

## Presentation to City of Calgary Council Committee re: budget Healthy and Green City

Good morning Chair and Council members and thank you for the opportunity to present to this Council Committee.

My name is Phil Carlton and I am the Engagement Liaison with the First 2000 Days Network, which acts as a catalyst to link, align and leverage efforts within the Early Childhood Development System to enable collective action towards improving early childhood development indicators.

My presentation, I believe supports Council Directives H4 and H5 for a Healthy and Green City.

One of the important linkages and alignment is with the City of Calgary – Parks, recreation and Neighbourhood Services. The First 2000 Days Network has actively been engaged in the committee YYC Plays Sector Development that developed the Calgary Play Charter and were pleased to be an original signee and fully support the 5 belief statements in the Charter:

- \* Play develops a a corset of skills for healthy well being.
- \* That play is a vital component of childhood; it is freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated.
- \* Play is fun, uncertain, challenging and flexible.
- \* When children have opportunities to play they used creativity, innovation, and reflection to learn, experiment, solve problems, create new worlds, test boundaries , assess risk and meet challenges.
- \* Play is a natural state for a child.

What we know about early brain development and the 5 developmental domains is that Play is the one domain that transcends and supports the other domains; Physical Health and Well-being, Emotional Maturity, Language and Cognitive Development and Communication.

Teresa Casey, President of the International Play Association when she attended the Triennial IAP Conference here in Calgary last year, wrote an article for the First 2000 Days Network, entitled “The Importance of Play in the Early Years”, in which she states:

“When the right to play is valued fully it implies commensurate attention to:

- the environments in which children play
- the organisation of children’s days (uninterrupted time to play, the social dimensions of play)
- the education and training of practitioners (navigating the tensions between adult organised and determined activities and children’s autonomous play, understanding of play as a right)
- support to families and caregivers
- investment and research into play in ECD.

Placing a high priority on the design and care of spaces for play, particularly outdoor environments with access to nature, is a significant step towards promoting children’s right to play. Local authorities and national governments have a role in ensuring investment in grounds so that all children have daily access to well designed and maintained spaces while practitioners have a hugely important role in the co-creation of these environments with children.

A rich environment for play includes: natural elements; opportunities for risk and challenge; places to express emotions; stimulation for the senses; chances for social interactions; interesting and varied physical and human environment and sufficient space to do what is wanted. Children will play more in environments that afford opportunities for various types of play. “

Calgary Parks Adventure Playgrounds, community initiatives like the Coventry development of natural play areas and the partnership with Vivo and the City to support loose parts bins activities, not only support the above, but also support the importance of pretend play in the early years for language development, creativity and problem solving.

A Quick persona story – we live in Panorama Hills, right across from Buffalo Rubbing Stone and right from a very early age, my grand children have asked “can we go to the big rock”, where they climb to their comfort level, chase around the rock and play hidden seek in the bushes and trees and under the rock.

As we continue to build a legacy from last year’s City of Calgary hosted International Play Conference, as we all continue to promote and support the Calgary Play Charter, it is imperative that sound and supportive financial and budget decisions are made to ensure we are indeed a Healthy, Playful and Environmentally friendly city for all.

Thank You

