

Early Learning
and Child Care

MONTHLY
E-NEWS

Message from Assistant Deputy Minister, Sarah Whiteford

Orange Shirt Day

Tuesday, September 30, 2025

All Manitobans are encouraged to participate in [Orange Shirt Day events](#) in recognition of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

The Manitoba Indigenous Reconciliation Secretariat also offers a variety of reports, publications and resources on this important topic at www.manitoba.ca/inr/resources/external-links.html.

The National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, also known as Orange Shirt Day, is an opportunity to reflect, to honour the children who were taken from their families and communities through the residential school system, and to recognize our shared responsibility in advancing Truth and Reconciliation.

In June 2025, the passage of Bill 20 enshrined a new requirement for the Minister to establish a First Nations, Inuit and Métis Policy Framework for Early Learning and Child Care. This framework will guide how we create culturally safe environments where Indigenous children can explore and celebrate their identities, and where all children can learn about and respect the histories, cultures, and perspectives of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. We are fortunate to be able to partner within our own department, between the Early Learning and Child Care Division and the Indigenous Excellence in Education Division, in preparing for the work ahead. We will be engaging with communities and the child care sector to shape this framework together.

Thank you for your commitment to reconciliation and to building an inclusive child care system for Manitoba children and families.



Governments of Canada and Manitoba Renew Action Plan to Affirm Child-Care Priorities

This August, the governments of Canada and Manitoba signed a new action plan under the Canada-Manitoba Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) Agreement, detailing how Manitoba will invest close to \$21.8 million this year to continue building and strengthening regulated child care services for children under seven.

The 2025–2026 Action Plan, under the Canada-Manitoba ELCC Agreement, continues to support initiatives that can be implemented quickly and have a meaningful impact. These initiatives were built through consultation and sector feedback with two main priorities: training and workforce development, and diversity and inclusion.

Many of the initiatives outlined in the plan are already in motion, such as post-secondary program infrastructure development and workforce recognition, along with the expansion of the ECE II Assessment Program, the creation of the Manitoba-specific Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Policy Framework, and curriculum redevelopment among others.

The Canada-Manitoba ELCC Agreement, originally established in 2017, remains complimentary to the priorities established under the Canada-Manitoba Canada-Wide ELCC Agreement. Together, these agreements support the creation of quality early learning and child care spaces and programming so that families can access the quality, inclusive child care they need.

For more information about the Canada-Manitoba Early Learning and Child Care Agreement 2025/2026 Action Plan, visit [Province of Manitoba | education - A Plan for Action](#).

New Inclusion Support Program Online Resources for Early Learning and Child Care

To better serve licensed child care facilities and families of children with additional support needs, the department has redeveloped the [Inclusion Support Program \(ISP\) section of the early learning and child care website](#).

Since 2009, all licensed child care facilities in Manitoba are required to provide inclusive programming and have an inclusion policy as well as individual program plans in place for children with additional support needs.

Early Learning and Child Care's Inclusion Support Program assists eligible child care facilities to remove barriers, thus allowing a child with additional support needs to meaningfully participate in programming and activities with their peers and enabling parents to work, attend education, training or seek employment. Under this program, various services and supports are provided to licensed child care facilities, including:

1. Child Development Services – Includes short-term interventions, programming recommendations, behavioural strategies, resourcing and training in inclusive practises and self regulation for early learning child care professionals. These services focus on inclusivity, environment, programming and staff-child interactions.
2. Case Management Services (application-based service for licensed and funded facilities only) – If a child care facility requires additional assistance in order to meet the needs of a child with additional support needs, case management services offers intake, assessment and service planning, which may include grants specific to the Inclusion Support Program.

The Inclusion Support Program also provides funding to organizations to deliver training to child care providers on topics such as characteristics of Autism, strategies for understanding and managing challenging behaviours, teaching communication and social skills, and building positive relationships to promote quality care for children.

The new Inclusion Support Program online resource provides valuable information about the program, including guidance on the benefits of inclusion, inclusive practices and roles in child care, enrolment requirements and policies, program eligibility and access to supports and services.

Learn more at manitoba.ca/childcareinclusion.

Manitoba Early Childhood Educator Awards of Excellence – Nominees in Review

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 showcase that than by taking 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.

