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# Work around the clock
# A snapshot of non-standard hours child care in Canada

## Occasional paper No. 29

Shani Halfon and Martha Friendly
Childcare Resource and Research Unit
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Childcare Resource and Research Unit
225 Brunswick Avenue
Toronto ON M5S 2M6, Canada
TEL: 416-926-9264
FAX: 416-971-2139
EMAIL: contactus@childcarecanada.org
WEBSITE: www.childcarecanada.org

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## Table of contents

# Work around the clock
# A snapshot of non-standard hours child care in Canada

## Executive summary

This report is intended to be a useful tool for policy makers striving to strengthen child care policy and programs, researchers studying child care, family and workplace policy issues, advocates working for accessible high quality child care for all Canadian families and employers of non-standard hours workers. Its main purpose is to provide an up-to-date report on the state of child care for families working non-standard hours in Canada.

The report includes:

- Data and information about non-standard work and non-standard workers in Canada;
- A review of pertinent literature on non-standard hours child care;
- A review of selected literature on the effects of non-standard work on work-family balance generally;
- Information collected from a scan of provincial/territorial policies and initiatives related to non-standard hours child care (including initiatives that have and have not been sustained);
- Several case studies of non-standard hours child care programs;
- International examples of non-standard hours child care provision, research and analysis.

Challenges, opportunities and issues for child care are identified and analyzed in the larger context of Canadian child care. In that context, the report includes practical information about what seems to "work" and what does not seem to work for families and services. The paper's last section uses the information to make a number of recommendations to governments, employers, unions, human rights specialists and parents.

**The Canadian Union of Postal Workers, the CUPW Child Care Fund and non-standard hours child care**

This report on non-standard hours child care was funded by the Child Care Fund of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW). Provided under the terms of the CUPW's collective agreement with Canada Post, the Fund supported the project as part of the union's commitment to help its members meet their child care needs. The Fund is financed by Canada Post and administered by CUPW to provide support and resources to CUPW members as well as to finance research that can help inform CUPW in serving their members and the broader community better.

The Canadian Union of Postal Workers has a particular interest in non-standard hours child care because many of its members, particularly inside plant workers, are predominantly engaged in early morning, extended evening and overnight shifts. When overtime is taken into account, other groups of postal workers such as letter carriers now often work into the evening hours as well. CUPW is the sole union that represents workers working non-standard hours in communities across every region of Canada and Quebec, so its members who are struggling with child care in many ways very much reflect the child care struggles of non-CUPW-parents across Canada.

**Context**

For families in all parts of Canada, high quality regulated child care is hard to find and—outside Quebec—hard to afford. For the many families who work non-standard schedules, an affordable regulated child care space that meets their needs is even harder to access than child care during "normal" working hours—essentially impossible for most families. Most child care service providers who consider providing child care to meet non-standard schedules either reject the idea because it is not financially viable or cease to offer these services after a time. The additional costs associated with providing non-standard hours services are unsustainable for most child care services providers without a stable external source of additional funding.

Non-standard work hours include a wide variety of schedule possibilities that are now common— from slightly extended hours (beginning as early as 6:00 AM or until 7:30 or 8:00 PM), to later shifts (until 11:30 PM or later), full overnights, to weekends. While there is no official definition of "standard work hours", they are often considered to cover the working hours of 9:00 to 5:00 or 8:00 to 6:00; Canada Post defines work hours not considered to be shift work as falling between 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM.

Parents in communities across Canada find that standard child care operating times do not meet the needs of workers who work early morning, evenings or overnight shifts, rotating and split shifts, casual/on-call jobs, or other non-standard or irregular shifts. Canadian experience and research show that current child care funding and other policy usually makes it difficult or impossible for most child care services to meet non-standard schedules. While some provincial/ territorial governments have experimented at different times with pilot projects or provided special funding to facilitate non-standard hours child care, these have been few and far between and have usually not been sustained. Thus, it is not surprising that there are few options offering regulated child care to meet parents' non-standard schedules.

It is clear that the lack of a comprehensive child care system with sustained funding and flexible options for families hinders development and maintenance of non-standard hours child care services. In Canada's market-based child care, public funding for child care is uneven and limited, with most child care services primarily supported by parent fees. Parent fees are already out of reach for many families and cannot be raised to cover the full cost of non-standard hours

child care programs (which tend to be even more expensive than regular programs) without making them financially inaccessible to the majority of families.

**What we know about non-standard hours workers in Canada**

Based on a 2008 analysis of data from the 2005 *General Social Survey*, some of the characteristics of non-standard hours work and workers are relevant to child care.

- 28 percent of employed Canadians worked something other than a regular day shift.
- 82 percent of shift workers worked full- time.
- Rotating/irregular schedules were the most common types of shift work.
- 37 percent of all full-time shift workers and 70 percent of part-time shift workers were women.
- 6 of 10 shift workers (7 of 10 day workers) were married.
- The percent of couples w/children <15 years was almost the same for those who worked standard hours (27.5 percent) and non-standard hours (29.6 percent).
- 22 percent of families with a parent working regular evenings had children compared to 30 percent of day workers.

In the Canadian population, it is not currently known what percent of non-standard hours workers are low income. However, 2001 data found that 40 percent of low income workers worked non-standard hours compared to 25 percent of other workers.

**What we know about non-standard hours child care**

Across Canada, there is very little regulated child care that is available in the evening, on weekends, overnight or on a rotating or on-call basis to meet the schedules of non-standard hours workers who need care for their children. There is, at the present time, no inventory of such services although three provinces (Manitoba, Saskatchewan and British Columbia) are set up to allow parents to search on-line for regulated services operating at non-standard hours.

Several studies and analyses note that a number of different kinds of non-standard hours child care (slightly extended child care hours, care that extends into the late evening or into the night, overnight care and weekend care) can be identified.

As well, there are some kinds of flexible work arrangements, accommodation or policy that may address some non-standard hours child care issues; the U.K. and Australia provide several good examples of such policies. The main Canadian example of this approach is exemplified by the ruling in the Fiona Johnstone case that lead to a legal interpretation of Canadian human rights legislation defining protection from discrimination as including child care responsibilities as part of "family status". Several other legal cases have reinforced this interpretation of accommodation based on family status.

**What we know from research on non-standard hours child care**

The report summarizes Canadian research and other documentation about non-standard hours child care as well as research on the effects of non-standard work on family life, work-life balance and child well-being. A literature review conducted for this report found that there is very little new Canadian research or documentation about non-standard hours child care. One exception is Albanese's 2007 study of mothers' work and family responsibilities in rural Quebec. The respondents in her study reported that the $7[1]/day child care program allowed them to maintain part-time or lower-paid employment or to focus on finding a new job or enrolling in retraining. Despite the popularity of the child care program, however, centre schedules did not cover non-standard hours and were a matter of concern for most interviewees. This study confirmed the findings of a 2000 study by Preston et al. in Quebec, Newfoundland and Alberta that notes that the "onus of adjustments to shifts fell mostly on women". As well, an evaluation of the Quebec government's 10 non-standard hours pilot projects in the early 2000s provided considerable detail about the different types of non-standard hours services and how parents experienced them. The evaluation confirmed that use of these services was quite variable but important for the parents who relied on them. The study found that the stability of the care and that it was one arrangement, not several, were especially important.

A 2011 Ontario study by Pagnan, Lero and MacDermid Wadsworth found that "off-shifting" was the primary way participants arranged care for their young children. Finally, although Canadian data are not available, US researchers have found (confirmed most recently in a 2015 Urban Institute analysis), that low-wage workers are more likely to work non-standard, unpredictable shifts and for these workers, child care choices are deeply constrained by work schedules.

While there are a number of fairly recent Canadian studies looking at work/family issues and non-standard work, none have included child care. In a 2004 study, Strazdins et al. compared children aged 2-11 in families working regular and no-standard hours using the NLSCY data. The researchers concluded that more data on non-parental child care use was needed and that "some of the links to family life and child well-being may result from lack of affordable or accessible child care".

**Provincial/territorial policy and initiatives on non-standard hours child care**

A provincial/territorial scan included an online search of all provincial/territorial ministry/ department websites. Telephone interviews with officials from most provinces/territories responsible for child care were also conducted.

None of the provinces/territories has a comprehensive policy or program to ensure access to non-standard hours child care. In most cases, little was known about the demand, prevalence and issues for non-standard hours child care. Several officials indicated that they thought there was

[1] Quebec child care fees were increased slightly by the Quebec government in 2015 and now follow a more geared-to-income

little to no demand for non-standard hours child care. Three Atlantic provinces have had specific regulations setting barriers to operation of non-standard hours child care, although these are changing.

Manitoba and Saskatchewan both provide some additional funding for non-standard hours child care programs. In Manitoba, operating funding and fee subsidies for non-standard hours programs are one and a half times the regular amount. Manitoba officials said that they were reviewing funding policies to better define extended hours. In Saskatchewan, centres operating 80 – 120 hours per week receive a higher (+25 percent) early childhood services grant per space while those operating 120+ hours/week receive an additional 50 percent of the grant per space. These two were among the three provinces (British Columbia is the third) in which non-standard hours child care programs can be identified using online searches of government websites.

Alberta provides an Extended Hours Subsidy (an additional $100/month) directly to parents who are working/attending school during extended hours and are eligible for a fee subsidy. This can be used for any form of regulated or unregulated child care.

In 2000, Quebec launched a pilot project and set up 10 non-standard hours child care centres that were funded in addition to the regular base funding formula and were, in certain situations, allowed to operate outside the regulations. A detailed evaluation was conducted in 2002 but additional funding ceased a year later. Although most of these programs are still operating, it appears that only one offers non-standard hours (extended into the early evening). Although non-standard hours child care in Quebec does not receive additional funding, funded CPEs and garderies (non-profit and for-profit centres) are eligible to be publicly funded to offer non-standard hours care through Quebec's usual formula-based public funding as per the Regulations.

No jurisdiction indicated any current research or projects focused on addressing non-standard hours child care. Ontario, based on a 2012 survey, indicated that 10 percent of regulated child care centres operated earlier than 7 AM and later than 6 PM (the survey did not capture regulated family child care, which Ontario assumed to be more flexible than centres in offering non-standard hours child care).

**What we know about non-standard hours child care from case studies**

The project included five case studies of non-standard hours child care programs. Four of the five programs studied were solely centres: one was a stand-alone program, while three were part of organizations that had multiple centres with one organization including family child care. All were in urban areas and varied from 24 hour provision to just slightly extended hours of one hour in the morning and one and a half hours in the evening. The centres all reported that their non-standard hours programs were somewhat different from their standard daytime programs.

A number of factors led to the reported success of these non-standard hours child care programs. First, being associated with a larger organization made a difference: all the respondents identified this factor as a significant contributor to success. This was associated with the larger organization's ability to absorb some of the non-standard hours program's extra costs. Another factor was the administrative capacity of the larger organizations, as scheduling parents and staff requires significantly more administration than regular day programs. As well, having access to a larger cohort of staff was a crucial asset provided by the larger organization, including the potential for job mobility within the organization as recruitment tool for staff.

A second significant contributor to success was reported to be extra funding in addition to parent fees and regular government funding. Four of the five programs received extra funding, which they reported as critical to success in sustaining the non-standard hours service. The two potential sources of this extra funding were government funding (in the Manitoba and Saskatchewan case studies) and employer/ union funding. In one case of union funding, the extra funds were provided by CUPW and UPCE, while in the other, a large multi-service agency, a consortium model involving employers, organizations and unions requires them to pay a fee to gain access for their employees/members. This latter program was originally funded by the Ontario government but was defunded when the government changed in the 1990s.

Among the challenges the case studies identified were: inconsistent need and usage, affordability, preference for making other arrangements for care at non-standard hours such as off-shifting with their partner. The issue of irregular or rotating shifts, creating a need for part-time or on-call care was also identified as a difficulty, partly because it is quite administration-heavy; one respondent noted that non-standard hours child care required 50 percent more administration than the regular day program to schedule children and staff. Finally, it was noted that inconsistent use patterns make it very difficult to sustain these programs without additional funding. The centre-based program in Ontario that does not receive extra funding also identified the implementation of full-day kindergarten as putting considerable financial pressure on the program.

In summary, the case studies highlighted the role that infrastructure and funding play as key pieces for creating and sustaining non-standard hours programs. At the same time, it is evident that the people who envision and lead these programs play a crucial role.

**Conclusions**

The research conducted for this report reinforces the view that creating and sustaining non-standard hours child care requires a publicly-funded, publicly-managed universal system of high quality early childhood education and child care that funds programs to meet the needs of all families and children. Moreover, based on the available literature, interviews and discussion

with government officials and the case studies, it appears that the challenges for parents and service providers appear to be relatively consistent across Canada. Overall, a systemic approach to the creation and maintenance of programs, as well as reliable, adequate and sustained public funding paid directly to services to support them would have a profound impact on the accessibility and affordability of child care for all Canadians including those engaged in non-standard hours work.

**Recommendations based on the study**

*To the federal government*

1. Provide strong federal leadership to put in place a comprehensive early childhood education and care (ECEC) policy framework and system while respecting provincial, territorial and Indigenous jurisdiction over social programs.
2. Develop a full ECEC policy framework based on universal access (including parents working non-standard hours) and moving away from the market-based system that makes it so difficult to develop and sustain non-standard hours child care. Part of the policy framework would be a plan for long-term sustained federal ECEC transfer funding to provinces/territories.
3. Work with provinces/territories to establish a research, data and evaluation agenda that includes the issue of child care for non-standard hours workers care as well as consideration of other family supportive policies to address the needs of non-standard hours workers.
4. Convene a national working group including provincial/territorial representatives, employers and unions to examine the situation of families in which parents work non-standard hours and to make recommendations for a variety of options for better support.

*To provincial/territorial governments*

5. Review and analyze each jurisdiction's approach to non-standard hours child care and identify demand for non-standard hours services.
6. Develop a policy approach that would facilitate and support affordable non-standard hours child care services where there is local demand.
7. Develop an approach to providing public funding to recognize the actual cost of operating to non-standard hours services.
8. Provide informative materials online and in print for parents about regulated child care services offering non-standard hours child care.

*To employers*

9. Consider the needs of workers who are parents when implementing workplace arrangements and policies such as schedules, shifts and accommodation.
10. Develop workplace policies specifically designed to address the issues that families face with regard to non-standard hours. This work should be in collaboration with relevant

unions and other workplace groups and personnel and should recognize that are there instances in which there is a need for non-standard hours work.

*To human rights specialists*

11. Explore, contribute to and develop rights-based legal and other remedies to the current child care situation that fails to support parents needing non-standard hours child care. This work should be based on human rights conceptions of child care, family responsibilities and women's rights (such as Fiona Johnstone and other Canadian human rights decisions based on accommodation, the Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

*To unions*

12. Work with unions and community partners to convene a working group on the issue of non-standard hours child care.
13. Advocate with governments on the issue of access to child care generally and non-standard hours child care in particular.
14. Develop and provide resources for members (such as the Finding Quality Child Care website, research and educationals) to help them address the issue of non-standard hours child care.
15. Continue providing support for pilot and other special initiatives in this area both to meet the needs of members and to provide illustrations of successful non-standard hours child care.
16. Consider and analyze innovative union policy approaches to families that could support the child care needs of members working non-standard hours.

*To parents working non-standard hours*

17. Join with others to advocate for a universal national child care program that would meet the needs of all families including those working non-standard hours.
18. Be as well informed about your child care options as you can be, although they are limited, so as to maximize the possibility of securing suitable, affordable, quality child care.

# Travailler vingt-quatre heures sur vingt-quatre
# Un aperçu des services de garde d'enfants répondant aux horaires de travail atypiques au Canada

## Sommaire

*Si on ne travaille pas de 9 h à 17 h, où faire garder ses enfants?*

Le présent rapport vise à servir d'outil pratique pour les décideurs qui s'emploient à renforcer les politiques et programmes relatifs aux services de garde, les chercheurs qui étudient les questions stratégiques liées aux services de garde, à la famille et au milieu de travail, les intervenants qui se livrent à la promotion de services de garde de première qualité accessibles à toutes les familles canadiennes et à tous les employeurs dont les travailleurs et travailleuses ont un horaire de travail atypique. L'objectif principal est de fournir un rapport actualisé sur la situation des services de garde au Canada offerts aux familles dont l'horaire de travail est atypique.

Le rapport comprend ce qui suit :

- des données et des renseignements sur le travail atypique et les travailleurs et travailleuses ayant un horaire de travail atypique au Canada;
- une recension des écrits pertinents sur les services de garde répondant aux horaires de travail atypiques;
- une recension sélective des écrits sur les répercussions du travail atypique sur l'équilibre travail-famille en général;
- des renseignements tirés d'une analyse des politiques et des initiatives provinciales et territoriales liées aux services de garde répondant aux horaires de travail atypiques (y compris les initiatives qui ont et qui n'ont pas été soutenues);
- plusieurs études de cas de programmes de garde d'enfants répondant aux horaires de travail atypiques;
- des exemples internationaux de la prestation de services de garde répondant aux horaires de travail atypiques, et des recherches et des analyses menées à cet égard.

Les obstacles, les possibilités et les questions en matière de garde d'enfants sont cernés et analysés dans le contexte plus général des services de garde au Canada. Dans ce contexte, le rapport comprend des renseignements utiles sur ce qui semble « fonctionner » et sur ce qui ne semble pas fonctionner pour les familles et les services de garde. La dernière section du document fait usage des renseignements pour formuler bon nombre de recommandations à l'intention des gouvernements, des employeurs, des syndicats, des spécialistes des droits de la personne et des parents.

## Le Syndicat des travailleurs et travailleuses des postes, le Fonds de garde d'enfants du STTP et les services de garde adaptés aux horaires de travail atypiques

Le présent rapport sur les services de garde répondant aux horaires de travail atypiques a été financé par le Fonds de garde d'enfants du Syndicat des travailleurs et travailleuses des postes (STTP). Conformément aux dispositions de la convention collective du STTP avec Postes Canada, le Fonds a servi à financer le projet dans le cadre de l'engagement du syndicat à aider ses membres à répondre à leurs besoins en matière de garde d'enfants. Financé par Postes Canada et géré par le STTP, le Fonds vise à fournir un soutien et des ressources aux membres du STTP ainsi que de subventionner la recherche susceptible d'aider le STTP à mieux servir ses membres et la communauté en général.

Le Syndicat des travailleurs et travailleuses des postes s'intéresse particulièrement aux services de garde répondant aux horaires de travail atypiques parce que bon nombre de ses membres, en particulier ceux affectés aux établissements postaux, travaillent principalement tôt le matin, tard en fin de journée ou la nuit. Lorsqu'on tient compte des heures supplémentaires, d'autres groupes de travailleurs et travailleuses des postes, comme les facteurs et factrices, travaillent à présent souvent jusqu'en soirée également. Le STTP est le seul syndicat qui représente les travailleurs et travailleuses ayant un horaire de travail atypique dans les communautés partout au Canada et au Québec, donc les difficultés éprouvées par ses membres à obtenir des services de garde reflètent à bien des égards les difficultés en matière de garde d'enfants auxquelles sont confrontés les parents non-membres du STTP dans l'ensemble du Canada.

## Contexte

Pour les familles de partout au Canada, il est difficile de trouver des services de garde réglementés de première qualité et – à l'extérieur du Québec – abordables. Pour les nombreuses familles dont l'horaire de travail est atypique, il est d'autant plus difficile, en dehors des heures de travail « normales », d'avoir accès à des services de garde réglementés abordables qui répondent à leurs besoins – une tâche essentiellement impossible pour la plupart de ces familles.

La majorité des fournisseurs de service de garde qui envisagent de fournir des services qui répondent aux horaires de travail atypiques renoncent à l'idée parce que ce n'est pas viable sur le plan financier ou cessent de fournir ces services après un certain temps. Les frais supplémentaires associés à la prestation de services répondant à un horaire atypique sont insoutenables pour la plupart des fournisseurs de service de garde sans source externe stable de financement supplémentaire.

Un horaire de travail atypique présente de nombreuses variantes qui sont aujourd'hui communes. Il peut s'agir de quarts de travail légèrement prolongés (commençant dès 6 h ou se terminant à

19 h 30 ou 20 h), de quarts effectués plus tard dans la journée (jusqu'à 23 h 30 ou plus tard), de quarts de nuit ou de fins de semaine. Bien qu'il n'y ait aucune définition officielle de l'expression « heures normales de travail », on juge qu'elles couvrent les heures de travail de 9 h à 17 h ou de 8 h à 18 h; Postes Canada définit les heures de travail réputées ne pas être un travail par quarts comme se situant entre 7 h et 18 h.

