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Sent: Thursday, January 5, 2017 3:13 PM
To: Budget Committee
Subject: Fwd: Speaking notes to city budget committee

Notes for Trustee Deputations: Elimination of Childcare Occupancy Grant and Cuts to Fee Subsidies
January 2017

Hello, my name is Pamela Gough. I am the Toronto District School Board Trustee for Wards 5 and 6, in Etobicoke Lakeshore .

I am here today, on behalf of the TDSB trustees, to share our deep concerns about the City`s proposed elimination of the Childcare Occupancy Grant.

This is not an abstract issue. This is a change that will directly impact families, making licensed childcare less accessible and more expensive for about 16,500 children and their families across our city.

The childcare occupancy grant provides funding to school boards to help pay for the heating, maintenance and caretaking costs of the childcares that lease space within schools across our city.

The occupancy grant of \$6.50 per sq foot of space has been in place since amalgamation 20 years ago and the city has not increased it since 2003.

According to information in the City budget, the elimination of the occupancy grant for the four school boards will amount to \$ 1.13 M this year and \$2.26M next year.

Without this grant, the school boards will need to recover occupancy costs directly from 350 school-based childcare centres, who will recover their increased costs directly from the parents who do not receive childcare subsidies.

Parents in Toronto already pay the highest childcare costs in Canada. They are struggling with fees in the range of \$1000 per month per child in the toddler age range. This is like having an extra mortgage.

To ask them to pay even more in order to reduce the city's budget deficit is to place an even larger burden on the backs of these struggling families.

Recent surveys have shown that in our city, 75 percent of families already find licensed childcare unaffordable.

These cuts threaten to put regulated care even farther out of reach.

The elimination of the occupancy grant will mean a fee increase of an estimated \$30 to \$100 per month or \$360 to \$1200 per year for these unsubsidized families.

Sixty percent of toddlers who attend childcares in TDSB schools are without subsidy so will be affected.

The TDSB currently subsidizes childcare centres in schools to the tune of \$5 per square foot.

This is money that is not recouped from the grants the board gets from the Ministry of Education.

The TDSB knows that providing families with safe, high quality childcare is essential for student achievement and well-being in school.

School-based care programs offer students a seamless day of learning at one location.

For the youngest learners, childcare is often their first introduction to a school environment and can help prepare them for school.

It is so important that these programs not become even less affordable or less accessible than they already are for many families

The statutory responsibility for funding school-based child care rests with the City of Toronto and the provincial government, not with the school boards.

The city should not be making child care less affordable for families in Toronto. In fact, to be doing the exact opposite in our city, which with its sky-high rental and home ownership prices is already a difficult place to raise a family.

We need to be looking at ways to make licensed care available to more families to give every child the best possible start.

What we need – and what children and families need most – is for the city to abandon these harmful budget cuts immediately.

Thank you.

Sources for Important Figures

- Cuts to Childcare Occupancy Grant, City of Toronto Budget 2017 (see page 11):

https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=http-3A_www1.toronto.ca_City-2520Of-2520Toronto_Strategic-2520Communications_City-2520Budget_2017_Analyst-2520Notes_Operating_Childrens-5Fop-5FDec6-5F1134.pdf&d=DgMFAg&c=c-XDUEBMCu6ouXKbes97DX3NGgHUVcdcr0RZVK3Djs&r=d3fokD7Dc qQub7pxyGZ3sJxgkIGVvGojiovhZEemnnY&m=3_u4B34sJZ6k4Rbwgj8B uOooM_hHw12q1Fvn-x8VMjw&s=DV9zSWgMDFjo8BgESK7g-T6glyL-18gYjCQ3DXhSgyg&e=

- More than 18,000 children on the wait list for subsidies: <http://www1.toronto.ca/children/dmc/wait.pdf>
- 75 percent of families in Toronto find licensed care unaffordable (see page 4):
<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2016/cd/bgrd/backgroundfile-97244.pdf>
(Full study here:
<http://www1.toronto.ca/City%20Of%20Toronto/Children's%20Services/Files/pdf/T/Toronto%20Demand%20&%20Affordability%20Study%202016.pdf>)
- 8,400 new fee subsidies are required over the next 15 years to maintain the current benchmark of 40 percent subsidies to licensed spaces (see page 8):

https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=http-3A_www.toronto.ca_legdocs_mmis_2016_cd_bgrd_backgroundfile-2D96982.pdf&d=DgMFAg&c=c-XDUEBMCu6ouXKbes97DX3NGgHUVcdcr0RZVK3Djs&r=d3fokD7Dc qQub7pxyGZ3sJxgkIGVvGojiovhZEemnnY&m=2SIlb_Sj8iP121aXdlInseUuhn3RL99i0FO9a_rmnauo&s=Syf7ViYimY8Gx05HEVI N4drGd7bjdUsg8UwtRZ--mMo&e=

[the staff report](#)

- Current proposed budget will cut 75 new fee subsidies (from the 2016 budget to be implemented in 2017):
<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2016.E X12.2>

That:

1. City Council increase the proposed 2016 Children's Services Operating

Budget by adding \$1.25 million for childcare subsidies, to be offset by the Childcare Expansion Reserve.

2. City Council direct the General Manager, Children's Services to include \$2 million in childcare subsidies in the preparation of the preliminary 2017 Operating Budget for Children's Services.

Note: City Council did part 1 and added 125 subsidies in 2016. They are now **not** doing part 2 to bring this up to 200 subsidies in 2017.

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