
Outcome Evaluation of Norwood Child and Family Resource Centre's Early Start Program-

Submitted to:
Norwood Child and
Family Resource
Centre

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A. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

In November 2009, Emerging Directions Consulting Ltd. was hired by Norwood Child and Family Resource Centre to undertake an outcome evaluation of its Early Start Program and produce a final report outlining findings and recommendations.

Specific activities undertaken as part of this outcome evaluation of the Early Start Program included:

- Conducting face-to-face interviews or focus groups with a sample of Early Start parents.
- Undertaking face-to-face interviews with a sample of Norwood staff currently or previously involved with the Early Start Program.
- Carrying out personal or telephone interviews with a sample of key informants who have a perspective on parental choice of programs that are similar to Early Start.
- Preparing a listing of alternative programs within geographic proximity of Norwood Child and Family Resource Centre.
- Conducting a review of the literature to determine alternative programs (with a focus on promising practice) and criteria parents use in selecting such programs for their children.

Norwood and Child family Resource Centre's Early Start Program provides learning through play program for children 0 – 6 years of age who are not attending school. It is based upon the theories and polices of the National Association of Young Children. According to the Norwood Child and Family Resource Centre Early Start Manual, "Children are introduced to a variety of play experiences aimed at cognitive, physical and social development. While children are participating in the program, their parents may attend workshops, have a meeting with the outreach worker, go to appointments, or use the time for themselves. Early childhood educators are also available to do home visits with Early Start children and their families, in order to discuss any child development concerns that parents may have."¹

The Early Start Program is licensed to care for a maximum of 35 children at any one time. A maximum of 6 infants under 19 months can be cared for at any one time.

The stated goals of Norwood Child and Family Resource Centre's Early Start Program are to:

- Support the healthy development of children.
- Increase the frequency of positive interaction between parents and their children.
- Increase supports for families.
- Provide better access to resources for families.²

The target group for Early Start Program children are as follows:

- Children between the ages of 0 and 6 years.
- Children residing within the Norwood Child and Family Resource Centre boundaries (between the Yellowhead Freeway and the North Saskatchewan River and between 75th Street and 124 Street.

¹ Norwood Child and Family Resource Centre. NCFRC Early Start Manual. December 2006, p. 2.

² Ibid.

- Children who satisfy program eligibility criteria, including children at risk of educational failure and children with special needs.

Table One identifies Early Start Programs operating in the Edmonton area as well as programs that have similarities to Norwood’s Early Start Program.

TABLE ONE: Early Start Programs and Similar Programs Operating In Edmonton

Program	Agency	Comments
Early Start	Norwood Child and Family Resource Centre	Offers child focused programming, parent support groups, parent respite, and in-home family support
Early Start	Bissell Centre	Offers child focused programming, parent support groups and parent respite
Early Head Start	E4C	Offers child focused programming, parent support groups and in-home supports
Emergency Drop In	Kids Kottage	Emergency short-term child care/ parent respite
Child Development Centre	Candora Society	Age appropriate learning activities for children age 0 – 6 years and parent respite care

B. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1. Background of Research Team Members

The primary researchers for this report were Dr. Wendy Doughty and Jim Klinge, partners in Emerging Directions Consulting Ltd. a private, incorporated Alberta-based management consulting firm.

Dr. Doughty brings 25 years experience in the development of community-based programs, program evaluation and curriculum evaluation. Jim Klinge has more than 20 years experience in carrying out successful research projects involving a variety of community organizations. Both have considerable experience in researching and evaluating programs/services.

2. Instrument Design

During the initial meeting with Norwood Child and Family Resource Centre’s Executive Director and Program Director, the interview questions, work plan and schedule were reviewed. The audience(s) and

uses of the final report were confirmed. A subsequent initial interview with the Supervisor of the Early Start Program provided the researchers with an overall perspective on the Early Start Program, its history and current status.

Following the initial meeting, Wendy Doughty developed draft schedules of interview questions for staff, parents and key informants. These questions were reviewed by the Executive Director and Program Director and some changes were made. Further discussions about the range of staff and potential key informants provided clarity of focus for the evaluation project.

Wendy Doughty conducted a pre-test of the interview questions. No significant changes were made to the questions as a result of the pre-test. Copies of the interview questions are provided in Appendix 1 of this report.

3. Use of Secondary Data

A literature review was conducted using PubMed, EBSCO and ERIC (Educational Research Information Clearinghouse) databases. These databases include journal articles, published reports and theses pertaining to early childhood education, health and children. The search terms used included "Early Head Start program", "evaluation research" and "Early Head Start program" and "innovation" and "early childhood program" and "parental choice". This search focused on documents produced between 2005 and 2009 and included publications from Canada, the United States and Europe. The researcher then reviewed these 30 documents and selected those most relevant to the content of this study.

A variety of documents were provided by the Program Director including:

- Program reports prepared for funders
- NCFRC Early Start Manual
- Parent Handbook. Early Start Program.

4. Primary Data Collection

An e-mail explaining the purpose of the evaluation was forwarded to prospective interviewees with a copy of the interview questions. Participation in this evaluation study was on a voluntary basis. Measures were undertaken to guarantee the anonymity of the comments of individual participants as well as organizational perspectives.

Primary data was collected through in-person interviews and one focus group with the centre's Parent Advisory Committee. Interviews ranged from 30 minutes to 45 minutes in length; the average interview length was 40 minutes. The Parent Advisory Committee focus group was approximately 90 minutes in length. Notes were taken by the interviewer.

Transcripts were returned to staff interviewees for their review and comments. A list of key informants and Norwood Child and Family Resource Centre Early Start Program staff interviewed during this evaluation is provided in Appendix 2. In the interest of personal privacy protection, the names of parents of Early Start Program children interviewed for this study were not collected.

5. Sample Characteristics

The research sample was developed based on suggestions by the Executive Director, Program Director and the evaluators. Interviews (or focus groups) were conducted with eight staff members, twenty parents and five individuals with expertise in Early Head Start programs or similar programs. The sample was intended to reflect a balance of individuals with varying levels of experience and knowledge of the Early Start Program at Norwood Child and Family Resource centre.

6. Approach to Data Analysis

Content analysis was utilized for qualitative data. Through the process of coding, conceptual labels were ascribed to comments generated through interviews. These concepts were then compared one to another to determine categories of similar response. Individual responses were also reported.

7. Research Assumptions

- Those participating in this research were reflective of the diversity of individuals, agencies and organizations involved with the Early Start Program.
- Respondents chose of their own free will to participate in this research.
- Respondents answered the research questions without concern for consequences as a result of voicing their opinions.

8. Limitations of Research

- The study was limited to the responses collected during personal interviews or focus group, observations made during interviews or focus group, and the information available in documents during the study period.
- The study was limited to those who chose to participate.
- The findings and recommendations are posited only as they relate to the current study.

C. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

A literature review was conducted using PubMed, EBSCO and ERIC databases. These databases include journal articles, published reports and theses pertaining to early childhood education, health and children. This search focused on documents produced between 2005 and 2009 and included publications from Canada, the United States and Europe. The search terms used were "Early Head Start program" and "evaluation research" and "Early Head Start program" and "innovation". A search for material on criteria used by parents in selecting programs for children within the Early Start age category did not yield any results. The researcher reviewed the resultant 30 documents and selected 20 most relevant to the content of this study.

Profile of Early Head Start Participants

In December 2006, the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation of the U.S. Department of Health and Family Services, published a comprehensive study based on survey data from 660 Early Head Start Programs in the United States. The following five main research questions guided this study:

1. What are the characteristics of Early Head Start programs?
2. Who is served by Early Head Start programs?
3. What services do Early Head Start programs provide?
4. How are Early Head Start programs managed and staffed?
5. Do key program subgroups differ in their characteristics? If so, how? (p. 21)

The findings from this research indicated that:

- Most (62 percent) Early Head Start children enter the program between birth and age 2 and stay until age 3. About 13 percent of children enter the program during the prenatal period.
- All programs surveyed maintain a waiting list for enrolment of eligible families and prioritize families by their level of need. Most programs are either at enrolment capacity or over-enrolled.
- About one-quarter of families served speak a language other than English; however, these families are distributed across nearly three-quarters of programs.
- Fairly high levels of family risk factors are prevalent across Early Head Start programs, in part because programs prioritize the families with greatest needs for enrolment. Demographic risk factors include unemployment, single parent, and lack of a high school credential. Single parenthood is the most prevalent risk factor.
- Psychological risk factors include mental health, family violence, or substance use issues. When considering the co-occurrence of risk factors, about 15 percent of programs serve high or very high concentrations (more than half of enrolment) of families with two or more psychological risk factors.
- More than three-quarters of Early Head Start programs reported that at least 10 percent of the children they serve have developmental concerns. Nearly one-fifth of programs' enrolments or more than 30 percent are children with special needs.
- Across the universe of Early Head Start children, 20 percent of all Early Head Start children have been referred for evaluation of a suspected disability, and many are receiving services (76 percent). Communication disorders and developmental delays are the most common types of developmental concerns among Early Head Start children. (pp. 24-26)

Service Delivery Models

The Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation of the U.S. Department of Health and Family Services (December 2006) study found that "while programs vary greatly in their approaches to service delivery, most use a multiple service delivery model, providing both home and center-based services. Only a few programs offer both types of services to all their families (combination approach)" (p. 26).

Early Head Start programs in the United States are encouraged to develop partnerships with community agencies both to improve the quality of services (such as child care) as well as to ensure proper linkages between families and other service providers. Survey results identified that "95 percent of programs participate in collaborative groups of service providers, and of those, 75 percent hold a leadership position. Ninety-two percent of programs reported having at least one formal partnership with a community service provider" (Ibid, p. 28).

Supporting Family Care Providers

The literature revealed several potential communities of care providers that could benefit from interaction and the support of Early Head Start programs and staff.

Buell and Gamel-McCormick (2002) investigated in what ways could family child care providers benefit from partnerships with Early Head Start programs, and in what ways could these programs increase the benefits of partnership for child care providers. This research determined several benefits of partnership with an Early Head Start program including:

- Instrumental benefits such as assistance with organizing their programs, assistance with developing curricula for infants and toddlers, financial support for the purchase of equipment and materials, financial support for training opportunities, access to knowledgeable colleagues/mentors to help with difficult situations, and assistance to caregivers to better work with low-income families.
- Emotional benefits including a reduced sense of isolation, an ongoing relationship with an adult which was beneficial only if the adult is knowledgeable about family child care" (p. 221).

Boller et al (2006) investigated the significance of fathers in parenting their children. They discovered that parenting behaviour is organized similarly for mothers and fathers. Their findings indicate that, "when either parent acts positively in relation to the child, it has the effect of promoting adaptive functioning. Their research suggests that what fathers do matters; it complements what mothers do" (p. 16). These researchers stressed the importance of Early Head Start programs in supporting fathers in parenting their children.

In summer 2004, the Office of Head Start funded 24 Early Head Start programs to implement the Enhanced Home Visiting Pilot Project, an initiative designed to support the quality of care that kith and kin caregivers provided to infants and toddlers enrolled in Early Head Start. Programs participating in the pilot were directed to continue providing all services to children and parents required by the Head Start Program Performance Standards for home-based programs. In addition, they provided home visits to caregivers, organized training workshops and support groups for them, and gave or loaned them materials and equipment (Paulsell et al, 2006 p. xiii).

Four main goals were set for the Enhanced Home Visiting Pilot: "(1) improving the quality of care provided by kith and kin caregivers, (2) increasing the consistency of care giving practices across home and child care settings, (3) improving parent-caregiver relationships, and (4) supporting caregiver needs" (Paulsell et al, 2006, p. xiv).

The pilot sites took three main approaches to staffing: "(1) a dual home visitor approach, in which a pilot home visitor worked with the caregiver, and an Early Head Start home visitor worked with the parent; (2) a single home visitor approach, in which the Early Head Start home visitor worked with both the caregiver and parent; and (3) a community partner approach, in which community partner staff worked with the caregiver and an Early Head Start home visitor worked with the parent" (Paulsell et al, 2006 p. xv).

In analyzing the resultant data (Paulsell et al, 2006) two broad categories of themes were considered: design themes, and service delivery themes.

Key design themes

- Pilot sites served a diverse population of kith and kin caregivers.
- To provide services to kith and kin caregivers, pilot sites applied the same approach they used for providing home visits to Early Head Start families.
- In general, caregivers were receptive to the pilot and liked the services they received.
- There were trade-offs to using the same or different home visitors to work with parents and caregivers.

Key service delivery themes

- During the first year of implementation, staff focused heavily on building caregiver-parent-home visitor relationships and creating continuity for the child.
- Home visitors delivered child development information and training by focusing on the child's individual developmental goals.
- Individualization of services for caregivers was a hallmark of the pilot programs.
- Providing equipment, toys, and home safety items made the pilot attractive to caregivers.
- While most caregivers did not attend group activities, providing incentives and transportation increased their participation.
- Most caregivers are not interested in becoming regulated child care providers. (pp. xii-xiv)

Based on the learning from the pilot project, Paulsell et al (2006) suggest that "initiatives for improving the quality of kith and kin child care settings can be implemented in Early Head Start programs with fairly modest amounts of additional resources. Additional funding is needed primarily to cover the cost of hiring home visitors to work with caregivers, and for purchasing safety and educational materials. Early Head Start programs already have expertise in early childhood development and home visiting, along with well-developed systems for staff training and supervision, that can be drawn on to support a kith and kin initiative" (p. xviii).

