

OCHAP: Gaps in Services to Families with Young Children



Presented to

OTTAWA-CARLETON HEADSTART ASSOCIATION FOR PRESCHOOLS
Early Enrichment Programs for Young Children

Prepared by

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- Bev Bakka, Director, Nanny Goat Hill Hill Nursery School (and former President of OCHAP)
- Fiona Carr, Director, Queensway Preschool
- Beth Dewan, Director, Esther By Day Care
- Brenda Fick-Kahler, Director, Cornerstone Children's Centre and Heatherington Nursery School
- Michele Hynes, Director, Pinecrest Queensway Nursery School
- Wendy Miron, Director, Foster Farm Child Care Centre (and current President of OCHAP)
- Janie O'Leary, Director, Children's Aid Society Headstart Nursery School
- Mona Rowland, Director, The National Capital YM-YWCA Headstart Nursery School
- Nancy Rowley, Director, Hawthorne Meadows Nursery School
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Ottawa-Carleton Headstart Association for Preschools is an organization committed to education, coordination and networking, and advocacy. The membership is driven by a core group of Headstart programs, which have a vested interest in preschool children from economically and socially disadvantaged environments and their families. As a concrete expression of its concern, OCHAP undertook this effort to examine the needs of young children and families in the City of Ottawa.

This report intends to fulfill OCHAP's desire to identify concerns and needs among Headstart families, create and sustain partnerships in each community to address said concerns, and to find alternative sources of funding to support new initiatives. The Community Developer tried to implement a logical process for obtaining data, taking into consideration limitations in resources and time. It is the hope of the Community Developer that this report complements OCHAP's vision to increase public awareness and education regarding poverty and appreciation for early childhood education; to strengthen and promote the Headstart model as a successful early enrichment strategy; to impact systems and public policy; and to expand OCHAP's membership.

This report contains information about the City of Ottawa, individual communities, the needs and concerns of families with young children, feedback from insightful early childhood educators, a review of complex social service network. It alludes to gaps in services, particularly among low-income families and in under-served communities like Vanier. It reinforces the need to establish a seamless continuum of services for families with young children.

Based on this information, there is a need for:

- < universal access to childcare opportunities;
- < planned approaches and identification of specific needs for "early intervention programs"
- < more qualified, prepared and equitably paid early childhood educators and staff;
- < accessible, enriched preschool programs in under-served areas (e.g. Vanier);
- < more funding to expand Headstart and other enriched ECE programs;
- < better visibility, outreach and communication about and between programs;
- < increased collaboration among programs to meet the multiple needs of children and families, including strategies to address issues related to poverty, housing, transportation, recreation and health.
- < adaptable services and parenting programs to meet families' unique and changing needs;

In conclusion, recommendations for increasing public awareness, services to families with young children, partnerships, and advocacy efforts are provided.

I. OTTAWA-CARLETON HEADSTART ASSOCIATION FOR PRESCHOOLS

A. OCHAP'S Mission Statement

Incorporated in November 1990, the Ottawa-Carleton Headstart Association for Preschools (OCHAP) is an organization representing children, staff, parents and Board members of Headstart Preschools, licensed under the Ministry of Community and Social Services, Day Nurseries Act of Ontario. OCHAP was established in response to the urgent need for advocacy and networking among Headstart programs dealing with issues of poverty, family stress, public housing, multiculturalism and other factors affecting child development.

On behalf of children and families, OCHAP provides a structure and forum for the development and delivery of high quality comprehensive early intervention services for preschool children in Ottawa. In carrying out its mandate, OCHAP acts as a collective voice to promote collaboration and provide advice to funding bodies and service planning.

B. OCHAP's Goals

OCHAP's stated goals are:

1. To inform the community about Headstart programs and other early enrichment programs for young children;
2. To provide a central body to support and coordinate services among Headstart Preschool programs and community agencies;
3. To support parent education programs;
4. To offer opportunities to educate and upgrade skills of staff;
5. To advocate on behalf of families participating in member schools; and
6. To advocate on behalf of member schools.

C. OCHAP's Objectives

Agencies benefit from participating as members in OCHAP through the:

1. Development and support of citywide early enrichment and intervention services and strategies, such as OCHAP's Speech and Language Program, Book Bag (early literacy effort), and Right Start (a numeracy initiative).
2. Monthly meetings which promote education, service coordination, professional associations, effective partnerships, networking opportunities and advocacy among agencies working with families dealing with issues of poverty, family stress, public housing, multi-culturalism, and other factors affecting child development.
3. Annual in-service training workshops for professional staff development.
4. Periodic newsletters, forums and focus groups for the benefit of member schools and parents.

D. Member Agencies

Through efforts of grassroots organizations, the initial Headstart programs were developed more than thirty years ago; the YM-YWCA Headstart Nursery School, Children's Aid Society Headstart Nursery School and Queensway Preschool being among the first. The last preschool, designated as a Headstart program by the Ministry of Community and Social Services, was Nanny Goat Hill Nursery School in 1990. While each school is unique and responds to the specific needs of its respective communities, all of the member agencies strive toward an ideal Headstart program (as described in Chapter 2: Background Information on Headstart).

There are 11 Headstart programs in the City of Ottawa, in the following four electoral districts (refer to Profiles of OCHAP Members and Map A: Location of Headstart Programs in the appendices):

Ottawa Centre:

- m Nanny Goat Hill Nursery School, under the auspices of Somerset West Community Health Centre
- m The National Capital YMCA-YWCA Headstart Nursery School
- m Queensway Preschools, under the auspices of the Queensway Social Action Group

Ottawa-West Nepean:

- m Pinecrest-Queensway Nursery School, under the auspices of Pinecrest-Queensway Health and Community Service
- m Foster Farm, under the auspices of the Child Care Division, City of Ottawa
- m Esther By Child Care Centre, under the auspices of the Child Care Division, City of Ottawa
- m West End Nursery School

Ottawa-South:

- m Cornerstone Children's Centre, jointly housed with Andrew Fleck Parent Resource Centre
- m Hawthorne Meadows Nursery School
- m Heatherington Nursery School, jointly housed with Andrew Fleck Parent Resource Centre

Ottawa-Vanier:

- m Children's Aid Society Headstart Nursery School/Pré-Maternelle Bon-Départ [Note: This voluntary Headstart program is located in Gloucester, but serves at-risk children and families throughout Ottawa.]

E. OCHAP's Membership Fees

OCHAP offers Full, Associate and Individual Memberships. Full Memberships are available to designated Headstart programs. Other child care centres and social service providers can become an OCHAP Associate Member. Individuals are also encouraged to participate, and take advantage of the many benefits in being an OCHAP member. The OCHAP Membership fee structure is as follows:

Full Members:	\$50.00 per year
Associate Members:	\$40.00 per year
Individual Members:	\$20.00 per year

F. Summary

The Ottawa-Carleton Headstart Association for Preschools is an organization committed to education, coordination and networking, and advocacy. The membership is driven by a core group of Headstart programs, which have a vested interest in preschool children from economically and socially disadvantaged environments and their families. As a concrete expression of its concern, OCHAP undertook this effort to examine the needs of young children and families in the City of Ottawa.

II. PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

A. OCHAP's Vision Planning Day

Two years ago, member agencies of OCHAP came together for a "Vision Planning Day." This event built on OCHAP's goals for fostering service coordination, professional associations, effective partnerships, networking opportunities and advocacy among agencies working with families dealing with issues of poverty, family stress, public housing, multi-culturalism, and other factors affecting child development. The purpose of the event was: (1) to examine OCHAP's strengths and weaknesses, (2) to identify potential opportunities for new early enrichment services, partnerships and growth, (3) to articulate a vision statement for OCHAP, and (4) to develop clear next steps.

1. Strengths and Weaknesses

OCHAP members recognized their many strengths, which included:

- < The active involvement of parents – ranging from their participation in their child's learning experience, to attending parenting workshops, to being a member of the board of the Headstart preschool.
- < The special talents and years of experience among Headstart members and staff, as well as enhanced teacher to child ratios.
- < The high level of commitment to providing a quality preschool experience, which includes a speech and language component, early literacy and numeracy initiatives.
- < The community-based focus of each school, striving to meet the needs of its respective community.
- < The strong desire for networking among members as well as with other community resources – to share ideas, coordinate services, and develop new programs.
- < The enduring support of the City of Ottawa, Ministry of Community and Social Services, and other funders, who recognize the special needs of low-income families with young children and the importance of early enrichment programs.
- < The significant impact Headstart makes in addressing the needs of these children and their families.

