

DREAMS & REALITIES

A COMMUNITY SURVEY - 2017



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This survey was commissioned by Communities 4 Families to obtain information in regards to programs that currently exist, seek out the gaps, and learn about emerging issues that downtown families with children ages 0-6 are facing. With the information gathered we hope to bring more awareness to the needs in downtown Winnipeg and thus inform our funding and granting directions.

Communities 4 Families (C4F) is a partnership of organizations, agencies and community members that work together to support families living in downtown Winnipeg. C4F is funded by Healthy Child Manitoba. Our members work across departments and sectors to facilitate a community development approach for the well-being of Manitoba's children, families and communities. Communities 4 Families believes in supporting healthy and active families, focusing especially on the preschool years.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	3
INTRODUCTION	4
METHODOLOGY	5
REALITIES	8
DISCOVERIES	9
DREAMS	10
CONCLUSION	14

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to Ingrid Peters Derry and Genny Funk-Unrau for the development and guidance of this process, and Deborah Clark, Lea Neufeld La Rue and Rita Racano for being on the advisory committee.

We would like to thank all the organizations, agencies and centres who graciously took the time to meet with me and/or complete the online survey. The following is a list of all who contributed their thoughts and ideas, all with the idea of making downtown Winnipeg a better place for families to live, learn and thrive.

Aboriginal Circle of Educators, Inc. (ACE)
Agape Table
ANCR's All Nations Family Resource Centre
Better Fathers Inc.
Bookmates Inc.
Bumper Crop Early Learning Centre
Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA)
Canadian Muslim Women's Institute (CMWI)
Canadian Red Cross CRC)
Crisis Pregnancy Centre (CPC)
Dufferin School Parent/Child/Family Centre
Family Community Centre-PFSS (THRIVE)
Family Dynamics
Filipino Women's Initiative
Frontier College
Greenway School Family Room
Healthy Start for Mom & Me (HSFMM)
Hospitality House Refugee Ministry
IRCOM
John M King School - Family Room
KidBridge
Kid Gloves - Day Nursery Centre
Knox Day Nursery, Inc.
Little Red Spirit Aboriginal Headstart (LRS)
Manitoba Foster Family Network (MFFN)
Manitoba Housing Renewal Corporation - Department of Families
Mosaic Newcomer Family Resource Network
Mulvey School Parent Room
New Directions Parenting Centre
Robert A. Steen Community Centre
Sexuality Education Resource Center (SERC)
Sister MacNamara School - Family room
Snowbird Lodge
Spence Neighbourhood Association

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Immigrant Centre
The WestEnd Commons
UWSA Daycare
Valour Community Centre (VCC)
Victor Play Centre Inc
Villa Rosa
Wahkohtowin Strengthening Families Program (SNA)
Wellington School Family Room
Wii Chiiwaakanak Learning Centre
Winnipeg Inner City Missions (WICM)
Winnipeg Public Library (Millennium, Cornish, Cindy Klassen)
Winnipeg Regional Health Authority (WRHA)
Wolseley Family Place (WFP)
Women's Health Clinic (WHC)
YMCA/YWCA Creative Play

