

## Modernizing Child Care in Ontario – September 2012

### *A response from Andrew Fleck Child Care Services specifically on capacity building and funding*



In June 2012 the Ontario Ministry of Education released a paper, Modernizing Child Care in Ontario and invited parents, agencies and the community to respond.

<http://www.ontariocanada.com/registry/view.do?postingId=9622&language=en>

Andrew Fleck Child Care Services (AFCCS) has embraced the opportunity to participate in the conversation; we prepared a comprehensive response on all of the questions for submission directly to Minister Broten. In addition we shared our response broadly with the hope that it will assist in generating support for the process and encourage conversations.

Given the breadth of the early learning and care sector, we also thought it would be helpful to separate our larger response allowing individuals and groups to read and react to their own areas of interest. We have summarized our responses into five specific areas of focus: *Licensed Home Child Care, Licensed Group Care, Capacity building and funding, Legislative requirements including quality and Special Needs resourcing.*

We encourage you to respond directly to Minister Broten by the deadline of September 24, 2012 either by email [CCGE\\_modernization@ontario.ca](mailto:CCGE_modernization@ontario.ca) or mail:

Child Care Modernization  
c/o Early Learning Division  
Ministry of Education  
900 Bay Street, 24th Floor Mowat Block  
Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1L2

If appropriate please feel free to refer to the recommendations made by AFCCS.

Andrew Fleck Child Care Services is one of the oldest and most diversified non-profit, charitable, full-service early learning, child care and family support organizations in Ontario. Our mission is to support children and their families through high quality, inclusive services that meet their diverse developmental, early learning and child care needs. We fully endorse the report “*With Our Best Future in Mind*”, released in 2009, in its entirety as it has the potential to transform our fragmented services into a more positive and seamless experience for families by developing an integrated system.

*We support children and their families through high quality, inclusive services that meet their diverse developmental, early learning and child care needs.*

We are also embracing the opportunity to modernize the current market system and existing complicated funding formula with the intention that capacity can be increased and efficiencies can be created.

**We have divided our recommendations into three broad areas, authority, funding and efficiencies.**

### **AUTHORITY**

First, authority for planning and allocating funding for the early learning and care system must be given to the CMSMs/DSABs with the expectation that they will develop three year service plans, created in consultation with the community, for the implementation of Early Learning Services following set provincial criteria and parameters. The community consultative structure must also be formalized, perhaps building upon the existing Best Start Network structure with the obligation for School Boards to participate. We suggest that the criteria and parameters for the CMSM service plan would include:

- community priorities established in consultation with the Early Learning and Care Sector
- Minimum % of licensed, non-profit spaces in each age group to be available in a community (formula based on population and workforce participation)
- Allocation of special needs resources/supports for at-risk children based on population demographics
- Allocation of funding for programming, resources and supports for First Nations based on population demographics

The purpose for the community consultative process would be to promote the establishment and growth of non-profit multi-site operators who utilize best practices, have demonstrated efficiencies, provide seamless services to families through integration and effectively use of resources to create Child and Family Centres in all communities. This would also include a local planning process, to ensure non-profit, licensed capacity is maintained in neighbourhoods where it is needed and allow for the planning and relocation of child care spaces from areas where demand has lessened to areas of growth. The current market approach is not responsive to parent need and is leaving some neighbourhoods without access to services. To ensure that quality is maintained we suggest that research be funded to identify what is an appropriate number of sites for one operator to manage that achieves efficiencies while maintaining quality

We also believe that CMSMs should be allowed to reallocate funding from underutilized budget areas to meet community priorities and pressures as defined in their Early Learning Services plan.

To support the development of true neighbourhood hubs of service we also recommend that all funding for children's services be consolidated under the Early Learning and Care division of the Ministry of Education (e.g. Early learning and care centres, OEYCs, PFLCs, PEDACs) to promote service system integration. This will allow for the identification of duplicate services that can be eliminated and/or streamlined e.g. parent playgroups being offered by community health centres on one day and by an OEYC another day in the same location. CMSMs should then become responsible for planning and contracting for the implementation of the services currently offered by OEYCs, PFLCs and PEDACs

Where possible and appropriate, non-profit multi-service operators should be encouraged and funded to build space for children's services on school board property – this should be done in partnership with the CMSM to create additional accessible community space while maximizing green space.

Obligate provincial and municipal agreements to allow the use of surplus public buildings (e.g. schools that are closing or City buildings) to locate, where appropriate, non-profit early learning and child care centres. This will support long-term, stable arrangements.

While we agree that co-locating children's services to create a neighbourhood hub of accessible services is ideal, we have experienced several implementation challenges, specifically:

- typically the highest demand for services for younger children exist in areas where the schools do not have space
- Each of the 4 local School Boards and even schools within the same Boards have different access policies and fees for using space
- Capital contribution requirements can be prohibitive for non-profit organizations, particularly given the limited length of leases

The policies required to ensure the success of a schools-first-policy include:

- Once school space is allocated to a non-profit early learning and care program, the agreement must remain in place even if the school is running out of space – early learning and care must be seen as part of the school not a side by side situation
- Set consistent policies and expectations regarding fees charged to non-profit child care operators leasing school space to provide early learning and care services/children's services
  - Space should be provided to non-profit organizations at no charge
  - Accessible after regular hours at no additional cost
- Maintain the Child and Family Centre Hub model as the approach to integrating services within a designated community to maximize resources and eliminate duplication.

## FUNDING

Ontario needs to implement a funding formula that provides equalizing and legitimate financial relief for parents who are burdened with child care expenses. We endorse the recommendation from the Quality Human Resources Expert panel of 2007 that identifies that the parental contribution should be 20-25% of the total cost of the service. Regionally set base funding for fixed costs such as salaries facilities and maintenance will support system growth and quality services.

