

Clause embodied in Report No. 10 of the Policy and Finance Committee, as adopted by the Council of the City of Toronto at its meeting held on June 18, 19 and 20, 2002.

8**Final Report of the Commission on Early Learning and Child Care for the City of Toronto**

(City Council on June 18, 19 and 20, 2002, adopted this Clause, without amendment.)

The Policy and Finance Committee recommends the adoption of the report (June 3, 2002) from the Commissioner of Community and Neighbourhood Services subject to amending Recommendation No. (1) embodied therein to read as follows:

“(1) the Commission report and its endorsement of a strong social infrastructure, including child care, be submitted to the new Minister of Community, Family and Children’s Services; and the Chair of the Community Services Committee be requested to convene a meeting with the new Minister with respect thereto.”;

so that the Recommendations now read as follows:

- “(1) the Commission report and its endorsement of a strong social infrastructure, including child care, be submitted to the new Minister of Community, Family and Children’s Services; and the Chair of the Community Services Committee be requested to convene a meeting with the new Minister with respect thereto;
- (2) the City provide copies of the Commission’s Report to local MPs and MPPs and use the Commission’s findings in its continuing discussions with the federal government on the need to direct the provinces to spend federal Early Childhood Development Initiative (ECDI) funds in all four of the target policy areas including child care;
- (3) City officials use the Commission Report’s findings, in their role on the Steering Committee to the Early Years Champion to ensure that the Ontario Early Years Centres being implemented in Toronto ridings recognize child care as central to an effective early childhood development strategy and that the City’s Child Care Service Plan directions are respected;
- (4) the City use the Commission Report’s findings to negotiate full provincial cost sharing of the 2002 budget approved by Council, including the request to expand the fee subsidy program by up to 2000 spaces;

- (5) **the City maintain its leadership in the promotion of an integrated system of services for young children by completing the current First Duty pilot projects and seeking new funding partnerships to sustain and expand them beyond the pilot testing and evaluation phases;**
- (6) **the City develop a communication/action strategy to engage the business, academic and volunteer community in an early years campaign that recognizes and includes child care; and**
- (7) **the appropriate officials take the necessary action to give effect thereto.**

The Policy and Finance Committee reports, for the information of Council, having expressed its appreciation to Mr. Charles Coffey and the Honourable Margaret Norrie McCain for their work on behalf of the City.

The Policy and Finance Committee submits the following report (June 3, 2002) from the Commissioner of Community and Neighbourhood Services:

Purpose:

This report summarizes the implications of the Final Report of the Commission on Early Learning and Child Care for the City of Toronto and recommends ways to use its findings to support the City's Children's Strategy.

Financial Implications and Impact Statement:

There are no immediate financial implications associated with the recommendations in this report.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that:

- (1) the City use the Commission Report and its endorsement of a strong social infrastructure including child care to support the Mayor's initiative for a "new deal" for the City during the upcoming Toronto Summit discussions and in meetings with other urban leaders and with the Judy Sgro Task Force on Urban Issues and the Council-directed meeting of the Chair of Community Services Committee with the Minister of Community, Family and Children's Services;
- (2) the City provide copies of the Commission's Report to local MPs and MPPs and use the Commission's findings in its continuing discussions with the federal government on the need to direct the provinces to spend federal Early Childhood Development Initiative (ECDI) funds in all four of the target policy areas including child care;

- (3) City officials use the Commission Report's findings, in their role on the Steering Committee to the Early Years Champion to ensure that the Ontario Early Years Centres being implemented in Toronto ridings recognize child care as central to an effective early childhood development strategy and that the City's Child Care Service Plan directions are respected;
- (4) the City use the Commission Report's findings to negotiate full provincial cost sharing of the 2002 budget approved by Council, including the request to expand the fee subsidy program by up to 2000 spaces;
- (5) the City maintain its leadership in the promotion of an integrated system of services for young children by completing the current First Duty pilot projects and seeking new funding partnerships to sustain and expand them beyond the pilot testing and evaluation phases;
- (6) the City develop a communication/action strategy to engage the business, academic and volunteer community in an early years campaign that recognizes and includes child care; and
- (7) the appropriate officials take the necessary action to give effect thereto.

