



## BACKGROUND

### A sample of programs across Canada improving kids' health and well-being

- **Healthy Child Manitoba.** The provincial government created an eight member cabinet committee to collaborate on child-centered public policies and invest in strategies across ministries. Initiatives include funding for pre-natal nutrition, combating fetal alcohol syndrome, positive parenting programs, and early childhood development programs. The result is a strong web of public services that support families and children. [www.gov.mb.ca/healthychild](http://www.gov.mb.ca/healthychild).
- **Toronto First Duty.** The program integrates community services for children at schools, actively engages parents and reduces the typically scattered approach to kids' programming. [www.toronto.ca/firstduty](http://www.toronto.ca/firstduty).
- **Southern Alberta Child and Youth Health Network.** A voluntary collaboration between parents and children's health organizations, SACYHN uses clinics and technology to extend Calgary-based specialized care to families across the region, links families facing similar health care challenges and provides guidance and support for parents and youth. [www.sacyhn.ca](http://www.sacyhn.ca).
- **Child Friendly Cities.** A number of Canadian communities have taken up the challenge of building civic engagement among urban children and youth. Initiatives include wheelchair-accessible playgrounds, expanded cycling routes, obesity prevention, municipal youth councils. [www.city.greatersudbury.on.ca](http://www.city.greatersudbury.on.ca), [www.cyfc.ca](http://www.cyfc.ca), [www.scyofbc.org](http://www.scyofbc.org).
- **Saskatchewan Immunization Management System.** Despite universal access to vaccines for kids, there was a two-fold difference in immunization levels between low-income and high-income areas (47 per cent vs. 93 per cent respectively). Outreach nurses use telephone and mail reminders, home visits and education to work towards a goal of 85 per cent of two-year-olds being fully immunized.
- **Project Early Intervention (Ottawa).** From 1999 to 2003, this program provided children in social housing communities with life skills programs, homework clubs, sports and recreation opportunities and support to high-risk children aged six to 12.
- **In Motion (Saskatoon).** A partnership of university researchers, the health region, the city and community advocates has designed a comprehensive program that has been running since 2000. The program combines mass-marketing strategies and targeted physical activity/ healthy eating programs for kids and adults. [www.in-motion.ca](http://www.in-motion.ca)
- **Preventing hearing loss and improving school success (Nunavut, Thunder Bay, Winnipeg).** As many as two-thirds of Inuit children suffer from hearing loss, a problem that often starts with ear infections. Working with the Thunder Bay, Ont.-based Centre of Excellence for Children and Adolescents with Special Needs, the Government of Nunavut now installs wireless sound systems in all new schools, which improves learning. The Centre developed a Young Mothers Project in Winnipeg that encouraged teen mothers to breastfeed as long as possible and limit their babies' exposure to second-hand smoke, reducing the risk of ear infection and hearing loss. [www.lcnorth.ca](http://www.lcnorth.ca).

More detailed accounts of the programs and approaches are in the full report, *Their Future Is Now: Healthy Choices for Canada's Children & Youth*, which includes a review of government commitments and Council advice. You can download the full report and a video documentary at [www.healthcouncilcanada.ca](http://www.healthcouncilcanada.ca).

-30-

#### Media contact:

**Paul Cantin, Media Relations, Health Council of Canada**  
**(416) 480-7085 or cell (416) 526-1593**