

## Check Against Delivery

### **Official Opening of Parent Link Centre Southwest Location November 20, 2014, Edmonton Honourable Naresh Bhardwaj, Associate Minister of Services for Persons with Disabilities, Human Services**

Good morning everyone.

I would like to also welcome:

- Fred Horne MLA for Edmonton-Rutherford
- Sohail Quadri MLA for Edmonton-Mill Woods
- Councillor Michael Walters
- Present Board Chair of South West Family Resource Centre, Mark Neufeld, and
- Former Board Chair of South West Family Resource Centre, Deborah Morrison

I am honoured to be here today on behalf of the Minister of Human Services, Heather Klimchuk, and as your MLA.

Congratulations to the staff and executive of the Mill Woods Family Resource Centre on its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary, on the Centre's 10 years of Parent Link Centre programming, and on the official opening of its new location.

Through your care and support, parents are connected with tools and resources to help raise their children.

Community partners and all levels of government also collaborate to help make this happen.

The result is positive outcomes, where thousands of children lead happy, healthy childhoods and successful futures.

That's why I cannot stress the importance of collaboration enough.

Raising children is rewarding, but it can also be challenging.

Despite their best intentions, some parents lack the tools, skills and knowledge to help their children develop into happy, healthy and fully functioning adults.

Thanks to this Centre and the collaboration between government and community partners, these parents will get the support they need.

They will receive help with early childhood development and parenting programs, family support, referrals to other programs and agencies, and more.

This is all possible thanks to your leadership and support.

This is vital because we all want what's best for Alberta's children.

And as November 20<sup>th</sup> is recognized as National Child Day, this takes on greater meaning.

As a former educator, I understand how critically important early childhood development is in shaping a child's future.

A child's early experiences shape brain development and influence everything from mental and physical health, to success in school and relationships.

The Alberta government has made Early Childhood Learning and Development one of its top priorities.

It is of significant importance in Minister Klimchuk's mandate letter from the Premier.

Along with our partners in Health and Education, we are developing an early childhood learning and development approach.

It recognizes that a child's development from prenatal to age six is critical for ensuring they get the best start in life.

All of us – from government to community members - have a role in raising healthy children and your partnership is important to making this a reality.

With your support, I am honoured to help open Mill Woods Family Resource Centre's new south west location, which will include Parent Link Centre programming.

This Centre will provide parents and caregivers with resources and tools to provide nurturing and stable environments for their children, so they can reach their full potential.

This is important for parents, families, and all Albertans.

Families throughout the province benefit from the network of 50 Parent Link Centres and two satellite locations across 180 of Alberta's communities.

I particularly look forward to working closely with those here at the centre, and our community and government partners.

I look forward to seeing first-hand how our community is working together to provide support through this Parent Link Centre.

Thank you for celebrating today's opening and I hope you enjoy the rest of today's program.