



The Thompson Childcare Development Council

A New Childcare
Governance
Model

August 2009



Childcare Coalition of Manitoba

Community
Futures  North Central Development

Community Futures North Central Development
In partnership with
Thompson Childcare Advisory Committee and the
Childcare Coalition of Manitoba

We warmly thank the individuals who generously assisted this work. Their input through the community consultation sessions and interviews is invaluable.

This report is one outcome of the Child Care Coalition of Manitoba's project, "Promoting Women's Economic Security and Work-Family Balance for Rural and Northern Women in Manitoba." Please visit the website, at www.childcaremanitoba.ca for copies of this report, and others from the project.

For more information please contact

Liz Sousa
Development Officer
North Central Community Futures
Development Corporation
3 Station Road, Box 1208
Thompson, Manitoba, Canada
R8N 1P1

Tel: (204) 677-1490 (ext 0204)
Toll Free: 1-888-847-7878 (Manitoba only)
Fax: (204) 778-5672
Email: lsousa@northcentraldevelopment.ca

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Executive Summary	3
2. Introduction	4
3. Background	6
4. Childcare Delivery Today	7
5. Comparisons	9
6. Lessons from Other Comparative Services	12
7. Community Consultations	13
❖ <i>Collective Governance is Needed</i>	14
❖ <i>Thompson Families Need Accessible, Affordable Childcare.....</i>	15
❖ <i>Quality Improvement is Required</i>	16
❖ <i>Childcare Supports the Thompson Economy and Labour Force.....</i>	16
8. Strategic Priorities	
❖ <i>System-wide Governance and New Infrastructure</i>	17
❖ <i>Available and Accessible Childcare Services</i>	19
❖ <i>On-going Quality Enhancement</i>	19
❖ <i>Supporting and Resourcing the Labour Force.....</i>	20
9. Recommendation: Thompson Childcare Development Council.....	21
10. Conclusion	24

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report summarizes a community consultation process and scan, to recommend a new governance model for childcare services in Thompson.

It begins from the assumption that that childcare is an essential component of economic and social infrastructure. When childcare services are inadequate, children, mothers, families, the community, the region, and the business community all experience stress. Like other parts of the province, Thompson has a shortage of licensed childcare spaces and early childhood educators. Without access to quality childcare, women's economic security and work-family balance are compromised.

This report reviews the current realities of childcare governance and delivery in Thompson. We observe that, in the context of labour shortages, more accessible and available childcare would facilitate women's employment. A job for the female head of the household can often mean the difference between family poverty and an adequate standard of living. Childcare services can also support parents who seek post-secondary education. In Thompson, a city blessed with a large and growing Aboriginal population, these challenges and opportunities are particularly important. Thompson has developed a systems-level approach to a number of services (libraries, economic development, healthcare and education). Childcare can draw on many of the structural and governance lessons learned from the establishment of these successful systems

We conclude that the current governance childcare model requires renewal. To meet current and future needs, childcare will need to move from a set of stand-alone centres to a coordinated and shared-resourced system. Creating such a mechanism for coordination will increase access, ease the strain on facilities, promote expansion and quality improvement, and efficiently utilize current resources.. This new model will begin to address and relieve many of the conditions contributing to the current "childcare crisis." We recommend a metamorphosis for childcare governance in Thompson, through the creation of the Thompson Child Care Development Council.



Metamorphosis is a process by which an animal physically develops after birth involving a conspicuous and relatively abrupt change in form through growth and differentiation., which is usually (but not always) accompanied by a change of habitat or behavior (Wikipedia). This process of change is called metamorphosis. When something happens in Nature, there is a reason, and that reason is connected to survival. What we observe in nature usually exists because it solves a problem and gives an organism an advantage. Transformation has many advantages and creates opportunities.

