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 the Best Start Resource Centre does not endorse or recommend any events, training, resources, services, research or publications of other organizations.

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I. News & Views

At Least 8 million IVF Babies Born in 40 Years Since Historic First

The world's first in-vitro fertilization baby was born in 1978 in the UK. Since then, 8 million babies have been born worldwide as a result of IVF and other advanced fertility treatments, an international committee estimates. In-vitro fertilization involves removing eggs from a woman's ovaries and mixing them with sperm outside the body, typically in a Petri dish; "in vitro" is Latin for "in glass." Fertilized by this process, the eggs become embryos that can be placed in a woman's uterus, where they can develop into a fetus and eventually a baby. While IVF births have increased over the past four decades, rates of twins and multiple births have declined, according to the report from the International Committee Monitoring Assisted Reproductive Technologies, a non-profit that disseminates global information on assisted reproductive technologies.

Read the article.

Starting Solids and Infant Sleep

A small but publicized study published in JAMA Pediatrics reported an association between the early introduction of solids into infants’ diets and longer sleep duration, less frequent waking at night, and a reduction in reported sleep problems. This creates some confusion for new parents, as the current World Health Organization guidelines recommend exclusive breastfeeding for the first 6 months of life. Should you need to answer their concerns, have a look at UNICEF UK’s complete and straightforward answer, available on their website. It highlights the limitations of the study and advises against any change to the recommendation to introduce solids only at around six months.
Discussing the introduction of solid foods with new parents?

The Best Start Resource Centre has the perfect resource for you: Available in 12 languages, the booklet *Feeding Your Baby* provides parents with information about feeding their baby from six months to one year. It has information and answers questions they may have about breastfeeding and starting solid foods.

It is still available in print in English and French, and can also be downloaded for free as a PDF in English, French, Arabic, Chinese (Simplified), Cree, Hindi, Ojibwe, Punjabi, Spanish, Tagalog, Tamil, and Urdu.

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Expert Group Denounces the Refusal to Treat Under 'Conscientious Objection'

For the first time ever, an expert group has arrived at a majority consensus that the practice of so-called "conscientious objection" by health-care professionals should not be allowed. The experts agreed that the practice of refusing to provide legal and essential health care due to a doctor's personal or religious beliefs is a violation of medical ethics and of patients' right to health care. Abortion and other reproductive health care are the most commonly refused services.

*Unconscionable: When Providers Deny Abortion Care* is the title of the expert group's just-released report with recommendations. It is a product of the first global meeting on the topic of "conscientious objection," which took place in Montevideo, Uruguay in August 2017 because the refusal to treat is a major barrier to abortion access in many Latin American countries.

Read more [here](#).

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The ndds Celebrates 25 Years with Rebrand: Now Called "Looksee Checklist"

In celebration of their 25th anniversary, ndds, a Northern Ontario-based non-profit organization, is proud to announce a new parent-friendly name and look for their signature developmental checklist. Since 1993, ndds has been helping children worldwide reach their developmental potential by providing an easy-to-use checklist that encourages interaction between parents and health/child care professionals.

The new playful, friendly name—the Looksee Checklist—reflects the simple, approachable quality of the product to appeal to even
more parents. The series of checklists follow a child from 1 month to 6 years of age and provides a short list of yes or no questions about the child’s abilities along with tips to help them grow. The checklists are available in a variety of languages and formats including a redesigned, user-friendly website at www.lookseechecklist.com.

II. Recent Reports & Research

Ecological Association Between Operative Vaginal Delivery and Obstetric and Birth Trauma

Increased use of operative vaginal delivery (use of forceps, vacuum or other device) has been recommended to address high rates of cesarean delivery. Seeking to determine the association between rates of operative vaginal delivery and obstetric trauma and severe birth trauma, researchers analysed data on 1,938,913 deliveries, and found that the rate of obstetric trauma and severe birth trauma have increased among operative vaginal deliveries despite an overall decline in the use of operative vaginal delivery. There is a positive association between the population rate of operative vaginal delivery and population rates of obstetric trauma, and severe birth trauma in nulliparous women. Recommendations to reduce cesarean delivery rates by increasing rates of operative vaginal delivery should be tempered by the understanding that such actions may be associated with higher rates of obstetric trauma. Continued concerted efforts toward improving the recognition and management of obstetric anal sphincter injury are warranted.

