

# *C*ommunity *A*ction *T*oward *C*hildren's *H*ealth

## **Partners with Parents:**

*Interior Health  
Authority,  
Provincial ministries  
serving  
Children & Families,  
School District #23,  
Agencies Serving  
Children & Parents,  
Okanagan Regional  
Library,  
Foundations,  
Societies,  
Okanagan University  
College Faculty  
& Students,  
Family Physicians,  
Pediatricians,  
Health Professionals,  
Faith Communities,  
Counselors,  
Family Therapists,  
Service clubs,  
Federal, Provincial &  
Local Politicians,  
Community Planners,  
Decision Makers,  
Local Businesses,  
Corporations,  
Health Networks  
& Societies,  
Royal Canadian  
Mounted Police,  
First Nations,  
Cultural Communities,  
Recreation  
Organizations,  
Community Schools,  
Childcare Providers,  
Preschool Groups,  
Researchers, Advocacy  
Leaders,  
Media Organizations,  
Neighborhood  
Associations,  
Students,  
Teachers,  
Grandparents,  
Aunts & Uncles,  
Interested Citizens*

## **UBCM Annual Conference Whistler, BC - Sept 23, 2002**



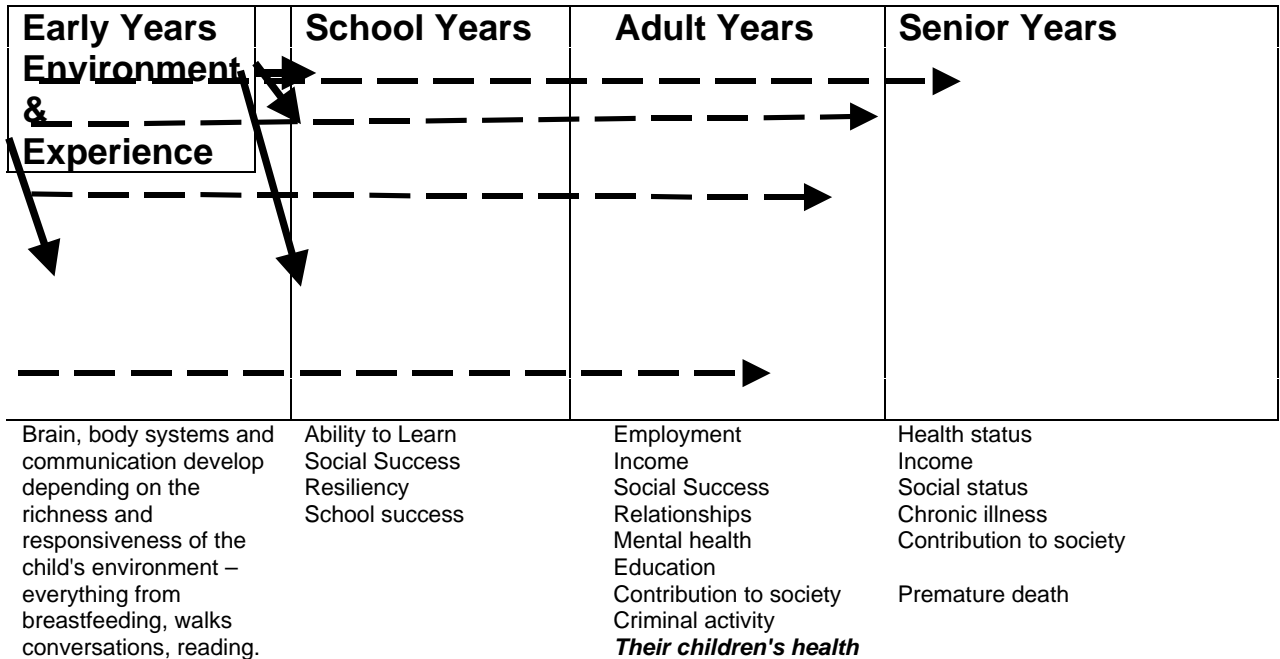
- A. Why do we need to CATCH children early?*
- B. What are we doing about it*
- C. 25 ways elected officials made a difference*

