



**Manitoba Child Care
Association**

**Pre-Budget Submission
To
The House of Commons
Standing Committee on Finance**

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Executive Summary

The availability of a high quality, accessible, affordable early learning and child care system is absolutely essential to ensure Canadian parents are able to be employed, to prepare for employment through education and job training, and maximize their contribution to economic growth. A reliable, stable early learning and child care system would guarantee ease of access to the child care spaces parents need so they can accept an employment offer, so they can return to work from maternity/parental leave, so they can be at the desk or in the factory without disruption of child care arrangements. When child care services are of high quality and accessible in urban, rural, and remote communities, neighborhoods thrive, children learn and grow in safe, educational learning environments, and families are supported.

The Manitoba Child Care Association submits the following recommendations for the 2017 federal budget:

1. The Government of Canada should lead the provinces & territories in the development of a system of high quality, not for profit, accessible, and inclusive early learning and child care services. Plans must include:

- a common, detailed, evidence-based federal/provincial/territorial policy framework
- multi-year, long-term, stable federal funding that provinces and service providers can count on
- the range of child care service options that families need
- quality programs through regulations, fairly compensated staff qualified in early childhood education, with good child-staff ratio's and group sizes, and a strong pedagogical base
- child care services that are affordable for parents
- reliable operational funding provided to services
- effective public management

2. By 2020, federal support for early learning and child care services should reach 1% of GDP, through scheduled increases in annual increments to provinces. Funds should be earmarked for early learning and child care and include conditions to ensure quality and accountability. Funds should be sustainable, increased annually, targeted to the provinces and territories that are committed to development of high quality early learning and child care services. In Manitoba, funds should be used to improve access, affordability, and quality; to support better wages, working conditions, and training for the child care workforce; for capital and renovation projects; and to strengthen governance and administration.

3. The Government of Canada should establish a system of data collection, evaluation, and research to measure progress on early learning and child care programs and services.

Quality Child Care – Canada Can't Work Without It!

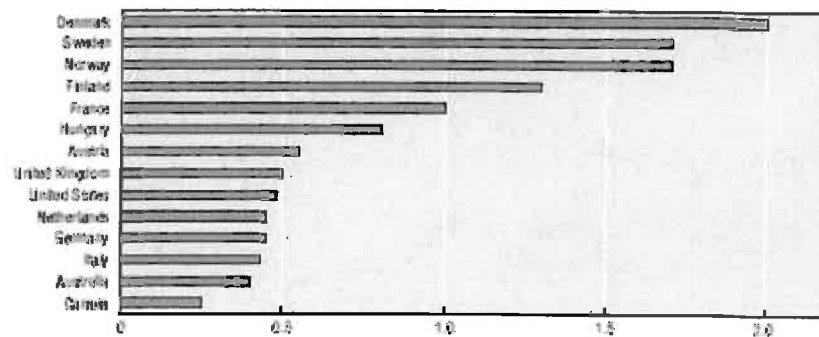
Quality early learning and child care programs have been recognized by countries around the world as essential services to support the ongoing learning and healthy development of children and to ensure access to training and labour force attachment of parents. Educated and employed parents can enjoy a stable income, economic security, and the potential for prosperous future.

Canada's sagging birthrate combined with an aging population is a landmine that no responsible government should ignore. Business struggles about labour shortages in many sectors now and it's not likely to get any better as long as Canadian birthrates remain below that required for a country to support itself. (Canadian Policy Research Networks)

In good and bad economic times, Canada needs child care to work. Child care yields high social and economic returns by promoting economic stimulus through job creation, facilitating parents labour force participation and increasing government revenues from employment taxes. It promotes healthy child development. It moves families out of poverty and it builds strong, local economies.

According to Starting Strong II, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Canada ranks last among 14 industrialized countries in public spending on early learning and child care at 0.25% of GDP:

Figure 5.3. Public expenditure on ECEC services (0-6 years) in selected OECD countries (%)



Note: This figure is comprised of expenditure estimates, based on replies provided by country authorities to an OECD survey in 2004. The figures provided suggest that Denmark spends 2% of GDP on early childhood services for 0- to 6-year-olds, and Sweden 1.7%. These countries - and Finland - also allocate an additional 0.3% (approximately) to the pre-school class for children 6 to 7 years.

