

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

HELD

October 11th, 2022

2022-273

**Moved by Councillor Champagne
Seconded by Councillor Lougheed**

WHEREAS the province of Ontario is currently experiencing an early years and child care workforce shortage;

AND WHEREAS access to quality licensed child care is an essential component of Ontario's social and economic well-being and enables children to grow up with a sense of community;

AND WHEREAS lack of licensed child care is a barrier for parents to return or enter into the workforce, thus putting a strain on families, hindering economic participation, and forcing parents to remain at home to care for their children;

AND WHEREAS in the District of Nipissing, there is a higher demand for child care spaces than the number of spaces available creating waitlists that have parents waiting for several years prior to getting a space, if they receive a space at all;

AND WHEREAS in recent years the recruitment and retention of qualified Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs) and child care staff has been a challenge that has been exasperated by the COVID-19 pandemic;

AND WHEREAS the workforce crisis in the early years and child care sector has been further exasperated by the significant wage disparity between the compensation paid to RECEs employed by school boards and those employed in licensed child care centers due to lack of funding which has created an inequity for workers with equal qualifications;

AND WHEREAS Ontario has signed the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement putting Ontario on the path to reducing child care fees to an average of \$10/day which will create a demand for more child care spaces when a workforce shortage already exists;

AND WHEREAS the province of Ontario committed to creating an additional 86,000 licensed child care spaces in Ontario without an explicit solution for increasing the number of RECEs and child care staff to fulfill this commitment;

AND WHEREAS the province of Ontario's commitment to a minimum wage of \$18/hour for RECEs with \$1 annual increases until reaching \$25/hour does not provide an immediate response to attracting and retaining child care staff and will take many years to correct the wage disparity;

THEREFORE BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED that Council of the Municipality of East Ferris advocates for the Province of Ontario to address the child care workforce shortage in Ontario by immediately increasing the \$18/hour minimum wage and providing benefits to RECEs in licensed child care centres to an equitable level to that which is paid to RECEs employed by school boards;

AND FURTHER that the Province of Ontario launch and financially support an accelerated Early Childhood Education program, to be completed within 14 to 16 months, similar to the program launched in March 2022 for Personal Support Workers (PSWs), where funding supported the costs of tuition, books, and other mandatory fees, to help address the shortage of RECEs in Ontario;

AND FURTHER that a certified copy of this resolution be forwarded to OMSSA (Ontario Municipal Social Services Association), Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, Childcare Resource and Research Unit, NOSDA (Northern Ontario Service Deliverers Association), FONOM (Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities), AMO (Association of Municipalities of Ontario), all 10 District Social Services Administration Boards in Northern Ontario, and all Ontario Municipalities to request their support and advocacy for this resolution;

AND FURTHER that a certified copy of this resolution be forwarded to Minister of Education Stephen Lecce, Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade and Nipissing MPP Vic Fedeli.

Carried Mayor Rochefort

CERTIFIED to be a true copy of
Resolution No. 2022-273 passed by the
Council of the Municipality of East Ferris
on the 11th day of October 2022.

Monica L. Hawkins
Monica L. Hawkins, AMCT
Clerk