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# Characteristics of Child Care Workers Who Claimed the Canada Emergency Response Benefit in 2020

by Anne Guevremont

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## **Abstract**

In March 2020, child care provision in Canada was greatly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, and most provinces mandated the closure of child care centres, schools and family child care homes. This study examines the percentage of child care workers who claimed the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) and their characteristics. About 65% of child care workers claimed the CERB, compared with 35% of all employed workers in Canada. Child care workers who claimed the CERB were more likely to be working in schools (than in the daycare services industry); have lower wages; and live in Ontario, the Prairie provinces or British Columbia (compared with Quebec and the Atlantic provinces).

# 1 Introduction

In March 2020, child care provision in Canada was greatly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Most provinces mandated the closure of child care centres, schools and family child care homes. Friendly et al. (2021) conducted a survey of child care facilities in Canada from April to May 2020 and reported that 72% of surveyed child care centres had closed. Although this survey was not representative of all child care providers, it provided an estimate of the magnitude of child care centre closures in the early days of the pandemic.

The provinces and territories had different policies around child care closures, and those that mandated closures had varied reopening dates. All provinces and territories except for British Columbia, Nunavut and Yukon mandated child care closures, with reopening dates varying from May 11, 2020, in Newfoundland and Labrador and Quebec (outside Montréal) to June 12, 2020, in Ontario. In addition, all provinces and territories mandated school closures, with only Quebec and Manitoba reopening before September 2020. In terms of child care homes, the Atlantic provinces and Quebec mandated the closure of licensed child care homes, but other provinces did not. Fewer provinces mandated the closure of unlicensed child care homes. Although many child care centres and homes were not required to close, many did. For example, Friendly et al. (2021) reported that 40% of surveyed child care centres in British Columbia were closed, even though closure was not required in that province. The appendix provides a brief overview of mandated child care closures in the provinces and territories.

Child care centre and home closures have an obvious impact on the child care workforce. In this respect, Uppal & Savage (2021) studied the changes in employment among child care workers since the start of the pandemic based on the Labour Force Survey (LFS). They found that while overall employment fell by 15% from February to April 2020, employment among child care workers fluctuated more during the pandemic. That is, employment among child care workers was down 36% in April compared with February 2020. Employment among child care workers was slower to return to pre-pandemic levels compared with total employment in Canada. By February 2021, one year after the onset of the pandemic in Canada, employment among child care workers had dropped by 21% compared with February 2020. By contrast, total employment in Canada decreased by 3%.

Data from the Survey of Employment, Payrolls and Hours (SEPH) have shown similar trends. In terms of child care, the SEPH reports on the number of employees receiving pay in the daycare services industry and does not include self-employed workers or workers in other industries such as schools and private households. In September 2020, payroll employment in the daycare services industry was 13.1% lower than February 2020 (Statistics Canada, 2020). Furthermore, in November 2020, payroll employment in the daycare services industry was still 9.8% below the February 2020 level (Statistics Canada, 2021). Comparatively, payroll employment for all industries in November 2020 was down 6.6% compared with February 2020.

The pre-pandemic characteristics of child care workers differed from those of other workers in Canada. Child care workers were more likely to be immigrants or non-permanent residents (33%) compared with other workers (25%; Uppal & Savage, 2021). As well, compared with other workers in Canada, child care workers were more likely to be women (96% versus 47%), be younger than 45 years old (64% versus 55%), have children at home (55% versus 43%) and belong to a visible minority group (28% versus 21%). In terms of job characteristics, compared with other workers in Canada, child care workers were more likely to be self-employed (25% versus 15%), less likely to be working full time (76% versus 81%) and less likely to be union members (26% versus 31% among employee [not self-employed] workers). Child care workers also had lower earnings, making \$19.97 per hour in 2019, compared with \$27.91 for other workers.

From March 15 to September 20, 2020, the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) gave financial support to employed and self-employed Canadians who were directly affected by COVID-19. This benefit was available to workers who resided in Canada; were aged 15 and older; had stopped working because of reasons related to COVID-19, were eligible for Employment Insurance regular or sickness benefits, or had exhausted their Employment Insurance regular benefits; had employment or self-employment income of at least \$5,000 in 2019 or in the 12 months prior to the date of their application; had not quit their job voluntarily; and had not earned more than \$1,000 in employment or self-employment income for 14 or more consecutive days within the four-week period of the claim. COVID-19-related reasons included being in quarantine or sick as a result of COVID-19, taking care of others because they were in quarantine or sick as a result of COVID-19, taking care of children or other dependants because their child care facility was closed as a result of COVID-19, or losing their job as a result of COVID-19. Workers collecting the CERB received \$500 per week.<sup>1</sup>

No previous research has reported on the percentage of child care workers who claimed the CERB or examined their characteristics. It is important to know how the child care sector responded to COVID-19 and whether policies left any gaps in terms of support for the workers who needed it. Also, given the possibility of new pandemics caused by other viruses, knowing how policies have been used can help when enacting future policies. Child care availability has a direct impact on parents' ability to work, and it is useful to know what groups of child care workers were most affected and how the child care industry responded.