Read the study here.

Early Childhood Is a Good time to Promote Physical Activity and Reduce Sedentary Behaviors

To evaluate the effectiveness of behavioural interventions that report sedentary behaviour outcomes during early childhood, a systematic review and meta-analysis study was performed, revealing that after these interventions, the overall mean significant difference in screen time outcomes between groups was −17.12 min/day, and -18.91 min/day for sedentary time. Subgroup analyses suggest that for screen time, interventions of ≥6 months duration and those conducted in a community-based setting are most effective. For sedentary time, interventions targeting physical activity (and reporting changes in sedentary time) are more effective than those directly targeting sedentary time. Despite heterogeneity in study methods and results, overall interventions to reduce sedentary behaviour in early childhood show significant reductions, suggesting that this may be an opportune time to intervene.

Learn more here.

Interested in making young children more active?

The Best Start Resource Centre’s Have A Ball Together bilingual website offers parents and service providers the information and the tools they need to promote and encourage physical activity for children 0-6.
Interventions to Improve Breastfeeding Self-Efficacy and Resultant Breastfeeding Rates: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis

Maternal breastfeeding self-efficacy (BSE) is reflective of a mother's confidence in breastfeeding and is a modifiable factor that may improve breastfeeding rates. Breastfeeding self-efficacy theory purports that women with higher BSE will have better breastfeeding outcomes. To explore the theoretical link between BSE and breastfeeding outcomes, researchers investigated (a) if interventions to improve BSE were successful and (b) if improvements in BSE resulted in improved breastfeeding rates. They found that, compared with mothers in control groups, mothers in intervention groups had significantly higher BSE at 2 months postpartum, and were 1.56 and 1.66 times more likely to be breastfeeding at 1 month and 2 months postpartum, respectively. Interventions that were implemented in the postpartum period, used combined delivery settings, or were informed by BSE theory had the greatest influence on breastfeeding outcomes. In conclusion, breastfeeding self-efficacy is a modifiable factor that practitioners can target to improve breastfeeding rates in mothers of full-term infants.

Learn more here.

The Effect of Perinatal Depression Treatment for Mothers on Parenting and Child Development: A Systematic Review

Antenatal and postpartum depression are very common and have significant consequences for mothers and their children. This review examines which antenatal depression (AD) and post-partum depression (PPD) treatment interventions are most efficacious in improving parenting and/or child development. Randomized controlled trials (RCTs) and quasi-experimental studies assessing the effect of AD, PPD, or both treatment interventions on parenting and/or child development were included. Interventions include interpersonal psychotherapy (IPT), cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), peer support, maternal-child interaction guidance, and other interventions, such as massage. For AD, IPT, CBT, and massage produced large effects on parenting (e.g. adjustment and attention toward infant) and child development (e.g. behaviour). For PPD, maternal-child interaction guidance and psychotherapeutic group support produced large effects on parenting (e.g. sense of competence) and child development (e.g. cortisol). However, meta-analysis revealed nonsignificant effects of IPT on maternal-child attachment and CBT on parenting stress. Promising findings exist for IPT, CBT, maternal-child interaction guidance, massage, and psychotherapeutic group support for specific parenting and/or child development outcomes. Additional RCTs using measures already employed in the literature are required to conduct necessary meta-analysis and fully elucidate treatment effect.

Learn more here.

Short Sleep, Snoring May Affect Infants' Learning Skills

Babies who fail to get enough sleep or are plagued by persistent snoring are more likely to experience some developmental delays by age two than other infants, new University of Alberta-led research has found. In particular, nighttime sleep duration was found to have the greatest influence on early childhood learning, according to the study that followed the progress of hundreds of Edmonton-area children. Researchers analyzed sleep pattern data from the 800 children in the Edmonton area to gain a better understanding of the effects likely to show up by a child’s second birthday. They discovered that children who regularly slept less than 12 hours a day tended to have inferior cognitive and language skills by age two. The disparity was particularly pronounced for poor nighttime sleepers. Scholars also looked at disrupted sleep behaviour, finding that persistent snoring was associated with poorer language skills but had no effect on general cognitive development. In a second study, researchers delved into the children’s snoring patterns, hoping to find out if there were different types of snorers and what factors might be influencing them. In addition
to persistent snorers, the authors found children whose snoring peaked just in the first year of life, as well as children whose snoring advanced closer to age two. Infants given acid-reflux medication were more likely to develop early-onset snoring, while exposure to environmental factors such as smoke or dog dander was more associated with late-onset snoring, the study found. Children with allergies and nasal congestion, as well as those with divorced parents, were most likely to snore all the time.

