

Manitoba Government partners to create 1,200 new child-care spaces in rural communities over the next year ^[1]

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The governments of Canada and Manitoba are allocating up to \$70 million in capital funding for new child-care facilities, creating more than 1,200 new, regulated non-profit child-care spaces across the province with a focus on rural and First Nations communities, Premier Heather Stefanson, Education and Early Childhood Learning Minister Wayne Ewasko and federal parliamentary secretary Ya'ara Saks, on behalf of federal Minister of Families, Children and Social Development Karina Gould, announced today.

"Today's significant announcement is another example of what we can accomplish when we work together with other levels of government and community partners," said Stefanson. "Access to high-quality child-care services closer to home is essential for Manitobans to be able to enter or re-enter the workforce, upgrade their skills and training, support their families and play an active role in the growth of our communities and economy. Our government is proud to partner on this unique and collaborative project that will quickly create new child-care facilities in communities of great need."

"Funding for this project is being provided through the Canada-Manitoba Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement and is a collaborative approach with communities to support the development of and need for child-care spaces in Manitoba," said Ewasko.

In exchange, local partners will provide a minimum of two acres of serviced land with 15 years of free rent and support services including snow removal, landscape maintenance and repairs. These support services reduce costs for child-care operators, ensuring long-term sustainability of centres.

"Families living in rural areas face unique child-care challenges, especially if the nearest child-care centre is far from their home or there aren't enough children nearby to make a full-time care centre sustainable," said Saks. "This initiative will help more Manitoban families find child care that meets their needs in their communities."

Initially, more than 650 new spaces will be created in nine communities with demonstrated child-care needs in partnership with the Winnipeg Metropolitan Region, rural municipalities and First Nations communities including:

- Rural Municipality (RM) of Portage la Prairie/City of Portage la Prairie;
- RM of Headingley;
- RM of Macdonald;
- Town of Stonewall;
- RM of Ritchot;
- RM of St. Clements;
- RM of Morris;
- RM of Whitemouth; and
- Peguis First Nation.

The projects are part of a new partnership between government and local municipalities. This is the first time the Manitoba government has expanded eligibility for capital funding beyond child-care providers.

Working with the Manitoba government's Early Learning and Child Care Program and Social Innovation Office, John Q Public designed a hybrid-construction pilot project using modular building, prefabricated construction process and an innovative building design that can be replicated, readily transported and built in communities across Manitoba.

"Through the John Q daycare pilot project local leaders, administration, provincial experts and child-care providers have taken a team approach to developing a new process that supports the delivery of critical infrastructure faster and more efficiently. We are excited to share this process so more communities large, small, rural, urban and northern across Manitoba can participate," said Brad Erb, chair of JQ Built Inc. and reeve, Rural Municipality of Macdonald.

This innovative hybrid-construction process allows the development of high-quality facilities by leveraging the benefits of economies of scale to reduce costs, material waste and project delays, the premier said. This allows the buildings to be developed off-site under

controlled conditions before facilities are moved to the final site and placed on a permanent foundation.

The buildings are expected to be moved to community sites this winter, the premier noted, adding the new child-care centres are anticipated to be fully open by summer of 2023.

The Manitoba government is also soliciting proposals to develop up to eight more facilities in communities throughout the province with close to 600 additional child-care spaces to be identified by the spring. More information on the expression of interest is available at www.gov.mb.ca/education/childcare/resources/rtm.html [3].

The child-care spaces being developed with this investment are part of the Manitoba government's commitment to develop 23,000 new, regulated not-for-profit child-care spaces for children under aged seven across the province by 2026. The investment builds on other recent provincial investments in child-care projects and the creation of new spaces including:

- capital investment to create 40 new child-care spaces in Oakville;
- a 48-space expansion at the YMCA of Brandon's Y Downtown Early Learning Centre; and
- a \$1-million investment to add additional child-care spaces for newcomers in Winnipeg.

For more information about the Canada-Manitoba Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement, early learning and child-care development supports and child-care services in Manitoba, visit <https://gov.mb.ca/education/childcare/> [4].

Region: Manitoba [5]

Tags: expansion [6]

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