

**December 2015**

**London's Family Centred Service  
System Common Experiences  
Committee**

*Committee Members:*

*H. Gerrits Thames Valley District School Board*

*I. Gibb City of London*

*J. Norris Thames Valley District School Board*

*P. Moffat Western Day Care*

*G. Catherwood South London Neighbourhood Resource Centre*

*D. Gillis Merrymount Crisis and Family Support Centre*

*P. Mazariegos Merrymount Crisis and Family Support Centre*

*C. Dowell London Children's Connection*

*L. Gower YMCA of Western Ontario*

*J. Brandl London Public Library*

## Table of Contents Summary – 2015 Common Experiences Committee

1. Connecting Families to Services
  - a) The Community Connector
  - b) Intentional Connectivity
  - c) Skills and Attributes of the Community Connector
  
2. Programs, Functions and Services
  - a) Program Groupings
  - b) Core Functions
  - c) Non-Core Functions
  - d) Shared Professional Language
  - e) Program Grouping Common Measureable Outcomes
  
3. Common Values and Principles
  - a) Shared Values
  - b) Core Guiding Principles
  
4. A Neighbourhood Approach
  - a) Interprofessional Communities of Practice
  - b) Integration of Child and Youth Network priorities
  - c) Common approach to planning
  
5. Partner Roles and Responsibilities
  - a) Different Roles for Different Partners
  - b) Residents and Associations
  - c) Signatories of the Memorandum of System Participation
  - d) Community Connectors within Family Centres
  - e) Community connectors in the neighbourhood
  - f) Community Connector System Coordinator
  - g) Lead Agency
  - h) Site Manager of the Lead Agency
  - i) School Boards
  - j) Backbone
  
6. Architectural and Design Considerations
  - a) The importance of Architectural Design
  - b) Consistency between neighbourhoods
  - c) Branding
  - d) Creating a welcoming environment
  - e) Effective and Efficient Space
  - f) Supporting an InterProfessional Community of Practice

Schedule 2- interior and Exterior Spatial Requirements and Comments  
Appendix 1 – Functions, Common Approaches and Outcomes

## London's Neighbourhood Family Centres

### The Common Experiences Committee 2015

The Child and Youth Network's vision for a family centred service system is built around a strategy that includes the development of a planned system of Family Centres in every neighbourhood in London. One of the greatest challenges in establishing this network is to minimize difference between locations in the scope and availability of programs and services that are available to families.

The original Common Experiences committee was struck in 2010 to identify common elements that would be required in order to develop a system of Family Centres. This committee was to develop the vision for the family's experience in Family Centres. As they wrote the vision for families, other committees worked on other areas of implementation to be drawn together over the next 5 years of implementation.

In 2015, several years into implementing this vision, the Family Centred Service System Governance committee identified updating the Common Experiences document as a priority. The experience of implementation of the vision and an ever changing context provided the reconvened committee to update it's relevance to the 2015 London context while maintaining the importance of the vision of a network of Family Centres in every London neighbourhood.

When the review was undertaken, the committee identified the importance of putting true experiences into the document. Many of the examples in action are from experiences in the current Family Centres. The neighbourhood approach has been further developed and defined through the process of implementing the vision for Family centres as well as the roles and responsibilities of a variety of actors within the system. This approach is consistent across the network and required the emphasis of the document to be focused on how families are able to access seamless integrated quality services in their neighbourhood with the Family Centre.

The common experiences document maintains the original mandate to define ways to ensure that the family's experience is consistent and positive across the entire network. The Common Experiences document of 2015 is one that can guide the work the Family Centred Service System for the development of Family Centres to the year. Over the next 5 years, London's Child and Youth Network will continue to learn and grow.

# The Community Connector: Connecting Families to Services

## The Community Connector

When we began our work, London families told us the system of services was not working for them. Families found the system difficult to navigate, they saw a lot of duplication, and they were waiting too long to receive the services they needed. In response, the CYN created its Family-Centred Service System strategy.

Family Centres aren't just about locating services from different service providers under the same roof; It is not enough to simply provide the service – the ultimate purpose of the Family Centre is also to make sure that families find it easier to navigate the children's services system, and that they are able to easily make real connections to the programs and the services they need. This critical function requires an environment that makes them feel welcome and secure and provides a personal and individual approach to every parent and child.

In our vision for a family-centred service delivery system, when families open the door to any Family Centre they will feel welcomed and receive an individualized approach to supporting their family. They will learn about and be intentionally connect to services that are appropriate for them in their community.

It is not enough to simply provide services – the ultimate purpose of the Family-Centred Service System is to make it easier for families to navigate the service system. By connecting families in a knowledgeable, consistent, friendly manner, the Community Connector (and by extension the Family-Centred Service System) improves outcomes for London's families by addressing the fragmented service system. They intentionally connect families to more opportunities that will help them be successful in all aspects of their lives.

The Community Connector Function is one that requires highly skilled individuals who are able to demonstrate several vocational competencies including:

- Facilitating Intentional Connectivity to services by providing a personal and individual approach to every parent, caregiver and child
- Demonstrating extensive knowledge of all the programs and services available within the Family Centres and those available throughout the community
- Supporting appropriate Human Resource Development
- Applying effective administrative support that will enhance the quality of support being provided
- Performing ongoing self-assessment and utilize self-care strategies to enhance professional competence

Some of the key attributes an individual would have to support the development of these competencies are:

- Trustworthy
- Respectful of confidentiality
- Discrete
- Local to the Community
- Culturally competent
- A Good listener and non-judgemental
- Independent and Self-motivated and curious
- Friendly, outgoing and professional
- Reliable
- Presentable
- Kind and caring with a warm smile
- Energetic and enthusiastic

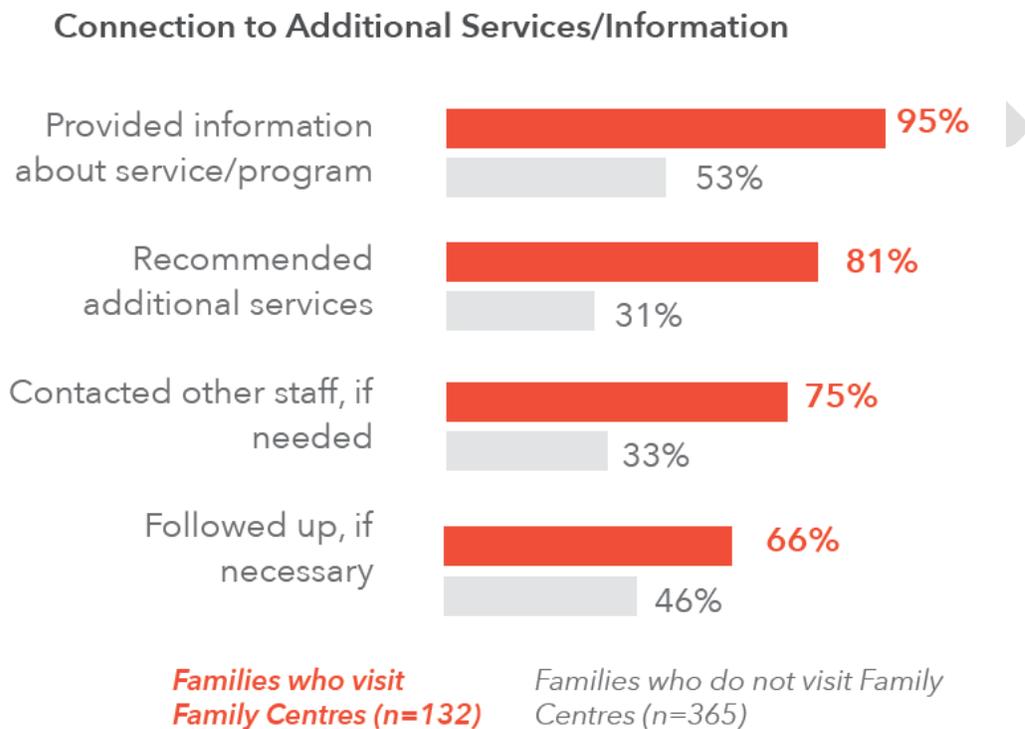
### Intentional Connectivity

The vision for intentional connectivity is a process that goes beyond simply letting parents know about the services that are available to proactively helping connect to them. Having the Community Connector assist with program registration, make appointments for the family and introducing the parent and/or child to the Program Facilitator are examples of how intentional connectivity can be achieved in Family Centres. In addition, if referrals to specialized programs in the community are necessary, the Community Connector can help streamline the process by assisting the family in making the appointment and by eliminating the need for them to repeat their entire story for each referral.

