

Toronto Child Care Funding Model Consultation Report

Date:	July 9, 2013
To:	Toronto City Council
From:	General Manager, Children's Services
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	

SUMMARY

This report summarizes the results of the consultation process led by Children's Services as it created principles and evaluation criteria to guide the development of a new Toronto Child Care Funding Model.

Consultation sessions have been held with a diversity of child care stakeholders. Overall, the proposed funding model principles and evaluation criteria were supported by stakeholders. Stakeholders requested additional information on the details of the funding model and related implementation strategies as they become available and identified the need for additional funding from the Province to sustain the child care system. Principles recommended to Council in CD22.5, which also appears on the July 2013 Council agenda, reflect findings from these consultations. Approximately 300 participants attended a series of 10 sessions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

- 1) City Council amend Principle number 2 listed in report CD22.5 by adding "parent affordability" so that it now reads:

"The new model will balance parent accessibility, parent affordability and service system stability."

Financial Impact

This report has no financial impact. The current method of funding child care will continue throughout 2013 and 2014. The new child care funding model will be reflected in the division's 2015 Operating Budget submission. The Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

DECISION HISTORY

The Toronto Child Care Funding Model Report (CD22.5) was presented at the Community Development and Recreation Committee Meeting of June 26, 2013. The report reviewed the process through which a new Child Care Funding Model will be developed and recommended principles and evaluation criteria to guide the development. The Committee requested the General Manager, Children's Services to report directly to City Council with a supplementary report that summarizes the results of the consultations to date and that a principle be added to address parent affordability.

COMMENTS

Consultation sessions on principles and evaluation criteria have been held with Children's Services staff; the Toronto Child and Family Network Steering Committee and planning committee representatives; Aboriginal and Francophone committees; and District Child Care Advisory Committees (made up of child care operators). Ipsos was retained to assist with some of the consultations. In total, approximately 300 participants attended these sessions. Key findings from each meeting are summarized in Appendix A. A summary of feedback from those meetings facilitated by Ipsos can be found in Appendix B.

The proposed principles and evaluation criteria were also reviewed by a number of groups established to guide the development of the new "Made in Toronto" child care funding model, including:

- a Stakeholder Reference Group that represents child care operators and provides advice on the development of the new model;
- an Advisory Committee that includes economists, academics, researchers and sector experts to provide expert advice from a systems perspective; and
- a GTA Modeling Working Group made up of children's services staff from other municipalities, to share research and modelling/analysis.

Overall, the proposed funding model principles and evaluation criteria were supported by stakeholders. Stakeholders noted, however, that much depends on how the principles are applied and requested additional information on the details of the model and the implementation strategies when they become available. They also identified the need for additional funding from the Province to sustain the system. The importance of proactive communication to provide clarity and transparency on the process of developing the funding model was highlighted and confirmed the importance of the three phases of stakeholder engagement that the City has committed to over this two-year period:

- Principles and evaluation criteria - May/June 2013;
- Funding model options - October/November 2013; and
- Transition and implementation planning - Spring 2014

In addition to communication and transparency, a number of other themes were highlighted during the engagement sessions. While stakeholders supported equity in the distribution of funding within the system, it was feared that lack of additional resources would mean a reallocation of funds within an already under resourced system. Child care staff salaries and staff retention were a concern to stakeholders, particularly during the transition to Full Day Kindergarten, with many ECE's moving to the education system to work in kindergarten programs. Stakeholders generally supported the principles but wanted more details on how the principles and evaluation criteria will be applied.

The proposed principles and criteria for evaluation were revised based on these consultations. Three of the initial principles presented to stakeholders were identified as assumptions associated with development of the model and have been moved to the assumptions section of the discussion paper. Three new principles were added to reflect feedback from the consultations to address the importance of the early learning and child care workforce and the unique nature of Aboriginal and Francophone communities. Amended principles and assumptions are appended to CD22.5, which also appear on the July 2013 Council agenda.

At the June 26, 2013 meeting of the Community and Recreation Committee, the following recommendation was approved to go forward to Council: City Council add an additional principle to the list in Appendix A to the report CD22.5 (June 11, 2013) from the General Manager, Children's Services that expressly addresses the need to keep childcare affordable fees. As a result, principle number 2 is recommended to be revised:

"The new model will balance parent accessibility, parent affordability and service system stability."

In the fall of 2013, Children's Service will engage parents through a Parent Summit and a parent survey. These engagement sessions will identify issues that are important to parents related to supporting their child care needs. Results of the Summit and survey will inform the analysis of funding models options and the 2015-19 Child Care Service Plan.

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ATTACHMENTS

Appendix A - City Of Toronto Child Care Funding Model Principles And Evaluation Criteria Consultations

Appendix B - City Of Toronto Child Care Funding Model Principles & Criteria Market Research Study: Ipsos Qualitative, Executive Summary

APPENDIX A - CITY OF TORONTO CHILD CARE FUNDING MODEL PRINCIPLES AND EVALUATION CRITERIA CONSULTATIONS

Meeting with Toronto Child & Family Network: Early Learning & Care Committee	
Date:	May 21, 2013
Representation:	16 members of the Network
Summary	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was general support of the principles. • There is a need to understand how the principle will be implemented in the new model. • Request that a new principle related to staff retention and salaries be added. • There is a suggestion that the principles reflect all ages 0-12 years and not segregate the age groups. • Some operators were concerned that equitable distribution would mean taking away from operators who receive base funding to give to those who do not. • Some of the principles should be assumptions. • See Appendix B for more details on discussions at this session which was facilitated by Ipsos. 	

