

*Unionization and Quality in
Early Childhood Programs*

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Executive Summary

1. The Purposes of the Present Study

This study used information collected in 1998 and reported in *You Bet I Care! A Canada-Wide Study on Wages and Working Conditions in Child Care Centres*¹ and *Caring and Learning Environments: Quality in Child Care Centres Across Canada*² to explore the influence of unionization on:

- Wages/benefits, working conditions, teaching staff feelings about the centre they work in and teaching staff feelings about child care as a career.
- Centre characteristics known to predict or to be associated with the level of quality of the program provided to the children, for example, the proportion of teaching staff with a two-year or higher level of ECCE education.
- Centre quality itself.

Only information from non-profit centres that are not operated by a municipality was used to avoid confusing the influence of unionization with the influence of auspice.

2. The Major Findings

The major findings were that:

- Wages and benefits for teaching staff are substantially better in unionized centres. Research indicates that higher wages and better benefits reduce staff turnover rates and increase the likelihood of high quality child care. In unionized centres, wages are higher even after accounting for other factors known to influence wage level such as the individual's position and length of ECCE education. A higher proportion of unionized centres provide their staff with benefits that provide a measure of longer-term security such as disability insurance, extended health care, and life insurance. A higher proportion provide benefits that improve daily working conditions such as paid preparation time, compensation for meetings held after hours, and a room set aside for staff only.
- Turnover rates for teachers are lower in unionized centres and a higher proportion of teaching staff in unionized centres expect to be still working at their current centre in 12 months' time. Consistency of relationship between the children and the person responsible for the group is an important component of quality child care. It enables that adult to know each child's developmental level, needs and interests and to plan and implement appropriate activities for the children.

- Unionized centres have an easier time recruiting and retaining staff. Directors in unionized centres report significantly less difficulty in finding and in keeping qualified permanent teaching staff than their counterparts in non-unionized centres. A higher proportion of teaching staff in unionized centres report that they expect to still be working in the child care field in three years' time.
- A significantly higher proportion of unionized centres act in ways that predict or are associated with higher levels of quality. In comparison with non-unionized centres, unionized centres hire a lower proportion of untrained teaching staff and a higher proportion of staff with two years or more of ECCE education, pay higher salaries, are more likely to provide in-service education, expect workers to be responsible for a slightly lower number of children, and more often act as field training sites for ECCE students.
- Both infant/toddler and preschool rooms in unionized centres obtain higher ratings on an overall measure of program quality than do their counterparts in non-unionized centres. While both the sample size and the difference in quality ratings between the two types of centres are small, the finding of higher quality ratings in unionized centres is consistent with what would be expected given that a higher proportion of them act in ways that support quality child care provision.

In summary, the findings of the present study indicate that unionization is beneficial not only for the child care workforce but also for the children in unionized centres, their parents, and for the whole society.

3. Child Care As a Benefit to the Whole Society

Child care is an essential component of and response to social and economic issues that affect the whole country, specifically society's need:

- To promote the well-being and optimal development of all children ---- the country's future workforce and citizens.
- To have a skilled workforce now and in the future that will support a healthy economy in Canada.
- To address all forms of inequity whether they be based on gender, socio-economic status, racial/linguistic background, or access to essential services.

The benefits of high quality child care are collective benefits for the whole society. High quality child care provides a good environment for children to grow and learn and thus promotes healthy child development, it enables parents to work and thus enables families to be self-sufficient and promotes women's economic and social equality, it improves

workforce functioning, and it increases government revenue through the taxes paid by working parents and hence government ability to provide essential services.

4. Child Care's Staffing Crisis

Annual teaching staff turnover rates in child care centres are unacceptably high ---- as high as 45% in Alberta. Furthermore, many staff not only leave their centre, they leave the child care field altogether to take higher paying jobs in other occupations. To make matters worse, those who leave the field tend to be those with the highest level of ECCE education and the most child care experience. The result is an erosion of the pool of qualified teaching staff. A recent Canada-wide survey documented that low wages and poor benefits are major barriers to recruitment into the field and major contributors to people leaving it. Ultimately, the current low wages and poor benefits could make it impossible to recruit sufficient people to staff child care centres.

5. The Canadian Labour Movement and Child Care

Over the past twenty years, the Canadian labour movement has emerged as a key player in the struggle for affordable, universal, high quality child care in Canada. Labour organizations have had three major roles in the child care movement: (1) advocating in collaboration with other groups for public policy and funding to create a Canada-wide, universal child care system, (2) organizing people working in the child care field and bargaining to improve their wages, benefits and working conditions, and (3) bargaining for child care benefits for union members in other occupations either in the form of a child care allowance or employer-sponsored child care facilities.³

There have been significant gains. The labour movement in British Columbia, Manitoba Ontario, and Québec was responsible for or instrumental in winning wage increases for child care centre staff. In the case of Manitoba and Québec, these increases have been extended to all centre teachers. Unfortunately, the gains in British Columbia and Ontario are now under attack by the provincial government. Unions have negotiated collective agreements with individual centres that have restricted the maximum number of children for whom one teacher could be responsible and/or have resulted in paid leave for professional development. The Canadian Union of Public Employees has established a Multi-Sector Pension Plan for union members right across Canada, including those working in child care. In Québec, the unions are negotiating with the provincial government to set up a child care sector pension plan.

6. Lessons for the Canadian Labour Movement

Much still remains to be accomplished. Canada still does not have universal, publicly funded child care, many child care workers in centre- and in family-based settings still have extremely low remuneration levels and few benefits, and there is still a lack of public

understanding of the value of child care to society. The labour movement has a wealth of experience with child care issues dating back to the late 1970s, and both the structure and experience to mobilize people and to conduct effective campaigns. These valuable assets could be used for a variety of purposes including:

- Continued advocacy in collaboration with other groups on at least three fronts:
 - ➔ for accessible, universal child care;
 - ➔ for public recognition of the value of the work done by child care workers and respect for the skills and knowledge required to do the work well; and
 - ➔ for components that enable the provision of child care that supports children's well-being and development. Such components include accessible, affordable pre-service training and on-going professional development for people wishing to or providing child care and government regulations limiting the number of children for whom one person is responsible.⁴

- Organizing, both:
 - ➔ union organizing of workers in individual settings or groups of settings; and
 - ➔ collective mobilization of the child care field and other community groups for province/territory-wide and for federal campaigns, for example, public education campaigns around the value of child care and efforts to obtain on-going public funding for child care from governments.

- Continued bargaining to improve wages and working conditions for all people in the child care field, for example:
 - ➔ wages that reflect the value of the work done;
 - ➔ benefits that improve the daily working conditions as well as benefits that provide longer-term security such as disability insurance and a pension plan;
 - ➔ benefits that assist members of the child care workforce to engage in on-going professional development; and
 - ➔ opportunities for child care staff to have real influence on decision-making in their setting.

The labour movement must make child care a priority. Advocating, organizing and bargaining are inter-connected strategies that would make good use of the movement's structure and experience. Collectively these strategies could be used to address the current staffing crisis in child care and the lack of affordable, accessible, quality child care for parents in most jurisdictions. Without government funding, it will be very difficult to increase wages and improve benefits. Without improved public recognition of the value of child care and mobilization of a broad coalition of parents and community groups, it will

be very difficult to convince most governments of the need for public funding. Without improved wages and benefits, it may become impossible to recruit and retain sufficient people to provide regulated programs.

Notes

1. Doherty et al., 2000.
2. Goelman et al., 2000.
3. Rothman and Kass, 1999.
4. Using research findings, the Canadian Child Care Federation has identified appropriate levels for various age groups for different aged children and for both centre- and family-based settings, Canadian Child Care Federation, Canadian Child Care Federation, 1991, pp. 9 and 25.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 The Child Care Staffing Crisis

Child care is an essential part of the spectrum of support services for young children and their families. However, child care centres in Canada are facing a staffing crisis. Annual teaching staff turnover rates are high --- 22% on a Canada-wide basis and as high as 45% in Alberta.¹ Such high turnover is of concern given the proven importance of teaching staff continuity for positive child outcomes in early childhood learning and care programs.² Furthermore, teaching staff are not simply leaving their centres, they are leaving the field to enter better paying jobs in other occupations.³ To make matters worse, those who leave the field tend to be those with the highest level of ECCE education and the most child care experience.⁴ The result is an erosion of the pool of qualified teaching staff. According to the Manitoba Child Care Branch, approximately a third of the centres in that province have a government exemption to operate without the required number of qualified staff because they cannot recruit such people.⁵ A recent Canada-wide survey documented that the low wages and poor benefits in child care are major barriers to recruitment and major contributors to people leaving the field.⁶ Recruitment and retention problems not only threaten the ability of child care centres to provide the type of programming necessary to support and promote young children's development, they also jeopardize the very existence of regulated child care. Ultimately, the current low wages and poor of benefits could make it impossible to recruit sufficient people to staff child care centres at all, let alone with sufficient people who have ECCE education.

1.2 Addressing Low Wages and Poor Benefits

Only an estimated 13.4% of child care centres in Canada are unionized.⁷ Might additional unionization improve both the quality and the viability of the child care centre system? Unions have long asserted that increasing wages and improving benefits in child care would increase its quality and stability by supporting both the recruitment and the retention of staff with higher levels of ECCE education. Canadian research has demonstrated that in fact higher wages do predict higher levels of child care quality.⁸

There is ample evidence from other sectors in Canada that unionization is associated with higher wages and better benefit packages for women as well as decreased wage inequality between men and women.⁹ Two economists used Canada-wide data collected in 1991¹⁰ to demonstrate that a teacher working in a unionized child care centre would earn 15% more and receive an average of 3.5 additional benefits than would a teacher with the same length of experience in the field and the same level of ECCE education who was working in a non-unionized centre.¹¹ A preliminary analysis from a second Canada-wide survey conducted in 1998 indicates that, on average, teaching staff in unionized centres earn \$3.32 an hour more than their non-unionized colleagues.¹² While these findings support the expectation that unionization would improve wage levels, neither analysis took into account some variables known to influence wage levels such as the receipt of donated space and/or utilities by the centre nor examined the influence of unionization on quality.

