

Program that helped special needs children on reserves loses funding ^[1]

Author: CBC News

Source: CBC News ^[2]

Format: Article

Publication Date: 28 Jul 2014

EXCERPTS

A Regina-based program that helped special needs children has lost funding from the federal government to provide services to families living on reserves.

The Early Childhood Intervention Program, which helps developmentally-delayed children in their early years, used funding from Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada to train workers and travel to reserves. Funding, which was used to help about 150 youngsters on reserves, amounted to \$800,000 and ended in June. The non-profit which runs the program will continue to offer services, but only to Regina clients.

The visits made a huge difference to the McCallum family from the Pasqua First Nation, 60 kilometres northeast of Regina.

Three-year-old Dannalee McCallum has a form of spina bifida and doctors told her parents it was unlikely the youngster would be able to speak or walk.

But the child has made huge gains, credited to the Early Childhood Intervention Program, or ECIP.

"The doctors always told us they didn't know where her paralysis was in her legs," the girl's mother Danna Henderson-McCallum, told CBC News. "So the ECIP workers would work on exercises to get her from sitting to crawling to standing. And now she walks along furniture."

CBC News contacted officials in Ottawa to learn more about the funding cut to ECIP, but no comment was provided. An official only noted that the federal government is committed to helping aboriginal children.

The McCallum family, however, does not feel that is happening.

"I want to be that voice for my daughter - for people who cannot speak - that our children deserve a chance," Henderson-McCallum said. "I feel like we're not getting a chance."

She added that paying for the program, from the family's own resources, is not an option because they cannot use the Regina service even if they drove into the city. Nor is there a program available on reserve.

Todd Peigan, chief of the Pasqua First Nation, told CBC News that he attempted to get information from officials in Regina about the program's funding cut and a possible alternative. He is still waiting for a response.

"It's unfortunate that the department of Indian Affairs initiates programs, starts helping children and then cuts the program," Peigan said.

- Read online at CBC News ^[2]

Region: Canada ^[3]

Tags: aboriginal ^[4]

special needs ^[5]

rural ^[6]

Source URL (modified on 27 Jan 2022): <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/14/07/program-helped-special-needs-children-reserves-loses-funding>

Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/14/07/program-helped-special-needs-children-reserves-loses-funding> ^[2]

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatchewan/program-that-helped-special-needs-children-on-reserves-loses-funding-1.2720851> ^[3]

<https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7864> ^[4] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/aboriginal> ^[5]

<https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/special-needs> ^[6] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/rural>