

Advancing an Integrated, Neighbourhood Based System of Early Childhood Development, Learning and Care Services in Vancouver

Memorandum of Understanding

Between Vancouver Public Partners:

The City of Vancouver, including Vancouver Park Board and the Vancouver Public Library, Ministry of Children and Family Development (Vancouver Coastal Region), Vancouver Coastal Health and Vancouver School Board.

Principles/Vision

Whereas Vancouver public partners each have a mandate to serve children and families and the Parties agree that:

- A) Children are valued at all stages of development, and thrive within families and communities that can meet their physical and developmental needs and can provide security, nurturing, respect and love;
- B) The early years are particularly critical to the development and future well being of the child, establishing the foundation for competence and coping skills that will positively affect learning, behaviour, health and lifetime outcomes;
- C) Research has shown that a coordinated, accessible range of universal, targeted and clinical services will contribute to the well being of all children;
- D) Services are accessible when barriers to participation are minimized. Barriers may include cost, transportation, language, hours of service, availability of programs, and location;
- E) The most effective and efficient approaches to meeting the needs of children and families require collaboration between public partners and community organizations in program planning, service delivery and evaluation;

Therefore, in order to support young children and their families, we envision an accessible, integrated, neighbourhood-based and culturally responsive system of quality Early Childhood Development, Learning and Care (ECDLC) services.

1.0 Commitment

The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is to articulate a commitment of the Vancouver public partners to collaborate in advancing their vision of Early Childhood Development, Learning and Care Services.

In support of this vision, the Parties agree that:

1.1 Early Childhood Development, Learning and Care (ECDLC) services refer to the full range of programs and services for children under 6 and their parents/caregivers. These services currently include, but are not limited to: kindergarten, licensed and regulated childcare (including preschool), parenting/caregiver and family support programs (including family literacy), recreational programs and services for children with additional support needs.

1.2 Vancouver has a long history of public partner, service provider and community involvement in the development and delivery of ECDLC services. Currently, several neighbourhood hubs strive to provide service integration for ECDLC, along with other services in many cases. The majority of these services are provided in public or community-owned facilities. Research, evaluations and feedback from community and public partners all support the further development and expansion of this service integration approach.

1.3 Furthermore, collaborative efforts to date between Vancouver public partners and community have resulted in the development of complimentary ECDLC plans and strategies. Taken together, they provide an ECDLC Framework which forms the basis for service planning and delivery in Vancouver. These strategies are consistent with the ECD Framework developed by First Call: BC's Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition and the Common Vision developed by the BC Child Care Advocacy Forum. Vancouver's strategies include:

- i) City of Vancouver – *“Moving Forward” Childcare: A Cornerstone of Child Development Services, 2002.*
- ii) Vancouver Windows of Opportunity Coalition, *Community Consultation: A Call to Action, 2000.*

1.4 Vancouver's strategies are currently supported by collaborative planning or implementation tables with representatives from both public partners and community services providers (Joint Council on Childcare and Windows Coalition). In addition, the “Moving Forward” strategy has resulted in a Child Care Protocol signed between the City of Vancouver, School Board and Park Board.

1.5 While Vancouver has a foundation of ECDLC planning, collaboration, programs and facilities in place there are unmet needs for services, particularly in quality, affordable childcare. Furthermore, neighbourhood based services require

support for infrastructure in order to fulfill the ECDLC vision. Infrastructure support includes:

- Planning, priority setting and development
- Administrative and financial management
- Community collaboration and networking
- Program consultation
- Service integration
- Capacity building, particularly of the licensed childcare sector

With supportive public policy and adequate public funding in place, Vancouver can effectively build on its existing foundations to advance integrated, accessible, quality services for young children and families throughout the city.

1.6 Given the importance of early childhood development, learning and care, and the complexity of integrating current and emerging public policy and funding in this area, a Vancouver ECDLC MOU Steering Committee will be formed to further advance the ECDLC vision.

