

NEWS RELEASE
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Ministry of Education

New StrongStart BC Centre opens doors to young learners

SURREY - Education Minister George Abbott joined children, caregivers and staff for the official opening of the Senator Reid StrongStart BC Centre today, where he read "No Sleep for the Sheep" to the kids.

Located at Senator Reid Elementary school, the centre opened its doors in Sept. 2011 and features organized activities such as story time, music and singing, art activities, puzzles and multilingual books.

StrongStart BC early learning programs provide school-based early learning services for adults and their young children, aged birth to five, at no cost to B.C. families. They offer unique opportunities for parents, guardians and grandparents to be involved in their child's early learning experience.

Over the last six years, StrongStart BC programs have grown from 12 pilot projects to 326 programs serving 385 communities across the Province. Over the past year, more than half a million children have participated in StrongStart BC programs.

Quotes:

Minister of Education George Abbott -

"As part of B.C.'s Education Plan we are investing in early learning programs to better prepare all of our students for a bright future. This is the 23rd StrongStart BC Centre in Surrey and will help preschool-aged children start school with the skills they need to succeed both now and in the future."

Board of education chair Laurae McNally -

"We know early learning can make a significant difference in helping students be successful. Our trustees are happy that, with the support of the Ministry of Education, we've been able to establish a new StrongStart BC program for the Senator Reid school community."

Quick Facts:

- * Senator Reid is one of 10 new StrongStart BC programs introduced this school year.
- * The Surrey school district received \$52,000 to set up the programs. 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.
- * Since 2006-07, the Province has committed \$43 million for the expansion of StrongStart BC programs.

Learn More:

* For more information on StrongStart BC centres and programs, visit:

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

* To read BC's Education Plan and have your say on the future of education, visit:

<http://www.bcedplan.ca>

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