

Tory's child-care plan slammed ^[1]

Letters to the editor

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EXCERPTS

Re: Critics question mayor's child-care subsidies plan, Jan. 18

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As a parent and RECE, I am shocked that Mayor John Tory would even consider eliminating the Child Care Occupancy Grant for Toronto schools and use those same funds to add 300 daycare subsidies. This is simply robbing Peter to pay for Paul.

The removal of the occupancy grant would make regulated childcare even more expensive for those families paying full fee and put it farther out of reach for many families. We know that licensed childcare is already too costly for many parents in our city. A recent study showed that 75 per cent of families in Toronto find licensed childcare unaffordable.

At a time when the government of Ontario has committed to creating 100,000 new childcare spaces across the province, the City should be looking at ways to expand licensed child care to be accessible to more families. It is shameful and shortsighted to balance the City budget with provincial child care dollars, download costs on to parents, and finally, open up an agreement where costs were fixed in 1998 – exposing parents and the city taxpayers to soaring costs at the mercy of the school boards.

If this agreement is opened, school boards will hike occupancy costs for child care in schools, and that will have a fast-moving ripple effect on parent fees across Toronto and destabilize child care programs. Providing the families of our city with safe, affordable, accessible and high quality child-care options is essential to ensure children have the best possible start in life.

Amy O'Neil, Toronto

Mayor Tory's plan to fund 300 new child care subsidies by cutting child care grants to schools will lead to parents who already pay the highest child care fees in the country paying even more.

The mayor claims the province should step up to pay the occupancy costs of child care programs in schools. I agree, but until the province agrees to flow that funding it is irresponsible of the mayor to make this capricious cut.

We need all levels of government working together on child care, not treating it as a political football.

Carolyn Ferns, policy coordinator, Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, Toronto

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