

# ***CUPE·SCFP***

CUPE Nova Scotia

**2013 Survey on Attitudes Towards Child Care**



**ENVIRONICS**  
R E S E A R C H G R O U P

# Research overview and methodology

## Research overview

CUPE required a survey to measure impressions of residents of Nova Scotia regarding public services and child care. Specifically the survey covered:

- Preferences for a child care service model for Nova Scotia (this report)
- Preferences for delivery of specific services (public/private sector) (reported under separate cover)
- Impressions about public-private partnerships (P3s) (reported under separate cover)
- Awareness and impressions of CUPE (reported under separate cover)

## Methodology

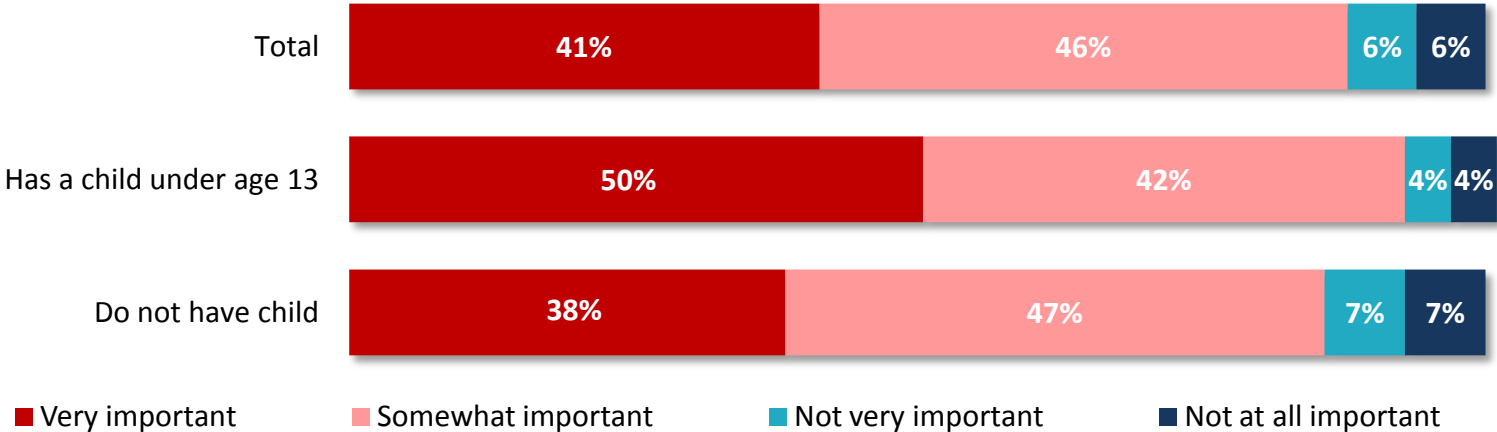
This research project involved a telephone survey, conducted among 704 adult Nova Scotia residents. The survey was conducted in November 23 to December 5, 2012.

The margin of error for a sample of 704 is plus or minus 3.7 percentage points (at the 95% confidence level). The sampling method was designed to complete 700 interviews within households randomly selected across the province.

In this report, results are expressed as percentages unless otherwise noted. Results may not add to 100% due to rounding or multiple responses.

# There is an almost universal view that governments have an important role to play in helping parents meet child care needs

**Importance of government role in helping parents meet child care needs**  
 – by presence of younger children in the home



