HS-B1-1

Region of Peel
Working for you

REPORT
Regional Council

For Information

DATE: August 12, 2010

REPORT TITLE: **FULL DAY EARLY LEARNING**

FROM: Janet Menard, Commissioner of Human Services

OBJECTIVE

To provide a preliminary status update on the provincial Full Day Early Learning initiative and its potential impact for Peel. A more comprehensive analysis will be forthcoming early in 2011.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- The Ontario Legislature passed the Full Day Early Learning Statute Law Amendment Act, 2010 (Bill 242).
- Child care policy, program and funding responsibilities for children from birth to age 12 have transferred from the Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS) to the Ministry of Education (EDU).
- The province has confirmed Consolidated Municipal Service Manager's (CMSM's) as the subsidy administrator for the extended day program.
- 2010-2011 Child Care Stabilization Funding allocation is $513,700 (Operating $418,800; Capital $94,900).
- Staff are working with internal and external stakeholders to develop and implement a Multi –Year Integrated Early Learning and Child Care Plan for Peel that will inform our future role as Service System Manager and service provider in the integrated early learning and child care system.
- Region of Peel is poised and has asked to be an active participant in the development of the Best Start Child and Family Centres.

DISCUSSION

1. Background

Dr. Pascal's report, *With Our Best Future in Mind, Implementing Early Learning in Ontario,* was released in June 2009. The report includes 20 recommendations, one of which is the implementation of a Full Day *Early Learning Program* for four-and five-year-old children. In October 2009, the Province announced that Ontario will proceed with implementation of a new Early Learning Policy Framework. The Framework draws from the recommendations in Dr. Pascal's report which will be phased in over a multi-year time span.

Beginning in September 2010, 600 schools and 35,000 children across the province will be a part of the full day kindergarten program. The program will be implemented in phases, to

become fully available to all four and five-year-olds by 2015-16. Staff have been working closely with local boards of education, the Peel Best Start Network and early learning and child care service providers to support the transition of the four and five-year-olds from the child care sector to the school boards.

Phase One and Two school site selections followed Ministry of Education criteria and involved a collaborative planning process with school boards, CMSM's, multi-site child care operators and Success by 6 Peel. Impact to existing local child care service providers and the varying needs of communities were assessed through Service Delivery Area (SDA), Low Income Cut-Off (LCIO) and Early Development Instrument (EDI) data.

a. Peel's Phase One

September 2010 will result in 3,978 four and five-year-olds attending a full day kindergarten program at 36 English speaking schools; 20 Peel District School Board and 16 Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School board.

b. Peel's Phase Two

September 2011 will result in 1,690 four and-five year olds attending a full day kindergarten program at 19 English language schools; 11 Peel District School Board and 8 Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School board.

The French-language school boards: Conseil scolaire de district Catholique Centre-Sud and Conseil scolaire de district du Centre-Sud-Ouest did not select any Peel schools to participate in Phase One or Two.

2. Bill 242, the Full Day Early Learning Statute Law Amendment Act

On April 27th, the Ontario Legislature passed the Full Day Early Learning Statute Law Amendment Act, 2010 (Bill 242, *Full Day Learning Early Learning Statute Law Amendment Act, 2010*), which gives school boards the legal responsibility and authority to implement full day early learning for four and five-year-olds, including the integrated extended day programs available before and after regular school hours. The Province has made numerous changes in two Ministries and assigned new responsibilities to local school boards and municipal service managers.

3. Extended Day Program

The new Act gives school boards the legal responsibility and authority to implement the integrated extended day programs. It also established temporary and specific circumstances under which boards may maintain already existing agreements with third-party service providers in lieu of board-operated extended day programs.

Both the Peel District School Board and Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board's have entered into third-party agreements with existing service providers to deliver the extended day program September 2010-June 2012. Third-party service agreements terminate June 2012 at which time the extended day program must be board delivered.

Costs for the extended day program are confirmed in Peel as $22.00 per day with subsidies available for eligible families. CMSM's are confirmed as the subsidy administrator for the extended day program.

In 2010-2011, up to $11.97 million is available across the province for extended day fee subsidies. Extended day fee subsidies are 100 per cent provincially funded, with no municipal cost sharing requirement. Eligible administrative costs (up to 10 per cent as part of the funding allocation) will continue to be determined by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS) Child Care Administrative Cost Sharing Guidelines. Funding not used for extended day fee subsidies will remain as annualized funding in the system as child care fee subsidies. The existing MCYS Best Start Equity allocation formula was used to distribute funds.

On July 8, 2010 staff received notice from the Province that Peel's Extended Day Fee Subsidy Allocation is composed of two components:

- $181,200 in new funding for extended day fee subsidies
- Up to a maximum of $1,133,100.00 in existing funds may be reallocated internally as children move out of child care and into extended day programs (also 100% provincial funds).

At this point, Phase One uptake for September 2010 has been minimal. School boards report that of the 36 Phase One schools, 18 will offer extended day programs. Third-party service providers report a total projected enrolment of 214 children for September 2010.

4. Child Care Stabilization Funding

The Province has committed Child Care Stabilization Funding to assist municipalities in addressing the financial challenges of sustaining the child care system arising from the implementation of the Early Learning Program.

On April 28, 2010 staff received notice from the province that the Child Care Stabilization 2010/11 funding allocation for Peel Region for child care operators is $513,700. This allocation is broken down into $418,800 operating funding and $94,900 capital funding. Although a full assessment is still required there is some concern that this funding may be insufficient.

