



An Eye on Early Learning and Child Care in Manitoba

Spring 2009

In this issue . . .

- 1 More Child Care Spaces Funded
- 2 Enhanced Funding for More Nursery Schools
- 3 Lowest Fees Outside of Quebec
- 4 Family Choices Building Fund
- 5 Child Care Safety Charter
- 6 Age-Appropriate Curricula and Enhanced Program Quality
- 7 Inclusion Support Program
- 7 Centralized Online Waiting List
- 8 Stronger Workforce
- 9 Training Supports and Initiatives
- 10 Welcome New Community Service Delivery Staff
- 11 Strategic Expansion and Flexible Hours
- 11 Think Tank on Early Learning and Child Care
- 11 Stronger Parental Stewardship
- 12 Video Streaming the Early Childhood Educator Workplace Training
- 14 New Faces of Early Childhood Educators
- 18 Progress Report Year One 2008/09 Manitoba's Five-Year Agenda for Early Learning and Child Care

A special issue

Progress Report on Family Choices

Family Choices: Manitoba's Five-Year Agenda on Early Learning and Child Care is well underway. Announced in April 2008, this agenda builds on the successes of Manitoba's first five-year plan and makes a commitment to support three key principles for our early learning and child care system: accessibility and universality, affordability and quality.

This issue of *An Eye on Early Learning and Child Care in Manitoba* is a progress report on the five-year agenda. It covers existing and new initiatives and events.

Ongoing consultations with you – Manitoba communities, the child care field and other stakeholders – will help with decision making and priority setting in Manitoba. We can work together to meet the goals of this plan and provide more opportunities for children and families to access high quality, affordable child care.

More child care Spaces Funded

Since *Family Choices* was announced in April 2008, Manitoba has committed funding for 2,350 more child care spaces, including 1,077 new spaces. That brings the province closer to its commitment of supporting 6,500 more child care spaces over the course of the five-year agenda.

With this growth, accessibility will improve greatly. Funding to support child care spaces is important to help child care centres pay expenses and expand their programs.

The province will continue to work with communities and child care providers to expand capacity based on the needs in each area.



Enhanced Funding for More Nursery Schools

In October, seven nursery schools were approved for enhanced nursery school funding retroactive to September 1, 2008. They join 13 others already receiving an enhanced operating grant.

The enhanced funding provides nursery schools with a maximum annual operating grant of \$3,335 per preschool space prorated based on the number of months and weekly sessions in operation. Manitoba has made a commitment to provide enhanced funding over the next five years for an additional 1,000 nursery school spaces.

Building on the success of the 2006 enhanced nursery school funding initiative, Manitoba recognizes the important role of nursery schools in promoting optimal development for all children, especially for families that do not want or need full time care. This initiative helps Manitoba address all three principles of the five-year agenda.

Affordability

- Parents will only pay \$5 or less per session to enroll each of their children.
- There are no parent fees for families receiving a full subsidy.

Accessibility

- Nursery schools must include children with additional support needs and other vulnerable groups of children.
- Nursery schools must strive to improve the accessibility of their programs for preschool children and ensure they are inclusive of all children and families.

Quality

- Enhanced funding has resulted in quality improvements, like new books, science kits, and art and music supplies. Purchasing or replacing large equipment, including swing sets, is now possible.
- Parent support programs have been established, including free parenting courses and magazine and book loaning programs.
- Additional staff have been hired, including part time music and drama teachers.
- More professional development opportunities are being offered to staff so they can stay up-to-date with early learning best practices.

Quality enhancement assessments have been conducted for nursery schools that have been receiving enhanced funding since the fall of 2006 and are now being conducted on nursery schools approved for enhanced funding in 2008.



Lois Speirs was appointed acting director of the Manitoba Child Care Program (MCCP) in June 2008. Lois has worked in the early learning and child care field for many years and brings a wealth of knowledge to this leadership position. Kathy Reid, former MCCP director, retired after 31 years of devoted service in the child care field.



Irene Huggins was hired as a project manager to help implement Family Choices. Irene spent many years working in the Early Literacy Intervention Initiative at Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth and more recently with the Winnipeg School Division in the Reading Recovery Program.

Subsidy To Attend All Nursery School Programs

Remember to tell your community about the nursery school subsidy when advertising your program. The subsidy is now based only on income, and attending nursery school may make a child eligible, regardless of whether the parents attend school or work. This change allows more families, including stay-at-home parents, to apply for subsidies if they want to enroll their child in a nursery school program.

Nursery schools with enhanced funding have said:

“For many of our families, nursery school no longer seems like something only higher income families can afford... we find this especially beneficial for single parent or one income families.”

■ ■ ■

“We have a greater variety of families in our centre.”

■ ■ ■

“A parenting course is being offered free of charge.”

■ ■ ■

“Both parents and children have benefitted from this program.”

