



Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care

Bulletin #5: “With Our Best Future in Mind”

How Much Will the Full Implementation of the Report Cost? How Much Funding is Committed today?

How Much Will It Cost to Implement the Report?

In the last provincial election, Dalton McGuinty promised \$200 million in 2010 and \$300 million in 2011 for a new program of full-day learning for 4 and 5 year olds. He appointed Charles Pascal to write a report on how the program could be implemented. "With Our Future in Mind" was released on June 15.

Page 44 Outlines the Estimated Costs of the Full-Day Learning Program at between \$790 and \$990 million.

This covers staffing and operating costs for the school day / year, as well as occupancy and programming costs to keep schools open before and after-school and summer programs. To create the needed space in schools for the Early Learning Program, the report recommends annual capital funding of \$130 million per year (page 43)

The report identifies that about 1500 schools, or a third of Ontario's schools, "could accommodate full-day learning programs with no or minor modifications" (page 43).

The first year proposes starting in schools that don't need capital funding and can utilize existing space (approximately 35% of schools), (page 43)

The second year would see the program open in new schools and renovated surplus classrooms (approximately 30% of all schools), (page 43)

The third year would include new classroom construction and renovations (35% of all schools), (page 43)

Both Premier McGuinty and Minister Deb Matthews have over the past several months repeated the government's commitment of \$200 million in 2010 and \$300 million in 2011 for implementation of full-day learning.

This falls well short of the costs of implementing the full report.

In addition, the report recommends the province replace the federal funding for early learning and child care that ends in March 2010. At the OCBCC Queen's Park Lobby in June, Minister Matthews committed to \$18 million dollars in bridge funding to keep existing child care spaces open. The full-day learning report requires that a permanent solution be found for this funding support.

What Are the Implications of the Government Spending \$500 million, or half of the estimated costs of implementing the report?

Funding the province has committed to date is only enough for the first third of schools recommended in the Pascal report. If the first phase of full day learning is restricted to low income neighbourhoods, as both the MCYS Minister and the Premier have indicated, there is a danger that the initiative will become a targeted service for poor families.

Alternatively, the government could ignore the need for before-school, after-school and summer care for children from 4 years to 12 years. If there are no provisions for school-based programs for children after-school and in the summer, they will compete with younger children for scarce spaces in child care programs.

Implications for Municipalities:

A lack of funding for full-day learning would severely restricted the capacity of municipalities to plan, fund and deliver early learning and child care to children from infants to 12 years.

The report envisions a central role for municipalities as "leaders among leaders" (page 15, chart), responsible for developing multi-year service plans for all children from infants to 12 years old. If the only funded program is the regular school day, there is no new role for municipalities. School boards can run a regular school day on their own.

For local communities, the role of municipalities is crucial. Part of the role of municipalities would be to know the community and know which services are really working. A significant role for municipalities would be knowing what works in a community, developing a service plan with input from all sectors and continuing funding for the many local success stories.

In addition, without any new role, municipalities may not be held to a higher standard for accountability to money saved to be re-invested in child care programs.

The Pascal report envisions that money saved from wage subsidy grants be left with municipalities to be re-invested in early learning and child care program. Each municipality should be currently calculating the amount of money saved from wage subsidy programs for 4 and 5 year olds who have moved to a new publicly funded program.

In Toronto alone, the City estimates \$127 million in funding will be freed up that can be reinvested into wages, lower parent fees and expansion of early learning and child care programs.

Municipalities are essential to ensuring that money is properly spend on early learning and child care programs.

Implications for Child Care Centres:

If the report is not fully implemented, but only partially implemented, some of our worst fears may happen.

- children coming back to child care programs from 3:30 to 6 p.m. will strain the capacity, budgets and human resources of child care programs

- child care centres will need to compete with schools for ECEs but without the same capacity to offer job stability, wages, benefits and infrastructure supports

- our current subsidy system will be even more strained, with 4 to 12 year olds still eligible and requiring

subsidies

- no implementation of Best Start Child and Family Centres continuing the fragmentation of speech and language, public health and services for children with special needs.

