



**WORKING
TOGETHER:**
Child Care



This resource document was developed by Toronto Children's Services in association with our early years partners at the Toronto District School Board, the Toronto Catholic District School Board and Family Support Programs to promote collaborative activities and an integrated approach to the delivery of child care, kindergarten and family support programs.

For further information, contact Toronto Children's Services at childcare@toronto.ca

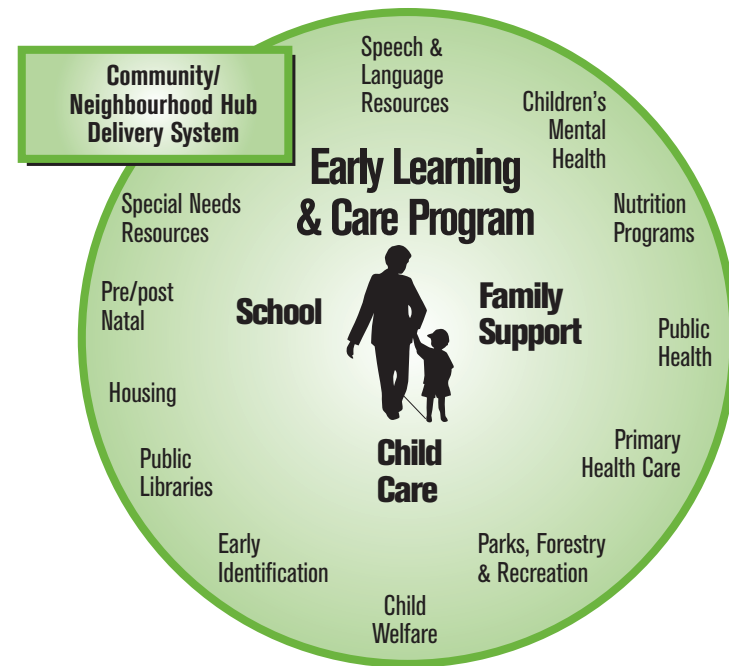
Working Together: Child Care

The Working Together guide for child care programs came about as a part of the work of the Best Start Implementation Steering Committee's efforts to enhance coordination and integration of community services for children 0-6 years and their families.

Toronto's Best Start Implementation Steering Committee (ISC) led the development and distribution of a Best Start Survey to assess the level of collaboration among the three core early childhood services: child care, kindergarten and family supports.

Survey results indicated that the sectors are at the beginning of a partnership journey and just starting the process of collaboration initiatives between early childhood services.

This guide for child care programs is designed to assist in moving along the road to working collaboratively with local schools and family support programs, and was developed following the framework of the Best Start Plan: Toronto Vision for Children.



The 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”¹.

Toronto shall be a City where:²

- Children are recognized as unique human beings with differing needs for nurturing and support from their families, communities and society
- 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
- 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

- 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
- Clean air and water and a sustainable environment are understood by everyone as integral to a healthy childhood
- 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.

