

# **The History of the Community-University Partnership for the Study of Children, Youth, and Families (CUP)**

**August 2007**

**Prepared by**



# Acknowledgements

## Interview Participants

The following past and present members of the CUP Steering Committee participated in individual or group interviews. Two members submitted comments by e-mail.

- ✦ **Jeff Bisanz**, Community-University Partnership for the Study of Children, Youth, and Families
- ✦ **Rhonda Breitzkreuz**, Community-University Partnership for the Study of Children, Youth, and Families
- ✦ **Gloria Chalmers**, Edmonton Public Schools
- ✦ **Al Cook**, Rehabilitation Medicine, University of Alberta
- ✦ **Barbara Dart**, United Way of the Alberta Capital Region
- ✦ **Lionel Dibden**, Faculty of Medicine, University of Alberta
- ✦ **Jane Drummond**, Health Sciences, University of Alberta
- ✦ **Muriel Dunnigan**, (formerly) Edmonton Catholic Schools
- ✦ **Michael Farris**, E4C (formerly Edmonton City Centre Church Corporation)
- ✦ **Martin Garber-Conrad**, Edmonton Community Foundation
- ✦ **Jane Hewes**, Grant MacEwan College
- ✦ **Terry Klassen**, Pediatrics, University of Alberta
- ✦ **Sue Lynch**, Child Study Centre, University of Alberta
- ✦ **Doug McNally**, (formerly) Edmonton Community Foundation
- ✦ **Lynn Odynski**, former parent representative
- ✦ **Richard Ouellet**, Alberta Children's Services
- ✦ **Don Philippon**, Special Advisor Provost and Vice-President (Academic), University of Alberta
- ✦ **Linda Phillips**, Elementary Education, University of Alberta
- ✦ **Delmarie Sadoway**, Capital Health
- ✦ **Laurie Schnirer**, Community-University Partnership for the Study of Children, Youth, and Families
- ✦ **Carol Watson**, City of Edmonton, Community Services
- ✦ **Brenda Willis**, Edmonton Catholic Schools
- ✦ **Doug Wilson**, School of Public Health, University of Alberta
- ✦ **Wendy Yewman**, Region 6 Edmonton and Area Child and Family Services Authority

## Research and Administration

The following CUP staff members contributed to the preparation of the history document.

- ✦ **Miranda Diakiw** provided contact lists and background documents, and managed project administrative requirements.
- ✦ **Kelly Shaw** conducted five interviews and provided input into the development of the final report.

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## List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Full Name
ACCFRC	Alberta Centre for Child, Family and Community Research
CCHS	Coordinating Council of Health Sciences
CISC	Centre for the Interdisciplinary Study of Childhood (one of the original names under consideration for what is now CUP)
CUP	Community-University Partnership for the Study of Children, Youth, and Families
CURA	Community-University Research Alliance
ECF	Edmonton Community Foundation
ECMERC	Early Childhood Measurement and Evaluation Resource Centre
FFE	Families First Edmonton
MKAD	Mobilizing Knowledge about Development
SSHRC	Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council

# 1.0 Introduction

## 1.1 Brief Background of the Community-University Partnership for the Study of Children, Youth, and Families

The Community-University Partnership for the Study of Children, Youth, and Families (CUP) was officially launched in November 2000 at Edmonton City Hall. The launch was preceded by more than three years of perseverance, hard work, and determination by a dedicated group of community and university representatives.

Individuals came together for a common cause: to improve linkages between the community and university for the betterment of children, youth, and families.

## 1.2 Mission Statement

The Community-University Partnership for the Study of Children, Youth, and Families (CUP) is committed to improving the development of children, youth, families, and communities by:

- ✚ generating, sharing, and mobilizing new knowledge about child and family development;
- ✚ identifying and promoting the use of evidence-based policies and practices for optimizing child and family development; and
- ✚ nurturing a culture, both in the community and the university, in which rigorous research, evaluation, and practice are valued highly as critical components in efforts to understand and optimize development.

## 1.3 Purpose of this Report

The purpose of this report was to document key milestones and decision points during the history and development of CUP (1997-2007). An initial draft report was used to facilitate discussion during the June 2007 Steering Committee retreat – with an emphasis on learning from the past to help plan for the future.

## 2.0 Data Collection

### 2.1 Document Review

To begin exploring the history of CUP, several background documents were reviewed including annual reports and Steering Committee minutes produced between 2000 and 2006.

In addition, earlier meeting notes and discussion documents from 1998 to 2000 (archived files of Jeff Bisanz) were reviewed. These files included information regarding various working groups and documents that became instrumental in the development of CUP (e.g., Research & Education subgroup report, and an early concept document).

### 2.2 Key Stakeholder Interviews

#### Interview Process and Response Rate

Twenty-two past or present members of the CUP Steering Committee and the Director and Assistant Director agreed to participate in the individual or group interviews (see Table 1). Two additional members provided feedback by e-mail and two members declined to participate.

**Table 1. Number and Type of Steering Committee Member Interviews**

Interview #	# of participants	Interview type	Interviewer(s)
1 (pilot)	2	In-person	LM, KS
2	1	In-person	LM
3	1	In-person	LM
4	3	In-person	LM
5	2	In-person	LM
6	2	In-person	LM
7	1	E-mail	LM
8	1	In-person	LM
9	1	In-person	LM
10	1	In-person	LM
11	3	In-person	KS
12	2	In-person	KS
13	1	Phone	KS
14	3	In-person (2); e-mail (1)	KS
<b>14 interviews</b>	<b>24 participants</b>	<b>12 in-person, 1 phone, 2 e-mail</b>	<b>--</b>

### 2.3 Information Synthesis

A draft timeline of key events and critical milestones was constructed based on the document review. The timeline was updated and supplemented with additional information collected during the interviews. Both interviewers prepared summarized notes based on information provided by CUP Steering Committee members. All interview notes (n=14 interviews) were reviewed together and key findings incorporated into the CUP history report.

## 3.0 Key Findings: Three Phases of Development

The Community-University Partnership for the Study of Children, Youth, and Families has progressed through the following three phases of development:

- Early Planning (1997-2000)
- The First Three Years: Development Period (2000-2003)
- Taking Flight (2003-2007)

Key milestones and critical events that occurred within each phase are described next.

### 3.1 Early Planning (June 1997 – June 2000)

MILESTONE/EVENT	DESCRIPTION
<b>Discussions with Success By 6®</b>	<p>Early discussions that contributed to what is now CUP coincided with the development of the Edmonton <u>Success By 6®</u> program. The focus of Success By 6 was to provide <b>quality programming</b> from prenatal to age six to ensure that preschool children enter school ready to learn. Success By 6 emerged, in part, in response to provincial government funding cutbacks for early childhood education in the early 1990s. Early leaders of the program were supported by evidence that the care a child receives from prenatal through the first six years of life is critical to the child’s growth and development.</p> <p>Doug McNally (former City of Edmonton Chief of Police and Executive Director of the Edmonton Community Foundation) was the first Chair of the Success By 6 Council of Partners. The first formal meeting of the Council of Partners was held in January 1995. This date precedes the early planning phase of CUP; however, many of the same representatives from the Success By 6 Council of Partners subsequently became involved in the development of CUP.</p> <p>The Success By 6 Council of Partners comprised primarily those in leadership roles within their respective organizations<sup>1</sup>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“We tried to attract leaders of organizations to be representatives on the Success By 6 Council of Partners.”</i></li> </ul> <p>A similar approach was also used (much later) in the development of the CUP Steering Committee.</p> <p>Myer Horowitz, former Dean of Education and President of the University of Alberta, was one of the initial members of the Success</p>

<sup>1</sup> Capital Health Authority; Child Welfare, Alberta Family and Social Services; Native Counselling Services; Parks and Recreation; Edmonton Public Schools; Edmonton Catholic Schools; Edmonton City Centre Church Corporation; Faculty of Education, University of Alberta; Edmonton Police Service; Edmonton Power; Catholic Archdiocese of Edmonton; Edmonton Community Foundation; Junior League of Edmonton; Population Research Lab, University of Alberta; Office of the Commissioner of Services for Children; Health Canada; United Way of Alberta Capital Region; Community and Family Services, City of Edmonton; and three community representatives.