Addressing Cultural Diversity

Bernstein et al (2005) looked at ways to best accommodate the varied parenting styles of those from cultures. This research surfaced the importance of asking some critical questions that, through discussion, will support establishing guiding principles for how to support these families. These questions included: including:

- How do parents, family and community members show children they are valued?
- How do children show parents that they know they belong?
- What are some central child-rearing goals for your ethnic group?
- How do children act when they are or are not complying with these goals?
- What kind of interaction between parent and child is associated with good for the child's development in your community?
- What kind of interaction between parent and child is not good for development?
- How would you decide that a particular parent-child interaction (an example is used) is problematic or within the normal range? What makes it that way? How come? (p. 248)

Jung and Stone (2008) performed a secondary analysis of the Early Head Start Evaluation project (U.S. data) "to examine differential effects by program (center-based, mixed, and home-based), race, poverty, and maternal education levels among intervention group participants on key indicators reflecting child cognitive competencies and family support" (p. 151). Their findings suggest the importance of attention to the process of "matching" families to programs or program configurations and adjusting program elements to better serve families, as a specific component of family-centered practice. In particular, this analysis suggests that racial and ethnic background and maternal education level may be important matching variables in early intervention programming focused on infants and their families" (p. 156).

Family-friendly Child Care Programs

In looking at ways to make early child care programs family-friendly Lerner (1995) identified several approaches including:

- Parent and community representation on governing boards and actively involved in decision making about the program.
- Providing training for child care providers and parents about communication. A series of five workshops developed by Cornell University (Parent-Caregiver Partnerships) include the following topics: "1) partnerships between parents and caregivers, 2) listening well, 3) saying what you mean clearly and respectfully, 4) resolving conflicts and handling blame and criticism, and 5) influencing policy" (p. 31).
- Child care resource and referral agencies can be very helpful in supporting parents and child care providers as they work together.

Lerner (1995) has shown that the effectiveness of child care is "directly related to the amount of staff time and attention that can be devoted to parents" (p. 32), that child care training programs "do not stress the development of skills needed to work with adults" (p. 32), that family support requires commitment to the principle by staff at all levels of the child care program, and that parents "need assistance with managing their relationships with child care providers" (p. 33).

Lerner (1995) found that best practices that link family support and child care require:

- Programs that support the development of the child and the parent.
- Family-focused activities where the children and parents participate together.
- Component services need to adopt the same philosophy in serving the needs of children and parents.
- Program staff from various component programs needs to share common values and communicate regularly.
- Pre-service and ongoing training for caregivers that focus on relationships with parents, respect for cultural differences, communication skills and power-sharing with parents and ways to resolve conflict with parents (pp. 34-35).

Parental Engagement

Buell et al (2002) suggest that programs such as Early Head Start can provide emotional support and professional confirmation to child care providers. In addition to "supporting providers, through parent education and training Early Head Start helps parents appreciate their child's development. It is hoped that once parents are made more aware of the profound growth of their infants and toddlers they will begin to value the work of the providers" (p. 227).

Baker and Roth (1997) affirmed that "the challenge of maintaining parent participation is greatest for programs that set out to establish a long-term relationship with families in order to effect lasting change" (p. 200). Their research revealed that variables associated with less involvement at the Early Head Start

Centre were those that created logistical barriers for parents (for example, pregnancy, employment, health issues of children, etc.) and more educated parents were more likely to be actively involved. Parent involvement was measured in regards to five aspects - in home visits, role-playing the curriculum, working on materials with their child, attending group meetings and interacting with other parents of children in the program. Baker and Roth (1997) concluded that some families are best reached by home visitations – in particular where parents are uncomfortable in a group setting, are unable to attend group meetings because of their schedules, or are most comfortable communicating one-on-one with child care professionals (often due to limited literacy in English). They further concluded that “parents’ expectations for their children’s educational success were a factor in influencing greater involvement” in an educational program (p. 214).

Gill (2002) looked at the comprehensive services offered by Early Head Start programs “in the areas of child development, health, safety, parenting, parents’ life course development, and community linkages through weekly home visits. He noted that in Early Head Start programs families have opportunities to participate in at least two group socializations per month and the importance of parents serving on parent committees and the policy council that governs the program” (p. 186).

When “Center Partners” were assigned the lead in encouraging parent participation in the program and devoted most of their time to organizing and conducting parent–child activities, parent meetings and other social events for the program participants there was a positive effect on parent engagement. By creating a new position of “Enrolment Family Partner” one could focus attention on enrolment, community awareness of the program, and program advocacy. Historically, home visitors carried most of these responsibilities (Gill, 2002, p. 190).

Value of Home Visitation

Raikes et al (2006) studied 11 Early Head Start programs which included a home visit component. The study found three components of home visits were significant:

- The quantity of involvement including the number of home visits, duration in the program, length of visits and intensity of service,
- The quality of engagement including global ratings by staff, ratings of engagement during each home visit, and
- The extent to which the visits were child-focused. (p. 2)

The researchers (Raikes et al, 2006) also found:

- Frequent relocation by families had a negative impact on participation and engagement.
- Home visitation may be effective in addressing underlying mental health issues of parents.
- Mothers ‘at risk’ accessed fewer home visits and were less likely to be focused on the welfare of their children.
- Home visits seem to be a viable alternative to centre-based interventions that served the needs of both children and their parents.

Challenges Facing Early Head Start Programs

Gray and Francis (2006) found in the United States “large-scale, rapidly expanding early childhood interventions may face issues around funding and maintenance of quality; balancing fidelity to models with flexibility to local conditions; with the potential for conflict between a commitment to parental empowerment and a ‘deficit’ model of the poor and, lastly, around differential impact” (p. 660).

Best Practice in Early Head Start Programs

Paulsell et al (2002) in reviewing the implementation of Early Head Start programs identified several considerations to support best practice. Those suggestions which are most applicable to the Norwood Early Start Program have been listed. This research may warrant further investigation by Norwood Centre staff.

- *Forming and strengthening partnerships.* The breadth of partnerships that the programs had with other community agencies increased over time.
- *Creating new staff positions.* To strengthen their focus on child development, some programs created new positions and either promoted existing staff or hired child development specialists or coordinators to support frontline staff in this area. In addition, some programs created positions for nurses or infant mental health specialists.
- *Enhancing staff training and supervision.* A key strategy for strengthening child development services was providing intensive child development training for frontline staff. In addition, many programs began supporting staff in working toward an associate's degree in early childhood development or a related field by providing tuition assistance and release time to attend classes. Programs also strengthened their supervision of frontline staff by hiring additional supervisors, conducting regular case conferences, observing service delivery, and providing more frequent and systematic feedback on performance.

