

**Consolidated Clause in Policy and Finance Committee Report 7, which was considered by City Council on July 19, 20, 21 and 26, 2005.**

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## **Best Generation Yet - Toronto Vision for Children**

*City Council on July 19, 20, 21 and 26, 2005, adopted this Clause without amendment.*

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**The Policy and Finance Committee recommends that City Council adopt the recommendations contained in the Recommendations Section of the communication (June 21, 2005) from Councillor Olivia Chow, Chair, Roundtable on Children, Youth and Education:**

On June 6, 2005, The Mayor's Roundtable on Children, Youth and Education approved the attached document, The Best Generation Yet. The Roundtable Terms of Reference state that it will "advise the Mayor and Council regarding:

- (i) Civic strategies (one for children; one for youth) that will guide investments by Council and the Mayor in policies, programs and services that demonstrably improve the well-being of children and youth in the City of Toronto; and
- (ii) working with other orders of government, in particular the education sector, and with non-profit organizations and the community on the development, funding and implementation of integrated and co-ordinated programs for children and youth."

Developed over an eight-month period by the Children's Working Group of the Roundtable, The Best Generation Yet fulfills the Terms of Reference by providing both immediate and long-term recommendations to improve the well-being of children in Toronto. The Mayor's Roundtable on Children, Youth and Education has requested that, in my role as Chair, I recommend Policy and Finance Committee and Council adoption of The Best Generation Yet. Staff will then have direction to proceed with implementing the immediate and long-term recommendations and seeking further Council approval where necessary.

The minutes of the Roundtable pertaining to The Best Generation Yet are as follows:

The Roundtable on Children, Youth and Education requested its Chair to request the Policy and Finance Committee to:

- (1) adopt the Recommendations contained in the report from the Children's Working Group entitled "The Best Generation Yet", subject to adding to Recommendation (14) the words "and, as well, the Advisory Committee would provide partners with an opportunity to obtain timely feedback on major initiatives that could be used as part of their respective

submissions to their decision-making bodies (i.e., City Council, Provincial Cabinet, Toronto District School Board and Toronto Catholic District School Board.”; to now read as follows:

- “14. In order to support our vision of healthy outcomes for the children of the ‘Best Generation Yet’ through expanded and integrated children’s services, the City will establish an Integrated Children’s Services Advisory Committee to monitor and advise on the implementation of the 10 Year Plan, and, as well, the Advisory Committee would provide partners with an opportunity to obtain timely feedback on major initiatives that could be used as part of their respective submissions to their decision-making bodies (i.e., City Council, Provincial Cabinet or the Toronto District School Board and Toronto Catholic District School Board).”;
- (2) request staff of the Interdivisional Children’s Staff Team and other staff, as appropriate, to:
- (a) develop the 10 Year Plan as set out in the report from the Children’s Working Group entitled “Best Generation Yet”; such plan to incorporate initiatives related to First Duty, Best Start and the Children’s Service Plan; and
  - (b) develop a process to assess all activities and policies recommended for adoption by Council, to determine the impact on children; such a process to be included in the 10 Year Plan; and
- (3) request Planning staff, working together with the Interdivisional Children’s Staff Team, the Interdivisional Youth Services Group, the Child and Youth Advocate, representatives from the Toronto District School Board and the Toronto Catholic District School Board, and other relevant agencies, to:
- (a) organize a charrette to provide the best built-form models of children and youth integrated services;
  - (b) use the model to develop the site plan for the railway lands block in Ward 20, Trinity-Spadina, that includes a park, community centre, child care centre, school and other community services and education needs;
  - (c) develop the charrette and site plan development with the funds raised through the railway lands legal agreements with the developers; and
  - (d) report the result of the charrette and railway lands community and education services capital plan to the October meeting of the Toronto and East York Community Council, the Community Services Committee and other relevant bodies that deal with children and youth services.

Attachment

### Toronto Vision for Children:

Regardless of the socio-economic status of his/her family and community, every child has the right to childhood experiences, which promote the chances of developing into a healthy, well-adjusted and productive adult. (Adopted by Toronto City Council, November 1999).

