



## The Early Years Initiative

Mobilizing Communities to Give Young Kids What They Need to Thrive

### Acton: Continuing Our Work with Families and Children

The Early Years Initiative started in Acton in September 2014 when local principals voiced their concerns about how many children in Kindergarten were unprepared. After looking at EDI scores, the group discovered that 38% of children in Kindergarten had one or more vulnerabilities. The area of most concern was in the Physical Health and Wellbeing domain, with fine and gross motor skills having the highest number of children vulnerable.

Service providers in the area were invited to participate in a session on the EDI / Early Years data in Acton to see what actions this group could take to improve EDI vulnerability and children's development.

A variety of service providers came forward to form the Acton Early Years Table:

- Community Care and Access Centres
- Community Living North Halton
- Halton Families for Families
- Halton Region Preschool Team
- Inspire Halton
- Knox Presbyterian Church
- Links2Care
- McKenzie-Smith Bennett Public School,
- Our Kids Network
- Robert Little Public School
- St. Joseph Catholic Elementary School
- Town of Halton Hills - Recreation & Parks
- YMCA
- The Halton Resource Connection
- Halton Region – Children's Services,
- Halton Hills Public Library
- Halton Children's Aid Society,
- Reach Out Centre for Kids (ROCK)
- Halton Region Developmental Services

Since the initial meeting, the Acton Early Years Table has worked on:

- The creation of activities to help children improve fine motor skills (activity kits distributed to all kindergarten children).
- Bringing Monkeynastix, fitness movement education programs for children, into local schools to help improve gross motor skills (2015, 2016).
- Hosting an annual fun fair with a focus on the fundamental movements and intentional parent engagement.
- Developing a mentorship program with the local high school where leadership students work with Kindergarten children on physical literacy and emergent learning.

More...

We are currently planning our 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Acton Kindergarten Fun Fair on August 30<sup>th</sup>, 2017 and working on developing a communication strategy to raise awareness of early child development among parents of preschool children.

Alison Hilborn, OKN Acton Community Hub Coordinator, facilitates and supports the Acton Early Years Initiative Table.

**For more information about the Our Kids Network Early Years Initiative, contact Shawna Scale, Community Impact Animator at [shawna@ourkidsnetwork.ca](mailto:shawna@ourkidsnetwork.ca)**