

**Who We Are:**

The FHL: Football Hockey Link is a non-profit organization that is committed to supporting the integration of culturally diverse children and youth into Canadian society by facilitating their involvement in Canadian football and hockey associations.

This is done by introducing Canadian football and hockey to children of diverse backgrounds through a barrier-free initiation program and then providing necessary support to link them to the sports association in their community. FHL was founded in 2010 after successfully completing a pilot project in the summer of 2009.

Critical Issues/Difference this Program will Make:

It is well known the benefits of sports for children; any children who experience exclusion, intimidation, insecurity can find confidence and trust in themselves and others through team sports and the camaraderie that goes with it. Sports can prevent young people from taking a path that is harmful or destructive. FHL believes that these sports could specifically benefit immigrant children and youth based on concerns organizers have heard from immigrant families. To help these children who are trying to integrate into the mainstream culture; hockey and Canadian football, two sports that define Canadian culture, will give these children the sense of inclusion and belonging for the benefit of their development. In addition, FHL is aware of reduced numbers of children registering in hockey and football and that associations have considered the need to engage children of diverse backgrounds.

The Program:

The FHL, with the help of community partners, offers both a football and a hockey camp, free of charge, to a maximum of 50 kids each year. Participants will have an opportunity to learn foundational skills in each sport. This includes understanding the concepts of the sports, basic knowledge of strategy, as well as skating experience for the hockey component. We encourage kids to try both sports through the program, for their future involvement in one of these sports. FHL helps families with transportation, equipment and other necessities for participation.

Role of the FHL:

- Engage culturally diverse communities to recruit kids
- Hold meetings with parents/kids to explain the program, benefits and establish commitment
- Engage community partners:
 - Transportation
 - Sports leagues/associations
 - Local businesses
 - Community volunteers
 - Schools

- Public relations/education with associations and stakeholders in order to create a common understanding and goal of integrating culturally diverse kids into mainstream associations
- Facilitate the link for culturally diverse families into the sports associations
- Support sports associations in communication and registration with the families
- Promotion of the program
- Acknowledgement of community partners, sponsors and supporters
- On-going evaluation and development of program