



**Manitoba Child
Care Association**

PROVINCIAL PRE-BUDGET SUBMISSION



↙ 2026 - 2027

TABLE OF CONTENTS

03 ABOUT US

04 MCCA'S OBJECTIVES

05 INTRODUCTION

06 MCCA'S RECOMMENDATIONS

07 FINAL THOUGHTS

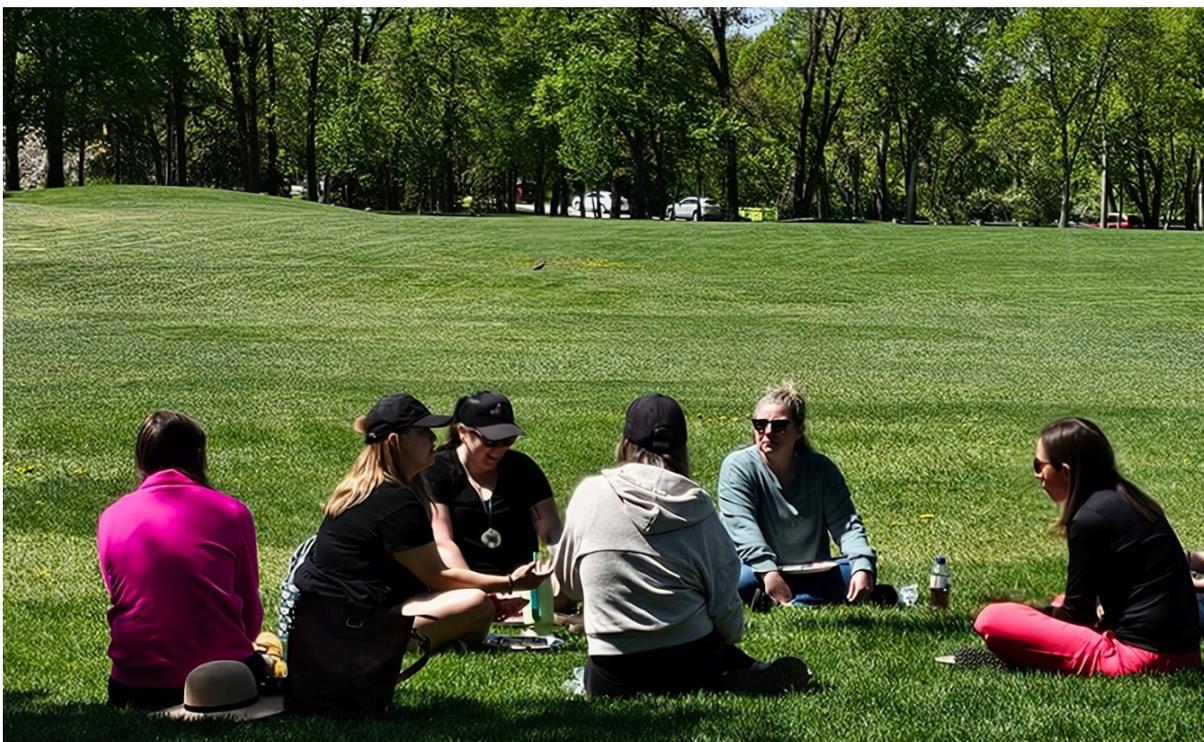
"MCCA advocates for a quality system of child care, to advance early learning and child care education as a profession, and provide services to its members"

ABOUT US

The Manitoba Child Care Association (MCCA) is a provincial, non-profit association that advocates for a quality system of child care, to advance early learning and child care education as a profession, and provide services to its members.

MCCA promotes and supports an exceptional and inclusive early learning and child care system by fueling its members to be proud and excited to belong to a progressive, respected profession.

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 supports policy makers in strengthening the programs and initiatives already in place and set a strong foundation for the future for Manitoba's children and families.



1974

Incorporated

5000+

Members Served

MCCA'S OBJECTIVES



Maintain Financial Independence



Provide resources and services to members on a province-wide basis



Promote and develop Manitoba's early learning and child care profession



Promote quality standards that support human development in early learning and child care



Advocate as a non-partisan, non-sectarian organization at all levels of government for a quality early learning and child care system



Educate and inform the public about early learning and child care as a profession and a service



Work in partnership with those involved with the care and education of children



Encourage the development and expansion of early learning and child care training, research, and educational resources

INTRODUCTION

MCCA values its collaborative partnership with the Ministry of Education and Early Childhood Learning and the divisional staff. On behalf of its 5000+ members representing early learning and child care in Manitoba, MCCA is pleased to submit its recommendations for the Provincial Budget 2026.

