

CARE Strategy

A Framework for Action

Table of Contents

Purpose of Framework.....2

Understanding Children and Youth of Immigrant Families.....3

Where we want to be: Vision, Mission, and Guiding Principles.....4

Framework.....5

How we get there: Spheres of Expertise and Action Plan for Success6

Your Role in Implementing the Framework8

Moving Forward.....10



Purpose of the Framework

Children and youth of immigrant families will experience socio-economic, academic, and cultural success if they have access to culturally competent, accessible, coordinated, and research-informed services. This Framework is Calgary's strategy for enhancing the system of support for children and youth of immigrant families. It is intended to provide a common reference on which to plan ongoing strategic work.

The CARE Strategy Framework for Action includes a set of values and strategies to guide collaborative work among government, funders, immigrant-serving agencies, broad-based agencies, and public institutions in the creation of an accessible, coordinated, and culturally competent continuum of quality services for children and youth of immigrant families.



As we consider the powerful role of funders, government, service-provider organizations, public institutions, and community members in contributing to the well-being of children and youth of immigrant families, attention must be placed on collaborative actions that strengthen cross-cutting protective factors for children and youth of immigrant families. The central tenet of CARE Strategy is that isolated impact will not make much difference to the continuum of social issues faced by children and youth of immigrant families if all parts of the continuum do not improve at the same time – **Everyone** shares responsibility for the well-being of children and youth of immigrant families.



Children and Youth of Immigrant Families Face Significant Challenges

Growing cultural diversity has transformed the population of school-aged children and youth. The number of identified ESL students in Alberta tripled between 1988 and 2008ⁱ. By 2016, approximately 33% of children and youth aged 0 – 14 years and 36% of youth aged 15 – 25 years in Calgary will be members of visible minority groupsⁱⁱ. As cultural diversity among Calgary's school-aged children and youth continues to grow, attention must be paid to the socio-economic, academic and cultural well-being of children and youth of immigrant families.

Academic Underachievement

Of growing concern is academic underachievement in children and youth of immigrant families. In 2006, 17% or 26,810 of Calgary's youth between the ages of 15-24 had neither English nor French as their first language. The high school drop out rate for English-as-a-Second Language (ESL) students in Calgary was especially high at 60 - 75% of the total ESL student populationⁱⁱⁱ. In addition, many teachers in Alberta have limited experience working with diverse populations and have little or no training in how to adapt curriculum content to accommodate culturally diverse learner^{iv}. Youth that leave the education system are more likely to receive social assistance, to be in poor health, to experience poor family functioning, to commit crimes, to abuse drugs and alcohol, to become parents in adolescence, and to have dependent children^v.



Social Exclusion and Lack of an Empowering Ethnic Identity

Many children and youth of immigrant families also experience social isolation and lack an empowering ethnic identity. The settlement and integration process pose culture shock and adaptation issues that can be compounded by family separation, difficulties in forming cross-ethnic friendships, diaspora politics and imported conflicts, lack of access to culturally appropriate services and programs, and systemic alienation and discrimination. Many youth from refugee camps have witnessed or experienced violence that can lead to post-traumatic stress; this impacts the ability of refugee children and youth to learn and adapt. The combination of these factors and the resultant feelings of discontent are all risk factors for violence as well as poverty^{vi}.



Where we want to be

Vision:

Children and youth of immigrant families in Calgary will achieve improved quality of life

Mission:

Calgary Communities work collaboratively to enhance and coordinate strategies that promote the positive socio-economic, academic and cultural well-being of children and youth from immigrant families

Guiding Principles:

We believe children and youth of immigrant families:

- will succeed in all facets of life when given opportunities
- will contribute and benefit society as a whole
- will benefit from a multi-sectoral collaborative approach needed to cultivate their overall well-being and integration
- provide important views that their participation in decision making enhances programs and services
- have rich cultures and traditions that must be acknowledged, celebrated, and shared
- have a right to experience equitable and accessible programs and services

