

Better Futures for Regina's Children



Final Report of the Community Planning Process by the Regina Area Early Childhood Network

April 2001

Healthy families are the foundation of a strong community.

Acknowledgements

Regina and Area Early Childhood Network

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Membership

Aboriginal Family Service Centre
Al Ritchie Health Action Centre, RHD
Balfour Tutorial Program
Buffalo Plains School Division no.21
Catholic Family Services
Catholic School Board
Child and Youth Services, RHD
Circle Project
Core Community Group
Early Learning Centre
Early Childhood Intervention Program (ECIP)
Families First
Family Services Regina
Four Directions Health Centre, RHD
Health Canada
Healthiest Babies, RHD
Indian & Metis Christian Fellowship
Morningstar Ministries
Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, RHD
Parent Mentoring Program
Peyakowak Committee
Prenatal Education & Support, YMCA
Public Health Services, RHD
Rainbow Youth Centre
Regina Public School Board
Regina Treaty/Status Indian Services
Sacred Heart R. C. Church
Saskatchewan Health
Saskatchewan Social Services
Saskatchewan Education
SCEP Centre
Scott Collegiate Infant Care
SWADD, RHD
United Way of Regina
Women and Child Health, RHD

Financial Support and Supply/Service Donations

United Way of Regina
Child Day Care Branch, Department of Social Services
Regina Public School Board
Regina Regional Intersectoral Committee (RIC)
Health Canada
Minerva Communications
Street Culture Kidz
Grand and Toy
Coca Cola

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Better Futures for Regina's Children Working Group

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Heidi Fisher-Phillips, Women and Child Health, RHD
Bob Larsen, Families First
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Debra MacDonald, ECIP
Mary Ann McGrath, ELC
Carol Olson, Child Day Care Branch
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How we got started



Concern for the health and well-being of our children is one of the hallmarks of a caring society. In recent years, more attention has been paid to the importance of the earliest years of childhood (from birth through to age six) and the need to find more effective ways to nurture young children and support their families during this critical period. Failure to effectively address a child's developmental needs may decrease that child's opportunities to live a healthy and productive life, which can be very costly for society.

In January 2000, a broad range of community stakeholders began meeting together on a regular basis. This group has become the Regina Area Early Childhood Network (see Acknowledgements for a list of membership in The Network). The Network identified the need for Regina, as a community, to develop a shared vision of how to more effectively address the needs of young children and their families. The Better Futures for Regina's Children Working Group was formed to accomplish this task. The Working Group coordinated a facilitated three - (3) stage planning process called Better Futures for Regina's Children.

What we have done so far

A wide range of people participated in Better Futures. Parents, community-based representatives, educators, health professionals, and representatives from the aboriginal community and all levels of government gathered together around the question: "How do we build a better future for Regina's children?" The goal of this planning process was to create a community-owned vision for young children and their families and to take the first steps towards making this vision a reality.



To ensure the success of our planning process, the Strategic Planning Cycle developed by the Institute for Cultural Affairs (ICA) was used (see Appendix 1). Erwin Allerdings, an ICA trained facilitator, was contracted to prepare and facilitate our planning. As well, a group of 17 individuals were trained to act as small group facilitators during the planning days.



On September 22, 2000 over 100 participants came together to create a shared vision and to identify the guiding principles which will guide our work. Later, on November 22, participants identified the underlying obstacles that prevent us from realizing our vision and identified the strategic directions in which we need to move to realize our vision. The final stage of this process took place on December 14, when participants worked together to identify possible actions to achieve our strategic directions.

What we created

A significant amount of work was accomplished during the three days of Better Futures for Regina's Children. This work provides a broad framework within which our community can move forward to more effectively address the needs of young children and their families. As well, it represents the views of a wide range of individuals and groups, particularly parents of young children. What follows is a summary of this work.



Our Vision

Healthy Families are the foundation of a strong community.

In 2005 we want to see:

- that families have an adequate social and economic base resulting in the ability to meet their family's needs;
- healthy children supported by healthy families. This will be demonstrated by playful children and joyful families within a vibrant community; and,
- a continuum of universal, accessible support services, from prevention through to intervention, developed with the participation of the community.

A number of guiding principles were developed to support the vision statement and to define how the community should work together.

Guiding Principles



We believe in the inherent dignity of children and families.

All children have the right to resources and assistance necessary to reach their full potential.

Parents are the child's first and most important teachers, caregivers and advocates.

All members of the community have a shared responsibility for the well-being of children.

We hold an abiding respect for diverse cultures, heritages and abilities.

We will work together in a spirit of cooperation, honesty and goodwill respecting the inherent skills, abilities, values and contributions of everyone.

We believe in, and recognize, an individual's power to make choices.

We believe in developing, enhancing and supporting high quality services that meet the needs of children and families in our community throughout the life span.

