




Aboriginal Head Start (AHS) is a national early intervention program funded by Health Canada for First Nations, Inuit and Métis preschool children and their families. There are 112 preschool centres across Canada operating in eight provinces and three territories. Approximately 3000 to 4000 children participate annually.

SPRING 2000

WABOWDEN, MANITOBA

submitted by Manitoba/Saskatchewan Regional Office

 Wabowden, the home of New Beginnings – The Connection for Aboriginal Children (an Aboriginal Head Start project), displays a lot of community spirit. Public holidays frequently have a host of organized festivities for everyone to enjoy – well, almost everybody. The parents attending the New Beginnings program noted that, although there were plenty of activities organized for adults, there were very few for the children.

Parents Amanda Colombe, Carmel Monias, Brenda Nachbaur, Jolene Garrick, Olivia Pierone and Corrie Beebe, and staff members Pauline Mosiondz and Marlene Dram, determined to rectify the situation.

Their first task was to raise funds, so that activities could be made available at little or no cost to the children. They decided to hold a bike-a-thon from Wabowden to Ponton, 30 miles away. The bike-a-thon took place on June 5, 1999, and the parents bicycled for three hours, raising \$800. The money was used to order AHS helium balloons and to purchase prizes.

For Canada Day, the parents organized and constructed a variety of activities for the children to participate in and to enjoy. There were New Beginnings children's booths featuring a Fish Pond, Free Freezie Pull, Basketball Toss and Add A Bean Bag. The New Beginnings parents also gave away cotton candy and 120 AHS helium-filled balloons.

The day was such a success that some funds remained, so further activities for the children were planned, and a fishing derby was held on July 16, 1999. We are very proud of the parents and staff of the Wabowden project site who worked so hard to make life brighter for the children of Wabowden.

Community Spirit: Parents from Wabowden Manitoba's New Beginnings – The Connection for Aboriginal Children biked 30 miles to Ponton, raising \$800 for fun activities for the children.



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HIGH/SCOPE TRAINING



In May 1998, eight Aboriginal women associated with Aboriginal Head Start completed training as High/Scope trainers. The training was conducted under the sponsorship of the AHS National Office, and went forward with the approval of the NAHSC.

High/Scope Educational Research Foundation is an independent non-profit research, development, training and public advocacy organization, which has sponsored the well-known Perry Preschool Longitudinal Study. The mission of High/Scope is to improve the life

chances of children and youth by promoting high-quality educational programs. The High/Scope preschool approach was originally developed for use with “at-risk” children, but is now used and has proven to be effective with the full range of children. It is used in all types of preschool settings in urban and rural communities and in countries around the world. For AHS, High/Scope training was adapted to the needs, circumstances and cultural approaches of Aboriginal communities. An Aboriginal elder was present at every training session to ensure that the methodology was consistent with Aboriginal values.

High/Scope offers extensive training programs and is designed to provide concrete strategies and information that AHS participants can take back to their sites. The High/Scope approach is rooted in a belief that children learn by pursuing their personal interests and goals, and they are encouraged to make choices.

High/Scope training trains teachers to participate as partners in children's activities rather than managers or supervisors and it emphasizes positive interaction strategies such as sharing control with children, focussing on children's strengths, forming relationships with children, supporting children's play ideas and adopting a problem-solving approach to social conflict.

AHS developed an interest in High/Scope in 1996, and it was selected as an “optional training approach” by the NAHSC in April 1997. The Training Of Trainers (TOT) began in September 1997. By May 1998, eight people had successfully completed their training, and certification of the training commenced in the 1998–99 fiscal year. At the end of 1998–99, planning was under way to train approximately 50 AHS staff from across the country as High/Scope “Lead Teachers.”

The **NEW** AHS National Newsletter

The AHS Newsletter will be longer and more informative. It will contain more resources and more early childhood education practices. The new newsletter will be published twice a year.

The AHS Newsletter continues to welcome submissions from community participants, staff and administration. Please send your submissions, photographs and other materials to:

Aboriginal Head Start
National Newsletter
c/o Aboriginal
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UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD



The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, adopted in November 1989, is an international human rights treaty about young people. It has been adopted by more countries in the world than any other international treaty. Ratified (signed and accepted) by Canada in 1991, it has been accepted by 191 of the 193 countries of the world. The Convention, 10 years in the making, aims to ensure that the rights of the world's two billion children and youth are known and protected.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child demands that a basic quality of life should be the right of all children, not just a privileged few. To varying degrees, some children in all nations, regions and social class face unemployment, homelessness, violence, poverty and a multitude of other struggles from chronic hunger to armed combat. The Convention places equal value on all rights for all children, everywhere. It is based on the premise that children are born with fundamental freedoms and the inherent rights of all human beings. Children are individuals and must be recognized as having equal status with adults as members of the human family.

Included in the Convention are statements that endorse the principle of non-discrimination. This principle implies that all children – girls and boys, rich and poor, living in urban and rural areas, belonging to minority or indigenous groups – should be given the opportunity to enjoy the rights recognized by the Convention. The Convention also states that States need to identify the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children and take positive action so that the rights of these children are realized and protected.

The Canadian Coalition on the Rights of the Child recently released a report called How does Canada Measure Up. The Coalition examined how well Canada has complied with the Convention. The Coalition found that Canada is doing well in most areas and meeting almost all of its obligations. According to the Coalition, a few young Canadians do not receive the full Convention Rights.

The Coalition found: vulnerable children, which included children with disabilities, those

in the care of the State and Aboriginal children, are not assured conditions of maximum survival and development; cutbacks in education funding diminish the ability to access quality education, especially for vulnerable children; abused and neglected children are not treated adequately in the child welfare system, although the Coalition notes that great strides have been made in this area; and refugee children were mentioned by the Coalition as a population that does not receive the full Convention Rights. To receive a copy of this report from the Canadian Coalition on the Rights of the Child, contact the Canadian Institute of Child Health at (613) 230-8838 in Ottawa.

To obtain more valuable information about the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, visit www.unicef.org/crc. To learn what you can do in your community to promote the Convention and children's rights, visit the website or call UNICEF directly and inquire. UNICEF urges all professionals working with children to make every attempt to raise awareness of the Convention among children and communities. People who know their rights are better able to claim them.

UNICEF can guide you in:

- organizing an information session and distributing material in your community about the Convention,
- working with your local school and communities to create support and awareness of the Convention,
- urging local and national lawmakers to provide education and training on children's rights, and
- finding valuable resources helpful in teaching children about their rights.

