



2015 Best Start Parent Information Fair EVALUATION REPORT



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Background

The Best Start Parent Information Fair is an annual event that takes place in Brantford- Brant County aimed at parents and caregivers of children prenatal to 12 years of age. The purpose of the fair is to promote early years' programs and services in the community.

It is hoped that educating and making parents aware of the benefits of intervention during early years will increase parent/caregivers' utilization of childhood programs and services, and in effect, enhance children's overall well-being in Brant.

Overview of this evaluation

The purpose of this evaluation was to investigate whether the Parent Information Fair was successful in:

1. Attracting 'higher needs' families (e.g., single parents, younger parents, families from target neighbourhoods – Core, Eagle Place, Homedale-William, Terrace Hill, East Ward)
2. Promoting awareness/ knowledge of programs and services, making families feel welcome and comfortable with using early years programs, helping parents understand the importance of quality child care
3. Encouraging parents to share resources and information with other parents & fostering intention to use programs and services

Procedure & Methodology

Upon exiting the parent fair, families were invited to participate in the evaluation survey (see Appendix A for a copy of the 2015 survey). Surveys were administered to one parent/caregiver from each family or group. Incentives given to each survey respondent included an age appropriate book for each child and their name entered on a ballot to win a prize.

RESULTS

Best Start Fair: General Information

	2015	2014	2013	2012
Date	Sat. April 25	Sat. April 12	Sat. April 13	Fri April 14
Location	Civic Centre (Arena)	Civic Centre (smaller hall)	Civic Centre (smaller hall)	Branylyn/ Notre Dame School
Weather Conditions	Mostly sunny 14.0° C	Mostly cloudy 14.3° C	Scattered showers, high of 7° C	Overcast, drizzle, high of 14° C
Total number of attendees	759 (417 adults and 341 children)	517 (320 adults and 197 children)	325 (205 adults; 120 children)	514 (253 adults; 261 children)

Respondent Characteristics

	2015	2014	2013	2012
Number of surveys completed	113	97	73	64
First time attendee	77 (68.1%)	65 (67.0%)	29 (59.2%)	31 (51.7%)
Gender				
Female	91 (88.3%)	74 (88.1%)	60 (87.0%)	55 (93.2%)
Male	12 (11.7%) <small>Missing = 13</small>	10 (11.9%)	9 (13.0%)	4 (6.8%)
Age				
19 or under	0 (0.0%)	3 (3.8%)	3 (4.5%)	0 (0.0%)
20-29 years	21 (20.6%)	24 (30.4%)	14 (21.2%)	8 (13.8%)
30-39 years	57 (55.9%)	35 (44.3%)	32 (48.5%)	36 (62.1%)
40-49 years	9 (8.8%)	11 (13.9%)	8 (12.1%)	9 (15.5%)
50+ years	15 (14.7%) <small>Missing = 11</small>	6 (7.6%)	9 (13.6%)	5 (8.6%)
Languages spoken at home				
English	102 (90.3%)	84 (94.4%)	69 (94.5%)	58 (90.6%)
French	9 (8.0%)	13 (14.6%)	6 (8.2%)	2 (3.1%)
Other	3 (2.7%) (Sign language, Spanish, Urdu) <small>Missing = 9</small>	6 (6.2%) (Gujarati, Indonesian, Polish, Spanish)	7 (9.6%) (Hindi, Italian, Mohawk, and Polish in 2012 and Cayuga, Filipino, Italian,	4 (6.3%)