**Dr. Eugene Krupa**

Health Promotion / Prevention Specialist, Interior Health Authority, Kelowna, BC

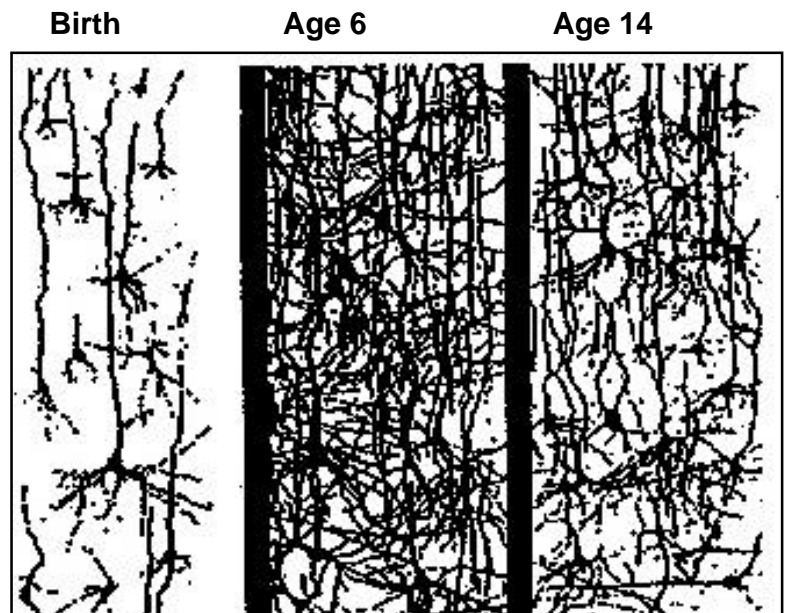
## A. Why do we need to CATCH children early?

It is clear from longterm research with thousands of people – a child's early years last a lifetime. Early development of a child's brain, senses, body systems, and communication abilities establishes his/her potential. Early experiences set children on a pathway - a level of health and success - that continues through school years, into adulthood, and into the senior years. This affects physical and mental health, learning, achievement, income, employment and relationships. It influences chronic illness, likelihood of entry into crime and premature death, as shown below.



### Connections among brain cells

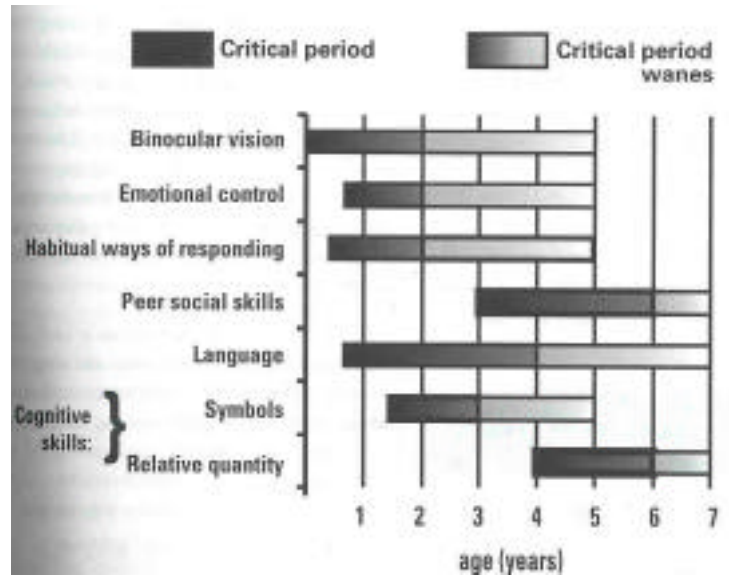
During the early years, our brains develop rapidly in response to stimulation in our environments. The image to the right shows connections among brain cells – synapses. The number of connections increase rapidly from birth to age 6. By the time the child enters school, she/he should have established a rich and dense network of connections among brain cells that will enable a wide range of learning to occur. Immune and endocrine systems also develop rapidly in the early years.



Sometime around the age of school entry, the brain begins a "pruning" process that continues throughout life. By the teen years, there are fewer connections and by midlife, many fewer.

**The "windows of opportunity" for development are in the early years.**

The chart at the right shows when the brain, senses and patterns of behavior develop. By the time children enter school, these abilities necessary for communication, and learning and social success have developed, or not. The opportunity to have major positive influence on these and other abilities has passed. We can still improve, but gains tend to be smaller and require much more time and effort.



**In summary, we need to correct the mismatch between opportunity and investment.** We need to make the investment while people are young and everyone will reap the rewards when they are older.

