Regional Municipality of Waterloo
Administration and Finance Committee
Public Input Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, September 30, 2015
7:00 p.m.
Council Chambers, 2nd Floor
150 Frederick Street, Kitchener, ON


Members absent: D. Craig and G. Lorentz

Declarations of Pecuniary Interest under the “Municipal Conflict of Interest Act”

E. Clarke declared a conflict related to report CAO-IAU-15-06, Service Review – KPMG’s Final Report, in light of the child care issues within the report and her employment with the YWCA.

Opening Remarks – Chair

Sean Strickland offered opening remarks noting that this meeting is an opportunity for the public to provide their input and views. He noted that no decisions will be made at the meeting; any decisions will be made later in October. He also reminded the audience about the procedural by-law regarding placards and conduct while in the Council Chamber.

Delegations

1. Moya Fewson Re: Child Care Centres

M. Fewson expressed her concern for the quality of care in centres if the Region were to divest the service, noting that Regional day care staff are well-trained and undergo
regular evaluation. She encouraged Regional Council to continue operating the centres as an investment for the future.

2. Carolyn Ferns, Public Policy and Government Relations Coordinator, Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care

C. Ferns provided an overview of the mandate of the organization she’s representing. She maintained that the Region of Waterloo is a leader in quality child care and that her organization supports local parents in their request not to close the centres. She asked Regional Council to reject the KPMG recommendation to close the Regionally-operated centres.

3. Martha Friendly, Executive Director, Childcare Resource and Research Unit

M. Friendly stated that she doesn’t believe that the KPMG report allows Regional Council to make informed decisions. She asked that Regional Council think about other available options that better align with the Region’s goals and objectives and that might address the lack of expert advice, special needs children and staff wages. A copy of her presentation is appended to the original minutes.

4. Andrea Wiebe, Kitchener, Re: Regional Child Care Centres

A. Wiebe encouraged Regional Council to look critically at KPMG’s recommendation to close centres when a waitlist exists. She stated that the Region’s centres are models for other centres and she summarized the benefits for children and Early Childhood Educators (ECEs). She asked that Regional Council be concerned not with closing centres but with how to address the shortage of spaces available for child care. A copy of her presentation is appended to the original minutes.

5. Heather Heartfield, Cambridge, Re: Waterloo Region Children’s Centres

H. Heartfield stated that the Region’s centres have exceeded her family’s expectations and she provided examples of the care her children have received. She asked Regional Council to consider increasing the fees at the centres to increase the profitability and avoid closures. A copy of her presentation is appended to the original minutes.

6. Angela Carter, Kitchener

A. Carter encouraged Regional Council to use the groundswell of community support for the centres as an opportunity to build on its reputation and history with child care centres by expanding and building additional centres so that more families can choose quality care. She highlighted the history and legacy of Edith MacIntosh and the centre dedicated to her. A copy of her presentation is appended to the original minutes.
7. Dr. John Peters, Kitchener

Dr. Peters summarized child care and maternity programs in Europe and compared the benefits for citizens abroad and locally. He expressed his concern with the reputation of KPMG and the lack of balance in the review. He stated that he’s reviewed similar reports for Peel Region and the City of Toronto and was surprised that, despite each having high quality child care programs, KPMG still recommend they be closed since the services are not provincially mandated.

*S. Shantz joined the meeting at 7:45 p.m.

8. Stephen Furmaniuk, Kitchener

S. Furmaniuk expressed his concern that there is a wait list and that the demand for quality child care is not being met. He stated that the Regionally-operated centres are a great benefit to the Region.

9. Andrea Siemens, Kitchener

A. Siemens shared her views on the value of early childhood education and the investment outcomes. She asked the Region to reject KPMG’s recommendation since the centres provide high quality care and are an example for other municipalities to model.

10. James Dick, Elmira, Re: Child Care Centres

J. Dick noted that a new day care centre is being built in Elmira and he outlined the benefits it will have for local families. He expressed his concern that a reduction in Regional support for centres will result in decreased provincial funding. He calculated that if the Regional centres are closed, 47 children will be without child care. He urged the Region to reject the KPMG recommendation. A copy of his presentation is appended to the original minutes.

11. Jan Richards, Waterloo, Re: Child Care and Employment Ontario Services

J. Richards stated that she is the President for the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), Local 1883, and that she represents the Region’s unionized inside workers. She outlined the dedication by staff to provide quality care for children, the Program Quality Assessment outcomes for High Scope involvement, the low turnover of ECE staff and the community partnership with Conestoga College. She presented a petition with more than 170 signatures asking that Regional Council maintain the highest level of child care by continuing to fund municipal child care centres. A copy of her presentation is appended to the original minutes.
12. **Catherine Fife, Waterloo, Re: Closure of Day Care Centres**

S. Strickland stated that this delegation advised that she was unable to attend the meeting but he noted that a written submission has been received and distributed to Regional Councillors. A copy of this submission is appended to the original minutes.

* L. Armstrong joined the meeting at 8:15 p.m.

13. **Mary Parker, Waterloo, Re: Child Care Recommendations**

M. Parker expressed her concern that the issue of the home care transfers is not currently being discussed. She commented that while no single level of government has taken responsibility for child care, Regional Council has demonstrated the political will that one could only hope for at the senior levels. She noted that the current system is not adequate and that the Region needs to seek ways to improve and expand the service. She highlighted the barriers and risks involved should the Region close the day care centres, including losing the investments made to date, the loss of highly-trained staff, service gaps and the loss of provincial funding. She stated that the recommendation to close the centres is not feasible and that the risks outweigh the benefits. A copy of her presentation is appended to the original minutes.

14. **Fred Hahn, President, CUPE Ontario**

F. Hahn stated that he believes that universal high quality child care is a key social justice issue and that the Region should be proud of its quality child care services. He noted his concern for children with special needs and access to services if the child care centres are closed. He provided data about the pay gaps between men and women. He asked that Regional Council consider the community impact if the centres are closed.

15. **Bill Mueller, North Dumfries, Re: Child Care Centres**

B. Mueller said that the Regional centres provide the best care for children. He noted the recent capital investment with Christopher’s Children’s Centre and expressed his concern that the Region would give up this investment. He stated that the Region needs to add spaces for child care rather than close centres.

16. **Alysia Kolentcis, Waterloo, Re: Day Care Centres**

A. Kolentcis stated that Regional child care centres are a beacon for other municipalities. She expressed her concerns about the likelihood of new spaces being created if the Regional centres close, access to quality care, and the will of the provincial government to take the lead on child care.

E. Akbari summarized the short and long-term benefits of public child care and the potential impact of the closure of the Regional centres. She stated that the evidence doesn’t support KPMG’s recommendation and that if the Region closes child care centres, spaces will be eliminated. A copy of her presentation is appended to the original minutes.

18. Jill Smyth, National Representative, CUPE, Re: Employment Ontario

J. Smyth stated that the Region’s Employment Services employees who provide Employment Ontario (EO) services are highly regarded in this community and that without this support, our vulnerable population would suffer. She highlighted the benefits of the program and the potential impact of eliminating EO service programs offered by the Region. She provided hand-outs to the Committee. A copy of her submission is appended to the original minutes.

* B. Vrbanovic left the meeting at 9:00 p.m.

19. Carrie Lynn Poole-Cotnam, Chair, Social Services Workers Coordinating Committee, CUPE Ontario

C. Poole-Cotnam stated that she represents 30,000 social service workers in Ontario and also represents not-for-profit child care providers. She outlined the working conditions and the pay and benefits of private child care providers. She stated that it doesn’t make sense to divest services and expressed her concerns for the people who may suffer as a result. She encouraged Regional Council to reject the recommendations for the closure of child care centres and the elimination of EO services and to instead use the opportunity to continue the investment.

The Committee recessed at 9:06 p.m. and reconvened at 9:17 p.m.

* K. Kiefer, K. Seiling and B. Vrbanovic were not present when the meeting reconvened.

20. Ksenia McConnery, Kitchener

K. McConnery expressed her concern that the KPMG recommendation to close Regional child care centres focuses on the minimum statutory responsibility of the Region rather than the community need to continue operating the centres. She provided her personal experience and her concerns for quality child care for children with special needs. She suggested that most parents won’t put their children in homecare if public spaces are not available. She commented that the report fails to note the impact of closing centres and fails to equip Regional Council with informed details.
* K. Kiefer and K. Seiling returned to the meeting at 9:21 p.m.

21.  Mark Burns, Baden, Re: Regional Day Care Centres

M. Burns share his personal experiences with Regional child care centres and noted the benefits of the quality programming. He expressed his concerns for child care services for children with special needs and he stated that he hopes the Region won’t close the centres.

22.  Áine Leadbetter, Cambridge, Re: Closure of Day Care Centres

A. Leadbetter identified the potential closure of day care centres as fundamentally a women’s’ issue. She cited a report listing the Region’s status in providing opportunities for women in the local workforce. She stated that the child care centres are community hubs and she asked Regional Council to seriously consider the implications of closing the centres.

* B. Vrbanovic returned to the meeting at 9:45 p.m.

23.  Brienna Schiedel, Cambridge, Re: Day Care Closures

B. Schiedel provided her personal experiences with the Kinsmen Daycare Centre, citing its location as the primary benefit for her and other families. She noted the impacts if the centre were to be closed. She shared details about how her child’s special nutritional needs were accommodated by the highly trained staff. A copy of her presentation is appended to the original minutes.

24.  Marie Rutledge, Cambridge, Re: Day Care

M. Rutledge expressed her concern that centres will be closed while the area population and the demand continues to grow. She advocated for children with special needs and commented that often private child care providers are not qualified to deal with special needs. A copy of her presentation is appended to the original minutes.

25.  Kinga Subject, Kitchener

K. Subject expressed her frustration that due to the child care waitlist, parents must put their kids on the list when they are born. She also expressed her concern for the impact on high needs areas like downtown Kitchener and on middle income families who don’t qualify for subsidy and won’t be able to cope if the Regional centres are closed. A copy of her presentation is appended to the original minutes.
26. **Oscar Cole-Arnal**, Alliance Against Poverty, Re: Day Care

O. Cole-Arnal warned Regional Council not to lay off employees unless they are prepared to live off the income of those unemployed workers. He advocated for government accountability and urged Regional Council not to close the centres. A copy of his presentation is appended to the original minutes.

