



NEWS BULLETIN

monthly news for family resource program providers

April 2007

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION FOR FAMILY RESOURCE PROGRAM STAFF

The Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) recently awarded a \$750,000 grant to the BC Association of Family Resource Programs (FRP-BC) to further two projects that will enable family resource programs (FRPs) to support adults in their role as parents and improve family functioning.

The one-time investment will be used to develop post-secondary courses that will strengthen the ability of staff to provide meaningful support to families with young children within the FRP setting. FRP workers require specialized skills focused on helping parents with a wide range of family issues such as adapting to a new country and culture, separation and divorce, family violence, economic stress and mental health issues. Recent research conducted through the *Best Practices Project* indicated relevant education and training as the next step to achieving the overall goal of ensuring quality practices throughout the family resource program sector.

Working with the Justice Institute of BC for the past year, FRP-BC has developed an FRP certificate program which includes six two-day courses. The grant from MCFD provides the necessary funding to complete the course writing and develop an ongoing plan for course delivery both on site and on line. The initial pilot is scheduled for Fall 2007 at the downtown Justice Institute campus.

FRP-BC AIMS FOR PROVINCIAL STANDARDS IN FAMILY RESOURCE PROGRAMS

The one-time grant will also be used to create a Policy and Procedure Manual as the foundation for the development of provincial standards. While other sectors have access to a formal process of accreditation to both assess and improve their service delivery, FRPs because of their historically low funding and unclear mandate have been left out. Province wide standards will ensure quality practice for families, communities, government, researchers and funders. Project details will be forthcoming in future FRP News Bulletins.

FRPS CAN PARTNER IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF STRONGSTART CENTRES

The Ministry of Education recently announced the development of StrongStart Centres in school settings. StrongStart Centres are for parent/caregivers and their young children. The programs are intended to address pre-literacy development through language-rich environments and purposeful play. They are designed to support parents in all domains of their child's development. These centres in many ways mirror family resource programs. In a recent conversation with Carolyn Henson, Early Learning Manager, she encouraged the inclusion of family resource programs in the implementation of StrongStart centres within school districts. Family resource programs should contact their local school board office for information about the development of StrongStart Centres in their district and the potential for partnering. For additional information about StrongStart Centres visit the website: www.bced.gov.bc.ca/literacy/early_learning/ss_centres.htm

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