This paper uses the LFS linked to CERB data to examine the impact of the pandemic on the child care industry and child care workers. The following research questions are explored:

1. What percentage of child care workers claimed the CERB? How many claimed the maximum number of weeks of CERB (28 weeks from March 15 to September 30, 2020)?
2. What job and sociodemographic characteristics were associated with claiming the CERB? How many weeks of CERB were claimed by workers with different job and sociodemographic characteristics?

## 2 Methods

### 2.1 Data sources

The characteristics of child care workers who claimed the CERB were examined using the LFS, collected by Statistics Canada, along with information on the CERB, provided by Employment and Social Development Canada. Information on the sociodemographic and job characteristics of child care workers was obtained from the LFS for the months of December 2019, January 2020 and February 2020.<sup>2</sup> These months were selected to capture people who were child care workers just prior to the pandemic. Child care workers were identified using National Occupational Classification 2011 codes (Statistics Canada, 2018): code 4214 identifies early childhood educators and assistants, and code 4411 identifies home child care providers. People living in the three territories are excluded. Although Statistics Canada uses the same questionnaire to collect and produce labour force data on the territories and provinces, it uses a different methodology and collection strategy in the territories. Thus, the territories were excluded from this analysis.

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1. On September 21, 2020, the CERB was replaced with the Canada Recovery Benefit (CRB). The CRB paid the same amount (\$500 per week) but was available for fewer weeks of the year. Whereas workers could receive 28 weeks of CERB during the 28-week period, workers could collect the CRB for 26 weeks of the 52-week period from September 27, 2020, to September 25, 2021.

2. Three months of data were necessary to have a sufficient sample size of child care workers.

## 2.2 Analysis

To examine the use of the CERB, two variables were explored. The first variable examined whether a child care worker claimed the CERB for any week from March 15 to September 30, 2020. The second variable examined the mean number of weeks (in that time frame) that a worker claimed the CERB. These two concepts were examined descriptively by investigating the sociodemographic and job characteristics of (1) workers who claimed the CERB and (2) workers who claimed different mean weeks of CERB.

A logistic regression model examined the factors associated with being a CERB claimant, while a multiple linear regression model examined the factors predicting the weeks of CERB claimed among child care workers who made a CERB claim. These models were run to assess the association of sociodemographic and job characteristics with the odds of being a CERB claimant and the number of weeks of CERB claimed, while controlling for other variables. The variables examined in the descriptive analyses and the models included job characteristics and sociodemographic variables. Job characteristics included self-employment (self-employed versus not self-employed), industry (daycare services, private household, school or other), union membership (union member versus not a union member), job permanence (temporary versus permanent), hours worked (part time, or less than 30 hours worked per week, versus full time, or 30 or more hours worked per week), multiple job status (multiple job holder versus not a multiple job holder), weekly earnings (less than \$550 per week, \$550 to \$749 per week, or \$750 or more per week) and job tenure (less than three years, three to five years or more than five years). Questions on three of these job characteristics—union membership, job permanence and weekly earnings—were asked only of non-self-employed workers. For this reason, a single variable was created combining weekly earnings and self-employment for the models, and union membership and job permanence were not included in the models.

The sociodemographic characteristics that were examined in this study included gender (men versus women), highest level of education (secondary school or less, trades certificate or diploma, or university degree or higher), place of birth (born in Canada versus not born in Canada),<sup>3</sup> age (younger than 30, 30 to 39, 40 to 49 or 50 and older), age of youngest child in the household (0 to 4, 5 to 9, 10 to 14, 15 to 25, or no children at home or children older than 25), marital status (married versus not married), region of residence (Atlantic provinces, Quebec, Ontario, Prairies or British Columbia)<sup>4</sup> and Indigenous identity (Indigenous person living off reserve versus not Indigenous). Racialized status was not included as it was not available on the LFS for the months used in this study.

## 2.3 Results

People employed as child care workers in December 2019, January 2020 and February 2020 differed in terms of certain characteristics compared with all other employed workers in Canada (Table 1). Data from the LFS account for all child care workers, including those working in licensed centres; in schools; as home child care providers; as nannies; and in other settings, such as drop-in child care services in gyms, malls and stores. During the pre-pandemic period of December 2019 to February 2020, employed child care workers were more likely to be self-employed compared with other employed workers (21% versus 14%). Among those who were employees (i.e., not self-employed), child care workers were less likely than other employed workers to have weekly earnings of \$750 or more (37% versus 64%). Child care workers did not differ significantly from all other employed workers in terms of union membership, job permanence, part-time status, job tenure and multiple job status. Previous research using the LFS found differences between

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3. Place of birth is used in this report rather than immigrant status because a relatively high percentage of child care workers are non-permanent residents and not immigrants (Beach et al., 2004).

4. Region of residence is used in this report rather than province of residence because of the low sample size in some provinces. Individuals living in the three territories are excluded.

child care workers and other workers in terms of union membership, job permanence, part-time status and job tenure (Uppal & Savage, 2021) that may not have been significant in this study because of a smaller sample.

