

Consolidated Clause in Policy and Finance Committee Report 7, which was considered by City Council on September 28, 29, 30 and October 1, 2004.

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Extension of Toronto First Duty Contracts

City Council on September 28, 29, 30 and October 1, 2004, adopted this Clause without amendment.

The Policy and Finance Committee recommends that City Council adopt the recommendation of the Community Services Committee in the communication (September 9, 2004) 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 (August 6, 2004) from the Commissioner of Community and Neighbourhood Services.

Background:

The Community Services Committee on September 9, 2004, considered a report (August 17, 2004) from the Commissioner of Community and Neighbourhood Services outlining the progress of the Toronto First Duty projects and seeking authority to extend the current contracts to June 2005.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that:

- (1) authority be granted to extend agreements with Macaulay Child Development Centre, Not Your Average Daycare (NYAD), and The Creche and East York/East Toronto Family Resources for the purpose of the implementation of the Toronto First Duty pilot project;
- (2) funding of up to \$125,000.00 for Macaulay Child Development Centre and approximately \$92,000.00 for each of the following projects: Not Your Average Daycare (NYAD), The Creche Child and Family Centre and East York/East Toronto Resources for the period of January 1 to June 30, 2005, be approved from the Child Care Expansion/Pilot Project Reserve Fund;

- (3) the Department report back on the final evaluation of Toronto First Duty following the completion of the pilot project; and
- (4) the appropriate City officials be authorized and directed to take the necessary action to give effect thereto.

(Report dated August 6, 2004, addressed to the
Community Services Committee from the
Commissioner of Community and Neighbourhood Services)

Purpose:

This report outlines the progress of the Toronto First Duty projects and seeks authority to extend the current contracts to June 2005.

Financial Implications and Impact Statement:

The Child Care Expansion Pilot Project Reserve Fund was set up in January 2000 with a \$3 million transfer from the Social Assistance Stabilization Reserve Fund to fund four approved Toronto First Duty pilot projects from 2001 to 2004. Total costs by the end of the contract period are expected to be below the \$3 million allocation due to initial delays in the start-up of the projects. Under-expenditure and accumulated interest income provide sufficient funds in the Child Care Expansion Pilot Project Reserve Fund to support continuation of the current pilots to the end of June 2005 at a total cost of \$401,100.00 as recommended in this report. Approval of this request will be reflected in the 2005 Children's Services Operating Budget Submission.

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 extend agreements with Macaulay Child Development Centre; Not Your Average Daycare (NYAD); The Creche and East York/East Toronto Family Resources for the purpose of the implementation Toronto First Duty pilot project;
- (2) funding of up to \$125,000.00 for Macaulay Child Development Centre and approximately \$92,000.00 for each of the following projects: Not Your Average Daycare (NYAD), The Creche Child and Family Centre and East York/East Toronto Family Resources for the period of January 1 to June 30, 2005, be approved from the Child Care Expansion/Pilot Project Reserve Fund;
- (3) the Department report back on the final evaluation of Toronto First Duty following the completion of the pilot project; and

- (4) the appropriate City officials be authorized and directed to take the necessary action to give effect thereto.

Background:

In May 1999, on a recommendation contained in Report No. 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, based on the philosophy that society's first duty is to ensure that children grow up in an environment that optimizes their physical, emotional and intellectual development. Four pilot projects that would integrate key children's services and develop innovative service provision were approved from 2001 to 2004 at a total expenditure of \$2,407,300.00. Funds from the Social Services Stabilization Reserve Fund were transferred into the Child Care Expansion/Pilot Project Reserve Fund for this purpose. The four pilot sites approved were the York Early Years under the sponsorship of Macaulay Child Development Centre, Corvette Early Years, sponsored by Not Your Average Daycare (NYAD), Queen Victoria Early Years, sponsored by The Creche Child and Family Centre and Action for Children Today and Tomorrow sponsored by East York/East Toronto Family Resources.

Toronto First Duty is a partnership that includes the City of Toronto, the Toronto District School Board and the Atkinson Charitable Foundation. The Atkinson Foundation has provided \$1 million to the project and the Toronto District School Board provides services in kind. The lead agencies provide staff time towards project co-ordination.

The Toronto First Duty sites are developing program models that integrate services for children aged 0-6 and their families in ways that are inclusive and address any barriers that could interfere with access to service. The sites both provide direct service and co-ordinate other community services to provide one-stop access for families. The core services are child care, kindergarten and parenting centres. Additional programs, such as those developed in communities by Toronto Public Health, are provided as needed and desired by the lead agencies or the site co-ordinating committee. The pilot sites must increase and enhance services, demonstrate high-quality, integrated and collaborative early childhood education and care, be consistent with the City's service plan for children and meet the criteria approved by Council.

The pilot project has been evaluated from the beginning by faculty and researchers at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto (OISE/UT) and Ryerson University. Through the evaluation the City, the partners, the lead agencies and communities are learning and will continue to learn new and more effective ways of providing children's services.

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. The funds available due to gradual start of individual sites have provided the opportunity of extending the project until June 2005. There are two strong reasons to do so:

- (1) Operating until June 2005 sustains the project until the end of the school year when children naturally make the transition from kindergarten to grade one. Ending the

services, especially the integrated child care/kindergarten component in December 2004, the middle of the school year, will be very disruptive to children and families.

- (2) 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, 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 allow the City to provide advice to the Ministry of Children and Youth Services on the provincial Best Start Program.

Conclusions:

This report recommends extending the current First Duty Pilot projects to the end June 2005 to prevent services to children and families being withdrawn in the middle of a school year and to provide a more significant basis for project evaluation. Funding of \$401,000.00 to support the period of January 1 to June 30, 2005, are available from the Child Care Expansion/Pilot Project Reserve Fund.

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