¹Adopted by Toronto City Council, 1999

²Adopted by Mayor’s Roundtable on Children, Youth and Education, 2005

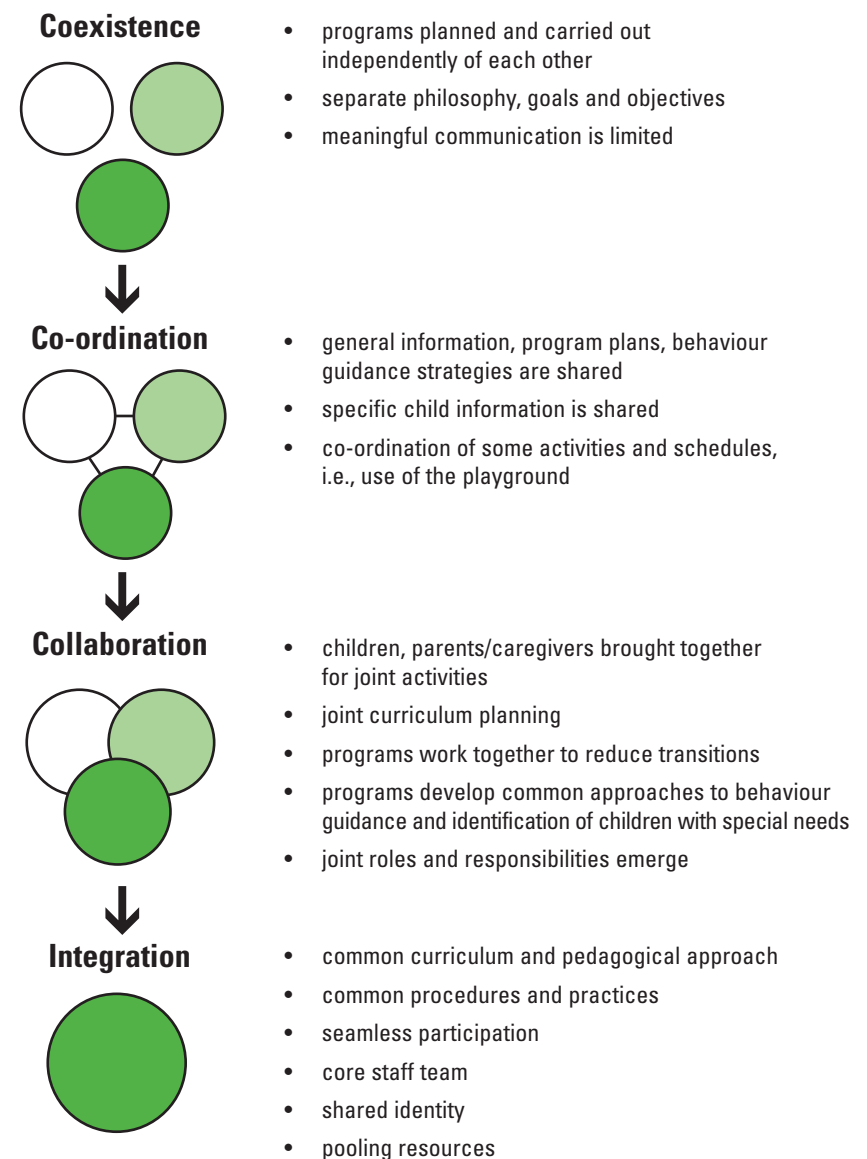
Working Together

Best Start: Toronto Vision for Children

This guide for child care supervisors is designed to assist you in starting on the road to working collaboratively with local schools and family support programs, and has been developed following the framework of the Best Start Plan: Toronto Vision for Children, focusing on the following core elements:

- Developing a **high-quality, early learning and care environment** through innovation, best practices and collaborative approaches to curriculum, activities and routines
- Bringing together staff expertise to create an **early years staff team** that includes early childhood educators, teachers, educational assistants and family support staff working collaboratively to achieve common goals
- Identifying obstacles and solutions and working towards **inclusive access** for children and their families in programs and services
- Developing a **continuum of supports and services** that makes the most efficient use of resources, space and infrastructure in responding to the changing needs of families and children
- Encouraging and enabling the **participation of parents** in programs and services, planning, service delivery and governance
- Developing a **local joint governance structure** to support community/neighbourhood planning, service integration and local decision-making
- Developing a **community/neighbourhood partnership agreement** reflecting the vision and goals of the Best Start Plan.

Integration Continuum for Child Care, Kindergarten and Family Support Programs



The Early Years Management Team

Membership:

- School principal
- Child care supervisor
- Family support co-ordinator
- Parent and/or community

Resource/Advisory to management team:

- Children's Services Consultant
- School board's early years advisors.

