



## STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

### Development of Child Care Centres with the Toronto District School Board and Native Child and Family Services

<b>Date:</b>	December 19, 2007
<b>To:</b>	Community Development and Recreation
<b>From:</b>	General Manager, Children's Services
<b>Wards:</b>	1, 31, 39 and 43
<b>Reference Number:</b>	

#### SUMMARY

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This report seeks approval to fund four new child care centres from the Child Care Expansion Reserve and the Child Care Capital Reserve Funds. It also seeks authority to amend an agreement with Native Child and Family Services Toronto to increase the size of a previously approved Aboriginal child care centre and enter into an agreement with the Toronto District School Board for the construction of the remaining three projects.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

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It is recommended that:

- (1) funds of up to \$2.9 million be approved for the construction of Ghesig House at 156 Galloway Road and Kiiwednong at 2784 Keele Street, two Aboriginal Child Care Centres to be developed by the Native Child and Family Services Toronto. The total project cost of \$2.9 million is to be funded from the Child Care Expansion Reserve Fund of \$2.4 million and from Provincial revenues of \$0.528 million. The 2008 Recommended Operating Budget for Children's Services be adjusted by \$0.228 million gross and revenue to reflect the additional funds required to complete the two Aboriginal Child Care Centres in 2008;
- (2) funds of up to \$2 million be approved to create three new child care centres at Highfield Junior School, Kennedy Public School, and Crescent Town Elementary School to be funded from the Child Care Capital Reserve Fund and that the 2008 Recommended Operating Budget for Children's Services be adjusted by \$2.0 million gross and revenue to reflect the funds required for this project; and

- (3) the General Manager of Children's Services Division be delegated authority to negotiate agreements and execute them on behalf of the City with the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) and with Native Child and Family Services Toronto (NCFST) for the design and construction of such projects, and such agreements be on terms and conditions satisfactory to the General Manager and in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor.

## **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

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The Children's Services' 2008 Recommended Operating Budget includes funding of \$2.7 million for the Aboriginal Child Care Centre Project, to be fully funded from the Child Care Expansion Reserve Fund. The Province recently advised the City that funding of \$0.528 million will be provided for two new Aboriginal child care centres with a total of 40 child care spaces in Toronto. The Aboriginal Child Care Centre Project, currently included in the 2008 Recommended Operating Budget, will be combined with one of the two provincially approved Aboriginal child care projects for a total project cost of \$2.928 million. As a result of the new provincial funding of \$0.528 million, only \$ 2.4 million will be required to be drawn from the Child Care Expansion Reserve Fund. The 2008 Recommended Operating Budget for Children's Services will be adjusted by \$0.228 million, gross and revenue, to reflect the additional funds required to complete the two Aboriginal Child Care Centre projects in 2008.

The Toronto District School Board is undertaking additions at three elementary schools, Highfield Junior School, Kennedy Public School, and Crescent Town Elementary Schools. There is an opportunity for the City to build additional spaces for child care during construction. The total project cost to expand the child care spaces at the three schools is estimated at \$2.0 million, to be funded from the Child Care Capital Reserve Fund. The Child Care Capital Reserve Fund 's 2007 projected year-end balance is \$11.263 million, with \$7.726 million committed for various projects, leaving a balance of \$3.557 million, which is more than sufficient to fund this project. The 2008 Recommended Operating Budget for Children's Services will be adjusted by \$2.0 million, gross and revenue, to reflect the funds required for this project.