27. **John Martin**, Program Director for Early Learning, Child Care and Family Resources, K-W Habilitation Services, Re: Day Care

J. Martin stated that he works with local families to secure child care and he's concerned with the review process that lead to the recommendation to close the centres. He explained that when he worked for the Ministry of Education, the Region of Waterloo was often referenced as leading in best practices in child care and early education. He asked that Regional Council keep the centres open. A copy of his presentation is appended to the original minutes.

28. **Marc Xuereb**, President, Waterloo Regional Labour Council

M. Xuereb advised that the Waterloo Regional Labour Council represents 35 unions and approximately 26,000 people, all of which are very involved in municipal elections. He highlighted the benefits that Regional employees provide to Employment Ontario clients. He asked that Regional Council accept KPMG’s overall findings that the Region is a well-managed organization. He noted that the other four (4) recommendations don’t provide an opportunity for significant savings.

29. **Louisette Lanteigne**, Re: Day Care

L. Lanteigne shared the results of her research into the Peel Region experience with the closure of their municipally-operated child care centres. She extended her appreciation to Regional Council for providing direct delivery of child care in the Region of Waterloo. She suggested that if the New Democratic Party (NDP) wins the upcoming federal election, they have promised a comprehensive child care program and this may impact the Region’s requirement to subsidize services. She urged the Region to defer any decisions on the closure of child care centres until after the federal election. She expressed her concerns with the reputation of KPMG. A copy of her presentation is appended to the original minutes.

30. **Eric Jardin**, Kitchener, Re: Day Care Closures

E. Jardin shared his personal story related to child care and expressed his relief when his child began attending a Regional child care centre. He challenged the figures for the average cost of child care in the KPMG report and stated that he would be willing to pay
more for Regional child care services. A copy of his presentation is appended to the original minutes.

31. Becky Roy, Cambridge, Re: Day Care Closures

B. Roy stated that her children are enrolled part-time at a Regional child care centre; the option for part-time care didn’t exist when she sought care in Toronto. She stated that preserving and expanding the child care centres would be an investment in the future.

* K. Kiefer left the meeting at 10:41 p.m.

32. Graham Hardie, Waterloo, Re: Employment Ontario

G. Hardie stated that of the varied government programs and services that he’s accessed, the Employment Ontario services offered by the Region were the most effective. He advised that he is currently gainfully employed thanks to EO services. A copy of his presentation is appended to the original minutes.

33. Cheryl Ambrose, Canadian Federations of University Women, Re: Closure of Day Care Centres

C. Ambrose, speaking on behalf of two (2) chapters of her affiliated organization, stated that she rejects the recommendation to close child care centres. She highlighted the differences between private and public child care and the outcomes and impact of quality care. She urged Regional Council to value the education of children under and over 4 years old equally. A copy of her presentation is appended to the original minutes.

34. Colin Telford, Cambridge, Re: Child Care Centres

C. Telford provided a photo collection presentation of his and other children involved with local child care centres. He shared the personal story of his child who has special needs and he advocated for quality care for all children with special needs.

Call for Delegations

S. Strickland called for any additional delegation but no one came forward.

S. Strickland provided closing remarks and thanked the delegations and members of the audience for participating and sharing their stories with the Committee.

Adjourn

Moved by T. Galloway

Seconded by K. Redman

1976860
That the meeting adjourn at 10:55 p.m.

Carried

Committee Chair, S. Strickland

Committee Clerk, S. Natolochny
I’m here today to respond to the recommendation made by consulting firm KPMG that Waterloo Region phase out its five Regionally-operated childcare centres on the grounds that doing so would provide “better value” for public money.

Obviously, I’m here to urge Waterloo Council to reject this recommendation – and will make two main points to back this up.

Who am I? NAME and TITLE. My job and I guess my primary identity – is that I’ve been a researcher on early childhood issues for more than 40 years. I have worked internationally, nationally and provincially on child care policy as well as at the local level. Among other things, as an activist on child care policy, I’ve always had the idea that child care policy decisions should be informed by good research.

In my ten minutes, I want to make two points –

First, I want to talk briefly about the role and value of publicly delivered child care in Waterloo, in Ontario and beyond.

Second, I want to offer some observations about what I see as the deficiencies of the KPMG report that is the main (maybe the ONLY ??) basis for this discussion here today.

So – on the first point.

From my perspective – and I’d be happy to back this with research – if the goal is (as mine is) that “every child has an opportunity to attend a high quality program that blends early childhood education and care” – public funding, public management and planning and SOME (at least) public delivery are necessary.

These are different from one another but somewhat related.

Many people don’t think of non-profit community-based child care centres as “private”, but they are. What this means is that because parent or voluntary groups—not public
government entities such as municipalities or school boards—bear the responsibility for creating and maintaining centres and making many of the decisions about them.

Today, almost all child care in Canada is private, both in the way it's funded and how it's delivered. Historically, Ontario has always had a public (municipally or regionally delivered) child care sector but it's been diminish— from about 13% of total spaces in 1998 to about 2.5% of spaces in 2012. The only other province that ever had a significant municipal child care sector was Alberta, and these were all closed down in the mid 1990s—much as Ontario's are currently being shut down.

This is quite different from most countries with well-developed accessible, affordable, high quality child care systems. In the countries that do the best for families and children in multiple ways (based on international research) -- Finland, Sweden, France, Norway for example – most or much of the child care is publicly delivered by local government entities, mostly by municipal-level governments.

Now - why is this an advantage? Mostly because it allows the best "steering" (as the international literature calls it) or planning, which is shown to work much better—more effectively AND more efficiently than relying on the child care “market”.

"Steering" is more or less that municipally-operated child care has traditionally tended to work in Ontario. Historically, they tended to serve mostly low income or vulnerable families, although this has shifted over time — usually by design. It has allowed the possibility of, for example, putting a new centre in a high need or vulnerable neighbourhood when no non-profit group has stepped up — or to provide much-needed infant or toddler spaces when community-based centres aren’t able to. Or it has allowed the possibility — as the Regional Centres do — of being able to include a much higher proportion of children with special needs than the norm, and do it well.
Perhaps most important is that—a municipal or regional operator can be there to expand, develop and maintain quality child care when and where it’s needed without having to rely on whether the community-run non-profit sector, whose capacity is already maxed out in many cases—can take it on. Or in some instances, there may not be a community-based non-profit sector at all, which often means that there are no child care services.

What I’m saying is that—if we want to expand and maintain child care to meet families’ needs, publicly-operated child care provides well tried-and-true advantages that can—if we allow it to—provide stability, quality and access. This is why I support it—why I’ve been promoting a bigger role for public child care for some years.

Now I’d like to make my second point, which has to do with the strength of the information provided in the KPMG report that suggests getting rid of these centres. It won’t surprise you that I find it quite inadequate (mildly put).

I want to reflect here on two of the other Ontario instances of recommendations to close municipal or regional child care—Peel Region’s and Toronto’s. Each instance also involved a KPMG report.

I looked back at the brief I presented to Peel Region’s public hearings in 2012 (like these today) in which I outlined some of the key pieces of information that I thought were lacking from the KPMG report to back their recommendation to close the 12 regional centres.

I must say that these are pretty much the concerns that I have about the Waterloo KPMG report. Here are—and are—some of my questions:

- Were there public consultations? With whom? What were the results?
- Did the consulting team have members familiar with how child care works?
- OR did the firm have any expert advice on this? From whom? What was the advice?
• Does this recommendation to shut the centres fit with goals and objectives that have been established—through community and political processes—for child care in the Region?

• Were any other options to closure considered? What were they?

• Was there consideration of how the hole in child care coverage created by closing the centres would be filled—especially as a key shortage in Waterloo Region seems to be the availability of spaces?

• What about the Regional centres’ provision of care for a disproportionately high number of children with special needs? Where would these children and families go?

• What about ECEC wages? The fact is that wages in many child care centres are so low that they fail to meet pay equity criteria. As the provincial government has mandated the Labour Minister to “close the gender wage gap” – it seems to me that the Regional centres provide an important anchor for raising—at least somewhat—the wage bar for early childhood educators in Waterloo Region—keeping in mind that ECE wages are linked not only to women’s equality but to child care quality.

I could go on. But my point here is that – in my view – closing these centres based on this report would based on very inadequate knowledge and extremely irresponsible. (Actually, I find the recommendation very irresponsible).

Just a few words about the Toronto situation: in Toronto, a KPMG report in the summer of 2011 also had municipal centres in its cross hairs – among many other “cut the gravy” recommendations it made. In Toronto this meant that a “service efficiency review” of Children’s Services was commissioned. In that case, another consulting firm was chosen (not KPMG) and they hired me as their “child care expert”.

This was a really interesting experience—working with a team of financial consultants on issues such as why it costs more for infants, toddlers and children with disabilities, why ECE wages make a difference to quality, what other jurisdictions do– -and things like why
“efficiency” may not be the only relevant concept by which to make decisions about early childhood programs. It was a good working experience but there was throughout an inclination toward – “is there some way we can recommend closing the municipal centres without sacrificing quality, wages, accessibility, and so on?”

Finally one day I said to the team – “tell me something. What is it about public services that you find a problem – if you’re willing to recommend paying the same money to community-based non-profits to do the job”? (which they were).

They laughed and one of the guys said – “you know, it’s just something that’s in the air in our industry – public services just aren’t on”.

Toronto didn’t close its 50-odd municipal centres. In fact, two new ones were built and several more are planned.

I will close with one further thought. I’m here today to urge you not to shut down the Waterloo Regional child care centres. But while I really agree with Ontario’s approach to local service management at the CMSM level, I think that we need to consider the provincial government’s role in all this.

Key to many of the local dilemmas regarding child care is that the Ontario government does not have a coherent comprehensive early childhood education and care policy including adequate sustained funding. Today, if I were facing the Premier and the Minister of Education I would be saying to them “it’s time for the Ontario government to step in with real policy and funding solutions for the whole province, rather than needed and valued child care continue to be shut down”.
Good Evening,

My name is Andrea Wiebe and this is my first presentation to council. I haven’t presented to you, or attended a council meeting previously, because there has not been an issue, to this point that I have felt so passionate about. My passion is a result of both my personal and professional experiences.

