

**Comox Valley Early Years Collaborative**

# **STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-2025**

**February 2022**

The Comox Valley Early Years Collaborative respectfully acknowledges that the land we gather on is on the unceded traditional territory of the K'ómoks First Nation, the traditional keepers of this land.

## INTRODUCTION

The Comox Valley Early Years Collaborative (CVEYC) is a network of individuals and organizations committed to improving the lives of the children in the Comox Valley. In October 2021, the Collaborative collected information from participants using an online engagement survey. On November 29, 2021, the Collaborative hosted an open planning session using the results of the survey to guide the conversation. Participants explored patterns and points of interest to identify priorities for the next 3 years. This report summarizes those priorities.

**“I’m excited. We are a group of flexible and innovative thinkers, ready to step outside our comfort zone.”**

**“We have a willingness to tackle big things from the bottom up!”**

**“I’m not the only new person here and I look forward to figuring things out together.”**

**“We need to be kind to ourselves – change takes time!”**

## HOW COVID-19 HAS AFFECTED PLANNING

After two years, the pandemic has significantly changed how community services are offered and how organizations are able to collaborate. Planning can be challenging because the future is unclear and the COVID situation continues to change.

### COLLABORATIVE PARTICIPANTS MADE THESE OBSERVATIONS:

- Virtual meetings lack personal interactions yet allow people to safely participate
- Families are struggling
- Service Providers are struggling
- Change and uncertainty is a new normal
- Our society/community has become more fearful
- investigating the impact of Covid-19 on child development is essential

# VISION

We share a vision where all children and families are supported and thrive in the Comox Valley.

# MISSION

We collectively engage, educate, and inform our communities to enhance early years supports and services for children from conception to age 8, their families and the Comox Valley.



# GUIDING PRINCIPLES

**Connectedness:** We value connectedness, so we will strive to collaborate through strong and supportive relationships with each other (professionally) and each service (organizationally) to create a growing web of care around families.

**Truth & Reconciliation:** We value the work to advance truth and reconciliation, so we acknowledge our responsibility to decolonize spaces, structures, and processes to contribute to a more just, equitable and decolonized future.

**Diversity:** We value diversity, so we will include many perspectives by fostering a spirit of openness and appreciation.

**Respect:** We value respect, so we will support each other, value each other's expertise and intentionally be culturally aware. Our interactions will be reflective, well-considered, and fun, and they will inspire a feeling of commitment to the Collaborative.

**Systems Change:** We value systems change, so we will embrace innovative, creative, and insightful approaches to change using child and family-focused knowledge. We are committed to generative conversations that lead to action.

## 2022 – 2025 PLAN OVERVIEW

### CVEYC Evolution –

To better align structures and processes with our guiding principles.

### Structures & Processes (P. 5, 6, 7)

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How we are organized.      What we do to achieve our Vision & Mission.

1. The CVEYC welcomes, orients and acknowledges new participants.
2. Participation includes many ways of engaging.
3. The Leadership Team shifts to a Steering Committee that follows clear and inclusive guidelines.
4. Truth and reconciliation, listening, and the work of decolonization shape CVEYC activities.
5. Internal and external communication is inclusive and promotes diversity.
6. CVEYC meetings give participants the chance to discuss topics that they find relevant.

### Strengthening Initiatives –

To support new and existing early years initiatives.

### Relationships (P. 9)

7. The CVEYC clearly defines its relationship with each initiative.

### Research (P. 9)

8. The CVEYC embeds evaluation into initiative planning.

### Collective Impact (P. 10)

9. The CVEYC revisits the concept of a Children's Charter to see if it is viable.
10. A new collective impact initiative engages, educates, and informs about what children and families need to be supported and thrive in the Comox Valley.

## PLAN DETAILS

CVEYC Evolution – To better align structures and processes with our guiding principles.		
Outcomes	Strategies	Metrics & Milestones
<b>Structures &amp; Processes</b>		
<p>1.</p> <p>The CVEYC welcomes, orients and acknowledges new participants.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop and implement an orientation to welcome new participants. Help new participants to orient themselves to the Collaborative in multiple ways. For example, personal contact from Coordinator, welcome package with the story of CVEYC, ways of engaging, initiative overview, etc.</li> <li>- Develop strategies for CVEYC to learn about new participants.</li> <li>- Survey participants to determine if CVEYC activities are relevant to both Comox Valley early years issues and the work they do.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Coordinator, with the help of the steering committee, will develop an orientation for new members including a welcome package.</li> <li>- The orientation for previously uninvolved participants is led by the Coordinator.</li> <li>- The coordinator will survey participants annually to measure the relevancy of CVEYC activities.</li> </ul>
<p>2.</p> <p>Participation includes many ways of engaging.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify and promote varied opportunities for participation in CVEYC activities. For example, meetings, surveys, working groups, reviewing material, connecting with families, interagency relationship building, professional development offerings, etc.</li> <li>-Review existing participant lists and extend invitations of participation or partnership to individuals and groups who are not currently represented in CVEYC activities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Current participants will help identify the many ways of engaging with the CVEYC.</li> <li>- The Coordinator will share and promote the different ways of engaging with new members.</li> <li>- The Coordinator will create, maintain and share a Collaborative directory with participants.</li> <li>- The Coordinator and Steering Committee are responsible for ensuring CVEYC participation reflects the diversity of the community.</li> </ul>

