



The Manitoba Child Care Association

Accreditation Standards, Criteria, and Indicators For Early Learning and Child Care Centres

**APPROVED BY THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE
FEASIBILITY STUDY ON VOLUNTARY ACCREDITATION OF
MANITOBA'S LICENSED CHILD CARE FACILITIES**

APRIL 2007

A project of the Manitoba Child Care Association in partnership
with the Canadian Child Care Federation



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Department of Family Services and Housing
Government of Manitoba*

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Feasibility Study on Voluntary Accreditation of Manitoba's Licensed Child Care Facilities 2005 – 2007

From 2005 – 2006, the Canadian Child Care Federation and The Manitoba Child Care Association partnered on a Feasibility Study on Voluntary Accreditation of Manitoba's Licensed Child Care Facilities, funded by the Manitoba Child Care Program, Department of Family Services and Housing, Government of Manitoba.

A 14 member Advisory Committee was identified to provide advice and insights. Representatives were invited from licensed full time child care centres, nursery schools, and family child care homes; privately owned services; urban, rural, and northern services; unionized, francophone and aboriginal services; ECE training programs, and appointee's from Healthy Child Manitoba and the Manitoba Child Care Program. Pat Wege, Executive Director of the Manitoba Child Care Association and Anne Maxwell, Canadian Child Care Federation were co-chairs of the Advisory Committee. Elin Ibrahim was the Project Coordinator.

The first phase of the feasibility study was conducted in 6 parts:

Part 1. A briefing on the Alberta Child Care Accreditation Program was provided by Sandra Beckman, Executive Director, Alberta Association for the Accreditation of Early Learning and Child Care Services.

Part 2. The environmental scan of the Manitoba child care system, to produce a description, and analysis of the readiness of the system into which accreditation might be introduced, was provided by Lynn Cooper, Winnipeg, MB

Part 3. A review of child care service standards, to produce a set of sample service standards, appropriate to the Manitoba context for review and revision by participants in the consultation phase, was conducted by Gillian Doherty, Toronto, ON

Part 4. The review of accreditation models, to produce a set of considerations in the design of an accreditation agency, appropriate to the Manitoba context, for review and revision by participants in the consultation phase was conducted by Don Ogston, Ottawa, Ontario.

Part 5. The consultations on accreditation with the child care community to inform stakeholders about accreditation purposes and processes and obtain opinions on standards, approaches, and readiness was done by Michele Grant, Louise LaFleche, and Janine Bertrand, Winnipeg, MB. In total twelve province wide focus groups were held, and three telephone seminars were offered, in both official languages.

Part 6. The Feasibility Study Report and Recommendations, including a summary of each part was prepared and recommendations on the processes to develop and implement an accreditation system in Manitoba was written by Elin Ibrahim.

The Advisory Committee recognized that accreditation of licensed child care facilities in Manitoba is a long term goal and will require many incremental steps along the way. They recommended that the first next step should be to incorporate community feedback into the service standards.

In September 2006, The Manitoba Child Care Association received approval from the Manitoba Child Care Program to revise the standards and criteria to reflect discussion at the consultations, and to compare them to Manitoba Regulations to ensure no overlap exists and they build on licensing requirements. Elin Ibrahim was the Project Manager and Michele Grant was the Project Assistant. Pat Wege chaired the second Advisory Committee. Most of the participants from the original Advisory Committee continued to advise on the project for the second phase.

This "Phase II" also gave the child care community the opportunity to provide feedback on the indicators, which were then revised, discussed and approved by the Advisory Committee. This April 2007 version of accreditation standards, criteria and indicators has been made available to the child care community as a tool to help improve the quality of services they provide, and to help families identify the ingredients of a quality care environment.

The Manitoba Child Care Association remains committed to the long term goal of a voluntary accreditation system for early learning and child care services in the Province of Manitoba. We will continue to work with our members, partners, and

stakeholder groups to build on the outcomes of this project.
Thank you to the participants on the Advisory Committees:

Ron Blatz, Discovery Children's Centre, Winnipeg
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Our appreciation is also extended to all those who participated in focus groups and telephone seminars. Their valuable feedback, wise comments, and ideas that were very useful in producing quality set of accreditation standards we can all be proud of!

Accreditation Standards for Accreditation Standards for Early Learning and Child Care Centres, April 2007

Table of Contents

Component 1:	Relationships	5 - 8
Standard 1:	Relationships between the staff and the children are warm, responsive, respectful and supportive.	5
Standard 2:	The development of positive relationships among the children is supported and encouraged.	5 - 6
Standard 3:	Relationships with families are respectful, supportive and collaborative.	6 - 7
Standard 4:	Relationships among staff are positive.	8
Standard 5:	Relationships among staff and management are positive.	8
Component 2:	Health and safety	8 - 10
Standard 6:	The physical space protects the health and safety of children and adults and enhances their well-being.	8 - 9
Standard 7:	Policies, procedures and practices protect the health and safety of children and adults.	9 - 10
Component 3:	Learning and development	11 - 14
Standard 8:	The physical space, equipment and materials support quality programming.	11
Standard 9:	The daily program is inclusive and supports diversity.	11 - 12
Standard 10:	Children are encouraged to make choices and learn through play.	12
Standard 11:	Curriculum planning and implementation is guided by observation.	12
Standard 12:	The curriculum promotes each child's physical, emotional, social, communication, cognitive, ethical and creative development.	12 - 14
Component 4:	Management	14 - 18
Standard 13:	Clear statements of program philosophy, goals and objectives and a code of conduct serve as the basis for decision-making, daily practice and program evaluation.	15
Standard 14:	Program management and administration is effective and supports the provision of high-quality child care.	15 - 16
Standard 15:	The management of human resources supports the provision of high-quality child care.	16 - 18

Component 5: Community relationships.18

Standard 16: The centre is actively involved in the broader community. 18

Component 6: Quality maintenance and enhancement.18 - 19

Standard 17: On-going monitoring of the extent to which the program is meeting clients' and community needs and periodic formal self-reviews support the maintenance and enhancement of quality. 18 - 19

Component 7: Governance in centres with a board of directors. 19 - 20

Standard 18: The composition, structure and functioning of the board of directors support its governance role and responsibilities. 19 - 20

Standard 19: The information provided to the board of directors is timely and supports its governance role and responsibilities. 20

Standard 20: Relationships between the board of directors and the Executive Director are professional, respectful and mutually supportive. 20

Documents reviewed for the development of the draft standard. 21

Component 1: Relationships.