As Norwood reviews its Early Start Program and contemplates change, the challenges identified by Paulsell et al (2002) inherent in full implementation of the Early Head Start program may have relevance:

- *Shifts in program focus.* Many of the research programs had to make an initial shift in their program focus when they began providing Early Head Start services. For example, some former Comprehensive Child Development Programs (CCDPs) had to shift the focus of their program services from family support to more intensive child development services. Head Start programs had to adjust their focus to include infants and toddlers when they began providing Early Head Start services. Other programs had to become familiar with Head Start performance standards for the first time and to figure out how to meet them in the context of their agencies and communities. Although these shifts were challenging initially, most programs made the transition and went on to implement fully Early Head Start.
- *Changes in partnerships.* Changes in partnerships sometimes caused setbacks or required programs to redesign services. Sometimes partnerships did not work out and were ended. When staff members encountered problems with the relationship, the program amended this partnership and went back to the drawing board to develop a new strategy for improving child care quality. In addition, as programs learned the requirements of Early Head Start, they sometimes recognized that their initial partners were not providing the services they needed, dissolved the partnerships, and developed alternative strategies. Over time, the dissolution of ineffective partnerships sometimes led to the formation of new partnerships that better met programs' needs.
- *Staff turnover.* Many programs experienced moderate or high levels of staff turnover, which sometimes disrupted program services. When programs were unable to fill openings quickly, families receiving home-based services experienced periods of less intensive or no services. Children and families also lost the trusting relationships they had built with the staff members who left, and it took some time for new staff members to establish relationships with these families. In addition, staff turnover sometimes required programs to start over with staff training and with helping staff to obtain their CDA credential. To improve staff retention, some programs increased staff salaries and training opportunities. (p. 31-33)

D. KEY STAKEHOLDERS' FEEDBACK

1. Feedback from Parents of Early Start Children

Interviewee demographics

Fifteen parents of Early Start Program children were interviewed and five parents participated in a focus group. Of the 20 participants, 17 were female and 3 were male. Eight of the participants were new Canadians and 12 were established Canadians.

Awareness of other programs similar to the Early Start Program

Half of the parents interviewed (10 individuals) were unaware of other programs similar to Early Start, and 4 parents identified that CANDORA offered a similar program to Early Start. Two parents named other daycares as offering similar programs while two parents identified playgroups but said they did not believe they were as in-depth as the Centre's Early Start Program. Two other parents thought that the Clareview Recreation Centre offered a similar program while two parents named the Head Start Program at Cromdale School. Individual suggestions as to other similar programs as the Centre's Early Start Program included:

- Preschool programs
- A program operating in Glengarry and another on Fort Road
- Edmonton Public School Board has an Early Start Program for special needs children.

How parents learn about the Centre's Early Start Program

The most common means by which interviewed parents of the Centre's Early Start Program learned about the program (as indicated by seven parents) was through a friend/neighbour/family member whose child was currently or had previously been in the Centre's Early Start Program. Three parents said they first learned about the program from their neighbourhood health centre, two parents through attending other programs at the Centre (Healthy Families or Rhymes that Bind), and two parents mentioned they noticed the Centre when they moved into the neighbourhood and went to in to ask about children's programs. Individual comments as to where they learned about the program included: from a social worker, through a support worker, from the Norwood community newsletter, from Capital Health Link, and by looking in the phone book.

Reasons for choosing the Centre's Early Start Program

Among the reasons commonly given by parents for choosing the Centre's Early Start six parents reported that their reason for choosing the Centre's Early Start Program was its convenience, since they resided in the neighbourhood. Five parents said they wanted their child to interact with other similarly aged children and make friends. Four parents stated they had heard good things about the agency and the program. Three parents indicated they chose the Centre's Early Start Program to prepare their child with a good

foundation for starting school. Three parents said they originally chose the program because it provided them with a break or respite from child care. Two parents chose the program in order to provide their child with the opportunity to learn English. Two parents said that the fact the program is free was a major factor in their decision.

Individual comments as to the reasons for choosing the Centre's Early Start Program included:

- Have seen good results from friend's children in the program.
- Child had hard time with speech delay that was identified during intake.
- Child likes the program.
- It was the only option available.
- My previous positive experience with the Centre and its programs.
- The program fits well with our schedule.

Changes parents observe in their children since attending the Early Start Program

Thirteen of the twenty parents interviewed (65%) identified that their child interacts, socializes, or plays better with other children since s/he started attending the Early Start Program. Four parents (20%) said their children are learning to be more independent and doing things on their own. Four parents (20%) spoke of their children's improved spoken English while four parents (20%) reported their children were more talkative. Three parents observed that their child is always very happy to come to the program. Two parents (10%) identified their children are more confident and outgoing while two parents (10%) said their children are better at sharing. Two parents said their child is more patient. Two parents thought it was too early to identify changes since their children had only been attending the program for a short time period.

Individual parents observed the following changes in their child since attending the Centre's Early Start Program:

- Learning numbers.
- More outgoing.
- Enjoys new books and toys to play with.
- More willing to try other foods.
- Starting to imitate what s/he sees on television.
- Talking at home about what s/he is learning and what happens during the day.
- Talking about the program all the time.
- Greater comfort with others.
- Saying please and thank you.
- Helping out at home and cleaning up toys.
- Developing her imagination.

Use of Outreach Services offered by Norwood Child and Family Resource Centre

Fourteen parents interviewed reported that they use the Centre's Outreach Services while six parents said they did not.

Attendance at parent groups at Norwood Child and Family Resource Centre

Respondents were evenly divided as to whether they attended parent groups at the Centre. Ten parents interviewed said they attended parent groups at the Centre and ten said they did not.

Suggestions for improving the Early Start Program at Norwood Child and Family Resource Centre

Four parents identified the need for a better system of communication with parents, particularly in terms of when programs are offered and dinners held. They suggested the need for more formal communication, perhaps a newsletter or some other written communication that goes home with children in their backpacks. One parent said the Centre's Early Start Program needs to be advertised better as no one knows about it. Five parents had no suggestions for the program and said they were really happy with it. Three parents said they would like to see organized recreational programs for low income children like dance, taekwondo, and other sports or activities.

Other suggestions offered by individual parent interviewees included:

- One-on-one parent-teacher conferences would be helpful and provide information as well.
- A playroom to run in.
- More creativity in class – drawing, painting, music. Good for children to learn about music when they are young.
- Have a day with an activity so that parents can be in the room with their children and interact with other parents and their children. This would also provide an opportunity to meet other parents.
- Additional hours for child to come to Early Start Program.
- More space is needed.
- Perhaps not have children playing with water when it is winter time. They get their clothes wet and then go out into the cold.
- Hold Early Start parent orientation session so that they understand what the program does and what is expected of them as parents.
- Provide transportation to the program.