The following principles to support the Vision were adopted by the Mayor's Roundtable on Children, Youth and Education (January, 2005).

### Toronto shall be a City where:

- (i) children are recognized as unique human beings with differing needs for nurturing and support from their families, communities and society;
- (ii) all children have adequate income, health, housing, food and nutrition, care and education, safety and security, recreation, leisure and cultural experiences. The supports necessary to achieve this will be available at all stages of childhood: pre-conception, pre-natal, post-partum, pre-school and school age. They will ensure the healthy physical, intellectual and social development of children "in the here and now" as well as build the foundation for their development into competent adults;
- (iii) families with young children have timely access to a range of universal, high-quality, developmental and affordable programs which support them, throughout the family life cycle, in their roles as parents, workers and urban citizens;
- (iv) communities welcome children and are fully engaged in the creation and operation of neighbourhood-based service "hubs" that provide expanded, comprehensive, culturally-appropriate, high-quality environments and programs built on the best available knowledge of child development and provision of services for children;
- (v) clean air and water and a sustainable environment are understood by everyone as integral to a healthy childhood;
- (vi) all governments, authorities and organizations involved in programs for young children and families work together to plan, develop, administer, fund, regulate, deliver and are accountable for a new service system built on goals and targets for quality, expansion, accessibility and effective use of resources. Their task will be to turn separate services into a coherent system of services;

- (vii) Services are:
- (a) developed to the type, level and quality necessary to achieve optimal outcomes for all of Toronto's children;
  - (b) based on a vision, goals and objectives that are shared by all partners and that embed expert knowledge of healthy child development;
  - (c) developed and publicly resourced for long-term sustainability;
  - (d) coherent, flexible and delivered, as appropriate, on a continuum which starts with networking and moves through coordination and collaboration to integration; and
  - (e) delivered by qualified, professional staff that are supported by pre- and post-employment training and development and are paid at a level that reflects the value of their work.
- (viii) governments commit to developing universal provision of services within which additional supports are developed concurrently and provided to children in special circumstances due to socio-economic status, family structure, race and ethnicity, ability or other such grounds; and
- (ix) community, business, labour and civic leaders, governments and the general public support, advocate and act on the compelling and well-documented case for increased public investment in young children.

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### The Best Generation Yet

Many things we need can wait,  
the child cannot  
Now is the time his bones are being formed,  
his blood is being made,  
his mind is being developed.  
To him we cannot say tomorrow,  
his name is today.

Gabriela Mistral, Chile  
Nobel Laureate, 1945

All children deserve the supports necessary for the best possible start in life. Families, of course, raise children. The role of government is one of shared responsibility in a commitment to provide the resources and policies that encourage those providing services, communities and families to work together to develop the best environments for Toronto's children.

Everyone, regardless of family status, cultural background, political affiliation or religious beliefs, agrees that we want our children to thrive. In the current vocabulary, we want positive child outcomes. The desire that children achieve competence and health in all aspects of their lives does not stop with individuals and families. Childhood, in the last decade, has become a topic of great and increasing interest for institutions both here and internationally. Organizations such as the OECD, UNICEF and the World Bank have made strong arguments for investment in programs promoting sound education, development and care for children. Closer to home, Dr. Fraser Mustard and The Hon. Margaret Norrie McCain produced *Reversing The Real Brain Drain: The Early Years Study*, which recommended integrated early childhood development and parenting centres for every community.

Over 25 years of research tell us that good children's programs enhance childhood. In some cases, such as child care, not only are they good for children, they enable parents to work or attend school. At times, they make the difference in succeeding or not in later life.

Toronto's Vision for Children, which appears on the front of this document and on which much of the work of the Roundtable is based, provides strong support for universal access to services. Toronto will continue to work towards the ideal of universal provision of and access to services for children.

Not only does this mean providing services to all children whose families wish that they participate, it means providing equitable access – that is ensuring that services meet the diverse needs children and families due to factors such as age and ability of children, family income, parental employment status, racial and cultural background and recentness of arrival in Canada. Equity of access has many aspects including location of services, affordability, age appropriateness, flexibility regarding hours of operation and provision for children with special needs. It is an essential element in the progress towards equality of outcomes for all children.

