

Canada, Manitoba governments renew action plans to affirm child-care priorities ^[1]

New initiatives, operating grant funding to strengthen access to quality child care across Manitoba: Suds, Ewasko

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Excerpts

The governments of Canada and Manitoba have signed the next three years of bilateral agreements to continue strengthening and expanding Manitoba's child-care sector, improving access to high-quality, affordable child care for Manitoba families, federal Minister of Children, Families and Social Development Minister Jenna Suds and Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning Minister Wayne Ewasko announced today.

"Since we first partnered, we have made extraordinary progress in improving access to and affordability of quality child care," said Ewasko. "We have also committed to more than 12,000 new child-care spaces opening across Manitoba, improved facility infrastructure, expanded access to early learning and child-care training, reimbursed tuition costs, increased wages for early childhood educators and child-care assistants and introduced \$10-per-day child care for kids under age seven—three years ahead of schedule. And over the next three years our government will achieve even more."

A new three-year action plan, signed as part of the Canada-Manitoba Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement, sets out plans for the remainder of the estimated \$1.2 billion the federal government is providing over five years for child care. In addition, a new two-year action plan sets out plans for the remainder of the estimated \$78 million the federal government is providing over four years under the Canada-Manitoba Early Learning and Child Care Agreement.

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The new action plans put increased emphasis on Indigenous engagement, francophone child care, diversity and inclusion, and space expansion. Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning has included specific references in the plans to consult on an extension of Mamāhtawisiwin: The Wonder We Are Born With, Manitoba's Indigenous education policy framework.

The new action plan supports the continued growth of the successful initiatives already implemented to strengthen the early childhood workforce, reduce parent fees, and improve access to high-quality early learning and child care through capital and space expansion projects.

In addition, the new action plan focuses on quality, inclusion and diversity through new programs and initiatives including:

- an inclusion workshop series, as well as leadership and governance training for centre directors and board members, to be facilitated by the Manitoba Child Care Association;
- a newcomer training and tuition reimbursement initiative in partnership with the Manitoba Métis Federation to recruit and train Ukrainian newcomers to become early childhood educators;
- a francophone governance and inclusion grant for La Fédération des parents de la francophonie manitobaine to support francophone child-care facilities;
- rural and northern workforce training through the competency-based assessment program, helping individuals obtain Early Childhood Educator II classification;
- support for the Mamāhtawisiwin Indigenous Education Symposium, to include representation of early childhood as part of the continuum of learning; and
- expanding the Abecedarian program, an evidenced-based early childhood intervention for higher-needs communities, beginning this fall at Thrive Child Care, Children of the Universe Learning Centre, and Early Learning and Child Care Thompson Inc.

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Region: Manitoba ^[3]

Tags: CWELCC ^[4]

funding ^[5]

child care policy ^[6]

accessibility ^[7]
affordability ^[8]
high-quality ^[9]
workforce ^[10]

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[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/23/08/canada-manitoba-governments-renew-action-plans-affirm-child-care> [2]

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<https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/funding> [6] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/child-care-policy> [7]

<https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/accessibility> [8] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/affordability> [9]

<https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/high-quality> [10] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/workforce>