

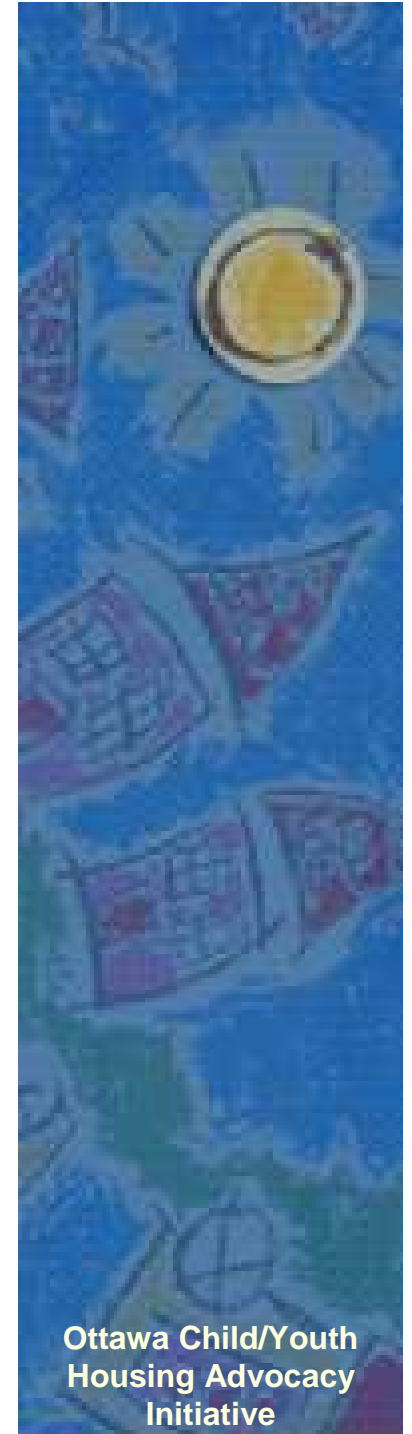
Ottawa Child/Youth Housing Advocacy Initiative

CAPHC October 21, 2008

**Continuity and Co-ordination of Services:
Innovative Models that are Making a Difference**

Housing and Child and Youth Health

- Housing has been demonstrated to be a key determinant of child and youth health and wellbeing
- More than 15% of Canadian households were living in housing need in the 2001 Census
- Tonight, **80 families** with children will use an emergency shelter in Ottawa staying an average of 31 days
- Waiting lists for subsidized housing are extremely long (Ottawa 5-8 years)
- Close to 50% of children and youth in lone parent and immigrant/refugee families are living in poverty



The background is a vibrant, abstract illustration of a town. It features various houses with different colored roofs and walls, a bright yellow sun in the upper left, and a globe in the lower right. The overall style is reminiscent of a child's drawing or a folk-art style. The text is centered and written in a bold, white, sans-serif font.

How Does Housing Impact Child and Youth Health?

Housing Impacts Physical Health

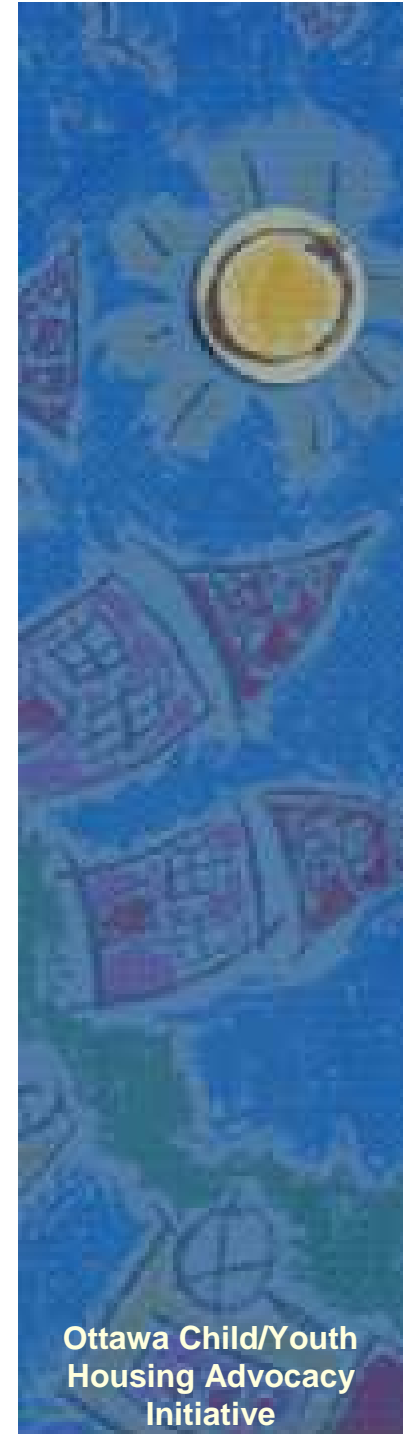
Poor housing conditions increase the risk of:

- Asthma and respiratory disorders
- Injury
- Lead exposure
- Malnutrition
- Exposure to communicable and infectious diseases
- Ear infections
- Vomiting and diarrhea among infants
- Fatigue
- Headaches

Housing Impacts Mental Health

Poor housing conditions increase the risk of:

- Psychological distress
- Social withdrawal
- Feelings of stress
- Feelings of helplessness
- Behavioural problems at home and at school



Housing Impacts Overall Wellbeing

Poor housing conditions increase the risk of:

- Missed school
- Lower school performance
- Insufficient sleep
- Child and parental stress
 - negative impacts on the parent/child relationship due to stress
 - less ability for parents to be involved in other needs of children



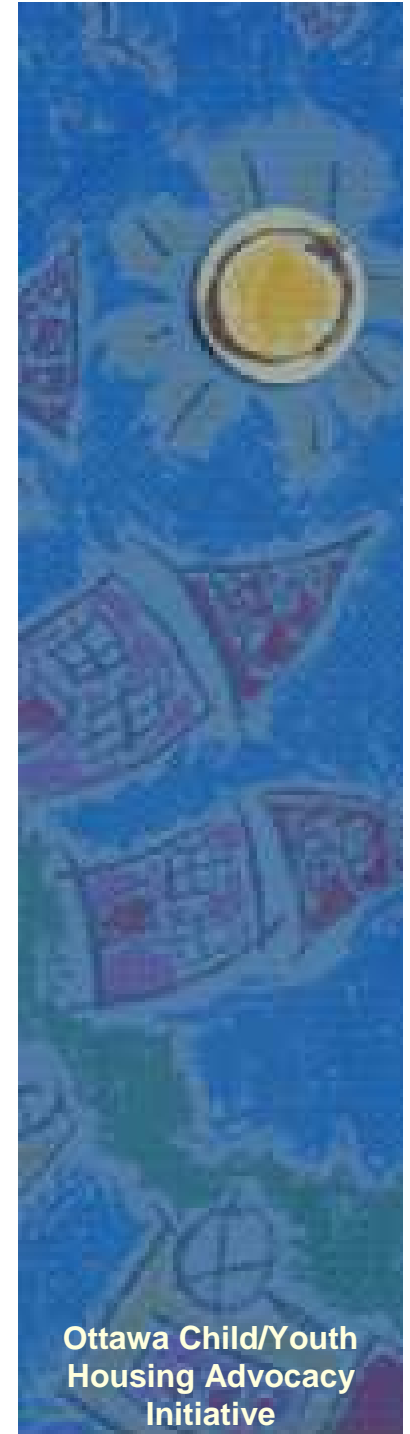
The background is a vibrant, abstract illustration of a town. It features various houses with different colored roofs (red, purple, green) and windows. A bright yellow sun is in the upper left, and a globe is in the lower right. The overall style is colorful and textured, with a blue and green color palette. The text "What is Acceptable Housing?" is overlaid in the center in a bold, white, sans-serif font.

