



The MNCHP Bulletin is an electronic bulletin that highlights current trends, new resources and initiatives, upcoming events and more in the preconception, prenatal and early childhood education and development fields. Our primary focus is the province of Ontario, Canada but the bulletin also includes news and resources from around the world. Wherever possible, we include resources that are available for free.

*\*Please note that Best Start does not endorse or recommend any events, training, resources, services, research or publications of other organizations.*

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## I. News & Views

### What Developmental Trauma Disorder Looks Like in Kids

The term “developmental trauma disorder” was first coined in 2005 by US psychiatrist and neuroscientist Bessel van der Kolk and a group of fellow researchers who specialize in childhood trauma. It was established after a study of 20,000 kids found that children who experience early neglect or abuse are more likely to experience behavioural problems, substance abuse and negative health outcomes later in life. Though developmental trauma disorder has not yet been recognized as an official diagnosis, a group of advocates in Ontario is working to spread awareness about the issue. Collectively known as [the Developmental Trauma Action Alliance \(DTAA\)](#), this coalition of parents, medical professionals and adoption specialists has hosted panel discussions across the province in hopes that it will bring legitimacy to the disorder and increase access to funding.

[Learn more.](#)



### Tweeting About Quality: How Social Media Can Help Improve Care

While social media may still only be used by a portion of health care providers, policy-makers and patients in the province, the platforms we have come to associate with social media – Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn etc. – can be influential in supporting quality care initiatives. In developing a system that we wish to be patient-centred, social media has emerged as an important platform for allowing patients and members of the public to engage with health care providers and policy-makers to make their views clear. The degree of interaction between those with lived experience with a disease or illness with those providing their care is unprecedented thanks to online communities and social media like Twitter. It is important to remember that social media can promote and amplify bad ideas and opinions just as easily as good. “Fake news” flourishes on social media, but that is no reason to dismiss the platforms themselves.

[Learn more.](#)

## Interested in incorporating social media in your practice?

The manual for service providers [Use of Social Media in Prenatal and Early Childhood Services](#) used literature searches and key informant interviews to identify and discuss the best practices for social media use in prenatal and early childhood services. It highlights considerations for organizations wishing to implement social media use in their reproductive health and early childhood services.



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## Arsenic and Lead Are in Your Fruit Juice: What You Need to Know

Fruit juice's health halo has slipped in recent years, mainly because it packs a lot of sugar and calories. But there's another, lesser-known health risk with these juices: They may also contain potentially harmful levels of arsenic, cadmium, and lead, according to new tests from Consumer Reports.

CR tested 45 popular fruit juices sold across the country—including apple, grape, pear, and fruit blends—and found elevated levels of those elements, commonly known as heavy metals, in almost half of them, including juices marketed for children. More than 80 percent of parents of children age 3 and younger give their kids fruit juice at least sometimes, according to a recent national Consumer Reports survey of 3,002 parents. In 74 percent of those cases, kids drink juice once a day or more. Children are particularly vulnerable to the harmful effects of heavy metals.

[Learn more.](#)



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## New Website from the National Collaborative for Infants and Toddlers

This week the [Online Solution Center](#) of the National Collaborative for Infants and Toddlers went live. The site provides the early childhood field with the latest information and tools to advance prenatal-to-three policies in states and communities. It includes case studies, a data section broken down by state and county, information on measuring impact, and innovations happening around the country. The site contains communications content to help you craft your own messaging to help you garner support for investments. Decision makers and advocates can connect with each other to share ideas for championing prenatal-to-three agendas. Explore the website and share this resource with your colleagues and networks!

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## First Nations, Inuit and Métis Food Guides May Be Coming, Health Canada Indicates

[Canada's new food guide](#) may not be relatable for many Indigenous people, but Health Canada officials say there are Indigenous-specific resources coming for First Nations, Inuit and Métis. Lauded for its reduced emphasis on meat, dairy and sugary drinks and its promotion of water, whole grains and plant-based proteins, the food guide—updated for the first time in over a decade—will influence health professionals, educational

institutions and others in determining what foods Canadians should consume for optimal health and nutrition. But the colourful palette of fresh produce, grains and proteins—like chickpeas and tofu—adorning the guide’s front page doesn’t necessarily represent or reflect Indigenous peoples’ food preferences or the barriers that many face in accessing healthy foods. Health Canada’s website says the new resource is “inclusive of Indigenous Peoples,” but that the 2007 [Canada Food Guide for First Nations, Inuit and Métis](#) “can still be used as a trusted source of information on healthy eating to support Indigenous peoples until new tools are available.”

[Learn more.](#)

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### **Why ECE Matters: Developing Transferable Skills from the Start**

“Once a child moves into grade one, they are less likely to experience play in the classroom. And in subsequent grades, they are even less likely to learn through play. In Early Childhood Education (ECE), students intentionally develop inquiry skills, creativity, and independent thinking. Then, in the later grades, the school system seems to take this away – asking students to follow stricter rules and perform more well-defined tasks. However, once students graduate, employers want them to have these entrepreneurial competencies. The question is: how can we bridge this gap, so that the domains assessed by the [Early Development Instrument](#) (EDI) and valued in ECE continue to be fostered throughout school?”

[Learn more.](#)

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### **Paternity Leave in Canada: An Opportunity not to be Taken Lightly**

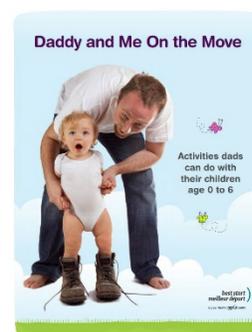
In this blog post from [Dad Central Ontario](#), Brian Russel discusses the benefits and implications of the new program in the parental leave system (beginning Mar 17, 2019) that will provide dads with 5 weeks of [“use-it-or-lose-it” leave](#). He argues that beyond an incredible pay-off to children and families, this new leave structure shows there is a change in the social fabric of parenting in Canada and reflects that consistent, engaged parenting by BOTH parents, from the beginning, benefits the development of children.

[Learn more.](#)

*Note: Are you registered to the [Side-by-Side: Canadian Father Involvement](#) conference? It's from February 28th to March 1st, 2019 in Ottawa...*

## Interested in engaging and encouraging fathers?

Aimed at fathers of children aged 0 to 6, the booklet [Daddy and Me on the Move](#) (Also available [in French](#)) encourages strong father-child relationships right from the start by highlighting activities that fathers can do with their children. See also the manual [Step by Step - Engaging Fathers in Programs for Families](#) (also available [in French](#)), a step by step guide for service providers who want to plan and implement strategies for engaging fathers.