Additional Intake Coming in 2009

If your nursery school wants to apply for enhanced grant funding or start a nursery school program, look for an announcement from the Manitoba Child Care Program in 2009.

To be eligible, nursery schools or centres wanting to start a nursery school program must:

- meet or exceed minimum licensing requirements, including staff qualifications
- offer nursery school to children with additional support needs and other vulnerable groups of children
- help parents to meet the child's developmental needs
- demonstrate how the increased grant funding would result in quality enhancements for the nursery school program
- charge a maximum of \$5 per child per session
- be financially viable
- limit a child's enrolment to a maximum of five half-day sessions a week
- agree to have the program reviewed with a quality assessment tool
- consider an expansion of nursery school sessions
- reach out to other early childhood development programs to further enrich the services provided to children and families in their communities

If you do not currently qualify for the enhanced funding, think about developing a plan to meet the funding criteria. From all reports, this increase in funding has been very beneficial to nursery schools and the families and children attending these programs.



Lowest Fees outside of Quebec

Manitoba has the lowest child care fees outside of Quebec. The Manitoba Child Care Program will continue to monitor fees in other provinces to ensure Manitoba maintains this commitment to parents.

Family Choices Building Fund

The Family Choices Building Fund was established to provide capital funding for the development of child care centres in schools that have surplus space. Manitoba identified 12 schools with surplus space that could be modified to accommodate child care centres within the schools. This will create an additional 343 spaces, including: 36 infant, 195 preschool, 79 school age and 29 nursery school spaces at a cost of about \$1.5 million.

The following 12 schools are the first to receive capital grants to modify their space for early learning and child care centres.

Winnipeg

Le P'tit Bonheur Inc., Marion School
David Livingstone School Age Program,
David Livingstone School
Kids Corner Inc., John M. King

Eastman

St. Adolphe Nursery School Inc., St. Adolphe School

North

Halcrow Lake Day Care Centre Inc., Mary Duncan School

Interlake

Eriksdale Nursery School Co-op Inc., Eriksdale School

Westman Region

Kids First Learning Centre, Inglis Elementary
Pierson Preschool Inc., Pierson School
Waskada Wee Ones Playschool Inc., Waskada School
Hamiota Kids Club Inc., Kenton School
Russell Lots-a-Tots Inc.,
Major Pratt School and Kenton School
Morning Star Day Care Inc.,
Birtle Collegiate

Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) Capital Fund Management Committee

The ELCC Capital Fund Management Committee was established to oversee the ELCC in Schools Policy in 1986. With representatives from the Manitoba Child Care Program (MCCP) and the Public Schools Finance Board, this inter-departmental committee works closely to help identify surplus school space suitable for child care centres and can help address community demand.

The committee manages the Family Choices Building Fund and participates in long-term planning with school divisions. To benefit children, families and the community, public schools are a natural fit and a first-choice location for non-profit early learning and child care centres.



Konrad Erickson, project co-ordinator from the Public Schools Finance Board, was seconded to replace **Paulette Monita**, MCCP's capital projects co-ordinator, during her one year leave. Paulette is expected to return to work in July 2009.

ELCC Equipment Grant Offered in Late 2008

An ELCC Equipment Grant was offered to non-profit child care centres in November 2008. These grants pay up to 50 per cent for the purchase of large scale equipment, children's furniture, office furniture, storage, and the development of outdoor play space to improve the early learning environments. More than 230 equipment grants were approved in 2008/09.



Child Care Safety Charter

Manitoba passed the *Child Care Safety Charter* in June 2008. It creates the first comprehensive legislation of its kind in Canada. Early learning and child care (ELCC) facilities in Manitoba are already safe places for children, but the code of conduct and enhanced safety plans in the charter will help to make them even safer.

A copy of the *Child Care Safety Charter* is available on the provincial website at web2.gov.mb.ca/laws/statutes/2008/co1808e.php. New and amended child care regulations are also being drafted to further explain and support this legislation.

Resources and support will be available to help facilities meet the requirements under the safety charter which comes into effect in 2010. Watch for more information and resources.



Carla Kernsted is MCCP's new child care safety specialist. Carla has experience as a policy analyst, a child care co-ordinator and a qualifications co-ordinator in the child care field.

~QUALITY~

Weather Radios for Child Care Providers

Manitoba has paid for weather radios for licensed child care centres and family child care homes that are within broadcast range of the current Weatheradio Canada transmitter stations. This initiative supports Manitoba's efforts to improve weather warning systems for schools and local authorities.

Weatheradio Canada is a nationwide network of radio stations broadcasting weather and environmental information 24 hours a day, directly from Environment Canada's storm prediction



centres. Weather radios respond to alert signals sent by Weatheradio. When a weather radio receives an alert signal, it automatically responds with an alarm to attract attention. This alerts the user to dangerous situations as quickly as possible.