**The good news is that parents and communities can make a tremendous difference!**

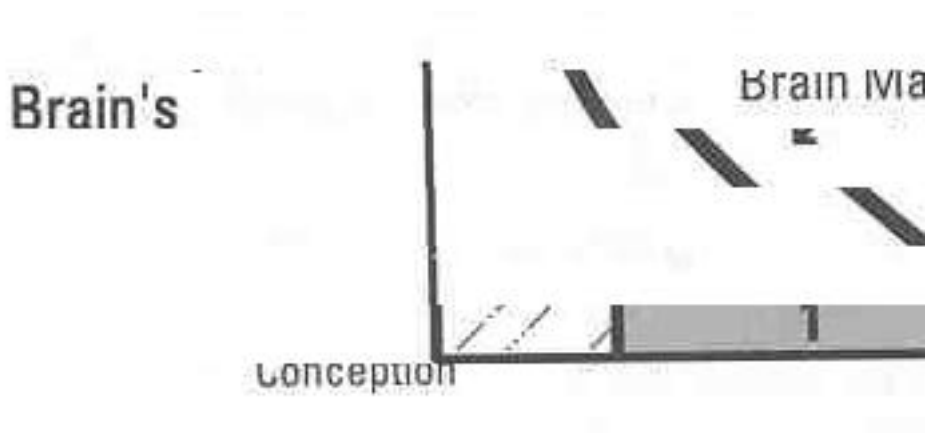
Parents and care providers can certainly make a huge difference in a child's health and his/her potential for future success. We must also work together to create a community that cares and acts to support the health and development of our children.

In CATCH - Community Action Toward Children's Health – over 100 organizations are working together to . . .

- **advocate** to make our community the best place possible for all our children to develop and become as healthy as possible – physically, emotionally, intellectually, socially, spiritually.
- **create and improve services and supports** for parents and families
- **improve awareness and connection** to services and supports
- **facilitate** on-going professional development for those who work with children and parents.
- **evaluate and learn how to improve** the effectiveness and appropriateness of our efforts.

**What role could you play?**

**For more information see [www.catch.silk.net](http://www.catch.silk.net) and contact your child development coalition**



## *B. Summary of the Second CATCH Report*

**CATCH is a community movement** - a grand coalition vehicle - to assist children

and young families in the Central Okanagan region to get to the best possible future. Over the past 3 years, over 400 people and 100 organizations have united in a common mission of "**working together for the healthy development of all children in the early years**" and the vision, beliefs and actions

expressed in

the CATCH

Charter. By

working

together,

we've made

considerable

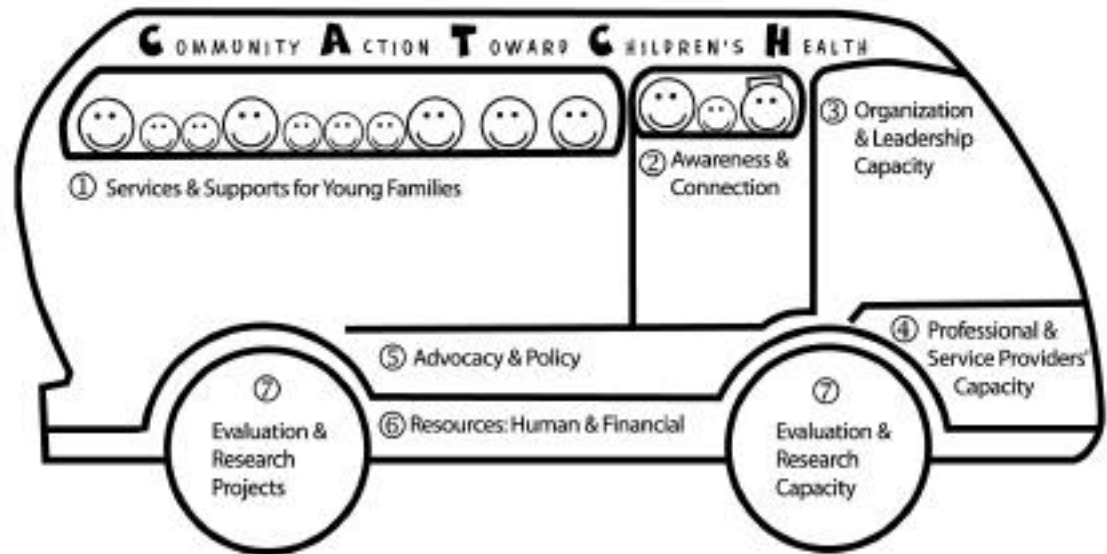
progress on

seven key

action areas,

as depicted in

our "bus" image and described below.



