

## **Middle Childhood Strategy Framework**

<b>Date:</b>	May 27, 2009
<b>To:</b>	Community Development and Recreation Committee
<b>From:</b>	General Manager, Children's Services General Manager, Parks Forestry and Recreation
<b>Wards:</b>	All
<b>Reference Number:</b>	

### **SUMMARY**

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Building on the Toronto Vision for Children, this report focuses on out-of-school-time programs for children in their middle childhood years of 6 – 12. This report outlines a set of guiding principles and directions from which to begin action on developing a system of high quality out-of-school-time programs for children aged 6-12 years. It also identifies elements of high quality programs. The report recognizes that further research needs to be conducted, and anticipates that the as yet released report from the Premier's Early Learning Advisor on Full Day Learning will impact many existing programs for this age group. It also recommends that the City's response to Full Day Learning be informed by these principles and directions.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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The General Manager, Children's Services and the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation recommend that

- 1) City Council adopt this Middle Childhood Strategy Framework report, and the principles and directions contained in it and request the General Manager of Children's Services and the General Manager of Parks, Forestry and Recreation, in partnership with other City program areas, to continue the development of a Middle Childhood Strategy based on this framework;
- 2) Further research be conducted, in collaboration with the Best Start Network and other partners, on the needs of families for high-quality programs for children aged 6 to 12, the current distribution of such programs and any service gaps that may exist; and report back to CDR by Spring 2010;

- 3) the General Manager of Children's Services and the General Manager of Parks, Forestry and Recreation use this framework to align future Divisional service plans with an emphasis on ensuring common elements of program quality in out-of-school-time programs and equitable access to those programs; and
- 4) these principles and directions be used to guide the development of a City response to the anticipated introduction of full-day learning for four and five year olds by the Government of Ontario.

## **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

There will be no financial impact beyond what has already been approved in the current year's budgets.

The Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

## **DECISION HISTORY**

The issue of school age care has been highlighted in the City's 2005-2009 Child Care Service Plan, and the Best Generation Yet considered by Council at its meetings of May 17, 18, 19, and 20, 2005 and July 19, 20, and 21, 2005 respectively. Both documents committed the City to developing the care needs of school age children during out-of-school hours including PD days and holidays.

See

[http://www.toronto.ca/children/pdf/council\\_rpt\\_servplan05.pdf](http://www.toronto.ca/children/pdf/council_rpt_servplan05.pdf)

<http://www.toronto.ca/children/pdf/bestgenerationyet.pdf>

Council at its meeting of December 1, 2 and 3, 2008 adopted a report dated October 30, 2008 from the General Manager of Children's Service initiating the development of the 2010-2014 Child Care Service Plan and principles for it. The principles from the earlier service plan are included and go beyond it.

See

[http://www.toronto.ca/children/pdf/serviceplan\\_2010-2014.pdf](http://www.toronto.ca/children/pdf/serviceplan_2010-2014.pdf)

## **ISSUE BACKGROUND**

This report focuses on the need for out-of-school programs for children 6-12 years. Their needs for care, enjoyable activity and personal development have often been overlooked. Working families with children in their middle childhood years have often had to contend with a patchwork of services that may not always be accessible, affordable or developmentally appropriate. The attached Middle Childhood Strategy Framework describes the importance of the middle childhood years and the benefits of out-of-school-time programs. It reviews the characteristics and distribution of current out-of-school-time programs and identifies some of the funding, jurisdictional and regulatory issues that affect out-of-school-time programs. The framework suggests that the Strategy should

initially focus on programs with a care component delivered or managed by Children's Services and Parks, Forestry and Recreation. And it outlines the principles that should guide the development of a new service system, and proposes directions that should constitute the first steps in that development. The City's role as systems planner and manager for out-of-school-time programs is outlined, as is a set of elements to ensure program quality. The framework emphasizes the importance of aligning divisional service plans to support the development of a more comprehensive, effective and innovative system of care and activity for children between the ages of six and twelve.

When completed, the Middle Childhood Strategy will form the basis for the City's work in service planning, policy development, investment priorities and program design. In developing this framework, community engagement sessions were held with Middle Childhood Matters Coalition, the Children's Services Advisory Committee, the Child Care Advisory Committee, and Toronto Best Start Network, individually and all together.

## **COMMENTS**

This framework is a starting point from which to begin action on developing a system of high quality programs for children 6-12 years, based on more effective collaboration between the various children's service sectors. The proposed guiding principles and directions are the action steps being recommended to City Council to help move the Middle Childhood Strategy forward.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**



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## **ATTACHMENT**

Middle Childhood Strategy Framework