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FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR A FOUR-YEAR ONLINE  
BACHELOR OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION DEGREE  
FOR THE ATLANTIC REGION



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***Faculty of Education, University of New Brunswick***

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS and ACRONYMS**

<b>CNA</b>	College of the North Atlantic
<b>ECE</b>	Early Childhood Education
<b>ECEs</b>	Early Childhood Educators
<b>ECCENB</b>	Early Childhood Care and Education New Brunswick
<b>EYC</b>	Early Years Centre
<b>FNEI</b>	First Nation Education Initiative
<b>LILCA</b>	Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement
<b>MSVU</b>	Mount St Vincent University
<b>MUN</b>	Memorial University
<b>NB</b>	New Brunswick
<b>NBCC</b>	New Brunswick Community College
<b>NSCC</b>	Nova Scotia Community College
<b>NL</b>	Newfoundland and Labrador
<b>NS</b>	Nova Scotia
<b>PE</b>	Prince Edward Island
<b>STFX</b>	St Francis Xavier University
<b>UNB</b>	University of New Brunswick
<b>UNB-ECC</b>	University of New Brunswick Early Childhood Centre
<b>UPEI</b>	University of Prince Edward Island

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the results of a feasibility study conducted to determine if there is sufficient interest, support, and access to provide a four-year Bachelor of Education in or Early Learning in the Atlantic Provinces using an online delivery model. The project is a partnership between the Faculty of Education, University of New Brunswick, the Margaret and Wallace McCain Family Foundation and the Jimmy Pratt Family Foundation. The Foundations jointly funded the study which was conducted by the University of New Brunswick. Consultant, Lynda Homer, was hired to carry out the study on behalf of the University over the time period of May-September, 2013.

A mixed method approach was used, consisting of an online sector survey and personal interviews with 67 individuals representing the spectrum of stakeholders from across the Atlantic Provinces. Policy documents from each of the Atlantic Provinces were also reviewed.

### Findings

Almost all interviewees were excited about the potential for the proposed degree. They felt that the time was right to offer the degree given the increased understanding of the crucial link between educator qualifications, program quality and child outcomes. Although the provision of quality early childhood education and care is on government agendas, stakeholders felt that what currently exists to support educators wishing to complete a degree in ECE is limited. Therefore, the proposed online degree presents exciting possibilities. The study further revealed that there is strong interest in exploring articulation agreements between the University of New Brunswick and the colleges and training institutions.

The study results show that there is a genuine interest and appetite for professional advancement in the field. Of the 369 respondents, only 13.55% (50) indicated that they would not be interested in enrolling in an online Bachelor's Degree for ECE with the University of New Brunswick. 47.69% of the survey respondents indicated that they would definitely be interested. An additional 38.76% indicated that they might possibly be interested.

According to the data, the vast majority of potential students have access to wireless internet but they would need strong support to deal with online education. The most commonly identified obstacles to completing a degree in ECE were *cost of tuition* (75.88%), *not enough time* (60%) and *lack of incentive to upgrade credentials* (15.72%). Portability of a four-year degree was another concern.

### Conclusions

Overall, the study revealed that there is sufficient demand for the proposed online degree to make it viable. A blended format that takes a broad approach to early childhood education is preferred. Recommendations call for providing strong supports for students to deal with online learning and establishing partnerships with provincial governments, ECE sector agencies and educational institutions.

# **1. BACKGROUND**

## **Introduction**

This report presents the results of a feasibility study conducted to determine if there is sufficient interest, support, and access to provide a four-year Bachelor of Education in or Early Learning in the Atlantic Provinces using an online delivery model. The project is a partnership between the Faculty of Education, University of New Brunswick, the Margaret and Wallace McCain Family Foundation and the Jimmy Pratt Family Foundation. The Foundations jointly funded the study which was conducted by the University of New Brunswick. Consultant Lynda Homer was hired to carry out the study on behalf of the University over the time period of May-September, 2013.

## **Description of the proposed program**

The proposed degree is a collaborative four-year online Bachelor of Early Childhood Education degree for the Atlantic Region. UNB would offer the degree, however, professors from the other Atlantic universities, and perhaps elsewhere, would be involved in teaching the courses. The intention is to establish agreements and partnerships with other colleges and educational institutions in the Atlantic Provinces so that students can build upon existing diplomas or certificates and complete a degree in Early Childhood Education or Early Learning while continuing to work in their local communities. The vision is to create a widely accessible and flexible program that allows course work to be done both asynchronously and synchronously. It would prepare graduates to work in a broad range of early childhood settings including early intervention, family resource and parent support programs, early childhood services in hospitals, primary school settings, home based programs and early learning and child care facilities.

## **The University of New Brunswick's role in early childhood education**

The University of New Brunswick has a long history of teaching and research in early childhood education (ECE), including early literacies, family literacies, early learning and childcare, and early years curriculum. ECE faculty teach early childhood courses within the Faculty of Education and participate in the broader ECE community as keynote speakers and workshop leaders provincially and nationally.

An outstanding feature of the University of New Brunswick (UNB) is its Early Childhood Centre (UNB-ECC), which was founded in 1991. The UNB-ECC includes a full day program for young children that serves as a model site for pre-service teachers enabling them to carry out observations and gain practical experience in their field. The Centre facilitates informed discussions between professionals, parents and the public and carries out collaborative research. Most recently, the Early Childhood Centre worked with a team of early childhood educators throughout the province and beyond to develop and implement the New Brunswick Curriculum Framework for Early Learning and Child Care- English and its accompanying program of professional development. This highly innovative curriculum framework has been acclaimed provincially, nationally and internationally.

## Rationale

The requirement for early childhood educators to hold a degree is a growing trend. “While no jurisdiction in Canada currently requires a Bachelor’s degree in Early Childhood Education, European and American practices show a preference for educators with degrees particularly at the pre-kindergarten level” Flanagan, 2008, p.54.

There is wide recognition that the level of academic qualifications of early childhood educators is one of the most important predictors of the quality of early learning and childcare programs. Even though governments and the childcare sector in Atlantic Canada have implemented a variety of strategies to increase high quality early learning and childcare in recent years, the provinces still lag behind other jurisdictions when it comes to educator qualifications. A collaborative four-year online Bachelor of Early Childhood Education degree offered by UNB for the Atlantic Region proposes to address this need.

*“Children in Atlantic Canada deserve well qualified early learning educators who have the opportunity to blend teaching experience with new learning. An online program, that continues the work of partnering colleges, will increase the quality of professional growth opportunities for these educators.”*

*Dr. Ann Sherman, Dean of Education, University of New Brunswick*

## 2. PROCEDURE

The main techniques for data collection were an online sector survey and informant interviews. The majority of interviews were conducted face-to-face and the remainder by telephone.

