



**Work  
Matters**

# **Roundtable Report**

**January 2022**



Work Matters is a 2 step project developed to help local businesses bridge the **skilled labour gap**.

We're looking for job seekers, incumbent workers, HR staff, managers, CEOs, and business owners in the **Early Childhood Education and Skilled Trades** sectors.



**1**

## Roundtable Discussions

Small group discussions to delve deeper into HR capacity to meet today's **workforce challenges**

Let's work together to prioritize HR and recruitment issues, then find the **best practices** and solutions



## Future of Work Summit

One summit that builds and delivers the knowledge and practices you need to **modernize and grow**

**Learn from** other businesses, as well as professional consultants and community partners

Learn to find **the right fit** instead of being stuck in a cycle of quick fixes

**2**



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# Introduction

The Work Matters project is delivered by the Canadian Career Academy and funded by *Employment Ontario*. The project is designed to bring together various key groups, establish the successes and challenges they have experienced within their respective sectors, and help build effective workforce solutions to address the issues that are presented.

Work Matters' first phase focused on manufacturing, transportation, and health care, which culminated in the creation of the [Pathway2PSW](#) and [Pathway2DZ](#) programs. For more information on this phase, view our Year in Review report [here](#).

In its current phase, the Work Matters project is focusing on the early childhood education and skilled trades sectors within Lanark and Renfrew Counties. Our analysis of these sectors began with the roundtable discussions held in October. We had over fifty employers contribute their voices in six roundtable discussions as well as individual conversations. We also heard from job seekers and incumbents in both sectors as well as

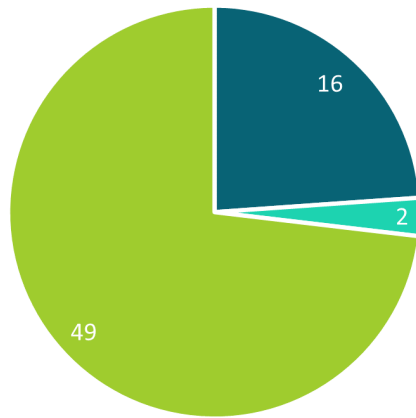
high school and college students interested in pursuing a career in either early childhood education or the skilled trades. Hearing from these various key groups allowed us to gain a better understanding of the present challenges within these sectors. It was interesting to see where there were commonalities throughout the sectors and among groups, but also where the opinions and values of one group differed from another within the same sector, for example, between employers and incumbents. We also learned about best practices used by employers, which will be shared in this report along with the results of the roundtables, individual discussions, and surveys.

The roundtables were a collaborative effort among some of our key partners. We would like to acknowledge Valley Heartland, the Local Immigration Partnership - Lanark & Renfrew, With Chéla, and the Labour Market Group of Renfrew & Lanark, as well as Matt LeMay as our moderator.

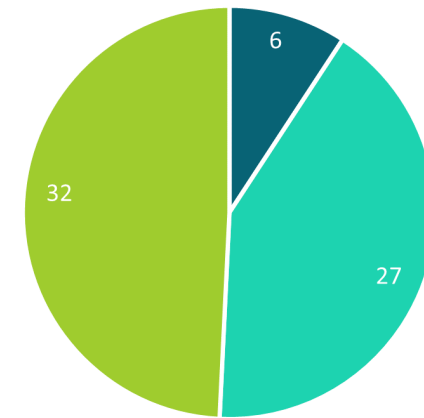


# Roundtable Period Engagement

Total Participants During Roundtable Period:  
Early Childhood Education



Total Participants During Roundtable Period:  
Skilled Trades



■ Roundtable Participants ■ Individual Discussions ■ Survey Respondents

■ Roundtable Participants ■ Individual Discussions ■ Survey Respondents

These figures illustrate the number of individuals in each sector that engaged with our project during the roundtable period. Employers, incumbents, and job seekers who completed our survey were included in the totals seen above. In addition, we collected 31 survey responses from high school and college students interested in pursuing a career in either early childhood education or the skilled trades and 10 survey responses from community partners with knowledge of either sector or connections to employers in either sector. In all, participation from our roundtables, individual discussions, and surveys totaled 173 individuals.

# Roundtable Findings

**D**uring the month of October, we held six roundtable discussions. Three were focused on early childhood education and three focused on skilled trades. We were joined mostly by business owners, but also welcomed HR staff, supervisors, educators, and incumbents. We also documented individual discussions with employers who were interested in contributing to the roundtables but could not commit to the dates and times that were set. In total, we documented close to thirty individual discussions across both sectors. The information shared during these conversations has been compiled with the information shared during the roundtables.

Laura Hanek of Swoop Media also joined us during the roundtables and completed individual graphic recordings of each session that highlight the main themes that

were discussed. The graphic recordings can be viewed [here](#).

In general, our findings illustrate the challenges that were shared by participants. Although the Work Matters project's intent is not to tackle systemic and broader sector challenges, we believe that the challenges and concerns outlined by employers need to be brought forward. For these sectors to thrive and prosper, there needs to be provincial solutions with employer engagement put in place. Later in this report, we identify some best practices and workforce development recommendations based on the employer feedback gathered during the roundtable period. Our roundtable findings, and the basis for our recommendations, have been categorized by theme and sector on the following pages.



# Staff Shortages

## Early Childhood Education

- **Program and centre closures** due to staff shortages
- **Split shifts and lack of consistent full-time hours** for before and after school programs make them hardest to staff because most registered early childhood educators (RECEs) do not prefer them
- **Limited supply staff** leading to reduced program capacity and potential closures when core staff call in sick with no available staff to cover
- **School boards' competitive advantage** results in child care centres often losing staff to school boards due to their ability to offer better pay, benefits, pension, and working hours
- **Female-dominated sector**—shortages due to work-life balance and primary caregiver roles
- **Ratio requirements** in child care centres determine the number of RECEs per number of children in a program based on children's age—with non-RECEs not counting towards this ratio. Having all RECEs is the goal, but this is not possible due to current labour shortages
- **Administration staff losing time** for their legislative reporting, policy adherence, scheduling, etc., to provide floor coverage to compensate for staff shortages resulting in excessive overtime
- **Non-RECEs and uncertified individuals** that are trustworthy and child-centred fill the gap, which gives the wrongful impression that RECEs can be replaced by 'babysitters'
- **Francophone and bilingual RECEs** are in great demand
- **Child care centre waitlists** have between 5 and 150+ infant and toddlers awaiting care in most centres
- **Infant spaces have highest waitlist** because there are so few centres—not a profitable field because you need one RECE per three infants and parents pay the highest rate for this type of care
- **Government \$10/day child care** is promising thousands of new child care spaces, which invites the question of who will staff the centres for the impending influx of children needing care

# Staff Shortages

## Skilled Trades

- **All trades in need of skilled workers** with some employers wanting to increase their staff by 50% or more
- **Difficulty filling entry level positions** with some taking up to 6-9 months
- **Extensive waitlists** for employers looking for skilled workers from training colleges
- **Employers choosing to work with less** employees to avoid liability concerns associated with hiring unskilled workers (i.e., safety, reputation of company, financial loss, etc.)
- **Under-performing staff are not dismissed** for fear no one will replace them—reputation and morale of other employees is at stake
- **Outsourced workers** from other areas are often needed by contractors to complete jobs in this area
- **Cross-training employees to cover shortages** due to the inability to fill specific roles
- **Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB)**, when in place, impacted the number of people willing to work
- **Longer hours and more work** divided among less people means increased liability and burnout of staff
- **Interest in certain trades needs to increase**—for example, production sewing is a trade that is not often recognized, with no local training programs, and an ageing workforce with few people entering the trade



# Attracting and Retaining Staff

## Early Childhood Education

- **Wages not reflective** of the levels of responsibility and accountability RECEs have in child care centres
- **School boards are often more attractive** to RECEs and new graduates because they often offer higher pay, regular full-time hours, unions, benefits, and more lenient licensing and health unit/ministry expectations, etc.)
- **Students often return to their place of origin** upon completion of their program
- **Rural employment is less attractive** to RECEs living in Ottawa and surrounding urban areas, affecting centres in nearby Lanark County
- **RECEs leave the sector** for jobs with more pay and fewer responsibilities and less stress
- **Home-based child care is more attractive** for some ECEs due to better financial opportunities, the ability to go unlicensed, and less parties to comply with, which is contributing to staff shortages in child care centres
- **More mental health resources** and support needed for staff
- **Funding and a long-term plan required** to increase wages and benefits, provide consistent scheduling, improve quality of work, and eliminate burnout with proper staffing to ensure this can be a fulfilling, lifelong career
- **Challenging to keep staff motivated** with increased responsibilities, longer workdays, and frequent policy changes with few incentives to outweigh the challenges brought on by the pandemic



