



Richmond Society for Community Living



Infant Development Program

Family Handbook



Sometimes when
your baby is late
in his or her
development,
a little help
can make a big
difference

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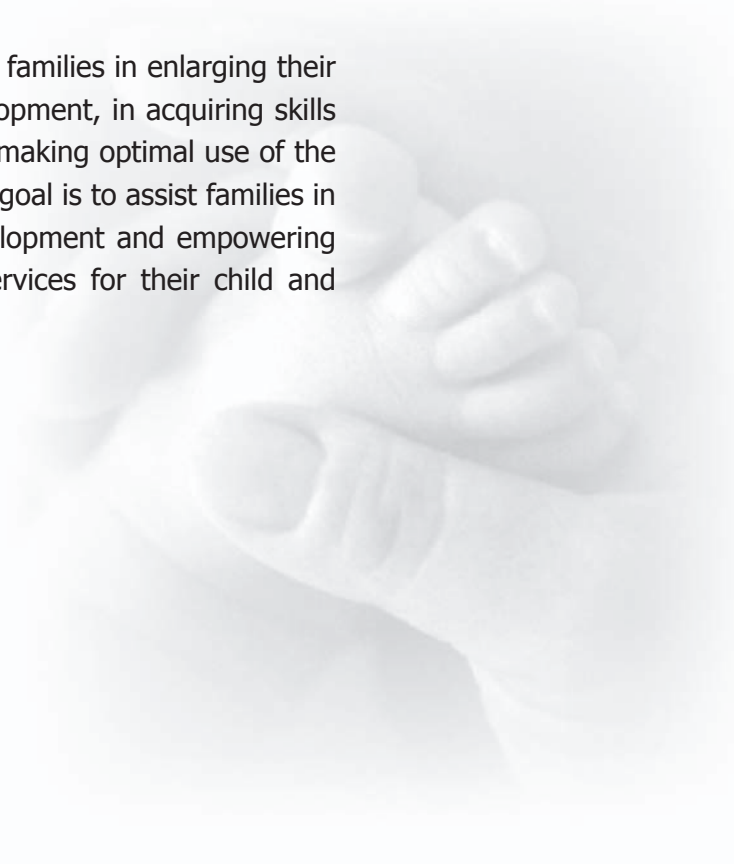
Why Early Intervention?

The Infant Development Program is based on the underlying assumption that “earlier is better” in addressing the needs of infants and their families. Infancy is an important stage of life in terms of the child’s own learning and development, as well as in terms of the development of positive patterns of interaction between the child, family and community.

Research has shown that intervention may be most effective if begun early in the child’s life. Early intervention has a positive impact on the growth, learning and development of infants with developmental delays. It also promotes healthy parent/infant attachment by helping parents to recognize and nurture their child’s unique strengths and abilities, and supports families in becoming active participants in their communities.

The Infant Development Program emphasizes the strengths and capabilities of the infant and family. Intervention is based on the idea that the family is the child’s most valuable resource. For this reason the family is the primary focus of services and the home is the centre around which the services are built.

The Infant Development Program aims to assist families in enlarging their understanding of their child’s growth and development, in acquiring skills for promoting their child’s development, and in making optimal use of the resources available within their community. Our goal is to assist families in understanding and promoting their child’s development and empowering them to make effective decisions regarding services for their child and family.



Referral Procedure

The Infant Development Program has an open referral policy. Referrals are accepted from parents, as well as professionals such as Community Health Nurses, Physicians, Hospital Therapists, and others. Referrals are directed to the Program Supervisor and can be completed on an Infant Development Program referral form or via telephone. Once the Program Supervisor has reviewed your file, your Infant Development consultant will be assigned to you based on the apparent support needs for your family.

We make every effort to provide service to families in as timely a manner as possible. However, from time to time a waitlist for service is unavoidable. When a waitlist is necessary, referrals will be prioritized according to urgency of need.

Involvement in the Infant Development Program is voluntary. If a family is not the source of the referral, they must be informed of the referral and provided with general information about the program.

The Infant Development Program is funded by the Ministry of Children and Family Development. All services provided to families by the Infant Development Program are free of charge.



The Role of the Parent

The Infant Development Program regards the family as playing the central role in promoting the growth and development of the child. If parents are aware of and understand the sequence of development, they are better able to focus on their child's abilities rather than delays, and better able to provide opportunities for their child's optimal growth and development.

Initially, parents may be unaware or uncertain of the importance of their contribution toward early intervention and services for their child. It is the responsibility of the Infant Development Consultant to encourage the parent's active participation with their child's services at whatever level seems appropriate, and to whatever degree the parent wishes to be involved.

Beyond the individual work with their infant, some parents are involved in a variety of other capacities with the administration of the Infant Development Program. At the community level, a parent who has been involved with the program may participate on the Local Advisory Committee, which monitors direct programs. Provincially, parents may be appointed to sit on the Provincial Steering Committee, and advise on the implementation and operation of the Infant Development Program throughout British Columbia.



