



Community Action Plan for Early Childhood 2010



Understanding
the Early Years

UEY REGINA

UEY Regina Community Action Plan



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The opinions and interpretations in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Government of Canada.

Today, as we launch the UEY project, we begin a process that will define the legacy we will leave to our children; it will be a blueprint for the kind of community we want them to learn and grow in. We are fortunate to have this chance to improve lives and build a healthy community. My hope is that the whole of Regina will support this project and demonstrate our commitment to children and their families, especially those who are most marginalized. *Anne Luke – March 2008 UEY Regina Public Launch*

Overview of Understanding the Early Years

Understanding the Early Years (UEY) is a national research initiative funded by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) that enables members of communities across Canada to better understand the needs of their young children and families so that community members can strengthen and design the best programs and services to meet those needs. The UEY initiative was developed to enhance knowledge of the community factors that influence children's early development.

The focus of UEY is community capacity-building to collect and use local information about young children. The broad objectives of UEY are:

- To strengthen the capacity of communities to use quality local information to help them make decisions to enhance children's lives; and
- To enable community members to work together to address the needs of children.

Objectives of UEY Regina

In its application, UEY Regina stated four main objectives, with the goal of supporting the healthy development of children in an effort to maximize health outcomes and increase readiness to learn. The objectives are:

- To improve understanding of child development and the parent and community factors that facilitate that development;
- To engage sectors and mobilize the community to participate in the UEY Regina project and in the development of a comprehensive Community Action Plan;
- To develop a framework for monitoring progress, extending knowledge transfer, and encouraging the development of a framework for sustainable improvement;
- To stimulate increased investment in early child development.

Basis of the UEY Regina Community Action Plan

The UEY initiative provides members of participating communities with quality information on:

- Local programs and resources to support young children and their families;
- Neighbourhood-based demographic and socio-economic data;
- Data on the early development achievements of all kindergarten-age children;
- Parent interviews on family and community factors that influence children's development and direct assessments of kindergarten children.

Parents, teachers, key decision-makers, and community members interested in the well-being of children in each community then work together to address issues identified by the information.

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Based on the local evidence and data collected, upon scientific research and best practices, each UEY project creates a Community Action Plan to support the healthy development of young children and families in the community. The Action Plan is then considered by the sponsoring agency and by partners.

UEY Regina and its partners have created this Community Action Plan to address issues and strengths identified in Regina. Several organizations and agencies acted as partners during the project, including the Regina Regional Intersectoral Committee, the United Way of Regina, the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region (RQHR), Regina Public Schools, Regina Catholic Schools, the City of Regina, and the Regina and Area Early Childhood Network (RAECN), a broad network of agencies supporting young children and families. Other important participants include:

- Regina Community Associations
- Regina Daycare Directors Association
- University of Regina Geography Department
- Regina KidsFirst Program
- Regina Early Learning Centre
- Regina Public Libraries
- Regina Catholic Family Services
- Regina Early Childhood Intervention Program (ECIP)
- Regina Open Door Society
- Regina Aboriginal Head Start Program
- Regina Circle Project
- Socialization Communication and Education Program (SCEP)
- Stepping Stones Daycare
- Regina Aboriginal Family Services
- Eagle Moon Health Office, RQHR
- Four Directions Health Centre, RQHR
- Population and Public Health Services, RQHR
- Child and Youth Services, RQHR
- YWCA Village Networks Project
- Ministry of Education – Early Learning and Care Branch

UEY Research

UEY Regina research has included the development of an inventory of programs, services, and resources for families with children ages six and under; an examination of demographic and socio-economic characteristics of Regina neighbourhoods; an assessment of the early development and school readiness of kindergarten-age children (Early Development Instrument); and interviews with the parents and guardians of kindergarten children about family and community factors that influence children's development and direct assessments on a sample of kindergarten children (Parent Interview and Direct Assessment of Children Survey).

All of the above local research combined with evidence gained from scientific literature, lessons from other jurisdictions, and input from local community members and service providers are



integrated into the UEY Regina Community Mapping Report, a companion document to the UEY Regina Community Action Plan.

