

Alternatives North

Investing in Our Future

**The Alternatives North
NWT Child Care Survey**

June 2006

Lutra Associates Ltd.

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Executive Summary

In 2005, Alternatives North, a social justice coalition, completed a survey of licensed child care facilities in the Northwest Territories. Forty-two (42) facilities responded to the Alternatives North Child Care Survey, including 30-centre-based programs (13 day cares and 17 pre-schools) and 12 day homes. Respondents represent 52% of licensed facilities, 75% of centre-based facilities and 29% of day homes. Facilities responding to the Survey also represent all regions in the NWT except the Tli Cho.

The Government of the Northwest Territories, Department of Education, Culture and Employment regulates child care in the NWT and administers a number of assistance programs. The Childcare Subsidy Program is designed to help parents in need cover the cost of child care. Subsidies are calculated based on financial and child care needs. Other research has identified factors that negatively affect the Subsidy, including:

- low eligibility income ceilings relative to the high cost of child care;
- a shortage of reliable child care; and
- late payment of the subsidy.

The Early Childhood Program provides funding to child care facilities through start-up grants (based on the location and number and type of space created) and operating grants (based on the location, number and type of space created, and attendance).

Socio-economic conditions in the NWT create demand for affordable, quality child care.

- 68% of women work outside the home.
- 21.5% of families are headed by lone parents (mostly women).
- 14% of families and 21.5% of children live with low income.

Highlights from the Alternatives North Child Care Survey provide a snapshot of the child care environment in the NWT.

- Child care facilities operate at full capacity and 67% maintain waiting lists.
- The highest unmet demand is for infant spaces within day cares and day homes and pre-school spaces within pre-school programs.
- Parents volunteer in child care facilities as board member and fundraisers, and participate in program activities in other ways.
- Child care facilities include a variety of early childhood development and school readiness activities as part of their regular programs and use community resources (e.g. materials and infrastructure) in program delivery.

- Child care staff are responsible for a variety of tasks besides program delivery. These tasks include developing program activities, cleaning toys, janitorial work, preparing food, preparing reports and shopping for supplies.
- 27% of child care staff have completed some early childhood courses and approximately one-quarter have completed an early childhood education certificate or diploma program.
- Barriers to completing early childhood education programs and courses include a lack of education opportunities at the community level, costs, and low literacy levels.
- Child care staff are paid low wages for the work they do. As a result, child care facilities experience high turnover.
- Child care facilities operate within prescribed budgets and depend upon revenues from other sources in addition to user fees and start-up and operating grants.
- Close to three-quarters (74%) of child care facilities report that their revenues are inadequate to operate a quality early childhood program.
- Child care facilities operate in buildings that are approximately 16 years old and most have access to attached playgrounds. Some facilities are housed in buildings that are small, old and in poor repair.

In light of Survey findings, it is recommended that:

1. Start-up and operating grants currently provided by the GNWT be increased to sustain existing child care facilities and support the creation of new ones, and that a portion of any increases be applied to staff salaries. Further, that grants not be tied to daily attendance.
2. The GNWT set targets for the yearly development of new child care spaces.
3. The GNWT address factors that negatively affect the Early Childhood Subsidy Program (e.g. low eligibility income ceilings and late payment of subsidies).
4. Education and training opportunities for early childhood staff be provided at the community level with financial support to staff to attend and/or funding to cover costs for temporary workers.
5. The GNWT further survey the need for child care during irregular hours and in centres with a significant need, provide additional funding for day cares to offer these services.
6. Child care facilities build relationships and connections with organizations that have an interest in child care issues and the capacity to lobby on their behalf. Organizations could include regional or community-based Aboriginal

governments and non-government organizations (e.g. Status of Women Council of the NWT, Native Women's Association of the NWT, YWCA of Yellowknife, unions). It would be in GNWT's best interest to support an NWT Child Care Association.

1. Introduction

Alternatives North is a social justice coalition in the NWT whose membership includes representatives from churches, labour unions, environmental organizations, women and family advocates and anti-poverty groups. Alternatives North believes that investment in the care and nurturing of northern children will pay off in the future through lower health, social service and educational costs, and improved quality of life for individuals, families, and communities.

In October 2005, Alternatives North commissioned a survey of child care operators in the NWT in order to better understand the issues they face and the support they need to provide quality child care services. Lutra Associates Ltd., under contract to Alternatives North, completed the Alternatives North Child Care Survey. The Union of Northern Workers and the NWT Regional Women's Committee of the Public Service Alliance of Canada financially supported the survey.

2. The Survey

2.1 Survey Approach and Methodology

The approach and methodology approved for the Alternatives North Child Care Survey was shaped by the following factors:

- research questions developed by Alternatives North;
- a desire to include as many child care facilities as possible;
- the number of licensed facilities in the NWT;
- the busy schedules of facility directors/coordinators;
- a limited budget; and
- a short time frame.

A clear language, self-administered questionnaire was drafted by Lutra and reviewed by Alternatives North. The approved questionnaire was tested with a child care facility in each of the following four communities: Fort Smith, Fort Good Hope, Yellowknife, and Fort McPherson. As a result of the test, some questions were reworded and others were reordered.

The survey questionnaire and a cover letter from Alternatives North were faxed to licensed facilities in the NWT and hand delivered to day homes in Yellowknife during the week of November 21, 2005. Facilities were asked to return completed questionnaires by December 5, 2005. Day homes in Yellowknife were given the option of faxing or mailing completed questionnaires or calling for pick-up.

A minimum of two telephone calls were made to non-responding facilities to encourage their participation. Facilities were also given the opportunity to complete the questionnaire by telephone. The timing of the survey (i.e. close to Christmas) may have affected participation as many facilities offer special programming during this time and others are preparing to close over the Christmas break.

2.2 Licensed Child Care Facilities

The Government of the Northwest Territories, Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) maintains a list of licensed early childhood facilities operating in the NWT. In 2005, there were 81 licensed facilities including 40 centre-based programs and 41 day homes. Licensed facilities are located in all NWT regions:

- 4 in the Tli Cho Region (5%);
- 7 in the Deh Cho Region (9%);
- 17 in the South Slave Region (21%);
- 4 in the Sahtu Region (5%);
- 10 in the Beaufort-Delta Region (12%); and
- 39 in Yellowknife (48%).

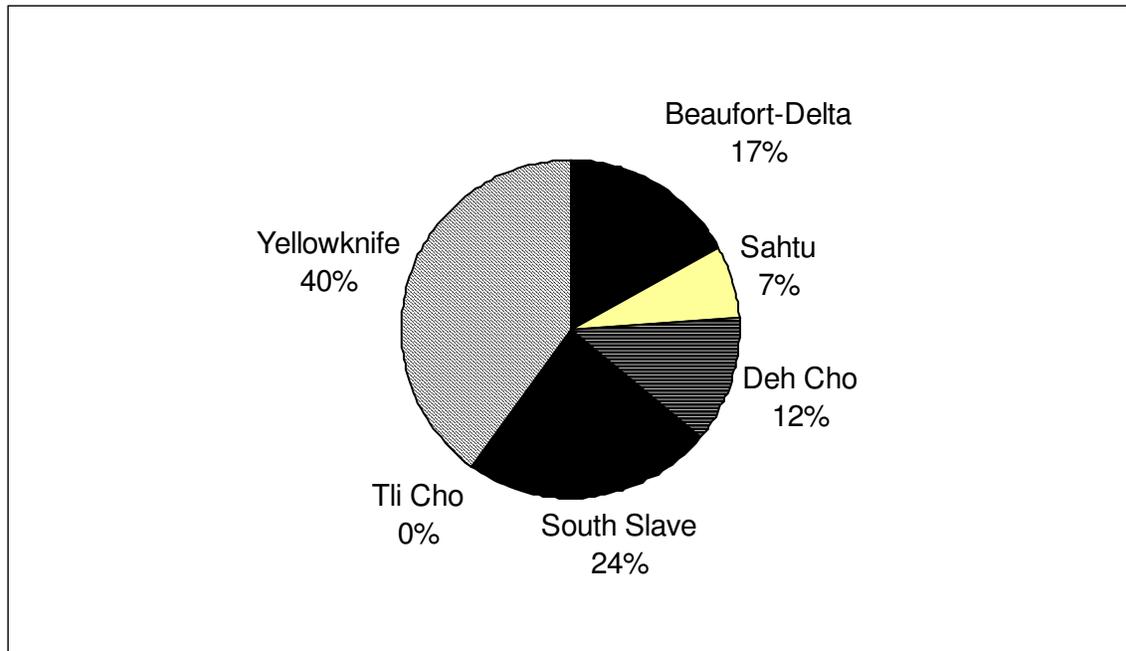
In 2004, the number of licensed child care spaces in the NWT could accommodate approximately 12% of children zero to 12 years of age.¹

2.3 Response to the Alternatives North Child Care Survey

Forty-two (42) licensed facilities responded to the Child Care Survey, including 30-centre-based programs (i.e. 13 day cares and 17 pre-school programs) and 12 day homes. Respondents represent 52% of the total number of licensed facilities, 75% of centre-based facilities and 29% of day homes. Facilities responding to the Survey also represent all regions in the NWT except the Tli Cho. (Facilities operating in the Tli Cho were not included in the original list from ECE. Contact was made with the Coordinator of Early Childhood Programs, Tli Cho Community Services Agency to invite their participation.) (Figure 1)

¹University of Toronto, Childcare Resource and Research Unit. 2005. Trends and Analysis: Early Childhood Education and Care in Canada <http://www.childcarecanada.org/ECEC2004/index.html>

Figure 1: Facilities Responding by Region



Note: Deh Cho includes Fort Providence and the Hay River Reserve; South Slave includes Lutsel K'e.
N (number of respondents) = 42

This report presents information from the Alternatives North Child Care Survey. Data are presented for all licensed facilities and are grouped by type of program (e.g. centre-based vs. home-based) and by type of service (e.g. child care vs. pre-school). For the purpose of this survey, the following definitions are used:

1. Day Cares – Day cares are non-profit, centre-based programs that operate 12 months of the year and provide full and part-time child care.
2. Pre-schools – Pre-schools are non-profit, centre-based programs that usually provide part-time programming and follow the school year.
3. Day homes – Day homes are home-based programs that usually operate 12 months of the year and provide full and part-time child care. Day homes are privately owned and operated, but are classified by ECE as non-profit.

