



CITY OF VANCOUVER

POLICY REPORT

Date: February 3, 2004
Author: Carol Ann Young
Phone No.: 604-871-6042
RTS No.: 3860
CC File No.:
Meeting Date:

TO: Vancouver City Council
FROM: Director of Social Planning
SUBJECT: Child Care Protocol

RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT Council approve and adopt the attached Protocol (APPENDIX A), and instruct staff to work with the Board of Parks and Recreation and the Vancouver School Board to carry out the actions set out in the protocol.

GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The General Manager of Community Services RECOMMENDS approval of A.

CITY MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The City Manager highlights for Council the 5% goal of increasing licensed child care spaces in the next two years may be achievable within City-owned facilities. However, a broader goal of 5% may be more difficult due to the necessary involvement of senior governments.

COUNCIL POLICY

In June, 2003, Council unanimously approved the following motion regarding the maintenance and expansion of childcare services in the City of Vancouver:

WHEREAS accessible, affordable, and quality childcare is essential to the health and well-being of the City of Vancouver's children and families;

AND WHEREAS child development and childcare play a crucial role in the economic stability of our City;

AND WHEREAS it is critical that all levels of government, including those at the local level, and the private sector, take an active partnership in ensuring successful child development opportunities;

AND WHEREAS the City of Vancouver has been a leader at the municipal level on the issue of childcare;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City of Vancouver commit to working in collaboration with the Park Board and School Board to maintain and expand childcare services in the City;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that city staff organize a policy forum for City, Park Board and School Board elected representatives and staff to develop a process to achieve these ends.

SUMMARY

As a result of the motion passed in June, 2003, to maintain and expand child care services, and Council's long-standing commitment to quality, affordable and accessible child care in the City of Vancouver, a Child Care Policy Forum was held in January, 2004. This policy forum consisted of elected officials from the City, Park Board and School Board and senior staff from the respective organizations. As a result of this policy forum, a protocol, "Child Care - A Commitment from Local Governments" was created. The protocol sets out a framework for the City and the two Boards to work towards a more coherent approach to policies and practices, in order to build a comprehensive range of childhood education and care services. The objectives of the protocol are to:

- i) stabilize and increase the viability of existing services so that there is no loss of licensed group child care spaces as a result of issues within the control of local governments.
- ii) plan for and develop child care on City/Park/School land and promote joint use of space for all types of child care in child development hubs.
- iii) equalize access across the city to a full continuum of care.
- iv) increase licensed child care spaces in the city by 5% in the next two years, while recognizing the essential role senior government has in terms of operating funding and support.
- v) advocate for a new partnership with the federal, provincial, regional and aboriginal governments to build a publicly funded national child care/child development system.

- vi) increase public awareness of the benefits of child care and early childhood development on society.

This report brings forward, for Council approval, the protocol, including a set of actions and deliverables to be achieved over the next two years.

BACKGROUND

On January 19, 2004, City Councillors, Park Board Commissioners and School Board Trustees, along with senior staff from each local body, participated in a Child Care Policy Forum. The key objectives of the policy forum were to:

- Establish a joint commitment across local governments to further facilitate accessible, quality, affordable child development and care services in Vancouver.
- Establish a formal structure to develop, coordinate and revise policies and funding strategies which support this commitment.
- Set benchmarks by which local government can measure its success.

As a result of the forum, a joint child care protocol was established (APPENDIX A). The purpose of the protocol is to set out a framework for City of Vancouver, the School Board and Park Board to work toward building a comprehensive range of childhood education and care services.

Elected officials and staff recognize that high quality, non-profit, licensed child care has many payoffs. Not only does child care provide labour force support, it also has a direct relationship on school readiness, poverty reduction, women's equality, parenting support, literacy, reduced crime, teenage pregnancy, and drug and alcohol abuse in adolescence. Child care also plays a key role in creating healthy citizens and supporting communities. Current research suggests that for every \$1 spent, there is a \$2 pay off to society (Cleveland and Krashinsky, 1998).