1.3 The Canadian Labour Movement and Child Care

For over twenty years, the Canadian labour movement has played a key role in both the struggle for affordable, universal, high quality child care services and the struggle for improved wages, benefits and working conditions for people working in the child care field.¹³

1.3a The Labour Movement and Child Care Advocacy

The history of collaboration between the labour movement and child care advocates in Canada goes back to the late 1970's. At the Second National Daycare Conference in 1982, representatives from the labour movement were instrumental in calling for a universally accessible, comprehensive, non-profit, Canada-wide child care system and in creating what is now the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada (CCAAC).¹⁴ More recently, the Canadian Labour Congress in collaboration with the CCAAC launched and contributed resources to *Campaign Child Care '93* during the federal election as a way to highlight the importance of public funding for child care. In 1997, in the face of the federal Liberal government's failure to keep its election promise of increased funding for child care, the Canadian Labour Congress devoted considerable resources to *Campaign Child Care '97* in an effort to obtain a federal government commitment to making child care a funding and policy priority. In 1999 and 2000, the labour movement in coalition with advocacy organizations used the *Sign on Canada for Kids* campaign to push for an agreement for early childhood development services between the federal, provincial and territorial governments. The Coalition's demands included that adequate funds for regulated child care programs be made available and that governments be required to use such funds for this purpose. Unfortunately, the resultant federal, provincial, territorial Early Childhood Development Agreement did not meet these demands.

The Labour movement has also engaged in advocacy at the provincial level. An early example is the campaign in Saskatchewan in the late 1970's by women's groups and unions to have the provincial government recognize that child care should be a universal service and child care workers' salaries should be paid by the government so that all parents could afford regulated child care.¹⁵ Labour's involvement in child care in Ontario also dates back to the late 1970's. In 1980 a paper by a union group, Ontario Working Women, took a strong stand on the need a universal, publicly-funded child care system. More recently, the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care and the Canadian Union of Public Employees launched the *Stepping Up for Child Care* campaign in 2001.¹⁶ This is a protest against and a public education campaign about the detrimental effects on child care of provincial funding cuts and the failure of the provincial government to put any of the federal funds received for early child development into child care services. This campaign has successfully brought together parents, child care workers, child care and social service activists, and the labour movement in a collaborative endeavour that has increased the profile of child care in the public press.

1.3b The Labour Movement and Bargaining for Workplace Improvements

The labour movement has long contended ---- and is supported by research findings ---- that maintaining and enhancing quality in child care is directly related to improving wages and working conditions. This presents a major challenge. On a Canada-wide basis, wages and benefits account for approximately 84% of the average centre's expenditures.¹⁷ Outside of Québec, parent fees account for about half and in some jurisdictions more than two-thirds of the average centre's revenue.¹⁸ This means that increases to salaries and benefits are associated with increases in parent fees unless there is an increase in public funding. The labour movement early on recognized the resultant dilemma in terms of bargaining for higher wages and, as noted above, has a long history as an advocate in collaboration with other groups for government funding of child care.

In the late 1980's the labour movement in Ontario working collaboratively with various women's organizations convinced the Ontario government to enact legislation that required employers to develop pay equity plans and time tables. This legislation covered staff working in municipal and community college child care centres although not those in other programs. Subsequently, in 1990 pressure by the Equal Pay Coalition, a collaboration of labour and women's organizations, and the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care persuaded the provincial government to grant \$2,000 a year per centre teaching staff member to all centres as a down payment on pay equity. When a new conservative government was elected in 1995 it cancelled the pay equity funding. The Service Employee's International Union then successfully challenged this move and the Supreme Court of Ontario ruled that the government must continue to pay for pay equity adjustments. However, in 1998, the provincial government down-loaded responsibility for child care to municipalities and refused to continue providing funds for pay equity adjustments. This left child care centres with the legal obligation to make pay equity increases but without government funds to do so. Several unions, coordinated by the Ontario Federation of Labour, are preparing a Charter challenge on the basis that the Ontario government is guilty of discrimination and violating Section 15 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.¹⁹

Similar province-wide action has occurred in British Columbia, Manitoba, Québec, and Saskatchewan. In British Columbia, unionized child care staff who were part of a larger campaign by community social service workers in 1999 won not only a wage increase but also improved benefits.²⁰ The two major unions representing child care staff in Manitoba worked with the Manitoba Child Care Association in a worthy wages campaign which in 2001 resulted in the newly-elected NDP government substantially increasing funding for child care in its first budget with the funds be directed towards improving wages in all child care centres.²¹ In May 1999, after prolonged centralized bargaining with the Québec provincial government, unions won average raises of 35.1% over four years which apply to all centre teaching staff across the province. The unions also obtained a promise from the province to create a working committee on pay equity and to negotiate about a pension plan for child care workers.²² Saskatchewan child care workers and advocates have joined forces with other community-based organizations

to lobby for wage increases in community social services, including child care, to bring wages up to par with those in similar provincial government programs. Again the intent is to benefit the whole child care workforce.

In addition to negotiating higher salaries, the labour movement has also addressed important issues related to maintaining and improving child care quality and to providing child care workers with longer-term security. For example, unions have negotiated collective agreements with individual centres that have stipulated the maximum number of children for whom one person can be responsible and/or for the provision of paid leave for professional development.²³ The Canadian Union of Public Employees has established a Multi-Sector Pension Plan for union members right across Canada, including those working in child care. Under this plan, the employer makes contributions as well as the employee. In Québec, unions including the Confédération des syndicats nationaux (CSN) are negotiating with the provincial government to set up a child care sector pension plan.

1.4 The Purposes of This Study

The present study was undertaken to explore the influence of unionization on:

- Wages, working conditions, staff feelings about the centre they work in, and staff feelings about child care as a career.
- Centre characteristics known to predict quality level or to be associated with higher quality, for example, the proportion of teaching staff with two years or more of ECCE education.
- Child care quality itself.

1.5 Data Sources

The *You Bet I Care!* project involved three studies and covered both centre- and family-based child care. The present study used the data sets from two of these studies:

- Study 1, the findings of which are reported in *You Bet I Care! A Canada-Wide Study on Wages, Working Conditions and Practices in Child Care Centres*.²⁴ This research used mail-out questionnaires to centre directors and teaching staff in centres in each province, the Northwest Territories, and the Yukon. Completed questionnaires were obtained from 4,154 teaching staff in 848 centres.
- Study 2, the findings of which are reported in *Caring and Learning Environments: Quality in Child Care Centres Across Canada*.²⁵ This study involved 239 centres in the Yukon and six provinces (Alberta, British Columbia, New Brunswick,

Ontario, Québec and Saskatchewan). It used the same questionnaires as used in Study 1 and also conducted on-site observations in 114 infant/toddler rooms and 204 preschool rooms.

Information collected through questionnaires was obtained through three different instruments. The *Centre Questionnaire* was completed by the director and covered a range of topics in eight sections: (1) the children enrolled, (2) the centre's financial organization, (3) the centre's staff complement, (4) changes in centre policies and practices over the past three years, (5) the highest and lowest wages paid to staff in various positions, (6) the benefits available to staff, (7) turnover patterns and current staff vacancies, and (8) the most pressing problems experienced by the centre in the year preceding data collection. The *Staff Questionnaire* was completed by people who worked directly with the children, including supervisors. It covered a range of topics in nine major sections: (1) length and type of child care experience, (2) wages, benefits, and working conditions, (3) level of formal education, (4) participation in professional development activities within the previous 12 months, (5) involvement in other paid work, (6) feelings about the centre in which the person works, (7) feelings about the child care field, (8) personal demographic information, and (9) views about what would make child care a more satisfying work environment. The *Director Questionnaire* completed by centre directors had the same major sections as the *Staff Questionnaire*, except for the section related to wages, benefits and working conditions. Both open-ended and closed-ended questions were used in all three questionnaires. Closed-ended questions included the options "don't know" or "not applicable," where appropriate. All three questionnaires were pilot-tested prior to use.²⁶

In Study 2, quality was assessed using the *Caregiver Interaction Scale (CIS)*²⁷ in both infant/toddler and preschool rooms and either the *Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale (ITERS)*²⁸ or the *Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale - Revised edition (ECERS-R)*²⁹ depending on the age of the children. The *CIS* focuses on the tone and nature of the interaction between adult and child while the *ITERS* and the *ECERS-R* assess quality from a variety of perspectives including the physical setting, the availability of toys and equipment, and the types of programming provided. Additional information about these instruments is provided in section 6.3 of Chapter 6.

1.6 Limitations of the Data Sources

When considering the findings reported in this paper it is necessary to understand the constraints imposed by the fact that the present study used existing data sets from research undertaken for a different purpose. First of all, the studies whose data sets are used were not designed for a comparison between unionized and non-unionized centres. Therefore, no attempt was made in either of these studies to ensure that the sample obtained had a similar proportion of unionized centres in each jurisdiction as the actual proportion of such centres in the province or territory. In the present study, 21.5% of the centres are unionized in comparison to the estimated 13.4% on a Canada-wide basis. Second, some centres in each of the studies that were approached to participate declined to do so. This self-selection of participants is inevitable but introduces an unknown bias in the responses. We cannot tell the extent to which centres that did not participate were different on crucial variables from participating centres. Third, in Study 2, participants were

selected only from specific communities within each jurisdiction. The result of these three realities is that we cannot know the extent to which the participating centres truly represent all centres in their jurisdiction or across Canada as a whole and must be cautious in assuming that the findings apply to all centres.

1.7 Methodological Issues and How They Were Addressed

Wages, benefits, working conditions, and quality are known to be influenced by other factors in addition to unionization and these must be taken into account when exploring the impact of unionization. These other factors include:

- Centre auspice, specifically non-profit versus commercial.
- Whether the centre is operated by a municipality.
- Whether the centre receives free/subsidized space and/or utilities.
- Province/territory-specific variables such as the relative wage levels for all occupations and the level of ECCE training for teaching staff stipulated in the child care regulations.

1.7a Centre auspice

Canadian research reports that, as a group, commercial centres not only pay lower wages and have a smaller proportion of trained staff,³⁰ they also have lower quality programs.³¹ There is evidence that these between-sector differences reflect differences in organizational goals and behaviours.³² Less than 1% of commercial centres in the data sets used reported having unionized staff. Given this fact, and the need to control for auspice, the present study used only data from non-profit centres.

