

CCCM media release, Winnipeg, 3 Mar 06

There are 14,758 names on Winnipeg childcare centre waiting lists, according to a telephone survey conducted by the Child Care Coalition of Manitoba, and released today. Four-fifths of the 294 full and part-time centres surveyed reporting having a wait list. The 294 childcare centres have a total of 14,041 spaces, meaning there are more names on Winnipeg waiting lists than there are children enrolled in Winnipeg centres.

“Winnipeg’s childcare centres are not meeting the needs of parents and children,” observes Thelma Randall, the Director of Cornish Child Care Centre and a member of the Coalition’s Steering Committee. Cornish Centre, with a capacity of 43 spaces, has a wait list of 115 names.

According to Dr. Susan Prentice of the University of Manitoba, the nearly 15,000 names on the waiting list are a demonstration of serious unmet demand. “In fact,” Prentice added, “since many centres told us they were not accepting new names on their waiting lists, the real number may be higher.”

Between 2004 and 2005, the total number of licensed childcare spaces in the province grew by just 92, according to the 2004-05 Annual Report of Family Services and Housing. Manitoba has a licensed childcare space for 14.3 percent of children under the age of 12 years.

“Parents know how much they need childcare,” explains Thelma Randall. “The question is: will governments help provide the childcare services that parents want?”

The Coalition will be closely watching the province’s 2006 - 07 budget on March 6th. This year marks the fourth and final year of the province’s Five Year Plan for Child Care, launched April 2002.

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**BACKGROUND:** 27 of Winnipeg’s 321 facilities (8.4 percent of the total) refused to answer questions about their wait lists. Centres were contacted between February 27 and March 3. The survey was not able to identify if any names were on more than one waiting list. Licensed family child care homes were not included in the study

Contact: Susan Prentice - Susan\_Prentice [at] umanitoba [dot] ca

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