

### *Helping parents be the best they can be*

2013 was a challenge — from the June flood to upheaval in government programs, Connections struggled to maintain, never mind grow, supports for more families in need. But, we did it. We had our best year ever. It took hard work, and our focus: **parents love their children**— they just need a little extra help to manage.

### **Why we do what we do**— Parents with cognitive challenges:

1. Love and care for children like any parents do.
2. Respond as individuals to the challenges of parenting.
3. Are successful when they themselves have been loved and cared for and have observed positive parenting practices.
4. Want their children to grow and be happy.
5. Want to be a good parent.
6. Often have skills and are exceptionally resourceful.
7. Often need support through child development stages.

8. Do better when supports match their learning styles.



**Connections Counselling started with a belief:** Adults with developmental disabilities deserve a chance to be parents if they choose. For 24 years, Connections has provided In-Home and Counselling supports to families in which a parent has a cognitive challenge (including brain injury and Fetal Alcohol Syndrome). In 2013, we supported **91 families** to manage safe and nurturing homes for their children. Our families range from one child to several, from newborn to late teens. At all of those ages and stages of family life, the questions and concerns vary -- and so Connections support does, too.



Connections is a registered charity BN # 890700347RR0001

### *How you can help...*

1. Donate Walmart or Superstore gift cards, transit passes or cash — extra support for our families.
  2. Sponsor our Picnic or Christmas party
  3. Volunteer as a Director or at a Connections casino
  4. Watch for 2015 **25th Anniversary** events!
- Contact Erin - [erinw@connections counselling.ab.ca](mailto:erinw@connections counselling.ab.ca)

# Strong and stable families

## How we work

Connections visits families in their home, either once or twice per week, to support parent-set goals. Research (Timchuk, Booth) shows that parents do best with **consistent support**. The reality is that, most often, the barriers to success are poverty, lack of natural supports like extended family and involved neighbours, and the effects of prejudice from teachers and others. In-Home support is strengths-based and teaches parenting skills like ages and stages of development, the basics of establishing routines, nutrition, hygiene, and discipline techniques.



## How we support our families:

- ◆ Persons with Developmental Disabilities and Child and Family Services (Alberta Government) refer and pay for our services
- ◆ United Way of Calgary is a long-term supporter
- ◆ Donations allow us to support additional, unfunded families
- ◆ Counselling is also provided to parents and family members

### The Numbers — 2013

- ◆ **91 families** (306 individuals) supported in 2013, up 12% from 2012 and 146% since 2010
- ◆ **33 families** were able to have child intervention files closed
- ◆ **22 families remain on our waiting list**, many with no source of funding
- ◆ In 2013, Connections carried out a **\$660,000 budget**. (under \$10,000 per family per year, compared to \$27,000 per family for foster care)
- ◆ 90% of budget is salaries; 85% of salaries are front-line team
- ◆ **2014 budget is \$765,000** - needing \$85K in donations
- ◆ In 2014...add family group programming, update website and plan for 25th anniversary in 2015

## Support for the whole family...

Connections adds to In-Home support with a wide array of family activities and workshops. From Mother Goose programs that teach parents how to play and bond with their babies to an annual family picnic and Christmas party to group programs that teach cooking, crafts, budgeting and parenting topics, Connections becomes an extended network -- a community of support. Family activities with In-Home support combine to help families build confidence and resilience. **Because of Connections, families are stronger and our Calgary community is strengthened right along with them.**

Connections Counselling and Consulting Foundation

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