

Consolidated Clause in Community Services Committee Report 6, which was considered by City Council on July 19, 20, 21 and 26, 2005.

6

**Federal Funding to Review Municipal
Involvement in Early Learning and
Child Care**

City Council on July 19, 20, 21 and 26, 2005, adopted this Clause without amendment.

The Community Services Committee recommends that City Council adopt the staff recommendations in the Recommendations Section of the report (June 23, 2005) from the General Manager, Children's Services.

Purpose:

This report seeks authority to sign a contract with the Government of Canada and receive and spend federal research funding.

Financial Implications and Impact Statement:

The total cost of this project to carry out research through a consultant as outlined in Appendix 1 is estimated to be \$45,000.00. The expenditures are funded as follows: \$35,000.00 grant from the federal government, \$5,000.00 absorbed within the Children's Services 2005 Operating Budget and \$5,000.00 from the City of Vancouver through the West Coast Child Care Resource Centre.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and concurs with the financial impact statement.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that:

- (1) authority be granted to sign a contract with Social Development Canada to obtain up to \$35,000.00 and to carry out the research as outlined in Appendix 1 at a total cost of \$45,000.00; and
- (2) the appropriate City officials be authorized and directed to take the necessary action to give effect thereto.

Background:

The City of Toronto has been allocated up to \$35,000.00 in federal funding to carry out research on programs for children provided by 11 cities across Canada.

Comments:

Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) is a key element of local social infrastructure. Cities are the place where most Canadian children and families experience ELCC services. Although child care is managed and cost-shared by municipalities in Ontario, in most jurisdictions, it is funded by federal/provincial/territorial cost sharing but delivered by local organizations. Cities provide recreation programs, libraries and public health programs and services. Kindergarten is provided by school boards, one of the key institutions of local government. The local level is also where the integration of services for children and families – schools, recreation, and health as well as early learning and child care – occurs. It is also at the local level that public-community partnerships, as well as cross-administrative partnerships, are most likely to be built.

The City of Toronto, working with Vancouver, Winnipeg and the Association of Native Friendship Centres developed a research proposal to investigate the range of ELCC programs provided and/or funded locally in cities across Canada. Titled “Learning from Each Other: Early Learning and Child Care Experience in Canadian Cities”, the purpose of the study is to obtain and analyze baseline data to be able to assess and report on the importance of ELCC to 11 cities (Vancouver, Edmonton, Whitehorse, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, Sudbury, Toronto, Montreal, Sherbrooke, Halifax and St. John’s) and the people who live in them. All municipalities involved, including Toronto, will learn about effective ways of funding and delivering services for children through the research.

In addition, the study is being done as the first wave of federal ELCC funding allocated under the bilateral funding agreements to four of the provinces (Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Newfoundland) is coming on-stream. Having the baseline data will enable researchers to return in a few years to assess the local effects of the federal funding.

Social Development Canada will provide up to \$35,000.00 to support the part of research on the programs for children aged 0-6 (the federal priority). To collect and analyze the data for 6-12 year-olds, the City of Toronto and the City of Vancouver will contribute \$5,000.00 each. Vancouver will flow their funding through a local non-governmental organization, West Coast Child Care Resource Centre. Toronto is holding and disbursing the funds.

The research will be lead by Dr. Rianne Mahon of Carleton University. Dr. Mahon is an expert on municipal government and social programs in Canada. The final report will be submitted by mid-December, 2005.

Conclusions:

This report seeks authority to sign a contract with the federal government and receive and spend federal research funding for a study to investigate the range of ELCC programs provided and/or funded locally in cities across Canada.

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List of Attachment:

Appendix 1: Learning from Each Other: Early Learning and Child Care Experience in Canadian Cities

Appendix 1

Learning from each other: Early Learning and Child Care Experience in Canadian Cities

Dr. Rianne Mahon

13 June 2005

ELCC, with child care as the essential core, is a key element of local social infrastructure, even if Ontario is the only province or territory that gives municipal government clear responsibility for the delivery of child care. This project is a study of formal child care programs and other programs that may serve as child care such as after school recreation programs, for children 0-12, in 11 cities across Canada, with support from the Department of Human Resources Canada and the cities of Toronto and Vancouver¹. The cities to be studied are: Vancouver, Edmonton, Whitehorse, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, Sudbury, Toronto, Montreal, Sherbrooke, Saint John's and Halifax.

Rationale for the project:

Cities are the place where most Canadian children and families experience ELCC services. In most jurisdictions, these services are funded by federal/provincial/territorial cost-sharing but delivered by local organizations. Kindergarten is provided by school boards, one of the key institutions of local government. The local level is also where the integration of services for children and families – schools, recreation, and health as well as early learning and child care – occurs. It is also at the local level that public-community partnerships, as well as cross-administrative partnerships, are most likely to be built.

