

MAY
2026

Early Learning and Child Care

MONTHLY E-NEWS



MOVING FORWARD
ON CHILD CARE
PRIORITIES

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AND REMINDERS

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MOVING FORWARD ON CHILD CARE PRIORITIES

Strengthening Child Care through Effective Board Governance

“What should I do if Board members miss meetings and we can’t always make quorum?”

“Whose role is it to decide on the Executive Director’s successor?”

“Our bylaws are very outdated. How do we update them?”

Do **you** have an answer to these questions?

Strong board governance is essential to the stability, accountability, and long-term success of licensed child care centres in Manitoba. For non-profit child care facilities, the board of directors is the legal authority responsible for ensuring that programs operate in compliance with legislation, that public funds are stewarded responsibly, and that children and families receive safe, high-quality, and inclusive care.

Continued on next page

MOVING FORWARD ON CHILD CARE PRIORITIES

Strengthening Child Care through Effective Board Governance (*continued*)

In Manitoba, the governing board sets strategic direction, establishes policy, and oversees financial and organizational health, while delegating day-to-day operations to professional staff. When boards understand their role and work with centre leadership, organizations are better positioned to respond to community needs, manage change, and maintain continuity over time.

Conversely, unclear governance roles can lead to operational challenges, staff turnover, and risks to service quality.

Recognizing the critical role boards play and the many important questions with which facilities sometimes struggle, the department has partnered with the Manitoba Child Care Association (MCCA) to ensure all licensed non-profit centres have access to high quality governance resources and training. With funding provided through the Canada-Manitoba Early Learning and Child Care Agreement, [a coordinated suite of leadership and governance supports](#) is available, at no cost, to help foster a strong, accountable, and responsive early learning and child care system throughout the province.

These supports include the following:

- [The Basics of Effective Board Governance](#) online training series, which introduces board members to their responsibilities, authority, and accountability, as well as the elements of effective meetings and decision-making.
- [Customizable Board Governance Manual, along with free implementation support from an HR specialist.](#) This manual serves as a practical, best practice resource outlining board roles, ensuring consistency in governance understanding, and supporting board orientation and succession planning.
- [Governance training workshops](#) that focus on governance fundamentals and governance in action, complementing existing online learning opportunities. Recent workshops included topics such as effective meetings, financial matters, HR issues, and legal oversight.
- [Board governance resource library](#) in English and French.

Facilities are encouraged to share these wrap-around resources with their Boards. For more information or to register for board governance training and services, visit the [Manitoba Child Care Association website](#).

"Words cannot explain how useful I found the Board Governance manual and tool kit! Michele at People First HR was so patient and understanding and full of incredible information. She comprehensively explained how the manual worked and how to customize it for our specific program. My Board has grown so much in knowledge and confidence since being introduced to the manual. I am a huge fan of this program."

Tammy Chalmers,
Director,
Little Steps Creative Centre

"Board governance training helped strengthen both our management team and board by creating a clearer understanding of roles, responsibilities, and decision-making boundaries. It provided guidance on where management leads daily operations and where board members contribute through oversight, strategic planning, and policy direction. Having these roles clearly defined reduced confusion, improved communication, and took pressure off our shoulders by ensuring everyone understood their purpose and authority within the organization. This clarity has allowed our team to work more confidently, collaboratively, and effectively in supporting the success and growth of our centre."

Jenna Francey, ECE II,
Executive Director,
Souris Cooperative Daycare Centre

Manitoba Child Care Association, in partnership with Curbridge, Launches 'Directors Desk'

Manitoba child care facilities can now access a subscription service for 'Directors Desk'—an HR software tool and a dedicated HR consultant specific to the early learning and child care sector.

To learn more, visit the [Manitoba Child Care Association](#).



**Manitoba Child
Care Association**

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REMINDERS

Information Session for New Licensed Child Care Centre Applicants

Do you know any applicants interested in becoming licensed? The information session for new centres provides important information about the child care centre development and licensing process, legislation, staff qualifications and training, design guidelines, and much more. There will be time allocated to answer questions from participants. Upon completion of the information session, applicants in attendance will be eligible to submit a licensing application.