Background:

At its meeting held June 26, 27, and 28, 2001, Toronto Council endorsed the establishment of a time-limited and independent Early Learning and Child Care Commission in Toronto "to develop a communication and advocacy strategy to influence national and provincial policy and funding support for childcare and early learning and development." The Atkinson Charitable Foundation and the Laidlaw Foundation made funding available for the Commission's work which was carried out under the leadership of its co-chairs Charles Coffey and Margaret Norrie McCain. Charles Coffey is Executive Vice-President of Government and Community Affairs for the RBC Financial Group. The Honourable Margaret Norrie McCain is the former Lieutenant-Governor of New Brunswick and co-author of "The Early Years Study". With the approval of Toronto Council, at its meeting held on November 6, 7, and 8, 2001, a report, funded by the City and prepared by the Canadian Policy Research Network was provided to assist the Commission in its deliberations. This paper was entitled "Child Care in Toronto: Can Intergovernmental Relations Respond to Children's Needs? An Options Paper."

The Final Report of the Commission on Early Learning and Child Care for the City of Toronto, released May 13, 2002, was endorsed by the Community Services Committee at its meeting on May 28, 2002. The Committee directed the department to prepare a report on the implications of the Commission's findings for consideration by the Policy and Finance Committee at its meeting on June 6, 2002.

Comments:

The Commission's report recognizes the importance of child care "as the cornerstone for a system of early childhood development" and criticizes the province for its failure to support

childcare with federal Early Childhood Development Initiative funds or to include childcare in Ontario's Early Years Plan. The Commission report applauds the leadership shown by the City in creating a Children's Strategy that promotes a continuum of integrated services for children, including childcare and highlights in particular the City's "First Duty" pilot project and the \$3 million of City money allocated to it. However, the Commission warns that Toronto cannot preserve let alone improve or expand childcare on its own. For that reason, the Commission's Final Report contains recommendations that are aimed at all key stakeholders – the federal and provincial governments, the City and the private sector.

The Commission findings validate and strengthen the City's negotiating position with senior levels of government. The importance of a strong social infrastructure, including childcare, to a viable urban economy is stressed as is the need for new funding and policy relationships with senior levels of government. These messages are important in the ongoing discussion of a "New Deal" for the City.

The Commission's Report also paints a stark picture of the future of childcare in the absence of renewed provincial and federal support. In spite of the infusion of new federal ECDI funds, provincial funding of childcare in Toronto has decreased by \$11.8 million since 1999. Although City commitment to the service has remained strong, existing funding levels are insufficient for the City to maintain historic service levels. The absence of adequate provincial cost sharing has already resulted in 1300 fewer fee subsidies for needy children and families. The Commission also highlights the huge childcare service gap and the continuing unmet demand for significantly more subsidized childcare. The findings of this independent Commission will assist the Department in its negotiation of the 2002 Child Care Service Agreement with the Ministry.

The Commission's Report clarifies that the provincial Early Years Centres plan to simply provide parent information centres across the province does not reflect the spirit or the intent of the original "Early Years Study: Reversing the Real Brain Drain" study by McCain and Mustard on which it is supposed to be based. That "Early Years Study", released by the province in February, 1999, recommended "community-based child development and parenting centres built on existing community capacity and providing development opportunities for children, and a full range of parenting supports, including flexible childcare." The provincial "anything but childcare" policy perspective and the politicization of its current early year's initiatives is judged in the Commission report to be "disturbing". Copies of the Commission's report have already been requested by and provided to the Early Years Champion, Dr. Susan Bradley and her Planning Steering Committee. The findings outlined in the Commission's report therefore have the opportunity of influencing the planning and implementation of Ontario Early Years Centres in Toronto ridings.

The recommendations within the Commission's report are targeted at a variety of stakeholders, all of whom are seen to be essential to the success of the City's Children's Strategy. To build on the momentum developed through the work of the Commission over the past year, the City should continue to develop strong partnerships with all of these stakeholders – the senior levels of government, other urban areas facing similar funding and policy pressures, other funders, the business community, academic institutions, service providers and the public at large. A comprehensive communication strategy to ensure a consistent and focused message is needed and the City should be the leader in its development. This action is consistent with the

December 2001 Council direction that the Department “support appropriate actions opposing deregulation and cuts to the child care and family resource systems in Toronto”.

