



Terms of Reference

Mission

The mission of the Chilliwack Early Years Committee is to create an inclusive, responsive and sustainable community through systematic and multi-sectoral collaboration where the importance of childhood is celebrated and there are enhanced opportunities for all children to thrive.

Vision Statement

The vision of the Chilliwack Early Years Committee is to foster community participation and to support a service delivery system that enables all children to thrive. The Chilliwack Early Years Committee is a sub-committee of the Chilliwack Child & Youth Committee.

1. Objectives

The Early Years Committee actively seeks to strengthen community support for families with children from conception to age six by:

- Increasing community awareness of the importance of the early years.
- Enhancing healthy beginnings by supporting responsive relationships, strengthening core skills and reducing sources of stress.
- Promoting a comprehensive and coordinated asset-based approach to services.
- Taking action on truth and reconciliation calls to action.

2. Mandate

2.1 From the Chilliwack Child and Youth Committee (See CYC Mission Statement and Principles)

The Early Years Committee will focus on the needs of children prenatal to age six.

2.2 The Early Years Committee will:

- Develop guiding principles to inform our work.
- Apprise itself of funding opportunities to help achieve the goals entrenched in the guiding principles and follow up as appropriate.

3. Membership

3.1 Members

- a) Members can be representative of either non-profit or governmental organizations and have some mandate in early childhood in Chilliwack or have a vested interest in children prenatal to age six and supporting their families.
- b) Members will be committed to active participation in the work of the Early Years Committee. Active participation includes:
 - (i) Members make every effort to attending a majority of the regular monthly meetings.
 - (ii) Participating in task groups and/or being available to contribute information or expertise.
 - (iii) Taking responsibility to become and remain informed about the Early Years agenda and key local, regional, provincial and federal early childhood matters.
 - (iv) A members list will be reviewed annually for active participation by the Early Years Committee.
- c) Membership will include officially designated local representatives from organizations with provincial mandate for early childhood, including Fraser Health Authority, Ministry for Children and Family Development and School District # 33 and service providers with significant early childhood mandate or services.

- d) Members may send alternates to represent them at Early Years Committee meetings. Members sending alternates are asked to provide them with recent meeting minutes and agendas to bring them up to date
- e) Members will participate in consensus-based decision-making.

4. Ad Hoc Committees

4.1 Ad Hoc Committee Definition: A group formed to move forward the actions of the Guiding Principles and/or to perform a specific task.

Establishing an Ad Hoc Committee:

- a. Members will be encouraged to volunteer.
- b. Individuals with specific knowledge or expertise may be solicited to participate in, or provide consultation to an ad hoc committee.
- c. A designated member shall report to the Chilliwack Early Years Committee for the duration of the Group's task.

5. Guests

5.1 Guests

- a) Guests are welcome to attend meetings and participate in discussion.
- b) Guests may request an item be added to an agenda. The chair can decline the request for an item to be added to a subsequent agenda (due to limited time) and may bring the request to the next meeting for the members to agree or decline.

6. Decision Making Process

6.1 Members are encouraged to participate in discussion of agenda items.

6.2 Only members shall have a voice in final decisions.

6.3 Consensus:

Agreement will be sought in a consensus-based process. Consensus means that we will reach an informed decision as we work together for the families of Chilliwack:

- a) that we are in total agreement with the proposed or
- b) that we are not in total agreement with the proposed but can live with and support the decision or
- c) that we cannot support or agree.

Members will consider the following:

- 1. Is this part of a solution?
- 2. Can I live with the decision?
- 3. Does it reflect the Early Years guiding principles and core values?

7. Conflict of Interest:

Conflict of interest can be disclosed at any point in the process when it becomes evident. The minutes will reflect this conflict of interest.

If a *Conflict of interest* or *appearance of conflict of interest* occurs, the individual may choose to or will be asked by the chair (co-chair) to step outside the room for the duration of the discussion and return for the decision making process.