A copy of the questionnaire and survey results are presented in Appendix A.

3. Child Care in the NWT

Child care in the NWT is regulated by the *Northwest Territories Child Day Care Act and the Child Day Care Standards and Regulations, 1988*. The Act provides a regulatory framework and guidelines for non-profit and profit agencies who wish to operate a licensed child care facility. The Standards and Regulations address the daily program, discipline, nutrition, health care, parental involvement, staffing ratios for a safe, healthy and stimulating environment. ECE also administers two programs, one designed to help parents in need to cover the cost of child care (Childcare Subsidy Program) and the other to assist facilities with start-up and operating costs.

Eligibility for the Childcare Subsidy Program is calculated based on financial need; the number of child care hours required; and parents' work, training or education schedules. The maximum monthly rates are \$700 for licensed day cares and \$600 for licensed day homes. Subsidies are paid directly to parents upon receipt of attendance and financial information. Arrangements can be made for subsidies to be paid to the facility.² Factors that negate the benefits of the subsidy include:

- low eligibility income ceilings relative to the high cost of child care (i.e. families do not qualify for the subsidy, but cannot afford current child care fees);
- a shortage of regulated or reliable child care in the community; and
- late payment of the subsidy, which creates problems for the parent and reluctance from child care providers to care for those children.³

Regional Early Childhood Consultants provide program support to early childhood facilities in their region. They provide training to early childhood practitioners on specific topics on request, and prepare and distribute newsletters that contain a variety of child development and programming ideas. Facilities can also access resources from their Regional Early Childhood Consultant.

The Early Childhood Program provides start-up and operating grants to licensed facilities on a first-come first serve basis. Start-up grants range in value depending on the number

² Department of Education, Culture and Employment
<http://www.ece.gov.nt.ca/Publications/PDF%20Publications%20Files/NWT%20Income%20Support%20Programs/NWT%20Income%20Support%20Programs%20Child.pdf>

³ Status of Women Council of the NWT. March 21, 2005 Submission on Development of the Department of Education, Culture and Employment Strategic Plan 2005 – 2015
http://www.statusofwomen.nt.ca/download/ece_submission.pdf

and type of spaces being created (e.g. infant, special needs, after-school) and the location (i.e. different parts of the NWT). For example, in 2003/04, start-up grants ranged from \$1,800 - \$3,420 per space.⁴

Operating contributions are committed based on: the number and type of spaces; daily rates in the community; and maximum possible attendance in the program. Actual amounts received over the year are based on documented daily attendance in the program. Payments are made quarterly, in advance, based on expected occupied spaces and adjustments are reconciled according to submitted actual attendance numbers. The adjustments made for daily attendance do not take into consideration that though the actual attendance may vary, the ratio of staff to children in care is based on the number of registered children. The facility is still required to maintain this ratio when a child is absent for a limited period of time. Licensed facilities operating out of a GNWT building that is also used for other purposes (e.g. school, hospital or college) receive 50% of their eligible operating grant.

In 2004, the GNWT spent just over \$2,000 per licensed child care space compared to \$816 in Alberta and \$4,849 in Quebec. Between 2001 and 2004, GNWT spending per licensed child care space increased by 60.9%.⁵

In 2005, the federal government began negotiating with provinces and territories to allocate close to \$5 billion over 5 years (2005/06 – 2009/10) for early learning and child care systems. In 2006, when the Conservative Party was elected, the federal government had completed agreements with the provinces but was still negotiating with the three territories. The key outstanding issue was per capita funding versus base plus per capita funding.

During negotiations the federal government placed the first year of funding into a trust fund for the provinces and territories. A second year of funding was also placed in the territories' trust fund. After the Conservative Party was elected, the federal government announced that all agreements and trust funds would be cancelled on March 31, 2007 and replaced with an annual taxable family allowance of \$1,200 for each child under the age of six. The federal government defines the taxable allowance as supporting choice

⁴ University of Toronto, Childcare Resource and Research Unit. 2005. Early Childhood Education and Care in Canada, 2004 – Northwest Territories

http://www.childcarecanada.org/ECEC2004/pub_pdf/ECEC_2004_NT.pdf

⁵ University of Toronto, Childcare Resource and Research Unit. 2005. Trends and Analysis: Early Childhood Education and Care in Canada <http://www.childcarecanada.org/ECEC2004/index.html>

however the amount of the allowance (i.e. less than \$100 a month after taxes) will not cover the cost of quality child care. Further, the cancellation of federal-provincial/territorial agreements will have a direct and negative impact on the ability of Canadian jurisdictions to invest in and support quality early childhood programs.⁶ At the time of writing the Government of the Northwest Territories had not announced how they plan to spend the two years of funding allocated to them.

⁶ Source: Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada
<http://www.childcareadvocacy.ca/action/codeBlue/index.html>

4. Children and Families in the NWT

Birth rates in the NWT, like the rest of Canada, are declining. Between 2000 and 2003, an average of 655 babies were born in the NWT each year. The number of young children (six years of age and younger) in the NWT is also declining, falling from 4,964 in 2000, to 4,697 in 2005.⁷ Approximately 43% of children nine years of age and younger, live in Yellowknife, 22% live in the regional centres of Inuvik, Hay River or Fort Smith, and 37% live in smaller communities.⁸

In 2004, 21,900 adults,⁹ including 10,000 women, worked outside the home. Most women (85%) worked full-time. In the five years between 1999 and 2004 the employment rate¹⁰ for women in the NWT grew from 65.4% to 68% and remained well above the national rate of 57.8%. The employment rate is highest for women 25 to 44 years of age in the NWT.¹¹ Participation of women in the labour force has a direct impact on the demand for child care. Men do not necessarily become caregivers and nurturers of children when women work outside the home. Instead it means a greater demand for child care spaces.

In 2001, lone parents (mostly women) headed 21.5% of families in the NWT.¹² Lone parent families are stressed to meet financial and other family needs. Recent studies suggest that children living in lone parent families have a higher risk of physical and mental health problems and lower levels of well-being, competence, and attainment than children from intact two-parent families.¹³ These children may need additional supports within the home and within early childhood programs.

⁷ NWT Bureau of Statistics

http://www.stats.gov.nt.ca/Stainfo/Demographics/population/est_data/SingleYr.xls

⁸ NWT Bureau of Statistics <http://www.stats.gov.nt.ca/Stainfo/Demographics/population/popest.html>

⁹ 15 years of age and older.

¹⁰ The employment rate is the percentage of the adult population who are working.

¹¹ NWT Bureau of Statistics

<http://www.stats.gov.nt.ca/Stainfo/Labour/Labour%20Trends/2004/Women.pdf>

¹² NWT Bureau of Statistics. <http://www.stats.gov.nt.ca/Social/11Loneparent.html>

¹³ Ross, David P., Roberts, Paul A., and Scott Katherine. 1998. Variations in Child Development Outcomes Among Children Living in Lone-Parent Families

<http://www11.sdc.gc.ca/en/cs/sp/sdc/pkrf/publications/research/1998-001325/page01.shtml>

In 2003, 14.4% of families and 21.5% of children in the NWT were living with low income.¹⁴ Low-income families are challenged to provide the basic necessities of life including safe shelter, nutritious food and quality child care.

Dependency ratios present the dependent population (those less than 15 years of age) as a ratio of the working age or intermediate population (those aged 15 to 64). In 2004, the dependency ratio in the NWT was 36.6.¹⁵ This means that for every 100 people of working age, there were approximately 37 dependent children. Dependency ratios indicate the substantial responsibility on some family members to care for and ensure the well-being of dependent members.

¹⁴ NWT Bureau of Statistics. http://www.stats.gov.nt.ca/Statinfo/PricesIncome/Income/1994-2003/Family_LowInc_2003%261998.xls

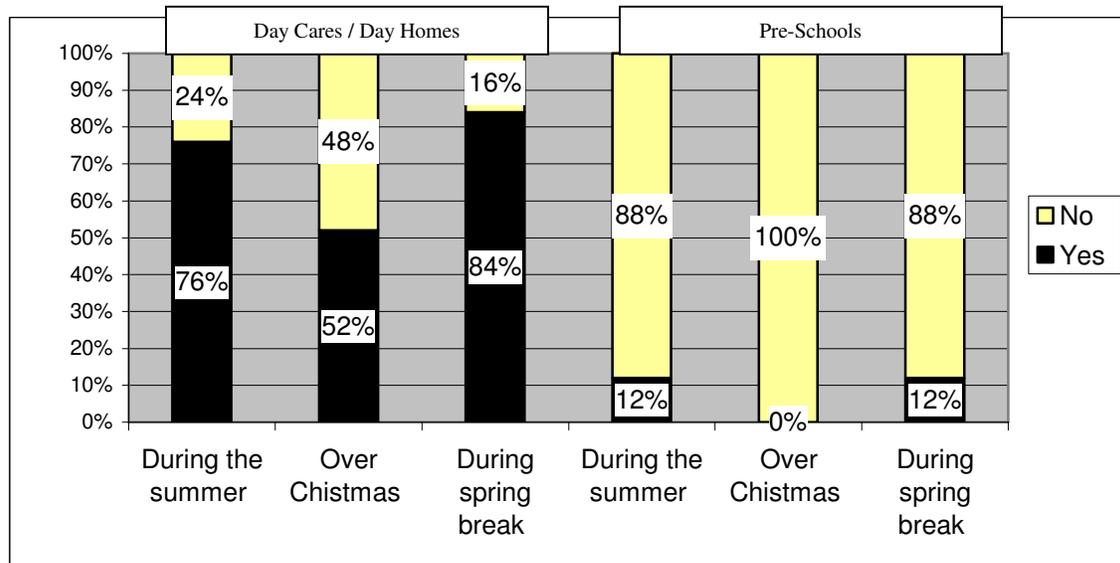
¹⁵ NWT Bureau of Statistics. <http://www.stats.gov.nt.ca/Social/Social%20Indicator%20Tables.xls>