### Stakeholder interviews

The total of sixty-seven individuals interviewed represented a range of stakeholder groups from each of the four Atlantic Provinces including provincial sector associations, universities and colleges and relevant government personnel and service providers. A list of the interviewees and their affiliation is provided in [Appendix A](#). The interviews addressed the following topics:

- a. Opportunities and challenges for a four-year online degree in Early Childhood Education and Early Learning
- b. Existing credentials of early childhood educators
- c. Computer access and capacity for high speed internet and technology
- d. Affordability and financial support for potential students
- e. Possibilities for partnerships and articulation agreements with existing training institutions
- f. Course content and format
- g. Interest and demand for the proposed degree

An interview outline is included in the report as [Appendix B](#).

## OVERARCHING QUESTIONS

Is there a perceived need for this degree?

Will they come? (*Will there be sufficient support and enrolment?*)

How will we deliver the degree?

### Sector survey

A questionnaire was implemented during July-August using internet-based Survey Monkey software. Invitations for online completion were sent by email through the provincial sector associations in each Atlantic Province except for Nova Scotia where the association distributed the invitation and link through their Facebook page. In Prince Edward Island, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development also sent a follow up email to the sector to promote participation in the survey. Most questions in the survey were multiple choice or check-all-that-apply, with opportunities to comment. To encourage participation, respondents were invited to submit their contact information to be entered into a draw for a set of children's books published by the University of New Brunswick Early Childhood Centre. The survey questionnaire is reproduced as [Appendix C](#) in this report.

### Limitations of the study

The sector survey was subject to potential response bias as a result of non-response and selective participation. Those who responded to the survey may have more interest than non-respondents in the proposed degree or they may have strong feelings about the idea either positive or negative. Running the survey during the summer vacation period may have resulted in a lower response rate. Other influencing factors may have been educators' access and comfort level with online surveys. In the case of Nova Scotia, the level of individual participation in the Nova Scotia Child Care Association Facebook site may also have been a factor. In addition, since UNB has established relationships with the ECE sector in New Brunswick, it is logical that the response rate would be highest from that province.

### Response scale

The following qualitative scale is used to indicate the relative weight of the responses or comments received:

- All/almost all responses: findings reflect views of 90% of the respondents in the group.
- Large majority: findings reflect the views of at least 70% of the respondents in the group.
- Majority responses: findings reflect the views of at least 50% of the respondents in the group.
- Some responses: findings reflect the views of less than 50% of the respondents in the group.
- A few responses: findings reflect views of at least 2% but less than 33% of respondents in the group.
- In cases where only one respondent expressed a view, this is noted in the text.



### 3. FINDINGS

#### Informant interviews

##### *Opportunities*

Almost all informants were excited about the potential for an online degree in ECE for the Atlantic Provinces. They felt that the time was right for this, given that there is an increased understanding of the crucial link between educator qualifications, program quality and child outcomes. Furthermore, the provision of quality early childhood education and care is currently on government agendas. They stated that what currently exists was limited. There is no Bachelor of Education degree in Early Childhood Education being offered by Universities in Atlantic Canada at present so an online degree in ECE would address this gap. It would provide much needed accessibility to potential students living in rural communities and flexibility for those wishing to study while managing work and family responsibilities.

The majority of interviewees commented that the trend towards integrating Early Childhood Services into the Education system has highlighted the gap between early childhood educator and teacher qualifications and the need for building a career ladder. They spoke of the lack of parity and continuities across the systems. Some also pointed to the lack of qualified people to fill leadership and supervisory positions in the field. Interviewees reported that they had difficulty finding qualified instructors for post-secondary ECE programs and qualified people for supervisory positions.

*The following are representative quotes from informants who were enthused about a proposed degree:*

- *“As Peter Moss would say, if we are going to put caring and learning together, we have to transform our image of the child and the educator. We are looking at continuity, coherence and congruence across all early childhood systems 0-8. Academic qualifications and pedagogy are the cornerstones.”*
- *“What I’ve noticed is, when we want to hire instructors; we look for a level 4 certification which is a degree plus an ECE diploma. Not a lot of people have degrees with this speciality.”*
- *“I oversee several programs. We have to do a lot of training when we hire. Even though staff may have a degree in something, they don’t have the in-depth knowledge in ECE.”*
- *“This is sorely needed. In our province, early literacy facilitators have recently been hired through the libraries. Their role includes outreach with Family Resource Centers, schools, etc. Focus is 0 to 3 at this point. It was hard to find qualified people so we had to develop a training package for the staff we hired.”*
- *“I think that teachers and even principals in the school system should have more awareness and understanding of the pedagogy for early childhood education.”*
- *“I like the idea of an Atlantic degree. This would be local and specific to early learning and child care.”*
- *It is an exciting time in the field. Now is the time to get on the bandwagon. “*
- *‘I’m really excited about the prospect of this program and what it could do to professionalize the sector.’*
- *“I often had people asking where to get degree in ECE when I was registrar and I wasn’t sure. “*
- *“This initiative is long overdue, and very exciting for early childhood education in our region.”*
- *We need a degree specifically on early childhood education.”*
- *“It would create a career ladder.”*

## **Challenges**

Although there was wide agreement that the proposed degree presented exciting possibilities, informants identified several challenges to be addressed. Concerns were raised about the lack of incentives for completing a degree and the lack of financial reward once a degree is completed. Presently, ECE's are not required to have a degree and there is no wage enhancement once they complete it.

One individual cautioned that we have to think about what the sector can handle. *"It's hard enough thinking about a diploma. A degree is much more daunting."* On the other hand, if new legislation came out requiring a degree for Directors, it would increase demand for the degree. According to government representatives in PE, this is a real possibility.

The limited portability of a four-year degree was a concern for some. In most provinces a four-year degree does not qualify educators to move beyond Kindergarten. Others pointed out that there is currently a teacher overload in the school system, so this may not be a big issue. Some also stressed the importance of alignment to ensure that the proposed degree is compatible with the requirements of existing regulating bodies across the Atlantic Provinces.

- *"We need compensation and a career ladder. There are no financial rewards and no incentives."*
- *"I don't know. It is a massive time and financial commitment and for what benefit?"*
- *"Possibilities for us in PEI are related to Directors. We are looking at requiring higher qualifications for Directors in Early Years Centers very soon."*
- *If you are going to establish a degree, understand needs and requirements and vulnerabilities in all contexts".*
- *"Think about portability and alignment."*

Issues related to funding support, course format, logistics and attrition rates are discussed further on in the report.

## **Existing credentials**

Many interviewees commented that while lots of learning opportunities are going on the province, more advanced credentials are needed in the sector. As one informant from Newfoundland and Labrador stated, *"Right now the demand for qualified ECE's exceeds the supply."*

Although provinces are taking steps to strengthen training requirements and make on-going professional learning available, almost all informants identified the need for higher academic qualifications for educators. For example, in PE, there is a shortage of staff with post-secondary early childhood education credentials since approximately 40% of all qualified and experienced early childhood educators have moved to the public school system to teach Kindergarten.

