

Cluster Research Report: Kootenay Childcare Providers

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Kootenay Childcare Providers survey looked at the characteristics of childcare providers in the Kootenays with a focus on workplace skills and training.

This report presents the findings from the Kootenay Childcare Providers survey completed in the fall of 2017. The survey was divided into five sections: Childcare Centre Characteristics, Labour Force Profile, Training and Skills Development, Formal Training, Informal Training, and Increasing the Number of Skilled Childhood Educators.

The first section of the report provides information on the characteristics of the childcare providers. A total of 33 respondents identified that they provide 1,308 childcare spaces. The most number of childcare spaces were provided for licensed preschools (431 spaces), followed by licensed group childcare (30 months to school age) (393 spaces), licensed school age care (255 spaces), and licensed group childcare (birth to 36 months) (162 spaces). 79% of childcare providers keep a waiting list, with children most commonly remaining on the list between 6 to 12 months (40% of respondents). Infant and toddlers (birth to 36 months) is the most common age category to be on a wait list (54% of children on a wait list).

The section looking at the Labour Force Profile of Childcare Providers, found that the majority of employees were full time (51%), followed by part time (34%) and casual/temporary/relief (15%). Childcare centres were most commonly operating as a not-for-profit (55%), while 45% operate on a for-profit basis. Employees were most commonly Certified Early Childhood Educators (37%), followed by Early Childhood Education Assistants (24%), Managers and Senior staff (12%), Responsible Adults (12%), and multiple roles (12%). Staff most commonly had over 15 years of experience in Early Learning and Childcare (32%), and are between the ages of 26 and 50 (69%). The majority of respondents reported that the number of employees increasing their education and/or credentials (59%), the proportion of employees taking formal training (training that counts towards certification) (63%), the proportion of employees engaging in informal skill development (63%), and the number of staff engaging in on-line studies (59%) would all be increasing over the next 12 months, indicating that a focus on workplace training and skills development is topical for the majority of childcare providers.

73% of respondents reported that they have had trouble attracting Certified Early Childhood Educators and 58% reported that they have had difficulty with retention. The top factor cited for these difficulties was competing with wages from other employment sectors

The Training & Skills Development portion of the survey found that 57% of childcare centres (16 respondents) do have training or professional development plans for employees and 64% have a budget for professional development. Informal training factors (96 responses) more commonly influenced staff training and/or skills development initiatives than formal training factors (65 responses). Regulatory requirements (9 responses), a desire to increase employees skills in general (9 responses), and industry cluster activities or events (9 responses) were the top three factors for initiating formal training activities, while professional association (13 responses) and industry cluster activities or events (14 responses) were the top two factors to influence informal training activities. 13 of 22 respondents indicated that they had not applied for external funding for professional development. Of the 11 respondents who had, applications were most common to provincial funders and professional associations. Just 29% of applications were approved.

With regards to the Formal Training section of the survey, formal training was accessed most commonly through one-off, short term training opportunities that met a specific need. The most common areas of training for one-off, short term training was for Health and Safety Training (5 respondents), ECE Specific (Infant Toddler, Growth & Development, Care, Inclusion, Curriculum Methodologies, Observation & Recording, Children's Rights, etc.) (4 respondents), and Management, Leadership, Human Resources (4 respondents). Formal training occurred most frequently in-house, provided by another staff member (8 respondents), in the workplace, during paid time (7 respondents), away from the workplace, but paid (6 respondents), and unpaid, away from the workplace (5 respondents). Early Childhood Education Assistants (24 employees) participated the most in formal training, followed by Early Childhood Educators (23 employees).

Outcomes of formal training were most commonly reported as benefiting the individual (72 responses), with the following four areas experiencing the most benefit: increased level of certification or credentials (10 responses), upgraded job skills and expertise in child development (9 responses) and early years programming (7 responses), and employment progression and career advancement (7 responses). Areas of unmet training needs include: cultural literacy and awareness (5 respondents), green skills (4 respondents), information and computer technology (4 respondents), and marketing and promotion (4 respondents). The top three barriers across all occupation categories were access due to location or time not being suitable (9 respondents); difficulty in giving staff the time to attend training (7 respondents), and training being too costly (6 respondents).

When considering informal training, job specific content was the most common area of training (9 respondents), and the most frequent mode of delivery was as a one-off event, designed to address a specific need (7 respondents). The two content areas that were most accessed included job specific training (such as infant toddler, growth and development, care, inclusion, curriculum development, observation & recording, children's rights) (14 respondents), followed by workplace communication and teamwork skills (8 respondents).

Outcomes of informal training were most commonly reported as benefiting the participant (24 responses) and the centre (24 responses). The two outcomes most frequently cited were increased skills or expertise (10 respondents) and increased innovation (i.e. new/improved services or processes) (8 respondents).

The most important learning partners for informal learning activities are co-workers (10 respondents), clients/customers (6 respondents), and other childcare providers (6 respondents). Additionally, 4 respondents identified their Child Care Resource and Referral Centre as an "other" partner they have used for Informal learning.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	5
METHODS.....	5
RESULTS	5
Childcare Centre Characteristics.....	5
Labour Force Profile	7
Training & Skills Development	15
Formal Training	20
Informal Training.....	29
Increasing the Number of Skilled Childhood Educators	36
APPENDIX: DETAILED QUESTION RESPONSES	37

INTRODUCTION

This report presents the findings from a survey undertaken by the Kootenay Workforce Development Initiative, a Selkirk College-College of the Rockies partnership, guided by an industry-led steering committee that seeks to build a workforce that provides a competitive advantage to the Columbia Basin-Boundary region.

Accessible, skilled and affordable childcare is necessary to the growth and full utilization of a competitive workforce. The purpose of this project is to better understand the changing labour market conditions specific to the early years sector in the region, focusing on a training and skills gap analysis of the sector, including current and future needs, opportunities, and challenges. By better understanding the nature and scope of the skills gap, organizations will be better equipped to plan and implement strategies to address the challenges.

METHODS

The survey was developed with input from an advisory group made up of industry representatives and stakeholders. The survey was distributed through direct contact, and through direct email invitations to known licensed and unlicensed childcare providers, and included representatives of child care providing businesses (eg.- day care centres, nursery schools); representatives of early years serving organizations (eg.- Success by Six, CCRR); and other child care providers (workers or operators of day cares or family care). Direct follow up was conducted by phone and/or email. The online version of the survey was also distributed through childcare resource and referral agencies to their registered child care providers. In total, 44 individuals participated in this research student. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistical analysis and full qualitative comments are provided in the report.

RESULTS

Childcare Centre Characteristics

Respondents indicated that the majority of childcare spaces they provide (33% or 431 spaces) were for licensed preschools, followed by 30% (393 spaces) for licensed group childcare (age 30 months to school age), and 19% (255 spaces) for licensed school age care (before and/or after school care). A total of 1,308 childcare spaces were identified by the 33 respondents.

Interestingly, the most number of respondents (21 respondents or 64% of respondents) reported that they provide licensed group childcare (age 30 months to school age), followed by licensed group childcare (infant toddler) (15 respondents or 45% of respondents) and licensed preschool (15 respondents or 45%). Note that respondents identified all of the categories of childcare that they provide, resulting in percentages that exceed 100% when looked as a proportion of the number of respondents.

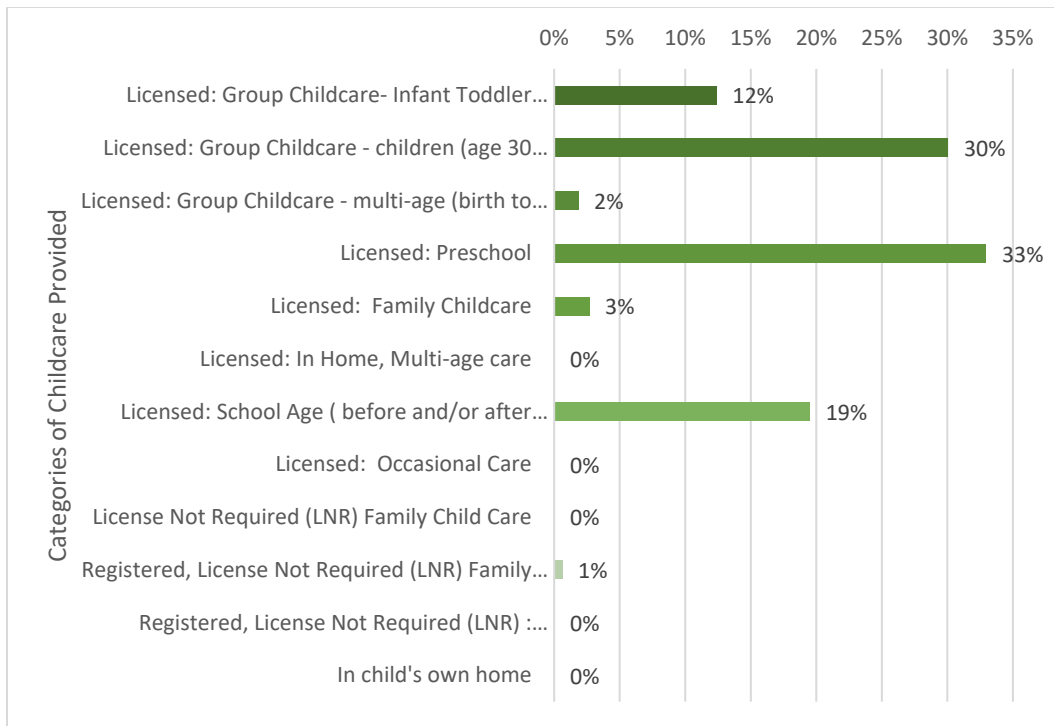
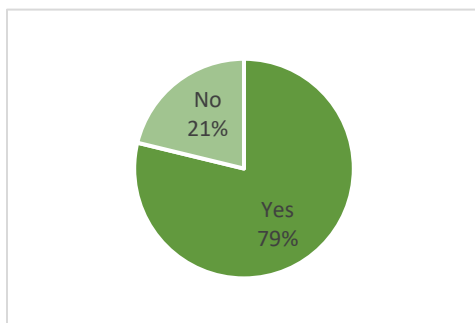


Figure 1: Category of Childcare (33 respondents)



The majority of respondents (79% or 26 respondents) keep a waiting list.

Figure 2: Wait List (33 respondents)

The most frequently reported average amount of time that children are on the waiting list before an opening is available is between 6 and 12 months (12 respondents or 40%), followed by 12 to 18 months by 23% (7 respondents).

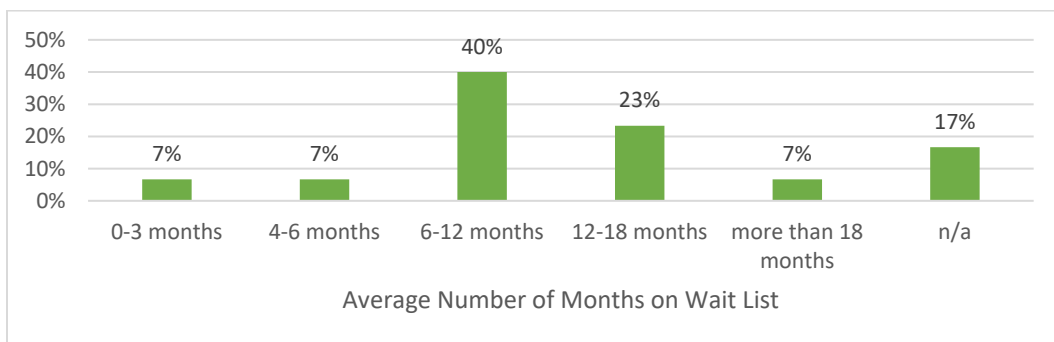


Figure 3: Average Number of Months on Wait List (30 respondents)

Respondents most commonly (48% or 15 respondents) reported receiving between 1 and 5 requests to have a child put on a wait list prior to birth in the previous 12 months. The second most common response (29% or 9 respondents) indicates they never get this request. This may be due to the nature of the childcare offered by respondents, which may not include infant or toddler care.

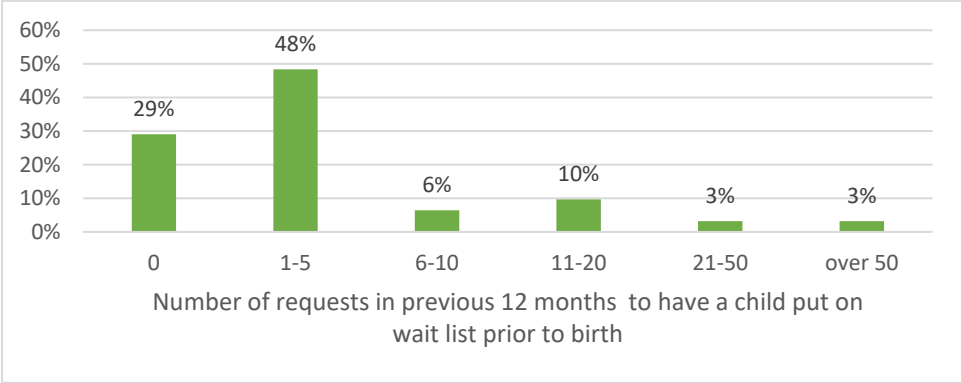


Figure 4: Number of Requests to Have a Child Put on a Wait List Prior to Birth (31 respondents)

For those childcare operators that do keep a list, the most frequent age group found on the wait list is infant/toddler with 20 respondents indicating that they have a combined total of 342 children on their wait list (54% of children on wait list). The second most common age group seeking childcare is for children between 30 months and school age; 21 respondents indicated they have a combined total of 182 children on their wait list for this type of care. Childcare providers indicated that they have a total of 632 children on wait lists.

