



## Early Learning and Child Care

### MONTHLY E-NEWS

**OCTOBER 2024**

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### A Message from Sarah Whiteford, Assistant Deputy Minister

#### ELCC Attends IPAC

Earlier this month, I was honoured to participate on a panel discussion with colleagues at the 76th Annual Institute of Public Administration Canada (IPAC) National Conference in Winnipeg. The panel discussion was focused on the creation of new child care spaces in Manitoba, and was a unique opportunity to showcase the importance of the early learning and child care sector as a public service in Manitoba.

Moderated by ELCC's Pam Wever, Director, Capital Development, the panel discussed Manitoba's approach to expanding its early learning and child care system, including innovations in partnerships and in capital construction. In advancing the province's goal of creating 23,000 new spaces, the panelists explored the inter-dependencies in system-wide policy design, including the critical importance of measures to grow and support ELCC professionals.



***Pam Wever**, Director, Capital Development, Early Learning and Child Care; **Wally Melnyk**, Chief Administrative Officer, Town of Stonewall; **Teresa Dukes**, Executive Director, Social Innovation Office; **Sarah Whiteford**, Assistant Deputy Minister, Early Learning and Child Care; **Jackie Schapansky**, Senior Director, Early Learning and Child Care, Manitoba Métis Federation*

# Moving Forward on Child Care Priorities

## Building Career Awareness—Become an Educator Campaign

Early Childhood Educators are the backbone of our early learning and child care system. They bring a wealth of knowledge and skills developed through the academic and practical experience that they put to use in creating high-quality caring and learning environments. They employ best practices and use emergent curriculum to support the cognitive, social, and emotional development of infants and children at a critical time in brain development.

In recognition of this critical role, Manitoba has been working in collaboration with Canada to improve wages, benefits, and working conditions for child care professionals. We know there is more to do, and we are committed to continuing to work on initiatives that will support recruitment, retention, and recognition of Early Childhood Educators.

To help facilitate this work, the department launched a *Become an Educator* multi-media campaign earlier this year, using a combination of print, radio, and social media advertising, and also attended over a dozen career fairs.

This fall, the department will continue to build on this campaign and engage in outreach activities, adding additional targeted print, radio, and social media advertising opportunities across the province and, in particular, communities with new child care facilities that are set to open soon.

In addition to the suite of publications currently available to build awareness about the benefits of a career in childcare (see below), the department has developed a new publication that will help to highlight the various recognized ECE II training options and the post-secondary institutions across the province where they are offered.

The following publications are available for download/sharing from the [department publication page](#) and are also distributed at outreach activities:

- **Become an Educator**—[Poster](#) or [Postcard](#)
- **Tuition Reimbursement**—[Poster](#)
- **Manitoba Child Care Search**—[Poster](#) or [Postcard](#)

Department representatives were or will be at the *Become an Educator* booth at the following career fairs:

- Winnipeg School Division (Oct 17, 2024) at RB Russell Vocational School
- Career Fair Canada (Oct 24, 2024) at RBC Convention Centre
- Sunrise School Division Career Fair (Nov 12, 2024) in Oakbank and Beausejour
- Career and Post-Secondary Symposium (Nov 14, 2024) at Louis Riel Arts and Technology Centre

Workforce Training Highlights:

- Since April 1, 2024, the Early Childhood Educator Tuition Reimbursement has provided over \$1M to over 295 applicants.
- The Staff Replacement Grant has successfully provided over \$960,000 in funding to support the replacement and continuity of staffing for workplace training.
- The Training Grant has successfully provided over \$50,000 in funding to support the professional development and upskilling of the workforce.
- The ECE II Assessment Program currently has 69 participants enrolled, with a waitlist of 16 new participants expected to enroll this fall.

For more information about careers in child care, visit: [www.manitoba.ca/education/childcare/students\\_workforce\\_careers.html](http://www.manitoba.ca/education/childcare/students_workforce_careers.html).

