



Name of Committee: Early Years Community Advisory Committee (EYCAC)

Meeting Date: March 12, 2021

A meeting of the Early Years Community Advisory Committee convened on March 12, 2021 from 10:00a.m. to 11:55a.m. in a Virtual Zoom Meeting, with Community Co-Chairs: Pam McArthur and Jill Oakes presiding.

Attendance via Zoom:

Pam McArthur (Community Co-Chair/ Runnymede Adventure Club), Jill Oakes (Community Co-Chair/ YMCA Child Care), Diane Banks (Toronto Public Library), Patricia Chorney Rubin (George Brown College), Jeff deFreitas (PLASP Child Care Services), Shiromie Ganesh (Heart Beatz Child Care), Anabela Ferreira (Woodgreen Child Care), Dan MacLean (Trustee), Stephanie Nickle (Woodgreen Child Care), Kim Rogers (Sunshine Child Care), Ann Marie Schiraldi (Toronto Children's Services), Irena Setnik (Silver Creek Pre-School), Patrina Stathopoulos (Dandyllion Daycare), and Lorrie Weddell (NYAD - Donwood)

Also present were TDSB Staff: Cynthia Grundmann (Senior Policy Advisor/Manager Early Years and Child Care Services), Karen Guthrie (Early Years Coordinator, Child Care Services), Liz Hoang (Child Care Services Manager), Nadejda Lekosky (Early Years Coordinator, Child Care Services), and Anastasia Poulis (Centrally Assigned Principal, Early Years)

Regrets:

Coleen McGrath (LEF) and Jennifer Story (Trustee Co-Chair)

ITEM	DISCUSSION	RECOMMENDATION / MOTION
Welcome/Introductions		
Acknowledgement of Traditional Lands	<p>"We acknowledge we are hosted on the lands of the Mississaugas of the Anishinaabe, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy and the Wendat. We also recognise the enduring presence of all First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples."</p>	
Confirmation of Quorum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quorum confirmed 	
Approval of Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Agenda was passed. <p>Moved: Patricia Chorney Rubin Seconded: Shiromie Ganesh</p>	
Approval of Minutes- January 8, 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Minutes were accepted as presented: <p>Moved: Jill Oakes</p>	
Declarations of Possible Conflict of Interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed - No Conflicts were declared 	
Co-Chairs' Report	<p>Communication items (Co-Chairs'- Jill Oakes and Pam McArthur):</p> <p>Some areas of focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pattie Domski and Laurie Ruscica who represented Toronto Public Library and who participated in EYCAC meetings over the past few years were thanked for their participation to date. They shared valuable information to EYCAC members and the community. • Diane Banks Manager, Children's Services, Service Development and Innovation for Toronto Public Library was welcomed to the committee as a new representative from TPL. • Day to day child care operations and information sharing with parents was discussed. • Ongoing communication with school principals when children are sent home due to COVID-19 was also raised. 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions around expectations on child care staff if vaccines will be a requirement or will it be voluntary. Staff, parents and guardians will feel more confident once everyone is vaccinated. • Managing outdoor play and sharing space at our school sites. <p><u>Members shared triumphs and obstacles:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on staying connected and regular communication. • Most vulnerable during staff break and lunch times within limited physical space. • Some staff have left the workforce entirely, placing additional pressures on remaining staff and operators, and impacting programs capacities. • Some child care centres have closed altogether resulting in staff needing to find other jobs. • Many staff are staying home to take care of their own families. • Additional staff are needed to assist with screening responsibilities. • Post-secondary ECE classes continue to be online. Face to face placements have taken place with some agencies. Post-secondary to prioritize the graduating cohort and to ensure graduating students complete required placements and are ready to register with the College of ECE and enter the workforce • Placements have helped students feel more comfortable and part of the team. Students are contributing and see the importance of their work. • Enrollments have been lower based on parent interest and comfort levels. • TDSB has not noticed a significant shortage of staff in terms of ECE working in FDK or EDP programs. There are some staff who are reluctant to take on supply shifts due to their comfort levels in a face to face environment. 	

