



Blueprint for Action:
**A Five Year Plan for Manitoba
Child Care Policy Redesign**

February 2001

**Child Care Coalition
of Manitoba**

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	p. 1
Members of the Child Care Coalition of Manitoba	
Introduction	p. 2
I. Childcare Today: Problems in Need of Solutions	p. 4
II. Principles for Policy Redesign & Action Plans	p. 9
III. Five Year Timeline & Benchmarks: 2001-2006	p. 15
Endnotes	

Child Care Coalition of Manitoba

Membership as of February 17, 2001

In addition to many people who joined as individuals, the following groups have endorsed the Child Care Coalition of Manitoba's mandate and have joined as members:

African Women's League
Brandon Kids Centre
Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada
Campus Day Care Centre
Canadian Auto Workers
Canadian Union of Public Employees Manitoba
Communication, Energy and Paper Workers
Checkerberry House Child Care Centre Inc
College Child Care
Cornish Child Care Centre
Canadian Union of Postal Workers
Discovery Children's Centre
Elmwood Morning Lunch & After School Program Inc.
Fort Rouge Child Care Inc
Immigrant Women's Association of Manitoba
KIDS Inc Child Care Centre.
Lions Gate Child Care Centre
Machray Day Nursery Inc
Manitoba Federation of Labour Women's Committee
Manitoba Nurses Union
Manitoba Government Employees' Union
New Directions for Women
Office of the Children's Advocate
Original Women's Network
Panda Bear Daycare Cooperative
Portage Day Care
Provincial Employees Care for Kids Co-op Inc
River Ave. Co-op Day Nursery
Social Planning Council of Winnipeg
United Nations Platform for Action - Manitoba
University Women's Club of Winnipeg
Winnipeg Labour Council

Executive Summary

The Child Care Coalition of Manitoba is delighted that the provincial government is soliciting input from Manitobans for a new vision of child care. We enthusiastically support the Child Day Care Regulatory Review Committee's "Vision" of an accessible, universal, non-profit, publicly-funded, licensed child care system. We believe the principles of

- Universality
- Accessibility
- High quality

provide an excellent starting point for the policy redesign process. We recommend that the government adopt these principles.

Child care in Manitoba confronts many serious challenges. The most fundamental is that child care is organized as a private matter to be provided by the voluntary or non-governmental sector. From this flow a host of associated obstacles: policy fragmentation, inadequate access, expensive services, lack of coordination and integration, a workforce crisis, and a persistent commercial sector offering poorer quality care. These systemic problems require fundamental policy redesign. In order to redress these problems, we therefore recommend the adoption of four additional principles:

1. Public Responsibility
2. Comprehensiveness, Integration and Coordination
3. Entitlement
4. Democratic Administration and Public Accountability.

The Child Care Coalition of Manitoba realizes that policy redesign is an incremental and multi-year undertaking. We propose an initial five-year plan, beginning with 2001. In Year One, we recommend the government adopt the above principles for child care. Once adopted, we recommend the government prepare a Green Paper on delivery models and implementation plans to actualize these principles. These two steps should be concluded by early-2002.

In the remaining four years of our five-year plan, we call for significant expansion of the number of child care spaces and we provide benchmarks. As a target for success, we would expect that in five years (in 2006), one-third of Manitoba's approximately 200,000 children under the age of 12 shall have access to licensed child care that meets their needs and the needs of their parents. At a minimum, by 2006 we expect Manitoba to have at least 39,930 licensed child care spaces in an high quality system that includes a range of comprehensive, inclusive and coordinated services which are democratically administered and publicly accountable.

Introduction:

2001 is a good time to undertake the redesign of child care in Manitoba. For the first time in many years, there is a new federal policy and corresponding new federal dollars to support early childhood care, in the context of a federal budget surplus. Under the Early Childhood Development (ECD) Services Agreement signed by the First Ministers in September 2000, Manitoba is slated to receive approximately \$80 million between 2001 and 2006. The ECD funds are for pre- and post-natal care, early learning and child care, family supports and community supports. Concurrently, the province has made child and family issues a priority through the new Healthy Child Manitoba Initiative. The 2000-01 provincial budget contained the first real provincial funding increase to child care in over a decade. With the February 2001 release of the Regulatory Review Committee's "Vision" paper, the Minister of Family Services and Housing has taken the exciting step of soliciting public opinion on a new vision for child care. Between the new federal program and the supportive provincial government, we see this as the right time to proceed on child care policy redesign.

This fortuitous political alignment lends new leverage to longstanding reasons to support child care. Child care is a public good in many ways. Child care is essential for women's equality, a precondition to enable mothers (and caretaking fathers) to participate in paid labour, education/ training, and in their communities. Since 'it takes a village to raise a child,' healthy and supportive communities participate collectively in supporting children and their parents. Diversity and social solidarity are enhanced in high quality child care settings. Child care is, or could be, a core element in social development and community economic development.

