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News Release - Manitoba

May 28, 2013

MANITOBA GOVERNMENT INCREASES ACCESS TO TRAINING FOR CHILD-CARE PROFESSIONALS

Five New, Expanded Child-care Centres Opened in the Last Two Months: Howard

A new partnership with l'Université de Saint-Boniface and an expanded partnership with Assiniboine Community College will give 70 more child-care professionals access to the province's popular workplace-based early childhood education diploma program. The new partnerships mean the program will begin training a total of 135 early childhood educators this year, Family Services and Labour Minister Jennifer Howard announced today.

"During the last period of economic uncertainty, the child-care system suffered from cuts and a lack of investment. We know that growing our economy requires access to affordable and high-quality child care for working families," said Howard. "That's why we will continue to invest in our system to support even more Manitoba parents, despite the economic challenges we see today."

The Manitoba government will invest more than \$2 million over two years to support the expansion of the unique accelerated program that trains child-care professionals to become early childhood educators, the minister said, adding the new partnership provides more rural training and, for the first time, training in French.

"L'Université de Saint-Boniface is continually striving to meet the needs of the province's Francophone community," said Réjean LaRoche, director of USB's École technique et professionnelle. "This new program is great news for child-care workers who are looking for flexible ways to upgrade their skills and, ultimately, the children of Manitoba."

Program participants must be working at a licensed, non-profit child-care centre with at least two years experience. They study in the classroom two days a week and on-the-job the other three days. Grants from the Manitoba government allow them to maintain a full salary while in training.

"What children learn and experience in their early years has an impact on their entire future," said Ron Blatz, executive director of Discovery Day Care Centre. "This program gives my staff the knowledge and practical skills to deliver quality early learning and child care to young children, without needing to leave their job or lose income."

The minister said Budget 2013 will also provide a one per cent funding increase to all existing funded child-care centres. She said the increase, in addition to a provincewide pension plan for child-care workers, will help fulfil the government's commitment to improve child-care workers wages and benefits, and improve recruitment and retention.

"Investments in training and retention lead to more child-care professionals in the system and that leads to more child-care spaces," said Howard. "Investments like these will keep Manitoba a child-care leader in the country."

The minister noted more than 300 affordable, high-quality child-care spaces became available in the province in the last

The minister noted more than 200 affordable, high-quality child-care spaces became available in the province in the last two months with the opening of five new and expanded centres. These are the first of up to 26 new and expanded centres announced as part of Budget 2013.

The Manitoba government invested more than \$5 million to create and fund the more than 200 new spaces at the five centres that opened in April and May:

- The Kanawenimawasowin Child Care Centre opened in The Pas with 74 spaces,
- the Ma-Mow-We-Tak Friendship Centre opened a child-care facility in Thompson with 50 new spaces,
- the Busy Bee Day Care Centre expanded its facility in Winnipeg to offer an additional 39 new spaces,
- Le Coin Magique opened in Ste. Agathe with 32 new spaces, and
- the Vita Community Child Care Centre relocated and expanded to offer an additional seven new spaces.

Budget 2013 gives families better access to quality child care by adding up to 1,000 new spaces over the next year in up to 26 new and expanded child-care centres across the province. This will complete the Manitoba government's five-year strategy to fund 6,500 more spaces and begin a new plan for an additional 2,000 child-care spaces, Howard said.

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