MILESTONE/EVENT	DESCRIPTION
	<p>By 6 Council of Partners. He invited some of the Success By 6 members to meet with representatives from the University of Alberta <u>Child Study Centre</u> to discuss possible linkages between the community and the university.</p> <p>Recall that the initial focus of Success By 6 was on quality programming, not research. Through ongoing discussions, a small group of individuals began to broaden their thinking in this area and soon emphasized the need to bring together <u>both</u> community programs and academic research.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“With the focus on quality programming, we realized that researchers and universities were missing in the equation. We wanted an organization in the university that would be guided by programs in the community.”</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Discussions with the Child Study Centre, University of Alberta</b></p>	<p>Other individuals involved in the early planning of what was to become CUP initially envisioned an expanded <u>Child Study Centre</u>.</p> <p>Sylvia Chard (former Director of the Child Study Centre) and other key stakeholders envisioned a comprehensive Early Childhood Program consisting of an on-campus facility for developing and demonstrating best practices in child care and education from pre-school to Grade 3.</p> <p>Informal discussions between community and university representatives regarding the potential to expand the Child Study Centre started to take place in the summer of 1997, until a somewhat more formal leadership group was established.</p> <p>The group was co-chaired by both a university and community representative (David Schiff, Pediatrics, University of Alberta; and Doug McNally who, at the time, was the Executive Director of the Edmonton Community Foundation).</p>
<p><b>Half-day organizing meeting (March 1998)</b></p>	<p>A half-day organizing meeting was co-chaired by David Schiff (University of Alberta) and Doug McNally (Edmonton Community Foundation). The meeting, facilitated by Peter Faid (Community Services Consulting), was held at the Royal Glenora Club in Edmonton and was attended by approximately 40 individuals representing community agencies and the university, many of whom later became integrally involved in the development of CUP. For example, Jeff Bisanz attended this meeting as a representative from the University of Alberta. [See Appendix B for a list of invited participants and affiliated faculties/organizations.]</p> <p>The meeting generated a great deal of excitement among those that attended. There seemed to be a belief in the potential that <i>“something could really come out of the meeting”</i>. Interested</p>



MILESTONE/EVENT	DESCRIPTION
<p><b>Identifying Common Needs</b></p>	<p>stakeholders included those with a practical understanding of what it might take to make the initiative work.</p> <p>The organizing meeting was followed by smaller group meetings to follow up on actions that could be taken to move the ideas forward.</p> <p>Stakeholders came together for a common cause and began to identify needs shared by the community and the university.</p> <p>For example, community agencies wanted access to practical research that would help inform community programming. University researchers (those interested in community-based research) wanted to establish better linkages with the community. These, and other common needs, were identified during early planning meetings. See Appendix C for more detail regarding the reasons stakeholders were at the table (Summary of the March 1998 meeting prepared by Community Services Consulting).</p> <p>Most importantly, stakeholders recognized the importance of working together for mutual benefit.</p>
<p><b>Building Relationships and Developing Trust</b></p>	<p>The process of in-person meetings and ongoing discussions helped to <b>build relationships and trust</b> between key stakeholders. This early relationship building is critical because many of the current members of the CUP Steering Committee were also among those who contributed to the early planning and visioning of what CUP could become.</p>
<p><b>Establishment of volunteer working groups (September 1998)</b></p>	<p>By September 1998, several working groups were established to further explore important details pertaining to the proposed new “Centre”. At this point, much of the discussion continued to focus on the potentially expanded Child Study Centre.</p> <p>The following working groups (and Chairs) were assigned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Development of Partnerships, Links, and Core Functions (Bauni MacKay)</li> <li>▪ Research and Education (Jeff Bisanz)</li> <li>▪ Funding (Doug McNally)</li> <li>▪ University Site Facilities Planning (Elizabeth Dechert)</li> <li>▪ Governance and Structure (Doug Wilson)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Development of early concept document for the “Centre for the Study of Childhood”</b></p>	<p>By late 1998, the planning group was exploring various options for funding to support the development of the new Centre. The group also required approval from the University of Alberta to proceed.</p> <p>To help achieve these tasks, a consultant was assigned by the university president’s office to prepare a <b>concept document</b> outlining the purpose, goals, and objectives of the proposed Centre.</p>

MILESTONE/EVENT	DESCRIPTION
	<p>Stakeholders began to refer to the centre as the <u>Centre for the Study of Childhood</u>. Work on the concept document helped to clarify the intended scope and direction of the new Centre. For example, by December 1998 the focus had broadened from pre-school to grade 3 to include <b>children and youth ages 0 to 18</b>.</p> <p>Sylvia Chard (Director, Child Study Centre) and Jeff Bisanz (Department of Psychology, University of Alberta) called a meeting in January 1999 with the directors of 9 centres on campus – those involved with research involving children – to assess support for the concept of creating the <u>Centre for the Study of Childhood</u>. See Appendix D for the list of invited Centres. An early draft of the concept document, outlining the Centre’s primary goal and areas of focus, was shared with the other centre directors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Goal: To foster collaborative, cooperative efforts between the university and community that will serve to identify and develop practices which optimize the development of children.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Areas of focus: (1) collaborative research; (2) education of students and professionals; (3) development of informational resources for parents and professionals.</i></li> </ul> <p>There was further recognition that the research agenda must be broad in scope and developed through collaboration between university and community participants.</p> <p>The idea for the Centre was promoted as an <b>exciting opportunity for increased collaboration</b>, not a threat to existing centres. During the meeting, it was emphasized that <i>“the new centre should not compete with nor try to absorb existing centres.”</i></p> <p>Ultimately, the majority of directors (8 of 9) expressed support for the Centre, inspired by the potential to increase collaboration both on and off campus. Following the meeting, formal letters of support were provided for funding applications and to facilitate the process of seeking university approval.</p>
<p><b>Meeting with “Directors of Centres” at the University of Alberta</b></p>	
<p><b>Name Changed to “Centre for the Interdisciplinary Study of Childhood”</b></p>	<p>By March 1999, stakeholders began to refer to the proposed new centre as the <u>Centre for the Interdisciplinary Study of Childhood</u>. The acronym CISC began to frequently appear in background documents. <b>What is now CUP almost became CISC.</b></p> <p>Use of the term “interdisciplinary” in the title was an important distinction and has remained one of the defining characteristics of CUP.</p>
<p><b>University-Community</b></p>	<p>Inspired by the expressed support from the centre directors, yet still lacking funding and formal support from the University, the planning</p>

MILESTONE/EVENT	DESCRIPTION
<p><b>Planning Group established</b></p>	<p>group continued to forge ahead.</p> <p>The “University-Community Planning Group” was formally established to oversee planning for the CISC. The University-Community Planning Group later became the CUP Steering Committee.</p> <p>Jane Drummond (University of Alberta) and Muriel Dunnigan (Edmonton Catholic Schools) served as Acting Directors of CISC.</p> <p>A clear vision for CISC was emerging. The vision included <b>true collaboration between the community and university, an interdisciplinary focus, and a broad definition of childhood.</b></p> <p>In addition, the following three key functions for the Centre were identified: <b>research, education, and sharing knowledge.</b></p>
<p><b>Report of the Subgroup on Research and Education</b></p>	<p>In April 1999, the Subgroup on Research and Education completed a report that would later become critical in determining the goals and functions of CUP. The report identified (1) the primary goals and functions of research and education in the Centre and (2) what must be done to ensure that these goals and functions could be achieved.</p> <p>Some of the details within the report were later revised, but the thinking and development that went into the report helped to set the direction for what CUP was to become.</p>
<p><b>Shift away from link with Child Study Centre</b></p>	<p>Discussions within the University-Community Planning Group began to shift away from a direct link with the Child Study Centre. One of the primary reasons for the shift in thinking was the “decision that it had to be broader...outside of any one faculty.”</p>
<p><b>Pivotal Meeting with Health Sciences Council (formerly Coordinating Council of Health Sciences-CCHS)</b></p>	<p>By the middle of 1999, the planning group was becoming increasingly <b>discouraged</b>. Despite strong vested interests among individual members, and expressed support from the other centre directors, the group lacked funding and university (administrative level) support.</p> <p>A critical turning point occurred after approaching <b>Al Cook</b> (member of the Coordinating Council of Health Sciences<sup>2</sup> and Dean of Rehabilitation Medicine).</p> <p>Al Cook became a strong supporter of the concept and promoted it to <b>Don Philippon</b> (who was the CCHS Executive Director at the time) and <b>Art Quinney</b> (CCHS Chair<sup>3</sup>).</p>

<sup>2</sup> The Coordinating Council of Health Sciences (CCHS) consisted of the Deans of the following six faculties: 1) Agriculture, Forestry, and Home Economics; 2) Medicine and Dentistry; 3) Nursing; 4) Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences; 5) Physical Education and Recreation; and 6) Rehabilitation Medicine. The CCHS was later renamed the Health Sciences Council.

<sup>3</sup> Al Cook became Chair of the CCHS in 2000.

MILESTONE/EVENT	DESCRIPTION
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The Dean of Education (Larry Beauchamp) was also supportive and willing to participate in meetings with the Coordinating Council to further discuss future possibilities for the Centre.

- *“There were trials and tribulations. It was a difficult process to get the university on board. We met with university representatives. Some were encouraging, but most were non-committal. We were about ready to walk away when Al Cook (Dean of Rehabilitation Medicine and member of the Coordinating Council of Health Sciences) became champion...and Larry Beauchamp (Dean of Education) as well.”*

A **pivotal meeting** was held with the Coordinating Council of Health Sciences (i.e., all Deans of participating health science faculties) and the Dean of Education. Doug McNally, David Schiff, and Jeff Bisanz made a formal presentation to the CCHS.

- *“Al got the Deans excited about it.”*
- *“The mandate – for Children, Youth, and Families – was so broad that every Dean could see a role for their faculty.”*
- *“From that point on, the university began to talk more positively.”*

**Presentation to VP Academic/Provost**

The meeting with the CCHS was followed by a formal presentation to the VP Academic/Provost (fall 1999). The planning group requested start-up funding from the university. It was anticipated that, over time, additional funding would be received from the community. It was envisioned that – as a result of additional community funding – the university’s contribution would decline although a specific funding formula was not determined.

**Name Changed to the “Community-University Partnership” (CUP)**

During an evening meeting at David Schiff’s house, planning group members discussed a possible name change for the Centre. Members were seeking a name that would better reflect the partnership between the community and the university. Following this meeting, the Centre for the Interdisciplinary Study of Childhood (CISC) became the **Community-University Partnership for the Study of Children, Youth, and Families** (CUP).

