

# a national children's agenda



measuring  
child well-being and  
monitoring progress

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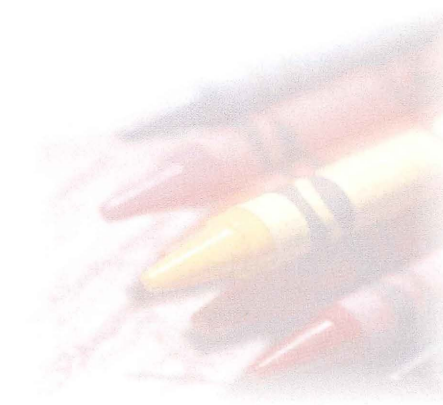
supplementary discussion  
paper



# Table of Contents



<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b> . . . . .	1
<b>2. WHY MEASURE CHILDREN'S WELL-BEING AND MONITOR PROGRESS?</b> . . . . .	2
<b>3. PROPOSED APPROACH TO MEASURING CHILDREN'S WELL-BEING</b> . . . . .	3
- Reflecting a National Children's Agenda: Goals (and outcomes); Key stages of child development; Key environments influencing development . . . . .	3
- Criteria for selecting indicators . . . . .	5
- Examples of possible indicators . . . . .	5
- Considerations in moving forward . . . . .	7
<b>4. PROPOSED APPROACH TO SHARING EFFECTIVE PRACTICES</b> . . . . .	8
- Sharing effective practices . . . . .	8
- Considerations in moving forward . . . . .	9
<b>5. MOVING AHEAD: WE WANT YOUR FEEDBACK</b> . . . . .	10
<b>APPENDIX: Examples of possible indicators of key environments and child outcomes</b> . . . . .	11



# 1. Introduction

*A National Children's Agenda: Developing a Shared Vision* invites individual Canadians and all sectors of society to join with governments\* to develop a shared vision of what we want for Canada's children. *Developing a Shared Vision* sets out proposals for discussion on:

- *a vision and underlying values* – what Canadians want for our children and beliefs that underlie that vision;
- *goals* – what we hope to achieve: children who are healthy, safe and secure, successful at learning, and socially engaged and responsible;
- *key developmental stages and environments/influences* – what we know about how children develop and how their interactions with the world around them affect their development;
- *six areas where Canadians can best respond*: supporting the role of parents and strengthening families; enhancing early child development; improving economic security for families; providing early and continuous learning experiences; fostering strong adolescent development; and creating supportive, safe and violence-free communities;
- *an approach to measuring child well-being and monitoring progress* – how we can track the well-being of girls and boys and society's progress in improving children's lives; and
- *how do we begin / how do we work together* – ideas on how we can all move forward on developing a National Children's Agenda to focus our collective efforts for children.

\* Quebec agrees with the objectives of the National Children's Agenda. However, the Government of Quebec has decided not to participate in its development because it wishes to assume full control over programs aimed at families and children within its territory. Furthermore, Quebec has not signed the Social Union Framework Agreement. Consequently, any references to joint federal-provincial-territorial positions in this text do not include Quebec.

This *Supplementary Discussion Paper* has been prepared by federal, provincial and territorial governments to focus on one of these areas – *an approach to measuring child well-being and monitoring progress*.

Work in this area will be advanced consistent with the Social Union Framework Agreement\*\* signed at the February 1999 meeting of First Ministers.

This paper outlines why governments believe that it is important to monitor and report on the well-being of children in Canada and to track our progress in achieving our shared goals for Canada's girls and boys. It proposes a two-part approach to measuring children's well-being and monitoring progress:

- It outlines a proposed approach to measuring children's well-being, using a mutually agreed set of indicators to reflect the goals (outcomes) and key influences on child development (environments) that are proposed in *Developing a Shared Vision*. It also proposes criteria to guide development of indicators of children's well-being, suggests examples of possible indicators and outlines considerations in moving forward.
- It proposes an approach to sharing effective practices that improve child outcomes.

This paper invites your feedback on the:

- *proposed approaches to measuring children's well-being and monitoring progress;*
- *possible indicators to help society to track progress in improving children's lives; and*
- *ways to share effective practices to inform policy and program development.*

\*\* Under the Framework provisions on government accountability, each government agrees to monitor and measure outcomes of its social programs and report regularly to its constituents on the performance of these programs. Governments will also share information and best practices to support the development of outcome measures, and work together to develop, over time, comparable indicators to measure progress on agreed objectives.

## 2. Why Measure Children's Well-Being and Monitor Progress?

Governments believe that developing a National Children's Agenda as a shared vision can enhance our collective efforts to improve children's lives. In *Developing a Shared Vision*, governments propose that we need better information – on how children are doing and on the results of our collective efforts – as a key building block for an Agenda. Together, these types of information can offer benchmarks for gauging progress toward our goals for children as Canada moves forward in developing our shared vision.

Why track children's well-being? In Canada, both within and outside governments, there is growing consensus on the need for ongoing, reliable and timely information on children's well-being and development to guide our actions on their behalf. Regular measuring and reporting of how children are doing in key areas of their lives, and key influences on their well-being, builds our awareness, understanding and commitment. It tells us whether Canada's boys and girls are developing on track. It offers “warning signals” about areas where we still need to focus our efforts. In so doing, it provides a powerful tool to inform and improve policy making to ensure our actions will be as focussed and effective as possible.

