

Ottawa-Centre Best Start Plan



INTRODUCTION

The Ottawa-Centre Best Start Plan is intended to provide an overview of the *provincial* Best Start initiative and how it evolved to encompass *local* planning in this community. The Plan has been designed to present a framework for the community to engage in collaborative planning to ensure that ALL children have equitable opportunities to achieve their fullest potential.

This document includes the following:

- Linkage to ***Ontario's* vision for Best Start**
- Linkage to ***Ottawa's* vision for Best Start**
- ***Ottawa-Centre* Best Start**
- ***Ottawa-Centre Best Start Advisory Committee* Terms of Reference**

ONTARIO'S VISION FOR BEST START

Background Information

Best Start is the *Ontario* government's early learning and care strategy, designed to help give children the best possible start in life. Throughout its ten-year plan, *Ontario's* Best Start aims to create an integrated system of services that seamlessly supports families and children from conception through their transition into grade one – right in their own communities. The Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS) has a vision to create "...an Ontario where children and youth have the best opportunity to succeed and reach their full potential" (2007).

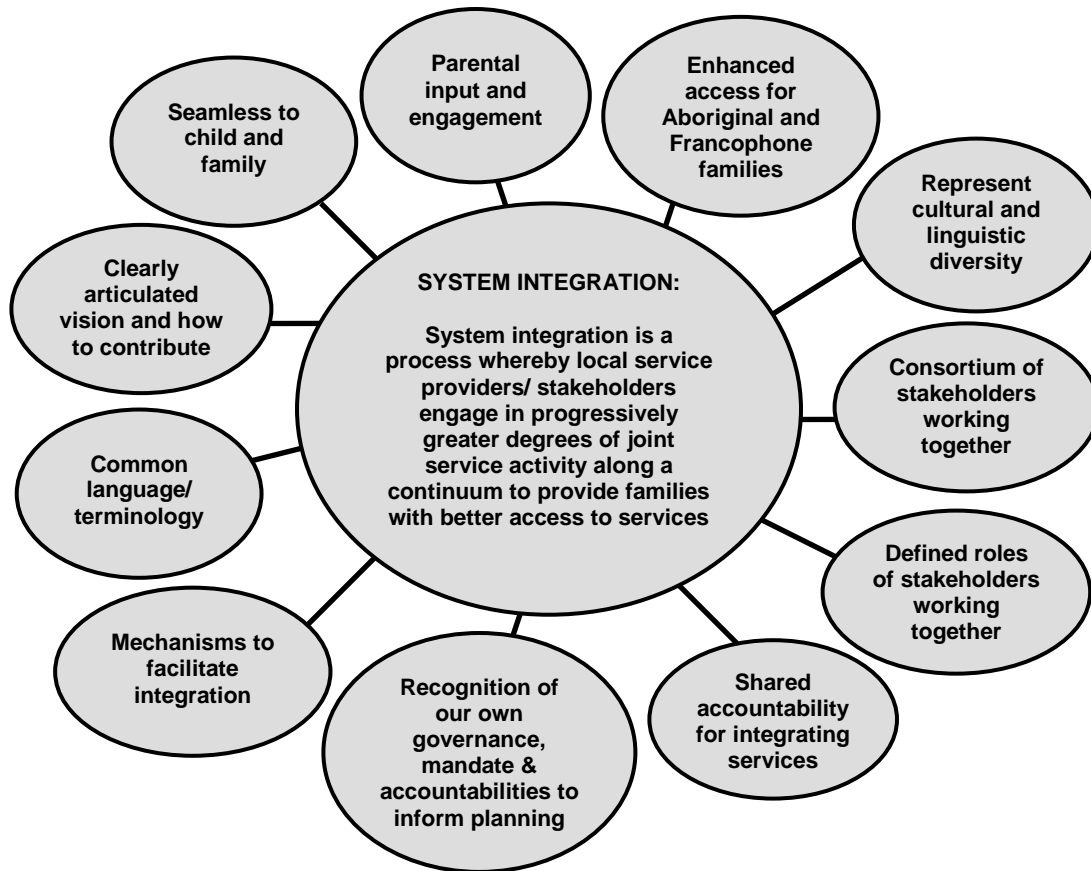
Phase I of Best Start:

