Invermere gets BC Early Years Centre

INVERMERE – Parents of young children in the Invermere area now have access to a range of early learning, health and family services in one convenient location. A new BC Early Years Centre has opened at 1317-7th Ave. to support families with children aged 0-6.

Hosted by the Family Resource Centre of Invermere, the centre offers a number of programs, services and supports, including:

- Family counselling.
- Toy lending library.
- Outreach services.
- Family support work.
- Parenting workshops.
- Satellite office in Canal Flats and Edgewater for easier access to services.

The BC Early Years Centre is one of 14 new centres throughout the province, bringing the total to 26. 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.

This is the second phase of an initiative under 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.

Quotes:

Stephanie Cadieux, Minister of Children and Family Development –

“We want to give families with young children throughout the province easier access to the services they need to help kids reach their full potential. BC Early Years Centres bring together a range of health, early learning, child care and family development programs and supports that are tailored to the needs of their local community.”

Pat Cope, executive director, Family Resource Centre of Invermere –

“The Family Resource Centre and the Columbia Valley Early Childhood Development Team are excited to have been chosen as a pilot for a BC Early Years Centre to serve families residing in the Columbia Valley. We believe our model to provide a main office in Invermere and two
satellite offices (one in Canal Flats and one in Edgewater) will increase accessibility to services and initiatives to support the healthy development of our children. We look forward to developing and implementing this initiative.”

Quick Facts:

- Children’s experiences early in life have a profound and long-lasting effect on their future development and well-being. Studies show that positive early years experiences lead to better social, economic, and health outcomes, while chief economists have noted that the wide-spread and long-lasting benefits of investment in the early years far outweigh the costs.
- That’s why government committed $76 million to support the first three years of the BC Early Years Strategy, which includes:
  - A new Provincial Office for the Early Years that helps ensure services across government, and throughout B.C., are co-ordinated and effective.
  - Support for the creation of up to 2,000 new licensed child-care spaces by March 2016 with the goal of opening 13,000 new spaces by 2020.
  - The B.C. Early Childhood Tax Benefit, starting April 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 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 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 ministry has committed $323.5 million for child care in 2015-16, a 53% 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](http://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](http://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/](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/early_learning/)