**#1: Services & Supports for Young Families** have been enhanced and initiated in response to the dreams and challenges articulated by interest groups surveyed in our first year. A common dream was that "**all parents have access to quality opportunities to learn, and to become the best parents they can be.**" CATCH and host agency Okanagan Families Society brought together over 20 organizations to develop the "**Parenting With Purpose**" project. The coalition members and coordinator, Trudy Battaglio, received support from the Vancouver Foundation, the Health Region, Central Okanagan Foundation and City of Kelowna, and have opened many new doors. Groups of parents that, previously, could not access learning opportunities due to barriers of culture, lifestyle, finances, and poverty are now on the path to becoming **the best parents they can be**. Existing programs were evaluated and enhanced, and a strategy to ensure sustainability is being implemented.

The **Family Friend** project, hosted by Kelowna Community Resources, realized another community dream – "**trained, experienced parents as volunteer mentors that can support parents and families in need.**" In the first year, 25 volunteers were trained by Coordinator Bev Colbow, and 22 families now have the support that will make a difference in their lives and in the lives of their children.

The **Bankhead Family Place** team, led by Linda McKinlay, is creating an environment for individual and group instruction in **parenting and developmental play**. Research in Canada and U.S. demonstrated that this approach can greatly enhance a child's abilities – intellectual, social and emotional. This will facilitate earlier detection of sensory and developmental delay, enhance social support and enable parents to address other childhood and family problems. The team has created plans and assembled nearly all of the funds necessary to open the first "family place" in October 2002. The donors and funders will be announced as soon as agreements are finalized.

The **Family Resource Centre** team, led by Dr. Tom Warshawski, advanced the vision of a **"one-stop interdisciplinary shop to address child & young family health issues."** They identified the greatest need - **child mental & emotional health and behavioral issues** - drafted a 3-stage plan, and created a coalition of interest groups. Once provincial government dynamics are stabilized, plans will be developed further and an implementation date will be set.

Within the limits of our human and financial resources, **CATCH is working to improve and promote existing programs**. Progress has been made in promoting **breastfeeding, speech & language development, family literacy, developing spirituality and marriage preparation**, as well as programs to **prevent fetal alcohol exposure, reducing early exposure to tobacco smoke, childhood disease and cancer**.

**#2: Awareness & Access to Services** for **child development and parenting issues** is also a key. Last year, we promoted services through eight community events, with 22 volunteers reaching out to over 1000 people. Almost 600 families came to learn from over 50 presenters at our two **Children's Health Fairs**. Our web-based **Directory of Programs and Services** was officially launched in November 2000 and has grown quickly with funding from the Community Health Advisory Council. Efforts to establish a **Parents' Hotline** have changed direction to support development and improvement of several new Help lines: a national Parents' Hotline, the BC Health Information system and our local Seniors' HealthLink, developing with Federal government support. CATCH engaged 40 parents in evaluating the hotlines, and is helping these systems to support our parents more effectively.

**#3: Organization & Leadership**. In our first year, we promoted "the cause" of child development, collected the dreams and developed relationships among dozens of partners, and articulated a **Charter** that outlines our mission, beliefs and commitments.

# Community Action Toward Children's Health Charter

## Partners with Parents:

Okanagan Similkameen Health Region, Provincial ministries serving children & Families, School District #23, Agencies Serving Children & Parents, Okanagan Regional Library, Foundations, Societies, Okanagan University College Faculty & Students, Family Physicians, Pediatricians, Health Professionals, Faith Communities, Counsellors, Family Therapists, Service clubs, Local, Provincial & Local Politicians, Community Planners, Decision Makers, Local Businesses, Corporations, Health Networks & Societies, Royal Canadian Mounted Police, First Nations, Rural Communities, Recreation Organizations, Community Schools, Childcare Providers, Preschool Groups, Archers, Advocacy Leaders, Media Organizations, Neighborhood Associations, Students, Teachers, Grandparents, Aunts & Uncles, Interested Citizens

**Vision:** We look forward to a future in which all of our . . .

- **children** -- including those with special needs and from diverse cultures -- will be safe, secure and loved. They will all have the opportunity to develop to their fullest potentials -- free of limitations resulting from preventable conditions -- and will be ready to learn.
- **parents** will be knowledgeable, motivated and effective in their parenting role
- **community members** will value children and parenting, and will take collective responsibility for child health and development.
- **organizations and people** working together effectively, with a common vision in support of children and their parents.