Upcoming information sessions:

- June 17, 2026 (virtual)
- September 16, 2026 (virtual)

To register for an information session, email cdcinfo@gov.mb.ca or call 204-945-0776 or toll-free 1-888-213-4754 and provide your contact information and the date you wish to attend.

Nominations Open: Manitoba Early Childhood Educator Awards of Excellence

Nomination Deadline: June 19, 2026

Help honour and celebrate outstanding child care professionals by nominating child care professionals whose excellence, innovation, and dedication are making a meaningful difference for children, families, and communities.

Choose from five nomination categories currently open for the 2026 [Manitoba Early Childhood Educator Awards of Excellence](#), including two new awards added this season!

- Outstanding Early Childhood Educator Award
 - Outstanding ECE
 - Outstanding Francophone ECE
 - Outstanding Indigenous ECE
 - *** NEW:** Outstanding Rural and Northern ECE
- Community Collaboration Award (up to five recipients)
- Leadership Excellence Award
- Exemplary Home-Based Early Learning Environment Award
- *** NEW:** Early Learning and Child Care Impact Award

One eligible category award recipient(s) will also be considered for the **Premier's Award for Early Childhood Education**.

A reception honouring all recipients will be hosted this autumn. Each award recipient will be presented with a certificate of recognition and a cheque for \$500.

For more information on how to prepare and submit a nomination, as well as information about the nomination and selection process, visit manitoba.ca/eceawards.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR AWARDS

DO YOU KNOW AN OUTSTANDING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR?

Nominations are now being accepted for the Manitoba Early Childhood Educator Awards of Excellence under the following award categories:

- **OUTSTANDING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR**
- **COMMUNITY COLLABORATION AWARD**
- **LEADERSHIP EXCELLENCE AWARD**
- **PREMIER'S AWARD FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION EXCELLENCE**

Special Recognition:

- **EXEMPLARY HOME-BASED EARLY LEARNING ENVIRONMENT AWARD**
- **EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE IMPACT AWARD**

For complete information on selection criteria and the nomination process, visit: manitoba.ca/eceawards.

NOMINATION DEADLINE:
June 19, 2026

Manitoba

2026 Manitoba Early Childhood Educator Awards of Excellence

Health and Safety Resources

With summer around the corner, facilities are encouraged to review the updated guidance on health and safety information related to supervision, field trips, water safety, sun safety, and neighbourhood outings. Facilities should also review two new resources: the **Air Quality and Wildfire Smoke Information Sheet** and the **Extreme Heat/Heat Advisory Information Sheet**.

Distribute these information sheets to staff and/or post them for quick reference throughout the summer months.

- [Count Your Children Information Sheet \(PDF\)](#)
- [Sun Safety Information Sheet \(PDF\)](#)
- [Water Safety Information Sheet \(PDF\)](#)
- [Experiences and Outings Information Sheet \(PDF\)](#)
- [Field Trip Information Sheet \(PDF\)](#)
- NEW: [Air Quality and Wildfire Smoke Information Sheet \(PDF\)](#)
- NEW: [Extreme Heat/Heat Advisory Information Sheet \(PDF\)](#)

Please refer to all health and safety regulations and remember that proper planning and supervision are critical to ensuring everyone's safety. If you have any questions, please contact your child care coordinator.

Congratulations Machray Day Nursery Inc.: Municipal efforts help to support non-profit child care centre road to ownership

Through Winnipeg's Strategic Facility Master Plan launched in 2024, Machray Day Nursery Inc., located at 491 Salter Street, is progressing toward building ownership. On May 6, 2026, the City of Winnipeg's Standing Policy Committee on Property Development voted to support the sale, with closing anticipated in October. The sale of city-owned buildings to non-profit organizations helps keep purchases affordable and provides greater stability for organizations like Machray Day Nursery Inc., which has leased the Salter Street location since 1985.

For more information, see [Winnipeg Free Press](#) or [Winnipeg Sun](#).

Membership Opportunities Available: Early Learning and Child Care Minister's Consultation Table (MCT)

The Early Learning and Child Care Minister's Consultation Table is currently seeking nominations for new members. Preference will be given to Indigenous people, front-line childcare professionals in rural Manitoba, and home-based child care providers.

The expertise and insights from a diverse membership with experience in the regulated early learning and child care sector is vital to the advancements in Manitoba's early learning and child care system.