- affordable and quality child care was expanded
- three provincial demonstration sites were established to accelerate the implementation of the full Best Start vision in order to share their findings and lessons learned across Ontario
- a new income-tested eligibility model for subsidized child care was introduced in 2007
- wage improvements for Early Childhood Educators were introduced
- the College of Early Childhood Educators was established
- key early identification and intervention programs were enhanced:
 - *Infant Hearing Program*
 - *First Words Preschool Speech and Language*
 - *Blind/Low Vision Program*
 - *Healthy Babies Healthy Children*
- MCYS commissioned three expert panel reports to provide the long-term framework for moving Best Start forward:
 - "Getting it Right at 18 Months... Making it Right for a Lifetime" (report of the Expert Panel on the 18 Month Well Baby Visit, September 2005)
 - "Investing In Quality. Policies, Practitioners, Programs and Parents. A Four-Point Plan to Deliver high Quality Early Learning and Care Services in Ontario" (report of the Expert Panel on Quality and Human Resources, March 2007)
 - "Early Learning for Every Child Today: A framework for Ontario early childhood settings" (report of the Expert Panel on Early Learning, December 2006)

(Adapted from "Ottawa Network for Children 2007 – 2008 Best Start Community Plan", June 2007)

Phase II of Best Start is currently in the implementation stage, with a focus on *system integration*, "...an ongoing process whereby service providers and stakeholders engage in progressively greater degrees of joint service activity (across sectors) along an integration continuum to provide families with better access to services locally."

(adapted from MCYS, "Building on the Foundation – Moving Forward", November 15, 2006)



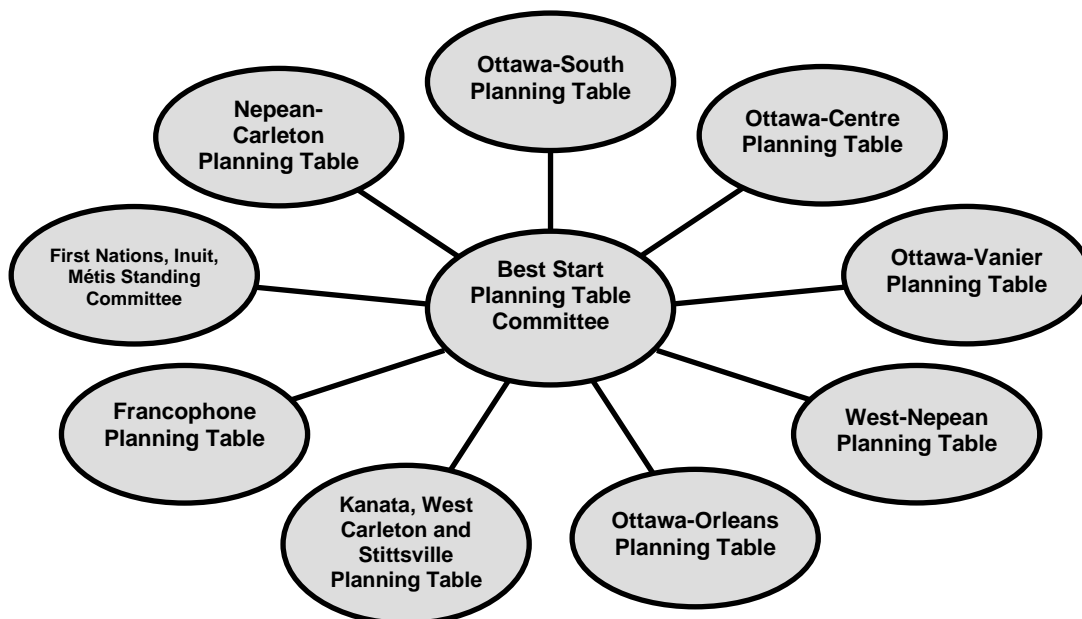
(City of Ottawa, 2008)

OTTAWA'S VISION FOR BEST START

Background Information

The *City of Ottawa* has embraced Best Start by creating the vision for a "...collaborative community engaged in ensuring that ALL children have the best and equitable opportunity to achieve their full potential" (2007). To achieve the Best Start vision, *Ottawa* relies on the leadership and direction provided by the Best Start Steering Committee (see appendix 1). *Ottawa* strives to bring together local government, school boards, and community agencies serving families and young children together with parents to plan and deliver quality early learning and child care services.

