

Voices on Health and Learning



3rd National Conference for Community Health Nurses
Blazing Our Trail...
Calgary, June 19th 2009



Donna Michal
Early Childhood Work Group
Health and Learning Knowledge Centre

Overview:



- Canadian Council on Learning and the Knowledge Centres
- Target Audience Project
- Key learnings
- Bridging and Building

Canadian Council on Learning

- Five Knowledge Centres
- Health and Learning Knowledge Centre
- Early Childhood Work Group

Our vision

The early years are a time

- of rapid growth and development
- a time to establish a healthy base for learning
- nutrition, physical activity, mental ability, and amount of stress interact to affect learning
- understanding the intertwined nature of health and learning can guide parents, practitioners, and policymakers

Health and Learning



Health and learning are intertwined and cannot be separated. When one is compromised so is the other.

Understanding health information...

- What do families need to know?
- What do families need to access health information?
- What do parents need to positively influence the health of their young children?

Target Audience Project

What did we do?

- Explore the relationship between health and learning
- Community-based research
 - Participatory, collaborative, evolving and involving
- Surveys, focus groups and interviews

Target Audience Project

Our questions:

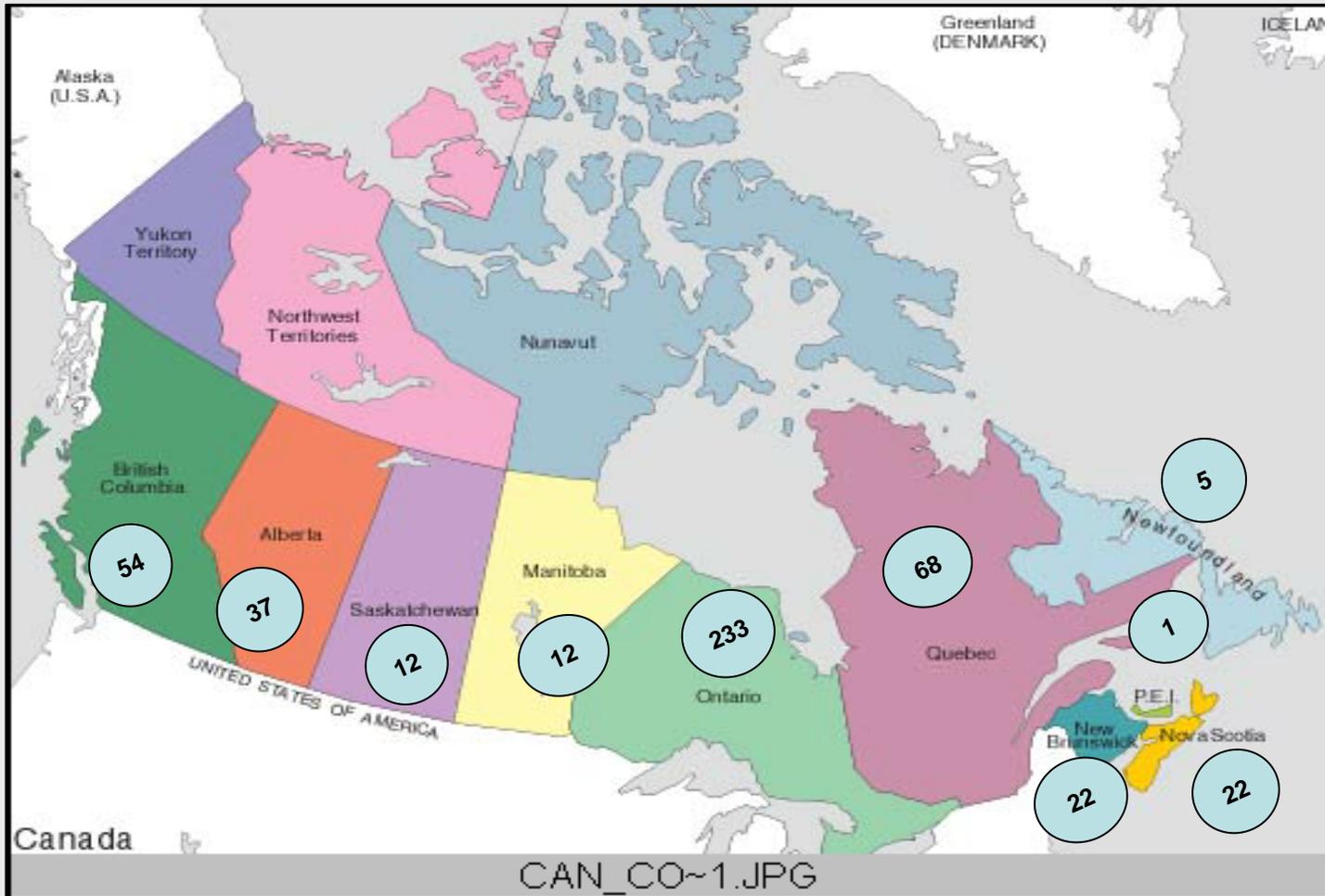
- Where do you go for health information?
- What kind of information format works best for you?
- Do you have difficulty finding health information?
- What kind of health information do you need and want for your family?

