Mental Health

"The foundations of many mental health problems that endure through adulthood are **established early in life**. **Multigenerational, family-centred approaches** offer the most promising models for preventing and treating mental health problems in young children. Sometimes the best intervention strategy for young children with serious behavioural or emotional problems is to **focus directly on the primary needs of those who care for them**." Mental Health Problems in Early Childhood Can Impair Learning and Behavior for Life, Center on the Developing Child, Harvard University, December 2008

Generational Support

"The family support movement and the programs and people that make up that movement continue to pull the **protective threads of community** around parents and their children in ways that are new, yet based on age-old knowledge: **in a supportive community, healthy, productive adults raise healthy, safe children- who will later do the same.**" Making the case for Family Support, Family Resource Coalition , 1996

Health of Individuals within Community

Community is the crucible for many of the most important determinants of health as the place where we live, learn, work and play – our homes, schools, workplaces and neighbourhoods. The Senate Subcommittee on Population Health has identified 12 health determinants – that contribute to or undermine the health of Canadians. Of these 12, a full 10 play out largely at the community level. This report argues that since so many of these determinants act at the local level, it is here that action must be taken. Since the community also represents the built physical environment where Canadians spend almost all of their time, as well as the local delivery of health care services, **more than 75 % of the health determinants exert their influences on the Canadian population in the community setting** – homes, schools, neighborhoods, workplaces, towns, and cities. Act Locally: Community-based population health promotion Dr Trevor Hancock Health Promotion Consultant Victoria BC for The Senate Sub-Committee on Population Health March 2009

Communities Response to Community Health

Explicitly calls for the strengthening of communities in Canada to address health determinants, noting people living closest to the problem are often closest to the solution. His report **said communities must be honored and supported to develop their own responses, to build on existing knowledge, experience and energy at the ground level.** The Chief Public Health Officer's Report on The State of Public Health in Canada 2008

Integrated Community Capacity Based Services

An important aspect of local human-centred development is an **integrated system of community-based human services.** Such a system would be built from the **household level up**, by examining how human development can be supported at every level and from every dimension, as seen from the perspective of the individual citizen, be **they infant, child, youth, adult or senior citizen.** Finally, such a system must be based on and **respectful of the capacity of individuals and communities, and must empower – not dis-empower – and enable – not disable them**; it must build on capacity. Act Locally: Community-Based Population Health Promotion Dr Trevor Hancock, March 2009

Gathering Place

Relationship building is further facilitated by a neighbourhood's **gathering places**, such as schools, parks, coffee shops, pubs, community gardens, farmers markets, trails, and other common areas, where people repeatedly **bump into** one another. From the Ground Up: Community's Role in Addressing Street Level Social Issues: Jim Diers 2008 Canada West Foundation.

Basic Conditions of Well-Being

"A Society that values children will first focus on assuring families **basic conditions of well-being** in homes and communities." (Novick M 1999). Fundamentals First: An Equal Opportunity From Birth For Every Child, Campaign 2000

Civic Participation Linked to Healthy Communities

The Tamarack Institute notes **high levels of civic participation are linked to a community's higher overall quality of life.** Communities whose citizens **collaborate** closely experience better **educational achievement, better child development**, **safer neighborhoods, greater economic prosperity**, and citizens with **increased physical and mental health.** Act Locally: Community-based population health promotion Dr Trevor Hancock 2009

Healthy Community Protects its Members

Part of what makes a community healthy is that it **protects** its members – especially its **most vulnerable members** - against harm arising from its physical, social, economic and other environments**.** Act Locally: Community-based population health promotion Dr Trevor Hancock Health 2009

Relationships Impact Health, Social Cohesion and Financial Well-Being

Dense networks and multiple **relationships of trust**, which can be built locally only in neighbourhoods and communities, have been found to have a strong **positive impact upon health, social cohesion and financial well-being**. Shared Space: The Communities Agenda Sherri Torjman 2006

Social Participation Can Help Mediate the Impact of Risks.

The quality of the social environment, including family, friends, school and neighbourhood, **can help mediate the impact of low income and other risks**. The evidence calls for **family-enabling environments,** which encourage **positive parenting** and opportunities for **learning the skills involved in effective problem-solving and conflict resolution.** It requires communities to provide **opportunities for participation.** Shared Space: The Communities Agenda Sherri Torjman 2006

Social Support & Stress, Confidence & Problem Solving

Gottlieb (1983) identified social support as an important component in people's lives and articulated the process of social support as it acts as a **mediator to stress**. He believes that the presence of supportive associates reduces stress, **increases self -confidence** and thus **enhances problem solving behaviours**. This he believes occurs through the process of social support- through **redirecting problem-solving**, offering **concrete aid** and **intervening** in the environment. Mothers and Others Making change: Empowerment through self-help and Social Action Susan M Morrison, Wilfred Laurier University, Ontario 1992

Neighbourhood Group & Support, Opportunity, Mutual Influence, Interdependence, Stability

Chavis and Wandersman (1990) relate the role of participating more in a neighbourhood group to the development of a sense of community and the resultant feelings of **shared emotional ties, support, opportunity and mutual influence**. They believe that these feelings in turn lead to a **perception of control and empowerment** within a community. (p. 56) Sarason (1974) also identified the effects of the development of a sense of community on the individual. A sense of community leads to: "… the perception of **similarity** to others, an **acknowledged interdependence** with others, a willingness to maintain this interdependence **by giving to or doing for others** what one expects from them, the feeling that one is a **part of a larger dependable and stable structure** (p.157) Mothers and Others Making change: Empowerment through self-help and Social Action Susan M Morrison, Wilfred Laurier University, Ontario 1992

Collective Action & Empowerment

Collective action helps people see that they are **not struggling in isolation**. (Adamson et al., 1988 p.155) but are part of a larger social movement. It has been labelled as a potentially **empowering** experience (Chavis & Wandersman, 1990; Fischer, 1984; Keiffer, 1984; Riger, 1984). Mothers and Others Making change: Empowerment through self-help and Social Action Susan M Morrison, Wilfred Laurier University, Ontario 1992

Neutral Community Space- Share Perspectives & Dialogue

Engagement is also influenced by the availability of public space. It is difficult to contribute in an authentic way to communities in the absence of **places that enable shared activity and dialogue**. The links between individual capacity and community infrastructure are evident. Public space facilitates many forms of engagement. Neutral shared space provides a venue, for example, for members of **diverse cultural groups** to **share perspectives** and exchange views around **common concerns**. They can try to work through community tensions rooted in racial difference or religious intolerance. The notion of shared space, in this case, takes on a true physical meaning. Shared Space: The Communities Agenda Sherri Torjman 2006

Barriers to Participation in Community

Engagement is a function not only of programs and opportunities for active participation. It requires the removal of barriers that **make it difficult for some individuals and groups to participate in communities** and in society, more generally. Shared Space: The Communities Agenda Sherri Torjman 2006

Family Protection
"...the **family, as the fundamental group of society** and the natural environment for the growth and well-being of all its members and particularly children, should be afforded the necessary **protection and assistance** so that it can fully **assume its responsibilities** within the community..." Preamble, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989

Encouraging Social Inclusion
The building blocks of inclusion result from interactions where people feel **secure and appreciated,** and at the same time have **opportunities to reach out to those who seem less familiar.** Mere physical proximity – consider, for example, the mixing of diverse inhabitants in a single housing development – does not guarantee that individuals will freely reach across traditional boundaries to connect with one another. As one British academic has observed, **we must move beyond proximity, to conditions where people from different backgrounds are engaged in common pursuits that encourage them to connect honestly.** These settings, often mediated by local community organisations, appear to **hold the greatest promise of promoting inclusion.** (Ash Amin 2002). Building Inclusive Communities, 2005, International Federation of Settlements and Neighbourhood Centres.

