

Year End Report 2010



Every child needs a healthy start to life.

Success By 6® is a community initiative managed by United Way of the Alberta Capital Region, focused on ensuring that all children 0 to 6 years and their families have the supports they need for a lifetime of healthy growth and development.

Vision: Helping all children succeed for life.

Mission: To strengthen the well-being of all children prenatal to age six, and their families.





A sincere thank you to the Council of Partners, the Success By 6® staff, and the United Way of the Alberta Capital Region for all that you did in support of children and their families over the last year. I have learned much from our work together.

While we often focus on the differences between families, I remain struck by the common themes, needs and desires that parents return to when they speak about their hopes and aspirations for their children. Parents and families want the best for their children. They want them to grow up in communities that nurture and care for them, and they want them to have experiences that encourage and foster their health and well-being.

The challenge for those of us working in the public realm is how best to reflect these individual aspirations in a policy framework that helps all children and families succeed. And to so in the face of a growing economic focus which sees policy options cast primarily as market choices that are considered better or worse investments.

There are strong economic arguments for public expenditures on early childhood development, but these should not be the main reasons we invest in children and families – nor should they be the only criteria that inform how we act.

Supporting and nurturing children and their families is the right thing to do. It remains central to building the kinds of communities in which it is good to live – communities in which we can all participate, belong and play as equal partners.

I look forward to our continued work together in building these communities.

Christopher Smith

Chair, Success By 6® Council of Partners





Each year brings new opportunities and challenges but we are able to take them on thanks to the support of our many partners and community champions for children. Success By 6® is dedicated to supporting positive changes in the area of early child development through the role of facilitator, convener, connector and communicator, as we feel this work is critical to building a strong system of support for families with young children in Edmonton.

Success By 6® was pleased to have been invited to participate in discussions about early learning and care in Alberta, hosted by the Norlien Foundation that took place throughout the year. The sessions focused on early brain and biological development and the importance of supporting healthy growth and well-being in children. Success By 6® also engaged in the several study circles centered on the research of the Frameworks Institute, a non-profit communications organization based out of Washington D.C., that is investigating how Albertans think about early childhood development and addiction. These opportunities were important in helping to build towards Success By 6®'s goal of creating high public awareness of the importance of the early years for children's growth and development.

In 2010, Success By 6® was also happy to be able to provide leadership to an exciting new project funded by the Early Learning Branch of Alberta Education on behalf of the early childhood sector. The three year project will work to identify and strengthen broad-based early learning and care continuums for families with young children and will identify barriers and challenges faced by families with young children in Alberta. The findings from this project will be extremely important in helping to build an accessible, comprehensive and cohesive range of early childhood services in Alberta.

Today's children are tomorrow's parents, leaders and innovators and we each have a part to play in ensuring that all children get the best start to life. It is an honour to be able to work on behalf of children and families in our community.

Ilene Fleming
Director





Our Children's Millennium Fund - 10 Years Strong

On behalf of Success By 6® I would like to thank everyone who contributed to the Our Children's Millennium Fund. Because of your generous contributions, Success By 6® has been able to make great strides in ensuring that all Edmonton children 0 to 6 years have the supports they need to reach their full potential.

Our Children's Millennium Fund was launched in 2000 by the Edmonton Community Foundation, to mobilize resources for children during their most formative years – the years from conception to six. It was set-up as a permanent endowment, to be a legacy to our children and future generations of children. Over the past 10 years Success By 6® accessed these funds to support and develop a wide variety of programs, services and initiatives. They have also allowed Success By 6® to evolve to meet the changing needs of young children and their families in the Edmonton area.

In its inception, Success By 6® championed a number of community programs for young children and their families in areas such as healthy development, literacy, parenting, and nutrition. Some of the initiatives include:

Classroom On Wheels (COW), the Alberta Prairie COW, the Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Prevention Project, Healthy Families, and the Report on Edmonton's Children and Youth. In 2005, Success By 6® saw the need for a stronger, more coordinated and sustainable early childhood sector in Edmonton and took on a broader role, with the goal of influencing lasting change for families with young children in Edmonton. At this time many of the programs that had been developed by Success By 6® were effectively transitioned to community agencies with continued funding and support from Success By 6®.

As part of its new role, Success By 6® developed a strategy to support the close to 54,000 children between 0 and 6 years living in Edmonton today. The strategy includes:

- Educating the public on the importance of the early years and their connection to today's social issues.
- Leveraging pertinent research to build the case for the importance of the early years.
- Partnering with organizations that have similar mandates in order to broaden the reach of the dialogue.
- Influencing government policy via public engagement and media relations.

