



Yellowhead Community Services Society

Early Childhood Development Programs



Pre-natal and Early Years Home Visiting Handbook



January 2021

Dear families,

Welcome to the Pre-Natal and Early Years Home Visiting Program.



We recognize the important role that families play in the healthy development of their children. 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.

We provide services to families living in the North Thompson Valley and the Fraser Canyon. We acknowledge that these lands are the ancestral, traditional and unceded territories of the Secwepemc and St'át'imc Nations. We pay respects to the First People of these territories and extend that acknowledgement and respect to all First Nations of Canada.

We hope this handbook is helpful. Please ask us if you have any questions.

Yours truly,

YCS Pre-natal and Early Years Home Visiting Team

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COVID-19 pandemic operations policy

Please take time to read our COVID-19 operations policy, provided to you along with this handbook. It has been developed to ensure the health and wellbeing of everyone accessing our services during the current COVID-19 pandemic. Your Home visitor will review the COVID-19 policy with you. As the pandemic situation changes the policy will be updated. We will share any updates with you as they are made.

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 and also in Lillooet and Ashcroft.

Early Childhood Development Programs Rationale

Positive early experiences play an important 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 forms the basis for all the child’s future relationships and also affects a child’s ability to learn and grow. We understand that during the early years of life a child’s brain is flexible and malleable, so skills are easier to learn and intervention is most likely to have lasting impact. Knowing this, we believe the first and most important relationships that a child experiences are with their family and 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 their child’s history and family situation. Parents have a life long relationship with their child while ours is comparatively brief.

Our staff look to you, the family, for the in depth knowledge only you can share about your 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 healthy 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 (PN&EYHVP) supports pregnant people and parents to make healthy positive choices in theirs and their child's life. Usually services are provided in your home and visiting schedules are worked around your own timetable as much as possible.

Services often begin during pregnancy, but parents with children under six years of age can participate too. If you have questions, and want to be the best parent you can, our staff are pleased to welcome you.

Twice a year pre-natal classes are offered to families expecting a baby. These run in the evenings so the birthing partner can attend with the

birth person. These help you prepare for the spiritual, emotional and physical aspects of childbirth. Often our participants make friends and move into parenthood together.



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

a stressful environment can impact early childhood development. We are here to support you.

The home visitor supports families by promoting positive parenting; teaching and modelling parenting skills and helping parents understand the benefits of being sensitive to their child's needs. Home visitors encourage appropriate parent/child interactions, like play, communication and safe boundaries. They can provide information to help you create a respectful environment. 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 knows about all the community resources and can help you get connected to; other families, public health, parent groups, transportation; counselling and dentists. Her support can be sharing information with you or actually helping you to get to appointments and being there with you.

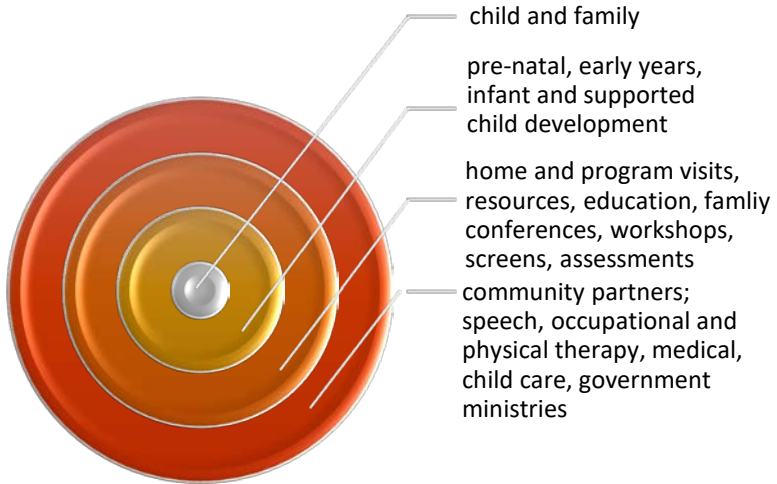
Home visits happen as often as you like, up to once a week. Typically, the numbers of visits gets less as parents get more confident and develop skills. Our goal is to have parents leave our program feeling successful. You can always reach out later if you would like more support after you have left.

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

More about our early childhood services



Home visits

Home visits are a really helpful part of our programs as this is usually where children and their family feel most comfortable. Getting to know you is important to us so we hope you will feel relaxed with us. If you would prefer to meet somewhere else, please let us know and we will find an alternative location.

Visits with you will be set at a time that works for you, your child and your home visitor. Usually visits take place about every second week, but can be more or less frequent if you choose. Visits usually last about one hour.

