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ELCCTF-2012-2

**THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF PEEL**

**EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE IN PEEL  
COUNCIL TASK FORCE**

**MINUTES**

The Early Learning and Child Care in Peel Council Task Force met on Thursday, April 26, 2012 at 8:44 a.m., in the Council Chamber, Regional Administrative Headquarters, 10 Peel Centre Drive, Suite A, Brampton.

Members Present: B. Crombie; S. Hames; E. Kolb; G. Miles; E. Moore; R. Paterak; J. Sanderson; P. Saito\*; J. Sprovieri♦

Members Absent: P. Palleschi, due to other municipal business

Other Regional  
Councillors Present: C. Fonseca; P. Mullin; A. Thompson

Also Present: D. Szwarc, Chief Administrative Officer; N. Trim, Chief Financial Officer and Commissioner of Corporate Services; J. Smith, Commissioner of Health Services; J. Menard, Commissioner of Human Services; P. O'Connor, Regional Solicitor and Director, Legal and Risk Management; Joan Kaczmarek, Director, Service System Management; C. Reid, Regional Clerk; C. Law, Committee Clerk

*Chaired by Councillor Miles.*

**1. DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST - Nil**

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- a) Minutes of the Early Learning and Child Care in Peel Council Task Force (ELCCTF-2012-1) meeting held on April 12, 2012

**RECOMMENDATION ELCCTF-4-2012:**

Moved by Councillor Sanderson,  
Seconded by Councillor Crombie;

That the minutes of the Early Learning and Child Care in Peel Council Task Force (ELCCTF-2012-1) meeting held on April 12, 2012, be approved.

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\* See text for arrivals

♦ See text for departures

**3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**RECOMMENDATION ELCCFT-5-2012

Moved by Councillor Crombie,  
Seconded by Councillor Moore;

That the agenda for the April 26, 2012, Early Learning and Child Care in Peel Council Task Force meeting be approved.

*Councillor Saito arrived at 8:45 a.m.*

**4. PRESENTATIONS**

- a) **Quality and Quality Assurance, Full Day Kindergarten Affects, System Transformation, and Sustainability Challenges**
  - i. Presentation by Joan Kaczmariski, Director, Service System Management

Received

A copy of the presentation is available from the Office of the Regional Clerk.

David Szwarc, Chief Administrative Officer, introduced the staff presentation by recapping the role the Region of Peel plays in the child care system as Service System Manager, the role of the Early Learning and Child Care in Peel Council Task Force (ELCCTF) and the results of the first meeting on April 12, 2012.

Joan Kaczmariski, Director, Service System Management, outlined first, an environmental scan of current issues that noted that there has been additional funding announced along with the recent provincial budget. As it stands, Peel is likely to receive some portion of the new funding, but it will likely not be known until September how the funding is to be allocated and how much Peel would receive. Furthermore, she outlined the key elements of quality child care, the stakeholders involved in that process, and the differentiation between roles of the Region and the province in providing quality assurance. She added that "Raising the Bar" is a peer-reviewed quality assurance program utilized in Peel launched in 2008 that currently has a 30 per cent participation rate currently, among child care providers; a number the Region would ultimately like to get to 100 per cent.

*Councillor Sprovieri arrived at 9:20 a.m.*

- b) **Early Learning and Child Care Providers, Quality Programs and Assurance, Full Day Kindergarten Affects, System Transformation, and Sustainability Challenges**
  - i. Presentation by Elizabeth Hawley, Executive Director, Practice and Programs, CDRCP, and Tracy Petersen, Director, Sunshine Children's Centre, and Raising the Bar participant

Received

A copy of the presentation is available from the Office of the Regional Clerk.

Elizabeth Hawley, Executive Director, Practice and Programs, Child Development Resource Connection Peel (CDRCP), began the presentation by defining the Raising the Bar program as a volunteer, annual quality initiative for early learning and licensed child care programs measuring quality by three levels: quality assurance, best practices, and professional education, which go above and beyond the requirements of the *Day Nurseries Act*. Participating programs move through three levels: Bronze, Silver, and Gold. She noted that currently, the Region of Peel is a partner in this program and there are 135 commercial and non-profit programs in Peel currently participating in Raising the Bar (with an additional 12 programs in the process of joining), encompassing 12,000 children and 1,200 staff.

Tracy Petersen, Director, Sunshine Children's Centre, shared examples of her experience and the advantages of Raising the Bar at her Gold certified location. She noted parents are involved and engaged in the process for feedback and ongoing improvements; staff are extensively trained and participate in ongoing and continuous education, especially in the field of special needs; the food provided is nutritious and healthy; and job satisfaction is at a high level. She added that she participates in the peer review process of all measures of the Raising the Bar program and notes many other centres are also providing excellent quality service in licensed child care. Lastly, she told the members that despite their Gold certification in Raising the Bar, it does not mean she or her centre are finished growing or trying to improve quality child care for their children and their parents.