Children's well-being and their development and learning are supported and enhanced when:

- They experience warm, positive relationships with the staff and other children in the centre;
- The relationship between their family and the centre is respectful and collaborative;
- The relationships among staff¹ are positive and supportive; and
- Staff perceive the person who supervises them as supportive and helpful.

Standard 1: Relationships between the staff and the children are warm, responsive, respectful and supportive.

1.1. Staff are warm, responsive and supportive with each child

- Staff are appropriately affectionate with all children throughout the day. For example, they:
 - Talk with, hold and carry infants frequently.
 - Hold a toddler or young preschooler on their lap or next to them with an arm around the child's shoulder.
 - Give a preschooler or school-aged child an encouraging hug or a pat on the shoulder.
- Staff respond to each child's verbal and non-verbal expressions of need promptly and sensitively. They:
 - Go to a crying baby as quickly as possible.
 - Comfort and reassure children who are upset.
 - Respond promptly and in a helpful way to children's requests for assistance.
- Staff give each child one-to-one attention at some point during the day.
- Staff actively listen to children.
- When talking with or to children, staff usually kneel, bend or sit at their level to establish eye contact.
- Staff build on children's interests and ideas. For example, they:
 - Seek children's opinions and perspectives through open-ended questions.
 - Provide additional materials or other support for children involved in an activity.
 - Develop or modify a planned activity to build on children's interests.

1.2. Staff treat each child with respect and consideration.

- Staff members do not interrupt children when they are speaking.
- Staff take the time to try to figure out what a child is trying to convey even when the child's speech is unclear or very limited.
- Staff acknowledge, validate and treat each child's expressions of feelings with respect. For example, staff provide comfort and assistance to a child expressing feelings of being rejected and do not imply that the child's perception is wrong.
- Staff prepare children for transitions or changes in routines. For example, they:
 - Remind children of what is about to happen and why.
 - Give children absorbed in an activity time to terminate the activity in their own way.
- Staff adjust routines and programming, where practical, to respond to each child's developmental level and preferences. For example, they:
 - Organize routines and transitions to allow those children who need more time, for example to dress themselves, to have that time.
 - Allow non-sleepers to have a book or alternate activity.
 - Give children choices between and within activities that considers the interests and needs of the child.
 - Only require children to participate in necessary routines.

Standard 2: The development of positive relationships among children is supported and encouraged.

2.1. Staff encourage positive interactions among children.

- Staff intentionally encourage and support children's interactions. For example, they:
 - Support an infant's interest in watching or touching another infant.
 - Provide time for child-directed play and organized activities in small groups.

¹ The term staff refers to ECE and CCA staff.

- Provide appropriate space and materials for child-directed play and organized activities in small groups.
- Guide child-directed play and organized activities in small groups.
- Set out equipment for school-agers to engage in group activities.
- Assist children to learn to respect each other's possessions and activities.
- Staff use play-based experiences and verbal guidance to help children to learn and practice strategies for getting along with others.
- Staff assist children to understand the perspective of another. For example, they:
 - Use story time, puppets, dramatic play and other activities to assist children to understand the expectations of others and to explore how others may feel in a range of situations.
 - Encourage and assist children to think about how others are feeling or what they may want, for example a child's need to play independently.
- Staff acknowledge and encourage prosocial behaviours among children. For example, they identify actions and comment positively when preschoolers share.
- Staff are sensitive to and provide extra encouragement and support to children who are new to the centre or socially reserved or withdrawn. For example, they remain close to a child who appears uncertain.

2.2. Staff anticipate and respond to conflict among the children.

- Staff establish clear, consistent expectations for children's behaviour with each other that are geared to the children's developmental level and explained in language children can understand.
- Staff have realistic expectations for peer interaction. For example, they provide duplicates of a favourite toy so that toddlers don't have to share too often.
- Staff assist and support preschoolers and older children to resolve conflicts with each other by talking through their feelings, explaining what they would like, engaging in negotiation and finding their own solutions.
- Staff intervene quickly and calmly when a child is or is about to become verbally or physically aggressive or if a child is being rejected.

Standard 3: Relationships with families² are respectful, supportive and collaborative.

3.1. The centre respects the family's primary responsibility for the child and its right to transmit its values, beliefs and culture.

- The intake process welcomes information from parents about their needs, religious and/or cultural requirements and preferences, the child's daily routine and preferences, and their current expectations for their child. This information is noted in the child's file, shared with staff that will be working with the child, and used to inform routines and programming.
- At the time of intake, parents are informed about any pets in the centre; they are also informed before any new pets are brought into the centre.
- Before the child begins care, parents are provided with the following pieces of information, both verbally and in writing:
 - The centre's philosophy, goals and objectives.
 - The centre's policies on enrollment, withdrawal, arrivals and departures, including the release of children to a parent or parent-designated other; financial arrangements; children's personal belongings; statutory holidays and vacations; illness; behaviour guidance; child supervision; administration of medication and medical procedures; transportation; field trips and reporting of suspected child neglect or abuse; confidentiality; and research and photography.
 - Information about how families can contact the centre's board of directors, where one exists.
 - Information about the centre's process for responding to expressions of concern or complaints by families.
- The centre provides support for parents with communication barriers whenever such support is needed. For example, it:
 - Provides written information that uses clear, simple language.
 - Provides written information verbally or in languages other than that used at the centre in communities with substantial immigrant populations.
 - During meetings it ensures that there is someone who can translate in the family's home language or sign for parents who are hard of hearing.
- Routines and programs are modified, to the extent possible or appropriate, to reflect family practices and wishes.
 - Parents and staff jointly determine the approach to be used in assisting children to develop self-regulation skills such as toileting.

² The term family refers to: (a) the biological parent who has custody of or legal access to the child; (b) the child's legal guardian; (c) the person who is married to, or lives in a conjugal relationship with the child's biological parent who is legally responsible for the child; and (d) close relatives, such as grandparents, who may have responsibility for the child's care in the parent's absence, for example, while the parent works.

- Alternatives are provided for children who cannot eat certain foods for religious, cultural or lifestyle reasons, for example, their family is vegetarian.
- The centre and staff encourage families to visit the child care setting any time during its regular hours of operation and to participate in the program whenever possible.
- The centre has an answering machine that is always on when staff are not able to take calls themselves. Staff check for messages frequently or have an alternate arrangement for emergencies.
- Staff respond positively and promptly to parental requests for a meeting.
- The most recent licensing, public health and fire inspection reports are posted where parents can easily see them and copies are available to families on request.

