Good Children's Policy is Good for Citizenship

July 27, 2001 – Citizenship is a great deal more than the periodic right to vote in elections. It involves, as Jane Jenson has pointed out, three aspects; rights and responsibilities, access, and feelings of belonging. Full citizenship is impaired by an absence or inadequacy in any one of these three.

Seen in that light, a situation where parents are saddled with child-rearing responsibilities, and inadequate resources to carry them out, can have an impact on access to full citizenship in more ways than one. The ability of the parents to engage actively in the exercise of their citizenship is restricted, and the chance of their children getting the start in life they need to grow into fully active citizens is also at risk.

Clearly, this example is simplistic, insofar as there are many more ramifications for the community and society that make the persistence of poorly resourced parenthood a social ill. But the link between a "best policy mix" aimed at giving all children a positive start on the road to becoming independent and healthy adults and the goal of full and active citizenship is worth underlining.

The Manager of the Family Network, Sharon Stroick, makes that connection in "The Best Policy Mix for Children: A Pathway to Citizenship", a presentation she made in June to the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association's "Learning Symposium 2001".

You can access or download a Powerpoint version of her remarks by clicking here.

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