In evaluating their weaknesses, OCHAP members identified the following:

- < The low profile and perception of OCHAP and Headstart needs to be elevated among the community-at-large, as well as within the early childhood education community.
- < Existing Headstart programs can not meet the needs of all children (particularly among the Francophone community, ESL families, and in under-served communities like Vanier).
- < Limited funding and manpower affects OCHAP's ability to attract new members, to offer enough training and professional development opportunities to staff who work with high-risk clients, to establish a consistent model among all Headstart schools, to develop a full-range of family and parenting programs, and to meet the needs of all children.

2. Opportunities for Growth

After examining its strengths and weaknesses, OCHAP members recognized a number of opportunities for growth, brought on, in part, by city-wide initiatives such as: Success By 6, First Words, Healthy Babies/Healthy Children, etc. OCHAP realized the potential opportunities for:

- < increasing public education regarding poverty and appreciation for early childhood education;
- < strengthening and promoting the Headstart model as a successful early enrichment strategy;
- < impacting systems and public policy; and
- < building on partnerships, networking and expanding OCHAP membership.

3. Vision Statement

By the end of the process, OCHAP expressed the need to identify gaps in services offered to children and parents using community Headstart child care programs; to assist individual Headstart child care programs to develop a close relationships with social, health and educational agencies within respective communities; to seek out new partnerships in the community that could assist with the support and profile of Headstart child care programs; and to pursue available sources of funding to enhance existing services.

4. Next Steps

To implement the recommendations which resulted from the “Vision Planning Day,” OCHAP hired a Community Developer, who was responsible for:

- < identifying gaps in services for families living in poverty;
- < planning focus groups to identify program needs and options to meet those needs;
- < identifying available resources (e.g. community health centres, schools, etc) and initiatives (e.g. First Words, Healthy Babies, Healthy Children, etc.) in the immediate community of each Headstart child care program; and
- < seeking out new partnerships.

B. Purpose of This Report

In the role of Community Developer for OCHAP, the author of this report has amassed data and information from a variety of sources to fulfill the responsibilities of this position. This report reflects a six-month effort to:

- < Identify concerns and needs among Headstart families.
- < Identify existing and potentially new partners in respective communities.
- < Identify new avenues for pursuing funding to enhance existing services.

The report concludes with a series of recommendations for consideration by OCHAP members.

C. Methodology

The approach to collect sufficient information to write this report included:

1. **Literature Review.** Four key articles or reports were reviewed by the Community Developer. The content of these reports were deemed as being most relevant to OCHAP's concerns and interests. The documents were:
 - *Community Inventory and Gap Analysis Study* (prepared for Success by Six / Six ans et gagnant Ottawa-Carleton as part of the Early Years Demonstration Project). Social Planning Council of Ottawa-Carleton, December 2000.
 - McCain, Margaret and Mustard, J. Fraser. *Early Years Study: Reversing the real brain drain*. Ontario Children's Secretariat, April 1999.
 - *A National Children's Agenda: Developing a shared vision*. May 1999.
 - *The Challenges Our Children Face: A report card on child poverty in Ottawa-Carleton*. Determinants of Health Working Group, March 2000.

In addition, the Community Developer reviewed numerous resource directories, pamphlets, and reports. These documents provided a review of early child development initiatives and services to families with young children. An understanding of early childhood education and development, by the OCHAP Community Developer, is concisely presented in the Chapter III of this report. This perspective shaped what other information was collected, interpretation of findings, and ensuing recommendations.
2. **Census Data.** The Community Developer collected individual census data, and aggregated them, for four of the six electoral districts of Ottawa: Ottawa-West Nepean, Ottawa-Centre, Ottawa-South, and Ottawa-Vanier. The specific variables included: 1991 and 1996 population, population change, land area in square kilometres; population characteristics by home language and by visible minority; income characteristics by incidence of low income; and number of children under 6 years of age. This data was useful in identifying geographical areas of need.
3. **Headstart Data.** Each Headstart school provided basic information about their clients: gender, age, residence, and ethnic background. Some schools were able to furnish additional data, such as income level, source of income, household arrangement, and parent's educational level. Demographic information was useful in painting a picture of Headstart clients – their geographical distribution and general characteristics.
4. **Focus Groups With Headstart Parents.** Focus groups were held at each of the eleven Headstart schools. The Directors of each school made the logistical arrangements, and were responsible for recruiting parents of Headstart children. In

total, 64 parents participated in the focus groups. The focus group questions related to their definition of Headstart, likes and dislikes, recommendations for improvement, service needs, and concerns. The focus group data was useful in identifying gaps in and prioritizing services to families with young children.

- 5. Interviews with Headstart Director.** Interviews were held with the 10 different Headstart Directors. The interviews focussed on the services of each school, and solicited feedback on issues related to the child development. The comments from these seasoned professionals added much insight into the needs of the community-at-large and within the early childhood education field.

D. Limitations of the Report

The Community Developer recognizes several limitations which affected this undertaking. Time limited a full literature review. Only a handful of articles, which were deemed most relevant to this report, were reviewed. A more complete literature review would have undoubtedly provided more insight in to understanding gaps in services to low-income families with young children.

The Community Developer conducted a skeletal review of relevant census data for four of the six electoral districts of Ottawa. Census data and information for Nepean-Carleton and Carleton-Gloucester was not gleaned. This report focuses on the urban areas of the City.

Each Headstart school is individually responsible for collecting and maintaining information on children and families. Thus, it was difficult to obtain consistent data on Headstart clients across all eleven schools. With the absence of a common definition of variables, data was subject to the interpretation of the school's director.

Time and resources influenced the number of focus groups held during the six month period of May to November 2001. To obtain additional perspectives on gaps in services, the Community Developer would have held focus group meetings with parents on Headstart waiting lists, or focus groups with other child care providers. If it were feasible, in-person interviews could have been conducted.

E. Summary

This report intends to fulfill OCHAP's desire to identify concerns and needs among Headstart families, create and sustain partnerships in each community to address said concerns, and to find alternative sources of funding to support new initiatives. The Community Developer tried to implement a logical process for obtaining data, taking into consideration limitations in resources and time. It is the hope of the Community Developer that this report complements OCHAP's vision to increase public awareness and education regarding poverty and appreciation for early childhood education; to strengthen and promote the Headstart model as a successful early enrichment strategy; to impact systems and public policy; and to expand OCHAP's membership.

III. FINDINGS

A. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Political Climate and New Initiatives

At the First Ministers' Conference in December 1997, Canada's Prime Minister, provincial Premiers and Territorial Leaders reaffirmed their commitment to address children's needs through a National Children's Agenda. In February 1999, the Social Union Framework Agreement was signed by all territories and provinces (except Quebec), which signalled an era of more effective cooperation among governments on social issues, including children. In May 1999, the Federal-Provincial-Territorial Council of Ministers on Social Policy Renewal published "A National Children's Agenda: developing a shared vision," a document inviting communities, business, organizations, governments and individuals to think about children and to develop a shared vision of what is wanted for Canada's children.

In "A National Children's Agenda," the following four goals, which reflect common values and vision for child development, were set out: (1) to promote physical, emotional and spiritual health of children, (2) to ensure basic needs, safety and security of children are met, (3) to provide opportunities for children to succeed at learning, and (4) to foster a sense of social engagement and responsibility among children. To achieve these goals, the National Children's Agenda suggests six areas for cooperative effort: (1) supporting parents and strengthening families, (2) enhancing early child development, (3) improving economic security for families, (4) providing early and continuous learning experiences, (5) fostering strong adolescent development, and (6) creating supportive, safe and violence-free communities. The document asserts the need for communities to work together to express their views, to work together on prevention programs that promote good development throughout childhood, and to promote research into child development.

In Ontario, the provincial government has already taken steps to promote an emphasis on children, youth and families. In Spring 1998, the Ontario government commissioned the *Early Years Study*, co-chaired by The Honourable Margaret McCain and by Dr. Fraser Mustard. The study examined the best ways to prepare all of Ontario's young children for scholastic, career and social success. The study was also expected to clarify roles and responsibilities and recommend options for collaborative service models for early learning for children, including local and provincial initiatives based on best practices. The report asserted that the early years, from conception to age six, have the most important influence of any time in the life cycle on brain development and subsequent learning, behaviour and health. The study examined evidence that Ontario can do more to improve outcomes among children across the socioeconomic spectrum. The authors concluded that an evolutionary approach to establishing community-based early child development and parenting centres should be adopted, which builds on existing community initiatives, and which is universally accessible.