**First CUP budget approved**

The first CUP budget was officially approved by the University of Alberta in December 1999. The initial funding was provided on a three-year basis.

- *“Money was scarce in the university back when CUP began. Doug Oram (former University of Alberta Provost) took a chance. It was also recommended to him by Don, Al, and the Health Sciences Council.”*

MILESTONE/EVENT	DESCRIPTION
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- *“It was that initial investment (from the university) that set them up under the Health Science Council. They got formal approval and called it a partnership.”*

**CUP was now a reality.**

### 3.2 The First Three Years: Development Period (July 2000 – June 2003)

MILESTONE/EVENT	DESCRIPTION
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**Human Resources**

Now that CUP had received funding from the University, it was necessary to **recruit staff** to begin to carry out the tasks envisioned by the University-Community Planning Group.

- Jeff Bisanz was selected as the **CUP Director** in April 2000 and was responsible for developing CUP.
- Leslie Mackey, a former honours student in Psychology, was the first **CUP staff member** (beginning in June 2000). Leslie contributed to several early developmental milestones such as choosing a logo for CUP that reflected both the university and the community.
- In July 2000, Laurie Schnirer was hired as the **Executive Assistant** (this title was later changed to **Research Associate/Assistant Director**).

Steering Committee members interviewed for the history report provided overwhelmingly positive comments regarding the significant role of **human resources** in the subsequent development of CUP.

- *“Amazing people work there. Laurie is good at making it happen. Jeff is such a broad thinker. And there has been a wonderful parade of young graduate students who were fun and able to take projects and run, such as the Kids in the Hall project. It took off!”*
- *“Hiring Jeff and then Laurie (have been critical milestones). The leadership those two have provided has been phenomenal. They spent time writing grant proposals over and over again and getting refused. They kept going, connecting with people over and over, building relationships with community agencies and establishing trust – huge trust. That enables community-based research to go forward.”*
- *“If the wrong people had been hired it could have gone in an entirely different direction. I would emphasize that it’s the Secretariat that has made CUP successful. Without Jeff and Laurie it wouldn’t have been as successful.”*

**Official Launch**

CUP was officially launched in the community with a ceremony at Edmonton City Hall in November 2000. The launch was well attended and generated positive media coverage. This helped to

MILESTONE/EVENT	DESCRIPTION
<p><b>First Community Project</b></p>	<p>build momentum and excitement for CUP.</p> <p>From the time initial start-up funding was received, the CUP Secretariat was extremely busy writing grant proposals and seeking numerous opportunities to conduct research in partnership with the community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“In the first few years they were constantly writing up grants and proposals at all hours of the day. If an opportunity came up it was, ‘let’s go for it’. They put a lot of energy into it.”</i></li> </ul> <p>A critical milestone was achieved in February 2001 when CUP received notification of funding for their <b>first community project</b> – to conduct an implementation evaluation of the In-School Mentoring Project for Big Brothers &amp; Big Sisters of Edmonton and Area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“That was important to build strength and credibility.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“Getting the In-School Mentoring Phase I project going was critical to show that CUP could get funding and get work going.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“(The In-School Mentoring project) was the first opportunity where things had to be worked out between the community and the university, such as how to do the project. There have been so many learnings regarding community-based research.”</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>First Retreat and Strategic Planning</b></p>	<p>In September 2001, CUP hosted its first retreat for staff and Steering Committee members at the Devonian Gardens. At the time of the retreat, CUP had been operational for just over one year. The retreat provided an opportunity to review past accomplishments and to start planning for the future.</p> <p>Martha Erikson, Director of the University of Minnesota’s Children, Youth and Family Consortium, was the keynote speaker. Martha was pivotal in showing the Steering Committee what a “mature” partnership might look like and invigorated the committee with possibilities. Peter Faid (Community Services Consulting) was engaged to facilitate discussion and strategic planning during the retreat.</p>
<p><b>Anonymous Community Donation</b></p>	<p>Also in 2001, CUP received a donation from an “anonymous donor” in the community (\$35,000).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“This was critical because it showed the university that the community was coming to the table.”</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Academic planning council application</b></p>	<p>In early 2002, CUP began to investigate the process for obtaining formal approval from the University as a “Centre”.</p>

MILESTONE/EVENT	DESCRIPTION
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="532 247 1352 279">▪ <i>“The process was critical. There were huge hoops to jump.”</i></li> </ul> <p data-bbox="532 310 1385 405">Upon submission of a detailed application and delivery of a formal presentation to university administration in late 2002, CUP was granted <b>official status as a Centre</b> at the University of Alberta.</p>
<p data-bbox="183 478 475 573"><b>Post-doctoral fellow in Early Childhood Development</b></p>	<p data-bbox="532 478 1401 636">CUP welcomed its first post-doctoral fellow (Darcy Fleming) in September 2002. This was a significant addition to the human resource component of CUP and enabled more community-based research projects to unfold, especially in the area of early childhood development and evaluation, which was in great need.</p>
<p data-bbox="183 678 475 772"><b>Completion of three-year development period</b></p>	<p data-bbox="532 678 1336 709">In June 2003, the initial three-year development period ended.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="532 741 1425 846">▪ <i>“Completion of the initial three-year provisional period was another key milestone. Initially the university provided three years of funding, essentially challenging CUP to prove itself.”</i></li> </ul> <p data-bbox="532 877 1401 1003">After the first three years, CUP had begun to “prove itself”. The foundation was set, projects were underway, and a structure to facilitate dialogue between the community and the university was in place.</p> <p data-bbox="532 1045 930 1077"><b>CUP was ready to take flight.</b></p>

### 3.3 Taking Flight (July 2003 – Present)

MILESTONE/EVENT	DESCRIPTION
<p><b>Notification of successful research funding for Families First Edmonton</b></p>	<p>Building on the progress made during the first three years, CUP was ready for its next big challenge. The <b>Families First Edmonton</b> research project would provide that opportunity.</p> <p>CUP was closely involved with the development of Families First Edmonton from its original conception, having participated in early discussions led by the City of Edmonton as early as 2001. By 2003, the Families First Edmonton Steering Committee decided to proceed with a randomized controlled trial to assess the effectiveness of the various service delivery approaches designed to better meet the needs of low income families.</p> <p>Laurie Schnirer (CUP) and Maria Mayan (International Institute for Qualitative Methodology and CUP) accepted the roles of <b>Research Co-Directors</b> and Jane Drummond (University of Alberta) became the <b>Principal Investigator</b>. CUP built an interdisciplinary team of researchers from four universities.</p> <p><b>2004 was a year of vigorous grant writing.</b></p> <p>A major milestone was achieved in April 2005 when the research team received notification of <b>successful research funding</b>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“The high level of funding means recognition for the university, and the whole process involves the community.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“Getting the big Families First Edmonton project – that was a critical milestone. (Getting a big grant) makes it more accepted in the academic community.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“Families First Edmonton has great potential to change the way we fund and otherwise support at-risk families. Getting it started was a major milestone for CUP and others.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“The incubation period for Families First was just about as long as CUP. That was a <u>big</u> milestone.”</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Seeking base operational funding</b></p>	<p>CUP was steadily moving forward, growing, developing, and starting new research projects including Families First Edmonton. As a result of the tremendous opportunities, CUP was also outgrowing its space and human resource capacity.</p> <p>While successful at obtaining research grants, CUP continued to face ongoing challenges obtaining <b>base operational funding</b>. Because CUP does not fit the traditional structure of the university, designating ownership and responsibility for funding the day-to-day operations of CUP has been difficult.</p>



MILESTONE/EVENT	DESCRIPTION
<b>Received Edmonton Community Foundation grant</b>	<p>In September 2005, CUP received a \$50,000 grant from the Edmonton Community Foundation (with matching funds from an anonymous donor). This funding not only allowed CUP to continue, but further demonstrated significant community support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“When CUP received funding from the Edmonton Community Foundation...it showed community recognition as to the potential value of CUP.”</i></li> </ul>
<b>Official launch of Families First Edmonton</b>	<p>Families First Edmonton was <b>officially launched</b> at the YMCA of Edmonton Enterprise Centre in November 2005.</p>
<b>Launch of the Early Childhood Measurement and Evaluation Resource Centre</b>	<p>With several research projects now underway, CUP revisited its original strategic directions: 1) research, 2) education, and 3) knowledge sharing. Following early success in getting <b>research</b> projects up and running, it was now possible to focus attention on the <b>education</b> and <b>knowledge sharing</b> goals of CUP.</p> <p>The <b>Early Childhood Measurement and Evaluation Resource Centre</b> (ECMERC) was created with these additional goals in mind and with a grant from Social Development Canada. A new Director (Rebecca Gokiert) was recruited and hired in April 2006 and the Centre was officially launched at Edmonton City Hall in October 2006.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“There is excitement about ECMERC.”</i></li> </ul>
<b>Development of the Mobilizing Knowledge about Development project</b>	<p>Similarly, the <b>Mobilizing Knowledge about Development</b> (MKAD) project represents CUP’s expanded focus on knowledge sharing.</p> <p>The project was created in collaboration with the Alberta Centre for Child, Family and Community Research (ACCFRCR) in Fall, 2005 and received word of successful funding in March 2006 (only 11 grants across Canada were funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council). To help meet the growing need for more capacity, a second CUP Assistant Director (Rhonda Breikreuz) was recruited and has assumed responsibility for managing the MKAD project.</p> <p>Establishing the collaboration between CUP and ACCFRCR was also a significant achievement. There was some early concern that the new provincial centre (ACCFRCR) might absorb CUP’s role; however, this concern was alleviated through open dialogue and clarification of each partner’s unique role and contribution.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“(The ACCFRCR) is a provincial organization that lends higher level support. It brings some provincial issues to the CUP table,</i></li> </ul>

