

Report Date: May 5, 2010
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TO: Vancouver City Council

FROM: Managing Director of Social Development and Deputy General Manager,
Community Services Group

SUBJECT: 2010 Civic Child Care Grants: City-owned Child Care Facilities Grant and
City Wide Support Services Grant

RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT Council approve a grant of \$112,541 to Vancouver Society of Children's Centres (VSOCC) for administration of City owned child care facilities. Source of funds: 2010 Civic Childcare Grants Funds, 2010 Operating Budget;
- B. THAT Council approve a grant to Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre for city wide support services totaling \$228,704. Source of funds: 2010 Civic Childcare Grants Funds, 2010 Operating Budget.

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

GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS

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

COUNCIL POLICY

Council established the annual Civic Childcare Grants Program on October 23, 1990, as part of the 1990 Civic Childcare Strategy. The program objectives 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 (VSOCC).

On December 18, 2009, a total budget of \$1,137,400 was allocated for 2010 Civic Childcare Grants.

Approval of grant recommendations requires eight affirmative votes.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to recommend approval of:

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

BACKGROUND

This report represents the first of three annual allocations of the Civic Childcare Grants Program. The remaining allocations include the Childcare Enhancement Grants and the Program Development, Stabilization, and Research Grants. Grants for the remaining allocations will be recommended to Council in July 2010.

The Vancouver Society of Children's Centres (VSOCC) is a registered non profit society established by the City in 1994 to operate childcare centres in City-owned/leased facilities secured through development processes in the downtown core.

Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre (Westcoast) is a Vancouver based registered non profit organization established in 1992 providing resources and child development services to families, practitioners, organization and educators.

DISCUSSION

1. City-owned Childcare Facilities Grant: VSOCC

Staff recommend a grant of \$112,541 to support VSOCC's administration and day-to-day management of City-owned child care facilities in high density developments developed as part of the public amenity process, early childhood development and family programs, and design advice for new centres and programs/services for families living and working Downtown.

VSOCC has a total annual budget of \$7.2 million. The majority of VSOCC's funding (\$5.1 M) comes from parent fees. The Province's annual contribution is approximately \$965,000. The City grant contributes towards total administrative costs of approximately \$689,819.

The City grant supports a portion of costs for six staff positions who in turn:

- operate 388 licensed spaces in nine locations, providing licensed child care services in the Downtown core (see Table I for reference);

- partner with other downtown and city-wide service providers to provide educational and support services for families;
- operate family place programs in seven locations serving 200 families/300 children
- offer a minimum of 40 early childhood development parent workshops in six different locations with about 700 participants;
- assist in the design of new facilities (see Table I); and
- employ 120 full-time equivalent staff who speak a total of 29 languages to meet the range of diverse family needs.

Table I

VSOCC Centres In Operation						
Centre	Infant/ Toddler	3-5 Years	Preschool	Kindercare	Out of School Care	Total
Bayshore Gardens	24	25				49
Dorothy Lam	24	25	20	20		89
Elsie Roy					25	25
International Village	24	25				49
Library Square	12	25				37
Pender Street	16					16
Quayside	24	25				49
Sapphire	12	25				37
Shaw Tower	12	25				37
Total Number of Current Operational Spaces						388

Three new sites under development that VSCOCC will manage include Sea Star (1451 Homer), 833 Homer, and 1372 Homer. These new centres will add 183 new spaces for families living or working in the downtown core in 2010.

2. Childcare Support Services Grant: Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre

Staff recommend a grant of \$228,704 to support City-wide services offered by Westcoast.

Westcoast has a total annual budget of \$1.3M . The majority of Westcoast's funding comes from the Province.

The recommended City grant will assist with salaries for nine core staff positions to provide:

- information and referral services to Vancouver families. In 2009, 16,500 lists of child care centres were distributed and 6,200 information inquiries were responded to;
- a child care/child development library and a mobile lending library;
- over 120 child care training and workshops for early childhood educators and practitioners;
- an advisor providing guidance to organizations developing new centres in Vancouver;

- operate a job board to help match service needs with employment opportunities; and
- employ 19 full time equivalent staff speaking 10 languages.

3. Child Care Challenges and Trends in Vancouver

There continues to be a shortage of affordable, quality child care in Vancouver. For example, VSOCC has 2,300 families on their waitlist, and their staff annually field 14,000 calls regarding space availability.

Average parent fees in Vancouver continue to increase. In 2009, the average monthly fee per child in Vancouver for group infant care was \$1,103 (1% increase from 2008), toddler care was \$1,046 (5% increase from 2008) and care for three to five-year-olds was \$748 per month (7.3% increase from 2008). Also, while the total fertility rate has been declining in BC, BC Vital Statistics reports that the Lower Mainland has experienced an increase in the number of births.

Infant/Toddler spaces continue to be the most expensive to operate and a shortage of trained, qualified staff for child care centres continues. In 2008, the average provincial wage of a centre-based early childhood educator was \$22,428 per year, and many of them are university trained.

4. Child Care Grants in the Context of Social Policy's Overall Grants Review

Social Policy is conducting a review of its grants portfolio to be completed by the fall of 2010. The review will identify administrative efficiencies across granting programs including the Child Care Grants and improve alignment with Council priorities.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

This report recommends \$112,541 for a 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 2010 Child Care Grants Budget, which will be reported on later this year.

The 2010 budget for Civic Childcare Grants is \$1,137,400. Currently allocations take place three times a year as illustrated in Table II.

Table II

Child Care Grant	2010 Proposed	2010 Allocated	2010 Remaining	Council Report
Admin of City Owned	\$112,541	\$112,541	0	May 18, 2010
City Wide Support Services	\$228,704	\$228,704	0	May 18, 2010
Child Care Enhancement	\$766,155		\$766,155	July 2010
Program Development, Stabilization & Research	\$30,000		\$30,000	November 2010
Total	\$1,137,400	\$341,245	\$796,155	

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Child care is important for the following reasons:

- It supports the labour force participation of parents and economic growth;
- Benefit and cost analyses indicate that good child care can produce \$7 in benefits for every \$1 in new spending;
- Quality early childhood development and care supports school readiness and healthy child development.

Childcare is a key cornerstone to lowering child vulnerability. Only 71% of BC children enter kindergarten meeting all the developmental benchmarks needed for successful learning and future economic sustainability. Across the province, 29% of children are developmentally vulnerable, and in the City of Vancouver, the rate is even greater at 37%.

The services and resources offered by VSOCC and Westcoast, and supported by the civic grants outlined in this report, are directly in line with the “smart family policy” recommended by the research of the Human Early Learning Partnership (HELP) at UBC, which advocates for community supports, provides parenting information, and early childhood education and care.

CONCLUSION

This report recommends approval of \$341,245 from the 2010 Child Care Grants Budget.

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