



ANNUAL REPORT



2021-2022

MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



This work looks different now than it ever has before. Many of the children coming into Head Start this year have lived their whole lives during a global pandemic and children's development has been impacted in ways that are not yet fully understood. In addition, COVID-19 has created newly vulnerable children whose families are facing economic hardship.

April 11

translates to children's

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

For more information please
email: volunteer@abcheadstart.org

We respectfully acknowledge that ABC Head Start Society operates within Treaty 6 Territory, the traditional gathering place of diverse Indigenous Peoples and the homeland of the Métis Nation; whose contributions continue to enrich the fabric of our society. We recognize our role in creating a just and prosperous future for every child.

EMPOWERING PARENTS & CAREGIVERS TO BE THEIR CHILD'S FIRST AND PRIMARY TEACHER

ABC Head Start's very first mission statement in 1985 included "to involve parents *directly* in the development of their children", a focus we still have today. To advance this mission in 2021, we adopted a program called SPEECHified. SPEECHified is a parent coaching program that gives caregivers the skills to help their child develop speech and language. It is affirming, it builds confidence in the parent and the child, and it allows caregivers to have one-on-one instruction from a Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP). SPEECHified puts the important neuroscience of resilience into action.

"Thank you for the wonderful SPEECHified program. I am happy that I got to attend this program. It was straightforward and very specific. Not only did I get the materials or BluePrint to work on, but you showed me the exact way to apply those strategies. I feel this has empowered me as a parent."

SUBAH MEMON, ABC HEAD START PARENT

IN THE 2021-22 PROGRAM YEAR:



1385 parents and caregivers were given the opportunity to attend the SPEECHified program and send in video samples for feedback and coaching from an SLP.



20 more parents took the SPEECHified program over the summer of 2022.



Occupational therapy was used to consult with families through the SPEECHified program, building unity among interdisciplinary services.



Internal Capacity was built by training ABC Head Start's internal SLPs as certified coaches.



ABC SUCCESS STORY

Jean*, at our Westmount site, was never expected to use words to communicate. He found his first words in our Snoezelen Multi-Sensory room and has developed a vocabulary from there. To see this story come alive, visit our YouTube channel to watch "[ABC Head Start's Snoezelen Room.](#)"



ABC's Snoezelen Room was made possible by the generous support from the Stollery Charitable Foundation.

*Name was changed to protect the identity of the child.

"Thanks for all your attention and support...I am seeing a great improvement."

ABC HEAD START PARENT (WESTMOUNT LOCATION)

"That's one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind."

NEIL ARMSTRONG

MUNA'S JOURNEY AS A MOM OF FOUR

When Muna secured a space for her first child, she was just looking for a safe place that would give her a few-hours break from her new and busy life as a mother. Little did she know at the time, but this small step launched the whole family onto a life changing path.

Her first child didn't talk much and wasn't able to make friends; after one year with ABC, this amazing child was talking, socializing, and finding friends and play-partners everywhere with boosted confidence. Our interdisciplinary team of specialists worked with Muna and her child to facilitate this giant leap towards social inclusion.

While her child was achieving that amazing progress, Muna was joining ABC Head Start's parent group. Parent Groups provide a space to meet and train with other caregivers of small children. She got out of her comfort zone, learned how to get her finances in order, and how to support her child. In her words, "Parent Groups are a push for life, all parents encourage each other to fight for their children."

Her story didn't finish at the end of the school year. Muna's second and third children also joined ABC Head Start! One of these children was tired, sleepy and mostly quiet all day while the other was very hyperactive jumping and moving all around. Through genuine passion and love for the children, ABC Head Start staff met each child's unique needs. For example, one of our teachers noticed a persistent drowsiness from one child and suggested Muna take them to the doctor. The result: the child was diagnosed with sleep apnea and had a surgery to correct it. Suddenly, the drowsy behaviour was gone. By the end of the school year, they were highly social and making friends. The other child, who had been always on-the-move, was able to be calm and focus on activities and tasks in the classroom.

At the same time, Muna was an active participant in ABC's Parent group. While our Family Engagement workers provided useful resources to the community, Muna would support in other ways such as sharing recipes and cooking together to boost parents' confidence and encourage eating better.

"I love to see my children challenging themselves with their peers, they wanted to close their jackets and tie their shoes because their classmates were doing it," Muna said, "It was mind blowing to see how their peers were able to get them to do what we, the parents, couldn't."

The last part of this story is about Muna's youngest, an energetic young child who just joined ABC. Being extremely social and active due to family interactions with the other children and the skills Muna has built over several years as a parent with ABC Head Start, her youngest child enjoys attending ABC's program and being the role model other children learn from in the classroom.



