



Yellowhead Community Services Society

Early Childhood Development Programs



Pre-natal and Early Years Home Visiting Handbook



Dear families,

Welcome to the Pre-Natal and Early Years Home Visiting Program, part of Yellowhead Community Services Society Early Childhood Development Programs.



We recognize the important role that families play in the healthy development of children. The early years of a child's life are significant as they form the foundation for each child's physical and mental health, happiness, development and learning.

We understand that parents are a child's first and most important teacher and we consider ourselves to be privileged to be part of many families lives. It is our belief that every person has the right to be treated with respect and care. In this way we offer services to help parents and children achieve their full potential.

Our handbook will answer many questions you may have about our programs and we encourage you to chat with staff. Please ask if you have any questions.

Yours truly,

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YCS Mission statement

“Providing services through collaboration, leadership and innovation that create positive change and contribute to a healthy community.”

Geographical area served



Yellowhead Community Services Society provides care to families with young children in the North Thompson Valley, from McLure to Blue River with three early childhood programs. It is important to us to acknowledge that these lands are the ancestral, traditional and unceded territories of the Simpcw First Nation on whose territory we work, live and play.

Early Childhood Development Programs Rationale

Research shows that positive early experiences play a critical role in a child’s development. These experiences begin during pregnancy and continue long after a baby is born. The connection between a parent and child is critical and not only forms the basis for all future relationships that children experience but also impact a child’s ability to learn and grow. We know that during the preschool years of life a child’s brain has the capacity to form neural pathways that are flexible and malleable, meaning skills are easier to learn and intervention is most likely to have lasting impact. With this in mind we recognize that the first and most important relationships that a child experiences are with their family and thus it is our honour to work alongside families to best serve children within our communities.

Family centered philosophy

Parents know their children better than anyone and have a complete understanding of the child’s history and family situation. Parents will continue to be involved in the care of their child long after service providers have changed!

Our staff look to the family for the in depth knowledge only they can bring to the table in regards to their child.

Our staff work to support families

- ✓ In understanding their children's growth and development
- ✓ By providing resources and information
- ✓ By engaging families to make informed choices
- ✓ By working with and advocating for families
- ✓ By encouraging the community to support children, youth and families.



What are our Early Childhood Development Programs?

We provide three early childhood development programs to support the healthy growth and development of the family and child from conception to six years old. These programs are:



- Prenatal and Early Years Home Visiting (HVP)
- Infant Development Program (IDP)
- Supported Child Development Program (SCDP)

About the Prenatal and Early Years Home Visiting Program

The Prenatal and Early Years Home Visiting Program is designed to enhance the health and development of children by providing a range of home based services to expectant woman and new parents. Services often begin during pregnancy, but children under six years of age qualify. By providing home based services, staff are able to offer advice and support in areas of need identified by the parent and thereby tailor services to best suit each individual family.

Twice a year, during the spring and fall, pre-natal classes are offered to families expecting a baby. A series of evening sessions, held one evening per week for five weeks, helps prepare parents for the spiritual,

emotional and physical aspects of childbirth. Friendships are formed and transition into parenthood begins.



Early years of childhood can be particularly challenging, especially for parents who have high levels of stress, anxiety, depression, little support and interpersonal relationship problems. The adverse long term effect of living in a

stressful environment are significant in terms of early childhood development.

The home visitor supports families by promoting positive parenting practices; teaching and modelling parenting skills and helping parents understand the many benefits of being sensitive to their child's needs. Home visitors encourage appropriate parent/child interactions such as play, communication and consistent boundaries and can provide reading materials to curious parents to bolster an environment that is mutually respectful. In this way, children are raised in a secure and safe way, which we know allows them to develop healthy and happy relationships throughout life.

Our home visitor has extensive knowledge of community resources and acts as a gateway connecting families to resources such as; child immunizations, counselling, parent & child groups, transportation and dental care. Support to access resources can be as simple as information sharing or more hands on by attending an appointment with a family.

Home visits occur as often as the family requires, up to once per week. Typically, the numbers of visits required gets less as parents gain confidence and skills and we are always happy to have parents transition out of our program feeling successful and capable. Parents may always access services again should they wish to do so.

The home visitor provides the following services to families

- Home visits
- Developmental screening
- Parent education and work shops
- Family support

- Support in the community
- Family conferences and team meetings
- Books, equipment and toy lending library

Home visits

Home visits are a key component of our program as this is the environment where both the child and family usually feel most comfortable. Services can also be provided in other settings such as the Early Years Center.