Infant Development Consultants

Infant Development Consultants are professionals trained to assist you in understanding and responding to your baby's needs. A consultant will visit you in your home and work with you to plan a program of activities to encourage your child's learning and development. All areas of development are considered (i.e. motor skills, language, social, play and learning skills). Infant Development Consultants also provide the family with support in accessing resources available within the community.

Infant Development Consultants have a degree in a field related to child development (i.e. education, psychology, nursing, social work), and receive ongoing training regarding child development and issues related to Early Intervention. Infant Development Consultants are trained in developmental assessment of infants, with a focus on the Gesell Developmental Assessment.

Your Infant Development Consultant will be assigned to you based on availability at the time your child is referred to the program. We understand that at times the "fit" between a family and their Infant Development Consultant may not be good. If you would like to request a change of consultants, you may speak with your IDP Consultant directly or contact the IDP Supervisor, Ann McCormick, at (604) 279-7059.



Cooperation with Other Services

Infant Development Consultants are generalists, working with the family to develop an individualized program to promote the development of their infant. This program frequently includes the involvement of other professionals. Your Infant Development Consultant will provide you with information regarding appropriate services for your child and resources available within your community, and can assist you by making referrals to appropriate services when necessary.

Infant Development Consultants work closely with other professionals to ensure that the services provided to your child and family are delivered in a collaborative and cohesive manner. Since the professionals involved with families may change over time, the Infant Development Consultant can assist the family in interpreting information and coordinating services.

Please note your child and family's confidentiality will always be maintained by your Infant Development Consultant. Information will be shared with relevant professionals only with permission and signed consent from a parent.

Some of the community professionals that Infant Development Consultants work closely with include:

- Community Health Nurses
- Physicians (Pediatricians, Family Physicians, and Specialists)
- Physiotherapists
- Speech Therapists
- Occupational Therapists
- Audiologists
- Supported Child Care Consultants
- Social Workers
- And Others...



Developmental Assessment and Reports

The Gesell Developmental Assessment is the standard assessment used in all Infant Development Programs in British Columbia. It is administered as directed by the family, usually once every six months. This assessment, completed by the Infant Development Consultant, provides a developmental profile of the infant, assisting the family and involved professionals in better understanding the infant's current level of development. The assessment provides the family and the consultant with guidelines for planning a program of activities for the infant, as well as providing a record of the child's developmental progress. A variety of other checklists, screening tools, and assessments are available for those families who do not find a standardized assessment to be useful.

In most cases, a written report is completed based on the Gesell Developmental Assessment. The report is written primarily for the family, and is always reviewed with the family prior to being sent to other involved professionals. Written reports are shared with other community professionals only upon request of the family, and with signed consent from a parent. Some families may wish to receive "informal assessments" without a written report, an option that can be discussed with your Infant Development Consultant when completing your Family Service Plan.



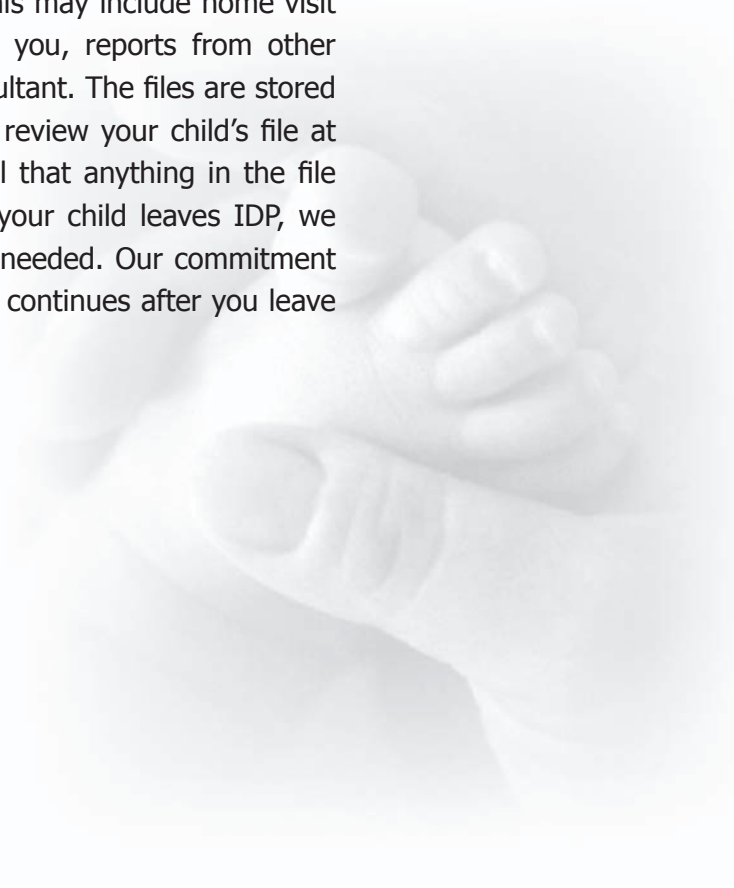
Family Service Plans

A Family Service Plan will be completed with your family approximately once every six months. You will be asked to consider your concerns and priorities for your child, and based on these to set several goals that you would like your child and/or family to attain.

