



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

US Pediatricians Finally Strengthen Stance Against Spanking Kids

Aversive disciplinary strategies, including all forms of corporal punishment and yelling at or shaming children, are minimally effective in the short-term and not effective in the long-term. With new evidence, researchers link corporal punishment to an increased risk of negative behavioral, cognitive, psychosocial, and emotional outcomes for children. In this Policy Statement, the American Academy of Pediatrics provides guidance for pediatricians and other child health care providers on educating parents about positive and effective parenting strategies of discipline for children at each stage of development as well as references to educational materials. This statement supports the need for adults to avoid physical punishment and verbal abuse of children.

[Learn more](#) and [read the actual statement](#).

Interested in alternative methods for child discipline?

Best Start developed an entire bilingual website on this very topic! Visit the [Children See, Children Learn](#) website, refer new parents to it with our [growth charts](#) and [mini posters](#), and lead a parent workshop with our [ready-to-use workshop](#)!



Why not go one step beyond? Browse, download and refer new parents to our **Frequently Asked Questions about Time-out** in [English](#) or [French](#)!

New Legislation Eases Regulations on Child Care

The Province tabled its "Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness Act" last week, which would change and loosen restrictions around home-based and unlicensed child care. One of the proposed changes affects the daycare age ratios for the province's youngest children — loosening restrictions that were introduced five years ago after a number of baby deaths. For example, the province plans to allow a home child-care operator to supervise three children under age 2 — up from the current two. Other changes would allow two caregivers to look after six babies, six other children as well as their own kids. [Read more about the proposed changes on OMSSA website](#). The move raised alarms among child-care advocates as well as the opposition at Queen's Park, who say kids' safety is at stake.

[Learn more](#).



Rainbow Health Ontario Has a New Website

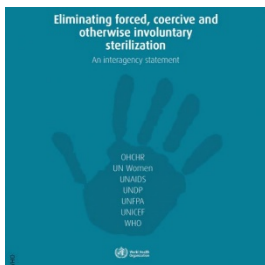
Over the summer the rainbowhealthontario.ca website was revised to give you a better browsing experience with quicker paths to what you're looking for—be it [RHO trainings](#), our [Service Provider Directory](#), [resources](#), [trans health information](#) or [open LGBT2SQ health research](#). To get you up to date at a glance, the site's homepage was redesigned to prioritize the latest news across areas of RHO's work. For our Francophone visitors, we've made a

series of bilingualism improvements to improve site-wide user experience. The site is also now optimized for mobile, so please enjoy your visit to the refreshed rainbowhealthontario.ca on any device!

Don't Forget to Also Provide Lactation Support After Perinatal Loss

Whether an infant loss is perinatal, neonatal, or that of an older infant/child, it is personal and unique to every mother. Loss of a child includes emotional and physical manifestation for each mother. She not only is grieving the loss of her child but also the dream she had of feeding, loving, and caring for her child. However, many times, providers overlook the normal postpartum changes that the mother's body will be going through. Many grieving mothers have expressed their strong feelings about the lack of lactation support following the loss of their infant. In [this blog post from ICEA](#), you'll find many recommendations and useful tools to best support grieving mothers with regards to lactation. Be the one that makes a difference in these mothers' lives and give them the lactation support they need.

[Learn more.](#)



Amnesty International Calls for Special Probe into Coerced Sterilization of Indigenous Women in Canada

The federal government needs to appoint a special representative to hear from Indigenous women coerced into being sterilized to learn what justice would look like for the survivors, says Amnesty International Canada. The human-rights organization, which plans to take the issue to the United Nations Committee Against Torture this month, insists there must be action from the federal government, the provinces and territories, and medical regulators. Many people are familiar with historic cases of coerced or forced sterilizations of Indigenous women in Canada, but Amnesty's gender-rights campaigner, Jacqueline Hansen, said people are shocked to learn it's still occurring.

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

How we Can Raise Kids to Have Healthy Relationships with Food, Themselves and All Kinds of Bodies

If we are not constantly examining how we engage with our kids about food, activity and fat, they will just end up defaulting to the socially acceptable norm, which is actively harming everyone and is literally dangerous for those of us navigating these norms in a fat body. For all the others working against time and society to raise kids who feel good in their bodies, Margaret Bryans offer her top three strategies for raising a fat-positive kid:

- Be value neutral about food
- Listen to your belly
- Move your body 'cause you love it, not 'cause you hate it

[Learn more.](#)

Interested in preventing child obesity?



Best Start's [It Takes a Village: Taking Action for Healthy Children](#)web course is what you need! Recently revised and also available [in French](#), this online course is intended for any service provider who work with children aged 2 through 11, and/or their parents, and who want a better understanding of how to support the healthy growth and development of children. The focus is on healthy weights in children, in the context of healthy child development.

Adoptive Parents Need More Time Off to Bond with Kids, Say Western Researchers

A group of Western University researchers and community partners are asking Canadian politicians to grant adoptive parents and caregivers more time to bond with their children during the early stages of adoption. The London, Ont.-based research team and [Adopt4Life: Ontario's Adoptive Parents Association](#) officials were in Ottawa last month to request an additional 15-week "attachment" leave to be part of a new class of employment insurance benefits for adoptive parents and customary and kin caregivers. They met with members of parliament and policy advisors. Right now, both biological and adoptive parents are granted a parental leave of up to 35 weeks. However, biological mothers are granted an additional 15 weeks of maternity leave. However, many adoptive parents experience significant challenges with their children related to mental health, physical disability and establishing an openness agreement with birth parents. An additional 15 weeks of leave could grant adoptive parents more time to bond with their children.

