



**Manitoba Child Care  
Association**

# **Pre-Budget Submission For the Province of Manitoba October 2018**

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The Manitoba Child Care Association (MCCA) is a voluntary professional association, not for profit, registered charity working since 1974 to promote quality child care as a service and as a profession. We are the largest provincial child care association in Canada, and entirely self-funded through membership dues and professional development events. Our 4000 members include those who provide care and education in licensed homes and child care centres, and they keep us informed of needs, priorities, and challenges providing care, early learning, and family support in their community.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, child care is an essential public service for modern families. The workforce participation of mothers makes an important contribution to Manitoba's economy, and now includes:

64.8% of mothers with children 0-2 years  
74.0% of mothers with children 3-5 year olds;  
83.1% of mothers of children 6-15 year olds.<sup>1</sup>

According to the 2016 Census, there are 243,820 children ages 0-14 in Manitoba. Of those, 164,440 are 0-9, the age range most likely to require child care. As of March 31, 2017 there are 35,469 licensed child care spaces, enough for around 18% of children.

There is evidence that demand for licensed child care will continue to increase. Manitoba's economic release, October 10, 2017 announced there were 17,541 infants born over the last 12 months, the highest number of births for a June – July period since 1972. In addition, our province welcomed 15,679 immigrants and 13,135 more individuals came than left our province.

On August 31, 2017, there were 16,702 unique children – meaning counted only once - on Manitoba's Online Child Care Registry waiting list, including 1,034 children not yet born.<sup>2</sup> .

It is well known that demand for licensed care far exceeds supply in most areas of Manitoba. In the fall of 2016, MCCA engaged Probe Research to survey parents with children enrolled in licensed child care to identify their experiences. We learned that:

- 62% of parents reported waiting for a child care space
- the average wait time was 14 – 15 months, depending on the child's age
- wait times hinder parents' ability to work or go to school with 30% of parents reporting they turned down a job, 41% reporting they delayed a return to work, and 24% reporting they declined an educational opportunity because they lacked child care

Parents also shared their preferences and the feedback will be useful in developing a Manitoba action plan. For example:

- parents rate an educational program, warm/caring and trained staff are their top qualities

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<sup>1</sup> Early Childhood Education and Care in Canada, Childcare Resource and Research Unit, 2014

<sup>2</sup> Manitoba Early Learning and Child Care Online Registry

- they think child care should be part of the education system
- they prefer a school with on-site child care and think child care centres should be built as part of any new housing developments
- they also prefer a child care centre to licensed home based care.
- parents are not looking for a “babysitter” – 72% believe providing quality child care requires specialized training.

Although 23% of parents report using unlicensed child care, 57% prefer it was licensed. Access to unlicensed home child care can easily be found online, but there is no consumer protection, it is expensive, and there is no fee subsidy for low income parents. Parents must self-monitor and have a huge problem if care does not meet their expectations and they are without other child care options. In our Probe Research survey, only 28% of parents reported they were confident they could identify high quality child care.

Home child care usually closes when the caregiver is sick, has an appointment, or is on vacation, leaving parents in the lurch. Home child care opens and closes frequently and that creates instability for families who rely on child care to work.<sup>3</sup>

Manitoba is well recognized as a leader in early learning and child care – most especially for our strong standards developed to protect the health, safety, well-being, and to foster early learning for children. Other strengths include availability of post-secondary Early Childhood Education training, ceiling on parent fees, government operating grant paid directly to eligible facilities, community based, not for profit services, and inclusion of children with additional support needs.

Public support for licensed child care is very high in our province, with 83% of Manitobans saying the lack of child care is a serious issue.<sup>4</sup> Among those who were decided and learning voters with a political preference, 78% of PCs said the lack of child care was serious; 90% of NDP said child care was serious, and 91% of Liberals was serious.

In addition, 76% of Manitoba business leaders<sup>5</sup> feel the lack of child care is a serious issue.

In short, the public, parents, and business leaders are aware there is a shortage of licensed child care, parents prefer high quality, and there is strong support for child care as a government priority.

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<sup>3</sup> Home Sweet Home? An Evidence Based Analysis of Licensed Home Child Care in Manitoba, 2016

<sup>4</sup> MCCA/Probe Research telephone survey of 1,000 Manitobans, September 13 – 26, 2016.