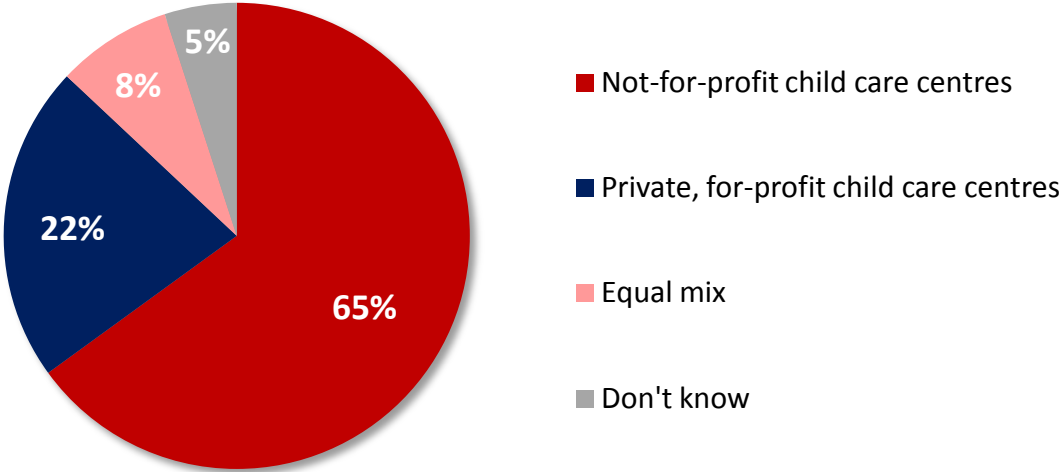
A strong majority of Nova Scotians (87%) think it is important for government to be involved in ensuring child care needs are met; four in ten say it is very important. Only around one in ten say this is not important. Saying that child care is an important area for government involvement is the dominant response across the province, but is higher in Cape Breton (95% important overall, 62% very) than in Halifax (87% overall, 40% very) or the rural mainland (85% overall, 37% very). Women are more likely than men to feel it is important (90% overall vs. 83% of men). The proportion who feel it is important is higher among residents under age 45 (91%), although it is still the majority of those aged 45+ (84%).

That government should play a *very* important role in securing child care is highest among parents of children under 13 (50%), NDP (48%) and Liberal (47%) supporters, and those who feel strongly that either government or for-profit corporations should be delivering public services (vs. those who do not feel strongly either way). However, those who strongly feel that private companies should deliver public services are also the most likely to say that child care is not at all an important area for government (16%).

Q20. How important a role do you believe governments should play in helping parents meet their child care needs? Do you believe governments have a very important, somewhat important, not very important, or not at all important role in this way?

# Two-thirds say not-for-profit child care centres are the best model for the province

Best model for child care services in Nova Scotia



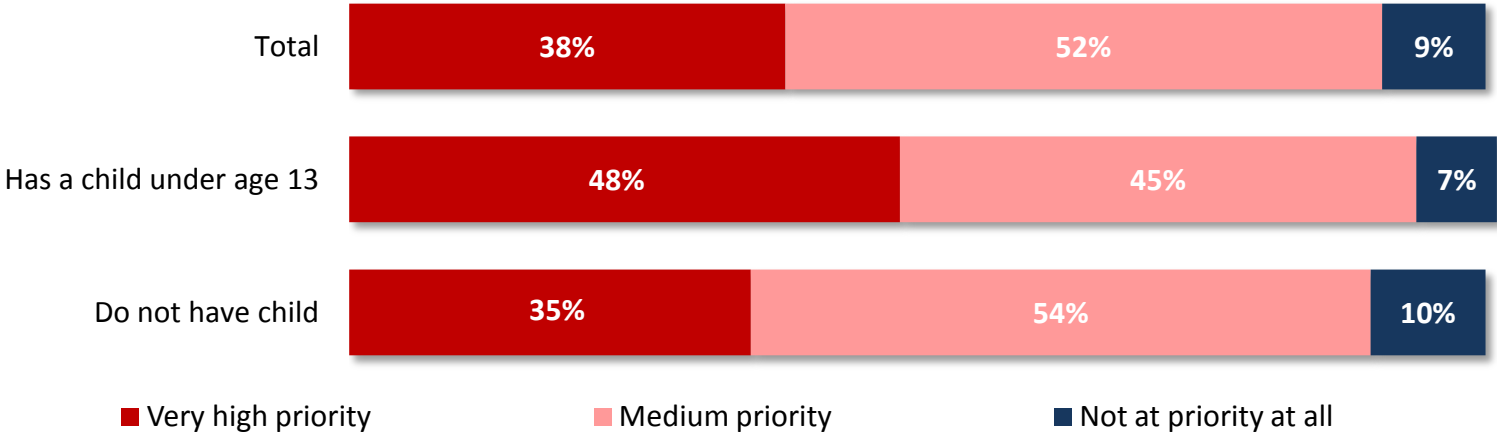
When presented with two child care systems (profit or not-for-profit), two-thirds of Nova Scotians say that not-for-profit child care centres are the best model. Two in ten favour the private sector for profit model, and one in ten say there should be an equal mix.

