



MEDIA RELEASE

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76% of Manitoba Parents Say “We’re not close yet” to Universal Child Care

As Manitoba children start a new school year, parents say the cost of child care has improved but access has not.

A new survey of nearly 1,900 parents who use child care participated in a Probe Research poll conducted for the Manitoba Child Care Association (MCCA) April 2-25, 2025. This survey, similar to the one circulated in 2016, provides insight on what’s working for families and what needs to be fixed. Highlights from the parent survey are available at www.mccahouse.org

A sampling of the findings include:

Universal care is still a long way off

- Among parents, 76% say Manitoba is nowhere close to a universal child care system, where every child who needs a space gets one.
- Wait times for space are long – on average, 17 months. Though 70% of parents got a spot when they needed one, they tended to place their child on a wait list for a preferred space very early.
- Only 13% of parents agreed it was easy to find a space (down 3 percentage points since 2016).

Affordability is much better (for most)

- Parents say \$10/day child care is working (70% agree).
- Parents are twice as likely now to say child care in Manitoba is affordable and not a large strain on their household budget (64% now vs. 31% in 2016).

The dial hasn’t moved on quality of care

- Only one in five parents (20%) agree the quality of child care is much better now than five years ago.
- Parents are satisfied overall with their child care, but a little less so now (92% satisfied in 2016, 85% now).
- Only 27% notice improvements in staffing ratios in recent years.

There are approximately 41,870 licensed child care spaces in Manitoba, of which 93% are located in child care centres and 7% in licensed home child care.

Probe Research, in close collaboration with MCCA, created and deployed this survey of parents – one of four interlocking surveys completed in the spring. Additional results from this research will be released in the coming weeks.