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Who We Are

Invest in Kids is a national charitable organization dedicated to ensuring the healthy social, emotional and intellectual development of children from birth to age five. From our head office in Toronto and on-the-ground regional presence in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Atlantic Canada we have been providing parents and professionals with easy-to-use, research-based parenting resources and programs since 1993. In doing so, we have engaged a Board of National Advisors comprised of internationally recognized experts in child development and parenting.

Our Mission

Invest in Kids is dedicated to helping parents become the parents they want and need to be. By translating the science of parenting and child development into easy-to-understand, relevant resources for parents and professionals, Invest in Kids aims to strengthen the parenting knowledge, skills and confidence of all those who touch the lives of our youngest children to ensure the healthy social, emotional and intellectual development of children from birth to age five.

What We Believe

Research shows that the first five years of a child's life are critical in developing a child's ability to learn and grow physically, socially and emotionally. It also tells us that parents feel unsupported and vulnerable in their role as parents. Parents want to be the best parents they can be, but too many simply do not have the knowledge, skills or confidence to do it well. If parents had access to appropriate resources to guide them throughout those first five years of their child's life, both their parenting experience and the positive developmental outcomes for their children would be enhanced.

The years before five last the rest of their lives.™

What We Do

To help parents, and professionals working with families with young children, strengthen their knowledge about and skills and confidence in parenting, Invest in Kids created a number of resources based on the **Comfort, Play & Teach: A Positive Approach to Parenting™ framework**. Engaging and easy-to-understand, these resources are used in the everyday moments parents spend with their children. By comforting, playing with and teaching their young child every day, parents move into a positive parenting experience and ultimately create an enhanced future for their child. Here are some of our resources and initiatives that continue to reach thousands of parents and professionals across Canada every day:

- www.investinkids.ca, with over 170,000 unique monthly visitors this website offers parents and professionals current information about early childhood development, practical parenting tips, activities, handouts and more.
- **Get Set For Life & Positive Parenting** public education campaigns spread the positive parenting message.
- **Comfort, Play & Teach™ Parenting Resources:** *Welcome to Parenting Box*, *The First Five Years Resource Kit*, *Infant Growth Chart*, *Comfort, Play & Teach Centre™* and *Comfort, Play & Teach™ Community Room Program*.
- **The Parenting Partnership:** a new prenatal and parenting program for 1st time parents that will transform the way we prepare and educate new parents for their parenting role.
- **The Imagination Library** program, in partnership with The Dollywood Foundation, supports children's language and literacy skills and prepares them for school by gifting every newborn enrolled in the program with a free age-appropriate book each month until his or her fifth birthday.
- **Professional development programs** for early childhood practitioners, social workers, public health nurses, community health nurses, psychologists, home visitors and infant development practitioners.

Invest in Kids

425 Adelaide Street West, 6th Floor, Toronto, Ontario M5V 3C1

Tel: 416.977.1222 Fax: 416.977.9655 E-mail: mail@investinkids.ca Website: www.investinkids.ca



What is this Program?

The Parenting Partnership is an innovative, comprehensive prenatal and parenting education program designed to ensure the best possible start in life for Canada's children. The goal is to assure the healthy physical, social, emotional and intellectual development of children during their early years. To achieve this goal, The Parenting Partnership has four objectives:

- To increase parents' knowledge, skills and confidence about pregnancy and childbirth;
- To increase parents' knowledge, skills and confidence in parenting and child development;
- To promote sensitive, responsive and warm parent-child and parent-parent relationships - the kinds of relationships that best promote healthy development; and
- To foster parents' sense of support for their role.

Why is this Program unique?

The program is free for groups of moms and dads expecting their first baby in the same month. The program accommodates the busy lives of parents through a combination of weekly online sessions and face-to-face sessions planned for when parents most want and need them. Each group of 7 – 10 couples is led by experienced two-person Parent Educator teams, with a mix of medical, child development and family relationship expertise. Parents are enrolled in the program until their child turns two.

What topics are covered?

Topics cover the gamut from pregnancy, labour, delivery and recovery to shifted priorities in the couple relationship, finances and self-care, caring for the physical health of their child including health, safety and nutrition, and guiding behaviour and supporting children's healthy social, emotional and intellectual development through positive parenting.

How is this program being tested?

- Before the program was launched a panel of parents examined the on-line materials and provided input into the website development. The content was also examined by subject matter experts.
- The program is undergoing a thorough process evaluation to determine if we have created a program the parents like, find useful, are willing to complete; the Parent Educators are comfortable with and confident in teaching; and is deliverable consistently to the same quality across a range of sites and Parent Educators. Two pretests are underway, with a third pretest planned to start the summer of 2008. Each pretest involves around 7 groups of parents and their Parent Educators.
- A large-scale impact evaluation pilot of 60 groups of parents in about 40 locations is planned to begin in January 2009. The pilot is designed to inform us if the program has a positive effect on parents' knowledge, confidence and behaviour, and on children's developmental outcomes, compared to an equivalent group of parents and children not participating in the program.

How can you get involved?

We could use your help in these ways:

- Consider hosting a program in your agency or becoming a Parent Educator.
- Consider becoming a partner in this program. A partnership involves providing a site and or staff person to receive the training, and/or running the program in your agency. Partners receive copies of the updates and research as the initiative unfolds.

For more information contact: Karon Foster, R.N., Director of Parent Educators and Curriculum.
kfoster@investinkids.ca