
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Children and Family Development

New BC Early Years Centre opens on Peninsula

SAANICHTON – Parents of young children on the Saanich Peninsula will soon have access to a range of early learning, health and family services in one convenient location.

A new BC Early Years Centre is set to open at School District 63's Individual Learning Centre to support families with children aged 0-6. Hosted by Beacon Community Services, and in partnership with the Saanich school district, the BC Early Years Centre will offer a number of programs, services and supports including:

- Parenting programs.
- Licensed child care.
- Food security and education.
- Car seat safety.

The centre will also establish satellite sites and pop-up centres to serve families in outlying communities. A Saanich Peninsula BC Early Years Centre website www.peninsulaconnectionsforkids.ca, Facebook page and hotline will also make it easier for parents and caregivers to access information about the programs and services in their neighbourhood.

The official opening will be Nov. 29, with a community open house from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

This new centre is the first step, as part of the B.C. Early Years Strategy, to implement a network of Early Years Centres throughout the province that will provide families with one-stop, convenient access to a range of services and supports, information and referrals. The strategy is an eight-year government commitment to improve the accessibility, affordability and quality of early-years programs and services for families with young children.

The Saanich Peninsula BC Early Years Centre is one of 12 new centres across the province. The chosen sites are in a diverse mix of urban, rural and Aboriginal communities, and will build on existing local community resources to enhance services for families. Each centre will receive \$52,000 from the Provincial Office for the Early Years for this fiscal year as part of a \$5.5-million investment over three years.

Quotes:

Stephanie Cadieux, Minister of Children and Family Development –

“The new BC Early Years Centres are part of our commitment to make life easier for families and ensure young children get the support they need to reach their full potential. Being able to access these early learning and health services at a young age is critical to the healthy

development of a child, and bringing services together through these new centres will help achieve that.”

Bob Boulter, chief executive officer, Beacon Community Services –

“Beacon Community Services has a long history of serving children and their families. Through this initiative, we look forward to continuing that tradition in partnership with SD 63 and the Province, with support from volunteers on our Peninsula Connections for Early Childhood advisory committee.”

“We’re excited knowing that the Early Years Centre initiative and its mobile program will strengthen children and families’ connections to their community and learning resources – because when positive connections are made in the early years, the benefits continue into adulthood.”

Quick Facts:

- Government committed \$76 million to support the first three years of the B.C. Early Years Strategy, including \$32 million to help create up to 2,000 new licensed child-care spaces.
- The foundation of the strategy is a new Provincial Office for the Early Years that will ensure services across government, and across B.C., are coordinated and effective.
- To help with the costs of raising a young child, government is introducing the B.C. Early Childhood Tax Benefit starting in 2015. The benefit will provide \$146 million annually to approximately 180,000 families with children under the age of six (up to \$660 a year per child).
- The Ministry of Children and Family Development also provides child care subsidies to help low-income families afford child care – helping approximately 45,000 children each year.
- The B.C. Early Years Strategy builds on the \$1 billion per year government spends on early learning and childhood development initiatives, services and supports, including:
 - Success by 6[®], Children First and Aboriginal early childhood development programs.
 - Full-day kindergarten.
 - Programs that support healthy pregnancy, birth and infancy.
 - Early childhood development care and learning program investments, including public health nursing, Ready, Set, Learn programs and StrongStart BC early learning programs.
 - A variety of programs, services and supports to address the specific needs of children and youth with special needs.
- The ministry will invest \$292 million on child care in 2014-15, a 38% increase since 2000-01.
- Close to 107,000 licensed child-care spaces are funded in communities throughout B.C.

Learn More:

B.C. Early Years Strategy:

www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/early_childhood/pdf/FamiliesAgenda_EarlyYearsStrategy_web.pdf

Provincial Office for the Early Years: www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/early_years/index.htm

Early childhood development programs funded through the Ministry of Children and Family Development: www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/early_childhood/index.htm

Early learning programs funded through the Ministry of Education, including full-day kindergarten and StrongStart BC: www.bced.gov.bc.ca/early_learning/

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