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## **Inclusion Backgrounder and Immediate Pause in Services**

Dear Present and Future Families:

Over the past few years, the City of Greater Sudbury, Children Services Division and Child and Community Resources have supported the inclusion of children in our programs through funding, consultations with Educators and families, mentoring our teams, and developing individual/group service plans for children with a wide range of needs.

We have done our work well and we have reached a time where our capacity to fund and support the many children in our programs that require additional supports has been maximized. We have always supported the needs of all children as best we could and took time to consider how we might move forward inclusively, respectfully and equitably. The Child Care Registry & Waitlist has been our tool in helping us offer placements into our programs with the help of families' identifying their child's needs on the registry.

The experience and skills of our Early Childhood Educators, Support Staff and Community Support Workers have also supported existing children in referrals to community agencies for additional supports and diagnoses. With the support of our Resource Consultant, their observations and interactions have helped in early intervention. This too has added to increased numbers of children requiring additional supports in our programs.

We also need to consider the teams, the group dynamics and their capacity to build relationships with children and families, consider pedagogy, support growth and development, and fulfill goals for every child. Their workload is heavy in addition to play, finding joy in their interactions with the children and in their daily responsibilities.

**Effective immediately, Discovery Early Learning & Care will move towards implementing a waiting list policy for children who have identified needs or may require additional supports to be successful in our programs and until we have the capacity to support the demands of the current caseloads that our Resource Consultant is permitted to carry.**

**We will not be accepting any new children into our programs for the remainder of the 2024 year who have identified needs or who may require additional Community Support Worker supports in these challenging times.**

We continue to work with our community partners, Child and Community Resources and Children Services on the Child Care Registry, referrals for services, advance prep and planning for entry with new families and working into a funding budget.

All children on the current Child Care Registry Waitlist will remain as priority as we consider placements into 2025.

As more information is gathered, policies reviewed and we begin to work within our allocated budget, we hope to start fresh in 2025 with a new understanding of what inclusion looks and feels like in our programs.

We hear you, and know that this is a huge barrier to accessing services for your family. We see you, and know that your disappointment is real and sensed. Our work on a full system review and your understanding requires courage and a continued commitment to children's rights to inclusive early learning and care services.

Discovery Early Learning & Care continues to stand strong on our four "Values" of;

- Play
- Leadership
- Lifelong Learning
- Inclusion

We commit to ensure inclusion and repair our own shortcomings as we work towards an equitable solution to accessibility and inclusion in our programs.

Kind regards,

*Tracy Saarikoski, RECE*

Tracy Saarikoski, RECE, AECEO.C, BA  
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