INTRODUCTION

The childcare sector has a significant economic and social impact in northern Manitoba. Good quality and available childcare is an essential service; it is part of the urban infrastructure and “a must for a modern city.”¹ Childcare enables people and communities to develop and prosper. Childcare permits parents to work, increasing family income and reducing poverty. Childcare services allow employers to recruit and retain staff, raising productivity and reducing absenteeism. The childcare industry employs citizens (primarily women) as early childhood educators,



directors, childcare assistants and family home childcare providers. Importantly, childcare supports gender equity as it eases family-work strain, and enables women to make higher lifetime earnings and higher incomes in old age. Childcare also produces impressive local

¹ Coffey, C and M. McCain, (2002). *Final Report of the Commission on Early Learning and Child Care for the City of Toronto.*

returns: long term benefits outweigh costs between 2 to 17 times. In the short-term, every \$1 invested in childcare in Thompson generates \$1.58 of local economic activity.²

Although childcare plays a vital socio-economic role for communities and families in Manitoba; it has failed to attract sufficient support from government. As a result, Thompson is experiencing a “childcare crisis”; a critical shortage of childcare spaces, a nonexistent or inconsistent governance model, lack of trained staff, under-paid and over-worked employees, and volunteer burnout. This crisis keeps young parents, predominantly women out of the labour force and away from post secondary opportunities. Neither provincial nor municipal governments have a mandate to intervene nor is



there any community-based organizational structure amongst the current providers that helps to reduce the complexity of the current challenges. Change is needed to alleviate the stress in the industry, for employers, post secondary institutions and individuals. Overall, this crisis hinders business growth and slows the economy, which harmfully impacts the community, families and children of Thompson.

Thompson urgently needs a new model for childcare delivery and governance. It needs to ease the strain on facilities, promote expansion and quality improvement, and efficiently utilize current resources. This paper begins by reviewing a range of governance models options that work effectively for other local public sectors.

The Child Care Coalition of Manitoba (CCCM) partnered with Community Futures North Central Development (CFNCD) and the Thompson Childcare Advisory Committee (TCAC). These consultations focused on designing a more effective governance structure for Thompson childcare. We examined the underlying structure of the current childcare governance model in Thompson to identify its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats; i.e. a SWOT analysis. The project also reviewed other social service delivery and management models to examine what they can offer the childcare sector. We use this

² Prentice, S. (2007) Child Care Coalition of Manitoba, Northern *Childcare: Childcare as Economic and Social Development in Thompson*.

review to recommend a way forward for Thompson. This report then discusses the findings of community consultations. The report first discusses the background of the issue, and then does a comparison to other nonprofit governance models. After consultations with the childcare community it provides recommendations with a goal and action steps towards moving closer to towards the vision of a new governance model for childcare in Thompson.

BACKGROUND

Thompson is the third largest city in Manitoba and is currently flourishing. Economic growth includes the expansion of Vale Inco Ltd. and major development in the hydro



industry. Despite the recent economic downturn, these multi-million dollar developments, coupled with increasing population growth, have

also put enormous strain on the health care, education and other public sectors as well as small business owners and services industry in Thompson. Currently, Thompson's childhood sector is comprised of only 6 licensed childcare centres and 9 family homes. Together, these 15 facilities provide 374 licensed spaces for children aged 12 weeks to 12 years old. Every facility is at full capacity and has a two to three year waiting list. Instead of growing to meet these new demands, the opposite has been occurring. In 2004, the lights went out in one of Thompson's largest childcare centres, at a loss of 80 licensed spaces. Over 2006-2007, due to crowded schools, the Mystery Lake School Division ended its lease agreement with a preschool, eliminating 20 more licensed spaces. The demand for daycare is increasing while the supply is decreasing. There is an

Whereas approximately 10% of university and college students nationally have children of their own, a recent study in Thompson showed that 70% of the university students interviewed there had children. This significant difference points to the important relationship between childcare services and a growing postsecondary student population in the community.

Bonnycastle, C. R. & Prentice, S. (2009). Barriers to post secondary education: Listening to northern students. Paper presented at the 2009 CASWE-ACFTS's Conference. Ottawa: Carleton University.

estimated 500 children in private unlicensed childcare. If licensed childcare increased, more children would have access to available and reasonably priced services.

It is estimated that less than ten percent of Thompson's children now have access to a regulated childcare space. Large industries like Vale Inco Ltd. Calm Air, Smooks Bros. Ltd. and the Burntwood Regional Health Authority find it difficult to recruit and retain staff that requires such services for their children. Many families needing childcare cannot work or attend school. Finally, children lose out on the developmental benefits of early childhood care and early education programs.

CHILDCARE DELIVERY TODAY

Each of Thompson's six centres is owned and operated as a not-for-profit organization and is governed by an independent board of directors made up of parent volunteers. Currently, many Boards of Directors often lack the skill set necessary to deal with complex matters such as legal, financial and human resource issues. Each centre operates

independently and is isolated from the others. Each of the licensed family home facilities is a single proprietor home based operation, delivering services to children and families privately. There is no mechanism for program collaboration, networking, the sharing of staff or pooling of resources among these micro enterprises. Each centre hires its own staff, manages its own budget, develops its own programming, purchases its own supplies, and manages its operations as a single enterprise. All licenses are held privately, one per centre or family home.

