**Vision:** To be the best place in Canada to raise a child, promote innovation, engage citizens and provide diverse economic opportunities.

**Values:** Honesty, Accountability, Innovation, Leadership, Respect, Excellence, Teamwork

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<th>TO: Chair and Members</th>
<th>WARD(S) AFFECTED: CITY WIDE</th>
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<td>Emergency &amp; Community Services Committee</td>
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| COMMITTEE DATE: | November 23, 2011 |

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<th>SUBJECT/REPORT NO:</th>
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<td>Hamilton Parent Charter of Rights as presented by the Best Start Network (CS11094) (City Wide)</td>
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<th>SUBMITTED BY:</th>
<th>PREPARED BY:</th>
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**Council Direction:** Not Applicable

**Information:**

The Hamilton Best Start’s vision is to make Hamilton the best place to raise a child. Best Start is about supporting parents and families to provide children with the best possible opportunities early in their lives. Parents are the first, most important and most lasting teachers in a child’s life.

The City of Hamilton is the project manager for the Best Start Network which includes a diverse group of service providers who share a commitment to making this vision real in each of their organizations. Network members interact daily with parents, offering support in the raising of children.

The Parent and Family Engagement Committee, a standing committee of the Best Start Network, has confirmed one of its priorities is to promote the important role parents play in the lives of their children. Based on examples from other communities the committee determined that a Parent Charter would contribute to this goal. A Parent Charter outlines the gold standard of how parents should expect to be treated in their dealings with health, early childhood education, schools and other community service providers.

The Hamilton Parent Charter sets out shared principles and beliefs for providers to guide them around planning and delivering services that make parents feel valued, respected, and supported in their roles at each stage of their children’s lives. It reflects...
the voice of the community, developed through extensive public consultation and feedback. It also provides a strong foundation for the future of families, service providers, and organizations that serve parents in Hamilton.

The Hamilton Parent Charter of Rights, attached as Appendix A to Report CS11094, includes seven clear rights with a short explanation to help the reader understand the intent of the meaning. The working group consulted with parents and parent representatives, service providers, representatives from school boards, hospitals, provincial government, and business people from the community. Over the period of a year and a half, the working group received over 600 responses through focus groups, web surveys and informal conversations that helped to inform the charter.

The development of the charter included the following:
- consultation with the Best Start Network members throughout the progression of the Charter
- consultation with agencies, school boards, city staff, provincial staff and institutions for feedback and support in both French and English
- consultation with a literacy specialist to ensure the literacy level was appropriate for our diverse community
- provision of a toolkit to the Best Start Network that will help members gain support from their organizations, internal staff and the people they serve
- support of the release of the Parent Charter in both French and English
- development of a plan to share this document throughout the community
- creation of a community wide annual implementation review.

A number of Best Start Network member agencies are already demonstrating their commitment to the Parent Charter by implementing more parent–friendly practices into their organizations to support and empower parents.

The Community Services Department, as the City’s lead for Best Start, will be sharing the Hamilton Parent Charter of Rights and its purpose with City departments who serve parents and families in our community. It is anticipated that staff will review this best practice information when planning and delivering City programs and services. The Charter will be distributed throughout the community by other members of the Best Start Network presenting it to their boards of directors and agencies.

APPENDICES / SCHEDULES
Appendix A to Report CS11094: Hamilton Parent Charter of Rights
Hamilton Parent Charter of Rights

From the point of becoming a parent you should be involved in every step of your child's life. Parenting is a lifelong commitment. You should be offered support to help you as you raise your children.

The Right to Respect
You will be

- treated fairly and equally
- treated with dignity
- treated without judgement or discrimination

The Right to Information
You will

- receive timely information
- receive accurate information that will help you make informed decisions

The Right to Be Heard
You will

- be listened to
- be understood
- get a response to your concerns

The Right to Assistance
You will have timely access to

- assistance
- services
- supports

The Right to be Involved
You have the right to

- have an active role in all areas of your children's lives
- participate in opportunities to make change

The Right to Safety and Security
You can expect

- privacy and confidentiality
- safe physical environments

The Right to Appeal
You have the right to

- know the process for review
- ask for change to any decision you have concerns about
These rights shall apply to all parents without discrimination according to race, colour, gender, sexual orientation, ability/disability, ethnic origin, region, economic status, religion, source of income or any other distinction. This Parent Charter does not replace the law. “Parent” refers to mothers, fathers, legal guardians, and other adults responsible for the care of a child.

_Suggestions for its use:_

Parents can expect the Hamilton Parent Charter of Rights:
- to help set a gold standard of how parents can expect to be treated in their dealings with service providers, or any organization that they come into contact with.
- to provide a consistent message about the value of their parenting role

Organizations may refer to the Hamilton Parent Charter of Rights:
- to raise the profile of parents
- to advocate for the rights of parents
- when reviewing their internal policies, their mission and vision
- in the process of planning and making programming decisions
- by placing the Charter in a prominent place so that everyone coming into their organization could read it and better understand the commitment to parents in our community
Charte des droits des parents de Hamilton

Dès que vous êtes sur le point de devenir parent, vous devez participer à chaque étape de la vie de votre enfant. Être parent, c’est un engagement à vie. Vous devriez avoir du soutien pour vous aider pendant que vous élevez vos enfants.

**Le droit au respect**
Vous serez traités :
- de façon équitable et sur un pied d’égalité
- avec dignité
- sans jugement ni discrimination

**Le droit à l’information**
Vous recevrez :
- des renseignements en temps opportun
- des renseignements précis qui vous aideront à prendre des décisions éclairées

**Le droit d’être entendus**
Vous :
- serez écoutés
- serez compris
- obtiendrez une réponse à vos préoccupations

**Le droit à de l’aide**
Vous aurez accès en temps opportun à :
- de l’aide
- des services
- du soutien

**Le droit de participer**
Vous avez le droit de :
- jouer un rôle actif dans tous les domaines de la vie de vos enfants
- participer à des occasions d’apporter des changements

**Le droit à la sécurité**
Vous pouvez vous attendre à :
- la protection et la confidentialité de vos renseignements privés
- des milieux physiques sécuritaires
Le droit d’interjeter appel
Vous avez le droit de :
• connaître le processus de révision
• demander de changer une décision qui vous inquiète

Ces droits s’appliqueront à tous les parents sans discrimination aucune fondée sur la race, la couleur, le sexe, l'orientation sexuelle, la capacité/l’incapacité, l'origine ethnique, la région, le statut économique, la religion, la source de revenu ou toute autre distinction. La présente Charte des droits des parents ne transcende pas la législation.
Par « parent », on entend les mères, les pères, les tutrices et tuteurs légaux et les autres adultes responsables de prendre soin d’un enfant.

Suggestions pour son utilisation :
Les parents peuvent s’attendre à ce que la Charte des droits des parents de Hamilton :
• facilite l’établissement d’une norme d’or sur la façon dont les parents peuvent s’attendre d’être traités dans le cadre de leurs activités avec des fournisseurs de services ou par toute organisation avec laquelle ils entrent en contact
• fournit un message uniforme au sujet de l’importance de leur rôle parental

Les organisations peuvent consulter la Charte des droits des parents de Hamilton pour ce qui suit :
• rehausser l’image des parents;
• promouvoir les droits des parents;
• réviser les politiques internes, la mission et la vision des parents;
• planifier les programmes et prendre des décisions à ce sujet;
• placer la Charte dans un endroit bien en vue afin que chaque personne visitant l’organisation puisse la lire et mieux comprendre l’engagement envers les parents dans notre communauté.