5. Survey Results

5.1 Operations

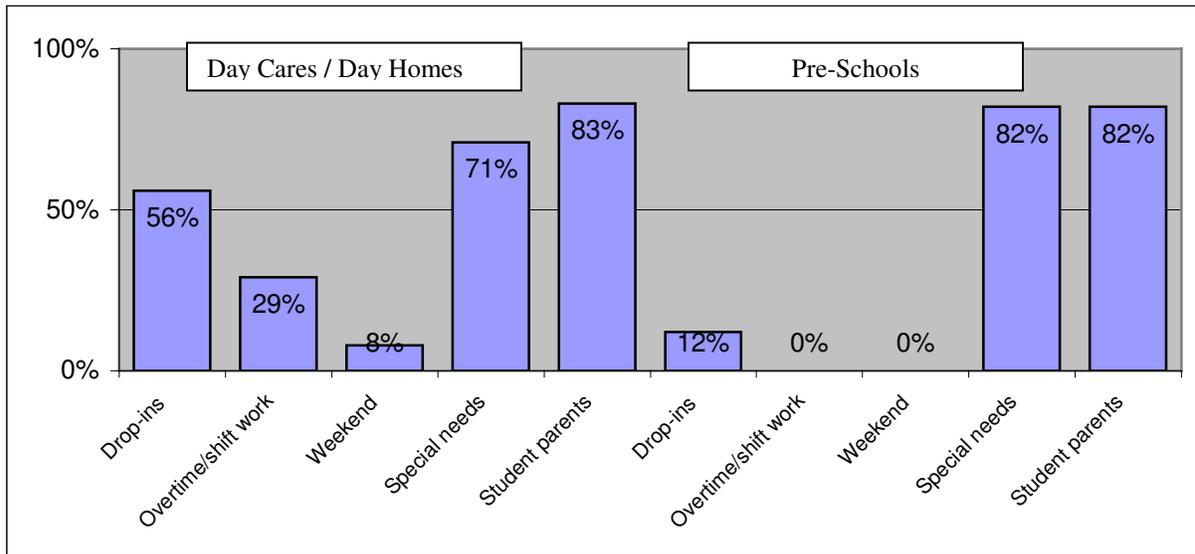
Facilities participating in the Child Care Survey have been in operation for an average of 11 years. Facilities operate an average of 4.7 days per week (day cares and day homes operate an average of 5 days per week and pre-schools 4.3 days per week). Facilities are open an average of 7.9 hours per day (day cares and day homes an average of 9.2 hours per day and pre-schools 6 hours per day). Day cares and day homes tend to have different operating schedules than pre-schools. (Figure 2)

Figure 2: Operating Schedules of Day Cares/Day Homes and Pre-Schools by Percent



Day cares and day homes are more likely to take children on a ‘drop-in’ basis than pre-schools. A high percentage of both day cares and day homes, and pre-schools accept children with special needs and can accommodate parents who are students. Just over one-quarter (29%) of day cares and day homes can accommodate parents working shift work or overtime, but only 8% provide weekend care. Pre-schools do not offer these services. (Figure 3) Just over half (51%) of facilities responding to the survey say that there is a demand for some or all of these services.

Figure 3: Services Offered by Day Cares/Day Homes and Pre-Schools by Percent



Centre-based programs tend to serve large groups of children, for example, day cares have an average of 28.2 spaces and pre-schools have 29.4 spaces compared to 7.2 spaces in day homes. All facilities operate at full capacity. (Table 1)

Table 1: Average Number of Licensed Spaces and Attendance* by Type of Facility

	Average Number, Infants		Average Number, Pre-School		Average Number, After-School	
	Licensed Spaces	Attending	Licensed Spaces	Attending	Licensed Spaces	Attending
Day Cares	6.5	4.8	15.2	15.1	6.5	6.1
Day Homes	1.8	1.6	3.8	3.9	1.6	1.3
Pre-Schools	0	.3	28.4	21.7	1	1.8

*Facilities were asked how many children attend their programs on a typical day.

Quality childcare is not generally available. Parents are desperate for childcare and end up resigning from their jobs and leaving the community.” Survey Respondent

Just over two-thirds (67%) of facilities maintain a wait list. The number of children on wait lists range from three to three hundred, with an average of 24. The highest unmet demand among day cares and day homes is for infant spaces while pre-schools say that their highest demand is for pre-school spaces.

“Let day homes have one employee and more kids. This would give more spaces to parents to choose and a better availability of service and safety for kids.” Survey Respondent

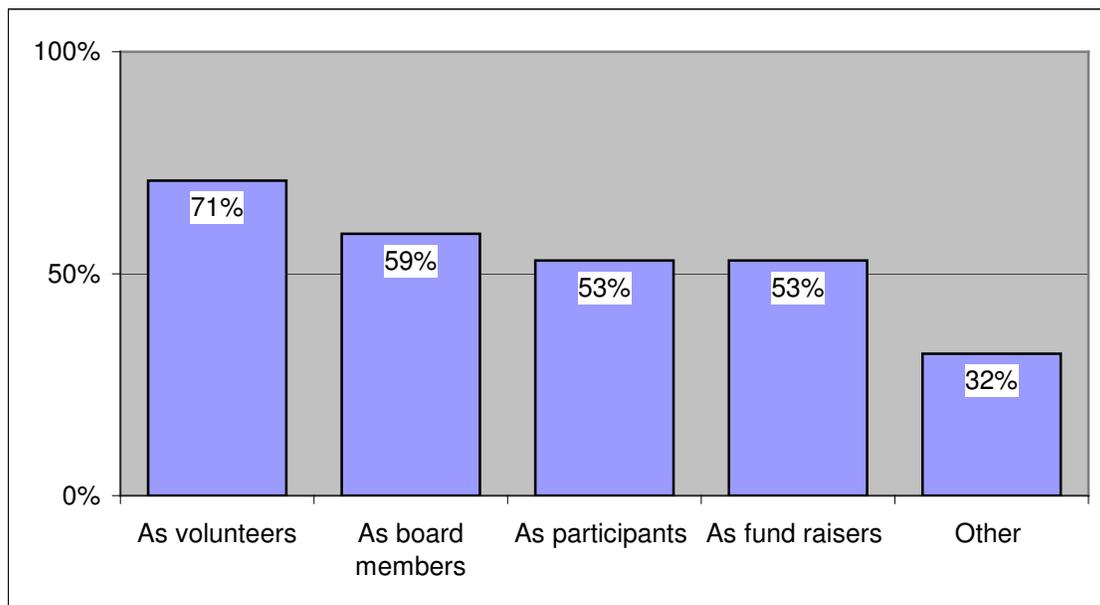
5.2 Families Served

A total of 1,035 families use the facilities participating in the Child Care Survey. This translates to an average usage of 25 families per facility. Families using child care facilities tend to have the following characteristics:

- 8% have a parent who works a rotational shift outside the community.
- 20% are headed by a single parent and women head 90% of these families.
- 16% have two children in one facility and 3% have three or more children.
- 9% receive a child care subsidy (86% receive the ECE Childcare Subsidy and 14% receive a subsidy from Social Services or a combination of the two).

Parents volunteer in programs as board members, fund-raisers and to help facilities in other ways. (Figure 4)

Figure 4: Parent Involvement in Child Care Programs by Percent

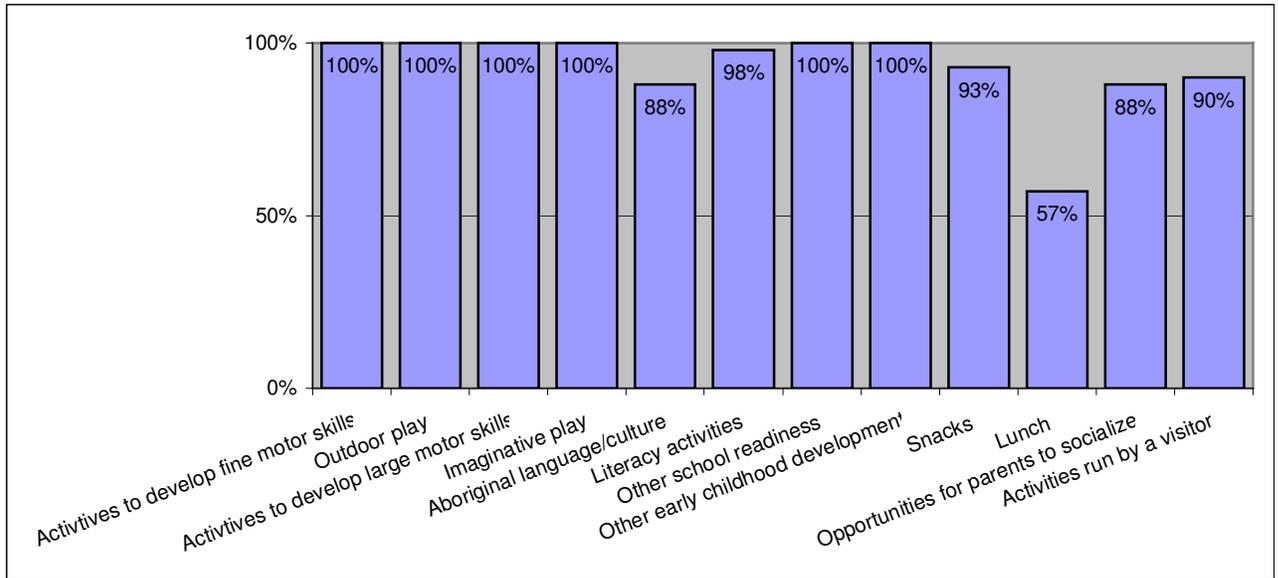


Note: “Other” includes on advisory board; special events; helping their children; providing feedback; and as substitute teachers. “As participants” includes parent involvement in toy lending libraries, and other activities that involve parents.

