

November 4, 2008

Honourable Greg Selinger,
Minister of Finance
Budget Consultations
Room 103, Legislative Building
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3C 0V8

Dear Honourable Greg Selinger: RE: Manitoba Budget 2009

The shortage of Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) and Child Care Assistants (CCAs) is a very serious problem in the Province of Manitoba. The Government of Manitoba has a commendable plan to fund 6500 more new child care spaces over the next 5 years. However, too many existing child care programs all over Manitoba can't recruit the employees required by governments own legislation – The Community Child Care Standards Act. In response, some child care programs have reduced their enrollment, cut back on hours of service, or put expansion plans on hold.

The problem is worst in rural Manitoba where the number of programs that can't meet licensing requirements for trained staff range from 68% in the north, to 69% in Eastman to 42% in Central to 43% in the Interlake. In Winnipeg, 26% of licensed child care programs don't have the trained staff required by law.

In 2008, the Government of Manitoba provided a 3% funding increase to the child care sector, even though wages are 19%-22% below market. There are plenty of better paying jobs outside the child care field, and ECE's and CCA's are leaving for greener pastures. The plan to build a stronger workforce by providing a 20% overall funding increase, if sprinkled over a five year period, is too little too slowly and the existing workforce will not be fooled into thinking the elusive brighter future has arrived.

I have attached a copy of the recommendations made by The Manitoba Child Care Association (MCCA) to the Government of Manitoba, along with a copy of the cover letter sent to Premier Gary Doer and the Hon. Gord Mackintosh, Minister of Family Services & Housing. A copy of the Market Competitive Salary Guideline Scale for Group Child Care Centres, 2008 is also enclosed.

The Manitoba Child Care Association continues to call on the Government of Manitoba to adequately fund the programs it regulates and licenses so child care wages are fair and competitive and enables employers to recruit, retain, and fairly compensate the personnel required by The Community Child Care Standards Act.

Sincerely,

Michele Henderson, President

cc Manitoba MLA's