

Escalating child care costs worry city ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

The city is preparing to take a detailed look at Guelph's costs related to municipally funded child care services at the social services and housing committee meeting Monday.

Staff has recommended the committee stop paying for child care services that were once covered by the provincial and federal governments; to request a five-year strategic child services plan from Wellington County, which shares responsibility and costs for child care services; and for Wellington County to offer input and comment on a background report city staff created relating to the historical and financial roles each municipality has played in child care since 1969.

The report, signed by the city's chief administrative officer Hans Loewig, states Wellington County has projected the city's portion of child care services will more than double in the next four years.

In 2009, the city's portion totalled \$2.195 million; the county has projected Guelph's portion will grow to \$5.373 million by 2014.

The report argues those numbers don't reflect changes to child care and early learning recently announced by the provincial government - specifically the province's plan to offer before- and after-school child care for kindergarten students at their home school. The program will be offered at 13 schools in the Upper Grand board and five in the Wellington Catholic board in September and over time will become universal. "However, this is not reflected in the CMSM's (Consolidated Municipal Service Manager's) five-year budget plan," the report reads. "In addition, federal policy changes have not shifted funding away from child care subsidies to tax credits for families."

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Guelph Mayor Karen Farbridge has said previously the city needs to understand the discretionary programs that fall under the social services umbrella, and needs some control over that spending.

- reprinted from the Guelph Mercury

Region: Ontario ^[2]

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[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/10/03/escalating-child-care-costs-worry-city> [2]

<https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7856> [3] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/funding> [4]
<https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/8149> [5] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/8166>