



CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

May 29, 2025

A meeting of the Children, Youth and Families Advisory Committee was held on Thursday, May 29, 2025, at 5:39 pm in the Joe Wai Room, Ground Floor, City Hall, and via electronic means.

PRESENT:

Joseph Dunn, Chair
Swapna Antony
Seerit Boparai
Wah Gee
Alicia Li
Melanie Li
Ryan Li
Katie Manning*
Miles Molhoj
Jack Molnar
Julia Molnar
Arezo Paterson
Betty Seto
Marcus Tse
Andre Yeh

ABSENT:

Kaylee Chou
Winston Chow (Leave of Absence)
Amy He
Freddie Zhang (Leave of Absence)

ALSO PRESENT:

Commissioner Scott Jensen, Park Board Liaison
Trustee Suzie Mah, Vancouver School Board Liaison
Gina Gaudet, Head Librarian, Children's Library;
Vancouver Public Library Liaison
Lanny Libby, Social Planner, Arts, Culture, and Community
Services; Staff Liaison

CITY CLERK'S OFFICE:

Julie Emmerson, Meeting Coordinator

**Denotes arrival after 6 pm.*

WELCOME

The Chair acknowledged we are on the unceded homelands of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Peoples. We thank them for having cared for this land and look forward to working with them in partnership as we continue to build this great city together.

Modified Procedures

MOVED by Wah Gee

SECONDED by Swapna Antony

THAT the Children, Youth and Families Advisory Committee suspend the rule of section 15.13 of the *Procedure By-law* in order to allow modified decision-making methods during the meeting.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY
AND BY THE REQUIRED MAJORITY

Leave of Absence Requests

THAT the Children, Youth and Families Advisory Committee approve leaves of absence for Freddie Zhang and Winston Chow, for this meeting.

APPROVED BY CONSENSUS

Approval of Minutes

THAT the Children, Youth and Families Advisory Committee approve the Minutes from the meeting of Thursday, January 30, 2025, as circulated.

APPROVED BY CONSENSUS

1. Recommendation Motion: Maintaining and Strengthening CYFAC

Motion to Preserve and Strengthen the City of Vancouver Children, Youth and Families Advisory Committee

WHEREAS

1. Recognizing that children and youth under the voting age are unable to directly participate in the electoral process, the Committee specifically exists to elevate the voices of children and youth who have historically been, and continue to be, denied access to civic participation. It ensures their unique needs, concerns, and perspectives are meaningfully and thoughtfully incorporated into City decision-making, serving as a fundamental component of their civic engagement and democratic inclusion. By directly advising Council and staff, the Committee fosters a more inclusive democratic process that acknowledges and values the

perspectives of future voters and active citizens;

2. City of Vancouver civic agencies are volunteer bodies established and appointed by Council to convey community perspectives to Council while advising on City priorities, projects, and initiatives, or to serve statutory functions as outlined in relevant by-laws or terms of reference;
3. Civic agencies are essential to the City's public engagement efforts, and are often asked to provide early and ongoing feedback on specific projects;
4. Civic agencies allow residents to develop civic knowledge and give back to their communities, and are a crucial part of the City's accountability to and engagement with residents;
5. Civic agencies have been shaping City priorities for nearly a century - beginning with the Vancouver City Planning Commission (1926-1952), expanding in the 1970s with advisory bodies like the Bicycle Advisory Committee and special advisory committees on disabilities and seniors, and continuing to evolve toward more inclusive and diverse public engagement;
6. As a part of this larger body of Advisory Committees, the Children, Youth and Families Advisory Committee (CYFAC) advises Council and staff on matters relating to children, youth, and families, including in enabling them to fully participate in City decision-making, services, and civic life;
7. Children, youth, and families have historically faced, and continue to face, barriers to meaningful civic participation; and recognizing that Canada is a signatory to the UN CRC, City of Vancouver has the duty to uphold the participation rights of its children and youth;
8. While there is merit in the need to ensure that advisory committees provide more focused engagement and feedback, it is vital to ensure the continuation of distinct advisory committees like this one, which can exist alongside other committee structures, especially as the elimination of this Committee would lead to the perception of a lack of democratic engagement from children and youth and create public distrust from young people;
9. The potential elimination of this Committee in favour of a different structure would diminish the voices and lived experiences of children, youth, and families in municipal decision-making, reversing decades of progress in increasing civic participation among marginalized communities;
10. Including a handful of children, youth, and families within a larger, broader body, such as a Community Advisory Assembly, or only within committees focused exclusively on specific topics or Council priorities, would fail to fully capture the diverse experiences of children, youth, and families, while also substantially reducing their opportunity to speak;
11. This Committee provides more in-depth and technical feedback than would be possible as part of a larger body, with staff over the years stating that the