Regular monitoring of children's well-being will allow us to track our progress in achieving our shared goals for Canadian children, and is particularly important at a time when Canada, like other countries, is in the midst of extraordinary technological, social and economic change. Many of the influences on children – in their families, neighbourhoods and communities – are changing. For example, there have been significant shifts in family structure and work patterns. We need to track these changes, and the changes in children's outcomes, to better respond to children's needs.

Governments believe that, in addition to measuring child well-being, we need to know how we can be most effective in helping Canada's girls and boys to achieve their full potential. We need to know how we can contribute most effectively to achieving our common vision. The National Children's Agenda offers an opportunity for governments to share information on effective practices that improve child outcomes, and to report to Canadians on “what works.”



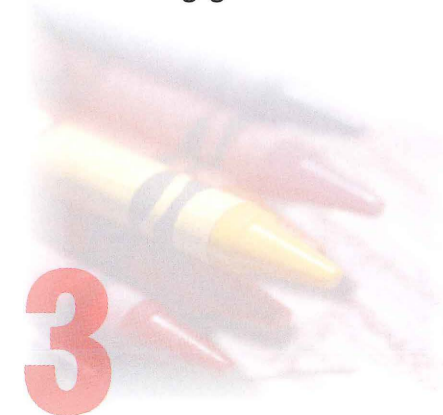
# 3. Proposed Approach to Measuring Children's Well-Being

**Reflecting a National Children's Agenda: Goals (and outcomes); Key stages of child development and Key environments influencing development**

*A National Children's Agenda: Developing a Shared Vision* proposes for discussion four broad goals to set out what we hope to achieve for children through the *Agenda*. They flow from evidence on child development and are rooted in the vision and values described in *Developing a Shared Vision*

The goals focus on child outcomes. How will we know if we are achieving these goals?

Governments propose to develop a set of indicators to measure and report on how boys and girls are doing in each of the areas of development and well-being covered by the following goals:



**As a nation, we aspire to have children who are:**

## **Healthy – Physically and Emotionally**

Children who are as physically, emotionally and spiritually healthy as they can be, with strong self-esteem, coping skills and enthusiasm.

## **Safe and Secure**

Children whose basic needs are met, including food, shelter, clothing and transportation. Children who are protected from victimization, including abuse, neglect, discrimination, exploitation and dangerous environments, and who are given support by caring adults.

## **Successful at Learning**

Children who have opportunities to reach their potential for physical and social development, language skills, literacy, numeracy and general knowledge. Children who are ready for learning throughout their lives so they can develop the skills, knowledge and competencies they need for successful transition to adulthood.

## **Socially Engaged and Responsible**

Children who can form stable attachments to nurturing adults when they are young, and are able to develop strong, supportive relationships within and outside their families. Children who value the cultural heritage and diversity of others, and who develop an understanding of the rights and responsibilities of belonging to a wider society. Children who respect themselves and others, and understand the personal and social consequences of their choices.



A set of indicators to track progress in each of the outcomes covered by the goals also needs to reflect our understanding of the key stages of child development and the environments that influence that development. *Developing a Shared Vision* describes how these two critical elements interact with each other to help shape outcomes throughout a child's development.

### Key stages of child development

Research suggests four major stages of child development. The transition points between these stages correspond with times of change in children's lives. Research tells us that these points offer key "windows of opportunity" for influencing children's development and for helping to overcome earlier disadvantages. Therefore, it is proposed that a set of indicators of children's well-being should reflect the goals for child outcomes at each developmental stage.

The developmental stages are:

- Prenatal to eighteen months (transition through infancy)
- Eighteen months to age five (transition to school)
- Ages six to twelve (transition to adolescence)
- Ages thirteen to eighteen (transition to adulthood)

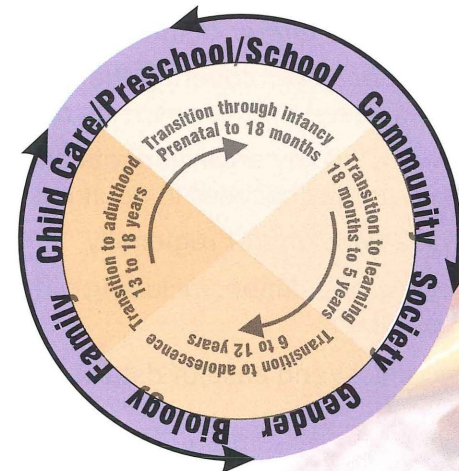
### Key environments influencing development

Environments also play a crucial role in shaping children's development and therefore also need to be reflected in a set of indicators that measure children's well-being.

*Developing a Shared Vision* also describes key environments that influence child development. They are biological inheritance, family, child care and school, physical and community environments, and society.