2.0 Terms of Reference: Vancouver ECDLC MOU Steering Committee

2.1 Membership will be comprised of a maximum of two senior staff representatives from each of the Vancouver public partners, as outlined in Appendix 1.

2.2 Meeting dates will be established as mutually agreed, but not less than quarterly during the first year of the MOU term.

2.3 Members will ensure that at least one representative from their organization will attend each meeting, or designate a senior staff alternate in the absence of the appointed representative(s).

2.4 The Steering Committee provides leadership to and supports collaboration at all levels of the public partner organizations and with community. Specifically, the role of the Steering Committee includes, but is not limited to:

1. Planning for pro-active and collaborative responses to initiatives
2. Seeking opportunities to extend collaboration and service integration
3. Sharing information
4. Overseeing the annual reporting out processes, as outlined in 2.6.

2.5 The Steering Committee will be supported by an MOU Facilitator. The Facilitator will:

1. Act as a liaison between the Steering Committee and the public partner staff and community service providers involved in collaboration on various initiatives.
2. Participate at various ECDLC tables, as requested, sharing and receiving information on the progress of, and issues arising from, efforts to advance ECDLC in Vancouver.
3. Lead the organization of the annual reporting out processes, as outlined in 2.6.

2.6 The goals of the *Annual Reporting Out Process: Advancing Integrated ECDLC Services in Vancouver* are to:

1. Share current research, data and evidence
2. Demonstrate integration, reporting on strategies, successes and barriers
3. Obtain feedback and input on future goals and priorities.

2.7 The Vancouver Public Partners acknowledge the critical role of community service providers and other community members in advancing ECDLC in Vancouver. Community service providers work with public partner representatives in neighbourhoods and at various planning and implementation tables. Achievement of our broadly shared vision requires ongoing collaboration between public partners, community service providers and other community members. The work of the Steering Committee will specifically support and enhance this work by, for example:

1. Adopting the complimentary ECDLC plans for Vancouver that have been established with broad community input
2. Continuing to provide public partner representation, as appropriate, to various ECDLC planning tables and joint initiatives
3. Establishing the role of MOU Facilitator, whose functions include liaison with community
4. Inviting community participation in the organization of the annual reporting out process.

3.0 Term and Review

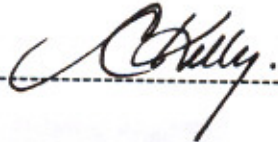
3.1 This MOU shall come into effect as of the date of the signatories and will remain in effect for a five-year period from that date. (The "Term")

3.2 This MOU and activities associated with it will be reviewed annually by the parties during the Term. Substantial changes to this MOU require the written agreement of all parties.

We, the signatories, agree to the commitment described herein.

Chris Kelly

Superintendent of Schools, Vancouver School Board



Oct. 17, 2006

Judy Rogers

City Manager, City of Vancouver



Oct. 23, 2006

Donna Knox

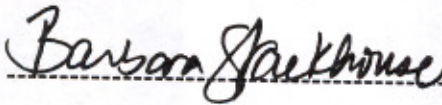
Regional Executive Director, Ministry of Children and Family
Development



Oct 17 2006

Maureen Whyte

Chief Operating Officer, Vancouver Community, Vancouver
Coastal Health



Oct 17, 2006

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Appendix 1

As of June 30, 2006, the Members of the Steering Committee are:

City of Vancouver

Judy Rogers, City Manager

Carol Ann Young, Child Development Coordinator

Paul Whitney, City Librarian, Vancouver Public Library

Susan Mundick, General Manager, Vancouver Park Board

Ministry of Children and Family Development

Donna Knox, Regional Executive Director, Vancouver Coastal Region

Beverly Dicks, Acting Regional Executive Director, Vancouver Coastal Region

Vancouver Coastal Health

Barb Stackhouse, Director, Vancouver Community

Dr. Cheryl Anderson, Medical Health Officer, Vancouver Community

Vancouver School Board

Chris Kelly, Superintendent of Schools

Valerie Overgaard, Associate Superintendent