Existing Level of Credentials for ECEs by Province				
	NL	NS	PE	NB
Approximate # of ECEs	2413	2924	600	3000 <i>(approximately 2100 are Anglophone)</i>
	<p>1229 (48%) are at Entry level (meet the minimum requirements of orientation training)</p> <p>141 are at Level 1 (Certificate)</p> <p>825 are at Level 2 (Diploma)</p> <p>121 are at Level 3</p> <p>97 are at Level 4</p>	<p>303 meet the minimum requirements of orientation level training (not counted as trained staff)</p> <p>796 have partial training - Level 1</p> <p>1451 have a diploma - Level 2</p> <p>374 have a Bachelor Degree in Child Study or an ECE diploma with a Bachelor's degree and have a Level 3 Classification</p>	<p>The majority have a minimum 3 - 30 hrs courses in Early Childhood.</p> <p>Approx 80 ECEs will have a 1 year certificate in ECE by the end of March, 2014,</p> <p>All directors /supervisors have either a 2 year diploma in ECE or Human services with ECE courses, or a degree in Education with additional ECE courses.</p>	<p>40-45 % of the 3000 have graduated from some sort of relevant post secondary education</p> <p>600 (18-20% of the 3000) have ECE (1 yr. certificate)</p> <p>216 (18% of the 45%) have the 1-year certificate</p>

A table outlining the lead ministries and the training requirements for ECE for each of the Atlantic Provinces is found in Appendix D.

## **Access and capacity for online learning**

Results show that high speed Internet is accessible in most areas although there are still a few communities without it. Informants with long time experience in offering online learning reported that the trend is toward mobile learners with more and more students wanting to use their cell phones or iPads to access course information.

According to the data, in many cases ECEs' experience with computers is limited to use of Facebook and email. The vast majority of informants stressed that students can handle the online technology as long as they have strong supports in place. This means that instructors have to make an extra effort to engage students and create opportunities for interaction throughout the course. Institutions typically provide training modules and orientation sessions for both instructors and students. They offer on-going access to support including a toll free line, a chat line and personal mentors. These services are available seven days a week for extended hours during evenings and weekends.

*"Research suggests that personal contact with instructors, whether that is face to face, or electronically through online chat, texting or discussion boards may be critical to the continued success of students with marginal cumulative GPA's, regardless of course delivery mode.*

*Wilson, D., Allen, D., (2010*

- *"When we first went online for our diploma program all these flags were raised. They did not translate into reality".*
- *"We have been offering online courses since 1998.*
- *"There are still some pockets without high speed but it has improved."*
- *"It's the wave of the future. Possibilities are endless.*
- *"No question, with supports they can handle the technology."*
- *"My experience with the ECE sector is that they are great on Facebook and email. They had trouble following directions, difficulty with passwords and so on."*
- *"There would need to be support and orientation for **both instructor and students**. This is key."*
- *"We are partial to the Desire to Learn platform, even using it for K-12 because it is user friendly."*

## **Affordability and financial support**

The study confirms that cost and affordability are issues for many ECEs who might wish to complete a degree. While some interviewees believed that those who wanted the degree would find a way, the majority felt that the take up rate would be lower unless some support was provided. They pointed out that ECE's are not well paid and cost is always an issue. Some informants felt that financial support might be available if the course were geared to Directors and Administrators. Since these people would have their own budget, costs could be covered as an expense to their business.

- *"Finances may be a barrier, unless the government can kick in some support."*
- *"People in the field are worried about finances."*
- *"It always costs to have a degree. If they want it, people will find a way."*

## **Potential for funding**

A variety of funding programs are offered to support ECEs in upgrading their qualifications in the Atlantic Provinces. In Nova Scotia, the government will refund up to \$5,000 per year for those who successfully complete a full-time early childhood education-training program, which includes the Bachelor of Arts degree in Child and Youth Studies offered by Mount St Vincent University. The program, which has a return-of-service agreement, is in effect until 2016. The government will reimburse some courses if not available in the province. For example, the online Bachelor of Education degree from the University of Victoria has also been funded.

In New Brunswick, the provincial government is committed to increasing its subsidy to improve salaries of educators with recognized training. In April 2013, and again in April 2014, the subsidy will increase by 25 cents per hour, which will see the subsidized hourly amount rise to \$5 per hour. It is hoped that this new investment will encourage staff to obtain the recognized training.

In some cases government funding is available for ECEs in First Nation communities to pursue degree. A representative of the MI'KMAW MATNEWY education system in Nova Scotia stated that potential students could apply for funding from their Band to complete a degree in ECE, however there are no guarantees. It is possible that funding would be available for ECEs already working in the sector but students graduating from high school have first priority. However, when it comes to NB, the Executive Director of the First Nation Education Initiative (FNEI) stated *"We cannot pay for a degree in ECE when there are greater needs and money is short. The funding is capped for post secondary education and there is a need to prioritize as it is."*

On the other hand, the Nunatsiavut government in Goose Bay and Labrador provides funding to beneficiaries of the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement (LILCA) for post-secondary education to obtain the qualifications and skills they need to pursue their careers. Assistance is available for tuition and mandatory fees, textbook costs, travel expenses, monthly living allowance and tutorial assistance.

As the table below illustrates, when government personnel were asked about the potential for funding for the proposed degree, there was little optimism even though not everyone ruled it out completely.

<b>NL</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— <i>"Our focus is on level 1. We would not expect to fund a degree at this time."</i></li><li>— <i>"It might depend on your approach. You may have a more favorable response if you involve government in the planning and monitoring of the program."</i></li></ul>
<b>NB</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— <i>"If they already received it (the funding for training), they no longer are eligible. We gave over \$8000 per student to the colleges, but those days are gone."</i></li><li>— <i>"There is a program through PETL to keep people in the province. Maybe it can be funded there."</i></li></ul>
<b>NS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— <i>"The trainee piece has been paid for out of province but only if not available in our own province and this program ends in 2016."</i></li></ul>
<b>PE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— <i>"Finances might be available for Directors and Administrators. It would be a challenge for front line ECEs."</i></li></ul>

Few programs cover the cost of a university degree and restrictions apply for those who do.

*When asked about strategies for approaching governments to obtain financial support for the proposed degree the following suggestions were made:*

- Approach it as a four or five year pilot. It is hard for governments to commit to long term. Give a 5-year period to complete the cycle and allow for a flexible individualized pace for students.
- Adopt a participatory approach and set up a true partnership with government in the development, implementation and evaluation of the program.
- Make your case: There is a need in province for more qualified staff. We need new people to enter the field to make this a career opportunity they can stick with. Articulate the benefits: How will this make a difference?
  - Increased quality in early childhood and better-qualified staff.
  - Accessible credentialing program that people would stick with and actually graduate.
- Include a monitoring and evaluation plan (both formative and summative). Start with year one and follow the students through. Governments could be partners in the planning and evaluation of the program and have a say in what it looks like. Establish indicators. Look at the *quality of the interactions* of the educators as a strong indicator of quality. Also look for an environment with rich learning materials and an emergent type curriculum.
- Prepare a budget. Identify what will it cost the government.
- Have a clear role for the government with government represented on a committee and involved in program development, implementation and evaluation.



## ***Potential for building upon existing credentials***

Interest in building upon existing credentials and exploring articulation agreements was very high for all informants. There was wide agreement that more options were needed for educators with diplomas to continue their learning.

