

Investing in Families is Good for Business

Paul Kershaw presents in Kamloops; investing in kids will strengthen our economy

29% of BC kindergarten children are vulnerable today. Most are from middle class families.

The high rate of vulnerability reflects time pressures and service shortages experienced by many BC families, in addition to the specific resource shortages faced by low-income families.

The BC Government's goal to reduce early vulnerability to 15% by 2015 (*15 by 15*) is achievable. It will cut by half the share of children who struggle to hold a pencil, follow instructions, get along with peers, and know 10 letters.

There are many short-term economic benefits from the family policies proposed to achieve *15 by 15*. The long term benefits of 20% in GDP growth are staggering, showing that strong economies require smart family policy.

Full school-day kindergarten for 5-year-olds is an important policy development. It will contribute to *15 by 15* as part of a broader range of family policy changes:

- Enhanced parental leave, taken by both parents, to provide more time to care personally
- Revised employment standards to reduce work-life conflict after parental leave
- High quality early learning and child care services after parental leave through to school entry
- Increased financial support for low-income families
- Monthly monitoring opportunities for children's development from birth to school entry
- Ongoing coordination and integration of early years' services in communities

15 by 15: A Comprehensive Policy Framework for Early Human Capital Investment in BC

Available at: www.earlylearning.ubc.ca

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Family Friendly Toolkit

We have launched our new "Family Friendly Toolkit" - full of resources to help businesses support their employees with families, and make their business more attractive to visiting families.

To request a toolkit contact Francy at United Way 250 372 9933 or francy@unitedwaytnc.ca



A Family Friendly Business - Urban Systems

Urban Systems is a multi-disciplinary consulting firm that offers expertise in civil engineering, urban planning and landscape architecture. They are one of Canada's Best Places to Work and a Top 100 Employer in Canada.

What is their secret? They invest in their staff. In their words "we are 100% committed to working with people on an individual basis to find customized solutions that allow them to live a whole life while still meeting the needs of our clients and the company."

Shannon McQuillan, People Development Manager, says they offer staff True Flexibility. This means that if an employee has to take their child to a Dr's appointment during work hours, they do so.

The company also offers great benefits to staff, including maternity top-up and a newly launched paternity leave option. Fathers can take a leave with top-up pay for up to 25 weeks, or a 2 week fully paid leave.

Urban Systems also hosts yearly staff events that are open and welcoming to staff and their families.

The result of these policies is "happy and healthy" staff, says McQuillan. This means greater retention and thus reduced costs due to turn-over and the loss of knowledge and expertise.

To learn more about other progressive practices that make Urban Systems a family friendly business, visit: urban-systems.com

Who are we?

Success By 6® is a provincial early childhood development initiative dedicated to providing all children with a good start in life. In the Thompson Nicola Cariboo region we have 6 coordinators working at the community level.

Our Business Engagement committee **raises awareness about the economic importance of investing in a child's early years**— it pay dividends for the future of our communities and our province. **Interested?**

Contact Francy at francy@unitedwaytnc.ca