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## Should we? Decoding Newborn's DNA Could Pinpoint Hidden Risks

A program that maps out the genes of newborns has allowed researchers to identify risks for some inherited childhood conditions, many of which can be prevented. The so-called [BabySeq Project](#) discovered that slightly more than 9 percent of infants carry genes that put them at risk for medical conditions as they reach childhood. DNA sequencing can identify risks for a wide range of disorders that may not be detected otherwise, the study authors noted. Finding these mutations early may lead to helping newborns live better lives and ease the worries of their families. Authors said, "Disclosing genetic risk for adult-onset conditions in children has been discouraged in traditional genetics in order to protect the child's 'right not to know,' but our results demonstrate that many parents want access to this information about their child."

[Learn more](#) and [access the original study](#).



## Trauma-Informed Practice in Child Welfare: Recognizing Collective Resistance of the African Canadian Community

Trauma-informed practice has become popular within the social services and has recently entered Ontario child welfare. Trauma-informed practice can be helpful in moving us away from a pathologizing, over-medicalizing and blaming lens upon people's behavior; by asking what happened to them, rather than what's wrong with them? However, further consideration and analysis is required when using trauma informed practice with African Canadian children, youth, families and communities. The assumption that African Canadian people are simply damaged by oppression is a racist idea. In this way we need to be careful of how we engage with trauma informed practice. We do not want to reproduce narratives of deficiency pertaining to the African Canadian community.

[Learn more.](#)

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## How Food Insecurity Puts Newborns at Risk

Canada needs to establish better methods to support food insecure families with newborns, according to a

sociology professor who warns that the high cost and often limited availability of infant formula can have negative effects on babies' health. In Canada, food insecurity affects more than four million people – or one in eight homes, according to the [Statistic Canada's Canadian Community Health Survey](#). Mothers of infants are particularly vulnerable to the effects of food insecurity because they're often malnourished, which can affect breastfeeding. As a result of this, mothers resort to feeding their children formula, which is unaffordable in Canada and difficult to access.

[Learn more.](#)

## II. Recent Reports & Research - Maternal and Child Health

### **Cannabinoid Exposure and Altered DNA Methylation in Rat and Human Sperm**

Little is known about the reproductive effects of paternal cannabis exposure. We evaluated associations between cannabis or tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) exposure and altered DNA methylation in sperm from humans and rats, respectively. DNA methylation, measured by reduced representation bisulfite sequencing, differed in the sperm of human users from non-users by at least 10% at 3,979 CpG sites. Pathway analyses indicated Hippo Signaling and Pathways in Cancer as enriched with altered genes (Bonferroni  $p < 0.02$ ). These same two pathways were also enriched with genes having altered methylation in sperm from THC-exposed versus vehicle-exposed rats ( $p < 0.01$ ). Data validity is supported by significant correlations between THC exposure levels in humans and methylation for 177 genes, and substantial overlap in THC target genes in rat sperm (this study) and genes previously reported as having altered methylation in the brain of rat offspring born to parents both exposed to THC during adolescence. In humans, cannabis use was also associated with significantly lower sperm concentration. **Findings point to possible pre-conception paternal reproductive risks associated with cannabis use.**

[Access the article.](#)

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### **Prospective Study of Cigarette Smoking and Fecundability**

To what extent is cigarette smoking associated with reduced fecundability? Data from a North American internet-based preconception cohort study of 5473 female and 1411 male pregnancy planners, enrolled from 2013 to 2018 was studied, and information on active and passive smoking history on baseline questionnaires was collected. Pregnancy was reported on female bi-monthly follow-up questionnaires. Fecundability ratios (FR) and 95% CI was calculated using proportional probabilities regression models, adjusted for demographic, behavioral, medical, reproductive and dietary variables. The study showed that current female smokers, particularly those who had smoked  $\geq 10$  cigarettes/day for  $\geq 10$  years, had lower fecundability than never smokers, but current male smoking and passive smoking in either partner showed little association with reduced fecundability. Keeping in mind that the numbers of cigarette smokers, particularly within categories of intensity and duration, were small, under-reporting of smoking may have resulted in non-differential misclassification, and smokers were more likely to be lost to follow-up, and given the consistency of these findings with results from previous studies and the dose-response relation in intensity of smoking, this study supports an association between female cigarette smoking and lower fecundability.

[Access the article.](#)

## What else can future parents do when planning a pregnancy?

The bilingual website [Health Before Pregnancy](#) is designed for people thinking of having a baby in the near future. It provides information to help them plan for the healthiest baby possible.

The logo for 'Health Before Pregnancy' is a dark purple square with a white border. Inside, the text 'Health Before PREGNANCY' is written in white, with 'PREGNANCY' in a larger, bold font. Below this, the question 'Is there a baby in your future?' is written in a smaller white font.

Health Before  
PREGNANCY  
Is there a baby  
in your future?

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## Patterns of Prenatal Alcohol Use That Predict Infant Growth and Development

Previous studies have had inconsistent findings regarding the quantity and frequency of prenatal alcohol exposure (PAE) that lead to deficits in growth and neurodevelopment. This study employed a longitudinal trajectory modeling of maternal drinking patterns associated with infant growth or neurodevelopmental deficits to a homogenous sample of 471 mothers and infants, and multivariable regression analyses to determine if each trajectory group was associated with infant weight, length, or head circumference at birth or psychomotor or mental deficits in infancy. 5 distinct PAE trajectory groups were identified: minimal or no PAE throughout gestation, low-to-moderate PAE with discontinuation early in gestation, low-to-moderate PAE sustained across gestation, moderate-to-high PAE with reduction early in gestation, and high PAE sustained across gestation. The highest-trajectory group was associated with deficits in infant weight and length at birth and deficits in psychomotor and mental performance at 6 to 12 months of age. Although confidence intervals overlapped, low-to-moderate sustained use was more strongly associated with most negative infant outcomes than moderate-to-high PAE with early reduction. With these findings, we confirm that high, sustained PAE confers the highest risk for adverse infant outcomes but demonstrate that even low-to-moderate PAE continued across gestation is associated with certain deficits. This approach may be used to help clinicians identify high-risk infants for targeted early intervention.