Another level of ensuring the family's experience is as successful and rewarding as possible is for the Community Connector role to be pro-active in guiding parents and children to additional programs or services that might be of interest or beneficial to them – a process that has been characterized as “Oh, by the way” moments. An example of this might be if a mom is signing in her 8 year old for a cooking program and the Community Connector sees that the mom also has a four year old son, the Community Connector might say “Oh, by the way, I see your son has picked up a book from the book shelf in the Lobby. Did you know that Alison from the library comes to our playgroups every Thursday for story time? Some of our parents have also established a book exchange within the Family Centre? Or that the school is running an event for all families that will be starting school in the fall? If you like I can register you and your son for that event right now. Then we can walk over and I can introduce you and your son to Patti, our Literacy Consultant, who will help him pick out a couple of games that help develop the skills for reading that you can play together at home”

A 2014 assessment of the Family-Centred Service System substantiated the value of the Community Connector in supporting families. This assessment interviewed hundreds of London families as well as service providers that are part of the Family-Centred Service System.

Through the assessment, both families and service providers expressed the importance of the Community Connector function in providing families with a more seamless service experience. The Community Connectors' extensive knowledge of the service system enabled families to connect with more services, more simply. The impact of the Community Connector and Family Centre experience is expressed in the following figures that compare the experiences of families who do and do not visit a Family Centre:



## Primary Community Connectors and Neighbourhood Community Connectors

It should be noted that all members of the Family Centred Service System are responsible for using a family centred approach that is individualized and pro-active. In this way, all members of the system are considered connectors and are responsible for intentionally connecting families to services in the neighbourhood and beyond or to the Family Centre for that support

All staff in the community provide some form of intentional connectivity to families within the community and are considered connectors. The Primary Community Connector and the Neighbourhood or Family Centre community connectors work collaboratively, sharing information with each other and understanding how their services are part of a larger system services families they work with are accessing. As members of the Family Centred Service System they connect families intentionally to either the Family Centre for greater support or to other services in the neighbourhood.

## The Neighbourhood Approach

### Collaborative Planning

The Neighbourhood Approach to planning is one of the key strategies to build a network of intentionally connected high quality programs and services that families can access close to home. The Family Centre is the vehicle which drives integrated service planning and provides opportunities for professionals to collaborate with residents. Residents bring their expertise to the table and are an active part of making decisions that will affect their community and their families. Residents and professionals together have a shared ownership of the process and its outcomes.

The Family Centre Neighbourhood Planning process is one that involves professionals and families who live and work in the neighbourhood developing a Neighbourhood Service Plan. This team collaboratively responds to questions in the Service Plan that was developed at a system level

. These questions are meant to drive the implementation of the system vision for families in London at a neighbourhood level where families directly experience the service system. The Family Centre Neighbourhood planning process provides the opportunity to build an evidence-informed, interprofessional strategic Neighbourhood Service Plan for programs, services and functions. It builds on the assets of the community and supports each family to reach their full potential.

The process to complete the Neighbourhood Service Plan agreement is the same across every neighbourhood. Each Neighbourhood Service Plan is unique based on the

uniqueness of the community the service provider partners involved.

Grounding this plan are the voices of residents who are experts in their own lives and share what is important to them and their community. This team of professionals and families is held accountable for the plan they develop to the families in the neighbourhood, themselves and the Family Centred Service System Governance Committee.

### Interprofessional Practice

The Neighbourhood Planning Teams are comprised of a variety of Family Centred Service System members from across sectors who are working with families in the neighbourhood. Many of these providers will work within the Family Centre, but others are working with families elsewhere in the community. All organizations and individuals who are actively taking a role in the lives of children, youth and parents in the community are invited to participate as valued members of the Interprofessional team. This process invites community voices to the table to be an active part of the decisions that directly affects their lives.

This multi-sectoral planning with families requires well developed interprofessional competencies. The use of the Interprofessional Communities of Practice Toolkit supports team members to develop the competencies of a strong InterProfessional team. Competencies for the team include: a collaborative leadership model, role clarification, team functioning, family centred service, conflict resolution and InterProfessional communication. Building a team that understands and respects the strengths and expertise of all its members and puts families at the centre assists the group in working together to use resources in a way that is evidence informed and grounded in the strengths of that community.

Team members use both their personal and professional lens' to support planning and collaboration. All Family Centre Neighbourhoods use and Interprofessional Approach to build relationships and have shared learning between professionals and families. These relationships create better and more informed referrals within the service system. Service providers are better able to share accurate information with families. When families have this fuller understanding of what is available to them in the community they are better able to make more informed and empowered choices for what's right for their family.

### Integration of Child and Youth Network Priorities

Family Centres support the integration of the work of the Child and Youth Network into

neighbourhoods' and organizations' activities. Family Centres provide opportunities through the planning process to integrate the work of the Child and Youth Network into the ongoing work of organizations when new activities or programs are considered in the neighbourhood. This planning process uses a lens that includes making literacy a way of life, creates opportunities and environments for healthy eating and healthy physical activity and end poverty. Organizations and residents are engaged in the work of the entire Child and Youth Network at a neighbourhood level that connects personally with residents of the city.

The objectives of the Child and Youth Network priorities are built into the physical environment of the Family Centres, integrated into programs offered within the Family Centre and the neighbourhood and are actively promoted by the Family Centre in communication to residents and partners.

For example, the Family Centre White Oaks engaged residents to photograph examples of everyday literacy in their neighbourhoods as part of a literacy awareness campaign. These images were also posted within the Family Centre to adorn the walls of the Family Centre with images of those who live and work within their community doing everyday literacy activities. It leveraged the existing literacy priority's literacy blocks which serve as focal points with all Family Centres. Not only did the images promote literacy within the Family Centre, it actively engaged residents in the campaign as leaders and ambassadors for encouraging family literacy.

