



Manitoba Child Care
Association

Our mission is to advocate for a quality system of child care, to advance early childhood education as a profession, and to provide services to our members.

March 4, 2010

Hon. Gord Mackintosh,
Minister of Family Services and Housing,
Room 357, Legislative Building,
450 Broadway Ave
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3C 0V8

COPY

Dear Hon. Gord Mackintosh:

Over the past ten years, Manitoba has achieved significant success in expanding and enhancing our early learning and child care system. The Manitoba Child Care Association (MCCA) acknowledges the enhancements to support quality early learning through increases to the operating grants to boost wages, the capital and small equipment grants, funding for new spaces, improving safety, and support for greater inclusion, to name a few.

MCCA believes ongoing communication and dialogue are important to help you with decision making and priority setting. As a partner in the development of early learning and child care services in Manitoba, we believe we have a responsibility to ensure the successes, needs, and stresses communicated to us by our members are brought to your attention. We know the information we provide can help you and your government make informed decisions on how to strengthen the programs and initiatives already in place and set a strong foundation for the future.

To reiterate, our main recommendation for 2010 is:

That the Government of Manitoba needs to implement an immediate retention and recruit back strategy for ECEs that includes competitive wages for all, competitive benefits for all, and a pension plan for all.

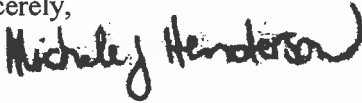
At our meeting on Thursday, March 4, 2010, MCCA representatives expressed concern that not enough attention has been directed to retention and as a consequence we hear the workforce has grown weary of waiting and those most experienced and most qualified have moved on or are preparing to move on to greener pastures. Frequent turnover, being short staffed, and the hiring of unqualified staff combined with short time lines for implementation of policies such as H1N1, inclusion, safety, etc have created tense and highly stressful work environments that are affecting the health and well being of both the workforce and the children.

We believe that funding to support competitive wages, benefits and a pension plan for all members of the child care workforce is long overdue, that there simply aren't enough people that can afford to make child care a career at the compensation levels that current funding supports, and that exit rates will continue to stress the system until the retention problem is addressed by your government.

We were disappointed that you were unable to give us any indication of when the funding required to support competitive wages would be forthcoming, and that work has not yet begun on the promised pension plan.

MCCA has done our best to remind our members of how the child care system is improving, that there are many rewards working in child care, and that progress toward the elusive competitive wages has been slower than they'd like, but steady. And while we understand the fiscal challenges faced by the province due to the downturn in the economy, and your commitment to keep parent fees low, the fact remains that the childcare workforce faces fiscal challenges of their own and most cannot afford to, nor are willing to, subsidize the cost of early learning and child care services in Manitoba.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michele Henderson". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Michele Henderson, President

cc Grant Doak, Deputy Minister
Carolyn Leoppky, Assistant Deputy Minister
Lois Speirs, A/Director, Manitoba Child Care Program