

From: [DONNA SPREITZER](#)
To: [Economic and Community Development](#)
Cc: [Donna Spreitzer](#)
Subject: [External Sender] My comments for 2023.EC4.3 on May 31, 2023 Economic and Community Development Committee
Date: Wednesday, May 31, 2023 12:20:02 PM

To the City Clerk:

Please add my comments to the agenda for the May 31, 2023 Economic and Community Development Committee meeting on item 2023.EC4.3, Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement Implementation in Toronto - Update

I understand that my comments and the personal information in this email will form part of the public record and that my name will be listed as a correspondent on agendas and minutes of City Council or its committees. Also, I understand that agendas and minutes are posted online and my name may be indexed by search engines like Google.

Comments:

Deputation to Economic & Community Development Committee – May 31, 2023

Re: Update on CWELCC Agreement Implementation in Toronto

Thank you for allowing me to speak. My name is Donna Spreitzer. For 18 years I was the Supervisor of a large, non-profit, school-based child care centre in the city's east end. I currently am the Executive Director of the Toronto Community for Better Child Care. The TCBCC has been advocating for non-profit and publicly funded child care in the city for over 30 years.

I'd like to start by saying that I support the recommendations outlined in the Report and thank Children's Services for bringing these critical issues to Council's attention. The City of Toronto is in a unique and influential position to effect important change to the Provincial CWELCC rollout. Child Care operators across the city are counting on the City of Toronto to stand up for child care workers and call on the Province to adjust the funding formula so it reflects the realistic needs of Toronto.

The CWELCC agreement is a terrific opportunity to grow the system and reduce child care costs for parents. This initiative will impact child care as we know it and pave the way for all levels of government to strategically plan for a child care system. It's so critical to lay the right foundation. If we expect to grow the system, then there must be financial supports in place to ensure for sustained growth.

I am here today to speak to 2 points in the Report:

- 1) Number 1. Child care is in crisis due to a severe workforce shortage. The Report notes that due to this staffing shortage, child care centres are unable to operate at their current licensed capacities. What this means is that we currently have thousands of existing child care spaces that are not available to families. If educators are not available to work, then rooms are closed or group sizes are reduced, resulting in more families on waiting lists.
 - a. We must start by solving the staff shortage and ensure that every single licensed child care space in the City is occupied. Growth cannot occur if existing centres can't even operate at their licensed capacities.
 - b. I don't have a magic wand, but what I do know is that when wages are low, like they are across the city, educators will find other jobs that are less stressful and pay more. The City could, and should, address this by resolving to implement an early childhood educator wage scale that is consistent with City of Toronto child care wages. We know that there is NOT a labour shortage among DECEs working for the school boards. This should be a clue that wages, benefits and pensions are a key to solving the ECE labour shortage.
 - c. The provincial CWELCC wage floor is extremely low and inconsistent with the needs of Toronto. In fact, CWELCC's \$19/hour for ECEs is 47% LESS than what an ECE working for the City of Toronto gets paid. The CWELCC wage for Supervisors is dismally low at \$21/hour, and 69% LOWER than for a supervisor working in a city centre.
 - d. TORONTO CANNOT GROW A CHILD CARE SYSTEM IF ECES AND SUPERVISORS ARE PAID AT THE PROVINCIAL RATE.
 - e. This is just NOT RIGHT. I implore the city to push back and get the province to acknowledge and pay child care workers a decent wage.
- 2) Number 2. I fully agree with the Report's request for the Province to include ALL 25 City of Toronto Wards as priorities for expansion under CWELCC.

- a. While there are likely wards that qualify as child care deserts, it is also important that the City **REDUCE** barriers to expansion. I know of 2 existing child care centres that have already modified their spaces and want to expand their preschool programs. Regrettably, they are not in high priority wards and thus their expansion applications have been turned down. Yet families are on their waiting lists and there is an expressed community need.
- b. The Province and City must build in some flexibility so that non-profit and publicly funded centres that already exist are allowed to expand if they can. This is the low-hanging fruit! To not allow existing centres to expand, is foolish at best, and not in line with the mandate of **child care for all**.

In conclusion, Toronto has the loudest voice and it's time Toronto uses its outside voice to address the shortfalls of the provincial CWELCC rollout. The Toronto child care community is counting on the City to resolve these impediments to growth.

Thank you.

Donna Spreitzer – Toronto Community for Better Child Care –
Donna@childcaretoronto.org 416-538-7630

Donna