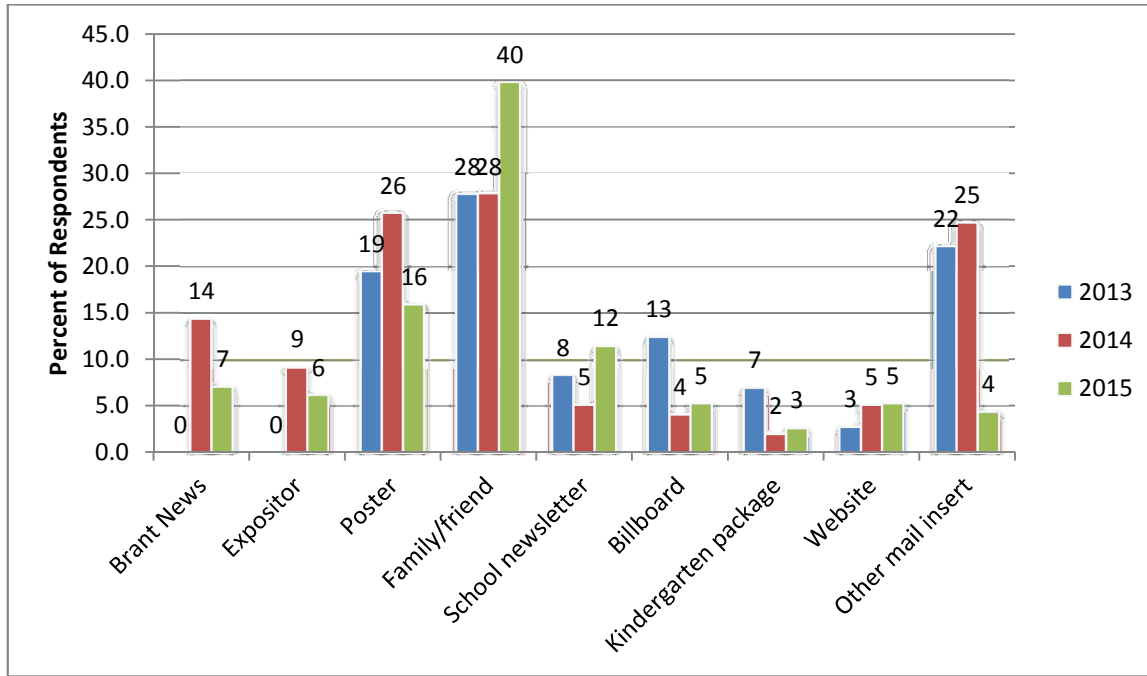
			Mohawk, Ojibway, and Polish)	
Parental Status				
-Parent of a child 0-12 years of age	85 (81.0%)	69 (77.5%)	55 (78.6%)	51 (85.0%)
-Grandparent of a child 0-12 years of age	13 (12.4%)	14 (15.7%)	7 (10.0%)	5 (8.3%)
-Caregiver of a child 0-12	2 (1.9%)	4 (6.7%)	5 (7.1%)	2 (3.3%)
-Other	5 (4.8%) (friend of parents, pregnant woman, student/volunteer) Missing = 8	-	3 (4.3%)	2 (3.3%)
Family Situation				
Single parent	27 (25.7%)	18 (20.7%)	10 (14.3%)	7 (11.9%)
Two adults	72 (68.6%)	59 (67.8%)	49 (70.0%)	50 (84.7%)
Other	6 (5.7%) Missing = 8	10 (11.4%)	11 (15.7%)	2 (3.4%)
Number of children per family				
0 children	17 (15.0%)	15 (17.4%)	11 (15.1%)	10 (15.6%)
1 child	41 (36.3%)	32 (37.2%)	33 (45.2%)	17 (26.6%)
2 children	34 (30.1%)	29 (33.7%)	21 (28.8%)	27 (42.2%)
3 children	18 (15.9%)	9 (10.5%)	6 (8.2%)	9 (14.1%)
4+ children	3 (2.7%)	1 (1.2%)	2 (2.7%)	1 (1.6%)
Total number of children in each age group				
0-2 years	72	43	44	38
3-6 years	73	55	36	44
7-12 years	32	25	21	21

Note. Missing values reported for 2015 data only. The number of responses may not always add up to 64, 73, 97, or 113 for the years 2012, 2013, 2014, and 2015, respectively, due to missing values. Percentages may not always add up to 100% due to rounding.

How respondents learned about the fair

Respondents were asked to indicate how they found out about the 2015 fair. Nine options were provided. Findings indicated that in 2015:

- ‘Family/friend’ was the most commonly reported option (reported by 40% of respondents)
- The least reported options were ‘kindergarten package’ (3%), ‘website’ (5%), and ‘other mail insert’ (4%)