1.7b Municipally-operated centres

Unionization is most common in centres operated by municipalities. In Study 1 of the *You Bet I Care!* project, 75% of municipal centres are unionized in comparison to 17% of the non-profit centres not operated by a municipality. No municipally-operated centres participated in Study 2. As a group, municipal centres pay substantially higher wages, provide better benefits, and have a higher proportion of teaching staff with ECCE education than do other non-profit centres.³³ All the municipal centres in the data set used are located in Ontario. The first step in the present study was a comparison of: (1) unionized municipal centres, (2) other non-profit, unionized centres, and (3) other non-profit, non-unionized centres in Ontario only. This could only be done for wages, benefits, working conditions and staff education because no municipal centres were asked to participate in Study 2. The three-way comparison³⁴ indicated sufficient differences between unionized municipal centres and other non-profit unionized centres to indicate that municipal centres should not be combined with other unionized centres in an exploration of the influence of unionization on wages and working conditions. Therefore, the present study compares only non-profit centres that are not operated by a municipality.

1.7c Receipt of free/subsidized space and/or utilities

Receipt of free/subsidized space and/or utilities frees up revenue that can be used for wages and benefits if the centre so desires. Centres that receive in-kind donations pay higher wages and provide better benefits.³⁵ The availability of free/subsidized space and/or utilities also predicts higher quality levels.³⁶ The present study used a statistical procedure to control for the influence on wage levels of the fact that a slightly higher proportion of unionized than of non-unionized centres receive free/subsidized space and/or utilities.

1.7d Province/territory-specific variables

The distribution of unionized centres varies considerably across Canada. Study 1 in the *You Bet I Care!* project found a range from 19.2% in Québec and 18.0% in Ontario to less than 1% in provinces such as Newfoundland.³⁷ Ontario and Québec have relatively high salary levels for all occupations, relatively high regulations pertaining to teaching staff ECCE levels, and provide government operating grants. In contrast, salary levels are low for all jobs in Newfoundland, training requirements for teaching staff in child care centres are low, and at the time of data collection Newfoundland did not provide centres with operating grants. The confounding of the influence of unionization on wage levels by the influence of province/territory-specific variables such as government funding was addressed in the present study through statistical procedures. It was not possible to do a within-jurisdiction comparison of quality in unionized and non-unionized centres due to small sample sizes (see Table 1.1 on the following page).

1.8 The Sample

The present study started with the complete data sets from *You Bet I Care! A Canada-Wide Study on Wages, Working Conditions and Practices in Child Care Centres*³⁸ and *Caring and Learning Environments: Quality in Child Care Centres Across Canada*.³⁹ Two decisions were made that reduced the number of participating centres in the present study. The first decision was to use data only from non-profit centres while the second decision was to exclude centres operated by municipalities.

The present study has two distinct parts:

- A comparison of wages, working conditions, staff feelings, and variables that are associated with or predict quality levels in unionized and in non-unionized centres.
- A comparison of quality ratings in infant/toddler and in preschool rooms in unionized and in non-unionized centres.

Information from a total of 497 centres, of which 107 (21.5%) were unionized, was used for the comparison of wages, working conditions, staff feelings, and variables associated with or predicting quality ratings.

The sample available for the comparison of quality ratings is illustrated in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1: Number of Rooms with Quality Ratings Available by Jurisdiction and Age Group

Jurisdiction			Infant/toddler rooms	Preschool rooms
Alberta	-	unionized	nil	nil
	-	non-unionized	9	18
British Columbia	-	unionized	5	6
	-	non-unionized	12	10
New Brunswick	-	unionized	1	1
	-	non-unionized	12	17
Ontario	-	unionized	4	4
	-	non-unionized	8	18
Québec	-	unionized	11	16
	-	non-unionized	6	15
Saskatchewan	-	unionized	5	5
	-	non-unionized	14	27
Yukon	-	unionized	1	2
	-	non-unionized	6	6
TOTALS	-	unionized	27	34
	-	non-unionized	67	111

As indicated in Table 1.1, 40.7% of the available infant/toddler rooms in unionized centres were located in Québec. As a result, centres from Québec would have a disproportionate influence on the overall quality ratings for the total sample of infant/toddler rooms in the present study. In the original *You Bet I Care!* study the average quality rating on the *Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale* for Québec centres was 3.6, the lowest of all the jurisdictions and substantially lower than the mean of 4.4 for the sample as a whole.⁴⁰ The quality ratings were done in 1998, just as several new initiatives were being implemented by the Québec government and at a time when centre staff “were feeling overwhelmed by the rapid momentum of changes.”⁴¹ This may in part explain the low quality ratings in this province. The low quality ratings could also partly reflect the fact that Québec permits a ratio of one teacher to five infants while the permitted number of infants for one teacher is lower in all other jurisdictions. On the basis of the disproportionate influence that Québec would have, a decision was made to exclude the Québec centres from the comparison of quality ratings between unionized and non-unionized programs.

1.9 Data Analysis

Data were analysed using the SPSS-X Program for Windows. TM Descriptive data including means, medians, and percentages were generated first. The next step consisted of correlational analyses in which associations were explored between quality rating and various variables such as being unionized and whether the jurisdiction provides grants other than fee subsidy. The present study then used regression analyses to examine the relative influence of unionization and other variables on wage levels and on quality ratings.

1.10 How This Report is Organized

- **Chapter 2** explores the influence of unionization on wages, benefits and working conditions.
- **Chapter 3** looks at the influence of unionization on teaching staff feelings about the centre in which they work, the relationships among staff, and child care as a career.
- **Chapter 4** explores the influence of unionization on staffing issues such as recruitment and retention.
- **Chapter 5** examines the relationship between unionization and both correlates and predictors of quality level.
- **Chapter 6** reports the findings of the comparison of quality ratings between unionized and non-unionized centres.
- **Chapter 7** provides a summary of the findings and some implications to consider.

A **glossary of terms** is provided at the end of the text, followed by the **references**.

Notes

1. Doherty et al., 2000, Table 8.1.
2. Howes, 1988; Howes and Hamilton, 1993; Whitebook, Howes and Phillips, 1990.
3. Doherty et al., 2000, Table 8.8.
4. Ibid., p. 107.
5. Mayer, 2001, p. 10.
6. Doherty et al., 2000, Table 13.1.

7. Donna S. Lero, University of Guelph, unpublished data from *You Bet I Care! A Canada-Wide Survey on Wages, Working Conditions and Practices in Child Care Centres*, Doherty et al., 2000. Data collected in 1998.
8. Goelman et al., 2000, Figures 5.1 and 5.3.
9. Jackson and Schellenberg, 1999.
10. *Caring for a Living: A Study on Wages and Working Conditions in Canadian Child Care*, Canadian Day Care Advocacy Association/Canadian Child Care Federation, 1992.
11. Cleveland, Gunderson and Hyatt, in press.
12. Doherty et al., 2000, p. 75.
13. Rothman and Kass, 1999.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
16. Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care/Canadian Union of Public Employees, 2001.
17. Doherty et al., 2000, Table 10.10.
18. Ibid., Table 10.1.
19. Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care/Canadian Union of Public Employees, 2001.
20. Sheila Davidson, personal communication.
21. Susan Prentice, personal communication.
22. Child Care Human Resources Round Table, 2001.
23. Jamie Kass, personal communication.
24. Doherty et al., 2000.
25. Goelman et al., 2000.
26. Doherty et al., 2000, p. 10.
27. Arnett, 1989.
28. Harms and Clifford, 1990.

29. Harms, Cryer, and Clifford, 1998.
30. Doherty et al., 2000; Friesen, 1995; Lyon and Canning, 1995.
31. Friesen, 1995; Lyon and Canning, 1995; Mill, Bartlett and White, 1995.
32. Doherty, in press.
33. Doherty et al., 2000, Appendix E.
34. Doherty, unpublished.
35. Helburn, 1995.
36. Goelman et al., 2000, Figures 5.5 and 5.3.
37. Donna S. Lero, University of Guelph, unpublished data collected for *You Bet I Care! Wages, Working Conditions and Centre Practices in Child Care Centres* (Doherty et al., 2000).
38. Doherty et al., 2000.
39. Goelman et al., 2000.
40. Ibid., Table 4.4.
41. Doherty et al., 2000, p. 235.

Chapter 2: Wages, Benefits and Working Conditions

“By failing to meet the needs of the adults who work in child care, we are threatening not only their well-being, but that of the children in their care.”

Marci Whitebook, Carollee Howes and Deborah Phillips, 1990, p. 3.

2.1 Introduction

Much has been written about the poor wages, benefits and working conditions in child care centres in most provinces and in the territories. There is ample evidence from other occupations in Canada that unionization is associated with substantially higher wages and better benefits for women as well as decreased wage inequity between men and women.¹ Most child care centres are not unionized. To what extent are wages, benefits and working conditions better in those centres that are unionized? A study using Canada-wide data collected in 1991 demonstrated that teaching staff working in unionized child care centres had better wages and benefits than their counterparts in non-unionized centres who had the same length of experience in the field and the same level of ECCE education.² This chapter uses Canada-wide data collected in 1998 to explore whether unionized staff in child care centres still have better wages and benefits. The findings discussed in this chapter indicate that unionization is associated with:

- Higher salary levels for teaching staff at all levels and for teacher-directors. This finding holds true even when other variables known to influence salary level, such as the individual’s length of time in the field, are accounted for.
- More generous paid vacation time.
- A greater chance of receiving a variety of benefits that improve daily working conditions such as paid breaks, paid preparation time, and of being compensated for overtime.
- Greater access to in-service training and to compensation for time spent in professional development activities.
- A greater chance of receiving benefits that provide a measure of longer-term security such as paid sick days, disability insurance, extended health coverage, and a retirement or pension plan.
- Greater access for staff to information about their rights, such as a written salary scale and a greater chance of having access to a formal grievance procedure.

2.2 The Concept of Statistical Significance

Sometimes it is quite easy to see that there is a substantial difference between two statistics such as the hourly wage of a teacher in a unionized centre and that of a teacher in a non-unionized centre. However, we cannot tell from simply looking whether the apparent association between unionization status and wage level occurred simply by chance. Statisticians use a test of significance to explore this possibility. If the test indicates that the probability of the association having occurred simply by chance is only 5 in 100 (5%), the association is deemed to be significant at the .05 level (sometimes written as $p < .05$). Traditionally, researchers have accepted that the .05 level indicates something more than just a random association. A level of .01 ($p < .01$) is more significant since it means that the probability of the association being random is only 1 in 100. Throughout this report when a relationship is significant its degree of significance will be indicated under the relevant table as either $p < .05$ or $p < .01$.

2.3 Wages

Table 2.1 presents a simple comparison of wage levels in unionized and non-unionized centres. It indicates that teaching staff in unionized centres obtain higher wages across all positions except that of administrative director.

Table 2.1: Median Gross Hourly Wage, Full-Time Staff Only, by Position and Centre Unionization Status, 1998

Position	Unionized Centres	Non-Unionized Centres
Assistant teacher	\$11.02	\$9.51
Teacher	12.96	11.13 **
Supervisor	12.80	12.16
Teacher-director	17.00	14.25 **
Administrative director	16.87	17.67

** = $p < .01$

- Notes:**
1. The above table uses the median, the point at which there is an equal number of cases above and below the amount, rather than the average. Medians are less sensitive to being unduly influenced by one or two atypical situations.
 2. **Assistant teacher** refers to a person who works with children under the direction of another person. **Teacher** refers to a person who has primary responsibility for

group of children and may also supervise an Assistant Teacher. **Supervisor** refers to a person who has primary responsibility for a group of children and supervisory responsibilities for other teachers. A **teacher-director** has both teaching and administrative duties while an **executive director** is a person with administrative duties only.

Wage levels, however, are known to be influenced by a number of factors in addition to the centre's unionization status. These other factors include: the individual's position (for example, assistant teacher or teacher), employment status (full- or part-time), level of ECCE education, length of experience in the child care field, years of experience at their current centre, the centre's auspice (non-profit or commercial), the jurisdiction in which the centre operates, whether the centre receives government operating grants, whether the centre receives free or subsidized space and/or utilities, and the level of fees charged by the centre.³ The present study used a statistical technique (regression analysis) to examine the influence of unionization and each of these factors on teaching staff wage levels.⁴ When all other variables were accounted for, teaching staff in unionized centres earn 8.3% more than their counterparts in non-unionized centres.

2.4 Benefits

Staff benefits can be divided into three types: (1) those that improve the daily working conditions, (2) those that assist staff to participate in professional development activities, and (3) those that provide a measure of longer-term security.

2.4a Benefits that Affect Daily Working Conditions

Daily working conditions are affected by the availability of benefits such as a paid coffee break, paid preparation time, and a room set aside for staff use only. Such benefits not only help to set the stage for higher quality by reducing job dissatisfaction, they also give the staff a message of being valued. Table 2.2, on the following page, illustrates that 13 of the 17 benefits are substantially better in unionized centres and the remainder are similar in both types of centres except the availability of a staff manual detailing personnel policies. The lower proportion of unionized centres with such a document may reflect the fact that in unionized centres the centre's collective agreement lays out personnel policies and therefore there is no need for a separate manual to do so.

Table 2.2: Benefits that Affect Daily Working Conditions, Full-Time Teachers and Supervisors Only, by Centre Unionized Status, 1998

Benefit or working condition	Percent of centres where this benefit was identified as being available or average number of days	
	Unionized	Non-Unionized
Paid coffee break	85.3%	69.2% **
Paid lunch break	55.1%	45.6% *
Paid preparation time	73.7%	63.0% *
Staff meetings usually held during regularly scheduled working hours	26.8%	24.4%
Compensation for providing overtime child care	77.3%	69.0%
Compensation for staff meetings that are held after hours	82.5%	62.6% **
Compensation for parent meetings after hours	69.6%	54.5% **
Compensation for attending Board meetings after hours	26.8%	22.7%
Written job description	95.3%	95.0%
Written job contract	75.7%	62.1% *
Written salary schedule	86.9%	60.6% **
Staff manual detailing personnel policies	71.0%	87.6% **
Formal grievance procedure	80.4%	59.0% **
A room set aside for staff use only	70.1%	64.7% *
A separate staff washroom	69.2%	63.3%
Average number of hours per week regularly scheduled to work	35.0 days	35.9 days
Average number of paid vacation days per year	16.7 days	14.0 days *

* = $p < .05$, ** = $p < .01$.

2.4b Benefits that Assist with Professional Development

A recent multi-jurisdictional Canadian study reports a strong positive association between higher quality programming in preschool rooms and the teacher having participated in professional development within the previous 12 months.⁵ Centres can do much to assist staff to engage in professional development. For example, making journals easily accessible increases the probability that teachers will continue to read about child care issues and research. An effective performance appraisal assists both the individual and the supervisor to identify areas of knowledge or skill that require attention. Paid release time may make all the difference to an individual's ability to attend a workshop or participate in a college course. As illustrated in Table 2.3, working in a unionized centre provides better access to in-service training, compensation for time spent engaging in professional development whether on- or off-site, and payment of a child care association membership fee. However, a higher proportion of staff in non-unionized centres report having regular performance appraisals and having the centre pay registration fees for off-site professional development activities.

Table 2.3: Benefits that Assist Staff with Their Professional Development, Full-Time Teachers and Supervisors Only, by Centre Unionization Status, 1998

Benefit	Percentage of centres where this benefit was reported as being available	
	Unionized	Non-Unionized
A collection of child care journals or books available for staff use	68.2%	69.6%
Regular written job performance appraisal	68.2	74.3 *
Centre provides some in-service training	87.9	77.7 *
Compensation for time spent in on-site training	79.1	56.0 **
Paid release time for off-site training	91.8	76.4 **
Payment of registration fee for P.D. activities	60.6	65.0
Payment of child care association membership fee	31.0	23.8

* = $p < .05$, ** = $p < .01$

2.4c Benefits that Provide a Measure of Longer-Term Security

Cost of living wage increases and benefits that augment the individual's salary or provide a measure of longer-term security are particularly important in an occupation with low wages as is the case in child care. Employee top-up of E.I. maternity/parental benefit is very valuable in a field where 98.3% of the workforce is female and 62.0% is in the prime child-bearing period between age 20 to 35. ⁶

Table 2.4: Benefits that Provide a Measure of Longer-Term Security, Full-Time Teachers and Supervisors Only, by Centre Unionization Status, 1998

Benefit	Percentage of centres where this benefit was identified as being available or average number of days	
	Unionized	Non-Unionized
Reduced child care fee for centre employee	30.3%	32.6%
Average number of paid sick days per year	12.9 days	11.1 days
Maximum number of accumulated sick days	27.8 days	9.9 days **
Paid personal leave days	4.0 days	2.2 days *
Unpaid, job protected maternity/parental leave	77.6%	78.2%
Employer top-up of E.I. maternity/parental leave	45.1%	12.1% **
Yearly wage increase	45.3%	42.8%
Yearly cost of living increase	23.2%	23.0%
Employee assistance plan		
- fully paid for by centre	19.0%	9.9% **
- partly paid for by centre	26.2%	25.3%
Short-term disability insurance (first 17 weeks)		
- fully paid for by centre	26.2%	15.5% **
- partly paid for by centre	33.3%	28.6%
Long-term disability insurance		
- fully paid for by centre	34.8%	20.6% **
- partly paid for by centre	35.9%	36.1%
Extended health care		
- fully paid for by centre	43.6%	22.6% **
- partly paid for by centre	39.4%	44.4%

Dental coverage		
- fully paid for by centre	36.5%	20.7% **
- partly paid for by centre	44.8%	47.2%
Life insurance		
- fully paid for by centre	40.9%	26.7% **
- partly paid for by centre	43.0%	38.8%
Retirement or pension plan		
- fully paid for by centre	9.3%	5.5% **
- partly paid for by centre	27.9%	21.3% **

* $p < .05$; ** = $p < .01$

Table 2.4 illustrates that a higher proportion of unionized centres than non-unionized centres provide 12 of the 15 benefits compared in this table. Included in these are the very valuable benefits of employer top-up of E.I. maternity/parental leave, short- and long-term disability insurance, extended health care, dental coverage, and life insurance. Unionized centres also provide more paid sick days per year and allow employees to accumulate a larger number of such days. The difference between the proportion of unionized and non-unionized centres providing the other three benefits --- reduced child care for employees, a yearly cost of living increase, and unpaid, job protected maternity leave is negligible.

2.5 Conclusions

The findings in this chapter clearly illustrate an association between working in a unionized centre and:

- Higher wage levels for all positions except that of executive director. The higher wage levels for unionized staff hold true even after taking into account a number of other variables known to influence wage levels such as the receipt of donated space by the centre and the individual's education level and position.
- Better benefits in all three areas ---- benefits that affect the quality of the daily work, benefits that assist staff to engage in professional development, and benefits that provide a measure of longer-term security.

The degree of significance found for the difference in wage level for teaching staff and for the availability or level of benefits indicates that the association between unionization and better wages and benefits is not random. Something other than simple chance is operating. Therefore, it appears that unionization does improve wages, benefits and working conditions in child care centres.

Notes

1. Jackson and Schellenberg, 1999.
2. Cleveland, Gunderson and Hyatt, in press.
3. Cleveland and Hyatt, in press; Doherty, in press.
4. Appreciation to Cleveland and Hyatt for permission to use the approach that they pioneered in their study using data collected in 1991 and reported in *Caring for a Living*, Canadian Day Care Advocacy Association/Canadian Child Care Federation, 1992.
5. Goelman et al., 2000.
6. Doherty et al., 2000, Table 3.2.

Chapter 3: *Staff Feelings About Their Work*

“Research shows that the most important ingredient of high-quality early education and care is the relationship between the teacher and the child.”

Carollee Howes, Ellen Smith and Ellen Galinsky, 1995, p. 50

3.1 Introduction

The extent to which a teacher’s relationship with children is warm, sensitive and supports their well-being and development depends upon a number of factors. One is the adult’s knowledge about and understanding of child development. Research has also demonstrated that higher wages and better working conditions predict more positive adult-child interactions,¹ and higher levels of satisfaction with the working environment predict higher levels of overall program quality.² The previous chapter demonstrated that unionization is associated with higher wages and better benefits. This chapter compares teaching staff feelings about the centre where they work, their relationships with their colleagues, and child care as a career between people who are or are not working in a unionized centre.

The findings presented in this chapter indicate that a somewhat higher proportion of unionized teaching staff:

- Feel able to make or influence decisions about matters that directly affect them.
- Indicate that they expect to be working in the same centre in 12 months time and in the child care field in three years’ time.

Teaching staff in both unionized and non-unionized centres reported:

- High levels of feeling proud about the centre in which they work.
- High levels of satisfaction with their relationship with other teaching staff.
- Similar levels of perceived of job security.

A marginally lower proportion of unionized staff perceive their job as being respected by the general public and indicate that they would choose child care as a career again. These responses may indicate a greater sensitivity among unionized staff to the discrepancy between the compensation received and the skills required to provide care and education for young children. Among directors, a somewhat lower proportion of those in unionized centres agree with the statement ‘My staff and I work well together as a team.’ However, in both types of centres the directors’ perception that they and their staff worked well together was high.

