



## Early Learning and Child Care

### MONTHLY E-NEWS

**JANUARY 2025**

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### Message from the Assistant Deputy Minister

As you are likely aware, on January 14, 2025, [the Honourable Nello Altomare, Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning, passed away](#). I know that he was honoured to serve as Minister, and worked tirelessly to support Manitoba's children both before and during his time in government. Given that his background was in the Kindergarten to Grade 12 system, as Minister he was immediately engaged in building his connection with Early Learning and Child Care. He was excited about advancing the work under the Canada-Wide Agreement and was optimistic about the progress we would make here in Manitoba. He will be missed.

On January 23, 2025, [the Honourable Tracy Schmidt was appointed as Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning](#). Minister Schmidt had been serving as acting Minister for several months, while continuing in her previous portfolio of Environment and Climate Change. During this time, Minister Schmidt has been very active in the work of Early Learning and Child Care, and represented Manitoba at the Federal-Provincial-Territorial Ministers' meeting in Charlottetown in November 2024. We welcome Minister Schmidt to the department and look forward to continuing to work with her.

On a final note, I would like to wish you a Happy (Lunar) New Year.

## Moving Forward on Child Care Priorities

### Outdoor Early Childhood Education Grant

Despite the frigid temperatures, sunny days and green grass are only a few months away and a new grant will help Manitoba child care facilities make the most of them.

The Outdoor Early Childhood Education Grant, a \$2M investment under the 2021-2025 Canada-Manitoba Early Learning and Child Care (Bilateral) Agreement, provides a one-time funding opportunity for licensed early learning and child care (ELCC) family/group home providers and licensed non-profit centres and nursery schools to promote high-quality outdoor play experiences for young children aged 0 to 6.



The goals of the grant are to incorporate outdoor or nature education into children's daily curriculum, increase opportunities to enhance learning through outdoor education, and foster connection with the land through incorporation of the traditional culture and knowledge of Manitoba's First Peoples.

In Manitoba, there is a growing interest in forest/nature schools, a nature-based pedagogy that emphasizes outdoor learning through a child-centered, play-based approach. It is recognized that quality outdoor learning in early ages, provides a variety of benefits for the children, their families and the educator including fostering healthy child development and life-long skills. However it is also recognized that facilities' access to green space and opportunities for nature play are not equal. Some facilities are located in areas with an abundance of greenery and with nature-rich environments while others have limited access to safe, natural play spaces. The Outdoor Early Childhood Education grant could serve as an opportunity to promote outdoor play through new and [innovative](#) approaches such as creating an outdoor reading area, starting a [gear lending library](#) (e.g., outerwear and shoes for children, staff and families that need them), [nature backpacks](#) for lending to families (e.g., magnifying glass, compass, neighbourhood scavenger hunt), building a natural [playground](#), or developing a community garden. Manitoba would like to support you in making outdoor exploration more accessible and meaningful for all young children.

The maximum amount of grant funding available is up to **\$2,500** for family/group child care homes and up to **\$25,000** for non-profit child care centres and nursery schools that provide services to infant and preschool children.

Apply online before **February 14, 2025**, at [forms.gov.mb.ca/outdoor-early-childhood-education-grant/index.html](https://forms.gov.mb.ca/outdoor-early-childhood-education-grant/index.html).

For information about the Outdoor Early Childhood Education Grant and other early learning and child care grants, visit [www.manitoba.ca/education/childcare/centres\\_homeproviders/providers\\_resources/grants.html](https://www.manitoba.ca/education/childcare/centres_homeproviders/providers_resources/grants.html).

## Spotlight on Success

### Flamingos Flying High in Transcona

It may have been December, but it wasn't too cold for the birth of Little Flamingos in Winnipeg's Park City.



Little Flamingos Early Learning Centre opened its doors on December 11, 2024, as a brand-new, stand-alone facility sharing a lot with École Regent Park in the heart of Transcona. It was a chilly, -25°C morning, but spirits were high, and things were running smoothly under the eyes of Director Jan Crielaard and her team as the first snowy boots padded across the gleaming entrance floor. A few weeks later, and things are going swimmingly.