Other sources of hearing about the 2015 Fair

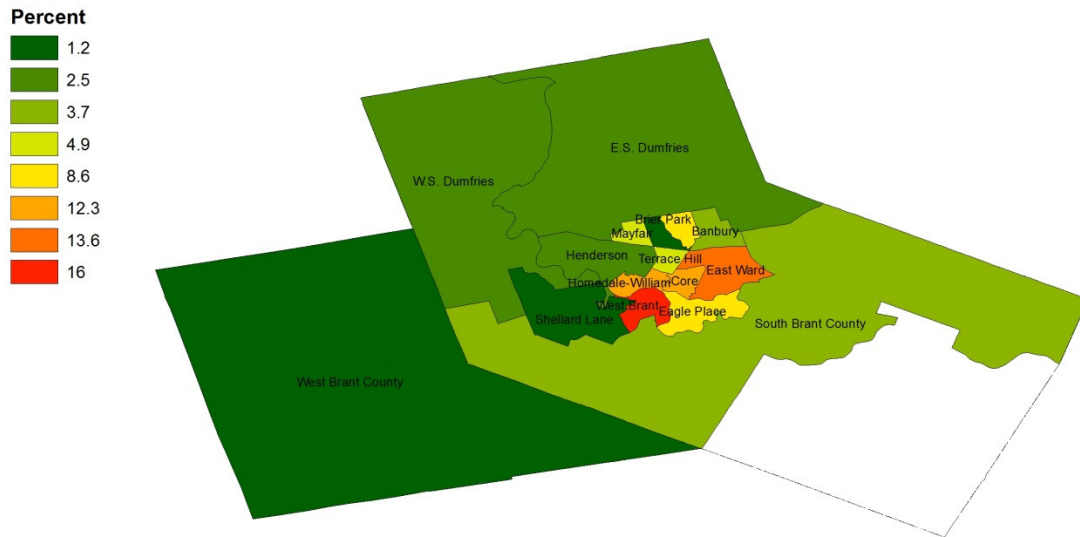
In additions to the options above, respondents were given the opportunity to indicate ‘other’ and then provide more detail. Fifteen respondents selected this option and provided the following responses:

- A drop-in centre
- Aboriginal health
- Come here the last 5 years
- Daycare
- Facebook
- Family Literacy Council Board member
- Flyer at Woodman Mom2Mom
- Friend of committee member
- Montessori
- OEYC
- Ontario Works
- OW worker
- Person
- Sign at Civic Centre
- Work

Where do respondents live?

Postal codes were used to determine which Brant neighbourhoods the Fair attendees represented. In 2015, 81 (71.7%) of survey respondents provided a valid postal code. The proportion of respondents from each neighbourhood is illustrated below. The following observations can be drawn:

- The lowest proportion of individuals came from Brant County
- Surprisingly, Shellard Lane was poorly represented despite being a neighbourhood with many children and the billboard located at Shellard Lane and Veteran Memorial Parkway
- The highest proportion of respondents came from West Brant
- Other well-represented neighbourhoods were East Ward, Core, Homedale-William, Eagle Place and Brier Park



How has respondents' geography changed over time?

The table below shows trends over time (2012-2015) in the proportion of respondents from each Brant neighbourhood. While statistical comparisons were not conducted, the following observations are worth noting:

- The proportion of families from Banbury dropped substantially after the Parent Information Fair was moved from the North end to the Civic Centre.
- Almost one quarter of the 2014 fair respondents were from Eagle Place. This was not the case in 2013 and 2015, even though the fair location remained the same.
- Respondents from West Brant increased over the years

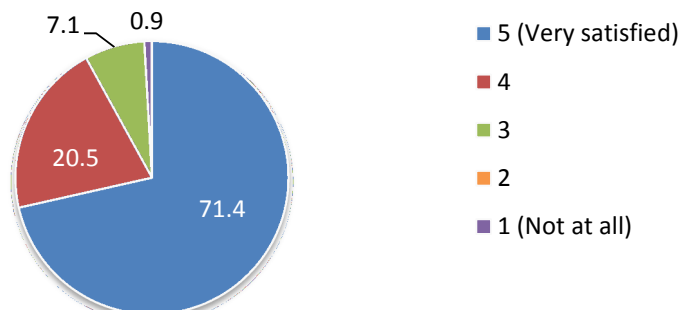
	2012	2013	2014	2015
Number of surveys completed	64	73	97	113
Number (%) of surveys with valid postal code	45 (70.3%)	56 (76.7%)	61 (62.9%)	81 (71.7%)
Neighbourhood	%	%	%	%
Banbury	24.4	5.4	3.3	3.7
Brier Park	4.4	12.5	4.9	8.6
Core	11.1	17.9	13.1	12.3
E.S. Dumfries	4.4	1.8	6.6	2.5
Eagle Place	4.4	8.9	24.6	8.6
East Ward	11.1	7.1	6.6	13.6
Fairview-Greenbrier	4.4	3.6	3.3	1.2
Henderson	6.7	3.6	6.6	2.5
Homedale-William	6.7	7.1	3.3	12.3
Mayfair	2.2	3.6	1.6	4.9
Shellard Lane	4.4	5.4	1.6	1.2
South Brant County	4.4	3.6	3.3	3.7
Terrace Hill	2.2	1.8	1.6	4.9
W.S. Dumfries	4.4	3.6	1.6	2.5
West Brant	0	3.6	13.1	16.0
West Brant County	4.4	10.7	4.9	1.2

