

Sent via fax
416-212-7431

March 9, 2009

The Hon. Deb Matthews
Minister of Children and Youth Services
56 Wellesley Street West
14th Floor
Toronto, ON M5S 2S3

Dear Minister:

At a recent meeting of the AMO Social Policy Task Force meeting, concern was raised regarding the clarity of child care funding in 2010. As you are aware, since 2005, municipalities have been receiving federal payments for child care under the Canada-Ontario Early Learning and Child Care Agreement and as part of the government's Best Start Program. As you are also aware, the final payment will be in 2009.

While the allocations under the Agreement did not fully address the pressures in our child care system in Ontario, they did maintain and provide for some expansion over the past three years.

In most municipalities across the province, this funding was used to address the cost of fee subsidies, wage subsidies, wage improvement, administrative planning and special needs resourcing. The loss of this funding will result in increased waiting lists for fees subsidies and other losses which will significantly undermine Ontario's child care system.

The impact of a compromised child care system and increased waiting lists for subsidized spaces at a time of economic downturn, and the expectation of increased demands for subsidized care, are troubling and counterintuitive to fiscal stimulus strategies.

While we are aware that the government is undertaking a review of early learning and child care in Ontario, in short order, municipalities will begin their budget process and will need to consider developing exit strategies from the child care system if funding is lost to the system. AMO has continued to advocate for a national child care system that sees appropriate funding from the federal and provincial governments. We will continue to do so and offer our support in your advocacy efforts with the federal government on a national child care program.

However, in the absence of new federal funding for child care, municipalities are hopeful that the province will permanently replace the federal funding for child care under the Best Start program at levels equal to the amounts flowed in 2009.

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I look forward to your response and clarification on child care funding for 2010 as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter Hume". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "P".

Peter Hume
President

- cc. Honourable Jim Watson, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
- Dana Richardson, Assistant Deputy Minister, Local Government and Planning Policy Division, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
- Darryl Sturtevant, Assistant Deputy Minister, Strategic Policy and Planning, Ministry of Children and Youth Services
- Julie Mathien, Director, Early Learning and Child Development Branch, Ministry of Children and Youth Services
- Lisa Alfieri Sladen, Manager, Municipal/Federal/Provincial Relations, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
- AMO Social Policy Task Force