

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING IN THE EARLY YEARS SECTOR

An Environmental Scan of Professional Development Opportunities in 2015



This environmental scan is part of a larger early years sector professional development project led by BCcampus and sponsored by the Ministry of Advanced Education and the Provincial Office for the Early Years in the Ministry of Children and Family Development.

PREPARED BY KATHREEN RIEL | EDITING & DESIGN BY ALISON LYNCH RICHARD

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Executive Summary

In 2013, the Government of British Columbia released the B.C. Early Years Strategy: a long-term plan to ensure that British Columbians have the best possible start in life. With the goal of improving early years programs and services, the provincial government has sought to support training and increase access to professional development opportunities for those who work in the early years sector. Part of this initiative is a plan from the Ministry of Advanced Education and the Provincial Office for the Early Years in the Ministry of Children and Family Development to create a web solution that consolidates all professional development and training resources related to the early years sector in a centralized online environment.

The first phase of this project is an environmental scan of early years sector professional development opportunities, which is comprised of two components:

1. An inventory of professional development opportunities and resources offered from January 2015 to January 2016 in B.C.
2. An analysis report of the inventory that documents the current state of professional development in B.C., according to the inventory's emerging themes.

This scan was conducted to better understand the early years professional learning context in B.C. in order to inform the design of a professional development web solution. The result of this inquiry includes a collection of 967 professional development opportunities and data from 50 interviews.

This report describes emerging trends and potential opportunities for professional learning among people who work with children aged 0-12, with specific emphasis on training opportunities for those working with children in the 0-6 age range. This report also seeks to provide insight into the distinct circumstances faced by coordinators, directors, researchers, and trainers who organize, promote, and deliver learning opportunities to early years professionals and practitioners working in diverse communities throughout the province.



Methodology

The primary aim of the inventory is to inform the development and design of a professional development web solution that will consolidate all professional development opportunities and resources related to the early years sector in one online environment. To support this objective, professional development opportunities gathered in the inventory are described according to 30 specifications. Information for each asset was populated according to these descriptive criteria:

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------|
| ▪ Organization | ▪ Opportunity or training type | ▪ Association |
| ▪ Title | ▪ Keywords | ▪ Culturally specific |
| ▪ Cost | ▪ Copyright and licensing | ▪ Demographic |
| ▪ Location | ▪ Evidence base | ▪ Scale |
| ▪ Dates and frequency of offering | ▪ Prerequisites | ▪ Satisfy ECE hours |
| ▪ Contact | ▪ Delivery method | ▪ Learning competencies |
| ▪ Facebook page | ▪ Format | ▪ Proof of completion |
| ▪ Link and name | ▪ Topics | ▪ Additional notes |
| ▪ Aggregate site | ▪ Offerings | ▪ Challenges |
| ▪ Duration | ▪ Jurisdiction | ▪ Successes |

Systems of Influence on Professional Development

“A SYSTEM IS A GROUP OF INTERACTING, INTERRELATED, AND INTERDEPENDENT COMPONENTS THAT FORM A COMPLEX AND UNIFIED WHOLE.”¹

The early years sector is serviced by health, special needs, family support, early care, and education systems. These systems have interdependent influences on the development of children and on professional learning. In British Columbia, training and professional development in the early years sector is funded, administered, and regulated by various provincial ministries. Because all these systems have permeable and reciprocal influences on professional learning, key informants were canvassed in each of the systems to obtain a broad understanding of factors that affect the provisioning of professional learning opportunities in the early years sector throughout B.C.

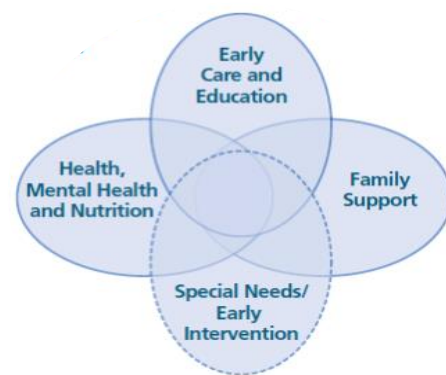


Figure 1: Components of an early childhood development system²

¹ Pegasus Communications. What is systems thinking? The Systems Thinker.

<http://www.thesystemsthinker.com/systemsthinkinglearn.html>. Retrieved June 28, 2007.

² Coffman, Julia. (2007). A Framework for Evaluating Systems Initiatives. (BUILD Initiative, 96/2007).

<http://buildinitiative.org/WhatsNew/ViewArticle/tabid/96/ArticleId/621/Framework-for-Evaluating-Systems-Initiatives.aspx>. Retrieved July 28, 2015.

The data collection was completed within a relatively short time through multiple approaches. Most of the inventory data was collected from Aug. 4 to Oct. 15, 2015. This timeframe influenced the scope and focus of the data collection—circumstances that are described in more detail in the Limitations section. Professional development opportunities were documented through Internet searches, meetings, and telephone interviews. Results from 508 websites, 50 interviews, and 263 email exchanges provide the data for this analysis report.

It was determined early in the data collection phase that most professional development opportunities for those working in the early years sector were coordinated and delivered through the Child Care Resource & Referral (CCRR) programs. Even though the CCRR’s mandate is to provide training, consultation, and support to child care providers, CCRR coordinators also work closely with local school districts, regional health authorities, community partners, and coalitions to organize conferences, workshops, forums, and networking opportunities accessible to professionals and practitioners from all systems. The CCRR programs are particularly influential in rural and remote communities. In small B.C. communities, for example, many CCRR coordinators assume leadership for multiple agencies, including Success By 6, BC Early Years Centres, and Aboriginal Supported Childhood Development programs.

Given the CCRR’s significant mandate to deliver professional development throughout B.C., it became a priority to contact as many CCRR coordinators as possible. In total, 31 CCRR coordinators were interviewed. These interviews, along with others, supported data collection for the inventory and provided insight into the conditions that influence professional development in each region of B.C.

The data from the inventory and interviews was analyzed by adapting Julia Coffman’s theory of change framework. Coffman asserts, “systems change or reform efforts tend to take place on the ‘front lines’ of practice” and are best understood by “the parts of the system they are trying to improve.”³ These are described as “systems initiatives” and viewed as organized efforts to improve a system or mobilize impact. For the purpose of this report, professional development in the early years sector was analyzed through an extended interpretation of Coffman’s five focus areas⁴:

CONTEXT	COMPONENTS	CONNECTIONS	INFRASTRUCTURE	SCALE
How does the context influence professional development opportunities in the community? Contexts may be physical, historical, social, technical, regulatory, and/or cultural.	What are the trends in professional development offerings for 2015? What are the popular offerings? What are the offerings for care providers for school age children?	What professional development opportunities aim to create and/or sustain effective networks to maintain or improve intended results for system beneficiaries?	What professional development opportunities aim to develop or improve support systems for beneficiaries?	What professional development opportunities benefit as many people as possible to produce broad and inclusive results for system beneficiaries?

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

This analysis applies and extends Coffman’s focus areas in order to understand emerging themes, trends, and potential opportunities that may suggest indicators to describe the current state of professional development in the early years sector.

Limitations

This analysis provides an overview of professional development opportunities available in 2015 to those who work in the early years sector. The scope of offerings in the inventory is constrained by the availability of publicly distributed online information that discloses the content and location of training opportunities throughout the province. Key informants frequently mentioned that professional development is often promoted through email networks. Access to these email circulations during the data collection phase was limited. Information describing those factors that influence professional development was obtained from 50 interviews with early sector professionals. Most of the key informants work in the early care and education system.

Organization of Report

This report is divided into two sections:

Findings

The Findings section is an analysis of the data according to an expanded interpretation of Coffman’s five focus areas: context, components, connections, infrastructure, and scale.

Potential Opportunities

The Potential Opportunities section outlines perceived gaps in one or more of the focus areas and recommends options for the design of a web solution that will promote professional development opportunities throughout B.C.



Findings

Context

Location

The location of professional development influences how training is accessed and organized. Most professional development opportunities are offered at a predetermined location, usually one that is found within the space of a sponsoring community agency. Very few professional development opportunities are offered on-site when people are interacting with children.

Finding adequate space at a reasonable cost was cited as major challenge for training providers, particularly in Metro Vancouver. Available spaces do not always support optimal learning because they are cramped and windowless. In rural communities, on the other hand, space is not a major issue and local school districts will provide large venues for free or at a nominal cost.

A prominent pattern emerged regarding the location of professional development with a high proportion of training events occurring in urban areas. Many large-scale training and networking opportunities such as conferences, institutes, and forums—the type that often attract high-profile speakers—usually occur in the southern coastal regions of B.C. This presents several challenges for those who reside in rural regions of the province: it is time-consuming and expensive for them to attend professional development in these areas.

“Last year my coworker and I attended the ECEBC [Early Childhood Educators of BC] conference in Richmond. So we travelled three hours to Cranbrook and then an hour-and-a-half on a plane to Vancouver. It was quite an ordeal for a two-day conference. It was exhausting. Planes leave at 9:00 in the morning so we have to leave here by 4:30 in the morning.”

CCRR Program Coordinator, Interior Region

Training organized in rural locales also presents challenges that affect access to professional development. Harsh and unpredictable weather conditions, particularly in the winter, deters people from participating in professional development for several months of the year.