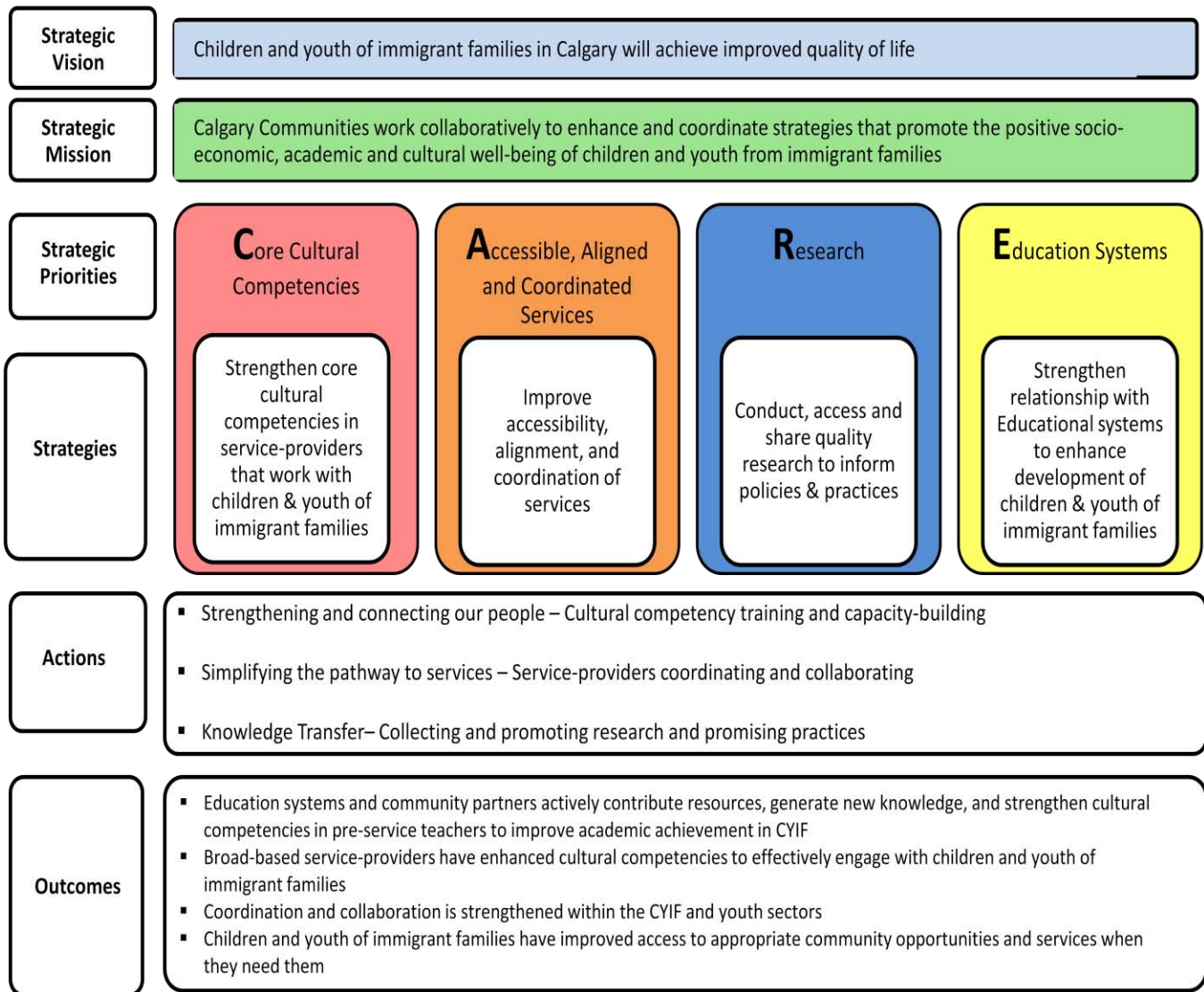
We also believe:

- research and knowledge of best practices of services for children and youth of immigrant families must be generated and shared
- individuals, families, communities and governments share responsibility for the well-being of children and youth of immigrant families

Framework:

The following Framework is intended to guide collaborative work, frame discussions and planning, provide a practical approach to organizing activities, and support the identification of priorities.