Remembering Our Children



"Always remembering the special and precious gifts that are given to us by Our Creator – Our Children.

Always remembering to honour them, respect them, love and cherish them, every second of your day and they shall forever be yours to hold – Our Children.

Always remembering to teach them about the traditional ways of our forefathers and foremothers – Our Children.

Always remembering to be gentle and kind, because their little spirits are so new and tender – Our Children.

Always remembering the specialness and preciousness of Our Creator's greatest gift bestowed to you the mother, and to you the father – Our Children.

Always remembering – Our Children."

WHITE BEAR WOMEN

(Submitted by: Margaret Church, Executive Director, Flin Flon Sweet Grass Aboriginal Head Start, Manitoba)

IT REALLY IS "GOOD" TO TALK



Learning to talk is very important. Children learn to value themselves and their experiences by talking about their environment with someone who listens and encourages them. In order for children to do this, they need three crucial things: 1) someone to actively listen, 2) something to talk about (new experiences), and 3) a vocabulary constantly enriched by encouraging and patient adults who supply new words.

The preschool environment can be the ideal place to encourage children to talk about their experiences. The preschool setting can

provide new experiences for the children and they can be encouraged individually or as a group to discuss and reflect on these experiences.

Photo courtesy of Health Canada.



Valuable language practice can be centred around small events, such as discussing what the children had at snack time, what they had yesterday and what they should have tomorrow. Talking about the layout of the centre, putting together a map of it, identifying what goes where, talking

about the way the preschool is organized, and discussing changes in the layout or special events can give children a sense of ownership as well as make them feel more comfortable and confident.

Spending time to talk with children about a field trip in the area can have the additional benefit of talking about the world outside the preschool (i.e.

traffic, sizes and shapes of houses, weather/seasons/the natural world, wildlife, the library, rivers and lakes, bridges and so on). Experience and vocabulary will grow as children become more familiar with an area and have regular discussions about it.

Conversations with and about various community

agencies and people (e.g. police, fire services, librarian) will help children learn about the kind of society they live in. Conversations about the environment and the world we live in are useful in understanding that the environment is influenced by our actions. It also helps children to feel ownership of their world and feel responsible to take care of it.

All activities that develop children's conversational skills help their learning in many areas.

(This information was originally published in Under Five Contact by the Pre-school Learning Alliance, United Kingdom, November/December 1999 and was summarized for this issue.)

ALBERTA ABORIGINAL HEAD START CONFERENCE 2000

 Alberta Aboriginal Head Start (AHS) and Community Action Program for Children (CAPC) Head Start projects gathered in Edmonton on January 26 to 28, 2000 for a "working conference." The theme was "Developing Effective Family and Community Intervention Programs." This was the first opportunity for all Health Canada-funded Aboriginal child development projects to network and to work collectively on developing strategies in three key areas: "Aboriginal Head Start's Role in Long-term Community Development," facilitated by George Calliou; "Community Approach to Family Healing," facilitated by Susan Powell and "Addressing Strategies in Behaviour Management for Children," facilitated by Caen Bly. Participants included elders, parents, project staff, board members, representatives of First Nations Tribal Councils, community leaders and Health

Canada staff working with AHS projects in Alberta.

The conference was organized and hosted by the Childhood and Youth Division of Health Protection and Promotion Branch (HPPB), Alberta/NWT/Nunavut Region and the Alberta Aboriginal Head Start Committee in partnership with Medical Services Branch (MSB), Alberta Region. Technical assistance was provided by the Social Marketing and Partnerships Division of HPPB, Alberta/NWT/Nunavut Region, which designed the conference graphics, logos and conference kits. An Aboriginal artist, Ken Syrette from Toronto, provided the artwork for a beautiful conference bag that was presented to each delegate. The message on the bags was a quote from Lakota Chief, Sitting Bull, "Let us put our minds together and see what kind of future we can make for our children." Registration and on-site coordination was provided by the Childhood and Youth Division staff. Alvin Manitopyes, Program Consultant from HPPB in Calgary, came up with the format for the conference in an effort to truly involve AHS projects. Alvin's words echo the spirit and intent of the conference: "It was gratifying to see the Aboriginal Head Start staff, parents and elders in the sessions collectively working at enhancing their own programming. This active participation shows that they know that they can make a difference in creating a positive learning environment for the children they work with. It was like we were all carrying out the inspiring words of Chief Sitting Bull." Invitations to attend were extended to all HPPB and MSB Head Start projects, including four CAPC projects which were among the first Aboriginal Head Starts established in Western Canada. Approximately 160 delegates were registered, with strong representation from all parts of the province from on-reserve and off-reserve communities, Métis Settlement and urban areas.

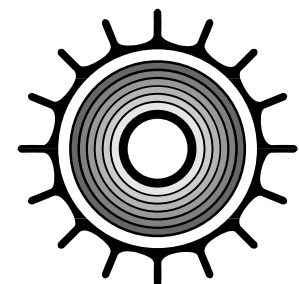
Media coverage for AHS projects was excellent and included a spot on the local television station, "A-Channel," where staff

and parents from the Rocky Mountain House AHS, Lethbridge CAPC and Buffalo Lake Metis Settlement AHS were interviewed and filmed. The January 28, 2000 edition of the Edmonton Journal contained a feature article on the keynote speaker, Marilyn Buffalo, President Native Women's Association of Canada. Marilyn spoke eloquently on the role of women in traditional communities and the value of strengthening family units. "It is the responsibility of our generation to bridge that link between elders and our babies to ensure they receive Native education. This is a rescue operation and you're in charge."

A conference report containing a summary of the strategies developed during the working sessions is under development and will be circulated to all participants by the end of March 2000.

Urban and Northern AHS projects in Alberta have been operational since 1995. In 1994, CAPC, a Health Canada program that builds on community strengths to establish and deliver services to meet the developmental needs of children age zero to six, established several Head Start projects including the first Alberta Aboriginal Head Starts in Lethbridge and Calgary. The Alberta Aboriginal Head Start Committee works in partnership with HPPB to steer the direction of off-reserve AHS program development. Recent key activities of the Committee include a focus on a province-wide evaluation, addressing the concerns of FAS (fetal alcohol syndrome) and special needs children and developing an electronic communications strategy.