Les parents dans les communautés de tout le Canada sont d'avis que les heures d'ouverture des services de garde ne répondent pas aux besoins des travailleurs et travailleuses qui travaillent tôt le matin, en soirée ou la nuit; qui ont des quarts rotatifs ou fractionnés, qui occupent un emploi temporaire ou sur appel, ou qui ont un autre horaire atypique ou irrégulier. Au Canada, l'expérience et la recherche montrent que le financement actuel des services de garde et les autres politiques publiques font en sorte qu'il est difficile ou impossible pour la plupart des services de garde de répondre aux horaires de travail atypiques. Bien que certains gouvernements provinciaux et territoriaux aient, à l'occasion, mis à l'essai des projets pilotes ou versé une aide financière spéciale pour permettre aux services de garde de prolonger leurs heures d'ouverture, ces initiatives ont été peu nombreuses et n'ont généralement pas été maintenues. Par conséquent, il n'est pas surprenant de constater que peu de services de garde réglementés proposent des heures d'ouverture susceptibles de répondre aux besoins des parents ayant un horaire atypique.

Il est clair que le fait de ne pas avoir de système universel pour la garde d'enfants offrant un financement soutenu et des options flexibles aux familles nuit au développement et au maintien de services de garde répondant aux horaires de travail atypiques. En ce qui concerne les services de garde répondant aux lois du marché au Canada, le financement public est inégal et restreint, la plupart des services étant principalement assurés par les frais exigés des parents. Les frais exigés des parents sont déjà hors d'atteinte pour bon nombre de familles et ne peuvent pas être haussés pour couvrir le coût total des programmes de garde d'enfants répondant aux horaires de travail atypiques (lesquels ont tendance à être plus dispendieux que les programmes réguliers) sans qu'ils soient financièrement inaccessibles à la majorité des familles.

**Ce que nous savons au sujet des travailleurs et travailleuses ayant un horaire atypique au Canada**

Selon une analyse menée en 2008 des données de l'*Enquête sociale générale* de 2005, certaines caractéristiques des horaires de travail atypiques et des travailleurs et travailleuses ayant un horaire de travail atypique sont pertinentes pour la garde d'enfants.

- 28 % des Canadiens et Canadiennes ayant un emploi ont effectué un quart autre qu'un quart de jour normal.
- 82 % des travailleurs et travailleuses de quarts travaillaient à temps plein.
- Les types de travail par quarts les plus courants comportaient des horaires par rotation ou irréguliers.

- 37 % de tous les travailleurs et travailleuses de quarts à temps plein et 70 % de tous les travailleurs et travailleuses de quarts à temps partiel étaient des femmes.
- Six travailleurs et travailleuses de quarts sur dix (sept journaliers et journalières sur dix) étaient mariés.
- Le pourcentage de couples ayant des enfants de moins de 15 ans était à peu près le même chez ceux qui effectuaient des heures normales de travail (27,5 %) et chez ceux dont l'horaire était atypique (29,6 %).
- 22 % des couples dont l'un des membres effectuait régulièrement des heures en soirée avaient des enfants, par rapport à 30 % des couples travaillant de jour.

Dans la population canadienne, on ne connaît pas actuellement le pourcentage de travailleurs et travailleuses qui ont un horaire de travail atypique et qui sont à faible revenu. Cependant, selon les données de 2001, 40 % des travailleurs et travailleuses à faible revenu avaient un horaire de travail atypique par rapport à 25 % des autres travailleurs et travailleuses.

**Ce que nous savons au sujet des services de garde répondant aux horaires de travail atypiques**

Dans l'ensemble du Canada, on offre très peu de services de garde réglementés le soir, les fins de semaine et la nuit, ou sur base de rotation ou de demande pouvant répondre aux horaires des travailleurs et travailleuses ayant un horaire de travail atypique. À l'heure actuelle, il n'y a aucun répertoire de tels services, quoique trois provinces (le Manitoba, la Saskatchewan et la Colombie-Britannique) ont un outil permettant aux parents de chercher en ligne des services réglementés offerts après les heures d'ouverture normales.

Dans plusieurs études et analyses, on fait remarquer qu'on peut dégager différents types de services de garde répondant aux horaires de travail atypiques (heures d'ouverture légèrement prolongées, service de garde qui se prolonge jusqu'en fin de soirée ou jusqu'à la nuit, service de garde offert la nuit et les fins de semaine).

Il y a aussi des types de conditions de travail souples, de mesure d'adaptation ou de politiques qui peuvent régler certains problèmes de services de garde vécus par des travailleurs et des travailleuses qui ont un horaire de travail atypique; le Royaume-Uni et l'Australie présentent plusieurs bons exemples de telles politiques. Au Canada, le principal exemple de cette approche est illustré par la décision rendue dans l'affaire Fiona Johnstone, laquelle a donné lieu à une interprétation juridique de la législation sur les droits de la personne au Canada selon laquelle la protection contre la discrimination en raison de la « situation de famille » inclut les responsabilités en matière de garde d'enfants. Plusieurs autres causes judiciaires ont renforcé cette interprétation de mesures d'adaptation prises en fonction de la situation de famille.

**Ce que nous savons au sujet de la recherche sur les services de garde répondant aux horaires de travail atypiques**

Le rapport résume la recherche canadienne et d'autres documents sur les services de garde répondant aux horaires de travail atypiques ainsi que la recherche sur les répercussions du travail atypique sur la vie de famille, l'équilibre travail-vie et le bien-être de l'enfant. Selon une recension des écrits menée au titre du présent rapport, il y a très peu de recherches canadiennes ou de documents sur les services de garde répondant aux horaires de travail atypiques. Une exception est celle de l'étude menée par Albanese en 2007 sur les responsabilités des mères à l'égard du travail et de la famille dans les régions rurales du Québec. Les personnes qui ont participé à son étude ont signalé que le programme de garde d'enfants de 7 $[2] par jour leur permettait d'occuper un emploi à temps partiel ou faiblement rémunéré, ou de se consacrer à la recherche d'un nouvel emploi ou de s'inscrire à un recyclage professionnel. Malgré la popularité du programme de garde d'enfants, les horaires des garderies ne couvraient pas les horaires de travail atypiques et représentaient un sujet de préoccupation pour la plupart des personnes interrogées. Cette étude a permis de confirmer les résultats d'une étude menée par Preston et divers collaborateurs en 2000 au Québec, à Terre-Neuve et en Alberta, qui indique que : [Traduction] « […] le fardeau des ajustements aux quarts de travail incombe principalement aux femmes […] ». De plus, une évaluation des 10 projets pilotes concernant les horaires de travail atypiques du gouvernement du Québec au début des années 2000 a fourni beaucoup de renseignements sur les différents types de services répondant aux horaires de travail atypiques et sur ce qu'en ont pensé les parents. L'évaluation a permis de confirmer que le recours à ces services variait beaucoup, mais qu'ils étaient importants pour les parents qui en dépendaient. Selon les résultats de l'étude, la stabilité des services de garde et le fait qu'il s'agissait d'un seul accommodement, et non de plusieurs, étaient particulièrement importants.

Selon une étude ontarienne menée en 2011 par Pagnan, Lero et MacDermid Wadsworth, c'est en s'assurant que les deux parents ne travaillent pas en même temps que la majorité de participants réglait le problème. Finalement, même si des données canadiennes ne sont pas disponibles, les chercheurs américains ont constaté que les travailleurs et travailleuses à faible revenu se montrent plus enclins à effectuer des quarts atypiques et imprévisibles, et que pour ces personnes, les horaires de travail limitent profondément les choix de services de garde (confirmé récemment dans une analyse de la société *Urban Institute* de 2015).

Bien qu'on examine, dans le cadre d'un certain nombre d'études canadiennes récentes, les questions liées à la conciliation travail-famille et au travail atypique, la question des services de garde n'y est pas abordée. Dans le cadre d'une étude menée en 2004, Strazdins et divers collaborateurs ont comparé des enfants âgés de 2 à 11 ans chez les familles ayant des horaires de

[2] Le gouvernement du Québec a légèrement augmenté les frais de garde d'enfant au Québec en 2015, lesquels sont désormais déterminés en fonction du revenu.

travail normaux et atypiques à l'aide des données de l'*Enquête longitudinale nationale sur les enfants et les jeunes*. Les chercheurs ont conclu qu'il serait nécessaire d'obtenir plus de données sur le recours aux services de garde et que « certains liens à la vie familiale et au bien-être de l'enfant découleraient d'un manque de services de garde abordables ou accessibles ».

**Politiques et initiatives provinciales et territoriales relatives aux services de garde répondant aux horaires de travail atypiques**

Une recherche en ligne de tous les sites Web des ministères provinciaux et territoriaux et des ministères fédéraux a été menée dans le cadre d'une analyse provinciale et territoriale. Des entrevues téléphoniques avec les représentants de la plupart des provinces et territoires chargés des soins aux enfants ont aussi été menées.

Aucune des provinces et aucun des territoires ne disposent d'une politique ou d'un programme d'ensemble visant à assurer l'accès à des services de garde répondant aux horaires de travail atypiques. Dans la plupart des cas, on en savait peu sur la demande, l'importance et les questions se rapportant aux services de garde répondant aux horaires de travail atypiques. Plusieurs représentants ont indiqué que, selon eux, il y avait peu ou pas de demande de services de garde à des heures atypiques. Trois provinces de l'Atlantique avaient des règlements particuliers établissant des limites pour la prestation de services de garde répondant aux horaires de travail atypiques, mais ces règlements sont en cours de modification.

Le Manitoba et la Saskatchewan fournissent un financement supplémentaire aux programmes de garde d'enfants répondant aux horaires de travail atypiques. Au Manitoba, les fonds d'exploitation et les places de garde subventionnées pour les programmes répondant aux horaires de travail atypiques équivalent à une fois et demie le montant normal. Les représentants du Manitoba ont indiqué qu'ils passaient en revue les politiques de financement afin de mieux définir les heures de travail prolongées. En Saskatchewan, les garderies ouvertes de 80 à 120 heures par semaine reçoivent une subvention plus élevée (25 %) pour les services à la petite enfance par place, alors que celles ouvertes plus de 120 heures par semaine reçoivent 50 % de plus de la subvention par place. Ces deux provinces se trouvent parmi les trois provinces (la Colombie-Britannique étant la troisième) où l'on peut trouver les programmes de garde d'enfants répondant aux horaires de travail atypiques au moyen des sites Web gouvernementaux. L'Alberta fournit une subvention pour heures prolongées (un montant supplémentaire de 100 $ par mois) directement aux parents qui travaillent ou qui sont aux études pendant des heures prolongées et qui sont admissibles à une place de garde subventionnée. Ce montant peut être utilisé pour tout type de service de garde réglementé ou non réglementé.

En 2000, le Québec a lancé un projet pilote et a créé 10 garderies répondant aux horaires de travail atypiques qui étaient financées au-delà du financement de base, et dont les heures d'ouverture pouvaient, dans certaines situations, se situer hors du cadre des règlements. Une

évaluation détaillée a été menée en 2002, mais un an plus tard, il n'y avait plus de financement supplémentaire. Même si la majorité de ces garderies existent toujours, il appert qu'une seule offre un service répondant aux horaires de travail atypiques (offert jusque tôt en soirée). Même si les services de garde répondant aux horaires de travail atypiques au Québec ne font l'objet d'aucun financement supplémentaire, les garderies et les centres de la petite enfance recevant du financement (à but lucratif et non lucratif) sont admissibles à être subventionnés par l'État en vue d'offrir des services de garde répondant aux horaires de travail atypiques au moyen du financement public habituel fondé sur la formule du Québec conformément à la réglementation.

Les provinces et territoires ont indiqué qu'aucune recherche ou aucun projet visant à aborder la question des services de garde répondant aux horaires de travail atypiques n'étaient en cours. L'Ontario, selon une enquête de 2012, a indiqué que 10 % des garderies réglementées ouvraient avant 7 h et fermaient après 18 h (l'enquête ne portait pas sur les services de garde réglementés en milieu familial, que l'Ontario supposait être plus souples que les garderies dans la prestation de services de garde répondant aux horaires de travail atypiques).

**Ce que nous savons au sujet des services de garde répondant aux horaires de travail atypiques d'après des études de cas**

Cinq études de cas portant sur les programmes de garde d'enfants répondant aux horaires de travail atypiques ont été menées dans le cadre du projet. Quatre des cinq programmes à l'étude étaient uniquement des garderies : l'un d'eux était un programme autonome; trois faisaient partie d'organisations qui avaient plusieurs garderies, et une organisation offrait des services de garde en milieu familial. Ils étaient tous situés dans des régions urbaines, et offraient des services variant de 24 heures à des heures d'ouverture prolongées d'une heure le matin et d'une demi-heure le soir. Toutes les garderies ont signalé que leurs programmes répondant aux horaires de travail atypiques étaient quelque peu différents de leurs programmes de jour réguliers.

Un certain nombre de facteurs ont contribué au succès déclaré de ces programmes de garde d'enfants répondant aux horaires de travail atypiques. D'abord, le fait d'être associé à une plus grande organisation faisait toute la différence : toutes les personnes interrogées ont identifié ce facteur comme ayant contribué de façon importante au succès. Cela était lié à la capacité de la plus grande organisation d'absorber certains des frais supplémentaires du programme répondant aux horaires de travail atypiques. Un autre facteur était celui de la capacité administrative des plus grandes organisations, puisque l'établissement d'un horaire pour les parents et les employés exige une gestion très considérable par rapport aux programmes de jour. De plus, l'accès à un grand bassin d'employés était un atout essentiel que fournissait la grande organisation, y compris la possibilité de mobilité professionnelle au sein de l'organisation en tant qu'outil de recrutement destiné aux employés.

Un deuxième facteur ayant contribué de façon importante au succès serait celui d'un financement supplémentaire en plus des frais exigés des parents et du financement public habituel. Quatre des cinq programmes ont reçu des fonds supplémentaires, qu'ils ont indiqués comme étant essentiels au succès du maintien du service répondant aux horaires de travail atypiques. Deux sources possibles de ce financement supplémentaire étaient le financement public (selon les études de cas du Manitoba et de Saskatchewan) et le financement des employés et syndical. Dans un cas de financement syndical, les fonds supplémentaires ont été fournis par le STTP et le Syndicat des employés des postes et des communications, alors que dans l'autre cas, un grand organisme de service polyvalent, un consortium de services englobant les employeurs, les organisations et les syndicats leur exige de payer des frais afin d'obtenir l'accès pour ses employés et ses membres. Ce dernier programme était financé à l'origine par le gouvernement de l'Ontario, mais n'était plus financé lorsqu'un nouveau gouvernement a été élu au cours des années 1990.

Parmi les obstacles dégagés dans les études de cas, citons les suivants : le besoin et le recours irrégulier, l'abordabilité, la préférence à trouver d'autres solutions de garde pouvant répondre aux horaires de travail atypiques, comme le travail en alternance des conjoints. La question des quarts de travail irréguliers ou rotatifs, créant le besoin de garde à temps partiel ou sur demande, a aussi été déterminée comme étant un obstacle, en partie parce que cela est exigeant sur le plan administratif; une personne interrogée a fait remarquer que, pour ce qui est d'établir les horaires pour les enfants et les employés, les services de garde répondant aux horaires de travail atypiques exigent 50 % de plus sur le plan administratif par rapport au programme de jour. Enfin, on a indiqué que le recours changeant à ces services fait qu'il est difficile de soutenir ces programmes sans financement supplémentaire. Le programme de garderies en Ontario qui ne reçoit aucun financement supplémentaire a aussi mentionné la mise en œuvre de la maternelle à temps plein comme exerçant une importante pression financière sur le programme.

Pour résumer, les études de cas ont permis de souligner le rôle que jouent l'infrastructure et le financement en tant qu'éléments clés contribuant à l'établissement et au maintien de programmes répondant aux horaires de travail atypiques. Parallèlement, il est clair que les personnes responsables de concevoir et de gérer ces programmes jouent un rôle déterminant.

**Conclusions**

La recherche menée pour le présent rapport vient renforcer la perspective selon laquelle l'établissement et le maintien de services de garde répondant aux horaires de travail atypiques exigent la mise en place d'un service universel d'éducation et de garde à l'enfance de première qualité financé et dirigé par l'État, par lequel sont financés les programmes visant à répondre aux besoins des familles et des enfants. De plus, selon les écrits, les entrevues et les discussions avec les représentants gouvernementaux et les études de cas, il appert que les obstacles pour les parents et les fournisseurs de services semblent être relativement les mêmes dans l'ensemble du

Canada. En général, une approche systémique à l'établissement et au maintien de programmes de même qu'un financement public fiable, adéquat et soutenu versé directement aux établissements auraient une incidence profonde sur l'accessibilité et l'abordabilité des services de garde pour les Canadiens et Canadiennes, y compris ceux et celles ayant un horaire de travail atypique.

**Recommandations formulées à partir des résultats de l'étude**

*À l'intention du gouvernement fédéral*

1. Fournir un leadership solide à l'échelle fédérale afin d'établir un cadre et système stratégique global de services d'éducation et de garde à l'enfance (SEGE) tout en respectant les compétences provinciales, territoriales et autochtones à l'égard des programmes sociaux.
2. Élaborer un cadre stratégique complet de SEGE fondé sur l'accès universel (y compris les parents ayant des horaires de travail atypiques) et s'éloigner du système axé sur le marché qui fait en sorte qu'il est difficile de créer et de maintenir des services de garde répondant aux horaires de travail atypiques. Une partie du cadre stratégique consisterait en un plan pour le transfert soutenu et à long terme de fonds fédéraux au titre de SEGE aux provinces et territoires.
3. Collaborer avec les provinces et territoires afin d'établir un programme de recherche, de données et d'évaluation qui comprend la question des services de garde pour les travailleurs et travailleuses ayant des horaires de travail atypiques, de même que la prise en considération d'autres politiques appuyant les familles et visant à répondre aux besoins des travailleurs et travailleuses ayant des horaires de travail atypiques.
4. Mettre sur pied un groupe de travail national, composé entre autres de représentants provinciaux et territoriaux, d'employeurs et de membres syndicaux, en vue d'étudier la situation des familles dont les parents ont un horaire de travail atypique, et formuler des recommandations de diverses options visant à fournir un meilleur soutien.

*Aux gouvernements provinciaux et territoriaux*

5. Revoir et analyser l'approche de chaque province et territoire à l'égard des services de garde répondant aux horaires de travail atypiques et déterminer la demande de services répondant aux horaires de travail atypiques.
6. Concevoir une approche stratégique qui permettrait d'offrir et d'appuyer les services de garde répondant aux horaires de travail atypiques là où il y a demande à l'échelle locale.
7. Concevoir une approche visant à fournir un financement public afin de reconnaître le coût réel de prestation de services répondant aux horaires de travail atypiques.
8. Fournir aux parents des documents d'information en ligne et imprimés sur les services de garde réglementés offrant des services de garde répondant aux horaires de travail atypiques.

*Aux employeurs*

9. Tenir compte des besoins des travailleurs et travailleuses qui sont des parents au moment de mettre en application les conditions de travail et les politiques telles que les horaires, les quarts et les mesures d'adaptation.
10. Élaborer des politiques d'entreprise visant précisément à aborder les enjeux auxquels sont confrontées les familles en ce qui concerne les horaires de travail atypiques. Ce travail devrait être fait en collaboration avec les syndicats de même qu'avec d'autres employés et groupes de travail pertinents, et devrait reconnaître que certaines circonstances exigent un horaire de travail atypique.

*Aux spécialistes des droits de la personne*

11. Étudier des recours judiciaires fondés sur les droits et d'autres recours visant la situation actuelle des services de garde qui n'appuie pas les parents ayant besoin de services de garde répondant aux horaires de travail atypiques, y contribuer et en concevoir. Ce travail devrait être fondé sur les conceptions des droits de la personne en matière de soins aux enfants, de responsabilités de famille et des droits de la femme (comme la décision rendue dans l'affaire Fiona Johnstone et d'autres décisions canadiennes en matière des droits de la personne reposant sur les mesures d'adaptation, la *Convention relative aux droits de l'enfant* et la *Convention sur l'élimination de toutes les formes de discrimination à l'égard des femmes* [CEDAW]).

*Aux syndicats*

12. Collaborer avec les syndicats et les partenaires communautaires afin de mettre sur pied un groupe de travail pour discuter de la question des services de garde offerts après les heures d'ouverture normales.
13. Faire la promotion, auprès des gouvernements, de la question de l'accès aux services de garde en général et des services de garde répondant aux horaires de travail atypiques en particulier.
14. Concevoir et fournir des ressources destinées aux membres (comme le site Web « Trouver des services de garde de qualité », la recherche et les documents d'information) pour les aider à s'attaquer au problème des services de garde répondant aux horaires de travail atypiques.
15. Continuer à fournir un soutien dans le cadre de projets pilotes et d'autres initiatives spéciales dans ce secteur afin de répondre aux besoins des membres et de donner des exemples de services de garde répondant aux horaires de travail atypiques qui ont connu du succès.

