



## **Collection & Mapping Early Childhood Assets for Greater Victoria** **Notes from the September 2006 Forum**

### **1. The Workshop**

PLAY, through the *Understanding the Early Years (UEY)* project<sup>1</sup>, is preparing an inventory of healthy early childhood assets, programs and services that support families, parents and children (from pre-natal to 6 years of age) in the Capital Region. The purpose of the inventory is to support the development of tools for early years groups in the region, as well as to assist with planning and implementation of community asset mapping and other local research initiatives.

The *Collection & Mapping Early Childhood Assets for Greater Victoria 2006 Forum* took place on September 13<sup>th</sup> 2006 at the Queen Alexandra Foundation for Children in Victoria BC (Appendix A: Forum Agenda). There were approximately 26 people in attendance. Those present represented a diverse range of organizations in the region of Greater Victoria, the majority of whom work within the field of early childhood development: academic institutions, childcare providers, community centres etc. (Appendix B: Forum Attendees).

### **2. Forum Goals**

- 2.1 *Introduce the Programs and Services Inventory and Framework* to Early Childhood Development stakeholders in the Capital Region.
- 2.2 Discuss the *strategies and challenges* of creating and maintaining an effective inventory.
- 2.3 *Define* a healthy early childhood development *asset*.
- 2.4 Decide *how* an inventory of early childhood assets can be used to create meaningful tools and *who the end users will be*.

### **3. The Inventory**

The Inventory was begun in late summer of 2006. In its current state, it is a MS Excel database of assets, programs and services, found within the Capital Region that, directly or indirectly, support the healthy development of children aged 0 to 6. The inventory is organized using a *Framework*. This was adapted by the UEY project from a framework

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<sup>1</sup> The UEY project and the forum is funded by the Federal Government of Canada.

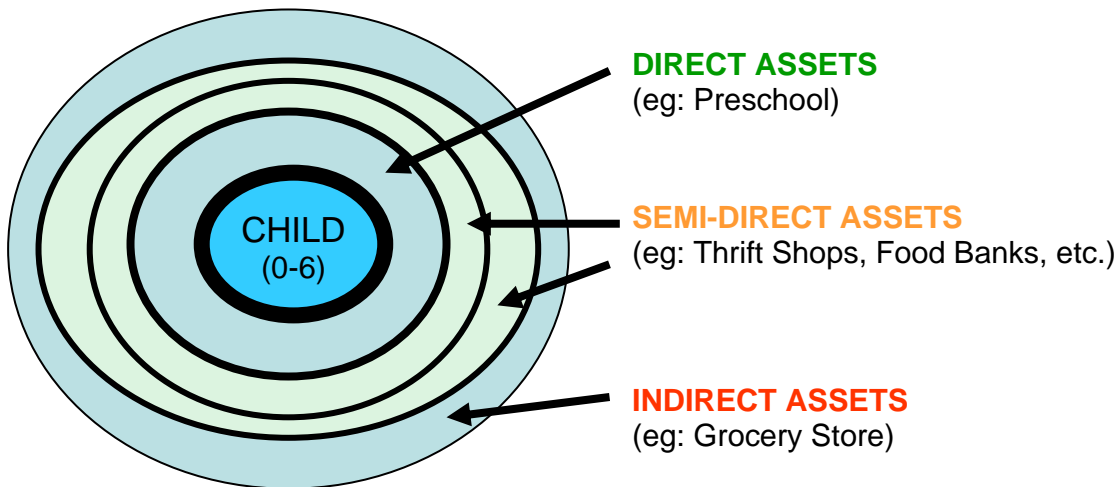
used in an early childhood asset assessment in Chautauqua County, New York (Smith, Patricia, 2001).<sup>2</sup>

The database allows users to sort the data based on a number of attributes (region of service, type of organization, target population, etc.).

As of December 2006, the draft Asset, Programs and Services Inventory includes:

- Over 1100 entries.
- A comprehensive framework, providing categories and sub-categories under which each program/service can be listed.
- Contact information, including phone number, email, URL, and contact name (where available).

