



**Manitoba Child Care  
Association**

May 29, 2026

Hon. Tracy Schmidt  
Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning  
Room 168 Legislative Building  
450 Broadway  
Winnipeg, MB R3C 0V8

Dear Minister Schmidt,

The Manitoba Child Care Association's (MCCA) Public Policy & Professionalism Committee has carefully reviewed the Auditor General's report, *Child Care Access and Inclusivity in Manitoba* (March 2026). As part of this work, the committee also considered MCCA's *Roadmap to a High Quality Early Learning and Child Care System in Manitoba* (2022) to ensure alignment with the sector's long term vision for quality, access, and equity.

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We are pleased to provide MCCA's assessment of the Auditor General's seven recommendations, along with the Association's corresponding recommendations.

**1 – Manitoba's ELCC expansion remains reactive, relying on groups and individuals to initiate programs, with inconsistent and often inaccurate waitlist data offering little real planning value. Even perfect data cannot drive action without provincial authority to plan.**

**Recommendation:** Establish a government led ELCC planning function that uses demographic analysis, municipal collaboration, and integrated school/housing planning to treat child care as essential community infrastructure.

**2 – Manitoba lacks a provincial mechanism to plan where child care centres are needed, leaving parents and boards to drive expansion. Reactive processes limit the usefulness of demand models and waitlist data, and transportation gaps further restrict access.**

**Recommendation:** Establish a proactive, government led ELCC planning function with regional targets, integrated school/housing planning, and transportation solutions to ensure equitable, community-based access across Manitoba.

**3 – Manitoba needs a coordinated, equity focused ELCC strategy that moves beyond ideas to concrete actions, timelines, and measurable goals. Barriers such as affordability, transportation, geographic gaps, and workforce shortages remain unaddressed, limiting access and system growth.**

**Recommendation:** Implement a province-wide equity plan with annual needs assessments, community-led solutions, workforce investment, and policy tools such as full day kindergarten and attendance standards to free capacity and ensure fair, reliable access across all regions.

**4 – Manitoba requires a more coordinated, actionable workforce strategy, with consistent reporting and data that to capture the real drivers of turnover; burnout, ratios, and more comprehensive compensation. Tracking alone will not solve systemic issues.**

**Recommendation:** Build upon the provincial workforce strategy with real time data, enforceable staffing plans, increased and consistent wage and retention investments, mentorship and leadership development, and strengthened ECE III competencies to stabilize the profession and improve quality.

5 – Manitoba’s 23,000 space target requires an understanding of the workforce, infrastructure, and planning capacity required. To date, forecasting tools and a reactive expansion model have been ineffective. Forecasting has limited value without provincial leadership in creating and governing new spaces.

**Recommendation:** Develop a proactive provincial planning model, such as a hub-based governance approach on school sites, supported by accurate forecasting, workforce planning, and coordinated infrastructure development to ensure sustainable, community aligned expansion throughout the province of Manitoba.

6 – Manitoba’s ISP system is overly complex, administratively burdensome, and ineffective at meeting children’s and facility’s needs. Lengthy processes, annual reapplications, staffing challenges, and inadequate support for complex behaviours drive programs away from participation. Data tracking alone cannot fix structural gaps.

**Recommendation:** Simplify ISP processes, establish clear timelines, invest in specialized ECE training, monitor provisional licenses, and fund a provincial mentorship and retention strategy to strengthen inclusion quality and workforce stability.

7 – Manitoba’s EDI grant process necessitated clear guidance, timelines, and accountability, resulting in rushed spending, inconsistent documentation, and confusion about eligible expenses.

**Recommendation:** For future grant processes, establish clear eligibility criteria, standardized forms, pre-approval planning, risk-based audits, and a streamlined digital reporting system to ensure funds are used effectively, transparently, and aligned with program goals.

MCCA believes that Manitoba can continue to lead and strengthen ELCC in Canada by implementing coordinated public planning, stabilizing the workforce, simplifying system processes, advancing equity driven strategies, and ensuring accountable funding to build a reliable, high quality provincial child care system.

MCCA looks forward to its continued partnership with the Government of Manitoba.

With regards,



Jodie Kehl  
**Executive Director, MCCA**

c.c. – Deputy Minister Mona Pandey  
Assistant Deputy Minister Sarah Whiteford  
Ruth Lindsey-Armstrong, Co-Chair of Minister’s Consultation Table