INTRODUCTION

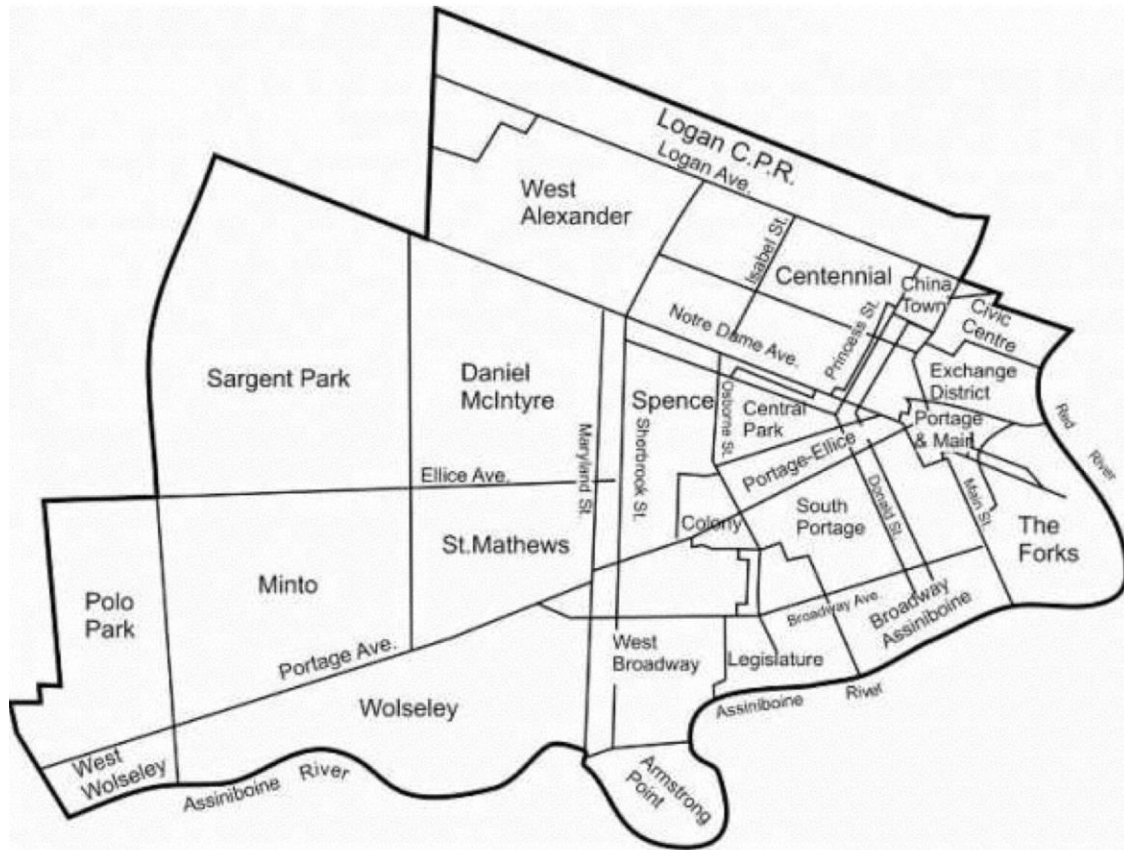
Downtown Winnipeg consists of vibrant and active neighbourhoods with a wealth of culture, diversity and enthusiasm. There is a strong sense of dedication and commitment from the greater community to support families so that they can thrive, learn and grow. Sometimes the opportunities seem endless and sometimes the limitations feel overwhelming. There are many gaps, yet it is evident that there is also growth.

After collecting and compiling all the information we received, we hope that people will use this document as a tool for directing their own ideas on networking within organizations and effectively supporting downtown families.

This document is not exhaustive and is a compilation of thoughts and ideas throughout the 24 neighbourhoods and 58 organizations surveyed. All information given was done so voluntarily. There are many more than this list of 58 organizations in downtown Winnipeg who support families with children 0-6. The information in this report is limited and does not include all programs being offered in the downtown.

METHODOLOGY

We researched organizations, agencies and centres within the downtown parameters, the goal being to connect with such groups that work specifically with families with children 0-6 years old. Once we had compiled the list of over 100, we began connecting with organizations who serve the 24 neighbourhoods in the downtown.



We created an online survey. All who completed did so voluntarily. There was a total of 58 surveys completed either online or with a face to face interview. We found both methods valuable. The face to face gave us the opportunity to build rapport and grow relationships. The online method allowed people to complete on their own time, with thoughtful responses, without coordinating a meeting.

REALITIES

Communities 4 Families believes in supporting healthy and active families, focusing especially on the preschool years. Communities 4 Families may fund an entire program such as Wiggle, Giggle and Munch, or provide funding to expand other programs that already exist, such as various parenting programs and groups. Networking, resource and information sharing is also a key component to the work that is done by Communities 4 Families. The following list is compiled based on information provided by respondents when asked, "How has Communities 4 Families supported your work?"

