

# Province pressed for child-care strategy <sup>[1]</sup>

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## EXCERPTS

Pat Wege wonders when the consultation about child care will end and the action will start.

Wege, executive director of the Manitoba Child Care Association, said she hopes Families Minister Scott Fielding will have something more substantive to offer than an invitation to consult when he greets the MCCA annual general meeting Thursday morning.

MLA Nahanni Fontaine (NDP-St. Johns) repeatedly asked the Pallister government to make a public commitment Wednesday about child care spaces and funding, and heard nothing but a promise to talk.

"A child-care strategy was completely omitted from the throne speech," Fontaine said during question period.

"They (earlier) promised more than 500 spaces this year, but have no plan to fund them," she said.

Fielding replied the NDP had almost 17 years in power and there are still 12,000 names on the child-care waiting list.

"We're absolutely committed," Fielding said. "We need to consult with the stakeholders, with front-line workers."

In an interview later, Wege sighed and said the association's 4,000 members have been consulted over and over again.

"In the last five years, there've been many consultations," she said. "Last year, there was consultation across the province on early learning and child care.

"There was one done in 2014, a couple done (before that) with the workforce. The information on what people need is abundant and easily accessible. There's 12,000 names on the child-care registry — the challenge is big," Wege said.

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