

Regional Council
Regional Municipality of Peel
10 Peel Centre Drive, Suite A, 5th Floor
Brampton, ON L6T 4B9

January 24, 2011

Re: Reject Proposal to Close 12 Region of Peel Child Care Centres by September 2012

Dear Council Members,

This letter is to urge you to vote AGAINST the proposed closure of twelve municipal child care centres as recommended by KPMG consultants. It is tragic that up to 864¹ licensed child care spaces will be lost at a time when the Region of Peel needs more high-quality child care rather than less.

As a parent living in Peel, I would like to explain why this issue is so important to me. I waited 18 months for a full- time non- subsidized spot for my daughter. Prior to that, I had to delay my return to work and settle for another facility part time until a full time position became available. There is no comparison between the other facility, which is listed in the Peel brochure, but falls very short of quality care. The Valley Child Care Centre delivers quality care for my daughter and I don't have to worry if she is being well cared for and can focus on my work. Her physical well being is looked after (she had cancer and has an artificial eye, which unfortunately was a problem at the other facility). She is nurtured by caring qualified staff, has continuity of teachers, is fed nutritional food, is in a clean environment, and is learning and growing into a remarkable girl.

In contrast, the other facility had large class sizes, 'teachers' who were not ECE educated, poor dietary choices for lunches, poor hygiene practices and an overall lack of communication. My daughter is blind in one eye and not one of her teachers ever thought to sit her in the class where she could see the other children and the activity and rarely clean her eye glasses. There were so many issues with the other facility and it became so stressful as a parent that I was not sure what to do. I would never know what happened to my daughter all day because there was a different person in the morning and a different person in the evening and they did not report to each other.

My daughter could have gone to full day school, as the other children in her senior kindergarten class. However, I would still have had to pay for before and after school (PLASP) and did not feel transitioning between PLASP and school was the right decision for her. The Valleys is actually a bit cheaper than the private facility she was at before, and it is worth it to know she is in a great environment, eating nutritional food, exploring her community on field trips, while enhancing her learning and fostering her development. I am extremely pleased with my daughter's development. Her reading, writing, vocabulary are enhanced through the model of education that has been implemented at the Learn Play care Centres.

As a registered nurse, I am deeply concerned that just as we have to come to understand how critical high quality child care is for child development, the Region of Peel is willing to risk losing some of the highest quality child care in Peel by closing the Learn Play Care Centres. Peel Region is a recognized leader in providing creative, excellent child care services to one of the most diverse regions in Ontario. Even my daughter's pediatrician in Etobicoke told us her daycare was exceptional when he asked what school she attended.

As publicly-operated child care tends to be even better than non-profit child care, which is consistently shown to be of better quality than profit-making child care,² these twelve centres need to be treasured as setting the bar for other centres instead of being closed. The Region of Peel should be building on our outstanding child care facilities and extraordinary staff as a catalyst for quality for our most precious, and vulnerable, community members.

Closing the twelve child care centres is not in the best interest of Peel Region's children, families, and the larger community. I have lived the experience and no one should have to settle for child care that is not high quality. The savings does not outweigh the investment in our children, the future.

Please vote NO to closing the child care centres.

Sincerely,

Jannine Bolton

¹ Menard, J. (2012). Proposal to Redirect Current Child Care Funding, Region of Peel Regional Council Report, January 26, 2012, Appendix II.

² Friendly, M. (2012). Letter to Peel Regional Council. January 16, 2012.