

All of us at the Best Start Resource Centre wish you the best for 2008!

MNCHP NETWORK BULLETIN JANUARY 4 / 08

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----- I. NEWS & VIEWS -----

ONTARIO

GOVERNMENT INVESTS \$424,000 IN SCHOOL TRAVEL PLANNING PILOT PROJECT

Dean Del Mastro, Member of Parliament for Peterborough, highlighted the Government of Canada's announcement to invest close to \$424,000 to support the "Green Communities Canada's School Travel Planning Project", a project that aims to encourage children and youth from across Canada to get active by walking or cycling safely to and from school. "With this project, Green Communities Canada will create an effective school travel planning policy for Canada. This policy will ensure that all children in Canada have improved access to supportive physical and social environments and the opportunity to increase their physical activity to and from school" (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2007, December 19).
http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/media/nr-rp/2007/2007_16-eng.html

CANADA

LATEST PRODUCT RECALLS

- Bunk beds sold in four models by Hooker Furniture: gaps between parts of upper bunk could pose a strangulation hazard to young children
- Graco SnugRide Infant Restraint System, Seat Pad Replacement: fibre fill from the car seat pads could present a potential choking hazard
http://www.healthycanadians.gc.ca/pr-rp/pr-rp_e.php
- Baby's Bliss Gripe Water (apple flavour), a natural health product to ease the stomach discomfort and gas associated with colic, hiccups, and teething: contains the parasite cryptosporidium
http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ahc-asc/media/advisories-avis/fpa-ape_2008/2008_01_e.html

INTERNATIONAL

NEW STERILIZATION TECHNIQUE FOR WOMEN TO BE REVIEWED BY FDA

A new method of sterilization for women, the Adiana Transcervical Sterilization System, is recommended for approval by an obstetrics and gynaecology devices advisory panel to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. This method would be an alternative to tubal ligation (i.e., getting your tubes tied), which involves a surgeon cutting or burning a woman's fallopian tubes to prevent the egg from meeting sperm at ovulation. Patients that undergo tubal ligation take four to five days to recover. In contrast, the new procedure only takes 15 minutes and patients can normally go back to work within a day. It involves placing a catheter at the entrance of each fallopian tube, which emits radio signals to remove a layer of cells. Soft polymer material is then inserted in the area, which generates the growth of healthy tissue, creating a permanent blockage in each tube.
<http://www.cbc.ca/health/story/2007/12/14/sterilization-fda.html?ref=rss>

SAFER, MORE ACCURATE RADIATION THERAPY FOR PREGNANT WOMEN

Radiation can treat cancer but can also harm and impede the growth of a developing fetus (ScienceDaily, 2007, December 25). Physicians use advanced computer simulations to determine the correct dose of radiation to administer to patients. Researchers from the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (Xu et al., 2007) used a new method to create three 3-D models of pregnant females at various gestational stages: three months, six months, and nine months. This new set of modeling tools could enable safer, more accurate, and more effective radiation therapy and nuclear medicine imaging procedures for pregnant women (Rensselaer, 2007, December 18). The lead researcher noted that it will likely be about one year before the models are verified and accepted by the medical community, and then integrated into computer software as a new standard for determining and administering radiation therapy to expecting mothers (Science Daily, 2007, December 18).
<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2007/12/071218122417.htm>

LABOUR LED TO THE EVOLUTION OF WOMEN'S SPINES

Katherine Whitcome, a postdoctoral researcher in the Department of Anthropology in Harvard's Faculty of Arts and Sciences, explained how baby labour led to the evolution of women's spines in a press release:

"the body must change in dramatic ways to accommodate the baby, and these changes affect a woman's stability and posture. It turns out that enhanced curvature and reinforcement of the lower spine are key to maintaining normal activities during pregnancy" (CBC.ca, 2007, December 12). The researchers (Whitcome, Shapiro, & Lieberman, 2007) examined 19 pregnant women 20 to 40 years old and found the curve of the spine in the lower back, called the lordosis, can increase by as much as 60% by the end of pregnancy. Women's lower backs have become more curved to allow them to move more freely while supporting a progressively heavier load. Women also possess larger spinal joints that flare out more than in men and are located further down the spine.