The purpose of the Family Service Plan is to help ensure that the program designed for your child is practical, relevant, and congruent with your goals for your child and family. Our aim is to ensure that the intervention process is guided by the family, as it is the family that will play the most important role in promoting the growth and development of the child.

The Family Service Plan will be kept in your child's file and reviewed periodically to ensure the specified goals are being worked towards. You will be given a copy of your Family Service Plan to keep for your own records.

In addition to the Family Service Plan, other information related to your child's support needs is kept in a secure file. This may include home visit records, copies of notes and reports given to you, reports from other professional, or reports written by the IDP consultant. The files are stored in a locked cabinet in the IDP office. You may review your child's file at any time by asking your consultant. If you feel that anything in the file is incorrect, please ask us to correct it. Once your child leaves IDP, we archive the file and it is still available to you if needed. Our commitment to treat the file as confidential is indefinite, and continues after you leave the program.



Home Visits

Once your family has been referred to the Infant Development Program, you will likely begin to arrange home visits with your Infant Development Consultant. Home visits may serve a different meaning and purpose for each family. Some families wish to receive information and suggestions, others wish to receive affirmation and support. As the needs of your child and family change, the focus of home visits may change as well. Our objective is to work together with you in the way that best suits your family's interests and priorities.

1) Why Home Visits?

As the family is the child's most important resource, intervention is best carried out in the home. You and your child are most comfortable in your home environment, and this is the place where much of your child's learning will take place. By visiting you at home, we can provide practical suggestions that are fun, developmentally appropriate, and that fit within your family's routine.

2) Frequency of Visits

The frequency of home visits is determined based on a number of factors, including the needs of your child and family, the number of other professionals involved, and the current size of IDP waitlists and caseloads. The frequency of visits may change over time as a result of the changing needs of your child and family. Your IDP Consultant will discuss the frequency of home visits with you when completing your Family Service Plan.

3) Scheduling Visits

When scheduling a home visit, try to choose a time that works well for yourself and for your child. IDP Consultants generally work weekday mornings and afternoons, but can occasionally schedule appointments

at alternate times. We will make every effort to be flexible in order to accommodate your schedule, so be sure to let your IDP Consultant know what works best for your child and family.

4) Cancellations

Occasionally families will need to cancel a home visit if the scheduled time is not convenient. We are frequently out of the office so you may not be able to contact us directly if there is a last minute change of plans. Please **leave a message on your IDP Consultant's voicemail** as this is the most reliable way to reach us. We will contact you to reschedule the visit for a more convenient time.

Many of the children served by the Infant Development Program are particularly susceptible to germs. We are sensitive to this fact and will call you to reschedule an appointment if your IDP Consultant is ill. Similarly, we would appreciate you contacting us before an appointment to inform us if your child or any member of your family has a communicable illness (flu, chicken pox, etc.). We will be happy to reschedule the home visit for another time if necessary.

5) Length of Visits

Home visits generally last approximately one hour, but may take less time or significantly more. We try to remain flexible in order to best meet the needs of your child and family. If you regularly feel that you require more time on home visits, please let your IDP Consultant know.

6) Location and Environment

Wherever you and your child are most comfortable is the best place for the home visit. This may be the living room, your child's bedroom or playroom, or even the back yard on a nice day. You may wish to minimize distractions by turning your television or radio off during home visits. Please do not worry unduly about your housekeeping, as IDP Consultants understand the busy lifestyles of families with young children. Occasionally a visit may be arranged at another location, such as at the child's preschool or child care centre, upon request of the family.

7) Siblings and Others

Siblings and other family members are welcome to be a part of the visit and we will include them whenever possible. If you would like to talk to your IDP Consultant without interruptions, you may wish to arrange to have siblings happily occupied for part of the visit.

8) Questions

Some families find it useful to write down a list of questions and concerns before the visit. If you have questions between visits that you would like to discuss, you are welcome to call your IDP Consultant at any time.

9) Home Visit Records

At the end of each visit, your IDP Consultant will write a Home Visit Record which will summarize the information and suggestions discussed on the home visit. Your IDP Consultant will give you a copy and keep a copy for your child's file.



Toy and Resource Lending Library

1) How does it work?

The Infant Development Program has a variety of resources available for loan. Your IDP Consultant will bring these resources to you on home visits, and you may choose whether or not you wish to borrow them.

