



Manitoba Child Care Association

If elected, what will your government do to develop an inclusive approach that meets all the elements of the system – affordability, accessibility and quality?

As a parent to a young toddler and two older sons, I understand the struggle Manitoba parents are facing to find quality, affordable, accessible child care. The Pallister PCs have frozen funding while the wait list for quality child care continues to grow; they have also failed to come clean with Manitobans about their plans for child care in Manitoba. A recently posted Request for Proposals on the future of childcare in Manitoba includes a non-disclosure clause which strongly suggests they have a plan to increase parent fees and cut child care.

Under the Pallister PCs, daycare centres have received no increase in operating funding in over three years. This is hurting child care and child care workers in our province. That's why we will end the freeze and commit to sustainable and predictable funding increases for the child care sector. We will keep post-secondary tuition affordable to ensure there are good opportunities to train as an Early Childhood Educator. We will work with the Federal Government to make sure wages, benefits and workplace conditions are competitive and equitable and we will invest in new childcare spaces in licensed child care centers across our province. We will also work with the Federal Government to ensure communities that are currently under-served – including newcomer communities, French language communities and rural and remote communities – are properly supported with good quality childcare. And we will continue to support all families in the child care sector so it is truly inclusive by making investments in important programs like inclusion support.

We are committed to keeping childcare affordable – we will not raise parent fees and we will take steps to reduce the burden parents have to pay over time. More broadly we are committed to integrating the child care system under the Department of Education. This recognizes the continuity from early childhood learning through K-12 schooling, to post-secondary education and beyond.

If your party is elected, how many additional spaces will be licensed and funded for each child care center and home-based programs? Will your party commit to funding the existing 2691 unfunded spaces?

The Manitoba NDP knows the need for new child care spaces is urgent and of the utmost importance. We are committed to building hundreds more child care spaces in licensed child care centres across our province beyond what was committed to in the most recent provincial budget. We will also invest money to ensure the existing unfunded spaces are funded and will work with the Federal Government to fund all unfunded spaces over the course of our mandate.

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?

The Pallister PCs cuts and freezes have had a real and negative impact on the child care sector, Early Childhood Educators and workers in our province. The Manitoba NDP however understand the value of early childhood education and believe we need to support Early Childhood Educators and child care workers. That's why we will take the step of incorporating the child care system under the Department of Education because we believe in and support the educational impact provided by Early childhood Educators and child care workers.

We will implement a workforce strategy that supports Early Childhood Educators by keeping tuition rates low for university and colleges and providing bursaries that will help ensure all Manitobans, regardless of income or background, are able to get the education and training they need and desire.

We will also take the pressure off of licensed child care centres by ending Pallister's operating grant freeze. With sustainable and predictable funding for centers we believe we can ensure ECEs are able to be compensated at levels that reflect their education and years of service.

What will your party do to ensure child care fees remain affordable to all Manitoba families?

The Manitoba NDP knows the cost of childcare is one of the biggest parts of a family's budget. And we know life is becoming less affordable under the Pallister's PCs. That's why we've developed an ambitious, but achievable goal for child care in Manitoba. We will keep parent fees where they are and continue to work with child care center to lower them in the future. We will also work to increase public awareness about available childcare subsidies to make sure more Manitoban families have access to childcare and make it easier for more Manitobans to qualify.