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**CHILD
FRIENDLY
EDMONTON**

Annual Report



Edmonton

What is **CHILD FRIENDLY EDMONTON?**

Child Friendly Edmonton is an Edmonton City Council Initiative that is working to build an Edmonton where children thrive because they live in an inclusive, accessible and well-designed community. In Edmonton, children are listened to, treated with respect and feel valued for their individual contributions.





Child Friendly Edmonton began in 2006 by talking to children, youth and community groups to see if they believed that it was important for Edmonton to be a child-friendly city. Based on the positive feedback from these interviews, it was decided that the goal of becoming a child-friendly city was important for Edmonton.

Over the past several years, Child Friendly Edmonton has grown a community of organizations that are committed to making Edmonton the best possible city for children. Child Friendly Edmonton has also led research and delivered training related to child-friendly practices, created programs and resources used within Edmonton and throughout the world, hosted pop-up play events, encouraged engagement with children, worked with the City of Edmonton's CITYlab to research child care in Downtown Edmonton and formed an Early Learning and Care Steering Committee to support EndPoverty Edmonton.



CURRENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS FROM LEFT TO RIGHT:
 BRENDA WONG, IAN SMITH, BECKIE BOUTILIER (ALL PROJECT TEAM), MARY JEAN CHAPELSKY, MARY ANN RINTOUL, LINDSAY WRIGHT, LINDSAY WRIGHT, COUNCILLOR BEV ESSLINGER, ELAINE JONES, FRANK GASPARIK MISSING-BEV ZUBOT HANI QUAN, JANE MOLSTAD, SHANNON MURRAY, TANNIA FRANKE, KAREN BARDY, CARLEEN GREAVES

Child Friendly Edmonton Workplan

In 2017, Child Friendly Edmonton focused on developing a work plan centered on cooperating with many public groups, growing an Advisory Committee and creating working groups to support each of Child Friendly Edmonton's goals:

- ▶ **Engagement:** children have a say in decision making in their city.
- ▶ **Accessible Spaces:** all children have places and spaces in their communities to feel welcomed and accepted.
- ▶ **Inclusive City:** all children are able to access fun activities that they would like to do.
- ▶ **Downtown Demonstration Project:** creating opportunities and removing barriers to downtown Edmonton being a child-friendly urban centre.

Why are children important?

In Edmonton, children make up about 13% of the population. Children are the future of Edmonton, and a city that supports children is better for everyone. This vision lays the foundation for Child Friendly Edmonton, sponsored by Councillor Bev Esslinger and Councillor Aaron Paquette.

Child Friendly Edmonton is grounded in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Fig.1) with a commitment to:

- ▶ **Engagement:** the voice and perspective of every child is valued.
- ▶ **Accessibility:** inclusive urban design and barriers to participation must be identified and removed.
- ▶ **Inclusion:** all children have the right to be included.
- ▶ **Collaboration:** developing strong relationships and working together.

Our principles

- ▶ All children in Edmonton are citizens that have the same rights as adults.
- ▶ A child friendly perspective needs to be applied to all areas of life in Edmonton.
- ▶ Children are the future of Edmonton.
- ▶ Child friendly cities benefit all citizens.
- ▶ Children's health and well-being is important.
- ▶ Children have the right to play, create and relax while engaging in activities appropriate for their interest, age and ability.



“ And even though we're young, we've still got ideas and in the end of the day, if we want a better place, all these ideas put together will make the right one, not just listening to certain people. If you talk about freedom of speech, everyone should get a say, I think it's beneficial for people to listen to other people, respect what they have to say and people's opinions. Like we respect their opinion, the elders' opinion, and we look at them, and we respect them and think they know right all the time, we don't question it, whereas they should do the same for us. ”

— **INTERVIEW WITH AN UNINVOLVED GROUP OF CHILDREN**

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What does "child friendly" mean?

The words "child friendly" are tough to define; everyone has their own ideas about spaces, places, policies, programs and services that are best for children. For example, in the pictures to the left, which places or activities do you think are child friendly?

From talking to children, families/caregivers and community groups about what they consider to be "child friendly", Child Friendly Edmonton believes "child friendly" to be when children and their families/caregivers are welcomed into an environment (play space, business, program, service, location) where business practices (hours of operation, noise levels, customer service), location (close access to parking, transit options) and services (menu, physical space) are intentionally planned with children's needs in mind.



What is a “child friendly city”?