Such justice-based arguments are as compelling as economic research that demonstrates that \$2 of social benefits flows from every \$1 invested in child care. That everybody benefits from child care is obvious when groups such as the Vancouver Board of Trade conclude that the payback from investment in child care is "spectacular." (1) The National Council of Welfare declares that "many social programs support families, but child care is the backbone of them all." (2) UNICEF explains that "far-sighted leaders understand that money spent now on early childhood care will pay off in the form of healthier, more productive children and in stable families that are able to sustain themselves and contribute to society." (3) Even groups that seem remote from child care have identified its importance. For example, the National Forum on Health has pointed out that a comprehensive approach to child care should be a key part of a population health approach, and the National Crime Prevention Council has identified that child care services are part of preventing crime at the community level. (4)

'Child care' encompasses a range of early childhood education, care and development services for children aged 0 - 12 years. We use the term 'child care' to mean government-licensed full-day, flexible and part-time group and family child care, parent-child drop-in centres, nursery schools, resource and toy-lending libraries, and other child care supports for children and their parents (such as parent resource centres). Good child care simultaneously provides care, early childhood education and

development services to children, meeting the needs of *both* children *and* their parents. Our basic premise about quality early child development programs is that ‘good care educates and good education cares.’ (5) Like most national social policy groups, we believe that child care must be the key element in of a comprehensive set of early childhood development services. We agree with the ‘Vision’ paper’s declaration that “child care is the cornerstone of healthy child and family policy.”

We are calling for child care policy redesign because the challenges confronting child care in Manitoba are systemic. ‘Systemic’ means that the problems we explore below are built-in: they are neither accidental nor avoidable in the current policy framework. To fix systemic problems requires a redesigned approach to policy, funding and delivery.

In this *Blueprint*, we propose a realistic, multi-year process for policy redesign. We are eager to work closely with our provincial government and other concerned stakeholders to build an effective child care system that meets the needs of all Manitobans in the new millennium.

I. CHILDCARE IN MANITOBA TODAY: PROBLEMS IN NEED OF SOLUTIONS

In Manitoba child care is “severely compromised on three fronts:” the availability of spaces to meet the needs of children and their families, the affordability of care and the quality of services provided. (6) It is additionally compromised as children’s care, services and education are fragmented in different policy ‘silos,’ uncoordinated between education, welfare, family and community services, labour and other government departments and between local, provincial and federal jurisdictions. These dysfunctions continue because Manitoba (like most of Canada) --particularly since 1988 -- has treated child care as a private issue, not a public responsibility.

Today, there is a licensed child care space for only one in ten Manitoba children, and this ratio worsens for some age groups and communities who are even more severely under-served. Of Manitoba’s 197,500 children under the age of 12 years, over two-thirds (132,000 children) have working mothers. There are only about 23,00 licensed child care spaces in the province, with the vast majority in Winnipeg. (7) The ‘daycare system’ is part of a fragmented series of services for children and families. Early childhood education, schooling, child care and family support services are scattered across different government departments and programs. Although in any given day, young children and their families may participate in several of these programs, there is little coordination or integration among them. Programs have different mandates -- some support parental employment or preparation for compulsory schooling, others provide compensatory or developmental care for children with special needs or who are considered ‘at-risk,’ while still others focus on parent education. There are separate approaches for children of working parents, for early childhood education for children with parents not in the labour force, for family resource programs, as well as for kindergarten and education. Some programs have user fees or strict income eligibility requirements while others are free; some programs are targeted although others paid for through the tax system. In some programs, the clients or users are children, in others services are for parents.

Private Responsibility:

Child care in Manitoba is private. Each licensed group child care centre is privately administered, usually by a non-profit board of directors. All family home child care is provided by independent self-employed caregivers. Unlike medical care, schools, libraries, police, or emergency and ambulance services, child care has not been not considered an essential public service. No-one is responsible for ensuring that child care services are available. The Ministry of Family Services and Housing will license a child care program if minimum standards are met, but the province does not run a single child care centre or home. Providing child care, or ensuring it exists, is not currently a public responsibility.

An entrepreneur can start a daycare centre -- and in Manitoba, about ten percent of centres are commercial operations. But mainly it is parents or communities who start up centres. They set them up: they negotiate incorporation, they fundraise, they make up the board of directors, they hire the staff, they oversee operation -- and it is non-

governmental or voluntary sector activity which opens and operates every single child care space in this province.

One of the problems with the current model of private responsibility is that it places an enormous burden on volunteers, mainly over-stressed parents and particularly over-stressed mothers. Ninety percent of Manitoba's group centres are operated by non-profit organizations -- relying on volunteer boards of directors to run complex organizations and manage annual budgets, often in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. In the current model, parents who may or may not have the expertise, resources or time are responsible for operating the programs their children use. In fact, in Manitoba parents are required by law to "volunteer" to run their child care services: parents must hold a minimum of 20% of the seats on non-profit board of directors of child care centres. Under a commendable commitment to "parent involvement," Manitoba's current system regularly burdens parents with what ought to be -- and in other jurisdictions are -- public responsibilities.