<p>3.</p> <p>The Leadership Team shifts to a Steering Committee that follows clear and inclusive guidelines.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Create steering committee guidelines for with the intent to increase both clarity and inclusiveness. Steering Committee guidelines include; clarified purpose, participation, commitment, and responsibilities.</li> <li>- An orientation to welcome new Steering Committee participants is developed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The existing Leadership Team will create new guidelines for the Steering Committee, in consultation with all CVEYC participants.</li> <li>- By the end of 2022, the Leadership Team will shift to a Steering Committee and encourage new participants to join.</li> <li>-New Steering Committee participants are oriented by a team of existing committee participants.</li> </ul>
<p>4.</p> <p>Truth and reconciliation, listening and the work of decolonization shape CVEYC activities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Prioritize time to listen to and learn from Indigenous Elders, guests and participants.</li> <li>- Invite Indigenous elders, guests and participants to assist in the decolonization of CVEYC structures, meetings, and processes.</li> <li>- Collectively review truth, reconciliation, and decolonization resources created for early years professionals and community organizations (for example: <a href="#">Aboriginal Worldviews and Perspectives in the Classroom</a>, <a href="#">Early Years Indigenous Cultural Safety Resource Guide</a>, <a href="#">White Supremacy Culture in Organizations</a>)</li> <li>- Use above resources to identify specific areas for action and advocacy.</li> <li>-A culturally safe environment is co-created, guided by participants, Elders, and experienced community members.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Voices of Indigenous Elders, guests and participants are included regularly in CVEYC activities.</li> <li>- CVEYC efforts in the areas of truth, reconciliation, listening and decolonization are measured with a focus on qualitative data and feedback.</li> </ul>

<p>5. Internal and external communication is inclusive and promotes diversity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review existing communication material and remove exclusive language and references.</li> <li>- Collectively work to create a space where participants feel safe to share concerns, be heard, valued and supported.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Coordinator creates a safe method for sharing feedback anonymously.</li> <li>-Participants are encouraged to share feedback, including reporting the use exclusive language and/or practices.</li> </ul>
<p>6. CVEYC meetings give participants the chance to discuss topics that they find relevant.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Balance meeting time for meaningful dialogue and organizational updates.</li> <li>- Routinely ask participants for timely, relevant and emergent topics to include in dialogue-focused meetings. Incorporate dialogue topics identified in the Fall 2021 Strategic Planning Survey.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Participants are surveyed yearly to reflect on whether the CVEYCV meetings and activities meet their need for dialogue and organizational connections.</li> <li>- The Coordinator and Steering Committee review yearly participant surveys, meeting content and CVEYC activities to assess balance.</li> </ul>



## Strengthening Initiatives - to support new and existing early years initiatives.

Outcomes	Strategies	Metrics & Milestones
<b>Relationships</b>		
<p>7.</p> <p>The CVEYC clearly defines its relationship with each initiative.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Articulate how existing initiatives (Building Connections for Valley Families and Child Care Action Planning Committee) serve the CVEYC and the Comox Valley community.</li> <li>- Adapt initiatives based on changing circumstances and events (for example: Covid-19 pandemic).</li> <li>- Map the anticipated lifecycle, including key milestones, for existing initiatives including succession plan.</li> <li>- Share initiative progress, challenges, and requests at CVEYC meetings and through other communication methods.</li> <li>- Celebrate initiatives when they end or move to an organization for long-term stewardship.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Orientation of new members includes a debrief of the existing CVEYC initiatives.</li> <li>- Current initiatives are reported on every two months.</li> <li>- A long-term plan for all existing and new initiatives is documented and shared.</li> </ul>
<b>Research</b>		
<p>8.</p> <p>The CVEYC embeds evaluation into initiative planning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Track outcomes for each initiative.</li> <li>- Foster relationships between CVEYC participants and research institutions.</li> <li>- Share intended impacts and measured outcomes with participants and the community at large.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Initiatives have research-informed evaluation frameworks that align with CVEYC mission and guiding principles.</li> </ul>

<b>Collective Impact*</b>		
<p>9.</p> <p>The CVEYC revisits the concept of a Children's Charter to see if it is viable.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Learn from others (e.g. <a href="#">Richmond</a>, <a href="#">TriCities</a>, <a href="#">Burnaby</a>, <a href="#">Campbell River</a>) and tailor Charter strategies based on CVEYC's mission and guiding principles.</li> <li>- Each of the five conditions for Collective Impact is understood and considered when determining the viability of this new initiative.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The CVEYC decides by consensus whether to proceed with a Children's Charter for the Comox Valley.</li> </ul>
<p>10.</p> <p>A new collective impact initiative engages, educates and informs about what children and families need to be supported and thrive in the Comox Valley.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- If deemed viable, secure funding for planning, engagement, and implementation and evaluation.</li> <li>- Engage the Comox Valley at multiple layers of the system including political, economic and populations with lived/living experience (children and families) during the design, implementation, and evaluation.</li> <li>- Identify opportunities to partner with and support Indigenous early years groups as well as other diverse groups who need to be included.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A diverse working group is formed to guide the new initiative.</li> <li>- A work plan and evaluation framework for a new collective impact initiative are created.</li> <li>- A new initiative is informed by diverse voices including people with lived/living experience.</li> </ul>

**\*Collective Impact:** A model for collaboration to address complex issues by bringing together partners across all sectors and including the experience of individuals affected by the issue. The five conditions for Collective Impact are; 1) the existence of a backbone organization, 2) a common agenda, 3) shared measurement, 4) mutually reinforcing activities, and 5) continuous communication.