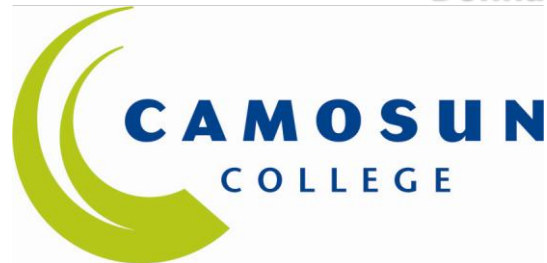


Voices on Health and Learning

SpeciaLink Symposium
August 2008

Donna Michal and Jamie Kass



Overview:



- ✦ **Background**
 - ✦ **Early Childhood Work Group, Health and Learning Knowledge Centre, Canadian Council on Learning**
- ✦ **Our questions and what we did**
- ✦ **What we heard**

Early Childhood Work Group

- ✦ **Canadian Council on Learning** promoting and supporting evidence-based decisions about learning throughout all stages of life, from early childhood through to the senior years.
www.ccl-cca.ca
- ✦ **Health and Learning Knowledge Centre** one of 5 Knowledge Centres (Early Childhood Learning, Aboriginal Learning, Adult Learning, Work and Learning)
 - ✦ Health literacy
 - ✦ Sustaining healthy communities of learning
 - ✦ Building capacity
- ✦ **11 working groups**

ECWG Membership

- ✦ **Canadian Child Care Federation**
- ✦ **Centre for Excellence in Early Childhood Development**
- ✦ **Early Childhood Learning Knowledge Centre**
- ✦ **Early Childhood Education training (post secondary institutions)**
- ✦ **FPT Early Childhood Development and Early Learning and Child Care Working Group.**
- ✦ **Healthy Child Manitoba**
- ✦ **Human Early Learning Partnership (HELP)**
- ✦ **Community Health Nurses Association of Canada**
- ✦ **National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health**

Partnerships

- ✦ To identify issues
- ✦ To plan project
- ✦ To access network “network of networks”
- ✦ To share and disseminate information
- ✦ To support and lead meaningful connection with the community

Health and Learning



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

Target Audience Project

What we did:

- ✦ **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?

Target Audience Project

Who we spoke with:

- ✦ Parents
- ✦ Early Childhood Educators
- ✦ Health Care Professionals
- ✦ Early Childhood Education Faculty

Survey: Parents in Special Needs Project

- ✦ Partnership with CUPW Special Needs Project
- ✦ 483 parents members with children with disabilities
- ✦ Health information questionnaire part of spring Advisor phone interview
- ✦ Target Audience Project provided data analysis
- ✦ Project development information for Special Needs Project

Where do members in the Special Needs Project live?



Survey: 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

Survey: Parents in Special Needs Project

What did parents say?

- ✦ Health concerns during past year
 - ✦ Emotional health
 - ✦ Social behaviour
 - ✦ Intellectual development
 - ✦ Nutrition
- ✦ Looking for health information
 - ✦ Emotional health
 - ✦ Social behaviour
 - ✦ nutrition

Focus Groups and Interviews:

Yukon, BC, Saks, Manitoba, Ontario, Nova Scotia



What did focus group participants say?

- ✦ **Health and Learning Issues**
 - ✦ Nutrition
 - ✦ Physical activity
 - ✦ Environment
 - ✦ Illness and illness prevention
 - ✦ Social/emotional health
- ✦ **Sources/formats of information**
- ✦ **Barriers to access**
- ✦ **Information gaps and needs**
- ✦ **Service gaps and needs**

Issue: Nutrition



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

Issue: Physical Activity



- ✦ Physical development
- ✦ Obesity
- ✦ Outdoor activities in winter
- ✦ Activity levels in early learning settings: children, staff and students