What is Acceptable Housing?

What is acceptable housing?

Housing is acceptable when it meets the three standards of:

- Affordability:** housing that costs less than 30% of a household's income
- Suitability:** housing with enough bedrooms for the size and make-up of the household
- Adequacy:** housing that is not in need of major repairs

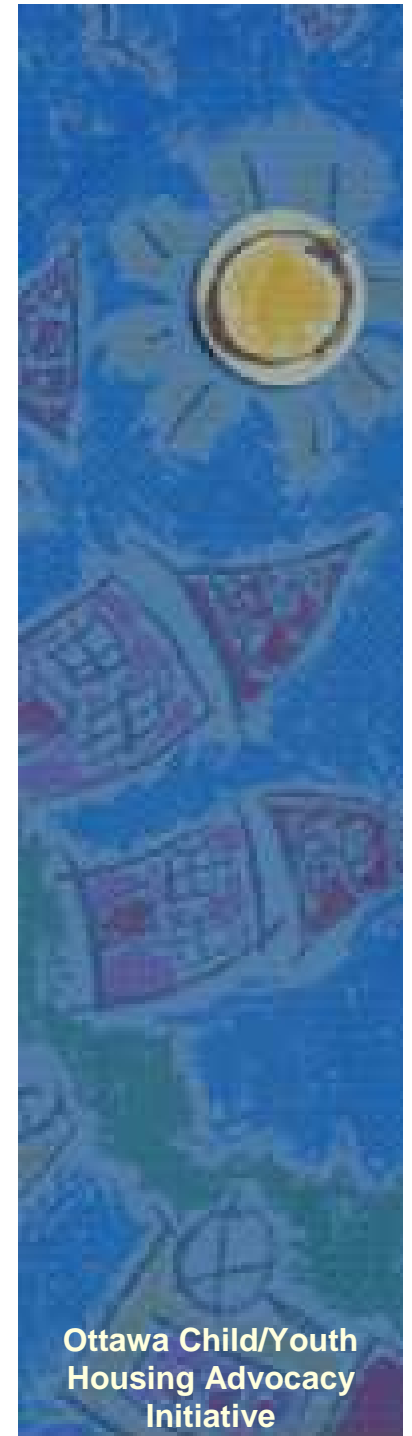


Housing is a problem when it is: Unaffordable

When housing is unaffordable, families have less money left over for other necessities such as:

- Healthy food
- Quality childcare
- Transportation
- Education
- Recreational opportunities
- Medical expenses

These are essential for the optimal health of children, youth and families.

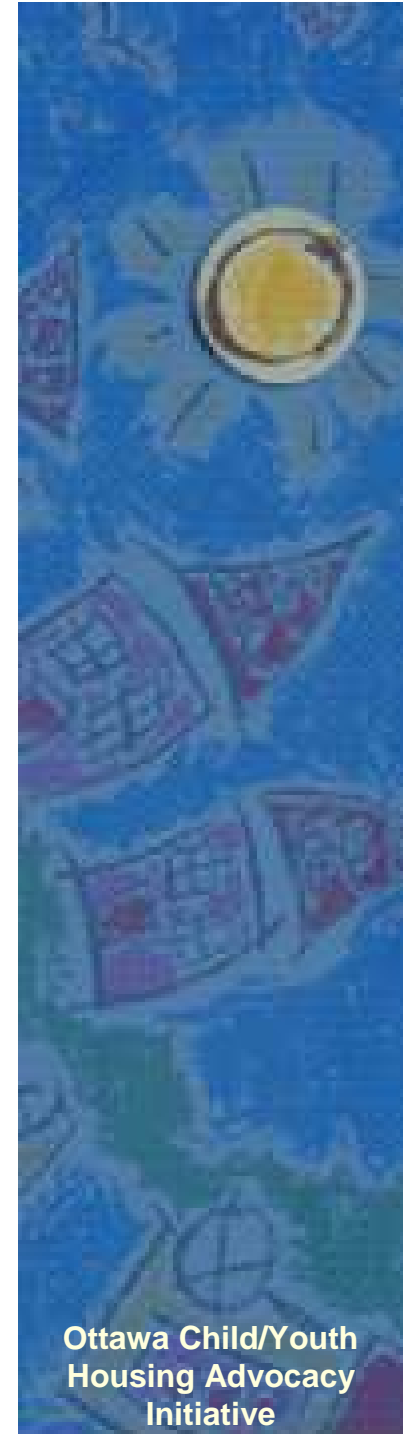


Housing is a problem when it is... **Unsuitable**

Often when families move into crowded conditions, it is to lower the expenses related to increasing rent costs.



This can mean that children and youth have to share beds or sleep in common areas.

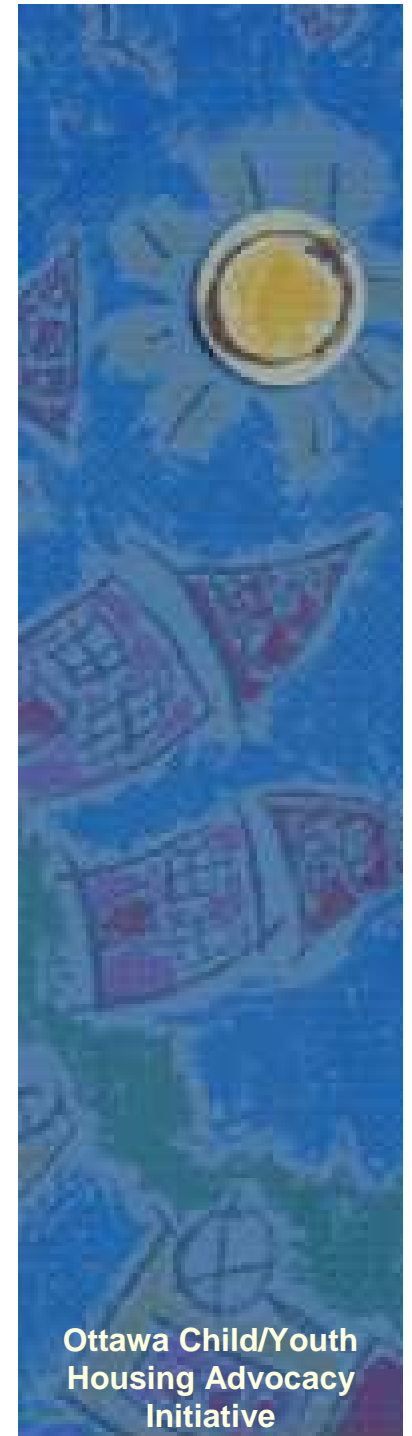


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Housing Advocacy
Initiative

Housing is a problem when it is... **Inadequate**

Examples of inadequate housing conditions:

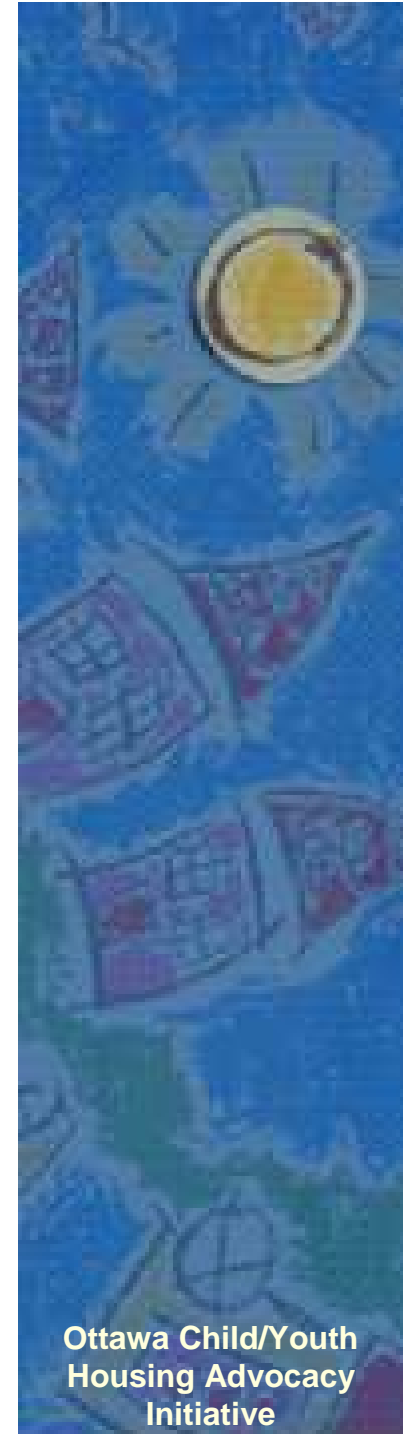
- Deteriorating and/or unsafe walls, ceilings, floors, doors and windows
- Presence of dampness, mould, lead, asbestos or radon
- Pest infestations such as mice, rats and cockroaches
- Poor air quality
- Lack of control over heating and water supply



Housing is a problem when it is... **Unstable**




- More than three moves in a child's life
- Associated with economic uncertainty



Housing is a problem when it is... **Unstable**

Unstable housing can be linked to:

- Multiple school changes within an academic school year
- Greater likelihood of grade repetition, school suspensions, expulsions and delayed social development
- Moves under pressure give children and families a sense of powerlessness
- Less connection to the community and support services

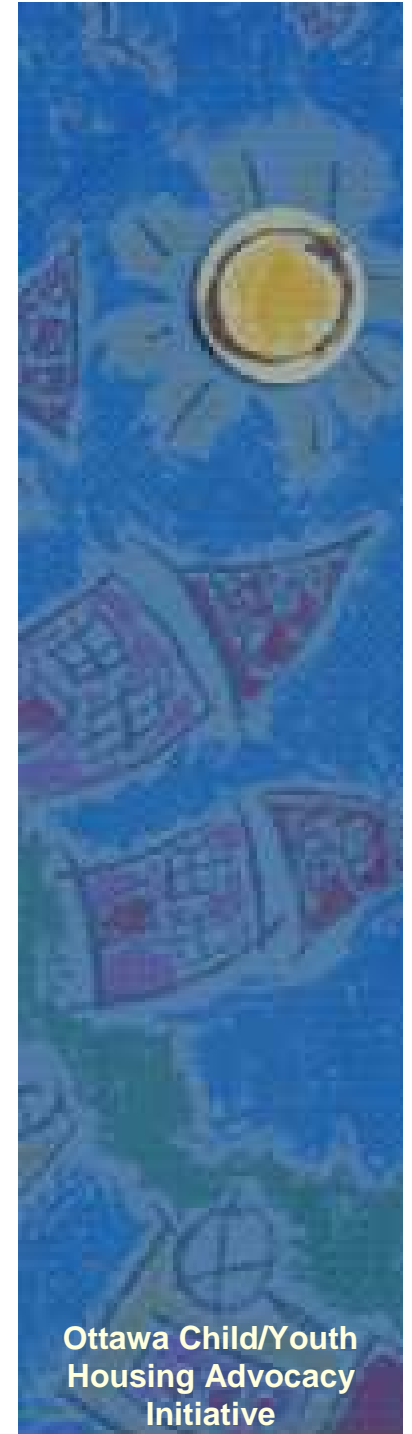
The background is a vibrant, abstract illustration of a village scene. It features several houses with colorful roofs and windows, a bright yellow sun in the upper left, and a stylized tree on the right. The overall color palette is dominated by blues, greens, and purples, with accents of yellow and red. The style is reminiscent of a folk-art or children's drawing.

Vulnerable Populations

Vulnerable Populations



- New Canadians: immigrants and refugees
- Aboriginal origin
- Lone parent families
- Youth (aged 15 to 24)



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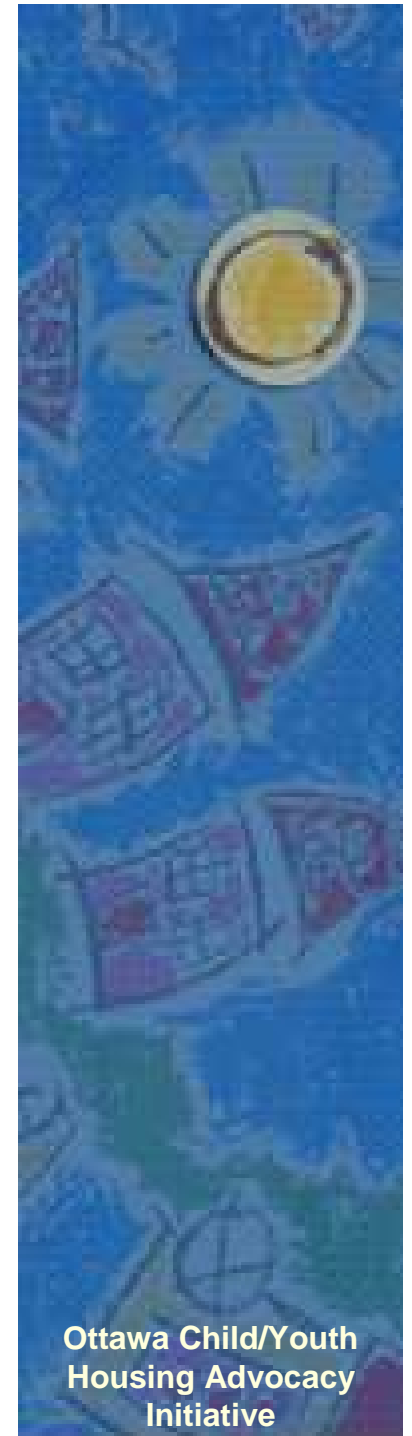
Housing and Health

