

Childcare in the Pembina Valley:

A Needs Analysis and Options Paper
for the Region



CHILD CARE COALITION OF MANITOBA

Preface

The Child Care Coalition of Manitoba is a public education and advocacy organization, established in 1993. We are a broadly-based coalition of groups and individuals, incorporated in 2007. The Coalition currently has over 55 group memberships – including parents, the labour movement, women's groups, the childcare community, educators and researchers and organizations committed to social justice, among others. Our goal is a fully accessible, publicly-funded, non-profit system of comprehensive and high quality childcare, with worthy wages and good working conditions for childcare staff.

This report is one product of the Child Care Coalition's 2008 - 2009 action project ("Promoting Economic Security and Work-Family Balance for Rural and Northern Women in Manitoba), funded by Status of Women Canada Women's Program. This paper, and the larger action project, build on our previous social and economic impact studies of childcare. We have shown that a universal childcare system can promote local economic development while simultaneously enhancing women's economic security and reducing work-family conflict, particularly for rural and northern communities – in addition to supporting the children who participate in early learning and care settings.



Author: Susan Prentice
Research Assistant: Fadi Ennab

August, 2009
Child Care Coalition of Manitoba
www.childcaremanitoba.ca

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Background

Rationale: Why Does the Pembina Valley Require a Needs Assessment and Options Paper?.....3

Pembina Valley Demographics.....7

Population

Children in the Pembina Valley

Household Incomes

Aboriginal Peoples

Immigration in the Pembina Valley

Local Schools

Mothers and Paid Employment

Childcare In the Pembina Valley.....10

Regulated Childcare Services

Access to Licensed Childcare

Projected Need in the Valley

The Economics of Pembina Valley Childcare.....14

Options for Growing Childcare in the Pembina Valley.....17

Why grow childcare services? The economic and social case for more service

Option A – Pembina Valley Childcare Authority

Option B – Municipality - Education System Partnership

Appendices.....21

References.....22

BACKGROUND

This paper grows out of interest sparked by the October 10, 2008 talk “Surprising Returns: The Economic Benefits of Rural Childcare,” organized by a local committee in the Pembina Valley, and facilitated by the Child Care Coalition of Manitoba. Over twenty five people attended the lunchtime talk, held at the Minnewasta Golf and Country Club in Morden. Evaluation surveys revealed a strong interest in the economic and business case evidence for expanded childcare services.

That information session was organized by an informal committee. The group met with the Coalition in early December 2008 to discuss next steps. The Coalition accepted the committee’s request to prepare a needs analysis and options paper, and the committee offered to act as a reference group. Members of the committee for the ongoing phase are:

Advisory Committee Members

Tracy Bamford

Coordinator Healthy Child Coalition - Central Region

Cheryl Digby

Community Development Officer, Town of Morden

Carol Gardiner

Coordinator, Manitoba Child Care Program – Central Region

Ken Reimer,

Community Development Coordinator, Community Futures Heartland

Shauna Richards

Director, Morden Community Child Care Centre

RATIONALE: WHY A NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND OPTIONS PAPER?

Recent economic and social impact studies of childcare in Winnipeg (2004) as well as Parkland, Thompson and St.-Pierre-Jolys (2007a; 2007b; 2007c) have made remarkable findings. Childcare has a powerful and positive effect on local economies, in addition to supporting children's healthy development and providing work-family reconciliation for parents who are employed or in training (Wehner, Kelly, & Prentice, 2008).

In Manitoba, every \$1 spent on childcare generates \$1.58 worth of immediate local economic activity. The benefits are realized through the direct and indirect effects of sector spending, excluding the induced effects (which would increase the return substantially) Over the long-term, gains are much larger.

Over the longer-term, returns are even higher. Recent estimates are that over a period of about two decades, the real present value of childcare is about \$2.54.¹ This cost-benefit return means that every \$1 spent on childcare generates \$2.54 of ultimate benefit. These returns are realized through enhanced children's development and improved family (especially maternal) labour force participation.

