



## STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

### Full-Day Learning for Four- and Five-Year-Olds

<b>Date:</b>	June 18, 2008
<b>To:</b>	Community Development and Recreation
<b>From:</b>	General Manager, Children's Services
<b>Wards:</b>	All
<b>Reference Number:</b>	

#### SUMMARY

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This report recommends the City endorse key principles developed at a Forum on Full-day Learning co-sponsored by the Children's Services Advisory Committee and Toronto Best Start Network and that the principles be sent to the Early Learning Adviser for his consideration in developing a strategy for implementing full-day learning for four- and five-year-olds.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

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The General Manager, Children's Services recommends that:

- (1) City Council endorse the principles from the Full-day Learning Forum co-sponsored by the Children's Services Advisory Committee and Toronto Best Start Network as outlined in Appendix A and that a copy be sent to the Early Learning Advisor;
- (2) City Council also adopt the principle that the success of full-day learning implementation requires that the City's child care system is adequately funded to meet the child care needs of its residents; and
- (3) City Council urge the Province of Ontario and the Early Learning Advisor to ensure that during the transition to full-day learning, school space is preserved.

#### FINANCIAL IMPACT

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This report has no financial impact.

## DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting of March 3, 4 and 5, 2008 City Council adopted the motions from in the report entitled "Informing the Development of a Full Day Program for Junior and Senior Kindergarten".

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2008/cc/decisions/2008-03-03-cc17-dd.pdf> and <http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2008/cd/bgrd/backgroundfile-11108.pdf>

## ISSUE BACKGROUND

The Premier announced the appointment of Dr. Charles Pascal to recommend the best way to implement full-day learning for four- and five-year-olds on November 27, 2007. At the same time, he committed to spending \$200 million in year three of its mandate and \$300 million in year four to make progress on full-time learning for Ontario children.

Dr. Pascal participated in a meeting of the Children's Services Advisory Committee on February 15, 2008. The Committee made Recommendation 2 as follows:

- (2) requested the General Manager, Children's Services to report to the Children's Services Advisory Committee on a process for providing input into the policy on full-day learning for four- and five-year-olds, such process to ensure input from other community stakeholders.

In addition the Committee referred recommendations concerning the impact of school closures and adequate funding for child care to the General Manager for consideration in the development of the City's position on this matter.

These recommendations were endorsed at the Community Development and Recreation Committee meeting of February 21, 2008 and added as Decision Advice and Other Information when considered and approved by City Council on March 3, 4 and 5, 2008.

Following up on the above recommendation, the Children's Services Advisory Committee and the Toronto Best Start Network co-sponsored a Full-day Learning Forum on May 15, 2008. The purpose of the Forum was to bring stakeholders together to discuss core elements / principles to consider in developing a full-day learning program for four- and five-year-olds and to review and learn from best practices. A representative number of invitees, from different sectors including child care, education, health care / promotion, parents, family support, labour, etc., participated. The Forum featured Dr. Pascal as keynote speaker on the value of full-day learning for children and families. His talk was followed by demonstrations of a series of sites in Toronto that were profiled because they are already offering full-day learning in a variety of settings. This was followed by a series of program component discussion groups on topics including human resources, governance, facilities, funding and sustainability, pedagogy, curriculum and quality and how a full-day learning day would work. Each component group was asked to come up with a few core principles.

## **COMMENTS**

Participants at the Full-Day Learning Forum developed key Principles for Full-day Learning Programs attached as Appendix A. The principles addressed issues of Human Resources, Governance, Facilities, Funding and Sustainability, Pedagogy, Curriculum and Quality.

At the June 17, 2008 meeting of the Children's Services Advisory Committee, there was a discussion of the above-referenced principles. Some implementation issues and comments were made relating to training and recruitment of staff, funding and facilities. CSAC members mentioned the following implementation challenges:

- 1) Appropriate training is needed for early childhood practitioners including Early Childhood Educators and for Ontario certified teachers.
- 2) The initiative must have adequate, long-term sustainable funding and capital funding to support the creation of appropriate space for full-day learning.
- 3) The group expressed concern that in light of the full day learning program that there needs to be a moratorium on school closures to ensure that there is adequate space for the program in all communities.

Since Dr. Pascal was the keynote speaker at the Forum, he will be interested in receiving a copy of these principles to inform his strategy for implementing full-day learning for four- and five-year-olds.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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Brenda Patterson  
General Manager, Children's Services

## Appendix A

### Principles for Full-Day Learning Programs

#### Human Resources

- 1) Full-Day Learning should be delivered by well qualified early childhood practitioners, which could include Ontario certified teachers, Early Childhood Educators, and educational assistants, with a recommended ratio of one appropriately qualified educator to ten children.
- 2) Working conditions for all practitioners should support quality, including; wages and benefits commensurate to education, time for program planning, paid professional education and development time, and equitable working hours.
- 3) All early childhood practitioners working in the Full-Day Learning for Four-and-Five-Year-Olds should be responsible for both their care and education.

#### Governance

- 4) Full-Day Learning should be guided by shared principles that allow for innovation and flexibility, based on good-practice research and local practices.
- 5) Appropriate infrastructure and budget should be provided to enable oversight at both the system and local level.
- 6) School Boards and Municipalities should work together to implement Full-Day Learning, in collaboration with Best Start Networks. Meaningful parental involvement and clear lines of accountability to the elected bodies should be established.
- 7) Local planning and implementation will ensure that the plan for Full-Day Learning provides local flexibility, yet agreed upon consistency and standards.

#### Facilities

- 8) Where space permits, full day learning should be offered in elementary school settings. Where this is not possible, existing child care centres and other child-friendly facilities should be considered based on community needs.
- 9) Physical environments for Full-Day Learning should be well designed; in terms of access, layouts that enable the integration of early childhood programs, appropriate lighting, air flow, easy access to outdoor space and washrooms.

- 10) Funding should be provided to ensure facilities meet the standards laid out in the Day Nurseries Act (DNA) and the Toronto Operating Criteria.
- 11) No existing programs (including tenanted) should lose their space due to this new initiative.

#### Funding and Sustainability

- 12) Full-Day Learning should build on the successes and lessons learned from existing models including Toronto First Duty, full-day kindergarten, kindergarten in child care, family support programs, and should build-on and enhance the existing system of services for young children.
- 13) While Full-Day Learning is a welcome additional service to support families and young children, implementation should be phased in strategically to ensure it does not destabilize other early childhood services.
- 14) Toronto will continue moving forward with its Best Start Plan: Toronto Vision for Children, working collaboratively with all early childhood service sectors.
- 15) Full-Day Learning in Ontario should guarantee the option of publicly funded, high quality full-day learning programs, offering universal access to all four-and-five-year-olds, providing a range of choices to support children and family's unique needs.
- 16) Full-Day Learning should be closely aligned with existing programs for four-and-five-year-old children, to ensure seamless delivery of services.
- 17) Full-Day Learning should be linked with a continuum of services for children 0-12 years.

#### Pedagogy, Curriculum and Quality

- 18) Full-Day Learning should meet the unique needs of every child, providing learning opportunities in all developmental domains.
- 19) *The Kindergarten Program (MOE, 2006)*, in combination with *Early Learning for Every Child Today (ELECT)* should be the curriculum framework for full day learning programs.
- 20) Quality assurance mechanisms should be in place to monitor and ensure ongoing program quality, and an assessment tool should be utilized to measure success.