

# North Local Health Committee

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To assist the Board of Health in determining and setting public health policy on a broad range of local health issues.  
To raise awareness of the determinants of health and their impact on the health and wellbeing of Toronto's communities.  
[http://www.toronto.ca/health/participate/lhc\\_index.htm](http://www.toronto.ca/health/participate/lhc_index.htm)

Reply: Sara Farrell  
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June 2, 2010

**Premier Dalton McGuinty**  
Queens Park  
Main Legislative Building, Rm 281  
Toronto, ON M7A 1A4

Dear Premier McGuinty,

On behalf of the North Local Health Committee (an Advisory Committee to the Toronto Board of Health), I would like to commend you on your commitment to early childhood development. The Committee is pleased with Dr. Charles Pascal's report: **With Our Best Future in Mind** and his comprehensive recommendations that incorporate an understanding of the impact of the broader social determinants of health framework on a child's growth and development. We believe that the health impact on Ontario's children and their families, when Dr. Pascal's full vision is implemented, will be immense and lasting.

We are encouraged by your first step of implementing full-day learning for Ontario's 4- and 5-year olds, and eager to learn more about your government's plans to respond to all 20 of the recommendations that are aimed at "building on the success of Ontario's Best Start Strategy for a comprehensive, continuous and integrated system for children up to the age of 12 and their families". Members of our Committee want to encourage you to realize Dr. Pascal's full, long-term vision.

We would also like to stress the necessity and importance of inviting all community stakeholders, including public health, to the decision making tables. As with any new system change, there are bound to be bumps along the road during implementation. It is only through inclusion and comprehensive consultation with all involved that one achieves buy in and commitment to the bigger vision. There are a number of public health programs including Healthy Babies Healthy Children, prenatal and parenting education, nutrition promotion, early identification and dental whose activities will need to be coordinated into Dr. Pascal's larger investment strategy. Toronto Public Health is also the lead agency to the Toronto's Preschool Speech and Language, Infant Health and Blind Low Vision programs and we understand the important place these programs will have in providing integrated services for children and families. Public health practitioners, along with early childhood educators, child care providers, teachers, parents and caregivers must have a voice in the implementation of this visionary strategy.

We would also like to draw your attention to Dr. Clyde Hertzman's (Director of the Child Development Institute of the Canadian Institutes for Health Research) **15 by 15** report. In this report he makes the argument that coordinated investments in the early years link directly with economic benefits. He has

noted that for every 1 % reduction in early childhood developmental vulnerability in Canada, the economy grows by 1% during the working lifetime of that cohort. This makes a convincing economic case for the full implementation of Dr. Pascal's comprehensive strategy.

As Premier of our Province, you have the opportunity to create a lasting and visionary early childhood system that will benefit not only children, but their families and all of Ontario. We look forward to ongoing communication about how to participate in stakeholder consultations for the implementation of Dr. Charles Pascal's recommendations and again, encourage you to move forward with the full, long-term plan.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Valerie Sterling". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Valerie Sterling  
Chair, North Local Health Committee

c.c.     Hon. Leona Dombrowsky, Minister of Education  
           Hon. Laurel Broten, Minister Children and Youth Service  
           John Fillion, Chair, Toronto Board of Health  
           Ulli S. Watkiss, Toronto City Clerk  
           Dr. David McKeown, Medical Officer of Health