As a child, I attended a public child care centre. Some of my first memories are from my time at “school.” Currently, I work as a Special Education Teacher - I know first hand the importance of Early Childhood Education. I have seen how children with quality early childhood education have less anxiety in school and are more ready to learn. I have worked in child care both in a hands on role as an Early Childhood Education Assistant and in a consultative role - providing support to ECEs in responding to challenging behaviour in their programs. But the most important reason that I am passionate about our regional Children’s Centres is I am a parent. Both my sons attend one of these centres - I feel like I won the child care lottery! I want nothing but the best for my children - and for all of the children in our community. But I’m not here to tell you that you should keep these centres open because my kids go there - although I’d like to... I’m here to ask you to look critically at KPMGs’ report. Do these recommendations really make sense? My specific concern is with the proposal to close the 5 centres - resulting in 250 less child care spaces when there is a child care crisis in our region.

As I’m sure you are well aware there are over 3,800 children on the Region’s childcare waitlist. Of those, 1,692 families need child care immediately. How is closing five centres a solution to this problem? KPMG’s report suggests that by cutting 250 spaces, 200 newly subsidized spaces can be created. Providing subsidized spaces is a very important goal but it does not create new spaces. Our region does not have a waitlist for subsidized spots. The need has been stable, and is not showing signs
they need to do their jobs well. They receive ongoing professional development opportunities, they have time within their week to plan, assess, and write reports. They are compensated fairly for their work. Staff retention at these centres is phenomenal- most staff work their entire careers in one centre - that is unheard of in the childcare industry. Kids feel most secure and can learn better with consistent care - this is especially important for children with special needs. The decision should not be about closing these centres but about how the other 10,000 children in child care can receive this level of care.

I have worked in, and consulted to private child care settings. I know many of these centres also provide fantastic care. I also know that many ECEs in these centres do not feel valued. Since child care is costly, they are paid little more than minimum wage, if they plan, they do it at home, parents do not receive daily reports or assessment on their child’s development simply because ECEs are stretched and do not have time. Undervalued ECEs change jobs frequently leaving child care operators frustrated and desperate. I was hired in a private centre off the street, literally. I walked in, asked if they were hiring and was told I could start immediately. I was paid cash. I was not interviewed or asked for qualifications. This is scary - but this is the reality.

We NEED centres like our regional centres to set the benchmark high. We NEED these centres to supervise and train ECE college students. We NEED centres like this to show our ECEs they are valued. We NEED centres like these to care for our most precious commodity, our children. WE NEED centres like this in our region so that our community knows that city council values early childhood education and our children.

Thank you for this opportunity to express my concerns.
of growing. By adding only unneeded subsidized spots the childcare crisis is not being addressed.

Furthermore - where are these children going to be absorbed? The Child Care System is currently at capacity and may not have the ability to accommodate increased enrollment without significant investment to construct new buildings or renovate existing space. If private operators would want to take on more children they would have already - there are more than enough children waiting. There is also a shortage of Registered Early Childhood Educators across the Province of Ontario, this too has implications for availability of a trained labour force to support growth.

Closing Regional Centres would only intensify the problem of our regional child care crisis. Parents have spoken up about how this would directly affect them. They’ve said - “Without the centre in my community, my wife would have to quit her job” and “We’ve experienced other child care providers - no other placement has been able to meet the unique needs of our son with autism.”

Yesterday on CBC, Councillor Strickland spoke to the need to look at the bigger picture of the 10,000 children in our region in child care. I could not agree more however I do not believe that closing the regional centres is the way to do this.

Closing these centres would take away the model of service to which many private centres strive to meet. The quality of childcare in other centres may deteriorate without these examples. If council votes to close our regional centres, what message is this sending to other providers about the importance of early childhood education in our community?

The region centres have achieved triple gold star status. This is because the Registered Early Childhood Educators in these centres are valued and highly trained. The region provides Registered ECEs with the resources
I don't know how many of you are parents and have had the experience of having to leave your children for 8 hours a day in the care of another person so you can provide for your family. I have had this experience since returning to work when my twins were 2 in 2006.

Our Children's Centre

The Kinsmen Centre in Cambridge is the closest childcare centre in proximity to my home. I originally enquired about spaces for my twins when they were less than a year however there were never two spaces in the same classroom available so I wasn't able to experience this option and instead relied on home childcare providers - 3 of them between ages 2 and 4, then due to work commitments and the ½ day kindergarten programs at the time, we used private schools to get us through Junior and Senior Kindergarten with full day care. We carefully interviewed and chose each place where our twins would attend and despite our best efforts, we still found that care fell short of our expectations in each situation for one reason or another. Some were serious, others were less concerning but still I felt guilty for returning to work and having to leave my kids in less than ideal circumstances.

When we had our son immediately put him on the list for Kinsmen Centre, there were no spaces available at the time so we hired in home care and used a private childcare centre. Again, these options were carefully selected from the best of what was available and again, they fell short of making me feel completely comfortable that my son was receiving all that he needed in the 8 hours a day I had to be at work. From overcrowded classrooms to staff that seemed overwhelmed and lacking in skills for managing conflict to extensive commutes of up to 45 minutes each way to drop off my child during heavy traffic, these scenarios were not ideal.

We were contacted about a space available at Kinsmen centre a little over a year ago and made the decision to take it based on the high scope curriculum offered for school preparedness and the proximity to our home.

We have been amazed at how much more this centre offers than what we had hoped. In over a year in attendance, we have had many experiences of being wowed by the staff and not one single time where we felt they let us down. These centres exceed expectations in so many ways.

The High Scope curriculum is helping my son be ready to read and write. He loves going to his "school" and has had unique opportunities to meet children from various backgrounds and of varying special needs. We had been concerned about how integration of special needs children into his class might impact the teacher's ability to provide a program for our child and honestly, we were concerned about how safe our young son would be with students in the class who struggle with behavioural or special needs issues. The staff at Kinsmen are so incredible, their skills in special case management are exceptional. I have witnessed them handling issues seamlessly to keep kids on program while including the special needs child and help those children to calm and redirect whenever necessary. Watching their patience, compassion and obvious skill level is impressive. I have never seen that and have had many opportunities to witness attempts at integration through my older children's school experiences but have always been left feeling that someone was being short changed, either the special needs child or my own. I have such a respect for the education and skill of these teachers.

childcare centre teachers
Regional council should also be aware that in addition to their daily teaching and caring activities, the staff of these centres has made a regular practice of creating community connection at the centres. Our centre offers after hours information sessions on early learning for parents, they have held winter carnival family nights so parents can meet each other and all members of the family can connect together at the centre. I understand these events take place at all of the regions centres and have assisted in bringing people of different backgrounds together – truly investing in creating a healthy community.

On the subject of health, in our family, we have children with Celiac disease as well as Dairy and Egg intolerances. I have been so very impressed with how seriously and cautiously the kitchen staff take these issues. Mary at our centre consults with me if she has a question about an ingredient she’d like to try and ensures that even if my child cannot eat what the rest of his classmates are having, he has a nutritious and delicious option that doesn’t make him feel left out. In other places I would often hear about how my child got a cracker while friends received cake or brownies and even at age 2 ½, this doesn’t seem fair. There are more and more children in our region with food allergies, intolerances and even anaphalaxis. Several at my son’s school have anaphalaxis and I don’t know how their parents would manage if they had to send their child to a less professional childcare centre where they were not assured of the care in providing safe and nutritious meals.

When we learned that Council was considering closing the centre we were absolutely shocked. How could it be possible that the Region would consider destroying such a beautiful part of our community. The model provided by these centres should be the standard to which all others are measured. Waterloo Region relies on young families to continue growing and thriving but removing a place where young professional families can confidently leave their children to contribute to the economy is such a mistake. Yes we all have to work, but children are our priorities. In my profession as an RESP representative, I meet constantly with families who have just had their first child and are education focused. One of the main topics of our discussion is how they will find and arrange suitable childcare for their baby when it’s time to return to work. Maternity leave is a precious time for bonding with baby. Many families begin the difficult task of locating and securing a childcare space when they are pregnant and continue searching and stressing over this option all throughout their maternity leave. Some families who are unsuccessful in securing a spot end up opting to drop to one income so one parent can stay home or extending maternity leaves because there are almost no options for childcare for less than 18 month olds. For-profit childcare centres who actually follow the rules and regulations do not wish to create infant spaces because the cost of staffing ratios make it almost impossible to make a profit. The care of our youngest citizens and the investment in growing our economy through the employment of young families requires regional investment. We cannot be trusting that for profit centres will meet our needs. They haven’t so far, there is no reason to believe that will change.

On a final note, it came as a surprise to me that council would consider closing these centres without first reviewing the profitability and considering an increase in childcare fees. While I would not like to pay more for childcare, my space at Kinsmen is actually one of the least expensive options I have used in
the past and the value is so much greater I would certainly be willing to pay more to keep it. How we can consider eliminating these centres without first looking at whether or not we can reduce the cost to the region through increasing profitability makes absolutely no sense to me. It seems hasty and irresponsible and I expect more careful management of my tax payer dollars from this government.

Thank you for your time.
Thank you, Regional Councilors, for the opportunity to participate in this public input meeting.

My name is Angela Carter and I am the mother of a two year boy, John Weston, who receives excellent care at one of the region’s Children’s Centre. But I would like to speak briefly about a point more general than my own situation.

The last three weeks—since parents first heard the news about the recommendation to close these centres—have been very stressful. We are certainly worried. Yet at the same time, I think that this recommendation has provided our region with an opportunity. Sometimes we overlook the value of the most important things in our communities until they are under question or threat. And indeed, in just three weeks, since the release of this report, we have seen a widespread groundswell of support throughout our region and beyond for these regional centres.

Just because this recommendation was made of course doesn’t mean it has to be followed. Closing regional centres is by no means the only option—KPMG’s report highlights this plainly, as it cites the Durham, Halton, and Niagara cases as examples where municipalities continue to provide public childcare. Today, Durham Region operates 7 regional centres, where they are needed most, as a core part of the region’s plan to sustain the communities’ growth. Two of these centres were opened in the last three years. The motivation is clear: Durham recognizes the critical importance of the first few years of children’s lives and it knows the benefits to the future of the region that come from supporting young children.