*"The kids are adapting, the families are so happy, and the grandparents are thrilled. Everything's going really well," says Crielaard, also the Director of École Centrale and École Regent Park School Age Centres in Transcona. "I've been with school-age kids for so many years and I always love them, but I am so happy to be back with the little children, the preschoolers and the little babies. It really is amazing."*

The newly built centre offers 74 licensed spaces for 20 infants, and 54 preschoolers. Crielaard began her career in child care in 1990 and has overseen Centrale and Regent Park since 2002, making Little Flamingos the third site under her purview.

*"It's been huge. The extra work has fallen largely on me and my assistant director, but we welcomed it. We were up for the challenge and really wanted to see this program get off the ground. For the families we have helped, I am really grateful that we can offer that to them, and they are so appreciative."*

From the initial idea to opening day, Crielaard credits an excellent team behind her, including a board of directors responsible for all three facilities, as well as a solid relationship with the school division.

*"I have a strong, supportive leadership team, and a fantastic board. It's nice being on school division property, and we partner with the school for a number of different things. Everybody's been really helpful to us."*

Like many of the new centres sprouting up in Winnipeg and across the province, natural light is a key feature, with plenty of full-length windows throughout the building. But even those who worked carefully to ensure the space was aesthetically top-notch know that it takes a special touch to turn an empty building into something that feels like a second home.

*"We have a lot of windows, and that's a beautiful thing for us. It's a really nice connection to the outdoors for the children. They chose a beautiful colour scheme for us, blues, greys and off-whites. And we've really worked hard to turn this sterile space into a warm and welcoming environment for the children so that it feels like home. And I think we've succeeded with that."*

Crielaard sees Little Flamingos as a great achievement after a more than 30-year career in child care.

*"I'm not as young as I used to be. It's an amazing thing to see the people coming to the centre today. Not only have I hired former children from our centre, but several of our children in our program are children of children from our centre in the past! It feels like I have grandchildren in my program. Because Transcona is just that kind of a community, right?"*

*"When you stay in a school for that many years and you start to see the second generation coming around, it really is rewarding."*

Funding for this project is made possible under the Child Care in School Policy that requires the consideration of new child care spaces as part of the construction of all new schools, or those undergoing a major renovation.

For more information on the departments' child-care space creation efforts and/or grant funding that may be available for a space expansion project, visit [www.manitoba.ca/education/childcare/resources/spacecreation.html](http://www.manitoba.ca/education/childcare/resources/spacecreation.html).

## Meet the ELCC Team

### Joanna Flores, ECE III, Quality Enhancement Consultant

My family and I arrived in Manitoba from the Philippines in August, 2004. By the second week in the country, I had already visited 114 Garry and applied for certification as both an early childhood educator and a kindergarten teacher (because I wasn't sure what I would qualify for). I could only be certified as a child care assistant (CCA), but it let me work in the sector, so I was okay with that.

Four months later, the province contacted me about a new pilot program launching for immigrant educators, and they asked me if I was interested. There were five of us that went through the very first iteration of the Immigrant Educators Qualification (IEQ) program. That became the Internationally Educated Qualifications stream, which today is part of the [ECE II Assessment Program](#) which follows competency-based and recognition of prior learning assessment practices.

The IEQ program enabled me to obtain my first job in Canada through a facility placement as a Child Care Assistant (CCA) and, from there, I earned my ECE II classification in 2005. I moved up to supervisor after a year of employment and continued to work there for 11 years while earning my ECE III via the University of Winnipeg.

When we came to Canada—it sounds cliché but—my husband and I agreed, 'Hope for the best, prepare for the worst.' The plan was to apply for jobs that still had something to do with our professions in the Philippines, but we were ready to work retail or in a warehouse or anything that would support our family.

I could have stayed as a child care assistant, but I kept pushing and pushing and pushing, and here I am.

In 2016, I joined government as an early learning and child care coordinator. Then a senior policy analyst, and now I work in curriculum development. It's a nice transition. To go from being the 'Guinea pig,' to 15 or so years later and playing an active role in that same program's growth and development. Life comes full circle.