Councillor Crombie inquired as to what percentage of private child care providers are Raising the Bar participants. Elizabeth Hawley replied that just below half of total membership in Raising the Bar are private or commercial child care centres. Councillor Crombie asked if there were any other private quality assurance standards programs operating in Peel that those not using Raising the Bar could be using. Elizabeth Hawley replied that within Peel, there is only Raising the Bar available. Councillor Crombie asked if the Region could mandate or require Raising the Bar participation for all child care providers. Janet Menard, Commissioner of Human Services, replied that the Region could require such membership for those providers that the Region currently has a purchase of service (POS) agreement with but currently it is not a requirement to obtain a POS. She added such a requirement might be a recommendation that comes out of the ELCCTF meetings, but that such a recommendation would require further resources. Councillor Crombie requested that staff provide cost estimates for such an option.

Councillor Fonseca inquired if it was possible for those not participating in Raising the Bar to network with Raising the Bar participants. Tracy Petersen responded that through CDRCP Annual Meetings and any number of other professional development activities, all child care professionals are meeting and sharing best practices and successes from their centre or program. She added that parental surveys and any other feedback is often shared with staff at these types of meetings in order to show the different best practices and suggestions currently being offered from the different providers.

Councillor Miles requested that staff provide a list of child care providers in Peel that identifies which ones were participating in Raising the Bar. She further inquired whether the presenters thought quality of child care would suffer if the Region were forced to close down their 12 Learn.Play.Care. (LPC) Centres, or what other impact there might be. Elizabeth Hawley responded that while she strongly agrees the LPC's are excellent child care centres that provide high quality child care, she noted that there are many other quality child care programs in the Region, both participating in the Raising the Bar program and not participating. She added that it would be a shame for any child care centre to close, but if Regional Council makes such a decision, the money saved should be redirected back into programs like Raising the Bar and special needs education.

- ii. Presentation by Charlotte Kanavos, Chair, Licensed Home Child Care Network of Peel Region

Received

A copy of the presentation is available from the Office of the Regional Clerk.

Charlotte Kanavos, Chair, Licensed Home Child Care Network of Peel Region, provided a presentation on what the Peel Network does and what it means to be a licensed home child care provider. She touched on the major differences between licensed providers and unlicensed providers: the accountability advantages of having licensed agencies that report to the Ministry of Education as well as to their governing agency with a POS with the Region of Peel; the regulation of this sector through quality assurance visits; Canada Food Guide nutritional standards for all food; ongoing training for licensed individuals with such tools as the Learning In Our Neighbourhood (LION) program; and small group settings that enhance child-centred learning. Ms. Kanavos added that the Peel Network is looking to develop a marketing plan for all agencies to recruit better recognition of this valuable and viable choice in child care and attract new home providers; advocating for increased subsidy for parents needing subsidized spaces; and advocating for further funding for increased licensed home care programs and training for these providers.

Councillor Crombie asked what the barriers were for a mother to begin delivering child care services in the home. Charlotte Kanavos responded that there were no barriers, and it is simply a matter of being willing to provide care for those parents who need it. Councillor Crombie inquired what the ratio of licensed home care providers is compared to unlicensed. Charlotte Kanavos responded that she did not have the exact numbers but there are likely more unlicensed providers. She added that there may be a convenience factor at play, where the provider needs only to deal with a parent one-on-one should there be problems. In a licensed situation, problems can be addressed by the agency responsible, and ongoing resources are provided to those caring for children, including insurance. Councillor Crombie asked how they could encourage further licensing of unlicensed child care. Charlotte Kanavos responded that the Region could ensure child care subsidies only go to spaces that are centre-based or licensed home care providers, as well as helping to market the program to parents to show the benefits of licensed care.

Regional Chair Kolb inquired if Charlotte Kanavos had any suggestions for how the Region of Peel might make better use of the LPC centres should Regional Council decide to end the direct operation of child care services. Charlotte Kanavos responded that she liked the idea of a group of providers being able to take over the facilities but was unsure what the costs of such

a transition would be. She added that she believes there are many child care providers in the community doing great work that were not given proper credit by delegates to Regional Council at its meeting on January 26, 2012.

