

Child Day Care Regulatory Review Committee

A Vision for Child Care and Development in Manitoba

The *Child Day Care Regulatory Review Committee* envisions a "**universal, accessible, affordable, quality**" child care system which provides for optimal development of children and support to families throughout Manitoba. These four key elements need to be considered as an integral part of the ultimate goal of building a comprehensive child care system throughout Manitoba. In order to achieve this goal, the issues surrounding six main components of the child care system need to be addressed. These components are as follows:

1. Standards/Quality Care
2. Funding
3. Training and Professionalism
4. Governance
5. Integrated Service Delivery
6. Public Education

1. STANDARDS/QUALITY CARE

While the minimum standards of the current *Community Child Day Care Standards Act* and Manitoba Regulation 62/86 ensure basic health and safety for children, the Committee believes that these standards must be enhanced to ensure the highest possible level of care and learning is provided in all facilities. The Committee recommends action to:

- support the development of national standards for child care and development programs;
- provide incentives to exceed minimum standards; and
- ensure a funding level that enables a stable, well remunerated, trained, child care workforce.

The child-focused curricula currently practiced in Manitoba is critical to quality early childhood education. This practice ensures the provision of care and education within warm, responsive, consistent environments and promotes children's learning and development in a natural way.

2. FUNDING

The Committee knows that Manitoba is positioned to expand child care and recommends a universal, non-profit, publicly-funded, licensed child care system within three to five years, with long-term funding secured. The Committee recommends action to:

- support the creation and expansion of spaces that are responsive to the needs of rural and urban families and communities;
- ensure a well-paid and well-trained workforce by developing a strategy that addresses the critical issues of recruiting and retaining early childhood educators;
- enable the construction of new facilities, as well as upgrading of existing inadequate facilities and equipment;
- enable the creation of inclusive early intervention and family resource programs, including universal, no-fee, part-time nursery programs and encourage the availability of early intervention experts to support these programs; and
- enable the expansion of the Child Day Care Program resources.

The Committee recommends further increases to public funding in order to achieve universal child care within the next three to five years.

3. TRAINING AND PROFESSIONALISM

Training and ongoing professional development for providers of early childhood care and education are among the **strongest indicators of quality**. The Committee recommends action to:

- provide accessible and affordable training;
- expand current models of training and develop new models that respond to community needs;
- provide specialized training options for caregivers, such as training for family child care home providers, school age care providers and management training;
- review the current classification system and educational requirements for early childhood educators based on best practices;
- provide funding to design and implement a certification process for early childhood educators;
- provide funding to develop and implement an accreditation process for licensed child care facilities; and
- provide funding to foster development of ECE training programs responsive to the needs of the current untrained child care workforce.

The Committee also believes that training must be both transferable and portable across Canada and supports the development of national training standards.

4. GOVERNANCE

Strong, knowledgeable community-based boards that reflect the needs of the community and its families are key to maintaining viable, high quality child care services. The Committee believes that enhanced options must also be explored and provided for family child care home governance. The Committee recommends action to:

- support and strengthen the governance of child care programs and services within communities;
- provide training for community-based boards;
- recruit individuals and groups to community-based boards that have experience and expertise to best support and promote the development of early childhood care and education programs;
- increase the current level of parental participation on boards of directors; and
- explore new models of governance for child care facilities, such as the Hub model.

A broader board governance role would help to ensure the effective and efficient use of resources for child care facilities. It would also facilitate community planning and the inclusion of child care as part of both urban and rural economic development.

5. INTEGRATED SERVICE DELIVERY

The Committee supports an integrated service delivery model, whereby child care services are established as part of community partnerships with continued input from families. The Committee recommends action to:

- increase communication, co-ordination and co-operation between jurisdictions;
- strengthen relationships with schools and other community services;
- encourage partnerships to meet a variety of family needs in both rural and urban communities;
- ensure a system of monitoring of basic health and safety for programs currently excluded from the Act, such as parent-child centres, infant labs, in-school lunch programs or before and after programs, unlicensed family home care;
- expand the definition of "licensed child care" to allow flexibility and creativity in designing responsive and integrated services, such as in-own-home child care, care for sick children; and
- support the creation of an integrated system of early identification and intervention for children in child care facilities.

6. PUBLIC EDUCATION

Early childhood care and education is fundamental to the healthy development of all children and is the first tier of education. The Committee recommends action to:

- raise the profile of early childhood care and education to the public at large; and
- develop strategies to inform the public about the early years and healthy child development in urban, rural, and northern settings.

Child care is the cornerstone of healthy child and family policy. Its vital role in building a healthy society requires further promotion to the general public.

Accessibility. Affordability. Quality.

Universal Child Care
