

Early Learning and Child Care

Elimination of Family Contribution and Non-Subsidized Daily Fee for Subsidized Families

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Circular # ELCC-2026-03

1. Why is this change being made?

As part of Budget 2026 the Government of Manitoba committed to offering free child care for families with low incomes, in partnership with Canada. The elimination of child care fees for eligible families will help low-income Manitobans focus on employment, education and training while being able to seek high-quality licensed child care without facing cost barriers. Free child care for the families who need it most will help toward ending poverty in Manitoba and improving outcomes for every child.

2. What is the effective date of this change? Am I required to take any actions prior to this date?

Free child care for eligible families will take effect on September 13, 2026, to reflect the change at the start of a new attendance billing period. Eligible families will **not** be required to pay a family contribution nor a non-subsidized daily fee for child care starting on September 13, 2026.

A letter from the department has been shared with facilities for their records, clarifying these changes. This letter precedes the issuance of new, individualized Subsidy Approval letters, so that facilities may adjust their invoicing processes in advance.

3. What if I already billed a family the non-subsidized fee and parent contribution for the September 13, 2026, attendance period?

If a family has been invoiced for a non-subsidized fee and family contribution, and payment has not yet been received, the invoice may be cancelled or amended to align with this new initiative.

Where payment has already been received, the amount must be reimbursed to the family in accordance with the facility's established processes.

4. What may families be billed for?

Facilities may continue to charge families for services that fall outside the scope of the Child Care Subsidy Program, in accordance with the [Policies and Procedures for Funded Centres: Fees for Additional Services](#).

In addition, facilities may collect up to the maximum daily fee for absent days that are not eligible for subsidy coverage.

5. Are there any changes being made to the Child Care Subsidy Program eligibility?

No. Child Care Subsidy applications are still based on net household income and family composition including the ages and number of children, and reason for needing care. Applications will continue to be assessed considering each family's unique circumstances.

Applicants should be encouraged to use the Child Care Subsidy Estimator tool to determine if they may be eligible.

6. What is the “family contribution” for subsidized families?

The family contribution is the amount that eligible families may currently be required to pay to a child care facility for a child care space during each four-week attendance reporting period. The family contribution is calculated based on the applicant's income, and is determined by each family's unique circumstances. At present, only families receiving full Subsidy do not pay a family contribution, and going forward, there will be no family contribution under the Child Care Subsidy Program.

7. What is the non-subsidized daily fee for subsidized families?

Under the existing Child Care Regulation, all eligible families are required to pay a fixed or non-subsidized portion of parent fees for a child care space, different than the family contribution. The current daily non-subsidized fee per child is \$1.00 for less than 4 hours of care; \$2.00 for 4 to 10 hours of care; and \$3.00 for more than 10 hours of care, payable in addition to the total family contribution where applicable. Going forward, families will no longer be charged this non-subsidized fee.

The province will provide an Additional Payment of this amount per eligible child to facilities to ensure there is no loss in revenue for facilities.

8. What are allowable absent days?

To ensure that child care spaces are being used for the reason for care provided by the applicant, the program allows a maximum number of days for which a child can be absent from their child care facility, and for which Subsidy will be paid.

The Child Care Regulation, subsection 42(2), outlines that a subsidy may be paid for the total number of days within the approval period, including the days of non-attendance when a child is in attendance for 85 per cent or more of the days within the approval period. For example, if a child is approved for five full days per week for six 28-day reporting periods, the total number of possible days of attendance is 120 days. The allowable absent days for this approval period would be 18 (that is 15 per cent of 120 days).

If a child exceeds the maximum allowable absent days, the Child Care Subsidy Program will not cover the cost of child care for the days that the child does not attend, and the family becomes responsible for the total parent fees for any subsequent absent days within the approval period. The facility may collect up to the maximum daily fee from the family for any absent days not covered by the Child Care Subsidy Program.

Note: The Child Care Subsidy Program will continue to pay for the child's attended days.

9. Does this change have any effect on facility attendance reporting?

No. Facilities receiving provincial funding of any kind are required to submit attendance reports every four weeks. Provincial funding includes operating grant funding, Child Care Subsidies, Reduced Parent Fee Revenue Grant, Inclusion Support Program funding, etc.

Facility attendance reports are expected to be submitted through the Child Care Online system within 30 days of the end of each four-week attendance reporting period, even if you do not have subsidized children currently enrolled.

Unfunded facilities who do not receive any type of provincial grant funding and who do not have any subsidized spaces are not required to submit an attendance report.

10. Do families already receiving subsidized child care need to reapply? How are subsidized families being informed of the changes?

No. Applicants who have already been approved for child care subsidy or have recently applied and not yet received a response do not need to take any action. The applications will be automatically reassessed and adjusted under the new subsidy fee changes.

Any current, active subsidy approvals that go past September 13, 2026, will be reassessed as of that date to reflect the program changes. New approval letters will be sent out to applicants and facilities.

The letter will also remind families of their obligation to not exceed their maximum allowable absent days in order to continue to be eligible for free child care.

11. Will the child care subsidy application process be changing?

No. Families who wish to apply for child care subsidy should be encouraged to use the Child Care Subsidy Estimator at:

https://gov.mb.ca/education/childcare/families/childcare_subsidies.html.

The Estimator is a tool that helps families determine if they may be eligible for a subsidy. Families can then access the online application at the same link if they wish to proceed with an application.

Note: The online Subsidy Eligibility Estimator will be updated on September 13, 2026, to reflect these changes. Prior to September 13, the tool will continue to provide results reflecting the non-subsidized fee and a potential family contribution, however, all families who are eligible will have no fees payable effective September 13.

12. Will there be any impact to the total funding amount for subsidized spaces?

There will be no change to the revenue received by facilities. Non-subsidized fees, previously billed to families by facilities, will now be paid by the department as an “Additional Payment” to facilities. The department will issue full Subsidy for all families eligible under the Child Care Subsidy Program.

Funded facilities will continue to receive operating grant funding, the Reduced Parent Fee Revenue Grant and subsidies.

Unfunded facilities who enroll subsidized children will receive the maximum regulated parent fees equivalent to the amount of the Reduced Parent Fee Revenue Grant plus the subsidy as well as the Additional Payment to compensate for the non-subsidized fees previously charged to families.

Note: There is no change in process for the payments for guaranteed spaces.

Note: This initiative is being delivered through a partnership between the Governments of Canada and Manitoba.

13. Who can I contact if I have additional questions or need more information?

Please contact the Child Care Subsidy Program at cdcsubsidy@gov.mb.ca, 204-945-8195 or 1-877-587-6224(toll-free).

To request this document in an alternate format, please contact cdcinfo@gov.mb.ca.