Issue: Environment



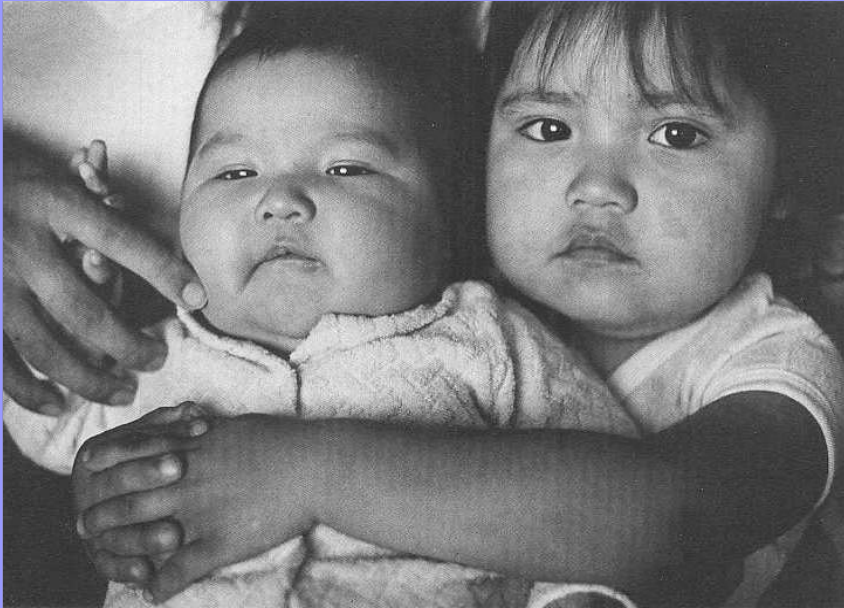
- ✦ **Water**
- ✦ **Air quality**
- ✦ **Pesticides**
- ✦ **Food additives**
- ✦ **Toxins**
- ✦ **Asthma**

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

Sources and formats of information

- ✦ Internet
- ✦ Medical personnel
- ✦ Health clinics
- ✦ Friends, family, colleagues
- ✦ Library
- ✦ Health line (telehealth)
- ✦ Print materials
- ✦ Support groups

Barriers to access

- ✦ **Lack of access to health professionals**
- ✦ **Lack of skills to find and determine reliability and validity of internet information**
- ✦ **Insufficient rural and northern connectivity**
- ✦ **Low levels of literacy**
- ✦ **Cultural and language differences**

Information gaps and needs

- ✦ **Need for more information in areas such as:**
 - ✦ **Alternative health**
 - ✦ **Emotional wellness**
 - ✦ **Learning disabilities and autism**
- ✦ **The huge health promotion “machine”**

Service gaps and needs

- ✦ Lack of family physicians
- ✦ Public health nurses need more time
- ✦ More speech and language services are needed
- ✦ Hearing screening and allergy testing
- ✦ More dietitians
- ✦ Support for transportation
- ✦ Trained early childhood workforce

Target Audience Project: Key Findings

- ✦ **Relationship as “key”**
- ✦ **Income as a determinant of health**
- ✦ **Mixed messages**
- ✦ **Health literacy**
- ✦ **Communities and context matter**

Target Audience Project: Complexities

- ✦ **Financial factors**
- ✦ **Safety factors**
- ✦ **Emotional factors**
- ✦ **Cultural factors**
- ✦ **People factors**

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**

Identified Service Needs

More:

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

Future Directions and Connections

- ✦ Knowledge exchange
- ✦ Lessons in Learning
 - ✦ *"Mixed Messages"*
- ✦ Forum to action: other HLKC work groups
 - ✦ Health affected by social barriers
 - ✦ Relationships with health professionals
 - ✦ Health literacy
- ✦ Research on working relationships of public health nurses and high priority families in northern communities (UNBC and Northern Health)

The challenge ahead

What supports do families need to access health information?

What supports do parents need to positively influence the health of their young children?

- ✦ **Key findings**
- ✦ **Identified barriers**
- ✦ **Identified service needs**

For more info

- ✦ A full report of this consultation, *Voices on Health and Learning*, is available on the Canadian Council of Learning website at: <http://www.ccl-cca.ca/CCL/AboutCCL/KnowledgeCentres/HealthandLearning/OurWork/WorkingGroups.htm?Language=EN>
- ✦ The Lesson in Learning: *Mixed Messages: How to choose among conflicting information to support healthy development in young children* is available at: <http://www.ccl-cca.ca/CCL/AboutCCL/KnowledgeCentres/HealthandLearning/HealthandLearningHome/?Language=EN>
- ✦ Further information about the Canadian Union of Postal Workers' Special Needs Project can be found at www.specialneedsproject.ca

Thank you!

Donna Michal
Co-coordinator
Early Childhood Work Group
Health and Learning Knowledge Centre
donnamichal@shaw.ca

Jamie Kass
National Child Care Coordinator
CUPW
jkass@cupw-sttp.org