In recognition of the importance of childcare to the current and future economic prosperity of the province, the Association of Manitoba Municipalities has recently declared that:

WHEREAS childcare is an essential element of rural infrastructure, helping rural families to combine work and family, enabling parents to earn off-farm income, and thus strengthening the rural economy;
AND WHEREAS childcare services promote farm safety, and can mitigate out migration and population decline;
AND WHEREAS childcare services have significant local economic impacts in the short-term, as every \$1 spent on childcare generates \$1.58 of economic benefits through ripple effects; childcare services create employment for early childhood educators; and the spending from every 2 childcare jobs supports another full-time job, in addition to enabling parents labour force participation;
AND WHEREAS high quality childcare services also generate significant economic effects in the long-term, by promoting children's development, school-readiness, and helping children who are disadvantaged by poverty;
AND WHEREAS over half of mothers in rural areas are in the paid labour force, and face barriers to paid employment when childcare services are absent;
AND WHEREAS licensed childcare services exist for just 14 per cent of Manitoba children aged 0-12, parent fees are high and subsidies are restrictive, and trained early childhood educators are scarce, due to low wages and benefits;
THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Province of Manitoba to provide more capital and operating grants for smaller rural operations to establish

¹ Source: Presentation by Child Care Human Resources Sector Council, Winnipeg, June 4, 2009, by Centre for Spatial Economics – full report forthcoming September 2009, to be available on the Sector Council website, at <http://www.csc-csge.ca/english/>

local childcare services and through encouraging the provincial government to provide incentives to increase the pool of trained early childhood educators in rural areas (AMM, 2007)

If the families and employers of the Pembina Valley are to benefit from the multiple returns of childcare, a series of questions must be first answered, among them:

- What do we know about the population of the region?
- How many children 0 - 12 live in the Pembina Valley?
- What is the female labour force participation rate? What capacity for greater female labour force participation exists?
- How is immigration changing the demographics of the area?
- How many children in the area require childcare, either because one or both parents are in the labour force, in school or training, or to be available for community service?
- What does a current snapshot of regulated childcare services indicate about the access and availability of services for local families? How many of what kinds of services exist?
- How many staff are employed in the childcare sector? What is the sector's direct value, and what kind of value does it generate?
- What predictions can be made about current and future childcare needs?

This paper responds these questions to provide an overview of childcare needs in the Pembina Valley. It uses this research to propose options to strengthen and grow family-friendly childcare services in the Valley.

PEMBINA VALLEY DEMOGRAPHICS

The Pembina Valley² is comprised of 835 square kilometers of rich land, in Manitoba's central region. The area is made up of the rural municipality of Stanley and its two major towns, Morden and Winkler. The additional eight unincorporated urban centres are Blumenfeld, Chortitz, Hochfield, Neuenberg, Osterwick, Reinfeld, Reinland and Schanzenfeld, whose names reflect the region's debt to German-speaking Canadians.

The rural municipality's economy is based in agriculture, complemented by a number of industry, business, service, and government organizations. The strong agricultural base has given rise to number of agricultural sales and service centres, based around Morden and Winkler.

Population

According to the 2006 census, 22,044 people live the Pembina Valley, a marked jump from the 2001 population of 19,224. Unlike many rural areas that are experiencing out-migration and population loss, the Valley's population is growing.

Between 2001 and 2006, Manitoba's average growth rate was 2.6 percent. In contrast, the Pembina Valley saw an increase of a 14.7 percent.

Although the people of the Valley represent just under 2 percent of Manitoba's population, the area is important to the province's future as its most attractive immigrant receiving centre.

Children in the Pembina Valley

There are 2,130 children aged 0 - 5, making up the total population of preschoolers. At age 5 years, most of these will start attending part-day kindergarten. There are 2,899 children aged 6 - 12, most of whom will use the region's local primary, elementary or middle schools. In combination, 5,029 children aged 0 -12 years live in the area.

The Pembina Valley has a youthful population - - there are many more children proportionately than in Manitoba overall, especially in the rural areas of the RM.

Household Incomes

The Pembina Valley is a relatively affluent region. The median income of couple households in Morden was \$70,352 in 2006 - well above the Manitoba average of \$58,818. Winkler had a lower than average median couple household income of \$55,418. Household incomes in the rural RM were lower still, at \$54,457. Since many of these households are made up of large families with multiple children, these data also reveal the presence of significant low income.

² We use Pembina Valley, 'region' and 'area' synonymously to refer to Morden, Winkler and the RM of Stanley collectively, except where stated otherwise. All data without a specific reference citation is drawn from the 2006 Census and/or Statistics Canada Community Profiles.