[Access the article.](#)

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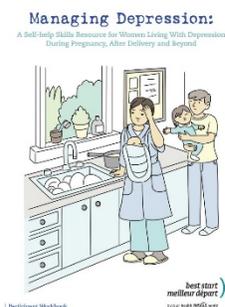
## The Effectiveness of Telemedicine Interventions to Address Maternal Depression: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis

Maternal depression (MD), is an overarching term for depression affecting pregnant women and mothers for up to 12 months postpartum. Because MD may have chronic and long-lasting effects, it is an important public health concern. The extent to which telemedicine may be an effective way to provide services to sufferers of MD is unknown, therefore, this review aimed to assess the available evidence. A search for relevant randomised controlled trials published between 2000 and 2018, followed by a systematic review and meta-analysis identified 10 studies for inclusion. Therapeutic strategies involved cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), behavioural activation and other psychoeducation. Eight trials reported significant improvement in depression scores post-intervention; four studies that conducted post-intervention follow-up found that these improvements continued. However, high attrition rates and lack of blinding were common problems. This review found limited evidence supporting the delivery of CBT for the treatment of MD and anxiety using telemedicine. However, most of the evidence only studied improvements in postpartum depression, indicating that use of telemedicine to provide MD intervention is still small and an under-researched area.

[Access the article.](#)

## Did you know?

- *Managing Depression – A Facilitator’s Guide* for service providers provides a weekly agenda and activities to facilitate 5 group sessions for women living with depression. Available in [English](#) and in [French](#).
- *Managing Depression - A Self-help Skills Resource Workbook* for women living with depression and their clinicians or service providers. It provides information about depression and healthy lifestyle behaviours, and skills for managing depression. Concerned partners, family members or friends may also find this resource helpful. Available in [English](#) and in [French](#), and in a fillable format in [English](#) and in [French](#).



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## Composition and Variation of the Human Milk Microbiota Are Influenced by Maternal and Early-Life Factors

Breastmilk contains a complex community of bacteria that may help seed the infant gut microbiota. The composition and determinants of milk microbiota are poorly understood. Among 393 mother-infant dyads from the CHILD cohort, we found that milk microbiota at 3–4 months postpartum was dominated by inversely correlated Proteobacteria and Firmicutes, and exhibited discrete compositional patterns. Milk microbiota composition and diversity were associated with maternal factors (BMI, parity, and mode of delivery), breastfeeding practices, and other milk components in a sex-specific manner. Causal modeling identified mode of breastfeeding as a key determinant of milk microbiota composition. Specifically, providing pumped breastmilk was consistently associated with multiple microbiota parameters including enrichment of potential pathogens and depletion of bifidobacteria. Further, these data support the retrograde inoculation hypothesis, whereby the infant oral cavity impacts the milk microbiota. Collectively, these results identify features and determinants of human milk microbiota composition, with potential implications for infant health and development.

[Access the article](#) and [read the discussion](#).

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## Initiative to Improve Exclusive Breastfeeding by Delaying the Newborn Bath

To examine whether delayed newborn bathing would increase rates of in-hospital exclusive breastfeeding and plans to use human milk at discharge, a retrospective, two-group, pre- and post-intervention design was performed, the intervention being delaying the newborn baths to at least 12 hours after birth. Pre- and post-intervention data were retrieved from the hospital’s electronic medical record and administrative database. Univariate and multivariate analyses were completed. Of 996 mother–newborn couplets, 448 were pre-intervention couplets, and 548 were post-intervention couplets. We found no differences in maternal or newborn characteristics by group. In-hospital exclusive breastfeeding increased from 59.8% before the intervention to 68.2% after the intervention. In multivariate modeling, in-hospital exclusive breastfeeding increased for all couplets after the intervention and with vaginal versus cesarean birth. In addition, the post-intervention discharge feeding plan reflected an increase in use of human milk. In conclusion, delaying the newborn bath was associated with increased in-hospital exclusive breastfeeding rates and use of human milk as a part of the discharge feeding plan.

[Access the article](#) and [read the discussion](#).

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## Breast Milk Macronutrient Components in Prolonged Lactation

Human milk (HM) is the first dietary exposure in infancy and the best nutritional option for growth and healthy development of the newborn and infant. The concentrations of macronutrients, namely proteins, carbohydrates and lipids, change during lactation stages. HM has been studied extensively in the first 6 months of lactation, but there are limited data regarding milk composition beyond 1 or 2 years postpartum. The aim of our study was to describe longitudinal changes in HM macronutrient concentrations during the prolonged lactation of healthy mothers from the 1st to the 48th month. For the macronutrient content of milk of mothers breastfeeding for longer than 18 months, fat and protein increased and carbohydrates decreased significantly, compared with milk expressed by women breastfeeding up to 12 months. Moreover, the concentration of fat, protein and carbohydrates in HM over 2 years of lactation from the 24th to the 48th month remained at a stable level. However, analyzed macronutrients were positively (carbohydrate,  $r = 0.51$ ) or negatively (fat,  $r = -0.36$  and protein,  $r = -0.58$ ) correlated with the amount of feeding. Our results create a greater potential for understanding the nutritional contribution of HM over 2 years of lactation and showed that the source of calories in breast milk for older children is mainly fat, while carbohydrates play a greater role in infant nutrition in the early stage. The observed changes of macronutrient concentrations from the 1st to the 48th month of lactation are probably related to the adaptation of milk composition to the increased energy demand of the intensively growing child.

[Access the article.](#)



## Timing of Introduction of Allergenic Solids for Infants at High Risk

Food allergy affects an estimated 2% to 10% of the population, with evidence of increasing prevalence over time. Preventing food allergy has become an important public health goal. Health Canada currently recommends breastfeeding infants exclusively until they are 6 months old, while acknowledging that in individual practice, signs of infant readiness may guide the introduction of complementary foods a few weeks earlier. There is emerging evidence that early food introduction, between 4 to 6 months of age, may have a role in preventing food allergy, particularly for egg and peanut, in high-risk infants. For infants at high risk for allergic disease, it is now recommended that commonly allergenic solids be introduced at around 6 months of age, but not before 4 months of age, and guided by the infant's developmental readiness for food. Continued breastfeeding should be encouraged and supported because of its many health benefits.

[Learn more](#) and [access the statement.](#)

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## The Impact of Bilingual Environments on Selective Attention in Infancy

Bilingualism has been observed to influence cognitive processing across the lifespan but whether bilingual environments have an effect on selective attention and attention strategies in infancy remains an unresolved question. In Study 1, infants exposed to monolingual or bilingual environments participated in an eye-tracking

cueing task in which they saw centrally presented stimuli followed by a target appearing on either the left or right side of the screen. Halfway through the trials, the central stimuli reliably predicted targets' locations. In Study 2, the first half of the trials consisted of centrally presented cues that predicted targets' locations; in the second half, the cue–target location relation switched. All infants performed similarly in Study 1, but in Study 2 infants raised in bilingual, but not monolingual, environments were able to successfully update their expectations by making more correct anticipatory eye movements to the target and expressing faster reactive eye latencies toward the target in the post-switch condition. The experience of attending to a complex environment in which infants simultaneously process and contrast two languages may account for why infants raised in bilingual environments have greater attentional control than those raised in monolingual environments.

