



# Children and Adolescents with Special Needs

The mandate for the **Centre of Excellence for Children and Adolescents with Special Needs** (CECASN) is to produce knowledge about children and adolescents with special needs in rural and northern Canada and transfer it effectively to those who can use it to make a difference in the lives of these children. We document and describe the opportunities and challenges for children with special needs in rural and northern communities highlighting best policies, practices and principles for prevention, early intervention and supports.

### Key Messages

- Access to appropriate services is essential for effective prevention and early intervention.
- Community involvement and participation at all stages of the design, planning, implementation, operation and evaluation of services must become the norm.
- Members of the community in rural and northern Canada must have appropriate and high quality education, training and professional development.
- A policy network for children and adolescents with special needs in rural and northern Canada fosters knowledge sharing and the development of focused strategies for knowledge uptake and policy development.

### Key Successes

A study on Otitis Media at the request from the Department of Education, Government of Nunavut. The results of this study have been the basis for teacher education and for redesigning classrooms to enhance learning.

A study on the overweight and obesity in preschool children in Newfoundland and Labrador with results widely disseminated to professional groups and policy makers.

The Special Needs Information Services On-line (SNIS) is a practical directory of services and information for parents of children with special needs in the Atlantic Region.

A national policy roundtable which brought together researchers, policy makers and community members to discuss children with special needs in rural and northern Canada, hosted in collaboration with Canadian Policy Research Networks Inc.