

Middle Years Coalition

Middle Childhood (ages 6 - 12)

Terms of Reference July 2004

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1. Mandate

The Middle Years Coalition has been formed to articulate a vision for programs and services that meet the developmental needs of children ages 6 to 12, to support their families in the important task of parenting and to act as a catalyst within the community to support the development and implementation of such programs and services for all children in Toronto.

(One measurable goal of the Coalition could be to eradicate the phenomenon of latchkey children in Toronto.)

2. Objectives

The Coalition will:

i. Articulate a vision for programs and services that meet the developmental needs of children ages 6 - 12

- Gather data on the numbers and location of children of this age group in Toronto. Identify the percentage of school-aged children who are presently in licensed child care programmes in Toronto. Identify the numbers of children whose parents would like them to be in an affordable, quality licensed programme.
- Establish and develop an easily accessible repository for existing research on the developmental needs of children ages 6 - 12
- Encourage further research on the physical, mental, emotional, social and intellectual markers related to this age range
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- Encourage further research on the activities that children of this age group find most satisfying
- Catalogue the type and availability of training programmes in Toronto for staff of school aged programmes.

ii. Support parents of children ages 6 to 12 in the task of positive parenting.

- Gather information from parents about what types of supports they need in raising children ages 6 - 12. (What are the most common problems that parents worry about for this age group.)
- Gather information about existing parenting supports for parents of this age group in Toronto

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- Gather information about workshops and books designed for parents of this age group but not necessarily available in Toronto.
- Work with the media to increase parental knowledge of existing parent resources and supports for this age group.
- Ensure that parent information is available in a number of different languages.
- Provide specific information about the prevention and support programmes available for parents who are having particular difficulties with a child within this age group.

iii. Engage funding bodies and existing programme providers for this age group, seeking to create a collaborative response to the development and implementation of a comprehensive, equal and accessible, health focused response to the needs of children ages 6 to 12.

- Gather information about the types of programmes required for children ages 6 - 12 - Before and After School Programmes (School-aged Quality Childcare), (Quality childcare for weekend and shift workers), Specific recreational programmes where parent/guardian is responsible for bringing child and picking child up after programme - could be week-end or after school, art, sports, drama, dance etc., weekly clubs or groups like Brownies, Guides, summer programmes and school break programmes.
- Research and establish base costs for staffing of quality school-aged programmes.
- Seek out funding bodies who have identified themselves as funders of programs for this age group
- Encourage other large funding organizations to develop a program to respond to the needs of this age group.
- Encourage funders to internally research the best way of ensuring that all children receive an equal chance of participating in programmes which will support their healthy development.
- Try to develop a government, corporate and non-profit partnership to ensure equity and access in the provision of these programmes across Toronto.
- Seek out and study successful models of school-aged programmes.

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- Engage TDSB, TCDSB, Toronto Foundation for Student Success, Toronto Children's Services, Toronto Parks and Recreation, Community Colleges that provide ECE training, Toronto Boys and Girls Clubs, Scouts Canada in Toronto, the YMCA and any other large group which provides services to this age group in the development of a new collaborative model for serving this age group of children in our community.

Possible Collaborative Model for Before and After School Programme located in neighbourhood schools

It is important to balance organized and non-organized activities. This age needs teaching and supervision but they also need time to daydream and create their own activities.

Morning Program: 7 a.m. - 9 a.m.

- Light Breakfast - Fruit, cereal and milk
- Supervised space to read books or newspaper, learn and play board games or complete homework (Important to monitor amount of time spent in sedentary activities and encourage active play)
- Stretching exercises and active games outside or in the gym, well organized and supervised by appropriate ratio of staff who know how to play children's games and have had conflict mediation training.

Lunch Program: Time depending on School timetables

- Lunch - Milk, fruit, different types of bread, choice of protein sandwich fillings, 2 vegetable servings
- Supervised space to read books or newspaper, learn and play board games or complete homework. (Important to monitor amount of time spent in sedentary activities and encourage active play)
- Free Play, well supervised by appropriate ratio of staff who know how to play children's games and have had conflict mediation training. Basic equipment such as skipping ropes, and balls should be available.

After School Programme: 3:30 - 6:30 p.m.

- Healthy Snack - Milk, fruit, carbohydrates, vegetables

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- Supervised space to read books or newspaper, learn and play board games or complete homework. (Important to monitor amount of time spent in sedentary activities and encourage active play)
- Free Play, well supervised by staff who know how to play children's games and have had conflict mediation training. Basic equipment such as skipping ropes, and balls should be available.
- Range of Clubs available for children to pursue specific interests, Arts, Outdoor camping and survival skills, drama, sports, music, academic clubs - math, building/geometry, etc.

Monthly Family Night - 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

- Light Supper - Chili, Pizza, Stew and Rice
- Regular monthly night parents could be invited to participate in some aspect of the programme. Could be drama night, math night, cooking, reading etc. Parent group would be expected to play major role in organizing these 10 nights. Could be a parenting workshop sometimes for an hour. Could be anything parents want. Important to have parents engaged in the programme and connecting with other neighbourhood parents.