

3.4 Families and Children

An old African proverb states that “it takes an entire village to raise a child”. With the growing complexities of modern society, the truth of this proverb is becoming more apparent.

The family in the 90’s is facing many socio-economic challenges making parenting more difficult: the structure of the family is changing, there are many new influences on children’s behavior, the role of women is changing, the economy is restructuring resulting in new economic demands on the family, etc. The overall well-being of the community is a reflection of the well-being of the families living in that community. Therefore, if we are to maintain a high quality of life in our community we must ensure the well-being of the family. Innovative programs and support mechanisms are required to enable families, particularly those on low-income, to deal with the challenges facing them.

GOAL

To promote a supportive, safe, and stimulating community that contributes to the well-being of its families, and allows children to grow and develop in an environment free of violence, abuse, discrimination, and inequity.

Objective 1: Encourage a range of family support programs designed to promote family well-being that are accessible, affordable, and innovative and that build on family capacity and community networks.

Actions

The City will:

1. Continue to support community development that supports the family.
2. Support the development of family support centres/drop-ins.
3. Support the development of parent support groups.
4. Continue to facilitate the Grant McNeil Service Providers Committee as a way to improve collaboration in service provision and to identify needs of low-income residents.
5. Encourage and support the Recreation Commission in developing programs to increase the participation of families on low-income in recreation programs.
6. Seek opportunities to collaborate with the North Shore Regional Operating Agency and the Health Region on programs for families and children.

7. Explore with the Child Care Planning Committee, ways to support child care providers in their role in early intervention work with families and children.
8. Evaluate the effectiveness of the Queen Mary Special Projects Budget, and develop guidelines for the future use of this funding.
9. Through the Recreation Commission, work with the Sport Council and arts organizations to develop a series of actions intended to increase the participation levels of children from families on low-income in arts and sport programs.
10. Identify ways to support violence prevention programs for families.

Objective 2: Promote the development of quality, accessible, and affordable child care and early childhood education that emphasizes a collaborative response.

Actions

The City will:

1. Continue to implement the City's Child Care Policy and Plan until the year 2000, following which time the Policy and Plan will be evaluated and updated.
2. Continue to co-facilitate the North Shore Child Care Planning Committee with the North Shore Child Care Resource Society as a way to improve collaboration among North Shore Municipalities and organizations interested in child care issues.
3. Support the Recreation Commission in providing after-school programming in City schools, recreation centres, and at North Shore Neighbourhood House.
4. Continue to support the North Shore Child Care Resource Society in its efforts to promote child care and to provide a coordinated and efficient approach to the provision of child care services.
5. Explore opportunities to collaborate with the North Shore Regional Operating Agency on child care issues.
6. Support the Recreation Commission in accommodating child care services in recreation facilities, where feasible.
7. Explore, in cooperation with the North Shore Child Care Planning Committee and School District #44, ways to preserve and expand the use of school grounds by child care facilities without negatively impacting the school use.