

Staff shortages a growing problem in child care ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

There's a growing labour shortage in Canada, and the child-care sector in Manitoba has not been exempt. I have heard from numerous childcare providers in Notre Dame who are sounding the alarm about the staffing shortages and the many negative effects this has on providing quality child care in our area and our province.

The main reason for the shortage of certified early childhood educators in Manitoba is that many ECEs earn little more than minimum wage because of the provincial government's five-year funding freeze to the childcare sector – led by former families minister Heather Stefanson. With these low wage prospects, completing the required two-year certificate just doesn't make sense for most people.

Staffing shortages are directly related to the lack of child-care spaces in Manitoba, because having fewer staff forces child-care centres to reduce enrolment in programs, hours of operation, and results in staff having to work too much overtime.

Many facilities, especially smaller centres, have to close whenever a staff member falls ill because there are not enough substitutes available to cover for them.

This summer, we received the sudden news that the Weston Daycare would close down by the end of August, and the parents of 59 infants and children suddenly had to find new spots within weeks in a child-care system that is already stretched thin.

I recently heard from Can You Imagine Inc., which runs three daycare programs in Winnipeg, that it is trying to open a new daycare program licensed for 50 spaces in Weston School. The only thing standing in the way is staffing, because it has been almost impossible to find qualified ECEs to work in this new day care.

When concerns such as these are brought up to Premier Stefanson's government, they provide no timeline or commitment for when ECE wages and the funding freeze will be addressed.

Lower child-care costs will not help families if there are no centres and staff to meet the demand for childcare in our province. The Progressive Conservative government needs to prioritize funding our childcare sectors and supporting ECEs because that is the only way to retain and attract qualified workers to the childcare sector.

If you have concerns about childcare and the lack of a living wage for ECEs in our province, please contact my office anytime at 204-788-0800 or by emailing malaya.marcelino@yourmanitoba.ca ^[3]

Region: Manitoba ^[4]

Tags: child care workforce ^[5]

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