

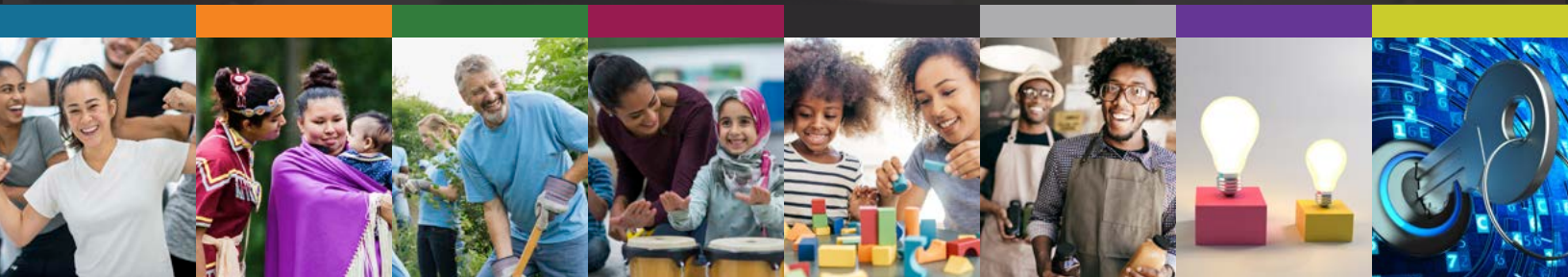


Sector Insights

SUPPORTING CHILD VOICE THROUGH THE ARTS

*Spotlight on the Hamilton Charter
of Rights for Children and Youth*

An interview with Victoria Long-Wincza,
Program Manager of Culture for Kids in the Arts



EXCERPTS FROM AN INTERVIEW WITH VICTORIA LONG-WINCZA, PROGRAM MANAGER OF CULTURE FOR KIDS IN THE ARTS.

What is Culture for Kids in the Arts?

[Culture for Kids in the Arts](#) (CKA) is a charitable arts education organization committed to arts access for all children in the greater Hamilton region. Founded in 1999 by Vitek Wincza, CKA together with professional, emerging and apprentice artist educators delivers innovative performance, visual and media arts programming to children and youth in partnership with community agencies.

Why did you focus your work on the middle years age group?

CKA's work spans across all age groups, but a concentration of our work is with middle years children. CKA has focused on the middle years because we believe art is a part of the healthy development of all children. Accessing arts can support the language development of expressing oneself in the world.

How did you engage middle years children in your work?

CKA's work maintains an emphasis on introductory approaches to the arts. This approach moves away from skill-based outcomes and instead listens to and collaborates with children to co-construct learning together. Arts introduction is about feeling good, connecting to the world and expressing ideas.

An example of CKA's work is [the Hamilton Charter of Rights of Children and Youth](#). CKA in collaboration with the City of Hamilton and a number of early years community partners, engaged community children in a series of arts activities to learn what they valued and thought was important for all children. The thoughts of over 2000 children informed the development of the renewed and city-endorsed charter, while their artwork helped the children communicate these rights to their families, service providers and the community. Released in 2015, the charter supports the goal of making Hamilton the best place to raise a child and the best place to be a child.

“THIS APPROACH MOVES AWAY FROM SKILL-BASED OUTCOMES AND INSTEAD LISTENS TO AND COLLABORATES WITH CHILDREN TO CO-CONSTRUCT LEARNING TOGETHER.”

ART ACTIVITY

With permission from the child and their parent or caregiver, upload a picture of a middle years child's artwork on a right they believe all children should have.

**“CHILDREN’S
VOICES ARE
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CONTRIBUTING
CITIZENS.”**

Why was the active engagement of middle years children important to your work?

By engaging middle years children in this work it connects them to the world and provides them with opportunities to express their ideas. Critical skills to becoming an open, active, engaged citizen.

Building on work with Dr. Renee Jackson, arts education matters because artists pay close attention to the world, they question it, reflect deeply about it and express ideas back into it - these capacities are important to everything - living life, science, politics, engineering and more.

What did you learn from the children who contributed?

Children’s voices are poignant and relevant. Children are equally contributing citizens.

What advice would you give others working with middle years children?

Learn how to listen. Observe and make meaning of the learning.

CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION

You can continue the conversation on the Knowledge Centre www.otf.ca/knowledge/promising-young-people

CKA’S ACTIVITY

To discover what else Culture for Kids in the Arts is up to, visit their website at www.ckarts.ca/what-we-do/

CHARTER DEVELOPMENTS

To learn more about the development of the Hamilton Charter of Rights of Children and Youth check out the Journal of Childhood Studies’ article [“Of, Not For...”: The Evolving Recognition of Children’s Rights in a Community](#)