The Best Start Planning Table Committee (BSPTC) has been tasked with moving neighbourhood-level system integration planning forward. The structure includes seven geographic-based planning tables, led by the local Ontario Early Years Centres (OEYC), along with two city-wide cultural/linguistic-based planning tables, led by a First Nations, Inuit and Métis Standing Committee Representative and the Francophone organization, services à l'enfance Grandir ensemble. In addition, the City of Ottawa, Success By 6, and MCYS, provide resources and support to the BSPTC. For more *Ottawa* Best Start information, including neighbourhood descriptions and who to contact for each planning table, see Appendix 4.



The aim of each planning table is to increase system integration at the local level while ensuring links to the broader city-wide level, with the ultimate goal of improving the outcomes for ALL children.

OTTAWA-CENTRE BEST START

Background Information

The *local* Best Start plan has been established as one of the seven geographic-based planning tables in Ottawa. Three community consultations have provided the following feedback:

- March 2007:
 - Communication – strategy to highlight importance of services
 - Need to advocate for funding
 - Need for direction

- June 2007 city-wide meeting:
 - Community information and sharing session
 - Where do we go from here?

- January 2008 Ottawa-Centre Planning Table meeting:
 - Community profile presentation
 - Challenges, strategies and outcomes for system integration, engaging key stakeholders, and communication

(minutes from above meetings accessible at: http://www.successby6ottawa.ca/uey/best_start.htm)

- May 2008 Centretown and Glebe neighbourhood meeting

- May 2008 Westboro neighbourhood meeting

- June 2008 Ottawa West and Dalhousie neighbourhood meeting

- November 2008 Ottawa-Centre Planning Table meeting:
 - City-wide Dr. Fraser Mustard presentation
 - Ottawa-Centre dialogue with Dr. Fraser Mustard

- December 2008 Ottawa-Centre Best Start Advisory Committee
 - First meeting

(minutes from above meetings accessible through Myrian Pépin at Canadian Mothercraft of Ottawa-Carleton: myrian@mothercraft.com)

OTTAWA-CENTRE BEST START ADVISORY COMMITTEE PLAN

Terms of Reference

Mandate: The Ottawa-Centre Best Start Advisory Committee will undertake to empower our local community in offering comprehensive, flexible, integrated and seamless services for children, parents, and caregivers at familiar neighbourhood locations, so that ALL children will experience increased readiness to learn at school.

Philosophy: We believe that the following guiding principles, along with community leadership and engagement, are essential elements in achieving system integration that supports families with young children in our community.

Guiding Principles:

- Supports and services are planned and provided in a manner that is seamless to the child and his/her family.
- Parental input through parental engagement strategies is foundational to the planning, implementation and success of all aspects of Best Start.
- All planning for integration must incorporate better and equitable access to services for all families and their children, ensuring a linkage with the two city-wide cultural/linguistic-based planning tables.
- Supports and services represent cultural and linguistic diversity in all of Ottawa-Centre.
- The Ottawa-Centre Best Start Advisory Committee is a consortium of programs/agencies and relevant stakeholders that work together to help give young children the opportunity for healthy development and the best start in life.
- Each program/agency and relevant stakeholder has a role within Best Start that should be clearly articulated, accepted by the Ottawa-Centre Best Start Advisory Committee, and locally implemented to meet the overall vision for Best Start.
- The consortium of programs/agencies and relevant stakeholders will assume shared accountability for integrating services and making sure that they work together to achieve local Best Start goals.
- The members of the Ottawa-Centre Best Start Advisory Committee recognize that programs/agencies and relevant stakeholders have their own governance, accountabilities, and mandates which mutually inform and support the planning processes.
- Clearly articulated mechanisms to facilitate system integration exist among the consortium of programs/agencies and relevant stakeholders.
- Community members work from a common language and use mutually accepted terminology.
- The consortium of programs/agencies and relevant stakeholders can clearly articulate the Best Start vision in this community and how programs/agencies contribute to the actualization of the vision.

