



London  
CANADA

## COMMUNITY SERVICES BRIEFING NOTE CURRENT CHILD CARE ISSUES

### ISSUES/SUBJECT:

The child care community, through the Child Care Advisory Committee of Council, are raising key issues regarding child care and early childhood education in our community. The Child Care Advisory Committee has requested that Council raise these issues at an upcoming meeting with Provincial representatives.

### KEY MESSAGES:

#### Elements of Healthy Child Development

Child care and early childhood education programs are widely recognized as important elements that provide children with a solid learning and developmental foundation on which success in school and life can be built. They also benefit parents by enabling them to work, go to school or participate in training and are as important to Employers as are schools, hospitals and churches, in that they support the Employer's ability to attract and retain young, qualified workers.

With the implementation of Full Day Kindergarten entering its third year, an increasing number of parents of all socio-economic classes are recognizing the important role child care and early childhood education has in helping prepare children for success in school and life. As parents become more informed and more knowledgeable about early childhood education, **demand for child care and early childhood education services is increasing.**

#### Barriers to Accessing Licensed Child Care

The child care community is concerned about the **following barriers that exist in London** with respect to meeting the current and future demand for child care and early childhood education services:

- **Current and future availability of child care spaces**
- **Potential shortage of Early Childhood Educators**
- **Limited availability of Fee Subsidy**

#### Economic Impact

Given, the current economic climate in London, there is an increased demand for assistance with affordable, quality child care. However, **the current amount of provincial funding is insufficient** to meet the growing demand for affordable child care and early childhood education. The current wait list for assistance is approximately 400 children.

#### Recommendation

With a shift from the Ministry of Child & Youth Services to the Ministry of Education, **it is imperative that a long term provincial framework/vision with sustainable funding be developed for high-quality licensed child care.** This also supports the Drummond Report recommending further integration of children's services to enhance early identification and intervention.

### BACKGROUND:

Child Care Advisory (CCAC) is a long standing Advisory Sub-Committee of Community Services Committee. The CCAC's mandate is to provide advice, comments and feedback to City Council (through Community Services Committee) on issues related to child care and early childhood education in the City of London.

CCAC has always had a service provider focus, with most of the nominated members representing various types of child care providers (i.e. centre based, home based, non-profit, private, school age, etc.). There has also been representation from the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, the Health Unit and the Children's Aid Society on a sporadic basis.

Over the years, CCAC has provided feedback to Council related to the city's strategic policies relating to Fee Subsidy rates, Fee Subsidy contracts, Fee Subsidy wait lists or Wage Subsidy issues. Through this mechanism, CCAC provides Council with a public input process on the strategic policies Children's Services uses to manage the delivery of the four mandated program streams.

The issues raised by CCAC are not new to our community. Council has raised these issues in previous meetings with Provincial representatives.

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