3.2. Staff actively and continuously engage parents in information-sharing and decision-making about their children.

- Arrival and departure time are used as opportunities to share basic information about the child's day-to-day experiences and any significant events that occurred at home or at the centre.
- An experienced ECE is available to interact with children's families at both drop-off and pick-up.
- A variety of approaches are used to maintain regular communication with families. For example, journals that staff and parents exchange on a daily or weekly basis; weekly summary notes sent home with parents; notices on a parent bulletin board; telephone conversations; scheduled meetings; emergent curriculum documentation.
- Parents are provided opportunities to be involved on a regular basis in goal-setting and planning for their children. For example
 - Parents of infant and preschool children discuss with the staff the children's progress on at least a quarterly basis through a meeting or by a written report sent home and supplemented with a telephone discussion.
 - At least once a year there is a formal meeting between the staff and parents to review the child's progress and set goals for the coming year.
 - Decisions made jointly by parents and staff regarding goals or specific routines are recorded in the child's file and there is evidence that staff implement these decisions.
- Major changes that affect children are discussed with their parents in advance of their happening. For example, parents are informed about a change in the child's primary caregiver as soon as the centre knows this will be happening.
- When there is the possibility of a developmental delay, behavioral challenge or other additional support need the director or a senior staff member meets with the family, explains the concern and the observations and documentation supporting it, and discusses options.

3.3. All families are informed in advance about significant proposed changes to centre policies or practices that may impact on them and enabled to express their opinion.

- All parents, not just those on the board of directors or a parent advisory committee, are provided with information about significant proposed changes or decisions that may impact on them, such as a pending fee increase or change in centre hours, through using a variety of communication processes such as:
 - An information sheet posted on the parent bulletin board along with comment sheets for parents who wish to use them and a closed box to insert them in.
 - A newsletter sent to all parents.
 - A parents' meeting.

3.4. The centre supports the family in its child-rearing role.

- The centre provides parents with information about child development and child-rearing issues on a regular basis. For example, through user-friendly, plain-language information sheets and/or articles on a parent bulletin board; by organizing presentations by centre staff or a community resource such as a public health nurse.
- The centre maintains accurate, up-to-date information about child and family services in the community, including social assistance, and how to access each service. Staff share this information with families and, if indicated, assist families in contacting a service.
- The centre provides parents with information about Federal and Provincial programs that are available, and child care subsidies.
- The centre provides opportunities for families to get to know each other. For example, staff introduce parents who live close to each other and have children of a similar age; the centre hosts a pot-luck supper for families.
- Parents state that they feel comfortable about approaching a staff member with a parenting question or concern.

Note to reader: The accreditation process involves interviews with a sample of parents.

Standard 4: Relationships among staff are positive.

4.1. Staff interactions with each other are respectful.

- The conversational tone among staff is pleasant and friendly. For example, staff are courteous with each other; use a friendly voice.
- Staff members listen attentively to each other. They use effective communication skills such as listening without interruption.
- Staff discuss issues arising from diverse perspectives and experiences or differences in opinion in an open, frank and respectful manner.
- Staff discuss issues with one another in private when needed or appropriate.

4.2. Staff support each other.

- Staff members assist and support one another. For example, staff:
 - Work cooperatively as a team and share responsibility.
 - Share knowledge and resources.
 - Assist each other in difficult situations such as a child who is exhibiting challenging behaviour.
 - Show consideration for another staff's additional support needs.
- Staff state that they trust and feel supported by their colleagues.

Note to reader: The accreditation process involves interviews with a sample of staff.

Standard 5: Relationships among staff and management are positive

5.1. Interactions between Supervisor(s)³ and staff are supportive and respectful.

- Supervisors make themselves available to staff requesting information or assistance.
- Supervisors provide helpful feedback and suggestions.
- Supervisors encourage staff to make decisions related to the group of children with whom they work and to try new ideas.
- Staff state that the person supervising them is supportive and that they would feel comfortable approaching this person with a question or concern or for guidance.
- When having to correct or instruct a staff member, the supervisor does so tactfully, for example not in front of other staff if this can be avoided, and in a respectful manner.
- Management explains their reasoning/logic to staff regarding decisions that have been made.
- Staff input is considered by management when making decisions.
- Staff respect decisions made by management.

Note to reader: The accreditation process involves interviews with a sample of staff. Assessing compliance with standard 5 would rely heavily on these interviews.

Component 2: Health and safety.

Children's well-being and their development and learning are supported and enhanced when they are protected from harm and feel safe in the environment. The ability of staff to provide a nurturing and stimulating program is enhanced by a situation that supports their physical well-being as well as that of the children.

Standard 6: The physical space protects the health and safety of the children and adults and enhances their well-being.

6.1. The outdoor space used for programming is a safe environment for children and adults.

- The outdoor space has trees or some other source of shade.

³ The term 'supervisor' is being used in a generic sense to apply to the person responsible for supervising staff. Depending on the size of the centre, this person may or may not be the centre director.

- All new outdoor play structures comply with CSA international standards for playground equipment.
- All climbers, swings and slides over 36 inches in height have cushioning materials under them.
- There are no openings in fences, railings or similar structures that are more than 15 centimetres wide.
- Resilient surfacing extends 1.83 metres beyond the limit of each outdoor play structure.
- Sandboxes are constructed to allow for drainage and are regularly maintained and sanitized.
- Centre has an emergency plan regarding adverse weather conditions (e.g. lightning, tornadoes).
- Centre has an outdoor emergency evacuation plan to meet local and community needs (e.g. "bear drills").
- There are no toxic plants in the outdoor area used by the program.

6.2. *The indoor space protects the children and adults from environmental contaminants.*

- The centre has been assessed for lead, radon, asbestos and insulation products that have been deemed hazardous such as urea-formaldehyde and remedial or containment action has been taken to protect children and adults if warranted by the assessment.
- There are no indications of mould in the centre.
- There are no toxic plants in the centre.

6.3. *The indoor and outdoor environment enables/allows staff to be aware of each child and provide supervision that is appropriate for the child's developmental level.*

- Toilets and wash basins used by children are child-sized; if not, safe accessibility is ensured by equipment such as non-skid, easily cleaned step stools.