5.3 Early Childhood Programming and Staff Duties

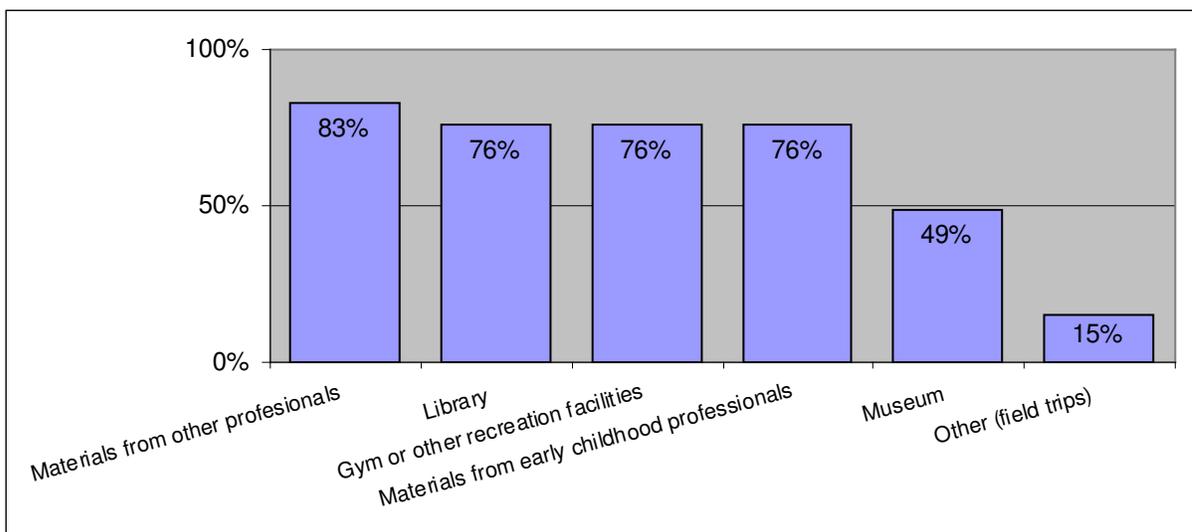
All facilities include a variety of early childhood development and school readiness activities as part of their regular programs. Most involve individuals from the community in the delivery of activities. Facilities also provide opportunities for parents to socialize and virtually all facilities provide snacks. (Figure 5) The majority (80%) of day homes and day cares also provide lunch.

Figure 5: Program Activities Offered by Facilities by Percent



Facilities use a variety of community-based resources in their program activities. (Figure 6)

Figure 6: Community Resources Used by Facilities by Percent



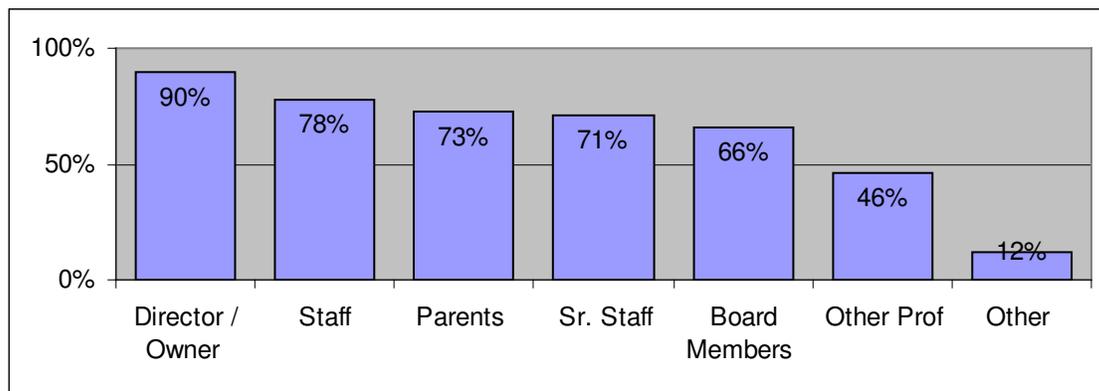
“It is important for children entering into the Francophone school to start early with preschool, especially for developing vocabulary. Resources are needed to ensure high quality programs and attract and keep high quality human resources.” Survey Respondent

“I think more money is needed for pre-schools in YK; the two that are in existence do not meet the needs of the community's children. There needs to be ONE STOP Shopping for early childhood resources such as Speech/language, OT, parenting, special needs.” Survey Respondent

Slightly more than one-quarter (29%) of facilities share space and services or are administered by the same non-profit or Aboriginal organization. About 40% of facilities escort children from their facility to attend other early childhood programs or bring children from other facilities to attend theirs. Centre-based programs are more likely to be connected in some way with other early childhood facilities.

Early childhood staff and parents are usually involved in the development of program activities. Close to half (46%) of participating facilities also involve other early childhood professionals in the design of program activities. (Figure 7)

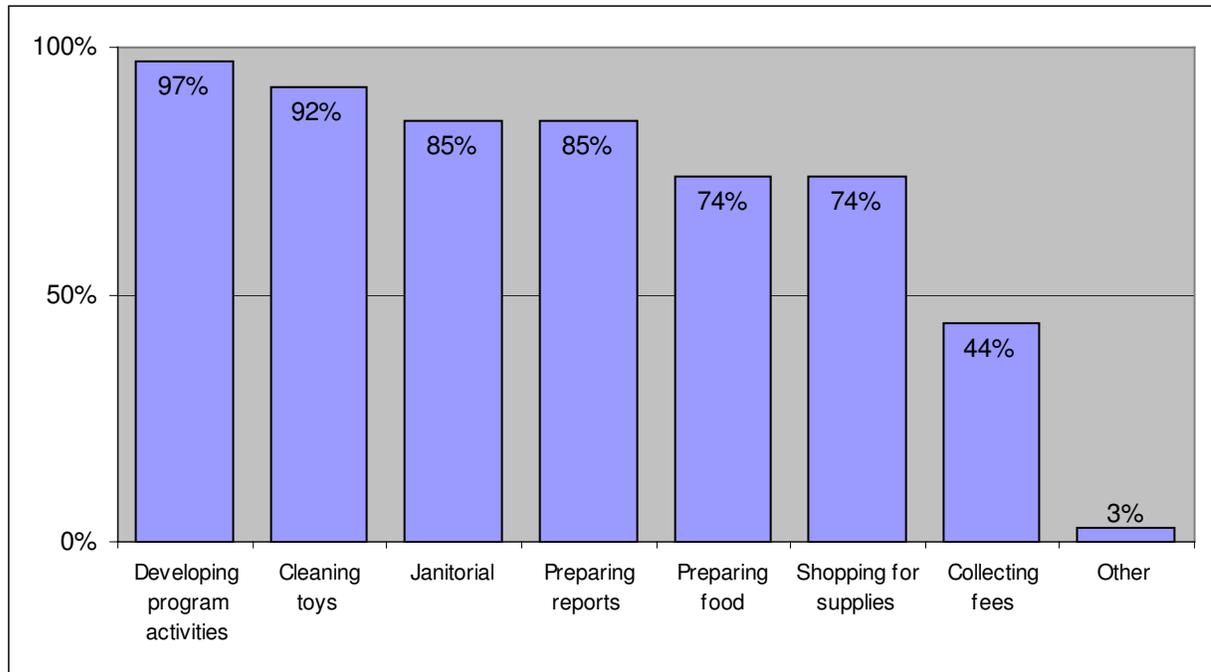
Figure 7: Individuals Who Help Develop Program Activities by Percent of Facilities



Note: ‘Other’ includes children’s interests/activities that have been popular with the children; special needs professionals; regional early childhood officers; and discussions with other day homes

Staff are responsible for a multitude of other tasks that may take them away from their primary responsibility (i.e. the care and development of children). (Figure 8)

Figure 8: Other Daily Staff Duties by Percent



“Why is there no Child Care Agenda in place yet? Money, resources and standardization of programs all need to be part of this Agenda.” Survey Respondent

“I would stress the importance of early childhood education. Investing in early childhood education will save money in the future.” Survey Respondent

5.4 Staff Remuneration and Training

In 2000, the average annual income of full-time early childhood educators and assistants with college certificates or diplomas in the NWT was approximately \$22,000. This compares to the approximately \$47,000 paid to individuals with college certificates or diplomas working in all other occupations.¹⁶ Centre-based programs responding to the Child Care Survey pay a full-time equivalent of approximately \$35,700 for coordinators, administrators, directors, and instructors and program support personnel; \$30,990 for child care workers; and \$30,570 for other staff. (Table 2) In 2003, the average personal income in the NWT was \$42,572.

¹⁶ 2001 Census of Canada in Child Care Wages and a Quality Child Care System, prepared by Jane Beach and Bozica Costigliola for the Child Care Human Resources Sector Council, 2004.

Table 2: Staff Remuneration by Type of Position, Centre-Based Programs

Position	Average Pay (Per Hour)	Pay Range (Per Hour)	Average No. of Hours Worked Each Week	Range of Hours Worked Each Week
Coordinator / Administrator / Director	\$17.17	\$18 to \$32	39.4	30 to 60
Instructor / Program Support*	\$17.15	\$12 to \$31	32	5 to 40
Child Care Worker	\$14.90	\$12 to \$20	33	10 to 40
Other (e.g. bus driver, cook, student worker)	\$14.70	\$9 to \$22	31.2	12 to 40

*Includes teachers, teacher assistants, language/culture instructors, and program support workers.

“Early childhood programs are important as they set a foundation for how a person copes with life. Please take care of the care providers by valuing their contributions to society. Additional funding is needed to attract and keep qualified people in early childhood development.” Survey Respondent

Low wages and poor benefits contribute to high staff turnover and problems with recruitment. Facilities responding to the Child Care Survey experience high turnover, especially among child care workers and instructors and program support workers. (Table 3)

Table 3: Length of Employment by Type of Position

Position	Average Length of Employment (Months)	1 to 9 months (percent)	10 to 19 months (percent)	20+ months (percent)
Coordinator / Administrator / Director	53.4	30%	13%	57%
Instructor / Program Support	21.4	37%	27%	35%
Child Care Worker	24.5	48%	5%	48%

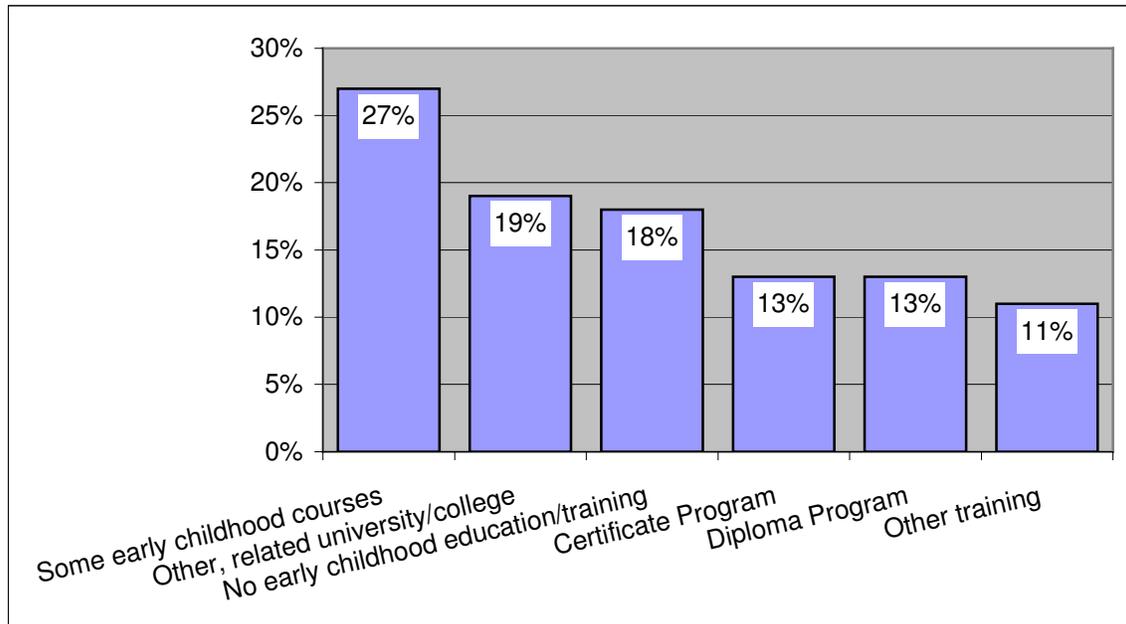
“Keep funding rates high and don't cut early childhood programs short. Please give staff raises as they work for low wages.” Survey Respondent

