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## 2004 BUDGET BRIEFING NOTE

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### Issue/Background:

At its March 8, 2004 meeting, the Budget Advisory Committee requested a report outlining the budget implications of the recommendations of the 2004 Action Plan for Children, developed by the Children and Youth Advocate as a follow-up to the 2004 Toronto Report Card on Children.

### Key Point(s):

Consideration of the recommendations in the 2004 Action Plan for Children as submitted to the February 22 meeting of Policy and Finance Committee must include the following points in addition to the information provided in the original recommendations:

- **Recommendations with 2004 budget impact:**

1. Increase funding for the Student Nutrition Program by \$2.338 million, which will restore the municipal funding contribution in existing programs, subsidize food programs in highest needs areas of the city and fund nutrition programs for youth. *Cost: \$2.3 million. Endorsed by Toronto Board of Health, February 23, 2004. Awaiting decision at BAC budget wrap-up. (Consolidated Grants)*
2. Fully fund the Food Security Grants. They will enable low-income areas to access healthy meals and foster neighbourhood solidarity. *Cost: \$1.15 million. \$500,000 recommended by Community Services Committee, February 4, 2004. Awaiting decision at BAC budget wrap-up. (Consolidated Grants)*
3. Expand the number of Peer Nutrition programs and add a Nobody's Perfect education component in order to meet the nutrition and parenting education needs of an additional 900 families and 1400 children. *Cost: net \$262.8 thousand; gross \$525.5 thousand. Endorsed by Toronto Board of Health, February 23, 2004. Awaiting decision at BAC budget wrap-up. (Public Health)*
4. Expand the Children's Before and After School Recreation Program across 24 sites. This will enable more children to have fun in a safe, supervised place that is affordable for parents. *Cost: \$255.2 thousand. Not in current budget request. (Parks and Recreation)*
5. Expand the Preschool Recreation Program across 99 additional sites in all 4 districts. This will provide 27,535 children and parents with registered and drop-in preschool program opportunities, 10,200 outreach referrals, 13,280 preschool drop-in opportunities, and 4900 opportunities to participate in special events. In total, the Preschool Recreation Program

will serve 42,635 children and families. *Cost: \$701.1 thousand. Not in current budget request. (Parks and Recreation)*

6. Expand the Children's Recreational Program across additional 65 sites. This will provide children with 38,194 recreational opportunities. *Cost: \$438 thousand. Not in current budget request. (Parks and Recreation)*
7. Expand the Children's Recreational Camp Program to reach 11,158 children. This will help children make new friends and learn new skills, as well as provide a form of quality childcare for working parents. *Cost: \$503.38 thousand. Not in current budget request. (Parks and Recreation)*
8. Create Girls' Recreation Programs across 28 sites to provide 10,166 girls with registration and drop-in opportunities. *Cost: \$237.33 thousand. Not in current budget request. (Parks and Recreation)*
9. Increase the number of childcare spaces so more children have access to quality care. *The 2004 Children's Services BAC recommended capital budget include capital funding of \$9.6 million to increase the number of child care spaces. (Children's Services)*
10. Ensure the quality of care provided and the affordability of childcare service in Toronto by maintaining all lines of funding, including wage subsidy. *Cost: \$1,781.7 thousand gross, \$356.3 thousand net. On March 11, 2004 BAC approved the redirection of the \$1,425.4 thousand Provincial share of the wage subsidy program to fund space subsidy, and a net budget reduction of \$356.3 thousand. (Children's Services)*
11. Commit the next annual increment to the phased-in return of actual costs in order to achieve full payment of actual costs by 2006. *\$3.3 million currently recommended in operating budget so no additional 2004 budget impact. (Children's Services)*
12. Maintain the 98 Toronto Public Libraries' current service levels by reneging the proposed \$1,253,000 funding cut in the 2004 municipal budget. *The \$1,253 thousand reduction was not recommended by BAC on March 11, 2004 (\$670 thousand EMT Unallocated Reduction and \$583 thousand ABC Target Reduction). Cost: \$1.25 million. (Toronto Public Library)*

- **Recommendations with future year impact:**

1. Expand the childcare program to include another 2000 subsidized spaces in order to reduce the wait list of eligible children, on the condition that they are cost-shared 80/20 by the provincial government