6.4. *The space used for child care is welcoming.*

- There is a place near the entry area where parents and other visitors may leave coats and other similar items.
- Parent resources are available, such as parenting/child care related reading material, notices of upcoming meetings and workshops.
- Children's work is displayed in the entry area and halls.
- Posters, displays, toys and materials used in the program reflect the cultural and religious diversity of Canadian society and show people of different ages and abilities engaged independently in everyday activities.

6.5. *The space used for child care is accessible.*

- If there are stairs at the entry into the centre and/or the exit to the outdoor play area, there is also a ramp that meets current building codes, and an entrance that is easily accessible.
- Hallways, room entrances, play areas and spaces between pieces of outdoor equipment are sufficiently wide to provide easy access for people with additional support needs.

Standard 7: Policies, procedures and practices protect the health and safety of the children and adults.

7.1. *Policies and procedures ensure a safe and healthy environment.*

- Reasonable accommodations are made to ensure children with additional support needs such as exceptional health needs are able to fully participate (e.g. allergens kept to a minimum).
- A visual inspection of the areas used for child care and their related materials and equipment is done at the beginning of each day, documented on a checklist, and potential hazards addressed immediately.
- Child care facilities have a crisis response program i.e. they have developed a plan based on MCCA's Crisis Response Manual.
- Policies and procedures protect children and adults from environmental contaminants. For example:
 - The humidity level in the centre is maintained below 55% at all times.
 - Children are kept away from indoor areas where pesticides have been applied recently or kept indoors if pesticides are being or have been recently sprayed in the area around the centre for as long as recommended by the local health authority.
 - Rooms that have been recently painted, carpeted or tiled are ventilated for at least 24 hours before use by children.

7.2. *Staff are trained/equipped to protect the health and safety of children.*

- Staff are required to update their CPR training annually.
- Staff are trained to use a fire extinguisher.
- 30% of all staff have a current Food Handlers certification
- Staff are trained to use health protection equipment such as epi pens.

7.3. *Policies and procedures ensure the safe arrival and departure of school-age children.*

- There is a procedure to follow-up on school-aged children who do not arrive at the centre at the expected time.
- Written agreements between the parent and the centre and a consistent sign-out procedure for children are used to ensure the safety of older school-age children whose parents have agreed to allow them to leave the centre on their own.

7.4. *Policies and procedures ensure vehicle safety.*

- If the centre rents a vehicle to transport children, it obtains written evidence to confirm that the vehicle is equipped and built according to *The Highway Traffic Act* and regulations and insured to transport the children under the centre's care.
- There is a procedure to ensure and confirm that vehicle maintenance is performed according to the manufacturer's recommended schedule.
- There is a procedure for daily inspection of each vehicle to identify and correct any unsafe situations before it is used.

7.5. *Policies and procedures ensure children's safety while using bicycles and skateboards.*

- Children are required to wear a helmet while riding tricycles, bicycles and using skateboards, in-line skates or similar equipment.
- Children are required to use protective gear (e.g. wrist pads) when using skateboards or in-line skates.
- Staff ensure that helmets and protective gear fit properly and are sized appropriately for each child.
- School-age children review bicycle safety prior to using bicycles away from the centre (e.g. field trip, back and forth to school).

7.6. *Policies and procedures protect children against sun injury and insect-borne diseases.*

- Policies limit excessive sun exposure.
 - Time spent outdoors is limited between 11 am and 4 pm during the summer.
 - Children are required to wear hats or caps with brims and sun glasses when outside in the sun.
 - With written parent permission, staff use sunscreen with children which has a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15.
- Policies protect children against mosquito bites.
 - The use of insect repellents containing DEET is prohibited on infants less than six months of age.
 - With written parent permission, the use of insect repellent containing 10 percent or less of DEET is permitted with children age six months to two years once a day, and with children age two to 12 years up to three times a day, in all cases avoiding the child's face and hands. Staff must be aware of applications made by parents to ensure these daily limits are maintained.
 - Staff are required to ensure that sunscreen is applied at least 20 minutes before insect repellent to prevent over-absorption of DEET.
 - Bug jackets are used if warranted by local conditions.

7.7. *Procedures and practices protect children during field trips. Centre policies require that:*

- Additional adults (above ratio) and a minimum of two staff, including a trained ECE, go on every field trip.
- Children wear tee-shirts, hats, another article of clothing or tags with the name of the centre clearly visible. Each adult be assigned to and accountable for specific children.
- The lead staff person has a cell phone and a list of emergency numbers.
- Safety rules are reviewed with the children and adults before each trip.
- Staff know and inform children and other adults about the rules and regulations of the site being visited.
- A count of children is conducted before leaving the centre, at arrival at the site being visited, several times while at the site, before transportation leaves the site and on return to the centre.

Component 3: Learning and development.

Children's well-being and their development and learning are supported and enhanced when they feel they are valued in a program that is fully inclusive, staff are actively engaged in children's activities and the indoor and outdoor space and materials support a variety of stimulating activities.

Standard 8: The physical space, equipment and materials support quality programming.

8.1. The amount, arrangement and type of indoor space support a variety of activities.

- The indoor space is arranged so that it can accommodate quiet and active activities, individual and small group activities, and different activities going on at the same time without interfering with each other.
- There is suitable space for different types of activities; for example, a space for messy play located where it is easy to clean up; space away from traffic for quiet activities.
- There are semi-private areas where children can engage in activities alone or with another child.
- There is provision to display a variety of children's individual artwork or projects at eye level.
- Infant rooms include an open area for crawling, walking and playing.
- Adjustable window coverings reduce light for nap time.

8.2. The amount, arrangement and type of outdoor space support a variety of activities.

- Access to and the space itself is fully accessible for children with mobility challenges.
- A variety of ground surfaces encourages different types of activities; for example, there is grass for running and group activities; hard surfaces for riding toys and tricycles; sand.
- The space has interesting features such as small hills, structures to go under, over and through.
- Separate outdoor areas are provided for infants and toddlers with age-appropriate equipment.

8.3. Materials and equipment support quality programming. They:

- Encourage interaction.
- Promote exploration and experimentation.
- Provide children with opportunities to express themselves creatively.
- Reflect the lives and cultures of the community being served as well as the specific children in the centre.
- Engage children with additional support needs.
- Use natural materials, such as wood, to the extent possible, rather than materials such as plastic.

Standard 9: The daily program is inclusive and supports diversity.