MILESTONE/EVENT	DESCRIPTION
	<p><i>and the Alberta Centre gets community input from CUP.”</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="532 310 1421 604">▪ <i>“CUP did some things right. They got involved and said, ‘we’re more complementary than in competition’. The Alberta Research Centre and CUP put in an application for a three-year project regarding knowledge mobilization and sharing...The co-chairs of MKAD are Sue Lynch (CUP Steering Committee member) and Nancy Reynolds (ACCFRC). Nancy comes to the Steering Committee of CUP when needed for the Advisory of MKAD. That was a breakthrough – working with other organizations with similar goals.”</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Reflecting on the history and planning for the future</b></p>	<p>The review of the history and development of CUP began in early 2007 in preparation for June 2007 retreat.</p> <p>It is hoped that this report will help to facilitate discussions regarding where CUP has been and where it is going.</p> <p>As one interview participant advised regarding the future of CUP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="532 911 1123 942">▪ <i>“Dream big dreams. Anything is possible.”</i></li> </ul> <p><b>CUP is entering the next frontier.</b></p>

## 4.0 Directions Not Taken

Some of the initial directions considered during the early development of CUP were ultimately reconsidered. **Not linking with the Child Study Centre** was one of the most significant directions not taken. The decision to create an entity separate from the Child Study Centre was consistent with the subsequent decision **not to align with any one faculty**. It was agreed that the mandate for the new Centre should be broader than any one faculty.

As CUP began to take on community projects, the Secretariat realized that it was difficult and somewhat counterproductive to create a **shared master agenda** or focused research plan to guide their activities. It became more important to be opportunistic and flexible with respect to undertaking community research projects.

These decisions enabled CUP to become truly interdisciplinary, responsive to community needs, and not tied to the agendas of individual faculties, researchers, or existing centres.

Other directions not taken included: selecting a **community representative** (instead of an academic representative) as the CUP Director; creating a **playroom and lobby area** in the entrance of CUP (linked to earlier discussions regarding an expanded Child Study Centre); assigning a **parent representative** on the CUP Steering Committee; becoming a **clearinghouse of information**; and **limiting the focus to ages 0 to 6** (broadened focus to include children, youth, and families).

A few other directions were not taken right away, but have been introduced more recently. Of the three areas of focus identified during the early planning of CUP (research, education, and knowledge sharing), most of the early emphasis has been on research. Now that CUP has made progress with research (through securing grants, getting projects underway, etc.), it has been possible to introduce activities in the other two focus areas: **education** and **knowledge sharing**.

Examples of directions not taken and illustrative participant comments are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2. Directions Not Taken in the Development of CUP**

DIRECTIONS NOT TAKEN (OR NOT TAKEN IMMEDIATELY)	COMMENTS/RATIONALE
<b>Expanding the Child Study Centre</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Not being linked with the Child Study Centre – but that was even pre-CUP days, and that was the right decision...Service provision is so all-consuming and would have distracted from research and policy.”</li> </ul>
<b>Aligning CUP with any one faculty</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Another option we did not take was aligning CUP with a particular faculty (e.g., Medicine, Education).</li> </ul>
<b>Developing a master agenda</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“We abandoned within the first two years the idea that we needed to have a ‘master shared agenda’ because it was an impossible task – either we focused on very broad topics which didn’t help narrow our focus or topics were so narrow that many stakeholders would be left out.”</li> </ul>

DIRECTIONS NOT TAKEN (OR NOT TAKEN IMMEDIATELY)	COMMENTS/RATIONALE
<b>Selecting a community representative as the CUP Director</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“There were some early discussions that the Director of CUP should be a community person, but this didn’t go forward.”</i></li> <li>▪ Other stakeholders commented that it was critical that the Director of CUP be affiliated with the university to bring credibility to the organization.</li> </ul>
<b>Creating a playroom and lobby area in the entrance of CUP</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“We used to think that the set-up of CUP would include a playroom for kids and a lobby area for parents, but this didn’t become the case.”</i></li> </ul>
<b>Assigning a parent representative on the CUP Steering Committee</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“...the role of parents on the Steering Committee...it surfaces (as an issue) periodically...”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“Maybe the issue of parent representation is a red herring....because everything we talk about deals with children, youth, and families, and we’re all parents, too.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“This discussion last came up about a year ago. We got back to the discussion that we’re asking people to represent a sector... and need to be linked to an organization.”</i></li> </ul>
<b>Becoming a clearinghouse of information</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“We also didn’t take the direction of becoming a clearinghouse.”</i></li> </ul>
<b>Limiting the focus to ages 0 to 6</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“The initial conversations were focused on prenatal to age six, and then we recognized the need to broaden that focus (beyond age six).”</i></li> </ul>
<b>Education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“We decided not to focus on graduate education, but rather to focus on research (initially).”</i></li> </ul>
<b>Knowledge Sharing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“Maybe there have been directions not taken right away. MKAD is a good example. It’s been a key purpose of CUP but not possible until recently. A large funding agency made funds available for knowledge transfer.”</i></li> </ul>

Beyond the examples provided above, most interview participants had difficulty recalling additional directions not taken and expressed satisfaction with the current status of CUP.

- *“There have been surprisingly little debates...People are happy with the overall goals and direction. Staff are doing as much as can be expected.”*

## 5.0 Challenges and Facilitators

### 5.1 Challenges

Steering Committee members identified the following challenges experienced during the development and ongoing operations of CUP (see Table 3).

**Table 3. Challenges in the Development of CUP**

CHALLENGES	COMMENTS/RATIONALE
<b>Funding/ sustainability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“The year-to-year budget process is difficult.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“Obtaining core funding. U of A has a model of funding that CUP does not fit into. U of A doesn’t understand CUP’s model of an operating budget.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“The university continues to struggle with recognizing interdisciplinary activity because of the way the university is structured around individual faculties and deans. It’s a discipline-by-discipline organization. Trying to ensure the survival of CUP is an ongoing challenge. The projects are successful but there are challenges with base funding.”</i></li> </ul>
<b>Workload/human resource capacity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“Finding the people and time to do the work that needs to be done.”</i></li> </ul>
<b>University structure for academic positions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“Finding ways to have academic positions at CUP.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“For those at the assistant and associate professor level trying to get a tenured position, how do you make sure those people get recognized by their faculty evaluation processes for the time they spent on CUP? This is a challenge. That continues to be an issue.”</i></li> </ul>
<b>Major research publications</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“Because of the huge workloads there hasn’t been the amount of writing for reports and peer-reviewed publications as would be ideal. It takes time just to get reports done and out. This will need attending to in the future.”</i></li> </ul>
<b>Office space</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“CUP is constantly outgrowing its space.”</i></li> </ul>
<b>Uniqueness of CUP</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“CUP is a unique entity – this has been a challenge. We have to keep reminding others of this, how we are different and what we are trying to achieve.”</i></li> </ul>
<b>Influencing policy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“In the Alberta context, and at the national and international levels, it has been demonstrated that early intervention at the school level results in better outcomes for children. Despite CUP’s work, this is still not getting implemented because there is no political will in this province. This is frustrating for CUP, since they do not want to take</i></li> </ul>

CHALLENGES	COMMENTS/RATIONALE
	<p><i>on a political or an advocacy role. But until you get involved in politics nothing will change, you are just perpetuating the status quo. That is, you will not see the changes needed, or sufficient change to implement what is learned through CUP. People need to see their MPs and MLAs for change to occur.”</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“Even with the knowledge mobilization work of CUP, the challenge of how to better influence policy has remained. We need to further develop this.”</i></li> </ul>
<b>Community based research in an academic setting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“Any academic involved in community-based research faces challenges. Sometimes projects take 2 or 3 years to get up and running. It takes more time to develop relationships in the community than to conduct lab-based academic research. Also, partners often have different worldviews, cultures, knowledge, and priorities.”</i></li> </ul>

## 5.2 Facilitators

Steering Committee members identified the following facilitators to the success of CUP (see Table 4).

**Table 4. Facilitators to the Success of CUP**

FACILITATORS	COMMENTS/RATIONALE
<b>Belief in the idea</b>	Stakeholders expressed a strong “belief in the idea”. Belief in the strength of the idea helped to sustain support and momentum during the early years of planning, despite the many struggles in obtaining support and recognition to move forward.
<b>Timing</b>	<p>Steering Committee members involved in the early planning of CUP emphasized that not only was the community-university partnership a good idea, <i>“it was a good idea whose time had come.”</i></p> <p>Timing also coincided with the development of the Health Science Council and its interdisciplinary mandate.</p>
<b>Clear Vision/Purpose</b>	<p>The early planning group developed a shared sense of purpose early on.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“The core mission of CUP has been constant. Having a clear vision paid off in the long run.”</i></li> </ul>
<b>Initial Funding from the University</b>	The initial three-year funding from the university enabled CUP to move forward.