Conspicuously absent in KMPG’s report is the example of the City of Toronto, which after a receiving similar recommendations from KPMG in 2011, chose to maintain fifty-two municipal centres caring for nearly three thousand kids—and this even under the Ford administration.

So there are plainly other paths to choose besides closing these centres. And tonight we are hearing lots of informed, research-based, and also very personal reasons why Regional Council needs to take these alternate paths, voting “no” to this recommendation.

But tonight could also be a starting point for a new conversation about expanding our regional children’s centres. About adding spaces and building new centres in areas of most need so that every family can choose to access this high quality care. And about addressing the crucial gap in infant spaces.
For nearly forty-five years, children have benefited from the quality childcare provided in these children’s centres. We need Regional Council to continue to make the wise decision they have been making for decades to support high-quality, municipal-run daycares in our region. This is something we should be leaving for the next generation.

Instead of discussing closures, we need to be working on creating more public childcare, for everyone, for another 45 years. Building on the Region’s long history of providing excellent childcare could be a defining feature of our region. The Region could become a leader in childcare in Ontario and Canada.

And we can start right here, right in this room, where I feel really honoured and excited to be surrounded by renowned childcare researchers and experts, early childhood educators, practitioners from the school systems, informed and passionate parents of our centres (past and present), political leaders, and more....

I hope that what comes from this meeting is the Council’s renewed commitment to its children’s centres and a commitment to bring us all together again soon in a different forum, to plan the next five decades of supporting our youngest citizens.

I’d like to close by remembering the origins and inspiration for these children’s centres. In 1966, Edith MacIntosh was the second woman elected to the City of Kitchener Council. In 1969, as reported in The Record (April 11, 1998), Edith MacIntosh, who became known as a “crusader for day care,” “organized a committee to lobby for working mothers and sole-support parents in need of quality child care.” Four of the current regional children’s centres were established shortly thereafter, in 1971. In 1975, Edith MacIntosh became the first and to date only female mayor of Kitchener. Then in 1998, the children’s centre my son attends was named in her honour, to recognize her “lifetime of work on behalf of children”. As said well in the Kitchener Post, “MacIntosh’s legacy lives on through the Edith MacIntosh Children’s Centre on Stirling Avenue” (http://www.kitchenerpost.ca/community/power-and-politics/).

The importance of these centres is woven into the very fabric of this region’s history—and their importance extends far into our region’s future. So let’s protect the centres, let’s grow them and let’s pass them on.
It is really important to me to be able to speak to you here today, and I appreciate the opportunity to do so. For so many parents in this Region, childcare outside the home is not an option, it is a necessity. For the 3,805 children on the waiting list for daycare spots, this is a need which is not being met. I appreciate the argument from Coun. Strickland on the CBC the other day that council must consider the needs of all the Region’s children in care, not just those at these public centres. But the facts are that in the regions in Ontario where KPMG’s cookie-cutter recommendation to close public daycares has been implemented, such as Durham and Peel, there has been no improvement in care – waiting lists have gotten longer, and private centres have not been able to expand to meet the increased needs of parents in the region who have to deal with fewer centres.

200 additional subsidized spots at private centres is a nice idea, but as we know there is no waiting list for subsidies – the Region is taking care of this issue very well already. Furthermore, how are we to expect the private sector to expand to handle extra spots when there are 3,805 children without spots now? We should not be confident that existing centres will “absorb” the losses, and as we have seen, the standard of care is not necessarily the same. We know now that KPMG’s recommendation, which is a standard recommendation offered to every Region with public child care, does not improve child care, it only cuts services – we have seen this before. Closures such as these were rejected by Toronto for good reason.

We parents advocating here have done our research – if this plan was the best for our children, believe me, we would let you know. We are not shy.

KPMG, itself under an investigation which may lead to criminal charges, let’s not forget, admits that Waterloo Region is run efficiently already – there is no financial crisis here which must be managed. 3,805 children without care is a crisis – closing much-needed centres for ideological reasons would be unacceptable and deeply offensive. It was never under KPMG’s mandate to evaluate quality of life, either. Is a huge step backwards in the ability of the region to care for its own worth a few dollars in the short term?

Waterloo Region’s public daycares represent the best child care in the Region. It is something we all should be proud of, something that Council has been doing very right. It would be a huge mistake to lose them. Thank you.
In the first 2000 days of life, more brain development happens than at any other time in life. 85% of the brain’s wiring happens at this time. 85%.

Attention to supporting optimal development during this time in a child’s life has been shown to result in children experiencing better outcomes later in life (school, health, relationships, society, communications and more).

Therefore, investment in the early years has the best return on investment of any time in life. One study measured it as $1 spent in early childhood learning = $8 needed as an adult. You see brains are not born, they are built and early development is a dynamic, interactive process that is not predetermined.

The HighScope Curriculum that is used in these Region-run centres is exemplary, using proven research based strategies for learning. They emphasize active participatory learning with hands on experience with people, materials, events and ideas. These adult-child interactions are critical in the most crucial years of development. In the HighScope Curriculum, each child’s development is monitored and recorded carefully. Only 10 child-care providers in Canada offer HighScope curriculum. The Region run centres offer training and placements for Conestoga Early Childhood Education Students, which benefits all child care in this Region and beyond.

I moved here in 2010 with my husband when I got a job as a Children’s Librarian in Cambridge. I am now the Children’s Services Manager working every day for the early literacy needs of all the children in the City of Cambridge. I love my job. But we don’t have family in this region or in this province. I rely of the quality care of Edith MacIntosh Child Care Centre and trust that our son is receiving the best care possible when I am busy giving my time in the service of all the children in this Region.

When I read the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives report listing Kitchener Waterloo Cambridge as the worst urban centre to be a women in Canada, I was surprised. With our forward thinking breastfeeding friendly public spaces policy, the focus on early literacy and learning through public services and libraries, the LRT bringing communities together, this Region does so much for families. But this recommendation would force families like mine to make impossible choices. When there is already so many impossible choices happening due to lack of quality child care options. We need more options not less.

There are other quality care centres in this Region as well. Not for profit centres that are research driven and put the care of children first. However, to say that the private sector will swoop in and save us from the 3805 children currently on the waitlist for care is a fantasy. Dinokidz in Cambridge is a private child care centre. Parents went to drop off their kids on Tuesday after the September long weekend and found a locked door and a sign stating “Permanently closed” because of a pending lawsuit. Is this the kind of care that we as parents should be satisfied with?
There was an opinion piece in the Record exclaiming parents at this meeting would have heartfelt pleas of “preschoolers over profits” and “quality spaces needed”. That is what we are saying. I don’t know why that is something to make light of knowing the research and crucial development that happens during those first years of life. I am here advocating for these Regional Child Care Centres. I am here advocating for the 1000’s of children that will benefit from these centres in years to come. I am here advocating for my son. And that is nothing to take lightly.

These centres are an example of this Region’s dedication to families, to quality early learning environments and to the investment it takes to raise healthy children together.

Thank you.
Intro
- 2011 Christopher's dedication
- Ken "Regional Council is committed to providing a vibrant comprehensive system of early learning and child care that supports the healthy development of all children in our community."
- Times have changed
- Council has changed
- Valued service in Elmira
- Reduced funding from the province
- Long term benefits outweigh the costs

1. Elmira
- Small rural community
- One licensed child care facility
- 40-45y kids
- Up to 64 kids once the new Riverside PS is complete
- $4.6 M allocated for the child care space in the new Riverside PS
- Elmira parents fear we will not be able to attract another high-quality provider like our current child care centre

2. Funding
- KPMG recommendation is to create 200 new subsidized spots when there is no demand.
- No waiting list for subsidized spots
- KPMG states reduced funding from the region will reduce funding from the province and further erode and destabilize CC services
- $550K property tax levy will disappear w/in 2 years b/c of ↓ prov funding = 47 children w/o CC

3. Benefits
- TD Economics literary review 2012
- ↓ crime, substance abuse, associated social costs
- ↑ earnings, employability, academic achievement
- ROI for every $1 invested = $1.5-3
KPMG - "A caveat should be noted that basing child care solely on cost has a negative effect on quality. High quality child care is more costly given the direct correlation between quality, caregivers, salary levels, equipment and physical space. The economic and social benefits gained from high quality, accessible child care include: increased tax revenue and lower social assistance costs because more parents are working; local economic stimuli linked to child care's labour intensive nature; better outcomes for children and potential mitigation of costs associated with social support later in life."
Conclusion

- Well used and valuable service in Elmina that we fear cannot be replaced

- The region will lose provincial funding because the proposal aims to create subsidized spots when there is currently a wait list

- Waterloo Region has developed some of the best and innovative talent in the world.

- Closing the Child Care centres is going to sweep the legs out from under the next generation of leaders, business owners and innovators.

- Will you make a new commitment to ECF and continued prosperity in WR?

- Thank you for your time
Good evening Chairman Selling and Councillors. For those of you who have not met me yet, I am Tim from the Regional Workers for Regional Programs.

I am speaking to you in support of all Regional programs.

As public service employees, we provide quality service to our community and clients. We take pride in the work we do and are totally accountable for it.

I will now speak directly to the Child Care centers the Region operates.

The Region's Child Care programs set the standard for others to try to achieve. Anywhere I've gone in the
Province others recognize this region's outstanding commitment to providing quality Child Care. When it comes to young children it should be quality not quantity that guides you.

At the staff meeting I attended where staff were told about the KPMG Report, the first question I heard from one of the teachers was "What will happen to the children?" The questions about themselves came later, but the first thought was about
the children in their care. Are those not the people you want caring for your children or grandchildren?

We are only one of ten across Canada that follows a research-based program called High Scope. It is an investment for the future. Children who experience a quality early learning and child care program are more likely to graduate with a post-secondary education, hold higher skilled jobs and experience a healthier life.
Centre staff are all trained in High Scope and recertified every 3 years. The centres also have a Certified High Scope designation. The children's evaluation is based on an authentic, research-based assessment tool called COR Advantage. It is completed by the educators on all children in the program at least twice a year. This measurement tool includes approaches to learning, social and emotional development, physical development, and health.
Language, literacy & communication,

Mathematics, creative arts, science

Technology, social studies &

English language learning.