- Wiggle, Giggle, Munch - a major initiative that incorporates physical activity and nutrition for parents and their pre-school children
- Networking with other organizations to further our mission and community connections
- Staff Training, Facilitation & Development
- Facebook page to share with families
- Family Literacy events
- Programs that support learning and play
- Parenting programs
- Parent-child programs
- The quarterly newsletter/ and the weekly digital updates
- Children's books / books for babies / book bags
- Sharing resources amongst coalition members
- Family Chefs program
- C4F helped two of our student to attend parenting programs
- Provided great place as a source of information
- Monthly coalition meetings to keep all informed of various activities and programming amongst organizations

After compiling the information that was gathered over two months from 58 organizations, it became clear that there is a lot of work being done to support young families in Winnipeg's downtown neighbourhoods. We created a list of what is being offered, based on the information provided by respondents. Many of these programs are being offered in number of centres and at multiple times. In parenthesis are the shortened version or acronym of the respondents. Most of these programs are offered at no cost or low cost to families. Please search for more information either on the Communities 4 Families website <http://www.communities4families.ca> or the website of the respective organizations.

REALITIES

Parent Programs

Handle with Care (*ACE, MOSAIC, Dufferin, ANCR, Wellington, WFP, New Directions, THRIVE*)
Indigenous parenting programs (*ANCR, Wahkohtowin*)
Positive Discipline in English and other languages (*The Immigrant Centre, IRCOM, MOSAIC, ANCR, Sister MacNamara, THRIVE*)
HIPPIY- home visiting program for parents with children ages 3-6 (*MOSAIC*)
Nobody's Perfect in English and other languages (*The Immigrant Centre, MOSAIC, ANCR, CPC, WFP, THRIVE*)
The Parent Wellness Initiative (*CMHA*)
Triple P Parenting (*New Directions, CPC, WFP*)
Circle of Security (*New Directions, ANCR, The Immigrant Centre*)
Bounce Back and Thrive (*MOSAIC*)
Our Families Can Talk about Anything Program (*SERC*)
Father's program (*Better Fathers, THRIVE*)
Parent Coach (*Family Dynamics*)
Parent's Exploring Anger (*WFP*)
How to talk so kids will listen (*WFP*)

Children's programs (some programs for children 6+)

Kids Art (*Robert A Steen CC*)
Kid's Yoga (*Robert A Steen CC*)
After School Drop-In (*Robert A Steen CC, VCC*)
Mini Soccer, Jack Rabbit Hockey, Mini Baseball, WEC Basketball (*Robert A Steen CC*)
Music Circle (*WFP*)
Arts and Adventure, Gymnastics, and Soccer (*YM/YWCA*)
Stay and Play and Open Gym (*YM/YWCA*)
Science Explorers (*Wii Chiiwaakanak*)
Powwow Club (*Wii Chiiwaakanak*)

Education and Literacy

Inter-generational literacy (*ACE, CMWI, Bookmates*)
Book Bonding program (*IRCOM, MOSAIC, Wellington*)
Book donations (*Frontier College*)
Circle time (*Kldbridge*)
Check it Out Reading Zone (*WPL*)
English conversation (*Wellington, MOSAIC*)
Ojibwe classes for adults (*Wellington*)
Water Safety (*CRC*)
Injury Prevention (*CRC*)
Literary based preschool program (*WPL*)
Reading Circle (*Wii Chiikaakanak*)
Preschool (*LRS Aboriginal Headstart*)

REALITIES

Resources

Equip moms with clothing and household items (*Kidbridge*)
Family Therapy for parents and children (*New Directions, Family Dynamics*)
Pre/postnatal programs, Healthy Baby groups (*HSFMM, WRHA, WFP, Villa Rosa, CPC, WHC, VCC, THRIVE*)
Public Health Nurses and Dieticians (*WRHA*)
Emergency food and baby supplies (*THRIVE*)
Emergency and low-cost meal and grocery programs (*Agape Table*)
Halal food bank (*CMWI*)
Training and peer support for foster parents (*MFFN*)
Parent Wellness Initiative Partnership (*CMHA*)
Family First - home visits (*WRHA*)
In home family support (*Family Dynamics*)
Supports for Refugees (*Family Dynamics*)
Crisis support - and referrals – walk in (3 days per week) (*THRIVE*)
Nutrition Bingo (*THRIVE*)