FACILITATORS	COMMENTS/RATIONALE
<p><b>The People</b></p>	<p>Much of the success of CUP was attributed to the <b>individual people</b> involved in the early planning and development phase. Key players mentioned frequently during the Steering Committee interviews included the following:</p> <p><u>David Schiff</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“David Schiff’s initial leadership was critical for many reasons, including his ability to encourage – or push – people to get involved. David was well known across the university and brought a great deal of credibility to the initiative.”</i></li> </ul> <p><u>Doug McNally</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“Doug McNally’s initial leadership was also critical. He had enormous credibility with the community as a result of his contributions as Chief of Police from 1990-1995, such as spearheading the development of community policing, and as director of the Edmonton Community Foundation. CUP’s assets increased phenomenally while he was there.”</i></li> </ul> <p><u>Al Cook</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“Al Cook was instrumental in helping the group to obtain funding to get things started.”</i></li> </ul> <p><u>Jeff Bisanz and Laurie Schnirer</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“Jeff and Laurie have been amazing.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“Jeff is absolutely key to making it happen – to what we have become and what we are now.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“Jeff has been one of the major reasons without question. He’s been instrumental. He’s kept at it and persevered in the nicest possible way.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“The people make such a difference. Laurie and Jeff just ‘got’ community...The way they consulted, cared, tried to understand. Their willingness to be on other committees and initiatives that don’t have a clear research component but can benefit from their knowledge, such as Success By 6. Their perseverance. It’s become a success because they don’t give up...There are lots of Centres at the University but not all are operational. CUP persevered.”</i></li> </ul> <p><u>Sue Lynch</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“Trying to engage government decision makers in the process has been a challenge. The involvement of Sue Lynch has been invaluable.”</i></li> </ul> <p>Examples of other key players during the early development of CUP included <u>Gloria Chalmers</u>, <u>Sylvia Chard</u>, <u>Barbara Dart</u>, <u>Jane Drummond</u>, <u>Muriel Dunnigan</u>, <u>Martin Garber-Conrad</u>, <u>Jane Hewes</u>, <u>Lynn Odinski</u>, <u>Doug Wilson</u>, and <u>Mary-Anne Venner</u>.</p>

FACILITATORS	COMMENTS/RATIONALE
	<p><u>Steering Committee Members</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“The strength and commitment of the Steering Committee. Members aren’t there as a token.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“The people around the table are really committed to it.”</i></li> </ul> <p><u>CUP Staff</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“Having really good staff has also facilitated the success of CUP. Staff have been committed to CUP, they can see the big picture, they leave their egos at the door, and work together well.”</i></li> </ul> <p><u>Other CUP Champions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“Having voices at important tables.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“People who have come to bat for CUP at critical times and in important ways but who aren’t at the table every day...People who help us when we really need it.”</i></li> </ul>
<b>Leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“There has been very strong leadership of CUP. They’ve developed a consistent and clear vision. They know what actions and steps are required to have CUP recognized and supported at the university.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“Jeff’s leadership shouldn’t go without comment...His willingness to be involved in other initiatives, such as .Success By 6, Leadership Edmonton, and the Muttart Board of Directors, has contributed to CUP’s success. He’s connected and has relationships in the community that feed the success of CUP.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“The leadership of the Steering Committee.”</i></li> </ul>
<b>Organizational culture of CUP</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“It’s somewhat of an organizational culture where it’s deeply engaged with the community.”</i></li> </ul>
<b>Grant writing skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“A strong team that could write research proposals.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“Grantsmanship has been extraordinary. They’ve developed proposals and applications successfully on tight turnarounds.”</i></li> </ul>
<b>Community support and awareness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“There has been very strong support from the community...Respected decision makers have been on the Steering Committee.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“People now say, ‘have you talked to CUP?’ I do, when people come to me. It’s the spirit of being involved in the community. It’s against the perception that academics are only interested in their own research agendas...They’re willing to bring expertise to the community.”</i></li> </ul>



## 6.0 Values of CUP

Steering Committee members were asked to comment on the **values that guide the direction of CUP**. Steering Committee members identified the following values and characteristics to describe CUP:

- Approachable
- Commitment
- Common dialogue
- Community input
- Ethical
- Flexible
- Humility
- Importance of children & families
- Integrity and honesty
- Interdisciplinary
- Leadership
- Mutual benefit
- Partnership
- Persistence
- Practical experience
- Relationship based
- Respect
- Responsive
- Risk taking & innovative
- Scholarship
- Valuing of community expertise

Illustrative participant comments within each category are presented Table 5.

**Table 5. Values and Characteristics of CUP**

CATEGORY	ILLUSTRATIVE COMMENTS
<b>Approachable</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“Approachable...They’ll sit down and talk at the community level and use their language – not talk above them or use academic language.”</i></li> </ul>
<b>Commitment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“Commitment to make things better for children, youth, and families.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“The idea that you were in for the long haul.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“Very committed to their work.”</i></li> </ul>
<b>Common dialogue</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“CUP provides a forum and opportunity for various participants to develop a common dialogue and to develop an understanding of practice activities.”</i></li> </ul>
<b>Community input</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“Opportunity for the community to influence the research agenda.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“Research priorities are community driven.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“Value importance of the input and participation of community members.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“Taking seriously the needs of the community.”</i></li> </ul>
<b>Ethical</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“High ethical standards.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“It’s an ethical organization – they wouldn’t compromise their research to provide a finding supportive of any individual views.”</i></li> </ul>
<b>Flexible</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“Flexibility and opportunism have beneficial characteristics of CUP.”</i></li> </ul>

<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>ILLUSTRATIVE COMMENTS</b>
<b>Humility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“Humility, modesty – Jeff has set the tone that we’re all learning from each other, everyone is a leader.”</i></li> </ul>
<b>Importance of children and families</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“Vision/mission to better opportunities for children through strengthening the community as a whole by having research results disseminated to influence practice.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“Focus on children and families and what’s in their best interests.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“Importance of children and families – critical to a healthy society.”</i></li> </ul>
<b>Integrity and honesty</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“Integrity to the mission, integrity in research. There is much discussion about being true to the research, being about inquiry – not about advocacy for a particular policy or program. That is a very powerful principle that runs through all of CUP’s work.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“Integrity, honesty.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“Honesty.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“Openness.”</i></li> </ul>
<b>Interdisciplinary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“Interdisciplinary.”</i></li> </ul>
<b>Leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“Strong, good leadership, a credit to CUP.”</i></li> </ul>
<b>Mutual benefit</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“Mutual benefits for the community and the university, value of truly building that link with the community.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“Equality”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“Sharing”</i></li> </ul>
<b>Partnership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“Truly working in partnership with the community.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“Partnership and collaboration.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“Equal partnership with the community.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“A partnership and balance between the U of A and the community.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“Distributed ownership.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“Collaboration.”</i></li> </ul>
<b>Persistence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“Persistence and determination.”</i></li> </ul>
<b>Practical experience</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“Practical experience.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“For the university, there’s value in providing practical experience in research.”</i></li> </ul>
<b>Relationship based</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“Building relationships. This is at the core of how CUP does research. Honouring what people bring to the relationship – both the practitioner and the researcher.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“Value of truly building that link with the community.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“Inclusive”</i></li> </ul>

CATEGORY	ILLUSTRATIVE COMMENTS
<b>Respect</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“Respectfulness.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“Respect for different stakeholder opinions.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“Jeff and Laurie create an atmosphere of mutual respect, there are no agendas. It is all about the common good for children and families. This sets a tone for everyone. They are also good listeners.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“Respect people they work with.”</i></li> </ul>
<b>Responsive</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“To be responsive to the community versus directing too much.”</i></li> </ul>
<b>Risk taking and innovative</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“Risk taking. They got involved with a lot of small scale university projects. Other researchers might ask for a \$5,000 project, why would you bother with that?”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“Risking the unknown.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“Trying something different.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“Innovative.”</i></li> </ul>
<b>Scholarship</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“Scholarship.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“Critical thought.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“Commitment to high academic standards, quality research design.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“Based on informed research.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“Commitment to research.”</i></li> </ul>
<b>Valuing of community expertise</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“Valuing the expertise in the community.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“Valuing of both academic and practical learning.”</i></li> </ul>

## 7.0 The Future of CUP

Steering Committee members provided the following comments and suggestions regarding the future of CUP for further discussion during the June 2007 retreat (see Table 6).

