

Mission Early Childhood Development Committee and Understanding the Early Years

It takes a Community
to Raise a Child



Canada

Funding provided through the Government of Canada's
Understanding the Early Years Initiative



Overview



- Background of the Early Childhood Development Committee
- Understanding the Early Years Project
Oct. 2005- Sept.2008





Mission's ECD Committee

- ECD Committee formed Oct 2003
- Network and relationships within ECD community expanded
- Gathered information about services and programs for children and their families
- Provided community grants



ECD Committee's Strategic Plan

- Increase the EDI (Early Development Instrument) performance of the children of Mission
- Have accessible, quality care for children
- Have the Mission community understand the importance of early childhood development and make sure parents and caregivers have the information and capacity to achieve positive early childhood outcomes for their children.





UEY Project Overview:

Helping Children Get the Best Start in Life

- UEY is community focused : children, parents, teachers, schools, community agencies, businesses, government
- UEY provides communities with quality data on their children's readiness to learn, on family and community factors which may influence children's development and on existing community resources
- UEY helps communities develop action plans to respond to the needs of their young children

Source: UEY Orientation session
2005





The early years are important

- Research in the 1990's : a good start for children under age 6 is critical for health and well-being
- Research beginning to show the impact of community factors on children's development





...and so is Community

- Children and families live in communities
- Children's communities influence their development in many ways
- Effective communities mobilize their citizens and resources to find creative ways to address challenges facing their residents
- UEY provides the basis for coherent and sustainable community action to respond to the needs of young children and their families

Source: UEY Orientation session
2005





The Social Care Thesis

- Child development is not just a reflection of biology , parenting patterns, or resources that families invest in offspring
- It also reflects the broader social dynamic and institutions through which the entire citizenry organizes itself economically, culturally, socially and so on.
- The **village** nurtures





Principles of UHEY

- A good start in life is important for children's well-being and is a foundation for learning and development as they grow up
- A child's family and community are key influences on the child's readiness to learn and overall well-being
- Communities play a significant role in shaping experiences for children and their families
- Research and knowledge are critical for informed policies and programs that enhance early childhood development

Source: UHEY Orientation session
2005





UEY Objective

- To strengthen the capacity of Mission to enhance the readiness to learn of our young children by:
 1. Expanding our understanding of how children are doing, of characteristics of our community and our families, and how our community is supporting our young children and families
 2. Enhancing community decision making through mobilizing Mission to develop and implement an evidence-based action plan to address gaps in services and programs for young children and their families

Source: UEY Orientation session
2005



Understanding the Early Years Activities



- Gather research about children's development in Mission
- Gather information about assets in Mission
- Inform community about the importance of early childhood development
- Share information about research, resources and services
- Provide support to children and families of Mission





Key Components of UEY

Community Research:

1. Mission Kindergarten teachers complete the EDI
2. Mission Parents/Guardians complete the Parent Survey
3. Mission Kindergarten children complete the Child Survey
4. Assessment of family and community factors and children's development
 - Study of Mission community resources
 - Study of Mission socio-economic data
 - Mapping of Mission community data





Key Components (Continued)

Community Capacity Building:

1. Build knowledge
2. Empower community
3. Develop action plan
4. Mobilize community





Currently we are working on...

- Posters that inform about early childhood development
- Community asset mapping
- Parent's survey about barriers , gaps, strengths
- Networking and sharing of information





Benefits

- Improves effectiveness of program and service delivery for *non-governmental organizations*
- Strengthens *communities* abilities to mobilize resources to help families and children
- Informs investment *at provincial level*
- Informs program and policy development related to ECD and community capacity building at a *national level*





Support Systems

**Children First and the Ministry of
Children and Family Development**



**Mission Early Childhood
Development Committee**

**Government of Canada's
Understanding the Early Years**





4 Things You Should Know About Early Childhood Development

- Children are influenced by their environment, pre and postnatally
- A child's brain is not fully developed at birth
- By age 4 the brain is 80% developed and without positive experiences the brain will wither and prune itself
- All children deserve access to positive experiences to reach their potential





Summary

- All community members can contribute to the positive growth of children
- Supporting families benefits society in both the short and long term
- UEY will gather research, share information with the community and help develop an action plan to mobilize our community to better support our children and their families
- The Mission ECD Committee welcomes community involvement and support



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