



If elected, will your party commit to funding MCCA's Market Competitive Salary Guideline Scale and a benefit package for all certified ECEs?

Yes. We have committed to this in our platform.

Getting \$10 a day childcare done right is a top priority for Manitoba Liberals. After the federal government announced \$10 a day childcare in partnership with the province, the PC's fumbled the rollout miserably. Part of the problem is that there are simply not enough ECE's working in the system and equally challenging conditions in recruiting new ECEs. It is so bad that nearly a third of childcare centres simply do not have enough certified ECE's to meet regulatory requirements.

The MCCA has long produced salary guidelines based on competitive pay rates for Early Childhood Educators, which was ignored by both NDP and PC governments alike. ECE's were poorly paid under the NDP, and the problem continues presently under the PC's. We can't recruit new ECEs if poor wages disincentivize them from entering the profession, and we can't retain them if we aren't putting up competitive wages and better benefits exist elsewhere.

One of the planks of the Manitoba Liberal childcare plan will be to increase wages and benefits for Early Childhood Educators, based on competitive salary guidelines as laid out by the Manitoba Childcare Association. We want to show ECEs that we value the work they are doing. Improving their working conditions and compensation is an important first step.

What is your plan for developing a comprehensive workforce strategy to address the current shrinking ECE workforce?

Manitoba Liberals have committed to investing in wages and training to ensure that we address the root causes of recruitment and retention challenges in the ECE workforce.

Unfortunately, this problem has persisted for many years. Under the NDP, Manitoba had one of the most costly and least used early childhood education systems in Canada, with 16,000 people on the waitlist for childcare when the NDP left office. The conditions deteriorated under the PCs, with certified ECE workers being paid at levels so low, they could not support themselves.

Stagnant funding for childcare centres has often left little room for upward financial mobility for ECEs, which is a further disincentive to pursue skills training or additional certifications.

A Manitoba Liberal government will adopt the recommendations of the MCCA to increase wages and benefits for Early Childhood Educators to support the implementation of 23,000 new affordable childcare spaces. We will also expand training programs at the Université de Saint-Boniface to ensure French-language spaces are available and well-staffed.

Affordability/Funding

What is your plan to ensure high quality early learning and child care services are affordable to all families in Manitoba?

For many Manitoban families – especially in today’s tough economy – whether you have child care or not makes the difference as to whether you can work and pay your bills. We want to make sure that affordable childcare remains accessible to all Manitoban families, no matter where they live.

One of the issues we have right now is that if certain childcare organizations are registered as a charity, their infrastructure funding is capped at 60% of capital costs. That limits organizations such as the YMCA, which is the biggest provider of childcare in Manitoba, from expanding and accommodating new spaces.

Manitoba Liberals will accelerate the creation of new spaces by improving infrastructure funding from 60% to 100% for charitable non-profits. We will further support the purchase and retrofit of existing suitable buildings for additional childcare spaces, especially in communities of great need.

We will also look to co-locate spaces where families and parents are working. For nurses and teachers, we will co-locate childcares in or near hospitals, clinics and schools.

What is your plan to ensure that families of School-aged children (7-12 years) will pay a maximum of \$10/day year long?

One of the most significant commitments we made for our child care policy is to ensure that \$10/day childcare is available for all school-aged children across the province. Our priority is to ensure that child care spaces are firstly made available for daycare-aged children, before expanding program eligibility.

We will address the bottlenecks in the lack of physical spaces, and ensuring ECE’s are paid a fair, competitive wage to not only ensure that Manitoba meets 23,000, but to go beyond for school-aged children. This commitment will cost approximately \$10 million.

What is your plan to ensure licensed not for profit facilities receive annual and adequate operating grants to make up for the frozen funding over the years?

The PC government’s austerity measures have been incredibly damaging for childcare spaces, which have led to many childcare facilities being over-registered, not enough facilities in high-need areas, and waitlists ballooning to unreasonable levels.

Besides Manitoba Liberals will reverse the austerity measures of the PC’s and invest in stabilizing and expanding childcare in the province.

Manitoba Liberals are committed to including ELCC under education, not families. The NDP and PCs are both keeping the education rebate, borrowing \$453-million to send cheques to companies outside of Manitoba. We have promised to repeal 80% of that rebate, increasing revenue, reducing borrowing and stabilizing the government’s finances so we can ensure adequate funding for ELCC.

Accessibility

What is your expansion plan to ensure the growth of high-quality child care for all Manitoba families throughout the province?

After the online child care registry was discontinued, parents and families lost access to data on accessibility, where they could see areas with a need for child care services in the province. Manitoba Liberals have committed to fixing the broken online childcare registry to create a new online portal so families can register for childcare spaces within one accessible access point.

We have further committed to constructing a public registry of available public buildings and land for future childcare space development. Between the City of Winnipeg and the Province of Manitoba, we would like to see, where appropriate, public buildings that have the capacity to be retrofitted to include new childcare spaces. Certain professions such as in the healthcare and education fields face disproportionate accessibility challenges when it comes to childcare. That's why we've announced that we will co-locate spaces where families and parents are working, such as in and around hospitals and schools.

What is your plan to support existing facilities ability to expand through planning grants, adequate funding and necessary resources?

We have committed to changing infrastructure funding from 60% to 100% to help existing facilities expand and grow their operations to accommodate the dire need for more childcare spaces.

Heather Stefanson's PC government has utterly failed to provide the necessary capital and resources for our province to meet the goal of allotted spaces since the Government of Canada partnered with the province to expand childcare. Parents are still struggling with unmanageable waitlists and high costs.

In Manitoba and across Canada, the single largest provider of early childhood education is the YMCA. They could be adding spaces, especially at the downtown Y, which is a charity. But it is only eligible for 60% and have to fundraise the other 40%.

Manitoba Liberals will work with the Manitoba Childcare Association to fill any gaps related to Early Childhood Education to ensure that all childcare facilities in the province are fully and properly supported.