

March 18, 2018 Early Years Family Centre meeting with IAT – requesting feedback on pre-sent questions

Introduction to the Early Years Family Centre (EYFC). EYFC Staff gave a brief history - discussion followed.

Started as a community collaborative, partners represented many sectors of community services, including education, police, health care, etc. The concern was based on children in the area not meeting developmental landmarks – so the goal was to have a rich, creative environment to stimulate children’s learning, and provide opportunity for parent/child interaction in a diverse setting, with the ability to interact with Early Childhood educators, at no cost.

The program is administered by Regina Early Learning Centre, which also runs a preschool project.

There are now 3 Centres, located in 3 schools. The schools donate the spaces for the EYFC’s. They are all open Monday – Thursday from 9-4, Fridays from 1-4, with the one in Dr. Hanna school also open on Saturdays.

A monthly calendar is developed, with all information, programs and dates for each school. Available online.

EYFC’s are open over the summer, closed for some periods for seasonal janitorial work.

Funding is grant-based, with Kids’ First Regina providing a large portion of operating costs.

It is valuable to have parents share information with other parents to make them aware of the Centres.

Philosophy:

- Universally accessible – free to all families
- Early learning – from newborn to age 6, with caregivers
- Opportunity for children and caregivers to play, interact and learn together, with access to educators
- Parent education, family wellness and support available
- Opportunity to participate in program planning
- Opportunity to meet other families
- Place to meet with healthcare, education and community professionals (collaboration)

EYFC’s believe:

- Providing a high-quality learning environment and developmental experiences is important
- Young children are capable, competent learners
- Holistic development is valuable
- Play-based, open-ended environment is stimulating and dynamic
- Play and exploration is children’s work
- Family engagement is key – supporting adults in learning about Early Childhood education
- Diversity and respect for original cultures is necessary and important
- Helping to relieve the isolation for post-partum families is key
- Free programming is necessary for universal access
- Changing and adapting the space optimizes learning

Programs include:

- Scheduled/regular as well as drop-in/free-ply
- Music therapist
- Creative process and exploration – loose parts, open-ended materials
- Fitness
- Cultural programming – learning about others
- Language programs for Moms and babies
- Co-learning – adult and little one bonding

- Painting, messy play, etc. – get messy, then go home
- Holistic programming – language/literacy/physical/cognitive/social-emotional
- Connection to the written word – always connecting to literacy, to stories
- Life skills language – dual language books that are given away (sponsored by Sask. Literacy network)
- Emergent Literacy books available in Arabic, Dari, Urdu, Tigrinia, Farsi, etc.

Positive Parenting Program – Triple P – funded by Provincial government (developed in Australia)

- 2 facilitators – trained to work with families with children 0-12 years
- Give seminars on specific topics, facilitate discussion groups, work 1 on 1
- Families can self-refer, go on-line for more info
- General information (tip sheets)

Questions for IAT:

Where did you find about the EYFC?

- Word of mouth
- Playground
- Public health-posters
- RRLIP – newsletters, blog
- Speech therapist
- Came with friend

IAT ideas for publicizing:

- Ask parents who come regularly to tell others
- Have the main (very basic) information at the Hospital – particularly in the delivery section (translated into numerous languages, including Arabic)
- Organize a presentation with RODS and RIWC
- Advertise for community volunteers to translate
- Let families know that they can go together and request a mini-van for the cab (1/wk voucher/family)
- Important to connect directly with the woman – she is usually the one home with the children
- Ask LINC teachers if EYFC can make a presentation to English classes
- Get English classes to go to visit the Centre as part of their homework
- Encourage husbands/fathers to go to Centre to see what is offered
- Encourage people – next time, bring a friend
- Send ads home with children going to schools
- Something similar to a ‘family day for pre-k’ – parent drops child off a pre-k, spend rest of time at Centre with younger child until pick-up time for pre-K
- Make Ministry of Education aware of need – perhaps transportation can be provided for family, not just child in pre-K
- Try opening all 3 Centres on Saturday

Do you visit our website? What would be most useful on the front page? Would a newcomer page be useful?

Would it be helpful to have links to resources in multiple languages on the webpage?

- Use website to see programs – but format/usability is difficult – don't see EYFC page, so confusing
- Maybe computer science students would be willing to design new page?
- An App for the smartphone would be helpful – many newcomers use an app – easy to just press it
- Google translate on website would be helpful
- Mention 'Transportation Issue? Talk to us!', so people know it is okay to ask
- Newcomer page idea – some find useful, others don't

Registration form: complicated and difficult to understand

- Reading level quite high – difficult
- Newcomers need to understand what info is being used for, and that the information cannot be traced back to them (e.g. demographic page has no name on it)
- Need to know what information Centre really needs – often don't understand that they don't have to fill out everything
- Can cause suspicion – why do you want that personal information?

Follow-up Action items:

Francophone community - Association of Francophone parents hold monthly events in Laval school – connect

Send questions/comments to IAT for further comments and feedback

Question for IAT - What would be useful on the front page?

RRLIP to ask for interested volunteers to translate – basic information

Ask Settlement agencies for presentation opportunities

Ask LINC teachers for presentation opportunities

Scan registration form – send out to IAT to get newcomer point of view