

Understanding the Early Years Project

Understanding the Early Years (UEY) is a research, planning, and development project that enables community members to better understand the needs of young children and families. This national initiative will help strengthen the capacity of the community to use quality local information to help Mission make decisions to enhance children's lives such as determining the best programs and services to meet the needs of Mission's families.

The UEY project is hosted by the United Way and Mission's Early Childhood Development Committee which consists of various community partners throughout the community who are concerned with the growth and development of all children in Mission. We welcome community partners and participants to support and shape the short and long-term interests of our community's children.

Contact Us
Contact the ECD Committee by telephone at: 604 826-2295 or email us at ecdcommittee@shawbiz.ca. You can check us out on the web at: <http://www.missioncdcom.shawbiz.ca/Home.html>. Check the website or Parent Resource Quarterly for upcoming local children's events.

Committee Updates

Through research and action, some of our newest successes in 2007 are:

- Community Mapping Project, an in-depth report of our neighbourhoods.
- Parent surveys - conducted 314 parent surveys to gather a parent's perspective of accessibility of programs and services in Mission.
- Free monthly children's celebrations at the Mission Leisure Centre.
- Presentations to local organizations regarding the latest local UEY research results.
- The ECD Committee with Success By 6 awarded \$24,131 in grants for local programs and services including the Fun n Run Gym, Tuesday Club at St'at'xwaya, Family Place, Family Treehouse, WHIN, and newspaper columns regarding early childhood.
- We continue to print our Parent Resource Quarterlies, Developmental Guides, as well as continue with our poster and bookmark campaign.
- Please support our car raffle this year! We raised thousands of dollars for Mission's children in 2006 and hope to do the same in 2007. Call us or come see us at community events for tickets.

Oh Baby

The Moon is round
As round as can be (trace a circle with your finger around baby's face touching gently)
Two eyes, a nose, (touch under baby's eyes, nose, and mouth)
Like me! (big smile or gentle tickle)

Jack in the box (cover your eyes)
Sits so still
Won't you come out?
Yes I will! (throw up your arms)
(Show your baby how to cover his/her eyes, say the first couple of lines in a low voice. Add some anticipation with the third line, then shout out the last line arms in the air.)

Reading Room

What is Early Literacy? It is what children know about reading and writing BEFORE they can actually do it. Simply holding and showing interest in a book, making sounds and singing songs or chants, matching signs and pictures, even just recognizing that words exist! The presence of books in the home is integral for children to explore and become familiar with them. Positive, joyful experiences with letters and sounds such as: drawing, painting, dramatic play, listening to stories and poetry, puppetry, and music are essential in regards to learning to read. The pre-reading skills that children must learn in order to read include: being able to describe events and tell stories, being able to hear and play with the smaller sounds in words, knowing letters are different from each other and recognizing them everywhere, knowing the names and sounds of letters, knowing how to handle a book and the words on a page. Research shows that children get ready to read and write years before they start school. Reading aloud to children is the best way to get them interested in reading. Make it a habit to read everyday and ask questions about the pictures, story, and the words. It opens the door to life long learning, as the ability to read leads to success in school which can build self confidence and motivate your child to set high expectations for life.



Welcome...

To the second edition of Family in Focus. This newsletter is created to provide Mission's community members with information and inspiration regarding early childhood development as well as fun and creative ideas to develop and nurture a positive family environment.

Keep reading to find out more!

Can You Move With Me?

To the tune of
'Do Your Ears Hang Low'

Can you wiggle like a worm?
Can you squiggle, Can you squirm?
Can you flutter, Can you fly
Like a gentle butterfly?
Can you crawl upon the ground,
Like a beetle that is round?
Can you move with me?
Can you flip, Can you flop?
Can you give a little hop?
Can you slither like a snake?
Can you give a little shake?
Can you dance like a bee,
Who is buzzing round a tree?
Can you move with me?

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FYI

Are you aware of The Healthy Kids Program? It helps low income families with the costs associated with basic dental care and prescription eyewear. Dependent children under 19 years of age in families receiving any level of Medical Service Plan's premium Assistance are eligible for the Healthy Kids Program. Children are eligible for \$700 of basic dental services per calendar year. The coverage includes: exams, x-rays, cleanings, fillings, and extractions. Emergency dental treatment is also available if required for the immediate relief of pain if the child's annual limit has been reached. Children are also eligible for prescription eyeglasses (lenses and basic frames) once in a 12 month period. To access services under the Healthy Kids Program, you will need to show your child's BC Care Card to the dental office or optical supplier. For more information, call the toll free information line for parent's at:

1-800-748-1444

Activity Centre



Empty juice boxes: Make a family of juice box buddies! You'll need some construction paper and a bag of googly eyes.

(Plus any other creative supplies you would like to use.) First, take an empty juice box and wrap it in some construction paper. Then cut a strip of black paper and make cuts in it as shown. Glue/tape hair around the top of the box, then glue on eyes, mouth, etc as you like. You can put on a hats, shoes or arms and legs. Yarn works great for hair! It's up to you!



Toddler Yahtzee

Put blocks or Lego-like toys in an empty container or cup, shake them around and dump them out on the floor. Line the blocks up on the floor in a row counting or naming colours as you go. Toddlers love to dump things out!



Health and Wellness

Dental Health For Babies

Healthy baby teeth help children eat well, speak clearly, and prevent adult teeth from growing in crooked. Some baby teeth stay in a child's mouth until they are 12 years old! Tooth decay is preventable and can be extremely painful even sometimes requiring hospitalization if a baby's teeth need to be repaired.