**Table 1**  
**Characteristics of employed child care workers and all other employed workers in Canada, December 2019 to February 2020**

	Employed child care workers (representing 273,000 workers)	All other employed workers (representing 17,978,000 workers)	Chi-square	P-value
	percent			
<b>Job characteristics</b>				
<b>Self-employment</b>				
Not self-employed	78.55	85.73	11.37	0.001
Self-employed	21.45	14.27	...	...
<b>Industry</b>				
Day care services	71.95	1.18	111.55	0.000
Private household	7.66 <sup>E</sup>	0.19	...	...
School	13.71	4.67	...	...
Other	6.68 <sup>E</sup>	93.96	...	...
<b>Union membership (employees only, self-employed excluded)</b>				
Not a union member	74.42	71.08	1.99	0.159
Union member	25.58	28.92	...	...
<b>Job permanence (employees only, self-employed excluded)</b>				
Temporary	15.79	11.60	2.88	0.090
Permanent	84.21	88.40	...	...
<b>Hours worked</b>				
Part time (less than 30 hours per week)	23.27	19.19	2.59	0.108
Full time (30 or more hours per week)	76.73	80.81	...	...
<b>Multiple job status</b>				
Not a multiple job holder	92.21	94.13	1.82	0.177
Multiple job holder	7.79 <sup>E</sup>	5.87	...	...
<b>Weekly earnings (employees only, self-employed excluded)</b>				
Less than \$550	30.57	21.01	22.23	0.000
\$550 to \$749	32.62	15.18	...	...
\$750 or more	36.81	63.81	...	...
<b>Job tenure</b>				
Fewer than three years	31.55	29.81	0.69	0.500
Three to five years	22.06	20.39	...	...
More than five years	46.38	49.80	...	...
<b>Sociodemographic characteristics</b>				
<b>Gender</b>				
Man	3.93 <sup>E</sup>	52.03	270.95	0.000
Woman	96.07	47.97	...	...
<b>Highest level of education</b>				
Secondary school or less	21.24	31.03	33.06	0.000
Trades certificate or diploma	57.18	35.91	...	...
University degree or higher	21.58	33.05	...	...
<b>Place of birth<sup>1</sup></b>				
Not born in Canada	37.27	28.35	12.74	0.000
Born in Canada	62.73	71.65	...	...
<b>Age</b>				
Younger than 30	21.09	23.59	1.60	0.188
30 to 39	24.54	22.57	...	...
40 to 49	25.17	21.23	...	...
50 and older	29.20	32.61	...	...
<b>Age of youngest child in household</b>				
0 to 4	12.76	11.18	8.14	0.000
5 to 9	12.53	8.16	...	...
10 to 14	10.45	7.22	...	...
15 to 25	17.11	11.33	...	...
No children at home (or children older than 25)	47.15	62.11	...	...
<b>Marital status</b>				
Not married	34.95	36.58	0.48	0.487
Married (includes common-law)	65.05	63.42	...	...
<b>Region of residence<sup>2</sup></b>				
Atlantic provinces	5.40	5.89	2.61	0.034
Quebec	30.49	23.10	...	...
Ontario	36.90	38.75	...	...
Prairies	16.60	18.44	...	...
British Columbia	10.61 <sup>E</sup>	13.83	...	...
<b>Indigenous identity</b>				
Indigenous person living off reserve	3.63 <sup>E</sup>	3.61	0.00	0.979
Not Indigenous	96.37	96.39	...	...

... not applicable

<sup>E</sup> use with caution

1. Place of birth is used in this report rather than immigrant status because a relatively high percentage of child care workers are non-permanent residents and not immigrants.

2. Region of residence is used in this report rather than province of residence because of the low sample size in some provinces. Individuals living in the three territories are excluded. Although Statistics Canada uses the same questionnaire to collect and produce labour force data on the territories and provinces, it uses a different methodology and collection strategy in the territories, and these data are collected separately from those for the provinces.

Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, December 2019, January 2020 and February 2020.

Employed child care workers also differed in terms of sociodemographic characteristics compared with all other employed workers. Child care workers were more likely than all other employed workers to be women (96% versus 48%) and to have a trades certificate or diploma (57% versus 36%), but less likely to have a university degree or higher (22% versus 33%). They were also more likely to have been born outside Canada (37% versus 28%). Child care workers were less likely to have no children at home (47% versus 62%) and were more likely to live in Quebec (30% versus 23%). Previous research has shown that the ratio of child care workers to the total employed population is higher in Quebec (2.4%) than in all of Canada (1.6%) (Uppal & Savage, 2021) because of the greater proportion of parents using child care services in Quebec (Findlay, 2019). During the pre-pandemic period, child care workers did not differ from other employed workers in terms of age, marital status and Indigenous identity.

Table 2 shows the percentage of employed child care workers and all other employed workers who claimed the CERB, along with the percentage who claimed different numbers of weeks of CERB. About 62% of child care workers had a CERB claim from March 15 to September 30, 2020, which was higher than the percentage of all other employed workers who had a CERB claim (35%). Of CERB claimants, 20% of child care workers claimed the maximum amount (28 weeks), which did not differ from other employed workers (20%). Of CERB claimants, child care workers claimed a mean of 17.45 weeks, which was not significantly different from the number of weeks claimed by all other employed workers (16.70).

