



## ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: March 16, 2009  
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Meeting Date: April 7, 2009

TO: Vancouver City Council

FROM: Managing Director of Social Development

SUBJECT: 2009 Civic Child Care Grants: Allocation 1 of 3:  
Administration of City-owned Child Care Facilities Grant and City-wide  
Child Care Support Services Grant

### **RECOMMENDATION**

- A. THAT Council approve an Administration of City-owned Child Care Facilities grant of \$112,541 to Vancouver Society of Children's Centres (VSOCC). Source of funds: 2009 Civic Childcare Grants Funds, 2009 Operating Budget;
- B. THAT Council approve a City-wide Child Care Support Services grant to Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre totaling \$228,704. Source of funds: 2009 Civic Childcare Grants Funds, 2009 Operating Budget.

The recommendations are for the provision of grants and therefore 8 votes in support are required.

### **GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS**

*The General Manager of Community Services RECOMMENDS approval of A and B.*

### **COUNCIL POLICY**

On October 23, 1990, Council approved the Civic Childcare Strategy that set out to:

- support the viability, accessibility and quality of existing child care services;
- assist child care initiatives in high need areas;
- encourage and support efficient, coordinated administrative services required for a child care system in Vancouver to lever other sources of child care funding, whenever possible.

Council established the annual Civic Childcare Grants Program on October 23, 1990, as part of the Civic Childcare Strategy. The overall objectives of this grant program are:

- to support the viability, accessibility and quality of existing child care services;
- to assist child care initiatives in high need areas;
- to encourage and support efficient, coordinated, administrative services required for a child care system in Vancouver;
- to lever other sources of child care funding, whenever possible.

On December 15, 1994, Council approved a report outlining the goals, objectives and scope of operations for the Vancouver Society of Children's Centres.

On April 23, 2002, Council approved "Moving Forward Childcare: A Cornerstone of Childhood Development", which set out a strategic plan for the integration of child care and child development services within a hub framework for the City.

On March 24, 2009, Council adopted the 2009 Operating Budget. A total budget of \$1,137,400 has been allocated for 2009 Civic Childcare Grants, which includes a 2% cost of living increase from 2008.

*Approval of grant recommendations requires eight affirmative votes.*

#### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this report is to recommend approval of:

- One Administration of City-owned Child Care Facilities grant to the Vancouver Society of Children's Centres, totaling \$112,541;
- One City-wide Child Care Support Services grant to Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre, totaling \$228,704.

#### **BACKGROUND**

The Vancouver Society of Children's Centres (VSOCC) was established in 1994 by the City to manage City-owned/leased child care facilities in the Downtown core which have been developed as part of the public amenities process. VSOCC provides licensed child care services for children 3 months to 12 years old and a full range of family drop-in and support programs all in high density developments. They are the largest provider of infant/toddler care in BC. In addition, they work closely with other downtown and city-wide service providers to plan and coordinate services for families.

The Administration of City-owned Child Care Facilities grant category was established in 1994 to offset administrative costs to support the Society in the management of City-owned/leased facilities and the development of new sites.

Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre (Westcoast) is a Vancouver-based, not-for-profit, organization providing child care and child development services for families, practitioners, organizations and others, in Vancouver and province-wide. The City provided leadership and

funding in the development of Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre's services in the early 1990's and started providing annual grants to the society in 1992.

Westcoast works to create and sustain a network of quality early childhood and child care services that address the spectrum of needs and interests of families with children aged 0 - 12 years. Westcoast provides direct services to families in Vancouver as well as support, consultation, resources and training for child care and child development practitioners.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **1. Administration of City-owned Childcare Facilities Grant: VSOCC**

Staff recommend a grant of \$112,541 to support a portion of the administration cost of VSOCC for day-to-day management of eight City-owned child care facilities and the early childhood development and family programs. This grant offsets the cost of core staff positions and also enables staff to provide leadership in the design and development of new centres and new programs/services for families living and working Downtown.

VSSOC operates 339 licensed spaces, in the following eight locations:

<b>Program</b>	<b>Number of Spaces</b>	<b>Age Group</b>
Bayshore Garden's Children's Centre	24	Infant/Toddler
	25	3-5 Years
Dorothy Lam Children's Centre	24	Infant/ Toddler
	25	3-5 Years
	20	Preschool
	20	Kindercare
Elsie Roy Elementary School	25	Out of school care
Library Square	12	Infant/ Toddler
	25	3-5 Years
Pender Street Children's Centre	16	Toddler
Quayside Children's Centre	24	Infant/ Toddler
	25	3-5 Years
Sapphire Children's Centre	12	Toddler
	25	3-5 Years
Shaw Towers	12	Infant/Toddler
	25	3-5 Years
<b>Total</b>	<b>339</b>	

In addition, VSOCC operates family place programs in 7 locations serving 220 children and will offer a minimum of 40 early childhood development parent workshops in 6 different locations with about 800 participants.