There are serious problems created by the voluntary sector model of parent-run boards of directors as the dominant way of delivering child care in our province. For example, in January 2001, the Minister of Family Service and Housing announced his concern over low early childhood educator wages, and declared his intention to audit non-profit child care centres to ensure that they had increased worker wages in 2000. However, the employer in all non-profit centres is the board of directors, which has autonomous power and control over its budget. Thus, the Minister's commendable desire to improve low staff salaries and solve the workforce crisis is thwarted, since he cannot directly intervene in the private market or voluntary sector. (8) When child care is a private responsibility, even well-intentioned and supportive governments find it difficult to make the changes they know are necessary.

Policy Fragmentation

Child care, nursery schools, playgroups, 'head-start' programs, parenting centres, family resource programs, 'healthy child initiatives', kindergarten and education are each delivered separately. They are not integrated into a coordinated policy framework, and are not delivered as part of a blended program. (9) Some programs are entirely unregulated, including many in-school lunch programs, community after-school programs, and infant labs, and in these programs there are no minimum quality assurances.

Different policy orientations affect who can participate and how much (if anything) they must pay for service. If a child's parents are low-income, the child may be able to qualify for a child care subsidy and a space in licensed child care. If parents are sufficiently disadvantaged, their children may be able to attend a 'head-start' type program, usually a part-day program that makes it difficult for parents to enter or stay in the workforce. If a child's parents are middle-income earners, they likely juggle schedules and make what arrangements they can afford. A child in Winnipeg One School Division will have access to a no-fee two-and-a-half hour nursery school experience (junior kindergarten) at age four. Most other children will have no opportunity to attend an early childhood program until they are 5 years old and enter kindergarten.

Early childhood education, schooling, child care and family support services are scattered across different government departments and programs. Although in any given

day, young children and their families may participate in several of these programs, there is little coordination or integration among them. Instead, as in much of Canada, “parents face a dizzying array of policies, funding arrangements, eligibility requirements and types of programs.” (10) In Manitoba, the main sites include the Healthy Child Manitoba Initiative, the Child Day Care Office, new initiatives begun through the Early Childhood Development Agreement, various Ministry of Family Services and Housing programs, as well as Education.

The child care community is made up of independent, stand-alone centres and family day care homes. Since it is not a ‘system’, there is little infrastructure to coordinate child care as a sector to enable policy development and analysis or service innovation. Unlike either the health or education fields, there is virtually no administration to the field at the province-wide level. Problems with this non-system can have serious consequences. For example, in early 2001 as new ECD funds hold the promise of growth and development and sectors are discussing how to use the new dollars, the child care sector appears to be extremely marginalized when it comes to presenting its case for a share of the funds. (11)

Expensive: High Fees

Child care is currently a user-fee system, and most parents cannot afford it. According to the Caledon Institute “only a small minority of Canadian families” can afford child care. The Institute points out that “the cost of child care is a serious problem for the middle-income majority of families, as well as most poor and modest-income families that cannot get access to (increasingly scarce) subsidized child care.” (12)

Parents in Manitoba using centres typically pay annual fees of \$7,280 for an infant (\$28 per day), \$4,888 for a preschooler (\$18.80 per day), and \$3,170 for a school-age child (\$9.60 per day for school-days, \$18.80 for in-service and summer days). Costs in family day care homes are generally slightly lower. Fees can easily represent almost half the after-tax income of women in many clerical and service occupations. (13)

Restrictive and Limited Subsidies

Parents are expected to pay child care fees unless their income is below set eligibility criteria -- and only about half of all parents using regulated child care get any financial assistance with child care fees. Manitoba subsidizes child care fees for only about 5% of the province’s youngsters. The rest have to rely on their parents’ ability to pay.

In Manitoba, parents who qualify for eligibility are the poorest of the poor -- the eligibility line for subsidies is set below the ‘poverty line’ of Statistics Canada’s low-income cut-offs. The Manitoba government currently requires any single parent of one child with an income over \$24,369 to pay the full cost of child care. In a two-parent family with two children, the cut-off for fee subsidy is \$40,055 -- meaning parents with an infant and a preschooler could easily be required to pay \$12,168, or 30 per cent of their yearly income for child care.

The current subsidy eligibility criteria were established in 1991, and have not been adjusted since. Moreover, since 1993, even subsidized parents are usually surcharged \$2.40 per day per child. For a parent of three children with a full subsidy, this

surcharge will cost \$156/month -- making 'free daycare' too expensive for some parents to afford.

Limited Access: by age, region, special need, hours, and language

Most care is provided to preschoolers aged 2 - 5 years; all other age groups have less access. Rural, remote and northern communities are even more drastically underserved than Winnipeg, and their unique needs for extended hours and flexible programs are not yet met. Special needs children also have worse access than other Manitobans. Between 1995 and 1998, 1 in 2 centres turned away a child with special needs, often because they could not accommodate the extra staffing requirements. (14) Children whose parents work shifts, evenings or extended hours have very limited access to regulated care. Care for sick children is non-existent.