Child Within Family & Community to Close School Readiness Gaps
Early childhood development policy will be most effective if the primary focus stays on **supporting the very young** child within his or her family and community. **Child, family and community well-being must be equally valued**, **since they are inextricably linked.** It is vitally important that families continue to have access to the community supports which help them raise their children, especially if they are dealing with multiple challenges such as **poverty, absence of positive parenting models, history of child maltreatment, post-partum depression o**r other conditions that might put their children at risk for negative outcomes. Research is clear on the need for **an ecological, life-course approach** to closing current **school readiness** gaps- one that addresses the child in the context of family and the family in the context of community (Bruner, C. 2010). Family is the Foundation: Why Family Support and Early Childhood Education Must Be a Collaborative Effort © Canadian Association of Family Resource Programs, 2011

Child Health, Parenting & Parent Lives
The Institute of Health Equity, commissioned by 4Children, identified three outcomes that they deemed were the **most important outcomes** children's Centres should be striving for in order to give all children positive early-years experiences, established three. 1. **Children's Health & development,** 2. **Parenting-** The dynamic **interaction** between parent and child, and in particular the type of **home communication** and **learning environment** that parents establish and nurture for their children from birth, is critical. Parenting must also generate **attachment** between parents and their children. 3. **Parents' lives** There are particular factors that sit outside the immediate parent–child relationship but exert powerful influence over parenting. **Parents' health, social networks, financial resources and knowledge** about parenting collectively act as enablers or barriers to nurturing their children's development. Parents' **mental wellbeing** is critical. Mental wellbeing has both direct and indirect impacts on a child: directly through the impact on parenting itself and indirectly through the mother's capacity to withstand stressors that can affect home and community environments. An Equal Start: Improving Outcomes in Children's Centres 2012 UCL Institute of Health Equity University College London, England

Sense of Belonging as Basic Need Influences Health, Depression, Stability & Attachment
It has been suggested that the **need to belong is a basic human need** that motivates behaviour. For example, control theory (Glasser, 1986, as cited in Wilkes, 1995) argues that the needs to belong, to succeed, and to feel needed **influence the behaviour of young people**. The need to belong has also been found to be linked to **emotional** and **cognitive** processes, as well as to people's **physical and psychological health** (Baumeister & Leary, 1995)(Canadian Mental Health Association, 2009). Studies have shown that a sense of belonging can be a mediator of the protective effect of social support against symptoms of **depression** (Choenarom, Williams, & Hagerty, 2005; Hagerty & Williams, 1999), **family instability, attachment, and belonging**. The Relationship between Childhood Family Instability, Secure Attachment, and the Sense of Belonging of Young Adults Hilla Shlomi, University of British Columbia, Okanagan

Children Need Supportive Community to Reach Potential

"Children do not just grow up in families - they grow up in communities. Communities provide the social settings where families help young children to grow and develop. Families with young **children need supportive communities** to help their children reach their potential." Early Childhood Development Agreement: Report on Government of Canada Activities and Expenditures 2000-2001 "**Children thrive** within families and communities that can meet their **physical and developmental needs and** can provide **security, nurturing, respect and love**." First Ministers' Meeting Communiqué on Early Childhood Development, 2000

Intersectoral & Multi-Level Support

"Early results from the National Longitudinal Study of Children and Youth show that determinants of child development have an impact at all levels of social aggregation: family, neighbourhood, community and economy. This underlines the importance of a strategy that is not only **intersectoral**, but also **multi-level**, and has **strong local leadership.**" Developmental Health and the Wealth of Nations: Social, Biological, and Educational Dynamics Daniel P. Keating PhD & Clyde Hertzman, MD 2000

Least Advantaged

"Successful communities are those that have been successful in **bolstering the social outcomes of their least advantaged citizens**." "People from less advantaged backgrounds are vulnerable, but people from less advantaged backgrounds who also live in less advantaged communities are particularly vulnerable." (Willms, J. Douglas. 2001) Three Hypotheses About Community Effects on Social Outcomes." *ISUMA*, Vol. 2, No. 1, Spring, pp. 53-62.

Community Capacity Building

Capacity building is about strengthening the environments that affect the lives of families and children **by creating conditions that lead to successful outcomes**. Initiatives developed in isolation may not be as effective as initiatives developed from a **capacity building, ecological perspective**. Based on population health principles, this approach to improving services is more economical in the long term than a 'top down' approach to planning and delivering services. For children to be able to thrive, they must live in a thriving family within a thriving community. Taking a community approach to service planning and integration encourages service providers and **community members to take responsibility for strengthening the fabric of their own community**, by asking themselves **what kind of place** their community is for children and families, and **how services may be used to positively influence** the quality of life there. Community Supports and the Early Childhood Development Initiative Craig Shields, 1995 Family Resource Programs of Canada

Strength of Informal Community Supports

"Most ameliorative responses consist of formal services and programs that are provided by paid professionals. This is necessary and makes good sense in many instances. But formal services are not a good substitute for the kind of **informal supports** that many children and families receive from **family, friends and community**. Formal supports work differently than formal services. They are based upon **personal affiliation and mutual regard**. They build on **aspiration and strengths, a**nd they can be **spontaneous, resilient and ongoing**. As a result, one of the greatest contributions formal services can make is to reinforce the value of informal supports, and to strengthen them wherever possible." Community Supports and the Early Childhood Development Initiative Shields, C. 1995 Family Resource Programs of Canada

Multicultural

Young immigrants who successfully plant a foot in both their own culture and the adopted one tend to feel better about themselves and have fewer social problems than those who become either totally assimilated or stick to their own kind. Our Immigrant Youth on Right Track: Study, Toronto Star 2006

Crime Reduction & Family Support

Arthur Reynolds, author of the Chicago Child-Parent Centers study published in 2001, believes the main reason for the **crime-reduction effect** seen in this population was the **strong family support component**. He states, "If it were just an educational program, you wouldn't find the **social outcomes** that we've found." Hard Data Shows Family Support Works, in America's Family Support Magazine, Summer 2001

Literacy Skills

"... During the past decade, theorists have stressed that learning societies depend also on relationships with people, both within communities and organizations and among them.... Compared with other social outcomes, literacy may have a particularly strong relationship with social capital. People become members of social networks by learning the language of the culture, and using it to engage in social relations.... We believe that at least some, and perhaps a large proportion, of the variation(in cognitive capacity) among jurisdictions is rooted in the early years, and determined by the ability of communities to **develop children's literacy skills** during the period from conception to age 5 (McCain & Mustard 1999) J. Douglas Willms, Three Hypotheses about Community Effects 2003

Serve whole Community & Social Closure

Segregation of less advantaged children seems to be especially harmful for disadvantaged students. (Coleman, Hoffer and Kilgore 1982; Coleman and Hoffer 1987) Catholic schools were deemed more effective in achievement because the **parents and staff all knew each other**- a construct called "social closure"- and the **parents knew their children's friends**-called "intergenerational closure"- which **reinforced norms** and encouraged student learning. Successful societies are those that are successful in improving the social outcomes of their most vulnerable citizens. J. Douglas Willms, Three Hypotheses about Community Effects 2003