Additional comments

Several parents praised the Early Start Program staff for being very supportive, helpful, and effective. A few parents called for more Early Start Programs in other areas of the City. One parent said she was moving to Calgary and did not think she would find a place like Norwood Child and Family Resource Centre there. Another parent stated she wanted to continue to bring her child to the Centre as long as she could.

2. Feedback from Early Start Staff, Norwood Child and Family Resource Centre

In-person interviews were conducted with eight staff members working with the Early Start Program.

Intended outcomes of the Early Start Program

Staff viewed the program as supporting the vision for the Centre of "healthy children, families and communities". All staff members viewed the intended outcomes of the program as serving both the children and their families.

Intended outcomes for the children included:

- Providing a safe, welcoming environment where learning can occur (four respondents).
- Developing social skills and comfort interacting with other children (three respondents).
- Providing resources for those who require additional support to help them achieve success in their future schooling (two respondents).
- Children are exposed to new resources for play.
- Developing independence in children (such as the ability to dress themselves).
- Helping children learn to express their feelings in an age appropriate manner.

Intended outcomes for the parents included:

- Providing respite for parents (four respondents) so they can rest, meet friends, go to appointments, look for work, etc.
- Helping parents understand the value of learning through play (two respondents).
- Helping parents to become comfortable playing with their children (two respondents).
- Parents are exposed to options and resources to support playing and learning with their children (two respondents).
- Laughing with their children.
- Parents come to understand what supports success in learning for their children.
- Parents can have some time to themselves but children are still in close proximity.
- Social opportunities for parents. Many parents are newcomers/new Canadians and are socially isolated.
- Parents start to feel more comfortable with child developing his/her independence.

Actual Outcomes of the Early Start Program

Overall, staff members reported consistency between the intended and actual outcomes of the Early Start Program. They thought:

- Achieves outcomes defined for children and parents (five respondents).
- We support the language, social, emotional and physical development of children (four respondents).

- Staff members serve as role models for parents (and children) (two respondents).
- Children become more comfortable with being away from their mothers (and learn that their mothers still love them even when they are separated from each other) (two respondents).
- If Early Start staff cannot address the issues then they refer child and family to another community resource (such as speech therapist, psychologist, etc.) (two respondents).
- Children gradually become more confident and comfortable with their independence.
- Parents trust that their children are in a safe, supportive environment.
- Many parents do not see their children as 'behind' other children. We help them see the challenges facing their children and connect them to professional resources.
- Parents are comfortable talking with staff about parenting challenges and strategies to resolve these.
- Parents can access support, information and helpful parenting tips.
- We support parents as they work through behavioural issues with their children.
- We are aware of the home environment due to the initial home visit.
- Results in healthier families and parents who give back to the community.

Changes in participation rates

Early Start Program

Staff saw some common patterns of lower participation rates during the winter months (four respondents) due to cold weather and limited transportation options. While there was an earlier concern about declining participation rates (two respondents) waiting lists are still in place for both the Butterfly and Tree rooms (six respondents).

There is an increase in the number of immigrant families accessing the program. Early Start "helps children integrate into Canadian society which then helps parents integrate as well". It appears that "if children are happy then their parents are happy".

Some staff commented that the demographic profile of the families accessing the Early Start Program has changed. Fewer Aboriginal families are participating and this might be due to families relocating elsewhere in the city or accessing services through Bent Arrow. There has been an increase in the number of families of East Asian and African descent (particularly of Muslim faith). Three staff members thought there was also an increase in the number of middle-income families moving into the area that might choose alternate child care.

While only 24 children access the program on a regular basis more than 100 children are served each month.

Outreach Services

Now that family support is designated to each program it offers a more holistic approach to providing services (one respondent) and the families seem to view this resource more positively (two respondents). The vital role that the Outreach Worker provides is to connect the families to community resources. Families can ask their questions in the privacy of their homes without the presence of other parents

and/or staff members and benefit from one-on-one communication (five respondents). Three staff members did not feel that they knew enough about outreach services to offer comments.

Support Groups

Recently, various play groups have been cancelled due to low registrations. Workshops on health matters, child development and nutrition are still well attended (four respondents).

Six staff members commented about the success of the monthly lunches and family dinners. One staff member added, "We have some parents who cannot send their children to Early Start because of geographic boundaries who choose to attend the Centre's monthly luncheons and dinners." Several staff commented that these social activities provided opportunities for parents "to get to know each other and share information about community resources, babysitters, etc."

Alternative programs to Early Start Program

Staff members did not identify any program that they viewed as comparable to the Early Start Program offered by Norwood Child and Family Resource Centre. They did offer some opinions about the strengths and weaknesses of alternative programs.

- For parents who can afford to pay fees there are daycare programs but these do not provide the same level of interaction between the staff and the child and do not actively involve the parent(s). (six respondents).
- Early Start Program is free and other programs charge a fee (six respondents).
- Parent Advisory Committee is strength of the program (three respondents).
- Parents want a program that is close to home and easily accessed.
- Pre-school programs offered by the two school boards are competition for the Head Start Program not the Early Start Program.
- This program provides opportunities to parents to learn how to support their child's development.
- The Bissell Centre offers a drop-in program where children are not registered. The population of children who attend this program is in a constant state of flux.
- In our Early Start Program, staff have more energy because of the shorter length of time spent with children and parents have more time to listen to feedback from staff about their child (since they are not rushing in before or after work)

How parents learn about the Early Start Program

Staff members offered various ideas about how parents learned of the Early Start Program including:

- Word of mouth referrals from other parents (six respondents).
- From chatting to community members (three respondents).
- Referrals from other programs (for instance, CASA, Capital Health, Healthy families) (three respondents).
- Staff promotes the program (two respondents).
- Advertisement in community newspaper (Rat Creek Press) (two respondents).

- Through community events at the Centre.
- Community health service providers.

Two staff members were not aware of any promotion of the program.

Criteria parents use in choosing a program for their early start age child

Staff members provided an extensive list of criteria they thought parents used in choosing a program for a child of Early Start age including

- Qualifications of staff (five respondents).
- Quality of care provided (four respondents).
- No program fee (three respondents).
- Variety of program options (three respondents).
- Children and parents are treated with respect (three respondents).
- Hours of operation (two respondents).
- Proximity to home and/or work (two respondents).
- Dedicated, hard-working staff.
- Low rate of staff turnover.
- Child/staff ratio.
- Safe environment.
- Large, physically attractive, clean environment.
- Facility where children can play indoors in unpleasant weather.
- Established, stable program.
- Licensed program.
- Respite care.
- "Learning through play" philosophy.
- Fun environment.
- Easy drop-of process.
- Comfortable leaving child at facility.
- Welcoming atmosphere.
- Variety of supports for the family.
- Parent Advisory Committee.
- Opportunities for parents to socialize together.
- Children with higher needs can be accommodated.