"I am on multiple waiting lists, which makes it difficult to have an accurate prediction of when my child can get a space. I do not know when I can return to work, it looks like I am on a 2 year waiting list."

A parent waiting to return to work

There are long waiting lists of parents and families who want childcare services. Large employers and educational institutions need access to services, but do not have the capacity or mandate to own and operate their own childcare programs. There is no mechanism in place to assess and meet the communities need for more spaces

are greatest, or where a new start-up centres and homes should occur. There are no

intermediary organizations or hierarchal structure in the childcare sector. After licensing and inspection obligations are met, there is no public role in on-going operation or administration beyond some financial transfers.

According to calculations about the future demographics of Thompson, by the year 2015, population is anticipated to grow to 22,000. Population growth rates, Urban Aboriginal upward mobility trends and increasing levels of immigration impact the labour participation rates. Thompson will be economically disadvantaged in the absence of planning to accommodate service infrastructure needs. This lack of planning is avoidable by putting frameworks and budgets in place to allow a growing economy to diversify and mature. Although Canada is experiencing an economic downturn, it is not demonstrated in the current and future projections of Thompson. Many newcomers are families relocating regionally, nationally or internationally and who need essential services such as health care, education, childcare and employment. Young urban upwardly mobile Aboriginal families need services to thrive in an urban environment. Safety, justice, adequate childcare, increasing employment while reducing the unemployment rate and increasing educational and training opportunities address wellness and increase standard of



"I had to drop out of my classes at School of Social Work, because even though I am funded I do not have childcare."
A college student

living. This enables families to thrive and contribute to the tax base. As Northern Manitoba heads for a more serious shortage of workers and is increasing post- secondary education opportunities, it is imperative that the local infrastructure including childcare is methodically planned to support this future growth. In a community of hardworking Northerners, childcare is essential for prosperity in the North.

Under current arrangements, however, significant growth in the number of childcare spaces and the quality of care is unlikely. Without changes to the architecture of childcare delivery and governance, the problems of access, quality, and staffing will persist.

COMPARISONS

Comparing the childcare delivery model to other delivery services in Thompson can teach some lessons about how to organize a system which can manage growth and quality improvements. We examine the Thompson Public Library, the Mystery Lake School Division, the Burntwood Regional Health Authority, and the Community Futures Development Corporation to learn what makes these non-profit and public institutions effective, and able to meet the growing demands of an expanding population.

The Thompson Public Library, like all libraries in Manitoba, is publicly funded, providing services free of charge to users. The library's governance model requires City Council to appoint a Board of Trustees to govern under the Public Libraries Act. The Board of Trustees sets policy. Trustees have legal authority over contracts and agreements. The library is mandated to provide accessible, available quality services and is administered through the City of Thompson. The library is funded by government through a yearly operating grant and the municipality contributes a percentage of the levy, which strictly applies to the library. Operating budgets are submitted yearly for approval and funding requests are dealt with at the provincial level. Yearly audited financial statements, reports, grant applications and other contributions are monitored.

The Library is a unionized workplace, where a contract is negotiated every 3 years. A strictly volunteer governance model is in place where the City of Thompson appoints new trustees for no remuneration yearly. The advantage of this model is the



structure. The library has a full time administrator and the City of Thompson acts as the bookkeeper and provides financial services to the administrator. The City of Thompson accepts financial requests, and maintains accountability. The Library's Board of Trustees reports to the City of Thompson on a quarterly basis to give updates and financial reports. The Library administrator is responsible for managing the day to day operations.

In childcare there is no centralized administration, no administering body and no effective level of public service. The cost of service in childcare is borne exclusively by parent-users, not distributed across the entire community that benefit from it, like the case of the library.

The School District of Mystery Lake (SDML), like all school divisions in Manitoba, provides guaranteed space for all children when they reach 6 years of age. The SDML is governed by a Board of Trustees elected through a municipal election every 4 years. The division is regulated by the Public Schools Act under the Minister of Education, and works with the Department of Education. The Board of Trustees hires the Superintendent to carry out the day to day operations of the School Division. The Superintendent works closely with a team made up of executive administrators and school principals. The Division is funded through a 60/40 split between the province and the municipality.