These environments have different impacts at particular stages of children's development. For example, in the stage from prenatal to eighteen months, a child is most greatly influenced by her or his immediate family. Maternal health has a permanent influence on a child's development. Strong emotional attachment to a nurturing adult helps build a baby's brain development. As a child grows, her or his connections outside the immediate family grow – interactions with the community through preschool and school experiences, recreation and supports within the neighbourhood become increasingly important in a child's day-to-day life.

### Key Environments/Influences



## Criteria for selecting indicators of children's well-being

How will we choose indicators to reflect the goals, stages of development and key environments? There is already much work under way, both within and outside governments, to gather data and report on various areas of children's lives. The development of indicators of children's well-being proposed here would build on this work. In addition, governments would seek input from policy makers, researchers, children's service professionals, community groups and others. The following criteria are suggested to help guide discussions and the choice of indicators.

Potential guidelines for indicator selection:

- *Reflective of the Vision we are developing*: particularly the goals, stages of development and key environments, as set out above
- *Responsive to change*: including improvements in policies, program provision and practices at the local level
- *Understandable and meaningful*: of interest to a wide audience
- *Balanced and comprehensive*: covering the full range of ages (prenatal to eighteen years) and key aspects of children's lives
- *Grounded in research*: on key environments and child outcomes, including those that predict success in adult life
- *Measurable*: Canada-wide and/or regionally
- *Representative*: of the population, including girls and boys, different cultural groups
- *Feasible*: in terms of cost and ease of data collection

Specific criteria for indicator data:

- *Allow analysis over time*
- *Allow analysis by gender and for sub-groups of the population, for example, high-risk groups*
- *Valid, reliable, timely and accurate*
- *Available for more than one point in time*

## Examples of possible indicators of child well-being

As noted above, governments and non-governmental organizations have carried out a substantial amount of work already that could lead to an initial set of indicators. Outlined below are examples of *possible* indicators applicable across the full range of developmental stages. Indicators such as these would allow us to monitor key environments or influences that affect child development, as well as significant children's outcomes.

The table on the following page outlines possible indicators for children of all ages. The appendix provides a more extensive listing, showing additional indicators that apply to specific developmental stages. The examples shown on the following page and in the appendix are not intended as a comprehensive or "final" list. They are a starting point for discussion only. There are likely to be additional indicators that would also be valuable. Some of those listed may not prove effective, appropriate or sufficiently feasible.



## Examples of possible indicators that apply to all ages

### Examples of key environments

#### Society

- Physical environment (air and water quality)
- Economic environment
- Media

#### Community

- Physical environment (water and sanitation)
- Housing (quality, accessibility)
- Economic security
- Community services
- Social or community cohesion
- Prevalence of substance use

#### Family

- Income level and source
- Parental employment and education
- Family structure
- Positive parenting
- Home learning environment (books in the home, reading, TV monitoring)
- Food security and nutrition
- Work/Family arrangements
- Residential moves
- Daily exposure to cigarette smoke
- Family functioning (including violence in the home)

### Examples of child outcomes

#### Health

- General health status
- Chronic illness
- Physical and mental disability
- Physical activity
- Emotional and behavioural problems
- Immunization
- Mortality (by cause and age group)

#### Safety and Security

- Injury (by cause)
- Reported child abuse and neglect (overall and for children in care)

#### Learning

- Positive attitude toward learning

#### Social Engagement/Responsibility

- Social development/connection/aggression



## Considerations in moving forward

As we develop indicators, we should take a number of issues into account.

*An incremental approach – thinking big, starting small:* We need to be pragmatic. The examples listed on the previous page and in the appendix, while neither comprehensive nor final, nonetheless constitute an ambitious set of indicators. Governments propose that we could begin with a limited number of key indicators initially, drawing on existing data sources. Over time, we could progress toward a more comprehensive range of indicators.

*Building on our knowledge and collaboration:* *Developing a Shared Vision* points out that "many governments, organizations and communities already collect information about children and their development." The process of developing indicators should draw on that wealth of information and experience that already exists.

*Data sources and gaps:* In recent years, the amount and quality of data on children and their environments have improved greatly. Existing data sources for indicators of children's well-being would be explored, including census data, major surveys (such as the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth) and various population health surveys.

Despite recent gains in data development, there are still gaps. As part of the development of indicators, we will need to identify gaps, limitations and technical issues that could be addressed over time. For example, the lack of data and research tools related to Aboriginal child well-being is an important issue. Aboriginal groups and communities will need to have the opportunity to guide the approach used to fill that information gap in a way that has meaning for their people.

*Ongoing need for research:* In addition to improving our ability to report on child well-being and track progress toward our goals under a National Children's Agenda, we need to continue research to help us better understand the processes and pathways of child development. Governments and society need to continue to build their capacities for conducting and sharing research and analysis and for translating that knowledge into action. This will support policy making.

*Need to review and update indicators over time:* We will need to review and update the agreed set of indicators as our knowledge increases and data systems develop.

# 4. Proposed Approach to Sharing Effective Practices

## Sharing effective practices

Developing and reporting on a set of indicators of children's well-being offers an important means to *gauge progress in improving children's lives*. Sharing effective practices is a potential means to *share success as we make progress* in this area.

