

Manitoba Government announces capital building fund to create additional high-quality, affordable child care for families ^[1]

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The Manitoba government is announcing details of the Family Choices Building Fund as part of the recently launched five-year plan to create more high-quality child care for families across the province, Family Services Minister Kerri Irvin-Ross said today.

"Families in many areas will have more access to some of the best, most affordable child care in Canada as we move ahead with our new strategy, Family Choices 2014," said Minister Irvin-Ross. "The next phase of our plan sees up to \$2.8 million allocated each year to provide a capital contribution to non-profit child-care organizations building community-based centres."

Earlier this year, the Manitoba government announced an additional \$25 million would be dedicated to building and expanding 20 early learning and child-care centres.

Along with today's announcement, Housing and Community Development Minister Peter Bjornson attended the official opening of the newly expanded Day Nursery Centre at 355 Kennedy St. in downtown Winnipeg on behalf of Minister Irvin-Ross. Manitoba Family Services' investment of \$228,000 supported renovations and improvements at this site, with the completed project resulting in eight new infant spaces, for a total of 44 spaces for local families.

"As housing minister, it is a pleasure to see this modern, expanded child-care centre open in a building that also provides high-quality affordable housing for low-income Winnipeggers," Minister Bjornson said. "Families need this kind of child care so they can go to work and earn a living or attend classes to upgrade their skills so they can find a better job."

The Day Nursery Centre Kennedy site also receives an operating grant of more than \$220,000 annually from Manitoba Family Services.

The overall budget for child care in Manitoba is more than \$152 million, which reflects growth of more than 184 per cent since 1999, the minister said. There are more than 660 licensed centres across Manitoba with almost half located in schools. As well, there are more than 400 licensed family child-care homes in the province.

Manitoba maintains the second-lowest regulated child-care fees in Canada, the minister added.

Provincial legislation now requires child-care centres be included in schools whenever a new school is built or is undergoing major renovations.

The Manitoba government's new five-year plan to create more high-quality child care for families across the province includes:

- investing in more than 5,000 new and newly funded spaces;
- providing an additional \$25 million to continue building and expanding at least 20 early learning and child-care centres in schools;
- supporting higher wages for early childhood educators through regular operating grant increases to centres including a two per cent operating grant increase for wages starting in January 2015;
- developing a special, new wage-enhancement grant in specific support of long-term early childhood educators working in centres;
- increasing supports for licensed, home-based child-care providers;
- improving the online registry and child-care website to make them more parent friendly; and
- establishing a commission on early learning and child care to look at the future of child care in Manitoba and ways to enhance the system to better meet the needs of families and to guide future planning.

Region: Manitoba ^[3]

Tags: funding ^[4]

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