



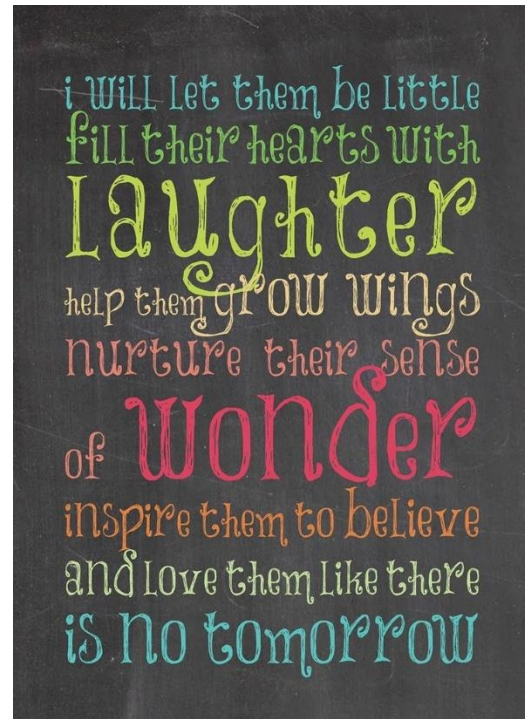
Annual Report 2014-2015



MEDICINE HAT & DISTRICT
Child Care Association
www.mhdcca.com

Chairperson & Coordinator Report

The Medicine Hat & District Child Care Association's 2014-2015 year has been very eventful. We have hosted and participated in a variety of professional development opportunities. We have connected with parents to talk about quality child care and their options in Southeast Alberta. We have promoted child care as a career choice and recognized the hard work that our local Early Childhood Educators do every day. We have allocated funding to our child care members in order for these programs to enhance the quality of care that they offer children and their families. And all of this, we did because of our partnership with the Southern Region Child & Family Services. It is this continued partnership that has allowed us to be innovative in our approach in providing this strong support network for child care centers, preschools, day home agencies, and out of school care programs.



Our membership has continued to grow over the past year. We have reached out again to the Brooks and Duchess area and were able to bring on 3 new memberships through a Child Care Association Meet and Greet held at the Brooks Preschool. In addition, our associate memberships (organizations that are in support of our goals) continue to increase.

Our monthly meetings are very well attended and are held at the Medicine Hat College in partnership with the MHC Early Learning and Child Care program. These meetings allow members time to help plan and discuss our upcoming events and initiatives. This past year, we began holding a separate Out of School Care Network meeting following the regular meeting. The OSC directors that attend have found this to be useful as their interests can be quite different from the rest of our child care program members.

Professional Development Opportunities

Our local Educators remain up to date with the latest research and best practice in early learning and child care by attending various professional development opportunities. The MHDCCA is integral in these Educators finding out about what is happening in our Region and across the province. Each week, the Coordinator creates a child care weekly update that is sent out to over 200 local Educators via email. This update contains information on new initiatives, community events, workshops, etc. This strong connection to front line staff and providers is very important to us.

In addition, the MHDCCA hosts our own workshops. This past June, we invited Christine Jakins from Alberta Child Care Ventures to present on Recruitment and Retention in Child Care. This was in direct response to requests from our members and was chosen due to the fact that this remains a challenge for many of our centers/agencies.

Most recently, we hosted a workshop for over 100 Educators with Presenter Dan Hodgins. He is an early childhood development specialist who is very well known in the child care community. His presentations on Creating Caring and Cooperative Environments for Children and Supporting the Need of Troubled Children were well received.

Recruitment, Retention, and Recognition Initiatives

We know that the most important thing in determining quality child care is the interactions that children have with their professional caregivers. We want our Educators to be considered professionals in their field and to feel recognized for their efforts. With this goal in mind, we have provided a variety of opportunities for our local Educators to network with one another, build relationships and share information. This year, these opportunities included a Bus Tour of local child cares and out of school cares and a Christmas Social Event held at the Holiday Inn Express.



Chairperson Michelle May, Vice Chairperson Shandra Beaulieu & MHC ELCC Program Coordinator Pamela MacDougall at the Christmas Social Event

Educators are often isolated in their own programs. By giving them a chance to see how other programs operate, we are allowing them to broaden their horizons and consider new ideas. Our Bus Tour in October was an excellent chance for our local Educators to do this. This is just another example how the MHDCCA has been innovative in its approach to professional development for our local Educators.

Our 2nd Annual Early Childhood Educator for a Day was another successful opportunity to show off the work that our Educators do. This year, Member of Parliament, LaVar Payne and his wife, Micheline joined us in visits to an approved day home, a licensed child care center and a licensed Montessori Preschool. LaVar and Micheline participated in activities with the children in a hands-on exploration of child care in Medicine Hat. We are looking forward to our 3rd ECE for a Day event in May of 2015 with our honourable Mayor, Ted Clugston.