Once our vision and guiding principles were developed, the group began to address some of the obstacles which we would need to overcome in order to make the vision a reality. With these obstacles in mind, a number of strategic Goals and Directions were defined.

Strategic Goals and Directions

To utilize community input and involvement in designing and developing the delivery of human services, in order to:

Strategic Goal #1

Ensure that an informed community will play an integral role in the development and implementation of child-focused public policies and sustainable services by:

- developing a broad early childhood public information strategy;
- improving public policy to ensure that standards for meeting basic needs are raised for all children and their families; and
- allocating long term resources through inclusive decision making.



Strategic Goal #2

Create and maintain awareness of, and easy access to information and services by:

- creating opportunities to network with and support families in their own community;
- create new ways to access information; and
- develop a central referral point.

Strategic Goal #3

Enhance and support quality neighbourhood-based services for children and families by:

- supporting workers and designing services so that they are respectful, flexible and holistic;
- establishing and funding holistic family-centred neighbourhood services; and
- providing and funding learning opportunities for both parents and service providers.

On the final day of the process, participants worked to begin translating these strategic directions into a work plan. Although a complete work plan was not developed, many useful ideas for concrete action were generated. A complete outline of these actions can be found in Appendix 2.

What happens next?

Following the final phase of the planning process members of the Network met to review the outcomes of the Better Futures for Regina's Children process and took steps to ensure the momentum generated by this event was not lost. The Network endorsed the work of Better Futures for Regina's Children and built upon this initiative by:

- Presenting the outcomes of Better Futures for Regina's Children to the Regional Intersectoral Committee;
- Presenting these outcomes to the Early Childhood Development Unit; and,
- Striking the Better Futures Action Committee to coordinate follow-up actions.

The Better Futures Action Committee will ensure that the work begun during the planning process continues and the energy, enthusiasm and insights of all participants is respected. In the short term, the Committee has defined three major tasks:

- Develop a report(s) and find appropriate methods of communicating this information to participants, policy makers and the wider community;
- Implement a plan to obtain further input and representation from parents and aboriginal people, and,
- Submit a proposal(s) to secure funding for a staff person to coordinate community- based actions.

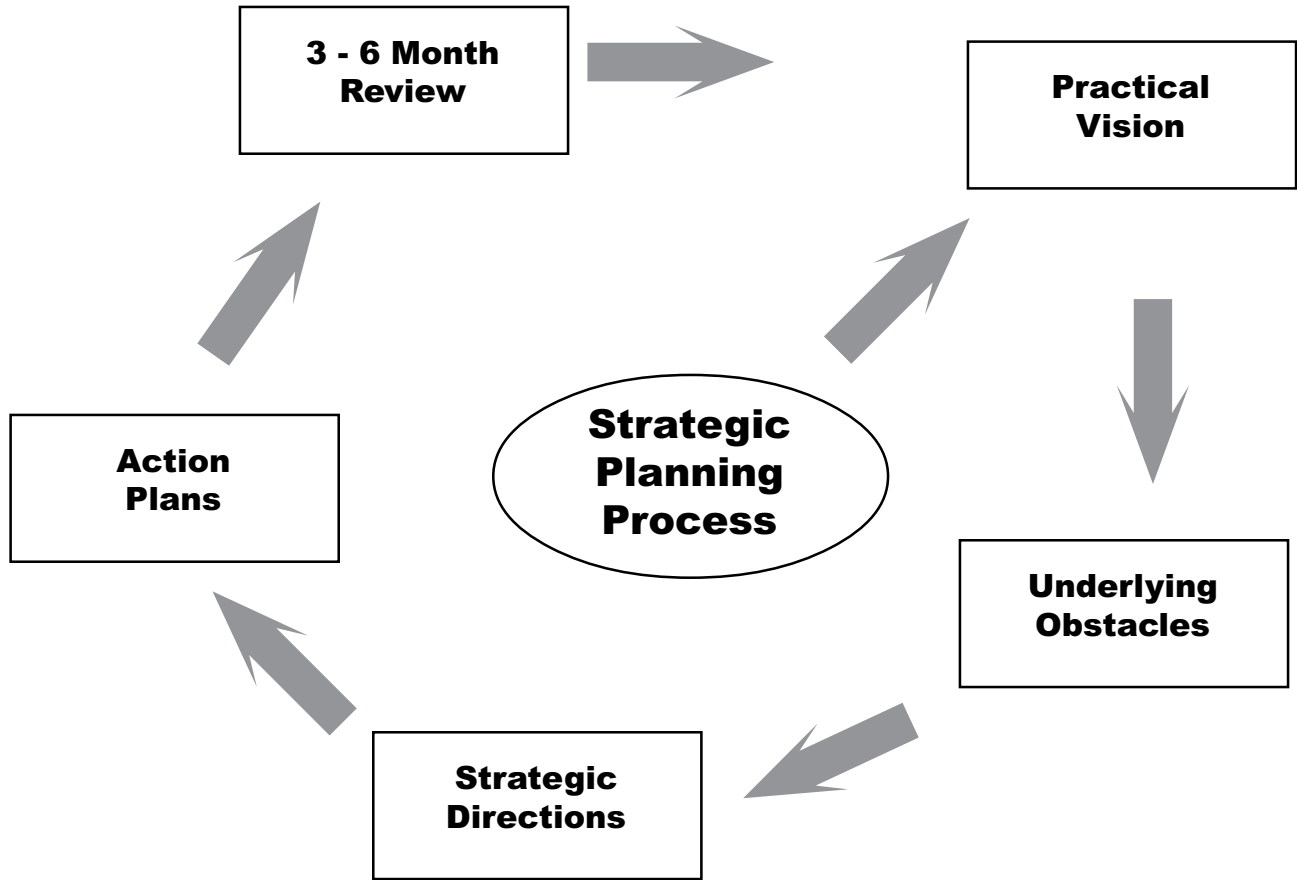
How can I get involved?

