

August 31, 2012



**City Council
Committee Report**

To: Mayor and Council
Fr: Colleen Neil, Recreation Services Manager
Re: Childcare Services Offered by the City of Kenora

Recommendation:

THAT the City of Kenora withdraws as a direct service provider of Child Care programs as of December 31, 2012 based on the changes and opportunities related to provincial directions in Early Learning and Child Care.

Background:

In November 2007, Premier Dalton McGuinty appointed Dr. Charles Pascal as special advisor on early learning and he commissioned a report on the best way to implement full day learning for four- and five-year olds.

In June 2009, Dr. Pascal released his report, With our Best Future in Mind - Implementing Early Learning in Ontario, which contained 20 recommendations, including a recommendation that the Province phase-in Full Day Kindergarten, characterized by classrooms that are jointly led by a teacher and early childhood educator, for four- and five-year-olds by 2014. Both of Kenora's local school boards have adopted these recommendations and are moving forward with implementation plans for our local and area schools.

At the same time, Human Services in Ontario are undergoing major transformation and legislative change as seen in new early learning and child care, housing and social assistance reform. To ensure a fully integrated system, the Province has transferred all early learning and child care responsibilities, including licensing and quality assurance, from the Ministry of Children and Youth Services to the Ministry of Education. Despite economic pressures, the Province has maintained the commitment to Full Day Kindergarten and an aggressive implementation timeline. With the phased implementation of Full Day Kindergarten, Daycare will increasingly evolve toward spaces for infants and toddlers. These younger age groups have higher staff ratios and continue to make reasonable and affordable childcare rates an issue for service providers. Although recently announced funding by the Province, through the local district services boards, for the provision of increased transitional funding to support the 0-36 months of age group; while appreciated, this funding is insufficient to meet regional childcare operating needs.

Additionally, families with children with special needs face unique challenges accessing integrated child care. The City of Kenora child care services does not meet the requirements for additional funding for trained staff or resource teachers with the expertise needed to care for children with special needs. Fortunately for our community there is two qualified and well pointed childcare services providers who are currently eligible and offering this valuable service in our community.

The City of Kenora Council has been reviewing its priorities to ensure that the City is making the right investments in its programs to maximize benefits for Kenora residents. The recommendation is for the City of Kenora to withdraw as a direct service provider of Child Care as of December 31, 2012 based on the changes and opportunities related to Provincial changes in Early Learning and Child Care and in particular, Full Day Kindergarten. It is Council's vision, that with other available qualified childcare services providers, and there will be **no** decrease in available daycare spots within the community.

Budget:

No impact to the 2012 Operating Budget

Communication Plan/Notice By-law Requirements:

Notice will be given all families attending City of Kenora childcare programs; to the Kenora District Services Board and to the Two Local School Boards of council's decision