In 2008, VSOCC staff assisted in the design of four new facilities with 212 spaces under development in the downtown area: 1451 Homer (89 new spaces), opening in September 2009; 833 Homer Street (37 new spaces); 600 Abbott (49 new spaces) and a 37-space child care centre, family development centre and ancillary space at 1372 Seymour. Planning work,

in collaboration with other service providers, is underway on the development of a possible expansion at Dorothy Lam/Elsie Roy School for a multi program, multi-use space which will include toddler care, preschool, kindercare and other uses.

VSSOC currently has a total budget of \$6.5 million, employs 112 full-time equivalent staff and is supported by 53 volunteers and 180 casual volunteers. The majority of their funding comes from parent fees (\$3.3M). The province supports the childcare centres and family places directly through the child care operating fund, special needs funding and early childhood development grants (approximately \$790,000). Among the staff group, 34 languages are spoken to meet the range of diverse family and children needs. VSOCC has a core administration budget of \$835,211. The recommended City grant will support a portion of costs associated with nine core staff positions.

## **2. City-wide Childcare Support Services: Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre**

Staff recommend a grant of \$228,704 to support City-wide services that include Family Information and Referral, a child care/child development library, child care training and workshops, and an Information Advisor to respond to inquiries about best practices and quality in child care environments.

In 2008, Westcoast responded to 6,800 telephone, e-mail and in-person contacts through their Family Information and Referral Services in 3 languages (Mandarin, Cantonese and English) to parents looking for information on child care in Vancouver. The Society offers a large child care/child development library with a circulation of over 16,000 books, periodicals, videos and other resources in several languages. They also provided 124 workshops and training sessions to parents, child care providers, early childhood development practitioners and others in Vancouver, including parent and caregiver workshops and courses on racism and bullying prevention training and tools. They responded to 441 inquiries from families, care givers, government, business and media with information about quality and best practice in early childhood education and child care environment. In 2008, Westcoast achieved accreditation through the Council of Accreditation.

Westcoast has a budget of approximately \$1.3M, and employs 19 full-time equivalent staff. The province provides \$550,000 which is primarily for Westcoast's provincial programs; however, a portion of this funding goes to the City-wide support services program. The recommended City grant will assist with salaries for 7 staff positions plus program and administrative expenses.

## **3. Child Care Trends in Vancouver**

There continues to be a shortage of affordable, quality child care in Vancouver. VSOCC has 2,000 families on their waitlist. Average parent fees in Vancouver stabilized but are at high rates. The average fee in Vancouver in 2008 for group infant care was \$1,091 (1% increase from 2007), toddler care \$996 (1% increase from 2007) and three to five years care \$697 (3% increase from 2007).

A shortage of trained, qualified staff for child care centres, especially for infant and toddler care continues. Finding substitute workers is particularly challenging. Many trained early childhood educators are leaving the field and it is difficult to recruit new people because the

wages and benefits are low. The average provincial wage of a centre-based early childhood educator is \$22,428 per year.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The 2009 budget for Civic Childcare Grants is \$1,137,400. Allocations take place three times a year as illustrated in the table below.

Child Care Grant	2009 Proposed	2009 Allocated	2009 Remaining	Council Report Date
Admin. of City-owned	\$112,541	\$112,541	0	April 7, 2009
City Wide Support Services	\$228,704	\$228,704	0	April 7, 2009
Child Care Enhancement	\$766,155		\$766,155	May 19, 2009
Program Development	\$10,000		\$10,000	November, 2009
Program Stabilization	\$5,000		\$5,000	November, 2009
Research and Innovation	\$15,000		\$15,000	November, 2009
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,137,400</b>	<b>\$341,245</b>	<b>\$796,155</b>	

This report recommends \$112,541 for an Administration of City-owned Child Care Facilities grant for the Vancouver Society of Children’s Centres and \$228,704 for a City-wide Support Services grant for Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre for a total of \$341,245. This leaves \$796,155 remaining in the 2009 Child Care Grants Budget, which will be reported on later this year.

**SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Child care is important for the following reasons:

- It supports the labour force participation of parents and economic growth;
- Benefit and cost analysis indicates that good child care can generate up to 7-for-1 return, producing \$7 in benefits for every \$1 in new spending;
- Quality early childhood development and care supports school readiness and healthy child development.

**CONCLUSION**

This report recommends approval of \$341,245 of the \$1,137,400 from the 2009 Child Care Grants Budget, 2009 Operating Budget.

- One Administration of City-owned Childcare Facilities grant to the Vancouver Society of Children’s Centres, totaling \$112,541;
- One City-wide Child Care Support Services grant to Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre totaling \$228,704.

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