Suggested changes to Early Start Program

The most common suggestions for changes to the Early Start Program pertained to staff salary rates, a separation of infants and toddlers and program expansion.

- Staff wages need to be increased (four respondents). Although staff members receive full benefits and are provided a paid day for planning each week, the wages are not competitive (staff in other programs received \$7/hour more). Norwood Early Start Program salaries are "at the

lower end of the salary scale for child care workers and we provide more than child care. Others working with special needs children are being paid more. We are involved in many aspects of providing services to the child and the family including case management, outreach services, committee work, working with and providing referrals to specialist.”

- Have a separate room for infants (0 to 13 months) (three respondents). Having infants in the same room as children up to 2.5 years of age presents some safety issues. Also, younger children are upset when they cannot play with the toys appropriate to the older ones. Not sure parents are comfortable with having babies and toddlers together in the same room.
- Policy of late drop off of children needs to be honoured with a limit of up to 30 minutes after the program has started.
- Parents need to advise program staff that they are going to be late.
- Add more days when full-time program is available (suggest Tuesday and Wednesday or Tuesday and Friday).
- Extend hours of program (increase from 2.5 to 3 hours).
- Option of more days for children with higher needs.
- Add one or two more rooms so program can be expanded.
- Financial subsidy available for families in need.
- No suggestions at this time.

Effect of new child care legislation on Early Start Program

Only three of the eight staff members interviewed offered any comments regard the potential effect of the new provincial child care legislation on the Early Start Program. These included:

- Being licensed is strength of the program.
- The specific focus of the program is also strength – we focus on children, their parents and the community.
- Limited effect on Early Start Program.
- Will not affect program since already have protocols in place.

3. Feedback from Early Start Key Informants

A total of five key informants were interviewed about Early Start programs in Edmonton (two key informants were interviewed together).

Programs competing with Early Start Program

Three of the five key informants interviewed said they did not see other programs in competition with Early Start Programs and that Early Start is unique in what it offers. They argued that there is a strong need for programs such as Early Start in our community. Early Start provides a needed window of service to families who usually do not have other types of supports. Alternatively, one interviewee argued that there are plenty of programs to support middle and upper class families.

The one key stakeholder who did identify programs competing with Early Start Program mentioned that day care and family day home programs are often used to meet the needs of low income people and students. These were seen as real competition with Early Start programs as they offer parents more flexibility, longer hours, and operate 12 months a year. However, the key stakeholder stressed that these options do not come close to providing what Early Start programs offer children and their families.

Another potential source of competition with Early Start programs that was identified by one key stakeholder was the Kin Care program offered by Alberta Children and Youth Services Region Six. This recently announced financial program provides payment to family caregivers who provide child care, including support for parents who require child care outside of traditional daytime hours. One of the key stakeholders interviewed argued that the opportunity to utilize family care givers may draw away children who currently attend Early Start programs. If Early Start programs start to have trouble recruiting families, this key informant argues that Kin Care may be the reason.

How parents learn about programs such as Early Start

The five key stakeholders interviewed said that parents learn about programs such as Early Start mostly through word of mouth. Often this is from other family members or friends whose children are in or have attended the Early Start Program. Four key informants identified referrals from other agencies as a means by which parents learn about Early Start programs and gave examples of such organizations as Boyle McCauley Health Centre, Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers, and Catholic Social Services. Two key informants identified neighbourhood health centres as another source where parents learn about Early Start programs and two key informants mentioned home visitation programs as a means for parents to learn about Early Start programs.

Individual suggestions by key informants as to sources where parents learn about programs such as Early Start programs included the following:

- Social workers
- Doctors offices
- Speech therapists

- CASA
- Parenting groups
- Telephone directory/Yellow Pages
- Child Welfare
- Agencies' websites
- Resource fairs
- Government resource lists.

One key stakeholder expressed a desire for better educating the population about Early Start. This could be done by giving a brochure to every family leaving an Edmonton area hospital with a newborn or when a child is immunized in a local health centre. Another key informant noted that by the time parents contacted her about Early Start, they had already learned about program and what it does.

Criteria parents use when choosing a program for Early Start Program age child

Key informants identified that parents used a wide range of criteria when choosing a program for their Early Start age child. They listed the following reasons for parents choosing a program for their Early Start Program age child:

- Concerns about child development (identified by two key informant interviewees). This view was countered by one key informant who said that most parents are not thinking about child development when choosing a program for an Early Start Program age child. She argued that generally parents are seeking help for themselves and their child. They want to be good parents.
- Two key informants cited the cost of a program as being a major criterion of parents while two others identified the availability of transportation to access the program. Two key informants cited the desire of parents for their children to learn English as a criterion used to choose a program for an Early Start Program age child. Two key informants also cited program hours of operation as a criterion for program selection

Individual suggestions by key informants regarding the criteria parents use to select a program for their Early Start age child included:

- Ease of program intake process (not too time-consuming or complex).
- Licensing and accreditation of program.
- Safety and security of their child while in the program.
- Program staff qualifications.
- How staff interact with their child and other children.
- Cultural practices of the program.
- Nutritional policies and practices of the program.
- Convenient location.
- Opportunity for child to interact with other children.
- Degree of commitment to the program required of parents.
- Opportunities for parent groups and family activities.
- Welcoming physical space.

Impact of the new child care legislation on Early Start Programs

Two key informants noted that the new child care legislation will require all child care programs (including Early Start) to physically separate children from birth to 12 months of age from those 13 to 19 months old. One key informant wondered if the implications of this requirement might be that Early Start programs focus on children 13 months and older.

One key informant noted that the new child care legislation was not likely to have much impact on the Early Start programs since Early Start would always exceed the standards. Instead, she was concerned about the funding being offered to create more new child care spaces while opening up child care jobs to all kinds of qualifications. She noted that 86% of Alberta mothers with children under age five are currently in the workforce. Her concern is: who is taking care of these children?

One key informant stated that the Early Start Program her organization delivers falls outside of the new child care legislation as parents are always with their children except for one hour of program time when parent groups are held.

One key informant noted that one of the outcomes of the new child care legislation would be the phasing out of the Social Care Act. While she was unsure whether Early Start programs came under the Act, she thought it would be important to check as it was her understanding that programs currently operating under the Social Care Act may not fall under the new child care legislation.

One key informant said she was not sure how the new child care legislation applies to Early Start programs.

