

April 12, 2010

The Honourable Vic Dhillon
Member of Provincial Parliament, Brampton West and
Vice-Chair of the Standing Committee on Social Policy
37 George St. North, Suite 304,
Brampton, ON
L6X 1R5.

Dear Mr. Dhillon:

RE: Bill 242

I am writing this letter on behalf of Success By 6 Peel, a collaborative of over 40 early learning and community-based agencies dedicated to the well-being of children 0 to 6 in Peel Region.

We are very supportive of the government's long-term commitment to early learning and child care and to the essential directions in the vision outlined for children and families in "With our Best Futures in Mind: Implementing Early Learning in Ontario". We also support the government's decision to begin this new policy direction with full day learning and the extended day program for 4 and 5 year-olds, for which Bill 242 is intended to provide the legislative framework.

We are concerned, however, that Bill 242 does not permit the provision of extended early learning and child care services by not-for-profit community-based organizations who have a strong history and positive track record in providing such services with excellent results for children. We urge you to amend the legislation so that school boards may choose to enter into partnerships and agreements with community-based organizations for the provision of the extended day early learning and child care services for children 4 and 5 years old and for those 6 to 12 years old requiring such services.

This mixed model has proven successful in meeting children's needs and being cost effective in different communities throughout the province and is quite capable of ensuring the seamless model of service envisioned in the policy. School boards should be given the option to develop these kinds of partnerships with community-based non-profit organizations. This will ensure continuity of existing services which have a positive track record of supporting children 0 to 6 and is in the best interest of children and families. It also provides a more cost effective option.

We would also urge that the legislation be amended to require that each school board make provision for children with special needs within these new programs for the full day and that the legislation require the Ministry to provide the Boards of Education with the appropriate funding as well as the community-based organizations currently serving these 4 and 5 year-olds so that effective service partnerships for children with special needs can be developed.

We will be submitting a more comprehensive brief on the early learning initiative in the near future, but we wanted to draw these particular issues to your attention as you consider the legislation in your committee today.

Yours truly,

John Huether
Chair
Success By 6 Peel

c.c.

The Honourable Peter Fonseca MPP Mississauga East-Cooksville
The Honourable Linda Jeffrey MPP Brampton-Springdale
The Honourable Harinder Takar MPP Mississauga-Erindale
The Honourable Bob Delaney, MPP Mississauga-Streetsville
The Honourable Sylvia Jones, MPP Dufferin-Caledon
The Honourable Dr. Kuldip S. Kular, MPP Bramalea-Gore-Malton
The Honourable Amrit Mangat, MPP Mississauga-Brampton South
The Honourable Charles Sousa, MPP, Mississauga South