Who did we ask?

- Parents
- Health professionals
- Early childhood educators
- Early Childhood Education faculty

Surveys:

Parents in Special Needs Project



What did parents say?

- Parents use and prefer multiple formats of health information....on average 3.
- Used and preferred formats are the same across ages of child and parts of the country.
 1. Personal contact with a health professional
 2. Website/internet
 3. Articles

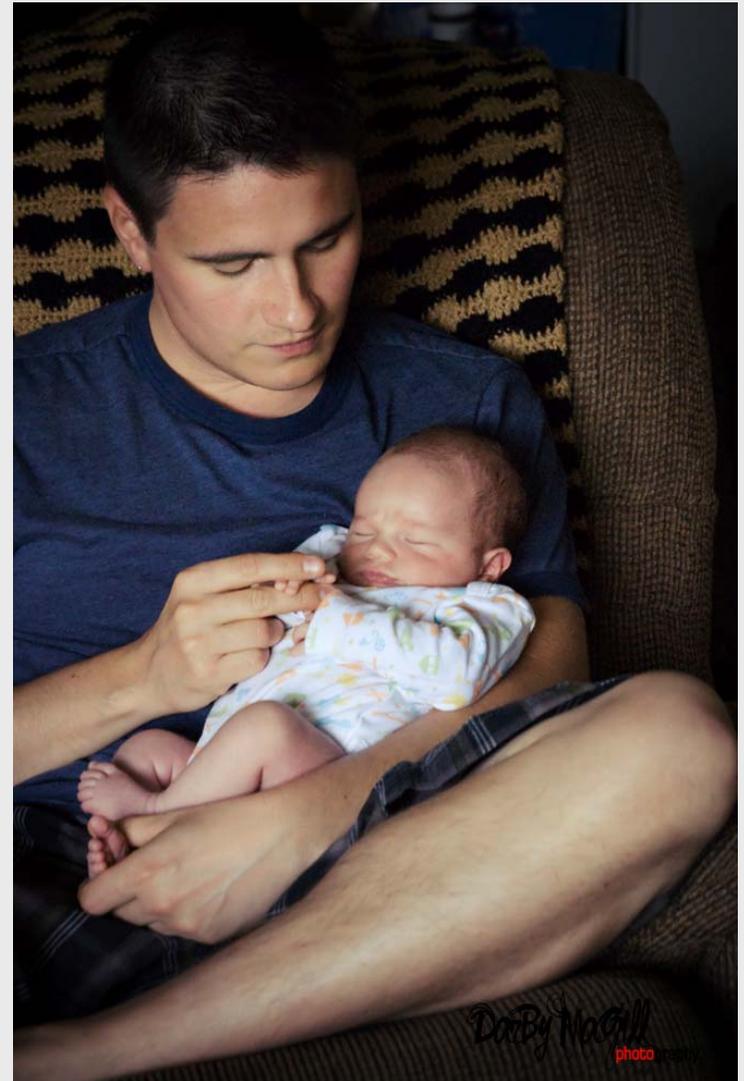
Focus Groups and Interviews:

Yukon, BC, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario,
Nova Scotia



Target Audience Project: Key Findings

- Relationship between parents and professionals “key”
- Income security is a determinant of health
- Mixed messages about health abound
- Sensitivity to cultural practices
- Communities and context matter