Preference for the not-for-profit model is the dominant view across population subgroups. It is elevated among those with the lowest household incomes, public sector union members and those who strongly oppose private sector involvement in public service delivery. While there is no subgroup where a majority would prefer a for-profit model, this option is somewhat higher among those aged 18 to 29, men, Conservative supporters and those who strongly favour increased private sector involvement in public services. An equal mix model receives more support from those with a post-secondary education, those with household incomes of \$60,000 to \$100,000, and Liberal and NDP supporters.

Q22. Which of the following do you think is the best model for a system of child care services in Nova Scotia? Should it be a system based on...?

# Most Nova Scotians feel that investment in child care should be at least a medium provincial gov't priority; four in ten say it should be a very high priority

**Priority of Nova Scotia government investing in child care services**  
 – by presence of younger children in the home



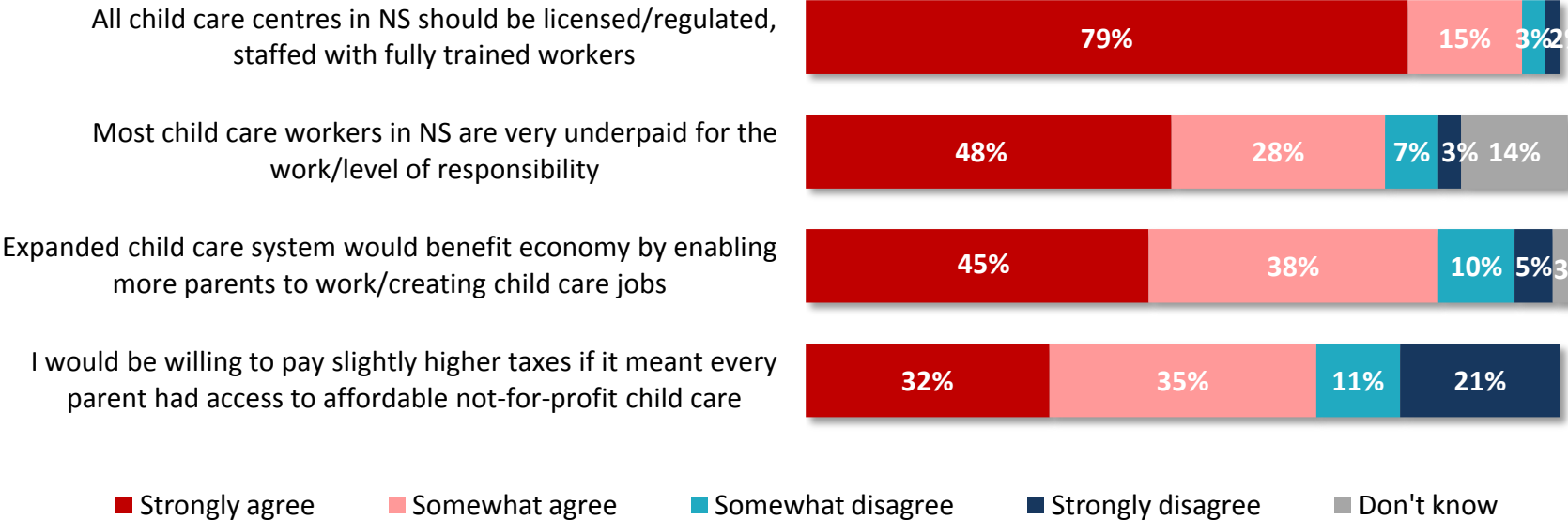
Similar to the question about government involvement, a slim majority of Nova Scotians feel that child care should be a medium priority for government spending, and close to four in ten think it should be a high priority. Only one in ten say it should not be a priority.

