



Time and money

The most commonly contributed resource was their own time. Among ways they contribute their own time resources include: covering staff shortages, participating in professional development, supporting co-workers, and communicating with or supporting parents.

Some educators reported using their own financial resources to supplement tight centre budgets, mainly for materials and snacks. For example, some educators interviewed planned to use their interview payment on treats and toys for their classes.



Creativity

Educators bring high creativity and adaptability to their work, describing how they apply ECE concepts in play-based settings to improvise learning opportunities for their students.

Educators are often looking for new ideas and techniques to support their creativity when they select professional development opportunities.

“ I just really loved seeing the connection and the aha moments with the children. And then just seeing their learning happening. One of my favourites started as somebody spilled their drink at the table while we were eating and I put [a] paper towel down and it sucked up the water and we walked about it and I said, that’s called absorption. And then they asked questions about it. Really great questions. And that turned into a two-month learning activity around absorption. How different things absorb, and talking about what do we think is going to happen, and then planting things, seeing how it absorbed the water. Those little learning moments could happen and turn into a huge learning opportunity.



High job satisfaction

Educators report that they love their work. They cite enjoyment of working with children, opportunities for input, afn good coworkers. Over half are very satisfied with the work schedule and how many hours they work.

Educators know that their work is important, which gives them a sense of purpose. Many directors (75%) retain hands-on work in the classroom in addition to their administrative responsibilities, In interviews, directors indicated that this was due to a lack of staff resources, but considered this ongoing connection to the classroom as a positive job aspect due to their love of children being a motivating factor for their work.

“ It’s really important when you’re going into this field that you try to always keep hold of why you’re there. That you always try to keep that love. You always try to be open-minded. It’s such an amazing rewarding field, but you can’t be there expecting that everything’s going to be perfect because it’s not, and its really up to you to try to make it as best as you possibly can.



Peer support networks

Educators share information and offer emotional and professional support for each other through informal networks. Some of these networks are created through working or attending training together, others use social media such as Facebook groups to get advice on common challenges.

Relationships among staff vary widely between centres. Some educators reported team dynamics to be a highly rewarding and helpful part of the work, while others reported team dynamics to be highly challenging, with a few describing the work environment as ‘toxic’.