



Shawna Scale
Community Impact Animator
905-635-0586 (T) or 905-805-2497 (C)
shawna@ourkidsnetwork.ca

OKN Early Years Neighbourhood Project: Summary & Description

Collective Impact (CI) enables a group to address major challenges by developing and working toward a common agenda that fundamentally changes population level outcomes in a community. The CI process has been used successfully in communities, large and small, to address complex social issues such as poverty reduction, addressing health inequities, and increasing local opportunities for children meet their full potential during the early years.

Halton Our Kids Network is invested in ensuring that all children thrive. Collectively, we works towards positively moving the needle on the Halton 7: children are healthy, children are safe, children are learning, children are positively connected, families are strong and stable, schools are connected to the community and neighbourhoods are where we live, work and play.

Research is clear that focusing on building strengths before age six produces positive, life long results. Building strong capacity in physical, social and emotional development is key to building resilience and the ability to form healthy, strong and stable relationships that support children that who are at their best to learn at home, at school, and in the community.

Through a 3 year Ontario Trillium Foundation grant, the OKN Early Years project will work in six neighbourhoods, using a collective impact process, to address one or more EDI domains. This initiative will focus on using data, and research to bring schools, families, community agencies and local government together to promote early childhood development, especially around the areas of wellbeing and social and emotional competence, to reduce the number of children who are developmentally vulnerable in key Halton neighbourhoods. The project will work to utilize EDI scores and local experiences to engage community members and support action.

This project will focus on 2 levels - an education and marketing component and a targeted program based neighbourhood approach to strengthen parent awareness and skills and enhance organizations abilities to provide coordinated programs.

1. The marketing strategy will highlight the importance on focusing on the early years to enhance outcomes for children. The campaign will focus on the parent/caregiver and child bond and relationships and will be drawn from research informed messaging developed by the Search Institute. The campaign will pay special attention to newcomer groups.
2. The project operates in at-risk neighbourhoods which are identified using risk factors and EDI results. Strategies will be developed to focus existing programs and build new programs to enhance parent/caregiver connection and relationship, enhance parenting skills, enhance service provision, promote parent engagement and parent support.

This initiative is based on a very successful pilot that was conducted in a Halton Community - Acton. It will also incorporates learning and initiatives focusing on system navigation that the Halton Early Years Committee has been developing over the past number of years.