16. Étudier et analyser des approches stratégiques syndicales innovatrices visant les familles qui pourraient répondre aux besoins en matière de garde d'enfants des membres ayant un horaire de travail atypique.

*Aux parents ayant un horaire de travail atypique*

17. Se joindre à d'autres pour promouvoir un programme universel national de garde d'enfants qui répondrait aux besoins de toutes les familles, y compris celles dont les horaires de travail sont atypiques.
18. Se renseigner le plus possible sur les options de garde d'enfants, quoiqu'elles soient restreintes, afin de maximiser la possibilité de trouver un service de garde convenable, abordable et de qualité.

Jobs are no longer just nine to five but child care often is…
Gillian Guy, Daycare Trust, U.K.

# INTRODUCTION

**Purpose of this paper**

The purpose of this paper is to provide an up-to-date examination of the state of child care for families working non-standard hours in Canada. It includes a review of pertinent research literature and reports on non-standard hours child care, information collected from a scan of provincial/territorial policies and initiatives related to non-standard hours child care (including initiatives that have and have not been sustained), a number of case studies of non-standard hours child care programs and international examples of non-standard hours child care provision, research and analysis. It also reviews literature on the effects of non-standard work on work-family balance generally. Challenges, opportunities and issues for child care are identified and analyzed in the larger context of Canadian child care. In that context, it includes practical information about what seems to "work". The last section of the paper makes a number of recommendations to governments, employers, unions, human rights specialists and parents.

For families in all parts of Canada and Quebec, high quality regulated child care is hard to find and—outside Quebec—hard to afford. However, for the many families who work non-standard schedules, an affordable child care space that meets their needs is even harder to access—essentially impossible for most families. At the same time, most child care service providers who consider providing child care to meet non-standard family schedules either reject the idea as not financially viable or cease to offer these services after a time.

In Canada, there is no official national definition of "standard" work hours. Each province/territory defines a "standard work week" for the purpose of determining when overtime must be paid. A few jurisdictions stipulate a maximum number of weekly hours an employee may work, while others specify maximum work hours in a day[3].

Non-standard work hours include a wide variety of possibilities that are now common— from slightly extended hours (beginning as early as 6:00 AM and until 7:30 or 8:00 PM), to later shifts (until 11:30 PM or later), full overnights, to weekends. Generally, standard work hours are considered to be in the vicinity of nine to five, or eight to six; Canada Post defines work hours not considered shift work to fall outside 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM (Canada Post, 2011).

Data from the 2005 General Social Survey showed that more than four million workers aged 19 to 64 worked something other than a regular day shift; the data show that about one-third of Canada's full-time work force works non-standard hours or shifts of some kind (Williams, 2008).

[3]Work time: Weekly hours and overtime. Retrieved from http://www.workrights.ca/content.php?doc=22

While the overall percentage of full-time workers who work shifts has remained fairly constant since the early 1990s (Saunders, 2010), Cranford, Vosko & Zukewich (2003) have reported on increasing labour market insecurity in Canada in the form of more temporary and part-time work and an increase in self-employment. This report considers the increased precarity in Canada's labour market in relation to the challenges that are already present for non-standard hours workers, particularly those working unpredictable or part-time non-standard hours.

Although the information is almost entirely anecdotal, it is generally agreed that most regulated child care, especially centres, operate on a "standard" work day basis - roughly 7:30 am to 6 pm. Overall, child care options for parents who work non-standard hours are very limited in all regions of Canada and Quebec. Parents in communities across Canada find that standard child care operating times do not meet the needs of workers who work early morning, evenings or overnight shifts, rotating and split shifts, casual/on-call jobs, or other non-standard or irregular shifts.

Canadian experience and research show that current child care policy, especially funding arrangements for services and parents, usually make it difficult or impossible—financially and otherwise—for most child care services to meet non-standard schedules. While some provincial/ territorial governments have experimented at different times with options or provided special funding to facilitate non-standard hours child care, these have been few and far between and have usually not been sustained. As a result, there are few options offering regulated child care to meet parents' non-standard schedules. Over the years, a limited number of employer-sponsored non-standard hours child care options have been developed, usually in situations where a large employer with a heavily non-standard hours workforce (such as a hospital or an auto plant) has taken the initiative, sometimes with government and/or union support. With few exceptions, these, too have not been sustained.

**The Canadian Union of Postal Workers, child care and the CUPW Child Care Fund**

This work on child care and non-standard hours work was funded by the Child Care Fund of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW). The Child Care Fund, provided under the terms of the CUPW's collective agreement with Canada Post, funded the project as part of the union's commitment to support and help its members meet their child care needs. The fund is financed by Canada Post and administered by CUPW. It is used to provide support and resources to CUPW members as well as to finance research that can help inform CUPW in serving their members and the broader community better.

CUPW has a particular interest in non-standard hours child care. Many of its members, particularly inside plant workers, are predominantly engaged in early morning, extended evening and overnight shifts. When overtime is taken into account, other groups of postal workers such as letter carriers now often work into the evening hours as well. Further, although the need for non-standard hours child care has been identified in all regions of Canada as well as by parents

in the Canadian Forces, postal workers (who are CUPW members) represent a cross-Canada workforce with one employer. That is, CUPW is the sole union that represents workers working non-standard hours in communities across every region of Canada and Quebec.

**Definitions of non-standard hours work used in this paper**

*Non-standard hours work* is most commonly defined as work organized on schedules "in which the majority of work hours fall outside a typical daytime Monday to Friday work week" (Li, Johnson, Han, Andrews, Kendall, Strazdins & Dockery, 2014: 54). Sometimes popularly termed "shift work", the category of non-standard hours work includes multiple variations: regular (and irregular) evening and nighttime schedules, rotating shifts, split shifts, irregular hours work or shifts, weekend work or shifts and on-call work (Williams, 2008).

Research by Cranford, Vosko and Zukewich and—most recently—by PEPSO (Poverty and Employment Precarity in Southern Ontario) (2015), alternatively, have explored non-standard or *precarious* work rather than non-standard *hours* work. Cranford et al. describe a standard work arrangement as "a situation where an employee has one employer; works in a permanent, year-round full-time position; enjoys extensive statutory benefits and entitlements; and expects to be employed indefinitely" (2003: 7). Non-standard work is therefore described as "employment situations that differ from the traditional model of a stable, full-time job" and include part-time work, temporary employment, holding multiple jobs and own-account employment (self-employed without paid employees). As the PEPSO project noted: "A major challenge for workers in less secure (i.e., precarious) employment is managing their childcare needs" (PEPSO, summary report, 2015: 12). This project's survey found that this was especially so if scheduling uncertainty was part of the employment situation.

Cranford et al. analyzed forms of work, both 'standard' and 'non-standard', with three indicators of precarious employment—firm size, union status and hourly wage, to identify an increasing level of precarity in the Canadian labour market. Cranford et al. concluded that "by layering indicators of precarious employment on the forms of wage work the mutually exclusive classifications give away to a continuum. All three dimensions of precarious employment increase along the continuum in the following order: full-time permanent as the least precarious followed by full-time temporary, then part-time permanent and part-time temporary as the most precarious" (2003: 13).

It is important to note that work that takes place during non-standard hours is not necessarily precarious and may still be full-time permanent work with the associated benefits. However, as this paper is principally concerned with child care provision during non-standard work *hours* (assumed to be during non-standard child care hours), the issue of non-standard work as defined by Cranford et al. may also pose some important questions for the provision of non-standard hours child care. While precarious work does not always involve non-standard work hours, it

often does.  As well, workers with temporary work, part-time and/or irregular shifts may need emergency or on-call child care options that fall outside of typical child care provision.

Therefore, while the definition of non-standard hours work—*work organized on schedules in which the majority of work hours fall outside a typical daytime Monday to Friday work-week*—will be the main one used in this paper, the child care needs of workers who fit Cranford et al.'s concept of non-standard work will be considered as well.

**Overview of the report**

*Methods*

Development of this report used the following methods:

- A review of pertinent literature
- Web search of documents and program information
- Analysis of policy documents and online materials
- Interviews with provincial/territorial officials
- Statistics Canada data
- Development of case studies
- Key informant and expert interviews

*Organization of the report*

The paper first discusses what we know about child care and non-standard hours in Canada, beginning with demographic information about who works non-standard hours, how and where they work. A review of pertinent Canadian literature, although it is limited, provides some knowledge about what is known about non-standard hours work, its effects on families' work/life balance and about non-standard hours child care. A general overview of the current state of child care in Canada helps provide background and context, a scan of provincial/territorial policy and initiatives affecting non-standard hours child care (collected from both online sources and interviews), key informant interviews and several case studies of non-standard hours child care rounds out "what we know" and also considers what we don't know. A section on "what we know from beyond our borders" presents some ideas to think about. The paper concludes with a discussion about the challenges, possibilities and thoughts for the future followed by recommendations.

# WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT CHILD CARE AND NON-STANDARD HOURS IN CANADA?

**What we know about who works non-standard hours, why and how?**
This section pieces together information from a number of sources to try to capture what we know about workers in non-standard hours in Canada. There are however, a number of outstanding questions that we were not able to answer from these sources.

A 2008 study analyzed data on Canadians working non-standard schedules. *Work-life balance of shift workers (*Williams, 2008) analyzed data from Statistics Canada's 2005 General Social Survey and reported the following:

- 28 percent or one-third of employed Canadians worked something other than a regular day shift.
- 82 percent of shift workers worked full- time.
- Rotating and irregular schedules were the most common types of shift work.
- Women made up 37 percent of all full-time shift workers and 70 percent of part-time shift workers.
- 6 of 10 shift workers were married, compared to 7 out of 10 day workers.
- The proportion of couples with children under 15 years was about the same for those who worked standard hours and those who worked non-standard hours, 27.5 percent and 29.6 percent respectively.
- The only significant difference between standard hours workers and non-standard hours workers was that between couples with children who worked regular evening hours: about 22 percent of families with a parent working evening shifts had children compared to 30 percent of day workers.

There was limited information about the socioeconomic status and income of non-standard hours workers. The Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics (SLID) (a Statistics Canada instrument discontinued in 2012), provided longitudinal data to shed light on work and income-related issues. In an analysis of data from the 2001 SLID, Fleury and Fortin found that 40% of low-income workers, defined as workers whose "work effort is high throughout the year, but whose family income is below the low income cut-off", worked a non-standard schedule compared to 25 percent of other workers (n.d)**.** A key outstanding question would be: What percent of non-standard hours workers are low-income?

Cranford et al's research indicates that non-standard forms of work (not necessarily non-standard hours work) are increasingly precarious and that women are overrepresented in the more precarious forms of work. They reported that, "women, both white women and women of colour, are more concentrated in part-time temporary and part-time permanent wage work, compared to

men" (2003: 18). Women were also overrepresented in part-time shift work as reported by Williams (2008), indicating that there may be some overlap between these multiple categories.

Data to provide a fuller picture of the characteristics of families with one or both parents working non-standard schedules are limited. Additional data on families with parent(s) working non-standard schedules can be found in bits and pieces in various analyses of other larger data sets. Many questions about the characteristics of non-standard workers and their families such as income, age, family structure and location, are not directly answered. Strazdins, Clements, Korda, Broom & D'Souzas' research used the second cycle of the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (1996-1997) (discontinued after the 2008-2009 cycle) to analyze the impact of non-standard work schedules on family well-being. Their analysis noted that, "all three types of non-standard schedules (weekend, evening or night, and mixed schedules) showed similar socio-demographic profiles: lower SES, younger parents, and lower child-care use" (2006: 402).

For comparison, Enchautegui (2013) analyzed U.S. data from the American Time Use Survey Multiyear Files 2003 to 2011 to identify the characteristics of non-standard work and non-standard workers. Her findings showed that:

- Non-standard schedules are more common among low-wage workers. Among those with very low wages (weekly earnings lower than those of 75 percent of the population who work full-time), 28 percent work most of their hours on a non-standard schedule. One in four workers with wages at or below the median works on a non-standard schedule (2013:6).
- For the majority of workers with non-standard schedules, these jobs are both their only job (85 percent) and a full-time job (76 percent). In both groups, about 25 percent of all workers are 30 to 40 years old (2013: 8).
- Industries with highest share of workers with non-standard schedules are also those associated with low wages (2013: 9).
- Black workers, those without a college education, women, and the foreign-born are more likely to work non-standard than standard schedules (2013: 11).
- Having preschool-age children increases the odds of working non-standard hours among low-income women (2013: 15).

**In what industries do workers in non-standard hours jobs work?**

According to Canada Post, shift work is more common for individuals in blue-collar or sales and service occupations than for those in white-collar or clerical jobs (Canada Post, 2011). Using data from the 2005 Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics (the now-discontinued SLID), Demers (2010) reported that 40 percent of shift workers work in the Accommodation and Food Services sector. Manufacturing and Health Care/Social Assistance also showed high proportions of shift work (27 percent and 26 percent respectively). Health Care and Social Assistance was

the sector with the largest number of women who worked rotating, evening or night shifts, closely followed by Trade and Accommodation, and Food Services. The greatest prevalence of shift work for men is found in Manufacturing, followed by Trade and Accommodation, and Food Services (Demers, 2010).

Williams' (2008) break down of full-time workers aged 19 to 64 by occupation, industry and shift showed Accommodation and Food, and Health as the industries with the highest percentage of shift workers (52.7 percent and 45.3 percent respectively). Transportation and Warehousing (39.5 percent), Information, culture and recreation (37.7 percent), and Sales and Service (39.5 percent) showed the next highest percentages of shift workers.

CUPW has a particular interest in non-standard hours child care. Many of its members, particularly inside plant workers, are predominantly engaged in early morning, extended evening and overnight shifts. When overtime is taken into account, other groups of postal workers such as letter carriers now often work into the evening hours Postal workers (who are CUPW members) represent a cross-Canada workforce with one employer; that is, CUPW is the sole union that represents workers working non-standard hours in communities across every region of Canada and Quebec. Through the CUPW member population, the need for non-standard hours child care has been identified in all regions of Canada in the same way that it has been among member of the Canadian Forces across Canada.

**What this means for child care**

In Canada, the sole comprehensive, detailed data about child care use and parent need/demand were collected as part of the *National Child Care Study* published in 1992. This study, Canada's only cross-country research examining parents' child care use patterns, used a comprehensive survey (implemented by Statistics Canada) of a sample of over 24,000 families. The reports included *Parental work patterns and child care needs* as one of a series of this massive study's findings (Lero, Goelman, Pence, Brockman & Nuttall, 1992).

This analysis reported that only 55 percent of working parents had a standard work week. Of the working parents identified as primarily responsible for arranging child care (who tended to be women), almost 10 percent worked a fixed late-day or night shift while 27.8 percent worked irregular hours. Women working part-time were more likely to work a non-standard schedule and almost 40 percent of working parents said their schedule varied from week to week.

*Parental work patterns* further reported that a majority of dual-earner families had adopted what the report termed "off-shifting" schedules, meaning that parent-couples worked out child care arrangement by working at different times so one parent could provide child care. One-third of these off-shifting parents reported that they did so because they could not afford child care.

The Lero et al report concluded that "children's needs for child care mirror the diversity in their parents' work schedules" and that, "roughly 27-29 percent of preschool and school-age children needed care for at least one weekend day…between 10-12 percent of preschool and school-age children needed care while their parent worked a fixed late day or night shift…[and] approximately 28 percent of preschool and school-age children needed care that would accommodate an irregular work schedule" (1992: 14-15).

Vosko & Clark have also identified that workers (mainly women) in non-standard, precarious forms of work suffer because of a lack of accessible, appropriate child care.

> For women in part-time or temporary employment who also earn low wages, high-quality child care is often out of reach due to its high costs and inflexible hours of operation (many spaces are only full-time, within standard hours). Paradoxically, child care delivery in Canada often functions best for high-wage earners in Standard Employment Relationships (SERs). While the division of childcare responsibilities continues to be cast as a matter of parental 'choice', the supply of child care reinforces prime working-age women's socially prescribed responsibilities for care giving work (paid and unpaid), perpetuating gendered precariousness in households and the labour force (n.d.: 22).

This was confirmed by the Toronto-area PEPSO study (2015) which found that "half of workers in precarious employment respond that access to childcare limits their ability to work and almost 40 percent respond that it limits their partner's ability to work" (2015, Summary: 25).

**Different approaches to the need for non-standard hours child care**

Families where one or both parents work non-standard hours may (or may not) require child care at times when most regulated child care programs do not operate. Although, as we have noted, there is limited data available about child care service schedules, we know anecdotally and from the available research that the vast majority of regulated child care operates during the hours of a standard workday and workweek, Monday through Friday from approximately 7:30 or 8:00 AM until 5:30 or 6:00 PM. There is very little regulated child care that is available in the evening, on weekends and overnight, or on a rotating or on-call basis to meet the schedules of non-standard hours workers who need care for their children.

Specific information on the demand for and the use of non-standard hours child care in Canada is quite limited. As well, current data about how much (or which) regulated child care is available at non-standard hours is also quite limited. Several provinces[4] include "extended hours" as a criterion in their online child care search pages. While this, in theory, is a useful tool for parents, the few possibilities these yield confirms that non-standard hours child care is scarce. Quebec

[4] Manitoba, Saskatchewan and British Columbia

officials confirm that although funded non-profit (CPEs) and for-profit child care services (garderies) may be funded through the regular base-funding formula to offer non-standard hours care, very few services—including regulated home child care agencies—provide it. Further, those that do are likely to offer the "easier" non-standard child care schedules: weekends and slightly extended days.

A 1994 report identified the following types of non-standard hours child care:

- Slightly extended child care hours, before 7:00 in the morning or after 6:00 in the Evening;
- Care that extends into the late evening or into the night;
- Overnight care and;
- Weekend care (Friendly, Cleveland and Willis, 1994: 11).

This analysis was reinforced and amplified in the detailed evaluation of Quebec's pilot project on non-standard hours child care (Gouvernment de Québec, 2002).

The 1994 Friendly et al. report further noted that there are two approaches to meeting the child care needs of non-standard hours workers: a) alternative (that is, other than parental) child care arrangements and b) policies allowing preferential work arrangements for parents of young children. Alternative child care arrangements outside regular work day/week hours can be centre-based, in a regulated or unregulated family child care home, or with an unregulated care provider in the family's home. Preferential work arrangements can involve a number of strategies to accommodate parents so that they can balance their work with their child care responsibilities. Some examples may include providing parents with flexible schedules, allowing them to work from home, or accommodating shifts so that parents can work at the times they have access to child care. Friendly et al. observed that, "policies which allow parents of young children preferential work arrangements can be regarded as another model which can solve child care problems for parents who work atypical hours. In practice, however, these kinds of policies are extremely rare" (1994: 13).

Since that report was published, there has been greater recognition of the idea that flexible work arrangements or accommodation may address some child care issues. Much of this recognition has occurred internationally. A 2009 report by the U.K. Institute for Women's Policy Research considered the impact of some elements of flexible work on gender equality and the access to quality flexible working for both men and women. The report examined two approaches to flexible work arrangements: "countries such as Belgium, France, Germany and the Netherlands where flexible working rights are open to all employees and those targeted at employees with childcare or care-giving responsibilities, noting in the majority of countries...laws are specific to employees caring for their children or dependent adults" (Hegewisch, 2009: iii). The report

identified multiple motivations for countries to legislate the right to flexible work hours, only one of which is related to child care.

While for some years the U.K. had legislated that people caring for children (and several other categories) could request flexible work hours, this right was extended to all workers in 2014 (*The Guardian,* 2014). In the new scheme, there are multiple kinds of flexible hours specified including job sharing, working from home, part-time work, compressed hours, flexi-time, annualized hours and staggered hours.

Since 2009, most Australian workplaces have been governed by a new system created by the *Fair Work Act 2009* that allows "a right for certain employees to request flexible working arrangements (such as changes in hours of work) from their employer". One of the specified reasons for employees requesting more flexible working arrangements is that they are: "the parent, or have responsibility for the care, of a child who is of school age or younger". An employer may refuse such a request but only on 'reasonable business grounds' (Fair Work Ombudsman, n.d.).