**CARE Strategy for Children and Youth of Immigrant Families
Framework**



How we get there: Spheres of Expertise

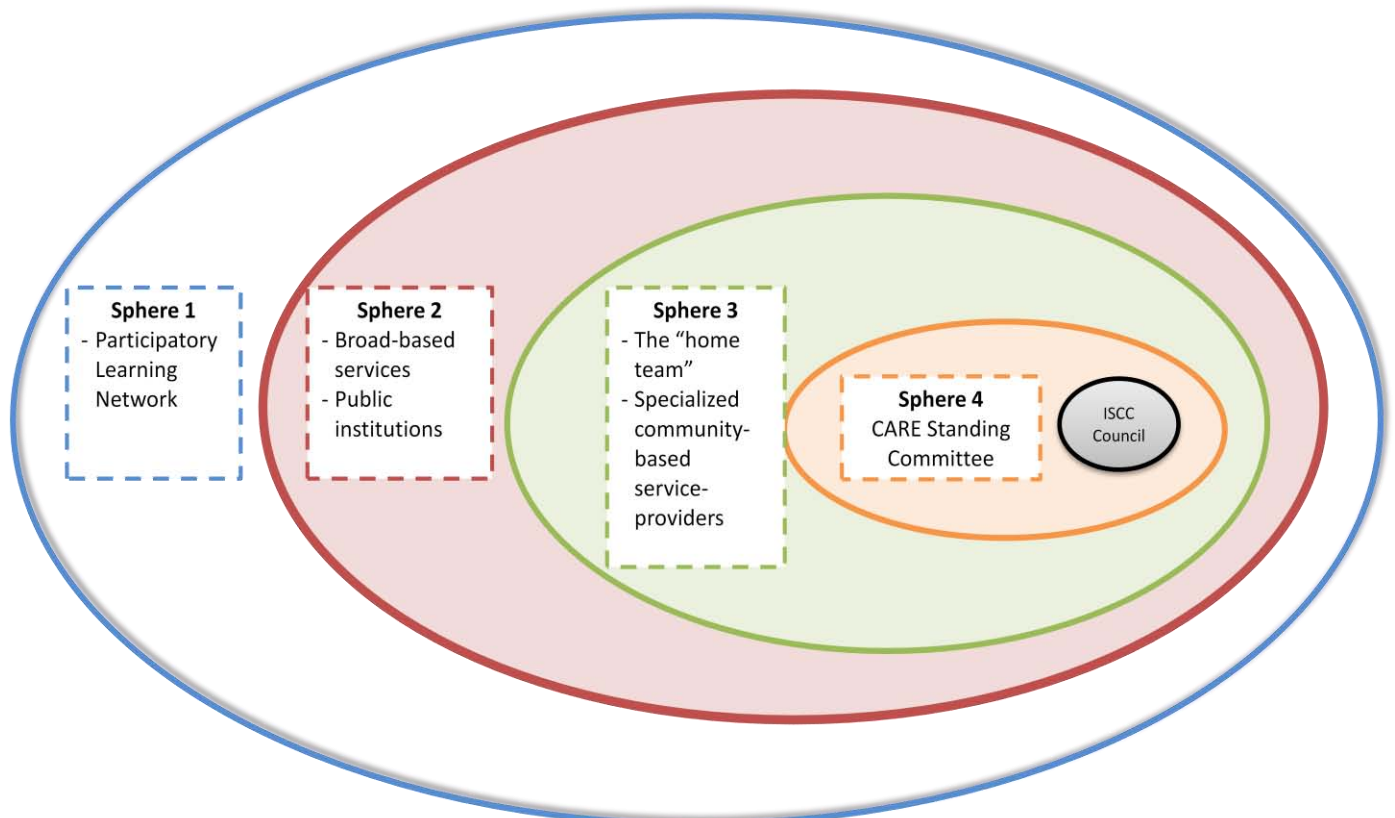
The service-delivery system is organized into spheres representing the many layers of expertise available to children and youth of immigrant families. This helps to reduce gaps in services and increase coordination and collaboration among service providers so that children and youth of immigrant families have access to appropriate services.

Sphere 1 providers contribute to CARE Strategy initiatives and engage in participatory learning events.