We recommend the implementation of a base funding model for all non-profit service providers, similar to the Quebec and PEI base funding system that allocates funding based on expenditures appropriate to quality, e.g.

- |                                  |                         |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| ○ Compensation - 76.5%           | ○ Equipment - 1.3%      |
| ○ Occupancy Cost - 6.2%          | ○ Supplies - 2.4%       |
| ○ Taxes - 0.3%                   | ○ Transportation - 1.3% |
| ○ Utilities - 2.1%               | ○ Food Costs - 5.0%     |
| ○ Financial Services 2.2%        | ○ Miscellaneous - 0.7%  |
| ○ Maintenance/Renovations - 2.1% |                         |

We recognize that this would require the implementation of a regional salary scale based on municipally operated programs.

Base funding reduces (but does not eliminate) the need for a fee subsidy system, therefore we recommend the implementation of a base funding/fee subsidy hybrid model similar to the one in Manitoba that reduces the cost of child care for all families while acknowledging that some families will still require assistance. The cost of administering a subsidy system across the province would be better utilized by directly reducing the fees for all parents.

Now that both child care and education are under the same ministry the fees to access school space, whether within the school or vacant land adjoining a school, should be eliminated for non-profit early learning and care agencies if deemed necessary by the CMSM to be co-located at the school. These are public buildings and land already paid for by public dollars.

## **EFFICIENCIES**

At this time all individual agencies manage their data requirements, accounting, parent billing and reporting to their OCCMS independently. Some organizations enter data manually, others have invested in the development of tools. A significant area of support required is the development of an effective database tool that is linked with the OCCMS system for uploading data. By collaborating across the Province we could identify numerous features that would enhance the entire sector and support multiple environments; the goal would be to create a highly functional tool that would be useful in unique environments – a database with a lot of functionality that a program could turn on/off depending on their need.

We recommend the development of a centralized tool that is a robust database to support the data collection requirements for many programs (HCC, group programs, OEYC, special needs resourcing and others) that links efficiently with the OCCMS system and accounting software. This would create efficiencies and support the integration of services.

Database functionality could include, for example:

- link to OCCMS
- link to accounting software
- link to Centralized waiting list information (for those communities that have that in place)
- record keeping requirements with optional fields depending on the services being offered – this would support OEYCs, licensed HCC, Group programs etc
- ability to produce statistics and reports, including waiting lists for Special Needs Resourcing
- send notes by email directly to parents
- functionality could be turned off/on depending on requirements
- different levels of users – e.g. accounting staff would have access to accounting information, but not parental notes and vice versa
- development of sustainable training options (e.g. webinars) so that after the project new staff have access to training at no cost

With parental permission application information could be shared with other service providers and schools eliminating the burdensome task of filling out multiple registration forms that ask the same questions.

## Description of Andrew Fleck Child Care Services

*Andrew Fleck Child Care Services (AFCCS) is one of the oldest and most diversified non-profit, charitable, multi-service early learning, child care and family support organizations in Ontario. It began its operation in 1911 and was incorporated as a charitable organization in 1920 under the legal name of The Ottawa Day Nursery Inc. It later changed its name to Andrew Fleck Child Care Services in recognition of its benefactor Mrs. Andrew Fleck who donated the building at 195 George Street to the organization in 1932.*

*AFCCS has always taken a leadership role in the child care community and in early childhood education. Over the past 100 years, in response to the changing needs of the community, it has developed innovative programs and expanded the organization to provide a comprehensive range of services that meet the diverse early learning and child care needs of families in the City of Ottawa. AFCCS takes pride in being innovative, progressive, responsive and - most importantly - committed to excellence in all its services.*

*AFCCS benefits from sound management practices, a secure financial base and an efficient infrastructure. It also keeps pace with the latest developments in the early childhood education field and information technology to support the delivery of high quality, client- and child-focused services. In addition, it has proven expertise in successfully piloting demonstration projects.*

*AFCCS advocates for high quality, affordable, accessible, accountable and inclusive child care that promotes the optimum physical, emotional, social, cognitive and intellectual development of the child. AFCCS believes in a holistic and family-centred approach to child care – one that offers a continuum of easily accessible child care options to meet the varying and changing needs of parents and children.*

*We are a comprehensive multi-service organization. In 2011 we provided care and services for 7,407 children and 52,208 families.*

***Licensed Home Child Care (HCC)** has been offered by Andrew Fleck Child Care Services since 1969. Today, approximately 550 children aged three months to ten years are cared for by dedicated Child Care Providers in nurturing, inclusive, supportive and stimulating home environments. Professional staff visit the homes regularly to provide support, consultation and educational opportunities and also to ensure that the highest standards of health, safety, nutrition and child development are met*

*More information about Andrew Fleck Child Care Services can be found at [www.afchildcare.on.ca](http://www.afchildcare.on.ca)*

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### Child Care Information

Information sur la garde des petits

Children's Integration Support Services

Services d'intégration pour jeunes enfants

600-700 av. Industrial Ave., Ottawa, ON K1G0Y9 • Tel/Tél 613 736-5355 • Fax/Télé 613 736-8378

[www.afchildcare.on.ca](http://www.afchildcare.on.ca)

### Home Child Care

Short Term Child Care

Programme de garde d'enfants à court terme

Child Care Consulting Services

### Group Day Care Centre

School Age Program • Summer Day Camp

Early Years Centre

Centre de la petite enfance

Thursday's Child Nursery School