Child Friendly Cities Initiative

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE OF CHILDREN IN THE COMMUNITY

What is a Child Friendly City?

The Child Friendly Cities Initiative (CFCI) is a UNICEF-led initiative that supports communities (often through municipal governments) in realizing the rights of children at the local level using the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child as its foundation. CFCI launched in 1996 as a partnership between UNICEF and UN-Habitat.

Principles

The CFCI builds on the guiding principles of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child. These principles are:

- Non-discrimination
- Best interests of the child
- The inherent right to life, survival and development
- Respect for the views of the child

Goals

1. Every child and young person is valued, respected and treated fairly within their communities and by local authorities.
2. Every child and young person has their voice, needs and priorities heard and taken into account.
3. Every child and young person has access to quality essential social services.
4. Every child and young person lives in a safe, secure and clean environment.
5. Every child and young person has opportunities to enjoy family life, play and leisure.

Participants

Forty-five nations on every continent are developing or have developed a Child Friendly Cities Initiative framework, including 21 of the 36 OECD member nations.

Why?

Many changes in society have a disproportionate effect on children and youth – and yet their voices are rarely heard and considered in decision-making processes. It's important to implement the global principles and goals of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child where it has the greatest direct impact on children's lives– in the communities where they live.

In Canada, only the province of Quebec has a CFCI initiative in place. UNICEF Canada is interested in working with communities like Waterloo Region and the CYPT to explore what a Canada-wide designation recognizing commitment and action for children could look like.

This initiative directly supports the Children and Youth Planning Table's vision of happy, healthy children and youth- today and tomorrow.