

Enhancing child care for Manitobans ^[1]

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Because strong families are the foundation of Manitoba's future, our government continues to improve child care in our province.

As Minister of Families, I'm proud to have recently announced that we are working with the federal government to add 780 licensed child care spaces with \$22.8 million in funding for construction in areas most in need across Manitoba — and I'm especially pleased that 40 of these new spaces are coming to Assiniboine Children's Centre at École Assiniboine.

This French-immersion school in our area of Winnipeg is receiving capital funding of about \$1.85 million and an annual operating grant of nearly \$340,000 for the creation of 40 early-learning and child care spaces, including 24 spaces for infants and 16 for preschool children. Our government has listened to families in the Kirkfield Park and St. James constituencies about the need for more childcare spaces and facilities, and we're acting to fill that need through the new Canada-Manitoba Early Learning and Child Care Agreement.

The 780 new child care spaces are being created across the province through 20 major capital projects in communities where access to affordable child care has been challenging, and with consideration of lower-income, lone-parent or French-language families. The new child care centres will serve as community hubs with 10 projects at schools or on school properties, and another 10 projects at other kinds of active community locations.

We are also allocating \$2.3 million in operating funding annually over three years to 621 existing child care spaces at 63 Manitoba facilities. In the St. James area, this funding will support 10 spaces at Bright Beginnings Educare's Monterey location, four spaces at Fairlane Children's Centre and two spaces at Horizons Children's Centre. The new funding ensures these child care centres will remain affordable and stable. The federal government requested that priority for this financial support be given to facilities serving French-language, rural, northern and other higher-needs communities.

All of these developments amount to a total of 1,400 new or newly funded child care spaces with an overall \$47-million investment over three years. We are vastly improving access to affordable child care while reducing families' wait times and meeting the needs of diverse communities. At the same time, our work continues on a broader provincial early learning and child care strategy.

Our government was elected on a promise to repair the services Manitobans depend on, and improvements to child care are among our priorities. It's fulfilling to see our efforts deliver an ongoing expansion of early-learning and child care facilities and spaces for families in west Winnipeg and across the province.

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