



Early Learning and Child Care

MONTHLY E-NEWS

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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 wish well to those who are moving on to new opportunities:

- **Suzanne Gessler** joined the division as Senior Adviser to the Assistant Deputy Minister. This new role will provide coordination and integration across the division and department. Suzanne has extensive experience in the public service, most recently as Manager of Corporate Services with Elections Manitoba. She has held several senior policy and research positions in government and non-profit sectors. Suzanne holds a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology, a Bachelor of Social Work, and a Master of City Planning from the University of Manitoba.
- **Crystal Carvalho** joined the Quality Enhancement and Program Design Unit as a Policy Analyst, transitioning from her role as ISP Coordinator in the Diversity and Inclusion Unit. Crystal has been with ELCC since 2011, and was previously an ECE III with 20 years of extensive experience in the child care field.
- Farewell to **Debra Lall**, Policy Analyst, whose last day with Program Operations and Services was February 28, 2023. We wish Debra all the best in the future!

Moving Forward on Child Care Priorities

Introducing \$10 a Day Childcare to Manitoba

On Friday, March 3, 2023, Premier Heather Stefanson and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau held a joint media event to announce that Manitoba is reaching its commitment for \$10 a day child care beginning April 2, 2023.

This historic change in child care fees will apply to funded child care centres and homes across the province for regular hours of infant, pre-school, and nursery school care, with a provincial investment for school-age children. It will also apply to three periods of care for school-age programs. The department is currently working with child care facilities on the implementation of funding and the communication with their families.



Learn more at: manitoba.ca/10aday.

For quality child care to benefit families, spaces are needed in every community across the province. The department is continuing to work with community-based organizations, existing child-care providers, school divisions, and other partners to advance the Manitoba government's overall commitment to creating 23,000 new child-care spaces by 2026.

In addition to the second phase of the Ready to Move child care space expansion project announced in February, the department launched an expression of interest with public post-secondary institutions. **The post-secondary training and space expansion project** will expand the training opportunities for child care professionals, in addition to developing additional child-care spaces on campus.

In partnership with Consumer Protection and Government Services, the department also launched an expression of interest to develop **expanded school-based child care**. Interested school divisions offering surplus land or building space, a 15-year lease with a qualified child care provider and grounds, and exterior building services, maintenance and repairs will be eligible. The deadline for applications is April 28, 2023. Read more about the [School-Based Expansion Project Expression of Interest \(EOI\) on our website](#).

Spotlight on Success

Indigenous Ideas Inspire Spirited Celebration

Inspired by Wonder provides quality care across two centres for 88 children aged 4 to 12 in Winnipeg's North End and for 56 children from 12 weeks to age 5 in St. James.

Shortly after establishing their second location at the Specialized Services for Children and Youth (SSCY) Centre in 2016, Child Care Coordinator Dana Ducharme shared with her leadership an interesting idea that soon became centre tradition.

The Stepping Stones Ceremony is a celebration for children turning two-years-old and transitioning into the centre's preschool program. Inspired by Ducharme's Indigenous heritage, the ceremony has the child's peers write down words that describe them best, like 'adventurous,' 'spirited,' or 'joyful.' The words are placed on special 'stepping stones' in the infant room, and a blue ribbon is taped across the doorway leading to the preschool room. As the child's friends, parents, and centre staff sing a playful song, the child breaks through the ribbon into their new room and the older children welcome them in.

Hundreds of children and families have participated in the ceremony over many years now, creating wonderful memories for years to come, thanks to a unique and innovative way of incorporating Indigenous knowledge and traditions into child care programming.



“The Stepping Stone Ceremony is such a beautiful and meaningful way to acknowledge and celebrate the milestone of the child transitioning from the infant room to their pre-school classroom. It was touching to watch the infants and educators bid farewell to our son and have him be welcomed in such a warm and exciting manner to his new room by his new friends and educators.” — The Carruthers Family

“When babies come to Cedar room, there's a new friend to play with!” — Everett

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Announcements and Reminders

Quality Enhancement Grant Updates

The Quality Enhancement Grants, a total funding commitment of \$60 million, are available to licenced non-profit child care centres (including infant, pre-school, nursery, and school-age programs) and all licensed home-based (group/family) facilities. To date, more than 600 centres, 360 homes, and 90 nursery schools have opted-in on one or more of the associated grant funding streams. Funding will be disbursed to those who have opted in by April 14, 2023.



Would you like to share some of your facility's grant plans with your peers? Email us at CDCInfo@gov.mb.ca with the subject line "QE Grant Ideas." We plan to feature some of the more interesting and innovative ideas in a future edition!

For more information on the Quality Enhancement Grants, including access to resources such as operational circulars and the webinar held on February 28, visit the grant funding section on the department website at: www.manitoba.ca/education/childcare/centres_homeproviders/providers_resources/grants.html.

Newcomer Hiring Event—Winnipeg Convention Centre

On Tuesday, March 7, departmental staff attended the Manitoba government-sponsored Newcomer Hiring Event at the Winnipeg Convention Centre.

Thousands of people attended the event over the course of the day, with hundreds of people visiting the Early Learning and Child Care booth to learn more about a career in child care, and about training and certification options in Manitoba.

Department staff were joined by dozens of well-known local employers, including Manitoba Hydro, CP Rail, Patterson Global Foods, St. Boniface Hospital, and many more. Visitors represented a variety of countries around the world, with a substantial portion of the attendees coming from Ukraine.



ECE/ CCA Focus Group Sessions

To inform workforce planning and priorities, the department is currently undertaking a series of focus groups that will provide an opportunity for deeper engagement with individuals who are currently working in or who have trained to work in the early learning and child care sector and who may or may not currently be working in their sector to inform workforce planning and priorities. This research is conducted by an independent research company, [Prairie Research Associates \(PRA\) Inc.](http://www.prairieresearch.com)

Regulatory Updates

On March 10, 2023, amendments to *The Community Child Care Standards Act* were tabled in the Manitoba Legislative Assembly as part of *The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2023*. These amendments provide greater clarity that municipalities, Indigenous governing bodies, and other public sector organizations are eligible to receive capital funding to create non-profit child care centres.

On March 24, 2023, amendments were registered to the Child Care Regulation, M.R. 62/86 and Child Care Worker Retirement Benefits Regulation to support the implementation of recent announcements including the new Quality Enhancement Grants, the new maximum daily parent fees (\$10 per day) effective April 2, 2023, and returning retirement and pension amounts to their original amounts following the implementation of the one-time 2021–2022 adjustments.

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

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