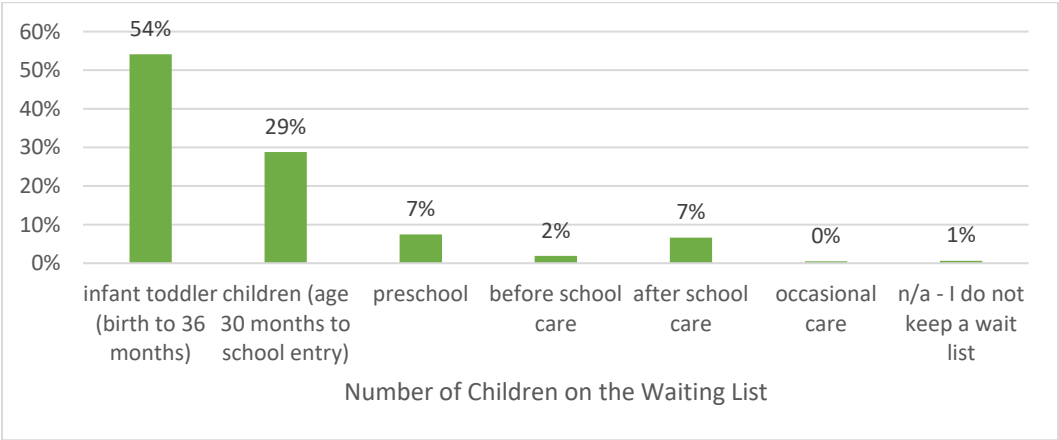


Figure 5: Number of Children on the Wait List by Type of Care (30 respondents)

Labour Force Profile

Childcare centres reported that the majority of their employees were full time (51% or 24 respondents, with a combined total of 94 employees), followed by part time employees (34% or 23 respondents, with a combined total of 63 employees.). In total respondents reported 185 employees. Note that 0% of employees were considered contractors.

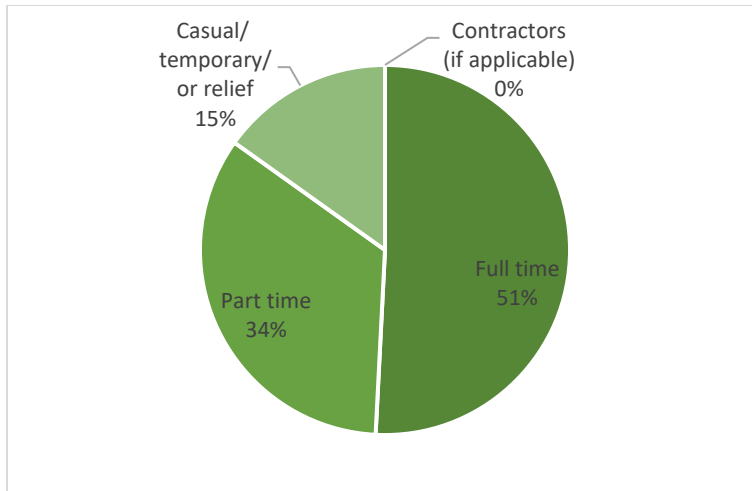
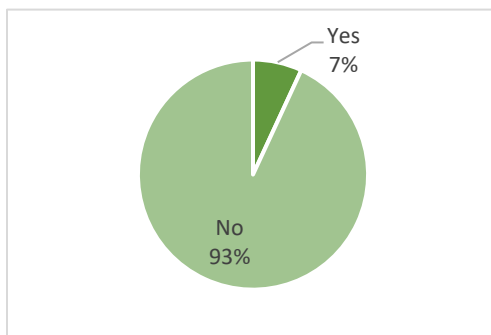
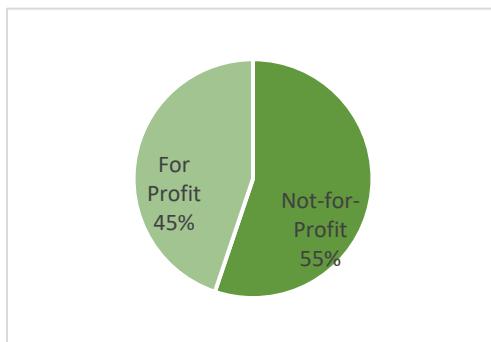


Figure 6: Number of Employees (27 respondents)



Just 7% of respondents indicated that their childcare centre was unionised (2 respondents).

Figure 7: Union (29 respondents)



55% of centres (16 respondents) reported that they operated as a not-for-profit, while 45% (13 respondents) indicated that they were for profit.

Figure 8: Business Model (29 respondents)

The most common employee position was reported for Certified Early Childhood Educators (37% or 68 employees, reported by 15 respondents), followed by Early Childhood Education Assistants (24% or 45 employees, reported by 15 respondents). Respectively, 12% of employees were Managers and Senior staff (22 employees, reported by 15 respondents), Responsible Adults (23 employees, reported by 14 respondents), and multiple roles (23 employees, reported by 18 respondents).

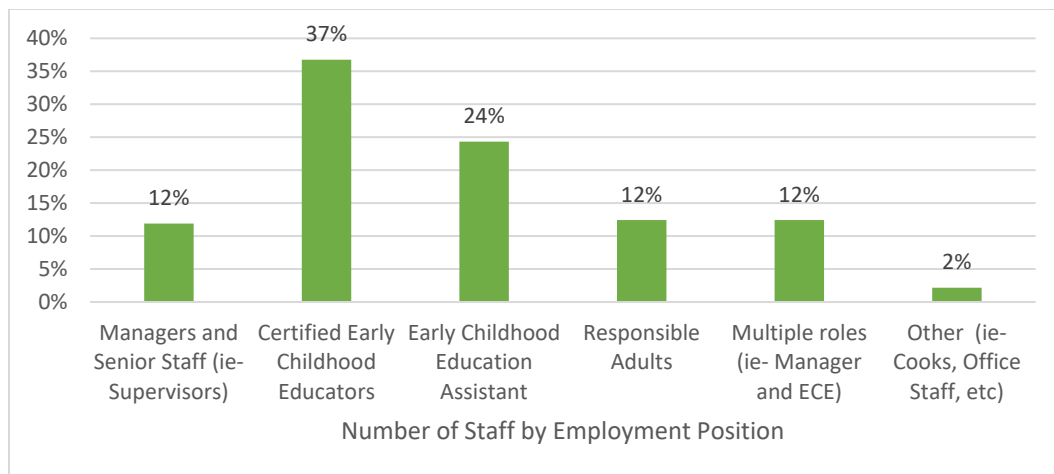


Figure 9: Number of Staff by Employment Position (28 respondents)

Managers and Senior Staff were most commonly employed for between 6 to 9 years (4 employers), Certified Early Childhood Educators (13 respondents), Early Childhood Education Assistants (11 respondents), and Responsible Adults (10 respondents) were all most commonly employed for between 1 and 5 years.

	Managers & Senior Staff	Certified Early Childhood Educators	Early Childhood Education Assistants	Responsible Adults	Multiple roles (i.e. Manager and ECE)	Other (i.e.- Cooks, Office Staff)
less than 1 year	0	1	4	1	1	1
1 - 5 years	3	13	11	10	2	1
6 - 9 years	4	3	1	0	2	0
10 - 20 years	3	1	0	0		1
over 20 years	3	1	0	0	1	0
# of Responses	13	19	16	11	14	3

Figure 10: Average Length of Time Staff Have Worked (# of respondents varies)

Staff most commonly had over 15 years of experience in Early Learning and Childcare (32% or 64 employees, reported by 17 respondents), followed by 1 to 5 years of experience (26% or 52 employees, reported by 20 respondents). 24% of staff had between 6 – 10 years of experience.

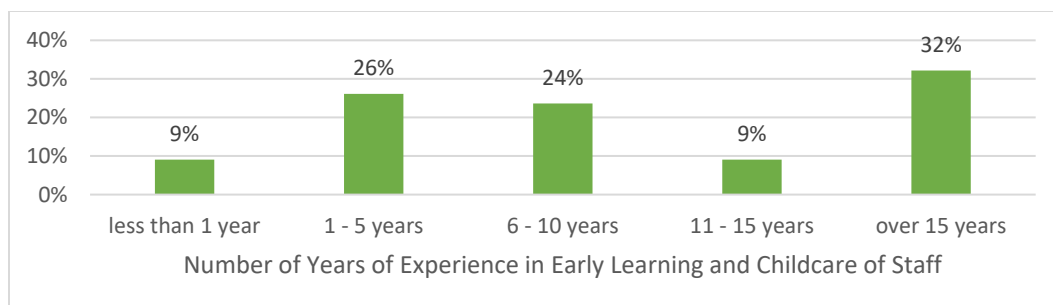


Figure 11: Number of Years of Experience (28 respondents)

The majority of staff were between the ages of 26 and 50 (69% of staff or 116, reported by 24 respondents).

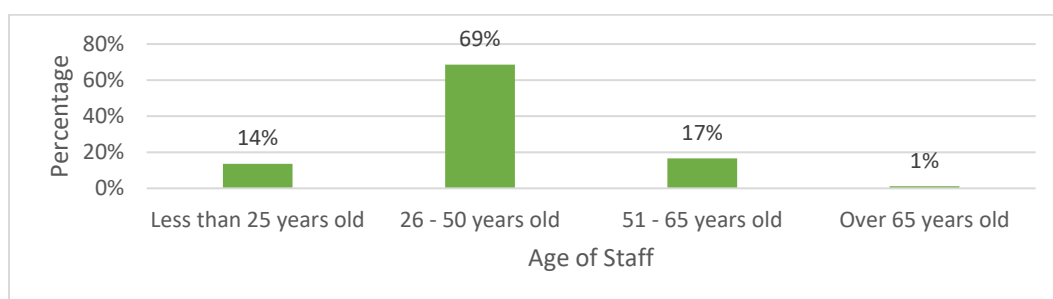
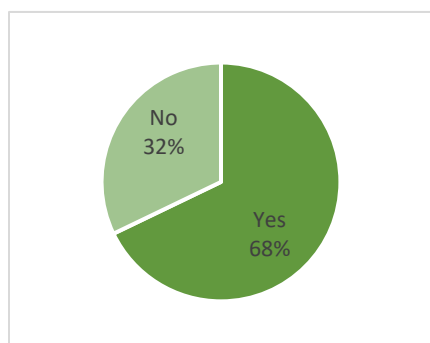


Figure 12: Age of Staff (28 respondents)



The majority of respondents reported that they had enough qualified staff to fill licensed childcare spaces (68% or 19 respondents).

Refer to the Appendix for a list of descriptions relating to those centres that do not have enough qualified staff.

Figure 13: Adequate Number of Staff to Fill Spaces (28 respondents)

The most common reason given for an exemption from Child Care Licensing in the past 12 months was due to the level of staff credentials (67% or 4 exemptions listed by 4 respondents).

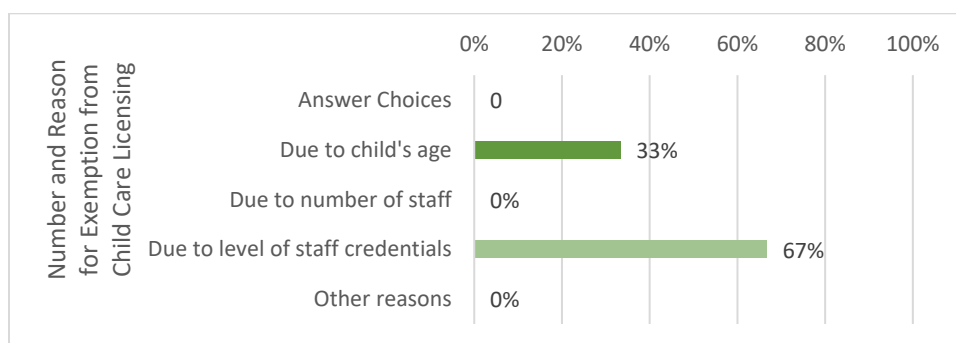


Figure 14: Number and Reason for Exemption from Child Care Licensing (6 respondents)

When considering specific factors that are expected to increase over the next 12 months, the majority of respondents reported that the number of employees increasing their education and/or credentials (59%), the proportion of employees taking formal training (training that counts towards certification) (63%), the proportion of employees engaging in informal skill development (63%), and the number of staff engaging in on-line studies would all be increasing (59%). The majority of respondents reported that the following were expected to remain the same: the total number of staff employed (75%), the number of new staff under the age of 24 hired (74%), and the number of prior-learning assessments your staff undergo (81%).

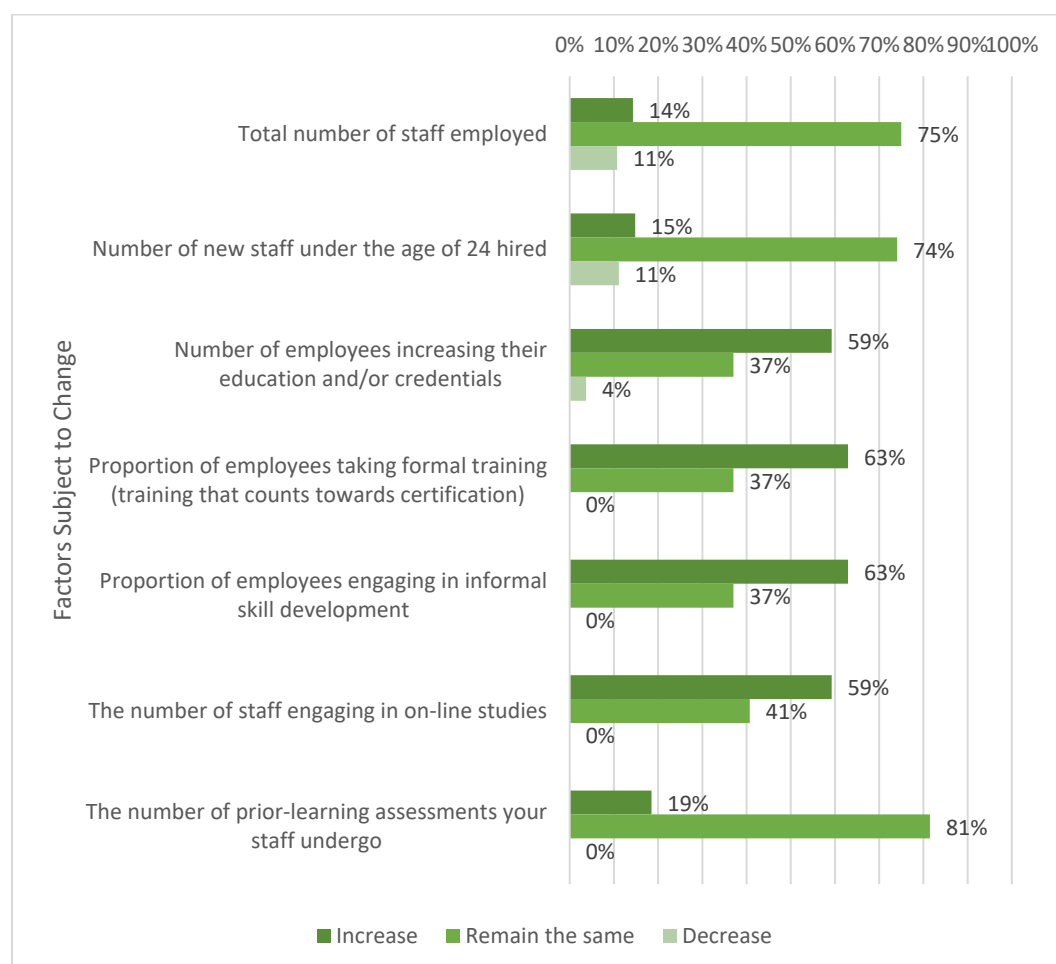
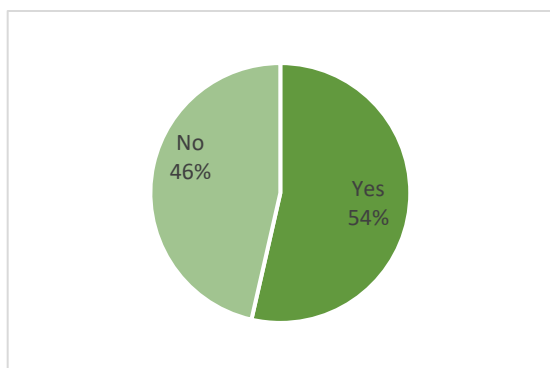