<http://www.cbc.ca/health/story/2007/12/12/pregnancy-spine.html?ref=rss>

MOTION EXERCISES BUILD BONE STRENGTH FOR PREEMIES AND INFANTS

A common problem associated with premature births is osteopenia of prematurity (OOP, i.e., brittle bones) that can cause bone fractures and rickets in the infant and osteoporosis later in life. Dr. Dan Nemet and Dr. Alon Eliakim, professors of the Sackler School of Medicine at Tel Aviv University, developed a program of gentle exercises performed five times a day on the wrist, elbow, shoulder, ankle, knee, and hip joints for approximately 10 minutes, five times per week for four weeks. The researchers examined the program's association with bone growth and development using ultrasounds and found that the preemies were gaining more bone mass, their bones were growing stronger, and subsequently, the babies were gaining more weight.

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2007/12/071204121944.htm>

BRAIN OVERGROWTH IN ONE-YEAR-OLDS LINKED TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF AUTISM

Lead researcher Joseph Piven, M.D., Director of the Neurodevelopmental Disorders Research Center at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, and an ACNP member, presented at the American College of Neuropsychopharmacology (ACNP) annual meeting (2008, December). The research indicates that brain overgrowth in the latter part of an infant's first year may contribute to the onset of autistic characteristics, findings that support concurrent research which has found brain overgrowth in autistic children as young as two years old. Piven will continue to study brain development in autism through a study of brain development on MRI and behavioural development in children at 6, 12, and 24 months. This study will provide important new information on brain changes in infancy that are associated with the development of autistic symptoms (ScienceDaily, 2007, December 10).

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2007/12/071208092451.htm>

----- II. RECENT REPORTS AND RESEARCH RESULTS -----

ONTARIO

NATIVE ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS REPORT: ONTARIO FEDERATION OF INDIAN FRIENDSHIP CENTRES

Alternative Schools were developed through a partnership between the Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres (OFIFC) and the Ministry of Education to address the high drop-out rates for Aboriginal students in Ontario. In 1990, three Native Alternative Secondary Schools were opened in Indian Friendship Centres (IFC) and were expanded to eight schools in 2004. In the past few years, other IFC's have articulated their community's need for a Native Alternative School but to date the expansion has not been approved. This report provides an overview of the Alternative Schools and their impacts including goals, successes, and challenges. Alternative Schools aim to: support Aboriginal students as they work towards acquiring their high school diploma, help students learn more about their culture and heritage, and assist students as they develop the tools necessary to lead healthy lives (OFIFC, 2007). Although Alternative Schools share many of the same goals, each school is designed to meet the needs of their community. For example, in one alternative school, over half of the students have children. The staff have stressed the need for adequate, affordable, and onsite daycare. The report concluded that the

Native Alternative Schools Program is a successful education model and seven key recommendations were developed.

<http://www.ofifc.org/ofifchome/page/index.htm>

INTERNATIONAL

SECOND-TRIMESTER LOSS ASSOCIATED WITH RISKS FOR SUBSEQUENT PREGNANCIES

This study (Edlow, Srinivas, & Elovitz, 2007) aimed to determine whether second-trimester pregnancy loss was associated with an increased risk for spontaneous preterm birth or recurrent second-trimester loss in a subsequent pregnancy. Three groups of women were examined: 30 women who had a spontaneous second-trimester pregnancy loss; 76 women with a spontaneous preterm birth; and 76 women with full-term deliveries. All of the women had a subsequent pregnancy beyond 14 weeks' gestation. The authors concluded that patients with a prior second-trimester loss are at significantly increased risk for spontaneous preterm birth and recurrent second-trimester loss in their next pregnancy.