In June 1999, Success by 6, an initiative to promote community-wide support to better meet the needs of children (aged six and under) and their families, was publicly launched in Ottawa-Carleton. Led by a coalition of organizations, Success by 6 was named, by the Ontario Children's Secretariat, as the

community-based leader to direct one of the five Early Years Demonstration Projects (EYDP), a provincial effort to implement suggestions from the *Early Years Study*. As part of the EYDP, Success by 6 was responsible for a *Community Inventory and Gap Analysis Study* to identify gaps in services in order to aid in subsequent planning of services. The undertaking of this effort was sub-contracted to the Social Planning Council of Ottawa-Carleton, which produced a report in December 2000. While there were many limitations of the study noted by the researchers, the report is useful in pointing out community resources upon which to build. The study also suggested areas for further qualitative and quantitative research to examine gaps in services for children zero to six and their parents or caregivers.

Using the findings from the *Early Years Study* and the *Community Inventory and Gap Analysis Study* as a foundation, the Ontario government has pushed forward the National Children's Agenda, and has proposed the development of Early Years Centres for each of the electoral districts in the City of Ottawa. Awaiting formal approval from The Children's Secretariat, these Early Years Centres are expected to be in full operation in 2002. Each centre is expected to use an integrated framework model, incorporating quality parenting programs, early child development programs, and appropriate linkages to community resources – fostering a seamless continuum of services to families during the prenatal period, and for children zero to six years.

Evidently, the City of Ottawa is poised and ready to model comprehensive supports and access to early intervention programs for families with young children. It is OCHAP's hope that Headstart, an early enrichment program for young children, becomes a valued partner in this effort. Through a positive prevention approach, Headstart programs work with families dealing with issues of poverty, stress, public housing, multiculturalism and other factors affecting child development. It has much to offer to the proposed Early Years Centres and similar initiatives.

2. Headstart Programs in Ottawa

Background Information

The Ottawa-Carleton region's first Headstart programs were established over 30 years ago, due in part to the American Headstart movement. The original intent of these programs was to provide 2½ to 5 year old children from economically and socially disadvantaged environments with an enriched preschool learning experience. Enriched programming attempted to counter negative environmental effects, to better prepare the child for entry into the education system, and to teach parenting skills.

Responding to the needs of the community served, individual Headstart programs evolved in different ways, and were shaped to some extent by the availability of funding. Most programs operate under a Board of Directors, whose membership includes a cross-section of community resource people, who identify and assist in steering the direction of the Headstart program.

Working Definition of Headstart

The Ottawa-Carleton Headstart Association for Preschools uses the following definition of Headstart and its clients:

The mission of Headstart is to serve the needs of children, from 18 months to 5 years, and their families, who require preventive and remedial programs so that children have the opportunity to achieve their full potential.*

** Children (low income and/or special needs**), who need a “head start” before they enter the regular school system, so they will succeed in the education system and will establish a positive pattern for the rest of their lives.*

*** While OCHAP is cautious in the use of labels, “special needs” is defined as a significant lag in one or any combination of emotional, social, physical or cognitive development. In this context, special needs is one who, at any given point in time, faces barriers to normal development and functioning, and/or has increased vulnerability to environmental and non-environmental stresses, including those related to family, social, economic and cultural circumstances.*

All Headstart programs employ qualified teachers, encourage parental involvement, incorporate indoor and outdoor activities, offer professional services, and maintains regular links to other community agencies and resources. Headstart programs are oftentimes equated to traditional child care programs (e.g. day care, junior kindergarten, play groups, and parenting co-ops). However, licensed under the Day Nurseries Act of Ontario and through purchase of service agreements with the City of Ottawa, Headstart receives funding for additional components which makes it different from regular nursery school programs, such as: *enhanced nutrition, transportation, lower teacher to child ratios, speech and language program, early literacy and numeracy initiatives, and parenting programs.*

While flexibility of program design among Headstart program is seen as a key to ensuring the effective and culturally-appropriate operation of programs, OCHAP is striving toward the establishment of a consistent approaches to service, such as with its intake procedures, assessment of the child’s and family’s needs, and program goals and components. Development of consistency in these areas is seen as a necessary step prior to more formal evaluation of the effectiveness of programs and future growth.

IDEAL COMPONENTS FOR A HEADSTART PRESCHOOL

All Headstart programs in Ottawa strive for:

Qualified Staff

- m Certified early childhood educators
- m Resource teachers
- m Low teacher to child ratios
- m Social worker or parent educator

Stimulating Programs for Children

- m Goal-oriented curriculum
- m Language-centred programs
- m Gross and fine motor skills
- m Multi-choice activities
- m Sensory areas - quiet and active
- m Outdoor and indoor activity areas
- m Gardening area
- m Quiet area
- m Focus on self-esteem

Active Parental Involvement

- m Sitting areas for parents
- m Parenting groups
- m Newsletter
- m Board Memberships

Appropriate Consultations

- m Home visits
- m Individual program plans
- m Speech and language assessments and consultation
- m Consultations with community agencies

Special Services

- m Nutritious menus - to provide a significant portion of the children’s daily needs
- m Transportation to and from school
- m Field trips

Headstart programs provide affordable access to child care to families in poverty. Nearly 100% of children enrolled in Headstart programs are receiving assistance from Ontario Works and day care subsidies through the Ministry of Community and Social Services. Headstart programs address the complex needs of families and children. The needs range from low nutritional level, poor motor and social development, language problems, English as a second language, family violence, special needs, etc.. Headstart programs give priority to families who have been referred by the Children's Aid Society, Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario, etc.

Based upon the findings from the 11 focus groups of Headstart parents, the term "Headstart" has positive connotations. The Headstart parents valued their relationship with "friendly, patient, helpful, loyal, caring, loving, understanding, nice and professional teachers," who responded to the unique needs of their children and to their individual concerns. The parents recognized that the program is funded by the government, and differs from other day care programs, in that Headstart offers a unique learning environment with structured play, which:

- < makes children ready for school – *e.g. exposes children to English for ESL families; teaches them how to identify and write the alphabet, numbers and colours, and to talk and convey ideas clearly; and focuses on physical, mental and speech development*
- < prepares children for independence – *e.g. how to eat and dress by themselves*
- < teaches children responsibility and appropriate behaviours– *e.g. rules, do's and don'ts, listening skills, paying attention to teachers/authority, picking up toys*
- < encourages positive social skills – *e.g. how to build relationships, interact well with others (children, siblings, and parents), show respect, share, resolve conflict without violence, and appreciate other cultures*
- < teaches children a routine – *e.g. waking up, getting dressed and going to school*

While Headstart prepares children for entry into the educational system, it also teaches parenting skills through a warm and nurturing environment. Enriched programming is designed to encourage each child to strive to his or her full potential, to better prepare the child for entry into the educational system and to work with parents addressing family issues. With this focus, Headstart is an ideal partner for those seeking to develop and implement early child development initiatives in Ottawa.

B. Families with Young Children in the City of Ottawa

1. Citywide Data

In a report by the Social Planning Council of Ottawa-Carleton, *A Tale of Two Cities*, socio-demographic and economic data was presented and analysed for trends for the Ottawa-Carleton Region. Mostly using 1996 census data, the authors concluded that there is a "disquieting trend of disparities and inequalities, between rich and poor, better inner urban and outlying and suburban areas, between different segments and subgroups of the population of Ottawa-Carleton." Their findings included the following facts:

- < Ottawa-Carleton has a higher rate of population growth and higher levels of in- and out-migration, than other metropolitan areas.
- < There are increasing numbers of non-traditional families (e.g. lone- parent families, households headed by women, etc.).
- < Increasing numbers of francophones are settling in the western parts of the region.
- < The number of people in the region having a mother tongue other than French or English more than doubled between 1986 and 1997.
- < Two consistent employment trends over the past twelve years have been a slower rate of job growth, and the prevalence of part-time over full-time job creation.
- < In the City of Ottawa, poverty rates for all groups are higher than the provincial and national rates.

