

January 7, 2011

TO: Community Development and Recreation Committee Members

FROM: Giorgio Mammoliti, Chair

RE: Childcare Development Task Force

In 2008, the UNICEF Innocenti Report Card on early childhood education and childcare provision rated Canada last (tied with Ireland) among 25 affluent countries. Canada achieved only 1 out of 10 benchmarks for access, quality and financing. A key finding of the report was that “investing in early childhood services of high quality.... pays huge social and economic dividends and reduces other costs down the road...”

Childcare remains a major challenge for many Toronto families. There has been minimal change in the considerable gap between need and provision, from an access perspective related to coverage, supply and affordability. Currently more than 17,000 children are on the waiting list for subsidized regulated care in Toronto. Demand for affordable childcare is expected to grow.

Toronto’s childcare sector is in the midst of significant transformation as four and five year olds incrementally move to Ontario’s Full Day Early Learning program. As these children leave the childcare system, opportunities become available in reshaping the Toronto childcare sector to reflect the changing needs of today’s families and their children in the provision of childcare programming.

Exploring options for expanding access to affordable, quality childcare is a priority for the new Toronto Council. Without appropriate levels of this critical service, the social development and economic success of Toronto is constrained.

To assist the city in identifying those options, I recommend that the Community Development and Recreation Committee request Toronto City Council:

1. Establish a Task Force on Childcare Development, to report through the Community Development and Recreation Committee effective upon terms of reference approved by Council.
2. Include in the composition of the task force the Chair of the Community Development and Recreation Committee by right of office (Councillor Mammoliti) or his or her designate.

3. Charge the Task Force with identifying and assessing options for expanding childcare, that is part of an integrated system of early childhood development and diversifying childcare delivery models to meet the future needs of Toronto's families in the context of other governmental legislative changes and policy initiatives.
4. Include in the membership of the Task Force a broad cross-section of stakeholders, including, but not limited to, government, business, labour, education, academia, childcare service providers, community-based service sector and parents/families.
5. Direct the General Manager of Children's Services and the Executive Director of Social Development, Finance and Administration to jointly develop the Terms of Reference for the Task Force to be submitted to City Council for approval.

I encourage members of the Community Development and Recreation Committee to support this initiative to reaffirm the value of a service sector that is significant to all features of Toronto's society.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Giorgio Mammoliti".

Councillor Giorgio Mammoliti
Ward 7, York West