

# Parents as Partners: School Involvement Matters

## **PRINCE GEORGE REGIONAL CONFERENCE**

October 24, 2015

**The Prince George District Parent Advisory Council thanks and appreciates the financial assistance of:**

- The Prince George School District
- The Province of British Columbia
- The Workers' Compensation Board of BC
- The BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils

### **Keynote Speech – Building Emotional Resilience in Children**

9:00 am to 10:00 am

#### **Auditorium 103, Main floor**

Dr. Vanessa Lapointe is a registered psychologist who has been supporting families and children for 15 years. Vanessa has been working in the world of private practice for the past 6 years and has previous experience in a variety of settings, including the British Columbia Ministry of Children and Family Development and the school system. Her areas of interest include holistic approaches to the psychoeducational assessment of children, supporting and advocating for children in foster care, and promoting the child's right to attachment through her work with children, parents, and various provincial organizations. Vanessa continues to reach out to her local, provincial, and national communities to ensure that children have what they need to grow up to their fullest potential. As a mother to two growing children, Vanessa strives not only professionally, but also personally to view the world through the child's eyes.

Vanessa enjoys presenting workshops to a wide range of professionals and parents throughout Canada. Vanessa cherishes the opportunity to collaborate with educators, childcare providers, early interventionists, mental health clinicians, and other professionals supporting children in the delivery of a variety of workshops. All of Vanessa's workshops have at their core a focus on encouraging hope, nurturing resiliency, and awakening a collective drive for professionals and parents to be the best they can be for our children.

# 10:15 am to 12:15 pm sessions

## **A: Happy Kids & Angry Birds**

Presented by Dr. Vanessa Lapointe

### **Room 207, second floor**

As a society, we have never before experienced a revolution as swift and all encompassing as the Technology Revolution. The result is we are growing up children in a time when their brains and worlds are being changed and shaped by forces we could not have imagined even 10 years ago. Facebook didn't exist a decade ago. Twitter and Instagram are a foreign language to many adults. And actual play in the real world is often replaced by screen time, with the average Canadian child being exposed to approximately 7.5 hours of "entertainment technology" per day. The challenge is that this has happened so quickly, we have not culturally had an opportunity to adjust our practices and build in safeguards and check-points to ensure that this revolution does not harm the influential brains and minds of our growing children. This workshop will focus on how technology exposure and use might be harming our children, how technology might be used to actually benefit the development of our children, and some ideas and guidelines to implement in our children's exposure to and use of technology to ultimately protect and nurture their well-being.

## **B: Gaming Funds & Responsible Gaming Practices**

Presented by Michelle Albinati, Charitable Gaming Auditor, Gaming Policy and Enforcement Branch and Andre Serzisko, Prevention Coordinator, BC Responsible & Problem Gambling Program

### **Room 206, second floor**

Participants will be presented with information about the use of gaming funds by both DPAC's and PAC's, and will discuss suggested record keeping, financial controls, required reporting, proper conducting of licensed events (raffles), and continuity of information from one year to the next. We will also cover responsible gaming and gambling practices.

## **C: How (Not) to be Effective in Advocating for Children in the School Setting**

Linda Picton (principal of Spruceland Elementary) and Linda McGraw (principal of Heritage Elementary)

### **Room 205, second floor**

Learning to communicate effectively with teachers and other school staff is one of the best ways to ensure that your child's school is creating a good learning environment for your child, and to ensure that your child's school is providing your child with the services or programs that he or she needs to succeed in school. In this workshop, we will learn from SD57 staff effective ways to advocate.

# 1:15 pm to 2:45 pm sessions

## **E: Supporting Children with Executive Function Challenges**

Presented by Dr. Vanessa Lapointe

### **Room 207, second floor**

Our understanding of the brain and what is actually needed for children and indeed, even adults, to be relatively at ease with the day-to-day demands of life in the classroom and beyond has resolutely highlighted Executive Function as a primary area of interest. As a result, the term 'Executive Function' (EF) is beginning to become more commonplace. However, it is a term that is relatively new to the field, with many of us who work to support and grow up children often left scrambling to make sense of what exactly EF is, how it develops, and what we can do to both support its development, and find ways through for children who are struggling. All too often, children who have this type of struggle are thought to be lazy, unmotivated, disinterested, or manipulative, when the reality is their brains actually cannot engage in the expected way. Participants in this workshop will leave with a clearer understanding of EF, the children impacted by delayed development of such, and strategies and supports that actually continued growth of EF related skills and abilities.