## Family Centres Programs, Functions and Services

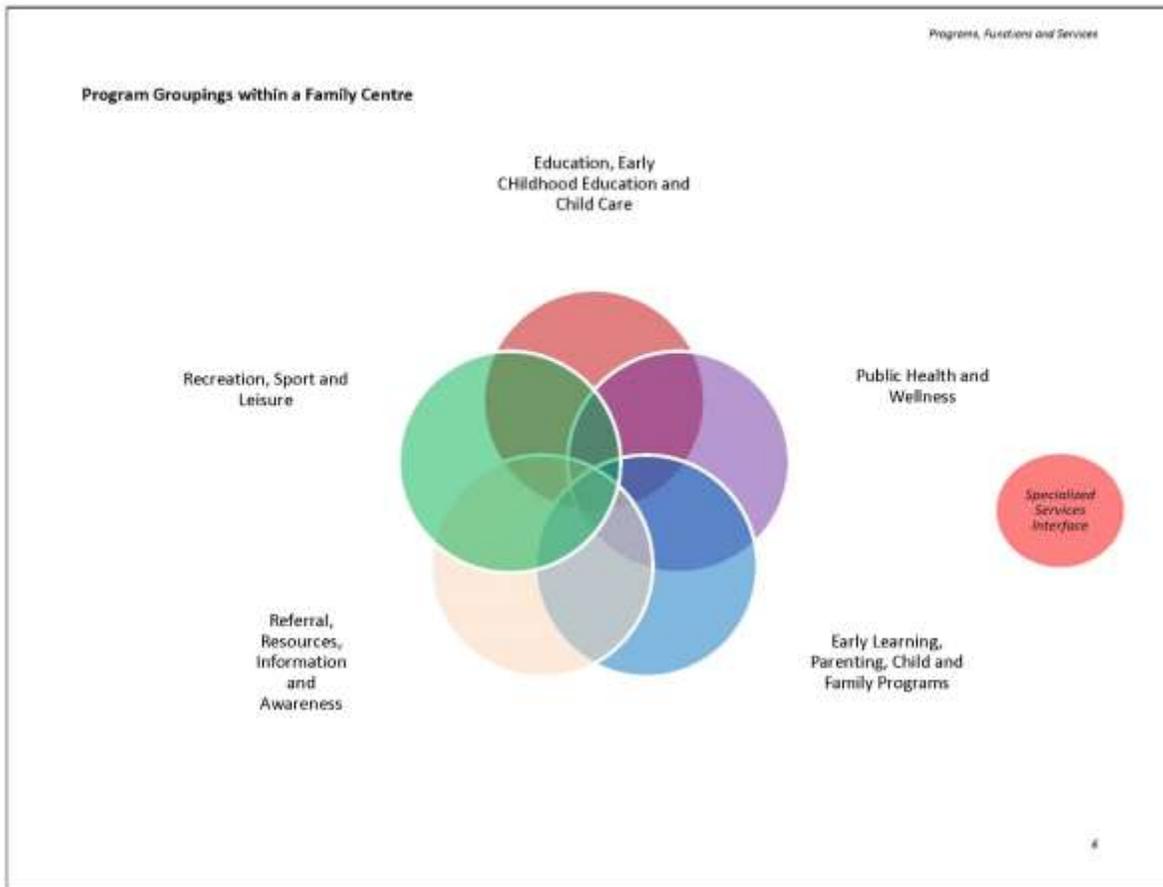
### Program Groupings

Every Family Centre will be able to intentionally connect families to a core group of programs, functions and services within the Family Centre and the surrounding neighbourhood. The original Common Experiences Committee examined the majority of programs, functions and services available for children that were London, classifying these into the following five major Program Groupings:

- Parenting, Early Learning, Child and Family Programs
- Education, Early Childhood Education and Child Care
- Public Health and Wellness
- Recreation, Sports and Leisure
- Referral, Resources, Information and Awareness

A sixth grouping classified as the Specialized Services Interface which facilitates the connection between children and families in the community who have specialized needs and can be intentionally connected to those services. The specialized services grouping is also offered inside the Family Centre as a neighbourhood access point linked to universal programs and supports for families.

The graphic on below illustrates the inter-relationship of the six Program Groupings. These Program Groupings are somewhat artificial, and mainly serve to provide basic organizational structure to the Programs, Functions and Services the Family Centre assists families in connecting to. In reality, there is a great deal of overlap amongst the programs offered – for example literacy can be found in virtually every program that will be offered, and nutrition could be as much a part of Public Health and Wellness as it is of Recreation, Sports and Leisure. Throughout all functions the priorities of the Child and Youth Network are integrated into the service offerings.



## Universal Program Principles

All programs and functions offered within the Family Centre and connected to the Family Centre as part of the Neighbourhood Service Plan follow common principles and approaches. All programs offered within the Family Centre and associated with the Family Centre will apply the same universal program approaches.

- Family centred
- Culturally sensitive (parenting styles and approaches vary by culture) Multi-lingual (where required)
- Inclusive, accessible, flexible and universal
- Welcoming, safe, non-judgemental, non-stigmatizing

- Age and developmentally appropriate
- Provided/facilitated by appropriately qualified professionals
- Use common frameworks that have been widely supported and/or adopted by professional regulating bodies or endorsed by the Child and Youth Network (for example CYN Youthframework)
- Use evidence informed practices with outcomes that are measurable

Each core function has its own specific criteria that supports an evidence informed approach. For a listing of the common Principles and Approaches for each specific program grouping refer to Appendix 1.

## Core Functions

All Family Centres will provide the following types of programs, functions and services from birth to youth or will be able to intentionally connect families to these programs, functions and services available in their neighbourhood. For detailed descriptions of the program specific principles and outcomes please refer to appendix A.

### **Parenting, Early Learning, Child and Family Programs**

- Parenting Strategies
- Attachment (Social Emotional)
- Child development including Literacy, Numeracy and Language Development
- Play Groups

### **Public Health and Wellness**

- Pre-natal Support
- Post-natal Support
- Early Screening and Assessment

### **Education, Early Childhood Education and Child Care**

- School – FDK – Grade 8
- Centre Based Licensed Child Care – Ages 0 to 6
- Licensed School Age Care – Ages 4 – 12
- Licensed Non-Traditional Hours Care – Ages 0 -12
- Pre-Kindergarten Early Learning Programs – Ages 2 – 5
- Non-instructional Day School Age Care – Ages 4 – 12
- Licensed home child care –ages 0-12

Note – the exact type of the these services will be determined by the

community

### **Recreation, Sports and Leisure**

- Physical Activity Programming
- Arts/Culture Programming
- Applied Skills and Crafts
- Club Programs
- Summer “Extended” Programming
- Creative, Free Play Programming

### **Referral, Resources, Information and Awareness**

- Child Care
  - Common Wait List for licensed programs
  - Information and referral – Centre based and licensed home
  - Information about child care options and making a quality child care choice
  - Fee Subsidy Access
- Family Literacy
- Public Education and Referral
- Income Support Referral
- Basic Needs Supports
- Special Needs – Intake, Services and Referral
- Links to Neighbourhood events, activities and assets

### **Non-Core Functions**

In addition to Core Programs and Services the availability of the following types of Programs, Functions and Services at a Family Centre will be determined by the need in the community.

#### **Parenting, Early Learning, Child and Family Programs**

- Psycho-educational

#### **Public Health and Wellness**

- Health and Rehabilitation Programs
  - Dietician

- Occupational Therapy
- Physiotherapy
- Dentistry
- Optometry
- Nurse Practitioner
- Immunizations
- Speech & Language
- Sexual Health Services

**Referral, Resources, Information and Awareness**

- Settlement Services Referral
- Income Support Referral
- Social Services Referral

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## Family Centred Service System Common Values and Principles

London's vision for service delivery creates the expectation that there be significant consistency across the network of Family Centres in terms of the availability and delivery of programs and services. All organizations who participate in the Family Centred Service System and are associated with the Family Centre have signed a Memorandum of Understanding for System Participation which identifies the common values and principles that all members ascribe to.

These values and principles define the approach members of the Family Centred Service system use to build a stronger more family-centered service system through the Family Centres and their everyday practice as it relates to the Family Centred Service System.

Below you will find the common values all members of the Family Centred Service System ascribe to. These values are applied to how programs, services, functions and relationships are formulated within the Family Centres and those associated with the Family Centred Service System.

## Family Centred Service System Values

*These are the values that guide our shared work and define how the Family Centred Service System operates*

