



# Poverty Reduction Strategy for the City of Kawartha Lakes and County of Haliburton: Children and Youth Action Plan

March 2016



*County of Haliburton*

The June 30, 2012 Poverty Reduction Strategy report for the City and County presented background information and a description of local needs. Based on this report and recognizing the cost of poverty is serious and rising, City and County Councils requested the development of a Poverty Reduction Strategy.

The Poverty Reduction Strategy was developed by the Poverty Reduction Strategy Steering Committee. All action plans are based on findings from extensive community consultations, local research and an assessment of literature on best practices for reducing poverty.

## **Children and Youth Action Plan**

The foundation for lifelong health, learning and behaviour is set in early childhood. A family's income has a significant influence on these factors. Families need enough income to provide the best circumstances for their child including an adequate and nutritious diet, safe and secure housing and opportunities for their child to socialize and participate in recreational activities.

Children living in poverty, especially persistent poverty, are more likely to experience health, emotional, behavioural and mental health problems both as children and later as adults.

**Investing in children lays a strong foundation for community and economic development. Early investment is the wisest investment, with the impact seen in adulthood as demonstrated by the greatest returns in higher levels of education and employment, lower levels of crime and better health and well-being for the community.**

Source: Morcos, A. Knox City Council. (2012). Municipal early years plan 2011-2015, 'off to a flying start'. [You can view the source document here.](#)

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Along with strategies known to optimize children's likelihood of reaching their optimal growth, development and overall well-being, strategies that address the root causes of child and family poverty, such as the lack of safe, affordable and appropriate housing for families, attaining an optimal level of education to secure employment that pays a living wage, and addressing transportation barriers are fundamental to reducing child poverty. This Action Plan builds on previous Poverty Reduction Plans that included these specific areas.

The Ontario Poverty Reduction Strategy report from 2008, “Breaking the Cycle”, focused on poverty reduction strategies for children and their families. The 2014 follow-up report titled ‘Realizing Our Potential’ continues to focus on poverty reduction strategies for children and youth while also highlighting other areas of concern: employment and housing.

**Intervention during the early years of a child’s life through public investment programs has an estimated return of 6 to 1.”**

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*Source: Public Health Ontario. (2014). The first five years: A foundation for life. Retrieved from: [You can view the source document here.](#)*

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Given the growing amount of research in poverty reduction strategies and the evidence supporting recommendations such as the ones from these reports, the Children and Youth component of the Poverty Reduction Strategy for the City of Kawartha Lakes and Haliburton County is developing recommendations similar to those in the Ontario Poverty Reduction Strategy reports, in addition to developing poverty reduction strategies tailored to the needs in our local community to address child, youth and family poverty.

The responsibility for most of the recommendations lies with the City and County as they will determine the extent of action and in most cases co-ordinate action. The specific departments or individuals that may participate will need to be identified through appropriate processes. The shared responsibility of individuals, community agencies and other levels of government in poverty reduction was a common theme through the development of the initial strategy report and this Action Plan and their contributions and support for all initiatives will be equally vital to the success of this plan.

These recommendations are presented to the Councils of the City of Kawartha Lakes and the County of Haliburton as part of the overall Poverty Reduction Strategy.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Children and Youth Action Plan Recommendations</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Primary role or responsibility</b></p>			
	Municipal	Provincial	Federal	Community
1. Implement the recommendations from the Housing, Transportation, Employment & Education and Food Security Action Plans of the City of Kawartha Lakes and Haliburton County Poverty Reduction Strategy to address the root causes of child poverty.	●			●
2. Advocate to the provincial and federal governments for increased income and social supports for families with children, including the removal of child support as a deductible income source for families in receipt of social assistance.	●			●
3. Continue to fund the dental cleaning program for pregnant women on Ontario Works and expand free or reduced cost dental service to low-income women who do not have dental benefits.	●			●
4. Support early learning programs, child activities and social supports for young children (0 to 6 years of age) and their families.	●			●
5. Advocate for a universal child care system.	●	●	●	●
6. Increase the number of licensed child care spaces.	●	●	●	●
7. Support subsidised, no- or low-cost recreational opportunities, library programs and community events for children and their families.	●			●
8. Increase the number of health, recreational, social and educational program supports and services available in the community.	●			●
9. Support and expand Student Nutrition Programs both during the school year and in the summer months.	●	●		●
10. Support and promote mentorship programs for children and youth.	●			●
11. Municipal Council endorsement of a Children’s Charter.	●			