To further illuminate these issues confronting the City of Ottawa, the Determinants of Health Working Group's publication entitled, "*A Report Card on Child Poverty in Ottawa-Carleton,*" summarised some of the key challenges children face as they grow up in Ottawa. In particular, it examined the relationship between poverty in a community and the health and well-being of children. The Determinants of Health Working Group concluded that the harm done to children living in poverty, with insufficient food, shelter, clothing and supports has lifelong consequences for them with respect to their health and future economic prospects. This assertion was based on key findings and facts, such as:

- < *Poverty.* There are 187,495 children in Ottawa-Carleton, and 43,315 (23%) of them live in poverty. 51% of visible minority youth, aged 0 to 19 years, and 59% of immigrant youth, aged 9 to 19 years, live in poverty in Ottawa-Carleton.
- < *Housing.* 41% of renters in Ottawa-Carleton pay more than 30% of their income on rent. The supply for housing is not keeping up with the demand in Ottawa. The rental vacancy rate is .2% (2 units for every 1,000) for Ottawa, the lowest in Canada. The availability of affordable housing has become a crisis. The wait for subsidized housing is five to seven years in Ottawa-Carleton.
- < *Child care.* The average cost of licensed preschool daycare here is \$637 per month. Licensed daycare can cost \$1,141 per month for infants and toddlers. The wait period can be over two years for some programs.
- < *Recreation.* In 1995, nearly half of families with an income under \$20,000 a year said that high costs was a reasons for not participating in physical activities, compared with one-third of families earning over \$60,000.
- < *Employment.* According to the 1996 Census, the unemployment rate for members of visible minority groups is 16.5%, which is higher than the general population which has a current 7% unemployment rate.

An understanding these key trends and their implications is viewed as critical in our collective ability to identify strategies that will contribute to the development of a health community, particularly for families with young children.

2. Headstart Families

OCHAP's Community Developer did some analysis of the 1996 Stats Canada on the following four electoral districts of Ottawa in which a Headstart program co-exists -- Ottawa-West Nepean, Ottawa-Centre, Ottawa-South, and Ottawa-Vanier. As depicted in Table 1 on the following page, there are

424,871 people residing – occupying 176 sq. km and the most urban areas of the City. These four areas of Ottawa are ethnically diverse, with 79,130 or 18.6% of a visible minority group; and 54,675 or 13.3% speaking a non-official language at home.

Of the 111,300 economic families in this area, the incidence of low-income was 21.1% or 23,510 families. Of the 424,871, 7.1% or 30,150 are children under the age of 6; an estimated 21.2% or 6,389 of the children under 6 are living with low-income families. The electoral district of Ottawa-Vanier had the greatest incidence of low-income families at 23.7%, with some individual census tracts reaching as high as 66.7%.

Table 1. Selected 1996 Census Data for 4 Electoral Districts of the City of Ottawa

	Ottawa-West Nepean	Ottawa- Centre	Ottawa- South	Ottawa- Vanier
Population, 1991	107332	106490	108254	102795
Population, 1996	108244	109793	111861	103418
Pop. % Change, 1991-96	0.8%	3.1%	3.3%	0.6%
Land area in sq. km	37.07	29.44	72.93	36.62
Population under 6 years	7820 7.2%	6065 5.5%	9535 8.5%	6730 6.5%
Est. low income, under 6 years*	1514	1192	2090	1593
Incidence of low income	19.4%	19.7%	21.9%	23.7%
Total - Economic families	29650	25445	30455	25750
Low income	5740	5000	6675	6095
Population by home language	103450	105280	106475	97240
English	86275 83.4%	85940 81.6%	80320 75.4%	58630 60.3%
French	%	6230 5.9%	9565 9.0%	27905 28.7%
Non-official languages	2905 2.8%	13110 12.5%	16590 15.6%	%
Arabic	14270 13.8%	1155 1.1%	%	10705 11.0%
Chinese	1965 1.9%	2795 2.7%	4185 3.9%	2100 2.2%
Somalia	2600 2.5%	630 0.6%	1800 1.7%	1175 1.2%
Spanish	1035 1.0%	825 0.8%	2270 2.1%	745 0.8%
Italian	780 0.8%	1415 1.3%	1385 1.3%	1045 1.1%
Other languages	1445 1.4%	6290 6.0%	885 0.8%	85 0.1%
	6445 6.2%		6065 5.7%	5555 5.7%
Population by visible minority	19480	17985	25490	16265
Black	4975 25.5%	4085 22.7%	8205 32.2%	5715 35.1%
Asian	9450 48.5%	9660 53.7%	%	5575 34.3%
Arab/West Asian	3595 18.5%	%	7520 29.5%	3670 22.6%
Latin American	945 4.9%	2665 14.8%	7475 29.3%	1050 6.5%
Other	515 2.6%	960 5.3%	%	255 1.6%
		615 3.4%	1905 7.5%	
			385 1.5%	

Source: 1996 Stats Canada. [*This figure was derived by multiplying the incidence of low income families with the population number of children under 6 years.]

The Headstart programs in Ottawa serve a combined number of 400 children and their families each year. Based on client data collected in 2001, over half of these families indicated being of a non-Canadian background; 43.5% identified themselves as having a Canadian background (37.8%) or French Canadian background (5.7%). Nearly one-third spoke a non-official language. Of those that

spoke a language other French or English, 32.6% spoke Somalian, 6.2% Arabic, and 2.5% an Asian language. The Headstart families mostly resided in the southeast, central, or western parts of Ottawa.

During the focus group meetings arranged by OCHAP, Headstart parents expressed their viewpoint on the concerns and needs of families with young children in the City of Ottawa. Parents talked about issues related to newcomers, single parents, parents in under-serviced areas, lack of opportunities available to economically-disadvantaged families, community safety issues, inadequate health care system, lack of affordable housing, the need for more quality, subsidized child care programs and programs for children.

During in-person interviews with the Community Development, the Directors of the Headstart programs also discussed a range of issues facing families with children. For all ten directors, the issue of poverty was a consistent theme. Poverty was related to poor self-esteem, housing problems, and lack of access to resources such as full-daycare programs and recreational programs. Families in high density housing areas were seen as prone to experiencing many stressors, including violence, isolation and lack of support. The Directors indicated that some families are struggling to meet basic needs (e.g. food) and are dealing with addiction problems, mental health issues, and other disabilities. New Canadians, immigrants and visible minorities face issues of prejudice and racism, cultural and language barriers.

The Directors agreed that the intake system for applying for daycare subsidy and Headstart programs is perceived as bureaucratic, intimidating, and disrespectful to parents. Oftentimes, information is wrongly given to clients. This process results in clients being turned away unnecessarily and /or discouraged from continuing with the process. Many families do not qualify for the subsidies, however, their children could greatly benefit from such enriched early childhood education programs. The subsidy restrictions disadvantage many economically, border-line families.

Each family may face their own unique barriers, e.g. low functioning, low motivation. Some families may require affordable and flexible daycare to accommodate work schedules. For many ESL families, language becomes a barrier. Transportation is another barrier to families trying to access early childhood education programs. Seven of the eleven Headstart programs provide limited transportation. Lack of transportation causes parents a inconvenience.

Parents, especially newcomers, have a lack of knowledge of available programs and services (where to go, shop, get doctors, catch bus, register children, etc.) in their community. The value of early childhood education program is sometimes underappreciated by parents.

The Directors talked about the need to focus on life and behavioural management skills for parents, but recognized the existence of a communication problem and lack of awareness of different types of programs among parents, as well as a low level of comfort in accessing services. Providing financial incentives to help parents move away from Social Assistance was mentioned as a need by one Director.

The Directors emphasized the need to expand subsidized spaces for Headstart programs. Long waiting lists and limited capacity (space, staff and hours) affect access to services for many economically-disadvantaged families – forcing families to put children in unsupervised and unsafe environments. More resources (money, food for children, etc.), services (for parents, ESL families, extended hours) and support (enhanced child to staff ratios) are particularly needed for special needs children or children with behavioural issues in Headstart programs.

The Directors identified early childhood education programs for “special needs children.” as the most under-served group in the City. The definition of “special needs” being broad – autistic children, children with behaviour disorders, developmentally delayed, physically disabled, etc. The Headstart programs value the support of Practical Assistants provided by Children’s Integrated Support Services, but CISS is underfunded and their support is inadequate to meet the growing demand for services for special needs children.

Other specific groups in the City which are not being served include: socially-isolated families, families in shelters and special living arrangements, new Canadians (e.g. Somalian community) and other ESL families, and families with infants and toddlers.

The Directors also spoke about the lack of child care programs, which cater to the diverse needs of families. The Directors articulated the need in the City of Ottawa for:

- < affordable, full-day childcare programs (especially in under-served areas like Vanier);
- < non-traditional child care (in evenings, weekends or extended hours);
- < child care for infants and toddlers; and
- < other programs to prepare children for school (for parents who don’t work or don’t go to school).