To learn more visit our website at www.successby6edmonton.info

Once again thank you for supporting the Our Children's Millennium Fund and we encourage your continued support. Today's children are tomorrow's parents, leaders and innovators. We have an opportunity to support children now, in their unique and valuable role as citizens of Edmonton.

Sincerely,

Christopher Smith

Chair, Success By 6® Council of Partners





New Website for Success By 6®

Over the past two years, Success By 6® has placed a strong focus on our communications strategy, with the goal of building awareness around early childhood issues in our community. Success By 6®'s website has been an important tool to help engage people in our work and highlight some of the areas we would like to address. We were extremely pleased to see that our website traffic has increased at an incredible rate over the past few years, affirming that our efforts to increase awareness about Success By 6® have been effective. In 2008, Success By 6®'s website attracted 553 unique visitors; that number increased to 1317 in 2009, and then to 5946 in 2010. We also learned that more people are searching for our site by name than ever before. That's why we were thrilled to be able to launch our new Success By 6® website in November 2010. The new website features a variety of resources and links, as well as information about our many initiatives and partnerships. It was designed to be more accessible for our visitors and increase knowledge about the importance of the early years in a child's development.

Check it out at www.successby6edmonton.info and let us know what you think.

National Child Day

Every year, Success By 6® strives to bring awareness about Children's Rights by promoting National Child Day. National Child Day is celebrated annually on November 20th and is a specially designated day to mark two historic events: the 1959 signing by Canada of the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child; and the adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989. The three over-arching concepts of the United Nations Convention are:

- **Protection:** Children have the right to be protected from abuse, neglect, exploitation and discrimination.
- **Provision:** Children have the right to an adequate standard of living, health care and to play.
- **Participation:** Children have the right to express their views about things that affect them and to participate in communities, programs and services.



In 2010, Success By 6® once again partnered with the Child Friendly Initiative of the City of Edmonton to celebrate National Child Day by hosting an event at the Whitemud Crossing Public Library. Mayor Stephen Mandel proclaimed National Child Day with children and families at the event. Stories were read aloud by City Councillor Kim Krushell and Christopher Smith, Success By 6®'s chair. Councillor Don Iveson was also on hand to celebrate the day.

"Our young people are the future of this city. Events like this recognize the vital importance of creating a community where children are valued, nurtured, and given opportunities to reach their full potential. And it's thanks to organizations like Success by 6® that Edmonton children and families have access to support day in and day out."

Mayor Stephen Mandel

Additionally, Success By 6® also celebrated Edmonton's children by presenting over one-hundred families from the Health for Two program with National Child Day baby sleepers, as a reminder of Canada's commitment to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The sleepers were presented by the Minister of Education Dave Hancock and Minister Heather Klimchuk, MLA for Edmonton-Glenora.

A brochure with information on National Child Day is available at www.successby6edmonton.info or can be downloaded by clicking the following link.

[National Child Day Brochure](#)

[Watch the National Child Day video](#)

Increasing public awareness of the importance of the early years for children's growth and development is an integral part of advancing Success By 6®'s mission.



Alberta Early Years Conference

In 2010, Success By 6® supported the fifth Alberta Early Years Conference, which took place on October 4, 5 and 6 in Edmonton. The conference takes place every two years and draws participants from across the country. This year's conference was a huge success with over 400 participants in attendance, including advocates, parents, administrators, researchers, funders and policy makers. The conference featured an excellent array of presenters who examined best practices, research and strategies to support families in the development of children from the age of birth to six years.

Success By 6® has been involved in the planning and delivery of the conference since its inception in 2000. In 2005, the Alberta Early Years Conference Planning group approached Success By 6® and United Way of the Alberta Capital Region to request support around the fiscal management of the conference. This is the third conference that financial management has been provided by United Way through Success By 6®. Success By 6® is proud to be able to provide support for the conference, as it provides an invaluable opportunity to learn about leading research and theory and implementation of ideas both from recognized experts and front line practitioners.

"Reclaiming our Youth presentation by Dr. Martin Brokenleg was phenomenal. I thoroughly enjoyed Wednesday afternoon as it focused on the children. We can't forget their needs and building on their strengths. Children need to be children." - Alberta Early Years participant

Parents and caregivers are critical to success.



