



Working together to improve early childhood development outcomes by strengthening connections for families

DATA COLLECTION

A wide range of community voices were gathered via:

- Surveys
- Focus Groups
- Interviews
- Service Provider engagement
- EDI Data review (HELP)

KEY SOCIOECONOMIC & GEOGRAPHIC INFLUENCES

Key community characteristics impacting families are:

- Hard to walk to playgrounds/parks/close to the highway
- Limited and/or inconsistent bus service
- Services are far from where families live
- Vast differences between neighborhoods

Parenting Challenges

- Home stress/parent stress means child stress
- Different ages/personalities of children = different support needs
- Social "isolation"—some problems are not identified until school
- Childhood anxiety increasing
- Different ages, personalities, and support needs with multiple children make it especially challenging to access the range of supports needed



Community Strengths

- Families enjoy being outside and there are plenty of natural places to enjoy
- There are various halls to use (Dove Creek Hall, Merville Hall, Black Creek Community Association, Military Family Playgroups, churches, and community gardens)
- There are many places to walk and enjoy nature in the area (Seal Bay Park, Kin Beach, Miracle Beach)

PARENT & COMMUNITY VOICES

There is nowhere/no central place to just meet people

There are currently no drop-ins at Black Creek Community Centre

It would be great to have somewhere where kids can play and parents can have "adult conversations"

More playgrounds would be great, but even a playground requires a drive

Strongstart is great for kids, but it can be so busy that it's hard to connect with the adults/make friends

It can be hard to not be a "reactive parent" when dealing with stress or frustration

A postpartum depression support group would have been helpful during that time period

Rural living requires more of an effort to get out of the house and into town, especially with multiple children

PARENT/COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDER VISIONING: THEMES



PARENT VISIONING: IDEAS

- A meeting place to hang out with other families so that parents can socialize
- Pop-up programming and regular drop-in programming (i.e. open gym, rotating StrongStarts)
- More community-based playgroups to support child socialization
- More opportunities to try new things and socialize with other children
- Educational programs/resources to learn about development and how to spot a problem
- Frameworks for supporting development based on child's current skills
- Centralized hub for service providers to offer programming
- Localized health/service centre (a resource hub) in North Courtenay
- Workshops with food and childcare (i.e. parenting skills development, early childhood development, parent anxiety)

NEXT STEPS

Connections is committing to a pilot project of supporting low barrier rural connection points (or "hubs") which will be supported by a Family Connector. These innovations will improve the current early years' system by better connecting families who live in rural locations. It is hoped that the connection points will allow families to have increased access to social and play opportunities. To enrich these connection points, the Family Connector will offer a skilled presence focused on welcoming and involving local families to participate in hub activities, and connect families to one another and to supports and services as needed.