**Table 2**  
**Canada Emergency Response Benefit characteristics of employed child care workers and all employed other workers in Canada**

	Employed child care workers (representing 273,000 workers)	All other employed workers (representing 17,978,000 workers)	Chi-square	P-value
		percent		
<b>CERB claimant</b>				
No	38.23	65.27	102.02	0.000
Yes	61.77	34.73	...	...
<b>Among CERB claimants, weeks of CERB</b>				
1 to 4	7.15 <sup>e</sup>	9.32	0.71	0.640
5 to 8	11.80	13.89	...	...
9 to 12	14.44	15.78	...	...
13 to 16	19.09	16.96	...	...
17 to 20	9.00 <sup>e</sup>	8.40	...	...
21 to 24	11.78	10.63	...	...
25 to 28	26.74	25.02	...	...
<b>Among CERB claimants, claimed maximum number of weeks from March 15 to September 30, 2020 (28 weeks)</b>				
1 to 27 weeks	79.52	79.98	0.03	0.858
28 weeks	20.48	20.02	...	...

... not applicable

<sup>e</sup> use with caution

**Notes:** CERB = Canada Emergency Response Benefit.

**Sources:** Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, December 2019, January 2020 and February 2020; and Employment and Social Development Canada, Canada Emergency Response Benefit information.

Table 3 shows the percentage of child care workers who claimed the CERB by job and sociodemographic characteristics. There were few significant differences between child care workers who did and did not claim the CERB. Child care workers who had a CERB claim were more likely to have lower weekly earnings: 53% of child care workers with weekly earnings of \$750 or more had a CERB claim, compared with 70% of child care workers who had weekly earnings of less than \$550. CERB claims also varied by region of residence, with claims being less likely among child care workers who lived in Quebec than those living in the other regions. Less than 43% of child care workers in Quebec had a CERB claim, compared with 60% in the Atlantic provinces, 73% in Ontario, 66% in the Prairies and 72% in British Columbia. Child care workers who did and did not claim the CERB did not differ significantly in terms of self-employment, union membership, job permanence, hours worked, job tenure, gender, education, Canadian-born status, age, age of youngest child in the household, marital status and Indigenous identity. Although some of these variables appear to differ in terms of the percentage who claimed the CERB, they were not significantly different.

Table 3

## Child care workers who claimed the Canada Emergency Response Benefit by job and sociodemographic characteristics

	Claimed CERB		
	percent	chi-square	p-value
<b>Job characteristics</b>			
<b>Self-employment</b>			
Not self-employed	61.52	0.05	0.828
Self-employed	62.70	...	...
<b>Industry</b>			
Day care services	58.93	1.21	0.304
Private household	60.99 <sup>E</sup>	...	...
School	73.95	...	...
Other	68.22	...	...
<b>Union membership (employees only, self-employed excluded)</b>			
Not a union member	63.40	1.21	0.271
Union member	56.05	...	...
<b>Job permanence (employees only, self-employed excluded)</b>			
Temporary	72.18	2.95	0.086
Permanent	59.52	...	...
<b>Hours worked</b>			
Part time (less than 30 hours per week)	70.42	3.36	0.067
Full time (30 or more hours per week)	59.14	...	...
<b>Multiple job status</b>			
Not a multiple job holder	62.21	0.20	0.658
Multiple job holder	56.56 <sup>E</sup>	...	...
<b>Weekly earnings (employees only, self-employed excluded)</b>			
Less than \$550	69.67	3.39	0.034
\$550 to \$749	64.00	...	...
\$750 or more	52.55	...	...
<b>Job tenure</b>			
Fewer than three years	67.73	2.74	0.065
Three to five years	65.33	...	...
More than five years	56.01	...	...
<b>Sociodemographic characteristics</b>			
<b>Gender</b>			
Man	64.82 <sup>E</sup>	0.05	0.821
Woman	61.64	...	...
<b>Highest level of education</b>			
Secondary school or less	67.82	1.25	0.287
Trades certificate or diploma	59.76	...	...
University degree or higher	61.12	...	...
<b>Place of birth</b>			
Not born in Canada	67.91	3.44	0.064
Born in Canada	58.12	...	...
<b>Age</b>			
Younger than 30	69.55	0.76	0.514
30 to 39	57.37	...	...
40 to 49	58.52	...	...
50 and older	62.64	...	...
<b>Age of youngest child in household</b>			
0 to 4	63.83	0.59	0.669
5 to 9	59.31	...	...
10 to 14	51.80	...	...
15 to 25	64.15	...	...
No children at home (or children older than 25)	63.21	...	...
<b>Marital status</b>			
Not married	66.33	2.45	0.118
Married (includes common-law)	59.32	...	...
<b>Region of residence</b>			
Atlantic provinces	59.84	5.96	0.000
Quebec	42.78	...	...
Ontario	72.60	...	...
Prairies	66.42	...	...
British Columbia	72.36	...	...
<b>Indigenous identity</b>			
Indigenous person living off reserve	75.32 <sup>E</sup>	1.73	0.188
Not Indigenous	57.46	...	...