Bulletin #3 addressing the question of "What does the report say about funding for infants to four year olds" notes that funding for Best Start Child and Family Centres (CFC's) will come from two sources:

1. Money saved from wage subsidy grants for 4 to 12 year olds
2. the re-engineering and consolidation of existing programs and resources.

- Without CFC's, we won't see the savings in efficiencies from combined human resources and administration. Without combined savings, we may not see changes in the way child care is funded and continue with our myriad of funding streams. In particular, municipalities may lose the commitment to a "single envelope that includes all existing transfers for programs / resources that will be consolidated under Best Start Child and Family Centres, resources associated with regulation and oversight, plus all child care savings generated from implementation of the Early Learning Program" (page 42).

Implications for Parents:

If full-day learning includes after school and full year care, parents can save money in comparison to today. Full-day, full year care for a 4 or 5 year old child would be \$6750 per year. Full-day, full year care for a 6 to 8 year old child care be \$5200 (page 44).

Income-tested subsidies would continue to be available through municipalities to families who could not afford the cost (page 44).

It is estimated that 50% of children would be enrolled in a full-day (to 6:00 p.m.) program. The operational costs of keeping our schools open and staffing costs mean that this relatively small amount of money would serve half the children in Ontario. Without the after-school program, parents will once again have a patchwork of programs, with widely varying costs for after school care.

The Toronto Star wrote an Editorial on August 31 called "Act on full day learning". The same day, the paper had an article exploring issue of whether the Province will commit to implementing the full report. "Will all-day school be ready for 2010? - Supporters are afraid early learning revolution will stall in its tracks unless province acts fast". You can see them on our website.

Both pieces are worth a read.

Next Steps:

Over the next two months, the Premier will decide whether or not to fund the implementation of the full report.

This decision is remarkably important. The report as presented works together as a package. Take away one of the components and than plan doesn't work. At the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, we want to see stronger early learning and child care programs that continue to provide much needed education and care to Ontario's youngest children.

To meet it's own target of September 2010 the government must act quickly:

September 2009: Establishment of the Early Years Division in the Ministry of Education

September to November 2009: Municipalities develop service plans for implementation of phase 1, phase 2, and phase 3 of full-day learning.

Summer 2009, Bulletin #5

September to November 2009: Municipalities need a commitment from the province that it will replace federal Best Start funds.

January 2010: Municipalities need final service plans

January 2010: Typical start of Kindergarten registration; start of registration for full-day learning.

2012-2013: New Education and Family Supports Act

What Can You Do?

The government is currently considering the report. We need a commitment for full implementation.

Contact your local Provincial MPP. Not sure who represents you? Go to www.waitingforchildcare.ca and input your postal code. Your local MPP's email address will come up.

Send a email directly to Premier Dalton McGuinty at dmcguinty.mpp.co@liberal.ola.org to tell him to implement the whole report.

Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care is collecting your questions. Your questions will help us focus on your issues and help us identify areas of concern. Email your questions to andrea@childcareontario.org

Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care Bulletins on "With Our Future in Mind"

Bulletin#1: Background and Context; Information to Get You Started

Bulletin #2: What Does the Early Learning Advisor's Report say about Early Childhood Educators?

Bulletin #3: What Does the Report Say about the Role of Municipalities? What Does the Early Learning Advisor's Report say about funding for infants to four year olds?

Bulletin #4: What Is a Best Start Child and Family Centre?

Bulletin #5:How Much Will the Full Implementation of the Report Cost? How Much Funding is Committed today?

For more information about the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care please visit www.childcareontario.org

The Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care is funded by our members including child care centres, family resource programs, OEYC's, individuals and provincial groups with a mandate for universal, publicly funded, high quality, not-for-profit early learning and child care programs. For membership information, please visit our website. Thanks!