



---

Grand Openings in Alberta	1
National AHS Committee	2
Program Standards and Guidelines	3
Resource Development	3
Calendar of Events	3
National Child Day	4
Regional Highlights	5
Summer Pilot Program	7
About the Newsletter	9
Aboriginal Head Start Staff	10

---

### **Alberta Children get off to a good start with two Grand Openings**

On Thursday, September 5, 1996, approximately 80 people from the Bonnyville area gathered to officially launch the Bonnyville Aboriginal Head Start Program. Guest speakers included Mary Dumais, Louise McGilvary and Angeline Badger from the Bonnyville Elders' Council; Tom Erasmus, Alberta Aboriginal Head Start Committee; Mayor Gerry Storoschuck; MLA Leo Vasseur, Francis Dumais of the Metis Nation of Alberta, Donna Padlesky of the Bonnyville Native Friendship Centre, Susan Durocher of Fishing Lake Metis Settlement and Michele Bourque from Aboriginal Head Start, Health Canada in Ottawa.

---

The Bonnyville Head Start Project is located just behind the Friendship Centre in a new building. The project will have up to forty Aboriginal children ages 3 to 6 years, in a half-day program with twenty in the morning and twenty in the afternoon. The teachers have been hired and they will be ready to open their doors on September 16, 1996. There was a wonderful demonstration of support from community members, local, provincial and Aboriginal politicians. Several children were in attendance and it is apparent that the children are looking forward to coming to the Head Start Program.

On Friday, September 6, 1996, Fishing Lake Metis Settlement celebrated the grand opening of their Aboriginal Head Start Project. "This is the beginning of learning for our children", said Metis Settlement Transition Commission representative Irene Collins. Ken Noskey, the President of the Metis Settlements General Council, offered congratulations. He is convinced that Metis children will prosper from this program. Tom Erasmus, a member of the Alberta Aboriginal Head Start Committee, spoke briefly on the importance of community development and how the project committee worked diligently throughout the process to secure funding for their project. Susan Durocher summed it up by saying, "this program will enhance the lives of families and children in Fishing Lake."

The ceremony in Fishing Lake was followed by a community feast, a sober dance and family get-together featuring music by Kikino Settlement's Northern Highway Band, with 200 people dropping by to celebrate the occasion.

On behalf of the Alberta Aboriginal Head Start Committee and Health Canada, Tom Erasmus presented both projects with a beautiful hand-made drum and a Metis sash.



The official launch of Aboriginal Head Start was made about a year and a half ago, in the spring of 1995. We are extremely pleased that a number of Aboriginal Head Start projects have had their grand openings. Projects have undertaken a great deal of work and preparation and now the projects are opening their doors to Aboriginal children.

## **New members on the National Aboriginal Head Start Committee (NAHSC)**

Since the last newsletter, the National Aboriginal Head Start Committee met in June and September 1996. They are busy working on the Program Standards and Guidelines. These guidelines will set a framework for projects to follow on the following topics. Be sure and get a copy from your Regional Program Consultant.

The NAHSC has been in existence since September 1995. Margaret Marin, Audrey Weasel-Traveller, Brenda Cantin and Claudette Dumont-Smith have left the NAHSC. Health Canada wishes to take this opportunity to publicly thank the parting members for devoting their time and effort while on the committee. Over the past year, these members made important contributions towards to the well-being of Aboriginal children.

New members coming on board include Edith Cloutier, Philip Durocher, Mary Thompson, Catherine Gottfriedsen and Lula Johns-Penikett.

Your National Aboriginal Head Start Committee representatives for 1997 are:

Colleen Rumbolt, Benoit's Cove, Nfld.  
Edith Cloutier, Val d'Or, Quebec  
Marilyn Miller, Fort Erie, Ont.  
Sylvia Maracle, Toronto, Ont.  
Reid Hartry, Winnipeg, Man.  
Philip Durocher, Ile-à-la-Croix, Sask.  
Jean Goodwill, Fort Qu'Appelle, Sask.  
Carol Fraser, Edmonton, Alta.  
Mary Thompson, Arviat, NWT  
Jarvis Gray, Fort St. John, B.C.  
Catherine Gottfriedsen, Vernon, B.C.  
Leena Evic-Twerdin, Iqaluit, N.W.T.  
Yvette Mongeon, Health Canada, Montreal, Quebec  
Lula Johns-Penikett, Health Canada, Regina, Sask.  
Richard Budgel, Health Canada, Ottawa, Ont.

