



# Simply Halton

Your Halton  
Connection  
June '06

## Quality child care benefits us all



**Joyce Savoline**  
REGIONAL CHAIRMAN

Recently I wrote to Provincial Minister Mary Anne Chambers in support of her efforts to call upon the federal government to honour its five-year funding commitment for child care in Ontario.

While we are pleased to learn about the additional operating funding from the Province over the next four years, we are disappointed that the federal government does not intend to continue the Federal-Provincial Child Care Agreement: an investment that would have allowed us to build an additional 600 child care spaces in Halton.

Halton is a growing community. We need more child care spaces to meet the needs of our population. I believe there are inherent problems with the new federal plan to issue annual funding of \$1,200 per child. This money is taxable, and doesn't go very far when it costs over \$10,000 a year for child care. Moreover, it is only useful if there are actual child care spaces available.

*"It is essential to the future prosperity of this country that we innovate or be left behind. I strongly urge the federal and provincial governments to seek out alternate sources of funding, so communities can move their child care systems forward."*

Chairman Savoline

Several groups are particularly hard hit by the cancellation of the federal agreement. Low and single income parents consistently find affordable child care a necessity but completely unattainable without subsidy support.

In addition, families with children with special needs are also adversely affected since services for these children are limited. They have difficulty in finding caregivers and very little choice by way of supports or after school programs that can accommodate them. These families in particular, would benefit from the development of a comprehensive system, because the market cannot meet their needs.

Child care, like healthcare and education benefits us all as a society.

## Giving children the best start in life



**A. Brent Marshall**  
CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

The first years of life are key to developing a strong foundation for our children. Research shows that quality child care and early learning experiences support children and their long-term success.

Originally, in an attempt to address our early learning and child care needs Halton Region was allocated \$23.12M through the Federal-Provincial Child Care Agreement, which would have created 600 new licensed child care spaces. However, with the federal government's intention to terminate the Agreement, Halton's ability to provide new spaces was reduced, to the provision of only 200 new child care spaces.



Regional Council strongly supports the Province's Best Start Initiative – a strategy that not only expanded child care, but provided all parents with programs for children's healthy early development. In response, the Province has granted Halton an

additional \$6.4M for 2006-2007 through the Best Start strategy, with an unconfirmed future allocation over the next three years. This increase will support operating costs for child care and is one-time funding only.

This revised funding will provide more subsidized spaces for low income families, wage subsidy and improvements for child care staff, as well as increased resources for children with special needs.

### Did you know...

- 35,000 children in Halton are 0-6 years of age
- Halton has 7,000 licensed child care spaces for 0-6 years of age
- 72% of working age adults in Halton were part of the labour force in 2001
- 12% of Halton's families are led by single parents

While we are improving the child care situation in Halton, we are concerned that this new funding allocation does not create a sustainable early learning and child care system. To address this issue we will keep working with the provincial and federal governments to consider alternate ways of funding for the future.

### Halton Meetings & Events

#### June Meetings at Regional Headquarters

<b>Tuesday, June 13</b>	9:30 a.m. Health & Social Services Committee
<b>Wednesday, June 14</b>	9:30 a.m. Planning & Public Works Committee 1:30 p.m. Administration & Finance Committee
<b>Wednesday, June 21</b>	9:30 a.m. Regional Council Meeting