

# Spotlight On Manitoba's Parent Child Coalitions



Across Manitoba, 26 parent child coalitions have been established in all rural and northern regions and Winnipeg community areas to promote and support local community-based programs for young children and their families. Three cultural coalitions provide support to francophone and aboriginal communities. Based on the shared philosophy that strengthening families can strengthen communities, the coalitions focus on culturally appropriate programs to support positive parenting, nutrition and physical health, literacy and learning, and community capacity building.

## An Overview of the 2005 Parent Child Coalition Survey

Measuring outcomes is an important component of the parent child centred approach. Healthy Child Manitoba works with coalitions to develop a common evaluation framework and share best practices.

### What did the 2005 survey measure?

Based on research and developed with coalitions, the 2005 Parent Child Coalition Survey provided demographic information on coalitions and focused on key components of effective coalitions. Coalition members participated in the survey and provided their perspectives on areas such as:

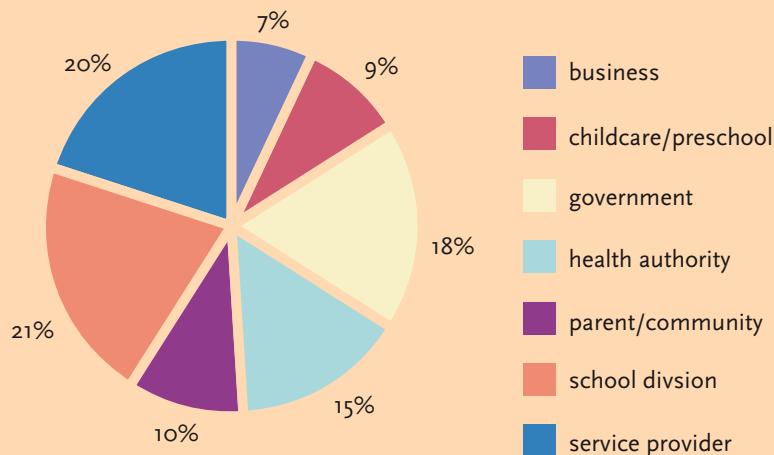
- experience working in coalitions
- feelings of ownership, involvement and satisfaction
- member representation
- communication
- contributions
- costs and benefits
- coalition skills, abilities and expertise
- benefits and challenges of coalition participation
- impact of coalitions on communities

### 2005 Survey Results

Survey results shown on the next page indicate that coalitions recognize the shared responsibility of all community members in improving the lives of children. This is reflected by the broad cross-section of coalition members, which include parents, service providers, child care, school, health, government, and business partners:



### Parent Child Coalition Representation



*Note: Percentages above are based on data for all coalitions.*

Coalition members were very interested in coalition work. The survey findings showed overwhelming optimism from coalitions. They believe their work plays a vital role in promoting healthy child development through activities such as:

- increasing community involvement in child development programs
- responding to community needs
- improving service and program collaboration and co-ordination
- reducing service delivery gaps and duplication
- improving the quality of community programs and services
- increasing the accessibility of community programs and services
- funding community programs
- sustaining the coalition
- influencing public policy
- raising public awareness about child development issues
- helping the community advocate for child development issues

## What is happening in some of Manitoba's Parent Child Coalitions?

### St. Boniface Coalition and Archwood and Marion School Family Centres

The St. Boniface Parent Child Coalition, in partnership with the Louis Riel School Division, provides operating funds to the Archwood and Marion School Family Centres in southeast Winnipeg. The family resource centres provide opportunities for parents and their preschool children to learn, grow and have fun together.

The morning Come Out to Play drop-in programs offer children hands-on learning through songs, stories, art, movement and nutrition activities. They also offer opportunities to play and socialize with other children. Parents have fun with their children and benefit from the support of other parents and centre staff. Special activities for parents include parent discussion groups, guest speakers on various parenting topics, anti-stress days and parent-led cooking days. Child minding is provided during these sessions.

The afternoon drop-in programs include Baby Play Days and Sing and Read...for Babes and Kids. Variety Wednesdays is another program held in six-week sessions featuring parent-child physical activities. Many of the families attend these afternoon sessions with babies and young toddlers.