(Adapted from MCYS, "Addendum to the Implementation Planning Guidelines for Best Start Networks – System Integration", November 2006)

Membership: To ensure diverse community representation for comprehensive service planning, we will work towards individuals and organizations from the following sectors participating in the work of the Advisory Committee:

- Parents and caregivers
- Health and Specialized Intervention Programs
- Early Identification and Intervention Programs
- Early Learning and Care
- Family Support and Parenting Programs
- Representative of community served
- Child Welfare
- Education
- Income Security Programs
- Community Services
- Faith Communities

In addition, we will work towards representatives from each of the following six neighbourhoods participating in the work of the Advisory Committee:

- Carleton Heights
- Centretown
- Dalhousie
- Glebe
- Ottawa West
- Westboro

- **Length of commitment:** 2 years

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE OTTAWA-CENTRE BEST START ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The Ottawa-Centre Best Start Advisory Committee is accountable to the children and families in this community and to the larger Ottawa Best Start Plan. As such, the Advisory Committee is responsible:

1. To determine the planning group structure, including the chairing model, roles and responsibilities of members, decision-making process, etc.
2. To ensure adequate representation in the Advisory Committee membership
3. To share in the establishment of a community-owned system integration plan, both short and long-term
4. To consult the city-wide Best Start Planning Table Committee for support and guidance regarding communication plans, reporting processes, and other city-wide common elements to enhance consistency and avoid duplication
5. To ensure a reporting/communication mechanism between the Ottawa-Centre Advisory Committee and the city-wide Best Start Planning Table Committee
6. To determine and identify potential hub-like locations in the six neighbourhoods:
 - Carleton Heights
 - Centretown
 - Dalhousie
 - Glebe
 - Ottawa West
 - Westboro
7. To determine common elements for planning at neighbourhood hub-like locations
8. To support the development of workplans and evaluation strategies at neighbourhood hub-like locations
9. To identify resources and create a toolkit to assist neighbourhood hub-like locations in their planning and implementation of system integration
10. To increase knowledge and awareness of services and supports among all community partners in the neighbourhood, regardless of participation levels
11. To integrate community profile information at all levels of planning
12. To integrate existing strategies developed at previous local community consultations

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES continued

Chairpersons

Co-chairs will stand for a two-year term and are expected to cover each other off as required. Responsibilities include:

- in collaboration with the Planning Table Lead, developing the agenda for the meetings
- chairing the meetings
- facilitating bringing people together for meetings
- calling or cancelling meetings based on needs and decisions made by the committee
- cover for Planning Table Lead at city-wide Best Start Planning Table Committee as required

Decision-making

Quorum will consist of 50% of membership plus 1. While striving for consensus, a majority vote will be required to confirm a decision. Members shall vote based on their individual expertise and experience and not as agency representatives.

Minute-taking

Administrative support to be provided by Ottawa Mothercraft.

Frequency of Meetings

Meetings will be held monthly until May 2009, at which time frequency of meetings will be reviewed.

Review date

Members will commit to review the Terms of Reference on an annual basis, commencing in February 2010.

Appendix 1

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

Stay tuned... new structure being clarified by the city-wide Best Start Steering Committee...

Appendix 2

LINKS TO ADDITIONAL BEST START INFORMATION

Ontario Best Start

Blind/Low Vision Early Intervention Program
http://www.gov.on.ca/children/graphics/stel01_136524.pdf

Child Care
<http://www.gov.on.ca/children/english/programs/beststart/care/index.html>

First Words Preschool Speech and Language Program
http://www.pqhcs.com/firstwords/about_us.htm

Healthy Babies, Healthy Children
http://www.ottawa.ca/residents/health/support/hbhc/index_en.html