*Prepared by: Karen-Garant Radke
Manager, Childhood and Youth
Alberta/NWT/Nunavut Region, HPPB*



CHILD DEVELOPMENT MORE AFFECTED BY PARENTING THAN SOCIAL CLASS

 Good parenting has a more pronounced effect on a child's healthy development than poverty and social class. The results of a Canadian researcher's landmark study challenges the belief that the poor are doing a poor job of parenting.

According to the authors of this study, what really matters is parenting practices: how they parent, how much they are engaged with their children, how responsive they are, how much they monitor behaviours, and so on.

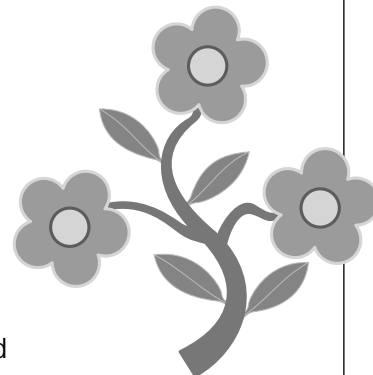
Neither the rich, the middle class or the poor have the monopoly on strong parenting skills or weak ones. It was discovered that wealth and parenting skills are independent of each other and that parenting skills are more important in healthy child development.

This one study was done as part of a larger Canadian effort to understand what makes some children thrive well while others struggle and turn to drugs and crime. The study, written by Prof. Douglas Willms and Dr. Ruth Chao, will be published soon in Prof. Willms book, *Vulnerable Children*.

(Source: The Globe and Mail, Monday, October 4, 1999)

Mother's Day Verse WHAT DO MOMMIES DO?


Mommies make our beds; take care of babies; put babies to sleep; help with the computer; fix our hair; make us wear our seatbelt; clean the dishes; go to work; draw pictures; write letters to someone; make funny faces; clean the floors; buy ice cream, candy, colouring books and toys; work and get money 7 cents a day! Mommies clean; make snowballs; take care of us when we are sick; buy necklaces, juice and markers; take us to the park and read books.



Written by the Ottawa Aboriginal Head Start Children, May 1999, and given to all the mothers of the program.

(Submitted by Teena Lacoste)

PREVENTING DIABETES EARLY

 Diabetes is a chronic disease that has many complications. Often, it can be prevented.

The very high rates of Type II diabetes among Aboriginal people is mainly due to changes in diet and lifestyle that have occurred over time. Aboriginal people are three times more likely than other Canadians to develop diabetes and are developing the disease at much younger ages.

Health Canada and organizations like the National Aboriginal Diabetes Association and the Canadian Diabetes Association are working to provide us with tools and information to deal with the prevention and management of diabetes and its complications.

Most importantly, we need to educate ourselves, our children and our communities about how to prevent this disease! The National Aboriginal Diabetes Association reminds us that "The Creator gave us the sacred Gift of Life. We are all responsible to do all we can to ensure that our children and grandchildren lead healthy and happy lives." Health promotion and nutrition are essential components of AHS and will go a long way

in supporting the next generation to take greater control over their own health.

Encouraging parents and children to participate in activities that will promote healthy, active lifestyles is an important aspect of health promotion and is key in the prevention of diabetes. Mealtimes are opportune moments for sharing, teaching and socializing. Use this time to teach about the prevention of diabetes. The National Aboriginal Diabetes Association informs us that we must take action to prevent diabetes:


**LEARN ABOUT DIABETES.
WALK A BALANCED LIFE.
EAT HEALTHY.
BE PHYSICALLY ACTIVE.
HAVE A POSITIVE ATTITUDE.**

In June 2000, the National Aboriginal Diabetes Association is hosting the "1st NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON DIABETES AND ABORIGINAL PEOPLES" in Winnipeg, Manitoba. See the conference calendar for details



Manitoba Association of Community Health
Diabetes Prevention Project for Children

MANITOBA'S RESPONSE: Diabetes Prevention Project for Children

 Funded by Health Canada's Community Action Program for Children, the Manitoba Association of Community Health has created the "Tickle Trunk." The overall goal of this


project was to collect, focus test and produce diabetes prevention resources primarily for use by programs serving First Nations and Métis children zero to six years of age throughout Manitoba.

In Manitoba, Type II diabetes has been identified in Aboriginal children as young as six years old. In the province and in Canada, diabetes statistics have reached epidemic proportions within Aboriginal communities. Early development of diabetes in Aboriginal children, lack of resources for young children and the current health status of Aboriginal people in Manitoba illustrated the need for primary prevention strategies for Aboriginal children zero to six years of age.

Many wonderful resources have been developed by the creative project team with the help of many partners and committed individuals. Around 20 resources are included in an attractive hand-painted trunk. Items include several games, booklets, learning activities, a cookbook, stories, a puppet, a training video and much more. The activities and resources are all aimed at facilitating learning and activities that will prevent diabetes. The original resources were created for and about Aboriginal people.

The original Tickle Trunk is available only in Manitoba. However, the AHS national office has ordered many of the resources. Most of the resources are being purchased, and each AHS site will receive a Modified Diabetes Resource Prevention Kit sometime in late spring. It will include the Northern Food Guide Card Game, We are Healthy and Strong storybook, Recipes for Healthy Living and much more.

NATIONAL EVALUATION UPDATE

 In the spring of 1999, all AHS programs operating at the time completed a questionnaire called "AHS National Evaluation Administrative and Process Evaluation Survey." A great deal of valuable information was collected regarding the AHS program across Canada.

What will arrive very soon for you to read and distribute is a document called *Children Making a Community Whole: A Review of Aboriginal Head Start*. This document summarizes information compiled from the questionnaire. Many copies will be distributed to regional offices and AHS sites. This report gives an interesting picture of the AHS program. Track one down soon and take a look. It will also be available on the AHS website at www.hc-sc/hppb/childhood-youth/acy/ahs.htm.

The National Evaluation is an ongoing process that is crucial to ensuring sustained funding, positive outcomes for our children and continued improvements to the overall program. It is a lot of work for everyone, but well worth the effort.

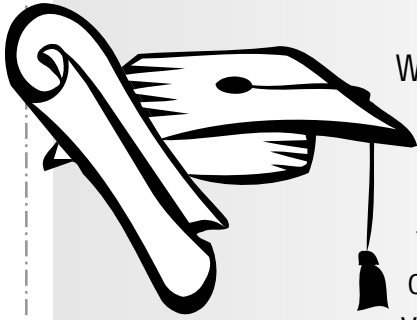
Planning and discussion is currently under way and the development of an Impact Evaluation is not far off. The Impact Evaluation will focus on determining and measuring

the positive impact that the AHS program is having. Feedback from parents, children, schools and communities indicate that AHS has had a tremendous positive impact on many who participate. We all know this is true. The Impact Evaluation will strive to demonstrate this fact with "measurable evidence." The pilot phase of the Impact Evaluation will begin in three sites in the fall of 2000. The first Impact Evaluation study will begin in the fall of 2001, in up to 20 AHS sites.

