

Transitional issues impacting Toronto's child care system and recommended actions for mitigation ^[1]

Community Development and Recreation Committee Agenda Item -- 2011 CD8.1

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AVAILABILITY

City staff report ^[2]

City of Toronto Children's Services report projects that Toronto will lose 23% of its regulated child care spaces without provincial action as full-day kindergarten rolls out. The report recommends that "City Council communicate to the Premier of Ontario and the Minister of Education the urgent need for development of a child care stabilization and transition plan that ensures the availability of a sustainable, high quality and affordable child care system for all families".

A detailed ward-by-ward analysis is available that "forecasts the licensed capacity of Toronto's child care system when full-day kindergarten is available at all publicly funded schools in September 2014".

Report will be discussed by the City of Toronto Community Development and Recreation Committee on November 4, 2011 at 9:30AM, Committee Room #1, City Hall.

Excerpts from the report:

The General Manager, Children's Services recommends that:

1. City Council communicate to the Premier of Ontario and the Minister of Education the urgent need for development of a child care stabilization and transition plan that ensures the availability of a sustainable, high quality and affordable child care system for all families.
2. City Council reaffirm its request of January 26 and 27, 2010 that the Province of Ontario provide all of the necessary tools and resources necessary to support the transition to an Early Learning System and to ensure that the child care component of this system remains stable and sustainable. These tools and resources should include financial, legislative and policy supports that address:
 - i. the regulatory changes required to ensure efficiencies in child care operations that focus on younger children,
 - ii. simplified and flexible funding formulas that enable base funding of child care programs and that ensure affordability for all families,
 - iii. transitional and operating funding to ensure that service levels are maintained during and following the transition to FDELK,
 - iv. capital funding for child care centres located within schools and
 - v. capital funding to support the reconfiguration of child care programs outside of schools so that they can address the needs of younger children.
3. City Council also reaffirm its previous requests to the Province of Ontario that the provincial funding formula provide sufficient resources to maintain existing service levels of 24,000 child care subsidies, recognize cost of living and other legitimate increases in operating costs, and ensure program quality and adequate qualified staffing.
4. The Community Development and Recreation Committee refer this report to the Mayor's Child Care Task Force to inform its deliberations.
5. This report proceed to Council with the report from the Mayor's Task Force on Child Care in the new year.

Summary:

This report responds to the May 27, 2011 direction from the Community Development and Recreation Committee that Children's Services report to Council prior to the conclusion of the 2012 Operating Budget deliberations with a detailed analysis of the impact of the Province's Full Day Early Learning Kindergarten (FDELK) program on Toronto's child care system.

Children's Services has completed an extensive analysis that, among other things, forecasts service levels and the availability of child care spaces by age group at the time of full implementation of FDELK in 2014. Overall, the analysis shows an expected decrease in the supply of child care spaces for Junior Kindergarten (JK) and Senior Kindergarten (SK) children in child care as 4 and 5 year olds enrol in FDELK and a corresponding interest by operators in converting these vacated spaces into care for younger infants and toddlers.

Toronto's child care system is the largest in Ontario and the second largest in Canada. It services 56,000 children in licensed child care, of

which 24,000 receive a fee subsidy to assist with the cost of child care fees. There are 924 licensed child care centres in Toronto, with 40 percent of the centres located in elementary schools. In addition, there are 20 licensed home child care agencies providing care in homes across the City. It is estimated that there are 13,000 children JK/SK aged in licensed child care who will move to FDELK incrementally over the next 3 years. Approximately 7,000 of these children will be in receipt of a fee subsidy. The impact of FDELK on a system as large as Toronto's is material. In order to effectively manage the transition, the City requires transitional, operating and capital resources from the Province of Ontario, as well as legislative and regulatory amendments to the Day Nurseries Act.

This report identifies strategies for addressing concerns and facilitating the transition to a high quality early learning and care system that is accessible to all families in Toronto.

Region: Ontario ^[3]

Tags: subsidy ^[4]

funding ^[5]

full-day early learning ^[6]

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