While the City, School Board and Park Board recognize that funding and regulation of child care is primarily the responsibility of senior government, all three play an essential role in the planning, development, monitoring, coordination and funding of child care. Although the City and the two Boards do not directly deliver child care, they do support non-profit societies and/or associations to deliver affordable, quality child care either within City/Park/School-owned facilities and/or land.

These relationships are essential to furthering the development of affordable, accessible, quality licensed child care in the City. Child care is primarily funded by parent fees; however, parents cannot always bear the real costs of delivering quality care. For example, an infant child care space costs approximately \$1,500 per month, per child, to deliver. Parents pay, on average, \$886. per month. The remaining costs are covered by either Provincial funding, through a direct operating grant, City funding (in some cases), and fundraising by the operator. It is important to note that about 85% of the cost of delivery of child care is staff wages and that the balance between fair wages and affordable fees is a

delicate one. The remaining 15% are operational costs, such as facilities rent, maintenance, administration, etc. The City and the two Boards provide considerable support in offsetting these costs through nominal rent leases, maintenance, infrastructure support, such as coordination and administration.

The City, School Board and Park Board also play a key role in providing space and/or land for the creation of child care spaces. There are currently about 9,200 licensed child care spaces, with a capacity of about 12,000 children in Vancouver. These spaces are either full or part time group care, preschool, child minding and family child care for children ages birth to 12 years. There are, however, 28,535 children under the age of 6 and an additional 43,830 children between 6 and 14 years of age. Crude calculations, using labour force participation rates only, would suggest that conservatively, Vancouver is serving about 15% of the potential need. Ironically, the least amount of licensed child care spaces exist in the areas with the greatest number of children. For example, the Renfrew/Collingwood, Grandview/Woodlands, and Kensington/Cedar Cottage areas are some of the most child populated areas and yet have the fewest licensed spaces per child.

The forum set out the opportunity for the City, School Board and Park Board to develop coordinated policies, formalize their working relationship and maximize their opportunities to maintain and expand child care services. The protocol in APPENDIX A, sets out a strategy to begin to:

- improve coordination opportunities across the City and the two Boards;
- revisit policies and practices which either facilitate or create barriers to space creation and affordability; and
- move to a more comprehensive and integrated approach to policy development at the local level.

Such a strategy is reinforced by the results of an international thematic review of early childhood education and care programs, conducted by the Organization for Economic and Cooperative Development - (OECD 2001).

The OECD reviewed early childhood education and care policies and practices in twelve countries to determine what variables contributed to high quality care and positive outcomes for children in the early years. The eight thematic lessons are reported in APPENDIX B, with the first being "systematic and integrated approach to policy development and implementation.

CONCLUSION

Should Council adopt the Child Care Protocol, staff from the City, School Board and Park Board will have a clear direction and mandate to work towards improved policy coordination and integration and implement strategies which ensure the maintenance and expansion of child care in Vancouver.

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DEPARTMENTAL APPROVAL AND REPORT CONCURRENCES

General Mgr./Dept. Head:

Report Dated: February 3, 2004

Author: Carol Ann Young

Date:

Phone No.: 604-871-6042

This report has been prepared in consultation with the departments listed to the right, and they concur with its contents.

Concurring Departments:

CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE

Protocol
Child Care - A Commitment from Local Governments

BACKGROUND

In June 2003, Council unanimously carried the following motion regarding the maintenance and expansion of childcare services in the City of Vancouver:

WHEREAS accessible, affordable, and quality childcare is essential to the health and well-being of the City of Vancouver's children and families;

AND WHEREAS child development and childcare play a crucial role in the economic stability of our City;

AND WHEREAS it is critical that all levels of government, including those at the local level, and the private sector, take an active partnership in ensuring successful child development opportunities;

AND WHEREAS the City of Vancouver has been a leader at the municipal level on the issue of childcare;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City of Vancouver commit to working in collaboration with the Park Board and School Board to maintain and expand childcare services in the City;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that city staff organize a policy forum for City, Park Board and School Board elected representatives and staff to develop a process to achieve these ends.

