

**REPORT TO THE PROVINCIAL STEERING COMMITTEE FOR THE
INFANT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
SUBMITTED BY ANNIE WOLVERTON
REGIONAL ADVISOR
FRASER REGION**

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Many important events have taken place during the past few months. Attending the CHILD Conference was very interesting and it is exciting to hear in detail about the innovative projects what are taking place throughout British Columbia. Mari Pighini and Lara El-Khatib have been meeting with the Infant Development Program (IDP) Supervisors in the Lower Mainland to discuss working together on projects which will benefit the children and families in the IDP. We are beginning with families the Lower Mainland communities first, before moving into other areas of the Province.

I was fortunate to have the opportunity to attend the Conference on the Newborn Hearing Screening Program. This is an excellent program and the evidence to support the efficacy of early identification of hearing loss is very impressive. I look forward to learning more about this program as it develops.

The IDP Provincial Inservice took place in October and was very successful. This Inservice included IDP, Aboriginal IDP, Supported Child Development (SCD), and ASCD. There were workshops and lectures occurring simultaneously, for staff with different interests and levels of experience. The topics were relevant and very interesting with excellent speakers. Everyone missed Dana being at Inservice, and are glad that she is fully recovered from her illness. Thank you to Amelia Mathieson and the other people who organised this week-long event at UBC, it was a masterpiece of organisation.

The beginning of the week of Provincial Inservice started with training in the Gesell Assessment and the Regional Advisors—Bonnie Barnes, Lynn Krausert, Judith Oldfield and Mary Stewart—all worked extremely hard to make this a successful training. There were a very large group of students with different levels of experience and years of work in IDP. Staff from the Visually Impaired Program took place in the training and they made a valuable contribution to all of us as they discussed their perspectives on our role and also how to modify the Gesell Assessment for children with different types of visual impairments.

We owe our thanks to Mary Stewart for collating the feedback from the Gesell training. Mary put the feedback together in a useful way, which we can all learn from. Overall, the feedback was positive and there were also some comments from the participants indicating that they would like to see some changes in how the Gesell training is delivered. The Regional Advisors have been talking about what changes can be made and how to make these changes.

The request for Gesell Assessment kits has increased tremendously as more staff are being trained in the Gesell. Having the kits available locally is keeping the price still less than half of what it would be if we were to order them from the United States.

The Lower Mainland IDP Supervisors have been meeting every month since September after having not met in July and August. The meetings this Fall have been filled with not only program updates and sharing new resources, but also with very important discussions taking place to do with changes in our jobs. The changes which are being requested have necessitated additional meetings and conference calls.

The Fraser Region and other Regions are now being proactive about addressing the needs of the children in care. We all recognise that this is a very at-risk population of children who have many challenges which include developmental and emotional problems. Alanna Robson and Ken Kabool were kind enough to attend an IDP Supervisors' meeting to discuss their vision and plans for this population of children and we are working out ways to manage taking on this new and important responsibility without receiving any extra funds. All of the programs have always seen children in care. Until now, we have not been asked to see all of the children in care, nor to make these children our highest priority.

Many of the IDP's with wait lists are feeling overwhelmed with the request to make the children identified with a hearing loss and the children in care both priorities and move these children to the top of the list when there are also other children with high needs waiting for IDP. While there is no disagreement that all of these children need and deserve to be seen right away, the logistics of how to do this without additional resources pose some challenges.

The Linked-DISC project is making progress and appears to be a database which will meet everyone's needs and requirements. It is interesting to attend the meeting and learn about the changes being made to modify the database and when and how it will be implemented.

A group of IDP and AIDP staff, including Dana Brynelsen, Diana Elliot, some of the Aboriginal Advisors and the IDP Regional Advisors met last week to discuss the Protocol which has been circulating in the Fraser Region. This document was written to specify how the AIDP and the IDP will work together in each of the communities in the Region. The Protocol was being signed between each of the AIDP's and IDP's within the Fraser Region. During the meeting, we had a discussion and consensus was reached to work with the principles of why we do the work we do as AIDP's and IDP's, resulting in a more flexible and applicable document to guide us in our work together. This document when it has been approved by the AIDP Steering Committee and the Provincial IDP Committee will then be put into each of the Policy and Procedure Manuals for use by all of the programs throughout the Province. It is so important to maintain the strength of a Provincial perspective and to have the guidance of the AIDP Provincial Advisor and the IDP Provincial Advisor to insure the integrity of the Programs.