



Mr. John Tory, Mayor of Toronto
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, On M5H 2N2

December 11, 2019

Dear Mayor Tory and Executive Committee,

The Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario (AECEO) is the professional association for Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) in Ontario. We support ECEs in their professional practice and advocate for recognition and appropriate compensation for early childhood professionals, so they can provide high quality programs for children and families. Well educated, well paid Early Childhood Educators are fundamental to high quality early years and child care programs that support children and families. Our members work throughout Ontario in programs for young children and their families, including City of Toronto operated child care centres.

As such, we are writing to express our concern in regard to the Value Based Outcomes Review, in particular, the proposition to close municipally-operated child care centres. We understand the need to review options that increase long-term financial stability, however, we urge you to deeply consider the important role of municipally-operated child care centres.

The female-dominated Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) workforce, comprised of registered early childhood educators and child care workers, faces ongoing challenges, primarily a lack of quality working conditions and adequate compensation. Municipally-run centres have long led the sector with quality jobs for ECEs and child care staff, where workers have decent work; including but not limited to unionization, appropriate wages, access to benefits, etc. The loss of these quality jobs would not only be devastating for the women who have them, but also for the broader ECEC sector that continues to strive to provide decent work, and looks to Toronto municipal child care as a leader.

With ECEC wages in Ontario stagnant at an average of \$17 an hour, and the ongoing uncertainty of provincial funding, it is increasingly important that the City of Toronto continues to lead as a decent work employer and service system manager. Among the many negative consequences of the closure of municipally-operated centres is the loss of quality jobs and further overburdening a strained ECEC sector. The notion that transferring services to existing non-profits at a 'lower cost to families' neglects the reality that these fees are directly connected to the wages and working conditions experienced by our ECEC workforce. We should instead seek solutions that reaffirm the City of Toronto's commitment to bold policy choices and social programs, both as an employer and service system manager.

We urge the Executive Committee to continue to prioritize those goals and ask the Executive Committee to consider how, in fact, the child care centres and ECEC workforce contribute to the short and long-term wellbeing, health, and sustainability of our thriving communities. As such, we are calling on you to continue to operate city-run child care centres and lead on decent work in the early childhood sector.

Sincerely,

Alana Powell, *Policy and Special Projects Advisor* '1