

TO MEMBERS OF PEEL REGIONAL COUNCIL REGARDING CLOSURE OF REGIONAL CHILD CARE CENTRES

Revisit centres' closure in light of 53 per cent increase in provincial child care funding for Peel

Dear councillors:

We are writing regarding your council's decision earlier this year to close its publicly-operated child care centres — a decision that we, and many others, actively opposed. We note that the provincial government's shift to a new funding formula significantly improves Peel Region's childcare funding situation. Indeed, it appears that Peel will benefit from a significant 53 per cent increase in next year's additional provincial child care funding. In fact, it appears that Peel will see the largest funding improvement across Ontario.

With this in mind, we are calling on you to take this opportunity to reverse your decision to shut down all Peel Region's high quality Learn Play Care centres. We believe that the additional \$28.5 million Peel will receive dramatically changes the local child care funding situation — dramatically enough to suggest that reversing your decision is the only sensible response to make on behalf of Peel's families now and in the future.

As many of us who opposed the closures noted at the time, these centres are not only among Peel Region's finest from a quality and leadership perspective but provide higher than average number of much-needed infant, toddler and special needs spaces. As well, closing the public spaces significantly diminishes Peel's supply of not-for-profit child care, reducing the available complement of higher quality spaces. Further, as you will remember, there were innovative suggestions about reforming aspects of these centres rather than wholesale closure.

We do not suggest that this funding formula shift is a complete response to Ontario's inadequate child care situation, nor, we believe, does the provincial government. Ontario child care continues to need much more public money and much better public policy. While we are encouraged that the Ontario government has begun to improve child care, we will continue to press for a full range of improvements. We do suggest, however, that this is the time for municipal/regional governments to join with their communities, experts, unions and others with an interest in early childhood education and child care to use the best available evidence to work constructively and collaboratively for the benefit of all.

After the holidays, we will be inviting others to join us in pressing you to reverse this decision.

We wish you all a very festive holiday season and look forward to discussing child care with you early in the New Year.

Yours truly,

Fred Hahn,
President, CUPE OntarioCarrie Lynn Poole-Cotnam,
CUPE Ontario, Social
Service Sector ChairAndrea Calver,
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Child CareMartha Friendly,
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