"Thank you so much for all your help. I was stuck in my trauma ways and didn't realize it. You helped me kick-start my spirit a bit more. So thankful my kids went to ABC... I can't thank you enough for helping my family come together again."



YEAR AT A GLANCE...

735



CHILDREN
HAVE A
BRIGHTER
FUTURE

68%



FAMILIES SERVED HAD
INCOMES LESS
THAN \$42,000.
WITH AN AVERAGE OF
3 CHILDREN PER
HOUSEHOLD

97%



PARENTS SAW
IMPROVEMENT IN
THEIR CHILD'S JOY
FOR LEARNING

87%



CHILDREN SHOWED
IMPROVEMENT IN
THEIR LANGUAGE &
COMMUNICATION
SKILLS

572



FAMILIES
ARE READY TO
REACH THEIR
FULL POTENTIAL

1385



PARENTS
& CAREGIVERS
ARE MORE
PREPARED TO
SUPPORT THEIR
CHILD'S
DEVELOPMENT



ABC Parents...



COME FROM

51

DIFFERENT COUNTRIES



SPEAK

43

DIFFERENT LANGUAGES



79%

OF ABC HEAD START
FAMILIES ARE
MULTILINGUAL

TOP 6 LANGUAGES OTHER THAN ENGLISH: Arabic, Somali, Punjabi, Tigrinya, Urdu & Tamil

Did you know that in Alberta:



- One of every four children in kindergarten have trouble or great difficulty in their social and/or emotional maturity. (MacEwan, 2016)



- Centres are 34 times more likely to turn away children with mental health or behavioural concerns. (Penney et Al. 2019))



- Challenging Behaviour is the primary reason parents are asked to withdraw their child. (Penney et Al. 2019))

ABC Head Start Society is a registered charity which has been committed to promoting and supporting children, families, and communities in Edmonton for over 37 years.

REINTRODUCING LITERACY BACKPACK DAY

Literacy Backpack Day is a send-off for our children who have learned and grown so much during their year with us. Each Backpack includes books, toys, fidget and emotional regulation tools, coloring paper, crayons, and other learning materials to keep children's minds and bodies busy during summer. It is an important part of children's continued development to keep making gains during their holidays. Additionally, for many of our families facing financial hardship the literacy backpack ensures their child is prepared with school supplies on their first day of school.



June 22, 2022 Literacy Backpack Day was made possible by volunteers from MHK Insurance, MNP Digital, ABC Head Start's Board of Directors, and community volunteers. Books and school supplies for 351 children were supplied by Books Over Borders, First Book Canada, Echo Promotions, and donations from individuals in the community. We thank everyone who joined us to send the kiddos off for their next chapter in learning and life!



To donate visit
abcheadstart.org/donate.



ABC HEAD START IS READY TO TAKE FLIGHT!

In partnership with the Edmonton Head Start Project and Community University Partnerships for the Study of Children Youth and Families (CUP), ABC Head Start has been a leading part of a three-year research study about children's behaviour. The research has led us to adopt three evidence-based approaches including **SCERTS**, **Safe Management**, and now Alberta's **Flight Curriculum Framework**. Years of learning have led us to this exciting lift-off and we couldn't be more proud of the consistency and quality it's cultivating in our classrooms.

What our staff are saying...

"Social emotional regulation was a big challenge in our classroom and having a model that all adults in the classroom could follow allowed us to have consistency with our responses."

"I rethink how I respond to behaviours and challenges in the classroom, honouring what [children] are telling us through their actions and responses to the classroom environment."

"Overall, I would say that using SCERTS® strategies has helped children feel more included in the classroom, and helped the teachers better understand/ explain goals chosen."

"I have noticed an improvement in my son's behaviour when he's around other children. He now goes around them, and is gentle with younger children."

THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS



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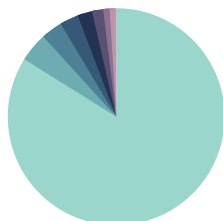
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2021-2022

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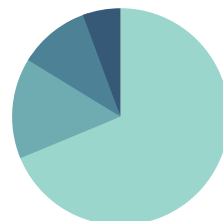
FUNDS
RECEIVED



TOTAL: \$7,411,323

- Alberta Education
- City of Edmonton - FCSS
- Other Government Funding
- Public Health Agency of Canada
- Foundation Grants & Endowments
- Donations, Fundraising, Service Fees & Other Revenue
- Other Grants
- Government Assistance

FUNDS
DISBURSED



TOTAL: \$7,410,242

- Staffing
- Client Transportation
- Program Costs (Supplies/Services/Equipment)
- Rent & Building Maintenance

NOTE: In addition to the \$7,410,242 disbursed, ABC also incurred amortization costs of \$50,197

Central Office:

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