Also under way on the evaluation front is a short book by Tomson Highway. Tomson Highway is a talented and successful Cree author, playwright and storyteller. In what we are sure will be a unique and powerful account, Tomson Highway's story will be based on the development of the AHS program, its success, material from local and regional evaluations, and personal stories. Issues of confidentiality and the protection of all AHS participants is an extremely high priority in our minds and will not be jeopardized in any way. Expect to see Tomson Highway's book in print during the summer of 2000.

Lynne Robertson, National Office Evaluation Analyst, has no small task in coordinating the activities of the National Evaluation, a project of great scale and significance.

1998-99 GRADUATIONS



Without a summer/fall 1999 newsletter, the graduation stories and photographs sent to us from the 1998–99 graduations did not get published. Our sincere apologies! It is, however, never too late to wish those graduates and families all the very best and to include them in this spring issue. Congratulations to all those children and their parents. Thank you to all the staff and volunteers who helped make it happen.

Chip Child Development Society 1998–99 Head Start Graduation



The theme for the 1998–99 graduation was a caterpillar turning into a butterfly.

Thirty-seven children graduated from the Head Start program. Parents dressed their children in traditional clothing, and decorated headbands for them to wear at the graduation.

A special gift was given to the children who graduated. They all received dream catchers made from willow, hand made by staff of the program.

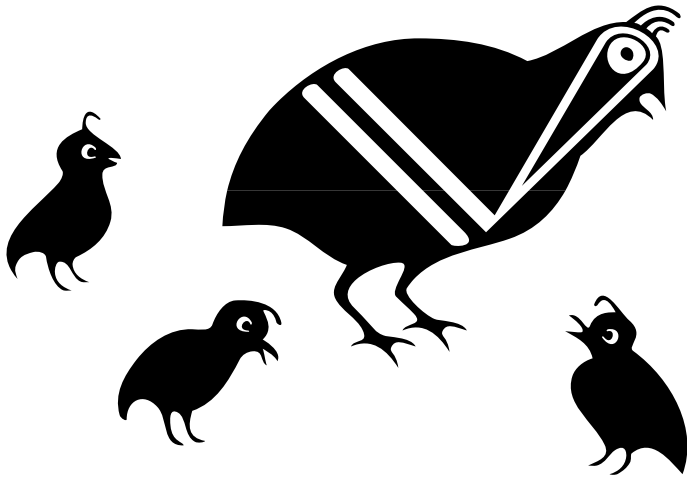
More than 150 people were present at last year's graduation, including kohkoms, moshoms, moms and dads, and siblings. It was a wonderful turnout and there was a lot of food available after the graduation.

Chip Child Development Society 1998–99 Head Start Graduation (Fort Chipewyan, Alberta).




Chip Child Development Society 1998–99 Head Start Graduation (Fort Chipewyan, Alberta). Over 150 people attended the graduation.





The Pas Sweetgrass Head Start Centre Inc.

The Pas, Manitoba (June 1999)


 The school year 1998-99 had a full enrolment of 40 children, and had five children graduate from Head Start, as well as nine children graduating to kindergarten. Overall, since the program began, a total of 11 children have graduated from Head Start.

The celebration of each season and all other events, such as the family fun days, prove to be very successful.

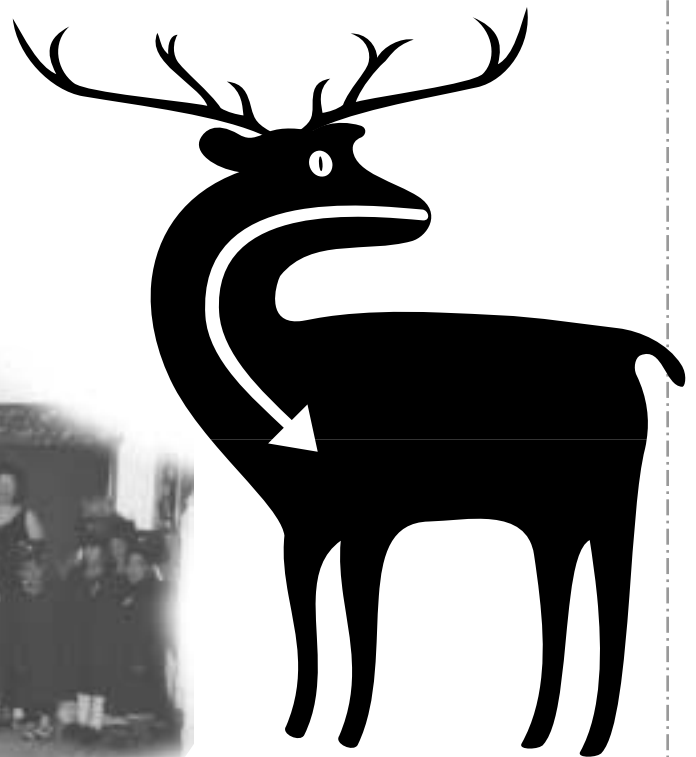
Community members and extended families participate at

the gatherings. These functions are extremely rewarding for everyone.

The children in the program are eager to come to "school" to see what they will learn that day. For the first time, many of these children are learning the Cree language. Their vocabulary in this area is expanding, and parents have commented that their child(ren) have carried over the Cree language to home, which is very encouraging.




Congratulations Axle Durocher, Île-à-la-Crosse, Saskatchewan – Apisciawasisak Learning Centre Class of 1999 (submitted by his father).



The Pas Sweetgrass Head Start Centre Inc. – For the first time, many of these children are learning the Cree language.

Tungasuvvigat Inuit Head Start, Vanier (Ottawa), Ontario.

Best Wishes from Nunavut


 Although the Honourable Paul Okalik, Premier of Canada's newest territory, Nunavut, was unable to attend the Tungasuvvigat Inuit Head Start program graduation ceremony in Vanier (Ottawa) in June 1999, he sent this letter (written in both English and Inuktitut) to express his best wishes:



To the graduates of Head Start and their proud parents
c/o Tungasuvvigat Inuit Head Start

Dear Graduates and Parents,

I was thrilled to learn that the Head Start Program is still going strong and that your children are graduating this year. I extend my congratulations to the wonderful little children who are moving into the school system next year. I trust that the program with its wonderful staff have prepared you well for the upcoming school year.

