



Manitoba’s Missing Childcare Action Plan

Six years, little action – despite triple return potential

March 08, 2008 • International Women’s Day • Winnipeg Manitoba’s childcare action plan is missing, and women – as users and providers of childcare -- are frustrated. The province’s first-ever Five Year Plan ran from 2002 to March 2007. For nearly a year, Manitobans have been waiting for the next provincial action plan.

The Child Care Coalition of Manitoba calls on the provincial government to immediately release its next action plan, and urges the Premier to make investing in children and families a provincial priority. The Coalition’s recent research shows childcare has triple return potential: it promotes children’s healthy development, it supports employers and working/studying parents, and it has impressive local economic impacts. Every \$1 invested in childcare in Manitoba generates \$1.58 of regional economic activity, and has impressive employment multipliers.

Full-fee paying parents, who make the up the majority of users, are still paying fees that can be as high as \$7,280/year for an infant. While lower than many Canadian jurisdictions, the fees are still too high for most modest and low-income parents. The subsidy system is still very restrictive, requiring parents to be well-below the Low-Income Cut-off (the ‘poverty line’) to receive the maximum fee subsidy. One third of the province’s centres operate with an exemption to their license due to inability to recruit and retain trained staff, causing quality of care to suffer.

Manitoba has few regulated childcare services. This leaves the province’s children and parents with low access to scarce spaces and long waiting lists. The most recent estimate is that just 14.5 percent of the province’s children 0-12 have access to a childcare space. Overall, Manitoba has seen less than 10 percent growth in total spaces over the past five years. The number of licensed family childcare homes and spaces has actually fallen. Only 33 new centres have opened since the Five Year Plan was inaugurated.

	2002	2007	Percent Change
Number of Centres	550	583	+ 5.6 %
Number of Homes	574	551	- 4.2%
Total spaces in MB	24,009	26,375	+ 9%

Source: Manitoba Family Services and Housing Annual Reports 2001-2002 and 2006-2007

For more information

For economic studies – www.childcaremanitoba.ca

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