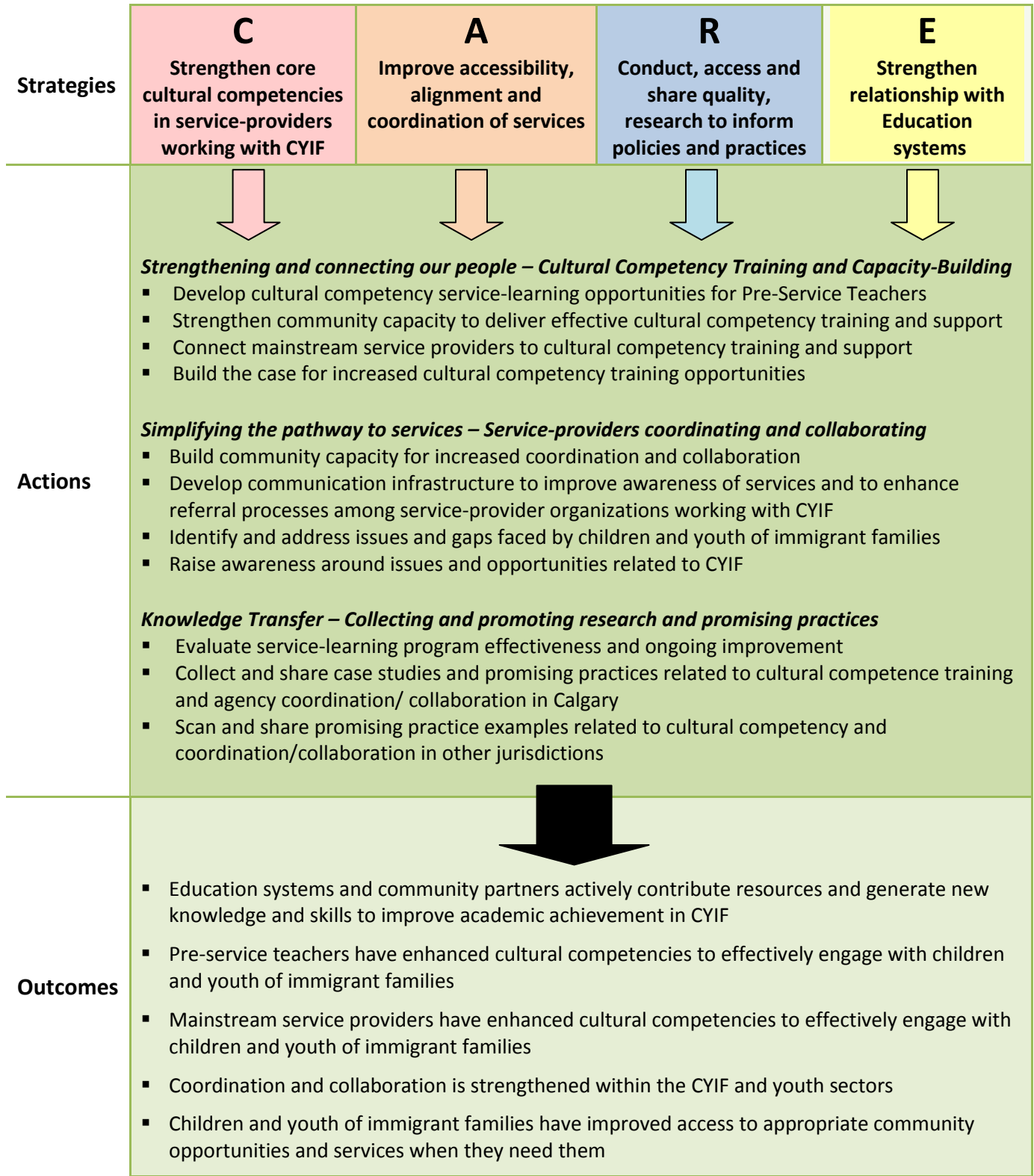
Sphere 2 providers have a great breadth of knowledge and provide general services which are available to all children and families in Calgary. This group includes public health practitioners, social workers, and teachers.

Sphere 3 providers are the “home team” for children and youth of immigrant families. They are specialized community-based service-providers who have significant knowledge and expertise in the settlement and integration process. This group includes settlement workers, critical-hours programmers that work specifically with immigrant and refugee populations, and ESL teachers.

Sphere 4 convenes leaders in key child and youth sectors to collectively improve the quality of life for children and youth of immigrant families. The CARE Strategy Standing Committee is a unique coordinating body that can provide strategic leadership to other spheres of expertise.



