

JUNE 2025

Early Learning  
and Child Care

MONTHLY  
E-NEWS

MOVING FORWARD ON CHILD CARE PRIORITIES



## Launch of New Annual Awards Program: Manitoba Early Childhood Educator Awards of Excellence

We know that Early Childhood Educators lay the critical foundation for lifelong learning during the most formative years of a child's development, and what better way to acknowledge that than to take the opportunity to annually honour our incredible child-care professionals and spotlight the innovative approaches, dedication and transformative impact that exceptional educators bring to our Manitoba communities.

The first annual [Manitoba Early Childhood Educator Awards of Excellence](#) honour Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) across the province who play a vital role in shaping the lives of children under the age of twelve. The awards celebrate early learning and child care professionals who exhibit standards of excellence in early childhood education and recognize home-based providers for their contributions to enhancing children's growth and development.

A reception honouring all recipients will be hosted in October 2025. Each award recipient will be presented with a certificate of recognition and a cheque for \$500.

Nominations are open and accepted in the following categories:

- [Outstanding Early Childhood Educator Award](#) (five awards)
- [Collaborative Early Learning Team Award](#) (one award, three to five recipients)
- [Outstanding Early Childhood Leadership Excellence Award](#) (one award)
- [Premier's Award for Early Childhood Education Excellence](#) (one award)
- SPECIAL RECOGNITION: Home-Based Early Learning Program—[Exemplary Home-Based Early Learning Environment Award](#) (three awards)

Nomination Deadline: August 8, 2025

For more information on how to prepare and submit a nomination, and the nomination and selection process, visit [manitoba.ca/eceawards](https://manitoba.ca/eceawards).



## Bill 20 Receives Royal Assent

On June 3, 2025, the Manitoba Legislative Assembly passed [Bill 20—The Community Child Care Standards Amendment and Education Administration Amendment Act](#). This Bill will require the Minister to establish policy frameworks for First Nations, Inuit and Métis education in licensed early learning and child care environments and the public school system.

The framework aims to create culturally safe, inclusive, and supportive early learning environments for First Nations, Métis and Inuit children and families. Its purpose is to ensure Indigenous children have meaningful opportunities to explore and celebrate their identity and culture, while also supporting the professional development and cultural competency of early learning and child care providers across the sector.

Recognizing the importance of sector input, the department will be consulting with stakeholders before finalizing and rolling out the new policy framework.

## WILDFIRE RESPONSE UPDATE

We recognize these past several weeks have been extremely difficult for all Manitobans both personally and professionally as we have navigated the ongoing wildfires, and challenges around the evacuations and emergency responses. Thank you for your continued efforts to support families and maintain continuity of care wherever possible. We are especially grateful to those in directly affected areas and those continuing to manage challenges related to smoke and air quality. Your patience and dedication in working with the staff of the Early Learning and Child Care Division is deeply appreciated.

Our department is continuing to work closely with emergency management services to coordinate responses to the needs of evacuated Manitobans. We recognize the vital role child care plays in providing stability during times of crisis and are committed to supporting the system now and in the months ahead. We are working with community partners across the province to assess both immediate needs and longer-term measures to ensure continuity of care.

As we head into the summer months ahead, facilities are reminded to review and access the various health and wellness related resources that are available to the early learning and child care sector from the department website: [Routine Practices Guidelines and Resources](#), [Developing Enhanced Safety Plans and Codes of Conduct: A Guide to Safety Charter Requirements for Child Care Centres](#), [Developing Enhanced Safety Plans and Codes of Conduct: A Guide to Safety Charter Requirements for Family and Group Child Care Homes](#), and [Handle with Care: Strategies for Promoting the Mental Health of Young Children in Community-Based Child Care](#).

You are also encouraged to review important information about the health effects of smoke exposure due to wildfires at [www.manitoba.ca/health/publichealth/environmentalhealth/smoke.html](https://www.manitoba.ca/health/publichealth/environmentalhealth/smoke.html).