Funding is based on the numbers of children registered who are sitting in desks on September 30th of every year. The Board of Trustees elects a Chairperson annually. The model ensures that support and resources are available such as a substitute list of qualified teachers, assists newly-hired teachers to locate housing and the Division provides

support and resource staff. The SDML has four main departments including Programs, Human Resources and Research, Facilities and Secretary Treasurer. The governance model is democratic and inclusive: parents have input and voice by electing Trustees who represent them at the Board level. The model is supported by provincial curriculum, resources, and best practices. When the system needs to expand, the province will make capital dollars available for new schools or renovations to existing schools. This is a sophisticated system that has developed over many years -- the governance model ensures that they meet the mandate of providing education services and supports to the community.

Whereas education is mandated by provincial authority, childcare is not. Childcare requires an umbrella governance structure to address collective need, and to ensure access. The SDML has administrative infrastructure that childcare lacks. Each school is not independently run by individual boards, although childcare centres are. Collective needs can best be addressed with a new macro governance model that adds infrastructure to the existing system.

The Burntwood Regional Health Authority (BRHA) provides healthcare to Thompson residents and surrounding communities. The Burntwood Regional Health Authority is governed through a Carver Governance Model and under the Health Care Act. In the

carver model, boards create and amend policy and leave administration to managers. The Board of Trustees ensures that all hospitals, clinics and services are accessible, available to the public. The purpose of the board is to see that the organization achieves what it should and avoids what is unacceptable. A yearly call for new trustees is published in the local media. Interested individuals are appointed by the Minister of Health. A final selection, which includes representation from surrounding communities, is made. It ensures patients pay no user fees at the point of service. In addition to healthcare providers - doctors, nurses, midwives, physiotherapists and other professionals who deliver expert care to patients, the BRHA has skilled administrators who manage the system, freeing the healthcare experts to work with patients and the community.



Childcare governance lacks parallel infrastructure, including a federal funding and policy role.

Directors and staff need to be free to work on programming and leaving complex issues to a higher level administration. The BRHA is a complex governance system which ensures staff is paid adequately, Resource levels are maintained and a full-time administration manages the day to day financial affairs and looks at innovative ways to add services to maintain quality for people in the North. Provincial accreditation is vitally important to the quality of service. Having these systems in place ensures that quality is preserved. The system has the capacity to plan and grow. New services added in the last 3 years have been a personal care home, a dialysis unit and a brain injury centre. In a recent staff survey by administration, it showed a strong need for childcare and the BRHA is interested in accessing much needed childcare spaces.

Community Futures North Central Development (CFNCD) is a non-for-profit independent organization governed by a volunteer Board of Directors. Western Economic Diversification Canada, a federal department partially funds core costs of each Community Futures Development Corporations including the Community Futures Partners network. The organization is governed under the Ci Act. The Board of Directors has 17 members, each representing a distinct community. Board members are appointed by their own elected officials in their own



communities. An Executive Committee made up of four members direct the Corporation to work on programs and projects that fall under the mandate of building prosperity in the North Central Region.

Community Futures Partners assists in negotiating the general contract with Western Economic Diversification Canada on behalf of Manitoba's 16 Provincial Community Futures Development Corporations. A contract is reviewed every 5 years and funds provide a portion of the operating budgets on a per year basis with an inflationary 2% yearly increment.



At the provincial level, Community Futures Manitoba (CFM) is development initiatives and professional development. Community Futures Manitoba is a provincial network whose Board of Directors is made up of one representative from each of the sixteen CFC'S pursues a mandate that is synergistic with the mandate of the provincial CF's and advocates for a collective general contract. They are governed under the Corporations Act. The CFC model enables each CFC office to deliver grass roots programming while accessing resources and support from a larger governance model.

LESSONS FROM COMPARATIVE SERVICES

What do these examples have to do with a new childcare governance model? The Community Futures model established and resourced a provincial network, much like the provincial coordination of public education and the Mystery Lake School Division, the provincial coordination of SDML and the provincial coordination of libraries. In childcare, this could mean a provincial organization that works synergistically to support childcare services (centres, family day care homes, nursery programs and federal networks such as Head Start programs). Childcare needs a provincial network for the same reasons that we have built Manitoba-wide networks for The Association of School Trustees, the Association for Public Libraries and the provincial association of BRHAs.