... not applicable

<sup>E</sup> use with caution**Note:** CERB = Canada Emergency Response Benefit.**Sources:** Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, December 2019, January 2020 and February 2020; and Employment and Social Development Canada, Canada Emergency Response Benefit information.

The mean (average) weeks of CERB claimed by child care workers followed the same trends as the percentage of child care workers who claimed a high number of weeks of CERB (Table 4). Of the child care workers who had a CERB claim, those in schools claimed fewer weeks—a mean of 12 weeks—compared with a mean of 18 to 19 weeks for those in the daycare services industry, private households and other industries. On average, child care workers who were union members claimed fewer weeks than non-union members (12 versus 19 weeks). The number of weeks claimed also varied by pre-pandemic weekly earnings, with workers who were making \$750 or more per week claiming a mean of 14 weeks of CERB, compared with 19 weeks for workers making less than \$550 per week and 18 weeks for workers making \$550 to \$749 per week. Child care CERB claimants who had been at their job for less than three years claimed more weeks of CERB (mean of 19 weeks) than workers who had been at their job for more than five years (mean of 16 weeks). Canadian-born child care workers claimed fewer weeks than non-Canadian-born workers (mean of 16 versus 19 weeks). Last, the number of weeks claimed varied by region or residence, with workers in Quebec and the Atlantic provinces claiming the fewest weeks (means of 14 and 15 weeks, respectively) and workers in Ontario, the Prairies and British Columbia claiming more weeks (means of 18, 19 and 19 weeks, respectively). The number of weeks claimed among child care workers who claimed the CERB did not differ significantly in terms of self-employment, job permanence, hours worked, gender, age, age of youngest child in the household and Indigenous identity.

Table 5 presents the results of the logistic regression model predicting the odds of being a CERB claimant for child care workers and shows all the variables included in the model. After controlling for the other job and sociodemographic characteristics, child care workers who worked in schools were the most likely to have made a CERB claim, with over three times the odds of having made a CERB claim compared with child care workers in the daycare services industry. Also, child care workers in Ontario, the Prairies and British Columbia were more likely than those in Quebec to have made a CERB claim: those in Ontario had more than four times the odds, those in the Prairies had three times the odds and those in British Columbia had almost four times the odds of having made a CERB claim compared with those in Quebec.

Table 6 shows the results of the multiple linear regression model predicting the weeks of CERB claimed (among child care workers who made a CERB claim), showing all variables included in the model. After controlling for all other job and sociodemographic characteristics, child care CERB claimants who worked in schools claimed the fewest weeks of CERB, almost five weeks less than those who worked in the daycare services industry. Weekly earnings were also associated with the number of weeks of CERB claims. Compared with child care CERB claimants with weekly earnings of \$750 or more, self-employed workers claimed about three and a half more weeks. Employee workers with weekly earnings of less than \$550 claimed more than five more weeks, and employee workers with weekly earnings of \$550 to \$749 claimed almost three more weeks. Last, child care CERB claimants in Ontario claimed significantly more weeks, even after controlling for job and sociodemographic characteristics. Child care CERB claimants in Ontario claimed more than three and a half more weeks compared with those in Quebec.

Table 4

Among child care workers who claimed the Canada Emergency Response Benefit, mean number of weeks claimed from March 15 to September 30, 2020, by job and sociodemographic characteristics