“Childcare workers are poorly paid; more money needs to be allocated for wages. It is so hard to find quality people at such low wages. The more money spent on early childhood programs will result in less money being spent on youth.” Survey Respondent

Early childhood workers in the NWT are required to complete a criminal record check and have CPR and first aid certificates. They are not required to have completed an early childhood education program. In 2000, approximately 29% of early childhood educators

and assistants in the NWT had achieved a certificate or diploma.¹⁷ Most staff in facilities responding to the Child Care Survey have some type of early childhood or related training. For example, 26% have achieved either an early childhood certificate or diploma and 27% have taken some early childhood courses, however, 18% have no early childhood education. (Figure 9) Early childhood staff have other skills, for example, 45% of facilities have staff that speak an Aboriginal language.

Figure 9: Highest Level of Training of Early Childhood Staff by Percent



There are some differences in the level of early childhood education by type of service. For example individuals working in day homes and day cares are more likely to have completed a diploma program; they are also more likely to have no early childhood education while pre-school staff are more likely to have completed other, related university or college education. (Table 4)

Table 4: Highest Level of Early Childhood Education Achieved by Staff by Type of Service

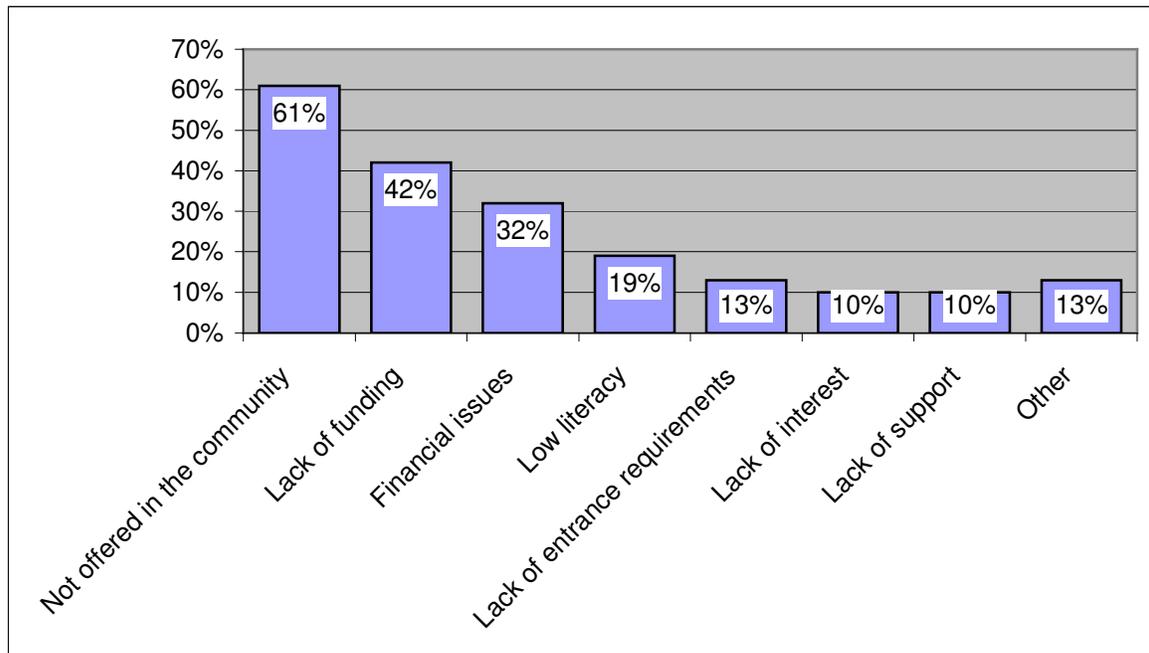
Highest Level Completed	Day Cares/ Day Homes (N=90)	Pre-schools (N=54)
Certificate Program	12%	13%
Diploma Program	16%	7%
Some Courses	24%	31%
Other, Related University/College	13%	28%
No Early Childhood Education Training	22%	11%
Other Training	12%	9%

¹⁷2001 Census of Canada in Child Care Wages and a Quality Child Care System, prepared by Jane Beach and Bozica Costigliola for the Child Care Human Resources Sector Council, 2004.

“Childcare workers’ wages are low and there has been no increase in rates for a while. There is no incentive to stay in positions or to improve skills. No financial motivation. Communities have a very high cost of living.” Survey Respondent

Most facilities (78%) provide professional development opportunities for their staff. A lack of early childhood education courses offered in community, financial issues and low literacy levels create barriers for early childhood staff wishing to pursue early childhood education. (Figure 10)

Figure 10: Barriers to Completing Early Childhood Education Programs/Courses



“Come and do my job for a day, manage a staff of 10, deal with their issues, care for 60 children and deal with parents and board members and you will find out how challenging the job truly is.” Survey Respondent

5.5 Financial Information

Between 2002 and 2004, facilities responding to the Child Care Survey were able to operate within budget and did not run a deficit. (Table 5)

Table 5: Average Revenues and Expenses, 2002 – 2004*

	2004 (n=24)	2003 (n=18)	2002 (n=14)
Total Revenues	\$159,111	\$151,452	\$149,103
Total Expenses	\$156,396	\$147,687	\$146,497

Note: n = number of respondents *These data should be used with caution due to the small number of respondents.

“Our staff and agency was awarded the Prime Minister's Award for Excellence in childcare. We fundraise as an organization, but our funding was cut from 15 subsidized seats to 10. We run a successful program, WHY was our funding cut?” Survey Respondent

Most facilities (70%), including 90% of day cares and day homes and 40% of pre-schools charge user fees. Most facilities charge for a full month regardless of actual use.

To address shortfalls in revenues, facilities depend upon a number of different revenue sources, including:

- ECE Early Childhood Program start-up and/or operating grants;
- fund raising activities;
- funding from other federal or territorial early childhood programs, such as Aboriginal Head Start, Healthy Children Initiative, Canadian Action Plan for Children, Brighter Futures, Canadian Prenatal Nutrition Program (CNNP);
- funding from Aboriginal governments/organizations; or
- other sources of funding (for example, hire a student, on-the-job training, funding for literacy, donations, interest income and ‘uncategorized’ income).

Table 6 provides information on average revenues from each of these sources.

Table 6: Average Revenue from All Sources, 2004*

Source	Average Amount	N
Parent Fees	\$92,753	20
ECE Early Childhood Program	\$54,229	27
Fund Raising	\$17,434	11
Other Federal and Territorial Programs	\$72,488	12
Aboriginal Governments or Organizations	\$88,720	5
Other Sources (see above)	\$68,293	7

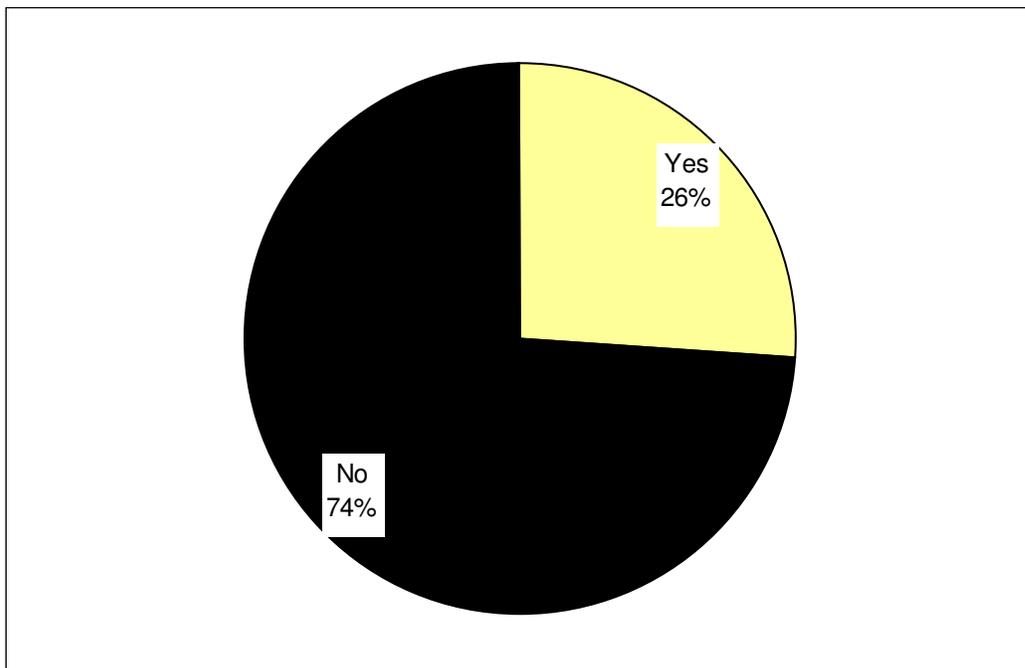
N = Number of Respondents *These data should be used with caution due to the small number of respondents. .

Facility directors/coordinators and board members usually prepare budgets, proposals and financial reports for centre-based programs. Owner/operators are most likely to perform these functions for day homes. Organizing fund raising activities, writing funding proposals, and meeting funding administrative requirements are among the functions of

directors/coordinators and owners along with program planning and delivery, and in the case of directors/coordinators, personnel management.