Conclusion:

The Final Report of the Commission on Early Learning and Child Care for the City of Toronto validates and reinforces the City’s conviction that a strong urban economy is directly related to a sound social infrastructure. Its findings support the leadership shown by the City in its Strategy for Children but warn that without renewed support from senior levels of government childcare service losses will continue. The report calls for cooperative action on the part of all stakeholders – government, business and the community to meet the needs of Toronto’s young children and families.

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The Policy and Finance Committee also submits the following communication (May 28, 2002) from the City Clerk:

Recommendations:

The Community Services Committee on May 28, 2002:

- (1) endorsed, in principle, the Final Report of the Commission on Early Learning and Child Care for the City of Toronto;
- (2) directed that the Final Report of the Commission on Early Learning and Child Care for the City of Toronto be forwarded to the Policy and Finance Committee for consideration at its meeting on June 6, 2002, with a request that the Commissioner of Community and Neighbourhood Services report to such meeting on the implications of the Commission’s report on the City of Toronto.

Background:

The Community Services Committee had before it the following communications:

- (May 13, 2002) from Councillor Olivia Chow, Children and Youth Advocate, forwarding for consideration the Final Report of the Commission on Early Learning and Child Care for the City of Toronto; noting that the Commission has met extensively with communities and with elected representatives and officials from all three levels of government, and also has gathered information from Ontario, the rest of Canada and other countries prior to release of their final report; indicating that the report recognizes Toronto’s strong contribution to early learning and child care, but that it cannot do the job alone and sets the stage for a new level of activity regarding the enhancement and expansion of services; advising of her support of the report; and extending

congratulations to the Commissioners for their hard work on behalf of the City of Toronto; and

- (May 21, 2002) advising that the Children and Youth Action Committee on May 15, 2002, recommended that:
 - (1) City Council endorse the report (May, 2002), titled “Commission on Early Learning and Child Care for the City of Toronto”;
 - (2) the report be forwarded to the Co-Chairs of the City Summit to be held in June, 2002 and that the report be considered by the City Summit as part of its deliberations;
 - (3) the report be forwarded to the Toronto District School Board and the Toronto Catholic District School Board for their consideration, particularly with respect to cross-jurisdictional issues;
 - (4) CYAC members be encouraged to take the report to other agencies and interested persons, for their consideration, comments and endorsement;
 - (5) the Mayor and City Council be requested to write the Prime Minister and the Premier of Ontario, to seek their endorsement and implementation of the Commission report;
 - (6) the report be forwarded to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario for their information and endorsement; and
 - (7) the Mayor and City Clerk be requested to accommodate a presentation at City Council by Commissioners Coffey and McCain, when the report is submitted to City Council for its consideration and endorsement.

(Communication dated May 13, 2002, addressed to the
Community Services Committee, from Councillor Olivia Chow,
Toronto’s Children and Youth Advocate)

It is my pleasure to forward to you, for consideration at the upcoming Community Services Committee, a copy of the final report from the Commission on Early Learning and Child Care for the City of Toronto with their recommendations.

Frustrated by the lack of response to its entreaties to Queen’s Park, in June, 2001, Council endorsed the establishment a Commission. The Commission’s task was to develop a communications plan to:

- (i) increase funding for early learning and child care services in Toronto;

- (ii) influence national and provincial policy on early learning and child care;
- (iii) ensure Toronto receives its share of funding from the federal/provincial/territorial initiative on Early Childhood Development; and
- (iv) advise the City on the intergovernmental mechanisms and funding supports available to implement its “Action Plan for Children.”

Mr. Charles Coffey, the Executive Vice-President of Government and Community Affairs for the RBC Financial Group, and Ms. Margaret McCain, former Lieutenant-Governor of New Brunswick and former Co-Chair of Ontario’s Early Years’ Study, kindly agreed to chair the Early Learning and Child Care Commission.

The Atkinson Charitable Foundation and the Laidlaw Foundation funded the initiative. As a support to the Commission’s work, the City funded a study by the Canadian Policy Research Network on how intergovernmental relations can respond to children’s needs.