While the Valley overall is relatively affluent, it is important to recognize that many families with children are very low-income. This reality is starkly seen in the Morden and Winkler licensed childcare programs. In Winkler, 26 children qualified for a full or partial subsidy in 2008-09. Over the same year in Morden, 49 children received a subsidy. The subsidy rate indicates that many children using regulated childcare are living in poverty.

Unemployment in the Valley is lower than the Manitoba average. Unemployment in Morden is 4.2 percent, in Winkler is 3.0 percent and is 2 percent in the RM of Stanley. In contrast, Manitoba as a whole had a 5.5 percent unemployment rate.

Aboriginal Peoples

The number of Aboriginal people in the rural municipality of Stanley is too small to count by the national census. In the towns of Morden and Winkler, however, a total of 445 people report Aboriginal identity. In Morden, 4.1 percent of residents report Aboriginal identity, as do 2 percent in Winkler. The Valley has a much smaller share of Aboriginal people than does the rest of the province, where 15.5 percent of Manitobans identify as having Aboriginal identity.

Aboriginal people are an important part of the Pembina Valley community, and as in the rest of the province, their share of the population is growing. Evidence suggests that Aboriginal people in the region share a similar experience to other Manitoba communities, with high rates of family and child poverty, which can challenge children's capacity to reach their maximum potential.

Immigration to the Pembina Valley

Winkler is the top rural destination for immigration in Manitoba, with Morden also ranking very highly (SCSES, 2008). In recognition of the burgeoning number of immigrants to the Pembina Valley, many services have been established. South Central Settlement and Employment Services (SCSES) has provided settlement services to newcomers for more than ten years. SCSES reports it assisted approximately 1,000 newcomers to the Valley in 2007.

Many new Canadians need English language training. Pembina Valley Language Education for Adults has been providing English-language training to adults for more than twenty years. It teaches over 500 adult learners/year, in more than two dozen programs. The degree of immigration in the Valley is clear from data about the data about mother tongues. In Manitoba, about 22 percent of residents report a first language that is neither English nor French. In Morden, the comparable rate is 25.4 percent. In Winkler and the RM of Stanley, over half of residents report a mother tongue – 53.1 percent in Winkler, and 55.1 percent in the RM. These data confirm significant language and cultural diversity in the Valley.

In Morden, it has been observed that immigrant families require childcare for a number of reasons:

- Both parents wish to be employed outside the home
- The parents want their child to learn English before entering the school system
- The parents want their child to integrate with other children in the community before entering the school system

The father is employed and the mother wishes to attend EAL classes, and only rarely vice-versa

Many immigrants have seen the benefits of early learning and childcare services in their home countries, and wish to have those benefits available to them in Canada. Municipal staff report that potential immigrants regularly inquire about the availability of childcare services

Local Schools

The Pembina Valley is served by two school divisions, which organize the Valley’s educational system by east and west.

Winkler and area is located in the Garden Valley School Division, which has a total student population of 4,100. Given the increase in Pembina Valley population, it is no surprise the Garden Valley Division reports it is growing at a rate of approximately 300 students per year. Garden Valley School Division operates one high school (a collegiate) and seven primary/elementary schools. Four schools are located in Winkler. There are plans to build a new high school for the Division.

Morden is part of the Western School Division. The Western division operates one high school (a collegiate), three primary/middle schools, and an adult education centre. The Morden Adult Education Centre is the site of the Child Development Centre which offers free on-site (but unlicensed) childcare to its students.

Women and Paid Employment

Immigration and employment patterns are distinct in the Pembina Valley. One consequence of this is that rates of female employment are lower in the region than in other parts of Manitoba. Women participate in the formal economy at much lower rates than do men in every part of the Valley. Winkler’s female labour force participation rate is nearly 10 percent points lower than Morden’s. In the RM of Stanley the gap between women’s and men’s labour force participation rates is particularly pronounced. See Table 1.

**Table 1
Male and Female Labour Force Participation Rates in the Pembina Valley**

	Morden	Winkler	RM of Stanley	Manitoba
Participation Rate for Females 15 years and over	63%	54.9%	60.3%	62%
Participation Rate for Males 15 years and over	75.1%	73.8%	87.4%	72.8%

Identifying the specific rates at which *mothers* participate in the labour force requires a special data run by Statistics Canada, and is beyond the scope of this brief paper. But the general male/female participation rates suggest that mothers (like other Valley women) work out of the home for pay at lower rates than do most Manitoba women. Immigration is often a solution to local labour shortages. Valley area employers might find that there is a local labour source available to be tapped if supportive services such as childcare are provided.

