

Questions and draft responses re questionnaire from the MCCA

1. WHAT WILL YOUR GOVERNMENT DO TO DEVELOP AN INCLUSIVE APPROACH THAT MEETS ALL THE ELEMENTS OF THE SYSTEM – AFFORDABILITY, ACCESSIBILITY AND QUALITY?

In the Spring of 2019, a general petition was circulated urging the Provincial Government to increase funding for licensed not for profit child care programs in recognition of the importance of early learning & child care in Manitoba. The response to the petition was overwhelming. Over 26,000 Manitobans signed the petition. However, there has been no comprehensive provincial strategy to date.

Response from the Green Party of Manitoba

The Green Party of Manitoba supports a long-term vision of universally accessible, high quality, affordable early learning and childcare services for all children and families who wish to use them.

The Green Party of Manitoba would work towards implementing this vision by taking into consideration, and be guided as appropriate by, the recommendations of the Manitoba Early Learning and Child Care Commission 2016.

Also, the Green Party of Manitoba is committed to retaining the non-profit character of the licensed child care system, and to enhancing high quality care that stimulates learning.

2. IF YOUR PARTY IS ELECTED, HOW MANY ADDITIONAL SPACES WILL BE LICENSED AND FUNDED FOR EACH CHILD CARE CENTRES AND HOME-BASED PROGRAMS? WILL YOUR PARTY COMMIT TO FUNDING THE EXISTING 2691 UNFUNDED SPACES?

Access to licensed child care spaces is a problem throughout the province and must be improved. As of June 2018, there were 16,605 total unique children province-wide on the online child care registry.

Response from the Green Party of Manitoba

The Green Party of Manitoba would build 2,000 new licensed child care spaces *per year* over the next 10 years. The estimated cost is about \$31 million a year with an additional annual cost of \$1.1 million in operating grants and financial assistance.

Furthermore, the Green Party of Manitoba supports (i) mandating school divisions, in collaboration with parents/caregivers and the early childhood development community, to develop and implement early childhood education and development programming and initiatives and (ii) providing funding to school divisions for early childhood education and development programming and initiatives.

3. WILL YOUR GOVERNMENT COMMIT TO A) IMPLEMENTING A WORKFORCE STRATEGY THAT SUPPORTS CURRENT INITIATIVES AND B) ENSURING ECES ARE COMPENSATED BY THEIR EMPLOYERS AT A LEVEL THAT REFLECTS THEIR EDUCATION AND YEARS OF SERVICE?

Quality child care is dependent on a workforce that is skilled and adequately remunerated. The workforce shortage of trained Early Childhood Educators has increased significantly. There are a number of current initiatives to address some of the recruitment and retention challenges including: staff

replacement grants, registered pension plan and retirement supports, increased funding to ECE training capacity and annual training grants. And still, there is a substantial shortage.

Response from the Green Party of Manitoba

The Green Party of Manitoba also believes that quality child care is dependent on a workforce that is skilled and adequately remunerated.

In consultation and collaboration with the early learning and child care community in Manitoba, the Green Party of Manitoba would develop a plan to address the workforce challenges related to recruitment and retention challenges in the early learning and child care sector.

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4. WHAT WILL YOUR PARTY DO TO ENSURE CHILD CARE FEES REMAIN AFFORDABLE TO ALL MANITOBA FAMILIES?

Manitoba continues to have the 2nd lowest child care fees in Canada. However, less families are eligible for subsidized care. Only 20% of all children in care qualify for subsidy.

Response from the Green Party of Manitoba

Under the Green Party of Manitoba plan, no parent earning less than the poverty line would pay for licensed child care, and the cost of care would gradually increase to a maximum cost of 10 per cent of net family income. The current formula now sees a single parent at the poverty line with one pre-school child paying 16 per cent of her income for child care.