

From: **"Mochrie, Paul"** <Paul.Mochrie@vancouver.ca>
To: **"Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"**
Date: 11/24/2022 10:36:47 AM
Subject: **Little Sprouts Preschool Correspondence**

Dear Mayor and Council,

You may have seen media or received email this past week regarding the imminent closure of the Little Sprouts preschool in the West End Community Centre.

The ACCS Childcare team have been following up with Park Board and WECCA to learn more and identify opportunities.

For your information, Sandra Singh has shared the following email as an example of how ACCS staff are responding to correspondence related to this unexpected situation.

If you have any questions, please feel free to follow up with Sandra at Sandra.singh@vancouver.ca.

Best,
Paul

Paul Mochrie (he/him)
City Manager
City of Vancouver
paul.mochrie@vancouver.ca



The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sn̓wəx̓ʷvú7mesh (Squamish), and səliwətaʔ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

From: Petersen, Marisol <Marisol.Petersen@vancouver.ca>
Sent: Wednesday, November 23, 2022 4:51 PM
Subject: Your letter regarding Little Sprouts

Dear [Names],

Thank you for your letter concerning the West End Community Centre Association's decision to close their Little Sprouts preschool at the end of December.

We appreciate hearing how valued the Little Sprouts program has been to your family, and understand the destabilizing impacts the closure of the program will have on children and families. We also understand that the decision to close the program was not taken lightly by the West End Community Centre Association (WECCA), and that it is the result of low enrollment and staffing challenges. This being the case, the City is deeply committed to working with colleagues at the Park Board to assist WECCA in exploring all options available to them.

In your letter, you raised a number of questions related to fundraising that we have answered below while recognizing that WECCA, as an independent non-profit society and operator, will necessarily make decisions in the best interest of the Society and community it serves.

Park Board Operational Fees

Our colleagues at the Park Board have explained that operational fees collected from Community Centre Associations are not designed to support individual Community Centre programs. Instead, the funds are used to provide priority initiatives across the full network of community centres in the city. For example, these funds may be used to offer accredited

professional development training for recreational staff from all community centre sites.

City Funding Sources

The City of Vancouver has a childcare grant stream that primarily focuses on providing program enhancements for organizations that serve vulnerable children and families. There is a small grant available to support childcare programs that are at risk of closure, which may be available starting in January 2023. [Program Stabilization Grants](#) are one-time emergency grants of up to \$10,000 for non-profit childcare centres that are in financial crisis. These grants can help centres stabilize their financial situation, restructure their financial systems, and conduct long term financial planning. This information will be provided to WECCA should it be applicable, noting that this would not resolve their current staffing challenges.

Provincial Funding Sources

Since 2018, provincial funding for childcare has increased significantly with priority given to licensed programs that provide full day services. For example, group programs that offer full-day childcare are now eligible to receive the [Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative](#), which provides significant reductions for parent fees, and provides enhanced operating funding for providers (through the Child Care Operating Fund). These programs can also apply to become \$10/day childcare sites.

You concluded your letter by noting that despite low enrollment at Little Sprouts, there remains ongoing demand for childcare in the West End. Based on City childcare need projections, your finding is correct; there is an estimated shortfall of approximately 300 spaces for full day childcare and 150 spaces for school age childcare in the West End. For preschool, our data shows there is a slight oversupply, which in the context of a large shortfall for full day childcare, does not in any way signal preschool spaces are no longer needed.

While the City has a number of new childcare facilities at various stages of development in the West End, we want to assure you that we recognize the important role programs like Little Sprouts are playing for families and will be working closely with the Park Board to support WECCA in navigating operational challenges.

Sincerely,