

\$10-a-day daycare in Manitoba raising demand for staff and lengthening wait-lists ^[1]

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Bright Beginnings for Kids daycare centre is licensed for 64 spaces, but its wait-list is sitting at more than 500 children. This is the narrative for daycares across Manitoba.

“There’s infants on here that haven’t even been born yet,” executive director Wendy McKnight said, adding she is constantly having to turn parents away.

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Ten-dollar-a-day child care came to Manitoba in April, but there isn’t enough space or educators to meet the demand.

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Jodie Kehl from the Manitoba Childcare Association says in order to fill the 23,000 spaces promised under a Canada-wide agreement by 2026, Manitoba would need 3,000 more early childhood educators (ECEs).

“A recent report that came out last week is speculating that to graduate that many ECEs in Manitoba, based on current graduation rates, might take as long as 18 years.”

Kehl stresses that to maintain the quality of care, daycare centres need greater and more consistent funding to cover increased costs, and especially to pay staff competitively.

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Altomare says listening, creating more spaces and communicating with stakeholders in the sector will be important moving forward.

But the problem will take time to solve, and McKnight is hoping she can keep her staff in the meantime.

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