



REPORT TO: Co-Chairs and Members of
Public Health and Social Services Committee

SUBJECT: Niagara Child Care Stabilization Plan 2010-2011

RECOMMENDATION

That this Committee recommend to Regional Council that this report be received for information.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Starting September 2010, Niagara will offer Full Day Kindergarten (FDK) in 21 schools with an additional 8 to be added for the 2011/12 school year.
- Children's Services have worked closely with local school boards in planning school sites for FDK that met the Province's criteria and minimized the impact to child care.
- Although the *Full-Day Learning Statute Law Amendment Act, 2010* mandates all school boards offer full-day learning for four and five year olds, school boards are permitted to work with child care partners to deliver before-and-after care over a two year transition period.
- The Province announced funding to help stabilize child care during the transition of the early learning program phase in over the next five years for which Niagara will receive \$225,000 for 2010/11.
- Niagara Region Children's Services has fulfilled the request by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS) to submit a local Child Care Stabilization Plan.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Province has announced new funding of \$225,000 for 2010/2011 for child care stabilization. The Regional gross budget will increase but will have no impact on the net levy as all new funding is 100% provincial.

PURPOSE

This report has been prepared to provide information to Committee and Council of the recently announced provincial child care funding in support of Ontario's system of early learning and care, Niagara's allocation and subsequent plans for stabilizing child care.

The new funding is an investment in children that contributes to Council's Business Plan Objective of "Community and Social Well-Being" and Children's Services' mission "To ensure access to a coordinated, diverse range of affordable, quality services and supports for young children and families residing in Niagara".

BACKGROUND

Dr. Charles Pascal's report on the implementation of full day learning for 4 and 5 year olds "With Our Best Future in Mind" released June 15, 2009 proposed sweeping changes for the system of services for children 0-12 years of age, including child care (COM 10-2009, COM 40-2009, COM 05-2010). A strong focus on outcomes for children, namely early learning and school readiness was emphasized as providing a strong foundation on which to build and drive future social and economic prosperity.

As part of the Province's commitment to full day learning, now referred to as Full Day Kindergarten (FDK), on April 27, 2010 the Ontario Legislative Assembly passed the *Full-Day Statute Law Amendment Act, 2010*. This *Act* amends the *Education Act* to mandate that all school boards offer full-day learning for four and five year-olds, including integrated before-and-after-school programs. The legislation permits school boards to contract with child care service providers for before-and-after school over a two year transition period. It is expected that schools boards will work towards offering a board delivered extended day service after this time period.

In selecting the schools for September 2010 (Phase 1 – 15% of all students in Niagara) and September 2011 (Phase 2 – an additional 5% of all students in Niagara), local school boards and Niagara Region Children's Services worked together to best identify where children, parents and communities would most benefit from full-day learning and the local availability of child care and where negative impacts to child care would be minimized. On June 15, 2010, the Province announced the list of schools that would be offering FDK in starting September 2011 (Appendix 1 – Phase 2 schools offering Full Day Kindergarten).

The government has committed to assist municipalities with addressing the challenges in child care that result from the implementation of full-day learning resulting from the loss of revenue associated with 4-and-5 year olds. The stabilization funding will be phased in over the period of implementation, growing to \$51 million annually at full implementation to help stabilize child care centres as four and five-year-olds move into the full-day learning program. The government has also committed \$12 million over five years in new capital funding to help non-profit child care centres make retrofits and renovations to serve younger children.

REPORT

In Niagara, local school boards have indicated to Children's Services and the child care community that they will continue to work with child care service providers for the before-and-after school program including Professional Development (PD) and holiday

requirements. Children's Services has worked closely with school boards and child care providers to identify the impacts related to financial stability with the loss of full day and half-day revenue for those children that would have the option of FDK.

In April, Niagara received notice of \$225,000 of child care stabilization funding for 2010/11 which includes \$38,300 of capital (COM 29-2010). With responsibility for child care moving from MCYS to the Ministry of Education as announced in May 2010, Niagara has not yet received a final contract confirming all funding. However, discussions with MCYS regional offices regarding the contract and service plans have taken place and are expected to be finalized soon.

A service plan, due June 30, 2010, for expenditure of these funds was requested by the MCYS Regional office. Children's Services submitted the "Niagara Child Care Stabilization Plan" in accordance with the MCYS "Child Care Stabilization Funding Guidelines: Addendum to 2010 Child Care Serviced System Guidelines". The plan contained the following: an overview of Niagara's child care system, the impact of FDK on child care, financial implications, approaches undertaken by local school boards for implementing FDK, strategies for funding allocations and community solutions generated through engagement, consultation and feedback from key stakeholders.