Toronto has the largest network of children's services outside the province of Quebec. Services for children in the City include over 800 child care centres, 46 family resource programs, 22 Ontario Early Years Centres, 26 agencies that support children with special needs, 141 community centres, and 98 library branches. The four school boards combined operate 1,917 junior and senior kindergarten classes enrolling close to 48,000 four and five year-olds. On an annual basis, over 300,000 children ages 0-12 take part in programs provided by the City's Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division. Toronto Public Health provides a range of services for children and families such as Healthiest Babies Possible, breastfeeding support and promotion, Peer Nutrition, dental care and health education.

Some services are directly operated by the City, a school board or arm's length public board such as the Toronto Board of Health or Toronto Library Board. Many others are operated by community agencies and supported by municipal, provincial or federal funding, contributions from organizations like the United Way, donations of funds or volunteer time and user fees.

In 2000, Toronto broke new ground in the development of services for children by providing funding and staff resources to Toronto First Duty, a pilot project to integrate services, including junior and senior kindergarten, child care and parenting programs for children aged 0-6. With the support of the City, the Atkinson Foundation, the Toronto District School Board and

community partners, the five Toronto First Duty sites continue to provide an essential foundation for the further development of integrated services.

However, there is still much to do. Although the City increased its spending on children's initiatives by \$36 million from amalgamation onwards, it could not make up for the spending cuts by other orders of government, principally the Province of Ontario, between 1997 and 2003. Social assistance rates to the lowest-income families were cut by 21 percent. The City lost close to \$12 million in provincial child care funding and is still working to reinstate 1,800 subsidized child care spaces. Despite recent provincial funding for community use of schools, school boards cannot afford to return to the days when recreation services, community programs such as Brownies and Scouts or child care used school space at no cost. In some cases, the City stepped in. It now pays school boards \$5.6 million a year for child care space.

The current lack of sufficient, long-term, stable, public funding is the main barrier to building a system of high quality, accessible and integrated services for children. Marshalling the resources necessary to achieve this goal is not simply a local job. The increased federal funding for child care is essential, as is the provincial commitment to provide much of that funding to municipalities for child care and other services for children. However, a single city, even a large one like Toronto, cannot achieve significantly expanded services for children on its own. All three orders of government must commit to making increased spending on children a priority. And we must make sure that the money is spent right.

Many – parents, practitioners, community members and elected representatives – have long advocated for expanded high-quality services for children. More recently, the message has changed. Yes, we need more and better services – and we need to organize them differently, with better co-ordination and, at times, integration. Parents will be able to find and use services with greater ease and children will experience less disruption in their days. Increased co-ordination and integration will better ensure that all communities have greater access to a range of services and supports with less chance of gaps or duplication.

Integration of services will smooth the transitions from one stage to another in a child's life (e.g., preschool to JK) and from one part of the day to the next (e.g., classroom program to after-school). More important, services can combine to support the full range of children's education and developmental needs over the long term. Staff can work together to reinforce children's learning and identify and solve problems. The extent to which this avoids expensive remedial programs can result in savings of public funds. Through such strategies as maximizing the use of space, integration can be more efficient. The commitment to integrated planning will support policies and service provision that work to achieve positive outcomes for children, families and the community.

Toronto City Council responded to this direction by giving the first Mayor's Roundtable on Children, Youth and Education the task of providing advice to the Mayor and Council on integrating services for children aged 0-12. The Roundtable brought together the City, the province, the federal government, school boards, child welfare agencies, recreation services, health organizations, child care, family resource programs, researchers and advocates to focus on breaking down the barriers that stand in the way of providing increased services for children in new and better ways. The Children's Working Group of the Roundtable, chaired by Councillor Janet Davis, worked throughout 2004-05 to develop the recommendations in this report.

