

Program to help Niagara's youngest citizens

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A local early childhood program and area libraries are teaming up to help Niagara Falls plan a community fit for children.

Parents, educators, early learning and care service providers can attend a series of planning meetings to offer ideas on issues affecting children from birth to age six.

"Anyone with an interest in or responsibility for improving outcomes for children and their families are invited to attend," said Glory

Reffler, co-ordinator of the Understanding the Early Years project.

Starting today, meetings will be at library branches across the city.

The UEY project has been collecting Niagara Falls specific information since 2001 on children in senior kindergarten and their readiness to learn in school, along with community factors influencing children and their families.

"The data is not about looking at one individual child, it's about looking at how well we're doing for all children across the city," Reffler said.

The Niagara Falls libraries support

using community knowledge to meet local needs and have used previous UEY findings to make decisions about programs, book purchases and outreach.

A UEY survey several years ago indicated there were not enough resources for parents with children suffering from attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (AD/HD).

Based on that study, the library subscribed to a magazine on AD/HD and added to its selection of materials that could be helpful to parents.

"The (UEY) reports are helpful to us, as they identify areas of con-

cern," said chief librarian Joe Longo.

The UEY project is sponsored by the Early Childhood Community Development Centre.

The workshops will be held today from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Victoria Avenue library and from 6 to 7:30 p.m. at the Chippawa branch. A third session will be held March 1 from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. at the MacBain Community Centre.

Admission is free but pre-registration is required. To register, phone 905-646-7311, ext. 306 or e-mail lvancier@eccdc.org.