Ensuring children and youth have acceptable housing helps mitigate the impact of poverty on their health

CHEO Housing Checkup

Objectives:

- To describe housing status of children/youth utilizing CHEO emergency department
- To examine influencing factors and identify populations at risk

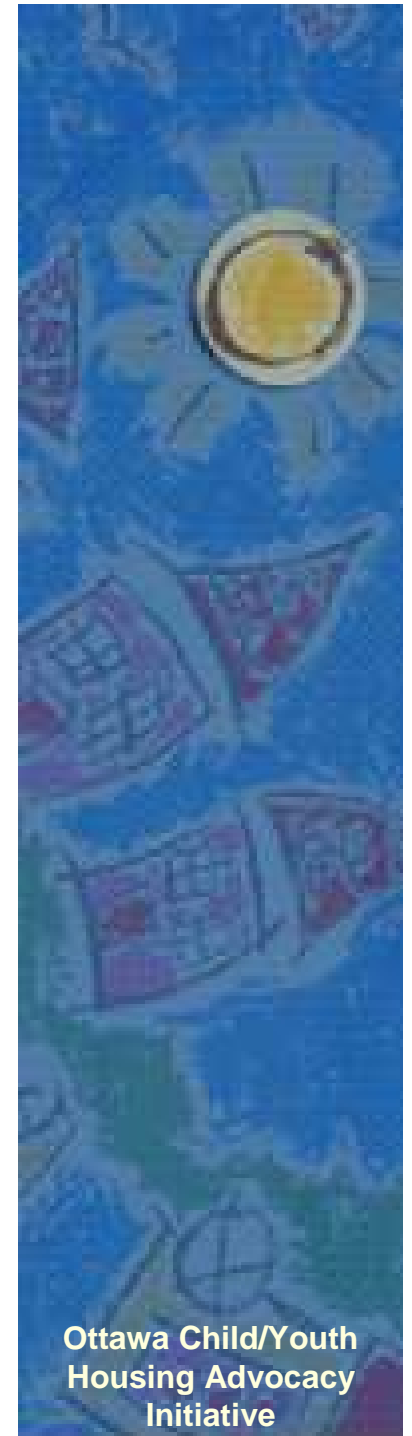




Housing Checkup

Results: >50% in housing need

- 8% live in inadequate housing (housing in need of major repair)
- 1/3 live in unaffordable housing
- 1/4 live in unstable housing
- 1/4 of households with 6 or more members had someone sleeping in a common area
- 2% children and youth had used housing shelters
- 7% children and youth had stayed with relatives or friends as they had no place else to stay

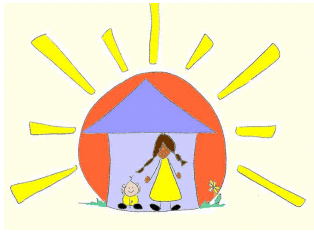




OCHAI

Ottawa Child/Youth Housing Advocacy Initiative

Partnership of clinicians and researchers at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario and community-based housing, health and child and youth focused organizations working to improve the housing and health of children, youth and families in the community

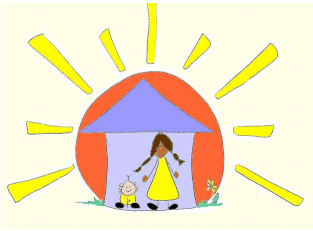


OCHAI

Objectives:

- To better understand the housing needs of children, youth and families
- To address housing need and its associated health disparities





OCHAI

- Dissemination of results
- Development of education and advocacy tools:
 - Pamphlets
 - Fact sheets
 - Handouts

Housing is a
Child and Youth
Health Issue

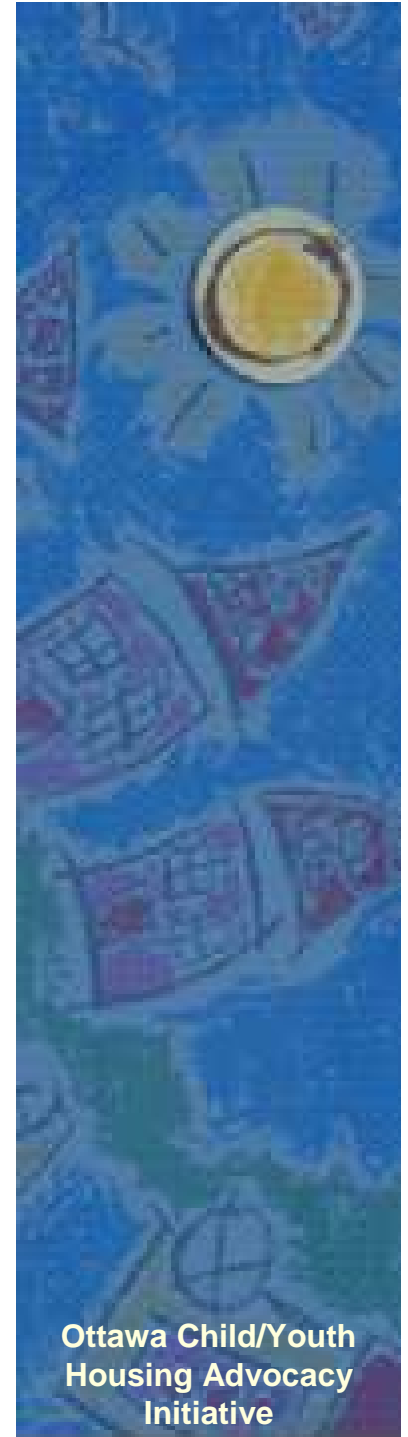
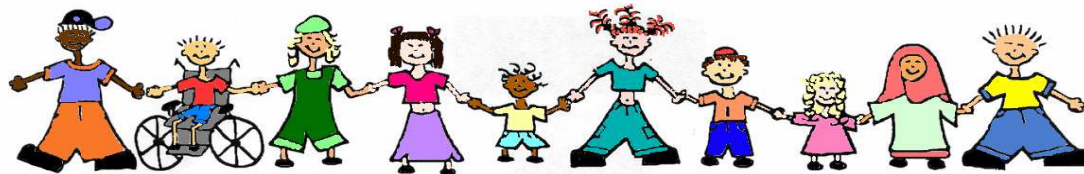