Early Years Management Team will:

- Develop overall program direction and mission statement based on the goals, beliefs and understandings of the Best Start Plan: Toronto Vision for Children (www.toronto.ca/children/bs/bsn_vision.pdf)
- Establish mutual goals and joint workplan for the year
- Plan, monitor, advise and assess integration activities
- Provide leadership and co-ordination by building a common culture throughout the school and in all early years programs that will build capacity to learn for both staff and children
- Identify new opportunities to support integration
- Work together to establish an Early Years Staff Team, consisting of kindergarten teachers, Early Childhood Educators, family support practitioners and educational assistants
- Act as an advisory body for the Early Years Staff Team and organize joint planning and professional development opportunities for the Early Years Staff Team
- Allocate resources, i.e., staff release time for joint planning and professional development; designate a coordinator position, as appropriate
- Organize a minimum of four meetings per year.

Early Years Staff Team

The frontline staff working with young children and their families in kindergarten, child care and parenting/family support programs comprise the Early Years staff team. Other staff may include: school administrator, ESL teacher, child care consultant, resource educators, special education and support services through school boards, teacher, librarian, literacy co-ordinator, school board's early years advisors.

Membership

- Kindergarten teaching staff
- Child care supervisor/staff
- Parenting/family support staff (if applicable)
- Educational assistants
- Other staff, as appropriate

The Early Years Staff Team will:

- Identify pedagogical/philosophical approaches to develop a shared philosophy
- Use common language based on the goals, beliefs and understandings of the Toronto Vision for Children
- Become familiar with respective curriculum materials and program guiding principles, i.e., the kindergarten program, curriculum approaches (e.g. ELECT, emergent curriculum, High Scope) as appropriate, of family support, Toronto Child Care Operating Criteria and Family Support Program Operating Criteria
- Share general information of interest to all partners, and children's information as appropriate (with parent/guardian consent)
- Plan and implement integrated programs and activities for children and families
- Develop a common behaviour guidance approach
- Involve parents in their children's early learning and development by organizing individual and group meetings
- Monitor progress and program decisions and communicate information to parents, as appropriate
- Jointly plan kindergarten registration process and orientation activities
- Meet regularly.

A note on location of programs

It is recognized that the physical location of the child care program, kindergarten program and family support program can impact the collaboration between the programs. However, if programs are not located in the same building it does not preclude them from working together, but may require some adjustment or tweaking to the suggestions in the following chart. So, when using the following chart, please keep this in mind and try to be as flexible and innovative as possible.

Program Component	Child Care Supervisors Role	Getting Started - Identify Common Approaches	Next Steps Towards Integration - Develop and Implement Common Approaches
<p>Communication</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce self/staff to school staff, including principal, teachers, caretakers, secretaries and establish a rapport • Introduce self/staff to family support staff and establish a rapport 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review communication plans, e.g., how to best share information, newsletters, events, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor communication strategies to ensure ongoing sharing of information to staff and parents
<p>Information Sharing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include pictures of teachers/principal and family support staff among those of child care staff team • Request appropriate identification from school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt the Information Sharing Consent Form and Confidentiality Agreement (see Children's Services website under Resources) • Review, and where appropriate, adopt shared policies & procedures (lock down, fire & emergency, evacuation, Access & Equity) • Review communication activities and identify opportunities to collaborate (e.g. joint newsletters) • Develop Early Years management and staff teams • Approach principal early in the school year to ensure child care's full involvement in the kindergarten registration process 	

Program Component	Child Care Supervisors Role	Getting Started - Identify Common Approaches	Next Steps Towards Integration - Develop and Implement Common Approaches
Special Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite school principal/staff and family support coordinator/staff to meetings and other functions, as appropriate 		
Family and Community Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform Board of Directors/Parent Advisory about integration activities on a regular basis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage parents/guardians in a variety of ways so they can support children’s learning at home, special events, concerts, storytellers, workshops, guest speakers • Offer information and links to other services in the community, plan a joint trip to the library, accompany parents to the family support program and the school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve parents and guardians in regular ongoing activities that build parenting capacity • Involve parents in planning and seek their input regarding what they think is important for their child • Involve broader community, as appropriate, be creative — this can add richness to the early learning environment

