

28 November 2006

EDI WORKSHOP SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

REASONS FOR RESULTS

- **Socio-economic factors are huge**
 - Poverty and unemployment
 - Basic needs such as food and shelter come first, reduced time for parenting activities and interactions
 - Poor nutrition
 - High cost of eating – 99% spent on food and shelter
 - Money management very difficult
 - Substance abuse increase
 - Domestic violence, isolation
 - Families that moved away may have been least vulnerable
 - Increased number of single parent families
 - Increased stress and exhaustion
 - Not enough time for interactions
 - Budgeting stress
- **Access to childcare**
 - Less access to preschool subsidy
 - Difficult to access childcare subsidy, too much bureaucracy – it takes 2 months to be paid, after it was moved to regional centres
 - Not enough spaces, qualified staff
 - Not enough resources to pay staff properly, difficult to attract and retain
- **Community Barriers**
 - 4-day school week
 - increased stress on families to find childcare
 - longer days make kids tired
 - School closures
 - disruption of neighbourhood community,
 - crowded space with no room for additional services (Thornhill)
 - Safety of neighbourhoods for play and walking to services
 - Transportation/Getting around
 - Only one bus for Southside
 - Lack of sidewalks
 - Only one overpass, crossing is not safe especially in the winter
 - Snow removal fro sidewalks done last
 - Housing
 - Poor condition and high cost of rental units in one part of town forces families to relocate and walk every day across town
 - Inequality of neighbourhoods

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TERRACE MAKE CHILDREN FIRST INITIATIVE

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- **Industry Shutdowns**
 - Kitimat: Methanex
 - Terrace: mill on and off
 - Hazelton: over 80% unemployment

- **Service Gap**
 - Gap in services between 18 mos and 5 years for Health Services (immunization)
 - Waitlist for programs is too long
 - Large part of funding is spent on transportation
 - Vouchers for families
 - Large geographical area to cover to deliver service
 - Gitksan Territory and Stikine very needy but has very few services, often coming from larger centres
 - Thornhill doesn't have any services
 - Horseshoe needs to have appropriate services
 - High turnover of staff
 - Service Providers - no consistency
 - Leadership changes frequently
 - Fragmentation of services
 - Too many agencies with unclear programs at changing times
 - Going into different directions without sharing the same vision
 - Funding
 - Is compartmentalized
 - Creates competition
 - Doesn't allow for flexibility to respond to changing needs quickly
 - Accessing Services
 - Some programs are not accessed by families
 - Time of day
 - Transportation issues
 - Not knowing that program exists
 - Didn't develop connection with families

EXAMPLES OF PROGRAMS – all free of charge

- Mother's Time Off – former drop-in program (parenting education and support that was free of charge open to all)
- Ready Set Learn – helpful in connecting with kids 3 yrs old in schools
- Health Fair (Kitimat), Family Fair (Terrace) – annual fairs great for families to receive info and ask questions
- HeadStart Programs
- Mother Goose
- Library programs
- Childcare subsidy – Skeena CCRR offers help with filling out forms, as will Anti-poverty Society

IDEAS AND OPPORTUNITIES

- Services & programs
 - Services have to come to families as vulnerable families have to overcome many barriers (basic survival, transportation, large families, disability, etc.)
 - Involve parents in planning and running programs
 - Programs offered where families live
 - Need for after-school care
 - Expand PALS to preschool age
 - Offer Roots of Empathy in preschools
 - More free programs at times that meet parents schedules – better access to swimming pool, arena, library
 - Expand HeadStart Programs to go beyond 4 yr. olds
- Working closer with schools in each neighbourhood
 - Connecting ECE and Kindergarten teachers
 - Sharing resources
 - Making transition to school easier
 - Connecting with families early
- Childcare
 - Need a system of childcare
 - Need fully funded daycare
 - Need more spaces
 - Need qualified staff
 - Reduce wait time for subsidy form processing
- Training
 - More training for local service providers
 - Provide education and support for families
 - See family as a whole unit, not just individuals
- Community
 - Need safe spaces like parks and playgrounds,
 - Build neighbourhoods that are family friendly
 - Overcome widening differences between neighbourhoods
 - Encourage physical activity – sidewalks, bike lanes, snow removal
 - PBS program by Mark Fenton
 - Deal with housing issues
 - Hold regular dialogues about community issues – Stone Soup analogy
 - Have opportunities to get to know each other
 - Need public meeting places
 - Getting out of cars

Highlights:

It's time to act and be proactive now

See family as a UNIT

Equality between neighbourhoods