How satisfied were respondents with fair location?

The majority (91.9%) of respondents were satisfied with the location of the fair ('4' or '5' on a 5-point scale).

How satisfied were you with the location of today's fair?

(n = 112)



Respondents were also asked "If you could choose another location for the fair, where would that be?" Only a few respondents (n=5) provided suggestions, which included :

- Paris Fairgrounds (n = 2)
- Gretzky Centre
- Somewhere with better parking
- Somewhere with natural light

Did the 2015 fair meet its objectives?

Objective 1 → Attracting ‘high needs’ families (e.g., single parents, younger parents, families from target neighbourhoods – Core, Eagle Place, Homedale-William, Terrace Hill, East Ward)

Comparison of survey respondents from 2012-2014 to those from **2015** reveals that the 2015 fair drew:

- **More single parents**
 - 25.7% of families which attended the 2015 fair were lone-parent families. This is up from 11.9% in 2012, 14.3% in 2013, and 20.7% in 2014.
- **Fewer younger parents (20-29 years old)**
 - In 2015, 20.6% of parents were between the ages of 20-29. This is down from 30.4% in 2014, similar to 21.2% in 2013, and up from 13.8% in 2012.
- **More families from target neighbourhoods**
 - In 2015, the highest proportion of families came from higher-risk neighbourhoods: 12.3% were from Core; 13.6% were from East Ward; 12.3% from Homedale-William, 8.6% from Eagle Place, and 4.9% from Terrace Hill. *In total, 51.7% of survey respondents came from one of these five neighbourhoods.*

Objective 2 → Promoting awareness/ knowledge of programs and services, making families feel welcome and comfortable with using early years programs, and helping parents understand the importance of quality child care

YES! The **primary reason** mentioned by survey respondents who attended the 2015 fair was to **learn about early years services in the community (71.7%)**. Other reasons included:

- Free children’s entertainment (45.1%)
- Free refreshments (10.6%)
- Free incentives/prizes (19.5%)
- Other (4.6%):
 - Checking it out
 - Strong Start Volunteer (n = 3)
 - Visiting with children

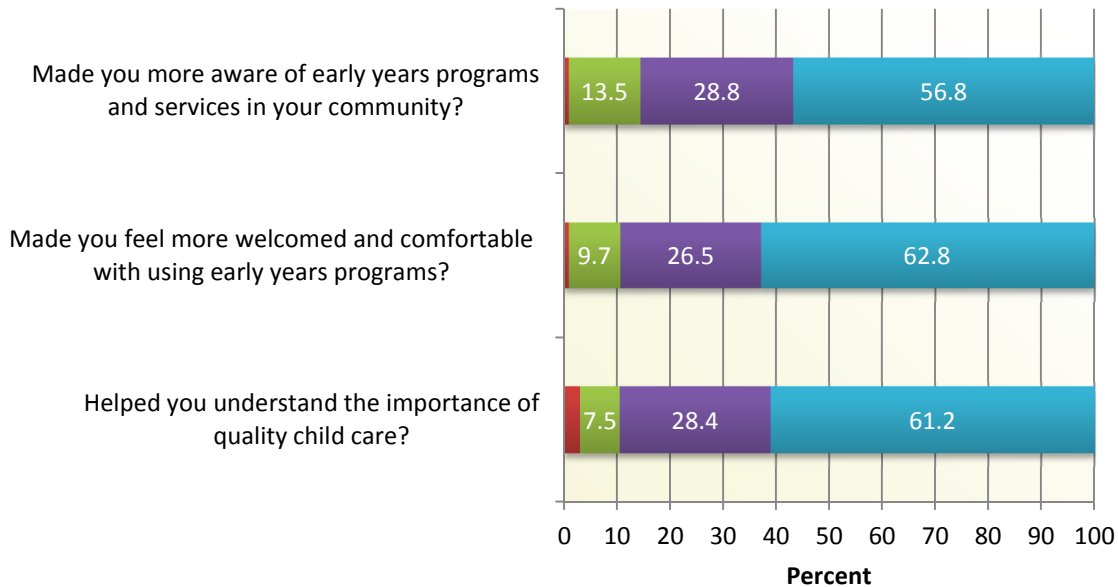
Awareness/knowledge of programs, comfort, importance of quality child care

Three items were used to assess **awareness** surrounding Early Years programming, feeling **welcome** and **comfortable** with using programs, and **understanding** the importance of quality child care. The overwhelming majority of responses were positive (‘4’ or ‘5’ on a 5-point scale), which indicates that upon exiting the fair most families felt that the Fair helped them...

- Become more aware of early years programs and services
- Feel welcome and comfortable with using early years programs
- Understand the importance of quality child care

Do you feel that the Parent Information Fair...

■ 1 (Not at all) ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4 ■ 5 (Yes, a lot)

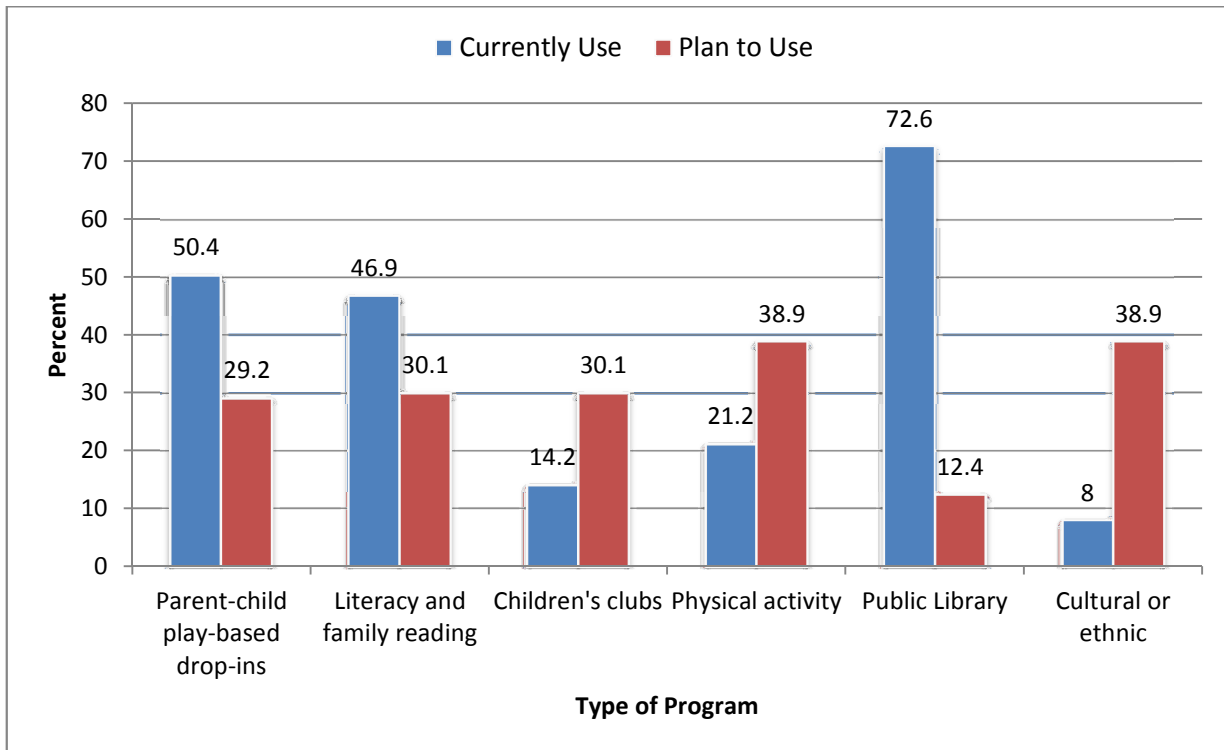


Note. The number of responses obtained for the questions above, in the order that they appear, was 111 (98.2%), 113 (100%), and 67 (59.3%), respectively.