What Does the Science and Research Tell Us? - Strong Beginnings...Brighter Futures

In recent years, the scientific knowledge about the impact of early childhood development throughout the lifespan has increased dramatically. Children's earliest years, from conception to approximately age six, represent a time in which critical aspects of development occur that form the foundation for behaviour, learning and health throughout the lifespan. Children who benefit from stimulating, nurturing early environments and relationships are more likely to establish favourable developmental trajectories. However, evidence shows that children whose early development is compromised face an increased likelihood of experiencing greater hurdles as they progress through school, develop social skills, encounter life's challenges, establish careers, and raise the next generation of children.

The wealth of scientific knowledge and research about the importance of early childhood on lifelong development presents both an opportunity and a challenge to our society. The challenge that exists is substantial - to shift our public, social, and organizational practices and policies to better support children in their task of growing and learning, and to support families and caregivers in their tasks of providing for children and of creating, and accessing, the type of stable, nurturing, interactive, and stimulating environments that children thrive in. If we succeed, research shows that results will be long-term, will reduce fiscal pressures on health, education, and social systems, will boost economic productivity, and will result in a generation of healthier, happier, more successful individuals.

The information below provides an overview of some of the critical research findings that have emerged over the past twenty years:

- Early childhood is a key determinant of the lifelong health and social well being of individuals and communities.
- The best time to invest in human development is during children's earliest years. Investment in the early years yields the highest rate of public return of any stage in human lifespan.
- The OECD suggests that Canada currently spends one third of the funds necessary to run a high quality early childhood system of services and support.
- Science directs us to realign our resources and services to earlier stages of human development.
- 90% of brain development occurs by age six, with particular rapid development having occurred by age three.
- In the first six years of life children's genes are particularly sensitive to their physical and social environment. Genes determine when specific abilities are developed such as learning to walk, while day to day experience determines how well they are formed.
- Child development occurs within a set of social relationships and social environments. Nurturing and stable relationships with caring adults are essential to healthy human development.



- The interaction of nature and nurture between child and caregiver(s) ‘sculpts the developing brain’ and other key biological systems
- Early secure attachments contribute to the growth of a broad range of competencies, including interest in further learning, healthy sense of self, positive social skills, multiple successful relationships at later ages, and a sophisticated understanding of emotions, commitments, social reciprocity, and other aspects of human relationships.
- Areas of brain development particularly sensitive during this period include all the basic competencies such as vision, hearing, emotional control, language and cognitive development.
- While parents are children’s primary caregivers, families require support within local neighbourhood, community and throughout the larger society.
- All parents and caregivers may require support and guidance from time to time.
- Initiatives that target children directly with structures and centre-based programs have the most positive effect on vulnerable children’s development.
- Effective group programs depend on quality – essentials include well-trained staff, effective programming, appropriate staff-child ratios, as well as sufficient duration of intervention/support.
- Over 70 percent of vulnerable children in Canada do not live in poor families.

Key Findings from the UEY Regina Study

Regina’s children at kindergarten entry scored below their Canadian peers in all five key areas of healthy growth and development. Vulnerable children were found throughout Regina and throughout all demographic groups. The UEY Regina study exposed considerable depth and breadth of early childhood vulnerabilities across the whole of Regina, evident in the following findings:

- 1 in 3 Regina children are behind in at least one area of their development,
- 1 in 5 Regina children are behind in at least two areas of their development
- 8% of Regina children are behind across a broad spectrum of important developmental capacities
- Basic literacy, basic numeracy and gross and fine motor skills, communications skills and general knowledge are specific areas of concerns.
- A direct assessment of kindergarten students found 1 in 5 children scoring low in pre-literacy skills.
- 14 of 21 Regina neighbourhoods have rates of childhood vulnerability higher than the Canadian average of (27%).
- 9 Regina neighbourhoods have rates of childhood vulnerability higher than the Regina average of (33%).
- 3 Regina neighbourhoods have extreme rates of childhood vulnerability greater than 45%
- Mothers in Regina have a significantly higher rate of maternal depression (14%) as compared to Canada (10%), with significantly higher rates among mothers with annual family incomes under \$30,000 (31%) and among female lone parents(28%)
- Children in Regina experienced a significantly higher rate of childhood depression (8%) as compared to Canada (5%)



- Children in Regina experienced a significantly higher rate of childhood asthma (15%) as compared to Canada (11%).

In terms of the programs, services, and resources for families with young children there is a need for increased investments especially in the areas of parent support and education, and high quality play based learning activities for children from birth to school entry. Cost and lack of time were cited by parents as significant barriers to accessing programs.

