For Immediate Release

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New BC Early Years Centres opening for families

VICTORIA – Parents and families in several B.C. communities will soon be able to connect to early learning, health and family services in one convenient location.

Twelve community organizations throughout the province have been selected to host new BC Early Years Centres that will help support families with children aged 0-6. The centres are expected to open this fall in the following communities:

- Comox Valley (Comox Valley Child Development Society)
- Delta (Reach Child and Youth Development Society)
- Golden (Golden Community Resource Society)
- Langley (Langley Children's Society)
- Mission (Fraser Valley Child Development Centre)
- 100 Mile House (Cariboo Family Enrichment Centre Society)
- Penticton (Penticton and District Community Resources Society)
- Revelstoke (Revelstoke Child Care Society)
- Saanich Peninsula (Beacon Community Association)
- Sooke (Sooke Family Resource Society)
- Sunshine Coast (Halfmoon Bay-Chatelech Community School Association)
- Vanderhoof (Carrier Sekani Family Services)

Each centre will offer a variety of programs, services and supports tailored to the needs of their community. These may include:

- Parent drop-in programs, such as Parent-Child Mother Goose.
- StrongStart BC programs.
- Public-health clinics.
- Advice and referrals from early-years professionals.
- Parent education workshops.
- Licensed child care for families.
- Child-care resources and referral information
- A mobile bus to provide outreach to families in rural communities.

The sites were chosen by a cross-ministry selection panel that included representatives from the ministries of Children and Family Development, Education and Health, and are located in a diverse mix of urban, rural and Aboriginal communities. 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.

This 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 Early Years 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.

Quotes:

Stephanie Cadieux, Minister of Children and Family Development –

“We know that what we do from birth up to school-age is absolutely critical to a child’s development. This is another step toward making life easier for families and setting children up for lifelong success.”

“We will continue to invest in the early years so young children have the support they need to learn, grow and achieve their best.”

Anne Cooper, Provincial Child Care Council member –

“I am very excited about the commitment by Provincial Office for the Early Years to proceed with these 12 Early Years Centres. As the former Superintendent of the Revelstoke School District, I have seen first-hand how investments in early learning support children and families, and make for a strong community.”

Quick Facts:

- Government committed $76 million to support the first three years of the 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 co-ordinated 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 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:  

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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