

TO: All MUNFA Members

FROM: The MUNFA Executive Committee

DATE: July 21, 2011

SUBJECT: Appendix H - MUN/MUNFA Collective Agreement
University's Assessment of the Feasibility and Cost of Expanding
Childcare Services, St. John's Campus

Prior to the beginning of negotiations in the last round of collective bargaining, some Academic Staff Members (ASMs) had reported to MUNFA that the current childcare facilities on the St. John's Campus of MUN were quickly becoming inadequate to meet growing demands.

Following from negotiations that led to the February 26, 2010 - August 31, 2013 Collective Agreement (CA), the parties agreed that MUN would "...investigate the feasibility and cost of expanding childcare for the St. John's campus..." (as outlined in Appendix H of the CA, attached). On July 30, 2011 in accordance with Appendix H, MUNFA received the attached report from the university administration.

Should you wish to comment, or have questions regarding the report, please contact the MUNFA Office at 864-8642 or munfa@mun.ca.

APPENDIX H

Letter of Understanding

January 5, 2010

Dr. Jon Church,
Chief Negotiator
Memorial University of Newfoundland Faculty Association

Dear Dr. Church:

The following reflects an understanding between the University and Memorial University of Newfoundland Faculty Association arising out of discussions during collective bargaining:

The University will investigate the feasibility and cost of expanding childcare for the St. John's campus, and report progress to MUNFA at the Joint Association University Relations Committee.

Yours truly,



Morgan Cooper
Director of Faculty Relations & Chief Negotiator



Memorial University of Newfoundland

Feasibility and cost of expanding childcare for the St. John's campus

A report prepared in accordance with Appendix H of the 2010-2013 MUN-MUNFA
Collective Agreement

Prepared by: Deborah Collis, Mike Foley, Tracy Rose, Carol Tibbo and Amy Wyse
6/13/2011

Introduction

This report is prepared in accordance with Appendix H of the MUN-MUNFA Collective Agreement and discussions arising out of collective bargaining between Memorial University of Newfoundland and the Memorial University of Newfoundland Faculty Association. The Office of Faculty Relations is grateful for the participation of the following individuals who provided their expertise in this investigation of this matter and in the preparation of this report:

Ms. Deborah Collis, Director, Department of Financial and Administrative Services & Chair of the Board of Directors for the MUN Childcare Centre

Mr. Mike Foley, Projects Coordinator, Department of Facilities Management

Ms. Tracy Rose, Executive Director, MUN Childcare Centre

Ms. Carol Tibbo, Director, Office of the Vice-President (Administration & Finance)

The Childcare Centre at Memorial University's St. John's campus first opened in 1976. The current building was officially opened in January 1992 with a capacity of 164 full time childcare spaces in four individually licensed centres. The Campus Childcare Centre Inc ("MUN Childcare Centre") was incorporated in 2006 and currently has 30 employees who provide childcare services for approximately 200 children.

The purpose of this report will be to investigate the feasibility and cost of expanding childcare for the St. John's campus of Memorial University.

The MUN Childcare Centre

The MUN Childcare centre is currently comprised of four separately licensed centres. Children enrolled in the centre attend on either a full or part time basis. In cases where care is on a part time basis, the actual number of children enrolled may be higher than the childcare space allotted.

1. The Toddler Centre: there are currently 20 childcare spaces for children between the ages of 2 and 3; the children are divided between two rooms with a maximum of 10 children in each room;
2. Two separately licensed Pre-Schools Centres: there are 48 childcare spaces for children between the ages of 3 and 6 in each pre-school centre (with a total maximum of 96 full time children in this age group); there are a maximum of 16 children per room in the pre-school centres.
3. After School Care/Activity Centre: there are 48 childcare spaces for children ages 5-12 years in the after school care activity centre.

In the Fall of 2010, enrollment at the Campus Childcare was composed of the following children:

Toddler Centre (24 children enrolled - 16 full-time/8 part-time)

12 children of students

8 children of faculty

4 children of staff

Pre-School 1 (48 children enrolled)

- 22 children of students
- 13 children of faculty
- 11 children of staff
- 2 children whose parents belong to other groups

Pre-School 2 (69 children enrolled - 32 full-time/37 part-time)

- 25 children of students
- 16 children of faculty
- 21 children of staff
- 7 children whose parents belong to other groups

After School Care/Activity Centre (48 children enrolled)

- 11 children of students
- 13 children of faculty
- 18 children of staff
- 6 children whose parents belong to other groups

Legislated Requirements

A. Space

Under the Child Care Services Act, any childcare centre can be licensed for up to 60 childcare spaces, provided the centre has the required physical space of 3.3 square metres per child (inside) and 7.0 square metres of outside space.