Program Component	Child Care Supervisors Role	Getting Started - Identify Common Approaches	Next Steps Towards Integration - Develop and Implement Common Approaches
<p>Curriculum Framework and Philosophical Approach</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Become familiar with the role of the principal • Become familiar with the role of family support staff • Review school's curriculum goals • Familiarize self and staff with (Ontario) Kindergarten Program document • Share child care operating requirements (i.e. Day Nurseries Act, City Operating Criteria) and philosophical/program goals with Early Years Management Committee (as developed in your neighbourhood) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit partners' space • Staff share child care philosophical (pedagogical teaching) goals, objectives and philosophy and program approach • Become familiar with partners' curriculum, i.e., The Kindergarten Program, Parenting and Family Literacy Guidelines, ELECT, Emergent Curriculum, High Scope, Play to Learn, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify commonalities and develop shared philosophies, goals, including standard language between programs • Use common approach to support children's emerging literacy and numeracy, coping skills and social competence
<p>Program and Activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Familiarize yourself with partners' programs (schools and family support) availability/schedules to enable staff to meet together from all the programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where possible co-ordinate time to enable planning between school and family support staff • Facilitate informal discussion opportunities • Share program/curriculum goals and identify opportunities for collaborative planning • Identify and understand team members' knowledge base and skills and expertise in specific areas where they may play a leadership role 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule regular meetings • Jointly plan and collaborate to create learning environments that support children's development in all areas • Jointly plan group activities involving children attending all programs, i.e., music, storytelling, gym time, field trips, garden projects, etc.

Program Component	Child Care Supervisors Role	Getting Started - Identify Common Approaches	Next Steps Towards Integration - Develop and Implement Common Approaches
<p>Behaviour Guidance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Familiarize self and child care staff with school's Code of Conduct, school-wide social/emotional programs, Homework Policy • Familiarize self and staff with family support behaviour management policies and procedures • Share child care behaviour management policies and procedures with school and family support program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and discuss partners behaviour guidance and related protocols, i.e., school Code of Behaviour, child care Behaviour Guidance Policy, Child Abuse Reporting, etc. • Become familiar with social/emotional programs used by partners, i.e., Tribes, Incredible Years, Second Steps, Future Aces, Peacemakers etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a common behaviour guidance approach based on commonalities, best practices and legislative requirements of partner organizations (appendix) • As appropriate, develop a common social/emotional program for use in all early years programs
<p>Children's Development and Progress</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be aware of early learning monitoring tools and data, i.e., Early Development Instrument (EDI), as it relates to the community and ensure that information is shared with child care staff and the Early Years management and staff teams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review respective early childhood development monitoring tools, i.e., Nipissing District Development Screen, EDI • Discuss children's needs and progress and develop consistent support strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share community data, i.e., EDI with child care staff to support collaborative programming • Use a variety of assessment and evaluations strategies, such as, EDI, Toronto Preschool Speech and Language (TPSL) observation checklists, developmental continuum (ELECT) to program collaboratively for children • As part of the early years management team, seek to have input in developing report cards and parent-teacher meetings for children

Program Component	Child Care Supervisors Role	Getting Started - Identify Common Approaches	Next Steps Towards Integration - Develop and Implement Common Approaches
<p>Daily Schedule and Routines</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider arranging your child care schedule to support a seamless and cohesive flow of activities for young children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review existing program schedules and routines with the aim of reducing transitions and duplication of activities, i.e. repetition of group time, snack, etc. Consider the flow of activities and personnel changes that occur within a child's day from arrival to departure (7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.) Review partners' health, nutrition and safety protocols 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish consistent routines and work together to adjust or reduce the number of transitions and duplications for children Discuss class placement, and make decisions based on best fit for children and families Arrange visits of younger children from child care and parenting/ family support programs to kindergarten, involving parents, whenever possible Schedule activities to meet the varying needs of families, i.e., offering parent/child activities that coincide with the normal pick-up and drop off time
<p>Children with Special Needs (Early ID and Intervention)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Familiarize self and staff with resources for children with special needs provided by school and family support partners Share information with school and family support partners about resources available for children with special needs to child care programs Co-ordinate resources, as needed, to support children with special needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share procedures for the identification and referral of children with special needs Identify special needs of new children and co-ordinate resources needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a common early identification/intervention strategy based on commonalities, best practices and legislative requirements of partner organizations Identify effective ways to pool and co-ordinate resources to provide more comprehensive service for children with special needs Invite school and family support resource staff to attend child care staff team meetings