CHILDCARE IN THE PEMBINA VALLEY

Across all regions of Manitoba, childcare services are badly under-developed. The latest figures show that Manitoba has 25,984 licensed family and centre-based and 179,300 children aged 0 – 12 years (Friendly, Beach, Ferns, & Turiano, 2007). Overall, about 14.5 percent of Manitoba's children can find a place in a licensed childcare program. The situation is much worse in the Pembina Valley.

The Pembina Valley, including the towns of Morden and Winkler, has 5,029 children aged 0 – 12. These children have excellent access to elementary and middle schools in the area, but very poor access to licensed childcare.

Licensed childcare centres and homes are found only in Morden and Winkler. None are located in the smaller urban centres or anywhere in the Rural Municipality.

Table 2
Regulated Childcare in the Pembina Valley, at June 30, 2009³

	Infant	Nursery (part-day)*	Preschool	School-age	Total Spaces
Morden					
Morden Community Child Care Centre	8		66	38	112
3 Family Homes	4		6	7	17
Small Wonders Nursery School		20			20
<i>Morden total</i>					<i>149</i>
Winkler					
Winkler Daycare	12		36	5	53
2 Family Homes (*)	6		4	4	14
Winkler Kids' Korner Nursery School		20			20
<i>Winkler total</i>					<i>87</i>
RM of Stanley					
<i>N/A</i>	0	0	0	0	0
Total	30	40	112	54	236

- Note: In July 2009, one family home in Winkler closed, and licensing in the second home changed. The effect was that Winkler lost five infant spaces, and two school-age spaces, making the access rates today even lower than reported. Across Manitoba, there is a significant rate of turn-over in family home care, as homes open and close rapidly.

It is important to recognize that the number of children actually served by childcare facilities often exceeds their number of licensed space – and this can be true of childcare centres, nursery school and licensed family homes. It occurs when some families opt to use a program part-time or part-week. For example, in 2008, Morden Community Child Care Centre served an average of 175 children per month in its 112 spaces, while Winkler Day Care served 62 children per month in its 53 spaces. This gap always occurs in nursery schools, which *only* offer a part-time program -- meaning their enrolment is always higher than their licensed capacity. The Nursery School in Morden runs morning and afternoon sessions 4 days/week (8 sessions per week). The nursery program in Winkler operates morning and afternoon sessions on Wednesday and Thursday as well as Friday morning (five sessions per week). Small Wonders in Morden (with its 20 licensed spaces) served 75 different children in 2008.. Winkler Kids Korner (also with 20 licensed spaces) served 95 different children in 2008.

Where access rates are reported, we have uses the smaller licensing number, rather than enrolment. The rationale for this is to approximate the degree of full-time/full-day care. Part-time

³ Childcare data provided by Province of Manitoba Child Care Program website licensed child care search engine, supplemented by information from Carol Gardiner, personal communication with author.

childcare centre care and nursery programs are a fine support for children's development and care, yet do little to accommodate full-time parental employment or training.

As the data show, the community-based childcare programs operating in Winkler and Morden provide welcome services to the families that use them. But the towns' centres and homes do not have the capacity to fully meet the needs of local families.

Table 3
Access to Licensed Childcare in Morden, Winkler and the RM of Stanley
By Child Age, at June 30, 2009

	Children	Total Licensed Spaces per Age Group (full and part-time)	Percent of Children with Access
Morden			
Children 0 – 5	480	104	21.7%
Children 6 – 12	620	45	7.2%
<i>Morden total</i>	<i>1,100</i>	<i>149</i>	<i>13.5%</i>
Winkler			
Children 0 – 5	836	78	9.3%
Children 6 – 12	1,029	9	0.8%
<i>Winkler total</i>	<i>1,865</i>	<i>87</i>	<i>4.7%</i>
RM of Stanley			
Children 0 - 5	814	0	0%
Children 6 - 12	1,250	0	0%
RM total	2,064	0	0%
Pembina Total	5,029	236	4.7%

Overall, Table 3 shows low rates of access for children. Services for younger children (aged 0 – 5) are marginally better than for school-aged children, but all age-groups are underserved.

