

BC Early Learning Newsletter

Volume 3, Issue 2

Spring 2010

Inside this issue:

Professional Development	2
Reporting	5
Framework Links	6
Resources	7
From the Field	9

Resources for Full Day Kindergarten Now Available

New resources are available for teachers and administrators to support the implementation of full day Kindergarten, including the new *Full Day Kindergarten Program Guide*, a human resource tool kit, suggested classroom equipment list, and a pamphlet for parents. These resources are available on the Ministry of Education's [website](#).

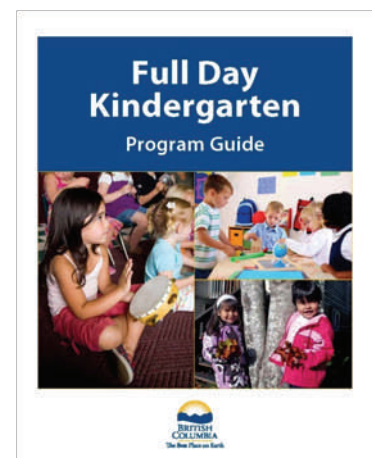
The [Full Day Kindergarten Program Guide](#) was developed to support teachers, principals and others in creating high quality full day programs for Kindergarten. It sets expectations for full day Kindergarten programs in British Columbia, summarizes current research findings, and suggests effective practices that can be put to immediate use in schools and Kindergarten classrooms. This guide is intended to help educators ensure that Kindergarten students benefit from experiences that reflect current knowledge about children's learning and development. Dr. Marilyn Chapman, Faculty of Education at the University of British Columbia, was the lead researcher and writer of the guide. The Ministry is also grateful for the efforts of the many other individuals who contributed to the *Full Day Kindergarten Program Guide*, including teachers, school district staff, researchers and Ministry staff.

As districts are creating new kindergarten classes, they may be acquiring new equipment and learning materials. A [suggested classroom equipment list](#) is available on the Ministry's website to assist districts and schools to create developmentally appropriate learning environments.

Make a Future – Careers in BC Education, a division of the British Columbia Public School Employer's Association, has developed a full day Kindergarten [toolkit](#) that provides strategies and resources to assist districts as they hire new Kindergarten teachers. This new resource is also available on the Ministry's [website](#).

Other full day Kindergarten resources include a [pamphlet](#) for parents that covers the benefits of the program and a resource for educators to help understand the developmental continuum for children 0-8 years old entitled [Making Linkages: How the British Columbia Early Learning Framework Links to the Primary Program](#).

Keep referring to the Ministry's [website](#) over the coming months for more resources, including the updated Primary Program and video exemplars, which will highlight exemplary early learning practices.



Pre-Kindergarten: Future Plans and Discussions

In the February 2010 Speech from the Throne, government announced that “new partnerships with the private sector and parents will enable the establishment of neighbourhood preschools for four-year-olds and three-year-olds within communities over the next five years.” Building on the Early Childhood Learning Agency’s findings, the Ministry is working in partnership with the Ministry of Children and Family Development and in collaboration with other ministries. Stay tuned for news on this next year.



School District 43 Summer Institute on Full Day Kindergarten

Heritage Woods Secondary School in Port Moody will be abuzz with insightful conversations and information on full day Kindergarten from International and Canadian experts on July 5th and 6th. School District 43 (Coquitlam) is offering a Summer Institute on the implementation of full day Kindergarten with key note speakers such as Stuart Shanker, Jane Beach, Jane Bertrand and Janet Mort.

Keynote speeches will be followed by break-out sessions for educators and community partners including specific sessions for administrators. The school district has extended an invitation to early learning partners outside Coquitlam and Mission, and has offered a reduced registration fee of \$25 for all StrongStart BC facilitators.

For more information and to register for the institute, please visit the district’s [website](#).

Summer Institute on Implementation of FULL DAY KINDERGARTEN

Playful Possibilities:
Moving to Play and Projects in Full Day Kindergarten

LOCATION:
HERITAGE WOODS SECONDARY SCHOOL
1300 David Avenue, Port Moody, BC

DATE:
JULY 5, 2010 8:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.
JULY 6, 2010 8:30 a.m. - 2:45 p.m.

AUDIENCE:
Kindergarten Teachers, Early Childhood Educators, Community Partners, Principals, Vice Principals, District and Ministry Staff

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
Stuart Shanker Assistant Superintendent 20276 stshanker@sd43.bc.ca
Pat Holborn Assistant Superintendent 20276 sholborn@sd43.bc.ca

REGISTRATION FORM

Please complete the registration form and return it along with your cheque to: District 43, 1300 David Avenue, Port Moody, BC V3H 2A7 (Heritage Woods School). Please make cheque payable to SD43 and be sure to mark the back of the cheque "Heritage Woods School" for the distribution of your cheque. Registration and speakers are subject to change.

