

**Written Deputation to Economic & Community Development Committee –**

**May 31, 2023**

**Re: Update on CWELCC Agreement Implementation in Toronto**

My name is Amy O'Neil and I am writing on behalf of Treetop Children's Centre. I am the Director of a large, non-profit, school-based child care centre in midtown Toronto.

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 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's workforce.

The CWELCC agreement is a once in a lifetime 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 comprehensive child care system. It's so critical to lay the right foundation now. If we expect to grow the system, then there must be financial supports in place to ensure sustained growth.

I would like to address two points to the committee:

- 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 ensuring 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. 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

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

**Re: Update on CWELCC Agreement Implementation in Toronto**

- 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 too 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 **ELIMINATE barriers** to expansion. I know Toronto child care centres that have already modified their spaces and want to expand their preschool programs. But since they are not in high priority wards, their expansion applications were turned down, even though 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, the Toronto child care community is counting on the City to resolve these impediments to growth under the CWLECC system.

Thank you,

Amy O'Neil, RECE, Hons B.A, ECS

Treetop Children's Centre

Toronto, ON