



zebra
Child Protection Centre

Five-Year Strategic Plan

2008 - 2012

Introduction

An Invitation to Grow with Us through Our Five-Year Strategic Plan

This document outlines the Five-Year Strategic Plan of Edmonton's Zebra Child Protection Centre – the first centre of its kind in Canada. To fulfill our ongoing commitment to lend strength to abused children in our community, the Zebra Centre is setting a course to achieve the highest possible standards in all facets of our operations and programs. What we need to achieve is clear. The leading practices set out by the National Children's Alliance, the governing body of child advocacy centres in the United States, enable Zebra to establish benchmarks based on solid years of experience. Our surveys of our clients, stakeholders and our multi-disciplinary team have illuminated, more specifically, where we currently reach those benchmarks and where we don't.

The essence of how we will achieve our goals is also evident: by building the strength and breadth of our integrated team within our organization and the strength of our alliances and support within the community. That's where you come in. We offer our **PLAN** to you for your review and invite you to come to know us better and participate in our growth.



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1.0 History

The Zebra Child Protection Centre, which officially opened in 2002, is Canada's first multi-disciplined child advocacy centre designed to lend strength to victims of child abuse. At the heart of the Centre are the interests and well-being of the children it serves. The body of the Centre is its multi-disciplinary team – comprised of Edmonton Police Service professionals, Alberta Children's Services (Region 6) professionals, Crown Prosecutors, Child at Risk Response Teams, off-site medical and trauma screening professionals and volunteer Child and Family Advocates – who collaborate to protect the hurt child from further trauma, nurture healing and pursue justice.

Before the Zebra Child Protection Centre was founded, abused children in the community were thrust into an adult institutional world of police and other investigative agencies. Children who had summoned the courage to tell their stories to police were often called upon to repeat them several times to different officials at different locations. Not only did this add to the child's trauma, it also made for disjointed information gathering and difficulty in building the case for prosecution.

Edmonton Police Service knew there had to be a better way: A way to safeguard the community's children, address their needs and nurture their healing, while rigorously bringing the criminals who commit these crimes to justice. Together with other agencies, concerned citizens and professionals, they sought out models throughout North America for a child-focused centre which integrated investigative, protective and prosecutorial services in one safe and nurturing environment. The passion and conviction of this founding team led to the establishment of the Zebra Child Protection Centre.

In its six years of operation in Edmonton, the Zebra Centre has demonstrated in this country how an integrated child advocacy centre can make a significant difference in the lives of abused children and to the delivery of justice to offenders. Many children who have come to Zebra Centre have reported back to us how important our support has been to them; some have returned with contributions to help other children. Out of 80 child abuse cases that came before Edmonton courts in 2007, 65 resulted in findings of guilt. This ratio is unheard of under conventional, non-integrated approaches to this crime. The Zebra Centre has engaged the compassion and generosity of our community. Many individuals and organizations have come forward to volunteer their time and contributions to lend strength to abused children in our community. Edmonton is increasingly able to protect and support our children and deliver justice to those who abuse them.

We have many opportunities and challenges ahead. It is important that we continue to increase our financial support to become sustainable for the future. Zebra is also striving to fund a new building that will offer the best location and amenities for the children we serve. Particularly in our competitive employment environment, we need to take measures to strengthen our multi-disciplinary team and volunteer contingent and, as a learning organization, to continually improve our expertise. As the first child advocacy centre of its kind in Canada, we receive a number of requests to help others develop such an organization in their communities. We believe that the Strategic Plan leads the way to the Zebra Child Protection Centre achieving optimum strength in its service to abused children in our community and serving as a model for other Canadian centres.

2.0 The Mission of the Centre

The Zebra Child Protection Centre works to improve the life experiences of children who have suffered abuse in our community. We do this through providing a collaborative and integrated environment; developing and implementing leading practices; offering support and 'giving a voice' to the child and family throughout the processes of disclosure, investigation, intervention and prosecution – each applied to appropriately address the best interests of each child. Our outreach programs seek to educate and engage the community in protecting our children through reporting signs of abuse and advocating for protection and justice.

The Centre's mandate provides for the delivery of services and support to the children within the Capital Health Region, Edmonton & Area Family and Children Services (Region 6) and the City of Edmonton. Additional or specialized services for regional and provincial agencies involved in child protection or with at risk populations are obtained through the Centre through a pre-consultation process.

2.1 Values

The Zebra Child Protection Centre upholds the following values in delivering on its mission:

- **Safeguarding Children:** The well-being of the child is paramount. Through the multi-disciplinary team approach, each child is assigned a child advocate that provides ongoing support to the child and family.
- **Trust and Respect:** The partnered professionals work in a manner that demonstrates respect and trust for one another. Case decisions are based on the best interests of the child.
- **Serving with Excellence:** There is an ongoing commitment to identifying and implementing leading practices.
- **Ongoing Learning:** Through research and day-to-day experiences, there is a commitment to continual and lifelong learning.
- **Collaboration:** The partner professionals work collaboratively to provide the best possible services to each child.

3.0 Vision

The Zebra Child Protection Centre envisions a community that does not tolerate child abuse. The community holds itself accountable, reporting any evidence of abuse and upholding the protection of our children as paramount. In this community, children who are abused will feel that they can tell someone about the abuse and be believed. As well, children will be empowered to participate effectively in the criminal justice system.

In the future, community funding will be sustainable. Partnered professionals working as part of the Zebra Centre multi-disciplinary team will work collaboratively to provide seamless services to all children who have been subject to abuse.