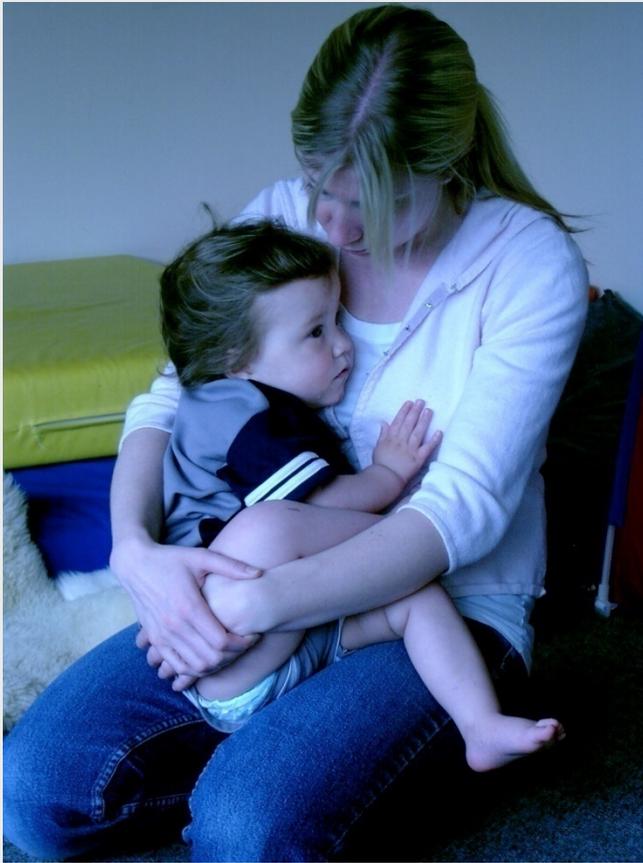
Stories from the Field

Issue: Nutrition



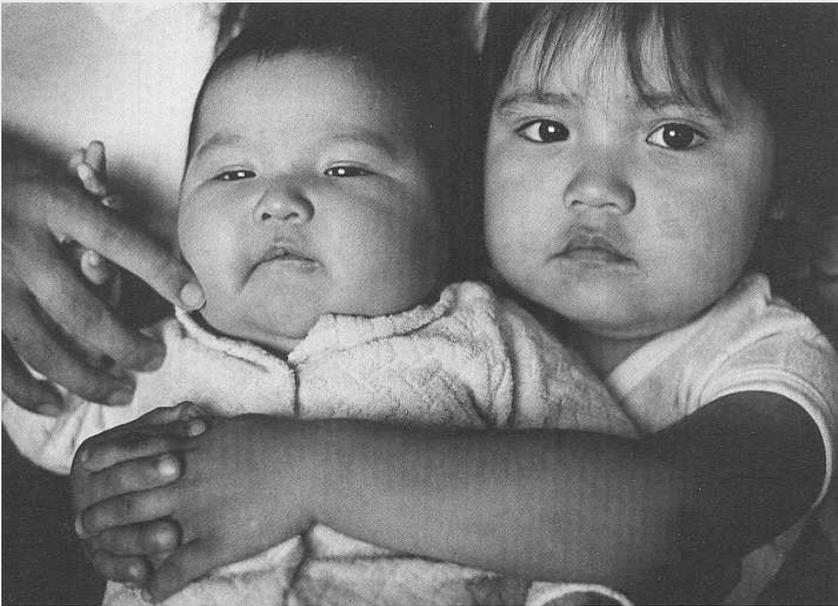
- Food security
- Geography
- Time
- Emotional aspects
- Practices in early learning settings
- Food allergies

Issue: Illness and illness prevention



- Immunizations
- Communicable diseases
- Dental health
- “half well”
- Handwashing
- Antibiotic resistance