Similar motions were passed by both the School Board and the Park Board. In passing these motions, the City and two Boards agreed to actively work towards achieving the key principles set out below as part of a civic social agenda.

In response to these motions, a forum bringing together elected officials and staff representatives from the City, Park Board and School Board was convened in January 2004 to build on previous work done and review this protocol. Specifically, the 1990 Civic Child Care Strategy and the 2002 child development strategic plan, "Moving Forward - Child Care: A Cornerstone of Child Development Services", which set out a vision of child care and child development hubs located within schools, community centres, neighbourhood houses and City owned buildings, were used as starting points. Child development hubs are central in supporting family child care providers, small stand alone child care centres and other parenting supports.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this protocol is to set out a framework for the City of Vancouver, the School Board and Park Board to work toward building a comprehensive range of childhood education and care services.

It should be understood that child care and education are inseparable concepts and are supported by an integrated and coherent approach to policy and practice. Childhood

education and child care are located in settings where both learning and care occur and include affordable, quality, licensed child care services for children from birth to 12 years. In Vancouver, child care is seen as a cornerstone of childhood development and therefore is the focus of this protocol.

The City, School Board and Park Board do not directly operate child care. However, they can and do make a significant contribution to the availability and viability of child care services in Vancouver. While recognizing that child care is delivered by organizations and individuals in the community, non-profit and private sectors, local government has a range of tools and resources available to support the development and delivery of non-profit child care on or in public facilities or lands and through the redevelopment process.

PRINCIPLES

The City, School Board and Park Board, by approving this protocol recognize the need to take action and actively promote a publicly funded system of quality licensed child care services which is integral to:

- building healthy neighbourhoods and communities;
- supporting families in their parenting role;
- providing quality early learning and school readiness opportunities;
- promoting equitable opportunities for women in society;
- supporting labour force participation for a strong economy;
- reducing poverty and isolation.

Five key principles establish guide posts by which local government will maintain and expand child care services in the City of Vancouver:

Comprehensive

A comprehensive range of services includes quality, licensed or regulated full and part time programs for children from birth to 12 years in child care centres, family and in-home settings. A continuum of child care programs or options should be available within every neighbourhood in the city, along with information services that support families and caregivers.

Quality

Quality child care is essential for optimal childhood development. Research indicates that quality is supported by government regulations and standards, non-profit auspice, training of staff, optimal physical environments, staff satisfaction and low staff turnover, positive adult/child interactions, developmentally appropriate curriculum and stable/adequate funding.

Accessibility

Accessibility includes a comprehensive range of child care choices that meet the needs and are inclusive of all children, are culturally appropriate and are located in proximity to the family's home or place of work.

Affordability

Affordable child care has a stable, public and accountable funding base and is accessible to all families, regardless of income or employment status.

Coordination and Collaboration

Coordination and collaboration across the City and the two Boards in capital allocation, land use regulation and availability, operations, infrastructure funding, sharing of information and in kind supports is essential to building a high quality, affordable and accessible child care system.

OBJECTIVES

The City, Park Board and School Board commit to advancing the following objectives to achieve a child care system that reflects the above principles:

- i) stabilize and increase the viability of existing services so that there is no loss of licensed group child care spaces as a result of issues within the control of local governments.
- ii) plan for and develop child care on City/Park/School land and promote joint use of space for all types of child care in child development hubs.
- iii) equalize access across the city to a full continuum of care.
- iv) increase licensed child care spaces in the city by 5% in the next two years, while recognizing the essential role of senior government has in terms of operating funding and support.
- v) advocate for a new partnership with the federal, provincial, regional and aboriginal governments to build a publicly funded national child care/child development system.
- vi) increase public awareness of the benefits of child care and early childhood development on society.

ACTIONS/DELIVERABLES

The following actions will be undertaken by the City, School Board and Park Board to facilitate the above objectives:

- i) Approve this joint protocol by February 29, 2004.
- ii) Establish a Joint Council on Child Care by March 31, 2004 as follows:

Initial Composition

As a starting point, the Council's membership will include: one elected official from each of the City, Park Board and School Board; the City Child Development Coordinator and one staff member with knowledge of issues related to children and their caregivers from the two Boards; the Child and Youth Advocate; and, three community members from the city-wide networking committee and UBC H.E.L.P.