Specific plans for the allocation of stabilization funding and capital was aligned under Children's Services priorities of stabilization, quality and partnership.

Stability

For service providers in FDK school locals (in the school or within 500m of the school), Children's Services will support increased per diems (daily rates) for 0-3.8 age groups by 2.75% to 6% in programs that will be impacted with the loss of full day and half-day revenue associated with 4 & 5 year old children attending FDK. To assist service providers with estimating impact to per diems, Children's Services provided tools and support through the annual budget process. In most cases, increases have brought contracted per diems in line with full fee market rates.

Additionally, a maximum increase of 2.75% for 4 & 5 year old school aged spaces was set by Children Services to compensate those programs that would experience the loss of the half-day revenue as they continued to offer before-and-after school care. For the most part, this increase applied to child care operators located in a FDK school.

Minor capital will be used to retrofit or renovate child cares to support younger aged children and to provide seamless services with child care working in partnership with school boards to deliver extended day programs where demand exists. Children's Services requires a business plan for any capital requirements consistent with MCYS's guidelines for allocation of capital.

Quality

Through Phase 3 of Quality Child Care Niagara (QCCN) child care programs will receive support for training, evaluation and measurement to deliver the extended day component of FDK as outlined by the new curriculum. A QCCN task group has already been formed to examine the existing curricula of service providers in these positions, evaluation of participation in QCCN and will align and set standards when the Extended Day Program curriculum is provided. Training will be extended to Best Start sites in fall 2010 whether or not they are directly located in an FDK school.

Partnership

Work is being undertaken with school boards on their strategy to implement FDK and provide high quality child care to families in the school communities that require child care consistent with the outcomes intended for the Extended Day component. Where possible, joint communication between child care centres and school boards have been distributed to parents at FDK schools to provide information on services available for September 2010. Children's Services continue to work with school board representatives on coordinating easy access to new families that are expected to enroll in FDK and may be eligible for fee subsidy.

Support for ongoing community planning and input for the transition of child care through Niagara Child Care Sector and Early Years Niagara Planning Council/Niagara Best Start Network will continue to be provided by Children's Services. This is of particular importance considering the anticipated emergence of Best Start Child and Family Centres as it relates to child care transition and sustainability.

Niagara Region Children's Services looks forward to continuing work with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Children and Youth Services in moving towards a truly integrated and more accessible system of services for children and families. The stabilization service plan and associated funding is a key component to achieving this vision as the early impacts to child care during this transition begin to unfold.

Submitted by:

Approved by:

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Phase 2 Full Day Early Learning School Announced

June 15, 2010

The Ontario government today released the list of schools in Niagara that will offer a full-day early learning program for four and five year olds starting September 2011 which are considered to be Phase 2 of the program implementation.

The new Early Learning Program (ELP) requires all school boards in Ontario to begin a five-year roll out of full-day learning for four and five year olds beginning in September 2010. The goal is to have full-day kindergarten offered in all elementary schools by 2015-16. The introduction of full-day kindergarten for four and five year olds is the next step in Ontario's plan to improve education, create a stronger school system and build a well-educated work force.

In selecting the schools, Niagara's school boards and Niagara Region Children's Services have worked together to best identify where children, parents and communities would most benefit from full-day learning and the local availability of child care.

Niagara schools selected to offer the ELP starting September 2011*:

District School Board of Niagara

Connaught Public School, St. Catharines
 Cherrywood Acres Public School, Niagara Falls
 Carleton Public School, St. Catharines
 River View Public School, Niagara Falls
 Virgil Public School, Virgil

Niagara Catholic District School Board

Our Lady of Victory Junior Separate School, Fort Erie
 St. Mark Catholic Elementary School, Beamsville

Conseil Scolaire de District Catholique Centre-Sud

École élémentaire catholique Sainte-Marguerite-Bourgeoys, St. Catharines

*Note: No additional schools in Niagara for CSD du Centre Sud-Ouest were included for Phase 2 September 2011 ELP implementation.

By September 2011, Niagara will have a total of 28 schools offering the full day early learning program as part of the Provincial initiative that will see upwards of 20% of Ontario's four and five year old children with access to the full day early learning program.

A complete listing of school locations and the Premier's announcement are available at www.edu.gov.on.ca/earlylearning.

For more information

www.niagararegion.ca/living/children/full-day-learning.aspx