

Community Voices on Tapping into Tech

Fostering equity for children with disabilities and/or medical complexity in rural & northern British Columbia



NEWSLETTER – AUGUST 2021

Tapping into Tech Community Council Meeting

The discussion at the initial Council meeting in June 2021, focused on sharing what is important in working together on this project and initial insights on using information and communication technologies¹ (ICTs) to support children's early development, including:

- ❖ engaging with families and gathering their perspectives and lifting up their voices
- ❖ being inclusive of Indigenous and newcomer families
- ❖ bolstering advocacy with research centred on parents' voices, reflecting their lived experiences
- ❖ impacting strategic policy changes
- ❖ increasing equitable access to ECD services
- ❖ building capacity within communities

Recruiting Community Researchers

Thank you to Angela at the Family Support Institute and Erika and Karla at Inclusion BC for helping to recruit community researchers who are central to bringing the participatory nature of this project to life. We are excited to include parents Symbia Barnaby (Prince Rupert) and Brenda Lenahan (Tahsis) and youth Kate Gibbs (Invermere) and Sam Bond (Terrace) as community researchers. Alison, Jason and Theresa are looking forward to listening to, learning from and working with our community researchers and mapping out some initial research activities in time for our next Council meeting in early October.

Funding for a Parent Reference Group

Thank you to Angela at the Family Support Institute for stepping up with a donation to support the formation of a Parent Reference Group. More news to follow as this takes shape in partnership with our parent community researchers.

This project is funded by 

¹ ICTS can include texting, phone calls, apps, social media, messenger apps, videoconferencing etc.

Recruiting Two ECD Agencies for Case Studies

Project co-lead Jason at BCACDI is currently helping to recruit two non-profit ECD agencies to participate as case study sites for this project, where we will work collaboratively to translate the findings from this project into tangible changes in the use of ICTs. These sites will provide 'real life' examples of what is possible. These agencies will each have an ECD frontline provider who will join our team as a community researcher.

Project Logo is Coming!

Thank you to Brenda with the BC Parents of Complex Kids for spreading the word through her network about our logo competition. We will also engage with our youth community researcher on a logo design. The selected logo will be used on all future correspondence and research materials.

Internet Access as Determinant of Health

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted how internet access has become an essential determinant of health and yet many parts of northern and rural BC, including many First Nations, continue to lack high-speed access. Theresa, our project manager is drafting a brief summary on internet access in BC. We look forward to sharing and discussing this at our next Council meeting.

Understanding the ICT Policy Landscape in BC

Children's early health and development starts well before birth and extends into their early years at school. Policies in BC on the use of ICTs to foster early child development therefore include the prenatal/maternal health, early child development and intervention and the education systems. What do these policies say or not say? How are they aligned or not? How have they been adapted due to COVID-19? Who are they benefiting and excluding? These are some of the questions we will be asking in order to better understand the current policy landscape in BC and the implications for our project.

Next Steps in Fall 2021

An exciting key feature of this research is that it is driven and informed by a Community Council that includes the member agencies (see logos on this page) and newly recruited community researchers. In the Fall, the Council will start informing the initial steps of community engagement. This will focus on learning from parents and caregivers in northern and rural parts of BC who are raising children that could benefit from extra supports for their early health and development and who have used or would like to use ICTs to access ECD information, resources, specific programs and services and social support. We will also explore how to best connect with young children to hear their views.

Contacts

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Community Council



Aboriginal Infant Development Programs



Aboriginal Supported Child Development



REPRESENTATIVE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH



BCACDI
The BC Association for Child Development and Intervention



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Symbia Barnaby
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University of Victoria



THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY