

Early childhood educators high on job satisfaction

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DESPITE eight in 10 early childhood educators reporting high levels of job satisfaction, many employers in the sector continue to struggle with staffing shortages.

The Manitoba Child Care Association has released the results of an online survey of its members that took place between Feb. 4 and 18.

Probe Research Inc. led the project — a decade after the Winnipeg-based polling firm conducted an initial workforce survey for the association.

This time around, 830 people, including front-line early childhood educators, centre directors and family child-care providers, submitted responses.

Citing their answers, the professional advocacy organization's leaders described workplace morale as “strong

and stable” in a news release Monday.

At the same time, they flagged turnover, employee exhaustion and outdated training — as evidenced by directors' observations about new hires' skillsets — as key challenges.

“It's hard to manage a program and ensure you've got enough trained staff. I feel like we're on the edge of something really good, but we still have a long ways to go,” Cathy Gardiner, president of the child-care association, said.

Gardiner said she's faced chronic challenges with ensuring her centre, Learning and Growing Daycare, is fully staffed and ready to meet demand in Charleswood.

However, there has been an increase in the number of resumes landing on her desk in recent months, she said.

The survey was undertaken three months before the province unveiled a new early childhood education wage

grid — an announcement that elicited tears of joy among news conference attendees on May 23.

While applauding the current government for making a historic investment, Gardiner noted there has been steady progress on topping up those wages over the last three years.

More than half of respondents to the latest workforce survey said there had been a “noticeable increase” to their pay in recent years.

A spokesperson for Tracy Schmidt, minister of education and early childhood learning, said work is underway to address staffing challenges through a government-led “workforce strategy.”

The government is slated to release that plan — which will include initiatives to attract and retain workers — “soon,” the spokesperson wrote in an email Monday.

The average tenure of an early child-

hood educator, among respondents to the 2016 survey, was 14.7 years. It was 17.2 years among participants in the follow-up edition.

Forty-five per cent of respondents to the 2025 survey indicated they had been working in a licensed child-care centre for 15 or more years.

Probe could not release a margin-of-error because the survey was not randomly sampled.

The association provided the public polling firm with member emails and asked early childhood educators to share the link with colleagues.

Statistics Canada estimates there are 8,800 child-care workers in Manitoba. Based on this data, a random and representative non-convenience sample of 830 would have a margin of error of plus or minus 3.2 percentage points.

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