



October 6, 2016

Office of the Minister of Finance
450 Broadway Ave
Legislative Building
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 0V8

Dear Minister of Finance:

Re: Provincial Budget 2017

The Manitoba Child Care Association (MCCA) is writing to provide input to the next provincial budget. Child care is an essential public service for modern families, however demand for licensed care far exceeds supply in most areas of Manitoba. Our province needs to commit to child care as a priority, and develop a plan to ensure that every child who needs a quality, affordable, and reliable space in a licensed facility gets one.

Quality child care has a positive impact on how children learn, supports families, benefits communities, reduces poverty, is key to women's equality, and contributes to a strong economy. Economists describe the impact that the child care sector has on regional economies as "multipliers". The multipliers range across North America in value from 1.6 to 3.25 depending on the region being considered¹.

There are 111,000 children 0-12 years with employed mothers in Manitoba (2014 rounded estimate) and 34,285 licensed child care spaces (March 30, 2016). Workforce participation of mothers of 0-2 year olds is 64.8%; 74.0% for 3-5 year olds; 83.1% for 6-15 year olds.² As of June 30, 2016, there were 15,078 children on the Online Child Care Registry waiting list, including 912 children not yet born.³

MCCA urges government leaders to maintain and enhance early learning and child care in Manitoba through policy and plans that address these principles:

1. Licensed child care must be available, accessible, and reliable for families and their children.
2. Child care must be affordable.

¹ For the multipliers for a rural region in Manitoba, see: Wehner, Kelly, & Prentice, 2008. For all of Canada, the multiplier is 2.34 – see: Centre for Spatial Economics, 2009. Establishing the multiplier (long term and short term) of early childhood education and care programmes for specific regions includes analyses of the programme costs, programme benefits, kindergarten to grade 12 educational savings, participant earnings, smoking health, post-secondary school attendance, criminal justice system savings, welfare expenditure savings, etc.

² Early Childhood Education and Care in Canada, Childcare Resource and Research Unit, 2014

³ Manitoba Early Learning and Child Care Online Registry

3. Child care facilities must be adequately funded and supported to meet the regulatory requirements, including education & training of caregivers, space and equipment, administration and governance
4. Care must be of high quality and include learning to foster healthy child development.
5. A comprehensive human resource development strategy that includes training and fair compensation is essential.
6. Experienced and skilled administration and governance is essential.

In 2015, the Manitoba Commission on Early Learning and Child Care sought public, community, and stakeholder input into the best strategy to improve child care in Manitoba, while addressing key issues such as access, quality, and governance. The options presented reflect previously collected studies, consultations, focus group discussion with Manitobans, a review of relevant research, and an analysis of approaches to early learning and child care (ELCC) across Canada and internationally. The full Commission report is available at http://www.gov.mb.ca/fs/childcare/childcare_news/index.html. An Executive Summary is attached for your consideration when planning provincial budget 2017.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a written submission.

Sincerely,



April Kalyniuk, President

Encl.