The Commission met extensively with communities, and with elected representatives and officials from all three levels of government. It also gathered information from Ontario, the rest of Canada and other countries. Their findings will be released today at 2:00 p.m. at Bruce Junior Public School. The Commissioners will continue to discuss their findings at various events during the next four months.

This groundbreaking report recognizes Toronto’s strong contribution to early learning and child care. It recognizes that the City cannot do the job alone and sets the stage for a new level of activity regarding the enhancement and expansion of services.

As Toronto’s Children’s Advocate, I fully support the Commission report and thank and congratulate the Commissioners for their hard work on behalf of the City of Toronto.

Summary of Recommendations
Final Report of the Commission
on Early Learning and Child Care for the City of Toronto

The following is a list of recommendations outlined in the “Commission on Early Learning and Child Care for the City of Toronto – Final Report, May 2002”:

(1) The Federal Government:

We recommend that the Federal Government:

- (a) utilize the provisions of the Social Union Framework Agreement (SUFA) to establish a child care partnership, modeled on the recent housing initiative (Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative). This would provide additional support to those provinces that have integrated child care into their early years’

plans and permit direct funding agreements with municipalities in provinces where a comprehensive approach has not been implemented;

- (b) publicly commit to a renewed Early Childhood Development Initiative structured to produce measurable outcomes and containing the accountability provisions of SUFA. These include citizen participation in the development and assessment of the agreement, third-party auditing and a disputes mechanism. A SUFA-compliant agreement would allow the federal government to engage in direct relationships with municipalities should a province not want to participate in phase two of an ECDI accord;
 - (c) provide public notice that the next phase of the Early Childhood Development Initiative will require participating provinces and territories to spend in all four target areas: (1) promoting healthy pregnancy, birth and infancy; (2) improving parenting and family supports; (3) strengthening early childhood development, learning and care; and (4) strengthening community supports;
 - (d) engage municipalities, local authorities and communities to monitor progress on the accord. A consultation process would assess the effectiveness of the ECDI, provide valuable information regarding integrated service development and build public support for early years services;
 - (e) provide Parliament with regular timely analysis of the agreement's progress; make these reports a topic for federal/provincial/territorial meetings and use the current review of the SUFA to foster support for transparency and accountability for public programs;
 - (f) in preparation for a renewed ECDI, lay the groundwork for the creation of new structures to facilitate meaningful dialogue between cities and senior governments on children's issues; and
 - (g) participate in the second round of the OECD examination of early learning and care. Collaborate with municipalities where individual provinces decline to participate.
- (2) The Provincial Government:

We recommend that the Provincial Government:

- (a) establish a legislative and funding framework to support the development of a network of early childhood development centres as recommended in the McCain/Mustard Early Years Study;
- (b) this framework would provide municipalities and school boards with the authority and resources to integrate existing services into a comprehensive, community-responsive early years' system;

- (c) direct federal allocations under the Early Childhood Development accord to municipalities for system expansion;
- (d) maintain the availability of services during the transition period: (1) by maintaining current funding for licensed child care and (2) by resolving outstanding funding issues with the Toronto District School Board;
- (e) exercise responsibility for establishing program goals, targets and outcomes. Allow municipalities to design and execute programs as the mandated managers of children's services; and
- (f) in compliance with the Social Union Framework Agreement – which Ontario signed – provide accountability for the funding received through the ECDI.

(3) The City of Toronto:

We recommend the City of Toronto:

- (a) commit to expanding the First Duty model beyond its initial phase and use its leadership to promote the initiative with Canadians and senior governments;
- (b) expand the mandate of the alliances developed with urban counterparts and the business sector beyond capital infrastructure to link capital and social development, including children's initiatives; and
- (c) create an infrastructure to monitor early child development and family outcomes and resource allocation at the community level. Community partnerships would combine the expertise of the City's existing community reporting capabilities with the academic expertise and independence afforded by university centres. A community committee now oversees the City's report card process and would ensure community ownership of expanded reporting. The Atkinson Centre at OISE/University of Toronto and the Centre for Children and Youth at Risk at McMaster will be able to assist Toronto in the analysis and to consider the data in relation to other communities in Canada;
- (d) work with Toronto's First Nations communities to access federal funding for Aboriginal Head Start (expanded in the last federal budget).