Time

Organizing professional development at a fixed time presents several challenges both to those who provide training and those who wish to access training in rural and urban regions of B.C. The times designated for training can be a significant barrier, particularly for child care providers. Respondents frequently mentioned that there were few opportunities for child care providers to participate in training during the workday. Many training coordinators organize professional development in the evenings and on weekends in efforts to support a large spectrum of scheduling needs; however, evening and weekend training events also limit access. In rural B.C. communities, for instance, there is nominal or no public transit, particularly in the evenings and on weekends.

“Transportation is a huge issue. The buses don’t run on Sundays and only periodically during the week. Someone working in a family daycare who is off at 6:30 p.m. may not have the opportunity to come because they have no transportation.”

CCRR Program Coordinator, Interior Region

Carpooling is sometimes organized in order to encourage attendance and minimize costs. In some communities, CCRR coordinators described personally transporting participants to workshops or multi-day courses. It can also be difficult for professionals who are parents to participate in training because they require child care for their own children during these times.

“You work very hard, and it’s very stressful and tiring and mentally exhausting. So to think of doing training on a weekend is a lot to ask of people – and a lot to ask of people with families especially.”

CCRR Program Coordinator, Northern Region

Evening and weekend workshops are sometimes cancelled because of low enrollment. This lack of participation was described by key informants living in northern and interior regions of B.C. For this reason, some CCRR coordinators do not schedule workshops throughout the year but focus instead on extensively planning two major training events in the fall and spring to ensure optimal attendance and opportunities to network with a broad range of people.

Indeed, most large-scale professional development is scheduled during the fall or spring. This scheduling pattern is true for all systems in both urban and remote communities. In rural regions, not only is it challenging for participants to travel during the winter months, it is also difficult to get speakers and trainers who are willing to travel in potentially adverse winter conditions.

“A lot of the professional development facilitators live down on the Coast so to get them to come up here to do training... they refuse to come up here past the end of October.”

CCRR Program Coordinator, Northern Region

“Because presenters do not want to come in the winter or shoulder season, we utilize our local experts. Our speech and language pathologist or Health will conduct a lice workshop (Scratching For Answers) or Ages and Stages Questionnaire training.”

CCRR Program Coordinator, Interior Region

Regulatory Context

The early years sector consists of a wide spectrum of professionals and practitioners who observe distinct standards and comply with different licensing requirements. In B.C., early childhood educators are obligated to obtain 40 hours of professional development every five years in order to renew their certification. A caregiver without early childhood certification is not required to fulfill the same level of ongoing training. This disparate obligation to continuous learning has potential implications for professional autonomy within the early years sector, particularly between early childhood educators and child care providers who work in unlicensed settings. In communities with smaller populations, supporting a cohesive collegial identity can be challenging because of this variance in accountability.

“It used to be required by licensing that family daycares had so many hours of training each year. They took that away, and it would be good if they put that piece back in as well. This reflects on the issues we are seeing and the quality when that component was in there some time ago. There is now a disconnection that child care providers have with one another.”

CCRR Program Coordinator, Northern Region

The current regulatory system of training in the early years sector also influences the way learning is structured and delivered. Diverse mandatory training obligations for people involved in very similar working practices may influence how participants choose to engage with learning and with one another.

“Different professional development requirements for license-not-required family child care, licensed family care, and group care makes it challenging to address the various levels of understanding and engagement with professional learning. One has to be cognizant of how to prepare and facilitate learning among care providers with different motivations and goals of attending a professional development experience. How a facilitator will prepare for and structure the learning will be different depending on the people from the various designations of child care facilities.”

CCRR Program Coordinator, Vancouver Island

Perceptions about Funding

A 2015 report by the Provincial Advisor for Aboriginal Supported Child Development (ASCD) programs described the challenges faced by those working in Aboriginal communities and the need for professional development and sustained financial support:

44% of ASCD programs experienced staff turnover within this past year, emphasizing the need to train staff. 62% of programs reported they had some resources dedicated to professional development opportunities. In some cases, however, a lack of financial support creates a barrier to strengthening staff capacity⁵

Funding for professional development for those who work in Aboriginal communities is a concern. Informants suggest there is a significant difference in the amount of training between regions, with some receiving more funding than others. This variance may be due in part to how professional development is valued within regional agencies: some allocate funds for training while others do not. Informants suggest that professional development needs to be valued at the agency level and that there could be more opportunities to enhance how regional Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal agencies pool resources.

“What works is professional development that is valued at the agency level and collaboration from regional folks that oversee the budgets and good working relationships with the non-Aboriginal agencies and mainstream agencies. In some regions they are working together, and in other regions there is no collaborating.”

Provincial Advisor, ASCD programs

While there may be more training opportunities when funds and resources are consolidated, some agencies that combine their resources and funds to provide professional development are not entirely successful in meeting the specific needs of those who work with Aboriginal communities.

⁵ Gagné-L'Hirondelle, Nadine (March 2015). *Aboriginal Supported Child Development Program Data Collection Report*, <http://ascdp.BC.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/ASCD-2015-Data-collection-report.pdf>. Retrieved September 2, 2015.

“It’s hard to provide professional opportunities for mainstream and Aboriginal supported training out of the same pot. While the programs are very similar, they are very different. Trying to marry the two to find appropriate opportunities is very challenging.”

Key informant, ASCD Programs

Technical Context

Given that access to professional development can be adversely affected by fixed locations and schedules, the option of online learning may hold promising opportunities for professional development. Online learning has been available for several years, and this medium has enabled people to receive certification, degrees, and professional learning within all systems.

The Early Years Professional Development Centre, a Canadian-based website, offers 104 online courses that may fulfill early childhood educators’ professional development requirements. In 2015, this website received 3,016 visitors from B.C., attracting significant enrolment in courses reflecting prominent early years trends.

Course Name	2015 Enrolment in BC
Self-Regulation in Infants and Toddlers	180
Kids Have Stress Too!	137
Self-Regulation: An Introduction	136
Scary Pictures and Fuzzy Blankets	116
Back To Nature!	52

Figure 2: Enrolment numbers for the top 5 Early Year Professional Development Centre courses in BC in 2015

Despite the potential benefits of online learning, there are barriers to its accessibility. While most urban areas of B.C. have broadband Internet access, there are communities on the outskirts of urban centres, particularly in northeast B.C. and along the north coast, in which Internet access is limited and expensive, restricting access to online professional development.

“Our equipment is really old so people come expecting to connect their equipment with ours and it is not compatible. Lots of people who want to do training in their homes can’t really access it. People don’t have cell phone coverage where they live. My friend, who is going to be working here soon, still doesn’t have the Internet. Those are big barriers. I don’t know if people in the city know that we don’t have that kind of consistent technology.”

CCRR Program Coordinator, Northern Region

There are also perceptions that learning and interacting with peers online does not adequately meet the personal and professional needs of those working in the early years sector. Face-to-face professional development is valued not only because it is an effective way to learn but also because it builds stronger collegial support.

“The face-to-face training is important so that you can get real-life scenarios and so that they can see one another. Child care providers get very isolated in their own centres so for them to come to workshops is a big networking thing.”

Program Manager, Supported Child Development Okanagan

Still, the use of online technologies is seen as a potential way to expand access to information, to affirm professional identity, and to cultivate connections.

“How are the core values of Early Childhood Education reflected in the other avenues of learning such as online learning? So when we have a provincial conference is there a way to Skype the keynote presenters so that people who are in other districts still have opportunity to be part of that experience and dialogue?”

Executive Director, ECEBC

Online learning may provide more options for people to access information, new understandings, and diverse interactions, but it is also constrained by strong perceptions of what quality learning looks like, how collegial networks are strengthened, and what legitimate measures may be used to evaluate the learning that takes place in these online environments.



Social Media

Social media appears to be minimally used to engage in early years sector professional development. Facebook is the most prominent social media tool used by agencies across all sectors, mostly to communicate upcoming community, regional, and national events pertinent to their sector. Professional development calendars, meetings, conferences, and useful resource links are also posted on agency Facebook pages. There are, however, minimal interactions by those who belong to an agency’s Facebook group or “like” its page and very few public posts depicting narrative exchanges for learning purposes.

Components

Conferences

There were 59 large-scale professional development opportunities in B.C. in 2015. These events were delivered through conferences, forums, summits, symposiums, and summer institutes. The Lower Mainland was the dominant location, hosting 34 of these training events. Most were scheduled from September to early November and April to June.

