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Child Friendly Edmonton Presentation

The City of Edmonton
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The Child Friendly lens was developed as part of the Child Friendly Strategy. Our journey is very similar to the development of a child. That one tiny little seed, grew over the years.

Background information

Child Friendly started in 2003 as a task force with support from 2 city Councilors. A City Council Special initiative encouraging action to make Edmonton a more child Friendly place that recognizes and reflects the needs of children and young people.

Child Friendly Strategy -

http://www.edmonton.ca/for_residents/PDF/ChildFriendlyStrategy.pdf

Child Friendly Edmonton identifies three goals and has broadened the scope of the work within the City of Edmonton to include all Departments and Civic Agencies.

- Advocacy and Awareness
- Accessibility
- Services 'FIT' for Children

Like any proud parent, I'd like to share the success and challenges of each of the three areas. Let's start with the Services "FIT" for Children.

Goal 3 Services 'FIT' for Children: Policies, services & programs provided meet the needs of children, youth and their families by striving for quality experiences that are child centered and take a holistic approach at the best practices for child development.

- Training & Development
 - Share the concepts of Child Friendly across the organization and with the community and youth. Tools are developed and training provided to support the implementation of a Child Friendly City.
 - Creating a culture where all children and youth can succeed – Kids At Hope, founded by Rick Miller in Phoenix, AZ

- Child Friendly Lens: What is Child Friendly lens – systematic process to assess the impact of policy and practice on children – in advance, during and after implementation. This tool will strengthen support for young people through changes in policy, programs and services.

Child Friendly Lens - http://www.edmonton.ca/for_residents/PDF/ChildFriendlyLens.pdf

- Composed of 5 lens which reflect the values that guild the Child Friendly Edmonton Strategy. Each perspective view may be used individually or in any combination depending on what is being assessed. Use the tool to review a variety of topics: policies, programs, service or other aspects of your operation

1. Children have a voice, influence and understanding responsibility to themselves and others
2. Children feel safe and are protected
3. Children join in and participate freely
4. Children play, have fun, make friends and develop skills
5. Children feel welcome, respected and have a sense of belonging.

- We apply the lens to all the work we do – evaluations of recreational camps, allowing for time for children and youth to provide input on their recreational choices within the program
- We have implement the use of a decision – making filter that assesses the child friendliness of corporate programs, services, facilities, bylaws and policies. This tool has identified areas for change and assisted us with identifying what can be done to make every decision more positive for children and youth.
 - This allows us to change with the demands of the times. For example, OST



Once the Child Friendly lens was developed, administration was able to apply the lens to goal number 1 and 2 of the Child Friendly Strategy.

The 1st goal is aimed at generating enhanced awareness and understanding of issues facing and opportunities for Edmonton's children. With greater awareness the community at large can embrace the principles of Child Friendly Edmonton and implement changes wherever appropriate. The goal also promotes children's active involvement in issues that affect them by listening to their views, considering them in the decision making process and empowering them to be self advocates.

Where did we apply the Child Friendly lens to?

3 Building blocks;

- State of Edmonton's Children Report
 - 2006, 2008 a State of Edmonton's Children Report was conducted with multiple stakeholders. Health Special Reports, Demographics, Early Learning & Care, Education, Risk Behaviors, Community Supports & Interventions and Leisure
 - Since 2008 no additional report has been compiled. What we have done is tap into existing research and publications.
 - Alberta's Health & Wellness, Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health developed a series called Let's Talk. About the Early Years taking on research
 - The information from the report helps to inform the community and support child and youth centered policy development, programs and services.
- A Voice for Edmonton's Children
 - The City of Edmonton promotes a systematic child participation process that will seek to engage children in design, planning and delivery of municipal programs and series through the corporation
Example: Public Involvement process, ties into our recreational programs, parks, trail systems



Involving Young People in Civic Matters, Child Friendly Edmonton Supplementary Guide -

http://www.edmonton.ca/for_residents/PDF/InvolvingYoungPeopleGuide2008.pdf

Youth Council & their activities & events. (Involving young people in civic matters)

Youth Council - <http://www.ceyc.ca/>

- Building Awareness
 - Promote the concept of child & youth friendly communities on a broad scale through a variety of media such as news coverage, circulation of print, conferences, newsletter, municipal events.



- Example: National Child Day, Building of Kids at Hope culture – Where all kids can succeed, no exceptions.

Goal Two: Accessibility: The City of Edmonton & it's partners will strive to improve accessibility for all children and youth so that they have the choice and opportunity to join in and participate freely.

- Addressing Barriers
 - Review programs, services & facilities that involve children to identify barriers & take a systematic approach to address them
 - We as a city were not meeting the needs of the multicultural and immigrant children and youth. Using the Child Friendly lens allowed us to quickly review our existing program structure and since then have started programs like the
 - **Nîkânîw: Aboriginal Youth Leadership Program,**
 - Nîkânîw combines the cultural teachings and guidance of Aboriginal Elders and Leaders with the instruction of water safety education, first aid, CPR, leadership and life skills. These program areas compliment each other, teaching a respect for Mother Earth, and especially the element of water.

http://www.edmonton.ca/attractions_recreation/sport_recreation/nkniheew-aboriginal-youth-leadership-program.aspx

- **Rising Youth (Somali youth)**

- The Rising Youth Program is a City of Edmonton initiative that prepares young people to step up to the challenges in their community, become leaders and volunteers, and have fun in a safe, enriching environment.



http://www.edmonton.ca/for_residents/programs/rising-youth.aspx

- OST
- Leisure Access Program – The Leisure Access Program allows eligible low-income Edmontonians to access participating City of Edmonton recreation facilities.
http://www.edmonton.ca/for_residents/programs/leisure-access-program.aspx
- Pilot Projects
 - Develop & pilot a range of innovative programs, services & opportunities with a focus on increasing & maintaining access for all children
 - Examples: Development of skateboard parks, Teen gamers palace through libraries, ETS service to snow valley

Our growing pains of Child Friendly lens are very similar to a teen ager finding their identity.

- Communication issues across the departments
- Changing of staff, loss of knowledge, silos
- Application issues – how does this affect the grass cutter or bus driver?
- Child Friendly Strategy is to go through a review with each changing of city council. Currently this is every 3 years



The Child Friendly lens is one tool used by The City of Edmonton and its partners to ensure a greater voice for Edmonton's children and youth and improve opportunities their meaningful participation. The lens also allows for The City of Edmonton and its partners, to build awareness on issues faced by children and youth so as to champion improvements and change.