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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Readiness to Learn: How well are we doing in preparing our children?

Local research results to be released at upcoming Understanding the Early Years (UEY) Community Forum

February 14, 2006, St. Catharines:

A national study of Canadian kindergarten students indicates that children's readiness to learn may be influenced by the community in which they live. **The Understanding the Early Years (UEY)** federal research initiative has been studying this issue in Niagara Falls since 2001, using the Early Development Instrument (EDI). The project is sponsored by the Early Childhood Community Development Centre and seeks input from the Early Years Niagara Research Advisory Group.

Preparing children to succeed in school is a matter of both parental and public concern. As a nation, our prosperity depends on producing enough suitably qualified workers to maintain Canadian economic diversity and competitiveness. As citizens, our responsible for contributing to this prosperity by preparing our children to meet whatever challenges lie ahead. As parents, we want to ensure that our community provides the support and resources needed. We must ensure that our children enter school ready to take full advantage of all that it has to offer.

An upcoming ***community forum*** will highlight the research and its local impact to-date (2002, 2003 and 2005), and will also launch the UEY region-wide project.

A keynote message on the "**Neurodevelopmental Aspects of Readiness to Learn**" will be delivered by Dr. Jason Ramsay of St. Michael's Hospital - Centre for Research on Inner City Health. Representatives from the District School Board of Niagara, Niagara Catholic District School Board and Children's Services Department of the Regional Municipality of Niagara will also share local achievements. All citizens of the Niagara Region are welcome to attend.

- 30 -

For more information on the Forum or research to-date contact:
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