



TERMS OF REFERENCE: UEY RESEARCH TASK GROUP

Overview of the UEY Project

The Understanding Early Years Project (herein referred to as UEY) is a PLAY project started in November 2005 and sponsored by the Community Social Planning Council of Greater Victoria (herein referred to as the Community Council). The project is funded by the federal government until summer 2008.

The project was formulated by the federal government with the following principles:

- A good start in life is important for success as children grow up
- A child's family and community are key influences on the child's readiness to learn and overall well-being
- Communities play a significant role in shaping experiences for children and their families
- Research and knowledge are critical for informed policies and programs that enhance early childhood development

The purpose of the UEY project for Greater Victoria is:

*To gather, interpret and share
meaningful information and resources
that can positively affect
the early years in local communities.*

Statement of Purpose

The following terms of reference are intended to set out the organizational structure, roles and responsibilities of the UEY Task Group and key partners.



Membership Composition

The membership of the UEY Research Task Group (herein referred to as UEY TG) will strive to be inclusive of the following:

1. PLAY leadership
2. Other PLAY task groups (Childcare, Parenting and Community Awareness)
3. Local Early Childhood Committees in the region
4. UVIC academics with expertise in early childhood development
5. Members of the childcare community
6. Camosun College
7. Aboriginal early childhood professionals and practitioners
8. School Districts, including kindergarten teachers
9. Health Sector, including VIHA
10. Community Organizations
11. Sponsor Agency
12. Parents
13. Other interested members of the community who have a clear interest in, and/or knowledge of children's development.

The UEY project will also strive for a diverse membership reflective of family demographics in Greater Victoria: age, ethnic, gender, economic, education and cultural. Where gaps in membership exist, efforts will be made to ensure representation in other UEY activities, such as forums, pilot projects, special meetings, direct consultation, etc.

Roles and Accountabilities

Roles and Accountabilities of the UEY TG as a Whole

Working as a team, the UEY TG will take an active role in providing support and direction to the UEY project, and to the UEY coordinator, for the duration of the project. Members are responsible for taking on specific tasks as identified in the UEY work plan and fulfilling their commitment by working with other members to complete tasks, in addition to maintaining regular attendance at UEY meetings.

A work plan will be formulated and approved by the UEY TG, and the TG will be responsible for its implementation. Members of the UEY TG will meet once monthly. Additional meetings will be set as required to complete specific tasks set out in the UEY work plan. To facilitate the participation of members who live farther away, teleconferencing options for those members will be pursued.



As one of several task groups of PLAY, the UEY TG will work in a spirit that embraces the values and commitments as outlined in the PLAY Charter. As a project of both PLAY and the Community Council, the UEY TG remains accountable to both organizations. An understanding of the relationship and responsibilities between these organizations will be set out in a formal Agreement between PLAY and the Community Council.

Two members of the UEY TG will read and sign off on quarterly reports to the Federal Government. Members will be selected on a rotating basis at a UEY TG meeting a month prior to submission of reports. The UEY coordinator will provide at a minimum, a one week turn around time to review reports.

Successful implementation of the UEY project is a shared responsibility between PLAY, PLAY leadership, the Community Council, the UEY coordinator, and the UEY TG. These responsibilities are further clarified below.

UEY Task Group Chair

A chair will be appointed to the UEY TG. The responsibilities of the Chair will include setting the monthly agenda, and chairing each UEY TG meeting. When absent, the Chair will request another UEY TG member to fill in. The Chair will also play an advisory role to the UEY coordinator.

UEY Coordinator

The UEY coordinator will prepare and disseminate all necessary meeting materials to UEY TG members, take minutes and assist the Chair to establish and disseminate the agenda for each meeting. The UEY coordinator will provide regular project updates at monthly PLAY Leadership meetings. The UEY coordinator will provide the UEY TG with quarterly updates on the project budget and any amendments. The UEY coordinator will take a lead role in project management, including overseeing the project budget.

Community Social Planning Council

The sponsoring agency, the Community Council, will work with the UEY coordinator to maintain good project accounting procedures and timely submission of quarterly reports to the Federal Government. The Community Council and the UEY coordinator are also responsible for the documentation and monitoring of the Contribution Agreement. The Community Council will make available other resources and services that the UEY project can access through a negotiated agreement. These additional supports will be outlined in the Letter of Agreement between PLAY and the Community Council.

PLAY Leadership

Play Leadership will have a responsibility for staying informed of work undertaken by the UEY TG and the UEY coordinator. The Leadership will work with the UEY TG on

key deliverables, such as the completion of the Action Plan and a general communications strategy for PLAY and the UEY project. PLAY Leadership takes the responsibility of integrating the work of the UEY TG and UEY project with other PLAY work and initiatives.