VALUES	FAMILY	PROFESSIONALS	NEIGHBOURHOOD
<b>Empowering</b>	<b>Families are experts in their own life experience.</b>		
<b>Engaging</b>	Families are informed, engaged and experts on their child's needs.	Professionals believe that families must have the opportunity and the resources to make informed choices.	The input of all residents is valued. All residents have real influence in the operation of the Family Centred Service System
<b>Respectful</b>	Families show respect for other families and professionals in the Family Centred Service System. Families are respectful of the values of other partners; the legislative mandate of specific service partners; and existing employment and other agreements that might exist.	Professionals and families listen to each other and work together to develop strength-based solutions, knowing that respect builds trusting relationships between children, families and colleagues. Professionals respect the environment they are working in and understand how their actions impact others working in the space. Professionals are respectful of the values of other partners; the legislative mandate of specific service partners; and existing employment and other agreements that might exist.	Residents know that integrity, respect and active listening are at the "heart" of the Family Centred Service System. Residents are respectful of the values of other partners; the legislative mandate of specific service partners; and existing employment and other agreements that might exist.
<b>Welcoming</b>	Every family is welcomed. All families are able to access programs and direct support or are linked to appropriate supports in a timely and non-judgemental manner.	Professionals consciously work to provide a welcoming and comfortable environment for families.	Residents know that the Family Centred Service System provides a place of comfort, safety and belonging for all.
<b>Inclusive</b>	Families are able to fully participate in and use services regardless of culture, socioeconomic status, or differing abilities.	Professionals communicate openly with families, community members and other professionals in the Family Centred Service System. Wherever possible, professionals are transparent and encourage partnerships.	Residents believe that the Family Centred Service System provides neighbourhood destinations that are fun, appealing and that support community mobilization. Residents understand that the Family Centred Service System renews the sense of community and promote diverse partnerships.
<b>Collaborative</b>	Families collaborate with service providers and other members of their community in the governance and operation of the Family Centred Service System.	Professionals collaborate with one or more members of a team, each of whom makes a unique contribution from within their scope of practice to the achievement of a common goal. Through this collaboration, professionals develop and provide services that are comprehensive, accessible, understandable and respectful.	Residents expect that the Family Centred Service System creates a collaborative environment with strong linkages and shared resources; where the culture is that every door is the right door.
<b>Creative</b>	Families feel comfortable working with professionals and other community members to explore new and creative ways of serving the community.	Professionals are willing to work with families to find "out-of-the-box" approaches to meeting their needs.	Residents look to the Family Centred Service System for creative, flexible and focused solutions that are provided with clarity and simplicity.
<b>Accessible</b>	Families expect a barrier free environment and actively work with the Family Centred Service System to identify and eliminate any barriers that may exist.	Professionals are flexible and strive to accommodate everyone with accessibility issues.	Residents work with the Family Centred Service System to support the removal of all barriers.
<b>Equitable</b>	All families have equal access to consistent quality services and customized care in their neighbourhood.	Professionals strive to provide equitable services that are customized to best meet the unique needs of each family.	Residents believe that the Family Centred Service System promotes equal access to quality services and customized care in neighbourhoods.
<b>Accountable</b>	Families, Professionals and Neighbourhood Residents share the responsibility for keeping the Family Centred Service Systems accountable for the delivery of family centred services		

## Core Operating Principles

In addition to the values that are applied by participants within the Family Centred Service System, guiding principles inform the shared approach that all members apply when working with families within the Family Centres and the Family Centred Service System.

**Community and Parent/Family Engagement** - Formal and informal structures and strategies are in place that support community and parent/family engagement in ensuring neighbourhood priorities are met.

**Governance** - All partners in the Family Centred Service System participate and are engaged in decision making processes as a single

**Integration, Coordination, Collaboration** – All partners in the Family Centred Service System are encouraged and supported to engage in greater degrees of joint service activity that moves us as a community from service awareness to service integration.

**Intentional Connectivity** – All partners in the Family Centred Service System share the responsibility for pro-actively connecting families to the functions, services and resources from which they can benefit; regardless of whether that service, function or resource is provided by the Partner's organization or another Partner or Stakeholder organization; or whether is provided at the Family Centre or elsewhere in the community.

**Measurement, Evaluation and Accountability** - Each partner in the Family Centred Service System takes responsibility for contributing to the achievement of the Family Centred Service System. Decisions are made and the monitoring, evaluation and accountability processes associated with those decisions are undertaken in a planned, known manner.

**Openness and Transparency** – Open communication lines are maintained to ensure that all partners in the Family Centred Service System are informed (i.e. have access to accurate, consistent and clear information) and have confidence in the decision making process. Information is freely available and directly accessible and is provided in an easily understandable form.

**Professionalism and Integrity** – All partners in the Family Centred Service System demonstrate honesty, objectivity and propriety. All partners in the Family Centred Service System use appropriately credentialed and/or qualified professionals to deliver the system’s functions and services. All professionals working in the Family Centred Service System agree to collaborate in creating and sustaining an Inter-Professional Community of Practice.

**Service Excellence and Innovation** - All partners in the Family Centred Service System are open to learning from promising practices, taking appropriate risks, and are open to new opportunities and challenges with the objective of building a more effective and comprehensive family-centred service system.

**Shared Framework** - All partners in the Family Centred Service System agree to work together within the shared professional, operational, and financial framework established by the Family Centred Service System Governance Body.

## Neighbourhood Identification

Neighbourhood Family Centres are located where families live to make it easier to access all programs, services and opportunities that support them to achieve their full potential. Family Centres are located in neighbourhood schools to promote access to the service system in locations where families already gather and build an early connection to learning.

In 2010, locations for Family Centres were identified using a variety of criteria, including demographics, by planning district. From this list, the community identified existing opportunities as readiness and worked with the school boards to identify available spaces. “Neighborhoods have been defined in both social and physical terms. The geographic boundaries of neighborhoods expand or contract based on people's daily activities and socio -demographic background”<sup>1</sup>

Child and Youth Network community developers began engaging families using a place-based, physical definition of neighbourhood; the municipal planning district. Through the engagement process families identified for themselves which neighbourhood they belonged to. “The definition of neighbourhood can be either geographic – attachment to place and social – attachment to people.” It’s important to note that proximity to services is important to families and that “my neighbourhood” is defined by need and is individual. In some instances this aligned with the geographic planning district and in other situations it did not. For example, many families who lived outside of the Carling planning district identified themselves with the Family Centre Carling-Thames and those further in the planning district did not.

The planning district still remains the best tool to consider Family Centre placements with the understanding that all are welcome and the geographic and social neighbourhoods may not always align.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://activelivingresearch.org/operational-definitions-walkable-neighborhood-theoretical-and-empirical-insights>. Moudon, PH.D., et al., “ Empirical Definitions of Walkable Neighborhood: Empirical and Theoretical Insights” (paper presented at Active Living Research Conference, Coronado California FEB 2005)

## Roles and Responsibilities

As the System of Family Centres continues to grow, a variety of actors with various roles and responsibilities support its success. The Common Experiences Committee of 2015 have further developed the roles and responsibilities based on learning in neighbourhoods and at a system level since the launch of the Family Centres in 2013. Examples of how these roles play out in day to day interactions are merely representative and not prescriptive.

### Role of Residents and Associations

- Identify and understand the unique aspects of each neighbourhood – the strengths and assets within each community and what each has to offer
- Guide the Family Centre and the neighbourhood in how best to serve and support the community
- Communicate information about the Family Centre and its activities in to their neighbours, including those not attached to programs or services
- Support the work of the Family Centre in the neighbourhood in a volunteer capacity
- Participate in a community development planning process

#### EXAMPLES IN ACTION:

Residents communicate the work of the Family Centres to families in the neighbourhood in a variety of ways such as, distributing flyers to their neighbourhoods about an upcoming event or general information about the Family Centre, sharing and liking items on Family Centre social media, writing a newsletter that highlights the work of the Family Centres. Residents have been part of neighbourhood planning meetings and grounded neighbourhood planning with a resident lens. In order to completely understand the neighbourhood residents have actively participated in focus groups, surveys and interviews.

Residents have also taken leadership roles in identifying programs and working with community partners provided programming and support to the neighbourhood. For example, the Resident Collaboration Team works in partnership with the Strategic Collaboration Team and a community developer to provide children's activities at a large Canada Day event. They've also supported a collaborative group of service providers to provide homework help in the neighbourhood- something identified by extensive engagement prior to opening the doors to the Family Centre.

Associations provide an important role in communities by building connections between neighbourhoods and families. Currently several community associations use the Family

Centre as a connection point for families and the broader community. These associations may not have signed a memorandum of understanding but follow the same values, principles and common policies held by Family Centred Service System members. They support the work of the Family Centre by connecting the members of their associations and the general population with Child and Youth Network activities and provide a voice to the many residents who live and work in the neighbourhoods where Family Centres are located.

