



REFERRAL OF MEMBER MOTION BY CITY COUNCIL

Request the Federal Government to Maintain Daycare Subsidy Funding in 2009 Federal Budget

Date:	February 26, 2009
To:	Executive Committee
From:	City Council
Wards:	All

City Council Decision

City Council on February 23, 24 and 25, 2009, referred Motion MM31.1 to the Executive Committee.

Recommendations

Councillor Walker, seconded by Councillor Thompson, recommends:

1. That City Council convey, in the strongest terms possible, to the Federal government that the childcare subsidy program is extremely important to the residents of the City of Toronto and request that the Federal government maintain subsidy funding for daycare/childcare at 2008 levels and to include this in the Federal government's 2009 Budget.
2. That City Council request the Federal government to create and implement a National Childcare Policy.
3. That City Council forward this resolution to the Prime Minister of Canada and the Leaders of all the Federal Opposition parties.

Summary

Our global economy is damaged worse than anyone has seen before. Canada lost 129,000 jobs in January. Toronto's rate of unemployment is 8.5 percent. Toronto's real estate market has fallen. The Federal governments of Canada and the United States have meddled by pouring billions of taxpayer dollars into a financial system no one fully understands. Confidence in the stock markets is fleeting and is ruined by short-term greed. We have not hit bottom yet; this downturn will not be over next year.

Our economy is inextricably linked to the ability of a family to function: whether parents can leave the home and generate income for the family by working at a job.

Daycare/Childcare is immeasurably important to allowing parents to work while paying someone else less than the income they make while working. Some parents, single or otherwise, need help making this happen.

Until now the Federal government, through the Provincial government, has joined the City of Toronto in giving a financial subsidy to those parents who apply and qualify. Now, the Federal government has pulled out of the deal.

The Federal government did not mention subsidies for daycare/childcare in their 2009 Budget, delivered January 26, 2009. This is odd since daycare becomes all the more important for struggling families during times of economic recession when citizens are losing their jobs by the thousands.

In Toronto, we stand to lose approximately 6000 subsidized daycare spots. If we lose these spots, the fee charged for non-subsidy daycare spots will be raised to cover the lost revenue from the loss of the subsidy spots; operating costs of the daycare are not reduced when enrollment is reduced by the removal of the subsidy. So, parents who both do and do not rely on the Federal subsidy program will be significantly impacted by the loss of this funding.

Toronto's families cannot bear to lose these daycare spots. We, as City Council, must speak-up quickly so an amendment can be made to the Federal government's 2009 Budget; Budget deliberations are occurring right now.

This deep recession needs all the mitigation we can offer; the times are made much worse by poor conditions for families. The Federal government's daycare subsidy program is one of the cornerstones in a foundation that our families balance upon.

(Submitted to City Council on February 23, 24 and 25, 2009 as MM31.1)