



## **Summary of Priority Recommendations 2018-19**

### **1. Provide Adequate Funding For a High Quality Early Learning and Child Care System**

Early learning and child care service providers rely on the Government of Manitoba to ensure the funding formula, whether through federal transfers, parent fees, or provincial grants, will cover the cost of a quality care and learning environment for children and support competitive wages and benefits to attract and retain a child care workforce in sufficient number to meet legislated training requirements. The unit funding model was established for child care centres in 2000 based on a rough estimate of typical operating expenses at that time.

### **2. Provide the Human Resources Needs of Quality Universal Child Care System**

Research correlates that quality early learning and child care is best provided by consistent, responsive, knowledgeable and well compensated educators. There are many rewards for working in child care, but market competitive compensation is not one of them. Child care wages remain 20-25% below market, regardless of decades of conversations, various enhancements, recommendations and lobbying for equity. Early Learning & Child Care has a solid reputation, after 40 years of licensing in Manitoba, as an inadequately paid sector.

The Province of British Columbia has invested \$136 million over three years (supplemented by \$16.3 million in federal funding) to make a career as an ECE more attractive and sustainable<sup>1</sup>.

### **3. Provide Province Wide Accessibility to Affordable ECE & CCA Training and Professional Learning**

Without a qualified and committed workforce, quality early learning and child care programs cannot exist. The superiority of care and curriculum in a child care centre or a family child care home is directly reflected in the skills of the educator(s). In 2018, a majority of the practicing child care workforce in Manitoba are Child Care Assistants (CCAs). A CCAs role should be to assist the Early Childhood Educator. However in the absence of ECEs, many CCAs are expected to assume the role and responsibilities of the ECE.

### **4. Provide Universal, Accessible, Affordable, Inclusive High Quality, Early Learning and Child Care**

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<sup>1</sup> Early Care and Learning Recruitment and Retention Strategy, 2018

Manitoba needs an early learning and child care system that parents can rely on. However, the shortage of licensed child care spaces is a problem almost everywhere in Manitoba. This is a barrier to early learning and best outcomes for children, parent access to education, workforce attachment and women's equality. Families in Manitoba must have child care choices available to meet their individual needs. As of June 30, 2018, there are 16,605 children registered on the Online Child Care Registry, of which 12,838 require care within three months. There are 116,400 children in Manitoba 0-12 years (2016 rounded estimate)<sup>2</sup> with employed mothers. There are just over 35,000 licensed child care spaces.

According to an MCCA/Probe Research survey (2016), parents report an average 14-15 month wait time for a child care space, which hinders their ability to work or attend school. 30% report they have turned down a job, 41% report they have delayed returning to work, and 24% have declined an education opportunity because they lacked child care.

#### **5. Provincial Leadership to Ensure Collaborative Relationships with Education**

Nearly half of Manitoba's child care centers are located in schools or on school property. This makes sense and maximizes use of a public facility already funded by taxpayer dollars. This type of collaborative approach supports children and families. The children attending the child care program will be the same children eventually entering the school system and will have a far easier time with the transition if they are already familiar with the school environment.

#### **6. Improve Accountability and Safety in the Unregulated Child Care Sector**

The serious shortage of licensed services means thousands of children receive out of home care provided by non-family members in settings that are not formally evaluated nor accountable for quality of health, safety, or learning environment. As all environments shape lifelong learning, development, behavior, health and wellbeing, our provincial strategy on early child development must plan for the wellbeing of ALL children, not just those whose parents are lucky to get a licensed child care space. Manitoba has been a leader in early childhood development initiatives and must do more to ensure all children benefit from a "starting early, starting strong" approach.

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<sup>2</sup> Early Childhood education and care in Canada 2016. Childcare Resource and Research Unit