D. KEY FINDINGS

1. **Parents of Early Start Program children interviewed for this study report that the program is meeting the needs of their children and themselves.** Suggestions offered by interviewed parents focused on enhancements to the program, including physically separating children age 12 months old and under from those age 13 months old and over.
2. **Early Start Program staff report that the program is beneficial to children and their families.** They view the program as offering superior learning opportunities to children age 0 to 3 years old and their parents. They are appreciative of the resources and the time available to work collectively and individually with the children in the program. The most common concern expressed by staff is the wage differential with those working in child care in other settings.
3. **Early Start Program is viewed as being unique by Centre Early Start Program staff, key informants, and parents of Early Start Program children.** While not viewing other programs as comparable to what is offered by Early Start programs, staff, key informants, and parents of Early Start children identified alternative programs to Early Start programs as being daycare programs, family day homes, pre-school programs, and playgroups. Half of all parents with children in the Centre's Early Start Program also said they were unaware of any other alternate programs to the Early Start Program.
4. **There is internal consistency between the intended and actual outcomes of the Early Start Program.** Early Start Program staff members reported overall that there is consistency between the intended and actual outcomes of the Early Start Program. They said that the program supported the vision of the Centre of "healthy children, families, and communities". All staff saw the intended outcomes of the program as serving both children and their families, including parents.
5. **Interviewed parents and staff tend to view Early Start as a unique program that has no equal (and therefore has no competition).** The Bissell Centre Early Start program offers flexible, drop-in respite care while E4C provides a traditional Early Head Start Program that includes transportation and required parent involvement in parent groups and interaction with their children in a group setting. Both school boards offer Head Start programs and could, in future, expand to include Early Head Start Programs if market demands supported them.
6. **The socio economic profile of the Norwood community is changing as more middle class families move into the area.** This raises the question of whether, over the longer term, policy makers and funders will continue to support the provision of free child care services to individuals with the means to pay market rate for such services.
7. **Kin Care, an Alberta government child care financial program, has the potential to draw away some Early Start age children, particularly in cases where family members are available to provide child care.** Additional income into the family household could be a strong inducement to utilize such a program.

8. **The literature review cites examples where Early Head Start programs provided support, resources, and training to family members providing in-home child care.**
9. **Parent involvement in the Early Start program appears to be somewhat limited.** During site visits, parents were observed dropping off their Early Start children and leaving the Centre. There was also limited reporting by parents interviewed on what they were learning to support the development of their child. Half the interviewed parents reported that they had not participated in a parent group. The greatest draw for Early Start parents appears to be the social activities such as family lunches and dinners.
10. **Norwood Centre has the child care workers, outreach workers, and connections to other professionals in the community to provide a comprehensive array of services and supports that can further the development of Early Start age children.**
11. **Both Centre Early Start Program staff and a key informant identified programs offering potential competition to Early Start programs.** Centre Early Start staff identified pre-school programs offered by the two school boards as competition for the Early Start Program. One key informant saw day care and family day homes as real competition for Early Start programs since they are able to offer parents greater flexibility, longer hours, and operate on a year-round basis.
12. **Parents of Centre Early Start Program children identified that the most common means by which they learn about the program is through word of mouth from a friend, neighbour or family member whose child is currently or had previously been attending the program.** Both Centre Early Start Program staff and key informants identified word of mouth as the most frequently used means of learning about the program. Other frequently cited sources that parents identified using for learning about the Early Start Program included: neighbourhood health centres, other community-based programs, Centre staff and programs, and the Norwood community newspaper. These were sources that Centre Early Start Program staff and key informants also identified during interviews.
13. **There are differing perceptions as to the primary reasons for parents choosing the Centre's Early Start Program.** Interviewed parents with children in Early Start most commonly mentioned the following reasons for choosing the Early Start Program (in order of frequency): convenience of program location or proximity, an opportunity for their child to interact with other similar age children, to set a foundation for learning and school, for a break or respite from child care, to enable their child to learn English, and the free cost of the program. Conversely, Centre Early Start Program staff most commonly cited the following reasons why parents choose the Early Start Program: qualifications of staff, quality of care, free cost of the program, variety of program options, respectful treatment of children and parents, hours of operation and proximity to home or work. Key informants also identified the major reasons parents choose an Early Start program as being: concerns about child development, the cost of a program, the desire of parents to have their children use English, and program hours.
14. **Interviewed parents of Early Start Program children clearly saw convenience of program location or proximity as a much more important reason to select a program for their Early Start age child than did Early Start Program staff or key informants.** They also saw the opportunity for their child to interact with children of a similar age to be of greater importance than

did Early Start Program staff or key informants. Finally, parents of Early Start Program children did not mention the free cost of the program as a reason for choosing the Early Start Program as frequently as did Early Start Program staff or key informants. However, it is not uncommon for recipients of free services to overlook a free service once they have been receiving this service for a period of time. It is the evaluators' view that had interviewed parents been asked specifically if the free cost of the program was a reason for choosing the Early Start Program for their child, many if not all interviewed parents would have mentioned it as a primary reason for selecting the program.

15. **Parents of Early Start Program children and Early Head Start program staff differed in their major suggestions for changes or improvements to the Early Start Program.** Parents most frequently mentioned the need for a better system of communicating with them, particularly around the scheduling of programs and family lunches and dinners. Another frequently mentioned suggestion was organized recreational opportunities for their children such as dance, taekwondo, and other sports or activities. Five parents had no suggestions for improving the program and said they were very happy with the program. One parent suggested providing information to parents through one-on-one parent teacher conferences.
16. **The major change that Early Start Program staff suggested for the program was the need to increase staff wages to be more competitive with those of staff in other similar programs.** The second most frequently raised suggestion of staff was to have a separate room for infants age 0 – 13 months. [Note: It is the evaluators' understanding that the new child care legislation will require children 12 months and under to be physically separated from children age 13 – 20 months].
17. **Outreach services appear to be well utilized by parents and seem to be positively perceived by those who do so.** Fourteen of 20 parents interviewed reported that they use the Centre's outreach services. While parents were not asked specifically about their experience with outreach services, many offered unsolicited positive comments about their support worker and the benefit of home visits. Several staff said that families seem to be viewing outreach services more positively since family support is now designated to each program.
18. **Parents of Early Start Program children do not appear to be taking full advantage of support groups.** Among the 20 parents interviewed, 10 did attend support groups and 10 did not. Program staff noted that various play groups had recently been cancelled due to low registrations. However, they also noted that workshops on health matters, child development and nutrition are still well attended as are monthly lunches and family dinners.
19. **The full impact of new provincial child care legislation on the Early Start Program is not yet known by Early Start key informants or Early Start Program staff but is seen as having a limited effect on the program.** There was general agreement among those who offered comments that the effect of the new provincial child on Early Start will be limited. The reasons given for this are that Early Start programs always exceed government standards and that there are already protocols in place. One change in the legislation that one key informant noted would affect Early Start programs is the requirement that all child care programs physically separate children from birth to 12 months of age from those 13 to 19 months old. This individual wondered if the implications of this requirement might be that Early Start programs focus more on child 13

months and older. Another key informant noted that one of the results of the new childcare legislation would be the phasing out of the Social Care Act. She was unsure if Early Start programs came under the Act, but thought it would be important to know this, since such programs may not fall under the new child care legislation.