## Extension of \$10-a-Day Parent Fees for School-Age Children on Non-School Days

In anticipation of Budget 2024 passing on November 7, 2024, advance notice is being provided to early learning and child care (ELCC) facilities that the extension of \$10-a-day parent fees for school age children on non-school days, including in-service days and school holidays, is planned to come into effect on December 8, 2024.

This means, licensed, non-profit centres (including infant, preschool, nursery, and school age programs) and child care homes that receive provincial operating grant funding (funded facilities) are required to comply with the regulated maximum parent fees when they come into effect.

To help prepare, licensed and funded child care facilities are encouraged to communicate with their families about changes to parent fees. More information including *Print Version: Extension of \$10-a-Day Child Care FAQ* flyer is available at [10-a-Day Child Care](#).

For more information and to assist with implementation, visit: [Notices, Circulars and Webinars](#).

## Spotlight on Success

### Congratulations to Our Recent ECE II Assessment Graduates Who Received Their Certification!

This year, the department celebrated and congratulated 35 new Early Childhood Educator (ECE) professionals who received their ECE II certification.

[The ECE II Assessment Program](#) is a pathway to achieving the ECE II classification in Manitoba. This program supports individuals who already have the necessary knowledge, skills, and judgement required to work as trained and qualified staff in a child care facility. Manitoba's newest ECE II professionals have finished one of four program streams that follow Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Competency Based Assessment (CBA) practices, investing anywhere between six and 24 months, proving that their skills meet Manitoba standards for ECE certification.



On Thursday, Oct. 3, 2024, the department invited the recent graduates to be honoured and receive their certificate at the ECE II Assessment Program Graduation Ceremony held in Winnipeg.

We were honoured to have Renée Cable, Minister of Manitoba Advanced Education and Training, join us to provide opening remarks and heartfelt congratulations on behalf of the Manitoba Government.



**Minister Renée Cable** with ECE II graduate **Jinyu Lu**; **Minister Cable** providing opening remarks; **Carmen Zubin**, Supervisor, Licensing and Compliance, ELCC with graduate **Anita Goel**; **Carmen Zubin**, graduate **Ana Maria Vasquez Gutierrez**, **Mario Gordon**, Director, Workforce Development, and **Marcia Desmedt**, Child Care Coordinator; centre: graduate **Givenjot Kaur** with **Mario Gordon**; Bottom photo, top row, left to right – **Givenjot Kaur**, **Simarjit Mann**, **Smrutiben Patel**, **Ana Maria Vasquez Gutierrez**, **Anita Goel**, **Anita Rani Choudhary**, **Amritpal Saond**, **Lesya Yatsevych**, **Irene Agawin**, **Olha Drogalchuk**, **Iuliia Shenderiva**, **Cherie Untalan**, **Elenie Lumbres**; Bottom row, left to right – **Lishan Li**, **Priya Maini**, **Jinyu Lu**, **Erika Schulz**, **Prativa Phuyal-Adhikari**, **Thilini Fernando**

### Child Care Coordinator Comes Full Circle with Stony Mountain Celebration

On Thursday, September 26, 2024, Division child care coordinator Marcia Desmedt attended a very special celebration for two extraordinary milestones: the grand opening of Stony Mountain Child Care’s new third location, and the fiftieth anniversary of the centre’s founding in the community.

The facility was founded in 1974 as Mountain Village Child Care Centre, a nursery school for just seven children, three days a week. In 1988, Marcia Desmedt joined the team as an ECE, and became director of the 20-space program in 1992.

Desmedt spent nearly 20 years with the program, shepherding the centre through expansions, improvements, and major changes within the sector.



*Marcia Desmedt, Child Care Coordinator, Early Learning and Child Care*

*“Those were truly different times,” says Desmedt, “Can you imagine a child care centre where parents and staff casually smoked? The doors were always unlocked. It makes me laugh to think of the first time a parent handed me a bottle of sunscreen.”*

*“At one point we had moved into the curling club, where we had the unique experience of setting up and taking down every evening to make room for the curlers in the winter months—a true testament to our commitment and adaptability!”*

In 2007, Desmedt transitioned to child care coordinator with Manitoba Early Learning and Child Care, passing the torch to Jennifer Joel and Rhonda Stasiuk as co-directors. Positions they still serve in today.

*“Fifty years ago, our community had a vision,” said Joel, “to create a safe, nurturing, and enriching environment for young children to learn, grow, and thrive. As we look to the future, we remain guided by the same principles that have served us well for the past 50 years: love, care, education, and community.”*

The new 6,000 sq ft RM of Rockwood—Stony Mountain facility will provide spaces for 74 children, ages 0 to 6 years old.

Funding for this project was made possible through a grant application under the [Early Learning and Child Care Building Fund](#).

Photos by Jennifer McFee, courtesy of the Stonewall Teulon Tribune. (All rights reserved.)



*Rhonda Stasiuk (left) and Jennifer Joel (right)*



*Interior view of the new play area*

For more information on ELCC’s child-care space creation efforts and/or grant funding that may be available for a space expansion project, visit: [Manitoba Early Learning and Child Care: Space Creation](#).



## West End Celebrates a Half-Century

West End Daycare Centre in Portage la Prairie recently celebrated its fiftieth anniversary on Friday, October 4, marking its journey as a foundation of the community since 1974.

Director Janice Delf said the centre has fostered meaningful relationships among families while providing quality childcare.

“The centre has been vibrant in this community for a very long time,” she said to [Portage Online](#), “Our first director, Jan Lucas, laid a strong foundation, and we’ve built on that by expanding our services to meet the evolving needs of families.”

Over the years, the centre has introduced various services, including weekend care in 1993 and significant building improvements, such as the addition constructed in 1988. West End also offers extended hours and school transportation services, which accommodate the diverse schedules of parents.



Photo courtesy of Portage Online and West End Daycare. (All rights reserved.)

To celebrate, the centre hosted its annual general meeting along with children’s entertainment, hosted a family day at the Shindleman Aquatic Centre, and had commemorative t-shirts designed by staff members Kaylene Neudorf and Keely Leonhardt, symbolizing the centre’s history and community spirit.

## Prairie Nature Children’s Centre Rebuilt and Reunited

On March 1, 2022, construction issues sparked a [fire at Westview School in Transcona](#), forcing Prairie Nature Children’s Centre to temporarily close their program and find alternate accommodations on the fly for hundreds of children.

Mariëlla Carr, Director at Prairie Nature, and her staff worked extremely hard to ensure families of both school age and pre-school age children were relocated as quickly as possible to ensure continuity of care in the short term. In addition to the logistics required, re-licensing and permits were required to split the program into two temporary facilities at two locations.

Close to one hundred per cent of program assets—furniture, toys, books, and more—were destroyed or unrecoverable due to fire, smoke, and water damage.

In June, 2024, after two years and three months, Prairie Nature held a small re-opening celebration for families to mark the reunification under one roof at the completely new and rebuilt facility in Westview School.

Additions include two new sinks, including adult sinks, two new large windows for the preschool rooms, and a large window and door to replace an old accordion divider. The new furniture is child sized, natural and inviting, with personal elements, such as photos, for children and staff to enjoy throughout the preschool and school age rooms.

*“As a nature-based centre, we strive to ensure that our environment is welcoming, warm and ‘home-like,’”* says Carr, *“Our educators take great pride in their environments. When children, families and our educators come to PNCC we want them to have a sense of wonder, comfort, and belonging. We were able to be extremely purposeful in our choice of items that we brought into our play space.”*

Prairie Nature Children’s Centre made use of both the Indigenous Programming Grant and Quality Enhancement Grants in support of their renovation and rebuilding efforts.



Photos courtesy of Prairie Nature Children’s Centre

## Meet the ELCC Team

Lindsay Ortlieb, ECE III, Acting Policy Analyst, Workforce Development Unit

I started working at ELCC in May of 2021 as a Child Care Coordinator, right in the middle of COVID. I came in on the first day and then by the end of the second day, they were frantically trying to get me set up so that I could work from home. It was different trying to navigate a brand-new position and being new to government while in lockdown.

I had been in the child care sector since I was 18. I graduated high school and started working in a child care program. That's 24 years serving Manitoba's kids.

Growing up, I had a lot of younger cousins and I always babysat. I enjoyed spending time with children, and it was a natural progression to pursue that field. I went to Université de Saint-Boniface for a year, then switched over to the University of Winnipeg, while working in a child care program. The facility I was at gave me full time hours, so I was eligible for the workplace Diploma program at Red River College [Polytechnic] so I enrolled there and graduated in 2004.

I completed my ECE III through Assiniboine College. I started when I was on maternity leave with my twin girls, and so I had a preschool son and baby girls at home—I thought, "Yeah, why not just add to the chaos? I have three kids. Good things come in threes!"

I'm a mom of three teenagers now, as scary as that sounds. My daughters and I are *Swifties*, and we're heading to Toronto next month to see Taylor Swift.

I work closely with [ECE II Assessment Program](#) participants and advisors, and offer support for individuals who are interested in the program. I also attend career fairs, write briefing notes, and, of course, perform policy work, which includes drafting and creating policies and procedures relating to the workforce and ECE II assessment.

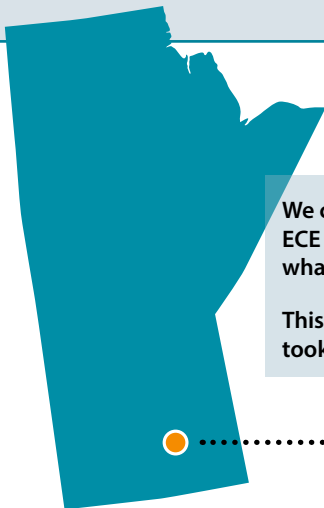
It's safe to say that our current workforce is obviously stretched thin at times. We need more people. There are a significant number of staff here at ELCC that started in the sector. We come to work here every day with that history and experience. We want the best for the sector and those choosing to join the sector.

I hope they, the ECEs the CCAs, are all aware of just how much we really do value the work that they do. At the end of the day, although many of us are sitting in front of computers and working on policies and procedures and 'government stuff,' our real desire is for children—for all children and families—to have quality child care. We recognize that the sector, the people, are right there at the centre of that. They are the heart of it.



Lindsay Ortlieb, ECE III, Acting Policy Analyst, Workforce Development Unit

## Listening to MANITOBA'S EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS



We continue to reach out to child care assistants (CCAs), ECE IIs, and ECE IIIs across Manitoba to get their thoughts on what a career in early childhood education means to them.

This month, we spoke with a child care assistant who recently took the next step in her career to become ECE II-certified.

..... **WENDY JIANG, ECE II**  
**Morrow Early Learning**



## Wendy Jiang, ECE II, Morrow Early Learning and Child Development

I started working at Morrow Early Learning and Child Development in October 2021 as a CCA and enrolled in the ECE Workplace program in August 2023. During my time as a CCA, I found career stability and enjoyed working with children.

The [Tuition Reimbursement](#) greatly helped support the opportunity to continue my education while working, and helped me enhance my knowledge so as to achieve my dream of becoming an early childhood educator professional.

Through the workplace program, I have improved the quality of early learning and feel more confident in creating a positive impact on children's learning, behaviour and health. It makes me feel my effort is worthwhile.

I am so grateful for all the support from Morrow Early Learning and Child Development and the tuition reimbursement, to help balance and support my personal life and career. Since starting this program, I have been very excited to bring my new knowledge to work.

Learn more about ECE II recognized post-secondary education options at: [www.gov.mb.ca/education/childcare/students\\_workforce/info\\_classification.html#education](http://www.gov.mb.ca/education/childcare/students_workforce/info_classification.html#education).



Wendy Jiang, ECE II, Morrow Early Learning and Child Development



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

### THIS MONTH'S QUESTION:

*Will the Province of Manitoba pay for my tuition if I go to school to get my ECE II certification?*

### ANSWER:

The **Early Childhood Educator Tuition Reimbursement** provides a reimbursement of up to **\$5,000 per academic year** to help cover the tuition-related costs of recognized ECE programs at post-secondary institutions in Manitoba that lead to an ECE II or ECE III certification.

