



Starting Early:

Creating Child-Friendly Downtowns

Illinois Main Street Annual Conference

October 26, 2011

Carol J. Dyson, AIA

Senior Preservation Architect

Illinois Historic Preservation Agency

1 Old State Capitol Plaza

Springfield, IL 62701

Carol.Dyson@Illinois.gov



Starting Early: Creating Child-Friendly Downtowns
Carol J. Dyson www.IllinoisHistory.gov/StartingEarly.htm

For more information, resources
and pictures please go to:

[www.IllinoisHistory.gov/
StartingEarly.htm](http://www.IllinoisHistory.gov/StartingEarly.htm)



Starting Early: Creating Child-Friendly Downtowns
Carol J. Dyson www.IllinoisHistory.gov/StartingEarly.htm

Children belong on Main Street



Burlington, VT, Photo:
Mike Jackson

But do we
welcome children
downtown?



Starting Early: Creating Child-Friendly Downtowns
Carol J. Dyson www.IllinoisHistory.gov/StartingEarly.htm

Main Street FOUR POINT APPROACH

- o Organize
- o Economics
- o Promotions
- o Design Solutions



Starting Early: Creating Child-Friendly Downtowns
Carol J. Dyson www.IllinoisHistory.gov/StartingEarly.htm

ORGANIZATION



Starting Early: Creating Child-Friendly Downtowns
Carol J. Dyson www.IllinoisHistory.gov/StartingEarly.htm

ORGANIZATION

- o Who will take the lead?
- o Do you have a student member of any committees or board?
 - *Orion, Illinois does!*
- o How are you tied-in with schools?
- o Vandalia used to tie in with 4th graders

Starting Early: Creating Child-Friendly Downtowns
 Carol J. Dyson www.IllinoisHistory.gov/StartingEarly.htm

Volunteers

- Junior Main Street
- Board Members
- Event support

Starting Early: Creating Child-Friendly Downtowns
 Carol J. Dyson www.IllinoisHistory.gov/StartingEarly.htm

ECONOMIC BENEFITS

Starting Early: Creating Child-Friendly Downtowns
 Carol J. Dyson www.IllinoisHistory.gov/StartingEarly.htm

ECONOMIC BENEFITS

- What are the economic benefits for a downtown to become child-friendly?



Starting Early: Creating Child-Friendly Downtowns
 Carol J. Dyson www.IllinoisHistory.gov/StartingEarly.htm

47% of American household spending kids influence!

- **Children under 14** influenced as much as 47% of American household spending in 2005, amounting to
 - > \$700 billion
 - @40 billion children's own spending
 - @330 billion in *direct* influence
 - @330 billion in *indirect* influence

James McNeal, as quoted in the Economist

Starting Early: Creating Child-Friendly Downtowns
 Carol J. Dyson www.IllinoisHistory.gov/StartingEarly.htm

Economic Benefits of Child-Friendly Downtowns

- Become a destination
- Build customer loyalty
- Gain enthusiastic marketers

Starting Early: Creating Child-Friendly Downtowns
 Carol J. Dyson www.IllinoisHistory.gov/StartingEarly.htm

Starting Early: Building Loyalty

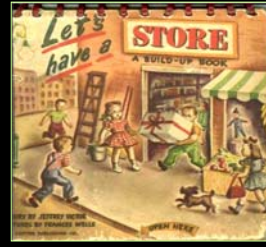
When you are **Child-Friendly** you are **ALSO** building Tomorrow's

- Customer Base
- Main Street & Downtown Supporters
- Volunteers
- Downtown Residents

How do we create Child-Friendly Downtowns?

- We have an advantage

Children Like Shopping



PROMOTION

EDUCATION K-12 Walking Tours/Scavenger Hunts



Dana Whiteman, Vandalia Main Street,
Former Director, leading a tour

Integration with K-12 Curriculum: Architeacher



Photo: Architeacher in Downtown Champaign, IL
2008 (Architeacher.org)

Build Your Own Main Street and Build Your Own Lincoln Sites



Student Artists



From RMDGallery.com

- o Art Stars, Springfield, IL
- o >100 k-12 students works are framed & displayed (Feb and April)
- o RMD Gallery has on site voting for a month (800+)

