



Atlantic Summer
Institute on
Healthy and Safe
Communities
l'Institut d'été
sur les collectivités
sûres et en santé au
Canada atlantique

Atlantic Canada Showcase Presentation

The Long Reach of Early Child Development – "It Takes a Child to Raise the Village"

Description of Presentation

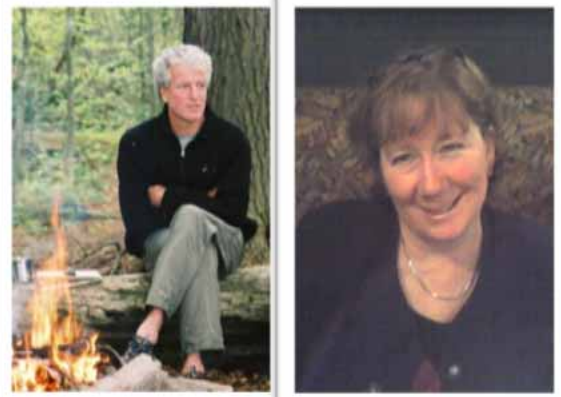
Emerging child development research provides compelling arguments that the health and well-being of children is directly linked to brain development in the first six years of life. What's at stake is more than healthy, happy children – early experiences shape learning, literacy, behavior, and health for the rest of children's lives. Like the bond between a parent and a child, which exists on so many interdependent levels, the well-being of our children is intricately intertwined with the health of our communities.

- Is there a crisis?
- How does the latest neuroscience (ex: epigenetics) and data (ex: 42% of adults have functionally low literacy levels) inform us about the present state of our children's well being and future capacity.
- Many communities are on the right track only to get derailed by government, local organization and/or service provider rules, community conflicts, lack of human and/or financial resources, a "we have always done it this way" attitude, lack of/or changes in political will.
- How can we build and sustain the ways in which community relationships, resources and programs can be partnered, integrated and developed from the grass roots to provide universal access to quality supports for all our families and children.

Through open dialogue and knowledge sharing we can

Presenters

Jim Mustard and Susan DeWolf



As a young man, Jim Mustard found himself in the beauty of Cape Breton with an interest in the land and a growing appreciation for the relationships in a community where you were needed and valued from infants to elders. He has spent much of his adult life with his partner Margaret creating a place to grow those relationships with their own children and children who find themselves in need of foster care. He has championed and coordinated the Roots of Empathy in NS (60 programs in 2008) as a way to share the knowledge for optimal infant development as well as to give each student a chance to learn about themselves and their classmates in a classroom of caring. Jim is now a Fellow with the Council for Early Child Development in the Maritimes and is helping to create a network of individuals, organizations and communities working to improve outcomes for all children.



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address these issues and more as we learn:

- how to frame up the key messages around the science of early child development;
- how to use an inclusive and meaningful process to engage your community around their assets ;
- about the importance of fostering personal leadership to work collaboratively of the importance of being able to measure how well our children and community are doing;
- from other communities and innovative pilots that can help guide our way forward.

Founded in 2004, the Council for Early Child Development www.councilecd.ca has fostered a growing network of individuals, organizations, government representatives and community leaders across Canada and in the Maritimes- people who, with their communities, are making the equality of opportunity for all young children a priority.

How you will benefit

Participants will learn:

- what the key messages are around the science of Early Childhood Development,
- how to engage your community and follow through with a process,
- how to develop collaborative relationships and leadership, build on what's working well and
- the importance of being able to measure how well the community is doing.

We will use many examples from research studies and other communities across Canada and innovative pilots that can help guide our way forward.

Handouts Available during the presentation

Resources Available during the presentation

Over the past eighteen years, Susan has worked in three provinces as a Family Support Worker, providing parenting education, support, advocacy, group programming and facilitation within a multi-cultural framework. Susan uses her extensive academic learning, community training, yoga practice, life experience, and holistic approach, to connect with isolated and vulnerable families. Susan is the mother of three grown children, and has a Bachelor of Arts degree, and a Diploma in Child & Youth Care. Since 2003, Susan has been the Family Support Worker for the IWK Health Centre's Extra Support for Parents Volunteer Service. Susan is actively involved with the Nova Scotia Council for Early Child Development.



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