

WHILE YOU WAIT STRATEGIES:

COMMUNITY EARLY YEARS PROGRAMS

“Children’s experiences early in life have a profound and long-lasting impact on their future development and well-being” (Ontario Early Years Policy Framework, 2013) Healthy child development depends on many factors including tuned-in responsive parenting, and an environment rich with play-based learning opportunities, language, music and books.

In York Region there are many excellent publicly funded community based programs designed to support caregivers and children birth to 6 years old: Ontario Early Years Centres (OEYCs), Parenting and Family Literacy Centres, Family Resource Centres, AOK programs, library programs and Welcome Centres. Each one of these high quality programs provides a language rich, stimulating fun environment with lots of opportunities for play-based learning and social opportunities for children. Parents and caregivers are given strategies to enhance their engagement with the child and have many opportunities to learn fun activities to do with their child. Another benefit of these programs is the opportunity for parents / caregivers to relax and socialize with other parents! These early learning environments also support cultural diversity. These programs also support the early identification of developmental concerns as well as referrals to the appropriate services, including our Preschool Speech and Language Program and Early Intervention Services.

Ontario Early Years Centres (OEYCs)

Not only do OEYCs offer age – appropriate play-based parent-child programs (including “Mother Goose” and “Getting ready for Kindergarten”), but they also run Parenting Workshops like “You Make the Difference”, “Nobody’s Perfect” and “Triple P” (Positive Parenting Program).

OEYCs are located in many different locations around York Region. Here is some information so that you can find a centre near you.

Ontario Early Years Centres



A Place For Parents And Their Children.

<http://www.cfcollaborative.ca/resources-for-parents/ontario-early-years-centres/>

Parenting and Family Literacy Centres

Based in schools, the PFLC programs enable families to experience school as a positive and nurturing environment. Because parents are the first and most important teachers in their child's life, the Parenting and Family Literacy Centres offer fun, language and literacy-rich, play-based activities within a school setting. The programs are designed for parents, grandparents and caregivers with children birth to six years old. This wonderful supportive environment helps families to get their children ready for school and for life, laying the essential foundations that are so critical in the early years. In York Region there are five Parenting and Family Literacy Centres operated by the York Region District School Board with the support of the Ministry of Education. www.yrdsb.ca/schools/ChildCare/Pages/Parenting-and-Family-Literacy-Centres.aspx

PFLCs are offered in the following schools:

Armadale Public School Markham; Jersey Public School, Keswick; Markham Gateway Public School, Markham; Sir Walter Scott Public School, Richmond Hill; and Woodbridge Public School, Woodbridge.

Family Drop in Centres

All Our Kids (AOK) offers free drop-in programs in York Region communities. They are places for parents, grandparents and caregivers to:

- Have fun with their kids
- Meet other parents and caregivers
- Take parenting workshops

There are many locations that offer the AOK program. Hours change often, so call the location you want to attend to find out when the drop-in centres are open.

All Our Kids programs are open to people with children up to six years old, including:

- Parents
- Grandparents
- Home child care providers
- Pregnant and parenting teens

There are locations all around York Region in East Gwillimbury, Georgina, King, Markham, Newmarket, Richmond Hill, Vaughan and Whitchurch-Stouffville.

Search on www.York.ca for Family Drop In Programs

Libraries

All municipalities in York Region have Public Libraries. All these libraries offer a variety of free programs and story times that promote emergent literacy and help develop concentration, speech and language and social skills. All Library programs for infants and preschoolers are child-focused, interactive and fun and involve the caregiver. Please search for a public library in your area to find out more.

Public Health Programs

Public Health runs many programs to support families. The website www.york.ca/parenting is an excellent resource for all parents and has connections to all their parenting programs. Recently they have begun to run “Bounce Back and Thrive” which focuses on resiliency and the ability to bounce back from stress and thrive.