



Online Survey on the Future of Early Learning & Child Care in Manitoba

February 18, 2021 – prepared by the Manitoba Child Care Association (MCCA)

The Province of Manitoba has launched an online survey “to promote the involvement of parents across the province in identifying their needs and priorities for child care and their ideas for modernizing the early learning and child-care system”.

MCCA’s Public Policy & Professionalism Committee met to discuss the survey. We view this as an opportunity to educate and inform vested stakeholders in Manitoba’s early learning & child care sector.

- We agree that flexibility and choices are important for every Manitoba family. There is room for many things in a potential reform. Yet, it is essential to remember the great infrastructure we already have here in Manitoba. We cannot abandon the existing system, which is already serving the needs of 38,000 children and their families.
- This is about children. This is about the future of our Province. The well-being of children must be grounded in high quality programs that are adequately funded, support development and are accessible and affordable to all children (families) regardless of where they live in Manitoba or their socioeconomic demographic.
- Manitoba has had the 2nd lowest child care fees in Canada for many years. Affordability is individual to every family. Changes that make for a more equitable system are logical. This should include a modernization of Manitoba’s subsidy system which was last indexed in 2013. Did you know...child care fees in Manitoba have increased by only \$2.00 in the past 21 years or \$0.09/year?
- Parents deserve a say on their child’s safety, well-being and learning.
- Early Childhood Educators must have a voice about Manitoba’s early learning & child care system. We are child care experts. We understand quality indicators which include: adequate funding, regulations, small group sizes and high adult to child ratios, language rich development, knowledgeable trained ECEs, developmentally age appropriate and play based curriculum, warm and responsive interactions between staff and children.
- Minister Squires will be hosting a ministerial table with sector representatives to share their input and expertise. MCCA is grateful to be included in this.

- Manitoba has long been the envy of other provinces in Canada for its established, highly regulated and quality licensed system which includes children as young as 3 months up to 12 years of age. The strength of its foundation has become apparent throughout the pandemic, where in other provinces such as Alberta and Ontario, we are seeing child care facilities crumble and close their doors.
- The Community Child Care Standards Act was established nearly 40 years ago. These regulations guide the work of Early Childhood Educators and help to ensure safe, healthy and stimulating environments for young children. They were considered a starting point with intentions to “raise the bar” on quality over time. Any proposed changes must augment the regulations, not dilute nor diminish their value.
- Over 31% of licensed spaces in Manitoba exist for children between the ages of 6-12 years. Manitoba has been a trailblazer in Canada offering regulated, quality pedagogical curriculum specific to school-aged children whose families are in school or at work. Many parents choose their child’s school based on the availability of child care. Many of these school-age programs offer early learning and care experiences 260 days of the year, including non-school days.
- The current system has seen no revenue increases in over 5 years. The unit funding model has served Manitoba’s child care system well for many years. However, it was established in 2000 and is based on typical operating expenses from 21 years ago. Programs have continued to incur additional costs that didn’t exist two decades ago.
- If we are truly talking about our most precious resource, our children, then we must strengthen the workforce. The early learning & child care sector must be competitive with other sectors so that we are attracting and retaining our best and brightest trained ECEs to work with children.
- And while we are still in the midst of the global pandemic, it has never been more evident that if our province wants a full, long term, economic recovery from Covid-19, child care is the answer. We must secure the foundation of the existing system to ensure its longevity and strength.

