

NEWS RELEASE
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Ministry of Education

New program for families in Vancouver to learn and play

VANCOUVER - Pre-schoolers and their families will have access to a new StrongStart BC program that will provide early learning supports to young children living in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver.

The Vancouver school district will open its 19th StrongStart BC program this September at Lord Strathcona Elementary school, where local families can take their children to learn through play while interacting with each other and a licensed early learning educator.

The school district will receive \$52,000 for the new program. This includes \$20,000 to prepare in-school space, including renovations and the purchase of new equipment and learning materials, and \$32,000 to fund the year's operating costs, including staff, professional development, supplies and healthy snacks.

Quotes:

Minister of Education, George Abbott:

"Over the last five years, we have seen the StrongStart BC program grow from 12 pilot projects to 316 programs across the province, with another 10 opening this September. We are committed to the expansion of this valuable program and are focused on communities with the greatest need for support of children and their families."

Vancouver board of education chair, Patti Bacchus:

"We are pleased to open another StrongStart BC program, especially for this part of Vancouver where it will help support families and create a positive early learning environment where caregivers and their children can learn together."

Quick Facts:

* The first StrongStart BC centre opened at Mountain View Elementary school in Revelstoke in 2006 and, as of September 2011, there will be 326 operating across B.C. The centres also provide valuable referrals to community resources for parents, grandparents and caregivers.

* In 2009-2010, there were nearly half a million visits to StrongStart BC programs across the province (476,000) with more than 24,000 children participating.

* Since 2001, the Province has invested \$1.4 billion in literacy and literacy-related initiatives, such as StrongStart BC early learning programs.

Learn More:

Learn more about StrongStart BC programs:

www.bced.gov.bc.ca/early_learning/strongstart_bc/

Learn more about full-day kindergarten programs:
www.bced.gov.bc.ca/early_learning/fdk/

Resources for parents: www.learnnowbc.ca/LearningResources.aspx

Contact:

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