	Mean number of weeks of CERB claimed from March 15 to September 30, 2020			
	mean	standard error	t-statistic	p-value
<b>Job characteristics</b>				
<b>Self-employment</b>				
Not self-employed	17.09	0.58	ref.	ref.
Self-employed	18.75	1.01	1.43	0.153
<b>Industry</b>				
Day care services	18.53	0.60	ref.	ref.
Private household	18.56	1.49	0.02	0.985
School	12.09	1.25	-4.95	0.000
Other	18.27	2.30	-0.10	0.917
<b>Union membership (employees only, self-employed excluded)</b>				
Not a union member	18.62	0.62	ref.	ref.
Union member	12.07	1.17	-4.93	0.000
<b>Job permanence (employees only, self-employed excluded)</b>				
Temporary	18.32	1.25	ref.	ref.
Permanent	16.81	0.69	-1.01	0.312
<b>Hours worked</b>				
Part time (less than 30 hours per week)	18.05	0.86	ref.	ref.
Full time (30 or more hours per week)	17.24	0.62	-0.77	0.440
<b>Multiple job status</b>				
Not a multiple job holder	17.33	0.50	ref.	ref.
Multiple job holder	19.05	1.83	0.93	0.351
<b>Weekly earnings (employees only, self-employed excluded)</b>				
Less than \$550	19.37	0.97	3.32	0.001
\$550 to \$749	17.69	0.95	2.56	0.011
\$750 or more	13.95	1.14	ref.	ref.
<b>Job tenure</b>				
Fewer than three years	19.20	0.81	2.53	0.012
Three to five years	17.54	0.90	1.27	0.206
More than five years	15.97	0.89	ref.	ref.
<b>Sociodemographic characteristics</b>				
<b>Gender</b>				
Man	18.02	2.38	ref.	ref.
Woman	17.43	0.54	-0.23	0.816
<b>Highest level of education</b>				
Secondary school or less	18.53	0.99	1.87	0.062
Trades certificate or diploma	16.32	0.74	ref.	ref.
University degree or higher	19.20	1.03	-2.18	0.030
<b>Place of birth</b>				
Not born in Canada	19.28	0.77	ref.	ref.
Born in Canada	16.18	0.65	-3.06	0.002
<b>Age</b>				
Younger than 30	17.67	0.86	-0.32	0.751
30 to 39	17.25	1.09	ref.	ref.
40 to 49	17.50	1.15	0.18	0.857
50 and older	17.40	1.17	0.09	0.928
<b>Age of youngest child in household</b>				
0 to 4	18.63	1.22	-1.51	0.131
5 to 9	18.14	1.33	-1.34	0.180
10 to 14	15.29	1.74	ref.	ref.
15 to 25	18.25	1.42	-1.22	0.223
No children at home (or children older than 25)	17.06	0.89	-1.02	0.310
<b>Marital status</b>				
Not married	16.16	0.77	ref.	ref.
Married (includes common-law)	18.23	0.66	2.10	0.036
<b>Region of residence</b>				
Atlantic provinces	15.28	1.03	-0.70	0.483
Quebec	13.88	1.47	ref.	ref.
Ontario	18.21	0.81	-2.60	0.010
Prairies	19.15	1.01	-2.58	0.010
British Columbia	19.35	1.30	-3.15	0.002
<b>Indigenous identity</b>				
Indigenous person living off reserve	18.15	1.88	-1.06	0.288
Not Indigenous	16.06	0.68	ref.	ref.

Notes: CERB = Canada Emergency Response Benefit. ref. = reference category.

Sources: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, December 2019, January 2020 and February 2020; and Employment and Social Development Canada, Canada Emergency Response Benefit information.

**Table 5**

**Logistic regression predicting odds of being a Canada Emergency Response Benefit claimant, among child care workers**

Variable	Odds ratio (95% confidence interval)	P-value
<b>Industry</b>		
Day care services	1.00 (1.00 to 1.00)	ref.
Private household	0.66 (0.20 to 2.16)	0.492
School	3.27 (1.25 to 8.57)	0.016
Other	1.28 (0.50 to 3.22)	0.606
<b>Hours worked</b>		
Part time (less than 30 hours per week)	1.00 (1.00 to 1.00)	ref.
Full time (30 or more hours per week)	0.92 (0.44 to 1.93)	0.823
<b>Multiple-job status</b>		
Not a multiple job holder	1.00 (1.00 to 1.00)	ref.
Multiple job holder	0.70 (0.19 to 2.58)	0.590
<b>Job tenure</b>		
Fewer than three years	1.17 (0.64 to 2.14)	0.606
Three to five years	1.12 (0.59 to 2.12)	0.724
More than five years	1.00 (1.00 to 1.00)	ref.
<b>Weekly earnings</b>		
Self-employed	2.07 (0.91 to 4.73)	0.085
Less than \$550	1.81 (0.73 to 4.47)	0.197
\$550 to \$749	1.56 (0.58 to 4.24)	0.379
\$750 or more	1.00 (1.00 to 1.00)	ref.
<b>Gender</b>		
Man	1.00 (1.00 to 1.00)	ref.
Woman	1.13 (0.29 to 4.46)	0.860
<b>Highest level of education</b>		
Secondary school or less	1.32 (0.72 to 2.42)	0.361
Trades certificate or diploma	1.00 (1.00 to 1.00)	ref.
University degree or higher	0.68 (0.37 to 1.24)	0.211
<b>Age</b>		
Younger than 30	1.30 (0.52 to 3.29)	0.576
30 to 39	1.00 (1.00 to 1.00)	ref.
40 to 49	1.06 (0.54 to 2.08)	0.857
50 and older	1.14 (0.58 to 2.23)	0.703
<b>Age of youngest child in household</b>		
0 to 4	1.52 (0.63 to 3.67)	0.353
5 to 9	1.50 (0.66 to 3.41)	0.336
10 to 14	1.00 (1.00 to 1.00)	ref.
15 to 25	1.29 (0.54 to 3.08)	0.564
No children at home (or children older than 25)	1.29 (0.57 to 2.93)	0.537
<b>Marital status</b>		
Not married	1.00 (1.00 to 1.00)	ref.
Married (includes common-law)	0.83 (0.46 to 1.50)	0.537
<b>Place of birth</b>		
Not born in Canada	1.00 (1.00 to 1.00)	ref.
Born in Canada	0.62 (0.34 to 1.16)	0.134
<b>Region of residence</b>		
Atlantic provinces	2.23 (0.84 to 5.91)	0.105
Quebec	1.00 (1.00 to 1.00)	ref.
Ontario	4.17 (2.11 to 8.26)	0.000
Prairies	2.98 (1.60 to 5.55)	0.001
British Columbia	3.85 (1.62 to 9.14)	0.002
<b>Indigenous identity</b>		
Indigenous person living off reserve	1.62 (0.46 to 5.68)	0.453
Not Indigenous	1.00 (1.00 to 1.00)	ref.