Program Component	Child Care Supervisors Role	Getting Started - Identify Common Approaches	Next Steps Towards Integration - Develop and Implement Common Approaches
Professional Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocate funds for staff professional development, as required • Identify and share professional development needs with Early Years management team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When planning for training and workshops, invite partner organizations in your neighbourhood to participate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jointly plan and deliver professional development opportunities with early years partners to support areas of curriculum and program, including social skills, behaviour guidance and assessment • Invite partners to attend staff and professional development meetings when appropriate, as well as events involving parents
Use of Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify space that has potential of being shared; i.e. school library, gym, meeting room in community centre etc. • Approach appropriate people regarding use of space by child care • Offer to share child care space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss space needs with school and family support program and evaluate available space with the aim of reducing transitions for children and families • Evaluate use of space on a yearly basis, i.e. do you have use of the school gym? • Encourage sharing of space, i.e., do you and your staff use staff room? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify areas where programs can be co-located or shared • Use space as it best fits the function, rather than designating space for each service provider • Allocate space for joint activities
Resource Allocation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support early years integration strategies by identifying resources that can be shared, i.e. materials, books, staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss with school and family support staff what resources can be shared between all the programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partners purchase and/or contribute resources for joint activities, i.e., space, staff, materials

Resources

- **Ward Reports on Children** contain statistical information on the children and families residing in each ward, and also provide maps and listings of children's programs and facilities including:
 - child care
 - community centres and libraries
 - elementary schools
 - family support resource programs
 - demographic information on children and families.

www.toronto.ca/children/wardreports.htm
- **Toronto First Duty (TFD)** is a universal early learning and care program model for every child that simultaneously:
 - meets the developmental needs of children to ensure they reach their full potential
 - supports parents to work or study
 - supports parents in their parenting role.

The TFD model brings together kindergarten, child care and parenting supports into a single program. Through TFD, parents are able to access the full range of child and family supports available in their community.

www.toronto.ca/firstduty

- **The Best Start Plan: Toronto Vision for Children** is a 10-year strategy for meeting the early learning and care needs of the city's young children. The vision will bring the existing patchwork of services together into a system that works for Toronto families.

www.toronto.ca/children/bs_network.htm

- **Best Start Expert Panel Reports:**

- The report of the Expert Panel on Early Learning: Early Learning for Every Child Today (ELECT) — A framework for Ontario's early childhood settings:

www.gov.on.ca/children/graphics/263264.pdf
- The report of the Expert Panel on Quality and Human Resources: Investing in Quality: Policies, Practitioners, Programs and Parents
www.gov.on.ca/children/graphics/stel02_183340.pdf

Other Working Together Documents

Child Care

www.toronto.ca/children/pdf/oc_workingtogether.pdf

www.toronto.ca/children/pdf/Working_together_questions.pdf

Education

www.tdsb.on.ca/wwwdocuments/programs/early_years/docs/WorkingTogether.pdf

www.cateam.ca/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_download&gid=597

Family Support

www.toronto.ca/children/bs/workingtogether_fs.pdf

For More Information

TORONTO CHILDREN'S SERVICES

www.toronto.ca/children

FIRST DUTY

www.toronto.ca/firstduty

FAMILY SUPPORT SECTOR

Family Support Institute Ontario (FSIO)

www.fsio.ca/

FRP Canada

www.frp.ca/

CAP-C/CPNP Programs

www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/dca-dea/programs-mes/npf_main-eng.php

Ontario Early Years Centres (OEYC)

www.gov.on.ca/children/oeyc/

SCHOOL BOARDS

Toronto District School Board

www.tdsb.on.ca/

Toronto Catholic District School Board

<http://www.tcdsb.org/>

Glossary of Terms

Pedagogical refers to the structure and methods used by Early Childhood practitioners (teachers, Early Childhood Educators and parenting/family support staff) in their endeavors to support children's learning.