How does growth in service sectors occur? Thompson's childcare structure, a stand-alone system of micro-enterprises is inefficient. It is financially ineffective, and it burns out its volunteers. In a system without intermediary scales of administration and infrastructure, there is little or no capacity to capitalize on expansion possibilities beyond individual initiatives. Opportunities for on-going quality improvement are scarce. There are few career ladders for staff in the field, and only weak linkages with the training institutions that prepare students for professional careers as early childhood educators. For home licensed facilities, risk is high for those individuals venturing into licensed care. After 35 years of childcare's micro-governance and service delivery, the existing isolated governance model is ready for development and renewal. As industries in Thompson evolve, the infrastructure which supports them must also evolve. There is a need for the childcare sector to better respond to its environment and economic climate. The existing micro level governance may work well at the individual centre level, but is full of risk and is exhausting. The heavy burden childcare centres place on parent volunteers to start-up, administer and manage through volunteer boards has failed to establish enough services to meet the need. For family home daycare, these burdens are placed directly on the owner/operator. A community-wide governance model is the solution to this problem.

In other jurisdictions of Manitoba, there are various options available to suit the needs of growing communities. Multi-site programs under one governance model, as well as multi-program models governed under one site, are two examples of how to meet growing needs. A new governance model would have the ability to respond to various community needs by implementing various types of programming models.

COMMUNITY CONSULTATIONS

Along with reviewing delivery of other Thompson services, a series of community consultations were conducted. Over a two-month period in the fall of 2008, four inclusive community consultations were held with community members, board members, staff, directors, post secondary institutions and students. Several sessions were open to the public. Sessions encouraged participants to discuss, collaborate and network to address challenges in the existing system and explore potential solutions.

There was agreement that the current system needs to be reformed, although it was difficult for participants envision an alternative. Four priority issues emerged during

the consultations, as participants thought about new ways to provide childcare services. The process of group sessions began with a brainstorming session about the issues and of those issues themes began to emerge. Once the ideas were captured on flip charts the same themes were used to capture ideas about possible solutions. Below are excerpts from the consultations.

1. COLLECTIVE GOVERNANCE IS NEEDED

The following are comments provided during consultations and opinions of participants. From the consultations most were in favor of collective group to address collective concerns. Currently individual Boards do not have the capacity needed to collaborate with other centres. It was found that although there are parts of the current system such as micro governance of individual local centers' are working adequately, "there was no one mandated to look at the overall childcare system in Thompson." said one centre Director.

- The system does not run smoothly and spaces are not filled in a timely manner. Employees could call a 1-800 number or visit a website and connect to a family home or centre or a nanny all of which are licensed by the province of Manitoba (all of which meet or exceed licensing standards). Why can't employees request temporary care, speak to a childcare consultant, people can travel with their children for work and access childcare in other centres?
- This new governing agency can have central billing where parents you pay for your childcare space monthly on line like you pay all your other bills. The centres are registered with this automated service. The centralized waiting list will give you a spot but will eventually put your child a long term space list that is either close to home or school or employment.
- We can't leave economic growth to chance. Economic growth as any business will require vision and strategic planning well into the future.
- Science tells us that brain development starts well before the kindergarten years. Early learning is the foundation to a bright workforce. Many studies show that spending the money up front reaps huge rewards. Manitoba needs to develop its youthful workforce for our future economy. Preparing children for early learning prior to kindergarten sets the stage for productive workers later in life.
- The change in childcare governance is a change for the better. It means that Manitoba remains a leader in childcare. That the province is sensitive to the

"I have to pay for my child's spot, when I am on maternity leave, otherwise I won't have a space in a year".

A pregnant working mother

economic balance and puts systems in place that assist to stabilize and sustain the economy.

- Parents can evaluate the care so they can put their child where they would fit in the most whether that is family day care, after hours care in a school or at the boys and girls club.
- We need a service first agency which is strongly connected to all the childcare programs and assists Boards by keeping a staff sub lists, manage the supply and demand and work with referral agencies to provide outreach.
- Childcare needs to develop a succession plan for the next 20 years.
- Childcare is typically governed by a small and dedicated group of parents and community members who are responsible for centre administration including legal responsibilities, signing cheques to ensure staff gets paid and managing the long waiting lists. Thompson needs to update our thinking in the way that centers' are governed. Staff needs professional development opportunities; workplace based educational opportunities to keep up with recent advancements in the industries and pay attention to equal work for equal pay wage scales.
- A new model could equalize policies and procedures and assist with centre insurance and bookkeeping services. This would allow for focused energy on quality and value for children.



