



Message from the Executive Lead

Welcome to the first edition of the Early Years Office (EYO) Bulletin!

The EYO works across ministries to oversee the implementation of the BC Early Years Strategy. The EYO's goal is to move from strategy to action, implementing the BC Early Years Centre network, and formulating a range of other ways to increase the quality, accessibility and affordability of early years services across the province.

This work involves identifying and filling gaps in B.C.'s early years infrastructure. It also requires examining and challenging existing services and supports to ensure investments are made in a way that brings the greatest possible benefit to children and families. Along the way, EYO staff engage widely with stakeholders and other levels of government to learn how we can best achieve the goals of the B.C. Early Years Strategy.

I hear frequently from stakeholders that they would appreciate more regular updates from the EYO about what we're doing. So this bulletin is an experiment for the next year to see if it meets this need. It will come out three times a year and highlight some of the work happening across government as it pertains to the early years.

Key sections in the bulletin will include updates from partner ministries like health, education, and children and family development, as well as updates from the field as staff visit

with BC Early Years Centres and other key stakeholders. It will also provide timely information about current initiatives underway in the EYO. Read on for more details!



Tessa Graham
Executive Lead
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Early Years Planning Review

Guided by the *B.C. Early Years Strategy*, the EYO launched an Early Years Planning Review with the intention of identifying the strengths and opportunities that will have a positive impact on child outcomes across the province.

Some key findings highlight the desire to build on current strengths, support greater provincial leadership, and emphasize the importance of First Nations, Aboriginal and Métis partnerships, and the benefits of streamlined and improved funding practices.

The review also identified the need for additional research and engagement to better understand the role of early years planning as it relates to First Nations, Aboriginal and Métis people.

Deborah Schwartz, of Flourish Consulting, has been hired to lead this engagement. If you would like to be part of this process, please contact Deborah at: deborahconsulting@gmail.com

On the Education Front....

StrongStart BC Review

The StrongStart BC review is currently underway to examine the impact of the program on children and families. The review will provide a snapshot of the existing system, identify gaps and opportunities for enhancement, and will provide some recommendations around policy and program changes.

A number of approaches are being used to gather information, including stakeholder surveys, face-to-face key informant interviews and focus groups, and case study analysis at 5 sample sites. A second round of data collection including survey redistribution and site visits will occur in October 2016.

Early Learning in BC School Districts

Maureen Dockendorf, Superintendent of the Early Years, has been busy finalizing an environmental scan of early learning initiatives in all 60 B.C. school districts. The [Early Years in B.C. School Districts: A Scan of Promising Practices](#) highlights an array of initiatives and leadership approaches that help us to understand more about community partner relationships and identify areas that could be further studied and/or enhanced.

A companion document, [Supporting Seamless Transitions for B.C.'s Youngest Learners](#), highlights practices used in schools and communities to support our youngest learners as they transition into Kindergarten.



Regional Sessions on Kindergarten Transitions

The BC School Superintendents Association is partnering with the EYO and Ministry of Education to develop and implement regional professional development sessions that will connect school district early learning leads, Kindergarten teachers and StrongStart BC facilitators with community-based partners, including child-care operators, Child Development Centre staff and BC Early Years Centres.

The purpose of these sessions is to:

- a) Establish a shared interest in understanding and working together to support improved kindergarten transitions
- b) Share ideas and expertise on innovative approaches to kindergarten transition
- c) Ensure professional development is topical to the concept of improved transitions.

Sessions will occur in the fall and spring in each of the six chapters – Fraser Valley, Kootenay Boundary, Metro, Vancouver Island, Northern, and Thompson-Okanagan.

From the Ministries of Health and Children and Family Development...

CCRR Review

A review of the Child Care Resource and Referral program was undertaken to assess the program's mandate, service delivery and outcomes with a view to identifying ways to improve the quality and accessibility of child-care resources. The review also examined ways to enhance coordination and partnership with other programs and services within the context of the [B.C. Early Years Strategy](#).

The report was shared with CCRR coordinators and contract holders. If you would like a copy, email EarlyYearsOffice@gov.bc.ca

Changes to the Child Care Licensing Regulations

The Ministry of Health's Community Care Facility Licensing Program is responsible for administrating, reviewing and updating the *Community Care and Assisted Living Act* and the Child Care Licensing Regulation. The Child Care Licensing Regulation was recently amended to keep current with issues in the child care field, to reduce regulatory burden, and to ensure the health and safety of children. The Ministry of Health worked with Health Authorities, EYO, MCFD, Provincial Child Care Council, and additional relevant stakeholders in this review. Visit the [Child Day Care](#) legislation for more information.

Update from the Field

Over the past three months, the EYO has been busy visiting a number of BC Early Years Centres (EYC) throughout the province. It was a pleasure meeting so many different members of the EYC network in their home communities and seeing, firsthand, the range of visions for supporting families' access to early programs services and information.

Recent travels include the Alberni Valley, Penticton, Clearwater, Kelowna, Lytton, Williams Lake, the Canim Lake First Nation, Nqstilt – the Upper Similkameen Indian Band and the Lower Similkameen Indian Band, and the West Bank First Nation.

A special thank you to everyone for accommodating our schedule, given the end of school and summer holiday. As always, it's a pleasure to meet you, visit your EYCs, learn from and be inspired by your work! We look forward to meeting more of you soon.



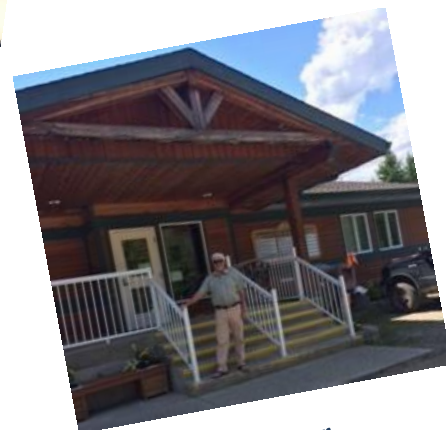
Lytton



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Clearwater