

Starting Early: Creating Child-Friendly Downtowns

Illinois Statewide Main Street Conference

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Why Should Your Main Street be Child-Friendly?

Loyalty: Welcome them today and they will support Main Street tomorrow

Children are active consumers and enthusiastic participants in the tapestry of Main Street. Children enhance the vibrancy and diversity of downtowns. Today their continued participation is more important than ever. Downtowns that welcome children today will ensure the continuity of future generations of Main Street owners, shoppers, volunteers, and residents.

Good Design: Child-Friendly design benefits everybody

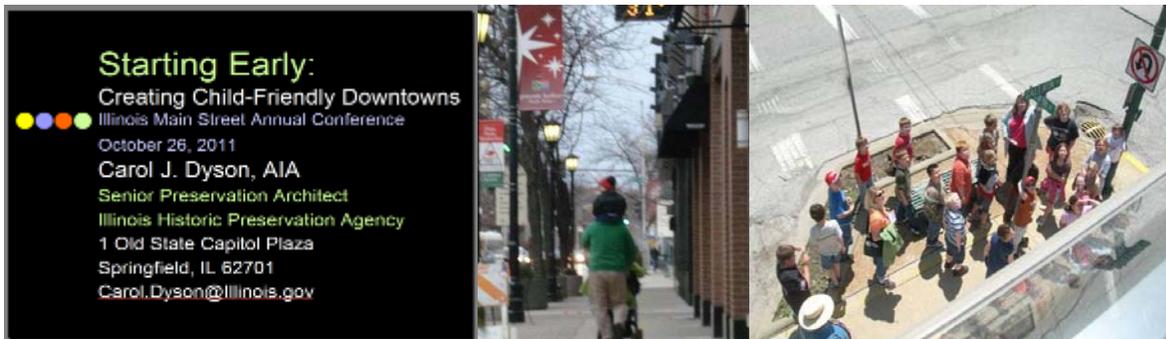
Downtowns should be welcoming to all. Traffic-calmed streets, stroller-accessible sidewalks, play-area pocket parks, and other child-friendly amenities will encourage parents to frequent your downtown. The same pedestrian-safety features and accessible designs that benefit children and families benefit all of us. Child-friendly downtown-design is attractive to families, persons with disabilities, retirees, and tourists.

Economic Opportunity: An often overlooked market

From an economic perspective, Main Streets today should not overlook the significant purchasing power of the parent and child. Creating parent-friendly retail encourages longer more relaxed shopping trips. Child-friendly restaurants and coffee shops can bring families to your downtown. Child-Friendly promotions bring the whole family to Main Street. Encourage busy parents to patronize your downtown rather than the neighboring mall or online. Meanwhile, you are developing the Main Street supporters of tomorrow by welcoming them today.

Marketing: Parents and youth will be your advocate

Parents and youth develop significant information networks, both by informal word of mouth and on the web. Work with local schools and organizations to bring volunteer students downtown, or even better to serve on your board. Create a child-friendly downtown and families will spread the word about your welcoming Main Street.



To learn more about Creating:

- **Child-Friendly Retail, Restaurants and Attractions**
- **Child-Friendly Marketing, Promotion and Education**
- **Child-Friendly Downtown Design**
- **Child-Friendly Cities**

Please go to the Illinois Historic Preservation website to see pictures, examples, and learn more about the creating Child-Friendly Downtowns:

www.IllinoisHistory.gov/StartingEarly.htm

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