Discussion with the consultant/ home visitor will determine a convenient time for visits to take place and how often the family would like visits to occur. Usually visits are arranged bi-weekly, but may take place each week or every third/fourth week and last for approximately one hour.

Home visits are a time for the family and consultant to chat, play with the infant and discuss progress and challenges that have occurred since the last visit. It is an opportunity to tweak any ideas and strategies to best support the child in the upcoming weeks. The consultant may be able to recommend community resources available to the family and will have knowledge to share about other community professionals able to provide services. The consultant will often leave activity suggestions and sometimes materials and equipment will be loaned for the family to use.

At the end of each visit the consultant will leave notes for the family about the visit. A copy of the notes will be stored in the child's file at the YCS office.

Screens

Developmental screens such as the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ3) looks at five domains of development; communication, gross and fine motor, problem solving personal/social and are fun and readily available for all families within the community and can be completed by anyone. They provide a snap shot of a child's development by identifying expected skills of children at a specific age and provide suggestions as to what the next developmental milestone may be. They

help identify any gap in development so that early intervention can support growth in that area.

If parents have concerns in regards to behaviour and social/emotional development our consultant can provide parents with an Ages and Stages Social/Emotional screen (ASQSE).

Family conferences and team meetings

Occasionally families take part in team meetings that involve all or some of the professionals providing services to them. The meeting may be set up by the family or a professional. Families are welcome to use the space at Yellowhead Community Services for this purpose. Conferences aim to coordinate and provide direction for services. You may choose to take part in a meeting, when all the goals previously identified have been achieved, or to support a child through a transition process.

Parent education and workshops

As part of providing services to the community at large we facilitate several educational workshops each year. Our staff will keep you informed of the program available and will encourage you to attend. Some of the programs we offer are; parenting workshops, infant massage, sign language, raising responsible adults and cooking classes.

Family support

In recognition of the challenges and celebrations surrounding pregnancy and parenting our programs connect families that share common experiences.

Book, equipment and toy lending library

We have a limited supply of books and equipment and are happy to loan items to our families. The Infant Development and Supported Child Development programs have specialized equipment that we often loan to families and child care centers. Any child utilizing equipment in a center is encouraged to practice with the same equipment at home.

Vouchers

Families participating in the Prenatal and Early Years Home Visiting Program who identify food security as an issue directly affecting their

family, have access to vouchers that support the purchase of eggs, dairy, vegetable and fruit products. Once spent in the local grocery store the receipts are returned to YCS for monitoring, ensuring that they have been spent on the identified food products only.

Infant massage



Infant massage is a vital, dynamic interaction that forms the foundation of relationship building that will last a lifetime. Nurturing touch between a parent/caregiver and an infant enriches physiological, social-emotional, and mind/body/spirit connections for the infant being massaged, as well as for the parent. Our instructor is certified in infant massage through the International Association of Infant Massage. Free drop in classes are offered in Clearwater and Barriere twice a year.

Parenting classes

Yellowhead Community Services Society staff present parenting classes that focus on the relationship between a parent and their child. The classes are educational and parents attend to learn new skills to care for their children. The primary goals of parenting classes include; improving relationships between parents and their children, understanding behaviours and creating a foundation of trust and love through communication and play. Our classes are usually free.

Funding for our Programs

Our 3 Early Childhood development programs are all funded by the Ministry of Children and Family Development and participation in them is free for families. There is no charge for any service, including extra support for individual children to attend a child care program. Please note that parents must pay child care fees to the licensed child care programs, but there is help available from BC Child Care Subsidy.

Accessing our services

Referral

Our referral form can be found on our website and at most community service offices in Clearwater and Barriere. Referral to our programs can be made by anyone. Often parents refer themselves, but we also

receive referrals from community professionals; such as the public health nurse, doctors, school teachers, child care staff and social workers.

Referrals can be mailed in, faxed to the office or handed to the receptionist. Referral cannot be processed if a family has not agreed to the referral being sent.

Once we have received a referral staff gather information to screen for eligibility and then contact the family.

If there is no room in the desired program, we use a weighted waiting list; some families automatically qualify depending on the needs of the individual/family and others may have to wait until space is available. If you are put on the wait list, a staff member will let you know how long your anticipated wait will be.

If you are not eligible for services, we will let you know why and support you to find services that suit your needs.

