



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

Meeting Date: January 08, 2021

A meeting of the Early Years Community Advisory Committee convened on January 08, 2021 from 10:00a.m. to 11:25a.m. in a Virtual Zoom Meeting, with Trustee Co-Chair: Jennifer Story, Community Co-Chairs: Pam McArthur and Jill Oakes presiding.

Attendance via Zoom:

Jennifer Story (Trustee Co-Chair), Pam McArthur (Community Co-Chair/ Runnymede Adventure Club), Jill Oakes (Community Co-Chair/ YMCA Child Care), Patricia Chorney Rubin (George Brown College), Shiromie Ganesh (Heart Beatz Child Care), Anabela Ferreira (Woodgreen Child Care), Dan MacLean (Trustee), Stephanie Nickle (Woodgreen Child Care), Laurie Ruscica (Toronto Public Library), 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: Joanne Davis (Manager and Policy Advisor, EarlyON Centres), 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)

Regrets:

Jeff deFreitas (PLASP Child Care Services) and Kim Rogers (Sunshine Child Care)

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: Patrina Stathopoulos</p>	
Approval of Minutes- November 13, 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Minutes were accepted as presented: <p>Moved: Jennifer Story Seconded: Patrina Stathopoulos</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"> • Keeping BASP staff employed and exploring opportunities for offering care for younger age groups since before-and after-school programs can't operate at this time. • Ongoing review and implementation of the current provincial changes and extended lock down status. • Kindergarten Registration. • Government's announcement regarding school closure as a result of the increasing COVID-19 cases and to keep people safe. A member asked if school-based staff will have access to the classrooms and what is the messaging when requesting access to the shared space? • Staff shared that the virtual school and system messaging encourages staff to continue to work from home and remotely. There are rare 	

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	<p>circumstances where staff may need to attend the bricks and mortar buildings, however that is a case by case communication with their school principal. Overall, staff have been directed to continue working remotely during this time.</p>	
<p>TDSB Staff Updates (Senior Resource Person)</p>	<p>Cynthia Grundmann, Senior Policy Advisor and Manager, Early Years and Child Care Services</p> <p>1. <u>EarlyON Update</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All EarlyON programming continues to be offered virtually in alignment with the City of Toronto requirements. • Exploring outdoor programming has been put on hold due to the current COVID-19 lock down. • In-person, face to face programming however will return at some point in the future. • With the increase in demand for virtual programming, City of Toronto has asked all operators to increase the amount of time and program opportunities to meet family needs. • The EarlyON team is looking to provide families creative ways to engage virtually in the absence of face to face programming. • Joanne Davis shared that the updated guidelines were a response to recognition of inequities within communities over the course of the pandemic. Though programming is provided virtually there are many challenges and needs that families continue to struggle with. • The City of Toronto is recognizing the amount of planning and prep work involved in providing quality virtual services and programming. • Parent workers are doing a fantastic job and feedback has been positive. Families continue to share how much they appreciate the quality of work, connections and engagement opportunities TDSB is offering through virtual EarlyON programming. 	