[Learn more.](#)



Ottawa to Hand Over Child Welfare Services to Indigenous Governments

The federal government plans to hand over control of child welfare services to Indigenous governments, in an effort to drive down the massive number of Indigenous children in foster care. Forthcoming federal legislation, co-developed with Indigenous leaders, will devolve authority to First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples to care for their own children in need of foster care. The specifics of how Ottawa will go about facilitating such a jurisdictional transfer are not known yet. The legislation will be introduced in the House of Commons in early 2019. Indigenous leaders expressed hope that the bill would be passed before the federal election next fall. This would be a departure from how the current system works, which leaves most Indigenous kids housed in provincially governed child welfare systems that critics say are inattentive to their unique needs, alienating kids from their traditional language, culture and support networks. Those pushing for reform want to see more money directed at programs for teen parents, rehabilitative family services, substance abuse treatment, warnings about fetal alcohol syndrome and other education campaigns, and to make apprehension a last resort. Kinship care — placing children with family members, such as grandmothers — is another model Indigenous communities want to explore.

Learn more [here](#) and [here](#).



Updated Evidence-Based Guideline Outlines the Right Amount of Physical Activity Women Should Get Throughout Pregnancy

Physical activity is a critical component of achieving a healthy pregnancy according to a new joint [Society of Obstetricians and Gynecologists of Canada](#) (SOGC) and [Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology](#) (CSEP) evidence-based pregnancy & physical activity guideline. Following the guideline can reduce the risk of pregnancy-related illness such as depression by at least 25 percent, and the risk of developing gestational diabetes, high blood pressure and preeclampsia by 40 percent.

[Read the announcement](#) and [access the guidelines](#).

In case you were wondering...

... Yes, Best Start already updated the [Prenatal Education Key Messages for Ontario](#) and the [Prenatal Education Modules](#) accordingly!



Two Cases of HIV Transmission Through Breastfeeding in Mothers with Undetectable Viral Load Reported

The PROMISE study was a large international study conducted in 14 low- and middle-income countries, investigating the effectiveness of maternal antiretroviral therapy in preventing HIV transmission and its impact on maternal health. These data were reported previously [in a 2018 publication of the study findings](#). New data from the study, presented in Amsterdam, show that two infants tested positive for HIV DNA either at the same time as their mothers had an undetectable viral load or viral load < 40 copies/ml, or shortly afterwards. Taken together, these cases of transmission suggest that undetectable does not mean untransmittable in the case of breastfeeding.

[Learn more.](#)

WHO Highlights Importance of Safeguarding Breastfeeding for Children up to Three Years of Age

In [a recent Information Note](#), the [World Health Organization](#) (WHO) highlights the importance of safeguarding breastfeeding and ending inappropriate marketing and distribution of breastmilk substitutes for children up to three years of age, because breastfeeding beyond 12 months has a profoundly positive impact on infant and maternal health:

- Children who are not breastfed at 12-23 months of age are about twice as likely to die as those who are breastfed in the second year of life
- Breastfeeding for more than 12 months reduces breast cancer by 26%

- Breastfeeding longer than 12 months reduces in ovarian cancer by 37%
- In a large study among low-income children in the United States, those breastfed for at least 12 months were 28% less likely to be overweight at four years of age than those never breastfed
- In a meta-analysis of 17 studies conducted in seven countries, each additional month of breastfeeding reduced the risk of childhood obesity by 4%.
- Each additional year of lifetime duration of breastfeeding is associated with a 9% protection against type 2 diabetes.

[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 for a centralized source of quality, evidence-informed resources that support the Baby-Friendly Initiative.



II. Recent Reports & Research - Maternal and Child Health

Targeting the Postpartum Period to Promote Weight Loss: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis

Many international clinical guidelines recommend that overweight and obese women lose weight prior to pregnancy to reduce the risk of adverse pregnancy outcomes. Women who have recently given birth and plan future pregnancies are an important target population for preconception weight-loss interventions. A systematic review to evaluate postpartum dietary and/or physical activity interventions to promote weight loss and improve health in a subsequent pregnancy was conducted. A total of 235 abstracts (193 after duplicates were excluded) were identified, from which 37 manuscripts were selected for full-text review. In total, 27 trials were identified for inclusion. Outcome data were available for approximately 75% of participants (n=3485). A combined dietary and physical activity intervention provided post partum produced greater postpartum weight loss, which was maintained at 12 months post partum, compared with no intervention. No studies reported maternal or infant health outcomes in a subsequent pregnancy. In conclusion, providing a postpartum intervention is associated with weight loss after birth, but effects on maternal and infant health in a subsequent pregnancy are uncertain.

[Learn more.](#)

Newborns of Ontario Women with Developmental Disabilities are More Likely to be Taken Into Protective Custody

Approximately half of women with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) lose custody of their children at some point in their child's development, but their rates of and risk factors for newborn discharge to child protective services from the birth hospitalization are relatively unknown. A population-based study of newborns of 3,845 women with and 379,834 women without IDD in Ontario, Canada (2002-2012) was conducted. A modified Poisson regression was used to estimate adjusted relative risks (aRR) and 95% confidence intervals (CI) for discharge to child protective services directly from the birth hospitalization (1) comparing newborns of

women with and without IDD and (2) among newborns of women with IDD according to sociodemographic, health, service, and perinatal characteristics. Results revealed that about 5.7% of newborns of women with IDD, compared to 0.2% of newborns of women without IDD, were discharged to child protective services. Among newborns of women with IDD, risk factors were maternal psychotic disorder, social assistance receipt, failure to receive an ultrasound by 20 weeks gestation, and receipt of < 4 prenatal visits by 36 weeks gestation. In conclusion, while women with IDD are at risk for custody loss immediately post-delivery, certain subgroups are at higher risk than others. Women with vulnerabilities related to comorbid psychotic disorders, poverty, and inadequate prenatal care may benefit from tailored, behaviour-based parenting interventions before and during pregnancy to prevent maternal-newborn separations.

