

Mobile community pre-school centre rolling in Brampton [CA-ON]^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

See text below.

EXCERPTS

Classrooms on wheels are helping parents in some Brampton communities steer children in the right direction for academic success.

Three converted recreational vehicles are being used as mobile learning centres to bring early childhood education classes to some of the most high needs neighbourhoods in Peel region. Learning in Our Neighbourhood (LION) is a program that is trying to make early childhood education and other community services more accessible to residents in areas where resources are scarce.

A 2007 survey revealed almost a third of kindergarten students in Brampton are not ready for school and face development issues that could hamper future academic success.

The LION program is coordinated by Success By 6 Peel, a coalition of community groups, agencies, businesses and individuals working to help parents give children aged 6 and younger the best possible start to life and school success. Partners in this program include, the Region of Peel, Brampton Library, Child Development Resource Connection Peel, the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board and the Peel District School Board.

Peel region purchased and renovated the recreational vehicles. The region is also housing and maintaining the converted buses that move to a different location each day to serve communities in Brampton and Mississauga. A \$1.5 million grant from the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration supports the program in both municipalities.

The traveling pre-school programs are offered for infants and children as old as six. Parents and families can also find access to various community services such as English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, employment counselling and other settlement resources for new immigrants.

Vehicles are stationed once a week in communities where availability of early learning programs and other services is low. While services are free, space is limited and participants must register before attending.

Most programs have waiting lists, according to Beth Williams, a spokesperson for Success By 6 Peel.

"The programs are in such high demand," she said.

Interactive play-based activities for parent and child focus on language, literacy and numeracy skills. Parents can also consult with early childhood professionals, access library services and get referrals to other community resources.

Centres are staffed with early childhood educators as well as other community service personnel considered in high demand in a particular community.

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- reprinted from the Brampton Guardian

Region: Ontario^[2]

Tags: pre-school^[3]

family resource programs^[4]

infant/toddler^[5]

public management^[6]

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