9.1. Staff demonstrate respect for each child's culture and religion. They:

- Treat religious requirements with respect.
- Use information about family cultural traditions when developing activities.
- Accommodate cultural preferences to the extent possible.
- Promote and support children's use of their home language in the centre.
- Regularly use greetings and songs in the languages of children whose home language is other than that used in the centre.

9.2. Staff establish an environment where children of all races, cultures, religions, family backgrounds and ability levels are equally valued. They:

- Talk positively about each child's physical characteristics, culture and religion.
- Celebrate diversity. They:
 - Display and use materials such as books, posters and toys that show men and women, and people of different cultures, ages and abilities engaged in everyday activities.
 - Incorporate things into the daily program that reflect individual children's backgrounds, for example, foods, games, books, stories, music, dances or pretend props.
 - Incorporate materials about additional support needs into group activities such as circle and story book time whether or not there is a child with special needs in the classroom.
- Challenge stereotypes.
- Intervene promptly when a child is being teased or rejected.

9.3. *Children with additional support needs are provided with a fully inclusive program.*

- Modifications are made to the environment and staffing patterns and adaptive equipment is provided as required to enable a child with additional support needs to participate in the program activities with the other children throughout the whole day.
- The child with additional support needs interacts freely with all staff throughout the day as meaningful and comfortable for the child.
- Staff facilitate the child's interactions with the other children.
- When an individual program plan (IPP) has been developed, the goals for children are embedded in daily program and routines.

Standard 10: Children are encouraged to make choices and learn through play.

10.1. *Daily schedules provide ample time for children to engage in sustained uninterrupted play and in activities of their own choosing.*

10.2. *Children have ready access to a wide range of open-ended resources and equipment for self-directed activities. These materials are presented/arranged in an organized way to promote and facilitate children's access.*

10.3. *Staff provide a variety of open-ended experiences where children have choice.*

10.4 *Staff show enthusiasm for and build on children's play and child-directed activities. For example, they:*

- Join in, if appropriate, by taking on a variety of roles while being careful not to dominate the activity.
- Extend children's play by offering additional materials or equipment.

Standard 11: Curriculum⁴ planning and implementation is guided by observation.

11.1. *Staff use a variety of ways to document each child's interactions, interests and progress. They use various combinations of the following to refer to a child's portfolio:*

- Written observation notes.
- Samples of the child's work.
- Information from the child's family and from the child, for example, about special interests.
- Photographs.
- Developmental checklists.

11.2 *Each child's portfolio is used to profile the child's interests and the child's learning and development over time.*

- Staff regularly add material to the portfolios in order to present a true picture of the child's development.

11.3. *Review of each child's portfolio forms the basis for developmental goal-setting for the child and curriculum planning and implementation for the group.*

Standard 12: The curriculum promotes each child's physical, emotional, social, communication, cognitive, ethical and creative development.

12.1. *Each child's physical well-being and development is supported and promoted.*

- Staff assist children to use health practices, such as hand washing, and explain their importance in a way that children can understand.
- Staff explain safety practices to children in a way that they can understand and assist children to use good safety practices and to develop overall safety awareness.
- Children are provided with many opportunities and a variety of materials to practice their coordination, perceptual-motor and manipulation skills. For example, staff:

⁴ The term 'curriculum' refers to an intentional plan for providing experiences and activities that promote development and learning, including opportunities for child-directed activities and free play.

- Engage infants with toys and materials suitable for reaching, grasping and manipulating.
- Older children have access to paints, play dough, blocks, puzzles, manipulation toys, riding toys.
- Children engage in daily outdoor activity, weather permitting.
- Developmentally-appropriate equipment is available for children to engage in large-motor activities, for example, there are climbing frames, low balance beams, balls and sports equipment.
- Staff appear to be aware of the varying levels of physical competence and confidence in the children and able to determine when to offer challenge or assistance and when not to.

12.2. Each child's emotional well-being and development is supported and promoted.

- Staff are sensitive to children's emotions. For example, they recognize fear or frustration and provide support before the child becomes distressed; recognize when a child's challenging behaviour reflects being over-tired or hungry and address the underlying situation.
- Children are assisted to recognize and name their own and other's feelings. For example, staff provide words for very young children; use puppets to give names to feelings; assist older children to talk about what they are feeling or wanting and why.
- Children are given opportunities to express their feelings and convey their wishes.
- Children's feelings are accepted and wishes are accommodated when appropriate.
- Children's developmentally-appropriate attempts to be independent are encouraged and supported. For example, staff:
 - Facilitate self-help, for example, by giving toddlers finger food or older children appropriately-sized utensils so that they can serve themselves.
 - Give children the time to do things for themselves.
 - React calmly to spills and other mistakes and use them as opportunities for coaching and guiding.
 - Assist when necessary to avoid frustration.
- Staff ensure that each child has opportunities to experience a sense of competence and mastery. For example, they set up activities where children can succeed; they help children recognize their successes through acknowledgement, praise and encouragement.

12.3. Each child's development of social and self-regulatory skills is supported and promoted.

- Staff model appropriate language and social behaviour.
- Staff establish simple classroom rules and explain them clearly and in a positive way.
- Rules, limits and consequences are geared to the children's developmental level and explained to each child in a way they can understand.
- Older children participate in establishing classroom rules and behaviour limits.
- Children's desirable social behaviour is acknowledged warmly and promptly, particularly when exhibited spontaneously.
- Activities that involve taking turns and sharing are regularly provided for toddlers and preschoolers.
- Activities that require collaboration are regularly provided for preschoolers and older children.
- Children are coached in social problem-solving and conflict resolution skills.
- Children are assisted to respect the possessions and work of others.
- When a child does something that is not allowed, staff explain the rule and the reason for it and focus on the behaviour as inappropriate rather than scolding or labeling the child.
- Interventions used when a child's behaviour is inappropriate take into account and are appropriate for the child's developmental level.

12.4. Each child's communication and emerging literacy is supported and promoted.

- Staff communicate with each child in a style and manner, and at a pace and level, that is appropriate to the child's abilities and needs. For example, they use pictures, body language and physical cues with children who have a limited command of the language used in the program.
- Staff respond promptly and appropriately to children's efforts to communicate. For example, they respond to an infant's vocalizations, extend a toddler's two-word sentence, answer children's questions.
- Staff provide various opportunities for children to develop their verbal and non-verbal communication skills. For example, staff ask children open-ended questions; provide opportunities for children to present their ideas and feelings through non-verbal means such as painting and dance.
- Each child has daily opportunities to be read books on a one-to-one basis or in a small group of children or to read books themselves.
- When reading with or to children, staff engage the children in conversations that assist them to understand and think about the story and to retell or re-enact events in stories.