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

People with developmental disabilities (DD) can be parents too. Would you like to support them better?

Session B4 of the [Best Start Annual Conference 2019](#) is addressing this very topic:



- The parenting rights of people with developmental disabilities
- Relevant findings from the literature
- Why people with developmental disabilities may have children
- Resources for service providers to help support parents with DD
- Parenting Enhancement Program description
- Parent training techniques and toolkit
- Parent and child characteristics and risk factors
- Case study
- Positive indicators for success
- Community resources and partnerships
- Barriers and gaps

Visit [the conference website](#) at and register soon!

Extending the Developmental Origins of Disease Model: Impact of Preconception Stress Exposure on Offspring Neurodevelopment

There is strong evidence for negative effects of maternal prenatal stress on the developing fetus; effects that continue to impact development throughout childhood. There is developing evidence that the observed association between prenatal stress and offspring neurodevelopment may be largely due to stress exposures that occur prior to conception. Consistent with a kindling or stress sensitization model, we posit that the development of the stress architecture during childhood and adolescence is in part based on environmental inputs, and that observed differences in stress regulation during pregnancy are largely due to variability in those earlier inputs. This hypothesis is testable via several interrelated approaches. First, more research is needed to understand the developmental timing of stress exposure on pregnancy health and offspring neurodevelopment, including models that compare chronicity and type of stressor (e.g., social, safety, health). Second, animal models will be critical for characterizing the unique effects of preconception stress exposure on pregnancy health and postnatal caregiving and offspring development. For example, cross-fostering is needed to determine the relative contribution of preconception stress on fetal development as opposed to postnatal caregiving effects on offspring neurodevelopment. Third, examining prevention effects will provide further information on the relative impact of preconception stress on offspring development. The results from the proposed research agenda will fill a critical gap in knowledge about the developmental origins of disease. To date, the model has

been limited by right-hand censoring, with the possibility that effects attributed to exposures during pregnancy are in fact causally linked to environmental exposures occurring prior to conception and the resulting alterations in biological systems critical in supporting healthy fetal development. Filling these gaps could lead to the design and deployment of public health initiatives that communicate the importance of reduction of stress and improved stress regulation during childhood, adolescence, and early adulthood to support later maternal and offspring health. Consequently, the proposed research is uniquely poised to elucidate the type and timing of bio behavioral targets for early preventive interventions.

[Learn more.](#)



Survive and Thrive: Transforming Care for Every Small and Sick Newborn

Nearly 30 million babies are born too soon, too small or become sick every year and need specialized care to survive, according to a new report by a global coalition that includes UNICEF and WHO. The report finds that among the newborn babies most at risk of death and disability are those with complications from prematurity, brain injury during childbirth, severe bacterial infection or jaundice, and those with congenital conditions.

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

Longer Lactation Duration is Associated with Decreased Prevalence of Non-Alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease in Women

Lactation lowers blood glucose and triglycerides, and increases insulin sensitivity. We hypothesized that a longer duration of lactation would be associated with lower prevalence of non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD), which is the leading cause of chronic liver disease in the United States. Participants from the Coronary Artery Risk Development in Young Adults cohort study who delivered ≥ 1 child post-baseline, and underwent CT quantification of hepatic steatosis 25 years following cohort entry were included ($n = 844$) in this study. The duration of lactation was summed for all post-baseline births, and NAFLD at Y25 was assessed by central review of CT images and defined by liver attenuation ≤ 40 Hounsfield Units after exclusion of other causes of hepatic steatosis. Unadjusted and multivariable logistic regression analyses were performed using an a priori set of confounding variables; age, race, education, and baseline body mass index. Of 844 women who delivered after baseline (48% black, 52% white, mean age 49 years at Y25 exam), 32% reported lactation duration of 0 to 1 month, 25% reported >1 to 6 months, 43% reported more than 6 months, while 54 (6%) had NAFLD. Longer lactation duration was inversely associated with NAFLD in unadjusted logistic regression. For women who reported >6 months lactation compared to those reporting 0–1 month, the odds ratio for NAFLD was 0.48 and the association remained after adjustment for confounders. In conclusion, a longer duration of lactation, particularly greater than 6 months, is associated with lower odds of NAFLD in mid-life and may represent a modifiable risk factor for NAFLD.

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

Interested in supporting women consistently throughout their breastfeeding journey?

Consider attending session B2 of the [Best Start Annual Conference 2019](#): This session will showcase the BFI Strategy for Ontario and RNAO's newest resources including updated Breastfeeding protocols, a new Baby-Friendly crib card for hospitals and additional resources on formula feeding and



informed decision making. Join us for this exciting presentation on enhancing consistent teaching using evidence-based messages from prenatal care to postpartum and beyond! Visit [the conference website](#) and register soon!

Gender Stereotypes and Preconception Health: Men's and Women's Expectations of Responsibility and Intentions to Engage in Preventive Behaviors.

As mounting evidence underscores the importance of both men and women taking steps before pregnancy to improve reproductive outcomes, public health priorities are shifting toward a more gender-inclusive program of promoting preconception health (PCH). This study examined whether prescriptive gender stereotypes, defined as men's and women's beliefs about PCH behavioral norms each gender should uphold, were positively associated with intentions to engage in behaviors to protect a future child's health. Methods Data came from a June 2017 online survey of 609 U.S. men and women ages 18-44. Two six-item scales of prescriptive same- and opposite-gender stereotypes were used to predict a six-item scale of intentions to engage in six recommended PCH behaviors (i.e., avoiding smoking, secondhand smoke, drinking, exposure to bisphenol A and pesticides, and preventing Zika infection). Multiple linear regression models also adjusted for demographic, socioeconomic, and health characteristics. Among both male and female respondents, PCH prescriptive gender stereotypes for men were rated significantly lower than those for women. Adjusting for covariates, stronger prescriptive same-gender stereotypes were associated with increased PCH intentions. Opposite-gender stereotypes were also positively associated with PCH intentions. Current every day smoking status (men and women), being uninsured (women only), and having children (women only) were also associated with lower PCH intentions. These results suggest that prescriptive gender stereotypes may play an important, yet slightly different, role in promoting PCH behavior among men and women.

