

Media Release

Too many children are vulnerable.

The Red Deer Understanding the Early Years Project (UEY) hosted a preliminary gathering of community members regarding preschool children in Red Deer.

Red Deer, Alberta, December 3, 2009- The Red Deer Understanding the Early Years Project (UEY) of Family Services of Central Alberta, hosted a day long gathering of community members from the areas of health, education, government, business and community agencies to receive and provide feedback on the preliminary research findings of the project.

The Red Deer Understanding the Early Years Project is a 3 year community project that provides local information about how Red Deer's young children are doing and looks at the family and community factors that impact on young children's readiness to learn upon entering school. The UEY project, funded by the Government of Canada's Understanding the Early Years Initiative, has looked at Red Deer's kindergarten age children, their families, their communities, and the socio-economic factors known to affect positive child development.

The group decided that the top priorities for young children are:

1. Increase the community's awareness of the importance of early childhood development; that the years from birth to 6 are the most significant time for development in an individual's life, setting the stage for later results in literacy, high school completion, employment, health, behavior and quality of life.
2. Create innovate partnerships and collaborations with the existing systems to create initiatives that help children thrive.
3. Support children earlier.

Research reports may be accessed at the Family Services of Central Alberta website www.fsca.ca

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