3.2 Staff Feelings About Their Centre

This section explores how teaching staff feel about the centre they work in, their perception of the extent to which they have input into decision-making, and their expectation that they will be working in the same centre a year from now.

The general attitude of teaching staff towards the centre they work in was explored through a series of descriptions. Staff were asked to rate the extent to which each description pertained to their centre using a five-point scale from 1 (never, not at all) to 5 (usually/most of the time). As indicated by the average scores in Table 3.1, most teaching staff felt positive about their centre. Given that the responses are based on a five-point scale and therefore could not exceed 5.0, the mean score in both types of centres for the item "I take pride in my centre" is high.

Table 3.1: Staff Feelings About The Centre They Work In by Centre Unionization Status, 1998

Staff Feelings	Mean by centre unionization status	
	Unionized	Non-Unionized
Centre policies and procedures are well-defined	4.0	4.1
I have reasonable control over things that affect my satisfaction with my job	3.8	3.7
I take pride in my centre	4.3	4.4

Teaching staff were also given a list of possible ways in which decisions might be made and asked to indicate all that they felt applied to their centre. As indicated in Table 3.2, on the following page, overall there was little difference in responses between staff in unionized and non-unionized centres. However, a somewhat higher proportion of staff in unionized centres indicated that they were able to make decisions about things that directly affect them and to provide input into the content of staff meetings.

Table 3.2: Staff Perceptions of Their Ability to Influence Decision-Making in the Centre, by Centre Unionization Status, 1998

Description of how decisions are made at the centre	Proportion of centres whose staff agreed that the description applies	
	Unionized	Non-Unionized
People are encouraged to be self-sufficient in making decisions	53.8	52.3
The director likes to make most of the decisions	26.3	30.8
People don't feel free to express their opinions	23.4	19.1
Everyone provides input on the content of staff meetings	74.5	70.0
People provide input but the decisions have already been made	23.4	24.4
Teachers make decisions about things that directly affect them	59.6	53.0
Teachers are seldom asked their opinion on issues	13.6	11.7
The director values everyone's input for major decisions	60.5	59.0

Staff perception of job security and their expectation of continuing to work at the same centre were explored through two questions. The first asked staff to rate the extent to which they felt their job was secure on a five-point scale from 1 (not secure at all) to 5 (very secure). The second question asked respondents if they expected to be still working at the same centre a year from now. Table 3.3 indicates no difference between unionized and non-unionized staff in their perception of job security but a somewhat higher proportion of unionized staff who expected to continue to work at the same centre.

Table 3.3: Staff Perception of Job Security and of Being at the Same Centre in 12 Months Time by Centre Unionization Status, 1998

	Mean score by centre unionization status	
	Unionized	Non-Unionized
Perceived job security	4.0	4.0
Expect to be at the same centre in one year	84.2%	79.5%

3.3 Relationships Among Staff

Concern is sometimes expressed that unionization may change the relationship between frontline staff and management and/or among teaching staff. This section examines these concerns through exploring teaching staff perceptions of their relationships with their co-workers and with their supervisors and the directors' perceptions of their relationship with their staff. The respondent's relationship with other teaching staff and their supervisor was explored through a series of questions, the responses to which were combined to form a score indicative of the extent to which the relationship is perceived as positive. The perception of directors was obtained by asking them to respond to the statement, 'My staff and I work well together as a team' on a five-point scale ranging from with 1 (not at all) to 5 (usually).

Staff in both unionized and non-unionized centres reported an almost identical degree of satisfaction with their relationship with co-workers. However, Table 3.4 suggests that there may be some tension between frontline staff and management in unionized programs. Nevertheless, in both types of centres the director's degree of feeling that she and her staff work well as a team is high given that the mean score is based on a five-point scale so could not exceed 5.0.

Table 3.4: Staff Relationships, by Centre Unionization Status, 1998

	Mean score by centre unionization status	
	Unionized	Non-Unionized
Perceived collegiality of relationship with co-workers	6.6	6.7
Perceived degree to which the supervisor is perceived to be supportive	6.3	6.5
Director's perception of the extent to which she and her staff work well together as a team	4.2	4.5

3.4 Teaching Staff Perceptions of Child Care as a Career

The extent to which unionized teaching staff may have a more positive perception of child care as a career was explored by asking three questions. The first question explored the extent to which the respondent perceived their job as being respected by the general public. The other two questions asked if the person expected to still be working in child care in three years' time and whether they would choose child care as a career again. A slightly higher proportion of unionized staff indicated that they expected to continue to work in the child care field. However, a slightly smaller proportion perceived the work as being respected by the public or would choose child care as a career if making that decision again. These two latter responses may reflect a greater understanding among unionized teaching staff of the discrepancy between the compensation they receive and the skills and knowledge required to provide quality child care.

Table 3.5: Teaching Staff Perceptions of Child Care as a Career by Centre Unionization Status, 1998

	Mean by centre unionization status	
	Unionized	Non-Unionized
Proportion of teaching staff who perceive the job as being respected by the general public	5.8%	8.8%
Proportion of staff who expect to still be working in child care in three years' time	81.0%	78.6%
Proportion of staff who would choose child care as a career again	43.4%	45.9%

3.5 Conclusions

The findings reported in this chapter indicate that unionized teaching staff perceive a greater ability to influence decisions that directly affect their daily work. They also reported a somewhat higher expectation of being at the same centre in 12 months time and still being in the child care field three years hence.

Notes

1. Berk, 1985; Phillips, Howes and Whitebook, 1991.
2. Goelman et al., 2000.

Chapter 4: Staffing Issues

“Several centre-based studies have found an association between high levels of teaching staff turnover and lower scores on a global measure of quality and/or the quality of the interaction between teacher and children.”

Doherty et al., 2000, p. 97.

4.1 Introduction

This chapter explores teaching staff turnover rates and compares the reported difficulty of recruiting and retaining permanent qualified teaching staff in unionized and in non-unionized centres. It also looks at the extent of unpaid overtime worked by teaching staff in each type of centre.

The findings presented in this chapter indicate substantially lower turnover rates among teachers in unionized centres but slightly higher turnover rates among assistant teachers and supervisors. Directors in unionized centres report substantially less difficulty in finding, affording, and keeping permanent qualified teaching staff than their counterparts in non-unionized programs. Directors in both types of centres report significant difficulties in finding qualified substitute teaching staff. The reported mean hours of unpaid overtime for teaching staff in both types of centres was almost the same, in spite of the higher proportion of unionized centres that provide paid preparation time.

4.2 Turnover Rates

As illustrated in Table 4.1, unionization is associated with substantially lower turnover rates among teachers (people responsible for a group of children) in unionized centres although the difference between unionized and non-unionized centres is not statistically significant. Turnover among assistant teachers and supervisors is slightly higher in unionized centres.

Table 4.1: Annual Staff Turnover Rates by Centre Unionization Status, 1998

Staff position	Mean turnover rates by centre unionization status	
	Unionized	Non-unionized
Assistant teacher	48.4	36.8
Teacher	18.3	34.3
Supervisor	21.3	15.6

Consistency of relationships is a very important component of quality child care. This is what enables the teacher to get to know each individual child's developmental level,

unique ways of communicating, and interests. From the perspective of the child, the consistency of relationship between the person responsible for the group --- the teacher --- is probably more important than is consistency among assistant teachers since it is the teacher who is responsible for planning and implementing the daily program.

4.3 Finding, Affording, and Keeping Teaching Staff

Centres are required to adhere to provincial/territorial staff-to-child ratios and training requirements unless they can obtain a specific exemption to not do so. If centres cannot replace teaching staff who have left, they may have to reduce enrolment. This has at least two potential negative consequences. For the centre, such a reduction reduces revenue even though fixed costs such as space and utilities remain the same. The continuation of reduced enrolment not only reduces the availability of regulated care for children in the short-term, it may eventually force the centre to close resulting in a permanent loss of spaces.

Directors were asked to rate the extent to which finding, affording and keeping staff had been problematic for their centre in the previous 12 months using a three-point scale of: "not a problem," "a minor problem," or "a major problem." As indicated in Table 4.2, directors in unionized centres perceive recruiting, affording and retaining qualified teaching staff as less of a problem than do their colleagues in non-unionized centres.

Table 4.2: The Extent to which Finding, Affording and Keeping Teaching Staff are Seen as a Problem by Centre Unionization Status, 1998

Staffing issue	Perceived degree of problem	Percentage of directors rating each issue as a problem	
		Unionized	Non-unionized
Finding permanent qualified teaching staff	minor major	28.8 13.5	29.2 27.5 **
Affording permanent qualified teaching staff	minor major	29.4 18.6	28.8 31.7 *
Keeping permanent qualified teaching staff	minor major	16.5 9.7	21.8 12.6
Finding qualified substitute teaching staff	minor major	28.0 57.9	28.2 62.1

* = $p < .05$; ** = $p < .01$

The higher wages and better benefits reported earlier in this paper probably contribute to unionized centres having fewer difficulties in recruiting and retaining permanent staff. The difficulty in finding qualified substitute teachers reported by all directors reflects the known scarcity of such people.

4.4 The Extent of Unpaid Overtime

The extent of paid overtime worked by teaching staff in unionized and non-unionized centres was explored by comparing their reports of unpaid overtime. The reported mean number of hours per week of unpaid overtime were 4.1 for staff in unionized centres and 4.3 for staff in non-unionized centres. Thus, even with a greater proportion of unionized centres than non-unionized centres providing paid preparation time (73.7% in comparison to 63.0%), unionized teaching staff still donate about half a day a week to their centre.

4.5 Conclusions

Unionization is associated with:

- Substantially lower turnover rates among teachers (the people responsible for a group of children).
- Directors reporting significantly less difficulty in finding, affording and keeping qualified staff.

Even though a higher proportion of unionized centres provide paid preparation time, teaching staff in these centres still donate an average of half a day per week to their centre -- an amount of time that is very similar to that donated by teaching staff in non-unionized centres.

Chapter 5: *Predictors of Quality*

“It is clear that the early years from conception to age six have the most important influence of any time in the life cycle of brain development and subsequent learning, behaviour and health.”

Margaret Norrie McCain and J. Fraser Mustard, 1999, p. 7.