In the U.S., the *Schedules That Work Act* was introduced by three Democratic Senators in July 2014. The purpose of this Act was to provide more stable schedules for employees who are subject to last minute and inconsistent scheduling. The Act would give employees "the ability to request changes to their work schedules without fear of retaliation. As well, it seeks to give workers in certain industries known to have erratic scheduling practices more predictable and stable schedules" (Ben-Ishai, 2014: 1). The Act would have given workers in all industries the right to request (and receive) flexible, stable, or predictable schedules. For workers in retail, food preparation and service, and building cleaning in particular, the act would have entitled workers to advance notification of schedules of at least two weeks, as well as call-in pay, split-shift pay and reporting pay. However, while lobbying on behalf of this bill was been extensive, it was not passed into law but remains a useful illustration of this approach.

In Canada, there is at best a limited formal or legally established framework of right to flexible work arrangements. Although the practice of flexible work arrangements is reported to be widespread, some research shows that these tend to be targeted to senior employees (Abma, 2011). As well, the idea of flexible work arrangements in Canada seems to be related less to the idea of helping families with work/family balance and more to reduce office costs or reduce traffic gridlock. The idea that preferential flexible work arrangements to support parents caring for young children (during non-standard or standard hours) could be treated legally and institutionally to be a right does not appear to have been considered as a policy option either by governments or by NGOs such as unions or advocacy groups.

However, in the last few years there have been some significant exceptions to this in Canada. The best known of these is the landmark Fiona Johnstone human rights case. The Johnstone case was noteworthy because it confirmed that Canadian human rights legislation should be interpreted more broadly; that is, protection from discrimination on the basis of "family status" should be understood to include child care obligations. A 2013 Toronto Star article quoted Johnstone's lawyer who explained that, "practically, it means that when parents of young children have made reasonable efforts to arrange child care and are unsuccessful, employers have a duty to accommodate them, unless they can show undue hardship" (Monsebraaten, 2013).

**The Fiona Johnstone case – implications**

In the past few years, there have been several key Canadian human rights cases concerned with child care issues that have shifted the landscape of human rights considerations with regard to family status. The Fiona Johnstone case was the first of these—a human rights case brought against the Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA), a federal government agency. Johnstone filed a human rights discrimination complaint against her employer on the ground of family status for failing to accommodate her parental care giving responsibilities so she could continue to work full-time. Both Johnstone and her husband worked irregular rotating shifts for the Canadian Border Services Agency. After the birth of her second child, Johnstone could not find child care that could accommodate her and her husband's non-standard work schedules so she requested a fixed shift in order to balance full-time work with her care giving responsibilities. CBSA responded that the only fixed shifts available were part-time, which meant Johnstone would lose pay and pension benefits. Johnstone took the part-time shift and filed a human rights complaint.

After a number of years, a Human Rights Tribunal heard the case in 2010 and decided in Johnstone's favour, agreeing with the argument that parental child care obligations fall within the scope and meaning of "family status" under the *Canadian Human Rights Act*. The decision was then appealed by the federal government (the CBSA) and upheld in the Federal Court of Appeal in 2014. Following the 2014 decision, the Women's Legal Education and Action Fund (LEAF), which had intervened in the appeal on behalf of Johnstone, put out a press release stating that, "the Court firmly rejected a restrictive definition of "family status" that did not include parental obligations such as childcare. It held that protection from discrimination for childcare obligations flows from family status in the same way that protection against discrimination on the basis of pregnancy flows from the sex of the individual"[5].

Although there are a number of key limitations, the Johnstone case has some significant implications for child care, particularly for parents who are managing shift work and child care. A 2014 Canadian Human Rights Commission report is intended to provide information about

[5] http://myemail.constantcontact.com/Where-a-workplace-rule-results-in-a-bona-fide-childcare-problem--the-workplace-must-accommodate--Federal-Court-of-Appeal-rules.html?soid=1100520459480&aid=1NNAVVIJ_U0

"the rights and responsibilities of the employee, the employer, unions and/or employee representatives" in light of the Johnstone case. It notes that:

> Human rights law prohibits discrimination based on the ground of family status. The courts have determined that family status protections extend to a person's family care giving responsibilities. This means that when an employee must care for a family member, employers have a legal obligation to accommodate that employee. This is best achieved through flexible work arrangements that enable the employee to care for a family member and continue to do their work.

However, it clarifies the terms of this right in the Canadian context at this time:

> To be accommodated, employees must show that they have exhausted other reasonable alternatives for care. Employees must also demonstrate that there is an *obligation* to provide care to a member of their family—a personal choice is not enough. For example, leaving work to attend a child's soccer game would be considered a personal choice. Leaving work to bring an injured child to the hospital when no other caregiver is available would be considered an obligation (Canadian Human Rights Commission, 2014: 1).

There have been several subsequent relevant Canadian legal cases based on the issue of accommodation for reasons of family status. Indeed, an article about a 2015 ruling called **"**the definition of "family status" under human rights legislation to be one of the "hottest topics in Canadian employment law". In another case, *SMS Equipment Inc. v Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union, Local 707*, 2015 ABQB 162, the employer was found to have discriminated against an employee, a single mother in Fort McMurray, Alberta who worked as a labourer in the oil patch and was required to work rotating day and night shifts. The Alberta court ruled that the employer had an obligation to accommodate her work schedule with respect to her child care responsibilities (Cox and Palmer, 2015).

Obviously, these cases ruling for accommodation by employers with respect to family status and child care responsibilities can have a substantial impact on policy to mitigate difficulties associated with non-standard hours work in many instances.

**The state of child care in Canada: Why this matters for non-standard hours child care**

One of the keys to understanding why non-standard hours child care is such a limited service is to understand the under development and serious inadequacies of child care in Canada. The next section provides an overview of the relevant aspects of child care in Canada as a whole.

*Who's responsible?*

Canadian child care is a private family responsibility in that there is no entitlement or right to service as there is in some other countries; Canadian parents carry most of the responsibility for finding and paying for most child care. From the perspective of aegis, provinces and territories have jurisdictional responsibility for Canadian education and social services including kindergarten and child care. Canadian child care was originally developed as a social welfare service under the aegis of social services ministries. It is only within the last decade that child care has started to be widely recognized as early childhood education in Canada, with 8 of the 13 provinces/territories now administering regulated child care through education departments.

*How child care is organized*

The range and quality of regulated child care programs vary enormously by region and circumstance across Canada. Each province and territory has a program of regulated child care that includes centre-based full-day child care, regulated family/home child care (in private homes), school-age child care and usually part-day nursery school or preschool. Each provincial/territorial child care program has its own Act and legislated requirements or regulations specifying how services may be operated. Each also has its own funding arrangements. All provinces/territories take responsibility for regulating (licensing) and providing some, usually limited[6] funding in the form of operational or base funding. Each province and territory also sets a maximum number of children permitted in an unregulated child care arrangement in a care provider's home and other unregulated settings.

Aside from specific programs for Aboriginal, military and some newcomer families, the federal government currently plays only a limited funding role and no policy role to speak of in early childhood education and care despite repeated calls for a federal leadership role (see, for example, ChildCare2020, 2014).

In 2012 there were regulated spaces for only 20.5 percent of children aged 0-12 and 22.5 percent of children aged 0-5 in Canada (Friendly, Halfon, Beach & Forer, 2013). Based on the high percentage of mothers with young children in the labour force (69.7 percent with a youngest child 0-2 years, and 76.6 percent 3-5 years) it is assumed that many children are in some type of unregulated care, either provided by a caregiver in her private home, or in the child's home without the public oversight of regulation or monitoring. However, this is only an assumption as there is no data and little information that can shed more light on the issue of unregulated child care (Ferns and Friendly, 2015).

*Child care is a market service*

The most salient feature of Canadian child care with regard to its provision of non-standard hours child care is that it is conceptualized and delivered as a market service, not a system. In the child care market, finding and paying for child care are largely treated as a private family

[6] Quebec is the sole province which provides what can be termed robust funding for child care services.

responsibility and service viability is the individual responsibility of the operator. This approach to child care can be seen in contrast to the Canada-wide entitlement of five-year olds to kindergarten in universal, publicly-funded, mostly publicly-delivered kindergarten programs.

Several of the characteristics of Canada's child care market have a direct effect on the availability of non-standard hours child care. While provinces license and set child care standards, no government jurisdiction has adopted a systemic approach to planning and developing services as is generally the case with public education. Setting up and managing regulated child care is mostly a private responsibility. In most communities, volunteer boards, (who are sometimes parents) and business owners take the initiative to develop programs. Locations and type of service are mostly developed in a fairly ad hoc manner.

Child care services receive limited public funding; outside Quebec, parents pay much or most of the cost. This means that child care services that are most costly—those outside standard schedules or easy-to-serve populations or communities—are usually out of the affordability range of most families. Further, much or most of the public funding that is available is attached to individual consumer-parents as fee subsidies, tax deductions or cheques.

While all jurisdictions provide fee subsidies to help lower income parents pay for child care, in most parts of Canada these fail to meet parents' needs either because they are in short supply or cover only part of the fee. Or the criteria may be too limited for some parents, for example, the income eligibility limits may be too low. Other eligibility parameters for subsidy eligibility may pose particular problems for part-time workers or workers with rotating or irregular schedules.

Thus, the subsidy systems that subsidize individual parent fees in all provinces/territories outside Quebec (and to some extent Manitoba and PEI) contribute to the financial unviability (or unsustainability) of non-standard hours child care. There are several provinces that have special cash subsidies or enhancement of the normal fee subsidy for non-standard hours child care but these are very limited.

Overall, a major result of Canadian child care's status as a marketized service is that the hit-and-miss service development and heavy reliance on parent fees create significant barriers to accessibility. At the same time, the quality of the program too often takes a back seat when scarce public dollars and parent fees must be balanced against staff wages/benefits to make ends meet. This means holding costs down, especially by keeping staffing to the minimum and wages, benefits and working conditions to whatever the market will bear. Too often quality suffers as a result, even in non-profit services.

## Literature review

The following literature review summarizes relevant Canadian research and other documentation on child care to fit non-standard work schedules and child care for evenings, overnights, and weekends, short-term and emergency child care. As well, a review of related research on the impact of non-standard work schedules on family life, work-life balance and child well-being is included. The next section provides a discussion of each relevant document.

## Literature on non-standard hours child care

*Flexible child care in Canada* examined "policy and program options to meet atypical child care needs" (Friendly, Cleveland and Willis, 1994: 9), including child care for evenings, overnights and weekends, emergency and sick child care, and child care in rural communities. The study was originally part of a policy initiative by the Ontario government that examined and funded "flexible" child care models including non-standard hours child care. The data in the report was drawn from telephone interviews with government officials responsible for child care and questionnaires sent to all identified "flexible" child care programs in Canada at the time. This report was originally written in 1989; the inventory of "flexible" child care programs was updated for the 1994 version but the other elements of the report were not.

The report noted that there was limited data to identify the needs and preferences of Canadian parents for child care during non-standard hours, however, "the information collected from evening, overnight and weekend child care programs in Canada in connection with [the] project indicate[d] that, usually, demand for use of these programs is likely to be small at any one time" (1994: 12). The report identified centre-based programs that offered a variety of non-standard schedule options, with very few programs offering overnight care. As well, the authors noted that "regulated family day care programs often offer some care during atypical child care hours" (1994: 11). At that time, a number of programs that had operated overnight had discontinued overnight care due to low use and high costs. The primary issue identified for all the programs surveyed for the project was that the way child care was funded was a key barrier to program viability.

In the same study, Friendly, Cleveland & Willis also examined emergency and sick child care that provides temporary care when the regular caregiver (either parental or non-parental) is unavailable, or when the child cannot attend the regular child care program because of illness. Again, a small number of programs were identified and no programs that were established specifically to provide temporary care for sick children were found. Regulated centre and home-based services were identified as well as related services that provided unregulated caregivers in the family/child's home. Emergency child care may play a crucial role for parents who work part-time and/or rotating or irregular schedules, the most common type of shift work as reported by Williams (2008). Considering that rotating and irregular schedules may not always occur at non-standard hours, it is also important to determine how this form of care can be provided during standard weekday hours as well. The authors concluded that, "as in the case of evening,

overnight and weekend child care, the issues fall into two general categories. First, all of these approaches have financial implications, either for families or for society. Second, the impact of each approach on children and their families and parental preferences for care must be considered" (1994: 22).

Foster & Broad's (1998) findings in *Flexible child care for flexible workers* were similar to Friendly et al's. Foster & Broad's report included a literature review and findings from key informant interviews. As well they visited extended-hours programs, and held group meetings with parents, child care providers and employers. Overall, there were few regulated flexible or non-standard hours child care services across the country; the majority of flexible or non-standard child care arrangements were unregulated and informal. The authors stated that, "the formal child care programs that do offer flexible child care all encounter problems that can be attributed to lack of funding resources" (1998: 10). The findings indicated that evening and overnight programs usually lose money. Centre-based non-standard hours programs are often subsidized by the daytime programs. As well, attracting and retaining qualified staff or home-based providers is an ongoing challenge, and providing flexible or non-standard hours services creates a substantial increase in administrative workloads. Programs that had additional financial resources other than parent fees had an easier time sustaining flexible programs. This study concluded that, "as with standard-hours child care, non-standard and flexible child care needs a greater commitment of resources and funding" (1998: 15).

One of the Ontario's flexible child care programs identified by Friendly et al (1994) was the focus of *The Emergency Child Care Research Project* by Howe and Swail (2000). This project was designed to: (1) investigate the impact of emergency child care services on individuals and their families; (2) evaluate the operational effectiveness of Ottawa's Short Term Child Care Program (STCCP) and; (3) to identify optimal structures and models of emergency child care services (Howe & Swail, 2000).

The STCCP was a non-profit organization that was set up to provide emergency child care services to the National Capital Region Emergency Child Care Consortium. The Consortium model included six partners representing more than 1,000 families; members included the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board, Nortel, Canadian Union of Postal Workers, Carleton County Law Association, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, and Nepean Hydro. The STCCP provided child care to Consortium members for whom there had been a disruption in child care arrangements, if a child was mildly ill or when regular child care was not available. The STCCP was administered by Andrew Fleck Child Care Services which, in 2014, continues to provide the service that is now called Short Term Child Care (STCC[7]).

[7] A case study of the STCCP can be found in Appendix

To evaluate the positive impact of the STCCP, Howe & Swail (2000) surveyed employees eligible to use the STCCP and compared the results with employees surveyed from two other organizations that did not have access to the emergency child care service. The results indicated that the program was reported to have a positive impact on employees and employers. "Having knowledge that one *could* use the service, reduced stress… and helped to enhance the quality of [family] relationships" and "the program had a positive influence on job satisfaction, organizational commitment and absence from work" (Howe & Swail, 2000: 42). The service evaluation review also indicated a high level of satisfaction with the service. However, some long-term issues were evident including the high costs to users which could pose a barrier to access, and on-going issues with recruiting and retaining qualified staff for such sporadic and unpredictable work. The final component that focused on the consortium model also identified positive benefits of the "multiple group approach…[such as] lower costs in the provision of service and efficiencies of resources, the ability to serve more people, shared responsibility and lower risks, as well as an increase in community ties and community services" (2000: 44).

Albanese (2006, 2007, 2009) was interested in how access to child care impacted both the individual family and the broader community. Her work with families and caregivers living in Pontiac County, a town located in the Outaouais region of Western Quebec aimed to "show that universal, affordable child care acts as a buffer to some of the most hard-hitting changes and challenges brought on by Canada's new economy" (2009: 32).

Albanese was particularly interested in how Quebec's $7/day child care program impacted the families in the small rural town that had experienced an economic shift after two major sawmills, the primary employer (of mostly men), were shut down. Overall, the townspeople experienced an increase in part-time work, lower paid jobs, longer commutes, shift work and permanent night shifts. The majority of fathers interviewed who had lost their jobs due to the sawmill closure turned to the mining and trucking industries which required them to be absent from the home for extended periods. As well, there was an increase in women's labour force participation, particularly in female-dominated fields that required shift work and sometimes long distance commuting.

Albanese's interviews with parents indicated that the $7/[8]day child care program (open to all children without regard to their parents' labour force participation) allowed them to maintain employment that was part-time or lower-paid, or to focus on applying for (un)Employment Insurance, finding a new job, or enrolling in retraining programs (Albanese, 2009). The child care program also created jobs within the community, as had been demonstrated by a number of economic researchers (see, for example, Warner, 2007). Despite the popularity of the program, however, "centres' hours of operation were a concern for most mothers, as all mothers

[8] Note that the Quebec government has announced that fees in Quebec will follow a sliding scale in 2016.

interviewed had to contend with their own and their partner's shift work and commuting" (2007: 261).

Albanese reported that parents in Pontiac County had to rely on informal networks of friends and family to manage child care outside typical working hours because most $7/day programs did not offer extended hours services. She concluded that "a universal, affordable (high quality) childcare system is essential for young families to prosper, but there is clearly a need for some flexibility (that is not overly taxing to the already overburdened and under-valued childcare workers) and different types of supports built into the existing system" (2007: 262).

Albanese's research confirmed findings from an earlier study by Preston, Rose, Norcliffe & Holmes that examined "the effects of shift work in the Canadian newsprint industry, on the division of labour in childcare and domestic work in the households of shift workers employed in three different mills [in Quebec, Newfoundland and Alberta]" (2000: 6) (note that this was prior to the growth of Quebec's publicly-funded child care system). A total of 184 mill workers (all men) and their partners/spouses completed a questionnaire and participated in an interview. While the focus of Preston et al.'s research was on the division of labour between the male and female partners in the participating families, the study highlighted a number of important considerations for non-standard work and child care.

Preston et al. found that the families managed their non-standard schedules with "varied and sometimes complex strategies for dealing with childcare needs" (2000: 17). Local services, social networks and finances all played a role in the families' child care choices. However, similar to Albanese's findings in small- town Quebec, the "onus of adjustments to shifts fell mostly on women" (2000: 24). In two of the paper mill communities where shift work was 'well-established', family child care and in-child's-home caregivers were more accommodating of shift workers' schedules. In one community, a local cooperative play program was set up to support shift workers' spouses and children. In the Quebec community where shift work was less common, available child care services did not accommodate shift schedules. Parents used multiple child care arrangements including informal networks and off-shifting to cover care during non-standard hours. The authors concluded that, "at an individual household level, in the short term, households 'cope' with shift work" and "some parents took advantage of rotating shifts to maximize their involvement in childcare; however, few mill-workers expressly chose shift work so as to be available to care for young children" (2000: 24). Lastly, Preston et al. reported that the typical gendered division of labour within the home persisted in the majority of families with the exception being couples in which the women had a higher paying job.

Off-shifting was the particular focus of Pagnan, Lero and MacDermid Wadsworth's (2011) research with 13 'dual earner dyads' in Southwestern Ontario. Contrary to the findings from Preston et al. (2000), Pagnan et al. found that the participants used off-shifting primarily as a

way to ensure constant parental care for their young children. Two of the couples interviewed did articulate that formal child care to accommodate their non-standard work hours was impossible to find but the remainder purposefully used off-shifting to avoid using formal child care. Additionally, Pagnan et al.'s findings did indicate a shift in the division of domestic labour to a more egalitarian model between the man and women in these particular cases. Using a cost/benefit analysis, the authors concluded that the costs of off-shifting outweighed the benefits but that participants were still satisfied with their off-shifting arrangements. With regard to child care, the authors concluded that, "nonstandard work schedules create challenges for shift workers in finding care for children at atypical hours, and as a result, off-shifting may be an artifact of the lack of childcare options available during nonstandard hours" (2011: 298). The authors noted that their sample was not socio-economically representative of the non-standard working population; for low-income workers and their families, choosing to off-shift and/or work non-standard hours may be the consequence of the high cost of child care and a lack of child care options in general.

American research provides some perspective that has not been captured in Canadian research. The Ms. Foundation for Women and the National Women's Law Centre (2014) reported in *Listening to workers: Child care challenges in low-wage jobs* that for many parents in low-wage jobs, child care is simply unaffordable. Access to child care during non-standard hours was identified as a key issue:

> Many workers reported that they needed child care during night and weekend hours, and that there were particular challenges associated with care during these times. Provider rates were generally higher during these hours, and working late at night was especially difficult…For some, working the night shift allowed them to share child care responsibilities with a spouse who worked the day shift. While this was a cost saving measure and allowed children to be cared for by family members, it meant that parents spent very little time together (2014: 5).

Researchers at the US-based Centre for Law and Social Policy (Ben-Ishai, Matthews & Levin-Epstein, 2014) also reported that low-wage workers in the U.S. are more likely to work non-standard, unpredictable shifts and for these workers, child care choices are deeply constrained by work schedules. The majority of low-wage workers with non-standard and/or unpredictable schedules piece together a variety of child care arrangements that are constantly changing.

It is also interesting to reflect on the findings of Harriet Presser, one of the leading US researchers on non-standard hours work. Presser (1986) used national data from the U.S. Population Survey to examine the relationship between shift-work status and child care use. Presser's analysis revealed that married women who work non-day shifts are more likely to rely on relative care including fathers and grandparents. Her findings however, indicate significant differences based on marital status and work type. For example, married mothers who worked

non-day part-time were more likely to rely on father care compared to mothers who worked non-day full-time. As well, father care was less likely when the father was also employed full-time. Unmarried women were more likely to both work non-days and use non-relative care, which Presser noted "suggests considerable economic and personal stress for these women" (1986: 561). Presser further identified that "a substantial proportion of part-time employed married women report that the un-availability of satisfactory child care at reasonable cost is a constraint on the number of hours they work, and those who work non-days are significantly more likely to express such constraint than those who work days" (1986: 562).

**Literature on non-standard hours work, family well-being and work/life balance**

A related relevant body of research on non-standard work hours focuses on the effects of non-standard work schedules for work/life balance and family well-being. In these studies, child care is sometimes considered; in most instances, the issue of finding and securing child care services for parents who work non-standard hours is at least noted. A comprehensive literature review of this research is beyond the scope of this paper but some overviews and examples from this body of research specific to Canada can provide additional considerations about the need for non-standard hours child care policy and services and identify the unique needs of families where one or more parents work non-standard hours.

Direct health effects of working non-standard schedules are documented in *Shift work and health*, a briefing note from the Institute for Work and Health in Toronto. It summarizes key research findings regarding possible links between shift work and a number of health issues including, sleep disorders, workplace injury, cancer, pregnancy complications, gastrointestinal disorders, cardiovascular disease, psychological distress and diabetes. The authors concluded that, "in some of these areas, the research findings clearly point to an elevated risk of adverse health outcomes arising from shift work" (Saunders, 2010: 7). Research findings indicate that night shifts pose particularly acute risks as they have the largest impact on sleep patterns and involve the highest incidence of workplace injury.

These kinds of negative health implications of non-standard work schedules are associated with concerns about the impact of these schedules on family and child well-being. Strazdins, Korda, Lim, Broom & D'Souza (2004) and Strazdins, Clements, Korda Broom & D'Souza (2006) used data from Cycle 2 of the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY, 1996-1997) to compare children between 2 and 11 years old and their parents from dual-earner families where one or more parent worked non-standard hours with families where both parents worked standard hours. Their research set out to identify the relationship between parents' work schedules and children's well-being.

Strazdins et al. (2004) concluded that children with parent(s) working non-standard hours were more likely to have emotional and behavioural difficulties, however, the authors cautioned that

their findings did not indicate causality. The association between parent's non-standard work and children's difficulties was stronger for younger children but only statistically significant when both parents, or only the father, worked non-standard hours. Strazdins et al. (2006) found that fathers or both parents working non-standard schedules was also associated with poorer family functioning whereas mothers or both parents working non-standard schedules was associated with more depressive symptoms. In discussing their findings, Strazdins et al. (2004) were cautious of possible interpretations of their research stating that, "we are mindful… that within these political and ideological contexts, our research could provoke strong reactions of guilt and blame, feeding the policy search for an easy answer (mothers at home) rather than grappling with the complexity of work conditions, the cost of quality child care, and the persistent assumption made by contemporary industrial relations of an 'unencumbered' (male) worker"(2004: 1525).

In their 2004 study Strazdins et al. analyzed non-parental child care as a confounding factor in work/family stress. Their data showed that 57.9 percent of couples where both parents worked non-standard hours used some type of non-parental child care, compared to 71.1 percent of couples where both parents worked standard hours. The research was limited by the fact that they could not adjust for cost and ease of access to child care. Strazdins et al. concluded that the child care variables did not influence the associations between parent work schedules and child difficulties but that more data on non-parental child care use was needed. They argued that, "child care is often critical to how families manage, and it is harder to obtain outside standard weekday hours. Thus, some of the links to family life and child well-being may result from lack of affordable or accessible child care" (2006: 406).

Strazdins et al.'s (2004; 2006) research was included in an international review of literature that investigated the relationship between parents' non-standard work schedules and child well-being by Li et al. (2014). The large majority of studies from multiple countries did indicate an association between non-standard work schedules and children's development and behavior. The most consistent associations were with preschool-aged children's cognitive and mental health/behavioural problems and adolescent's risky behaviour. Further, there was some evidence that associations were more pronounced in families with lower socio-economic status. In their analysis of limitations of their review, Li et al. observed that "most studies lacked information about the availability and quality of child care available to parents working [non-standard] schedules" (2014: 66). Further, they said that "none of the reviewed studies examined indicators of broader influence outside the home, such as the neighborhood, community resources (e.g., the accessibility and cost of child care facilities, school, before- and after-school care for school-age children, and public transportation), and work place policy initiatives. These factors can potentially mitigate the negative association between [non-standard] work schedules and child development" (2014: 69).

Work/life balance is another area of family and child well-being that is often considered in research on the impact of non-standard work. As stated by Williams, "working shifts can have negative health effects, and complicate scheduling of family activities…because shift work is rarely restricted to weekdays, finding child care on weekends or making plans for holidays and social activities can be difficult" (2008: 5).

Duncan and Pettigrew (2012) analyzed and compared data from 1998 and 2005 time-use cycles of Statistics Canada's General Social Survey to "examine the effect of three work arrangements - use of flexible schedules, shift work and self-employment on reported satisfaction with the balance between the work and family lives of Canadian women and men in dual-earner families with children" (2012: 404). Their research findings indicated that for women in 2005, flexible work arrangements increased the odds of being satisfied with their work/life balance by 75 percent. Shift work was also positively associated with work/life balance for women at both time periods. For men, all the working arrangements were negatively associated with work/life balance. Self-employed men were much more likely to report a lack of satisfaction with the balance between their work and family lives compared to self-employed women. The authors hypothesized that working arrangements that are flexible, including self-employment or shift work, may be more meaningful to women because they continue to have primary care giving roles. These arrangements allow women to accommodate their care giving responsibilities more easily while still participating in paid work.

Williams' (2008) analysis of the 2005 General Social Survey came to similar conclusions as did Duncan and Pettigrew. Williams reported that non-standard shift workers and day workers identified similar challenges to work-life balance, including "not enough time for family and too much time spent on the job" (Williams, 2008: 9). However, non-standard shift workers were significantly more likely to be dissatisfied with their work/life balance. Shift workers were more likely to sacrifice sleep when they needed more time outside of work and they were more likely to worry about not spending enough time with family or friends. Although women in general were more likely to report work/life imbalance, they showed no significant differences by shift type. Non-standard work schedules only had a negative impact on the perceived work/life balance for men. William's analysis also identified that evening and night shift workers actually spent more time with their children compared to daytime workers, but less time with their spouse. Additionally, work/life balance was affected by the type of shift; workers with regular shifts including regular evening or rotating schedules were more satisfied with their work/life balance compared to the least satisfied workers with split or irregular shifts.

Confirming Duncan and Pettigrew's conclusions, Williams noted that being satisfied with one's job was also associated with higher odds of being satisfied with work/life balance regardless of shift. Duncan and Pettigrew found that, "women's satisfaction with their work-family balance was significantly associated with the amount of time spent in paid work, educational attainment,

household income, enjoyment of paid and domestic work and having a flexible schedule" (2012: 413). Williams concluded that the impact of certain variables on levels of work/life balance "suggests that satisfaction with work/life balance and role overload are related not only to workers' schedules but also to a complex interaction of hours worked, self-perception and general feeling of well-being" (2008: 15). Another example was evident in Pagnan et al.'s research with off-shifting couples in which they indicated that control over working hours and predictable scheduling mitigated some of the negative effects of working non-standard hours for their participants.

It is, therefore, predictable that family well-being for non-standard hours workers may also be exacerbated by increasing precarity in the labour market. A 2013 report*, It's More than Poverty*, prepared by the Poverty and Employment Precarity in Southern Ontario (PEPSO) research group and a 2015 follow-up report, *The Precarity Penalty,* both identified significant strains on families facing employment insecurity because of precarious working arrangements. Household well-being and community connections were negatively impacted for all households and low-income households were found to be particularly vulnerable. Key findings highlighted the emotional stress caused by employment insecurity and the toll it takes on family well-being. Accessing child care was identified as a significant issue for these families. The authors concluded that, "employment insecurity increases the challenge of accessing child care for both low- and middle-income households…This could be a result of irregular work hours and issues of affordability [and] difficulty accessing child care may be limiting the ability of these households to adopt employment strategies that could minimize economic insecurity" (2013: 75).

Lack of control over work times and schedules for low-wage workers in the U.S. was identified as a significant issue by the Ms. Foundation for Women and the National Women's Law Centre (2014). Their research found that, "rigid, unpredictable or unstable work schedules profoundly complicate parents' and children's lives" and "the ability to have some control over work schedules was highly coveted by parents" (2014: 5). Similar findings were also reported by Ben-Ishai, Matthews & Levin-Epstein who highlighted that the patchwork of child care arrangements often used by non-standard hours workers may cause undue stress on the family and "when parents rely on multiple child care arrangements or must change arrangements frequently, children's healthy development may suffer" (2014: 3).

Research by the Washington DC-based Urban Institute in *Nonstandard work schedules and the well-being of low-income families,* was concerned with the disproportionate number of low income families who work non-standard and unpredictable schedules and the implications for their well-being. U.S. data reveals that, "non-standard schedules are more common among low wage workers…[and] one in four workers with wages at or below the median works on a nonstandard schedule" (Enchautegui, 2013:6). Further analysis found that parents who work non-standard schedules spend less time with their children and family than standard-schedule workers overall. However, mothers of preschool children who worked non-standard schedules

spent slightly more time with their child(ren) and both parents spent less time with their school-age child(ren).

*Nonstandard work schedules and the well-being of low-income families* highlighted the negative implications for the quality of time families spend together when there is no shared time off together. A lack of access to child care and transportation were also identified as key stressors for parents working non-standard schedules. The author concluded that, "having preschool-age children increases the odds of a mother working non-standard hours and, because this effect is stronger among lower-income women, it is likely due, at least in part, to the high cost of child care" (Enchautegui, 2013: 17).

**Provincial/territorial policies and initiatives affecting non-standard hours child care**

A provincial/territorial scan was conducted to identify policies and funding affecting non-standard hours child care. The scan included an online search of all provincial/territorial ministry/department websites and interviews with most provincial/territorial officials responsible for child care. Interviews with British Columbia, Northwest Territories and Yukon were not conducted. Policies and funding that were directly related to non-standard hours child care as well as policies and funding that may have an indirect impact on non-standard hours child care were documented. A list of the questions that guided the provincial/territorial scan can be found in Appendix A.

Overall, no province or territory has a comprehensive policy or program to ensure access to non-standard hours child care (or child care of any kind). The provinces and territories rely on the market of private child care providers to meet the demand for both standard and non-standard hours child care. In most cases, very little was known about the demand, prevalence and issues for non-standard hours child care. No province indicated any current research or projects focused on addressing non-standard hours child care. Non-standard and extended hours child care programs can be identified by parents searching for child care in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and British Columbia using the online searches on their government websites.

Several provincial officials indicated that they thought there is little to no demand for non-standard hours child care. Three of the provinces in eastern Canada—Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick—have specific regulations pertaining to non-standard hours child care.

*Newfoundland and Labrador* limits the hours of operation so that centres cannot operate past 8:30pm. Officials report that there is one commercial chain that offers weekend care in one of its centres. However, take up is low, they report.

*New Brunswick* released new regulations in 2014 that allow centres to stay open past 9 PM. The regulations describe extended hours care as "child day care services provided in an approved

child day care facility whose hours of operation exceed the traditional 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM daily". The regulations also stipulate that maximum capacity for extended hour care services, including overnight care is 12 children with no more than three infants less than 24 months of age. As well, no child may attend for more than 14 consecutive hours in a 24 hour period. Centres open 14 consecutive hours between the hours of 6 AM and 9 PM are eligible for a $7,500 start-up grant for a full-time program and $5,000 for an after school program. Parents who do not have access to regulated child care and the corresponding fee subsidy (due to a rural location or irregular work hours for example), may be eligible for a daily subsidy through the Alternative Child Care Program.

*Nova Scotia* also has standards specific to extended hours care, including health, nutrition, programming, equipment, staffing, and maximum hours a child may attend. In Nova Scotia "Extended Hours Child Care" means a full-day, part-day or school-age program that is licensed to provide day care for up to 18 hours per day, under the following circumstances: (i) the setting is in operation for more than 12 hours per day; or (ii) the setting is in operation past 6:30 PM; or (iii) the setting is in operation during the weekend. Centres must have approval to provide extended hours and approval is indicated on their license. Kids and Company, a large for-profit chain, offers extended hours care to support hospital staff working shifts and some family child care homes provide extended hours care and weekend care on an as-needed basis. The provincial representative responded that others have tried to provide extended hours care but there is no apparent demand.

The *Prince Edward Island* official explained that there have been some attempts at establishing non-standard hours care in the past but the demand has not been adequate enough to make it a viable option for programs. There are currently no non-standard hours programs but occasionally a centre will accommodate a parent on an as-needed basis. Provincial officials said that parents who work non-standard hours generally rely on grandparents or other extended family for child care. Further, while it has been acknowledged that early learning does not happen without the component of care, there has been debate about what early learning takes place in situations such as evening and night care that is primarily focused on care, and whether or not such arrangements would fit into the mandate of the new *Early Learning and Child Care Act.*

In 2000, *Quebec* launched a pilot project and set up 10 non-standard hours child care centres which were funded in addition to the regular base funding formula and were, in certain situations, allowed to operate outside the regulations. A detailed evaluation was conducted in 2002 (Gouvernment de Québec, 2002). The additional funding ceased a year later. Although most of these programs are still operating, it appears that only one offers non-standard hours (extended into the early evening).

Although non-standard hours child care in Quebec does not receive additional funding, funded CPEs and garderies (non-profit and for-profit centres) are eligible to be publicly funded to offer non-standard hours care through Quebec's usual formula-based public funding as per the Regulations. Based on the concept that child care can take place in any of three time periods: 7 AM and 6 PM, 6 PM to 12 AM or 12 AM to 6 AM, a centre may offer reduced contribution child care at $7.30/day for a child for 20 days per four week period. In this formula, time periods are counted once, even if they are contiguous (that is, if the child is at the centre from 7 AM to 12 AM, this would comprise two time periods, so would count for two days of the 20).
There are few non-standard hours child care services in Quebec; there are none that operate overnight or into the late night hours, a few that extend to approximately 8 PM and a few that operate on weekends (Saturdays). Although centres are permitted to offer child care at full cost to the parent for days exceeding 20days/four weeks, few do.

It should be noted that while Quebec has a substantial regulated home child care sector, which is funded in a way similar to centres to offer non-standard hours child care, few home child care providers provide this option. Although home child care is often assumed to be potentially more flexible vis-à-vis non-standard hours child care, Quebec Ministry officials suggested that the low interest among home child care providers in providing extended or non-standard hours child care is less financial than personal; a provider in her own home or even those with an assistant in group home child care are just not able to sustain the long hours required to offer a long extended day and night of child care.

*Ontario's* response indicated that 10 percent of regulated child care providers operate earlier than 7 AM and later than 6 PM, despite the lack of any additional funding for extended hours. A 2012 survey of licensed child care[9] reported that, "licensed centre-based programs in Ontario typically start between 7 AM and 9 AM and close between 5:30 PM and 6 PM". The hours and days of operation for licensed private-home day care programs are assumed to be more flexible compared to centre-based programs, but this was not captured in the questionnaire.

*Manitoba and Saskatchewan* identified a number of programs providing non-standard hours child care services. Both provinces provide additional funding to these centres. *Manitoba* officials knew of ten facilities that offer extended hours, as well as some regulated home child care providers. In Manitoba, operating funding and fee subsidies for non-standard hours programs are one and a half times the regular amount. Provincial officials reported that the province is reviewing their current funding policies to better define extended hours. As well, they reported that it is hard to identify the real demand and there are operational challenges in maintaining adequate enrolment.

[9] http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/ChildCareQuestion.pdf

*Saskatchewan* officials reported that there were a number of centres providing non-standard hours care, including one 24 hour centre in Regina and numerous regulated family child care and group family child care homes. Some of the licensed family and group family child care homes that offer non-standard hours of care advertise these hours and some will accommodate a particular family's needs for alternate or extended hours on an as-needed basis. In Saskatchewan, centres that operate between 80 and 120 hours per week receive an extra 25 percent of the early childhood services grant per extended hours space. Centres that operate for more than 120 hours/week receive 50 percent of the grant for the number of spaces that are open for those hours. Officials reported that it is unclear what the unmet demand might be for non-standard hours care, and there are no specific policies beyond the additional operating grants.

In *Alberta,* additional money is available to parents through an Extended Hours Subsidy which provides up to $100 per month to those who can provide evidence of working or attending school during extended hours and qualify based on income. Extended working or school hours are defined as "outside the time of Monday to Friday 6 AM to 6 PM". This money can be used for any form of regulated or unregulated child care.

Similarly, in *Nunavut* all fee subsidies can be used for any type of non-parental child care that takes place at any time. However, officials reported that there are no non-standard hours child care programs in Nunavut.

Very few facilities in the *Northwest Territories* can accommodate family members working overtime, shift work or on weekends. Territorial officials commented that the demand for these services is expected to grow in the coming decade if the anticipated growth in the non-renewable resource sector (e.g. oil and gas and mining) is realized.

**Case studies**

Case studies of five child care services providing non-standard hours child care were conducted to inform the research. Programs were first identified using an internet search and leads from provincial/territorial contacts. The five programs were selected based on including the broadest possible representation of provinces (there were no programs identified in the territories) and the amount of information that could be acquired through preliminary research. The case studies include representation from four provinces, one from each of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, New Brunswick, and two from Ontario. The programs include four child care centres and one in-child's-home caregiver service delivered by a multi-service child care organization.

Preliminary research was conducted for each of the sites and the information was organized in a chart format. Key informants—supervisors or executive directors—were then contacted and asked to participate in the project (see initial request in Appendix B). All key informants originally contacted agreed to participate in the project and a semi-structured interview of

approximately one hour. The preliminary information collected on the program was then sent by email to check for accuracy, along with the questions that would guide the interview. After the interview a summary draft document was sent back to the respondents to check for accuracy and any outstanding clarification. Below is a brief description of the five case study sites. The full case study summaries are included in Appendix C.

- *Discovery Children's Centre, Winnipeg, Manitoba*

Discovery Children's Centre is the largest single site child care centre in Winnipeg, with 171 licensed space serving children from 12 weeks to 12 years old. The centre was established in 1976 and began the "flex" program that provides evening care until 12:30 AM in 1996. The flex program provides flexible care for children from age 2 years to 12 years between the hours of 6:30 AM and 12:30 AM Monday through Friday, and from 6:30 AM to 7:30 PM on Saturdays. The flex program is funded for 32 spaces and an average of 12-15 children attend at one time.

- *The Preschool Centre, Fredericton, New Brunswick*

The Preschool Centre offers two extended hours' programs to Canadian Union of Postal Workers and Union of Postal Communication Employees members only. One location opens at 6:30 AM to accommodate mail carriers, and the two locations close as late as 7:15 PM to accommodate workers in the Canada Post call centre. Regular program hours are from 7:30 AM to 5:30 PM.

- *The Children's Place, Ottawa, Ontario*

The Children's Place provides flexible, extended hour's child care in two communities in Ottawa, Ontario, including one centre that offers care 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The Children's Place provides care in four centres; two located side by side in Kanata and two located side by side in Ottawa (Carling). The 1150 Carling location is the designated 24/7 site; it has 65 licensed spaces and space for 20 children to sleep. The Kanata locations offer care until midnight, Monday through Friday. The Children's Place also provides short-term, temporary, and emergency care and is a first call site for social services, shelters and other programs for children and families.

- *Stepping Stones Child Care Cooperative, Regina, Saskatchewan*

Stepping Stones Child Care Cooperative provides extended hours care from 5:30 AM to 2:00 AM Monday through Saturday, and 5:30 AM to 12:00 AM on Sundays. The extended hour's child care program provides up to ten hours of child care per day, five days a week, within the opening hours. The extended hour location of Stepping Stones gives priority to families who need extended hours care with the assumption that they cannot receive this type of care anywhere else.

