

Adopted by Council at its meeting held December 3, 2012 [M530-2012]

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Windsor, Ontario, December 3, 2012

**REPORT NO. 127 of the
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT,
HEALTH & CULTURE STANDING COMMITTEE**
of its meeting held November 14, 2012

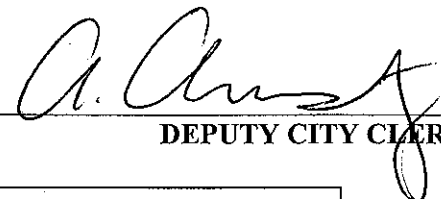
Present:
Councillor Ed Sleiman, Chair
Councillor Jo-Anne Gignac
Councillor Alan Halberstadt
Councillor Percy Hatfield
Councillor Fulvio Valentinis

That the following recommendation of the Social Development, Health and Culture Standing Committee **BE APPROVED** as follows:

Moved by Councillor Gignac, seconded by Councillor Halberstadt,
THAT the response submitted by the Windsor/Essex Best Start Implementation Committee entitled "Modernizing Child Care in Ontario" **BE ENDORSED** on the proviso that the Province fund the program 100%.
Carried.

Clerk's Note: The response submitted by the Windsor/Essex Best Start Implementation Committee dated September 2012 entitled "Modernizing Child Care in Ontario" is attached as background information.


CHAIRPERSON


DEPUTY CITY CLERK

| NOTIFICATION: | | |
|---------------|-----------|---------------------------|
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| | | |

Modernizing Child Care in Ontario

Response Submitted by the Windsor/Essex Best Start Implementation Committee September 2012

Introduction

The Windsor/Essex Best Start Implementation Committee is comprised of representatives of a range of agencies and sectors that reflect the unique composition of Windsor/Essex County. At present, there are over 37 members who are passionate about children and families in our community.

In order to develop a response to the discussion paper, *Modernizing Child Care in Ontario*, the Best Start Implementation Committee consulted with child care operators. A session was held to gather input from this stakeholder group, with 75 representatives attending the session and providing feedback to the committee. This feedback was blended with the thoughts and suggestions of the broader Best Start Implementation Committee and is included in this response.

This document provides responses to the specific questions posed in the discussion paper, *Modernizing Child Care in Ontario* and follows the format and order of the discussion paper.

Operating Funding Formula

How can the approach to child care funding be revised to enable more transparent and efficient allocations to municipal service system managers and First Nations?

The approach to child care funding can be revised to enable more transparent and efficient allocations to municipal service managers and First Nations by moving to a funding approach that is comprised of a combination of base funding and tuition (tuition being either parent fees or subsidy). Moving to base funding will provide stability and viability for child care centres. The ebbs and flows in attendance in the child care system can threaten the viability of child care systems and a tuition based system will continue to have viability as an issue. This base funding and fee subsidy should only be provided to those child care centres with a nonprofit status.

In addition to the move to a base funding approach the Province should develop a fair wage policy so that ECE salaries in the child care system mirror school board ECE

salaries. Currently ECEs in the child care system are indirectly subsidizing the cost to families due to their low wages (in order to keep fees affordable for families) This policy would provide more consistent per diem rates from centre to centre, leading to an increase in quality in the child care system. Less staff turnover in child care centres provides consistency in the centre which is then tied to increased quality.

What elements should be considered when developing a new funding formula (i.e. demographics, demand, costs)?

The elements that should be considered when developing a new funding formula for base funding include established demand data such as live births, population of children 0 to 12, fee subsidy wait list, immigration patterns, demand for special needs and other identified unique community variables.

When developing a new funding formula a number of items must be considered. These include:

- The affordability of child care for families
- The need for in year flexibility for changes in funding due to an increase or decrease in demand.

How can current funding be streamlined or consolidated to improve flexibility and efficiency?

In order to streamline current funding to improve flexibility and efficiency, funding lines and categories should continue as is, but municipal service managers should be allowed more flexibility to move funding between lines and categories with Ministry approval.

In addition to this flexibility, municipal service managers should be provided with the ability to accrue a portion of current unspent funding to the next fiscal year.

Capital Funding Priorities

How can the Ministry of Education facilitate collaboration and joint planning among school boards, service system managers and child care operators so they can plan and manage this approach?