Aboriginal families, both on and off reserve, need services which meet their needs, yet appropriate, accessible and affordable child care is in extremely short supply. Other minority communities, including ethno-cultural and heritage language communities, have very limited access to culturally diverse services and programs that meet their needs. (15) Franco-Manitobans have long noted their inequitable access to services in their own language. (16)

Workforce Crisis

Child care educators in Manitoba are paid inadequately, and the workforce is in crisis. Between 1991 and 1998, real wages dropped between 9 - 12%, the worst decline in Canada (although indications are that wages have recently begun to rise). The low pay of child care providers is an invisible subsidy to the service. Poor wages are taking a toll on quality of care: in 2000, forty percent of Manitoba's centres operated without the minimum numbers of trained staff. (17) The quality of care also suffers because staff in Manitoba turn-over at a rate of nearly 20% annually. (18)

A recent national study has confirmed what earlier research has demonstrated: low staff wages are linked to poorer quality care. (19) Even though most early childhood educators have post-secondary education, low wages in childcare mean that "some child staff are living close to, or in, poverty" -- earning about the same as Manitoba's parking lot attendants. (20)

The funding increase of the 2000-01 provincial budget was warmly welcome, and has helped to raise wages in many preschool programs (although stand-alone schoolage programs lost revenue, and many mixed aged programs had little net change.) The Minister of Family Services and Housing has publicly declared his concern about poor wages, and his interest in ensuring that staff are paid worthy wages. However, in the current policy model, he can implement few remedies. The structural problem remains: a) in the current system, wages are the private responsibility of employers, and b) in a user-pay system, wages depend on fees and parents can't afford to pay what child care staff deserve to earn.

Poor Quality Commercial Care

An extensive research literature documents that poorer quality care typically characterizes the commercial child care sector. (21) Ten percent of Manitoba child care centres are commercial operations. This sector is disproportionately represented in

serious quality breaches. Between 1986 and 1999 Manitoba had a total of 45 serious quality breaches. Of these 45 quality breaches, 29 violations -- or 64% -- were by commercial centres, marking that sector as grossly over-represented in poor quality.²²

Commercial centres are barred from receiving operating or other grants in Manitoba, but they can receive public funds in the form of fee subsidies. The recent 'You Bet I Care' study shows that 80% of the revenue of the average Manitoba commercial centre is derived from public funds.²³ YBIC reports that the average Manitoba commercial centre, in fact, receives *more* public dollars as a share of its total revenue (80%) than the average non-profit centre does (60%). After Manitoba, the next 'biggest public spenders' on commercial care lag far behind. In British Columbia and Alberta, government sources provide 44.6% and 44.7% respectively of the total revenues of the average commercial centre. In Saskatchewan and Nova Scotia, by comparison, 0% of a commercial centre revenue is derived from public dollars.

Commercial centres typically spend a smaller proportion of their budget on staff than do non-profits -- about \$1.62 per hour less in 1998, which can reasonably be predicted to aggravate turnover and lack of consistency for children.²⁴

II. PRINCIPLES FOR POLICY REDESIGN & ACTION PLANS

The current organization and funding of child care is inefficient and ineffective. It leaves too many children and their parents without the care they need, when and where they need it. All children, whatever their parents' labour force participation, need and deserve a new approach.

We recommend the following seven principles for a redesigned approach to child care. The first three are included in the Regulatory Review Committee's 'Vision for Child care and Development in Manitoba.' The remaining four principles are not included, but we recommend their adoption.

Each of the seven principles is essential, and all are linked together. It would not be possible to implement any one of these in the absence of the whole. Systemic policy redesign requires that each principle be accepted by government, and be actualized in legislation, regulation, funding and service delivery.

1. Universality
2. Accessibility
3. High Quality
4. Public Responsibility
5. Comprehensiveness, Integration and Coordination
6. Entitlement
7. Democratic Administration and Public Accountability.

These principles form a total package. Each of the principles supports and depends on the others. Each is a necessary but not sufficient condition for the systemic redesign which is required.

In the discussion below, we outline why we support these principles.

Children, Families and Caregivers Deserve High Quality Care

Children flourish in high quality child care. Cognitive, emotional, physical, language, social and other skills blossom in settings where children are respected, where developmentally appropriate activities are provided, and where children are cared for by trained and consistent caregivers. Best practices must animate a redesigned system of early childhood care, education and development. This will require that the physical and human environments for children are well-resourced and sustainable.

Research shows that the most important variables in quality of care are staff training and experience. Caregiver wages, benefits and working conditions must therefore reflect the value of the work to ensure the sustainability of a highly skilled and stable

workforce. Consistency of care is tremendously important to children, and is a hallmark of quality. Caregiver consistency is directly linked to wages and working conditions.

Universality and Accessibility Require Public Responsibility and Public Funding

We agree that all children should have access to the services they need. This requires moving beyond a targeted approach toward a vision of child care as a universal and inclusive service.

