OPEN LETTER

June 11, 2009

Mayor Fred Eisenberger
and Members of Council

Bravo to Hamilton Council for recognizing that child care programs are essential to our city! However, it is troubling that a municipal council with real fiscal challenges of its own is forced to assume what is clearly a provincial responsibility.

Funding of child care is something Premier Dalton McGuinty promised repeatedly prior to forming government. Unfortunately, the provision of actual resources to build a high quality, universal, public program is far less grandiose than the Premier’s rhetoric.

Investments in early learning and care are an economic imperative. Parents require it to access training, employment and job interviews and children need it to develop to their highest and best potential.

The reason Hamilton is on the hook for $8.4-million in child care costs is because the McGuinty Liberals never honoured their commitment to put $300-million new provincial dollars into the system. Immigrant and low-income families, in particular, are hurt by a lack of access to child care spaces, which prevents them from bettering their circumstances.

Cities and towns are paying the price, as are the many parents in our city stuck on long waiting lists for a space or a subsidy for their child. Frankly, none of them can afford to have the provincial government withdraw from its mandated obligation.

I believe Council’s approved funding should be viewed as a repayable loan, not a gift nor a permanent arrangement.

Thank you for stepping up with this emergency, top-up funding, in your continuing efforts to make the City of Hamilton the best place to raise a child.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Andrea Horwath
MPP, Hamilton Centre
Leader, Ontario’s NDP

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