- Staff provide a print-rich environment (e.g. labels on shelves; menus in dramatic play area; books in science area).
- Staff build on children’s emerging interest in print and writing in the context of meaningful activities. Depending on their developmental level, children are encouraged to scribble; to combine pictures and print to illustrate a field trip; to develop a shopping list as part of dramatic play; to ‘write’ a story by dictating to a staff member; to keep a journal.

12.5. Each child’s curiosity, logical enquiry, problem-solving ability and mathematical thinking is supported and promoted.

- Staff are actively engaged with children in exploring, questioning, making inferences and developing an understanding of things in the centre and the surrounding community. For example, staff join children in activity centres and engage them in conversations to extend and deepen the children’s learning; staff use field trips in an intentional fashion to engage children in exploring, questioning and discussing.
- Staff assist and encourage children to problem-solve by modeling strategies, making suggestions, breaking down the components of a task into meaningful and achievable bits, asking leading questions that stimulate children’s thinking.
- Children are encouraged and supported to explore, to experiment, to predict what might happen. For example, staff guide the children in their exploration and explicitly teach specific skills if required.
- Children are engaged in number games, categorization, measuring and assisted to understand the relationship between the characteristics of objects and symbols.
- Staff provide opportunities for preschoolers and older children to collect data, for example changes in the weather, and to represent and document their findings in various ways such as drawing and graphing.
- Staff provide opportunities for preschoolers and school age children to have access to technology such as videotapes, films and computers. The use of such technology is limited and planned so that it extends learning.
- Staff monitor children’s use of computers to ensure it is limited and that the material is culturally sensitive and does not expose children to violent or sexually explicit material.
- Children have access to the internet to expand their understanding of the world. If there is internet access, it is fully supervised.

12.6. Each child’s ethical development is supported and promoted.

- Staff use a variety of techniques, such as story time, play with puppets and dramatic play, to assist children to understand the rights of others and how their actions may affect others.
- Staff assist children to understand and respect diversity in culture, race, gender, ability and family configurations. For example, staff respond factually to children’s questions about differences among people and also point out similarities among them.
- Children are provided with opportunities to assist others and to assume some responsibility for the environment, for example, to assist in cleaning up.
- Staff engage children in developmentally-appropriate activities and discussions that assist them to think about and reflect on ethical issues such as fairness, responsibility, authority and diversity.

12.7. Each child’s creative development is supported and promoted.

- Daily opportunities are provided for children to use their imagination and creativity. For example:
 - Many open-ended materials are easily accessible such as play dough, art and craft materials, and dress-up and pretend-play props.
 - Music is presented in a variety of ways including singing, playing simple instruments, clapping games, playing recorded music.
- Art experiences are open-ended and child-directed.
- Staff encourage and support children’s efforts to try new activities, to develop their own ideas and to use materials, toys and equipment in their own ways.
- Staff show genuine interest in and appreciation of children’s creative expression. For example, they focus on the process and children’s descriptions of what they are doing and do not show a preference for things that are realistic or pretty.
- Children’s work, for example, drawings or child-made books are displayed at children’s eye level.

Component 4: Management.

High-quality child care requires a program philosophy to guide practice, knowledgeable leadership, competent financial and human resource administration and comprehensive policies and procedures that are responsive to the needs of the children and their families.

Standard 13: Clear statements of program philosophy, goals and objectives and a code of conduct serve as the basis for decision-making, daily practice and program evaluation.

13.1. The program has a written statement of program philosophy. The statement:

- Reflects a commitment to the provision of a culturally-sensitive, family-centered program that meets the needs of the community and is inclusive of all children.
- Is written using clear simple language.
- Is discussed with and given to parents before the child is enrolled.
- Is discussed with, given to and read by all potential ECEs and CCAs before they are hired and with all ECE students before they begin their practicum.
- Is readily available at all times to families and people working in the program.
- Is reviewed on an annual basis in a process that includes the board of directors, where one exists, and incorporates input from the families being served and the child care staff.

13.2. The program has written goals and objectives. The goals and objectives:

- Are clearly related to the program philosophy.
- Include statements related to the types of services to be provided and desired outcomes for children and their families.
- Are discussed with and given to parents before the child is enrolled.
- Are discussed with, given to and read by all potential ECEs and CCAs before they are hired and with all ECE students before they begin their practicum.
- Are in a format that is readily accessible at all times to families and people working in the program.
- Are reviewed on an annual basis in a process that includes the board of directors, where one exists, reflects the findings of the program's periodic self-review and incorporates input from the families being served and child care staff.

13.3. The program operates under a written code of conduct. The code:

- Is consistent with the Manitoba Child Care Association Code of Ethics.
- Is discussed with, given to and read by all potential ECEs and CCAs before they are hired and with all ECE students before they begin their practicum.
- Staff actively engage in ethics workshops and discussions of ethics and professionalism
- Is reviewed with Board of Directors, where one exists.

Standard 14: Program management and administration is effective and supports the provision of high quality child care.

14.1. The program has a strategic plan developed by the board of directors or owner, depending on the governance structure, that is monitored on an on-going basis by the centre's management and board of directors, if one exists, and reviewed annually. The plan outlines the process the centre will take to:

- Implement its philosophy, goals and objectives.
- Meet the needs of the children and their families.
- Sustain the financial viability of the program.

14.2. When there is a management team, rather than a single person responsible for centre administration, policies and procedures exist that ensure effective operation of the centre.

- Centre organizational lines of authority and areas of responsibility are clearly documented through an organizational chart or other means.
- Management meetings are held on a regular schedule and written minutes taken.
- Minutes indicate decisions made and the individual with primary responsibility for implementing each decision.

14.3. The day-to-day operation of the program is guided by written policies, each of which is supported by procedural guidelines.

- All policies and procedural guidelines have been collected into a centre operations manual which is readily available at all times to child care staff and others working in the centre and to parents.
- All staff responsible for a group of children are familiar with the program policies and procedural guidelines.

- Staff are informed about all changes, and families about changes that impact on them or their children, before the changes take effect.
- The manual is up-dated immediately a change takes effect.