Poverty can impede children's ability to learn and contribute to social, emotional, and behavioral problems.



Make Poverty History

Make Poverty History is an international event that raises awareness about United Nations Millennium Development Goals and encourages local support for these goals. Success By 6®'s role was to support the goal of working toward universal access to education, which includes opportunities for learning and development in the early years. Success By 6® was asked to participate in the Make Poverty History Event which took place at the University of Alberta on September 17, 2010. The event brought together hundreds of organizations to focus on ending poverty worldwide. Success By 6® was there and represented the local early childhood agencies, that help link families with young children who may be experiencing the effects of poverty to access services in their communities. Success By 6® is looking forward to attending this event again in 2011, because it helps further our goal of supporting a stable early childhood system and increasing long-term success of young children.

"Canada is one of the richest countries in the world. However, about 1,400,000 of its children live in poverty." – **Free the Children**

"Poverty can impede children's ability to learn and contribute to social, emotional, and behavioral problems. Poverty also can contribute to poor health and mental health. Risks are greatest for children who experience poverty when they are young and/or experience deep and persistent poverty. Research is clear that poverty is the single greatest threat to children's well-being. But effective public policies that provide high-quality early care and learning experiences for their children can make a difference."

– **National Center for Children in Poverty**





ECD Bus Tours

Building on the success of the Early Childhood Development Bus Tours from the previous year, Success By 6® embraced the opportunity to engage individuals and organizations not typically connected to our work to share information about the importance of the early years in a child's development. With the support of United Way's Discovery initiative, Success By 6® was able to raise awareness about the programs and services available for families with young children in Edmonton. By touring the agencies the participants see how their donations impact the children and families who access early childhood programs. It also gives Success By 6® the opportunity to share information about the initiative and what individuals can do to make a difference in their community.

Special thanks to the agencies that participated in this year's tours: Ben Calf Robe Society, the Centre for Family Literacy, Norwood Child and Family Resource Centre, Kara Family Resource Centre, ABC Head Start (Abbott site) and Mother Earth and Me Head Start (Abbott site).

"The most meaningful part of my experience was seeing the quality of services being provided to local communities as a direct result of my contribution."

- Bus Tour participant

[Click here to download the Success By 6® Information Sheet](#)



**Children and families who
are supported, succeed.**



Success By 6® and the Government of Alberta

Success By 6® had the opportunity to meet with Honourable Yvonne Fritz, Minister of Children and Youth Services twice in 2010, on February 23rd and November 29th. The purpose of the meetings was to welcome the new Minister to her position, and to increase awareness of Success By 6® and our work in the community. The meetings focused on the importance of having programs and services for families with young children and to keep the Minister informed of how the work of Success By 6® is aligned with the Ministers mandate letter which states: *Improve access to existing programs for high risk youth and Albertans affected by family violence, and increase emphasis on comprehensive early childhood development and parenting programs.* Minister Fritz expressed her gratitude for our work in the community.

On May 10, 2010, representatives from Success By 6® met with Honourable Dave Hancock, Minister of Education. Since Minister Hancock is very knowledgeable about the work of Success By 6® we were able to have a broad discussion about early learning and care in Alberta. Minister Hancock was supportive of the idea of Success By 6® convening people for a discussion of early learning and care. We discussed the current advances in early learning and care and our appreciation for investments from Alberta Education, such as the Early Childhood Development Mapping Initiative. Minister Hancock expressed his continued support for Success By 6® and was able to participate in our National Child Day celebration.





Early Child Development Study Circles and Symposium

Increasing public awareness of the importance of the early years for children's growth and development is an integral part of advancing Success By 6®'s mission. Success By 6® is always open to new opportunities, so we were honoured to have been invited to participate in the Norlien Foundation's first Early Child Development Study Circle. Success By 6® was one of the 25 organizations from across Alberta selected to participate. The study circles took place between January and June 2010 and were based on research of the Frameworks Institute, a non-profit communications organization based out of Washington D.C. The focus of the work was to look at communication tools to better grasp how Albertans learn about child development.

Success By 6® was also one of 100 participants to the Norlien Foundation's week long symposium, *Early Brain and Biological Development: A Science and Society Symposium*. The symposium took place from May 31 – June 4, 2010 and included twelve keynote presentations on topics such as Brain Plasticity and Behavioural Development, Individual and Contextual Influences on Development and How Stress Impacts Parental Care and the Intergenerational Transmission of Parenting Capacities. The symposium was the start of a three year strategy that Success By 6® will continue to support.