[Access the article.](#)

Magnitude and Chronicity of Environmental Smoke Exposure Across Infancy and Early Childhood in a Sample of Low-Income Children

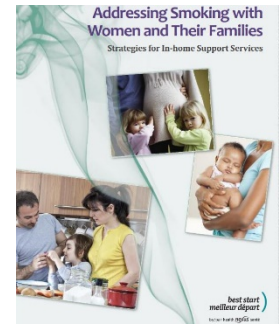
Infants and young children may be at an increased risk for second- and thirdhand exposure to tobacco smoke because of increased respiration rate and exposure to surface residue. However, relatively fewer studies have examined biomarkers of exposure (cotinine) in children under age 4 years. This study examines the magnitude and chronicity of exposure across early childhood among children from low-income families in order to better characterize contextual risk factors associated with exposure. A total of 1292 families were recruited in six nonurban counties of Pennsylvania and North Carolina. Cotinine was assayed from infant saliva at 6, 15, 24, and 48 months of age ($N = 1218$), and categorized as low (≤ 0.45 ng/mL), moderate (0.46–12 ng/mL), or high (≥ 12 ng/mL) at each time point. Categories were highly correlated across time. Latent class analysis was used to summarize patterns of exposure categories across time. Approximately 12% of infants registering cotinine values at least 12 ng/mL, consistent with active smoking in adults. Greater exposure was associated with lower income, less education, more residential instability, and more instability in adult occupants in the home, whereas time spent in center-based day care was associated with lower exposure. Results suggest that infants from low-income, nonurban families have higher risk for environmental smoke exposure than data from nationally representative samples. Predictors of exposure offer insights into specific factors that may be targeted for risk reduction efforts, specifically conditions of children's physical space. In addition to considering the increases in risk when an adult smoker lives in a child's home, families should also attend to the possible risk embedded within the home itself, such as residual smoke from previous occupants. For high-risk children, day care appears to mitigate the magnitude of exposure by providing extended time in a smoke-free environment.

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

What are the best ways to start a discussion on smoking with future or new parents?

From videos to manuals, Best Start has developed many resources to help you. Check [our resource page](#) to discover them all.

In particular, [Addressing Smoking with Women and Their Families, Strategies for In-home Support Services](#), also available [in French](#), suggests ways that service providers can assist and motivate women and their families to think about their smoking and consider trying to quit smoking.



Research Stigma as a Dominant Discourse in FASD

The purpose of this paper is to conduct a scoping review of the literature to explore the many ways stigma affects people with FASD and to highlight the disciplines and places where discourse on FASD and stigma is taking place. Searches identified 39 full text manuscripts, 13 of which were included in the scoping review. Stigma toward people with FASD exists in multiple professional forums across disciplines. The relationship between mother's use of alcohol and the lasting impact on the child is a focus in the articles identified from a public health perspective. The review showed there was limited cross-disciplinary discussion evident. In total 13 articles were selected for inclusion in this review. Negative discourses predominate with little attention being paid to possible areas of success as well as cases of lower FASD impacts. There is a significant void in work focusing on positive outcomes for people with FASD. Such discourse would support a better understanding of pathways to more positive outcomes. This paper highlights the issue of FASD and stigma through identification of relevant literature and expands the conversation to offer insights into the challenging terrain that individuals with FASD must navigate. The issue of stigma is not linked only to individuals with FASD but also their support systems. It is critical to recognize the multiple attributions of stigma to FASD in order to effectively take up conversations across and between disciplines to promote new discourses focused on de-stigmatization.

[Access the article.](#)

Pregnancy Intention, Risk Perception, and Contraceptive Use in Pregnant Women Who Use Drugs.

The aim of the study was to evaluate pregnancy intention, risk perception, and contraceptive utilization among women reporting substance use during pregnancy. Data were obtained from the 2009 to 2011 Tennessee Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS), an annual cross-sectional survey which assesses behaviors before, during and after pregnancy. Substance use during pregnancy and contraceptive use at the time of conception and after delivery were captured by self-report in the postpartum period. Pregnancy intention was categorized as intended (pregnancy desired then or earlier) or unintended (pregnancy desired later or not at all). Weighted descriptive and multivariable analyses were performed. A total of 3042 women completed the PRAMS survey, with 168 (5.4%) reporting substance use during pregnancy. Compared with women who did not report drug use, women who used drugs were more likely to have an unintended pregnancy (65.6% vs 48.4%, $P=0.003$), were more ambivalent towards pregnancy planning or prevention (69.7% vs 46.2%, $P<0.001$) and were less likely to report contraceptive use before pregnancy (31.3% vs 46.8%, $P=0.022$) or in the postpartum period (79.6% vs 88.1%, $P=0.019$). Finally, women reporting substance use in pregnancy had 2 times higher odds of reporting that they did not think they could get pregnant at the time of conception after adjusting for age, race, income, education, insurance, and smoking status (adjusted OR 2.18, 95% confidence interval 1.07-4.49, $P=0.033$). Taken altogether, this study suggests that women who report substance use in pregnancy have unique reproductive health needs and would benefit from additional education and counseling concerning their pregnancy intention, contraceptive use, and ability to conceive.