8. Voting

- a) If Consensus cannot be reached after due process, a vote will be called.
- b) Decisions will be made with a 75% majority vote.
- c) Voting is by organization, with the most senior member of an organization present determining who is the designated member for voting purposes in that meeting.

9. Guiding Principles

The Early Years Committee shall develop Guiding Principles for Chilliwack through a broad and inclusive process, a minimum of every five years. The Core membership shall monitor the principles and review it annually.

10. Chair

10.1 Preference of the Early Years Committee is the appointment of two co-chairs.

10.2 The Chair is selected by consensus of the Committee.

10.3 After a two-year term, the position of chair is opened to re-appointment. Upon consensus, the current chair may remain and be reviewed annually.

10.4 Duties of the chair include:

a) Monthly Meetings

(i) Preparation of the agenda.

(ii) Ensuring agenda incorporates all timelines as appropriate.

(iii) Ensuring positive process during meetings: that everyone is given an opportunity to speak; there is adherence to the Committee's values and principles and to Terms of Reference.

(iv) Ensuring minutes are prepared and circulated in a timely fashion.

b) Participating in Guiding Principle Ad Hoc Groups.

c) Attending Chilliwack Child and Youth Committee (CYC), representing the Early Years Committee to CYC and CYC to Early Years Committee.

11. Frequency of Meetings

11.1 Meetings will be held at a regular time monthly throughout the year, September to June.

11.2 Ad hoc and special meetings will be called by the Chair if needed.

12. Record Keeping

12.1 Access to certain data or documents may be limited to the Core Members of Early Years Committee (e.g. data belonging to H.E.L.P. on limited populations).

13. Revisions to Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference shall be reviewed on an annual basis.

Glossary

Child and Family-Centered As members of the Early Years Committee, while acting as representatives of our respective organizations, we are responsible to place the well-being of children pre-birth to age six and their families, as paramount.

The Early Years Committee's view is that the child is nested within concentric geographic and relationship circles. His family of primary care-givers and intimate relationships form the immediate circle. These are supported by informal networks within a geographic or relationship neighborhood, which are nested in the broader community of people and systems, all of which are inter-related. (From Ecological Systems Theory)

Collaboration We believe that the quality of a decision-making process strongly influences the outcome. We seek solutions that are the best fit for all. In light of limited resources for services and supports for children and families, we adhere to the principles of collaboration and enhancement versus duplication.

We believe the most effective collaboration occurs in the context of positive, trusting relationships. Relationship building, therefore, is an important activity within and of the committee. We adhere to the principle of open and honest communication, and to the degree possible, inclusion in the process of those affected.

Community-based Every community is unique and requires solutions and approaches which utilize its strengths to meet its particular needs. We believe that the community's strengths and needs are best known and addressed by people and organizations rooted in the community.

Core Members Members who participate in 8 or more of the regularly scheduled monthly meetings.

Diversity We value diversity, believing that diversity enhances the human experience, providing richness and strength.

Inclusion We are guided by the principle of inclusion, in the understanding that ‘it takes a community to raise a child’. We adhere to the research-based strategic approach to a system of care and support for the early years, which provides for universal as well as targeted and clinical supports within a civil society.

Members at Large Members who want to be included in the announcements and distribution of approved Early Years minutes and those who participate in task groups related to the Early Years Committee.

Quorum Quorum is 51% of the current Core membership and representation from a minimum of five different Core Member organizations. Quorum should include official designates from the Fraser Health Authority, Ministry for Children and Family Development and School District #33 .Where decisions are urgent and time sensitive, consensus may be sought through group email discussion. The consensus process will be followed (see Decision Making Process)

Respect We recognize that all people have worth, strengths and gifts. All people have the right to be treated with dignity, including, children, parents, colleagues, fellow committee members, representatives of organizations, institutions and government, and community members. We believe that honoring individual and group diversity promotes respect and dignity.

Strength-based All people and all communities have strengths. Strengths are the foundation for growth and increasing capacity.