Learn more and download a nomination form at www.manitoba.ca/education/childcare/resources/committees.html.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Below is a non-exhaustive list of upcoming opportunities. Additional information is also available on the [department website](#).

MCCA 2026 Winter/Spring Workshops

The Manitoba Child Care Association lists more than [40 different workshops](#) and activities running until June 19. Below are a few upcoming sessions.

Visit the [full list and registration](#).

Blooming Words® Training for Child Care Staff – No Cost in 2026

Blooming Words® is a standardized, evidence-informed early language stimulation program for children from birth to Kindergarten age. It was developed by speech-language pathologists in Quebec in partnership with the non-profit organization API-Enfance and is now being offered province-wide through the [Children's Therapy Network of Manitoba \(CTNM\)](#).

Blooming Words® training is currently free for licensed early learning and child care centres (including nursery schools) in Manitoba.

Blooming Words® Information Session – for Early Learning and Child Care Centres

Thursday, June 4, 2:00 to 3:00 p.m. CST

Blooming Words® Initial Facilitator Training Session

Thursday, June 11, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. CST

Blooming Words® Community of Practice Meetings for Facilitators

Tuesday, June 16, 2:30 to 3:30 p.m. CST

French Dates: TBA

To learn more, visit [Blooming Words® Program](#) or view the [program newsletter](#).

Understanding and Supporting Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) in Early Learning Settings Training

Be part of the creation of an FASD-informed workforce at a critical time in a child's development.

Developed by the [Canada Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Research Network \(CanFASD\)](#), this course includes evidence-based information, real-world strategies, one-year access to course materials, and a certificate upon completion.

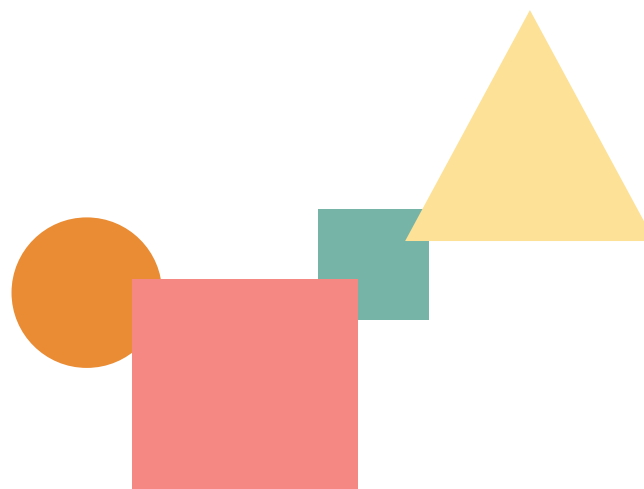
With support from the MBLL (Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries), **this course is free for residents of Manitoba.**

Visit the site for further [course details and to register](#).

To access details and registration information for other related FASD e-learning courses applicable to child care providers, visit [Courses – CanFASD ELearning](#).

Dates at a Glance

| DATE | TITLE |
|---------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Various Dates | MCCA 2026 Winter/Spring Workshops |
| Various Dates | CanFASD ELearning: Understanding and Supporting FASD in Early Learning Settings |
| June 4 | Blooming Words® - The Education Model: Train Your Team! |
| June 11 | Blooming Words® Initial Facilitator Training |
| June 16 | Blooming Words® Community of Practice Meetings for Facilitators |
| June 17 | Information Session for New Licensed Child Care Centre Applicants |
| June 19 | ECE Awards of Excellence - Nomination Deadline |





ELCC Question Corner

This Month's Question

How do I report school-age children during the summer break? What about children who complete Kindergarten at the end of June?

Answer

Between July 1 and August 31, use the "Summer" field in Child Care Online to record school-age children attendance. A school-age child is defined as a child enrolled in Grade 1 to 6 in a school.

| Regular | | | Inservice & Holiday | | | Summer | | | Evening & Weekend | | |
|---------|-----|-----|---------------------|-----|-----|--------|-----|-----|-------------------|-----|-----|
| Period | Att | Abs | Hours | Att | Abs | Hours | Att | Abs | Hours | Att | Abs |
| 1 | | | 0 - 4 | | | 0 - 4 | | | 0 - 4 | | |
| 2 | | | 4 - 10 | | | 4 - 10 | | | 4 - 10 | | |
| 3 | | | 10 + | | | 10 + | | | 10 + | | |

What about Kindergarten children? Once a child completes Kindergarten, they can be considered enrolled in Grade 1. Your facility's policy determines the exact date when a Kindergarten child becomes a school-age child and moves into a school-age space.