By 2020, federal support for early learning and child care services should reach 1% of GDP, through scheduled increases in annual increments to provinces. Funds should be sustainable, increased annually, targeted to the provinces and territories that are committed to development of high quality early learning and child care services.

Canada Needs Child Care Services To Work

Current economic realities leave many families struggling to find and keep jobs, to acquire and enhance their education and skills, pay for housing, put food on the table, and buy shoes for the children.

In good and bad economic times, Canada needs child care to work. Child care yields high social and economic returns by promoting economic stimulus through job creation, facilitating parents labour force participation and increasing government revenues from employment taxes. It promotes healthy child development. It ensures fathers and mothers can participate in education, job training, and can enter and stay in the workforce. It moves families out of poverty and it builds strong, local economies.

Not only is quality child care combined with early learning a priority for Canadians, but investing in affordable and accessible child care services is also a key strategy for fostering economic prosperity in Canadians and a sustainable future for country.

In 2014, 70% of women in Canada with a child between ages 0 – 2 years and 77% with a child between ages 3 – 5 years, and 82% with a child between 6-15 years were engaged in paid employment. At the same time there are only enough regulated child care spaces for 24.9% of children 0-12.¹

UNICEF, the Canadian Paediatric Society, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, and the Canadian Labour Congress are just some of the many well-established organizations presently calling on governments to take strong leadership on creating a national child care strategy to build accessible, affordable, quality early learning and child care services.

On behalf of the parents of the 14,168 children on the Manitoba Online Child Care Registry and waiting for a licensed child care space, the Manitoba Child Care Association joins in the call to the Government of Canada to take immediate action to get Canada's early learning and child strategy development moving forward:

1. The Government of Canada should lead the provinces & territories in the development of a system of high quality, not for profit, accessible, and inclusive early learning and child care services, including:

- a common, detailed, evidence-based federal/provincial/territorial policy framework
- multi-year, long-term, stable federal funding that provinces and service providers can count on
- the range of child care service options that families need
- quality programs through regulations, fairly compensated staff qualified in early childhood education, with good child-staff ratio's and group sizes, and a strong pedagogical base

¹ Early Childhood Education and Care in Canada, 2014, Childcare Resource and Research Unit

- child care services that are affordable for parents
- reliable operational funding provided to services
- effective public management

2. *By 2020, federal support for early learning and child care services should reach 1% of GDP, through scheduled increases in annual increments to provinces. The Government of Canada should transfer funds to the provinces and territories that are earmarked for early learning and child care and attach conditions to ensure continued system building, quality and accountability. Funds should be sustainable, increased annually, targeted to the provinces and territories that are committed to expand and enhance high quality early learning and child care services.*

Childcare is an essential element of rural infrastructure, enabling rural families to combine work and family, enabling parents to earn off farm income, and thus strengthening the rural economy...

Association of Manitoba
Municipalities, Resolution
#16/07

In Manitoba, funds should be used to:

- *Improve access, affordability, and quality*
- *Support better wages, working conditions, and training for the child care workforce*
- *For capital and renovation projects*
- *To strengthen governance and administration*

3. *The Government of Canada should establish a system of data collection, evaluation, and research to measure progress on early learning and child care programs and services.*

Quality Early Learning and Child Care Does a Public Good

An investment in licensed child care is an investment in a healthy economy and a productive society. It gives parents the opportunity to access the jobs and training they need to support their families, and helps children learn and develop. Over the long term, expanding child care services may in fact save the taxpayer money. A landmark study of the effects of high quality early care and education on low income three and four years olds shows that adults at age 40 who participated in a preschool program in their early years have higher earnings, are more likely to hold a job, have committed fewer crimes, and are more likely to have graduated from high school. The High/Scope Perry Preschool study documented a return to society of more than \$17 for every tax dollar invested in the early care and education program. (www.highscope.org)

Quality Early Learning and Child Care Benefits Employers and Families

Employer's benefit when employees have good dependable child care. Employees are more productive on the job, and are less likely to be absent, late for work, leave early, or show other

signs of stress caused by uncertain child care arrangements. Making child care more accessible to low-income working families costs less than maintaining them on welfare. For many two-parent families, the second income, made possible by the availability of child care, is the only thing that stands between them and poverty. When parents can't find or afford licensed child care, this may make the difference between dependence on welfare, and contributing to the Canadian economy. Child care is essential to help single parents, mainly women, to get the education and training they need to succeed in today's workplace and support their families.