

Policy Issues in Indigenous Early Childhood Education and Care 2015

Early childhood education and care (ECEC) is a critical policy issue for Canada's Indigenous people. For many years there has been a call for a sustainable Indigenous ECEC system that is controlled by Indigenous communities. Developing ECEC policy and programs that maintains Indigenous culture by adopting a culturally appropriate approach yet is flexible and robust enough to accommodate diverse needs has long been identified as a major concern.

On June 3, 2015, The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) released its findings and calls to action following a six year mandate during which the three Commissioners heard more than 6,750 survivor and witness statements from across the country. The TRC's call to action includes 94 recommendations on topics ranging from child welfare, preserving language and culture, promoting legal equity and strengthening information on missing children. Specific to ECEC, a recommendation in the substantial education section calls upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Indigenous governments to develop culturally appropriate early childhood education programs for Indigenous families.

For a more clear depiction and imagery and to build a better understanding of the needs of the calls of action, more than 6,750 survivors and witnesses were called upon to provide statements of their experiences from around the country. These statements bring to life the reality for the Indigenous people and children and share stories of the love, laughter, and nurturing they received from their families. Survivors spoke about the love and respect they had for their elders as they shared their stories with the children, teaching and sharing with them their cultural values. Ultimately, the survivors spoke about happiness, togetherness, and the unity of their families before the residential schools. Amongst these survivors were intergenerational survivors whose parents had been survivors of the residential schools. The intergenerational survivors spoke about the trauma that was reflected in their parent's behaviors, and how their experiences at the residential schools negatively affected their ability to be parents.

The TRC is but the most recent Canada-wide inquiry into issues affecting Canada's Indigenous people. Some previous inquiries have recognized the importance of ECEC; in 1996, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples recommended that:

federal, provincial, and territorial governments co-operate to support an integrated early childhood funding strategy that a) extends early childhood education to all Aboriginal children regardless of residence; b) encourages programs that foster the physical, social, intellectual and spiritual development of children, reducing distinctions between child care, prevention and education; c) maximizes Aboriginal control over service design and administration; d) offers one-stop accessible funding; and e) promotes parental involvement and choice in early childhood education options.

The benefits of investment in the early years for Indigenous families are far-reaching. In addition to commonly discussed benefits of high quality ECEC programs, centres can be significant community hubs - locations where parents can build social capital and seek supportive resources. As Indigenous populations and children have been found to be especially vulnerable in the Canadian population, ECEC in the more than 600 First Nations and other communities where Indigenous families live is a vital issue for policy discussion.

A federal government publication on ECEC (Public Investments in ECEC 2010, available online at <http://www.ecd-elcc.ca/eng/ecd/ececc/page00.shtml> ^[1]), includes the following contextual section:

"Aboriginal peoples" is a collective name for the original peoples of North America and their descendants. The Canadian constitution recognises three groups of Aboriginal people: Indians (commonly referred to as First Nations), Métis and Inuit. More than one million people in Canada identify themselves as an Aboriginal person, according to the 2006 Census.

Aboriginal communities are located in urban, rural and remote locations across Canada. They include: First Nations or Indian Bands, generally located on lands called reserves; Inuit communities located in Nunavut, the Northwest Territories, Northern Quebec (Nunavik) and Labrador; Métis communities; and communities of Aboriginal people (including Métis, Non-Status Indians, Inuit and First Nation individuals) in cities or towns which are not part of reserves or traditional territories.

Jurisdictional considerations regarding the planning and delivery of ECEC services are complex. Funding for on-reserve social programs is generally the responsibility of the Government of Canada, but some provincial governments may carry out regulation of on-reserve child care, while others do not. Social programs for other Aboriginal peoples may be a federal, provincial or territorial responsibility.

This Issue File is intended to promote discussion about how Indigenous child care and early childhood education features within policy debate about ECEC in Canada. It is organized into online documents and a list of useful resources including organizations, websites and other information. It builds on an earlier online CRRU Issue File titled Aboriginal Early Learning and Child Care: Policy Issues, compiled in 2011.