[Access the article.](#)

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

Selecting Appropriate Toys for Young Children in the Digital Era

Play is essential to optimal child development because it contributes to the cognitive, physical, social, and emotional well-being of children and youth. It also offers an ideal and significant opportunity for parents and other caregivers to engage fully with children using toys as an instrument of play and interaction. The evolution of societal perceptions of toys from children's playthings to critical facilitators of early brain and child development has challenged caregivers in deciding which toys are most appropriate for their children. This clinical report strives to provide pediatric health care providers with evidence-based information that can be used to support caregivers as they choose toys for their children. The report highlights the broad definition of a toy; consideration of potential benefits and possible harmful effects of toy choices on child development; and the promotion of positive caregiving and development when toys are used to engage caregivers in play-based interactions with their children that are rich in language, pretending, problem-solving, and creativity. The report aims to address the evolving replacement of more traditional toys with digital media-based virtual "toys" and the lack of evidence for similar benefits in child development. Furthermore, this report briefly addresses the role of toys in advertising and/or incentive programs and aims to bring awareness regarding safety and health hazards associated with toy availability and accessibility in public settings, including some health care settings.

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



Understanding Motivation: Building the Brain Architecture That Supports Learning, Health, and Community Participation

A healthy, engaged community depends on people achieving to the best of their potential, contributing actively to the economy and public well-being, and helping the next generation to thrive. A complex set of intertwined social and biological factors influences people's motivation to participate actively and productively in schools, jobs, and communities—and to persevere in the face of setbacks. To unlock this puzzle and ensure that all people have the opportunity to develop motivation to learn, improve skills, and make healthy choices, it would be helpful to understand the underlying mechanisms in the brain that develop in childhood and build the foundation for later complex behavior. This Working Paper from the National Scientific Council on the Developing Child explains the science behind motivation—the “wanting” system and the “liking” system—as well as how those systems develop, and how that development can be disrupted. It also dives into the implications of the science for parents, caregivers, and teachers, as well as policy and public systems.

[Read the working paper](#) and [view the interactive graphic](#)

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



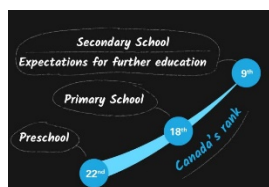
Best Start's [Tips for Parents on Brain Development](#) (also available [in French](#)) provide parents with simple and useful tips on 15 topics associated with brain development. The tips can easily be shared through social media or distributed as handouts. They cover preconception, pregnancy and child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

Caregiver-Perceived Sleep Outcomes in Toddlers Sleeping in Cribs versus Beds

Little is known about whether sleep space impacts toddler sleep outcomes, so the prevalence of crib-sleeping and its association with caregiver-reported sleep patterns and problems in a large sample of toddlers from Western countries was examined. Participants were caregivers of 1,983 toddlers ages 18.0-35.9 months (51.7% male; mean age 25.3 months) from Australia, Canada, New Zealand, United Kingdom, and the United States sleeping in a crib or bed in a separate room from caregivers. Caregiver-reported sleep patterns and problems were collected via a free, publicly available child sleep smartphone application. Across countries/regions, rates of crib-sleeping decreased linearly with age, with 63.4% of toddlers ages 18.0-23.9 months, 34.3% of toddlers ages 24.0- 29.9 months, and 12.6% of toddlers ages 30.0-35.9 months sleeping in a crib. Across age groups and countries, crib sleeping was significantly associated with an earlier bedtime, shorter sleep onset latency, fewer night awakenings, longer stretches of time asleep, increased nighttime sleep duration, and decreased bedtime resistance and sleep problems. The duration of night awakenings did not significantly differ by sleep space. In conclusion, sleeping in a crib instead of a bed is associated with enhanced caregiver-reported sleep quantity and quality for toddlers in Western countries. Consistent with practice recommendations, deferring the crib-to-bed transition until age 3 years may benefit toddlers' sleep in Western contexts. Additional research is needed to identify the impact of sleep space on child sleep in other countries/regions.

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



UNICEF Report Card 15 - The Equalizer: How Education Creates Fairness for Children in Canada

UNICEF has measured the rights and well-being of children in rich countries in 15 Report Cards over the past 18 years. We compare countries so we can learn and do better. The 2018 UNICEF Report Card 15 is focused on equality in education. Canada is one of the top ten rich countries in educational equality, ranking 9th among 38 countries. UNICEF Report Card 15 shows that Canada's public education system helps many young people achieve.

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

Interventions to Increase Physical Activity in Children 0–5 Years Old: A Systematic Review, Meta-Analysis and Realist Synthesis

To evaluate the effectiveness of interventions to increase physical activity (PA) in 0–5 year olds and to determine what works, for whom, in what circumstances, a systematic review, meta-analysis and realist synthesis was performed. Thirty-four studies were included in the review, mostly conducted in the preschool/childcare setting. Meta-analyses showed an overall nonsignificant mean difference of 0.03 minutes/day for light-intensity PA (n = 11). The overall mean difference for moderate-intensity to vigorous-intensity PA (n = 21) was 2.88 minutes/day, indicating a small but significant overall positive effect. The realist synthesis provided insights into the key contexts and mechanisms that appeared to be effective at changing children's PA. Overall, a small, positive intervention effect was observed for children's MVPA, with no effect observed for their LPA, suggesting that maybe reducing sedentary behaviors would be more effective than increasing the quality of physical activity interventions in increasing children's MVPA. Based on the findings from the realist review, a series of recommendations for practitioners and policymakers were put forth.

[Learn more.](#)

Running out of ideas to make young children active? Best Start has you covered.

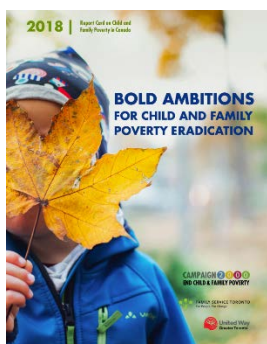
Physical activity plays a big role in physical development and health, but did you know there are many other benefits of physical activity on emotional, social, and cognitive levels too? But where do you begin? [Have a Ball Together](#) is a bilingual website that contains the information and tools you need to be able to promote and encourage physical activity for children 0-6.



