

Ontario relents in child care feud [CA-ON] ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

London has won its battle with the province over child care funding, government sources say.

That means Ontario municipalities won't have to pay a 20- per-cent share to access new federal child care funding.

In London, that could mean savings of about \$450,000 a year.

"I think the position we took at the start definitely got the attention of the province," Controller Bud Polhill said yesterday. "It doesn't cost them anything to back off anyway because they didn't put a nickel into it."

It's unknown whether municipalities will have to pay the 20 per cent this year, or if it only applies to future years.

In December, at the urging of finance manager Vic Cote, board of control balked at a provincial policy demanding municipalities pay 20 per cent of the cost to access a new federal child care program, even though Ontario wasn't contributing.

Other provinces allow the funding to flow directly to municipalities.

Though city council eventually relented and approved spending the \$450,000 to get \$1.67 million in federal funding, the board's tactic appears to have succeeded.

Social advocate Coun. Susan Eagle, who led the push for the city to pay the 20 per cent because of the local need, was pleased.

"It was just another form of downloading," Eagle said. "That means we'll have that (\$450,000) available for other needs in the city and there are many."

- reprinted from the London Free Press

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