## **F: Making Your Life Easier with Bylaws and Robert's Rules of Order**

Presented by Sarah Holland

### **Room 206, second floor**

Robert's Rules may seem confusing, but using Robert's Rules can be a good way to maintain order, effectively run a meeting, and ensure justice, courtesy, fairness, and equal treatment for all members - without getting caught up in procedural problems. In addition, we will cover bylaws, which are the rules that govern how your PAC is organized and run, such as who can vote, who is eligible to run for the executive, what the executive does, and how officers are elected. By paying attention to what the rules are before you run into problems – and changing the rules when required – your PAC can avoid some awkward problems. Participants are welcome to bring questions.

## **G: Making Schools Inclusive and Welcoming**

Presented by Susan Trabant, PG District Inclusivity Resource Teacher

### **Room 205, second floor**

This workshop on making schools inclusive and welcoming for all students, is facilitated by teacher Susan Trabant. Her job is to be a resource and support person for teachers wanting to make classrooms safe for students with different ethnicity, religion, gender, and/or sexual identity. The creation of her position was the direct result of new policy drafted by the school district for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered and questioning students.

## 3:00 pm to 4:30 pm sessions

### **I: Kids' Mental Health: Anxiety, Resilience, and Parent Resources**

Presented by Monica Kriese, BC FRIENDS Parent Program

#### **Auditorium 103, Main floor**

The FRIENDS Parent presentation is designed for parents, families and caregivers to learn more about the BC FRIENDS Parent Program. FRIENDS is an evidence based anxiety prevention and resiliency program used in BC schools to promote the mental health and well-being of all students.

In an effort to further involve parents in FRIENDS, the FORCE Society for Kids' Mental Health and MCFD joined forces to deliver FRIENDS parent workshops throughout the province starting in 2005.

At a Parent Program workshop those in attendance will learn about and see demonstrations of parent friendly resources, tools, home activities and videos addressing how anxiety affects children, how to foster resilience, how to reinforce the FRIENDS skills at home, and where to go for more information.

Participants will gain parent-friendly tools and information to practice FRIENDS together at home and assist them in helping their children cope with their worries, learn how to relax, and much more!

### **J: Treasurer 101**

Presented by Gillian Burnett

#### **Room 206, second floor**

What PACs and DPACs need to know about gaming funds, budgets, finances, and the reporting obligations associated with them. This session is ideal for volunteers who are treasurers, who are considering becoming a

treasurer, or who want to play more of a role in the financial work of their PAC or DPAC. Bring your questions.

### **K: What All Parents Should Know about Weaving Aboriginal Perspectives into the Curriculum**

Presented by Angela Carter, Aboriginal Education Officer, School District 57

#### **Room 205, second floor**

The Aboriginal Education Department of the Prince George School District offers a variety of services, with the goal being to infuse Aboriginal perspectives across the curriculum for all students, as well as by providing direct wrap-around supports to enhance the overall achievement of Aboriginal students throughout the District. BC's new curriculum also integrates aboriginal history, culture, and perspectives across subject areas and grade levels.

### **L: Kids and drugs: A parent's guide to prevention**

Presented by Constables Trevor Hurley and Fred Greene, RCMP

#### **Room 207, second floor**

#### **3:00 pm to 4:30 pm**

Parents, guardians and other adult mentors have a significant influence on children's attitudes and behaviours regarding alcohol and drug abuse. The Kids and Drugs prevention program is a prevention program for parents to help parents learn strategies to prevent their school age children from abusing alcohol and other drugs. Kids and Drugs is built on known protective factors for substance abuse prevention and strives to improve interactions between kids and parents through improved communication, support, decision making and discipline.