In the Philippines, I was a preschool teacher. I have a Bachelor of Science degree in psychology because I was supposed to go into medicine, but I wanted to work with young children. I started my Master's in Education, but then we got our immigrant visas to Canada. So that was a dream put on pause for 20 years.

I've always wanted to keep going. I'm working on my Master of Education in Early Childhood Education through the University of British Columbia. Here I am in my fifties and starting a graduate program. After this, what am I going to do?

You have to keep challenging yourself. You have to keep trying to find those doors and you have to keep pushing and prying them open if you have to. Get your foot in the door, push your way in—but the doors do open.

It takes a lot of hard work, but it pays off.



Joanna Flores, ECE III, Quality Enhancement Consultant

January 2025 marks the twentieth anniversary of Manitoba's Early Learning and Child Care ECE II Assessment Program : Internationally Educated Qualifications Stream.

To learn more about the program, including an overview of the different program streams, and whether you or someone you know might qualify for Early Childhood Educator II certification, visit [gov.mb.ca/education/childcare/students\\_workforce/ece\\_assessment.html](http://gov.mb.ca/education/childcare/students_workforce/ece_assessment.html).



Each month, the division will answer a common inquiry received from facilities in a question-and-answer format.

### This Month's Question

*What are the pathways for home-based providers to pursue their ECE II classification?*

### Answer

Several Manitoba post-secondary institutions offer recognized Early Childhood Educator (ECE) II programs with flexible training options such as hybrid, online, and off campus in communities around the province. Some offer part-time options so you can work and complete the training at the same time. A staff replacement grant is available for those who choose the workplace delivery model. A reimbursement of up to \$5,000 per school year is available for out-of-pocket tuition expenses at a recognized Manitoba ECE post-secondary program.

For information, view the [ECE II Training Pathways](#) or visit [www.gov.mb.ca/education/childcare/students\\_workforce/info\\_classification.html#education](http://www.gov.mb.ca/education/childcare/students_workforce/info_classification.html#education).

## Announcements and Reminders

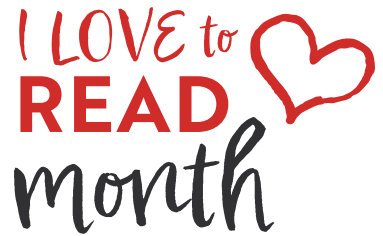
### February is I Love to Read Month

The Manitoba government is pleased to proclaim February 2025 as "I Love to Read Month," recognizing the vital role that **language, literacy, and reading** play in the lives of Manitobans of all ages. Read the official [Proclamation](#).

All child care facilities are encouraged to take part in many opportunities and events this month, including collaborating with community members to join in on the festivities. Continue to celebrate literacy throughout the year with outstanding books by various Canadian authors and illustrators available through local libraries and booksellers.

Learn more about Canadian children's books at [Scholastic Canada](#) and [Manitoba Reading Association](#).

Have a recommendation for a great read? Email [CDCInfo@gov.mb.ca](mailto:CDCInfo@gov.mb.ca) with the subject line "ELCC Great Kids Book!" and you could be featured in a future edition.



### Board Governance Manual and Free Support Services — Available February 1, 2025

The customizable best-practice Board Governance Manual and implementation supports developed in partnership with the Manitoba Child Care Association and People HR First Services are designed to help Centre directors and board members effectively fulfill their responsibilities and ensure the success of their Boards and operations now and into the future.

To help centre directors and their boards with the implementation of this manual and governance best-practices, visit the Manitoba Child Care Association website to register for a copy of the Board Governance Manual and/or individualized support services provided at no-charge by People First HR Services.

Manitoba Child Care Association (MCCA) — Board Governance — Manual and Implementation Support Request Form: [mccahouse.org/professional-development/board-governance](http://mccahouse.org/professional-development/board-governance)

To learn more about this initiative, visit [www.manitoba.ca/education/childcare/childcare\\_news/current\\_circulars.html](http://www.manitoba.ca/education/childcare/childcare_news/current_circulars.html).

### MCCA — 2025 Awards Call for Nominations, and 2025 Workshops

The Manitoba Child Care Association (MCCA) is seeking nominations for the **2025 MCCA Awards**.

