



Mimi Hunfeld and the Seeds of Empathy Program at Smarties Children's Centre

Mimi Hunfeld has worked at Smarties Children's Centre for the past six years. She started out in the school aged care area but is now in her second year as an Early Childhood Educator with the preschool/daycare program. Mimi loves working with this particular age group. One of the preschool aged programs she is involved with at Smarties is Seeds of Empathy. A series of themes about family are taught on three week cycles. In the first two weeks of each cycle, two Literacy Coaches at Smarties read and discuss books with small groups of children. In the third week, Mimi, as the Family Guide, hosts a Family Visit where a mother and her young baby visit the children for half an hour. Mimi shows the children how the baby is developing, how she expresses what she's feeling and how her mother knows.

"Seeds of Empathy teaches emotional literacy and empathy. The children learn to recognize feelings within themselves and that others have feelings just like they do," says Mimi. "The baby is the catalyst to teach that. The baby is really our teacher. The children are able to witness the attachment between mother and baby. And they learn that love grows brains."

Smarties also runs a very well attended Parent Child Mother Goose program every Tuesday evening and Thursday morning. This is also an early literacy program for mothers and babies or tots from ages 0-30 months.

Smarties Children's Centre is a non profit childcare centre, located at Maple Ridge Community Church and licensed by the Simon Fraser Health Authority.

Teachers in all the Smarties' programs consider the environment to be the third teacher and intentionally set it up on a daily basis to make sure it is aesthetic and inviting and ready for exploration and discovery to enhance the children's learning.

For more information about Smarties Children's Centre programs, go to www.smartieskids.com or phone 604-465-4288