

March 29th, 2016

To: Chair and Members, Community Development & Recreation Committee
From: Councillor Janet Davis

Re: Child Care Waitlist Fees and Admissions Policies



Janet DAVIS

*City Councillor
Ward 31
Beaches-East York*

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Dear Committee Members,

For most Toronto parents, finding and paying for child care is a frustrating, competitive and worrying experience. And for many families, the process involves paying non-refundable fees to join multiple waitlists that may never result in a child care space.

Child care centre waitlist policies and practices are inconsistent and confusing. Desperate parents are forced to navigate what has become an expensive admission system with minimal guidelines and little transparency. This process is doubly complicated for subsidy-eligible parents who are placed on a City centralized waitlist, along with thousands of other families, to secure the financial assistance they need to take an available space.

Through the City's consultations on the new Service Plan 2015-2019 and the New Funding Formula, parents raised concerns about waiting list practices. They suggested that the City should establish a centralized waitlist system for all child care centres in order to increase accountability and fairness. Children's Services is examining the feasibility of this concept.

Parents also identified that "paying multiple waitlist fees for a child care space is a barrier to accessing care." In response to these concerns, Children's Services announced that all service providers receiving a General Operating Grant from Toronto Children's Services must eliminate waitlist registration fees for families effective January 1, 2017.

In order to understand the scope and progress of this work, I would like to request that the Community Development and Recreation Committee:

Request the General Manager of Children's Services report to the June 23, 2016 meeting of Community Development and Recreation Committee on:

- 1) the implementation and communication plan for eliminating child care waitlist fees for January 2017;
- 2) the work being undertaken to examine the establishment of a City centralized child care waitlist and other admissions policies.

Sincerely,

Councillor Janet Davis
Ward 31, Beaches-East York