Family & Social Programs

Families Programs - Evenings and/or Saturdays (*Dufferin, Wellington*)
Family literacy programming (*Frontier College, WPL*)
Drop in English conversation/play group (*IRCOM, KidBridge*)
Parent & Tots (*CMWI*)
Family Story time (*WPL*)
Baby Rhyme Time (*WPL*)
Time for Twos (*WPL*)
Bright Beginnings (*Dufferin*)
Feet on the Street - safer neighbourhoods (*Dufferin*)
Mother Goose Program (*Mulvey, Wellington, MOSAIC*)
Breastfeeding Buddies group (*WRHA*)
Exercise program for moms (*CMWI*)
Wiggle, Giggle & Munch (*Immigrant Centre, IRCOM, MOSAIC, Dufferin, JMK, Greenway, WFP, Sister MacNamara*)
Learning and Play Program (*WICM*)
Men's Time (*Dufferin*)
WHAM (Wellness Health Action for Men) (*THRIVE*)
Women's Sharing Circles (*THRIVE*)
Workshops on self-care (*THRIVE*)
Healthy low cost cooking (*THRIVE*)
Parent and Tot (*THRIVE*)
Free professional therapy for individuals, families, couples and children (*THRIVE*)

Child care

Child care - drop-in, crisis, part time and/or respite (*IRCOM, Thrive*)

Child care - part time and/or full time (*YM/YWCA, Bumper Crop, UWSA Daycare, Victor Play Centre, Kid Gloves*)

Reading tutors in childcare (*Frontier College*)

Behavioural support program for children experiencing challenges in child care facilities (*Family Dynamics*)

DISCOVERIES

It's no surprise after decades of living and working in downtown Winnipeg that our community struggles continue. Lack of affordable housing, enormous wait lists for childcare, food security and safety concerns persist in the 24 neighbourhoods that make up Downtown Winnipeg. After consulting with people who work throughout the neighbourhoods, there were several themes and ideas regarding what else is needed to support young families. Some of these discoveries are not as grand as the previous struggles mentioned, yet if they are addressed, they will be instrumental in affecting change throughout the various struggles that exist for many families.

We noted many organizations repeating each other when addressing concerns for families. The necessity of friendship came up over and over again in a number of ways. Families need friends. Many feel isolated in their struggles and experience, friendships alleviate many of these feelings. Friends can share childcare needs and develop practical and emotional support systems. Beyond parenting groups, friendship groups are needed, perhaps this exists as a drop in style or extra time allocated after parenting programs to meet, space to connect with consultation and conversation. Parents need community space to meet others who are going through similar situations. Good friendships build healthy relationships, lifestyles and support systems. Many know that due to strong friendships our quality of life increases. With healthy friendships parents are less isolated and are better connected to community. Many feel that creating safe spaces for friendships to develop will increase feelings of safety and connectivity in the downtown.

Within the context of friendship, cross-cultural parent-child programs are also important as it increases understanding and relationship building among families. Opportunities for families of diverse backgrounds, whether it be economics, ethnicity, or culture, to interact will not only teach children, but parents, the value and importance of learning from each other. Winnipeg is changing rapidly in many ways, it is at a time where embracing each other is becoming critical to our health as a city.

As we embrace our differences as families, it is being noted that there is a lack of programs that support fathers. There are many programs that focus on "mom and baby" yet fathers who are taking active roles in parenting are lacking support from community organizations and agencies. This is on the collective minds of many and more funding and support is needed. That being said, we also need more programs that exist on weekends and weeknights. By offering programs outside of regular work hours, more parents will be able to participate.

Many organizations report high participation with limited time and space to operate programs. The influx of newcomers to Winnipeg is welcomed yet this also means that many organizations feel the strain on their resources. However, programs that lack participation are also a concern, when it is clear there is need from the community. Many want to increase awareness to families. How are resources best used in order to reduce duplication of programs and be successful? Communities 4 Families has had a strong commitment to networking between organizations, yet how can more families be connected? Ideas have been to create a parent inventory with schedules and lists of programs and put out a networked effort to reach more families.