<http://pt.wkhealth.com/pt/re/ajog/abstract.00000447-200712000-00006.htm;jsessionid=H9MXcGWTBNgLH1nHgbRNCGGISWhXj9L2TIJvZp2VyPIbxvk1Mjk3!1390229169!181195629!8091!-1>

SMALLER BABIES MORE PRONE TO DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY LATER IN LIFE

This study (Colman, Ploubidis, Wadsworth, Jones, & Croudace, 2007) examined 4627 members of the Medical Research Council National Survey of Health & Development for symptoms of depression and anxiety over the life course and neurodevelopmental background. The researchers found that: (1) heavier babies had lower likelihood of depressive and anxious symptoms, and (2) delay in first standing and walking was associated with subsequent higher likelihood of symptoms, controlling for social circumstances and stressful life events during childhood. The main author noted the implications of the study: "we should take better care of pregnant women. The kind of stress that pregnant mothers are under has a significant long-term effect on the developing fetus" (Medicannewstoday.com, 2007, December 5).

Abstract:

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/sites/entrez?db=pubmed&uid=17692292&cmd=showdetailview&indexed=google>

U.S. BIRTHS REPORT: PRELIMINARY DATA FOR 2006

This report by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center for Health Statistics provides preliminary data on births and birth rates as well as selected maternal and infant health characteristics for the United States in 2006 (Hamilton, Martin, & Ventura, 2007). Some key findings of the report include: (1) the preliminary estimate of total births in the U.S. for 2006 was 3% higher than in 2005 (127,647 more births); (2) birth rates in 2006 increased for women in their 20's, 30's, and early 40's from 2005, as well as for teenagers; (3) the Caesarean delivery rate rose in 2006, to 31.1% of all births, a 3% increase from 2005 and a new record; and (4) the preterm birth rate rose slightly between 2005 and 2006 from 12.7% to 12.8% of all births (Peck, 2007, December 5).

http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr56/nvsr56_07.pdf

HEALTH NEEDS ARE HIGHER FOR CHILDREN OF ABUSED MOTHERS

The study (Rivara et al., 2007) compared 11 years of medical records and utilization data from 631 children of mothers with a history of intimate partner violence (IPV) with those of 760 children whose mothers had not experienced IPV. The mothers, ages 18 to 64 years, participated in a telephone survey, providing information about their lifetime history with IPV (defined as both physical abuse and non-physical abuse). Among the mothers in the study, 46.6% reported experiencing IPV since age 18. Among the children of mothers with IPV, the violence stopped before the children were born for 21.8 percent, but for 23.6%, the violence happened during the children's lifetime (ScienceDaily, 2007, December 16). The findings indicate that children whose mothers have a history of abuse by intimate partners have higher

health care needs than children whose mothers have no history of abuse, with significantly higher levels of mental health costs and services, primary care visits, primary care costs, and laboratory costs. These needs were higher even if the abuse occurred before the children were born. Children of mothers with a history of IPV that ended before the child was born had significantly greater utilization of mental health, primary care, specialty care, and pharmacy services than did children of mothers who reported no IPV. Children exposed directly to IPV after birth had greater emergency department and primary care use during the IPV and were three times as likely to use mental health services after the IPV ended. The authors recommend that (1) health care providers routinely screen women for IPV as a part of their healthcare, and (2) interventions for both the women and their children are likely necessary to minimize the effects of IPV in the family.

Abstract: <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/content/abstract/120/6/1270>

TRAFFIC POLLUTION IS ASSOCIATED WITH CHILDREN'S ASTHMA SEVERITY

This study (Holguin et al., 2007) aimed to determine the differential association of traffic-related exposures with exhaled nitric oxide and lung volumes and symptoms in children with and without asthma. A total of 200 asthmatic and non-asthmatic children, ages 6 to 12 years, who lived in the Mexican border town of Ciudad Juarez, a crossing point into the United States, participated in the study. The researchers measured traffic density and traffic-related pollutants near the children's homes and schools for one year and evaluated each child's lung function and respiratory symptoms for four months. The findings indicate that children with asthma who are exposed to traffic pollution are at increased risk for respiratory problems and reduced lung volumes and were more susceptible than healthy children.