Support for Children of all Income Levels

All children are born ready to learn. However, by the time they arrive at school, approximately 30% of children in Canada have been affected by early negative experiences which may hamper their progress in school and later in life. (Willms D. 2002), (Kershaw, P. et al 2009) The rate and degree of vulnerability is higher for children from Canada's poorest families, and lower for children from Canada's wealthiest families. However, the **largest numbers of vulnerable children come from middle income families.** Contributing factors include **stressful or non-stimulating environments, poor nutrition, and unresponsive or harsh parenting**. Family is the Foundation: Why Family Support and Early Childhood Education Must Be a Collaborative Effort © Canadian Association of Family Resource Programs (FRP Canada),

Support for Families with Children age 0-3

From the prenatal period **until about age 3**, children are most profoundly influenced within their intimate **family** environments and through interaction with primary caregivers. The **groundwork for lifelong health**, learning and well-being is formulated through these early experiences.   Longitudinal studies from the U.S. provide substantial evidence of the positive effects of early school entry programs for disadvantaged children, the effectiveness of these carefully designed programs is due, at least in part, to the provision of **extensive supports for parents** in conjunction with **educational programming** for children. Since the foundation that supports children's **lifelong learning** is established very early, services and programs for families during the period from conception to school entry are vitally important. Child outcomes will be enhanced if all families have access to an adequate array of supports during this critical time. "Parents are their children's first and most important teachers… and their first and most important nurses, coaches, safety officers, nutritionists and moral guides. They also are their children's first and most important advocates and care coordinators." *(Charles Bruner2010)* "Nothing is more important in the world today than the nurturing that children receive in the **first three years of life**, for it is in these earliest years that the capacities for **trust, empathy and affection originate.** If the emotional needs of the child are not met during these years, permanent emotional damage can result. What I keep coming back to is that it's like pouring cement. If you don't mix the batch right, you are stuck with it, and you have to get at it with a sledgehammer later – it's a slow, difficult and almost impossible process. In the first three years of the child's life, the cement is setting, and parents [with the support of the community] ought to **set every other priority aside** and do their best."(Barker, E. 1977) Recent studies in neurobiology, genetics, health sciences, sociology, psychology, linguistics and epidemiology have reached complementary conclusions **that warm, responsive, authoritative parenting** and **low stress environments** are associated with **positive child development** and **positive social and emotional development** sets the stage for **successful cognitive development; qualities such as curiosity, confidence, persistence, self-control and willingness to risk making mistakes** contribute to learning and **reduce the likelihood of aggressive behaviour and bullying**
- Family is the Foundation: Why Family Support and Early Childhood Education Must Be a Collaborative Effort © Canadian Association of Family Resource Programs (FRP Canada), 2011ISBN: 978-0-9784698-6-3

Family Essential Supports

Essential supports for families with young children include: pre- and post-natal programs; **basic necessities** such as food and housing; employment programs; mental health services such as counselling and post-partum depression programs; breastfeeding support; well-baby visits and immunizations; **parenting groups**; **play groups; family literacy programs**; settlement services for newcomer families; full-time, part-time and respite child care; **early identification and programming for developmental delays; early identification of speech and language problems**; and intensive family intervention when child neglect or abuse is a concern. Family is the Foundation: Why Family Support and Early Childhood Education Must Be a Collaborative Effort © Canadian Association of Family Resource Programs (FRP Canada),

Parent Engagement

Participatory family–centered, help-giving practices that **actively involve** parents in deciding what knowledge is important to them, and how they want to acquire the information they need, have the greatest positive effect on parents' sense of **competence and confidence**. (Dunst CJ, Trivell CM 2001) Available research evidence concerning the social and emotional development of young children indicates that a more confident and **responsive** style of parent interaction is more likely to lead to **positive social and emotional development**. (Layzer et All 2001) (Walker TB et al 1995) Key features of these programs is not only what is offered, but **how supports are provided**. **Capacity-building help giving** practices that form the basis of the interactions between staff and families ensure the enhancement of parents' capacities which in turn gives them the competence and confidence necessary to interact with and promote the social and emotional development of their children. Community-Based Parent Support Programs C M Trivette, CJ Dunst 2005 USA Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development

Civic Participation

"In addition to its service role, community organizations also make critical contributions to **community cohesion** and economic well-being through the **mobilization of volunteers** and the promotion of **civic participation**."- Community Dispatch January 2006 Community Development Halton

Universal, Collaborative, Shared Leadership

More families will use a centre's services if they are seen as **universal** and **not stigmatized** as for "at risk" families only. Successful parent education programs avoid a deficit model of parenting and use a **collaborative** approach with parents. Effective family support organizations move beyond token parental involvement to **shared leadership** with community parents. When staff members take the time to find out what parents are looking for in a program, they are more successful. Enhancing Family Participation 2006 Family Resource Programs of Canada

Support Parent

Longitudinal research clearly demonstrates that parents have the greatest and **most long-lasting impact** on children. High-quality services must therefore be directed both to children and to their families. Reinforcing the family support potential of early learning and care programs to **strengthen parents' responsive care** in the home (still the most important influence on children's future) Shifting Paradigms of Child Care: From Women-Focused to Family Centred, Akua Schatz & Betsy Mann, Perspectives in Family Support Volume 2 Winter 2006 Family Resource Programs of Canada

Parent Support

Parents capacity as **nurturers** is determined by features of the **family support network, characteristics of the neighbourhood and community supports** and other factors such as life experience, **material resources** and so on. When parents were asked (Hermann 1996) about the practices that they felt were most effective in support, the most common answers were: **respect, opportunities to network, accurate & timely information and access to services (lack of barriers like user fees, red tape, wait lists and criteria for participation**) Understanding Family Support Programs Suzanne Smythe Perspectives in Family Support, Volume 1, Spring 2004 Family Resource Programs of Canada:

Child Development

Four factors are essential to Children's optimal development: **Protection** from harm & neglect, **Quality relationships**, **Opportunity & Hope**, **Community**. Our Promise to Children, Kathleen Guy 1997 Ottawa: Canadian Institute of Child Health

Resilient Children

Characteristics of **resilient children** are **social competence, problem solving skills, mastery, autonomy, and a sense of purpose and a future**. Factors that support these characteristics are: an **ethos of care** in schools and community organizations in which **everyone is seen as having a stake** in the well-being of all children, **Respectful and ongoing communication** between home and schools and the consistent **presence of a caring individual** in the child's life. Children that live in neighbourhoods that promote an ethos of care for all children will be **more resilient to the effects of other difficult circumstances in their lives.** What Makes the Difference? Children and teachers talk about resilient outcomes for children "at risk" (2000) S Howard & B johnson Educational Studies Vol 26, Issue 3 p321