Early Childhood Investment Impacts Social Decision-Making Four Decades Later

Early childhood educational investment produces positive effects on cognitive and non-cognitive skills, health, and socio-economic success. However, the effects of such interventions on social decision-making later in life are unknown. We recalled participants from one of the oldest randomized controlled studies of early childhood investment—the Abecedarian Project (ABC)—to participate in well-validated interactive economic games that probe social norm enforcement and planning. We show that in a repeated-play ultimatum game, ABC participants who received high-quality early interventions strongly reject unequal division of money across players (disadvantageous or advantageous) even at significant cost to themselves. Using a multi-round trust game and computational modeling of social exchange, we show that the same intervention participants also plan further into the future. These findings suggest that high quality early childhood investment can result in long-term changes in social decision-making and promote social norm enforcement in order to reap future benefits.

[Access the article.](#)



2018 Report Card on Child and Family Poverty in Canada

Despite Canada's enormous wealth, over 1.4 million children live in poverty with their families. Stress, anxiety, stigma, hunger, poor nutrition and hopelessness have profound effects on their life chances and can reverberate over time within families, communities, cities, and indeed the country. The historic release of Canada's first Poverty Reduction Strategy (CPRS) in 2018 is a new starting point in the fight against poverty, but it is not as ambitious as required, given the gravity of the problem. Campaign 2000 calls for more ambitious poverty reduction targets and shorter timelines as well as a costed implementation plan that shows how poverty reduction targets will be achieved. Accountability, community involvement, a human rights approach and ongoing investments are also fundamental to the CPRS' success. Canada requires a strong CPRS so that poverty eradication can finally stop being tomorrow's promise and become today's reality.

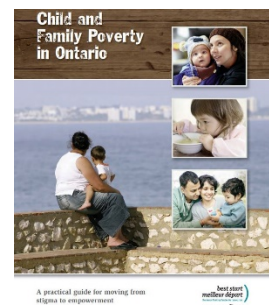
[Access the report.](#)

See also:

- [Child Poverty in the OECD: Trends, Determinants and Policies to Tackle it](#): Main trends in child income poverty since the mid- 2000s, how child poverty trends are linked to demographic, policy and/or labour market changes, contribution of financial assistance paid to households under different schemes, correlation between child poverty and employment rate and housing of parents.
- [Tackling Child Poverty in Canada](#): compares the situation of children in Canada relative to other OECD countries in terms of child poverty and well-being.

Wondering what YOU can do to help families living in poverty?

The manual [Child and Family Poverty in Ontario. A practical guide for moving from stigma to empowerment](#) (also available in [French](#)) was written with a wide range of service providers in mind, such as community workers, child protection workers, teachers, health care providers, early childhood educators, social workers and others who interact with families, parents or children. The manual offers an opportunity to reflect on how poverty is defined, the impacts of poverty on families, how service provider practices can help and suggest broader systemic and policy issues that influence families living in poverty.



IV. Current Initiatives



Alberta Family Wellness Initiative (AFWI)

In 2007, Alberta was facing a now all too common health crisis—increasing rates of substance abuse and addiction and mental health issues among its residents—combined with a lack of adequate comprehensive, integrated programs to address these issues. In searching for information that could help address these issues and achieve population-level change, leaders of the Alberta-based Palix (formerly Norlien) Foundation discovered the scientific knowledge about early childhood development on [the Center's website](#). To overcome the silos between policymakers, researchers, practitioners working in the medical, mental health, and social services fields, educators, and more, and the lack of public belief in the connection between early childhood development, experiences, and relationships with lifelong learning, behavior, and health, the Palix Foundation created the [Alberta Family Wellness Initiative](#) (AFWI). Since its founding in 2007, AFWI has become a driving force in Canada and beyond for using what we know about early brain development to address a range of community challenges affecting both children and adults, through a powerful knowledge mobilization approach.

[Learn more.](#)

Pilot Project Integrates Sask. Children with Intensive Needs into Pre-Kindergarten Classes

Children with intensive learning needs are getting an early start at some Saskatchewan schools. The Early Learning Intensive Support Pilot allows schools to open up spaces in existing pre-kindergarten classrooms for children with physical, cognitive and behavioural challenges. The project is funded through a grant from the federal government. A combined total of ninety students have been enrolled in the program at 16 schools in Regina and 30 schools in Saskatoon. Pre-kindergarten classes usually accommodate 16 students for every one teacher and one educational assistant. For every two students added through the pilot, one educational assistant will be added. The program allows children with intensive needs to socialize and learn along with other three- and four-year-olds.

[Learn more.](#)

Training Program for Early Childhood Educators in Nova Scotia to Help Keep Mi'kmaw Language Alive

According to the 2011 National Household Survey, there were 136,100 Indigenous children between the ages of zero to four in Canada, including 2,735 in Nova Scotia. However, Indigenous children are less likely than non-Indigenous children to attend early childhood education programs, the Conference Board of Canada says. The federal and provincial governments are teaming up with a Mi'kmaw advocacy group and the Nova Scotia Community College to create an Indigenous-centred training program for early childhood education. Twenty Mi'kmaw early childhood educators with first-level training will have the chance to upgrade their skills and earn a second-level diploma in the accelerated workplace training program, which will launch in January.

[Learn more.](#)



The Gender-Based Violence Knowledge Centre (KC)

The [Gender-Based Violence Knowledge Centre \(KC\)](#) is the focal point of the Gender-Based Violence Strategy. The KC is responsible for coordination, data and research, reporting, and knowledge mobilization. It is intended for interested individuals, organizations, and communities to access timely, relevant information and evidence, the KC compiles resources and research into a single platform. The KC also provides a searchable database, which brings together existing data and evidence on GBV-related content. It will continue to evolve and expand in the coming weeks and months, and will include more varied sources of information, and tailored knowledge mobilization tools.

