

Know who to turn to



... because health matters!

pcsj

Peterborough Coalition for Social Justice



Health For Life wants to thank Trent Fleming Nursing students and the Peterborough Social Planning Council who contributed to the development of this pamphlet.



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Peterborough Child Poverty Profile 2006



Jason's Story

"Why is Jason in the hospital?

Because he has a bad infection in his leg.

But why does he have an infection?

Because he has a cut on his leg and it got infected.

But why does he have a cut on his leg?

Because he was playing in the junk yard next to his apartment building and there was some sharp, jagged steel there that he fell on.

But why was he playing in a junk yard?

Because his neighbourhood is kind of run down. A lot of kids play there and there is no one to supervise them.

But why does he live in that neighbourhood?

Because his parents can't afford a nicer place to live.

But why can't his parents afford a nicer place to live?

Because his Dad is unemployed and his Mom is sick.

But why is his Dad unemployed?

Because he doesn't have much education and he can't find a job.

But why...?"



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Local Groups working to end child poverty

Health For Life Peterborough

Phone: 743-1000

Website: www.healthforlifepeterborough.ca

Peterborough Coalition Against Poverty

Phone: 749-9694 Email: pcap@riseup.net

Peterborough Coalition for Social Justice

Phone: 745-5503

Website: www.walkwheelridefordignity.org

Peterborough County-City Health Unit

Phone: 743-1000

Website: www.pcchu.ca

Peterborough Ontario Disability Support Program Action Group

Phone: 741-0537

Peterborough Social Planning Council

Phone: 743-5915 Website: www.pspc.on.ca

Data for this publication came from the Peterborough Social Planning Council Peterborough Profile 2006, Kawartha Food Share Hunger Count 2006, Peterborough City and County Housing Progress Report 2006, and 2005 Report Card on Child Poverty in Ontario (Campaign 2000).

What Makes People Healthy?

As Jason's story suggests, health depends on a variety of factors. These factors interact with one another and affect individuals and communities. Some of the factors that determine our health and well-being are:

- Family Income
- Housing
- Access to food
- Early childhood experiences
- Education
- Employment and working conditions

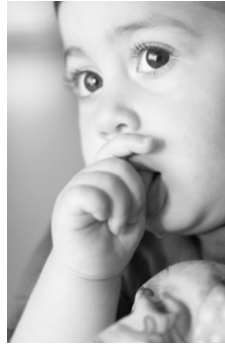


This report will focus on the effects that some of these factors have on the health and well-being of children living in our community. You will also find information about what governments and all of us can do to make our community a better place to grow up in.

One in five children under the age of 6 in Peterborough lives in poverty.

Childhood poverty

has both immediate and lasting negative effects. As illustrated below, children in low-income families fare less well than children in more affluent families.



How do we define poverty?

A commonly used measure of poverty is the “low-income cut-off.” It marks an income level where a family has to spend 20% more of its income on food, shelter and clothing than the average family of similar size. For example, the average lone parent family is living \$9,600 below the poverty line. The average two percent family would need an additional \$10,200 income just to reach the poverty line.



Poverty and Health

Poverty is the most significant indicator of health status. The health problems of poor children begin before birth and can continue to have an adverse effect throughout their lives. Low-income children are more than twice as likely to have poor vision, hearing, speech, mobility and learning ability.

In 2006, 5024 individuals in Peterborough City and County were receiving Ontario Works. 38% of those receiving this assistance were children.

Government Actions

In recent years, municipal governments in Peterborough City and County have taken steps to address these issues. Some actions include:

- Affordable and safe housing projects.
- Support of the local Food Security Strategy.
- Redistribution of the municipal portion of the National Child Tax Supplement Benefit.



What can I do?

- Learn more about the issue.
- Join local campaigns addressing poverty.
- Talk to your local municipal, provincial and federal politicians, and work with them for change.

What are we doing?

Peterborough is a generous community which seeks to respond to the needs of its most vulnerable citizens. Many programs and services exist to alleviate the impact of poverty on the lives of children. There is still more to be done to support the healthy development of all children.



What more can be done?

- Increase the income of low-income families by raising minimum wage and all social assistance rates.
- Build affordable and safe housing by supporting spending 1% of any government budget on housing.
- Ensure that all families have access to safe and nutritious foods.
- Create subsidized and licensed non-profit childcare for all children in Peterborough County and City.
- Support the provision of the National Child Tax Benefit Supplement to families on social assistance.
- End Ontario government's withholding of the National Child Tax Benefit Supplement.

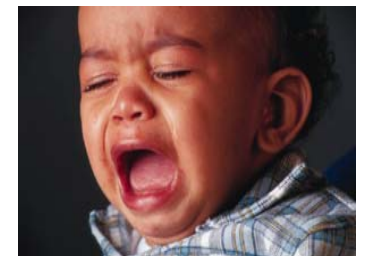


Housing

Homeless children face health risks, such as infection, anemia, injuries, burns, developmental delays and incomplete immunization.

Over 1400 households are currently on the waiting list for subsidized housing in Peterborough. The average wait time is 3-5 years. 35% of this list is comprised of families with children.

When families spend more than 30% of income on housing, they have fewer resources for food, clothing and other necessities.



The Ontario minimum wage, at a 2006 rate of \$7.45 an hour, is inadequate to rent any apartment type in Peterborough. In fact, an hourly wage of \$10.85 is needed to rent a bachelor apartment.

Access to Food

Children's good health and development depend on a diet sufficient in nutrients and calories. Having enough nutritious and safe food to lead an active and healthy life is essential.



Not having access to enough nutritious and safe food is largely the result of low income. Families on social assistance and minimum wage have a greater risk for child hunger.



During the month of March 2006, 2794 children received food from local food banks, an increase of 9% over the previous year. Children represented 43% of the total number of food bank clients in the community.

Early Childhood Development

The effects of prenatal and early childhood experiences on health and well-being are powerful. Early childhood education and child care programs support healthy development and strengthen the foundation for lifelong learning.



Good quality child care is an essential pathway out of poverty for families. It enables parents to work and receive training.

According to 2004 figures, Ontario had only enough regulated child care spaces to accommodate 10.7% of children age 0 to 12.