

Motion: Urgent Action on Early Learning and Childcare Access and Equity

WHEREAS access to affordable, high-quality **Early Learning and Childcare (ELCC)** is essential not only to economic growth and workforce participation, but also to the healthy cognitive, emotional, and social development of children; and

WHEREAS the early years are a crucial period in brain development, and participation in high-quality early learning environments has been shown to improve long-term educational, health, and social outcomes for children; and

WHEREAS municipalities across [Province] are experiencing an urgent shortage of licensed ELCC spaces, preventing families from returning to work, straining local labour markets, and limiting the potential of local economies; and

WHEREAS the federal government has committed to creating 100,000 new ELCC spaces nationwide as part of its national Early Learning and Childcare strategy; and

WHEREAS municipalities need tools and a clearly defined role in ELCC planning and delivery to ensure that local needs are met efficiently and equitably; and

WHEREAS both nonprofit and for-profit ELCC providers operate as essential community institutions and small businesses that families rely on every day; and

WHEREAS ELCC facilities should be formally recognized as **essential social infrastructure**, equivalent in importance to schools, health care facilities, and recreation centres; and

WHEREAS such a designation would empower municipalities to prioritize ELCC developments in zoning, permitting, and land-use processes, expediting the delivery of new childcare spaces in areas of need;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Union of Municipalities of [Province] call on the Government of Canada and the Government of [Province] to:

1. **Accelerate the creation and long-term funding of licensed Early Learning and Childcare spaces** in communities across the province;
2. **Recognize the essential role of both nonprofit and for-profit ELCC providers** in meeting diverse community needs, without bias toward governance model;
3. **Designate Early Learning and Childcare facilities as essential social infrastructure**, enabling municipalities to prioritize and fast-track development approvals through local land-use processes;

4. **Establish clear and consistent channels for municipalities to engage in ELCC planning and advocacy**, ensuring that local governments have the tools and resources to respond to community needs in collaboration with provincial and federal partners.
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