### Recognizing an Early Childhood Asset



In preparing the draft database, certain issues were identified as *requiring input from early childhood development professionals*. Examples include:

- a) It was unclear what parameters should be set to decide what constituted a “Healthy Early Childhood Asset”. Obvious, or “*Direct*” assets such as preschools were included in the inventory. *Indirect* assets were simply excluded. *Semi-direct* assets, however, required further deliberation.
- b) It was uncertain whether to include certain *time sensitive* or transitory programs.
- c) It was uncertain whether to include certain *private* programs and services programs.
- d) Deciding whether or not a program or service was *universally accessible* was challenging. Many programs require fees, private transportation, or personal mobility.
- e) The Inventory is a *time-sensitive* snapshot of programs and services, and *requires constant upkeep* to remain effective.

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<sup>2</sup> Patricia Smith (2001). Community Early Childhood Asset Assessment and Analysis for Chautauqua County. Refer to Chautauqua County Success by Six Website: <http://www.ccsb6.org/publications.asp>.

## 4. What Was Learned

Forum participants spent most of their time in small group discussion (See Appendix C for the questions each group addressed as well as Appendix D for individual group responses). There were four groups in total.

The central issues that emerged from the small group discussions are summarize below.

### 4.1 Clarity on what is a healthy childhood asset

There was a high degree of consistency between groups as to what was or was not considered a healthy early childhood asset. The table below shares results provided by all groups.

These items were listed by at least three groups		
<b>IS a Healthy Childhood Development Asset</b>	<b>UNCLEAR</b>	<b>IS NOT a Healthy Childhood Development Asset</b>
Neighbourhood houses	Housing, Social housing	Grocery stores
Childcare	Faith based programs/assets	
Preschool	Food security	
Recreation centres	MCFD	
Food banks		
Libraries		
Playgrounds, parks, greenspaces		
Public health		

Section 4.1 Continued: Clarity on what is a healthy childhood asset

These items were listed by at least one group		
IS a Healthy Childhood Development Asset	UNCLEAR	IS NOT a Healthy Childhood Development Asset
Clinics		Banks
Community associations		Lawyers
Childcare resource and referral		On-line resources
Respite care		Thrift stores
Culture based programs		
Transportation		
Sports clubs		
Play groups		
Parenting programs		
Music/art programs		
Community school programs		
Baby talk/toddler talk		
Toy libraries		
Community centres		
Hospitals		
Dr/dentist/pediatrician		
Family drop-in dinners		
Anger management		

## 4.2 Assets, Programs and Services Criteria

The idea of a '*litmus test*' as an evaluation tool to determine if a particular asset, program or service should be entered into the inventory was presented by one group and was well received. Potential criteria and values mentioned by the groups were:

- Free or low cost
- Accessible
- Designed for young children (child-focused)
- Culturally appropriate
- Inclusive
- Non-exploitive
- Gender-fair
- Non-stigmatizing
- Meeting child and family needs
- Safe
- Local
- Public
- Compassionate
- Play opportunities for children
- Affordable
- Non-detrimental to child development
- Non judgmental
- Accommodating
- Involving other children and other families
- Universal
- Healthy
- Not meeting needs of those other than children/participants (ie: for profit, religion)
- Nurturing a sense of community
- Available to extended families
- Employs happy caregivers

### 4.3 Inventory User Groups

Developing the inventory becomes significantly less challenging once potential user groups are identified. In small group discussions, the following community members and groups were listed by forum participants as being probable inventory users:

#### Community

- Parents & families
- Communities
- Politicians
- First Nations Bands
- Schools
- Parents
- Extended families

#### Organizations

- Community associations
- Service clubs
- Parent Advisory Committees
- Community centres

#### Professionals

- Early childhood providers
- Program facilitators
- Other childcare providers

#### Policy and Research

- Funders
- Colleges
- Provincial/Municipal governments
- Political groups
- Policy makers
- Health (eg: Queen Alexandra Foundation)

#### 4.4 Products and tools created from the inventory

To focus the scope of the inventory, forum participant-groups listed *how the inventory might be used, and how it might appear.*

##### Potential Uses

###### Research and Planning

A comprehensive inventory of early childhood assets, programs and services could be used to inform and further various research and policy-making initiatives. It was suggested that local universities, governments, corporate groups, and community agencies might use the information to further needs assessments. This data might also be used for grant applications, municipal/provincial policy, mapping, and advocacy for families.

###### Families and Communities

The inventory's potential uses also extend to families and communities in the Capital Region. Such applications include finding activities for children, choosing a place to live, resource searches, and referrals.

