

# Education Minister leads in Canadian delegation in Moscow conference <sup>[1]</sup>

**Author:** Hall, Angela

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## EXCERPTS

Saskatchewan Education Minister Donna Harpauer is heading up a Canadian delegation in Moscow this week for a first-of-its-kind world conference on early childhood care and education.

"Leading this delegation, sharing our experiences and learning from others will benefit and inform our work in Saskatchewan as we continue to focus on early learning and childcare as a priority," Harpauer said in a statement Monday, the start of the three-day UNESCO conference hosted by the Russian Federation and the City of Moscow.

The event and its 1,200 participants will address "the unique nature of these early years, and ways to ensure that every child gets a good start in life," the provincial education ministry said.

Saskatchewan was chosen to lead a delegation on behalf of the Council of Ministers of Education Canada because of the province's move to link early childhood policies with pre-kindergarten through Grade 12 education, said Helen Horsman, assistant deputy minister of education.

Saskatchewan was the first jurisdiction in Canada to move responsibility for child care to its Ministry of Education, a decision that was made four or five years ago, Horsman said.

"(That decision) would certainly centre around the fact that we know that the research tells us that when we provide continuity for families in terms of child care and then leading into the regular school system, that that's really supportive of families and very good for families, both children and their parents," Horsman said.

UNESCO - the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization - defines early childhood as the period from birth to eight-years-old, and describes those years as the foundation for subsequent learning. Expanding and improving early childhood care and education is one of six "Education for All" goals established by member countries in 2000.

"The Moscow conference will take stock of progress and identify ways for countries to achieve this goal. It will also explore mechanisms for setting benchmarks and targets, for overcoming obstacles that hinder the development of early childhood care and education services and for monitoring progress toward service delivery," said a UNESCO news release.

-reprinted from the Leader-Post

**Region:** Alberta <sup>[2]</sup>

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