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

## **DECISION HISTORY**

The Best Start Service and Transition Infrastructure Plan was approved by City Council on October 26, 27, 28 and 31, 2005, in the staff recommendations in the recommendations section of the Policy and Finance Committee Report 9, Clause 21, <http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/2005/agendas/council/cc051026/pof9rpt/cl021.pdf>

At its meeting of September 26 and 27, 2007 City Council approved EX 11.10, 2007 Additional Best Start Funding and New Funding for Aboriginal Child Care Report. <http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2007/ex/bgrd/backgroundfile-6164.pdf>

## **ISSUE BACKGROUND**

The Best Start Service and Transition Infrastructure Plan outlined the allocation of Best Start funding for child care expansion projects including construction/renovation funding and start-up funding of up to \$2,200.00 for each new child care space created under the Best Start Plan. An Aboriginal Child Care Project was included in Best Start Phase 2 Proposed Capital Projects targeted for Ward 43. Although funding for Best Start was constrained following the cancellation of the federal/provincial early learning and child care initiative, the City committed to completing 3 high priority projects in Phase 2 of its Best Start Plan. Previous projects included Bergamot and Regent Park and the Aboriginal project is the final project to be completed under Phase 2. A consultation was held in the fall of 2006 with the Aboriginal community, including parents to determine the most appropriate location for this project. Because of the large number of Aboriginal families in the Galloway area, Ward 43 was deemed to be the most appropriate location.

On July 5, 2007 the then Minister of Children and Youth Services, Mary Anne Chambers, announced additional funding for Best Start. In addition, she also announced an Expression of Interest process to create off-reserve culturally appropriate child care programs for Aboriginal children that was targeted to 14 communities as potential sites for the development of the child care spaces, including Toronto. The intent is to sustain new Aboriginal child care spaces province-wide, including capital and operating costs. Both capital and operating funds will be available to support these new spaces.

See <http://www.children.gov.on.ca/mcys/english/news/releases/070705.asp>

Using an Expression of Interest process the province identified child care projects in nine Ontario communities including Toronto, which are expected to create 325 new Aboriginal child care spaces. In Toronto, the province approved funding for Native Child and Family Services Toronto (NCFST) to create two child care centres with a total of 40 child care spaces. Funding for the two projects of \$528,023 is not sufficient to build purpose built child care centres but will cover the costs of renovating existing space. NCFST applied for funding for two projects. The first project located at NCFST's Kiiwednong Head Start site at 2784 Keele Street was approved by the province is expected to serve 16 children. Although the agency's initial proposal for their second project was not approved, the province did approve funding for an additional 24 spaces, pending NCFST finding a suitable facility. After completing a feasibility study the agency has determined that the best option is to create a single purpose built facility within a larger Aboriginal hub at NCFST's Ghesig House at 155 Galloway Road. The province has agreed to allow provincial funds to augment the City intended contribution to the creation of a purpose built child care program. The program is expected to have a licensed capacity of 50 children and will serve infants, toddlers and preschool children.

The Children's Services Capital Reserve Fund is intended to support growth of child care in communities that are significantly deficient and to support the growth of child care in accordance with the Child Care Service Plan. Creating new child care space in schools provides an opportunity for integration of early learning environments by combining child care with kindergarten programs. The Toronto District School Board is undertaking additions at three elementary schools, Highfield Junior School, Kennedy Public School, and Crescent Town Elementary Schools. The opportunity to build additional space for child care during the construction of the school additions is timely. Depending upon the results of the construction tenders that two purpose built child care rooms will be created at each site. The licensed capacity for each program will include 44 preschool children and up to 25 school age children will be cared for in shared school space.

## **COMMENTS**

Both the Best Start Service and Transition Plan and the City's Child Care Service Plan identify the need to increase child care services in communities which are not receiving their equitable share. Lack of physical child care spaces is the largest barrier to equitable access to child care subsidies. In particular, Aboriginal communities face even more significant barriers to culturally appropriate services. Through the use of reserve funds this report proposes the creation of up to 257 new child care spaces in communities that are deficient of child care.

## **CONTACT**

Gail O'Donnell  
Manager, Capital Projects  
Children's Services Division  
Tel: (416) 397-5086  
Fax: (416) 392-4227  
Email: [godonnell@toronto.ca](mailto:godonnell@toronto.ca)

## **SIGNATURE**

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Brenda Patterson  
General Manager, Children's Services