How we get there: Action Plan for Success



Your Role in Implementing the Framework

At the Community Level...

Communities take into account the views, knowledge and expertise of a range of people and organizations – an important first step in planning effective action. It is at the community level, in all sectors, that the voices of children and youth of immigrant families are heard most directly. This is where families live and the child’s “home team” resides. Work at this level depends on the unique needs, strengths and capacities of each community, including the existing knowledge base, relationships, and current work underway relating to children and youth of immigrant families.



At the Organizational Level...

The role at the organizational level is one of leadership, developing organizational policies and practices, coordinating across organizations and with communities, and supporting implementation of community and regional initiatives.



At the Regional level...

The role at the regional level is one of strategic planning, setting priorities, coordinating across sectors and with communities, and supporting implementation of regional and community initiatives.



What we can all do

Engage

- Engage in discussions about services for children and youth of immigrant families, the CARE Strategy Framework for Action and its potential uses
- Establish, strengthen, and support cross-sectoral planning tables, community coalitions and networks with a focus on children and youth of immigrant families

Implement

- Provide programs and services congruent with CARE Strategy's Strategic Priorities
- Use the Framework's vision, mission, values and strategies to identify priorities for collaborative work
- Promote effective partnerships, improve collaboration, and increase communication across sectors

Empower

- Involve youth and families in discussions, planning, and implementation

Educate

- Enlarge the circle of people and organizations that understand the issues and are committed to developing solutions
- Share expertise, knowledge, and strategic priorities across sectors and between community, regional, and provincial levels.

Moving forward

While partnerships, networks, and other types of joint efforts are common approaches for anyone involved in supporting children and youth of immigrant families, the CARE Strategy Framework for Action involves a centralized infrastructure, a dedicated staff, and a structured process that leads to a common agenda, shared measurement, continuous communication, and mutually reinforcing activities among all partners.

Organizations, communities, and regional stakeholders are encouraged to use this document to guide all aspects of priority setting, actions, reporting, and evaluation. Determined, action-focused collaboration can lead to an accessible, coordinated, and culturally competent continuum of quality services for children and youth of immigrant families.



For more information:

Immigrant Sector Council of Calgary, CARE Strategy

www.isccalgary.ca

care@iscc-calgary.ca

(403) 403-263-1881

ⁱ Ngo, Hieu. Evaluation of ESL Education in Alberta; and Cultural Competence in Alberta Schools, 2009.

ⁱⁱ Cooper, Merrill. Demographic Trends and Implications for the City of Calgary. Canadian Policy Research Networks: 2006.

ⁱⁱⁱ Cooper, Merrill. The Best Start is Finishing: Overcoming the Educational Challenges Faced by Calgary's Youth. Multiple Funders, 2008.

Mujawamariya, Donatille, Gada Mahrouse. *Multicultural Education in Canadian Preservice Programs: Teacher Candidates' Perspectives*. The Alberta Journal of Educational Research, 2004.

Watt, David & Hetty Roessingh. The Dynamics of ESL Drop Out: Plus Ça Change. The Canadian Modern Language Review, 2001.

^{iv} Government of Alberta: Education. (n.d.). *Report and Recommendations: Review and improve current preservice programs for teachers to ensure that they provide excellent preparation for Alberta's beginning teachers*. Retrieved September 7, 2011, from <http://education.alberta.ca/departement/ipr/archive/commission/report/highlights/keydir/excellent.aspx>

Guo, Y., Lund, D. E., & Arthur, N. (2009). *My Culture, Your Culture: What Pre-service Teachers Say about Intercultural Competence*. University of Calgary: Prairie Metropolis Centre.

^v Cooper, Merrill. The Best Start is Finishing: Overcoming the Educational Challenges Faced by Calgary's Youth. Multiple Funders, 2008.

^{vi} Pruegger, Valerie et al. Inequality in Calgary: The Racialization of Poverty. City of Calgary, 2009.

Ngo, Hieu Van. Unravelling Identities and Belonging: Criminal Gang Involvement of Youth from Immigrant Families. 2011.

Rossiter, Marian J. & Katherine R. Rossiter. *Immigrant youth and crime: Stakeholder perspectives on risk and protective factors*. Metropolis Working Paper No. WP02-09, 2009.