- *Short Term Child Care, Andrew Fleck Child Care Services, Ottawa, Ontario*

  Andrew Fleck Child Care Services is a multi-service agency in Ottawa that first began providing emergency child care in 1987. The Short Term Child Care program, originally funded by the Ontario government, provides 24 hour emergency child care for children aged three months to 12 years when they are mildly ill, when regular child care arrangements are interrupted, or when other family emergencies arise. The service is only available to employees of the organizations that have an arrangement with Andrew Fleck to access the STCC service. The program has between 30-50 caregivers who care for children in child(ren)'s homes. Parents may also be given the option to have their child placed in a regulated child care home supervised by Andrew Fleck Child Care Services but this is rarely requested.

*Overview of programs in the case studies*

Four of the five programs studied were centre-based. One of these was a standalone program while three of the five were part of organizations that had multiple centres. The Short Term Child Care Program (STCC) was the only case study that involved caregivers going into the child(ren)'s home. However, this program was integrated into a large multi-service agency with multiple centres and a regulated home child care agency. The hours of the five programs varied from 24 hours to just slightly extended hours of one hour in the morning and one and a half hours in the evening. All the programs were based in urban settings.

Two of the programs only served specific families associated with unions and/or employer groups who had arrangements for their members/employees to access the non-standard hours care. The other three serviced their immediate and surrounding community with a diverse set of families and parents working in a variety of industries. One respondent commented that her clientele included everyone from "doctors to exotic dancers". The three programs open to the community said that the majority of the families they serve are led by single parents.

Respondents from the centre-based programs all responded that their non-standard hours programs were somewhat different from their standard day programs. Some differences included less programming time and more free-time, multi-age groupings or transition from age-based groups to multi-age, dinner mealtime routines, bedtime routines and homework support. The more care-based nature of the non-standard hours program was identified and it was noted that programming and quality expectations were not as high during these hours. There was an understanding from all respondents that this was more a "care" than an "educational" service.

*Factors that lead to the success of non-standard hours child care programs*

There were a number of factors that led to the reported success of the non-standard hours child care programs included in the case studies. Certainly, being associated with a larger organization made a difference; all respondents identified this factor as a significant contributor to the success

of the program. In some cases, the larger organization was able to absorb some of the extra costs associated with the non-standard hours program. The administrative capacity of the larger organizations was a key factor as non-standard hours programs that service parents with irregular and rotating shifts or on an on-call and emergency basis require significantly more administration than regular day programs.

Having access to a larger cohort of staff was a crucial asset provided by the larger organization. The potential for other jobs within the organization was an incentive for recruiting staff for the non-standard hours programs as well. Although it was a single site, the one program that was standalone was a large centre site (12 rooms in a vacant school building with a capacity to provide care for 170 children) and benefited from having extra administrative, space and human resources capacity.

For all but one program, extra funding other than parent fees and regular government funding was critical to sustaining the non-standard hours service. There were two potential sources of this extra funding: government funding and employer/ union funding. The programs studied in Manitoba and Saskatchewan both received additional funding from their provincial governments to subsidize the cost of providing non-standard hours care. These funds were in addition to parent fee subsidies and operating funding distributed in both provinces based on a number of factors including centre capacity. Government funding provided the stable funding that both programs in these two provinces required to keep the centres open and fully staffed despite fluctuations in use. This made recruiting staff easier as the program can offer a full-time, permanent job and the program can provide the flexibility that most parents working non-standard hours require if they are going to benefit from the service. This funding has also meant that parent fees for the non-standard hours care are the same as, or only slightly higher than regular day fees. Additionally, the program in Saskatchewan created partnerships with other government-funded programs that fund spaces so that they are always accessible for their clients. This funding contributes to the overall stability of the program.

The second type of 'extra' funding came from employers and unions who provided funds so their employees/members could have access to the non-standard hours program; in some cases they actually paid part of, or all, the fees for their employees/members to use the program. In these two cases, the services provided are quite different. In one instance, the program was initiated by the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) and the Union of Postal Communication Employees (UPCE) to serve their members. The program services mail carriers by opening earlier in one location and workers at the Canada Post call centre by staying open later at another location. The unions subsidize their members' fees but they have also invested significant money in the program to build up overall capacity. For example, the program has been able to open additional locations due to union funding support which then contributes to their being able to sustain extended hour services.

In the second example, a large multi-service agency coordinates in-home caregivers for emergency care and care for mildly ill children using a consortium model. This model requires consortium members (employers, organizations, unions) to pay a fee to gain access for their employees/members. This membership fee provides financial stability for the program, covers some of the administrative costs and keeps the hourly rates down. Depending on the partner, they may pay the actual hourly fee for care for their members or the members pay it themselves. The fee is quite high at $15 per hour but the program personnel believe that an in-home program is the preferred model for this type of care. However, without the additional support, fees for non-members would be unaffordable. Although the consortium model initially sustained the program when its status as a pilot project ended along with Ontario government funding, in its original form, it has proved to be unsustainable over time. This is mainly due to the partners, particularly businesses, cutting their ties with the program when they are faced with financial pressures. The agency is in the process of piloting an option that would allow individual parents to join as members.

Infrastructure and funding are key pieces to creating and sustaining non-standard hours programs. At the same time, it is evident that the people who envision and lead these programs play a crucial role. All the respondents articulated a commitment to the programs they were responsible for and a desire to find creative ways to overcome the challenges for the program. Respondents were very aware that they were providing a unique service that was vital to the families and children that they served and this was a driving force behind their decisions to sustain the program. The respondents described this commitment through their willingness to try new ways of working, to form partnerships to access different sources of funding, and to absorb some of the costs of the program into the larger organization. As one respondent commented, "it's a service, you're either doing it, or you're not".

*Challenges for non-standard hours child care programs*

Providing non-standard hours child care presented a number of challenges for the programs included in the case studies. The interviewees believed that there was a demand for the non-standard hours program. However, usage was inconsistent—even low at times. Several respondents commented that they thought that some people who may need non-standard hours child care prefer to find other arrangements for this type of care such as in their own home and/or with a relative/spouse. Affordability was also identified as an issue. One respondent commented that many people preferred to off-shift with their partner if they are able.

For the families using the non-standard hours programs, respondents noted that they often have irregular or rotating shifts as many non-standard hours workers do. As a result, the three larger centre-based programs all offered part-time or on-call care, as well as accepting requests for care as little as one week in advance. The in-home caregiver program also included emergency or on-

call services. This model requires significant administrative resources. One director reported that the non-standards hours program required significant human resources and as much as 50 percent more administration time than the regular day program to schedule children and staff.

Without the stable funding described above, inconsistent use patterns would make it very difficult to sustain the program. For the centre-based service (with four centres) in Ontario that does not receive any extra funding, implementation of full-day kindergarten (FDK) for all four and five year olds was putting financial pressure on the program. As with many programs, the higher ratios for four and five year olds had allowed centres to subsidize some of the costs for younger children and—in this case—the non-standards hours provision. With those children moving out of the centre or spending less time in the centre, the respondent articulated that, "FDK is the biggest challenge I have ever faced". The in-child's home program also identified the cost of the model as prohibitive for most people and was working on solutions to bring the costs down to make the service more accessible to a broader range of people.

Although all the programs identified their staff and leadership as factors contributing to the success of the program, some respondents identified challenges with staffing the non-standard hours program. For some programs, recruiting supply staff to work non-standard or irregular hours was an on-going challenge. Finding trained staff to work these shifts was particularly challenging for some programs. They reported that if the program could offer full-time jobs, it could be much easier to recruit staff, although finding reliable supply staff would still be an issue.

The administration associated with scheduling staff was identified as a challenge but many of the programs had devised unique systems for this complex scheduling. The additional hours of operation also meant that there were more staff in the same space and there were some challenges around maintaining consistency in the room and communication between staff working different shifts in the same room. One respondent highlighted that many of the staffing challenges were consistent with the challenges faced by all child care programs regardless of operating hours and were indicative of chronic child care workforce challenges overall.

Although respondents were satisfied with the overall program quality, some respondents admitted that their expectations for quality were lower for the non-standard hours program. As one respondent commented, "you have to accept the fact that you are going to have poorer quality [in non-standard hours programs]. The quality is close but there are some challenges". The reasons given were mainly due the nature of the non-standard hours program; building and maintaining relationships with children and their families is more of a challenge when individual children attend the program at different times each week and the group of children staff are working with is always changing. For example, one program may have 65 to 70 different children coming though in one week, all on different schedules. On the other hand, one

respondent also highlighted how relationships with families using the non-standard hours programs, particularly in the evenings and overnight, can sometimes be more intimate than usual, noting that this can cause challenges around boundaries and privacy.

The use of mixed-age groupings in some programs was seen as both an asset and a challenge by respondents. Creating a more familial feeling with mixed-age groupings was generally seen as a positive element of the non-standard hours programs but some respondents commented that at times, staff have a struggle with accommodating the diverse needs of children in this context.

There was also some concern about the children and families using the non-standards hours programs. Particularly for school-age children in programs that ran until 12 AM or 2 AM, respondents were concerned that having their sleep disrupted in the middle of the night and then having to wake up for school the next morning was leaving school-age children exhausted. School-age children may also struggle with the limited time that they get to see their parent(s) as a result of having to go to school when their parent(s) is not working. One respondent also identified the lack of sleep for the parents as a risk factor. For example, if the parent works late and uses her money or subsidy for child care to cover her work shift, she then has to be awake during the day and cannot access additional child care to catch up on sleep.

Respondents also highlighted that ever-changing schedules are also difficult from the child's point of view as they are always with  different groups of children and— in some cases— different staff. Some of the social benefits typically gained from early learning and child care programs were considered unlikely in this context. On the other hand, one respondent observed that many of the children using the non-standard hours program actually saw their parents more than children using the standard hours program.

Overall, the initiatives identified through these case studies had become sustainable non-standard hours programs that are considered assets to the organizations and the communities. This was largely due to the non-standard hours program being part of a larger multi-service or multi-site organization and having a consistent source of extra funding to sustain the program despite the irregular and sometimes low use patterns. While there were some challenges, they were not considered insurmountable or too much different than those faced by all child care providers. Certainly, the willingness of the individuals and communities to start up and sustain these programs was essential to their success.

# LOOKING BEYOND OUR BORDERS: HOW OTHER COUNTRIES TREAT NON-STANDARD HOURS CHILD CARE

*Sweden*

In Sweden, every child is entitled to a space in child care (called both "preschool "and "day care") and parents pay fees based on the number of children they have and a percent of their income to a maximum of 3 percent. Local governments or municipalities are mandated by the national government to supply sufficient child care spaces to meet the demand of the parents in the community. However, the current laws do not make it mandatory for municipalities to provide child care during what they term "inconvenient times" or non-standard work hours. According to the National Department of Education website[10]:

> Municipalities are to *try* to offer care for children at times when pre-schools or out-of-school centres are not offered as necessary with regard to the parents' employment or the family's situation. The municipality then offers care during the parents' inconvenient working hours through such activities as night-time pre-school, pedagogical care or child carers in one's own home.

Despite a robust and well funded child care system, the majority of Swedish municipalities do not provide child care at "inconvenient times". However, the availability of non-standard hours programs appears to be considerably greater than in Canada. As of 2011, about 50 percent of Sweden's 290 municipalities provided child care during weekends, late days or nights and about 40 of these provided child care around the clock (24 hours). About 30 provide child care "as needed" without further specification (Hobson, Carlsson, Fahlén and Anderberg, 2011).

In 2012, the English language Swedish newspaper, *The Local,* reported that a recent shift had resulted in a record amount of municipalities (160 out of 290) providing child care at "inconvenient hours" including early mornings, evenings, night and weekends (http://www.thelocal.se/20120910/43136; http://www.thelocal.se/20120823/42776#.

It was noted that this increase was the result of the changing needs of the communities which the municipalities are mandated to serve. The specific implementation and amount of non-standard hours child care vary at the municipal level (it should be noted that Swedish municipalities have considerable discretion about how child care is delivered). As well, the national government had announced the introduction of a temporary financial incentive to be implemented in 2013 for municipalities to set up "inconvenient hours" child care.

[10] http://www.government.se/sb/d/7172/a/172247

A recent article in the BBC news magazine (Savage, 2013) featured a Swedish single mother using out-of-hours care in the municipality of Norrköping, a town of 90,000 in the south. The article noted that there are four publicly-run centres open overnight in the municipality. A mother interviewed for the story stated that her two children "spend about two or three nights a week at one of the preschools, which is more like a homey apartment than an education centre". The article further noted that parents are required to provide proof of their inconvenient working hours to use the service and that the children also use daytime preschool.

The child care guidelines for the municipality of Linköping confirmed that parents are required to provide proof of their work or activity at inconvenient hours to obtain care at that time. As well, the guidelines state that "to be eligible to receive care at inconvenient times, the need for supervision must be at least 30 hours per month for reasons of continuity". The fees charged are the same as for typical hours child care and children can have spaces in both services simultaneously. However, the guidelines specify that "there is a local shared queuing system for the two round-the-clock units and for evening and weekend care", and that a space in inconvenient hours child care is not guaranteed within four months of registration as is the case for regular hours spaces.

*United Kingdom*

In the UK, child care services are mainly set up and provided by a private market in which services are more fragmented and diverse than are Sweden's. The U.K. market features a significant unregulated child care sector including both caregivers that care for children in their own homes ("child minders"), those who care in the home of the child(ren) and care by relatives. Similar to Sweden, however, local authorities have a legal obligation to provide "sufficient childcare" and to manage and/or provide the "free entitlement" of 15 hours per week for every three and four-year-old. Local authorities are also required to do a Childcare Sufficiency Assessment every three years to determine that there is sufficient child care for their area.

Family and Childcare Trust (previously Daycare Trust), the lead U.K. early childhood organization, has developed an extensive detailed analysis of non-standard hours child care in two reports, *Open all hours? Flexible childcare in the 24/7 era* (Singler, 2011) and *Childcare for parents with atypical work patterns* (Rutter & Evans, 2012). These reports assess the demand for non-standard hours child care and investigate challenges faced by parents, as well as the options and barriers for services that provide non-standard hours care.

According to this research, in the last round of Sufficiency Assessments in 2012, a growing number of local authorities acknowledged the needs of parents who work outside normal office

hours. However, child care for parents with unpredictable work patterns was largely ignored by both local and national governments. Additionally, the report noted,

> The Department for Education announced that parents would be allowed to use their entitlement to free early education between 7.00 AM and 7.00 PM thus extending the hours over which free early education could be claimed, should nurseries be willing to operate over these hours (Rutter & Evans, 2012: 14).

Online surveys and interviews conducted with parents found that a significant number of parents worked atypical hours, including shifts, overtime and hours which vary on a weekly basis. Further, there were many low-income parents working atypical hours. Child care on an ad-hoc or emergency basis was identified by the report as a particularly challenging service to access and affordability was one of the major obstacles.

Whether regulated child care at non-standard times is suitable was a major concern, particularly for evening and overnight care. While parents expressed a preference for caregivers to come to their homes at these times, survey responses also found that parents lacked awareness of the regulations for registered child minders (home child care providers). The author suggested that, "this demonstrates that government, at both a national and local level (Family Information Services, for example), and child minding organizations, must do everything they can to communicate this information to parents" (Singler, 2011: 4-5).

Interviews and case studies of providers of non-standard hours child care revealed a number of significant barriers to providing and sustaining this form of care. One of the most significant barriers was the difficulty of establishing demand for atypical hours services.

> Parents might fail to report unmet demand for formal care as they do not feel it is available and do not request it. For these reasons, and other methodological problems…local authorities find it very difficult to uncover a comprehensive picture of demand (Singler, 2011: 5).

The lack of information about demand for non-standard hours services inhibits providers from moving forward with setting them up, as well as making it more difficult to identify parents that need the services once they are in place. As observed in the Singler report, "when providers attempt to provide this service, many fail, as demand takes too long to build" (2011: 5). Other significant barriers revolved around staffing—finding staff willing to work non-standard hours, needing to pay them more and managing staff-to-child ratios. The lack of integration with other services was also a barrier for families, as often they need someone to transition their children from school or daytime care to evening or night time care.

The U.K. interviews and case studies with service providers highlighted some strategies for overcoming the above challenges. A number of case studies confirmed earlier research that identified nanny or childminder networks as a viable model for providing atypical hours care; both models involve the caregivers working in the child's home at atypical hours. The networks can be managed by a larger organization or as a standalone entity. Using registered childminders is optimal, according to Singler, as it allows parents to claim various tax benefits targeted to child care but some examples included unregistered "nannies". Additional funding from the local or national government to set up and maintain these networks until they are self-sustaining was critical to their success. In one case the local government funded a "childcare coordinator" to coordinate a network of childminders and link up demand and provision (Singler, 2011: 44).

The local government also plays a crucial role in identifying demand through their child care sufficiency assessments. One case study highlighted a local authority that was using the assessment to set up services in locations where there was high demand, "for example, the service might be located in a community centre in a disadvantaged neighbourhood, where local people do not usually use, or engage with, mainstream provision. By attaching the care to these centres, they can offer childcare to those who need it most" (Singler, 2011: 47).

Although Daycare Trust was able to identify some positive examples of services for atypical child care needs, the majority of parents surveyed could not access formal care at atypical times. More recently, in an analysis of the child care market, a 2014 report by Citizens' Advice found that three in four child care providers (including child minders) did not provide evening or weekend care. The group's Chief Executive, Gillian Guy, said:

> Jobs are no longer just nine to five but childcare often is… Our evidence shows that the most suitable childcare options for those on unstable hours are likely to be of poorer quality, which could have a damaging impact on a child's ability to learn and develop. Parents who work shifts or irregular hours may find that the lack of availability will be a major block to getting work. A last minute change of shift or an unexpected meeting could mean parents see their hard work undone by extra costs (Citizen's Advice, 2014).

# DISCUSSION

This report has examined what we know about non-standard hours work and child care in Canada and the broader context in which non-standard hours child care should be considered. This section will summarize the central findings about non-standard hours child care in Canada at this time, then focus on a number of issues, challenges and opportunities for moving forward. The discussion leads to recommendations to governments, employers, unions and parents.

**What we know**

The literature review, provincial/territorial scan and case studies conducted for this report indicate that the state of non-standard hours child care in Canada has been largely static since this topic was first considered in the 1980's. Most notably, the same structural issues about funding and the market-based approach to child care provision continue to limit the development and sustainability of non-standard hours child care. The reliance on the private market to set up child care programs continues to perpetuate a lack of child care spaces overall, and a lack of spaces for harder to serve populations such as non-standard hours workers in particular. The extra cost of providing non-standard hours child care that is due to fluctuating use patterns and extra staffing and administration makes it not financially feasible for most community-based child care programs. Limited public funding and heavy reliance on parent fees to fund programs makes it very difficult to accommodate non-standard hours and flexible services without being unaffordable for most families.

The case studies identified consistent factors that facilitate sustainable non-standard hours child care in Canada. Programs that operate at non-standard hours seem to have at least one of two characteristics: a) they are part of a larger organization that can support, if not subsidize, the non-standard hours program and/or b) they have access to additional funding. Furthermore, the people who envision and lead these programs play a significant role in initiating and sustaining them. As with many community-based programs, it takes commitment from the people and the organization to continually find new ways to meet the needs of their communities and keep the program operating.

The case studies also indicate that there are a number of models or options that can work to provide non-standard hours child care programs, not just one model.

Two of the programs studied formed partnerships with other social services for families and children. These partnerships provided a stable source of funding and/or clientele and supported the program to meet the needs of families using other social services for various reasons, and to sustain the program for the broader community.

Lastly, this report highlights how little is known about the need for and the provision of non-standard hours child care in Canada. There has been very little research, data and policy analysis on the topic over the past twenty years. This lack of research, data and analysis is, to some degree, part of an overall decline in Canadian child care research. Governments that previously led research have stopped doing so and have significantly decreased funding to organizations involved in child care research. In the past, several provinces had initiated pilot projects to provide and research flexible child care that includes non-standard hours provision. However, these projects have largely been one-time experiments that were not sustained over a long period of time or—indeed—were sometimes not even evaluated. That is, services have been set up and funded for a limited amount of time and then—sometimes with no or minimal evaluation, funding is removed and it is up to the community to sustain the program. In most cases communities are not able to replace public funding and as a result programs stop providing the non-standard hours service or close all together. Similarly, a number of programs were initiated and supported by employers and/or unions but have since closed, leaving very little or no information about the program to contribute to knowledge. A number of issues, challenges and opportunities for non-standard hours child care are discussed in more detail in the next section.