- The reimbursement is available for students attending a part-time or full-time recognized ECE program from the 2023/2024 to 2025/2026 academic years (including the Workplace Program).
- For students attending part-time, there are no minimum class requirements. A student can submit an application for reimbursement for as little as one class per semester or per academic year, so long as program parameters are met.
- Students may apply for reimbursement more than once; however, the maximum reimbursable amount is \$5,000 per academic year.



For more information and to apply, visit [Early Childhood Educator Tuition Reimbursement](#).

## Announcements and Reminders

### 40-Hour Course Options

In Manitoba, all Child Care Assistants (CCAs) and licensed home-based child care providers are required to complete a 40-hour course related to early childhood education within the first year of employment. There are many course options available in Manitoba for CCAs and home-based child care providers to fulfill the 40-hour training requirement. Course selections should consider individual learning needs and support their work with children.

All courses included in approved ECE diploma programs qualify towards the 40-hour course requirement. In addition, there are several other options to consider to obtain 40-hour course requirement including:

- Completion of other post-secondary courses or programs in a similar field
- Completion of the Manitoba high school **Technical-Vocational Education (TVE) Child Care** program or the **Applied Family Studies 40S** course
- Certificates from Provincial/Territorial Regulatory Bodies outside of Manitoba

For further details, visit [www.gov.mb.ca/education/childcare/students\\_workforce/40-hour\\_course.html](http://www.gov.mb.ca/education/childcare/students_workforce/40-hour_course.html).

## Lead in Drinking Water Grant Deadline—March 31, 2025



In March 2024, the Manitoba Environmental Industries Association (MIEA) extended the Lead in Drinking Water Grant for all funded and unfunded licensed child care centres (including nursery schools) to ensure centres that have not yet had an opportunity to test their drinking water for lead can do so for free.

By accessing this program before the deadline, facilities can also obtain funding for mitigation efforts if they have elevated lead levels in their drinking water. If your facility remains untested and/or you may need to access funding to support mitigation, you are encouraged to apply before March 31, 2025.

Information about testing results and mitigation status for licensed child care centres will be made publicly available at: [www.gov.mb.ca/sd/water/drinking-water/lead/index.html](http://www.gov.mb.ca/sd/water/drinking-water/lead/index.html).

To apply, visit: <https://meia.mb.ca/lead-in-drinking-water-grant/>.

## New Child Care Subsidy Publications Now Available

The Manitoba Child Care Subsidy Program provides financial support for eligible families to reduce child care fees for children under the age of 12. New Child Care Subsidy posters and postcards are available for facilities on our [Publications](#) page. These documents can be easily printed and posted in child care facilities and shared with parents and families, who may qualify for additional provincial support.

- The Manitoba Child Care Subsidy Program—[Poster](#)
- The Manitoba Child Care Subsidy Program—[Postcard](#)

## 2024 ELCC Listening Tour

In 2023, senior ELCC staff began a *Listening Tour*, visiting facilities, especially in rural locations around Manitoba, and spending time with staff in order to build stronger relationships and gain deeper perspective on the matters important to child care workers. The tour has continued throughout 2024, with recent stops in Churchill, Thompson, The Pas, Cranberry-Portage, and Flin Flon.

*“The trip was enlightening as we heard from early childhood educators about issues that are unique to Northern facilities. We want to thank all the facilities we visited, especially the directors and staff who took time out of their day to share their experiences with us. We look forward to returning so we can visit the northern communities we were unable to visit this time around.”*

– Susan Emerson, Executive Director, Provincial Operations, ELCC



**Terri Tretjak**, Child Care Coordinator; **Carol Saville**, Supervisor, Licensing and Compliance; and **Lisa Ludwig**, Manager, Licensing and Compliance at Pisew Falls Provincial Park, located just outside Thompson.

Photo by **Susan Emerson**, Executive Director, Provincial Operations

## Help Keep Board of Directors Contact Information Up-to-Date

To support communication efforts with our sector, please ensure that Board contact information and email addresses for all board members are entered and up-to-date in the [Child Care Online—Record of Board of Directors](#) section.



