

Child care great in Manitoba — if you can ever get in, poll finds ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

The stress and anxiety of trying to find quality daycare in Manitoba has parents calling on the government to create a universal child care program.

The vast majority of respondents who took part in a Probe Research poll prepared for the Manitoba Child Care Association (MCCA) pointed to wait times as the single worst thing about the child care system in the province.

As of Sept. 30, 2016, there were 15,273 children on the online child care registry waiting list, according to the MCCA.

Two thirds (62 per cent) of parents who took part in the poll reported having to wait between 14 and 15 months for a space. And many of those waiting turn to friends or family or use unlicensed operators as a stop-gap measure.

The lack of daycare space can also have a serious impact on the lives of parents:

- 41 per cent saying they delayed a return to work.
- 30 per cent saying they turned down a job.
- 24 per cent saying they turned down an educational opportunity.

Those who have a child care space, however, reported high levels of satisfaction with the hours, services and overall quality of care their children receive.

The online survey, conducted between Sept. 15 and Oct. 1, was completed by nearly 3,100 parents, representing approximately 4,774 children currently in child care.

It was the most in-depth opinion research undertaken in Manitoba on the issue of child care, according to the MCCA, which insists a universal child care system would ensure every child who needs a licensed space gets one.

A sample of the survey's findings include:

- 83 per cent of parents agreed licensing is important to ensure quality.
- 49 per cent said child care fees are a strain on their household budget or not affordable.
- 77 per cent of parents prefer a school with onsite child care.
- 77 per cent of parents agreed child care centres should be built as part of new housing developments.
- 57 per cent of parents who have used unlicensed home child care prefer it be licensed.
- 64 per cent of parents did not express confidence in the province's ability to increase spaces without sacrificing the quality of care. One in five (20 per cent) were not at all confident.
- 18 per cent of parents said they would start a home-based child care business with enough incentive.

Of the 34,000 licensed child care spaces in Manitoba, 91 per cent are located in child care centres and nine per cent are located in licensed home child care.

There is very little data regarding the number of unlicensed child care homes in Manitoba, the MCCA said.

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Region: Manitoba ^[3]

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ever-get-poll-finds

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