



## Best Start Conference

January 2006

# Peel Health Great Beginnings Initiative



- In 1999, McCain and Mustard's Early Years Study documented the importance of the early years (birth to 6 years) and the role of **parents** and **caregivers** in promoting healthy brain development.
- In 2001, the Ministry of Children and Youth Services provided Peel Public Health with five-year Early Child Development funding to implement strategies aimed at *"increasing the ability of parents and caregivers to promote the optimal neurodevelopment of children from birth to age six"*.

# Peel Health Great Beginnings Survey



- In 2003, a Peel Health Survey with parents, caregivers and Family Health staff indicated that gaps existed in knowledge around:
  - the qualities of parent-child relationships that promote healthy early neurodevelopment
  - the specific characteristics of healthy neurodevelopment for children 0-6 years
  - practical approaches, ideas, and tips for parents to nurture healthy neurodevelopment from birth to six years

# Peel Public Health Great Beginnings Educational Kit



- In response to the survey results, the *Great Beginnings: Build Your Child's Brain. Build Your Child's Future* educational kit was developed to support parents and caregivers in their roles



# The Great Beginnings Kit: How it was developed



- In November 2003, six focus groups were held with 83 parents, caregivers and staff at Peel OEYC's and Healthy Start sites to focus test the Great Beginning Kit

## What they Liked

- Calendar format
- Colorful images
- Messages: short, clear and easy to understand by diverse audiences
- Memories page

## Suggested Areas for Improvement

- Represent people with special needs
- Depict different cultures
- Depict children of different ages interacting together
- Add more information about community resources

**Overall, findings showed that participants **liked the kit** and **would use it****

# The Great Beginnings Kit: What is it?



- An educational and interactive resource which provides age specific tips for parents/caregivers to encourage healthy neurodevelopment in children 0-6 years
- Tips center around the themes **Love**, **Feed**, **Play**, **Protect** and reflect children's development through ages 0-6 years

# The Great Beginnings Kit: Sample Tips



## Love (0-1 years):

- “ Please never shake me because it will hurt my brain”

## Feed (1-2 years)

- “ Please let me be messy. I learn about my food by touching and mashing”

## Play (2-4 years)

- “Lets play follow the leader because I like to be active and keep moving”

## Protect (4-6 years)

- “I learn by watching you. Tell and show me the traffic safety rules”



# Great Beginnings: Program Components

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## 1. Education & Skill Development:

- workshops with Peel Family Health staff
- workshops with OEYC and Children's Services staff
- Both series of workshops were well attended. A total of **98** Family Health staff and **107** community representatives participated



# Great Beginnings: Program Components

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## 2. Outreach to Diverse Communities:

- 2 workshops have been delivered to staff and volunteers at community agencies that service Peel's diverse communities
- In collaboration with Peel District School Board, a workshop was conducted for 40 staff from Peel HUBS and Readiness Centres
- The Great Beginnings pamphlet has been translated to other languages to assist sharing of brain development information



# Great Beginnings: Program Components

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## 3. Outreach to Home Child Care Providers (HCCP):

- In collaboration with Child Development Resource Connection Peel (CDRCP), access to education opportunities (workshops) and health information have been enhanced for members of the HCCP Network. Membership is currently 330 HCCP's.
- In 2004/5, 8 workshops have been offered to Home Child Care Providers who belong to the Peel Network, with attendance of 113 adults and 156 children

# Great Beginnings : Evaluation Activities



- On-going **progress evaluation** through end-of-workshop evaluations
- Conducted a **follow-up workshop needs assessment** with Family Health staff and OEYC/Children's Services Staff. Results showed:
  - Participants feel confident applying GB tips/messages into their work with clients
  - Participants feel the GB kit is very helpful in educating parents about healthy neurodevelopment
  - Participants would like accompanying resources (fact sheet, pamphlet to accompany kit)

# Great Beginnings: Evaluation Activities



- Conducted two **focus groups** with OEYC staff to assess overall use and satisfaction with GB kit in their programs. Results showed:
  - Parents respond well to content contained within Kit, but find format a bit ‘confusing’
  - Supportive resources are needed to ‘introduce’ the Kit to parents to support their continued use and understanding of the Great Beginnings Messages



# Great Beginnings: Project Partners

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- **Ontario Early Years Centres of Peel**
- **Community Development Resource Connection of Peel (CDRCP)**
- **Peel Children's Services**
- **Multicultural Inter Agency Group (MIAG)**
- **Success By 6 Peel**



# Great Beginnings: Collaborative Successes

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- Strategies have resulted in consultations and request for resources from various agencies including:
  - Peel District School Board (HUBS and Readiness Centres)
  - Public Library System
  - Daycare/preschools in the Region of Peel



# Great Beginnings: Project Resources

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## Primary Resource:

- Great Beginnings Kit

## Supplemental Resources:

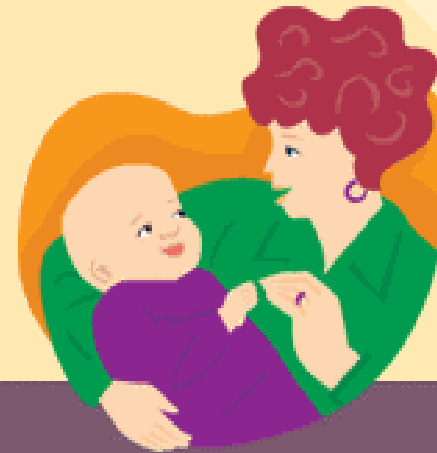
- Great Beginnings Posters
- Great Beginnings Question and Answer Sheet
- Great Beginnings Information Brochure (translations available in 2006)
- Great Beginnings Workbook
- Great Beginnings Pens with key message: *Build Your Child's Brain, Build Your Child's Future*

# Great Beginnings: Project Website



- Home
- What Children Need
- Resources
- Community Agencies
- Contact Us

## Early Childhood Development



<http://www.peelregion.ca/health/great-beginnings/index.htm>



# Great Beginnings: Challenges & Key Learnings



## Challenges:

- Reaching out to Peel's diverse communities
- Peel Public Health continues to get many requests for the kit and accompanying presentations

## Key Learning:

- The community development and collaborative approach is central to success



# Great Beginnings: Sustainability Strategy



- Peel Public Health is collaborating with **Success by 6 Peel** to discuss options to sustain components of this project
- Success by 6 has recently identified the promotion of key neurodevelopment messages as one of their key strategic directions in Peel





## In Conclusion:

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Great Beginnings is a successful project that benefits parents, caregivers and professionals.

Questions & Discussion