Any increase in toddler spaces requires a corresponding increase for pre-school children. Children are in the pre-school for two years. Since children are in the toddler centre for only one year, the centre will need more spaces in the pre-schools to accommodate toddler children as they turn three years old. This ensures the continuity of their care as they age.

There are numerous regulations on the space of the building and equipment required. Some of these requirements are addressed in more detail throughout the report.

B. Staff to Child Ratios

For each group of children, the following staff to child ratios is required in provincial legislation:

Toddlers (ages 2-3): 1 staff member for every 5 children

Pre-School (ages 3-5): 1 staff member for every 8 children

Kindergarten (age 5): 1 staff member for every 12 children

After School Care/Activity Centre (ages 6-12): 1 staff member for every 15 children

C. Maximum Group Size

In addition to the required staffing, the provincial government regulates the maximum group size by age group.

Toddlers (ages 2-3): 10 children maximum

Pre-School (ages 3-5): 16 children maximum

Kindergarten (age 5): 24 children maximum

After School Care/Activity Centre (ages 6-12): 30 children maximum

Wait List Demands

In accordance with the *Separately Incorporated Entity* (SIE) management agreement with the university, the Campus Childcare Centre must give priority to the children of full time undergraduate students. When these children are accommodated, children remaining on the waitlist are ranked in order of priority according to their parents' status. Preference is given in the following order: full-time graduate students, university faculty and staff members, and then part-time students and members of the general public. Children are accommodated as space permits.

The area of greatest demand continues to be the Toddler Centre. In the Fall of 2010, 73 children were on the waitlist for spaces in the Toddler Centre: 25 were children of full-time undergraduate and graduate students, 12 were children of faculty members, 17 were children of staff members, and 19 were children of part-time students, post doctoral fellows, or members of the general public. Any expansion of the Toddler Centre would certainly accommodate more children, but it should be noted that these children will likely be those whose parents are full-time students.

Space in the Pre-School Centres (for children aged 3-6) is also in demand. Waitlists are not as long as the Toddler Centre, but with 96 licensed spaces, 48 children were on the waitlist in the Fall of 2010. Eleven of those children were children of full-time students, 7 were children of faculty members, 15 were children of staff, and 15 were children of part-time students, post doctoral fellows, or members of the general public.

The Activity Centre has 48 licensed spaces and maintains the shortest waitlist. All children of full-time students and faculty members were accommodated in the Fall of 2010. Three children of staff members remained on the waitlist as of the end of October 2010.

While these numbers relate specifically to Fall 2010, they are representative of the waitlist trends for the past several years. Children of faculty members are consistently the smallest group of children on the waitlist.

Options for Expansion of Services

The committee considered four main options for the expansion of childcare services: reconfiguring internal space, physical expansion of the building, leasing other space on campus, and leasing space elsewhere in the city. A longer term option was also discussed and is noted in this report for information purposes.

Option 1: Reconfiguring Internal Space

The conversion of a locker room into a toddler room may provide space for an additional 10 spaces. The locker room is located on the first floor of the building. Facilities Management estimates that the space can be suitably converted following a small renovation. Toddler care is the most expensive service to provide, and any additions to the program must result in a corresponding change/increase to the Pre-School license.

This option requires an additional identical renovation on the second floor of the building: the locker room will be converted to Pre-School space to accommodate the new toddlers as they age. This will provide an additional 12 spaces for the Pre-School.

Challenges with this option:

1. Implications for license: While no internal programming or policy changes would need to occur, re-licensing through the provincial government is required for this option. New floor plans need to be submitted to and approved by Government Services. The plans/drawings for the renovations, the curriculum, and staffing plans will need to be approved by Eastern Health. The Childcare Centre is re-licensed every three years and the process takes approximately 60-90 days.
2. Renovation costs: \$108,000 estimated (\$51,000 for the first floor renovation; \$57,000 for the second floor renovation). The renovation must take place in the last 2 weeks of August as this is the only period of time that the Childcare Centre is closed every year. This may increase costs because it will impact the schedule and selection of a contractor.
3. Staffing:
 - a. Recruitment of two full time staff members and one part time staff member will be required to work in the newly created toddler room. In addition to annual salary and benefits, the Childcare Centre will have to budget approximately \$4,000 for increased professional development costs for new staff.
 - b. Recruitment of two full time staff members and one part time staff member will be required for the additional Pre-School centre added as a result of the new toddlers. Costs will include an annual salary and benefits, as well as approximately \$4,000 in professional development costs.
 - c. Annual (estimated) cost for hiring new staff = \$175,000 (salary and benefits)
4. Other financial considerations:
 - a. Annual (estimated) increased cost of food and groceries: \$12,000
 - b. One time cost of additional equipment required: approximately \$12,000 (includes toys, tables and chairs) per room (\$24,000 in total)
5. Outside play space: 7.0 square metres of outside play space is required per child, per licensed centre; this space must be exclusive of fixtures like swing sets or decks; and this outside space must be fenced. No additional play space or landscaping is required
6. **Total Estimated Cost: \$323,500**

This option creates 22 additional spaces: 10 toddler spaces and 12 spaces for pre-school children.

The estimated revenue earned from the creation of these additional spaces is approximately \$152,800 per year.

Option 2: Physical expansion of the building

The committee discussed and considered the physical expansion of the current Childcare Centre building as one option to increase services. When the Child Care Centre was first built, an exemption was sought regarding the size of the building. The centre was the first in the province to obtain multiple childcare licenses for one building (in order to accommodate the large size of the building). Permission to expand the building would have to be granted by the Board of Regents, the Board of Directors of the Childcare Centre and the provincial government. Given that the building currently exceeds legislated requirements, it is unlikely that such approval would be forthcoming.

Additionally, any physical expansion of the building would reduce the amount of outdoor physical play space for the children. As previously noted, the amount of this space is regulated: 7.0 square meters per child is required. Since the Childcare Centre building borders on Burton's Pond and parking lots (Area 14), there is no room to accommodate a larger building and increased outdoor play space. Additional land in the area is owned by the provincial government (Arts & Culture Centre).

Regulation 8.1 of the Child Care Services Regulations, Policies and Standards prohibits a child care service centre from being more than one floor above the ground floor. Therefore, expansion beyond the current two floor structure is not possible.

Option 3: Leasing Other Space on Campus

Leasing other space on campus may increase childcare services. The significant challenge with this option is securing alternate space on campus that meets the highly regulated needs for childcare centres (for example: 3.3 square meters of internal space and 7 square meters of outdoor space per child, toddlers must be located on a ground floor, etc). In addition to the space challenges, there may be increased costs associated with rent. On-site management is a legislative requirement and would be an additional cost. Given the complexities and challenges with space on campus, the committee did not consider this as a viable or reasonable option for expansion of childcare services.

Option 4: Leasing Space Elsewhere in the City

The Committee considered leasing space off campus as an option to expand childcare services. While the particular challenges with seeking on-campus space (lack of appropriate or amount of space) will not be a problem in the city, there are complications and drawbacks.

MUN currently pays for all costs associated with cleaning, utilities, snow-clearing, pest control and maintenance of the building. Any space located off-campus would require these services and, therefore, mean significantly increased costs for parents. Space located elsewhere in the city may not be convenient for parents and, therefore, not alleviate any of their needs with respect to convenient and high-quality childcare services.

Private commercial rental agreements typically require a long-term investment of 5-10 years, which requires a long-term commitment. Any offsite facility would require on-site management. There are concerns that it would be difficult to ensure the same level and quality service at an off campus location. The Committee did not consider this a feasible option.

Option 5: Long term consideration – renovations to accommodate full day kindergarten

The Provincial Government is currently studying full-day kindergarten options. If this change proceeds and full day kindergarten is implemented, the childcare centre's kinder care program will be empty for two-thirds of the day. Through re-licensing of the Activity Centre, there is a potential to offer more pre-school spaces (full time and part time spaces) as well as after-school spaces for kindergarten children. Since the change to kindergarten will occur at the earliest in 2013, this is not an immediately viable option. This option requires significant renovations and will need more thorough consideration at a future time.

Conclusion

The Committee has thoroughly considered all options for expanding childcare services for the St. John's campus. Option 1 is the most realistic plan for an immediate expansion of services. The Childcare Centre Board of Directors is currently assessing the feasibility of renovations as outlined in Option 1. Renovating locker/storage rooms can only occur during the last two weeks of August (when the centre is closed for summer break). Renovations could proceed in August 2011 if this option is determined to be financially feasible. However, renovations also depend on successful re-licensing and hiring of contractors who can complete the work in the required timeframe.