Intake

Getting to know you is very important to our staff. In line with our family centered approach to practice we have expectations that service will be offered to you in a culturally sensitive way and that the whole family is included in the process. Who knows better what you and your child needs, then you? Our staff are skilled at facilitating the means to achieve identified goals but without partnership and cooperation with families very little will be successful.

Service agreement

Before we can begin providing services, families are required to complete the service agreement. This form looks at some of the policies that guide our work such as; respectful and confidential service provision, a safe and healthy environment for families and staff and cooperative engagement. You can read more about all the policies later in the handbook and are encouraged to familiarize yourself with this booklet as it contains lots of information about Yellowhead Community Services Society.

Release of information

We also ask families to complete the release of information form and encourage you to add any professionals already providing service to

your family so service provision is truly collaborative.

These two forms, the service agreement and release of information, expire at the end of twelve months although, they may be dated for a shorter time period. Once expired they must be checked and signed again for service to continue. You may make changes to both forms at any time while participating in our programs.

Family intake form

The family intake form provides the most up to date and current information about your family and everyone living in your home. It's kept at the top of your file for easy access to telephone numbers and pertinent information for our visits. If you have any changes to your circumstance, we ask that you let us know so we can update this form.

Once these three forms; the service agreement, release of information and family intake profile are complete we can begin visiting with you.

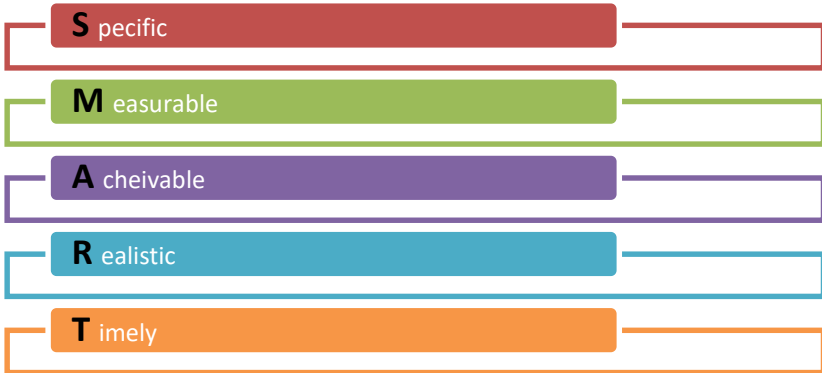
Family history

You will be given a form that asks more detailed questions about your pregnancy, the delivery of your child/ren, medical, developmental and behavioural history, drug and alcohol use and your whole families hopes and dreams for the future. We ask these questions, because we know there is a direct link between development of both positive and negative experiences. You may complete this form during a visit or by yourself. If answering any question is too personal or difficult, please leave it blank.

Goal plans

Families that access our pre-natal and early years' program will design a goal plan with their home visitor that suits their needs. This is a very flexible document and the range of goals can vary immensely as the focus of care is on the family in general. Setting goals helps keep families motivated and on course for success. It is easy to make adjustments to goals if the intermediate steps are too challenging and just as easy to adjust them once targets have been achieved!

Our SMART goal plans follow five simple steps. They must be:



Transitioning on

Families are free to terminate services at any time as participation with our programs is completely voluntary. Often families may move from one program to another, for instance a mother may begin accessing services while she is pregnant and then choose to access infant development if her baby has a developmental delay. An infant accessing IDP services may transition to supported child development when she attends a licensed child care program.

These transitions often create stress as they signal change. Our staff support parents with transitions by gathering information, team building, planning for the future and providing information about follow up services.

Community partnerships

Collaboration is pivotal in our approach to providing services and we are thankful to the many specialized service providers that work alongside us. Our staff often help families identify services needed, understand the information provided to them and work with families to follow through with their chosen goals. The following are some of the community partners our families access frequently:

Community Speech Pathologist

The speech pathologist supports children with communication, both expressive (what children say) and also receptive (what they understand) from the early years through to the school years.

Clearwater	Abby Wright	250 674-2218
Barriere	Liz Garner	250 371-4100

Public Health Nurses

Are well known by our families and support mothers with breast feeding, children’s immunizations, general health and wellbeing questions.

Clearwater	Crystal Wadlegger	250 674-2244
Barriere	Angela Semerick	250 672-5515

Doctors

Provide medical care for the entire family. They may refer families to specialists such as pediatricians and provide medical information to our staff to best support you and your children.

Clearwater Medical Center	250 674-3319
Barriere Medical Center	250 672-9795

Government Ministries

The Ministry of Children and Family Development and the Ministry of Health provide a variety of services for families with children. They may be able to offer respite care, support licensed child care program placement fees and provide information about children with special needs.

