



April 1, 2009

Hon. Gord Mackintosh,  
Minister of Family Services and Housing,  
Room 357, Legislative Building,  
450 Broadway Ave  
Winnipeg, Manitoba  
R3C 0V8

Dear Hon. Gord Mackintosh:

The Child Care Safety Charter is an important amendment to the Community Child Care Standards Act. In the coming months, early learning and child care facilities will need to enhance their policies to be in compliance with the requirements prior to the effective date after December 2009.

The ECE training programs in Manitoba provide a basic level of instruction on safety, primarily in daily health, safety issues related to seasonal changes, walks, field trips, evaluating indoor and outdoor environments, emergency evacuation etc. The childcare workforce and volunteer Boards of Directors, primarily parents, will require much guidance, education, resource, and support in order to develop effective and appropriate policies and procedures for extreme incidents such as threats, an armed intruder, a terrorist attack, a chemical spill. Child care facilities that operate with a low percentage of ECE's or no ECEs will be especially challenged to develop policy and respond appropriately in a crisis. It is reassuring to know that a Child Care Safety Specialist will be available to resource and support child care facilities in developing enhanced and appropriate safety plans.

The recent threat at KinderWorld DayCare Inc. provides an opportunity to identify needs and ensure all people and systems are educated, informed, involved, ready, and responsive during a crisis. Therefore, The Manitoba Child Care Association recommends that:

- the Manitoba Child Care Program must develop its own crisis response plan which describes the role and responsibility of each program employee during a critical incident in a licensed child care facility, including to whom each must report, when, how, and what the responsibility of each is
- a designated representative of the Manitoba Child Care Program, with professional expertise in safety and crisis management, must "drop everything" and immediately contact the child care program to offer resource, assistance, and support to the Board of Directors and to employees, to communicate with media, the community, and assist with developing a communication strategy for parents whose children attend the facility

- the Manitoba Child Care Program assume leadership at a centre in crisis if a Board of Directors/Parent Advisory Committee is not available or if the number of board members is below that required by the Community Child Care Standards Act; or if the person designated by the licensee to be responsible for the daily operation of the day care centre is a Child Care Assistant
- the Manitoba Child Care Program provide financial assistance to child care programs who experience a cost for enhancing safety and security, such as procedures to control visitor access and ensure indoor and outdoor spaces are safe
- all codes of conduct and safety plans developed by licensed child care programs be reviewed and approved by a safety specialist designated by the Manitoba Child Care Program to ensure the plans are complete, and appropriate

On behalf of the licensed child care facilities, thank you for recent safety initiatives, including weather radios for facilities within broadcast range of the current *Weatheradio Canada* transmitter stations, and arranging for facilities to be notified by the Winnipeg Police Service of a dangerous situation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michele Henderson". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Michele Henderson, President

cc Martin Billikoff, Deputy Minister  
Carolyn Leoppky, Assistant Deputy Minister  
Lois Speirs, A/Director, Manitoba Child Care Program