



## Early Learning and Child Care

### MONTHLY E-NEWS

**JUNE 2023**

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## Early Learning and Child Care Division Update

### Reflections on Indigenous History Month and Pride Month

Pride Month holds significant importance around the world, as it celebrates diversity, inclusivity, and the rights of members of the 2SLGBTQ+ community. Indigenous History Month, along with National Indigenous Peoples Day celebrated June 21, 2023, honours the cultures, histories, and contributions of Indigenous peoples in Canada. The Manitoba Child Care Association's Conference highlighted the impact that early learning programs can have in celebrating diversity, with its opening day keynote address by Gaston Lopez Ficher. As we consider the growth and strengthening of the early learning and child care system here in Manitoba, it is a valuable time to reflect on how we create safe and inclusive environments where children and their families have a sense of belonging.

The Manitoba government has a [policy statement on gender diversity and inclusion](#) for both children in early learning and child care programs and students in Kindergarten to Grade 12 schools, as well as an Indigenous Education Policy Framework, entitled [Mamāhtawisiwin: The Wonder We Are Born With](#). The department has also created two dedicated positions for Early Learning and Child Care within the Indigenous Inclusion Directorate. Recruitment for both of these positions is currently taking place.

### Staffing Opportunities and Updates

We are hiring for two dedicated positions to advance priorities for Indigenous inclusion within early learning and child care:

#### **Indigenous Inclusion Consultant, ELCC:**

<https://jobsearch.gov.mb.ca/generateBulletin.action?ID=103180>

#### **Indigenous Inclusion Senior Program Analyst, ELCC:**

<https://jobsearch.gov.mb.ca/generateBulletin.action?ID=102640>

We continue to welcome new staff into our division to support Manitoba's priorities for early learning and child care:

- **Lisa Ludwig** has been confirmed in the position of Manager, Licensing and Compliance, in the Provincial Operations Branch. Lisa has 26 years of experience in the sector, having worked in the field 13 years before joining the Manitoba government in 2010. Lisa holds a Bachelor of Human Ecology degree from the University of Manitoba and an ECE III classification.
- **Olaekan Lasisi** (who goes by **Ola**) has joined the Finance and Accountability Branch as the Manager, Accounting Services. Ola is a designated accountant (CPA, CGA) with 15 years of experience in both the public and private sectors, and brings with him a wealth of experience in treasury management, and financial planning, analysis, and reporting. Ola holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Applied Accounting and a Master's Degree in Business Administration.

## Moving Forward on Child Care Priorities

### Adding More Options to Enter or Advance a Career in Early Learning and Child Care

On Thursday, June 15, 2023, the governments of Manitoba and Canada announced an investment of over \$24 million to develop and expand Early Childhood Educator (ECE) and Child Care Assistant (CCA) training programs at Manitoba's post-secondary institutions over the next three years. Another \$6 million will be allocated to continue the successful Early Childhood Educator (ECE) Tuition Reimbursement initiative until the 2025/2026 academic year. Both initiatives are funded under the Canada-Manitoba Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement.

Five Manitoba post-secondary institutions are expanding training, which will support more than 2,000 new additional student admissions. This expansion will also include more flexible, accelerated training opportunities that meet the standards for certification, while recognizing the needs of the child care workforce across the province. Watch for new training options soon, including those available to support francophone training at the Université de Saint-Boniface which will be adding 15 seats to its French-language ECE Diploma Workplace Program and redeveloping an advanced diploma to provide francophone-centred ECE III training beginning September 2024.

Together with this investment, the ECE Tuition Reimbursement has been extended for another three academic years, providing eligible applicants attending recognized post-secondary ECE programs with a rebate of up to \$5,000 per academic year. Manitoba has already provided over \$2.7 million in tuition rebates to 631 Manitobans in ECE training during the 2021/2022 and 2022/2023 academic years, and the department encourages more to apply in the months and years ahead!

**Did you know** – *Nine post-secondary institutions currently offer recognized childhood education programs leading to ECE certification?*

For more information about the Tuition Reimbursement, including a poster to print and share, visit: [www.manitoba.ca/education/childcare/students\\_workforce/ece\\_tuition\\_support.html](http://www.manitoba.ca/education/childcare/students_workforce/ece_tuition_support.html)

Additional information about childhood education programs, including CCA and ECE classification is available at: [www.manitoba.ca/education/childcare/students\\_workforce/index.html](http://www.manitoba.ca/education/childcare/students_workforce/index.html)

## Spotlight on Success

### “What If We Spent the Whole Week Outside?” Simple Question Leads to a Unique Approach to Child Care

In 2011, Doris Storey wanted to spend more time outdoors with the children in her program at Discovery Children's Centre in Winnipeg.

