

Growing Together Goals:

Increasing access to developmental check-ups for children aged 18-26 months of age.

Increasing parental knowledge of key preschool developmental milestones.

Creating a single point of entry for Growing Together referrals and coordination of service.

Offering timely and effective assessment and intervention services to children and their parents.

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Developmental Check-Ups

"Increasing Opportunities"

The Growing Together Project focused on increasing access to developmental check-ups for children between the ages of 18-26 months in the communities of Red Deer, Olds and Rocky Mountain House. Growing Together has been a partnership between Alberta Health Services, the former David Thompson Health Region and the Parent Link Centres in each of the three communities.

During each child's developmental check-up, parents were given the opportunity to review the Ages and Stages Questionnaire that they had completed for their child, identify any areas of need, discuss any further follow-up that was recommended and receive information regarding children's developmental milestones and community resources.

Growing Together "Our Stories"

Staff and parents who have been a part of the Growing Together Project have created stories about their own personal "Growing Together Experiences."

We hope to have the stories posted online soon. Watch for details to come.



Just the Stats...

Between November 1, 2007 and December 31, 2009, Growing Together:

- Completed 2437 developmental check-ups with children.
- Offered Parent Coach support to 115 families.
- Completed assessments for 486 children.
- Recommended follow-up intervention for 85% of those children.
- Provided intervention to 249 children.
- Completed follow-up re-assessments for 193 children.





At The End of the Day....

Growing and Learning Together

"All the flowers of the future are in the seeds of today..."

The Growing Together team has grown and learned throughout the pilot project. Often through successes and sometimes through challenges we bring out of the project an increased awareness about what works for children, families, systems and partners. Below we share some of our key learnings:

"Catching Them Earlier"

- Simply put, children and families benefit from early intervention. A process that allows for early childhood screenings helps alleviate fears for parents, validates their concerns and boosts children's skills within an optimum time frame, when they can make significant gains in short periods of time.



"Go Where the Children Are"

- Developmental check-ups work best when the program offering them comes to families instead of families having to make a special trip to a program. Offering check-ups at immunization clinics is convenient for families, allows them to gather information in a location where they feel comfortable asking questions about their child's health and development and allows for the opportunity to see more children.
- Many parents continue to seek out information regarding their child's development from their family physicians. Providing physicians with up to date information on programs, children's development and referral processes is beneficial to families. Continuing to ask physicians what they need is valuable.



"Empower Parents"

- The Parent Coach position has been a very successful addition to the Growing Together Project. Parents often have specific questions regarding parenting strategies for their child and enjoy the opportunity to discuss them one on one with an experienced worker. Typically only 1-3 visits and a follow up phone call were needed to assist parents in gaining confidence.
- Children and parents benefit from a Family Centered program philosophy that helps reduce barriers and engage and empower parents.



"Teamwork Works"

- The core Growing Together team was comprised of Speech-Language Pathologists, an Occupational Therapist, a Physical Therapist, a Psychologist and Social Workers. Additional team members included: Public Health Nurses, Parent Link staff, Administrative Assistants and Growing Together Group Facilitators. An entire multidisciplinary team of staff working together, sharing information and ideas to best assist children and families.



"Increase Accessibility and Reduce Barriers"

- Central Intake, particularly having a social worker in this role, improves coordination of care and assists families in identifying and addressing barriers to access early on in the process.
- Partnerships between systems and agencies reduce barriers for families as well, providing multiple sites for receiving services, collaborative procedures and options for providing childcare and transportation.



Checking In With Parents...

Growing Together has completed a variety of evaluation activities during its operation. Of that data, the most meaningful has come from the parents that we have worked with.

Of parents completing quarterly mail out surveys, following their child's developmental check-ups:

- 88% were satisfied with the developmental check-up itself.
- 90% found the staff to be helpful
- 90% felt their questions were answered to their satisfaction
- 49% found the handouts provided to be useful.
- Just over 50% tried activity suggestions provided at the check-up once they returned home.



Of parents contacted by telephone following assessment and intervention services provided to their child:

- 90% felt that the wait time for assessment was acceptable
- 99% felt that their child's assessment results were clearly explained
- 95% were satisfied with their child's treatment and would recommend Growing Together to other parents
- 100% of parents accessing Parent Coach support identified increased parenting confidence.

In Year 3, an amazing 89% of all parents mailed an Ages and Stages Questionnaire prior to their child's immunization appointment, completed it and had it ready to review at immunization.

The Growing Together Difference...