Council of Partners

Success By 6® is guided by a Council of Partners, which consists of leaders drawn from across the community. The Council provides overall direction and strategic vision for Success By 6®. In 2010, the Success By 6® Council of Partners welcomed two new members: Heather Raymond, Principal, Kindergarten Inclusive Developmental Services (KIDS), Edmonton Public School Board and Laura Manz, Public Health Regional Manager - Edmonton Zone (Southeast Area), Alberta Health Services bringing the current number of council members to twenty-four.

Success By 6® is strengthened and better able to be connected and informed through the broad range of stakeholders on the Council. Their leadership, connections and influence bring the necessary skills, passion and dedication to create the best possible environment for every child in our community.

[Click here](#) to see a current list of members of the Success By 6® Council of Partners.



The healthy development of young children depends on the quality of all their early experiences.

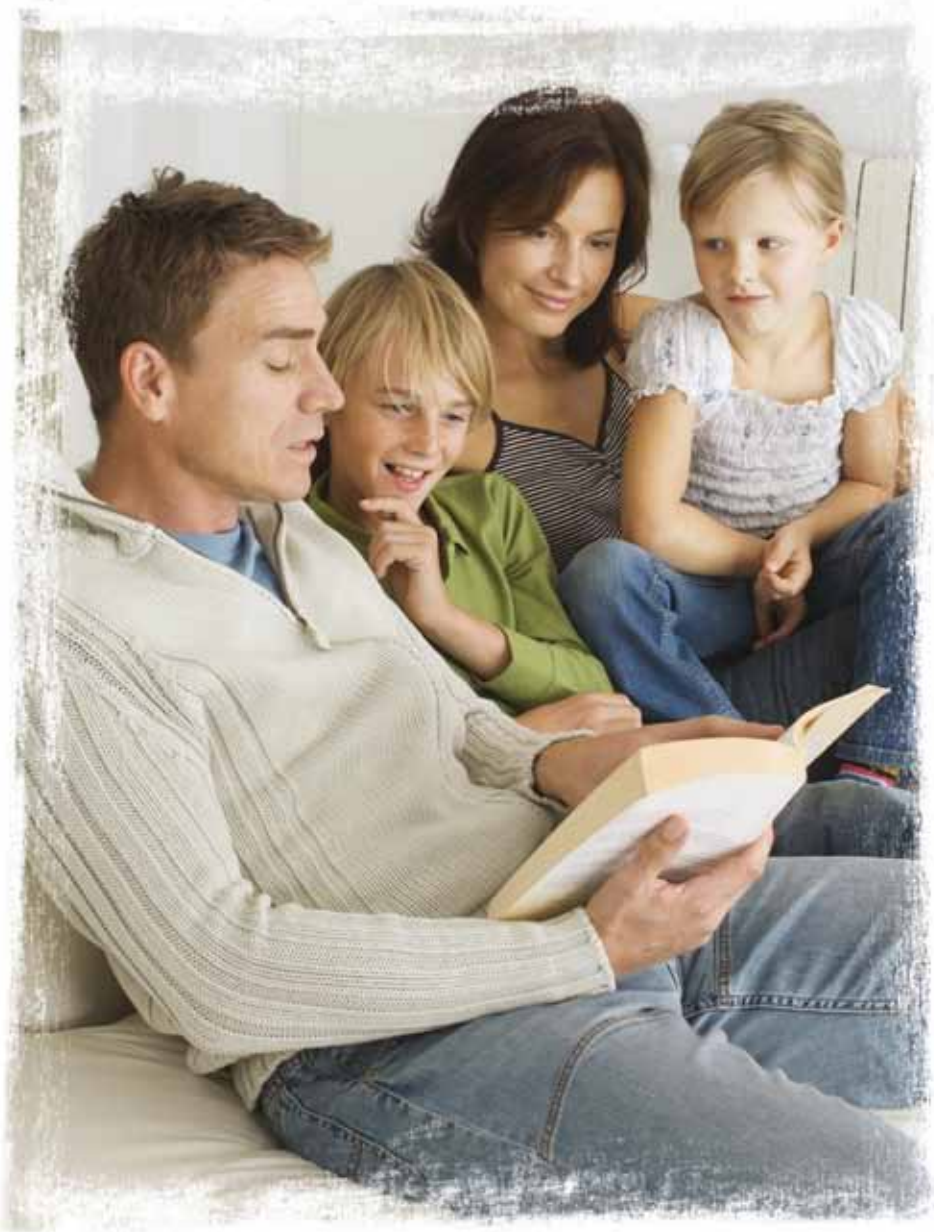


Pan Canadian Early Years and Middle Years Network

The Pan Canadian Early Years and Middle Years Network is a United Way based initiative, which has been bringing together representatives of the early childhood community since 2003. The group was originally comprised of early childhood initiatives connected to United Way such as Success By 6®, but has since expanded to include the middle years as well. Face-to-face meetings, teleconferences and webinars have been used to build connections across Canada, which has supported the sharing of information and helped to create strong links and to build capacity.

Due to structural changes over the past year, this group is in a re-developing process; however, individual Success By 6® members continue to maintain pan-Canadian connections. United Ways in Ottawa, Edmonton and Lower-Mainland have continued to plan and deliver a series of webinars for our colleagues. The first webinar was held on May 28th and focused on an Integrated Approach to the Early Years – Middle Years. The second webinar held on June 18, 2010 focused on Advocacy Tools and Influencing Policy. Success By 6® Edmonton is optimistic that the work of this group will regain momentum in the coming years as more focus is being placed on the importance of the early and middle years on a child's development.

Members of the Network are currently supporting the planning of an international conference on Early Years Community Development, which is scheduled to take place in the coming year.



The vision of the initiative is to work collectively to create an environment that supports the best possible conditions to promote optimal development for all children.



Learning Cities Initiative

