

Early Years Initiative 2016 to 2019 Evaluation Report

Using Collective Impact to Improve
Early Childhood Development Outcomes



Early Years Initiative
Welcome to Kindergarten Event



Acton Family Fair 2018



Burlington Family Adventure
Play Day 2018

Funding provided by

Ontario
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Foundation



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de l'Ontario

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About Our Kids Network and the Early Years Initiative

Our Kids Network (OKN) is a Halton-wide partnership of organizations and agencies serving children and youth. Our work is focused on child development from birth to 18 years. Partners from education, children’s services, health, mental health, special needs, police service, child protection, and the multicultural community provide the backbone structure that guides our vision, strategy, planning and advocacy activities.

OKN is a national leader in mobilizing knowledge to strengthen communities and improve life for families and children. We have established the ‘Halton 7’ – seven fundamental conditions of high quality of life and we use them to measure the progress of our work. For more information about the Halton 7 Population Results, visit ourkidsnetwork.ca

The Our Kids Network Early Years Initiative worked with communities to understand and take action on their own local early years needs by providing opportunities to work collectively. Based on Early Development Instrument data (EDI) and other neighbourhood characteristics, the initiative provided the opportunity for 6 local community groups to work together to plan and develop

resources that are most needed and supported at the local level to address early childhood development and transition to school. The OKN Early Years Initiative was a three-year program (2016 to 2019) funded by the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

The initiative operated on 2 levels: a targeted program-based neighbourhood approach to strengthen parent awareness and skills and enhance organizations’ abilities to provide coordinated programs, and a Halton-wide parent education campaign.

The initiative operated in 6 neighbourhoods that were identified by studying risk factors and EDI data. Strategies were developed to adapt existing programs and develop new ones to enhance parent/caregiver connection and relationship, parenting skills, and service provision; and to promote parent engagement and support.

The Halton-wide parent education strategy focussed on the importance of the early years in enhancing outcomes for children. The messaging focussed on the parent/caregiver and child bond and relationships.

The Long Goal

To reduce early childhood vulnerability for children living in Halton

The Medium Goal

To build a sustainable community effort that would result in meaningful actions to promote early child development

The Short Goal

To understand how communities can work more effectively to promote early child development

The Process

The OKN Early Years Initiative was an experimental three-year project to study the impacts of using a Collective Impact framework aimed at improving population-level outcomes related to early childhood development. Over the three years, the collective process was documented through multiple measures including interviews, activities, product development and distribution, and surveys. Information was gathered from families that participated in the initiative’s activities and service providers who played an active role in the local action tables assembled for the project.

The Collective Impact framework is an evidence-based model for impacting population-level outcomes. By working through the collective process, groups are better able to identify and understand problems, address major challenges and have a greater impact on population level outcomes in a community.

The Collective Impact process for this initiative started with the creation of action tables in 6 Halton neighbourhoods to understand and address issues related to early childhood vulnerability.

The action tables were supported through two specially designed positions: Community Animator and Knowledge Broker. The Community Animator guided vision and strategy, supported activities and provided administrative support which is known in Collective Impact as backbone support. The Knowledge Broker established the shared measurement, provided the tables with needed data and conducted research evaluating the initiative. The Community Animator used numerous facilitated exercises to help the action tables understand and interpret their local neighbourhood data; to identify priority areas for action; and decide on activities to pursue. She then supported the development of their action plans and activities.

Our Kids Network Early Years Initiative Key Achievements

Neighbourhoods' Resources Development

Connect, Play & Learn Every Day! (CPLE) Brand and Resources

- 30 Ways to Play flyers
- Posters
- Postcards
- Play dough mats
- Play balls
- Cinch bag kits
- Bookmarks
- Banners
- Activity booklets

Other Resources

- CPLE common messages for service providers use in resource development and working with families
- Activity kits containing fine motor items
- Families Love Each Other book
- Kindergarten outdoor play buckets containing outdoor and gross motor items
- "I'm an Awesome Acton Kid" t-shirts