# Attracting and Retaining Staff

## Skilled Trades

- **Job boards frequently attract unqualified people** for posted positions and/or non-residents of the area or even Canada—word of mouth has proven to be the best method for recruiting
- **Better hiring system required** that is specific to tradespeople
- **Under-utilized recruitment and HR technology** by employers due to insufficient amount of time and/or skill level to learn these programs
- **Unrealistic wages expected** by overqualified/underqualified applicants
- **Smaller businesses losing employees** to larger companies and jobs in bigger cities that pay more
- **Some employers unable to provide a livable wage** to employees without raising service costs for customers—employers caught between retaining staff and losing customers
- **Male-dominated** sector which can be challenging for women to feel accepted and respected in
- **Soft skills training recommended** to bridge the divide between seasoned workers and new hires, and improve the intimidating environment often associated with the skilled trades
- **Newcomers to Canada** are eager to work in industry—most are skilled, but not yet eligible to work in Canada
- **Lack of affordable and available housing, child care, and transportation** has posed challenges for people considering work in this area



# Apprenticeship and College Programs

## Early Childhood Education

- **Unpaid placements** are standard across all ECE programs (even for students already employed in child care centres), which often deters people from furthering their education in the field, completing their program, or even entering the ECE profession at all
- **Employers face staff shortages** when incumbents complete their 3–4-week placement required to complete the ECE program. Often these placements are completed at a different child care centre than the one they are employed with, leaving their current employer understaffed
- **Succession planning is challenging** due to the limited number of courses needed to train people in other ECE roles such as directors, etc.
- **More specialized training required** to support children with special needs, trauma, etc., and knowledge of resources for parents
- **Revised intake process required** to determine unfit applicants
- **Programs designed by colleges** often do not recognize credits from other institutions, making it difficult for students to transfer or complete their program later elsewhere
- **Out-of-province credentials not recognized** for ECE registration in Ontario, forcing ECEs to complete program again or leave the profession altogether
- **Lack of additional funding** hinders employer participation in the apprenticeship program. Employers cannot afford the additional payroll cost and loss of productivity for the trainer/apprentice
- **College of ECEs' approval standards for education programs** only allows two-year Ontario college programs to be considered, which excludes private career colleges and significantly reduces training capacity. Private career colleges can pivot to market conditions in a manner that can substantially address the shortage of RECEs. This is an area that can be addressed through regulatory discussions
- 53% of our survey respondents have hired apprentices in the past
- 47% of our survey respondents have not hired apprentices and attribute this to a lack of funding to support additional wages for apprentices and lack of understanding of the apprenticeship program

# Apprenticeship and College Programs

## Skilled Trades

- **Curriculum is outdated**, and apprentices are being taught processes they will never use in their career (i.e., creating CAD drawings) and are lacking teachings on more current processes they will need to know. Ministry could benefit from hearing the expectations of apprentices/new hires from employers when reevaluating their programs
- **1:1 ratio system** means one tradesperson to one apprentice and must be paired before any training can begin. With fewer tradespeople and more set to retire it will be harder to train apprentices this way
- **Some apprentices lack basic math and literacy skills.** Employers suggest that refresher courses on these subjects be added to apprenticeship programs
- **Apprenticeship programs omit basic trades knowledge** that people without any trades experience must learn before being taught the fundamentals of their specific trade. Employers suggest offering pre-apprenticeship programs or night classes that allow people who are completely new to the industry to gain basic skills and knowledge of one or more trades before committing to an apprenticeship program
- **Employers are challenged to allocate sufficient time** to properly train apprentices with staff shortages
- **Apprenticeship programs require extensive paperwork** for employers to complete, which is time consuming and sometimes complicated
- **Apprenticeship programs can be costly.** Students must be informed prior to enrolling about potential delays in EI receipt, the cost of tools and textbooks, available grant programs to help alleviate the financial burden associated with the program, etc.
- **Lack of apprenticeship programs** for several trades in this area (i.e., baking and production sewing)
- 67% of our survey respondents have hired apprentices in the past
- 33% of our survey respondents have not hired apprentices and attribute this to there not being any apprenticeship programs in this area for their trade, not having enough time to explore the process of hiring apprentices, and that the process is too administratively heavy



# Funding and Recognition

## Early Childhood Education

- **Lack of public transportation**, especially across Lanark and Renfrew Counties, limits employment opportunities for ECEs
- **More subsidy funding for parents** who cannot afford child care is required if \$10/day child care plan is not signed
- **Need for marketing funds** for child care centres to access. This funding would allow centres to create promotional materials to attract business, new hires, and promote the profession
- **Additional funding for educational tools** in child care centres is needed, so ECEs do not have to spend their own money on supplies, toys, etc., as they often do
- **Lack of respect, understanding, and sense of value** felt overall by members of the profession
- **Promoting the ECE profession** as an appealing and viable career path for women, men, and students requires a better understanding of what opportunities exist in this field
- **Candidates must exhibit proficient skills** in math and English fundamentals and have a passion for working with children—cannot be thought of as a career for those with limited career options due to poor academic skills
- **Access to school classrooms is often restricted** for supervisors of before and after school programs by limiting the use of materials, toys, and parts of the space used for school programs, which leaves supervisors feeling unwelcome and unable to create a space of their own



Click [here](#) to listen to the Wish List compiled from clips from the early childhood education roundtables



# Trades in Schools

## Skilled Trades

- **Must get students interested in the skilled trades** at the elementary and secondary school levels
- **Need for easy-to-use interactive website** that explains all available skilled trades, required training and where to access it, and potential career paths for those interested in this sector
- **Need for interactive career fairs** highlighting different trades—generating interest and understanding of different careers in the skilled trades for students of all ages
- **Need for behavioural assessments and aptitude tests** to be used in schools to identify students who would be a good fit for certain trades, allowing students to discover a career path they may not have considered
- **Schools must work to build better connections** with local employers to benefit students in high skill majors looking for jobs after graduation
- **Need to consider students in all academic streams** for potential skilled trades career paths, not just students in applied streams, because the sector needs workers who are analytical, comfortable with computers, excel in math, and committed to further learning, etc.
- **Additional training for guidance counsellors** in high schools is necessary to better understand the trades and apprenticeship programs so this can be promoted as a viable career path for students
- **Entrepreneurship and business courses should be suggested** by guidance counsellors to students interested in the skilled trades because people that enter this sector often go on to own their own businesses and would benefit from these teachings early on

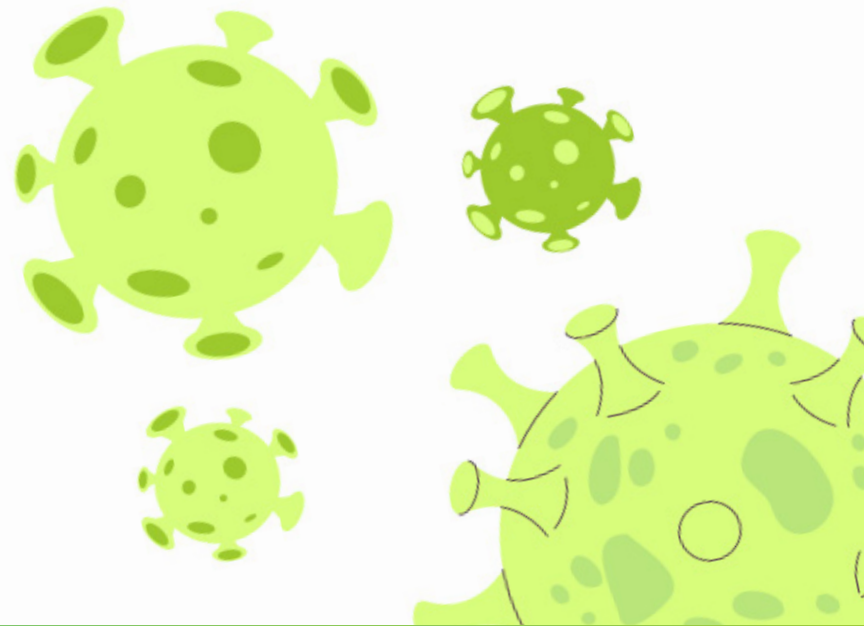


Click [here](#) to listen to an unvarnished perspective of the Wish List compiled from clips from the skilled trades roundtables

# The Effects of COVID-19

Since the beginning of the pandemic approximately two years ago, the health units in Lanark and Renfrew Counties have reported thousands of positive cases of COVID-19 in this area. Following the rise of cas-

es across the province came subsequent lockdowns that affected the early childhood education and skilled trades sectors. On the next page, we describe the pandemic-related challenges faced by employers in these sectors.