For providers not currently within the broadcasting range of Weatheradio Canada, MCCP is working on a procedure to ensure weather radios are available to ELCC facilities when new stations put them in range. The Manitoba Emergency Measures Organization and Environment Canada plan to double the number of transmitters in Manitoba over a three-year period.

More Safety Measures with the City of Winnipeg Police Service (WPS)

MCCP and the Winnipeg Police Service (WPS) have collaborated to improve the safety of child care facilities. All licensed child care centres and nursery schools in Winnipeg are entered on the city server map and uploaded onto the WPS dispatch computer system.

Immediate access to this information will allow the WPS to notify ELCC facilities of a dangerous situation to

ensure the safety of children, families and ELCC staff. Notification may be in person or by telephone, depending on the circumstance, and a voice mail message may be left for your information.

Commit to Kids

Commit to Kids is a new program to help organizations minimize the risk of child sexual abuse. Developed by the Canadian Centre for Child Protection, it provides a practical tool kit for organizations to manage risk and develop child-safe policies and procedures by:

- screening potential employees and volunteers carefully
- creating child protection policies
- building awareness about sexual abuse
- preventing opportunities for sex offenders to target children

Commit to Kids will be piloted in ten child care centres across Manitoba over the next 6 months. These centres will receive training and provide feedback on the program. Other community volunteer-based organizations will also be approached to evaluate the program and provide ways to adapt it for smaller organizations.

Age-Appropriate Curricula and Enhanced Program Quality

Numerous initiatives are underway to support the continual improvement of program quality in all types of licensed facilities.

Environment Rating Scales

In May 2008, child care co-ordinators (CCCs) began integrating the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R) into their ongoing work with licensed preschool centres. The rating scale is an internationally recognized tool CCCs use to objectively observe and assess preschool programs, provide staff with feedback and help develop plans to improve quality.

In April 2007, CCCs were trained to use the scale. The week long training session included CCCs, child development counsellors and MCCP staff. Co-ordinators participated in numerous program assessments to develop skills in using the ECERS-R tool in a reliable way.

Assessments are also being done in infant centres. In January 2008, four MCCP staff received training in the Infant & Toddler Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ITERS-R). Kim Hucko, Gerrie Stolz, Mavis Lewis-Webber and Jo-Ann Burkitt are now using it to assess infant centres across the province. The centre's child care co-ordinator will review the results with each program and help the staff develop a quality enhancement plan.

Curriculum Framework

Curriculum is everything we do with children, planned and unplanned.

It includes all the experiences children have in a program and the social, emotional, physical and cognitive learning and development that occurs. Each



centre's curriculum is unique, flexible and based on the individual child.

Manitoba's Curriculum Framework is not a prescribed curriculum with set outcomes for children. Instead, it guides practitioners to:

- think about what they do in practice
- articulate and explain the reason for a practice
- evaluate and enhance their curriculum

Once it is described or explained, the curriculum is understood by all staff and can be communicated clearly to parents.

From April to June 2008, MCCP piloted the curriculum framework at 11 preschool child care centres, including three outside of Winnipeg. MCCP staff provided support as the centres reviewed their practices, reflected on them, and articulated their program

curriculum. Based on feedback from these centres, an implementation process for all Manitoba is now being developed. MCCP will prepare resources and support centres.

Information workshops offered to child care providers on the curriculum framework and the implementation process will be announced later this year.



Kerri Pruden, former director of Campus Day Care Centre at the University of Manitoba, joined MCCP on a term basis in October 2008 to help support inclusion and implement the curriculum framework. Kerri has been a frontline ECE III, a special needs worker, a preschool supervisor, an assistant director, a nursery school teacher and a director.

Inclusion Support Program

The Manitoba Child Care Program (MCCP) is pleased to announce that the Children with Disabilities Program will now be called the Inclusion Support Program. We are also updating the term for “children with disabilities” to “children with additional support needs”. These describe the children and how we work together to help them fully participate in a facility’s program. They also reflect current international trends and were chosen after consultation with the community.

An exciting development is that grants for training and special equipment to support children with additional support needs will be available year round, starting in spring 2009. These grants, previously available on a limited basis, will help reduce barriers for children and enhance their meaningful participation in community based settings.

Families of children of all abilities have the right to access child care when needed. To further support children enrolled in licensed child care, regulation amendments are now underway. While many child care facilities already have an inclusion policy, all centres and homes will be required to have one written in the future. MCCP is developing a guide to help facilities write an inclusion policy. It should be available early in 2009. All staff in a centre will be expected to be

made aware of the inclusion policy once it is adopted. Another amendment formalizes the already established practice of having an individual program plan (IPP) in place for all children with additional support needs. All staff who work with a child should be aware of the plan and it should be reviewed in consultation with the child’s parent or guardian, a qualified professional and practitioners at least once a year. Most importantly, the regulation will require that programs in child care facilities include children with additional support needs. As illustrated in the definition of inclusion (provided below) this means children will participate along with their peers using appropriate supports.