5.1 Introduction

In their report to the Premier of Ontario, McCain and Mustard emphasize the importance of child care by noting that the effects of early experience last a lifetime. This chapter compares unionized and non-unionized centres across a number of variables that have been identified by research as either predictors or correlates of child care quality --- that is, the type of programming that supports children’s well-being and development.

Predictors are more powerful than correlates. To understand how predictors work suppose a group of centres is divided into two categories -- higher quality and lower quality. If the names of all the centres are put into a hat and one name is drawn out at random, there is a 50% chance of correctly guessing the category to which the centre belongs since it has to be in one or the other. If knowing an additional piece of information about the centre, such as the proportion of teaching staff with a two-year or higher ECCE credential, increases the guessing accuracy rate above 50% that piece of information is a predictor. In contrast, a **correlate** indicates that there is an association between quality level and a variable and that the association could not have occurred simply by chance. For example, studies have found a *positive* correlation between the teacher’s level of job satisfaction and their level of positive behaviour towards children. This does not mean that a high level of job satisfaction predicts positive adult behaviour, only that when job satisfaction is high the interaction between adult and children is more likely to be positive. A correlate can also be *negative*, that is, a high score on the correlate is associated with a lower level of quality.

As reported in this chapter, in comparison with their non-unionized counterparts, unionized centres obtain clearly better scores on three of the nine predictors of higher quality. The scores obtained by unionized and non-unionized centres are very similar for the other six predictors. Unionized centres obtain higher scores on three of the five positive correlates and lower scores on all three negative correlates. Thus, overall, a higher proportion of unionized centres than non-unionized centres act in ways and have characteristics that support the provision of high quality child care.

5.2 Variables that Predict Quality Level

*Caring and Learning Environments: Quality in Child Care Centres Across Canada*¹ found that higher levels of quality were predicted for both infant/toddler and preschool rooms by the following:

- The observed teacher had a relatively higher level of ECCE education.
- The observed teacher's wage level was at the higher end of the range.
- There was a relatively large number of teaching staff in the room at the time of the observation.
- The centre is used as a practicum setting for ECCE students.

In preschool rooms, higher levels of quality were also predicted by:

- The observed teacher had a more positive feeling about her relationship with her co-workers.
- Each staff member was responsible for a relatively small number of children.

Some of these variables have also been identified as predictors of quality by other researchers, specifically: teaching staff wage level, teaching staff ECCE education level, and teaching staff-to-child ratio.²

Three other predictors of quality identified in the literature are:

- The director's length of experience in the child care field.³
- The director's level of formal education in any field.⁴
- The director's level of ECCE education.⁵

Table 5.1, on the following page, compares unionized and non-unionized centres on each of the nine predictors. The table indicates that in comparison with non-unionized centres, unionized centres have clearly higher scores on three of the predictors. They hire staff with significantly higher levels of ECCE education, pay significantly higher salaries, and a higher proportion of them are used as student practicum settings. All of these are predictors of higher quality in both infant/toddler and preschool rooms. The staff-to-child ratio in preschool rooms in unionized centres was somewhat better at the time of observation. There is very little difference between unionized and non-unionized centres on the other predictors.

Table 5.1: Comparison of Predictors of Quality by Centre Unionization Status, 1998

Variable	Mean by unionization status	
	Unionized	Non-unionized
Proportion of assistant teachers and teachers combined without any ECCE education or a course lasting less than one year	14.3%	22.0%
Proportion of assistant teachers and teachers combined who have a two-year or higher ECCE credential	74.5%	63.9%**
Mean gross hourly wage for all teaching positions combined	\$13.00	\$11.12**
Number of teaching staff in the room at the time of observation		
- infant/toddler rooms	2.26	2.41
- preschool rooms	2.00	2.16
Centre had been used as a student practicum site within the previous 12 months	88.9%	80.0%
Ratio in the preschool room at the time of observation	1:46	1:50
Observed preschool teacher's level of satisfaction with her relationship with co-workers	6.6	6.7
Director has ten or more years experience in the child care field	66.7%	68.3%
Director's level of formal education in any field		
- two or three year college credential	51.1%	45.2%
- post diploma certificate or university degree	38.6%	43.1%
Director's level of ECCE education		
- two or three year college credential	47.3%	50.3%
- post diploma certificate or university degree	25.0%	26.9%

** = $p < .01$

Note: Students in Québec enter the college system after the equivalent of grade 11. As a result, their three-year college credential is considered to be the equivalent of a two-year credential in other jurisdictions.

5.3 Variables That Are Correlated With Quality

The term 'correlation' refers to the extent to which there is an association between two things that occurs at a level that is above simple chance, for example between centre quality and whether the staff and director regularly engage in the identification of program goals. In the case of this example the correlation is positive, quality tends to be higher when there is regular goal identification. Correlations can also be negative, for example, research has documented a relationship between low quality and a relatively high

proportion of the centre budget being used for rent or mortgage (which usually means a lower proportion being available for wages).

Variables with a Positive Correlation with Quality

Caring and Learning Environments: Quality in Child Care Centres Across Canada identified a number of variables that have a high *positive* correlation with ratings of centre quality. They are:

- The observed teacher's level of education in any discipline.
- Whether the observed teacher had participated in professional development within the previous 12 months.
- The proportion of centre budget used for staff wages.
- The proportion of centre budget used for staff benefits.
- Whether the director and staff regularly engage in the identification of formal goals for the centre.

In Table 5.2, teaching staff level of education in any subject is based on a seven-level categorization ranging from some high school through to a B.A. or higher degree. Thus, 4.67 indicates a higher level of overall education than 4.21.

Table 5.2: Comparison of *Positive* Correlates of Quality by Centre Unionization Status, 1998.

Variable	Mean by centre unionization status	
	Unionized	Non-Unionized
Teaching staff (assistant teachers and teachers combined) level of formal education in any subject	4.67	4.21**
Proportion of centre budget used for staff wages	71.7%	71.1%
Proportion of centre budget used for staff benefits	12.0%	9.5%*
Proportion of centres that provide in-service education	87.9%	77.7%*
Proportion of centres where the director and teaching staff regularly engage in the identification of formal goals for the program	27.4%	32.7%

* = $p < .05$; ** = $p < .01$

As indicated by the table, unionized centres have significantly higher scores on three of the five positive correlates, that is, variables where a high score is associated with higher quality. Their teaching staff have higher levels of general education, a higher proportion of the unionized centres provide in-service education, and a higher proportion of the budget in unionized centres is used for staff benefits. Both unionized and non-unionized centres allocate the same proportion of their budgets for staff wages.

Variables with a Negative Correlation with Quality

The following variables were identified by *Caring and Learning Environments: Quality in Child Care Centres Across Canada* as having a significant *negative* correlation with centre quality level:

- The proportion of budget used for rent or mortgage payments.
- The proportion of budget used for utilities.
- The number of hours the observed teacher was scheduled to work, a longer scheduled work week was associated with poorer quality.

Table 5.3: Comparison of *Negative* Correlates of Quality by Centre Unionization Status, 1998.

Variable	Mean by centre unionization status	
	Unionized	Non-Unionized
Proportion of centre budget used for rent or mortgage payments	5.1%	7.3%
Proportion of centre budget used for utilities	3.4%	5.2%
Number of hours teaching staff are regularly scheduled to work per week	35.0	35.9

Unionized centres obtained lower scores on all three negative correlates ---- that is, correlates where a low score is associated with higher quality level.

5.4 Conclusions

Caring and Learning Environments: Quality in Child Care Centres Across Canada documented that higher quality in both infant/toddler and preschool rooms is predicted by:

- The observed teacher had a relatively higher level of education.
- The observed teacher's wage level was at the higher end of the range.
- The centre is used as a practicum setting for ECCE students.
- There was a relatively large number of teaching staff in the room at the time of the observation.

Unionized centres obtain higher scores on three of these four predictors and their score is very similar to that in regard to the number of teachers in the room. Unionized centres also obtain higher scores on three of the five positive correlates noted in the above study and lower scores on all three negative correlates. These findings make it clear that a higher proportion of unionized centres act in ways and have characteristics that are associated with higher quality levels.

Notes

1. Goelman et al., 2000.
2. Whitebook, Howes and Phillips, 1990.
3. Helburn, 1995.
4. Jorde-Bloom, 1989.
5. Bredekamp, 1989.

Chapter 6: Actual Quality Ratings

6.1 Introduction

There is a substantial body of research demonstrating that high quality child care ---- that is, sensitive, responsive care that provides developmentally-appropriate and stimulating experiences --- enhances children’s social, language, and cognitive development. Furthermore, the benefits of such early experiences are reflected in higher levels of school-readiness, easier transition into school, and better school performance throughout elementary school. ¹ On the other hand, child care has the potential to harm young children, even those from supportive homes, when it fails to provide warm relationships and the types of activities that assist children’s skill development.

As noted in the previous chapter, a higher proportion of unionized than of non-unionized centres act in ways and have characteristics that have been found by Canadian research to support the provision of high quality child care. Unionized centres also mirror the profile associated with quality as described in a report of the findings from a study of 227 American centres:

“ better quality centers paid higher wages, had more teachers caring for fewer children, employed better educated and trained staff, had lower staff turnover and better adult work environments.” ²

This chapter compares the actual quality ratings obtained by infant/toddler and by preschool rooms in unionized and in non-unionized centres. It reports that both infant/toddler and preschool rooms in unionized centres obtained higher ratings of overall quality. These findings must be treated with caution since they are based on a very small sample size and for the reasons noted in the next section, exclude data from Québec centres. Nevertheless, the findings on quality ratings are consistent with what would be expected given the documented higher proportion of teaching staff with ECCE training, higher wage levels, and better benefits and working conditions in unionized centres.

6.2 The Sample Used

The available sample included 27 infant/toddler rooms and 34 preschool rooms in unionized centres and 67 infant/toddler and 111 preschool rooms in non-unionized programs. As illustrated in Table 1.1 in Chapter 1, 40.7% of the available infant/toddler rooms were located in unionized centres in Québec. As a result, centres from Québec would have a disproportionate influence on the overall quality ratings for the total sample of infant/toddler rooms in the present study. In the original *You Bet I Care!* study the average quality rating for infant/toddler rooms in Québec was 3.6, the lowest of all jurisdictions in the study and substantially lower than the mean of 4.4 for the sample as a whole. ³ The quality ratings were done in 1998, just as several new initiatives were being implemented by the provincial government and at a time when centre staff were reported as “feeling overwhelmed by the rapid momentum of the changes.” ⁴ This, plus the fact that Québec permits one teacher to care for more infants than is allowed in any other jurisdiction, may in part explain the substantially lower quality observed in Québec infant/toddler rooms. On

the basis of the disproportionate influence that Québec would have, a decision was made to exclude all the Québec centres from the comparison of quality ratings between unionized and non-unionized centres. This left only 16 infant/toddler rooms and 18 preschool rooms in unionized centres for the quality ratings comparison between unionized and non-unionized programs.