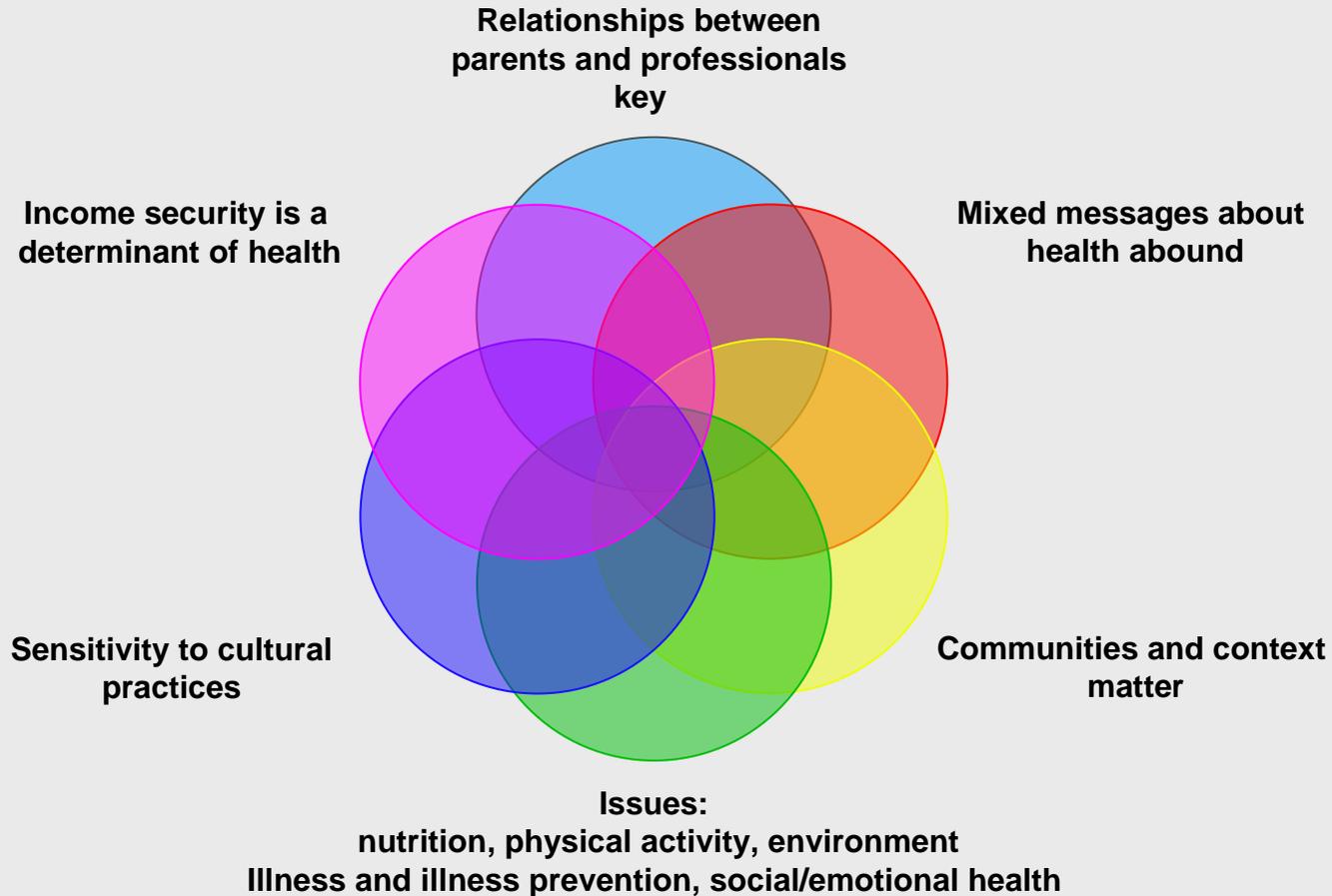
Issue: Social/Emotional Health



- Family stress
- Poverty
- Immigrant families
- Impact of illness
- Pain and grief

Target Audience Project

Key findings about health information:
issues, sources, access and needs



Identified Barriers

- Lack of health professionals
- Skills to find and determine reliability/validity of internet information
- Rural and northern isolation
- Low levels of health literacy
- Cultural and language differences
- Complexity of issues—social, emotional, systemic

Identified Service Needs

More:

- Family physicians
- Time for Public Health nurses
- Speech and language services
- Hearing screening/allergy testing
- Dietitians
- Transportation support
- Trained early childhood workforce
- Quality child care spaces

Lesson in Learning

Mixed Messages: How to choose among conflicting information to support healthy development in young children



Social determinants of health

- Income and social status
- Employment/unemployment, working conditions and job security
- Housing
- Education
- Conditions for early childhood development or Healthy Child Development
- Social support network
- Social exclusion
- Health services

Health literacy

- the ability of individuals to access and use health information to make appropriate health decisions and maintain basic health

Finding appropriate information and using it effectively can positively impact the health status of an individual or family.

“In From the Margins”

- Joint Forum using the consultation findings from three working groups (Adults, Early Childhood, and the Health Professional Network)
- Identify common barriers to health, health and learning, and access to services and information
- Identify promising practices and emerging practical solutions that focus on addressing identified barriers to health and learning
-
- Compile, publish, and disseminate promising practices including online access for health care professionals and other stakeholders through a variety of web sites including the Canadian Public Health Association’s portal.

Bridging and Building

1. Alberta Centre for Child, Family and Community Research (*What Adults Know About Child Development*)
<http://www.research4children.com/admin/newsx/launch.cfm?ItemId=343&gid=1>
2. UNBC and Northern Health (*Working Relationships of Public Health Nurses and High Priority Families*)
3. York Region Community and Health Services (*Parenting Needs Assessment*)
<http://www.york.ca/Services/Public+Health+and+Safety/Child+and+Family+Health/parenting.htm>
4. School of Early Childhood Education, Ryerson University (*Listening to Families: Reframing Services*)
5. Centre for Digital Storytelling
www.storycenter.org
6. Healthy Aboriginal Network (health literacy comic books)
www.thehealthyaboriginal.net
7. Family Resource Programs of Canada
www.frp.ca

Next steps

Ensure that the voice of early childhood is represented in the conversation and work on *Health, Social Development and Learning*



To your good health and ours!



The complete report “Voices on Health and Learning” is available at
http://www.ccl-cca.ca/NR/rdonlyres/C32F22DD-85D5-4453-8998-C08CED5C2A24/0/HLKCWG1voicesonhealth_report.pdf

Further information about the Early Childhood Work Group:
<http://www.ccl-cca.ca/CCL/AboutCCL/KnowledgeCentres/HealthandLearning/OurWork/WorkingGroups.htm?Language=EN>

Contact info: Donna Michal - donnamichal@shaw.ca