These improvements will allow you to better support children with additional needs in your programs as we work towards greater inclusion.



Monica Lytwyn has been MCCP’s inclusion and quality enhancement specialist since April 2008. Her duties include developing and revising policy for the Inclusion Support Program and supporting quality enhancement. Monica has experience as a consultant in the early learning and child care field at Community Living Manitoba, Red River College and various child care programs in the province.

What is Inclusion?

Inclusion in early learning and child care is the practice of educating and caring for children of all abilities, together in a group setting. The goal is to enhance each child’s development within the regular daily program and foster positive social attitudes toward all abilities. A high quality, inclusive program provides opportunities for all children to learn through play, with and from their peers, while supported by knowledgeable practitioners.

Centralized online Waiting List

A centralized online waiting list is being developed to provide families with current and reliable information about the availability of early learning and child care in their community. An extensive consultation process with rural and urban child care centres, family child care providers and other stakeholders was completed. It looked at how waiting lists are currently managed and what needs to be done to ensure the online waiting list contains current, reliable information about the availability of child care.

Manitoba is now preparing to build an online system after working closely with child care stakeholders to develop, refine and finalize a system that can match available child care spaces with parents’ need for child care.



Stronger Workforce

Manitoba launched the Family Choices Workforce Stability Strategy in **November 2008**. This aggressive recruitment and retention plan recognizes the need for a strong workforce to support the expansion of the early learning and child care system. The 11 point plan features the following steps to strengthen the existing child care workforce and attract new people to the child care field:

- wage increases and a pension plan
- minimum base wage
- increased training supports
- increased ECE workplace training college seats
- expanded community-based ECE training programs
- wage subsidies
- public awareness campaigns
- scholarships
- apprenticeship pilot
- fast-tracking licences
- director skills training

Manitoba's recruitment and retention efforts will intensify over the coming years, but already the effort put into early learning and child care has resulted in 1500 more child care workers, including 446 more early childhood educators (ECEs), working in Manitoba's licensed child care system from April 2004 to November 2008. That's a 25 per cent increase in the number of ECEs in less than five years.

Commitments in the Family Choices Workforce Stability Strategy build on this success and go even further in making early learning and child care an attractive career choice.

Retention

Salaries and Benefits

Manitoba plans to increase overall funding by 20 per cent during the five-year Family Choices agenda. Those additional funds will be used to create a pension plan, increase wages and establish a mandated minimum base wage. Steps have already been taken to improve wages:

- A **three per cent increase** to support salaries was delivered to child care providers in July 2008 and an additional three per cent has been committed for July 2009, subject to the approval of the Legislative Assembly.
- A **wage adjustment fund** was established to help facilities meet the need to pay front line workers similar salaries for similar work at a certain minimum level.

The Manitoba Child Care Program (MCCP) accepted applications for wage adjustment funding assistance to help



eligible funded centres and nursery schools increase wages of early childhood educators to at least \$15.50 per hour and child care assistants in training to \$12.25. All approved wage adjustment grants must be applied to wages.

Recruitment

Recruitment Incentive Grant

- Up to \$3,000 continues to be available to attract trained workers back to the early learning and child care field. To qualify, applicants must be out of the field for two or more years and have an approved diploma or degree for an ECE II or ECE III classification.
- As of March 2009, 53 ECEs (35 ECE IIIs and 18 ECE IIs) had returned to the field and have received all or part of the grant.

Public Awareness Campaign

- Advertising for recruitment and retention continues with ads running in daily, weekly, and community newspapers. Ads are also running in French newspapers, parenting and aboriginal publications.



Kris Piche was seconded to MCCP in October, 2008 to work on the wage and pension component of Family Choices. Kris comes from the Treasury Board Secretariat where he worked as a financial analyst for Manitoba Family Services and Housing as well as Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation.

Training Supports and Initiatives

Manitoba will continue to offer and improve previously successful training supports and initiatives, as well as add some new approaches.

Grants

Annual Training Grants

- Starting in 2009, the grant for Child Care Assistants (CCAs) and Family Child Care Providers will increase to \$350 from \$250.
- Also starting in 2009, for the first time, the annual training grant will also be offered to ECE IIs taking courses to upgrade their credentials to the ECE III level.
- Grants will be provided to family child care licencees and centres, on behalf of CCAs or ECEs completing approved early childhood development courses through distance education or evening and weekend courses while they continue to work.
- There were 1,913 training grants awarded from 2004 to November 2008, including 425 to family child care providers and 1,488 for CCAs.

Conditional Tuition Support Grant

- Up to \$4,000 continues to be offered to students enrolled in an approved full time two-year ECE II program at one of Manitoba's four colleges.
- There were 324 conditional tuition support grants approved between September 2005 and November 2008.
- In the fall of 2008, 57 ECE students received approval for this grant.

