



**Manitoba Child Care
Association**

Our mission is to advocate for a quality system of child care, to advance early childhood education as a profession, and to provide services to our members.

**Presentation to the All-Party Panel
Manitoba Pre-Budget Consultation
Wednesday, October 26, 2016
7:00 – 9:00 PM
Winnipeg Grand Mosque
2445 Waverley St
Winnipeg**

Presented by Pat Wege, Executive Director

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The Manitoba Child Care Association (MCCA) is a voluntary professional association, not for profit, registered charity working to promote child care as a service and as a profession since 1974. We are the largest provincial child care association in Canada, and entirely self-funded through membership dues and professional development events. Our 4000 members are mostly those who work 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.

In the 21st century, child care is an essential public service for modern families. The workforce participation of mothers has continued to grow in Manitoba, now reaching:

64.8% of mothers with children 0-2 years
74.0% of mothers with children 3-5 year olds;
83.1% of mothers of children 6-15 year olds.¹

There are 111,000 children 0-12 years with employed mothers in Manitoba (2014 rounded estimate) and 34,285 licensed child care spaces. (March 30, 2016).

As of September 30, 2016, there are 15,078 unique children – meaning counted only once - on Manitoba's Online Child Care Registry waiting list, including 918 children not yet born.² More than 3000 of those children were added in the 6 month period from January – September this year alone.

Demand for licensed care far exceeds supply in most areas of Manitoba. Parents who can't access a licensed child care space when they need it, may delay a return to work or school, hope they have friends/family able to help, rely on social assistance for income, or use unlicensed child care – usually another mother, who by law can care for no more than four children including her own.

Access to unlicensed in home child care may be quicker to get than licensed care, but it is also more expensive, and without fee subsidy for low income parents. There are no standards, no training or background checks required, zero consumer protection. Parents must self-monitor and have a huge problem if care does not meet their expectations and they are without other child care options. Home child care usually closes when the caregiver is sick, has an appointment, or is on vacation, leaving parents in the lurch. Home child care opens and closes frequently and that creates instability for families who rely on child care to work.³

Manitoba is well recognized as a leader in early learning and child care - for our strong regulations, Early Childhood Education training programs, progressive funding models, and inclusion of children with additional support needs. Public support for child care is very high in our province.

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

² Manitoba Early Learning and Child Care Online Registry

³ Home Sweet Home? An Evidence Based Analysis of Licensed Home Child Care in Manitoba, 2016

MCCA recommends the Government of Manitoba make quality, child care a priority, and continue to enhance and expand our licensed child care system through a comprehensive policy framework that addresses these principles:

1. Licensed child care must be available, accessible, and reliable for families and good for their children.
2. Child care must be affordable.
3. Child care facilities must be adequately funded and supported to meet the regulatory requirements, including education & training of caregivers, space and equipment, administration and governance.
4. Care must be of high quality and include learning to foster healthy child development.
5. A comprehensive human resource development strategy that includes training and fair compensation is essential.
6. Experienced and skilled administration and governance is also needed

We recommend the following priorities for, or before, provincial budget 2017:

- provide immediate start up and operating grant funding for child care spaces in the community or co-located in a school that have already opened without funding, and to commit to funding for those currently under construction
- ensure there is an annual funding increase for existing child care facilities so they can cover inflationary increases to operating expenses including employee wages and benefits, children's program, occupancy, and administration
- revise the subsidy eligibility levels to help more lower income families with the cost of child care
- develop a robust plan to add more child care spaces, including construction or renovation costs, licensing, start up and operating grant funding for new infant, preschool, and school age spaces with a long range goal of ensuring all parents can access the child care they need
- establish a Ministers Advisory Committee on Early Learning and Child Care to study the options presented in the report from the Manitoba Early Learning and Child Care Commission, and identify a comprehensive implementation plan to improve access, affordability, workforce, quality of care and learning, funding, and to modernize the system
- use the one year federal funds coming to Manitoba in 2017 for a one time, per space, quality enhancement grant to existing licensed facilities to be used for space and equipment, education and training, or administration and governance projects.

Research tells us high quality licensed child care has a positive impact on how children learn, supports families, benefits communities, reduces poverty, is key to women's equality, helps establish newcomers, and contributes to a strong economy.

Please make child care a priority in the 2017 provincial budget and thank you for the opportunity to provide our input and recommendations.