In order for this to happen, child care must become a public responsibility. As with other social services, every Manitoban deserves access to the children's and family services they need, when and where they need it. This means a shift from a private, user-pay model to public funding, with significantly increased public funding to make the service accessible to all. It also requires that governments ensure that services are available. This will require a shift from the current *ad-hoc* system of provision to service planning. The 'right' to universal access means nothing to children and parents who live where services do not exist. Likewise, in neighbourhoods where parents do not wish to directly manage and oversee non-profit boards of directors, high quality child care services must be offered nevertheless.

Entitlement, not 'affordability,' is required.

The Child Care Coalition of Manitoba supports the principle of 'entitlement': just as all Canadians are entitled to healthcare and education, we believe that they ought to be entitled to child care. The language of 'affordability,' by contrast, remains too close to the market model with its many documented dysfunctions.

All children, whatever their background, are entitled to high quality child care that supports their development; all adults are entitled to support in the work of parenting. All children should be entitled to quality early childhood experiences and programs, regardless of their families' economic or employment status. We need to promote all children's access to child care -- early childhood care, education and development programs -- while ensuring that the programs are structured to be sensitive to parental labour force participation.

We believe that programs which integrate children from diverse backgrounds and varying socio-economic status are a public good. We support the social solidarity that develops when children and families grow together. Inclusive programs strengthen an appreciation for diversity and promote equity among classes, levels of ability, racial and ethnic groups, as well as generations, strengthening social solidarity.

Research shows that targeted programs are actually inefficient, in that they miss many children and families who are at-risk. Moreover, targeted programs generate social stigma and generally lack widespread social 'buy-in.' Researchers have concluded that targeted programs "result in continuing segregation by class and race in many communities, are expensive, and inevitably result in less sustainable, poorer programs over the longer term."²⁵

In the Regulatory Review Committee's "Vision", the goal of affordability is held up as a principle. We believe this goal is too narrow. As written, it might describe the current system. Some might argue that the current child care system is affordable, since low-income parents have access to 'full' or partial subsidy. However, we know that child care is far too expensive for most Manitobans to afford. What is required is a shift to the

principle of entitlement: the goal being that all children are entitled to the services they need, whatever their family's socio-economic status.

Ideally, we would like to see sufficient public funding so that child care was free at the point of delivery, like health and education. A redesigned child care system requires comprehensive funding that moves from user-fees to funding through the tax system. We recognize that it will take several years and much political will to implement this goal, and so we accept that some parent fees are likely to continue in the interim. We see the Quebec \$5/day parental contribution (less for low-income families) as being in the appropriate fee range, with BC's \$8/day (less for low-income families) as the upper maximum during the transition from the current system to public funding.

Comprehensiveness, Integration and Coordination

Children need holistic care: their days need to be seamlessly organized, both for them and their parents. This means that child care needs to be integrated. Integration requires regulation, legislation and funding mechanisms that promote coordination at the level of policy and service delivery. We recognize some barriers to integration are created by the division of powers between the federal and provincial governments, and we urge Manitoba to address these barriers in Ottawa.

The child care system that will emerge from policy redesign must be a 'system' in the fullest sense -- more than the sum of its parts. This will require new mandates on the part of systems dealing with young children. The education system, for example, must work in closer concert with the child care system to ensure the days of children in nursery schools, kindergartens and Grades 1-6 are more coordinated and seamless.

A range of services must be provided, including full and part time care, half-day and part-time programs, services for all age groups and for children of all abilities. Services must be responsive to the needs of working parents, parents in training/education programs, and at-home parents -- including those who need extended, irregular and/or seasonal hours. These services must be inclusive and high quality, meeting the diverse needs of children of different backgrounds. We stress that children with special needs, like all children, need access to inclusive, integrated high quality services.

It is in everyone's best interest that parents be supported in every stage of raising a family -- from good prenatal and pregnancy programs, through progressive family leave and employment policies. Families need to be able to make informed choices from a range of high quality, coordinated, inclusive child care programs and services.

Services must be Democratically Administered and Publicly Accountable

Services for children and their parents must be inclusive and responsive to the communities they serve. They must honour and respect the diversity of Manitoba's children, families and communities. Thus, there must be meaningful opportunities for local control and governance. We want to see services which "have a high degree of autonomy, enable the active participation of stakeholders and accept a high level of responsibility for defining, developing and reviewing the quality of their own work."²⁶ Mechanisms must be developed to ensure appropriate input from parents, staff, children and others.

We are deeply concerned about the current system's reliance on parent volunteers to initiate, maintain and manage child care services. We would like to participate in a serious public discussion of other models of service delivery, including various forms of public delivery. We are persuaded that there are ways to ensure appropriate parental/staff/community input in a child care system which is a public responsibility. In the timeline which we have attached to this *Blueprint*, we propose a Green Paper on delivery models to help organize a provincial discussion on ways and means to ensure that services are truly universally accessible. We believe the current delivery model, in which there is no public obligation to plan nor ensure service, is highly unlikely accomplish this important goal.