Moreover, it is probable that some families living outside Morden or Winkler use the towns' childcare services because of a lack of childcare where they live. Thus, the Morden centre, nursery school and three family homes, like Winkler's centre, nursery school and one family home must carry the load for an even higher potential number of children.

Every child living in Blumenfeld, Chortitz, Hochfield, Neuenberg, Osterwick, Reinfeld, Reinland and Schanzenfeld, as well as smaller centres, is entirely without access to regulated childcare services. There are no preschool, nursery or school-aged programs in the Valley outside the two major towns. A considerable degree of informal care probably exists, but it is unlikely to offer the secure early childhood education and learning programs provided by regulated services (Friendly & Prentice, 2009). No data are available for unlicensed and unregulated childcare provision.

Estimated Shortfall of Childcare Services in Pembina Valley

It is difficult to estimate childcare need, and Manitoba has no guidelines. The Province of Manitoba, for example, has produced two successive five-year plans for childcare without proposing any target of how much childcare service is needed in the province (Government of Manitoba, 2002, 2008).

Many European countries provide over 80 percent of their children with early learning and care services, for part or full-days, for part or all of the year. Closer to home, Quebec has ensured that about 30 percent of the province's youngsters have access to childcare (Mahon & Jenson, 2006).

We propose that a reasonable intermediate-range goal for the Pembina Valley (within about a five year time-frame) is to have a childcare space available for one in four children, whether for a part or a full-day.

With a 25 percent access rate, mothers who wanted to enter paid employment would find it easier to do so. Significant new jobs would be created in the local economy, providing new employment opportunities. The local economic effects would be strong. Most importantly, the high quality regulated services would support the early learning and care of all the Valley's children who opted to participate. They would provide children with enhanced developmental options, promoting greater school success and building social cohesion and inclusion in this diverse region (Friendly & Lero, 2002; Pascal, 2009).

Below, we sketch out the current rate of coverage and calculate the shortfall of spaces. Table 4 presents the number of new spaces needed by age group for Morden, Winkler and the RM. We estimate that the Valley is short at least 1,020 regulated spaces if its to be able to meet the needs of one-quarter of its children.

**Table 4
Current and Projected Childcare Service Needs**

	Number of Children	Number of Spaces Needed for 25% Access	Total Licensed Current Spaces (full & part time)	Number of New Spaces Needed
Morden				
Children 0 – 5	480	120	104	16
Children 6 – 12	620	155	45	110
<i>Morden total</i>	<i>1,100</i>	<i>275</i>	<i>149</i>	<i>126</i>
Winkler				
Children 0 – 5	836	209	78	131
Children 6 – 12	1,029	257	9	248
<i>Winkler total</i>	<i>1,865</i>	<i>466</i>	<i>87</i>	<i>379</i>
RM of Stanley				
Children 0 - 5	814	203	0	203
Children 6 - 12	1,250	312	0	312
<i>RM total</i>	<i>2,064</i>	<i>515</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>515</i>
Pembina Total	5,029	1,257	236	1,020

THE ECONOMICS OF PEMBINA VALLEY CHILDCARE

Childcare services have strong positive effects on their local regions in the short-term, while laying the foundation for long-term returns on investment down the road. Childcare services are highly labour-intensive, sustainable and green industries, and they create employment opportunities both directly and indirectly. They have a direct impact as they hire early childhood educators and others to provide education and care to children. The revenue of the childcare sector has immediate regional impacts, as few dollars leak away from the local economy or are directed to expensive imports.

The small supply of 236 licensed spaces creates employment for 60 people, almost all of them women. The positive effects of job creation through childcare are felt only in Morden and Winkler, as there are no services – and hence no employees – in the RM of Stanley. At 60 employees in the sector, childcare is a significant source of local jobs for women.

Table 5
Current Jobs Created
by Pembina Valley Childcare Facilities

	Full Time Employees	Part Time Employees	Total Positions
Morden			
Morden Community Child Care Centre	24	7	31
3 Family Homes	4		4
Small Wonders Nursery School	2	1	3
Winkler			
Winkler Day Care Centre	16*		16
Winkler Kids' Korner Nursery School	2	2	4
2 Family Homes	2		2
RM of Stanley			
<i>N/A</i>	0	0	0
Total	50	10	60

Source: Employment figures provided by Manitoba Child Care Program Coordinator Carol Gardiner (Personal communication, 19 Jan 2009). No breakdown for full and part-time employees is available for Winkler Day Care Centre.

