

## Update: Child Friendly Edmonton Initiative

**Initiative Title:** Child Friendly Edmonton  
**City Council Lead(s):** Councillor B. Esslinger  
**Department Lead(s):** Citizen Services, L. Brenneis / E. Betchinski

### **Recommendation - Renew for 2017-2021 Council Term**

---

#### **Objective**

The Child Friendly Edmonton Council Initiative's vision is to ensure children have a voice and opportunities for meaningful participation. A child-friendly city welcomes and involves children, promotes their well-being and safety, and ensures accessible quality programs and services are provided. This provides the framework from which the Child Friendly Edmonton Initiative is supported.

#### **Key outcomes, projects or activities and their status as of May 2017**

Child Friendly Edmonton continues to work with the Child Friendly Edmonton Advisory Committee which provides input and supports the Council Initiative. A summary of key work completed this term is outlined.

#### Child Friendly Edmonton Work Plan

The Child Friendly Edmonton Advisory Committee held three planning sessions in early 2017 and is finalizing a two-year work plan, the governance structure and the Committee's Terms of Reference. The work plan's goals are outlined:

##### *Goal 1: Engagement*

Seek out children's voices to ensure their needs and interests are incorporated into programs, services and plans that impact them.

##### *Goal 2: Accessible Spaces*

Facilitate high quality, affordable, welcoming and accessible child friendly places and opportunities for children and their families/caregivers to live, learn and play.

##### *Goal 3: Inclusive Programs and Services*

Facilitate a diverse range of inclusive services and programs for children of all ages through effective program design, quality leadership, and addressing barriers such as language, affordability and location.

##### *Goal 4: Downtown Demonstration Project*

Support and showcase downtown Edmonton as a Child Friendly Edmonton demonstration site by creating opportunities and addressing barriers.

### Child Friendly Project Team

- The new Child Friendly Edmonton Coordinator began in mid-April.

### Research and Development of Child Friendly Resources

- Research was initiated on leading practices related to child friendly cities and assessment tools.
- A variety of child friendly activities in Edmonton were featured each month on [edmonton.ca/child-friendly](http://edmonton.ca/child-friendly)
- “Involving Young People in Civic Matters Guide” was developed.
- Consulted and collaborated with CITYlab to support children’s public engagement with the evolving infill public engagement process.

### Early Learning and Care

- The Early Learning and Care Steering Committee held monthly meetings, hired a coordinator and selected a consultant to develop a sketch for Early Learning and Care Services in Edmonton.

### Child Friendly Edmonton Downtown

- Partnered with Edmonton Arts Council to provide a variety of drop-in children's programming activities for spring break at Churchill Square.

## **Future Steps**

### Child Friendly Edmonton Work Plan

- Complete the Child Friendly Edmonton work plan, finalize the structure and establish working groups by summer 2017.
- Begin developing plans and implementing projects for working groups.
- Develop and begin implementing Child Friendly Edmonton’s communication plan by late summer 2017.

#### *Goal 1: Engagement*

Proposed projects include a child friendly engagement practices inventory, piloting innovative child engagement practices and developing a series of training programs/resources for engaging children.

#### *Goal 2: Accessible Spaces*

Proposed projects include education on design of child friendly cities, and working with stakeholders and children to develop a visual representation for Child Friendly Edmonton (i.e. public spaces, green/play spaces, urban design, transportation, businesses, etc.).

*Goal 3: Inclusive Programs and Services*

Proposed projects include promoting child friendly opportunities, supporting innovative child friendly programs (i.e. intergenerational, adventure and free play, etc.) and providing child friendly input into strategic plans.

*Goal 4: Downtown Demonstration Project*

Proposed projects include Child Friendly Business Recognition Program, pop-up animated play spaces, education on leading practices, engagement of children, urban and park plans, and strategies to address other barriers in downtown Edmonton.

Early Learning and Care Committee

- Complete the preliminary Early Learning and Care sketch by late fall 2017.
- Provide input on Edmonton Public Library's new child care centre in downtown Edmonton.

Other Projects

- Plan and support National Child Day Initiative on November 19 and 20.
- Attend and present at the International Play Association Conference in Calgary (September 2017).

**Evaluation**

Child Friendly Edmonton was refocused and re-launched in 2016; moving from primarily focusing on City of Edmonton services to a city-wide, Edmonton focus with many external stakeholders. The Child Friendly Edmonton Advisory Committee was re-established and a long-term work plan is being developed.

It is recommended that the work of this initiative continue as findings from the Child Friendly Edmonton Symposium strongly support the need for this work and further time is required to develop, implement and evaluate this work.