

# Medal for Exceptional Contributions 2005



Public Health Agency of Canada / Agence de santé publique du Canada

Université de Montréal

## LEADERS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

This year again, the Centre of Excellence for Early Childhood Development (CEECD) honors four leaders whose work and dedication have helped ensure that Canada's youngest citizens—those aged zero to five—reach their full potential. The recipients of the 2005 Medal for Exceptional Contributions to Early Childhood Development are the late Dr. David Offord, Dr. Edward F. Zigler, the Honourable Landon Pearson and the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation.

### DR. DAVID OFFORD

A world-renowned child psychiatrist and a champion of children's mental health issues, Dr. David "Dan" Offord spent his career building scientific knowledge of mental illness in the early years. He also ensured that this information could be disseminated and translated into policy and planning. Dr. Offord was the founding director of McMaster University's Offord Centre for Child Studies (formerly the Canadian Centre for Studies of Children at Risk), a research centre dedicated to finding solutions to young children's emotional, cognitive and social problems. He led a

groundbreaking study in 1983 called the Ontario Child Health Study which outlined the extent to which very young children struggled with emotional and behavioural difficulties. His academic work didn't prevent him from rolling up his sleeves each year as the volunteer director of Christie Lake, a camp for Ottawa-area children living in poverty. The recipient of many awards and honours, Dr. Offord was given the Order of Canada in 2001. Sadly, Dr. Offord died in 2004, but his legacy lives on and may be summed up in his own words:



DR. DAVID OFFORD

*"The challenge in Canada is to make sure all kids have full participation in life and that the things I value for my kids are available to all. That translates into equal access, equal participation and equitable outcomes for every child"*

For more information: [www.excellence-earlychildhood.ca](http://www.excellence-earlychildhood.ca)

The Centre of Excellence for Early Childhood Development is one of four Centres of Excellence for Children's Well-Being funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada. The views expressed herein do not represent the official policies of the Public Health Agency of Canada.

## DR. EDWARD ZIGLER

*"Adults must take seriously their responsibilities to assure that all children receive excellent physical care and to promote healthy social environments for a strong psychological growth"*



DR. EDWARD ZIGLER

As a young professor with a specialty in early childhood education, Dr. Edward Zigler was invited in 1964 to join a panel of experts mandated to create a national intervention program for children aged three to five living in poverty. From that work came the groundbreaking program known as Head Start.

Dr. Zigler's interest in the Head Start program never lagged and he fought against budget cuts that would harm it. He also spoke out when he saw the quality of the program's services endangered by poor planning and poor policies. As the Sterling Professor of Psychology, Emeritus, at Yale University, he is the founding director of the former Bush Center in Child Development and Social Policy, now renamed the Edward Zigler Center for Child Development and Social Policy. Dr. Zigler's work has focused on mental retardation, psychopathology, and intervention programs for disadvantaged children and the effects of childcare on children.

## THE HONOURABLE LANDON PEARSON

*"Every baby and every child is a new chance for the human race. If you support children and their parents, you will have people who grow up to be solutions, not problems"*



THE HONOURABLE LANDON PEARSON

Senator Landon Pearson's life and work are a testament to the idea that Canada's future depends upon its children receiving the best start possible in life. As the wife of a diplomat and the mother of five children, Landon Pearson volunteered for organizations working with children. She was appointed Vice-Chairperson of the Canadian Commission for the International Year of the Child, where she edited the 1979 report "For Canada's Children: A National Agenda for Action." She served for several years as President and then Chairperson of the Canadian Council on Children and Youth.

In 2004, Landon Pearson presented to the United Nations the document "A Canada Fit for Children", which she helped develop. The document outlined the Canadian government's commitment to children and families, and included many recommendations focused on the early childhood years. She was called to the Senate in 1994, where, in her words, she strives to be the "Senator for Children."

## THE J.W. McCONNELL FAMILY FOUNDATION

*"It should be a community-wide goal to have healthy, good places to raise families. There is a direct correlation between healthy, vibrant communities and healthy families"*



MR. STEPHEN HUDDART on behalf of THE J.W. McCONNELL FAMILY FOUNDATION

John Wilson (J.W.) McConnell was one of Canada's leading philanthropists, a man of vision and generosity. Today, the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation continues this tradition by supporting programs and initiatives that build resilient, engaged communities that will improve the quality of life for all Canadians, including its youngest citizens. Long-term, systemic change is a key priority as well as the sharing of information and the building of bridges between people, communities and sectors.

The Foundation has been a key supporter of a unique early childhood initiative in Montréal, entitled 1, 2, 3, GO!, which helps neighbourhoods create one-stop resource centres that ensure access to services and programs. The Foundation also supports the Child Development Institute in Toronto, which provides early intervention, child development and family violence services. "The Foundation is interested in programs that take a comprehensive approach to the early years," notes Katharine Pearson, former Project Director.