Special thanks to our CRRU interns, Vittoria Rotiroti and Jessica Trinh for their hard work on updating this important Issue File.

Wed, 07/29/2015

Tags:

aboriginal ^[2]

Useful resources

The British Columbia Aboriginal Child Care Society ^[3]

The BC Aboriginal Child Care Society (BCACCS) is the only ECEC organization in Canada with a specific focus on Indigenous child care. Although it primarily focuses on British Columbia, its resources are useful more widely. BCACCS has published many resources on different aspects of Indigenous child care, most of which are available in PDF format free of charge on their website. The topics of these publications range from best practices, training and recruitment within the First Nations ECE sector to licensing and curriculum. There are also resource sheets provided offering information on providing traditional foods, inclusion of elders in the program, and what you need to know about multi-age grouping within early childhood development settings.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada ^[4]

See the TRC's reports at: <http://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/15/06/hono...> ^[5]

Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples ^[6]

(see volume 3, chapter 5, section 3.1 for section on early childhood education)

Source: Government of Canada Archive

Indigenous organizations

Assembly of First Nations ^[7]

The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) is the national representative organization of the First Nations in Canada. The AFN exists to promote the "restoration and enhancement" of this relationship and to ensure that it is mutually beneficial to the First Nations people. The Assembly of First Nations is a national aboriginal lobby organization. The British Columbia Aboriginal Child Care Society

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Congress of Aboriginal Peoples ^[8]

This major national organization represents off-reserve First Nations and Métis

people living in urban, rural and remote areas throughout Canada. Website offers information, resources, links and articles about and for Aboriginal Canadians living off reserve.

Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami ^[9]

ITK has represented the interests of the Inuit of Canada at the national level since its incorporation in 1972. Working primarily as an advocacy organization, ITK has been actively involved in a wide range of issues some of which have proven to be of critical importance in enabling Inuit to pursue their aspirations and take control of their destinies.

Métis National Council ^[10]

The MNC represents the Métis Nation nationally and internationally. The MNC's central goal is to secure a healthy space for the Métis Nation's on-going existence within the Canadian federation.

Native Women's Association of Canada ^[11]

NWAC seeks to "improve the economic, cultural and political well-being of Aboriginal women in Canada". The site was developed to provide a "valuable tool in the fight to advocate, educate and promote gender issues". Includes links to programs, resources and news.

Pauktuuitit ^[12]

Pauktuuitit is the national non-profit association representing all Inuit women in Canada. Its mandate is to foster a greater awareness of the needs of Inuit women, and to encourage their participation in community, regional and national concerns in relation to social, cultural and economic development.

Federal government Indigenous ECEC initiatives

The federal government historically took primary responsibility for social programs for Indigenous Canadians under Canadian constitutional arrangements. As recently as 2010, there were seven federal programs concerned with ECEC, four cross-Canada in nature (including overall education funding) and three province-specific.

The most recent available compiled information on these programs (including federal funding for the years 1999 - 2009) can be found online in Public Investments in ECEC in Canada 2010 (<http://www.ecd-elcc.ca/eng/ecd/ececc/page00.shtml> ^[1] - see Federal government section and scroll down).

Aboriginal Head Start on Reserve ^[13]

This website outlines the Health Canada-funded Aboriginal Head Start on Reserve initiative for First Nations. The initiative is designed to "prepare young First Nations children for their school years, by meeting their emotional, social, health, nutritional and psychological needs".

Aboriginal Head Start (AHS) in Urban and Northern Communities ^[14]

This website outlines the Health Canada-funded early childhood development program for off-reserve, Inuit and Métis children and their families. The primary goal of the initiative is to demonstrate that locally controlled and designed early intervention strategies can provide Indigenous children with a positive sense of themselves, a desire for learning, and opportunities to develop fully as successful young people.