Funding was prioritized based on the Province's Secondary Child Care Risk Assessment and Guiding Principles (March 2010). Criteria considered included sites within a two km radius of FDK schools, as well as neighbourhoods with highest number of families below the low income cut off. The end result being that of the 165 centres potentially impacted by Phase One, 23 sites have been selected to receive $4,126.00 each in capital funding to offset the costs of minor renovations of existing child care centres to serve younger aged children.

Staff have begun the initial process of identifying potential usages for the operating funding. A number of solutions have been identified and require further analysis to determine which options would be most effective in stabilizing the child care system.

5. Peel's 2010-2011 Child Care Service Plan

Peel's 2010–2011 Child Care Service Plan, was developed in collaboration with the community in response to the Ministry of Children and Youth Services' May 5, 2010 memo, *Early Learning Program (ELP) Phase One Child Care Stabilization Guidelines: Addendum to 2010 Child Care Service System Guidelines.* The purpose of the addendum was for CMSM's to consider the impacts of ELP in order to minimize the impacts on children and families and to provide an overview of a community plan for transition funding. In developing this plan, the Region of Peel embarked on a community engagement process with stakeholders, including the Peel Best Start Network service providers and parents. The plan was submitted to MCYS on June 30, 2010.

6. Full Day Early Learning - Service Impact

The ability to successfully re-engineer the system presents complex challenges which require timely and sustainable resources. Full impact of Phase One full day kindergarten will be monitored as occupancy rates evolve and the uptake of the program is realized over the coming months. Results from the Province's Secondary Child Care Risk Assessment (March 2010) report centres may experience a 25-50 per cent revenue loss due to the exit of four and five-year-olds. The ability to re-invent child care spaces is dependent upon adequate operating and transitional funding including fee and wage subsidies. As a result there will be significant impact to municipalities, people, service and financial accountabilities.

As implementation progresses, transition plans must consider and take a planned and flexible approach to the impacts of the Service System. Impacts include formal (licensed centre and home child care) and informal child care programs, special needs resource agencies, Ontario Early Years Centres and year round child care options for the four and five-year-olds.

The economic situation has increased pressure on the early learning and child care system through increased demand for fee subsidy. Also, service providers have reported increased vacancy rates within the centres due to local decline in employment and labour force levels.

7. Opportunities Moving Forward

Staff are working collaboratively with internal and external stakeholders to develop and implement a Multi –Year Integrated Early Learning and Child Care Plan for Peel that will:

- Emphasize the role the Region's role as Service System Manager to lead the design of a seamless and integrated system prenatal to 12 years; including Child and Family Centres
- Establish collaborative support plans for the transition of four and five-year-olds to Full Day Kindergarten
- Re-engineer the 0-3.8 child care service system including internal operations and regionally delivered services
- Make recommendations regarding fiscal risk and pressures facing the system, internal operations and related Regional services

Staff have developed a Program Charter to undertake the work to define the Regional role in an integrated early learning and child care system. This planning will be informed by provincial initiatives and local experience, including Peel's Best Start initiatives. Since 2005, Peel and its early learning and school boards partners have been operating integrated early childhood services (including kindergarten, child care and supports to families through readiness centres and parenting centres) in seven Best Start sites across four school boards (including the two French boards). Peel's Best Start's programs and outcomes have been the focus of research project led by Dr. Janette Pelletier's of Ontario Institute of Child Studies/University of Toronto. This research will provide valuable information on effective service delivery models going forth.

As a CMSM, the Region of Peel has a history of collaborating on innovative community initiatives to enhance service provision. To this end, staff have sent a letter to Minister Broten to indicate interest in serving on the province-wide reference group and piloting the provincially proposed Best Start Child and Family Centres (BSCFC's). These centres will offer a one-stop opportunity for parents and caregivers to support children's earliest development which would also include Public Health programs like Healthy Babies, Healthy Children, nutrition, home

visiting and pre-/post natal supports. As an active participant in achieving the Best Start vision, Regional staff will continue to explore ways to work co-operatively with the province and others on new initiatives which benefit children and families.

FUTURE DIRECTION

Staff will continue to monitor the phase-in of Full Day Kindergarten and the impact to early learning and child care service providers in Peel, including our own 12 Regionally operated child care centres. Upcoming reports will address opportunities to stabilize the early learning and child care sector, the resulting financial impacts and also speak to the emerging trends in overall capacity for subsidized spaces.

CONCLUSION

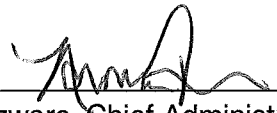
The early learning and childcare system is currently experiencing tremendous change. As a CMSM, the Region is committed to provide leadership and fulfill our obligations within an integrated early learning and child care system. Regional staff look forward to exploring new opportunities to stabilize the child care system while monitoring current trends and issues impacting early learning and child care service providers in Peel and confirming an appropriate role in the management and delivery of early learning and child care supports and services.

Regional staff are committed to working collaboratively with the Ministry of Education and Peel school boards in the transition of early learning to the education system for four and five-year-olds. As well, CMSM staff are working with community partners, including school boards, the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association, service providers, the Peel Children & Youth Initiative (including Success by 6 Peel and the Peel Best Start Network) to reinvent early learning and child care services for children 0 to 3.8 years old and to create an integrated multi-year child care plan that addresses community needs.

As further information is received from the province regarding transitional resources and the development of Best Start Child and Family Centres, staff will continue to communicate to stakeholders and Council. Staff will monitor and plan for the implementation of Full Day Early Learning this fall and will report back to Council in spring 2011.

Janet Menard
Commissioner of Human Services

Approved for Submission:



for D. Szwarc, Chief Administrative Officer

For further information regarding this report, please contact Gurpreet Malhotra at extension 4862 or via email at gurpreet malhotra@peelregion.ca