

Ministry of Children
and Youth Services

Minister's Office

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Ministère des Services
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JAN 15 2009

Mr. J. Raymond Chénier
Chair
Manitoulin-Sudbury District Social Services Administration Board
210 Mead Boulevard
Espanola, Ontario
P5E 1R9

Dear Mr. Chénier:

Thank you for your letter regarding the management and funding of Ontario Early Years Centres and Family Resource Centres.

My ministry understands the important role that Consolidated Municipal Service Managers and District Social Services Administration Boards play in Ontario's early learning and care system, and we look forward to our continued partnerships with you for the benefit of all Ontario's children and families. While I regret that I'm unable to meet with you at this time, I appreciate this opportunity to address your concerns.

The Ontario government has made great progress in moving forward with its implementation of Best Start for early learning and care and healthy child development. This progress was possible because of our community partnerships with Ontario Early Years Centres, child care centres, municipalities, school boards and public health units. Through these partnerships, more children and parents can access a seamless network of early learning and development services and supports right in their own communities.

As you're aware, the Provincial-Municipal Fiscal and Service Delivery Review report was released on October 31, 2008. It included a recommendation to better integrate child care and children's services to improve readiness to learn and healthy child development outcomes and for findings to be shared with the Early Learning Advisor. A decision was made to delay full consideration of provincial-municipal child care items until after the Early Learning Advisor submits his report to the Premier. This reflects the significant link between the full-day learning program for four- and five-year-olds and the child care system. All Ontario Early Years Centres will maintain their current boundaries and funding structure. No changes will be made to the boundaries or funding structure of the centres at this time.

.../cont'd

Thank you again for sharing your concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Deb Matthews". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Deb Matthews
Minister



MANITOULIN-SUDBURY DISTRICT
SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION BOARD
CONSEIL D'ADMINISTRATION DES SERVICES
SOCIAUX DU DISTRICT DE MANITOULIN-SUDBURY

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November 27, 2008

Honourable Deb Matthews, Minister
Ministry of Children and Youth Services
14th Floor, 56 Wellesley Street West
Toronto, Ontario
M5S 2S3

Dear Minister,

The responsibility for the local planning, coordination and management of child care services was downloaded to municipal service managers (CMSMs and DSSABs) in 1999.

The McGuinty government, as far back as Minister Marie Bountrogianni, increasingly referred to municipal service managers as Ontario's Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) "Service System Managers".

The recently released PMFSDR Report reaffirms the contention that municipalities are the "service system manager" responsible for the local planning and the local responsiveness of those services.

The PMFSDR Report also speaks to the short term objective of moving the child care/children's services and programs listed (Ontario Early Years Centres, Family Resource Centres, Family Literacy Centres, Special Needs Resources, Best Start, and the range of Child Care funding components - fee subsidies, wage subsidies) into "a single program".

In a 2006 NOSDA resolution forwarded to your Ministry, Northern Ontario service managers in effect indicated that a key obstacle to seeing said programs part of "a single program" rests on the Province's unclear rationale as to why it continues to provide ongoing service management to Ontario Early Years Centres (OEYCs) which are a significant part of the early learning and child care system when the local planning and the local responsiveness of all of the other parts of the ELCC system are the responsibility of municipal service managers (which is where the PMFSDR Report confirms it should be).

Your Regional Office recently forwarded us a renewed service agreement that it expects us to sign. The agreement sets out the Ministry's expectation that we agree that FRCs and OEYCs are basically one and the same, and that both are in fact Best Start Hubs. While we can agree with that principle given that we advanced that they were one and the same when OEYCs and later Hubs were introduced (and it was your Ministry that then contended otherwise) we quite frankly cannot sign that agreement Minister until we have a meeting with you to discuss some of the very fundamental problems cited in our June 20, 2007 letter to you; problems which, if left unaddressed, prevent us from playing the very active and committed leadership role which we believe is ours to play as our jurisdiction's "service system manager".

Key amongst these, Minister Matthews, are:

- Our difficulty in appreciating why we would continue to fund a 20% share of our FRCs when OEYCS are 100% funded;
- Our difficulty in appreciating why OEYCs are service managed by your Regional Office when FRCs are service managed by DSSABs/CMSMs;
- Our continued belief that our jurisdiction should have at least one fully funded OEYC committed to this jurisdiction or at least a portion of the budget of the two fully funded OEYCs which cross our boundaries committed to the communities within our service jurisdiction.

We are asking to meet with you Minister re: these outstanding matters and look forward to your indication of the time and day which is most amenable to you.

Yours truly,



J. Raymond Chénier, Chair
Manitoulin-Sudbury DSSAB

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Deb Matthews
Minister