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July 5, 2023

Honourable Searle Turton
Minister of Children and Family Services
130 Legislature Building
10800 - 97 Avenue
Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6
Via e-mail: cs.minister@gov.ab.ca

Dear Minister Turton:

Congratulations on your re-election and appointment as the Minister of Children and Family Services. It was a pleasure to talk with you on the bus tour this spring, and we're looking forward to working with you in your new role.

We have a keen interest in having high quality child care available to families. The early years of a child's life are so critical to their development and also to their love of learning. Ensuring all children have access to stimulating, research-informed early years programming benefits everyone, as it sets children up with a solid foundation for success throughout their lives.

We also have many child care operators as tenants and cherished colleagues. Due to our rapidly increasing enrolment and shortage of new schools, particularly in newer neighbourhoods outside of the Heday, space is becoming scarce in our Division. As our mandate and first priority is K to 12 education, unfortunately we are being forced to reclaim tenant space for classroom use. This is only done as a last resort. We know how valuable it is to have students become familiar with their future school through having their early years programs in the same building, and how much families value having siblings in the same location. Having dedicated space for these programs included in new school builds would be of huge benefit to children and families.

As is the case with your office, we also work to ensure every child feels welcome, included, safe and healthy. This can become more challenging in situations where kinship or custody agreements, foster care or abuse or neglect is involved. We are hoping that we can work collaboratively to support children in these situations and ensure they receive the care and nurturing needed to develop into caring, competent, healthy adults.

We would be pleased to meet and discuss these and other collaborative possibilities. Please contact Catherine Angeles at 780-429-8443 or catherine.angeles@epsb.ca to arrange a time. In the meantime, I hope you enjoy a wonderful summer.

Sincerely,



Trisha Estabrooks
Board Chair