14.4. *A systematic process is in place for the periodic review of program policies and procedural guidelines and their amendment as indicated.*

14.5 *Records required for the effective and responsive delivery of the program are accurate, complete and current.*

14.6. *There is a reliable system of record storage, retrieval and disposal that protects the confidentiality of information on children, families, centre staff, students and volunteers working at the centre.*

- The centre has policies and procedural guidelines pertaining to the collection of information from or about children, families, staff, volunteers and students. These include the requirement that the family, staff member, volunteer or student be provided with an explanation of the purpose of seeking the information; restrict the content and amount of information collected; provide for the parent with custody, staff, volunteers and student to access the records kept on them and provides for the correction of inaccurate or misleading information.
- The centre has processes for preventing unauthorized access to records.
- Each staff member who is responsible for a group of children has been trained in the centre's procedures for recording and updating child information.
- The centre's method of disposing of old records protects confidentiality, for example, by the use of shredding.

14.7. *The centre's financial administration is effective, consistent with accepted accounting principles and transparent.*

- Up-to-date records are kept of revenues and expenditures.
- Financial control policies and procedures are in place to monitor revenues and expenditures on an on-going basis and to take corrective action if necessary.
- Members of the management team, and of the board of directors where one exists, receive the financial information necessary for their job. This includes:
 - An orientation to the centre's accounting systems when they first become a member.
 - Monthly statements thereafter that clearly indicate and explain variations in actual versus budgeted expenditures.
- The centre is implementing a work plan to address any deficits or debts that may exist.
- There is an annual independent external financial audit.

14.8 *A system exists and is used to maintain current information about government policies, programs and procedures that may impact on the centre or the families using it.*

- MCCP announcements/notices are placed on staff and/or parent bulletin boards, depending on topic.
- A binder of current news (i.e. newsletters, announcements, articles) is available to both families and staff in each site.

Standard 15: The management of human resources supports the provision of high quality child care.

15.1. *Human resource policies, procedures and practices set the stage for quality programming.*

- There is a written statement of the required skills, knowledge and qualifications for each staff position in the centre, including support staff.
- There is a written job description that defines the roles, duties, responsibilities and reporting relationships of each staff position.
- Each person's job description is reviewed with them at the time of hiring and annually thereafter.
- Each staff member has a written contract that outlines the role and responsibilities of the job and the relevant working conditions such as hours and salary level.
- The wage and benefit package provided to staff contributes to the successful recruitment and retention of trained staff.
- The centre has developed and uses strategies to recruit staff and volunteers who reflect the cultural, racial and religious diversity of the community.
- Each new ECE and CCA is given a pre-service orientation. This orientation includes a review of the centre's philosophy and code of conduct, an orientation to the lines of authority in the program, and a review of the key policies and procedures that person must know before beginning to work with children.
- A mentoring program or buddy system is in place to assist new staff in their ongoing development.

- Copies of the centre's statement of program philosophy, code of conduct, operational manual, parent manual, personnel manual and the Best Practices Licensing Manual for Early Learning and Child Care Centres are easily accessible to all staff at all times.
- Each staff member has an annual performance evaluation based on the employee's job description and previously established professional development goals where they exist. The process includes each of the following:
 - A discussion with the individual about his/her areas of strength and areas that require attention.
 - An opportunity for the individual to challenge what is in the evaluation.
 - The establishment, with the individual, of professional development goals for the coming year.
 - The provision to the individual of a copy of his/her performance evaluation.
- CCAs, volunteers, substitutes and students only work with children under the direct supervision of an ECE who is familiar with the children.
- Regular volunteers are evaluated annually and the results of the evaluation are documented in writing and a copy given to the individual.
- A process exists to address the issue, should it arise, of unsafe or un-desirable practice by non-employees who are working directly with centre children while they are under the care of the centre, e.g. ECE students on a practicum, volunteers or employees from another organization.

15.2. Staffing practices support continuity of care for children.

- A primary staff member is assigned to each child.
- Staff are assigned to the same group of children each day unless there is a situation where this is not possible, for example, staff illness.
- Substitute staff are assigned to the same group as much as is practical.
- There is a process for orienting substitute staff to the schedules and individual differences of the children they will be working with, and to the centre's emergency procedures and its behaviour guidance policy.

15.3. The physical space and the policies and practices support work satisfaction and staff retention.

- The work environment pays attention to the needs of the staff. There is:
 - A secure place for the personal belongings of each staff member, volunteer and student.
 - An adult-sized bathroom.
 - Space where staff can take a break or work away from children or meet with an individual family.
- Centre practices give staff a message of being valued.
 - The centre promotes occupational health and safety, for example, through policies that protect staff from environmental hazards, through keeping staff informed of current best practices.
 - Staff review Workplace Health and Safety policies on a regular basis.
 - Staff have the opportunity to participate in the centre's Health and Safety committee.
 - Staff who work more than 5 hours a day have at least a 1/2 hour break away from children.
 - Staff working directly with children are provided with paid preparation time each week.
 - Staff are provided with formal opportunities to have input into the development or amendment of policies and procedures that affect their daily work and into the centre's periodic self-evaluation process.
 - Staff are informed in a timely fashion about changes to the program, policies and procedures, or government policies and procedures that might directly affect them.
 - Staff have access to an objective and fair grievance procedure and conflict resolution process if they have a concern related to any other staff person or to the program in general.
 - There are regular staff meetings, at least quarterly, that provide an opportunity for staff to discuss program-wide issues such as changes in the profile of the families being served.
- The centre has a personnel manual that includes job descriptions, and information about salary scales, the performance evaluation process, the benefits available, the grievance procedure, the procedure that will be followed if a staff member is accused of child neglect or abuse, and resignation and termination processes. The manual is easily accessible by staff at all times and is consistent with a Collective Agreement where present.

15.4. Professional development is valued and supported.

- The centre has an annual plan that addresses program-wide professional development. The plan:
 - Is based on needs identified through staff performance evaluations and information from the centre's periodic self-review of its program.
 - Is based on the specific and unique needs of the centre i.e.: rural/northern opportunities.