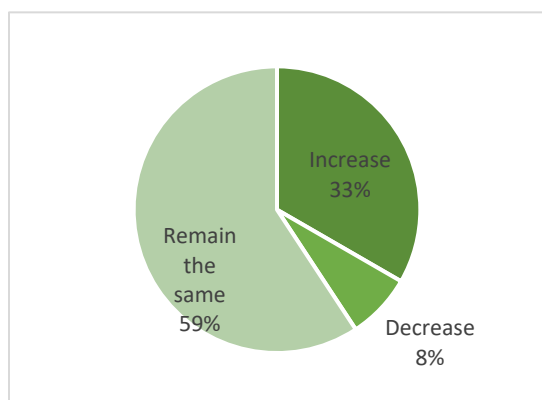
Figure 15: Factors Subject to Change over Next 12 Monthsⁱ (28 respondents)

ⁱ Formal Training refers to training that results in credits towards recognized certification. Informal Skill Development refers to other forms of learning such as mentoring, presentations, etc. that do not lead to credentials.



54% of respondents (15 respondents) reported that they have noticed, or are expecting factors that will impact our region's ability to build a strong and skilled workforce for the childcare sector. For a list of those factors described by respondents, refer to the Appendix.

Figure 16: Factors That Will Impact a Strong and Skilled Workforce (28 respondents)



59% (16 respondents) don't plan to change the size of their workforce over the next 3 years, while 33% (9 respondents) are planning an increase.

Figure 17: Change to Workforce over Next Three Years (27 respondents)

Of those planning an increase, the most common reason given was in order to expand current programs or services (5 respondents) and to fill a perceived gap in services (4 respondents). For a list of the 2 'other' responses provided, refer to the Appendix.

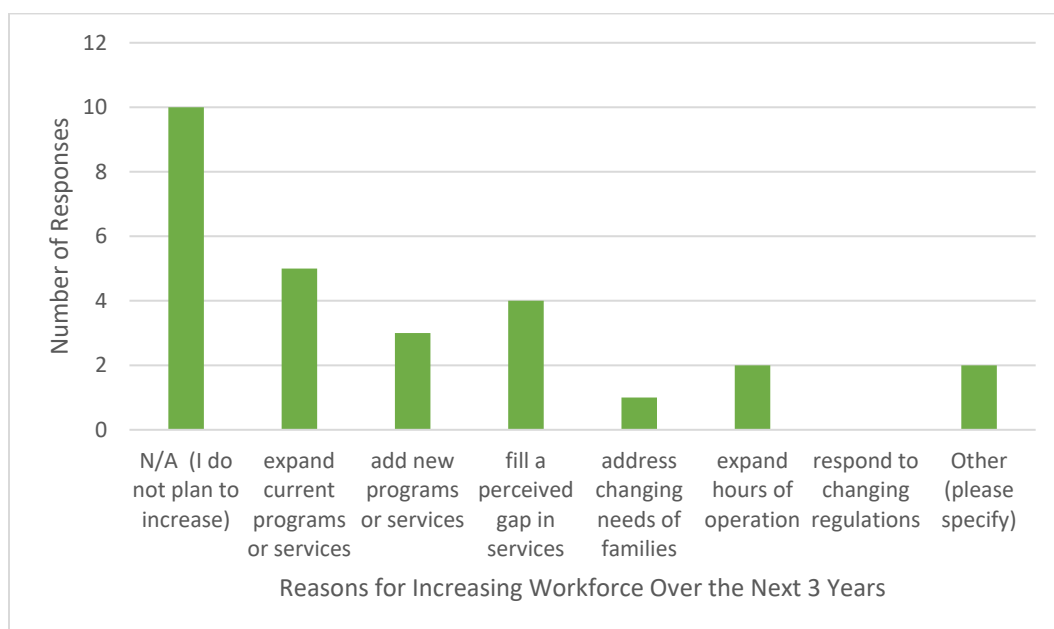
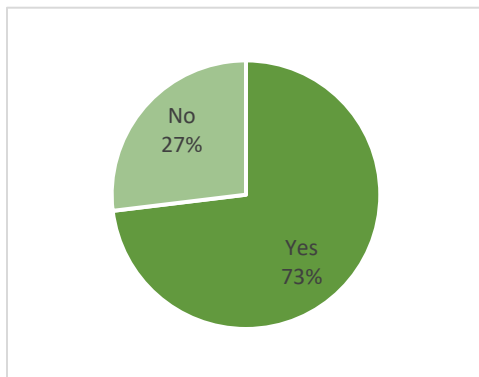


Figure 18: Reasons for Increasing Workforce over the Next 3 Years (18 respondents)

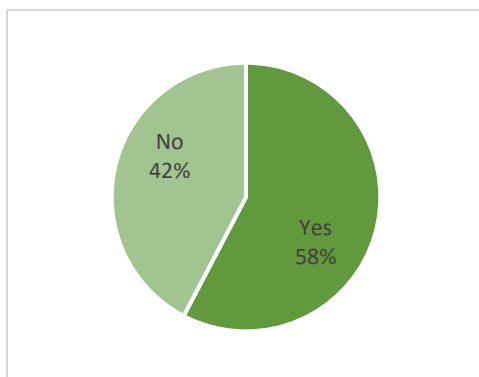
Just 4 respondents provided a response when asked if they plan on decreasing their workforce. Reasons given for reducing the size of the workforce include:

- Less days of work per week
- Closing the facility
- Decrease programs due to staffing
- Decrease staffing if enrolment decreases



73% (19 respondents) reported that they have had trouble *attracting* provincially Certified Early Childhood Educators in the last three years.

Figure 19: Trouble Attracting Provincially Certified Early Childhood Educators (26 respondents)



58% (15 respondents) reported that they have had trouble *retaining* provincially Certified Early Childhood Educators in the last three years.

Figure 20: Trouble Retaining Provincially Certified Early Childhood Educators (26 respondents)

The top factor impacting the ability to attract or retain Certified Early Childhood Educators was difficulty providing wages that compete with other employment opportunities (19 respondents for attraction, 12 respondents for retention). The other two frequently cited factors impacting attraction include a candidates' skills not matching job requirements (15 respondents), and the inability to provide competitive employment benefits (i.e. extended health/dental) (13 respondents). Other factors impacting retention include the inability to provide competitive employment benefits (i.e. extended health/dental) (9 respondents), a candidates' skills don't match the job requirements (7 respondents), and candidates do not have the required specialized training (7 respondents).

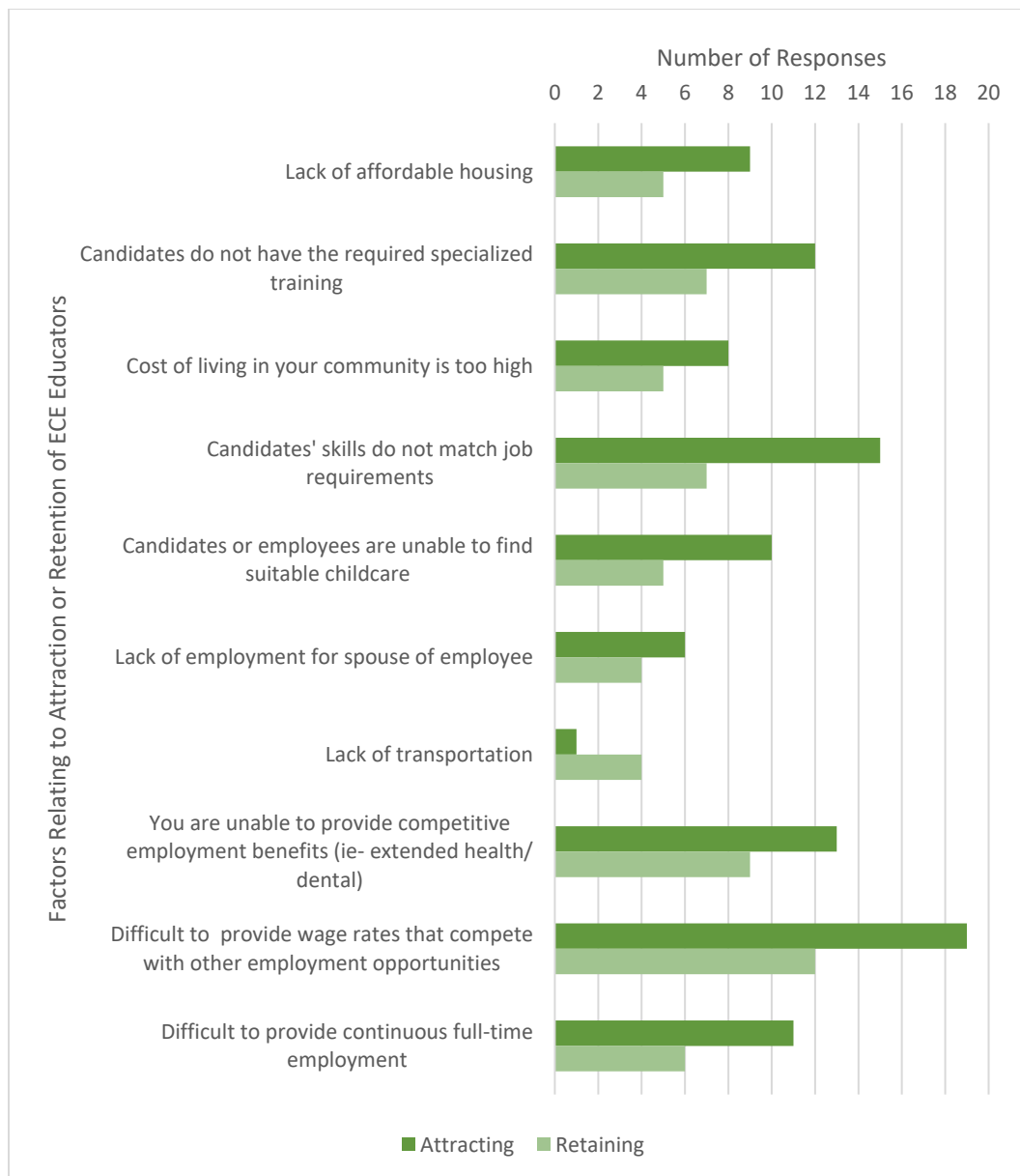


Figure 21: Factors Relating to Attraction or Retention of ECE Educators (21 respondents)

When looking at the previous 3 years, Early Childhood Educators were most commonly retained on average more than 36 months (10 respondents), while Early Childhood Educator Assistants were most commonly retained between 18 to 36 months.

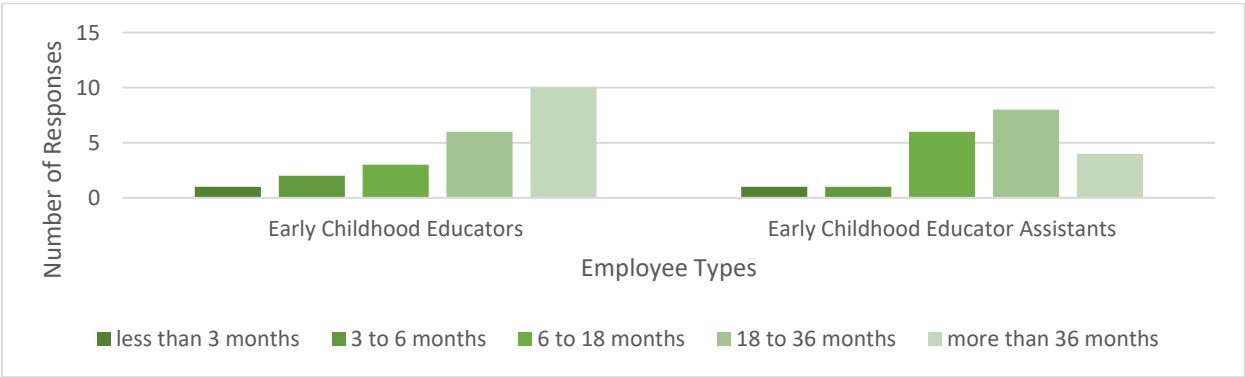


Figure 22: Average Length of Staff (20 respondents)

13 respondents provided the following comments and/or recommendations relating to challenges with attraction and/or retention of workers in the childcare sector, reference to competitive wages was most frequently cited (6 respondents). Refer to the Appendix for more detail.