Immigrant Communities

Immigrant families face numerous difficulties accessing early education. Their participation in child care and early education is affected by the extent to which programs and services are **responsive** to their needs. Young children of immigrants need experiences that support their **home and second-language** development, that **respect** their families' **culture and traditions**, and that offer **meaningful opportunities** for parents who speak languages other than English to be involved. While there is a need for additional research on effective models that improve outcomes for young children in immigrant families, available research points to the importance of **valuing a child's home culture** and home language, as well as **infusing multiculturalism and diversity** throughout early learning content. **Partnerships with parents** and other family members are a crucial component of any high quality early learning setting. Research shows that parental and family involvement can positively affect children's **cognitive and socio-emotional development** and contribute to school success. Parental and family involvement can have additional benefits for immigrant families, as it may be an opportunity for parents to **learn English and literacy skills** themselves and to receive an **introduction to the formal education system** from the beginning of their child's experience. While the majority of all parents are involved in their **children's school** at some level, immigrant parents participate at lower rates than native parents. Most of the providers and immigrant-serving organizations we interviewed agreed that the most effective programs—especially for immigrant families—are those that address the **whole family and not just young children.** The challenges of Change: Learning From The Child Care and Early Education Experiences of Immigrant Families Centre for Law and Social Change. Hannah Matthews and Deeana Jang; Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) / 2007

Poverty and Universal Access

A human development approach to poverty reduction would ensure **universal access to opportunities for high quality learning** and care for all children during the early years. This approach to poverty reduction reflects the United Nations (UNDP 1998, 1997) definition of human poverty as both deprivation and exclusion. The presence and persistence of child poverty in Canada is a violation of democratic values on the inherent dignity and worth of each person. Life chances are shaped from the earliest moments of development. Children tend to thrive when the social conditions into which they are born nurture the development of their capacities and interests, and sustain them during inevitable contingencies of life. Children growing up under conditions of family poverty have **fewer social advantages** upon which they can rely. **Food deficiencies, insecure housing, limited social resources, parents under stress, chronic health difficulties, and lower educational outcomes** are the prevailing denials of equal opportunity bred by child poverty. They lead to what Kitchen et al (1991) called "unequal futures" for children as persons of today and adults of tomorrow. States of proximity and trust take time to create, and can readily recede through neglect. If disparities become entrenched in Canada, there is a clear risk of a drift into a United States model of racially divided cities, in which fear and separation replace **proximity and trust** (Harris, 2007). Disparity breeds social instability, which in turn provokes patterns of **civic disengagement** away from diversity into enclaves of affinity (Rutherford & Shah, 2006). The civic "we", still evident in many Canadian cities, is replaced by frightened withdrawals from "them". Summoned to Stewardship: Make Poverty Reduction a Collective Legacy. Marvyn Novick 2007

School Readiness

Researchers use the phrase readiness to learn to describe the cognitive and social skills, knowledge, dispositions and personal experiences children bring to kindergarten. Children who do not arrive at school **ready to learn** are more prone to **drop out of high school** and **engage in behaviours that break the law**. (Power and Hertzman 1999)
Canadian Institute for Health Information. (2005). *Improving the health of young Canadians*. Ottawa, ON.

Food Security

The findings indicate that children living in households **with food insecurity are more likely to be at developmental risk during their first three years of life,** compared to similar households that are not food insecure. Household food insecurity, even in the presence of appropriate weight-for age, is an important risk factor for the health, development, and behaviour of children less than 3 years of age. The authors suggest that "**providing nutritional and developmental interventions to young children and their families is a proactive step that might decrease the need for later, more extensive interventions for developmentally or behaviourally impaired children of school age**". Association Between Food Insecurity and Developmental Risk in Children- Medical News Today January 2008 *(Rose-Jacobs et al., 2008)*

Sense of Belonging

An inclusive society creates both the feeling and the reality of belonging and helps each of us reach our full potential. The **feeling of belonging comes through caring, cooperation, and trust.** We build the feeling of belonging together. The reality of belonging comes through **equity and fairness, social and economic justice, and cultural as well as spiritual respect.** We make belonging real by ensuring that it is accepted and practiced by society. Count Me! Health Nexus 2004

"A Statistics Canada Study: Community Belonging and Self- Reported Health 2005 showed that Canadians who have a strong **sense of belonging** to the community in which they live also have **more positive feelings about the state of their physical and mental health**. The relationship of inclusion and/or exclusion to inequity, poverty and disparity resonated strongly with a majority of participants, surfacing and **reinforcing inclusion as a deliberate strategy** to promote health**.** Inclusion= *Feeling of Belonging:* Being **accepted** for who one is **without judgments**, being able to **ask for and give support**, being given **responsibility**, being **part of community**. Feeling of **mutual respect**, **belonging, self-esteem, trust, comfort, courage, connection with neighbours and community**, **empowerment, togetherness**, as well as of **being heard** and **listened to**, and **welcomed.** *Reality of Belonging:* Structures that are **anti-racist**, demonstrate **diversity**, are **connected**, where **everyone has a place** and can **'play' a role**, where **doors are opened** and **no one is left behind.** Services that provide **opportunities**, are **equitable**, provide **education for all**, are **accessible, encourage growth**. Behaviour such as body language like a smile or **eye contact, kindness**, communicating in **any language and in any way**, culturally **sensitive, empathy, team work**, **tolerance**, **value each other's gifts**. Inclusion: Societies that Foster Belonging Improve Health, April 2006 Ontario Prevention Clearinghouse

Community Space & Common Humanity

Research evidence shows a link between good **community spirit** and **health outcomes and** between **tightly knit communities** and **positive quality of lives.** This relationship is especially important for people who are new to a country, or who do not share the same sense of common historical or geographical 'belonging'. In particular, Offe emphasises two factors: **trust & solidarity** (contributing to the common good even when they don't directly benefit as a result.) We know that **public spaces** are vitally important for that, because they are where citizens often **encounter** one another. Trust – as well as solidarity - is often built partly through **familiarity**, the gradual **breaking down of the barriers of 'otherness',** and the **recognition of shared interests** and a **common humanity** between what still are strangers. The issue of trust is closely bound up with that of social capital - the social networks, shared norms and co-operative relationships that help people and communities get along, and which sustains their collective efficacy in the face of change. Equally Spaced? Public space and interaction between diverse communities: A Report for the Commission for Racial Equality Hannah Lownsbrough, Joost Beunderman July 2007

Ecological Support for Children 0-5yrs

Thanks to longitudinal studies such as Canada's National Longitudinal Study of Children and Youth (NLSCY), we know that inequalities in child development emerge in a systematic fashion over the **first five years of life**, following contours established by family income; parental education; parenting style; neighbourhood safety, cohesion, and socio-economic mix; and access to good child care and family programs. A high level of **neighbourhood cohesion** indirectly improves children's **language development** through its positive effects on parental **emotional distress**, **social support, and health**. **Behaviour** problems are more frequent among children living in neighbourhoods with fewer affluent residents, high unemployment rates, and low cohesion. Child development unfolds in an ecological context and is influenced by child, family, and community factors. From a policy perspective this means that improving child development is not simply a matter of fulfilling service mandates to targeted client populations, but of **improving the environments** where children grow up, live, and learn. The challenge is one of adopting an environmental perspective when agencies have traditionally understood their role to be limited to providing one-on-one client services. For example, our work supports

recommendations for policies that encourage socio-economically diverse neighbourhoods and that increase community cohesion, trust, and a sense of belonging. These are environmental strategies that complement traditional service-provision strategies. -Neighbourhoods Matter for Child Development by Clyde Hertzman and Dafna Kohen Transition Autumn 2003 The Vanier Institute of the Family