# Early Childhood Education

- **ECEs forced to leave work to care for their own children** as they did not qualify for emergency child care like other frontline workers at the beginning of the pandemic
- **Lack of recognition** felt for not receiving \$2/hour bonus or vaccine priority that other emergency frontline workers received
- **Extreme feeling of burnout** due to staff shortages, longer workdays, more frequent cleaning, and covering for symptomatic staff members who must provide a negative test before returning to work
- **Programs no longer play-based**, only allowed plastic toys, no sandbox, water table, books, or sharing of toys—these items and alternatives starting to be reintroduced
- **Anxious behaviours among children** and speech delays (from wearing masks) being noticed by ECEs
- **Enforcement of cohort rule** means that ECEs are not recommended to share classrooms, which poses additional staffing challenges when covering breaks, taking vacation, calling in sick, etc.
- **Temporary program closures** due to limited staff and respecting cohort rule
- **Increased administrative processes**, reporting, and policies
- **ECEs responsible for screening staff and children** and are put in the difficult position of denying symptomatic children entry into centres
- **Everchanging COVID-19 policies** are often expected to come into effect the day after they are received and are revised regularly
- **Home child care centres going unlicensed**, less organizations to comply with
- **Less money and longer waitlists** for centres due to the need for smaller class sizes to be able to adhere to social distancing rules
- **Decreased staff morale** as job went from developmental-based work to health/sanitation-based work during the pandemic

## Skilled Trades

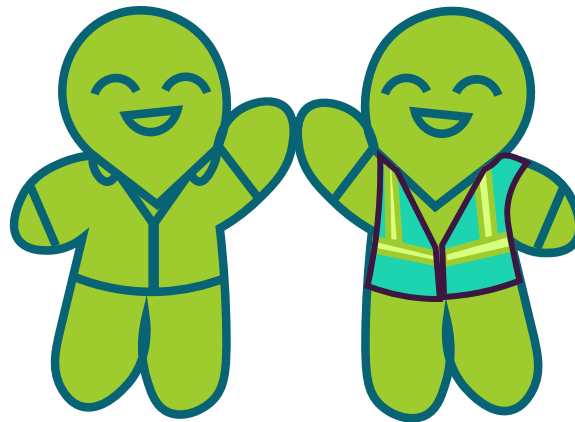
- **Layoffs and company closures** in certain subsectors
- **Increased demand in work**, with fewer employees to meet the demand, felt by other subsectors
- **Drastic price increases** and extreme delays for supplies

# Best Practices in Place

Our roundtables not only allow us to collect information from employers, but serve as a space for employers to engage with one another. The roundtables are a great way for employers to gain insight into shared experiences and challenges that they may have in common with other employers. Employers often share creative solutions to past challenges and the best practices they now have in place to mitigate these chal-

lenges and improve the experience of their employees. The best practices that are shared are free for anyone to adopt and employers are often keen to implement them in their organization.

The best practices that were identified during the roundtables can be found on the next page and are grouped by the sector in which they were shared from.



# Early Childhood Education

- **Work together** with different agencies across the region to write and discuss new policies to be implemented in child care centres (especially policies related to COVID-19)
- **Hold virtual meetings** in place of traditional face-to-face meetings, allowing to meet more frequently and eliminate travel time and the need for extensive planning
- **Offer work share opportunities** between centres so employees can work their preferred amount of hours
- **Encourage succession planning** early on, help new hires reach their goals, keeping them in the field and encouraging professional development
- **Offer paid personal days and/or benefits** to employees
- **Coordinate frequent information sessions** for all programs across the agency allowing staff to clarify any questions they may have about new policies, COVID-19 regulations, etc.
- **Continue to advocate** for the importance of early childhood educators (i.e., ECEs in school boards publish writeups in school newsletters about what ECEs do and how to become one, etc.)
- **Offer virtual tours for parents** unable to access centres

# Skilled Trades

- **Offer employee incentives** such as signing bonuses, benefits, competitive wages, paid breaks, and regular working hours with weekends off or flexible hours
- **Build good rapport with your apprentices** by covering partial/full cost of books, training, and/or tools if they complete program
- **Encourage employees to keep learning** by offering to cross train them in other areas or promote further education and provide resources on how to get started
- **Create a positive team environment** by ensuring that new hires will complement your existing team (i.e., have applicants complete a personality test before hiring)
- **Train anyone who is interested in learning** your trade, no matter their skill level but seem like a good fit
- **Maintain an understanding** that anyone you train may not stay with your business, but at least more people will be entering the sector and helping the overall labour shortage
- **Relay positive feedback** from customers to employees on a regular basis
- **Be open** to working with competitors
- **Think of creative ways to generate profit** (i.e., sell any unused/extra tools or materials to other businesses)

# Survey Results

**T**raditionally, this project has focused on understanding the perspective of employers to make change happen. During this phase, we decided to broaden our scope of analysis by gathering, through surveys, the perspectives of incumbents, job seekers, and students interested in pursuing a career path in early childhood education or the skilled trades. The perspective of these groups allowed us insight into some of their challenges

and concerns with these sectors. We also gained a general understanding of what they look for in an employer and place of work as well as other factors that help shape the labour market in this region.

Data collected from these surveys has been graphed and is accompanied by brief analysis on the next few pages.



