

Child care groups say Harper's Conservatives failing them [CA-MB]^[1]

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EXCERPTS

With the clock ticking down on Manitoba's child care agreement with Ottawa, local child care advocates want the federal government to finally explain how it plans to address the problem.

Manitoba Child Care Association Executive Director Pat Wege said the Tories made an election promise to create 125,000 new spots for child care over five years, beginning in 2007.

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Of particular concern is the agreement Manitoba signed with the former Liberal government in May 2005. It was to have been a five-year, \$176 million deal, but when the Tories took office last year, they said they had their own daycare plan in the works and would not be honouring the agreements the Liberals made with the provinces beyond one year.

The Manitoba agreement expires at the end of March.

Manitoba will have to consider finding another way to fund those investments if Ottawa pulls out all its cash, says Wege.

"We are expecting Manitoba will backfill the money because taking it back would be irresponsible," Wege said.

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A spokesman for the provincial government said yesterday Manitoba is still waiting to see what Ottawa decides to do, but believes the provinces will be part of the solution.

"We're trying to get them to honour their commitment," said Grant Doak, assistant deputy minister of Family Services and Housing.

The federal Tories \$11 billion plan for child care includes \$3.7 billion over two years for the Universal Child Care Benefit, the program which sends parents \$100 a month for every child under the age of six. The money is taxable income.

An additional \$250 million was promised in 2007-08 for new child care spaces, but details of how that will roll out have not been revealed. In the last election, the Tories said they would give tax credits to private companies and non-profit groups who create new child care spaces.

Federal Human Resources Minister Monte Solberg released a statement Jan. 11 which said only the plan is to work with provinces and territories, employers and community non-profit groups to create those new spaces.

A spokeswoman for Solberg said yesterday that statement is the most up to date information available.

Wege said the issue is critical because waiting lists for child care are long, a lot of parents can't find a spot, and many parents can't afford spots if they were available.

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Region: Canada^[2]

Tags: funding^[3]

federal programs^[4]

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/07/01/child-care-groups-say-harpers-conservatives-failing-them-ca-mb> [2] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7864> [3] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/funding> [4] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/federal-programs>