

COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Understanding the Early Years (UEY) is a three year research project funded by Human Resources and Social Development Canada (HRSDC). This initiative is designed to increase knowledge about child development, to monitor society's progress in improving outcomes for young children, and to catalyze community action. The West Kootenay region of British Columbia participated in the UEY project from 2007 to 2010. The Kootenay Boundary Community Services Co-operative (KBCSC) was the host organization and the Early Years Office was responsible for the implementation of the UEY project. The **Community Action Plan** represents the culmination of the project and presents six recommendations for future action.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Many individuals and organizations in the West Kootenay region understand the importance of the early years and work to improve outcomes for children and families. Amongst the participants at the UEY Research Forum, the theme of collaboration was integral, reflecting the belief that "Growing Our Kids" is the responsibility of the whole community. Stakeholders wanted to see future actions take place within existing structures and that limited resources be used wisely to strengthen relationships. Although many issues affecting children and families are impacted by decisions made at the provincial and federal levels, much can be done within regions and communities.

The following six recommendations represent a blue print for action called for by UEY project stakeholders and adopted by the West Kootenay Early Years Council (formerly West Kootenay Success by 6 Council of Partners)

1. Take action to create additional and affordable child care spaces.
2. Strengthen and support coordinated efforts at the community and regional level.
3. Strengthen Partnerships
4. Build on and strengthen existing services for families
5. Connect with non-traditional partners
6. Consider the special characteristics of the region.

The Community Action Plan identifies the WHAT and WHO for each recommendation and a series of next steps recognizing a link between services to children and families and annual EDI research released by HELP (Human Early Learning Partnership UBC)

Accompanying the next steps is an invitation to stakeholders to identify their role and work plan for contributing to the Community Action Plan, and how they will coordinate their efforts with other partners.

Start where you are. Use what you have. Do what you can. - Arthur Ashe

For more information and/or to become a partner please contact Dorothy Kaytor, Early Years Coordinator at 250-352-6786 ext. 200 dorothy@thekoop.ca