Children must be moved into a school-age space no earlier than July 1 and no later than September 1. For example, you may

- Move all Kindergarten children into school age spaces on July 1 or September 1, or
- Move children individually into school-age spaces as spaces become available throughout the summer.

How to record an age change in the facility reporting? The following is an example of the steps to follow if, for example, a child moves into a school-age space on the sixth day of the reporting period:

- On Preschool Attendance, report a total of five (5) days attended/absent.
- Enter a Transfer Out event on the Preschool Attendance.
- Enter a Transfer In event on the School Age Attendance.
- On School Age Attendance, report a total of 15 days attended/absent.

For more information about facility reporting, review the November 6, 2025, [webinar presentation, recording, and transcript.](#)

SPOTLIGHT ON SUCCESS

Interview with Bonnie Ash

Executive Director of Morrow Avenue Child Care Programs for Families

For nearly four decades, Bonnie Ash has forged a small empire of child care programs across Winnipeg's St. Vital neighbourhood through positivity, persistence, and creativity, and, above all, by building lasting relationships with people at every opportunity in every corner of the community.

"We have so much latitude to do all kinds of things," says Ash. "Every time I look at a new parent who comes in, I think, 'What does this family need?' 'How can we incorporate it?' My brain never sleeps."

Even her email signature drives home her approach: "Building community capacity, one family at a time."

That philosophy has shaped Morrow Early Learning and Child Development, a system of nine centres, more than 100 staff, and multiple innovative programs focused on vulnerable families, inclusion, and early intervention. It has also shaped how Ash works with schools, governments, and community partners.

Early in her career, Ash was forced out of a deteriorating building and needed to find space for 40 children. She has a collaborative, solution-focused approach that supports positive relationships and, in this instance, led to her successfully securing the space for the new facility.

That pattern has repeated itself for years. Ash relies on the strong relationships she has built throughout the community and in the schools including the custodians and the administrative staff. She appreciates the value that everyone brings to the school and the broader community and prioritizes relationship-building with everyone.

Ash's approach extends beyond space and logistics. Her programs prioritize vulnerable families, often finding solutions when systems say none exist. "Most of my focus has always been on the vulnerable population," she said. "They're the ones who need the support more than anyone else."

Continued on next page



**"I started with Morrow Avenue in June of 1988. I've been in the childcare sector 38 years. I'm expecting my seventh great-grandchild next month. When you work in this field, it keeps you young."
– Bonnie Ash**



“Bonnie is a pillar of Manitoba’s early learning and child care sector. Her depth of experience, knowledge, and passion is unmatched. She was an exceptional choice to serve as Co-Chair of the [Minister’s Consultation Table](#), and from its inaugural meeting she has led this work with professionalism, enthusiasm, diplomacy, and innovation. It has been a privilege to work closely with her over the past eight years, and her leadership has made a lasting impact on the sector.”

- Jodie Kehl, Executive Director, Manitoba Child Care Association

In the early 90s when two families came to her seeking subsidized care she technically did not have, Ash refused to turn them away. “Nobody’s done that before,” she was told. Her response was immediate. “Wrong answer,” she said. “Things happen because people come up with ideas.”

Innovation has also come through persistence. Ash wrote the original proposal for what would become St. Vital’s first Abecedarian early learning program nearly 20 years before it was finally funded. Despite numerous setbacks, she continued to champion the concept.

“I never take no for an answer,” she said. “When you believe in something and it makes sense, you keep going. When I see the transformation in these kids, it tells me we’re doing the right thing,” she said.

Looking back on nearly 40 years, Ash measures success differently than most. “Relationship building is the key,” she says. “If you don’t have that, you’re nowhere.”

Testimonials from Manitoba Child Care Professionals

Early Childhood Educators (ECEs), Child Care Assistants (CCAs), and home-based providers are at the heart of what makes a high-quality early learning and child-care program.

