



**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.

June 28, 2017

Hon. Scott Fielding  
Minister of Families  
Room 357, Legislative Building  
450 Broadway Ave  
Winnipeg, Manitoba  
R3C 0V8

Dear Hon. Scott Fielding:

The Manitoba Child Care Association makes the following recommendations for the Inclusion Support Program:

1. ALL children should have equal access to quality, licensed, early learning and child care that will enhance their social, emotional, physical and cognitive development.
2. The Government of Manitoba must provide sufficient funding for the Inclusion Support Program (ISP) to enable licensed child care facilities to comply with the inclusion policy approved by the Manitoba Early Learning and Child Care Program, and also meet their obligations under human rights legislation.
3. The Government of Manitoba must ensure that funding for the Inclusion Support Program is reasonably reflective of the population of children age 12 and under that have additional support needs, and must be adjusted as new child care spaces are licensed.
4. The ISP policies and practices must minimize risk to children, to staff, to boards of directors.
5. Due to recent abrupt and inconsistently communicated changes, child care facilities report they are unclear on ISP goals, funding policies, and procedures resulting in frustration, confusion, chaos, and decreased level of support for children. A communication strategy is urgently needed to explain access, funding, and procedures. It must be circulated to all licensed child care facilities, and those who are part of the child's support team including child development counsellors, therapists, family services workers, service coordinators, social workers, service providers, agencies, etc.
6. Successful inclusion of children with additional support needs hinges on the knowledge, skills and abilities of staff in centres and the provider in the licensed home. ECE training programs focus on typical child development and graduates are not experts in working with children with unique needs. The only training requirement for Child Care Assistants and FCCPs is a 40 hour introductory course and no specific training or experience working with children with special

needs is required. Requiring ISP staff and FCCP's to complete a specially designed articulated course in the basics of working with children with additional support needs should be considered as a requirement. Better qualified caregivers would improve child outcomes and may reduce the number of hours of inclusion funding required.

7. Child care centres cannot recruit and retain skilled inclusion support workers if the most the ISP program will fund is minimum wage. Providing effective care and education to high needs children requires the most skilled, not the cheapest.
8. To reduce the pressure on the inclusion support program, child care facilities must have quick access to consultants to help them cope with children presenting with challenging behaviors, including those who have experienced trauma. Having someone to call that is a "behavioral specialist" may mean an ISP worker is not needed at all, or only for a short period of time.
9. An early identification strategy, for example a province wide screening of all 3 year olds, would ensure intervention could be provided when most likely to be successful and less costly in the long run. Reduced wait times for developmental assessments, and quick access to occupational and speech therapy, behavior specialists, family supports directly in child care facilities would also help to address child developmental needs early. The Department of Families should be working with Healthy Child Manitoba, Manitoba Education, and other partner departments on the Healthy Child Committee of Cabinet to ensure an integrated and collaborative approach in supporting children and families.
10. To improve access to licensed child care, the Early Learning and Child Care Program should identify a way to ensure all licensed child care centres and home child care programs are providing equal access to children with additional support needs. It has been noted that at the end of the 2016 fiscal year, 40% of child care centres and 92% of Family Child Care Providers are not receiving inclusion support. This may mean they don't need additional support or it may mean they are denying care to children with diagnosed additional support needs.
11. The Child Functional Ability Inventory Form is unnecessary red tape and should be reconsidered. The persons currently authorized to complete the form often do not know the child at all or enough to provide an accurate assessment of abilities.

Thank you for considering our recommendations as you complete the review of the Inclusion Support Program.

Sincerely,



April Kalyniuk, President