### Achieving the Vision:

Achieving the vision for The Best Generation Yet will require shared political commitment, public and institutional support and accountability mechanisms to measure our success. The Children's Working Group of the Mayor's Roundtable on Children, Youth and Education recommends that the City develop a ten-year plan that contains goals, strategies, benchmarks and timelines in the areas of:

- (i) funding;
- (ii) new types of service delivery;
- (iii) joint planning and collaboration;
- (iv) advocacy and accountability and
- (v) community engagement.

Our report includes additional recommendations in each of these areas. Some of the recommendations support immediate action, while others are longer-term initiatives that will form key elements of the ten-year plan.

### A Ten-Year Plan for Integrated Services for Children:

The keystone recommendation of this document is The Best Generation Yet, a ten-year plan that will put Toronto in the forefront of ensuring comprehensive, integrated and inclusive services for children. The Best Generation Yet will outline where we are now, where we want to be in 10 years and how we will get there by identifying goals, strategies, timelines and necessary resources. It will provide the framework for City divisional plans for children and tie this together with the local application of initiatives from other orders of government such as the province's Best Start. It will include benchmarks, indicators and outcomes needed to ensure accountability and measure effectiveness of strategies and progress towards the goals.

The goal of The Best Generation Yet should be nothing less than a City that aspires to become the best place in the world to be a child. In support of this goal, the Mayor and Council must adopt, as part of the ten-year plan, a process so that every aspect of their decisions is viewed and considered through the prism of what's good for children. We believe that the City of Toronto has an obligation both to lead from within and encourage, by word and example, other leaders in the public and private sectors to think and act so that all involved in the social and economic life of Toronto adopt child-friendly policies and practices.

### Recommendations:

- (1) The City of Toronto will develop and implement a ten-year plan, The Best Generation Yet, to achieve a comprehensive system of integrated, inclusive and high quality services that will support best outcomes for Toronto's children.

The plan will be based on the Vision for Children for Toronto. It will include goals, strategies and benchmarks to measure progress towards success as well as the identification of the funding needed and the sources of funding available to achieve the

goals of universal and equitable access to services for children. The ten-year plan will be developed in co-operation with all government and community partners.

As a general principle, when programs are extended to greater numbers of children, the standard of equity will be raised to the existing best practices or better.

The Best Generation Yet will be launched at a Children's Symposium at which point the City will undertake a broad consultation prior to final Roundtable and Council adoption.

- (2) In support of the Best Generation Yet, The City will reaffirm the position of Child and Youth Advocate, to be held by a current member of Toronto City Council.
- (3) The City must develop a process to assess all activities and policies recommended for adoption by Council to determine the impact on children; such a process to be included in the ten-year plan.

#### Begin with Our Own House:

Immediately, as a support to The Best Generation Yet, the City will integrate its own planning and programs for children. The City provides and/or funds services for children in five divisions: Children's Services, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration, Social Services, Parks, Forestry and Recreation and Culture as well as two arm's length agencies, Toronto Public Health and Toronto Public Library.

Currently, each division and agency develops an individual service plan, including its services for children. Starting next year, in 2006, City divisions with responsibility for services for children will submit a joint plan during the annual budget process to insure that planning, service provision and funding support integrated services, prevents gaps and overlaps and ensures equitable access to services City-wide by putting under-resourced communities first.

In addition, Toronto will take steps to increase the space that can be used for services for children by using all available strategies to generate capital funds during the development process and by beginning to include space for integrated children's services when facilities are built or renovated by the City.

#### Recommendations:

- (4) Beginning in 2006, the City of Toronto will begin to integrate its own planning and provision of services for children. City divisions that provide services for children will submit a joint service plan to inform the 2007 budget. This plan will outline integrated planning as well as service provision and funding where appropriate.
- (5) In order to increase the space available for services for children, the City must ensure that Section 37 of the Planning Act and other financing tools, such as development charges, are used appropriately in neighbourhoods where development is taking place and a need for services is identified.

- (6) All new or renovated City buildings such as child care centres, libraries and community centres must include space for additional and integrated children's services.

#### New Kinds of Services for Children:

Within the framework of The Best Generation Yet, City Divisions and Agencies, Government (including school boards) and community partners will work together in new ways to develop more and better services for the community's children. Funders will need to agree to innovative use of both new and existing resources. Integration will require a strong relationship between service provision, planning and evaluation.