We want to recognize the emotional toll that crisis situations like this can take. Stress, anxiety, and uncertainty are natural responses to these events—for children, families, and staff alike. We encourage you to reach out if you need support. Services such as [Kids Help Phone](#), the [9-8-8 Suicide Crisis Helpline](#), and [The Link: Youth and Family Supports](#) are available 24/7.

### Little Artists Make a Big Impression at Portage Gallery

French Impressionist Edgar Degas said that painting is very easy when you don't know how, but very difficult when you do—as any family refrigerator festooned with finger paintings can attest to.

At Portage Ukrainian Nursery School in Portage la Prairie, educators are working to give budding young artists a chance to show us just how they see their world.

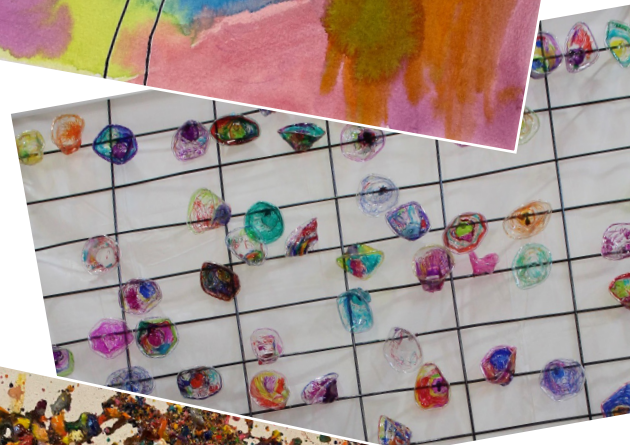
On Thursday, June 5, Prairie Fusion Arts and Entertainment opened a monthlong showing of extraordinary paintings and mixed media pieces by Nursery children, complete with statements by the artists themselves. This year's show is dedicated to autism expert Temple Grandin for her work as an advocate for neurodiverse children. This is the thirteenth annual exhibition by the nursery, which started as a simple fundraiser.

*"It started in 2013, raising money to try and pay for extensive renovations," says Lori Carpenter, Director. "We invited a local Grade 7 art class who came in with all their supplies and they worked with the little kids—I think they did something like 300 pieces of art in three days. The older kids loved it, and the little kids looked up to those older kids like they were gods. We also did some big group pieces that went up for auction and raised about \$7,000. The community really came through."*

Carpenter has a unique approach to children's art. She introduces kids to traditionally famous art and artists, as well as lesser-known contemporary artists like Seattle glassblower Dale Chihuly, or English sculptor Andy Goldsworthy, to broaden their approach to materials, process, and composition.

*"We really try and respect the child," says Carpenter. "Art is where the kids can do what they want to do. Sometimes the process is way more important than the product and I don't want the kids to think they're being judged by whatever they do. I want them to do what makes them happy and to feel free."*

*"Studies have shown that creativity in children drops drastically at the age of six, and that just breaks my heart. If you ask any employer what a positive skill would be for the people they're hiring, it is problem solving and creativity. That's why we push for creative art in nursery school."*



That philosophy has led to many successful years of art programming, and student art gracing the walls of homes and offices across Portage.

*"An artist who works in Portage came in and guided the kids through the process of painting a picture of [Trinity United Church], where we're located. We took easels outside and put them across the street and the children painted the church.*

*And so each child painted whatever they saw. I was blown away by the work; some of it was very abstract and some of it was very detailed. One hangs in the church office right now."*

Portage Ukrainian Nursery School requires parents to volunteer time and encourages active family involvement in the program. Many of the pieces in the show involved children working collaboratively with their parents.

*"We want the grownups to see how creative their little ones would be working together," says Carpenter. "They talk about ideas and colours and shapes, but they can't tell each other what to paint. It's the parents that are often a little intimidated when they hear the piece is going to be up at the art gallery for the public to see."*

Friday, June 13 was Carpenter's last official day with the Nursery after 33 years. She promises she will be an active volunteer, including next year's gallery opening:

*"Yes, I'm still going to do art shows."*

More than 80 Portage la Prairie children and families are represented at this year's exhibit, which runs until July 2 at [Prairie Fusion](#).

