

Athabasca Tribal Council, Keyano partner on early learning child care program ^[1]

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EXCERPT

The Athabasca Tribal Council (ATC) has partnered with Keyano College to provide an online early learning child care course for people in Indigenous communities.

May-Britt Jensen, ATC's director of employment and training, said rural communities have needed this program for years. First Nation and Métis communities in Fort McKay, Anzac, Janvier and Fort Chipewyan have day care centres, but have a shortage of certified staff.

The program starts in March. It is the first program the ATC and Keyano College will deliver directly to the region's rural communities.

"The intent of the program is for people to stay in their communities and enrich education locally," said Jensen. "Graduates can also go into working at pre-schools, as stay-home providers and family resources centre workers."

The 32-week online program gives students practical experiences in early learning child care at each stage in a child's development. This includes learning how to create programs for children and give lessons through problem solving.

The curriculum also includes Indigenous teachings, such as Dénéshuliné and Cree language training.

To work around sporadic internet connections in rural communities, the program instructor will also travel to each community to provide extra help for students.

For Jensen, it is crucial students learn about the complexities of working as a child care professional in a small Indigenous community.

"Every community has its own unique situation," said Jensen. "We meet biweekly with child care providers in each community to make sure this program will be a benefit to them."

Shelly Janvier, an early learning child care consultant for Treaty 8 and Chipewyan Prairie First Nation (CPFN), said online learning can help make child care jobs more accessible to people in rural and Indigenous communities.

"The people we have working in our programs in Janvier have little or no training," said Janvier. "We don't want to have to send them away for training because that means we've lost our staff."

With this online program, students would be able to work during the day and attend classes in the evening. Having staff in the community capable of supporting and running programs will make operations easier, said Janvier.

There are already five people looking forward to participating in the program. Some are already staff in Janvier and others want to start a career in child care.

"We want our members to be the ones delivering the programs," said Janvier. "They know the community and they know what the strengths and the issues are."

By making a career in child care more accessible, Janvier hopes more people in the community will be encouraged to pursue training.

"If people see other people in the community getting trained, hopefully they will realize they can do it too," she said.

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Region: Alberta ^[4]

Tags: Aboriginal (indigenous) ^[5]

accessibility ^[6]

Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/21/01/athabasca-tribal-council-keyano-partner-early-learning-child-care> [2] <https://www.fortmcmurraytoday.com/news/local-news/athabasca-tribal-council-keyano-partner-on-early-learning-child-care-program> [3] <mailto:swilliscraft@postmedia.com> [4] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7859> [5] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/8994> [6] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/accessibility>