

Moving Forward on Early Learning and Child Care

Manitoba's Action Plan – Key Objectives

Introduction

Manitoba's Five-Year Plan for Child Care (2002–2007) set a clear direction and ambitious goals to maintain and improve the quality, accessibility and affordability of early learning and child care for Manitoba's children and their families. The plan includes children with disabilities. With significant new provincial investments and financial support from the federal government, most of the major elements of the plan will be completed by March 2007.

A new five-year federal funding commitment to early learning and child care (2005-06 to 2009-10) allows Manitoba to keep building on these achievements. This new federal revenue will not displace existing provincial investments. It will support new improvements and expansion of Manitoba's regulated early learning and child care system with a focus on children under age six.

Manitoba's Action Plan – Key Objectives describes how Manitoba intends to invest new federal funds to meet the targets set out in the five-year plan. It also outlines how the Province will fulfill the objectives of the

2005 Agreement-in-Principle between Manitoba and the Government of Canada. Manitoba's plans are based on what Manitobans have said are their main priorities for improving early learning and child care. Funding will go to five key areas:

1. workforce stabilization and development
2. sustainability of existing non-profit centres
3. affordability/accessibility of child care

4. improving quality environments
5. additional steps to enhance quality

Manitoba intends to build upon its early learning and child care system to emphasize the QUAD principles of quality, universally inclusive, accessible and developmental. To that end, Manitoba's Child Care Program is committed to achieving specific objectives, which will be reported in the annual Early Childhood Development Progress Reports to Manitobans.



QUAD Principles

Improvements to Manitoba's Child Care System will be based on four principles: **quality**, **universally inclusive**, **accessibility** and **developmental**: or the QUAD principles.

High **Quality** early learning and child care supports optimal child development, by demonstrating evidence-based quality practices, including provincial/territorial regulation and monitoring, and an appropriate complement of staff and child care providers qualified in early learning and child care.

Universally Inclusive early learning and child care is open and responsive, without discrimination, to young children, including children with special needs, Aboriginal children, and children with various cultural and linguistic circumstances. Diversity is respected and valued.

Accessible early learning and child care is broadly available to children and parents. It is also affordable to all parents who choose to use it.



Developmental early learning and child care demonstrates quality and contributes to improved lifetime outcomes for children by supporting social, emotional, physical and cognitive development and parents' knowledge and involvement. Developmental early learning and child care is child centred, reflects family and community contexts and encourages meaningful partnerships between parents and child care providers.

In the first two years of the federal funding commitment (2005-06 and 2006-07):

TARGET/OBJECTIVE*	QUAD PRINCIPLE SUPPORTED ¹			
	Q	U	A	D
Workforce Stabilization and Development				
Funding will be provided to allow average salaries for early childhood educator (ECE) IIs, including staff of the Children with Disabilities program, to be \$27,000 to \$30,000 annually (Phase IV Manitoba Child Care Association Salary Scale).	■		■	■
Funding will be provided to allow family child care incomes to increase by an average of 9 per cent.	■		■	■
500 child care assistants and family child care providers will have completed a 40-hour basic training course, or have obtained equivalent training.	■			■
Funding to college expansion and training supports will allow 400 new ECE IIs to be trained.	■		■	■
Funding will be provided to support 100 trained staff to return to the sector as a result of recruitment incentives.	■		■	■
Specialized Training Grants will be available to support specific staff training requests related to children with disabilities.	■	■	■	■
Sustainability of Existing Non-Profit Centres				
3,000 more spaces will be funded, including 120 spaces in French-language programs based on population levels.		■	■	
Supports will be made available to ensure children with disabilities have equal access to newly licensed child care spaces.	■	■	■	■
Five hub model pilot projects will be funded to support innovative new approaches to non-profit board governance.	■	■	■	
An early learning and child care exceptional circumstances fund will be established.	■		■	

¹ As the QUAD Principles are interrelated, many of the targets and objectives support all four QUAD principles either directly or indirectly. This chart describes those QUAD principles that are directly impacted by the targets and objectives.

TARGET/OBJECTIVE*	QUAD PRINCIPLE SUPPORTED			
	Q	U	A	D
Affordability/Accessibility of Child Care				
The \$.40 non-subsidized daily fee for subsidized families will be addressed.			■	
Funding will be provided to allow 200 nursery school spaces to be offered at a reduced parent fee to provide better access to more low-income families.			■	■
The freeze on maximum fees parents pay as part of funded programs will continue.			■	
An inclusion statement for children with disabilities will be added to the Manitoba Child Care Regulation.	■	■		
A vision statement and a policy and standards framework regarding the inclusion of children with disabilities in child care will be developed.	■	■	■	
Start-up Grants will be available to continue to support full inclusion of children with disabilities in licensed child care settings.	■	■	■	■
The child care website will be enhanced to improve the information available to families and providers on a range of issues.	■	■	■	
The child care website will be enhanced to include information on the Children with Disabilities Program and provide families and service providers with links to related childhood disability services.	■	■	■	
Improving Quality Environments				
Funding will be provided to support the building, renovation and/or expansion of 50 child care centres.	■	■	■	■
30 per cent of all early learning and child care renovation and/or capital development will be in school buildings.	■	■	■	
Universal design guidelines, including modifications to accommodate disability, will guide renovation and new development.	■	■	■	
Additional Steps to Enhance Quality				
Funding will be provided to the Manitoba Child Care Association to support a feasibility study for an accreditation program.	■	■	■	■
A quality team of service staff will be established to work directly with providers to improve the quality of care.	■	■	■	■
An early learning and child care quality framework will be developed in consultation with community stakeholders.	■	■	■	■
A Manitoba early learning and child care curriculum framework will be developed based on the QUAD principles	■	■	■	■
A best practices manual, and design guidelines for child care centres will be developed and provided for use by providers.	■	■	■	■
Resources regarding childhood disability and inclusion practices will be developed and given to licensed child care providers.	■	■	■	■
A revised parents' guide to quality early learning and child care, inclusive of children with disabilities, will be published.	■		■	

* All funding is subject to the appropriation of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

These first two years of federal funding will support the stabilization of Manitoba's early learning and child care workforce and the licensed, not-for-profit delivery system. This will set the stage for continued improvements and further expansion which will be possible because of expected increases to federal funding beginning in 2007-08.

Between 2007-08 and 2009-10, Manitoba expects to:

TARGET/OBJECTIVE*	QUAD PRINCIPLE SUPPORTED			
	Q	U	A	D
Conduct an evaluation of the hub model pilot project.	■			
Ensure that all programs are operating with at least two-thirds trained staff or have an approved staffing plan in place.	■			■
Implement improvements to the subsidy system so that more low-income families have access to early learning and child care subsidies.			■	
Conduct a review of parent fees to make early learning and child care more affordable for all Manitoba families.			■	
Continue to provide supports to work towards equal access and inclusion for children with disabilities within licensed child care settings.	■	■	■	■
Consider the need for increased operating grants so that cost-of-living increases may be provided for ECE wages and incomes.	■			■
Support succession planning for ECE IIs to upgrade to the ECE III classification through enhanced training opportunities.	■			■
Fund additional new spaces based on need.		■	■	
Continue to provide funding support for capital improvements to child care centres as resources allow.	■	■	■	■
Adopt a best practice approach to licensing.	■	■	■	■
Annually update the best practices resources related to children with disabilities to ensure principles and practices are current.	■	■	■	■

Prior to April 2007, more specific objectives and targets will be developed for the last three years of the federal funding commitment. This process will involve input from Manitoba's early learning and child care stakeholders and the community.