School boards need to adopt an integrated, community planning process when making capital funding decisions as opposed to using the current "elected" school board planning model in which school boards make unilateral decisions. This community

planning process must include a comprehensive consultation process with all stakeholders, including child care operators. This collaborative, community planning process should be verified through the use of a required attestation of collaboration on capital funding decisions by the school board and service system managers.

What supporting policies are required to ensure the success of a schools-first child care policy (i.e. long-term planning on space for school-based operators, reasonable accommodation costs, facilities, and other shared space issues)?

The supporting policies required to ensure the success of a schools-first child care policy include:

- A policy that secures child care space in a school: Once child care space is dedicated in a school and the child care centre is running a viable operation then child care space should be secure and not taken back if there is a need by the school.
- A policy that designates certain schools as community hubs if expanded programming and services exist or are needed within that school. This policy will require supporting policies that address the unique status of these "community hubs" in schools (for example: policies that address accessibility issues such as, unique security systems, expanded hours of operation and policies that address barriers to community partnering and collaboration such as collective agreements).

Where school-based space does not meet community needs, are there additional capital tools that could support community-based child care operators?

In instances where school-based space does not meet community needs a funding formula for community providers that supports an adequate capital and operating funding is required. This funding formula must support a level of consistency in care across child care in schools and community based child care (for example: facility costs, capital changes to the facility, etc.).

More capital funding must be available to nonprofit child care operators to meet the needs of families if space is not available in schools. The funding provided must allow nonprofit child care operators to continue to offer a range of choice when programming in schools is not meeting the needs of families or is not available due to the location of the school.

Quality Programs

Based on your experiences and knowledge of existing research and evidence, how can provincial program guidelines support program quality?

In order to support program quality, the Province needs to develop a provincial guideline regarding accountability to parents by child care operators (for example: a regular reporting process by child care centres based on established quality outcome measurements, utilizing a standard evaluation tool, etc.).

How can program quality be demonstrated and connected to the licensing process?

Quality in child care centres can be enhanced by increasing the minimum standards currently required through the licensing process. The concept of "accreditation" can be embedded in the licensing process versus being a standalone quality assurance process that is layered on top of the licensing process. One of the aspects of quality is obtaining feedback from all system stakeholders, including families, on a regular basis. This should be embedded in the licensing process.

What additional tools or professional development opportunities would be helpful to support ongoing quality improvement?

The College of ECEs should require a minimal level of professional development based on evidence based research practice on an annual basis for ECEs to maintain their certification. Teachers should also be required to attain a minimal level of professional development based on evidence based research practice on an annual basis.

The following professional development opportunities would be helpful to support ongoing quality improvement:

- Specialized infant and toddler training
- Specialized training for operators/supervisors in order to enhance their qualifications. This could take the form of a credentialing program for individuals who wish to be supervisors in a child care centre.

How can we ensure that program guidelines meet the distinct needs of diverse communities?

The following items will help to ensure that program guidelines meet the distinct needs of diverse communities:

- The requirement to obtain feedback from individuals in diverse communities and to do an assessment of the catchment area
- Training
- Development and adherence to policies and procedures to ensure inclusion and diversity

What components of the special needs resourcing program should be reviewed and streamlined (i.e. eligibility criteria, services provided, qualifications and resource consultants)?

The special needs resourcing program should be streamlined to ensure that services and funding follow the child, resulting in seamless service, a better transition to school and no duplication.

What resources about program quality could the government develop to help parents make choices about care?

The Province should develop the following "quality" resources to help parents make choices about care:

- Tool to assess programs and make results available to parents online
- A large scale public awareness campaign about indicators of high quality, effective early learning and care programs
- Quality checklist for parents looking for child care

Modernized Legislative and Regulatory Framework

How should standards be updated to improve health, safety and overall quality in child care?

Standards should be updated to improve health, safety and overall quality in child care in the following ways:

- Update the Day Nurseries Act to harmonize rules between schools and child care (for example: ratios, square footage per child, windows, lighting, playground usage, nutritious food guidelines, etc.)
- Develop and fund an accreditation/quality assurance system and include it in the licensing process
- Develop a provincial tool to better assess the level of support required for children with special needs

How can the government reduce duplication and overlap in requirements for licensed child care providers?