There is also a tool called the Program Quality Assessment that measures the program, environment & teacher's standards.

High Scope trained teachers outscored their peers on multiple variables assessing classroom environment, daily learning opportunities, adult/child interactions & overall
program quality.
Children in High Scope programs
had significantly higher ratings
on overall development,
initiative & social relations.
(High Scope website)

Reliable, high standard child care
is a foundation block & this is
what our Regional Child Care
center contributes to our society.
Foundation blocks are essential
for the health of the community
& the continued growth of the
local economy.
Regional centres are integrated
and many of the staff have also taken
the Resource Consultant course.
Building staff build relationships
with all children and their parents,
working together, sharing expertise,
and providing a safe and secure environment
for children to reach their full
potential.
Our centres are stable. Our
centres stay open when there is
inclement weather and other centres
have closed. Therefore, parents
can rely on the service we provide. Also they don't need to worry that one day they'll come to doors will be locked with a sign posted that says "Closed Permanently" with no warning. If you check the Regina's stats you will see our centre staff do not have a high turnover. They love their work and develop long-term relations with the children and parents. Consistency is important.
Anastoga College sends their coop students to our centres only. They know our staff are highly trained with lots of experience. They recognize their skill & value as I hope Council also does.

I urge you to remember that these children are the future leaders in our community & we should give them every advantage we can. I have many petitions here that members of the community have signed asking you to keep our centres open.
Please make the right decision on the items before you.

Thank you.
September 29, 2015

Chair Seiling & Regional Councillors:

After reading the KPMG report recommending that five municipal childcare centres in Waterloo Region should close I felt compelled to share some thoughts and concerns on the issue of child care in the Region. While this report shocked the community, it has provided an opportunity for the community to raise the red flag on the urgent need for more quality childcare. The bottom line, we can’t afford to lose any more spaces.

First I should note that the Region has been a leader in supporting families, inclusive of special needs children, for many years. However, families in Waterloo Region continue to struggle to secure care. The five municipal centres provide 250 children with excellent care, but the current wait list sits at 3805. Any parent will tell you that the search for quality, regulated care in a centre or home is an incredibly stressful experience. This situation would be improved if the province had a clear strategy to create more spaces, with targets and deadlines for improving the childcare system, but it does not. To be clear, child care is a "matter of provincial interest" but Section 54 of Bill 10 (Child Care Modernization Act) states that the Minister “may” fund child care programs and provide financial subsidies.

Too often municipalities have been left with the responsibility for providing childcare; recently many are abandoning this responsibility. The question remains, will Waterloo Region join Sarnia, Sudbury, Ottawa and Peel Region by getting out of the childcare business? I sincerely hope that this will not be the case. The reality is that Ontario has no comprehensive plan for child care: no targets, no timelines. Closing high-quality affordable childcare centres is not the answer that families in Waterloo Region are looking for. Parents and children in our community deserve access to childcare that meets their diverse needs.

Of course the government will respond that they have invested billions in Full Day Kindergarten but the reality is that this is not enough; parents do not work from 9am - 3pm. It is also worth noting that full day kindergarten does nothing for families of children three and under and that the focus on these older children has in fact reduced the number of spaces for the younger ones. That said, I commend the Region of Waterloo and the local school boards for investing the time and energy into building a seamless day of care around schools, making use of current infrastructure at very little cost to taxpayers.
There is a compelling case for staying the course and maintaining these five centres, but the debate often gets lost in the already frayed fabric & emotion of a broken provincial childcare system. This debate should not dispute whether not-for-profit models of childcare are higher quality: the research and evidence is conclusive in this respect. When profit isn’t the major motivating force, there is greater access to and greater quality of childcare in our communities. And when affordable, high-quality childcare is widely available, the social and economic benefits are immense with improved outcomes and greater school readiness which has long-term social economic benefits. In addition to improved outcomes for children, greater numbers of parents can participate in the workforce, contributing greatly to the health of the economy.

Every time we lose a public child care centre, we lose quality care for kids in this province and good jobs in our community.

So when KPMG looks to target our public childcare centres in order to find potential savings at the Regional level, we should be extremely cautious about the societal and economic impact that this could have on our local workforce.

I hope that soundly reject these recommendations and continue to support families and children in our community.

Kind regards,

Catherine Fife, MPP Kitchener Waterloo

Cc: Waterloo Labour Council
CUPE Ontario
and Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care
Thank you for the opportunity to provide input to the KPMG recommendations.

I am here tonight because of my concern for the child care system in Region of Waterloo. I believe that the Region should maintain the direct operation of its centre’s and home childcare program. The risks, barriers and disadvantages of divestment outweigh the potential growth of 200 subsidized spaces.

Some context for the issue before you.

No one level of government has ever taken full comprehensive responsibility for leadership and funding of childcare. There have been many attempts over the years; provincial and federal governments have stepped up to the plate, but never together, with any success, at the same time. It has been an issue of political will, and we have yet to have a provincial or federal government that has made the commitment.

Municipalities, who are responsive to community need at the local level, have tried their best to provide local policy, funding and service, have provided leadership, and have taken responsibility when no other government would. This has resulted in a patchwork of services and supports across this province that vary in auspice, funding and supply.

The Region of Waterloo has been a strong supporter of child care programs since its inception......directly operating centre’s and home child care, supporting the creation of quality care choices across the community, cost sharing whenever provincial funding was available, providing full funding when provincial cost sharing was not available, and always balancing the needs of families and children against competing priorities for local tax revenues.
Regional Council has demonstrated the kind of political will that we hope for, at the provincial and federal levels.

There are a lot of pressures on the Region with respect to childcare. As the level of government closest to its citizens, the Region sees the need and hears about the inadequacies of the system, and it is clear that the system as it exists today, is not adequate for all of the families that would like to access high quality affordable care for their children.

I think it is good practice to examine ways to grow the system, ways to make sure that we are using our resources to offer the best services and to always look for ways that the services can be improved and expanded. The demand for regulated childcare has always exceeded availability. But... “Growing the system” by ending the provision of care in one auspice and purchasing care from another, is not as simple as it may seem.

I believe that the divestment of directly operated childcare centres and licensed home childcare program presents too many risks, barriers and disadvantages for this Region.

What are those barriers and risks?

Capital Investments
The Region, as child care operator, has already invested in a long term capital strategy to fund the replacement of the five centre’s, three completed to date and two more over the next few years. Closure of these facilities represents the loss of invested tax dollars, and uncertainty with respect to the future of the buildings. It is unlikely that community operators could afford to purchase these buildings, or afford the actual leasing costs.
Jobs
The Region employs approximately 65 staff in the five centres, and 25 staff in the home child care program. Regional staff is unionized and receive pay equity salaries. If the recommendations of the KPMG report were implemented, 90 Regional staff would lose employment. There are significant implications and risks for the Region’s obligations under the collective agreement and under labour law, especially if the facilities are sold or leased to other operators.

Capacity
It is unlikely that the childcare community has the capacity to absorb 450 childcare spaces. It is not a matter of simply expanding and transferring the spaces from one auspice to another…. this is a significant expansion, more than any current vacancies could assume.

Grants
There are no Provincial capital or equipment grants to assist the child care community to expand. There is no certainty that the current pay equity funding and wage grants could be transferred to new operators, and it is not known if the Province could provide wage grants for the 200 new fee subsidies.

Subsidy Waitlist
There is not a subsidy wait list at this time. We know that this can change; it will increase and decrease as needs change. But without demand, there is no justification for expansion at this time.

Provincial Funding
Provincial funding relies, in part, on utilization of the fee subsidies. If the additional 200 fee subsidies that are not utilized,
the Province will reduce its funding for the Region and re-allocate its resources. The Region risks losing provincial funding.

Tax Savings
There are no tax savings for the Region in the divestment of the Regional centres, and the identified savings resulting in the transfer of the home childcare program to a community agency, and not substantial or verifiable.

Increased Costs
The divestments could represent some increased costs for Region. At the minimum, there will be expectations from the community for capital, equipment, and operating grants to expand their operations. There will be compensation costs resulting from job losses and possible labour issues. And, there are no guarantees that care purchased from the community will continue to be less costly than care that is directly operated.

Reduced Parental Choice
Parents have chosen Regionally operated centres and the home childcare program. Many families have located close to the centres or have chosen a trusted caregiver in their neighborhood. They have chosen these programs because of specific curriculums, accreditations and specialized services. Closing the programs will reduce parental choice.

Service Gaps
The Region’s centres have been located in neighborhoods with demonstrated need for care with consideration for other operators. Closure of the centre’s will leave some neighborhoods without access to service.
The uncertain future of physical facilities, significant job loss, potential labour issues, a lack of community system capacity, the loss of Provincial funding, the potential for increased Regional costs, the loss of parental choice, service gaps... and the loss of the unique and valued models of child care directly operated by this Region. Not a comprehensive list by any means, but these are all serious barriers and financial risks. The recommended plan is not feasible or realistic.

I think that KPMG should have explored the barriers and implications of their recommendations for childcare. I believe that the risks for the Region clearly outweigh the benefits, and that the KPMG report should read...”that the barriers to implementation are too significant, that the ideas lack sufficient merit to pursue, that the cost savings would be limited and that the opportunity for growth has too great an impact on the clients.” And, “that no further action is recommended.”

I believe that the Region of Waterloo has done the best it can do with the resources that it has had to date. The Region responsibly manages regulated childcare services that include municipal, non-profit and private operators, who all work together to continually improve the quality of care for the Region’s children. The regulated childcare service system does needs to grow, but the KPMG strategy is not the strategy to take. Sustainable growth can only come with Provincial and/or Federal leadership and funding.

Thank you for your time and attention tonight.
September 30th, 2015

The Atkinson Centre for Society and Child Development

Ontario Institute for Studies in Education

University of Toronto

Dr. Emis Akbari

The Atkinson Centre, at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at University of Toronto is dedicated to research informing public policy and educator practice in the area of early childhood development, education, and care. Our recommendations reflect the considerable national and international scientific evidence supporting the standards of quality essential to developmental programming for young children.