- *“We are absolutely interested! The more pathways we can create the better. “*
- *“That would be wonderful! Many people want to go on after they get a diploma.”*
- *“Great to have a career ladder especially if credits are recognized.’*
- *“I believe there would be considerable interest from the Francophone community. Articulation agreements should be explored.”*
- *“We do need more options for those with a diploma to continue.”*
- *“This is really needed. I often had people asking where to get an ECE degree when I was registrar.”*

## ***Course format and content***

The vast majority of interviewees had similar views in regards to course content and format. A broad approach was recommended, with a focus on children aged 0-8 in a range of settings. Only one informant suggested expanding the focus to include children 8- 12 years, pointing out that there was a gap in knowledge for that age group.

In order to respond to the needs of students with a range of backgrounds, informants suggested having two different tracks – one for those who already have some ECE credentials and another for those who don't. They also recommended a two- tiered model that would offer both Bachelor and Master's degree options. One idea was to build in multiple exist points. The idea was to keep the course as flexible as possible and provide some form of accreditation at the end of either a module or a course. This would increase the likelihood of participation and increase rate of enrolment.”

The data revealed strong support for the idea of involving instructors from each of the Atlantic Provinces. Interviewees were excited about the potential for an Atlantic connection for ECE. Several faculty members expressed interest in teaching the course. Some pointed out the importance of getting the right instructors and providing coordination to maintain the coherence and integrity of the course.

Nearly a third of the informants mentioned that the course would have to be well promoted for it to take off. They stated that partnerships and the support of the colleges, training institutions, and ECE agencies would be critical.

When it comes to course design, the preference was for a blended learning format with some face-to-face sessions. Some interviewees recommended a flexible model that would allow students to move at their own pace. Having a cohort in each province would allow for some much needed personal contact and peer support. A few stressed that new graduates right out of high school would do better with a regular face-to-face program.

Most all interviewees believed that a well-supervised practicum was important, although one individual said that it should not be required at all. While summer institutes were suggested by some, others cautioned that out of province travel could be costly and inconvenient.

When training institution representatives were asked about existing attrition rates for online courses in ECE, some stated that while precise records were not available, attrition was an issue. *“For our 90-hour training, 43 out of 183 students dropped out leaving 140 to finish.”* Others reported that their retention rates were very good. *“We have a high retention rate.”* *Our sessions are very interactive. Part of our value system is to create those connections”.*

The difference between admission standards for university versus college would present another challenge. To add to this, ECE students taking courses online are often parents of young children trying to juggle both home and work responsibilities. The transition from college to university would be a big jump for most. The consensus was that students would need strong supports and instructor engagement to deal with an online degree.

**Considerations for Course Design**

*“Literacy and writing skills are an issue for ECE.”*  
*“Math is hard.”*  
*“Statistics can be a barrier for some.”*  
*“You need a blended approach with opportunity for discussion and dialogue.”*  
*“Give learners, opportunities to share their geographic richness. It could be an Atlantic think tank or retreat.”*  
*“Don’t forget primary teachers. They may want to take some courses.”*

***Suggestions for course structure***

- Offer options for both a four-year Bachelor’s degree and a Master’s degree.
- Create separate strands: one for those with existing ECE credentials and one for those without.
- Allow for people who wish to take a few courses to increase their knowledge but do not necessarily want to complete a degree.
- Provide regular mentoring and supervision for placements and recognition for those sponsoring the students. The placement hosts need a lot of support as well. There would have to be some reciprocity and a direct link between the university and host.
- Develop a system for keeping the course content up to date. This can be a challenge when dealing with online technology.
- Provide opportunity for both instructors and students to receive training and on-going support.

***Suggested Topics***

Early language and literacy development	Assessment and intervention	Comparative policy and practice for ECE (with a world view as well as local)
Mathematics	Play in different settings.	Curriculum: How to integrate the different disciplines
Digital literacy	The role of the adults in supporting play.	Advocacy
Science	Leadership/Administration	Diversity & inclusion
The arts	HR-Accounting basics	Community/program development
Exceptionalities	Communication and conflict resolution	
Working with families		



## ONLINE SECTOR SURVEY

### *Profile of respondents*

A total of 369 respondents participated in the online survey. The representative distribution of the respondents included a spectrum of roles, settings, years of experience in the field and educational background.

### *Number of Responses by Province*

Newfoundland and Labrador	<b>14.99%</b>	<b>52</b>
New Brunswick	53.03%	185
Nova Scotia	19.31%	67
Prince Edward Island	12.68%	65
<b>Total</b>		<b>369</b>

### *Role and setting*

The distribution of the respondents included almost an even number of front line educators and Director/owners working in both centre-based programs and Community Day Care Homes.

- 41.47% were front line early childhood educators
- 39.02% were program Director/owner-operators
- 1.08% were educational assistants
- 18.43% represented other roles including coordinators, Family Resource Centre and Early Intervention personnel, VON and Prenatal facilitators, ECE instructors, preschool and parenting program personnel, community advisors, trainers and supervisors.

<b>Answer Choices</b>	<b>Responses</b>	
Front line early childhood educator in an early learning and child care centre	39.30%	145
Director or owner /operator of an early learning and child care centre	29.81%	110
Front line early childhood educator in a Community Home Day Care	2.17%	8
Director or owner /operator of a Community Home Day Care	9.21%	34
Education Assistant	1.08%	4
Other	18.43%	68
<b>Total</b>		<b>369</b>

### *Length of time in the field*

- Over 50% of survey respondents have been working in the field for 10 years or more.
- 30.63% have 5 years or less experience in the field.
- Only 4.07% of survey respondents had one year or less experience in the field.

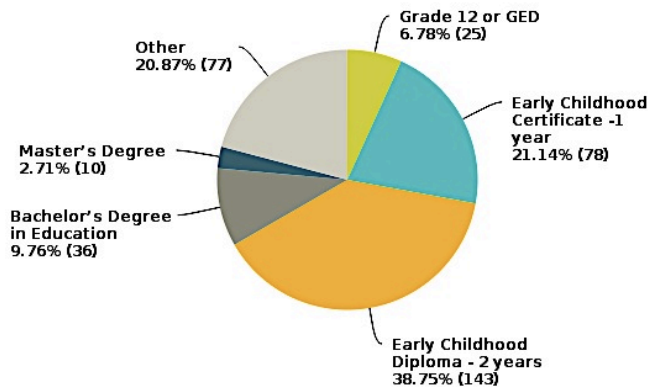
The table below gives a further breakdown of the length of time respondents have been working in the field of early learning and childcare.