Infant Hearing Program
http://www.pqhcs.com/firstwords/infant_hearing.htm

Ministry of Children and Youth Services, Best Start
<http://www.gov.on.ca/children/english/programs/beststart/index.html>

- Best Start Phase I: Laying the Foundation (Implementation Planning Guidelines for Best Start Networks, June 2005) [not yet online]
- Building on the Foundation – Moving Forward (Addendum to the Implementation Planning Guidelines for Best Start Networks – System Integration, November 2006) [not yet online]

Ministry of Children and Youth Services, Expert Panel Reports

- “Early Learning for Every Child Today: A framework for Ontario early childhood settings”
http://www.gov.on.ca/children/graphics/stel02_183342.pdf
- “Getting it Right at 18 Months... Making it Right for a Lifetime”
http://www.gov.on.ca/children/graphics/stel02_183343.pdf
- “Investing In Quality. Policies, Practitioners, Programs and Parents. A Four-Point Plan to Deliver high Quality Early Learning and Care Services in Ontario”
http://www.gov.on.ca/children/graphics/stel02_183340.pdf

Nipissing District Developmental Screen
<http://ndds.ca/ontario/home.html>

Ottawa Best Start

City of Ottawa, Best Start
http://ottawa.ca/residents/childcare/beststart/index_en.html

Community Services Inventory (CSI)
<http://successby6ottawa.ca/CSI/>

Early Development Instrument 2005/2006: “School Readiness to Learn in Ottawa”
http://www.successby6ottawa.ca/pdfs/Ottawa_EDI_Report_2005_2006_Print_Design_English.pdf

OttawaKids.ca
<http://www.ottawakids.ca/ottawakids.php>

Ottawa Network for Children 2007-2008 Best Start Community Plan

Parent Resource Centre
<http://www.parentresource.on.ca/>

Success By 6 Ottawa: Understanding the Early Years/Best Start
http://www.successby6ottawa.ca/uey/best_start.htm

Appendix 3

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Clearly Articulated Mechanisms, such as:

Memorandums of Understanding

Partnership Agreements

Collaborative Agreements

Simplified access referral / release of information consent forms

Policies and Procedures

Etcetera

Consortium

A voluntary group of individuals representative of various sectors committed to a common vision and set of tasks that is beyond the resources of any one member.

Equitable outcomes

Clear, specific descriptors of culturally and individually appropriate pattern(s) of development, and the steps to the next stage, recognizing the wide diversity in both individual and group development across domains (Early Childhood Education Assessment Consortium, 2005).

Integrated seamless program

The blending of the kindergarten and early learning and care program components into one program that extends beyond the school day (Best Start Glossary)

Seamless day – describes a system of organizing and integrating services for young children so that they can move easily from one service (e.g., child care) to another (e.g., junior kindergarten), and the services are complementary and harmonized with one another, and contribute to healthy child development (Best Start Glossary).

Appendix 4

CITY OF OTTAWA BEST START CONTACT INFORMATION

Best Start Planning Table	Lead(s)	Contact Information
First Nations, Inuit and Métis Standing Committee	Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre and Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health	Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre 613-744-3133 Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health 613-748-0657
Francophone Planning Table	services à l'enfance Grandir ensemble	613-789-3020
Kanata, West Carleton and Stittsville Planning Table	Ottawa-Carleton Ontario Early Years Centre	613-591-3686
Nepean-Carleton Planning Table	Nepean-Carleton Ontario Early Years Centre	613-825-5990
Orleans-Cumberland Planning Table	Ottawa-Orleans Ontario Early Years Centre	613-830-4357
Ottawa-Centre Planning Table	Ottawa-Centre Ontario Early Years Centre	613-728-1839
Ottawa-South Planning Table	Ottawa-South Ontario Early Years Centre	613-737-3716
Ottawa-Vanier Planning Table	Ottawa-Vanier Ontario Early Years Centre	613-744-2892
Ottawa West Nepean Planning Table	Ottawa West-Nepean Ontario Early Years Centre	613-820-4925

- **Neighbourhood descriptions** of Planning Table areas are currently being developed in partnership between Success By 6 and Parent Resource Centre. For more information:

http://www.successby6ottawa.ca/uey/best_start.html