Handbook of Best Practices in Aboriginal Early Childhood Programs, 2003

Funded by Vancouver Foundation and supported by the BC Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services
A Note to Readers

Early childhood education provides First Nations children with a head start in acquiring pre-school cognitive and motor skills. Early childhood education is needed to support the development of quality education programs and the economic development activities of First Nations communities. These programs need to incorporate local culture and use aboriginal languages to ensure that students will be able to fully participate in the culture of the community. The Elders of the community can contribute valuable expertise to these programs. Funding is required for First Nations governments and organizations to establish, staff, and operate early childhood education programs.

Tradition and Education: Towards a Vision of Our Future. 
A Declaration of First Nations Jurisdiction Over Education.

In the spring of 2002 the BC Aboriginal Child Care Society (ACCS) received a grant from the Vancouver Foundation to host a series of regional workshops on early childhood programs and compile a Handbook of Best Practices. The idea for the workshops and Handbook came from participants in our 4th annual conference, Building Linkages, who said they had much to gain from learning about Aboriginal early childhood programs around the province.

The Best Practices project was also inspired by a series of reports called “You Bet I Care!,” published by the University of Guelph’s Centre for Families, Work and Wellbeing, and based on extensive 1998 research reviewing wages, working conditions and program practices in child care centres. Results of the research showed that a number of factors contribute to high-quality child care programs. Those that scored highest on the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale and Infant-Toddler Environment Rating Scale had relatively high staff-child ratios and relatively high staff education and staff wage levels. Programs in which staff members were trained in early childhood education also scored higher on the Rating Scales.1


---

A NOTE TO OUR READERS

participated, sharing their strategies for early childhood program successes. This Handbook is essentially a written record of those workshops, with the material organized into a user-friendly format full of tried and true strategies on key aspects of Aboriginal early childhood development. For that is what we mean by Best Practices: strategies and practices that are already being successfully applied within a program, a unique way of teaching language, for example, or a special strategy for involving Elders and parents. The Handbook describes, in detail and in practical terms, these proven strategies from a range of early childhood programs – preschools, group child care, infant/toddler and after-school programs – so that they can be applied in your community or facility.

The Handbook is divided into six chapters: Culturally Focused Curriculum, Traditional Languages and Language Development, Community Networking, Policies and Procedures, Program Evaluation and Child’s Assessments. For ease of use, each chapter follows a similar format, providing, first, an explanation of general principles you’ll need to keep in mind as you get started, then plenty of examples of successful strategies or Best Practices, and a discussion of areas that require ongoing effort. At the end of each chapter, we provide a comprehensive list of other helpful resources; an Appendix provides relevant tools and templates.

When you read the Handbook and begin to decide which strategies are appropriate for your program, keep in mind the following Vision. The early child care program right for your community will differ in detail from the one in the community next door, but they should both adhere to the ideals and principles described below:

**Our Vision**

Workshop participants developed a vision for strong Aboriginal child care programs. We agreed that the following elements are essential:

**Strong Staffing.** Staff should reflect diverse qualifications beyond basic ECE, and include a cultural resource person with strong connections in the community. Employees should be dedicated, loyal, committed and open to learning and growth and work as a team. High staff morale is critical, as are high staff-child ratios.

**Adequate Funding.** Funding should cover necessary toys and facilities, be sustainable and include financial support from Bands, where applicable.

**Licensing.** Programs should work with licensing officers to exceed minimum required standards.

**Flexibility.** Curriculum should meet individual children’s needs, respect the local culture and accord with community processes and schedules.
**Language Recognition.** Programs should offer language instruction, and staff members should try to learn the local language.

**Community Support.** Programs should be owned by the community, reflect community resources and partnerships; and help build relations between native and non-native children.

**Parent and Elder Communication.** Staff should encourage parent involvement and empower parents to be a child’s first teacher through effective parenting programs. Elder input should be sought and valued.

**Strong Facilities.** The buildings housing child care centres should provide a positive environment for children and, ideally, be near a school, an Elders residence and a playground.

**Focus on Nutrition.** Programs should provide education about healthy nutrition. Where applicable, Bands should regulate nutritious menus.

**A Holistic Approach.** To reflect Aboriginal culture, early childhood education programs should be holistic, taking into account the physical, emotional, social, intellectual, cultural and spiritual needs of children.

**Long-term Planning.** Staff, parents and, if applicable, the Band or host agency should work together to create a three-year work plan, featuring the goals, objectives and outcomes of the program.
A NOTE TO OUR READERS

Using The Handbook

Throughout this Handbook, the word “parent” refers to biological parents, adopted parents, guardians, and any other adult who is legally responsible for a child. And the names of traditional foods are spelled phonetically for the benefit of readers from different linguistic groups.

The tools and templates provided in this Handbook meet accepted standards of quality and can be used as is, or modified to suit the specific needs of your program. If you have questions or concerns, your local community care licensing officer, child care resource and referral programs, or the BC Aboriginal Child Care Society can help.

In the meantime, we wish you the best in developing strategies for the optimum care of our youngest citizens. You can make a difference.

Disclaimer

This Handbook is as good as we could make it at the time of publication, but we cannot guarantee there are no gaps or omissions. It is a guide only; your common sense and good judgment are also needed. If you receive professional advice in conflict with this book, please follow the professional advice. Because laws and regulations constantly change, that advice will likely be more current.

While we have made every attempt to ensure that the information contained in the handbook has been obtained from reliable sources, the BC Aboriginal Child Care Society is not responsible for any errors or omissions, or for the results obtained from the use of this information. All information is provided “as is”, with no guarantee of completeness, accuracy, timeliness or of the results obtained from the use of this information, and without warranty of any kind, express or implied. In no event will the BC Aboriginal Child Care Society, or employees thereof, be liable to you or anyone else for any decision made or action taken in reliance on the information in this kit or for any consequential, special or similar damages, even if advised of the possibility of such damages.
About Early Childhood Development

Early childhood development (ECD) programs are based on the notion that children progress through a distinct set of social, physical, cognitive and emotional stages as they grow. While they recognize that children develop at their own pace, early childhood educators use specific techniques to encourage progress to the next level. ECD covers a range of child care programs, including: preschool, group child care, infant and toddler care, integrated programs and family child care.

ECD benefits children, families, and communities. Through such programs, children will develop fundamental social, physical, cognitive and emotional skills. In fact, before children are six years old, they learn many of the skills they will need as adults. More and more research is showing the link between development during the early years and strong self-esteem and problem-solving skills later on. Further, because ECD programs are often associated with other social services in the community, a child’s special needs can be identified and addressed at a very young age, when intervention is the most effective.

Aboriginal child care programs will be different from mainstream programs in many ways. Our culture and values will be reflected in the way the program is governed, in program policies, staffing, facilities design and in the curriculum. Currently, child care regulations in BC specific to First Nations do not exist, and it can be challenging to construct an Aboriginal early childhood program that meets mainstream licensing requirements. It may help to keep in mind that, while licensing does not guarantee a high-quality program, it is often a predictor of quality. Licensing ensures that a program is focused on the needs of the children, and licensing officers help ensure that children are cared for in a safe and comfortable environment.

About the BC Aboriginal Child Care Society

The BC Aboriginal Child Care Society (ACCS) has been providing child care resources to BC Aboriginal communities since 1995, when there were only 14 provincially licensed child care centres in BC Aboriginal communities. Largely because of efforts by the ACCS, and through funding from the First Nations and Inuit Child Care Initiative, today there are more than 57 licensed child care centres providing care to almost 800 children in BC First Nations communities.

The goal of the ACCS is to support BC’s Aboriginal communities in the development of quality, community-based early childhood services that promote child growth in an environment respectful of culture, history and language. We are also currently the host agency for two Aboriginal Head Start Preschools in Vancouver. Our services also include:

Print Resources, including a funding opportunities inventory, a handbook for culturally focused ECE programs, a resource
and training kit for Aboriginal children’s programs, and a compilation of best practices in Aboriginal ECE programs.

**Rotating Curriculum Boxes**, with hands-on play materials and a curriculum reflecting West Coast Aboriginal traditions. These are available on loan to child care programs throughout BC. Themes include: Animals and the Environment, Family and Community, Food and Nutrition, School Readiness, Music and Movement, and Speech and Language. Courier services are provided by Greyhound Courier Express.

**Advisory Support and Evaluation Services** for new and existing Aboriginal ECE programs, child care resource and referral programs, post-secondary ECE programs and other community services targeting Aboriginal children and families. This program is funded by the BC Ministry of Community, Aboriginal & Women’s Services.

**Resource Library** of over 800 books, videos and newsletters available for loan to members of ACCS. Topics include child development, Aboriginal lore and legends, children’s stories, health and program administration.

**Office of the Provincial Advisor for Aboriginal Infant Development Programs**, providing family-centred support to infant development programs in BC. The latter targets infants who are at risk for developmental delays. The program is funded by the BC Ministry of Children & Family Development.

**Workshops and Training:** ACCS offers training on topics related to early childhood services for Aboriginal children. In addition, ACCS organizes annual conferences every November. Our workshops include:

- Enhancing Community Participation in Aboriginal Early Childhood Programs
- Effective Proposal Writing and Fundraising Strategies for Early Childhood Programs
- Designing A Culturally Focused Early Childhood Education Curriculum
- Program Evaluation for Aboriginal Child Care Programs
- Program Management: Non-profit Boards and Parent/ Elder Advisory Committees
- Partnerships in Challenging Behaviors
- Music and Movement
- Caring for our Children: A Resource and Training Kit for Aboriginal Children’s Programs

**Contact us at:**

209-1999 Marine Drive, North Vancouver, BC V7P 3J3

Phone 604-990-9939
Fax 604-990-9457

www.acc-society.bc.ca
Acknowledgements

The BC Aboriginal Child Care Society would like to acknowledge the generous funding provided by the Vancouver Foundation for this project.

We would also like to acknowledge the participation of the following people, who generously shared their ideas and expertise. Without them, this project would not have been possible:

**From the Vancouver Area**

Erica Bowes, *North Shore Child Care Resource & Referral*
Nicole Muir, *Vancouver Supported Child Care*
Shannon Svingen, *Novaco Child Care*
Karen Hazelman, *Sundance Daycare*
Sharon Jones, *Sundance Daycare*
Linda Deneault, *Sundance Daycare*
LaVerne Victor, *Rosedale*
Carolyn Reed, *Awahsuk AHS Preschool*
Cheryl Delorme, *Awahsuk AHS Preschool*
Robie Brown, *Awahsuk AHS Preschool*
Tanis Khols, *Awahsuk AHS Preschool*
Christine Ellis, *Mission, BC*
Elsie Guss, *Seymour Community Services Society Parkgate Community Centre*
Debbie Nelson, *O-K-N Tribal Council*
Kathleen Kummen, *Capilano College*
Naznin Dhanani, *S’Takya Child Care Centre*
Ady Charlie, *S’Takya Child Care Centre*
Reneé Stogan, *S’Takya Child Care Centre*
Joy Chakraborty, *YWCA Citygate*

**From the Okanagan Area:**

Celina Rodrigues, *Neskonlith Daycare*
Brenda Gustafson, *Upper Nicola HS*
Shirley Paul, *Okanagan Indian Band*
Diana Jules, *Skeetchestn Daycare*
Lorraine Ladan, *Okanagan Indian Band*
Sue Rossi, *Whitevalley Community Resource Centre*
Laura Miller, *Okanagan Indian Band*
Dorothy Munro, *Skw’lax Daycare*
Ramona Louis, *Okanagan Indian Band*
Vivian Williams, *Skw’lax Daycare*
Barbara Scapinella, *Upper Nicola Head Start*

**Recorder:** Tracy Drury
**Host:** Vernon Lodge

**From the Prince George Area:**

Cari Charron, *Quesnel CCRR*
Pauline Saxy, *Sketemes Airali Daycare*
Frieda Prince, *Nak’azdli Child Care*
Yvonne William, *Saik’uz Daycare*
Glenda Burrows, *Community Care Facilities Licensing Officer*
Barbara McLean, *Williams Lake CCRR*
Nicole Doucette, *PGNAETA*
Mary Harry, *Esketemc Head Start*
Sandi Prevost, *Aboriginal Infant & Family Development*
Darcy Dennis, Aboriginal Infant & Family Development
Diane Gabrielson, Aboriginal Infant & Family Development
Yvette Hepburn, Aboriginal Infant & Family Development
Mina Hans, Snx’aalh Daycare
Colleen Sampson, Snx’aalh Daycare
Natasha McDonald, Jean Marie Joseph School
Kym Gouchie, West Moberley Child Care
Dawn Lulua, Charlene’s Daycare
Geraldine Bob, Nenqayni Treatment Centre
Yvonne George, S’tellat’en FN
Meaghan Van Somer, McLead Lake
Tanya Joseph, Jean Marie Joseph School
Rita Joseph, Jean Marie Joseph School
Susan Joseph, Jean Marie Joseph School
Victoria Joseph, Jean Marie Joseph School
Kathy Davidson, Woyene Daycare
Recommander: Cecilia Harvey
Host: Prince George Nechako Aboriginal Employment and Training Association

From the Prince Rupert Area:
Darlene Westerman, The Family Place
Judy Riddell, The Berry Patch CCRR
Gloria Nisyok, New Aiyansh Nursery
Jean Ann Carlick, Tlingit Family Learning Centre
Stella McKay, Tlingit Family Learning Centre
Carol Quock, Iskut Headstart
Cindy Robinson, Metlakatla Head Start
Angel Prevost, Metlakatla Head Start
Liz William, Gitwangak CD Society
Darlene Clarke, Bulkley Valley CDC

Coco Shau, Skeena CCRR
Jackie Davies, Bulkley Valley CDC
Regina Tworow, Bulkley Valley CDC
Kathy Davidson, Lake Babine Nation
Mary Williams, Lake Babine Nation
Lisa Lightening, Lake Babine Nation
Bonita Barton, Gingolx Nursery
Jackie Gosnell, Box 440 Hazelton
Recommander: Laurie Reece
Host: Crest Hotel

From the Nanaimo Area:
Sandra Scott, Nanoose First Nation Head Start
Margaret Robb, Child care Support Services, Victoria
Frances Thomasset, Child Care Support Services
Anne Almond, Cape Mudge Band
Melanie Adams, Tla’Amin Health Services
Rose Adams, Sliammon Health Clinic
Marian Pickton, North Island College
Vivien Black, Kwigwis Daycare
Shelley McClure, Community Care Facilities Licensing
Yvonne Betts, Community Care Facilities Licensing
Shelly Haunch, Campbell River AHS
Kara Price, Campbell River AHS
Lorraine Kok, Campbell River AHS
Margaret Haggith, Snuneymuxw Headstart
Ramona Melanson, Smun’eem Daycare
Barry Edwards, Smun’eem Daycare
Recommander: Amy Wyse
Host: Best Western Dorchester Hotel
# Table of Contents

**A Note to Readers**

**ACCS Services**

**Acknowledgements**

**Chapter One: Culturally Focused Curriculum**

- Introduction
- General Principles
- Getting Started
- Acquiring Resources
- Best-Practised Strategies
- Ongoing Needs
- Resources Index
- Appendices:  
  1. How to Teach Cross-Cultural Science  
  1B. Cultural Worker Job Description  
  1C. Assessing Culturally-Focused Resources  
  1D. Nutritional Benefits of Traditional Food  
  1E. Recipes for Indian Ice Cream and Rabbit Stew  
  1F. Sample Smudging Ceremony  
  1G. Handmade Drum Illustration

**Chapter Two: Traditional Languages and Language Development**

- Introduction
- Best-Practised Strategies for Language Development
- Teaching Traditional Languages: Getting Started
- Best-Practised Strategies for Teaching Traditional Languages
- Ongoing Needs
- Resources Index
- Appendices:  
  2. How to Play Lahal/Slahal  
  2B. How to Read a Storybook  
  2C. Hand and Stick Puppet Instructions  
  2D. Traditional Languages Funding Opportunities
# Chapter Three: Networking and Outreach

- Introduction 45
- Getting Started 45
- Best-Practised Strategies 46
- Ongoing Needs 53
- Community Resources Index 54
- Appendices: 
  3A. Sample Parent Advisory Committee Terms of Reference 61
  3B. Foodsafe Contacts 63
  3C. Funding Opportunity: Vancouver Foundation 65
  3D. Funding Opportunity: United Way 68

# Chapter Four: Policies and Procedures

- Introduction 71
- Getting Started 71
- Best-Practised Strategies and Recommended Policies 72
- Ongoing Needs 81
- Resources Index 81
- Appendices: 
  4A. Sample Guidance and Discipline Policy 82
  4B. Sample Application for a Multi-Age Variance and sample Health and Safety Policies 86
  4C. Additional Safety Policies 89
  4D. Sample Fee Schedule 91

# Chapter Five: Program Evaluation

- Introduction 93
- Getting Started 93
- Best-Practised Strategies 94
- Ongoing Needs 96
- Resources Index 97
- Appendices: 
  5A. Sample Cultural Environment Rating Scale 98
  5B. Harms and Clifford Program Evaluation Mode 102
  5C. Logic Model Program Evaluation 103
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter Six: Child Assessments</th>
<th>105</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Introduction</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Getting Started</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Best-Practised Strategies and Tools</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ongoing Needs</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Resources Index</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Appendices:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6A. Introduction to Infant Development Programs</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6B. List of Supported Child Care Agencies in B.C.</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Conclusion                     | 121 |

| Feedback Form                  | 123 |
Chapter One – Culturally Focused Curriculum

Culture is a way of being of a group of people that is passed on that grows and changes from one generation to the next. This way of being is all inclusive... Culture includes a way of seeing the world – a set of values and beliefs about the world around us and how we should relate to it.

...if a program is to truly be effective in validating, strengthening, and transmitting the culture of an Aboriginal group, then there must be a multi-layered and multi-faceted approach to the cultural aspect of an education program.

Introduction

Developing a culturally based curriculum is a long-term process. Many early childhood programs begin by incorporating books and materials that reflect the children and the customs and traditions of their community. But participants in the Best Practices workshops agreed that a truly effective cultural curriculum involves much more than images and artifacts, although these are the daily tools that will be used in such a curriculum. The challenge is to build the cultural practices of the community into the curriculum.

One way of doing that is to base the curriculum on a well-defined program philosophy that emphasizes cultural development. Components of an early childhood curriculum might include:

• Developmentally and culturally appropriate activities;
• Opportunities for large group, small group and individual activities;
• Opportunities for outdoor activities;
• Interaction with parents, Elders and community resource people; and
• Opportunities to practise vocabulary and learn local languages or traditional stories or legends.

Many workshop participants discussed the need for a fully planned cultural curriculum, one that is well-defined, but flexible enough to reflect local cultural practices and teachings. In this chapter, you will find plenty of practical examples of the cultural activities or components that might make up such a curriculum. Before getting to the specifics, though, we outline several key general principles. These can be used as a foundation for culturally based programs in any community.
CULTURALLY FOCUSED CURRICULUM

General Principles

• Treat cultural themes as an integral part of the curriculum, not just as a special time or day.

• Make early childhood education programs fit the culture of the community, rather than simply treating culture as one aspect of the program or curriculum (see Appendix 1A on Cross-Cultural Science and Technology, for example).

• Acknowledge differences between cultures and nations, while finding ways to respect and accept all cultures.

• Make building self-esteem one of the goals of the curriculum. Encourage children to be proud of their heritage and traditional teachings.

• Aboriginal cultures share many similar values, chief among them is the emphasis on a relationship with the natural world, sharing and respect for others, and on balance and harmony with nature. Make sure this is reflected in the curriculum.

• Cultural protocols should be followed. Acknowledge the traditional territory on which you live and work and obtain permission to use stories, songs, designs and crests that belong to families, clans or individuals.

• Keep early childhood education centres open to non-native people, too. It can help inspire pride in the children to see information about their culture passed on to people from different backgrounds. Further, it is a reflection of modern society to have native and non-native people working together.

Getting Started

1. Develop a program plan with yearly, monthly, weekly, and daily teaching objectives.

Create a theme for each month, then specify weekly and daily plans (e.g., this month, we are going to learn about fish; this week we are going to learn about cleaning fish; on this day, we are going to go fishing and clean the fish we catch). A daily/weekly model is still important for “emergent” curriculum, to ensure that some time is left over for unplanned events, or activities chosen by the children. Seasonal activities (e.g., hunting, berry-picking, fishing) are a useful way to determine themes and activities. Consider developing a guide to seasonal activities so that you can refer to it when planning each year. Look at different cultures and the things they celebrate throughout the year and decide which ones you want to share with the children (every year can be different).

2. If funding is available, hire or designate a cultural resource person, who can concentrate on coordinating and developing a culturally focused curriculum. If funding is limited, create one full-time position out of two part-time positions,
and hire someone who can do more than one job. For example, a part-time cultural resource person could also be a bus driver. Work together with the Band or host agency to keep costs low and make the most of a budget (see Appendix 1B for a sample Cultural Worker Job Description).

3. **Start a group in the community** that is focused on strengthening the local culture and traditions, and work together to support children’s learning. Bring the community together, identify roles and responsibilities and assign tasks.

4. **Develop your own library** with books available at all reading levels. Include an informal lending library for staff and parents, keeping a written record of loaned books.

   Identify contacts within the community to help find resources; you can never have too many.

---

### Acquiring Resources

It’s an unfortunate reality, but ECD programs face the same scarce resources as other government funded initiatives. The basics can be difficult enough to acquire; cultural resources, sometimes viewed as “extras,” even more so. The more creative you can be about acquiring your own resources and making the best of what’s readily available, the better.

Workshop participants made the following suggestions for acquiring such resources. A word of caution: be sure to assess the material for focus and credibility before making it part of your program (see Appendix 1C):

- **Raise extra money by getting an Air Miles card with the agency’s name on it, or by pooling Canadian Tire money to purchase program materials.**

- **Encourage staff to collect as many resources as they can on their travels, and to always be looking for new and innovative techniques or methods.**

- **Work together to extend your resources. For example, the cultural resource person and the language instructor might work together to develop additional activities such as beading or sewing.**

- **Make maximum use of community resources. The libraries at Westcoast Multicultural and Diversity Services, the BC Aboriginal Child Care Society and local Child Care Resource and Referral Programs have a wealth of resources to tap into (See “Resources Index” below).**

- **Invite community members to workshops to make baskets, drums, masks and blankets. Some Elders will provide lessons in a traditional activity for a small fee.**

- **Use the Internet. Searched properly, it holds a wealth of information on virtually any topic. Some Internet sites even feature language dictionaries. Keep in mind, though, it can take time to “search” effectively.**

- **Make use of traditional guest speakers in your own community or outside it. Bring them in to talk to parents, Elders or the community at large.**

- **Go to other bands and other territories to share and trade goods, skills, curriculum and ideas.**
Informal Publishing

Informal publishing can be a powerful tool for teaching and validating the local culture and community. To maximize the production of locally produced cultural instructional materials, think about partnering with the elementary or high school to get older students to write and illustrate local stories and legends. Consider the following themes:

- Traditional perspective on the beginning of the world;
- Traditional perspective on nature;
- Local heroes, both living and from the past;
- Traditional foods;
- Traditional humor;
- The clans, houses or other groups in the community;
- Traditional view of sharing;
- Water;
- Animals as neighbors;
- Aboriginal history, including recent experiences like residential schools, the Potlatch law and the reserve system;
- Traditional housing, past and present;
- Traditional tools and equipment;
- Trading;
- Traditional language and its relationship to other languages;
- Traditional beliefs;
- Masks;
- Traditional dances; and
- Traditional songs.