I would like to have been present for the graduation ceremony, but I have to attend a meeting with Nunavut's Members of the Legislative Assembly in Baker Lake this week.

For the beautiful little children who are graduating, this is your first graduation ceremony and one of many in the years to come. I encourage you to stay in school and choose any area of study at university or college. With determination and perseverance, you can succeed. Again, I wish to extend my congratulations to the graduates, their parents and the staff of Head Start for supporting the children throughout the duration of the program.

*Yours truly,
Paul Okalik
Premier of Nunavut*

Tungasuvvigat Inuit Head Start, Vanier (Ottawa), Ontario.

FROM PRESCHOOL TO KINDERGARTEN



The transition from preschool to kindergarten is just that, a transition.

There are many things that can be done to make it a smooth one. This is a list of ideas collected from many places and many sources. Several articles were posted on the world wide web, and many links to related information can be found at www.nauticom.net/www/cokids/transition.html.

Preschools can try these activities:

- 1) Have a photo album of the new school (kindergarten). It could include photos of the front door, the bus, the block area, teachers and so on. It could stay on the preschool book shelf and could include an album of each school the children may attend.
- 2) Arrange a class field trip to a kindergarten class. Make it short and pleasant.
- 3) Encourage kindergarten teachers to do a home visit prior to the start of school or have the teacher visit the preschool and meet upcoming students.
- 4) Read books about going to kindergarten.
- 5) Alumni visits: Have a few children who are in kindergarten who were in AHS last year come back and tell the children about kindergarten. The children could prepare questions ahead of time.
- 6) Develop a portfolio of the child's work to share with a new teacher.
- 7) Develop a "Positive Profile" of the student. (A photo of _____, A passport for _____.)
- 8) "Play school" for a week or so. Use props (desks) and ask children to raise their hands to ask questions. The children enjoy having their own desk.
- 9) It may not be possible to bring in desks and imitate a real classroom, but learning about the school your children will be attending and bringing some of these practices into the preschool during a "play school" event may help. Getting to know the kindergarten classes your children will attend is the point.
- 10) Ask the kindergarten class to make a book for the preschool kids about going to kindergarten.
- 11) Visit the new playground and library.
- 12) Concentrate on readiness during the last month: dressing, toileting, paper and pencil activities. Remember to praise the children for the progress you see and tell them they are ready for kindergarten.

NATIONAL OFFICE UPDATE



Richard Budgell is the Manager of the Aboriginal Childhood and Youth Division. He is responsible for the overall management of the National Office budget and all projects. He is the National Office representative on the National Aboriginal Head Start Committee (NAHSC). Richard has been with the AHS program from the start. He is from Labrador and is of mixed European and Inuit ancestry.

Lyne Chartrand is the Administrative Assistant. She handles travel and hotel bookings, arranges meetings of the Aboriginal Head Start Working Group and the National AHS Committee (on behalf of Health Canada staff from across the country), administers finances, including contracts, and routes correspondence.

Brad Martin is a Program Officer. Among many things, Brad is working on the High/Scope Training Initiative and is spearheading the production of the second AHS video. He is the coordinator

of the National Working Group and the liaison with regional program consultants working in the Northwest Territories, Saskatchewan and Alberta. He is Métis from Yorkton, Saskatchewan.

Rena Morrison is the Senior Program Officer. Some of her many duties include the coordination of the AHS National Training Workshop, the management of the AHS community exchanges and the production of the AHS Annual Report. Rena is the coordinator of the National AHS Committee and the liaison with regional program consultants in the Atlantic Provinces, Quebec, British Columbia and the Yukon. She is Mi'kmaq from Listuguj First Nation in Quebec.

Lynne Robertson is the Evaluation Analyst. She is responsible for the management of the National AHS Process and Impact Evaluation and the organization of the expert colloquium. She is of part Native American ancestry.

Kari Nisbet is a Program Officer. Kari began work at the National Office in

January 2000. Some of her tasks include editing the newsletter, producing a new AHS map and representing AHS on a variety of committees within the Childhood and Youth Division of Health Canada. Kari is the liaison with regional program consultants working in Manitoba, Ontario and Nunavut. She is Métis from Flin Flon, Manitoba.

Last fall, the Aboriginal Head Start Program had to say so long to one of its long-time staff members and one of its most ardent supporters. Guy Freedman, Senior Program Officer from AHS's National Office, accepted another position within Health Canada. Take care Guy – All our best!


Valerie Galley, Policy Analyst, and Gabriel Keesic, Administrative Assistant, have also embarked on new career paths this past year. Wish you well.

Maurice (Sonny) Pelletier was a Junior Officer on a developmental assignment with AHS that came to an end shortly after the new year. Stay in touch Sonny!



RESOURCES

The Northwest Company Recipes for Healthy Living



The Recipes for Healthy Living cookbook was one of the many resources developed for the Manitoba Diabetes Prevention Project. It is a small and colourful 25-page cookbook that features Aboriginal foods and Aboriginal people. Great photographs, illustrated directions, tips for healthy cooking and, of course, delicious food fill up the pages. With healthy, very easy-to-follow recipes, it features dishes like pemmican, moose stew and oatmeal bannock. Printed with permission from The Northwest Company, Healthy Living Program, here is one of the recipes for you to try:

WILD RICE WITH CARROTS

You will need:

- 1 1/2 cups wild rice
- 2 1/2 cups water
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 onion (1/2 cup) chopped
- 1/2 cup mushrooms (canned or fresh) sliced
- 4 carrots (1 cup) grated
- 1/2 cup milk
- 1 egg white, well beaten

Directions:


- 1) Wash rice thoroughly with cold water until water is clear. Put washed wild rice and water in a large saucepan and bring to a boil for 10 minutes.
- 2) Turn off heat, cover and let sit for 20 to 25 minutes, until all the water has been absorbed.
- 3) Heat oil in a fry pan. Add onions and mushrooms and cook over medium heat until onions are clear.
- 4) Mix onions, mushrooms and carrots in with wild rice.
- 5) Beat milk and egg white and then pour into the rice mixture.
- 6) Bake in a covered casserole dish at 325°F for 1 hour, stirring every 15 minutes.

