



**STAFF REPORT
ACTION REQUIRED**

**Full Day Learning Staffing Models and Options for a
Child Care Communications Strategy**

Date:	November 24, 2011
To:	City Council
From:	General Manager, Children's Services
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	

SUMMARY

This report responds to the November 4, 2011 request from the Community Development and Recreation Committee that the General Manager of Children's Services report directly to Council on First Duty, the proposed Atkinson model for full-day learning and full-day kindergarten as it is being implemented by Toronto school boards.

The report also outlines options for a communications strategy to raise awareness of the child care funding situation in Toronto.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager, Children's Services, recommends that:

- 1) City Council consider the options outlined in the communication strategy attached to this report as Appendix A, with a view to raising awareness of the potential funding crisis in Toronto's child care system.

Financial Impact

There are no financial implications associated with this report. Should Council elect to choose a specific communication strategy, costs associated with the implementation strategy will be identified at that time.

Should a strategy be agreed upon, Council will be requested to identify a funding source.

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

DECISION HISTORY

Community Development and Recreation Committee at its meeting of November 4, 2011, requested that the General Manager, Children's Services, submit a report directly to Council on First Duty, the proposed Atkinson model for full day learning and the current full-day kindergarten (FDK) roll out by Toronto school boards. The Committee also asked that staff report on alternative models that could address integration of child care and kindergarten programs. The Committee requested that the General Manager, Children's Services, report directly to Council on a communication strategy to raise awareness of the child care funding situation in Toronto.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

Toronto's child care system is facing significant funding pressures as 4- and 5-year olds leave existing child care programs to attend the Province's FDK program. These pressures are outlined in the staff report titled, *Transitional Issues Impacting Toronto's Child Care System and Recommended Actions for Mitigation*, which will be before Council at its meeting on November 29 and 30, 2011.

FDK is premised on the idea that a seamless, integrated day provides the most positive experience for children. The original vision, as outlined by Dr. Charles Pascal in "With Our Best Future in Mind", called for school boards to operate a before and after school program to compliment the core full day kindergarten program.

FDK is being implemented incrementally until September 2014. September 2012 is a critical year as 49% of kindergarten children will have access to a FDK program. The Province originally legislated that school boards directly provide before-and after-school programs as part of FDK. More recently, the legislation was amended to allow third-party operators to provide this programming.

The City of Toronto has been a leader in integrating services for children since the introduction of Toronto First Duty in 2001.

COMMENTS

Various staffing models exist in the early learning community, each with different degrees of collaboration between school day staff and before- and after- school staff. The Community Development and Recreation Committee requested that staff provide a brief overview of these models and outline other options for enhanced integration.

Toronto First Duty

Toronto First Duty (TFD) was established in 2001 as a partnership of the City of Toronto, the Toronto District School Board and community agencies, supported by the Atkinson Charitable Foundation. Toronto First Duty is a collaborative partnership that combines the three core early childhood service streams: kindergarten, licensed child care, and family supports, into a comprehensive single program for young children and their families. Staff teams include kindergarten teachers, early childhood educators, family support practitioners, and educational assistants who deliver the program using shared curriculum, resources and space. An evaluation of the program found that with increased integration, program quality improves.

Atkinson Foundation's "Seamless Day" Model:

The Atkinson Foundation promotes "a seamless day approach" where, in addition to full day kindergarten, school boards operate the before and after school program, as well as the full-day kindergarten program. This model reflects the vision initially proposed by the Province. It operates from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. and is available for children from junior kindergarten to Grade 2. The staffing model includes an early childhood educator who greets children at 7 a.m. and stays until 2 p.m. and a second ECE who begins at 11 a.m. and stays to close the program at 6 p.m. The teacher's day begins at 9 a.m. and ends at 3 p.m. The advantage of this board-run program is that a single employer results in a closely monitored, high-quality program with fewer transitions for children and board hired ECE's who receive competitive benefits and wages.

Full-day Early Learning Kindergarten in Toronto:

In FDK schools, a team of early childhood educators and teachers share their expertise to deliver a developmentally enriched play-based program during the core school day (9 a.m. to 3 p.m.). School boards are also legislated to provide FDK before-and after-school programs, where demand exists.

Toronto school boards to date have opted to contract with third party providers for before- and after-school programs where there is an existing child care program operating in the school. A board decision has not yet been made with respect to schools that do not have an existing child care operator in the school. With third party arrangements, the child care covers the beginning and end of the day and delivers the program in the kindergarten room. This arrangement poses challenges for third-party operators who must retain staff for split-shift work and still provide a high quality program. For children, more staff transitions result in less continuity between child care and school programs.

Other Employer Models:

Additional opportunities for a blended model between school boards and child care centres are limited and contingent upon collective agreements. The options presented below do not take into account current collective agreement arrangements. Further,

staffing model decisions for programs in schools belong to Boards of Education and the Ministry of Education. Children's Services' focus will be on maintaining a system of services for younger children.

Two Employer Model

This model requires the sharing of staff, whereby the ECE in child care is also hired as the ECE for FDK. The ECE would work 7 a.m. to 9 a.m. in the child care centre and continue as a board employee from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Another ECE would work as a board employee from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. and then carry on into the child care program from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. In this arrangement, the ECE has full time employment which provides for a quality early learning experience for the child.

FDK Delivered in Child Care

An FDK group size delivered in the school is 26 children. With a change in the group size for licensed JK/SK child care from 20 to 26, the schools could have a full kindergarten class operated out of the licensed child care program. The school boards would recognize the licensed child care room (with the existing ECEs) as a full day kindergarten room and assign a teacher to provide the instructional program within the centre. This allows ECEs to work as a team with the teacher and could resolve space problems within schools that do not have sufficient space to address enrolment.

The following sections respond to specific questions raised by Committee members:

a. Child Care Centres located in Schools – November 2011

	# of Centres	Licensed Spaces				
		Infant	Toddler	Preschool	School Age	Total
Fee Subsidy Contract with the City	290	136	645	8,284	9,447	18,512
No Contract with the City	74	0	10	883	2,017	2,910
Total	364	136	655	9,167	11,464	21,422

b. Number of kindergarten classes in schools and the number of kindergarten classes that currently have Educational Assistants (EAs).

The Toronto Catholic District School Board currently has 572 kindergarten classes. In addition, it has 88 FDK classes. The school board does not assign educational assistants to kindergarten classes. Educational assistants are assigned to individual children who have extra support needs.

The Toronto District School Board (TDSB) also does not assign educational assistants to kindergarten classes. Currently educational assistant's schedules are determined by the Principal. EAs can be assigned to any classroom or grade in the school and may have schedules that include a number of classrooms. The

TDSB currently has 1541 kindergarten classes, and an additional 290 FDK classes.

Information regarding the number of kindergarten classrooms and the use of EA's in the French Public and Separate school boards was not available at the time of this report.

c. Number of Educational Assistants that are ECE's

The educational status of educational assistants is not easily attainable as the information rests in employee files and would require a file-by-file review by school board officials.

Communications Strategy

Community Development and Recreation Committee requested that staff develop a campaign strategy, with a view to raising awareness for funding issues impacting child care in Toronto. Options for Council consideration are outlined in Appendix A of this report. Campaign costs depend on the option(s) selected.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

(original signed)

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – Communications Strategy: Options for Council