Keep in mind, children love big books with illustrations that are 16’ by 20’ or larger. Keep the story lines simple, with maybe 10 words (in large print) per illustration. Only one copy of each book is necessary, but make sure they can be reproduced easily. Photos are an option for some themes.

Local elementary and high school children could also help assemble multi media kits with pictures, items for touching and manipulating, sounds and smells, based on a theme. These are low-budget, but age-appropriate resources with local relevance.
Best Practised Strategies for a Cultural Curriculum

Explore, Serve and Prepare Traditional Foods

- Invite parents to be present when you **serve traditional foods** to their children (see Appendix 1D for info on nutritional benefits and safety of traditional foods). Or ask parents and other community members to bring in traditional food to preserve, prepare and discuss. But first be absolutely certain of the safety of a particular food. Because licensing of early childhood education programs is regional, food restrictions, intended to protect the health of children, vary across the province. To find out what the specific restrictions are in your region, check in with your environmental health officer. He or she can also help you plan for the safe preparation and storage of traditional foods. Parental consent will usually address any restrictions.

- Traditional foods that are usually not restricted include:
  - fresh, in-season berries;
  - camas;
  - fresh salmon; and
  - fresh tsumish (herring eggs).

- Traditional foods that may be restricted include:
  - smoked or dried fish;
  - fresh or dried shellfish (e.g. clams);
  - glina (ooligan oil);
  - a’ant (herring roe);
  - klakasdan (dried seaweed); and
  - gallas (dried fish/jerky).

- Try **foods from different cultures and nations**. Look for differences and similarities in how different cultures eat.

- Make **soap-berry ice cream**. Have the children help pick the berries, make the ice cream and then, the best part, let them eat it (see Appendix 1E for recipe).

- Make **rabbit stew**. Involve the children at every stage, from setting the snares, to skinning the rabbit, to making, serving and eating the stew (see Appendix 1E for recipe).

- Make **bannock**.

- Go on **seasonal outings** to pick sage, wild vegetables and berries. Let the children take home what they pick (see Sharing

**Important: Parents’ Permission**

Always ask parents for permission for their children to participate in traditional ceremonies, especially if they are from a different culture and don’t understand the ceremonies. It’s a good idea to ask for permission when the child registers in your program, and to include the permission slip, with the parent’s signature, on the registration form.
Nature with Young Children in the Resources Index of this chapter).

- Go **fishing** (both rod and gill-netting) in spring when the leaves turn green. The children can take home their catch. Enlist the help of local fishers to teach the children how it’s done.

- Go **clam-digging**. What the children dig up, they can take home.

- Go to a **smoke house** to smoke fish. Some grocery stores will vacuum-pack the smoked fish for a small fee.

- Involve the children in the process of **growing a garden**.

## Explore Traditional Ceremonies and Sacred Teachings

- Participate in, and/or **perform traditional ceremonies** (e.g. salmon ceremony) as part of your regular curriculum. Remember that every community will have different traditional ceremonies; be sure to respect and acknowledge all of them. Talk to parents and Elders in the community to find out which traditional ceremonies are appropriate and who can help.

- Say **traditional prayers** to prepare for snack and meal times. It’s best to consult local Elders for traditional prayers appropriate for your community.

- **Attend a sweat house**, or participate in the building of one. A sweat house, or sweat lodge, is a traditional ceremonial house where men and women cleanse themselves, hold council and get ready for social and religious events. Sometimes, sweat houses are sex-segregated. They are typically heated inside by a low fire. To find the location of a sweathouse near you, contact a local elder, Friendship Centre or First Nations community.

- **Use smudging.** Smudging is a traditional cleansing ceremony, which generally precedes a spiritual activity, including prayer, and often coincides with either a sunrise or sunset. Typically, tobacco, sage, sweetgrass or cedar is burned in bundles or small pots. The purpose of the ceremony is to cleanse the body, an object or an area of negative influences. In one type of smudging ceremony, an Elder carries the smoking
CULTURALLY FOCUSED CURRICULUM

The Four Sacred Medicines

**Tobacco:** Traditional beliefs hold that tobacco helps people communicate with the spirit world. When an offering of tobacco is made, prayers are communicated through the tobacco. A common saying is “always through tobacco” because tobacco is used as an offering for everything and in every ceremony. It is used to seek the help and advice of an Elder, Healer or Medicine Person, and to express gratitude to the spirits for their help. People following a traditional path make an offering of tobacco each day when the sun comes up.

**Sage:** Sage is used to release negative energy. A bundle or pot of sage is often burned to prepare people for ceremonies and teachings.

**Cedar:** Like sage and sweetgrass, cedar is used to purify the home. When it’s put in the fire with tobacco, it crackles, attracting the attention of the spirits. Cedar is used in fasting and sweat lodge ceremonies as protection: cedar branches are spread over the sweat lodge floor or placed around a faster’s lodge.

**Sweetgrass:** Sweetgrass is considered the sacred hair of Mother Earth, its sweet aroma reminiscent of her gentleness, and her love and kindness. Like sage and cedar, it is used for smudging and purification. When sweetgrass is used in a healing circle it known to have a calming effect.

bundle or pot to members of a circle, starting from the east and moving clockwise. Each person “bathes” in the smoke, drawing it toward his or her heart, head, arms and legs. While there are many ways to smudge, in all instances, the ceremony should be done with care and respect. Consult a local Elder (see Appendix 1F for a sample smudging ceremony).

- **Hang cedar** around the doors. Cedar has several uses among Aboriginal peoples of the northwest coast. It is burned for smudging ceremonies, used as floor mats to heal an area or hung at entranceways to protect a room or building.

- **Invite Elders, Healers or Spiritual Leaders** as resource people who can practise cultural ceremonies and protocols with young children. Also known as

Visit Cultural Camps

Secwepemc Heritage Park in Kamloops and Soda Creek Heritage Village in Williams Lake are interesting destinations for field trips. If there isn’t a cultural camp in your area, turn your own program into one in the summer months. An outdoor-based program can teach children about living on the land. Just be sure the children are properly supervised and that you have all the necessary resources on hand. Then help children figure out the answers to questions like “Why is the lake there?” “What do birds eat?” “What happens to a fallen log?” “What kind of wood do you use to smoke fish?” “What do we eat?”
CULTURALLY FOCUSED CURRICULUM

medicine men, medicine women and Shamans, Spiritual Leaders and Healers are well respected in Aboriginal communities. Known for their wisdom, healing powers or spiritual leadership, they are not always distinguishable by age, and don't always possess the same gifts. The best way to find someone suitable for your program is to explore your professional and personal networks, or ask local parents.

• **Hold a potlatch or feast.** Have the children prepare beading, crafts, lacing and weavings for use in the potlatch. Each community has its own potlatch traditions; be sure to incorporate these into your potlatch. Urban programs should look for guidance from local Elders.

**Potlatch**

Once a year, the children of the Lake Babine Nation Education Centre host a potlatch, with over 400 people attending. The children are involved in the entire process, from start to finish.

**Provide Traditional Music and Dance**

• **Hold weekly drumming and dance lessons.** Fred John at Haywenuk Healing Circle on West Broadway in Vancouver provides drumming lessons. Be sure to teach children that their guests are educators, not entertainers. And children can make their own drums by recycling materials (see below).

• **Sing songs taught by Elders** or by Aboriginal entertainers. Carrier Sekani Family Services offers a Louie Singers CD for $20. Call 1-800-889-6855 to order.

• **Develop new songs** about nature and animals. Make up a song about walking in the forest, for example, and seeing a wolf or bear. Have the children howl like wolves or growl like bears. (see Singing With Infants and Toddlers in the Resources Index below.)

**Tell Traditional Stories**

• **Have two storytelling circles:** one in English and one in the local language. Bring in people who are fluent in the local language to read to the children.

• **Use flannel boards** to illustrate stories told in the local language.

**Project Ice Cream Bucket**

1. Collect enough ice cream buckets for each child.

2. Cut out the bottom of the bucket an inch above the bottom rim. This becomes the drum.

3. Punch holes in the one-inch border and cut another strip from the leftover pieces to weave through the holes.

4. Use the rest of the bucket by cutting a long strip to roll up into a drum stick.

5. Leftover pieces of the bucket can be used for other projects.

(See Appendix 1G for illustration.)
Go On Outings

• Go ice fishing.

• Have children who hunt with their families share their experiences with the group.

• Go on nature walks, using the local language to point out the plants and animals. (See Sharing Nature with Young Children in the Resources Index below.)

• Explore traditional forms of transportation such as dog sledding, canoeing, wagon rides (with horses) or horseback riding.

• Travel to different communities to experience other cultures.

• Attend powwows or other community events where children can experience cultural traditions.

• Take the children to visit a community member who tans hides. If they’re lucky, they may be invited to help stretch the hides by using them as trampolines.

• Visit the Aboriginal section of local museums.

Children’s Empowerment Program (CEW)

Established in 2001, this 10-week course organized by Métis women targets children aged 0 to 6, who learn traditional music, crafts, games and books in a structured, supervised setting. For more information, contact Shelley Wintrap at Vernon’s First Nations Friendship Centre, (250) 542-1247 or fnfc@shaw.ca.

Stock up on Traditional Toys and Materials

• Invite Elders to help children make traditional toys, such as rattles, dolls, and drums. Be sure to teach children how to use these toys safely. Or have Elders or other resource people come in to make masks. Have each child design his or her own regalia for a paper doll.

• Have on hand dolls and puppets dressed in traditional clothing.

• Keep a supply of traditional clothing for dress-ups and performances of plays illustrating traditional stories or legends.

• Use historical artifacts and traditional equipment wherever possible. Use them to build on a theme. For example, if you have a transportation theme, bring in a pair of snowshoes, or if the theme is dress, bring in a pair of moccasins. Draw from Elder’s teachings to describe artifacts to children. Consider traditional houses as a theme. There are so many possibilities: consider

In B.C., June 21 is Aboriginal Day, or All Nations Day, recognizing all Aboriginal people.
the long house, song house, totem poles, tepees, underground houses. If examples of traditional houses exist nearby, take the children to visit them.

- Introduce cultural artifacts through math (e.g., count the frogs, count the clans).

Ongoing Program Needs Related to Cultural Curriculum

Participants in the Best Practices workshops noted that, despite specific successes in the field, in order for Aboriginal ECD programs to be the best they can be in terms of cultural focus, the following areas – staff training, funding, community support and resources – require ongoing effort. They made a number of recommendations for strengthening each area:

1. Staff training

Inclusion of cultural awareness and Aboriginal curriculum in post-secondary Early Childhood Education Programs;

- More Aboriginal early childhood educators, infant-toddler educators and special needs educators and a strategy for recruiting them;
- Staff retreats with Elders;
- Involvement of staff in community cultural activities so they can make connections and find ways to involve children;
- An orientation weekend before school starts to help staff and parents identify roles, responsibilities and expectations;
- More staff, to allow for the time necessary to develop culturally based curriculums and materials;
- Regular networking workshops where participants bring in tools they find useful; and
- A staff member with a Class 4 driver’s license (to drive a bus), to provide transportation on field trips, as well as to and from the program.

Traditional Caregiver’s Camp

Providing young children with a healthy learning environment requires enthusiasm and stamina. It’s important that staff are regularly rejuvenated so as to prevent burnout. Ormond Lake Healing Camp (Najeh Bayoh) in Vanderhoof hosts a caregiver’s camp every October. The camp provides traditional music, healing touch and other services to enhance wellness. Contact the camp at 240 W. Stewart Street PO Box 1219 Vanderhoof BC V0J 3A0 (250) 567-2900 Fax: (250) 567-2975.
2. Funding

- Full-time positions to help meet curriculum and resource development needs; and
- Involvement from parents, Elders, and the rest of the community to help stretch budgets.

3. Community Support

- More comprehensive lists of community contacts and resources; and
- More local people who can present their skills and ideas at staff workshops and conferences.

4. Resources

- Information on the sources of toys and equipment reflecting local culture;
- A comprehensive cultural curriculum template;
- Make-and-take workshops with curriculum kits that can be purchased and taken away for use in programs;
- More workshops on cultural similarities, differences and celebrations;
- A series of worksheets (one to two pages each) on different Nations (e.g., the language, food, how to count to five in the language, etc.);
- A resource book on Aboriginal art activities;
- Access to Elders, and/or strategies for helping Elders become a part of the program;
- Guides to various topics: Aboriginal Food and Cooking, Spiritual Laws, Medicines and Herbs, Protocols for Tobacco Use, etc.;
- “How-to” videos on fishing, processing moose, berry-picking, using traditional medicines and walking on trails; and
- Children's storybooks containing traditional Aboriginal stories and history, especially those targeting preschool children.

Resources Index

The following resources are available through the BC Aboriginal Child Care Society’s resource centre and lending library or other Aboriginal organizations.


Secwepemc Cultural Education Society and Secwepemc Heritage Museum, 202-355 Yellowhead Hwy, Kamloops, B.C., V2H 1H1 (http://www.secwepemc.org/; Ph: (250) 828-9801; fax: (250) 372-1127)


### Resources for traditional celebrations:


*Also consider this booklist from INAC for books about Canadian Aboriginal Myths and Legends:*


**Non-Fiction books from INAC:**


Appendix 1A – How to Teach Cross-Cultural Science


An important feature of our project Rekindling Traditions is the community’s involvement in helping decide what is worth learning in school science. An Aboriginal way of knowing, defined by the community itself, forms the foundation for each unit. Elders and other knowledgeable people in the community teach local content to students and to you, who in turn record this knowledge appropriately. The process teaches students the proper protocol for gaining access to their community’s knowledge and wisdom, and it teaches them to value and respect their Aboriginal heritage.

When you introduce students to the science content in a unit (from the provincial curriculum), you do it with sensitivity to the authentic knowledge shared by the community. Consequently, students learn Western science without feeling the need to discredit the Aboriginal knowledge they have learned. If any conflicts do arise between the two ways of knowing (Western and Aboriginal), the students are encouraged to resolve the conflict. Their Aboriginal self-identities tend to be strengthened. At the same time, students become better prepared for, and sometimes more interested in, next year’s science course. This interest follows from the fact that students find the Western science content more meaningful, rather than approach it as content to be memorized.

To accomplish this more meaningful learning, we investigated a cross-cultural approach to science teaching by developing six Rekindling Traditions units. They illustrate our cross-cultural approach. Each lesson in a unit includes specific directions and background information to help you achieve your own cross-cultural approach.

To be a successful cross-cultural science teacher, you may need to rework some of your ideas that guide your day-to-day teaching. These ideas are the practical principles and values that determine what you do in your classroom. We know that teachers construct these practical ideas from experience and from thinking about their practice (when planning a lesson, or when reflecting on what happened, after the lesson).

This is where our Teacher Guide to Rekindling Traditions can help. It contains practical principles and values to think about when you teach any of our units or when you develop one of your own units. We do not tell you what principles and values to adopt, but we do suggest topics you should resolve in your mind as you teach in a cross-cultural way. Thus, consider this Teacher Guide as professional guidance that you’d expect from an in-service experience given by other teachers. The Teacher Guide is supplemented by a sister document, Stories for the Field: Experiences and Advice from the Rekindling Traditions Team, in which we convey our experiences and advice related to the challenges of contacting community people.
to learn their knowledge, involving them with the school, and gaining support from the community at large.

There is nothing more practical than a principle that works well. Practical principles found in this Teacher Guide come from personal experiences and from research systematically crafted to give the greatest transferability to your classroom.

Each section in the Teacher Guide is designed to be read independently. Thus, with one exception, you can begin reading wherever you wish. The exception is Chapter 7, “An Overview of the Units.” Our overview has been written to illustrate some of the ideas in Chapters 5 and 6, “Background” and “Integration of Western and Aboriginal Sciences.” The more familiar you are with the ideas in those two chapters, the more you’ll appreciate our overview of the units, the more at ease you’ll feel with our concrete suggestions found in each unit’s lesson plan, and the more fun and flexibility you’ll have implementing any of the units.

The Units:

It is anticipated that you’ll print out a unit that interests you and take it to some people in your community who know the topic well. You’ll then ask, “How could we modify this unit so it fits our community?” These local advisory people become a major resource for you in modifying the unit (or developing a new one). Perhaps they may interact with your students in school or on a field trip. See Stories from the Field for more information on how to locate and involve these local advisory people.

The units are available (as of September 2000) on CD from: Northern Lights School Division Teacher Resource Department, Bag Service 6500, La Ronge, SK, S0J 1L0, (306-425-3302)

They may also be down loaded from the internet (as PDF files) at the Rekindling Traditions web site (http://capes.usask.ca/ccstu). This web site has details about the Rekindling Traditions project not found in this Teacher Guide.

Additional resources:

Also see various publications by Dr. Gregory Cajete. Dr. Cajete is a Tewa Indian from Santa Clara Pueblo, New Mexico. Currently, he is Director of Native American Studies and an Associate Professor in the Division of Language, Literacy and Sociocultural Studies in the College of Education at the University of New Mexico.

Dr. Cajete also designs culturally responsive curricula geared to the special needs and learning styles of Native American students. These curricula are based upon Native American understanding of the “nature of nature” and utilizes this foundation to develop an understanding of the science thought process and Indigenous and Western perspectives of the natural world.

Appendix 1B – Cultural Worker Job Description

Campbell River Aboriginal Head Start Program
Job Description: ECE Assistant/Cultural Worker
1996

General Duties

Work under supervision of Head ECE
Provide the class with instruction
Work with CAPC when needed
Attend staff meetings
Attend professional development training
Help to maintain the facility

Cultural duties:

Incorporate local/territorial teachings to the children
Research and teach about other cultures
Use the local environment and community resources to link teachings to the everyday lives of children and families
Participate in community events and activities in a positive and honouring way
Work with parents to develop complementary education experiences
Learn and improve the children’s cultural knowledge and skills through craft projects, circle time (speaking in the territorial language, Kwa-Kwa-La numbers, weather, Aboriginal names given to each child, calendar, body parts, stories)
Ensure our Elders are given respect; and time to teach our children (reading stories, working specifically with children)
Introduce First Nation’s Foods to the children, i.e. teaching them how to make bannock, etc.
Gather First Nation’s materials to use as a resource and/or in craft projects
Teach children the proper respect in a Bighouse
Perform other related cultural and ECE assistant duties
Appendix 1C – Assessing Culturally Focused Resources


Be careful to assess the material for focus. If it focuses on material culture exclusively, for example, then make sure that you don’t make the focus of your program strictly material culture (i.e.: clothing, visual art, food). Many resources that exist will have been created by non-Aboriginal writers and may or may not accurately portray the culture, so it is important that you assess any such material for authenticity. Also ensure that the material doesn’t represent Aboriginal people in the past tense only, as people who were alive a long time ago and not now.

Build a portfolio of cultural resources for your centre. This portfolio could include art projects, cultural objects, sound recordings and videos, lists of community cultural resource people and lesson or activity plans for future reference. Over time, your centre should be able to acquire a rich collection of cultural resources for use with children.

Criteria for the Selection of Books and Materials
Look for the messages in children’s books.

The Characters
Do the characters in the story have personalities like real people?

Do they seem authentic in the way they act and react?

Do they speak in a style and language that suits their situation?

Are they real people with strengths and weaknesses rather than stereotypes?

Is their lifestyle represented fairly and respectfully?

The Situation
Do the characters have power over their own lives?

Do they resolve their own problems and reap their own rewards?

Illustrations
Do they idolize or idealize the physical traits of one group of people over another?

The Messages
Are there embedded messages that are demeaning in any way or that reinforce stereotypes?

The Author’s Credibility
What makes the author or illustrator suited to produce the type of material in question?
Appendix 1D – Benefits of Traditional Foods

Nutritional Benefits

Minnie Grey, from Kuujjuaq, knew what she was talking about when she said traditional food from all regions is rich in essential vitamins and minerals, often lower in fat than market food and contains healthier types of fat than market food.

Economic and Cultural Benefits

Due to the high cost of transport and storage, market food is often more expensive than traditional food and of poorer quality. In addition, hunting, fishing for and preparing food teaches the values of hard work and sharing. And eating from the land gives an appreciation of where food comes from and what nature can provide.

In a recent Centre for Indigenous Peoples’ Nutrition and Environment (CINE) survey, the majority of Yukon First Nations People agreed that harvesting and using traditional food:

• Contributes to physical fitness and good health;
• Is a favourite outdoor recreation activity;
• Provides people with healthy food;
• Keeps people “in tune” with nature;
• Saves money;
• Is an essential part of the culture;
• Provides education on the natural environment;
• Contributes to children’s education;
• Provides skills in survival; and
• an opportunity to learn patience and other valuable personality qualities.

New Video Available

“Traditional Food, Is It Safe?” explores the issue of contaminants in food sources in the Yukon and provides a description of the recent CINE survey there. Although filmed in the Yukon, this video is relevant to all communities facing similar problems of contamination. Thirty minutes long, it is available free from CINE to First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities and organizations, as long as supplies last. Otherwise, the cost is $30.

Contact CINE (Centre for Indigenous Peoples’ Nutrition and Environment)
Macdonald Campus of McGill University
21,111 Lakeshore Road
Ste-Anne-de-Bellevue, Quebec
H9X 3V9 CANADA
Telephone: (514) 398-7544
Facsimile: (514) 398-1020
Email: cine@cine.mcgill.ca
Appendix 1E – Recipes

Indian Ice Cream

- 1/4 cup water
- Sugar
- 1 cup soapberries, or 2 tbsp canned or dried soapberries or soapberry concentrate

Beat the water and soapberries into a light foam, the consistency of beaten egg whites. After the foam begins to thicken, gradually add the sugar (usually three to four tablespoons per cup of fresh berries, or to taste). Makes about four to six servings.

* Make sure the berries, bowl and utensils don’t come into contact with grease or oil, which will prevent the mixture from becoming nice and fluffy.

From: *Food Plants of Interior First Peoples*

Rabbit Stew

by Maryann Sam, a Cree from Fort George (Chisasibi), Québec:

1. Clean and skin the rabbit. Cut meat into parts.

2. Include bones. Put meat in a pot. Add water to cover. Now add these:
   - 4 tablespoons lard
   - 1 teaspoon salt

3. Let meat cook for about two hours, adding water as needed. If desired, add rolled oats, barley or rice. Keep the water boiling and gradually add 1/2 cup of one of the above, stirring all the time. Cook another 10 minutes.

Or you can add dumplings made like this:

- 2 cups of flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 4 tablespoons lard
- 1/2 teaspoon of salt

Make a dough. Break and add to top of stew in pieces.

Suggestions:

- Use vegetable oil instead of lard to decrease the cholesterol and saturated fat.
- Add vegetables such as carrots, corn or squash to increase vitamins and fibre.
Appendix 1F – Sample Smudging Ceremony
from Niji Mahkwa School, Winnipeg

Smudging

“We smudge to clear the air around us. We smudge to clean our minds so that we’ll have good thoughts of others. We smudge our eyes so that we’ll only see good things in others. We smudge our ears so that we’ll only listen to good things about others. We smudge our mouths so that we’ll only speak of good things about others. We smudge our whole being so that we may portray the good part of our SELF through our actions.”

The smudge prayer is the foundation of this most basic of the cleansing ceremonies. Students and staff at Niji Mahkwa School participate in this activity twice daily. The reasoning behind the smudge in the morning is to teach children to use the sacred smoke to clear away negative thoughts and feelings from before-school experiences. Things that might inhibit their clear thinking and ability to work well in the classroom are removed. To settle the children into the classroom for the afternoon, the smudge is again purposeful. Each child in the class has the right to use the smudge whenever they need to clear something; teachers may use it more than twice a day if necessary.

The smudge for Nursery to Grade 4

Purpose: The teachers facilitate the smudge to:

• Bring students together at the beginning of a learning time so that they are fully prepared;
• Introduce the most basic of ceremony protocols;
• Initiate students to the circle;
• Prepare students in the circle protocol; and
• Introduce universal directions.