Early literacy and parenting programs are also offered regularly. These include Parent-Child Mother Goose, Rock and Read, Alphabet Soup, Nobody's Perfect and How to Talk So Kids Will Listen. A home visiting program helps families who need extra support or can't get to the centres. Early literacy and parenting support are the main goals of this service.

Together with Louis Riel School Division, Archwood and Marion School Family Centres offer Ready for School, a program for children about to enter kindergarten. Offered each spring, two afternoons a week, for six weeks, Ready for School helps children learn and practise basic concepts and skills through play and routines. The children have the chance to play with other children, practice social skills, learn basic school routines and how to feel comfortable in a school setting without their parents. The program's goal is to make going to school a positive, exciting time for children and their families.

All programs at the Archwood and Marion School Family Centres are free and available to all families.

## Assiniboine South Early Years Team

The Assiniboine South Early Years Team offers several resources for families of preschool children throughout the community:

### Parent Resource Centre

Royal School, 450 Laxdal Rd., Winnipeg MB

- **Parent/Child Drop-In programs**

(for parents/caregivers with children from birth to five years old)

Tuesdays 6:00 to 7:30 p.m.

Wednesdays 9:30 to 11:30 a.m.

Fridays 9:30 to 11:30 a.m.

- **Book lending/parent resource materials**

### Beaverlodge Parent Resource Centre

Beaverlodge School, Winnipeg, Manitoba

- **Parent/Child Drop-In**

Tuesdays 9:30 to 11:30 a.m.

Assiniboine South is working with Pembina Trails School Division to share funding for Kindergarten Here We Come, a program for children starting kindergarten. The program will be held at the following locations:

**Pacific Junction School** Mondays 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.

**Royal School** Tuesdays 9:15 to 11:30 a.m.

**Westgrove School** Tuesdays/Thursdays 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.

**Beaverlodge School** Thursdays 9:30 to 11:30 a.m.

**Chapman School** Wednesdays 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.

**Dalhousie School** Tuesdays 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.

**General Byng School** Mondays 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.

**Ralph Maybank School** Wednesdays 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.

The coalition is currently hosting Mother Goose training for community members and plans to offer several Mother Goose programs in the community.



## Healthy Child Coalition – Central Region

Healthy Child Coalition – Central Region recently produced a promotional video called "Growing Community." Available from the coalition, it highlights the parent child programs it offers.

This fall, Central Region will introduce two new parent-child programs:

- Shake Rattle and Roll, written and delivered by Shauna Hewitt of Sanford, is a family activity program for toddlers and their parents. With *in motion* funding, the coalition developed a training program so Shake Rattle and Roll can be offered across the region. Four communities are currently piloting the program.
- Kit and Kaboodle is a simple, fun-filled family literacy program for preschool children and their parents/caregivers. Songs, rhymes and stories are all part of the one-hour program. Two Kit and Kaboodle kits, including storybooks, library contact information and supplies needed to deliver the program, are available for lending.

These new programs are shared across the region through the coalition network and the work of the coalition's community partners, so families in other communities will be able to participate.

## Fort Rouge/River Heights Parent Child Coalition

**familiesforward** is committed to supporting children, youth and families in the community. The coalition funds projects that strengthen literacy and language, positive parenting, health and adequate nutrition, and strong community in the Fort Rouge/River Heights neighbourhood.

Good nutrition helps make people healthy. The coalition offers nutrition-based snack and meal programs and supports activities that teach good nutrition, such as the Kids in the Kitchen program at Lord Roberts School. Kids in the Kitchen is a community-based program that teaches children about healthy eating and how to cook nutritious meals. The program also allows them to participate in fun activities to learn about food, nutrition and food safety. Each week, the children prepare their own recipes, eat what they have made, participate in fun, nutrition education activities, sample new foods and learn nutrition facts.

Meeting weekly over an eight-week period, Lord Roberts School Kids in the Kitchen participants have made bean burritos, baked french fries, eggs in bread and oatmeal bannock.

Positive parenting strategies promote a strong, nurturing environment. The coalition also encourages parent education about early childhood development, adolescence, special needs, bullying and tolerance.



Recognizing a need in the community, **familiesforward** added diversity to its guiding principles. We have recently hired a newcomer outreach facilitator who will conduct a needs assessment about what resources, programs and services are currently available in the Fort Rouge/River Heights community. Other duties include connecting newcomers to community resources, programs and services through a range of activities while providing general support and encouragement to people as they adapt to a new culture.

