

An introduction and invitation to participate in the:
“**Social Inclusion for At-Risk Children and Their Families**”
(Social Development Partnerships Program, Social Development Canada)

Presented by:

The Human Early Learning Partnership at
The University of British Columbia



and

The Infant Development Program of British Columbia



This project is funded by the Canadian government as part of the **Social Development Partnerships Program** a federal program. Nearly all of the activities listed here are the result of cross-sectoral collaborations of individuals representing families, communities, universities, professionals and different levels of government.

In this project, HELP and IDP are partnering to:

(a) Collect data on the longitudinal impact of early intervention programs on young children: To be completed through two studies, ‘An Interdisciplinary Study of At-Risk Infants and Children’ and “Case Studies of the Infants and Families of the Infant Development Program of BC”

- Phase I of ‘An Interdisciplinary Study of At-Risk Infants and Children’ (Currently analyzing and interpreting data on the health trajectories of at-risk infants and children who were admitted to NICU’s in BC)
- Part I of “Case Studies of the Infants and Families of the Infant Development Program of BC” – Final stages of data interpretation on a case study of families with children with identified special needs
- Follow-up: Phase II of “An Interdisciplinary Study of At-Risk Infants and Children” (linking health and educational trajectories of infants and children at-risk for developmental disabilities; Part II of “Case Studies of the Infants and Families of the Infant Development Program of BC” (looking at the experiences of families with children who are considered at-risk for developmental disabilities, but not identified with special needs.

(b) Conduct a series of needs- assessment based activities such as focus groups, interviews and surveys .
The content of these activities will reflect the information and results collected through the above described previous stage (a), and it will lead to (c):

(c) Create a wide range of educational and informational print and electronic materials for in-service and pre-service professionals in early intervention, for parents of children with special needs and for the general public

*PLEASE REFER TO PAGE 2, THE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THIS PROPOSAL FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THIS PROJECT. IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO PARTICIPATE IN AN INFORMATION SESSION THAT WILL DESCRIBE STAGES (b) AND (c) OF THIS PROPOSAL AND THE EXPECTED TIMELINE AND SEQUENCE OF EVENTS, PLEASE ADD YOUR NAME AND CONTACT INFORMATION TO THE **SDPP** SHEET OR CONTACT LARA EL-KHATIB AT (604) 927 5552 MARI PIGHINI AT (604) 827 5513 [COLLECT CALLS ACCEPTED] OR EMAIL: lara.el-khatib@ubc.ca/ mari.pighini@ubc.ca*

THANK YOU!

EXCECUTIVE SUMMARY (Project Proposal, Approved)

This proposed project is submitted by a unique collaboration of practitioners and researchers. The project will focus on issues of **social inclusion** as they pertain specifically to disabled young children (birth to age 5) and their families. (Note: in this proposal we use the terms “at-risk”, “vulnerable”, “developmentally challenged” and “disabled” interchangeably). This includes children who are at risk due to biological, medical or environmental factors, or a combination of all three. All through this child’s development, she and her family will face a continuing set of challenges that can and do exclude both child and family from full participation in society and community. The project will address the absence of governmental policies that support inclusion. For example, the lack of services, the fragmentation of services, and long wait time for services for those in need of intervention services are all major barriers to inclusion. This proposal reframes how the community looks at children and families who live with disabilities and poverty. The proposal looks beyond stigma and stereotype, especially when examining the interactions of family income, severity of disability and the quantity and quality of both ‘specialized’ programs for children with disabilities and ‘typical’ programs that serve a broader population which often do not lower barriers to inclusion.

The first objective of the project is to construct a detailed picture of the precise nature of the social exclusion experienced by these children and their families at critical points in the child’s development. Case studies of children currently in and recently graduated from a provincial early intervention program will give voice to the lived experiences of these children and families, providing an in-depth understanding to challenges to **social inclusion** that they face daily. In order to contextualize these case studies in a policy and population health framework, the project will also draw on linkages between provincial health and education bases that have become available only recently. Drawing on this information, **the second objective** of the project is to develop policies, programs and materials that will educate the public on **social inclusion**, support the continuing education for professionals, and expand the capacity of intervention programs. These materials will include both print and electronic resources that will assist parents in locating appropriate resources for their children’s special needs; the early identification and diagnosis of children with special needs, the communication of vital information to the various professionals who are involved with the family. A special effort will be made to produce materials that will help to educate the public about how communities, schools and neighborhoods can act to enhance the **social inclusion** of these children and their families.

The project grows out a long-standing relationship between university researchers and the Infant Development Program of BC which provides intervention and consultation services to the families of young children (0-3) with disabilities. The project will contribute to a better understanding of the barriers to **social inclusion** and will develop concrete approaches and materials to overcome these barriers.

There will be updated information on this project under an **SDPP** link at the HELP website:
www.earlylearning.ubc.ca starting on **August 2007**.