[Access the article](#) and [read the discussion](#).

### What else can parents do to improve their child's brain development?



Best Start's [Tips for Parents on Brain Development](#) (also available [in French](#)) provide parents with simple and useful tips on 15 topics associated with brain development. The tips can easily be shared through social media or distributed as handouts. They cover preconception, pregnancy and child development for ages 0-3 years.

You can also refer parents to Best Start's bilingual [Healthy Baby, Healthy Brain website](#), where they'll find similar information, and advice from experts, gathered in short videos.

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### Stroking Modulates Noxious-Evoked Brain Activity in Human Infants

A subclass of C fibre sensory neurons found in hairy skin are activated by gentle touch and respond optimally to stroking at ~1–10 cm/s, serving a protective function by promoting affiliative behaviours. In adult humans, stimulation of these C-tactile (CT) afferents is pleasant, and can reduce pain perception. Touch-based techniques, such as infant massage and kangaroo care, are designed to comfort infants during procedures, and a modest reduction in pain-related behavioural and physiological responses has been observed in some studies. Here, authors investigated whether touch can reduce noxious-evoked brain activity. They demonstrate that stroking (at 3 cm/s) prior to an experimental noxious stimulus or clinical heel lance can attenuate noxious-evoked brain activity in infants. CT fibres may represent a biological target for non-pharmacological interventions that modulate pain in early life.

[Access the article](#) and [read the discussion](#).

## III. Recent Reports & Research - Early Childhood Development and Education

### Associations of Harsh Physical Punishment and Child Maltreatment in Childhood With Antisocial Behaviors in Adulthood

This study aims to examine whether harsh physical punishment in the absence of child maltreatment and child maltreatment with and without harsh physical punishment are associated with antisocial behaviors in

adulthood. Harsh physical punishment included pushing, grabbing, shoving, slapping, and hitting. Child maltreatment included physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, physical neglect, emotional neglect, and exposure to intimate partner violence. The study used data on the general US population obtained from the National Survey on Alcohol and Related Conditions Wave 3 from April 2012 to June 2013. Participants were civilian, non-institutionalized adults 18 years and older. Lifetime antisocial personality disorder behaviors since age 15 years were assessed using the Alcohol Use Disorder and Associated Disabilities Interview Schedule-5 based on Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (Fifth Edition) criteria. The number of study participants was 36 309, with 15 862 men. The mean (SE) age was 46.54 (0.19) years. The prevalence of harsh physical punishment and child maltreatment was 18.1% and 46.7%, respectively. Harsh physical punishment only, child maltreatment only, and harsh physical punishment and child maltreatment were associated with adult antisocial behaviors. It is estimated that harsh physical punishment and/or child maltreatment might account for approximately 45.5% of antisocial behaviors among men in the United States and 47.3% antisocial behaviors among women in the United States. **Harsh physical punishment and child maltreatment appear to be associated with adult antisocial behaviors.**

[Learn more](#) and [access the article](#).



## CMHO Annual Report Card - Families and the Economy

[Children's Mental Health Ontario \(CMHO\)](#) has released our Annual Report Card, disclosing [new research findings from the Canadian Centre for Health Economics at the University of Toronto](#) calculating a productivity loss in Ontario (due to absenteeism) of \$421 million in 2017 for parents with children who experience issues related to anxiety. This new research was conducted in response to [CMHO's 2017 Ipsos Public Affairs](#) survey that discovered 1 in 4 Ontario parents have reported missing work to care for a child with issues related to anxiety. This year's report card also includes results from a series of interviews done with Ontario parents and caregivers who have sought treatment for a child's mental health issues as well as survey findings from siblings of young people with mental illness.

[Access the report](#).

## Association Between Screen Time and Children's Performance on a Developmental Screening Test

Excessive screen time is associated with delays in development; however, it is unclear if greater screen time predicts lower performance scores on developmental screening tests or if children with poor developmental performance receive added screen time as a way to modulate challenging behavior. To assess the directional association between screen time and child development in a population of mothers and children, this longitudinal cohort study used a 3-wave, cross-lagged panel model in 2441 mothers and children in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, drawn from the All Our Families study. At age 24, 36, and 60 months, children's screen-time behavior (total hours per week) and developmental outcomes (Ages and Stages Questionnaire, Third Edition) were assessed via maternal report. Of the 2441 children included in the analysis, 1169 (47.9%) were boys. A random-intercepts, cross-lagged panel model revealed that higher levels of screen time at 24 and 36 months were significantly associated with poorer performance on developmental screening tests at 36 months and 60 months, respectively. The results of this study support the directional association between screen time and child development.

[Learn more](#) and [access the article](#).

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## Associations Between Meeting the Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for the Early Years and Behavioral and Emotional Problems Among 3-Year-Olds

This study aimed to 1) examine associations between meeting the 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for the Early Years and behavioral and emotional problems in a large sample of 3-year-old children, and 2) determine the proportion of children meeting the Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines. Participants were 3-year olds (n = 539) from the Edmonton site of the Canadian Healthy Infant Longitudinal Development (CHILD) birth cohort. Physical activity and sleep duration were accelerometer-derived while screen time was parent-reported. Meeting the overall guidelines was defined as: (1)  $\geq 180$  min/day of total physical activity, including 60 min/day of moderate- to vigorous-intensity physical activity, (2)  $\leq 1$  h/day of screen time, and (3) 10–13 h of sleep per 24-hour period. Externalizing, internalizing, and total problem scores (lower scores representing fewer problems) were calculated from the parent-reported Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL). Descriptive statistics and linear regression models were completed. Only 5% of children met the overall guidelines (all three recommendations), with 19.3%, 50.5%, and 83.1% meeting the physical activity, screen time, and sleep recommendations, respectively. Meeting more recommendations was associated with lower scores for total, externalizing and internalizing problems. Similar findings were also observed for the specific combinations of: (1) physical activity and screen time and (2) sleep duration and screen time. In conclusion, **meeting more recommendations within the 24-hour Movement Guidelines was associated with fewer behavioral and emotional problems at 3-years**. Few 3-year-olds met the overall guidelines. Findings support an integrated approach for healthy growth and development.

