

Modular child care expansion in Manitoba: An idea worth looking at ^[1]

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Excerpts

Manitoba has a good plan for how to expand child care services in rural, remote and northern communities. It's called the Ready-to-Move project. Its origins were with the 2017 Canada-Manitoba ELCC agreement when the Department of Families in Manitoba developed three rural child care facilities through a modular construction project. The initiative was developed by the Department in co-operation with Manitoba's Social Innovation Office which seeks innovative solutions for complex social and environmental issues. By the way, Early Learning and Child Care is, since 2022, part of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Learning.

The Winnipeg Metropolitan Region has an incorporated entity called JQ Built that is providing project management support to municipalities that wanted to be involved. The result is known by the name "Daycare in a Box". It creates modular buildings with a pre-fabricated construction process. The child care centres are made in a manufacturing facility in Winnipeg and transported to a permanent site in the relevant municipality for assembly.

To date, there are 23 communities with projects approved and another 14 applications being considered for future rounds of development. The first batch of facilities began construction in February 2023, and the first facility is planned for opening on July 21, 2023. That's quick!

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The province is providing 100% of the capital funding for the centres. This is an investment of between \$4 million and \$6 million each depending upon the size of facility. A 74-space facility is about \$4 million while a 104-space facility is closer to \$6 million. The centres will become municipal assets.

Related link: Government of Canada and Manitoba announce \$13.5 million in funding to create additional 450 child-care spaces ^[3]

Governments of Canada, Manitoba celebrate opening of the first of eight new ready-to-move child-care centres ^[4]

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