On June 8, 2010, Success By 6® participated in the City of Learners dialogue event hosted by the City of Edmonton. The initiative is being led by Councilor Don Iveson with the objective of “creating conditions in which every citizen of Edmonton has the opportunity to be engaged with meaningful learning opportunities at all stages of their lives.” The early years was highlighted by several groups as being a priority for action as the initiative continues to build a learning plan. Success By 6® had the opportunity to meet one-on-one with Councilor Iveson in September to discuss the initiative. The meeting focused on four key priorities: Early Learning, Literacy, Health and Learning, and Workplace Learning. One of the interim Co-Chairs of Success By 6® has been invited by Councilor Iveson to co-chair the task group for Early Learning. In the first quarter of 2011, a white paper will be developed by each of the four task force groups and the steering committee to be presented to City Council. More information on the initiative can be found at: www.cityoflearners.ca

Investments in children and families benefit everyone.



Success By 6® Funded Programs

In 2010, 4354 preschool age children participated in the following programs thanks to the \$113,380 provided through Success By 6 to support these programs.

• Books for Children

This program introduces books to young children and discusses with parents the importance of books and oral language. It supports all families in developing early literacy and language experiences and promotes healthy relationships. Visiting local libraries, introducing other community resources and the sharing of parents' favorites books, songs and rhymes help to decrease isolation and develop friendships for both the parents and children. In 2010, 89 families with 97 children participated in this program at Norwood Child and Family Resource Centre.

100% of the parents reported that they have a better understanding of their role when their child is learning to read.

• Early Science Discovery Program

TELUS World of Science in Edmonton through its Early Science Discovery Program provides preschool aged children with science discovery learning. The goal of the program is to foster excitement for science and life-long learning. In 2010, 853 children aged 3-6 years from 35 Edmonton and area Head Start and early Intervention Child Care programs participated. Students expressed excitement about this amazing opportunity.

"The program is wonderful."

The goals of the Literacy and Alberta Prairie C.O.W.'s include promoting the enjoyment and importance of reading, and providing assistance to parents in supporting their child's early language and literacy development.



• Local Literacy Classroom On Wheels - Literacy C.O.W.

A mobile Classroom On Wheels, better known as the Literacy C.O.W., which is operated by The centre For Family Literacy, visits low income, high density housing areas in Edmonton. The program facilitator models literacy activities and encourages parents to share books with their babies and preschoolers. Families are also encouraged to borrow books free of charge each time they visit the bus. In 2010, the weekly visits to 10 sites in Edmonton provided 412 families with 613 children the use of 6502 quality children's books to share as well as story telling, songs, rhymes and literacy activities in a safe supportive setting. The visits give families the chance to meet each other and learn about community resources.

The facilitator was able to assist a parent complete the required forms for kindergarten registration and to learn about another program appropriate for her and her son in which she promptly enrolled both herself and her son.

