

Canada-Manitoba early learning and child-care agreement to strengthen child care and support recruitment, retention of early childhood workforce across Manitoba^[1]

More than \$19 million in initial investments to be made in coming weeks to enhance pay, increase benefits for front-line workers

Author: Governments of Manitoba

Source: Government of Manitoba

Format: Press release

Publication Date: 22 Feb 2022

AVAILABILITY

Access online^[2]

EXCERPTS



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The governments of Canada and Manitoba have extended the Canada-Manitoba Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) Agreement, investing close to \$98 million over four years to continue building and strengthening regulated child care services for children six years old and under, Federal Minister of Families, Children and Social Development Karina Gould and Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning Minister Wayne Ewasko announced today.

This will include a one-time investment in the early childhood workforce of more than \$19 million to begin offering targeted support for the recruitment and retention of qualified staff for the early learning sector.

“When we announced the increased subsidy thresholds and fee reductions for subsidized families three weeks ago, we promised that additional investments would be coming to support the early childhood workforce, and today, we deliver on that promise,” said Ewasko. “Our first investments will be to enhance wages for many workers who make less than the provincial average, as well as provide additional benefits to current staff, which is expected to help us retain more employees to support the youngest Manitobans.”

“Today’s agreement builds on the great work already underway to improve early learning and child care in Manitoba,” said Gould. “It also means more support for early childhood educators, who are at the heart of the Canada-wide system we are building with provinces and territories. I look forward to continuing to work with the province to support families, create more child care spaces, and grow the early childhood workforce.”

As part of the close to \$98 million investment, \$15.5 million in funding for this year prioritizes ongoing commitments made under previous agreements, including supporting:

affordable child care by providing operating grant funding for over 1,800 spaces,

diversity and inclusion through increased funding for Francophone and Indigenous programming and expanded supports for children with additional needs; and rural and northern communities to build sector capacity.

Under this extended agreement, Manitoba will also introduce two new initiatives to support the ELCC sector in the coming months. This includes:

a Renovation Expansion Grant to provide funding for non-profit facilities to expand their existing spaces to meet community needs; and

increased opportunities for child-care assistant certification training by improving access to the required 40-hours course through subsidized costs and expanded programming.

Building on existing supports and providing one-time retention incentives, a one-time early childhood workforce investment of nearly \$19.2 million is included in this agreement, with a focus on attracting new educators to the ELCC sector and retaining current staff while acknowledging length of service. By the end of March 2022, up to \$12.6 million of the \$19.2 million will be used to support retention of qualified and experienced staff for the ELCC sector. This will include:

increases in wages for eligible current staff that enhance economic stability and support the lowest-paid workers in the sector to bridge gaps until the wage grid under the Canada-Wide Canada-Manitoba Early Learning and Child Care Agreement is implemented;

providing a one year “top-up” of the percentage offered by Manitoba to the pension plan for centres and the RRSP program for home child care providers; and

providing facilities with funding to provide staff a one-time investment in a tax-free savings account, to support increased financial security of the workforce based on years of service.

The remaining funding will be used to help grow the sector workforce, including investments in:

attracting qualified workers by providing tuition reimbursements to early childhood educators (ECE’s) already enrolled in, or recent graduates from, an ECE training program;

removing the barriers of entry into an ECE program by directly funding ECE training programs, with a focus on underserved communities;

providing supports to child-care assistants seeking ECE certification; and,

modernizing the ELCC sector career landscape by redeveloping competencies to better support career laddering.

The ministers noted today’s announcement builds on recent investments under the Canada-Wide ELCC Agreement to expand eligibility to Manitoba’s Child Care Subsidy Program, resulting in nearly half of regulated spaces being subsidized. In addition to supporting the ELCC workforce, work will continue to ensure the ongoing financial stability of child care facilities, while minimizing challenges for new families applying for a child care subsidy.

To further support subsidy increases and ensure more Manitoba families have access to affordable child care, Canada and Manitoba are investing an additional \$75 million to provide facilities with a six-month subsidy advance and three-month parent fee coverage, with \$58.1 million in federal funding coming through the Canada-Manitoba Canada-Wide ELCC agreement for children aged six and under.

This funding will support the growing number of families that are now eligible to receive financial assistance for child-care subsidies under the increased threshold levels announced earlier this month, and reduce the administrative burden on facilities. It will also support families by allowing parents to move forward with employment or educational plans and commitments without interruption while waiting for their parent fee subsidy assessment to be completed.

This initiative will further support families with reduced out-of-pocket parent fees, ensuring Manitoba is on track to achieve a key joint commitment in the Canada-Manitoba Canada-Wide ELCC agreement to reduce out-of-pocket parent fees by 50 per cent by Dec. 31, 2022.

Region: Manitoba ^[4]

Tags: \$10-a-day child care ^[5]

child care expansion ^[6]

child care workforce ^[7]

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