**Beliefs:** We believe that . . .

- child health & development determines future health & success in life.
- many differences in development at school entry are preventable
- children have a right to grow up in healthy environments (as outlined in the UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child).
- as a community and as individuals, we have a collective responsibility for our children's health and development.
- being proactive, promoting health and preventing problems is essential.
- a healthy community is essential for raising healthy children.
- investing in children is investing in our community and society.
- parents have a challenging and pivotal role, and deserve our support.
- working together will enable us to overcome barriers. Parents and all interest groups need to be involved in decisions and leadership.

**Mission:** We will work together for the healthy development of children in the early years (conception to school entry) in the Central Okanagan.

**Commitments:** We agree to work together to . . .

- **advocate and act** to make our community the best place possible for all our children to develop and become as healthy as possible – physically, emotionally, intellectually, socially, spiritually.
- **create environments** where parents and families are supported in their roles to promote healthy family environments.
- **facilitate** on-going development of those who work with young children and parents, integrating and sharing experience to improve approaches.
- **evaluate and continuously improve** the effectiveness and appropriateness of our efforts.
- **demonstrate** our commitments in our policies, practices and relationships.

**Timeframe:** This movement will evolve through our leadership and collaboration over a period of 6 years. By December 2005, we hope to have established the capacity for self-sustaining action. Evaluation completed by that time will inform future directions.

**In the second year**, teams formed and began systematically turning the dreams into realities. The steering group of the first year evolved into **CATCH Council** in the second year. These representatives from all interest groups gathered monthly for networking, updates, identifying needs, engaging new partners, strategizing, coordinating initiatives and advocacy. At the end of Year 2, we separated into two groups – a leadership team and a network - to better meet members' needs.

Members of our **Leadership Team**, chaired by David Griffin, have committed to a two-year term, and dedicated time to develop into effective advisors and communicators. They address controversies, advocate for funding and develop plans for sustainability. Our **Network** comprises all who wish to be in the communication loop. They receive updates and come together for networking, professional development, and planning strategies to address common concerns. CATCH Network members also support the development of associated community organizations and individuals.

Near the end of our third year, we received designation as a federal / provincial "Learning Site" for early child development. The new resources will support initiatives for children and parents. The new responsibilities will catalyze another step in development of organization and leadership capacity.

**#4: Supporting Service Providers.** CATCH supported professional development on **Motivating for Change, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome/Effects** and **Program Evaluation**. One of the dreams "**that delay in child development would be detected and addressed earlier in the child's life, while the opportunity was greatest**" is becoming reality through the efforts of Kelowna Child Care Society, under the leadership of Lynn Burgat and Geordie Belinski. They developed a resource guide on **Early Detection of Development Delay** and conducted programs to support adoption of best practices by service providers and parents.



**#5: Advocacy & Policy Development.** Local CATCH advocacy included work with the School District, City, Regional District, Community Health Advisory Council and Health Region to encourage policy and planning directions that are friendly to young families. It also included work with local business and organizations. The *Tuned Into Families* Team, coordinated by Faye Sheldon, advanced the mission to "**encourage the development of work environments that are mutually beneficial for families and employers.**" The team includes representatives from our Chambers of Commerce, Economic Development Commission and municipal government. They are surveying businesses and promoting the concept in a forum for business and workplace leaders in May. This effort built on a **previous campaign with businesses, our Chambers of Commerce, and municipal politicians** that attracted nearly 100 business and organizational leaders.

**On a regional level,** we have been actively supporting the formation of coalitions in Vernon, Penticton and Oliver/Osoyoos/Keremeos. We can attract additional resources and realize gains in efficiency and effectiveness by collaborating on this level. We are also learning from one another and sharing expertise.