The Centre will:

- Realize sustainability funding of the Centre and achieve leading practices.
- Accommodate new partners to join the Centre's multi-disciplinary team based on the mission and vision of the Centre.
- Increase public awareness about child abuse in the Edmonton area.
- Educate the public about the Zebra Centre.
- Initiate dialogue and foster support with all orders of government to impact legislation and funding.



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4.0 Goals & Objectives

Listed below are the goals and objectives of the Zebra Child Protection Centre. Our objectives for 2008 can be seen highlighted in bronze.

1

Goal 1: To expand upon the collaborative model to strengthen the community's response to child abuse.	
Objectives	Outcomes
a. develop and implement a plan to integrate professional services in Region 6 for children who have suffered abuse and their families - develop a community program and service inventory to identify gaps in programs and services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Knowledge among service providers of the programs and resources available in the community - Identified gaps in community services - Collaborative approach to child abuse - Informed community - More effective utilization of resources - Supportive legislation
b. develop and implement a community education program through aligning and collaborating with other community agencies	
c. create critical government support for legislative support of issues surrounding child abuse	

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Goal 2: To provide the best possible programs, services, and supports to children who have been abused, and their families.	
Objectives	Outcomes
a. to identify the Zebra Centre's "core services"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organizational focus and ability to optimize resources - Children and families receive the most effective services and supports - Facility supports and enhances services and programs as effectively
b. to identify and implement leading practices on an ongoing basis - train personnel at the Centre regarding leading practices	
c. to provide consistent onsite mental health services for children, families and staff	
d. to ensure programs and services meet the needs of children and families from culturally diverse backgrounds	
e. to develop a facility plan to ensure programs, services, and supports are provided optimally - conduct a needs assessment - optimize present facility space - explore potential future sites for the Centre	

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Goal 3: To develop a Human Resource Plan to ensure effective delivery of programs and services and build the strength of the Zebra Centre.	
Objectives	Outcomes
a. to develop and deliver orientation programs to Centre multi-disciplinary team, volunteers, and board members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Highly effective delivery of programs, services, and supports to children and their families - Heightened level of collaboration and camaraderie among multi-disciplinary team - Proactive approach to human resource management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • effectively address organizational needs
b. to develop and formalize a team building structure for the Centre's multi-disciplinary team	
c. to develop a plan that will enhance the recruitment and retention of a multi-disciplinary team	
d. to develop a plan for board recruitment and retention	

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Goal 4: To secure sustainable funding for core services.	
Objectives	Outcomes
a. to lobby government for funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Align victim grants with core services - Provide predictability and stability in the provision of programs and services - Improved service delivery - Enable longer term planning
b. to investigate the potential for sustainable funding through the Alberta Law Enforcement Response Team (ALERT) structure	

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Goal 5: To develop and implement a strategic communications plan.	
Objectives	Outcomes
a. to identify targets of communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Greater community awareness of the Zebra Centre - Enhanced community support (financial and volunteer) - Help key stakeholders (including government, multi-disciplines team, staff) to understand core services - Affirmation of support and commitment from other community agencies
b. to identify key messages	
c. to identify appropriate mediums	

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Goal 6: To implement a system of evidence-based decision making.	
Objectives	Outcomes
a. to identify informational needs including timing - data collection needs to align with core services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improved decision making - Delivery of effective programs and services - Informed and effective stakeholder communications
b. to identify process for collecting and reporting on information - may include technological solutions	
c. to identify a process for integrating information into decision making	

5.0 Situational Assessment

5.1 Internal

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Passion, compassion, and commitment of those who are involved• No professional egos• Respectful and trusting environment• Focused on the needs of the child, including the environment• Expertise and specialized training of professionals• Multi-disciplinary team (MDT)• The Zebra Client Management System• Regular and independent audit reporting• Degree of collaboration & integrations for disciplines• High quality investigative tools and equipment• Efficacious• Recognition of 'good works' within professional community• Willingness of partner agencies to understand the importance and purpose of the Zebra Centre• Significant community involvement• Increased profile leading to voluntary funding approaches• Practice model for other jurisdictions (both geographic and practice specialties)• Diversity of board experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Potential to overextend services and expertise• Lack of structured mentoring and team building process• Limitations of training for multi-disciplinary team• Recruitment and retention of multi-disciplinary teams• Multi-disciplinary team turnover• Site based wellness supports that are consistent including mental health services• Lack of sustainable funding for core services• Shortage of resources/multi-disciplinary team (capacity for workload)• Capacity to secure funding (ad hoc and sustainable)• Ability to participate in multi-disciplinary team staff selection process• Some management levels in partner agencies do not understand Centre day to day operations• Physical location too small• Providing adequate age appropriate space• Consistent and effective evaluation(s)• Level of diversity on the Board• Lack of political and financial representation on the Board



5.2 External

Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate enabling legislation supporting child protection centres (US precedent) • New partnerships with attendant funding • ALERT – Alberta Law Enforcement Response Teams (umbrella) • Economic climate supports funding • Municipal/political will • Regular budget allocation as part of government responsibility – sustainable funding • Research/Evaluation • Child abuse to the forefront • Technological 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding sustainability • Consistency/government turnover • Issue becomes associated with an individual Minister • Resources – money, time, people – impacts capacity • Judicial movement – increase in child abuse – impacts capacity • Legislation • Technology can expand the potential for abuse
Both	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boom times – disparity in income leads to increases in needs • Bill C-2 – minimum sentences; rights, • Internet exploitation • More demand – various ages, epicenter • Demographics • Population growth • Cultural diversity • Prevention 	

12th Floor, 10909 Jasper Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 3L9
Phone: (780) 421-2016
Fax: (780) 421-2234
www.zebracentre.ca