Governments across Canada currently fund and/or provide a wide range of legislative, policy and program supports aimed at ensuring children have the best possible opportunity for a good start in life. Beyond providing universal health care and education, a wide range of initiatives supports various aspects of children's lives. Examples of supports include income programs for families with children; extended health benefits; supports to early child development (including child care); child protection; recreation services; and services to young offenders. A wide range of non-governmental organizations, community groups and the private sector is also involved in providing programs and supports to children.

As part of the National Children's Agenda, governments propose to explore approaches to enhance existing efforts to share effective practices. The National Children's Agenda provides an opportunity for governments to showcase innovative and promising approaches as a means to increase our shared understanding of "what works" for children, and to improve policy and program decisions. The sharing of effective policies and programs by governments can improve our ability to achieve our common vision and goals for Canadian children.

Approaches to sharing effective practices could include:

- profiling effective practices on initiatives from each jurisdiction, sector (i.e. health, social services, education, justice), and from the non-governmental community
- profiling effective practices in the area of "integrated" or "coordinated" services. That is, initiatives that are:
  - ✓ holistic
  - ✓ child-centred
  - ✓ focussed on outcomes
  - ✓ family-oriented
  - ✓ community-based
  - ✓ intersectoral and collaborative in terms of service delivery
  - ✓ balanced in terms of prevention and intervention (with a goal of earliest possible intervention, when necessary)
  - ✓ rigorously evaluated, with an emphasis on outcomes



# Considerations in moving forward

*Clarity of concepts regarding how to define effective practices:* It will be important to create a common understanding of the elements that constitute effective practices. In exploring approaches to sharing effective practices, governments will review literature and research from within and outside Canada to determine possible criteria. This will include reviewing elements of “integrated” services.

*How best to share information:* There is a wide range of activity under way in Canada in terms of services and supports to children. It will be important to determine the most useful ways to share information and experience in order to inform policy and program development. Examples could include summary reports, linked and interactive Web sites, and national and/or regional forums to bring together policy and program representatives.



## 5. Moving Ahead: We Want Your Feedback

This paper has outlined a proposed approach to measuring children's well-being and monitoring progress as part of a National Children's Agenda. In addition to welcoming your general views on measuring and monitoring, governments invite your input on specific issues to be addressed as we develop this building block of a National Children's Agenda:

We propose to measure and monitor child well-being through:

- developing indicators of outcomes and environments, or influences, at key stages of child development; and
- sharing effective practices.

*Do you agree with the proposed approach? Are there other approaches you would suggest? Are there other major aspects that should be included?*

*What indicators of well-being do you feel are most essential to measure and report? We recognize that, at least initially, we will need to focus on some key indicators. We have suggested a set of examples as a starting point – does it encompass the best available choices? Are there additional or different indicators you would suggest?*

*Do you agree with the proposed criteria for choosing indicators? Would you suggest additional or different ones?*

*How can we best link to existing and planned efforts?*

Governments propose to work within the public sector – across jurisdictions and departments – as well as with partners outside government to build on existing efforts to develop indicators of children's well-being. Which initiatives could best inform the proposed development of a set of indicators?

*How can governments best share effective practices, particularly in the area of coordinated/collaborative services, to inform future policy and program decisions? What types of information could be most usefully shared? Through what means (e.g. reports, Web sites, periodic conferences/forums)? What initiatives to share effective practices are already under way?*

### What's Next

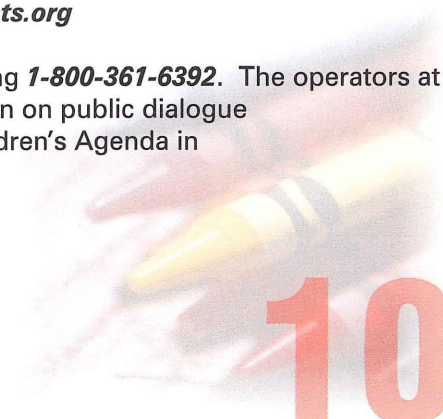
Governments will be sitting down with key partners to encourage dialogue about the vision, values, goals and areas for action proposed for the National Children's Agenda. The purpose of the dialogue is to develop a strong vision for children. At the end of the dialogue process, governments will incorporate the views of Canadians into a vision document and report back so that the vision can guide all of our efforts to improve the lives of Canada's children.

All Canadians are welcome to provide governments with their views on the National Children's Agenda. There are several ways to send in your comments. You can contact us in writing at:

***National Children's Agenda, 280 Albert Street, 10th Floor, Ottawa, Ontario, K1P 5G8***

Written comments can also be submitted through the National Children's Agenda Web site at ***www.children-enfants.org***

Your views can also be provided by calling ***1-800-361-6392***. The operators at this number can also give you information on public dialogue opportunities related to the National Children's Agenda in your province or territory



# Appendix

## Examples of possible indicators of key environments and child outcomes

### Developmental stages and transitions

Applicable to all ages

### Examples of key environments

#### Society

- Physical environment (air and water quality)
- Economic environment
- Media

#### Community

- Physical environment (water and sanitation)
- Housing (quality, accessibility)
- Economic security
- Community services
- Social or community cohesion
- Prevalence of substance use