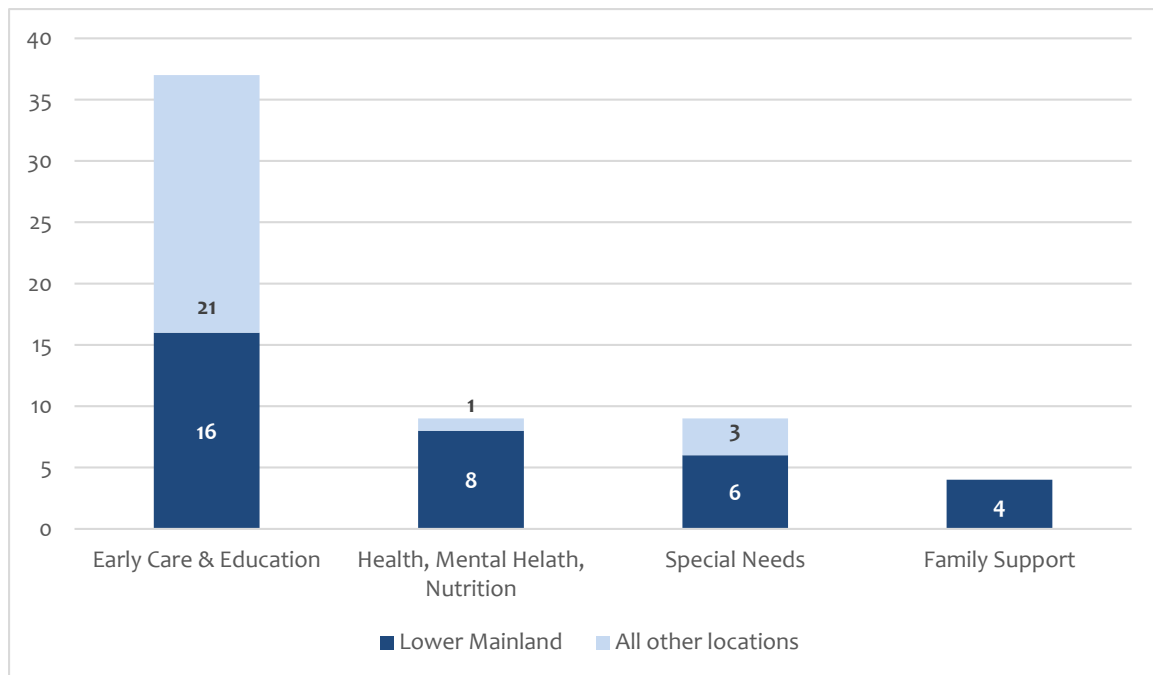


Figure 3: Locations of 2015 early years sector conferences, symposiums, and institutes in B.C.

Workshops

This scan identified 583 face-to-face workshops for those working in the early care and education system in B.C. in 2015. The CRR programs coordinated and delivered most (an estimated 524) of the identified workshops. The remaining 59 workshops were provided by other non-profit and for-profit agencies.

Figure 4 below illustrates the most popular non-compulsory workshop topics. The chart does not illustrate Child Care First Aid and Responsible Adult courses, which are offered in most B.C. regions.

Literacy workshops were the most common offering in all regions and focused on early literacy, phonics, and storytelling. Behaviour workshops were the next most prominent with guidance strategies being the most common theme. Bullying prevention also accounted for one-quarter of this category's workshops. Workshops about play were dominated first by themes about creative play and next by risky play. Hands-on or "make and take" workshops taught how to explore books, celebrations, or seasons through art. Mental health workshops dealt with strategies to assess children who are experiencing stress, anxiety, separation anxiety, and sleep disruptions due to anxiety. Workshops about the business of child care included content about management, marketing, licensing, and budgets. Outdoor education workshops explored nature appreciation, sensory development in the outdoors, outdoor play, and gardening. Workshops about communication focused on supporting children's communication skills, developing effective communication skills with children, and enhancing communication skills between adults.

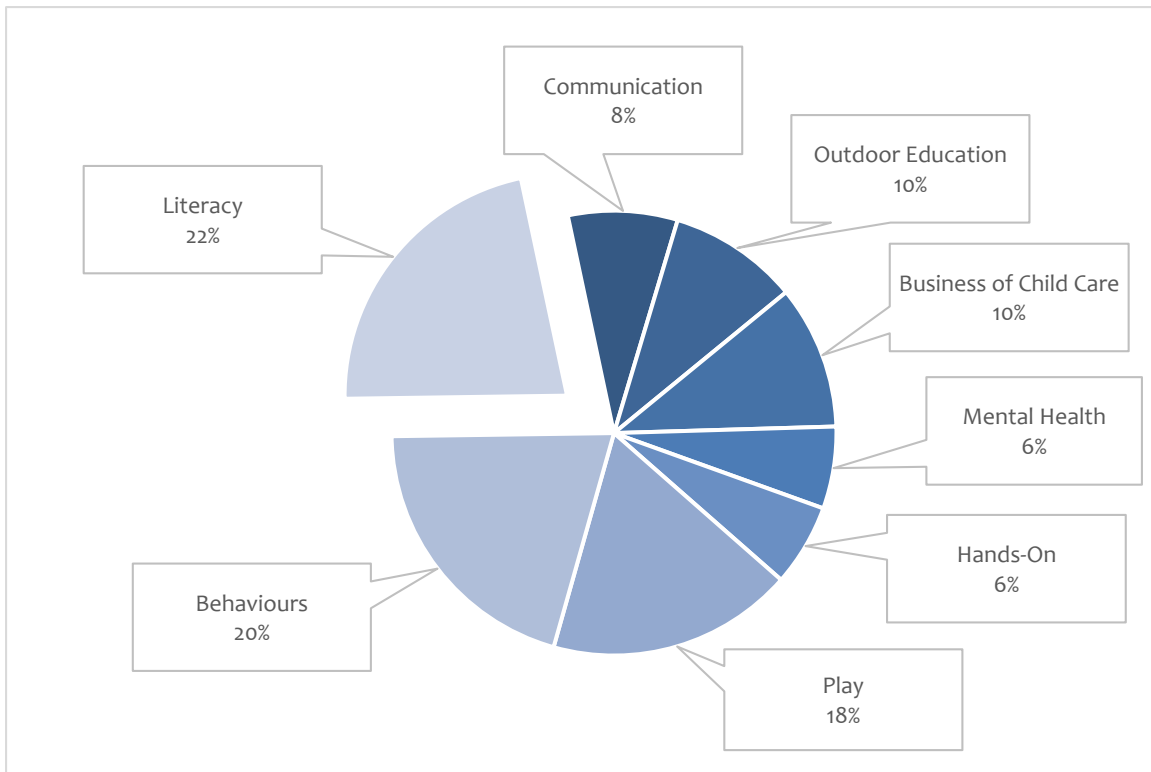


Figure 4: Categories of 2015 early years sector workshops in B.C.

Locations

The data illustrated in Figure 5 below indicates that most workshops were offered in urban areas, particularly the southern coastal region of B.C. Many remote communities, especially those north of Fort St. John and in northern coastal communities, have limited access to a wide scope of workshops in their region.

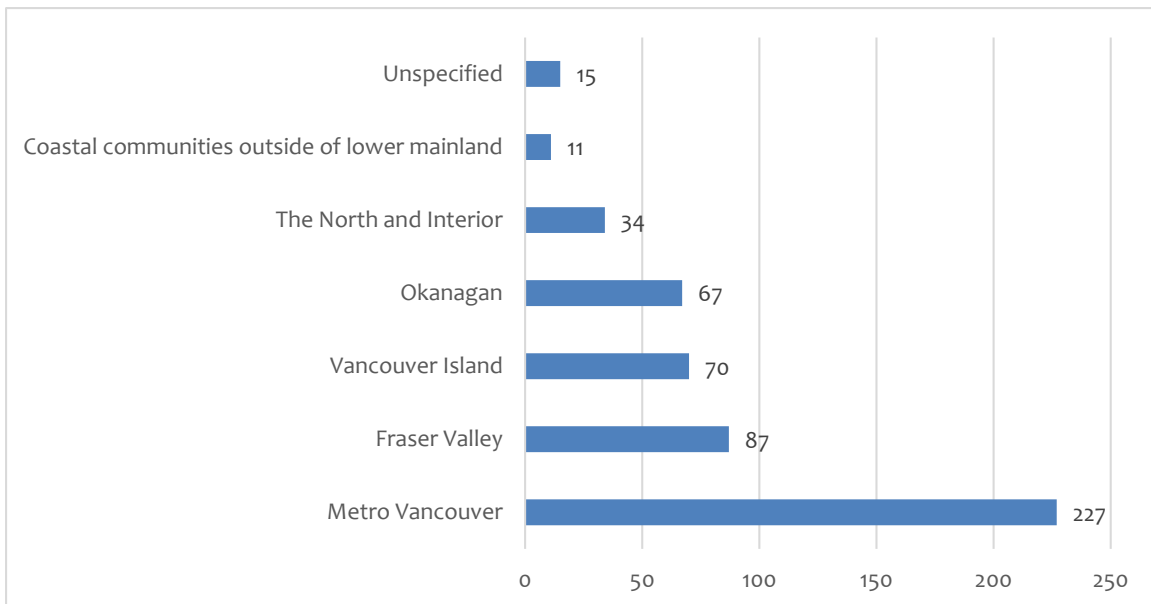


Figure 5: Locations of 2015 early years sector workshops in B.C.

Key informants described the need to travel considerable distances in order to attend professional development events.

“Anything that is within a three- to four-hour drive is considered pretty accessible compared to having to go to Vancouver.”

Early Childhood Development Coordinator, Northern Region

Given the integrated infrastructure of the early years sector, there are many workshops and courses that are collaboratively coordinated and delivered by child care and education agencies, including CCRR programs, non-profit societies, and for-profit companies. These cross-system courses and workshops are illustrated in Figure 6 below.