While it is not common to think of childcare as an economic sector, childcare is a business. Like all businesses, we can evaluate its local economic importance. Morden Community Child Care Centre, is an enterprise that does over \$1 million of business annually, owned and operated by its volunteer board. Together, we estimate that the licensed childcare programs in the Pembina Valley are a valuable sector. They raise an estimated \$1,876,462 of direct revenues, between parent fees (and subsidies) and various government grants (See Table 6).

Table 6
Direct Revenues in Pembina Valley Childcare (Attributed)

	Annual Budget
Morden	
Morden Community Child Care Centre	\$1,049,691
3 Family Homes*	\$121,995
Small Wonders Nursery School**	\$66,814
Winkler	
Winkler Day Care Centre	\$525,676
Winkler Kids Korner Nursery**	\$41,600
2 Family Homes*	\$81,330
RM of Stanley	
<i>N/A</i>	\$0
Total	\$1,876,462

- Centre budgets were provided by the provincial coordinator. Family home revenues are attributed at an average of \$36,000/year.
- For Nursery School revenues, we used the licensed capacity, the number of slots per week, assumed a fee of \$9.60/day and projected 40 weeks/yr of service

We estimate that the Pembina Valley childcare sector directly generates over \$1.87 million/year in revenue. Input-output multiplier studies in other parts of Manitoba find that every \$1 of childcare spending generates \$1.58 worth of local economic activity. Assuming the Pembina Valley I-O effect is the same, regulated childcare produces about \$2.95 million worth of local economic activity to Morden and Winkler.

In short, the two childcare centres, two nurseries and five family homes, with their 236 licensed spaces, bring real value to the region.

OPTIONS FOR GROWING CHILDCARE IN THE PEMBINA VALLEY

Why grow childcare services? The economic and social case for more childcare service

Childcare services have many positive effects. They support children's early childhood development, and help them grow and thrive. Accessible and affordable childcare services make it possible for mothers (and all parents) to undertake paid work or education and training. Childcare services reduce work-family conflict, and ease the strain of juggling home and paid employment. They also have "eye-popping" economic effects.

Given the very low rates of women's employment in the Pembina Valley, and the strong economic drive to recruit immigrants to meet local labour demand, it is illustrative to recall the experience of Quebec. Beginning in 1997, the province began to build toward a universal childcare system with very low parent fees. Economists from the CD Howe Institute have found that after the roll-out of Quebec's childcare system, the rates of mothers' employment changed. The economists observed

Since the program's introduction, the proportion of working mothers in two-parent families increased in Quebec by about 21 percent, more than double the increase in the rest of Canada. Moreover, most of the new work is full-time. This increase brings many benefits, such as raising the Quebec economy's productive capacity and promoting the careers of women who might otherwise have only sporadic attachment to the labour force. It also generates more tax revenue; as a rough calculation we estimate new federal and provincial taxes offset about 40 percent of the cost of the program. (Baker, Gruber, & Milligan, 2006).

Growing Pembina Valley childcare services would mean:

- more children benefit from early learning and care
- children enjoy early childhood care and education, including greater school-readiness
- more parents, and mothers particularly, are supported in employment, mitigating work-family conflict
- new jobs will be created in the sector, and new jobs will be created to support the sector
- childcare dollars will have positive local impacts
- employers will benefit from greater employee productivity and reduced absenteeism

Currently, there are few specific plans to expand childcare services in the region. Outside of Garden Valley School proposal to include a childcare in the new high school for 2012, there are

no other initiatives underway. Each of the existing childcare centres and nursery programs was an initiative of community-based groups, who started up their stand-alone, non-profit centres. The licensed family homes are officially independent small businesses. As noted earlier, the stock of family childcare is unstable – as the closing of one family home this summer illustrates. Under the current policy architecture, new services will only be established if and when a non-profit group or a small business decides to start-up.

It is clear that reliance on the voluntary sector to initiate and maintain stand-alone childcare programs has led to a gap between supply and demand. The absolute number and capacity of regulated services is insufficient to meet the 25 percent recommended access target. Therefore, a new delivery and management system will be required to expand childcare services.

