

7

PROVINCIAL CHILD CARE STABILIZATION FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

The Community and Health Services Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report dated May 19, 2010, from the Commissioner of Community and Health Services.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. Regional Council approve an increase in gross expenditures in 2010 of approximately \$542,000 to support child care programs impacted during the transition to the Early Learning Program, Phase 1, offset by 100% provincial subsidy and therefore no impact to the 2010 budgeted net tax levy.
2. The Commissioner of Community and Health Services, or designate, be authorized to submit a child care stabilization plan to the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, as required by June 30, 2010 in order to access the available funding.

2. PURPOSE

This report requests Council's authority to submit a child care stabilization plan and for Council to approve a gross expenditure increase of approximately of \$542,000, offset by 100% provincial subsidy to support child care programs impacted by the first phase implementation of the province's Early Learning Program.

3. BACKGROUND

The Province of Ontario is moving ahead with the implementation of the Early Learning Program for four and five year old children beginning in September, 2010

On October 27, 2009, the Province announced it would begin to phase in full day learning for four and five year olds, in the fall of 2010. Full day learning for Junior and Senior Kindergarten was one of the key recommendations of Dr. Charles Pascal who conducted a wide ranging review of Early Learning in Ontario. In September 2010, approximately fifteen percent of eligible four and five year olds will be attending full day learning programs at 39 schools in York Region (*see Attachment 1*) as part of the first phase roll-out.

Although staff understand that all schools selected will implement the full day every day kindergarten program, it still remains to be seen how many of these school sites will also offer the extended day component (before school and after school). Factors such as identified parent need, enrolment, daily cost, etc. will impact the final decisions by the Boards of Education as to where they will offer and operate extended day programming.

York Region is being allotted \$542,000 in stabilization funding to support the Child Care System through the first phase of the Early Learning implementation

On April 27, 2010, the Province announced additional initiatives designed to support the implementation of the vision of a seamless and integrated system intended to support Ontario's children and families. These initiatives included passing of the *Full Day Early Learning Statute Law Amendment Act, 2010*, which amends the *Education Act* and mandates all school boards to offer full day learning for four and five year olds. Additionally, the Province announced the provision of funding to help stabilize the child care system during this period of change. The Province has announced up to \$12 million over five years in new capital funding to assist non-profit child care centres to serve children 0-4 years of age with retrofits and renovations, such as installation of additional washroom facilities, upgrading playgrounds or installation of walls to create required interior play space. The Province has also announced up to \$51 million over five years in operating funding that as we understand it at this point, can be used to support fee subsidy for non-profit and commercial child care programs impacted by the implementation of the Early Learning Program. On April 27, 2010, York Region was advised that as the Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (CMSM), it would receive an allocation of \$542,000 for 2010/2011 to allocate to providers. This allocation is broken down into \$441,600 operating funding and \$100,400 minor capital funding. No specific information on future year allocations is available.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

The Province has provided guidelines for the use of stabilization funding that is intended to support the needs of providers during the implementation of the Early Learning Program

On May 6, 2010, the Province provided CMSMs with Child Care Stabilization Guidelines which outlines the process to follow for using the stabilization funding. They are required to work with partners, including child care centres impacted, to develop a plan that:

- Supports the needs of families and children in the community.
- Supports the transition of child care programs to a 0 – 4 years of age focus.
- Maintains accessibility and availability of licensed child care for children and families.

- Focuses planning on solutions that do not require funding from the government and as much as possible maintains parental choice in the child care system.

CMSMs are required to provide planning information on the use of Phase 1 stabilization funding by June 30, 2010

All CMSMs are required to submit plans to the Ministry of Children and Youth Services (the Ministry) by June 30, 2010, detailing how the stabilization funding will be used. This plan is to be included as part of the annual child care service plan also due by June 30, 2010.

York Region will consult with key stakeholders to gather information for the plan

The guidelines require CMSMs to consult with key stakeholders such as child care operators, the Best Start Network, school boards, and Ministry licensing staff. This consultation is required in order to gather information and to confirm that child care operators requesting stabilization funding are directly impacted by the Early Learning implementation. Operators must also be financially viable and meet other provincial funding requirements and licensing provisions. York Region will work with community partners through established forums such as child care operator meetings, the Best Start Network partners, and other planning tables to share the requirements as provided by the Ministry and identify priorities to be addressed through available funding.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

100% provincial subsidy means no impact on tax levy

The Community and Health Services Department has been informed that it has been allocated \$542,000 in 100% provincial stabilization funding as part of the 2010/2011 child care service contract. It is expected that this funding allocation will be fully expended by December 31, 2010. The Ministry has informed staff that the Department will be required to monitor and report back on the use of minor capital funding. The Province has not yet made clear, however, what requirements for reporting will be requested for the use of operating funding.

The 2011 budget will include estimated expenditures and funding that may be eligible under further allocation of the Child Care Stabilization funding.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

Child care plays a key role in promoting healthy childhood development and helping children arrive at school ready to achieve success. It is also an essential support for many parents, helping them to balance the demands of family with participation in the workforce, or the pursuit of education or training. This stabilization funding will assist child care operators in supporting families and children throughout the Region through the first phase implementation of the Early Learning Program.

7. CONCLUSION

The Province's recently introduced child care stabilization funding is designed to provide critical supports to existing child care services during a period of significant transition. Upon Council approval, Community and Health Services staff will work with key stakeholders to develop and submit required planning information in order to make the most effective use of this money in support of working families and their children.

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.

(The attachment referred to in this clause is attached to this report.)

COUNCIL ATTACHMENT 1

Early Learning Program - Phase 1 List of 39 Schools

York Region District School Board		York Catholic District School Board	
School Name	Municipality	School Name	Municipality
Bond Lake PS	Richmond Hill	Blessed John XXIII	Markham
Coppard Glen PS	Markham	Corpus Christi	Richmond Hill
Crosby Heights PS	Richmond Hill	Divine Mercy	Vaughan
E.J. Sand PS	Markham	Holy Family	Vaughan
Ellen Fairclough PS	Markham	Holy Spirit	Aurora
Glad Park PS	Whitchurch-Stouffville	Kateri Tekakwitha	Markham
Glenn Gould PS	Vaughan	Keele and Kirby	Vaughan
James Robinson PS	Markham	Major Mac and Weston	Vaughan
Jersey PS	Georgina	St. Charles Garnier	Richmond Hill
John McCrae PS	Markham	St. Clement	Vaughan
King City PS	King	St. Elizabeth Seton	Newmarket
Lakeside PS	Georgina	St. Francis of Assisi	Vaughan
Lorna Jackson PS	Vaughan	St. Francis Xavier	Markham
Michael Cranny PS	Vaughan	St. Thomas Aquinas	Georgina
Milliken Mills PS	Markham		
Morning Glory PS	Georgina		
Pleasantville PS	Richmond Hill		
Prince Charles PS	Newmarket		
Ramer Wood PS	Markham		
Regency Acres PS	Aurora		
Stonehaven PS	Newmarket		
Summitview PS	Whitchurch-Stouffville		
Sutton PS	Georgina		
Westminster PS	Vaughan		
Whitchurch Highlands PS	Whitchurch-Stouffville		