## Indian and Metis Friendship Centre of Winnipeg

Birthdays are special days in everyone's life, especially for a child. The Indian and Metis Friendship Centre of Winnipeg Parent-Child Coalition introduced an innovative way to mark children's birthdays and promote literacy.

In September, the coalition launched its annual Birthday Book project. It provides gift books for school-age children to take home to enjoy with their families. Now in its third year, the program distributes birthday books to children in more than 14 schools and child care centres in Winnipeg's inner city.

The Indian and Metis Friendship Centre Coalition, in partnership with F.A.C.T. (Families and Children Together, the Point Douglas Coalition) distributes books to over 14 schools and daycares in the inner city to be given to children on their birthdays.

For every \$5 donated, a label is printed with the donor's name and attached to the inside cover of the book, wishing the child a happy birthday. The books are sorted and labeled by volunteer community members. This program owes its success to public donations and the generosity of community organizations. Coalition staff and volunteers look forward to being able to continue this initiative for many years to come.

## The Manitoba Association of Friendship Centres (MAC) Parent Child Centre Coalition

The MAC Coalition funds 10 parent child centres throughout Manitoba at their member Friendship Centres in Brandon, Dauphin, Flin Flon, Lynn Lake, Portage, Riverton, Selkirk, Swan River, The Pas and Thompson.

Responding to community need, the coalition provides services and activities to children aged six to 12.

MAC's parent child centres offer a wide variety of activities, including cooking, centre fundraising, drop-in programs, participation in community events, board and learning games, physical fitness activities, organized sports, arts and crafts classes,

computer access, book and movie nights, traditional Aboriginal dancing, Métis square dancing, tutoring, breakfast and hot lunch programs. Each local parent child centre determines its own programming, based on community need. Like all other coalitions, MAC relies on volunteerism and parental involvement to carry out these activities.

All of MAC's parent child centres have formed strong partnerships in their communities. They work with other organizations, schools and existing programs at the Friendship Centres themselves.

## Bears Here, Bears There... Bears Bears Everywhere



The Assiniboine North Parent Child Coalition, **Families First** and community groups held three successful Teddy Bear Picnics this summer in Carberry, Oakburn and Minnedosa. Each event reflected the size and theme of the host group.

All succeeded because of community support and offered opportunities for parents and children to participate together in outdoor activities.

At each picnic, children and their teddy bears enjoyed face painting by teen volunteers, stories read by local librarians, songs and art. Local medical staff was on hand to care for any minor injuries. In Carberry and Minnedosa, volunteer fire fighters encouraged children to explore the fire truck – and explore, they did. The children climbed on it, sounded the horn and, in Carberry, even operated the fire hose and ran through the spray.



In Oakburn, Crayons and Caring Nursery School and Playgroup added a Baby Comfort Zone.

Local emergency medical services staff were on hand to handle minor injuries and check bicycle helmets and car seats as part of their Buckle Up Kids Initiative.

Parents could find out more about the Healthy Baby Program, dental care for little ones from Healthy Smile, Happy Child and sun safety strategies from CancerCare Manitoba. Canadian Pacific Railway's safety representative talked with children and parents about safety around railroad tracks.

Parents, grandparents and children played together on the play structures and with the parachute. At lunch, everyone shared a meal, catered in Oakburn by a local group fund-raising for the nursery school/playgroup and, in Minnedosa and Carberry, barbecued by the local mayors of those towns.

**Local businesses provided food, supplies, money and prizes, including teddy bears.**

**Local residents helped out the community groups.**

**The Teddy Bear Picnics are great examples of the kind of community activities the coalition strives to develop and support.**



## The Parkland Healthy Child Coalition

The Parkland Healthy Child Coalition provides services to a wide range of diverse communities, cultures and families with varying income levels.

Using the Early Development Instrument research to better understand community need, coalition partners recognized that some children are ready for the challenges that school brings but others do not share the same excitement about this next step. They also believe strongly in the power of play and the importance of parents to their children's lifelong learning.