### Role of Signatories of the Family Centered Service System Memorandum of Understanding

- Proactively connect families to all services available in the community or to the Family Centre
- Participate in neighbourhood -based planning if operating in a neighbourhood connected to Family Centre
- Participate as a member of the Interprofessional Communities of Practice in the neighbourhood
- Share referral information with the Family Centre to promote services on behalf of the system to families
- Actively participate as a member of the Family Centred Service System Governance to guide the system as a whole
- Represent themselves as members of the Family Centre or Family Centred Service System at alternate program locations and in the community
- Adhere to Neighbourhood Service Plan commitments as appropriate
- Using a community development approach to engage families in the neighbourhood to plan for programs and services
- Ascribe to the values and principles of the Family Centred Service System

#### EXAMPLES IN ACTION:

The library is offering a multitude of opportunities for families age 0-100. Programming takes place primarily onsite at the Library in the community. At a planning level, the library participates with other members of the service system at interprofessional neighbourhood planning meetings. They use a community development approach in their work by gathering information from patrons online and providing opportunities for residents to help guide the strategic plan for the library in person regularly. They also work closely with many community partners to bring services into the library that are in demand in the community and tailor their offerings to what local residents are looking for.

They provide their expertise in literacy and information and referral to others in the community as part of the interprofessional community of practice as a member of the Family Centre team. They also share information about strategic directions their

organization is taking based on research and community involvement and how this fits with the programs and services offered in the neighbourhood. They share trends and changes they are experiencing to help the community be more informed to plan for services.

When planning for programs they take into consideration gaps in the neighbourhood and link with community partners to develop programs that use their expertise and draw in those with expertise in other areas to customize programs as needed. As a source of information and referral they work closely with the Community Connector to share referrals and information not only about library programs but what others in the community are able to provide to the whole family. When they encounter a family who has more complex needs, they refer families to the Family Centre to assist with navigating and supporting them to intentionally connect to the service system.

At community events, they promote the services as the library and the fact that they are part of the Family Centred Service System and the Family Centre in the neighbourhood. Staff are able to highlight how the library is connected to the Family Centred Service System and what the Family Centre provides to families.

### Primary Community Connectors within the Family Centres

- Welcome families to the Family Centre and the service system on behalf of all Family Centred Service System members
- Proactively and intentionally connect families to opportunities and services in the neighbourhood and across the city
- Act as the single point of contact for service providers and associations to collect, and distribute information to the broader neighbourhood on behalf of the system
- Ascribe to the values and principles of the Family Centred Service System

### EXAMPLES IN ACTION:

The Community Connector at the Family Centre plays a central role in supporting the community to access services more easily. They welcome families into the Family Centre as the welcoming, supportive face of the entire service system. Their purpose is to connect families to programs and services which best support their needs, whether it's in the Family Centre in a room down the hall or a specialized service in the community. The Community Connector is responsible for keeping up to date not only with all the resources available in the community but also how to connect families to these services. They spend time doing research on behalf of families and partners and build strong relationships with service providers who provide services in the Family Centre and who work in the broader community. They are curious and ask questions of providers in order to share what they have learned with families and other partners. They are the voice of

the Service System through a variety of mediums to help connect families and providers with neighbourhood information.

The Community Connectors bring together information from all sources, organize it and redistribute it in a readable, useable format. They are the information conduit to assist partners with resources to support the families they work with. For example, the community connector in the Family Centres gathers information from providers about upcoming events, programs or opportunities for families. They then share it via social media with a target audience of parents, and through an e-newsletter with a target audience of providers. They share information daily through face to face interactions with families and providers in the community.

"I find it much easier to access services through the Family Centre, compared to other service providers. The Family Centre staff are warm, accommodating, patient, there to help with any questions, and there to connect you to any service that you may need, whether at the Family Centre or outside of the Family Centre. I feel comfortable accessing services for my children at the Family Centre, because I know that I can go to the staff for anything"<sup>2</sup>

The Community Connector takes time to build a trusting relationship with a family and uses an individualized approach to connecting families to quality programs and services available in the community and the city. The Community Connector seeks to build the capacity of families to access services for themselves by supporting them with intentional connections to services. This connection may be a personal introduction of the family to the program service provider, calling an intake line together, or gathering information to share with the family to help them take the next step to accessing services.

"The Family Centre helped to connect me to the services and information I needed. If staff didn't have answers to my questions, they would do research for me and get back to me in a timely manner (they have even called me with answers/information)"<sup>3</sup>

### Community Connectors within the Community

- During day to day activities in the neighbourhood provide information and referrals to families in the community
- Share organizational referral and programmatic information with the Big C Connectors at the Family Centre in order to facilitate intentional connectivity
- Refer families to the Family Centre to receive additional supports
- Ascribe to the values and principles of the Family Centred Service System

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<sup>2</sup> Anonymous. "Family Centred Service System Assessment" Malatest and Associates, Inc. 2013.

<sup>3</sup> Anonymous. "Family Centred Service System Assessment" Malatest and Associates, Inc. 2013.

## EXAMPLES IN ACTION:

The Family Centre is located in a neighbourhood with many programs running in the community. A basketball program runs weekly at an area school for children ages 7-9. The program started last year based on an identified desire by the residents in the neighbourhood to have more accessible physical activity programming in the neighbourhood for their school age children.

Scott runs the program and is skilled in High Five child development, and runs a fun group of registered children with a few spaces for drop in so the children can bring a friend. The highlight of the program for the children is a good-hearted parents vs kids game at the end of the session. This also serves as an opportunity for the Scott to connect with the children and their parents about what they would like to see in their neighbourhood. A few quick games to make feedback fun and a survey is completed at the end.

A parent who has attended a few sessions with their daughter, knows Scott's great with children and has a question for him about their 16 year old who they mention is "really having some trouble at school and could use some help. Maybe a basketball group would help" The staff person tells them about a drop in group happening on Tuesday nights. Scott also remembers during his orientation his supervisor who's part of the neighbourhood interprofessional team, mentioned the Community Connector at the Family Centre as a resource for families. He tells the family that the Community Connector at the Family Centre down the road has a lot of great information on all the activities and supports for young people in the area and could help them to find something their son may be interested in. He provides them with the information for the Family Centre. They may even have someone they could talk to, if they would like. Knowing Scott and trusting him after all these weeks with their daughter, they take the information and follow up with the Connector.

### Community Connector System Coordinator

- Lead the Community Connector Professional Learning Initiative;
- Act as a financial "clearinghouse" for the Community Connector function;
- Support Family Centre lead agencies to coordinate the placement of Community Connectors to meet
- Family Centre operational needs and the requirements of the lease agreements with school boards; and
- Support and monitor the effectiveness of Community Connector competencies across the system
- Ascribe to the values and principles of the Family Centred Service System

## EXAMPLE IN ACTION

The system coordinator supports a strong community of practice for community connectors within the city. They facilitate learning opportunities and opportunities to connect with each other. We expect this function to identify with community partners opportunities for support of the function of the Community Connector as well as seek additional supports for the function of the connector.

### Lead Agency

- Using a Community Development approach in all activities of the Family Centre and promoting a culture which supports Community Development
- Promoting a culture of Interprofessional Practice
- Facilitating the connection to organizations who are part of the Family Centred Service System and residents and associations of the neighbourhood
- Adhere to the requirements of the Service Plan
- Engage partners to provide core programs, function and services at the family Centre and as part of a neighbourhood planning process
- Ascribe to the values and principles of the Family Centred Service System

## EXAMPLES IN ACTION:

Lead Agencies actively identify the principles of interprofessional practice to partner organizations through the partnership agreement and the structure and process of meetings and shared communication. Lead agencies model a community development approach and include opportunities for engaging residents as part of the neighbourhood planning process and day to day activities at the Family Centre. They encourage the Interprofessional team to identify opportunities that support the group's efforts to address the needs of the community. The Lead Agencies, working with the Community Connector System Coordinator, will engage partners in the community when a gap is identified by the community, where appropriate.

### Administrative Lead Agency<sup>4</sup>

Support the operation of the Family Centre Facility including:

- Provide and maintain technology and telecommunications infrastructure
- Perform inspections as per workplace health and safety legislation

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<sup>4</sup> Where a co-lead agency arrangement exists within a neighbourhood. For administrative purposes, a single lead must perform the above noted duties in accordance with the lease agreements.