Approximately three-quarters (74%) of facilities report that their current revenues are not adequate to operate a quality early childhood program (Figure 11). On average, they identify a need for an additional \$49,470 annually to run a viable operation. Centre-based programs say that they need an additional \$55,714 (n=14)¹⁸ annually and day homes an additional \$32,000 (n=5).

Figure 11: Adequacy of Revenues to Operate a Quality Program



N (Number of Respondents) = 31

“Children are our future and we need to provide them with the best possible care and education possible. More government support would help reach our goals. ECD programs need money.” Survey Respondent

“Children want to learn and are so innocent and eager. Workers need higher wages because of the high cost of living in the north. Workers are dedicated and make daycare a positive experience. Money should not be held back from children's programs.” Survey Respondent

¹⁸ Does not include one response of \$500,000.

It is highly unlikely that facilities could generate additional revenues through increases to user fees. Almost one quarter (22%) of facilities report that in the past year, families have removed their children, reduced their use of the program or brought other family members in to look after their children because they could not afford user fees.

“There needs to be more incentive for daycare facilities to open and remain open. There should be more resource materials for these operators who do not have any formal training.” Survey Respondent

“It is hard to keep raising the price to follow inflation, so the inflation goes faster than price charged to parents.” Survey Respondent

Day homes pay an average of \$1,785 (n=8) each month for rent or mortgage and utilities and an additional \$3,562 (n=8) per year for maintenance and renovations. Nine centre-based programs do not pay for rent or utilities and 12 do not pay for maintenance and renovations. Programs that are responsible for these costs pay an average of \$1,562 (n=14) for rent or mortgage and utilities and an additional \$8,118 (n=11) for maintenance and renovations.

“Explain funding agreements with early childhood programs. The GNWT does not adequately cover costs of running a quality program.” Survey Respondent

“More money for childcare, to pay for quality programming that includes quality caregivers. Spend more money on children when they are young. It makes a big difference.” Survey Respondent

5.6 Infrastructure

Centre-based programs responding to the Child Care Survey operate in buildings that are an average of 15.3 years old while day homes operate in buildings that are an average of 16 years old. Approximately 43% of centre-based programs and 17% of day homes operate out of buildings designed to be child care centres. Almost 63% of facilities, including 75% of centre-based programs, have a playground attached to their facilities.

Some centre-based programs say they are located in buildings that are small, old and in poor repair, and/or are not designed to be child care centres. These deficiencies challenge early childhood programming. Some centre-based programs are housed within community schools and have access to school playgrounds and other facilities, but may be at risk of losing the space if the school needs it. A couple of centre-based programs have undertaken major fund raising activities in order to build a new facility or renovate an existing one.

“Better inspection and policing day cares and day homes to ensure they are operating within parameters set by GNWT. Poor conditions and performance affect those of us who provide quality programs.” Survey Respondent

5.7 Governance Structure

Day homes in the NWT are privately owned. Most centre-based programs (69%) are run by a board of directors while 31% operate under the auspices of a community or Aboriginal government or an education authority. Boards of directors consist of an average of 7.6 people of which 6.5 are parents. Most (70%) board members have had some type of board training and 55% of boards use board resources from Education, Culture and Employment. Approximately 63% of boards evaluate their program or senior staff.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

The Alternatives North Child Care Survey provides a snapshot of the child care facilities in the NWT.

6.1 Conclusions

A number of conclusions can be drawn from the Survey.

Strengths

1. Child care facilities offer integrated programs that include opportunities for early childhood development and the development of school readiness skills, and exposure to Aboriginal culture and languages.
2. Parents are involved in child care facilities as board members, as fund raisers, and helping out within programs. Most board members have some board training.

Challenges

1. The demand for licensed child care exceeds the supply. The highest unmet demand is for infant spaces within day cares and day homes and pre-school spaces within pre-school programs. Very few facilities can accommodate family members working overtime, shift work or on weekends. The demand for these services is expected to grow in the coming decade if the anticipated growth in the non-renewable resource sector (e.g. oil and gas and mining) is realized.
2. Most staff working in child care facilities have some early childhood or related education or training and facilities provide professional development opportunities for staff. Barriers to completing early childhood education programs and courses include a lack of education opportunities at the community level, the costs associated with courses and programs, and low literacy levels.
3. Child care facilities do not generate sufficient revenues to pay their staff a competitive wage for the work they do. As a result facilities experience high turnover, which negatively affects their programming.
4. Child care facilities are able to operate within a prescribed budget. Existing budgets are inadequate to offer high quality programming. Given the already high cost for child care, it is unlikely that facilities can generate additional revenues by raising user fees. Facilities need adequate, stable funding.

6.2 Recommendations

In light of the survey findings, it is recommended that:

1. Start-up and operating grants currently provided by the GNWT be increased to sustain existing child care facilities and support the creation of new ones, and that a portion of any increases be applied to staff salaries. Further, that grants not be tied to daily attendance.
2. The GNWT set targets for the yearly development of new child care spaces.
3. The GNWT address factors that negatively affect the Early Childhood Subsidy Program (e.g. low eligibility income ceilings and late payment of subsidies).
4. Education and training opportunities for early childhood staff be provided at the community level with financial support to staff to attend and/or funding to cover costs for temporary workers.
5. The GNWT further survey the need for child care during irregular hours and in centres with a significant need, provide additional funding for day cares to offer these services.
6. Child care facilities build relationships and connections with organizations that have an interest in child care issues and the capacity to lobby on their behalf. Organizations could include regional or community-based Aboriginal governments and non-government organizations (e.g. Status of Women Council of the NWT, Native Women's Association of the NWT, YWCA of Yellowknife, unions). It would be in GNWT's best interest to support an NWT Child Care Association.

“Listen to the people who work in overcrowded and under funded centres. They are the people who know the subject.” Survey Respondent

“Better facilities, more funding, better programs. Staff wages are too low considering the high stress environment.” Survey Respondent

“We need money for the operation of the daycare and to increase wages of childcare workers to a level where turnover is not an issue. Children are our future and benefit from quality day care.” Survey Respondent

A Letter to the Minister from a Survey Respondent

Mr. Minister, could you tell me if your office has a clear vision for Early Childhood Programs in the NWT? What will early childhood programs look like in five years from now? What steps are currently being taken to attain any long range plans?

As an early childhood educator involved with northern programs for over fourteen years, I think it is essential for the government to go to individuals on the frontline of child care and see first hand the needs of educators and families. Valuable expertise and experience can be gained while listening to these individuals.

With the current economic growth and prosperity the NWT is experiencing, we are attracting families for employment. With the growing number of working parent families, quality child care is essential. By offering viable, quality child care we are in essence ensuring that we are attracting and retaining families coming for employment in other sectors of our economy.

Our current system needs to continue to change and grow to keep up with the realities of our ever growing economy. We face many challenges, as do other Canadians when establishing high quality care. Housing, cost of living, remuneration, retention and training are all issues facing us. We must have a plan of action to address these issues.

The latest research tell us the importance of the first six years in a child's development, confirming the essential need for quality child care programs. Mr. Minister, in the NWT an individual is required to obtain a driver's license in order to operate a motor vehicle. Why then, do we allow other individuals to operate early childhood programs with little or no training? In order to provide quality child care we must recognize the importance of training in the field and demand it.

There are many dedicated individuals who work tirelessly on the behalf of children throughout the NWT. It is time we recognize that these individuals contribute to the NWT economy. It is vital that the Government of the NWT move forward in a positive direction. By investing in the early years we are investing in our growth and prosperity. The North's future marches forward on the feet of little children, let's give them the best possible start.

Appendix A: Letter of Introduction and Survey Results

November 17, 2005

To: Operators of Early Childhood Programs
Northwest Territories

Re: Alternatives North NWT Child Care Survey

Alternatives North is a social justice coalition with representatives from labour, women's, church, environmental and anti-poverty organizations. We have been in existence for ten years. We are non-profit and operate entirely on volunteer resources. One of the things we do is examine social policy and make recommendations for its improvement.

Early childhood care and learning issues have been in the media of late. These issues have also been a longstanding concern of Alternatives North. With the assistance of the Union of Northern Workers, we have secured funds to hire Lutra Associates Ltd. to design and carry out a survey of child care centres in the NWT. Sandy Auchterlonie and MaryAnne Duchesne are working on the survey on behalf of Lutra Associates.

The purpose of the **Alternatives North NWT Child Care Survey** is to gather information from early childhood centres to determine common themes and challenges. Results of the survey will be used to make recommendations to the Government of the Northwest Territories on positive changes they can make to their early childhood program policies and approaches to funding.

This survey is voluntary, but your participation would be most helpful. We will not release any individual survey results, but will pool together the information obtained in order to make our recommendations. We know that it is difficult for child care centres to join together to voice their concerns and we believe this survey could help with this. We know that this survey will take some work on your part, but your efforts will be worthwhile.

Please fax your completed questionnaire to **867-873-8368 by December 15, 2005**. If you have questions about the questionnaire or would like help filling it out, please call Sandy collect at 867-920-2177. If you have any questions for Alternatives North, please contact us at info@alternativenorth.ca or by calling 867-920-2765.

On a more personal note, I was president of the francophone day care here in Yellowknife for three years. I understand very well the challenges some of you face.