3. Ottawa-West Nepean

The electoral district of Ottawa-West Nepean is comprised of 108,244 people residing within 22 census tracts, covering 37.07 sq. km. This region has a 19.4% incidence of low income families. There is an estimated 7,820 children under the age of 6, of which 1,514 are living in low-income families. 13.8% of the population speak a non-official language at home. Among the visible minority population, 48.5% are Asian, 25.5% are Black, 18.5% are Arab/West Asian, and 4.9% Latin American.

Upon further examination of the census data, low-income families are primarily concentrated in 2 areas. Half of the district’s children under 6 in low-income families (762) live in the contiguous census tracts of #27, 28, 29 and 138 in the western end of the district. Two of the four Headstart programs are located in this community: Pinecrest-Queensway Nursery School (under the auspices of Pinecrest-Queensway Health and Community Service) and Foster Farm Child Care Center (under the auspices of the Child Care Division, City of Ottawa).

26.9% or 408 children under the age of 6 in low-income families reside on the eastern side of this electoral district in the contiguous census tracts of #22, 23 and 132. This area is served by two

Headstart programs: Esther By Child Care Centre (under the auspices of the Child Care Division, City of Ottawa) and West End Nursery School. There are a total of 160 child care slots for Headstart programs for this district.

For the Directors of these four Headstart programs, commonly expressed issues facing families with children for this area include:

- < children and parents have ESL issues as well as new Canadian issues;
- < children are lacking school-readiness skills;

- < lack of understanding and value of early education and parenting programs accompanied with a lack of affordable, flexible day care;
- < lack of knowledge of and difficulties with the subsidy criteria, welfare system, and social service network are barriers to service access; and
- < more programming for children and families, who are isolated, living in high density housing and poor areas, is warranted.

4. Ottawa-Centre

Comprised of 109,793 persons, 27 census tracts, and covering 29.44 sq. km, the electoral district of Ottawa-Centre has a 19.7% incidence of low income families. There is an estimated 6,065 children under the age of 6, of which 1,192 are living in low-income families. 12.7% of the population speak a non-official language at home. Among the visible minority population, this electoral district has a high percentage of Asians (53.7%).

Upon further examination of the census data, there is one primary concentration of low-income families -- 41.9% of the district's children under 6 in low-income families (499) live in the adjoining census tracts of #41, 42, 43 and 46, whose boundaries include from Bronson to Parkdale, and from Somerset to the Queensway. The remainder are even disbursed among the remaining census tracts. Two of the four Headstart programs are located in and serve this community: Nanny Goat Hill Nursery School (under the auspices of Somerset West Community Health Centre) and Queensway Preschool (under the auspices of the Queensway Social Action Group).

The National Capital YMCA-YWCA Headstart Nursery School is also located in this electoral riding. Because of its transportation program, the Y's Headstart program enrolls children from throughout this area, as well as from the southeastern part of the Ottawa-Vanier electoral district.

There are only 64 child care slots, in total, for these three Headstart programs.

For the Headstart Directors in Ottawa-Centre, their concerns included:

- < Issues facing families with children – poverty, housing, insufficient life skills among parents
- < Unmet needs with respect to early childhood development – a lack of parent-infant programs, subsidized spaces.

- < Barriers to families accessing ECE programs – transportation, poor intake system for child care subsidies which turn clients away, lack of visibility and knowledge of programs.
- < Unserved populations – special needs children and low functioning parents, with addiction problems.

5. Ottawa-South

The electoral district of Ottawa-South is comprised of 111,861 people residing within 22 census tracts, covering a comparatively larger area of 72.93 sq. km. This region has a 21.9% incidence of low income families. Among these four electoral districts, Ottawa-South has the highest number of low-income families, the highest percentage of people who speak a non-official language at home, and the highest percentage of visible minority population. This area has the largest estimated number of children under the age of 6 (9,535), of which 2,090 are living in low-income families. 15.6% of the population speak a non-official language at home – with Arabic and Somalian has the more frequently spoke non-official languages. Among the visible minority population, 32.2% are Black, 29.3% are Arab/West Asian, and 7.5% Latin American.

Upon further examination of the census data, low-income families are primarily concentrated in 2 areas. Half of the district's children under 6 in low-income families (1,031) live in the contiguous census tracts of #1.01, 1.02, 1.03, and 7.02. Two of the three Headstart programs are located in this community: Cornerstone Children's Centre and Heathering Nursery School. 517 or 25% of the children under 6 in low-income families reside in census tracts #10, 11.01 and 11.02. This area is served by Hawthorne Meadows Nursery School. These Headstart programs enrolls a significant number of children with a Somalian or Arab/West Asian background.

In total, these three Headstart programs can accommodate 126 child care slots. These schools also have the longest waiting list for a Headstart slot – exceeding 100 names for each and with more than a 12 month waiting period.

For the Headstart directors in Ottawa-South, their concerns centred around the following:

- < Families with children in this community are dealing with multiple issues: isolation, poverty and financial problems, addictions, mental health issues, cultural, immigrant and resettlement issues, and stressors related to the environment, e.g. high density housing, chaotic and violent neighbourhood atmosphere, etc.
- < Needs which are not being met with respect to early childhood development in this community include: limited availability and access to affordable, supervised and licensed child care as well as service during non-traditional hours.
- < Barriers to families include: transportation, services are not located in community, and lack of information about existing resources.

6. Ottawa-Vanier

Comprised of 103,418 persons, 29 census tracts, and covering 36.62 sq. km, the electoral district of Ottawa-Vanier has the highest incidence of low income families at 23.7%. There is an estimated 6,730 children under the age of 6, of which 1,593 are living in low-income families. 28.7% of the population speak the French language at home. Approximately one-third of the visible minority population are Black or Asian.

Upon further examination of the census data, there are 5 census tracts (#12, #14, 103, 122.01 and 122.02) with an excess of 100 low-income children under 6. Census tract #14, has a 66.7% incidence of low-income families with 173 under the age of 6 in such families. The two census tracts on the southeastern end (#122.01 and 122.02) has 363 low-income children under 6.

While the Y's Headstart program enrolls some children from this part of the Ottawa-Vanier electoral district, there are no designated Headstart programs for this community. In addition, aside from CAS, none of the other Headstart programs offer an early enrichment program specifically for francophones.

The Children's Aid Society Headstart Nursery School/Pré-Maternelle Bon-Départ is located in this region. However, the target population and eligibility requirements of the CAS Headstart Nursery School is unique – children and parents involved in the child protection system rather than local residents. The CAS Headstart Director expressed her concern for families who are isolated, dealing with mental health and addictions issues, living in poverty, and dealing with family violence. She agrees that more outreach is needed, as well as home visiting programs, parenting programs as well as general family support. In terms of unmet needs, special needs children and children with behavioural issues require more support and resources.

C. Social Service Network

1. The Vision

To adequately address the needs of families with young children throughout Ottawa, OCHAP endorses the principle of an integrated system of services. Based on their collective and extensive experience in the field of early childhood development, these ten Headstart Directors recommend an integrated range of programs, which includes

- < universal access to childcare opportunities;
- < planned approaches and identification of specific needs for “early intervention programs”
- < more qualified, prepared and equitably paid early childhood educators and staff;
- < accessible, enriched preschool programs in under-served areas (e.g. Vanier);
- < more funding to expand Headstart and other enriched ECE programs;
- < better visibility, outreach and communication about and between programs;
- < increased collaboration among programs to meet the multiple needs of children and families;
- < adaptable services and parenting programs to meet families' unique and changing needs.

Furthermore, Headstart parents were asked information during focus groups on what services they “use” or “would like to use.” Parents use a variety of services from a number of service providers in Ottawa including:

- < First Words
- < Nobody’s Perfect
- < Better Beginnings
- < Boys and Girls Clubs
- < Children’s Aid Society
- < Community Health Centres, CHEO, and other medical clinics
- < Local YMCA-YWCA or recreation centre
- < Ontario Works - Employment Resource Centre
- < Local library
- < Local elementary schools
- < Food banks
- < Shelters

With regard to services parents “would like to use,” the following table lists all of their responses. The bolded suggestions were repeatedly presented by parents in the different focus groups.

