

Minister of Children and Youth Services to speak at Annual Best Start Resource Centre Conference

3-day Conference will build capacity to address maternal child health in Ontario

TORONTO, ON Feb. 18, 2011 - Best Start, Ontario's Maternal Newborn and Early Child Development Resource Centre is pleased to have The Honourable Laurel Broten, Minister of Children and Youth Services as an opening speaker for their 2011 Annual Conference. The Minister will provide welcoming remarks on Wednesday February 23rd at 8:45am at the BMO Institute for Learning.

The conference will host a variety of speakers from diverse backgrounds who will offer valuable insight on issues related to prenatal and child health. One of the conference's strengths is the integrated networking sessions allowing organizations and individuals to expand their networks and opportunities for collaboration. The conference begins on Tuesday February 22nd.

"Our annual conference allows us to bring together many representatives from a diverse group of service providers who address maternal child health to share information and experiences," said Barb Willet, Executive Director of Health Nexus. "The event is just one of many ways in which we support service providers across the province and continue to convey clear, consistent messaging centered on creating awareness about prenatal and child health. "

This year's conference will include sessions on child poverty and the impact on child health. According to Statistics Canada, in 2008, 15.2 per cent of Canadian children lived in poverty. "Poverty has a significant impact on a child's health and development. There are many things that service providers can do to make a difference.," said Wendy McAllister, Manager of Best Start Resource Centre.

Keynote speakers include Dr. Charles E. Pascal, the Premier's special advisor on early learning, Andrée Jetté, author and public speaker, Jessica Yee, Founder of Native Youth Sexual Health Network and Dr. Stuart Shanker from York University. Over 300 health promotion professionals, service providers and consultants are expected to attend this year's conference.

For the complete conference program please visit: www.beststart.org/events/detail/bsannualconf11/program.htm

Best Start Resource Centre is Ontario's Maternal Newborn and Early Child Development Resource Centre. Since 1998 it has been supporting service providers across the province working on health promotion projects to improve the health of expectant parents and young children. In addition to service provider tools and multi-lingual resources for parents, Best Start Resource Centre provides workshops, conferences and consultations. Best Start Resource Centre is funded by the Ontario Government and is a key program of Health Nexus, Ontario's longest standing health promotion organization.

www.beststart.org/index_eng.html

www.healthnexus.ca/index.html

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