• Alberta Prairie Literacy Classroom on Wheels - Alberta Prairie C.O.W.

Since 2004, Success By 6 has facilitated a funding partnership among United Ways throughout Alberta to support the ongoing delivery of the Alberta Prairie C.O.W. program. This bus is a friendly space for parents and children ages 0-6 years to learn and explore new ways of incorporating literacy activities in their daily lives. At the invitation of local literacy groups, the C.O.W. bus travels around rural and small urban Alberta communities participating in locally planned events. Literacy facilitators provide information and strategies on early literacy development and leave behind 50 new books to add to local resources for families with young children. In 2010, this program visited 68 communities, engaged 1202 families with 2640 children, and distributed 3480 new quality books to local communities.

"The C.O.W. Bus visit is always such a great community building event. It connects young families not just with resources but with other families as well."



• Preschool Learn To Skate and Swim

To support the integration of children into Edmonton society, the Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers has coordinated recreation activities for children new to Canada ages 3-6 years. The program has provided skating and swimming lessons. This year it expanded to include a mega-sports program through the YMCA as well as both a cultural dancing and a music program in partnership with the Multi-Cultural Health Brokers Co-op.

95 children were introduced to swimming and skating, and 21 children were introduced to hockey, soccer, basketball and badminton in order to develop skills and determine if they had an interest in one of these sports. The multi cultural programming helped instill cultural pride and build resilience in 35 children new to our city.

*Learning through play is critical
to a child's development.*



Success By 6® Initiatives and Collaborations

“I feel the greatest value is that Success By 6® actively promotes the importance of the early years. They give value, recognition and a voice to services that support healthy children, families and communities. Success By 6® broadly represents the interests of all stakeholders re: children and families - this is a valuable role and one that cannot be filled by any one agency, coalition of agencies or families.” - Community member

Aligning Early Learning and Care Services

Success By 6® has been engaged in Aligning Early Learning and Care Services (AELCS) since December 2006. The idea to align early learning and care services was initiated by the Interagency Head Start Network and the City Centre Education Project with the intention of creating partnerships among agencies, funders and key stakeholders that work with children and families to maximize the available resources. The vision of the initiative is to work collectively to create an environment that supports the best possible conditions to promote optimal development for all children. By working cooperatively with community partners, the initiative strives to ensure that quality early childhood services are coordinated and effectively supporting children and their families in Edmonton. The AELCS group consists of a steering committee, which is chaired by Success By 6®, as well as various task groups that focus on creating a strong unified voice amongst the early learning and care sector.

Through accompanying her child to the mega sports program, a single mother became friends with some of the other parents and gained the confidence she needed to connect to community resources.

“The most significant unanticipated outcome is the positive relationships that have evolved the more we work together. There is more awareness and respect about what each of the members contributes to the overall early learning picture.”

“I would say that participation has increased our sensitivity and awareness of the multitude of ways to support families and children. In doing so, we may have improved our transition between programs, appropriately referred to others etc.”

“It has raised the awareness of other community agencies and definitely made our connections to be more intentional and supportive.”

[Link to brochure AELCS brochure](#)

[Link to “Learning to Play in the Sandbox”](#)

Early Years Continuum Project

On behalf of the early childhood sector, Success By 6® received grant funding from the Early Learning Branch of Alberta Education for the Early Years Continuum Project. The three year project will work with 3 or 4 rural and urban locations in Edmonton and Northern Alberta to identify and strengthen early learning and care continuums for families with young children. Each location will be distinctly different in its demographic makeup and service levels. The project will focus on building the strengths of existing community services. Families and service providers will work together to identify gaps in early learning and care services, and to find solutions. The experiences of each site will be documented for the benefit of other communities in the Province of Alberta. The Early Years Continuum Project is a result of the work of Aligning Early Learning and Care Services (AELCS) in Edmonton.

[Link to EYCP brochure](#)





211

In June 2009 Success By 6 began connecting the Aligning Early Years and Care Services group and the staff of 211 with the purpose of increasing the number of early childhood programs and services that would be listed in the 211 directory. This was finally achieved this year. The categories “*early learning*” and “*early learning and care*” have been added to the Inform Alberta database. Information about 211 and how to register was distributed to the 58 early childhood agency representatives at the annual Aligning Early Learning and Care Services celebration in June. Success By 6® will continue to work with 211 to build on the accomplishments of the past few years.

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*Success By 6® is a community initiative managed by
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