

# Job satisfaction of early childhood educators in Nova Scotia and their perceptions of the current daycare system in our province <sup>[1]</sup>

Graduate Thesis

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## AVAILABILITY

Full article PDF <sup>[2]</sup>

## Abstract

A well compensated early childhood workforce, who are valued and respected by society, is the key to ensuring quality early childhood care. Teaching staff wages, work satisfaction, adult-child ratio, teacher's level of education and auspice are direct predictors of program quality (Doherty et al, 2000). However, the reality of the childcare sector is one of low wages, minimal benefits and very little respect and recognition from society. Job satisfaction of early childhood educators in Nova Scotia and their perceptions of the current daycare system within Nova Scotia were investigated. Sixty-six early childhood educators from across Nova Scotia participated in the study, fifty-nine percent (59%) of educators worked in not for profit centers and 30.1% of participants were employed by for profit child care centers. The researcher-developed survey investigated participants' perceptions of their current work situation, their ideal child care setting, and the areas that need to be addressed to ensure quality care for children in Nova Scotia. Both Likert and short answer question formats were used on the survey. Results indicated significant differences in the experience and education level of participants from not for profit and for profit child care centers. With participants from not for profit centers being more experienced and having a higher level of education. The majority of early childhood educators (60.9%) work 31 to 40 hour work weeks and many are making wages that are close to or below the poverty line. Only 15% of participants have pension plan options within their work place. Forty percent (40%) of educators receive 45 minutes or less of personal break time and over 50% of participants indicate they use their personal break time in order to fulfill job requirements. Over ninety percent (90%) of participants indicated their workplace provides them with professional resources/books, and resource/materials for programming benefits and opportunities for professional development. However, very few educators (12.5%) receive time for programming and of the 90% who have opportunities for professional development; only 74.2% receive some financial assistance to access such opportunities. Results indicated that early childhood educators feel that society as a whole devalue the early childhood field and provide no recognition for the crucial job early childhood educators do. As well, educators indicate that they feel that the government does not recognize the value of early learning or the benefits that quality child care brings to our young children. Participants of the current study felt that the governments' actions are not supportive of creating quality childcare centers as the province has low standards that are inadequately maintained and lacks in funding. When asked outright if they are satisfied with their job, over eighty percent (82.3%) of early childhood educators agreed that they were satisfied with their current job. When looking deeper, results indicate that early childhood educators are in fact, unsatisfied with many facets of their current workplace conditions. Educators indicated that their work place provided unfair wages and benefits, did not provide adequate time for programming, had a philosophy that differed from their own and workplace relationships that were far from their ideal. The results of the current study were in line with those of previous studies, highlighting the delicate interplay between structural, contextual and process quality elements that affect the quality of early childhood programs. The results also demonstrate that these elements affect and are affected by the job satisfaction of early childhood educators, thereby recognizing that the job satisfaction of early childhood educators plays a significant role in the quality of care that early childhood programs are providing. These factors; work place conditions, policy/societal recognition, and auspice, which influence an employee's level of job satisfaction, do not operate in isolation but instead interact with and impact each other. Results indicate that early childhood educators continue to work in a field that is undervalued and unfairly compensated for the work they do. The reality of the child care sector sadly continues to be one of low wages, minimal benefits and very little respect and recognition from society. These results speak to the need to address the personal, financial, and policy issues facing early childhood educators in Nova Scotia to ensure that early childhood educators are recognized and compensated fairly and that high quality education becomes the norm instead of the exception.

**Region:** Nova Scotia <sup>[3]</sup>

**Tags:** childcare workforce <sup>[4]</sup>

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#### Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/16/04/job-satisfaction-early-childhood-educators-nova-scotia-and> [2]  
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