##### Inventory Appearance

Forum groups suggested that the inventory be *accessible, current, and informative.* *Media types and locations* were also recommended.

###### Accessible

- Convenient
- Easy to use
- Flexible
- Sortable
- Acronym-free
- Limited text (use of symbols, maps, etc.)
- Universal

###### Location and medium

- Online
- Brochure format
- Hard copies
- Available in kiosks
- Distributed in packages from community centres and hospitals
- Available to new parents and newcomers
- Map format
- Multimedia
- Visual appeal
- Multilingual, Braille
- Plan language
- User-friendly
- Readable

###### Current

- Continually updated
- Linked to other resources, websites
- Cumulative: capacity to add data

###### Informative

- Categories outline any bursary or fees
- Lists age group and population served

## 5. Next Steps

- a. The inventory will be updated with information collected during the forum
- b. The inventory will be placed on the PLAY website for people to review and provide further feedback- it will be organized by municipality.
- c. Forum participants will receive an email with the forum notes, a link to the website and a list of the forum participants and contact information.
- d. A strategy to map, analyze and create tools using the assets will be formulated early 2007 and updates and new maps will appear on the PLAY website as they are produced for review and feedback before finalization.
- e. Information collected on assets will be used to produce an Early Years report for each sub-region where an Early Years committee is organized (Westshore/Sooke, Esquimalt, Saanich, Peninsula, Gulf Islands) as well as for Victoria and OakBay.

If you have questions, suggestions or information to share, please contact the project coordinator, Stephanie Gabel at:

Email: [stephanie@playvictoria.org](mailto:stephanie@playvictoria.org)

Tel: 250.385-0716

## **6. Appreciation and Acknowledgements**

A warm thank you goes out to all the people who made time to attend our forum in September, to Ann Ovstaas who facilitated our session together, and to Jonathan Ball for his continued work on updating the inventory and his valuable contributions to preparing this report.

## Appendices

### APPENDIX A: The Agenda

## **Collection & Mapping of Early Childhood Assets for Greater Victoria Work Session**

**Wednesday September 13<sup>th</sup>  
9:00am to 12noon**

### Goals for the Meeting

Define what a healthy early childhood development asset is  
Decide what an inventory of early childhood assets will be used for and by who

### AGENDA

9:00am

Greeting and Check In

Review Agenda

Desired Outcomes for the Meeting

9:30am

Project Background- Stephanie Gabel

9:45am

Inventory and Framework Background- Jonathan Ball

### **Break 10:00 to 10:15**

10:15 to 11:15

Small Group Discussion

11:15 to 11:45

Large Group Debrief

11:45

Next Steps

## APPENDIX B: Forum Attendees

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization/Affiliation</b>
Alison Preece	University of Victoria- Education
Carole Ireland	Saanich Parks & Recreation- Community Services
Colleen Hobson	Saanich Neighbourhood Place
Daphne MacNaughton	Peninsula Connections for Early Childhood
Elizabeth Quon	University of Victoria Family Centre
Emilie K. Adin	City of Langford
Enid Elliot	Regional Childcare Council/ Health & Learning Knowledge Centre: EC working group
Gus Underwood	Songhees Preschool
Jan White	PLAY, Success by Six
Jane Worton	Community Council
Janice Shields	School District 64, Gulf Islands Early Years Coalition, Treefrog Daycare
Janis Johnson	Peninsula Connections for Early Childhood
Joanne Cruickshank	Victoria Childcare Resource and Referral
Jonathan Ball	Consultant
Judith Oldfield	VIHA- Infant Development Program
Laura Snow	Military Family Resource Centre
Margot Edwards	Victoria Native Friendship Centre
Martha August	Songhees Preschool
Mary Hayes	Tsartlip First Nation
Meagan Brame	Esquimalt ECD Committee
Michele Fryer	VIHA
Nicky Logins	Sooke Family Resource Society
Ragnhild Flakstad	Salt Spring Island Community Services
Scott Branch	Military Family Resource Centre
Stephanie Gabel	PLAY, Community Council
Susan Boyle	VIHA
Tracy Kendrick	Greater Victoria Public Library
Ursula deGroot	Sooke Family Resource Society, Childcare Resource & Referral

## Collection & Mapping of Early Childhood Assets for Greater Victoria Work Session

### Small Group Discussion: PART ONE 25 minutes

**Notetaker:**

**Presenter:**

A. In your group, discuss and write down your ideas of what constitutes a healthy early childhood development asset.

B. Using the flipchart paper provided, make a list of specific examples or types of assets found in the region that either:

1. **Meets** your group definition of a healthy early childhood asset
2. **Does not represent** your group definition of a healthy early childhood asset

**Is a Asset**

**Is Not an Asset**

C. In your list of healthy childhood development assets, put a check mark beside assets you think information can easily be obtained by December 2006.