---

## Program Standards and Guidelines

The Regional Offices now have copies of the most recent edition of the Program Standards and Guidelines. If you haven't already received one, call your Regional Program Consultant for your copy.

## Resource Development

Gabriel Dumont Institute is currently in the process of reviewing resource materials that will benefit Aboriginal Head Start projects. Copies should be available by October 1996. Should you require additional information on the resources or curriculum project materials, please contact Guy Freedman at (613) 952-9769.

## National Office Children's Joke of the Month

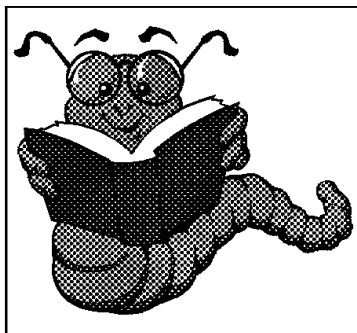
Guy - Have you ever seen a buffalo hiding in a tree?

Rena - No, never.

Guy - Pretty good hiding place eh?

## A Must Read

An invaluable resource is Edward Zigler's and Susan Muenchow's *Head Start, The Inside Story of America's Most Successful Educational Experiment*. Take the opportunity to read it and you too could learn from the challenges faced by our friends to the south. Available from your library or bookstore.



## Calendar of Events

October 1996

6-9 – Wellness and Spirituality VI Conference – University of Oklahoma, Devil Tree Hotel, Tucson, AZ (405) 325-1790

7-13 – National Family Week

November 1996

11-15 – Cultural Curriculum Workshop focussing on Native Languages, (405) 325-1790 American Indian Institute

20 – National Child Day

December 1996

2-3 – National Aboriginal Head Start Committee Meeting, Vancouver, British Columbia. Contact: Guy Freedman (613) 952-9769

13 – Deadline for Newsletter Articles

February 1997

7 – Aboriginal Achievement Awards, Calgary, Alberta

26-27-28 – Second National Training Workshop on Aboriginal Head Start – Winnipeg, Man. Contact: Rena Morrison at (613) 954-8615 or your Regional Program Consultant (listed under regional updates)

March 1997

14 – Deadline for Newsletter Articles

---

## National Child Day – Join in the Celebrations!!

- ♥ On March 19, 1993, the Government of Canada designated November 20 as *National Child Day*.
- ♥ *November 20* was chosen because it's the anniversary of two historic events for children: the adoption of the United Nations *Declaration of the Rights of the Child* in 1959...and the U.N. adoption of the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* in 1989.
- ♥ The *Convention* is important because it addresses the various aspects of the lives of children and youth – proper nutrition...access to health care and education...protection from exploitation and abuse...the right to express their opinions and to participate in matters that affect them. Basically the *Convention* is saying that children need an environment that will allow them to grow to their full potential. We all have a role to play to make sure this happens. To get more information on the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, contact the address below.
- ♥ *National Child Day* celebrates children...for just being themselves. It provides us with the opportunity to remember that children need love and respect to grow to their full potential. It's a day to listen to children and to marvel at their uniqueness and all they have to offer.
- ♥ *November 20* also provides us with the opportunity to reflect on the special needs of children and matters that concern them. We – governments, community groups, teachers, parents and children themselves – can all make contributions to improve the well-being of children. By working together, we will ensure a better tomorrow for all children!

- ♥ *National Child Day* is a day we celebrate *with* our children, not *for* our children. It is only a reminder that every day is a special day for children.
- ♥ The Canadian Government has been promoting *National Child Day* since 1993 but we are **all** key players in celebrating that day. In fact, many of us are already very active in organizing events and celebrations on November 20.
- ♥ To assist you in promoting *National Child Day* and organizing events, Health Canada has produced a user-friendly resource for organizations and individuals, that offers helpful hints and ideas. To get more information about the guide, contact:

Health Canada  
Childhood and Youth Division  
Finance Building, Tunney's Pasture  
PL0202C1, Ottawa, Ontario  
K1A 1B5  
Telephone: (613) 952-1220  
Fax: (613) 952-7046



---

## Regional Highlights

The following articles were written in conjunction with the Regional Program Consultants. Please feel free to contact the regions for additional information.