Rebuilding Aboriginal Parenting Skills

(Submitted by: Manitoba Regional Office. It was originally featured in the Thompson Citizen. It has been condensed for the AHS newsletter.)



*Kisewatotaowin is a Cree word that refers to a great love and respect for all living beings.



“Kisewatotaowin Aboriginal Parenting” was first developed in Saskatchewan in 1997 by a group worried that traditional parenting skills were disappearing among young parents. The program is based on a parenting manual and handbook which was developed from conversations with Aboriginal parents and elders. It was based on their stories about how they were raised as children.

Kisewatotaowin has been used effectively in Aboriginal Head Start sites in Saskatchewan and Manitoba. In Thompson, the New Beginnings program offers the workshops throughout the school year. Workshop leaders use the manual to explore traditional methods of parenting. The Kisewatotaowin model encourages participants to share their own parenting experiences.

Some of the Kisewatotaowin teachings include:

- ◆ Children learn by watching. If you shake your finger at them, they will later use that same motion when they are playing. If you hit people when you are angry, the children will learn to do the same thing.
- ◆ Children can be taught by including them. Use activities like baking, sweeping or taking care of a younger sibling. Include them in age-appropriate ways, but don't give them too much responsibility before they're ready for it.
- ◆ Teaching children how to do things is more than just telling them. You need to show them: like how to cross a street; be safe near water; or participate in traditional ceremonies.

Perhaps the most important message that Kisewatotaowin conveys to parents is to “take time” to play with your kids: sing to them, teach them how to do something, let them teach you, and most of all listen to them.

If you are interested in finding out more, contact Aboriginal Parenting Inc. at (306) 665-3337 and speak with Delores Young.

Nobody's Perfect



This series of easy-to-read booklets was first developed in Atlantic Canada. It was revised in 1997, in collaboration with federal and provincial/territorial representatives, along with child development experts and special groups representing parents and children. It has been translated into many languages, including Inuktitut.

The Inuktitut version is not yet in print.

Each of the five booklets has a separate topic: Body, Mind, Safety and Behaviour (all relating to child development); and one called, Parent, which is specifically geared to parental needs and issues. The content is written in easy-to-understand language with a lot of colourful images. Each booklet begins with a brief explanation about the Nobody's Perfect series, followed by a colour-coded table of contents. Each booklet offers basic information and facts, which first-time or experienced parents may find useful.

The Nobody's Perfect series is available in Canada through your local bookseller, or by mail from the:

Canadian Government Publishing – PWCSC

Ottawa Ontario Canada K1A 0S9

Catalogue Number H39-132/1 1997E

ISBN 0-660-17240-2.

Nobody's Perfect is also available in alternate formats.

"How Difficult Can This Be?"

The Frustration Anger and Tension (F.A.T.) City Workshop



"The F.A.T. City Learning Disability Workshop is a program that allows the viewer to spend 70 minutes experiencing life the way a learning disabled student does. Working with parents, teachers and friends of learning disabled children at an all-day workshop, the program host and workshop facilitator, Richard Lavoie, demonstrates the frustration, anger and tension that learning-disabled (LD) children typically experience in a classroom.

The purpose of this videotape and discussion guide is to sensitize parents, teachers, counsellors and friends of learning-disabled students to the world of the LD student, and to educate them toward different modes of interaction with the students.

Included in the guide are the following aids:

- a definition of learning disabilities and ways to recognize the learning disabled student;
- a brief description of the program themes;
- helpful suggestions for parents of LD children;
- helpful hints for teachers who have LD students in their classes;
- tips for preparing and managing group discussion; and
- suggested steps to follow in group discussion."

Videocassettes of the program "How Difficult Can This Be?" (F.A.T. City Workshop) may be purchased from:

PBS VIDEO

1320 Braddock Place,
Alexandria, Virginia 22314
United States
(800) 424-7963
(703) 739-5380 (between 9:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. EST)

UNDERSTANDING BEHAVIOUR:



A Key to Discipline

Early Years Are Learning Years

We all struggle with some behaviours and actions of the children in our care. Imagine having a magic formula that would work in all situations! Well, there isn't one. However, understanding a few basic possibilities that drive a child's actions will result in more positive outcomes. Remember to be reflective rather than reactive the next time you are confronted with challenging behaviour. It will create an atmosphere that is supportive and nurturing. Reflect on this:

Is this a developmental stage?

Sometimes problems that occur in early childhood mark the onset of a developmental stage. Each new developmental stage brings new challenges for the child. It is best to give a child choices, use humour and be firm but supportive.

Is this an individual or temperamental difference?

As you know, not all children act the same way at the same age. Biological factors like vision, auditory or speech difficulties, or motor problems may affect a child's behaviour. Temperament qualities like shyness, adaptability or moodiness may account for differences in children's behaviour. Adults who learn about their own temperament traits are better able to recognize situations resulting from a conflict of two attitudes toward, or approaches to, the same behavioural problem.

Is the environment causing the problem?

Sometimes the setting can provoke challenging behaviour. An overcrowded space or even the lack of an appropriate number of toys can increase aggression or spark jealousy. Get down on your knees and have a good look at the environment from a child's level, and evaluate it in light of the child's behaviour.

A child does not know something but is ready to learn.

Is the child in new or unfamiliar territory? Is the child facing a new task or problem for the first time? Children rarely learn or master a desired response on the first try. Be patient, calmly explain the concept and you may need to repeat the message over and over again.

Unmet emotional needs.

Unmet emotional needs are the most difficult cause of behaviour to interpret. In these cases, the child's behaviour has a particularly driven quality about it and occurs regularly in all settings. A child who harms himself or others should be stopped and may need a formal assessment by a trained professional. Observation, thoughtful reflection and communication between the parent and teacher who respond with quiet firmness and patience can be critical to the future emotional health of a child with emotional needs. Find ways to validate and acknowledge the child during the day, encourage participation in circle activities and always acknowledge empathetic behaviour toward others.

This is a reproduction of The Early Years Are Learning Years which are short information pieces designed by the National Association for the Education of Young Children in the United States. Visit their website for many informative articles at www.naeyc.org.

WHAT'S IN A NAME

People's names are very important to them, a part of their identity. Children too feel strongly about their own names. It is often the first written word that they recognize and master. Children's name calling often takes the form of making silly and insulting variations on their friends' names. Older children usually spend a lot of time creating elaborate signatures or monograms for themselves based on their names. We must harness children's fascination with their own names and the symbols used to represent them.