Refer to Figure 1 for an overview of the organizational relationships that exists within the UEY project.

Decision Making Processes

The UEY TG will strive to make decisions by consensus, while ensuring a fair opportunity is provided to members who share a differing opinion, or a dissenting voice. Due to the time limitations of the project, decisions can be finalized when at least five members of the UEY TG, consisting of the PLAY Chair, the UEY coordinator, a representative from PLAY leadership, a representative of the Community Council and at least one representative of a PLAY task group, have come to agreement. The participation of the members stated above will be considered quorum.

For time sensitive decisions, electronic approval will be sought. A decision will be finalized once all members, or a quorum have replied.

In a situation where one person in the UEY TG expresses a dissenting opinion that impacts on the UEY TG to finalize a decision, the Chair will ask the person with the dissenting decision or opinion if they will permit the decision making process to proceed, ensuring that their concerns and opinions are accurately recorded in the minutes, and will be further reflected upon.

***Spending and Consultants-need to address this still as I forgot to include this in our Sept 19th discussion.

Conflict of Interest

The UEY Research task group will adopt and apply the PLAY conflict of interest guidelines to provide guidance to all members to ensure clarity, fairness, absence of bias and commonality of purpose throughout the lifespan of the UEY project.

Communications

Meeting dates and minutes will be distributed to members of the UEY TG by email. Meetings are open to all PLAY members and minutes of the UEY TG will be posted on the PLAY website.



Throughout the duration of the project, the UEY TG will have access to early release of, and/or confidential information and data. All UEY TG members have a responsibility to keep UEY information and data confidential until such time the UEY TG and PLAY leadership have agreed upon a plan for the release of such information and data.

Any communication with the public regarding the sharing of data and information from the UEY research will be reviewed and approved by the UEY TG and PLAY Leadership. The UEY TG and PLAY leadership will determine what other parties have a vested interest in such communications and information and will provide opportunities for such parties to review materials before public dissemination.

A supplementary document outlining research protocols for the UEY project will be prepared by the UEY coordinator with input from the UEY TG and will be disseminated to interested parties.

Project Monitoring and Evaluation

Successful implementation of the project will consist of a periodic monitoring and evaluation of the projects' expected outcomes and objectives (see appendix one).

Meeting Dates

Meetings will be held monthly from 9:30 to 11:30 am. Meeting dates for the remainder of the 2006-07 fiscal year are: September 19th, October 17, November 14, December 5, January 16th, February 20th, and March 20th.

Workplan

Table 1.0 below provides an overview of the substantive matters that will be addressed at the UEY TG meetings for this fiscal year. This is a working document that will change and evolve over time. A list of tasks assigned to each UEY TG member will be created to accompany this document after members have discussed and agreed upon the work plan.

Work Package	Activity	Meeting Date	Completion Date
UEY Project Structure	Review Terms of Reference	Sept 19 th	
Research Framework	Establish an interim Research Advisory Committee to address: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - create a research framework - create plan for reviewing current inventory, forum outcomes and next steps - prepare a data analysis plan - plan for the release of EDI results - advisory to PIDACS consultants 	Sept 19 th	
Research Framework	Share proposal established by the interim Research Advisory Committee	October 17 th	
Work Plan	Finalize a UEY Work Plan	October 17 th	
Communications Plan	Review EDI Results from HELP if available	October 17	
Communications Plan	Work on preparations for HELP PLAY workshop	October 17	
Regional Inventory-Mapping	Updates, discuss next steps for developing mapping products from Forum outcomes and ideas	October 17	

Regional Inventory-Mapping	Work on what needs support	November 14	
Deliverables	Initial discussion to get folks thinking about a vision for the mapping report and atlas	November 14	
Communications Plan	Create a newsletter for principals, teachers and parents- re: EDI and other PLAY UEY work	November 14	December before holidays
Deliverables	Continue discussion on a vision for the mapping report and atlas	December 5	
Action Planning	Discuss work in the new year to prepare for PLAY's action plan- set a date to have a PLAY strategic planning session	December 5	
Deliverables	Discuss work plan for new year to prepare final mapping report	December 5	
Deliverables	Bring together current data, maps etc. and review and analyze work together	January 15	
Action Plan	Start a List of Recommendations based on PLAY & UEY research to date	February 20th	
January to June- central focus on bringing together our data sources, analyzing them and figuring out a strategy to share findings and work them into our mapping report and atlas.			
June- Host a UEY-PLAY pre-summer gathering for Task Group members to celebrate accomplishments! We'll have accomplished a lot!!			

Appendix One

Insert table of expected results and objectives