20. **Interviewed parents of Early Start Program children consistently report positive changes in their child since attending the Early Start Program.** Thirteen of the twenty parents interviewed (65%) identified that their child interacts, socializes, or plays better with other children since they started attending the Early Start Program. Four parents said their children are learning to be more independent and doing things on their own. Four parents spoke of their children's improved spoken English while four parents reported their children were more talkative. Three parents observed that their child is always very happy to come to the program. Two parents identified their children are more confident and outgoing while two parents said their children are better at sharing. Two parents said their child is more patient.
21. **Program staff reported that the demographic profile of the families accessing the Early Start Program has changed over time.** Staff noted an increase in the number of immigrant families accessing the program. In particular they are seeing an increase in families of East Asian and African descent (particularly of Muslim faith). Early Start "helps children integrate into Canadian society which then helps parents integrate as well." There are also fewer Aboriginal families in the program. This is perhaps due to families relocating in the city or accessing services through Bent Arrow. Several staff members also noted an increase in the number of middle-income families moving into the area that might choose alternate child care.
22. **The Parent Handbook for the Early Start Program is written at too high a reading level to be used as a resource by most parents whose children are accessing the program.** A review of the Parent Handbook for the Early Start Program using the Flesch-Kinkaid reading level instrument reveals that it is written at a Grade 11 reading level. Given that many of the parents are new immigrants and others may have low literacy levels, the appropriate level for the Handbook should be no more than a Grade Six reading level.
23. **The most recent version of the Early Start Program Manual is over two years old and is likely in need of updating.**

E. RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall Recommendation

It is recommended that the Centre maintain the current format, functions, and approaches of the Early Start Program. As it is currently offered, ample evidence has been demonstrated through this evaluation that the Centre's Early Start Program is performing well in balancing the respite needs of Early Start parents while meeting their child's social, physical, and emotional needs. Interviewed parents consistently praised the Early Start Program for the many positive changes they saw in their child's behaviour. There also appears to be no evidence that Early Start program parents wish the program to expand so their children can have additional time in the program. Only one of twenty parents interviewed indicated a desire for their child to have more time in the program.

The following recommendations are proposed to further enhance an already sound program:

Review the formats and processes by which information is exchanged with parents of Early Start children. As part of this review, the Parent Handbook and all other written information should be reviewed and rewritten in a Plain Language format that is aimed at no more than a Grade Six level. Consideration should be given to offering a parent orientation session and one-on-one parent-teacher interviews.

Review and revise the Early Start Program Manual. The current program manual is dated December 2006. It is likely that during the past two years there have been changes to policies and practices that need to be reflected in the manual. It is recommended that the manual be reviewed by the Program Manager annually and updated to ensure it is current and reflective of changing policies and practices.

Over time, as the Province of Alberta provides financial support to family members through its Kin Care Program to care for Early Start age children, the Centre may wish to look at potential opportunities to provide training and support for these child care providers.

Periodically review the Centre's geographical service boundaries from the perspective of ensuring that those families most in need of the Early Start Program have access to it. Given that interviewed parents listed convenience and proximity as the most common reasons for selecting the Early Start Program, it is important to ensure that it continues to serve low-income families in need as the neighbourhood changes and becomes more gentrified.

F. APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Interview Questions

Early Start Program

Interview Questions – Parents of Children Attending Early Start Program

Norwood Child and Family Resource Centre is looking at the Early Start Program. We want to hear your ideas about the Early Start Program. Your participation in this study is voluntary.

Your name will not be used in the report that is written. If you have questions about this study to you talk with Laurie Fagan.

1. What other programs like Early Start do you know about?
2. How did you learn about the Early Start Program and these other programs?
3. Why did you choose the Early Start Program?
4. What changes do you see in your child from attending the Early Start Program?
5. Do you use the Outreach Services offered by Norwood Child and Family Resource Centre?
6. Do you attend the parent groups at Norwood Child and Family Resource Centre?
7. Do you have any suggestions for changes to the Early Start Program at Norwood Child and Family Resource Centre?

Early Start Program

Interview Questions – Norwood Staff

Norwood Child and Family Resource Centre is undertaking an internal review of the Early Start Program. It is timely to reflect on the successes and potential areas for strengthening the Early Start Program. As part of this evaluation, we are asking staff members to provide responses to the following questions. Your participation is voluntary. Your feedback will help Norwood Child and Family Resource Centre continue to offer quality programs responsive to the needs of the community.

Your responses to these questions will be aggregated with those of other staff members to ensure anonymity. This data will be analyzed and included in the outcome evaluation report of the Early Start Program at Norwood Child and Family Resource Centre being prepared by Emerging Directions Consulting Ltd.

1. In your opinion what are the intended outcomes (changes in the lives of children and their families) of the Early Start Program offered by Norwood Child and Family Resource Centre?

2. What are the actual outcomes (changes in the lives of children and their families) of the Early Start Program offered by Norwood Child and Family Resource Centre?

3. What changes are you noticing the participation rates in the following:
 - a. Early Start Program
 - b. Outreach Services
 - c. Support Groups

4. What programs do you think are competition for the Early Start Program?

5. How do you think parents learn about programs in the community such as Early Start?

6. What criteria do you think parents use when choosing a program for their Early Start age child?

7. What changes, if any, would you suggest be made to the Early Start Program?

8. What effect do you think the new Child Care legislation will have on the Early Start Program?

Early Start Program

Interview Questions – Key Informants

Norwood Child and Family Resource Centre is undertaking an internal review of the Early Start Program. It is timely to reflect on the successes and potential areas for strengthening the Early Start Program. As part of this evaluation, we are asking key informants to provide responses to the following questions. Your participation is voluntary. Your feedback will help Norwood Child and Family Resource Centre continue to offer quality programs responsive to the needs of the community.

Your responses to these questions will be aggregated with those of other key informants to ensure anonymity. This data will be analyzed and included in the outcome evaluation report of the Early Start Program at Norwood Child and Family Resource Centre being prepared by Emerging Directions Consulting Ltd.

1. What programs do you think are competition for the Early Start Program?
2. How do you think parents learn about programs such as Early Start?
3. What criteria do you think parents use when choosing a program for their Early Start age child?
4. What effect do you think the new Child Care legislation will have on the Early Start Program?

Appendix 2

List of Interviewees

Key Informants

Tanis Aker, Bissell Centre
Fatima Bellahmer, Bissell Centre
Sandi James, Kids Kottage
Lynn Lema, E4C
Avril Pike, Oliver Centre

Norwood Child and Family Resource Centre Staff Interviewees

Meagan Fehsl
Milijana Karacic
Margaret Martynowski
Eva Paweda-Osmulski
Rajwant Sekhon
Vina Tinani
Jenny Zerbin
Ellen Zhao

Note: For privacy protection reasons, the names of parents who participated in the interviews were not collected.

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