



***Vision Into Action:***  
***A Seven Step***  
***Manitoba Child Care Strategy***

**Child Care Coalition of Manitoba**  
**May 2001**

# ***Vision Into Action: A Provincial Strategy for Child Care***

Twenty-two thousand Manitobans responded to the government's recent "Vision" paper. This is an unprecedented outpouring of public support in favour of child care redesign.

However, based on recent government statements, no immediate action plan is forthcoming. The target for reporting on the consultation's "findings" is the fall (Manitoba Government Press Release, May 11, 2001). We believe this proposed process is too slow, squandering the current window of political opportunity,

The Child Care Coalition of Manitoba proposes the following seven-step provincial strategy for child care redesign:

## ***Step 1: Adopt New Policy Principles***

***Deadline: June 30, 2001***

The provincial government should adopt new principles for child care policy in Manitoba. The principles should include the Child Day Care Regulatory Review Committee's "Vision" of an accessible, universal, non-profit, publicly-funded, high-quality licensed child care system. Additionally, we recommend the principles of: entitlement; public responsibility; comprehensiveness, integration and coordination; and democratic administration and public accountability.

The Minister of Family Services and Housing can declare the new policy principles on behalf of the government.

## ***Step 2: Complete a Green Paper on Child Care Redesign***

***Deadline: October 31, 2001***

The government should order a *Green Paper on Child Care Redesign*. The Green Paper will specify the scope, objectives and overall concept of the redesigned services, drawing on the newly adopted principles. It will recommend an implementation plan for a transitional period of three to five years.

As well as establishing priorities and setting targets, the plan will cover:

- funding
- legislation and regulations
- delivery options, including public delivery of child care
- administrative responsibility
- integrated service delivery

The Green Paper cannot be the responsibility of volunteer labour. Family Services and Housing must be ensured a budget and resources to enable it to contract with a consultant/consultants with the required skills, expertise and knowledge base to develop a comprehensive action plan.

A special advisory committee should be struck to advise the consultant(s). The Child Care Policy Redesign Advisory Group (CCPRAG) should have parent users of child care holding at least one-quarter of the seats, and early childhood educators holding another one-quarter of seats. The remaining 50 percent of places should encompass the constituencies of: child care advocates (through the Child Care Coalition of Manitoba), Aboriginal, francophone and ethno-cultural communities, women's groups, organized labour, anti-poverty and social planning organizations, social justice groups and researchers. The CCPRAG should also include representatives from the Ministry of Family Services and Housing, Education and the Healthy Child Manitoba and other involved government ministries. It should have a non-governmental chair.

The Green Paper's first year recommendations should be incorporated into budget estimates and fiscal planning for 2002-03.

### ***Step 3: Complete a Green Paper on the ECE Labour Market***

***Deadline: October 31, 2001***

A Supplementary Green Paper on the ECE Labour Market should be developed concurrently by the consultant(s). Training and accreditation, remuneration and benefits, professional development, career progress, pensions, unionization and other labour market matters must be addressed in the Supplementary Green Paper.

### ***Step 4: Organize Working Public Consultations***

***Deadline: December 30, 2001***

Effectively organized, well-planned working consultation meetings should be hosted over the fall with key stakeholders to review the Green Paper.

### ***Step 5: Develop New Legislation and Implementation Plans***

***Deadline: March 31, 2002***

By March 31, 2002, new legislation and funding models should be introduced and implementation plans should be announced.

## ***Step 6: Showcase Manitoba at National Strategy Conference*** ***Deadline: September, 2002***

Out of the Green Paper process, Manitoba will have an exemplary child care policy that it can showcase at a 2002 national conference. The Manitoba government should host a "Conference on a Pan-Canadian Child Care Strategy." The conference can be organized in partnership with the federal government and provincial/territorial governments, national social policy groups and child care advocates.

As Minister Sale has said, Manitoba "does not have the fiscal ability to fully introduce such a program without significant federal financial support" (February 2001) and is an issue the province plans to "discuss with the government of Canada" (May 11, 2001). Under the terms of the Social Union Framework Agreement (SUFA), provinces that want federal financial support are entitled to advance new policy and funding proposals for consideration. At the 2002 conference, to be held in Winnipeg, interested parties can consider how to create the conditions which will enable a national child care strategy to be successful.

This conference should be organized by government staff, working in consultation with a broadly-representative planning group.

## ***Step 7: Budget for Expansion and Redesign*** ***Deadline: April 2003***

In the 2002-03 provincial budget, child care redesign and expansion should be addressed. By 2003, at least 20% of the province's children should be receiving the kind of care, education and development services that meet their needs. At a minimum, this will include 30,000 comprehensive, inclusive and coordinated licensed child care spaces.

*For more information:*

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