6.3 The Instruments Used To Rate Quality Levels

The original *You Bet I Care!* study used three instruments to assess the level of quality of the care provided in the participating centres. The *Caregiver Interaction Scale (CIS)*⁵ was used in all rooms along with the *Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale (ITERS)*⁶ or the *Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale - Revised (ECERS-R)*,⁷ depending on the ages of the children in the room. The *CIS* assesses the affective tone of the adult-child interaction through three sub-scales. The first, Sensitivity, focuses on the extent to which the adult is warm, attentive, and engaged with the children. The Harshness sub-scale looks at the extent to which the teacher is critical, threatening or punitive with the children. The third sub-scale, Detachment, assesses the extent to which the teacher interacts with the children and supervises them appropriately.

The *ITERS* and *ECERS-R* are parallel scales both of which assess overall quality through seven sub-scales that look at: (1) the safety and appropriateness of the physical setting for the age of the children, (2) personal care routines including health and safety practices, (3) programming materials and equipment, (4) programming activities, (5) the quality of teacher-child interactions, (6) program structure such as the schedule of daily activities, and (7) provisions for adults such as a place for staff to store personal belongings and opportunities for professional development.

The *CIS* and the *ITERS* have been widely used in previous research and their validity is well substantiated.⁸ The *ECERS-R* is an update of the well-respected *Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale*⁹ which is considered to be highly reliable and has been widely used by researchers in Canada¹⁰ and the United States.¹¹

6.4 Interpretation of the Instrument Scores

Scores on each of the three *CIS* sub-scales range from 1.0 to 4.0. High scores on Sensitivity are desirable while high scores on Harshness and Detachment are not. Total scores for all sub-scales on the *ITERS* and *ECERS-R* range from 1.0 to 7.0. Total scores below 3.0 indicate a situation where children's health and safety may not be adequately protected and/or the adult does not provide sufficient warmth and support. Scores between 3.0 and 4.9 reflect a situation where health and safety is protected, teachers are warm and supportive of the children, but there are limited activities that would stimulate children's social, language or cognitive development. In the 3.0 to 4.9 range, scores close to 4.9 indicate a greater availability of experiences that support and encourage development. Scores of 5.0 or higher indicate the presence of stimulating activities along with warm, supportive care and protection of children's health and safety.

6.5 Quality Ratings In Unionized and Non-Unionized Centres

As illustrated in Tables 6.1 and 6.2, both infant/toddler and preschool rooms in unionized centres obtained higher overall ratings on quality (higher *ITERS* and *ECERS-R* Total scores) than their counterparts in non-unionized centres. The difference for preschool rooms is close to, but not statistically significant. Teaching staff in both types of centres obtained very similar *CIS* scores indicating similar degrees of warm, engaged and supportive behaviour with children and low levels of harshness or detachment.

These findings suggest that quality is higher in unionized centres. This is what would be expected given the higher proportion of staff with ECCE training in unionized centres and the higher wages and better benefits and working conditions that these centres provide. However, the association between centre unionized status and quality rating is not statistically significant and could have occurred simply by chance. Furthermore, the sample sizes for unionized centres are very small. Given that these findings are only from one study with a small sample of unionized centres, there is a clear need to repeat the comparison of quality ratings between unionized and non-unionized programs using a different and larger sample.

Table 6.1: Quality Ratings, Infant/Toddler Rooms by Centre Unionization Status, Total Sample Except Québec Centres, 1998

Quality rating	Mean score by centre unionization status	
	Unionized (N = 16)	Non-Unionized (N = 61)
<i>ITERS</i> Total score	4.9	4.6
<i>CIS</i> Sensitivity sub-scale	3.2	3.4
<i>CIS</i> Harshness sub-scale	1.1	1.1
<i>CIS</i> Detachment sub-scale	1.3	1.3

N = Number of rooms.

Table 6.2: Quality Ratings, Preschool Rooms by Centre Unionization Status, Total Sample Except Québec Centres, 1998

Quality rating	Mean score by centre unionization status	
	Unionized (N = 18)	Non-Unionized (N = 96)
<i>ECERS-R</i> Total score	5.1	4.7
<i>CIS</i> Sensitivity sub-scale	3.3	3.4
<i>CIS</i> Harshness sub-scale	1.2	1.2
<i>CIS</i> Detachment sub-scale	1.2	1.4

N = Number of rooms.

6.6 Unionization Status as a Predictor of Quality

A regression analysis was done on the sample of rooms used in Tables 6.1 and 6.2 to explore whether centre unionization status or other variables known to be associated with or to predict quality level would predict quality ratings in this sample. The other variables in addition to centre unionization status were: (1) length of ECCE training required for teaching staff by government regulations in the jurisdiction in which the centre operates; (2) whether the jurisdiction provides centres with annual operating grants; (3) whether the centre obtains free or subsidized space and/or utilities; (4) centre fee levels; (5) mean gross hourly wage for all teaching positions combined; and (6) proportion of staff in the centre who have a two-year or higher ECCE education credential. The significant predictors that emerged were:

- The gross hourly wage for all teaching positions combined.
- The centre is located in a jurisdiction that requires at least some teaching staff to have a minimum of two years of ECCE education.

These findings reinforce the importance of centres being able to pay teaching staff wages at the higher end of the continuum and of provinces and territories requiring at least some teaching staff to have a two-year ECCE education credential.

6.7 Conclusions

The findings reported in this chapter suggest that overall quality is higher in unionized centres. This is what would be expected given the higher proportion of teaching staff with a two-year ECCE credential employed by unionized centres and the higher wages and better working conditions that these centres provide for their teaching staff. However, the findings should be

treated with some caution. The sample size from unionized centres was small and the findings are not statistically significant. There is a clear need to repeat the comparison of quality ratings between unionized and non-unionized centres using a different sample that contains a higher number of unionized programs than was available for the present study.

Notes

1. Doherty, 1996.
2. Whitebook, Howes and Phillips, 1990, p. 112.
3. Goelman et al., 2000, Table 4.4.
4. Doherty et al., 2000, p. 235.
5. Arnett, 1989.
6. Harms and Clifford, 1990.
7. Harms, Cryer and Clifford, 1998.
8. Goelman et al., 2000, pp. 14-16.
9. Harms and Clifford, 1980.
10. Doherty and Stuart, 1996; Goelman and Pence, 1998; Schliecker, White and Jacobs, 1991; White, Jacobs and Schliecker, 1998.
11. Helburn, 1995; Kontos and Stremmel, 1988; Whitebook, Howes and Phillips, 1990.

Chapter 7: *Implications*

“The quality of care children receive in their early years directly affects the way they think and learn, and has a lasting impact on their future abilities.”

Federal-Provincial-Territorial Council of Ministers on Social Policy Renewal, 1999, p. 2.

7.1 Child Care: Canada Can’t Work Without It

Child care is an essential component of and response to social and economic issues that affect the whole country, specifically society’s need:

- To promote the well-being and optimal development of all children ---- the country’s future workforce and citizens.
- To have a skilled workforce now and in the future that will support a healthy economy in Canada.
- To address all forms of inequity whether they be based on gender, socio-economic status, racial/linguistic background, or access to essential services.

7.1a *Promoting Children’s Optimal Development*

Regular participation in non-parental child care is now the norm for Canada’s young children. In 1996/97, almost one-quarter of Canadian infants and nearly half (46%) of children age 1 - 5 years were regularly involved in non-parental child care while their parents worked or studied.¹ Recent studies using new techniques have confirmed the importance of early experiences for brain growth and functioning.² The fact that children lay the foundation for their future health, well-being and functioning abilities during the first six years of life means that the quality of their child care experiences is of vital importance not only to the child but also to society as a whole.

Under the umbrella of the National Children’s Agenda the federal, provincial, and territorial governments (with the exception of the Government of Québec) announced the Early Childhood Development (ECD) Agreement in September 2000. In so doing, they made a policy and financial commitment to improve and expand early childhood development programs and services. This commitment is not being met. While a few smaller provinces have used some of the ECD funds for child care, Alberta, British Columbia and Ontario --- collectively home to almost two-thirds of Canada’s young children ---- have not. Instead, they appear to be going down the path of reducing funding for regulated child care programs. With the exception of Québec, access to regulated child care in Canada remains heavily dependent upon the family’s income and/or place of residence.

7.1b Promoting a Skilled Workforce

Child care contributes to the promotion of a skilled workforce in two ways. First, it permits women to work and, when of high quality, reduces absenteeism rates and parental anxiety while at work and thereby increases productivity.³ Second, longitudinal research has demonstrated the potential of high quality child care to encourage the development of the social, language and cognitive skills essential for successful functioning in later life.⁴

Women account for almost half of the participants in the paid workforce (46%).⁵ As noted by the Vancouver Board of Trade, “*Our economy could not meet the demand for workers without women in the workplace.*”⁶ Imagine virtually no nurses or diagnostic technicians except for the small proportion who are male, almost no check-out clerks in the grocery store or teachers in elementary school. Many of these women are the mothers of young children. Sixty-eight percent of women whose youngest child was under age three and 71% of women with a child between age 3 and 5 were engaged in paid employment in 1999.⁷ Other women with young children are engaged in improving their employability through post-secondary education or job skills training. Most mothers of young children would not be able to engage in these activities without the availability of reliable child care.

In 1996, women contributed in excess of 26 billion dollars in taxes the federal, provincial and territorial governments out of the income they earned through their workforce participation.⁸ What would happen to the ability of governments to provide basic services without these funds?