Pedagogy is the understanding of how learning takes place and the philosophy and practice that supports that understanding of learning. This includes teaching methods, strategies and techniques.

Partners includes schools and family support services (family resource programs, Ontario Early Years Centres, Parenting and Family Literacy Centres, Community Action Programs for Children (CAPC), Canada Prenatal Nutrition Programs (CPNP))

Child care/early childhood education – Child care centres, home child care, nursery schools, school readiness programs, preschool programs, special needs resourcing, and preschool early intervention group programs. Children attend without a parent or guardian.

Kindergarten – Junior and senior kindergarten offered to all children 4 to 6 years of age by school boards.

Family support programs – Parenting centres, family resource programs, Ontario Early Years Centres, prenatal/postnatal groups, family literacy, parenting groups, home visiting, community kitchens, and family health and nutrition programs. The focus is on parents and children. Parents may attend alone. Children are accompanied by a parent or caregiver.

Family support practitioner is the designation used for professionals working in family support programs.

Partner programs – Community-based child care and family support agencies, school boards, municipal children service managers, public health, recreation, public libraries etc., participating in a cross-sector partnership to form a community/neighbourhood hub delivery system.

Integrated learning environment – Combines the functions and elements of child care, kindergarten, and family support programs. Elements include combining space, pedagogical approach, daily routines and schedules, assessing children's development and progress, and establishing and monitoring program quality.

Specialized services providers – Resource teachers for children with special needs, public health nurses, children's mental health, and other intervention professionals.

Frontline staff – People who provide direct service or programming to children and families, including Public Health nurses, children's mental health, and other intervention professionals.

Early learning team – People who provide the daily program, including early childhood educators, early childhood assistants, kindergarten teachers, educational assistants, family support practitioners, and may include special needs service professionals if they are part of the daily program delivery.

Early identification and intervention services include specialized services for children aged 0 – 6 and their families offered by child welfare agencies, child treatment centres, infant hearing, infant development, children's mental health centres, developmental services, preschool speech and language and Healthy Babies, Healthy Children.

Appendix 1

What are Family Support Programs?

Family support programs are community-based organizations working with children, families and caregivers to enhance strengths, build capacities and promote healthy development.

Family support programs include

- Ontario Early Years Centres (Funded by the Province of Ontario)
- Family Resource Programs (Funded by the City of Toronto and the Province of Ontario)
- Parenting & Family Literacy Centres (operated in Toronto by the Toronto District School Board and the Toronto Catholic District School Board and funded by the Province of Ontario.)
- Community Action Programs for Children (CAPC) (Funded through The Public Health Agency of Canada, with a focus on health promotion)
- Canada Prenatal Nutrition Programs (CPNP) (Funded through The Public Health Agency of Canada, in partnership with Toronto Public Health and local hospitals with a focus on health promotion for at-risk pregnant women)

Other organizations also run family support programs including Toronto Parks, Forestry and Recreation and Public Libraries.

- Family support programs deliver a range of services, guided by The Guiding Principles of Family Support that focus on building supportive relationships, facilitating growth, respecting diversity and furthering community development.
(www.frp.ca/_data/global/images/resources/guiding-e.pdf)

- Family support programs vary depending on their size, mandate and resources. Services are flexible, accessible and offered in an informal atmosphere. These services may be provided in partnership with other groups. Services may include:

- * child development
- * parent and caregiver support
- * family literacy/numeracy
- * employment assistance
- * parent education
- * multilingual
- * counselling and mediation
- * referrals to other resources
- * promotion of health and safety
- * Early Identification
- * early learning and care
- * community development
- * food and nutrition support
- * educational upgrading
- * peer contact and mutual support
- * toy and book lending
- * play-based programs
- * drop-in programs
- * community outreach
- * Resources for parents (eg. books, dvd's, pamphlets)

Source: *Canadian Association of Family Resource Programs (FRP Canada):*
www.frp.ca

