



Manitoba Child Care
Association

Our mission is to advocate for a quality system of child care, to advance early childhood education as a profession, and to provide services to our members.

May 5, 2010

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

COPY

Dear Minister Mackintosh:

The Manitoba Child Care Association (MCCA) is encouraged to learn the Government of Manitoba will launch a pension plan for the child care workforce in the fall of 2010. As your government is aware, the un-resolved compensation problem means early learning and care programs continue to report significant challenges recruiting the Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) and Child Care Assistants (CCAs) they need to meet provincial licensing requirements. A competitive wage range and a pension plan that ensures a living income upon retirement are essential to any career that requires qualified and career minded men and women.

As you proceed with the design of the pension plan, MCCA recommends:

- the Government of Manitoba must fully implement the pension plan in 2010
- enhanced funds for a pension plan must be new money to the child care system, that is in addition to and not instead of annual increases to operating funds
- employers already contributing to an employee pension such as an RRSP should not be penalized by not being eligible for the maximum amount of new pension funding provided by the Government of Manitoba
- the pension plan must provide a guaranteed pension upon retirement based on salary, years of membership in the plan, and age at retirement
- child care centre employee and family child care provider incomes must all be high enough that pension plan contributions are affordable, therefore the Government of Manitoba's funding policies must enable full and part time programs to adopt the most current Market Competitive Salary Guideline Scale for Early Learning and Child Care Centres as the minimum wage base for all positions; and funding policies must enable incomes of licensed family child care providers to be at least competitive with the unlicensed sector
- the Government of Manitoba must provide enough new funds annually to eligible facilities and family child care providers so pension plan contributions do not become a financial hardship for

the employee and so employers have the funds to make a matching contribution of 3-5% of the employee's gross salary annually without fundraising

- regular full and part time employees and providers who work more than 20 hours per week must participate in the pension plan once established and adequately funded by competitive wages, and enough new government funding provided for the employer portion
- the plan must include provision for increases in pension benefits to reflect the cost of living
- the pension plan should be centrally managed by qualified professionals
- the pension plan must provide past service credits for plan members employed prior to the plan implementation date
- to recognize ECE's who have remained in the field, the Government of Manitoba provide a bonus of \$3000.00 to ECE II & ECE III's, for every five years they have remained employed in a licensed child care facility. In addition the Government of Manitoba fund retroactive pension contributions for members modeled after the one negotiated between the Confédération des syndicats nationaux and the Centrale des syndicats du Québec. (first recommended to Minister of Family Services by MCCA in 2008/09)

Most Early Childhood Educators, Child Care Assistants, and Family Child Care Providers face tough economic challenges supporting themselves on the compensation they currently receive while caring for and educating children in licensed facilities. I appreciate that you recognize a career in child care must not end with a retirement in poverty, and are working to address this situation.

Sincerely,



Michele Henderson,
President