A child friendly city promotes the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child at the level where it has the greatest direct impact on children's lives, in the cities where they live. It is a strategy for promoting the highest quality of life for all citizens. A Child Friendly City is committed to the fullest implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (see Fig. 1) and guarantees each child all of these rights.

In a child friendly city, children are seen as important citizens whose voices, opinions and needs are always thought of, so that children are connected to the rest of the city. Developing and maintaining a child friendly city is a process that never ends and depends on learning from past challenges as well as other child friendly cities. A child friendly city cannot be built by the City of Edmonton alone, Child Friendly Edmonton needs to work with children, their families/caregivers, community groups and all levels of government to create the best possible city for all its children.

A child friendly approach advocates the multifunctional use of space and the re-use of existing infrastructure such as school grounds, community hubs and parking lots for neighbourhood activities after hours. This can lead to space savings, increased usage, higher density and better access to services and activities.



Fig. 1

Why does Edmonton believe in making children a priority?

Edmonton has a legal obligation to consider children. Under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC): “the provision and protection of children’s rights is the primary responsibility of governments at all levels, and realizing the promise of the UNCRC is an ongoing, progressive commitment.” Countries that have accepted the UNCRC, including Canada, have an obligation under international law to ensure that the child’s best interests are a primary consideration in all actions concerning children.

Beyond the legal imperative, there are other compelling reasons why putting children first is in the interests of everybody in the city:

- ▶ Children’s healthy development and active participation are uniquely crucial to the healthy future of Edmonton.
- ▶ Children are able to develop new skills, self-confidence and self-esteem by being involved in all aspects of being a citizen.
- ▶ Children develop a sense of “WE” rather than “I” and are able to see issues from someone else’s point of view.
- ▶ Providing playable urban spaces can create a city for all ages to enjoy together.
- ▶ It is important to avoid the huge costs to society of not considering children. Governments know from research beyond doubt that what happens to children in the early years, significantly determines their positive, or negative, growth and development. This decides their cost or contribution to society spread over the rest of their lives.
- ▶ Children have no vote and play no significant part in the conventional political process. Without special arrangements, they will have little influence on the huge impact government has on their lives.



CHILD FRIENDLY EDMONTON in 2017

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PlayYEG

Four entirely cost-free play events were held throughout Edmonton with over 1,000 children taking part. Events were held at Edmonton Valley Zoo, Movies on the Square and at City Market. These events highlighted the benefits of child-directed play, promoted awareness of Child Friendly Edmonton and helped to introduce child-directed play to adults and community groups.

Pop Up Adventure Play

Child Friendly Edmonton co-hosted a workshop with Play around the World, University of Alberta to bring Pop Up Adventure Play, an international play work company, to Edmonton. This workshop, which was available to select City of Edmonton staff as well as the general public, gave the participants a strong foundation in playwork principles and gave them the opportunity to try out these principles with children.





National Child Day Play Day

National Child Day Play Day is an entirely cost-free event held each year to celebrate the commitment of Canada to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Representatives from groups throughout Edmonton and Alberta work together to create resources and plan the play day. The theme for National Child Day 2017 was "It's Our Right To Be Safe" and focused on the broad range of safety challenges faced by children; from physical to emotional and psychological. Many different organizations including YMCA, Edmonton Fire Rescue, Office of the Child and Youth Advocate and Zebra Child Protection Centre, among others, provided activities, crafts and games. More than 300 children and their adults attended the event at YMCA Castle Downs.



It's Time for a Party

Child Friendly Edmonton, with lots of help from Winter City Edmonton, hosted the first Downtown Winter Play Street! 103 Avenue between 102 and 103 Street was shut down for an afternoon and evening in December to let children play. Over 500 people came to enjoy building with giant lego blocks, creating paper bag lantern crafts, cooking bannock and sitting by a roaring fire in the heart of Edmonton.



Including Children Networking Event

This event brought together members of community groups from all areas of the city on the topic of including children in programs and services. An overview of Child Friendly Edmonton was followed by presentations on the topics of universal design, designing for winter play and a case study in winter play from Glenora Child Care Society. Attendees also participated in interaction pods where topics such as involving children in decision making, barriers to including children, and successes of individual groups were discussed. 97% of participants said that they would attend another event like this hosted by Child Friendly Edmonton.