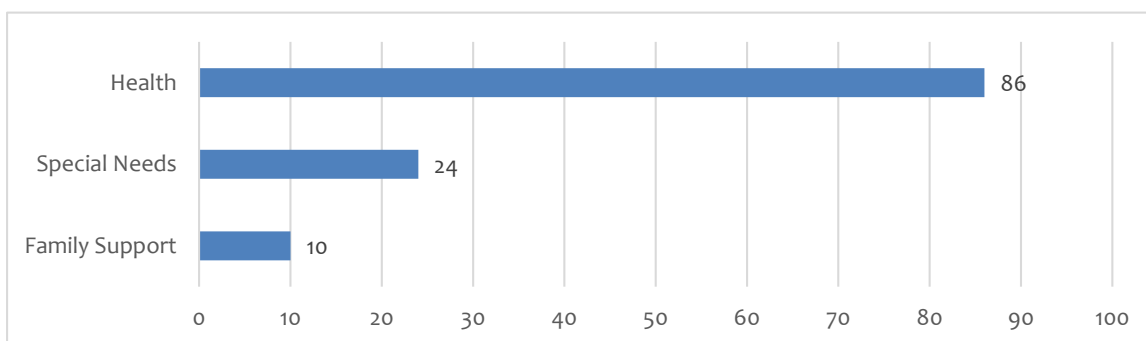


Figure 6: Topics of early care and education cross-system courses and workshops in B.C. in 2015

School Age Care

Adults who wish to care for school age children must complete mandatory training called the Responsible Adult Course, which is available as a face-to-face or correspondence course. Aside from this course, professional development opportunities for these practitioners include a conference that has been held annually for the last three years and, in 2015, 15 workshops for school age care practitioners identified through this scan. Twelve of these workshops were offered through CCRR programs; the remaining three were offered by agencies specializing in health, special needs, or family support.



School age practitioners experience challenges in sustaining access to and engagement with ongoing learning opportunities. Tuition rates have escalated for the School Age Child Care Certificate Program offered by Vancouver Community College and Douglas College, and there are no mandatory obligations to participate in professional development beyond the Responsible Adult Course. School age practitioners also often work daily split shifts, which limits opportunities to participate in courses and workshops.

There are opportunities for increased collaboration between professionals in the early years and school age sectors, particularly in the development of learning frameworks, occupational standards, and accredited training. School age practitioners have a great deal to contribute to dialogue around the further application of the Middle Years Development Instrument and increasing its continuity with the Early Development Instrument. It's also important to note that those who possess early childhood qualifications may also be working in facilities with school age children, which suggests value in developing curricular connections between early childhood and school age philosophies and pedagogies in certification programs.

Health, Mental Health, and Nutrition System

This scan identified 65 face-to-face workshops offered to those who support the health, mental health, and nutritional needs of children. As shown in Figure 7 below, mental health workshops were most common and focused more often on play therapies. Next most popular were health workshops, which featured maternal and child health, physical fitness, and physical safety as their most popular topics. The nutrition category was populated by many “Healthy Beginnings” workshops offered by the Child Obesity Foundation, which has partnered with the Canadian Cancer Society to scale up workshop delivery across B.C. Finally, in the communication category, trauma-informed practice and motivational interviewing were dominant topics.

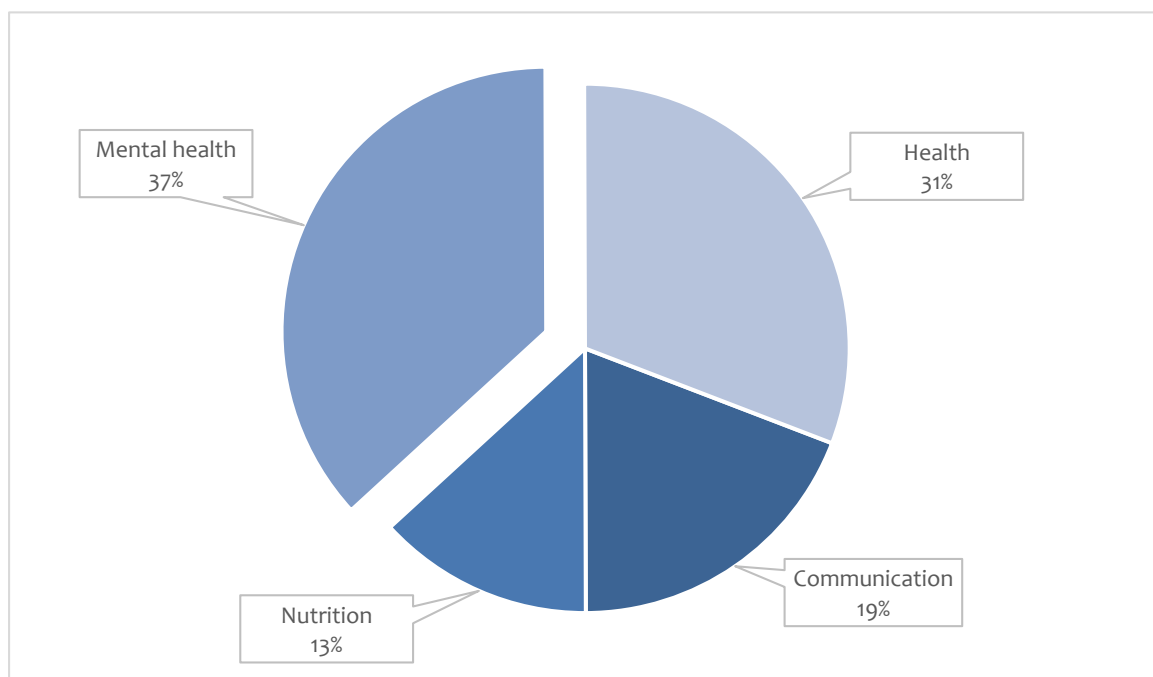


Figure 7: Categories of health, mental health, and nutrition early sector workshops in B.C. in 2015

As was seen in other systems, most professional development opportunities in this system were offered in the southern coastal region of B.C. Given that 86 health-related workshops were also coordinated by early care and education agencies in various communities around the province, the geographical distribution of opportunities in this system were slightly modified. The predominant location, however, did not change.

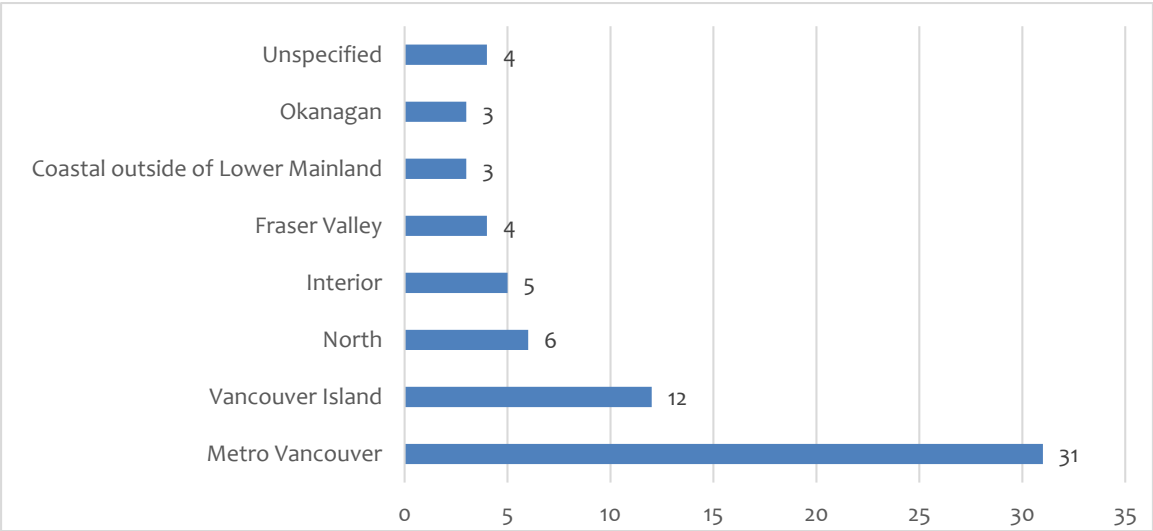


Figure 8: Locations of 2015 mental health, health, and nutrition workshops in B.C.

Special Needs and Early Intervention

This scan identified 59 workshops and networking opportunities in the special needs and intervention system in 2015. Topics included assessment, literacy strategies, eating disorders, and brain development. FASD and Autism workshops were the most common, as shown in Figure 9 below.

