



Report Number: PFC2021-1129

Meeting: Priorities & Finance Committee

Meeting Date: 2020 July 20

NOTICE OF MOTION

RE: Increasing Accessibility to & Safety of Affordable Child Care in Calgary

Sponsoring Councillor(s): Councillor Gondek, Councillor Carra, Councillor Farrell

WHEREAS:

- The federal government has dedicated \$30 billion over five years to create affordable child care programs in partnership with provincial governments, in an effort to increase women's labour force participation and reduce household expenditure on child care;
- Given the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on women, it is the responsibility of all orders of government to foster greater opportunity for women's labour force participation through the tools available in each jurisdiction;
- At a municipal level, there are planning tools like density bonusing and mixed-use districts that can encourage more affordable childcare options;
- Presently, families in Alberta have different options for child care, including home-based child care that is often more affordable for low income working parents;
- Because all orders of government have a responsibility for public safety (particularly for vulnerable populations like children), they must coordinate efforts around access to and regulation of businesses offering child care to the public;
- A recent review of provincial child care regulations shows no proactive oversight and no application requirements for home-based child care businesses that choose not to contract with a licensed family day home agency, despite the fact that a number of critical incidents including neglect, abuse, and even death have been reported in Calgary pertaining to these home-based child care providers;
- On November 26, 2018, Justice Hawkes composed 10 recommendations for the Alberta Minister of Justice and Solicitor General based on the tragic death of Mackenzy Jane Woolfsmith while in care at a private day home in Calgary, yet there has been no action on creating a safer child care system in the province for families and operators choosing the private day home option; and
- While the City of Calgary presently does not license home-based child care businesses, it has the ability to do so in the same manner it licenses other businesses to ensure standards for public safety and consumer protection.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT ADMINISTRATION:

- Explore the ability to increase accessibility to child care – with a focus on affordable child care options - in Calgary through measures like density bonusing, streamlined change of use, and more land use districts that can accommodate child care;
- Explore the opportunity for affordable child care funding to flow directly to cities from the federal government (similar to the Rapid Housing Initiative) to assist families and child care operators;
- Determine whether The City of Calgary has the legal and jurisdictional ability to license and set minimum requirements for home-based child care businesses, and create a publicly-accessible database of municipally licensed service providers;

- Conduct a review of current bylaws (including the Business Licence and Land Use Bylaws) and provincial legislation to identify existing gaps with respect to for-profit home-based child care, engaging with relevant stakeholders including the Government of Alberta, child care agencies, child care providers, and parents;
- That as part of the review, Administration carefully consider potential costs and barriers that could either drive these operators underground or out of business, in an effort to ensure marginalized or low-income Calgarians continue to have access to affordable child care;
- That Administration report back to Council through the Standing Policy Committee on Community and Protective Services no later than Q3 2022.

References

Government of Canada Early Learning and Child Care Plan (2021)

- Budget 2021: A Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care Plan ([link](#))
- July 8, 2021 – News Release: Canada announces historic first early learning and child care agreement [British Columbia] ([link](#))

Alberta Government of Alberta Childcare engagement (2020)

- Consultation report ([link](#))
- Subsequent legislative changes, Bill 39 ([link](#))

Public inquiry into the death of Mackenzy Jane Woolfsmith (2018-2019)

- Report to the Minister of Justice and Solicitor General : public inquiry into the death of Mackenzy Jane Woolfsmith (2018)
- Ministry of Children’s Services’ Response to the Public Fatality Inquiry - Mackenzy Jane Woolfsmith (2019)

Statistics Canada: Research on child care and parental labour force participation (2018-2019)

- Early Learning and Child Care for Children aged 0 to 5 years: A Provincial/Territorial Portrait (2019) ([link](#))
- Fertility rates and labour force participation among women in Quebec and Ontario (2018) ([link](#))

Ombudsman and Auditor General of Ontario: Child care reports (2014)

- Ombudsman of Ontario: Investigation into how the Ministry of Education responds to complaints and concerns relating to unlicensed daycare providers (2014) ([link](#))
- Auditor General of Ontario: Child Care Program (Licensed Day Care) audit report (2014) ([link](#))