- Maintain an appropriate insurance as per lease requirements
- Oversee the day to day management of the Family Centre, including the people who work there
- Book space for partners in the Family Centre
- Adhere to the requirements of the lease agreement
- Liaise with school board staff for school facility issues
- Provide an onsite manager
- Ascribe to the values and principles of the Family Centred Service System

#### EXAMPLES IN ACTION:

Lead agencies work within their organizations to provide appropriate access to technology and telecommunications for all onsite work within the Family Centre. The site manager supports partners to access the Family Centre space and share information on policies and procedures contained in the Partnership Agreement. The site manager provides support to staff working on site from a variety of organizations, including those providing the function of Community Connector in association with the partner agency. The site manager provides procedures for booking space in the Family Centre and can support partners in linking with other agencies as appropriate.

The site manager works with partners to identify together mutual expectations for providing programs onsite- for example – who will set up and take down the room, identify and request promotional information to share with Community Connector. The site manager also liaises with the school staff to share facility information and collaborate on facility related safety issues – for example, lockdown procedures, fire drill plans.

### School Boards

#### A) School Boards as a Partner

- At a board level communicate to schools in the neighbourhood the availability of the Family Centre as a resource to staff, students and families to support educational outcomes.
- Participate as a member of the Interprofessional Community of Practice
- Teachers and support staff are aware and refer families to the Family Centre and its ability to support families beyond the resources available within schools.
- Teachers and support staff are aware and utilize the role of the Community Connector for their ability to provide information and resources about other providers in the community
- The school utilizes the Family Centre as a transitional space between the school and the community
- Ascribe to the values and principles of the Family Centred Service System

## EXAMPLES IN ACTION:

The school boards have actively identified individuals to act as ambassadors to other schools, and share what a Family Centre is and how their students and staff can connect to it. They actively share information about emerging trends and data with their partners who support children in the community and lend their expertise as educators to the Interprofessional Community of Practice. At the Family Centre White Oaks the Full Day Kindergarten teams and the Family Centre early years professionals participate together in the shared professional development and community of practice within the school. The Family Centre has served as a transition point for families who have children starting Full Day Kindergarten and are experiencing difficulties moving into the classroom. The Family Centre can also act as a quieter space for those children who require less stimulation. The school teams and the early years teams work collaboratively to use the school spaces and Family Centre spaces as seamless connections for families and children. They regularly share resources, expertise and space to support families in the neighbourhood.

### B) School Boards as landlords

- Perform all provincially mandated duties as identified within the Education Act.
- Provide support for facility related inquiries, repairs and maintenance
- Maintain a clean and safe environment for the community

## EXAMPLES IN ACTION:

The custodian, principal and site manager have developed a communication and safety plans for all drills associated with the school, i.e. Lockdown, fire drill. The site manager and charge custodian work together to repair and maintain the Family Centre facility as per the lease agreements for Family Centres. They work together with the lead agency to provide for the health and safety of all occupants of the school through collaborative planning for protocols.

### Backbone

- Guide Vision and Strategy
- Support aligned activities
- Established shared measurement practices
- Build Public Will
- Advance Policy

- Mobilize Funding<sup>5</sup>

## EXAMPLES in ACTION

The backbone within the Family Centred Service System provides a variety of functions. Initially the backbone pulled organizations and families together to create a common agenda and strategy as the Child and Youth Network and later as London System Reengineering. Part of this work supporting the shared measurement of the Family Centres and Family Centred Service system. The backbone has advanced policy through engaging with provincial leaders and other funders to support the work of the network. The backbone has also supported the work of the measurement and evaluation framework to be able to evaluate the work of the Family Centred Service System. The collection and communication of this data has helped to advance policy and build public will as part of the Community Action Research project and advocacy and lobbying. Results of this policy advancement can be seen in other inter- ministerial initiatives (mental health and special needs strategy and community hubs report to the Premiere).

At a local level, backbone members use a community development approach to engage with individuals and with groups of members of the service system to develop the shared vision and align activities to support strategies that will achieve a shared vision. Backbone members guide this activity by facilitating opportunities that drive organizations and individuals closer to the vision of Family Centred Service System. This happens at both a neighbourhood and system level. The backbone has worked to secure funding for the initiative and continues to work with funders so that available funds are aligned to support the outcomes of creating a Family Centred Service System.

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<sup>5</sup> The term “Backbone” is identified in the Collective Impact Literature. The roles of the Backbone are detailed in the article “Understanding the Value of Backbone Organizations in Collective Impact”, Stanford Social Innovation Review. Adapted article from July 2012 4 part blog series on [www.ssireview.org/blog](http://www.ssireview.org/blog). Kania, J, Martin, E., Merchant, K, Turner, S.

## Architectural and Design Considerations

### The Importance of Architectural Design

It is very important that the “look and feel” of every Neighbourhood Family Centre is as consistent as possible across the network of Family Centres. It is understood that as Family Centres are established within neighbourhoods, it is most likely that they will be built as renovations or additions to existing elementary schools. As a result, the site and physical plant infrastructure available at each existing location will impact on how each Family Centre is designed. Nevertheless, in order to create a “Common Experience” for children, parents and professionals across the system, it is important to create as much uniformity between locations as is possible.

There are five significant reasons why attention to architectural design and layout is important. These are:

- Consistency between neighbourhoods
- Branding
- Creating a warm and welcoming environment
- Effective and efficient use of space
- Supporting interprofessional practice

## Consistency between neighbourhoods

The Child and Youth Network's vision for a family centred service delivery system includes a network of locations in every London neighbourhood. Given that there are socio-economic differences between neighbourhoods, the objective is to make sure that every neighbourhood is treated equitably so that one neighbourhood is not seen as having a "nicer" or "better" Family Centre than another.

## Branding

The Child and Youth Network's intent is that each Family Centre becomes an easily recognizable landmark in every neighbourhood, and that regardless of where they are in the City, parents will recognize that landmark as a place to access services for their children and their families.

The consistent use of exterior signage and exterior detailing, and even interior colours and finishings, etc. will support the branding initiative.

## Creating a Welcoming Environment

Within any community, there are some people who pro-actively seek out service, and there are others who will be much more cautious in coming forward. Recognizing this, the design and appearance of the Family Centre is critical in creating a welcoming, non-threatening invitation to all parents and children to explore what the Family Centre has to offer. This can be accomplished through a progression of welcoming environments, starting with the exterior and the exterior access, moving into the Lobby and Reception area, and then transitioning to the Public and Specific Program spaces.

The welcoming strategy starts with the building's exterior, and how it is accessed. Parking and accessible entrances are fundamental in encouraging parents to visit the Centre. But equally important in helping children and parents become familiar and comfortable with the building is the use of community gardens, playgrounds, gardens and landscaping, quiet sitting areas, exterior active play areas (i.e. basketball courts and access to open fields) and possibly even picnic tables and shelters. These are all

areas where through the community development process, each community can help design the spaces.

Once through the entrance of the Family Centre, the family must experience a welcoming Lobby and Reception area that encourages them to become involved with the programs and activities at their own pace. Examples include a Community Connector where parents can ask questions combined with a bulletin board with information and schedules in case they are reluctant to openly ask for assistance. The Lobby should have interesting and comfortable places for both parents and children to sit before transitioning to a program or activity. Glass walls looking into the public playrooms/group activities will give children and parents the opportunity to observe a program in action before committing, lessening any reluctance they might have to participate. Separate private and semi-private meeting areas for clinics, interviews and some information and referral processes will help to create greater feelings of trust and confidentiality.

### Effective and Efficient Space

There are a wide range of program activities taking place in a Family Centre, each of which will have certain specific facility and equipment requirements. Yet there will also be common requirements that apply to most or all of the activities. The architectural design will need to balance these competing needs so that there is maximum flexibility for the space.

Additional in-room storage, partition walls and moveable furniture and equipment are examples of how this flexibility can be supported.

