



# STRATEGIC SOCIAL PLAN

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

# SSP Connections

a bulletin about the Strategic Social Plan

## Northeast Avalon makes Early Childhood top priority

**W**hile there is no shortage of issues to tackle, the Northeast Avalon Region Steering Committee for the Strategic Social Plan is focusing on Early Childhood as its priority for the next year.

"We chose to look at early childhood within the context of the child, the family and community," says Steering Committee Chair Joan Dawe. "There are many long-term benefits to prevention and early intervention, and addressing early childhood issues helps to develop the healthy, prosperous communities envisaged in the SSP."

The committee is gathering information on early

childhood programs and services from a variety of sources, including community groups, university researchers and government officials.

To ensure that evidence is collected to support its work, the Newfoundland Statistics Agency is helping the committee develop a database for collecting and measuring early childhood data.

"It's essential that we have good data to guide our work," says Joan. "We need to know our strengths and our weaknesses, and where we should be focusing our energies."

The steering committee plans to use this kind of single-issue approach as a model for addressing further issues.

The challenge for SSP committees is to deal with issues important to all partners around the table, and not just to a single organization.

"Early Childhood certainly is one of these because it has implications for all our partners," says Joan.

The Northeast Avalon Region Steering Committee of the SSP identifies ways for its partners to work with each other and with communities to improve long term opportunities for people, and better coordinate service. Contact Regional Planner Gillian Janes for more information at: 758-7474, or email her:

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## Social Policy Ministers visit SSP Regions

The Social Policy Committee of Cabinet is traveling the province on working visits to the six SSP regions.

"These meetings give us a chance to see how committees are implementing the plan, and reinforce our commitment to the SSP," says Judy Foote, Chair of the Social Policy Committee, and Minister of Education.

### Upcoming visits

- Avalon - Feb. 25, 26
  - Eastern - Feb. 26, 27
  - Northeast Avalon - March 6
  - Cormack Grenfell - to be scheduled
- Ministers have visited the Labrador and Central regions.

### The SSP in action

In Labrador the SSP Steering Committee recently held a health and recreation summit that brought together communities from across the region. With such immense geography and communities that are widely scattered, they met to talk about recreation as a way to bring people together, build healthy communities and develop leadership skills. The committee is now following up with stakeholders to develop community recreation plans.