*Cost: \$12.3 million for 2000 spaces. Currently in Children's Services base budget awaiting provincial 80% commitment. City's 20% (\$3.1 million) will be funded from the Social Assistance Stabilization Reserve. Not a new item and will not create a budget pressure in 2004. In addition, the 2,000 spaces are budgeted at an annualized value, and, given the timing of City and provincial approvals, there is little chance of spending the total budgeted amount in 2004. In other words, regardless of the amount of additional subsidy spending, the impact on the gross budget would not be felt until 2005. (Children's Services)*

2. Advocate the provincial government to restore its contributions to subsidized childcare and fund the 1800 spaces that were cut. *See above. (Children's Services)*
3. Continue to provide five year capital funding to the "Let's Build Capital Revolving Fund". *Estimated contribution from the City for 2005 to 2009: \$31.5M. (Shelter, Housing and Support)*
4. Continue to be at the forefront in the development of affordable housing, through the "Let's Build Program", by providing property-tax money to this program. *2005 budget impact: estimated \$750. thousand. (Shelter, Housing and Support)*
5. Continue to support the Toronto First Duty Project to ensure that the children and families served now can continue to benefit from this program. *Current City funding runs out in 2005. The Commissioner of Community and Neighbourhood Services will provide a report outlining progress and future steps required to support and expand Toronto First Duty. (Children's Services)*

- **Non-Budgetary Recommendations:**

1. Explore feasibility of a joint pilot project between Toronto Shelter Services and Public Health to do deep dental cleaning for high-risk pregnant women living in shelters. This may reduce the number of low weight birth babies in Toronto.
2. Request the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care to cover the cost of dental cleaning for uninsured, low income pregnant women as a means of reducing the incidence of pre-term births.
3. Advocate the province to fully fund the Healthy Babies Healthy Children Program.
4. Advocate the province to sustain the Early Childhood Development Initiative funded projects beyond the current 5 year plan.
5. Continue to advocate the provincial government to contribute its fair share of the Early Childhood Development Initiative so more licensed childcare spaces can be created.
6. Adjust the requirements for subsidized childcare to realistically meet families' circumstances.
7. The City must equalize the distribution of Early Years Centres' funding across the ridings. This will ensure each child has access to an equal amount of resources as every other child.
8. Explore the provision of licensed childcare during non-traditional childcare hours, as well as flexible hours of care, to support the needs of families who have to work nights, weekends, shifts and/or multiple jobs.
9. Continue to advocate the federal government to help create a municipal-federal partnership to build on the national childcare strategy.

10. Advocate the provincial government to adapt the school funding formula so schools have more funding for needed resources and programs.
  11. Advocate the provincial government to increase social assistance rates to reflect families' cost of living and to increase the minimum wage more swiftly than the current three-year plan.
  12. Advocate the federal and provincial governments to create initiatives that allow parents to achieve a better work-family balance, which will help them meet the multiple demands placed on them.
  13. The Shelter, Housing and Support Division, through the "Let's Build Program", must continue to support non-profit and private organizations' efforts to build and sustain new permanent affordable housing.
  14. Continue to implement the Housing First policy for surplus city lands by developing/retrofitting unused space into affordable housing. *Contingent on land availability, suitability criteria and a community consultation process.*
  15. Remove the cap placed on Housing First land value. *Contingent on land availability and suitability criteria.*
  16. Continue to advocate the federal and provincial governments to contribute their fair share of investment into affordable housing development.
  17. Continue the efforts made to coordinate all planning and services that affect children. New efforts should also be made to assess whether such coordination and service linking have effectively been meeting children's and families' needs.
  18. Initiate the process of establishing service benchmarks and measuring outcomes.
  19. The City should continue to find "Made In Toronto" solutions that help serve children and families, while respecting local priorities and needs.
- **Major Policy Changes:**
    1. Adapt the shelter by-law to allow shelter development in all parts of the city, not just major arterial roads.
    2. Place the sale of surplus residential properties into the Capital Revolving Fund in order to create new affordable housing. *The calculation of this source of revenue is undetermined and would need involvement of Corporate Real Estate to conduct an impact evaluation analysis.*

**Date:**

**March 22, 2004.**