A publicly-funded child care system is a public trust, and requires that tax dollars are well spent and bring maximum public benefit. There is no place in a redesigned early childhood care, education and development system for proprietary, for-profit services. Public funding of private enterprises is an inefficient use of taxpayer dollars, and generally subsidizes poorer quality care. We are pleased that the Regulatory Review Committee's "Vision" is for a system of non-profit care.

Action Plans to Implement New Principles for Child Care

The Regulatory Review Committee's "Vision" includes a number of recommendations for action. The Child Care Coalition of Manitoba offers the following comment on the report's action plans:

On Quality:

We support the three recommendations to improve standards/quality of care. In particular, we urge that funding be sufficient to regularly enable programs to exceed minimum standards. We further recommend adequate minimum training requirements for family home child care providers. We underscore our support for a 'child-centred' curriculum that promotes the care, education and development of all children, of all abilities and backgrounds. We urge the government to immediately bring currently unregulated services (such as infant labs, lunch programs, etc) under the quality assurances of the Act.

On Funding:

We fully agree with the Regulatory Review Committee's "Vision" for a publicly-funded, universal, non-profit licensed child care system. We further recommend that minimum benchmarks for service expansion be developed, and in our timelines we propose expansion figures for 2001-2006. We would like to see a clear government directive that there is a public responsibility to plan for the provision of child care services, and a corresponding statement that government will ensure that services are in place for the children and families that need them. We would expect that the Green Paper will address mechanisms to ensure this occurs. One model might be the establishment of a child care development agency with funding, staffing and an adequate annual, sustainable budget, to plan, develop, incubate and deliver child care programs. We are especially eager to explore the potential of a 'Hub Model' of care, in which centre-based

and family home child care are integrated in a range of neighbourhood parenting support programs.

On Training and Professionalism:

We wholeheartedly agree that training and on-going professional development are key indicators of quality. We support the seven recommendations provided by the “Vision” paper. We want mandatory minimum training for family home care providers and a new model of delivering home care that transcends the isolation, lack of resources and lack of support currently experienced by individual home providers

On Governance:

We have the most questions about this section of the “Vision.” We regret that the paper didn’t address delivery model options, and that it didn’t consider ways and means of publicly-delivering child care. We think this discussion is essential for moving beyond the dysfunctions of the current ‘voluntary’ (or private) model of child care provision.

No doubt a mixed delivery system will prevail in Manitoba -- some parents will continue to choose parent cooperatives, some will prefer parent-run boards of directors. Others, however, would like the security of knowing that child care services are permanent and reliable, regardless of parental volunteer activity. Manitobans can rely on the availability of education and health care services in every neighbourhood, whether or not they choose to involve themselves in those systems: child care must likewise be made available.

In our timeline, we call for a Green Paper to address the benefits and limits of a range of delivery models to be included as Manitoba’s child care system evolves. The Child Care Coalition of Manitoba will be pleased to work with the government in developing the Green Paper.

On Integrated Service Delivery:

We enthusiastically support the six recommendations to ensure integration, coordination and seamless services. Achieving this will require changes in the mandates of a number of systems which interact with children, especially the education system. We urge an end to policy fragmentation and lack of integration between different programs for children and families. Children and their parents need coordinated and seamless service.

On Public Education:

We agree with the “Vision” paper on the importance of public education to build widespread public support for high quality early childhood care and education programs.

Additional Recommendations:

Resource a Child Care Infrastructure

We recommend 5% of the provincial child care budget be allocated to child care infrastructure and community supports. All organized social service systems (such as education and health) require a resourced infrastructure. Infrastructure refers to both personnel and resources that support and enhance the service.

Infrastructure enables organizations to partake of policy development opportunities, to collaborate with sister organizations, to communicate effectively with members, to provide professional development and in-service opportunities, to conduct research and development projects, to monitor research findings for best practices, and to launch public education campaigns. Community supports includes system management, research and development and some training. The education field typically devotes 5% of its budget to infrastructure, and we recommend a similar amount for child care infrastructure.²⁷ Such funds can be distributed to early childhood educator organizations (such as the MCCA), to regional bodies (such as neighbourhood director groups), to constituencies (such as special needs, or family home child care providers) and to stakeholder groups. Manitoba used to recognize the importance of infrastructure support: the Manitoba Child Care Association used to receive some operating funds, which were eliminated a decade ago.

Especially now, as the government has requested public consultation, funds should immediately be dedicated to enabling community and stakeholder groups to participate effectively in the public debate and policy development.

The Caledon Institute's recent report lends urgency to this recommendation for action on infrastructure, pointing out that children's experts and social advocates have joined their efforts and talents to develop a "remarkable consensus combining theory and practice in early childhood development." The Caledon Institute carefully reminds us that "governments are making use of this knowledge and have been greatly influenced by the work of the non-governmental sector. It is imperative that such exchange... continue to inform the building of a national early childhood development system."²⁸ This fruitful capacity of the non-governmental sector requires resourcing.