[Learn more](#) and [access it](#).

Did you know?

Abuse often starts or gets worse during pregnancy. Best Start can help you:

- The [You and your Baby](#) handouts are available in [English](#), [French](#), [Arabic](#), [Chinese \(Simplified\)](#), [Chinese \(Traditional\)](#), [Cree – N Dialect](#), [Punjabi](#), [Severn Ojibwe](#), [Somali](#) and [Spanish](#). The small You and Your Baby brochure in [English](#) and [French](#) can be slipped discretely into someone's hand. Both provide a self-assessment questionnaire and strategies (including contact information) for seeking and getting help.
- The [Abuse in Pregnancy - Information and Strategies for the Prenatal Educator](#) booklet provides information on identifying potential situations of abuse and provides strategies and resources for supporting the woman through the situation.



New Coworking Spaces Let You Take Your Kid to Work, Every Day

The Workaround is one of several coworking spaces opening with child care. And the timing couldn't be better. Close to half of Canadians live in areas with very few available daycare spaces, [according to the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives](#), so there is an unmet need for this type of business model. Entrepreneur Madeleine Shaw is working on a project called Nestworks, which partners a shared office space with a licensed daycare provider to allow entrepreneurs to bring their children to work with them. Shaw hopes to open the ten thousand square foot Vancouver space in 2019. Meanwhile, other smaller ventures are emerging such as the Coworking Parents Studio in Guelph, which exists in multiple rooms on the main floor of a house.

[Learn more](#).



Where We Stand: The Canadian Index of Child and Youth Well-Being

Many Canadians say they believe Canada must be one of the best places to be a child. Many children see things differently. The facts say that we could definitely be better. UNICEF Canada is launching the [Canadian Index of Child and Youth Well-Being](#), a framework to:

- communicate to Canadians [what Canada is like, for kids 0 to 18](#).
- track progress for their rights and well-being.
- guide action to address the greatest challenges.

The current version is a “prototype”, an unfinished work in progress to ask, ***is this what child and youth well-being looks like to you?*** You are encouraged to consult it and share your ideas. It will continue to be refined to better reflect what it means to be a society in which every child can achieve their rights and their dreams.

GRANDFAMILY Offer Support to Grandparents and Other Kin and Kith Who Are Caregivers for Children and Teens

Becoming a grandparent and transitioning into retirement are two stages of life that are typically embraced and anticipated, but unfortunately, the reality for many people is that these roles often have a reciprocal effect on each other. According to Stats Canada 2011, at least 75,000 grandparents in Canada were raising their grandchildren well into their retirement years. The number is much higher today. Grandparents in this role typically feel they are all alone in their circumstance, as they deal with social services, navigate the court system, or play the waiting game — hoping their adult child will eventually be able to parent their own children. GRANDFAMILY holds socials and monthly meetings to offer support to grandparents and other kin and kith who are full-time or part-time caregivers for children and teens. The group operates under the umbrella of LifeChange & Reconciliation Resources (LCRR), of which Jodi Bryant is director. The organization is a non-profit with charitable status and provides support, advocacy and resources to many areas of ministry. One of GRANDFAMILY’s important resources is a library of helpful books and literature for both caregivers and the children they are raising.

[Learn more](#) and [visit their website](#).

V. Upcoming Events



Best Start 2019 Conference: EARLY BIRD RATES END IN JANUARY!

Come join us to learn, network, share and be inspired! We offer 4 streams of workshops (Maternal Health, Indigenous Health, Early Childhood, Breastfeeding), incredible keynotes, 30 exhibitors, a poster session, plenty of networking opportunities, and so much more...

Visit [the bilingual website](#) regularly to learn more and register!

Webinars: Visual Storytelling

Infographics have become an important tool to disseminate key messages and data, in Nutrition Science or any other field. [The Canadian Nutrition Society](#) offers a series of two webinars:

- the first one on **January 9, 2019 at noon** EST called *What are Infographics and how can they be used to share important nutrition messages*, will provide a comprehensive overview, some infographic best practices, tools that are available, and guidance on how to get started in developing and designing infographics; allowing you to communicate information about nutrition and health to your key target audiences. [Learn more and register here.](#)
- the second one on **January 16, 2019 at noon** EST titled *Learning how to create an effective Infographic*, will demonstrate each step of the Infographic development process. Participants can attempt to develop their own infographic simultaneously, or watch one be developed by the presenter during real time. This will be an interactive webinar that will encourage Q and As from participants throughout. [Learn more and register here.](#)



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](#).

Motivational Interviewing Workshop

Join [A Question Of Care | Peterborough Drug Strategy](#) in Peterborough on **January 30th and February 27th, 2019** for 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. Learn how to work within the Motivational Interviewing spirit where showing a genuine interest in the client's perspective leads to further collaboration.

[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](#).

MBC Annual AGM & Conference
Expanding Our Reach:
Experiencing Life In The North



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.

VI. Resources



Online Courses by CanFASD: Foundations in FASD and The Prevention Conversation: An Online Curriculum

CanFASD offers two online courses:

- [The Prevention Conversation: An online curriculum](#): provides front-line health and social services professionals with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to engage their clients/patients in a supportive and non-judgmental conversation about alcohol use during pregnancy, its lasting effects on the developing child, and resources and supports available to women of childbearing age.
- [Foundations in FASD](#): basic training course intended for everyone that will come into contact with individuals with FASD including all sectors of work, families, individuals with FASD, spouses, and the general public.

