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**To:** [Economic and Community Development](#)  
**Cc:** [Donna Spreitzer](#); [Janet Davis](#); [Petr Varmuza](#); [Jessica Tomas](#); [Christina Gilligan](#); [Carolyn Ferns](#); [John Weatherup](#); [Shanley McNamee](#); [Tara Cleveland \(b2c2@b2c2.ca\)](#); [Neeka Barnes](#); [Zeenat Janmohamed](#); [Sylvie Charron](#); [Julie Mathien](#); [Dan Wise](#); [Peter Frampton](#); [Patricia Chorney Rubin](#); [Jane Bertrand](#); [Gail Hunter](#); [Lorraine McLeod](#); [Shellie Bird](#); [Kim Hiscott](#); [Robert Froom](#); [Elise Patterson](#); [Lorna Reid](#); [Sheila Olan-Maclean](#)  
**Subject:** [External Sender] Towards a Comprehensive Action Plan for Toronto's Economy 2025-2035  
**Date:** October 22, 2024 8:05:02 PM  
**Attachments:** [email\\_b2c2-logo-only-100.png](#)

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TO: Chair and Members Economic and Community Development  
Committee  
FROM: Building Blocks for Child Care (B2C2)

**RE: EC 16.2 Sidewalks to Skylines: An Action Plan for Toronto's Economy  
2025- 2035  
Toronto's Draft Economic Action Plan – Are Women and Children Included?**

Toronto's draft Action Plan for the economy puts forward the right Vision: "calling on all orders of government, business and civil society to reinvest in *high standards of liveability that drive the city's success and its outsize economic contribution to the region and the nation.*" (p. 5, emphasis added)

But the Action Plan completely ignores the role of affordable, accessible child care in supporting parents' employment and productivity in much the same way that affordable housing does.

The authors seem to have forgotten what Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland laid out in her 2021 budget:

"[Child care] is an economic issue as much as it is a social issue. Child care is essential social infrastructure. It is the care work that is the backbone of our economy. Just as roads and transit support our economic growth, so too does child care.

Investing in early learning and child care offers a jobs-and-growth hat trick:

- It provides jobs for workers, the majority of whom are women;
- it enables parents, particularly mothers, to reach their full economic potential; and
- it creates a generation of engaged and well prepared young learners." (pp. 97-98 Federal Budget 2021)

The federal government is pouring \$9.2 billion per year into expanding early learning and child care services by 2025-26. Nearly \$3 billion annually of these funds will be spent in Ontario, funnelled through municipal governments. As a result, child care will soon become one of the top spending items for Ontario municipalities – rivalling the municipal budget proportions spent on roads and transit, wastewater, and policing <sup>[1]</sup>.

Changing the Action Plan to include child care would not require much rewriting.

Wherever “housing affordability” is mentioned “child care affordability and accessibility” should be added. The arguments supporting the importance of housing and of child care are very similar; child care is particularly important for parents and families, housing is important for everyone *including* parents and families.

But even though the redrafting will be simple, this omission suggests that some vital additional rethinking on the part of planners is needed. No one even thought to consult with Children’s Services in the preparation of this Economic Action Plan.

### Recommendations

1. Redraft Action Plan to include supply and affordability of child care along with supply and affordability of housing as basic issues requiring action. This will require changes to the Executive Summary and the body of the document, strengths and outcomes. Wherever housing affordability or housing investment are mentioned, affordability and investment in early learning and child care services should be included.
2. In the section “Toronto today: Strengths and Challenges” there would need to be a short section on the “Child Care Affordability and Availability Crisis” to parallel the section on “A Housing Affordability Crisis”.
3. Under the section “Drivers, Actions and Success Indicators”, there would need to be a new “driver-action-success indicator” triad devoted to solutions to child care shortages and fees. This would presumably follow Action 6 on Housing Affordability.
4. In the section on Implementation, ways of implementing child care affordability and access improvements would need to be detailed.
5. We would be pleased to help the City with this redrafting, if desired.

Building Blocks for Child Care hopes that the Committee will take all these recommendations under advisement.

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[1] See page 12, G. Cleveland & S. Colley (2024) *The Municipal Role in Child Care in Ontario: What Should the Future Look Like?* Pp. 12-16 in G. Eidelman, K. Forman, & E. Slack *The Municipal Role in Child Care* Volume 8 in the *Who Does What* Series. Institute on Municipal Finance and Governance, University of Toronto

Kind regards,

Sue

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*B2C2 recognizes that its work, and the work of its community partners takes place on traditional Indigenous territories across the province. We acknowledge that there are 46 treaties and other agreements, including unceded land, that cover the territory now called Ontario. We are thankful to be able to work and live in these territories. We are thankful to the First Nations, Metis and Inuit people who have cared for these territories since time immemorial and who continue to contribute to the strength of Ontario and to all communities across the province. B2C2 is honoured to collaborate with Indigenous child care providers, families and communities throughout the various territories. B2C2 also respects the calls for action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and their significance to early childhood education and policy. We share respect for the rights of, and Canada's obligations to, Indigenous peoples*