

## City Council

### Notice of Motion

MM22.18	ACTION			Ward: All
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### **Recognizing Childcare is Essential for Recovery from COVID-19 - by Councillor Mike Layton, seconded by Councillor Joe Cressy**

*\* Notice of this Motion has been given.*

*\* This Motion is subject to referral to the Executive Committee. A two-thirds vote is required to waive referral.*

#### **Recommendations**

Councillor Mike Layton, seconded by Councillor Joe Cressy, recommends that:

1. City Council request the Government of Ontario to develop and release publicly a comprehensive plan to ensure child care access for the 60 to 70 percent of families who will be unable to find a space due to reduced capacity of centres.
2. City Council request the Government of Ontario to continue to provide stable and ongoing provincial funding for child care centres for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic, which will ensure that they can continue to operate at reduced capacity in line with the provincial guidelines.
3. City Council request the Government of Ontario and the Government of Canada to develop a National Child Care Strategy to make child care more accessible and affordable for low- and moderate-income families, which is essential to economic recovery.

#### **Summary**

Our economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic depends on access to affordable child care. Parents can only return to their jobs if they are able to find a child care spot for their children. This is especially true for women, who are more likely to be excluded from the workforce if they cannot access child care.

The Ontario Government has introduced rules for the safe re-opening of child care facilities, and provided a plan to temporarily stabilize operators' finances. As a result, child care centres are estimated to begin re-opening at about 30 to 40 percent capacity. This means that there will be 60 to 70 percent less available spaces than before the pandemic, when access to child care in Toronto was already nearing crisis levels.

The Province hasn't provided a plan for how they will find 60 to 70 percent more child care spaces, and ensure funding for these operators, just to get child care levels back to where they were last year. Moreover, many families have long struggled with accessing affordable child

care in our City, facing multi-year waitlists and other barriers. Even a return to the status quo will continue to exclude many.

Child care is a sound investment: for every \$1 that the Quebec government spends on child care, it gets back \$5 in economic stimulus. At the same time, it is essential for addressing gender inequity and tackling the pay gap, which in Canada means that today, women still earn 87 cents for each dollar earned by a man.

Providing affordable child care creates jobs, reduces inequality, and ensures that working parents are empowered to make decisions about what's best for their family. That's why all levels of government must work together to create a national framework for child care that is truly affordable and accessible to all. We cannot move forward into full recovery without a National Child Care Strategy.

### **Background Information (City Council)**

Member Motion MM22.18