### Atlantic Provinces

In the Atlantic Region, the three project sites – Hopedale, Happy Valley-Goose Bay, and Halifax – have received developmental funding to assist them to prepare a proposal for the operational phase of their AHS project.

AHS Project Coordinators have been hired and they have been working diligently with their parent advisory committees to complete the necessary requirements for the operational proposal. A guide has been completed to assist project coordinators with their operational proposal.

*Halifax Sponsor: Micmac Native Friendship Centre (MNFC)*

*Kni Jannaq Aqq Ta'n Telo'ti'kw (translated: Our Children Our Way) Mi'kmaq Child Development Centre (MCDC) and Kjipuktuk Aboriginal College (KAC)*

The Halifax Aboriginal Head Start project will be serving primarily Mi'kmaq children in the metro Halifax area. In the developmental phase, the first step undertaken was the formation of a parent committee to ensure parental involvement and ownership. This responsibility has been taken on by the existing Parent Education Committee, which has graciously accepted being renamed as the AHS Parent Steering Committee. Committee membership is open to all community members who wish to have an active role in the planning, development and operations of an AHS Program. The Committee consists of 20 members, comprised of parents of preschool children, school age/teenage children, grandmothers, educators, Aboriginal community agencies/organizations and concerned community members. The committee functions in an advisory role by making recommendations to the program Development Coordinator and Community Researcher during the developmental phase of the Program.

A community survey and assessment is under way as a means to identify programs and services required by parents of preschool children. To date the following areas of concern have been identified as critical and in need of an AHS Program:

- Relating to language/culture, there is a demand in this community for both adult and children's programs as a means of retaining the Mi'kmaq language and culture. The community assessment will determine the location of these programs.
- The school readiness program will take on a larger role than preschool education. Consultations will take place between the Department of Education and school boards to implement a program whereby the school readiness instructor will be available upon request to sensitize educators on cross-cultural issues.
- There have been numerous times where young children who are of Aboriginal descent have been called upon by their teachers to educate the class on their native ancestry. Therefore, the program is considering a school readiness program which provides the opportunity for children up to the age of 6 to receive pre-school instruction and provide a culturally sensitive environment within the public school system.
- The community assessment and the Parent Committee will identify the programs/services needed in the area of Health Promotion and Nutrition. As the sponsor of the Aboriginal CAPC for this area, an assessment will indicate which needs are already being met by CAPC and what programs/services are needed in terms of the wellness of the children and parents. Recently, the CAPC program delivered a pilot program on Basic Shelves and Collective Kitchens integrated into parenting programs. The assessment and evaluation of the CAPC program should determine if there is a continued demand for this type of program or whether an alternative program should take its place; i.e.: employment of a full-time community health nurse to develop and deliver health and nutritional programs under the AHS program.

For additional information, contact  
Christine Gibson-Rout, Coordinator, MNFC,  
2158 Gottingen Street, Halifax, NS B3K 3B4  
Phone (902) 420-1576 Fax (902) 423-6130.

---

*Happy Valley-Goose Bay Sponsor: Labrador Friendship Centre – Naskapi Aboriginal Children’s Development Centre (NACDC)*

The Naskapi Aboriginal Children’s Development Centre (NACDC), located in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Labrador, is sponsored by the Labrador Friendship Centre. This program will endeavour to create a specialized program designed by the unique diversity in this community; Innu, Inuit and Metis people. The Aboriginal groups have two distinct languages, Innu Eimun and Inuktitut. A tremendous amount of progress has been made including the following accomplishments: the Head Start site has been identified; A two-storey building containing 1163 sq. ft. of learning area, two offices, three resource rooms, staff room, and kitchen, children’s washroom and adults’ washrooms; the municipal authorities have been briefed on the project; the Provincial Department of Social Services has been contacted regarding licensing; the Program Coordinator is in the process of identifying resource people in the community and receiving letters of support; in the process of meeting native parents and promoting the program via meetings, interviews, information nights, advertising through radio, posters, local cable T.V. and newspaper.