#### Family

- Income level and source
- Parental employment and education level
- Family structure
- Positive parenting
- Home learning environment (books in the home, reading, TV monitoring)
- Food security and nutrition
- Work/Family arrangements
- Residential moves
- Daily exposure to cigarette smoke
- Family functioning (including violence in the home)

#### Society

- Parental leave arrangements

#### Community

- Prenatal and early child development supports

#### Child Care/Preschool/School

- Participation in parent/baby groups
- Type and stability of child care

#### Family

- Parenting (stimulation, support, discipline)
- Breastfeeding
- Alcohol/tobacco/drug use in pregnancy
- Effective use of car seats

### Examples of child outcomes

#### Health

- General health status
- Chronic illness
- Physical and mental disability
- Physical activity
- Emotional and behavioural problems
- Immunization
- Mortality (by cause and age group)

#### Safety and Security

- Injury (by cause)
- Reported child abuse and neglect (overall and for children in care)

#### Learning

- Positive attitude toward learning

#### Social Engagement/Responsibility

- Social development/connection/aggression

#### Health

- Birth weight
- Infant mortality
- Attachment/bonding
- Fine and gross motor skills
- Fetal alcohol syndrome/effects

#### Safety and Security

- Injuries
- Reported child abuse and neglect (overall and for children in care)

Prenatal to 18 months

Key Transition: Through infancy

11

# Appendix (cont'd)

## Examples of possible indicators of key environments and child outcomes

### Developmental stages and transitions

**Ages 18 months to 5 years**

Key Transition: To learning

**Ages 6 to 12 years**

Key Transition: To adolescence

### Examples of key environments

#### Community

- Safety
- Social or community cohesion
- Access to recreational facilities (library, play spaces, etc.)

#### Child Care/Preschool/School

- Participation in preschool/toddler groups
- Type and stability of child care

#### Family

- Connectedness/isolation
- Parenting (stimulation, support, discipline)
- Effective use of car seats

#### Community

- Recreation/leisure opportunities

#### Child Care/Preschool/School

- Type and stability of child care
- School quality including school climate, teacher expectations and academic press

#### Family

- Parental encouragement, expectations re: school
- Parenting (nurturance, monitoring)
- Use of seat belts, bike helmets

### Examples of child outcomes

#### Health

- Fine and gross motor skills

#### Safety and Security

- Injuries
- Reported child abuse and neglect (overall and for children in care)

#### Learning

- Cognitive abilities and behaviour ("readiness to learn")

#### Social Engagement/Responsibility

- Social development/connection/aggression

#### Health

- Child's self-esteem
- Risk-taking behaviours (smoking, drinking, drugs, sex)
- Positive health behaviours (nutrition, exercise)
- Suicide

#### Safety and Security

- Feeling safe in school/neighbourhood

#### Learning

- Achievement: math, science, reading and writing
- Knowledge/awareness of diversity/culture/citizenship
- Positive attitude to learning

#### Social Engagement/Responsibility

- Positive relationship with (a) caring adult(s)
- Respect for authority
- Activities out of school/use of free time

# Appendix (cont'd)

## Examples of possible indicators of key environments and child outcomes

### Developmental stages and transitions

Ages 13 to 18 years

Key Transition: To adulthood

### Examples of key environments

#### Community

- Opportunities for youth activity (e.g. recreation) and volunteerism/mentoring

#### Child Care/Preschool/School

- School quality including school climate, teacher expectations and academic press
- Programming/guidance for transition from school to work, life skills

#### Family

- Parenting (nurturance, monitoring, support to independence)
- Support for continuing education
- Use of seat belts, bike helmets

### Examples of child outcomes

#### Health

- Self-esteem
- Teenage pregnancy
- Risk-taking behaviours (smoking, drinking, drugs, sex)
- Positive health behaviours (nutrition, exercise)
- Body image
- Eating disorders
- Suicide
- Sexually transmitted diseases

#### Safety and Security

- Feeling safe in school/neighbourhood

#### Learning

- Achievement: math, science, reading and writing
- School completion
- Knowledge/awareness of diversity/culture/citizenship
- Positive attitude to learning

#### Social Engagement/Responsibility

- Volunteerism
- Community participation
- Involvement in criminal/antisocial activity
- Detachment (e.g. living on street)



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# a national children's agenda

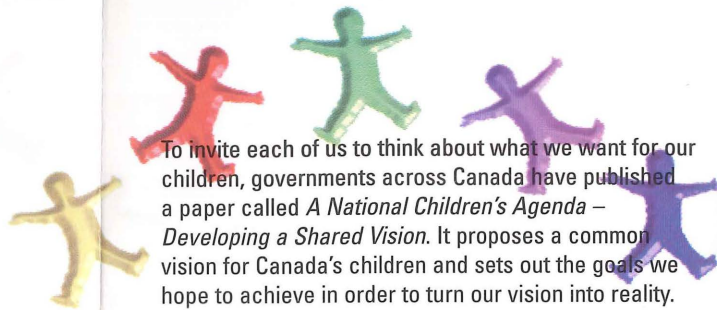


## measuring child well-being and monitoring progress



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supplementary discussion paper



To invite each of us to think about what we want for our children, governments across Canada have published a paper called *A National Children's Agenda – Developing a Shared Vision*. It proposes a common vision for Canada's children and sets out the goals we hope to achieve in order to turn our vision into reality.