Home visits are a time where you, your child and the home visitor will chat, play and discuss progress and challenges. Usually, your home visitor will share some small activities for you to try over the next couple of weeks that will support your goals.

Your home visitor can lend you equipment and resources. If there is something you are interested in, please ask us; if we have it you are welcome to borrow it. Your home visitor may also be able to

recommend community resources and other professionals who provide services.

At the end of each visit the home visitor will leave notes for you about the visit, sometimes these can be sent to you electronically a bit later. A copy of the notes will be stored in your file at the YCS office.

Screens

ASQ 3 and ASQ SE; The Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ3) looks at five areas of development; communication, gross and fine motor, problem solving personal/social and are fun and easy to do. This screen lets you know how your child is developing and what their next milestones may be.

If you have worries about behaviour and social/emotional development your consultant can give you a similar screen just for that called Ages and Stages Social/Emotional screen (ASQSE).

MCHAT R; We also have the MCHAT R (Modified Checklist for Autism in Toddlers - Revised). This screen is for toddlers between 16 and 30 months old and is looking very specifically at possible Autism.

The Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS); This screen is a quick set of ten questions that can help moms, while they are pregnant or in the first year after having a baby, find out if they may have anxiety or depression. Your home visitor will be able to help you find the supports you need if this affects you.

Family conferences and team meetings

Sometimes it is helpful to meet with all the people who are providing support to you, or you and your family. You are welcome to use our space at the office for these meetings. Your home visitor will be happy to help you arrange this meeting if you like.

Parent education and workshops

As part of providing services to the community we facilitate educational workshops each year. Some of the programs we offer are; parenting workshops, infant massage, sign language, raising responsible adults and cooking classes. We hope you will be able to attend some events.

Family support

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

Book, equipment and toy lending library

We have a book and equipment lending library and are happy to loan our equipment to our families. It's really easy to borrow items, just sign them out with your home visitor for as long as you like. We want the equipment to be used and sometimes things come back damaged or broken, don't let this worry you. We don't mind that at all.

Vouchers

We have a variety of vouchers we can give you if you struggle financially. Our vouchers can be used in the local grocery store and gas station. We also have tickets for exercise classes and taxi vouchers. These vouchers are funded by YCS programs and MCFD.

Some classes we offer

- ❖ Single mom support group
- ❖ Infant massage
- ❖ Parenting classes like Make the Connection, Circle of Security and STEP.

Funding for our Programs

Our Early Childhood Development programs are all funded by MCFD; the Ministry of Children and Family Development. Families choose to participate in our programs, they are voluntary. You can leave whenever you choose. The pre-natal and early year's home visiting program is a free program.

Accessing our services

Referral

Our referral form is on our website www.yellowheadcs.ca in the drop down tab called Early Childhood Programs. You can also find them in our office and at other community programs. Anyone can make a referral for services like your doctor, social worker or public health

nurse. But, it is really important that you know the referral has been made, so we ask that a box on the referral forms is ticked to show you agree. If this box is not marked, we cannot contact you and will reach out to the person who made the referral.

Once we have received a referral, by mail, fax, hand delivered or electronic, we check to make sure our program will fit your needs and then be in contact with you.

If our program is full we use a 'weighted' waiting list. This means that we consider each person's needs, some families automatically qualify and others may be asked to wait. If you are put on the wait list, we will let you know roughly how long you can expect to wait.

If our services aren't quite the right fit, we will let you know why and help you to find the right services.

Intake

Getting to know you is very important to us. We have expectations that service will be offered to you in a culturally sensitive way and that the whole family will be included in the process if you choose. Who knows better than you, what you and your child need? Without partnership and collaboration very little will be successful.

There are a few forms for you to fill in to help us get to know you all. This can sometimes seem like a lot of paper work. Don't worry, we can do this over time. Quite often our Home visitor completes a little each week with you, before you know it, it's done. We want you to know, that if there is information you do not want to share, we will respect that. It is your information and we trust you to share when you feel comfortable.

Service agreement

Before we can begin providing services, please complete a form called '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 working together. You also have to sign that you agree and are choosing to participate. There is more information about some policies later in this handbook.

Release of information

The 'release of information form' is where you can add the names of people you would like us to share information with. It helps us get a picture of who you are working with and how we can be collaborative services providers. You may not have names to add, this is your choice.

This form, may be used for a 'once only' release or can be approved by you for up to 12 months, which means at least once every year we must redo it. You may make changes to forms at any time.

We will never release information to anyone, unless you give us permission first, with the exception of one instance; in Canada, if an adult thinks that a child is being abused or neglected they have a legal duty to report their concern to a person in authority.