**Issues, challenges and opportunities**

*Demand for non-standard hours child care is unknown and assumed to be low*

The lack of reliable data and research on the provision and use of non-standard hours child care and on families with children where one or both parents are working non-standard hours leaves many unanswered questions that need to be considered. Some provincial officials and service providers noted that they believed there to be very little to no demand for non-standard hours child care. These assumptions were mostly based on low enrolment in previous or on-going programs. One provider indicated that the cost of care was probably a factor in the low enrolment and that parents were probably finding other, lower cost solutions for their non-standard hours child care. The high percentage of families led by single parents using the community-based programs may indicate that two-parent families are choosing to off-shift, a possibility also identified in the literature, to manage their child care needs.

The literature and interviews also highlighted that there are still questions around whether it is appropriate for children to be in centre-based care during non-standard hours, particularly in the evening and overnight. While no one interviewed for this project considered this an "ideal" situation, there were a range of perspectives presented by the respondents. It was clear, however, that non-standard hours child care is viewed as primarily a care service and does not necessarily fit into some of the more common current conceptions about early childhood education. In the current context, child care (in contrast to programs acknowledged to be "early childhood education") in Canada is still largely viewed as a private family responsibility. Therefore it is not surprising that that the more care-based nature of non-standard hours services may have an impact on the decision to provide government support.

International research and anecdotal evidence in Canada indicates that there is a mismatch between the perceived or expected demand for non-standard hours child care and the actual take up of this form of care. Whether this is partly because this care is unavailable, too expensive or undesired is not clear. Further research is much needed to identify the child care needs and wants for families who work non-standard hours and how they can be supported to sustain healthy working and family lives. Various levels of government have to play a role in gathering this critical information. This is particularly relevant as we see a shift in the Canadian labour market that is changing the "typical" or standard working conditions for many workers, including those working non-standard hours.

*Canada's changing labour market and family well-being*

There are many connected and complex related issues that are touched on but not fully discussed in this report. Of great concern is how the changing labour market, perpetuated by the 24 hour service economy has added another layer to non-standard hours work. There is mounting evidence that non-standard or precarious work is increasing and that women, low-income, and racialized groups are overrepresented in this form of work (Vosko et al., 2003; PEPSO, 2013, 2015). Exactly how much of this precarious work occurs during non-standard hours is not clear. However, there are some striking correlations between the industries with the highest numbers of non-standard hours workers and those most closely associated with precarious work such as service and manufacturing.

Precarious work presents economic and social challenges for families and communities that have an impact on family and child well-being (PEPSO, 2013, 2015). Combined with the challenges of non-standard hours work, families may be facing unprecedented vulnerability in the labour market which could have a profound impact on their overall well-being. As Strazdins et al. concluded, "unsociable [non-standard hours] work times are more often a condition in low-paid jobs, especially in the expanding service sector, and so dual-earner parents with fewer skills or less education could face the double jeopardy of low -income and work at unsocial hours. These parents will also have the greatest difficulty accessing affordable child care when they need it (Presser & Cox, 1997) or purchasing services that might help them cope, further widening status-based inequalities in parent and child well-being" (2006: 407).

While a full discussion of the above issues is beyond the scope of this report, these new realities combined with what we know about non-standard hours work and child care, present us with some important considerations for moving forward. For example, parents working part-time and/or irregular hours, regardless of the time of day, are going to struggle to access child care as it is typically set up. It may be useful to question how programs that serve parents working non-standard hours may also be able to accommodate workers with non-standard employment more broadly. The centre-based programs included in the case studies for this project had all

developed strategies for dealing with part-time and fluctuating schedules. Identifying other barriers such as affordability and restrictions on fee subsidy eligibility (i.e. must be employed full-time) would have to be a key consideration in making these services more broadly available.

As well, the idea that non-standard hours child care needs fall into a number of categories, as Friendly et al. and the Quebec government information describe, requires much more analysis. As the Quebec information shows, some schedules are much easier to meet than others. As well, the question of policy requiring accommodation for child care reasons needs to be factored in. As the available data on workers in non-standard hours jobs is not fine-grained enough to know who they are, how many there are, and where they're located, it is difficult to know how much of the non-standard hours workforce could be provided with child care options that are relatively easy to maintain—and how many, and where other solutions must be found. Again, this points to the need for better data to support policy making and program development.

*Quality in non-standard hours services*

As with all child care services, quality services are absolutely fundamental for children and their families using non-standard hours programs. The research reviewed in this report highlights that the well-being of children and families with parents and caregivers working non-standard hours needs special consideration and support. The case studies included in this project indicated a number of challenges for children and staff in non-standard hours programs. Further research on the specific challenges and additional supports needed to sustain quality in non-standard hours child care are critical in the development and improvement of these services. This is of particular importance considering the potential vulnerabilities of children and families who are using or need non-standard hours child care. A holistic approach that considers the needs and realities for the family more broadly is needed to provide high quality services. Of course, child care is only one aspect of support for families. Workplace and family policies are also vital to support non-standard hours workers.

*Workplace and family policies need to be created*

Some commentators have recommended, and the Fiona Johnstone case and other related legal challenges have reinforced the idea that workplace and family policies including preferential work arrangements and accommodation for workers with care giving responsibilities, can and should play an integral role in providing support to families with non-standard hours. The Fiona Johnstone human rights case has set the precedent that employers do have a legal obligation, under the Canadian Human Rights Act, to try to accommodate workers' schedules based on their child care responsibilities and options in certain circumstances. That is, a large grey area still persists as the court ruling in this case determined that "employees must show that they have exhausted other reasonable alternatives for care" before the employer has a duty to accommodate for their child care needs. This leaves many workers vulnerable to employers who may interpret

their legal obligation as a last resort and make unrealistic demands on employees to prove that they have exhausted all options.

In addition to holding employers accountable for their legal obligations under the Canadian Human Rights Act, further clarification could address employees' rights to working arrangements that accommodate their family and care giving responsibilities while still being able to maintain full-time employment. Workplace and family policies are an integral element of a comprehensive approach to supporting families' work-life balance and overall well-being, particularly with the increase of non-standard forms of work. Hegewisch's comparative review of flexible working policies concluded that access to flexible working conditions is very important but it is not a "panacea for all work-family conflict" (2009: 60). Other factors such as access to child care and well-paid, flexible parental leave benefits may be just as, if not more important.

# CONCLUSION

This report has aimed at providing an overview of what we know and what we do about non-standard hours child care in Canada. Case studies of five diverse non-standard hours child care programs provide examples of how we can meet the child care needs of parents and caregivers engaged in non-standard hours work and their children. As well, international examples in Sweden and the UK have identified some possibilities for moving forward.

It is clear that persistent challenges, many of them associated with the absence of a comprehensive child care system with sustained funding and flexible options for families hinder non-standard hours child care services available in Canada. The extra costs associated with providing non-standard hours services are unsustainable for programs that cannot subsidize these costs via other programs in a larger organization or a stable external source of additional funding. Parent fees are already exorbitant and cannot be raised to cover the cost of these programs without making it completely inaccessible to the majority of families who need it.

The limited amount of research on this form of care and data collection on the child care needs and barriers for families who work non-standard hours also continues to hinder our progress on this issue. This report has identified a number of considerations that need to be included in further research and data collection that is greatly needed.

Above all else, the research makes it quite clear that Canada needs a national, publicly-funded, publicly-managed universal system of high quality early childhood education and child care program to meet the needs of all families and children. A systemic approach to the creation of programs and reliable and adequate funding that goes directly to the programs would have a profound impact on the accessibility and affordability of child care for all Canadians including those engaged in non-standard hours work.

**Recommendations based on the study**

*To the federal government*

1. Provide strong federal leadership to put in place a comprehensive early childhood education and care (ECEC) policy framework and system while respecting provincial, territorial and Indigenous jurisdiction over social programs.
2. Develop a full ECEC policy framework based on universal access (including parents working non-standard hours) and moving away from the market-based system that makes it so difficult to develop and sustain non-standard hours child care. Part of the policy framework would be a plan for long-term sustained federal ECEC transfer funding to provinces/territories.
3. Work with provinces/territories to establish a research, data and evaluation agenda that includes the issue of child care for non-standard hours workers care as well as

consideration of other family supportive policies to address the needs of non-standard hours workers.

4. Convene a national working group including provincial/territorial representatives, employers and unions to examine the situation of families in which parents work non-standard hours and to make recommendations for a variety of options for better support.

*To provincial/territorial governments*

5. Review and analyze each jurisdiction's approach to non-standard hours child care and identify demand for non-standard hours services.
6. Develop a policy approach that would facilitate and support affordable non-standard hours child care services where there is local demand.
7. Develop an approach to providing public funding to recognize the actual cost of operating to non-standard hours services.
8. Provide informative materials online and in print for parents about regulated child care services offering non-standard hours child care.

*To employers*

9. Consider the needs of workers who are parents when implementing workplace arrangements and policies such as schedules, shifts and accommodation.
10. Develop workplace policies specifically designed to address the issues that families face with regard to non-standard hours. This work should be in collaboration with relevant unions and other workplace groups and personnel and should recognize there are instances in which there is a need for non-standard hours work.

*To human rights specialists*

11. Explore, contribute to and develop rights-based legal and other remedies to the current child care situation that fails to support parents needing non-standard hours child care. This work should be based on human rights conceptions of child care, family responsibilities and women's rights (such as Fiona Johnstone and other Canadian human rights decisions based on accommodation, the Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

*To unions*

12. Work with unions and community partners to convene a working group on the issue of non-standard hours child care.
13. Advocate with governments on the issue of access to child care generally and non-standard hours child care in particular.

14. Develop and provide resources for members (such as the Finding Quality Child Care website, research and educational tools) to help them address the issue of non-standard hours child care.
15. Continue providing support for pilot and other special initiatives in this area both to meet the needs of members and to provide illustrations of successful non-standard hours child care.
16. Consider and analyze innovative union policy approaches to families that could support the child care needs of members working non-standard hours.

*To parents working non-standard hours*

17. Join with others to advocate for a universal national child care program that would meet the needs of all families including those working non-standard hours.
18. Be as well informed about your child care options as you can be, although they are limited, so as to maximize the possibility of securing suitable, affordable, quality child care.

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# Appendix A: Provincial/territorial questions

- Review purpose of the project as outlined in the email
- Do you have a particular definition of non-standard hours for purposes of considering child care policy or funding?

1. Do you currently have any specific regulations, policies, funding mechanisms or practices that are intended to support the establishment or sustainability of non-standard hours child care?

   If yes: →
   - 1a. Can you elaborate?
   - 1b. Are the details available on your website/can you send us a copy of relevant documents?
   - 1c. How have these been effective?

2. Have there been any previous initiatives in (PT) aimed at the development of non-standard hours child care?

   If yes: →
   - 2a. Can you elaborate? Are these still in operation? If no, why not?
   - 2b. Are there any available reports or documents that describe the initiative or its impact?

3. Are there any general regulations, policies, funding mechanisms or practices that, in your opinion, have facilitated the establishment or sustainability of non-standard hours child care (that may have been more general or intended for another purpose)?

   If yes: →
   - 3a. Can you elaborate?
   - 3b. In what way have these been effective?

4. Do you know if there is a greater unmet demand for non-standard hours child care than for those programs operating standard hours?
5. What do you think have been the main challenges with the development of non-standard hours child care in (PT)?
6. We are planning on doing a selected number of case studies on non-standard hours child care programs that are well established and are meeting community need. Can you suggest a non-standard hours child care program (or organization that operates more than one program) that you think is particularly successful?
7. Is there anything else you would like to add? Thank you for your time

## Appendix B: Invitation to case study participants

Dear NAME

The Childcare Resource and Research Unit (CRRU) is working with the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) on a project to provide an overview of the current state of child care during non-standard hours. We have conducted a review of Canadian and other relevant research and policies. One component of our research is to conduct several case studies of service providers who successfully offer this form of child care.

Using information available in other sources (other research, "key informants", your website, news articles), we have identified your program as one we would like to include. Thus, I am writing to ask whether you would be willing to have a telephone interview with us so we can develop a good description of the program and try to answer some common questions across all the case studies.

The semi-structured, pre-scheduled telephone interview should take about an hour. If you are willing to participate, we will send you a document with information we have been able to put together about your organization from other sources; if you could confirm or correct this information (for example, the number and type of child care spaces, the year the program started, and so on), it would simplify the telephone interview somewhat. We can fill in missing information from the interview (or you may want to send it to us). In addition, we will send you in advance the broader questions we would like to cover, for example, what you see as the biggest challenges and what policies/circumstances you attribute to the success of your program before scheduling a time for the phone interview.

We will then write up the information in a case study for a public report on this research, sending the case study back to you for your approval. We cannot promise anonymity, as the programs will be identified by name and province.

If you could let me know if you are interested in being part of this research or if you have further questions

Thank you so much

# Appendix C Case study summaries

1. **Discovery Children's Centre**, Winnipeg, MB

Discovery Children's Centre is the largest single site child care centre in Winnipeg with 171 licensed space serving children from 12 weeks to 12 years old. The centre was established in 1976 and began providing the flex program that includes evening care until 12:30 AM, in 1996. The centre began a Saturday program two years later in 1998. Executive director Ron Blatz explained that, the move to non-standard hours provision was partly about survival in a competitive child care market that was being underutilized at the time. As well, it was in response to the changing work patterns of the community and Manitobans more broadly.

The centre is located in a vacant school building and has programs running in 12 separate rooms. Along with the flex program, the centre also provides regular full-day child care services, part-day nursery school programs and after school programs for school-age children.

*What services are provided?*

The flex program provides flexible care for children age 2 years to 12 years between the hours of 6:30 AM and 12:30 AM Monday through Friday, and from 6:30 AM to 7:30 PM on Saturdays. The program is funded for 32 spaces and an average of 12-15 children usually attend at one time. Children enrolled in the regular full-day child care services have access to extended hours care from 6:00 PM after the other programs at the centre end, and on Saturday.

The flex program uses two dedicated rooms within the centre and has dedicated staff. The two flex rooms are used exclusively by the Flex program and are the home base for the children from 6:30 AM – 12:30 midnight. There are two regular evening shifts, one from 4:30 PM till close and one from 1 PM to 9 PM. There is a day and night supervisor assigned to the program. The evening supervisor typically does administrative work after the children go to bed as the program requires about 50 percent more administration than the regular day program.

Ron Blatz described the program as "a little more relaxed", with mixed age groups that create a more familial feeling to the program. The program maintains the emergent curriculum approach that is used in the other Discovery programs and offers children a lot of free time and outdoor activities. The extended hours program even participated in a two week outdoor challenge along with the rest of the centre where the children spent the evening outdoors until bed time. As well, the centre tries to do unique activities or outings during the flex program such as taking the children on a trip to see a movie.

Parents have to register for the flex time specifically. 'Regular' parents are asked to commit to use the service a minimum of two days per week, using at least four evenings or Saturdays per month. These parents are guaranteed care during the times they request by the Friday of the week before and are committed to paying for at least two days per week even if they do not use the program. 'Causal' parents are not asked to commit to any amount or times of usage but they are

not guaranteed the hours they request on the Friday of the week before. If the centre is unable to accommodate request for casual parents they will be notified by Friday evening of the week before.

Regulations stipulate that no child can be in the program for more than 18 hours in a day. Ron Blatz explained that the centre is only open 18 hours per day so this never becomes an issue. In fact, he has observed that children in the flex program are almost always at home with their parents more during waking hours per week than our regular full-time day children.

*Who uses the program?*

The flex program does not serve infants below 2 years old as they cannot be accommodated in mixed age groupings.

Ron Blatz commented that the program was originally targeted to parents working in retail and hospitality with the centre located four blocks away from the largest shopping mall in the province, and 10 blocks away from the airport where there is a concentration of hotels and restaurants. However, Blatz has observed that it turned out to serve a much wider variety of professionals including musicians, bus drivers, police officers, fire fighters, students, military personnel, airline workers and hospital personnel. For example, Blatz described one parent who is an ECE and needs the program because of her own rotating shifts in child care. The majority of parents using the program have an irregular or rotating shift.

Blatz estimated that approximately half the families live in the community and the other half work in the community. He also commented that there are parents who are driving from the other side of Winnipeg to access the centre. The specific demographics of the children and families was not known at the time of the interview. Blatz commented that if he had to guess, he would say that a larger percentage of single parent families use the flex program.

On the rare occasion a family from the non-flex regular day program may use the flex program if a parent is asked by the boss to stay overtime, or a scheduled babysitter falls ill etc. The program is prepared to do what they can to accommodate these full time children for the odd evening here and there.

*What contributes to the success of the program?*

The flex program has been successful for a number of reasons, most notably, the "very generous" provincial funding given to the extended hours spaces.

Government funding

Manitoba provides operating funds to eligible not-for-profit child care centres through a "unit funding" model, and to regulated family and group child care homes. This operational funding is linked to regulated age group composition and a maximum parent fee set by the provincial government and incorporates fee subsidies for eligible families. Discovery Children's Centre

receives one and a half times the regular operational funding for each evening space and double the regular operating grant if also opened on the weekends. Overall, this means the flex program spaces are actually funded at twice the amount as the regular day spaces. This additional funding is absolutely crucial to sustaining the program and was also a main factor in the decision to open the flex program.

Having consistent funding means the program is always open and fully staffed so that it can accommodate weekly and last minute requests, and the on-going changes of families' schedules. Extra funding is also critical to support the additional administration time associated with the program.

Size

The size of the centre also supports the flex program as it can draw on some of the administrative and staff resources of the larger centre. There is a supervisor for each program, including a day and night supervisor for the flex program, which creates a strong core of leadership that can be called on to deal with last minute challenges. The center also has three administrative staff that help with the heavy administration associated with the flex program.

*What are the challenges for the program?*

Although the flex program is financially sustainable and supported by the size of the overall centre, there are some on-going challenges to providing such a flexible service.

Administration, staffing and supervision

Ron Blatz estimated the flex program accounts for 50% of the centre's overall administration time. Scheduling care for families' requests from the week before is an on-going task, as well as fitting in request from causal, part-time families.

Blatz commented that they have been pretty lucky with consistent staff. However, the flex program supervisors do have more staff to manage which can be a challenge at times. Blatz is always worried about filling the 4:30 to midnight shift, and when the staff on the shift is sick or wants to take holiday it is difficult to replace them.

Quality and relationships

The nature of the flex program makes some aspects of quality difficult to maintain. For example, the program may have 65 to 70 different children coming though in one week, all on different schedules. In this context it can be difficult for staff to build meaningful relationships with children and their families. Additionally, because there are numerous staff on different shifts the program is less consistent in programming and approach in comparison to the other regular hours programs. Ron Blatz saw this as an inevitable result of having a flex program where the staff are always coping with different children at different times. He stated, "you have to accept the fact that you are going to have poorer quality. The quality is close, but there are some challenges".

### Challenges for children

Being in an environment with different children, different staff and at different times of the day can be challenging for some children. Blatz described it is more difficult to follow routines in the flex program for some children who are in the program at different times each week. They also do not get the opportunity to build strong friendships in the same way as children who are with the same group every day. Not knowing who is going to be there on any given day can lead to disappointment for children when their favourite friends are not there at the same times.

School-agers are a particular concern for Blatz as they are often coming from a full day of school to the flex program in the evening, and then being woken up to drive home at 12:30 AM. The long hours and sleep disruptions can be exhausting for these children.

2. **The Preschool Centre,** Fredericton, NB

The Preschool Centre provides child care in three centres and five after-school programs in Fredericton. The Windsor St. location opened in 1966 and was the first non-profit centre in the New Brunswick. It was also the first fully inclusive centre in the Maritime Provinces and worked closely with SpeciaLink: The National Centre for Child Care Inclusion, to facilitate the inclusion of children with disabilities.

The Preschool Centre started providing extended hours programs after union reps from the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) and the Union of Postal Communication Employees (UPCE) initiated a feasibility study with their members and the existing non-profit child care centres in Fredericton in June 2001. By the end of the feasibility study process, The Preschool Centre was the only provider left and agreed to work with CUPW to provide child care, including extended hours care for their members. Shortly thereafter, CUPW actually funded the opening of the Clark St. location, and a year later an additional after-school program was opened at Clark with union support.

Lois Aubin-Vautour and Tracey Law are both administrators with The Preschool Centre and they commented that, "they [the union] have been very generous to us for sure". With the support of CUPW, the Preschool centre has expanded to meet the varying needs of their community and has established a sustainable program.

*What services are provided?*

The Preschool Centre offers two extended hours programs to CUPW and UPCE members only. Windsor location will open early at 6:30 AM to accommodate mail carriers, and the Clark St. and Main St location close as late as 7:15 PM to accommodate workers in the Canada Post call centre. Regular program hours are from 7:30 AM to 5:30 PM.

Typically, one staff is available during the extended hours programs, although depending on need, other staff support can be provided. Mixed-age grouping are used during extended hours as the number and ages of the children fluctuates. The evening program is less structured, serves dinner and offers homework support for school-age children.

