





What's New in Special Needs Resourcing

Volume 2 Issue 1
January 2010

 Community Living Cambridge

 Developmental Services Access Centre

 Elmira District Community Living



Happy New Year to one and all! As you read this bulletin the holidays may already feel like a distant memory as we rev up for 2010!

2010 marks the beginning of the **7th year for Child Care SNAP!** To date, approximately 2790 referrals for 2460 children have been made! Way to go!

A Word from the Infant Child Development Program (by Janice Richards, Family Infant Child Consultant)

The Infant and Child Development Program (ICDP) is part of Children's Services Division within the Social Services Department at the Region of Waterloo. We work out of the Public Health and Social Services Building at 99 Regina St. South as well as doing on-site clinics in Waterloo and Cambridge, in families' homes and in the community.

The Infant and Child Development Program supports families who:

- Have a child diagnosed with a special need such as Down Syndrome.
- Have a child who is at risk for delays in development due to premature birth, serious illnesses, etc.
- Have concerns about their child's

development.

Children (infants, toddlers and preschoolers up to the age of 5 years old) are referred to us from a variety of sources including Grand River Hospital's Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, paediatricians, family doctors, community professionals and parents themselves. A simple phone call to the Infant and Child Development Program is all that is needed to determine if a child is eligible for our services.

After a child is referred to us, our intake worker meets with the family to discuss their concerns and to help them to decide on the type of support which would be most helpful for their family. Parents can decide on the following services:(continued on page 2)



SNAP Fast Facts

DID YOU KNOW...

- In 2009 there were 645 referrals made for 552 different children?
- ELCC programs made 422 of those referrals; the others were from parents and community professionals?

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Developmental Monitoring: A Consultant assesses the child's development at regular intervals (i.e. 4, 8, 12 months of age) to determine if their development is progressing as expected for their age. Parents receive information about ways to help their child learn as well as answers to any questions they may have about their behaviour, feeding, sleeping, etc.

Home Visiting: When a child's development is delayed or is complicated by more complex issues such as visual, hearing or medical challenges, a Consultant will visit a family in their home. Families decide on the frequency of these visits as well as which areas of development they would like to focus on. The Consultant demonstrates activities to help the child's development progress. Parents are provided with information about other agencies and services which may be appropriate for their child.

We assess the child's development through watching them interact with toys and we use toys specifically to help a child build new skills. Since young children learn through play, we, together with their parent, find the right toys to engage the child's sense of fun while at the same time, providing a rich learning experience. As well, we provide the parents with information on a variety of topics – everything from feeding to communication development to toileting.

In order to provide collaborative services to our families, we work together with a number of community agencies such as KidsAbility and the Community Care Access Centre. We offer a play group at the Early Years Centre which is specifically for families with children with special needs. This has been a wonderful way for parents to connect and has resulted in several lasting and supportive friendships.

Every opportunity is made to include families. Those who are unable to travel to our sites in Waterloo or Cambridge are able to receive services in their home. Translators are offered to those learning English and various resources are available to those struggling with literacy skills. Regular Family Service Plans are completed to ensure that the service we provide is meeting the needs of the parent, child and family.

Our Infant and Child Development Program has gone through an extensive self-evaluation process based on "Best Practices" recommended by the Ontario Association for Infant and Child Development Programs. As well, the changes we have made in the last several years to our service model has meant that we have gone from a wait list of over 300 families to our current situation of no wait for service. In 2009, we received close to 400 referrals and served over 700 children and their families.

If you would like to learn more about our program or know of a family who would benefit from our services, please contact us at 519-883-2268 or drop by our office at 99 Regina St. South, 5th Floor.

Do Premature Children have Special Needs?

(by Bonnie May, Manager– Infant Child Development Program)

8 - 10% of children are born prematurely in Canada. In Waterloo Region this is approximately 445 – 555 births per year and represents 73% of the children served by the Waterloo Region, Infant and Child Development Program.

A child is considered to be premature when they are born before 37 weeks of gestation. There are many contributing factors to a premature birth including a multiple pregnancy, age of mother, maternal health (blood pressure, blood sugar, infections, nutrition, etc), early labor & rupture of membranes, intrauterine growth restriction, etc. Most premature infants will spend their first few week and/or months of life in a Neonatal Intensive Care Unit under the care and watchful eye of doctors, nurses, dieticians, therapists, and social workers. (continued on page 3)

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For more information on the Child Care Special Needs Resourcing Partnership or to make a referral to the Child Care Special Needs Access Point please contact:

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Premies may experience medical complications including hypoxia, respiratory disorders, cardiovascular disorders, infections, and brain injuries. While the NICU is a protective environment, it too has an impact on the premature child - loud noises, bright lights, indistinct day/night cycles, frequent handling, and painful procedures.

Over the past 10 years, advances in our health care system have significantly improved the outcomes for children born prematurely – more children are surviving births as low as 23 weeks gestation with birth weights below 500 grams. Fewer children today will experience significant medical and developmental complications such as cerebral palsy, blindness, and intellectual disabilities. With time many parents become less concerned about the impact of their child's early birth. However, studies continue to demonstrate that premies are at a greater risk for developmental problems through their preschool and school-age years.

Parents and professionals will make a difference in a premature child's life by being aware of and seeking support for the unique learning needs of each premature infant, toddler, preschooler and school-age child. Early identification and intervention does make a difference!

Here is a small sample of the many websites and books available on prematurity:

[The Essential Guide for Parents of Premature Babies](#) by D. Linden, E. Paroli, M. Doron

[The Premature Baby Book](#) by H. Harrison

<http://www.fags.org/abstracts/Health/Prevention-of-preterm-birth-Determinants-of-preterm-birth-rates-in-Canada-from-1981-through-1983-and.html#ixzz0bBj0G4Rl>

http://www.marchofdimes.com/professionals/14332_1157.asp

<http://www.prematurity.org>

Upcoming Professional Development Events

2010 Conference for Early Learning and Child Care— March 19&20 th at Conestoga College- registration is now underway!

Log onto www.kidslinkcares.com— don't be disappointed— register today!

Being Active Builds a Healthy Child— March 2, 2010

Caring for Children, Caring for Yourself— March 11 & 25 ,2010

Both workshops at kidsLINK's 1770 King St. E office— register at www.kidslinkcares.com

Current Research- Links

Resource: New Articles from the Canadian Council on Learning, Early Childhood Learning Knowledge Centre

The Canadian Council on Learning has placed the following new articles on their Early Childhood Learning Knowledge Centre site (<http://www.ccl-cca.ca/CCL/AboutCCL/KnowledgeCentres/EarlyChildhoodLearning/>):

[Comfort, Play & Teach: A Positive Approach to Parenting](#)

A collaboration of the Early Childhood Learning Knowledge Centre and Invest in Kids to create tools aimed at helping parents understand and address aggressive behaviours in young children. Information is available on the website with regard to babies and aggression, toddlers and aggression, and preschoolers and aggression.

[Stress and Early Brain Development](#)

- by Megan R. Gunnar, Adriana Herrera and Camelia E. Hostinar (PDF, 521 KB)- available on the same website listed above