

July 24, 2024

**Toronto City Council
100 Queen Street West**

Dear Mayor and Councillors,

RE: EC14.12 - Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care Implementation Roundtable: Update

We are writing today to endorse the recommendations in report EC14.12 from the Economic and Community Development Committee, and to suggest further amendments (see Appendix 1 below.)

We want to thank Chair Bravo for her leadership working with the child care community and for her continued advocacy on behalf of Toronto families.

Since the ECD Committee meeting, the provincial government has taken several steps that we believe will further jeopardize the future of child care in Toronto. We are hopeful Mayor Chow, Chair Bravo and City Council can collaborate to strengthen the Committee recommendations to respond to these challenges and support the successful implementation of the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care plan (CWELCC.)

1. The Ontario Education Minister has requested the Federal government to amend the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) Ontario Agreement to increase the expansion of for-profit child care in Ontario.

The City of Toronto must oppose this position, and press the Federal government to maintain the current agreement provisions to expand predominantly in the non-profit and public sector.

- The Minister has characterized the provisions in the Canada-Ontario CWELCC agreement as a “hard cap” on the expansion of for-profit child care. This is not true. The agreement preserves the ratio of non-profit to for-profit spaces, and ensures for-profit operators can expand and maintain their share of the sector, and receive wage subsidies, start-up grants and increased public operating funding – including significant profit margins.
- The for-profit sector already has a significant and continued role in early learning and child care in Toronto under the CWELCC agreement, despite the Federal governments stated goal of developing a non-profit system and the City’s historic policy of funding expansion of non-profit and public child care only.
- Other jurisdictions have experienced significant and growing concentration of private ownership when public funding is available. Small operators are bought out by larger corporate interests, reducing quality, destabilizing the sector and creating strong anti-regulation lobbies.
- There is an immediate need to increase child care spaces and reduce wait lists to ensure equitable access to affordable child care in our City. However, expanding for-profit child care will not solve the underlying issues that limit growth in the child care sector: inadequate operating and capital funding and the lack of qualified staff.

- Expanding commercial child care will only divert public funding to private owners and corporate profits and away from desperately-needed investments in staff compensation and other program expenses that contribute to quality care for our children.

2. The Ontario government refuses to contribute major capital funding to build child care spaces in the non-profit and public sector. Instead, it cut previously-approved capital projects and plans to accelerate expansion of private for-profit operators to fill the void.

The City of Toronto must increase pressure on Ontario to restore and increase capital funding, and work with Toronto school boards to expand non-profit, community and school-based child care.

- Unlike other provinces, Ontario has not provided new major capital funding to build new, expand or retrofit child care facilities to meet its CWELCC commitments
- The Ontario Education Minister cancelled 56 previously-approved child care capital projects (48 in TDSB and TCDSB schools) and re-allocated the approved funding.

<https://www.haltonhillstoday.ca/local-news/56-child-care-projects-planned-for-schools-across-ontario-cancelled-government-docs-9243929>

- Board by board breakdown of the 66 projects.

School Board	Cancelled	Proceed	TBD	Spaces
Avon Maitland DSB		1		39
Bruce Grey CDSB		2		156
Durham DSB	1			49
Grand Erie DSB		2		128
Kenora CDSB		1		15
Peel DSB	3			195
Rainbow DSB		1		10
Renfrew County CDSB			1	73
Simcoe County DSB	1			49
Simcoe Muskoka Catholic DSB	3		1	156
Toronto CDSB	20			1,048
Toronto DSB	28			2,035
Trillium Lakelands DSB		1		73
Total	56	8	2	4,026

- The 48 projects in Toronto would provide almost 3,100 spaces in high priority neighbourhoods and underserved communities: Scarborough (1,507 spaces); Etobicoke (714 spaces); York-South-West (235); Humber River- Black Creek (235 spaces.) See **Appendix 2 (file attached.)**
- Former Minister Lecce refused to recognize cost escalations and rejected TDSB's offer to build fewer centres within the existing budget allocation
- Many projects are shovel ready (designed, approved, with building permits)
- The Federal government has promised capital grants and a new capital loan program, with funding flowing to provinces; however, no funded has been confirmed for Toronto
- Without these projects, and additional capital funding, Toronto will be unable to meet its provincial expansion targets

The Province has given the city CWELCC space allocation for 2022-2026 expansion in community and in school-based centres.