Answer Choices	Responses	
1 year or less	4.07%	15
1-5 years	26.56%	98
5-10 years	19.24%	71
10-20 years	36.31%	134
Over 20 years	13.82%	51

### ***Highest level of education completed***

#### **Q4 What is the highest level of education you have completed?**

Answered: 369 Skipped: 0



***The majority of respondents have completed either a 1-year certificate or 2-year diploma.***

59.89% of respondents indicated that they had completed either a 1-year certificate or 2-year diploma in Early Childhood Education. For 6.78% of respondents, grade 12 or GED was the highest level of education completed. On the other end of the spectrum, 2.71% of respondents have a Master's degree. Those who selected *other* as a response had a range of credentials including Bachelor's degrees in Arts, Child and Family Studies, Business Administration, Psychology, Nutrition, Linguistics, Philosophy; certificates or diploma in Teleservices, Marketing, Special Education, Nursing, Stenography, Youth Care and Hospitality.

Less than grade 12	0%	0
Grade 12 or GED	6.78%	25
Early Childhood Certificate-1 year	21.14%	78
Early Childhood Diploma- 2 years	38.75%	143
Bachelor's Degree in Education	9.76%	36
Master's Degree	2.71%	10
Other	20.87%	77

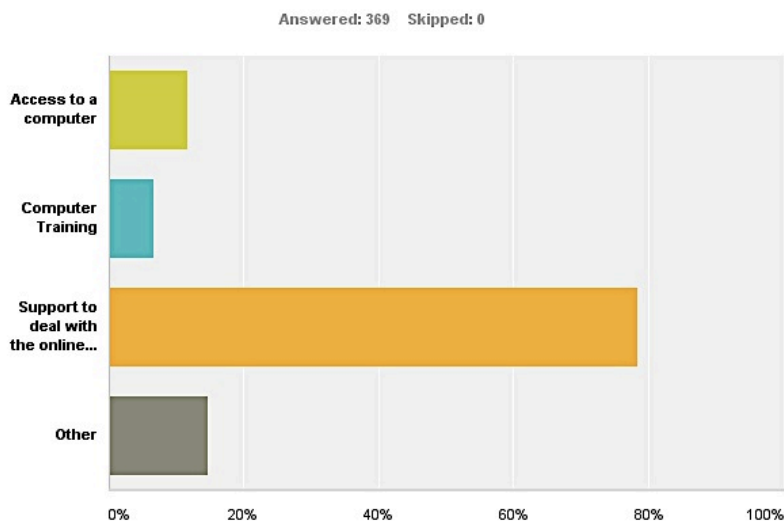
### **Access to wireless internet**

A total of 98.37% of survey respondents indicated that they have access to wireless internet that they could use to take an online course.

- 78.98% have 24/7 access
- 20.33% have access on week nights
- 3.25% have access on weekdays
- 1.90% have access on weekend days
- 0.54% have access on weeknights.

### **Need for technical support**

**Q8 If you were to complete a Bachelor degree on-line, what technical support would you need? (Please check all that apply.)**



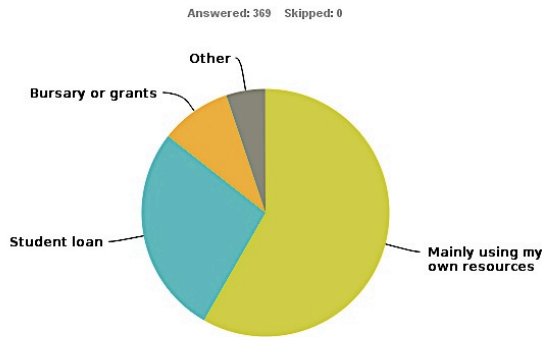
**A large majority (78.32 %) of respondents indicated a need for support to deal with online education.**

- 11.65% need access to a computer
- 6.78% need computer training

The 14.63%, who checked *other*, indicated the following needs:

- No support needed at all ( 54)
- Access to a support desk, some one-on-one/someone to ask a few questions (8)
- Supports for people with learning disabilities (i.e. note taker and oral testing)(1)
- Workplace internet access (1)
- Access to a better computer (1)
- Wondering if I would need to purchase a microphone and headset (1)

## Obstacles to completing an online degree



As illustrated by the chart on the left, the vast majority (75.88%) identified *cost of tuition* as an obstacle to completing an online degree. The second most commonly selected obstacle was *not enough time* (60%). This was followed by *No incentive to upgrade my credentials* (15.72%), *concern about taking online courses* (13.28%) and *I don't have a computer* (0.54%).

Below is a summary of the comments made by the 5.69% of respondents who checked "other":

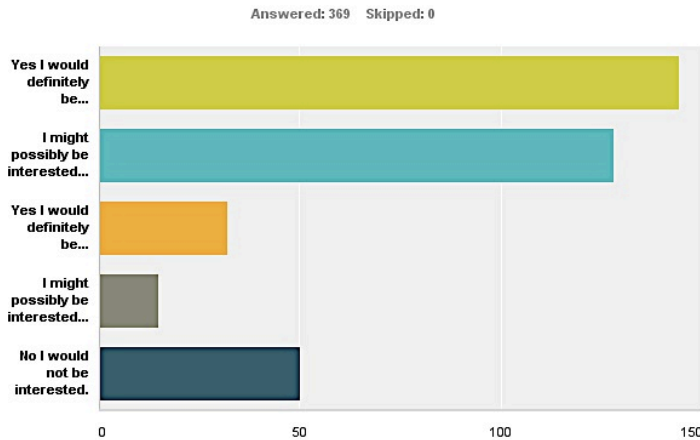
- *Lack of time due to full time work/Balancing self care and family life (8)*
- *Finding affordable childcare is a challenge (2)*
- *If I have to shut down for a practicum, I could lose clients (2)*
- *My age is an obstacle. I am getting ready to retire. (3)*
- *One can't learn a sociological course from a computer (1)*
- *Classroom training is key to work with children. You can't learn what you need in front of a computer.*
- *No support for learning disabilities (1)*
- *Unsure about costs (1)*
- *For those of us who are truly passionate and want to increase the credibility of our profession, this program is an exciting possibility. (1)*
- *I would do it regardless of obstacles (2)*

## How respondents expect to finance the degree

When asked how they expected to finance the proposed degree, the majority of the 369 respondents, (58.27%), indicated that they would use their own resources. Another 27.37% plan to obtain a student loan and 9.21% expected to look for bursaries or grants. The 5.15% who checked "other" made the following comments:

- *Not sure about this (8)*
- *Perhaps some of both...my own resources and student loan (2)*
- *My daycare will pay for the cost up front due to the grants in Nova Scotia for upgrading (1)*
- *I would sure hope to get some grant or bursary (1)*
- *Hoping to have funding from the military (1)*
- *Credit line (1)*
- *That's expensive. MSTV is about \$200 cheaper (1)*
- *Possibly help from Aboriginal Band (1)*
- *Hope the Department would help with costs to ensure a better educated work force (1)*
- *All of the above. Whatever it takes! (2)*

## Interest in enrolling in an online Bachelor of Early Childhood Education with UNB



Only 13.55% of respondents stated that they would not be interested in enrolling in an online Bachelor's Degree for ECE with the University of New Brunswick.

A total of 47.69% of all respondents stated that they would definitely be interested in enrolling. An additional 38.76% indicated that they might possibly be interested.

Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes, I would definitely be interested in enrolling part time	39.02%	144
Yes, I would definitely be interested in enrolling full time	8.67%	32
I might possibly be interested in enrolling part time	34.69%	128
I might possibly be interested in enrolling full time	4.07%	15
No, I would not be interested	13.55%	50
		369

## Final Comments

Participants' were given an opportunity to share any final comments. Their responses are presented below according to themes.

### Level of interest (13)

- *"Hoping this will begin soon. I find this idea to be brilliant."*
- *"Any job I apply for requires a Bachelor's Degree. I would love this opportunity."*
- *"I've been waiting for this to happen for a long time."(2)*
- *"I would be interested in updating my knowledge since I got my degree in 1988."*
- *"I would DEFINITELY be interested in enrolling. This is a huge opportunity."*
- *"This is part of my ten year plan. I really hope it goes!"*
- *"I would definitely be interested. Being a mom of 4, online would work best for me."*
- *"As a full time employee and mother of three children, online courses would be ideal I would be the first in line to register!"*
- *"I would love the opportunity to complete a degree online. I am a fulltime mother, fulltime ECE. I would like to know if this program goes ahead as I am very interested in enrolling."*
- *"With a husband and family, it was not possible for me to leave home to complete my degree... to complete it online would open more career opportunities for me"*
- *"I would love the opportunity to complete an ECE degree online. Please feel free to contact me."*
- *"Already have a Bachelor's degree but would like the emphasis on Early Childhood."*

### **Costs (8)**

- *“I’m a little concerned about having to pay the whole thing up front. Maybe a payment plan is possible.”*
- *“A four-year degree is sorely needed in the field. Would grant or bursaries be available?”*
- *“The cost of the program outweighs the wage you could possibly get when you finish.”*
- *“It would mostly depend on if I qualify for a student loan.”*
- *“I have been looking into getting my degree for years but cost and timing were always an issue.”*
- *“While this is something I would love to do it comes down to funding.”*
- *“I need some incentive to upgrade.”*
- *“The field of ECE does not pay overly well. It may be difficult to finance/ pay off debt either before or after. Looking forward to it all the same.”*

### **Format and Logistics (3)**

- *“I would hope I could transfer a lot of my BA in psychology credits.”*
- *“Online courses scare me but if this was the option I would give it a try.”*
- *“Would the credits count in NS?”*

### **Master’s Degree/ Certificate Options (3)**

- *“I would actually love to do a Master’s Degree in ECE online.” (4)*
- *“This would be of interest to me only if it fell under what the current Director’s EYC are required to have and not in addition to the required education.”*
- *“Would this be helpful to nurses working in community programs with children 0–2 years? It would be great to have the option of a certificate and not only a Bachelor Degree.”*



## 4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Is there a perceived need for this degree?

This study reveals that the majority of respondents believe that there is a need for a four-year Bachelor of Education degree in Early Childhood Education or Early Learning in the Atlantic Provinces using an online delivery model. This is based on several factors:

- The degree would be in line with current efforts to increase the quality of early childhood programs and the professional qualifications of early childhood educators.
- It would address an existing gap since there is no Bachelor of Education degree in Early Childhood Education currently being offered by a University in Atlantic Canada.
- It would provide much needed accessibility for potential students living in rural communities and added flexibility for those wish to study while managing work and family responsibilities.
- The move to integrate Early Childhood with the Department of Education has underlined the need for greater parity between the qualifications of early childhood educators and teachers in the school system.
- Stakeholders are having difficulty finding qualified instructors for post-secondary ECE programs and qualified people for supervisory positions.
- A significant number of ECEs have expressed interest in enrolling in the proposed degree.

On the other hand, some stakeholders have reservations about the proposed degree, stating that a degree was not a priority at this time since so many educators do not even have level 1 diploma credentials. Government representatives, in particular, are worried that upgrading credentials of ECEs to a University degree would create a demand for higher salaries, which the system could not afford. A few respondents also feared that the proposed degree might affect enrolment numbers for degree programs that have been taken up by some ECEs in the past. They pointed specifically to the Child and Youth Studies program offered by Mount Saint Vincent and the Child and Family Studies program from the University of Prince Edward Island.

Despite the concerns expressed, there was almost full agreement that early childhood educators require more specialization knowledge and the option of an online degree in the Atlantic Provinces that focuses specifically on early childhood learning would be beneficial.

## Will they come? *Will there be sufficient enrolment to make it viable?*

Based on this study we can conclude that early childhood educators have a keen interest in this degree and they would enroll in sufficient numbers to make the course viable. Of the 369 survey respondents, only 54 said that they would not be interested. 176 indicated that they would *definitely* be interested in enrolling and 143 indicated that they *might* be interested.

Potential students include:

- ECEs with a certificate or diploma who wish to upgrade their credentials on a part time basis while continuing to work in the field. *(This would be the largest number.)*
- ECEs with a certificate or diploma who wish to upgrade their credentials on a full time basis.
- Directors /Administrators of ECE programs wishing to upgrade their credentials for personal interest or in response to anticipated new requirements for Directors.
- Educators from Family Resource Centres, early intervention programs, play groups and parenting programs wishing to increase their knowledge and upgrade their credentials in ECE.
- Educators in supervisory or leadership roles who may have some credentials or a degree in another discipline and wish to increase their specialized knowledge in ECE.
- Educators with undergraduate degrees who wish to obtain a Master's degree to move from level 4 to level 5 to increase their portability and pay rate. *(If this is an option).*
- People who may be interested in taking some courses to increase their knowledge in ECE.

### **Influencing factors that would affect enrolment**

**Affordability** - Wages are low in the ECE sector and the cost of obtaining a degree is a concern for most educators. Some financial support in the form of bursaries, grants, student loans or reimbursements would help to remove barriers and significantly increase enrolment.

**Financial rewards** - Currently there are no financial rewards in the sector for completing a degree in ECE. Educators who stay in the field would receive little or no increase in pay after completing a degree.

**Legislative requirements** - A requirement for increased credentials for educators would act as an increase incentive and significantly increase enrolment for the proposed degree.

**Scope** - A program that is relevant to ECEs in a variety of contexts would have a wider appeal. Including a Master's degree level would attract students seeking that level. For example, a degree that meets the needs of ECE Directors and Administrators would increase enrolment from PE since a new requirement for them to have a degree is anticipated.

**Alignment** - The extent of alignment and portability of the degree between provinces will affect the relevance of the degree for some and therefore have an impact on enrolment.

**Marketing** -The extent to which the degree is promoted locally by stakeholders in each province would be another factor in the enrolment rate.