There are two key reasons why the proposed review and assessment of this basic social infrastructure needs to be done at this time:

- (1) There is a growing recognition that the well-being of cities is essential to national well-being. Governments at all levels are turning their attention to ensuring that cities have the necessary resources to develop and maintain their infrastructure. Yet most attention still goes to physical infrastructure, while investment in social infrastructure receive little attention. Nowhere is this gap clearer than in the area of ELCC, despite the now entrenched understanding of the importance of high-quality environments for young

children as essential for sound intellectual and social development and present and future success. There is no systematic, pan-Canadian and up-to-date review of this crucial piece of local social infrastructure. We lack basic information about local conditions such as the amount and types of ELCC available in each city; local governments' roles and responsibilities for service design, delivery and/or regulation; the connections between municipal/provincial/federal policies on ELCC; funding forms; best practices. Municipal as well as F-P-T government have every interest in obtaining access to this basic information, available in a clear, concise and comparative form, as they make decisions about ELCC. This is the first rationale for the project.

- (2) The second rationale is a time-sensitive one. The F-P-T preliminary agreement on new child care spending, announced in early November 2004, will fundamentally change the ELCC situation in Canadian cities. In order to evaluate the effects of this historic intergovernmental agreement, it is essential to have base-line information about the situation in 2005. Only with such information about patterns of availability, access, affordability and so on, will it be possible in later years to monitor results.

Data:

In this project, data of three types will be collected for each city, as well as for the province in which each is situated.

A – Contextual Data:

For each participating city:

- (i) Demographic, economic and social trends in cities participating in the review; and
- (ii) Political structure of participating cities, especially as (and if) it relates to ELCC.

B – Policy Inventories:

For each province/territory involved, as well as for the federal government (as appropriate):

- (i) Policy and programmes for all types of ELCC programmes: funding (operations and capital); regulatory regimes; staffing; etc.;
- (ii) Initiatives to influence both supply and quality;
- (iii) Roles and responsibilities for ELCC in participating cities; and
- (iv) Intergovernmental ELCC and Early Childhood Development Initiatives (ECDI)-supported projects involving cities.

For each participating city:

- (i) Existence of municipal policy and programmes for ELCC, including supply, access, affordability and quality initiatives;
- (ii) Extent of municipal involvement in decisions about funding, regulatory regimes, staffing, etc.;

- (iii) Planning/development control mechanisms used by cities to ensure development of ELCC services, e.g. Section 37 in Ontario or the development by-laws in Vancouver;
- (iv) Partnership initiatives with private-sector providers, including for-profit as well as non-profit; kindergarten and before/after school;
- (v) Role of parents, advocates and other community members in ELCC;
- (vi) Cross-administrative partnerships for ELCC; and
- (vii) Municipal role in assessment and evaluation of quality.

C – Empirical Data about ELCC:

For each participating city:

- (i) Availability of ELCC and composition of provision (numbers of spaces, mix), location and age group, by form (centre-based, family day care, kindergarten etc.) and by auspice (non-profit, for-profit, in-school);
- (ii) Subsidies: eligibility rules;
- (iii) Affordability and the funding mix – contribution of public funds, parents, community groups, employers etc.;
- (iv) Access to services for specific populations such as francophone programmes in cities outside Quebec, Aboriginal children and children with special needs
- (v) Women’s labour force participation rates; and
- (vi) Number of children 0-6; 6-12.

Method:

The data collection will rely on three techniques:

- (i) Collection of information from documentary sources. This will be used for the contextual and policy information;
- (ii) Collection of empirical information from provincial and municipal sources. Some provinces have all data collected by municipality, while in other cases it will be necessary to seek the information from local governments or other sources; and
- (iii) Key informant interviews, to fill data gaps, especially for the policy inventories.

To ensure data collection is as complete as possible, a resource person will be needed in each participating city. This person will serve as a liaison between the researcher and local officials and partners. They will also be a member of the Reference Group.

The Report:

The end result of the work will be a concise and well-written report that provides a systematic understanding of the different local systems of child care provision, as well as a synthetic analysis of innovative practices in the design and management of ELCC.

In addition to the narrative report, the results will be displayed using the inventory methodology pioneered by CPRN in studies such as “the best policy mix” (Jenson and Stroick) and “policies for school-aged children” (Mahon). This methodology is designed for comparative studies such as the one proposed here. Information from each jurisdiction is presented in synthetic tabular form, thus allowing for immediate and systematic comparison across jurisdictions. This method has been used with success to map policies at the national and provincial scale. In this study, it will be applied to the local scale.

The study will conclude with a brief, synthetic analysis of the key findings and include a full bibliography of sources used, with web links where appropriate.

The report will be distributed electronically to all funders, participants and appropriate Web sites. A limited number of hard copies will be printed by the City of Toronto for launch and distribution.

Research:

The research project will be carried out and the report written by Dr. Rianne Mahon, Director of the Institute of Political Economy, Carleton University. As necessary, she will be assisted by other researchers, the cost of whose employment will be included in the flat-rate fee for the project.

A Reference Group, composed of representatives of funders and participating cities will provide advice on research design and data collection as well as the preliminary draft of the report. The Group and the researchers will meet as they have done thus far, by teleconferencing and email.

Timeline:

The first draft will be completed by October 15, 2005 and circulated in electronic form to all members of the Reference Group. The Reference Group will provide its feedback to the researcher(s) via a teleconference on November 8, 2005. The final draft, to include an Executive summary and an identifying cover page, will be circulated in PDF form by December 15, 2005.

- (1) The project was developed with the assistance from staff of the cities of Toronto and Vancouver, a community researcher from Winnipeg and a staff member of the Association of Native Friendship Centres.