UEY participants recommended the creation of neighbourhood hubs to better serve families while offering play based learning activities that promote the healthy growth and development of their children. These neighbourhood settings are seen as a strategic way to both integrate a wide array of professional services and at the same time provide informal opportunities for parent education, social support and child development. Planning, resource allocation and other developments should also continue to involve parents, and local neighbourhood based entities such as community associations and community school councils. Overall there is a large need to develop a well-coordinated communication strategy for awareness and education purposes.

A central issue resides in the ways our society has changed over the past several decades and that our community support systems for families have not been modernized to reflect and support these changes. Family and children's services and resources need to be enhanced, diversified and re-aligned to fit the context and circumstances of contemporary family life. It was noted that many children travel a greater distance in their day as compared to their working parents. Daily transitions and disruptions for the young developing child should be minimized where possible. Services and resources should also travel to the child where possible. Attention must also be paid to supports for children as they transition and enter new settings and programs. As the majority of parents work, time poverty is a significant issue facing families wanting to spend quality time together as well as having the opportunity to take advantage of community resources and services. The private sector and business community will be encouraged to contribute through family based workplace policies and practices which allow parents to better attend to the needs of their young developing children.

Demographic information shows that family structures and circumstances have changed dramatically over the past several decades. Lone parent families now make-up thirty-two percent of all families types. The majority of parents now work placing increased pressures on the licensed daycare sector and informal childcare support. Income levels for middle and low-income families have declined as well over the past few decades, with parents typically working longer hours to maintain their standard of living. The recent dramatic rise in housing costs and rental shortages place increased pressure on families. Child poverty rates remain unacceptably high, with 25% of Regina families with children under the age of six living in poverty. For many mothers working shields their children from poverty. Of note, in just over a decade, Quebec cuts its child poverty rate in half, in part through publicly funded universal daycare allowing parents to return to education or the work force and for their children to reap the rewards of early learning opportunities.

Strong Foundation – Better Outcomes

Regina UEY findings indicate a need to develop a 'high quality multi-sectoral system' of services, resources and support for families with young children, especially those aimed at the prenatal



period and through to age three. Currently resources are divided and spread across jurisdictions, provincial and civic departments, and community-based organizations. Science and program experience point to a child-centered, socio-ecological approach to the development and provision of resources and supports. This requires building relationships and social capital between and among programs, agencies, organizations, parents and communities.

This formative work includes the development of a regional governance model, shared accountability, collaborative planning, integrated service delivery, data collection and analysis for early childhood system and population based outcomes, and a communication strategy.

Below are six key recommendations - important first steps by which to continue and at the same time transfer the work began by the UEY Regina project to a regional coordinating body and the larger Regina community. These initial six areas focus on setting a solid foundation, a formalized structure and set of processes from which the on-going regional work can be sustained, managed, coordinated, and formalized. The recommendations focus on key operational considerations – direction, management, coordination, engagement and shared ownership, communication, knowledge building, strategic and collaborative action, accountability and quality assurance.

The actions listed under each recommendation are taken from the larger plan and are proposed as initial steps to be taken. The overall plan categorizes actions under the following three categories: building a regional child centered regional early childhood support system, healthy early childhood development and early intervention.

The plan recognizes and considers the critical role and set of responsibilities that the national and provincial governments have in the provision of policy, funding, coordination and in moving the early childhood agenda forward. However, this plan focuses on what may be accomplished at the regional level given present policy and fiscal realities. All of the proposed actions are concordant with existing provincial policy.

Key Recommendations

1. Establish **Community Direction and Regional Commitment:**
 - Create a charter for vision, direction, sustainability, collaboration and engagement
 - Determination of common outcomes
 - Establish a set of community goals and indicators (i.e. 10% reduction of vulnerability by 2015 as measured by the EDI)
 - Obtain on-going, long-term commitment from regional partners to work together, monitor and report on progress
 - Secure funds to implement community plan including enhancing resources and services

2. Develop a **Regional Management / Coordination Mechanism** to:
 - Help transfer the work from the UEY Regina project to the Regina community and a new set of resources to continue the work
 - Oversee the implementation of the first community action plan
 - Provide continuity in the intersectoral work required