Five Year (2022-2026) CWELCC Space Allocations for Toronto (as of May 2023)	
Community Space Expansion	13,627
School Space Expansion	4,550
Total New CWELCC Spaces over 5 years	18,177

3. Ontario has revised the Child Care Funding Formula; but is keeping it confidential.

The City of Toronto must call for the immediate release of the new funding model, and advocate for operating funding that supports a high-quality, financially viable child care system in Toronto.

- The province intends to implement a new Funding Formula CWELCC for 2025-2026; however, the formula has still not been released
- Toronto and other municipal service managers, community child care providers and others called for operating funding that would provide sustained, adequate funding to support increased compensation, inflationary costs and reflect regional cost differences
- Some municipal service managers and AMO have been privy to the revised formula, but have not released any information
- Many child care programs are experiencing serious operating deficits, with centres taking steps to close rooms, hire unqualified staff, cut wages and withdraw from CWELCC.
- Without an adequate funding formula that reflects the true costs in Toronto, the child care system will remain financially vulnerable and unstable, and non-profit centres will hesitate expanding – despite local need and centre interest.

4. EC14.12 - Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care Implementation Roundtable: Update

The report provides a good summary of the input from the child care community. We support the Committee recommendations; but would like to suggest important amendments and additional recommendations. (Appendix 1) below.

Families across Toronto need and expect to access affordable high-quality \$10 day child care promised under the Canada Wide Early Learning and Child Care plan. All children deserve the opportunity to benefit from growing and learning in high-quality early learning and child care programs. But too many children and families have been shut out in too many neighbourhoods in our city.

Toronto has always been a leader and strong advocate for children and families. We need this leadership now.

Sincerely,

Donna Spreitzer on behalf of Toronto Child Care Advocates



Appendix 1.

EC14.12. Recommendations for Amendments and Additions

Amend Recommendation 1.

City Council request the General Manager, Children's Services to report back to the October 23, 2024 meeting of the Economic and Community Development Committee in the fourth quarter of 2024 with an update on growth and expansion within Toronto's licensed child care sector, ongoing implementation of the Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) system, and an analysis of the CWELCC provincial funding formula ~~for the Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care agreement~~ and its impact on the child care sector in Toronto.

Amend Recommendation 2.

City Council request the Minister of Education to introduce a Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care provincial funding formula that ensures long-term stability and viability of the child care sector through sustainable multi-year operating and capital funding, addresses workforce compensation issues and supports a thriving workforce, provides capital funding for expansion in the non-profit and public sector, and increases fee subsidies to support access and inclusion for families across the City of Toronto.

Add the following new recommendations:

3. The City of Toronto opposes changes to the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement proposed by the Ontario Minister of Education that would increase the expansion of child care spaces in the for-profit sector; and reaffirms its support for the current provisions that require Ontario to maintain or improve the proportion of non-profit to for-profit child care spaces as the system grows; and communicate this position to the Prime Minister and Minister of Families, Children, and Social Development, the Ontario Premier and Minister of Education; OMSSA, and the AMO Executive Committee and member municipalities.

4. Toronto Council request the Ontario Minister of Education to reverse the cancellation of and provide adequate funding for the previously-approved 28 TDSB and 20 TCDSB child care capital projects that would create over 3,000 non-profit spaces in Toronto schools in high needs communities; and request the Ontario government to work with the City of Toronto and the Government of Canada to achieve the CWELCC growth targets in the non-profit and public sector in Toronto.

5. The Mayor and Chair of Economic and Community Development convene discussions with Toronto school board Chairs, affected local Councillors, Trustees, Create TO and Toronto Lands Corporation to examine ways to advance the previously-approved school-based child care projects, and identify surplus space and innovative strategies to expedite the expansion of non-profit and public child care in Toronto schools.

6. The Mayor request the Federal Government to confirm Toronto's share of capital funding and work with the City on innovative approaches to provide capital support such as a capital revolving funds, low-interest loans and loan guarantees.