[Access the article](#).

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## Ratios/Class Sizes for Four and Five Year Olds in ECEC Programs

Research and expert perspectives agree that one of the key elements that determines the quality of an early childhood education and care program is the number of adults to children - the ratio/class size. However, it is also clear that the adult:child ratio is not the sole quality-determining element. Other important elements, especially training and qualifications, interact with ratio to form the structural and pedagogical base for quality in an ECEC program. This detailed paper reviews research and expert opinion from the child care, kindergarten and blended ECEC program literature to consider what is known about effects of staff: child ratios/class sizes on child outcomes and program quality for four and five year olds, and what other key factors should be taken into account.

[Read the briefing note](#) and [access the report](#).

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## A Longitudinal Comparison of Learning Outcomes in Full-Day and Half-Day Kindergarten

In 2010, the province of Ontario introduced a new universal two-year play-based full-day kindergarten program. The authors exploited the phasing-in of this program over five years, allowing a natural experiment in which children from full-day kindergarten could be compared with those from half-day kindergarten in matched neighborhoods. Children (N = 592) were followed from kindergarten to Grade 2 with direct learning and self-regulation measures. Grade 3 wide-scale achievement test scores were available for 269 of the children. Results showed lasting benefits of full-day kindergarten on children's self-regulation, reading, writing, and number knowledge to the end of Grade 2, including some benefits for vocabulary. Full-day kindergarten children were significantly more likely to meet provincial expectations for reading in Grade 3. The study points to the benefits of a play-based, full-day kindergarten program and brings evidence to bear on the mixed findings in the research literature about the fade-out effects of full-day kindergarten.

[Access the article.](#)

## IV. Recent Reports & Research - Other Topics

### Developmental Milestones - Child Care Fees in Canada's Big Cities 2018

This report updates the ranking of the most and least expensive cities for child care in Canada. The study finds that fees have risen faster than inflation in 61% of cities since 2017. However, in 2018, the number of provinces with policies directly targeting fee affordability has doubled.

The study, the fifth in a series, provides an annual snapshot of median parental child care fees in Canada's 28 biggest cities for full-time regulated child care of infants, toddlers and preschoolers. Fees were surveyed between May-August 2018.

[Access the report](#) and [learn more.](#)



### Fathers' Parental Leave-Taking, Childcare Involvement and Mothers' Labor Market Participation

This study analyzes the effect of fathers' parental leave-taking on the time fathers spend with their children and on mothers' and fathers' labor supply. Fathers' leave-taking is highly selective and the identification of causal effects relies on within-father differences in leave-taking for first and higher order children that were triggered by a policy reform promoting more gender equality in leave-taking. Results show that even short periods of fathers' parental leave may have long-lasting effects on fathers' involvement in childcare and housework. Effects on maternal labor supply are also significantly positive but do not persist over time.

[Find out more.](#)

## Parental Leave: Why We Need to Talk about Fatherhood

“Parental leave” is often understood to be synonymous with “maternity leave,” but that’s only half of the story. However, research on parenting, which has traditionally examined the effect of the mother on children’s outcomes, is now focusing on the importance of the father. At the organizational and policy level, decision-makers have begun to implement paternity-leave policies to encourage fathers to share child-rearing responsibilities. For example, in Canada, new federal parental leave policies created a “use it or lose it” five weeks of leave for the second parent in an effort to encourage fathers to take time off to spend with their infants. To shed light on the implications of paternity leaves and fatherhood for policy and households, the [Institute for Gender and the Economy](#) held a panel discussion with leading scholars, who debated the issues and highlighted the important intersections of gender, race, socioeconomic status and identity that shape parenting and paternity leave.

[Find out more.](#)



## Setting the Table: Food Insecurity and Costs in Ontario’s North

This report looks at the issue of high food costs across Northern Ontario and the resulting food insecurity. It explores the causes of higher food prices in this region, as well as other underlying social concerns that contribute to food insecurity. Proposed solutions to address this issue include increased road access, delivery using airships and drones, encouraging cooperative business models and implementation of a basic income guarantee.

Access [the release](#) and [the whole report](#).

## Food Banks Canada for First Time Releases HungerCount Digital Report for all Access

[Food Banks Canada](#) released its national [HungerCount 2018](#) report digitally; now accessible to all Canadians, year-round, and provides a clear view of who is most affected and where across the nation. HungerCount 2018 emphasizes that food bank use across Canada remains unacceptably high with 1.1 million visits to food banks in March 2018 alone. The report reveals that:

- Children Bear the Brunt of Food Insecurity.
- Single Adult Households are being left behind.
- Food Insecurity in Northern Canada is Extreme.
- Poverty is at the core of food bank usage

[Learn more](#) and [access the report](#).



HungerCount 2018

## V. Current Initiatives



### Calling All Bloggers - The NRC Wants to Feature You!

Would you like to share a story related to this year's [Nutrition Month](#) via the [Nutrition Resource Centre](#)?

The NRC is welcoming blog posts (300-600 words) on topics related to this year's theme: **Unlock the Potential of Food.**

[Find out more here!](#)

### NCCDH Health Equity Clicks: Community Revitalization

The [National Collaborating Centre for Determinants of Health \(NCCDH\)](#) has relaunched their [Health Equity Clicks: Community](#), which will be used in some of their PHESC offerings. The community now features functionalities that will allow you to more easily monitor and participate in active discussions, network with each other and share resources. With the revitalization, the community will become a more active space for robust conversations on research and practice related to social determinants of health and health equity.

[Learn more.](#)

### Did you know?

Health Nexus has developed many resources and tools over the years to help you strive toward equity in your work. All of them are available for free on [this page](#).



### Baby Bundle Project



### New Regent Park Program Provides Holistic Support for New Indigenous Moms

Statistics Canada suggests while they make up less than eight percent of the population under the age of 14, about 52 per cent of children in care in Canada are Indigenous. The federal government recently introduced Indigenous child welfare legislation to avoid repeating the 60s scoop, when Indigenous children were routinely removed from their families and communities to be sent to foster homes or adopted. After a three-year research project, St. Michael's Hospital and the Seventh Generation Midwives have launched the new program to address infant mortality and child apprehension rates that are higher in Indigenous communities across Canada than in the general population. The [Baby Bundles Program](#) aims to cut the number of Indigenous infants in children's aid system. Founders of the project hope a holistic system that supports the whole family will mean

fewer Indigenous children will end up being taken away by children's aid agencies.