III. FIVE YEAR TIMELINE & BENCHMARKS: 2001 - 2006

Vision must be translated into action, and benchmarks are required to assess progress. The Child Care Coalition of Manitoba therefore proposes a multi-step, multi-year plan for policy redesign, in a realistic and achievable plan that respects fiscal realities.

Step One:

Public Consultation on Vision Is Completed By May 30, 2001

The public consultation process generated by the Minister's release of the "Vision" paper should result in the adoption of new principles and a new vision for child care in Manitoba by May 30, 2001.

The campaign to generate public input on the "Vision" will be expensive to community groups. There are costs associated with participating in a public consultation, and groups like the Child Care Coalition of Manitoba and the MCCA are currently subsidizing this important public policy work on the unpaid labour of volunteers. Therefore we recommend that child care and stakeholder groups be provided with a 'down payment' on the first infrastructure instalment that would be due them in a universal model. This will enhance the public consultation process.

Step Two:

Implementation Planning and Delivery Model Discussion Begins June 1, 2001

Once new principles are adopted, Manitoba must address how to implement them. We believe this discussion must include a consideration of different delivery models and implementation options.

This planning process should be coordinated and staffed by the government, in liaison with a broadly-based Child care Policy Redesign Advisory group. The Child Care Policy Redesign Advisory Group (CCPRAG) should ensure parents and users of child care and children's services hold at least one-quarter of the seats, and early childhood educators hold another one-quarter of seats (through the MCCA and ECE training programs). The remaining 50 percent of seats 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. The CCPRAG should be co-chaired, and each chair should be a non-government member.

The CCPRAG could alternately incorporate the current Regulatory Review Committee into a greatly expanded group, or the Regulatory Review Committee could continue as an independent, appointed advisory group to the Minister.

Step Three:**Green Paper on Delivery Models and Implementation Released By December 1, 2001**

The government, working with the CCPRAG, will prepare a Green Paper which builds on the newly-adopted principles. The Green Paper will be submitted to public hearings, which must be concluded by March 2002.

The Green Paper will contain an extended discussion on various delivery models, including a full consideration of various mechanisms for public delivery, as well as a recommendation for action. It will also include a policy statement on early childhood services for children aged 0 - 12 years. The statement will specify the scope, objectives and overall concept of the redesigned services, and will set out the principles governing its development and operation. The Green Paper recommend an implementation plan for a specified transitional period. As well as establishing priorities and setting targets, the plan will cover the following items:

- legislation and regulations
- delivery options
- administrative responsibility
- infrastructure and community supports
- funding
- mechanisms to ensure integration and coordination

Step Four:**Supplementary Green Paper on ECE Labour Market Released by December 1, 2001**

In order to plan for sustainable and expanded high quality child care services, the multi-faceted workforce crisis must be addressed. A separate Labour Market Planning Group will work with the government to prepare a Supplementary Green paper on ECE Labour Market Issues. Training and accreditation, remuneration and benefits, professional development, career progress, pensions and other labour market matters must be addressed in the Supplementary Green Paper. Much of what this Supplementary Green Paper will address is itemized in the Regulatory Review Committee's "Vision" paper, in the section on training and professionalism.

Step Five:**By March 2002 Consultation Completed**

Consultation on the Green Paper is concluded. New legislation and regulations, and funding models, are introduced. Implementation plans are announced.

By April 2002:**Expansion Begins Based on the Plan for Child Care Redesign**

Infrastructure payments begin to the non-governmental sector. Coordination and planning teams begin meeting to coordinate children's services to end policy fragmentation. Planning for early childhood educator workforce expansion begins, as per the Supplementary Green Paper.

Development of new services begins. Expansion must include the construction of new licensed group facilities and the provision of operating grants to expand family home child care. New spaces should primarily be in the form of new facilities, rather than the in-fill growth which has largely characterized expansion in the last decade.

By June 2003:

Expansion Continues/Benchmark Target is 30,000 Licensed Child Care Spaces

Of Manitoba's approximately 200,000 children under the age of 12, at least 20% must be receiving the kind of care, education and development services that meet their needs. At a minimum, this will require at least 30,000 licensed child care spaces in an expanded system that includes a range of comprehensive, inclusive and coordinated services.

By June 2004:

Expansion Continues/Benchmark Target is 33,000 Licensed Child Care Spaces

Of Manitoba's approximately 200,000 children under the age of 12, at least 25% must be receiving the kind of care, education and development services that meet their needs. At a minimum, this will require at least 33,000 licensed child care spaces in an expanded system that includes a range of comprehensive, inclusive and coordinated services.

June 2004:

Planning Begins for Second Five-Year Plan

The government will initiate a new planning process to be coordinated by staff in consultation with a broadly-based CCPRAG, which includes at least 25% of the members from the 2001 CCPRAG, thus ensuring some continuity of expertise.