Suzette Montreuil
Co-chair
Alternatives North

Alternatives North NWT Child Care Survey

Number of centres responding = 42

31% Day care (13)

40% Pre-school (17)

29% Day home (12)

Your Program

1. How many years has your program been in operation? **Average 11 years**

n=41 range 1 to 30 years

2. How many days does your program operate each week?

n=42 Average **4.74 days/wk**

range 1 to 5 days

3. How many hours does your program operate each day?

n=41 Average **7.9 hours/day**

range 3 to 12 hours

4. Does your program operate: (Please check)

n=42 during the summer months? **50% yes 50% no**

n=42 over Christmas? **31% yes 69% no**

n=42 during spring break? **55% yes 45% no**

5. How many infants, preschool and after school children is your program licensed for?

(Number of Children)

n=40 a. infants (3 -24 months)

0 infants = 48% (19);

1-4 infants = 35% (14);

5-9 infants =10% (4);

10+infants = 8% (3)

Average (not including 0's) = 4.9

n=40 b. preschool (2 - 5 years)

0 preschool = 3% (1);

1-4 preschool = 25% (10);

5-9 preschool = 13% (5);

10-19 preschool = 58% (23);

20+ preschool = 28% (11)

Average (not including 0's) = 17.5

n=41 c. after school (6-10 years)
0 after school children = 51 % (21);
1-4 children =32% (13);
5-9 children = 5% (2);
10+ children = 12% (5)
Average (not including 0's) = 6.0

7. On a typical day, how many children attend your program?
(Number of Children)

a. infants (3 -24 months)
Average (not including 0's) = 4.3

b. preschool (2 - 5 years)
Average (not including 0's) = 14.9

c. after school (6-10 years)
Average (not including 0's) = 6.2

8a. Do you have a waiting list?
n=42 **67% yes 33% no**

8b. If yes, how many children are on your waiting list?
Range 3-300 average 24

8c. If yes, which age group has the highest demand for additional spaces?
n=31 **52% infants 42% preschool 6% after school**

9a. Does your program accommodate:

		(Please check)
n=42 a. drop-ins?	38% yes	62% no
n=41 b. parents who work overtime/shift work?	17% yes	83% no
n=41 c. weekend care?	5% yes	95% no
n=41 d. children with special needs?	76% yes	24% no
n=41 e. parents who are students?	83% yes	17% no

9b. If no, to any of the above. Is there is a demand for these services in your community?
n=37 **51% yes 49% no**

10. Does your program share space or is it connected in other ways with another early childhood program(s)?
n=41 **29% yes 71% no**

11a. If yes, what other program(s)? _____

Elementary School	3
Language/culture program/organization	2
Preschool program	2
NWT Council of Persons with Disabilities	2
Day care	1
Literacy program	1
Recreation program	1

11b. How are you connected?

-both are Band programs=2

-rent/share space = 2

-formal agreements = 1

-partnerships = 1

-aides for children=1

Your Program Activities

This section is about your program's activities.

1. Does your program include:

(Please check)

n=42 a. Crafts, colouring and other activities to develop fine motor skills	100% yes 0% no
n=42 b. Outdoor play	100% yes 0% no
n=42 c. Other activities to develop large motor skills	100% yes 0% no
n=42 d. Imaginative play	100% yes 0% no
n=41 e. Aboriginal language/cultural activities	88% yes 12% no
n=41 f. Literacy activities	98% yes 2% no
n=42 g. Other school readiness activities	100%yes 0% no
n=42 h. Other early childhood development activities	100%yes 0% no
n=42 i. Snacks (provided by the program)	93%yes 7% no
n=42 j. Lunch (provided by the program)	57% yes 43% no
n=42 k. Opportunities for parents to gather and socialize	88% yes 12% no
n=40 l. Activities run by a visitor (e.g. professional, elder, parent)	90% yes 10% no
m. Other (please describe)	
field trips = 5; child progress reports = 1; evening cultural programs=1;	
link with other community agencies to run events=1; music program =1;	
nutrition resources = 1	

2. Who helps develop your program activities? (Check as many as apply)
n=41

- 90% Director/Owner = 37
- 71% Senior Staff/Program Coordinator =29
- 78% Child Care Staff = 32
- 73% Parents = 30
- 66% Board Members =27
- 46% Other early childhood professionals within or outside the community =19
- 12% Other (please identify)
children's interests =1; regional early childhood officer=1;
special needs professionals=1; meetings with other day
homes each month to exchange information =1

3. What community resources/facilities does your program use?
n=41

- (Check as many as apply)
- 76% Library = 31
 - 76% Gym, swimming pool, arena or other recreational space =31
 - 49% Museum = 20
 - 76% Materials from early childhood professionals in the community = 31
 - 83% Materials from health, education and/or language professionals in the community. = 34
 - 15% Other (please identify)
field trips to grocery store, fire station, etc. = 6

4. Do you escort children from your program to other early childhood programs or do you bring children from other programs to attend yours?
n=42

41% yes 60% no

Your Families

1. Approximately how many families use your program each year?

n=41 Total number of families: **1035**
Average number of families: **25**
Range 4 to 150

2. How are parents involved in your program?

n=34

(Check as many as apply)

53% As participants = 18

71% As volunteers (e.g. cleaning, baking, organizing, helping workers)=24

59% As board members = 20

53% As fund raisers = 18

Other: advisory group = 12%; special events 6%; helping their children (with show and tell and other activities) 6%; provide feedback=3%; substitute teachers=3%; sitting with children=3%

3. How many of your families have a parent who works rotational shifts outside the community?

n=41

49% of programs have a families working rotational shifts

Total number of families: **81 (8% of total families)**

Number of families: 1-4=13; 5-9=6; 10+=1

4a. How many of your families are headed by a single parent?

n=41

20% of families are headed by a single parent (203 of 1035 families)

4b. How many of these single parents are women?

n=202

are men?

90% are women

10% are men

5. Approximately how many families have:

two children in your program?

16% families (169/1035)

three or more children in your program?

3% families (36/1035)

6a. How many of your families receive a child care subsidy? **9%** families

(93/1035)

6b. What subsidy do they receive? N=14

n=14

86% ECE Child Care Subsidy Program (12)

14% Social Services or a combination of SS and ECE (2)

7. Over the past year have any families removed their children from your program, reduced their use of your program or brought family members in to look after their children because they could not afford the costs?

n=37

22% yes 57% no 22% don't know

Your Staff

1. Please provide a profile of your staff

Note: The following information does not include day homes.

Coordinator/Administrator/Director

n=18 Wage: Range \$18 to \$32/hour; Average wage \$22.20

n=19 Hours: Range 30 to 60; Average 39.4

n=18 Length of Employment: Average 53.4 months

Teaching Staff

(Teacher, Teaching Assistant/Aide, Language/Culture Instructor, Program Support/Developmental Support Worker)

n=76 Wage: Range \$12 to \$31/hour; Average \$17.15

n=80 Hours: Range 5 to 40/week; Average 32

n=75 Length of Employment: Range 0-96 months; Average 21.4 months

Length of Employment

1 to 9 months = 37% (25)

10 to 19 months = 27% (18)

20 to 29 months = 13% (9)

30+ months = 22% (15)

Caregivers

n=27 Wage: Range \$12 to 20/hour; Average \$14.90

n=24 Hours: 10 to 40/week; Average 33

n=21 Length of Employment: Range 1 to 60 months; Average 24.5 months

Length of Employment

1 to 9 months = 48% (10)

10 to 19 months = 5% (1)

20+ months = 48% (10)

Other

(Bus Driver, Cook, Student Workers)

n=8 Wage: Range \$9 to \$22/hour; Average \$14.70

n=9 Hours: Range 12 to 40; Average 31.2

2. What is the highest level of **early childhood education** programs or related courses achieved by your staff?

n=144 Number of staff (please count each person only once)
13% have completed a certificate program (18)
13% have completed a diploma program (18)
27% have completed some courses (39)
19% have other, related university or college education (27)
18% have no early childhood education training (26)
11% have completed other training (16)

Other

	No. of Responses
Did not specify	5
Completed CPR and First Aide Training	2
One is a retired teacher	1
Bachelor of Education	1
Bachelor of Education, major early childhood development	1
Bachelor of Social Work	1
Degree in Early Childhood Development and Degree in Computer Programming	1
Degree Program in Child Psychology	1
Diploma in Teacher's Education	1
Management Studies Certificate	1
Speech/Language, Literacy and Management training	1

3. What things make it difficult for your staff to complete early childhood education programs or courses? (Check as many as apply)

n=31 **19%** low levels of literacy (6)
13% do not have entrance requirements (4)
32% financial issues (10)
61% courses/ programs are not offered in the community(19)
10% lack of interest (3)
42% lack of funding (13)
10% little support from family, coworkers or workplace (3)
Other: **13%** work full-time, not enough time, courses offered in the evening/ weekends (4); **3%** just started working (1)

4a. Do you provide professional development opportunities for your staff?

n=36 **78% yes 22% no**

4b. If no, why not? (Check as many as apply)

n=8 3 few development opportunities available in the community
6 costs
0 staff not interested
0 not seen as a priority by Director/ Board
Other - funding cut = 1; participate in ECE workshops = 1

5. How many of your staff speak an Aboriginal language? **44 staff**
45% of programs have staff that speak an Aboriginal language (17/38)

6. What other duties, besides child care are child care workers required to perform daily? (Check as many as apply)

- n=39
- 92%** cleaning toys
 - 85%** cleaning up/janitorial
 - 74%** preparing food
 - 74%** shopping for supplies
 - 85%** preparing reports
 - 97%** developing program activities
 - 44%** collecting fees/issuing receipts
 - 3%** other = helping parents with problems

Your Finances

1. What have been your total revenues and expenses over the past three years?

	2004 n=24	2003 n=18	2002 n=14
Total Revenues	\$159,111	\$151,452	\$149,103
Total Expenses	\$156,396	\$147,687	\$146,497

2. How much did you receive last year from each of the following sources:

- a. Parent Fees **n=20 \$ 92,753**
- b. Department of Education, Culture and Employment's
 Early Childhood Program **n=27 \$ 54,229**
- c. Fund Raising Activities **n=11 \$ 17,434**
- c. Other Federal or Territorial Early Childhood Programs **n=12 \$ 72,488**
 (For example, Aboriginal Head Start (AHS), Healthy Children Initiative (HCI),
 Canadian Action Plan for Children (CAPC), Canadian Prenatal Nutrition Program
 (CPNP), Brighter Futures)
- d. Aboriginal Governments/Organizations **n=5 \$ 88,720**
- f. Other _____ **n=7 \$ 68,293**

3a. Was this enough money to operate a quality program? **26% yes 74% no**
n=31

3b. If no, how much more do you need? **\$49,474 per year**
n=19 Range 10,000 to 200,000 (does not include one response of \$500,000)

\$10,000 - \$19,999 = 3
\$20,000 - \$49,999 = 8

\$50,000 - \$99,999 = 5
 \$100,000 or more = 3

4a. Does your program charge parent user fees? n=37 **70% yes 30% no**

4b. If yes, much do charge?

- n=10 **\$549** per month for full-time
- n=8 **\$288** per month for part-time (less than 20 hours per week)
- n=2 **\$690** per month for seasonal
- n=17 **\$33** per day
- Other (please describe):

\$17/half day
\$30./day for families with two children in day care.
\$50/month for 3 year olds who attend 2 half days per week; \$100/month for 4 year olds who attend 4 half days per week. The Preschool is only a small component of the Francophone school and it is difficult to determine actual revenues and expenses for it.
After school fees are \$350. per month. Additional fees are charged if parents need more than 8 hours of service.
Charge \$45. per day for infants
Half day is \$12. Charge only for the days attended.
Infant rate is \$27/day.
Infants \$685./month Infant half time \$25./day After school 12.'day
Infants are \$45. per day.
Infants/day is \$30.
Other Income is from Interest. Parents are charged for the number of sessions per week. A session is either a morning or an afternoon. 2 sessions per week is \$114 and 3 sessions per week is \$160 per month.
Other revenue comes from summer camp and donations. Fees for after school care are \$125. per month.
Registration Fee of \$20.

