

SERVICE DESCRIPTION

EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES

DESCRIPTION:

Early childhood services include a range of supports and services for families with children under six, and community development activities to increase the capacity of communities to support young families. Services to families and children include drop-in parent/child services, structured parenting and play programs and individual parent support. Family Place provides a “hub” for early childhood services on Salt Spring.

HISTORY:

Family Place was developed in 1996 when SSICS received core operating funds through the federal Community Action Plan for Children (CAPC). The program was developed in order to address a lack of support services for families with young children.

POPULATION SERVED:

Family Place services are available to families with children 0-6 on Salt Spring and the Southern Gulf Islands. The service also targets pregnant and parenting teens, young parents, and children identified at risk in the community.

Education programs are offered to the community at large.

GOALS AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

1. Increase the support young parents access from community resources.
2. Increase the awareness and skills parent have of positive ways of dealing with children.
3. Increase the opportunity for parents to network with other parents.

4. Increase the involvement of children in age appropriate learning and facilitated play.
5. Increase the understanding parents have of their children's development and needs.

SERVICE DELIVERY PHILOSOPHY AND PRINCIPLES:

1. The climate of service delivery will be caring, respectful, safe and open.
2. People will be treated with dignity and respect.
3. Services will be provided in a discreet and confidential manner.
4. The climate of service delivery will be family-focused and child-centered.
5. Services will be delivered using a strength-based approach.
6. Service will be provided with the belief that families are able to support and teach each other.
7. Services will be universally available and accessible to all parents, caregivers and supports to young children.

SERVICE DELIVERY ACTIVITIES:

1. **Parent-Child Drop In.** Offers unstructured play and visiting opportunities for parents and children 0-6. Children may play with a variety of safe age appropriate toys in a safe indoor play room. Parents can visit, relax read and use a small, kitchenette to prepare simple refreshments and spend the morning playing with their children and meeting other parents.
2. **Enhanced Parent-Child Drop In.** Offers more structured activities facilitated by an Activity Worker. Activities incorporate an Early Childhood Learning component (storytelling, arts and crafts or music and song) and requires parent participation.

3. **Individual Counselling.** Person-centered and solution-focused counselling and support related to parenting and communication skills.
4. **Advocacy.** Acts on behalf of the person served to obtain needed resources and services.
5. **Referral.** Refers the person served to other services, within SSICS or community, as needed.
6. **Parent/Caregiver Support and Education.**
 - Nobody's Perfect - 6 week support and education program for parents
 - Parent Child Mother Goose, song/storytelling & rhyme for parents & children
 - Workshops and topics of interest to community and child care providers (e.g. Talking about Sex to Toddlers, Leaving an Abusive Relationship, Budgeting & Bankruptcy, Wills & Estates for Families)

LOCATION:

Early Childhood Services are based at Family Place, a separate building on the main SSICS grounds. The building has wheelchair access, washrooms, kitchen, confidential offices, group space, toddlers play area, and an outside playground. Activities may be offered at times at other locations in the community.

Hours:

Monday to Thursday between 9am - 4pm
A schedule of activities is available.

STAFF RESOURCES:

One Program Coordinator facilitates programs and is responsible for all aspects of program development and delivery. Other staff resources, either SSICS casual employees or short-term contractors deliver specific activities. Parent education and childcare services are available on an as needed basis, depending on funding. The Program Coordinator is

part of the Child and Youth Services team and reports to the Director of Child and Youth Services.

ACCESS TO SERVICE:

Information and services can be assessed through the main office at 268 Fulford-Ganges Road at 537-9971 or directly through Family Place at 537-9176. Referrals can be made by the counsellors at Salt Spring Island Community Services, Ministry for Child and Family Development, schools, physicians or other organizations in the community.

STANDARDS/BEST PRACTICES:

1. Best Practices for Family Resource Programs.
2. CAPC program standards.

FUNDING/SPONSORSHIP:

Core funding is provided from the Public Health Agency of Canada through the Community Action Plan for Children (CAPC) program. Annual funding for specific activities is also provided by the Ministry for Children and Families and the Vancouver Island Health Authority, grants and foundations, in-kind community contributions and Success by Six project funding.

PARTNERSHIPS/KEY CONNECTIONS:

1. Capital Kids: CAPC Capital Region Coalition
2. Vancouver Island Health Authority Public Health Nurses
3. Family Resource Programs of British Columbia
4. PLAY: South Island ECD Coalition
5. Family Place Parent Advisory Committee
6. Gulf Island Coalition for Families