*Artwork pictured is by current and former students of Portage Ukrainian Nursery School.*



## Meet the ELCC Team

### Brigitte A'Bear, Manager, Child Care Subsidy

I've been with government for 15 years now—13 of those years with Child Care Subsidy Program. Within the first month of working here, as much as it was a very overwhelming program to learn, I knew I wanted to stay here. I feel a strong sense of purpose in Child Care Subsidy; understanding the importance of child care and how it helps parents and families.

My role involves providing guidance to the Child Care Subsidy Advisors when they have questions, reviewing our processes and procedures to ensure quality, and having discussions with facilities and applicants as needed.

We are very busy. We process facility reports and applications, providing service for the whole province. But if there's one thing I would say to facilities and caregivers: if you have a question, just ask us. We don't know everything, but if you have a question regarding subsidy or the payment, just ask, because we can share readily available information.



Brigitte A'Bear, Manager, Child Care Subsidy

We also understand that there are parents working hard to maybe get themselves out of a place where they don't want to be. Subsidy to help with the cost of child care can be a huge relief to them. If a parent is going to school and not working because they are taking a full course load; having that reassurance is one less stress they have to worry about. In that way, we are a part of the social safety net.

In the big picture, I know we're not saving the world, but it's important to me to feel that sense of purpose. Throughout my life, there's always been this aspect of wanting to help people, as cheesy as that sounds. As soon as I could, I started babysitting. I've worked in group homes. I've been drawn to jobs where I felt I could make a difference. And here, I feel like we're helping the people who need the help.



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

#### **This Month's Question**

*What resources are available to help boards of directors understand their roles and responsibilities? Where can they access this information?*

#### **Answer**

The Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) website has a section dedicated to the roles, responsibilities and functions of boards. Board members can find valuable information about board development and governance, policies and procedures, meeting management, legal accountability, and more at [The Roles, Responsibilities and Functions of a Board](#).

The [Financial Management](#) section includes a tool kit to help boards implement the new 2025/2026 ELCC Wage Grid. The tool kit has an Operating Budget Template in Excel to help forecast revenues and expenses for the year. Board members can use this template to see the effect revisions to the salary scale would have on their staffing expenditures and overall budget.

Centre Directors and Boards of Directors are also encouraged to access the free Board resources developed for all licensed and non-profit Manitoba child care facilities in partnership with the Manitoba Child Care Association (MCCA) and People First HR Services. These include:

- The Basics of Effective Board Governance: An Online Board Orientation
- Customizable Best Practices Board Orientation Manual
- Individualized implementation support services from an HR specialist from People First HR Services
- Access to MCCA resource library for governance resources in English and French

To register/request information provided through MCCA and People First HR Services, visit <https://mccahouse.org/professional-development/board-governance>.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REMINDERS



### 2025/2026 Wage Grid, Effective April 1, 2025

As announced on May 23, 2025, Manitoba and Canada are providing a total funding contribution of \$60.4 million to increase the Wage Grid Supplement to support the wage increase effective April 1, 2025. Additionally, a total of \$4.55 million has been provided as a two percent increase to base operating grants for all licensed and funded early learning and child care facilities.

As of mid-June, all licensed and funded facilities should have received their Wage Grid Supplement and base operating grant increase effective April 1, 2025. Facilities must use the funding to provide wage increases to staff **effective April 1, 2025**.

**TIP**

The Board Guidelines Wage Grid Implementation Tool Kit has been updated to include the increase in Wage Grid Supplement and base operating grants effective April 1, 2025, to assist funded centres and nursery schools when preparing their annual budget.

For more information, view the [2025/2026 Wage Grid](#) and view a copy of the [operational circular and webinar recording](#).

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

To support communication efforts with our sector, please ensure that Board 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.

### Expression of Interest: ECE II Assessment Program Advisors

**DEADLINE EXTENDED: July 7, 2025**

Join a group of ECE III Advisors who annually support the ECE II Assessment Program—a unique pathway, leading highly skilled Child Care Assistants to ECE classification through the demonstration of skills and knowledge as assessed by an Advisor. Advisors play an integral role in the success of participants by providing them with invaluable mentorship experience fostering growth, development and connections as an educator.

ECE II Assessment Program Advisors are paid positions up to a maximum of 40 hours per year, per participant.

For additional details about this opportunity, including information about the program and eligibility requirements, visit our [website](#).

### Membership Opportunities Available: Early Learning and Child Care Minister's Consultation Table (MCT)

The Early Learning and Child Care Minister's Consultation Table (MCT) Committee is currently seeking nominations to appoint additional members from licensed rural and/or home child care facilities. The expertise and insights from a diverse MCT membership who deliver and/or support the regulated early learning and child care sector are vital to informing advancements in Manitoba's early learning and child care system.

Learn more and download a nomination form at [www.manitoba.ca/education/childcare/resources/committees.html](http://www.manitoba.ca/education/childcare/resources/committees.html).

## Summer Safety Resources



With summer around the corner, facilities are encouraged to review the early learning and child care summer safety information on supervision, field trips, water safety, and sun safety, as well as enhancing their program and neighbourhood outings. Distribute these information sheets to staff and/or post them as a reminder and for quick reference throughout the summer:

- [Count Your Children Information Sheet \(PDF\)](#)
- [Sun Safety Information Sheet \(PDF\)](#)
- [Water Safety Information Sheet \(PDF\)](#)
- [Experiences and Outings Information Sheet \(PDF\)](#)
- [Field Trip Information Sheet \(PDF\)](#)

Please refer to all health and safety regulations and remember that proper planning and supervision are critical to ensuring everyone's safety. If you have any questions, please contact your child care coordinator.

## Mental Health Resources for Early Childhood Educators

Maintaining mental health is important for the Early Learning and Child Care Workforce. Ensuring well-being not only enhances job performance but also improves interaction with children and colleagues.

There are services and resources that can help develop skills and strategies for promoting mental health and well-being, and responding to immediate crisis. Below is an inexhaustive list of crisis and counselling services available:



### [Crisis Response Centre](#)

For adults experiencing a mental health crisis. Their services are accessible 24 hours a day, seven days a week within an atmosphere that promotes healing and recovery.

### [Klinik Crisis Line](#)

The Klinik Crisis Line operates a variety of crisis phone lines and online support services, providing free and confidential counselling, support and referrals for people who are suicidal, in crisis or struggling to cope.

### [Manitoba Farm, Rural and Northern Support Services \(24/7\)](#)

Provides free, confidential and non-judgmental counselling for anyone who lives on a Manitoba farm or in a rural or Northern community.

### [Women's Health Clinic](#)

Inclusive, feminist community health clinic that offers client-centred support through services and education.

### [Manitoba 2-1-1](#)

Provides access to mental health services close to you. Their service line is available 24/7.

## ELCC Learning and Engagement Month

For the second year, the Division held an informal Learning and Engagement Month to coincide with National Public Service Week. Throughout June, staff were encouraged to take in a variety of workshops and seminars to advance their skills, professional development, and knowledge of government. Activities included tours, discussions on national and international child care policy and regulation, and much more. Highlights included a tour of the Manitoba Legislature, sitting in on Question Period, a FortWhyte Risk Assessment Workshop exploring the practices and policies that form the foundation of safety in Forest and Nature Schools across Canada, and Facility Tours at Riverview Ashland and Louis Riel Child Care Centres.



