



Stepping Stones Program

NEWSLETTER

WINTER February 2018

In this issue of our newsletter we will discuss helping young children learn about emotions and self-regulation, high school transitions and graduating from the Stepping Stones program, community resources and upcoming events.

We look forward to seeing many of you at our family nights, monthly parent networking, and educational workshops.

It is that time of year again. The snow is starting to melt (hopefully!) and Spring Break will be here soon.

So far, this has been an interesting year. In September schools began to implement the new class size and composition. This school year has not been without challenges for children and families. Some younger children have been without educational assistants making their transition a bit longer than usual. Schools and districts have worked very hard to support students with extra needs and most children are settling into routines.

For some families it is time to start to think about Spring Break. Be sure to check out your local community centre and other community programs and ask about how your child might participate. Many organizations provide adapted and integrated programs.



Ways to Help Your Child Self-regulate

Teach basic emotions.

Children start to learn emotion words and use them around 3 to 5 years old. Children with language or cognitive delays often need more time to learn emotion words and to practice using them to self-regulate their emotions and behavioural responses.

Start by teaching your child the words: Happy, Sad, Angry, Excited, Frustrated, Scared and Calm.

Learning can be easier with the use of pictures with word visuals.



Excited



Mad



Happy



Calm

Help your child learn by letting them know you understand their emotions. *“I see you are very excited about going to the playground”* or *“I understand you are mad because you can’t play with your Lego right now.”*

Regulating emotions and behaviour responses.

As children get better at using their emotion words to describe how they are feeling they start to learn that each emotion makes their body feel a certain way. For example, when excited they might describe their body as feeling “tingly” or when they are mad they may describe it as “hot”. The ability to describe how our body feels is an important part of being able to self-regulate. We can now start to teach children ways to calm their body if their energy is too high.

When I am Excited



my body feels tingly



Parents can help children with their emotions and self-regulation. Some research shows that children don’t start to self-regulate effectively until the age of 8 or 9 years. This means that adults need to be patient. Also, children with sensory challenges, language or cognitive delays will need extra time to master these skills.

Community Resources and Further Reading

Kelty Mental Health—www.keltymentalhealth.ca. Tools for healthy living

Inclusion BC—www.inclusionbc.org. Lots of information on advocating, school inclusion, transition planning, etc.

Autism Information Services British Columbia (AIS BC). autisminfo.gov.bc.ca . Assessment and diagnosis, treatment options, effectively using Autism Funding, finding and hiring professionals, etc.

Charities can help fund needs such as speech and language, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, tutoring, recreation programs, equipment, etc. Visit the following for more information:

CKNW Orphan's Fund www.cknworphansfund.com or 604-331-2711

Variety—The Children's Charity www.variety.bc.ca or 604-320-0505

Child and Youth with Special Needs (CYSN) also can provide access to groups and some after school programming for older children, if your child is eligible for CYSN services. Contact your CYSN Social Worker at MCFD.

What's new in Stepping Stones?

The Social Emotional Enhancement and Development (SEED) website was originally developed through Federal Government funding in 2013.

The Psycho-social programs at the BC Centre for Ability are committed to continuing to add new content and resources to support children, families/caregivers, and community members.

Visit www.bccfa-seed.org.



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 The Social Emotional Enhancement and Development website aims to provide evidence based resources to promote social emotional competencies of children with special needs. The content of the website is managed by the Psycho-social team at BC Centre for Ability.

Graduating from Stepping Stones

The Stepping Stones program at the BC Centre for Ability is funded by the United Way. We support children and their families from birth to age 12, including assisting with transition to high school. When a young person “graduates” or ages out of services with the Stepping Stones program what other supports are available? Here are a few:

- ◆ Canuck’s Autism Network (Physical and social programs)
- ◆ Pacific Autism Family Network (not only Autism)
- ◆ Child and Youth with Special Needs (services for eligible youth)
- ◆ Learning Support Teachers, District Resources, work experience programs (at local school district)
- ◆ Sarah McLachlan School of Music (Vancouver—school can make referral—application process)



Upcoming Events

Family-Together Night

Our next Family together night will be in April. Stay tuned for details.

High School Transition Parent Workshops

Workshops will be held from 6 to 8pm at BCCFA Kingsway office:

Feb 22, 2017 Burnaby families
March 1, 2017 Vancouver families

For more information or to discuss high school transition for your child, please contact Andrea Harstone 604-630-3007.

Parent Networking Group

Held on the last Tuesday of every month. Each month there is a new topic. Parent discussion and networking.

For more information about family night or parent networking call Michelle Perri 604-451-5511 x1257.



Fun with Friends

This group is for 7 to 10 year olds and focuses on social emotional competencies of self-awareness and self-regulation.

Monthly Girls Group

This group is for girls ages 8 to 11 year olds and focuses on social emotional competencies, friendship and life skills.

Please note: To ensure the success of all the group members children are selected to participate based on group readiness, abilities and needs. After school group.

If you are interested in groups please call Andrea Harstone at 604-630-3007.