Our planning process was built upon the belief that all members of our community have the right to be involved in creating a better future for our children. We would like to hear from you. Please contact the United Way of Regina at 757-5671 if you want more information or want to get involved.



Appendix 1

Strategic Planning Cycle



Appendix 2

Measurable Accomplishments 2000

Focus Question (from Stage 3 of the planning process): What are the measurable accomplishments that Regina should have in the next year to deal with the underlying obstacles and realize its vision for the healthy development of Regina's young children?

Overall Theme:

Utilizing community input and involvement in designing and developing the delivery of human services.

STRATEGIC GOAL #1

Ensuring that an informed community will play an integral role in the development and implementation of child focused public policies and sustainable services.

Directions:

- Developing a broad early childhood public information strategy;
- Improving public policy to ensure that standards for meeting basic needs are raised for all children and their families; and,
- Allocating long-term resources through inclusive decision making.

STRATEGIC GOAL #2

Creating and maintaining awareness of, and easy access to, information and services.

Directions:

- Creating opportunities to network with and support families in their own community;
- Creating new ways to access information; and,
- Developing a central referral point.

STRATEGIC GOAL #3

Enhancing and supporting quality neighbourhood-based services for children and families.

Directions:

- Supporting workers and designing services so that they are respectful, flexible and holistic;
- Establishing and funding holistic family-centred neighbourhood services; and,
- Providing and funding learning opportunities for both parents and service providers.

Timeline of Specific Actions and Strategic Objectives

The following represents a summary of suggestions – an “idea bank” – intended to identify “Measurable Accomplishments” for the Strategic Goals and Directions. These are not intended to represent “hard and fast” plans that must be achieved. They do, however, indicate clearly indicate the kind of initiatives the community participants chose as important.

A. Overall Theme:

Utilizing community input and involvement in designing, developing and delivery of human services.

i) Measurable Accomplishment:

Use existing community structures to begin dialogue and discussions on access and barriers to access of services for early childhood development (1 year).

Possible Actions and Timelines:

January 2001 - Expansion of existing network awareness

February 2001 - Identify citizens who are concerned with early childhood development

April 2001 - Disseminate promotional information and ensure funders are aware

Fall 2001 - Neighbourhood-based community forums: Context; Leadership; Accessibility

Winter 2001 Evaluate Dialogue with X communities regarding Barriers

ii) Measurable Accomplishment:

Create a review tool to reduce organizational barriers to access to early childhood services (1 year **or** 6 months from Community Forums).

Possible Actions and Timelines:

July - September 2001 - working groups to organize the information from Forums

October- December 2001 - Feedback to Community Forum participants

- checking for accuracy, gaps;
- “friendly“ tool?

iii) Measurable Accomplishment:

Co-ordinate Transportation – includes 6 agencies to plan, resource, implement two
(2) “Twoonie Taxis” – 6 months (before the Community Forums) Evaluate
“Twoonie Taxi” Program – 12 months after start-up (Jul-02)

Possible Actions and Timelines:

January - March – Review SGI Volunteer Driver program

July - September – Use “Twoonie Taxis” to Deliver Participants to Community Forums

B. Strategic Goal #1

Ensuring that an informed community will play an integral role in the development and implementation of child focused public policies and sustainable services.

