



Report To:	Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board
From:	Donna Moroso, Director of Integrated Social Services Ray Hannah, Children's Program Supervisor
Date:	October 25, 2012
Re:	Child Care Modernization – Issue Report

RECOMMENDATION

That the Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board endorse and approve the [OMSSA Response to Modernizing Child Care in Ontario](#) and [NOSDA's Feedback on the Modernization of Child Care](#).

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to update the Board in relation to the potential, and anticipated, changes that will take place in relation to the delivery of Children's Services in Ontario.

Background

Since the transfer of responsibility, from the Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS) to the Ministry of Education, changes to the Child Care sector have been anticipated. The first change came with system services manager's reporting to a new Ministry and a new reporting system. Conversations between the Ministry of Education, DSSAB's/CMSM's, OMSSA, and NOSDA have been ongoing about future changes. For some time now, the topics of conversation have been about modernizing and stabilizing the Child Care sector through new methods / models such as base funding.

With the passing of the Provincial Budget, the Ministry of Education soon after released its discussion paper "[Modernizing Child Care in Ontario](#)". The purpose of the paper was to encourage discussion and responses to the proposed vision and changes. The proposed action plan identifies five key areas for action over the next three years.

These areas of action include:

- Operating funding formula
- Capital funding priorities
- Quality programs
- Modernizing the regulatory framework
- Support for accountability and capacity building

Within each of these identified action areas, the discussion paper raises questions on how to achieve the goals and it encourages responses that the Ministry will consider for the changes to come.

Concerning the funding formula and with the objective to modernize and stabilize the Child Care sector, the hope is that any decisions or changes made will result in base funding that will allow the streamlining of more flexible Child Care funds.

With regards to capital funds, the Ministry's goal is to stabilize the Child Care sector as they adapt to the implementation of Full day Kindergarten. To date, we have seen some capital funds that will directly assist our Child Care centres to transition in year 3 of the implementation process.

The Ministry also plans to develop mandatory provincial guidelines for Child Care operators. In this area, we have not yet seen any changes to date with the exception of the transfer of licensing from MCYS to the Ministry of Education. CMSM's and DSSAB's have been working closely with the Ministry of Education and OMSSA at providing input on how this should be implemented.

Child Care Managers across the Province have been working with OMSSA in providing suggestions and responses to address all the identified action areas. OMSSA's collaborative responses can be found in the paper ["OMSSA Response to Modernizing Child Care in Ontario"](#).

The keys areas of response include:

- Build on Dr. Pascal's vision that CMSM's and DSSAB's are leaders amongst leaders in modernizing the Child Care system
- The development of a flexible funding model is key to respond to local needs
- Municipal Service Manager's funding should not be reduced
- Capacity differences around the Province must be recognized in policy, funding, and implementation

In addition, the NOSDA Child Care Managers group has developed a response to the Modernization paper. [NOSDA's feedback on the Modernization of Child Care](#) provides direction and suggestions from a Northern perspective. It is NOSDA's position that Northern Ontario communities are unique and require a delivery model that will consider our realities. For instance, the funding model must take into account the actual cost of operating as the traditional approach was focused on the number of children in the

seats. Also, small and remote communities that require Child Care are a reality in the North.

In addition to a base funding model, the response addresses the need for an evidenced based quality assessment model for Child Care programs which is adequately funded for implementation and delivery. Since the transfer of responsibility to the Ministry of Education and the development of a Licensing and Quality Assurance Branch, it has been unclear what Quality Assurance will mean and look like at the implementation stage. Locally managed Quality Assurance programs, with adequate funding, have been put forth as a necessity. It is also NOSDA's position that the Day Nurseries Act must be reviewed and a new framework developed to ensure consistency and shared policies with those of the school boards.

NOSDA's key areas of response are highlighted as follows:

- A new approach to base funding should be flexible with broad funding streams
- An approach to capital funding and planning should result in maintaining Child Care centres in publicly funded schools
- The advancement of program quality and insurance of this are in investment in the future
- Modernize the current legislative framework
- Accountability and capacity building

Summary

Although, Child Care Managers in the North have coordinated our opinions and suggestions, it is unknown how all the collective responses will be interpreted and implemented by the Ministry of Education. To date, we have not heard any examples of how the implementation will unfold. Though the only certainty is that changes are coming, we are hopeful that the Ministry of Education's transparency and cooperation will result in changes that strengthen the Child Care sector for Northern communities.

The concern would be a new funding model that does not consider the unique needs of Northern communities because the model will ultimately be for the entire Province. In addition, if funding pots are streamlined or combined, within this base model, there could be the potential that Best Start funds are reduced. The goal is for greater flexibility and less funding envelopes; however, the potential exists to have an opposite effect depending on how they determine the base funding amounts for each DSSAB/CMSM.

If the proposed base funding does not consider our current allocations being received, it will result in less funds, and with the merger of funding lines, there is the potential that less 100% Provincial funds would be available.

Concerning Quality Assurance, there is only speculation as to how this will be rolled out. One example might be the development of a Province wide Quality Assurance initiative operated by the Ministry of Education. If this was to occur, we are requesting that the Child Care operators that receive recommendations should also receive adequate funds to bring their programs to the new standard. Another possibility is that a Quality Assurance program would be operated locally by DSSAB's/CMSM's, in which case

there would need to be funds to operate and / or staff such a program. Some NOSDA members feel this would be the best option; however, our DSB currently does not operate a Quality Assurance program as we do not have the staffing compliment to manage same. While the DSB does fund Quality Assurance initiatives, we do not have designated staff and funding which would mean this scenario could be costly without adequate funding.

Finally, one member, from our NOSDA Child Care Manager's group, has been selected by the Ministry of Education to sit on an advisory group for the development of a new funding model. Therefore, this member is using this opportunity to assist in the development of a new funding model, and to voice the opinions of NOSDA Child Care Manager's as outlined NOSDA's response paper.

Conclusion

Staff are recommending that the Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board endorse and approve the OMSSA Response to Modernizing Child Care in Ontario and NOSDA's Feedback on the Modernization of Child Care.