Skills: Students will develop the ability to:

• regroup and focus;
• Recognize and become familiar with the medicines - tobacco, sage, cedar and sweetgrass;
• Say a prayer before starting something new;
• Recognize the value of smudging;
• Become a helper in the smudge practice; and
• Independently identify when the smudge ceremony is necessary.

Appendix 1G – Homemade Drum Illustration

THE ICECREAM BUCKET
Gloria V. Nisyok

- Use for mobiles!!
- Use the cover for stencils/templates!!

Dream Catcher
- Weave string/wool through.
- Hang feathers to decorate.

Head-dress or Drumstick
- Stick/Staple a piece of velcro at the edge to fasten the head-dress
- Cover a picture (of a tribe) with clear adhesive
- Staple the tribe onto the head band, i.e. Eagle head-dress

DRUMSTICK
- Roll up the band to form a long stick & tape down.
- Tape a flannel piece at one end.

Drum
- Punch out holes all around the edge.
- Weave pipe cleaner through.
- Use clear adhesive to stick on a tribe onto the *use picture from calendars/create your own crest
- Bass
- Decorate with red U" shapes (Moon shape)

NOTE:
NISGA'A TRIBES:
Eagle tribe
Wolf tribe
Killerwhale tribe
Raven tribe
Chapter Two – Traditional Languages and Language Development

I have tried very many ways over the years to teach our language to our people and more and more I have come to realize that we need to start with the little ones.

Elder Mary John, OAC, Saik’uz Nation

The Aboriginal languages were given by the Creator as an integral part of life. Embodied in Aboriginal languages is our unique relationship to the Creator, our attitudes, beliefs, values, and the fundamental notion of what is truth. Aboriginal language is an asset to one’s own education, formal and informal. Aboriginal language contributes to greater pride in the history and culture of the community; greater involvement and interest of parents in the education of their children, and greater respect for Elders. Language is the principal means by which culture is accumulated, shared and transmitted from generation to generation. The key to identity and retention of culture is one’s ancestral language.

1992 Report on Aboriginal Languages, the Assembly of First Nations

Introduction

Participants in the Best Practices workshops discussed two elements of language learning: teaching traditional languages and language development. Both are essential to culturally focused Aboriginal children’s programs. And with appropriate tools, resources and training, early childhood educators can support both methods of language acquisition. We’ve divided this chapter into two distinct sections: language development and teaching traditional languages. As language development is a necessary foundation for learning traditional languages, we start with the section on language development.
Language Development

Using some common strategies, early childhood educators can support language development for all children. Special strategies may be required for children with noticeable speech delays or disorders. Speech and language is considered delayed or disordered when it deviates so far from normal speech that it calls attention to itself; interferes with communication; or impairs emotional, social or economic well-being. In her workshop titled “Partnerships in Speech and Language,” Anne Gardner, who works with the Vancouver Island Health Authority, notes that there are several different types of communication delays and disorders, including:

- Delayed or disordered language – when language skills are below what’s deemed appropriate for a child’s developmental age.
- Expressive language disorder/delay – when spoken language is below age or developmental expectations.
- Articulation disorder – when one or more sounds are mispronounced or omitted.
- Voice disorder – when a voice is noticeably different in pitch, quality or volume.

It’s important for educators working with young children to recognize that the development of speech and language skills is a complex mental and physical process. “Normal” speech is a range; not a single point. While we want to encourage children to use language, we also need to be patient to allow children to develop at their own pace. Be sure to check out the Resources Index at the end of the chapter for valuable sources of support.

Best Practised Strategies for Language Development

The following section includes tried-and-true language development strategies from early childhood educators across the province, as well as some of the methods taught by Anne Gardner. In her “Partnerships in Speech and Language” workshops, Anne suggests the following ways to support children’s language development.

- When encouraging verbal responses, provide children with a choice of two or more response options.
- Extend conversations with children by talking in turn. Show children it’s their turn to talk by giving time for a response, waiting with an expectant expression on your face and using comments and questions that continue the topic.
- Model a slow, relaxed manner of speech. Let the child hear talking that is easy to copy.
- When identifying objects, label them with a specific term (e.g use “in the box” for “in there”).
• Get on the same physical level as children and give them your uninterrupted attention.
• Let children finish their sentences without interrupting them or finishing their sentences for them.
• Don’t tell a child to slow down, take a deep breath, start over or think before speaking. Such advice tells the child that there is something wrong with his or her speech. Encourage children in positive ways.
• If a child appears frustrated, struggles with his or her speech or avoids speech, refer them to a speech pathologist.

The following strategies came from workshop participants:
• Children with speech and language development problems (e.g., delayed speech, FAS) need to have these addressed before they try to learn other languages.
• Be diplomatic with parents. Use information handouts to raise awareness of potential problems in the language development of their children. For some parents, it’s easier to receive difficult information this way than hearing it directly from staff.
• Getting special needs support services in rural areas can be challenging. You may need to get extra funding to cover travel expenses.
• Ask your public health nurse for a list of exercises that children with language development problems can do (e.g., blowing bubbles, tongue exercises, etc.) while waiting for their appointment with the speech pathologist.
• Teach basic sign language to infants and toddlers. Speech and Language Pathologists recommend using sign language with picture/cue cards, so children can visualize what they are signing. Sign language stories are available from Odin Books (1-800-223-6346).

Teaching Traditional Languages

It is commonly accepted that language is the foundation of a culture, an essential component of self-determination. Of deep concern to any culture, language is even more so to Aboriginal communities, whose traditional languages have been endangered by deliberate English-only policies. It’s not a simplification to say that without language, a culture is eradicated. With it, a culture can thrive.

That said, renewing or revitalizing a language is never easy. And while the need for language renewal is urgent, it is by no means too late. Smaller, isolated communities, whose members share a language and dialect, may have an easier time protecting the traditional language than Aboriginal people living in urban centres, where many different languages are spoken. Even within a one-language or one-dialect community, there may be many different ways to say the same thing. While the challenges are many, workshop participants agreed that it is better to have some language learning than none at all.
Getting started

1. **Determine the importance of language learning** to the community as a whole. To be effective, you’ll need broad-based support. Be sensitive. Move slowly. And don’t push. Ask the Band council for support. Offer community members opportunities for involvement. Some may jump at the chance, but you won’t know until you ask. And be sure you have parental consent to teach the language in the program.

2. Determine the number of dialects or linguistic groups in your community, and among program children. If there is more than one dialect or linguistic group, **decide which one (or ones) you are going to teach**. Some programs include children from different linguistic groups, but offer only one language because teachers of other languages just aren’t available.

3. **Create your own resources**. If it’s important to your program to integrate language learning, then it is your responsibility to make it happen—with help from families, Elders and other community members. In addition to the resource suggestions we’ve provided throughout the text in this chapter, Wintergreen Learning Materials has an extensive supply of resources. They can be contacted toll free at 1-800-567-8054. And don’t forget to check the Resources Index at the end of the chapter.

---

**Best Practiced Strategies for Teaching Traditional Languages**

1. **Involve parents and extended families in language learning**
   - On registration forms, ask parents and extended family members about their language, and other skills, and whether they would be willing to share them with the class.
   - Encourage parents to speak the language with their children at home, and to start teaching the language when their children are infants.
   - Send newsletters home each week outlining the language activities and vocabulary for that week. Parents can help their children and learn at the same time. Use words from the traditional language in these regular newsletters.

There are many different traditional dialects and linguistic groups in BC, a fact which has, at times, caused conflict in some communities between ECE workers and Elders. Certain programs have been reprimanded for teaching the wrong dialect in the wrong region. Clearly, more funding for the hiring of language instructors fluent in the appropriate dialects would further language renewal.
• Invite parents and family members to lunches or other events where the local language is spoken. Ask parents for help with pronunciation. This will get them involved and perhaps lead to something more formal.

2. Involve the community in language learning.

• Identify community members who can help with various aspects of local language instruction (e.g., with labeling, telling stories, singing songs, or playing drums). Find as many resource people as you can.

Powwows are a good place to identify and connect with resource people.

• A large group of people with a common interest has a stronger voice than one person working alone. Enlist as many community members as possible in the cause.

• Invite Elders to teach the local language to staff. They may already be very busy and unable to make the time to visit your program. One way around this is to take staff or children to visit Elders in their homes.

• Host or sponsor language workshops for community members.

• Get Band funding to hire a community member to teach a language course in the evenings.

• Try to have fluent language speakers continuously present in your program to expose the children to the language as it is used in informal conversation. If fluent speakers are not available, have program staff speak as much as possible with one another in the language. Immersion is crucial to learning any language.

The Language Nest

The Language Nest was developed by Splatsin Day Care in Enderby. It is a highly successful language immersion program for children aged one to seven. It encourages parents to attend, and Elders to come and visit and talk with others in their native tongue. English is never spoken, and the children are exposed to full dialogue in the language. To find out more, contact program coordinator Deanna Cook at 250-838-6404.

If there are other early childhood programs in your language area, get together to share ideas, information and theme boxes.

Creating a safe, welcoming and pressure-free environment for Elders in your program is essential.
3. In the classroom

- Present language learning as a fun exercise for the kids.

- Use common words and phrases from the local language throughout the day (e.g., sit down, stand up, wash hands, eat, listen). Encourage the children to use the language, for example, by providing a drink only when a child uses the traditional words for “I would like a drink.”

- Use the local language in the morning and English in the afternoon.

- Use the local language for traditional cultural activities.

- Put the local language alphabet on the wall.

- Teach a new word every day.

- Label everything in both English and in the local language.

- Have circle times each day where you speak mainly the local language. Incorporate numbers, songs, dances and games, making it a fun experience, as well as a learning one.

- Create a language corner: a quiet area where a fluent Aboriginal language speaker works one-on-one with a child. This kind of learning is intense and effective.

- Use a calendar to teach days of the week, months, seasons and weather in the local language. Describe cultural activities associated with each season.

- Use games to teach simple vocabulary, such as numbers, colours and animals. Make use of traditional games from Elders and other community members. La’hal is a game played in many Northwest Coast communities (see Appendix 2A for instructions on how to make and play the game). Or adapt and modify non-native games, like Duck-Duck-Goose and Hopscotch, using the local language instead of English. Make up games, keeping it simple. For example, have the children stand in a circle and identify, in the local language, the colors they are wearing.

The Internet is a good source of games for adaptation. The Cedar Road Aboriginal Head Start program in Prince Rupert also has many novel ideas for play. Contact them at 250-627-4010 to arrange visits to their centre.

- Use songs. Learn traditional songs from Elders and other community members and teach them to the children. Teach drum songs, using the drums to emphasize the words. Explain the symbols on the drum and the stories they tell. Play recordings of traditional and contemporary songs at different times during the day. Record local singers and have the children drum along with the music.

Drums are an invaluable teaching tool, but commercial drums can be expensive and they are not as good as those made according to Aboriginal tradition. Traditional drums can be purchased from the Secwepemc (Shuswap) Museum and Heritage Park in Kamloops. Contact the museum at 250-828-9801 for more information. Drum workshops are also available.
• Make a tape of the children singing in the local language so they can hear themselves. Make your own CDs of songs to play during the day. Vernon First Nations Friendship Centre has equipment available for making good-quality video recordings of songs and stories. Contact them at 250-542-1247 or e-mail at fnfc@shaw.ca.

• Use books and stories (see Appendix 2B for tips on getting the most out of storytime). Stock up on books in the local language. Or create your own books. Adapt and modify English-language picture books. Use felt boards and finger plays to tell stories. Record stories on tape and make books to accompany the tapes. Use stories that revolve around traditions. Or develop identity books for each child, using the local language to describe who the child is and where he or she comes from. Aboriginal books and stories can be found at Khot La Cha, BC Play Things, Nahanees, Theytus Books Ltd. and other book retailers. Refer to the Resources Index in Chapter One for an extensive list of Aboriginal myths and legends. Tourist shops may also carry children’s books with native themes.

• Use rhymes. Learn rhymes from Elders and other community members, or make up your own rhymes in the local language. The ACCS handbook, Developing Culturally Focused Aboriginal Early Childhood Education Programs has some suggestions.

• Model language sounds. Use rhymes and songs that focus on the sounds children may have trouble pronouncing. Practise language sounds enough so that they don’t feel awkward. Turn the practice into a game with a group of children.

• Take the children on nature walks and other cultural activities, such as berry picking, where you can name items using the local language.

• Take the children to community events and ceremonies where they will hear the language being used.

• Develop a traveling language suitcase that children can take home on evenings and weekends. The case could include a book, puzzle, colouring pages, tape or CD and other materials.

• Make hand puppets with children and have them speak the local language too! See Appendix 2C for instructions.

• Create handmade puzzles reflecting different themes (animals, toys, seasons, transportation, etc.), using colorful pictures and the local language to describe the different objects.

• Homemade wooden blocks can show pictures, numbers and vocabulary. Get consent to photograph the children and use the photos on the blocks, as well as in books, picture cards, posters and calendars.

• Try language computer programs like the Language Master or Board Maker. Keep in mind, though, that each of these programs costs hundreds of dollars and requires adult supervision and participation. On the other hand, they are quality resources and do help children develop skills in both English and local languages. CD-ROM learning games, as well as audio equipment with flashcards and pictures are available from the Skw’lax day care centre. Contact manager Dorothy Munroe at 250-679-8033.
The Okanagan Day Care Centre uses the Language Master, a machine that records specific words on cards, which children can then slot in to hear the words repeated. Although it is effective and children enjoy it, it is expensive, time consuming, and requires constant supervision. It is also crucial to have a clear speaker record the words and children need to be shown how to use the cards once they are made.

Ongoing Program Needs Related to Traditional Languages and Language Development

Language is such a challenging component of early child development, requiring concerted effort on the part of so many stakeholders and the broadest possible application of programs, that current strategies and policies represent a beginning only. Participants in the Best Practices workshops identified the following program needs:

1. General Needs

- To continue language lessons in the public school system;
- Enhance coordination between ECE programs and schools; and
- Approach more Aboriginal advocates, policy makers and public speakers to gain a higher level of support for, and acknowledgment of, traditional languages.

2. Staff Training Needs

- More staff training in basic language skills and language teaching skills;
- More opportunities to explore other cultures to see how they teach and preserve their language;
- Enhanced funding available for language courses and programs for language educators;
- More opportunities to network with others in the ECE field, to share ideas and approaches, and to develop resource kits, for example, for parents to share with their children at home.
3. Funding Needs (see Appendix 2D for funding opportunities)

- More employees and language instructors fluent in the appropriate dialect for the area;
- One-time-only funding available for effective, but cost-prohibitive, resources such as the Language Master;
- More money for honorariums for resource people outside the program;
- Enhanced funding so as to increase the amount of time each worker has to address the language and cultural learning needs of the program; and
- More money to develop comprehensive language libraries, reflecting various local languages and dialects.

4. Community Support Needs

- Enhance parent and Elder participation;
- Work toward lower child/Elder ratios;
- Communicate with parents about the importance of language and culture and encourage participation from fathers;
- Provide language and cultural information relevant to specific families;
- Provide transportation to and from language programs; and
- Enhance the value placed on language learning by the community.

5. Resource Needs

- More fluent speakers to provide language immersion;
- More cultural workers and translators;
- More resource materials—including books, puzzles, games, tapes, videos, CDs, and CD-ROMs and other computer software—reflecting Aboriginal languages and images;
- More language resources for parents to use with their children at home;
- A series of cultural worksheets, including simple words (greetings, numbers, colours, etc.) in various local languages;
- A comprehensive directory of language resources (see Resources Index below); and
- A complete set of Aboriginal community profiles in BC, including cultural boundaries so we know which stories and songs belong to which nations, and what can be shared (see Resources Index below).
Resources Index

• The Aboriginal Literacy and Parenting Skills (ALAPS) program is a family literacy program developed in Alberta for Aboriginal parents, consisting of several sessions: Listening, Passing on Values and Traditions, Schools, Building Self-Esteem, Talking to our Children, Discipline, Foods, and Families as Teams. The facilitator’s guide is available through the ACCS library. For more information about programs and training courses offered in BC, contact Elaine Cairns or Laureen MacKenzie at 403-410-1501, or visit their website: www.nald.ca/laps/Training.htm.

• Deanna Cook of the Splats’in Daycare Centre has developed a series of 15 audiovisual Shuswap language lessons. Deanna can be reached at 604-838-6404.

• The First Peoples’ Cultural Foundation in Victoria offers a partial directory of language resources. Contact them at 250-361-3456 or via e-mail at info@fpcf.ca, or check their web site at www.fpcf.ca.

• The Provincial Literacy Resource Centre, Literacy British Columbia, provides a unique and diverse collection of more than 3,000 resources, including print materials as well as other media. Call 1-800-663-1293, or go to www.nald.ca/lbc.htm.

• Statistics Canada’s web site includes basic population data, but information about cultural boundaries should be explored with individual communities. Check out Statistics Canada at www.statcan.ca.

• Vancouver Coastal Health Authority can provide handouts on typical language development at certain ages. Call 1-866-884-0888 or 604-736-2033, or e-mail feedback@vancoastalhealth.ca. If you are outside of this district, your community health nurse may be able to get the materials for your community.

• Theytus Books Ltd is an Aboriginal publishing house in Penticton. Contact them by phone 250-493-7181 or e-mail theytusbooks@vip.net.
Appendix 2A – Lahal/Slahal
How to Play

Lahal/Slahal is a native gambling and social game common throughout the Northwest Coast and Plateau. It involves bluffing and sleight-of-hand in a fashion similar to the “shell game”, although using sticks and bone pieces. Like the potlatch, it was banned for many years in Canada. It is still widely played in the Chilcotin region and variants are known throughout the Plateau and Columbia Basin.

Time:
1 hour to 4 hours or more

Setting:
Indoors or outdoors, traditionally played in the Big House

Background:
The game is a gambling game and traditionally was played by adults. Recently, children have been taught Lahal because it allows Elders to teach traditional songs and different drum beats. At the same time, lessons on the history of the children's tribes and stories relating to the game can be passed on. In addition, children can learn to work together as a team, to develop respect, trust, self-confidence and pride in traditional games. Youth can learn to carve their own Lahal sticks and bones.

Preparation:
Invite an Elder to come and teach the game and Lahal songs.

Materials required:
• Traditional drum.
• At least five sticks per team. The sticks are carved. Each team needs to have the same number of sticks. One extra stick is used as the King Pin.
• Four carved bones, usually deer, moose or elk bone, about two inches long. There are two plain carved bones (female bones) and two that have a ring or protruding ring around the bone (male bones).
• Teams sit directly across from one another with the sticks laid out in front of team members.
• Each team has one female bone and one male bone.
• The game begins with one team having the drum and the other guessing where the male bones are hidden.

Rules of the game:
• There are two teams with at least three members per team. Teams can have odd numbers of players. During fun games, people can come and leave as they wish.
During competitions, team members must stay seated

- To start the game, each team designates someone to hold the bones and someone to guess which hand the bone with the ring (male bones) is in. The team that guesses correctly where the male bone is, wins the opportunity to have the bones first. They also win an extra stick (the King Pin). This may vary among tribes. The King Pin may be used at the end of the game. If the team that won the King Pin is losing, it’s like having an extra stick.

- Each team chooses a team captain. Most decisions will go through the captain. The team captain is usually the person who formed the team and is one of the stronger Lahal players.

- There is no use of drugs or alcohol during the game.

- The object of the game is to win all of the other team’s sticks and the King Pin.

- For the purpose of explanation, the team that wins the bones will be referred to as Team A, while the opposing team will be Team B:

  1. Team A sings their Lahal song and tries to distract Team B, while two members of Team A are mixing up the bones behind their backs or under a sweater and hiding the bones in their hands. Team B members watch to see where the bones are being hidden.

  2. Team B tries to guess which hand(s) Team A has hidden the male bone in.

  3. If Team B guesses correctly, they win a set of bones for every correct guess. If they guess incorrectly, they must pass one of their sticks over to Team A. This continues until Team B wins both sets of bones.

  4. If Team B guesses incorrectly, they continue to lose their sticks until none are left. Should they reach this point and continue to make incorrect guesses, Team A will lay one of their sticks on top of one of their winning sticks. The sticks are considered to be “dead sticks”. This continues until either all the sticks that have been won are “dead” or Team B begins to win some of their sticks back.

  5. The only way Team B can win sticks back from Team A is to correctly guess which hand(s) the bones are in. If Team B wins both sets of bones, then Team A becomes the guessers and the game continues.

  6. The first team to win all of the other team’s sticks and to ensure that all the sticks are dead wins the game.

  7. There is to be no cheating. If cheating occurs, then the team is disqualified.

**Hand movements during the game:**

- The person guessing where the male bones are typically uses her/his pointing finger.

- When there is only one set of bones to guess for, that person usually points either left or right.

- If there are two sets of bones to guess for, and the person guessing only wants to guess for one set of bones, then the player can
hold one of the guesses by holding up a hand to stop the guess from either the player on the right or left. If the guess they want to hold is on their left, they would hold up the left hand. They can then turn to the other player holding the bones and make their guess. This is one way for players who are confident they know where the male bones are, to try to win two bones.

• If the player guessing is trying to guess where both male bones are and they believe both are in the outside hands of players on the opposite team, they must hold down their three inside fingers and spread apart the thumb and pinky finger. This indicates they think the male bones are on the outside.

• If the person guessing believes the male bones are in the inside hands of the two people holding them, they must hold their hand straight and make a chopping motion indicating they think the male bones are down the middle.

Sources
Dennis Alphonse, Elder, Cowichan Tribes
K’odi Nelson, Kwakaka’wakw Nation
From http://web.mala.bc.ca/cycfncon/Stuprojects/games/alahal.htm
Appendix 2B – Things You Can Say When You Read a Storybook to Your Child

Look at the cover
“Let’s see what the title is.”
“What’s this book about?”
“I wonder what will happen in this book.”
“Let’s find out who wrote this book.”

Predict what might happen
“What do you think will happen next?”
“What will be on the next page?”

Look at the first picture
“What’s this?”
“Where’s the…?”
“What can you see here?”

Link pictures with words
“Let’s see what the story says. Hey, here’s a part about the mouse!”

Find where to start
“Here’s where we start.”
“Let’s read the story.” (Point to the place.)
“Let’s read the first sentence.” (Run your finger underneath.)

Predict words or phrases
“Brown bear, brown bear, what do you see? I see a red bird looking at ….”

Point out some features of words
“Your name begins like that.”
“We saw that word before.”

Find out how to read the page
“Where do we go now?” (Run your finger along and sweep back to the left for each line.)

(Source: Cutting, Brian. 1985. Talk Your Way to Reading Adapted by L. R. Sipe)
Appendix 2C – How to Make Puppets

1. Hand Puppet

Basic Supplies
- 14” by 12” of fabric for each body (old shirts work well)
- matching felt for faces/paws
- fabric glue
- fabric paint

Steps
- Trace around patterns and cut out 2 bodies from the fabric
- Glue or paint eyes, nose, ears, mouth and paws on one side of the fabric
- Glue (or have an adult sew) around puppet, remember to leave the bottom open

2. Stick Puppet

Supplies
- Paper & Printer
- Glue
- Thin Cardboard
- Crayons or Paint

Steps
- Start by printing the template
- Cut it out and trace it on the cardboard
- Cut out the cardboard bear and glue to paper bear
- Color the bear anyway you wish
- Glue to the stick
- Have your bear sing a song
Appendix 2D – Traditional Languages Funding Opportunities

Canadian Heritage Aboriginal Languages Initiative

Objective

The Aboriginal Languages Initiative maintains and revitalizes Aboriginal languages for future generations by increasing the number of Aboriginal language speakers, by encouraging the transmission of these languages from generation to generation, and by expanding language usage in family and community settings.