The original nomination deadline of August 8 was extended to September 26, giving facilities more time to consider and prepare a nomination over the summer months. Nominations received are currently under review and selected awards recipients will be notified in the coming weeks.

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

Award categories:

- Outstanding Early Childhood Educator Award (five awards)
- Collaborative Early Learning Team Award (one award, three to five recipients)
- 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)

For more information, visit manitoba.ca/eceawards.



Outdoor Grant Helps Norwood Garden Grow

This spring, Beautiful Savior Lutheran Childcare (BSLC) at Birchdale School in Norwood created a project to get children outside and learn how to grow their own healthy fruits and vegetables.

Supported through the Outdoor Early Childhood Education Grant, the project has borne fruit thanks to the hard work of staff and children.

"We wanted to learn together how food is produced," says Jennifer Penner, program director. "Learning what plants need to thrive, how to care for living things, and then to share what we harvest with our families. We started work this spring with a patch of unused grass behind the school. It was a blank canvas. We brought in planters, composters, a bench, a picnic table, and a storage shed. We had soil delivered, planted seeds and plants from our school fundraiser."

Penner says the new garden has been an enriching and inspiring place for the children.

"The children are always excited to go and check in on how things are growing. They actively volunteer to cut the grass, water the plants, build and install the structures. They've been a part of the whole process; even paying the builder for the garden boxes."

In addition to beautiful flowers, the children are growing carrots, beans, peas, tomatoes, zucchini, cucumbers, and strawberries. The garden is a great example of how outdoor spaces can support children's development and engagement, bringing outdoor learning to life by fostering connection, exploration and growth.

"It's so special when they get to take some food home," says Penner, "or explain the layout of the garden to their classmates. I wanted them to feel ownership over the space, and they do."

Parents have been strong supporters of the project as well.

"I am thrilled to see how much pride my boys have for having helped take care of things," says Kara Gillis-Mitchler, BSLC parent. "I've never seen anyone so enthusiastic for zucchini—which they don't even eat! They carry it around like a trophy and show everyone they possibly can the zucchini from 'their garden.' They truly feel that this is 'theirs' and they care for it with great excitement. They want to put a garden in our backyard next year."

The [Outdoor Early Childhood Education Grant](#) was made available through the [Canada-Manitoba Early Learning and Child Care Agreement](#). The grant was provided to facilities to enhance children's learning by incorporating outdoor education into children's daily curriculum.



Top: BSLC student Bennett showcases the garden's first harvest.

Middle and bottom: Views of Beautiful Savior Lutheran Childcare's new community garden.

Meet the ELCC Team

Stella Berube, Director, Diversity and Inclusion Unit

My passion for working with children with disabilities began when I was a teenager, when I would spend my summers as a recreational volunteer at St. Amant Centre. This was followed by working with children with disabilities in child care for many years.

I worked with amazing child care staff and we had, what felt like, a naturally inclusive program. We worked together as a team to meet every child's unique needs, regardless of ability. We were all very passionate about our work, and our facility had a long history of providing the highest quality child care. We welcomed opportunities to learn various models, techniques and strategies through professional development, training, specialists and therapists, which have helped to inform my practise to this day.

I joined the Early Learning and Child Care Division seven years ago and have been with government since 2003. My degree is in Inner City Indigenous Social Work, which I earned attending university evenings and weekends, while working in child care during the day. I have worked in every Disability and Protection program for children and adults with disabilities in Manitoba, which 22 years later has allowed me to gain extensive knowledge in this area.

I enjoy assisting anyone who has a need, problem or issue through sharing information, resources and historical information or by explaining systems which may be a good fit to address a particular matter and help mitigate barriers. For example, we have recently updated the Inclusion Support Program (ISP) section for care child facilities on the early learning and child care website. The new and revised content provides information on specific parts of the ISP such as, [What is Inclusion?](#), and [how to access available services](#), as well as a valuable [FAQ section](#) to answer the most common questions.

When I look back over the decades, I knew early on that I wanted to work with children with additional support needs and help address barriers where I could. I would never have guessed I would be where I am today, as I love working directly with children, families and care providers. Services and supports require extensive work behind the scenes, including through policies and legislation. It's a whole other world, as equally important as front-line work. And when individuals with lived experience and in-depth knowledge in a particular area work to develop programs, results will have a positive impact.