Councillor Moore inquired as to what the process is to report a bad experience with an unlicensed child care setting. Joan Kaczmariski, Director, Service System Management, responded that complaints of unlicensed care can still be heard through the Licensing Branch through the Ministry of Education, as well as through the Early Learning Services Unit at the Region of Peel, where further action can be taken depending on the situation. Councillor Moore suggested that perhaps the Network could reach out to the unlicensed providers when concerns are raised for further education on solutions.

Councillor Miles requested that staff capture the recommendations raised by members and presenters to the Task Force, for further study at the end of the ELCCTF process.

- iii. Presentation by Jane van Berkel, Executive Director, CDRCP, and Shela Minhas, President, Bright Scholars Academy Inc., CDRCP Quality Choices Committee

Received

A copy of the presentation is available from the Office of the Regional Clerk.

Jane van Berkel, Executive Director, CDRCP, and Shela Minhas, President, Bright Scholars Academy Inc., outlined the major services provided by the CDRCP, most notably professional education and resources for the child care community. They outlined how the CDRCP has cross-sectoral members and all work is done with community partners which are then drawn upon for feedback in several forums. They put forward several recommendations from the CDRCP for the ELCCTF members to consider as they continue to deliberate. Specific recommendations include the Region of Peel providing further funding for professional education and relief staff for operators through CDRCP; requiring all new POS agreements with new operators to commit to more inclusive early learning and child care with an emphasis on enrolment of children with special needs; providing investments in inclusiveness training and certification sessions in inclusiveness; and continuing to advocate to all or other levels of government for additional supports for early learning and child care in Peel that is both sustainable and reliable.

Councillor Miles inquired if the Region of Peel was a significant funder of the CDRCP and its activities. Jane van Berkel responded that while the Region is a funder primarily supporting the Child Info Line and Raising the Bar, several provincial ministries fund the majority of their activities.

Councillor Crombie inquired as to what additional funding would provide for the CDRCP. Jane van Berkel responded that an additional two full-time coordinator positions would be one estimated requirement given workload. Councillor Crombie also asked what they expected to see when their operator survey came back with results. Jane van Berkel suggested that they are looking to see what barriers and problems operators are anticipating in the future with regards to proper care of children with special needs, or any special training needs they require. Councillor Crombie further asked if there were any rules or requirements for the number of special needs children that can be cared for under licensed and unlicensed environments. Jane van Berkel responded that for licensed providers, there are rules requiring fewer children be accommodated per site for quality purposes. She added that in centre-based care, there is no extra support to help care for special needs children.

Councillor Moore requested that staff provide clear information on child care funding, perhaps in chart form, which shows who is providing funds and what operators are receiving funds.

*Councillor Sprovieri left the meeting at 10:30 a.m.*

- iv. Presentation by Velma Doran, Professor, Early Childhood Education, Sheridan Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning

Received

Velma Doran, Professor, Early Childhood Education, Sheridan Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning provided a brief report on Sheridan's role in educating early childhood educators. She listed various full-time, part-time, intensive, and continuing degrees, diplomas, and certificates in early childhood education all intended to provide quality credentials for these professionals. She emphasized the HighScope nature of the curriculum based on best practices, and other evidence-based academic child care research; coupled with a placement in a variety of child care field sites.

Councillor Miles inquired as to what the difference is between HighScope training and Raising the Bar. David Szwarc, Chief Administrative Officer, responded that HighScope is a curriculum implemented in various child care facilities, while Raising the Bar is a program to ensure quality assurance.

Councillor Fonseca inquired whether field placement data on experience ensures quality as per Sheridan's criteria. Velma Doran responded that there is room for flexibility around geographic location, different experiences of students, etc., and that the assurance of quality is not necessarily a one-size-fits-all for every student but rather the necessity of training is of utmost importance. Councillor Fonseca also noted that while Ms. Doran had mentioned HighScope as a best practice, she inquired whether there are other examples of best practices that ensure quality experiences of placements. Velma Doran responded that it has been traditionally an eclectic approach in the field where the only recognized models are HighScope and Montessori. She added that the only accredited HighScope institutions available for placements in the Region of Peel are the Region's LPC's, however there are many HighScope-like programs delivered in other centres.

**5. COMMUNICATIONS - Nil**

**6. OTHER BUSINESS - Nil**

**7. NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Early Learning and Child Care in Peel Council Task Force is scheduled for Thursday, May 10, 2012 at 8:30 a.m., Regional Administrative Headquarters, Council Chamber, 5th floor, 10 Peel Centre Drive, Suite A, Brampton, Ontario.

Please forward regrets to Curtiss Law, Committee Clerk, (905) 791-7800, ext. 4330 or at [curtiss.law@peelregion.ca](mailto:curtiss.law@peelregion.ca)

**8. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 10:58 a.m.