



Community Action Toward Children's Health

For Immediate Release
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The Community Calls For Action on Early Childhood Development Priorities in the Central Okanagan

(Kelowna, June 22) A report on the three year process of generating six community priorities for young children and a call for action to support children's healthy development was issued in the Early Childhood Development Plan for the Central Okanagan that was released last Friday by the Community Action Toward Children's Health (CATCH) Coalition. Amy Fulton, acting manager of the CATCH coalition told an audience in Kelowna that the gathering was "about celebrating a great achievement and sharing back with the community all we have learned about where it is the citizens of this community want to go." Fulton described the lengthy community consultation process that included region-wide neighbourhood workshops, extensive research and local survey taking. In fact, Survey results found very strong support for the idea that it takes a community to raise a child; 79% of those asked said the community should provide support to parents and 89% support using tax dollars to do so.

Fulton said the announcement of the six community driven priorities "also serves as a call to action to each of us – as private citizens, service providers, business people, educators, community leaders, parents and family members and as neighbors, to reflect and act on the ways in which we play a pivotal role in supporting children. The six priorities are:

- More Access to Stable and Affordable Child Care Options
- The Development of Central Places in the Community Dedicated to Meeting the Needs of Young Children and Their Caregivers
- More Recreational Opportunities for Young Children and Their Caregivers
- Civic Planning that Enhances the Liveability and Inclusiveness of Our Communities
- More Support for Vulnerable Families, including Support for Lone Parents, Young Parents and Fathers
- Educating the Community about the Critical Importance of the Early Years (Conception to Age 6) .

Fulton told the audience that everyone is invited to participate in the solution building processes that CATCH will facilitate, beginning with visioning gatherings in the fall of 2007. CATCH will be providing further information about these next steps in the near future.

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