Table 2. Programs Headstart Parents Would Like to Use

	WOULD LIKE TO USE
Other Day Care and Early Childhood Educational Services (<i>e.g. full-day care, home-day care, schools, libraries, speech therapy, etc.</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> < Alternative day care or drop off programs on weekends and in afternoons < Play groups < Information on other child care programs or in different locations < Reading and writing program < Homework club < Sunday school < Craft programs
Recreational Programs (<i>e.g. recreation centres, museums, parks, etc.</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> < Affordable sports and games for young children (including dance and music) < Affordable sports for adults
Cultural Programs (<i>e.g. cultural interpretation, language school, diversity workshops, etc.</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> < School for language acquisition (French) < Programs to learn about different cultures

	WOULD LIKE TO USE
Health Services (e.g. <i>community health centres or resource centres, etc.</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> < Health workshops on topics such as CPR, epilepsy, allergies, asthma, emergency care, etc. < Dental services < Eye services < Medical services (after 7:00 p.m.) < Cheaper prescriptions
Employment and Job Search Services (e.g. <i>Ontario Works, etc.</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> < Computer skills training and typing classes < Professional training (eg. for teachers, doctors, hairdressing etc.) < Information on starting your own business < Information on employment opportunities < Driving lessons
Housing Services (e.g. <i>shelters, tenant rights, etc.</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> < Affordable housing options < Information for first-time homeowners < Shorter waiting period for subsidized housing
Parenting Programs (e.g. <i>Parent Resource Centres, etc.</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> < Parenting workshops on how to deal with anger, sibling rivalry, time for self, special needs children, etc. < Parenting programs after 5:00 p.m. for people who work.
Practical Assistance Services (e.g. <i>food banks, clothing banks, etc.</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> < Community kitchen / food co-op < Food banks which give more than 1 week of food, don't have to show drug card, accessible, more nutritious foods < Information on places to go/where to turn

In Ottawa, there exists a wide range of programs and services for families with young children. The following is a listing of just a few, and includes ideas for partnership with OCHAP members.

2. Early Child Development

Child Care

According to the Ottawa-Carleton Inventory of the Social Planning Council of Ottawa, there are 162 licensed child care sites and 29 licensed home child care agencies. Ottawa-Carleton is listed as having 9,800 licensed child care spaces, of which 6,344 are subsidized. In addition, there are around 18 programs which provide respite or occasional care. Because of costly fees and lack of spaces, many families also use unlicensed child care programs in Ottawa.

In addition, there are several coalitions which have been established, which has an emphasis on child care. For instance, the mission of the Child Care Council is: "On behalf of children and families, the Child Care Council provides a structure to promote collaboration and shared responsibility for the development and delivery of comprehensive, high quality child care services in Ottawa. The CCC acts as a collective voice to provide advice to funding bodies and to influence the political process."

Partnerships Ideas for OCHAP:

1. OCHAP will continue to advocate for additional child care spaces, subsidized slots, Headstart programs, and child care programs in Ottawa, particularly for the under-served communities like Vanier.
2. OCHAP will look into establishing partnerships with other child care facilities which serve a similar population as Headstart. OCHAP is exploring the feasibility of sharing its knowledge, resources and programs, like its Speech and Language program, with other child care programs.
3. OCHAP will continue to inform and refer families on waiting lists to other child care centres. In addition, OCHAP will discuss the idea of developing a demonstration project, which would help Headstart families to move into traditional day care settings – thus alleviating the long waiting periods for Headstart slots, increasing services to low-income families, and ensuring the fullest use of the day care subsidy program.
4. OCHAP will continue its representation on the coalitions, including the Child Care Council.

Education

In terms of universally available early child development programs, junior and senior kindergartens enroll children between the ages of four and five years. The Ottawa-Carleton Region has a number of junior and senior kindergarten programs, managed by four school boards:

- < The Ottawa-Carleton District School Board with 115 sites
- < The Ottawa-Carleton Catholic School Board with 64 sites
- < Le Conseil des écoles catholiques de langue française du centre-est with 29 sites, and
- < Le Conseil des écoles publiques de l'est de l'Ontario with 11 sites.

Partnerships Ideas for OCHAP:

1. OCHAP Directors have placed an importance in developing a closer relationship with individual schools in each community as well as with the various school boards. A more formal partnership has the potential of easing the child's transition to the regular school system, continuing the level of care required for specific special needs children, and for helping the parents who need additional information and support on where and how to enroll their child into junior and/or senior kindergarten.

Family Supports and Parenting Education

Ottawa has a number of parenting education programs and parent resource centres. Programs have been established for new parents (e.g. childbirth and child development programs, Well Baby Drop-ins, pre- and post-natal infant care, etc.), to encourage parent and child interaction (e.g. playgroups, drop-in programs, etc.), to improve parenting skills (e.g. through parenting workshops, conferences, etc.).

There are 33 municipal libraries, and additional bookmobiles and toy lending libraries throughout Ottawa, numbering around 90. These resources encourage early literacy, provide caregivers with important information on parenting issues and child developing, and offer parents alternative and cost-effective strategies for stimulating children's learning and play.

In addition, many communities have food banks to supplement families need for nutritional foods.

Ottawa will soon see the creation of 7 Early Years Centres to be established under the following organizations: Mother Craft (Ottawa-Centre); Pinecrest-Queensway Health and Community Services (Ottawa-West Nepean); Andrew Fleck Parent Resource Centre (Ottawa-South); Vanier Community Resource Centre (Ottawa-Vanier), Cumberland Community Resource Centre, City View Day Care and Kanata/West Gilbourne Community Resource Centre. These Early Years Centre are expected to provide a continuum of services to families with young children

Partnerships Ideas for OCHAP:

1. OCHAP will continue to explore options for offering parenting education programs to Headstart families. Where feasible, partnerships with established and culturally-appropriate programs will be pursued.
2. OCHAP will continue to inform parents about existing family supports and programs available in each community.
3. OCHAP is interested in working with the Ottawa Public Libraries on early literacy strategies within Headstart settings.

Special Needs Children

There are 84 programs that serve children with special needs. Such programs include: Preschool Speech and Language Program, early assessments of hearing and other medical conditions, programs to deal with behaviourally-challenged or developmentally delayed children. Sponsoring organizations include the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario, First Words, Children's Integrated Support Services, etc.

Partnerships Ideas for OCHAP:

1. OCHAP will continue its existing partnership arrangement with CHEO, CISS, First Words, etc.. Opportunities for expansion will be reviewed periodically.

Housing

With a waiting list of over 13,000 households, there are just over 800 social housing units operated as supportive housing to meet the special needs of clients.

There are written resources to help tenants who are fighting an eviction, have chronic maintenance and

repair problems, and are being imposed high rent increases. These pamphlets include useful information for people to understand their rights and where to turn for legal assistance.

Partnerships Ideas for OCHAP:

- < OCHAP will continue to advocate for and verbalize the feelings of many Headstart families, who are urgently expressing their need for safe and affordable housing options.
- < OCHAP will inform and provide parents with written resources related to tenants rights and housing options.

Recreation

Recreation services, provided by the new People Services Department, are organized into four districts in the City of Ottawa: central, south, east and west. Facilities in each location vary. Some include arenas, fitness centres, pools, etc.. Programs for preschool-aged children focus on music, arts and crafts, baby yoga, kindergym, swimming, etc. While fees are attached to most programs, there is a Fee Assistance Program, which is a system of financial support, that helps to reduce the cost of admission to programs and activities for residents who can't afford them..

In addition, there are a number of YM-YWCAs, private recreation centres, Boys and Girl Scouts programs, summer camps, etc..Some assistance is provided to help children living in poverty to participate in programs.

Partnerships Ideas for OCHAP:

1. OCHAP understands that many families would like more access to affordable recreational programs in their community. For Headstart families, costs are prohibitive, and requesting subsidies is difficult and perhaps embarrassing for some. OCHAP could advocate for its families with the Peoples Services Department and other recreation programs, in the hopes that the system will understand and address the needs of low-income families.

Health

In Ottawa, there are 6 community health centres, and an additional 7 community resource centres. They include:

- < Pinecrest-Queensway Health and Community Services (Ottawa-West Nepean)
- < Carlington Community and Health Services (Ottawa-West Nepean and Ottawa-Centre)
- < Centretown Community Health Centre (Ottawa-Centre)
- < Somerset West Community Health Centre (Ottawa-Centre)
- < South-East Ottawa Centre for a Healthy Community (Ottawa-South)
- < BlackStar Community Resource Centre (Ottawa-South)
- < Sandy Hill Community Health Centre (Ottawa-Vanier)

- < Vanier Community Centre (Ottawa-Vanier)
- < Cumberland Community Resource Centre
- < Gloucester Centre for Community Resources
- < Lowertown Resource Centre
- < Nepean Community Resource Centre
- < Overbrook-Forbes Community Resources Centre

There are a number of programs which geared toward health promotion, such as:

- < Healthy Babies, Healthy Children – Family visitors offer home visits and support to women during pregnancy, to parents of newborns and young children up to three years of age.

