

Councillor Joe Cressy

Ward 10, Spadina-Fort York

Trustee Stephanie Donaldson

Ward 9, Davenport & Spadina-Fort York



Dear Niagara Street Junior Public School families and neighbours,

This week, families at Niagara Street Junior Public School received notice from the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) that the school's EarlyON Child and Family Centre will be closing at the end of this school year, on June 26. Together, as your School Board Trustee and your City Councillor, we are firmly committed to finding new space for the EarlyON program to ensure that the same level of service is provided in the neighbourhood next year.

EarlyON Centres offer free programs for parents and caregivers with children up to age six. They provide a safe, nurturing and stimulating program where children can play and parents can connect. There are nearly 300 EarlyON Centres across the City of Toronto including 77 in TDSB schools, and each provides important programs and supports to local families. Wherever possible, we seek to expand and increase the number of EarlyON Centres, such as the brand new Centre that will open alongside the new elementary schools, child care facility, and community recreation centre in CityPlace this fall.

With increasing student enrollment at Niagara Street JPS, there is no longer enough physical space in the building for the EarlyON Centre. For this coming September, that space is needed for classrooms.

This means there is an urgent need to find a new space nearby to continue providing this service in the community. We are working together, along with TDSB staff and City of Toronto Children's Services staff, to identify and evaluate relocation opportunities.

While we are unequivocally committed to finding new replacement space for the EarlyON Centre, the chronic underfunding to our school boards by the province and Doug Ford's latest short-sighted budget cuts make it all the more difficult for cities and school boards to deliver the vital public services that we all rely on. The space crunch at Niagara JPS and other downtown schools is directly related to the fact that the TDSB does not receive enough provincial funding to keep up with rapid population growth in downtown. With new changes to the Planning Act, Doug Ford is taking away our ability to create healthy and liveable communities with adequate community services and parkland. If these changes are not reversed immediately, more programs and services will be at risk of being squeezed out of our communities by under-funding and development.

We are working together to secure a new space nearby for the EarlyON program to continue providing important programs and supports for the Niagara Street JPS community and the wider neighbourhood. And we will continue to be dedicated advocates for our growing community and all of the public services relied upon by each of our neighbours.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joe Cressy', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Joe Cressy
City Councillor
Ward 10, Spadina-Fort York

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stephanie Donaldson', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Stephanie Donaldson
TDSB Trustee
Ward 9, Davenport & Spadina-Fort York