Stella Berube, Director, Diversity and Inclusion Unit





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

This Month's Question

I might have missed some information that the department previously distributed. Is there a place I can find copies of the information previously provided to child care facilities?

Answer

Missed the last webinar? Looking for an eNews article? Want to review the latest circular? No problem!

You can find previous editions of the Early Learning and Child Care ENews, circulars, FAQs, webinar recordings, and presentations all in one place at [Province of Manitoba | education – Notices and Circulars](#).

You can also view past child care-related news releases at [Province of Manitoba | education - Child Care Related News Releases](#).

Still can't find what you are looking for? Email cdcinfo@gov.mb.ca or reach out to your Child Care Coordinator.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REMINDERS

Child Care Sustainability Trust – Deadline October 17

The Child Care Sustainability Trust is an endowment fund managed by The Winnipeg Foundation that supports one-time grant opportunities for early learning and child care facilities to undertake infrastructure and innovative programming improvements.

The maximum amount of grant funding available per facility includes: \$5,000 for family/group homes, \$20,000 for child care facilities with 50 spaces or less, and \$25,000 for child care facilities with 51 spaces or more. All licensed, non-profit early learning and child care facilities are welcome to apply.

The application deadline is October 17, 2025.

To learn more about this initiative and how to apply, visit [Child Care Sustainability Trust](#).

SAVE THE DATE

Facility Orientation Webinars



Thursday, November 6, 2025

For new and existing licensed child care providers. Topics covered will include Child Care Subsidy Program, Fees, Facility Reporting, and the Reduced Parent Fee Revenue Grant Payment.

Further details and registration links will be available in October.

Blooming Words® Training for Child Care Staff – No Cost for 2025/2026

Blooming Words® is a standardized, evidence-informed early language stimulation program for children from birth to kindergarten age. It was developed by speech-language pathologists in Quebec in partnership with the non-profit organization API-Enfance and is now being offered province-wide through the [Children's Therapy Network of Manitoba \(CTNM\)](#).

Blooming Words® is being offered for free in 2025/2026 to interested licensed early learning and child care centres (including nursery schools) in Manitoba.

New Blooming Words® Training Dates for Facilitators (Train the Trainer):

October 3, 2025

9:00am – 12:00pm CST – Education Model – **English**
To register, email bloomingwords@rccinc.ca or call 431-338-6210

October 15, 2025

9:00am – 12:00pm CST – Education Model – **French**
To register, email bloomingwords@rccinc.ca or call 431-338-6210

To learn more, visit [Blooming Words® Program](#).

Compliance with Lead in Drinking Water Standards

The testing and mitigation status for schools and child care facilities as of March 31, 2025, is now publicly posted on the [Lead in Drinking Water](#) website.

To ensure that all drinking water in child care facilities meets the new guidelines, the department will be following up with child care facilities that remain non-compliant, to ensure testing and any necessary mitigation is completed this year. A plan to mitigate any issues will be required by October 15, 2025. Financial support for mitigation may also be available through the 2025/2026 Child Care Sustainability Trust for non-profit centres and nursery schools.

For more information on how to test drinking water for lead and reduce lead exposure after testing, visit www.gov.mb.ca/sd/water/drinking-water/lead.

If you have questions or to update your facility's testing or mitigation status, please contact your Child Care Coordinator or Child Care Information Services at 204-945-0776 (Winnipeg), 1-888-213-4754 (toll-free), or cdcinfo@gov.mb.ca.

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 \(English\)](#)
(revised as of September 2025)

For more information, visit [Publications](#).

Training Grants

The Early Learning and Child Care Training Grant is available to offset the cost of up to \$400 per calendar year to assist individuals in obtaining [professional development](#), their [40-hour course requirement](#) and/or their [Early Childhood Educator certification](#).

Employees at licensed non-profit centres (including nursery schools) and licensed family/group child care homes who have paid tuition and successfully completed training that leads to professional skill development are eligible.

Also eligible are licence holders or employees of family/group child care homes who have paid tuition and successfully completed training that leads to professional skills development.

To learn more about this initiative and how to apply, visit [Training Grants](#).