Partnerships Ideas for OCHAP:

1. Because of the wealth of resources and services available through the community health and resource centres, OCHAP will continue to get and give referrals, work on collaborative projects, and set up new partnership arrangements for the benefit of families with young children.
2. OCHAP will continue to share information about the CHC/CRCs services with the Headstart parents.

Advocacy

Ottawa-Carleton Child Poverty Action Group, a public interest, advocacy and research organization working to alleviate poverty among families with children. CPAG's mandate is to increase awareness, advocate on behalf of all poor children, monitor government policies affecting families, and recommending changes to existing legislation.

Success by 6, an initiative to promote community-wide support to better meet the needs of children (aged six and under) and their families, was publicly launched in Ottawa-Carleton. Led by a coalition of organizations

The Social Planning Council of Ottawa identifies social and economic needs, establishes priorities in meeting them, and contributes to the coordination efforts of local agencies to meet these needs. The Council takes an active role as an advocate for social and economic issues in the region.

Using a directory of foundations and corporations in Canada, seventeen organizations were identified as potential and appropriate funding sources for early child education and child development. They include: the Bell Mobility Foundation, Troco-Trouten Foundation, Inc., Altamira Foundation, Atkinson Charitable Foundation, The Samuel and Saidye Bronfman Family Foundation, CIBC World Markets Children's Miracle Foundation, Community Foundation of Ottawa, The Harold Crabtree Foundation, Laidlaw Foundation, The McLean Foundation, The Meighen Foundation, F.K. Morrow Foundation, The Ontario Trillium Foundation, Royal Bank of Canada Charitable Foundation, R. Howard Webster Foundation, and the Geoffrey H. Wood Foundation. These foundations have an interest in children and youth issues.

Partnerships Ideas for OCHAP:

1. OCHAP could develop better relations with CPAG, Success By 7 and the Social Planning Council of Ottawa. OCHAP's information on gaps in services could be shared, for the benefit of the city-at-large.
2. OCHAP could obtain proposal guidelines, developing ideas and submit proposals to any of the aforementioned foundations.

D. Summary of Gaps in Services among Headstart Families

This report contains information about the City of Ottawa, individual communities, the needs and concerns of families with young children, feedback from insightful early childhood educators, a review of complex social service network. It alludes to gaps in services, particularly among low-income families and in under-served communities like Vanier. It reinforces the need to establish a seamless continuum of services for families with young children.

Based on this information, there is a need for:

- < universal access to childcare opportunities;
- < planned approaches and identification of specific needs for “early intervention programs”
- < more qualified, prepared and equitably paid early childhood educators and staff;
- < accessible, enriched preschool programs in under-served areas (e.g. Vanier);
- < more funding to expand Headstart and other enriched ECE programs;
- < better visibility, outreach and communication about and between programs;
- < increased collaboration among programs to meet the multiple needs of children and families, including strategies to address issues related to poverty, housing, transportation, recreation and health.
- < adaptable services and parenting programs to meet families' unique and changing needs;

This section of the report concludes with a range of partnership possibilities between OCHAP, Headstart schools, and the surrounding community. The following section presents some concrete recommendations, which warrant discussion and hopefully action.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

Public Awareness

1. Develop effective, community-based strategies to inform parents about the existence, importance and effectiveness of Headstart programs in preparing young children for school.
 - < City-wide Strategies – Maintain website, list website with internet search engines, place periodic ads in the Capital Parent and/or Ottawa Families newspapers, place community announcements on Rogers Cable and other media outlets, and design promotional materials (e.g. magnets, buttons, etc.) for OCHAP.
 - < Neighbourhood-based Strategies – Place OCHAP’s brochures and promotional materials in key sites – ideal locations to be determined by each OCHAP members (e.g. libraries, grocery stores, health centres, etc.).
2. Educate service providers, including Ontario Works staff, about Headstart – the eligibility requirements, process to register parents and children, and dispel misinformation.
 - < Arrange presentations about OCHAP and Headstart to service providers and Ontario Works staff in Ottawa-Centre, Ottawa-West Nepean and in Ottawa-South neighbourhoods.
 - < Send informational and promotional packets with OCHAP’s brochure, profiles, membership form, list of publications, and promotional materials to key service providers.

Services to Families with Young Children

3. Continue to identify and compose position statements on the needs of families with young children in Ottawa, and post on OCHAP’s website and disseminate to policymakers.
4. Develop creative and effective early child development initiatives for Headstart children and children of similar demographics. Respond to RFPs and submit proposals to funders, such as the Early Years Challenge Fund, etc.
5. Continue to seek out parenting programs and training opportunities for parents and staff to provide up-to-date early child development techniques.
6. Hold semi-annual planning and informational meetings with Headstart staff, like another Vision Planning Day.
7. Actively participate in the development of a seamless system of care for families with young children. Address fragmentation of services, gaps, overlaps in service by attending related meetings.
8. Build the organizational capacity of Headstart programs to evaluate its program and to assess impact and outcomes.

Partnerships

9. Identify and ensure links are established between child care and Headstart programs in each respective community to ensure parents on waiting list have access to other subsidized child care slots.
10. Work directly with elementary school teachers and schools to ensure the ongoing needs of Headstart children are understood and addressed.
11. Foster partnerships between Headstart programs and community health and resource centres. The result of which is increased referrals to and from such organizations, improved access to health, community and family services among families with young children, and/or better management of Headstart programs through official sponsorships.
12. Establish formal links with city and provincial early childhood development initiatives, e.g. Success By 6. Contact and state possible strategies for collaboration with the emerging Early Years Centres:
13. Foster partnerships with businesses, housing authorities, correctional associations, treatment services, cultural and settlement services, service clubs, children mental health, hospitals, parks and recreation, etc.

Advocacy

14. If the demand persists, advocate for the development of new Headstart programs in under-served areas (e.g. southeast, southwest, west and east Ottawa, etc.) and in the unserved districts (e.g. Vanier, Orleans, and Nepean, etc.). Compose position statements on the need for expanding Headstart programs in Ottawa. Send letter and informational packets with OCHAP's brochure, profiles, membership form, list of publications, and promotional materials to key legislative or administrative offices. Provide the same information to parents and staff and encourage them to become powerful advocates for Headstart programs.
15. Make recommendations to the City of Ottawa regarding ways to improve services to families with young children. Advocate for positive change and, if needed, additional resources to establish consistent standards of service among Headstart programs. Continue to identify and barriers which Headstart families face in accessing traditional child care and social service programs.

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PROFILES OF OCHAP'S MEMBER AGENCIES: Ottawa-Vanier

CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY

Year Established: 1968

HEADSTART NURSERY SCHOOL

1602 Telesat Court

Gloucester, ON K1B 1B3

(613) 747-7800 (613) 747-4456 fax

Hours of Operation: Half-Day, mornings and afternoons *Number of Children:* 21

Mission: The Headstart Nursery School/Pré-Maternelle Bon-Départ is a voluntary child protection support program provided to preschool children living with their parents. The program endeavours to assist children to reach their full potential by offering a warm, nurturing environment which promotes early child development and assists children to enter the school system ready to learn. The length of a child's stay in the program is determined by the needs of the family and the level of risk to the child as assessed in close consultation and collaboration with the child protection worker.

PROFILES OF OCHAP'S MEMBER AGENCIES: Ottawa-Centre

NANNY GOAT HILL NURSERY SCHOOL

Year Established: 1990

755 West Somerset Street, Ottawa, ON K1R 6R1

(613) 235-7561 (613) 235-7595 fax

Hours of Operation: Half-Day Mornings *Number of Children:* 16

Mission: Nanny Goat Hill Nursery School offers an educational program based on the belief that children learn through play. Given a balance of free-play, and teacher directed activities, the preschool children grow and develop socially, physically, emotionally and intellectually.

QUEENSWAY PRESCHOOL

Year Established: 1969

429 Parkdale Avenue

Ottawa, ON K1V 1H3

(613) 728-8055 (613) 728-9686 fax

Hours of Operation: Half-Days *Number of Children:* 24

Mission: It is the philosophy of the Queensway Preschool to recognize that each child is unique, therefore the program focusses on the individual needs and abilities of each child, knowing that early childhood should be a time of fun, warmth, security, exploration and discovery.

THE NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION YMCA-YWCA

Year Established: 1966

HEADSTART NURSERY SCHOOL

180 Argyle Avenue

Ottawa, ON K2P 1B7

(613) 788-5004 (613) 788-5095 fax

Hours of Operation: Half-Day Mornings *Number of Children:* 24

Mission: The goal of the National Capital Region YMCA-YWCA Headstart Nursery School is to provide an enriched preschool experience for children that will help prepare them for the formal education system with success. Through play, children are encouraged to feel good about themselves; be confident to try new activities; solve problems and communicate their feelings, and develop their language and social skills.