Family intake form

The information you add to the 'family intake' form tells us all about who lives with you and the best ways to contact you. Please let us know if any of this information changes.

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

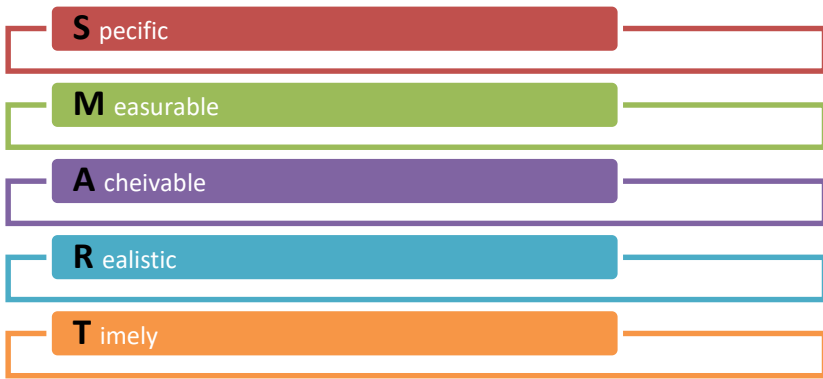
Family history

The 'family history' form asks more detailed questions about your pregnancy, their birth, yours and their medical history and so on. It helps us develop an understanding of your child and family. Again, you may leave any question blank if you prefer to.

Goal plans

Setting goals helps keep everyone motivated and on track for success. It is easy to make adjustments to goals if the small steps are quickly achieved or too challenging.

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



Leaving services

Families are free to leave services at any time. Participation in our programs is completely voluntary. Sometimes families move from one program to another; a mother may begin services while she is pregnant and then choose to access the infant development program (IDP) if she has concerns about her baby’s development. An infant accessing IDP may move to supported child development when she attends daycare or preschool.

These transitions can be stressful, as can any 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 central in the way we provide services. 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.

Public Health Nurses

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

Doctors

Provide medical care for the entire family. They may refer families to specialists such as pediatricians.

Government Ministries

The Ministry of Children and Family Development and the Ministry of Health provide lots of services for families with children. They may be able to help with respite care, daycare and children and youth with support needs.

Kamloops Children's Therapy and Family Resource Center

The CTFRC is a not-for-profit association who provide different therapies to children, up to the age of 19 years. Their staff work in the community where the family lives and they support the child and the family. Their staff provide physical and occupational therapies.

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.

The Early Years Center

The Early Years Centres at Dutch Lake Community Centre in Clearwater and the YCS offices in Barriere and Lillooet are open during the week. Free drop-in groups for families to gather together, play and have fun are based there. We are happy to let you know dates and times for these groups.

Other free groups like Mother Goose, Tumble Bumble and Story Time are scheduled in our centers. Your home visitor can give you more information about these activities.

As part of YCS commitment to healthy communities, children and families we can provide vouchers for food and gas if families have a need. Please ask your home visitor.

Confidentiality

All the information you share with us is yours and it is confidential. All our files are kept securely in a locked cabinet. We will never share information from your file unless you agree.

If you would like to see your file, please let your home visitor know. We ask you to write a letter, your home visitor can help you with this if you like. We will make sure you have access to your file within ten working days.

Photograph policy

YCS staff take photographs of children and parents to help document progress or for fun – if you give us permission.

The photos may be used on our website and in local newspapers to promote activities and groups – if you give us signed permission on the ‘Photograph form’. By initialing but crossing through the form, you are telling us that YCS may **not** use your photographs.

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 diseases is to reduce the risk of exposure. To access YCS services you must be in compliance with our general health and wellness policy which asks that you cancel visits with our programs if you or your child are unwell with any contagious symptoms. We also ask you to check your health before visiting with us and be mindful of our COVID-19 safety protocols. You must;

1. Be healthy and not have any COVID-19 symptoms (see below)
2. Wear a mask in a shared indoor space

3. Wash or sanitize hands as you enter a YCS site and frequently throughout the length of time spent at the YCS site, YCS staff will do the same as they enter your home
4. Maintain a safe social distance of at least two meters
5. Sanitize all shared/communal items after touching
6. Comply with all occupancy level restrictions in YCS buildings
7. Read and be familiar with the COVID-19 operational policy

Stay away if you are sick with any of the following COVID-19 symptoms;