Consistency is so important for successful programs and strong participation, however this is difficult when time, space and funding is limited and changes occur from year to year. Inconsistency often results in employees not guaranteed stable work hours which can lead into programs not being consistent which leads to families not being kept up to date with programs that exist. Families thrive while they have supports, but often struggle when these are no longer available.

The discoveries continue to be many. Vicarious trauma or compassion fatigue is a result of empathetic engagement with traumatized people. This has been noted to affect the capability and performance of facilitators and staff who work with families who have experienced trauma. Organizations need to be mindful of this fatigue and learn measures to reduce this impact.

DREAMS

After learning about the programs that exist in the downtown and sharing the discoveries and thoughts of many, the next step is to focus on ideas and dreams of families and organizations in downtown Winnipeg. How do we as a network increase healthy lifestyles and thriving communities?

Limitations exist; there are many: funding, lack of space, overextended staff, non-strategic promotion of programs, transportation barriers, etc. Yet after compiling all the innovative ideas, it is abundantly clear that there are more dreams than limitations. Below is a gathered list from all the organizations surveyed of thoughts that are needed to help families thrive:

- More programming support for Syrian families - big families, lots of needs
- Cross-cultural parent-child programs - example - "Share our world" program created at Immigrant Centre
- Empower and bring out more participants into programming.
- Collective, organizational understanding regarding parenting / parent support philosophy
- Parent-child snack cooking/ prep program
- A space in Central Park for parenting programs that is available for low-cost or free would be helpful
- A literacy organization would like to recruit more volunteers from the community rather than have volunteers go into the downtown from other areas
- More family learning together programs

- Need more English classes where childminding is offered
- Make more effort to better connect parents with the C4F
- We would love to issue more honorariums to newcomer mothers who currently help us with program activities
- More support/capacity building for newcomer volunteers
- Initiatives to support programs to build bridges between newcomer families and Aboriginal families
- Additional support and training regarding vicarious trauma
- Our 'Connect' program works with parents of older children and teens and has been used to train foster families who care for high risk children and youth.
- Some funding for increasing the number of groups that we run would be helpful
- More STEM (Science, Technology, Engineer and Math) training for children
- More transportation for families to programs
- Parenting program that focuses on nutrition, cooking, hands on practical lessons
- Provide to families more books in a variety of languages
- Parents need more support than just parenting, they want friendship and healthy interactions
- Advocacy and support for parents engaging in CFS system
- A father's group would like its own centre
- The Families First program is often full and we turn away many families who would benefit from the program
- More Home Visiting staff would be helpful
- A social enterprise for women sewing textile products
- We would like to offer both 'Circle of Security' and 'Connect' to groups of single fathers
- A preschool organization would like to expand their mobile classroom would into other school family rooms
- More technology support for organizations who are struggling to keep their website and computers current and functioning
- Need a place for parents of young children to go as they have to vacate their unit for 12 hours when they are being treated by pest control. Treatments typically occur monthly
- Stronger connection with C4F and Winnipeg School Division #1. Community Outreach Workers would help provide direct support to the schools in the area
- Year round Community Kitchen in the Centennial Neighbourhood
- I would like to get some parents to do some training so they could run some programs at school ie. Wiggle Giggle and Munch and Handle With Care
- Something active or interactive - get people moving - Zumba or Yoga
- More art, more craft
- Community gardens/kitchens
- We would like to offer Muslim families, women only and children swimming programs
- Programs that bring New Canadian families out into Winnipeg more and integrate with the larger community
- Connect with schools who do not have as many newcomers and have children learn from each other and their experiences
- More drop-in, part time daycare options
- Many children in the Winnipeg School Division #1 are below school readiness assessments - more effort is needed for early literacy programs

CONCLUSION

As a network of organizations it is important that we continue to work together to share information that will expand our resources. There is concern that some supports are not reaching those in need. We are stronger when we work together; this applies to both organizations and families. Bridging gaps between communities, making better effort to connect with others, building new friendships, finding similarities; all of these are simple, tangible steps to healthier families. It's not only about making efforts for the children, but it's acknowledging the family as a whole and that parents need security, safety and friendships as well. I do think the stronger the Communities 4 Families network is, the better connected families can be.