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(613)737-7600 ext.3134

Ottawa Child/Youth
Housing Advocacy
Initiative

Housing and Child/Youth Health Symposium March 2006

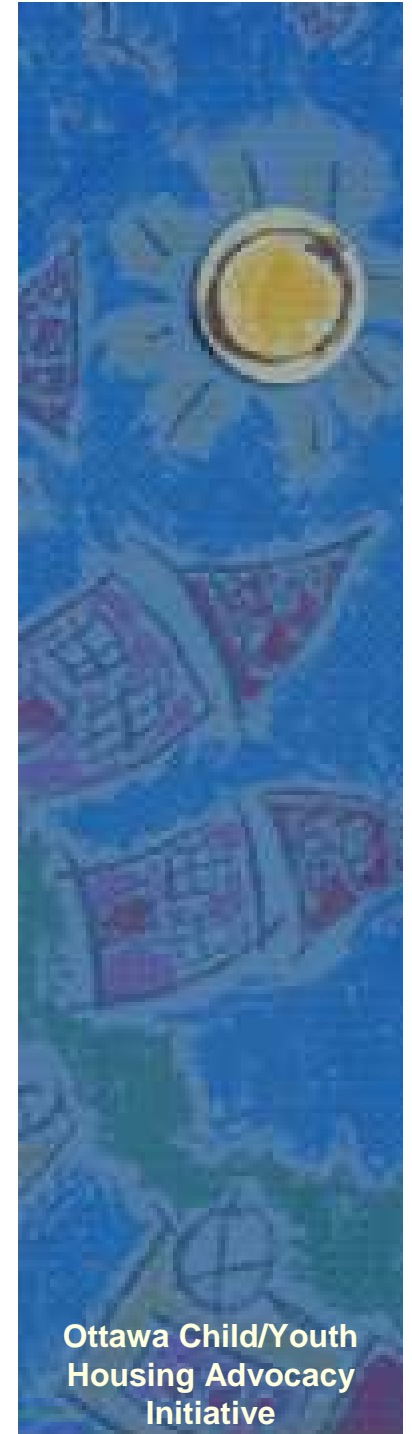
- Focus on individual practitioner
- Broad representation from stakeholders at varied levels




Housing and Child/Youth Health Symposium March 2006

Recommendations

- **Practice Tools: Toolbox**
 - Educational Tools
 - Assessment Tools
 - Referral Tools
- **Education**
 - Undergraduate, Postgraduate
 - Interprofessional
 - Housing used to teach health advocate and obligation





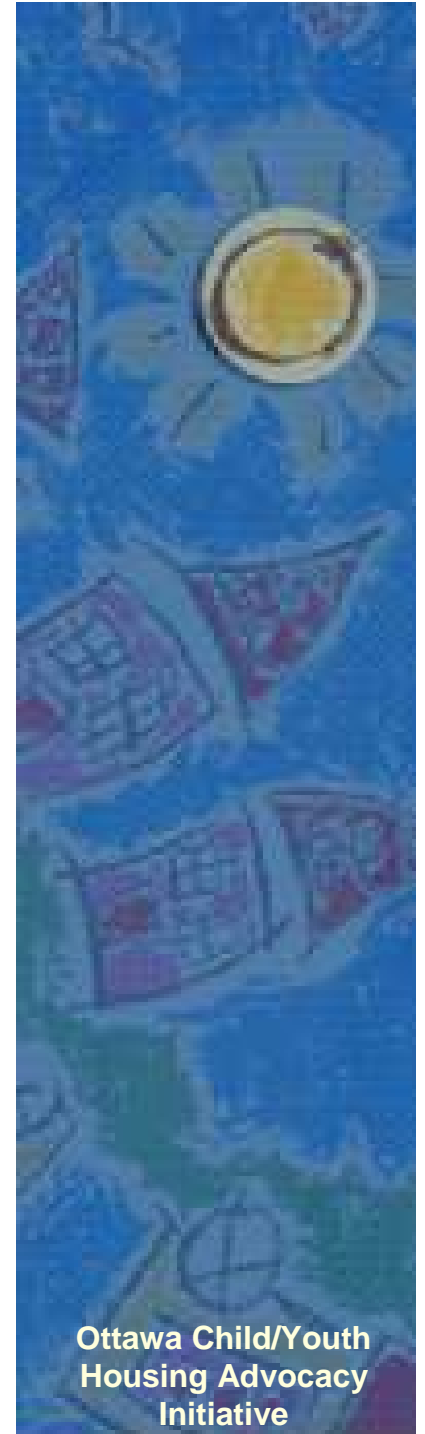
**Housing and Health
Toolbox
for
Children and Youth**

Objective of the Toolbox

To provide individuals and organizations working in child and youth health with:

- ▶ Information about housing, health and environmental concerns for children and youth
- ▶ Practical tools for use in clinical practice to help:

- **Screen for housing issues**
- **Educate about the links between housing and child and youth health**
- **Refer to appropriate services and resources**



Toolbox Components

Educational Resources

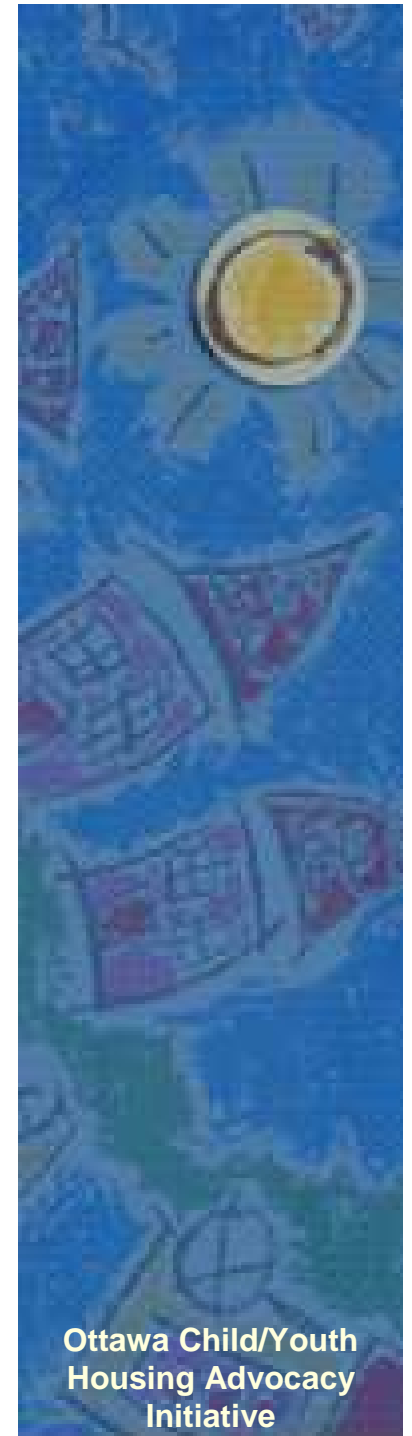
- Health Professionals
- Families
- Youth

Screening Tool

- Quickly assess housing concerns and risk factors during clinical encounters

Referral Tool

- Quick guide to local resources and services





Using the Toolbox

Step 1: Knowing the Facts!