*Who uses the program?*

The program is only offered to CUPW and UPCE members. There are occasions in which a non-union parent may use the service, but it is not formally advertised to non-union parents or the broader community. Centre directors Tracey and Lois identified that there was demand in the community for the service, but they also felt that most people just needed slightly extended hours and the centre was willing to accommodate these on an as-needed basis. All families are restricted to a maximum of 9.5 hours of care per day.

Members of both Unions are eligible for a subsidy from the Child Care Fund. The subsidy for one child is 20%, two children – 25%, three children – 30%, and so on. The program bills the union directly and the member receives a T4 for this annual contribution at the end of each year.

*What contributes to the success of the program?*

Union support

The Preschool Centre has a long-standing relationship with CUPW which has contributed to the development and on-going capacity of many of the individual programs including the extended hours component. The contributions made through CUPW have not only served their own members with the specific services they need, such as the extended hours, but have also helped the community by creating more spaces and facilitating higher quality education and care in general.

For example, CUPW supported staff to acquire specialized training in infant care to support the development of an infant room in one of the Preschool Centre centres. CUPW also funded a toy lending library to further support the community and assisted in the purchase of a bus to facilitate the transportation of children from one program to the other so they could access the extended hours program.

Size

Having a number of programs under the auspice of The Preschool Centre consolidates some of the administration for all of the programs.

*What are the challenges for the program?*

Lois and Tracey described minimal challenges associated with providing the extended day program as, again, the support of CUPW addresses the primary issue around funding.

Mixed-age group

Having children in mixed-age groups can be challenging at times, specifically when staff are expected to assist older children with their homework. The level of challenge fluctuates depending on the children and staff, however, it seems to have become less of a challenge at the time of the interview.

Staffing

At one time, it was a challenge to find staff that were willing to come in early to accommodate the CUPW members or to stay later to accommodate the UPCE parents but over time, a good list of school age staff who only work part time hours and are willing to do this regularly was developed.

3. **The Children's Place,** Ottawa, Ontario

The Children's Place provides flexible, extended hours child care in two communities in Ottawa, Ontario, including one centre that offers care 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The Children's Place, above all else, is dedicated to being flexible and accommodating families' individual care needs. During the interview, founder and executive director Terry MacIver described the program and explained that, 'no' is not in our vocabulary is probably the best way to put it".

The Children's Place was started as a private for-profit business in 1981. The program converted to non-profit incorporation in 1993 after a lengthy process that MacIver initiated after an opportunity was presented by the government in 1987 to convert existing for-profits to non-profit in order to receive wage enhancement grants.

MacIver got the idea for The Children's Place after working in a high tech firm where she saw women experiencing a disadvantage because they could not participate in more flexible working hours. She stated, "I felt if a program was available for extended hours, weekends etc., it would help women move ahead, perhaps work and go to school. Every other aspect of who could be served with a 24/7 program stemmed from this thought". The original Kanata location operated a 24/7 schedule but when she realized there was not a demand for 24 hour child care in that location, she sought out another location on Carling to provide the 24/7 care. The Kanata programs still provides extended hours including early drop off hours and care until midnight Monday through Friday. All of the programs offer absolute flexibility to the clients (the parents). MacIver is adamant there is a solution for any scenario presented to her.

*What services are provided?*

The Children's Place provides care in four centres, two located side by side in Kanata and two located side by side in Ottawa (Carling). The 1150 Carling location is the designated 24/7 site; it has 65 spaces and can accommodate 20 sleeping children. Central administration for the four centres is housed in one of the Kanata centres. The Children's Place also provides short-term, temporary, and emergency care. The program is a first call site for social services, shelters and other programs for children and families. MacIver also allows other extra-curricular and family support programs to use free space at The Children's Place to better serve the community. She sees this as a way to advertise her program while integrating other services that support the families, children and community already using her program.

MacIver describes the evening/night and weekend program as "a more familial environment" with mixed age groups and lower staff:child ratios for the older children. This program is also less structured and there is no program planning. Children are offered more "down time" and have access to computers, video games and TV. The program also ensures vehicles are available to transport children to school or other programs when needed. MacIver believes this is just part of maintaining a good service and that there is always a way to accommodate the parents' needs. She describes the program as an essential support for parents. She explained, "it's not about the

education component: we do that but we are not a school – we provide care for families who need or want it".

*Who uses the program?*

The clientele for the extended hours program is very diverse, "doctors to exotic dancers" as described by Terry MacIver. The families also live and work in a wide district around the centre. The majority of parents are using the program because they are working and approximately 95% are single parents. The Children's Place accommodates all types of workers including those working on-call and with irregular schedules. Parents are asked to submit their schedules in advance but MacIver understands that this is not possible for everyone.

Parents are charged $6/hour for care after 6 PM; this can be in addition to both full-time and part-time rates during the day. Evening care until about 9:30 PM is the most commonly used non-standard hours care. As well, the program usually has between 45-60 children on Saturdays.

*What contributes to the success of the program?*

The Children's Place operates a dynamic and financially sustainable extended hours program. It was very obvious the founder and executive director, Terry MacIver, has had a huge impact on the success of the program. Her leadership regarding flexibility and customer service guides the philosophy of the program.

Size

A main asset is the size of the organization. The four centres and their associated space and staff provide the program with considerable flexibility. MacIver explained that children and staff can be, and are, moved among centres when it is necessary to accommodate the needs of families and the program. Having this "economy of scale" allows the program to have strategies in place to cope with constant changes. For example, the program is able to keep eight spaces available to allow for congestion at the busiest transition times. Because all the programs do not run at the same time, the empty space can also be used to facilitate other services that both attract families to the program and allow children to stay at the program. Lastly, central administration consolidates the task of scheduling and staffing such a complex set of programs.

Human resources

Staff retention has not been an issue for the program. MacIver cites the dedicated and consistent staff team as key to the success of the program. She believes the work environment is fair and rewarding; staff are given opportunities to take on a variety of roles which provide them with new opportunities as well as contributing to the overall functioning of the program. MacIver has developed a system in which "group leaders" from each program go through a variety of roles including scheduling and other administration at the office, supervising the different sized programs and working "on the floor". She believes this model ensures that even if the supervisor

is absent, there is always someone available who understands every part of the program, and is able to make decisions about the program quickly and accurately.

MacIver was also clear that staff wages are controlled by how much we can charge full fee parents in order to keep the program affordable for them. On a scale, staff doing the same job, regardless of training, are paid the same amount. She did not think the staff all had to be trained ECEs and explained that she cannot compete with larger agencies or the school board in terms of wages. However, she feels that the low turnover in her staff reflects other benefits to working for the program.

Flexibility

An ethos of flexibility was clearly communicated during the interview, both in the day-to-day operations as well as in the changing demands of the program. MacIver provided several examples of how the program is flexible and adaptable. In the day-to-day, she described a guiding philosophy that is clearly communicated to all staff about being flexible and ready to change plans and accommodate families at the last minute. She felt as long as the program was open and running it should be used. She stated, "it's a service, you're either doing it, or you're not". She also highlighted the need to adapt to changes outside the centres such as the implementation of full-day kindergarten in the public schools. As a third-party provider of the extended day program, MacIver described a situation where she chose to hire a bus to transport children back and forth from the school rather than not provide the program for children because of boundaries.

*What are the challenges for the program?*

Terry MacIver did not identify many challenges she did not think were solvable for The Children's Place. Although there is no way to forecast the use of the 24/7 program or identify on-going demand for the program, the program is set up to cope with fluctuations of use and changing needs.

Relationships

Challenges with families arise due to the intimate nature of the relationship with staff and the program, particularly those families using the evening and overnight care. MacIver explained there "is an intimate, intrusive aspect to what we do – that is, information from parents is needed". Parents may be working late or overnight in some industries that may involve risk factors (i.e. bars and restaurants where drinks are served), which means the staff may be confronted with situations where they have to ask tough questions of parents if they think a child's safety may be at risk. Separated or divorced parents also have to be clear and open about custody arrangements, particularly if the other parent is not working non-standard hours and may feel they should be caring for the child rather than having her/him at the centre.

Full-day kindergarten (FDK)

MacIver stated that FDK is the biggest challenge she has ever faced. The exodus of four- and five-year-old kindergarten children from the program has created a significant strain on the day-time program. The program compensates by offering a number of programs for both kindergarten and school-age children before- and after-school but it is still a challenging adjustment. MacIver believes the non-standard hour's services are going to be what keeps the program going, as that is the one program families can not get through the school or other community-based programs.

### Funding

Funding has been unreliable and hard to access for the program. Changes due to the new provincial funding formula may change the situation but MacIver's experiences have led her to believe that public funding is not distributed equitably. The program, therefore, does not rely on outside funding and operates with the expectation that there will be very little funding from government. MacIver commented that it would be very difficult for a program to establish a non-standard hour's child care service today. She commented, "cost is a factor, especially for anyone wanting to try this today…we were in the right place at the right time and we have spent years in building our agency".

4. **Stepping Stones Child Care Cooperative,** Regina, Saskatchewan

Stepping Stones Child Care Cooperative provides extended hours care from 5:30am to 2:00am Monday through Saturday, and 5:30am to 12:00 am on Sundays.

The program was established in 1976 by a group of parents who needed child care. The precise date or rationale for starting the extended hours program could not be identified. The current Executive Director, Donna Rice, explained the centre did once provide 24 hour care but this service had already ended before she became the director in 1994. Stepping Stones is the only extended hours child care centre in Regina.

*What services are provided?*

Stepping Stones runs four programs: one extended hours child care program, two regular hours child care centres, and one 24 hour social services emergency home care specifically for children who have been taken into care by social services. Each program has a Director and an Assistant Director. The extended hours child care program is located in North-Central Regina and is a stand-alone program that can accommodate 90 children at any one time. Donna Rice is the Executive Director for the entire organization and oversees all of the programs.

The extended hours child care program can provide a child with up to 10 hours of child care per day, five days a week within the opening hours. The extended hours location of Stepping Stones gives priority to families who need extended hours care with the assumption they cannot receive this type of care anywhere else. Families in the regular hours programs get priority when a space opens in the extended hours program if their child care needs change and require extended hours. Parents need to sign up for an extended hours contract to have access to the program.

Parents are asked to provide a schedule in advance, but the program can also accommodate last minute requests during the week. Weekend care must be requested by Friday afternoon as the centre opens, and closes based on the times of care requested during the weekends. Short-term and emergency care is only offered in very special circumstances. Rice explained providing one time or casual emergency care is not financially feasible, with the administrative costs far exceeding the fees charged.

The extended hours program fees are $20 more per month than the regular day program, mainly to cover the cost of dinner, and enhanced ratios. The evening and weekend programs operate with a variation of mixed-age groups; infant and toddlers in one group and 3 – 12 years old in another group. On busier days or peak hours such as Saturdays and early evenings the older children may be divided into 3-6 year old and 6-12 year old groups. Programming is relaxed during the extended hours and weekend. A set number of staff are scheduled for the evening and weekend shifts even though this sometimes means the program is overstaffed.

*Who uses the program?*

Donna Rice described the families using the centre and explained that "most of our clients are single parent families, working in the health care field, the casino or in retail, or families where both parents work extended hours". Almost all of the families receive at least some fee subsidy from the government. She estimated 70% of the children served by Stepping Stones are Aboriginal.

About 15% of the children attend the centre using block funded social service or KidsFirst spaces. The block-funded spaces were established to provide respite for parents. The program usually enrolls approximately 130 children between their public spaces and the spaces funded by social services and KidsFirst. Children who have attended the centre through social services and KidsFirst are given priority if they apply for a full-time public space. As Rice described, the centre acknowledges these previous relationships and tries to facilitate a continuation of care for families.

*What contributes to the success of the program?*

Stepping Stones' extended hours program is financially stable and has established a sustainable operational model. A variety of funding streams contribute significantly to the success of the program.

Funding

Four main funding sources are key to the sustainability of the extended hours program at Stepping Stones.

The Early Childhood Service Grant in Saskatchewan provides all non-profit child care providers with operating money based on their capacity. The extended hours program receives one and half times the regular grant because they are open over 120 hours per week. This additional funding compensates for the associated staffing expense of being open during extended hours. Donna Rice commented, "we are fortunate to receive the additional grant funding" and described how the additional money may not be available to any centre wanting to provide extended hours care, due to provincial budget limitations. She speculated if Stepping Stones stopped providing the service, the Ministry of Education, Early Years Branch might re-allocate the funding to another centre to provide extended hours care in the community. If Stepping Stones did not have the additional grant funding and block funded spaces, it would not be financially feasible to operate the extended hour centre.

The centre also receives Centre Inclusion Block Funding which provides for enhanced ratios on a consistent basis. The Inclusion Funding is part of the province's strategy for facilitating inclusion of children with disabilities in regulated child care. Centres can receive funding for an individual child or as is the case for Stepping Stones, they receive block funding when they include a high number of children with additional needs on a regular basis.

Lastly, 16 spaces at Stepping Stones are block funded through other parent and child support programs; ten are funded by Social Services, and six are funded by the KidsFirst Program. The Social Services spaces are used to offer support to families who are dealing with the social services system and need respite or care so they can attend programs/courses. KidsFirst is a program designed to support children and families by enhancing parenting knowledge, providing support and building on family strengths. The spaces funded by KidsFirst allow the program to provide respite care for families on an as-needed, pre-booked basis.

Donna Rice commented on the additional grant funding from the province and the block funded spaces through social services and KidsFirst which "make a real difference in the success of the program". Stable funding allows the program to remain open and fully staffed despite fluctuating use patterns. The consistent funding enables the program to employ and retain full-time staff, as well as have enhanced ratios to support the children and families. This creates better working conditions for the staff and increased retention. Furthermore, Rice explained the program gets used more as a result of the block funded spaces and the additional children and families make "it more of a vibrant program".

Size

Although there is only one extended hours centre, the fact that Stepping Stones has multiple sites and provides a variety of services contributes to the success of their extended hours program. Each site has a supervisor and assistant supervisor, however, they benefit from having an Executive Director who can look out for the organization and address systemic challenges such as funding.

Having three centres also allows the organization to retain more staff as they may be able to get fulltime hours by working at more than one centre. As well, when last minute changes happen, there is a larger pool of staff to pull from.

*What are the challenges for the program?*

Donna Rice reported that from her perspective, there are minimal challenges associated with running the extended hours program at Stepping Stones. Her main concern is the health of the children and families attending.

Challenges for families and children

Rice described a number of concerns for the families and children using the extended hours program. She believed parents working late evenings with opposite schedules from their children were often exhausted and could contribute to parenting difficulties. Rice also suggested that some parents may need care during part of the day so they can get enough sleep, but subsidy would only cover enough hours to provide care while they are at work.

Children may have difficulties as a result of not seeing their parents or having a consistent schedule. In particular, school age children struggle with only seeing their parents in the morning and then going straight from school to extended hours care into the night. Rice felt this was not always the best arrangement for the children or their families and evening and overnight care may be better provided in a home environment. At times other children and their families manage very well with the irregular work day and the resulting child care schedule.

The children who use the block-funded spaces often need extra attention as they do not attend the centre regularly and may have additional needs. However, Donna Rice felt the centre had the resources and experience to largely accommodate these children's needs.

### Staffing

Stepping Stones is able to staff the extended hours program, largely due to the fact that they can offer full time consistent shifts. Many of the staff are also off-shifting with their own partners to manage their own child care needs. However, Donna Rice expressed concerns with recruiting trained staff as each year there are far more jobs available in child care centres than there are graduates of the Saskatchewan Polytechnic full-time Early Childhood Education program. Many staff participate in part time evening or correspondence classes in order to receive their ECE certification. She identified this as an issue throughout the child care sector. As well, Rice commented that recruiting Aboriginal staff to reflect the culture of the children in the centre was an ongoing challenge.

## 5. **Short Term Child Care,** Andrew Fleck Child Care Services, Ottawa, ON

Andrew Fleck Child Care Services is a multi-service agency in Ottawa that first began providing emergency child care in 1987. The program has been through a number of transitions since it was first established. In 1989, the program was chosen to participate in the Ontario government's Flexible Services Development Project and received project funding to join with two other child care agencies in Ottawa. The three agencies established a non-profit corporation called Short Term Child Care (STCC) with the objective of providing emergency care and care for mildly ill children through a network of trained caregivers who could go into the child's home or in licensed child care homes supervised by the three agencies.

The provincial government stopped the funding program in 1993 and the program was at risk of closure. Looking for alternatives, STCC turned to a consortium model which involved partnering with employers and other community organizations to fund the service. The National Capital Region Emergency Child Care Consortium was established in 1995. The consortium partners would pay a fee to gain access to emergency child care services for their employees and members. Funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation also helped transition into the new funding model. In 1999, Andrew Fleck took over the STCC program and became the sole agency administering and providing the program for the consortium partners. The number of consortium partners fluctuates and there are currently three partners. Executive Director Kim Hiscott stated, "the agency is committed to providing the program" and that it was considered an asset to both the agency and the community.

*What services are provided?*

STCC provides emergency child care for children aged 3 months to 12 years when they are mildly ill, when regular child care arrangements are interrupted, or when other family emergencies arise. The service is only available to employees of the organizations with an arrangement with Andrew Fleck to access the STCC service. However, Andrew Fleck is in the process of piloting an option that would allow individuals to join as members.

The program has between 30-50 caregivers who care for children in the child (ren)'s homes. Parents may also be given the option to have their child placed in a regulated home child care supervised by Andrew Fleck Child Care Service, but this is rarely requested. The program has a manager, Lyne Tremblay who works within Andrew Fleck, as well as a morning and an evening placement coordinator to take requests and match up families with caregivers. There is someone on-call to take requests during weekends as well.

Parents whose employers/union/association have joined are charged $15 per hour and have to book a minimum of five hours of care. Some employers choose to pay the hourly rate for their employees while others only pay the access fee and the other costs including a $50 one-time registration fee, which is incurred by the employee.

The STCC program also receives funding from the City of Ottawa to provide respite care for six women's shelters. Women in the shelter can access a four hour block of care three times a week by one of the caregivers associated with the STCC. A ten week summer camp at all six shelters is offered through STCC to provide an opportunity for children to have a camp experience. As well, STCC provides child minding services at conferences and events.

*Who uses the program?*

Currently, employees from the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board, the Carlton County Law Association and Fraser Milner Law Firm can access the service. There are no data on the personal or family characteristics of the clients using STCC.

*What contributes to the success of the program?*

Partners

The STCC program has long standing relationships with their partner organizations and the caregivers that provide the service, which has allowed the program to maintain a consistent and reliable service. Lyne Tremblay described how some of the caregivers have been with the program for over 20 years. The leaders within the agency are also committed to providing the program and finding ways to make it sustainable.

Size

The size of Andrew Fleck Child Care Services contributes to the sustainability of the program. Executive Director Kim Hiscott said, "the larger agency does absorb some of the costs…but the board is committed to the program". All the administration for the program, for example, collecting fees and paying individual caregivers is done through the agency.

Additionally, having a number of programs and services within one agency is helpful in the recruitment of caregivers. STCC caregivers benefit from other job opportunities within the agency and access to additional training opportunities. Hiscott commented that she actually sees the program as being an asset to the agency, as it allows them to have a larger pool of established employees to draw from for their multiple programs and services.

Model

Kim Hiscott and Lyne Tremblay believed the in-home model used for the STCC has contributed to the success of the program. Having caregivers available to go to the child's home is seen as a key element of the service and it is believed this is the type of arrangement most parents want in an emergency situation or when their child is ill.

*What are the challenges for the program?*

There are some challenges associated with the model and delivery of the STCC, however, Andrew Fleck generally sees this as sustainable program and hopes to expand it to more families.

### Cost to users

The model used to deliver the STCC is very expensive for users. The service costs $15/hour for employees or members of consortium partners and would cost $20/hour for others if opened up to the public. Hiscott and Tremblay would like to see the service be available to more families; however, they do believe the current rates are cost prohibitive for most people.

### Consortium model

Although the consortium model initially sustained the program when it lost government funding, it has proved to be unsustainable over time. This is mainly due to the partners, particularly businesses, cutting their ties with the STCC program when they are faced with financial pressures. This model is seen as a problem to building up a more accessible and sustainable STCC program as funding through partners is vulnerable to bottom line business decisions. As well, this model does not help to make the service more affordable to a broader cohort of families.

### Ongoing recruitment

Despite a dedicated group of caregivers, recruitment is an on-going process for the STCC program and the larger agency. Lyne Tremblay responded that they “need to recruit everyday”, and they are always paying attention to the number of providers as it is a constant challenge.