

Christina Gilligan

Deputation to the Executive Committee

July 28, 2011

Good afternoon mayor Ford and Executive,

My name is Christina Gilligan and I would like to thank you for providing me with the opportunity to share my thoughts and story with you today. As you can see, I am a new mom. My daughter is four months old and the joy of my life. I do have to say though that I never really thought that I was going to be a mother. It was not that I did not want to it was just that I did not think I could afford it. When I was in my thirties I had come to the realization that it was going to be very expensive to raise a child in the city of Toronto and thought I would never be able to do it. Ten years later, I changed my mind because I did not want to regret the decision of not becoming a mother. Caring and educating children is my life and my career. I not only care for my daughter, but I am also an Early Childhood Educator. Throughout my 20-year career, I have seen the erosion of childcare in this city and province and frankly, I am quite disgusted how little we value our children who are inevitably our future. If women today were to think how I did (and I know many of them do) ten years ago, we would be in big trouble.

What kind of society do we live in where women have to make these kind of choices?

To have a family or to have a career?

Is there any man on this council that can say they have had to make the same decision? I doubt it.

I am truthfully disappointed by the recommendations that have been made to cut services to our childcare programs and services.

First by reducing the number of subsidized spaces through attrition...we all know there are not enough spaces now as we can see through the long waiting list of, correct me if I am wrong but which is about 20 000. This only proves that these spaces are truly needed by families in our city.

Secondly, by transferring municipally run centres to community agencies that are already over extended as it is, I know this personally because I work in one of them or to for-profit employers...and we all now how that would end. There are numerous studies that show municipal centers provide the highest quality of care to our children with consistent staff and resources that other centres are not able to access...and aren't they worth it? I believe they are!

By eliminating affordable accessible child care for our children will only make the situation worse. Nevertheless, that does not

have to be the case. By providing affordable and accessible care to the parents for our children, allow us to continue to work and contribute to the economic growth of our city. I myself, if unable to be able to find a space for my daughter in a licensed childcare I will not be able to return to work or if I am unable to attain affordable childcare, it may not even am worth my while. If I were not able to receive subsidy and have to pay full fee for a space...if I find one...I would bring home \$100 biweekly after paying for my childcare fee. Where is the incentive to continue to work and be a contributing member of society and continue to contribute to the economy on two levels...paying taxes and putting money back into the economy by spending in the community?

It has been proven that every dollar that is spent in childcare creates four dollars in the local economy. I do understand that the province has also contributed to this crisis in childcare we now find ourselves in. They have not been paying there fair share of the 80% that was agreed too, the cancellation of a National Childcare Program that was coming to fruition years back and the lack of transition funding the province was to provide with the implementation of the Early Learning Program, but instead of attacking the most vulnerable, We should be demanding that they pay the true 80% and fund the Early Learning Program the way it was outlined in their plan. The city should be stepping up and investing more in our child

care and not divesting. We need to stabilizing our 0-3.8 and 6-12 year old programs while the 4 and 5 are being pulled out and the province gets it right.

We also need to look at the elimination of income that, Mr. Ford, was part of your election platform last year. Sure, the vehicle registration tax was not a popular tax for many Torontonians' but that is the price we pay to live in the city and the holiday for paying property taxes. Not everyone enjoys paying taxes but it is understood that they are necessary. We all need to pay our fair share. I would sooner continue to pay these kinds of taxes on a yearly basis, than to find out the savings we received last year was only going to cost us more this year. Now tell me where are the true savings?

I can only ask that this council sees our children as a priority and find savings elsewhere... but also think twice before voting to cancel subsidized spaces or selling off our municipal childcare programs.

These services for our children is not GRAVY...they are a necessity.