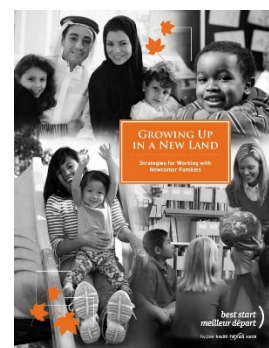
Checklist: Planning for a Multicultural Child Care Environment

Is your child care organization welcoming to newcomer families? Use this helpful [checklist for planning a multicultural child care environment](#) to see how your program is doing, and identify areas for improvements!

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!](#)



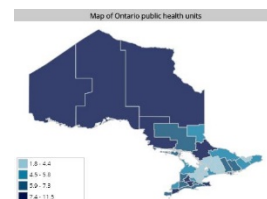
Cannabasics, an Information Package on Cannabis Tailored to Health Professionals

The [Chief Public Health Officer](#) (CPHO) Health Professional Forum, which comprises 18 national health organizations, is working with partners to ensure health professionals are well-equipped to provide Canadians with credible and evidence-based information and advice on the use of non-medical cannabis since its legalization and regulation. To this end the [Canadian Public Health Association](#) (CPHA) recently developed [Cannabasics](#), in collaboration with members of the CPHO Health Professional Forum. Cannabasics is an information package on cannabis tailored to health professionals. The toolkit provides a set of fact sheets and links to key resources that give an overview of cannabis plants and products, methods of consumption, and approaches to harm reduction. It also links to resources produced by partner associations.

[Learn more.](#)

The Risk Factors for Reproductive and Child Health and Maternal Health Snapshots have been updated

The [Risk Factors for Healthy Child Development Snapshot](#) has been updated with 2017 data from the Healthy Babies, Healthy Children (HBHC) Integrated Services for Children Information System (ISCIS). The [Maternal Health Snapshot](#) now includes 2016 data from the Better Outcomes Registry Network (BORN).



Composition of Food Marketed for Children: First Steps Nutrition Trust Website

[First Steps Nutrition Trust](#) is an independent public health nutrition charity that provides up-to-date, evidence-based information and resources to support eating well from pre-conception to five years in the UK. They have looked at baby food marketed in the UK and highlight some of the key issues that health professionals may find useful when providing advice and support to families with infants and young children. See for example:

- [Processed dried fruit snacks for young children](#)

- [Fruit and vegetable based purées in pouches for infants and young children](#)



Family Court and Beyond

[Luke's Place](#) has prepared [Family Court and Beyond](#), for women who are leaving abusive relationships and are involved in family court processes. It covers many topics, including:

- Safety planning
- Common legal issues, such as custody and access
- Working with lawyers
- The court process
- Court-related services and agencies
- After court is over

KidsGriefCanada

Have you struggled with how to tell a child about the death of someone important to them? Are you unsure of what information to share, when and how to approach these difficult conversations? [KidsGrief.ca](#) is a free, bilingual, online resource that helps parents, guardians and others support children when someone in their life is dying or has died. The website equips parents with the words, confidence and coping strategies needed to help children grieve life's losses in healthy ways.



When Compassion Hurts:

Burnout, Vicarious Trauma and Secondary Trauma in Prenatal and Early Childhood Service Providers



And don't forget...

The Best Start manual *When Compassion Hurts - Burnout, Vicarious Trauma and Secondary Trauma in Prenatal and Early Childhood Service Providers* explores burnout, vicarious trauma and secondary trauma. Topics include: definitions, the biology of stress and trauma, signs and symptoms, risk factors, protective factors, resilience and self-care, reflective practice and taking action.

Available in [English](#) and [French](#).



The First Nations Health Authority Launches A Guide to Your Baby's First Solid Foods

A Guide to Your Baby's First Solid Foods is a new resource developed by the First Nations Health Authority to support the wellness and healthy development of Indigenous babies. Preparing and sharing food is an important way of connecting with and caring for family and loved ones, and access to nutritious foods plays a critical role in the development and growth of babies and children.

[Read more and download the guide.](#)

Infant Mental Health from the Bench: Module 2 Part A – Understanding Infant Trauma

Young children are not directly in the courtrooms therefore their perspectives can be often ignored and unheard in legal proceedings. How do we know the decisions being made are in the best interest of the child? As part of the Family Law Initiative, Infant Mental Health Promotion has created a video series focusing on understanding infant mental health within the judicial system. The video series aims to:

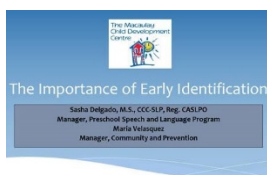
1. increase knowledge about infant mental health
2. understand the effect of neglect and/or maltreatment on child development – short term and long term
3. identify Judicial options specific to infants and toddlers who may be at risk for poor mental health as a direct result of their early care giving experiences that may have included neglected, physical abuse, maltreatment, sexual abuse.

[Learn more.](#)



Consider your daily routine. Do you have to schedule appointments? Remember instructions from your supervisor? Juggle multiple tasks at once? Executive function and self-regulation skills are like an air traffic control system in the brain—they help us manage information, make decisions, and plan ahead. We need these skills at every stage of life, and while no one is born with them, we are all born with the potential to develop them. But, how do we do that? [The Center on the Developing Child](#) created this Guide to Executive Function to walk you through everything you need to know about these skills, the science behind these mental processes, how we can help children and adults build these skills and how to develop and practice them throughout life.

[View the executive function guide](#)



Webinar Recording: The Importance of Early Identification for Newcomer Children with Special Needs: Helping You Manage

In this webinar, presented by [Macaulay Child Development Centre](#), you will have the opportunity to learn about why early identification and support for newcomer children with special needs is so important, and discuss strategies for how you can help children with special needs and their families.

Watch the [webinar recording](#) or [download the ppt](#).



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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.