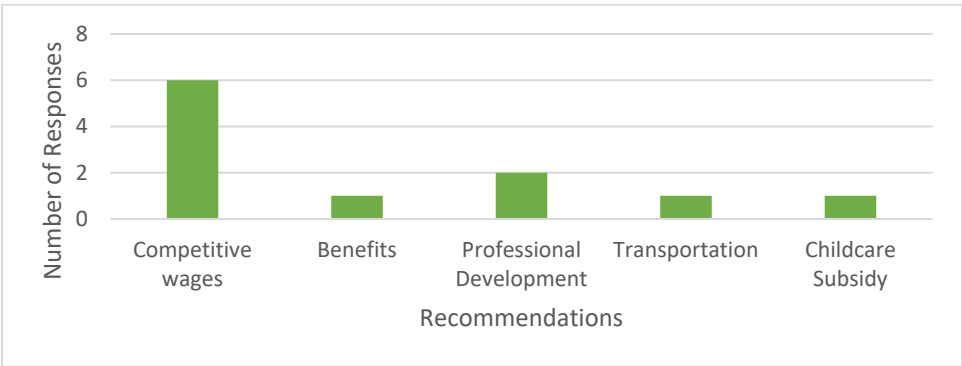
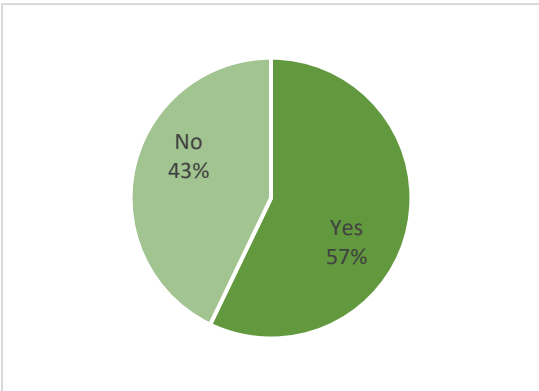


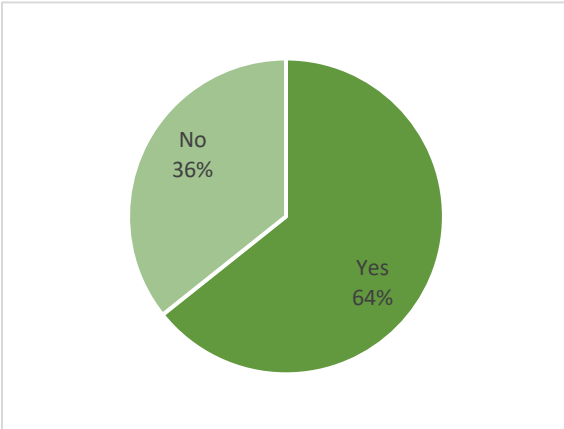
Figure 23: Challenges of Attracting and Retaining Workers (13 respondents)

Training & Skills Development



57% of childcare centres (16 respondents) surveyed have training or professional development plans for employees that lead to skills development or career advancement. Refer to the Appendix

Figure 24: Training or Professional Development Plans For Employees (28 respondents)



64% of childcare centres (18 respondents) have a budget for professional development. Refer to the Appendix for the budgeted amount reported that is available for Professional Development.

Figure 25: Professional Development Budget (28 respondents)

When asked which factors have influenced the childcare centres staff training and/or skills development initiatives over the previous 12 months, the top factors for **formal** training activities were:

- Regulatory (e.g.- training to meet licensing requirements) by 41% (9 respondents);
- Desire to increase employees' skill level in general by 39% (9 respondents);
- Professional Association (e.g.- CCRR events) by 36% (8 respondents); and
- Industry Cluster Activities or Events (e.g. Early Years Conference) by 33% (9 respondents).

The top factors for **informal** training activities were:

- Professional Association (e.g.- CCRR events) by 59% (13 respondents);
- Industry Cluster Activities or Events (e.g.- Early Years Conference) by 52% (14 respondents); and
- Regulatory (e.g. training to meet licensing requirements) by 50% (11 respondents).

Informal training factors were generally more commonly cited (96 responses) as influencing staff training and/or skills development initiatives than formal training (65 responses).

For factors listed as 'other' refer to the Appendix.

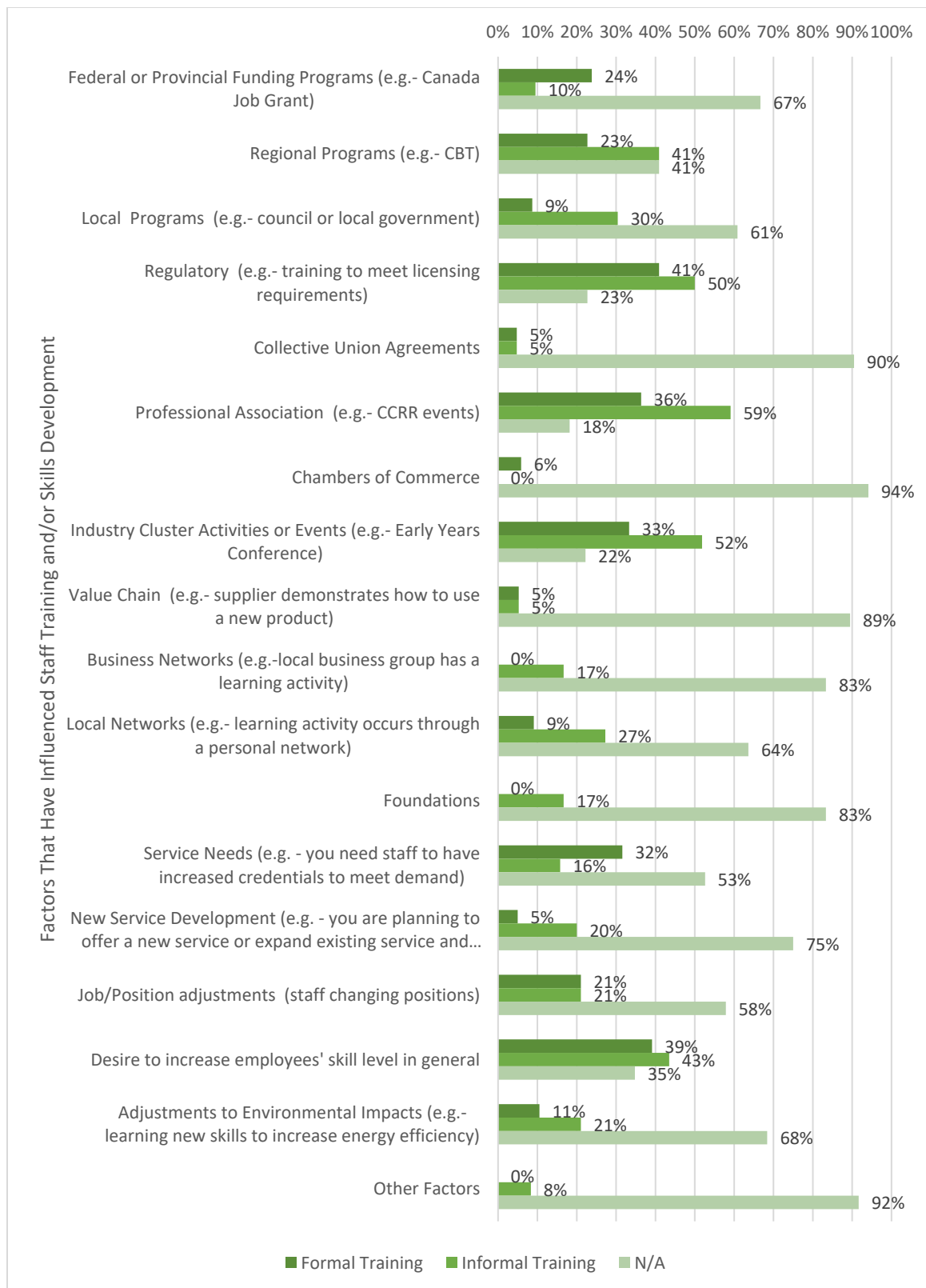


Figure 26: Factors Influencing Staff Training and/or Skills Development (28 respondents)

Of the 22 respondents, applications for funding to provincial funders and professional association funds were the most common (27% or 6 respondents, respectively. Interestingly, 59% (13 respondents) indicated the question was not applicable, indicating that a majority of respondents may not have applied for any funding from external sources. Note that respondents were asked to choose all sources of funding for which they applied, resulting in a percentage over 100% when compared with the number of respondents.

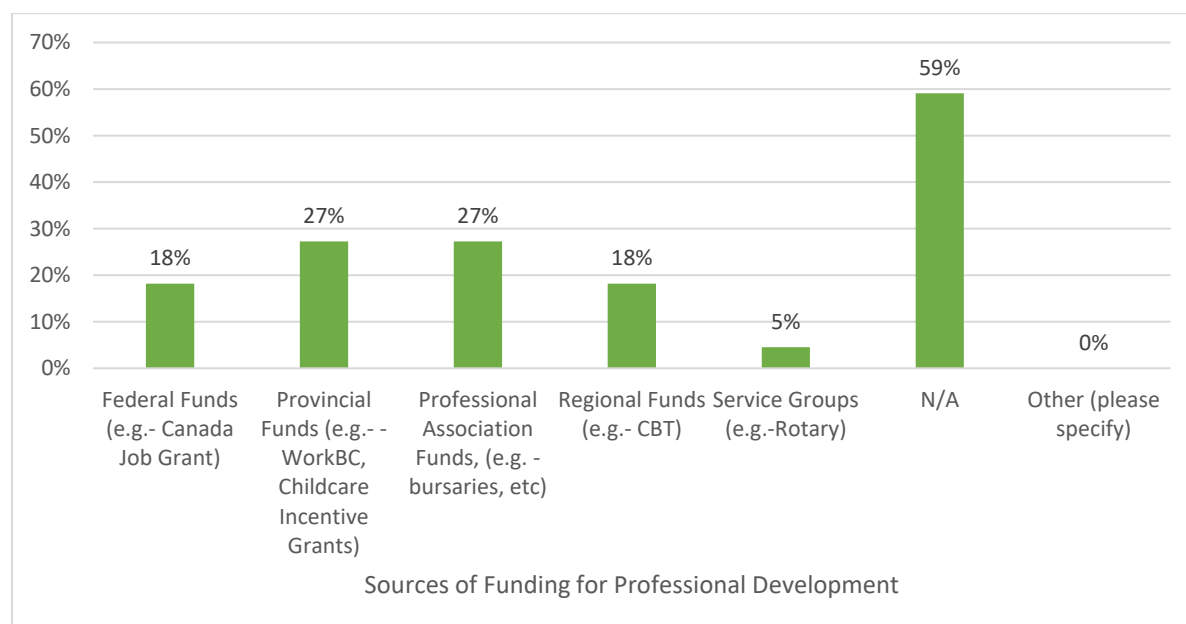
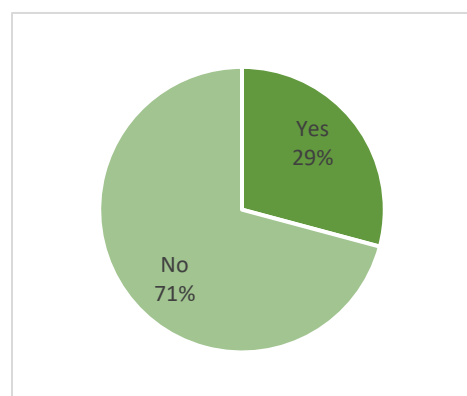


Figure 27: Applications for Funding (22 respondents)



Just 29% of the respondents (7 respondents) indicated that their applications were approved.

Figure 28: Funding Approvals for Training or Skill Development (24 respondents)

When asked which organisations have been used to access staff training and/or skills development initiatives over the previous 12 months, the top organisations for **formal** training activities were:

- Professional Associations (e.g. ECEBC) by 11 respondents;
- Community Organization (e.g. CCRR, or Regional Early Years Conference) by 10 respondents; and
- Colleges by 9 respondents).

The top organisations for **informal** training activities were:

- Community Organization (e.g. CCRR, or Regional Early Years Conference) by 15 respondents;
- Private Training Provider by 5 respondents; and
- Professional Associations (e.g.-ECEBC) by 4 respondents.

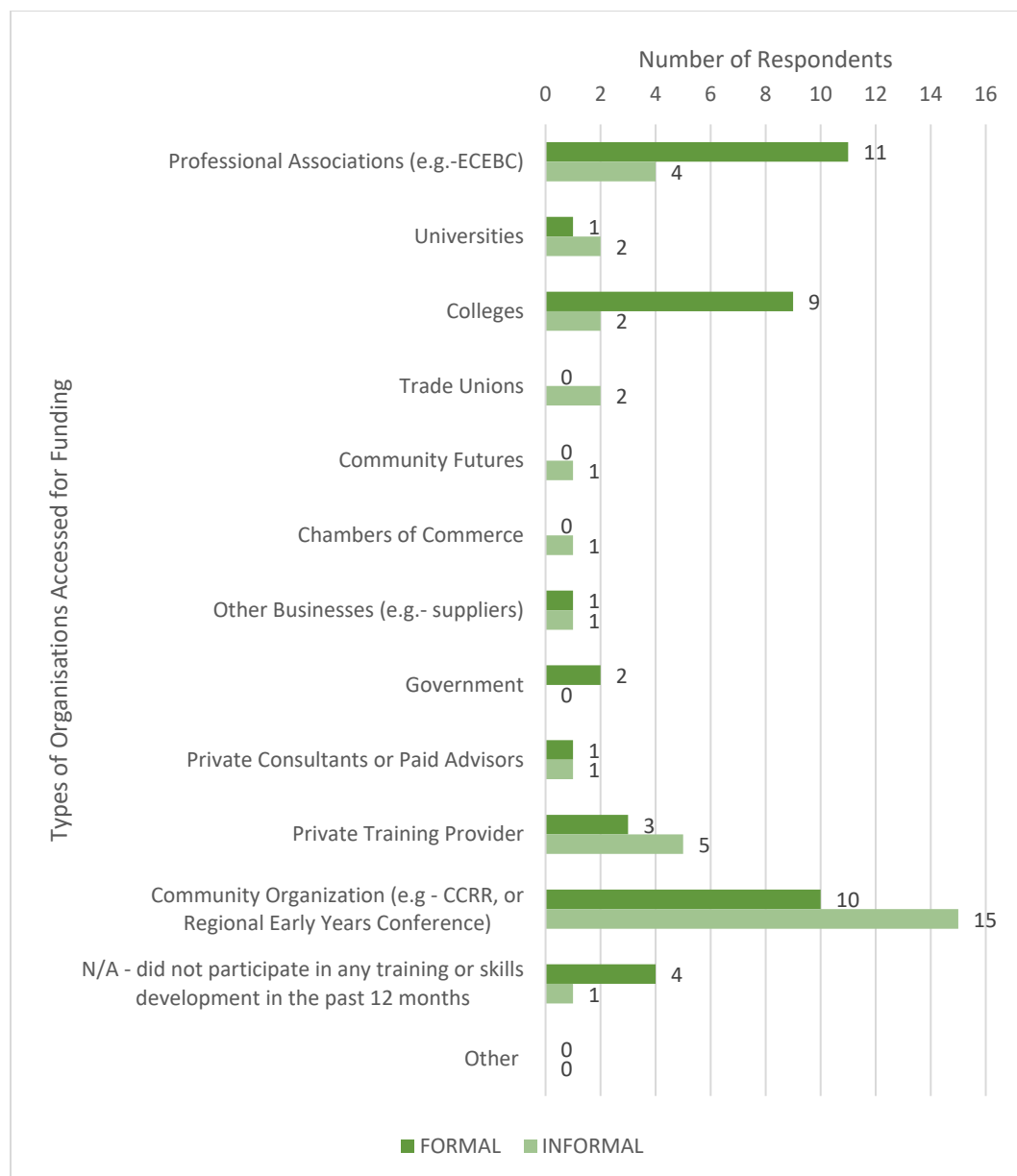


Figure 29: Types of Organizations Delivering Training and Skills Development (25 respondents)

Formal Training

In the past 12 months, formal training was accessed most commonly through one-off, short term training opportunities that met a specific need. One-off style training was chosen 32 times by respondents, in comparison with 11 respondents indicating on-line delivery, 10 respondents accessing training via a regular course, 3 indicating that course content was accessed through a blended delivery model of classroom and on-line learning, and 2 respondents through a class room delivery format.

