



APPENDIX B

**CITY OF TORONTO  
CHILDCARE FUNDING MODEL PRINCIPLES &  
CRITERIA  
MARKET RESEARCH STUDY: QUALITATIVE**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY – JUNE 2013**



## BACKGROUND, OBJECTIVES & APPROACH

As the province of Ontario seeks to implement a new funding framework for Childcare, the City of Toronto identified the need to conduct consultation and engagement research to better understand the perceptions, opinions, beliefs and attitudes of various key stakeholders with regard to funding model implementation in January 2015.

The first phase of this research was to evaluate the funding model principals and evaluation criteria via engagement sessions with service providers/operators. More specifically:

- 1 in-person, facilitated engagement session with 16 Children network members on May 21<sup>st</sup> from 1-3pm
- 2 in-person, technology enabled (see next slide), facilitated engagement sessions:
  1. Downtown at Metro Hall with approximately 95 Service Providers/Operators on May 28<sup>th</sup>
  2. North York at Memorial Hall with approximately 125 Service Providers/Operators on May 29<sup>th</sup>



## METHODOLOGY

For the larger sessions, we used a combination of at-table discussions, plenary-style forum, and responding to direct questions via CitizensLabs and Ideation. More specifically:

- **CitizensLabs** = At various intervals during the session participants answered survey-style questions using wireless TouchPad technology, while clients, researchers, and the audience, watched, in real time, the responses. Since the data is tabbed and graphed instantly, the insights gleaned in real time were used to feed into the session itself. The session chair also used these data to probe and delve into any issues arising.
- **Ideation** = At other times, at table moderators typed answers to certain questions into our online Ideation platform and sent them to our nerve centre with the session chair. These inputs, in some cases, were coded instantly, and put back to the room at large for feedback via the keypads.
- Because the sessions were free-flowing throughout a 2.5-hour period, participants were permitted to get up from their table as needed. Thus, the base size on various keypad questions varies.






## SUMMARY: CONTEXT

- Everything indicates that Children Network Members and Service Providers/Operators were unified in their attitudes and perceptions regarding the child care system overall and the funding model principles specifically.
- In terms of context, many felt the system:
  - Lacks resources. Specifically, funds for staff remuneration, incentivizing/retention, training, etc.
  - Is in a constant state of flux, resulting in instability and uncertainty.
- The majority of those surveyed did feel the system is at least *about the same* as other jurisdictions, while half rate the system overall as very good or good. Further, only 1 in 5 say it is poor or very poor.



## SUMMARY: OVERALL PERCEPTIONS OF PRINCIPLES

- For most principles, there were more 'positive' ratings than 'negative'. The survey data and our at table discussions suggests that the premise behind most principles was sound and logical.
- That said, the majority of participants were clustered around the mid-point (somewhat positive/agree-neutral-somewhat negative/agree) on most key metrics (overall impression, agreement with, etc.).
- The primary reason for this 'neutral' stance was that many struggled with evaluating the principles in the absence of details regarding the funding model(s) and implementation strategies.
- There was also a sense during our discussions, that clarifying key words, terms, concepts, will be essential as you move towards funding model design, assessment and implementation... 



# SUMMARY & SUGGESTIONS: PRINCIPLES

| *Principle   | Ratings %       | Summary/Suggestions   |
|--|-----------------|---|
| <i>The new model will be flexible to accommodate future changes and will be regularly evaluated to ensure system stability and continuous improvement.</i> | 73 Favourable   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most common sense, forward looking principle</li> <li>• Key terms = flexible, accommodate and continuous improvement</li> <li>• RECO: Minimal/No change required</li> </ul>  |
|  | 19 Neutral      |   |
|  | 8 Unfavourable  |   |
| <i>The new model aims to stabilize the current early learning and child care system (ages 0-12) and prepare for future growth.</i>                         | 67 Favourable   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good to look at entire child range (0-12) vs. segmented as per below</li> <li>• Key terms = prepare for future growth</li> <li>• RECO: Minimal/No change required</li> </ul>   |
|  | 16 Neutral      |   |
|  | 17 Unfavourable |   |
| <i>The new model will be committed to advancing child care quality.</i>  | 67 Favourable   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minus a definition(s) for what exactly is meant by 'quality' most consider this to be a cost of entry vs. a principle</li> <li>• RECO: Take as a given and remove and/or considering a definition for 'quality'</li> </ul> |
|  | 20 Neutral      |   |
|  | 13 Unfavourable |   |