Clearwater and Barriere MCFD	250 674-6810
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Kamloops Children’s Therapy and Family Resource Center

The CTFRC is a not-for-profit association who provide therapy to children, up to the age of 19 years, who have identified extra needs. Their staff work in the community in which the family live and support the child and family.

CTFRC 250 371-4100

Licensed Child Care Programs

Licensed child care programs in our communities offer full and part time care to all children. Our staff can support families with finding the right program for their child and assist with the registration process.

Clearwater	Building Blocks Daycare	250 674-2600
	Clearwater Preschool	778 208-7027
	Wells Gray After School Program	250 674-2600

Barriere	Little Stars Child Care (Daycare & preschool)	250 672-9773
	NTVIC After School Program	250 674-0033

The Early Years Center

The Early Years Centre at Dutch Lake Community Centre in Clearwater and the YCS office in Barriere is open five days a week 8:30am – 4:30pm and offers a drop-in place for families to gather together, play and have fun. The gym is available for use with plenty of toys, comfortable seating, snacks and drinks; all provided free!

Throughout the week, parents and children can take advantage of free programming such as Mother Goose, Tumble Bumble and Story Time. You can find out about these activities and many more by phoning the centers.

As part of the community development for children the Early Years Centers have funded the provision a voucher scheme allowing families to supplement their grocery and transport costs. The vouchers are free to families who have a need and families may access them either through their Early Childhood Development worker or directly from the

Early Years Center.

In Clearwater families may also request taxi vouchers if they live within the town boundary. These free vouchers are provided by Success By Six.

Clearwater 250 674-3530 Barriere 250 672-9773

Confidentiality

All information you provide to our agency is yours and is confidential. Information will only be shared with the people you identify on the 'release of information' form which is time limited. You will be required to renew the form when the time expires, at a minimum once a year. You may make changes to the form whenever you chose.

Photograph policy

Occasionally Yellowhead Community Services staff may take photographs of children and parents during a home visit or at a community event. The photos may be used on our website and in local newspapers to promote activities and groups. If you agree to you and your children's photograph being used, please initial in the space provided on the parent agreement. By **not** initialing you indicate that YCS may **not** use your photograph. To respect privacy concerns we do not share any photographs on any social media sites such as Face Book, Twitter or Instagram.

Health and wellness

Illness policy

One of the most important factors in reducing the spread of communicable diseases is to reduce the risk of exposure. If you or your child are unwell with a cough, cold, pink eye, upset stomach or any other communicable disease please call the YCS office to cancel your visit.

Likewise, if our staff is ill you will be notified as soon as possible. Once both staff and/or family member are well, visits may resume.

Smoking policy

The adverse health effects of first and second hand smoke inhalation are well documented and YCS staff



may not visit in a smoky environment. We ask that parents do not allow smoking in their home for one hour before a visit takes place and that no person smokes in the home during the visit.

If this proves challenging for families, there may be an option to visit in a different smoke free location. Visits may be rescheduled or service terminated if the smoking policy is not adhered to.

In order to maintain a healthy work environment and in recognition of the possible ill effects experienced by some people due to the chemicals contained in scented products our Early Childhood Development Program staff reduce the amount of scented products that they wear when visiting families. If you should be affected by any product, please let your worker know.

Personal health and safety

All our staff are trained in first aid and practice responding to different emergency situations on a regular basis. All our facilities and vehicles are maintained to high standards and we abide by all agency regulations to keep our staff and service users safe.

Rights and responsibilities



We cannot successfully provide services to our families without recognizing the important role that parents play. From conception, the role of the parent is crucial to the healthy development of a child and we are honored to be part of our family's lives, partnering together to best serve the

children in our community. As parents and caregivers we have rights and responsibilities

You have the right to....

- Be treated fairly and respectfully and receive quality services
 - Services will be offered in a professional and friendly way and plain language will be used in all communications
 - Every effort to accommodate parents and children with extra challenges that affect participation will be made