Note: ref. = reference category.

Sources: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, December 2019, January 2020 and February 2020; and Employment and Social Development Canada, Canada Emergency Response Benefit information.

**Table 6**  
**Linear regression predicting weeks of Canada Emergency Response Benefit claimed, among child care workers who made a claim**

	Beta	Standard error	P-value
<b>Industry</b>			
Day care services	ref.	ref.	ref.
Private household	0.36	2.12	0.866
School	-4.74	1.39	0.001
Other	-1.00	2.22	0.651
<b>Hours worked</b>			
Part time (less than 30 hours per week)	ref.	ref.	ref.
Full time (30 or more hours per week)	1.36	1.57	0.385
<b>Multiple-job status</b>			
Not a multiple job holder	ref.	ref.	ref.
Multiple job holder	1.32	1.87	0.481
<b>Job tenure</b>			
Fewer than three years	1.59	1.59	0.319
Three to five years	1.28	1.34	0.340
More than five years	ref.	ref.	ref.
<b>Weekly earnings</b>			
Self-employed	3.57	1.59	0.025
Less than \$550	5.25	2.62	0.046
\$550 to \$749	2.85	1.28	0.027
\$750 or more	ref.	ref.	ref.
<b>Gender</b>			
Man	ref.	ref.	ref.
Woman	-0.27	2.91	0.926
<b>Highest level of education</b>			
Secondary school or less	1.65	1.24	0.187
Trades certificate or diploma	ref.	ref.	ref.
University degree or higher	1.84	1.29	0.154
<b>Age</b>			
Younger than 30	-0.15	1.45	0.916
30 to 39	ref.	ref.	ref.
40 to 49	0.43	1.37	0.757
50 and older	0.75	1.75	0.670
<b>Age of youngest child in household</b>			
0 to 4	3.43	2.11	0.104
5 to 9	3.35	1.91	0.081
10 to 14	ref.	ref.	ref.
15 to 25	3.70	1.95	0.058
No children at home (or children older than 25)	2.91	1.91	0.128
<b>Marital status</b>			
Not married	ref.	ref.	ref.
Married (includes common-law)	1.45	1.37	0.291
<b>Place of birth</b>			
Not born in Canada	ref.	ref.	ref.
Born in Canada	-1.63	1.16	0.161
<b>Region of residence</b>			
Atlantic provinces	0.07	2.08	0.972
Quebec	ref.	ref.	ref.
Ontario	3.68	1.67	0.027
Prairies	3.02	2.13	0.156
British Columbia	3.38	1.95	0.083
<b>Indigenous identity</b>			
Indigenous person living off reserve	-0.08	2.29	0.972
Not Indigenous	ref.	ref.	ref.

**Note:** ref. = reference category.

**Sources:** Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, December 2019, January 2020 and February 2020; and Employment and Social Development Canada, Canada Emergency Response Benefit information.

### 3 Discussion

Child care provision in Canada has been greatly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The current study showed that 65% of child care workers claimed the CERB from March 15 to September 30, 2020, compared with 35% of all employed workers in Canada. In addition, child care workers who claimed the CERB were more likely to have a high number of weeks of CERB claims (15 or more weeks) compared with other workers (63% versus 57%).

Among child care workers, those who worked in schools had more than three times the odds of having made a CERB claim compared with those in the daycare services industry. However, among claimants, child care workers in schools claimed approximately three and a half fewer weeks of CERB compared with workers in the daycare services industry. Examining the temporal pattern of CERB claims more closely, child care workers in schools made the most claims in the summer months (July and August), whereas those in the daycare services industry made the most claims in the spring (April and May). Early childhood educators in kindergarten classrooms are permitted to claim Employment Insurance in the summer months (even prior to the pandemic), and this may explain the high rate of CERB claims among child care workers in schools (Employment and Social Development Canada, 2021). Further exploration of the use of support programs—such as the CERB or other Employment Insurance programs—is warranted to understand use by different types of child care workers.

Region of residence was also associated with being a CERB claimant and with the number of weeks claimed. After controlling for other sociodemographic and job characteristics, child care workers in Ontario, the Prairies and British Columbia were the most likely to have made a CERB claim, and child care workers in Ontario claimed the most weeks of CERB. These findings are generally congruent with the policies enacted by the different provinces in terms of child care during this period of the pandemic. Quebec (outside Montréal) had the earliest reopening date for child care centres of all the provinces. As well, these findings may reflect differences between provinces in terms of funding during child care closures. In Quebec and the Atlantic provinces, compensation was given to licensed centres to replace parent fees (likely used to pay staff), whereas the other provinces did not have similar programs. Future research could examine whether continuing to pay child care workers, compared with laying them off and rehiring them, affected these workers in terms of stress, job satisfaction and job retention.