District 186 Art Stars

- o Owner Rob DeLong:
"We do this because we love to watch the kids as they see their artwork, framed and on the wall of a real gallery. Their sense of pride is tangible."
- o Rob's set up similar programs elsewhere in Illinois and in Iowa.
www.RMDgallery.com
(Rob@RMDgallery.com)



PROMOTION: Child-Friendly Events – Parades, Fairs

Child-Friendly Holiday Events



Seattle, WA

Photo: From WestSeattleblog.com

Outdoor Films



Farmers' Markets



Farmer's Market, Springfield, 2006

Child-Friendly Activities

Tie- in live performances, recitals with restaurants or other businesses

IN-STORE PROMOTIONS

Organized Playgroups, Birthday Parties



photo from www.Jenhall.typepad.com

CHILD FRIENDLY RESTAURANTS

Child Friendly Restaurants

- Sturdy & Clean High Chairs
- Kid-sized Table and Chairs
- Booster Seats are Not as Good.



Koala Kare Products

Provide Activities



Famous Dave's Restaurant, Champaign, IL 2004

Parent Play – Children Entertained



In NYC. Website of www.ParentPlay.com

CHILD FRIENDLY RETAIL & SERVICE BUSINESSES

Parent and Child Cross-Marketing



Service & Attitude

- Be welcoming to parents and children
- Greet Children
- Help the parent find things
- Have a child activity area
- Open doors for a parent with kids
- Train staff
- Offer to carry purchases to the car
- Child friendly restrooms

DESIGN

Universal Design



From: Partners in Shrewsbury

Starting Early: Creating Child-Friendly Downtowns
Carol J. Dyson www.IllinoisHistory.gov/StartingEarly.htm

Welcoming Window Display



Starting Early: Creating Child-Friendly Downtowns
Carol J. Dyson www.IllinoisHistory.gov/StartingEarly.htm

Playfulness



Starting Early: Creating Child-Friendly Downtowns
Carol J. Dyson www.IllinoisHistory.gov/StartingEarly.htm

Bulkhead Window Display



Vermont Storefront.
Photo: Mike Jackson

Starting Early: Creating Child-Friendly Downtowns
Carol J. Dyson www.IllinoisHistory.gov/StartingEarly.htm

Interior Access



Great accessible interior Geneva

Starting Early: Creating Child-Friendly Downtowns
Carol J. Dyson www.IllinoisHistory.gov/StartingEarly.htm

Child sized table and chairs



Book store, Oak Park

Starting Early: Creating Child-Friendly Downtowns
Carol J. Dyson www.IllinoisHistory.gov/StartingEarly.htm

Restrooms

- Provide a restroom for parents with kids
- Cleanliness is next to Godliness
- Stepstool
- Changing table

Changing Tables



Family Restrooms

- All ages and all sexes who need assistance



Activity Areas



Apple knows how to do it

Activity Table



Play Panels



From: Child Friendly Solutions, Australia

CHILD-FRIENDLY EXTERIOR ENVIRONMENTS

Starting Early: Creating Child-Friendly Downtowns
Carol J. Dyson www.IllinoisHistory.gov/StartingEarly.htm

Playgrounds: Malls get it



Danbury Fair Mall, CT

Starting Early: Creating Child-Friendly Downtowns
Carol J. Dyson www.IllinoisHistory.gov/StartingEarly.htm

Why not a downtown playground?



Boulder, CO Photo: Mike Jackson

Starting Early: Creating Child-Friendly Downtowns
Carol J. Dyson www.IllinoisHistory.gov/StartingEarly.htm

Climbable Sculpture



Chicago, IL photo Mike Jackson

Starting Early: Creating Child-Friendly Downtowns
Carol J. Dyson www.IllinoisHistory.gov/StartingEarly.htm

Touchable Sculpture



Starting Early: Creating Child-Friendly Downtowns
Carol J. Dyson www.IllinoisHistory.gov/StartingEarly.htm

Water & Kids



Boulder, CO, photo: Mike Jackson

Starting Early: Creating Child-Friendly Downtowns
Carol J. Dyson www.IllinoisHistory.gov/StartingEarly.htm

Main Street Ice Rink



Photo: Genoa Main Street program

CHILD-FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENTS: ACCESS

Stroller-Friendly Downtown



Stroller Rentals



Miami's Baby Stroller Auto Parking

How To Get a Baby Stroller Parking Permit
By Renee Chapple, About.com

[baby permit](#) [miami driving](#) [miami government](#)



... baby is never a task most mothers find a little easier when you get to park in a stroller spot! Here's how you can get a baby permit.



