



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Best Start Community Plan

Date:	July 23, 2007
To:	Community Development and Recreation Committee
From:	General Manager, Children's Services
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	

SUMMARY

This report seeks Council endorsement of the Best Start Community Plan. The Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS) is requiring Best Start Networks to file a 2007-2008 Best Start Community Plan: Building the Foundation – Moving Forward. The attached Best Start Community Plan, on behalf of the Toronto Best Start Network, highlights the progress made in implementing Best Start during 2006-2007 and identifies strategies to continue the momentum during 2007-2008.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager, Children's Services, recommends that:

- 1) Council endorse the 2007-2008 Best Start Community Plan, entitled, "*Working Together for Toronto's Families, Giving Every Child the Best Start, Toronto Vision for Children, A plan to meet the early learning and care needs of Toronto's children*".

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The recommendation will have no financial impact beyond what has already been approved in the current year's budget.

DECISION HISTORY

The precursor to the 2007 Best Start Community Plan was the MCYS requirement for a *Phase One Integrated Community Plan January 2006* prepared by each community. The Toronto Best Start Network submitted Toronto's Best Start Plan Toronto Vision for Children 2006 as its integrated community plan. It was considered by Council on April 25, 26 and 27, 2007.

See Report 12(b)

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/2006/agendas/council/cc060425/cms2rpt/cl012.pdf>

ISSUE BACKGROUND

MCYS is requiring Best Start Networks, with advice from the Regional French-language Best Start networks, to update their strategies for achieving their community vision for Best Start, ultimately leading to an integrated system of services that is responsive to the needs of all community members, including families of children with special needs, Aboriginal, Francophone, and other culturally and/or linguistically diverse families.

The intent is to build on the vision for Best Start outlined by each community in the *Phase One Integrated Implementation Plan* submitted in January 2006. The 2007-2008 Best Start Community Plan provides communities with the opportunity to focus their planning activities on moving further towards achieving their community's vision and the ultimate goal of Best Start – the development of an integrated system of services that is seamless from the child and family's perspective and that is responsive to local needs".

The attached Best Start Community Plan, on behalf of the Toronto Best Start Network, highlights the progress made in implementing Best Start during 2006-2007 and identifies strategies to continue the momentum during 2007-2008. The Best Start Network is a partnership of 36 members representing two provincial ministries, four school boards, the City of Toronto, Toronto Public Health, representatives from the Francophone and Aboriginal communities, special needs and community organizations, all of whom are committed to achieving Toronto's Best Start vision. The Best Start Community Plan It is approved by all members of the Network including representatives from Toronto Children's Services, Toronto Public Health, Toronto Public Library, Parks Forestry and Recreation, and Toronto Community Housing Corporation.

The Best Start Community Plan should be read an accompanying document to the 2007-2008 Child Care Service Plan and the 2007-2008 (Toronto) Ontario Early Years Centres Service Plans.

COMMENTS

Section 3 of the Best Start Community Plan identifies a range of challenges faced by the various sectors in moving forward. While Toronto has been able to overcome some of the local barriers and continues working on resolutions to these local challenges, policy and funding barriers at the Provincial level continue to impact on our ability to go further with implementation.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

Best Start Community Plan 2007 – 2008, “Working Together for Toronto’s Families, Giving Every Child the Best Start, Toronto Vision for Children, A Plan to Meet the Early Learning and Care Needs of Toronto’s Children”