But turning a vision into reality demands that we find some meaningful yardsticks for success. We need to figure out how to measure the well-being of children. We must also agree to report regularly on our findings, so that we will know where we are making progress, and where we need to focus more attention.

And because federal, provincial and territorial governments already offer a wide range of programs and services for families and children, it makes sense to share information on what works and build on the successful experiences of governments and the non-governmental community.

A supplementary discussion paper, summarized here, suggests ways to measure the well-being of Canada's children and to monitor our progress in improving their lives. It also encourages us to share effective practices, so that we can better realize our goals.

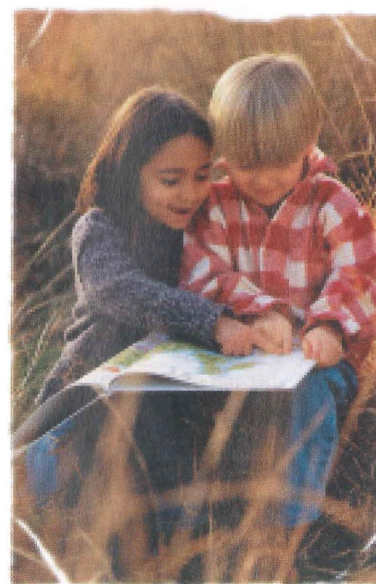


## The Proposed Vision for a National Children's Agenda

Canadians want their country to be one where all children thrive in an atmosphere of love, care and understanding, are valued as individuals in childhood and given opportunities to reach their full potential as adults.

Respected and protected from harm, children will grow up to respect and protect the rights of others. Valued, nurtured and loved, they will grow up able to contribute to a society that appreciates diversity, supports the less able and shares its resources.

Given the opportunity to develop their physical, intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual capacities to their fullest, children will become tomorrow's successful and enthusiastic parents, caregivers, workers and citizens.



## The Proposed Goals for Our Shared Vision

### Good Health

Children who are as physically, emotionally and spiritually healthy as they can be, with strong self-esteem, coping skills and enthusiasm.

### Safety and Security

Children whose basic needs are met, including food, shelter, clothing and transportation. Children who are protected from victimization, including abuse, neglect, discrimination, exploitation and dangerous environments, and who are given support by caring adults.

### Success at Learning

Children who have opportunities to reach their potential for physical and social development, language skills, literacy, numeracy and general knowledge. Children who are ready for learning throughout their lives so that they can develop the skills, knowledge and competencies they need for successful transition to adulthood.

### Social Engagement and Responsibility

Children who can form stable attachments to nurturing adults when they are young, and are able to develop strong, supportive relationships within and outside their families. Children who value the cultural heritage and diversity of others, and who develop an understanding of the rights and responsibilities of belonging to a wider society. Children who respect themselves and others, and understand the personal and social consequences of their choices.



## The Proposed Goals for Our Shared Vision

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## How Will We Measure Success?

### Step One – Deciding what to measure

Governments talk of “indicators,” which are simply things we can measure. There are essentially two categories of indicators to help us monitor whether we are achieving our goals: those that tell us about the child, and those that tell us about the surroundings that influence his or her well-being.

#### Examples of Indicators

About the child:

- Injuries and illnesses
- Behavioural problems
- Success at learning
- Social development

About the child’s surroundings:

- Parenting
- Family economic security
- Learning environment
- Quality of housing
- Clean environment

No one has yet come up with the definitive list of indicators that would give us a perfect snapshot of the state of Canada’s children. Still, we have a pretty good idea of what makes some indicators better than others. For instance, good indicators should be:

- About important aspects of children’s lives
- Understandable and meaningful
- Based on solid research
- Representative of the entire population, both girls and boys
- Measurable in a practical and economically feasible way
- Repeatable over time for easy comparison.

### Step Two – Tracking our progress

When it comes to monitoring our progress in achieving our goals for Canada’s children, the sensible place to begin is with the wealth of data that already exists.

#### Existing Data Sources

- Census
- National surveys
- Various population health surveys

Many governments, organizations and communities collect excellent information about children. In recent years, the amount and quality of these data have improved greatly. We would therefore be wise to begin our work with the information we have, and fill in knowledge gaps over time.

At the same time, we need to promote research into areas we know are not well understood. For example, we need better knowledge about the processes of child development. There are also too little data about the well-being of Aboriginal children.

#### Ways to Share Information

- Summary reports
- Websites
- Canada-wide or regional forums

### Step Three – Sharing effective practices

From universal health care and education to child protection, recreation programs, income supports and child care, governments in Canada already provide a wide range of services to children and their families.

In developing programs and policies for children, governments can learn from the experiences of others. That’s why governments\* want to explore ways to profile successful initiatives in their own and other jurisdictions, across a variety of sectors (such as health, justice, education and social services) and within the non-governmental community.