Staff Replacement Grants to Support Workplace Training

- Grants continue to be provided to centres to pay for substitute workers while CCAs attend workplace Early Childhood Education (ECE) training two days a week at Red River College and Assiniboine Community College. The staff replacement grant enables child care assistants (CCAs) and family child care providers to receive full time salaries while completing a two-year ECE diploma two days a week and continuing to work three days a week.
- In 2008/2009 fiscal year, 78 child care centres supported 137 CCAs to enroll in workplace training and 16 family child care providers attended workplace training.
- Since the staff replacement grants began in April 2005, 411 CCAs and 23 family child care providers have benefited.

Scholarships

Watch for more details about a variety of educational scholarship opportunities that will be available for students enrolled in programs this fall.

To start, scholarships will be offered to high school students enrolling in the ECE diploma program at the University College of the North and the Collège universitaire de Saint-Boniface to support communities currently experiencing the greatest ECE shortages.

Training

Funding to Increase Training Capacity in Colleges

- More full-time daytime college seats are available, including the off-campus SISTARS program in Point Douglas, which has 20 seats.
- Additional workplace training seats are also available.
- Red River College had three workplace training groups with 121 students enrolled in February 2009. Seats are also available at regional campuses with 7 in Steinbach, 8 in Portage la Prairie and 12 in Winkler.
- In September 2008, Assiniboine Community College (ACC) was approved for 25 workplace seats in Dauphin. ACC was also approved for another 25 workplace seats in Brandon in the first quarter of 2009.





Video Streaming Workplace Training to Regional Campuses

- In September 2008, workplace training was offered for the first time by video streaming to Red River College's regional campuses in Steinbach, Winkler and Portage la Prairie. Workplace training allows existing CCAs to receive an ECE diploma on a part-time basis while they are employed at a child care centre.

- Video streaming courses for workplace students in regional campuses allows CCAs to stay employed in local centres and not have to re-locate or drive to Winnipeg.
- 27 students are currently enrolled in the video streamed ECE training.

Competency Based/Prior Learning Assessment (CBA/PLA) Program

- This is available from the MCCP for CCAs with related post secondary education (not eligible for an ECE II classification) who can demonstrate their competencies and achieve a trained ECE II classification.
- The program is expected to graduate 36 students in 2008/2009.

Early Childhood Educator: Internationally Educated Qualification's Program (ECE: IEQ);

- This program was transitioned to MCCP from Manitoba Labour & Immigration in spring 2008. It is for internationally educated students with related post-secondary education who are working in licensed child care to attain an ECE II classification.
- Approximately 10 people are expected to receive an ECE II classification in 2008/2009.



Welcome New Community Service Delivery Staff

Child Care Coordinators

Melanie Colli – Westman
 Holly Sweetman – Parkland
 Lianne Picton – Winnipeg
 Sharlynn Saindon – Winnipeg
 Eden Tomczyk – Winnipeg

Program Specialist

William Curtis-Grindell

Supervisors/Managers

Heather Mazur – Winnipeg
 Barbara Balshaw-Dow – Winnipeg
 Sandra Smith – Westman
 Micheline Durand - Central

Strategic Expansion and Flexible Hours

While new child care facilities are often developed by groups of people to meet the needs in their communities, strategic planning is also important to identify under-served communities.

The Manitoba Child Care Program (MCCP) has been working on a long term strategy. MCCP has:

- distributed a survey to child care co-ordinators to determine the child care needs in the regions; identify centres capable of expanding services; and identify other groups interested in helping to develop child care centres
- examined census data to see where children from birth to 12 years are located and what type of child care is available
- started reaching out to form partnerships with community groups and other government departments to hear about the child care needs of diverse groups
- listened to ideas and concerns from child care providers, advocacy groups, the Child Care Regulatory Review Committee and other stakeholders

The centralized online waiting list, another part of the five year agenda, is also expected to provide valuable information from parents and child care providers. More discussions and planning will occur to address the needs identified in Family Choices, including farm families and part-time or seasonal workers.

As Manitoba expands the early learning and child care system, MCCP looks forward to working with community representatives and the child care community to ensure the five-year agenda can be achieved. Through these efforts, Manitoba will improve the accessibility and universality of child care for families and communities across the province.



Think Tank on Early Learning and Child Care

Parental Stewardship

In January 2009, the Child Care Coalition of Manitoba, with support from the provincial and federal governments in collaboration with Community Futures White Horse Plains, hosted a think tank forum in Portage la Prairie. Several key business and community stakeholders shared ideas and considered ways to strengthen the delivery and financing of early learning and child care programs for rural Manitoba.

The coalition hoped to learn from other sectors about successful models that could enhance the delivery of child care. The coalition will produce a paper to summarize the forum results. Manitoba welcomes this input to help meet the unique child care needs in rural areas.



