



August 21, 2009

Dr. Charles E. Pascal
Executive Director
Atkinson Charitable Foundation
One Yonge Street, 15th Floor
Toronto, Ontario M5E 1E5

Delivered by mail and electronically

Dear Dr. Pascal,

Congratulations on the release of your report: *With Our Best Future in Mind*. We read with great interest the thoughtful consideration given to resolving one of this province's great social challenges – moving from chaos to order in the early learning environment.

Your report speaks to the essence of childhood experiences and we applaud the vision of creating “community hubs” through education where a child and their family can access many community resources including healthcare and specialized learning through partnership and strategic alliances.

Working in collaboration with community partners is essential in your plan and we observe that you have indicated the importance of aligning with service providers including community recreation services, public health, special needs resources and childcare to name a few. Although sport is mentioned on two occasions in your report with respect to after-school programming (page 5) and enrichment activities (page 19), the alliances fail to include community sport programming.

Sport – and that is small ‘s’ sport – is embedded in the fabric of our society, culture and history. For the purposes of this letter, we are referring to the role that sport plays in society at the amateur level.

As you may be aware, our country's sport landscape is changing through the adoption of the Canadian Sport for Life (CS4L) model – a model sanctioned by the Federal and Provincial/Territorial governments. It differs from other athlete development models in that it acknowledges that physical education, school sport, competitive sport and recreational activities are mutually interdependent¹. Canadian Sport for Life stands in sharp contrast to the past Canadian sport delivery systems. Traditionally, physical education in the schools, community sport, and high performance sport have been developed independently, an ineffective and expensive approach. The CS4L approach is designed to ensure that all children, including those who may choose to become high performance athletes, are given a solid foundation and knowledge base — physical, technical, tactical, and mental — upon which to build their athletic abilities.² We refer to this as “Physical Literacy” which is the foundation for success in sport and

¹ <http://www.canadiansportforlife.ca>, accessed August 16, 2009

² *ibid*

physical health and is developed during the “Active Start” (0-6 years) and “Fundamentals” stages (6-8 for girls and 6-9 for boys) of the Canadian Sport for Life model. Developing physical skills - much like reading, writing and mathematics skills - requires the expertise of leaders in a structured, consistent and reliable environment.

The 2009 Active Healthy Kids Canada Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth³ reports that children who are more physically active are also more academically fit, resulting in better scores in math and reading, higher grades, greater perceptual skill and overall academic readiness.

The Ontario Ministry of Education has plans underway to launch a new health and physical education curriculum in 2009 aimed at shaping a generation of physically literate students. We believe that physical literacy and the role of amateur sport must be included in any discussion of strategic alliances that support the personal growth and holistic development of our children. The report that you authored makes too little mention of sport as a means to assist in this development. In particular, we feel that much more discussion is required to define the role of sport, as set out in the Canadian Sport for Life model, in providing opportunities for “*learning through play*” and after-school programming. We would welcome the opportunity to engage in such a discussion.

SPORT4ONTARIO is a not-for profit organization that provides the collaborative environment, knowledge and resources to build capacity and drive leadership excellence in the Ontario sport community through education, advocacy, interaction, research and innovation. We work on behalf of a wide variety of sport organizations and represent a collective voice of sport in this province on common issues.

Once again, we congratulate you on this excellent and much needed report.

Sincerely,



Margaret Emin, Chair
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Cc: Premier Dalton McGuinty
Honourable Margaret Best, Minister of Health Promotion
Angela Longo, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Health Promotion
Honourable Deb Matthews, Minister of Children and Youth Services
Honourable Kathleen Wynne, Minister of Education
SPORT4ONTARIO Board of Directors
Brandy Tanenbaum, SPORT4ONTARIO Executive Director

³ <http://www.activehealthykids.ca/ReportCard/2009ReportCardOverview.aspx>, accessed August 16, 2009