- Have the rules explained to you so you understand behavior expectations for continued participation
- All information will be kept in a secure and locked cabinet
- You may request to see your information and any reports or records written about you or your child
- Be included in all planning and decision making
 - Your ideas and priorities are important and your voice will be heard, it is important that the family remains in control of decision making
 - Any concerns or worries about you or your child should be expressed to your worker
 - If you have any concerns about the services, we provide please speak with your worker. If this is not enough to resolve any issues, then you will find more information on how to register a complaint in the handbook
- To be fully informed about all Yellowhead Community Services, provincial, federal and community programs that may benefit you and your family
 - Your worker can provide you with referrals to other services
 - Supply information to access local and government resources
- Confidentiality. Information will only be shared with people you identify on your release of information form or with YCS employees if it is relevant to the service you receive
 - On occasions YCS may be legally required to share information, for example, if there are child protection concerns
 - YCS performance is monitored by CARF and files may be examined in order to monitor agency performance
- To celebrate you culture and history
 - Unless you feel safe we cannot expect families to engage with our services and learn skills
- To end services with YCS at any time
 - Services are voluntary and you will never be forced to take part
 - All YCS services, with the exception of licensed child care, are free

You have the responsibility to

- Attend meetings that involve you and your family
 - By asking questions we can move forward
 - Providing feedback helps shape your goals
 - Review information provided to you or ask for information to be explained clearly
 - Sign/acknowledge that you received information
- Make an informed decision
 - Ask for help if you are not clear on any points of discussion
- Treat others fairly and with respect
 - Respect others and their differences
 - Respect the privacy of others
 - Take care of your family
- Be open to trying and learning new things
- To report if you are unhappy with services

Complaints procedure

Our staff work hard to provide quality services and part of that process is learning from our mistakes. If you should experience a negative incident while accessing our programs you have the right to make a complaint. In the first instance you are encouraged to talk directly with your worker. If the issue is not resolved, you will find a short complaint form at the back of this handbook. Please complete the form and mail it to the YCS main office at 612 Park Drive, Clearwater, BC, V0E 1N1 or hand it to any YCS worker.

A manager will be in contact with you immediately if more information is needed. Once we have received the full details your complaint will be investigated within ten days.

A manager will be in touch with you to share the findings of the investigation and you will receive a written report. If you feel the issue is still not resolved, you may contact the Executive Director who will complete an independent investigation.

If this is not satisfactory then you should contact the Board of Directors who will seek advice from a recognized authority such as the

ombudsman.

It is important to know that services will not be withheld and you will never be penalized for making a complaint.

In short our complaints procedure is;

1. Talk openly with the YCS worker to try and resolve the issue
2. Complete the complaints form at the back of the hand book and return to the YCS office
3. The incident will be investigated by a manager
4. The findings shared with you through conversation and a written report
5. If you are unhappy you may report to the Executive Director who will investigate independently
6. If resolution is not satisfactory the final investigation will be at the discretion of the Board of Directors

Survey

Once a year we complete an anonymous survey so that we can track our performance measurements and adjust our service accordingly. Please complete a survey provided to you in early December by your worker or upon exit of your program. If you would prefer to complete the survey by telephone or in person, please let your worker know and they can arrange this for you.

All surveys are confidential.

How to reach us

Our main office is in Clearwater but we provide services from our Barriere office too. You can reach staff at either telephone number.

Yellowhead Community Services Society
Mailing address for all programs: *Clearwater address*

Clearwater contact: 612 Park Drive	Clearwater, BC	VOE 1N1
Telephone: 250 674-2600		Fax: 250 674-2676
Barriere contact: 4936 Barriere Town Road	Barriere	VOE 1E0
Telephone: 250 672-9773		Fax: 250 672-9709
Executive Director	Jack Keough	250 674-2600 ext. 229 jack.k@yellowheadcs.ca
Licensed Child Care and Early Childhood Development Programs Manager	Susanne Butcher	250 674-2600 ext. 227 susanne.b@yellowheadcs.ca
Prenatal and Early Years Home Visitor	Bobbi-Ann Strachan	250 674-2600 ext. 226 bobbi.s@yellowheadcs.ca
Supported Child Development Consultant	Jenna Wilson	250 674-2600 ext. 262 jenna.w@yellowheadcs.ca
Infant Development Consultant	Terralin Leier	250 674-2600 ext. 258 terra.l@yellowheadcs.ca
Early Years Center Manager	Kerry Milner-Cairns	250 674-3530 ext. 102 kerry.m@yellowheadcs.ca

Thank you

Yellowhead Community Services Society
www.yellowheadcs.ca

October, 2017

Early Childhood Development Program – complaints form

Please provide your contact information:

Name:

Address:

Home #:

Cell #:

1. Staff involved in your complaint:

Name:

Position:

2. Details of your complaint; please include the date of the incident, where the incident occurred and names of any other individuals who witnessed the incident (please add another page if needed)

Signature

Print name

Date