PROFILES OF OCHAP'S MEMBER AGENCIES: Ottawa-West Nepean

ESTHER BY DAY CARE

Year Established: 1972

1550 Caldwell Avenue
Ottawa, ON K1Z 8M7
(613) 729-3242 (613) 729-6765 fax

Hours of Operation: Full-Day

Number of Children: 48

Mission: Recognizing that children's experiences during their early years directly affect the quality of their lives, Esther By Day Care's goal is to meet children's social, physical, intellectual and emotional needs. If children are to grow into responsive and responsible individuals, they first need to accept themselves as they are, regardless of developmental differences. Through support, assistance and direction, children come to understand their potential and to gain the knowledge necessary to deal with life's everyday experiences. Esther By Childcare Centre has been developed as a supplement to the home environment. In this way, children find a place for themselves as members of the family, community and society of peers.

FOSTER FARM CHILD CARE CENTRE

Year Established: 1973

1065 Ramsey Crescent
Ottawa, ON K2B 7Z9
(613) 829-8939 (613) 829-1533 fax

Hours of Operation: Full-days

Number of Children: 32

Mission: Recognizing that children's experience during their early years directly affect their quality of the lives, it is Foster Farm Children Care Centre's goal to meet the social, physical, intellectual and emotional needs of children. To grow into responsive and responsible individuals, they first need to accept themselves as they are, regardless of developmental differences. Through support, assistance and direction, children come to understand their potential and to gain the knowledge necessary to deal with life's everyday experiences.

PINECREST QUEENSWAY NURSERY SCHOOL

2860 Ahearn Avenue
Ottawa, ON K2B 6Z9
(613) 829-1125

Hours of Operation: Half-Day, morning and afternoons

Number of Children: 48

Mission: The Pinecrest Queensway Nursery School provides an early enrichment program to children from economically-disadvantaged families. This community-based school has an innovative curriculum and enhanced learning environment.

WEST END NURSERY SCHOOL

Year Established: 1978

1470 Raven Avenue
Ottawa, ON K1Z 7Y7
(613) 728-6505 (613) 728-2921 fax

Hours of Operation: Half-Days, mornings and afternoons

Number of Children: 32

Mission: West End Nursery School provides children with the opportunity to develop and grow in a stimulating environment and through a wide variety of activities. The school offers a rich language program, and our philosophy is to encourage each child to develop at their own pace and feel good about themselves. Good role modelling teaches the children the necessary tools to deal with life experiences.

PROFILES OF OCHAP'S MEMBER AGENCIES: Ottawa-South

CORNERSTONE CHILDREN'S CENTRE

Year Established: 1981

2330 Don Reid Drive, Suite 102

Ottawa, ON K1H 1E1

(613) 731-2440 (613) 521-8356 fax

Program Hours: Full-Day

Number of Children: 50

Mission: The philosophy of Cornerstone Children's Centre is to provide a full Day Care program for children. The primary goal is for a healthy environment which will allow the child to grow in all areas of their development by learning through "play." The centre teaches children independence, social and cognitive skills, develops creativity and builds positive self-image.

HAWTHORNE MEADOWS NURSERY SCHOOL

Year Established: 1977

2244 Russell Road

Ottawa, ON K1G 1B3

(613) 731-1507 phone and fax

Hours of Operation: Half-Day

Number of Children: 44

Mission: The purpose of Hawthorne Meadows Nursery School is to provide a one-half day Nursery School program, which will benefit the child, the parent, and the community. The school's philosophy is to enable children to participate in a program designed to meet each child's individual needs as well as their social, physical, emotional and cognitive development. The staff encourages and promotes language development throughout the program.

HEATHERINGTON NURSERY SCHOOL

Year Established: 1977

2330 Don Reid Driver, Suite 102

Ottawa, ON K1H 1E1

(613) 731-2440 (613) 521-8356 fax

Hours of Operation: Half-Day

Number of Children: 32

Mission: Heatherington Nursery School's philosophy is to provide each child with a stimulating and supportive environment designed to motivate each child to reach their individual potential.

For more information about OCHAP, visit the website at www.ochap.ca or write:

Ottawa-Carleton Headstart Association for Preschools

c/o Pinecrest Queensway Nursery School

2960 Ahearn Avenue

Ottawa, Ontario K2B 6Z9

(613) 829-1125

(613) 829-0052 fax

OTTAWA-CARLETON HEADSTART ASSOCIATION OF PRESCHOOLS - LOGIC MODEL

Purpose Statement: **To support, coordinate and advocate for Headstart Preschool programs and community agencies in the City of Ottawa. To facilitate the provision of professional staff training, parent education and enriched early childhood education**

Component	EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES AND PARENTING SERVICES	ORGANIZATIONAL AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT	COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, NETWORKING AND ADVOCACY
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct initial and periodic assessments of the child and family. • Design individualized personal program plan for child and family. • Coordinate half-day or full-day, enriched, early childhood developmental programming (including child guidance, indoor and outdoor play, storytelling, creative arts, music and movement, language development, and field trips). • Provide nutritional snacks to children. • Offer transportation services to family. • Offer Speech and Language Program (4 days of service to 11 schools) with: English and French services, English as a Second Language workshops, assessments and referrals. • Encourage parent participation and offer parent education groups on a variety of topics (e.g. health education, parenting skills, etc.) • Support parents and hold parent/teacher conferences. • Aspire towards an enhanced staff to child ratio. • Refer children and parents to appropriate services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer staff training at individual Headstart programs or to Headstart staff (as a group) on such topics as language assessments, child therapy, etc. • Evaluate and publicize outputs and outcomes attributable to Headstart programs. • Submit proposals for enhanced services and programs. • Obtain appropriate license with City of Ottawa and non-profit purchase of service agreement with the Ministry of Community and Social Services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce and distribute a periodic newsletter. • Participate in meetings of the Ottawa-Carleton Headstart Association of Preschools. • Establish links, liaise and develop effective early childhood education policies with community-based and city organizations and groups. • Participate in discussions with key stakeholders and advocate on behalf of families participating in Headstart, which are dealing with issues of poverty, family stress, public housing, multi-culturalism and other factors affecting development.
Target Groups	Children, between the ages of 18 months and 6 years, and their families. Families must be low-income, reside in the Ottawa-Carleton region, and obtain Headstart subsidies from the City of Ottawa.	Esther By Day Care Centre, Foster Farm Day Care Centre, Cornerstone Children's Centre, Heatherington Nursery School, Children's Aid Society Headstart and Prematernelle Bon Depart, Hawthorne Meadows Nursery School, Nanny Goat Hill Nursery School, Pinecrest-Queensway Nursery School, Queensway Preschool, West End Nursery School, The National Capital Region YMCA/YWCA Headstart Nursery School Program	AECEO, Algonquin College, Better Beginnings/Better Futures, Children's Aid Society, Children's Integrated Support Services, CHEO, Child Care Council, City of Ottawa, First Words, OCCA, Parent Resource Centres, Royal Ottawa Hospital, Success by Six, etc.
Short-term Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase child's attainment of developmental milestones. • Improve child's independence, social and cognitive skills, language development, creativity and self-image, and nutritional intake. • Improve communication and parenting skills. • Increase receptivity of parents to suggestions for behaviour management. • Increase number of children who are immunized 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase knowledge base and skills of teachers and staff to effectively relate to the Headstart population. • Upgrade staff's ability to provide high quality of care and to impact child development. • Improve Headstart's accountability by providing evidence-based research on outcomes and cost-benefits. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase networking opportunities. • Reduce duplication of services. • Increase efficient use of resources.
Long-Term Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce incidence of low-grade and chronic illnesses. • Improve school-readiness skills and problem solving techniques. • Improve chances for succeeding in employment, at high school, and post-secondary education. • Reduce risks for involvement with the law. • Increase access to and use of multi-cultural, community services. • Increase parent's participation in child's early years. • Increase parent's self-esteem and confidence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase peer support through networking and reduce staff burnout. • Increase funding for services and research related to Headstart, early childhood education, and early intervention programs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise government and public awareness of and support for Headstart and other early childhood education programs. • Increase the number of early intervention programs in the city of Ottawa. • Influence policies which address the needs of at-risk families, and effect change to improve the Day Nurseries Act. • Better coordination of services.