<sup>5</sup> Probe Research Business Leaders Index, 2016

## A Way to Move Forward

On June 12, 2017, the Federal Government, along with Provincial, and Territorial Governments signed a Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework Agreement, that recognizes that the *“development of Canada’s early learning and child care systems is one of the best investments that governments can make to strengthen Canada’s society and economy.”*<sup>6</sup>

Manitoba’s share of federal funds is estimated at \$15M in each of the next 3 years, 2017 – 2020. An Action Plan must be submitted to the federal government, before funds can flow. To date, Ontario, PEI, New Brunswick, and Nunavut have signed bi-lateral agreements.

MCCA has identified the following priorities and suggestions for improvements and for new investments to strengthen and enhance our child care system:

### 1. Improve access:

- 1.1 Provide the expertise to increase the number of licensed spaces co-located in schools and in other community buildings by providing capital construction and renovation grants.
- 1.2 Provide start up and operating grants for currently unfunded and new not for profit child care centres and licensed home child care.
- 1.3 To ensure equitable access for children with varying abilities, funding and support must be provided to all child care centres and licensed homes to enable them to participate in the Inclusion Support Program based on community need.
- 1.4 Identify and fix the challenges with the Online Child Care Registry to ensure it is as user friendly and accurate as possible.
- 1.5 Maximize use of existing spaces by publishing a list of centres and homes that have immediate vacancies.

### 2. Affordability:

- 2.1 Keep child care fees the second lowest in Canada by continuing to set a maximum standardized fee for centres and homes that receive a government operating grant.

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<sup>6</sup> Employment and Social Development Canada News Release, June 12, 2017

# THEY GO UP SO FAST

2015 monthly preschool child care fees in Canada

Toronto, ON	\$1,033	St. John's, NL	\$857	Saint John, NB	\$651
Markham, ON	\$1,000	Hamilton, ON	\$852	Charlottetown, PEI	\$586
Ottawa, ON	\$987	Kitchener, ON	\$813	Regina, SK	\$560
Vaughan, ON	\$981	Burnaby, BC	\$811	Winnipeg, MB	\$451
Brampton, ON	\$977	Edmonton, AB	\$800	Gatineau, QC	\$174
Mississauga, ON	\$977	Halifax, NS	\$785	Montréal, QC	\$174
London, ON	\$970	Windsor, ON	\$760	Laval, QC	\$174
Calgary, AB	\$910	Surrey, BC	\$750	Longueuil, QC	\$174
Vancouver, BC	\$905	Saskatoon, SK	\$655	Québec City, QC	\$174

[policyalternatives.ca/childcare2015](http://policyalternatives.ca/childcare2015)

2.2 Discourage for profit child care, the main reason why parent fees in Ontario, Alberta, British Columbia are so high.

2.3 Index subsidy so more low income families are eligible for assistance.

2.4 Eliminate the \$2.00 per day additional fee not eligible for subsidy.

### 3. Funding:

3.1 Provide an annual revenue increase for child care centres and licensed homes that reflects inflationary increases to operations, for staff, children's program, occupancy, administration costs and provides fair remuneration based on education and training.

3.2 Introduce a mandatory province wide, research based, market competitive wage scale that recognizes the education, skills, and abilities of employees in early learning and child care centres

3.3 Explore ways to make the funding model responsive to individual circumstances such as occupancy costs, location, a high population of at risk children, and staff training levels.

#### 4. Quality & Pedagogy

- 4.1 Ensure all licensed child care centres and home child care providers offer programs and practices that will support children's learning, development, safety, health, and well-being through exploration, play, and inquiry.
- 4.2 Improve access to affordable ECE diploma and degree training across the province.
- 4.3 Address retention by ensuring remuneration of centre employees and home child care providers fairly reflect their education, experience, and responsibilities.
- 4.4 Provide incentives to Child Care Assistants and Family Child Care Providers to upgrade their qualifications through post-secondary education.
- 4.5 Require 24 hours per year of professional development for ECEs, CCAs that work with children, and for home child care providers.
- 4.6 Allow 3 days of closure annually for in-service training without loss of funding.
- 4.7 Ensure that Aboriginal culture is reflected in all licensed facilities.

#### 5. Strengthen governance & administration:

- 5.1 Review alternatives to 36 (1) and/or ways to strengthen board and management committee requirements.
- 5.2 Add a cost and time effective method of providing affordable resource, guidance, training, and support to the board of directors of child care centres.

Research tells us high quality, licensed child care has a positive impact on how children learn, supports families, benefits communities, reduces poverty, is key to women's equality, helps establish newcomers, and contributes to a strong economy.

Please make child care a priority in the 2018 provincial budget and thank you for the opportunity to provide our input and recommendations.