

Closing Peel child care centres to cost region nearly \$12.4 mil, says the region's own report ^[1]

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EXCERPTS:

MISSISSAUGA, ONTARIO--(Marketwire - Jan. 26, 2012) - Questions are surfacing about the rationale behind a consultant's report that says Peel region should close all 12 of its regional child care centres and no longer deliver child care programs, a move that the report projects will cost the region nearly \$12.4 mil in transition costs.

"This makes no sense. Why would councillors vote to spend \$12.4 mil to close child care centres that Peel parents rely on? That's not in the best interest of families and the 800 children now receiving quality care at regional centres. Also of concern is why council would support spending millions to close centres so they could become system managers," said Carrie Lynn Poole-Cotnam, a municipal social worker who will make a deputation at Peel Region Council today before a controversial vote to close the centres.

The \$12.4 mil figure is outlined in the consultant's report on page 32 for "administrative expenditures associated with the Region's transition out of the direct delivery of child care."

"Now that the consultant's report is finally out, we can see it's merely being used as cover for the region to get out of delivering public child care as a platform to privatize. Ultimately fewer families will be able to afford good quality care and families in lower income neighbourhoods will have less access to child care," said Poole-Cotnam of the Canadian Union Public Employees (CUPE).

Those most affected will be families with children with special needs because many community and for-profit providers do not have trained staff with the expertise needed to provide appropriate care.

When accessible, public child care centres close, poorer quality for-profit child care is likely to expand to fill the void. Already, more than 54 per cent of available child care for children under six in Peel is for-profit, compared to 25 per cent Ontario-wide.

Before Christmas, an Alberta-based for-profit company traded on the Toronto Exchange announced the purchase of four Mississauga child care centres and three in Windsor. Windsor closed nine of its municipal child care centres in 2010. The company has rapid expansion plans with a goal of owning a 10 per cent share of child care in Canada.

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Region: Ontario ^[2]

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