

■ SOCIAL SERVICE: Broad range of programs offered

Child and Family Centre opens at Colborne PS

NORTH Humberland Today
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COLBORNE - The brain-child of two Northumberland women - Northumberland Cares For Children - may eventually benefit children across Ontario.

Northumberland Child Development Centre executive director Clare Paterson and Lesley Patterson, children's services manager for Northumberland County's community and social services department have set up and implemented two Child and Family Centres - one in Port Hope and one in Colborne which was opened Monday - which could become the blueprint for similar centres across Ontario.

At the end of the day, we will have a parent that has had good involvement, who will know how to do the best they possibly can do to help their child succeed."

Clare Paterson

After attending the release of Dr. Charles Pascal's 2009 report on the need for remodeling the delivery of education and support services for children from birth to age six years, the women sat down and devised a plan specific to Northumberland. Pascal is a special advisor on Early Learning to the Premier of Ontario.

The programs offered are for all children and families. They fall under several broad head-

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ings such as: pre- and post-natal; early child screening, parenting, links to the community, home visitation and nutrition. Each section breaks down into more precise groups, workshops, classes and programs. Early behaviour management is a favourite topic that parents are interested in, Paterson says.

The two introductory sites are St. Mary's Catholic Elementary School in Port Hope and Colborne Public School. In the former, there will be a room designated for activities and meetings, while in the Colborne school two full-time rooms will be available.

Northumberland Cares For Children is open to anyone from anywhere, says Paterson. Children don't have to be affiliated with either school. For the most part, parents and their children can just show up, she says, but some events will require for pre-registration. Calendars with the information about what is offered go out to every child in every school.

"We are hoping for there to be something for every child," she says.

Northumberland Cares For Children has been designed to defragment the individual delivery of services, education and support that already exists in the community. Citing the power of partnerships, programs and services provided

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by Northumberland Child Development Centre, Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board, Peterborough Victoria Northumberland and Clarington Catholic District School Board and many family agencies such as Ontario Early Years Centre, the local health unit, Northumberland United Way and more, Paterson and Patterson say Northumberland Cares For Children will be overseen by a service co-ordinator who is an infant and child development specialist. The services are targeted at children whose age ranges from several months to age six and their parents or care-givers, although children up to 12 will be included in some instances.

To date, many services have been focused in the Cobourg and Port Hope area. With NCC

co-ordinating services, those living in the east end of the County can access the programs in Colborne. As well, transportation to and from the centres is being provided as well as on site day care when parents are taking a course.

"At the end of the day we will have a parent that has had good involvement, who will know how to do the best they possibly can do to help their child succeed," Paterson says.

By September Paterson and Patterson hope to have a good idea of how their program is working. Many benchmarks and goals have been set and by the end of the year they hope to submit their results to Pascal, who has been involved the Northumberland Cares For Children project.

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(From left) Jim Grieve, Assistant Deputy Minister of Education, Colborne Public School principal Pam Buttery, Northumberland Child Development Centre executive director Clare Paterson and Lesley Patterson, children's services manager of Northumberland County's community and social services department chat after the official ribbon cutting for the Northumberland Cares for Children program at the school Monday afternoon.

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