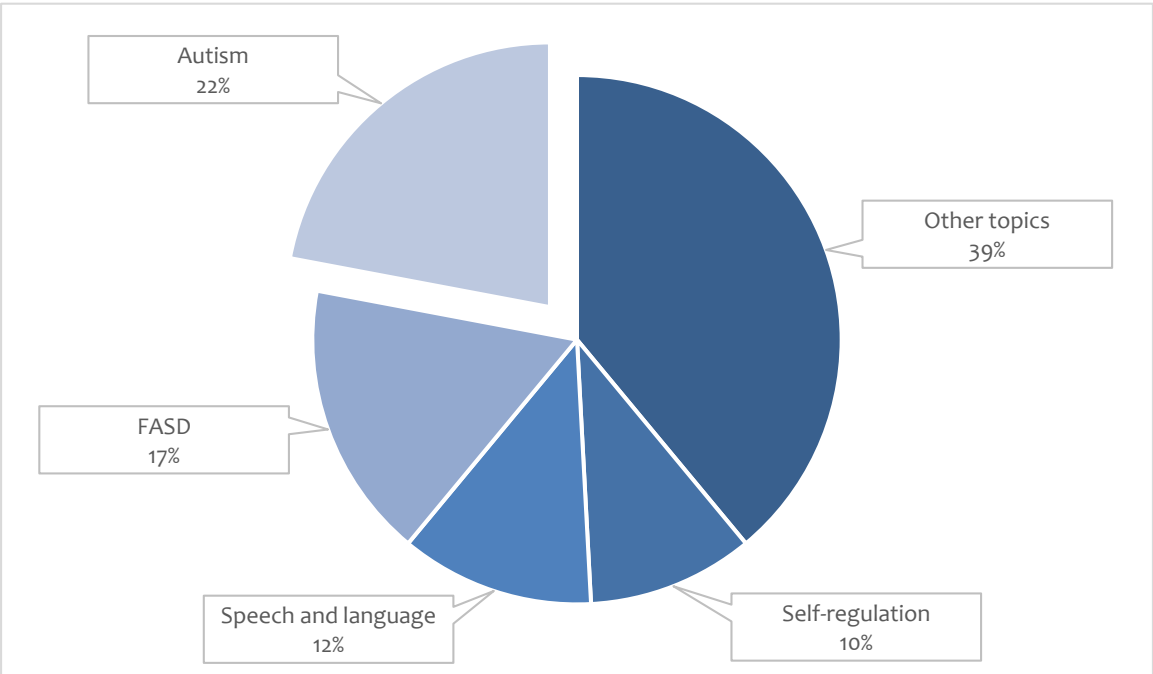


Figure 9: Categories of special needs and early intervention early sector workshops in B.C. in 2015

Metro Vancouver, the North, and the Okanagan were the dominant regions for special needs and intervention workshops in 2015. This scan did not find workshops within this system in the Interior Region. This may indicate a limitation of the scan, suggest a potential gap in workshops in this region, or signify a different focus for training providers in 2015. The Friend 2 Friend Social Learning Society, the Partnerships Project, and the Aboriginal Head Start Association of British Columbia offered workshops in 2015; however, their locations could not be determined by this scan.

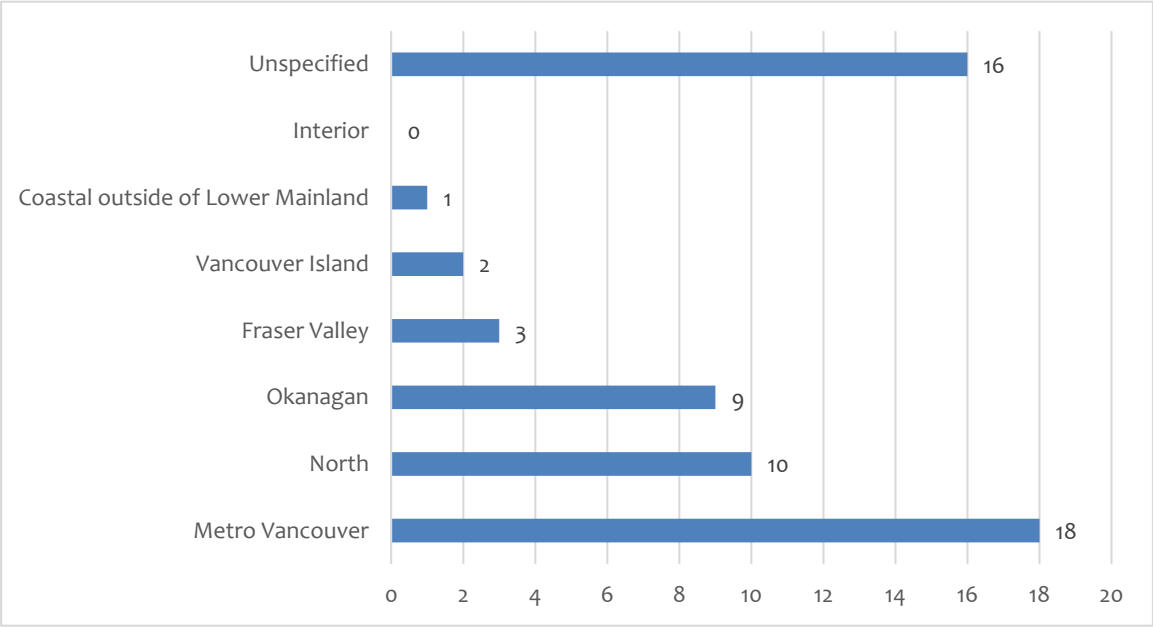


Figure 10: Locations of 2015 special needs and early intervention early sector workshops in B.C.

Family Support

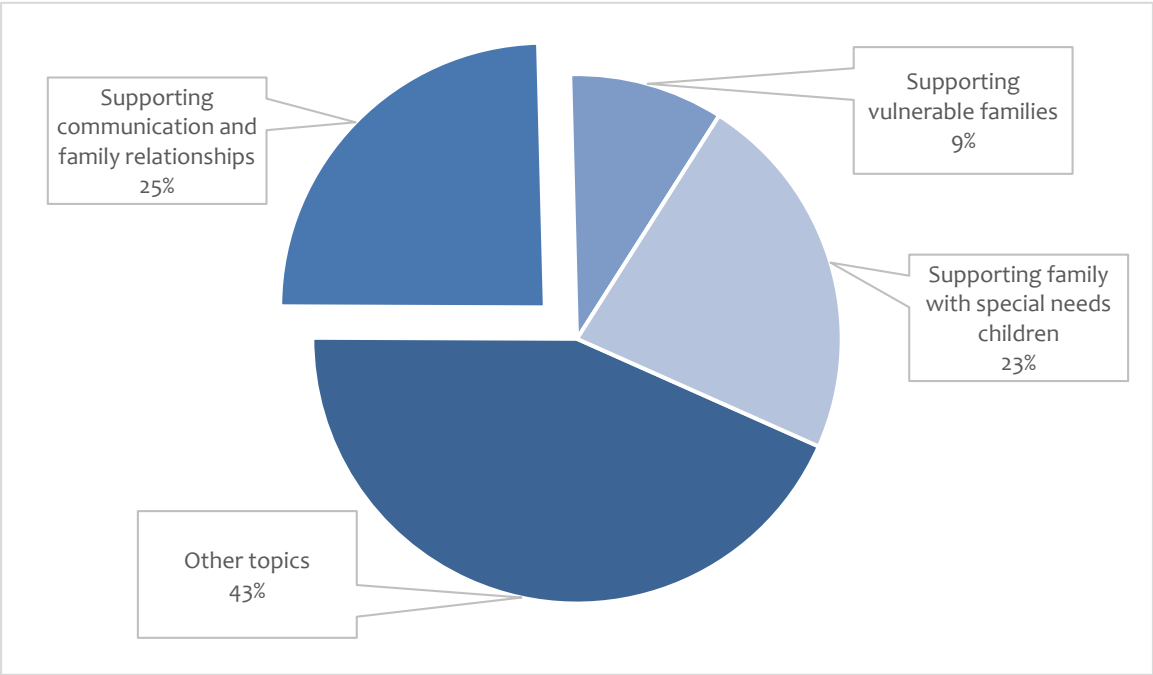


Figure 11: Categories of family support early sector workshops in B.C. in 2015

The scan identified 53 workshops in the family support system in 2015, which were associated with three major agencies: BC Association of Family Resource Programs, the Family Support Institute of BC, and BC Council for Families. Strengthening parent-child and sibling relationships was the prevailing theme among the offerings. The Family Support Institute of BC provided most of the workshops that support those working among families with children who have special needs. Workshops concerning vulnerable families or family members were offered by the three major agencies identified in this system.

Over half of the workshops were offered in southern coastal regions of B.C. with other workshops potentially available in other locations on a request basis.

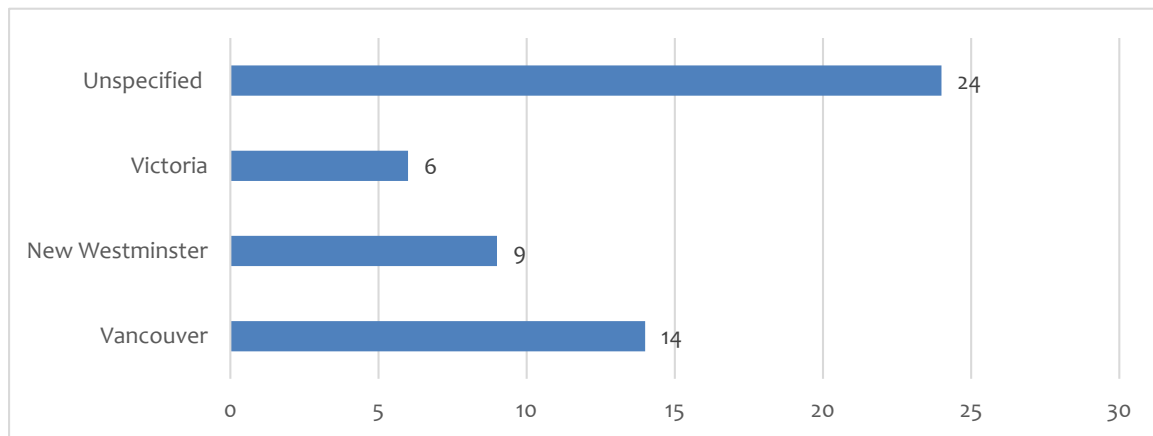


Figure 12: Locations of 2015 family support early sectors workshops in B.C.