KPMG's recommendations to phasing out the five municipally operator child care centres, thereby eliminating 250 proven high quality child care spaces in the Region of Waterloo, with the recommendation of increasing regulated home care will result in negative effects for children, families, and the ECE workforce.

With the closure of five municipally operated centres, 250 regulated child care spaces will be removed adding to the already over 2,100 children currently on waitlists in the Region of Waterloo. Research has shown, that with shortages of regulated, affordable child care spaces, jurisdictions see an increase in unregulated home care participation. With the recent deaths of toddlers in unlicensed care, considerable attention should be paid to curtail this direction. Furthermore increasing restrictions on an underground daycare market is not a replacement for quality, accessible child care (see Appendix A).

The recommendation of the KPMG is to expand regulated home child care to support the transition of closing municipally operated centres. Home based child care is a cheaper alternative to centre-based care but it is not better. Research has demonstrated that regulated child care centers display higher mean quality as gauged by provider education and the intensity of structured learning activities, compared to home-based settings. Furthermore, caregiver training has been shown to be the structural characteristic that most consistently predicts observed global quality. Regulated and non-regulated home care have consistently lower trained caregivers compared regulated child care centres. Particularly for children at risk, the use of lower quality care results in increases cumulative risk and negatively impacts child and family outcomes.

Municipal child care is not care like any other. It addresses the critical shortage of care for infants, it responds to children with exceptional needs and to families in crisis. It fills a gap that centres in the community and home care do not have the capacity to provide. In closing the Region's centres you will be leaving many of these families with no place to go.

What is more, academic readiness at school entry has been shown to have persistent effects on later scholastic achievement and socio-emotional regulation. As such, research has focused on the contextual factors that influence school preparedness prior to school entry, specifically the home and child care environments. Positive effects on cognitive child outcome have been found with regulated high quality child care utilization, with larger gains seen for children from lower income brackets. A recent review of the early childhood education literature has concluded that high quality early childhood education is effective at reducing child externalizing behavioural problems. Taken together, for those in the lower SES brackets, affordable high quality child care has a direct impact on the children who spend their days in these programs, and the quality of the child care programs attended impacts their functioning. Furthermore, the availability of child care may further impact families by alleviating stress, reducing maternal
depression, and improving the quality of family interactions. Therefore, access to good quality child care may serve as a protective buffer for low income children and their families⁵.

The KPMG recommends the purchasing of 200 subsidized child care spaces from other agencies. This will not increase the number of regulated child care spaces in the region and in fact is increasing subsidized spaces where there is little demand. Currently, the Region of Waterloo does not have a waiting list for child care subsidy, and demand has been stable for the past few years. The KPMG’s recommendation is to invest into subsidized child care spaces where a demand does not exist at the expense of the availability of regulated child care spaces, where the demand does exist.

With regards to the workforce, research in Ontario has demonstrated that ECEs in public sector jobs show increased job benefits, and for the most part an increase in salary compared to the private sector. ECEs show a preference to work in the public sector, and report that having a union increases their professional status⁶. Closing five municipally operated centres will transition these ECEs back to lower paying jobs, with little benefits and job security.

As stated in the KPMG’s caveats, the directly operated Children’s Centres have high quality ratings, providing service to vulnerable populations, and set benchmarks for best practices for other child care operators. With these centres having an impeccable record of high quality for the last 12 years, they are a benchmark of quality in the region and are a crucial factor for the sustenance of existing levels of quality for other operators.

Research has reliably demonstrated that the benefits of preschool outweigh the costs, indicating a prudent economic investment. Indeed, high-quality preschool programs are amongst the most cost-effective of the social programs,⁷ by increasing maternal labour force participation, increasing tax revenue, and reducing social transfers.

Lastly this Region is recognized across Canada as a child care manager leader. Its unique partnerships with the school boards and training colleges are but two examples.⁸ The capacity of the region to innovate will be compromised if the closures proceed. It is particularly short-sighted to make these changes just as the province is moving to reorganize child care for younger children.

The evidence does not support the KPMG’s recommendations to close municipally operated high-quality regulated child care spaces. It is a poor recommendation, which will disrupt the lives of the children and families involved. It eliminates child care spaces in the face of a demand for more spaces. It replaces good quality programming with poorer programming. I say this not only as an academic, but as a mother who relies on child care. Our children deserve better. We can do better.

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REFERENCES


APPENDIX A

*CBC News – Unlicensed daycares in Canada 'a black hole,' advocate says*

*The Toronto Star - Daycare crisis: Ontario inspections reveal numerous violations*

*The Toronto Star - 30 years of toddler deaths in unlicensed child care*
Good evening Chairman Seiling, and Counsellors

I asked to present to you because I am the National Representative for the Canadian Union of Public Employees and I work closely with CUPE Local 1883 who represents office, clerical and technical employees with the Regional Municipality of Waterloo.

My name is Jill Smyth and I am very concerned about the facilitators and job developers as well as the program assistants who work in Employment Ontario especially in light of KPMG strongly recommending that these services be cancelled via the non-renewal of the Region’s contract with the Ministry of Trades, Colleges and Universities.

Non-renewal of the Employment Ontario contract will negatively impact those participants who desperately require the services provided under this program. These participants are recipients of Ontario Works benefits and represent the most vulnerable populations in our communities. The Region of Waterloo became a service provider for the Employment Ontario program to ensure appropriate services are available to those in need and to assist these community members in obtaining employment so they would no longer require social assistance support.

The employees in Employment Ontario value the mission of the Region of Waterloo in regard to service, integrity, respect, innovation and
collaboration. The employees are highly regarded in the community and are able to bring 160 plus years of experience to their jobs. This experience gives them a unique understanding of the challenges and barriers that the participating clients face when seeking employment. The case managers, placement workers, facilitators and job developers have achieved high standards and considerable success by developing strong relationships both with the community and internally within the Region which allows these employees to maximize services and expedite client needs.

EO caseloads have been comprised of up to 60% OW clientele over the last preceding 3 years and approximately 49% currently. Without Employment Ontario this vulnerable population, we believe, will not be as well served and may cause gaps that will result in hardship for the participants. In addition, we are concerned that if the Region does not remain in control of Employment Ontario it may result in participants requiring social assistance for longer periods of time as outside agencies are not as invested as Regional employees to ensure the success of participants in obtaining employment.

Any gaps in service for this demographic may manifest itself by participants not responding positively as a result of being referred to an external service provider. The gaps could then cause problems which results in lack of motivation, lack of confidence, lack of familiarity with an outside agency versus the familiar Regional employees and Regional systems they are comfortable with and whom are able to direct them and support them through navigating the Regional process as they move through the required steps to become successful.

The collaboration and innovation between EO and ES staff has evolved over the years by the assignment of EO staff to an ES team together with the integration of OW and non-OW participants into both
programs. Participants are better supported because they receive all services under one roof. All the services are there from start to finish and Regional staff are able to communicate with each other to follow each participant to help ensure they receive maximum supports to achieve their goals. The Region can assist Participants by providing relevant certifications that employers are seeking in the labour market which such programs as experience matters both industrial and office; hospitality and tourism; planning for employment; towards employment; and community placement. These programs also provide for literacy support, income support, resume writing, interview skills, pre-employment training and job search. A weekly networking group has been created as well to support all participants which is the only program in this Region. Regional staff have the advantage of direct link to OW case managers and regional ES workers which ensures identification of support and needs that each participant requires.

For participants they trust the connection between EO and OW in maintaining integrity of all the parties concerned. The sharing of information between divisions and departments with the participant allows for a better experience and mutual goals are accomplished expeditiously due to the direct lines of communication.

EO staff and the case managers from OW using the new SAMS software are able to support each other while assisting the participant. This interaction between divisions is valuable as it allows for less frustrations to both staff and participants. Participants can be tracked and supported through the process and ensure that benefits are available to participants when needed and as required in a timely manner. This type of service coordination for Cambridge/Kitchener and Waterloo means that participants can access housing, OW, child care, public health, employment. Education, and training, in additional to GED testing all under the Regional umbrella.
From the few statistics we have been able to obtain, 79-90% participants annually over the last 3-5 years have been successful in securing employment. Approximately 11% of participants are attending training or received educational support. 83% of the participants have accessed more than just social assistance benefits. EO is an integral part of the programs that results in participants achieving self-reliance versus requiring benefits for longer periods of time.

For your reference, in the document package under Appendix I, I have supplied success stories of participants who have achieved wonderful outcomes after accessing Region of Waterloo assistance programs. I hope you take the time to read these personal stories and be proud of their achievements.

Included in the package is a testimonial from Valerie Lyon, President Compass Surplus. This Company uses these programs and is very pleased with their association with the Region of Waterloo.

What CUPE Local 1883 does not understand is, if the Region has an effective and successful tool that results in reduction of community members requiring social assistance and they are able to sustain productive employment...why would they want to discontinue the program?

The KPMG report speaks to an overall savings of $384,000 with a resulting $334,000 annualized savings and that Employment Ontario services can be reassigned to outside agencies who already provide all or part of EO programs. If the goal is to ensure participants obtain and maintain employment why am I not finding in this report any statistics which substantiate whether or not Regional services are more successful on the aspect of reducing social assistance usage.
I ask...has council turned their minds to whether an outside agency will be able to provide the same efficient and effective services as that Region that results in successful outcomes?

CUPE Local 1883 is proposing that time be taken to investigate whether or not participants on assistance achieve self-sufficiency sooner and maintain their employment using the supports and programs currently offered via the Region?

Has the community partners and/or employers been consulted to ascertain whether or not they prefer to work with the region or outside agencies? Will employers be as willing to continue to offer employment opportunities with outside agencies versus the Region?

KPMG has stated that they expect the funding amounts that the Region of Waterloo receives will stay within this Region and the Ministry of Trades, Colleges and Universities will continue to provide the Region’s approximate $1.5 million annually to outside agencies in our communities...has this been confirmed? If the MTCU funding is not awarded within this Region or is reduced whether minimally or substantially, will that not be reflected by clients using benefits for longer periods of time?

Have any statistics regarding community usage of EO and how it impacts OW benefits been supplied to council? Our CUPE members have been advised that statistics are not available but can possibly be accessed by the MTCU. Why can’t we take the time to obtain substantiated statistics from both the Region and MTCU in regard to outcomes supported by data found within the systems?

