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**PROVINCE ANNOUNCES NEW LICENSED COMMUNITY-BASED CHILD-CARE SPACES,
RELEASES PLANS FOR MODERNIZATION OF EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD-CARE SYSTEM****Changes will Reduce Regulatory Barriers
For Early Learning and Child-care Operators: Fielding**

The Manitoba government is committing \$6,181,500 for 15 community-based capital projects that will create up to 739 new licensed child-care spaces and is launching new measures to increase the efficiency of the licensed early learning and child-care system by addressing regulatory barriers for operators, Families Minister Scott Fielding announced today.

"Families across Manitoba understand the importance of safe and affordable child-care options and it has been evident since forming government, there are many opportunities for us to improve and modernize the system to ensure it is meeting the needs of Manitobans," said Fielding. "This first step will reform the licensing process and build a service-oriented system that focuses primarily on the needs of children, parents and child-care professionals, rather than on the administrative procedures that place an excessive burden on operators."

As part of the government's plan to modernize Manitoba's licensed early learning and child-care system, the province will:

- Expedite licensing renewals for centres with a track record of full compliance with regulations. In response to issues identified by the child-care sector as opportunities for improvement, a pilot project is being implemented that will see the inspection and licensing history of child-care centres factored into their application for licensing renewal. This will streamline re-licensing and monitoring as inspection visits will focus on centres in need of extra support. Currently, re-licensing occurs annually and a one-size-fits-all licensing inspection visit is completed for all centres, regardless of their compliance record.
- Streamline applications of certified early childhood educators who wish to open a licensed family child-care home. This new application process will recognize the professional credentials and intensive training that early childhood educators (ECEs) receive and will fast-track their applications according to their specialized qualifications.
- Simplify and expedite the process for age exemptions in order to ensure uninterrupted care for developmentally ready infants moving into vacant preschool spaces within the same centre. Requests for children approaching preschool age to be granted exemptions allowing them to transition early (prior to 24 months of age) into vacant preschool spaces within the same centre are fairly common. The process by which these exemptions are sought is being simplified, becoming a joint template form to be completed by the centre and the parent. The form will now be returned to the centre with a decision, within one week. This change will allow vacant preschool spaces to be filled more quickly which will in turn result in a more rapid availability of infant spaces.

- Improve public access to information regarding processes for opening child-care centres. Existing documents will be consolidated, updated and placed online so individuals or groups may easily access information regarding the process of opening a child-care centre. At this time, information is only available by mail following a request being submitted to the Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) Program.
- Complete the ongoing review of Manitoba's child-care legislation, regulations and procedures in order to streamline processes for child-care operators. This review, underway since the fall of 2016, involves a detailed comparison of Manitoba's standards to other Canadian jurisdictions in order to identify best practices, opportunities for efficiency and unnecessary duplication.

"We welcome new ideas to strengthen and improve the child-care system for those responsible for licensing, for the service providers in centres and homes, and especially for the parents and children who use it," said Pat Wege, executive director, Manitoba Child Care Association.

"As a centre director, any changes that enhance early learning and child-care in Manitoba are welcome," said April Kalyniuk, executive director, Lord Roberts Children's Programs. "Providing additional support to centres that are having difficulties in any area of the licencing process, while at the same time streamlining the process for others, is well worth examining."

"New child-care initiatives put forward in recent years have not always yielded the desired results," said Lisa Nemetchek, executive director, Les Heures Claires. "I believe more consultations about streamlining current programs and mandates could improve the use of resources and lead to positive outcomes for children and families."

"A trained ECE with years of experience should not have to go through the same process as untrained individuals who want to run a licensed daycare," said Marthe Melanie, ECE III, specialization in infant care. "Qualified ECEs who demonstrate the requirements needed to get licensed should be able to receive their full home daycare licence in a reasonable amount of time. Recognizing qualifications in the licensing process can encourage more ECEs who have left the field to consider coming back to open more licensed home daycares."

"The safety and well-being of our children is a top priority and the ELCC framework plays an important role in ensuring this," said Fielding. "ELCC regulations must also be practical, easy to understand and part of the long-term solution. These common-sense initiatives will help make sure that ELCC regulations fulfil their intended purpose of ensuring safety and access to quality early learning and child-care options for Manitoba families."

For more information on the Early Learning and Child Care Program, visit:

www.gov.mb.ca/fs/childcare/index.html.

**NEW LICENSED CHILD-CARE SPACES
IN MANITOBA**

The Manitoba government will invest in community-based capital projects that will create up to 739 new licensed child-care spaces. The following projects are moving forward with capital funding support:

- **Winnipeg:**
 - Les Heures Claires Inc., up to 56 spaces in River East;
 - Campus Day Care Centre Inc., up to 52 spaces at University of Manitoba;
 - Soul Sanctuary Preschool, up to 40 spaces in Fort Garry;
 - Little Saints Learning Centre Inc., up to 48 spaces in St. Vital;
 - Qualico – Sage Creek (with community partner), up to 74 spaces in Sage Creek;
 - Kookum's Place Preschool Centre, up to 24 spaces in south Point Douglas;
 - YMCA-YWCA of Winnipeg at Great West Life, up to 100 spaces in the downtown area;
 - University of Winnipeg Student Association Day Care Centre, up to 32 spaces in the downtown area;
 - Ka Ni Kanichihk Daycare, up to 32 spaces in central Winnipeg; and
 - Ryerson School Age Centre Inc., up to 48 spaces in Charleswood.

- **Other Communities:**
 - Pembina Valley Child Care Centre, up to 52 spaces in Morden;
 - La Salle KIDZ Inc., up to 60 spaces in La Salle;
 - Niverville Heritage Holdings Inc. (with community partner), up to 90 spaces in St. Adolphe;
 - Riverside Daycare Inc., up to 10 spaces in Thompson; and
 - Springfield Learning Centre, up to 21 spaces in Anola.