We spoke with several child care professionals from across Manitoba and asked what a career in child care means to them. Watch these [short interviews](#) for candid, heartfelt testimonials from hard-working ECEs.



Testimonials from child care workers across Manitoba paint a picture of a career you'll love—that loves you back!

DIVISION UPDATES

Early Learning and Child Care Connecting with Community Across Manitoba

Early Learning and Child Care attends the *Future Now Expo* and *Journée jeune enfance*

On April 28 and 29, department staff attended the *Future Now Expo* at the Red River Exhibition Park in Winnipeg. This event, recognized as Manitoba's largest interactive career and education exposition, saw over 4,000 students and 100 exhibitors in attendance. The Become an Early Childhood Educator booth attracted dozens of visitors interested in learning more about a rewarding career in child care.

On May 1, department staff participated in *Journée jeune enfance* (Early Learning Day) at Canad Inns Polo Park in Winnipeg. This professional development day was organized by the Fédération des Parents de la Francophonie Manitobaine. Sarah Whiteford, Assistant Deputy Minister, provided opening remarks to the 170 Francophone participants, all working in the child care sector. Six different workshops were offered and each participant selected two, one in the morning and one in the afternoon.



Anaïs Ratté, Engagement Specialist (left) and Melissa Shapiro, Policy Analyst (right) greeted participants visiting the Become an Early Childhood Educator booth at the *Future Now Expo*.



Early Learning and Child Care Apprentissage et garde de l'

Highlights from *Journée jeune enfance* including opening remarks from Sarah Whiteford, Assistant Deputy Minister (top left).

Week of the ECE, April 27 to May 3, 2026— Visit from Minister Tracy Schmidt

On Thursday, April 30, staff at 114 Garry celebrated the 2026 Week of the Early Childhood Educator with a spring Tea Party, featuring dainties, light bites, coffee, and tea. Staff from 210 Osborne, as well as staff from across Manitoba, were able to join in the festivities, along with Minister Tracy Schmidt and Deputy Minister Mona Pandey.



Twenty-six of ELCC's fifty-three ECE-certified staff pose with Deputy Minister Mona Pandey (first on the left) and Minister Tracy Schmidt (last on the right) at our ECE Week Tea Party.



MEET *the*
TEAM



MARCI SUL
Child Care Coordinator, ECE III

Meet the ELCC Team

My love for children started at a very young age when I became an auntie at eight-years-old. Growing up in Northern Manitoba, I spent a great deal of time supporting my family with the care of young children. From the beginning, I was surrounded by babies and young children, and that shaped everything that came after.

I always knew what I wanted to do; it was either teaching or early childhood education. I realized my passion was with the youngest children, infants, and preschoolers, where development happens rapidly and relationships matter deeply.

I began my training in Brandon, graduating from Assiniboine College and completing my ECE II in the early 90s. I started working in child care facilities and, after a few years, I realized I wanted to do more than deliver programming. I wanted to understand children more deeply and support them more fully.

That opportunity came when I was asked to work one on one with a child who had significant support needs and was non-verbal. That experience changed everything. It shifted my outlook on inclusion and opened my eyes to the essence of communication: not just speaking, but eye contact, facial expressions, body language, and connection through the senses. That realization became a turning point and a lifelong passion.

In 1998, I earned my ECE III, eventually becoming a supervisor. Inclusion wasn't something I studied in theory, it was something I practiced every day. That led me to a role as a child development coordinator, allowing me to fully lean into my passion for inclusion. I supported staff in creating programming for children with additional needs, embedding developmental goals into inclusive environments, and introducing alternative communication methods.

I enjoy guiding child care facilities in creating stronger, higher-quality programs for children and families. Working collaboratively with educators to problem-solve, share resources, and build environments where children thrive makes this work deeply meaningful.

Inclusion supports continue to expand and investment in the early years is growing. I believe that momentum will continue. My dream is a seamless approach between child care and school, where early learning and education are one connected system: that's the future I'm working toward.

We Want to Feature You!

Celebrating a milestone? New program working out well? Great idea you want to share? If you have content ideas or a story you would like to include in our next edition, email CDInfo@gov.mb.ca with the subject line "E-NEWS" to share your thoughts!

For general inquiries about the Early Learning and Child Care Division

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