2. THOMPSON FAMILIES NEED ACCESSIBLE, AFFORDABLE CHILDCARE

- For infants or for toddlers, and especially for the growing number of immigrant families, “I want nursery spaces to allow my child to have basic language and instruction to prepare them for kindergarten”.
- There is a significant cost to employers who have employees who cannot attend work due to their babysitter not showing up or is sick, at Vale Inco one parent reported that they had to use their vacation days to cover when their sitter was not available.
- Parents care giving concerns or employers the high cost of absenteeism. Can this new governance model assist parents by providing back up care lists, or provide a

list of short term back up plan list or even a backup centre list on a casual basis. If a child preregisters with the system why can they not have a temporary spot, such as during spring break or Christmas holidays?

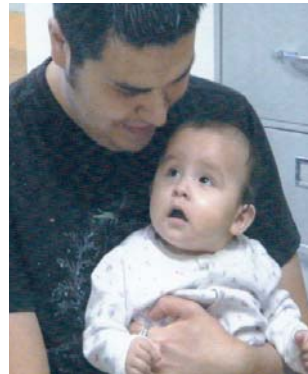
3. QUALITY IMPROVEMENTS ARE NEEDED

The quality of childcare services in Thompson needs to rise. In the context of under-funding, it is not surprising that six of seven childcare centres is operating with an exemption to their license. All across the north, there is shortage of trained Early Childhood Educators -- although new enrollments at the University College of the North may begin to remedy this. A further quality concern is that childcare governance is overseen by volunteer parent boards, many of whom lack the skills and time to manage complex organizations.

- "Volunteers are currently running the boards now, and the system is working fine. You get what you pay for"
- "I don't have a choice, but I want my child to be in a safe environment"
- "Where is the quality control? Why do we have to accept minimum standards?"

4. CHILDCARE SUPPORTS THE THOMPSON ECONOMY AND LABOUR FORCE

- Childcare is business. It is no question that centres and family day cares must run efficiently, cost effectively and be sustainable long term. Working towards sustainability ensures that childcares are flexible and can weather the economic downturns.
- Childcare guarantees the future of the labour force and more services offered to the municipality the more stability and economic stimulus the economy can support
- In 5 years 30% of the labour force will retire, in 10 years 70% are slated to retire. Major industries, small business and Government have an aging workforce. The Childcare Industry also has an aging workforce. Who is planning the succession needs of the next ten years?



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

We propose that childcare requires reorganization to introduce system-wide capacity and to more efficiently use human and financial resources. Such a change will remedy many of the current crises in childcare. This solution is based on the following four key arguments:

1. SYSTEM-WIDE GOVERNANCE AND NEW INFRASTRUCTURE

-
- A new governance model should be created to act as the administrator to current childcare centers' on a voluntary basis. Existing centres and family home providers are invited to further collaborate and participate in the process to ensure participation is mutually beneficial.
- The creation of a new "Thompson Childcare Development Council" and in collaboration/consultation with other childcare organizations to look at providing services that to not duplicate existing services.
- This new governance model would take advantage of the economies of scale. The system they have now requires the Director and volunteer board/committee members to spend hours with duties that take them away from program quality. Under the new model, services would be on a fee for service basis enabling a centre to save money on bookkeeping, auditing costs and banking charges, etc. Multi use areas would be identified and beneficial to share funding resources.
- The new childcare model would centralize waiting lists, substitute staff lists, resource staff and services to meet the needs of children under the age of 12 years. Centralizing staff and resources for populations such as special needs, school age, family day care and nursery schools would enhance collective HR strategies and resources. Families would be better served and resources would be shared.
- A Thompson Childcare Development Council would look at the growth needs and work with other stakeholders to ensure that a growth plan is in place to address, where to establish new spaces. To work with the school division on securing space within or attached to schools, open more family day care spaces that could address the need while taking into account the high cost of new construction.