\*Principles ranked by "favourability" rating



# SUMMARY & SUGGESTIONS: PRINCIPLES

| *Principle   | Ratings %       | Summary/Suggestions  |
|--|-----------------|--|
| <i>The new model will consider the challenges of parent affordability and service provider viability.</i>  | 64 Favourable   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent affordability and provider viability two extremely important concepts</li> <li>• RECO: Providers would like to see separate concepts, fleshing out each, due to importance,</li> </ul>   |
|  | 20 Neutral      |  |
|  | 16 Unfavourable |  |
| <i>The new model will be equitable and will support efficient early learning and care programs.</i>  | 49 Favourable   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providers acknowledge the need to be equitable and to be efficient with public funds, but feel 'efficient' almost always means 'cuts' or less funding</li> <li>• RECO: explain 'efficient' not necessarily mean 'less'... it may mean more in some cases</li> </ul> |
|  | 33 Neutral      |  |
|  | 18 Unfavourable |  |
| <i>The new model will support stabilized licensed child care programs for the younger age group (0-4), extended day for 4-5 and other models for 6-12.</i> | 47 Favourable   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Redundant to ages 0-12 principle and draws attention to perceptions of a fragmented system</li> <li>• RECO: Merge with above or consider removing</li> </ul>  |
|  | 29 Neutral      |  |
|  | 24 Unfavourable |  |

\*Principles ranked by "favourability" rating



# SUMMARY & SUGGESTIONS: PRINCIPLES

| *Principle   | Ratings %       | Summary/Suggestions   |
|--|-----------------|---|
| <i>The new model will align with other family support services that achieve broader community outcomes.</i>  | 44 Favourable   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Conceptually sound to partner with other partners in the same space, but there was a lack of clarity on ‘other family support services’ and ‘outcomes’</li><li>• RECO: Consider providing examples for each above</li></ul> |
|  | 37 Neutral      |   |
|  | 20 Unfavourable |   |
| <i>The new model will reflect the overall provincial policy framework for early learning and child care.</i> | 40 Favourable   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Most consider adherence to provincial policy a ‘given’</li><li>• RECO: Take as a given and remove and/or provide more information on framework</li></ul>  |
|  | 41 Neutral      |   |
|  | 20 Unfavourable |   |

\*Principles ranked by “favourability” rating





# SUMMARY & SUGGESTIONS: PRINCIPLES

| *Principle  | Ratings %       | Summary/Suggestions  |
|---|-----------------|--|
| <i>The new model will leverage existing financial partnerships with the province and City divisions.</i>          | 39 Favourable   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Logical to leverage any partnerships. Focus on financial generated some skepticism as to impact on provider funding</li> <li>• RECO: provide an example and/or manage skepticism</li> </ul>                                 |
|   | 43 Neutral      |  |
|   | 18 Unfavourable |  |
| <i>The new child care funding model will be aligned with the current and new Toronto Child Care Service Plan.</i> | 34 Favourable   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-evident and thus non-essential as a principle for many. May have more meaning once service plan is revealed</li> <li>• RECO: Consider removing or rolling up with other 'givens' / cost of entry principles</li> </ul> |
|   | 45 Neutral      |  |
|   | 20 Unfavourable |  |

\*Principles ranked by "favourability" rating



## SUMMARY & SUGGESTIONS: MOVING FORWARD

- An overwhelming majority felt the session facilitated feedback to the city
- Slightly more than half cited “engagement meetings” as their preferred type of communication going forward.
- During discussions and after the sessions, several participants also remarked how they preferred the voting format for engagement sessions as it sheds light on trends amongst their peers . A few also mentioned how it ensured everyone was given the opportunity to provide input, if not verbally, then via the keypads.
- Overall, this phase of the research validates the city’s facilitation and engagement strategy/ approach as it moves toward funding model development, assessment and implementation.