The most common areas of training for one-off, short term training was for:

- Health and Safety Training (5 respondents);
- ECE Specific (Infant Toddler, Growth & Development, Care, Inclusion, Curriculum Methodologies, Observation & Recording, Children's Rights, etc.) by 4 respondents; and
- Management, Leadership, Human Resources by 4 respondents.

10 respondents indicated that they have participated in regular (weekly or monthly classes); these were evenly spread across the following 10 content areas:

- ECE Specific (Infant toddler, Growth & Development, Care, Inclusion, Curriculum Methodologies, Observation & Recording, Children's Rights, etc.);
- Management, Leadership, Human Resources;
- Health & Safety (other than First Aid and WHMIS etc. which are part of regulatory compliance);
- Language (e.g.- second language);
- Cultural Literacy & Awareness;
- Workplace Skills (e.g.- communication, team work);
- Literacy, Numeracy, Document use, Digital Technology (foundational skills);
- Green Skills (e.g.- adjusting to climate change and environmental factors);
- Inclusion or Inclusive Practice; and
- Truth and Reconciliation.

9 respondents indicated that they accessed ECE Specific training through on-line delivery method.

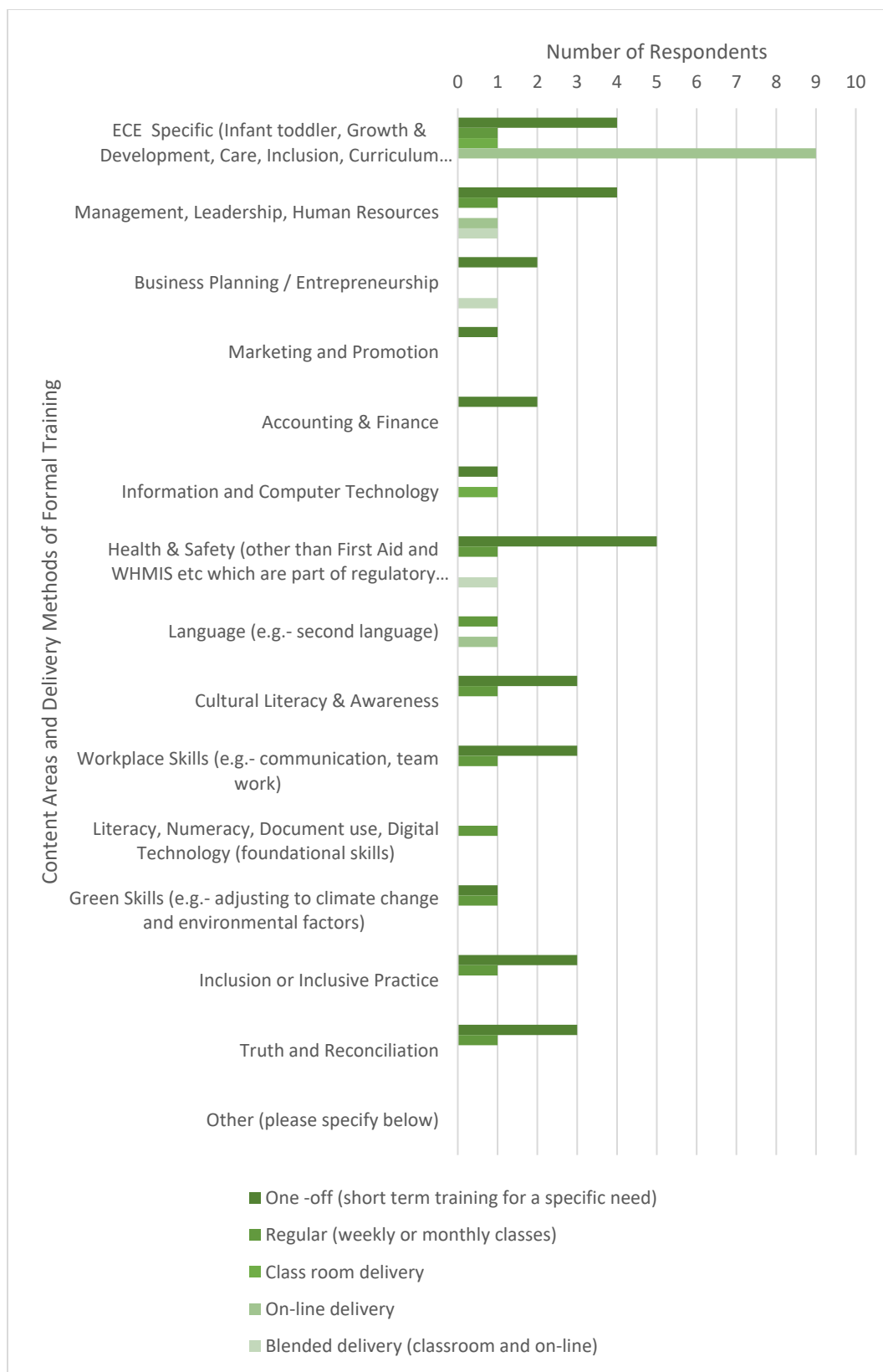


Figure 30: Content Areas and Delivery Methods of Formal Training (14 respondents)

The satisfaction level with formal training opportunities indicates that participants were generally satisfied, and in 4 cases they were very satisfied. Refer to the Appendix for comments on satisfaction ratings.

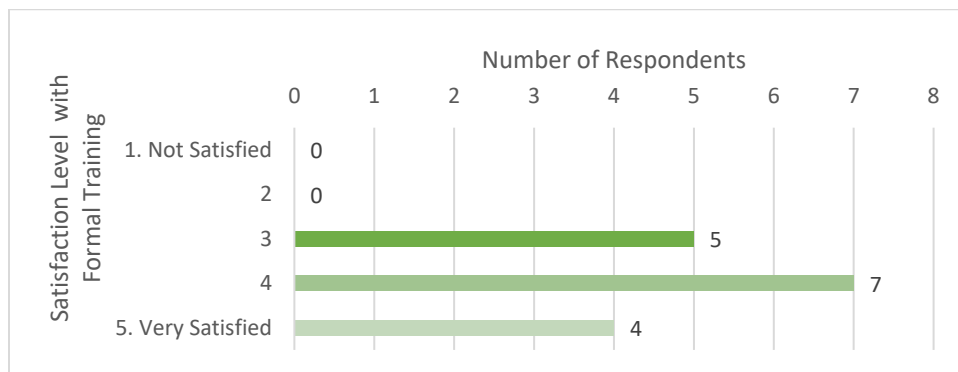


Figure 31: Satisfaction Level with Formal Training (16 respondents)

Respondents most frequently reported that most of the time, formal training occurred:

- In-house, with training provided by another staff member (8 respondents)
- in the workplace, during paid time (7 respondents)
- away from work, and time was paid for (6 respondents), and
- away from work, and time was not paid (5 respondents).

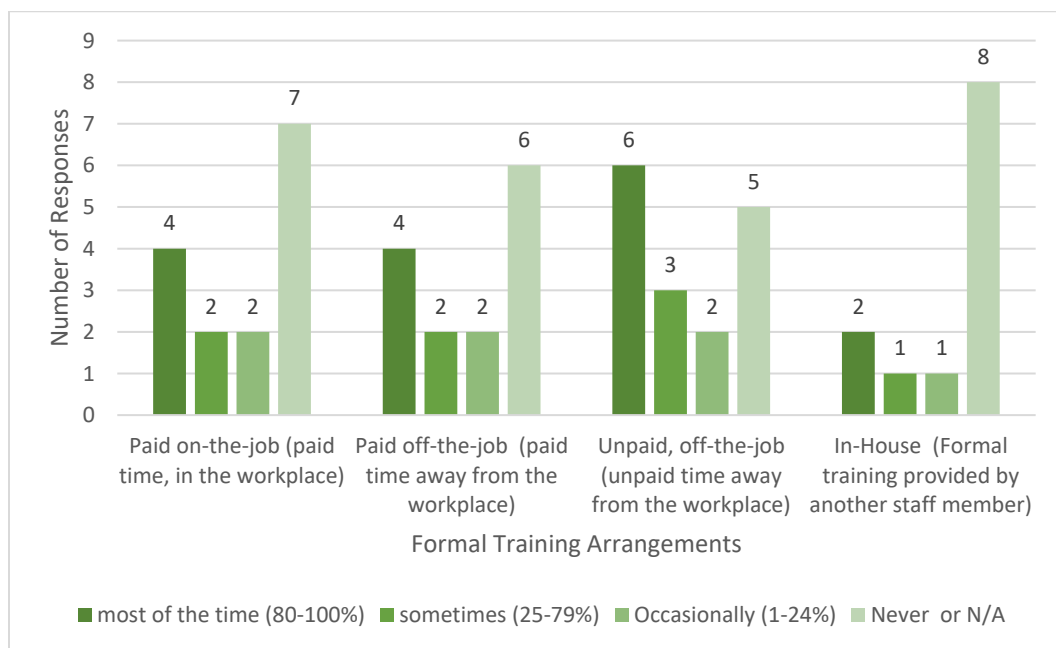


Figure 32: Training Arrangements (18 respondents)

7 respondents indicated that formal training most frequently occurred on-line or by distance education, and 6 respondents indicated that it was most uncommon to travel out of the area for formal training.

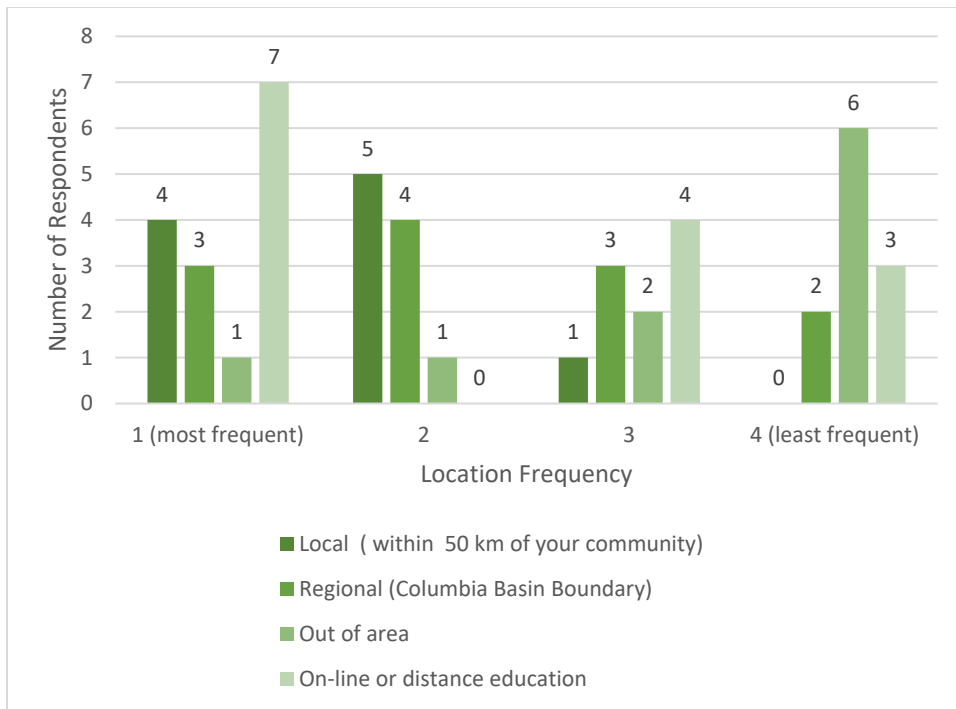


Figure 33: Most Frequent Location of FORMAL Training (15 respondents)

Of the 17 respondents, 64 staff members were identified as having participated in formal training over the previous 12 months. Early Childhood Education Assistants participated the most (24 employees), followed closely by Early Childhood Educators (23 employees).