7.1c Addressing Inequity

The availability of affordable child care enables women to participate in the paid workforce or to train for such participation. Thus, it promotes women’s social and economic equality and reduces the incidence of family poverty. In 1997, the incidence of poverty among dual-earner families on a Canada-wide basis was 5%. However, if the wives’ incomes were deducted from the family income, the incidence of poverty would have been almost 18%.⁹

Outside Québec, the accessibility of regulated child care in Canada is currently heavily dependent upon the family’s income and/or place of residence. This is clearly inequitable. It is also clearly inconsistent with the commitment made in the Social Union Framework Agreement (SUFA) by the federal, provincial and territorial governments (except Québec) to, “*Ensure access for all Canadians, wherever they live or move in Canada, to essential social programs and service of reasonably comparable quality.*”¹⁰

7.2 Addressing the Child Care Staffing Crisis

The benefits of high quality child care are collective benefits for the whole society. High quality child care provides a good environment for children to grow and learn and thus promotes healthy child development, it enables parents to work and thus enables families to be self-sufficient, it improves workforce functioning, and it increases government revenue through the income and other taxes paid by employed parents. However, if the current recruitment and retention

problems in child care are not addressed it may become impossible to find sufficient people to work in child care centres, let alone sufficient trained people to provide the types of programs children need and deserve.

In 1998, Child Care Sector Human Resources study concluded that:

- “Well-trained and compensated staff are a key element in the provision of quality care.”¹¹
- Wage levels that “reflect the value of the work being performed [and] adequate benefits and working conditions are necessary to attract and retain a qualified workforce.”¹²

However, four years later, wage levels still do not reflect the value of the work being done, benefits continue to be inadequate, and teaching staff turnover rates continue to be high. In its report, the Child Care Sector study suggests that wages and working conditions should be addressed through the interdependent strategies of advocacy, unionization and professionalization. This report focuses on the role of unions both in terms of bargaining for better wages and working conditions for child care workers and in terms their long-standing advocacy role in collaboration with other partners.

7.3 Summary of the Major Findings of the Present Study

The present study used existing data sets from the *You Bet I Care!* project¹³ to explore the influence of unionization on: (1) teaching staff wages, benefits and working conditions, (2) teaching staff feelings about the centre they work in and child care as a career, (3) the extent to which a centre has characteristics or behaves in ways that are known to predict or to be associated with higher levels of quality, and (4) child care quality itself. The major findings were that:

- Wages and benefits for teaching staff are substantially better in unionized centres. Research indicates that higher wages and better benefits reduce staff turnover rates and increase the likelihood of high quality child care. In unionized centres, wages are higher even after accounting for other factors known to influence wage level such as the individual’s position and length of ECCE education. A higher proportion of unionized centres provide their staff with benefits that provide a measure of longer-term security such as disability insurance, extended health care, and life insurance. A higher proportion provide benefits that improve daily working conditions such as paid preparation time, compensation for meetings held after hours, and a room set aside for staff only.
- Turnover rates for teachers are lower in unionized centres and a higher proportion of teaching staff in unionized centres expect to be still working at their current centre in 12 months’ time. Consistency of relationship between the children and the person responsible for the group is an important component of quality child care. It enables that adult to know each child’s

developmental level, needs and interests and to plan and implement appropriate activities for the children.

- Unionized centres have an easier time recruiting and retaining staff. Directors in unionized centres report significantly less difficulty in finding and in keeping qualified permanent teaching staff than their counterparts in non-unionized centres. A higher proportion of teaching staff in unionized centres report that they expect to still be working in the child care field in three years' time.
- A significantly higher proportion of unionized centres act in ways that predict or are associated with higher levels of quality. In comparison with non-unionized centres, unionized centres hire a lower proportion of untrained teaching staff and a higher proportion of staff with two years or more of ECCE education, pay higher salaries, are more likely to provide in-service education, expect workers to be responsible for a slightly lower number of children, and more often act as field training sites for ECCE students.
- Both infant/toddler and preschool rooms in unionized centres obtain higher ratings on an overall measure of program quality than do their counterparts in non-unionized centres. While both the sample size and the difference in quality ratings between the two types of centres are small, the finding of higher quality ratings in unionized centres is consistent with what would be expected given that a higher proportion of them act in ways that support quality child care provision.

In summary, the findings of the present study indicate that unionization is beneficial not only for the child care workforce but also for the children in unionized centres, their parents, and for the whole society.

7.4 Lessons for the Canadian Labour Movement

The Child Care Sector Study, *Our Child Care Workforce: From Recognition to Remuneration: More Than A Labour of Love*, concluded that the interdependent strategies of advocacy, unionization and professionalization, “*can work together to improve compensation and working conditions and increase caregiver skill levels and qualifications.*”¹⁴ As discussed in Chapter 1, labour organizations have a long history of involvement with other groups in advocating for public policy and funding to create universal, high quality child care services and in bargaining to improve the wages, benefits and working conditions in the child care field. The labour movement is also involved in addressing the need for professionalization in the field. Both the Canadian Labour Congress and the Confédération des syndicats nationaux from Québec have representatives on the Child Care Human Resources Round Table, a national group working to address a variety of human resource issues in the child care field including training. A representative from the Canadian Labour Congress is on the Steering Committee of a project that is developing a written description of the skills, abilities and knowledge required by someone responsible for a group of children in a child care setting.

As discussed in chapter 1, some gains have been made. However, much remains to be accomplished. Canada still does not have universal, publicly funded child care. In fact in some jurisdictions public funding for child care has been reduced over the past decade. Child care workers in both centre- and family-based child care continue to face the challenges of poor wages and benefits, and the lack of public respect for the occupation noted in the 1998 Child Care Sector Study. The labour movement has both the structure and the experience to mobilize people and to conduct effective campaigns. These assets could be used for a variety of purposes including:

- Continued advocacy in collaboration with other groups on at least three fronts:
 - ➔ for accessible, universal child care;
 - ➔ for public recognition of the value of the work done by child care workers and respect for the skills and knowledge required to do the work well; and
 - ➔ for components that enable the provision of child care that supports children's well-being and development. Such components include accessible, affordable pre-service training and on-going professional development for people wishing to or providing child care and government regulations limiting the number of children for whom one person is responsible.¹⁵
- Organizing, both:
 - ➔ union organizing of workers in individual settings or groups of settings; and
 - ➔ collective mobilization of the child care field and other community groups for province/territory-wide and for federal campaigns, for example, public education campaigns around the value of child care and efforts to obtain on-going public funding for child care from governments.
- Continued bargaining to improve wages and working conditions for all people in the child care field, for example:
 - ➔ wages that reflect the value of the work done;
 - ➔ benefits that improve the daily working conditions as well as benefits that provide longer-term security such as disability insurance and a pension plan;
 - ➔ benefits that assist members of the child care workforce to engage in on-going professional development; and
 - ➔ opportunities for child care staff to have real influence on decision-making in their setting.

The labour movement must make child care a priority. Advocating, organizing and bargaining are inter-connected strategies that would make good use of the movement's structure and experience. Collectively these strategies could be used to address the current staffing crisis in child care and the lack of affordable, accessible, quality child care for parents in most jurisdictions. Without government funding, it will be very difficult to increase wages and improve benefits. Without improved public recognition of the value of child care and

mobilization of a broad coalition of parents and community groups, it will be very difficult to convince most governments of the need for public funding. Without improved wages and benefits, it may become impossible to recruit and retain sufficient people to provide regulated programs.

Notes

1. Johnson, Lero and Rooney, 2001, p. 43.
2. McCain and Mustard, 1999.
3. MacBride-King, 1990; MacBride-King and Bachman, 1999.
4. Doherty, 1996.
5. Statistics Canada, 2000a, Table 5.1.
6. Vancouver Board of Trade, 1999, p. 6.
7. Statistics Canada, 2000a.
8. Glossop, 2001.
9. Statistics Canada, 2000a.
10. Text published in *The Globe and Mail*, February 5, 1999, page A 13.
11. Beach, Bertrand and Cleveland, 1998, p. 135.
12. *Ibid.* p. 138.
13. Doherty et al., 2000; Goelman et al., 2000.
14. Beach, Bertrand and Cleveland, 1998, p. 124.
15. Using research findings, the Canadian Child Care Federation has identified appropriate levels for various age groups for different aged children and for both centre- and family-based settings, Canadian Child Care Federation, Canadian Child Care Federation, 1991, pp. 9 and 25.

Assistant teacher:

A person working directly with children under the direction of another person such as a teacher, supervisor or the centre director.

Association:

The extent to which there is a relationship between two things, for example, teacher level of ECCE education and the quality rating received by her program.

Auspice:

A term referring to who or what is legally responsible for operating a program, e.g. a voluntary board of directors, a commercial owner.

CIS:

The *Caregiver Interaction Scale* an observation tool used to measure the quality of the interaction between adult and child. It has three sub-scales, Sensitivity, Harshness and Detachment (see separate entries for each).

Correlation

Another term for Association, see above entry.

Detachment:

Adult behaviour with children characterized by lack of involvement with them, for example, passively watching the children instead of being actively engaged with them in doing an activity or talking with them.

ECCE:

Early childhood care and education.

ECERS, ECERS-R:

The *Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale*, the *Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised*. These scales measure the overall quality of a preschool room through on-site observation.

ITERS:

The *Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale*. This scale measures the overall quality of an infant/toddler room through on-site observation.

Mean:

What is commonly known as an average. It is calculated by taking the sum of all the scores on a variable and dividing it by the number of subjects.

Median:

The point at which an equal number of cases fall above and below a specified value.

Predict or Prediction:

A situation where knowledge about one variable, such as the observed teacher's level of ECCE education, enables an above-chance estimate of what will occur with another variable such as the quality of the programming observed in the teacher's classroom.

Ratio:

The number of children for whom an adult is responsible. A staff-to-child ratio of 1:8 means that one adult is responsible for eight children.

Responsiveness:

Adult behaviour that is characterized by reacting promptly and appropriately to a child's verbal or non-verbal signals for attention. It includes having expectations that are appropriate for the child's developmental level and being sensitive to the child's mood.

Sensitivity:

Adult behaviour with children that is warm, attentive and engaged.

Significant or Significance:

A statistical term identifying the extent to which a relationship between two variables, for example, between teacher responsiveness and child language development, is likely to have occurred simply by chance. If the relationship is significant at the .05 level (sometimes written as $p < .05$) it means that the probability of the relationship having occurred randomly is 5 in 100 (5%). Traditionally, researchers have accepted that the .05 level indicates something more than random association. A level of .01 is more significant since it means the probability of randomness is only 1 in 100.

Staff turnover rate:

The frequency with which staff leave a centre. It is usually expressed as a percentage and measured on the basis of how many staff leave in a 12-month period.

Supervisor:

A person who works directly with children and also supervises teachers.

Teacher:

A person with primary responsibility for a group of children. This person may also supervise assistant teachers.

Teaching staff:

Assistant teachers, teachers and supervisors combined.

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