

Although early in the history of the National Child Benefit initiative, the stories contained in this Progress Report illustrate how the National Child Benefit reinvestment is having a positive impact on children. As the medium- and long-term effects begin to emerge through the evaluation of the initiative, it will become possible to measure the impact of the program.



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hat is known at this point is that the reinvestment programs the National Child Benefit program supports significantly affect First Nations children, families and communities. The programs and activities represent a wide range of areas relating to children and families, and each has been designed with a specific purpose that corresponds with the needs and priorities of First Nations. The beneficiaries of these programs are primarily First Nations members on social assistance who, as a result of this initiative, have access to programs and services for themselves and their children, so they need not choose between employment and benefits for their children. As a result of the National Child Benefit reinvestment component, recipients of social assistance maintained their levels of income while having access to additional community-based programs geared to children and making links to the labour market.

As part of the broader federal-provincial-territorial process, First Nations contribute the lessons they have learned from delivering the reinvestment programs of the National Child Benefit and provide information on the impact the program has had on their communities through a separate but co-ordinated evaluation process. Future progress reports will document the progress made in assessing the long-term impacts of the National Child Benefit on the lives of First Nations children and their families.



CHIPPEWAS OF KETTLE AND STONY POINT FIRST NATION, ONTARIO

Nutritionists have said that breakfast is an important part of a child's development and learning ability at school. *The Kettle Point School Breakfast and Lunch Program*, which involves approximately 150 children, has resulted in great improvement in the participating children. More children are arriving on time and have marked improvement in their overall attitude. Based on the success of the program, the community is looking into the feasibility of providing light lunches for the children. This program has created vital links between the child, the school and the parents.



Acknowledgment of challenges faced and external factors are important to include in any assessment of the National Child Benefit. For example, the relative isolation of many First Nations communities constrains economic opportunities. For this reason it is important that policies aim to improve income security within the community and provide additional opportunities.

These lessons can be achieved by working in partnership with First Nations communities. This ensures that steps can be taken toward improving the health and social outcomes and public safety of First Nations children. This partnership also makes possible the development of appropriate solutions to address the specific and pressing needs of First Nations children.



I think it's important that when we, in the community, create programs that it comes from the community, that way everyone can take ownership of it and it is more successful that way.

- Linda George, Supervisor Child and Family Services Program,
Squamish First Nation