Minister Mackintosh with Charles Coffey, former Executive Vice President of RBC Financial Group, at the Think Tank in Portage la Prairie

Stronger Parental Stewardship

In Manitoba there are over 575 voluntary boards, made up mostly of parents, to manage early learning and child care programs. To support the work of these board members, Manitoba has committed to work with child care boards and encourage the development of alternative models of board governance.

Six child care boards or groups working with boards have been given funding to look at the benefits of new models of governance and what barriers there might be to implementing them. Plans to support another two groups should be finalized in 2009. As these new models are researched and evaluated, helpful information will be shared with boards that are considering alternative governance structures.

Board orientations for new child care board members are ongoing. In addition, the agency accountability and support unit has been training child care co-ordinators and staff from MCCP on board governance so they can support boards. Board governance training is also available on request for child care centre boards.

Video Streaming the Early Childhood Educator Workplace Training

In September 2008, Red River College piloted video streaming of the Early Childhood Educator (ECE) Workplace Training program to three regional campuses. Using computer technology, lectures from the Winnipeg campus are video streamed to students in Steinbach, Winkler and Portage la Prairie.

To support the learning environment at regional sites, lectures are transmitted with only a 20 second delay. Students can ask questions through an online chat system, which allows the instructor to be notified immediately and provide answers in the same class. In addition, each site has a class facilitator to help guide discussions with students and liaise with staff in Winnipeg to ensure a better learning environment.

Video streaming the ECE workplace training to regional sites offers a great opportunity for child care assistants and family child care providers to get an ECE education while working in rural communities. To take advantage of this ECE workplace training program, students don't have to relocate or drive to Winnipeg two days a week. Manitoba's staff replacement grant further supports students by ensuring they receive their full-time salary while attending school two days a week.

Joanne Marusyk believes the video streaming is a "wonderful thing" because it's responsive and accessible to the field, especially in rural Manitoba. Currently, there are 27 ECE workplace students enrolled in regional campuses with 12 in Winkler, seven in Steinbach and eight in Portage la Prairie. The Garderie de Bambins Co-op Inc. child care centre in St. Malo currently has three of its employees enrolled in this program.

Kim Hanna, co-ordinator of the ECE Workplace Training program at Red River College, says child care assistants (CCAs) have responded favourably to the ECE workplace training program. Since it began six years ago, 250 ECEs have graduated from this program. In February 2009, 121 CCAs were enrolled in the first or second year of the ECE workplace training program, including the 27 students at regional sites. Assiniboine Community College also



Video Streaming at the ECE Workplace program at the Eastman Education Centre

(starting at top from left to right)

On site Facilitator – Joanne Marusyk

Monique Forest

Raymond Chartier, watching the lecture

offers a workplace training program in their Dauphin campus and in early 2009 the college will have another class in Brandon.

Hanna agrees that video streaming the workplace training to regional sites is another way to reach child care assistants wanting to upgrade their education. She says a co-operative team approach has made the video streamed ECE program successful, and believes the support of facilitators at each site is also an important element. The result is a successful program and happy students who are able to get an ECE education close to home.

Collège universitaire de Saint-Boniface offers an Advanced Diploma in Leadership for ECEs

The Advanced Diploma in Leadership for Early Childhood Education is a 30-credit program composed of 21 credits in theoretical courses offered online and nine credits in an internship placement. Its purpose is to prepare bilingual leaders (French/English) in the Early Childhood field. It's offered on a part-time basis and takes about two and a half years to complete. Successful completion of this program leads to an Early Childhood Educator III classification.

Courses offered in Winter 2009 were Organizational Behavior and Administrative Communication.

For further information, please contact Dominique Arbez, 237-1818 (ext 478) in Winnipeg; or by e-mail darbez@ustboniface.mb.ca.

(from top to bottom)

Claudia Storoschuk and Raymond Chartier

(R-L) Krystal Fuchs, Daphne Friesen and Michelle Comeault



New Faces of Early Childhood Educators

Across the province, more people are recognizing the benefits and personal fulfillment that a career in child care offers. Encouraged by financial training supports, people from diverse backgrounds, gender and age groups are now being drawn into the field.

Workers already employed in child care are also realizing the importance of education and taking advantage of training initiatives to upgrade their skills and increase their salaries. Here are profiles on some of Manitoba's new early childhood educators.



Ardis Gauthier at Garderie de Bambins Co-op Inc., St. Malo

“Working with children is fun.”

Ardis graduated as an ECE II in April 2008 from Red River College, Steinbach Regional Site. Looking for a career change, Ardis thought child care would be a good fit for her. Having operated a family child care home when her children were young, she already knew child care was rewarding work.

