

# ABOUT Women

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## Child care ongoing issue for women

### Take active role...

There are currently 24,777 licensed child care spaces in Manitoba, located in nursery schools, infant, pre-school and school-age centres and family child care homes. Although all licensed facilities must meet basic health and safety standards, it's the parents' responsibility to check out the spaces where their children will be spending the better part of their waking hours.

### What to look for in a child care centre/licensed home:

- Make sure it's licensed. A Child Day Care licence should be clearly posted.
- Ask about the safety measures in place in the home/centre as well as on outings. Make sure there is a safe outdoor play area with enough space for the number of children attending.
- Is the home childproofed? Ensure hazardous products are locked away and all electrical outlets are covered.
- Visit the home/centre and see how it operates. Do the children appear to be happy and excited in their activities? Are the early childhood educators friendly and responsive to the children's needs?
- Are there enough napping and toilet facilities?
- Inquire about the snacks and meals served. What policies are in place to ensure the safety of children with life-threatening allergies?
- Inquire about the experience/education of the staff. What is the staff-to-child ratio?

For additional resources and guidelines for parents, as well as information on licensed child care in your area, visit [www.gov.mb.ca/childcare](http://www.gov.mb.ca/childcare) or call Child Care Information Services at 945-0776 in Winnipeg; or toll-free at 1-888-213-4754.

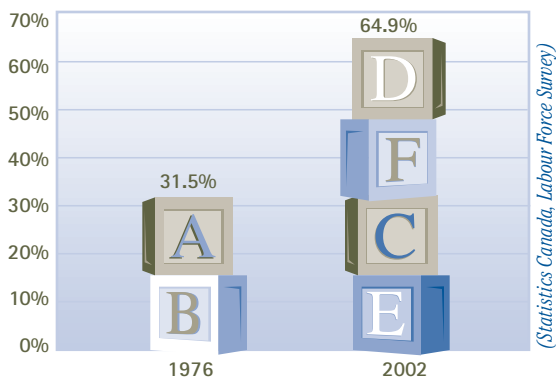


### Need more info? Get online!

Visit Child Care Online at [www.gov.mb.ca/childcare](http://www.gov.mb.ca/childcare) for more information on child care in Manitoba, including:

- licensed child care in your neighbourhood
- applying for a subsidy – applications available online
- estimating your eligibility for child care subsidies
- what to look for in a child care centre or home
- Children with Disabilities program

Percentage of employed women with children under 6



Over the past 25 years, the percentage of Canadian women (with children under 6) who are working outside the home has more than doubled. As a result, this country has seen a dramatic rise in the need for child care.



## Minister's Message



As Minister responsible for the Status of Women, I am particularly pleased to address you as we celebrate Women's History Month. This

edition of *About Women* looks at caregiving, an issue with significant impact on women's ability to work.

In the past, women worked outside the home until they left the workplace to raise their children. Most women today balance full-time employment with child rearing, creating the need for readily available, flexible, quality child care. Increasingly, these women are required to provide care for elderly parents. In this issue, we provide information about the availability of caregiving supports and how to access them.

Next month, we again celebrate Women's History Month. This year we will focus on the early struggles of women for the right to work. I invite you to celebrate women's contributions - past and present - by attending a reception at the Legislative Building on October 15. Space is limited so please call the Directorate if you plan to attend.

I look forward to meeting you at our Women's History Month event. As always, I invite you to call or write the Women's Directorate (945-3476 or 1-800-263-0234) to voice your opinions or share your concerns with me.

*Diane McGifford*

Diane McGifford  
Minister responsible for  
the Status of Women

# The Child Care Challenge

## Meeting the needs of Manitoba's working mothers

### Child care subsidies – Am I eligible?

Manitoba Child Day Care provides eligible families with subsidies for child care fees. The program pays a portion of the fee to the child care facility while the family pays the rest.

