



**CHILD CARE COALITION OF MANITOBA**  
www.childcaremanitoba.ca

## Bulletin No. 1, Feb, 2007

### Counting Down The Five Year Plan

April 2007 will mark the close of the province's first-ever Five Year Plan for childcare. When the Plan began in 2002, Manitoba had 24,009 licensed childcare spaces. Five years later, we have 25,984 spaces (up just 8.2 percent) and 24 additional childcare centres. Income levels for subsidy have not changed, meaning families must be more poor today than they were in 2002 to qualify. The \$2.40/day per child surcharge has not yet been eliminated. ECE wages have improved, but not enough. What will the province do to 'move forward,' especially since the anticipated federal funds have been cancelled?

### April Fool's Day

On April 1<sup>st</sup>, the new fiscal year starts. Manitoba was scheduled to receive \$42 million in 2007-08 under the bilateral "Moving Forward" childcare agreements, up from \$24 million transferred to our province in 2006-07. However, the Harper government cancelled the agreements. Manitobans will need to closely watch to see what happens to the provincial childcare budget.

### National News -- Code Blue for Child Care

The recently released study, *Making Space for Child Care*, is a critical review of the Conservative Child Care Spaces Initiative in which the government plans to create 125,000 new child care spaces a year. Have you seen any new spaces? Check out more details at [www.buildchildcare.ca](http://www.buildchildcare.ca).



### Child Care Report Card: Harper Doesn't make the grade.

Stephen Harper has received a failing grade on his early learning and childcare report card, prepared by Code Blue. As it notes: "Stephen has some trouble understanding basic concepts. His major term project, the Universal Child Care Plan, is not childcare. It's also not universal and not a plan." The report card was launched on February 6, 2007, the first anniversary of PM Harper's inauguration and his cancellation of the bilateral agreements. This report card invites parents to evaluate

Stephen's cut and run approach to childcare – cut the cheques and run away! Feedback might include: Stephen doesn't play well with others.... Stephen isn't allowed to play with scissors – he's been known to cut programs! Please visit the CCCM's link, at [www.childcaremanitoba.ca](http://www.childcaremanitoba.ca), and add your comments.

### **Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada (CCAAC): Manitoba Momentum Paper**

The *Child Care Policy: Making the Connections* project team would like to thank members of the Manitoba childcare community for their input into our accountability framework for childcare spending. Public reporting under this project will start shortly. For more information about the project and its tools, check out our web site at [www.childcareadvocacy.ca](http://www.childcareadvocacy.ca).

### **Welcome! New Minister of Family Services and Housing**

The Coalition met with the new Minister of Family Services and Housing, the Hon. Gord MacIntosh, on January 18, 2007 to introduce ourselves and to discuss matters of concern. We had a very cordial meeting with the Minister and his staff on a number of issues, including government plans regarding the end of the Five Year Plan and the termination of the federal funds. We were assured by the Minister that there would be no roll-backs due to the federal shortfall, and that they are in the midst of developing a strategic plan for childcare. We also indicated our position that parent fees should not be increased, that the \$2.40/day per child surcharge should be eliminated and that the subsidy levels need to be increased as they have not been changed since 1991. The Minister indicated that he welcomed input from the Coalition, and we look forward to a continuing dialogue with him.

### **Manitoba's ECE Labour Force**

Due to low wages, very few benefits (particularly pensions) and lack of professional recognition, the early childhood education system has had a very difficult time recruiting and retaining qualified staff over the last two decades. Current governance models place Board of Directors in a conflict of interest with their staff when funding shortfalls restrict a centre's ability to pay worthy wages. Current funding models create an unfair disadvantage to those centers that have higher overhead costs, such as rent. The CCCM's position that Manitoba move towards a truly publicly funded system will help us to address these kinds of push/pull conflicts.

### ***Coming Soon!***

### **Research Reports – Public Talk – Workshop**

The Coalition's new research reports on the economic and social impact of childcare in Parkland, Thompson and St.-Pierre-Jolys will be released in late April. As part of their release, we are organizing a public policy workshop and talk:

**April 23:** *"Reframing Childcare as Economic Development: Exploring The Theory, Method, Practice and Strategy of Economic Impact Studies"* is the title of a one-day public policy workshop, being held at the Fort Garry Hotel in Winnipeg. Dr. Mildred Warner, of Cornell University, will be a lead presenter. More information, including registration details, can be found on the Coalition's website, at [www.childcaremanitoba.ca](http://www.childcaremanitoba.ca). Space is limited.

**April 24:** Dr. Warner will speak on *"Reframing Childcare as Economic Development: New Directions for Research and Advocacy,"* at 7:00 pm, at Eckhart-Grammate Hall at the University of Winnipeg. Come and hear this leading American expert, then join us for a participatory Q & A followed by coffee and cookies. All welcome!