The child care workers with the lowest wages claimed the most weeks of CERB. This is congruent with Lemieux et al. (2020), who found that the most affected workers in terms of employment were those with lower wages. Lemieux et al. (2020) reported that almost half of all job losses from February to April 2020 were attributed to workers in the bottom earnings quartile. The CERB provided \$500 per week, which is higher than the weekly earnings of many workers in the child care sector (about one-third of child care workers were making less than \$550 per week before the pandemic).

### 4 Limitations

Data from the LFS account for all child care workers, including those working in licensed centres; in schools; as home child care providers; as nannies; and in other settings, such as drop-in child care services in gyms, malls and stores. Reporting on all child care workers collectively does not account for the differences among these different groups of workers in the child care sector. Providing information on each of these groups of workers is not possible with the LFS, and reporting on them as one group may mask important differences between different types of workers. As well, at the time of the study, the LFS could not provide information on the racialized status of child care workers.

This study reported on the use of the CERB by child care workers, but some financial support for the child care sector was also provided by the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS). The CEWS provided subsidies to Canadian employers who had lost revenue because of the pandemic to cover part of their employees' wages. This study may, therefore, underestimate the impact of COVID-19 support programs on the child care sector, as some child care workers may have received benefits from the CEWS and not claimed the CERB.

## **5 Future research**

Future research could focus on the child care workforce in general. Topics of study include reasons for working in the child care industry, job satisfaction, job retention and ongoing training opportunities. As well, it is important to consider whether the characteristics of the child care workforce have changed with increased federal investment in child care (Government of Canada, 2021). The job and sociodemographic characteristics of the workforce should continue to be examined as more child care spaces are created and funding is increased. This increased funding may also affect the quality of child care in terms of the education of child care workers and ongoing training opportunities.

## **6 Conclusions**

Child care workers were more likely to claim the CERB compared with other workers in Canada. Among child care workers, the likelihood of claiming the CERB and the number of weeks claimed varied by industry, region and pre-pandemic earnings. Child care workers in schools were more likely to make a CERB claim but claimed fewer weeks than workers in other industries. Workers in Quebec were the least likely to make a CERB claim, and workers in Quebec and the Atlantic provinces claimed the fewest weeks. Child care workers who had higher pre-pandemic earnings claimed fewer weeks of CERB compared with self-employed and lower-paid workers. Future research on child care workers and providers could provide information on subgroups of workers within the child care sector and also focus on the job satisfaction, job retention and training opportunities of child care workers.

## 7 Appendix

**Table A1**  
**Summary of child care and school closures in Canada in 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic**

Province or territory	Licensed child care centres		Licensed home-based child care		Was funding provided for licensed child care spaces during closure?	Unlicensed home-based child care		Schools	
	Mandated closed?	Date of opening	Mandated closed?	Date of opening		Mandated closed?	Date of opening	Mandated closed?	Date of opening
Newfoundland	Yes	May 11	Yes	May 11	Government funding at child care subsidy program rates for all licensed spaces	No	...	Yes	September
Prince Edward Island	Yes	May 22	Yes	May 22	Financial support to centres	Yes	June 1	Yes	September
Nova Scotia	Yes	June 15	Yes	June 15	Staff continued to be paid in licensed care Parent fees charged with government support to parents who could not pay	No	...	Yes	September
New Brunswick	Yes	May 19	Yes	May 19	Financial support to early learning centres and staff	No	...	Yes	September
Quebec	Yes	Outside Montréal - May 11; Montréal - June 1	Yes	Unclear (all child care closed March 16 to 27, unclear whether child care homes closed after that)	Services continued to be funded	No (some may have been open with lower ratio)	Return to normal ratio June 22	Yes	Outside Montréal - May 11; Montréal - September
Ontario	Yes	June 12	No	...	Regular funding, but no replacement of lost parent fees, and ban of child care fees for closed child care services	No	...	Yes	September
Manitoba	Yes	June 1	No	...	Operating grant continued to be provided to licensed child care facilities, but no replacement of lost parent fees	No	...	Yes	Limited access June 1 (e.g., one-on-one, small groups)
Saskatchewan	No—only school-based centres closed	School-based centres reopened May 4	No	...	Regular government grants to licensed child care facilities, but no replacement of lost parent fees	No	...	Yes	September
Alberta	Yes	May 14	No	...	Regular funding only if operating, no replacement of lost parent fees	No	...	Yes	September
British Columbia	No	...	No	...	Open child care services received seven times their average funding; Closed child care services received twice their average funding	No	...	Yes	Reopened part time June 1
Northwest Territories	No	...	No	...	Subsidy for fixed costs (rent, utilities) for closed centres, no replacement of lost parent fees	No	...	Yes	September
Nunavut	Yes	June 1	Unknown	...	Funded child care staff	No	...	Yes	September
Yukon	No	...	No	...	Grant to cover operational costs March to June, but not staff wages for closed centres	No	...	Yes	September

... not applicable

Sources: Childcare Resource and Research Unit (2020); and Friendly et al. (2021).

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