

Manitoba government establishes commitment to create road map for providing universally accessible early learning and child care ^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

Press release and backgrounder available online ^[2]

Description:

The Manitoba government has established a commission to look at ways to redesign Manitoba's early learning and child-care system to guide future plans including developing options to create universally accessible early learning and child care for all Manitoba families who need it, Family Services Minister Kerri Irvin-Ross said today.

"Our long-term economic future looks bright but we must ensure that every parent has an equal opportunity to participate in the workplace and we must provide every child with the best start to succeed," Minister Irvin-Ross said. "Manitobans have told us very clearly that high-quality early learning and child-care services are essential for helping many families and children achieve those goals."

The announcement was made at NorWest Early Learning Childcare Centre's infant centre at ACCESS NorWest at 785 Keewatin St. There are 12 new infant spaces at the centre, funded by Manitoba Family Services' early learning and child-care program at an annual cost of \$131,820.

The commission will look at Manitoba's early learning and child-care system to offer advice and options that will help the Manitoba government further develop high-quality, affordable child care, Minister Irvin-Ross said.

"Manitoba is on the right track with child care and has ambitious plans for the future," said Pat Wege, executive director, Manitoba Child Care Association. "The commission is a timely initiative and will ensure we continue to work together to build a strong system, responsive to the needs of modern families including high-quality early learning for their children."

Minister Irvin-Ross said the Manitoba government is responding to feedback expressed by parents, the child-care sector and other stakeholders during public consultations last year that led to the new Family Choices: Manitoba's Plan to Expand Early Learning and Child Care, announced May 1, 2014.

Since the conclusion of the first Family Choices multi-year plan, the Manitoba government has expanded the system by funding 646 more new child-care spaces and has taken steps to advance new goals of the 2014 plan including:

establishing two new Family Choices capital building fund intakes - one for school-based projects and one for community-based projects to build new and expand existing centres to create more spaces for families and communities;

- partnering with Manitoba Jobs and the Economy to pilot a self-employment project for family child care that will increase the number of licensed home-based child-care spaces for families and communities;
- increasing annual operating grants by two per cent effective this past Jan. 1 in support of wages/incomes for the sector;
- providing funding for more workplace training at Red River College for an additional 30 early childhood education students (ECE);
- providing funding to offer more substitute grants so that existing workers can participate in workplace training while continuing to receive their full salary;
- increasing the amount of the annual training grant effective this past Jan. 1 to \$400 from \$350 for child-care assistants, ECEs and family child-care providers working to advance their education and certification; and
- undertaking work with community stakeholders and experts to further examine recruitment and retention strategies and make recommendations for future planning.

The minister noted that since 1999, the Manitoba government has laid a solid foundation to expand early learning and child care including:

- nearly tripling annual funding for child care to more than \$152 million, an increase of more than 184 per cent;
- funding more than 13,900 child-care spaces, an increase of more than 89 per cent;
- establishing a first-ever capital building fund with funding commitments to build new centres and expand existing centres;
- increasing wages by nearly 60 per cent and introducing a provincewide pension plan for child-care workers;

- introducing age-appropriate curricula and enhanced quality programming; and keeping Manitoba child care the most affordable in Canada outside of Quebec.

Related link: Manitoba eyes redesign of child care, early learning system^[3]

Region: Manitoba^[4]

Source URL (modified on 27 Jan 2022): <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/15/02/manitoba-government-establishes-commitment-create-road-map>

Links

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