Who can apply?

• The Assembly of First Nations (First Nations languages), the Métis National Council and its provincial affiliates (Michif languages) and the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami and its regional affiliates (Inuktitut languages) will be delivering the ALI to eligible recipients, and may apply for funding directly to the Department of Canadian Heritage.

• Eligible recipients include existing national and/or regional Aboriginal representative and service delivery organizations such as Aboriginal communities/First Nations, Aboriginal governments or institutions, Aboriginal cultural education centres, and Aboriginal Friendship Centres. Eligible recipients are to apply directly to the delivery organization of the relative language element. ie: First Nations languages; Michif languages; Inuktitut languages.

What is the deadline?

Eligible recipients should call the appropriate organization(s) listed below to determine its/their requirements in terms of the deadline(s) for receipt of proposals.

For more information:

Assembly of First Nations
1 Nicholas Street, Room 1002
Ottawa, ON
K1N 7B7
Tel.: (613) 241-6789
Fax: (613) 241-5808

Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami
170 Laurier Avenue West, Suite 510
Ottawa, Ontario
K1P 5V5
Tel.: (613) 238-8181
Fax: (613) 238-1991

Métis National Council
350 Sparks Street, Suite 201
Ottawa, ON
K1R 7S8
Tel.: (613) 232-3216
Fax: (613) 232-4262
Language plays an important role in maintaining diversity and celebrating our past. Nine in ten of all Aboriginals in Canada would like to learn the language spoken by their ancestors. Our program tries to help in finding the needed resources to do just that.

Originally established in 1990 by the BC Government through the First Peoples’ Heritage, Language and Culture Act, its purpose is to assist in the preservation and enhancement of languages for the Aboriginal Peoples of BC.

Our objectives are to:

- increase the number and quality of language projects in First Nations communities
- increase community and individual participation in First Nations language activities
- support long-term strategies aimed at revitalizing and maintaining First Nations languages
- increase the number of speakers, improve fluency, assure intergenerational transmission and enlarge the sectors in which First Nations languages are spoken.
Chapter Three – Networking and Outreach

We have learned that the healthy development of children depends on the strength of their families, and the resources available in the communities in which they live. Children don’t grow up in isolation, nor can families do their jobs alone. We have also learned that communities cannot thrive in isolation. They require government policies and support that facilitate and make it possible for the community to achieve its goals.


Introduction

For the purposes of this handbook, the word “community” is used in its broadest possible sense. It means, simply, people who are brought together by geography, culture or common interests. We use the word respectfully, acknowledging that real action takes place in communities, not in the halls of government, nor of academia. So when we talk about community participation, we mean the involvement of diverse stakeholders—from families and extended families, to Band leaders and Elders, to a range of service providers—in the fulfillment of a common goal: in this case, the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal children and their families, and ultimately, of the entire community.

General Principles

Keep the following general principles in mind as you start to integrate early childhood programs into the community. These will ensure that finding your own path through the process, while perhaps leading down a different road from the next community, will take you in the right direction.

• Families and young people should be partners in the planning and implementing of services.

• Services should be available in various settings, using public, community and personal resources.

• Programs and staff should reflect cultural protocols.
• Ensure that all programs, whether yours or in the community, are inclusive of all cultures.

• Services should focus on enhancing the ability of children and families to help themselves.

• Public, private and community services should be coordinated and delivered collaboratively.

• Services, whether private, public or at the community level, should meet accepted standards for quality and be developmentally appropriate. Services should also be delivered by well-trained, well-qualified staff.

• Services should be cost-effective.

---

### Mobile Games Library in France

A human services volunteer group active in six rural communities in central France operates a mobile day care centre featuring ‘ludotheque’ or a lending library of games. A van loaded with games and operated by two nursery school teachers stops for at least an afternoon a week in each of six participating communities. The service is funded by family members, with a pro-rated subsidy from the welfare funds of the six communities. And each of the six communities in the Ille-et-Vilaine district provides a school or community centre in which to operate the library.

---

### Best-Practised Strategies for Outreach

As early childhood educators, you have a dual role as teachers and ambassadors to the community. When partnering with agencies or individuals in the community, it is crucial to model behavior that is professional, respectful and gracious. Make it clear that community members who dedicate time, energy or resources, are fully appreciated. Workshop participants recommended using honoraria as a formal means of appreciation, as well as informal acknowledgements such as verbal or written thank you notes. Still, it’s not always easy to achieve community integration. With so many stakeholders and so few resources, it will take time, and persistence. Using best-practised strategies will help. At the very least, you’ll gain an all important momentum. One successful relationship or partnership will lead to another, which will lead to another. We’ve offered more suggestions than you can use at any one time, so decide where your priorities are and choose those that suit the more immediate needs of your program.
1. Involve Parents and Extended Family

- Ask parents what they expect their children to learn during their early pre-school years. Approach parents when they register their children, or include appropriate questions on the registration form. If the centre can’t meet parents’ expectations because it lacks the resources, ask the parents (or grandparents!) if they would be willing to help out. Let them know how. Parents might not recognize what they have to offer in the way of ideas, materials, artifacts, songs, stories, and expertise.

- Require that parents (or extended family members) volunteer for a minimum of three hours per month, or be charged an extra fee (e.g., $20 per month). Prepare a sign-up sheet every month listing tasks and activities, such as making snacks, doing laundry, driving on outings, etc.

- Hold a regular parents’ night.

- Organize staff and parent luncheons once or twice a week.

- Videotape daily activities for working parents so they can see what their children do during the day, or to answer questions. The parents will appreciate the extra effort and the children will enjoy watching themselves and sharing with their parents details about their activities.

- Organize short home visits. Include information on these in the registration form and ask parents to provide convenient times for such visits.

- Organize a Parent Advisory Committee (PAC). Such committees encourage direct involvement from parents and can be empowering—sometimes empowering enough for parents to return to school themselves. Develop Terms of Reference so that parents are clear about roles and responsibilities (see Appendix 3A for a sample Terms of Reference). Emphasize the fact that the approach is supportive, rather than adversarial.

Starting a PAC

Aboriginal Head Start offers extensive information on how to start a PAC, including sample Rules and Responsibilities and Terms of Reference. Parents sign a form when they register their child, indicating their participation in the program is highly recommended, maximizing the Committee’s potential. Parents also sign a Code of Ethics and an Oath of Confidentiality. During annual general meetings, parents can sign up for committees as well as elected positions, such as president, and fundraising activities.

- Designate a staff member as family involvement worker. This person will do the home visits, promote the program to families, and help families with their child’s transition from preschool to school.
• Develop a resource centre, with culturally diverse books, videos, theme boxes (containing a book and a game), and research papers available for loan to parents and extended families. Start a toy lending library. Be sure to include theme boxes that reflect both First Nations and non–First Nations people.

• Develop a home reading program in which children take home a different book each day to be read to them by their parents. This gets parents involved and gives children an opportunity to interact with their parents through the books.

Moms and Tots Program

One centre hosts a Moms and Tots program in May and June, funded out of the previous year’s budget. An adult must remain with the child at all times and the program provides crafts, circle time and a morning snack. This gives children and mothers a chance to socialize.

• Produce a monthly newsletter and calendar for parents that includes centre and community events.

• Provide a suggestion box for parents (including paper and pen). Ask for specific suggestions, such as how to incorporate culture in the program. Encourage people to provide positive feedback as well as suggestions for improvement. It’s always inspiring to hear that your efforts are working! Clearly state that comments should be anonymous.

2. Enlist the Help of Elders

The involvement of, and guidance from, Elders is invaluable. Some centres organize Elders’ Conferences to solicit input from Elders on the traditional native values and cultural expectations they believe should be integrated into the curriculum.

• Have Elders visit the centre weekly, either for lunch or some other regular activity. Invite the whole community.

• Invite Elders to come in and share their knowledge on specific topics, such as: roots and berries; surviving in the woods; or gathering, drying and storing food. Some Elders will provide formal lessons for a small fee.

• Hold a monthly Grandparents’/Elders’ Day, featuring a potluck dinner. This is an opportunity to get to know extended families and for the centre to gain valuable exposure.

Honoraria and Gifts

Providing honoraria for Elders is an honored tradition within Aboriginal communities and proper protocols should be followed. Budgets will determine the size, and, as such, they may vary. Regular guests are usually paid an average of $25 per hour. It is also customary to present guests with a gift. Traditional items are ideal, including hand-sewn purses, blankets, tobacco, sweet grass and sage.
• Have an annual (or more frequent) Elders’ tea or lunch. Some centres schedule this in November to coincide with Remembrance Day. Provide transportation to and from the event, and be sure to follow up personally. Organize the food at the centre (include in the monthly nutrition budget) or ask volunteers to bring in food. Have the children make gifts for the Elders to show their respect and appreciation.

• Visit Elders regularly—perhaps once a month—at home, including care homes.

• Encourage children to hunt with an Elder they know (one-on-one). They can help skin and butcher the animal, as well as learn about gun and knife safety.

• Start an Adopt-a-Grandparent program, in which children adopt an Elder from a local Elders’ Residence.

• Invite Elders to come to the program to help with traditional language instruction, read or tell stories in traditional languages and/or English, and help with crafts and other cultural activities.

• If an Elders’ Conference is scheduled nearby, ask the organizers if they wouldn’t mind having children from your program visit for a few hours.

Reaching Out

The Upper Nicola Band was ineffective at getting the elderly population of their community involved in the child care centre, until they established an outreach program. Now, every Thursday the centre serves lunch to the Elders of the community and guest speakers are invited. A public health nurse, for example, might come and talk about nutrition. The food served, donated by the parents of the children at the centre, is usually a stew or spaghetti, which is inexpensive to make and goes a long way.

Skw’lax Day Care Centre has implemented a Hot Lunch Program to entice people in their community to come to the centre.

The Okanagan Indian Band holds Special Occasion Lunches, providing honoraria (included in the annual budgets) to Elders and other guests who come to the centre to teach local language, traditional stick games and drumming.

Every Wednesday, Elders come to the Sundance Day Care Centre at Vancouver’s Aboriginal Friendship Centre to share materials and designs for moccasin templates.

Important: Criminal record checks

Criminal record check requirements vary regionally (with licensing regulations). Generally, regular visitors to early childhood education programs must undergo a criminal record check. However, as resource people, Elders do not require such checks. (Keep in mind, Elders, and others who have not had criminal record checks, should never be left alone to supervise the children.)
3. Encourage Input from the Chief and Council

- Invite the Chief and Council to all events and ceremonies, including graduation ceremonies. Keep them apprised of new services or upcoming activities. They are more likely to provide support if they know who you are and what you do. They can also participate in program evaluations.
- Be clear to the Chief and Council about what your needs are, and how you would like to meet them.
- Make organized presentations to Chief and Council when soliciting funding. Keep a detailed record of what’s done each day, from administrative to planning to teaching to extra-curricular duties. This kind of documentation can help address funding issues.

4. Celebrate Special Occasions

- Invite everyone in the community to celebrate children’s birthdays.
- Use special occasions (e.g., Christmas, Mother’s Day, Father’s Day, Valentines Day, Nutrition Day) as reasons to celebrate and showcase your program. Invite parents and extended families.
- Arrange an awards day and invite the community. Children can make traditional dress to be worn at the ceremony.

5. Host Community Events

- There’s a whole range of fun events from which to choose: community dinners or barbeques, hot lunches, workshops and training on specific topics, arts and crafts sessions, drop-in play time or weekly ladies’ nights.
- Organize a sports day for all daycares and ECE programs in your community. Include different activity centres (e.g., walking backwards, balloon toss, spoon race, red rover, tug-of-war, parents vs. caregivers, scavenger hunt). Hand out participant ribbons, explaining that it’s all for fun and that everyone is a winner for participating.
- Coordinate a potluck lunch, scavenger hunts, bingos, childcare month activities, or project days, to paint blocks for example, or paint a wall.
- Develop a community garden. Give children seeds to plant. Use the fresh produce in your program or take it to Elders as gifts. Preserve some of the produce (e.g., canning, freezing, dehydrating). Consider budgeting some funds for the cook or other staff members to tend to the garden. Make sure it’s fenced.
- Let other groups use your facility in the evenings free of charge. This is good public relations, and the favor will almost certainly be returned.

Community Garden Funding

Health Canada’s Community Action Program for Children (CAPC) may sponsor a community garden. For more information, contact Health Canada’s Division of Childhood and Adolescence at 1-613-952-1220.
6. Invite the Community In

- Invite a variety of people from the community to teach the children how to smoke fish, dry clams, can berries, drum, and sing, and make traditional arts and crafts or traditional clothing.

- Invite people from a variety of professions and occupations to explain to the children what they do. If applicable, ask them to wear their uniforms or working clothes. Tradespeople can sometimes offer children hands-on learning experiences. Possible guests include: dentists, doctors, electricians, fire fighters, fisheries officers, mail carriers and delivery personnel, musicians, nurses, plumbers, and police or RCMP officers.

- If your community is in a remote area, invite emergency services to your facility so they know how to locate you, as well as to promote a sense of safety in the children.

- Don’t be shy about using the personal contacts (family and friends) of staff as guests to your program.

7. Go Out to the Community

- Have staff and/or children attend community events, such as: feasts, potlatches, powwows, rodeos and ceremonies. When attending a potlatch or feast, have the children put their artwork in a basket and hand it out to guests.

- Offer FoodSafe workshops before community feasts, potlatches and powwows. To find out how to bring a Foodsafe workshop to your community, call one of the contacts listed in Appendix 3B. Also visit the Foodsafe website at www.c2+2.ca/curric/foodsafe/.

- Have a float in Christmas, Aboriginal Day and other parades.

- Be sure to participate in Aboriginal Day activities. It’s one of the best opportunities for establishing ties with the community.

Aboriginal Day Powwow

- One ECE centre planned a mini powwow on Aboriginal Day, inviting the community while maintaining a focus on young children. Funding came from Putting Kids First in Kamloops, as well as donations. It has since grown into a large, high-profile community event.

- Subsidize community workshops, offering child-minding for participants.

- Make use of community resources. Know what’s available. Use recreation centres for skating, swimming and playground use. Promote other community activities and events (including non-Native) through your program.

- Schools and school districts have a wealth of valuable resources at little or no cost. Why not take advantage of them? Find out what’s available through the schools in your area or district.

- On Halloween, dress children up, have a parade, and give candy to Band Office staff.
8. Connect with Other Programs and Organizations

- Regular networking with other ECE programs or agencies is a great way to stay current, get ideas, and share information and resources. The Canadian Child Care Federation can provide information on what is happening across Canada, and resource sheets on a range of topics.

- Arrange for the children to visit other programs in your area, and vice versa.

- Contact community health nurses and other community officials, such as fire marshals or police departments; they can often provide posters relevant to Aboriginal communities.

- Compile a list of Aboriginal resources and share it with other services in the community. Costs can be shared.

9. Governance

- Have community members join the Board of Directors for the program.

- Develop a community child care planning council, or an education committee. Have the Chief and council participate. Arrange for an education coordinator to help you develop guidelines, define boundaries, and share information.

10. Organize Outreach Initiatives

- Produce flyers, newsletters, and public service announcements for local radio and television stations.

- Write articles for your local newspaper.

- Arrange immunization clinics, with public health nurses administering the shots.

11. Be Proactive about Fundraising

- Hold raffles, bingos, bake sales and hot lunches.

- Sell t-shirts with your program’s logo on them.

- Make and sell a CD or tape of Elders singing and drumming. Enlist the help of local highschool students to help record the CDs or tapes.

- Create and sell a cookbook with favorite recipes from parents and children.

- Diversify your approach, soliciting funding from a wide range of sources. Start by acquiring the ACCS Funding Opportunities Handbook for complete information on what’s available from government agencies, how to write a grant application, and other kinds of support.

- If applicable, approach your Band Council (each band receives money earmarked for different budgets).

- Visit funders armed with a depth of information about your program, including statistics, along with letters of support from
parents. Consider taking a few parents with you.

• Find out what’s available from the United Way, the Vancouver Foundation (see Appendix 3C for United Way and Vancouver Foundation funding requirements), VanCity Foundation and other mainstream funding sources.

• Approach local businesses for sponsorships and donations. Think about developing an in-kind donation campaign. Make a list of ways people or organizations in the community can contribute to your program, other than in funds. For example, donated goods might include toys, books, craft supplies, kitchenware, food, door prizes and computers. Donated services might include cooking, reading, clean-up, laundry, driving and fundraising. Distribute the list with a letter to businesses in your community, such as Save-on-Foods, Sears, dollar stores, and Please Mum.

One ECE program distributed a form community-wide, asking recipients for their name and phone number, and a brief description of skills or areas of expertise. The result: a comprehensive and ready list of valuable resources.

Ongoing Program Needs Related to Networking and Outreach

1. Cultural Resources

• Easier access to community cultural facilities (e.g., big house, sweat lodge);
• More medicine women;
• Higher access to reserves by urban programs for cultural teachings;
• More resources for off-reserve children; and
• More rigorous language immersion.

2. Other Resources

• The addition of a Friendship Centre in each community;
• Funding to provide training for non-Aboriginal support services and volunteers;
• Funding for a liaison person whose mandate is exclusively community outreach and networking;
• Enhanced funding for resource sharing;
• Funding for transportation for outings; and
• Easier access to people who can identify free activities and supplies, perhaps through a Recource Committee involving parents, Elders and social workers.

3. Communication

• More networking;
• More personal contact with parents;
• More comprehensive contact information (e.g., centralized lists with the names of Chiefs, Counsellors, child care representatives, social workers, health professionals and supported child care, etc.)
• Regular communication about available resources and upcoming events;
• More field trips to other programs;
• More open communication among directors, staff, and Chief and Council;
• Enhanced advertising and marketing, perhaps through a web site, on-line cultural teachings and internet access and training; and
• Increased collaboration among agencies.

4. Chief and Council
• More support from Chief and Council administration by providing “suitable” staff the opportunity to participate within the day care facility;
• A higher level of assistance from administration in establishing community partnerships; and
• More incentives to keep existing volunteers and recruit new volunteers.

Community Resources Index

There are a number of related resources in your community on which you can call for support or to answer questions. They are more than willing to provide information or be on hand when needed. The resources listed here reflect the information shared by workshop participants. They may be able to refer you a similar resource in your region.

Office of the Provincial Advisor for Aboriginal Infant Development Programs

Aboriginal Infant Development Programs in British Columbia support families of infants who are at risk for or have been diagnosed with developmental delays. Programs are voluntary, family centered, and focused on children ages 0-3. Aboriginal Infant Development consultants provide home visits, activity planning, and developmental and family needs assessments in culturally sensitive and meaningful ways.

West Coast Child Care Resource Centre

This non-profit society that provides information, services and support to the child care community in BC. Services available to child care providers, parents, students, policy makers, government, educators, employers, researchers, community organizations and the general public throughout the province.
BC Parents in Crisis Society, Aboriginal Parent Support Circles
201-1155 West Pender, Vancouver BC V6E 2P4, Phone: 604-6691616, Fax: 604-669-1636, bcpic@portal.ca.

Meeting place for Aboriginal parents with similar concerns to share, support and learn from one another. Facilitated by two trained volunteers. Meet 6:30pm-8:30pm every Thursday. Office 8:30am-5:00pm. Monday-Friday. No cost. Aboriginal volunteers available. Transportation subsidies available. Wheelchair accessible.

Burnaby Family Life Institute
Aboriginal Family Parenting Program, 203-7355 Canada Way, Burnaby BC V3N 4Z6, Phone: 604-659-2230, Fax: 604-524-8985

10-week parenting program to enhance awareness of traditional values and beliefs among Aboriginal parents, families and caregivers, with an emphasis on honouring Aboriginal teachings and restoring cultural identity and pride. Program hours are 9:30am-3:00pm. Tues. 9:30am-11:30am. Wed., and 5:00pm-8:30pm Thurs. (dinner provided). Admin. hours 9:30am-4:00pm. Self-referrals and referrals from Aboriginal organizations and the Ministry for Children and Families. Aboriginal staff is available. Childcare available.

Family Services of Greater Vancouver

First Call BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition
408-4480 Oak Street, Vancouver BC V6H 3V4, Toll free: 1-800-307-1212, Phone: 604-875-3629, Email: info@firstcallbc.org, www.firstcall.org.

The coalition partners work together on public education, community mobilization, and policy advocacy to ensure that all children and youth have the opportunities and resources required to achieve their full potential and to participate in the challenges of creating a better society.

Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada
323 rue Chapel Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1N 7Z2. Telephone: (613) 594-3196, Web site: www.childcareadvocacy.ca, E-mail: ccaac@istar.ca or Dianne Goldberg, Project Consultant, info@parentvoices.ca

Parent Voices is about working with parents to make the case for quality, affordable and accessible child care. It’s about bringing parents together so their voices are united and strong when they speak out about the child care services they need in their communities.

Vancouver Native Health Society
449 East Hastings Street, Vancouver BC V6A 1P5. Phone: 604-254-9955, Fax: 604-254-9948, http://vnhs.net, Email: vnhs@shaw.ca

Some programs include: Co-ed Life skills
Programs, Inner City Foster Parents Project, Medical Walk-In Clinic, Positive Outlook—AIDS/HIV Home Health Care Drop In/Outreach, Pre-Recovery Empowerment Program, Rotary Kids’ Place, Sheway Project, TB Nurses, and the Youth Safe House Project. Hours 8:30am-4:30pm. Monday-Friday. Closed daily from 12:00pm-1:00pm for lunch. Aboriginal staff available. No Cost. Wheelchair accessible.

B.C. Aboriginal Network on Disability Society
1179 Kosapsum Crescent, Victoria, B.C. V9A 7K7. Phone: 250-381-7303, Fax: 250-381-7312, E-Mail: yvon@bcands.bc.ca, Website: www.bcands.bc.ca

First Nations Education Steering Committee
113 - 100 Park Royal South, West Vancouver, B.C. V7T 1A2. Phone: (604) 925-6087, Fax: (604) 925-6097, E-Mail: fnesc@fnesc.bc.ca, Website: www.fnesc.bc.ca

First Nations Friendship Centre
2902 - 29th Avenue, Vernon, B.C. V1T 1Y7. Phone: (250) 542-1247, Fax: (250) 542-3707, E-Mail: fnfc@shaw.ca

Canadian Diabetes Association

Diabetes resources include info and referral service for care and management, diet and nutrition, healthy living, and community resources. Additional services include: telephone info lines, a lending library, pamphlets, and a walk-in centre. Hours are 10:00am-3:00pm Monday-Friday. Wheelchair accessible.

First Nations Patient Advocate
BC Women’s Health Centre, Room E300A, SHY-4500 Oak Street @ 29th and Heather, Phone: 604-875-3440, Fax: 604-875-2041

Ensures that First Nations patients at BC Children’s Hospital, BC Women’s Hospital, BC Women’s Hospital and Health Centre, and Sunny Hill Health Centre for Children receive the info/support they need. Communicates between patients and hospital staff, toiletries, donated clothing.

Hey-way’-noqu’ Healing Circle for Addictions Society Counseling for Children, Youth and Adults,
206-33 East Broadway Avenue, Vancouver BC V5T 1V7. Phone: 604-874-1831, Fax: 604-874-5235

Provides one-to-one counseling, various group sessions, and art therapy. Counseling topics include: family violence, chemical addictions, co-dependencies, and sexual abuse. Counseling hours vary according to the schedules of each counselor. No cost. Aboriginal staff available. Wheelchair accessible downstairs only. Provides referrals to Traditional Practitioners.

