

An Overview of the Development of Aboriginal Early Childhood Services in Canada ^[1]

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In the guise of equality, citizenship, integration, and policy change, the door has opened to allow the development of Aboriginal early childhood services in Canada. Recognition of the need for early childhood services specific to Aboriginal people did not become prominent until the mid-1980s. A decade later, services came into being. Little time was given to communities for planning and development, and capacity, including implementation resources, was often limited. Coinciding with this development of services were government research and development initiatives designed to support the creation of service delivery models, training models, program and evaluation models, and research-specific studies. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, a handful of national inquiries determined that Aboriginal child care was important not only for addressing economic barriers to employment and education, but for preserving and transmitting Aboriginal culture. Given the historical and contemporary context of assimilation, Aboriginal people want control of child care programs for their children. With the introduction of the National Children's Agenda (2000), there is hope that Aboriginal children will be included in a meaningful way, although no specific announcement for Aboriginal children has been made. There continues to be a need for further exploration of Aboriginal early childhood from both a policy and services delivery perspective. Studies that give voice to community and that document services as they are being developed may also prove to be valuable sources for future early childhood service development.

Region: Canada ^[3]

Tags: Aboriginal (indigenous) ^[4]

child care ^[5]

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