Halton-wide Connect, Play and Learn Every Day! Parent Education Campaign

Outdoor

- Billboards
- Transit shelters
- Buses: posters
- A-frame signs

Traditional media

- Bi-weekly column online and in local papers

Digital Screens

- Libraries
- Recreation Centres
- EarlyON Centres

Social Media

- @Haltoniparent

Webpages

- Connect Play & Learn web section on Haltoniparent.ca

Resources

- Broader distribution of CPLE resources

Events



Acton Family Fair August 2018



Burlington Family Adventure Play Day May 2018



Kindergarten Orientation Events 2017 - 2018



Family Literacy Day Events 2019



Oak Park Neighbourhood Centre Fall Fair 2017

The Numbers

Number of Events	44+
Families Engaged at Events	3,200+
Number of Partners	100+
Number of Working Groups	13
Number of Presentations and Conferences	37
Number of Service Providers and Volunteers Trained	100
Number of Resources Distributed	28,000+

Training...Play Ambassador...Relationships First

Our Kids Network

The Our Kids Network Early Years Initiative was an excellent opportunity to test an implementation of the Collective Impact framework for early childhood development outcomes in Halton.

From the results, the following conclusions can be supported:

1. Collective Impact is a difficult community process that takes time and dedicated support but does offer the necessary structure for collective action.
2. People participating inside the Early Years Initiative received significant benefits; both individually and for their organizations. Many of the table members expressed that learning about other programs and services from fellow members was of utmost value. The building of relationships and partnerships were significant benefits.
3. All action tables experienced varying levels of commitment from the members, suggesting this is a normalized piece of the process and not to be interpreted as a sign of failure.
4. It is a difficult task to get people to understand this type of collective work. Many people struggled with what their roles should be, what the objectives were, and how their organizations would benefit. For the people that persevered, this became evident as time passed: the experiential learning that took place was significant and would be something to promote in future implementations.



At annual meetings in 2016 and 2017, OKN members discussed local data.

Early Years Initiative Learnings

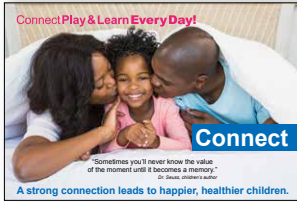
5. Given all the activities, events and resources that were produced, there should be no doubt that action tables can understand and interpret the need in the community, generate actionable ideas, work collectively and collaboratively, and execute action plans.
6. There is a definite appetite for data, knowledge sharing and co-creation of understanding. In fact, most people expressed that this is the area that had the biggest gains and benefits.



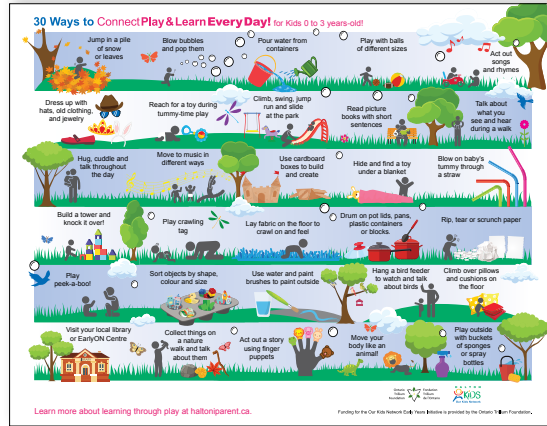
At the OKN annual meeting in 2016, Early Years Initiative Community Animator, Shawna Scale and OKN Acton Community Hub Coordinator, Alison Hilborn shared information about the Acton Early Years Initiative pilot and the Early Years Initiative plan for the upcoming 3 years.

Early Years Initiative 2016 to 2019 Evaluation Report

For more information about the Our Kids Network Early Years Initiative visit ourkidsnetwork.ca/EarlyYears.



CPLE postcards



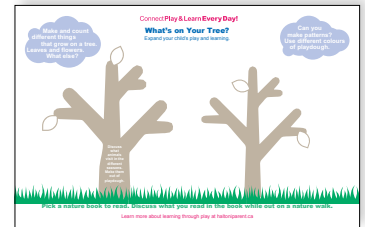
CPLE 30 day activity sheet



CPLE webpages found at haltonparent.ca/CPLE



CPLE transit shelter poster



CPLE play dough mats



Play Ambassador training for professionals



Activity kits at Oak Park Neighbourhood Centre Fall Fair



CPLE cinch bags activity kits



CPLE Activity Booklet set up in child care centre

Our Kids Network Protocol Partners



ourkidsnetwork.ca

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