40 Developmental Assets for Early Childhood

The Search Institute has developed 40 developmental assets that are the positive experiences and personal qualities children and youth need to grow up healthy, caring and responsible. Studies conducted by the institute on more than 2 million young people consistently reveal **strong relationships between the number of assets** young people have and the **degree of positive healthy development**. Students with more assets are less likely to engage in **patterns of high-risk behaviour** and more likely to have **higher academic achievement**. Search Institute 2013

External Assets

Support

1. Family Support , 2. Positive Family Communication, 3. Other Adult Relationships, 4. **Caring Neighborhood**
    5. Caring Climate in Child Care and Educational Settings, 6. Parent Involvement in Child Care and Education

Empowerment

7. **Community Cherishes and Values Children**, 8. Children Seen as Resources, 9. **Service to Others**

Boundaries & Expectations

10. Safety, 11. Family Boundaries, 12. Boundaries in Child Care and Educational Settings, 13. Neighborhood Boundaries, 14. Adult Role Models, 15. Positive Peer Relationships, 16. Positive & High Expectations, 17. Constructive Use of Time, 18. Play and Creative Activities, 19. Out-of-Home and Community & Recreational Programs, 20. Religious Community, 21.Time at Home

Internal Assets

Commitment to learning

1. Achievement Motivation to Mastery, 2. Engagement in Learning Experiences, 3. Home-program/school Connection (homework), 4. Bonding to Programs & School, 5. Enjoyable Literacy Activities

Positive Values

 1. Caring, 2. Equality and Social Justice, 3. Integrity, 4. Honesty, 5. Responsibility, 6. Self-regulation

Social Competencies

1. Planning and Decision Making , 2. Interpersonal Skills to competence, 3. **Cultural Awareness**, Sensitivity to Competence, 4. Resistance Skills, 5. Peaceful Conflict Resolution

Positive Identity

1. Personal Power, 2. Self-Esteem, 3. **Sense of Purpose**, 4. Positive View of Personal Future

Early Parent & Child Relationships & Social Support

Early parent-child relationships have powerful effects on children's **emotional well-being** (Dawson & Ashman, 2000), their **basic coping** and **problem-solving** abilities, and future **capacity for relationships** (Lerner & Castellino, 2002). Through these interactions, children learn skills they need to engage with others and to succeed in different environments (Rogoff, 2003). The day-to-day interactions between infants and young **children and their parents** help drive their **emotional, physical, and intellectual development** (Brazelton & Cramer, 1990). Families can engage in everyday learning activities, even with very young children, and help them to develop **lifelong motivation, persistence,** and a **love of learning** (Dunst, Bruder, Trivette & Hamby, 2006) The work of Mary Ainsworth and her colleagues (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978) demonstrated how **responsive parenting supports** the **emotional health** and **security** of infants and young children. When families are isolated, lack resources, and live with greater stress and instability, the risk of negative child health and behavioral outcomes is higher (Duncan & Brooks-Gunn, 2000). Children's development can be thrown off track when parents are highly stressed, lack social support or when they see their child's temperament as difficult (Hess, Teti, & Hussey-Gardner, 2004). Social support is one of the **greatest protective factors** against **parental stress, depression, and low self-efficacy** (sense of competence) (Simpson & Rholes, 2008). -*Understanding Family Engagement Outcomes: Research to Practice Series Positive Parent-Child Relationships* -The National Center in Parent, Family & Community Engagement.

Mental Health   - Child & youth

The Canadian Institute of Child Health has identified **emotional and behavioural problems** and **early learning difficulties as "the leading group of conditions that lower life quality and reduce life chances"** for children and youth in Canada from age one to 19. Based on a review of literature and research this McMaster team concluded that the more effective and enduring interventions designed to reduce risk and enhance protection, are **broad in spectrum**, aim at all components or domains of a child's life, are **flexible, seamless and universal**, with caring staff with time to develop relationships, and emphasize peer participation and interaction. The Ontario Child Health Study found that **one in six children**, aged 4 to 16, suffered from a **psychiatric disorder**. (Boyle & Offord, 1987) On long-term follow-up, nearly half the children diagnosed as having a conduct disorder or antisocial behaviour in the study were found to have increased rates of problems such as **criminality, psychopathy and substance abuse** in adolescence and adulthood. The National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY) found that just over **19% of children** from birth through age 11 had difficulties on a behaviour measure that looked at **hyperactivity, anxiety, emotional problems, inattention, conduct disorder, physical aggression and indirect aggression.** (Offord & Lipman, 1996) The Early Years Study, co-chaired by Dr. Fraser Mustard, reported that a "vulnerability index" which combined learning and behaviour showed that **25 to 30% of Ontario children** from birth through age 11 were achieving below average and were exhibiting behavioural problems. (McCain & Mustard, 1999). Children from low-income families have higher rates of behavioural and learning problems, compared to their well-off peers, but in sheer numbers, the majority of children with these problems are not poor. The late Dr. Paul Steinhauer, who was with the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto and founded Voices for Children, wrote in 1998: "Risks experienced within one aspect of a child's life, for example chronic illness, maltreatment or growing up in poverty, may be **counteracted by protections** provided by other aspects in what is called the protective triad i.e., individual opportunities, close family ties and external support systems, including the school and the community: Garmezy, 1991." (Steinhauer, 1998:51) The evidence about risk and protective factors suggests that programs for school-aged children that are directed at a single problem or a single social domain will be less effective than programs that aim to promote competence and resilience by **addressing both risk and protective factors** in the many environments in which young people live, grow, change and learn. "We have assumed that positive youth development occurs naturally in the absence of youth problems. Such thinking has created an assortment of youth services focused on 'fixing' adolescents engaged in risky behaviors or preventing other youth from 'getting into trouble'. Preventing high-risk behaviors, however, is not the same as preparation for the future. There must be an equal commitment to helping young people **understand life's challenges and responsibilities** and to **developing the necessary skills to succeed as adults.** What is needed is a massive conceptual shift – from thinking that youth problems are merely the principal barrier to youth development to thinking that **youth development serves as the most effective strategy** for the prevention of youth problems." (Pittman and Fleming, 1991 quoted in Catalano et al., 1998: Introduction: 4) Why Ontario Should Develop Community-Based Models of Integrated Service for School-Aged Children A Discussion Paper By the System-Linked Research Unit on Health and Social Service Utilization, McMaster University 2001

Models

Needle-Moving Community Collaboratives A Promising Approach to Addressing America's Biggest Challenges By Michele Jolin, Paul Schmitz, and Willa Seldon

…thus far, only a few, such as the "cradle to- career" Strive Partnership show data that confirms a significant and measurable impact on the entire community. The Council recognized that cross-sector community collaboratives, such as Strive, could represent an emerging national trend, where communities were working together to solve their biggest challenges. The Council was interested in exploring this trend's potential by identifying examples where communities were achieving needle-moving change (10 percent-plus progress on a key community-wide indicator as a clear standard for success), determining what contributed to that change and capturing the lessons their experience holds for other communities.

In addition to sharing a **commitment to needle-moving change,** we found these collaboratives had the following operating principles in common.

 • *Commitment to long-term involvement.* Successful collaboratives make multi-year commitments because long-term change takes time. Even after meeting goals, a collaborative must work to sustain them.

• *Involvement of key stakeholders* *across sectors*. With shared vision & agenda & effective leadership & governance. All relevant partners play a role, including decision-makers from government, philanthropy, business and non-profits, as well as individuals and families. Funders need to be at the table from the beginning to help develop the goals and vision and, over time, align their funding with the collaborative' s strategies.