- Coordinate planning and other activities during the initial stages until formal mechanisms are established
 - Formal mechanism should be accountable and credible and be able to identify and respond to needs.
3. Continue and expand efforts for **Community Engagement, Shared Ownership and Capacity Building** with:
- Parents
 - Human service professions and providers
 - Community agencies
 - Private sector
 - School Community Councils
 - Community Associations
4. Develop a **Regional Multi-faceted Communication Strategy**
- Develop and cost a long-term, multi-faceted communication plan to increase:
 - Overall public awareness
 - Parent education
 - Community engagement
5. **Take Strategic Action in Resources/Service Enhancement**
- Continue to examine and improve coordination and efficiencies between existing resources and services
 - Provide a range of developmentally appropriate early learning programs that address all areas of children's development –physical, emotional, social, language and cognitive based on EDI evidence, best practice and community input
 - Establish Neighbourhood family / child resource hubs
 - Initial hubs established based on EDI evidence, built on best practise, along with community input
 - Hubs can provide a wide range of formal services including public health, parent support programs, education, prevention, and early intervention.
 - Hubs can play important role of providing public/social space for families to come together informally, to learn and support each other, building social capital within the local neighbourhood
 - Develop and implement other integrated service delivery models
 - Increase supports and resources for families with children from prenatal to age three
 - Review supports and resources provided to families during prenatal period, at time of hospital birth and through first three years of life
 - Individual organizational strategic changes may be required to place a primary and coordinated focus on families with young children.
 - Large organizations realign their organizational structure/processes to better plan, coordinate and deliver services for young children and their parents and to work more effectively with community partners.
6. **Coordination, Monitoring and Quality Assurance**



- Establish a community mechanism to collect and analyze data
- Establish baseline data set (for example in-hospital birth data, 18 month screen, ASQ, EDI)
- Establish a surveillance and monitoring system to increase capacity in the early identification of vulnerabilities and timely intervention
- Quality Assurance
 - Increase capacity to gather comprehensive and detailed data across services
 - Increase capacity to undertake analysis, reporting and evaluation of service delivery across services
- Develop an information sharing strategy among relevant agencies, organizations and jurisdictions
 - For the purposes of planning, coordination and evaluation of services and supports, develop an integrated information management strategy in consultation with service providers and other stakeholders, in part to identify the needs and barriers to information sharing and provide a strategy to address them.
- Develop a formal service coordination mechanism(s) to make effective use of available program space and assist with transitions for children between agencies
- Make better use of existing public facilities such as neighbourhood centres, schools
- Develop a common intake mechanism where practical (for example licensed daycare sector)
- All new initiatives should build on strengths of existing relationships, programs, structures and incorporate lessons learned

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GOAL ONE: BUILD A CHILD CENTERED REGIONAL EARLY CHILDHOOD SUPPORT SYSTEM

OUTCOMES:

- A child / family centered regional system of human services established, based on scientific evidence, best practices, local data, quality assurance and community input.
- A community that understands and supports the developmental needs of children
- A community that meets the needs of its families by providing resources and supports to promote successful child development
- Integrated models of service delivery established
- A range of early care and education options available to all families irrespective of income or disability, accessible and convenient to employment settings to encourage good parenting and family time and enhance service delivery
- A quality assurance system across human services
- A system-wide surveillance and monitoring system for the early detection and intervention of early childhood vulnerabilities, challenges and issues

INDICATORS:

- Establish a baseline data for measurement of quality assurance across system of services
- Increased effectiveness, efficiency and accountability of supports and services for young children and their families.
- Increase in comprehensive and accurate information used to inform continuous service improvement within and across sectors and programs
- Increase in the use of evidence in policy and practice changes
- Increase engagement of service provider partners and parents and children in planning and quality assurance processes
- Increased public reporting on data collected through an overall system-wide quality assurance system.

Actions	Rationale
Establish Children’s Charter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To provide on-going community direction, engagement, structure and process.
Develop, cost and implement a comprehensive, innovative, and collaborative multi-year strategy for early childhood in Regina.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To enhance the quality and breadth of the early learning and care sector within the Regina region. Note UNICEF 2008 Report, Canada scored last in terms of quality and

