



Elements of Quality Child Care from the Perspectives of **Aboriginal** **Peoples in British Columbia**


For Aboriginal parents, extended families, and communities, caring for children is a sacred responsibility. The Creator has given Aboriginal peoples the right and responsibility to initiate, design, and control programs and services for our children. We accept these rights and responsibilities to care for and educate our children according to the Laws of the Creator.

The elements of quality child care described below rest on these beliefs:

We, the Original Peoples of this land, know the Creator put us here. The Creator gave us laws that govern our relationships to live in harmony with nature and mankind. The Laws of the Creator defined our rights and responsibilities. The Creator gave us our spiritual beliefs, our languages, our culture, and a place on Mother Earth which provided us with all our needs. We have maintained our Freedom, our Languages, and our Traditions from time immemorial. We continue to exercise the rights and fulfill the responsibilities and obligations given to us by the Creator for the land upon which we were placed. The Creator has given us the right to govern ourselves and the right to self-determination. The rights and responsibilities given to us by the Creator cannot be altered or taken away by any other Nations

Assembly of First Nations. Resolution 1/2002, Special Chief's Assembly.





Our child care programs reflect the Laws of the Creator, our traditions, beliefs, and values. From those foundations, we have derived these elements of quality:

1 Aboriginal world view

Quality Aboriginal child care programs reflect a shared world view. Child care personnel pass our values on to our children. Shared world view elements include: appreciation for the sacredness of life; awareness of the continuity of life and our connections to past and future generations; love for our families; respect for nature; a commitment to positive relationships and equality; and the pursuit of spiritual well-being.

2 Relationship with the environment

Quality Aboriginal child care programs teach children how to respectfully use and care for the earth's gifts. Respectful relationship with the earth and its inhabitants is at the heart of Aboriginal cultural beliefs. Caring for the land, air, and water, respect for nature, and knowledge of the environment are essential characteristics of our cultures.

3 Cooperative relationships

Quality Aboriginal child care programs teach children a non-competitive approach to life. Child care personnel model cooperation, respect, consideration for others, and sharing.

4 Elder involvement

Quality Aboriginal child care programs teach children to respect and ask guidance from Elders. Elders are invited, heard, valued and their knowledge is acted upon. Elders are an essential part of the curriculum.

5 Holistic view of development

Quality Aboriginal child care programs support the development of culturally appropriate, holistically-based curricula and assessment instruments. The Aboriginal perspective on children's growth and development is holistic and includes the spiritual domain. Children's physical, emotional, cognitive, spiritual health and well-being overlap and are intertwined. Each child's growth and development reflects his or her uniqueness. Patterns of development are inseparable from the cultures in which children are raised.

6 Aboriginal languages

Quality Aboriginal child care programs try to ensure that children's rights to enjoy and become literate in their traditional languages are honoured as much as possible. Aboriginal languages can be used for everyday communication in child care programs. Where that is not possible, children can be taught Aboriginal languages to the extent possible. Child care programs serving Aboriginal children from different cultures teach respect for all languages and cultures.

7 Relationships with families

Quality Aboriginal child care programs build positive, respectful relationships with the child's family and work in partnership with them. Quality Aboriginal child care programs help families care for their children.

8 Preparation for future responsibilities

Quality Aboriginal child care programs prepare children to eventually assume a wide range of responsibilities as members of thriving self-governing communities. Quality Aboriginal child care programs build children's confidence and self-esteem and communicate the expectation that they will make positive contributions to community life.

9 Inclusion

Quality Aboriginal child care programs are inclusive. Children with exceptional talents and abilities are encouraged to develop their gifts. Children who need extra support, modified environments, and individualized programs have their requirements met.

10 Multi-age grouping

Quality Aboriginal child care programs recognize the advantages of multi-age grouping. Segregation of children on the basis of age is contrary to Aboriginal cultural values and traditions. Multi-age groups more closely resemble life in an extended family.

11 Respect and recognition for child care personnel

Quality Aboriginal child care programs are exemplary employers, providing all personnel and volunteers with training, support, respect, and recognition for the important work they do.

12 Research

Quality Aboriginal child care programs conduct and participate in research to answer their own questions and increase their understanding of issues that are important to them and to their communities.

13 Delivery models

The descriptions of quality Aboriginal child care are applicable in all settings in which children receive care and education. This includes child care centres, part-time preschools, adult and tot drop-in programs, Head Start programs, family day care homes, programs based in community centres and parks, before-school and after-school programs for school-aged children, respite facilities that provide overnight and longer-term child care and child-minding programs.

14 Collaboration and network building

Quality Aboriginal child care programs provide their personnel with opportunities to establish and maintain connections with other Aboriginal child care providers.

15 Accountability

Quality Aboriginal child care services are governed by and accountable to Aboriginal parents and communities. Aboriginal peoples have the cultural knowledge, commitment to their children's well-being, and awareness of local priorities that is essential to ensure good governance of child care programs.

16 Local authority

Quality Aboriginal child care programs comply with the regulations developed by Aboriginal child care administrative bodies.