D. Create a list of ideas of where information/data can be obtained about the availability of these assets.

**Small Group Discussion: PART TWO** 25 minutes

**Notetaker:**

**Presenter:**

Scenario: Imagine it is one year from today. Everything your group identified as healthy early childhood assets have been inventoried, and that information is now being used and shared.

Please discuss the questions below and record your ideas on the flipchart paper provided.

1. What are people doing with this information?
2. Who is using the information?
3. What does the information look like?

## APPENDIX D: Small Group Responses

<b>GROUP 1</b>	
What Constitutes an Early Childhood Asset	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Opportunity</li> <li>- Child-focused</li> <li>- Family-focused</li> <li>- Play Opportunities</li> <li>- Other children</li> <li>- Play Environments</li> <li>- Healthy foods</li> <li>- Well-balanced, happy caregivers</li> <li>- Extended Family</li> <li>- Practicing Culture</li> <li>- Sense of Community</li> </ul>	
Examples of Early Childhood Assets	
IS an Asset	IS NOT an Asset
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Military Families Resource Centre</li> <li>- “Headstart”</li> <li>- Playgrounds</li> <li>- Religious programs</li> <li>- Inter-Cultural Associations</li> <li>- Foods</li> <li>- Native Friends</li> <li>- “Surrounded by Cedar”</li> <li>- Neighbourhood houses</li> <li>- Preschools</li> <li>- Childcare</li> <li>- Public houses</li> <li>- Library</li> <li>- Childcare resource and referral</li> <li>- Parks and recreation</li> <li>- Community associations</li> <li>- Clinics</li> <li>- Culture-based programs</li> <li>- Transportation</li> <li>- Sports club</li> <li>- Food bank</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- MCFD</li> <li>- Faith-based programs</li> <li>- Grocery stores</li> <li>- Lawyers</li> <li>- Banks</li> </ul>

## Group 1 Continued

### The Programs and Services Inventory

#### Who is Using it?

- Community organizations
- Parents & families & community
- Politicians
- Success by Six
- Queen Alexandra
- Funders
- Community associations
- Service clubs
- First Nations Bands
- Colleges

#### How Can it be Used?

- Form of networking
- Resource
- Developing initiatives in local communities
- To create more childcare spaces
- Planning and funding opportunities
- Holistic approach

#### What Does it Look Like?

- Needs to be in different forms
- Up to date

## GROUP 2:

### What Constitutes an Early Childhood Asset

This group formulated a more conceptual idea of what an early childhood asset is and began formulating a list of criteria that would serve as a sort of 'litmus' test to help us decide if a particular asset was a healthy early childhood asset, or not. Ideas for criteria included: designed for young children, non-exploitative, deals with barriers (accessible, \$, cultural, social), inclusive, gender fair, non-stigmatizing, community planning activities that include/consider the needs of young children. An entry would not be included if it: met the needs of someone else other than the young children (eg. for political, religious or profit/money), if it had an element that was detrimental to young children's development and well being (eg. MacDonalds, mall events).

### The Programs and Services Inventory

Who is Using it?	How Can it be Used?	What Does it Look Like?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Planners</li><li>- Government</li><li>- Funders</li><li>- Community agencies</li><li>- Families</li><li>- Schools</li><li>- Newcomers</li><li>- Real estate</li><li>- Researchers</li><li>- Universities</li><li>- Public Health</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Planning</li><li>- Choosing where to live</li><li>- Finding activities for children</li><li>- Meeting child/family needs</li><li>- Funding proposals</li><li>- Advocacy</li><li>- Decision making</li><li>- Defining needs</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Current, continually updated</li><li>- Web-based</li><li>- Hard copies (at libraries/health units, etc.)</li><li>- Easy to use</li><li>- Flexible</li><li>- Sortable</li><li>- Multilingual, Braille</li><li>- Accessible in kiosks</li><li>- Acronym-free</li><li>- Linked to other resources, websites</li><li>- Visual appeal</li><li>- Symbols, maps (ie: limited text)</li><li>- cumulative- capacity to add info in future</li></ul>

### GROUP 3:

#### What Constitutes an Early Childhood Asset

Resources whose mandates is to support the development of young children that provide a safe accessible continuum of support for healthy early childhood development within the family's reach.

