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CHILD CARE FEE ASSISTANCE AGREEMENTS AND SERVICES 2009 ANNUAL ACTIVITY UPDATE

The Community and Health Services Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendation contained in the following report dated March 24, 2010, from the Commissioner of Community and Health Services.

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that this report be received for information.

2. PURPOSE

This report informs Council of the number of new, amended, and terminated Consolidated Day Nurseries Agreements for Child Care Fee Assistance in 2009. It also provides information regarding the number of licensed spaces and the number of children receiving child care fee assistance and the number of children on the waitlist in York Region, by municipality, in 2009.

3. BACKGROUND

York Region provides child care fee assistance to eligible families through agreements with licensed child care programs

The Execution of Documents By-law #2009-49 provides the delegation of authority for the Commissioner of Community and Health Services to sign Consolidated Day Nurseries Agreements (Purchase of Service Agreements) with operators of licensed child care programs within The Regional Municipality of York.

All operators entering into a Consolidated Day Nurseries Agreement with York Region are required to meet specified criteria including possession of a clear license to operate a Day Nurseries Program from the Ministry of Children and Youth Services. Operators that enter into a Consolidated Day Nurseries Agreement with York Region are able to provide child care services to families that are deemed eligible to receive child care fee assistance.

Community and Health Services staff will be working with child care operators, the school boards, community planning tables and other stakeholders, as the province moves forward with Phase 1 of the Ontario Early Learning Program in September, 2010 with 39 schools offering the program in York Region. While further information is pending from

the province, it is anticipated that there will be impacts to the child care system as increasing numbers of 4 and 5 year old children are supported through fee based extended day services in the school as opposed to centre and home based child care. This may require operators to look at different business models, including service to other age groups. Changes are also anticipated in the provision of wage subsidy and fee subsidy as the new system is implemented and the province provides additional business planning information.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

Consolidated Day Nurseries Agreements enable residents to access child care services in approved programs

Residents of York Region, who qualify for fee assistance in accordance with provincial legislation and regional policy, are able to access child care services if there is fee assistance funding available, space in the approved program, and the operator has a Consolidated Day Nurseries Agreement in place. The Consolidated Day Nurseries Agreement enables fee assistance to be paid to the operator by York Region.

Approximately 86% (25,926) of the 30,146 licensed centre-based spaces and approximately 100% (900) of home child care spaces in use by licensed home child care agencies were covered by a Consolidated Day Nurseries Agreement with York Region as at December 31, 2009.

Consolidated Day Nurseries Agreement Activity in 2009

Table 1 summarizes the number of agreements entered into, amended, or terminated by York Region in 2009.

Table 1
Consolidated Day Nurseries Agreement Activity 2009

Reporting Period	New	Amended	Terminated
January to March	7	12	0
April to June	2	155	0
July to September	3	27	0
October to December	2	438	7
Total	14	632	7

York Region provided child care fee assistance to a monthly average of 4,059 children in 2009

There are 30,146 licensed centre-based spaces and approximately 900 home-based child care spaces in York Region. In 2009, a monthly average of 4,059 children were subsidized by York Region. Table 2 shows these figures by municipality.

Table 2
Licensed Spaces and Average Monthly Number of Children Receiving
Fee Assistance, by Municipality

Municipality	Number of Licensed Centres (as at Dec. 31, 2009)	Number of Licensed Spaces (Centre based) (as at Dec. 31, 2009)	Average Monthly Number of Children Receiving Fee Assistance
Markham	114	7,683	1,129
Vaughan	126	9,957	1,034
Richmond Hill	84	5,471	813
Newmarket	38	2,359	495
Georgina	14	884	243
Aurora	22	1,635	205
Whitchurch-Stouffville	21	1,021	68
East Gwillimbury	10	529	49
King	15	607	20
Other*	n/a	n/a	3
Total	444	30,146	4,059

* Special needs children served outside of York Region boundaries

As of December 31, 2009, there were 3,892 families on the waiting list for child care fee assistance. Table 3 shows these figures by municipality.

Table 3
Waitlist for Child Care Fee Assistance by Applicant, by Municipality
(as of December 31, 2009)

Municipality	Waitlist by Municipality	Percentage Distribution by Municipality
Markham	1,290	33.23
Vaughan	1,152	29.60
Richmond Hill	739	18.90
Newmarket	269	6.91
Georgina	152	3.91
Aurora	132	3.39
Whitchurch-Stouffville	95	2.44
East Gwillimbury	30	0.77
King	28	0.72
Other**	5	0.13
Total	3,892	100.00

** Children over 12 on waitlist for care due to special needs

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There was an over-expenditure of approximately \$2 million net in the Family and Children's Services budget in 2009 primarily due to child care fee assistance demand and service levels. This occurred as a result of a range of factors that appear to be related to the economic recession, including the fact that while there were more service demands, as reflected in the growing waitlist, there were fewer clients exiting service when in previous years they would. (The families' ability to exit being impacted by income issues and longer periods of job search.)

The overall situation meant that there was no levelling off of service at certain points that would allow targeted numbers of overall monthly average service levels to be achieved through the later part of the year. As a result, while more children were served, expenditures were above the budgeted level.

The over-expenditures in Family and Children's Services were managed within the overall Community and Health Services approved 2009 operating budget. New enhanced tracking mechanisms, which include frequent service level and expenditure monitoring by operational and financial staff, are in place, and will be looked at closely throughout the year. These processes appear to be working well, with the result that, at this point, expenditures are in line with the budget projections in 2010.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

Child care fee assistance provides support to employment and/or education for families in York Region. This, in turn, supports local industry, promotes economic development, and strengthens local communities.

7. CONCLUSION

Consolidated Day Nurseries Agreements between York Region and child care operators enabled a monthly average of 4,059 children of eligible residents to access child care fee assistance in 2009.

The child population and number of low income families continue to grow in York Region. The current level of provincial funding for child care fee assistance does not meet the need of the rapidly growing population as reflected by the waitlist of 3,892 children in December 2009.

For more information on this report, please contact David Rennie, General Manager, Social Services at Ext. 2013.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.