
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Education
Ministry of Children and Family Development
Ministry of Health

NEW PROGRAM PROMOTES HEALTH, READING FOR PRESCHOOLERS

VANCOUVER – The Province will provide \$2.7 million under its ActNow BC strategy for a new program to increase healthy living and literacy skills in preschool children.

“We know that 25 per cent of children enter kindergarten without the skills they need to succeed,” said Education Minister Shirley Bond. “The oral language and rhyming activities offered through this new ActNow program are the building blocks to developing successful reading skills.”

The new program, called Literacy Education Activity and Play (LEAP BC), is designed to promote literacy in children up to age five by integrating reading and language skills with play. Parents and caregivers will be able to access tools and resources to help them encourage more physical activity and healthy eating in their children, while engaging children in literacy through activities such as singing, rhymes, movement and games.

“I want parents and providers to be enthusiastic about engaging young children in physical activity,” said Linda Reid, Minister of State for Childcare. “LEAP BC will help parents and childcare workers gain the skills necessary to help children get more physical activity and have fun while they learn their ABCs.”

LEAP BC is jointly funded by the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Children and Family Development and Ministry of Health. It will be administered by 2010 Legacies Now and will support the following:

- Words Offer Rich Developmental Support (WORDS), which provides resources for families and childcare providers through exercises to improve language development.
- An enhancement of the existing Parent Child Mother Goose program to increase the use of movement, rhymes and literacy as part of the nurturing process for parents and very young children, aged 0-2.
- Movement Opportunities in Various Environments for Infants and Toddlers (Move-It), a family resource manual for parents that offers ideas and tips to promote literacy and activity in children aged 0-2, including raising awareness about childhood obesity and the steps parents can take, from their children’s infancy, to prevent it.
- An enhancement of the existing Healthy Opportunities for Preschoolers (HOP) manual, which will give parents and childcare providers ideas and tips for engaging children aged 3-5 in reading and physical activity. The manual will also include a nutrition component to help parents and caregivers encourage healthy eating in children.

“ActNow BC helps to promote healthy lifestyle choices and environments for all British Columbians,” said Gordon Hogg, Minister of State for ActNow BC. “LEAP BC will help youngsters increase their physical activity while they learn new things, and that will promote good health habits from a young age and continue that trend throughout their lives.”

LEAP BC will help the Province reach its goal of making B.C. the healthiest jurisdiction to ever host the Olympics Games. ActNow BC is a cross-government undertaking consisting of programs and services that motivate British Columbians to eat a healthy diet, be more physically active, maintain a healthy weight, reduce, quit and avoid tobacco use and make healthy choices during pregnancy.

“2010 Legacies Now is working with communities to promote lifelong learning and increase access to local literacy programs and resources,” said Brenda Le Clair, managing director of strategic development and partnerships at 2010 Legacies Now. “LEAP BC is an example of the creative, integrated approach we’re taking to reach the whole community, from infants to seniors.”

2010 Legacies Now works with communities, non-government organizations, private sector companies and all levels of government to ensure hosting the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games benefits all of British Columbia. 2010 Legacies Now is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to strengthening sport and recreation, arts, literacy and volunteerism in B.C. communities, leading up to 2010 and beyond.

LEAP BC also supports the Province’s efforts to achieve its goal of making B.C. the best educated, most literate jurisdiction on the continent. Since 2001, the Province has provided more than \$57 million for literacy programs, including \$10 million for innovative literacy programs, \$6 million for Ready, Set, Learn, \$5 million for Literacy Now, and more than \$4.4 million to support adult literacy programs.

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