By June 2005:

Expansion Continues/Benchmark Target is 36,300 Licensed Child Care Spaces

Of Manitoba's approximately 200,000 children under the age of 12, at least 30% must be receiving the kind of care, education and development services that meet their needs. At a minimum, this will require at least 36,300 licensed child care spaces in an expanded system that includes a range of comprehensive, inclusive and coordinated services.

By June 2006:

Expansion Continues/Benchmark Target is 39,930 Licensed Child Care Spaces

Of Manitoba's approximately 200,000 children under the age of 12, at least 35% must be receiving the kind of care, education and development services that meet their needs. At a minimum, this will require at least 39,930 licensed child care spaces in an expanded system that includes a range of comprehensive, inclusive and coordinated services.

Endnotes

1. Vancouver Board of Trade Task Force on Early Child Development and Child Care, July 1999, *Investing in our Children is Good Public Policy*, Vancouver, p. 1.
2. National Council of Welfare, 1999. *Preschool Children: Promises to Keep*. Ottawa., p. 89
3. UNICEF, 2001. *The State of the World's Children, 2001: Early Childhood*. Available on-line at www.unicef.org/sowc01/short-version/page3htm.
4. Cited in M. Friendly, "What is the Public Interest in Childcare? *Policy Options*. January-February 1997.
5. Beach, J and J. Bertrand, 2000. *More than the Sum of the Parts: An Early Childhood Development System for Canada*. Childcare Resource and Research Unit, Occasional Paper No. 12, University of Toronto, p. 40.
6. National Council of Welfare, 1999. *Preschool Children: Promises to Keep*. Ottawa., p. 44.
7. Minister of Family Services and Housing, February 2001.
8. The government does have the option of direct wage grants or designated wage supplements, a policy the former NDP government pioneered.
9. For a discussion of this problem, see Beach, J and J. Bertrand, 2000, *More than the Sum of the Parts: An Early Childhood Development System for Canada*. Childcare Resource and Research Unit, Occasional Paper No. 12, University of Toronto, Section 1.
10. Beach, J and J. Bertrand, 2000, *More than the Sum of the Parts: An Early Childhood Development System for Canada*. Childcare Resource and Research Unit, Occasional Paper No. 12, University of Toronto, p. 5.
11. For example, at the recent February 2, 2001 provincial Early Childhood Development Services Agreement Conference, child care organizations were seriously under-represented.
12. Battle, K. and S. Torjman, February 2000, *Ottawa Should Help Build a National Early Childhood Development System*. Caledon Institute: Ottawa, p. 5.
13. Doherty, G. M. Friendly and M. Oloman, 1998. *Women's Support, Women's Work: Child Care in an Era of Deficit Reduction, Devolution, Downsizing and Deregulation*. Status of Women: Ottawa, p. 33.
14. Doherty, G. et al, 2000. *You Bet I Care*. p. 122
15. Prentice, S. 2000. *A Decade of Decline: Regulated Child Care in Manitoba, 1989-1999*. p. 14-16.
16. Lowe, Keith, Chair. 1992. *Report of the Working Group on Francophone Day Care*. Manitoba.
17. Letter from Child Day Care Office to S. Prentice, August 2000.
18. Doherty, G. et al, 2000. *You Bet I Care*. Table 8.1, p. 99.
19. Prentice, S. 2000. *A Decade of Decline: Regulated Child Care in Manitoba, 1989-1999*. p. 12

20. Doherty, G. et al, 2000. *You Bet I Care*. p. 76 and 81.
21. See the National Council of Welfare, 1999. *Preschool Children: Promises to Keep*. Ottawa, pp. 57-59, and Battle, K. and S. Torjman, February 2000, *Ottawa Should Help Build a National Early Childhood Development System*. Caledon Institute: Ottawa, p. 5.
22. Prentice, S. 2000, *A Decade of Decline: Regulated Child Care in Manitoba, 1989-1999*, Appendix 5, "Quality Breaches in Manitoba Centres, 1986-1990", p. 43.
23. Doherty, G. et al. 2000. *You Bet I Care*. Table 10.1 "Proportion of the Average Centre's Revenue from Government Sources by Jurisdiction and Auspice, 1998", p. 129.
24. Prentice, S. 2000, *A Decade of Decline: Regulated Child Care in Manitoba, 1989-1999*, Appendix 5, "Quality Breaches in Manitoba Centres, 1986-1990", p. 12.
25. Lero, D. 2000. "Can a reevaluation of early childhood care and education policies be an empowering force for the 21st century? In J. Hayden (Ed.) *Landscapes in early childhood education: Cross national perspectives on empowerment*. New York: Peter Lang.
26. Penn, H. and P. Moss, "From Vision to Reality", *Transforming Nursery Education*., p. 146-7.
27. Rothman, L and Friendly, M., Fall 2000, "Early Childhood Development Services: How Much Will They Cost?" *Play and Parenting Connections*, Canadian Association of Family Resource Programs. pp 1 and 3.
28. Battle, K. and S. Torjman, February 2000, *Ottawa Should Help Build a National Early Childhood Development System*. Caledon Institute: Ottawa, p. 8