Printed Name: _____ Telephone: _____
 District: _____ Position: _____
 Email: _____
 Business Address: _____

Playful Possibilities:
Moving to Play and Projects in Full Day Kindergarten

The Coquitlam and Mission School Districts are pleased to present a Summer Institute on Implementation of FULL DAY KINDERGARTEN

Speakers

STUART SHANKER

Jane Beach
Jane Bertrand
Brenda Bayliss
Marilyn Chapman
Pat Holborn
Sharon Jeroski
Carol Johns
Flora Morrison
Janet Mort
Caitlin Patterson
Nancy Perry
... and more.

July 5th & 6th, 2010
HERITAGE WOODS SECONDARY SCHOOL
PORT MOODY, BC

Second Round of 2010 Legacies Now/StrongStart BC Training

Another successful round of StrongStart BC Professional Development workshops is now complete. Approximately 650 people participated in workshops in 12 regions across the province. Participants included StrongStart BC facilitators, Early Learning Coordinators, Kindergarten teachers and administrators. As a result of these workshops, StrongStart BC facilitators are building supportive learning communities with ever increasing levels of professionalism. The next round of workshops will take place starting this fall in each of the 12 regions. Stay tuned for information about training topics and registration.



Early Language and Literacy Development in SD 23, from Donna Kozak, *Early Language / Literacy Projects Coordinator, SD 23*

This year, StrongStart BC facilitators in School District 23 (Central Okanagan) have participated in 6 three hour professional development sessions focusing on early language and literacy development. The sessions have provided them with practical ideas about how to stimulate language and literacy through the activities they plan for their programs, as well as how to model and inform parents on the significance of the play-based learning opportunities they offer. The sessions were facilitated by the district's two early learning coordinators.



One of the many benefits of these sessions has been the networking among early childhood educators. The group will continue with their professional development next year with six more sessions planned.

North Shore Facilitator Connections, *from Kelly Botz, SD 45 StrongStart BC facilitator*

Sharing and learning with other StrongStart BC facilitators and early learning partners is the key to continually developing and offering a rich and engaging early learning program. At times, delivering the program can seem quite challenging, and facilitators can tend to feel isolated from other programs. Not so on the North Shore of Vancouver, where a group of facilitators and early learning partners has made it a priority to keep connected.

It all began when Kelly Botz, Hollyburn Elementary StrongStart BC facilitator, invited the StrongStart BC facilitator from Westview Elementary to her classroom so they could discuss their StrongStart BC programs and share ideas. She then extended the invitation to other facilitators and early learning partners in the North Shore. Over the course of a year, the group got together several times at various StrongStart BC programs to share tips, songs, program ideas, and work together to problem-solve challenging situations.

Due to changing schedules, it has proven to be a challenge to meet at the StrongStart BC programs this year. So instead of meeting during program hours, Kelly hosted a pot-luck dinner at her house to network and share ideas. This group expanded their network to include an ECE practicum student and a volunteer mom who is also a kindergarten teacher from Mexico. The group has created a strong bond and enjoys what they do for each other and for the families of the North Shore of Vancouver.



Monthly BCeSIS Reports: Helping Districts Manage Their Programs



Many school districts have found that creating monthly attendance and registration reports for their StrongStart BC programs, directly from BCeSIS, has helped them to understand attendance patterns, keep track of their registration data, manage their sign-in process, and maintain accurate attendance data. One school district reviews their reports at their monthly StrongStart BC facilitator meetings. The facilitators confirm whether these reports are accurate. If there are discrepancies, they work with their BCeSIS Level 1 contact to correct them.

Some school districts use their StrongStart BC monthly enrolment reports from BCeSIS to create sign in sheets for their StrongStart BC programs. If a parent cannot find their child's name on the sign-in sheet, it indicates that they need to complete a registration form. Instructions on how to produce a monthly report from BCeSIS can be found on the [ISW](#) website.

New: Year End Transition Guide for StrongStart BC Programs

BCeSIS has developed a guide to help StrongStart BC programs prepare for the Year End Transition (YET). This document entitled “StrongStart Centres YET Checklist” outlines the steps required to save registration information and roll it over for the 2010/11 school year. Following these simple instructions will preserve registration information from 2009/10, so that districts do not need to re-register children in the fall. This document is available on the [ISW](#) website.

READY, **S**ET, **L**EARN

2010/11 Ready Set Learn (RSL)

Program funding for Ready, Set, Learn has been maintained at \$2,450.00 for each host public school to support Ready, Set, Learn events in their community.

In order to sustain program funding for the 2010/11 school year, story books for participants are no longer being provided by the Ministry.