# Employers

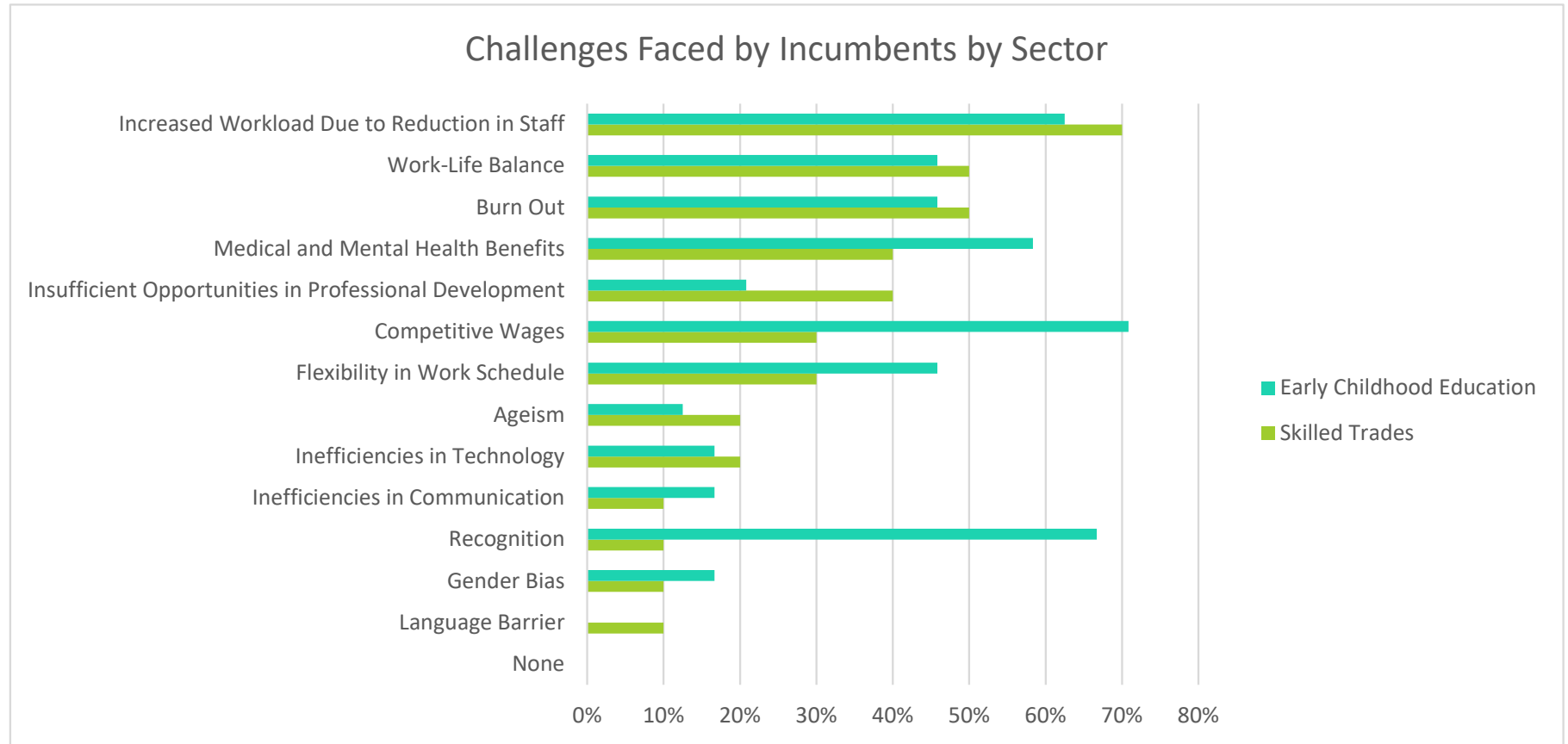


Above are the top strategies in place to retain employees as indicated by employers in the early childhood education and skilled trades sectors. The comparison between sectors shows the disparities in what employers in each sector can provide their employees.

When asked, incumbents in the early childhood education sector ranked work-life balance as the most important aspect in a career, followed by competitive wages, benefits, recognition and rewards programs, training and development, company culture, and flexible work arrangements. Incumbents in the skilled trades sector ranked competitive wages as the top aspect in a career, followed by benefits, company culture, work-life balance, recognition and rewards programs, training and development, and flexible work arrangements. This information, compared with the graph above, shows that there is some disconnect between employers and incumbents when it comes to what employees value and what employers work to provide.



# Incumbents

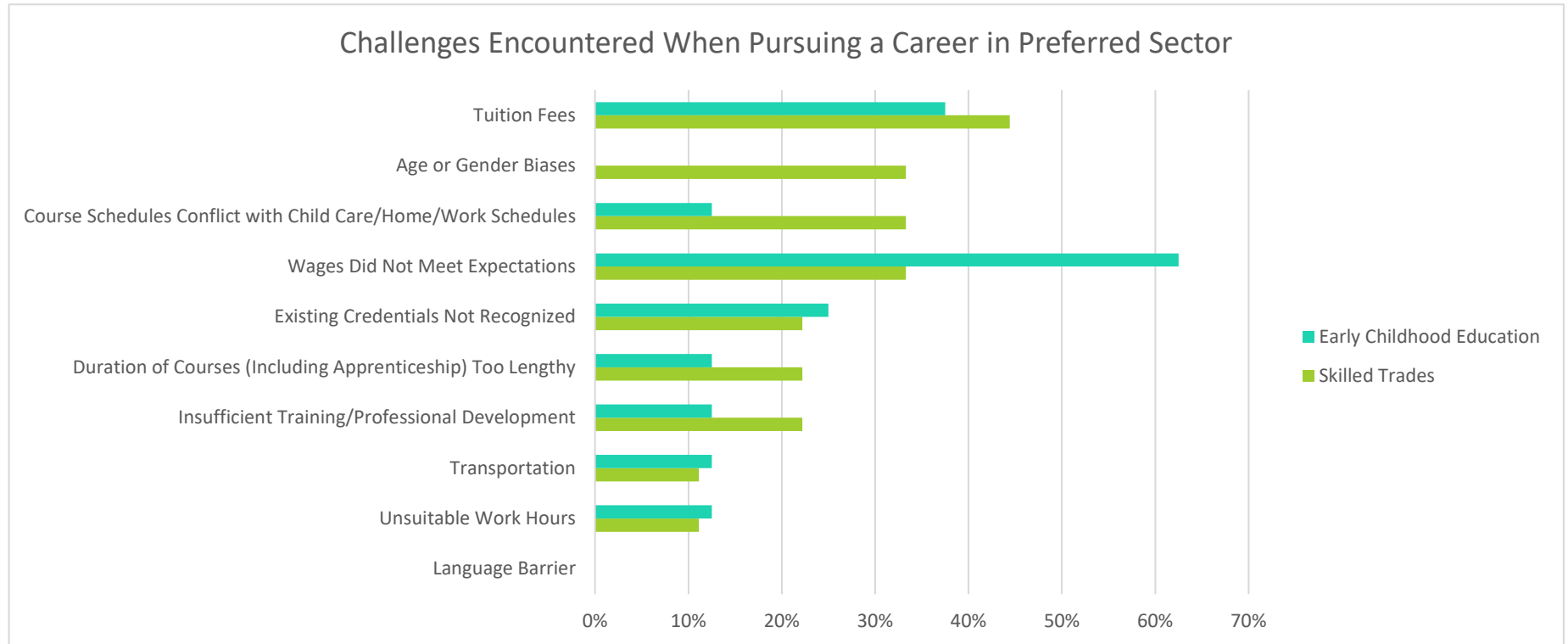


The graph above shows the prevalence of challenges faced by incumbents in the early childhood education and skilled trades sectors.

The results indicate a strong correlation between sectors for most challenges, with increased workload due to reduction in staff being the top challenge collectively. The greatest disparity between sectors is recognition, with 67% of early childhood education incumbents and only 10% of skilled trades incumbents acknowledging this as a challenge affecting them in their sector. The second greatest disparity between sectors is competitive wages, with 71% of early childhood education incumbents and only 30% of skilled trades incumbents acknowledging this as a challenge affecting them in their sector.

100% of respondents from the early childhood education sector were women. 80% of respondents from the skilled trades sector were men, and 20% were women.

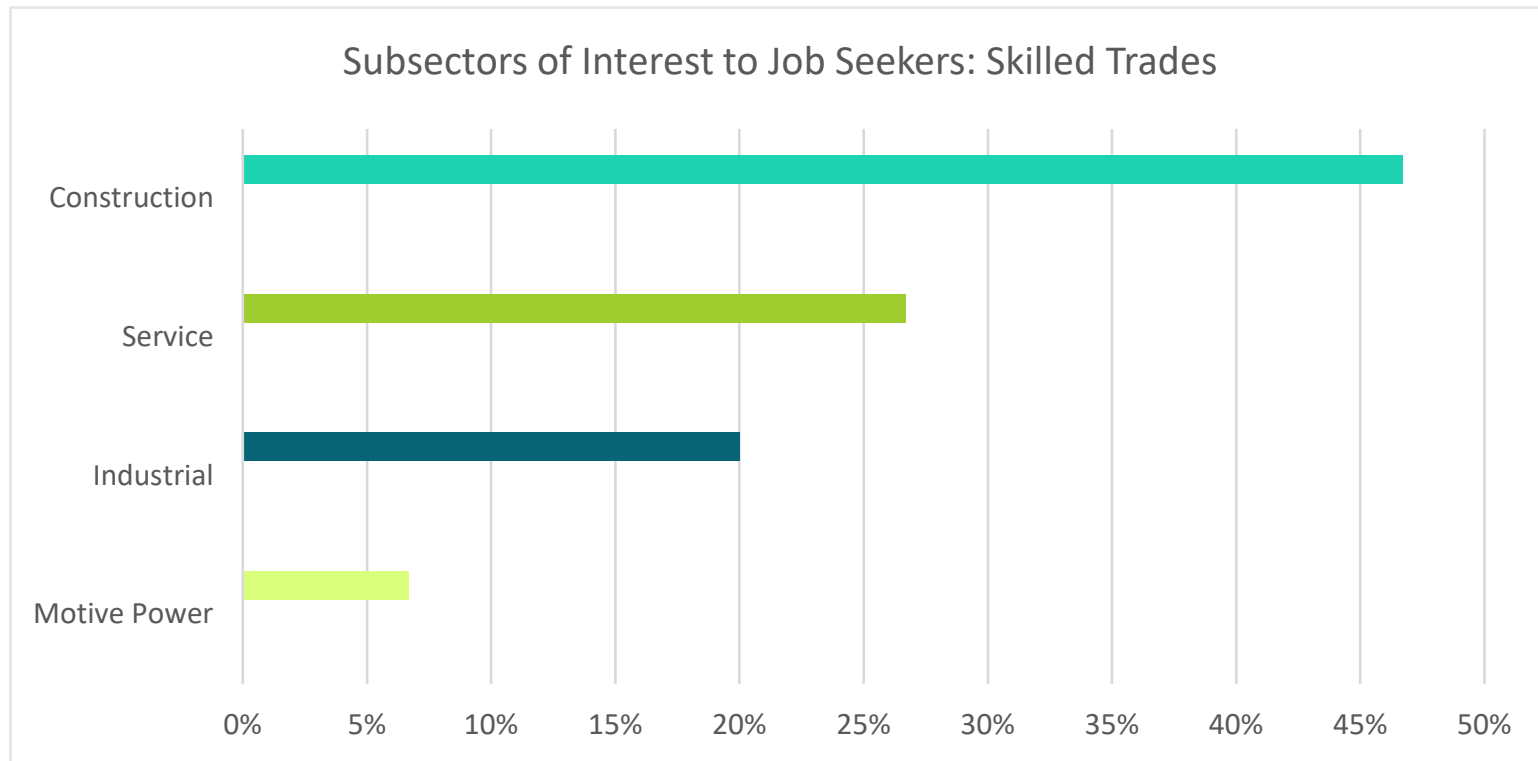
# Job Seekers



Above are the top challenges encountered by job seekers in the early childhood education and skilled trades sectors.

