

# TIMISKAMING BEST START

APRIL 2015  
 "Just Keeping You Posted"



We'd like to wish the best of luck to Norma Cale, Best Start Project Assistant, who will be moving on to new opportunities. It has been a pleasure to work with you.

## Quality Child Care

Child Care Quality Assurance Coordinator for the District of Timiskaming, Jessica Plante, is working on professional development that aligns with MEDU priorities. "How Learning Happens" and the Ontario Early Learning Framework guide the process in working with child care centres across the District. Successes are measured using the ECCERS, third edition rating scales, to assess the quality of early childhood environments.

Ms. Plante spent time in Hamilton recently with Cathy Robb, a Professional Learning Consultant with the Affiliated Services for Children and Youth. Professional Development workshops have been scheduled throughout the year with the district network of child care service providers and also specific to the Early Learning Program. The most recent was the Science and Nature Workshop. It was presented in conjunction with the Centre pour enfants Timiskaming Child Care Early Literacy Specialist and the Emergent Learning Coordinator. Upcoming is the Outdoor Activities Workshop for ELP. The bottom line? Children are competent, capable individuals who benefit from reflective teaching, in a cycle of observation, documentation, reflection and planning.

	April/May
Upcoming Events	April - Dental Health Awareness Month; Daffodil Days
	April 2nd- World Autism Awareness Day (Light It Up Blue)
	April 3rd - Good Friday - NO ELP April 6th - Easter Monday - NO ELP
	April 22nd - Earth Day
	April 26-May 2 - National Immunization Awareness Week
	April 13 & April 17th - Professional Development Days - NO ELP

Timiskaming Best Start Network partners attended the Health Nexus/Best Start Resource Centre Annual Conference in February. For research and resources: [bit.ly/bscrc2015handouts](http://bit.ly/bscrc2015handouts). Here's what one attending partner staff-member had to say:

"I really enjoyed the conference, especially having had the chance to see the Francophone presenters at the Pre-Conference. It was most interesting. I also really appreciated the information that was given on the subject of physical activity for children. I will share the information with my co-workers and the [Early Years] Practitioners. The conference was very well organized. We also had the chance to get to know the people representing Timiskaming a bit better..."



"Light it Up Blue" and "Raise the Flag" are two initiatives which promote World Autism Awareness Day, recognized on April 2nd. This year marks the 8th annual event. Spectrum diagnoses are on the rise. For more information, <http://www.raisetheflagforautism.com/>  
 Several schools and municipalities throughout the district will be participating. Check local media for more details.

## Who guarantees maternal & child health?

Adverse perinatal outcomes persist in Ontario despite universal access to high quality prenatal care, according to the Ontario Public Health Association.

The key to this seems to lie with preconception health and education. In a 2015 study, OPHA recommends that a shift in public and political awareness of reproductive health needs to happen in order to improve maternal and child outcomes. The study, *SHIFT*, cites that many of the maternal and paternal risk factors for poor birth outcomes - such as lifestyle behaviours - are modifiable in the preconception period.

OPHA notes that among the challenges in implementation of an effective preconception health agenda is the **lack of consistent and ongoing data monitoring**. They call for interdisciplinary collaboration and integrating key messages of intervention at multiple levels within public health and primary health care.

In Timiskaming, Best Start funded the development of a Perinatal Strategy, which is to be implemented by partners of the Best Start Network through 2019.

The study is available at: <http://bit.ly/1E5Wkmd>