

**Consolidated Clause in Policy and Finance Committee Report 6, which was considered by City Council on June 14, 15 and 16, 2005.**

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## **Continuation of the Toronto First Duty Project**

*City Council on June 14, 15 and 16, 2005, adopted this Clause without amendment.*

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**The Policy and Finance Committee recommends that City Council adopt the recommendation of the Community Services Committee contained in the communication (May 26, 2005) from the Committee:**

Recommendation:

The Community Services Committee recommended to the Policy and Finance Committee that City Council adopt the staff recommendations in the Recommendations Section of the report (May 5, 2005) from the General Manager, Children's Services, respecting the Continuation of the Toronto First Duty Project.

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(Report dated May 5, 2005, addressed to the  
Community Services Committee from the  
General Manager, Children's Services)

Purpose:

This report outlines funding for the Toronto First Duty Project and seeks authority to enter into contracts to support the continuation of the Toronto First Duty Project from July 1, 2005, to June 30, 2006.

Financial Implications and Impact Statement:

The Toronto First Duty Project agreements to be authorized will cost approximately \$0.550 million for the period of July 1, 2005, to December 31, 2005, and \$0.550 million for the period of January 1, 2006, to June 30, 2006, for a total cost of approximately \$1.1 million. Funds to cover these costs are available in the Child Care Expansion/First Duty Reserve Fund. The Reserve Fund has an uncommitted balance of \$1.2 million.

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

Recommendations:

It is recommended that:

- (1) authority be granted to extend agreements with Macaulay Child Development Centre; Not Your Average Daycare (NYAD); The Child Development Institute (formerly operated and known as The Creche), East York/East Toronto Family Resources and the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education University of Toronto, and to enter into an agreement with Woodgreen Community Centre for the purpose of the continuation of the Toronto First Duty pilot project;
- (2) withdrawals from Child Care Expansion/First Duty Reserve of up to \$250,000.00 for Macaulay Child Development Centre, up to \$300,000.00 for Woodgreen Community Centre, up to \$184,000.00 for each of the following projects: NYAD, The Child Development Institute, East York/East Toronto Family Resources, and up to \$25,000.00 for Ontario Institute for Studies in Education University of Toronto for the period of July 1, 2005, to June 30, 2006, be approved;
- (3) the Children's Services General Manager report back on the final evaluation of Toronto First Duty following the completion of the pilot project;
- (4) the Children's Services 2005 Operating Budget be adjusted by \$550,000.00 gross and revenue to reflect the 2005 estimated expenditures;
- (5) this report be forwarded to the Policy and Finance Committee for its consideration; and
- (6) the appropriate City officials be authorized and directed to take the necessary action to give effect thereto.

Background:

City Council at its special meetings on February 21, 22, 23, 25, 28 and March 1, 2005, directed that the General Manager of the Children's Services Division report back to Community Services Committee before July 2005 on the outcome of provincial negotiations and the use of the City's contribution for the period of July 2005 through June 2006 for the Toronto First Duty Project.

In May 1999, on a recommendation contained in Report 8 of the Strategic Policies and Priorities Committee, Council allocated \$3 million from the Social Services Stabilization Reserve Fund to fund a multi-year Early Childhood Education, Development and Care Project, later renamed Toronto First Duty. Toronto First Duty was established as a funding partnership with the Atkinson Foundation and the Foundation committed \$1 million towards the total costs of the project.

Five pilot projects that integrate key children's services were established and the operation of these projects was approved for extension by Council at its meeting of September 28, 29, 30 and October 1, 2004. Under-expenditure during the first three years of the pilot provided sufficient funding to extend the projects to June 2005.

Funding to support the continuation and enhancement of the Toronto First Duty Project to June 2006 was approved by Council during its 2005 budget deliberations. Funding to support an enhancement of the Toronto First Duty Project to include young children at Bruce School and other sites was contingent upon a comparable contribution from the Atkinson Foundation. The Atkinson Foundation Board has approved up to \$1.2 million over three years for Toronto First Duty.

The Province has announced its intention to build on the work of Toronto First Duty through their Best Start Plan. Best Start builds on the creation of early learning and child care hubs that support parents in their role and help make the transition to school smooth, seamless and successful. Specific funding under Best Start has not yet been announced and is to some extent contingent on federal provincial negotiations under the proposed national plan for Early Learning and Child Care (\$5 billion over five years).

#### Comments:

The City's funding for Toronto First Duty and the contributions from partners are a significant investment in improving, expanding and integrating services for Toronto's children aged 0-6 and their families. Although the Province has announced its intention to move to a model of service similar to Toronto First Duty, specific funding allocations under Best Start have not been announced and as a result it is premature to comment on the potential impact of Best Start on the funding of Toronto First Duty. The funds that were approved by Council during its 2005 budget deliberations allow for extension of the project to June 2006. The extension of Toronto First Duty meets a number of goals outlined below:

In a response to the release of the provincial Best Start Strategy, Toronto First Duty will continue to promote innovation and staff development activities as a component of Phase 2 of the project at all five sites. In addition to the sites providing common core elements that support an integrated model of delivering services to young children, the sites will further the model by including elements of Best Start that support an early learning and care experience for younger children. All sites will continue to develop activities that support and promote site coordination, enhanced seamless access, sustained partnership agreements, increased opportunities for direct parent participation, intake and tracking research and development, communication, joint hiring practices and joint kindergarten registration.

Extending the pilot enables the evaluators to obtain additional information in the areas under examination, for example, depth and breadth of program expansion, program quality, the extent of service integration, child outcomes, increase in use of programs and an economic analysis. The extended time available for evaluation will provide the City with improved information on service delivery in general and on sustaining Toronto First Duty and it will inform the process of implementing the provincial Best Start Strategy in the City.

The Toronto First Duty Project is consistent with the mandate of the Mayor's Roundtable on Children, Youth and Education to develop a plan for integrating services for children in Toronto. The Roundtable is expected to report to Council in October 2005. Toronto First Duty Project continues to inform the work of the Roundtable by providing valuable information on service integration.

Conclusion:

This report outlines funding for the Toronto First Duty Project and seeks authority to enter into contracts for the period of July 1, 2005 to June 30, 2006. The report describes the importance continuing and enhancing of the Toronto First Duty Project and comments on the relationship of First Duty to the provincial Best Start Plan.

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