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<p>Wi-Fi Access for child cares – Update</p>	<p>Cynthia Grundmann, Senior Policy Advisor and Manager, Early Years and Child Care Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TDSB staff have been communicating with Service IT team to discuss the Wi-Fi access issue for child care operators, especially due to the increased internet needs of the past year. • Peter Singh, Executive Officer and his team will provide an update on the process and information at the next EYCAC meeting. • Peter Singh provided some options to child care operators at the January 10, 2020 meeting regarding Wi-Fi services to third-party child care staff operating child care programs in TDSB schools/sites. • It was explained that TDSB would serve as a Wi-Fi provider similar to Rogers or Bell. • Due to the pandemic, substantial TDSB IT resources were refocused to support virtual and remote learning. This caused EYCAC’s January 2020 discussion to be placed on hold. Over the course of the pandemic Wi-Fi access needs for child care operators have increased due to reporting and health & safety screening requirements. • TDSB provided Emergency Child Cares (ECC) guest Wi-Fi access. • The ongoing Wi-Fi access needs is a process that Peter and the Service IT team will be able to help explain in more detail. Specific logistical information will be provided to help determine how to move forward. <p><u>Questions for consideration:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demand - how many child care operators are interested in subscribing to TDSB Wi-Fi service? • What are the administrative pieces involved for TDSB? What will be the costs? Is this cost effective for child care operators? How can TDSB manage this process? • What about granting guest Wi-Fi access on an emergency/as needed basis? 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This service may not be available at all schools because of the lack of existing infrastructure. Peter and his team are looking at the schools and buildings where this may be an issue. What does that look like long term and how can TDSB provide equitable access to Wi-Fi? • The Child Care Services team have had ongoing communication with Peter and the Service IT team to advocate that this is a priority and plan how best to move forward recognizing the reporting and screening requirements. The Child Care Services team will continue to provide updates. <p><u>Members discussed:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are two different issues- temporary immediate Wi-Fi access needs and longer-term ongoing Wi-Fi access needs. • It was reiterated that child care operators need Wi-Fi access now. • The provision of guest Wi-Fi access for Emergency Child Care (ECC) programs during the lockdown periods was a short-term solution and only involved 20 programs. • Providing access to over 350 programs with guest access is not a sustainable short-term option given the work that was required for ECC. • Child care operators are asking for temporary immediate Wi-Fi access to support online screening process, to connect with families, communicate with public health, report serious occurrences, etc. Families communicate through online or text. Wi-Fi is the linkage to families. This is an emergency request and time sensitive. • Question was raised regarding how other school boards support the Wi-Fi needs of child care operators • What is the Provincial standard and expectation for this need? • What are the municipal expectations for school boards in providing this access, both on a short term and long-term basis? • It would be beneficial for IT to conduct a survey on how IT departments in other school boards are handling Wi-Fi access needs for child care operators. 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some school boards have been given money to help support protocols and to enhance Wi-Fi in their buildings. • Operators are requesting this short-term request be escalated. • Child Care Services team will meet and discuss short term and long-term pieces and next steps. Cynthia will move information forward to Peter. Cynthia will continue to provide information to EYCAC members and child care operators. 	
<p>TDSB Staff Updates (Senior Resource Person)</p>	<p>Cynthia Grundmann, Senior Policy Advisor and Manager, Early Years and Child Care Services</p> <p><u>Permits for Summer:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TDSB Plant Operations & Community Use noted that spring and summer permit applications are being received as of March 5, 2021 and will be parked until further direction. At this time, the TDSB has not reached a decision on community access and summer permits. This decision will be based on the advice and direction of the Province and TPH. Spring and summer permit applications will not be processed until direction is provided and a decision is made. Child care operators are welcome to submit their applications, but they will not be processed until we receive further direction. • Members flagged that there is an increased interest in access to outdoor space due to COVID-19. • What will permits and access to outdoor look like in schools and outdoor environments? • Child Care Services team will continue to have conversations with the Permits Office and provide an update once there is clear direction. Clarification will be sought as to what can be permitted (playground structure, outdoor sports field, outdoor grass area) • Facilities team is working on policies dealing with cleaning protocols and distancing for outdoor space. Awaiting further updates and information from TPH. • Members have asked the Child Care Services team to share with 	