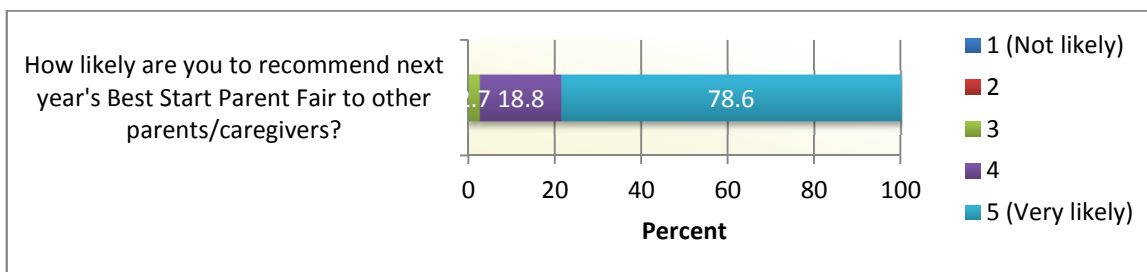
Objective 3 → Encouraging parents to share resources and information with other parents & fostering intention to use programs and services

Current and Planned Utilization of Early Years programs and services

Current use of programs ranged from 14.2% for children's clubs and 72.6% for the public library. For most program types, approximately one third of respondents indicated that they did not currently use the program but *plan to use it in the future*.



The majority of respondents (97.3%) indicated that they were likely to recommend next year's Best Start Parent Fair to other parents/caregivers ('4' or '5' on a 5-point scale).



Note. The number of responses obtained for this question was 112 (99.1%).

Survey comments from attendees

Twenty-one attendees (21.6%) offered specific comments on the evaluation survey:

Positive comments

- A lovely event, so much fun
- Awesome this year - thank you!
- Children loved it
- Enjoyed very much
- Everything was great for children. Lots of information
- Excellent job
- Great Day - thank you!
- Great information fair! Thank you!
- Great job!

- Great location!
- great place, very informative
- great stuff for toddlers
- great workshop
- keep up the awesome work
- Thank you for the awareness program
- Thank you for the great information!
- Thanks for all the information. I enjoyed finding out what is available.
- Thanks for all the work!
- the show was great
- Very informative
- Was great to see a positive event!

Constructive criticism

- Could not find nursing /diaper stations – floor plan needed
- More booths about sports programs, soccer, dance, etc
- Please NO balloons (helium) unless handing them out to children. very disappointing for children
- Reduce sound of magician - way too loud. more parking needed.
- Very crowded and loud. Too many activities (came only for info, not to entertain kids)

Verbal comments offered to organizing committee members

Members of the parent fair organizing committee also reported the following comments and observations:

Positive comments

- Lots of positive feedback on the facepainters and balloon artists
- Elsa was a big hit.....lots of positive comments
- Lots of comments on Snow White and the Dwarfs
- Joan Minnery was amazing....when she sang the kids were mesmerized.....it was so beautiful to watch
- I love that the facepainters stayed later than expected so every child that was waiting had their face painted
- Reptile dude was very impressed with the space and thought it was awesome
- Ample space
- Fun mascots
- Lots of activities for children

Constructive criticism

- The BBQ ran out of supplies: no more chips and pop
- The opposite end of the arena could not hear the Entertainment
- No power outlet
- Some empty "tables/spaces"
- More space needed for entertainment viewing
- A mom and a child were leaving and I directed her to fill out a survey and receive a free book, she went over and then came back and said it was too stressful and left.

- One mom would like to see more activity for older children. Age 9 and up. She thought it was really great family activity.
- Staff and volunteers park behind Civic Centre as visitors could not find parking
- Schedule the fair on a weekend that the carnival is not in town. A lot of families found it difficult to say no to their kids when they were right beside the carnival, and many reported that this created a struggle for them.

