



**KINGSTON, FRONTENAC,
LENNOX AND ADDINGTON
CHILDREN'S SERVICES STEERING COMMITTEE**

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November 13, 2007

David Marshall
Executive Director
South East Community Access Centre
1471 John Counter Blvd.
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Dear Mr. David Marshall:

The Kingston, Frontenac, Lennox and Addington Children's Services Steering Committee is comprised of over 30 different agencies and services from across the spectrum of human services and provides overall leadership in children and youth services. The KFL&A CSSC shares information, identifies opportunities for collaboration, identifies systems issues as well as advocates for equitable services for children and families in our communities.

We are writing to express our deep concern regarding the impact and unintended consequences of a recently posted RFQ for therapy services for SECCAC. This RFQ requires that applicants have the capacity to provide therapy services to "all ages", including adults. The expectation to provide services to the adult population essentially excludes any organization that has developed expertise and community credibility as a children's service provider. While the RFQ allows for an opportunity to sub-contract or participate in a joint venture, it is not necessarily possible to do this. We are concerned about this policy direction as it will result in disruption of service, lack of service continuity for clients and families, and a potential loss of pediatric therapy expertise in our area. Further to this, we think the policy change disadvantages current providers and certainly are aware this is the case in our community.

This RFQ requirement has effectively disqualified the Child Development Centre (CDC) at Hotel Dieu Hospital from the competition. CDC as you know does not provide

services to adults nor have they been able find a partner willing to subcontract or to arrange a joint venture.

Children with special needs in our community are first identified and served through the CDC .The children and families are able to continue with this service and care in their transition to school through the School Health Support services as contracted by the CDC. The inability for the CDC to respond to this recent RFQ means these children would lose this continuity of care during a critical point in their lives. The impact on children and their families also includes the discharge/transfer to another agency. This unnecessarily results in service disruption and service discontinuity both of which will have negative impacts on client outcomes. This also raises our concerns that other agencies and services are, or will be affected similarly.

CDC has been developing expertise in providing therapy services for children with complex disabilities since 1974 through funding from the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Children and Youth. This has included providing those services to children at home and in the schools. This current policy direction regarding the RFQ will result in the weakening of a longstanding collaborative relationship between the CCAC, the CDC and the School Boards. This not only weakens the system for children, families and service providers, but puts them at a disadvantage.

We believe that children in the school system with special needs should continue to be served by the specially trained paediatric therapists at the CDC. These children and families are already extremely vulnerable and have only begun to navigate the special needs system. The therapists at CDC provide high levels of care to these families within a broader continuum of paediatric programs. Ensuring that children with special needs in the school system have stability and consistency within their team of therapists enhances care for children and minimizes disruption to children and their families.

We are formally requesting that you delay making any decisions that affect local services until you have considered more fully the impact of this policy change. Further, we are requesting through this correspondence that the Ministry of Children and Youth Services and the Ministry of Health review this process and consider the consequences that impact our children and families, community capacity, service collaboration and integration efforts .

Please feel free to contact the Chairs of the KFL&A Children's Services Steering Committee for further discussion.

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