Useful data

Number of child care centres on reserve and in self-government regions ^[15]

See Table 18 in Public Investments in ECEC in Canada 2010

The state of Aboriginal learning in Canada: A holistic approach to measuring success ^[16]

Canadian Council on Learning, 2009

This report provides considerable data on Indigenous ECEC. Although it is somewhat dated, there has been no more recent similar analysis. It is primarily based on special runs of data from the 2006 Census and the National Longitudinal Study of Children and Youth and includes a section on ECEC.

Other

Early Childhood Development Intercultural Partnerships ^[17]

University of Victoria website devoted to the health, development, and success of children in Canada, and around the world.

Beyond our borders...of further interest

New Zealand's national curriculum statement for ECEC, Te whāriki, developed in the 1990s, assumes a bicultural curriculum for all early childhood services.
<http://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/06/08/te-w...> [18].

In 2011, a national ECEC task force recommended an evaluation of Te Whariki. In 2013, the NZ Education Review Office published the evaluation. A summary and links to it can be found online at:
<http://www.ero.govt.nz/National-Reports/Working-with-Te-Whariki-May-2013...> [19].

Tags:

aboriginal [2]

Online documents

An Environmental Scan of Public Policy and Programs for Young Aboriginal Children in BC: A Cold Wind Blows

Author: Jamieson, Kathleen

Source: British Columbia Aboriginal Child Care Society (2014)

A Good Path Forward: Understanding and Promoting Aboriginal Early Childhood Development and Care

Authors: Isaac, K. and Jamieson, K.

Source: In Our Schools, Our Selves. Summer, Special issue on ECEC. Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives

British Columbia: How are we doing? Aboriginal performance data 2013/2014

Author/Source: British Columbia, Ministry of Education

Early childhood education and care for Aboriginal children in Canada

Author: Preston, Jane

Source: movingchildcareforward.ca (2014)

Improving the Reach of Early Childhood Education for First Nations, Inuit and Métis Children

Author: Ball, Jessica

Source: movingchildcareforward.ca (2014)

Polysynthetic Language Structures and their Role in Pedagogy and Curriculum for BC Indigenous People

Author: Kell, Sarah

Source: British Columbia Ministry of Education (2014)

Summary Report: Occupational Standards and Fair Wages for BC First Nations Early Childhood Educators

Author/Source: British Columbia Aboriginal Child Care Society (2014)

What You Need to Know About the Inclusion of Elders in Early Childhood Development Settings

Author/Source: British Columbia Aboriginal Child Care Society, 2014

Aboriginal early childhood education in Canada: Issues of context

Author: Preston, J.P., Cottrell, M., Pelletier, T.R., Pearce, J.V.

Source: Research Gate

Early learning for Aboriginal children: Past, present and future and an exploration of the Aboriginal head start urban and northern communities program in Ontario

Author: Mashford-Pringle, Angela

Source: First Peoples Child & Family Review, 7(1), pp. 127 - 140 (2012)

Childcare for First Nations children living off reserve, Métis children and Inuit children

Author: Findlay, Leanne C., and Kohen, Dafna E.

Source: Statistics Canada, 2010

Founded in culture: Strategies to promote early learning among First Nations children in Ontario

Source: Best Start Resource Centre (2010)

The state of Aboriginal learning in Canada: A holistic approach to measuring success

Source: Canadian Council on Learning (CCLA), (2009)

Report in pdf (78pp.)

Needers to leaders: CARS for women and children in rural, remote, northern and Aboriginal communities -Read abstract here. <http://www.cwhn.ca/en/node/42192> [20]

Full report available with university library access

Source: Communities Achieving Responsive Services (CARS), Canadian Women's Health Network, (2009)

Report in pdf (52 pp.)

Aboriginal early language promotion and early intervention

Author: Ball, Jessica

Source: Encyclopedia of Language and Literacy Development, (2008)

Document in pdf (8 pp.)

Enhancing Aboriginal Child Wellness: The Potential of Early Learning Programs

Author: Preston, Jane P.