(4) Private and Public Institutions:

- (a) business needs to appreciate its interest in this issue. Business is a powerful sector with the capacity to influence government policy and public opinion. In addition, it can ensure family-friendly workplaces as an essential complement to public services. Workplace programs or community partnerships should not be seen as replacements for public initiatives; and

- (b) the sustainability of valued public programs such as education and health are dependent on healthy child development. Substantial research demonstrates that children who are well supported in their early years are less likely to draw on expensive health treatment and educational remedial services. It is therefore in the self-interest of these sectors to (1) provide leadership promoting a comprehensive approach to early childhood development, and (2) to co-operate in breaking down the barriers that stand in the way of a comprehensive systems approach.
- (5) The Community:
- (a) service providers must commit to program quality. Poor programs compromise children's future and alienate parents and the public. If insufficient resources make this impossible, operators and staff have an obligation to take decisive action to inform the public;
 - (b) service providers have a duty to make parents aware of policy initiatives that affect their children and involve them as active participants in seeking solutions;
 - (c) increased funding must be accompanied by reorganization. A weakness in the children's sector is the fragmentation imposed by provincial policy frameworks. Service providers, users and unions have a right to be consulted about service reorganization; they also have a responsibility to work with the City as the systems manager to break down barriers to integration; and
 - (d) private funders can ensure their allocations support a comprehensive approach to service delivery, rather than fostering fragmentation.

(Communication dated May 21, 2002, addressed to the
Community Services Committee, from the City Clerk)

Recommendations:

The Children and Youth Action Committee recommends that:

- (1) City Council endorse the report (May, 2002), titled "Commission on Early Learning and Child Care for the City of Toronto";
- (2) the report be forwarded to the Co-Chairs of the City Summit to be held in June, 2002 and that the report be considered by the City Summit as part of its deliberations;
- (3) the report be forwarded to the Toronto District School Board and the Toronto Catholic District School Board for their consideration, particularly with respect to cross-jurisdictional issues;

- (4) CYAC members be encouraged to take the report to other agencies and interested persons, for their consideration, comments and endorsement;
- (5) the Mayor and City Council be requested to write the Prime Minister and the Premier of Ontario, to seek their endorsement and implementation of the Commission report;
- (6) the report be forwarded to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario for their information and endorsement;
- (7) the Mayor and City Clerk be requested to accommodate a presentation at City Council by Commissioners Coffey and McCain, when the report is submitted to City Council for its consideration and endorsement.

The Children and Youth Action Committee reports, for the information of the Community Services Committee, having:

- (1) endorsed the report (May, 2002) titled, "Commission on Early Learning and Child Care for the City of Toronto";
- (2) authorized the Chair of the Children and Youth Action Committee, with staff support from the Department of Community and Neighbourhood Services, to carry out an advocacy and action plan as follow-up to the report, in consultation with a working group comprised of Colin Hughes, Fiona Nelson, Jane Mercer, Caroline Di Giovanni and Shoba Adore, and report back to the Children and Youth Action Committee on the actions taken;
- (3) requested the Acting Commissioner of Community and Neighbourhood Services and/or the Commissioners on Early Learning and Child Care to provide an Executive Summary of the report and a powerpoint format for the report for presentation purposes; and
- (4) thanked Commissioners Coffey and McCain for their efforts in the publication of the report.

Background:

The Committee on May 15, 2002, heard a presentation from Ms. Julie Mathien, Community and Neighbourhood Services Department, on this matter.

The Committee's recommendations are noted above.

Mr. Charles Coffey, Executive Vice President of Government Community Affairs, RBC Financial Group, and Co-Chair of the Commission on Early Learning and Child Care for the City of Toronto, appeared before the Policy and Finance Committee in connection with the foregoing matter, and filed a copy of his presentation material in regard thereto.

(A copy of the Final Report of the Commission on Early Learning and Child Care for the City of Toronto was forwarded to all Members of Council upon its release on May 13, 2002, and to Members of the Community Services Committee with the agenda for its meeting on May 28, 2002, and a copy thereof is on file in the office of the City Clerk, City Hall.)