



*Government of Bermuda*  
**Ministry of Youth, Social Development and Seniors**

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

by

**Senator Lindsay Simmons, JP**  
**Junior Minister of Youth, Social Development and Seniors**

**Nurturing our Nation: Annual Parenting Expo**

*Wednesday, 29<sup>th</sup> November 2023*

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**Madam President,**

On Friday, November 10<sup>th</sup>, the Ministry of Youth, Social Development and Seniors held its second annual **Nurturing our Nation Parenting Expo**.

This morning I rise to share with Members of the Senate the success of the Expo and the opportunities this event presents to our parents, guardians, and members of the public to have access to valuable information, and gain awareness of the support services, programs, and activities that are specifically available for our children and families within our community.

**Madam President,**

Let me share that a key incentive for introducing the Annual Parenting Expo resulted from the data gathered annually by the Department of Child and Family Services (DCFS) using a Family Strengths and Needs Assessment on all families engaged in intervention services with the Department. We all know that data tells stories. The data collected from the assessments conducted supported the fact that two of the highest priority areas for most primary caregivers (that is our parents/guardians) are the need for greater support in:

- (1) coping skills; and,
- (2) parenting skills.

**Madam President,**

Knowing that our parents were seeking greater assistance in these areas pushed the drive to find ways to ensure primary child caregivers are given the support and tools through the promotion and awareness of the many services available within the community.

The parenting expo was held on the front lawn of the City Hall and brought together in one centrally located space, the diversity of services offered that assist parents and guardians in developing coping mechanisms and enhancing parenting skills to nurturing our children.

**Madam President,**

In addition to the parenting expo, this month the Ministry will be highlighting on all of its social media platforms the live stream panel discussions held last year with industry professionals which covered a broad range of topics that were of interest to our parents. These included:

- Personal Care and Wellness,
- Effects of Bulling and Domestic Violence on Children,
- Nutrition and Meal Planning,
- Boundary setting for your child, and,
- Co-Parenting and Nurturing Parents

Also, last year the Ministry intentionally introduced parenting tips each month that were promoted on the Ministry's social media platforms. These tips will continue to be highlighted for the remainder of this year, and throughout 2024.

**Madam President,**

The Ministry of Youth, Social Development and Seniors inclusive of the Department of Child and Family Services is committed to providing alternative ways to promote and raise awareness for parents and guardians so that they are equipped with practical solutions and resources to raise happy and confident children.

**Madam President,**

The Parenting Expo takes a holistic approach in ensuring that the services promoted are diverse as we understand that not all parents experience the same with their children. This year, there were eighteen (18) representative services and programmes in the parenting expo that reflected a cross-section of Government Ministries and Departments, the third sector, community agencies and organizations that offer support to children and families in the form of community programs; child development support and services; mental health support and services; parent support; education support; and extra-curricular activities. The various entities included:-

- Bermuda Archery
- BSMART
- The Child Development Programme - Department of Education
- Department of Education – Early Childhood Education Preschool Awareness and Registration
- Department of Education – Middle School Awareness and Registration
- The Coalition for the Protection of Children
- The Department of Child and Family Services
- Endeavour
- The Family Centre
- In Motion School of Dance
- The Ministry of Education – Education Reform Unit
- The Mirrors Program
- Mayvera Wellness
- Tomorrow's Voices
- Windreach
- Women's Resource Centre
- Department of Health – Child Care Regulation Programme
- Department of Health – Oral Health.

Information pamphlets were also distributed on behalf of the Bermuda National Library Youth Services.

**Madam President,**

Each participant had a booth-style display that allowed attendees to interact and engage; gather pamphlets and enjoy giveaways. Many of the participants provided play areas, games; and live demonstrations to create a fun filled interactive and informative environment as a representative from each participating organization made brief speeches emphasizing the service, programme and/or activities that they offered for parents and children.

**Madam President,**

As our public schools were on break on that day, both parents and children attended the Parenting Expo and experienced a fun but informative afternoon. The feedback from participants and attendees has been very encouraging underscoring the appreciation for, and importance of having the Parenting Expo annually. I look forward to the third Annual Parenting Expo in 2024.

**Madam President,**

I encourage any organization that provides services, support, or extra-curricular activities for children and families who would like to know more about the Parenting Expo and potentially participate next year to contact the Ministry of Youth, Social Development and Seniors on 444-2466. Be a part of this annual event as we work together to strengthen our families.

**Madam President,**

I take this opportunity to thank all of the participants and persons who attended the second annual Parenting Expo; the Mayor of the City of Hamilton; the Town Crier; the staff at the Corporation of Hamilton; members of the organizing committee, specifically all the members of the Parenting Expo planning team who worked diligently despite the challenges they faced to communicate without computers and e-mails in some instances, to make the Expo a success. I appreciate their continued commitment to children.

Thank you, **Madam President!**