Any MCCA member can be nominated for the awards and any previous nominees that were not selected as the recipient can also be nominated again. The deadline for nominations is February 20, 2025. All recipients will be honoured at the MCCA awards banquet on May 24, 2025, as part of the annual provincial conference. Banquet and ticket information is available at [mccahouse.org/professional-development/annual-provincial-conference/conference-banquet](http://mccahouse.org/professional-development/annual-provincial-conference/conference-banquet).

For more information about nomination categories and to make a submission, visit [mccahouse.org/professional-development/recognition-awards-mcca-members](http://mccahouse.org/professional-development/recognition-awards-mcca-members).

### MCCA Winter/Spring 2025 Workshops

Over 55 professional development opportunities are available this year. For a complete list of workshops, times, and dates, view the [brochure](#). Questions? Email [events@mccahouse.org](mailto:events@mccahouse.org).

### New Partnership Leads to the Development and Delivery of a Series of Inclusive Workshops

Through a partnership with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Learning, the Manitoba Inclusion Child Care Committee, and the Manitoba Child Care Association, a series of five workshops promoting inclusive early learning and child care practices will be offered free of charge to child care facilities in Manitoba.

The workshops will be facilitated by the Manitoba Inclusion Child Care Committee and offered through the Manitoba Child Care Association's professional development workshop series. Workshops will be offered in person and through Zoom to support accessibility of all regions in Manitoba.

The Manitoba Inclusion Child Care Committee is a group of volunteers who promote "inclusion" in Manitoba's Early Learning and Child Care community. The committee works to provide peer-to-peer guidance and support for early learning and child care. In addition to providing and identifying resources as well as educational opportunities, the committee works in partnership with the Province, Manitoba Child Care Association, and other supporting agencies to develop effective policies and advocate for inclusive child care.



For more information about the Manitoba Inclusion Child Care Committee, contact Donna Freeman at [dfreeman@discoverycc.com](mailto:dfreeman@discoverycc.com) or 204-889-2689, or Lisa McLaughlin at [lisa@alephbet.ca](mailto:lisa@alephbet.ca) or 204-586-1110.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Red River Métis Early Learning and Child Care Conference, February 21 to 22, 2025

Register today for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Red River Métis Early Learning and Child Care Conference at the Fort Garry Hotel in Winnipeg. This year's theme, "Little Steps, Big Future," reflects our dedication to nurturing early learning within a vibrant Red River Métis cultural framework.

For more information and to register, contact the Manitoba Metis Federation at [www.mmf.mb.ca/early-learning-child-care/2nd-annual-red-river-metis-early-learning-child-care-conference](http://www.mmf.mb.ca/early-learning-child-care/2nd-annual-red-river-metis-early-learning-child-care-conference).

## New ECE II Training Pathways Flyer

Are you or someone you know considering your next step in their career as an Early Childhood Educator. You are encouraged to view, share and/or post a copy of the ECE II Training pathways flyer promoting a career in Early Childhood Education and highlighting the various recognized Early Childhood Education training options in Manitoba.

- [ECE II Training Pathways](#) (English)
- [ECE II Training Pathways](#) (French)

For more information, visit [gov.mb.ca/education/childcare/resources/publications.html](http://gov.mb.ca/education/childcare/resources/publications.html).



## Canadian Centre for Child Protection (C3P) Training – Deadline March 31, 2025 (No Cost)

In May 2024, ELCC partnered with the Canadian Centre for Child Protection (C3P) to deliver an online child sexual abuse prevention training program for all child care staff in Manitoba. The program is intended to create a model for early childhood educators to help detect and prevent child abuse in Canada.

As a reminder, licensed child care facilities including Early Childhood Educators, Child Care Assistants and home-based child care providers (including substitutes) are required to complete this mandatory training by March 31, 2025, and every four years thereafter.

To learn more about the C3P initiative and how to access the online training at no cost, view a copy of the [operational circular and webinar recording](#). For further details about the Canadian Centre for Child Protection (C3P), visit [www.protectchildren.ca/en/](http://www.protectchildren.ca/en/).