The Local Union is proposing deferral of a decision to discontinue the EO contract until we have had an opportunity to ascertain how the
MTCU funds the program and to explore other options on how to maintain the program and meet budget restrictions.

As well, CUPE Local 1883 is respectfully requesting the deferral beyond the scheduled October council meeting in order to provide a period of time for a comprehensive review of any data that is made available to the parties. A decision by council to not renew the EO contract will result in serious impact to EO program users as well as Regional employees who are dedicated to providing the best service and success possible for the community. We request an opportunity for council to listen to our concerns and ensure they are fully comprised of all available information before they make a final decision as it relates to the recommendation by KPMG to cancel the EO program.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of the employees in EO.

Respectfully submitted,

Jill Smyth
CUPE National Representative
jsmyth@cupe.ca
519-502-6806
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Hello my name is Marie Rutledge

It is my understanding from reading the news and listening to people around me that Kitchener, Cambridge and Waterloo area are going to become the next Milton. With all the growth that has been predicted or anticipated now you are talking about closing/changing the best day care system in Ontario.

My son attended the Kinsmen Daycare that used to be on Schluter Street. He is now grown and has learned from his experience there.

When I became a single parent, I was stuck with the task to find a daycare for him, so I could continue to support both of us. I was blessed that I found the Kinsmen Daycare. You see I did not know at the time that he had ADHD...I thought it was just normal for a boy. The employees there are properly qualified to handle the ‘special needs’ children, which seem to be increasing. They called me if he fell, or was upset. I received report cards, which my son now still has. I received advice on how to handle him. The quality of the food was tremendous. I did not have to worry that he was not getting the proper nutrition. At the age of 2 my son no longer napped, but the daycare handled this like troopers. They just asked him to lay there and rest, he thought he was just so privileged as they did not try to force him to sleep. They made me feel totally at ease leaving him there and he loved it there. They asked me if I minded if they brought in a mentally challenged child.....I said of course not, they are children as well and need the same or more care. My son was quite a handful, but the girls there were amazing. If it was not for the daycare teaching him and preparing him for kindergarten the teachers there would have had way more trouble dealing with him at Grand View PS, and they still had lots of trouble.
Unfortunately when he went to kindergarten he was no longer at the kinsmen but put into Regional Daycare in private homes. The difference from the Kinsmen daycare and these registered private daycares was like night and day. They are not qualified to deal with ADHD or ASD children or any other special needs children. He was bounced around from one private daycare to another. His schooling was getting worse because of no consistency. He would just start to feel comfortable in these daycares and the daycare caretaker would let him go as he was such a handful. He was not diagnosed till he was half way through grade two. Special needs children need consistency...they don’t take change very well.

You keep saying that when these centers are closed that the private daycare centers will step up....but they have not. You are going to dissolve all these spaces and there are already many, many people on waiting lists... still...even now at this time. How much bigger is the waiting list supposed to get and how much longer are these parents going to have to wait.

I am disappointed that the parents were not consulted before, to let them give you some input before you brought in the consulting firm. We as a community will go from triple gold down to silver and bronze only...that is not progress. Daycares are the foundation of family life, and families are the core of our great cities. Don’t throw our children and new people moving here to the wolves....they know that we have the best daycares.
Talking points...

When Mr. Strickland appeared on the CBC yesterday to defend the position of the KPMG report he made it seem like it was a done deal; that council has already decided to close our Children’s Centres.

He also implied that the waitlist in this region shouldn’t be taken too seriously because parents put their unborn children on the list so there are children on the list who don’t need immediate care. But any parent knows that in order to find care for your child you HAVE to get on the list ASAP because there simply aren’t ENOUGH SPOTS. I placed my daughter on the list when she was born. A year later when I needed care for her there was NOTHING available in my neighbourhood of downtown Kitchener. None of my local providers had space. The first call I got from a provider that was in my area was eight months later from the Edith Macintosh Centre. I work in Guelph, with commuting and all the construction in the core it didn’t make sense to drive to another part of the city for care because I never made it work on time! What does KPMG propose that council do to provide spaces in areas that need them most like downtown Kitchener for example?

It also seems to be an implied tone that the parents fighting to keep these centres open are somehow privileged. To the public it sounds like we would be taking from the privileged few and giving to the underprivileged many but I can tell you this is NOT the case. I can speak for mine and other families when I say that we are middle income hard working families! In fact some of us are even at the lower end of “middle income”. I am not eligible for subsidized care but I don’t fall far outside of eligibility and yet without a reliable care space for my daughter I would have to quit my job which would have severe consequences for my family! What does KPMG propose that council do for middle income families who aren’t eligible for subsidies but have limited or no option for childcare?

And lastly, we affectionately call our children’s centre “School” because with the high scope curriculum and the knowledge and care of the teachers our daughter is getting an education. She isn’t even two. I have conversed with primary teachers who have said that they wish all children could be given this level of care so that more kids would be prepared for school. The decline of school preparedness is an issue in our region and closing these centres would further add to that. What does KPMG propose that council do to maintain the “triple gold” standard of the “raising the bar” program going forward?

Please keep our children’s centres open. For the Children.

Thank you Councillors,

I understand that your region goes above provincial mandates for childcare, but isn’t that part of our legacy? Isn’t what something our children and grandchildren can be proud of? That our regional government invested in them? Truthfully, the mandates should be higher! All children and families in our region, and across the province, should have access to quality reliable care!

Thank you.
HOLD THE LINE on REGIONAL CHILD CARE:

An Appeal

Oscar (Oz) Cole-Arnal

My appeal to you this evening to stand by our Regionally-funded daycare spaces does not come from my support for Richard Walsh as Green Party candidate from Waterloo (though it meshes with his campaign), nor am I here as a strong supporter of the labour movement (even though they my labour comrades can count on my head, heart & feet solidarity), nor do I now speak chiefly as a spokesperson for the Alliance Against Poverty (AAP), although I remain the spokesperson for that delegation this very evening. Also my hope is not to burden you with repetition of the fine words said by previous delegations, such as **** which we at the AAP support strongly. After all it is late, & if you're even half as tired as I that's plenty tired!

Instead, I will speak personally & only for myself, and should I dishonour my AAP colleagues by this I beg their forgiveness in advance.
Hence I stand before you only as Oz Cole-Arnal, last place candidate in the race for Regional Chair, with a message starkly similar to the one I took in that campaign. Tonight my appeal is to leave you with some painful questions I face daily & hope you do as well. No doubt you will recognize the appeal I bring; it is not new from previous notions whether in my last campaign or in speeches at the Day of Mourning yearly in honor of my toiling brothers & sisters wounded or killed at the workplace. Perhaps the chief difference of my appeal this evening—is that it is an appeal from my heart of hearts and not epithets hurled at you our regionally elected politicians.

I agree that you have been elected to use wisely the taxpayers money. Now, here is where I wish to appeal to you based on deep personal convictions—namely my poor halting attempt to follow that ancient Galilean peasant known as Jesus of Nazareth & his current follower Jorge Bergolio, better known as Pope Francis I. I live a solidly comfortable middle-income life. We (my wife, myself & a daughter) live on an income of roughly $65,000-70,000 a year (pensions, benefits, etc.), over 5x
what a person on ODSP survives on & roughly 10x what a person on OW survives on or dies on. In short we can have a decent vacation, I can hang out in coffee shops, buy books (my chief indulgence) without cutting food, clothing or housing. So when I said that, if elected Regional Chair, I would give my entire salary to anti-poverty work, this was not a desire to exercise charity. Rather it was a step toward justice and fairness based on the fundamentals of the three Abrahamic faiths—Islam, Judaism & my own Christianity. Throughout the literature I call Bible wealth redistribution is the norm—whether in the Law, the Prophets or the message of Jesus. So based on that my appeal is both simple & scary! Do not lay off any worker; do not cut costs which lower the income of people making less than yourselves unless you are prepared to live on the income to which your vote may send them. When running for Regional chair my campaign was based upon human need via income sharing and via income distribution. My appeal to you is simple: as a human being are you prepared to live on an ODSP income, a brief EI income while searching for a job in an insecure market based on temp jobs,
OW rates, etc. (you see where I'm going)? If you and I are not prepared to do so (& I'm not), how can you & I ask a human brother or sister to do the same? I can't! Are our human needs any different than those of the vulnerable? Do we deserve more than they? Should they pay the same costs in $$ to be human if we have more $$$? I could not live with myself if I were not prepared, at the very least, to support income for all at least to my level of income. Otherwise I'm saying to them that I deserve more than they?

Finally, allow me to share my notion that government, for all its blunders, does better work than the private sector in terms of community supports & health. Also government is directly accountable to me as a citizen whereas the undemocratic private sector is accountable to a private board where I have no input. Sure, a privately-operated day care centre can hire more folk & maybe, just maybe have more children (read CLIENTS in their model), but above all, they must generate a profit. And in our austerity driven society, profit invariably means cheap, often temp, labour. In my heart of hearts, it is about the vulnerable
our children under the care of well-trained & yes, unionized child
care professionals and for a society, such as post-World War II
that built a strong welfare state through fair taxation which
rendered us more equal. But above all I strongly urge you to
share the wealth through this small act & not further a situation
where gross inequality continues to grow & oppress. Permit me
to close with a faith statement from an American brother named
Jim Wallis that drives me to this evening: “Do not ask how much
money I should give to just causes (or God as he said); ask rather
how much of God’s money I dare keep for myself!” If you have
any questions, I am prepared to respond! If not I sat THANK YOU
& sit down!!!
September 30, 2015

Mr. Mayor and Members of Council

Thank you for providing me with the opportunity to speak tonight. My name is John Martin and I currently hold the position of Program Director for Early Learning, Child Care and Family Resources at KW Habilitation. As you may know from our recent commercials, or other opportunities you may have had to learn about our community involvement, we are an agency that provides a wide range of individualized services and supports to children, and adults, with developmental disabilities. Our Early Learning Program works with the Special Needs Resourcing Collaborative throughout the Region of Waterloo. Specifically, we provide Special Needs Resourcing to licensed child care for children up to the age of six years. This would include the five regional children centres. In addition, we are currently working with a collaborative group to determine the needs of children up to 12 years old, following directives through the process of the
modernization act for Education in Ontario. At KW Habilitation we are guided by our Mission Statement “A community where everyone belongs and participates.”

