
Sent via email: minister.edu@ontario.ca

July 27, 2021

The Honourable Stephen Lecce
Minister of Education
438 University Avenue, 5th Floor
Toronto, Ontario M7A 2A5

Dear Minister Lecce:

This is both a challenging and exciting time for the child care and early years system in Ontario. While the pandemic is not over, your Ministry and municipal service managers have worked diligently with operators over the past year to reopen and restore service capacity for families and their children. This is extremely important for economic and social recovery. There is still work to be done together to stabilize the sector, maintain the current number of spaces and, looking forward, expand spaces for more opportunities for people in Ontario.

One area of concern is the Ministry's plan to proceed with phasing in changes to the administrative cost-sharing arrangements. This will have funding implications which, as a result, will likely lead to a reduction of some child care services. The rationale for the change has never been provided. It is simply not appropriate, especially during this time as the pandemic continues. Now is not the time for reductions.

The change to 50/50 administrative funding cost-share for the full envelope does not reflect the fact that municipal service system managers administer provincial initiatives on behalf of the Province, such as the Wage Enhancement/Home Child Care Enhancement Grant program. Reducing the administrative cost threshold from 10% to 5% in 2022 will place added pressure on municipalities and District Social Services Administration Boards to fill in the gaps and/or reduce service to children and their families. It is not clear why these changes are being applied to child care in contrast to other human service programs. There has not been a significant reduction in administrative burden to offset the impact of the changes nor decrease in responsibilities. Arguably, the need for administrative and planning capacity is increasing.

While the mitigation funding in 2021 was appreciated, it is only delaying the full impact in 2022. AMO respectfully asks that the administrative changes be reversed in recognition of the detrimental impacts to those served by the child care system.

It was welcome news to hear about the Canadian government recently entering into bilateral agreements with some provinces as a result of the federal commitment to

establish a national child care and early years system across the country. We trust that an agreement with Ontario will soon be reached. AMO is ready to work with the Province to identify Ontario's municipal and community priorities for implementation in Ontario. In the meantime, we would ask for continued efforts with AMO and municipal service managers to prepare the system in Ontario for growth and change. A comprehensive provincial-municipal plan taking us beyond the pandemic recovery is an appropriate foundation to build upon.

As always, we appreciate your door being open to us and look forward to a conversation about these matters and other ways to strengthen the child care and early years system in Ontario.

Sincerely,



Graydon Smith
AMO President
Mayor of the Town of Bracebridge

cc: The Honourable Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Nancy Naylor, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Education
Phil Graham, Assistant Deputy Minister, Ministry of Education
Kate Manson-Smith, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
His Worship John Tory, Mayor, City of Toronto
Cathy Cousins, President, Ontario Municipal Social Services Association (OMSSA)
Michelle Boileau, Chair, Northern Ontario Service Delivers Association (NOSDA)