

## A Success Story from the InterAgency Head Start Group

The Interagency Head Start Network came together in 2007 to achieve a number of goals, which included better assessment of the need for Head Start services within the Alberta Capital Region, and identifying the existing Head Start services, their service areas and any gaps within the area. We also wanted to work towards a coordinated effort to respond to identified gaps in service and to increase our ability to work together as a collaborative group.

The original members of the group consisted of the Early Head Start Program, Bent Arrow, Head Start Network, Resource Supports for Early Learning and Care, Norwood Child & Family Resource Centre and MAPS Alberta Capital Region.

In the beginning, we created a comprehensive set of maps that plotted out service areas, eligibility demographics and types of Head Start services available. From these initial maps, we focused our efforts in North Edmonton and Mill Woods communities. Other maps that evolved from our discussions included a map by postal code for applicant families and those on the waiting list.

These discussions eventually led to an Early Head Start program opening in Mill Woods in 2008/2009?

In reviewing the achievements of this collaboration we would include the following:

- Have provided leadership at the collaborative planning tables.
- Members have an increased ability to work as a collaborative group.
- Have shifted boundaries to better meet the needs of families.
- Have created a standard intake form for IHSN agencies which documents postal codes of all applicants (to be used for planning).
- An Early Head Start program is opened in Mill Woods
- Have begun to use maps to better align existing Head Start, Child Care and Early Learning programming to meet needs of Edmonton neighbourhoods
  - Have used mapping and postal code data when considering additional Head Start services in Edmonton (i.e. Expansion of Early Head Start / Head Start programs in Mill Woods)

Kelly Hennig, ABC Head Start