

What is the Child Development Unit?

The Child Development Unit at the Brant CAS offers prevention programs at several housing complexes through the city. These programs enhance family's abilities to care for themselves and their children and connect families to each other through community development initiatives. Programs range from community kitchens where families learn how to feed their families nutritious meals on a limited budget to home-work help programs where young children are encouraged to complete school work, improve literacy and foster a love of learning.

We find that families often struggle to make ends meet in terms of meeting their very basic needs of shelter, clothing and food. There are children in Brantford who go to school with no breakfast. Financial shortages however are only one of the many problems that families face. Many families are also struggling with mental health problems, addictions and domestic violence. It is difficult to manage some of the day-to-day issues of living when there is fear. We support communities at risk by offering programs where families can come together to learn, meet their neighbours and find support from each other. The end goal is to build healthy communities where family can find hope and a sense of belonging.

Child Development Unit also offers Parent Child Interaction Program and In Home Family Support as well as a Teen Parenting program.

### **Is Child Development Unit part of the Children's Aid Society of Brant?**

Yes the Child Development Unit is part of the Children's Aid Society of Brant. We do not receive the same funding as the rest of the agency and although we share a vision of healthy children and families we do have different roles in the community.

The Child Development Unit has 6.5 Child Development Workers, 1 Family support worker, 1 Community Developer, 1 Unit Assistant and 1 Manager. The team works to preserve family unity and promote healthy parent child attachment. We operate out of 3 Community Resource Centers at 56 Memorial, 50 Pontiac and 359 Darling St. We also work in the schools at 5 Best Start Early Learning and Parenting Centers where caregivers and their children can come and learn and play together at Notre Dame/Branlyn School, Major Ballachey, Bellview School, Centennial Grandwoodlands, St. James Church in Paris and Patta Cake at the Brantford Library.

Our unit works to make sure that families have support to stay together.

### **Doesn't everyone have enough resources to help himself or herself in Brantford?**

It is hard to believe that poverty is alive and present in our Brantford community. We find that families often struggle to make ends meet in terms of meeting their very basic needs of shelter, clothing and food. There are children in Brantford who go to school with no breakfast. Financial shortages however are only one of the many problems that families

face. Many families are also struggling with mental health problems, addictions and domestic violence. It is difficult to manage some of the day-to-day issues of living when there is tremendous fear. We try to bring support to communities at risk by offering programs where families can come together to learn, meet their neighbours and find support from each other. The end goal is to build healthy communities where family health is nurtured.

Through funds from Brant Food for Thought we offer Breakfast programs twice a week at each of the three neighbourhood centres listed above.

### **What happens to the money that is donated to the Child Development Unit?**

Money that is donated goes directly to supplies for programs for before and after school and breakfast programs. It does not pay for salaries or administrative costs....we use the donation to purchase craft supplies, baking supplies, snack for children, food for programs and homework supplies to mention a few. We often need items for the neighbourhood centers that are not covered under our funding such as kitchen table and chairs or other equipment such as pots and pans.

### **I have a question and/or want to learn more about the Child Development Unit....who can I call?**

Jill Esposto is the Manager of the Child Development Unit - she can be reached at 753-8681 ext. 282

April Taylor is the Community Developer and she can be reached at 753-8681 ext. 336