

CITY OF HAMILTON M O T I O N

Emergency and Community Services: November 18, 2021

MOVED BY COUNCILLOR N. Nann

SECONDED BY COUNCILLOR

National Childcare Strategy – investigating the potential for direct municipal agreement with the Federal Government

WHEREAS, on April 19, 2021 the Government of Canada’s budget announcement included a \$30 billion investment over five years to create a national system of Early Learning and Child Care and Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care (1);

WHEREAS, the Government of Canada has entered into Child Care Agreements with seven provinces and one territory to improve the quantity and quality of regulated child care while reducing the costs for parents to an average of \$10 per day;

WHEREAS, the provinces and territory that signed agreements with the federal government are collectively committing to expanding capacity of new regulated child care spaces by 125,000 (2);

WHEREAS, an agreement between the Government of Canada and Province of Ontario on a bilateral child care program remains outstanding with public reports stating negotiations are ongoing;

WHEREAS, Ontario is home to 38% of Canada’s children under the age of 6 (3);

WHEREAS, like other cities in Ontario, families in Hamilton struggle with accessing child care and managing the high fees required to maintain care once secured;

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic has particularly amplified the precarious position that women, primarily the caregivers of children, are placed in when forced to choose between participating in the workforce and caring for their children or their extended family’s children;

WHEREAS, twice as many women as men vacated the paid labour force by September 2021 compared to February 2020 (4);

WHEREAS, the adoption of a National Child Care strategy would provide the resources required to ensure all families have access to the child care supports that meet their needs while providing all members of our community the opportunity to fully participate in the work force;

WHEREAS, the National Child Care strategy aligns with Hamilton's Economic Recovery Task Force recommendation to ensuring a direct connection is made to the health and well-being of the community and the economy (5); and

WHEREAS, the National Child Care strategy aligns with Hamilton's Early Years Community Plan and the commitment to providing responsive, high quality, accessible early years programming that achieves equitable outcomes for all children and families.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that staff from the Healthy and Safe Communities Department investigate the potential for entering into a direct municipal agreement with the Federal Government that would allow the City of Hamilton to participate in the National Childcare Strategy and report back to the Emergency and Community Services Committee as soon as possible.

References:

1. Government of Canada, A Recovery Plan for Jobs, Growth and Resilience (2021)
2. The Care Economy, The Care Economy Data Room: Early Learning & Childcare (2021)
3. Statistics Canada, Population Estimates on July 1st by age and sex (2021-09-29)
4. Statistics Canada, Labour Force Characteristics, month, seasonally adjusted & trend-cycle, last 5 months (2021-10-08)
5. City of Hamilton, Mayor's Task Force on Economic Recovery (2021)