Valley residents and leaders have built an excellent public education system for their children. They have worked to provide access to other needed infrastructure - - from healthcare, to communications technology. A dense network of immigrant and settlement services have recently been constructed to welcome high numbers of newcomers. This same energy and commitment must be applied to growing childcare services.

There are at least two different models for growing childcare services in the Pembina Valley. Both models would ensure a continuum of early learning, childcare and family supports (including literacy and parenting programs) for children from age 0 to age 12. Both models also bring stronger accountability to childcare services, as delivery and governance would increasingly fall under public funding and delivery. Universal access to childcare for all families who want or need it is unlikely without a provincial-wide foundation of policy and financing, but important steps can be taken in the Valley to move closer to the objective.

Option A - Pembina Valley Childcare Authority

The creation of a Pembina Valley Childcare Authority (PVCA) would be a full transformation of childcare delivery and management in the region. It would involve integrating all existing early learning and care programs under a new governance structure.

We borrow heavily from the model developed to deliver childcare in Kenora, Ontario, in laying out this option.⁴ The Kenora District Services Board is the Ministry-designated 'Child Care Service System Manager' for the Kenora District. In 2005 the Kenora District Services Board created a network of services. It worked with the eight School Boards, as well as Children's Service Agencies, NW Health Unit Services, Aboriginal Children's Services and Child Care Services. By September 2006 the Network had created one hundred and sixty-four (164) new child care spaces in the Kenora District. Today, 26 childcare programs are administered through the KDSB, each with its own operator. Many programs are operated by municipal government (see Appendix 1). For example, the City of Kenora owns and operates four childcare programs; the City of Dryden owns and operates three programs.

⁴ See <http://www.kdsb.on.ca/child%20care.htm>

For the Pembina Valley, a similar Authority Model would see the development of a regional board. The PVCA would consolidate planning, and would be charged with the responsibility of developing projections models, community development, coordinating services and creating efficiencies. Through coordination, we would anticipate greater access, better use of human resources, and quality enhancement.

Option B – Municipality - Education System Partnership

In a Municipality-Education System Partnership, local governments (the towns of Morden and Winkler and the RM of Stanley) would collaborate with the Garden Valley and Western School Divisions to meet the target of 25 percent access within five years.

Local governments would be responsible for ensuring services for children below school age (birth to about age six years), and the school divisions would have authority to provide services to children aged six to 12. Whether kindergarten children (usually aged 5) would be allocated to the municipal or education program would have to be determined.

The municipal/local governments would plan, develop, support and monitor a network of services for young children. The municipality could operate programs directly, or in collaboration with independent facilities, who would deliver them on behalf of the local government. Services would include flexible part-time/full-day/full-year services for preschool children. Parenting and family supports, such as home visiting, family literacy and playgroups would be among them. This would involve a combination new programs and coordination with existing Healthy Child Manitoba programs offered through Parent-Child Coalitions. Where possible, these programs for young children would be located in or near schools, to facilitate the transition to the school-system and programs delivered to school-age children. Existing childcare programs and nursery schools would continue to operate, but would be integrated into the partnership through administration, management and funding - - giving them access to a level of resourcing and infrastructure they have historically lacked.

The school system would deliver and manage services for school-age children, either by offering programs directly as the license-holder, or through agreements with individual facilities. They would make school space and education resources (such as gymns, playgrounds, libraries, computer rooms, caretaking and janitorial services, etc) available to childcare programs.

The major advantage of this program is that it relies on an expanded role for two major well-established institutions rather than the creation of a new level of infrastructure. This model does not fundamentally require the creation of a new system. This is, at the same time, therefore, the major disadvantage of the system. To be successful the partnership requires two formal bureaucracies -- local governments and school divisions -- to revise their scope and expand their traditional mandate. Without funding to support such as partnership and a clear directive from senior government, this kind of innovative partnering may not be a first priority for either potential partner.

A caution from Ontario is in order. Ontario has just announced an innovative new system for early learning for all children. The province's Special Advisor on Early Learning, Dr. Charles Pascal, warns that "to invest in 'more improved coordination' would be the enemy of the real change required" to build quality services (Pascal, 2009).