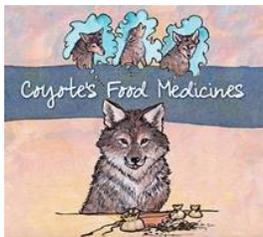
[Learn more.](#)

## First Nations Health Authority Launches Cannabis Awareness Campaign

The First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) has launched a public health campaign aimed at reducing cannabis use among Indigenous children and youth by reminding them that their culture and traditional values give them the strength and ability to make the right choices for themselves. Some of the ads are aimed specifically at women who are pregnant or breastfeeding. The campaign includes digital advertising on multiple social media platforms, radio spots, and transit shelter ads at strategically selected locations that will direct people to a cannabis web portal for information and resources.



[Read the media release here!](#)



## First Nations Health Authority and Doctors of BC Use Indigenous Storytelling to Help Educate Health Care Providers

In summer 2018, The [First Nations Health Authority](#) (FNHA), in collaboration with [Doctors of BC](#) and the [BC provincial government's Shared Care Committee](#), launched [Coyote's Food Medicines](#), an innovative storytelling project and campaign focused on healthy medication use. The story was created after Secwepemc Elders met in 2016 to share their thoughts and experiences of their community's use of medicines. It is from their conversation and guiding words that the Coyote's Food Medicines story emerged.

[Read the full post and watch the video.](#)

## VI. Upcoming Events



## APHD Colloquium Series

The [Applied Psychology and Human Development program of the University of Toronto](#) offers the [APHD Colloquium Series](#), a collection of special talks delivered by esteemed speakers from within and outside of APHD and OISE. Colloquia are delivered once a month from September to May and cover topics in a variety

of domains within psychology, broadly defined. Topics of past Colloquium Series have included risk assessment for domestic violence, a wide range of learning disabilities, mental health, childhood development, learning in the developing mind and brain, and many others. Colloquia are held on **Wednesdays from 12:30-2:00pm** in Rm 9-105 (*December and April colloquia will take place at 56 Spadina Rd at the Dr. Eric Jackman Institute of Child Study*).

[Learn more and access past recorded sessions.](#)

Note : For select talks, you can also [join remotely](#).

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## Webinars: Survivors to Leaders: Stages of Immigrant Parent Involvement

The [National Family Support Network](#)'s Webinar Wednesdays series aims to raise awareness of valuable work in the Family Support and Strengthening Field. In the next webinar on **February 27th at 12:30 pm**, you will gain insight into four stages of immigrant parent involvement. Understanding these stages will help identify challenges to family engagement and highlight effective family engagement practices to equip immigrant parents to navigate systems such as education.

Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

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## Motivational Interviewing Workshop and Webinar

[A Question Of Care | Peterborough Drug Strategy](#) will offer a workshop in Peterborough on **February 27th, 2019**, called [An introduction to Motivational Interviewing](#) where you will explore how to enhance the conversation style with clients as they contemplate change. Topics such as how to explore ambivalence, roll with resistance, and elicit change-talk will be discussed.

The [Ontario Municipal Social Services Association \(OMSSA\)](#) offers [a webinar](#) on a similar topic on March 6, 2019 at 12:30pm. You will learn that helping your clients find their inner motivation to create positive and lasting changes takes transforming how you communicate with them. With the right tools, you can support your clients in taking that first step towards change when you know how to build their inner resources.

Note: You can check the OMSSA's calendar of upcoming events at <https://www.omssa.com/calendar.php>.

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## Side-by-Side: Canadian Father Involvement Conference

The *Fatherhood Matters in the Early Years* conference, taking place from **Feb. 28 to Mar 1, 2019** in Ottawa will give an opportunity to focus on supporting and engaging fathers with relevant and effective services, programs, or resources. The goal is to help provide fathers with the knowledge and support needed around the healthy development of children. Attend to connect, inform, and mobilize around father involvement in Canada.

Learn more [here](#).

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## Language, Literacy and Numeracy - Online Workshop

The [Association of Early Childhood Educators of Ontario](#) (AECEO) has partnered with [Red River College](#) to offer the [Language, Literacy and Numeracy Online Workshop](#). The workshop content (videos, readings, links, games, discussions) is completely online and available to participants over a two-week period (**February 28 - March 13, 2019**). The content is from the [Science of Early Child Development \(SECD\)](#). A facilitator oversees the workshop by welcoming, orienting and guiding participants. Topics include:

- Experiences that best support children's development of language, literacy and numeracy
- Exploring language development in the early years, including genetic and environmental influences
- Literacy and emergent literacy in research and practice
- Mathematical concepts and the development of numeracy
- Practices that support numeracy
- Literacy, numeracy and school readiness

To register click [here](#)

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UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO  
DALLA LANA SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

## Webinar - Being Healthy Together/Mamwi: Indigenous Engagement and Planning in Public Health

This webinar, taking place **March 8th at 11 am EST**, will discuss protocols for engaging Indigenous peoples and communities from urban and reserve communities. A discussion of potential methods of planning with Indigenous peoples for public health will be addressed. It is important to build long-term relationships with Indigenous peoples, organizations and governments. A discussion of how to continue to build a partnership and relationship will be highlighted. Note that the recommended readings are [First Nations Mental Wellness Continuum Framework](#) | [Cadre du continuum du mieux-être mental des Premières Nations](#) and [Community Health Indicators Toolkit](#) – First Nations Health Development Project

[Learn more.](#)

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## The Families in Canada Conference 2019

On **March 27 and 28, 2019**, in Ottawa, Ontario, the [Vanier Institute of the Family](#) will host the [Families in Canada Conference 2019 \(#FAM2019\)](#) – a national, pan-Canadian conference held simultaneously with satellite events co-hosted by university

partners across Canada. Join delegates from across the country who study, serve and support families for two days of knowledge-sharing and catalytic conversation! Note that on March 27 and 28, 2019, the University of Guelph will be hosting [a satellite event for the Families in Canada Conference 2019](#).

[Learn more.](#)



## 2019 Expanding Horizons for the Early Years National Institute on Infant Mental Health

How does the science or our understanding of the science of infant and early mental health change our knowledge, policy, and practice? The [2019 Expanding Horizons for the Early Years National Institute on Infant Mental Health](#) will bring together practitioners from multiple perspectives to reflect on the values of scientific research and evaluation when considering the promotion of early mental health. Through community collaboration - the organic processes that build relationships across disciplines by exploring and maintaining partnerships - practitioners can benefit from the shared experience and expertise of others. We hope you will join us for what promises to be an informative and thought provoking gathering. It will take place **April 11 & 12, 2019** at the Sheraton Airport Hotel and Conference Centre, and include renowned Keynotes and **40** different concurrent sessions to choose from.

