

Family Services à la famille Ottawa

POSITION ON ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Family Services à la famille Ottawa believes that all families have the right to affordable housing. Therefore, consistent with our values of humanity, accessibility, collaboration, relevance and social justice, we will:

- Maintain membership on community advocacy committees such as the Alliance To End Homelessness and continue partnerships with housing providers.
- Support advocacy by other organizations that will help to implement policies to increase access to safe and affordable housing - policies such as developing a National housing strategy, including the development of co-housing alternatives.
- Continue to produce reports like The State of Ottawa's Families, which outline the needs of Ottawa families including challenges related to housing.
- Through our advocacy workshops, educate community members to advocate for self and others.

Background

- When individuals are homeless or at risk of homelessness, they are less able to meet their counselling goals.
- Without stable and secure housing, children can lose important connections with family, friends and their community.¹
- Research indicates that physical, emotional, cognitive and social capabilities of children 6 to 12 years old are decreased when they are malnourished, live in poor housing, have limited access to medicine, or are exposed to environmental hazards.²
- Parents are often forced to choose between paying the rent and feeding their children because of high shelter costs.³
- 15,840 children in Ottawa use the food bank every month.⁴
- One in five households in Ottawa pays more than half of their combined income on rent.⁵

¹ Middle Childhood Matters, A Framework to Promote Healthy Development of Children 6 to 12

² Ibid

³ Ibid

⁴ Ibid

- About one-in-seven users of shelters across Canada is a child. Compared to children with permanent homes, homeless children suffer more from lack of educational opportunities, infection, obesity, anemia, injuries, burns, developmental delays and incomplete immunization; youth suffer more injuries, sexually transmitted diseases, mental health problems, and pregnancies.⁶
- When families live in unaffordable housing, they are at greater risk of being forced to move multiple times. This can have detrimental effects on child development. Research indicates that children who move more than three times in their lifetime are more likely to have problem behaviours, repeat a grade and have lower math scores than children who have not moved.⁷
- Thousands of Canadian families can barely make ends meet because their rent consumes most of their budget. They often go without food and other amenities, such as warm clothing; their paychecks don't cover even the basics. Others live in unsafe, infested or cramped quarters.⁸

Family Services à la famille Ottawa Social Justice Framework states: A family's ability and capacity to care for its individual members is central to building a strong community. We need to promote environments where families can care for themselves, and where there are external services available to help families. Family Services à la famille Ottawa is committed to promoting an inclusive and responsive society that acknowledges the unique face of each family and welcomes them unconditionally into the community.

⁵ Housing Help Ottawa website, <http://www.housinghelp.on.ca/>

⁶ Raising the Roof website, http://www.raisingtheroof.org/lrn_hh_index.cfm

⁷ Middle Childhood Matters, A Framework to Promote Healthy Development of
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