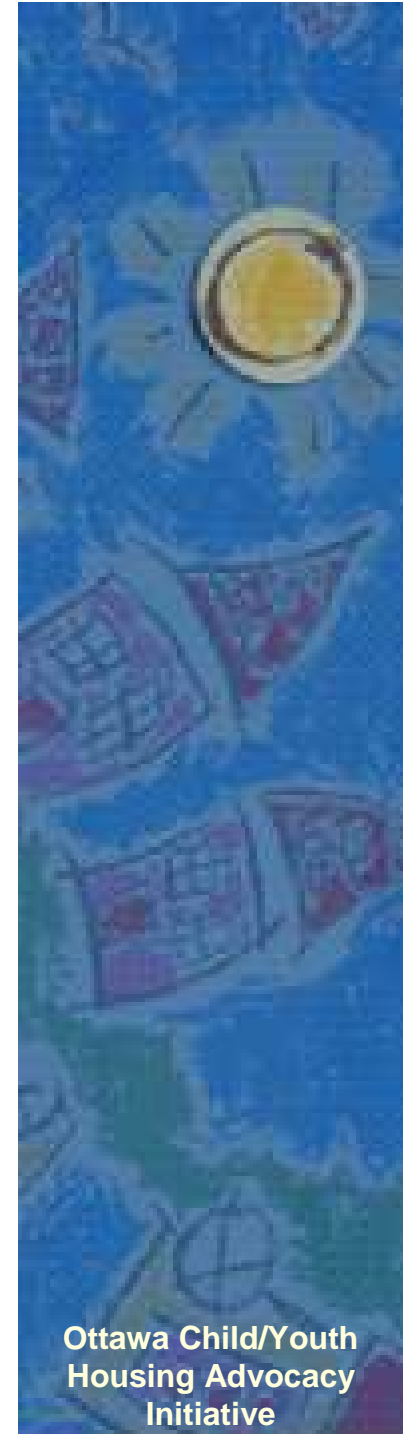
Educational Resources for Health Professionals

Fact sheets:

- Housing is a child and youth issue
- Housing is a child and youth health issue
- Vulnerable Populations
Families of Aboriginal origin • Lone parent families • Families new to Canada • Youth
- Environmental Hazards in the Home
Lead • Mould • Insects and Pests

Presentations for the workplace:

- Introduction to the Housing and Health Toolbox for Children and Youth
- Housing Makes a Difference! *How housing impacts the health and development of children and youth*

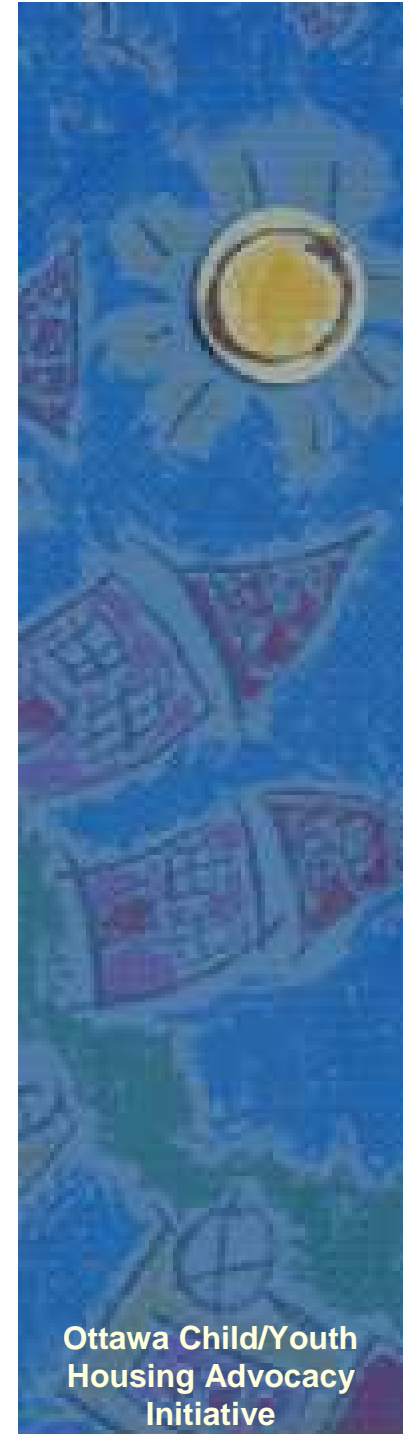
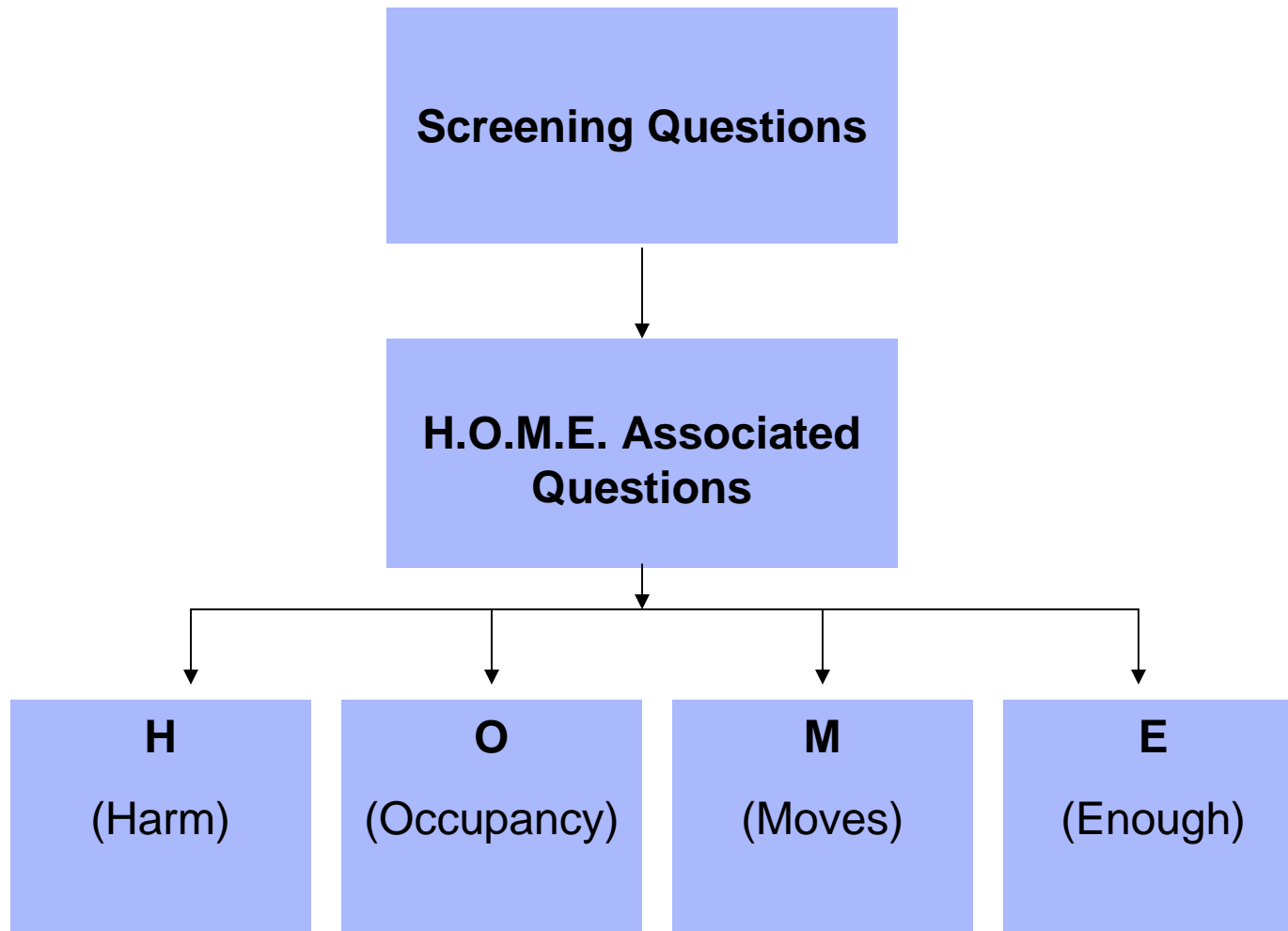




Using the Toolbox

Step 2: Screening for housing concerns

Ask the Questions!