[Download the registration brochure](#), [register online](#) and [book your accommodations](#).



## Public Health 2019

[Public Health 2019](#) is the national forum where public health professionals, researchers, policy-makers, academics, students and trainees come together to strengthen efforts to improve health and well-being, to share the latest research and information, to promote best

practices and to advocate for public health issues and policies grounded in research. Three Forums will be held concurrently with **Public Health 2019**. Click on the links below for more information.

- [Cannabis and Public Health Forum](#) 30 April-1 May 2019
- [Healthy Parks, Healthy People Forum](#) 1-2 May 2019
- [Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Forum](#) 2 May 2019

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### Save the Date : Summer Institute 2019 – Accounting for Quality

The [16th Annual Summer Institute on Early Childhood Development](#) will take place in Toronto on June 17th, 2019. Iram Siraj, Professor of Child Development and Education at the University of Oxford will present *Fostering Effective Early Learning through Professional Development* at our 16th annual Summer Institute. In addition to her keynote presentation, Professor Siraj will lead a workshop on *Developing the whole child through movement play: Using the MOVERS guide to improve the quality of physical well-being*. Please visit our webpage for abstracts on both presentations, and a detailed Bio of Professor Siraj!

[Learn more.](#)



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### Save the date : The 2019 Multiple Birth Canada Annual General Meeting and Conference Retreat

The [Greater Sudbury Multiple Births Association](#) is excited to invite [Multiple Births Canada](#) (MBX), its affiliated chapters and direct members to join them in Sudbury, Ontario on **September 27-29, 2019** for the 2019 MBC Annual General Meeting and Conference Retreat, on the theme “Expanding Our Reach: Experiencing Life In The North.” The following topics will be discussed:

- healthy eating on a budget
- special education resource support
- medical and developmental support
- LGBTQ
- single parent family support
- truth and reconciliation.

In order to keep up to date on the announcements for the 2019 Conference & AGM event in Sudbury, Ontario, please join the [Facebook Group](#) for this event.

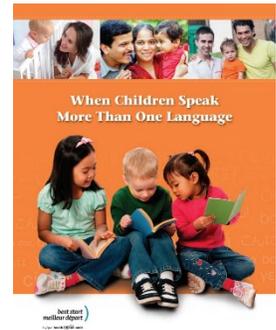
## VII. Resources



## Podcast: How Children Across the World Develop Language

How a child learns its first words, and the similarities of early language acquisition across cultures, is the focus of a recent episode of Stanford Radio's "[School's In](#)" featuring [Michael Frank](#), PhD, a Stanford language and learning specialist. In the podcast, Frank emphasizes that babies communicate with the desire to interact with the people and things surrounding them. He highlights an interesting finding that kids around the world are generally fascinated with the same things within their environment, which lead to their early vocabulary development. Top interests include the people around them, animals, and social routines (leading to the words hi, bye, peek-a-boo). Frank offers valuable tips on how parents and early childhood educators can provide children with an environment that catalyzes language learning.

[Learn more.](#)



### How about children who develop more than one language?

Language is the best tool to help a child do well later in school and in life. Parents of a child who will learn two or more languages may have questions. The booklet [When Children Speak More Than One Language](#) provides information based on research to help them.

Available in [English](#), [French](#), [Arabic](#), [Chinese](#), [Cree](#), [Hindi](#), [Ojibway](#), [Punjabi](#), [Spanish](#), [Tagalog](#), [Tamil](#) and [Urdu](#).

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### Access Parent Resources for Early Introduction of Peanut Foods

Being a new parent is stressful and your patient's caregivers have lots of questions and concerns. Introducing peanut foods early is one easy way to help reduce the risk for peanut allergies by as much as 86%. Find simple tools, videos and evidence-based guidance at [PreventPeanutAllergies.org](http://PreventPeanutAllergies.org).

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## New Editions of Childhood Health and Wellness Resources Support Parents and Caregivers to Raise Healthy, Vibrant Children

The [First Nations Health Authority \(FNHA\)](#) and the [National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health \(NCCA\)](#) are pleased to re-launch the following four resources for First Nations and Indigenous parents and caregivers in British Columbia:

- Growing Up Healthy.
- Family Connections.
- Parents as First Teachers.
- Fatherhood is Forever.

[Learn more and access the resources.](#)

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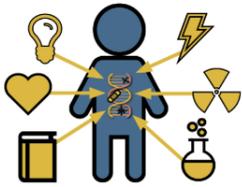
## Physical Literacy Assessment for Youth

### Preschool Physical Literacy Assessment

The [Preschool Physical Literacy Assessment \(Pre PLAY\)](#) was developed by researchers with expertise in motor development in early childhood for educators who work with children ages 18 months to kindergarten entry. The Pre PLAY was developed for children at all levels of physical literacy within this age range, but was not developed to identify delay. If you have concerns about a delay, we recommend using a tool designed to detect delay. Pre PLAY was designed for early childcare settings as these settings offer important opportunities to support children in developing physical literacy. Results from the Pre PLAY might be helpful for planning class activities that can strengthen children's physical literacy. In the preschool space, developing physical literacy involves encouraging children to experiment with many different physical activities and movement skills. The focus should be on emphasizing creativity and problem-solving with movement (e.g. different ways to hit a target, or move through an obstacle course), and how to structure movement activities that are fun.

[Learn more.](#)

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## Infographic: What is Epigenetics? And How Does it Relate to Child Development?

Science tells us that the interactions between genes and environment shape human development. “Epigenetics” is an emerging area of scientific research that shows how environmental influences—including the experiences we provide for children—actually affect the expression of their genes. This means that the old idea that genes are “set in stone” has been disproven. Nature vs. Nurture is no longer a debate. It’s nearly always both! To understand more about epigenetics and how it affects child development and long-term health outcomes, check out this new infographic by [the Centre on the Developing Child at Harvard University](#).

[View the infographic.](#)

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## Recorded Webinar: Interactive Ways to Teach Breastfeeding

This session will enhance your skills and provide you with ideas to teach breastfeeding to clients, in classes, or to other professionals. Breastfeeding is an important component that is sometimes forgotten when we teach about birth. Baby Friendly, local breastfeeding initiatives, and the Healthy People 2020 goals all support the need for breastfeeding education. This session will help you with the continuum from birth to breast with some creativity and fun.