The Province can reduce duplication and overlap in requirements for licensed child care providers in the following ways:

- Eliminate duplicate playground inspections
- Have the same building code, fire safety inspection, water, playground, etc. for school based child care and community based school aged child care use of school buildings
- Have one health and safety team per building with common training for WHMIS, epi pen, etc.

How can the government more effectively harmonize standards across legislation as well as regulatory requirements in child care (i.e. numbers/ages of children in licensed vs. unlicensed home care, clarification of programs that do and do not require licenses)?

Standards should be made consistent between child care centres and schools that reflect the needs of the age group. Day Nurseries Act revisions should be made to

address these regulatory requirements (see previous 2 questions for examples of how this can be accomplished).

As the government looks to deliver on the commitment to provide on-site after-school programs for 6-12 year olds, should we consider a new licensing category for older children that builds on the strengths of a recreation program model (i.e. different program requirements for older children, participation in recreation-focused programs)?

The regulatory framework for on-site, after-school programs for 6 to 12 year olds must be flexible to provide for various child needs (for example: recreation, physical activities, "down" time, play, homework, etc.). The qualifications of staff in these programs need to be adjusted to meet the programming needs of 6 to 12 year olds (for example: staff need alternative post secondary qualifications, not necessarily an ECE qualification).

Note: All forms of care for 6 to 12 year olds should be licensed, including recreation programs.

How could new licensing approaches support home and centre based care in smaller, rural and remote communities (i.e. permitting home based providers to care for more children where there is more than one provider, providing greater flexibility for family or mixed age groupings and space configurations)?

Flexibility for allowances for family groupings and ratios that continue to meet the needs of children as part of the licensing process could support home and centre based care in smaller, rural and remote communities.

How can the government foster quality in informal home-based child care?

Quality can be fostered in the informal, home-based child care sector by formalizing this sector. Offer funding to this sector to encourage the move to being licensed.

Support for Accountability and Capacity Building

How can risk assessments help the government use licensing resources more effectively, encourage compliance and reward high-performing child care operators?

Licensing resources can be better utilized by differentiating "risk" amongst child care operators. Indicators to differentiate risk amongst child care operators could include patterns of non compliance or problems.

How can the government encourage quality and licensing compliance (i.e. administrative orders, administrative monetary penalties)?

The Province can encourage quality and licensing compliance in the following ways:

- Visually post compliance within the child care centre
- Pursue an aggressive timetable for compliance. If child care centres are not in compliance close the centre and provide support for families around centre closures
- Conduct unannounced licensing visits for centres that have had patterns of non compliance or problems
- Reward compliance with a license for 2 years versus providing those centres needing follow-up with a one year license.

What tools can support program and administrative leadership in child care (i.e. for centre directors and staff, volunteer not-for profit boards)?

The following tools can support program and administrative leadership in child care:

- Leadership/governance tools for training for Boards of Directors of nonprofit child care operators
- Occupational standards for child care which focus on staffing, leadership tools and training (for example: Child Care Human Resources Sector Council Occupational Standards - <http://www.ccsc-cssqe.ca/hr-resource-centre/occupational-standards-0>)

Note: Also see comments under quality section re: specialized training/credentialing program for supervisors/owners.

How can the government support the use of evaluative tools in licensed child care, including common registration and screening tools, as well as the Ontario Education Number?

The Province can support the use of evaluative tools in licensed child care by:

- Developing a common registration and screening process for identification of needs for early supports
- Establishing common registration information
- Developing common privacy guidelines
- Developing a common data warehouse number (for example: Ontario Education Number)

Note: This common registration and screening process should be developed in consultation with municipal service managers and child care operators.

What information should be collected from the operators annually in order to provide a regular cycle of public reporting on the child care system in Ontario (i.e. hours of operators, parent fees, staff compensation)?

No further information needs to be collected from child care operators.

Final Thoughts

The Windsor/Essex Best Start Implementation Committee is pleased to have had the opportunity to provide input into the modernization of child care discussion. This is an important and timely discussion and we look forward to further opportunities to provide input and to dialogue with the Province on this topic.

For further information or questions of clarification about this response please contact Shannon Hyatt, Children's Services System Manager (and Chair of the Best Start Implementation Committee), City of Windsor at shyatt@city.windsor.on.ca or 519-255-5200 ext. 5290.

