

7.3. Advocacy Item – Canada Wide Early Learning and Child Care Plan

Additional Submissions:

- Brittany Irvine
- Willow Lake Tiny Tots Society
- Rhodora Dio

An open letter to the Alberta Government,

I am a level 3 Early Childhood Educator who has earned an Early Learning and Child Care diploma and completed Alberta's Curriculum Framework course- Exploring Early Childhood Curriculum: Play, Possibilities, and Participation, among other training. In 2015 I was part of a team of educators who won the Child Development Professional Awards of Excellence in the Program Category for Inclusive Child Care. I am a qualified Early Childhood Educator, and I can not afford to pay for quality child care for my children. I am an Early Childhood Educator who can no longer afford to work in child care.

As you are aware, over the past year, the child care sector has taken an overwhelming amount of cuts. The loss of the pilot program, accreditation, and our northern living allowance has slashed the quality standards we once had and created enormous financial burden for centers, educators, and parents. These cuts created the perfect storm for a child care crisis, particularly in the RMWB. The time has come for Alberta to create a \$10/day child care program.

Since the massive cuts, child care center's who have been able to remain open have had to raise parent fee's and make cuts within their program. Parents have been put in a situation where they have to decide if they can absorb the increase in fees, find cheaper unregulated care, or leave the workforce entirely. Educators have had to leave the field because they simply can not afford to work in child care any longer. Being both a parent and an educator I have been hit with higher child care fees for my two children and a lower monthly income.

The pilot program, which created \$25/day child care spaces was the reason that I was able to return to work after having my second child. My child care fees have gone from \$1100/month for two children to \$2775/month for two children. This is an increase of \$1650/month does not include meals or snacks. Factor in the loss of the \$1040/month living allowance and I'm looking at an extra \$2715 coming out of my pocket every month. This is not feasible and I should not be faced with the choice of being a mother or pursuing a career that I love.

I have watched first hand as the funding from the pilot program allowed centres and educators to flourish. The extra training, the creation of age appropriate spaces both indoors and out, and the connections that have been formed with other organizations are just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the positive impact this program had on centers. It truly created quality, affordable child care, and instead of making this program accessible to all Alberta families, it was taken away from everyone.

Now is the time to work with the federal government and create a plan for \$10/day child care. This would be life changing for Alberta families like mine. Our educators,

families, and most importantly our children deserve better. If we don't advocate to support the child care sector now, it's going to get much worse.

It cannot be understated: the sweeping cuts of the last year have caused a child care crisis. I am afraid for the sector and what it will become as it crumbles around us.

Thank you,
Brittany Irvine, ELCC & Concerned Parent

Willow Lake Tiny Tots Society
Anzac Recreation Centre
237 Stony Mountain Road
Anzac Alberta T0P 1J0



July 13th, 2021

Mayor & Council of the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo

We are writing today to ask council to send a letter to the Government of Alberta's Minister of Children's Services and local MLA's Tanya Yao and Laila Goodridge to request participation in the federal universal childcare program as well as reinstating the Cost of Living Allowance for Early Childhood Educators (\$1040.00 a month). Being part of the planned federal program means that Fort McMurray families will have access to affordable, quality, licensed childcare. Reinstating the COLA for ECE's will help us attract educators to the region once again, allowing for more spaces available for families.

The Willow Lake Tiny Tots Society, located in rural Anzac, previously operated a daycare under the \$25/day childcare pilot program. Our daycare served families from Fort McMurray, Anzac and Fort McMurray First Nation #468. Due to the loss of the \$25/day childcare pilot program grant, parents who had been paying \$550.00 a month would have been expected to also pay the additional \$850.00 covered by the grant. Unfortunately, the loss of the grant coupled with a global pandemic and little support in terms of funding caused the Willow Lake Tiny Tots Daycare to close its doors on March 14, 2020.

Parents in Anzac and surrounding areas must now rely on the Headstart program at the Fort McMurray First Nation #468 or unlicensed day homes for children. On a weekly basis we have families reaching out to us, asking about care for their children. There is a significant need for quality affordable childcare in our region however at this point in time it is beyond feasible to be able to operate due the high costs in running a daycare.

We hope that council will help support the childcare sector by sending a letter to the various Government entities expressing the need for the federal universal childcare program, and the reinstatement of cost of living allowance for the Wood Buffalo region.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Skylar Canning
Chair
board.director2@willowlaketinytots.com

Sarah Pocock
Vice Chair
board.director4@willowlaketinytots.com

Willow Lake Tiny Tots Board

Living Allowance and \$10 a day Child Care

- **Is this a bylaw?**

No

- **Written submission**

Sir/Madam:

Good Day. The reason why I am writing this letter is to knock on your good hearts and in hope that you help us in advocating the return of the living allowance for all the ECE's. I don't have to elaborate the reasons because I'm pretty sure you already know. That big amount (\$1,040) helped us pay some of our bills and that being removed from our pay has a very huge impact in our purchasing power. I do believe that we deserve to receive that benefit together with other workers who still enjoy the living allowance. ECE's job is a tough one. We are not just taking good care of these children, we are also teaching them academically, honing and preparing them as they enter real school. We also teach them independence and how to be a better member of our society. This job is quite tough but we do it anyway because we love our job and for us this is not just a profession, it's our Mission. Not everyone can do this job so please help us stay in this line of work by giving us back the Living allowance. Some already left the field to do another job that pays better. So please, help us stay and keep the job we really love.

Sincerely:

Rhodora Dio

- **Acknowledgment**

I have read and understand that my name and comments will be made publicly available in the Council agenda. My contact information will NOT be included in the public record.