

How Indigenous mothers experience selecting and using early childhood development services to care for their infants ^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

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Abstract

Purpose: Promoting a child's healthy growth and development in the first six years of life is critical to their later health and well-being. Indigenous infants experience poorer health outcomes than non-Indigenous infants, yet little is understood about how parents access and use health services to optimize their infants' growth and development. Exploring the experiences of Indigenous mothers who select and use early childhood development (ECD) services provides important lessons into how best to promote their access and use of health services.

Methods: This qualitative interpretive description study was guided by the Two-Eyed Seeing framework and included interviews with 19 Indigenous mothers of infants less than two years of age and 7 providers of ECD services.

Results: Mainstream (public) and Indigenous-led health promotion programs both promoted the access and use of services while Indigenous-led programs further demonstrated an ability to provide culturally safe and trauma and violence-informed care.

Conclusions: Providers of Indigenous-led services are best suited to deliver culturally safe care for Indigenous mothers and infants. Providers of mainstream services, however, supported by government policies and funding, can better meet the needs of Indigenous mothers and infants by providing cultural safe and trauma and violence-informed care.

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