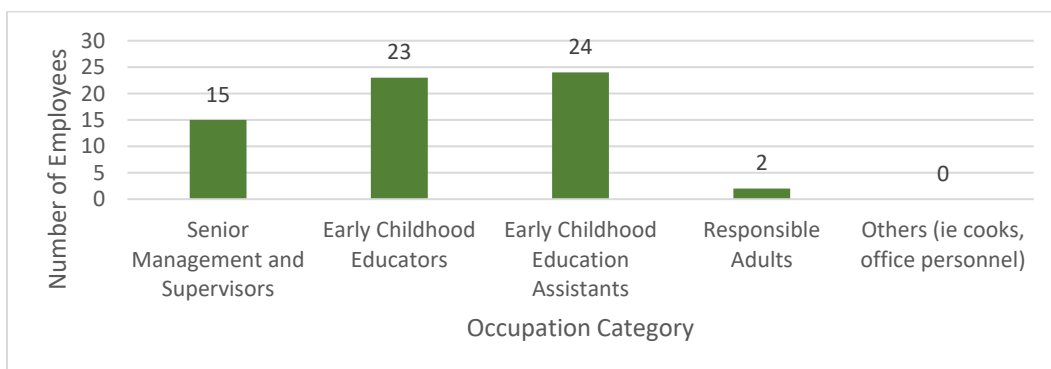


Figure 34: Number of Employees in Formal Training (17 respondents)

Employees who participated in formal training were most frequently in the 25 – 50 year old age group (39 employees or 60 reported)

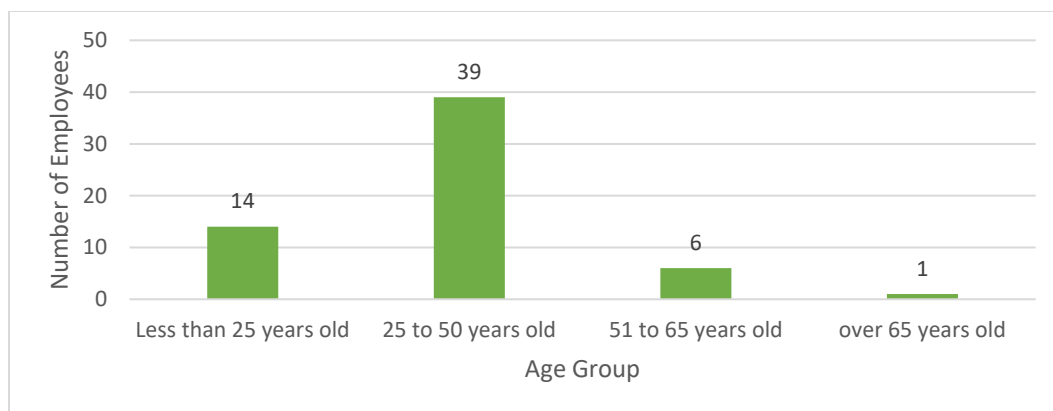


Figure 35: Age of Employees Participating in FORMAL (15 respondents)

Outcomes for the individual were most commonly reported with 72 responses provided. The most common outcomes for the individual include:

- Increased level of certification or credentials (10 responses);
- Upgraded job skills and expertise: Child Development (9 responses);
- Upgraded job skills and expertise: Early Years Programming (7 responses); and
- Employment progression, career advancement (7 responses).

Outcomes for the childcare centre were the second commonly reported with 60 responses provided. The most common outcomes for the childcare centre include:

- Increased level of certification or credentials (7 responses);
- Upgraded job skills and expertise: Early Years Programming (7 responses); and
- Upgraded job skills and expertise: Child Development (6 responses).

Just 15 responses were received for outcomes benefiting the sector, 16 indicating that outcomes benefited the community, and 11 outcomes benefited the Columbia Basin-Boundary Region.

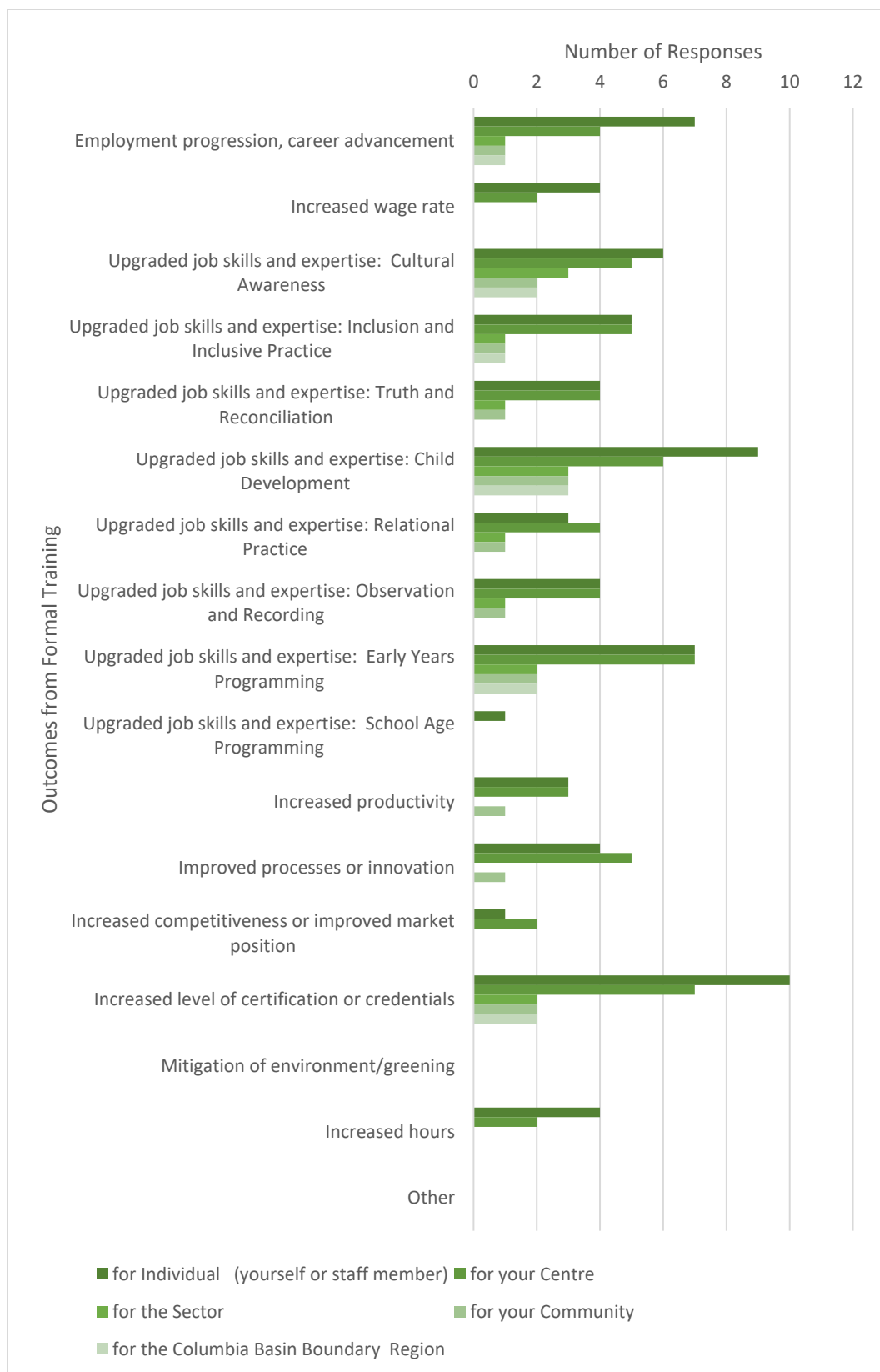


Figure 36: Formal Training Outcomes (13 respondents)

Formal training needs that were left unmet over the previous 12 months were reported as follows:

- Cultural literacy and awareness (5 respondents);
- Green skills (e.g. -adjusting to climate change and environmental factors) (4 respondents);
- Information and Computer technology (4 respondents); and
- Marketing & Promotion (4 respondents).

A total of 51 responses were provided by 10 respondents.

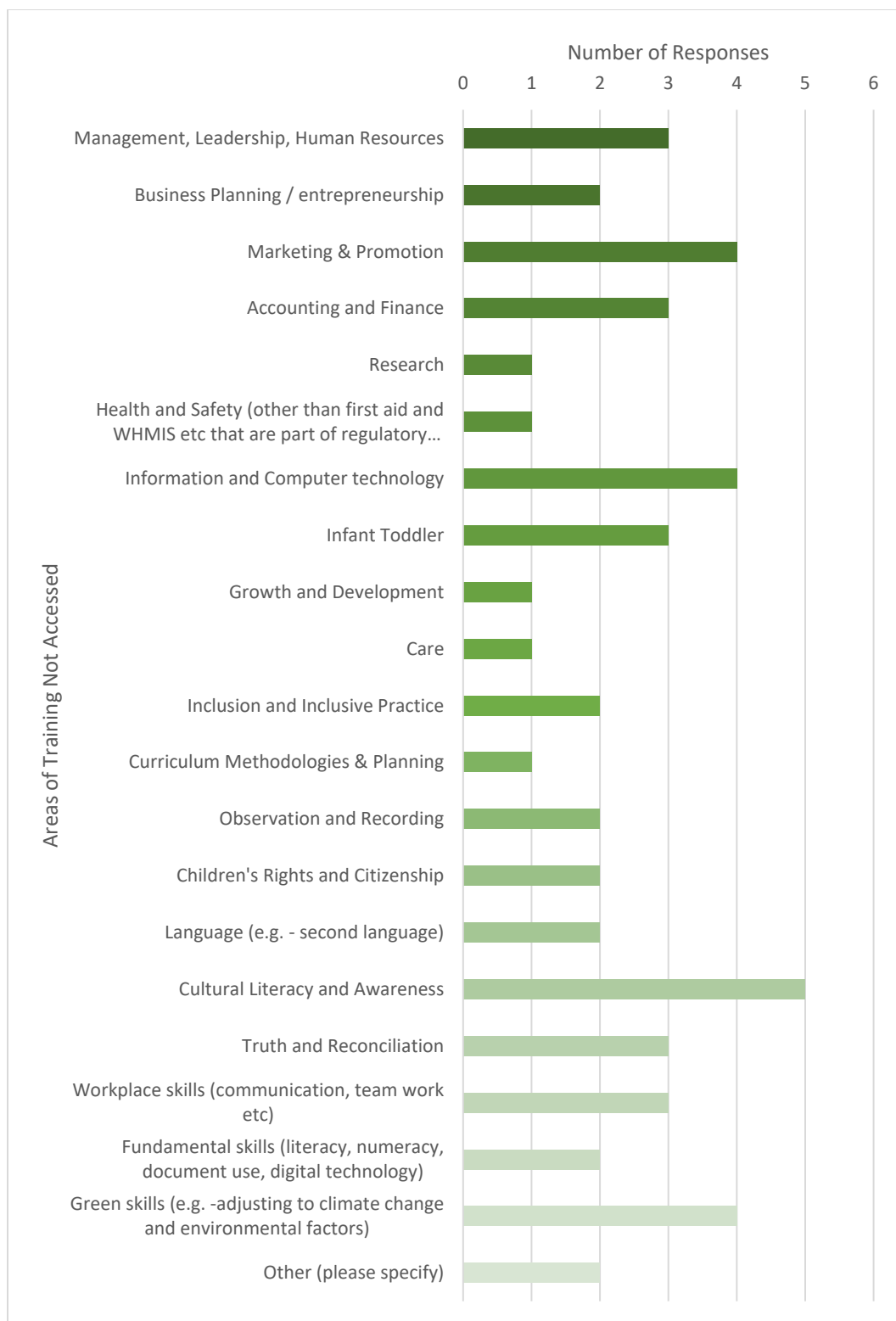


Figure 37: Formal Training Needed but Not Accessed (10 respondents)

The top three barriers across all occupation categories were:

- Access was problematic due to location or time not being suitable (9 respondents);
- Difficulty in giving staff the time to attend training (7 respondents); and
- Training was too costly (6 respondents).

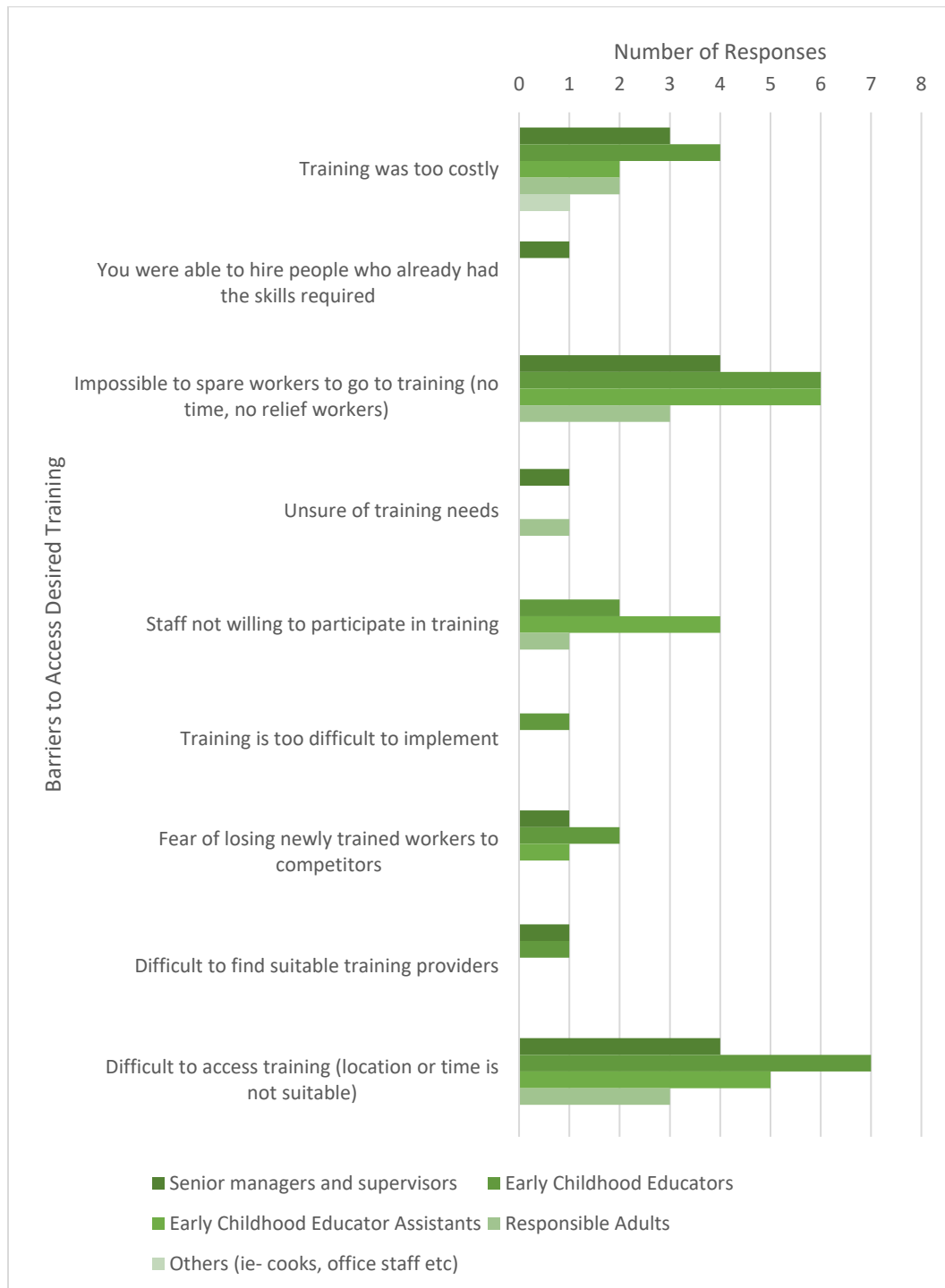


Figure 38: Barriers to Access Desired Training (14 respondents)

When asked what formal training was required over the next 12 months, 5 responses were provided with ECE certification training, Infant/Toddler certification, First Aid, ECE assistant training by distance education all listed.