- The Thompson Childcare Development Council would work synergistically with other stakeholders who have similar priority areas, like the Northern Development Strategy and the Urban Aboriginal Strategy.
- Childcare macro governance would assist with providing supports and resources to individual centres such as collectively applying for grants and putting an action plan in place to correct current inefficiencies. They can also standardize training and salary scales.
- A “situational governance model” would work for childcare in Thompson. This model is a term used to clarify responsibilities between Board and Management. Board and Management decide on responsibilities based on the issue and the expertise level. At times they would collectively engage in outside expertise being brought in on an occasional basis.
- There is no one size fits all model. A new governance model ensures best practices and enables the sector to create a northern hub model which functions through a Thompson Childcare Development Council the new governance model is not designed to administer individual centres, it is designed to address collective issues of individual centres and other early learning programs.
- The Thompson Childcare Development Council is made up of representative community stakeholders from Thompson who have a vested interest in providing childcare infrastructure necessary to keep up to the current and fluctuating economy. This Council would have an advisory Board made up of industry, small business and the non-profits be mandated to provide services, resources and supports which are in the best interests of the current childcare sectors.
- These comparisons demonstrate a need in Thompson to regularly evaluate the needs and gaps. To ensure that high quality, accessible and available childcare.
- Comparisons show that Boards hire Executive Director/Managers to carry out their strategic plans which were made up of research and community consultations. A yearly budget provides ability to address the main concerns of the Board and long range strategic planning provides stability and capacity building.



2. AVAILABLE AND ACCESSIBLE CHILDCARE SERVICES

- These comparisons show that it is possible to make the current system more sophisticated, synergistic and complimentary.
- Community surveys and feasibility studies would research the recommended approaches to put a plan into place to synergistically, through a multidisciplinary approach implement priority childcare areas and operational funding would be designated to achieve specific outcomes. Cost sharing opportunities to be researched.



3. ON-GOING QUALITY ENHANCEMENT

- A collective evaluation would clearly identify barriers to post secondary education. Lack of qualified staff seriously impacts the field, currently 68% of centres function on provisional licenses. Collective training needs to bring existing staff up to minimum levels would alleviate the provisional licenses currently in place. This would assist the province to meet the 5 Year Family Choices Plan currently in place.
- Quality control measures would increase productivity and efficiencies would save money.

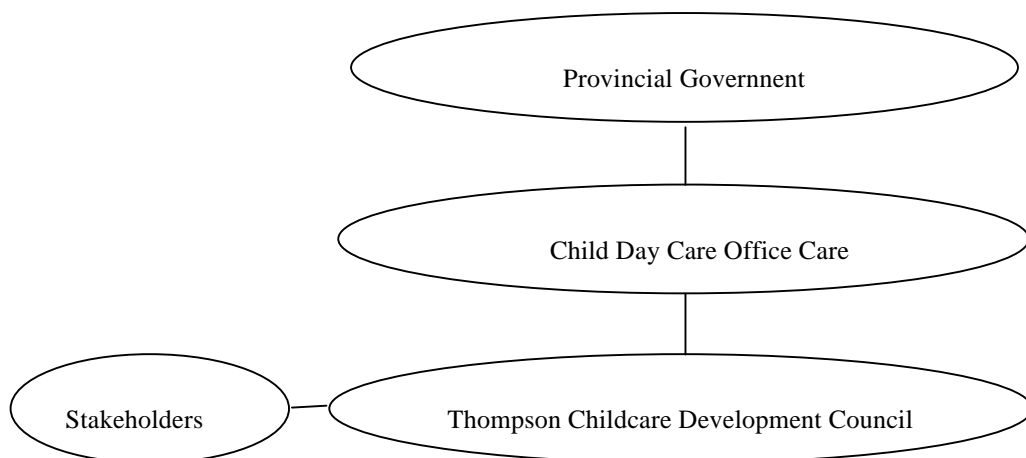
4. SUPPORTING AND RESOURCING THE LABOUR FORCE

- Thompson Childcare Development Council would address gaps in training and look at funding opportunities through other government departments to support the needs of employees and address high priority areas such as recruitment and training for new and existing staff. Addressing human capital is especially important.
- Incentives to bring back Early Childhood Educators that have left the field for various reasons could be initiated.

