

24 Manitoba child-care facilities get funding boost for Indigenous programming ^[1]

Provincial-federal government early-learning and child-care agreement allocates \$300K to cultural programming

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EXCERPTS

Two dozen child-care facilities, most of them in Winnipeg, have received a combined \$300,000 through a government program to increase Indigenous-focused, cultural programming for children and education initiatives for staff.

Twenty-four child-centre applicants received between \$5,000 and \$25,000 through a provincial-federal government early-learning and child-care agreement, Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning Minister Wayne Ewasko announced Wednesday.

"All children in Manitoba need access to inclusive, culturally appropriate child-care programming," Ewasko said at a news conference outside Day Nursery Centre in Winnipeg. "There has been an overwhelming demand from child-care facilities for funding to integrate Indigenous cultural components right into their programming."

The initiative comes in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission call to action No. 12, which asks for the development of culturally appropriate early childhood education programs for indigenous families.

Ewasko said the grants will allow the centres to invest in resources and supplies to help with Indigenous programming and professional development for staff to learn more about Indigenous cultures.

"It provides us with a step in the right direction toward reconciliation and a greater understanding of our Indigenous families, staff members and community," said Fernanda Hodgsons, executive director of Day Nursery Centre. "This grant will allow us to further include and honour our Indigenous communities."

She said the centre received \$25,000 for its five child-care facilities in Winnipeg.

Hodgsons said the centre plans to put the money toward training staff and buying books, toys, art and other materials that are culturally appropriate from local, Indigenous producers where possible.

Alan Lagimodiere, Manitoba's Indigenous reconciliation and northern relations minister, said the funds are a response to a history of Indigenous culture being suppressed in schools and early-learning environments.

"It involves bringing the culture back into the community ... and starting the kids off the right way learning their culture, learning the importance of their culture, where they come from," he said.

The centres applied for funding during the 2020-21 grant process. And Ewasko suggested there will be another intake round for more of the grants in the future.

The funding is part of the Canada-Manitoba Early Learning and Child Care Agreement 2021-25, which will provide Manitoba with about \$20 million annually over four years to improve access to inclusive, early learning, child-care programs.

Region: Manitoba ^[3]

Tags: Aboriginal (indigenous) ^[4]

child care ^[5]

Truth and Reconciliation ^[6]

Canada-wide agreement ^[7]

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