• *Use of shared data* *to set the agenda and improve over time*. Deliberate alignment of resources, programs & advocacy.

• *Engagement of community members as substantive partners.* Community members maintain involvement in shaping services, offering perspectives and providing services to each other—not just as focus group participants.

Beyond engaging beneficiaries as participants, community collaboratives also could benefit from **seeing residents as "natural allies" that could be tapped as producers of service and impact.**

Next Generation Community Revitalization: A Work in Progress Bridgespan

How can the complex problems created by concentrated poverty be addressed most effectively. Prominent among these emerging efforts are six nascent networks—Building Sustainable Communities, Choice Neighborhoods, Promise Neighborhoods, Purpose Built Communities, Strive, and The Integration Initiative—that are all developing national footprints. In the aggregate, they are seeking to improve the **lives of hundreds of thousands of low-income families** by 2015 and, ultimately, influence national policies. The idea of explicitly **engaging with and connecting a given community to the larger systems** that surround it is present throughout the profiled initiatives.

Lack of capacity and expertise related to data will not only limit progress for individual initiatives and their sites, but also for the field overall. **If there were a practical set of common metrics for outcomes that are being widely adopted (children's readiness for kindergarten or high school, for example, or gains in family income) it could speed up the pace of learning across these efforts and the field more broadly. Determining what the "right" metrics are is a critical task.**

Living Cities Integrative Initiative

Low-income individuals and families in 5 cities have improved outcomes in terms of income, assets and skills/education

1. Create new "whole system" models. Build the new relationships, models and networks needed to ensure that civic, public, private, philanthropic and non-profit leaders and organizations can **come together and solve problems.**
2. Alter regional dynamics that are environmentally unsustainable and that have limited opportunities for low-income people and communities by isolating them from the larger city and region.
3. Scale change by attracting and blending capital. Demonstrate how multiple types of funding from multiple sources can be structured and deployed to maximize impact.
4. Sustain change by establishing "new normals" that will drive ongoing integration and accountability. **Create a 'new normal'** by permanently redirecting public and private sector funding streams away from obsolete approaches and applying them to these new solutions; setting new policy priorities and using data to track, ensure and communicate accountability for results.

Promise Neighbourhoods

Young people, growing up in impoverished neighborhoods, need a great many supports in order to succeed. **If you can reach enough children and families with enough supports, over time the fundamental dynamic of the neighborhood will shift, breaking the cycle that keeps families in poverty.** Together, these hypotheses create a compelling argument for defining the boundaries of the Promise **Neighborhoods carefully and tightly, so that there is a balance between the resources at hand—people, money, skills—and the number of residents those resources will need to reach in order to change their life prospects and affect the broader community**. Harlem Children's Zone began its work by focusing on a 24 square block area. As it has tested its programs and strengthened its organization, it has progressively expanded to 64 and now 97 square blocks But for the purposes of defining a Promise Neighborhood, strategic considerations are likely to be as, if not more, important. Among these, the configuration of the neighborhood's educational resources is one of the most significant. The catchment area of the neighborhood school system may provide the most relevant anchor for the work and, hence, the initial boundaries of a Promise Neighborhood.

The creation of a **neighborhood needs assessment** is a "must have," Applicants must also demonstrate that they are **representative of the geographic area** to be served, and that **residents play an active role in decision making**: at least one-third of the neighborhood's governing or advisory boards must be composed of residents, low-income residents, and/or public officials (or some combination of the three). *If poverty is a disease that affects an entire community in the form of unemployment and violence, failing schools and broken homes, then we can't treat those symptoms in isolation. We have to heal the entire community and we have to focus on what works."* then Senator Barack Obama

Takes an education-focused approach to neighborhood change by offering a continuum of supports and services for children to stay on track from birth through college and career. Begins with The Baby College, a series of workshops for parents of children ages 0-3, programs for children of every age through college and includes in school, after-school, social-service, health, and community-building programs. Must **partner with a school**. Impact - All children will have access to effective schools and strong systems of family and community support that will prepare them to attain an excellent education and successfully transition to college & career.

Academic- Ready for JK-# children age app functioning, have a doctor, part in early learn programs; Proficient in subjects- perform at or above grade level; Attendance rates middle & high school. Graduation rates

Family & Community-# 60 min physical act., eat 5 veg., # children feel safe at school & to & from, mobility rate. Caring adult, # attend teacher conf., access to computer

The Working Centre - Kitchener

Document written when it was 14 years old parallels with us. Grass-roots organization seeking to develop the community as a whole. Their commitment came to be focused on unemployment. Used "**pastoral circle," as beginning concept.** Step One of the circle involves getting in touch with the impressions, the feelings, the lived experience of people in the target community. Step Two is collective social analysis of the experienced reality, making an account or explanation of it by connecting it to broader social processes. Step Three is theological reflection on this analysis in light of Christian faith, church teaching and tradition—in less sectarian terms, a surrender to the possibility of becoming more. Step Four, finally, is an active response to the foregoing, some kind of planned social change for the sake of developing the community. Establishing a centre where 1 encouraging employment opportunities, 2. Bring unemployed together, 3. Understanding, exploring and developing a system of support, decision-making, and participation that reflects in a creative way, the needs of the unemployed.

The **knowledge for planning and implementing programs and projects would be generated from the bottom up,** through collective discussion and analysis of their own experiences and staff.

The centre **sought to reduce its dependency on governmental** contracts and grants, and instead try to win financial support directly from citizens. Individual donations and fund-raising events currently pay for about 50 percent of the centre's operating costs. The emphasis increasingly is on learning how to **lessen the dependence of unemployed people on the money economy**: on growing food, on preserving food, on establishing community kitchens, on bicycling, on sewing, on exchanging services.

The board is a group of citizens concerned for **developing the community in such a way that nobody is left out**. There has not even been an effort to give precise definition to board versus staff domains of responsibility—a common bone

of contention between boards and executives jockeying for power (see Carver 1990). It helps that **all board members also take part as volunteers** in other activities at the centre. These ideas work towards long-term organizational stability. Pursuing these ideas will transform all aspects of the centre toward looking increasingly to communities of dedicated volunteers: people working together to develop a sustainable organization through the ideas of work as gift, home production, faith and simplicity.

Strive

Every **child is prepared for school**, **Every child is supported** inside & outside of school, Every child succeeds academically, Every child **enrolls in post-secondary** education, Every child graduates & **enters a career**. The partnership's work spans the cradle to career continuum, and is focused on achieving "collective impact" through:
• **Collaborative** action around shared priorities and outcomes
• Building a culture of continuous improvement by **using data effectively** to drive improved results for children
• **Aligning our community's leadership capacity** and funding to what works for children and students.
8 outcomes- kindergarten readiness, 4 & 8 grade proficiency, seconday grads, Post secondary enrollment, retention & completion.

