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Child Care Human Resources Sector Council Conseil Sectoriel des ressources humaines des services de garde à l'enfance

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, APRIL 29, 2005

Child care deal good basis for developing a quality system Investment in workforce will pay off, says sector council

OTTAWA--Today's child-care agreements between Ottawa and the governments of Manitoba and Saskatchewan lay a good foundation for building a pan-Canadian system that includes recognition of the value of skilled staff to quality programs, says the Child Care Human Resources Sector Council.

"This concrete investment in early learning and care demonstrates that when governments are committed and exercise political will, we can make real progress for children and families," said Joanne Morris, Chair of the Child Care Human Resources Sector Council (CCHRSC). "We're very pleased with the agreement."

In particular, Manitoba's plans specifically include increasing wages for child care workers and training more early childhood educators, and expanding the province's non-profit child care system by 5,000 spaces over the next two years. All good news for the workforce, employers and parents, says Morris. The sector council also hopes to see measures to increase quality services by supporting the workforce in the details of the Saskatchewan agreement, as well as in future federal/provincial/territorial accords.

"The research is clear that quality child care can't happen without an investment in the people who care for children," says Morris. A recent labour market study sponsored by the CCHRSC, *Working For Change: Canada's Child Care Workforce*, showed that low wages, poor working conditions, and lack of respect and recognition are leading many early childhood educators to take their expertise elsewhere. The CCHRSC sees a focus on compensation and training as the key to ensuring high quality child care as the child care services expand.

Many hope the federal government will strike other bilateral deals in the coming weeks that equal or surpass the two agreements with Manitoba and Saskatchewan. "Canada's children and their families have been waiting for quality child care for more than 30 years," Morris said. "Building a quality child care system is an investment in Canada's future citizens, parents, and skilled workforce."

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The CCHRSC is a pan-Canadian; non-profit organization dedicated to moving forward on human resource issues in child care. The Sector Council brings together child care, labour organizations, and other sector representatives to develop a confident, skilled and respected workforce.