**Table 6. Steering Committee Suggestions Regarding the Future of CUP**

CATEGORY	ILLUSTRATIVE COMMENTS
<b>Maintain current directions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“Keep to the mission.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“Stay the course.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“CUP is going in the right direction.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“Don’t mess with a winning formula.”</i></li> </ul>
<b>Stay flexible</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“Keep looking for ways to change and develop.”</i></li> </ul>
<b>Continue to emphasize research</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“We can’t drop our strength – research. There is stress on the Secretariat to focus on both housekeeping and administration and the core business of research – doing both with limited resources.”</i></li> </ul>
<b>Continue to explore ways to work collaboratively</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“Continue to address ways to work with government in a collaborative way. Families First is a good example, but there’s still lots of work to do.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“Determine how to communicate information successfully to politicians.”</i></li> </ul>
<b>Increase the profile and positioning of CUP</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“Raise the profile of CUP in the community to get more supporters – both financially and otherwise.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“Continue to address how to position CUP in the community and the university, and to communicate what we are.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“Long term, it would be nice if CUP was <u>the</u> place where people went for assistance in evaluation and building practice, renowned for reflecting the practice in the community.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“Work with community partners and always think about their profile on projects. If there’s a successful project in the community, sometimes people might not know that CUP was even involved. There’s a balance – it wouldn’t work if CUP was trying too hard to get recognized or always promoting themselves, but at the same time CUP should be recognized for what it’s doing to help build its profile. They should get the community to express that support for CUP – to raise their profile and to give some recognition of the value of their involvement.”</i></li> </ul>

CATEGORY	ILLUSTRATIVE COMMENTS
<b>Increase emphasis on academic publications</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“Publishing and presenting findings is a gap in the work of CUP. Other CUP-like agencies have more publications; for example, Wellesley-Central in Toronto has a better track record of publications.”</i></li> </ul>
<b>Conduct succession planning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“Succession planning for the Steering Committee – we must not forget that! Part of CUP’s success has been the personalities...Many of us are on the Steering Committee by virtue of our positions. The normal succession planning of 3 to 6 year terms doesn’t work.”</i></li> </ul>
<b>Deliver orientation for new Steering Committee members</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“Orientation of new representatives around the table... (with) maintenance directed toward those with less frequency of contact.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“It can be a challenge bringing new people on the Steering Committee while keeping that shared philosophy and vision.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“New members need to know the background. Otherwise it’s just another committee.”</i></li> </ul>
<b>Clarify roles and expectations of Steering Committee members</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“Steering Committee members need a job description and a statement of what their representation is hoped to achieve.”</i></li> </ul>
<b>Continue informal consultation and communication with community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“Community agencies can call and ask about evaluation, research, and outcomes. Quite a few people use that service.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“Even though they’ve been successful, don’t forget what’s given them that success – direct contact with community groups.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“The future of CUP is steadily becoming more and more secure. The course offerings mark another significant milestone. I just hope that it will not start to move too much toward the university and away from the community.”</i></li> </ul>
<b>Continue to pursue stable sources of operational funding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“It would be nice to see them not having to struggle with operational funding.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“U of A should provide more core funding to CUP.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“Governments need to step up with financial support.”</i></li> </ul>
<b>Continue to build human resources and address sustainability issues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“Build academic/community staff resources. Develop shared positions that are funding by U of A and the community.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“We need to build sustainability and permanent positions at CUP.”</i></li> </ul>

CATEGORY	ILLUSTRATIVE COMMENTS
<b>Better engage some stakeholders and strengthen partnerships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“We need a better strategy to engage the City of Edmonton. Councilors Michael Phair and Kim Krushell are co-chairs of Child Friendly Edmonton and they haven’t been well-connected with CUP. We should be linked with the Child Friendly Edmonton Initiative.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“Strengthen the connection between Success By 6 and CUP. Success By 6 has a higher profile.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“Resolve the issue regarding how we talk about how people are affiliated with CUP to help make it easier to understand how to work with CUP.”</i></li> </ul>
<b>Celebrate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“Celebrate the completion and success of finished projects.”</i></li> </ul>
<b>Plan for the future</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“The retreat in June is a good idea.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“A strategic plan is a good idea so that as CUP becomes larger it will not be pulled in too many directions. For example, we should plan how much research, learning/education, and dissemination we will do. We need to become a little less opportunistic and conduct a little more planning.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“During the June retreat we should develop a long range plan. We should identify the pieces of work that we see as core business and discuss how we will distribute resources to these pieces.”</i></li> </ul>
<b>Dream</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“Dream big dreams. Anything is possible.”</i></li> </ul>

## 8.0 Overall Timeline (Highlights)

**1997-2000**

### **EARLY PLANNING**

- Discussions with Success By 6®
- Discussions with the University of Alberta Child Study Centre
- Early organizing meeting of community and university representatives
- Identifying common needs and goals shared by the community and university
- Building relationships and developing trust
- Establishment of volunteer task groups (e.g., Research and Education; Governance and Structure)
- Development of early concept document outlining the goal of the proposed “Centre for the Study of Childhood” (later referred to as the “Centre for the Interdisciplinary Study of Childhood” or CISC)
- Meeting with “Directors of Centres” engaged in research involving children at the University of Alberta
- Establishment of a formal “University-Community Planning Group”
- Emerging vision identified
- Critical meeting with the University of Alberta Health Sciences Council
- Presentation to the University of Alberta VP Academic/Provost
- Name selection: “Community-University Partnership for the Study of Children, Youth, and Families”
- First CUP budget approved (\$129,000)



**2000-2003**

### **THE FIRST THREE YEARS**

- Human resources: selecting the CUP Director and Assistant Director
- Official launch of CUP at Edmonton City Hall
- First research project: In-School Mentoring Phase I
- First retreat and strategic planning session (Devonian Gardens)
- Anonymous community donation (\$35,000)
- Academic planning council application (involved and detailed process of obtaining formal approval from the university as a “Centre”)
- Recruitment and hiring of first post-doctoral fellow
- Completion of first three-year development period



**2003-2007**

### **TAKING FLIGHT**

- Notification of successful research funding for Families First Edmonton
- Received Edmonton Community Foundation grant
- Official launch of Families First Edmonton at YMCA of Edmonton Enterprise Centre
- Launch of the Early Childhood Measurement and Evaluation Resource Centre (ECMERC)
- Development of the Mobilizing Knowledge about Development (MKAD) project in collaboration with the Alberta Centre for Child, Family, and Community Research (ACCFRC)



**2007 & beyond**

### **THE NEXT FRONTIER**

- Reflecting on the history and planning for the future of CUP during the June 2007 Steering Committee Retreat.

## 9.0 Summary

### Looking Back: The First 10 Years

#### Early Planning (1997-2000)

The development of what is now known as the Community-University Partnership for the Study of Children, Youth, and Families (CUP) has been a long and eventful journey. A group of dedicated individuals committed to the betterment of children, youth, and families have paved the way for community based research through the development of relationships between community agencies and university researchers.

Early discussions among a few key stakeholders with both the Success by 6@ Council of Partners and the Child Study Centre, University of Alberta, led to a growing recognition of the need to develop better linkages between the university and the community, and the desire to take action to improve the situation. A half-day organizing meeting held in March 1998 (attended by approximately 40 representatives from the community and the university) provided the structure and impetus to move forward.

Much of the early discussion focused on creating an expanded Child Study Centre – a comprehensive Early Childhood Program consisting of an on-campus facility for developing and demonstrating best practices in child care and education from pre-school to Grade 3. By September 1998, several working groups were established to further explore important details pertaining to the new “Centre”. By the middle of 1999, the planning group (referred to at the time as the “University-Community Planning Group”, which later became the CUP Steering Committee) began to shift discussions away from a direct link with the Child Study Centre. One of the primary reasons for this shift was the desire to create a mandate that was broader than any one faculty.

This early planning period provided an opportunity to identify common needs, build relationships, and develop trust among key stakeholders. Furthermore, a clear vision for what was later to become CUP was emerging. The vision included true collaboration between the community and university, an interdisciplinary focus, and a broad definition of childhood.

However, the planning group lacked university approval and funding support to put their plan into action. A pivotal meeting was held with the Coordinating Council of Health Sciences (CCHS) during which the Deans of participating health sciences faculties expressed support for the proposed Centre. The meeting with the CCHS was followed by a formal presentation and funding request to the VP Academic/Provost in the fall of 1999. **The first CUP budget was officially approved by the University of Alberta in December 1999.** The initial funding was provided on a three-year basis.

#### The First Three Years (2000-2003)

Now that CUP had received funding from the University, it was necessary to recruit staff to begin to carry out the tasks envisioned by the University-Community Planning Group. Jeff Bisanz was selected as the CUP Director in April 2000; Leslie Mackey was the first CUP staff member (June 2000); and Laurie Schnirer was selected as the Executive Assistant in July 2000



(this title was later changed to Research Associated/Assistant Director). Steering Committee members interviewed for this report emphasized that the selection of human resources (skilled, enthusiastic individuals) was critical to the successful implementation of CUP.

**CUP was officially launched in the community with a ceremony at Edmonton City Hall in November 2000.** The launch was well attended and generated positive media coverage. This helped to build momentum and excitement for CUP.

From the time the initial start-up funding was received, the CUP Secretariat was extremely busy writing grant proposals and seeking opportunities to conduct research in partnership with the community. A critical milestone was achieved in February 2001 when CUP received notification of funding for their **first community project** – to conduct an implementation evaluation of the In-School Mentoring Project for Big Brothers & Big Sisters of Edmonton and Area.

In early 2002, CUP began to investigate the process for obtaining formal approval from the University as a “Centre”. Upon submission of a detailed application and delivery of a formal presentation to university administration in late 2002, CUP was granted official status as a Centre at the University of Alberta.

In June 2003, the initial three-year development period ended. After the first three years, CUP had begun to “prove itself”. The foundation was set, projects were underway, and a structure to facilitate dialogue between the community and the university was in place.

### Taking Flight (2003-2007)

Building on the progress made during the development phase, CUP was ready for its next big challenge. A major milestone was achieved in April 2005 when the **Families First Edmonton** research team received notification of successful research funding.

Throughout the next few years, CUP was steadily moving forward, growing, developing, and starting new research projects. As a result of the tremendous opportunities, CUP was also outgrowing its space and human resource capacity. While successful at obtaining research grants, CUP continued to face ongoing challenges obtaining base operational funding. Because CUP does not fit the traditional structure of the university, designating ownership and responsibility for funding the day-to-day operations of CUP has been difficult.