Left to right: Lisa Rivest, *Systems Clerk*; Oliver Barham, *Policy Analyst*; Sam Toth, *STEP Student*; Sarah Watt, *Inclusion Support Program Coordinator*; Brigitte A'Bear, *Manager, Child Care Subsidy*; Mel Bale, *STEP Student*; Milina Dueck, *STEP Student*; Matthew McConnell, *Co-op Student*; Marielle Japus, *STEP Student*; Angel Pionela, *Systems Clerk*; Carissma Cyra, *STEP Student*; Amanda Flores, *STEP Student*; Delaney Boehm, *Quality Enhancement and Program Development Support*. Foreground: Kim Karvelson, *Subsidy Advisor*



**Assessing Risk - Fort Whyte - June 2025**

Left to right/top: Manoj Jayatunga, *Administrative Assistant*; Crystal Carvalho, *Policy and Program Analyst*; Bobbi Morken, *Child Care Coordinator*; Holly Orr, *Inclusion Support Program Coordinator*; Nicole Goderis, *Child Care Coordinator*; Monique Lubkiwski, *Child Care Coordinator*; Sherrie White, *Child Care Coordinator*; Shuang Qi, *Inclusion Support Program Coordinator*; Angel Pionela, *Systems Clerk*.

Left to right/bottom: Barb Baumung, *Child Care Coordinator*; Robyn Frost, *Child Care Coordinator*; Mavis Lewis-Webber, *ECE Program Advisor*; Séamas Finnerty, *Program Coordinator*.

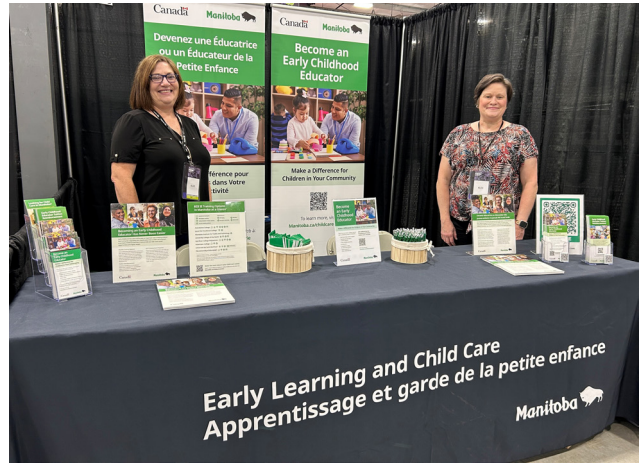
# Early Learning and Child Care Connecting with Community Across Manitoba

## Early Learning and Child Care attend the MCCA conference and the Future Now Expo

On Wednesday, May 28 and Thursday, May 29, representatives from the Early Learning and Child Care Division attended the Future Now Expo at the Red River Exhibition Park in Winnipeg. Dozens of participants, including students from six school divisions, stopped by the ELCC booth to learn more about how to start a rewarding career in child care. The Future Now Expo is Manitoba's largest interactive career and education exposition.



Carla Fleury-Charles, *Policy and Program Analyst*;  
Shelly Marques, *Workforce Curriculum Consultant*;  
Lindsay Ortlieb, *Policy Analyst at the MCCA Conference*



Marci Sul, *Child Care Coordinator* and Diann Dunbar, *Senior Policy Analyst* greeted participants visiting the ELCC booth at the Future Now Expo.

On June 18, Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning and Swan Valley School Division partnered to host a virtual information session about careers and opportunities in child care for career seekers in northwestern Manitoba.

## 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.

**Tayla Agostinho** joined the Policy and Planning Branch, Strategic Policy and Intergovernmental Relations Unit as Policy Analyst at 114 Garry on June 2. Tayla holds a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology and will soon begin her Master's Degree in Public Administration through the University of Manitoba and University of Winnipeg this fall. Tayla previously served with the Manitoba Department of Labour and Immigration, Natural Resources Canada, and in community and family-focused government roles in Brazil.

**Halle Rempel** joined the Capital and Space Expansion Branch, Space Expansion Unit as Senior Project Manager at 114 Garry on June 2. Halle has previously worked at the University of Manitoba and with Manitoba Justice, and comes to the Division with experience in community healthcare, women's health and reproductive rights, policy development and family law.

## 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 [CDCInfo@gov.mb.ca](mailto:CDCInfo@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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