



# NEWS BULLETIN

Monthly news for Family Resource Program providers

October 2007

## **FAMILY RESOURCE PROGRAMS / STRONGSTART CENTRES: SAME OR DIFFERENT**

The recent commitment of the Ministry of Education to develop StrongStart (SS) Centres for preschool-aged children and their parents or caregivers raises the question of the role of Family Resource Programs (FRPs). The recent Evaluation of StrongStart BC states that SS have emerged “to fill an early learning niche for preschool children not in childcare”.

For over 30 years universal parent-child engagement programs have been offered to families with young children through Family Resource Programs in communities throughout the province. They are grounded in the belief that consistent positive parenting practices and secure, healthy parent-child relationships are fundamental factors in all aspects of healthy child development. Family Resource Programs holistically support families through five core areas of service, of which one of those areas is Early Learning and Literacy. Both StrongStart Centres and Family Resource Programs regard parenting as key to a child’s early learning.

As StrongStart Centres have emerged in school districts, there has been discussion about the similarities and differences between Family Resource Programs and SS Centres. Whether they are mirror images or operate with subtle differences, their objectives both include the physical, social, emotional and language development of young children, and the need to work together is vital. The Ministry of Education is moving into a field in which they have no historical mandate or experience. Their acknowledgement of the importance of parental involvement in children’s early learning is to be celebrated. Family Resource Programs have a long history in providing both formal and informal early learning activities that include both children and their parents. They understand that children do not learn in an unhealthy family environment, and that parents need to be supported as much as their children.

Although the Ministry of Education has asked school districts to co-locate other services with their SS sites and connect with community agencies where possible, this has played out in various ways. In some school districts such as Chilliwack, the development of StrongStart Centres has been collaborative and respectful. Donna Gannon from Chilliwack Community Services states, “We have enjoyed a four-organization formal partnership, initiated by the Family Resource Program sector which includes the school district. The partnership formed the basis for a successful collaboration when our community was approved for its first StrongStart Centre. The commitment of school district staff to this partnership and their respect for existing services has reaped many benefits that have resulted in expanded services for families with young children.” In other school districts there have been concerns and frustrations from Family Resource Programs about the lack of willingness to form meaningful collaborations with the school districts, and there is an inference that the StrongStart model is different.

In the development and implementation of similar initiatives such as Toronto First Duty, collaboration and integration of existing services was incorporated from the onset. The Toronto First Duty model demonstrates how existing early childhood and family programs can be transformed into a system for children 0 - 6 years, providing young children with consistent early learning and development opportunities in the school setting. In 2001, the Toronto First Joint Steering Committee members committed to “the development of new approaches to service delivery through constructive participation and building on the work that has already been done in the early years field”.

Family Resource Programs in BC support the development of StrongStart Centres and should be included in an implementation process that is both collaborative and integrated with the existing ECD services in this province.

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## CAPACITY GRANT UPDATE

As our membership may be aware, the BC Association of Family Resource Programs was awarded a one-time \$1 Million grant from the Ministry of Children and Family Development. The purpose of the funding is to provide capacity grants to support the expansion of quality practice throughout the Family Resource Program sector.

Grant applications will be available in late October for Family Resource Programs in the Northern Region. The BC Association of Family Resource Programs will be forwarding to its Northern members the details, criteria and applications for the Capacity Grants.

Capacity Grants will be available for programs that adhere to eligibility criteria that includes:

- Membership with the BC Association of Family Resource Programs
- Services that comply with the principles of family resource programming
- Services that follow the six valued practices in service delivery
- Ongoing Parent / Child drop-in program as the gateway to a service continuum

The grants will range from \$10,000 - \$20,000 and are one-time only. Applications will be available through two distinct funding streams:

- Funding Stream One - Building Partnerships
- Funding Stream Two - Rural Family Resource Programs

**Information about Capacity Grants for FRPs in the other four regions will be available in 2008**

## PROGRAM / MEMBERSHIP COORDINATOR

FRP-BC is pleased to announce our new Program / Membership Coordinator, Emily Hoskins. Emily's role will be to aid in the curriculum development for the FRP certification, working with committee members with the Policy & Procedures project, and gathering more in-depth data from our membership. Emily attended several Family Places as she grew up and after graduation she joined Chilliwack Community Services as a Family Resource Centre Worker and a Youth Worker. She also has a owned and operated her part-time business, Icon Photography, for more than 6 years. She is married to James and they live in Coquitlam.

## PSYCHOLOGY CLINIC AT THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

There are now specialized psychological services provided by the psychology clinic at the University of British Columbia available to children under the age of 12. Treatment is available in the clinic for children with problems related to noncompliance, sleep and eating problems, bed wetting, phobias, habit problems (e.g. hair pulling), and Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder.

These services are offered on a sliding scale fee and no clients are denied services solely for inability to pay. Parents who have a child with the above types of problems can contact UBC's clinic to get more information about the services provided. Please call (604) 822-3005 or visit [www.psych.ubc.ca/clinic](http://www.psych.ubc.ca/clinic) for more details.

★ Please complete the attachment regarding your involvement with StrongStart and mail or fax to our office. ★  
Thank you!