

## Open Space Notes

### Parent Empowerment

#### **Where does it start**

- Family and social groups
1. What can spouse do to make you a strong parent?
    - One parent stays home – socially encouraged
  2. Can help parents find resources in school/community
    - Finding space is difficult
    - Have more accessible resources – creating own resources within the community
    - Being proactive
  3. Can be hard to spend time with kids if both parents work. Should be possible to be a one income family.
  4. Employers were more flexible with part-time employment – Try to make more social change.
  5. Parents choosing work to become empowered
  6. Creating opportunities for parents to get to know each other.
  7. Creating community within families
  8. Going to social events to build community
  9. Appreciate the centres that DO exist and are free – accessibility is great!
  10. Finding out about resources can be very empowering

## **Housing**

- affordable
- changes to neighbourhoods (condos, \$, houses)

## **Redevelopment**

- enough affordable at the end
- what happens to stuff that goes but doesn't come back (ie daycare)

## **Lack of respect**

- waiting list for transfers
- choice or the lack thereof because of poverty
- lack of respect – told to bring papers to office then told don't need papers when I show up – my time is valuable.

## **What to do?**

- write letters
- roundtable discussions with housing staff and tenants and children to create understanding/respect
- find allies/friends to support us/each other

## **Cultural Sensitivity in Public School System**

### **We share different experiences**

- Principals and teachers don't listen to parents
- Wrong messages or misunderstandings because of differences in culture

### **Actions**

1. Do research on school beforehand
- you have the right to sit in a classroom
  - open communication with your children (how day went, talk about school/activities etc)

## 2. Form Parent Group

- totally independent so you have a stronger voice
- newcomers need more knowledge about school system, rights, how to approach school

### **Tips**

- always trust your child, be aware about personality
- need more info on how to talk to schools, how to fight for children's rights, confidentiality and privacy rights
- parent councils don't really work, in the end they go with the school
- newcomers don't know enough or how to advocate for their children
- social workers are very helpful to newcomers
- parents need to be more knowledgeable of child development

### **Affordable Daycare**

- More daycare spaces
- Weekend and evening spaces
- Waiting lists are too long. It takes too long to put a child in a daycare centre
- Multi-cultural background caregivers so children are more likely to hold onto their cultural roots.

### **Day By Day Parenting Issues**

- Quality of time
- Children behaviour
- Activities in the community
- Time for ourselves
- Parenting education
- Not enough financial resources
- Ban violent toys and video games for kids, as well as sexual advertising and violent media should be supervised (esp. on television and TTC)
- Teenagers parents groups
- Pros and cons of early start of daycare

### **Speech and Language GE Development in First Language**

- EYC have songs, books, circle time in first language

## **Reduce Pollution**

### **Ways to Reduce Pollution**

- Better accessibility in apartment buildings
- Stop using plastic bags and bottles
- Specific recycling for batteries/supermarket and grocery stores carry bins for recycling batteries, have community centres have battery drop offs
- Less lead in women's products
- Make own cleaning products (vinegar, baking soda etc)
- Housing with energy efficiency (ie SOLAR)
- Less driving more bike lands and a friendlier bike environment
- More composting in green bins in housing/schools and public places!
- More gardens/green spaces/ playgrounds on apartment roofs
- More affordable organic food – less antibiotics and hormones in milk, dairy and meat.
- More plants
- Save rain water
- Less makeup and deodorant

## **Pay Equity and Women's Financial Security**

- Women should automatically qualify for jobs when they've been away (starting families) without being discriminated against ie haven't worked in a while because they decided to stay at home and help raise their children.
- Life insurance – whole life/term life -> education
- Will kits/living will @ Business Depot and online
- Have workshops on wills
- Shared software
- Have workshops and speakers on debt insurance
- Lobby for tax credits
- Have people from women specific job centres talk
- Women returning to work workshops
  
- Women who stay at home with kids return to work is difficult. Skills are not recognized and they must start over.
- Retirement funds for women's financial security are not there
  
- Mothers expected to be at home/families expectations for them to be there to do all work @ home even if they have a job.
  
- Government needs to do more in this area for women

## **Teaching Kids About Diversity**

- Education at home – Parents as teachers
- Talk to kids about how there are different families
- Read to them – libraries are a great resource
- Teach kids how to react when they meet people with intolerance – teach them to stand up to them
- Roots of Empathy is a great program and we need to bring it to more schools
- We need hold the teachers, coaches etc accountable
- Parents need to learn about school system
- Parents need to get involved more, get into communities
- Get out into the community to celebrate different cultures and diverse people, make it a part of everyday life.

## **Child and Senior Abuse**

- Publicize abuse
- Changing/educating/support of caretakers
- Genuine feelings toward patients and caregivers
- Provide help to caregivers in the community and in the home
- These people should be accepted as humans and not looked at as societal burdens
- Use webcams
- Inspections should be done without notice
- Funding
- For those people who cannot afford caregivers for their loved ones, financial support should be given to provide relief

## **Stroller and Wheelchair Accessibility**

- TTC drivers say they “aren’t allowed to help”
- Make streetcars wheelchair friendly

## **Short Term and Partial Disability Coverage**

(de-listing of medical coverage, practices and treatments not covered)

## **Issues**

- Assistance filling out ODSP applications
- CAG – client advisory group
- Lobbying for funds and change of policy and coverage

- Education – understand new changes to Ontario Works/ODSP/ - parent issues, fund for children, what is actually covered
- How do we stay informed
- Self-esteem issues in looking for work
- Strategies for improved health
- Health and healing through love, gratitude and hope

### **Positive Things**

- specific clinics that provide medical devices and therapies exist
- special needs – braces for legs
- Dental coverage should be free
- Some dentists won't take people on ODSP or OW Alternatives: Dental school/massage school
- Delisted – Physiotherapy is completely delisted

### **Families First**

#### **Pregnancy Rights**

- Pregnancy leave combined with Maternity leave
- Flexible work environment – awareness of pregnancy conditions

#### **Support New Families**

- Parent relief services – domestic help
- More home visitor/family support workers/flexible to suit different needs
- Networks – building networks for new families
- Resources – family resources
- Training – opportunity for training for new families

#### **Education**

- Better access to special services
- More recognition around special circumstances/needs
- MORE SUPPORT – classroom aides – learning disabilities, behavioural problems, special needs
- More funding
- Right to choose regular schools

#### **Accessibility**

- TTC – including pregnancy with often special conditions
- have family sections
  - places for strollers

- more transportation
- more recognizable seating for special conditions – ie pregnancy