Sponsored Links
[Parking Permit](#)
Great deals on everything Parking Permit themed.

1. You must have a baby.^{Microsoft} The back of the permit states that it can only be used "when traveling with a baby and a stroller."



CHILD-FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENTS - STREETScape

Starting Early: Creating Child-Friendly Downtowns
Carol J. Dyson www.IllinoisHistory.gov/StartingEarly.htm

Universal Design



Universal Design Means
Accessibility for All

Starting Early: Creating Child-Friendly Downtowns
Carol J. Dyson www.IllinoisHistory.gov/StartingEarly.htm

Traffic Calming



Starting Early: Creating Child-Friendly Downtowns
Carol J. Dyson www.IllinoisHistory.gov/StartingEarly.htm

Pedestrian Safety



Starting Early: Creating Child-Friendly Downtowns
Carol J. Dyson www.IllinoisHistory.gov/StartingEarly.htm

Perceived Safety

- Well lit downtown
- Placement of businesses/social services
- Visual Connections

Starting Early: Creating Child-Friendly Downtowns
Carol J. Dyson www.IllinoisHistory.gov/StartingEarly.htm

CHILD-FRIENDLY CITIES

Starting Early: Creating Child-Friendly Downtowns
Carol J. Dyson www.IllinoisHistory.gov/StartingEarly.htm

Livable Cities



29th Annual Livability Awards

Sustainable Cities

- Sustainable downtown residency includes families

Children Living Downtown Need:

- Daycare
- Schools
- Activities
- Safe outdoor space
 - Explore
 - Bike
 - Skateboard

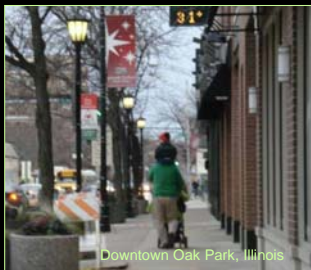
Seattle Friendly Urban Neighborhoods (FUN)

- 2004, Seattle Mayor Greg Nickell's Center City Seattle strategy included
- Family-Friendly Urban Neighborhoods (FUN) Project:
 - Affordable family-friendly housing
 - Web site to connect families
 - Transportation options for children
 - Downtown public schools

Seattle FUN

- "What we're trying to have success with is families actually living downtown so that their presence is not there just on a special occasion or just for special events but on a daily basis"
 - Cheryl Sizov, a senior urban planner in Seattle's Department of Planning and Development.

Get the Word Out About Your Child-Friendly Downtown



Pontiac, IL

Starting Early: Creating Child-Friendly Downtowns
 Carol J. Dyson www.IllinoisHistory.gov/StartingEarly.htm

CHILD-FRIENDLY 2.0 Parent Networking

- Social
- Travel
- Services
- Retail
- Dining
- Activities



Starting Early: Creating Child-Friendly Downtowns
 Carol J. Dyson www.IllinoisHistory.gov/StartingEarly.htm

Resources

For more info. please go to:
www.IllinoisHistory.gov/StartingEarly.htm



Starting Early: Creating Child-Friendly Downtowns
 Carol J. Dyson www.IllinoisHistory.gov/StartingEarly.htm

What we all can do

- Assess the Child-Friendliness of our Downtowns
- Create Universal Accessibility
- Increase Pedestrian Safety
- Promote your Child-Friendliness

Starting Early: Creating Child-Friendly Downtowns
 Carol J. Dyson www.IllinoisHistory.gov/StartingEarly.htm

What we all can do

- Welcome Children when they come
 - Ask if you can help a parent
 - Hold a door for a dad pushing a stroller
 - Give up a seat on a bench for a tired mom with kids
 - Smile and welcome them all to our downtowns –

Remember *they are the future of our Downtowns!*

Thank You!
 and...



www.IllinoisHistory.Gov/StartingEarly.htm

Starting Early: Creating Child-Friendly Downtowns

Carol J. Dyson, AIA
 Senior Preservation Architect

Illinois Historic Preservation Agency
 CarolDyson@Illinois.gov

www.IllinoisHistory.Gov/StartingEarly.htm