

Make Child Care a Priority This Election

Manitoba Child Care Association urges Manitobans to put people first and keep early learning and child care top of mind this provincial election

Winnipeg, April 20, 2023 - Everyone relies on someone who relies on child care, and now—with a pending provincial election— is the time for Manitobans to make it a priority. With historic and transformational funding from the Canada-Manitoba Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) Agreement, Manitoba has started to make investments in the province's ELCC sector, but it won't be enough to sustain the workforce who support the high-quality, accessible, affordable, and inclusive system all Manitoba families have learned to expect. That could mean families and children may not get the \$10/day quality care space they need.

Leading up to the 32nd Week of the Early Childhood Educator (ECE), the Manitoba Child Care Association (MCCA) is urging Manitobans and all political parties to prioritize ELCC and the professional Early Childhood Educators who support it, during this year's provincial election.

"We have started to see change in child care in Manitoba, primarily to help families with affordability, but frankly, it's not enough," says Jodie Kehl, Executive Director of MCCA.

Currently, Manitoba's child care facilities are facing long wait lists of up to five years. Manitoba's programs have also lost staff, the Early Childhood Educators, at historic levels. From recent MCCA surveys, at least 35 per cent of Manitoba child care programs have an exemption on their operating license due to the failure to meet provincial requirements for trained staff.

"Our daughter just turned two and we have to find a new daycare," says Alexandra and Evan Allan, residents of the Crescentwood and River Heights neighbourhoods in Winnipeg. "There's no space for her to advance to preschool so we're stuck trying to find daycare again. It's a super stressful situation. We've been told that waitlists in other facilities are closed due to overwhelming numbers or there are 550 children ahead of us on the list. What are we supposed to do next? It's frustrating."

"Manitoba needs trained ECEs. There are an estimated 1,000 fewer educated ECEs today than there were in 2018. Without ECEs, every new space will be an empty space," continues Kehl. "With inflation and cost of living rising, wages are not keeping pace and ECEs are leaving the field for higher paying employment and fewer are joining the child care sector. A competitive salary will go a long way in keeping the incredible people who take care of our children, who help our children build the foundation for growth and success."

Currently, entry level ECEs in Manitoba earn a starting wage of \$19.53/hour. However, the target for a market competitive wage in Manitoba was set to be \$26.86/hour, [based on our third-party compensation research](#).

"We need to support our child care facilities, so we have quality of care for our children and that means making sure staff retention is high," says Lynda Raible, president of MCCA. "We need to make sure the foundation of our system is sound, and that starts with the ELCC workforce, we have to make sure we're retaining good ECEs and an easy start is making sure they're compensated fairly."



MCCA has provided the province with solutions to these urgent issues. The [Roadmap to a Quality Early Learning and Child Care System](#) lays out how Manitoba can address all of the interrelated issues of building and sustaining a high quality ELCC system for Manitobans – Thanks to child care, Manitoba can work.

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About Manitoba Child Care Association – The Manitoba Child Care Association is a membership funded organization that advocates for a quality system of child care and works to advance early childhood education as a profession.

MCCA does not endorse the position of any political party, elected official, or any candidate for public office. This is for informational purposes and does not necessarily reflect the opinion of this organization.

Media assets available for download [here](#).

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