Informal Training

Training that was job specific, such as Infant toddler, growth and development, care, inclusion, curriculum, observation & recording, and children's right were the most common areas of informal training, with 9 respondents indicating that they engaged in some form of job specific informal training. The majority of respondents indicated that training was delivered as a one off event, designed to address a specific need (7 respondents).

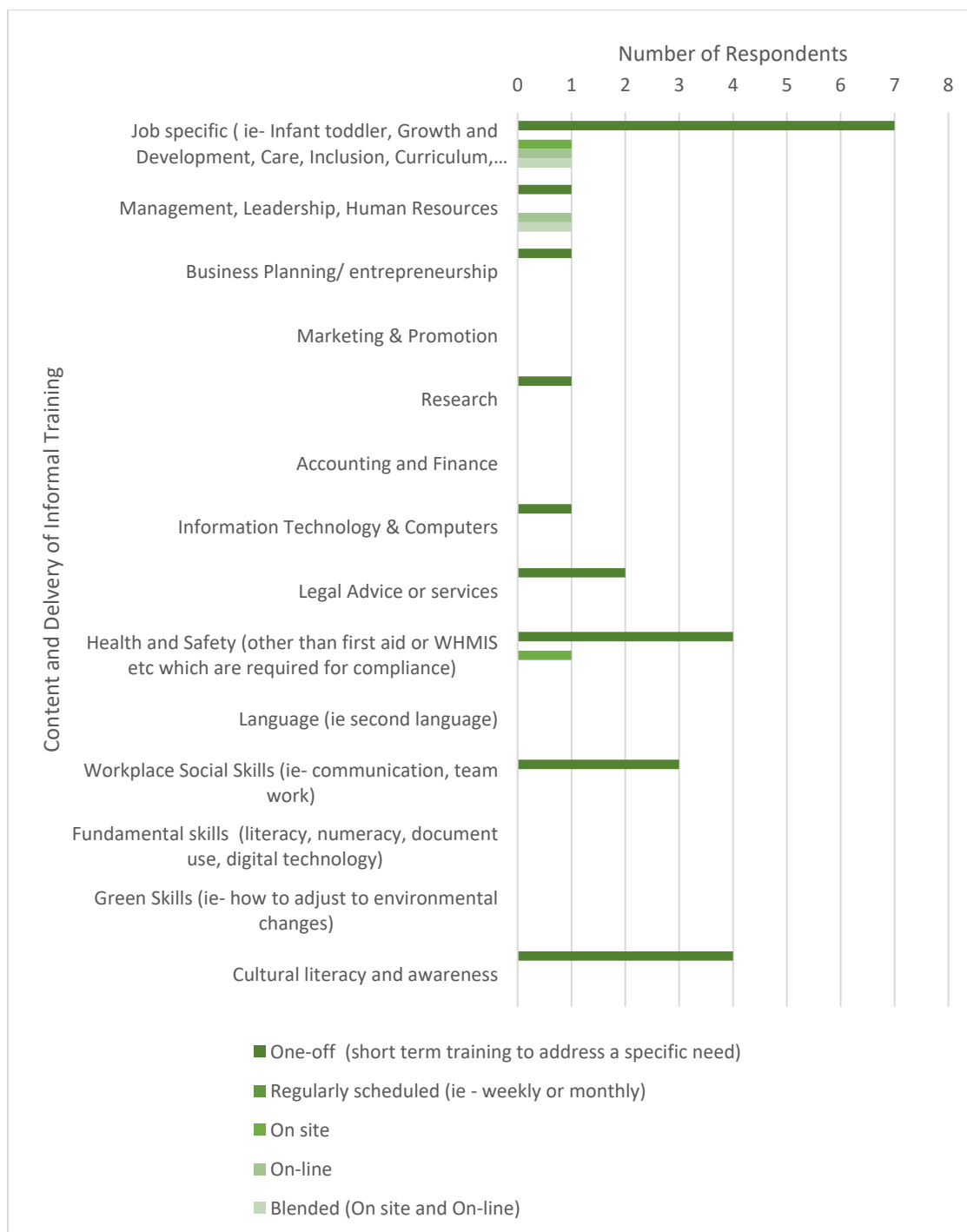


Figure 39: Content Areas of Informal Training and Delivery Methods (11 respondents)

The satisfaction level with informal training opportunities indicates that participants were generally somewhat satisfied (6 respondents), and in 4 cases they were very satisfied. Refer to the Appendix for specific comments on satisfaction ratings.

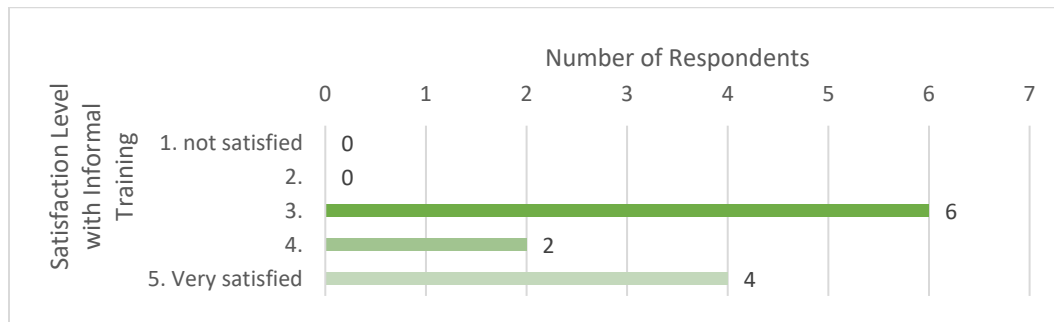


Figure 40: Satisfaction Level with the Informal training (12 respondents)

Senior management and supervisors were the employee groups who utilized informal training the most, with 43 persons indicating they had taken informal training. 29 Early Childhood Educators and 20 Early Childhood Educators Assistants participated in informal training. The content areas that were most accessed include job specific training (infant toddler, growth and development, care, inclusion, curriculum development, observation & recording, children's rights) (14 respondents) followed by workplace communication and teamwork skills (8 respondents).

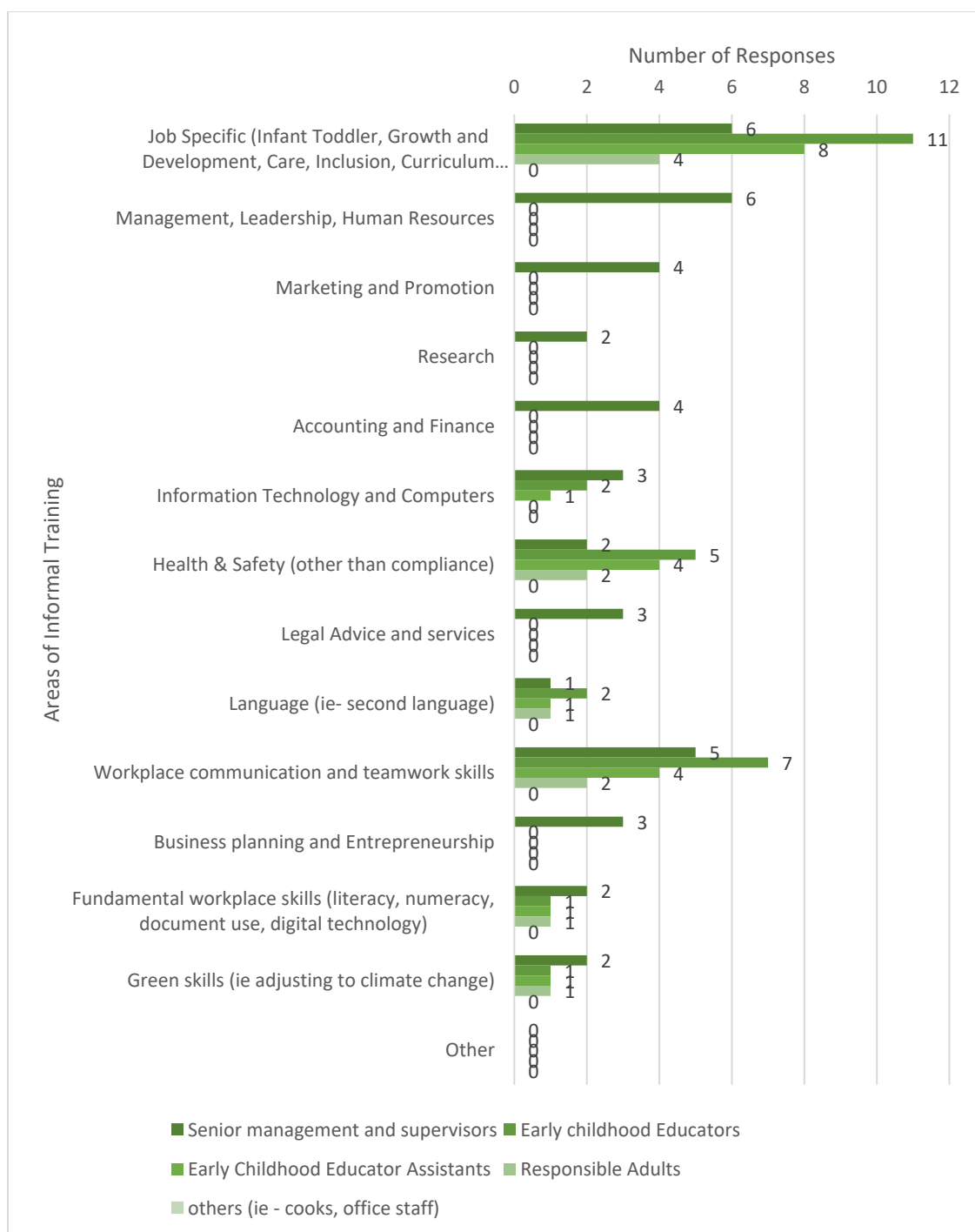


Figure 41: Occupational Groups Utilized Informal Training by Content Areas (14 respondents)

31 Early Childhood Educators participated in informal training, followed by 22 Early Childhood Educator Assistants, and 20 Managers and Supervisors.

There are discrepancies between the number of staff who participated as reported by respondents in Figure 41 and 42. Figure 41 indicates that 43 Senior Management and Supervisors participated, while Figure 42 indicates that number to be just 20. The number of Early Childhood Educators participating in informal training varies between 31 in Figure 42 and 29 in Figure 41, while the number of Early Childhood Educator Assistants varies between 20 in Figure 41 and 22 in Figure 42.

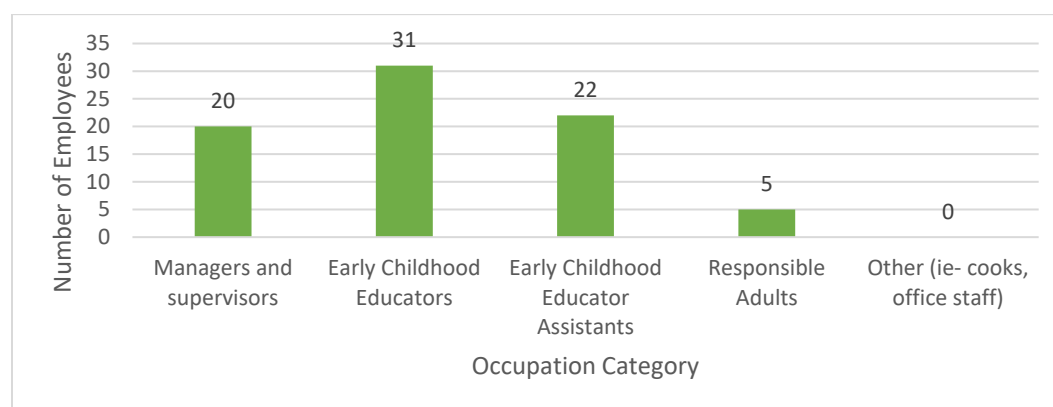


Figure 42: Number of Employees participated in Informal training (17 respondents)

The employees that participated in informal training were most likely between the ages of 25 and 50 years of age (48 employees, or 61% of employees).

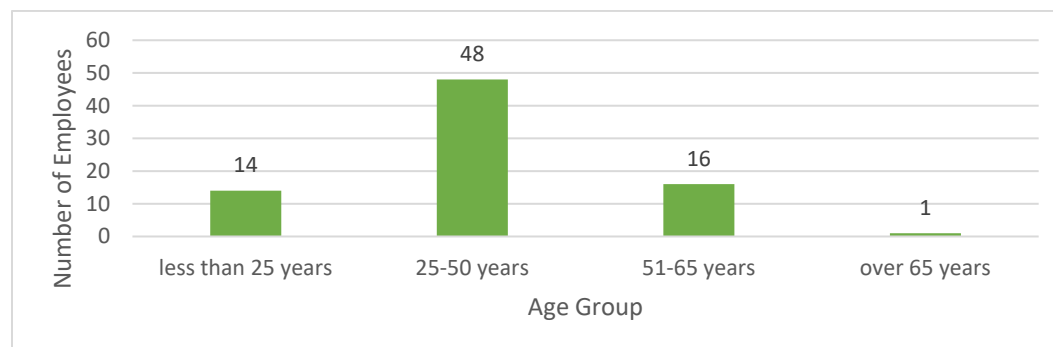


Figure 43: Age Group of Employees - Informal Training (18 respondents)

The two most outcomes most frequently cited were increased skills or expertise (10 respondents) and increased innovation (i.e. new/improved services or processes) (8 respondents). Outcomes were most commonly found to have benefited the participant (24 responses) and the centre (24 responses).

