

**Early Intervention Summary Report**  
**Reviewing Program from April 2020 - March 2021**  
**Presented at the AGM Saturday June 12, 2021**  
**by Sue Gawne, Program Director**  
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**The Early Intervention Program (EIP)** worked through many challenges during this pandemic year. We had a new families come onto our caseload. Allison and I both had children transition off to kindergarten. We certainly had to quickly learn to pivot into a new way to provide service delivery to our families. As the year progressed and we came to understand that virtual visits were going to be the way for the immediate future, we felt it was necessary to survey the families to gauge where they were at and how they wanted service moving forward. We moved to a coaching model looking at home routines and how we provide support. Some families embraced the new online model, others preferred to stay with phone and email. It was very challenging for all of us, being on this steep technology learning curve together. We learned to be patient with each other and I know it made for stronger team relationships.

Our family online sessions were well attended by team members as everyone was home. Daycares and Preschool were willing to have us virtually drop in. We had fathers, extended family, and the family pets joining visits. For kindergarten transitions, we saw full team participation including some pediatricians and audiologists. We also saw some pediatricians and audiologists attending family meetings, again because everyone was working from home. However, there were also families who didn't have the ability to fully participate for numerous reasons; poor internet service, computers not able to run these new online platforms, difficulties watching through a small screen on their phones and not having enough hands to manage the devices and still actively participate in sessions.

Families surveyed also felt they wanted networking opportunities during this time. Early Intervention Coffee Breaks Sessions were created. We met twice a week (for half an hour) bi weekly, covering family directed sessions, some days were just chatted about how things were going and other times we covered different topics such as Dollar Store sensory toys, Kindergarten Transition and Intervention strategies.

With the demands of online platforms and access to screen performance. The Early Intervention Program updated staff computers. We also felt that families needed better accessibility to virtual sessions. Families were surveyed and given a choice of two types of modular-arms to provide accessibility for their child and for families to free up their hands to be able to provide intervention. Our families have been most grateful for this new versatile piece of equipment. Not only are families using them for devices, they can hold books, puzzles, toys and sensory items – just to name a few uses.

How to provide online training was also a challenge. Our website was something we wanted to utilize more effectively this year. We started working on updating the website to have current information about our chapter and to provide some administrative forms and have training resources for families and Intervenors in a private log in.

Over the year we continued to collaboration with other agencies. I continue to sit on the BC Early Hearing Program, Intervention Advisory Group (BCEHP) advocating for children with deafblindness, and the Shared Vision Group, bringing deafblind early intervention experience and awareness to the Provincial Vision Services. Online Kindergarten transitions were surprisingly smooth this year. All the kiddos attended classes as schools opened up. It was still a stressful time for families and their early intervention teams. As the children moved on from their early intervention team to the Ministry of Education system all online. We continue to work very closely with the Provincial Outreach Program for Students with Deafblindness (POPDB) to make these transitions as smooth as possible for the families and their school districts.

## **Presentations**

Allison and I worked on **two Early Intervention Presentations** this year both Covid related. Everyone was going through this pandemic together, reaching out to support each other was certainly the theme of the year, **how were we all managing?**

**Again, a whole new learning curve, making AND recording our presentations.**

One presentation was for the **Texas Symposium on Deafblind Education 2021 - asynchronous sessions.** This being an International Symposium, we felt that we need to provide the audience with clear geography lessons on the size of BC and where it was located in Canada. ☺

**“Early Intervention Services for Children with Deafblindness and their Families – THEN and NOW”.** We presented on how our program came to be. I little about BC. What our service delivery looked like before the pandemic and what it was like now (then December of 2020). We shared our family transition tools; the **Kindergarten Here We Come!** (the parent Kindergarten transition handbook), along with the **All About Me – brochures and Communication Dictionaries.** and how these tools helped support our families through these milestones in their parenting journey and how the schools were embracing all this information.

The feedback we received was very positive with numerous requests for copies of our presentation and templates for our transition tools. Including a request from Heather Hickman at W. Ross Macdonald.

*We were honoured to be asked by Kate Moss Hurst, if we would be willing to have our presentation archived indefinitely at the Texas School for the Blind & Visually Impaired – Texas Deafblind Project, and the answer was, “yes!”*

## **Our second recorded presentation was for CDBA National**

**“Canadian Deafblind Association – BC Chapter, Early Intervention Program ‘Taking the Detour’”**

By this time (March 2021), we were a year into the pandemic, and were able to provide some good reflections and a sense of where we wanted to be in the future. The presentations were similar. Our program, the tools we use with the families, how we changed to more of a coaching model, with the addition of family networking, Coffee Breaks. After this pandemic detour we see our Early Intervention Families back to direct family service, Sensory Clinics, Summer Rec and the Intervention Program. AND... they will also have our additional pandemic programming that will stay, the Virtual Recreation Program, judicious use of virtual programs, and our monthly Coffee Breaks.

NOTHING COMPARES TO IN PERSON CONNECTIONS...