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Actions	Rationale
	access issues.
Develop and implement a multi-pronged communication strategy on early childhood.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To raise awareness about the importance of the early years. ▪ To improve community awareness and engagement. ▪ To increase knowledge regarding the science of early brain development and its importance on a person's entire life course among <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Parents and other Caregivers ○ Human service providers ○ Private sector
Continue to analyze the EDI data, investigating at the neighbourhood level the strengths, opportunities and challenges facing families and service providers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide high quality resources at the neighbourhood level for families with young children by using local data to strategically plan and deliver resources and services.
Continue to examine and improve coordination and efficiencies between existing resources and services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strengthen existing resources and services. ▪ Ensure appropriate, quality supports are located in strategic (evidence based) locations.
Develop strategy to improve information sharing among agencies and programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enhance awareness and information among programs and services and the general public. ▪ Use this knowledge for planning and enhancing coordination.
Develop strategy to engage parents and other stakeholders in planning and promoting early years support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Comprehensive community involvement in the analysis, planning, and delivery of resources and services.
Develop an Aboriginal strategy to reduce/eliminate the disparity between aboriginal and non-aboriginal children related to the conditions of poverty and exemplified by poorer developmental outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ EDI results. ▪ 2007 UNICEF Report.

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Actions	Rationale
<p>Develop and implement regional childhood poverty reduction strategy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Living in poverty increases the probability of exposure to developmental risk factors. ▪ Families with young children experience higher rates of poverty than population as a whole (25% of children 0-6 in Regina live under the poverty line). ▪ Quebec recently reduced its child poverty rate by half in ten years through such measures as universal access to publicly funded childcare along other related investments.
<p>Ensure the needs of families with young children are considered in all appropriate public policy and planning activities. Collaborate and integrate where appropriate.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Needs of children compete with others within public policy.
<p>Plan and implement individual organizational strategic changes required to place a primary and coordinated focus on families with young children. Large organizations may have to realign/adjust their organizational structure to better coordinate services for young children and to work with other stakeholders.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Required for intersectoral planning and collaboration.
<p>Increase use of collaborative practice within and among agencies and service providers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Intersectoral collaboration is a ‘must do’ to achieve desired outcomes for children as services are distributed across sectors and jurisdictions.
<p>Increase the use of birth screening questionnaire data for early identification, planning and monitoring purposes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Early identification and assistance
<p>Implement screen for maternal mental health.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Early identification and assistance ▪ Promptly identify and treat women with PPD
<p>Implement the Ages and Stages tool to better improve</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Early identification and assistance

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Actions	Rationale
screening and early identification of development issues.	
Continue to use the EDI as a regional and neighbourhood based planning and monitoring tool.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ EDI is a useful and valid population health measurement and planning tool used across Canada and internationally, including the World Bank and UNICEF.
Enhance Early Screening and Support through Public Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ High percentage of children not identified by human services sector until school entry. ▪ Early identification of children with special needs, children with multiple challenges, developmental delays/challenges using standardized assessment tools ▪ Support discussions with parents on early child development ▪ Provide information on parenting and community programs that promote healthy child development and early learning ▪ When needed, provide referrals to specialized community services and health professionals
Enhance and increase the number of contacts between public health and children between birth and three years.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Early identification of children with special needs, children with multiple challenges, developmental delays/challenges using standardized assessment tools ▪ Support discussions with parents on early child development ▪ Provide information on parenting and community programs that promote healthy child development and early learning ▪ When needed, provide referrals to specialized community services and health professionals
Increase the number of children ages 0 -5 receiving dental health screening and maintenance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Early identification and assistance
Increase the number of children ages 0 -5 receiving hearing and vision checks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Early identification and assistance ▪ EDI 40% of children did not have hearing checked between 3-6 years of age.

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Actions	Rationale
Foster continuous improvement culture throughout regional ECD sector.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ High quality services are necessary
Increase capacity to gather comprehensive and detailed data across services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To monitor and enhance service system outcomes
Increase capacity to undertake analysis, reporting and evaluation of service delivery.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To monitor and enhance service system outcomes
Monitor and publicly report on the regional development of the early learning sector on a regular basis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public Engagement ▪ Accountability ▪ Quality Assurance
Monitor and publicly report on developmental outcomes of young children on a regular basis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public Engagement ▪ Accountability ▪ Quality Assurance
Encourage the federal government and the provincial Ministries of Education and Health to take a more active and expanded role in early childhood development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Investments are needed to allow parents to enjoy more time to care personally for their children, and provide families with adequate income and community supports
Recommend to the Provincial Government to mandate that all school divisions participate in the regular collection of EDI data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide communities with consistently collected local data. ▪ Provide provincial level data to compare regional data to.
Provide better employment conditions for those currently working in the early learning and care sector including addressing wages disparities and career opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improve staff compensation. ▪ Attract personnel to child care field ▪ Improve staff retention
Improve funding structure for community-based organizations (CBOs) through more stable, reliable funding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improve ability of CBOs to provide programs and services to families, particularly child care, early learning, and family support programs. ▪ Enable CBOs to conduct both short and long-term planning

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Actions	Rationale
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Reduce considerable time and effort spent by CBOs to secure funds.
Encourage provincial and federal governments to provide publicly funded universal access to childcare.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Quebec system of childcare has contributed to an increased ability of parents to return to work, and a significant reduction in child poverty. The government recoups 40% of the cost through taxes paid by working parents.