In September 2005, CUP received a \$50,000 grant from the Edmonton Community Foundation (with matching funds from an anonymous donor). This funding not only allowed CUP to continue, but further demonstrated significant community support.

With several research projects now underway, CUP revisited its original strategic directions: 1) research, 2) education, and 3) knowledge sharing. Following early success in getting research projects up and running, it was now possible to focus attention on the education and knowledge sharing goals of CUP.

The **Early Childhood Measurement and Evaluation Resource Centre (ECMERC)** was created with these additional goals in mind and with a grant from Social Development Canada. A new Director (Rebecca Gokiert) was recruited and hired in April 2006 and the Centre was officially launched at Edmonton City Hall in October 2006.

Similarly, the **Mobilizing Knowledge about Development** (MKAD) project represents CUP's expanded focus on knowledge sharing. The project was created in collaboration with the Alberta Centre for Child, Family and Community Research (ACCFRC) in Fall, 2005 and received notification of successful funding in March 2006. To help meet the growing need for more capacity, a second CUP Assistant Director (Rhonda Breitreuz) was recruited and has assumed responsibility for managing the MKAD project.

### **Looking Forward: The Future of CUP**

Documenting the history and development of CUP was undertaken to help facilitate strategic planning regarding the future of CUP – that is, to learn from the past to help plan for the future.

Overall, Steering Committee members were optimistic about the future potential and continued development of CUP.

**“Dream big dreams – anything is possible.”**

# Appendix A: Guiding Interview Questions

## 1. From an Idea to a Reality

- What can you remember about the early planning that led to CUP?
- Who was involved?
- What was it about what was to become CUP that inspired you to get involved? Why did you see a need for CUP/why were you involved?
- How did CUP grow from an idea to a reality?

## 2. Critical Milestones & Accomplishments

- In your opinion, what were some of the critical milestones that CUP achieved over the years? Major accomplishments?

## 3. Directions Taken & Directions Not Taken

- How well do you think CUP has been doing in choosing and maintaining specific directions?
- What have been some key decision points? (consider distant versus recent past – what did they dream CUP would become? Is it getting there?)
- Can you recall any significant directions (or goals, objectives, projects, initiatives) not taken? Why/rationale?
- What are some of the main values of CUP guiding the directions taken?

## 4. Challenges & Facilitators

- What challenges has CUP faced? What aspects of CUP have not been successful?
- What has facilitated the success of CUP?
- [Note: challenges or facilitators may include leadership, people, ideas, resources, etc.]

## 5. The Future of CUP

- What advice do you have for CUP as the Secretariat plans for the future (both short-term and long-term)?

## 6. Closing Comments

- What would you say is the one most important thing for me to remember about CUP?
- Do you have any additional comments/questions?

## Appendix B: Meeting Participant List (March 1998)

Representatives from the following university faculties and community organizations were invited to attend the March 1998 organizing meeting facilitated by Peter Faid (Community Services Consulting). Approximately 40 of the invited representatives attended the meeting.

University Faculty / Community Organization	Invited Representative(s)
<b>University</b>	
<b>Faculty of Medicine</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Dr. David Schiff (Co-Chair)</b></li> <li>▪ Dr. Robin Smith</li> <li>▪ Dr. Wendy Vaudry</li> <li>▪ Dr. Gary Hnatko</li> <li>▪ Dr. Carole Anne Hapchyn</li> <li>▪ Dr. Donald Spady</li> </ul>
Faculty of Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Dr. Gay Bisanz</li> </ul>
Faculty of Agriculture, Forestry and Home Economics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Dr. Berna Skrypnek</li> </ul>
Faculty of Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Dr. Gerry Kysela</li> <li>▪ Dr. Sylvia Chard</li> <li>▪ Ms. Margaret Brooks</li> </ul>
Faculty of Extension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ms. Karen Bower</li> </ul>
Faculty of Law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Prof. Christine Davies</li> </ul>
Faculty of Nursing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Dr. Jane Drummond</li> </ul>
Faculty of Physical Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Dr. Linda Thompson</li> </ul>
Office of the President	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ms. Sharon Jamieson</li> </ul>
Faculty of Rehabilitation Medicine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Dr. Joyce Magill-Evans</li> <li>▪ Ms. Johanna Darrah</li> <li>▪ Ms. Lu-Anne McFarlane</li> </ul>
School of Native Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Dr. Stan Wilson</li> </ul>
Faculty of Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Dr. Jeff Bisanz</li> </ul>
Faculty of Social Work University of Calgary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Mr. Jean LaFrance</li> </ul>
U of A Planning and Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ms. Elizabeth Dechert</li> </ul>
Ministry of Advanced Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Mr. Ken Shields</li> </ul>
Centre for Health Promotion Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Dr. Miriam Stewart</li> <li>▪ Dr. Doug Wilson</li> </ul>
<b>Community</b>	
<b>Edmonton Community Foundation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Mr. Doug McNally (Co-Chair)</b></li> </ul>
Alberta Department of Community Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ms. Noni Heine</li> </ul>
Alberta Department of Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Dr. Harvey Finnestad</li> <li>▪ Ms. Brenda Sautner</li> </ul>
Alberta Department of Family and Social Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ms. Mary Jane Graham</li> </ul>
Alberta Department of Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ms. Donna Ludvigson</li> </ul>
Alberta Department of Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ms. Paulette Rodziewicz</li> </ul>
Alberta Daycare Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ms. Lynn Groves Hautmann</li> <li>▪ Ms. Lorna Rogers</li> </ul>
Alberta Home and School Councils Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ms. Janice Bell</li> </ul>
Alberta School Boards' Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ms. Sylvia Laarhuis</li> </ul>
Alberta Teachers Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ms. Bauni Mackay</li> </ul>

University Faculty / Community Organization	Invited Representative(s)
Capital Health Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ms. Marianne Stewart</li> <li>▪ Ms. Janet Adams</li> </ul>
Edmonton Catholic School System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ms. Muriel Dunnigan</li> <li>▪ Ms. Pat Hauck</li> </ul>
Edmonton Public School System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ms. Gloria Chalmers</li> </ul>
Grant MacEwan College	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ms. Selene Syvenky</li> <li>▪ Dr. Jane Hewes</li> </ul>
City of Edmonton Community Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ms. Kathy Barnhart</li> </ul>
Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ms. Lynn Odynksi</li> <li>▪ Ms. Mary Anne Venner</li> </ul>
Aboriginal Representatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ms. Cheryl Arcand-Kootenay</li> <li>▪ Ms. Patricia Daly</li> </ul>
Multicultural Community Health Developers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ms. Beant Singh</li> </ul>
Glenrose Rehabilitation Hospital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ms. Ellen Carlisle</li> </ul>
Health for Two Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ms. Lorraine Green</li> </ul>
Health for Two Parent Support Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ms. Lisa McDonald</li> </ul>
Oliver School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ms. Avril Pike</li> </ul>
Mental Health Advisory Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ms. Betty Schoenhofer</li> </ul>

## Appendix C: Meeting Summary (March 1998)

The following summary of the March 1998 organizing meeting was prepared by Community Services Consulting. The text and formatting have been edited (in style only) for inclusion in this report.

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### **UNIVERSITY AND COMMUNITY PLANNING GROUP: THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTRE (A Summary of the March 26, 1998 Workshop)**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of the workshop was to provide an opportunity for members of the University of Alberta and the broader Edmonton community to share insights and ideas regarding the development of an Early Childhood Centre.

The 40 participants were welcomed to the workshop by Doug McNally. Then Doug introduced Peter Faid, facilitator for the day. After describing the process that would be used to get input, Peter asked participants to respond to the statement: "When I heard about the idea of developing an Early Childhood Centre, the first thing that came to mind was..."

- What great potential. We must be involved!
- It will be a place for resources, for educators, parents, students and others. A place where teachers can interact with other professionals, an opportunity for us all to learn from each other - all generations. A way of getting students involved in an interdisciplinary initiative.
- This will provide opportunities for local, collaborative research and to link up with others. A place where practice and research can be brought together. A chance for the university and the community to work together and coordinate services. It will be a chance to build on the great work of the Child Study Centre.
- Let's hope it's not just for rich and upper middle class kids, but that all children will be involved, including those with special needs. It must respond to our cultural diversity, have strong representation from the aboriginal community.
- How will it fit into the continuum of services? What part can we play and learn from?
- It must be community-based. It will provide great benefits to the school system and a chance to build a stronger community.
- It will offer a global approach to health care and promotion with a focus on wellness. A chance to look at children holistically by linking education and health needs. A perfect opportunity to coordinate around children's mental health issues.
- It could become a model for others.

#### **OUR VISION FOR THE CENTRE**

In the second exercise, participants were asked to respond to the question: "What will be different for children and families in Alberta as a result of the establishment of an Early Childhood Centre?" As a result of the Early Childhood Centre:

- Families are knowledgeable and meaningfully involved in their child's education and development. Families are respected for the knowledge and skills they have. Families feel less isolated, more connected. They have the resources to advocate.

- Services are accessible. Barriers have been reduced. Families know where to get information. All services are available in one or two locations. Communication among families, front-line workers, policy makers and researchers is enhanced.
- Knowledge from practical research is valued and readily disseminated. Professionals work together to develop "real world" research and knowledge related to wellness and family support. Training models have been developed. A demonstration site is in place to bring practice and research together. Other communities are learning from the longitudinal data and best practices.
- Professionals have opportunities to work in interdisciplinary teams. As a result of their broader expertise, professionals are better educated for the diversity of today's family. They also have a better understanding of other disciplines and professions beyond their own. There is a network connecting universities, colleges, and service providers.
- School and other outcomes are more positive for children: self-esteem, empowerment, greater success in school. Children start school ready to learn. Children have an equal chance at being successful in school.
- Integrated, coordinated services reduce frustration and increase empowerment. Approaches involve the whole child, all aspects of well-being. Care is "seamless." Support has increased and improved for families, children, training centres, faculties, agencies and health and education authorities.

