



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 19, 2009

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

**COPY**

Dear Minister Mackintosh:

It has come to the attention of The Manitoba Child Care Association (MCCA) that effective February 1, 2009 licensed child care centres in the City of Winnipeg will be required to pay the costs associated with an annual fire inspection required by the Government of Manitoba. Fees will be based on actual inspection time, the Fire Inspector's report writing time, and travel time for all initial and follow up inspections. Fees are currently set at \$90.00 per hour or part thereof and will be subject to annual increases in accordance to the rate of inflation.

We are also aware that many child care centers located outside the City of Winnipeg also pay for fire inspections. For example, there is a school in Dauphin that is home to a licensed school age program and two licensed nursery schools. EACH licensed program pays \$100.00 for its fire inspection and the school pays separately for its own inspection. When child care programs are located in schools, why can't their fire inspections be harmonized into those of the school, or at the very least a reduced rate offered when the inspector is visiting multiple programs located on the same property?

If each of the 583 licensed child care centres in Manitoba pays the minimum fee of \$90.00 per hour for a fire inspection, around \$52,470.00 per year from primarily not for profit child care centres is remitted to local fire authorities. Every time a new expense creeps in or the price of a product or service increases, there are less funds available to pay a competitive wage to the people hired by the organization to educate and care for children.

MCCA's Public Policy & Professionalism Committee recently brainstormed this list of new or increased expenses incurred by child care programs in the past two years, which are in addition to the annual inflationary increases to food, toys, equipment, office supplies, bank charges, utilities, etc:

- Fire inspections
- Increase to the minimum wage on April 1, 2008; May 1, 2009; October 1, 2009
- Additional cost of employer expenses for group benefits and RRSP contributions for employees eligible for the wage adjustment fund
- Quality enhancements to program and staff overtime and substitute expenses related to ECERS & ITERS
- Infection Control Guidelines which resulted in extra expenses for change tables, diaper table paper, more frequent hand washing increases the cost of water, hand soap, and paper towels; sanitizer for furnishings and toys
- Increased use of paper products has led to higher cost for garbage pick up in rural communities
- Shipping costs to rural areas have increased
- Employment Standards legislation resulting in additional expenses for staff training and overtime

- Newer requirement that employers must pay for general holidays for eligible part time employees
- All professional services have increased, such as auditors, consultants, plumbers, bookkeepers
- Rent increases levied by landlords, including school divisions
- Fundraising expenses, such as educators overtime, incurred while trying to raise 50% of funding required to be eligible for other grants
- Advertising expenses have increased because the Winnipeg Free Press eliminated its not for profit rate and because centres must place multiple job ads due to the educator shortage

Funded child care programs in Manitoba aren't permitted to pass on any increases to their operating costs to the consumer; therefore their revenue increase hinges on when, what, or if government feels it can afford to provide an operating grant increase. So child care programs, responsible for the care and education of our youngest citizens at the most important stage of human development, reduce expenses where they can, try and recruit parents to fundraise to fill the gap, look for employees who are both skilled and don't mind earning less, and then they lobby government to ask for enough funding so they have the capacity and resources to meet the standards and expectations set by government.

The Manitoba Child Care Association is in full support of initiatives that ensure safety and well being and enhance quality, however the Government of Manitoba must ensure its funding policies enable licensed child care centres and family child care homes to generate sufficient revenue to meet all the requirements of the Community Child Care Standards Act, and provide competitive wages and benefits to all educators. For the record, evidence suggests programs continue to require an immediate increase of 20-25% in order to provide market competitive wages and benefits to everyone they employ.

Sincerely,



Michele Henderson, President

cc by email

Martin Billenkoff, Deputy Minister  
 Carolyn Loeppky, Assistant Deputy Minister  
 Lois Speirs, A/Director, Manitoba Child Care Program  
 Child Care Centres