

# Community Voices on ‘Tapping into Tech’

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



## NEWSLETTER – MARCH 2022

### Early Years Conference

Project co-lead Jason Gordon, and members of our Tapping into Tech Community Council – Symbia Barnaby, Crystal Kalas and Diana Elliott presented on ‘*Tapping into Tech in the Early Years During COVID 19: Lessons Shared & Next Steps*’ at the virtual Early Years conference March 2<sup>nd</sup> 2022. Polling results during the presentation will inform project next steps, including a service provider survey.

### Parent Advisory Circle (PAC)

Welcome to members of our newly formed Parent Advisory Circle. All of the parents on the PAC are mothers raising children with extra support needs in rural and northern areas of BC:

- Janelle B., Central Vancouver Island
- Darlene Schopman, rural Mission
- Crystal Turatus, Williams Lake
- Ashley Seltenrich, Dawson Creek

PAC members have provided input on the parent survey, recruitment strategy and materials. In the future, they will assist with interpreting survey results. The important knowledge and guidance provided by the PAC is supported through additional funding provided by the Family Support Institute.

### Parent Survey

Project Manager, Theresa has also been working closely with project co-leads, Community Council members and PAC on developing a parent survey. The survey is being piloted by our PAC and community researchers Symbia, Brenda and Kate. Pending ethics approval, the survey will be available in paper and online formats in April-May 2022. MOSAIC will assist with translation.

### Parent Community Researchers

Our intrepid parent community researchers, Symbia Barnaby in Prince Rupert and Brenda Lenahan in Tahsis have guided the development of the parent survey, recruitment plans, data collection approaches and methods, and much more! Brenda is managing our Facebook page. Gratefully, Symbia was a co-presenter at the Early Years Conference.

## Tapping Into Tech Facebook

Our Facebook page (link below) allows us to network with community partners, announce project updates and recruit parents and providers to share their experiences and views about 'tapping into tech' to access early child development (ECD) and health supports. Thanks to our parent community researcher Brenda for managing the site and creating a FB Group for our PAC. Please encourage parents in your network who are raising children with extra supports needs in rural and northern communities to follow our Facebook page!

## Youth Community Researchers

Our youth community researchers have helped to inform the parent survey, communication materials, recruitment and data collection approaches. Kate Gibbs in Invermere is helping with our Facebook page and will assist with the literature scoping review that is currently underway.

## ECD Community Researchers

Our two early child development community researchers Crystal Kalas at Fort St John CDC and Cheryl Work at Northwest CDC in Fort St James are completing community profiles and environmental scans of their agencies' use of information and communication technologies, including policies and practices. Crystal and Cheryl will also assist with gathering parent survey data. Thanks to Crystal for being a co-presenter at the Early Years Conference.

## Scoping Literature Review

Project co-lead Alison Gerlach and her doctoral student Amarens Matthiesen, are working on a scoping literature review. This involves collating and analyzing Canadian literature published in the last 10 years on how information and communication technologies have been used in diverse community settings to support children with extra support needs. This review will help to inform the work in year 2 of our project and will be submitted for publication later this year.

## BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres

In partnership with the BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres, we will apply for a TELUS Friendly Futures Foundation grant. The focus will be on developing a community profile and environmental scan of the Hiiye'yu Lelum House of Friendship in Duncan and support their strategic changes to enhance access to ECD and health services for Indigenous families in rural areas of central Vancouver Island through the use of information and communication technologies. Thank you Diana Elliott for facilitating this relationship!

## For More Information

To learn more or get involved, please reach out to Theresa, our Project Manager:

**Email:** [tappingintotech@uvic.ca](mailto:tappingintotech@uvic.ca)

Also, please check out our social media sites:

**Project website:** <https://onlineacademiccommunity.uvic.ca/tappingintotech/>

**Facebook page:** <https://www.facebook.com/TappingintoTechCommunity/>

## Community Partners



Aboriginal Infant Development Programs



inclusionBC



FAMILY SUPPORT  
Institute of BC  
*families supporting families*



Aboriginal Supported  
Child Development



REPRESENTATIVE FOR  
CHILDREN AND YOUTH



BCACDI  
The BC Association for Child Development and Interim

PARENT RESEARCHERS  
Brenda Lenahan  
Symbia Barnaby



ECD RESEARCHERS  
Crystal Kalas  
Cheryl Work



YOUTH RESEARCHER  
Kate Gibbs  
Sam Bond