We have immediate opportunities to take the experience with Toronto First Duty and the activities that Best Start will generate in the near future and use them to begin to develop integrated children's services hubs in elementary schools. While the creation of the integrated service hubs is complex, the early research results from Toronto First Duty show that it is worth the effort.

Ultimately, The Best Generation Yet will plan for integrated services for children aged 0-12 to be available in a series of community hubs throughout Toronto. Established primarily, but not exclusively, in schools, each hub will have at its core:

- (i) Early learning and child care:
  - (a) licensed child care for children from birth to four years;
  - (b) an integrated child care/kindergarten program with option to attend a half-day, a full school day or an extended day for four and five year-olds;
- (ii) Before and after school programs for 6 to 12 year-olds, which could be licensed child care, recreation in the forms of sports, art, music, homework club or library activities. These could take place at the hub site or in the community as appropriate.
- (iii) Family Resource/Family Literacy/Ontario Early Years' Centre, providing early learning and parent/caregiver support.
- (iv) Links to public health programs such as Healthy Babies/Healthy Children, Preschool Speech and Language, Healthiest Babies Possible, Parent Education and dental care.
- (v) Library Services;
- (vi) Nutrition programs such as breakfast, lunch, healthy snacks, Peer Nutrition; and
- (vii) The ability to broker and refer to services needed by children but not a part of the hub (e.g., diagnostic, children's mental health, child welfare).

In addition, the community may wish to develop a range of other services to meet specific needs such as community kitchens, recreational activities for children and other family members, continuing education, settlement services, housing referral, ESL, job search, literacy and community computer and internet use.

Services will take place on a continuum ranging from co-ordination to full integration, depending on such factors as the type of service, the age group of the children, whether a particular service is a part of the core and availability of space.

Specifically for older children, Toronto Children's Services and Parks, Forestry and Recreation divisions working with school boards, other agencies such as Toronto Public Library and local partners will immediately begin to develop a new program model for serving 6-12 year-olds during out-of-school hours, including P.D. days and holidays. The programs will be centred on licensed child care that is reconfigured to provide the program variety and flexibility requested by school-age children and their parents.

Recommendations:

- (7) City divisions and their agencies, government (including school boards) and community partners will implement neighbourhood-based children's services hubs, providing models of integrated services and located, where possible, in elementary schools. The children's services hubs will be based on what we have learned from the successful Toronto First Duty pilot sites.
- (8) Toronto Children's Services and Parks, Forestry and Recreation divisions working with school boards, other agencies such as Toronto Public Library, Toronto Public Health and local partners will develop a new program model for serving 6-12 year-olds during out-of-school hours, including P.D. days and holidays.
- (9) To support integrated children's services, the City, the province and the school boards must work together to ensure that elementary schools have sufficient, suitable space for before and after school care for all children from kindergarten to Grade 6.
- (10) The Ministry of Children and Youth Services, the Ministry of Education, school boards and the City of Toronto must establish common standards for indoor and outdoor space requirements for different types of programs for children such as child care, kindergarten and recreation to facilitate program integration.
- (11) The Ministry of Children and Youth Services, the Ministry of Education, school boards and the City of Toronto, using local and international "best practices" for design, must develop new facility guidelines to support integrated children's services in either new or renovated sites.

## Funding:

Lack of appropriate and adequate funding is the major barrier towards realizing the Vision for Children developed by the Children's Working Group and endorsed by the Roundtable. The impacts of inadequate and uncoordinated funding are evident across Toronto. Access to programs is by no means consistent. Service levels vary by ward and neighbourhood. In some instances, such as child care and some recreation programs, cost for families is a barrier to use. The Best Generation Yet will identify the funds needed to achieve the goals set out in the Vision.

Investment in children's services strengthens Toronto's social infrastructure. Significant new public contributions are necessary to achieve the goals of universal and equitable access to services for all children. Both the OECD (Society at a Glance: 2002) and UNICEF (Child Poverty in Rich Countries) show that higher public spending on social programs that are available to a broad range of families reduces child poverty. This, by extension, improves child outcomes.

Funding integrated children's services will be as challenging as building the resource base to fund the increase in services needed to meet the goal of universal accessibility to programs. At present, service funding comes from three orders of government, donations in the voluntary sector and, for some services, user fees. Each of the over 1,000 community agencies has its own budget. Integration implies that, over time, there could be a combining of resources to support the core programs.

Two kinds of structural reform will be necessary to achieve program integration:

- (1) working to develop ways to integrate in such areas as planning, evaluation and service provision; and
- (2) changing the way in which services for children are funded in order to support integration. This will vary according to type of service and will need the commitment of funders as well as legislative and regulatory changes, particularly regarding education and child care funding.

There is a real challenge to integrating funding for programs such as kindergarten, recreation, public health and library activities that are, on the whole, universal and mostly or fully tax supported with child care- that is mostly supported by parent fees. This disconnect between services, which, although not universal, are not market-driven, and child care, which is in Canada (although the market is imperfect), has proven to be a barrier to integration. Full integration requires flexibility in funding which comes with significant public contribution. As progress towards integration develops, the institutions involved will need the will and the ability to combine all types of resources – financial, staff and facilities.

Toronto, in co-operation with the province, will develop options for long-term, stable base funding for integrated services. In addition, The City will continue to press the province for the flexibility to use some of the recently announced federal child care funding to meet both its current service goals and the integrative direction outlined in this report which, due to the shared influence of Toronto First Duty, is consistent with the provincial Best Start initiative.

Recommendations:

- (12) Toronto must advocate for the increased funding necessary to ensure a comprehensive and equitable system of integrated, inclusive and high quality services for children aged 0-12 as outlined in The Best Generation Yet.
- (13) The City, in co-operation with the province must develop and advocate for options for base funding for integrated services for children. The funding models will include all of the costs of providing high quality programs for children such as:
  - (i) funding to renovate or build appropriate space;
  - (ii) funds to cover the costs of administering a service hub;
  - (iii) staffing models that will support quality;
  - (iv) realistic compensation for staff and
  - (v) appropriate ways of covering the costs of facilities use, particularly in schools and recreation centres.
- (14) The City must continue to reiterate its very strong view that Best Start implementation plans include flexibility in use of federal child care funding to enable Toronto to meet both its service goals and the provincial goals for Best Start.

#### Planning:

In Ontario, all orders of government play essential roles in the development of policy and services for young children. Non-governmental programs, most of them non-profit and community-based, compose an extensive network of children's services.

Depending on the particular service, one, two and, at times three governments and a number of community partners may be involved in such activities as funding, service provision, planning, ensuring equity and inclusion, quality assurance, curriculum and program, research, evaluation and monitoring. In some instances, an order of government will have complete jurisdiction; most of the time, it is shared.

Although progress has been made towards greater coherence in the creation of ministries for children and youth at both the federal and Ontario governments and despite increased and improved partnership between the City and the school boards, most education, recreation and health policies and programs are developed and delivered within their respective sectors. Over 80 service co-ordination networks for children's programs exist in Toronto. However, the results on the ground are limited.

A strategy towards meeting this challenge would be to develop a common vision and goals for children across all orders of government. These would become the foundation for policies that would support the coherent planning, funding and services needed to make fully accessible, high quality, integrated children's programs a reality.

One suggestion for achieving this type of integration at the planning level is a Children's Planning Authority in which all orders of government would take part. Partners would agree to bring major initiatives to the planning authority to obtain timely feedback that would serve as information for decision-making bodies such as City Council, Cabinet or the school board. Such a body could be a long-term goal, with a children's committee advisory to the City as outlined below as a first step to enable the more extensive collaboration in future.

In support of integrated services planning and delivery, the City will establish an Integrated Children's Services Advisory Committee which will monitor and advise as necessary the implementation of The Best Generation Yet and ensure that initiatives such as Best Start support the City's direction. The detailed role, mandate and membership of the advisory committee will be developed as part of the 10-year plan.