NACDC goals and objectives are important to ensure that it meets Aboriginal parents’ criteria. It is essential that parents, families and other community resources be closely involved in the curriculum design as it is the core of the AHS program.



For additional information, please contact Jenny Lyall, AHS Project Coordinator, Labrador Friendship Centre, P.O. Box 767, Station B, Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Labrador, NF A0P 1E0 phone (709) 896-3535 or fax (709) 896-8731.

*Labrador Hopedale Sponsor – Inuit Health Commission  
Hopedale Sugusik Centre*

Hopedale is a predominantly Inuit community located on the north coast of Labrador. To date, the following progress has been made in Hopedale, Labrador. Three potential sites have been selected and the Project Coordinator is now in the process of researching the necessary information in order for the AHS Parent Committee to make it’s final decision. The AHS Parent Committee has been meeting on a weekly basis, although on occasion parents meet more frequently. The community survey questionnaire has been completed and is now in the process of being translated into Inuktitut. Two canvassers have been selected to interview families, using the questionnaire, in Hopedale.

The Project Coordinator and a representative from the sponsoring agency (Labrador Inuit Health Commission) will soon meet with the Department of Social Services in Goose Bay.

AHS activities are progressing quite well in Hopedale, Labrador. For additional information, please contact: Valerie Andersen, AHS Project Coordinator, General Delivery, Hopedale, Labrador, NF A0P 1G0 phone (709) 933-3693 or fax (709) 933-3645.

## **Ontario**

Project development in Ontario is progressing well at this time. A number of operational phase proposals are to be reviewed by the Aboriginal Management Committee (AMC) over the next few weeks.

The parent-driven nature of AHS is being taken seriously by communities in Ontario. Many parents sitting on development steering committees are receiving board training, personal development training, and in many instances have fulfilled the role of chair. Parents have been consulted in each community to provide their input into shaping local AHS

---

projects, as well as providing comments and feedback on national program standards and other important issues.

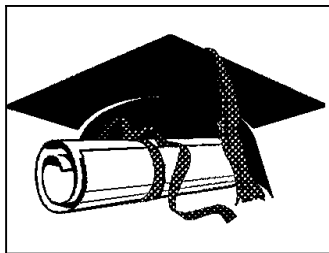
Development of a regional committee consisting of project representatives is currently in the planning stages. This committee would relieve the AMC of its current role as Interim Regional AHS Committee in Ontario. In keeping with the desire for a community-driven AHS program, it is envisioned that each community approved for operational funding would be represented on the committee and have the initial responsibility of establishing terms of reference.

As a follow-up to the National AHS Training Workshop in Edmonton, a regional workshop is in the planning stages. Workshop topics will be determined in consultation with projects that will identify their own training needs. It is likely that projects will be at similar stages of organization by the time the workshop unfolds in late November.

### **Summer Pilot Program**

A world in which learning is a natural and joyful expression for children was created this summer, a world in which children discovered the wonder of computers, libraries, classrooms, zoos, farms, fire stations and playgrounds.

More than seventy preschool children living in Sioux Lookout, Timmins, Cochrane, North Bay, Barrie, Fort Erie and Brantford were met daily with the smiling faces and loving voices of their teachers this July and August. Once inside, some pretended they were Kermit, some created pink and purple polkadotted people on the computer, they learned their ABC's and they developed pride in the words and ways of their grandparents.



Parents noticed differences with their children. They listened. They expressed themselves. They looked forward to school. They were creative. They talked about their teachers and the learning experiences of each day. School readiness activities were learned. They listened when others spoke. They were exposed to letters and numbers. They became familiar with lining up and how to be part of a group. All are the benefits and outcomes of this Summer Pilot Program.

You can certainly appreciate that challenges showed up as this program was run for the first time. The planning timeframe was extremely tight as this program was developed from an idea in early April to an application deadline of May 23rd. An orientation session for project staff was held during the last week of June and children walked through the classroom door July 2nd. Despite the pressure of time, communities rose to the challenge and delivered seven unique short-term AHS projects which impacted on the lives on children and their families.

