



Building the new Ministry of Children and Youth Services

working together

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## Children and Youth Summit a great success

### Message from Deputy Minister Jessica Hill

Today at the Ontario Children and Youth Summit, Minister Bountrogianni received a standing ovation after she announced several initiatives to help children get the best start in life. She also provided an update on Best Start, the long-term plan which is one of the key priorities for our ministry's work this year and in the coming years.

Today's announcement was a milestone event. We are focusing our planning efforts on results, and with Best Start, the result we want is a very important one: "more kids arriving at school ready to learn."

Being ready to learn is fundamental to the trajectory of a young person's future. Best Start has the potential to have a positive impact across the entire range of programs serving children, youth and families. So you will want to learn more about Best Start, even if you work in a program that focuses on older children or youth.

I encourage you to take some time to read through today's [news release and backgrounders](#) on our website. There is a lot to absorb, as you will see. In the materials there is also very useful information about how the government is moving forward on the child and youth agenda across many ministries.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the staff who developed the policy and the plan for Best Start. Everyone in the ministry played a part. I also want to thank everyone in advance for the work that will need to be done. I like to say that we need to be a "nimble, high-performing organization" and Best Start will definitely require us to be exactly that.

I also want to say a huge thank-you to the ministry staff who organized the Children and Youth Summit, which is where today's announcement took place. It's another major accomplishment in our ministry's brief history. Soon we will be sharing highlights of the Summit presentations on our website. Stay tuned.

I would like to close with this quote that sums up the vast body of research that tells us why a child's early years are so vitally important: "Children who are ready to learn at the time they start school, are more likely to complete high school, find employment and make positive contributions to society as caring and productive citizens." -- Hertzman and Keating, 1999.



Minister Bountrogianni with children at the Ontario Science Centre, site of the Children and Youth Summit