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	<p>Permits that child care operators be prioritized for the use of outdoor space in their designated schools</p> <p><u>CCEYA Changes for Authorized Recreation and Skill Building Programs</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On February 26th, 2021, Ministry of Education announced the filing of the new and amended regulations under the CCEYA, which came into effect on March 8. Within these amendments, there are changes that allow specified Authorized Recreation and Skill Building Programs to operate for more than three consecutive hours per day, both before and after school, and on non-instructional days. • In a number of TDSB schools, authorized recreation and skill building programs provide after-school programming for our students. TDSB are currently engaging with the City of Toronto about implementation opportunities as it relates to operating before-school sessions. TDSB also is in the process of reviewing the implications for the board and its early years system. • TDSB is certainly committed to supporting increased access for families through an equity lens but recognizes this needs to be carefully considered to alleviate system instability, especially now during a pandemic. • TDSB needs to better understand what the pilot project involves from the Ministry’s perspective before it can share its intentions and plans to implement • Members asked that when TDSB looks at expansion to ensure they balance viability concerns and consider child care operators who are currently offering programs for expansion first • TDSB will have a more systemic approach to expansion and of both new and existing programs. • A member shared that the Board should have a provision that states only one operator per location because it may not be viable to have multiple. • Members shared that the Ministry has allowed this pilot with no rules and guidance. It’s a statement with no regulations. Child care operators 	

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	<p>worry that they will have to decide to operate in the licensed world or Authorized Recreation and Skills Building Programs. Authorized Recreation is easier to operate; however, quality of care may be affected. It's very concerning that the Ministry would do this.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A member cautioned to be mindful of programs that may opt to operate both morning and in the afternoon. • What does this mean for the sector? Lots of unknowns concerning this pilot. What are the funding supports? Need to understand the access and affordability of these programs through an equity lens. <p><u>HEPA Filters</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TDSB is in the process of outfitting all schools with institutional grade HEPA filters, for every occupied classroom that is in use by the school, including portables and wellness rooms. This roll out of HEPA filters is for school-occupied classrooms and does not include exclusive child care space or shared spaces that are not utilized by the school as school instructional classrooms during the core day. • To support child care partners, TDSB has been able to work with the vendor, who will extend TDSB pricing to any child care interested in purchasing their own units. More information will be sent to child cares. • For more information about the roll out of HEPA filters and ventilation in TDSB schools, please visit our Ventilation webpage. • A member shared that this should be standard as these are the same children in the school. It's a narrow view of creating a healthy and safe environment. Looking ahead in creating a healthier school environment should be for all spaces in all places. The lease should include clean air, purified air, Wi-Fi, heat, electricity, etc. • Child Care Services team continues to work with Facilities to review ongoing opportunities for improved health and safety measures for both school and child care programs • Children are children regardless of the space they use. What does this mean for all programs (EDP, EarlyON, BASP, child care programs)? 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A member shared that TDSB needs to think about the negative press and optics of the lack of equity in terms of child care centres not getting HEPA filters for clean air. <p><u>COVID-19 Resilience Infrastructure Stream-Education Related</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Child Care Services team is excited to share that the Ministry of Education has recently approved the TDSB's COVID-19 Resilience Infrastructure Stream-Education Related application for child care handwashing stations. In the coming months, staff from our Facilities Services team will be contacting those who applied and met the eligibility criteria to discuss next steps. Forty-eight child care operators submitted applications. Those in portables were not eligible. 	
Other Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trustee MacLean provided an update on the return to bricks and mortar schooling in September 2021. The Province is requiring the Board to plan for a full return to in-person learning in September. A member shared that there are conflicting messages and inconsistencies relating to when there is a COVID-19 case. Schools are assigned one public health worker and the child care operator has another public health worker for the same case, resulting in different communication. There needs to be consistent and efficient messaging. Staff stated that this is on the Child Care Services team's radar and we will continue to flag these gaps through Toronto Children Services with Toronto Public Health to bring to their attention and follow-up any issues of incongruency. There have been improvements since the pandemic began, but issues still do arise. 	
Adjournment	The meeting was adjourned at 11:55 a.m.	
Next Meeting Date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May 14, 2021 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. via Zoom 	