However, the parent guide is still available [online](#) in 13 languages. Schools are asked to please inform attendees of its availability during their Ready, Set, Learn events.



Changes to the 2010/11 Early Learning Agreements

To help districts administer their early learning programs, two changes were made to the 2010/11 Early Learning TUA (Transfer Under Agreement) that was sent to districts in mid May. These changes involved the financial reporting date and operating expectations for StrongStart BC programs.

Districts have until September 30, 2011 to submit their 2010/11 StrongStart BC financial report, a change from the previous August 30th date. This new submission date aligns with the due date for other district financial reports to the Ministry. If Districts have included StrongStart BC in their Special Purpose funds, StrongStart BC can be reported through this method. This will eliminate the need for districts to produce two reports.

The second change in the 2010/11 TUAs is related to days when StrongStart BC programs are not open for families. Districts need to allocate sufficient time for professional development, program planning, program evaluation and administration. They may choose to close their StrongStart BC programs for up to two days per month in order to undertake these important activities. Please ensure adequate notice is given to families for these closures.

Regarding changes to Ready, Set, Learn (RSL), the 2010/11 TUA enables multiple schools to coordinate joint RSL events. An evaluation is still required in May 2011 requiring the district to list the schools involved and how many children attended.

Outdoor Play in Early Learning Programs



Young children learn best through play and discovery, and the outdoors offers a rich and diverse environment to explore.

“Exposure to natural environments strengthens children’s relationship to nature, building the physical, social, emotional, and intellectual connections

that are a necessary motivation for environmental stewardship. Natural environments also provide the perfect setting for holistic learning.” *British Columbia Early Learning Framework, 2008, p. 11.*

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Outdoor Play in Early Learning Programs - *continued*

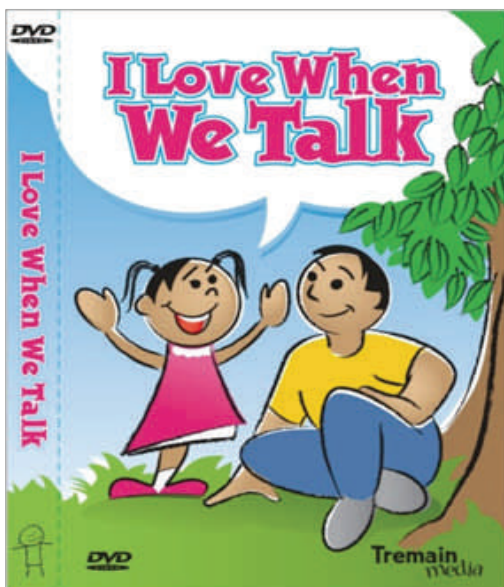
When participating in outdoor play, children can fully engage their gross motor skills such as running, jumping, and climbing. But it is not just physical benefits that children can reap when playing outside. Outside, children engage with nature using all their senses. Being outside and interacting with other children supports social development, an important contributor to learning. Repeated exposure to nature can foster a sense of environmental responsibility in children of all ages. While outside, children can become aware of the beauty of nature, as well as the fragility.

Research demonstrates that safe exposure to the sunlight is beneficial by providing Vitamin D, as well as stimulating the pineal gland. The pineal gland produces melatonin, which helps to regulate sleep cycles, very important in young children.



Try bringing music outside, either a portable CD player or some musical instruments. Children and adults love to sing and dance outside. “Water painting” is a great outdoor activity. Children can “paint” the side of a building using a paint brush and a bucket of water. This activity requires great upper body movement and presents an opportunity to discuss wet and dry and evaporation. Try a nature walk. While on the walk, ask the children to use their senses and describe what they are seeing, hearing, and smelling. Stop to touch and discover the bark on a tree or the rocks underfoot.

New DVD available in Award Winning Series



“I Love When We Talk,” the latest DVD from the “I Love When...” DVD series highlights the important role that families play in language and emergent literacy development and offers easy and practical strategies for children birth to six years.

This latest video was produced with support from the Nanaimo early years community. These DVDs can be especially helpful for parents and caregivers that struggle with printed material.

For more information, including pricing and ordering, please visit the read-tv website.

Science World Asks the Questions

Encouraging children to discuss ideas, to predict and estimate, and to give reasons for their choices is one way to encourage them to actively explore, think, and reason. This is one of the learning goals for Exploration and Creativity in the *British Columbia Early Learning Framework*. New on

Science World's preschool website are some suggested inquiry based questions that StrongStart BC facilitators, parents, and caregivers can use to facilitate learning and to promote curiosity and inquiry with children. These questions have been translated into eight

different languages, [English](#), [French](#), [German](#), [Spanish](#), [Farsi](#), [Korean](#), [Chinese](#), [Japanese](#) and [Punjabi](#). The questions can be printed and posted within early learning programs.