Job seekers in the early childhood education sector indicated that wages, tuition fees, and existing credentials not being recognized were the top challenges when pursuing a career in this field. These challenges were also identified by employers during the roundtables. Additionally, job seekers in this field identified communication, work-life balance, wages, pensions and other monetary incentives, and medical and health benefits as the top five most important aspects of a career in this sector, in that order. 100% of respondents were women.

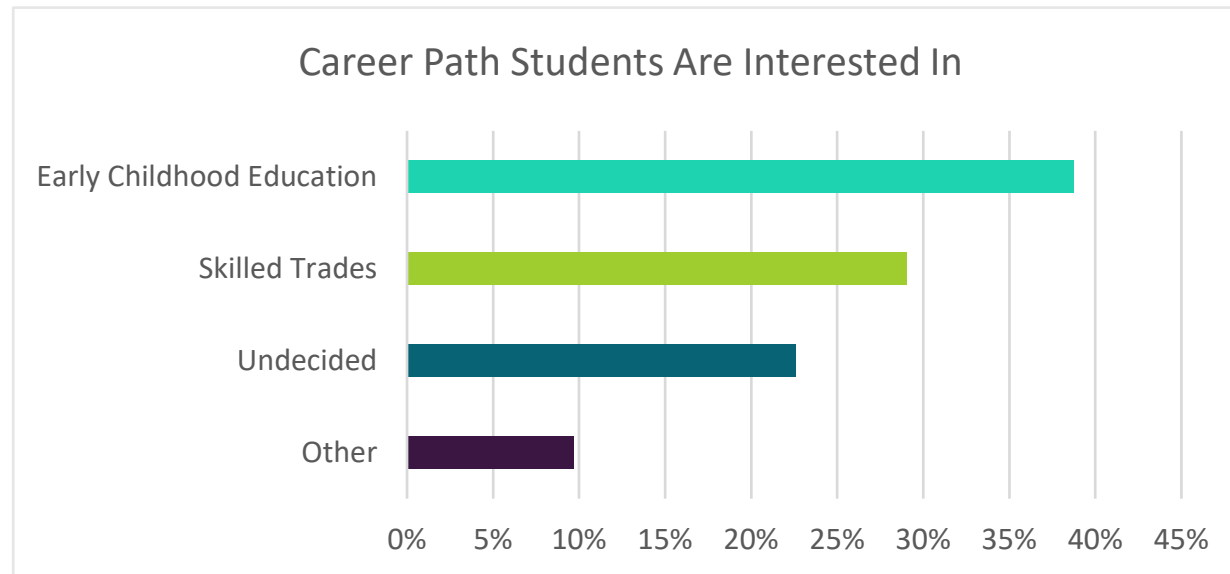
Job seekers in the skilled trades sector indicated that tuition fees, age and gender biases, course schedules conflicting with work/personal schedules, and wages were the top challenges when pursuing a career in this field. These challenges were also identified by employers during the roundtables. Additionally, job seekers in this field identified work-life balance, wages, company culture, medical and health benefits, and pensions and other monetary incentives as the top five most important aspects of a career in this sector, in that order.



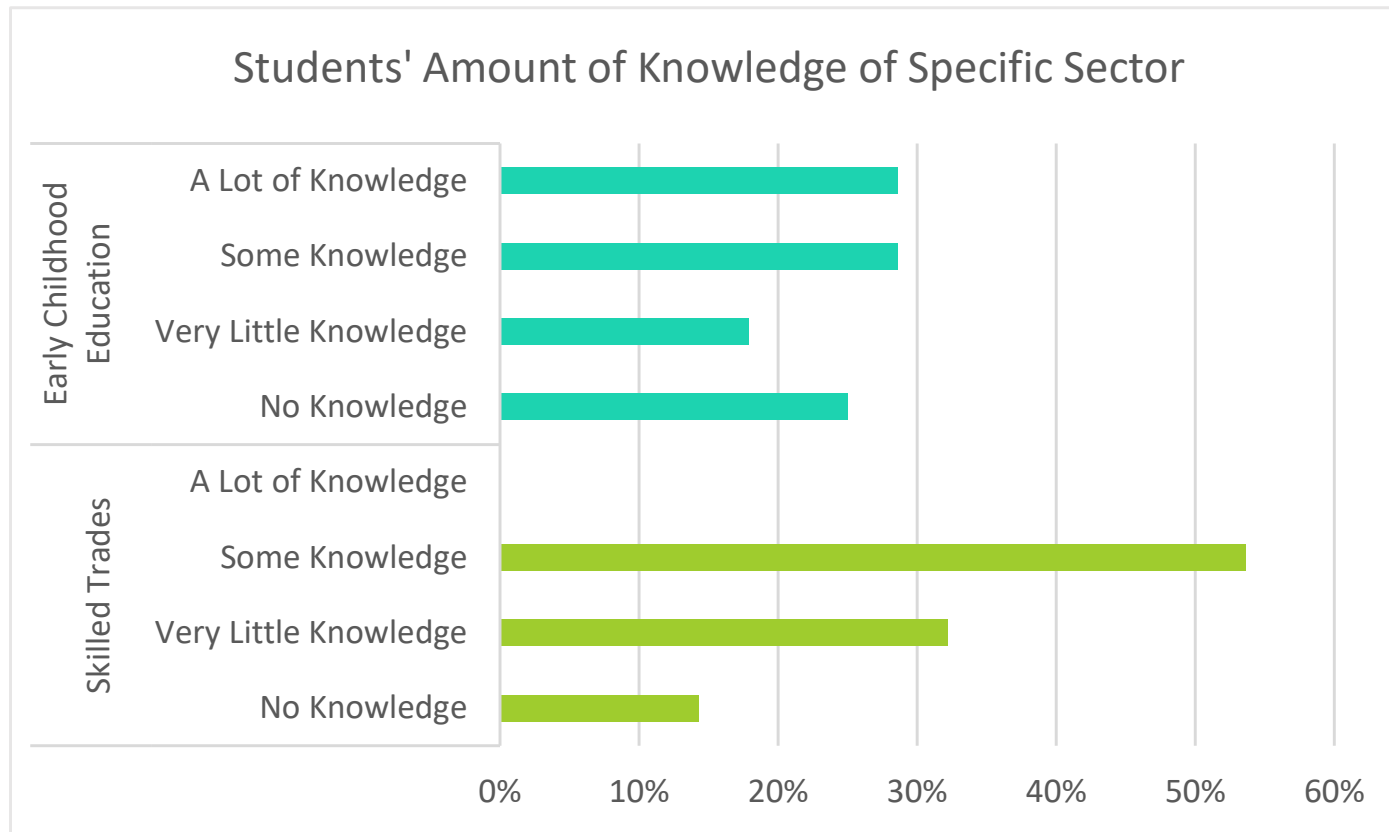
In the graph above, survey respondents have indicated which subsectors of the skilled trades sector are of interest to them. 56% of respondents were men and 44% were women. 89% of respondents stated that they do not have any previous experience working in the skilled trades sector. 44% of respondents stated that a job in this sector would be a second career for them.

