

MEDIA RELEASE  
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## **The Sandbox Project hosts 4<sup>th</sup> national conference to improve health for young Canadians**

**TORONTO, Ont. (January 23, 2014)** — Building a better future for Canada's next generation took the spotlight at a national conference featuring some of the country's leading experts in child and youth health.

The Sandbox Project hosted its 4<sup>th</sup> national conference and workshop on January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2014 at TELUS House in Toronto, creating a venue for experts and conference participants to work together on strategies to improve health outcomes for young people throughout Canada.

This year's conference featured the Honourable Dr. K. Kellie Leitch, Minister of Labour and Minister of Status of Women as well as the Honourable Candice Bergen, Minister of State (Social Development).

"Our children are our future," said Minister Leitch. "We have a responsibility to educate young Canadians on injury prevention - including those injuries that can happen in the workplace. Healthy and productive workplaces are the cornerstone of a strong Canadian economy, and young Canadians need to know about safety wherever they choose to work."

"Our Government has a proven track record of supporting and investing in Canadian families because we understand how important this is," said Minister Bergen. "One of the most crucial investments we can make as a country is in assisting families with the support they need to ensure their children realize their full potential."

During the morning plenary session, leadership of The Sandbox Project provided updates on progress made in several key areas of advocacy over the past year. Afternoon working sessions enabled participants to help develop action plans outlining innovative solutions to problems and challenges affecting child and youth health. Sessions focused on transitional times in the development of a child's health.

"The Sandbox Project's goal is to eliminate redundancies, increase efficiencies and develop underutilized capacity in other kid's health charities", said Dr. Christine Hampson, President and CEO of The Sandbox Project. "By bringing likeminded organizations together once a year The Sandbox Project can identify issues we are all facing and tackle the issue together. We require collaboration between organizations that do not typically learn from one another because they are focused on difference subject areas – be that Injury Prevention, Healthy Weights, Mental Health and the Environment".

To ensure Canada remains on a level playing field globally, The Sandbox Project took part in this year's federal pre-budget submission process, proposing that the government invest \$2 million in seed funding over two years to create an independent research-based think tank. This organization would be dedicated to driving change in the social

and physical behaviour of young people aimed at helping them sharpen Canada's competitive edge.

The Sandbox Project also announced phase two of the Sandbox Mental Health Initiative. This \$450,000 investment is set to help develop a new virtual health support network and app for young people and their families.

**About The Sandbox Project:**

The vision of The Sandbox Project is to make Canada the healthiest place on Earth for children and youth to grow up. It is focused on improving children and youth health outcomes with respect to injury prevention, obesity, mental health and the environment. For more information, visit <http://sandboxproject.ca>

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