“ Very well organized!
Excellent presenters! Very
engaging and informative.
Thank you. ”



“ Lots of thought provoking info and ideas shared! ”

Engage Edmonton

Many times working together is a much better option than trying to achieve a goal alone. This was the thought behind the Engage Edmonton pilot project. Sixteen different projects being led by the City of Edmonton worked together to host five separate events to provide the opportunity for the public to learn about the projects and give feedback.

All of the Engage Edmonton events were child-friendly; each project had a welcoming attitude to children and several had specific engagement activities for children. Through a process of engaging with visuals and “If I were Mayor...” artwork, children identified spaces that they thought were more child-friendly. Both children and adults believe that bright colors contribute to spaces being welcoming to children and that all art structures should be playable but especially climbable. With over 1,600 citizens attending, the pilot was a success for both the public and the project teams but increased promotion of future events has been identified as an area for growth.



Child Friendly Business Recognition Program

The Child Friendly Business Recognition program has been created, with support from the local business community, to identify businesses that are already child-friendly and encourage other businesses to become child-friendly.

Each business must have a welcoming attitude, amenities such as a change table available for all genders to use and activities for children to take part in while visiting such as coloring, games, etc. Resources on child-friendly business practices are being developed and will be available on Child Friendly Edmonton's website. An online directory of businesses taking part in the recognition program is also being developed.

**We're a Child
Friendly Business**

edmonton.ca/childfriendly





Access Design Guidelines

Designing spaces and places to be able to be used by all people is difficult. There are so many things to think about: how steep should the ramp be, how wide is that door, is there enough washrooms and the list goes on.

To help answer some of these questions, Age Friendly Edmonton Initiative, with feedback from other sources, including Child Friendly Edmonton, has created the Access Design Guidelines to bring together accessibility features from the Alberta Building Code as well as suggested best practices. Highlights from the Access Design Guidelines include designing barrier-free washrooms, use of tactile strips, and placement of wayfinding signage.

Consultations

Many projects throughout the City of Edmonton are recognizing that children are an important demographic to reach out to for their input and also to design for. Child Friendly Edmonton was asked by many project teams to suggest engagement strategies and provide feedback on draft plans. Some of the projects that Child Friendly Edmonton has consulted with are Recreation Facility Master Plan, Civic Precinct Redesign, Ribbon of Green, Stanley Milner Library and Lewis Farms Recreation Centre, among many others.

Additional highlights

Child Friendly Edmonton got a facelift with a new logo, branding and visual identity resources, like this balsa airplane—how fun!



Social media has been another huge success in 2017; make sure that you're following Child Friendly Edmonton on both Facebook and Instagram.



INSTAGRAM
childfriendlyedmonton



FACEBOOK
childfriendlyedmonton

Children in Apartments

Creation and analysis of “Children in Apartments” survey in the June 2017 Mixed Topic Insight Survey. 1,778 citizens replied.

I believe parents/caregivers and their children should be allowed to live in all condos and apartment buildings.

- ▶ **49%** of respondents agreed or strongly agreed
- ▶ **41%** of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed

I think parents/caregivers and their children should be able to live in condos and apartment buildings in urban neighbourhoods such as Downtown or Oliver.

- ▶ **72%** of respondents agreed or strongly agreed
- ▶ **15%** of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed

What considerations should be made to ensure condos and apartment buildings are accessible and welcoming for parents/caregivers and their children, if any?

- ▶ Open ended responses included a focus on removal of restrictions on children living in condos and apartment buildings, child friendly amenities, accessibility and green spaces.
- ▶ **5.5%** of respondents identified noise prevention as a consideration.

The RePlay Design competition has been started with the goal to add a child friendly space to downtown Edmonton. In 2017, Beaver Hills House Park was targeted as a likely location, Stantec has agreed to volunteer the time of their landscape architects, and conversations have begun with local hotels and businesses about partnership opportunities.

Child Friendly Edmonton is continuing to work with the Early Learning and Care Committee as they develop a vision of an integrated coordinated system for early learning and care in Edmonton.

An evaluation plan for the overall Child Friendly Edmonton Initiative was designed by Community-University Partnership, University of Alberta, with feedback from members of Child Friendly Edmonton Advisory Committee and working groups. The intent of this evaluation plan is to track outcomes and map progress on achieving the vision of a child friendly city. Timelines and evaluation resources were also created and integrated into the plan.