One way to ensure that children feel themselves to be part of a group is to display their names. Do not miss opportunities to encourage children to recognize and respond to their written names. Display children's names by:

- Creating a birthday wheel (a large circle divided into segments representing each month, decorated to represent seasons, etc., with the children's names inserted into the correct month). This links the child's name with another of their favourite things – birthdays – while teaching them about the passage of time.
- Displaying children's work. Display the best work of the child and mount it on a larger paper with the child's name on it.
- Making a creative display of the children's names.
- Making an alphabet chart using the names of the children, their friends and family.
- Having children find and mark their own name in the register in the morning when they arrive.

To support the growth of literacy skills, children must see reading and writing as useful and interesting things, not merely a trick to be learned to please adults. You can use names to clearly illustrate the value of reading and writing. Children's names can be linked to many things like coat pegs, personal items or their work.

Name games are delightful for many children. Chants of "Andy, Mandy, Pandi, Sandy" sound silly and are often dismissed by adults. Games of this sort, however, encourage children to look at the way words are put together, the way they start and end, and play a role in building phonic awareness and understanding the way our language works.

- Encourage children to find rhymes for their own names and to find other words that begin with the same letter or sound.



Photo courtesy of Health Canada.

- Have them listen closely to the rhymes they form. Clap out the syllables of the children's names and see whether they can recognize which name you have in mind.

If children are surrounded by models of their own names, children will often want to write it themselves. Encourage them to do so. Remember:

- Spontaneous attempts at "mark-making" should be praised
- Children will often trace their name on top if it is written faintly or in dotted form. Placing a coloured dot where the letter starts and another where it stops is also helpful in some cases.
- Make felt pens or markers available to children near painting easels, as well as sticky labels. Children will often want to try to write their name more than one time until they are satisfied with it. Using a sticky label will prevent them ruining their picture.

(This information was originally published in Under Five Contact by the Pre-school Learning Alliance, United Kingdom, October 1999, and was summarized for this issue.)

Y2K CONFERENCE / EVENT CALENDAR

May 11–14, 2000

Seventh Annual Stabilizing Indigenous Languages Conference:

“Languages Across the Community”

Toronto, Ontario

Fax: (416) 926-0469, or visit

May 22–26, 2000

“Caring for Our Children in the New Millennium”

National First Nations Child & Family Services Conference
Edmonton, Alberta

Contact Harvey Burnstick or Barb Paul

by tel: 780-481-7390 or fax: 780-481-3064

June 1–4, 2000

Strengthening Our Future: 1st National Conference on Diabetes and Aboriginal Peoples

Winnipeg, Manitoba

Call: (204)-775-3625, or visit

www.escape.ca/~nada/happen.htm

June 4–9, 2000

“Partnerships for the Future: Science and Health”

Eleventh International Congress on Circumpolar Health

Harstad, Norway

Call (514) 934-4349, or visit www.hoar.no/icch

June 14–18, 2000

Beyond 2000: Healthy Tomorrows for Children & Youth

Canadian Paediatric Society
Ottawa, Ontario

Call: (603) 526-9397, ext. 228

June 21, 2000

NATIONAL ABORIGINAL DAY

On the longest day of the year, share in the celebration. Celebrate the contribution that all Aboriginal people have made to Canada. Acknowledge our truly rich cultural diversity and unique achievements in this national day of celebration.

Call (819) 997-0380 or visit www.inac.gc.ca/june21/EVENT.html to find out what organized activities are already planned in your region, or get involved in organizing a local celebration by contacting an Aboriginal community or organization, your local municipal office or your MP.

June 28–July 1, 2000

Head Start's 5th National Research Conference: Developmental and Contextual Transitions of Children and Families
Implications for Research, Policy, and Practice
Washington, DC

Call Bethany Chirici at Ellsworth Associates at (703) 821-3090, ext. 233, or e-mail: bchiico@eainet.com

July 4–6, 2000

International Conference of Understanding Healing Through Diversity of Practice (Traditional Healers' Gathering)

Miawpukek FN

Conne River, Newfoundland

Call: (709) 782-2180, or visit

www.miwpukek.nf.ca/medicinconference

July 8-13, 2000

National Indian Head Start Director's Association's 10th National Training Conference “Blueprints for a New Millennium: Healthy and Safe Facilities for Young Tribal Children”

Arlington, Virginia

Call: (907) 276-4323 or (405) 360-2919

October 11–14, 2000

“Suicide Prevention in Canada: Expanding Our Diverse Landscape”

Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention – 11th Annual Conference

Vancouver, British Columbia

Call: (604) 822-0740, or e-mail

spirc@interchange.ubc.ca

October 12-14, 2000 National Aboriginal Head Start Training Workshop

Ottawa, Ontario

Call: Rena Morrison at

(613) 954-8615 or,

e-mail: [Rena_Morrison@](mailto:Rena_Morrison@hc-sc.gc.ca)

hc-sc.gc.ca

October 22–25, 2000

“Health for All in the Year 2000”

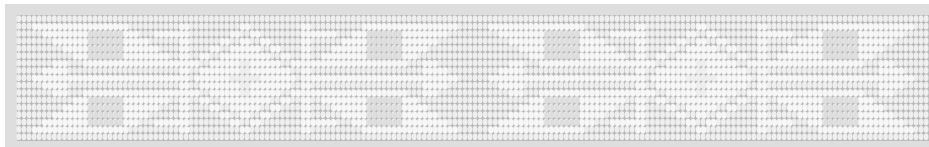
91st Annual Conference, Canadian Public Health Association

Ottawa, Ontario

Call: (613) 725-3769, or

visit www.cpha.ca

If you have a conference or event you would like included in the next newsletter, please submit your contribution to the AHS National Office, Attention: Kari Nisbet.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

- ◆ Please remember to inform the national office of any changes in your address or location so we can keep the mailing list up-to-date.
- ◆ Visit the AHS website at www.hc-sc/hppb/childhood-youth/acy/ahs.htm to view all recent AHS documents and publications.
- ◆ The National Special Needs Survey Report is now available for your perusal. If you have not yet received a copy, contact the national office or visit the AHS website.

HEALING IS MORE THAN A BUZZ-WORD

Adam Beach



Film and television actor, Adam Beach, has become a strong voice for Aboriginal youth throughout Canada. He is originally from Manitoba but now resides in Ottawa with his wife and two young sons. His eldest attends Ottawa's Aboriginal Head Start. At last year's Aboriginal Awareness Week ceremonies in Ottawa, May 26 to 28, 1999, he shared the following inspiring words about healing in the Aboriginal community.

