

April 13, 2021

Dr. Eileen de Villa
Toronto Medical Officer of Health
277 Victoria St, 5th Floor
Toronto, ON
M5B 1W2
publichealth@toronto.ca

Mayor John Tory
Office of the Mayor
City Hall, 2nd Floor
100 Queen St. W.
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2
Mayor_tory@toronto.ca

Councillor Gary Crawford
Ward 36 Scarborough Southwest
416-392-4052
councillor_crawford@toronto.ca

RE: Childcare Workforce Vaccinations

Dear Dr. Eileen de Villa and Mayor John Tory,

On behalf of Today's Child-Tomorrow's Future Children's Centre and the children and families we work with, thank you for your ongoing leadership throughout the pandemic.

Today's Child-Tomorrow's Future Children's Centre is a non-profit childcare centre, located in Ward 36 who proudly provides vital early learning and care **for up to 200 children and their families in our vibrant community.**

This week, we heard the Premier of Ontario announce that school staff and special education workers will be prioritized in hotspot neighbourhoods throughout the province. This is good news; however, we are highly concerned that educators who work in childcare centres haven't been included in this refocused vaccination approach.

Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) and childcare workers work with an unmasked, unvaccinated and vulnerable population. Despite our vigilant efforts to mitigate the transmission of COVID in our early learning spaces, ECEs and childcare workers are in regular direct contact with young children, many of whom cannot wear masks and do not yet understand physical distancing.

The majority of Toronto's non-profit childcare centres have remained open during provincial shutdowns, even during school closures. If ECEs and childcare workers are truly considered essential to the health, well-being and economy of Toronto, it is essential that we protect them. The Toronto childcare community has been on the frontline of this pandemic providing vital early learning and care for communities across the city. Families and caregivers,

especially in our most vulnerable neighbourhoods, depend on their childcare centre as a safe early learning and care community for their young children. The need for action is urgent; we need vaccinations for our childcare workers, now.

As leaders in our province, we look to the city of Toronto and our local public health unit to take swift action that is proactive, solutions-based and centralizes community care. We are seeing Public Health Units in other regions of Ontario refocus their vaccination strategy. The Niagara Region has confirmed that they will be vaccinating all of their frontline educators and Early Childhood Educators over the April 12, 2021 school break. In York Region, they are simultaneously vaccinating frontline workers while rolling out the Province's Phase II of vaccinations. Other regions have created centralized waitlists for education and childcare workers to be on call for end of day doses, including Durham and the Kawartha Region. We ask that Toronto Public Health join these other regions in their community-based approaches.

As leaders in early learning and care, we know how critical it is that we prioritize the well-being of the nearly 80,000 young children we provide care for in 1051 childcare centres across the city. Vaccinating the childcare workforce protects not only our workers, but the children, families and communities we work with. With the current school closures, 433 of which have childcare centres located on site, we have a window of opportunity to use these spaces in conjunction with mobile clinics to vaccinate all education workers, including ECEs and child care workers.

We've copied our City Councillor to ensure they are aware of this important health and wellness issue for families in their community, the Toronto Board of Health Chair, and our municipal and provincial ELCC advocacy organizations.

We look forward to seeing the city of Toronto take bold and immediate action regarding a progressive and effective vaccination strategy that includes Early Childhood Educators and childcare workers. The health and well-being of both our children and those responsible for leading them in education and care, depends on it.

Sincerely,
Gillian Oskalns RECE
Program Supervisor

cc:
Toronto Board of Health, boh@toronto.ca
Toronto Community for Better Child Care, abigail@childcaretoronto.org
Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, carolyn@childcareontario.org
Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario, apowell@aeceo.ca