To be eligible for a child care subsidy, a family's net income must be below a certain amount and the parent(s) must show they need care because they:

- have a job
- are looking for a job
- are attending a school or training program
- are undergoing medical treatments
- have a special need, supported by a professional

#### Subsidy Example:

Annual income for one single parent .....	\$20,275
Family contribution for one preschool child (4-week period/20 days) .....	\$162
Contribution from provincial government .....	\$166
Estimated non-subsidized fee (20 days @ \$2.40/day/child) .....	\$48

For more information on the subsidy program, call 945-0286 in Winnipeg, or toll-free at 1-888-213-4754.

*NOTE: Subsidies are only available at licensed child care centres/homes.*



### Part-time, shift workers...

#### Choices for child care?

Many women work part-time to balance their child rearing and paid work responsibilities. As well, large numbers of women, such as nurses, do shift work. This creates a day care challenge.

Most child care centres operate from 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and many are filled to near capacity with children attending full time. As a result, parents working evening shifts, part-time or on call, often find it more difficult to secure child care arrangements that meet their specific needs. Evening shift workers often cannot find child care at all.

Pat Wege, executive director of the Manitoba Child Care Association, is pleased to see this government's clear commitment to child care. "We're fortunate to have a wonderfully supportive provincial government that recognizes the importance of early learning and affordable, quality child care." She adds, however, that the system cannot yet adequately accommodate shift workers or parents employed in jobs with non-traditional hours.

The provincial government is involved in numerous initiatives designed to address this important issue through its Child Day Care Program. The province currently funds 904 licensed spaces for extended child care (evening/weekend/overnight) in Winnipeg and 316 spaces in other regions of Manitoba.

For more information on extended care facilities, contact Manitoba Child Day Care at 945-0776 in Winnipeg; or toll-free at 1-888-213-4754.

## Parental Leave Benefits

### Meeting parents' needs

On December 31, 2000, federal parental leave benefits increased from 10 to 35 weeks. The longer benefit period gives working mothers and fathers the opportunity to be home with their infants during that first, important year of life.

### How do parental benefits differ from maternity benefits?

- Maternity leave benefits can be claimed only by women as early as eight weeks before giving birth. The maximum benefit period is 15 weeks.
- Parental leave benefits can be claimed by either parent, or shared between the two partners, to a maximum of 35 weeks.

### Am I eligible for benefits?

To be eligible for parental leave benefits, parents must have worked 600 hours in the previous 52 weeks. As well, parental leave must be taken within 52 weeks (one year) of the birth of a child. Biological and adoptive parents are eligible for the same parental benefits, as are surrogate mothers.

*Did you know that approximately 75 per cent of mothers with children under age 15 are in the labour force?*

### How much will I receive?

Parents eligible for parental leave benefits receive 55 per cent of their average insured earnings to a maximum of \$413 per week in taxable income (EI average insured earnings = T4 taxable income to a maximum of \$39,000 annual gross salary).

#### For example...

In the last 26 weeks you worked for 17 weeks and earned a total of \$5,100. To determine your average weekly earnings: We calculate  $\$5,100 \div 17 = \$300$   
To determine your weekly benefit rate: We calculate 55% of \$300 = \$165  
So, \$165 is your weekly benefit rate.

### Lower income – higher benefits

If your family income (both spouses) is less than \$25,921, and you receive the Canada Child Tax Benefit, you are eligible for a family supplement. The supplement will be automatically added to your EI (employment insurance) payment if you are eligible. The family supplement rate is based on your family net income, the number of children in the family and their ages.

*NOTE: The Canada Child Tax Benefit may include the National Child Benefit Supplement, a monthly benefit for low-income families with children.*

For more information, or to apply for benefits, call Human Resources Development Canada toll-free at 1-800-206-7218; or visit [www.mb.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/](http://www.mb.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/).

## Seniors' Care a Growing Concern

### Women face increased demands

Demands for seniors' services are shifting dramatically and national studies predict elder care will soon top child care as a major concern for working women. As baby boomers move into their late 40s and 50s, their parents are in their late 70s and 80s.

Seniors are living longer, are healthier and are independent longer, says Dr. Carol Harvey, professor, Department of Family Studies, University of Manitoba, so they need care later in their lives. The result is increased expectations for women, from 45 to retirement age, to care for aging parents or parents-in-law.



