

Ministry of Education

Deputy Minister

438 University Avenue, 5th Floor
Toronto ON M7A 2A5

Ministère de l'Éducation

Sous-ministre

438, avenue University, 5^e étage
Toronto (Ontario) M7A 2A5

November 21, 2023

Brendan Browne
Director of Education
Toronto Catholic District School Board

Dear Mr. Browne,

Thank you for your email dated September 27, 2023, regarding previously approved standalone child care capital projects in Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB).

The government knows that a strong child care and early years system plays a key role in supporting children's learning, development and well-being while parents go to school and work to support their families and contribute to economic growth and productivity. Ontario is committed to continuing to deliver high-quality, affordable child care and early years programs to families in every corner of the province including spaces associated with existing and new school builds or within other community programs.

In August 2023, the Ministry of Education (ministry) sent communication out to your board regarding 20 previously approved child care projects, totaling 1,048 licensed spaces. None of these projects have begun construction and all are reporting significant cost overages. In an effort to work together to ensure these subsidized spaces can be accessed in the near future to benefit the communities that need them most and to mitigate further delays on these projects, the ministry is committed to providing 25% additional funding on top of the existing approved capital funding allocation. Additional shortfalls would be addressed through other funding sources identified by your board.

The ministry recognizes the importance of working together with its partners, including school boards, to meet the government's commitment to helping build modern schools faster to support the needs of growing communities, to better utilize school capacity, and ensure value for taxpayer dollars. However, at the risk of not meeting 2026 timelines in association with Ontario's commitments under the Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) agreement to create thousands of new affordable child care spaces, the ministry is eager to explore alternate arrangements.

Our plan to implement the CWELCC system supports the creation of 86,000 new licensed child care spaces, from 2019 levels, for children aged 0-5, by the end of 2026. The province has worked with Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSMs) & District Social Service Administrative Boards (DSSAB)s to ensure affordable child care is available in the communities that need it most. Through Ontario's Directed Growth Plan, the ministry has now allocated a total of more than 72,500 new spaces to CMSMs & DSSABs.

We are committed to supporting the creation of new licensed child care spaces, and to exploring all opportunities, including community-based child care or licensed home child care, to ensure families in your communities can access this much needed service.

Thank you for taking the time to write.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "K. Manson-Smith".

Kate Manson-Smith
Deputy Minister