National Child Day Play Place at the Downtown YMCA

Connecting with Parents

The MHDCCA strives to ensure that parents recognize that child care is a vital asset to our community. We also want to build parent capacity in accessing quality licensed and approved child care. Over the past year, we have continued our website improvement to make it easy to navigate for parents. This website (www.mhdcca.com) contains a list of

our member's programs and agencies. It also has a copy of our Choosing Quality Child Care powerpoint presentation and other links that parents may need when they are searching for child care.

This year, our Coordinator was invited back by Alberta Health Services to present on Choosing Quality Child Care to new mothers on a more regular basis. Every six weeks, our Coordinator meets with new mothers at the Baby and You time at the Community Health Unit. During these sessions, she is able to provide information on licensed and approved child care in Southeast Alberta and connect with these new parents.

We have maintained our strong partnership with the Parent Link Center. Our parent information board is updated about four times a year. This board allows us to connect with a wider range of parents and share information on quality licensed and approved care or early childhood development information.



Art in the Park
Canada Day, Kin Coulee Park

The MHDCCA is an active participant in a variety of community Events. These include Art in the Park at the Canada Day celebration in Kin Coulee park and Flu-la-pol-ooza, a family flu clinic held in October.

For the first time, this year, we partnered with the YMCA to host a family event for National Child Day in November. There were over 250 parents and children who participated in a variety of free activities at both YMCAs. The MHDCCA had a booth at the downtown YMCA location. Our Coordinator has also become an active member of the National Child Day provincial steering committee.

We have built strong relationships with our local media outlets. About six times a year, the Coordinator writes articles for the Medicine Hat News on quality child care or early childhood

development. The News has also written numerous articles on both the MHDCCA's and our member child care programs over the past few years. We are able to connect with the broader community using this approach.

Social media is another popular avenue used by parents in our community. Our MHDCCA and Medicine Early Childhood Coalition Facebook pages both have large numbers of community members. We can disseminate information quickly via this outlet to a large number of people.

Key Relationships

Our membership is quite involved with the Alberta Child Care Association. One of our members is currently the Past Chair and another is a regional rep. This professional organization is dedicated to advancing a unified child care profession by providing support, education and recognition of their members. In November, we hosted the

ACCA AGM here in Medicine Hat in collaboration with a workshop by Dan Hodgins, an early childhood development specialist.

In regard to other provincial affiliations, our Coordinator sits as the Vice Chair of the Alberta Association for the Accreditation of Early Learning and Care Services (AELCS). AELCS is a not-for-profit organization, funded and contracted by Human Services to deliver accreditation services to child care and out-of-school care programs that have engaged in an intensive self-study of their practices. Their role is to assess child care and out-of-school care programs against quality standards of care. Having our Coordinator as a part of the Governing Council allows the MHDCCA to remain up to date on what is happening in accreditation. She is also a voice for Southeast Alberta at this provincial table.

The Medicine Hat Early Childhood Coalition remains a strong presence in our community and is well connected provincially. Our Coordinator serves as the Chairperson of this group of agencies serving children and families in Medicine Hat. This Christmas, a partnership



Workshop with Dan Hodgins
March 2015

between the MHDCCA, the Coalition, LEARN (Family Literacy), and Parents as Teachers allowed us to collect over 700 books in a Book Drive. These books were distributed to Parents as Teachers families in need for Christmas and will continue to be distributed over the rest of the year. Our members and their families were very generous in their donations to this Book Drive.

The MHDCCA wants to support all of its members as fully as we can. This fall, the MHDCCA became a member of the School Age Care Director's Association, a provincial group that works hard advocating for the many OSC programs in Alberta.

This year, we also continued our partnership with the Alberta Resource Center for Quality Enhancement. We regularly update our members on the professional development opportunities and services that ARCQE has available. In addition, 18 of our members are part of a tote distribution service provided by the MHDCCA. Approximately, once a month, our Coordinator rotates ARCQE's Birch Bark Baskets (Aboriginal resources), Multicultural Totes and Supporting Inclusive Activities Bins.

Conclusion

The MHDCCA is a unique organization that utilizes an innovative approach to serving its members. Our ability to listen to the child care community's needs allows us to be responsive and respectful of our members. However, our reach also extends to the broader community to include parents, other service agencies, provincial organizations, etc. We would like to thank the Southern Alberta Child and Family Services for their continued support of our organization. We look forward to 2015-2106!

Medicine Hat & District Child Care Association Goals



Mission:

The Medicine Hat and District Child Care Association works to support the child care community by promoting quality outcomes for children 0-12 years of age.

Values of the Association:

- Communication
- Teamwork
- Accountability/financial stewardship
- Respect for diversity
- Commitment to quality

EXECUTIVE BOARD

Michelle May, Chairperson
Shandra Beaulieu, Vice Chairperson
Lisa Lutz, Secretary/Treasurer
Khirsta McDowall, Past Chairperson

SERVICE PROVIDER

Jennifer Usher, Coordinator

STANDING COMMITTEES

Funding Committee
Recruitment, Recognition, and Retention Committee

**Medicine Hat & District
Child Care Association**

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**www.mhdcca.com
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