

Childcare Is Not Child's Play:

Community Acclaims Agency's New Position, Issue Continues to Loom on Political Horizon

Ottawa – May 30 2007: The Board of Directors of Family Services à la famille Ottawa (FSFO), one of Ottawa's oldest and largest social service agencies, has formally adopted a position on childcare, to great acclaim by the community.

“For years, FSFO has recognized the importance of access to affordable, quality childcare,” says Tim Simboli, Executive Director. “We view it as essential so families that need these services can balance work and personal lives in the 21st century. With this official policy, our commitment and our voice on childcare will be even clearer and louder.”

FSFO offers a range of child and family related services and works with all levels of government and the broader community. Research and the practical day to day experience of the families served by the agency show that children in quality childcare have increased self-esteem, positive social skills, and improved academic performance. Good childcare also reduces the risk of injury, missed meals and experimentation with drugs and alcohol. FSFO's new policy enhances community partnerships already established by the agency and enhances the broad support for extended childcare options.

“The increasing inequalities in social and economic conditions in Ottawa means that many families cannot afford to purchase quality childcare,” says Dennise Albrecht, Director of Outreach and Community Development at CHEO. “I am really pleased to note that FSFO, through its new formal position, will continue to draw attention to the urgent need for affordable childcare.”

“From the perspective of an employer,” says Kim Hiscott, Executive Director of Kanata Research Park's Family Centre, “childcare just makes good business sense and is an investment in the future. Providing viable options for employees to balance work and family commitments allows employees to be more healthy and productive. This helps everyone's bottom-line. We all have a responsibility to ensure that children are able to participate in quality early learning experiences. We look forward to working with FSFO to bring more employees on board with fostering family-friendly work environments.”

“Lack of access to quality child care is not good for families or communities,” offers Brian Cornelius, Minister of Ottawa's First United Church. “It negatively impacts on family relationships, community relationships, and affects the ability of children to attain their potential. I applaud FSFO for such a clear, concise statement of action. It's an inspiring step forward on an issue that affects all Ottawa families.”

Childcare is the focus of intense political attention. It was a major issue in the last federal election. Municipally, the City of Ottawa recently debated offering a cost of living raise for childcare providers. This fall, the issue will likely rear its head again since the last provincial budget delivered no new funds to childcare. FSFO's new position is intended to prepare the agency for the continued political debate.

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