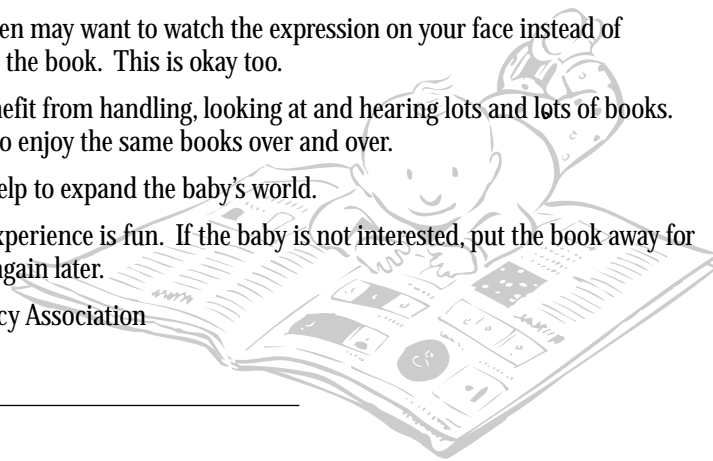
"I am Saulteaux, from Dog Creek First Nation in Manitoba. I lived in my community until I was eight, and then I moved to Winnipeg until I was 22. I now live in a middle-class neighbourhood in Ottawa. More often than not, I am the only First Nations person on the set when I go to work. I guess you could say that I am now an expert on living between the two cultures – between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultures and ways of thinking. Because of this, I have to remain in balance, with a healthy spirit.

TRY THESE WAYS OF READING WITH BABIES

- Hold your baby on your lap, open a book with clear pictures of familiar objects. Let your child feel and taste the book at first.
- Then you can give your baby a toy to keep him or her busy while you turn the pages.
- Point to the pictures asking "what's this?" Give the answer if your baby doesn't try to say the word: "See the dog, can you say dog?" Relate the picture to your child's experience, "Where's Sally's dog?"
- Soon the child will try to repeat words; praise him/her and s/he'll keep on doing it. Then s/he'll begin to ask you "What's that?"
- You'll begin to take turns asking and answering questions as you go through the book.
- Young children may want to watch the expression on your face instead of focussing on the book. This is okay too.
- Children benefit from handling, looking at and hearing lots and lots of books. They will also enjoy the same books over and over.
- Books will help to expand the baby's world.

Make sure the experience is fun. If the baby is not interested, put the book away for a while and try again later.

Prospects Literacy Association



For many Aboriginal people, however, the misunderstandings that exist in our society can cause a breakdown in physical and spiritual strength. Too often, there is nobody to turn to. Instead, the confusion, loneliness and fear are calmed in unhealthy ways. This breakdown in spirit is fed by mainstream society's approach to Aboriginal peoples, which is to institutionalize them.

With the release of the report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People, healing for Aboriginal individuals and communities has become mainstream. We must remember, though, that healing is more than a buzz-word when speaking about Aboriginal peoples and their hopes for the future.

Healing has always been a part of us as a people. Our elders tell us that,

when one becomes unbalanced and unhealthy, the entire community is weakened. It is also the responsibility of the entire community to help that person become healthy again.

Everyone's healing journey is different. Healing involves a process of letting go of our own hurting. We recognize and let go of the hurt that we have caused others, and we recognize and let go of the hurt that others have caused us. When we are healed, we can reclaim the responsibilities given to us by our Creator – our responsibilities as men, women, parents and grandparents. We can pick up the responsibility for who we are and where we are going, and we can fill the place originally intended for us by the Creator."



ABORIGINAL HEAD START - HEALTH CANADA STAFF

For more information regarding the AHS program in your area,
contact a Program Consultant in one of the following regions¹ :

Atlantic Region

Teresa Jeffery, Program Consultant
709 - 1557 Hollis Street
Halifax, NS B3J 3V4
Tel: (902) 426-7148
Fax: (902) 426-9689

Quebec Region

Pauline Tardif, Program Consultant
212 - 200 Boul. René-Lévesque Ouest
Montreal PQ H2Z 1X4
Tel: (514) 283-3065
Fax: (514) 283-3309

Ontario/Nunavut Region

Ronda Evans, Program Consultant
25 St Clair Avenue East 4th Floor
Toronto ON M4T 1M2
Tel: (416) 954-3716
Fax: (416) 973-0009

Manitoba/Saskatchewan Region

Manitoba
Betty-Ann Lavallee, Program
Consultant
391 York Avenue Suite 420
Winnipeg MB R3C 0P4
Tel: (204) 984-257
Fax: (204) 983-8674

Saskatchewan

Doris Wesaquate, Program Consultant
1920 Broad Street 18th Floor
Regina SK S4P 3V2
Tel: (306) 780-3474
Fax: (306) 780-6207

Alberta/Northwest Territories Region

Alberta
Alvin Manitoypes, Program
Consultant
#620, 220 - 4th Avenue S.E.
Box 1236
Calgary AB T2G 4X3
Tel: (403) 292-6695
Fax: (403) 292-6696

NWT

Kathleen Hunter, Program Consultant
815, 9700 Jasper Avenue
Edmonton AB T5J 4C3
Tel: (780) 495-5122
Fax: (780) 495-5537

British Columbia/Yukon Region

British Columbia
Rose Sones, Program Consultant
440, 757 West Hastings Street
Vancouver BC V6C 1A1
Tel: (604) 666-9917
Fax: (604) 666-8986

Yukon

Bob Walker, Program Consultant
100 - 300 Main Street
Whitehorse YK Y1A 2B5
Tel: (867) 393-6780
Fax: (867) 393-6774

National Office

Aboriginal Childhood and
Youth Section
Childhood and Youth Division
9th Floor, Jeanne Mance Building
Tunney's Pasture -
Postal Locator: 1909C2
Ottawa ON K1A 1BA
Fax: (613) 941-5492

Richard Budgell, Program Manager
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Tel: (613) 954-8615

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Tel: (613) 957-6488

Kari Nisbet, Program Officer
Tel: (613) 946-2056

Lynne Robertson, Evaluation Analyst
Tel: (613) 952-9769

Lyne Chartrand, Administrative
Assistant

Tel: (613) 952-5845

¹ Note to Reader: Please make inquiries regarding Nunavut to the Ontario/Nunavut Region after May 10, 2000.