GOAL TWO: HEALTHY EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

A primary focus on enhancing the healthy growth and development of young children and reducing preventable vulnerabilities.

Outcomes:

- An increase in the healthy growth and development and well-being of children
- A decrease in preventable vulnerabilities experienced by young children
- A decrease in the percentage and number of children and youth with special learning needs

Indicators:

- An increase in the number of parents or caregivers with strengthened ability to promote healthy development of children.
- An increase in the number and percentage of young children who are school ready as measured by the EDI.

Action	Rationale
Provide a range of developmentally appropriate early learning programs that address all aspects of children’s development – (physical, emotional, social, cognitive) and across the ages and stages of their development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To enhance the growth and development of young children and to reduce the number of children who do not achieve their age appropriate developmental milestones.
Develop early literacy strategies to boost language skills in infants and toddlers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Brain development that determine language skills takes place between birth and by age three ▪ EDI results ▪ 25% of kindergarten children scored below average in their speech and language development according to a recent Regina Public Schools study.
Develop strategies to increase physical activity among toddlers and other young children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Physical activity is essential to early learning and development ▪ EDI results ▪ Nationally physical activity levels are decreasing among preschool and school age children.



Action	Rationale
<p>Develop and implement parent/caregiver capacity development programs and opportunities.</p> <p>Universal and targeted programs should be made available in ways that avoid stigmatizing those who use them.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support central role of parents in their child’s development and learning ▪ Teach parents positive parenting, consistent disciplinary and monitoring skills known to result in significant improvements in childhood social, emotional and behavioural health and well being. ▪ Increase caregiver knowledge regarding the science of early brain development and its importance on a person’s entire life course. ▪ Family learning programs to inform parents about the importance of play-based problem solving interactions and early literacy (reading) with their children.
<p>Review support and resources provided to families during prenatal period, at time of hospital birth and through first three years by the health region.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To enhance education and support to parents regarding their child’s development.
<p>Develop and offer support to single parent families at time of birth, especially those who are identified as not having adequate supports through use of in-hospital birth questionnaire.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enhance support for one parent families.
<p>Further develop a ladder of options and support to promote the maternal mental health especially for single parents for during and beyond the post partum period as this group experiences over twice the rate of maternal depressions compared to other mothers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ High rate of maternal depression in Regina.
<p>Enhance and increase the number of contacts between public health and children between birth and three years.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Early identification of issues. ▪ Timely guidance and knowledge sharing.
<p>Assign families to public health nurses to build better relationships and provide greater continuity in care.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Client centred practise.



Action	Rationale
<p>Create neighbourhood hubs that provide early years programs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish Neighbourhood Early Years Hubs that are or may offer: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Free ○ Local ○ Trained Staff ○ Drop-in ○ 7 days/week/some evenings ○ Early childhood resources ○ Parenting programs / supports ○ Quality place spaces ○ Family Literacy activities / resources ○ Informal & Formal Activities ○ Scheduled services ○ Connected to schools, community centres preferred <p>Neighbourhood hubs held as gold standard for service delivery around the world.</p>
<p>Increase the number of infant and toddler development (ages 0 to 3) programs (registered and drop-in) that meet the life context and circumstances of local families. Complement these programs with opportunities for parent involvement, support and education. Universal and targeted are needed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To act on the research that demonstrates the vast majority of brain growth occurs after birth, especially in first three years of life. ▪ Research indicates the earlier at-risk children receive intensive care and education the greater and more enduring the gains across a broad set of health and social well-being indicators.
<p>Increase the number of age appropriate, affordable recreational programs for children ages 0-6.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Results from EDI and Parent Interviews.
<p>Increase the number of opportunities for physical activities and other play-based learning opportunities within public facilities for infants, toddlers and young children.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Results from EDI and Parent Interviews
<p>Establish a community mechanism to plan and coordinate the effective utilization of pre-kindergarten spaces coordinated with other child development opportunities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lack of a formal coordination mechanism