The Brain Building Bags were introduced into the region by the coalition to support local communities. They help improve awareness of the skills children acquire through play – even more so when they play with their parents. Mountain View School Division and Turtle River School Division also sponsored the project.

The bags are filled with 10 objects that inspire play activities. There is a set of cards that outlines quick and easy ideas for parents about how they can join in on the fun and further encourage learning. There is also information on the importance of play, brain development and the incredible power of the parent child relationship.

In close partnership with licensed child care and nursery programs, Parkland Regional Health Authority, local parent child programs and the West Region Tribal Health Offices, the coalition annually delivers 800 free bags to all three-year-old children in its service area.

The Parkland Healthy Child Coalition is very proud of this project. The feedback received from children, parents, and partnering agencies means the coalition will be continuing this project well into the future.

## River East and Transcona Parent Child Coalitions Jack Be Nimble, Jack Be Quick

This spring, families with preschoolers in the River East and Transcona communities were quick to join in the fun at *Jack Be Nimble*, an exciting new *in motion*-based literacy program. Hosted by Kildonan East Collegiate, in co-operation with their Grade 10 girls' gym class, the goal of the pilot project was to provide an opportunity for parents and children aged two to five to play, learn and be active together. During the interactive 75-minute parent child sessions, activities included stretching to nursery rhymes and songs, playing parachute games, exploring activity stations, venturing out on a "bear hunt," learning new co-operative games, creative movement using homemade streamers and free play with balls, hoops and bean bags.

After cooling down to soothing songs and rhymes, preschoolers definitely enjoyed recharging with a nutrition break featuring a variety of healthy choices. This program also proved to be a great



leadership experience for the youth volunteers. They supervised and encouraged the children during snack and craft time and later organized games and activities for the enthusiastic group. Parents also appreciated the opportunity to meet other families in their neighbourhoods, while participating in an interactive 20-minute session full of ideas for keeping themselves and their families fit, healthy and full of energy.

Thanks to an *in motion* grant from Manitoba Healthy Living, *Jack Be Nimble* will now be offered as a free, feature-length program throughout the 2006/07 school year.



During the summer, Literacy Links gears its programs toward getting children ready for the adventure of kindergarten. This summer:

- Over 465 children were registered to participate in the free Literacy Links home visitation program.
- Literacy Links facilitators successfully completed over 1,000 home visits with preschool families.

- Literacy Links hosted six free camps including Rock and Read and One Two Buckle My Shoe, which were attended by more than 120 children and their parents.
- Volunteers donated nearly 200 hours to preschool camps and the Literacy Links Family Picnic.

In July, Literacy Links hosted the third annual family picnic at Burnside Creek Park in Winnipeg to celebrate the summer home visiting program. Over 275 people enjoyed a variety of activity stations including face and hair painting, parachute rhyme time and stories, bubbles, bingo, crafts, stickers, tattoos and an inflatable bouncer. They also enjoyed the new Let's Move It station featuring balls, hoops, bean bags, hopscotch and golf. Winnipeg firefighters were on hand to give tours of their pumper truck. A special thank you to the coalition's outstanding summer staff and volunteers who made this event such a success.

For more information about *Jack Be Nimble* or other preschool literacy programs offered in North and East Kildonan, East St Paul or Transcona, contact Trish Ward, manager of Community Initiatives, River East Transcona School Division at 204-669-9412 ext. 2243 or [tward@retsd.mb.ca](mailto:tward@retsd.mb.ca).

## PROMISE Years Parent Child (PYPC) Program South Assiniboine Coalition

### Program highlights include:

- Aaron Burnett, a Winnipeg children's entertainer, recently came to four communities to perform for children and their families.
- Activity theme kits were distributed to early childhood educators to use in their work with families and preschoolers. Some featured themes including cultures, community, families, farms and harvest.
- A monthly newsletter is distributed to parents of preschoolers with information ranging from sun safety to general child health. An event schedule is also included.
- Training is offered for course conductors who want to provide community programming. Fabulous Facilitating, Positive Parenting, Rock and Read, Mother Goose, Alphabet Soup and Mothers and Daughters in Touch have been offered to date. These and other programs being offered in the community are managed by the PYPC co-ordinator.
- The coalition participates in eight different preschool wellness fairs in communities across the region.
- The PYPC co-ordinator meets with Early Child Committees in three school divisions. The committee includes kindergarten