District Child Care Advisory Group Consultation #1 and #2	
Date:	May 28, 2013/ May 29, 2013
Representation:	220 Service Providers/Operators
Summary:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was general support of the principles. • There is a need to understand how the principle will be implemented in the new model. • Request that a new principle related to staff retention and salaries be added. • There is a suggestion that the principles reflect all ages 0-12 years and not segregate the age groups. • There was a general concern for the lack of funding for the transition. • Some participants commented that the base funding should be distributed equitably among operators. • Some operators were concerned that equitable distribution would mean taking away from operators who receive base funding to give to those who do not. • Some of the principles should be assumptions. • See Appendix B for more details on discussions at these sessions which were facilitated by Ipsos. 	

Consultation with Stakeholder Reference Group	
Date:	June 3, 2013
Representation:	Representatives from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-site agencies • Single site not-for-profit operators • Multi-service agencies • Commercial Operators
Summary	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall there was general agreement for the proposed principles. • There was a perception that a large percentage of child care funding will be allocated to support FDK resulting in less money in the system. In particular, Principle 5 "The new model will support 	

stabilized licensed child care programs for the younger age group (zero to four years), extended day for four to five year-olds and other models for children aged six to 12" appears to pull the 4-5 year olds out of licensed care. (This principle was amended as a result of feedback.)

- There was support for placing priority on the 0-4 age group with the belief that stabilizing the 0-4 age group will stabilize the rest of the system.
- The Group favours a streamlined, well planned system.
- It was noted that the new system should not be administratively more costly.
- There was support for a system management approach to ensure that unlicensed programs funded by the Province are not competing with licensed child care programs.
- The Group suggested longitudinal research was needed on the overall impact and effectiveness of the funds spent by age group.
- It was noted that the principle document does not address wages of service provider staff.
- Stronger language is required around quality.

Consultation with Aboriginal Advisory and Planning Committee

Date: June 4, 2013

Summary

- Two separate consultations took place to incorporate feedback from the Aboriginal Advisory and Planning Committee.
- Overall it was recommended that the principles be amended to include a separate statement on the unique needs of this community.
- It was noted that the principles need to address programming for children age 7-12 years.
- Affordability, eligibility and access to child care are barriers.
- Cultural competency training with an Aboriginal lens is important because Aboriginal children in child care are often in non-aboriginal setting because of location.
- The Committee identified a need for accurate population data to ensure appropriate funding for this community.

French Language Planning Committee of Toronto Child & Family Network Consultation

Date: June 5, 2013

Summary:

- Overall there was general agreement with the principles and evaluation criteria but the Committee identified a need for the principles to address the particular needs of francophone communities.
- The Committee expressed a need for better understanding of the Toronto Child Care Service Plan to assess whether it would be a good base for the future funding model. It was noted that the Service Plan has never been translated into French. (Going forward, the City committed to translating its Service Plan into French.)
- The Committee suggested that funds are needed to improve quality.
- Translation issues were noted for some of the terms (e.g. stabilize and efficiency).
- Staff wages were identified as an issue.
- The FDK impact was discussed, with split shifts of staff resulting in staffing difficulties.
- It was noted that families travel long distances for access to Francophone child care – which affects equity if equity is viewed only from a age and geographic perspective
- Changing demographics need to be taken into account. For example, the number of Francophone families is increasing. The need to address wait lists, now and in future, was raised.

- The Committee identified a number of system issues that should be addressed, such as need for training in French for staff and lunches for children aged 4 and 5.

Consultation with Child Care Funding Model Advisory Committee	
Date:	June 10, 2013
Representation:	Subject Matter Experts:: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academics • Economists • Researchers • Policy Professionals
Summary: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was general agreement with the principles, however, it was suggested that two should be considered assumptions. Principles 7 ("The new model will reflect the overall provincial policy framework for early learning and child care") and principle 9 ("The new model will leverage existing financial partnerships with the province and City Divisions") were moved to assumptions. • It was agreed that Principles should be value based. • The Committee identified the need to advance quality programming for school age programs but identified that the system stretches resources when it goes beyond children 9 years of age. • It was suggested that Principles recognize the early learning and care profession and the importance of paying reasonable wages. • A universal system could ideally balance viability between parents and operators. • There was a discussion of "efficiency". It was suggested that there be a broader definition that embeds quality and that any new model should not cost more administratively. 	

Consultation with Representatives from Colleges	
Date:	June 11, 2013
Representation:	Representatives from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centennial College • Humber College
Summary: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was general agreement with the proposed principles and evaluation criteria. • The Colleges identified the importance of recognizing the early learning and care profession and paying liveable wages. • Representatives identified a concern that "financial partnerships" could be interpreted as redistributing funds to other City divisions. The intent is to leverage new partnerships. • Equity is important and all service providers should have access to the same funding. • The model should make the best use of resources and include support for small not for profits and Home Child Care. • Effectiveness is appropriate for all service providers. • The system should be easy to understand and include transparency of funding allocations. • Important to define the roles and responsibilities with school boards. • Identified a lack of parental choice related to the roll out of FDK and subsidies. • Boards of Education not providing before and after care makes it difficult to support families. • Representatives highlighted that Toronto Children's Services is doing their best to support the system. 	