First Nations Urban Community Society
301-668 Carnarvon Street, New Westminster BC V3M 5Y6, Phone: 604-517-6120, Fax: 604-517-6121
Programs include: First Nations Full-Time Program, Native Awareness Parent Program, and Partners in Parenting, can also help with issues around child apprehension. Incorporates traditional teachings. Hours are 8:30am-4:00pm. Monday-Friday. Closed daily for lunch 12:00pm-1:00pm. Aboriginal staff available. Wheelchair accessible.

Surrey Aboriginal Cultural Society
129-7420 121A Street, Surrey BC V3W 1B2. Phone: 604-599-4795, Fax: 604-599-3950

Hosts many successful events such as regular family nights, two major art exhibits, arts and crafts workshops, Plains-style dance classes, Ojibway language instruction, golf tournaments, fundraising dinners. Also provides info and referral services, youth recreation programs, a family support worker, youth employment development activities.

First Nations Employment Society and Enterprise Centre

Focus on First Nations employment and job assistance, youth and business development. This resource was established to assist all working-aged Aboriginal people. Hours are 9:00am-4:30pm. Monday-Friday. Clientele can drop in to use this resource. No cost. Aboriginal staff is available. Childcare available. Wheelchair accessible.

Tupper Mini-School
419 East 24th Avenue, Vancouver, Phone: 604-713-8232

A flexible school program designed to help young parents finish high school. Childcare is provided. Call for more info and to register.

BC Society for Male Survivors of Sexual Abuse
202-1252 Burrard Street, Victoria BC V8W 1K7, Phone: 604-682-6482, Fax: 604-684-8883

Offers adult male survivors of sexual abuse individual and group counseling: includes info about legal rights, the process of the judicial system, and various forms of compensation available. Provides support and guidance through any legal option or applications for compensation. Individual counseling sessions by appointment. Group counseling sessions begin every 12 weeks. 9:00am-5:00pm, Monday-Friday.

Battered Women’s Support Services
PO Box 1098 Station A, Vancouver BC V6C 2T1. Phone: 604-687-1868, Fax: 604-687-1864, Phone 2: 604-687-1687, bwss@web.net

Information, referrals, advocacy, and support to women who are/have been experiencing abuse in an intimate relationship. Also one-to-one and telephone counseling, legal advocacy, dating violence program, support groups and educational workshops and materials. Hours are 9:30am-5:00pm. Aboriginal staff available. On-site childcare available. Wheelchair accessible.
Downtown Eastside Women’s Centre (DEWC)

44 East Cordova, Vancouver BC V6A 1K2, Phone: 604-681-8480, Fax: 604-681-8470

A safe place where women living in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver can access support services and fulfill basic needs. Programs include the Education, Victim Services and Stopping the Violence Program, Legal Advocacy, HIV Outreach, Volunteer Program, and Mental Health Advocacy. Contact by phone or drop in the centre. Hours are 10:00am-5:00pm Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday; 11:00am-5:00pm Tuesdays; 12:00pm-5:00pm Saturdays and Sundays; 12:00pm-4:00pm on Holidays. Closed the day after cheque-issue day. Some programs have waiting lists. No cost. Aboriginal staff is available. Wheelchair accessible.

Books


Get a PDF version from http://www.mcaws.gov.bc.ca/aboriginal_dir/aboriginal_guide.pdf

Crisis Phone Lines

Crisis Centre-Crisis Intervention & Suicide Prevention Centre of Greater Vancouver,

Phone: 604-872-3311 24 hours, 7 days a week.

Offers free, confidential telephone counseling to people who are emotionally upset or experiencing depression, relationship or family problems, alcohol or drug problems or are feeling suicidal.

Rape Crisis Centre, Women Against Violence Against Women

Phone: 604-255-6344 24 hours, 7 days a week.

A confidential phone service which offers info, support, counseling and referrals to victims of rape or sexual violence.

Helpline for Children, Ministry of Children and Families

Phone: 604-310-1234 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Free confidential phone service for anyone needing help, or who knows of a child being abused or neglected. You don’t have to identify yourself.

Emergency shelter for adults: 604-660-3194, Child Protection issues: 604-660-4927 or 1-800-663-9122
Kids Help Foundation Help Phone
Phone: 1-800-668-6868 24 hours.
Offers free telephone conversation with professional counselors about anything. Offers info and referrals.

Mental Health Emergency Service
Phone: 604-874-7307.
Psychiatric emergency services, assessment and follow-up.

Alcohol & Drug Information & Referral Service
604-660-9382 or 1-800-663-1441

Websites

Friendship Centres in B.C.
http://www.bcaafc.com/centres/
British Columbia Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres. This site lists Friendship Centres by communities and identifies programs and services within these communities.

Sea to Sky Community Services Society
http://www.communityservices.bc.ca
Offering a variety of services: Early Intervention/Prevention Programs, Family Youth and Children Services, Daycare Referrals, Community Living Services, Mental Health Services and Employment Assistance Services.

Contact 1-877-894-6106 toll free. Locations: Pemberton, Squamish and Whistler.

Web Page for Child Care at MCAWS
www.mcaws.gov.bc.ca/childcare/childcar.htm

BC Ministry of Health
www.healthplanning.gov.bc.ca/ccf/index.html

Centre of Excellence for Children and Adolescents With Special Needs
www.coespecialneeds.ca/

Child Care Resource and Referral Program
Support, resources and referral services for child care providers and parents in all communities in the province and works with community groups to promote quality child care choices that meet the needs of local families.


http://www.mcaws.gov.bc.ca/childcare/childcar/rrp_contact_list_index.htm

Nobody’s Perfect Parenting Program
http://www.bccf.bc.ca/programs,np_about.html.
Nobody’s Perfect is a parenting education and support program for parents of children from birth to age 5. It helps parents develop the
knowledge, skills and self-confidence that are so essential to child-raising, and encourages the development of support networks. The BC Council for Families provides training, support and resources to facilitators of Nobody's Perfect (funding to run programs may be available from Regional Health Boards/Societies and the Ministry for Children and Families).

B.C. Association of Family Resource Programs
http://www.frpofbc.com
A networking, consulting and advocacy organization that has been working to strengthen and support families in B.C. since 1989.

Justice Institute of British Columbia
http://www.jibc.bc.ca
Training and education for employment in corrections; emergency management; municipal police; fire and emergency health services; and the Ministry of Children and Families. Training in conflict resolution and a wide range of programs for those who work with children, families and youth. First Nations Programs & Services are available.

Native Education Centre
http://www.necvancouver.org

The Institute of Indigenous Government
http://www.indigenous.bc.ca
An Aboriginal-run post secondary institution offering a variety of diploma and degree programs.

First Nations House of Learning
http://longhouse.ubc.ca
A department of the University of British Columbia with links to resources and programs within the university.
Appendix 3A – Sample Parent Advisory Committee Terms of Reference

Comox Valley Aboriginal Head Start Program
Parent Advisory Committee Terms of Reference

Purpose

The purpose of the Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) is to act as a liaison between parents, program staff and the host agency, Upper Island Women of Native Ancestry.

Responsibilities and Tasks

1. To make recommendations to program staff about the program.
   1a. Collaborate on problem solving for program issues.
   1b. Assist in developing goals and objectives for the program.
2. To make decisions about how to spend the PAC budget.
3. To participate in hiring decisions for program staff.
4. To develop and implement ways to involve parents in the program, including
   4a. Orientation for new parents; and,
   4b. Social activities for AHS families.
5. To keep parents informed about what is happening in the program.
   5a. Develop a Parent Handbook and revise it as necessary
   5b. Write agendas and minutes, and do phoning for meetings
   5c. Phone parents to invite them to PAC meetings and other activities
   5d. Write and distribute a newsletter.
6. To do fundraising.
Authority

To make decisions about the PAC budget.

To advise Program staff and the host agency regarding program decisions, including classroom programming and hiring program staff.

Structure

• All parents of children attending Comox Valley Aboriginal Head Start Program are members of the PAC, and form the general membership.

• There is an Executive, consisting of two Co-chairs, a Secretary and a Treasurer, elected from the general membership. Three of these must be filled by people of Aboriginal ancestry.

• There are three standing committees: the Immediate Response Team, Telephone Committee and Fundraising Committee.

• Ex-officio members are the Program Coordinator, a representative of the host agency and a representative of School District No. 71.

Meetings

• Meetings are held monthly.

• Quorum for the PAC is 5 members.

• Decisions are made using majority voting. Proxy voting is allowed.

Commitment

For members to fully participate, 2 hours per month.

Parents do not have to attend any minimum number of meetings to remain members in good standing.
Appendix 3B – Foodsafe Contacts

**Interior Health Authority**

http://www.interiorhealth.ca/

**IHA - Kootenay Service Area**
Shaun Malakoe
shaun.malakoe@interiorhealth.ca
phone: 250-354-6837
fax: 250-354-6304

**IHA - South Okanagan Service Area**
Gundie Volk
gundie.volk@interiorhealth.ca
phone: 250-770-3497
fax: 250-770-3470

**IHA - Thompson Service Area**
Kevin Touchet
kevin.touchet@interiorhealth.ca
phone: 250-851-7346
fax: 250-851-7341

**IHA - Cariboo Service Area**
Lori Frame
lori.frame@interiorhealth.ca
phone: 250-395-7676
fax: 250-395-7675

**Fraser Health Authority**

http://www.fraserhealth.ca/

Jeet Gill
inderjeet.gill@fraserhealth.ca
phone: 604-572-2618
fax: 604-572-2609

**Vancouver Coastal Health Authority**

http://www.vcha.ca

**VCHA - Coast Garibaldi Service Area**
Dan Glover
dan.glover@cgh.bc.ca
phone: 604-485-8860
fax: 604-485-7996

**VCHA - Vancouver Service Area**
Richard Taki
rtaki@vrhb.bc.ca
phone: 604-714-5666
fax: 604-736-8651

**VCHA - Richmond Service Area**
Art Hamade
art_hamade@rhss.bc.ca
phone: 604-233-3176
fax: 604-233-3175
**VCHA - North Shore Service Area**
Peter Lee
peter.lee@nshr.hnet.bc.ca
phone: 604-904-6200
fax: 604-904-6262

**Vancouver Island Health Authority**
http://www.viha.ca/

**VIHA - Capital Health Region Service Area**
Gary Gibson
gary.gibson@caphealth.org
phone: 250-475-5101
fax: 250-475-5130

**VIHA - Central Vancouver Island Service Area**
Cina Opel
cina.opel@cvihr.bc.ca
phone: 250-755-6215
fax: 250-755-3372

**VIHA - Upper Island/Central Coast Service Area**
Jim McCaul
jim.mccaul@cmcare.org
phone: 250-336-3202
fax: 250-336-2815

**Northern Health Authority**
http://www.northernhealth.ca/

**NHA - North East Service Area**
Brian Steeves
brian.steeves@gems6.gov.bc.ca
phone: 250-774-7092
fax: 250-774-7096

**NHA - Northern Interior Service Area**
Greg Tone
gtone@northernhealth.ca
phone: 250-567-6153
fax: 250-567-6170

**Health Canada**
http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/
Lynne Brewer
lynne_brewer@hc-sc.gc.ca
phone: 604-666-1603
fax: 604-666-7487

**Yukon Government**
http://www.gov.yk.ca
Lynn Richards
lynn.richards@gov.yk.ca
phone: 867-667-8391
fax: 867-667-8322

A **distance education** version of FOODSAFE Level 1 course is delivered to students both inside and outside British Columbia. For information, contact:
go2 FOODSAFE Administrator
Telephone: 604-930-9770, Toll free: 1-800-665-8883
Fax: 604-930-9771
Email: info@go2bc.ca
Web: http://www.go2bc.ca
Appendix 3C – Funding Opportunity: Vancouver Foundation

Vancouver Foundation
St. 1200, 555 West Hastings St. Box 12132
Harbour Centre, Vancouver, B.C. Canada V6B 4N6
Tel: (604) 688-2204 Fax: (604) 688-4170
www.vancouverfoundation.bc.ca

Purpose

To promote initiatives aimed at creating caring, safe and supportive environments that enhance the quality of life for children, youth and families. This includes supporting social and cultural development; encouraging physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well being; and offering equal opportunities for all within a diverse population with emphasis on relationship building.

Goals

To promote community initiatives that address basic needs of children, youth and families which include adequate food, health care, shelter and social supports.

To promote projects which enhance the self-esteem, leadership skills and life skills of children, youth and families both individually and as a whole.

To support culturally sensitive initiatives within communities and those that promote full access to services for children, youth and families.

To promote activities for children, youth and families that lead to a better understanding of diversity.

To promote development of the innate capacities of individuals and families, as well as their communities, to grow and adapt to change.

Current Particular Interests

Prevention and promotion activities in such areas as mental health, sexual abuse, violence, childhood injuries, and other areas of critical need.
Increased collaboration and partnership amongst agencies to reduce fragmentation and improve the effectiveness of service delivery to children, youth and families.

The Application Process

Vancouver Foundation has a two-stage process. The first stage, consists of an informal proposal to determine basic suitability. The second requires submission of a formal grant application by a specific deadline date. Applicants should allow at least 4 months for the entire process.

Stage One: Letter of Inquiry

After you have reviewed the funding guidelines and Advisory Committee goals, send us an outline of your project of no more than two to three pages (8 1/2 x 11”) containing the following:

- introduction to your organization, including your charitable registration number
- statement of the issues or community priorities that the project will address
- concise description of the activities to be undertaken
- start-up and completion dates
- project budget itemizing all potential and confirmed expenditures and at least 50-70% confirmation or potential expenditures and revenue
- the amount to be requested from Vancouver Foundation

Failure to submit your letter of inquiry at least 4 weeks prior to the official application deadline may result in the consideration of your proposal being postponed to the following funding cycle.

A Program Director will review your proposal for basic eligibility and relationship to Advisory Committee goals. You may be contacted for additional information. If your project is not considered appropriate for further consideration, you will receive an explanation. However, if the Program Director feels that the project would be suitable to take to the next stage of review, you will be invited to submit a formal application.

Stage Two: Grant Application

The Program Director will send you a grant application form with specific instructions for completion. This application must be returned by the deadline.

Once your application has been received, you will be sent written confirmation. Over the next nine weeks, Program Directors will thoroughly assess all projects prior to review by an Advisory Committee. Part of the assessment involves consulting with other funders and informed people
in the field. A Program Director may phone or meet with you at this stage to go over further details of your project.

The appropriate Advisory Committee will then consider your application taking the Program Director’s assessment and recommendation into account, and make a recommendation to the Board. A final decision will be available approximately twelve weeks after the deadline date. You will receive written notification of the Board’s decision, along with the terms and conditions of any grant that has been awarded. Submitted materials become the property of Vancouver Foundation. Final decisions on all grants rest with the Foundation and access to its decisions is restricted.

Grant Application Deadlines

The three annual deadlines for receiving completed grant application forms are the first Friday in January, April and September.

The timeline below provides a summary of the entire process to guide your project planning. Please remember to allow a minimum of 16 weeks (four months). Vancouver Foundation does not provide retroactive funding. All funded activities must begin after the decision date.

1. Applicant submits letter of inquiry no later than 4 weeks before application deadline.
2. Applicant submits completed grant application form by application deadline.
3. Program Director assesses application 2 to 11 weeks after deadline and discusses project with applicant (depending on Advisory Committee schedule).
4. Applicant receives final decision approximately 12 weeks after deadline.

After a Grant Has Been Awarded Vancouver Foundation expects the following from grant recipients:

- approval from the Program Director prior to any alterations in plan
- proper fiscal management
- thorough and well-planned project evaluation
- project dissemination plan and activities, where appropriate
- interim and/or final reports (financial and descriptive)
- public recognition of the support received from Vancouver Foundation

*Foundation staff appreciate the opportunity to make site visits, if time and location permits.*
Appendix 3D – Funding Opportunity: United Way of the Lower Mainland

United Way of the Lower Mainland
4543 Canada Way, Burnaby, B.C. V5G 4T4
Phone: (604) 294-8929, Fax: (604) 293-0220
www.unitedwaylowermainland.ca

While United Way is best known as an organization providing stable funding for programs and services offered by our Member Agencies, we also invest in projects that focus on prevention and early intervention of issues that lead to social problems. United Way works very closely with funding partners, community partners and volunteer representatives to evaluate funding proposals and distribute dollars where we believe they can have the greatest impact.

Our priority funding areas are selected after extensive community research. Experienced volunteers who represent the community to which you belong meet together with staff to review and assess submissions for funding. By meeting with volunteers we ensure accountability of donor dollars.

United Way funding allows agencies to engage in the development of innovative social programs, conduct short, medium and long-term planning and respond to changing community needs. Funding is available for the following:

Community Innovation Grants

United Way Community Innovation Grants are distributed once a year to organizations working to develop, test and support new ideas and innovative projects. Grants provide short term funding to help an innovative, new initiative get started.

Enterprising Non-Profits

Enterprising Non-Profits is a funding program that provides matching grants to help non-profit organizations start or expand a business venture. These revenue-generating enterprises help to stabilize and strengthen the agencies’ ability to deliver programs and services. United Way’s funding partners are Vancouver Foundation and VanCity Community Foundation.
Partners in Organizational Development

The Partners in Organizational Development program provides grants to agencies engaged in strengthening their organization, adapting to change and responding to diversity. The funding enables groups to work with an experienced consultant/resource person to enhance organizational effectiveness. United Way’s funding partners are: BC Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women’s Services; City of Vancouver - Social Planning Department; and Vancouver Foundation. Applicants are strongly encouraged to use the POD Tool Kit to help define their organization’s needs, and to read the 4 short Case Studies, which document effective use of funds.

Transition Strategies

Sector Transition is a funding program that provides one-time grants to non-profit organizations in the Lower Mainland to help them to re-evaluate their practices and adapt to an increasingly complex funding environment. Challenged by financial uncertainty and growing service demands, it has become vital for the voluntary sector to have the ability to respond to and adapt to ongoing change.

Growth Communities

A component of United Way’s community funding focuses on increasing services in growth communities. In 2002, the Squamish to Pemberton Corridor was identified as a rapidly growing area. Funding is available for up to three years to community agencies providing services within this geographic area. Services must focus on prevention and early intervention. Funding is available for new and ongoing direct service delivery programs operating in the Squamish to Pemberton Corridor.

Hospice

The Hospice Funding program provides multi-year grants to community agencies involved in the provision of hospice services to address the needs of the chronically ill. United Way recognizes that, with an increasingly aging population, there is a need to focus on developing service delivery in this area. Activities we would consider funding relate to: advocacy services, public awareness and education initiatives, direct service delivery programs and culturally competent or multicultural responses to this issue area.
Relief of Poverty

The Relief of Poverty funding program provides grants to agencies delivering a range of food security initiatives. These include, but are not limited to: Community Kitchens, The Good Food Box and alternative approaches (community gardens, food training, nutrition and food preparation). Grants are administered for a period of three years to sustain efforts and enable the program to demonstrate community impacts.

Success By 6

This program provides funding for services that support families with children aged 0-6.
Chapter Four – Policies and Procedures

Policies and procedures are the building blocks of an effective program. The foundation is the people who make them work.


Introduction

Experience shows that any organization, whether public or private, non-profit or commercial, will be more effective in meeting its goals if it has clearly established policies and procedures in place. They are perhaps even more critical to facilities like ours, which must not only be in compliance with government legislation, but are charged with the safekeeping of society’s very youngest and most vulnerable citizens. A comprehensive, well thought out set of policies and procedures, based on clearly defined goals and objectives, is critical for ensuring financial viability and providing safe, quality care for our children. Fortunately, there are an abundance of resources to help you meet the challenge. We’ve provided relevant resources wherever possible throughout the text, but be sure to check the Resources Index at the end of the chapter for additional support agencies.

Guiding Principles

As you start to develop new policies and procedures, or perhaps you are modifying or expanding those already in place, keep the following general principles in mind.

• Simplicity is best. Make sure your policies are written in a way that can be understood by everyone, including parents. Steer clear of jargon or legalese. It’s frustrating to read and will only lead to confusion. In the end, people are more likely to follow policies if they understand them.

• Aim for a comprehensive set of policies and procedures, covering most of the activities at the centre. (For example, a policy is needed for birthday parties, including who in the community can attend, and who brings what to the party.) At the same time, be careful not to overwhelm people by introducing too many policies too quickly.

• Develop policies and procedures that reflect your own program’s philosophy and meet its needs. Don’t automatically add a policy
just because another centre has one. Make sure there’s a need for it first.

Open-Door Policy

S-Takya has an open-door policy, which works very well. But it resulted in open-door lunches, which became chaotic. Instead of changing a policy that otherwise worked very well, they changed the procedure so that parents signed up for the lunches, with a maximum of two parents each day. This minimized the chaos, without breaching a well-established policy.

- Use your Band’s or host agency’s code of ethics or develop your own. Develop a code of ethics for program staff. The code of ethics serves as a basis for decision-making. It should outline values that are important to your program, such as personal responsibility and confidentiality.
- Include staff and parents in the development of policies and procedures. Have parents sign them to indicate their agreement, like a contract. Policies can then be brought back to their attention if necessary.
- Where applicable, make the Chief and council aware of your policies and procedures. For consistency, consider implementing the same policies and procedures for all ECE programs in your community.
- Apply policies and procedures consistently. If everyone follows the rules, they will remain strong.
- Create separate staff and family policy and procedures handbooks. Keep them both on hand at all times.

Best-Practised Strategies for Developing Policies and Procedures

1. Registration

- Go over the policies and procedures with families when they are registering.
- Give parents lots of opportunity to ask questions, either by phone or through questionnaires.

Suggested registration policies

- Gradual child/parent entry. Parents can bring in their children for short visits before entering the program full time.
- Band members receive child care at half-price.
- The third and/or fourth child in one family (attending simultaneously) receive discounts.

Fees

Although fees will vary from program to program, the average cost for a child under 18 months of age is $32 per day. Fees generally decrease as children get older.
• Staff receive a discount for a second child in the program.
• Families who are more than two months behind on payments must take their child out of the program. Keep in mind, this can be a challenging, time-consuming policy to enforce, especially if staff have worked to gain the family’s trust.
• If a child doesn’t attend for two weeks, his or her space is given to someone else.
• Drop-ins are allowed, as long as the child is registered and staffing allows.

2. Hiring
• If applicable, consider using the hiring policy of your Band or host agency.
• Keep a copy of the hiring policy manual on hand.

Suggested hiring policies
• The references of all new employees are checked.
• All new employees undergo a three-month probationary period and a performance evaluation at the end of the probationary period. If problems are identified during the evaluation, the probationary period may be extended as long as the new employee shows a willingness to address the problems.

Parent Orientation
In the Head Start program, the coordinator or family involvement worker goes over the Parent Handbook with parents at the time of registration. It also offers three parent-orientation sessions per year, in which staff sit down with each parent to review the program. This usually takes three hours per parent and has to be done after hours because it is not in the budget.

A staff member could also go out to each child’s home to collect registration information and explain guidelines. Keep in mind, this may seem intrusive to some parents, especially if a level of trust has not yet been established between the staff member and the parents, and if there’s a fear of child apprehension.

Practicums
Workshop participants supported hosting practicum students. Programs can work out arrangements with local colleges. Be sure to conduct criminal record checks and health checks, and review the qualifications of each student.

• Some programs on reserve open job postings to Band members first; qualified Band members receive priority and are able to bump non-Band members.
3. Employment standards

**Flexibility Key**

Certain employment standards (federal, provincial, or Band) are difficult to maintain. For example, providing two paid breaks and an unpaid lunch break is extremely challenging when there aren’t enough staff to cover them. Many programs have implemented more flexible systems in which staff take time when it is convenient rather than prescribed. If a staff member is unable to take her half-hour lunch break, she can leave her shift a half-hour early. Or if she misses her two fifteen-minute breaks, she has the choice of taking a one-hour lunch break or leaving early. And if a staff member works nine hours one day, she will only have to work seven hours the next day.