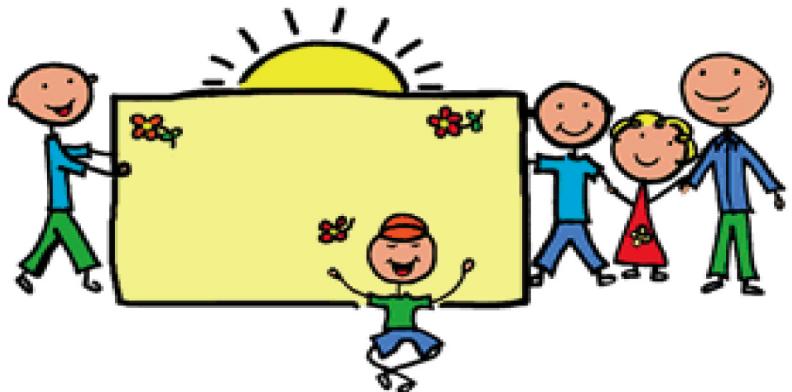
teachers, early years resource workers, speech and language pathologists, public health nurses and representatives from Manitoba Child Care, Children's Special Services, Families First and Child and Adolescent Mental Health.

- A literacy grant was extended to all childcare centres and nursery schools located in communities that don't have access to public libraries.
- An extensive policy binder was prepared and distributed to coalition board members.
- An Early Child Development Day is mandatory for all Grade 11 students in Turtle Mountain School Division. PYPC worked with Families First to deliver a presentation to 150 students about empathy and emotions from birth to age two.
- The Baby Think It Over program, designed to inform teens about the responsibilities of parenthood, was added to the coalition's responsibilities. Four newborn simulators are given to interested schools in the region throughout the school year.

Students in different grades are encouraged to take the simulator home for 24 to 48 hours. During that time, students must care for the simulator as if it were an infant.

## South Eastman Launches Parent Child Stay and Play Kits

The South Eastman Early Years Regional Team is proud to offer a new resource for families in its region. The parent child Stay and Play kit will help anyone running a parent group or interested in getting one started. The kit offers weekly themes and topics, including introductory activities, craft ideas, story ideas, three activity/game options, many songs, rhymes and snack ideas and two parent discussion topics. The team hosted a Stay and Play training day in August, attracting 25 people from resource centres, moms and tots groups, preschool programs and community organizations interested in starting something new for the families they serve. The coalition's goal is to support community capacity by offering ongoing support and resources for all families.



## Manitoba Parent Child Coalition Contacts

Winnipeg			Rural & Northern Manitoba		
Coalition	Contact	Telephone	Coalition	Contact	Telephone
Assiniboine South	Sharon Barker	885-0738	Burntwood	Iris Murray	778-8420
Downtown	Genny Funk-Unrau	475-5755	Brandon	Marie Wotton	726-6280
Fort Garry/ St. Norbert	Karen Velhys	284-9311	Central	Lois Burr	745-3821
Indian & Metis Friendship Centre of Winnipeg	Shirley Cyr	586-8441	Churchill	Irene Duncan	675-2273
Inkster	Lisa Janke	940-2106	Interlake	Terry Connon	467-4768
Point Douglas	Kim Johnson	589-9422	Manitoba Association of Friendship Centres		
River East / Elmwood	Trish Ward Ingrid Zacharias	669-9412 982-1720		Ella Mayer	942-6299
River Heights/Fort Rouge	Sandy Allen	791-0956	Nor-Man	Deb Quickfall	687-1748
Seven Oaks	Anna Mangano	294-9048	North Eastman	Rhea Galeschuk	753-2022
St. Boniface	Carman Patterson-Payne	237-0219	North Assiniboine	Dorothy Kaytor	328-7541
St. James/Assiniboia	Bonnah Demeulenaere	453-5880	Parkland South/ Parkland North	Marli Brown Sharon Glasscock	622-2360 734-4531
St. Vital	Colleen Mayer	233-9535	South Assiniboine	Vicki Neufeld	523-3227
Transcona	Trish Ward	669-9412	South Eastman	Trish Braun	346-7019
Coalition francophone de la petite enfance			Suzanne Lagassé	237-9666	