Screening Questions

1. On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate where you are living now?
2. What would you like to make better about where you are living?

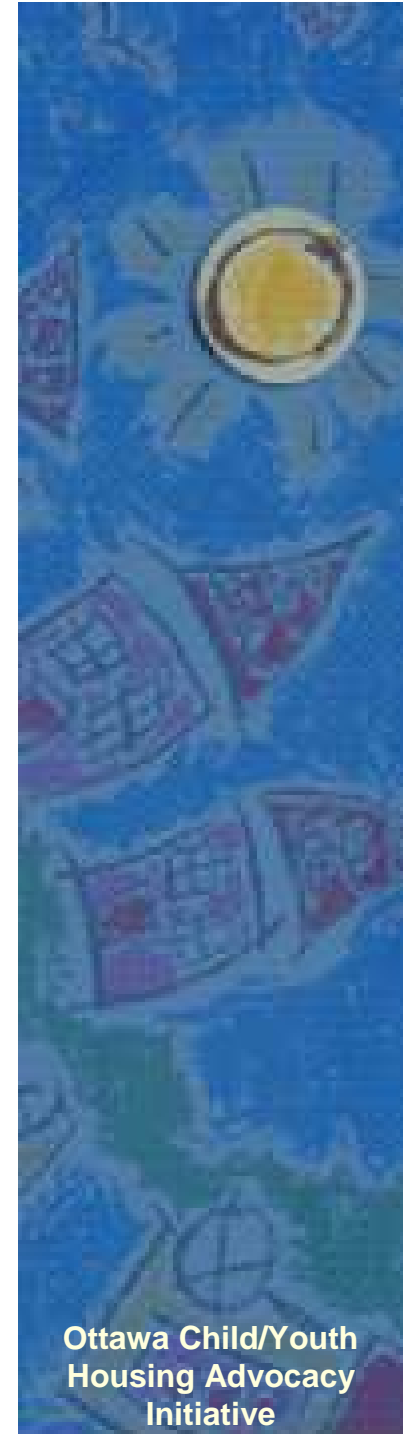
If a housing concern is triggered, use the H.O.M.E. Assessment for more detail

H.O.M.E. Assessment

There are 4 housing concern categories in the H.O.M.E. Assessment:

- Harm
- Occupancy
- Mobility
- Enough/Economics

To narrow down the housing concern, ask the identifying question for each category. If a housing need is triggered, proceed with the assessment.



H.O.M.E. Assessment

H (harm)

Is anything in your home/neighbourhood unsafe or potentially dangerous to your family?

- Security
- Pests and Insects
- Air Quality
- Mould
- Temperature
- Injury
- Exposure to toxins
- CO Monitor
- Smoke Detectors
- Fire Escape Plan

H.O.M.E Assessment

○ (occupancy)

Do you feel that your home is crowded?

- Number of people living in home
- Number of bedrooms
- Number of rooms in the house
- Do all children have their own bed?
- Where does the child sleep?

H.O.M.E Assessment

M (mobility)

How many times have you moved over the past two years?

- Number of times the child has moved over his/her lifetime
- Concerns of eviction due to non-payment

H.O.M.E Assessment

E (Enough/Economics)

Do you have enough money to pay for your rent, food and utilities every month?

- Trouble paying rent/mortgage
- Trouble paying gas/hydro bill
- Concerns of eviction due to non-payment
- Run out of money for basic needs
- Use of food bank



Using the Toolbox

**Step 3: Educating & Referring
your patients**

Resources for Patients

Families

Pamphlets

- *Housing Makes a Difference*

Environmental Hazards

Fact Sheets

- *Lead*
- *Mould*
- *Radon*
- *Cockroaches*
- *Bedbugs*
- *Air Quality*

Youth

Pamphlets

- *Housing Makes a Difference*
- *Your Housing Rights and Responsibilities*

Pocket Cards

- *Do you worry about...*
- *Housing Rights*

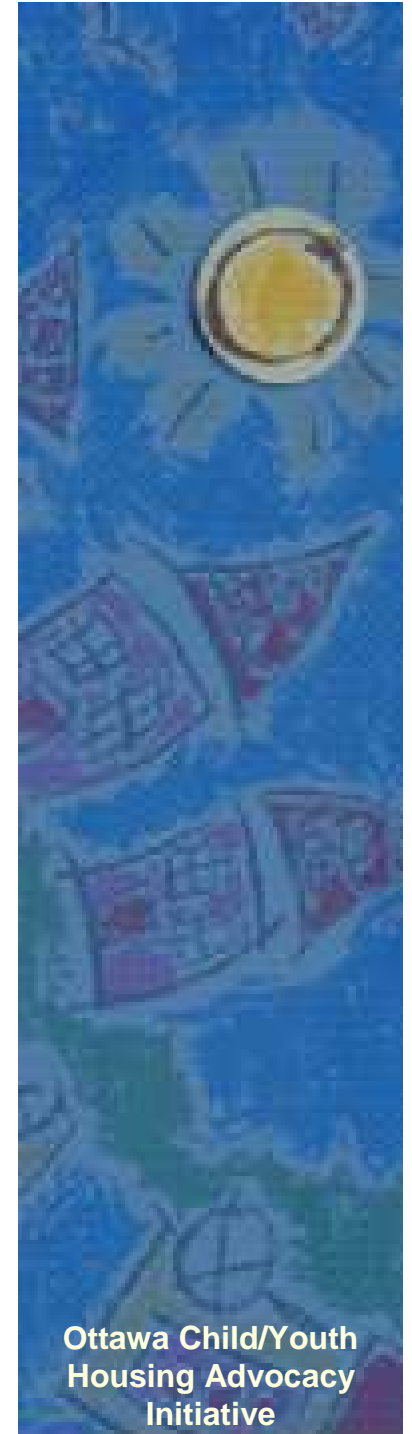
Electronic versions of these resources can be found on the CD inside your folder.

