

Innovative Approaches for Preschool Developmental Screening and Follow-up Services

- Request for Proposals -

Background

Early childhood development is an important opportunity to influence lifelong health, success in school and social-emotional relationships. Since the First Ministers' Agreement on Early Childhood Development in 2000, there have been several initiatives underway in Alberta to develop or enhance programs and services in order to achieve better outcomes for young children. Given the shared responsibility for these outcomes, the ministries of Children's Services, Education and Health and Wellness have been working together in the planning and delivery of programs and services for children and their families.

As part of the recent announcement on initiatives to promote the health of children and youth in Alberta, support was provided for projects that incorporate innovative approaches to preschool developmental screening, assessment and intervention services.

Preschool developmental screening and follow-up services provide a consistent and timely way to identify young children with possible developmental delays. Those children who are identified with a delay by the screening can receive an assessment by the appropriate professionals, followed by intervention services.

In Alberta, developmental screening and follow-up services are offered through public health centres, Parent Link Centres and school authorities. However, the times at which children are screened and the availability of follow-up services vary considerably and coordination could be improved.

Purpose of the projects

In order to improve access to preschool screening and follow-up services in Alberta, there is a need to consider different models and approaches, and to ensure that they are effective. Alberta Health and Wellness has allocated \$3 million per year for the next three years will be available to implement at least three projects in regions that will demonstrate and evaluate innovative ways of delivering preschool screening, assessment and intervention services.

Key elements of the projects will include the sharing of knowledge and experience with other regions in the province, and ongoing evaluation to inform decision-making related to implementation of preschool developmental screening and follow-up services in Alberta.

Who can apply for the funding?

Proposals will be submitted by regional health authorities, but must be developed collaboratively and include participation (at minimum) by the relevant Early Childhood Services operators/school authorities and Parent Link Centres as well as other community partners. There must be evidence of coordination among the activities of each sector. The proposals will consider how to build on current service capacity and will propose new strategies that will enhance accessibility.

What are the requirements for the proposal?

The proposals will meet the following criteria:

1. Proposals will provide increased access, as well as innovation of current screening and follow-up services.
2. Proposals must address screening and follow-up services for children between the ages of 18 months to 3 years old.
3. Proposals will demonstrate collaboration and partnering to support the services required.
4. Proposals will address screening, assessment and intervention services as well as case management.
5. Proposals will include activities and resources needed for planning, implementation and evaluation of the new models for the three years.
6. Proposals must describe how the services can be sustained beyond the project funding .

Who will be evaluating the proposals?

Proposals will be reviewed and assessed by a committee with member representatives from Alberta Health and Wellness, Alberta Education and Alberta Children's Services, as well as external members with expertise in child development, service delivery and evaluation.

What are the key dates for the request for proposals (RFP) for the projects?

Release date for RFP	November 6, 2006
Information Videoconference in Edmonton	November 16, 2006
Deadline for proposal submissions	4:30 p.m., December 12, 2006
Funding allocated to projects	2006 / 2007 fiscal year

Where to find the request for proposals:

<http://www.health.gov.ab.ca/key/devscreensvc.htm>

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