

Trail Area Health & Environment Program and Early Childhood Development

A child's early years are critical because this is when the brain develops most rapidly. Early childhood development strongly influences well-being throughout life.

THEP's purpose is to support the community of Trail and surrounding areas to live, work, and play in an area influenced by smelter air emissions. A key ambition for the Program is to be a community leader and champion for health and early childhood development.

In 2013, THEP launched the Healthy Families Healthy Homes Program (HFHH). HFHH promotes health through in-home visitations for expectant families and those with children under three years old in Trail, Casino, Oasis, Rivervale, Waneta, and Warfield. During these early years, children are more at risk of oral exposure to lead in their home as they are beginning to crawl, explore their world, and put objects and hands in their mouths. A Community Program staff and Public Health Nurse provide tools, information and support:

- These experts will look more closely at nutrition, diet, and the home and yard environment.
- They will connect families with community resources and groups that support early childhood development.
- They can provide useful supplies to keep dust down in the home environment, such as a vacuum, dust buster kits, hand soap, and lead-safe renovation resources and supplies.

**Research has found
that the potential
effect of enriched early
child development
opportunities can be as
much as 15 IQ points.**



Leadership and community collaboration

How has the Trail Area Health & Environment Program (THEP) strengthened early childhood development in the community?

- Providing public education for community leaders and residents
- Building a broad base of community support
- Stimulating community action
- Developing an educated and engaged core group of community citizens
- Making a long-term commitment

THEP and its programs keep early child development top-of-mind in the public eye.

Collaboration is key!

- Founding member of the Family Action Network (FAN)
- Collaborations that connect families and services and build relationships that increase participation in programs such as Lead Safe Renovation

Reducing exposure to lead and early childhood development go hand in hand.

The Trail Area Health & Environment Program relies on community support and participation. Key to this participation is THEP's engagement in early child development. It raises the Program's profile in the community and strengthens relationships with local families and the organizations that support families. This, in turn, leads to support for environmental health initiatives of the Program.

Bottom line: It's all about the kids.



FAN
Family Action Network

FAMILY ACTION NETWORK (FAN)

FAN is the champion of community action on Early Childhood Development in the Lower Columbia region (Trail, Warfield, Montrose, Fruitvale and Rossland). FAN encourages community organizations to invest in families and young children. It provides support for organizations that help families and for initiatives that go beyond the scope of a single organization. It helps link families to each other and to community resources.

www.familyactionnetwork.ca



“... minimizing lead exposure in combination with improving other important early childhood factors such as parent-child interactions may be the best way to improve developmental outcomes.”

THE CONCLUSION OF RESEARCH PUBLISHED IN 2014 FOLLOWING 30-YEARS OF INTERVENTIONS IN THE SMELTER COMMUNITY OF PORT PIRIE, AUSTRALIA.