Referral Tool

Use the referral tool as quick guide to local resources and services

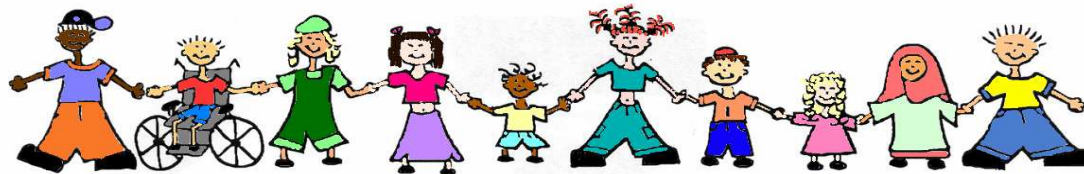
Concerns addressed:

- Finding housing
- General housing support
- Emergency services
- Basic Necessities
- Francophone services
- Affordability issues
- Legal issues
- Environmental hazards
- Home inspections and safety



Housing and Child/Youth Health Symposium 2007

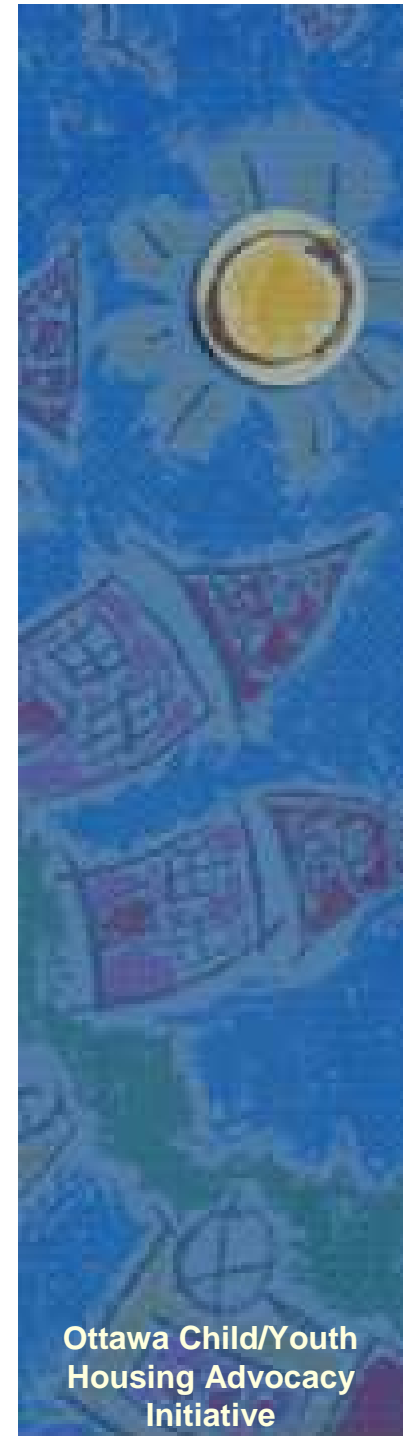
- Focus on population level advocacy initiatives and recommendations
- Broad representation from stakeholders at varied levels



Housing and Child/Youth Health Symposium 2007

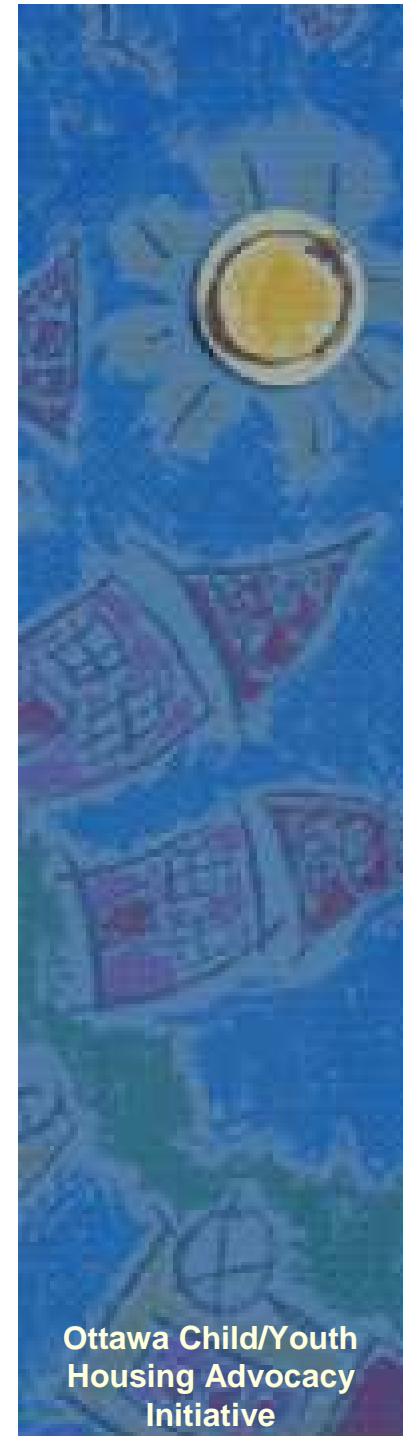
Recommendations:

- Focus on educating and engaging health care professionals across the continuum
- Facilitate the development of local toolkits in other regions
- Develop a national template for the toolkit
- Ongoing partnership with housing sector advocacy initiatives at policy level



OCHAI Next Steps

- Toolkit
 - Formal evaluation
 - Research on health outcomes
 - Facilitate regional and national uptake
- Education
 - Develop curriculum at undergrad and post grad levels (RN, SW, MD)
- Advocacy
 - Engage health professionals, educators, social service providers re the link between housing and child/youth health
 - Collaborate with partners re evidence based advocacy for local, provincial and national housing strategies



Ottawa Child/Youth Housing Advocacy Initiative (OCHAI)

With the support of:



**Canadian Paediatric
Society**



Health
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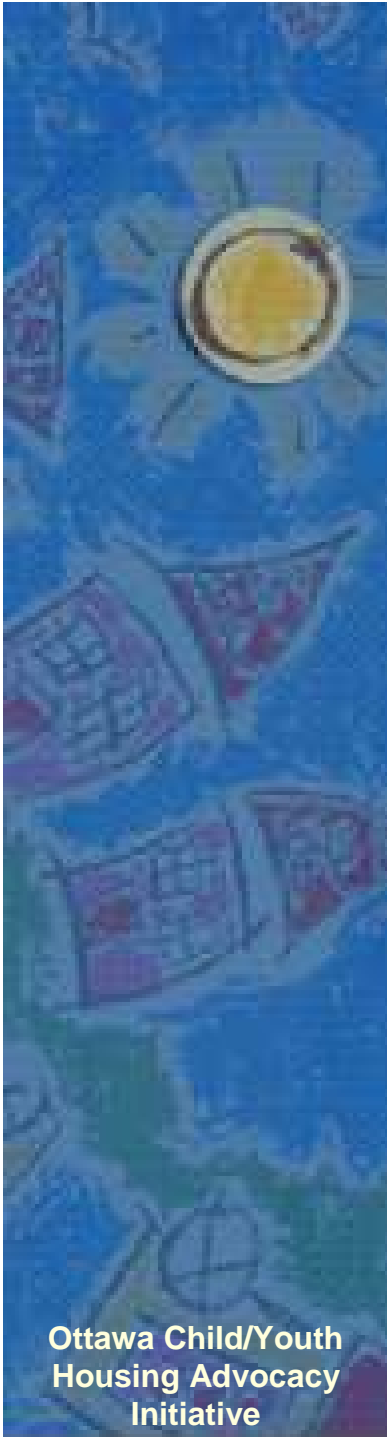
UNITED WAY | CENTRAIDE OTTAWA

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Thank you!

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