Abstract: <http://ajrcm.atsjournals.org/cgi/content/abstract/176/12/1236>

CHILD CARE ENVIRONMENT CAN PROMOTE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN THE EARLY YEARS

This study (Bower et al., 2007) examined the relationships between the childcare environment and physical activity behaviour of preschool children. The researchers assessed the physical and social environmental factors thought to influence healthy weight at 20 childcare centers across North Carolina, followed by an evaluation of the physical activity levels of children attending the centers. Additional data was gathered through interviews and documents provided by the child care directors (ScienceDaily, 2007, December 12). The findings indicate that children had more moderate and vigorous physical activity and fewer minutes of sedentary activity when their center had more portable play equipment (e.g., balls, hoola hoops, jump ropes and riding toys), offered more opportunities for active play (inside and outside), and had physical activity training and education for staff and students. Stationary equipment (e.g., climbing structures, swings and balance beams) were associated with lower intensity physical activity, but are beneficial to other aspects of child development, such as motor and social skills.

An author of the study, Dianne Ward, noted that "child care providers can play a huge role in encouraging children to be active and develop habits and preferences that will help them control their weight throughout their lives. The easiest way to increase physical activity may be as simple as providing more active play time, and providing relatively inexpensive toys, like balls and jump ropes" (ScienceDaily, 2007, December 12).

<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/journal/07493797>

----- III. CURRENT INITIATIVES -----

FAMILY LITERACY DAY: JANUARY 27TH

Family Literacy Day® (FLD) is a national initiative created by ABC CANADA Literacy Foundation in 1999 to promote the importance of reading and learning together as a family (ABC CANADA Literacy Foundation, 2007). Families and communities across Canada celebrate this special day at literacy-themed events coordinated by literacy organizations, schools, and libraries. Family Literacy Day is promoted through a national marketing campaign.

For more information and for event listings see: <http://www.abc-canada.org/fld/>

LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR TO CONTINUE BOOK DRIVES FOR ABORIGINAL CHILDREN

The Honourable James Bartleman initiated two book drives during his term as Lieutenant Governor and over two million books were collected. The Honourable David C. Onley, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, taking over Bartleman, outlined the details of his new version of the book drives for aboriginal youth started by Bartleman (CBC.ca, 2008, January 2). Ontarians were reminded to buy a brand new book while they were shopping the sales after the holidays and to drop them off at any Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) detachment or at any Toronto Police Services station between January 1 and January 18. <http://www.cbc.ca/canada/toronto/story/2008/01/02/ot-book-080102.html>
Press release: <http://ogov.newswire.ca/ontario/GPOE/2008/01/02/c6429.html?lmatch=&lang=e.html>

MY FAMILY MATTERS! SCHOOLS PROJECT

Many lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) parents are concerned about what happens for their children in schools. The LGBTQ Parenting Network at the Sherbourne Health Centre, Queer Parenting Programmes at the 519, EGALÉ, the Lorraine Kimsa Theatre for Young People, and a committee of community members have launched a new project to make schools more welcoming for children and for families of all configurations. They are planning several days of action, education, and celebration to coincide with Valentine's Day and Family Day. Everyone is invited to participate including parents, prospective parents, teachers, young people, friends, and allies. <http://www.fsatoronto.com/programs/lgbt/newsletter.html#connection>

BIRTH DEFECTS PREVENTION MONTH

The National Birth Defects Prevention Network in the United States is a network of birth defects programs and individuals working at the local, state, and national level in birth defects surveillance, research, and prevention. The organization has chosen "preventing infections in pregnancy" as the focus for birth defects prevention month in 2008 and provides resources on their website. <http://www.nbdpn.org/current/resources/bdpm2008.html>

----- IV. UPCOMING EVENTS -----

ONTARIO

COURSE FOR GAY/BISEXUAL/QUEER MEN CONSIDERING PARENTHOOD

Date: February 26 to May 13, 2008 (Tuesday evenings)

Location: Toronto, ON

This course, "Daddies & Papas 2b", is for gay/bisexual/queer men considering parenthood.