Since its announcement in April 2021 and Manitoba's subsequent signed agreement on August 9, 2021, the Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) plan has been more than a policy shift— it is a program that is fundamentally transforming early learning and child care (ELCC) services for Canadians. It has been a game-changer for working families, providing the dependable services they need to secure their economic future during their child-rearing years.

MCCA commends the Government of Manitoba on its leadership in system building. There has been significant progress and investments in:

- Affordability** – becoming the first jurisdiction outside of Quebec to implement true \$10/day
- Accessibility** – the creation of over 5400 licensed spaces towards the target of 23,000 through innovative initiatives such as the Ready-to-Move, post-secondary expansion and school-based focus
- Quality** – workforce supports including increasing training seats for Early Childhood Educators, the monumental increase to the wage grid in 2025, increase of paid professional development days up to 5 days by 2028.

However, continued growth relies on consistent, predictable and enhanced investments from both the Governments of Canada and Manitoba.

“This is not a time to cut programs or to look at making significant changes that might further slow down the economy.”
– Finance Minister Adrien Sala

The provincial government is anticipating a \$1.6 billion deficit by Spring 2026. The Government of Manitoba has prioritized creating the conditions in Manitoba for more economic growth. This growth can be achieved with increased investments in early learning and child care.



MCCA'S RECOMMENDATIONS

While early learning and child care is part of critical social infrastructure in our province, it is also integral to strengthening economic conditions.

It is under this foundation, MCCA has identified the following four key priorities for the Government of Manitoba to consider in Budget 2026:



Comprehensive supports for the workforce



Increased provincial investments in addition to the Canada-Wide ELCC transfers



Removing Barriers for solution-based expansion



Subsidizing Directors' Desk (A Human Resource Portal for Early Learning and Child Care in Manitoba)

Supporting Manitoba's Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) workforce is critical to the sustainability and quality of the system. Establishing and funding a common, provincially indexed salary scale—one that recognizes ECEs' education, experience, and job responsibilities (MCCA's Market Competitive Salary Guideline Scale 2026-27) is essential to achieving this goal. The current workforce includes only 38.5% certified ECEs II/IIIs. In addition to the many recruitment initiatives already underway, a concerted focus on retention is imperative. As a government that proudly champions gender equity, prioritizing retention—particularly of women and underrepresented groups must be underscored.

In its 2024 Budget, the provincial government planned for \$459.5M for Early Learning and Child Care. The 2024/25 Annual Report, cites actual spending of \$405.9M; a 12% shortfall. With the anticipated federal transfer of \$342.3M (Canada-MB CWELCC Agreement), MCCA recommends that increased provincial investments are fulfilled in Budget 2026 to advance towards a more balanced cost sharing approach.

Expansion of existing licensed not-for-profit child care programs are part of the solution for Manitoba to attain its target of 23,000 new child care spaces, but are faced with unrealistic obstacles. The current ELCC Building Fund limits funding for expansion exceeding 60% of total eligible expenses. This growth could be further supported by removing barriers such as the arduous application process, providing clear guidelines, and increased capital funding with additional allowances for rural and northern expansion.

Director's Desk, an innovative online Human Resource (HR) portal for the ELCC system in Manitoba is making its debut in 2026 (April). MCCA initiated this comprehensive HR resource for the sector in partnership with Curbridge Consulting. An ECEs working conditions are a child's learning conditions. By supporting Director's Desk, Manitoba would continue to lead the way in quality.

CONCLUSION

“The Canada-Manitoba agreement did not just answer a call; it fulfilled a promise to generations of women and families...”

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 2026 Provincial Budget.

The Canada-Manitoba agreement did not just answer a call; it fulfilled a promise to generations of women and families. By dramatically improving affordability, CWELCC is providing Manitoban families the breathing room to survive in a challenging economy and is enabling women to participate more meaningfully in the workforce, regardless of their postal code. It is moving us from where child care was a barrier to one where it is a bridge to opportunity.

Manitoba parents want it, economists value it, and children deserve it. By protecting the integrity of this system with provincial increased and sustainable investments, Manitoba’s Government will continue lead the way engaging in nation-building and providing essential services for Manitoba families and children at a critical moment in our history.



THANK-YOU

We hope you found this submission insightful and valuable for upcoming work in 2026-2027. If you have any questions or require further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us.



PREPARED BY: THE MANITOBA CHILD CARE ASSOCIATION

 204-586-8587

 info@mccahouse.org

 www.mccahouse.org