Oral Care should start before teeth appear. Use a soft, clean cloth or gauze to wipe your baby's gums and mouth twice a day beginning at birth. Once teeth appear, use a soft baby toothbrush twice a day, most importantly at bedtime. Avoid putting your child to sleep with a bottle containing anything but water. Many other beverages including milk and formula contain sugar which causes tooth decay while they sleep. Bottles are sometimes used as soothers rather than for feeding so to help prevent tooth decay, switch from a bottle to a cup when your child is old enough to sit up to enjoy meals and snacks. Gradually diluting the contents of a bottle with water can help your child break the habit of going to sleep with a bottle.

Rhyme Time

The Toothbrush Song

(tune of row row your boat)

Brush, brush, brush your teeth,
We brush them everyday!
We put toothpaste on our brush
To help stop tooth decay.

Floss, floss, floss your teeth
Floss them everyday!
Using the string to clean between
Keeps the plaque away.

Clean, clean, clean your teeth
Clean them everyday!
Your teeth will sparkle for years to come
In the most fantastic way!

Brush, brush, brush your teeth
Brush them everyday!
Happy healthy teeth you'll have
If it's done this way!



Tips and Tools

Some Factors To Consider When Snacking: Sugar and plaque are the main causes of dental decay. Plaque is a clear and sticky film that forms on your teeth everyday. It contains germs (bacteria) that stick to your teeth. When sugar in food and drinks react with plaque, it forms an acid that eats away at the tooth's hard outer layer (enamel). When a hole is made in the enamel, a cavity is created. Healthy food is good for your general health as well as your dental health so choose snacks that are nutritious and unsweetened.

Read the ingredients list when choosing snacks, remember that honey, molasses, glucose, and fructose are all types of sugar. Eat sweets with meals, not as a snack. The increased flow of saliva during a meal helps wash away and dilute the sugars.

Reduce the amount of time that sweet food stays in contact with teeth. Children should avoid sipping sugared beverages for a long period of time, sucking on candy or chewing sugared gum.

Brush teeth after eating sweets, sticky foods stay in contact with teeth longer. Rinsing with water or chewing sugarless gum is helpful when brushing is not possible.

Some healthy snacking ideas:

cheeses,
Melba toast, muffins, and breadsticks
Pita bread with cheese or hummus
vegetables and fruit
rice cakes and apple sauce
bagel with cheese
nuts and seeds (for older children)
yogurt, milk, deviled eggs
sandwiches (ham, tuna, salmon, cheese, egg)
unsweetened fruit juice and vegetable juices.



Free Dental Fluoride Varnish Program
For children 4 years old or younger who do not have a dentist for regular care. Fluoride varnish is a paint-on fluoride that hardens the outer surface of the teeth and helps to prevent cavities. It is quick, easy, safe, and only takes about one minute. Varnishing is done once a week at the Mission Public Health Unit and once every four months at Family Place. Call 604 864 3420 or 604 826 3323 for info.

Playing Around

It is through play that much of children's early learning is achieved; physical, social, and emotional development. Through play, children develop the foundations they'll need to succeed in life, from problem solving and social skills to basic literacy, math, and science. When you play with your child, you not only support their ability to learn, think, problem solve and explore, but also strengthen your relationship with them. Giving a child toys and other safe things for them to play with is good for their development, however playing WITH your child and letting him/her lead is even more important. Since play is the major way young children learn about themselves and others, creating opportunities for your children to play with other children their age provides them with an opportunity to develop and practice their social skills. They learn to be cooperative and respectful to others, learn self control and self confidence, as well as various ways to express their emotions in acceptable manner. Playing with other children is an important part of social and emotional development and thus creates the basic foundation for school readiness. Problem solving skills are integral for social and academic success and children develop most of their early problem solving abilities through play. It is the experience of playing, not the toy, that aids the development of the brain. There are many opportunities to play, share, and socialize in our wonderful community such as:

Yummy Mummy's Walking Group
Fun N Run Free Drop In Gym
Family Place programs
StrongStart Family Literacy Place
Mission Aboriginal Family Place
Family Treehouse

Mission Public Library programs
As well as many local free community events focused on families and children.

Please check the Early Childhood Development Committee's Parent Resource Quarterly for more information on these and other wonderful local programs. You can also see them on the web at:
www.missionecd.com.shawbiz.ca/Home.html

In Focus



Play to Learn!

**West Heights StrongStart
Family Literacy Place**



A family literacy program that offers a place to play with your child in a warm and supportive environment focusing on preparing your child to be ready for kindergarten. Learn and play together with learning stations such as the dramatic area, construction area, art station, tactile/sensory area, math station, literacy lending bags, group songs, stories, music & movement time, as well as parent reading and one to one special activities.

Weekday mornings from 8:30 to 11:30am on school days. Bussing is available to StrongStart from Mission Central Elementary School at 8:40am and returning to Mission Central at 10:45am.

Fun and Run Playtime

Burn some energy at this free gym drop in program for parent and caregivers with children aged 0 to 6. This program brings families with children together in a safe, fun, and playful environment. The focus is on being active, playing games, participation, socialization and development of gross motor skills. The gym is set up in stations using bright, colourful, age appropriate equipment such as gym mats, slides, swiss balls, basketball hoop and much more. A mix of structured and unstructured activities for children to enjoy.

Tuesdays 11:00am to 1pm at the Mission Leisure Centre Gymnasium. For more information call 604 820-5350 or go online to www.mission.ca

In The Kitchen

Easy Breakfast Bars that kids can help make too!

2 cups of granola
2 eggs beaten
dash of vanilla for sweetening
Combine granola and eggs in a bowl. Spread into an 8" pan. Bake at 350 for 15 min. Cut into bars. Serve with peanut butter, honey, or jam. You can also add fruit like banana or strawberry slices.