

THE MISSING MIDDLE: THE GAP “IN BETWEEN” CHILD & YOUTH



March 2019

Focusing on the Middle Children: 10-14 years

Local health area 62 is a rapidly growing community with families that often have one or both parents with a lengthy commute to work each day. Projected growth of children and youth is approximately 400 each year for the next 10 years. The time is now to engage all community stakeholders in deepening existing collaborative relationships and prioritizing the allocation of space for development of an age appropriate programming and service hub that would meet an identified gap to ensure middle year's children are receiving transition specific services where they live and go to school.

“Middle years is a time of building self esteem”

The Missing Middle

FOCUSING ON THE MIDDLE CHILDREN: 10-14 YEARS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A rapidly growing community with a significant commuter population is a unique aspect of local health area 62 (LHA 62) which includes First Nations Communities of T'Sou-ke Nation, Scia'new Nation, and Pacheedaht Nation. Additionally, the sprawling and diverse communities of Colwood, Highlands, Langford, Metchosin, and Sooke collectively make up the Western Communities. The boundaries of LHA 62 match those of Sooke School District. The potential exists for middle years children and families to experience isolation and disconnection from community. With families that have one or both parents engaged in a lengthy commute to and from work each day, middle years children between the ages of 10 – 14, who are no longer required to be in licensed care; may not be involved in programs or activities; and may largely be on their own between the hours of 3 and 6 pm daily. With a lack of space and age appropriate programming, middle years children may be at home on their own, heading into the city, or be caring for younger siblings while parents work and commute.

The developmental needs of this age group are not homogenous and call for specific attention to their diverse developmental and transitional needs. The call to action being offered by this report is that space needs to be prioritized so that age appropriate services and programs can be centrally accessible and strengthened. The Middle Years Collaboration in Action working group believes that the opportunity exists for all middle years children to be thriving and engaged in collaborative community experiences as communities in LHA 62 continue to grow and develop.

Four key priority areas of focus that were identified as part of the middle years mapping and community input workshops included:

1. Increase community connection among peers, mentors, families and communities;
2. Increase inclusive parent support and engagement;
3. Identify technology best practices that will embrace both the challenges and the potential for positive impact for middle years children and their families;
4. Identify space for age appropriate programming for middle years children.

Limited space availability and multiple service providers who are seeking to use the space during the same period for programs further compounds the service delivery challenges for this unique community environment. Add to that a projected growth of children and youth at an increase of approximately 400 each year for the next 10 years, and the time is now to engage all community stakeholders in prioritizing the allocation of space for development of an age appropriate programming and service hub that would ensure middle years children are receiving services where they live and go to school.

The Healthy Schools, Health People (HSHP) Table serves as a collaborative regional committee to further the work of this project, and is the existing structure that is recommended to sustain the priorities that this project has identified.

Acknowledgements:

We wish to gratefully acknowledge the traditional territory of the Coast Salish and Nuu-chah-nulth people on whose lands we met, collaborated, learned, and shared together.

The Middle Years Collaboration in Action working group wishes to express their deep appreciation to the United Way for funding this project. The collaboration of Boys and Girls Club, Island Health, Sooke School District, and the Sooke Family Resource Society was instrumental in moving this project forward. Thank you to West Shore Parks and Recreation for making the space available for stakeholder and community consultation meetings to occur.

We also wish to thank the twenty community, agency and service provider organizations who participated in our collaboration in action workshops. The passion and caring for middle years children has been instrumental in helping us to prioritize actions for middle years children living and going to school in LHA62.

The “family experience on the West Shore with commuting, and both parents working. Quite a lot of before and after school time where parents may be stuck in traffic. We have a concern with service providers that service the West Shore and aren’t residents of the West Shore. The area is growing so fast that the social services can’t keep up with the growth”



Boys & Girls Club
of Greater Victoria



To Learn More:

Collaboration in Action Middle Years Working Group Members:

Dalyce Dixon, Executive Director,
Boys & Girls Club of Greater Victoria
ddixon@bgcvic.org

Kathy Easton, Manager,
Public Health Island Health
Kathy.easton@viha.ca

Cindy Andrew, Healthy Schools Lead
Sooke School District
candrew@sd62.bc.ca

Nicky Logins, Executive Director
Sooke Family Resource Society
NLogins@sfrs.ca

If you are receiving the executive summary and you would like the full report, you may access it at the following link: [The Missing Middle Full Report](#)