Harvey points out that care of elders isn't just a cost to society, because elders continue to provide benefits. "Many supply emotional and often financial support to the younger generation," she says. "It's actually an intergenerational social exchange of help and services, such as child care provided by grandparents while parents work."

### A fine balance

Only about five per cent of people over 65 live in nursing homes. Most live in their own homes and need increasing help as they age. More than 60 per cent of Canadians caring for seniors with long-term health problems are middle-aged women with full-time jobs.

Balancing the demands of full-time work, home and elder care can be hard on caregivers. It's extremely important that women in this position meet their own needs as well. Research indicates the stress of long-term caregiving could possibly lead to elder abuse, if caregivers don't have the right supports.

### Did you know?

- Women average 7.5 hours a week helping elderly parents who live independently.
- Adult children will spend more years caring for an elderly parent than raising a child.
- Almost 90 per cent of care provided to elderly Canadians at home is provided by relatives.
- The fastest growing segment of the population is people over 85.

### Help is available Home Care benefits both client and caregiver

The Province of Manitoba's Home Care Program is the oldest comprehensive, province-wide, universal home care program in Canada. The program provides Manitobans with responsive and reliable home health care services that support independent living. The program also ensures clients' admission into facility care when living in the community is no longer an option.

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## No charge for services

Home care is available to Manitobans of all ages based on assessed needs. A client-centred assessment process and care plan incorporate input from the client, family and involved professionals. There is no charge for services provided by the home care program within the approved plan of care.

Services include:

- nursing
- meal preparation
- access to adult day care
- therapy assessment
- personal care
- respite/family relief
- cleaning and laundry
- health education

For more information on the provincial government's Home Care Program, or to determine if you or someone you know is eligible for home care services, call 940-2655 in Winnipeg; toll-free 1-800-392-1207; or your local regional health authority.

Manitoba's Home Care Program is run by the province's Regional Health Authorities (RHAs), who look after the planning, delivery and ongoing management of home care services. Contact your RHA, or visit the Manitoba Home Care Program website at [www.gov.mb.ca/health/homecare/](http://www.gov.mb.ca/health/homecare/).

*Did you know that in 2001/02 approximately 34,000 Manitobans received services from the Manitoba Home Care Program?*

### Additional resources

The following organizations offer information, programs and services that can benefit older adults and their caregivers:

#### Manitoba Seniors Directorate

Seniors Information Line: 945-6565 in Winnipeg; toll-free at 1-800-665-6565; Website: [www.gov.mb.ca/sd](http://www.gov.mb.ca/sd)  
(Also available on website – A Guide for Caregiving – providing practical advice on accessing support networks, hospitalization and personal care homes.)

#### Manitoba Society of Seniors (MSOS)

Phone: 942-3147  
Toll-free: 1-800-561-6767  
Website: [www.msos.mb.ca](http://www.msos.mb.ca)

#### Age and Opportunity

Phone: (204) 956-6440  
Website: [www.ageopportunity.mb.ca](http://www.ageopportunity.mb.ca)

#### Creative Retirement Manitoba

Phone: (204) 949-2565  
Website: [www.seniorscan.ca/crm/crm.html](http://www.seniorscan.ca/crm/crm.html)

Helpful websites:

**How to Care:** [www.howtocare.com](http://www.howtocare.com)  
**Seniors Resource Network:** [www.seniors.cimnet.ca](http://www.seniors.cimnet.ca)

# ABOUT Women

*About Women* is a publication of the Manitoba Women's Directorate that focuses on issues of interest to women and provides practical, timely information they can use. It is available without charge upon request.

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*This newsletter is also posted on the Women's Directorate website:*  
[www.gov.mb.ca/wd](http://www.gov.mb.ca/wd)

*Cette information existe également en Français sur Internet à l'adresse suivante :*  
[www.gov.mb.ca/wd/newsletter/newsletter.fr.html](http://www.gov.mb.ca/wd/newsletter/newsletter.fr.html)