4c. If yes, do you charge for a full month whether participants use your program or not?

n=35 **66% yes 34% no**

5. Who usually prepares your budgets, proposals and financial reports?

	Number of Responses
Owner/Operator	10
Coordinator	4
Band Office	2
Regional Administrator	3
Accountant	1
Catholic School Board Admin. Staff	1
Administrator, Treasurer, Bookkeeper	1
Board Financial Officer and Bookkeeper	1

Board President	1
Board Treasurer	1
Board/Bookkeeper	1
Director	1
Director and Accountant	1
Director and Board Treasurer	1
Executive Director	1
Finance Officer/Coordinator	1
H and R Block	1
Manager/Director	1
Principal	1
Program Manager	1
Secretary	1
Teacher and Board	1
Teacher and President	1
Total	42

Your Facility

1. How old is your facility? N=40

-Average 16 years

-Range 1 to 40 years

1 to 4 years= 6 facilities:

5 to 9 years= 8 facilities;

10 to 14 years=10 facilities;

15 to 24 years=7 facilities;

25 years or older=9 facilities

2. Was your facility designed to be a child care centre? **35%yes 65% no**
n=40

3. Do you have a playground attached to your centre? **63% yes 37% no**
n=41

4. How much do you pay each month for rent/mortgage and utilities?

Range 0 to \$8500

Average \$1166/month n=31

\$0 = 9 facilities 29%

\$250-999 = 8 26%

\$1000 - 1499 = 4 13%

\$1500 - 1999 = 2 6%

\$2000 - 2499 = 5 16%

\$2500 or more = 3 10%

5. About how much do you pay per year for maintenance/renovations?

Range 0 to \$23000

Average \$4363/year n=27

\$0=8	30%
\$200 - 1999 = 6	22%
\$2000 - 4999 = 4	15%
\$5000 - 9999 = 4	15%
\$10,000 or more = 5	19%

6. Is there anything else you would like to say about your facility?

A lot of your questions are none of your concern.
As a license requirement, I must keep all walls and surfaces free from chips or scratches; painting is ongoing in order to maintain sanitary conditions. Additional insurance costs exceed 4 000/year for operating a childcare business out of my home.
Deline Preschool should have their own building.
I maintain a high quality level of childcare by keeping my caregiver child ratio low.
If there was more money for childcare, I would be able to afford to install quality playground equipment in my backyard for the children to enjoy.
It costs lots to live in 2005. It's hard to keep raising the price to follow inflation, so the inflation goes faster than the raising of the price asked of parents of kids in day care.
Major renovations are needed to the facility, but funding is not available. If the renovations are not made this year, our daycare may be forced to close its doors.
Building is old, rundown, moldy and in poor repair.
Our facility is located in a building designed as a bakery, with two levels. It would be wonderful to have everything on one level. There are 15-foot tin ceilings that cause noise to be amplified. We are not able to completely separate the age groups
Our facility used to be the old fire hall. We need a new building.
The Band maintains the building and utilities as part of community services.
The facility is the owner/operator's home. A playground will be completed this coming summer.
The playground is actually a play area, not a formal playground.
This facility is located within a school and space was renovated for the facility in 2002
Very old building and needs repair and renovations related to electrical, plumbing and structure.
Was almost bankrupt three years ago, last year we built a\$32,000.tricycle track and did \$10880. worth of renovations to our kitchen with no help from a funding agency.
We are fortunate to have this space.
We have a new school with the preschool as part of the kindergarten program in a very large classroom. We need to complete the playground and renovate the bathroom for our small students.
We need more space, and need to add on to the building so we can take on more children and meet the needs of the community.
We raised funds and built a new facility that was designed as a pre-school.
We share a building with offices, and the doors closing with people coming and going tends to disturb the children's concentration.
We share the space with the Kindergarten class. Our Preschool uses the space in the am. The advent of full time Kindergarten is a reality in the near future. When this happens we will not have space, and we cannot afford to pay rent and utilities.
YCS supports program by providing classroom space and janitorial and maintenance services at no charge; program coordination is also provided at no charge

Other

1a. What type of governance structure do you have?

n=40 **50% Board (20)**
20% Under a community or Aboriginal government (8)
28% Privately owned (11)
3% Other (1) Education Authority

If a Board please continue,

2a. How many people are on your Board?

n=19 **Average 7.6 people**

2b. How many parents are on your Board?

n=19 **Average 6.5 people**

2c. How many of your Board Members have Board training?

n=20 **10% all 70% some 20% none**

2d. Have you used the Board resources binders from GNWT, ECE?

n=20 **55% yes 45% no**

2e. Does your Board evaluate your program or senior staff?

N=19 **63% yes 37% no**

Finally

If you had five minutes with the NWT Minister responsible for early childhood programs what advice would you give him?

Listen to the people who work in overcrowded and under funded centres. They are the people who know the subject.

Early childhood programs are important as they set a foundation for how a person copes with life. Please take care of the care providers by valuing their contributions to society. Additional funding is needed to attract and keep qualified people in early childhood development.

Childcare workers' wages are low and there has been no increase in rates for a while. There is no incentive to stay in positions or to improve skills. No financial motivation. Communities have a very high cost of living.

Concentrate on a pre-school curriculum or standardization. A checklist that says whether a child is ready for kindergarten would be helpful.

Explain funding agreements with early childhood programs and GNWT does not adequately cover costs of running a quality program.

Our staff and agency was awarded the Prime Minister's Award for Excellence in childcare. We fundraise as an organization, but our funding was cut from 15 subsidized seats to 10. We are a successful program, WHY was our funding cut?

It is important for children entering into the Francophone school to start early with preschool, especially for developing vocabulary. Resources are needed to ensure high quality programs and attract and keep high quality human resources.

Childcare workers deserve higher wages and benefits to attract and keep qualified workers.

Why is there no Child Care Agenda in place yet? Money, recourses and standardization of programs all need to be part of this Agenda.

More money for childcare, to pay for quality programming that includes quality caregivers. Spend more money on when children are young and it makes a difference. It would lead to brighter futures for many children.

Childcare workers are poorly paid; more money needs to be allocated for wages. It is so hard to find quality people at such low wages. The more money spent on early childhood programs will result in less money being spent on youth.

I would stress the importance of early childhood education. Investing in early childhood education will save money in the future.

Let day homes have one employee and more kids. This would give more spaces to parents to choose and a better availability of service and safety for kids.

Promote the option of parents staying at home to raise their own children so that they can instil good values, love and patience into their child and not depend on others for such an important task.

Stricter regulations for day homes/day care if there has been a violation of regulations. There needs to be more incentive for daycare facilities to open and remain open. There should be more resource materials for these operators who do not have any formal training.

Better inspection and policing day cares and day homes to ensure they are operating within parameters set by GNWT. Poor conditions and performance affect those of us who provide quality programs.

That we need money!

Better facilities, more funding, better programs. Staff wages are too low considering the high stress environment.

Children are our future and we need to provide them with the best possible care and education possible. More government support would help reach our goals. ECD programs need money.

I think more money is needed for pre-schools in YK; the two that are in existence do not meet the needs of the community's children. There needs to be ONE STOP Shopping for early childhood resources such as Speech/language, OT, parenting, special needs.

Come and do my job for a day, manage a staff of 10, deal with their issues, care for 60 children and deal with parents and board members and you will find out how challenging the job truly is.

We need money for the operation of the daycare and to increase wages of childcare workers to a level where turnover is not an issue. Children are our future and benefit from quality day care.

The longer the delay in paying for early childhood programs the more you will pay in the future

Money to fund aide for our special needs children. There has to be a better way for day cares to access funding dollars from ECE. Take Federal money offered and fight about funding issues separately.

Children want to learn and are so innocent and eager. Workers need higher wages because of the high cost of living in the north. Workers are dedicated and make daycare a positive experience. Money should not be held back from children's programs.

Provide more money as these programs is very successful and we have evaluations to prove it.

Need more funding for recourses and supplies

More money needs to go for early childhood

Quality childcare is not generally available in Inuit. Parents are desperate for childcare and end up resigning from their jobs and leaving the community. Insufficient funding results in low wages and it is very hard to keep staff.

Keep funding rates high and don't cut early childhood programs short. Please give staff raises as they work for low wages.

Come and see our facility and see what we offer our children.

Lobby for daycare and preschool building in the NWT or communities.

Mr. Minister, could you tell me if your office has a clear vision for Early Childhood Programs throughout the NWT? What will early childhood programs look like in five years from now? What steps are currently being taken to attain any long range plans? As an early childhood educator involved with northern programs for over fourteen years, I think it is essential for the government to go to individuals on the frontline of child care and see first hand the needs of educators and families. Valuable expertise and experience can be gained while listening to these individuals.

With the current economic growth and prosperity the NWT is experiencing, we are attracting families for employment. With the growing number of working parent families, quality child care is essential. By offering viable, quality child care we are in essence ensuring that we are attracting and retaining families coming for employment in other sectors of our economy.

Our current system needs to continue to change and grow to keep up with the realities or our ever growing economy. We face many challenges, as do other Canadians when establishing high quality care. Housing, cost of living, remuneration, retention and training are all issues facing us. We must have a plan of action to address these issues. The latest research tells us the importance of the first six years in a child's development, confirming the essential need for quality child care programs. Mr. Minister, in the NWT an individual is required to obtain a driver's license in order to operate a motor vehicle. Why then, do we allow other individuals to operate early childhood programs with little or no training? In order to provide quality child care we must recognize the importance of training in the field and demand it.

There are many dedicated individuals who work tirelessly on the behalf of children throughout the NWT. It is time we recognize that these individuals contribute to the NWT economy. It is vital that the Government of the NWT move forward in a positive direction. By investing in the early years we are investing in our growth and prosperity. The North's future marches forward on the feet of little children, let's give them the best possible start.

Would you like a copy of the results of this survey?

100% yes 0 no