- Make staff aware of Workers Compensation Board (WCB) regulations. An example: WCB does not cover injured workers if they are wearing improper clothing, such as open-toed shoes.
- Design policies and procedures to prevent staff burn-out, through features like paying overtime with time off.
- Policies and procedures should set limits on how many hours staff can work—perhaps to a maximum of nine or 10 hours a day. Keep in mind, staff caring for infants and toddlers need special permission to work four days at ten hours a day.

**Suggested employment policies**

- Wherever possible, substitute or part-time staff will cover during breaks.
- Pay for overtime work follows federal and provincial labour laws: time and a half or lieu time for anything over eight hours a day or 40 hours a week.

4. Guidance and Discipline

- Think of discipline as behaviour guidance, rather than as a punitive measure when developing policies and procedures. And make the safety of children a priority.

  *Every child needs a place to belong, and every child needs a person to help them belong.*

- Policies and procedures should work for all children, including special needs children.
- Use escalating guidance measures and make policies and procedures proactive, as opposed to reactionary. A video called 1-2-3 Magic is an excellent resource for staff looking for strategies for guiding children’s behavior, and includes various levels of consequences, from mild to more serious. The video costs $39.95 U.S., and can be ordered through the publisher at 1-800-442-4453.
- Communicate openly with parents about the program’s rules and expectations for behavior. Further, be direct about your expectations of parents. For example, parents must not physically discipline their children while at the facility.
The Temperament Project

Kate Anderson at UBC has developed a set of resources that helps staff and parents support children with different temperaments. The idea is to think in terms of temperament, rather than behavior, and to think of behaviors in context. For example, if a child is biting, the behavior itself is less important than the fact that it may interfere with her learning. Staff can use the model in their communications with each other. For example, a bus monitor might tell ECE staff that a child had a tough morning on the bus, rather than focusing on a specific behavior. A parenting program based on this model is offered in Surrey. For more information, see www.temperament.com

- Always simplify rules for children, as follows: Will not hurt self. Will not hurt other children. Will not hurt furniture or toys.

- Post the rules throughout the day care. Make the posters visually appealing, decorating them with apples or something equally appealing and recognizable, so that when children are disruptive, you can tell them to look at the apples and the rules.

- Policies and procedures should allow for a number of different disciplinary approaches.

- Some workshop participants felt that licensing regulations are a helpful adjunct to specific policies and procedures in that they encourage staff to set limits. Others saw them as a barrier, serving only as protection from liability. Neither perception is wrong. You should make up your own mind how you view them.

Suggested guidance and discipline policies

- Wherever possible, staff will receive extra training around guidance. (Courses are available at Okanagan University College and other colleges offering ECE programs. Also check out your local child development centre.)

- Staff will keep parents informed about their child’s behavior. If a child is having difficulty coping with the long day, staff will communicate this to parents. If a child is having real difficulties, staff will arrange a formal meeting with the parents to collaboratively decide on ways to meet the child’s needs.

- Any abnormal or irregular behavior will be recorded by staff. Behavior patterns will be identified through the use of a chart. Staff will look for sources of behaviors or behavior patterns that might require more individual attention or assistance from a professional.

- Staff will support parents through parent meetings and guest speakers.

- Staff will support parents who need help to support their children. They will maintain good rapport with both the parents and any social workers involved.

- Wherever possible, children will be given choices, and the centre will have two of everything to reduce fighting.
• Time outs will be limited or avoided altogether.

• If a child is acting out, staff will talk to the child first, and then ask him or her to sit at the cubby hole, or kick the floor.

• Children who have temper tantrums will be given a dummy doll on which to act out their frustrations. Or they will be held until they regain control.

• A child who pushes another child will be directed to the handprints on the wall (“pushing hands”). Staff will advise them to “push the wall if you want to push.” Likewise, if a child is angry, he or she will be directed to “push your anger away.”

• A stack of newspapers will always be on hand as a defuser for angry children, who will be allowed to rip up the paper.

• Positive reinforcement will be used as a discipline tactic. For every one negative statement, staff will find six positives.

• The number of children at a particular area will be limited.

• Children’s feelings will be acknowledged at all times. If a child is upset, staff will not attempt to talk him or her out of his feelings.

• To reflect traditional culture, in which physical contact is central to childrearing, hugging is allowed, and encouraged.

• Fussing infants will be swaddled.

• Hammocks will be used for babies in their first few months.

• Staff will never label children as “bad.”

• Children will be encouraged to be nice to people because they are people.

• All injuries will be recorded and parents will be notified.

• If budgets allow, children who physically hurt other children will be given one-on-one supervision. Suspension is a last resort.

• See Appendix 4A for sample guidance and discipline policy.

5. Special Needs or Gifted Children

• Make integration of special needs children a priority at the centre and reflect this priority in your policies and procedures. When children with special needs are integrated with mainstream children it makes the special need less of an issue. Integration helps children understand that everyone is different and become more accepting of that fact. Children will also be able to educate their parents to be more sensitive to children and people with special needs.

• Think about incorporating a special needs theme into the curriculum, using appropriate dolls for demonstrations.

Gifted children need extra support as well, in that they need to be challenged.

Parents may feel more at ease talking to a staff member who has a child with special needs or requires extra support.
Suggested special-needs policies

- As much as possible, the centre will work with parents, supported child care and an infant or child development centre to ensure optimum progress for special-needs children.
- Pictures of children with special needs will be displayed throughout the centre.
- At all times, staff will be honest and direct with children when explaining why someone is different.

6. Health

- Several guides and handbooks about how to prevent illness and injury in a childcare setting are available from the Ministry of Health, planning division. Follow the “publications” link on their website (www.healthplanning.gov.bc.ca) or call 250-952-3456 to order.
- Be sure that policies and procedures reflect the sensitivity of the subject and that they don’t assign blame or judgment. Head lice, for example, common in child care programs, is a very sensitive subject and should be handled delicately (see policy below).

Suggested health policies

- If a child is visibly ill, the parents or an alternate will be called to pick the child up.
- To minimize the spread of head lice, the centre will keep hair clips and other head gear separate from other dress-up materials. Staff will help parents with the treatment of children with head lice.

7. Toilet Training

- Ensure policies and procedures around toilet training are clear and direct.

Suggested toilet-training policies

- Children three and up must be fully toilet trained.
- Parents begin toilet training at home and it’s supported by the program.
- As diapering facilities are not available at the centre, children in attendance are required to be toilet trained.
- Volunteers will not diaper children/toilet children.
- While children are toilet training, parents/guardians are asked to keep several complete changes of clothing at the centre.

8. Safety

- Supplement your policies and procedures with regular visits from safety professionals, such as police or firefighters. Also, find out who your Native Police Liaisons are and ask them to patrol your area.
- Get recommendations from your local police department on how to deal with the safety of children and incorporate these into your policies and procedures.
- See Appendix 4B and Appendix 4C for sample health and safety policies.

9. Release of Children

- Develop a policy on the minimum required age of the person picking up a child, as this
When parents can’t care for their children at pickup time...

This is one of the most challenging situations staff might have to deal with, and requires clear knowledge of the rights of parents and of the legal obligations of the child care centre, as well as a good deal of diplomacy, patience and detachment. You don’t want to over-react and escalate an already intense situation, while at the same time your absolute first priority is the safety of the child. You do have a number of options, as follows:

• Before an incident arises, talk to local police about how to identify people who are too high to properly take responsibility for a child. And make sure you are clear about parents’ rights and about the centre’s legal obligations when faced with a parent who is deemed too intoxicated to be responsible.

• If you are faced with an intoxicated parent, offer to call someone else listed on the registration form to pick up the child, or suggest that the parent contact an alternate caregiver, and then kindly inform him or her that the staff will remain with the child until an alternative plan is implemented. Or invent a stalling tactic to keep the parent and child there until a more appropriate person arrives to take them home.

• Offer to drive the parent and child home.

• In an urban area, get permission from the parent to call a taxi to take the parent and child home.

• If a parent is intoxicated and insists on taking the child with him or her, whether driving or not, inform them that the police and a social worker will be called immediately. If the parent leaves while intoxicated, even without the child, staff are legally bound to inform the police.

• If you believe the child is at risk, phone the Child and Family Service Organization delegated to care for children in your area, as outlined in the B.C. government publication on Child Abuse and Neglect.

• Develop a late pickup action plan. Decide at what point you call the parent, at what point you call someone else on the child’s contact list and at what point you call social services.

• Make it a policy to charge parents a late fee, but don’t enforce it too rigorously unless late pick-up is a chronic problem.

• Policies should allow for occasional late pick ups, for legitimate reasons. If a parent is late only occasionally, allow half an hour or an hour, while trying to contact the parent or alternative contacts. In a small community, contact the child’s relatives and have them try to reach the parent as well, or walk the child home or to a relative’s. If these measures fail, staff are obligated to inform the band social worker or manager. Only as a last resort contact a social worker from the Ministry of Children and Family Development or your community’s delegated child welfare agency.
Policies and Procedures

is not specified in licensing regulations. This is a liability issue and depends on the community. The S-Takya Child Care Program at the University of B.C. requires a minimum age of 18; an on-reserve program that participated in the workshop, 16 years, with identification; and Sundance, an urban program in downtown Vancouver, 16 years, with a signed form and the name on the registration.

- Ensure that policies and procedures reflect legal custody requirements. A copy of the custody form must be kept in the child’s file; only a court order can prevent parents from picking up their own children. It’s a good idea to keep a list handy of any special concerns or instructions for each child (on a single page) to inform substitute teachers.

- Make it a policy to offer parents who neglect to put their children in car seats a leaflet or pamphlet on the attendant risks.

- At holiday time, make it a policy to distribute a light-hearted letter to parents about picking their children up after office parties. Remind them that children will not be released to intoxicated drivers, and that, if necessary, they should arrange for someone else to pick up their child.

Suggested release policies

- At registration, parents must sign an escorted child release form (consent form), which states that the program is no longer responsible for the child once he or she leaves the centre.

- Children must be signed in and out. Parents can call a special message line to indicate who will be picking up their child on any given day.

- Under no circumstances will the centre release children to an individual whose name is not on the list signed by the parents.

- If a parent has indicated that someone else will be picking up their child, and if that person is unfamiliar in the community they must provide photo identification before the child will be released.

- Children will be released only to people who are 18 years or older. A separate consent form is required if individuals under 18 years of age are going to be picking up a child. And under no circumstances will children be released to anyone under 12.

Unescorted Release

This is a very sensitive issue and requires clear guidelines. According to licensing guidelines, even if a child lives 100 feet away from the day care centre, they must never be released alone.

- If children are picked up in a car, they must be placed in a car seat.

- Program staff reserve the right to refuse release of a child to anyone who is under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

- At 15 minutes past pickup time, staff will call the parent to come and pick up their child. At half an hour past pick-up time, staff will call someone on the child’s contact list. At an hour past pickup time, a
social worker will be called.

- If late pick-up is a chronic problem, staff will arrange to talk to parents one-on-one. If that doesn’t solve the problem, a meeting will be set up with the Band to discuss the issue.

- Staff will allow a 15-minute grace period, and after that implement a late fee of $1.00 per minute. The fee will be waived if parents call beforehand. If the fee is not waived, parents will be allowed two days to pay it and after that, the child will not be allowed back into the program until the fee has been paid.

10. Closing

- Make it a policy to maintain regular, consistent hours. This helps parents be consistent too. On days when all the children have left early, use the time to do preparation or finish up work that is hard to get to during the day. Occasionally, it’s okay to close early if all the children have gone home.

- It’s not okay to close because staff are ill or undergoing extra training. Make sure your budget includes substitute teachers to cover such instances.

Suggested closing policies

- The program closes for one week, between Christmas and New Year’s day, and for two additional days per year—once for cleaning and once for professional development.

- The program does not close for Band socials or funerals, with the exception of a child’s funeral.

- Staff may attend Band socials or funerals if a substitute is available.

Sensitive Issues Requiring Policy

The West Coast Child Care Resource Centre has developed extensive policies on the following sensitive issues (see the Resources Index at the end of this chapter for contact info):

- Fees
- When parents provide too much information because they feel close to you
- Irate parents
- When parents use foul language
- Threats from parents
- Critical incidents and stress debriefing
- Apprehension and custody issues
- Foster parents
- Appropriate age of people picking up a child
- When parents forget to pick up a child
- When the person picking up a child is intoxicated
- Sex education (e.g., children touching other children)
- Education about needles (IV drug needles) and other dangerous items
**Ongoing Program Needs Related to Policies and Procedures**

- One set of policy guidelines for all programs;
- More administrative support for developing policies and procedures;
- Enhanced contact with other programs to share information about policies, procedures and related issues;
- Training for directors on sensitive issues,
- More training for staff, especially on discipline and guidance measures;
- More information on traditional discipline measures;
- A means of translation or translators to ensure policies and procedures are clear to everybody, no matter the language; and
- More time and money set aside for development of comprehensive policies and procedures.

**Resources Index**

**Aboriginal Child Care Society**

ACCS has a collection of policies and procedures from several Aboriginal child care and pre-school programs. Search the library catalogue online at www.acc-society.bc.ca, or call ACCS at 604-990-9939 and ask to speak to the child care advisor.

**Internet**

The internet can be an excellent resource for program planning, themes and activities. Head Start’s web site is a good place to start, at www.ahsabc.ca, or try www.earlychildhood.com. Also, UBC Child Services has policies and procedures online at www.childcare.ubc.ca.

**Local Licensing Officers**

They can be a very helpful resource when it comes to the licensing requirements for programs, as well as act as a consultant on more general topics.

**West Coast Child Care Resource Centre**

This excellent resource has an extensive library with information packages on a range of relevant topics, as well as a checklist of things that should be covered in policies and procedures. Contact the centre at 1-877-262-0022.
Appendix 4A – Guidance and Discipline Policy

S-Takya Child Care Centre

*The S-Takya Child Care Centre aims to honor First Nations culture and traditions, and help children develop self-esteem and pride in their heritage*

**Purpose:**

The S-Takya Child Care Centre is located within the UBC First Nations Longhouse and the woods surrounding it. The centre provides a home-like setting for up to 16 children between the ages of six months and five years of age, Monday to Friday (except holidays) from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. The centre’s priority is to serve First Nations students and staff of UBC.

**Philosophy and values of the centre:**

The S-Takya Child Care Centre aims to honour First Nations culture and traditions, support First Nations families in their quest for self-determination, and help children develop strong self-esteem and pride in their heritage.

The philosophy and values that will guide the management of the S-Takya Child Care Centre and the provision of the program in ways that best meet the needs of First Nations children can be identified in the following aspects of the centre.

- The working together of the parents, Elders and Longhouse and centre staff to manage the centre;
- The flexible building design for mixed-age “family grouping” of children;
- The wooded outdoor play area which allows for play and exploration in a natural environment; and
- The program, which reflects a holistic view of children, growth and learning and uses the best of traditions and contemporary First Nation child rearing practices and play materials.

**Program**

The use of traditional First Nations child rearing practices and a holistic approach to child growth and learning are important goals that guide the S-Takya Child Care Centre program.

They can be observed in the following ways:

- showing respect for children who are a “gift” to be loved and treated with kindness and patience;
- giving children freedom to develop at their own pace;
- fostering the values of respect, responsibility and reciprocity;
• utilizing the extended family and Elders in a shared responsibility approach to child rearing;
• making use of oral traditions for songs, music, dance, and story telling;
• using a holistic approach to child growth and learning, incorporating spiritual, physical, social, emotional and intellectual dimensions; and
• fostering respect and reverence for all beings, animate and inanimate.

The holistic approach of the S-Takya Child Care Centre’s program will provide integrated learning in the following ways:
• Children are to be treated with respect, kindness and patience.
• Children will be protected from harm and free to develop at their own pace.
• Parents, extended family and Elders are encouraged to share their skills, talents and wisdom to enrich the program.
• The use of oral tradition will be fostered wherever possible through songs, stories, music, dance, games, picture posters and art of First Nations people.
• Age-appropriate First Nations methods of learning will be used, such as: listening, observing, cooperative activities.
• Discipline will be non-punitive and non-demeaning and always linked to positively fostering self-control, generosity and consideration.
• Activities will encourage independence and self reliance.
• Activities will stimulate and challenge children.
• Activities will allow for relaxation and reflection.
• Activities will foster respect and care for other people, animals, plants and the environment.
• Opportunities will be given to learn and reflect on the interconnectedness of all beings: human and non-human, animate and inanimate and including plant life, the weather and the landscape.
• Appropriate use will be made of natural materials wherever possible, both indoors and outdoors, for play equipment and teaching materials.
• Opportunities will be given for real life, practical activities, such as: planting, cooking, cleaning, building, etc.

The spiritual, social-emotional, physical and intellectual dimensions of growth and development are closely interwoven and are fundamental to an integrated holistic approach. Within the program these dimensions are provided as follows:

Spiritual
Participation in The Circle and ceremonies wherever possible. The importance of silence will be acknowledged.

Social/Emotional
Opportunities to play, work and relate to other children and adults in ways that foster caring and mutual respect will be established. Opportunities to succeed and to have that
success celebrated, and to know the limits and boundaries of acceptable behavior will be emphasized.

**Physical**
Opportunities will be given for children to gain confidence in their bodies.

**Intellectual**
Opportunities for exploration, problem-solving and self-expression will be provided. Children will be encouraged to develop theories for making sense of the living, physical and material worlds. They will also be given opportunities to develop verbal and non-verbal communication skills for a range of purposes, and to develop different ways of being creative and expressive.

**Guidance and Discipline Policies**
Please note the definition for discipline is quoted from the Guidance and Discipline with Young Children Handbook provided by the Ministry of Health.

**Definition**
The word “discipline” is derived from the word disciple. It describes the teaching/learning process by which children develop socially acceptable and appropriate behavior as they grow to maturity. Discipline is something that adults do with and for children, rather than to children to stop them from behaving in undesirable ways. Its intention is to help children become self-disciplined as they learn appropriate and acceptable behavior patterns. Discipline involves a continuous process of guiding behavior and is offered while acceptable behavior is occurring, as well as before, during and after unacceptable behavior is displayed.

While there are a wide variety of theories and approaches related to discipline, the goal remains constant—to assist children in developing self-control, self-confidence, and ultimately, self-discipline, as well as sensitivity in their interactions with others.

**Guidance and Discipline Policy:**
The S-Takya Child Care Centre believes that each child is a unique individual. Our goal is to help children develop self-discipline and to find acceptable ways of expressing and controlling feelings. We do this by encouraging children to use language to express their feelings and desires. As verbalizing is difficult for children under three, it is helpful to acknowledge or express the child’s feelings for him/her. For example, if a child grabs a toy from another resulting in tears and hitting on both sides, the staff can hold the child first and say: “I know you are angry because you want that toy now. It’s hard to wait for your turn. Let’s tell her how you would like a turn when she’s finished.”

The S-Takya Child Care Centre does not believe in punishment for inappropriate behavior. We talk to the child at their level, using words they can understand and in a respectful voice tone and level. We do not believe in labeling a child “bad.” We explain we can’t allow a child to hurt themselves, to hurt another child, or to damage property. We try to positively redirect them, showing what behavior is permissible, rather than what is not. For example, instead of saying “don’t
rip that book,” we say “books are for reading, would you like to read a story?”

We try to establish clear, consistent, and simple limits for children. We try to state the limits in a positive way. We look at the child directly (eye contact is very important here) and emphasize calmly, for example:

Preschoolers: If a preschooler is running inside the child care centre staff would say to the preschooler “inside we walk”

Toddlers: If a toddler tries to stand on the chair the staff would say to the toddler “chairs are for sitting on.”

Infants: If an infant goes towards a high chair indicating he/she is hungry the staff would say to the infant “Are you hungry, I will pick you up and you can sit in the high chair and eat.”

We believe children have reasons for their actions. They may be tired, hungry, ill, scared, feeling unnoticed. Staff are encouraged to find the reasons behind the behaviour by asking questions, such as: “Why is this child acting like this?” and then, “How can I best deal with this situation now?” There are no perfect ways of dealing with children, no hard and fast rules, and we encourage staff to be flexible, calm and observant of new situations.
Appendix 4B – Sample Application for a Multi-Age Variance

April 10, 2000

Yvonne Betts
Chief Licensing Officer
Community Care Facility Licensing
233 Prideaux Street
Nanaimo BC
V9R 2M9

Dear Ms. Betts:

Smun’eem Head Start Daycare is located on reserve at Kuper Island, just off Chemainus. We have been open since September 7th 1999 as an infant/toddler and three-to-fives daycare centre. The building consists of a cubby area, bathrooms, office, kitchen, storage room, nap room, and electrical room with one large playroom spanning the length of the building. The playroom has been divided down the middle to separate infant/toddlers and three-to-fives as per licensing.

We currently hold a temporary license for 23 children, 12 three-to-fives and 11 infant/toddlers. We would like to request a variance under Part 3, Section 40, that would allow our centre to combine the two groups of children into a smaller group of 17. Our staff consists of one ECE with Infant/Toddler, two assistant ECEs (one completing her Infant/Toddler at the end of this year), two assistant ECEs currently enrolled at Malaspina College, and one enrolled for the fall. Due to the ferry schedule all but one staff arrive at 7:30 am in the morning to start the day. The remaining staff member arrives at 9:30 am (please see the schedule).

We feel that Smun’eem Head Start Daycare would be better able to fulfill its philosophy by becoming a First Nations family-grouping centre. The community on Kuper Island is very close and all of the children are familiar with each other, either by relation or friendship. During community functions children naturally group together, the older ones caring for the younger ones. According to Coast Salish tradition, children learn the old ways, values and social roles together from members of the community. We believe that giving the older children an opportunity to help care for the younger children and the younger children an opportunity to
learn from the older kids is both beneficial to the kids and in keeping with Coast Salish traditions. Thank you for your time in considering this request. Should you need more information, please do not hesitate to phone or fax.

Ramona Melanson,
Smun’eeem Manager

Smun’eeem Head Start Daycare Health and Safety Issues

Attendance

• We will be allowing a maximum of three infants, five toddlers and nine preschoolers into the program at any one time.
• At the moment there are no infants attending regularly.
• We must be available to take infants when the Health Clinic offers Mom’s Day Out Support Groups and other Workshops.

Staff

• The daycare will ensure a 1:4 staff, child ratio during operation.
• The two ECEs and one assistant ECE will be responsible for the primary care of the infants and toddlers, such as changing, feeding and comforting them.
• The manager holds an ECE and infant/toddler license.
• The two other certified ECEs are both enrolled at Malaspina College to complete their infant/toddler certificates.
• Both ECE assistants are attending Malaspina College in the ECE program.
• The responsible adult will begin attending in the fall of 2000.
• Out of a total of six staff for 17 children, five of the staff are full time.

Indoor Facilities

• The infants and toddlers have a separate nap room/change room that includes a sink, change table, cribs and cots, and individual storage cubbies for diapers and spare clothes.
• Each child has his or her own cot/crib with sheet and blanket.
• A record sheet is kept to keep track of all diaper changes.
• Parents are offered a daily record sheet of their children’s naps, feedings and behaviors.
• All toys in the daycare have been modified and checked to ensure no choking hazards.
• There are 20+ developmentally appropriate toys and activities available specifically for infants/toddlers.
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- All small toys are washed weekly.
- Toys that have been mouthed by any of the children are collected and washed immediately after use.
- Four high chairs are used to feed sitting up infants; enclosed, wooden box type chairs are used for the two-year-olds.
- Bibs and face clothes are used for each meal and washed after each use.
- Disinfectant (hydrox) is used after each use of the tables, chairs and high chairs, and change tables.