Committee's feedback is extensive and allows staff to demonstrate meaningful engagement with children, youth, and families;

12. Dedicated, distinct committees like this one are essential for providing focused feedback on City policies directly affecting children, youth, and families, including the Building Safer Communities Program and Youth Safety and Violence Prevention Strategy, School Active Travel Program, and the Childcare Strategy;
13. This Committee has worked specifically to align its 2023-2026 Work Plan with the Mayor and Council's Vibrant Vancouver Strategic Priorities, with a focus on child care, youth mental health, and middle years programs;
14. The October 9th Council motion on advisory committee structures (Minutes, page 13) suggests that committees may be placing more emphasis on operations rather than policy, but in practice, these two areas are deeply interconnected, as operational matters directly impact the lived experiences of children, youth, and families, and often signal areas where policy improvements are necessary;
15. Given historical experiences of stigma and marginalization, many children and youth feel safer sharing their lived experiences and perspectives as part of a separate group of like individuals, whereas participation in a majoritized group could limit open and frank discussion;
16. This Committee gives members sufficient time and space to bring forward ideas and concerns that may not be apparent to a majoritized group, ensuring that issues affecting children, youth and families are not overlooked;
17. Over the years, these Committees have established strong relationships with Council members and City staff, which have facilitated meaningful engagement and policy improvements, and such relationships would be disrupted if the Committee were dissolved; and
18. These Committees play a critical role in bridging the gap between City Council, municipal staff, and marginalized communities, ensuring that policies and services are informed by lived experiences and clearly conveyed to the community.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Children, Youth and Families Advisory Committee recommends that Council:

- i. Ensure the Committee remains a distinct, dedicated body that provides focused, expert feedback on issues affecting children, youth, and families;
- ii. Ensure that any changes to advisory committee structures do not deny democratic engagement to or diminish the representation of equity-denied communities, including children and youth in municipal decision-making;
- iii. Recognize that specialized advisory committees like this one play a vital role in democratic participation beyond voting, and should continue to serve as a means

for historically marginalized communities to engage with civic processes; and,

- iv. Reaffirm an ongoing commitment to working with Civic Agencies towards shared goals, including appropriate investment of time and support by Council and staff liaisons.
- v. Consult and collaborate with the Children, Youth and Families Advisory Committee, to continue to align with City goals while supporting the committee's mandate.

APPROVED BY CONSENSUS

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VARY AGENDA

At this point in the meeting the Committee agreed by consensus to vary the agenda to hear item 3, Liaison Updates, next, followed by item 2, Working Session Updates.

For ease of reference, the minutes are recorded in chronological order.

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3. Liaison Updates

The Vancouver School Board Liaison provided an update on the [2025-2026 Financial Plan](#).

The Staff Liaison provided updates on the following:

- Child & Youth Mental Health Awareness Day proclamation
- Youth Safety Program Prevention
- [Building Safer Communities Program \(BSCP\)](#)

The Vancouver Public Library Liaison provided updates on the following:

- [BC Summer Reading Club](#)
- [Teens | Vancouver Public Library](#); Teen Summer Challenge launches June 16, 2025

2. Working Session Updates

The Chair provided an update on the working session held on April 22, 2025, and the Child & Youth Mental Health Awareness Day proclamation.

4. Subcommittee Updates

None.

5. New Business

None.

ADJOURNMENT

THAT this meeting be adjourned.

APPROVED BY CONSENSUS

Next Meeting:

DATE: Thursday, July 24, 2025
TIME: 5:30 pm
PLACE: Joe Wai Room, Ground Floor, City Hall
/ Teams Online

The Committee adjourned at 7:29pm

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