Building Sustainable Communities launched 2007 focus on built environment, education, economic development, health & financial prosperity as prioritized by community.
Each of these initiatives requires its local sites or prospective sites to embark on some sort of **intentional planning exercise, local-stakeholder-led Quality of Life plans** that constitute the central operating document. The BSC model is profoundly focused on **resident engagement and relies on neighborhood leaders** to establish the priorities for the community's work. At the same time, BSC also emphasizes the need for each neighborhood to build a **strong cross-sector civic partnership** to help attract resources into the neighborhood from the wider community which surrounds it. Leaders believe that every community understands its own needs best, and they have developed carefully thought out processes (including interviews of neighborhood residents by school children) to collect the data that ultimately go into creating the agenda for change. Residents are encouraged not only to get involved in establishing the priorities set out in the Quality of Life plan, which embodies that agenda, but also to get involved in implementing it. **This involvement, in turn, is what facilitates the emergence of a new generation of community leaders**. **Resident engagement is both an input to and an output of the initiative's theory of change.** Quality of Life plans begins by conducting an analysis of the neighborhood's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. No priority is included in the plan unless a local leader or stakeholder agrees to be accountable for implementing it. Based on the plan, early action projects are identified. These projects are generally quick wins. Early action projects build the momentum that is used throughout the implementation of the *comprehensive development activities. R*esidents, with the assistance of the lead agency, define the *performance measurement* indicators that will be used to track progress. Throughout this entire process, there needs to be a *sustained communications* effort. All neighborhoods track key indicators in four categories: housing and real estate; income and wealth; economy and workforce; and demographics.

Purpose Built Communities

over-arching goal—its definition of success—is to break the cycle of systemic poverty in one generation by fostering a safe, thriving community with **high employment, increased incomes**, increased property values, **new middle-income families,** new retail investment, and **100 percent of high-school graduates prepared for post-secondary education** that will ultimately lead to living wages and better jobs. Considers resident engagement and support a vital precondition for its work. Uses one-on-one interviews and small group meetings to gather feedback and input instead of holding large-scale gatherings. Prefers to rely on the traditional structures of a healthy middle-income community to bring people together around common issues; and it discourages the creation of organizations that might serve to heighten differences among the residents. Develops a cradle to college education pipeline focused on a specific neighborhood and anchored by direct, local control of schools • Delivers best in class support services, especially workforce development, to low-income families • Offers high quality amenities and commercial services, such as green space, that enhance the overall quality of life for residents • Has the work led by a community-based organization that has talent, access to sufficient resources, and ability to engage community stakeholders.
Some measures: # children ready for JK, school test scores, high school grad rate, post-secondary grad, crime, employment, incomes, resident satisfaction, # children meeting & exceeding standards.

All schools focused on serving community, focus on serving social housing, seamless transitions, workforce train, wrap around services for children, financial literacy, health & wellness,

Family Independence Initiative (FII)
Currently operating in San Francisco, Oahu, Oakland, and Boston, the initiative **enables low-income families, working in cohorts, to receive small monetary rewards and access to networks for making progress on self-chosen goals**. (Common goals include increasing household income, accumulating savings and improving student grades.) Participants track and report their own progress and rely on family, friends and social networks for motivation and guidance. They cite FII's hands-off approach as empowering and a primary reason for their success.

Choice Neighbourhoods
Promote **economic self-sufficiency of residents**
Provide **effective community services, strong family supports & education reforms for children** &youth
Involve residents in the planning and implementation processes
Community will become safe, healthy, and mixed-income neighbourhoods in which all residents will have access to high performing schools and economic opportunity, health, Education and Economic Self-Sufficiency
-All people are physically and mentally healthy, Children enter Kindergarten ready to learn, Proficient in core subjects, Youth graduate from high school college- and career-ready, households are economically stable and self-sufficient, Residents feel safe in their neighborhood
 "Children, youth and adults are physically and mentally healthy" metrics are:
& % have a place where they regularly go other than a hospital when they are sick or in need of advice.
Number and percentage reporting good physical health
Number and percentage reporting low psychological distress
Number and percentage reporting healthy weight

Mothers and Others Making change: Empowerment through self-help and social action Susan M Morrison Wilfred Laurier University (Ontario 1992)

They believe that **support both tangible** (clothing, food, transportation> and intangible (just being there) is important in allowing them to believe that they will be **able to cope from one day to the next.** Social support serves to **mediate the everyday stresses** of those members of the group who live in poverty- a stressful situation. It also gives the members the sense that they are **valuable people, worthy of freely given assistance** and support. All of the participants in this research identified the benefit of helping others. The **ability to help others and therefore be useful is a component of the process of empowerment** for members of MOMC. Celebrating holidays … and **enjoying the company of others are important aspects if the process of building a sense of community o**r attachment to the group. Members believe they are valued when they can enjoy themselves and celebrate with others in similar situations. Members admire someone else who is like them and see that there is **hope for their future when others can succeed** in a way that they are hopeful about for themselves. Participants in this research stress the **healing effects of being able to tell their story. It is therapeutic as well as educational.**
Individual- mutual aid, advocacy, choice, share info, experience acceptance & support, social action activities, socialize
Outcomes more powerful, participate in community, increase skills & knowledge, & self-esteem, feel supported, increase personal relationships, enjoy participation

Neighbourhood House
A volunteer driven community based organization committed to enhancing neighbourhoods. In BC since 1894. A welcoming place where everyone, all ages, nationalities and abilities can attend, participate, belong, lead, and learn through programs, services and community building. ANHBC is part of the neighbourhood and settlement house movement which began in the 1880 in England to address the needs of people who had moved into the cities to find work; often leaving behind their families and everything that was familiar to them. The neighbourhood/settlement house movement is credited with establishing public recreation programs, the first day nurseries for working parents, English as a second language and adult literacy classes as well as the profession of social work. Today neighbourhood houses are hubs for

local community development activities and for programs and services that address local needs; there are thousands of neighbourhood houses in more than thirty countries around the world.

We are a volunteer driven, community service agency. Our mission is to make neighbourhoods better places to live in. Our goal is to enable people to embrace their lives and strengthen their communities. Our challenge is to work with communities to develop innovative programs and services that meet the changing needs of a diverse population. Diversity statement includes: We endeavour to reflect the diversity of our neighbourhoods in our membership, our Boards of Management, our volunteers and our staff and we expect that all who come to our Houses, all those who provide or receive services, will extend the same respect to all those they meet here.

Toronto- Founded in 1911, It owes its beginnings to U of T students who, along with social reformer John Joseph Kelso, were interested in improving conditions for recent arrivals to the city, many of whom were living in poor conditions. These dedicated individuals formed a committee to develop the aims of the settlement house which were heavily rooted in creating a democratic meeting place and a social centre where neighbours of all ages, races and religious affiliations could contribute equally. They have a community innovations fund for one bright idea a year in the community.

Neighbourhood Centres develop and deliver community services including: Seniors, Youth and Family Programs, Employment and Skills Training, Settlement Services, Community Development Initiatives, Literacy and ESL Programs, Housing and Food Access, Social Recreation Activities Neighbourhood Centres are hubs and anchors for social participation. They play a central role in fostering key characteristics of supportive communities, including:

INCLUSIVENESS: empowering individuals and groups who have been left out of the planning, decision-making and policy-development processes in their community; promoting increased awareness, respect and an active celebration of people's diversity.
OPPORTUNITY: working to ensure that all community members, especially those most vulnerable, have access to adequate income, education and a network of relationships they need to participate as valued members of society.
MUTUAL SUPPORT: assisting community members to help each other and work together to address shared concerns.
Applying these principles means working directly with community members, developing initiatives from the ground up, mobilizing trained volunteers and skilled staff, and securing government funds and private donations to achieve locally defined objectives

Family Resource Programs

Family support programs actively contribute to the health of their communities. They operate from a strength-based perspective and facilitate change in their participants in a positive manner. Family support programs represent a framework of existing programs and services that act as a barometer of the community. They are sensitive to factors that impact on families and they are aware of emerging trends. Family support programs are by their nature adaptable and creative. They are practised at solving problems in new ways. Family support programs invite community residents to take an active part in shaping the services they want. They act as a catalyst by helping diverse stakeholders to find common ground through formal and informal partnerships established to address specific needs.

