

Ministry of Children  
and Youth Services

Minister's Office

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**MAR 13 2009**

Ms. Carol Timmings  
Mr. Charles Gardner  
c/o Association of Local Public Health Agencies  
502-425 University Avenue  
Toronto, Ontario  
M5G 1T6

Dear Ms. <sup>Carol</sup> Timmings and Mr. <sup>Charles</sup> Gardner:

Thank you for your e-mail regarding Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategy and for your pre-budget suggestions. I'm honoured to be part of this ground-breaking initiative and appreciate you both sharing your thoughts as we aim to reduce poverty for Ontarians.

Our strategy is about breaking the cycle of poverty with an initial focus on giving children and their families the opportunity to reach their full potential. We've established a bold but achievable target of reducing child poverty by 25 per cent over five years. This target will allow all low-income families to see the benefits of this strategy and lift 90,000 children out of poverty.

Recently, I was excited to move forward on another initiative - our proposed Poverty Reduction Act which, if passed, would enshrine in law a long-term, ongoing commitment to reducing poverty in Ontario.

Our government cannot do this alone. We are calling on all levels of government, the private and non-profit sectors and citizens across this province to be part of the solution. We will all need to do our part. While I believe our strategy is an excellent first step, we are also trying to be realistic during these uncertain economic times.

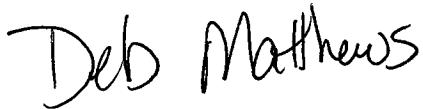
We recognize the importance of the Healthy Babies Healthy Children program in supporting families to overcome poverty and to provide children with a healthy start in life. Since 2003, the Healthy Babies Healthy Children program has received a 25.8 per cent funding increase to fulfill those goals. While I understand and appreciate the difficulties associated with providing the high quality services for families in the province, I regret that my ministry is not in a position to grant increases to the base budget of the early years programs this year. I recognize that this may cause increased pressure to deliver the same level of service. However, I urge you to find efficiencies wherever possible.

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I note from your e-mail that you've also shared your pre-budget suggestions with the Honourable Dwight Duncan, Minister of Finance. I trust he will give your recommendations every consideration.

Thank you again for sharing your recommendations with me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Deb Matthews". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Deb Matthews  
Minister

c: The Honourable Dwight Duncan, Minister of Finance