A leader in one of the three major family support agencies described trends that could also be reflected in the province's other systems.

"We're seeing an increase in social and emotional development issues. Social and emotional development happens primarily in the family unit in the early years so we need to be focusing on what's happening between parents and their kids and how we support it."

Director, Provincial Agency

Other Component Trends

Training providers, particularly those in CCRR programs, face the ongoing challenge of sustaining engagement with professional learning among a diverse population of practitioners and professionals. Coordinators are constantly searching for innovative ways to balance workshop offerings between "hands-on" interactive experiences and more conceptual offerings that may require reading, research, and reflective exploration.

"There are a wide spectrum of professional development needs from established early childhood educators who wish to learn something more 'cerebral' to new child care providers who want a hands-on basic activity to use with their children."

CCRR Program Coordinator, Vancouver Island

When key informants were asked about the most popular workshop or training opportunities in their region, most mentioned that they continually receive requests for training to deal with challenging behaviours among children.

“Our workshops are packed when they are dealing with anything about challenging behaviours or challenging situations—that would give the child care provider more skills, more tools to deal with challenging situations.”

CCRR Coordinator, Okanagan Region

“What we always see is anything dealing with challenging behaviours. This is across the board. Child care providers, professionals, parents—they want to know how to best deal with challenging behaviours and strategies to deal with the children they are caring for. That’s always a trend. We offer that at least once a year. And there’s always new information available.”

CCRR Coordinator, Coastal Region

Costs for Training

Early Care and Education

Fees charged for large-scale professional development opportunities and workshops vary among systems and regions. In the early care and education system, registration fees for provincial conferences are between \$100 and \$150. Conferences fees related to but not sponsored by the early years sector charge higher registration fees: between \$200 and \$415. Regional conferences, fairs, expos, and forums charge between \$10 and \$75.

Figure 13 below depicts the price range of registration fees for single session offerings charged to members of CCRR programs by region. Child Care First Aid, Responsible Adult, and Good Beginnings courses are not included. CCRR programs in coastal, interior, and northern regions offer the highest number of workshops for free or for a cost of \$10 and under.

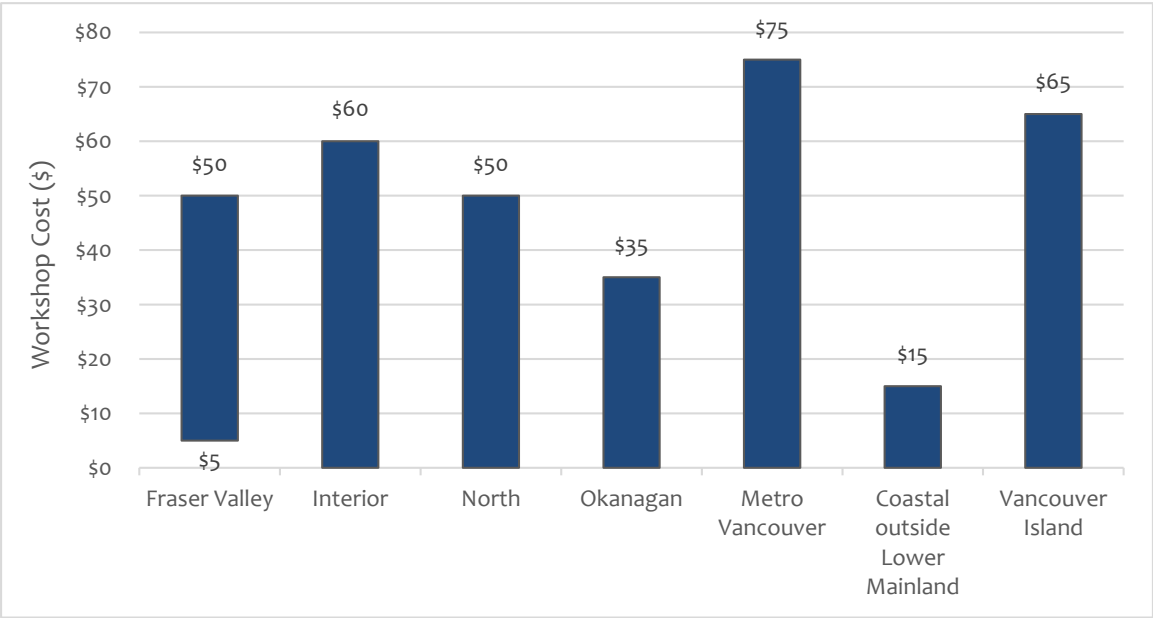


Figure 13: Range of costs for 2015 early sector workshops in B.C. by location

In 2015, various agencies and post-secondary institutions sponsored a significant quantity of free learning and networking opportunities in the early care and education system. For example, UBC sponsored the Human Learning Partnership Roadshow in Prince George, Kelowna, Terrace, and Prince Rupert, as well as the Janusz Korczak Lecture Series in Vancouver. South Vancouver Island Family Care Association sponsored nine free workshops for members on a variety of topics. The Queen Alexandra Centre for Children's Health provided free multi-day positive behaviour support training at four different times in 2015.

There are also several free online learning opportunities: Success By 6 and the Human Learning Partnership sponsor a webinar series about the Early Development Instrument; Open School BC provides six online modules to learn about B.C.'s Early Learning Framework; and the Early Years Community Development Institute provides free courses about professional identity, leadership, and community engagement.

Health, Mental Health, and Nutrition

Registration fees for conferences and symposiums in the health, mental health, and nutrition system are higher than fees in the early care and education system. Provincial and national conferences held in B.C. in 2015 had registration fees that ranged from \$40 to \$295. Healthy Beginnings, the nutrition workshop sponsored by the Obesity Foundation of Canada, accounts for most of the identified free offerings in this system in 2015. The approximate breakdown of conference registration costs in this system is illustrated in the Figure 14 below.

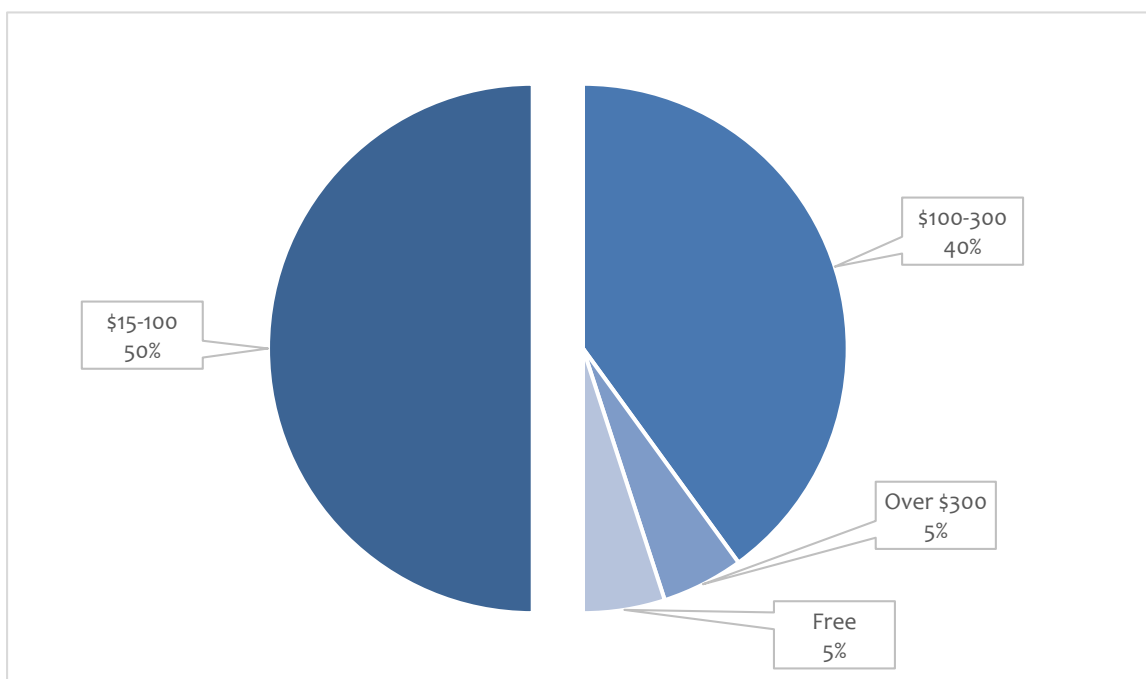


Figure 14: Cost of 2015 health, mental health, and nutrition early sectors workshops in B.C.

Special Needs and Early Intervention

Conference fees for this system are comparable to others, ranging from \$135 to \$695. Fees for workshops are higher, ranging from \$50 to \$550. This scan also identified 21 free face-to-face and online workshops sponsored by Native Friendship Centres, post-secondary institutions, or health agencies.

Family Support

Conference and workshop fees in the family support system are between \$60 and \$600 with most offerings costing between \$100 and \$200. As in other systems, there are a variety of free webinars and podcasts, sponsored by the BC Council for Families, the Public Health Agency of Canada, and the Early Years Community Development Institute, that provide opportunities to learn about research and strategies related to relationships, communication, and gender issues.