<http://www.fsatoronto.com/programs/lgbt/newsletter.html#connection>

COURSE FOR LESBIAN/BISEXUAL/QUEER WOMEN CONSIDERING PARENTHOOD

Date: April 4-6, 2008

Location: Toronto, ON

This course, "Dyke Planning Tykes Weekend Intensive" is for lesbian/bisexual/queer women considering parenthood.

<http://www.fsatoronto.com/programs/lgbt/newsletter.html#connection>

4TH GYNAECOLOGY ONTARIO CONTINUING MEDICAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

Date: April 18-19, 2008

Location: Toronto, ON

Additional information will be available on the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada website.

http://sogc.medical.org/cme/events-gcme_e.asp

JOINT CONFERENCE: SHOULDER TO SHOULDER STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS FOR POSITIVE CHANGE

Date: June 2-4, 2008

Location: Toronto, ON

This conference, hosted by Children's Mental Health Ontario and the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies, will offer its delegates the opportunity to hear about innovative programs, new research, and exciting outcome studies that will help agencies work with families and children.

<http://www.oacas.org/conference/>

CANADA

AN INTRODUCTION TO SENSORY PROCESSING IN CHILDREN WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER – REACHING A COMMON UNDERSTANDING

Date: January 19, 2008

Location: Surrey, BC

This event provides an overview of sensory processing, why it is important for children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), and important insights into how difficulties in sensory processing impact children with ASD.

http://www.actcommunity.net/workshops_and_training/workshops/2008/Sensory_Fulks.htm

INCLUDING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN REGULAR CLASSROOMS

Date: January 26, 2008

Location: Vancouver, BC

This workshop will provide an overview of four components needed for successful educational inclusion of students with autism and other development disabilities: (1) presuming competence, (2) building supportive classroom communities, (3) collaborative learning, and (4) providing access to the general education curriculum. Videotaped examples of students of all ages will be used to illustrate concepts and strategies throughout.

http://www.actbc.ca/workshops_and_training/workshops/2008/InclusionClass_Mirenda_2008.html

EFFECTIVE EARLY LEARNING PROGRAMS: RESEARCH, POLICY, AND PRACTICE

Date: March 16-19, 2008

Location: Banff, AB

The 40th Annual Banff International Conference on Behavioural Science 3-day conference will gather key international researchers who will review effective early learning programs on language and literacy, numeracy, and social learning. The morning sessions will review specific areas of these programs (the gold standards of effective programs, the effects of these programs, implementation issues, and gaps in research), the afternoon workshops will allow participants to go further into specific programs, and the evening plenary sessions will introduce participants to a discussion on the implications of related data and recommendations for Canadian policy program planning.

<http://www.banffbehavsci.ubc.ca/>

CHILDHOOD AND ADOLESCENT OBESITY 2008

Date: October 2-4, 2008

Location: Vancouver, BC

This conference, "How We Live, How We Learn, and How We Work: Implications for the Prevention and Treatment of Childhood Obesity" brings together an interdisciplinary group of professionals who work in the field of childhood and adolescent obesity or are confronted with this growing problem. The sessions have been proposed based on a framework of living (home/community environment), learning (school environment), and working (work environment), and how these settings are associated with childhood

obesity. A focus of this conference will include cultural considerations for working with Aboriginal communities and individuals.

http://www.interprofessional.ubc.ca/Obesity_Conference.htm

----- V. RESOURCES -----

JANUARY 2008 ISSUE OF CANADIAN ADVERSE REACTION NEWSLETTER: HEALTH CANADA

This quarterly publication provides information for health professionals on suspected adverse reactions to health products occurring in humans before comprehensive risk-benefit evaluations and regulatory decisions are undertaken. This issue offers an update regarding the Evra contraceptive patch, and a case of heart attack and adverse reactions involving blood clots; and a case presentation regarding NuvaRing, a hormonal vaginal ring used for contraception, and its suspected association with blood clots in the aorta. It also contains an announcement about the name change of the Canadian Adverse Drug Reaction Monitoring Program (CADRMP) to Canada Vigilance and a quarterly summary of advisories/warnings issued by Health Canada and Industry.

http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/dhp-mps/medeff/bulletin/carn-bcei_v18n1_e.html