Saying child care should be a high spending priority is most pronounced among Cape Breton residents (50%), those with high school or less education (46%), those with household incomes of under \$30,000 (51%), parents of children under 13 (48%), NDP (44%) and Liberal (41%) supporters, and those who feel strongly that government or the private sector should be involved in delivery of public services (compared to those who do not feel strongly either way).

Q21. When you think of all the things the Nova Scotia government could spend money on, would you say that investing in child care services should be a very high priority, a medium priority or not a priority at all?

# There is strong agreement with positive statements about expanding the child care system and most agree child care workers are very underpaid

## Agreement with statements about child care

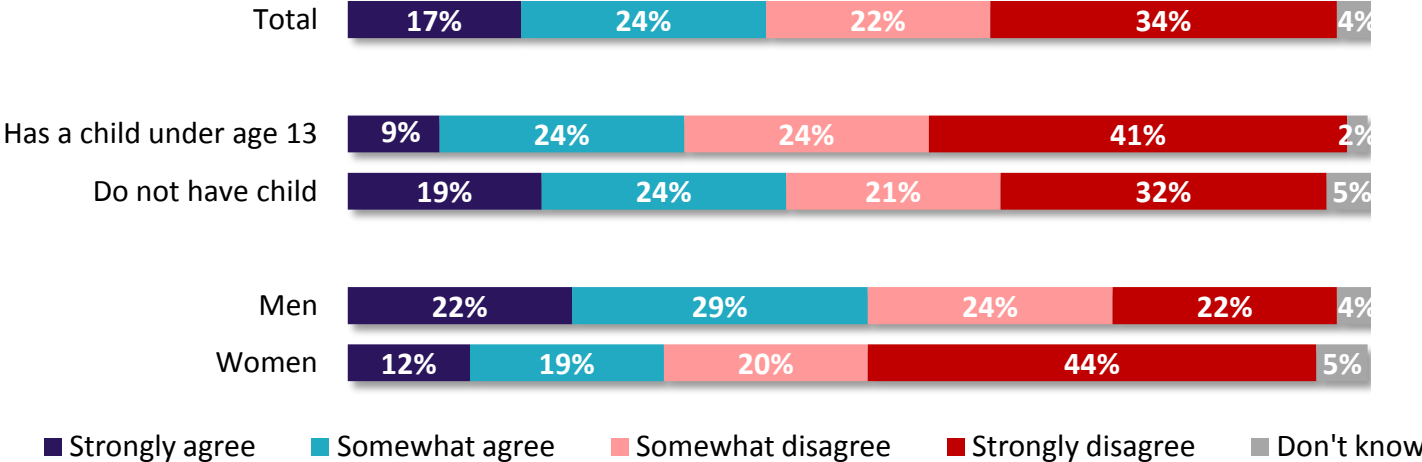


Majorities of residents agree to some extent with each of four supportive statements about child care services, but the strongest agreement is that all child care centres in the province should be licensed and regulated, and staffed with fully-trained child care workers (94% agreement, 79% strongly). Over eight in ten agree to some extent that having an expanded accessible child care system would benefit the provincial economy by enabling more parents to work and by creating jobs in child care services, and three-quarters agree that most child care workers are very underpaid. Agreement is lower, but still the majority (67%), about willingness to pay slightly higher taxes to ensure access to affordable not-for-profit child care. Only 21 percent strongly disagree with personally paying higher taxes in exchange for universal access to affordable child care.