## What’s Next:

Governments\* will be sitting down with key partners to encourage dialogue about the vision, values, goals and areas for action proposed for the National Children’s Agenda. The purpose of the dialogue is to develop a strong vision for children by building common ground on what we as Canadians want for our children. At the end of the dialogue process, governments will incorporate the views of Canadians into a vision document and report back so that the vision can guide all of our efforts to improve the lives of Canada’s children.

All Canadians are welcome to provide governments with their views on the National Children’s Agenda. There are several ways to send in your comments. You can contact us in writing at: **National Children’s Agenda, 280 Albert Street, 10th Floor, Ottawa, Ontario, K1P 5G8.**

Written comments can also be submitted through the National Children’s Agenda Web site at [www.children-enfants.org](http://www.children-enfants.org)

Your views can also be provided by calling **1-800-361-6392**. The operators at this number can also give you information on public dialogue opportunities related to the National Children’s Agenda in your province and territory.

\* Quebec agrees with the objectives of the National Children’s Agenda. However, the Government of Quebec has decided not to participate in its development because it wishes to assume full control over programs aimed at families and children within its territory. Furthermore, Quebec has not signed the Social Union framework agreement. Consequently, any references to joint federal-provincial-territorial positions in this text do not include Quebec.



## Les objectifs proposés de notre vision commune

### Objectif de santé

Des enfants qui jouissent d'une santé physique, affective et spirituelle optimale, qui ont une solide estime de soi, de bonnes facultés d'adaptation et de l'enthousiasme.

### Objectif de sécurité et de protection

Des enfants dont les besoins fondamentaux en matière d'alimentation, de logement, d'habillement et de transport sont satisfaits. Des enfants que l'on protège contre la victimisation – notamment contre la violence, la négligence, la discrimination, l'exploitation et le danger – et qui bénéficient du soutien d'adultes attentifs.

### Objectif d'apprentissage réussi

Des enfants à qui l'on offre l'occasion d'atteindre leur plein développement physique et social, d'apprendre à s'exprimer, à lire, écrire et compter, ainsi que d'acquérir de bonnes connaissances générales. Des enfants qui sont prêts à apprendre toute leur vie afin d'acquérir les habiletés, les connaissances et les compétences nécessaires pour réussir le passage à la vie adulte.

### Objectif d'engagement social et de responsabilité

Des enfants qui peuvent dès leur jeune âge forger des liens affectifs solides avec des adultes qui les aiment, y compris des relations fortes et positives dans leur famille et à l'extérieur. Des enfants qui valorisent le patrimoine culturel et la diversité des autres, qui comprennent les droits et les responsabilités qu'impose l'appartenance à une société élargie. Des enfants que l'on respecte et qui, de ce fait, se respectent et respectent les autres, et qui comprennent les conséquences personnelles et sociales de leurs choix.

## Comment mesurer nos succès?

### Première étape – Déterminer ce qu'il faut mesurer

Les « indicateurs » dont parlent les gouvernements correspondent en fait aux éléments que l'on peut mesurer. Il existe essentiellement deux catégories d'indicateurs pour nous aider à déterminer si nous atteignons nos objectifs : ceux qui ont trait à l'enfant et ceux qui concernent l'environnement qui influe sur son bien-être.

#### Exemples d'indicateurs

Concernant l'enfant :

- blessures et maladies
- problèmes de comportement
- succès de l'apprentissage
- développement social

Concernant son environnement :

- exercice du rôle parental
- sécurité économique de la famille
- climat d'apprentissage
- qualité du logement
- qualité de l'environnement

Personne n'a encore dressé la liste définitive des indicateurs qui nous donneraient une image exacte de la situation des enfants au Canada. Toutefois, nous savons pourquoi certains indicateurs sont meilleurs que d'autres. En effet, les bons indicateurs doivent :

- concerner des aspects importants de la vie des enfants;
- être faciles à comprendre et significatifs;
- être fondés sur une recherche solide;
- être représentatifs de l'ensemble de la population, soit des filles et des garçons;
- être mesurables, de façon pratique et économique;
- se prêter à un usage répété dans le temps, afin que l'on puisse établir facilement des comparaisons.

## Deuxième étape – Évaluer nos progrès

Pour évaluer les progrès accomplis en regard des objectifs établis pour les enfants du Canada, nous disposons déjà au départ d'une mine de données.

#### Sources de données existantes :

- recensement
- sondages nationaux
- sondages variés sur la santé de la population

Les gouvernements, organismes et collectivités sont nombreux à recueillir des données très utiles sur les enfants. La quantité et la qualité de ces données se sont grandement améliorées au cours des dernières années. Il serait donc sage d'utiliser d'abord l'information dont nous disposons pour ensuite combler au fur et à mesure les lacunes sur les connaissances.

En même temps, il faut promouvoir la recherche dans des domaines qui ne sont pas encore bien compris. Par exemple, il faut mieux comprendre les processus du développement de l'enfant. En outre, on manque de données sur le bien-être des enfants autochtones.

#### Façons de partager l'information

- rapports
- sites Web
- forums à l'échelle nationale ou régionale

## Étape trois – Partager les pratiques efficaces

Les gouvernements du Canada offrent déjà une vaste gamme de services aux enfants et aux familles, services qui vont de l'accès universel aux soins de santé et à l'éducation, à la protection des enfants et aux programmes de loisirs, en passant par le soutien du revenu et la garde d'enfants.