### Supporting Inter-Professional Practice

A fundamental operating principle for the entire Family Centre network is that there is a culture of family centred interprofessional practice within and between each location. The architectural design needs to support this culture, providing professionals with both the physical and technological infrastructure that promotes trust and a sharing of expertise. A larger, comfortable “Professionals Lounge” where practitioners can meet, talk and share is seen as an important part of the physical layout. A shared workstation

environment that is coupled with private file and record storage will support professionals working side-by-side while respecting the need for client confidentiality.

## Schedule 2 - Interior and Exterior Spatial Requirements and Comments

Schedule 2 summarizes the preliminary estimated amount of space required for the Family Centre, as well as provides additional background comments on the facilities. *It is acknowledged that the spatial requirements listed in Schedule 2 represent the perfect “no budget limitation” world. It is understood that as each Family Centre is developed, existing spatial restrictions will heavily influence the total area available and how it is configured and used.*

<b>Schedule 2 - Architectural and Design Consideration Summary</b>						
			No. required	Space per unit	Total Area	Comments
<b>Area Consideration</b>						
<b>Exterior Requirements</b>						
<b>Access to site</b>						
		Parking				Drop-off and pick up Parking close to door for parents with young children Staff Parking Service Vehicles
		Walking and Riding paths from				Lighting?
		On Bus Routes				
<b>Landscaping</b>						
Trees & Gardens. Benches for adults and children						
<b>Family Playground</b>						
Natural, hills. Water play						
<b>Hard Surface Active Play</b>						
Riding, Skateboarding, Basketball						
<b>Access to Sports Field</b>						
<b>Community Gardens</b>						
<b>Picnic Areas, shelters for community gatherings</b>						
Connection for natural gas BBQ						
<b>External Storage</b>						
Play Equipment. BBQ						
<b>Garbage Enclosure</b>						
<b>Schedule 2 - Architectural and Design Consideration Summary</b>						
			No. required	Space per unit	Total Area	Comments
<b>Area Consideration</b>						
<b>Interior Requirements</b>						
<b>Common Areas</b>						
		Large, Open Central Lobby	1	300	300	Circular, curved reception counter Welcome sign/digital display in relevant languages Clearly recognizable connection doorways/halls to program areas (i.e. child care) Relaxation/play area Sunken play area, seats for parents around perimeter. Ramp access Salt water aquarium Chairs and couch seating for adults and children
		Art and display wall				By children and/or from neighbourhood
		Area for announcements, program notices				
		Community bulletin board				
		Coat Room, Cubby Area, Stroller, Car Seat	1	200	200	
		<b>Sub-Total</b>			<b>500</b>	
<b>Support Space</b>						
Offices						
		NCFC Manager	1	125	125	
		Service Delivery Partners (shared)	1	250	250	3+ Workstations? Private file storage
		Professional's Lounge/Staffroom	1	250	250	Workstations? Washroom? Storage
		Small Meeting/Board Room	1	300	300	For 20 people?
		Closet Storage				
		<b>Sub-Total</b>			<b>925</b>	
<b>Interior Requirements</b>						
<b>Program Space</b>						
Clinic						
		Reception	1	150	150	
		Clinic Rooms	2	125	250	
		Large Meeting/Multi-purpose room	1	750	750	For 25 - 50 people? Partition Walls to divide into two or three? Smart board, projector, internet Table and chair storage Closets for storage
		Play Rooms	1	600	600	Partition Walls? Sinks, water play Child washrooms, change tables Toy and book shelves Closets for storage

	Technology Kiosks/Interview Rooms	2	100	200	
	Information and Resource Library	1	150	150	Digital display capability Literature shelves Resource binder shelves Physically linked to Reception
	Family Literacy Resource Centre	1	250	250	
	Basic Needs/Clothing/Food Bank	1	200	200	Area for dispensing Storage of goods
	Food Service	1	750	750	Service Kitchen Teaching Kitchen Parent Café/Lounge
	Multiple Washrooms	2	100	200	Adult, child, family, handicap In common and larger program areas Include diaper change in adult
	<b>Sub-Total</b>			<b>3500</b>	
	<b>Total</b>			<b>4925</b>	

## The Family Experience

The late Harvard Business School Professor Theodore Levitt pointed out that clients do not want the product or the service itself, but rather the effect the product or service produces. In his famous example, customers do not want a drill; they want the holes the drill will make.

Peter Drucker made a similar observation: “What the customer buys and considers value is never a product. It is always utility – that is, what a product does for him”. As we consider the family’s experience at a Family Centre, we must first and foremost consider the impact on the family, not the program or service that creates that impact.

Families through the 2013 Assessment of the Family Centered Service System identified how the Family Centre has impacted their ability to connect with programs and services as a result of visiting the Family Centre.

## Family Centre Stories

I was originally reluctant to visit the Family Centre because I don’t like asking for help when it comes to me and my family. However, my family and I were going through a very hard time in our lives and as a single mother with a 15 year old daughter and a 13 year old son I had no choice but to look for assistance. As soon as I walked into the Family Centre I immediately felt comfortable, the staff at the Family Centre were so warm and welcoming, that I was not ashamed to be honest with them about our family’s situation

At this time, I was in a very hard time financially and it affected my son - his behaviour, school and just about every other aspect of his life. My daughter was not impacted as much as my son, but there was a lot of arguing taking place in our home. What happened was, I went to the Family Centre because I didn’t have a phone or a computer. The Family Centre staff were welcoming and allowed me to access these services from the Centre. As the staff were so welcoming, I was able to open up to them about our situation. They then referred me to several programs and services that would help my son. Specifically, they referred me to a local service provider that helps at-risk youth and their families. My son and I visited this organization on a weekly basis and they were able to provide our family with an in-home support worker. Now that my son is in respite, he visits this organization on a weekly basis which allows me to have a break. He participates in several games and activities there (i.e., foosball, paintball, they watch movies, and they feed him dinner). My daughter and I still visit the Family Centre together and access a lot of classes, mainly cooking classes.

The Family Centre has had a very positive impact on the lives of my son, daughter, and I. If it wasn’t for the Family Centre, I would not have been connected to this organization for my son. Behaviourally and at school my son is doing a lot better, and I am so thankful. Staff at the Family Centre were there for me when things in our lives were particularly hard. When I needed simple things like to use a phone or a computer, I could do that there. When I just needed someone to talk to and seek advice from, the staff were there.

## APPENDIX A

### Core Functions– Parenting, Early Learning, Child and Family Programs

#### Sub-Group – Parenting Strategies

***A facilitated group program for parents that focuses on Growth, Behavioural and Developmental Expectations for young children.***

#### Sub-Group Principles:

- The parent is involved in identifying his/her and the child's needs; the child's participation is program dependant
- Individualized; Reflective of, and responsive to, different learning styles and levels of stress; Adaptable to the parent(s) unique skills and knowledge

#### Approaches:

- Focuses on parents and child's strengths, skills, abilities & confidence in understanding how to use a positive approach to parenting strategies
  - Facilitated Peer or Parent-to-Parent Learning (non-authoritarian) combined with Guided Learning to explain rationale
  - Builds on strength of relationship between parent and child. Emphasis on the importance of consistency, respecting cultural and individual norms.
    - Understanding that bonding, attachment and relationships develop and need to be worked on overtime.
    - Emphasis on understanding Health, Learning and
    - Development in young children guiding and behaviours and
    - Preventing Behaviours
- Incorporates focus on developmental assets (40 developmental assets ([www.searchinsistitue.ca](http://www.searchinsistitue.ca)))

Recognizes individual temperament and the need for individualized approaches

#### Outcomes:

- Parents report that the relationship and the trust between themselves and the child is strengthened
- Parents develop an understanding of child development and appropriate expectations
- Parents increase their own problem solving abilities, self-esteem and confidence
- Parents report the child's self-esteem and confidence and ability to self-regulate is approved
- Parents have a sense of normalcy with respect to parenting issues
- Parents leave with a social network of support
- Parents leave the program with an understanding of resources/supports in community
- Parents and children report an increase in life skills
- Parents report improved capacity to parent safely and effectively

