

Manitoba votes: Tories promise \$500 per month child care subsidy for lower-income families ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

The Progressive Conservatives are promising to create a new child care funding program to cover child care costs and help improve the availability of child care in the province.

The child care funding program would include a subsidy of up to \$500 per month for 3,000 lower-income families.

“Our party is the only party committed to making life more affordable for working families,” said Heather Stefanson, the PC candidate in Tuxedo. “Families aren’t all the same and our early learning and child care choices shouldn’t all be the same either, so in addition to adding more spaces, we know we need to offer more choice for parents.”

The PCs say their new Portable Child Care Benefit will offer flexibility by following children to their family’s child care option of choice.

“Our new Portable Child Care Benefit will provide flexible child care cost relief to eligible families who need it most and offer more options to parents who feel that they don’t have any,” said Stefanson, speaking at Living Prairie Childcare in Sage Creek, a 74-space facility which was built through the Child Care Centre Development Tax Credit.

Stefanson said the Tories plan to continue the Tax Credit program, which was introduced last year.

“This beautiful venue that we are in today speaks volumes about (the program’s) value,” said Stefanson, who was flanked by fellow PC candidates. “But we’re also going to keep moving forward to improve child care in Manitoba.”

Stefanson said her government will introduce legislative amendments to authorize payment of capital grants to private early learning and child care centres to spark the creation of more spaces, which would become one more option for eligible recipients of the new Portable Child Care Benefit. Private spaces currently make up less than 5% of Manitoba’s childcare system, versus 58% in Alberta or 49% in British Columbia.

If re-elected, a PC government is also committed to accelerating the construction of new schools in Manitoba, with the New Schools Sooner Guarantee adding even more child care spaces for families with every school. Seven schools in various stages of construction and tender will add 548 new spaces across the province, and 13 newly announced schools will create 1,000 more spaces. All together, that should result in more than 3,000 new child care spaces.

“We need to go back and remind Manitobans that the wait list did double under the previous NDP government and it’s going to take significant time to ensure that we reduce that wait list but this is why we’re starting with this today and starting to bring it down and we’re going to continue to get access to child care services for Manitoba families,” said Stefanson.

In a statement, the NDP accused the PC government of “sitting on its hands” for three years as families struggled to find quality, accessible, reliable child care and froze funding for child care centres throwing the system into crisis. The PCs let the child care wait list grow to above 17,000 kids and then hid the wait list from the public because it was too long and promised 550 home-based day-care spots in their first term and didn’t even get halfway there, missing by over 350 spots, the NDP said.

“Pallister’s record on childcare shows how little he cares about working families and how little he values early childhood education – he’s only concerned for those at the top,” said the NDP in a statement. “The lack of action hurt all children in our province and women who are the most likely to be affected by cuts to child care.”

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Region: Manitoba ^[3]

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/19/08/manitoba-votes-tories-promise-500-month-child-care-subsidy-lower> [2]
<https://winnipegssun.com/news/local-news/manitoba-votes-tories-promise-500-per-month-child-care-subsidy-for-lower-income-families> [3]
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