



CITY OF HAMILTON
COMMUNITY & EMERGENCY SERVICES DEPARTMENT
Children's & Home Management Services Division

TO:	Chair and Members Emergency & Community Services Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	November 9, 2015
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Hamilton's Charter of Rights of Children and Youth and Participatory Responsibility (CES15051(a)) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
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SIGNATURE:	

RECOMMENDATION

That *Hamilton's Charter of Rights of Children and Youth and Participatory Responsibility*, attached as Appendix A to Report CES15051(a), be endorsed.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As referenced in Report CES15051, Hamilton's Charter of Rights of Children and Youth and Participatory Responsibility is made up of 18 rights and responsibilities.

Hamilton's Charter of Rights of Children and Youth

This Charter was created with the input of over 2000 Children and Youth of Hamilton, in their words, through extensive community engagement. While families are responsible for raising their children, governments, schools, communities, parents and individuals have a duty to respect children's rights. The Charter is not only about Making Hamilton the Best Place to Raise a Child, but also about Making Hamilton the Best Place to BE a Child.

The following are the rights that will be included in the charter:

I have the right to be heard.
I have the right to live in a home, in a neighbourhood.
I have the right to live with and be cared for by family.
I have the right to have friends.
I have the right to good food, and warm, clean clothes.
I have the right to a healthy earth to live on.
I have the right to play.
I have the right to learn more things.

I have the right to express myself, my personality and thoughts without judgement.
I have the right to privacy.
I have the right to make choices.
I have the right to special help like a wheelchair if I ever need it.
I have the right to know about and practice my culture.
I have the right to care for living things.
I have the right to be safe, secure, and healthy.
I have the right to be free from discrimination.
I have the right to rest.
I have the right to be proud of who I am.

These rights and responsibilities shall apply to all children and youth under the age of 18, without discrimination according to race, colour, gender, sexual orientation, ability/disability, ethnic origin, religion, neighbourhood, economic status. This Charter of Rights for Children and Youth does not replace the law.
Hamilton's Charter of Rights of Children and Youth and Participatory Responsibility complements the Parent Charter of Rights that was supported by Council in 2011.

This Children's Charter will provide opportunities to review and enhance internal policies and will be helpful to inform planning and programming decisions.

Alternatives for Consideration – Not Applicable

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial:

Costs for all materials are covered within the planning allocation for the development and implementation of the charter and have been included in the 2015 budget. This is from the 100% Ministry of Education funding allocation. There are no additional financial implications associated with this project.

Staffing:

There are no staffing implications associated with Report CES15051(a).

Legal:

There are no legal implications associated with Report CES15051(a).

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In 1990, Canada signed the United Nations Convention on the Right of the Child, which identified that children have inherent rights. In 2000, community representatives, including City staff, met to discuss policy development for children's issues and the development of a Hamilton-Wentworth Charter of Rights for Children, which would be based on the United Nations document. The Charter of Rights for Children was brought forward and endorsed by the Region of Hamilton-Wentworth, Community Services and

Public Health Committee (Report SPH00043). The original Hamilton's Children's Charter of Rights, attached as Appendix B to Report CES15051(a), was developed in Hamilton and used to establish guiding principles for the development and delivery of programs and services for children in our community.

In 2010, the Hamilton Best Start Network created the first Hamilton Parent Charter of Rights, attached as Appendix C to Report CES15051(a). The Charter set out the shared principles and beliefs for service providers to guide the planning and delivery of services to make parents feel valued, respected, and supported in their roles as parents. The Parent Charter (Report CS11094) was endorsed by Council in November, 2011.

Process

The Hamilton Best Start Network's Parent and Family Engagement Committee partnered with Culture for the Kids in the Arts, Art Forms and Artist in the Centre to review the 15 year old charter. The aim was to help educators engage children and youth in conversations about rights and responsibilities and to document these conversations through pictures and words that would reflect their voices.

Once the art was collected, committee members, students and interns, artists, and educators met to sort the artwork into themes. These themes were then used to inform the development of the rights of children, as well as the responsibilities of children and the responsibilities of adults.

The draft charter was validated by approximately 300 children and youth across the city. Children were invited to participate in a "dot-mocracy" validation exercise at local events including the SuperCrawl Arts Festival and the Telling Tales Literacy Festival.

Next Steps

The City and the Best Start Network have developed a communication plan for the dissemination of the Charter. It includes:

- (i) The creation and delivery of a communication toolkit to support the Charter in practice and encourage ongoing discussions;
- (ii) Education for children, families, service provider, and the public about the rights of children and youth in our community; and,
- (iii) Building awareness to the rights of children and youth in Hamilton by touring an exhibit with words and artwork drafted by children and for children throughout the remainder of 2015 thru 2016. The exhibit will bring awareness along with the opportunity for children to continue to tell

us what they feel is the most important right for them and for other children.

The charter will also be celebrated at this year's Week of the Child and Youth Luncheon on November 19, 2015.

This Charter serves to honour our commitment as a broader community and government as it relates to children's rights. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child – Article 42 (Knowledge of Rights) stipulates that Governments should make the Convention known to adults and children. Adults should help children learn about their rights, too.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS

There are no policy implications for Report CES15051(a).

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

Community consultations and engagement sessions were conducted between January 2015 and August 2015 with children, youth, educators, and facilitators. During this time, approximately 1,500 children and youth under the age of 18 years participated in the project and engaged in discussions using art as a medium for conversation. The 1,500 submissions from children and youth were reflective of all neighbourhoods across Hamilton and involved the school boards, child care centres, youth agencies, and recreation programs in the parks.

Hamilton's Charter of Rights of Children and Youth and Participatory Responsibility was endorsed by the Hamilton Best Start Network in October 2015.

ANALYSIS AND RATIONAL FOR RECOMMENDATION

The children's charter provides an outline of shared principles and beliefs that key service providers in Hamilton agree will strengthen all their work with children and families.

The charter provides children, youth, parents, and service providers with clarity about the rights and responsibilities of children, and the responsibilities of adults to ensure these rights are valued and respected. The Best Start Network has supported a communications strategy to educate children, families, service provider, and the public about the rights of children and youth in our community.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION

None

ALIGNMENT TO THE 2012 – 2015 STRATEGIC PLAN

Strategic Priority #1

A Prosperous & Healthy Community

WE enhance our image, economy and well-being by demonstrating that Hamilton is a great place to live, work, play and learn.

Strategic Objective

- 1.5 Support the development and implementation of neighbourhood and City wide strategies that will improve the health and well-being of residents.

Strategic Priority #2

Valued & Sustainable Services

WE deliver high quality services that meet citizen needs and expectations, in a cost effective and responsible manner.

Strategic Objective

- 2.2 Improve the City's approach to engaging and informing citizens and stakeholders.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Appendix A to Report CES15051(a): Hamilton's Charter of Rights of Children and Youth and Participatory Responsibility, 2015

Appendix B to Report CES15051(a): Hamilton's Children's Charter of Rights, 2000

Appendix C to Report CES15051(a): Hamilton Parent Charter of Rights, 2011