Access the first study here, and the second study here.

### Discussing infant sleep with parents?

The Best Start Resource Centre’s *Sleep Well, Sleep Safe* is for parents of infants from 0-12 months and for all who care for infants. It provides healthy sleep tips as well information on how to reduce the risks of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and other sleep related causes of infant death.

Currently available for sale in print in English and French and for free download as PDF in English and French.

### Physical Activity and Fecundability in Women with a History of Pregnancy Loss

Physical activity (PA) may influence fecundability through altered endocrine function. Studies evaluating this association have primarily utilized Internet-based recruitment and self-report for pregnancy assessment and have yielded conflicting results. Is physical activity (PA) associated with fecundability in women with a history of prior pregnancy loss? 1214 Healthy women aged 18-40 and with 1-2 prior pregnancy losses were recruited from four US medical centers. Participants were followed for up to six menstrual cycles while attempting pregnancy and through pregnancy for those who became pregnant.

The association of walking with fecundability varied significantly by BMI. Among overweight/obese women, walking ≥10 min at a time was related to improved fecundability. In adjusted models, women reporting >4 h/wk of vigorous activity had significantly higher fecundability compared to no vigorous activity. Associations of vigorous activity with fecundability were not significantly different by BMI. Moderate activity, sitting, and International Physical Activity Questionnaire (IPAQ) categories were not associated with fecundability overall or in BMI-stratified analyses. These findings provide positive evidence for the benefits of PA in women attempting pregnancy, especially for walking among those with higher BMI. Further study is necessary to clarify possible mechanisms through which walking and vigorous activity might affect time-to-pregnancy.

Learn more here.

### Emotional Eating in Childhood is Learned at Home

The tendency for children to eat more or less when stressed and upset is mainly influenced by the home environment and not by genes, according to a new UCL-led study. The study, published in Pediatric Obesity, found that genetics only play a small role in young children’s emotional overeating and undereating, unlike other eating behaviours in childhood such as food fussiness.

The current research, which analysed data from over 398 British twins, builds on a previous UCL study published in 2017 which highlighted the strong effect of the home environment on emotional eating. In this study, half the families were selected specifically because the parents had obesity, to see if the effect of the home
environment on emotional eating was still strong. Notwithstanding this, researchers still found that emotional eating is driven by environmental factors, regardless of the child’s risk of obesity.

Learn more here.

Want to learn more on healthy weight in children?

The Best Start Resource Centre's It Takes a Village: Taking Action for Healthy Children is a free on-line course for service providers working with children 2-11. The focus is on healthy weights in children, in the context of healthy child development.

Take the course in English or in French.

III. Current Initiatives

Campaign: Save the Children

In Canada, 4.5 every 1,000 birth dies, 2.7 % children of primary or secondary school age dropped off, 2.2 out of 1,000 girls 15-19 married and the adolescent birth rate is 9.5 out of 1,000... Yet despite these alarming numbers, Canada ranks 24 out of 175 countries in the 2018 End of Childhood Index Rankings, according to the report from the “Save the Children” campaign, which aims to tackle some of the key causes of exclusion in order to help set the world on the trajectory to end preventable child deaths and achieve learning for every child within a generation.

Read the report here. Discover what you can do to help the campaign here.

Single Dads on the Rise

Single dads are making up a growing number of the population. According to Statistics Canada, 15.5 per cent of children aged 24 and under were living with a male lone parent in 1996, and that number increased to 20.1 per cent in 2011. Since 2001, the number of children living with a single dad grew 34.1 per cent compared to those living with a single mom, a group that grew by 4.8 per cent. In 2016, two in ten children were living with their father.