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Kenora District Child Care Providers

1. Biidaaban Children's Centre Operator: Municipality Of Sioux Lookout
2. Cameron Bay Day Nursery Operator: Low Child Development Centre
3. Castle Of Learning & Discovery Operator: City Of Kenora
4. Child's View Day Nursery Operator: Township Of Ear Falls
5. Circle Of Friends Kids Camp Operator: Kenora Circle Of Friends
6. Dryden Children's Resource Centre Operator: City Of Dryden
7. Dryden Nursery School Co-Op Operator: Dryden Nursery School Co-Op
8. Evergreen Kid's Club Operator: City Of Kenora
9. Golden Child Care Centre Operator: Municipality Of Red Lake
10. Ignace Nursery School Operator: Ignace Nursery School
11. K.P. Best Start Operator: City Of Dryden
12. Keewatin Kid's B.A.S.E. Operator: Low Child Development Centre
13. Kenora Circle Of Friends Operator: Kenora Circle Of Friends
14. Kenora Preschool Playgroup Operator: Kenora Playschool Group
15. Kid's Korner Operator: Vermilion Bay & Area Nursery School Coop
16. Kid's Zone Operator: Kenora Association For Community Living
17. Kid's Zone Smb Operator: Kenora Association For Community Living
18. King George Kid's Club Operator: City Of Kenora
19. Lakewood Kid's B.A.S.E. Operator: Low Child Development Centre
20. Lakewood Early Learning Low Child Development Centre
21. New Prospect Kid's Connection Operator: City Of Dryden
22. Norah Love Children's Centre Municipality Of Sioux Lookout
23. Norman Kid's Camp Operator: Low Child Development Centre
24. Norman Village Montessori School Operator: Same
25. Our Lady Of The Valley Kid's Club Operator: City Of Kenora

Source: <http://www.kdsb.on.ca/child%20care.htm>

REFERENCES

- AMM. (2007). *Resolution 1607 - Rural Child Care Services*. Portage La Prairie: Association of Manitoba Municipalities.
- Baker, M., Gruber, J., & Milligan, K. (2006). *What Can We Learn From Quebec's Universal Childcare Program?* Toronto: C.D. Howe Institute.
- Friendly, M., Beach, J., Ferns, C., & Turiano, M. (2007). *Early Childhood Education and Care in Canada 2006* (7th ed.). Toronto: Childcare Resource and Research Unit.
- Friendly, M., & Lero, D. (2002). *Social Inclusion Through Early Childhood Education and Care*. Toronto, ON: Laidlaw Foundation.
- Friendly, M., & Prentice, S. (2009). *About Canada: Childcare*. Halifax: Fernwood Publishing.
- Government of Manitoba. (2002). *Manitoba's Five-Year Plan for Child Care*. Retrieved April 29, from http://www.gov.mb.ca/fs/childcare/five_yr_plan.html
- Government of Manitoba. (2008). *Family Choices: Manitoba's Five-Year Agenda for Early Learning and Child Care*. Winnipeg: Family Services and Housing.
- Mahon, R., & Jenson, J. (2006). *ELCC Report 2006 - Learning from Each Other: Early Learning and Child Care Experiences in Canadian Cities*. Toronto: Social Development Canada, City of Toronto, Vancouver Joint Council on Child Care.
- Pascal, C. (2009). *With Our Best Future In Mind: Implementing Early Learning in Ontario*. Toronto: Report to the Premier by the Special Advisor on Early Learning.
- Prentice, S. (2007a). *Franco-Manitoban Childcare: Childcare as Economic, Social and Language Development in St-Pierre-Jolys*. Winnipeg: Child Care Coalition of Manitoba.
- Prentice, S. (2007b). *Northern Childcare: Childcare as Economic and Social Development in Thompson*. Winnipeg: Child Care Coalition of Manitoba.
- Prentice, S. (2007c). *Rural Childcare: Childcare as Economic and Social Development in Parkland*. Winnipeg: Child Care Coalition of Manitoba.
- Prentice, S., & McCracken, M. (2004). *Time for Action: An Economic and Social Analysis of Childcare in Winnipeg*. Winnipeg: Child Care Coalition of Manitoba.
- SCSES. (2008). *South Central Settlement and Employment Services Newsletter*. Winkler.
- Wehner, J., Kelly, B., & Prentice, S. (2008). *Rural and Northern Childcare: A Summary of Economic and Social Evidence from Manitoba*. Winnipeg: Women's Working Group, Rural Secretariat.