Scarborough School-based Child Care Projects

TDSB	Ionview PS5-Room ChildcareON HOLD	88	\$ 3,798,309.00
TDSB	Dorset Park PS3-Room ChildcareON HOLD	49	\$ 2,936,947.00
TDSB	Ellesmere-Statton PS5-Room ChildcareON HOLD	88	\$ 3,952,825.00
TDSB	Glen Ravine Jr PS3-Room ChildcareON HOLD	49	\$ 3,535,911.00
TDSB	Lord Roberts Jr PS3-Room ChildcareON HOLD	49	\$ 3,062,246.00
TDSB	General Crerar PS5-Room ChildcareIN DESIGN	88	\$ 2,571,270.00
TCDSB	St. Albert CS	88	\$ 2,571,267.00
TCDSB	St. Kevin CS	49	\$ 1,542,762.00
total spaces and allocations		548	\$ 23,971,537.00
TDSB	Macklin PS3-Room ChildcareON HOLD	49	\$ 4,518,639.00
TDSB	Milliken PS3-Room ChildcareON HOLD	49	\$ 2,936,947.00
TDSB	Malvern Jr. PS5-Room ChildcareON HOLD	88	\$ 3,535,911.00
TCDSB	St. Barbara CS	49	\$ 1,542,762.00
total spaces and allocations		235	\$ 12,534,259.00
TDSB	Alexander Stirling PS5-Room ChildcareON HOLD	88	\$ 5,065,910.00
TDSB	Emily Carr PS5-Room ChildcareON HOLD	88	\$ 3,466,800.00
TDSB	Grey Owl Jr PS5-Room ChildcareON HOLD	88	\$ 3,062,246.00
TCDSB	St. Jean de Brebeuf CS	49	\$ 1,542,762.00
TCDSB	St. Dominic Savio	49	\$ 1,542,762.00
total spaces and allocations		362	\$ 14,680,480.00
TDSB	J.G. Workman PS5-Room ChildcareON HOLD	88	\$ 3,667,953.00
TDSB	Birch Cliff PS3-Room ChildcareAWAITING MINISTRY ATP POST TENDER	49	\$ 3,667,953.00
total spaces and allocations		137	\$ 7,335,906.00
TDSB	Military Trail PS5-Room ChildcareIN DESIGN	88	\$ 2,571,270.00
TDSB	Willow Park Jr PS5-Room ChildcareIN DESIGN	88	\$ 2,314,143.00
TCDSB	St. Edmund Champion CS	49	\$ 1,542,762.00
total spaces and allocations		225	\$ 6,428,175.00
TOTAL SCARBOROUGH SPACES AND ALLOCATIONS		1,507	\$ 64,950,357.00

Scarborough Centre	David Smith	PC	Cllr. Michael Thompson
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Scarborough Centre	David Smith	PC	Cllr. Michael Thompson
Scarborough Centre	David Smith	PC	Cllr. Michael Thompson
Scarborough North	Raymond Sung Joon Cho	PC	Cllr. Jamaal Myers
Scarborough North	Raymond Sung Joon Cho	PC	Cllr. Jamaal Myers
Scarborough North	Raymond Sung Joon Cho	PC	Cllr. Jamaal Myers
Scarborough North	Raymond Sung Joon Cho	PC	Cllr. Jamaal Myers
Scarborough North	Raymond Sung Joon Cho	PC	Cllr. Jamaal Myers
Scarborough Rouge Park	Vijay Thanigasalam	PC	Cllr. Jennifer McKelvie
Scarborough Rouge Park	Vijay Thanigasalam	PC	Cllr. Jennifer McKelvie
Scarborough Rouge Park	Vijay Thanigasalam	PC	Cllr. Jennifer McKelvie
Scarborough-Rouge Park	Vijay Thanigasalam	PC	Cllr. Jennifer McKelvie
Scarborough- Rouge Park	Vijay Thanigasalam	PC	Cllr. Jennifer McKelvie
Scarborough- Rouge Park	Vijay Thanigasalam	PC	Cllr. Jennifer McKelvie
Scarborough South West	Dolly Begum	NDP	Cllr. Parthi Kandavel
Scarborough South-West	Dolly Begum	NDP	Cllr. Parthi Kandavel
Scarborough South-West	Dolly Begum	NDP	Cllr. Parthi Kandavel
Scarborough-Guildwood	Andrea Hazell	LIB	Cllr. Paul Ainslie
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