While we may be aware that fatherhood is changing and single fathers are more visible, what is less apparent is how much they suffer with higher incident rates of physical and mental health issues than those with partners. North America's gender norms around masculinity has made some men believe that showing emotions is a sign of weakness and vulnerability. Asking for help can be viewed as vulnerability, so single dads are less likely
to reach out for support from others when needed. Social support is key to mental health and single dads are far less likely to have this in place for themselves. Yet, in a recent study of Canadian single dads conducted by University of Toronto, they found one in five had two or more chronic medical conditions, and one in 10 had a diagnosed mood or anxiety disorder. Incidentally, compared to single mothers, single fathers also had lower fruit and vegetable consumption and were more likely to be overweight and binge drinkers.

Consider directing Dads to fatherly.com, All Pro Dad, the Single Dads Facebook page and Dad Central Canada.

Expanding our View of Children and Spaces with 360 Video

Children often charm and surprise with their thoughts, ideas and imaginative play scenarios, which can take some unexpected turns and fantastic plot twists. In fact, sometimes the things children say and do leave us scratching our heads in wonder: that is they challenge us and leave us to wonder “why”. Why did the child say/do that? Why did a situation in which two children are tugging a toy between them come to be? We may not always have a complete picture.

360° video is a new tool that the SECD team is excited to introduce as part of their multimedia inventory. As a tool that allows the viewer to follow the action, 360° video potentially expands our view of events over time and space.

What applications can you think of for your context? When you think of the potential for 360° video in relation to your context, is there something that you have been wondering about that might benefit from an expanded view?

Learn more and watch examples of videos here.

IV. Upcoming Events

Best Start Resource Centre 2019 Conference: Save the Date

A yearly, unique event in Ontario, our annual conference gives all service providers working on preconception & prenatal health, and early child development and education the opportunity to meet, share, reflect, network and be inspired! The 2019 conference will take place in Toronto, February 12-14, 2019.

Our 2018 conference was a huge success and the 2019 conference promises to be even better: Our keynotes are likely to include Dr. Gary Bloch, Dr. Kathryn Hirsh-Pasek and Annette Cutknife. Janet Fox will facilitate a full-day workshop on Water and
Plant Teachings, and renowned author, Ann Douglas, will talk about Supporting Parents through the Storm, and how parents’ health is interconnected to that of their children in a concurrent session. Don't miss our Exhibitor Day on February 13, and more!

Visit the bilingual website regularly to learn more!

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**2018 OCASI Executive Directors Forum: Call for Vendors**

The OCASI Executive Directors Forum open to all Agencies serving Newcomers and Refugees in Ontario, and it will take place **November 7–8, 2018 in Toronto.** OCASI would like to showcase community start-ups and small business and OCASI Member from across Ontario. If this is you or your organization, please submit a description of your business or program with the subject line "Vendor call" to edforum2018@ocasi.org by August 3rd, 2018. If you are interested in submitting a proposal application please download here.

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**NRC’s 2018 Forum: “Unpacking Food Literacy”**

Growing concerns about unhealthy eating habits, including consuming too many processed foods and beverages, and the lack of food literacy in children, youth and adults has inspired this year’s theme - Unpacking Food Literacy. Join the NRC on **November 15, 2018 in Toronto** as they explore the current state of food literacy, its components, and the latest research and strategies that will help to change behaviours. Don't miss out on this exciting opportunity to hear from and network with health professionals, service providers, educators, students, researchers, government decision makers and food literacy champions.

Learn more here.

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**7th Conference on Recent Advances in the Prevention and Treatment of Childhood and Adolescent Obesity**

Taking place **October 25 -27, 2018 in Calgary,** this conference brings together an interdisciplinary group of professionals working in the field of childhood and adolescent obesity. The 7th conference will focus on a range of topics that impact the prevention and treatment of obesity beyond the clinic setting, considering the broader social and environmental factors that influence the health of children, adolescents, and families. This multi-theme meeting will explore the role that health care professionals can play in promoting healthy strategies within the greater community to enhance the well-being of children and
adolescents living with obesity. Specifically, the conference will showcase examples of successful collaborations that span diverse settings, including the health care system, government, schools, and community at-large.

Learn more [here](#).

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**Health Promotion Ontario 2018 Annual Conference**

One of the key goals of Health Promotion Ontario is to advance the critical importance of health promotion through advocacy, knowledge exchange, and professional development for its membership. This year’s conference, taking place **November 22nd, 2018 in Toronto**, is intended to serve as a forum for practitioners, researchers, and students to come together to learn about and critically reflect on the ways that important social issues are forcing the field of health promotion to “break new ground”. Themes will include truth & reconciliation, health promotion and technology, cannabis legalization, active transportation, climate change, health promotion and physical & social environments, mental health, grass roots outreach & community-based health promotion...

