



Thrive Canada,
www.thrivecanda.ca
 Your Workplace – Simple Investment, Big Reward

Pass It On! Ready-to-Use Handouts for Asset Building
www.search-institute.org

Work/ Life Harmony Enterprises (Nora Spinks)
www.worklifeharmony.ca

Paper and resources from the Work Life Balance Forum in 2005
www.socialplanningcouncil-cnd.org/pdfs/wlb.pdf

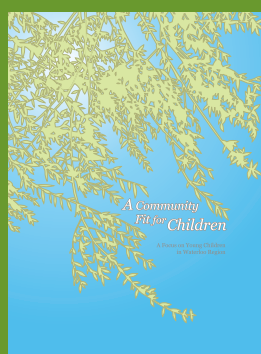
Resources

Federal, Provincial, Territorial Government website for Early Childhood Development and Early Learning and Child Care
www.ecd-elcc.ca

Government of Canada,
www.hrsdc.gc.ca – Search ‘work life balance’

The Centre for Families, Work, and Well-Being, University of Guelph website
www.worklifecanada.ca

This is one of five bulletins developed for specific audiences to help connect people to the importance of the early years of life. We have provided *Highlights of the Full Report* to accompany these bulletins. The full report is available at:
www.earlyyearsinfo.ca



Workplaces A Perspective Report

This bulletin was developed for and by workplaces in Waterloo Region. It contains reflections and suggested actions to support the healthy development of young children.

For more information about this project, contact the Alliance for Children and Youth of Waterloo Region by phone at 885-9562 or by email at forkidssake@united-way-kw.org



Workplaces: A Perspective Report

Introduction

The Community Fit for Children report was produced by the Ontario Early Years Centres in partnership with the Provincial Government, the Alliance for Children and Youth of Waterloo Region, the YMCA, the Region of Waterloo, and various community partners. This report shares baseline measurements for child development in this region with particular attention to individual neighbourhoods.

There is now powerful research evidence that shows that investing in the early years lasts a lifetime. The evidence shows that for every dollar spent during the early years, communities can save 16 or more dollars in future costs for society (see Perry Highscope Preschool Project). Positive early year experiences may lead to: successful school performance, high quality of life and success in the labour market. An educated workforce is the keystone to knowledge-based economies like that of Waterloo Region. Workplaces play a big part in the lives of families and have a critical role in supporting families.

What we know

The report shows that this community is healthy—with a strong economy and hundreds of supports for children and families (see Community Services Inventory), Waterloo Region tends to outperform many other communities across the key indicators of child development. However, all the work has not yet been done and it must also be acknowledged that an unacceptable number of families are living on low income. We can also see consistent differences across neighbourhoods in terms of child outcomes. The report reveals that 1 in 4 children may be vulnerable to experiencing some form of developmental difficulty that may make it harder for them to succeed in school.

We believe that as a community we can do better than this.



What actions can be taken?

There is growing evidence that strong, supportive communities help nurture healthy child development. Not only are friends and neighbours powerful influences but community organizations, institutions and businesses also play a role in providing children with the early foundations that lead to success in school and throughout their lives.

Management, labour and workers all have opportunities to have positive impacts in three areas. Possible actions include:

Encouraging Youth Directly

- Welcome students into placements that truly utilize their skills, e.g. building computer presentations
- Teach staff how to positively manage youth in work placements
- Ensure that student employees are able to work around their school schedule
- Provide orientation and health and safety training
- Offer class tours for school groups
- Host an open house for families of your employees
- Support staff volunteering for mentorship roles
- Offer scholarships
- Ensure safe working environments

Building Bridges Between Local Services and Families

- Ensure that soon-to-be or new parents know of family policies and benefits
- Connect parents with a list of key services in the area, such as child-care programs, family-care centres to support parents (Ontario Early Years Centres, family resource centres, etc.), community-centred program such as libraries and community centres and health and wellness programs such as Community health Centres and regional supports for pre- and post-natal care
- Offer opportunities for local agencies to provide talks or information in-house to address parenting issues
- Offer additional support to parents who are new Canadians by encouraging and helping them to make community connections

Developing Policies that have a Positive Impact on Children and their Families

- Recognize that many employees are also parents
- Allow vacation to be taken in hours, rather than days, to allow parents to attend doctor's appointments, school functions or other 'kid-related' events
- Provide time off for family reasons through banked hours, without loss of pay or use of vacation days
- Offer in-house daycare or build a link with a local child-care provider
- Allow staff the time to meet their children for lunch or participate in their schooling periodically
- Plan some social events that include children
- Be considerate in giving fair notice of overtime to allow parents to arrange child-care
- Provide the opportunity for flexible work time or to work from home when appropriate
- Include organizations that make a positive impact for children and families in your corporate giving policy