# Early Learning and Child Care Division Update

## Staffing Updates

We continue to welcome new staff into our division to support Manitoba's priorities for early learning and child care, and to support career growth and development of existing staff:

**Shelley Jonasson** joined the Capital and Space Expansion Branch on October 1, as Program Coordinator for the Space Expansion Unit, Capital and Space Expansion Branch. Shelley has over 20 years of experience working for the provincial government in a variety of areas including legislation and cross-departmental projects for the Department of Families; early childhood development and supports for families with Healthy Child Manitoba Office; women's and gender issues with Status of Women; and domestic violence with the Family Violence Prevention Program.

**Manoj Jayatunga** joined the Funding and Financial Assistance Branch as an Administrative Assistant beginning October 15, 2024. Manoj has both a Bachelor in Business Administration as well as a Master in Business Administration. He also has a Diploma in Human Resource Management as well as experience leading a variety of administrative, human resources, and logistics initiatives in the private sector. He is excited to begin a new chapter of his career in public service.

**Three new Inclusion Support Program Coordinators** have joined the Provincial Operations Branch, Diversity and Inclusion as of August 12 at our 210 Osborne office:

**Danica Llanes** is an Early Childhood Educator III with approximately six years of experience in the sector, working with children of all ages. Danica is a graduate of the University of Winnipeg with a Bachelor of Arts in Child Development and Child Care, and a part-time Reservist with the Canadian Armed Forces.

**Sarah Watt** is an ECE III and has considerable experience working with children with additional support needs in child care environments. Sarah holds a Bachelor of Arts in Developmental Studies: Stream C Childcare and Inclusion, and is a trained Circle of Security facilitator.

**Darcy Orvis** is an ECE III with over 20 years of experience in the sector, including nearly a decade as a centre director. Darcy holds a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology with a focus on Child Development and Behavioural Science. She is a trained Circle of Security facilitator, and a volunteer fundraiser with Manitoba Possible.

## Staff Role Transitions:

**Larissa Zacharuk** has moved into a new role as Senior Capital Projects Manager with the Capital Development Unit. Larissa began working with Early Learning and Child Care as a Policy Analyst in spring 2022. Since joining the Capital and Space Expansion Branch, she has taken on a lead policy role in advancing several space expansion initiatives.

**Terry Smith** will be moving from her role as Child Care Coordinator to join the Capital Development Unit in the role of Acting Facility and Capital Development Analyst for a two-year term beginning October 21, 2024. Terry brings nearly 40-years of experience within the child care sector; she has worked at Head Start programs and licensed centres in roles ranging from floor staff to director of multiple centres in Churchill, and across the Eastman region.

**Crystal Simmons** has recently accepted a one-year developmental opportunity as a Senior Legislative Analyst with the Governance and Policy Branch of the System Performance and Accountability Division. Crystal joined ELCC's Strategic Policy and Intergovernmental Unit early this year as a Policy Analyst after many years with the Child Care Subsidy Program. In her new role with the Legislative Office, Crystal will continue to support the ongoing and future legislative projects of the Early Learning and Child Care Division.

**Farewell to Samantha Holt**, Brandon-based ISP Coordinator, who has accepted a new position, with Families' Autism Early Intervention Services, her last day was August 23. Her new role will primarily be supporting families with preschool children with Autism and this work will allow her to continue to intersect with the Diversity and Inclusion team in child care facilities. We wish her all the best and good luck in the new position.

For the list of key department contacts, visit [www.edu.gov.mb.ca/aboutus.html](http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/aboutus.html).

## 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](mailto:CDInfo@gov.mb.ca) with the subject line "ELCC Newsletter" and you could be featured in our next edition.

### For general inquires about the Early Learning and Child Care Division:

**Website:** [www.manitoba.ca/childcare](http://www.manitoba.ca/childcare)

**Email:** [cdcinfo@gov.mb.ca](mailto:cdcinfo@gov.mb.ca)

**Phone:** 204-945-0776

If you would like to remove your email from the ELCC Monthly E-News distribution, contact [melcc-ed@gov.mb.ca](mailto:melcc-ed@gov.mb.ca).