## **Statistics**

Throughout the year, the Early Intervention Program provided services to 37 children with deafblindness in British Columbia, ranging in age from 9 months up to 5 years of age or school entry. We had 11 outreach families, from Nanaimo, out to Port Alberni, then up to Campbell River on the island. On the mainland we have families in the Central Okanagan, West Kelowna, Kelowna and Enderby. To the north - Quesnel, Houston, Prince George and Burns Lake. Our 26 local families came from all over in the Lower Mainland – North Vancouver, Vancouver, Burnaby, New Westminster, Surrey, Delta, Richmond, Port Coquitlam, Langley, Pitt Meadows, Abbotsford and Chilliwack.

For the period from April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021 we made 263 virtual visits on various platforms - Zoom – Teams – Whats App – Facetime – Doxy etc, whatever worked best for the family. Our outreach families received 79 hours of support during this period.

Kindergarten transitions happened for eight students; all over the province - Surrey, Delta, North Vancouver, Chilliwack, Houston, Kelowna, Vancouver and Enderby. The majority of these families choose to enter the public-

school system, with one student registered in distance learning. Two of these student were on consult and didn't met criteria for deafblindness once reaching school age.

We had one child's vision improved to within the normal range for their age and came off service,

We had 4 new referrals - Surrey, Burnaby, Richmond and Kelowna.

We had six children attending preschool/daycare this pandemic year. Deafblind awareness education, workshops and training sessions were provided online to preschools/daycares along with child development centres in the communities of Port Alberni, Richmond, Quesnel, New Westminster and Surrey.

The Intervention Program, through this pandemic supported 12 early intervention families.

We unfortunately had two children passed away, one in Burns Lake and one in Abbotsford this time period.

Last year we started charging for non-family related inquires for Workshops, we didn't have any requests this year.

### **Partnerships, Training, Education Sessions and CDDBA-BC Professional Development**

The EIP provides direct family support, working with the family's team providing ongoing consultation, education and resource materials. Encouraging social networking and supporting the families in making connections with community resources and other programs. Allison and I continue to work closely with other members of the child's team doing joint visits and training sessions. These agencies and professionals include the Provincial Outreach Program for Students with Deafblindness (**POPDB**), BC Early Hearing Program (**BCEHP**), Deaf Children's Society (**DCS**), Children's Hearing and Speech (**CHSC**), Vision Loss Rehabilitation – CNIB (**VLR**), Supported Childcare Development (**SCD**), Infant Development Program (**IDP**), BC Children's Hospital (**BCCH**), Sunny Hill Health Centre (**SH**), Community Audiologists, Occupational Therapists (**OT**), Physical Therapists (**PT**), Speech and Language Pathologists (**SLP**), Social Workers (**SW**), Nursing Support (**NS**), Family Service Workers (**FSW**), School District (**SD**) teachers and staff, School Intervenors, Summer Intervention Program Intervenors, Early Childhood Educators (**ECE**) and Preschool Support Workers (**PSW**).

***A summary of the online meetings, training/education and professional development sessions for the last year are listed below.***

#### **Professional Development Highlights**

Understanding CHARGE Conference Australia – Online Course

Texas Symposium on Deafblind Education 2021 – with all the excellent presenters

POPDB – Learning Series with Dr. Jude Nicolas – Tactile Working Memory and Strategies

#### **April 2020**

**\*Provincial Outreach Program for Students with Deafblindness** – POPDB and CDDBA coordination of services for children transitioning into kindergarten and agency updates.

**\*Understanding CHARGE - Australia Conference** – 6-week online course

**\*School District # 44 North Vancouver** – Kindergarten Transition – Family and School Staff

**\*School District # 44 North Vancouver** – Kindergarten Transition - Meet with school district staff to prepare for kindergarten

\***CDBA-BC** – Family CHAT – Family Networking

\***Vision 2020**: Pivot Your Business Online with Zoom - Webinar

\***Shared Vision** – Early Intervention Collaboration – Coordination of Provincial Vision Services Agency Updates, networking of vision supports throughout the province for Early Intervention and School Aged Children.

\***School District # 36 - Surrey** - Kindergarten Transition Meeting – Meeting with SD and POPDB.

\***School District #33 – Chilliwack** – Kindergarten preparation meeting with school district staff

\***Centre for Ability** – Child and Family Support Plan – Coordination of services and family plan

\***School District #37– Delta** - Kindergarten preparation meeting, Mom, Nursing Support and Early Intervention Team.

## **MAY 2020**

\***Provincial Outreach Program for Students with Deafblindness** – POPDB and CDBA coordination of services for children transitioning into kindergarten and agency updates.

\***School District #37– Delta** - Kindergarten preparation meeting, school district staff

\***CDBA-BC Family Network** – CHARGE Families – Sensory Show and Tell Kobes/Bryant

\***Quesnel Child Development Centre** – Preschool Updates – New SCD Consultant training

\***School District # 33 Chilliwack** - Kindergarten Transition – Coordinate with TVI re K transition

\***Shared Vision** – Early Intervention Collaboration – Coordination of Provincial Vision Services Agency Updates, networking of vision supports throughout the province for Early Intervention and School Aged Children.