2. Keeping non-walkers in the infant area at this time;

3. Arranging the equipment into a sectioned off infant area (please see the floor plan), including a playpen, two rocking chairs, a soft mat and pillow area and carpeted floor space; and

4. Encouraging toddlers to play in the infant area (with close supervision).

This is a small, tightly knit community in which the children are continually grouped together during long house events, community events, and daily living routines. The children interact from birth with all members of the community, young and old. We are simply continuing the teachings from the culture and we have had wonderful parent support. Every step we take to include First Nations culture into our centre seems to stamp out one more residential school survivor’s distrust of institutionalized care. Parents are comforted knowing that brothers and sisters, cousins and neighbors are together. We have, of course, hired members from the community, but to ensure we have early childhood educated staff we have had to hire non-native persons, each who must gain the community’s trust in their own way. We have been in operation for one year this September and we really feel that we have gained trust. Please help us build a quality First Nations childcare centre that is seen as professional and safe in the eyes of First Nations People and Community Licensing.

Thank you for your time and feedback,

Ramona Melanson
Smun’eem Head Start Daycare Manager

Outdoor Facilities

- The infants and toddlers and three-to-fives will have an outdoor play area separated by a four foot fence.
- The infant/toddler playground will meet all CVIHR licensing requirements and recommendations.
- Staff members, according to ratio, will supervise each play area.
- Active indoor and outdoor play. Active indoor playtime is from approximately 8:30 am until 9:20 am (when we clean up for morning snack). The majority of children arrive at 8:45 am when the school bus arrives to drop off elementary/teen/adult school students for classes. This same bus picks up students at 3:15 pm. As you can see by our schedule, the one hour in the morning is the only time during the day where we would have full integration. We plan to ensure maximum safety by:

1. Having all staff available at this time (no breaks);
Appendix 4C – Additional policies for safety

Visitors at the Centre

As the safety and security of children, parents/guardians and staff is critical, visitors need permission from the Supervisor prior to visiting the Centre.

Community resources/partners and immediate family members of children enrolled are welcome to visit, however, arrangements must be made in advance with the staff. Unauthorized visitors will be asked to leave the premises.

Emergency Situations

Safety is an ongoing part of the Centre and staff will receive earthquake preparedness training. Earthquake and fire drill/evacuation procedures (approved by the Fire Marshall) are posted in the Centre and are practiced once a month. During orientation staff will review these procedures as it is important for parents/guardians to understand their role if an emergency evacuation happens.

Parents/guardians will provide an earthquake comfort kit for their children. It will be returned to them upon children’s departure.

Child Abuse

The Child, Family and Community Service Act states that all children in the Province of B.C. “are entitled to be protected from abuse, neglect and harm or threat of harm.” The Act also states that any “person who has reason to believe that a child needs protection must promptly report the matter” to the Ministry of Children & Family Development (MCFD). If parents/guardians have any questions, or would like more information, they are encouraged to talk to the Supervisor.

The Act indicates that a child is in need of protection if:

• the child has been, or is likely to be physically harmed, sexually abused or exploited or emotionally harmed by the child’s parent;

• the child is deprived of necessary health care; and/or

• the parent is unwilling or unable to provide protection for the child from another person who presents a danger to the child.

The legal requirements as outlined in the Act include:

• the duty to report;

• the definition of reason to believe;

• confidentiality of information; and

• removal of child and parental notification of removal.

The duty to report does not mean proving the allegations. Investigations are the responsibility of MCFD and the police.
Reporting Procedures to be Used:

**Suspicion of Abuse or Neglect**

Document indicators, statements and observations. Consult with other staff within Program, including the Supervisor. This may include other professionals who are involved with the child as part of program; e.g. the family worker, health nurse, supported child care consultant. One may always consult with MCFD protection workers.

If, after the documentation and consultation process, staff still suspect abuse or neglect, staff will report situation. Concerns about possible abuse constitute reasonable grounds for reporting. A disclosure from the child is not necessary.

**Disclosure Of Alleged Abuse Or Neglect**

- Document indicators, statements and observations.
- Report the disclosure immediately to the Intake social worker or to the Ministry family service protection worker involved with the child and family.
- Inform the Supervisor immediately of the actions taken.

Failure to report abuse can result in prosecution under the Child, Family and Community Service Act. Staff are not permitted to contact the family, unless specifically directed to do so by the MCFD or the police.

Removal by the Ministry of Children & Family Development (MCFD)

The Child, Family and Community Service Act defines when a child is in need of protection. Decisions related to when, how and where MCFD can remove a child rests with the Ministry. If and when a social worker from the MCFD and/or the police intend to apprehend a child at the Centre, the senior staff member on duty will be responsible for responding to the situation.

Prior to the child being removed from the Centre, the staff member will verify with a ministry supervisor that the social worker is authorized to apprehend the child. It is the responsibility of the Ministry to make all reasonable efforts to notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the removal.

The staff member will:

- require the social worker or police officer to show identification;
- record the name and title of the person apprehending the child;
- record the address and phone number of the Ministry office involved;
- complete an incident report, recording the date and time of the apprehension; and
- phone the Ministry office to verify with the supervisor that the social worker has authorization to remove this child, prior to the child being removed from the Centre.
Appendix 4D – Program Funding and Enrollment Fees

Operators of not-for-profit early childhood development programs are continuously challenged to provide quality programs that are affordable and accessible to parents. Without support from governments and industry, this goal is practically impossible to achieve. More and more programs are turning to enrollment fees to support their operations. Enrollment fees can supplement staff wages or be used to purchase necessary toys and equipment. But programs that charge fees are also becoming less affordable for many families.

Child Care Funding in 2003/4

Funding for Aboriginal early childhood development programs in BC comes from various sources. They include:

- Health Canada: Aboriginal Head Start Urban and Northern Initiative. Covers all operational costs for part-time preschool programs. There are twelve programs in BC. No new funding in 2003. BC First Nations Head Start Program. Covers all operational costs for part-time preschool and/or outreach programs. There are approximately seventy-two programs in BC. New funding in 2003 will support the creation of seven to twelve new programs.

- Human Resources Development Canada (through regional Aboriginal Human Resources Development offices): First Nations and Inuit Child Care Initiative. Covers operational costs for full-day child care programs on reserve in BC. Spaces are funded based on a population formula. Enhanced funding for existing spaces is available in 2003. Some new centres may be created in 2004.

- Indian and Northern Affairs Canada: Elementary Education Program. May provide funding toward facilities and operating costs of Kindergarten programs in First Nations communities.

- BC Ministry for Community, Aboriginal and Women’s Services: Major Capital Grant provides up to $250,000 toward new licensed child care spaces. Minor Capital Grant supports up to $4,000 in renovations. Child Care Operating Grant provides between $1.15 (school age) and $10.28 (0-35 months) per child per day, based on the type of program and enrollment reports.

Other sources of funding may be one-time-only grants from regional funders, in-kind donations from corporations, volunteer services from service clubs (e.g. Rotary, Kiwanis), ongoing support from banks/credit unions and proceeds from local fundraising drives (e.g. raffles, community cookbooks, BINGO).
Enrollment Fees

Considering the current climate for early childhood development funding in BC, it may be necessary for your program to charge enrollment fees. Even a low daily fee can make a big difference for a program. If you decide to charge fees, start by asking parents what they can afford to spend. Are any of the parents eligible for a child care subsidy? Below is a table listing monthly fees charged by licensed child care programs in BC. The range in fees reflects the costs of typical daytime programs in rural, urban, northern and southern areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Program</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Monthly Enrollment Fee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Infants &amp; Toddlers (6 weeks to 3 years)</td>
<td>Vancouver</td>
<td>$795.00 - $879.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group (3-5 years)</td>
<td>Vancouver</td>
<td>$410.00 - $570.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group (3-5 years) 3 days per week</td>
<td>Okanagan Area</td>
<td>$125.00 - $290.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter Five – Program Evaluation

Program evaluation is a tool used to measure whether a project or program is doing what it aims to do. It is not a test, but an opportunity to improve and build on the existing program.

Introduction

Even the most well-intentioned, well-planned programs and services aren’t always effective in practice. Without a formal process of evaluation in place, it is virtually impossible to measure objectively the success of a program or service. How can something as subjective as “success” be measured without clearly outlined benchmarks? At the same time, an evaluation, though critical, need not be intimidating. In fact, it can afford an opportunity to develop and improve a program, to make it the best it can be. It can also help determine progress made and identify areas of strength; and knowing you’re headed in the right direction is motivational.

Guiding Principles

Before developing a system of evaluation for your centre, keep the following general principles in mind. And remember, incorporating evaluations into your program doesn’t have to be difficult.

• Evaluations should be planned on an annual basis. Include costs in your program budget.

• They should be driven by the goals and objectives of your program. Because these vary from program to program, evaluations must be program-specific.

• Involve all stakeholders in the evaluation.

• Evaluations should be culturally relevant.

• Your evaluation approach has to fit your centre and your community. Clearly define your approach before you begin.

• Establish a framework for regular overall evaluation.

Be on the same page and you will finish together.
Best-Practised Strategies for Program Evaluation

1. What to Evaluate

**Physical Space.** Is there room for the children to run? Are there spaces for both quiet and noisy activities? Are they separate? Is the art area near a sink or wet area for easy clean up?

**Outdoor Space.** Is it safe? Are the outdoor play materials/equipment in good repair? Is there a covered play area so children can go outside in inclement weather?

**Schedule.** Is it flexible enough to meet each child’s needs? Is there time for socializing, free play, outdoor play, the exercise of gross motor skills, resting or napping, circle activities, learning, hygiene and personal care, and one-on-one with staff? Are there smooth transitions between meals, circle time and free time?

**Culture.** Is there a language component in the curriculum? Is there art, music and dance? Is culture reflected throughout the program? In other words, are the cultural practices of the community built right into the curriculum? Are Elders involved in the program? Do foods and materials reflect the cultures of the children in the program? See Appendix 5A for a sample Cultural Evaluation used by Cowichan Tribes.

**Staff.** Evaluate long-term staff annually; newly employed staff at three and six months. Use job descriptions to guide the evaluations, having each staff member comment on how their activities reflect their expected duties.

**Other.** Does the curriculum meet the specific needs of the children in the program? Are the goals outlined in your work plan being met? Is the program flexible enough to adjust to community needs?

When evaluating specific program components, such as language, you may need supplementary tools and resources to enhance regular evaluation.

2. When to Evaluate

- Do a major evaluation of your program annually. Identify a time such as the end of the fiscal year and evaluate the program and the administration at the same time.
- Conduct less extensive evaluations on a daily, weekly, monthly and yearly basis. Plan these at weekly staff meetings.

3. Who Should Evaluate

- Think about hiring an external evaluator. They cost money, but are objective. Incorporate the expense into your budget.
- Make program evaluations the responsibility of the program manager/coordinate and include this responsibility in the job description.
- Invite input from staff. They know first hand what’s going on in the program. In
addition, involvement in evaluation will give them a valuable sense of ownership. Consider having staff conduct part of the program evaluation, under the leadership of the program manager/coordinator.

Involving parents in the process. They need to feel ownership of the program as well and are likely to get more involved as a result. See the next segment on How to Evaluate for ideas on methodology.

Involving the people most affected by any program changes: the children. This will ensure your program is truly child-centred, and help the children develop the skills for informed decision making. They can provide valuable information and feel empowered at the same time.

Seek advice from Elders. They have a unique cultural perspective. Include on registration forms the following statement: “At times, we will seek advice from respected Elders.”

Involving licensing officers, the Board of Directors, public health nurses and kindergarten teachers. Ask them whether they have visited the centre in the past year. Ask whether they would consider attending an open house, resource fair or community dinner.

4. How to Evaluate

- Think about networking with other programs, agencies or bands to find out how they do their evaluations.
- Be sure to evaluate your program against the annual work plan you have developed for the year. Evaluate the environment first. Sometimes this will solve other problems.
- Use both oral and written approaches.
- Think about using the Harms and Clifford Evaluation (see Appendix 5B). It’s easy to use and highly reliable. You can add your own section to evaluate your cultural program, or follow the example from Cowichan Tribes in Appendix 5A.
- Develop your own questionnaires (e.g., for staff, parents, children) specific to your program. Keep them short and simple, focusing on strengths and weaknesses, or likes and dislikes. For every problem identified, ask for suggestions or ways to solve the problem.
- Involve parents in a variety of ways. Ask for parent feedback every three months. Use written questionnaires and/or verbal surveys. Be sure to emphasize confidentiality, otherwise you may not receive any responses.
- Provide a suggestion box, stressing that it is for suggestions, not complaints.
- Ask parents what their goals and expectations are for their children by the end of the year. This can be empowering because some parents may never have thought about goals. Be sure to support their wishes. Think about offering
incentives, such as small gifts, gift certificates or door prizes, for providing feedback.

**Establishing Rapport**

*It is critical for ECE workers to establish a strong rapport with parents. If parents trust staff, they will be more forthcoming when it comes to answering specific questions about their children.* Ask non-invasive questions, and try to implement suggestions collected from the evaluation. Parents and children will then both feel heard. It’s interesting to note that parents are more likely to trust certified ECE workers than non-certified workers.

- Organize staff lunches or retreats to get staff input.
- Have informal meetings with Elders to solicit their feedback.
- Ask Kindergarten teachers if they notice a difference in children who have been through your program, or any differences from previous years. Incorporate their responses in your evaluation report.
- Report to Band membership on a monthly basis and at annual general meetings.

**Head Start evaluations**

Head Start programs use a planning and evaluation tool called the Program Logic Model. This tool helps programs plan their curriculum with specific objectives in mind. See Appendix 5C for a sample.

**Ongoing Program Needs Related to Program Evaluation**

- Evaluation templates for family child care programs;
- A template for developing questionnaires;
- Workshops on evaluation for staff;
- Culturally sensitive evaluations;
- Aboriginal licensing officers; and
- Information sharing/networking with other programs.
Resources Index

* Indicates resources available on loan through the BC Aboriginal Child Care Society


## Appendix 5A – Le’lum’el Cultural Environment Rating Scale

### 1. Use Learning Concepts:
- regular use of culturally appropriate books, puzzles, tapes and stories
- play materials such as dolls, authentic dress, etc.

<p>| | | | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No materials or activities to encourage cultural concepts.</td>
<td>Some materials or activities but not used with teacher guidance or not readily available.</td>
<td>Sufficient materials and activities available on a regular basis. Children use by choice but a teacher is available to assist by developing concepts through talking, asking questions and stimulating child’s reasoning.</td>
<td>All of 5, plus teachers encourage reasoning throughout the day, using actual events and experiences to promote recall and feed back.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Comments**

---

### 2. Art Activities:
- provision of culturally-based art activities and materials

<p>| | | | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No materials or activities to encourage development of cultural concepts.</td>
<td>Some materials or activities presented but not used with teacher guidance or not readily available.</td>
<td>Sufficient materials and activities available on a regular basis. Activities promote individual expression and free choice.</td>
<td>All of 5, plus a major variety of materials available with attempts to relate art activities to other experiences.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Comments**

---
3. **Music and Movement:**
- culturally-based music, singing and dance
- use of tapes, members from community attending centre-ceremonial activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No specific provision made.</td>
<td>Some provision made but seldom available.</td>
<td>Planned time for singing and dancing, etc. several times a week.</td>
<td>All of 5. Activities provided daily as free choice or group activities, plus visits by community members.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Comments**

4. **Elder Involvement:**
- Elders as key role-players in day-to-day planning, operation and guidance of daycare centre

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Elder involvement.</td>
<td>Occasional Elder input.</td>
<td>Elders consulted regularly for planning and guidance.</td>
<td>All of 5, plus Elders visit regularly and are key players in daily centre operations.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Comments**

5. **Meals and Snacks:**
- traditional foods introduced on a regular basis
- traditional foods prepared for and with the children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No traditional foods or cooking activities.</td>
<td>Traditional foods occasionally.</td>
<td>Traditional foods provided on a regular basis. Children assist with planning and preparation.</td>
<td>All of 5, plus vocabulary/concept learning around traditional foods. Community members also help plan and prepare.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Comments**
6. **Greeting and Departing:**
- parents and children greeted in Hul’qumi’num language
- Hul’qumi’num language used to say goodbye at the end of each day

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No language used.</td>
<td>Language used minimally or occasionally.</td>
<td>Language used daily.</td>
<td>Language used comfortably as much as possible. Bilingual proficiency noted.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Comments**

7. **Furnishings & Displays:**
- culturally appropriate displays-pictures, bulletin boards, etc.
- displays and pictures labeled in Hul’qumi’num language
- displays rotated to reflect cultural events in the community

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Comments**

---

---

---

---
8. **Staff Training & Resources:**
- adequate Elder/community resources available
- language/cultural training for non-Aboriginal staff members
- workshops and in-service training for staff on culture, curriculum planning and delivery

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No staff cultural training or workshops.</td>
<td>Some materials and training available for staff.</td>
<td>Cultural materials always available for staff use. Training opportunities available and workshops regularly presented.</td>
<td>Staff uses an Elder-developed curriculum for day-to-day programming. Language classes prepared and available to all staff. Program evaluated regularly.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Comments**

9. **Program Planning:**
- parent/child/community involvement in program planning
- program planning meets needs of individual child
- parents/Elders/community are key to day-to-day centre operation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program planning by staff with no outside involvement.</td>
<td>Minimal community/Elder/parent input.</td>
<td>Parents, Elders and community assist with planning on a regular basis.</td>
<td>Individual Education Plans (IEP) are done with parents and incorporated into daily planning. Elders, community members and parents plan and help implement daily program. The community together runs the centre.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Comments**

---

**BC Aboriginal Childcare Society**

**Program Evaluation**
### Appendix 5B – Sample Program Evaluation Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicators</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Needs Improvement</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The program is culturally meaningful to the children and community.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children are encouraged to be proud of their heritage.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children have opportunities to learn the language spoken by their ancestors.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children participate in local cultural events.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The setting encourages appropriate child-staff interaction.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Space for one-on-one, small group, and large group activities.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate child : staff ratios</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The facility design permits children to be seen at all times.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The classrooms are appropriate sizes.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Space is approved by local licensing office.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The setting helps children develop independence and self-help skills.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children have a convenient place to hang up their coats and cubbies to keep their belongings.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furniture is child-sized.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mirrors, water fountains, and washrooms are child-sized and accessible to children.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 5C – Logic Model

Using a logic model can help you plan activities that you know will benefit children and families in your community.

Some people like to think of the logic model as a “machine” or “path” when you begin with raw materials and come out at the end with a solid result. Some people also find it easier to work backwards, beginning with an outcome and then figuring out how to get there.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inputs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resources that will go into the program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Staff time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Equipment/supplies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What the program does with its resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Hold mom and tots program weekly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provide full day child care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Hold parenting workshops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provides transportation for children to get to the program</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outputs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The direct products of the program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 50 mom and tots drop-ins held</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 15 children enrolled in the child care program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 20 parents attended workshops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 7 children take the bus to the program</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Benefits for participants during and after the program (e.g. a demonstrated change in knowledge, behaviour, and status)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The quality of life for Aboriginal children is enhanced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Children know more about their culture and traditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Parents know more about their culture and traditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Parents know more about child development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The child care program serves all the children and families who want it</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter Six – Child Assessments

Careful looking and listening leads to knowing each child’s development, interests, and abilities; and to understanding the child within the context of his/her family. This information is used to respond to, and scaffold, children’s actions, and serve as the basis for planning curriculum and communicating with parents.

Introduction

The assessing of preschool children is an area of some concern among early childhood educators. Most experts agree on the necessity of some form of assessment—how else can children’s needs be determined, and their development evaluated? In 1991, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) in the U.S. defined assessment as “the process of observing, recording and otherwise documenting the work children do and how they do it, as a basis for a variety of educational decisions that affect the child.”

Today, assessments are deemed necessary to help plan program curriculum, identify children in need of specialized services or intervention, and to determine how well the program is meeting its goals. The NAEYC definition has come to be generally accepted by early childhood educators as appropriate.

The jury is still out, however, on how assessments are to be done and whether they should be based on formal testing or an informal process of observation.

A number of participants in our workshops felt that formal testing at such a young age is inappropriate. Others expressed concern that formal tests don’t take into account Aboriginal culture. Consequently, the Best Practices strategies in this Handbook are based on an observational model. For a more in-depth discussion of child assessments, we’ve provided further resources at the end of the chapter.

Several participants in the Best Practices workshops also noted that early childhood educators are not trained to conduct developmental assessments with children in their programs. While it is true that ECEs do not have the time nor training to conduct
formal diagnostic assessments of children, ECEs can use a developmental screen with full participation from parents. The developmental screen can help ECEs and parents detect developmental areas that need further development. Activities can be incorporated at the centre and at home to help children progress.

Consider some of these Frequently Asked Questions from the website for the Nipissing District Developmental Screen:

**What is a Developmental Screen?**

A “developmental screen” is a short checklist of some of the most important skills that a child should be able to perform by a particular age. A developmental screen is not a diagnostic tool and it is not meant to be a formal assessment of the child’s skills but rather a quick survey to determine any areas that may require some extra help.

**Why do we screen children’s development?**

The primary reason for administering developmental screens is to identify those children who may need some extra help with learning age-appropriate skills. It is understood that early intervention has a positive effect on the child’s development, behavior and later school performance. (Wolraich, 1996; Butler 1998).

**What are the benefits of developmental screening?**

- To help parents learn about their child’s development;
- Recognize the child’s skills and abilities;
- Identify developmental areas that may need extra attention (for info on B.C.’s Aboriginal Infant Development Programs, see Appendix 6A);
- Provide an opportunity to plan intervention strategies, including referrals to qualified professionals, if required; and
- To promote early identification.

**What is the correct way to use developmental screens with families?**

The Screens can be administered in a variety of ways, such as:

- Face-to-face with a parent;
- Over the phone with a parent;
- At a doctor’s office or well-baby clinic;
- By mailout (make sure there is a contact number for a person or program for follow-up);
- As part of a registration package at a daycare; or
- As part of a service provider’s intake package.
Guiding Principles

When developing an assessment strategy for your program, keep the following general principles in mind.

• Assessments should be used to identify needs, not to label children. They should be used to support children’s learning and development, plan for individuals and groups and to communicate with parents.

• They should reflect program curriculum, goals and objectives.

• Staff time and training will affect the depth of assessments.

• Assessments by professional therapists may differ from those done by early childhood educators. Parental consent is necessary before a professional assessment.

• Assessments should involve typical activities, and should not place children in artificial situations.

• Assessments should be done at regular intervals, cover a range of circumstances and activities, and represent the child’s behavior over time.

• Assessments should use a variety of tools and procedures (work by the children, teacher observation, etc.).

Trained Assessors

There’s a fine line between assessment and labeling, and early childhood educators receive no formal training on assessments. Fortunately, there are professional therapists who have been trained specifically to do child assessments. They will work with educators to provide assessments that adhere to industry protocols and standards. Supported Child Care (see Appendix 6B for complete listing), or your local Child Development Centre may be able to refer you to the right therapist for your program.

Best-Practised Strategies for Effective Child Assessments

1. In-House Assessments

• Observe and record children’s activities and accomplishments regularly, perhaps every three months. Thinking of assessments as skills observations will help you stay away from labeling.

• Do assessments every September and June to see progress made during the year.

• Be especially careful not to misinterpret the results of observation and assessment. If you are concerned about a particular child’s skills, refer the child for assessment by a professional.
School Readiness

Observe the following school-readiness skills:

- written name recognition;
- number/alphabet differentiation;
- tying shoe laces; and
- appropriate social interaction.