## **Principles**

What shared principles will we need to guide the development of an Early Childhood Centre?

Our principles are:

- We value a child-family-community centred approach where the focus is on wellness within the family and the community.
- We value all children and recognize the wisdom of investing in them. The child is central to our work. We believe that all children and families have gifts which must be respected and engaged. We encourage mutual respect between children and families and professionals.
- Our services are universally accessible. Access is equitable regardless of culture, race, ability, and economic circumstances.
- We respect the rights, roles and responsibilities of children and families. We promote empowerment of families. We respect diversity.
- We encourage advocacy by promoting actions and activities in research, policy and practice that will produce positive changes in children and families.
- We recognize the importance of timeliness in our strategies and our responses to children and families with needs. Prevention rather than reaction is critical.
- Our focus will be on practical research and issues. Through our practices we will strive for excellence in meeting children's needs.
- We are committed to approaches that are flexible, collaborative, integrated and interdisciplinary. We will ensure that services and communities are linked.
- We are committed to sharing our knowledge and information with others in a language that will be easily understood.
- We value open dialogue and joint ownership.

- We will be accountable to our partners: the university, the community, children and families, our funders

### **Opportunities**

What opportunities in our environment must we be aware of if we are to be successful in establishing an Early Childhood Centre?

- The time is right. Statistics show there is strong public support for childhood prevention programs. Interdisciplinary collaboration is "hot." We must act quickly. This is an opportunity to influence the lives of children and families positively
- This is an opportunity to influence the practice of professionals by being interdisciplinary and involving education research. Opportunity exists to make research more relevant, to try out new ideas, and to increase our knowledge.
- This is an opportunity to locate and build best practices and then disseminate the information to others. Through our experience and what we learn will be able to serve as a model for others.
- This is an opportunity to support agencies during government restructuring. Our support will help community agencies to evaluate, maintain, improve and expand their programs.
- This is an opportunity to foster respect across a range of professionals. We will be able to see perspectives of people in different disciplines and learn from those who have a holistic view of children and families. We will learn how to work more effectively. There will be opportunities for professional development.
- This is an opportunity to work together collaboratively. There is commitment here to work together to make things happen. There is an opportunity for communication with all stakeholders.
- This is an opportunity to bring together diverse ethnic, cultural and economic groups in a common goal. This will be a place where common essential concerns can be addressed. We will be able to use the wisdom and leadership of people from different communities.
- This will be an opportunity to create and develop political awareness at the provincial and federal levels of the early childhood field. We will be able to influence social policy related to education, health, social services and justice.

### **Challenges**

What challenges in our environment must we be aware of if we are to be successful in establishing an Early Childhood Centre?

- What definitions are we using for responsibility, goals and outcomes? What do we mean by "early"? What is our vision, our function, our scope? How can we ensure that our vision will not be too broad, that we will not try to be all things to all people?
- How will we address turf and perception issues? Will groups be willing to relinquish professional ownership? How will we be perceived by existing services with which we will be competing? How will we overcome the perception that this is elitist?
- Will we be able to meet the needs of all stakeholder groups? Will we be able to balance the needs and desires of the community with those of the university? Will we be seen as a threat to existing lab schools at the University and Grant MacEwan?



- Whose Centre is it? How will we define and create partnerships? How will we go about involving all the appropriate faculties in a collaborative effort? How can we promote broad ownership? Is everyone here at the table? Who is missing?
- Where will our funding come from? Can we persuade government to make a long-term commitment to funding? We will be competing for scarce resources. How can we get society (and governments) to place more value on the care and education of children?
- What will it take to reach a balance between research, service and education; between innovation and stability; between collective caring and individual rights? Will we be able to keep up with all the information available?
- How will we move from vision to implementation? How can we ensure the Centre is universally accessible and perceived that way? How will families get to the Centre? How will we involve parents in decisions about their children's education? How will we find out where good practices are? How will the Centre be governed?
- How will we coordinate interdisciplinary teams? Who will provide administrative support for the interdisciplinary work? It takes time, money and a lot of hard work to collaborate effectively.
- What will the barriers be in public policy, practice and research? How will we address them? For example, will we be able to overcome the government's short sightedness? Will we be able to coordinate social policy in this government climate? How can we address the gaps between knowledge and practice? How can we bring the changes we introduce into the practice of our systems?
- How will the Centre gain recognition and credibility for its role and its work?
- How far afield do we cast our net? How can we work with other areas of Alberta and with other provinces?

## **OTHER ISSUES**

Having come this far in our discussion, are there any unspoken needs or concerns?

- How do we avoid overlap with what others (the university, government and community groups) are doing? For example, in child development or the work of the Commissioner for Services to Children and Families? Also, there are already programs in the community trying to address multicultural issues. We won't be able to get funding if someone else is already doing what we propose.
- We must be careful not to end up competing with the Centre of Excellence proposed by Health Promotion. The Centre of Excellence will be a virtual centre, linking others through technology; for example, the university and Social Services. It is critical that both groups talk to each other. The federal government has limited funding for these "research centres" and if we both submit proposals, the chances are that neither will be successful.
- The Child Study Centre functions in a similar way. It is important the Early Childhood Centre be more than an expansion of the Child Study Centre. In addition, we will need to show results quickly to justify the resources/funding.
- What is the Early Childhood Centre? What will it look like? Is it a school? A resource centre? Whose is it? What grade levels are we targeting? Can we discuss building blocks when we are not sure what the Centre looks like?
- We need an actual centre (as opposed to a "virtual centre"), a place that brings together families, children and professionals; a place where university students can learn through

practicums. It needs to be linked to other sites so that best practices can be shared. A university-based centre would enhance credibility in the eyes of funders.

- The Centre should not be located at the university. Perhaps the inner city is a good site; but it should be easily accessible to poor families as well as students and teachers. Many families living below the poverty line are not necessarily found in the inner city. We should have an advisory board of people working and living in the city. The Centre's link into the community is important if more families are to benefit.
- The idea of the Centre originated in the university, but now what we need is a proposal that sees us all as equal partners. Talking about locations will take away from this.
- How will the partnership work? Will it be "in" the community, involving the community in an active way rather than an advisory way? Knowledge sharing must be two way (the hub and spokes analogy).
- Will it be focused on programs or service delivery? We already have plenty of good programs, but are they run in the best interests of children and families? So many of the services are fragmented. We need to investigate existing programs to understand how they might be improved or replicated. We need to consider how we can be more effective and better integrated.
- The implications for training are immense. It is important to train people in an interdisciplinary approach as they enter the different systems. This goes beyond enabling professionals to do research together: we need to change their attitudes. We need to make sure that students are trained, better informed about aboriginal history, culture and issues. This knowledge is also critical for those in the social services and justice systems.

#### **Key criteria/concepts include:**

- A Childhood Centre which is linked to others so we can all learn from each other,
- Training and education for university students and practitioners such as service providers,
- Research and dissemination of information including best practices,
- Serving as resource to others.

#### **KEY TASKS**

At the end of the workshop, participants began trying to identify key tasks needing to be done. These are:

- Define the need. Who will benefit from the proposed Centre? What are the needs of different groups (cultural, age, etc.)? Who are we targeting?
- Develop closer communication with other initiatives, particularly the proposed Centre of Excellence. Continue the discussion so that two groups can evolve their plans together.
- Identify others who should be involved (stakeholders).
- Clarify the Centre's vision, purpose and location. Decide what it will "look like". Identify community linkages and linkages with other systemic changes. This could be facilitated by drawing a simple picture of the Centre and its relationship with others. Develop and test various scenarios. Look at alternatives. From all these ideas, develop a protocol. Use plain language and concrete terms.

- Gain a consensus from the key partners. Decide who will "be in charge" of coordinating activities.
- Start developing a framework. Identify all resources.
- Form a working group that includes a balance of representatives from the university and the community. Identify specific tasks and set up sub-groups as needed.
- Explore the use of technology and networking. Explore how we move beyond having only Edmonton involved. Develop research ideas and opportunities.

## **CONCLUSION**

Dr. David Schiff concluded the workshop by thanking people for their input and encouraging them to stay in touch. Participants will be advised of future meetings or developments.

## Appendix D: Invited University Centres (January 1999)

In January 1999, Sylvia Chard and Jeff Bisanz called a meeting with the directors of the following 9 centres at the University of Alberta (see the table below). The purpose of the meeting was to assess support for the concept of creating a Centre for the Study of Childhood.

University of Alberta Centre	Representative
1. Applied Developmental Neuroscience Group	Joyce Magill Evans
2. Centre for Applied Measurement and Evaluation	Todd Rogers
3. Child Study Centre	Sylvia Chard
4. Centre for Research in Child Development	Jeff Bisanz
5. Child and Family Resiliency Program	Gerry Kysela
6. J.P. Das Developmental Disabilities Centre	Dick Sobsey
7. Perinatal Research Centre	Jane Drummond
8. Centre for Health Promotion Studies	Doug Wilson
9. Centre for Literacy	Linda Phillips