Early childhood development should be: family-oriented, affordable, consistent, inclusive, local, accessible, universal, supportive, accommodating, non-judgmental, compassionate, safe, friendly, healthy, relevant, and culturally sensitive.

#### Examples of Early Childhood Assets

IS an Asset	IS NOT an Asset
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Parks/playgrounds</li><li>- Preschools</li><li>- Playgroups</li><li>- Daycares</li><li>- Neighbourhood houses</li><li>- Recreation centres</li><li>- Parenting programs</li><li>- Public health units</li><li>- Food security programs</li><li>-</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Thrift stores</li><li>- On line resources</li><li>- Housing</li><li>- Faith organizations</li></ul>

#### The Programs and Services Inventory

Who is Using it?	How Can it be Used?	What Does it Look Like?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Early childhood providers</li><li>- Funders</li><li>- Service organizations</li><li>- Provincial government</li><li>- Municipal government</li><li>- School/PAC's</li><li>- Program facilitator</li><li>- Parents</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Parents: Looking for specific resources</li><li>- Referral</li><li>- Reference for developing plans/programs/services</li><li>- Identifying gaps, needs and redundancies</li><li>- Linking with like-minded organizations</li><li>- Developing cases for funding</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Accessible to everyone</li><li>- Online</li><li>- Paper, at organizations</li><li>- Readable</li></ul>

## GROUP 4:

### What Constitutes an Early Childhood Asset

- Inclusive
- Culturally appropriate
- Free/bursary options
- Accessible transportation
- Promotes healthy child development (social, emotional/mental, physical, health of family)
- Child-friendly
- Universal
- Easy to access
- Non-stigmatizing

### Examples of Early Childhood Assets

#### IS an Asset

- Child health clinics
- Parent-child drop in
- Daycare
- Parent support
- Preschool
- Library
- Parks and recreations programs
- Playgrounds
- Schools
- Neighbourhood houses
- Food banks
- Family doctors, pediatricians, dentists
- Music programs
- Art programs
- Parent support groups
- Preschool
- "Mother Goose" programs
- Toy libraries
- Service clubs (bursaries are made available through these clubs)
- Hospitals
- "Best Babies" programs
- "Baby Talk/Toddler Talk"
- McDonalds ("Playplace")
- (food can be healthy if parents don't necessarily eat there)
- Other "child friendly" restaurants need to be included?)
- Social housing

#### IS NOT an Asset

- Programs with fees/without bursaries
- Church schools/Sunday schools
- Grocery stores
- Separate food security section
- Separate social housing section

## Group 4 Continued

### The Programs and Services Inventory

#### Who is Using it?

- Parents
- Professionals
- Policy makers
- Grand parents,
- Childcare providers,
- Political groups,
- Community centres

#### How Can it be Used?

- Informing parents of services
- Informing policy
- Mapping
- Linking to UBC/UVIC research
- Corporate sponsors
- Policy advocate tool

#### What Does it Look Like?

- Categories for bursaries and fees
- User-friendly
- Category for bursary or fees
- Plan language
- Age group/population served
- Map of local communities in brochure format
- Distributed in packages from community centres/hospitals for new parents or newcomers
- Need to be clear on fee/bursary

## APPENDIX F: Inventory: Public Resources Used

- PLAY Parent Education Database
- World Wide Web
- Bridges Victoria Community Handbook
- VIHA Website
- Community Food Resources (VIHA)
- District School Board Information
- Licensed/non-licensed Daycare Programs
- Brochures, Guides, Pamphlet
- Island Parent Magazine
- Community Contacts
- Westshore directory (excluding all Daycare)
- VIHA Community Services Directory (Online)
- Victoria Community Information Database (Online)