

Manitoba equality report card 2012^[1]

Manitoba's Femme Fiscale grades the Golden Boy on his commitment to women's equality

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Source: UNPAC Manitoba

Format: Report

Publication Date: 9 Mar 2012

AVAILABILITY

Link is no longer available

Excerpts:

On International Women's Day 2010, UNPAC issued Manitoba's first Equality Report Card. The cumulative grade was C+. UNPAC offers the 2012 Report Card to help our government ensure that it is on track to meet its equality commitments to the women of Manitoba. The cumulative grade has not improved since 2010, and indeed we considered giving an Incomplete Grade. In its fourth majority term we are looking for leadership from the Government of Manitoba, and we believe it can deliver!

...

In Canada, all provincial policy-making takes place within a federal context, a context that is currently extremely inhospitable to women's equality. Although we recognize that the province is constrained by lack of federal commitment to these issues, we believe that more work can be done in Manitoba and we urge our government to commit to immediate action to address these inequalities.

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Incomplete grade (IC) for Childcare (C- in 2010)

Manitoba's NDP Government has had over a decade to improve the state of childcare in this province. However, they have failed to create initiatives that address the issues surrounding access to childcare. While the number of daycare spaces has grown from 23,022 in 2001 to 29,811 in the year 2011, access remains quite low at 24% for preschool age children and just 10% for school-aged children.

The architecture of childcare delivery has not changed. Manitoba's center-based programs are generally owned and run by not-for-profit organizations that receive some public funding. This system has remained underdeveloped and fragile, with most parents waiting several months to a year for a childcare space. Additionally, Manitoba has relatively flat fees, charging the lowest outside of Quebec. Yet, childcare remains expensive with parents paying between \$3,000 and \$7,000 annually, depending on the age of the child. Importantly, only about 30% of families receive a subsidy for this amount, which results in parent's fees making up well over half of the budget for these centres.

These not-for-profit centers are typically unable to attract and keep the required trained staff due to wages, held down by funding shortages. Moreover, the number of for-profit daycare institutions is growing. Currently, only 7.5% of daycare centers are for-profit centers but the troubling trend is becoming apparent. Recently, the company Kids & Co opened in downtown Winnipeg. This for-profit company charges more than double the normal fees creating a two-tiered daycare system that the not-for-profit sector cannot possibly compete with. We can predict that this for-profit system will exploit and capitalize on long waiting lists and that as a result this for-profit sector will grow substantially.

When childcare is underdeveloped, it is women and the impoverished who suffer. Little change has taken place since the 2010 Report Card and low-income families still have very poor access to childcare services. Many Manitoba children are growing up marginalized by poverty. High quality childcare services would help to mitigate some of this disadvantage by closing some of the educational gap. It is essential that Manitoba increase access to childcare services and increase the wages associated with working in this field in order to meet its obligations under CEDAW. We have given a grade of incomplete because the transformational change required is long overdue and no current initiative is up to the task.

Related link: Province gets passing grades. Highs, lows for women's issues: report card^[2]

Region: Manitoba^[3]

Tags: poverty^[4]

health^[5]

gender^[6]

<https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/12/03/province-gets-passing-grades-highs-lows-womens-issues-report-card> [3]
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