Council Direction: Not applicable.

Information:

Background
On April 28, 2010, Council received Information Report CS10042 Early Learning Program (Full Day Learning Program for Four and Five Year Olds), which provided a status report on the Provincial Government’s response to the *With Our Best Future in Mind; Implementing Early Learning in Ontario* Report by Dr. Charles Pascal.

This report provides a further update and reflects a number of significant actions taken by the Provincial Government subsequent to the previous report.

Recent Provincial Government Announcements
On April 27, 2010, the Provincial Government moved one step closer to implementing full day learning for four and five year olds and to further support child care and the delivery of other children’s services in the Province of Ontario.

**Bill 242 Full-Day Early Learning Statute Law Amendment Act, 2010**
The *Full-Day Early Learning Statute Law Amendment Act, 2010* was passed by the legislature on April 27, 2010. This bill, which amends the Education Act, and the forthcoming regulations, will provide boards of education the framework and clarity to move
forward with implementation of the Full Day Learning Program for four and five year olds beginning in September 2010.

Of particular interest to Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSMs), including the City of Hamilton, is the language in Bill 242 which could allow for the administration of fee subsidies for the extended day portion of the Full Day Learning Program by CMSMs. This is one of the key functions the City currently carries out in the Child Care System. Thus far, no official announcement has been made regarding this issue; however, staff has been advised that more information should be made available with the release of the regulations expected in mid to late May.

**Transfer of Child Care from the Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS) to the Ministry of Education (EDU)**

At the Provincial level, responsibility for the child care system will be transferred from MCYS to EDU to make the transition between child care and education easier for young children and their families. Beginning immediately, EDU has assumed responsibility for policy, legislation, and funding for child care. By fall 2010, the transfer of contract management will occur. For the time being, both ministries will have authority under the Day Nurseries Act (DNA); licensing under the DNA will remain with MCYS at this time. A Standing Municipal Working Group will be established by the EDU to inform and support this Ministerial transition.

During the transition period, the City, as local Child Care System Manager, will be accountable to both ministries.

**Stabilization of the Child Care System**

The Province has also announced funds to help stabilize the child care system as four and five year olds move into the Full Day Learning Program. Preliminary funding allocations have been based on risk assessments previously submitted to the Province by CMSMs regarding child care programs which are potentially impacted by year one implementation of the Full Day Learning Program. These assessments provided the Province with information specific to resulting risks to child care program viability and potential mitigation strategies to ameliorate those risks.

The stabilization funding will be phased in gradually over the implementation period, growing to $51 million annually province wide by the end of five years. Additionally, $12 million in capital funding has been committed over the same period (five years) to assist non-profit child care programs to make renovations necessary to serve younger children. For this first year (2010/11), a total of $5.6 million in stabilization and capital funding will be distributed to CMSMs across the province.

This year’s (2010/11) Child Care Stabilization funding allocation for the City is $224,400 (100% provincial dollars). Guidelines outlining the Ministry expectations of CMSMs with respect to the planning for and distribution of the funds to impacted child care programs
this year are forthcoming. CMSMs will be required to submit their plans to the Regional MCYS office for approval by June 30, 2010.

**Integration of Supports for Young Families**

Dr. Charles Pascal, Premier’s Special Advisor on Early Learning and author of *With the Best Future in Mind: Implementing Early Learning in Ontario* report, has been appointed as an advisor to Laurel Broten, Minister of Children and Youth Services. He will support the implementation of an essential recommendation of Dr. Pascal’s report; specifically, the creation of an integrated network of Best Start Child and Family Centres which are seen as a key vehicle for developing a co-ordinated children’s services system.

This work will engage CMSMs, Best Start Networks and other key stakeholders. It will build on evidence, as well as best practice, including work underway across various communities in the Province such as Hamilton’s Best Start Demonstration Site.

**Analysis of Impacts and Next Steps**

Staff will:

- analyze the 2010/11 child care stabilization funding allocation received and develop a stabilization plan for impacted child care operators;
- monitor further provincial announcements, including the anticipated Bill 242 Regulations;
- work closely with our Best Start Network, local boards of education, service providers and other key stakeholders to support:
  a) our early years sector in preparation for the creation of an integrated network of Best Start Child and Family Centres;
  b) the stabilization of the child care sector; and,  
  c) the implementation of the Full Day Learning Program.
- continue to keep Council apprised of information as it becomes available through information updates and formal council reports.