I would like to speak directly tonight to the review process in considering the closure of the five regional children’s centres during the next five years. My hope is that this will not become a missed opportunity. I think review is a necessary process of both government and quality assurance to ensure that we are doing things properly. It is always important to do the right thing. For children, care and education **must** be done the right way. I also believe that through the Canada’s Ministers of Education Council (CMEC), which has been in existence for almost 50 years, the research overwhelming supports the importance of Early Learning, specifically, ALL children should have access to high quality early childhood education that ensures they arrive at school ready to learn. This is considered one of the four pillars of lifelong learning. This is part of the CMEC’s Learn Canada 2020. Our Education Ministers work collaboratively across this country to ensure that our national agenda for education is in the forefront. They participate with members of the
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Delegates routinely attend meetings and conferences to remain current in educational trends and research across the globe. Canada, and more specifically, Ontario is seen as a world leader in early learning and education. The OECD state that “The extraordinary and long-lasting impact of experiences in the early years requires access to high quality programs that are provided consistently across both the early childhood education and care and education systems.” Our early learning programs are early years’ programs.” We know that a child needs to be an integral part of policy and program development. We also know that the family is central to a child’s development. This is how our Children’s Centres in this region are managed. In Ontario, the provincial agenda from the Ministry of Education has made monumental gains since the beginning of this new millennium. This list is exhaustive and we do not have the time to go into it. However, the Ontario Early Years Policy Framework of 2013 remains a beacon to us as we move forward in the transformative field of Early Years and Education. We now have a division in the Ministry of Education for Early Years.
I was formally an employee of the Ministry of Education for a long time. It is a job I did with passion and had a tremendous amount of satisfaction from. I am fortunate to have had that experience. I feel passionate about my current work. I know from the capacity that I had with the Ministry of Education that the Region of Waterloo was researched, watched and often modelled as a pilot for the work we did. I know from the work done on the provincial and national stage Waterloo was an inspiration for hope and guidance in how to do things with precision. Those are partnerships that have long been established in the early learning and care field. Sometimes formally, and at other times on an informal basis. There are reasons for this. The unique population of Waterloo is younger than the average Ontario population. The manufacturing sector is strong and unique to most communities. We have access to 3 outstanding post-secondary institutions. Our children’s centres have partnerships with many of these community members. The closing of centres will impact our partners and this will mean missed opportunities on much more than a regional level. Our children and their care need to be part of that vision. The future. Our council and city management have demonstrated great vision in the
last few decades. Think of our soon to be rapid transit system. Although a challenge during these days of construction the foresight will be sanctified one day when we realize these people got it. Just look ahead now down the tracks and the need for quality early learning and care programs comes in various forms. Children's regional centres for care and all licensed care programs throughout our region need to be an option for our children, our families, and our partnerships. Our partnerships regionally, provincially, nationally and globally benefit. Closing the doors of our centres will take us off these maps. We are viable because of our quality and our options.

Child care and education should never be about money. We know that for every dollar we spend today on child development we save over seven dollars to the future. We have an opportunity once again to lead the way. Let's take advantage of that.

If I may take the opportunity to quote one of my favourite mayors. Naheed Nenshi, mayor of Calgary. If I were to ask the question why would we do this? The answer would be "Because it is the right thing to do!"
John Martin
Director
Early Learning, Child Care and Family Resources
KW Habilitation
Waterloo Regional Council Submission regarding Waterloo Regional Daycare Funding
By Louisette Lanteigne, 700 Star Flower Ave. Waterloo Ontario.

A KPMG report suggests that the Region of Waterloo should close Regional childcare spaces in order to facilitate more funding for private day care.

Out of curiosity, I phoned staff at Peel Region who went through a similar transition in 2012 when their municipality closed 12 of their regionally run daycare centers.

Peel Regional staff told me the delays to access child care were linked with the delays to access funding to support the requests, not the lack of spaces. When the municipality sold their child care facilities, infrastructure and running costs were externalized which freed up funds to put more kids into the existing spaces, dramatically reducing waiting lists and delays.

Peel Region was very lucky that their local operations were purchased by other daycare agencies so no space volumes were lost as a result of the transition. We can’t guarantee similar results will happen for Waterloo Region though. Are we willing to roll dice on the fate of 250 childcare spaces or 1,100 spaces in the Region’s home child care program?

In the Toronto Star article about Peel Region’s experience dated Sept. 13, 2012 it states

*Councillors who voted for the closures repeatedly said senior government needs to step up.*

“We are at the province and we are talking to upper levels of government about daycare” said Councillor John Sanderson. “It’s a tough situation.”

The only reason why Peel had to sell off their daycares was because there was no Federal or Provincial funding to help families access it. Harper and the Tories failed to provide it federally. The Liberals failed to provide it provincially. It is 2015 and they both still refuse to fund it. That is shameful.

Our Region created both spaces and funding for childcare and I thank you for your leadership, courage and fiscal wisdom. It was the right decision for our community to address the shameful slack of the other levels of Government.

If the NDP wins the election and more Federal funding is provided to families to access regionally run daycare programs, this negates the need for us to sponsor daycare spaces. If the NDP wins, the Federal Government picks up the tab for funding and our Regional Daycare centers will profit significantly as a result. The NDP childcare plan is new guaranteed source of predictable revenue that will reduce wait times, waiting lists and while offset expenses for all municipal tax payers regardless if they have kids or not. Even a bachelor who is a pensioner stands to benefit from the NDP Daycare program if it makes Regional tax dollars. This can only happen if we simply do nothing and let the NDP plan work for us.

I am excited about this election. I am excited at the benefit it means for taxpayers when solutions like this are proposed. This is a responsible planning investment that mirrors the values and courage that our Region had when they agreed to build and support these daycare programs. NDP plan will benefit everyone in the Region. This why I’m voting NDP.

Region of Waterloo must defer making any decision on this matter until after the Federal election. Do the math to see what an NDP win means. It’s not just the kids who benefit. It’s the entire community.

Sources of information: Region of Peel Toll-free: 1-888-919-7800
NDP affordable childcare plan http://www.ndp.ca/childcare
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<tr>
<td>September 2015</td>
<td>$732.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2015</td>
<td>$960.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cost to parents for one year of toddler care**: $10,734.53  
Actual average cost of a childcare space for one year as per KPMG report: $11,765.00  
**Annual difference***: -$1,030.47  
Average cost to parents per month of toddler care: $894.54  
Actual average cost of a childcare space per month as per KPMG report: $980.42  
**Monthly difference***: -$85.87

*My son has been at Edith Maclntosh Children's Centre since he was 16 months old. Above are the last 12 months of exact payment for his toddler fees.

**Note: in the example of Edith Maclntosh, there is no infant care. Therefore, a toddlers space cost to parents can be taken as the most expensive care and above the average.

***Based on the above comparison, the actual difference will be more than listed because while KPMG is listing the average, the toddler expenses are on the higher end of the regional childcare spectrum of fees.

**Conclusion:** I have spoken to at least 50 parents and would say the overwhelming majority are willing to consider paying increased childcare costs to enable our centres to narrow the funding gap, or eliminate it completely to allow them to operate at a break-even, not-for-profit level.
Employment Ontario program cuts.

Thank you for allowing me to speak to the KPMG report that recommends Waterloo Region stop the Employment Ontario program. I have never been motivated to speak officially on Government plans or programs. What brings me here today is that I felt that something was very wrong when I heard that this program may be cut in our area. The reasons for my surprise will be outlined later.

First let me tell you my experience dealing with Government agencies and programs.

I have had the occasion to interact with many government agencies for the past 40 years. As a teenager, I applied for a Social Insurance card. Like most citizens I gleefully pay my taxes and participate in filling out a never-ending stream of paperwork required to receive benefits from the tax payments I loan to various government agencies. The reams of paper required to operate a successful government single handedly sustain our Forestry Industry. I am certain that many citizens would rather have root canal surgery than spend time navigating the bureaucratic channels built by years of Government program development. It is not something many enjoy.

In my lifetime I have had occasion to utilize Employment Insurance services. I found them helpful to aid me when looking for employment.

To summarize, I have dealt with many ministries and government programs and I have not always been a fan, if ever.

In 2008 I lost my job. I have been continuously employed since graduating in 1991. Since the recession in 1991 many things have changed in the job market. I found my self less prepared to secure a suitable career in the post recession world of 2008. I attended a networking program provided by the Employment Ontario office on King Street. I was amazed at the skills of the facilitators and staff there. It was without a doubt the most effective and productive Government program I had ever worked with.
I read the KPMG report and noticed two things.

1. Not renewing the EO contract will see a $300,000 dollar benefit. This recommendation was identified by KPMG as "Low Benefit" "Low difficulty"
2. The recommendation seemed to be based on dollars not performance.

   **KPMG KNOWS THE COST OF EVERYTHING BUT THIS**

   I am speaking experientially. When I consider this program so beneficial, my thinking is it should be replicated, NOT eliminated.

   **VALUES OR NOTHING**

   If you have something that works find out how to make it better and roll it out everywhere.

**Finally:** The KPMG said there is not much low hanging fruit.

Counsellors: look for another tree. It's out there.
Market/Private versus Public Child Care

Market (including commercial and not for profit)
- Child care viewed as a service or charity to parents (it can be bought and sold)
- Offered where it is profitable or cost effective (not necessarily based on need)

Public (municipal, lab schools & school boards)
- Service to parents and early education and care for children
- Public good (focus on child development & benefit to the economy)

Focus should be on quality & not just cost
- Developmental outcomes are tied to quality
- Poor quality care can be harmful

What impacts quality?
- Staff turnover & job satisfaction - pay, benefits & working conditions
- Staff training
- Ratios
- Support for inclusion
- Continuous professional development
- Input into decision making (curriculum & program planning)

The Value of Publicly Managed Child Care
- Highest quality care
- Leaders in inclusion and innovation
- Fair and equitable wages & working conditions (commensurate with education, experience and responsibilities)
- Serve as pay comparators for an underpaid female dominated sector
- Stability – can withstand market forces that impact the private sector
- Fills service gaps not met by the private/market system
- Keeps public investment in the public realm