

Background

Successive measurements of school readiness in Strathcona suggest that current approaches have been unable to improve the situation for the poorest children in the City of Vancouver. There have been a number of general programs aimed at addressing this issue including: Success by Six; Windows of Opportunity; the Federal Child Benefit; Strong Start; Ready, Set, Learn; and Aboriginal Head Start. None of these separate initiatives have been able to change the harsh reality faced by youth and parents in our community. According to UBC research, over 52% of children in Strathcona are vulnerable on one or more scales of vulnerability; children are not school ready and youth drop out of school before graduation; and they consistently fail to achieve the economic security of peers in other communities who complete secondary and post-secondary education.

What We Know

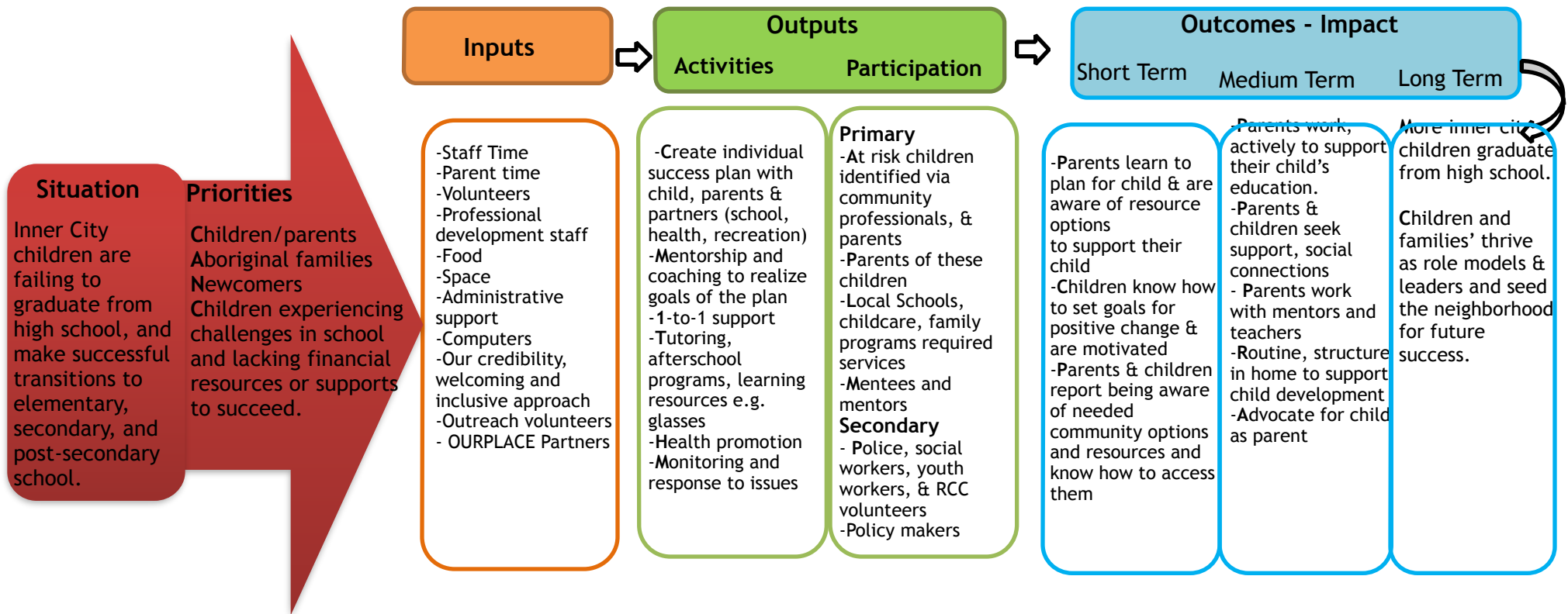
Children grow up and live in communities and neighborhoods, not in programs. We know this, and yet in our current approach to this unfortunate reality, we continue to overlook the complex and interconnected nature of the challenges that children and youth are facing. Their reality is a combination of linked, compounding problems such as low income and poor housing, as well as health, safety and mental health issues. Instead of acknowledging this, we isolate and address each problem through separate programs and initiatives.



Graduation Strategy is a partnership of residents, community-based organizations, schools and service providers working collaboratively to support the growth, education and healthy development of children in Vancouver's inner city. The Graduation Strategy is a vision and coherent strategy which builds from local experience, research, and strengths. It aligns a wide range of activities and partners within our community, using the current capacity of each and building and creating new capacities into the core vision and strategy. We will measure outcomes and incorporate our learnings back into the strategy, adapt to opportunities and challenges as they present themselves, ensure solutions, and view people as citizens able to contribute, rather than clients to be serviced. We will deliver local, place-based programming, while addressing the broader issues impacting the success of our children, youth, and families. We will link to and work with influential champions to inform relevant public policy to ensure continuity and sustainability of these place-based responses. Specifically, we will promote a change to funding practices, advocating for a shift from narrowly-defined delivery of Y services to X people to more comprehensive, place-based, and collaborative approaches.

In the high level logic model for the Graduation Strategy (*see below*), there are a multitude of partners working together to achieve better outcomes for children and families. For example, childcare & early learning providers, outreach initiatives and pediatricians from RICHER will identify and assess the needs of children and families, providing supports that enhance school readiness at a young age. Programs such as the Postal Foundation Grade 4&5 project of Ray-Cam or the Pathways to Education program of PCRS and the Homework Club Society that targets students in high school, will work together with schools to create a coordinated system for a

child/youth throughout their school years. At the same time children and families will be connected and engaged in a deliberate way to positive, safe, and enriching activities that include recreation, afterschool activities, health services, tutoring, and homework clubs. Together, we will create and provide the required mix of intensive programs and services to create an environment in which families can achieve success. No single government, non-profit agency, individual or program can meet the needs of all the children in the community, but working in partnership we can create a tipping point and make a difference for our future generations by providing opportunities that are seamless and accessible.



Outcome Evaluation: Did change happen?

1. Are children better able to complete school assignments? reports
2. Are children at age appropriate development & educational level? assessments
3. Increased parenting participation in child's education survey
4. Is there an increase in parent advocacy? survey
5. Are child & parent able to work toward goals in Plan?

Indicators

- School assessments change in child status
- Developmental changes
- Reported change by parents/teachers/children
- Change in ability to access needed resources for child
- Change in skills, confidence

Measurement Tools

- Assignments/ grades/teacher
- Nurse practitioner
- Questionnaire,
- Questionnaire,
- Questionnaire,