Recommendation:

- (15) In order to support our vision of healthy outcomes for the children of the "Best Generation Yet" through expanded and integrated children's services, the City will establish an Integrated Children's Services Advisory Committee to monitor and advise on the implementation of the 10-year plan. As well, the Advisory Committee would provide partners with an opportunity to obtain timely feedback on major initiatives that could be used as part of their respective submissions to their decision-making bodies (i.e., City Council, Provincial Cabinet or the Toronto District School Board and the Toronto Catholic District School Board)."

Community Engagement:

The participation of parents, families and community members is essential in building a system of integrated children's services. Parents know their children best and are the first and most enduring influence on their growth and development. Active community members are often an invaluable source of knowledge about the people, services and culture of the community.

In the development of integrated children's services, community engagement will:

- (i) be an essential part of service planning and delivery;
- (ii) include transparent processes for planning, delivering and funding services;
- (iii) build on the existing capacity in communities; and
- (iv) build on parental and community capacity to make informed decisions.

Toronto will achieve this by involving communities in the local implementation of The Best Generation Yet. On a City-wide basis, it will consult regularly with parents on directions for children's services, continue to produce the Toronto Children's Report Card and ensure improved and expanded public information on children's programs and policies.

Recommendations:

- (16) The City must establish neighbourhood engagement processes to support the local implementation of The Best Generation Yet. Service users and community members will have meaningful input into neighbourhood service integration issues and solutions. In

particular, the City will provide resources to support the community and leadership development in communities where capacity for engagement is low.

- (17) Planning staff, working together with the Interdivisional Children's Staff Team, the Interdivisional Youth Services Group, the Child and Youth Advocate, representatives from the Toronto District School Board and the Toronto Catholic District School Board, and other relevant agencies, will be requested to:
  - (a) organize a charrette to provide the best built-form models of children and youth integrated services;
  - (b) use the model to develop the site plan for the railway lands block in Ward 20, Trinity-Spadina, that includes a park, community centre, child care centre, school and other community services and education needs;
  - (c) develop the charrette and site plan development with the funds raised through the railway lands legal agreements with the developers; and
  - (d) report the result of the charrette and railway lands community and education services capital plan to the October meeting of the Toronto and East York Community Council, the Community Services Committee and other relevant bodies that deal with children and youth services.
- (18) All orders of government must develop accessible and useful information for families on a wide range of services and programs for children, including but not limited to child health, Early Years Centres, family resource programs and other parenting supports, child care, recreation, sports, culture and arts, literacy and schools and education.
- (19) The City of Toronto must improve and expand its capacity to obtain information and advice from and provide information to children, parents and communities by:
  - (i) implementing regular consultation with parents on opinions, needs and preferences regarding children's services;
  - (ii) continuing the City of Toronto Children's Report Card on an ongoing basis;
  - (iii) promoting the Family Portal on the city of Toronto Web site; and
  - (iv) working with governments, 211, 311 and community partners to build on existing information and initiatives and develop an inclusive inventory of services for children.

And to Conclude:

By 2015, The Best Generation Yet, will have made a positive impact on the children and families who live in Toronto. The plan will set in motion 10 years of progress towards achieving a system of services for children.

By that time, programs and services will have been expanded, improved and rationalized, gaps filled in and days will be seamless for children, whether they are in child care, school, a recreation program or involved in another of Toronto's services for children.

In addition, planning for the system of integrated children's services will be based on evidence: what we know now about children, parents, services and communities and what we are achieving as the system develops. Not only do we want to ensure access to high-quality programs and services for children as they grow and support parents in their primary role, we want to know which supports are the most effective in achieving the best child outcomes.

Most important, we will see children thriving in every area of development: physical, intellectual, social and emotional. Toronto's children will have a right to equitable access to supports and services so that, as a city, we can play our part in ensuring equal opportunity for all.

This is a call to action. No part of our future as a modern, vibrant city within a stable and democratic nation is more vital than the way that we raise our children from conception on. Civic leadership must break down the barriers that stand in the way of raising The Best Generation Yet. Toronto's commitment is strong and we must now ensure that the resources follow to make our City the best place to be a child.