Best Chance Online

The Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport has created a new *Baby's Best Chance* website which offers practical and easy-to-understand information for parents on nutrition, safety, child development, and

parenting. The [Best Chance](#) website features information on healthy pregnancy, early child care and self care for parents. The site was designed as an interactive, online alternative to the popular *Baby's Best*

Chance books. Early learning facilitators are encouraged to direct parents to visit the Best Chance website at www.bestchance.gov.bc.ca.



Using Nature's Bounty for Healthy Snacks

As per the Ministry policy, StrongStart BC programs are required to offer a healthy snack to participating children. After a long winter, spring brings a welcome abundance of healthy choices for snack time. Stores and farmers' markets are full of fresh local offerings, like asparagus, lettuce, spinach and early fruits.

Many schools and communities are planting their own vegetable gardens.

Greens beans are a healthy, low cost choice for snack time. These crispy vegetables are great with a honey mustard dip (1 cup of yogurt, ¼ cup of honey, 2 teaspoons of mustard * do not serve honey to children under 12 months

of age). Older children can help measure the ingredients, stir the dip, and remove the "strings" from the beans.

More healthy and age appropriate snack ideas can be found in the LEAP BC resource [Food Flair](#). This guide is packed with ideas and activities that support healthy eating for young children.



Superhero Facilitator, from Nanci Farell, SD 39 Early Learning Contact

To the many children who attend the Tillicum Annex StrongStart BC program in Vancouver, Steven Pedersen, the StrongStart BC facilitator, is their very own superhero. When it is time in the daily schedule for circle time, all the children and their parents stop what they are doing to follow Steven, who is wearing a long blue superhero cape and carries an old fashioned suitcase. They follow him excitably to the centre of the colourful classroom and sit quietly in a semi-circle with their parents. A hush falls across the room as Steven sits calmly on a chair and draws a puppet “pack rat” from the old suitcase. Story time has now begun. Steven uses his “superhero” identity to help lead the children and their families on a journey during circle time, through stories, songs, and action games, all the while keeping the children and their parents fully engaged in the learning that is taking place. Steven is one of the many “Superhero” facilitators in the province that provide a rich and responsive program to a diverse group of families.



StrongStart BC Artists Exhibit in Local Art Show, from Nicole Pawlak, Community Literacy Coordinator

Children attending the Windermere Zone StrongStart BC Outreach programs have been invited by the Columbia Valley Arts Council to display their artwork in the first ever Little Peeps art show in Invermere. The focus of the Little Peeps art show is on birds and the natural surroundings of the Windermere Valley.

The Columbia Valley Arts Council already showcases artwork from area elementary and high school students. Believing that everyone should have the opportunity to have their art on display, the idea for the Little Peeps show was born. The arts council has invited children between the ages of 18 months and 4 years old who attend area preschools, child care centres, and StrongStart BC programs to decorate the walls of the art gallery.

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StrongStart BC Artists Exhibit in Local Art Show, *from Nicole Pawlak, Community Literacy Coordinator ... continued*

Evelyn Walker, Windermere Zone StrongStart BC facilitator, provided the children at the program with a variety of opportunities to practice their skills. From group collages on large canvases to bird nest sculptures constructed from found items to individual hand print birds and feather paintings, the children have really enjoyed creating their works of art. When the art goes on display at the gallery, it will be labelled with the child's first name and a personalized description of what they would like others to notice about their work.

The show is shaping up to be a wonderful exhibit of early childhood learning through the exploration of art. Visitors to the gallery will see first hand how creative children at this age can be and that preschool art means so much more than staying inside the lines.



Storytelling at StrongStart BC, *from Joan Lozier, SD 27 Early Years itinerant teacher*



In collaboration with Desniqi, a local First Nations Service Society in Williams Lake, the Cariboo Chilcotin School District received a Success by Six grant earlier this winter in order to increase the participation rates of Aboriginal families at the district's StrongStart BC programs.

Evening gatherings with storytellers from the First Nations community have helped families develop a sense of belonging at the StrongStart BC centre. The group meets once a month for supper, crafts, stories and songs. The goal of the program is that after becoming familiar with the location and staff of the StrongStart BC centres, families will attend during regular hours of operation.

The Ministry of Education hosts a [website](#) that contains current information on all its Early Learning Initiatives:

[Full Day Kindergarten](#)

[StrongStart BC](#)

[Ready, Set, Learn](#)

[British Columbia Early Learning Framework](#)

[Early Learning Research and Publications](#)

We would appreciate your feedback and new articles for the BC Early Learning Newsletter. Please send your comments and ideas for future issues to Janet Powell via email at: Janet.Powell@gov.bc.ca.



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