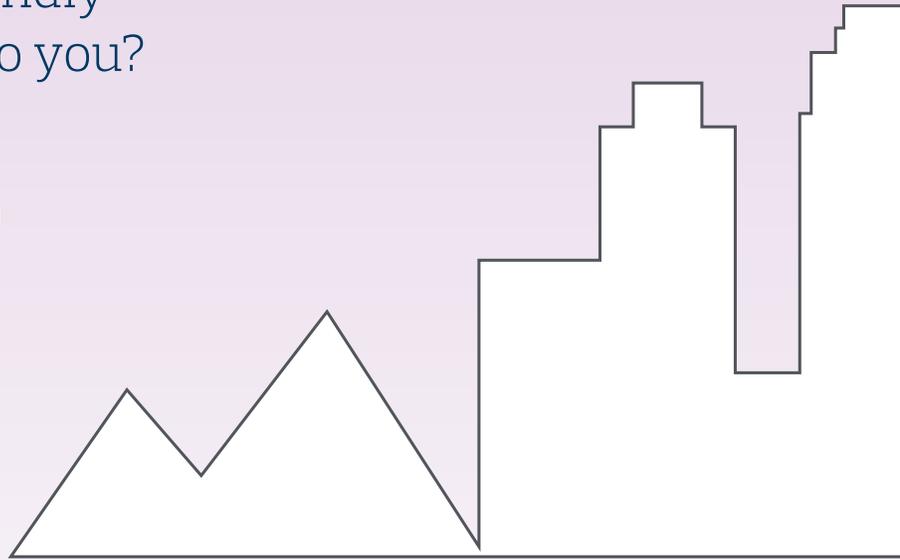
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What does Child Friendly Edmonton look like to you?

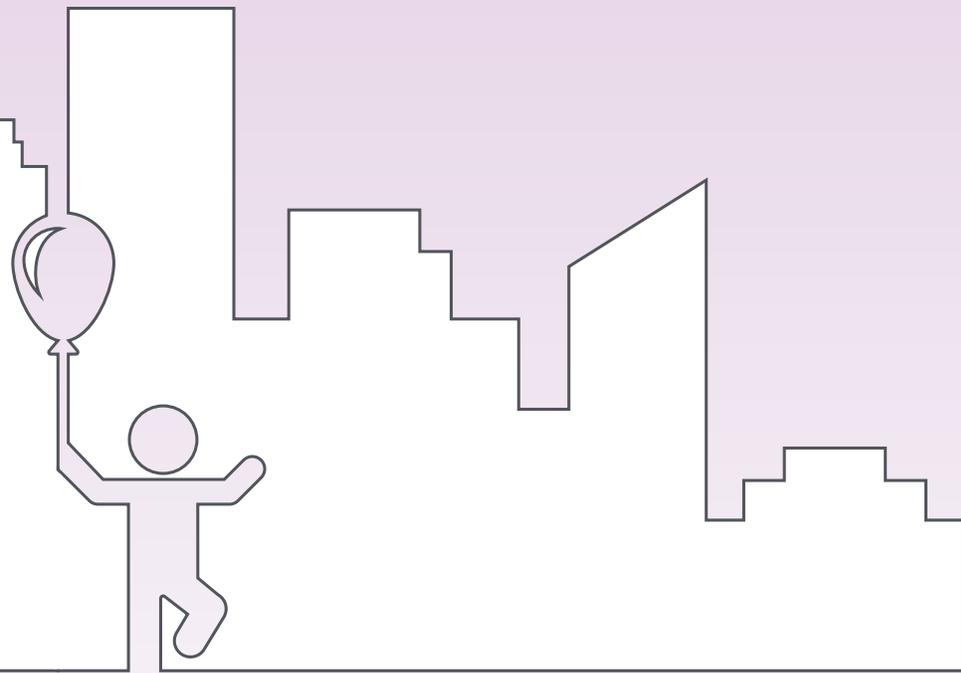
This is the perfect place for you to create and colour. A Child Friendly City is for everyone, and we want you to show how you think Child Friendly Edmonton should look like. Go ahead, we encourage you to create your own colour interpretation of Child Friendly Edmonton logo, or use this page to Doodle and capture ideas.

If you want, take a picture and share it on social media with **#ChildFriendlyEdmonton**

Be creative & have fun!



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Get involved

Child Friendly Edmonton is always looking for parents/caregivers and community organizations to connect with about improving the lives of children in Edmonton.

Please contact us at if you'd like to get involved.

childfriendly@edmonton.ca

780-944-0462

edmonton.ca/childfriendly



Edmonton