

Hello and thank you for having me, my name is Tiffany Webber and I am here representing the Care'N'Share Family Resource Center. Care'N'Share is a non profit organization, we receive our funding from the Public Health Agency of Canada's Community Action program for Children and Provincial Funding from Early Childhood Development. Our programs are for families with children ages 0-6 and everything we offer is FREE of charge. I'd like to begin with a little history of getting a playgroup set up in Coles Island. Care'N'Share first organized a playgroup in Coles Island in November 1996 in the Baptist Church, a year later we moved to the Youngs Cove Community Center, and again in just only one year we moved to the Pentecostal Church. Unfortunately Care'N'Share closed our playgroup altogether in January 1999 and we did not reopen until April 2004, at which time we were back in the Pentecostal church. Finally in September 2007 we moved into the Coles Island School. First downstairs in the mobile, then we moved upstairs when they were taken away. It should also be noted at this time we have parents and children attending from the Cambridge Narrows area. We also held a playgroup in this area, however due to lack of space available our attendance dropped and the playgroups have been combined. As you can tell these other spaces really did not work out for us and we do not believe we could re-establish a great working

playgroup in another space. Although I know we have established travelling distances, I wanted to add that the families attending our programs would need to attend a Family Resource Center either in Sussex which I have as 34.3 km, or 28 minutes, from this school, or Chipman which I have as 41.7km, or 30 min with no traffic.

This year alone we have provided services to 13 families, with a total of 21 children. Since coming to the school we have provided services for approximately 47 different families and approximately 77 children.

Currently our playgroup is open two days a week, Mondays and Thursdays.

We share a room with the school, and we use it on these days from 9:30 - 12:30. When providing programs to the parents we also require another room, usually the library. In the past we have also used the room a third time during the week if Monday's or Thursday's the staff are not available on regular days and the school is very accommodating. An example of a program we would do on a third day would be our school readiness program, "Off To School". We like to do this program on a different day than regular playgroup because the children are in one room for their pre-school program, and their parents or guardians are in a different room for parenting sessions. These sessions could include talks from Public Health, Talk With Me, a nutritionist on lunches, or one of our parent facilitators might offer

talks on bullying, routines.

Other programs we have offered to the parents and guardians at the Coles Island Group include Nobody's Perfect, How To Talk So Kids Will Listen and Listen So Kids Will Talk, Basic Cooking, Active Kids, Emergency Preparedness and Response. I just want to repeat that ALL of these programs are FREE. And a lot of times there are great give aways to go along with these programs, for example with the Emergency Preparedness And Response workshop the participants get a large Rubbermaid tote, filled with the essentials to begin a kit like water, a blanket, crank radio/flashlight, can opener, etc and they go home with the knowledge to fill the bucket when they get home. When people in the community have these skills and knowledge, it is not only helping the one family, it is helping their neighbours, the elderly, and other community members. Also, the Care'N'Share is led by a Board of Directors. Every year Coles Island nominates and votes for a new Board Member. Board members learn new skills and are offered training programs when available. Having a board member in the Coles Island community brings skills and essential skills to the community.

We also offer many wonderful programs to the children. Besides our Off To School program our other main program is Backpack Adventures. With

this program we sit together as families and read stories, puppet shows, do crafts, have treats, and each week for the duration of the 12 week program the children get to pick a free book to take home and keep.

Being in the school provides many benefits to the children; it helps them become familiar with the building they will be attending school in, it provides a safe, clean environment for our families to be in. I also feel the school benefits from having us as a partner. For example one of the wonderful programs Care’N’Share offers is called Sudsy Hand washing, with this program the children use cream and a blacklight to practice washing their hands the proper way, the blacklight helps show the areas that might be getting missed during the hand washing. A parent remembered this program from coming to playgroup and recommended it to Karen Ingersoll the K-1 teacher. I was able to go in and do this program with the children as part of their World Around Me unit, and they furthered the educational part by all writing me thank you letters describing their favourite part. Another recent example of our collaboration is that one of the Board Members for our Playgroup asked the Coles Island Fire Department to come to the school so the children could see the fire truck. They were also given a short presentation on the equipment and the truck. Because the truck came to the school the rest of the school was able to enjoy the same

presentation and have a turn checking out the fire truck.

In closing, I just want to say that I believe if the school closes our playgroup will close as well. I think this is going to hurt the families in the surrounding areas.