# Students

Our student surveys were advertised to high school and college students across Lanark and Renfrew Counties interested in pursuing a career in early childhood education or the skilled trades. Millennials (born between 1981-1996) made up 13% of respondents. 87% of respondents represented the Generation Z (born between 1997-2012) demographic. Approximately one-third of respondents are of college-age and two-thirds are of high-school-age. Our results indicated that 39% of respondents are interested in pursuing a career in early childhood education and 29% are interested in pursuing a career in the skilled trades. 32% of respondents are either undecided or interested in another career path.

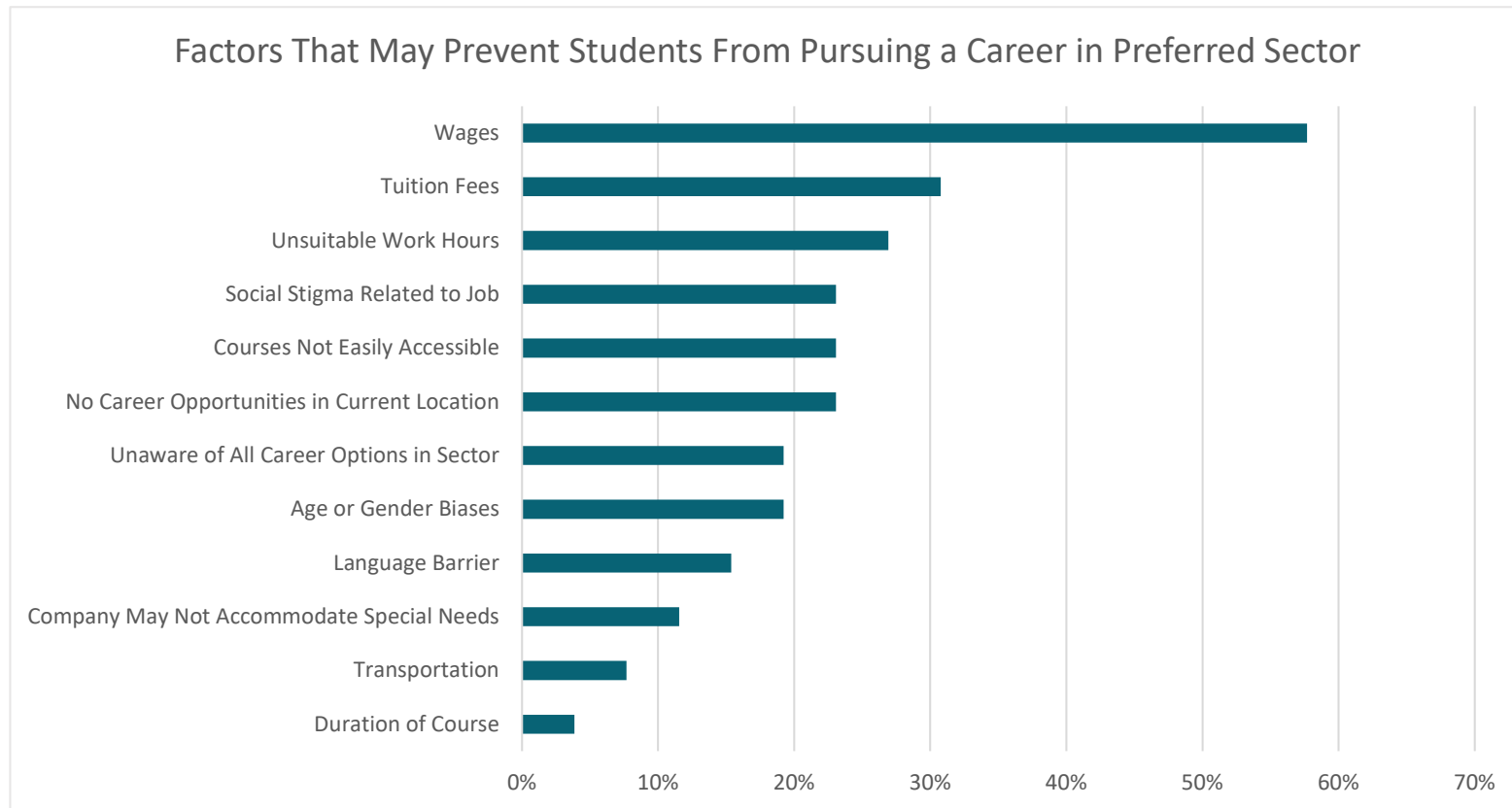


Of the students interested in pursuing a career in the skilled trades sector, 44% are interested in construction, 44% are interested in motive power, and 11% are interested in industrial. None of the respondents in this survey indicated an interest in pursuing a career in the service subsector of the skilled trades.



Above shows the amount of knowledge the respondents feel they have about each sector. Respondents indicated that their top resources for learning about their preferred career path were school (43%) and family and friends (37%). Some indicated that job fairs (3%) were also a source for learning about their preferred career path.

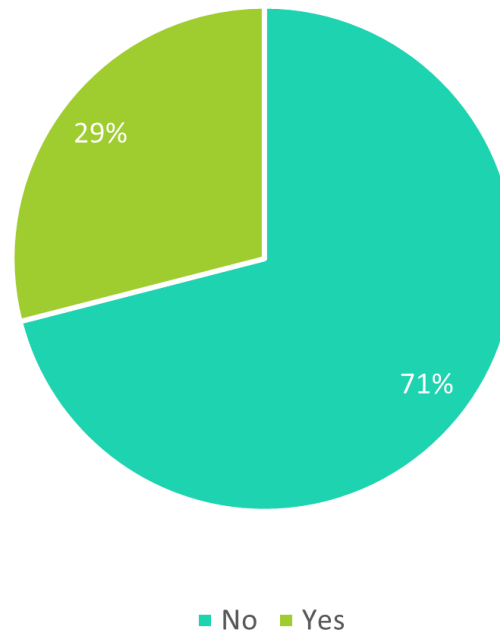
Below are factors that may prevent students from pursuing a career in their preferred sector. 58% of respondents chose wages as a possible deterrent, which has been a common concern brought forth by employers and incumbents, especially in the early childhood education sector.



Students also identified their top five most important aspects of a future career. The results are as follows:

1. Work-life balance
2. Medical and mental health benefits
3. Vacation/personal days
4. Training and development
5. Competitive wages

### Students' Likelihood of Moving to a City After Completing School



**71% of respondents indicated that they would likely remain in either Lanark or Renfrew County** rather than move to a city after completing school. Family and friends, lifestyle, and lower cost of living were the top reasons that respondents would prefer to remain in this area. For those who would prefer to move to a city, they identified job opportunities, lifestyle, and recreational activities as the top reasons for this decision.

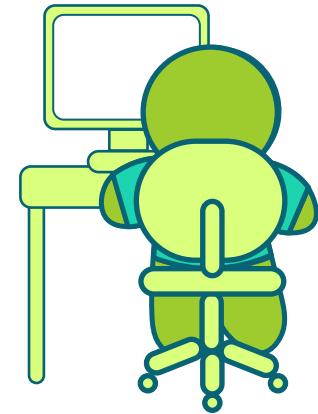
# Job Seekers & Students

## Job Searching Methods

We asked job seekers and students to identify their job search preferences. Below are the top resources used by job seekers and students to find jobs as indicated in our survey results.

Top Resources for Job Seekers and Students Used to Find Jobs:

1. Google
2. Indeed
3. Facebook
4. Individual Company Websites
5. Employment Service Centres



Employers who completed our survey, responded that their company's website was the main resource used for advertising available job positions. Employers who joined our skilled trades roundtables indicated that word of mouth was the most successful way to connect with job seekers. Since most job seekers turn to Google first when searching for jobs, it is important for employers to optimize this search engine as best as possible to ensure that job listings posted to their company website and other job platforms come up first in web searches. It is also important that employers who have relied on word of mouth to connect with job seekers in the past, consider promoting their available job positions electronically as well since the next generation of workers have proven to rely heavily on search engines to find jobs.



Click [here](#) to view our Work Matters toolkit and learn more about search engine optimization along with other helpful topics related to bettering your business



# Recommendations from the Work Matters team

**T**hrough our roundtable discussions, one-to-one conversations, and surveys, we have heard and recognized concerns in the early childhood education and skilled trades sectors that require further attention. Work Matters would like to highlight some suggestions for change provided or discovered throughout this project. Some of these recommendations can be resolved through local actionable solutions, while others are systemic and require a higher level of involvement from policymakers.

