

SUMMARY OF THE COALITION COMMUNITY PLAN May, 2004

In its Community Charter [“the Charter”], the Greater Victoria Early Childhood Coalition [“the Coalition”] makes the following commitment as part of its mission:

- *Design and act on a community plan [the “Plan”] which will promote the multiple factors that contribute to the health and well being of young children*

In order to reach that goal, the Coalition underwent a strategic and invigorating process to develop a Plan. This Summary is intended to provide an overview of the Plan coming out of that process. The Plan is designed around and based on the results of the Mapping review done that identified the needs of all children by neighbourhood in the Greater Victoria area.

The focus of the Plan is to remove all barriers within programs, services and communities that prevent young children from accessing generic community based programs: programs and services that promote the developmental stages identified as important by the Early Development Instrument [the “EDI”]. A consistent set of principles were identified during the planning process that the Coalition believes ought to overlay the whole design and implementation of the Plan. These principles can be summarized as follows:

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- **ACCESSIBLE** – available to all children including those who have a disability, are born to immigrant parents or are new to Canada, etc.
- **AFFORDABLE** – a range of services that each economic group can afford while providing the same quality for all
- **AVAILABLE** – the services required for all children are actually available in the community
- **ACTUAL** – the services are really in place when and where people need to access them within their own neighbourhoods.

There are four areas of primary interest that require attention in order to promote the optimum development of young children. They are as follows:

1. Physical Health and Well being
Physical: Child is healthy, independent, ready each day
2. Social Competence and Emotional Maturity
Social Competence: Child plays, gets along with others, shares, and is self-confident.
Emotional Maturity: child is able to concentrate, help others, is patient, not aggressive or angry.

3. Language and Cognitive Development/Communication and General Knowledge
Language and Cognitive Development: Child is interested in reading and writing, can count and recognize numbers, shapes
Communication and general knowledge: Child can tell a story, communicates with adults and other children.
4. Communication and General Knowledge
Communication and General Knowledge: child can tell a story, communicates with adults and other children

EMERGENCE OF A FOUNDATION FOR A COMMUNITY PLAN

A set of standards was agreed upon by the Coalition members in order to identify its priorities. The set of standards is as follows:

- Consistent with the Coalition's Charter
- Identified as an issue through the Mapping review
- Backed up by the most up to date research and best practices
- Consistent with people's experience in the field
- Financial resources are available to address the issue
- Opportunity to partner with people/group community resources
- There was a demonstrated short term need
- The issue requires long term attention

Using this set of standards during the process, the Coalition members identified the following themes, with the first three identified as the top priorities:

Themes and Priorities for the Community Plan

1. Childcare: promoting quality, structured and regulated childcare environments where children have learning opportunities to maximize their early development
2. Knowledge and Awareness of Early Childhood Development: disseminating accurate and up to date information to improve everyone's awareness and knowledge of early childhood development
3. Parenting Education and Support: educational initiatives to help parents learn how to promote early development in their children
4. Safe Environment: the community is a place that promotes play and emotional security

5. Neighbourhood Cohesion: a sense of community within neighbourhoods that promotes a sense of belonging
6. Food Security and a Nutrition Friendly Community: ensure food that is nutritious and affordable is available to children and families
7. Housing: ensure safe, consistent and quality housing is available to all children and families.
8. Child friendly workplaces and communities: a community where people value and contribute to promoting early childhood development for all young children
9. Health Care and developmental/health screening: facilitate timely access to appropriate, affordable and available health care and screening for early childhood development
10. Partnerships: development of relationships that promote integration and intersectoral planning consistent with the knowledge that it takes a community to raise a child
11. Promoting Learning including through literacy: a commitment to life long learning and in particular in the case of young children, learning and becoming literate through fun
12. Media including all technological influences over children: develop specific initiatives that will promote learning through fun, general education, literacy and demonstrate a commitment to lifelong learning.

Established Action Groups and Proposed Mandates

The following list constitutes the existing action groups within the Coalition. Each has a proposed mandate attached coming out of the identification of the priorities:

1. Leadership Council – focus on securing resources and forging partnerships with the community
2. Communication Task Force – focus on the education and awareness
3. Evaluation and Research Task Force – prepare background briefing papers for all education and awareness initiatives
4. Engaging Families – focus on education programs and outreach for parents
5. Mapping Committee – continue to develop maps focusing on the priorities set by the Coalition to support all initiatives