**Core Function – Parenting, Early Learning, Child and Family Programs**  
**Sub-Group–. Language, Literacy and Numeracy**

***A facilitated group Parent Education program for parents, care-givers and young children that introduces information on Healthy Eating, Exercise, Nutrition, Social skills, Literacy, Self-Regulation and Community supports in a fun, social and play based environment.***

Sub-Group Principles:

- Individualized; Adaptable to the parent(s) unique skills and knowledge, and flexible in delivery
- The parent is involved in identifying his/her and the child's needs
- Individualized and reflective of and responsive to different learning styles and skill levels
- Based in oral traditions and are in child's first language
- Promote the inter-relationship between language, literacy and numeracy and the knowledge that they are found everywhere (i.e. home, school, community etc.) and can be shared with anyone (i.e. parents, grandparents, sitters)
- Lifelong learning starting in the pre-natal period

Approaches:

- Parents, care-givers and children of all ages and all cultures attend together
- Mix of drop in and registered activities offered on a flexible schedule to accommodate schedules parents and caregivers
- Operates in an inclusive, social, non-judgemental, success oriented environment
- Emphasis on a fun, play based learning environment (i.e. laughing, rhyming)
- Emphasis on fun using developmentally appropriate play-based activities that cover all developmental domains. Recognition of individual gifts and strength
- Parents are encouraged to participate in the play; parents and facilitators model appropriate play behaviour, adult/child engagement and parenting (parents reinforce each other)
- Led by qualified facilitators (e.g. professional credentials ),
- Inquiry based learning model (around child and family interests or needs)parent and child choose the specific activities in which to engage
- Use of authentic everyday parent and child interactions and experiences (i.e. grocery shopping, cooking, environment)
- Access to Resources (Community Supports, Make at home projects, newsletter)
- Incorporation of various means to promote relationships (i.e. drama, art, music etc.) Interactive experiences (e.g. stand-alone literacy displays, take home components)

Outcomes:

- Enhanced parental understanding of child development and the benefits of play based learning
- Parents report increased skill in understanding and coping with child stress and behaviours
- Parent develop stronger support systems through formal and informal networks and through improved knowledge of resources available to them in the community

- Family strength and capacity are improved
- Children demonstrates improved social skill development, understanding of feelings, self-regulation and self-concept and readiness to learn, confidence.
- Child learns that learning is a positive experience
- Families report increased knowledge on topics that promote health (e.g. nutrition, physical activity), emotional and situational well-being, group belonging(e.g. reduced isolation and making new friends), social skills, empathy, tolerance and respect for others
- Improved mental health and happiness for all

**Core Function – Parenting, Early Learning, Child and Family Programs**  
**Sub-Group – Psycho-educational**

***A facilitated program for parents and families dealing with specific family situations and specialized situations. Providing parent education and support with respect to specific diagnosis (i.e. Asperger's, individual behaviours).***

Sub-Group Principles:

- High degree of safety and confidentiality ensured
- The parent is involved in identifying his/her and the child's needs; Parent(s) attend with the child
- Individualized; Reflective of, and responsive to, different learning styles

Approaches:

- Based on shared experiences; group support; peer support
- Flexible scheduling and delivery methods to ensure "right fit" for parent/family (special screening process needed for intake)
- Intake/Registration required to ensure appropriate
- referral  
Links to specialized services

Outcomes:

- The parent's knowledge of the issue is increased
- The family feels empowered, and the parent's confidence and competency in addressing the issue is increased
- The parents feel supported, safe, respected and "heard"
- The parent's knowledge of resources that are available in the community and how to connect to them is increased
- There is capacity building within participants to support themselves and others in the future
- Parents benefit from on-going support through the development of formal and informal support networks
- The child's self-concept and self-esteem are respected and enhanced, so they can see themselves as worthy as individuals and contributors to family and community.

## **Core Function – Education, Early Childhood Education, Child Care**

***A licensed or regulated learning environment, provided by one or more qualified professionals***

### Core Function Specific Principles:

- Emphasis on licensed or regulated environments, where available
- Intentional integration and connectivity between the school day and early childhood learning environments
- Neighbourhood involvement, Parent/community partnerships
- Partnerships amongst School Boards and Early Childhood Education
- Use of recognized assessment tools

### Approaches:

- Play-based, Inquiry based, Child directed
- Includes all developmental domains
- Family involvement - Family nights, Family engagement, Family feedback
- Incorporates Early ID and Developmental Screening
- Family centered approach in supporting children through transitions
- Intentional engagement of community partners as program supports

### Outcomes:

- Improved readiness to learn  
Increased child self-regulation
- Increased family and community awareness of the value of the early years, play-based learning and Full Day Kindergarten
- Increased parent/engagement with child and centre
- Effective and efficient referrals/connections to Community Resources

## **Core Function - Public Health and Wellness**

### **Public Health programming provided by appropriately qualified Health Professionals**

#### Core Function Specific Principles:

- Responsive to community needs and identified social determinants of health
- Delivers programs and services that are part of the Health Protection and Promotion Act and follow the Guidelines set out by the Ontario Public Health Standards
- Program excellence whereby maximum value and impact are achieved through evidence-based resources and best practice guidelines
- Foster client and community confidence

#### Approaches:

- Evidence-informed based on the best available evidence from research, practice and experience
- Informed-decision making
- Client- or family-centred care
- Strengths based
- Non-judgmental and unbiased
- Focused on developmental assets
- Equitable access, including flexibility in delivery scheduling and reducing barriers of language and disability
- Incorporates educational and guided learning
- Emphasis on skill-building – life skills and health related
- Prevention of illness and injury and promotion of wellbeing – physical, emotional, mental, spiritual, and social
- Multidisciplinary collaboration between health care professionals

#### Outcomes:

- Outcomes as outlined by the Ontario Public Health Standards
- Client and community confidence in health care professionals and service provided
- Establishment of therapeutic relationships with clients and the community
- Reduction of barriers to accessing care
- Clients and families increased ability to reach their full potential
- Increased community and individual capacity to promote and maintain wellness
- Increased individual and community health and wellness
- Effective and efficient referrals to community resources Improved early detection and intervention

## **Core Function - Recreation, Sports and Leisure**

### ***Individual and/or group programming for children, youth and adults***

#### Core Function Specific Principles:

- Intentional benefits of recreation as described in The Benefits of Recreation Catalogue, Canadian Parks and Recreation Association Catalogue of Healthy Childhood Development Principles e.g. High Five
- Principles of Healthy Childhood Development ( for young children) as noted in High Five Program (Parks and Recreation Ontario)
- Principles and outcomes described in the Child and Youth Network Youth Framework

#### Approaches:

- Various levels of organization
  - Unorganized, informal (e.g. Climber)
  - Drop in
  - Scheduled/registered
  - Organized, group (e.g. Teams)
- Variety of age targeted activities
  - Intergenerational
  - Family
- Variety of activities and interests
- seasonally sensitive

#### Outcomes:

- Improved fitness
- Improved social skills
- Improvement in gross motor skills
- Improved skill development in area of specialty (e.g. guitar)

## **Core Function – Referrals, Resources, Information and Connections**

***The system by which professionals and the families they serve are intentionally connected to each other.***

### Core Function Specific Principles:

- Driven by the community
- Evidence of excellent knowledge and understanding of all of the agencies and organizations and their respective capacity
- Strong relationships between agencies

### Approaches:

- Ongoing use of a Community Development approach
- Community Developers support neighbourhood participants with the identification of resources and services they want to have available
- Ongoing community input e.g. Community Boards
- Identification of basic needs and supports and using these as a recruitment and engagement tool and a connection to all services
- Regular inter-professional information sharing sessions – on-line or in person

### Outcomes:

- Community ownership
- Families report that referrals are true “Connections” to programs/services not just passing on of information
- Referrals are efficient & effective
- Reduced Story telling for families
- Common Intake where appropriate

