

### **RELEASE OF THE *EARLY YEARS STUDY 3***

MONTREAL, November 22, 2011 /CNW/ - To mark the simultaneous release of the Canada-wide *Early Years Study 3* (EYS3) in Montreal and Toronto, the Lucie and André Chagnon Foundation, which has supported this study since its first edition in 1999, enlisted three Quebec early childhood experts to give their opinions on it.

“Since the creation of our Foundation, we have been deeply inspired by Dr. Mustard’s research, and we were devastated to hear last week of the passing of this impassioned supporter of early childhood education. We are dedicated to upholding and promoting his work to ensure that his memory lives on,” said **Claude Chagnon**, President of the Lucie and André Chagnon Foundation.

The Foundation’s Vice-President, Philanthropy, **Jean-Marc Chouinard** stated: “We share the opinion of the Honourable Margaret Norrie McCain that foundations have a duty to advocate on behalf of children. We also support the position adopted in the EYS3 stating that we need to intervene in children’s lives early on in order to achieve the best possible outcomes and make sure they *get off to a good start in school and in life*. Our actions in recent years, including our partnership with the Quebec government in the area of early childhood education, fostering healthy lifestyles and encouraging student retention, support this position.”

#### **Observations from the study**

- **The importance of early intervention**

“This report emphasizes the importance of a child’s first years of life, and provides scientific evidence of this. It also states that young children need to have access to quality care and services in order to grow up happy and healthy. We need to continue on this path in Quebec and across Canada,” stated **Claire Gascon Giard**, General Coordinator of the Centre of Excellence for Early Childhood Development (Université de Montréal).

- **The importance of building a village around a child**

According to **Lyse Brunet**, General Manager of *Avenir d’enfants*: “To ensure the overall development of young children, and especially those from underprivileged families, we need to support the local workers who interact with them. The only way to succeed is by helping them to develop more activities and initiatives aimed at children and their parents—projects that are based on a common needs assessment. In just 18 months, *Avenir*

*d'enfants* is already hard at work in 125 local communities, supporting some 15 pilot projects worth a total of \$25 million.”

- **Investing in early childhood education pays off across the board!**

The return on investment from early childhood initiatives is enormous. In fact, the cost/benefit ratio of this type of investment far outstrips that of investments in primary, secondary or college education. According to economist **Pierre Fortin** of UQAM, who is closely involved in the EYS3: “Fundamentally, the governments make money off of Quebec’s subsidized daycare programs, which enable an additional 70,000 Quebec women to be at work. The \$2 billion that the provincial government contributes annually to daycare services ultimately generates tax revenues of close to \$3 billion (\$2 billion for Quebec and \$1 billion for the federal government) for all three levels of government.”

- **The importance for Quebec to remain at the head of the pack**

Quebec is a national leader in early childhood policy development and was ranked first in the country by the new *Early Childhood Education Index 2011*, created as part of the EYS3, which ranks some 20 variables grouped into five broad categories: integrated governance, funding, access, learning environment and accountability. “However, with its score of 10/15, Quebec still has some work to do, and needs to stay focused on its daycare and community support initiatives, particularly in underprivileged communities. A recent survey also showed that lack of time has become a problem for many people. Work-family balance is a major issue for parents, and it needs to be tackled jointly by the government and workplaces,” concluded **Jean-Marc Chouinard**.

### **About the study**

The Early Years Study 3 details the current state of Canadian families with young children and provides the social, economic and scientific rationale for increased public investments in early childhood education. Early Years Study 3 is the third collaboration headed by the late Dr. J. Fraser Mustard, a world leader in the field of early childhood, in collaboration with the Honourable Margaret Norrie McCain, and Kerry McCuaig, Senior Policy Fellow at the Atkinson Centre, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto.

- 30 -

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