- ❖ new or worsening cough
- ❖ shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- ❖ temperature equal to or over 38°C
- ❖ feeling feverish
- ❖ chills
- ❖ fatigue or weakness
- ❖ muscle or body aches
- ❖ new loss of smell or taste
- ❖ headache
- ❖ gastrointestinal symptoms (abdominal pain, diarrhea, vomiting)
- ❖ feeling very unwell

If you have symptoms, please let your Home visitor know and don't access services until;

1. You have completed a health assessment by phoning 8-1-1 or
2. Have been assessed by a physician or nurse practitioner or
3. Completed the B.C. COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool

AND followed instructions provided through one of the above checks. If you are advised to complete a COVID-19 test you may return to our facilities or meet with staff;

- ❖ when you are well enough to participate in normal activities and the COVID-19 test is negative
- ❖ when public health advises you if the COVID-19 test is positive
- ❖ after isolating for at least ten days from the onset of symptoms if you choose not to participate in a recommended COVID-19 test. You must be well enough to participate in normal activities.

You must also isolate for 14 days if

1. You return from a trip outside of Canada
2. You have been in contact with someone who has been outside of Canada

Services will not be provided in a client's home if a person living in the same residence has any of the symptoms listed above. However, services may be provided in spaces outside of the home as long as the service user does not have symptoms themselves.

Smoking and vaping policy

We ask you to not smoke or vape in your home for one hour before a visit takes place and that nobody smokes in the home during the visit.

If this is difficult for you, visits in a smoke free location can be arranged. Visits may be rescheduled or service terminated if the smoking policy is violated.



Scent reduced air

Some scented products contain chemicals that trigger a reaction in some people and children. Our staff are careful to be as scent free as possible and we ask our families to be the same. If you are affected by any smells or products please let your home visitor 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



Every individual is important. We take our responsibilities seriously and want you to know that as parents, caregivers, children and workers, we all 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 always be used
 - Every effort to accommodate parents and children with extra challenges will be made
 - Rules and policy will be explained to you so you understand behaviour expectations in our programs
 - All information will be kept in a secure and locked cabinet
 - You may ask 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 shared with your home visitor
 - If you have any concerns about the services we provide, please contact your home visitor. If issues are still unresolved, 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 home visitor can refer you to other services
 - We can help direct you 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
 - YCS's performance is monitored by CARF and files may be examined in order to monitor agency performance
- To celebrate your culture and history
 - Unless you feel safe we cannot expect families to engage with our services
- To end services with YCS at any time
 - Services are voluntary, you will not be forced to take part

You have the responsibility to

- Attend meetings that involve you and your family
 - Ask questions so we can move forward
 - Provide feedback to help shape your goals
 - Review information given to you and let us know if it needs to be explained better
 - Sign/acknowledge that you received information
- Make an informed decision
 - Ask for help if you are not clear on any points we discuss
- 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 are unhappy with services, you have the right to make a complaint. First we ask you to talk to your service provider but if this doesn't resolve the issue, you will find a short complaint and compliments form at the back of this handbook, we like to hear positive feedback as well! 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 it 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 Chief Operating Officer 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 or write us a letter
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 Chief Operating Officer 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 ask you to complete an anonymous survey so that we can track our performance and make any changes, helping us be the best service providers we can be. Your Home visitor will share a link with you electronically for the survey. If you would prefer a paper or a telephone survey, just let your home visitor 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 and Lillooet office too. Please use the Clearwater address for all mail correspondence.

Yellowhead Community Services Society

Clearwater; 612 Park Drive, Clearwater, BC, V0E 1N1
Tel; (250)674-2600 Fax; (250)674-2676

Barriere; 4936 Barriere Town Road, Barriere, BC, V0E 1E0
Tel; (250)672-9773 Fax; (250)672-9709

Lillooet; 155 Main Street, Lillooet, BC
Tel; (250)256-2277 Fax; (250)256-2299

Chief Operating Officer; Susanne Butcher susanne.b@yellowheadcs.ca

Prenatal and Early Years Home Visitor; Bobbi Strachan
bobbi.s@yellowheadcs.ca

Infant Development Home visitor; Ana Donoso. Lillooet
LIDP@yellowheadcs.ca

Infant Development Home visitor; Jenna Wilson. Clearwater and
Barriere
Supported Child Development Home visitor; Jenna Wilson
jenna.w@yellowheadcs.ca

General email inquiries; info@yellowheadcs.ca

Thank you,

Yellowhead Community Services Society
www.yellowheadcs.ca

Complaints or compliments form

Your name;

Your cell;

Other contact #;

Your address;

Your email;

Today's date:

Signature;

1. Staff involved;

2. Please share as much information as you can. Include the date, other people involved and exactly what the incident was.