Each graduation ceremony recognized many accomplishments of the children as they experienced the final stretch of their pre-school years and readied themselves for the transition to school.

Staff and sponsoring organizations are to be congratulated for their dedication and hard work. Despite the short-term nature of these projects, there are relevant experiences and lessons that can be shared with long-term projects. For example, it was clear that during operations, it is vital to establish an immediate connection with parents and provide them with two things; 1) as many options for becoming involved with the project as possible, and 2) the expectations of them as parents of AHS participants. A final report on the AHS Summer Pilot Program, with recommendations, is anticipated at the end of October.

### **Manitoba**

All thirteen Aboriginal Head Start projects in Manitoba have been approved. Two of these, Norway House and Camperville, have held their official openings and are beginning their work with children and their parents. The remainder are in the process of hiring and training staff, carrying out renovations to facilities and developing programs for their operations.

---

Openings have been scheduled for the next several months, as plans and facilities come together.

A number of the groups in Manitoba have applied for licensing as nursery schools under provincial regulations, and more anticipate doing so. A few have expressed their intention to not license, indicating that they do not want to be bound by provincial regulation. The province of Manitoba has passed an amendment to *the Community Child Day Care Standards Act*, providing for exemption from licensing for federally funded Aboriginal Head Start programs. Discussions are continuing with respect to the issues of liability, insurance, child abuse reporting and monitoring of programs.

### **Saskatchewan**

Fifteen Aboriginal Head Start projects in Saskatchewan have been approved. Sponsors are also finalizing facilities and programs, hiring staff and arranging training for staff and for parents and parent boards. Some projects will be starting operations as early as October, and the remainder by early in 1997.

In Saskatchewan, discussions have occurred with the provincial Child Day Care staff. They are concerned with the magnitude of additional monitoring requirements which would be required by Head Start. Discussions are ongoing.

In both Manitoba and Saskatchewan, the formal responsibilities of the original provincial advisory committees are winding down and a process has been put in place to assist each committee to evolve into a committee with direct representation from the funded projects.

### **Alberta**

It was with great anticipation and excitement that the Alberta Aboriginal Head Start projects moved into the month of September. The communities and the sponsor organizations are progressing through the start up phase and preparing for the first day of school and grand opening ceremonies. All communities are progressing at the same speed. Most projects will have their first day of school in September, with the remainder starting in early October. The Alberta Aboriginal Head Start Cultural Curriculum Framework and Resource Planning Guide final draft has gone out to the communities for feedback and comments. The

respondents indicated that the Curriculum Framework was very valuable and useful in assisting them to develop their own curriculum and in integrating their culture within the context of their respective communities.

In preparation for the first day of school, the sponsors, project coordinators and community volunteers had many hurdles to overcome. Lack of housing in some communities made it difficult to encourage staff to relocate. As housing needs are often considered a community priority, site renovations were delayed in some areas. Problems with equipment and supplies not being available within the anticipated time frame, and in making the required changes to the sites to meet health, safety and building standards caused some delay in acquiring licences for the projects. The project sponsors and staff addressed problems or concerns as they arose and were able to work through the issues to find solutions.

Parent Advisory Committees have begun meeting and Parent Handbooks are being drafted and awaiting input from the parents as the projects commence. Parents are being recruited to participate in the projects. In most communities, the parents are being asked to recommend the names of Elders or cultural teachers to assist in the classrooms. Some communities are very fortunate to have artists and crafts people who are adding murals and artwork to the classrooms which will be enjoyed by the children, staff and families.





---

During the months of September and October, two workshops will be offered by Health Canada for the Alberta Head Start projects. During the week of September 30-October 4, 1996, three regional financial workshops will be organized to allow sponsors and their financial administrators to meet with Darlene Laboucane (Program Assistant) and Janet Krauskopf (Manager, Administrative Services) to gain a better understanding of the financial requirements. Janet and Darlene will be meeting one-on-one with individuals during this workshop to discuss their concerns and/or comments. On October 18-19, 1996, the Alberta Head Start projects will be invited to attend a nutrition workshop in conjunction with sponsors of Canada Prenatal Nutrition projects. A follow-up participatory evaluation session will conclude the second day of the workshop.