**The following are recommendations that can be pursued at a local level through strategic programs and partnerships.**

- **Develop Apprenticeship-Mentor programs** that will create succession planning for businesses
- **Create soft skills programs** for all levels of employees that build skills for the future and have a positive impact on workforce culture including diversity and inclusion, problem solving, and more
- **Introduce an Employee Sharing Model (ESM)** where several employers can access qualified staff and business resources
- **Design executive leadership programs** that will empower owners and managers to make decisions and increase productivity while giving leaders time to strategize on their business goals and build a culture that embraces today's workforce expectations
- **Establish an ECE training program** that will recruit, train, and place early childhood educators across Eastern Ontario

**The following recommendations will require assistance and involvement from policymakers as they are systemic challenges.**

- **Improve compensation packages for RECEs** in daycare centers that will allow them to compete with school boards, which includes wages, health benefits, paid time off, and pension plans
- **School boards to provide more training for guidance counselors** to understand, encourage, and promote the early childhood education and skilled trades sectors.
- **Ministry of Education to reintroduce skilled trades curricula in all schools** and provide meaningful co-op placement opportunities for both skilled trades and early childhood education
- **Colleges to update apprenticeship programs** in consultation with employers to meet the needs of today's skilled trades
- **Amend Ontario Regulation 221/08: Registration** under **Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007**, S.O. 2007, c. 7, Sched. 8 to allow private career colleges to train ECEs
- **Colleges to provide a consistent early childhood education program** that allows for mobility across the province and throughout Canada
- **Make ECE placements paid** and enable incumbents to train with their current employer
- **Government to recognize existing credentials** of migrants and newcomers to the province and country
- **Apprenticeship programs must expand** to include butchery, industrial sewing, and other skilled trades not represented by professional trade apprenticeship programs in this area
- **Establish \$10/day child care** program for families
- **Prioritize affordable and available housing**
- **Increase public transportation networks**

# Final Thoughts

It is clear from the recommendations presented that changes in programs, policies, and procedures need to happen at local and systemic levels to attract and retain talent in the early childhood education and skilled trades sectors. Strategic programs, strong community partnerships, a local employer-led committee, and ministry assistance will enable growth for local businesses and bridge the labour shortage gap for future success in our rural communities. The pandemic has accentuated existing workforce problems in our communities; however, it has also provided an opportunity to consider and implement new and innovative approaches in resolving the issues at hand while keeping an eye on the future.

Throughout the second phase of the Work Matters project, we have heard the challenges employers face in attracting and retaining qualified staff in the early childhood education and skilled trades sectors in Lanark and Renfrew Counties. Work Matters is grateful for the time and input from employers, incumbents, students, and community partners. With this information, we are better equipped to advocate, promote, and propose workforce solutions within our rural communities.

Work Matters is looking forward to collaborating with employers and community partners to create innovative solutions with a rural lens to address the chal-

lenges that have been brought forth. Work Matters is in the process of forming a consortium that will be employer-led. Its primary objective will be for employers to work together in creating actionable solutions to address local issues within their communities.

According to our Student Survey, the next generation to enter the workforce would like to remain close to home. To keep this generation of workers in the area, there needs to be attractive job opportunities with the potential for competitive wages and advancement. As we know, change takes time; however, current workforce shortages do not allow employers the luxury of waiting—actions must be taken immediately.

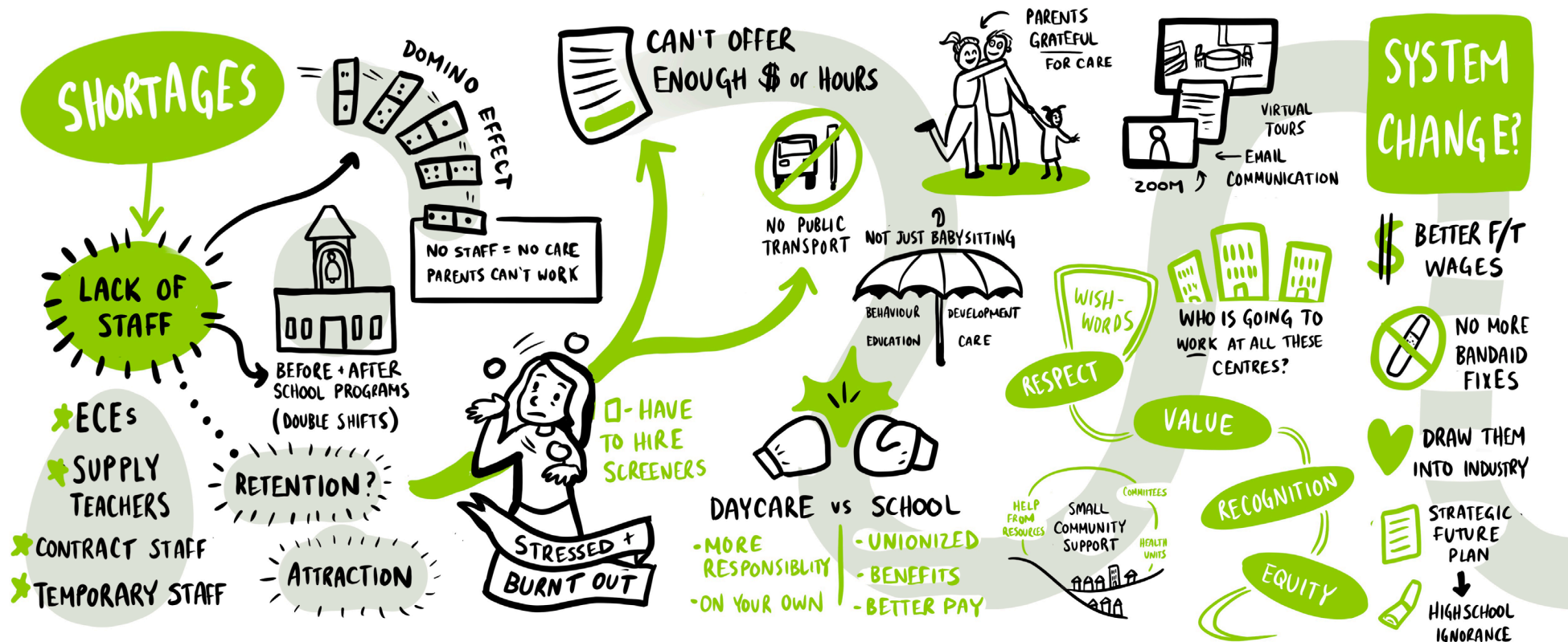
In March 2022, Work Matters will host a Future of Work Summit that will introduce some key concepts to help employers comprehend how post-pandemic work has changed, how to attract and retain talent in today's labour market, and how to remain competitive to ensure future growth for their business.

Work Matters would like to thank all participants for their insights, suggestions, and perspectives. We appreciate the partnerships that have formed throughout the project and are looking forward to continuing our efforts in promoting Lanark and Renfrew Counties as a place to live, work, and play.