Learn more [here](#).

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**Annual Conference on Women and Maternal Nutrition and Care**

Taking place **August 31st through Sept 1st, 2018 in Toronto**, Women Nutrition 2018 is intended to give a chance to the specialists in the field of Food and Nutrition to analyze latest progressions and challenges in the field. It is proposed to give dieticians, nutritionist’s stage regarding the advanced technologies increasing the Women’s Health, scientists and clinical nutritionists. Women Nutrition 2018 welcomes prominent Researchers, Specialists, Presidents, Delegates and experts from the field of Nutrition, food Science and nutrition industry and molecular genetics to participate in the natural exploratory sessions, B2B meetings and breakout get-togethers over the tea-coffee breaks and cocktails.

By the end of the sessions, participants will:

- See the important role of Nutritional value in Women’s Diet in maintaining a healthy life.
- Consider strategies to address issues/Risk factors relating to Women’s health and safety through Market research analysis
V. Resources

Reaching IN... Reaching OUT Songs of Resilience

Research tells us that music and movement are a powerful combination. Together they help children by building better brains, reinforcing learning, supporting development, building strengths to "bounce back" and thrive, and promoting social harmony.

So, Reaching IN... Reaching OUT has been writing special musical stories and children's sing-a-longs and adding guided movements that are aimed at children 3-1/2 to 7 years. Each song package contains a musical story, sing-a-long with guided movements, lyrics and sheet music, tips on how to use the songs most effectively, and other resiliency resources.

Learn more here.

Bringing Up Bébé Bilingual: The 4Rs

Experts unanimously agree that the best way to become bilingual is to be exposed to the two languages from birth (or even in utero, as the brain is ready to learn language at the 34th week of pregnancy). There is a decline in the ability to learn a second language after six or seven, though that does not mean adults can’t learn a second language. Bilingual language development also has another important feature: one of the two languages is almost always a minority language, which means it is spoken less than the other language in the child’s environment. This often means that children have fewer opportunities to hear, speak and learn that minority language. The critical threshold for developing proficiency in a second language is to be exposed to this language at least 30 per cent of the time. If a child is awake 84 hours during a week, they need to be exposed to the minority language for 28 hours. Unless each parent speaks their mother tongue to their child all the time, which is not always feasible, this level of exposure is rarely attained.

To help bilingual families raise bilingual children, you can:

- Promote the 4Rs method described here.
- Browse the 1 enfant 2 langues website (BILINGUAL)

Did you know?

Language is the best tool to help a child do well later in school and in life. The Best Start Resource Centre’s booklet When Children Speak More Than One Language, available in 12 languages, offers tips based on research to parents of a child who will learn two or more languages.

Currently available for sale in print in English and French, and for free download as PDF in English, French, Arabic, Chinese, Cree, Hindi, Ojibway, Punjabi, Spanish, Tagalog.
Strong Nations: Bringing Indigenous Books Into Your Lives...

In 2012, Strong Nations began a publishing house. By 2017, they had over 150 titles! Growing up while learning multiple languages is beneficial to kids, and Strong Nations translate all of their books into French and work with Indigenous communities to license their books for Indigenous language translations. They believe in collaborating with schools, colleges, universities, organizations, daycare facilities, businesses and communities to support and improve the learning experiences for all Indigenous peoples. Strong Nations provides an open service of information to support, and hopefully transform, the lives of Indigenous peoples by providing access to, and demonstrating the use of, Indigenous text in literacy acquisition. They hope to bring Indigenous content into the lives of all peoples in order to create pathways that support the building of strong nations together.

Learn more here, and check, in particular, the beautiful Caring for Me series…

It's A Plan: Website on Contraception

With so many options available, making the right decisions about contraception can be a little overwhelming. The It's a plan website was created by the SOGC to help patients and their health care providers determine the method that's best for them.

And when the time comes to discuss Preconception...

Check out the Best Start Resource Centre's Preconception resources and in particular the Health Before Pregnancy, bilingual website! This website 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.
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.