## How should we deliver the degree?

As described earlier in the *Findings* section of this report, a broad approach to early childhood education with a focus on children 0-8 in a range of settings is recommended. The program should be designed for students from a range of backgrounds and work settings. Based on the data from the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

- **Support** - Provide strong support for both instructors and students. Include orientation sessions mentoring and ongoing technical support. Build in opportunities for peer support and personal connections and interaction between instructors and students.
- **Blended format** - Include some face-to-face sessions to provide important personal contact and opportunities for peer support.
- **Partnerships with the sector and educational institutions** - Establish strong interprovincial university/college, connections. Ensure that there is alignment and portability/certification recognized in all provinces. Articulation Agreements with colleges and training institutions will be essential. These institutions, along with the ECE sector associations, will also be partners in promoting the program.
- **Partnerships with provincial governments** - Seek a commitment from government for some financial support for ECEs wishing to take this degree. Establish a committee and involve government representatives and other stakeholders in program development, implementation and evaluation. See page 14 for further details.
- **Degree options** - Offer two tracks: one for those with ECE diplomas or certificates and another for those without. Provide both a Bachelor's and Master's degree option. To further broaden the appeal, build in different exist points for those who want to strengthen their background in ECE but may not need to complete a full degree.
- **Administration** - Appoint a full time registrar/academic advisor.
- **Coordination and communication** - Have someone specifically designated to deal with the coordination and logistics.

### Concluding statement

Overall, the study indicates that there would be sufficient enrolment from the ECE sector to make the proposed degree viable. The lack of requirements, financial incentives and support to cover costs for the degree are factors that would affect the level of take up rate. However, the data shows that there is a genuine appetite for professional advancement in the field. A broad approach with strong interprovincial partnerships and support for students and instructors will be critical elements in the successful implementation of the program.

## **APPENDIX A – List of interviewees**

### **NEWFOUNDLAND**

**Joanne Morris**

Director, Early Childhood Education Faculty, College of the North Atlantic

**Brenda Tobin**

Dean of Academics, Applied Arts & Tourism, College of the North Atlantic

**Theresa Pittman**

Chair of Distributed Learning, College of the North Atlantic

**Helen Sinclair**

Executive Member, Association of Early Childhood Education, NL

**Skye Taylor**

Director of Professional Development, Association of Early Childhood Education, NL

**James Higgins**

Director Early Childhood Development Services, Family and Child Development, Department of Child, Youth, and Family Services, NL

**Mary Goss-Prowse**

Child Care Services Consultant, Family and Child Development, Department of Child, Youth, and Family Services, NL

**Paula Hennessy**

Senior Consultant, Department of Education, Early Childhood Learning Division, NL

**Des Whelan**

Chair, Keyin College, Chair, Carbonear, NL

**Anne Burke**

Professor, Memorial University, NL

**Gerald Galway**

Associate Dean, Memorial University, NL

**Tracy Rose**

MUN Campus Childcare Inc., Memorial University, NL

**Leslie Hardy**

Director, Children's Program, Daybreak Parent Child Centre, St. John's NL

### **NOVA SCOTIA**

**Jane Cawley**

Executive Director, Nova Scotia College of Early Childhood Education

**Nicki Beck**

Faculty Instructor, Nova Scotia College of Early Childhood Education

**Beverlie Dietze**

Assistant Professor, Department of Child & Youth Study, Mount Saint Vincent University

**Peggy Watts**

Director of Distance Learning & Continuing Education, Mount Saint Vincent University

**Mary Jane Harkins**

Professor, Director of Teacher Education, Department of Child & Youth Study, Mount Saint Vincent University

**Anne Murray Orr**

Professor, St. Francis Xavier University, Antigonish, NS

**Elizabeth Munroe**

Professor, St. Francis Xavier University, Antigonish, NS

**Bronwen Lloyd**

Child Care Program & Policy Analyst, Department of Education & Early Childhood Development, NS

**Patricia Martins**

Coordinator, Child Care Staff Classification Services, Department of Education & Early Childhood Development, NS

**Kristina Creamer**

Coordinator, Family Home Daycare Programs, Department of Education & Early Childhood Development, NS

**Virginia O'Connell**

Director, ECD Services, Early Years Branch, Department of Education & Early Childhood Development, NS

**Elaine Fergusson**

Executive Director, Child Care Connections NS

**Kathleen Couture**

Chair, Nova Scotia Child Care Association

**Sue Melanson**

Coordinator, Family Resource Centres, Cape Breton & Central Nova Scotia / Nova Scotia Child Care Association

**Anna MacDonell**

Program Director, Institute for Early Childhood Education and Development Services, Truro, NS

**Connie Fisher**

Academic Chair Cumberland Campus, Nova Scotia Community College

**Marlene McClelland**

Acting Dean, School of Health & Human Services, Nova Scotia Community College, Institute of Technology Campus

**Eleanor Bernard**

Executive Director, MI'KMAW MATNEWAY, NS

**PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND (PE)**

**Rosemary White**

Program Manager, Early Childhood Education Program, Holland College, PE

**Susan Ashley**

Early Childhood Education Program, Holland College, PE

**Holly Moses**

Early Childhood Education Program, Holland College, PE

**Kim Gillis**

Early Childhood Education Program, Holland College, PE

**Carolyn Simpson**

Early Childhood Education and Kindergarten Manager, Department of Education & Early Childhood Development, PE

**Cathy McCormack**

Early Childhood Programs Administrator, Department of Education & Early Childhood Development, PE

**Sonya Hooper**

Executive Director, Early Childhood Development Association of Prince Edward Island

**Emma Rocket**

Education & Training Coordinator, Early Childhood Development Association of Prince Edward Island

**Charlene VanLeeuwen**

Professor, Field Placement Coordinator, Department of Applied Human Sciences, University of Prince Edward Island

**Gabriel Sanchez**

Coordinator for BED for Kindergarten Teachers, University of Prince Edward Island

**Lori Weeks**

Professor, Child & Family Studies Field Placements University of Prince Edward Island

**Lindsay Moffatt**

Professor, University of Prince Edward Island

**Kathleen Flanagan**

Policy Consultant, Early Childhood Education, PE

**Ann Robertson**

Director, Chance Early Years Centre, PE

**Collette Aucoin**

Faculty, College Acadie, PE

**NEW BRUNSWICK**

**Diane Lutes**

Acting Director, Department of Education & Early Childhood Development, NB

**Clare Archibald**

Regional Director, Family & Early Childhood Services East, Department of Education & Early Childhood Development, NB

**Anna Marie Hayes**

Regional Director, Family and Early Childhood Services West, Department of Education & Early Childhood Development, NB

**Sharon Hachey**

Project Manager, Program of Professional Learning, Early Childhood Care & Education New Brunswick

**Marjolaine St Pierre**

Executive Director, Early Childhood Care & Education New Brunswick

**Angela Scott**

Certification Project Manager, Early Childhood Care & Education New Brunswick

**Elizabeth Pitcher**

Professional Learning Coordinator, Early Childhood Care & Education New Brunswick

**Pam Whitty**

Professor, Early Childhood Education; Director, Early Childhood Centre, University of New Brunswick

**Sherry Rose**

Assistant Professor, Early Childhood Education, University of New Brunswick

**Sue McGibbon**

Past Instructor, New Brunswick Community College, Fredericton, NB

**Betty Brown Dean**

Health and Social Sciences Division, New Brunswick Community College

**Tammie Hachey**

Instructor, Early Childhood Education, New Brunswick Community College, Woodstock, NB

**Tammy McTavish**

Instructor, Academy of Learning, Miramichi, NB

**Jayne Wilson**

Instructor, Atlantic Business College, NB

**Lorryann Arseneault**

Instructor, Oulton College, NB

**Ellen Bubar**

Vice Principal, Early Childhood Education Program, Union of NB Indians Institute, Fredericton, NB

**Robert Atwin**

Executive Director, First Nation Education Initiative (FNEI)

**Vicky O'Sullivan**

Early Childhood Education Specialist, First Nation Education Initiative (FNEI)

**BRITISH COLUMBIA**

**Sharon Strasdin**

Instructor, Early Childhood Education Program, Acting Chair, Northern Lights College Distance Education Program

## APPENDIX B—Outline for Interviews

### Interview Questions – Feasibility Study

1. Tell me about your involvement with early childhood and early learning.

2. Thinking about the idea of an online four year degree, what do you believe are the possibilities and challenges for potential students?