**On a provincial level,** we presented our concepts to the Provincial Budget Consultation, the Liberal Party Roundtable on Health, and Linda Reid (now Minister of State for Early Childhood Development). We have joined with other BC communities in the *First Call* coalition, to form a stronger voice for child development at upper provincial levels, share mobilization strategies and presentation resources. In the third year, CATCH is part of a provincial task force to stimulate **intersectoral collaboration** – among provincial government ministries, municipal governments, provincial advocacy groups, academic units, corporate supporters and community coalitions.

**On the federal level,** we met with leaders in the Departments of Justice, Health and HRDC, and are developing strategies and proposals for securing support from these agencies.

**#6: Human & Financial Resources.** In Year 2, over 200 volunteers and students assisted with our Children's Health Fair, summer promotion events, research projects, communication activities and proposal development. When the calculation is completed for Year 3, we estimate that members of over 20 teams will have contributed over one thousand hours to design projects, craft proposals, present to funders, negotiate agreements, and coordinate projects.

**Our core funding** has been provided by the Health Region, Ministry for Child & Family Development and the Regional District. Applications for **Project funding** are "lightly" coordinated by CATCH to avoid competition among local groups where possible. Project teams have developed

proposals for private, government and business sources. In the second year, CATCH gathered over \$30,000 in external funding, and over \$20,000 cash and in-kind donations from local businesses. Third year totals are not yet calculated but will be considerably higher. As a designated "Learning Site," we will receive three years of major funding for evaluation, research into supporting child development and for specific initiatives for children and parents.

**#7: Evaluation and Research.** In order to continuously improve our programs, understand costs and benefits, focus resources, and be effective in policy discussions, we continue to . . .

- **Build capacity of our team** of researchers – OUC and UBC Faculty, individual staff in partner agencies, and national leaders in research and advocacy.
- **Articulate a framework for evaluation & research** that links various programs, themes and community level activities
- **Enhance program evaluations** – supporting development of effective, efficient, appropriate and linked evaluation designs (process and outcome) for all related programs.
- **Link outcome measures for children and parents** - beginning with parenting education.
- **Implement the “Early Development Instrument”** – planning for February, 2003
- **Map community assets and factors influencing health and development**
- **Document growth in community capacity** for advocacy, policy development, professional development, acquiring resources, evaluation, communicating our learning and supporting other communities.

We encourage you to join us in making a difference for our youngest children & families!

*The CATCH Leadership Team:*



Mike Morrill (CO Child Development Association), Carol Derickson (First Nations), Lynn Burgat (Kelowna Childcare Society), Sharon Shepherd (City of Kelowna), Dr. Eugene Krupa (CATCH Facilitator), Mary Bates (Health Region), Wendy Majewski (City of Kelowna Recreation), Amy Fulton (CATCH Project Assistant), Canon David Griffin (Ministerial Association), Laurie MacDonald (Okanagan University College). **Missing:** Terry-Lee Beaudry (School District #23), Doug Hughes (Ministry for Child & Family Development), Mary-Ann Graham (CO Regional District), Lesley Dyck (Health Region), Shelley Inglis (YM/YWCA)

## ***C. 25 ways elected officials made a difference***

### **1. Enhancing Supports and Services**

- letters of support for proposals – PWP
- Workplaces: *Tuned into Families* committee

### **2. Awareness and Connection**

- Com. Hlth Council - fund web-based directory
- facility for health fair

### **3. Organization and Leadership**

- CATCH Council
- CATCH Leadership Team
- special tasks – Learning Site design
- volunteer and donor recognition

### **4. Building Service Providers' Capacity**

- childcare
- program evaluation
- fetal alcohol prevention
- regular affirmation ----->

### **5. Advocacy and Policy**

- arranging for presentations to City Council
- arranging presentations to Regional District
- connections - Chambers and business groups
- connections with arts and other groups
- set up mtgs with MLAs
- official community plan
- child and family impact assessment

### **6. Resources: Human and Financial**

- meeting rooms & facilities
- social planning council grants
- annual contribution to leadership costs
- fundraising for member organizations
- connecting with business sponsors and community leaders

### **7. Evaluation and Research**

- letters of support - Community Alliance for Health Research, Population Health Research Centre
- mapping assets – City planners with RCMP, Regional planning dept. with current large-scale initiative

### **Other:**

- nominations for awards (Child and Youth Friendly Community)
- promoting awareness sessions with special guests
- poverty initiative
- increasing public awareness and valuing through comments at public events
- hosts and MCs at public events in support of child development and young families