With financial assistance from Manitoba's conditional tuition support grant and employment insurance, Ardis enrolled in the full-time ECE diploma program in the fall of 2006 and graduated with honors. Ardis made such an impression during her practicum at Garderie de Bambins Co-op Inc. in St. Malo that she was offered a job there. She enjoys contributing to each child's development by helping each one learn and says “they learn so quickly.” She feels valued when parents tell her that their children have learned specific skills with her encouragement.

Ardis says her ECE training and ongoing support from her mentor and supervisor, Pierrette Dubois, helps her respond to the uniqueness of each child.



Stephanie Dueck, Lisa Dueck, Samantha Currie and Lavonne Miller at Kinder Korner, Steinbach

“Yes, we do make a difference.”

Kinder Korner director, Marita Rempel, was happy to say that her centre has hired four new ECE graduates and another employee is currently enrolled in the new video streamed workplace program being offered in Steinbach.

These graduates are enthusiastic about their work and say it is very rewarding guiding children in their development. The early years are important for a child's development, so they know they can make a difference. A comfortable atmosphere in the centre also adds to the enjoyment of their work. Staff share ideas and feel like they are part of a family in the centre. They believe that their director, Marita, sets a positive tone with her support and humour.

Pierrette Dubois, Supervisor and Mentor, and Ardis Gauthier, 2008 ECE graduate

Hélène Lafantaisie, Director, and Ardis Gauthier, 2008 ECE Red River College (RRC) – Steinbach graduate



Lisa Dueck was the first of the group to graduate when she completed the ECE diploma course from Red River College, Notre Dame Campus, in 2007. Lisa's sister Stephanie, followed in her footsteps and graduated from the Notre Dame campus in 2008. Samantha Currie took advantage of the ECE diploma program being offered in Steinbach and also graduated in the spring of 2008. All three say Manitoba's conditional tuition support grant and encouragement from their family really helped them to finish their ECE II education.

Lavonne Miller took a different educational path by finishing the first year and a half of the ECE diploma in Winnipeg and then completing her required courses through distance education. She also completed the ECE diploma in April 2008.

Ofelia Gelo at Machray Day Nursery, Winnipeg

"Becoming an ECE changed my life."

Ofelia loves working in the Machray Day Nursery where she feels like part of a family. She says children run to greet her in the morning and co-workers are always willing to help. Ofelia's mentor, Debbie Blackmon, is the director of the centre and she sets a flexible and professional tone.

Ofelia was a teacher in the Philippines and after moving to Winnipeg she held a number of positions, including garment factory worker and substitute teacher. Ofelia then found employment as a child care assistant (CCA) at a child care centre. After a year as a CCA, she decided to take advantage of Manitoba's conditional tuition support grant, enrolled in the full-time ECE diploma course and graduated in the spring of 2007.

Ofelia credits her new position as an ECE II and the resulting salary increase for changing her life. After 15 years of living in an apartment, Ofelia and her family were finally able to afford to buy their own house.



Stephanie Dueck, 2008 RRC Winnipeg graduate; Lisa Dueck, 2007 RRC Winnipeg graduate; Samantha Currie, 2008 RRC – Steinbach graduate, Lavonne Miller – upcoming RRC graduate

Debbie Lackmon, Director and mentor, Ofelia Gelo, 2007 RRC graduate

New Faces of Early Childhood Educators *continued*



Françoise Nkuba, Irene Anzaka, Jaqueline Edmunds, Léanne Plamondon at Les Enfants Precieux Inc., Winnipeg

"An ECE education really helps."

Françoise and Léanne completed the two year ECE diploma program at the Collège universitaire de Saint-Boniface (CUSB) in 2007. The following year, Irene and Jaqueline finished the ECE diploma from CUSB.

Léanne strongly believes in the value of an ECE education. While she admits she only enrolled in the ECE diploma program after being pushed by the director of her child care centre, Léanne now realizes its importance. She says working with children is "not always about common sense" and the diploma program helped her better understand children, communicate with parents and plan activities for learning. ECEs don't provide a cookie-cutter approach to child care. Instead, they provide an environment where children are allowed to be creative and experiment to increase their knowledge and develop skills. Jaqueline agrees and says ECEs help children discover new things.

After immigrating to Canada, Françoise and Irene both chose a career in child care and, with the help of a conditional tuition support grant, they each accomplished the goal of becoming an ECE II. Françoise had worked with children before but spent her first four years in Winnipeg as a health aide. Eventually though, she missed working with children and found a job as a child care assistant before deciding to enroll in ECE training. Irene had an internal desire to work with children and see them grow. For that reason, she was drawn to the field of early childhood education and completed the diploma program.

Caryn LaFlèche, director of Les Enfants Precieux, also believes in education and encourages all child care assistants working at the centre to upgrade their qualifications. She often has more trained staff than provincial regulations require. Many child care assistants demonstrate a natural ability with children, so she asks them to imagine how skilled they could be with an ECE education.