\***Bethany Daycare** – CFSP Update – Coordinate services and family goals

## **JUNE 2020**

\***CDBA-BC** - EIP Parent Chat – Parent get together on Zoom

\***Understanding CHARGE Australia Conference** – 6-week online course

## **JULY 2020**

\***Quesnel Child Development Centre** – Family Service Plan

\***CDBA-BC** – Summer Intervention Meeting

## **SEPTEMBER 2020**

\***BC Early Hearing Program** – Intervention Advisory Group – Coordination of services, program updates.

\***Houston Christian Community School** – Kindergarten Transition Meeting

\***Shared Vision** – Early Intervention Collaboration – Coordination of Provincial Vision Services Agency Updates, networking of vision supports throughout the province for Early Intervention and School Aged Children.

\***Deafblind Summit** – Ministry of Education in – Queensland, Australia/Provincial Outreach Program for Students with Deafblindness and Canadian Deafblind Association – BC Chapter – Share resources and experience supporting children with deafblindness in BC

\***CDBA-BC** – Staff meeting – Develop Hybrid Programming

\***CDBA-BC** – Board Meeting

\* **Danielle Bevan** – Zoom Meeting – Training on Zoom Meetings, setting up Virtual Training/Workshops

## October 2020

\***CDBA-BC** – Team Meeting - learning about platforms, zoom etc.

\***Coffee Breaks** – EIP Family Network – Same topic Tues and Sat – Different topic bi-weekly

\***TSBVI** – Webinar Distance Considerations for Birth – Three

\***Douglas College** – Practicum Student Training

\***Shared Vision** – Early Intervention Collaboration – Coordination of Provincial Vision Services Agency Updates, networking of vision supports throughout the province for Early Intervention and School Aged Children.

\***Deafblind Summit** – Ministry of Education in – Queensland, Australia/Provincial Outreach Program for Students with Deafblindness and Canadian Deafblind Association – BC Chapter – Share resources and experience supporting children with deafblindness in BC

\***Douglas College** – Practicum Student Training – review progress, assist with booklets

## November 2020

\***Sunny Hill Health Centre Vision Program** – Client coordination – Updates

\***BC Family Hearing Resource Centre** – Caseload Updates

\***Shared Vision** – Early Intervention Collaboration – Coordination of Provincial Vision Services Agency Updates, networking of vision supports throughout the province for Early Intervention and School Aged Children.

\***Texas Symposium on Deafblind Education 2021** – Develop Early Intervention Presentation

\***POPDB** – Follow up Houston Kindergarten Transition

\***CDBA-BC** – Team Meeting - learning about platforms, zoom etc.

\***Coffee Breaks** – EIP Family Network – Same topic Tues and Sat – Different topic bi-weekly

\***Douglas College** – Practicum Student Training – review progress, assist with booklets

## January 2021

\***CDBA-BC** – Team Meeting - learning about platforms, zoom etc.

\***Coffee Breaks** – EIP Family Network – Same topic Tues and Sat – Different topic bi-weekly

\***Douglas College** – Practicum Student Training – review progress, assist with booklets

\***School District #36 Surrey** - Kindergarten Information Session – Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services for Students in Surrey

\***Regent Academy** – Kindergarten transition intro to Deafblindness Supports

\***Sunny Hill Health Centre Vision Program** – Client coordination – program updates

\***Houston Christian Community School** – Coordination of Deafblind Supports

\***Shuswap Child Development Centre Webinar** – Trauma Informed Practice – A Compassionate Guide for Caring for Children – Dr. Linda O'Neil

\***Reach Child Development Centre and School District # 37 Delta** – Kindergarten transition intro to Deafblindness Supports

\***Deaf Children's Society** – ASL Classes 1 x 10 weeks

## February 2021

\***CDBA-BC Team Meeting** – Team Training, Deafblind Awareness Planning

\***CDBA-BC** – Team Meeting - learning about platforms, zoom etc.

\***Coffee Breaks** – EIP Family Network – Same topic Tues and Sat – Different topic bi-weekly

\***Douglas College** – Practicum Student Training – review progress, assist with booklets

\***Thomas Robinson Consulting Ltd** – Orientation to Deafblindness and Intervention Workshop

\***Perkins Webinar** – Active Learning

## March 2021

\***Texas Symposium on Deafblind Education** – Various Presentations full week

\***CDBA-BC Team Meeting** – Team Training, Deafblind Awareness Planning

\***CDBA-BC** – Team Meeting - learning about platforms, zoom etc.

\***Coffee Breaks** – EIP Family Network – Same topic Tues and Sat – Different topic bi-weekly

**\*POPDB Learning Series** – Dr. Jude Nicolas – Tactile Working Memory and Strategies

**\*CDBA-BC** – CDBA National Presentation - EIP prepare and record

**\*UBC** – Human Early Learning Partnership HELP – What is and What could be of BC's Children and Families

**\*Shared Vision** – Q & A Presentation with Dr. C. McCradan RE- Vision Therapy

**\*School District # 36 - Surrey** - Kindergarten Transition Meeting\_– transition three students