Q23 a,b,d,e. Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with the following statements?

# Most Nova Scotians *disagree* that parents should be either staying home or paying the full cost of child care

**“Parents should either arrange to stay home full-time with their kids or pay the full cost of child care by themselves”  
– by gender and presence of younger children in the home**



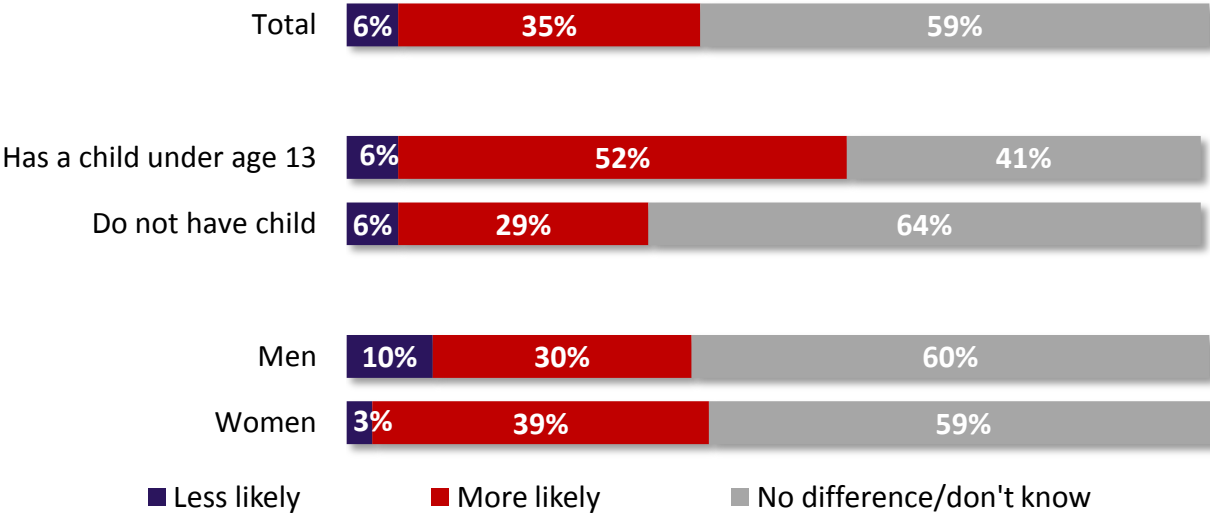
Many Nova Scotia residents are well aware of the challenges faced by working families. The majority (55%) disagree that parents should either stay home or pay the full cost of child care. Four in ten agree to some extent with this statement. Parents with child a under 13 in the home are more likely to disagree (65%) than those without a young child (53%), who are more likely to strongly agree that parents should pay the cost of child care. Women and those with young children are most likely to totally reject this assertion.

Men are slightly more likely to agree (50%) than disagree (46%); the opposite pattern is true of women, and the distinction is more marked (64% disagree, 31% agree). Agreement is also higher among older residents (48% of those aged 60+ agree, 44% disagree), Conservative supporters (58% agree, 39% disagree) and those who strongly favour increased private sector involvement in public service delivery (53% agree, 46% disagree). Opinions do not change as household income increases.

Q23c. Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with the following statements?

# A party platform featuring expansion of affordable child care would be most likely to sway parents and female voters

**Impact of expansion of affordable NFP child care on likelihood of voting for a party – by gender and presence of younger children in the home**



Nova Scotians were asked to indicate what impact, if any, a platform that included expanding the affordable not-for-profit child care system would have on their likelihood to vote for a party in the upcoming provincial election. One-third say this would make them more likely to vote for that party, and under one in ten say it would make them less likely. A majority of close to six in ten say it would make no difference to their vote. There is no difference by region. Half of parents of children <13 say it would positively impact their vote.

