

New: Child Friendly Edmonton

Initiative Title: Child Friendly Edmonton
City Council Sponsor(s): Councillor B. Esslinger
Supporting Department and Lead Staff: Community Services, Lyall Brenneis / Elaine Betchinski

BACKGROUND:

- The Child Friendly Edmonton Strategy is based on the International UNICEF Child Friendly Cities Initiative. This initiative provides a framework for defining and developing a Child Friendly City. It promotes the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child at the level where it has the greatest direct impact on children's lives: in the cities where they live. Child Friendly Edmonton (CFE) aims to create the best possible results for children and their families in the following five areas:
 1. To ensure children and youth have a voice, influence and understanding of responsibility to themselves and others.
 2. Children and youth feel safe and are protected.
 3. Children and youth join in and participate freely.
 4. Children and youth play, have fun, make friends and develop skills.
 5. Children and youth feel welcomed and respected and have a sense of belonging.

DESIRED OUTCOMES:

- Child Friendly Edmonton and its partners will ensure a greater voice for Edmonton's children and youth and improve opportunities for their meaningful participation.
- *Goal: Advocate and Advise City Council and City Departments on issues that affect Children and Youth*
 - Inform and share research findings and act as information distributor in relation to best practices for children policy.
 - Update the Child Friendly Lens (Child Assessment Impact Tool.) This is a tool that can be applied to assess the impact on children in advance of, during, and after the implementation of policies, programs and services. It can serve as a guide for city staff as they plan for land use and transportation corridors; design parks, playgrounds, multi-use trails, sport, recreation and leisure facilities as well as other public spaces. This self-assessment tool asks the user to rate their level of agreement with a series of statements that assess the child friendliness of infrastructure, a policy, program or service from a number of viewpoints. CFE will conduct internal consultation to determine how staff and departments are using the Child Friendly Lens. This work will assist in identifying issues and gaps that may exist and recommend future action.

- Tools on how to involve children and youth in civic processes will be developed. The City of Edmonton Youth Council (CEYC) is a space where youth can share their voice and opinions.
- **Goal: Provide networking opportunities**
 - Presentations will be made by Youth Council members and staff to elementary and junior high schools. Project Vocalize encourages engagement and raises awareness of issues of concern to junior high students (ongoing as requested). Opportunities will be developed to engage children and give voice to their issues of concern.
 - Partnerships are developed and maintained with many child and youth organizations through the Out of School Time Shared Services initiative (OST). Working together since 2008, this “coalition of the willing” has explored how to work together to respond to the increasing demand for out-of-school- time activities for immigrant and refugee children and youth.
 - CFE will continue to be a vehicle through which children and youth will continue to be consulted on city projects and policies.
- **Goal: Strive to improve accessibility for all children and youth so that they have the choice and opportunity to join in and participate freely.**
 - Youth Council’s new ‘Recreation Subcommittee’ was created to enhance the awareness of the importance of physical literacy and a healthy lifestyle. Partnership discussions are underway with Leisure Centres on hosting youth swims and focused activities on Friday nights throughout the school season.
 - CFE participates on an international “Community of Practices” committee to gather information, tools, and resources for organizations, government, school boards, not for profits and advocacy groups.
 - CFE will access community mapping tools and resources to identify areas of concern affecting the lives of children. Issues identified through community mapping initiatives will be addressed through community collaborations and partnerships.
 - CFE will create a working group of internal and external partners that will focus on child advocacy and collaboration.
 - Children’s Festival: CFE will coordinate the organization and delivery of an event /festival for children that creates an opportunity for and celebration of their collective voices. This will be an opportunity for children from schools, child cares and afterschool groups to attend and be engaged in celebrating their City through fun activities and play. This initiative will give voice to children and seek to learn what makes a great city from their perspective. A detailed work plan and budget will be developed.
- **Goal: Provide training to both city staff and community members on best practices to engage children and youth through programming opportunities.**
 - Continue to offer Kids at Hope, HOPEOLOGY and High Five, Principles of Healthy Child Development (PHCD) training.
 - CFE will create an inventory of training opportunities for city staff working with children and for staff whose work impacts children. We will promote and deliver these training opportunities where possible. CFE will identify gaps and

make recommendations for future action and act as a resource for training providers.

- Youth Week with kick-off/wrap up events are held each year.
- CFE will continue to participate in the community collaborative that coordinates National Child Day (November 20, 2014) celebratory events in Edmonton.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC DIRECTION:

- This Council Initiative aligns to The Way We Live
 - **Goal Two:** Edmonton celebrates life.
 - **Goal Three:** Edmonton is a caring, inclusive, affordable community.
 - **Goal Four:** Edmonton is a safe city.

START-UP BUDGET REQUIREMENTS:

- No new budget allocation is required at this time.

TARGET DATE FOR COMPLETION OF PROJECT PLAN:

- A work plan will be completed by March 31, 2014, and will include the following key deliverables: updating the Child Friendly Edmonton Strategy and Child Friendly Edmonton Lens, developing an Implementation Plan, as well as other strategic work, events, projects and collaborative efforts.