Guiding Principles of Family Support
    1. Family support programs are open to all families, recognizing that all families deserve support.

2. Family support programs complement existing services, build networks and linkages, and advocate for policies, services and systems that support families' abilities to raise healthy children.
3. Family support programs work in partnership with families and communities to meet expressed needs.
4. Family support programs focus on the promotion of wellness and use a prevention approach in their work.
5. Family support programs work to increase opportunities and to strengthen individuals, families & communities.
6. Family support programs operate from an ecological perspective that recognizes the interdependent nature of families' lives.
7. Family support programs value and encourage mutual assistance and peer support.
8. Family support programs affirm parenting to be a life-long learning process.
9. Family support programs value the voluntary nature of participation in their services.
10. Family support programs promote relationships based on equality and respect for diversity.
11. Family support programs advocate non-violence to ensure safety and security for all family members.
12. Family support programs continually seek to improve their practice by reflecting on what they do and how they do it.

Better Beginnings Program

Findings published in 2008 based upon analysis of 2004 data indicate that young people (now in Grade 9) who had participated in *Better Beginnings* programs from junior kindergarten to Grade 2 were better prepared for school, used fewer special education services, had fewer problems with hyperactivity/inattention, showed more adaptive functioning in school, and were likely to go further in school than comparison children. Parents from the *Better Beginnings* neighbourhoods felt more social support from others, were more satisfied with their marital relationships, reported more positive family functioning and were more satisfied with their local neighbourhood as a place to live than those from the comparison communities. The program had more than paid for itself by the time the e children reached Grade 9, with greater saving anticipated in future years. Roche, J., Petrunka, K., & Peters, R. DeV. (2008). Investing in Our Future: Highlights of Better Beginnings, Better Futures Research Findings at Grade 9. Kingston, ON: Better Beginnings, Better Futures Research Coordination Unit. http://bbbf.queensu.ca/pdfs/BB%20Report%20O31.pdf

Outcomes

Are Outcomes the Best Outcome? *By* **Sherri Torjman November 1999**

There is clearly a need for some work – possibly in the form of research – to figure out how best to assess community capacity building efforts.4 The US-based Aspen Institute has published a framework that is particularly relevant to outcomes and the building of community infrastructure. In a document entitled "Measuring Community Capacity Building," the Institute sets out eight key outcomes for measuring the success of community efforts [1996]. It then breaks down each of these outcomes into its component parts and puts forward a range of possible indicators to assess progress in these areas. The *promotion of diverse, inclusive citizen participation* means that the project has engaged ever-increasing numbers of community members in all types of activities and decisions. These individuals should come from a wide range of sectors and should represent the diversity of the community. *Growth of the leadership base* involves bringing new people into community decision making processes and ensuring that they have an opportunity to learn and practise leadership skills. Another important outcome of community capacity building is *strengthened individual skills* which both expand and enhance the community's volunteer base. *The creation of a widely shared understanding and vision* is another key outcome of community capacity building. While the creation of a vision is an important part of any agenda, community work must ensure that this vision is widely shared. The *development of a strategic community agenda* follows the articulation of a widely shared vision. The community agenda then must be translated into concrete actions that are assessed by the *tracking of consistent, tangible progress toward goals*. Another key outcome is the *development of more effective community organizationsand institutions*, such as schools, neighbourhood associations and local newspapers. The final outcome is *improved resource utilization by the community* [Aspen Institute 1996

An Equal Start: Improving outcomes in Children's Centres 11th July 201207:47

The Institute of Health Equity was commissioned by 4Children to identify the **most important outcomes** children's Centres should be striving for in order to give all children positive early-years experiences.

1 Children's health and development Cognition, communication and language, social and emotional development, and physical health are all critical for children to thrive as they grow up. While debate continues about which of these four aspects is the most important, there is agreement that they are all critical and interrelated. (creating safe & healthy environment, active learning, positive parenting, mental well-being, knowledge & skills, financially self-supporting, parenting enables development, parent context enables good parenting)

2 Parenting The dynamic interaction between parent and child, and in particular the type of home communication and learning environment that parents establish and nurture for their children from birth, is critical. Parenting must also generate **attachment** between parents and their children. Children's Centres can offer a range of interventions and opportunities to support parents to improve their approaches and skills.

3 Parents' lives There are particular factors that sit outside the immediate parent–child relationship but exert powerful influence over parenting. **Parents' health, social networks, financial resources and knowledge** about parenting collectively act as enablers or barriers to nurturing their children's development. Parents' mental wellbeing – particularly mothers' – is critical. Mental wellbeing has both direct and indirect impacts on a child: directly through the impact on parenting itself and indirectly through the mother's capacity to withstand stressors that can affect home and community environments. An Equal Start: Improving outcomes in Children's Centres 11th July 201207:47

1 Children are developing age appropriate skills in drawing and copying
2 Children increase the level to which they pay attention during activities and to the people around them
3 Children are developing age appropriate comprehension of spoken and written language

4 Children are building age appropriate use of spoken and written language

5 Children are engaging in age appropriate play

6 Children have age appropriate self-management and self-control

7 Reduction in the numbers of children born with low birth-weight

8 Reducing the number of children with high or low Body Mass Index

9 Reduction in the numbers of mothers who smoke during pregnancy

10 Increase in the number of mothers who breastfeed

11 Increased # & frequency of parents talking to their child using a wide range of words and sentence structures

12 More parents are reading to their child every day

13 More parents are regularly engaging positively with their children

14 More parents are actively listening to their children

15 More parents are setting and reinforcing boundaries

16 More parents are experiencing lower levels of stress in their home and in their lives

17 Increase in the number of parents with good mental wellbeing

18 More parents have greater levels of support from friends and / or family

19 More parents are improving their basic skills, particularly in literacy and numeracy

20 More parents are increasing their knowledge and application of good parenting

21 Parents are accessing good work or developing the skills needed for employment, particularly those furthest away from the labour market

Building caring Communities- Trillium Communities 1998

Wendell Berry: "The revival of community would have to be a revival accomplished mainly by the community itself. It would have to be done not from the outside by the instruction of visiting experts, but from the inside by the ancient rule of neighbourliness, by the love of precious things, and by the wish to be at home"

The "ancient rule of neighbourliness" is another way of looking at social capital. In a community with abundance, you might fine:

- There are opportunities for interaction & belonging. No one sector or organization is responsible for making things happen.
- The community has a good sense of its assets, and does not see itself as simply a collection of problems.
- There is a healthy balance between formal structure, informal networks and individual responsibility.
- There is a unifying focus that is stronger than the parts.

Peter Senge (1990), said, "A shared vision is not an idea. It is not even an important idea such as freedom. It is, rather, a force in people's hearts, a force of impressive power." Such a force, when translated into a clearly articulated statement of the ideal future, has historically served communities as a guide to the future far beyond the temporal nature of most strategies and plans."