



**Manitoba Child Care  
Association**

**Manitoba Pre-Budget 2025 Submission  
Manitoba Child Care Association  
February 21, 2025**

Manitoba Child Care Association  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, 2350 McPhillips St.  
Winnipeg, MB R2V 4J6  
[www.mccahouse.org](http://www.mccahouse.org)

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 4900+ 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.

MCCA is an active partner in the development of early learning and child care services in Manitoba. We believe ongoing communication and dialogue are important to help the Government of Manitoba meet their goals, set priorities, plan for the future and make decisions. We are confident that the information we provide will support policy makers in strengthening the programs and initiatives already in place and set a strong foundation for the future.

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Since 2021 (the signing of the Canada-Manitoba Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) Agreement 2012-2026), Manitoba has made significant progress towards creating an affordable, accessible child care system that meets the needs of children, families, educators, and providers. However, building a high-quality system will take time. With an imminent end date of March 2026, MCCA is urging the provincial government to sign an extension to its agreement, as proposed by the federal government.

We believe this is a critical moment to reaffirm that commitment and now concentrate our efforts on quality and inclusion, including robust workforce supports. At a time when child care demand is at an all-time high and facilities are navigating rising operational costs, securing predictable supply-side funding is not just beneficial – it is essential. A renewed agreement will provide stability, allowing Manitoba to continue to be a leader in shaping policies with a focus on quality and inclusion, while reflecting the individual needs of its children, families, and communities. Without this extension, we risk uncertainty that will limit the access to high-quality child care, continue to impact inclusion supports and undermine workforce retention.

Sustainable funding must account for the realities faced by all providers to ensure equitable financing and workforce supports across the sector. A balanced approach will

help maintain high-quality, inclusive programs for young children, retain an educated workforce and provide families with dependable, accessible, and high-quality child-care options.

The noted progress in Manitoba is largely comprised of ensuring child care is more affordable in Manitoba and now, a concerted effort on expanding the accessibility of early learning and care for families. It's imperative that the provincial 2025 budget place a stronger emphasis on strengthening the support for the workforce and inclusion with increased investments.

### **Workforce Supports**

From the 2023/24 Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning Annual Report<sup>i</sup> -

- Total # in the workforce (centre staff by classification) = 8668
- Total # of ECE II/III = 3383
- Total # of CCAs (licensed homes and centres) = 5288

*“Manitoba’s commitment to increase the supply of child care spaces by 23,000 will require about 5,000 additional staff and directors. With the current regulatory requirements for qualified staff, more than 3,000 will need to be certified as ECE IIs or ECE IIIs. There is already shortage of ECEs to meet the regulatory requirements.”<sup>ii</sup>*

Based on these assumptions (and factoring in Manitoba’s 14,168 licensed school-age spaces), there is a clear shortage of approximately, 1000 ECEs within the current system. Equally as concerning is the proportion of certified ECE II/IIIs to CCAs. The system requires 66% (infant/toddler/preschool) and 50% (school-age) of the workforce to be classified as Early Childhood Educators. *“The Manitoba Child Care Association estimates about 30 percent of centres do not have enough certified ECEs to meet requirements.”<sup>iii</sup>* There is a legitimate concern that this has continued to increase.

It is evident that many more steps must be taken to support the ELCC workforce while harmoniously augmenting high-quality child care for Manitobans.

MCCA is recommending that the Province of Manitoba:

- Ensure that barriers are removed for ECE students to access the Tuition Reimbursement Grants
  - ECE students in the accelerated programs, (at various post-secondary institutions), in particular, have shared the challenges in accessing the full tuition reimbursement grants
- Annual indexing of the operating grant to ensure predictable, sustainable and sufficient supply-side funding for licensed not-for-profit facilities
  - While MCCA is pleased to see the recent increases to the operating grants, there is much revenue to recoup due to the unpredictability of indexing
- Develop and fund a common provincial salary scale and benefit package for certified ECEs that reflects their level of education and job function, based on MCCA's Market Competitive Salary Guideline Scale
  - The 2024-2025 ELCC wage grid sets at target of \$21.47/hour for an ECE – Entry Level; MCCA's 2024 Market Competitive Salary Guideline Scale's target for an ECE II/III is \$28.63
- Review and address working conditions for staff
  - Induction and mentoring support
  - Introduction of non-paid contact time
  - Provision of additional paid release time for professional development opportunities
- Develop professional profiles for educators and relevant job descriptions
- Compile and analyze human resources information collected from centre directors

### **Inclusion Supports**

Correspondingly important to a high-quality ELCC coherent system is one in which equity and inclusion is planned for and supported.

According to the Annual Report, 1,262 children were served under the Inclusion Support Program (ISP) in 2023-24. Only 51% of centres and, more concerning, 6% of homes participated in the ISP during this period. While the number of spaces continue to grow in Manitoba, the number of children/families accessing ISP is not increasing proportionately.

Countries with well-developed ELCC systems have an integrated approach which promote:

- Gender equity among parents
- Support labour force participation, particularly of mothers;
- And recognize the important of high-quality provision on the well-being of and development of young children, and its role in promoting inclusion, social cohesion and equity.

Manitoba's Provincial government has an opportunity in this budget to advance its policies to ensure that all children, families and ECEs are the priority. This will set the foundation for a successful and sustainable high-quality ELCC system in Manitoba. The policy recommendations from MCCA, as the recognized voice of the child care community in Manitoba, must be considered when planning for the 2025 Provincial Budget.

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<sup>i</sup> <https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/annualreports/docs/annualreport.pdf>

<sup>ii</sup> [Roadmap to a Quality Early Learning and Child Care System in Manitoba](#) (p.32)

<sup>iii</sup> [Roadmap to a Quality Early Learning and Child Care System in Manitoba](#) (p. 33)