



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Transfer Ownership of Specialized Equipment for Children with Special Needs from the City to Community Living Toronto

Date:	January 3, 2008
To:	Government Management Committee
From:	General Manager, Children's Services Director, Purchasing and Materials Management Division
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	

SUMMARY

Children's Services seeks approval to transfer ownership of specialized equipment from the City of Toronto to Community Living Toronto for use in community child care programs across the city at no cost.

Children's Services equipment for children with special needs has been used in recent years, exclusively in municipal child care programs. Community Living Toronto is establishing a centralized city-wide "bank" of equipment that can be accessed by all licensed child care programs.

This new centralized bank will far exceed current city resources and will be professionally maintained and enhanced each year. Children's Services would like to contribute City owned equipment to the centralized bank which will increase the inventory of equipment available to child care programs and in turn give city staff access to an extensive catalogue of equipment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager of Children's Services and the Director of Purchasing & Materials Management recommend that:

- 1) Children's Services transfer ownership of current City owned specialized equipment, with a current value estimated value between \$2,300 and \$3,500, to Community Living Toronto at no cost, for use in community to child care

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- programs across Toronto; and
- 2) the General Manager of Children's Services be delegated authority to execute an agreement on behalf of the City with Community Living Toronto for the transfer of such equipment and such agreement be on terms and conditions satisfactory to the General Manager and in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

This report has no financial impact.

DECISION HISTORY

Children's Services would like to transfer ownership of specialized equipment from the City of Toronto to Community Living Toronto for use in community child care programs across the city at no cost. The transfer of ownership would increase the inventory of equipment available to child care programs and in turn give city staff access to an extensive catalogue of equipment. Council authority is required to transfer the ownership of this equipment.

Since 1948, Community Living Toronto has been a source of support for thousands of individuals with an intellectual disability searching for accessible and meaningful ways to live in the community. Community Living Toronto is funded by the City of Toronto to provide Special Needs Resourcing services to child care.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

Children's Services purchased specialized equipment specifically for use by children with special needs who otherwise would not be able to participate in the program. As a large portion of children with special needs were enrolled in municipal programs, in recent years the equipment has been used within municipal programs exclusively.

The equipment includes articles such as special seating and standing equipment, mobility devices such as strollers and trikes, adaptive and sensory toys.

In 2005, Children's Services adopted a new model of support for children with special needs. The *Every Child Belongs* Model restructured community based services by assigning a Special Needs Resourcing staff (whether municipally employed or based in community agencies) to a group of child care centres which they work with on a continual basis. This system design provides centres with consistent program and individual child consultation and has increased their capacity to provide care for all children. The new model has resulted in more children being accommodated in their community child care programs, however, they do not have access to adaptive equipment crucial to their successful placement.

Transferring ownership of current City owned specialized equipment to Community Living Toronto will increase the pool of specialized equipment and create a more efficient service delivery system. This will support improved access to equipment for all child care programs.

COMMENTS

The vision of the *Every Child Belongs* model is that children with special needs have access to child care and appropriate supports in the neighbourhood where they live. The absence of specialized equipment is often a crucial barrier to meaningful participation for children with special needs.

A community bank of specialized equipment available to all child care programs is an effective solution for families as equipment of this type is often large, making it difficult for parents to transport to and from the child care centre each day. In addition, it is an efficient solution for child care programs as equipment is expensive to purchase and may not be used again after a child leaves or grows.

The equipment currently owned by the City of Toronto was purchased between 2000 and 2004. An estimate obtained on the value of the equipment indicates that it has a current value of \$2,300 - \$3,500 however to purchase it today it would cost upward of \$40,000. Community Living Toronto is willing assume liability and to manage the distribution of equipment to child care programs across the city. This includes professional maintenance and inventory management.

The intent of this proposal is to transfer ownership to ensure more equitable access to equipment. Because of the specialized nature of this equipment and the City interest in supporting children with special needs the Report recommends transferring the equipment to Community Living Toronto, instead of disposing of the equipment by public auction or solicitation as required by Municipal Code, Chapter 195 Section 17.

CONTACT

Mary-Anne Bedard
Program Manager
Children's Services
Tel: 416-397-1260
Email: mabedard@toronto.ca

SIGNATURE

Brenda Patterson
General Manager
Children's Services

Lou Pagano
Director
Purchasing & Materials Management

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