

**From:** [Donna Spreitzer](#)  
**To:** [Clerk](#)  
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Dear City Clerk: I had trouble on-line giving my deputation so I am submitting my speaking notes to share with the committee.

My name is Donna Spreitzer and I'm the Exec director of the TCBCC. The Toronto Community for Better Child Care represents the non-profit sector in the city. I'd like to start by thanking you for the opportunity to speak today. I'd also like to thank General Manager, Shanley McNamee and her team for putting this plan together.

My first response to seeing that there was "No Financial Impact" was Great! TCS is working hard to do more with less. But at a time when the federal government is investing billions into the sector with CWELCC, this is not the time for Toronto to be reliant solely on upper levels of government.

"No Financial Impact" is NOT a good thing.

We have already heard from the Holly Moran at the Ministry of Education that CWELCC's funding formula is, and I quote, **"a race to the middle, plus a little."**

If Toronto is okay with a mediocre child care system, then this services plan is fine.

But what happened to Toronto being a child care champion?

What happened to Toronto being the leader in high quality, non-profit and child care?

What happened to Toronto investing in children?

I had hoped to see a more robust plan to really address growth in the sector. Instead, what I see is words like advocating to the Province and collaborating with sector partners. Yes, we need the City to advocate and collaborate. But the City can and should be playing a bigger role using its clout among the 47 SSMs to collaborate with them to demand more sustainable funding that keeps up with inflation, provides livable wages for educators, supports ALL children, builds more spaces, and fully funds the sector.

While access continues to be an obstacle, once a child secures a space, even more challenges result: children with special needs fall through the cracks.

The City's Every Child Belong division has a very limited budget which is inadequate. I know of an operator that has 4 children on the autism spectrum in 1 preschool room. They need more hands on deck. Yet city funding doesn't even fund a half-time staff.

Therefore, many centres end up self-funding additional staff – educators that work to maintain the safety and well-being of all children. We should not be depending on centres to use their reserves or other families to subsidize these additional staff. If we truly want inclusive child care, then the city must increase its Every Child Belongs budget.

I urge this Committee to be bold and request more funding for Children's Services. If this is not possible, then please consider my proposed trade-off. If we can't get more funding to support children with exceptionalities, then please redirect funding from the AQI division to Every Child Belongs.

**The province, not the city, is in charge of ensuring and monitoring quality. The City's AQI program is redundant and a bureaucratic over-reach and one that can no longer**

**be justified.**

The City's own Auditor General agreed that AQI and the Ministry's Child Care and Early Year's Act overlap by 53%. It is long past time for children's services to stay in their lane and let the province inspect child care centres. When AQI started, we were still operating under the archaic Day Nurseries Act. But since 2014 the province really has upped their game and the provincial licensing inspections now ensure quality. Sure, use AQI as a guide but it's time to stop the policing.

If this new provincial reality really is a race to the middle, then we cannot be satisfied with just a little more. Hidden within this Service Plan is a cry for more funding. The words contained in the plan say TSC will move forward within the confines of the provincial allocations. But the goals and objectives outlined within the plan will require an injection of financial support. We know the city is cash strapped. But we know that for every dollar invested in child care, there is an economic return of up to \$5.80. Why then are we reluctant to spend city dollars on children? We cannot and should not solely rely on upper levels of government to fund Toronto's child care system.

Thank you.

**Donna**

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(pronouns: she/her) ([why pronouns?](#))

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(Please note I work a 4-day week)