From Montessori Academy in Paris:

- Why does the city not cover the cost of such an event, I was stunned to learn that Best Start was charged to use the Civic Center, I would have hoped that our city would recognize the significance and importance of offering this to the community. I understand paying for insurance for the day but I struggle with the fact that they charged for use of the facility. Is there any way this can be addressed?
- From Montessori Academy in Paris: We requested one table and then space for our activity. When the vendor beside us did not show it was requested that we spread over two tables. We did not bring enough material to display to do so, however, my staff did their best to accommodate this request. Perhaps a follow up to vendors in the 48 hrs prior to the event to confirm attendance would prevent this. Tying into my previous suggestion, we had a lot of empty tables surrounding us this meant a lot of parents/families didn't bother to come down in our area so we weren't able to reach out to as many families as we potentially could have. We kept track and we did 86 ice cream cone planters with children.
- Some of the large characters were taking their heads off and walking around. Being involved in Storybook Breakfast, I know this can be terrifying for some small children. Might be worth mentioning to the volunteers next year.
- Is it possible to have some type of carpeting for the aisles or in front of the stage to help absorb the sound? The entertainment was plentiful and lots of variety but just very loud and hard to hear it clearly.
- We noticed that traffic really slowed down after 1pm, would a 9am start be an option to consider?

Survey Limitations

Several limitations need to be acknowledged, including:

- Response bias – Only approximately one-quarter of adults attending the fair completed the survey. It is possible that these adults do not represent the views of the rest of the attendants.
- Missing data – Not all respondents completed the entire survey, resulting in different sample sizes for different questions. This was particularly evident for postal code data where only 71% of respondents were successfully matched to a Brant neighbourhood. Again, it is not possible to tell if the available data is representative of all respondents.

Summary

In summary, the fair was positively received by attendees, and achieved all of its 3 stated objectives:

- Target neighbourhoods were adequately represented.
- Respondents reported a high degree of awareness/ knowledge of programs and services.
- Respondents reported a high level of intention to use programs and services & willingness to share resources and information.



Please return to receive your FREE book!

FILL OUT A BALLOT AND ENTER TO WIN!

Please complete this questionnaire and return to the volunteers. All responses are confidential. Your input will be used for BEST START planning purposes only.

PLEASE COMPLETE 1 PER FAMILY/GROUP

1. How did you learn about the 2015 Best Start Network’s Parent Information Fair? (please check all that apply)

- Brant News ad or insert, Poster/Sign, Other mail insert, Family/Friend, Expositor, School Newsletter, Billboard, Kindergarten Package, Website, Other

2. Is this your first time attending the annual Parent Information Fair?

- Yes, No

3. What was your primary reason for attending today’s fair? (please check one)

- Free children’s entertainment, Free refreshments, Free incentives, To learn about early years services, Other



4. How satisfied were you with the location of today’s fair?

1 Not at all, 2, 3, 4, 5 Very Satisfied

If you could choose another location for the fair, where would that be? please specify:

5. Do you feel that the Parent Information Fair:

Table with 6 columns: Question, Not at all, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, Yes a lot. Rows include questions about awareness, feeling welcomed, and understanding child care importance.

6. How likely are you to recommend next year’s Best Start Parent Fair to other parents/caregivers?

1 Not likely, 2, 3, 4, 5 Very likely

Turn Over with arrow pointing right

7. Please check any programs you *currently use* or *plan to use*

	Currently use	Do not use but PLAN TO USE
Parent-child play-based drop-ins (e.g., Ontario Early Years Centre, Parenting and Family Literacy Centres, Best start Early Learning & Parenting Centres)		
Literacy and family reading programs (e.g., Kids Can Fly, Imagination Library)		
Children's Clubs (e.g., Girl Guides, Beavers)		
Physical Activity Programs (e.g., Boys and Girls Club)		
Public Library		
Culture or ethnic-based programs		
Special needs or children's therapy programs (e.g., speech therapy)		

Please tell us a little bit about yourself:

8. Postal Code: _____ **9. Your Age:** _____ **10. Your Gender:** M / F

11. Which of the following best describes you? (please check one)

- Parent of a child 0-12 years of age
- Grandparent of a child 0-12 years of age
- Caregiver of a child 0-12 years of age
- Other, *please specify:* _____

12. How many children in the following age groups live in your home?

_____ 0-2 years of age _____ 3-6 years of age _____ 7-12 years of age

13. Which of the following best describes your family situation:

- Two parents at home
- Two parents sharing custody
- One parent
- Other

14. Which languages are spoken in your home? (check all that apply)

- English
- French
- Other, *please specify:* _____

15. Do you have any other comments or suggestions?



Thank you for your feedback!