

## An Overview of ABC Head Start

### Introduction

To increase awareness of the dynamic social agencies that serve the diverse communities within Edmonton, this *fACT Sheet* provides a summary of **ABC Head Start Society** and its history, mission, and the services it offers.

### About ABC Head Start

ABC Head Start Society is a registered charity that has been committed to promoting and supporting strong children, families, and communities in Edmonton for over 35 years. By giving children the best possible early learning and development opportunities in life, ABC Head Start ensures the future well-being and prosperity of families and communities.

Head Start programming began in the 1960s and is globally recognized as one of the most effective ways to break the cycle of poverty for children and families. Early intervention provides improved educational outcomes, has a long-term impact on self-esteem and self-control and shows improved intergenerational outcomes through positive parenting strategies and strengthened social connections.

ABC Head Start is committed to inclusive, equitable, and diverse programming to create safe spaces for children and families to thrive as valued members of our community.

### What Do They Offer?

Programs include:

**Quality Early Learning Education:** ABC Head Start has 14 classrooms, in 5 locations throughout the city, making ABC Head Start Society the largest Head Start program in Edmonton. They offer both full and half-day classes, 3 or 4 days per week, for children ages 2.8 to 5 years old.

Their programs provide educational opportunities using the foundation of a play-based philosophy, with an interdisciplinary team working together to meet the unique needs of each child.

**Family Programs:** ABC Head Start believes parents and caregivers are the first and most important teachers in a child's life and aims to support that role by providing family support and education on topics relevant to family life. Workshops topics include:

- Kids and Technology
- Speech and Communication
- Understanding Children's Behaviour
- Establishing Routines
- Importance of Play
- Financial Literacy

- Understanding Autism
- Fine and Gross Motor Skills
- Toilet Training Readiness
- Feeding Picky Eaters
- Choosing a School for Kindergarten
- others on health, parenting, and child development

**Parenting Courses:** ABC Head Start offers a variety of parenting courses including:

- Active Parenting
- Kids Have Stress Too
- Building Stronger Kids
- Intercultural Parenting

They also offer parent and caregiver support groups to increase social connections and parental well-being, as well as work with families to connect them to other community supports and programs as needed.

**Family Wellness Summer Program:** ABC Head Start provides summer programming at three of their locations. Each two-week session provides opportunities for children ages 4-9 to experience a variety of activities, with a focus on art, science, and physical play.

### Who Do They Serve?

The organization supports over 700 children and families every year through their programs. Eighty-two percent of engaged families originate from somewhere other than Canada, representing 64 different countries and speaking 50 different languages! Eighty-five percent of engaged families have incomes of less than \$42,000, with an average of three children per household.

ABC Head Start primarily accepts children with developmental concerns such as speech and communication delays, behavioural challenges, and fine and gross motor skills.

### The ABC Head Start Team

Each ABC Head Start site is comprised of a highly skilled interdisciplinary team to address the complex needs of the children and families in their programs. Teachers, Early Childhood Educators, Speech Language Pathologists and Assistants, Behaviour Specialists, Occupational Therapists, Family Engagement and Community Engagement Workers all collaborate to create personalized learning plans to build on the strengths of each child and address learning needs.

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### Community Impact

Every year ABC Head Start staff hear stories from families about how they see improvements in their child's speech, communication skills, and behaviour. These programs help set children up for success in Kindergarten and beyond, as well as help families build resilience and increase their capacity to meet their needs.

### How Can You Support ABC Head Start?

There are three ways to give to support ABC Head Start!

- 1) Make a donation online at [www.abcheadstart.org/donate](http://www.abcheadstart.org/donate)
- 2) Mail a cheque (payable to ABC Head Start Society) to:

ABC Head Start  
12122 68 Street NW  
Edmonton, AB  
T5B 1R1

- 3) Provide goods & services: email [giving@abcheadstart.org](mailto:giving@abcheadstart.org)

### Contact

Email: [info@abcheadstart.org](mailto:info@abcheadstart.org)  
Call: [780-461-5353](tel:780-461-5353)

Central Office:  
ABC Head Start Society  
Jerry Forbes Centre  
12122 68 Street NW  
Edmonton, AB T5B 1R1



*Special thanks to ABC Head Start for providing the content included in this fACT sheet.*

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The Edmonton Social Planning Council is an independent, non-profit, charitable organization focused on social research.

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