

KEY NATURAL SUPPORTS INDICATORS

This Fellowship aims to align with and build off of the reports recently released by the Government of Alberta Ministry of Children’s Services: *Well-Being and Resiliency: A Framework for Supporting Safe and Healthy Children and Families*, *Well-being and Resiliency: Evaluation Framework*, *Well-being and Resiliency: The miyo Resource kânâkatohkêhk miyo-ohpikinawâwasowin*, and the *Family Resource Network Expression of Interest*. The domain or ‘Spoke’ of “Social connections and supports” particularly aligns with Natural Supports. Many of the current indicators around “Social connections and supports” are generally programmatic and target individuals. The objective of this document is to offer suggestions about indicators that reflect social and community engagement. The indicators below have been identified from the evidence gathered during this Policy Fellowship, and from reviewing current literature. An example of a potential action is provided with each indicator. These indicators can support the creation of Natural Supports within Albertan communities to create naturally supportive environments.

COMMUNITY NATURAL SUPPORTS INDICATORS:

1. Community organizations (e.g. Calgary Community Associations and Edmonton Community Leagues) identify family, child, and youth engagement as a key objective.
 - E.g. Community Associations and Leagues identify an engagement coordinator, who is resourced, to connect with residents and families to ask what they would like to see happen in their community.
2. Community leaders encourage partnerships and collaboration between local services, businesses, not-for-profit, and other sectors to enhance child and youth wellness.
 - E.g. Local organizations are informed of the importance of community engagement on child and youth mental health, and combine resources to provide neighbourhoods with events and opportunities for the whole community.

3. Approaches to engaging local businesses, such as coffee shops, hair salons, in activities that support children and youth can be identified.
 - E.g. Additional training at local commercial establishments is provided so that employees appreciate the benefit of brief, informal interactions, and are encouraged to engage with people.
4. Approaches to engaging community members in ‘building natural supports’ can be identified.
 - E.g. Neighbourhood and Block Connectors, with the Abundant Community Initiative, develop routine processes for engagement and identify newcomers providing them with information regarding local resources, services, and events. Leaders may consider the development of peer support of family mentors when appropriate.
5. Allocation of useable space to encourage informal connections between residents, families, children, and youth can be identified.
 - E.g. When rooms and halls are not in use, local organizations and community centres offer a free, open space for clubs and interest groups to meet.
6. Community coordinators who are responsible for developing engagement approaches are empowered, funded and resourced.
 - E.g. Community Association and League boards and their partners allocate appropriate funding for an engagement coordinator.
7. Strategies to connect with those who are potentially vulnerable, isolated and/or new residents can be identified.
 - E.g. Low income and struggling families are able to participate in local programming and activities through fee and equipment waivers.
8. Out-of-school (e.g. after-school, weekend) opportunities for children and youth are accessible, affordable and support healthy relationships.
 - E.g. Local organizations and community centres offer free, open space for children and youth to gather and participate in recreation or homework help during out-of-school time, including after school hours and weekends.
9. Residents and families are given opportunities to share their culture, values, traditions, etc. with other members of their neighbourhood.
 - E.g. Local schools or community centres host open houses regularly where families can share their culture with each other, including pot-lucks and game nights, enabling other residents and families to learn about each other’s traditions.
10. Opportunities and activities are inclusive with respect to age, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, and language abilities.
 - E.g. Development of intergenerational opportunities and activities may help in decreasing the number of community members, including seniors, that are socially isolated.
11. Opportunities and activities are low cost and accessible.
 - E.g. Community Association or Community League memberships are affordable

by offering a fee model through community engagement or volunteer support.

12. Community leaders consider innovative approaches to recognizing contribution and participation of community members to encourage connections, promote new opportunities and events, recruit more volunteers, etc.
 - E.g. Community leadership provides adequate resources, support and opportunities for residents to come forward with new ideas regarding events, activities, and infrastructure. Leadership and engagement coordinators work with residents to overcome any potential barriers, including grant applications and potential bylaw or policy implications.
13. Community participants are purposefully recruited, utilized, supported and recognized.
 - E.g. Volunteers and resident champions are supported by community leadership by providing adequate resources, and building off of their skill set and interests.
14. Residents and families feel confident and safe to make use of public spaces within the community, such as parks, playgrounds, and cafes.
 - E.g. Block connectors create opportunities for neighbours to meet and get to know each other, such as block parties, building a sense of trust enabling parents to feel confident letting their children to play outside during out-of-school hours.
15. Youth are seen to engage in public spaces within the community.
 - E.g. Community planners create green spaces within neighbourhoods enabling opportunities for play, gathering and outdoor activities.
16. There are safe, unsupervised activities within the community that children and youth can participate in.
 - E.g. Community centres and local organizations provide safe spaces for children and youth. These spaces can be supervised or unsupervised. based approaches were identified, many of which can be addressed through strategy and planning. Evidence and stakeholder feedback indicate support for policy and practice recommendations, the development of indicators to assess natural supports.