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	<p>2. <u>Extended Day Program (EDP) Update</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EDP did not operate the week following the holiday break and will not operate until the Provincial Government and Toronto Public Health officials allow BASP to reopen. • Enrollment is currently low with approximately 50% capacity and significant vacancies across sites. The EDP team will continue to manage enrollment. <p>3. <u>Emergency Child Care Centres (ECC)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff shared that TDSB is pleased to be able to support emergency child care centres operating in schools and recognizes how difficult it has been for families and front-line workers requiring care during program closures. • Out of the 35 emergency child care sites, 20 are operating in TDSB buildings. • The full list of emergency child care sites can be found on the City of Toronto’s website. https://www.toronto.ca/home/covid-19/covid-19-latest-city-of-toronto-news/affected-city-services/covid-19-emergency-child-care-for-essential-workers/ • Operators interested in applying to help support emergency child care for essential workers should connect with the City of Toronto directly. It was also recommended they connect with their District Consultant who can provide the necessary information. • Staff asked if a map of ECC locations was available to help operators with monitoring demand, and if the City or other stakeholders had any concerns regarding ECC gaps in/across the City. • Ann Marie from Toronto Children’s Services will take this feedback back to her colleagues at the City. <p>4. <u>Kindergarten Registration</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • February is Kindergarten Registration month in TDSB. • Communication was sent this week to all child care partners to share with their families. 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Families will be registering children virtually due to COVID-19 instead of face to face. • Families have been directed to contact their local school to schedule a virtual meeting (Zoom/Google Meet). • Families can also register their child online using the Online Registration System (OLR). • Regardless of which process caregivers select, a virtual meeting with the school (via Zoom or Google Meet) will be required to validate registration information. • TDSB looked at other school boards to gauge the most appropriate and accessible approach for families to register for Kindergarten. • Training opportunities for office staff will be provided by the SIS team on January 15th, 2021. • A member asked if Principals would work with child care operators to share Kindergarten Registration information and to provide child care centre information to families. • Staff shared that principals have been provided Kindergarten Registration information and materials that provide helpful information about child care and other early years programs. <p>5. <u>Annual Before and After School Planning Process for 2021-22</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff shared that in line with the requirements outlined in the Education Act, an annual BASP Survey of Interest is completed by families to determine if there is sufficient interest in developing a new BASP program in schools that currently don't have one for the 2021-22 school year. • Families in 53 schools with children enrolled in grades JK to 6 will receive the survey. • Communication and the online survey will be available on the Early Years, Before- and After-School Programs website between January 18th and February 28th. • Decisions about new BASP opportunities will be communicated by the Child Care Services team in March. 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liz Hoang shared that surveys have been conducted over the past 10 years and based on that experience, the TDSB Child Care Services team continues to refine its annual process. The language was looked this year through a barrier and equity lens to ensure the survey is more accessible for families. The language in the survey has changed to reflect this and the number of questions has been reduced. The Child Care team will provide phone support to families who need additional help to complete the survey due to technology or other accessibility challenges. Families can call the Child Care Service office at 416-394-2072. • Issues around linguistic barriers for families were raised, specifically around the availability of the survey in other languages. The role of the principal and other school-based staff in helping to ensure they are fully aware of this opportunity and existence of the survey was also discussed. • The Child Care Services team has prepared various communications and information is being disseminated in different ways. The 53 schools are being encouraged to share information in many ways and again during Kindergarten Registration. Information will be in Trustee’s Weekly and System Leaders’ Weekly Bulletin. • Trustee Co-Chair Story recommended that the Child Care Services team reach out to individual Trustees in those specific areas. Also asked, if a map could be available of the 53 schools. • The Child Care Services team will take back the information regarding the accessibility of information to families for further discussion. The team will also have a deeper conversation with Principals. <p>Liz provided an update from the November 13th, 2020 EYCAC meeting regarding child care operator concerns around inconsistencies with operational approaches and different messaging received from TPH, the City and Province re: COVID-19 requirements and operations. Liz shared that other child care operators have also forwarded their concerns directly to these organizations. The City of Toronto and Toronto Public Health are aware of these challenges and although there may be different inspectors assigned for the school and child care operators, there is now a procedure</p>	

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	<p>in place where both will be notified whenever there are cases of COVID-19 to allow for better coordination and guidance to take place.</p>	
<p>Other Business</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A member asked if schools continue to be closed for longer than 3 weeks would it be possible to allow children ages 4 to 12 to attend the child care centre each day from 3 to 6pm to give families some relief for families? • As a school board those decisions are beyond our scope. This direction comes from Toronto Public Health and Provincial Government officials. TDSB understands the realities of families who need to balance work life and virtual school. TDSB also recognizes the pressures and challenges of families. In order to contain the spread of COVID-19 however we must follow the direction from Toronto Public Health and let that be the guiding principle. The Child Care Services team will continue to advocate for families and child care operators as best they can and encourages members to do the same • Members discussed the need for Wi-Fi access and services in child care centers in order to complete the online screening process and be able to communicate with families. It was recommended this request be treated as an emergency as internet access and services is a critical need especially during this pandemic. • Cynthia and the Child Care Services team have been discussing the Wi-Fi issue in ECC specifically and have reached out to IT. They will be following up again with Peter Singh, Executive Officer regarding general access for operators, following last year's EYCAC meetings and the Motion brought forward by the committee. It is recognized that the requirements for online screening and connecting with families in a virtual environment is of critical importance to child care operators. Cynthia will provide an update to members as soon as possible. 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A member asked if there has been any discussion or if the language will change in the Optional Attendance Policy. Until the new policy is approved please use the current Optional Attendance Policy. At this time, it is still under policy review as it was extended. Child Care Services has provided the link to: Optional Attendance- Important Notice for 2020-21 School Year. https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Elementary/OptionalAttendance Laurie Ruscica shared that Toronto Public Library is providing remote outreach in the four quadrants and EarlyON. TPL has kindly provided links to library resources to be shared with the early years community. TPL LINKS: TPL website TPL website for birth-5 years TPL website for children 6-12 years BLOG: 9 Ways to Use the Library from Home Live & Online Programs TPL Kids Crowdcast Channel (upcoming live programs & recordings of past programs; <u>NOTE</u>: the link will open in Google Chrome, not Internet Explorer) TPL YouTube Channel (Ready for Reading Storytime's, Mini Makers at Home, Fun with STEM and French videos to watch on-demand) NEW! Digital Access Card (get immediate access to Toronto Public Library's digital resources and services. To be eligible for a Digital Access Card, you must live in Toronto and be 13 years of age or older) Patricia Chorney Rubin from George Brown College stated that field placement is taking place with students in early childhood programs and will resume on January 25th, 2021. 	
Adjournment	The meeting was adjourned at 11:25 a.m.	
Next Meeting Date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> March 12, 2021 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. via Zoom 	