2) What types of resources are available for loan?

- Toys – A wide variety of toys for children aged birth to three years old. Your IDP Consultant will select toys suitable for your child's level of development to bring on home visits.
- Children's Books – A variety of books suitable for infants and toddlers (board books, picture books, storybooks, etc.).
- Large Play Items – Larger play items such as ride-on toys and push toys.
- Other Equipment – A variety of other equipment such as infant seats may be available for loan. Occasionally items such as strollers and highchairs may also be available.
- Resource Books and Videos – A large selection of books that may be of interest to parents are available for loan. Some videos suitable for parents may also be available. Books and videos are available on a variety of topics, including:
 - Parenting
 - Child Development
 - Play and Activities
 - Specific Disabilities (i.e. Down Syndrome, Autism)
 - And many other topics...

3) Length of Loans

Toys are generally loaned until your next IDP Home Visit, at which time you may return the toy or exchange it for another. If you would like to borrow a toy for a longer period of time, please speak with your IDP Consultant. Some resources, such as books for parents or larger equipment, may be loaned for a slightly longer period of time. Please speak with your IDP Consultant regarding the length of loan for these items.

4) Condition of Toys

Toys should be returned in good condition. If you borrow a toy that has several pieces, please try to return all of the pieces together. If this is not possible, please return lost pieces to your IDP Consultant when you are able to find them. All IDP toys are marked with a number or with "IDP" to help you distinguish them from your child's own toys. It is helpful to us if toys are cleaned before they are returned. However, the toy will be cleaned by IDP staff before being loaned to another family.



IDP Playgroups

1) What is IDP Playgroup?

IDP Playgroup allows parents and their children to share an enjoyable morning out together. It is offered both as a learning opportunity for children and as a support to the parents who attend. Playgroup provides children the opportunity to observe and interact with other children, to play with a variety of new toys, and to learn new songs at circle time. Playgroup provides parents and caregivers the opportunity to connect with other families who share similar experiences, and to relax over a cup of coffee. IDP staff are available throughout playgroup to answer questions that parents may have.

2) Who can attend?

IDP Playgroup is open to all families currently involved in the Infant Development Program. Siblings preschool age and younger are welcomed to attend. Due to the popularity of playgroup and limited space availability, we cannot accommodate families not involved in the Infant Development Program.

3) Locations and Times

IDP Playgroups are offered twice per week during the school year. IDP Playgroups are closed during all school holidays, including Christmas break, Spring break, and summer holidays.

Tuesday Playgroup

Tuesday Mornings
10:00 until 11:15

South Arm Community Centre
(8880 Williams Road)
In the Lounge past the reception desk.

Friday Playgroup

Friday Mornings
10:00 until 11:15

Steveston Community Centre
(4111 Moncton Street)
In the Phoenix Room
across from the reception desk.

Playgroups are run on a drop-in basis, so there is no need to register or call ahead. Simply join us at playgroup when you are able to attend. Families are welcomed to attend the playgroup that is most convenient for them, or to attend both playgroups if they choose.

4) Illness

Some of the children who attend IDP Playgroup are particularly susceptible to germs. Out of consideration for others, please do not bring your child to playgroup if they are showing any signs of a cold, flu, or any other communicable illness.

5) Snacks

Children are provided with a small snack of animal cookies during circle time. Please inform IDP staff if your child has a food allergy and we can arrange to give them an alternate snack that you provide. Disposable cups are available for water. To avoid the spread of germs, outside snacks, juice cups, and bottles are not permitted in the playgroup room. You may take your child outside of the playgroup room for a snack or a drink if necessary.

6) Toys

Babies frequently mouth toys during play, and this is a normal part of development. If your child mouths a toy during playgroup, allow them to finish playing with it, then put it in the sink. IDP staff will wash the toy before returning it to use.

Occasionally playgroup toys will go home with a child in a pocket or a stroller. If you notice an IDP toy in your home, please return it to playgroup or to your IDP Consultant.

7) Parents' Responsibilities

Parents are responsible for supervising their own children at all times during playgroup. Parents are encouraged to assist in making playgroup a supportive and welcoming environment for all of the families who attend. Parents are also encouraged to help set a good example for their children by helping to clean up during clean up time and by participating during circle time.

Leaving Infant Development

When the time comes for your child to leave the Infant Development Program, a number of options will be available for your family. If therapists are involved with your child, and your child will need ongoing support in a preschool or daycare setting, your IDP consultant can arrange a team meeting for your family and the support staff to plan the transition. If your child will not require ongoing support, you may still want help in planning for preschool or other next steps in your child's development. You are welcome to visit us at Play Group, picnics and other events. When your child is three years old, or earlier if our service is not needed, the file will be closed. Your child's file will remain in our archives for many years, but information will never be released except with your written permission.



Notes

