

Re: EC30.2 - Building Local Capacity to Deliver Child Care in High Inequity Neighbourhoods – Update – July 14, 2026

To: ECDC Committee Members

From: Donna Spreitzer, Executive Director
Toronto Community for Better Child Care (TCBCC)

Thank you, TCS, for your Report. It highlights the successful community engagement that has transpired over the past year, as well as the accomplishments and barriers to building a stable child care system in Toronto. Sherry Kamali and her team have recently initiated some very positive strategies that will directly benefit families, children, educators and operators. **I commend TCS for listening to and working with the child care community to improve the system.**

While funding supports are welcome, one-time funding is a double-edged sword. It provides child care operators with much needed revenue, but only for 2026. It's difficult to operate any business when funding is not reliable or predictable. Additionally, when funding comes in different pots, the reconciliation process is more problematic. Single site operators often do not have the bandwidth or expertise to manage the increasingly complicated financial requirements to operate under the new CWELCC system and the more pots of money, the more difficult things become. **To this end, it would be helpful for TCS to create templates for operators.**

The sector requires sustainable, long-term funding. The first line of the report notes that there are "*no financial implications resulting from... this report.*" This is not a good thing. **If the city truly wants high quality child care, especially in Scarborough and Etobicoke, they must increase the TCS budget or at least rejig it.**

For example, Attachment 2 of the report titled, *2025 Toronto Child Care and Early Years Roundtable Engagement Summary* notes that the City's Assessment for Quality Improvement (AQI) adds a significant administrative burden related to compliance and reporting which diverts attention from programing and child development towards compliance responsibilities. Toronto is the **only** municipality in all of Ontario that

duplicates the Ministry of Education's licensing requirements. Toronto's own **Auditor General reported in 2018 that 53% of what AQI inspects is already included in the Ministry of Education's annual licensing criteria.** Why has TCS been intransigent in holding onto this expensive and unnecessary tool? I know first-hand that AQI has driven excellent RECEs out of child care and into school boards or other careers. **The City's bureaucratic overreach can no longer be justified when operators and educators are required to do more and more to comply with the ever-changing goalposts in AQI.** This, in light of the fact that by the end of 2026 Ontario is expected to have a shortage of 10,000 ECEs. **Toronto must act to eliminate AQI and the onerous ways it is implemented to ensure that ECEs are not pushed out of the field. The City can no longer afford this expensive, duplicative and punitive tool.**

This leads to another important point. We cannot grow the system if we don't have ECEs. **TCBCC calls on the City of Toronto to advocate to the provincial government to create a pay-equity compliant wage grid for all child care workers.** This is long overdue and is the #1 priority to support both the workforce and sector-wide growth initiatives.

Additionally, all levels of government must provide more funding for capital projects and infrastructure. **The City of Toronto could implement a revolving loan program for non-profit operators wishing to expand their operations.** The City has done this before. Non-profits struggle to secure commercial loans because the banking industry does not understand the non-profit corporate model. These loans would be low-risk to the city and provide greater opportunities for creating more child care spaces.

Recently, TCS introduced some terrific initiatives to support the sector. These are a great start! We would have hoped that the Report's, "Next Steps" section would have included more SMART goals. While the Report clearly outlines many challenges, Toronto's parents, children, operators and educators are looking for concrete steps that TCS is committed to taking. **We are asking the City to step up and once again be a child care leader.** The child care community is very willing to work with you to hone and implement the next steps.

What will happen in 2027 and beyond? Nobody seems to know, as we are at the mercy of the provincial and federal governments to sign a long-term agreement. **We ask the City to please advocate for CWELCC be continued, not just for 5 years but for 25 years.**