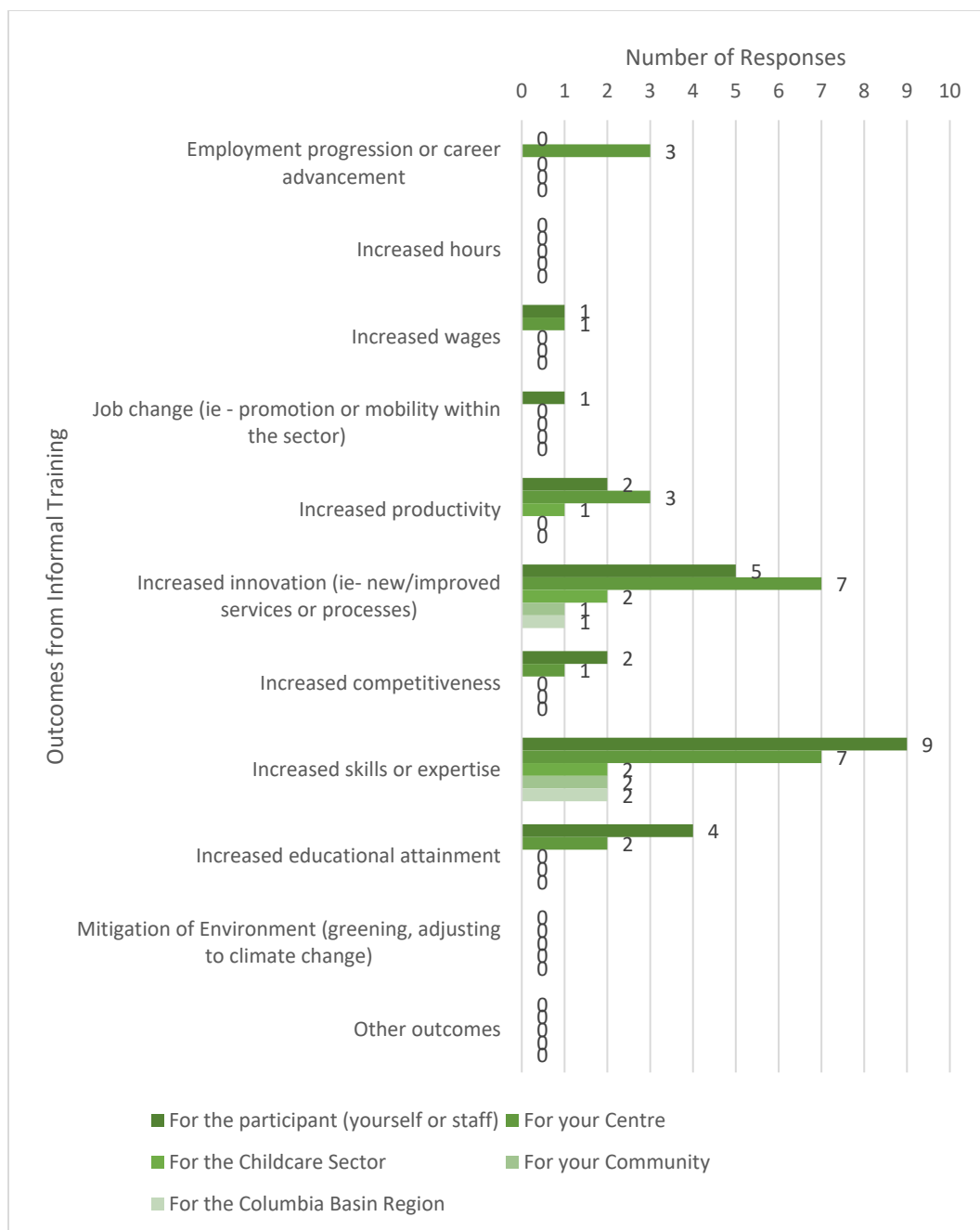


Figure 44: Outcomes of Informal (12 respondents)

The most important learning partners for informal learning activities are co-workers (10 respondents), clients/customers (6 respondents), and other childcare providers (6 respondents). The learning partner with least amount of importance was the government sectors (3 respondents). Additionally, 4 respondents identified their Child Care Resource and Referral Centre as an “other” partner they have used for Informal learning.

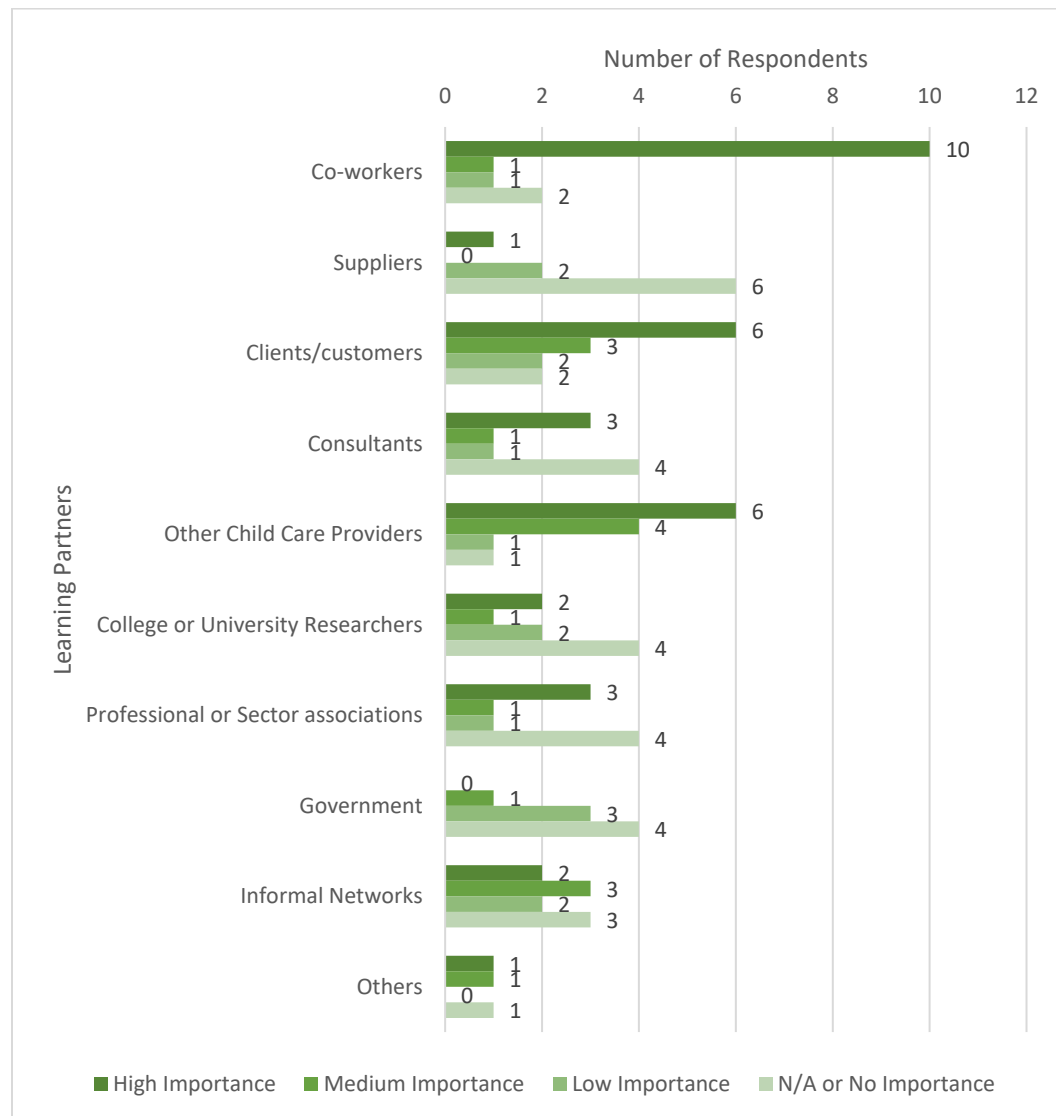


Figure 45: Importance of Partners to Informal Learning Activities (16 respondents)

Three respondents described additional supports that would help them to make full use of informal training opportunities. Recommendations include: covering mileage to training, covering wages, providing wages for substitutes, extra funding, being mindful of timing of School District Professional Development days.

Increasing the Number of Skilled Childhood Educators

Five respondents provided ideas when asked if there were any other initiatives that could enhance the number of skilled Early Childhood Educators in the region. They include

- Providing local educational opportunities;
- Providing better wages to retain workers and to entice workers into the field;
- Top up funding/grants/ better CCOF funding/government funding;
- Investment from CBT in the early years is very exciting and we look forward to that support enhancing the sector in the Basin;
- More funding and health benefits; and
- Offering paid training and on line, so they can continue to keep working.

APPENDIX: DETAILED QUESTION RESPONSES

Figure 13: Do you have enough qualified staff to fill your licensed childcare spaces? If no, Please describe.

- I don't have staff
- Really need subs.
- cannot find substitute
- I'm the only one. I run my home daycare.
- we need one more full time ECE to fill all spaces
- No one qualified available
- We could open more spots if we had more teachers
- But not guaranteed daily---our subs are limited of when they can fill in, we share staff with our Out of School Program, and some staff have other jobs as well.
- we have 2 that are leaving within the next month
- We are just making the shifts and my staff work more hours then they would like.
- using Responsible Adults as do not have ECE's though all are in process of upgrading

Figure 16: Have You Noticed, or Are You Expecting Any Factors That Will Impact Our Region's Ability to Build a Strong and Skilled Workforce for the Childcare Sector? If yes, please describe.

- Child care workers sometimes leave the profession for higher paying positions in another field.
- Wages
- Low wages is a major factor in staff turn over, we lose many staff to the school district as EA's due to the fact that the wage is significantly higher.
- Finding staff that will get the training and stay in the field for longer periods than 1-2 years. It's difficult to find qualified staff
- distance is a strong factor in the Slokan Valley
- We are spread out in our communities so it is hard to find full time hours at one centre but difficult to work at two centers but can't usually work as travel time in between doesn't work with the shifts.
- increasing classrooms with more non-profit funding
- Wages for eces are too low and not enough qualified eces to hire

- Columbia Basin Trust's investment in the early learning and care sector
- Decline in students taking ECE due to anticipated wages upon completion of studies.
- Low wages, lack of respect for the profession.
- the wage is very low for Early Childcare Professionals---it is very difficult to keep staff long term. Most staff have to find second jobs for more income or move away for employment for a better wage--which makes staffing daily difficult.
- ECEs are underpaid. Licensing regulations restrict the possibility of opening forest preschools
- Low respect for the field as demonstrated through low wages, no benefits and increasing cost to families.
- Yes! we are under paid and under appreciated. Our line of work is not recognized as a real career. We are still viewed and paid as babysitters.

Figure 18: Reasons for Increasing Workforce Over the Next 3 Years. If Other, please specify.

- there is no Infant toddler Center in our town anymore, yet there is a great need for one. Our society would like to one day expand on to our building and add an infant toddler center-----but so far that has only been talked about----no real plan has been made.
- hope to fill spaces left vacant from staff leaving the field

Figure 23: Comments or Recommendations Related to the Challenges of Attraction and Retention of Workers in Your Sector?

- Competitive wages help retain staff. Also, offering lunch/coffee breaks helps maintain staff wellness and prevent burn out.
- We need funds to pay them higher wages
- I wish more staff would stay in the field, we work extremely hard and are professionals, we don't make a lot of money
- I'm the only one whom runs and works at my home daycare.
- Some Online courses are irrelevant and hours could be better spent in the classroom. Refine the curriculum to a shorter more useful courses.
- Our Daycare is located on reserve, out of town. Hard for transportation for town children and no bus funding available.
- we have lost a few staff to moving to other communities and also there is another licensed centre in the community that is paying \$4 an hour more to ECE so we have lost 2 people to that facility.
- again good wages and working conditions
- staff tend to last about a year....with the exception of our senior staff members that do multiple roles----if they could just do one role---manage/supervise--then their could potentially be more hours available for other staff----but if we could have qualified staff STAY employed with us long term, then we would'nt need to do multiple roles.
Our only other long therm staff is our subs---which get better wages at their other jobs and arent always available when needed.

- affordable on-line training
- Something needs to change. There are no qualified staff in this area and we have more kids then ever needing care!!! The government needs to recognise us and start wage subsidy and better childcare subsidy for all families.
- Does not apply in my situation
- it would be helpful if we were able to pay our employees what they are worth. Government help for parents with their fees

Figure 25: Does your centre have a professional development budget? If yes, please indicate estimated annual amount

- \$400
- \$500.00
- \$750.00 not nearly enough
- Not sure
- 150.00/employee
- 300
- 1,000
- \$1000
- \$250 approximate
- \$5,000 per year
- \$2000
- 1000.00
- 500
- \$1200.00
- if we get the approval by our Executive that our fees are paid for--then we go
- \$100/person per year
- \$500
- \$100/person

Figure 26: Factors that have influenced your centre to undertake staff training and/or skills development. If other factors have motivated training, please specify:

- Personal interest has motivated training.
- to meet other ece in the field , to find support and share ideas.
- Free!!
- On an on going basis. I go to workshops to keep up with new knowledge that is out there referring to Early Learning in child care
- Trying to get staff to be motivated in this field is hard! there is no reward except for personal pride. Most workshops happen on the weekend and at this point staff are exhausted and need their weekends to regroup, spend time with their own families and get rest. people are so unaware how physically and emotionally draining our job is.

Figure 31: Indicate the satisfaction level with the formal training you or your employees participated in (16 respondents)

- Courses support staff in working with children and families in our care, provide strategies and understanding of child development and attachment
- First Aid course was well presented-Child Safe- but I find it insufficient to response to a grave emergency, like a broken arm...I end up doing another Occupational First Aid Level 1course.
- I feel like our "senior" staff have the training they need. Do wish there was a formal training opportunity online that was specific to a topic that was affordable and accessible for those who just want more knowledge to apply to their experiences.

It is harder to get the younger newer ones to training events on their own time. We only have professional day on a Friday of the Early Years Conference once every year and a half or two years.

- Did not complete one.
- Part of it was good but others seemed repetitive...eg. We all know this already.
- Our community has many training opportunities for workshops focussing on the early years. The online ECE certificate training through Pacific Rim Early Childhood Institute continues to meet the needs for increasing credentials for staff.
- CCRR works very hard to provide training and workshops in this area. They do a very good job at creating as many opportunities in this area as they can
- Did not do any of the above so cannot indicate my satisfaction or did satisfaction

Figure 40: Please indicate your satisfaction level with the INFORMAL training that your or your staff participated in (12 respondents)

- great local convention/training CCRR workshops
- not always what was needed, and/or too difficult to use in the centre.

Our early learning and child care community leaders focus on bringing excellent presenters to the community at no cost to participants to reduce as many barriers to participation as possible.