B1. Strategic Direction: Allocating Long-Term Resources Through Inclusive Decision Making

i) Measurable Accomplishment:

Plan is implemented and funded

Possible Actions and Timelines:

February – Regina’s Strategic Early Childhood Development Plan will be on paper

April – Hire Co-ordinator to develop implementation plan for Network

April – Plan will be shared with the Early Childhood Development (ECD) Unit -
Dialogue about fit

May – Develop Implementation Plan (5 years)

July - September – Integration and co-ordination of existing service / budgets into
new plan - ongoing to 2005

October - December – Training issues - address shortages of early childhood
resource people

B2. Strategic Direction: Developing a Broad Early Childhood Public Information Strategy

i) Measurable Accomplishment:

Develop Internet Web Page with links to agency web pages, etc.

Possible Actions and Timelines:

February – Expand Committee

May – Find funding for Web design, Webmaster salary to design and update site

January 2002 - Get computers for agencies

- Gifts in kind programs with U.W / SaskTel / Volnet / Access Communications
- Get agency participation to establish their own web pages
- Web Page links and update info on the “Network” i.e., “What is EC development”

ii) Measurable Accomplishment:

Development and Implement Advertising Campaign

Possible Actions and Timelines:

June – Develop committee to:

- co-ordinate resource needs
- hire person, pay for production of ad campaign
- agree on content

September – Agencies could contribute articles (one each week) about EC and what they do (in relation to) to be published in weekly community paper

- Get Corporation Sponsorship to get people to Forums
- \$ coupons for IGA, great for door prizes

iii) Measurable Accomplishment:

Information awareness sessions targeted to corporations / workplaces

Possible Actions and Timelines

March – Develop roster of Presenters (volunteers from early childhood agencies)

- Develop list of possible / potential audience
- Develop generic Presentation Package i.e. 2 hours on early childhood development

October - December – co-ordinate and conduct presentations

B3. Strategic Direction: Improve Public Policy to Ensure Standards for Meeting Basic Needs are Raised for All Children and Their Families

i) Measurable Accomplishment:

Increase the number of licensed, subsidized childcare spaces in Regina

Possible Actions and Timelines:

February – Network with other early Daycare Advocates

– ID Key government officials

March – Documentation

May – Funding proposals

June – Meet with Minister of Social Services

ii) Measurable Accomplishment:

Support the “baby friendly” initiative - Breast Feeding

Possible Actions and Timelines

January – Contact local breast feeding committee(s) to offer support

– Be prepared to write letter of support

April - June – Lobby funders

C. Strategic Goal #2

Creating and maintaining awareness of, and easy access to, information and services.

C1. Strategic Direction: Creating opportunities to network with and support families in their own community

i) Measurable Accomplishment:

Create days that celebrate families and children (National Child Day) - Network supports community schools to celebrate days

Possible Actions and Timelines:

January - March – Pick days that celebrate families & children; Create and disseminate information regarding days

April - June – Info out to community schools

- Schools develop plans using community ideas to celebrate days

C2. Strategic Direction: Creating new ways to access information

ii) Measurable Accomplishment:

Work with three - (3) Community Associations to host socials and information night re: services & supports available in the community by September 2001

Possible Actions and Timelines

February – Form a working committee within the Early Childhood Network

April – Identify communities willing to host social and information night

May – Organize agencies to participate in information nights in community

September – Network - work with three - (3) community Community Associations to host a social and information night re: services and supports available in the community

C3. Strategic Direction: Developing a Central Referral Point

iii) Measurable Accomplishment:

Hire person to create and maintain an electronic human service resource directory

Possible Actions and Timelines:

January - March - create selection criteria and hire person

April – Gather existing directories

May – Contact all service providers

September – Directory created; begin promotion and ongoing maintenance

D. Strategic Goal #3

Enhancing and supporting quality neighbourhood-based services for children and families.

D1. Strategic Direction: Supporting Workers and Designing Services

i) Measurable Accomplishment:

Create integrated service provider network in three - (3) communities / neighbourhoods – 1 year

Possible Actions and Timelines:

February – Identify two existing networks and determine what worked

- Co-ordinated by Community Development Co-ordinators

April – Develop model to be used

September - Recruit a third network and implement new model

D2. Strategic Direction: Establishing and funding holistic family centered neighbourhood services; providing and funding learning opportunities for both parents and service providers

i) Measurable Accomplishment:

Four - (4) Communities Commit to Participate

Possible Actions and Timelines:

January - March – Form a group (Steering Committee)

- Write an early childhood development concept paper:

- Stakeholders
- Planners
- Community
- Capture Imagination
- Principles
 - Strength based
 - Inclusive
 - Respectful

April – Concept Paper to Agencies seeking guidance and support

- Publicity - community limited approach

- Community Event - on board

July – Develop Community Leadership

August – Bylaws - Rules of operation input

- Develop / Establish Program

- General running [operation]

- Central Financial Function

2002 - Beyond Scope:

- Role modeling by service providers

- Developing Human Resources - Community Members

- Implementation and Evaluation

- Developing tools for operation - Passport to Services

- Continuous education services

- Ongoing training