Connections

Professional isolation is a common theme described by key informants, particularly in the early care and education system. Given this reality, professional development is not only viewed as an opportunity to gain new skills and understandings but to share and network with colleagues in order to find support and encouragement.

To cultivate these connections, training coordinators schedule or integrate opportunities to network with others. These networking experiences are integrated into “make and take” or “circle time” workshops or scheduled as separate events with creative titles such as “Chatter Matters,” “Nature Walks,” or “Coffee Talks.” Some training providers offer meals before a workshop to attract a higher turnout and foster conversations and connections among child care professionals. CCRR coordinators will schedule extended operating hours to provide flexible times for caregivers to visit.

Despite these extended hours and networking opportunities, many CCRR coordinators concede that workshops designated as “networking events” do not produce high participation rates and child care providers rarely take the initiative to attend drop-in times, particularly in the evening. To foster stronger connections with child care providers, CCRR coordinators try to stay in touch with their members. In one northern community, the CCRR program office calls every child care provider in the city each month in order to maintain support and promote upcoming training opportunities.

There is also a need for networking opportunities among early years professionals who have specialized roles. This was expressed as especially significant for those who work in Aboriginal communities.

“The AIDP [Aboriginal Infant Development Program] or ASCDP [Aboriginal Supported Child Development Program] worker is often in a part-time position and is very isolated from specialists. They are often that one person, and they don’t have the connection to other people, support, or mentoring, especially in remote communities.”

Key informant, ASCD Program

Key informants working in systems other than early care and education did not describe the same levels of isolation. Networking opportunities may be part of daily professional responsibilities in these systems.

Infrastructure

Planning for professional development is informed by cross-sectoral collaboration among a variety of agencies and specialists who meet frequently to determine training needs in the community.

Representatives from agencies such as CCRR programs, Success By 6, Children First, the Ministry of Children and Families, community child development centres, regional health authorities, and local school districts provide feedback and direction on a range of issues, including professional development.

Scale

“I’ve never had a job in which I have been offered so much training. It’s phenomenal.”

Director of Early Childhood Services, Northern Region

There are a variety of ways in which professional development is structured to engage as many people as possible. In urban regions, CCRR coordinators report that their workshops fill up quickly and are delivered to capacity audiences. In rural regions throughout B.C., workshops aimed at local populations do not consistently yield high turnout rates. Since workshop attendance can be minimal, especially during winter in remote communities, training coordinators prefer to plan biannual regional conferences.

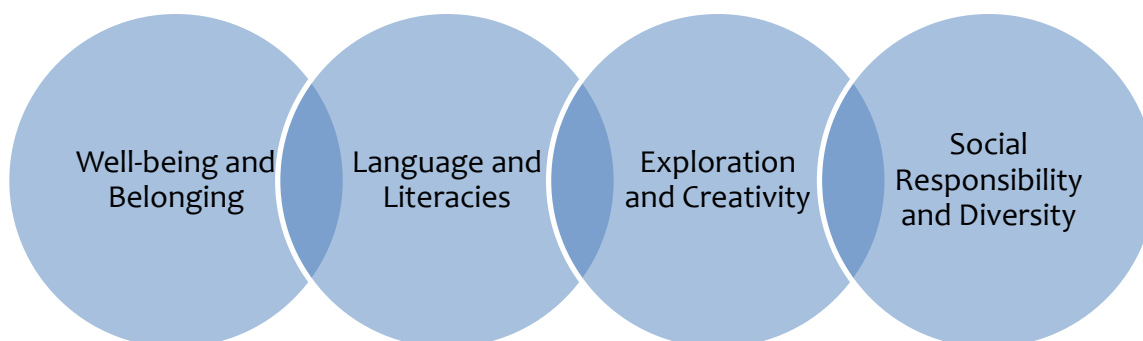
The Northern Aboriginal Early Childhood Development Committee coordinates a spring and fall conference every year. These conferences are attended by 100 to 125 people, including early childhood educators, social workers, Aboriginal infant and child development specialists, and Aboriginal Head Start practitioners. Daycare facilities and support services are closed so that as many people as possible can attend. In 2015, the Northern Aboriginal Early Childhood Development Training Conference provided 28 hours of training for those seeking to continue their ECE certification. These large-scale professional development events allow several community agencies to pool resources in order to attract high-profile speakers and secure suitable venues for large numbers of attendees. Community agencies and local school districts combine funds, offer in-kind support, and share expertise in order to deliver professional development to a wide variety of participants and sometimes a cluster of communities.

Large-scale events provide opportunities to assemble a critical mass of professionals with varying interests and levels of expertise; however, key informants suggest there are negative aspects to this approach. While there may be many similarities among professionals in the early years sector, some professional and community needs are quite distinct, particularly when comparing “mainstream” and Aboriginal supported training. Despite the potential disadvantages of large-scale events, these experiences appear to be the favoured training format, especially in the northern region of B.C.



Potential Opportunities

The British Columbia Early Learning Framework describes the principles for shaping optimal environments for young children and outlines pedagogical practices to guide professional development opportunities in the early care and education system. The framework recommends theories and professional practices that support four areas of early learning:



The guide *Understanding the British Columbia Early Learning Framework: From Theory to Practice* outlines recommended learning approaches for professionals to understand and apply the principles of the four areas of early learning. This publication proposes that in order for children to develop in each of these areas, they need adults who view children holistically, nurture their individuality, and promote respect for children’s linguistic and cultural diversity.⁶ Such professional capacities are cultivated by “carefully observing” children through a process called pedagogical narration. This is an inquiry-based approach for learning, based on observing, recording, and interpreting ordinary moments in one’s practice.⁷ Part of this inquiry-based professional development occurs within the work environment through the collection and interpretation of observations of children. These observations can sometimes be guided by experts, known as pedagogical facilitators, who may be available on-site to support the process of observing, interpreting, and applying understandings to practice.

Given that B.C.’s Early Learning Framework recommends pedagogical narration as a model to understand and apply the framework’s principles, one would expect to find frequent offerings regarding this learning model; yet, this scan did not reveal a high frequency of this professional development format in 2015. Only six key informants described participation in or facilitating of this form of professional development.

Despite the limited occurrence of pedagogical narration cited in this scan, one key informant described promising initiatives currently taking place in Burnaby, Terrace, and Victoria. The Investigating Quality Project, sponsored by the University of Victoria, supports monthly meetings between pedagogical facilitators and professionals from the early care and education system. They discuss observations, perceptions, and potential links to professional practice. The pedagogical facilitator in each of these

⁶ British Columbia’s Ministry of Education (2008). *British Columbia Early Learning Framework*. <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/early-learning/teach/early-learning-framework>. Retrieved August 15, 2015.

⁷ British Columbia’s Ministry of Education (2009). *British Columbia Early Learning Framework: From Theory to Practice*. <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/early-learning/teach/early-learning-framework>. Retrieved August 15, 2015.

communities also visits the participant's workplace to support their "careful observations" of each child. This form of professional development has potential implications for the way in which early sector professionals learn and how they may expand notions that define their work with children.

Working with children can be complex. An inquiry-based learning approach like pedagogical narration may assist in the exploration of conscious and unconscious perceptions of major challenges professionals face. This learning structure may be especially informative in exploring prominent issues, such as children's behaviour, that are not always subject to quick solutions.

"One request for professional development that we get the most is children's behaviour. I don't know how many workshops we've put on around children's behaviour. I still think they're looking for a magic fix. They're looking for that one workshop, one technique that is going to make it easy. I really think it's about where they're coming from and their beliefs around how children should behave. That makes me think of offering training in a different way that is more ongoing in which you could get a group of child care providers that would look more closely at behaviour but it is not a 'one-night thing.' It's ongoing support."

Program Manager, Supported Child Development Okanagan



If inquiry-based approaches like pedagogical narration continue to be the recommended professional development format for the early years sector, then more training opportunities should reflect this model of learning. This is a challenging opportunity because key informants suggest that current training is based on the feedback of members who may not be interested in learning experiences that do not offer immediate strategies to address compelling challenges in their work. It would be beneficial if the future professional development web solution supported some aspect of pedagogical narration in order to follow the recommended professional learning process described by the framework's theory to practice guide.

Key informants revealed that delivering professional development requires extensive planning, organization, and time. Those responsible for training expend considerable effort to create, distribute, and collect feedback from surveys, cross-sectoral meetings, email networks and conversations with the

people they serve. A centralized professional development web solution would not only assist those who seek professional development but also those who coordinate such events.

“We get a lot of newsletters and calendars in our region and we contact agencies to find out the steps needed to get hold of that presenter. It’s like you’re hunting for information constantly. Even our coalition coordinator—she is researching and trying to find presenters and what’s new and what’s happening.”

CCRR Coordinator, Interior Region

Training events often serve and engage broad populations of experts and professionals across all systems of the early years sector. Key informants suggest that an online tool that assists with the planning process could be beneficial.

“What I really hope is there is some function to do some up-front planning. How can we come together in advance of them posting an event to collaborate on the content and delivery of that course so it meets the needs of our practitioners and theirs as well? If we could figure some kind of mechanism that enables us to do that, that facilitates that partnership and collaboration up front, I think we would be way ahead of the game.”