[Learn more.](#)

### Did you know?

From online courses to webinars and resources, Best Start can help you [encourage breastfeeding](#), and support mothers and infants whatever feeding method they choose!

Need more? Visit [breastfeedingresourcesontario.ca](http://breastfeedingresourcesontario.ca) for a centralized source of quality, evidence-informed resources that support the Baby-Friendly Initiative.



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## Parenting Through Separation and Divorce

Parents often worry that their children will be emotionally harmed during a separation, but children are resilient and highly adaptable. If they have positive experiences to counter the difficult ones, they can develop resiliency, which can help them cope. There are ways to make a separation less traumatic and help your children, and yourself, cope with the transitions and changes in your family life. Full of practical advice and useful strategies, this newly revised booklet, available for sale on the [BC Council for Families website](#) is your essential guide to:

- Finding support and taking care of yourself
- What kids need from parents
- Managing your relationship with your former partner
- Helping kids make the transition between houses

Learn more.



## Do it for a Healthy Home Website

Do you know how to buy, use, store and dispose of chemical products in your home? How about common chemicals and pollutants you may find in and around your home? Health Canada developed and recently updated the Healthy Home Online Guide website at [canada.ca/healthy-home](http://canada.ca/healthy-home). This easy to browse website has information about chemicals and pollutants around the home along with ways parents can protect themselves and their family.



## Guided Pathways for Children, Support, and Property Issues in Separation and Divorce

Steps to Justice now has developed [Guided Pathways for children, support, and property issues in separation and divorce](#). This allows people getting a divorce to get online help to complete family law court forms from CLEO's Guided Pathways. Now available on [Steps to Justice](#), the latest online tool helps people fill out the forms they need to ask for custody, access, support, and/or property division when they separate or divorce.

[Learn more.](#)

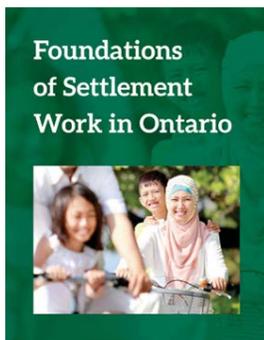
## CANVax

In July 2017, CPHA — funded by the [Public Health Agency of Canada](#) through the Immunization Partnership Fund — launched the **Creation of a [Canadian Immunization Resource Centre](#)** project. The project aims to offer access to the latest evidence-based products, resources and tools via the Canadian



Vaccination Evidence Resource and Exchange Centre (CANVax). CANVax is an online database of curated resources to support immunization program planning and promotional activities to improve vaccine acceptance and uptake in Canada.

Visit [www.canvax.ca](http://www.canvax.ca)



## Foundations of Settlement Work

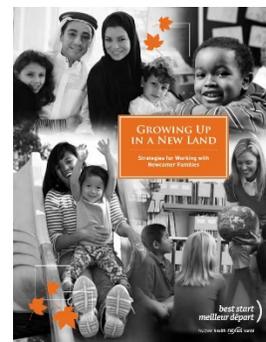
Foundations of Settlement Work in Ontario is a free, comprehensive resource for everyone who works with and supports immigrants, refugees, and people with precarious or no status. Learn about history, immigration policy and law, the immigrant and refugee-serving sector, and how to support newcomers in working through common barriers and challenges to settlement and integration.

[Download your PDF copy today.](#)

## Trying to be more welcoming to newcomer families?

Best Start has what you need: The [Growing up in a New Land - Strategies for Working with Newcomer Families](#) manual contains many strategies to assist service providers who work with newcomer families with children aged 0-6 years. Background information, as well as lists of resources, programs and activities are provided.

A tip: You can start by browsing and referring parents to our [resources for newcomer parents!](#)



## Applying the Science of Motivation

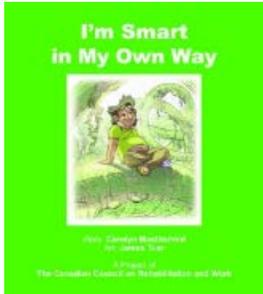
Motivation is a popular topic in early childhood development. Parents want to motivate their children to reach developmental milestones. Teachers want to motivate their students to be more productive. Program leaders want to motivate participants to remain engaged with their program. With the strong desire to understand and promote motivation, there are often misconceptions about this complex system of intertwined social and biological factors that influences people's motivation to participate actively and productively in schools, jobs, and communities—and to persevere in the face of setbacks. The [Center on the Developing Child's](#) latest newsletter addresses this issue with:

- [Five Facts About Motivation That Are Often Misunderstood,](#)

- [Implications for Parents, Caregivers, and Teachers](#),
- And a [working paper](#)/

[Learn more.](#)

*Note: Did you know? Many resources from the Centre on the Developing Child have been translated into a variety of languages. You can find all these translated materials, or filter by the language for which you'd like to find translated materials, [here](#).*



### Receive Free Children's Books on Inclusion

Ontario's Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility is sharing a free, 3-book series of children's stories that communicate the benefits of inclusion, including themes promoting accessibility for people with disabilities.

Order free copies at [ccrw.org/childrensbooks](http://ccrw.org/childrensbooks).



180 Dundas Street West, Suite 301, Toronto, ON M5G 1Z8

Telephone: (416) 408-2249 | Toll-free: 1-800-397-9567 | Fax: (416) 408-2122

E-mail: [beststart@healthnexus.ca](mailto:beststart@healthnexus.ca)

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## Stay connected!

- [Click4HP](#) is an international dialogue on health promotion. Participants exchange views on issues and ideas, provide leads to resources, and ask questions about health promotion.

- 
- **The Maternal Newborn and Child Health Promotion (MNCHP) Network** - A province-wide electronic forum for service providers working to promote preconception, prenatal and child health.
  - **Ontario Prenatal Education Network** - A space where professionals can share information and resources, ask questions and collaborate with peers on topics related to prenatal education.
  - **Health Promotion Today** Our blog keeps you informed of news and topics related to health promotion.
  - **The Best Start Indigenous Sharing Circle (BSASC) Network** is a distribution list designed for service providers working with Aboriginal Peoples in areas of preconception, prenatal and child health. The network is a forum to share news, ideas, questions and best practices.

En français:

## **Restez branché!**

- Le **Bulletin de santé maternelle et infantile** est un bulletin électronique mensuel à l'intention des fournisseurs de services œuvrant dans le domaine de la promotion de la santé maternelle et infantile.
- **Promotion de la santé aujourd'hui**– Notre blogue sur lequel on partage des nouvelles et réflexions liées à la promotion de la santé.