They started small, with longer periods outside each day, and worked toward having a full day of outdoor fun. Building on that success, Storey asked her team, “What if we spent the whole week outside?”

“That was how the Two-Week Challenge began 20 years ago,” says Donna Freeman, Executive Director of Discovery. “Back then, centres spent most of their time inside. We found that it was really good for the children to be outside. They engaged in deeper, very imaginative play, and longer periods of uninterrupted play.”

The Two-Week Challenge grew in popularity very quickly, with more than 30 centres participating within the first few years. Facilities across Canada from Ontario to Vancouver Island took part in the Challenge, intrigued by an outdoor experience well-beyond what is normally offered in Canada. Today, while Discovery still promotes the ideals of the Two-Week Challenge and offers information, tours, and workshops to centres who wish to spend more quality time outside, their centre has moved to an almost entirely outdoor program.



“We are outside most of the time,” says Freeman. “We are outside about five or six hours per day depending on weather. We have 320 children and 55 staff, and we’re open evenings and Saturdays, and we’re all outside more than half that time each week. We have the babies outside! It’s all about adapting and accommodating. We have 167 garden boxes and apple trees, and we teach the kids about where food comes from. Some of our snacks are seed to table. Many of our staff didn’t know anything about gardening until they came here—one person thought potatoes came from trees! It can be expensive to be outside, with outdoor equipment and setup and repairs, so sustainability is a challenge. But we hear from parents, their toddlers don’t want to be inside, they put their rubber boots on by themselves and want to go out. Stories like that make it worthwhile.”

Research shows that many child care programs in other cold-climate countries spend far more time outside than their Canadian counterparts. But cold weather doesn’t stop Discovery.

“Why wouldn’t you want to be outdoors in winter?” jokes Freeman. “Snow is so good, so fun, and you can do so much with it! It’s all about adapting to the weather. We are licensed for a removable fire pit, we have good equipment, and shelter space to warm up. Summer can actually be more challenging—it’s easier to warm up than cool off!”

While Discovery has moved to a year-round outdoor program, Freeman says the Two-Week Challenge continues to be a great jumping off point for centres that want to get children outside more often.

"You can start with a half day, then a whole day," says Freeman. "I am meeting with schools and centres all the time, sharing stories about how good it is for children. We strongly advocate for nature in pedagogy. I worry that young people today often have fewer memories about being outside—some might remember being at a cottage or camping, but many don't. And so by inspiring people and doing things differently, we really connect with nature."

"We hope that kinship with nature will influence what the children in our centre today are going to do with their children tomorrow."

### Helpful Ideas from Discovery Children's Centre on Spending More Time Outside

- Try starting your day outside, the moment your program opens.
- Give your teaching partners a bit of time to get their head around the idea.
- Start small and build on success.
- Document (in writing and with pictures) your experiences and share with parents and colleagues.
- Children love eating outside, napping outside, and even playing in the rain.
- Even infants and toddlers thrive outside. They really can do it!
- You don't need to over plan. A few activities can go a long way.
- Show the children you too are having fun!



For more information, visit [discoverycc.com](https://discoverycc.com).

### Listening to Manitoba's Early Childhood Educators

Prescious (CCA—Winnipeg)

**"What I love about working with children is how we create strong relationships with the children and their families. A place that feels like home, safe, loved, and excited to go to! This motivates my love for children and makes me feel proud as an Early Childhood Educator."**

### Meet the ELCC Team

Gurpreet Grewal (Child Care Coordinator, Early Learning and Child Care Division)



*"I was born and raised in Mumbai, India. I was twenty when I left the country and moved to New Zealand. I lived there for eight-ish years and then I moved to Winnipeg in February 2020, bang in the middle of COVID. Right from a very young age, I was interested in early learning and child care. When I was in Grade 8, I started facilitating summer and winter camps for children. Working in the sector [early childhood] was absolutely incredible, and I think a blessing, because not everyone gets to do that. People don't realize how important the first seven years of a child's life are.*

*I get 100% of my ambitions from my mother. Everyone thinks their parents are the best, but truly you will not come across a person like my mother. Every single day, I try to be a better person because of her.*

*When my life is complete, I would want people to remember who I was. I want to leave a mark. It's doing something for the children. What can I do to enhance the quality of their lives? It's doing something for the sector, bringing real change."*

## Announcements and Reminders

### Congratulations to Our Recent ECE II Assessment Graduates Who Received Their Certification!

This June, the department celebrated and congratulated 67 new Early Childhood Educator (ECE) professionals who received their ECE II certification.

The ECE II Assessment Program is a pathway to achieve the ECE II classification in Manitoba. This program supports individuals who already have the necessary knowledge, skills, and judgement required to work as trained and qualified staff in a child care facility. Manitoba's newest ECE II professionals have finished one of four program streams that follow Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Competency Based Assessment (CBA) practices, investing anywhere between six and 24 months, proving that their skills meet Manitoba standards for ECE certification.

