

Making Children Visible on the Drive



REGGIO-INSPIRED
LEARNING
CENTRE
Frog Hollow

Making Children Visible



At Frog Hollow Reggio-Inspired Learning we are working to change adults' perspectives on the role of children in our society. Traditionally, children have been considered tomorrow's citizens – treated as passive consumers rather than active participants.

Inspired by the Reggio Emilia approach, we argue that children are individuals capable of asking questions about the world, seeing injustice in society and offering solutions when listened to as citizens of today.

Through our **Making Children Visible** Initiative, we facilitate community projects in which we invite adults to change their perception of children and build a new, richer image of a child.

On June 23, 2018 we took a few of our educators to Commercial Drive and set up sandwich boards that asked the question:

“How can we make Commercial Drive more welcoming for children?”

Commercial Drive is a lively street, filled with businesses and community opportunities for people of all ages. In our inquiry, we were hoping for more insight from residents, learning about their views on how to be more welcoming for children spending time on the Drive.

Our educators spent four hours on the streets and on Grandview Park, speaking with pedestrians – adults and children – and getting their opinion on this subject.

We have gathered the comments we received and summarized them below:



“How can we make Commercial Drive more welcoming for children?”



Accessibility:

Many people talked about making the street more accessible for children and families. Some ideas were:

- Better signage telling where things are
- Wider sidewalks that would allow stroller accessibility
- Better patio accessibility in restaurants
- Restaurants with highchairs, kid's menus and kid-friendly bathrooms
- More benches for senior caregivers

Participation:

Many people felt the need for more opportunities and spaces for children and adults to interact and be part of a community:

- More family-friendly coffee shops
- Storytime events in the park
- More activities and family entertainment
- More parks
- More play spaces
- More play opportunities – such as buckets of sidewalk chalk on the street
- More social opportunities for children
- More stores for kids
- Cleaner parks
- Wider sidewalks that would allow for children and elders to stop, say hello and have a conversation without blocking the way for others passing by
- More interactive community activities to engage adults and children



Businesses:

Some people thought more child-friendly businesses could contribute to welcoming children in the area:

- More coffee shops with play areas
- Temporary childcare space for parents to shop
- Healthier food options for children
- Coupon booklets for kids

Community:

Some people took a larger view and talked about changes of attitude or social services:

- Accessible childcare in workplaces
- Creating a culture of care and responsibility that invites people of all ages to take care of our city and parks
- Planting a tree for every child born
- Taking a child-friendly attitude in concerts, buses and other public spaces so parents feel welcomed to bring their children into the community
- Taking an inclusive approach as a community
- More inclusive schools – involving more parents and community members
- Education for adults
- Youth employment opportunities
- Youth activities



As we reviewed these comments, we were amazed by the amount of knowledge and wisdom people in the community share.

We hope these suggestions and reflections can be a guiding point for those involved in city planning and community development, and be used to make our city more welcoming to our children.