- Includes a range of professional development strategies such as mentoring, visits to other centres, in-service workshops and presentations by staff during staff meetings.
- The centre allocates a minimum of 1% of gross annual salary (as outlined by MCCA Wages and Benefit Scale) for professional development opportunities for staff.
- Each staff member has a set of professional development goals for the coming year developed as part of the performance evaluation process and an individual plan to attain them.
- Each full time staff member working directly with children completes at least 24 hours of professional development each year. Hours of professional development are prorated based on hours of work for part time staff.
- Membership in the Manitoba Child Care Association is a requirement for all staff members who work directly with children.
- The centre encourages and supports staff to keep current about changing knowledge and concepts of best practice through one or more of:
 - A collection of recent child care journals or books available for use by staff, volunteers and students.
 - Providing in-service training.
 - Providing information about up-coming off-site professional development opportunities.
 - Providing assistance to attend off-site professional development, for example, paid release time, payment of all or part of the fees.

Component 5: Community relationships.

The ability of the centre to be responsive to the needs of the children and families it serves is enhanced when it has collaborative relationships with other child and family services in the community.

Standard 16: The centre is actively involved with the broader community.

16.1. Staff are active participants in the centre's community.

- Staff make appropriate use of community resources to provide stimulating experiences for or to meet the needs of the children.
- Staff actively participate in community groups concerned with meeting the needs of children and their families and in ad hoc task forces or working groups to address child and family needs.

16.2. The centre keeps others in the community informed about the services it offers.

- Centre staff update "Child Care Online" as necessary.
- Centre staff inform neighborhood schools of changes to any programs available to school age children.
- The centre responds promptly to requests for information about it and to expressions of concern by members of the community.
- As appropriate, the centre informs other services of professional development activities it is undertaking that their staff might wish to attend, for example, a workshop on stimulating children's creativity.

Component 6: Quality Maintenance and enhancement.

Because our understanding of best practices is constantly evolving as new knowledge emerges, and the needs of the community shift as a result of demographic and socio-economic changes, a centre can only maintain and enhance its quality through on-going monitoring of its services and making adjustments as indicated.

Standard 17: On-going monitoring of the extent to which the service is meeting clients' and community needs and periodic formal self-reviews support the maintenance and enhancement of quality.

17.1. The centre actively seeks the views of families and older school-age children being served on the extent to which it is meeting their needs.

- The centre seeks the views of parents and older school-age children through mechanisms such as:
 - Annual parent satisfaction questionnaires.
 - Informal discussion with parents.

- Group discussions with older school-age children.
- Exit interviews when parents/older children leave the service.

17.2. *The centre undertakes an annual formal self review of its program that includes considering:*

- The centre's progress towards meeting its goals and objectives.
- The appropriateness of its goals, objectives, policies and procedures in light of the current clientele, the profile of young families in the community and feedback from other community agencies.
- Overall program quality, for example, as indicated by a standard tool such as the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale, Revised or the relevant companion scale for infants/toddlers and for school-age children.
- Input from staff working directly with children, other regularly participating adults such as volunteers, the board of directors or parent advisory committee, depending on which exists, and other child and family services in the community.

17.3. *The key findings of the formal self-review are used to improve quality of care provided.*

- The centre shares information about the review's key findings through mechanisms such as:
 - A newsletter sent out to all families and staff.
 - A summary of findings posted on the parent bulletin board.
 - A presentation by the Executive Director to the board of directors or parent advisory committee.
- Findings are used to develop a written quality enhancement plan, including a process to monitor progress.

Component 7: Governance in centres with a board of directors.

To be effective in its role and promote high-quality programming, the board of directors must include the range of skills required to operate the centre, have appropriate governance structures, understand its roles and responsibilities and have timely access to the information necessary for its optimal functioning.

Standard 18: The composition, structure and functioning of the board of directors support its governance role and responsibilities.

18.1. *The composition of the board of directors reflects the range of skills required to oversee the effective operation of the centre.*

This may include individuals with skills in areas such as:

- Personnel
- Finance
- Law
- Early Childhood Education
- Fundraising

18.2. *The roles, responsibilities and structure of the board are clearly defined in writing.*

- There is a clearly designated chair, secretary and treasurer and a job description for each of these roles.
- If standing committees exist, the mandate of each is clearly defined.
- The board has a conflict of interest policy for members.

18.3. *The board delegates responsibility for the day-to-day operation of the centre in accordance with its legal responsibilities for the program's activities. In so-doing, it:*

- Defines the qualifications, authority and responsibilities of the senior administrator and the outcomes expected of that person.
- The board of directors meets a minimum of six times a year to review operations of the centre.
- Develops and/or reviews and approves a written job description for senior administration.
- Conducts an annual written job evaluation of the senior administrator based on the written job description and indicators of performance that have been previously established through discussion between the board and the individual as well as feedback from staff.

18.4. *The board reviews the financial status of the program at regular, specified intervals and at least once a quarter.*

18.5. *Members of the board of directors are active participants in the centre's periodic formal review of itself.*

Standard 19: The information provided to the board of directors is timely and supports its governance role and responsibilities.

19.1. *Each new member of the board receives a formal orientation to the responsibilities and functioning of a board of directors.*

- A minimum of 50% of the Centre's Board members attend a Child Care Centre Board of Directors Orientation provided by MCCP or alternate external agency such as MCCA or the Volunteer Centre of Winnipeg.
- All Board members are provided with a board of directors orientation.

19.2. *Each new board member receives a formal orientation to the centre. This includes:*

- Its philosophy.
- Its goals and objectives.
- Its services.
- Its personnel policies and its collective agreement where one exists.
- The current centre budget and the most recent financial statement.
- The findings of the most recent financial audit, licensing visit and the centre's annual formal review of itself.
- A visit to the program to observe its daily operation.

19.3. *Board members are notified of upcoming meetings, provided with an agenda, and provided with the required background information sufficiently in advance of the meeting to enable review of the material.*

19.4. *Written minutes for each meeting of the board or one of its sub-committee are circulated to all members of the board in a timely manner.*

Standard 20: Relationships between the board of directors and the Executive Director are professional, respectful and mutually supportive.

20.1. *The Executive Director demonstrates understanding of and respect for the board's legal responsibility for the centre and the limits of her/his delegated authority.*

20.2. *The Executive Director ensures that the board receives timely information about any occurrences in the centre, changes in government requirements or other matters that the board should be aware of in order to meet its governance responsibilities.*

20.3. *The board seeks the opinion and the professional expertise of the Executive Director in formulating policy positions and making operational decisions.*

20.4. *Members of the board demonstrate understanding that responsibility for the day-to-day operation of the centre has been delegated to the Executive Director.*

Note to reader: Estimation of compliance with Standard 20 will depend heavily on interviews.

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