- Use developmentally appropriate materials. The Ages/Stages screening tool is helpful and can be used/modified in Aboriginal communities.
- Use a variety of play materials (see under “Assessment tools” below for more information).
- Communicate regularly at weekly or monthly staff meetings to ensure that all staff are aware of each child’s development, and to address specific development issues.
- Create a “communication book” to log and record the daily activities of each child, as well as any parental issues. This is beneficial to all full-time staff, as well as part-time, substitute and on-call staff, who can quickly get acquainted with any concerns or issues of relevance. The book can also include worker observations on each child’s performance. This way, records are easily accessible in one place. Info in this book should be kept confidential.
- When doing the skills assessment, be aware of the dynamics of the grandparent/ grandchild relationship. Grandparents who are raising their grandchildren can sometimes do too much for them. These children may need extra encouragement to do things for themselves.

2. External Assessments

- Enlist the help of occupational, physical and speech therapists. They can determine any trouble spots and develop strategies for dealing with them. Contact Supported Child Care or your local Child Development Centre for referrals to professionals.
- Invite other professionals, such as optometrists, dental hygienists and community health nurses, to conduct general assessments at the centre before children go to Kindergarten.
- If a child has to wait to see a professional, work with the child as much as possible using available resources during the wait.
- Supported Child Care consultants can do quick assessments of children and provide staff and families with skills development strategies. Vancouver Supported Child Care offers a free workshop called “Partners Addressing Challenging Behaviour.”

Support visiting professionals, by:

- providing appropriate time and physical space;
- offering lunch;
- providing ferry tickets if needed; and
- letting them know they are welcome anytime.
CHILD ASSESSMENTS

• Natasha McDonald, the Head Start coordinator at Yekooche First Nation, provides workshops on play therapy, challenging behaviors, self-esteem, ADD/FAS/Autism and other diagnosed conditions. She can be contacted at 250-996-7134, ext 120.

3. Consulting with Families

• Consider asking for parent input during an assessment. Sometimes there are discrepancies between a child’s behavior at home and his or her behavior in the program. Parents’ feedback will make for a more comprehensive and accurate assessment.

• Develop a personal profile of each child. This will give staff an opportunity to talk to parents about children’s needs. Collect any information on family background that may influence children’s development and behavior. Use careful, supportive wording when doing this: the aim is to support children, not judge parents.

• Ask parents to help if a child needs to further develop a skill. For example, if a child is having difficulty with hand coordination, lend the family a pair of scissors and ask parents to practise with the child over the weekend. Support parents by using neutral language, such as: “Your child is developing this skill and you can support this development by…”

• Recognize that building trust with parents takes time. Experience shows it can take as long as three years before parents are comfortable approaching staff.

• Be sure to share assessment results with parents and get their permission before sharing results with others.

4. Assessment Tools

There’s a wide variety of assessment tools available for early childhood programs. Effective assessments—the most complete and comprehensive—never rely on one tool, and are never done just once, but over a period of time. Keep this in mind when choosing your tools. Supported Child Care has various assessment checklists, including one for parents, one for staff and one for consultants (see Appendix 6B for a complete list of Supported Child Care agencies in B.C.). We’ve provided several options below:

NOTE: The tools below are general developmental screens for identifying children who may require extra support. They are not diagnostic tools. Several other developmental screens, such as LAPD (Learning Accomplishment Profile), and Peabody Developmental Motor Skills are available and used by trained occupational and physical therapists, once a child has been referred. Speech and language therapists will also use special assessment tools to diagnose the type and extent of a child’s developmental delay.

Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ)
The Ages and Stages Questionnaire, by Diane Bricker and Jane Squires, provides a reliable way to screen infants and young children for developmental milestones during the crucial first five years of life. Parents complete the simple, illustrated 30-item questionnaires at designated intervals, assessing children in
their natural environments to ensure valid results. Each questionnaire can be completed in just 10 to 15 minutes and covers five key developmental areas: communication, gross motor, fine motor, problem solving, and personal-social. For more information about Ages and Stages, or to order the questionnaire, contact Brookes Publishing Co. at 1-410-337-9580 (Baltimore), Fax: 1-410-337-8539. Or visit the ASQ website at www.pbrookes.com/store/books/bricker-asq/

**Gesell Preschool Test and Kit**
This tool is frequently used by infant development consultants. The Gesell Preschool Test and Kit evaluates motor, adaptive, language and personal-social behavior in children ages two and a half to six. The kit includes puzzles, cards, blocks, tests and a manual. For information regarding materials contact: Modern Learning Press, PO Box 167, Rosemount NJ 08556, Phone toll-free: 1-800-627-5867, Fax toll-free: 1-888-558-7350.

**Work Sampling System (WSS)**
The Work Sampling System is an ongoing classroom performance assessment system that is used in preschool through fifth grade. Its purpose is to document children’s skills, knowledge, behavior, and accomplishments across a wide variety of curriculum areas on multiple occasions. WSS is a curriculum-embedded performance assessment. It takes place in the context of the classroom, is ongoing rather than occurring only once or twice a year and involves teachers, children and families.

The system involves checklists, observations and portfolio assessments. A portfolio can be made up of artwork, written reports of children’s stories and observations, and photographs of children’s accomplishments. ECEs record children’s progress (e.g. “Susan is starting to color within the lines, showing development in her fine motor skills”) on summary reports. WSS is available through Pearson Early Learning. Call 1-800-435-3085 to order material; select option 5 for additional information. Or visit the WSS website at www.pearsonearlylearning.com.

**Nipissing District Developmental Screen (NDDS)**
This developmental screening tool is designed to be used by health care professionals working with infants and children up to six years of age. The screen also comes with a set of activity sheets that suggest developmentally appropriate activities for children aged one and two months, four months, six months, nine months, 12 months, 15 months, 18 months, two years, 30 months, three years, four years, five years or six years.

The areas of development covered by the Screen Forms include vision, hearing, communication (note: the language items refer to the child’s ability in his/her first language), gross and fine motor, cognitive, social/emotional, and self-help.

The Screen Forms are not meant to be a substitute for professional advice, assessment and/or treatment from a health care and/or child care professional.

Visit the NDDS website to find out more: www.ndds.ca or call 705-472-0910 (North Bay, Ontario). Fax: 705-472-9743.
**Denver Developmental Screening Tool (DDST)**

The Denver Developmental materials were originally developed in the 1960’s to encourage the early identification of children with developmental problems by those in close contact with them: health professionals, education and social service providers. The goal was to create standardized tests that are easy, quick and simple to administer and interpret.

The Denver II is a revised tool that is more culturally appropriate for more children. Denver II is not an IQ test, nor will it predict what the level of the child’s future intelligence and ability will be. The test is also not to be used to diagnose. It must be administered in a standardised manner by trained personnel. The Denver II is designed to test the child on 20 simple tasks and items that fall into four sectors as follows: Personal–Social (these tasks will indicate the child’s ability to get along with people and to take care of himself / herself); Fine Motor Adaptive (these tasks will identify the child’s ability to see and to use his hands to pick up objects and to draw); Language (these tasks will indicate the child’s ability to hear, follow direction and to speak); and Gross Motor (these tasks will indicate the child’s ability to sit, walk and jump).

Several test kits are available to assess children’s development, hearing and articulation. The standard Denver II kit contains a bell, glass bottle, set of 10 blocks, rattle, pencil (#2 lead), tennis ball, yarn, raisins, zippered bag, cup, doll, baby bottle, and an interpretation card.

Find out more about this tool and order the test kit, training manual and videotape from www.denverii.com or contact them at 1-800-419-4729 (Colorado). Fax: 303-355-5622.

**The Bayley Scales of Infant Development II**

The Bayley Scales measure the mental and motor development and test the behavior of infants from one to 42 months. The Scales may be used to describe the current developmental functioning of infants and to assist in diagnosis and treatment planning for infants with developmental delays or disabilities. It takes about 45 to 60 minutes to complete and provides scores on mental, psychomotor and behavior scales. The motor scale, developed in 2001, helps to identify children who have delays in their motor development. The scales are meant for use by Occupational Therapists and Medical Doctors who have the appropriate training. For more information about the Bayley Scales, contact The Psychological Corporation’s Australia & New Zealand or call: 011-61-02-9517-8958, Fax: 011-61-02-9517-2249.

**Brigance Inventories and Screens**

Several screens are available for infant and toddlers and children in early preschool, preschool, kindergarten and grade one. The tool takes 10 to 15 minutes per child. It can be used to help ECEs with program planning and to identify children who have developmental challenges, academic talent or intellectual giftedness. Skills are tested in the following areas: fine and gross motor, general knowledge, language, pre-academic/academic and graphomotor development. A set of at-risk guidelines for use in prevention programs
is also included to identify children in need of prompt referral. The manual containing instructions and assessments can be ordered from Brigance at: www.brigance.com or by calling Curriculum Associates, Inc. (Massachusetts) at (978) 667-8000, Fax: (978) 667-5706

**Ongoing Program Needs Related to Child Assessments**

- Time and money to complete assessments;
- More training in child development;
- Enhanced access to specialists (vision, speech, language, physiotherapy), especially in rural areas;
- An Aboriginal agency that provides specialists (speech and language pathologists, physiotherapists, ophthalmologists) trained to work with Aboriginal children;
- More culturally sensitive assessments;
- Enhanced training and resources for effective communication with parents. Resources might include a parent information package with a complete list of specialists and other support services. Training for staff might include a session on how to support parents who don’t acknowledge a developmental delay in their child.
- Extra staff to support parents and talk to them during arrival and departure times;
- One-on-one workers or flexible ratios to support at-risk children;
- Staff : Child ratios enhanced from the 1:8 minimum to 1:5;
- Increased staff sensitivity to diverse Aboriginal cultures and cultural differences;
- A central place from which to get information and resources; and
- Increased communication and information sharing among Head Start, CAPC and ECE programs.
Resources Index

* Indicates resources available on loan through the BC Aboriginal Child Care Society


Appendix 6A – Infant Development Programs (IDP)

The following information was provided by the Office of the Provincial Advisor for Aboriginal Infant Development Programs. For a complete listing of IDP programs in BC, visit www.aidp.bc.ca or call the Office at 604-990-9939.

Infant Development Programs are based on 3 principles:

• Interventions for children with developmental problems are most effective if begun early in the child’s life.

• Infancy is an important period of life and delays in development during that period may have long-lasting, cumulative effects on the patterns of development of a child, as well as on the patterns of interaction between the child and his/her family and community.

• The family unit is the most crucial source of learning, of emotional support and of developmental encouragement available to the child.

Infant Development Programs work in Aboriginal communities because participation is voluntary, family centered, and parent driven. Infant Development consultants recognize parents as the major decision makers in their children’s lives and build on parents’ strengths and priorities.

Programs also work because they can be made accessible and flexible. Programs in our communities are:

• Voluntary

• family centered

• primarily focused on children ages 0-3

Aboriginal Infant Development consultants support families by offering the following:

• Home visits, playgroups, parent education opportunities, parent support groups, parent to parent connections,

• assist the family in planning activities that will encourage the optimum development of their child,

• resource library of books and toys that is available on loan to families,

• screening and assessment that is culturally sensitive and meaningful.

Consultants also assist families in accessing other health, social, and community services.
Appendix 6B – Supported Child Care Agencies

**Cedar Crest Society, South Cariboo Supported Child Care**
Box 1197, 100 Mile House, V0K 1G0. Phone: 250-395-5278, Fax: 250-395-4686, Email: cedarcst@bcinternet.net

**Fraser Valley Child Development Centre**
34081 Cyril St., Abbotsford, V2S 2E8. Phone: 604-852-2686 Loc 228, Fax: 604-852-5794, Email: mmetcalfe@fvcdc.org

**Bella Coola Community Support Society, Supported Child Care Program**
Box 22, Bella Coola, V0T 1C0. Phone: 250-799-5588, Fax: 250-799-5791, Email: bc_css@yahoo.com

**Supported Child Care Services - Campbell River Solution for Kids Corp.**
#3 - 1016 Hemlock St., Campbell River, V9W 3E4. Phone: 250-287-2223, Fax: 250-287-2074, Email: kidscorp@uniserve.com

**Kootenay Family Place, West Kootenay Boundary Supported Child Care Program**
Box 3144, Castlegar, V1N 3H4. Phone: 250-365-5616/1-866-644-5616, Fax: 250-365-5792, Email: supcc@telus.net

**Chilliwack Developmental Children’s Centre**
45795 Manuel Road, Chilliwack, V2R 4E1. Phone: 604-858-3922 ext 7122, Fax: 604-858-3948, Email: chilldev@telus.net

**Simon Fraser Society Supported Child Care Program**
204 Blue Mountain St., Coquitlam, V3K 4H1. Phone: 604-525-9494, Fax: 604-525-3013, Email: diane.king@sfscl.carenetbc.com

**Comox Valley Child Development Association, Supported Child Care**
237 Third St., Courtenay, V9N 1E1. Phone: 250-338-4288, Fax: 250-338-9326, Email: scc@cvcda.ca

**Cranbrook Women’s Resource Society, East Kootenay Supported Child Care**
20B - 12th Avenue North, Cranbrook, V1C 3V7. Phone: 250-426-4043, Fax: 250-426-4043, Email: ekssc@shaw.ca

**South Peace Community Resources Society Supported Child Care Program**
Box 713, Dawson Creek, V1G 4H7. Phone: 250-782-1138/1-866-782-1138, Fax: 250-782-4167, yvonnehca@yahoo.com

**Delta Association for Child Development, Supported Child Care Program**
3-3800 72nd St., Delta, V4K 3N2. Phone: 604-946-6622 ext 318, Fax: 604-946-6223, Email: slj@dccnet.com
Cowichan Valley Supported Child Care Services
201/202 - 321 Festubert St., Duncan, V9L 3T1. Phone: 250-746-5889, Fax: 250-746-5339, Email: mbaker@cowichan.com

Fort Nelson Family Development Society, Supported Child Care
Box 1210, Fort Nelson, V0C 1R0. Phone: 250-774-2596, Fax: 250-774-2831, Email: fnfds@pris.ca

SCC Services for the Bulkley Valley, Burns Lake and the Hazeltons
Comp 19 Site 6 SS1, Houston, V0J 1Z0. Phone: 250-845-3031, Fax: 250-845-3080, Email: tomrob01@telus.net

Kamloops Supported Child Care Program
Children’s Therapy and Family Resource Centre, 801 McGill Road, Kamloops, V2C 6R1. Phone: 250-371-4100 or 250-371-4104, Fax: 250-371-4120, Email: scc@direct.ca

Kelowna, Central Okanagan Child Development Assoc.
1546 Bernard Avenue, Kelowna, V1Y 6R9. Phone: 250-763-5100, Fax: 250-862-8433, Email: lana@cocda.com

Kitimat Supported Child Care
1515 Kingsisher Ave., Kitimat, V8C 1S5. Phone: 250-632-3144 Ext 28, Fax: 250-632-3120, Email: mailto:kcdckit@telus.net

South Nanaimo/ Ladysmith Supported Child Care Services
PO Box 2147, Ladysmith, V9R 2E0. Phone: 250-245-3466, Fax: 250-245-3496, Email: Mairi@shaw.ca

Langley Child Development Centre
Box 3323, Langley, V3A 4R4. Phone: 604-534-1155 #103 (Joy), Fax: 604-534-1814, Email: sccl@lkcdc.com

Mackenzie Counselling Services Society
Box 790, Mackenzie, V0J 2C0. Phone: 250-997-6595, Fax: 250-997-3909, Email: mcss@cablerocket.com

Ridge Meadows Association for Community Living
26281 Dewdney Trunk, Maple Ridge, V2W 1A2. Phone: 604-462-0880, Fax: 604-462-7188, Email: winnie.chucas@rmacl.carenetbc.com

Robson Valley Supported Child Care
Box 430, McBride, V0J 2E0. Phone: 250-566-9107 (Valemount) 569-2266 (McBride), Fax: 250-569-2200, Email: mstewart@valemount.com

Merritt and District Youth Resource Services, Supported Child Care
Box 1153, Merritt, V1K 1B8. Phone: 250-378-4878, Fax: 250-378-9611, Email: sccmerritt@hotmail.com
**Individual Options Program, Mission's Supported Child Care**

33345 2nd Avenue, Mission, V2V 1K4. Phone: 604-826-9080 #231, Fax: 604-826-9611, Email: richardson@macl.bc.ca

**Nanaimo Child Development Centre**

1135 Nelson St., Nanaimo, V9S 2K4. Phone: 250-753-0251, Fax: 250-753-5614, Email: pam@cdc.nisa.com

**North Shore Supported Child Care**

148 East 2nd St., North Vancouver, V7P 1B5. Phone: 604-987-8138 ext 241, Fax: 604-987-2107, Email: nsnhsc@nsnh.bc.ca

**Supported Child Care Services**

124 McCarter St., PO Box 489, Parksville, BC, V9P 2G6. Phone: 604-954-4737, Fax: 604-248-8974, Email: Helen.Walker@gems1.gov.bc.ca

**Penticton & District Community Resources Society, Supported Child Care, South Okanagan/Similkameen**

60 Calgary Ave., Penticton, V2A 6Y3. Phone: 250-492-5814, Fax: 250-492-7572, Email: supchild@vip.net

**Port Alberni Association for Community Living, Supported Child Care Program**

4325 Neill St., Port Alberni, V9Y 1E5. Phone: 250-723-1006, Fax: 250-723-7349, Email: jankersccp@shaw.ca

**Queen Charlottes, Northern Health Authority QCI/Haida Gwaii**

Box 168, Port Clements, V0T 1R0. Phone: 250-626-3918, Fax: 250-626-3689, Email: hcsidp@island.net

**Step-By-Step Child Development Centre, Supported Child Care Program**

#200 - 2232 McAllister Avenue, Port Coquitlam, V3C 2A6. Phone: 604-552-0897 #322, Fax: 604-552-0896, Email: debssc@step-by-step.ca

**North Island Crisis and Counselling Centre, Port Hardy Supported Child Care**

Box 2446, Port Hardy, V0N 2P0. Phone: 250-949-8333, Fax: 250-949-8344, Email: ni-sccc@island.net

**Cranberry Centre Supported Child Care Service**

6791 Drake St., Powell River, V8A 3X8. Phone: 604-483-3778 (Juliet)/Phone: 604-483-2394 (Cathy), Fax: 604-483-4723, Email: jpotter@prcn.org

**Children's Services**

4368 Michigan Avenue, Powell River, V8A 2S1. Phone: 604-485-5620, Fax: 604-485-5646, Email: childrensservices@shawcable.com

**Supported Child Care**

1668 Tamarack St., Prince George, V2L 2T3. Phone: 250-563-1147, Fax: 250-563-9434, Email: scc@ckpg.net
Prince Rupert Community Enrichment Society, Supported Child Care Program
710 Fraser St., Prince Rupert, V8J 1P9.
Phone: 250-627-7166, Fax: 250-627-7482, Email: chprces@citytel.net

Quesnel and District Child Development Centre, Supported Child Care Program
395 Elliot St., Quesnel, V2J 1Y4. Phone: 250-992-2481, Fax: 250-992-3439, Email: carlafulton@cdc.quesnelbc.com

Community Connections Revelstoke Society Supported Child Care Program
Box 2880, Revelstoke, V0S 2S0. Phone: 250-837-2920 ext 32, Fax: 250-837-2909, Email: jmcnab.cc@telus.net

The Richmond Supported Child Care Program
#280 - 7000 Minoru Blvd, Richmond, V6Y 3Z5. Phone: 604-279-7010, Fax: 604-279-7011, Email: kforestell@develop.bc.ca

Salmon Arm, Shuswap Exceptional Children’s Association
Box 2579, Salmon Arm, V1E 4R5. Phone: 250-833-0184, Fax: 250-832-4591, Email: seca@shuswap.net

Sunshine Coast Community Services Society - Supported Child Care
Box 1064, Sechelt, V0N 3A0. Phone: 604-740-3727(direct line), Fax: 604-885-9493, Email: gayle_duncan@dccnet.com

Sea-to-Sky Community Services Society
Box 949, Squamish, V0N 3G0. Phone: 604-815-4144, Fax: 604 815 4140, Email: Joanne.Wagner@sscs.carenetbc.com

South Fraser Child Development Centre Supported Child Care Program
9460 140th St., Surrey, V3X 3K6. Phone: 604-584-1361 loc 4275, Fax: 604-583-5113, Email: sfcdckw@yahoo.com

Terrace Child Development Centre
2510 South Eby St., Terrace, V8G 2X3. Phone: 250-635-9388, Fax: 250-638-0213, Email: cdct@telus.net

Vancouver area
2765 Oysoos Cres, Vancouver, V6T 1X7.
Phone: 604-709-4551, Fax: 604-709-4553, Email: kforestell@develop.bc.ca

Centre For Ability, Burnaby Supported Child Care
2805 Kingsway, Vancouver, V5R 5H9.
Phone: 604-451-5511, Fax: 604-451-5651, Email: cpohl@centreforability.bc.ca

North Okanagan Neurological Association Child Development Centre, Supported Child Care Program
2804 - 34th St., Vernon, V1T 5X1. Phone: 250-549-1281 ext 210, Fax: 250-558-1571, Email: scc.manager@nona-cdc.com
Community Integration (with Queen Alexandra Centre for Childrens’ Health)

QACCH (Pearkes Building), 2400 Arbutus Road, Victoria, V8N 1V7. Phone: 250-721-6709, Fax: 250-721-6818, Email: James.Vitti@caphealth.org

Cariboo Chilcotin Child Development Centre Association

690 North Second Avenue, Williams Lake, V2G 2C4. Phone: 250-392-4481, Fax: 250-392-4432, Email: nancy.gale@cdcwl.com

(Last updated November 13, 2003)
Conclusion

The belief that child rearing is a sacred responsibility has always been present for Aboriginal people. This belief is embodied in the customs and practices of childrearing as a communal (or tribal) practice done not only by parents and immediate family, but rather by the whole (and extended) community.

...an Aboriginal child lives within a family, a community, a Nation, a province and a country. In this context children develop their self-esteem and pride in their heritage and culture, which is needed to sustain them in their communities and nations as well as in broader society.


This Handbook has provided many proven strategies for making Aboriginal early childhood programs the best they can be: culturally relevant, entrenched in the community, based on sound policies and procedures, with effective program evaluation and child assessment measures. But it is not exhaustive. You will no doubt discover other strategies not reflected here. And not all the strategies shown here will be appropriate for your purposes. Pick and choose those that meet the specific needs of your centre or community. Use the tools and templates provided or modify them to better suit your facility. And do make use of the many resources we’ve provided throughout the text and at the end of each chapter.

Talk to agencies in other communities and share your ideas. Periodically assess the progress your program is making against the goals and objectives you’ve established. And do not be discouraged if progress appears to move slowly. Substantive achievement always takes time. Keep working, take a step at a time, and you will begin to see positive outcomes: a smoother running centre, more firmly partnered with families and the community, whose young graduates are proud of who they are and fully prepared for the challenges of school.
Handbook of Best Practices in Aboriginal Early Childhood Programs – Feedback Form

Care to share your thoughts and comments about this resource? Did it meet your expectations? Do you have something to add? Please take a few minutes to answer the questions on this page. Send it to the BC Aboriginal Child Care Society by mail (209-1999 Marine Drive, North Vancouver, BC V7P 3J3) or fax (604-990-9457). We’re looking forward to hearing from you!

What did you learn from the handbook?

What types of activities/ events or publications should come next?

How could the handbook be improved?

How are you involved in early childhood programs? (E.g. staff, volunteer, parent, Elder)

What did you like best about the handbook?