Action	Rationale
Develop transition models from child care, preschool, and specialized programming to the school system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lack of a formal coordination mechanism
Establish and distribute entrance guidelines for ECD programs and supports for transitions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enhance awareness and knowledge of entrance criteria and supports required in order that all children may attend.
Review transportation policies and practices among early learning sector agencies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Make the best use of existing resources. ▪ Transportation is a primary issue for both parents and programs
Work towards implementing universal ½ day pre-kindergarten with on-site after school care options.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Promotes early learning and development ▪ Supports the ability of parents to earn a living without compromising their children's development
Work towards implementing full-day kindergarten with after school options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Full day quality programming promotes early learning and development. ▪ Allows children with lower reading levels to catch up to others. ▪ Supports the ability of parents to earn a living without compromising their children's development
Maintain and enhance regional early childhood program knowledge and resources among all relevant stakeholders and services providers for example between the health region, community based organizations, education, social services and parents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This theme emerged through the discussions held with service managers and providers and parents.
Establish on-line directory of services and resources for families and service providers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enhance knowledge of available services and supports.
Consider the establishment of a common intake among services and agencies, where practical such as licensed daycare.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enhance service coordination.

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Action	Rationale
<p>Enhance transitions and reduce unnecessary transitions for family and child between appointments, settings and services by scheduling of related appointments by family circumstance and by service providers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Family centered practice



GOAL THREE: EARLY INTERVENTION

Provide early intervention services to vulnerable children within their families and local community.

Outcome:

- An increase in the strength, capacities and competencies of vulnerable children and their families

Indicators:

- An increase in capacity in the early identification of vulnerabilities in children.
- An increase in the ability of vulnerable children and their families to overcome challenges and sustain positive outcomes
- An increase in the number / percentage of children in care who have positive developmental outcomes
- An increase in positive developmental outcomes for children with special needs
- Offer services and supports that meet child needs within the context of family life and circumstances rather than from a system or job centered perspective, especially for children with special needs

Action	Rationale
Stable full-day programming for all early intervention children, where appropriate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Stable environment beneficial to child development
Increase and enhance contacts and monitoring efforts between young children and practitioners (e.g. 18 month enhanced public health visits)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To provide timely guidance and support ▪ To increase early identification of vulnerabilities in children
Increase quality parenting and early childhood development programs for all families as well as targeted strategies beginning as soon in early life as possible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Research indicates the earlier at-risk children receive intensive care and education the greater and more enduring the gains are across a broad set of health and social well-being indicators. ▪ Research shows an effective system blends universal, targeted and clinical approaches.
Increase early intervention options on early childhood mental health with particular focus on childhood depression.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Regina children experience a higher rate of depression as compared to their Canadian peers.



Action	Rationale
<p>Increase options and supports for maternal mental health.</p> <p>Provide both formal and informal community based programming for maternal mental health that offer universal as well as targeted support.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reduce impact of PPD on mother, infant, family ▪ Reduce stigma about PPD ▪ Improve supports to women experiencing PPD ▪ Establish a laddering of options to address maternal depression
<p>Implement the use of Edinburgh Postnatal Depression (Screen) Scale as a universal screening tool.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Promptly identify and treat women with PPD
<p>Develop and implement a strategy to effectively address and reduce the high percentage of children experiencing a broad spectrum of developmental vulnerabilities as evident by MCI scores.</p> <p>Identify and provide individualized family planning and adequate supports for children facing significant developmental challenges, including those with special needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Eight percent of Regina children are behind across a broad spectrum of developmental capacities, nearly double the Canadian norm.
<p>Expand the Regina KidsFirst program to include consideration of families living in non-targeted neighbourhoods.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In Regina, EDI results identified poor early childhood outcomes at a neighbourhood level outside of KidsFirst selected neighbourhoods.
<p>Provide consistent high quality early child care and education programs for foster children to reduce the affects of mobility between families.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Stable environment beneficial to child development
<p>Prevent unnecessary transfer of foster children from one to school to another due to changes in foster parents or residence.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Stable environment beneficial to child development.
<p>Provide funds for grandparents to care for children.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Children removed from extended families because many grandparents cannot afford to care for children.

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Action	Rationale
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Saskatchewan has a high percentage of grandparents who care for their children.
Increase the amount of financial social assistance provided to parents to the level given to foster parents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Increase income support.