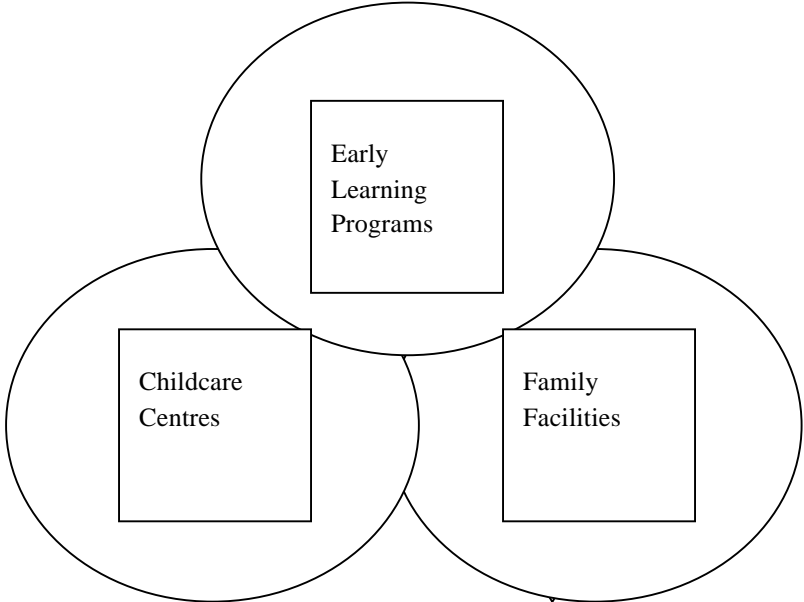
RECOMMENDATION: THOMPSON CHILDCARE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

Upon reviewing what we have learned through discussions at the community consultations and analyzing other community institutions, a framework for a new governance model for Thompson’s childcare industry is the next step.

It is evident that while current childcare governance functions well at the micro-level, there is a clear need to create a macro governance level. The development of a Thompson Childcare Development Council and financial commitment from the provincial government are key factors. The following outlines the needed steps to achieve the goal to create a new governance model.



Sample of Thompson Childcare Development Council Organization Model



Goal: To create a new, effective governance model for Thompson's childcare industry by creating a Thompson Childcare Development Council. The Childcare Development Council will have the mandate:

- to address affordability and accessibility for families, including expansion
- to ensure ongoing quality enhancement; and
- to resource and support the current and future labour force.

Objectives and Action Steps

1. Commission a lead agency to work with provincial and municipal partners on an agreement to write a proposal to administer the creation of the new governance model
 - a. The Province of Manitoba, Child Day Care Office to tender a Request for Proposals to designate a lead agency to begin the process of developing a new framework that works to support the strategic priorities of a new childcare governance model in Thompson, MB.
 - b. Meet with the stakeholders and partners to assist and collaborate and form a development board who will develop a framework
2. Form a "Thompson Childcare Development Council" (TCDC) with a Board of Directors who has a 5 year renewable mandate.

Contact members of the Thompson Advisory Council to meet to assist in the development of the Thompson Childcare Development Council mandate

 - a. Identify how this strategy is harmonious with the provincial strategy and how it fits into the existing childcare fabric. This community planning will facilitate development of information sharing, networking with community stakeholders to build capacity within childcare. Continue working with partners to address the labour market challenges within childcare and address barriers to qualifications.
 - b. Negotiate a memorandum of understanding/agreement with the Province of Manitoba Family Services Child

- Daycare Office for 5 years to strengthen the current system by adding a new governance model
 - c. Develop a Mission and Vision Statement
 - d. Develop policies and by-laws
3. Commence Thompson Childcare Development Council operations
- a. Strengthen the existing system by incorporating the Thompson Childcare Development Council as a not-for-profit, charitable organization
 - b. Receive funding to hire a administrator
 - c. Develop a 5 year Strategic Plan for priority issues of accessibility, affordability, quality and support
 - d. Develop program areas to address the priority issues
4. Evaluate the program yearly
- a. Province of Manitoba Family Services Department to work with the Thompson Childcare Development Council measure the outcomes and the effectiveness of the new model
 - b. Thompson Childcare Development Council to make recommendations to review the Strategic Plan

CONCLUSION

According to demographers, Thompson's population is anticipated to grow to 22,000 by 2015. With consideration for future growth, Thompson will be economically competitive, and it will, retain and maintain the future labour force. Strategic planning is necessary to accommodate future population growth needs. This lack of planning is avoidable by putting frameworks and budgets in place to allow the economy to further diversify. A metamorphosis in childcare is already in motion. The economic climate has changed and way childcare is governed needs to change as well. The ability to collaborate and be innovative with a new governance models allows for diversity and growth. New partnerships and synergies will enable more families to have

childcare services and various types of programming. This begins to solve the problem of lack of spaces and lack of qualified professionals, while allowing more children to access care when families need it most. The advantage is felt in the economy when small business have access to a greater labour force and post secondary institutions have students attending while parents feel safe knowing their child is in a quality program at a nearby centre.