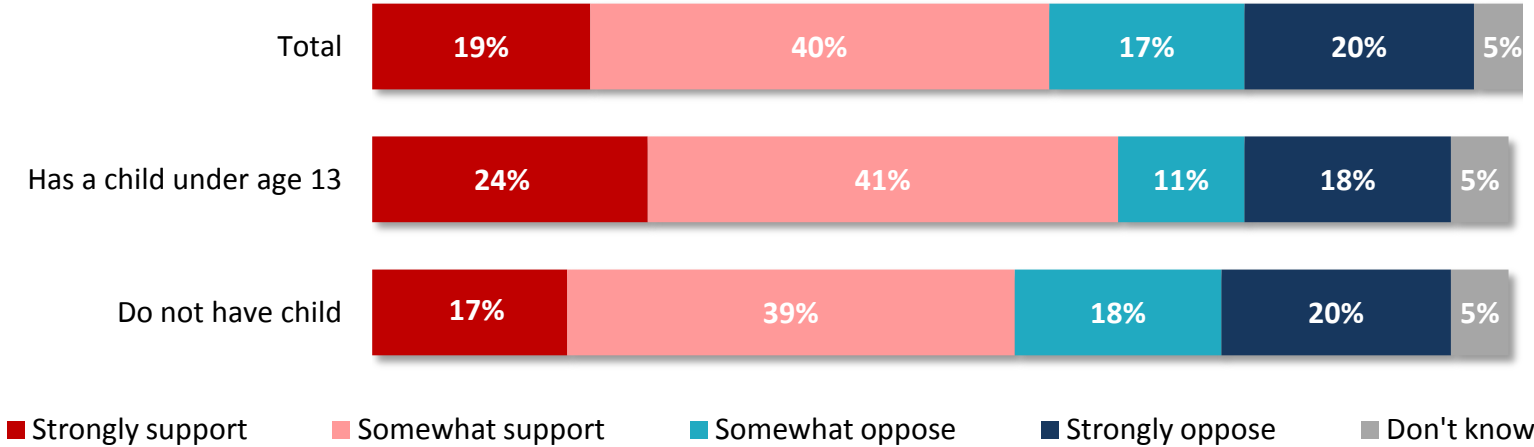
Being more likely to vote for a party offering expanded child care is somewhat higher among younger residents (and 47% of those age 30 to 44, the same as the proportion who would not be influenced); women (39% vs. 30% of men) and university graduates (43%). Half of NDP supporters say it would make them more likely to vote (vs. 33% Liberals and 30% Conservatives).

Q24. *There will be a Nova Scotia provincial election in the coming year. If one of the parties promised that if elected it would introduce a major expansion of affordable not-for-profit child care, would it make you more or less likely to vote for that party or would it make no difference to you?*



# Six in ten would support NS a moving to a Quebec-style \$7/day regulated child care system

**Support for move toward \$7/day regulated child care**  
 – by presence of younger children in the home



Nova Scotians were asked if they would support a move to \$7 per day, Quebec-style subsidized child care, with a price tag in the tens of millions. Six in ten express some level of support, with two in ten supporting this strongly. Support rises to 66 percent among parents of young children.

Overall support is a dominant response across most subgroups, but some are more divided. Conservative supporters are as likely to oppose (51%) as to support (46%). Women are more supportive than men, but support decreases as age increases and is lowest among those aged 60 and over (49% vs. 75% age 18 to 29 and 62% age 30 to 44). NDP supporters are the most supportive (77%).

Q25. In Quebec, there is a provincial child care program that gives all families access to regulated child care services for \$7 per day. Bearing in mind that doing this in Nova Scotia could cost tens of millions of dollars, would you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose the Nova Scotia government moving towards a \$7 per day regulated child care system like they have in Quebec?

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