Director, Provincial Agency

Key informants also described the need for a review function within the professional development web solution. This function would provide opportunities for participants to describe, read, and write online evaluations of training experiences according to attributes such as content, presentation style, and the physical space. Such a review function may assist training coordinators with the planning of future events.

“Sometimes presenters may not have a good experience in one town but the next town could work well... To be able to look online and see what other people have said about presenters would be fantastic.”

CCRR Coordinator, Northern Region

A professional development web solution may also assist with the coordination of training events in order to minimize potential duplication and scheduling conflicts.

“Having that website where you could see what is going on in the future would be a helpful tool because, for instance, they [Cranbrook] are having a major workshop. They’re also offering Mother Goose training but not at the same venue. So that is a conflict because I would have loved to have attended both. Being a CCRR coordinator I have to be at a regional meeting in Vernon during that weekend, but it would have been kind of nice to know, ‘Well, this is happening in Cranbrook on this day.’ I almost held a workshop that same day too (October 3) and I’m glad I didn’t.”

CCRR Program Coordinator, Interior Region

Conclusion

This scan, completed in order to better understand the breadth and depth of training opportunities in the early years sector in British Columbia, identified 967 professional development opportunities in the early years sector in 2015. Key informant interviews suggest that professional development is influenced by where people live, the location of training, the provision of funds, the scheduling of professional development, and the distinct personal and professional needs of those participating in the training experience. Most professional development delivers strategy-based content at a fixed time in locations outside the workplace.

There appears to be incongruity with the recommended professional learning model for understanding and applying B.C.'s Early Learning Framework and the way in which most professional development is organized and delivered throughout the province. While there are initiatives that implement inquiry-based learning as a professional development model, this scan found limited occurrences of this practice for 2015.

Insights from this scan will guide the development of a professional development web solution that will communicate learning opportunities for those who work in the early years sector. Based on feedback from key informants, the professional development web solution could be a valuable communication tool for those who seek training and for those who coordinate professional development in the early years sector.



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Appendices

Appendix A - List of Interviewees

Name	Position	Organization	Location	Interview Date
Kim Chernenkoff	Director	Early Childhood Services	Prince George, B.C.	Aug. 18, 2015
Diana Elliott	Provincial Advisor	Aboriginal Infant Development Programs (AIDP)	Victoria, B.C.	Aug. 18, 2015
Catherin Bunce	Program Coordinator	Sunshine Coast Child Care Resource & Referral (CCRR)	Sechelt and Gibsons, B.C.	Aug. 19, 2015
Susan Forest	Program Manager	Justice Institute of British Columbia Centre for Counselling & Community Safety	New Westminster, BC	Aug. 24, 2015
CC Duncan	Owner	4children.ca	Powell River, B.C.	Aug. 25, 2015
Crystal Janes	Director of Programs	Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre	Vancouver, B.C.	Aug. 27, 2015
Beulah Munson	Manager of Children Services	Williams Lake CCRR	Williams Lake, B.C.	Sept. 2, 2015
Emily Mlieczko	Executive Director	Early Childhood Educators of BC	Vancouver, B.C.	Sept. 2, 2015
Nadine Gagné-L'Hirondelle	Provincial Advisor	Aboriginal Supported Child Development (ASCD)	Victoria, B.C.	Sept. 2, 2015
Katherine Charbonneau	Program Coordinator	CCRR South Peace Region	Dawson Creek, B.C.	Sept. 3, 2015
Judy Riddell	Coordinator	Berry Patch CCRR	Prince Rupert, B.C.	Sept. 3, 2015
Cari Charron	Program Coordinator	Quesnel CCRR	Quesnel, B.C.	Sept. 4, 2015
Joseph Dunn	Provincial Director	Success By 6	Burnaby, B.C.	Sept. 5, 2015
Sue McIntosh	Program Coordinator	Trail and Castlegar CCRR	Trail, B.C.	Sept. 8, 2015
Tyler Summer	Chair	School Age Child care Association of B.C.	Vancouver, B.C.	Sept. 8, 2015
Heather McBryan	Coordinator	CCRR North Peace Region; Success By 6; Children First	Fort St. John, B.C.	Sept. 9, 2015
Coco Schau Skeena	Program Consultant	Skeena CCRR	Terrace, B.C.	Sept. 11, 2015
Lisa Vienneau	Advisor	AIDP Northern Region	Prince George, B.C.	Sept. 11, 2015
Alicia Embree	Program Coordinator	Haida Gwaii CCRR	Queen Charlotte, B.C.	Sept. 11, 2015
April Macri	Regional Coordinator	ASCD Vancouver Island	Victoria, B.C.	Sept. 15, 2015

Erica Henderson	Coordinator	Cariboo Family Enrichment Centre Program; 100 Mile House CCRR; Early Years Centre	100 Mile House, B.C.	Sept. 18, 2015
Kathy Petursson	Coordinator	Early Childhood Development; MOST for Children; Smithers CCRR	Smithers, B.C.	Sept. 21, 2015
Maria Gargnelli	Program Supervisor	Abbotsford CCRR	Abbotsford, B.C.	Sept. 21, 2015
Rita Romeo	Program Coordinator	East Kootenay CCRR	Cranbrook, B.C.	Sept. 23, 2015
Vanessa Morley	Coordinator	Child Obesity Foundation	Vancouver, B.C.	Sept. 23, 2015
Linda Chell	Program Coordinator	Revelstoke CCRR	Revelstoke, B.C.	Sept. 23, 2015
Jodie Tucker	Founder and CEO	Kids Matter	Abbotsford, B.C.	Sept. 23, 2015
Jenn Keilty	Program Coordinator	Golden CCRR	Golden, B.C.	Sept. 24, 2015
Carrie Reiter	Program Coordinator	Penticton CCRR	Penticton, B.C.	Sept. 24, 2015
Trina Devine	Program Coordinator	Vernon CCRR	Vernon, B.C.	Sept. 24, 2015
Dave Somerville		The Early Years Professional Development Centre	Nanaimo, B.C.	Sept. 25, 2015
Heidi van den Berg	Development Clinical Leader	Supported Child Development (SCD) Program, Queen Alexandra Centre	Victoria, B.C.	Oct. 1, 2015
Diane Lee	Program Manager	Tri-Cities YMCA CCRR	Coquitlam, B.C.	Oct. 5, 2015
Pippa Rowcliffe	Deputy Director	HELP UBC	Vancouver, B.C.	Oct. 5, 2015
Valerie Irvine	Training Coordinator	Family Support Institute	Vancouver, B.C.	Oct. 5, 2015
June Maynard	Manager	Parent and Child Resource Programs North Shore	North Vancouver, B.C.	Oct. 5, 2015
Sue Khazaie	Executive Director	B.C. Association of Family Resource Programs	Surrey, B.C.	Oct. 6, 2015
Heather Todd	Manager	SCD Program, North Okanagan Neurological Association	Vernon, B.C.	Oct. 7, 2015
Belinda Macey	Program Coordinator	Victoria CCRR	Victoria, B.C.	Oct. 8, 2015
Daphne Raymond	Program Coordinator	Sooke/Westshore CCRR	Sooke, B.C.	Oct. 8, 2015
Laura McInnes	Program Coordinator	Langley CCRR	Langley, B.C.	Oct. 8, 2015
Joanne Schroeder	Executive Director	Comox Valley Child Development Centre	Courtenay, B.C.	Oct. 9, 2015

Janis Arner	Program Coordinator	Kamloops CCRR	Kamloops, B.C.	Oct. 13, 2015
Sue McIntosh	Program Coordinator	Sea to Sky CCRR	Squamish, B.C.	Oct. 13, 2015
Sharlene Wedel	Program Coordinator	Child Care Options CCRR	Surrey, B.C.	Oct. 13, 2015
Jo-Anne Mackenzie	Program Coordinator	Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows CCRR	Maple Ridge, B.C.	Oct. 14, 2015
Sue Warren	Child Care Consultant	Pacific CARE CCRR	Courtenay, B.C.	Oct. 15, 2015
Joel Kaplan	Executive Director	B.C. Council For Families	Vancouver, B.C.	Oct. 28, 2015
Alicia Larson	Program Coordinator	Kelowna CCRR	Kelowna, B.C.	Oct., 29, 2015
Kim Atkinson	Pedagogical Facilitator	University of Victoria	Victoria, B.C.	Nov. 4, 2015

Appendix B - Interview Questions

Questions posed to all:

Note: Data from Questions 1 to 4 is described in the second part of this project, Professional Learning in the Early Years Sector: An Analysis of Business Models Used by Professional Development Training Providers in 2015.

1. What time of year do you typically plan professional development opportunities?
2. What external factors influence the provisioning of professional development opportunities?
3. How do you market the professional development opportunity? Or how do you recruit participants?
4. What is your funding source?
5. What do you think are barriers/obstacles to providing professional development or resources?
6. What do you think are barriers/obstacles to accessing professional development or resources?
7. What works for your colleagues/community?
8. What are the factors that support people's access to or engagement with professional development?
9. Do you have any other comments about professional development in your community?
10. What questions do you have for me?

Additional questions posed when professional development opportunities were not listed on an agency's website:

1. What professional development opportunities are offered for practitioners in your area?
2. Does it satisfy ECE hour requirements? Is there a proof of completion?
3. What is the delivery method?
4. Is the training for or by a specific demographic?
5. Could I get a list of these opportunities?