

## THE IMPORTANCE OF INVESTING IN THE EARLY YEARS

Investing in early childhood is much more effective than investing in later development when patterns have been established.

Early childhood is the time when children who are loved and nurtured in a safe environment will have the best chance of growing into caring contributing members

of the community. That's what we need to aim for to have a highly productive society.

To achieve this we need to provide support services for families with babies and young children and including antenatal care.

Benefits of research from high quality early intervention programs:

- \*reduced welfare expenditure
- \*improved school performance
- \*reduced contact with the juvenile justice system
- \*reduced notification of child abuse and neglect
- \*higher employment and skill levels in mothers
- \*reduction in emergency health service provision and hospital admissions for injuries

Long term studies show that these benefits last into adult life. They are measured by:

- Reduced school drop out rates
- Lower incidence of teenage pregnancy
- Increased work force participation
- Reduced criminality

The benefits of prevention and early intervention are particularly apparent for disadvantaged families – helping both children and adults.

(Source: NIFTeY- National Investment For the Early Years, 2009)

There is no doubt that investment in early childhood services in the Manning Valley can make a significant difference to the lives of countless children and their families.