*Prompts:*

- Perceived need
- Existing credentials of ECEs
- Access to high speed internet
- ECE computer skills
- Online platform

3. Finances and cost of tuition are always an issue. Are you aware of any support that exists among departments or ministries who look after early learning in your province?

*Prompts:*

- Current support
- Affordability –potential funding support

4. Do you believe there is interest in working with us to provide some kind of transition from your college / institute to this degree? (Idea to build upon existing diplomas or certificates)

5. What suggestions do you have for course format or course content?

*Prompts:*

- Topics
- Course structure
- Course load capacity for students who are continuing to work

6. Thinking about your province, do you believe there would be enough interest, support, and access to provide a four year Bachelor of Education in Early Childhood or Early Learning in the Atlantic Provinces through an online delivery?

7. Other comments/ suggestions?

## APPENDIX C – Survey Questionnaire

**1. In which province do you live?**

- Newfoundland and Labrador
- New Brunswick
- Nova Scotia
- Prince Edward Island

**2. Which of the following best describes your role and setting in which you work?**

- Front line early childhood educator in an early learning and child care centre
- Director or owner /operator of an early learning and child care centre
- Front line early childhood educator in a Community Home Day Care
- Director or owner /operator of a Community Home Day Care
- Education Assistant
- Other:  
Please describe \_\_\_\_\_

**3. How long have you been working in the field of Early Learning and Child Care?**

- 1 year or less
- 5-10 years
- Over 20 years
- 1-5 years
- 10 to 20 years

**4. What is the highest level of education you have completed?**

- Less than grade 12
- Grade 12 or GED
- Early Childhood Certificate -1 year
- Early Childhood Diploma - 2 years
- Bachelor's Degree in Education
- Bachelor's Degree in discipline other than Education (Please specify)
- Master's Degree
- Other (Please specify)

**5. At which school, college, institution or university did you complete your highest level of education?**

**6. Do you have access to a wireless internet service that you could use to take an online course?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**7. What days and times do you have access to a computer with high speed internet:**

- 24/7
- Weekdays
- Weeknights
- Weekend Days
- Weekend Nights
- No internet Access

**8. If you were to complete a Bachelor degree online, what technical support would you need?**

**(Please check all that apply.)**

- Access to a computer
- Computer Training
- Support to deal with online education format
- Other (Please explain) \_\_\_\_\_

**9. Which of the following, if any, might be obstacles to your completing an online degree? (Please check all that apply.)**

- I don't have enough time
- Cost of tuition is a problem
- Concern about taking an online course
- Not sure I have strong enough computer skills
- I don't have a computer
- No incentive to upgrade my credentials
- None of the above
- Other (Please explain) \_\_\_\_\_

**10. The current cost per course at the University of New Brunswick is approximately \$721. Depending upon your background, a specific number of courses would be required to complete a Bachelor's degree. If you were to enroll in the proposed online degree program how would you expect to finance the cost of your studies?**

- Mainly using my own resources
- Student loan
- Bursary or grant
- Other

**Comments**

**11. Would you be interested in enrolling in an online Bachelor's Degree for Early Childhood Education with the University of New Brunswick? Note: Indicating your interest does not in any way mean that you are committed to the course. (Please select one response.)**

- Yes, I would definitely be interested in enrolling part time.
- Yes, I would definitely be interested in enrolling full time.
- I might possibly be interested in enrolling part time.
- I might possibly be interested in enrolling full time.
- No, I would not be interested

**12. Please share any final comments**



## APPENDIX D - Lead Ministries and Training Requirements for ECE

	Lead Ministry	Training Requirements
NL	Department of Child, Youth and Family Service. Working closely with the Department of Education, which is leading the development of an Early Childhood Learning Framework.	<p>The lead staff person in each homeroom is required to have Level I certification. The program operator is required to have Level II. Other staff are required to have a minimum of entry-level certification. All ECEs working with infants must have Level 1.</p> <p><i>Entry Level Classification: Orientation course</i>  <i>Level 1 Classification: One year ECE certificate</i>  <i>Level 2 Classification: Two year Diploma</i>  <i>Level 3 Classification: Level 2 certification, plus a post-diploma, ECE certificate or specialization or a university degree plus a provincially recognized certificate in ECE (or equivalent)</i>  <i>Level 4 Classification: a university degree in ECE or a university degree plus a provincially recognized ECE diploma</i></p> <p>*Level 1 is on its way to being a requirement.</p>
NS	Dept. of Education and Early Childhood Development	<p>All staff working with children in a licensed childcare facility must be classified. There are 4 levels of Classification:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Entry Level Classification: completion of an Orientation course</i></li> <li>2. <i>Level One Classification: completion of the Orientation course and Level 1 course work and workplace experience or a one year ECE Certificate or the equivalent of an ECE certificate</i></li> <li>3. <i>Level Two Classification: Two year ECE Diploma</i></li> <li>4. <i>Level Three Classification: Bachelor's degree in ECE or the requirements for Level 2 classification and a bachelor's degree in any discipline from a recognized post-secondary institution</i></li> </ol> <p>*2/3 of staff in a licensed centre must hold Level one, two or three Classification. Directors must hold Level two or three classification.</p>
NB	Dept. of Education and Early Childhood Development	<p>The Director, his designate or 1 in 4 staff must have the one-year community college ECE Diploma or equivalent.</p> <p>Staff: a 30-hour Program of Professional Learning (PPL) is required at this time. However, the government will be introducing a 90-hour online introductory course. The PPL will be integrated into this. The recent policy document, <i>Putting Children First</i>, contains a government commitment to increase training requirements. The government and ECCENB are partnering to create a new certification system to encourage ECEs to upgrade their credentials.</p>
PEI	Dept. of Education and Early Childhood Development	<p>Directors require a two-year ECE diploma plus 2 yrs. of ECE experience, or a 1-year certificate plus 3 yr. experience, or a degree in related field plus 2-4 ECE courses plus 2 years experience or diploma in a related field plus 4 ECE courses plus 3 years experience.</p> <p>Staff -One year ECE certificate or diploma or degree in related field plus 2-4 ECE courses, or diploma in related field plus 4 ECE courses.</p>

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