MCCA Northern Conference – November 7 and 8, 2025

Registration is now open for the MCCA Northern Conference. The conference organized by the MCCA Thompson Branch will be held on November 7 and 8, 2025, in Thompson. This year's theme is "Growing Leaders, Empowering Teams". For more information and to register, visit [MCCA Northern Conference](#).

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

The Early Learning and Child Care Minister 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.

Professional Development Days and Approved Holidays for 2025/2026

As a reminder, facilities in receipt of operating grant funding may choose to close for up to two ELCC PD days on a date(s) chosen by the facility without a loss of parent fees or payment for Child Care Subsidy and the Reduced Parent Fee Revenue Grant.

Facilities are not required to stay open on another day that the facility would normally be closed (e.g. Easter Monday) as was the practice prior to 2023.

Upcoming holidays include the following:

Orange Shirt Day (National Day for Truth and Reconciliation): Tuesday, September 30, 2025

Thanksgiving Day: Monday, October 13, 2025

Remembrance Day*: Tuesday, November 11, 2025

Christmas Day: Thursday, December 25, 2025

Boxing Day: Friday, December 26, 2025

New Year's Day 2026: Thursday, January 1, 2026

[See the full list of 2025-2026 closure days here.](#)

* Although Remembrance Day is not a general holiday, there are restrictions for operating businesses and special requirements for paying employees who work that day. If your facility remains open, you must ensure compliance with Employment Standards.

EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE DIVISION UPDATE

Early Learning and Child Care Connecting with Community Across Manitoba

Staff from Early Learning and Child Care attended events at the University of Manitoba and St. Vital Park earlier this month to promote careers in early learning and child care. Marielle Japus, STEP Student, and Angel Pionela, Systems Clerk, attended the fourth Annual University of Manitoba 'Bison Bash' at University Centre on Friday, September 5 to speak with new and returning students at the fall orientation day. On Saturday, September 6, Shuang Qi, Inclusion Support Program Coordinator, and Carla Fleury-Charles, Policy and Program Analyst, attended the Multicultural Newcomer Welcome Fair event at St. Vital Park to promote child care careers with newcomers to Canada.



Marielle Japus at the University of Manitoba 'Bison Bash' on Friday, September 5, speaking with students about careers in child care.



Shuang Qi, Inclusion Support Program Coordinator, and Carla Fleury-Charles, Policy and Program Analyst, attended the Multicultural Newcomer Welcome Fair event on behalf of Early Learning and Child Care on Saturday, September 6.



Fan dancers perform at the Newcomer Welcome Fair event at St. Vital Park on Saturday, September 6.

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.

Adebola Adedeji joined the Policy and Planning Branch, Continuous Improvement and Engagement Unit as Senior Business and Technology Analyst at 114 Garry on August 11. Adebola holds a Bachelor's and post graduate degree in Business Administration from the University of Ado Ekiti and National Open University of Nigeria, as well as a diploma in Applied Business Analysis from the University of Manitoba. She has financial sector experience, specializing in business process implementation, software, and systems. She joined the Government of Manitoba in 2023 and has served in the departments of Public Service Delivery (Vital statistics) and Manitoba Justice (Justice Information Systems).

Levi Eruala joined the Funding and Financial Assistance Branch, Funding Design and Analysis Unit as a Senior Policy Analyst at 114 Garry on July 14. Levi holds a Master of Science in Public Health from McGill University and a Bachelor's degree in Microbiology with first class honours from Nnamdi Azikiwe University. He brings more than five years of experience across the public and private sectors, with a strong background in policy development, program implementation, and legislative analysis. Most recently, Levi served with Manitoba Environment and Climate Change.

Robyn Jacobs joined the Provincial Operations Branch, Diversity and Inclusion Unit as Inclusion Support Program Coordinator in Dauphin on July 14. Robyn is an ECE III, and has worked as an instructor with the University College of the North's Early Childhood Educator program. She has years of experience in the child care sector, having worked with children across various age groups and spent several years leading programming and staff.

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 with the subject line "ELCC Newsletter" and you could be featured in our next edition.

For general inquiries about the Early Learning and Child Care Division

Website: www.manitoba.ca/childcare

Email: cdinfo@gov.mb.ca

Phone: 204-945-0776

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