

**WATERLOO REGION'S**

# **VitalSigns<sup>®</sup>**

Opportunity or Challenge?



Setting out on the right foot is extremely important for the future success of our community's newcomers, children, and youth. Their accomplishments are reliant on our combined power to welcome and integrate them into our community and workforce.

The third annual **Waterloo Region's Vital Signs** report, a snapshot on the quality of life in our Region, told us that our community's investment in child care and the number of child care spaces are on a slow rise but are not keeping pace with Ontario and Canada.

Ensuring that our children are adequately prepared to become active and engaged citizens is vital for any community. They should have every opportunity to be healthy, safe, and successful.

As noted by the Parliamentary Information and Research Service, "Canada lags behind many of its counterparts with regard to early childhood development programs, both in terms of GDP spent on public funding of early childhood education and care and in terms of enrolment of children in preschool education."

If this is the case, the situation is even more worrisome for Waterloo Region. While investment in child care increased by 2.5% between 2006 and 2007 in the Region, Ontario's investment increased by 26%. And, we only have 104 child care spaces per 1,000 children in comparison to the 136 per 1,000 children seen across the province.

These numbers are cause for real concern. Investment in child care benefits more than just the parents and the children. Society stands to gain as well from economic productivity, lower social services costs, and future improvements to childhood development.

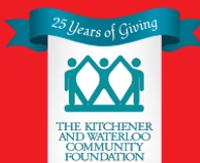
Positive experiences are important in determining how well a child can enjoy life and directly impact upon their sense of self worth. Children are more apt to flourish in communities that meet their developmental needs. And as you can guess, their quality of life can be hampered when poor supports are experienced.

Be a voice for our youngest citizens. When we invest in our children, we are investing in our future.

*The 2009 Waterloo Region's Vital Signs report was released on October 6th. Check out [www.wrvitalsigns.ca](http://www.wrvitalsigns.ca) for a pdf of the report or call us at 519.725.1806 to receive a copy.*

**Waterloo Region's Vital Signs is an annual checkup through which The Kitchener and Waterloo Community Foundation and the Cambridge & North Dumfries Community Foundation measure the vitality of our Region, identify significant trends, and invite community supporters to assign grades in 11 key areas critical to Waterloo Region's quality of life.**

Community foundations provide a simple, powerful, and highly personal approach to giving and help others to make a lasting difference in their community.



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RECORD**