On June 22, 2023, the department invited the recent graduates to be honoured and receive their certificate at the ECE II Assessment Program Graduation Ceremony held in Winnipeg.



Left to Right: Mario Gordon, Director, Workforce Development; Joanna Flores, Senior Policy Analyst; Charito Julian – ECE II Graduate; Carmen Zubin, Policy Analyst



ECE II Graduate Olga Shmidt with Marcia Desmedt, Child Care Coordinator, Carmen Zubin, and Mario Gordon.



Mario Gordon with ECE II Graduate Meena Rani



Class of 2019 through 2023 ECE II Graduates from left to right: Lovepreet Kaur Mohie, Jasdeep Bajaj, Sathsaranie Thenuwara, Dilini Balasooriya, Pratima Bhattarai, Amritpal Thind, Nivin Elserety, Meena Rani, Olga Shmidt, Anlyn Frias, and Charito Julian

## ECE II Assessment Program—New Intake for Rural and Northern Participants in the Competency Based Assessment (CBA) Stream

The CBA stream is a self-directed assessment program in which Child Care Assistants (CCAs) may earn a classification of Early Childhood Educator (ECE) II upon successful completion of the program requirements, under the guidance of an Advisor and Peer Assessor. With an intake focused on participants from regions outside the City of Winnipeg, the opportunity for ECE II certification is within reach for more CCAs across the province! Learn more [here](#). All interested applicants are encouraged to email [cdccertificate@gov.mb.ca](mailto:cdccertificate@gov.mb.ca).

## Child Care Sustainability Trust—2023/2024 Application Available Now

The Child Care Sustainability Trust supports all eligible licensed child care facilities by providing one-time grant funding for projects directed at infrastructure improvements, program enhancements and professional development to enhance early learning and child care services and programming. Qualifying applicants are eligible for up to \$25,000 for licensed child care centres and \$5,000 for child care homes. All eligible expenses are to be made prior to March 31, 2025. Deadline to apply is September 30, 2023. Read more or obtain an application [here](#).

## Declaration Under the Public Sector Compensation Disclosure Act (PSCDA)—Due July 7, 2023

A reminder that all eligible facilities must provide a signed Declaration Form stating awareness/compliance with PSCDA requirements by **July 7, 2023**. For more information, read the circular [here](#) or watch the [webinar](#) for additional details.

## Government of Canada announces Early Learning and Child Care Infrastructure Fund

On June 29, 2023, the Government of Canada announced a \$625 million Early Learning and Child Care Infrastructure Fund for provinces and territories, to support the Canada-Wide Agreement on Early Learning and Child Care. The Manitoba government will be negotiating with federal partners on the details of this fund and how it applies in our province, and we will share further information as it becomes available. Read more [here](#).

## Request for Proposals (RFP): Now Available on MERX

The department is currently seeking two consultants to carry out commitments made under the Early Learning and Child Care Agreements with Canada as follows:

**Consultant Position (formal title TBD):** The consultant will lead the renewal of the Department's early learning and child care curriculum framework, supporting the commitment under the Canada-Manitoba Early Learning and Child Care Agreement. The successful proponent for the renewal of the curriculum framework contract will develop an enhanced and adaptable curriculum framework integrating Indigenous, cultural, and community perspectives. They will also be responsible for developing and piloting the curriculum framework and resources within the Early Learning and Child Care sector. The new framework will support high-quality and inclusive programming that promotes improved outcomes in the different domains of early childhood development. Merx Listing will be live week of July 3, 2023.

**Provision of Capital Development Consultancy Services:** The consultant will act as a Capital Projects Systems Navigator, supporting the commitment towards developing 23,000 new child spaces by March 31, 2026 under the Canada-Manitoba Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement. The consultant will be tasked with identifying viable prospects for child care development across different regions of the province, crafting a comprehensive and cohesive capital project plan that integrates ongoing initiatives (e.g., commitments within the Canada-Manitoba Early Learning and Child Care Agreement) and the region-specific opportunities identified, project implementation and management of the capital project plan. Merx Listing Number 29518, learn more [here](#).

## We Value Your Input!

Would you like to share some of your facility's ideas or tell us about a program or celebration at your facility? A quote about why you love being an early childhood educator? Email us at [CDInfo@gov.mb.ca](mailto:CDInfo@gov.mb.ca) with the subject line "ELCC Newsletter" and you could be featured in our next edition!

### For general inquiries about the Early Learning and Child Care Division:

**Website:** [www.manitoba.ca/childcare](http://www.manitoba.ca/childcare)

**Email:** [cdcinfo@gov.mb.ca](mailto:cdcinfo@gov.mb.ca)

**Phone:** 204-945-0776

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