Jaqueline's advice to anyone thinking about a career in child care is "go for it!"



Françoise Nkuba, 2007 Collège universitaire de Saint-Boniface (CUSB) graduate; Irene Anzaka, 2008 CUSB graduate, Jaqueline Edmunds, 2008 CUSB graduate; Léanne Plamondon, 2007 CUSB graduate

“I really enjoy working in child care”

Régine Walkty at Les Amis de la Source in CFB Shilo

“There’s always something to learn.”

While working as a child care assistant, Régine was encouraged to upgrade her education by her mother-in-law and mentor, Charlotte Walkty, director at Collège universitaire de Saint-Boniface (CUSB). Believing she had a special talent with children, Régine enrolled in the ECE diploma program at CUSB and graduated in 2007.

The education “helped a lot.” Before she received the training, Régine admits it was hard dealing with some children’s behaviour problems. As an ECE graduate, she understands how to intervene with children in a positive way and recognizes their developmental process. She recommends an education to anyone wanting to work in child care.

Working in child care also allows Régine to bring her baby, Gabriel, to work every day. Originally, she planned to set up a licensed family child care home but when Régine knew her child could join her at work, she decided to accept a position in a child care centre. According to Régine, Gabriel benefits from the interaction with other children and adults at the centre, so it was good decision for everyone.

Erika Napierala and Angie Whelpton at the Y Early Learning Centre in Brandon

“I really enjoy working in child care.”

Both Erika and Angie are 2008 ECE graduates from Assiniboine Community College. Listening to children’s points of view and teaching them through play is rewarding, says Erika. “I learn so much from kids and vice versa.” She says the ECE training was a good experience and taught her how to relax with children.

Erika’s aunt also works in child care and she has a number of friends enrolled in first year ECE training. She believes early learning and child care is really enjoyable and says, “I have no regrets about choosing this career.”



Régine Walkty, 2007 CUSB graduate and her baby, Gabriel

Erika Napierala and Angie Whelpton, 2008 ECE graduates from Assiniboine Community College

FAMILY CHOICES

Manitoba's Five-Year Agenda for Early Learning and Child Care Progress Report - Year one 2008/09

Agenda Commitment	Progress Report
✓ 6,500 More Child Care Spaces Funded by 2013	Funding committed for 2,350 additional child care spaces for children of all ages in need of care.
✓ Increased Nursery School Enrolment	Seven additional Nursery Schools receiving enhanced funding on September 1, 2008. 116 additional spaces funded in September 2008 More children can access this early learning opportunity. The maximum fee is \$5.00 per session.
✓ Family Choices Building Fund	12 schools across the province with surplus space have been identified for funding to help develop child care centres. Equipment grants are offered (November 2008). Early learning and child care building fund - 29 grants in six regions of Manitoba.
✓ Child Care Safety Charter	Manitoba is the first Canadian jurisdiction with a legislated Child Care Safety Charter (June 2008). Regulations are being drafted to meet requirements of legislation. Weather radios provided for programs.
✓ Age Appropriate Curricula and Enhanced Program Quality	Materials have been developed for use by preschool centres as they define their play-based, early learning curricula. To implement the curriculum framework, MCCP staff will provide mentorship and support beginning April 2009. Use of ECERS and ITERS will enhance program quality.



Agenda Commitment	Progress Report
<p>✓ Centralized Online Waiting list</p>	<p>A centralized early learning and child care availability waiting list is being developed.</p> <p>It will provide parents with current, reliable information about availability of early learning and child care in their communities.</p>
<p>✓ Lowest Fees Outside of Quebec</p>	<p>Manitoba currently has the lowest fees outside Quebec.</p> <p>Manitoba continues to regulate maximum fees</p> <p>Fees across Canada are monitored by MCCP staff.</p>
<p>✓ Greater Inclusion</p>	<p>Name changed to Inclusion Support Program.</p> <p>MCCP is developing resource materials to help facilities write an inclusion policy.</p>
<p>✓ Flexible Hours</p>	<p>MCCP is identifying current child care needs for off-hours and seasonal programs.</p> <p>Options for providing flexible hours of child care are being explored.</p>
<p>✓ Stronger Workforce</p>	<p>There was a three per cent increase in operating grants July 2008.</p> <p>A wage adjustment fund has been set up.</p> <p>The annual training grant to be increased to \$350 from \$250.</p>
<p>✓ Strategic Expansion</p>	<p>Ongoing research is being done to identify the need for the strategic expansion of the child care spaces for under-served areas.</p>
<p>✓ Stronger Parental Stewardship</p>	<p>Six groups are being funded to support initiatives that enhance board governance with two more in the works.</p> <p>Ongoing board orientations are available for new child care board members.</p> <p>The agency accountability and support unit provides training for FSH staff.</p> <p>Ad hoc training is available for child care centre boards when requested.</p>