Initial Mandate

The Council will provide leadership in seeking resources, planning, development, coordination, problem solving and monitoring of child care/child development. The primary focus of the Council will be on child care in publicly

owned facilities or those non-profit facilities located on public land. However, consideration will be given to policies and practices that support the broader child care system (i.e. licensed family child care). Draft terms of reference for the Council will be developed.

Initial Workplan

The Joint Council will begin work on the following activities and will report to the City and the two Boards on their progress as required and no later than December 2004:

- review existing policies and practices and bring forward new policies and practices which either facilitate child care services or eliminate barriers to developing and sustaining child care services.
- develop coordinated planning and delivery standards and practices for child care across local governments (e.g., facility standards, costs, operating agreements, maintenance).
- identify opportunities and integrate child care in future development and into the capital and operating budget cycles to facilitate equitable child development hubs based on current planning, demographic data and research.
- review operating, capital and in-kind support from the City, School Board and Park Board to child care to achieve efficiencies and reduce or subsidize child care operating costs.
- review potential implications of realigning existing resources within and between the City, School Board and Park Board to maximize effectiveness (i.e. staff roles and responsibilities, financial analysis to achieve objectives).
- review implications of an enhanced city wide administrative structure for the management and delivery of child care in City, Park and School owned facilities.
- pursue a flexible child care pilot project in partnership with other levels of government and the community to provide part time, extended hours and emergency care.
- pursue a centralized child care wait list pilot project in partnership with other levels of government and the community.
- establish a relationship and mechanism to dialogue with municipalities across the country, commencing with a presentation to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities at the first available opportunity in Spring 2004.
- report out to the public on an annual basis the activities of the organizational structure in achieving these objectives.

February 4, 2004

Policy Lessons from *Starting Strong: Early Childhood Education and Care*, Summary Report, Thematic Review of Early Childhood Education and Care

Policy Lesson 1. A systematic and integrated approach to policy development and implementation. The thematic review emphasized the importance of a clear vision of children as a social group to underpin ECEC policy. A systematic and integrated approach requires a coordinated policy framework and a lead ministry that works in cooperation with other departments and sectors.

Policy lesson 2. A strong and equal partnership with the education system suggests that the nation supports a life long learning approach from birth to encourage smooth transition for children and recognize ECEC as a foundation of the education process.

Policy Lesson 3. A universal approach to access, with particular attention to children in need of special support is linked to equitable access so all children can have the equal and fair opportunities provided by high quality ECEC regardless of family income, parental employment status, special educational needs or ethnic/language background.

Policy Lesson 4. Substantial public investment in services and the infrastructure. The Thematic Review found that while a combination of sources may fund ECEC, substantial government investment is required to support a sustainable system of quality, accessible services.

Policy Lesson 5. A participatory approach to quality improvement and assurance begins with the premise that all forms of ECEC should be regulated and monitored. Defining, ensuring and monitoring quality should be a participatory and democratic process. Pedagogical frameworks focusing on children's holistic development and strategies for ongoing quality improvements are key parts of this element.

Policy Lesson 6. Appropriate training and working conditions for staff in all forms of provision is a foundation for quality ECEC services, which depend on strong staffing and fair working conditions. Strategies for recruiting and retaining a qualified, diverse, mixed-gender workforce and for ensuring that a career in ECEC is satisfying, respected and financially viable are essential.

Policy Lesson 7. Systematic attention to monitoring and data collection with coherent procedures for collecting and analyzing data on the status of young children, ECEC provision, and the early childhood workforce are required.

Policy Lesson 8. A stable framework and long-term agenda for research and evaluation requires sustained investment to support research on key policy goals and is a necessary part of a process of continuous improvement.

Organization for Economic and Co-operative Development (2001). *Starting Strong: Early Childhood Education and Care*. Summary Report, Thematic Review of Early Childhood Education and Care. Paris: Author