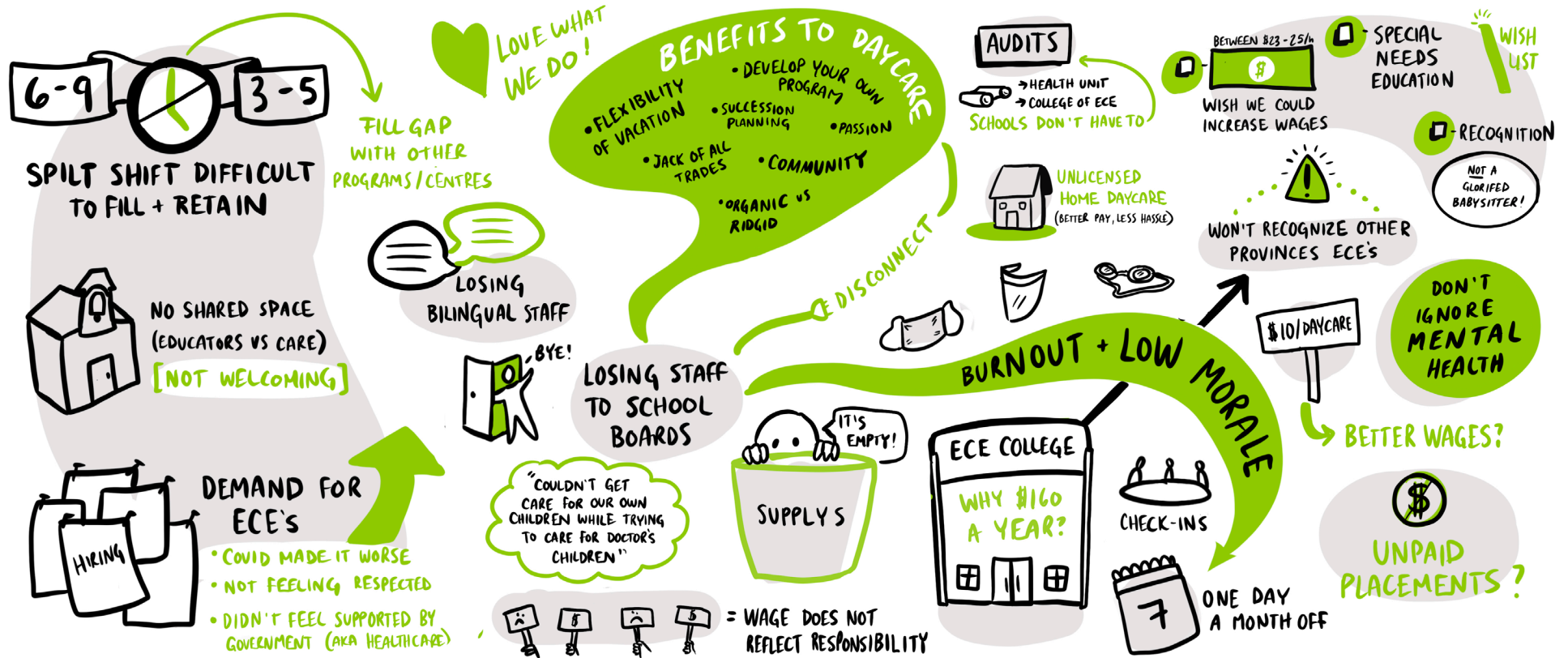
# Graphic Recordings by Swoop Media

The main themes from each roundtable were captured by Laura Hanek of Swoop Media in individual graphic recordings completed in real-time during each roundtable. The graphic recordings begin on the next page.

# Early Childhood Education

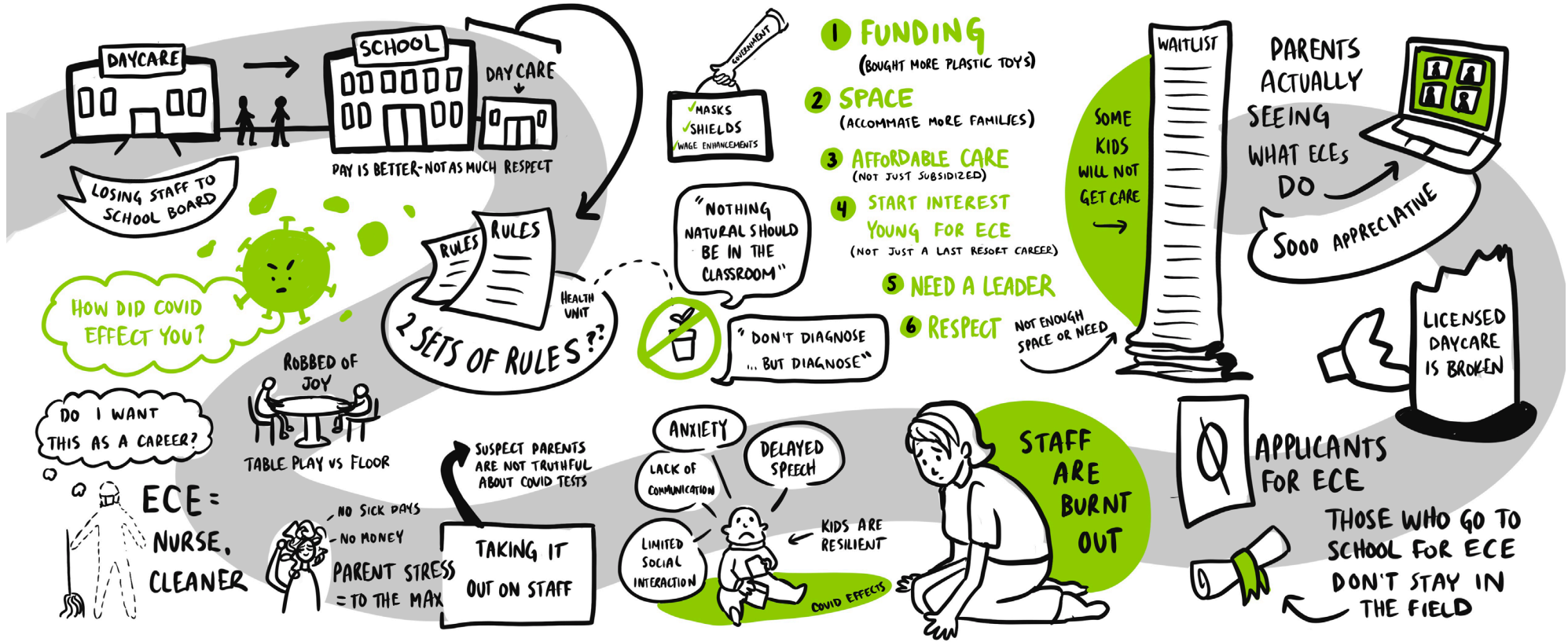


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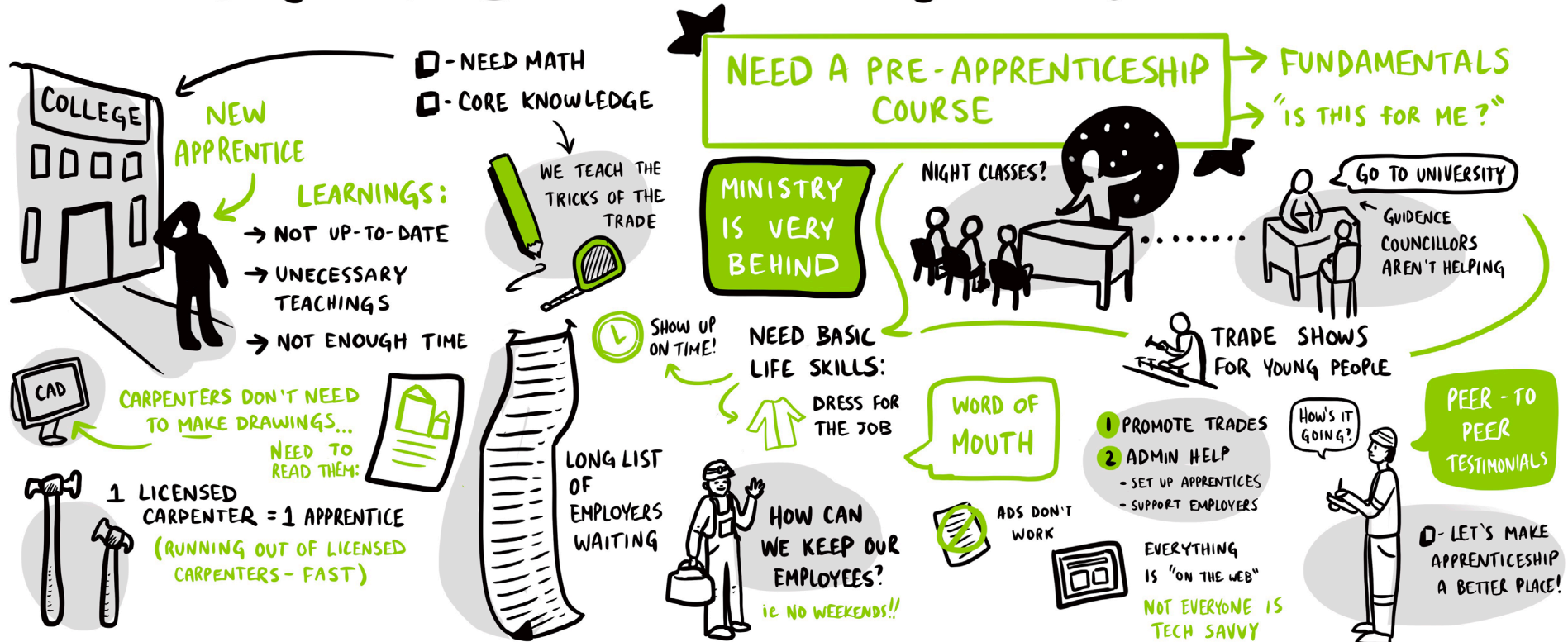




# Early Childhood Education



# SKILLED TRADES





# SKILLED TRADES



# SKILLED TRADES