Au moment d'élaborer ces programmes et ces politiques pour les enfants, les gouvernements peuvent s'inspirer de l'expérience des autres. C'est pourquoi les gouvernements\* veulent trouver des façons de mettre en valeur les initiatives efficaces menées dans les provinces, dans divers secteurs (comme la santé, la justice, l'éducation et les services sociaux) et par des organismes non gouvernementaux.



## Prochaine étape

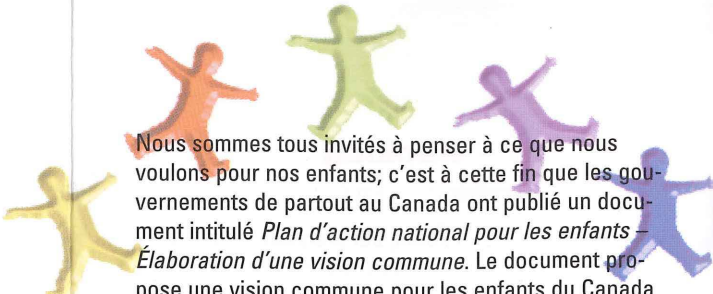
Les gouvernements rencontreront leurs partenaires afin de susciter un dialogue sur la vision, les valeurs, les objectifs et les domaines d'intervention proposés dans le Plan d'action national. Ce dialogue permettra de consolider notre vision de l'enfance. À la fin du processus de dialogue, les gouvernements intégreront les points de vue des Canadiens et des Canadiennes en un document qu'ils rendront public afin que nous nous en inspirions pour améliorer les conditions de vie des enfants du Canada.

Tous les Canadiens et Canadiennes sont invités à transmettre aux gouvernements leurs commentaires sur le Plan d'action national pour les enfants. Vous pouvez nous transmettre vos commentaires de diverses façons. Vous pouvez nous écrire à **Plan d'action national pour les enfants, 280, rue Albert, 10<sup>e</sup> étage, Ottawa (Ontario) K1P 5G8**

Il est aussi possible d'utiliser le site Web du Plan d'action national pour les enfants à [www.children-enfants.org](http://www.children-enfants.org)

Vous pouvez aussi téléphoner au **1-800-361-6392** pour donner votre point de vue. Le téléphoniste pourra aussi vous renseigner sur le déroulement du processus de dialogue dans votre province ou territoire.

\* Le Québec est d'accord avec les objectifs généraux du Plan d'action national pour les enfants. Cependant, le gouvernement du Québec a décidé de ne pas participer à cette initiative, parce qu'il souhaite assumer le plein contrôle sur les programmes destinés aux familles et aux enfants sur son territoire. De plus, le Québec n'a pas signé l'accord-cadre sur l'union sociale. En conséquence, toute référence à des positions conjointes fédérales-provinciales-territoriales dans ce document n'inclut pas le Québec.



Nous sommes tous invités à penser à ce que nous voulons pour nos enfants; c'est à cette fin que les gouvernements de partout au Canada ont publié un document intitulé *Plan d'action national pour les enfants – Élaboration d'une vision commune*. Le document propose une vision commune pour les enfants du Canada et fait état des objectifs que nous espérons atteindre et qui concrétiseraient notre vision.

Toutefois, comment jugerons-nous de notre succès à transformer notre vision en réalité? Il nous faut en fait trouver des façons de mesurer le bien-être des enfants. Nous devons également nous engager à présenter régulièrement les résultats obtenus pour ainsi noter nos progrès et réévaluer nos priorités.

Les gouvernements fédéral, provinciaux et territoriaux offrent déjà une vaste gamme de services et de programmes destinés aux familles et aux enfants; il serait donc logique d'échanger de l'information sur les initiatives qui ont donné de bons résultats et de tirer profit des expériences positives tant des gouvernements que des organismes non gouvernementaux.

Un document de discussion supplémentaire, résumé ci-dessous, propose des façons de mesurer le bien-être des enfants du Canada et de suivre les progrès réalisés dans l'amélioration de leurs conditions de vie. On y préconise également le partage des pratiques efficaces, de façon à faciliter l'atteinte de nos objectifs.



## La vision proposée du Plan d'action national pour les enfants

Les Canadiens et les Canadiennes veulent un pays où tous les enfants vivent dans un climat d'amour, d'attention, de compréhension; un pays qui les valorise comme personnes pendant l'enfance et qui leur offre la possibilité de se réaliser pleinement comme adultes.

Respectés, protégés du danger, les enfants deviendront des adultes respectueux des autres et de leurs droits. Valorisés, choyés, aimés, ils seront plus tard capables de contribuer à une société qui apprécie la diversité, protège les plus faibles et prône le partage.

S'ils ont la possibilité de réaliser pleinement leurs capacités physiques, intellectuelles, affectives, sociales et spirituelles, les enfants deviendront des adultes accomplis et assumeront pleinement leurs rôles de parents, de soignants, de travailleurs et de citoyens.



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