

Mayor Rob Ford closes doors to public during child care meeting

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EXCERPTS:

Mayor Rob Ford's Child Care Task Force closed its doors to both the public and the media once again when it held its third of four meetings on Oct. 26.

According to a news release issued to the Et Cetera by Coun. Mammoliti's office, the task force has discussed ways to fund the continuation of existing childcare spaces and alternative funding models as well as the role of private childcare.

"I'm shocked that the meetings are being held in secret, but somehow I'm not surprised," said Rebecca Milburn, program co-ordinator for liberal arts and sciences, who has had two of her children in Humber's daycare.

Milburn said people who use childcare services have to be allowed to have a voice, whether they believe daycare service should become more privatized or more public.

"It's not surprising that he's closed the doors, because I bet he'd have the same uproar from the public that he saw with other services he's talked about cutting," Milburn said.

"Parents have a stake in this discussion. They should be able to have a trustee at the table and there should be open dialogue with everyone involved."

Jenni Mastroianni, a supervisor at the Humber Child Development Centre, said potential cuts to subsidized childcare would impact the college's daycare centers, as 70-80 per cent of their spots are subsidized.

"Many of our subsidized spots are used by students," Mastroianni said. "If subsidized childcare was cut they may not be able to afford to continue with their education. Those students would have a hard time maintaining their schooling while financing childcare."

Cynthia Wilkey, chair of the West Don Lands Committee, said childcare is an extremely important service to the city and to women.

"I know that they are looking at whether or not the private sector could provide cheaper childcare, and I don't believe they can," she said.

Wilkey, who tried to attend the second task force meeting, said subsidized childcare is critical to women's access to the workforce, and is the last service that council should be cutting.

- reprinted from Humber EtCetera

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