

HS-B1-1

PCYPG

Peel Children and Youth Planning Group

c/o CDRCP, #103 – 75 Watline Avenue, Mississauga, ON L4Z 3E5

February 8, 2012

LION Steering Committee

RE: Learning In Our Neighbourhood (LION) Program

The Peel Children and Youth Planning Group is composed of more than 20 transfer payment agencies providing services to children in Peel Region. Its mandate is to plan collaboratively for and develop the spectrum of MCYS-funded services to respond to the needs of children and youth in Peel. As service providers who are mandated to provide a broad range of programs to children and their families, we are writing to express our support for the LION program, as its continuation is threatened by the loss of funding from Citizenship and Immigration funding. There are a number of reasons we find the prospect of losing this program to be particularly troubling.

The Region of Peel continues to experience rapid population growth which challenges the capacity of service providers to respond appropriately. LION is one effective model of response. Peel's diverse population has a higher proportion of young families than is found across the province. Many of these young families live in new subdivisions which have few local services and sparse transit to reach centralized services. This is particularly challenging in the rapidly growing areas of Brampton East and Brampton West. The LION Program brings services to these high-needs neighbourhoods, providing access to resources and supports that would otherwise be out of reach for many of these families.

PCYPG members become concerned when any component in the continuum of services is curtailed, creating a gap. LION provides vitally important preventative services, tailored to the needs of specific neighbourhoods. These services strengthen resilience, so families can address problems when they begin to develop, not after they have become critical and require costly interventions. Without these services, families will have less understanding of, and access to, the whole system of resources and supports when they first could use them.

The LION program helps the whole family. As parents, grandparents and other caregivers come to the program, they meet service providers who can offer information and connections to other supports which will benefit the family. This is particularly critical for newcomers who have limited knowledge of the Canadian social service system and can benefit from contacts that will assist their assimilation into Canadian society.

LION has been built on the effective Ontario Early Years Centre model. We understand it has been evaluated through RBA (Results Based Accountability) and the Family Resource Program E-valuation.

| LEGISLATIVE SERVICES | |
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| Chair | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Committees |
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| Corporate Services | <input type="checkbox"/> Council |
| Public Works | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Employee and Business Services | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Health Services | <input type="checkbox"/> File |
| Human Services | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Peel Living | <input type="checkbox"/> |

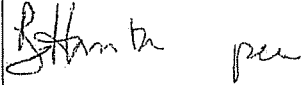
REFERRAL TO _____
 RECOMMENDED _____
 DIRECTION REQUIRED _____
 RECEIPT RECOMMENDED

HS-B1-2

LION is the product of a very collaborative partnership which includes the boards of education, early child care providers, libraries, the Region of Peel and other organizations. This model of cooperative problem-solving is one that should be emulated, not undermined.

PCYPG supports the continuation of the LION program. We ask to be kept informed regarding the deliberations about its future.

Regards,



Kelly Henderson, Co-Chair



Jim Preston, Co-Chair