



## **Brief to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance Pre-Budget Consultations for 2018**

August 4, 2017

The Manitoba Child Care Association (MCCA) is non-profit, registered charity, incorporated in 1974. Our mission is to advocate for a quality system of early learning and child care, to advance early childhood education as a profession, and to provide services to our members. We are the voice for our 4000 members and an affiliate member of the Canadian Child Care Federation.

The Manitoba Child Care Association is pleased the federal government is back at the child care table and has made a long term funding commitment to help provinces increase the supply of child care services in Canada. Successfully developing more child care spaces also requires infrastructure including capital funding, skilled and well-compensated Early Childhood Educators and licensed home child care providers, along with strong administration and governance. Multi-pronged strategies at the federal and provincial level are key to system development. While progress has been made over time, much work remains to be done to build the pan-Canadian child care system that children deserve and families are waiting for.

There is plenty of evidence to support the need for a better and bigger early learning and child care system. Almost every province and territory has a significant shortage of spaces and fees are unaffordable in many. The challenges of recruiting and retaining the well trained, well compensated child care workforce key to quality are shared from coast to coast to coast.

As of June 30, 2017 there are more than 16,800 children registered on Manitoba's Online Child Care Registry waiting list for a licensed child care space and 49% of centres have operated with a conditional licensed due to staff shortages. We know from the MCCA/Probe Research (2016) survey of parents with a child in a licensed child care facility that the average wait time was 14-15 months, that 30% have turned down a job, 41% have delayed returning to work, and 24% have declined an educational opportunity because they lacked child care.

Our survey results have identified that 83% of Manitobans and 76% of business leaders say the lack of child care in our province is a very serious or somewhat serious issue and that 83% of parents say licensing is important to ensure quality.

Available, affordable, accessible high quality child care enables parents to be employed, go to school, and adequately support their families. It is key to women's equality, strengthens the economy, increases the labour force, and fosters early learning and healthy child outcomes.

We are writing in support of the brief submitted by the Canadian Child Care Federation to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance, which recommends that accessible, affordable child care is the key to helping Canadians and Canadian business be more productive and competitive.

We also believe, as the CCCF states:

*That the federal government must significantly increase it's already allocated spending on child care, accompanied by an expanded and more detailed evidence-based policy framework, with the goal of making high quality child care fully accessible to all families and inclusive of all children in every part of Canada over the next decade. This will significantly support Canadians, but even more specifically, women in their employment, productivity, economic security and equality.*

The MCCA Board of Directors is also in support of the ***Shared Framework for Building an Early Childhood Education and Care System for All***

(<https://ccaac.ca/2016/01/20/new-shared-framework-for-building-an-early-childhood-education-and-care-system-for-all/>) which calls for three core elements

1. Common federal/provincial/territorial policy frameworks
2. A plan for long term sustained funding
3. System building and policy and system development shared by federal/provincial/territorial and local governments with the participation of key stakeholder groups such as educators, researchers and parents.

In addition to enhanced funding beyond the 11 year federal funding allocation, we believe much can be done to improve collaboration and stakeholder engagement and therefore recommend a national Ministers Advisory Committee on Early Learning and Child Care be established by the end of 2017, to provide short and long term advice and leadership. For example, explore the feasibility of a National Child Care Act as a long term goal to ensure early learning and child care remains on the policy agenda at the federal level.

The lack of comprehensive data, evaluation, and current and longitudinal research on early learning and child care is always a stumbling block when trying to make the best use of available dollars and ensure evidence based decision making. Part of infrastructure investments should include funding to national child care organizations like the Canadian Child Care Federation, who are directly connected to child care service providers in provinces and territories and well equipped to conduct, evaluate, and disseminate research and provide resource and support to Canada's child care workforce.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input into the 2018 federal budget.

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