

Diversity, economic characteristics, and retention of early learning and child care workers in Canada ^[1]

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Abstract

Given Canada's increasingly diverse population, a better understanding of the representation of different groups among Canadian workers and their economic characteristics is needed. This study analyzes the diversity, economic characteristics, and retention of workers in Canada's early learning and child care (ELCC) sector. Using census data, diversity characteristics (e.g. sex, visible minority status such as race and ethnicity, language, and activity limitations) were compared between ELCC and non-ELCC workers. The study also examines whether ELCC workers' economic characteristics, such as self-employment rate, full-time work status, employment income, and poverty rates, varied by diversity groups. It then investigates whether diversity characteristics were associated with workers' retention in ELCC occupations. Findings showed an over-representation of women, visible minorities, and non-native speakers of Canadian official languages in the ELCC workforce. Generally, non-White ELCC workers were more likely than their White counterparts to be paid employees, work full-time, and earn less than \$40,000 annually. Variations in ELCC workers' economic characteristics and retention rates were also found across visible minority groups. Findings from this study provide greater insight into the representation and retention of different groups within ELCC occupations, which can contribute to higher quality early learning and child care for Canada's multicultural population.

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