Overall, staff and project sponsors have demonstrated genuine desire and commitment to their Aboriginal Head Start projects throughout the developmental and start-up phase.

### **Northwest Territories**

The Western Arctic Aboriginal Head Start Committee met on August 27 in Yellowknife to review proposals submitted for Aboriginal Head Start projects in the Western Arctic.

The Nunavut Aboriginal Head Start Committee will meet in Iqaluit on October 5 and 6 to review proposals in the Eastern Arctic.

### **Aboriginal Head Start News**

This publication is published and distributed free of charge up to four times a year by Health Canada. If you wish to receive a copy, please contact the editor.

Articles are submitted from various sources and Health Canada is not responsible for errors or omissions.

Aboriginal Head Start News is published in the interests of promoting issues relating to Aboriginal Head Start to all Aboriginal Head Start projects in Canada and other interested parties. Readers are encouraged to reproduce Aboriginal Head Start News in whole or in part, provided the source is mentioned.

Let us know what type of information you would like to see included in the next edition. We hope that you will be willing to share some interesting stories relating to Aboriginal Head Start. Please send in your articles and photos to the Aboriginal Head Start Office in Ottawa. We reserve the right to edit information and photos. Deadlines for new articles are – December 13, March 14, 1997, June 13, 1997 and September 12, 1997.

If you want additional information on Aboriginal Head Start, please feel free to get in touch with a regional contact.

Aboriginal Head Start News is also available in French.

Editor, Michele Bourque  
Aboriginal Head Start News  
Health Canada  
Room 2213, Finance Building  
Tunney's Pasture PL0202C1  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 1B5  
Phone - (613) 954-5697  
Fax - (613) 941-5492  
E-Mail -  
Michele\_Bourque@ISDTCP3.HWC.CA at  
Internet @ LME

---

**Staff – Health Canada  
Aboriginal Head Start**

**Regional Offices**

Atlantic Region  
Lynn Poole-Hughes, Program Consultant  
(506) 452-4090  
P.O. Box 20210  
Fredericton, New Brunswick E3B 7A2

**Quebec Region**

Suzette Jeanotte, Program Consultant  
(514) 283-3065  
Robert Young, Program Consultant  
(514) 283-2205  
210 - ouest Boul. René Lévesque  
Montreal, Quebec H2Z 1X4

**Ontario Region**

Ronda Evans, Program Consultant  
(416) 973-5778  
Valerie J. Galley, Program Consultant  
(416) 954-5128  
3rd floor - 55 St. Clair Avenue  
Toronto, Ontario M4T 1M2

**Manitoba/Saskatchewan Region**

Larry Flynn, Program Consultant  
(204) 983-0744  
Betty-Ann Lavalley, Program Consultant  
(204) 983-2573  
900 - 213 Notre Dame Avenue  
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 1N3

Lynne Robertson, Program Consultant  
(306) 780-7650  
Lula Johns-Penikett, Program Consultant  
(306) 780-3474  
320 - 1975 Scarth Street  
Regina, Saskatchewan S4P 2H1

**Alberta/Northwest Territories Region**

Brenda Cantin, Program Manager  
(403) 495-5113  
Jeannette Sinclair-Tanner, Program Consultant  
(403) 495-4869  
Laura Kemp-Hanson, Program Consultant  
(403) 495-3652  
Kathleen Hunter, Program Consultant  
(403) 495-5122  
815 - 9700 Jasper Avenue  
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 4C3

**British Columbia/Yukon Region**

Karen Schwartz-Heimdal, Program Consultant  
(604) 666-7111  
Rosemary Trehearne, Program Consultant  
(604) 666-6064  
440 - 757 West Hastings Street  
Vancouver, British Columbia V6C 1A1

**National Office**

Richard Budget, Program Manager  
(613) 957-2917  
Rena Morrison, Program Officer  
(613) 954-8615  
Guy Freedman, Program Officer  
(613) 952-9769  
Michele Bourque, Program Officer  
(613) 954-5697  
Lyne Chartrand, Jr. Program Officer  
(613) 952-5845

Health Canada  
Aboriginal Head Start  
Childhood and Youth Division  
Room 2213, Finance Building  
Tunney's Pasture PL0202C1  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 1B5