## Accessible Information and Communication Standard Regulation

The Accessible Information and Communication Standard Regulation under The Accessibility for Manitobans Act, builds on existing requirements of Manitoba's Human Rights Code and requires organizations to identify, remove and prevent barriers that exist digitally, in-print or through interaction with technology or people. It also adopts globally recognized web content accessibility guidelines as a minimum requirement.

All licensed early learning and child care centres, including nursery schools, as well as family and group child care home providers with one or more employees (including casual staff), are required to comply before May 1, 2025.

For more information, visit [www.manitoba.ca/education/childcare/childcare\\_news/current\\_circulars.html](http://www.manitoba.ca/education/childcare/childcare_news/current_circulars.html). Additional information and resources are also available on the Manitoba Accessibility Office website at [accessibilitymb.ca/](http://accessibilitymb.ca/).

## Help Keep Board of Directors Contact Information Up-to-Date

To support communication efforts with our sector, please ensure that contact information and email addresses for all board members are entered and up-to-date in the [Child Care Online—Record of Board of Directors](#) section.

# Early Learning and Child Care Division Update

## Staffing Updates

We continue to welcome new staff into our division to support Manitoba's priorities for early learning and child care and support career growth and development of existing staff.

**Temitope Alimson** has joined the Capital and Space Expansion Branch for her second placement as a Leaders in Training intern. Temitope holds a Master of Science in Energy Studies and a Bachelor of Science in Economics from the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. Temitope's previous experience includes policy analysis and community-focused initiatives as a researcher with the Centre for the Study of the Economies of Africa, as well as volunteer work with the Bunmi Adedayo Foundation. Temitope's first placement was with Manitoba Environment and Climate Change.

**Oliver Barham** has joined the Capital and Space Expansion Branch as a Policy Analyst. Oliver holds Bachelor's and Master's Degrees in English Literature, and has more than a decade of experience as a teacher in various educational settings. Oliver has previously worked as an educational consultant with the Government of Nunavut to design and implement sustainable, bilingual education in Nunavut, including creating and delivering teacher education courses for the Nunavut Teacher Education Program.

**Jordan Hall** has joined Policy and Planning Branch as Manager of Strategic Policy, Strategic Policy and Intergovernmental Relations. Jordan holds a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) Degree in International Development Studies and a Bachelor of Commerce in Finance from the University of Saskatchewan. Jordan comes to us from the Manitoba Department of Municipal and Northern Relations, where he has held the position of Acting Manager, Policy and Legislation with the Community Planning Division. Prior to this, he has worked with the Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program in the Department of Labour and Immigration since 2015, including overseeing program operations as a manager since 2019.

**Myrna Javate** has joined the Funding and Financial Assistance Branch as Director, Financial Operations. Myrna holds a master's in business administration, and is a designated accountant (CPA, CGA) with over 17 years of experience in accounting, financial policy, public sector finance, and SAP expertise. Myrna started with the Government of Manitoba in 2012, has previously worked in the Departments of Agriculture, Labour, Consumer Protection, and Families. Myrna will provide departmental oversight for funding and financial assistance programs processed within and outside Child Care Online (CCO), including Child Care Subsidy application review and payment.

**Holly Orr** has joined the Provincial Operations Branch, as an as Inclusion Support Program Coordinator, with the Diversity and Inclusion Unit, based in Brandon. Holly is an Early Childhood Educator III, and holds a Bachelor of Science in Early Childhood Studies as well as an adult teaching certificate. Holly has more than 30 years of experience in child care, having served as a nursery school director and an early childhood education instructor at Assiniboine College.

For the list of key department contacts, visit [www.edu.gov.mb.ca/aboutus.html](http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/aboutus.html).

## We Value Your Input!

Would you like to share some of your facility's ideas or tell us about a program or celebration at your facility? Would you like to share a quote about why you love being an early childhood educator? Email us at [CDInfo@gov.mb.ca](mailto:CDInfo@gov.mb.ca) with the subject line "ELCC Newsletter" and you could be featured in our next edition.

### For general inquires about the Early Learning and Child Care Division

**Website:** [www.manitoba.ca/childcare](http://www.manitoba.ca/childcare)

**Email:** [cdcinfo@gov.mb.ca](mailto:cdcinfo@gov.mb.ca)

**Phone:** 204-945-0776

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