Source: First Nations Perspectives, 1 (1), pp. 98-120. (2008)

Full article in pdf

Aboriginal Quality of Life, IRPP Choices, 14(7)

Author: Ball, Jessica

Source: Institute for Research on Public Policy, (2008)

Report in pdf (32 pp.)

Vulnerable children in Canada: Research insights and policy options

Source: Early Childhood Development Intercultural Partnerships, 2008

Aboriginal children's survey, 2006: Family, community and childcare

Source: Statistics Canada (2008)

Aboriginal Children and Early Childhood Development - Linking the Past to the Future

Author: Greenwood, M., de Leeuw, S., Ngaroimata Fraser, T.

Source: Canadian Journal of Native Education (2007)

Available with access to university library.

Inuit early childhood education and care: Present successes - promising directions

Source: Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (2007)

Northern childcare: Childcare as an economic and social development in Thompson (MB)

Author: Prentice, Sarah

Source: Child Care Coalition of Manitoba (2007)

Children are a gift to us: Aboriginal-specific early childhood programs and services in Canada

Author: Greenwood, Margo

Source: Canadian Journal of Native Education, 30(1), pp. 5-18. (2006)

Full article available with university library access.

Measuring social support in Aboriginal early childhood programs

Author: Ball, Jessica, and Elliot, Enid.

Source: Aboriginal Children's Circle of Early Learning, 2005

Full Research Connections issue in pdf, see pg. 41 for article

For the next seven generations: Early learning and child care programs for children in First Nations and Inuit communities: AFN consultation with BC First Nations community representatives

Source: British Columbia Aboriginal Child Care Society, 2005

- Paper in pdf (22 pp.)

- Summary of key themes in Word

First Nations early learning and child care action plan

Source: Assembly of First Nations, 2005

Early childhood development single window strategy: Summary report of First Nations regional dialogue sessions

Source: Assembly of First Nations, 2005

Report in pdf (15 pp.)

Early childhood care and development programs as hook and hub for inter-sectoral service delivery in First Nations communities

Author: Ball, Jessica

Source: Journal of Aboriginal Health, Volume 12, Number 1, 2005

Article in pdf (18 pp.)

Where to from here? Building a First Nations early childhood strategy

Author: Greenwood, Margo

Source: Assembly of First Nations, 2005

Discussion paper in pdf (12 pp.)

Early childhood development activities and expenditures: Early learning and child care activities and expenditures, 2003-2004

Source: Government of Canada, 2005

See Chapter 6 for overview of services for First Nations families and children.

National dialogue on federal Aboriginal early childhood development strategy: Draft dialogue report

Source: Aboriginal Research Institute of Six Nations Reserve, 2005

Many voices, common cause: Addressing Aboriginal early childhood development education and training needs

Source: British Columbia Aboriginal Child Care Society, 2004

The community within the child: Integration of Indigenous knowledge into First Nations childcare process and practice

Author: Ball, Jessica

Source: Early Childhood Development Intercultural Partnerships, 2004

Aboriginal children in poverty in urban communities: Social exclusion and the growing racialization of poverty in Canada

Source: Canadian Council on Social Development, 2003

Revised handbook of best practices in Aboriginal early childhood programs (The 2003 version is no longer available)

Source: British Columbia Aboriginal Child Care Society, 2008

The challenge of creating an optimal learning environment in child care: Cross-cultural perspectives

Author: Ball, Jessica

Source: Early Childhood Development Intercultural Partnerships, 2002

Considerations for evaluating 'good care' in Canadian Aboriginal early childhood settings

Author: Stairs, A.H., Bernhard, J.K

Source: Ryerson University, 2002

Whispered gently through time: First nations quality child care: A national study

Author: Greenwood, Margo & Shawana, Perry

Source: Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario

Aboriginal child care in review: Part I

Author: Greenwood, Margo

Source: Canadian Child Care Federation, 2000

Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal people

Source: Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 1996

(see volume 3, chapter 5, section 3.1 for section on early childhood education.)

Attachment	Size
An Environmental Scan of Public Policy and Programs for Young Aboriginal Children in BC- A Cold Wind Blows.pdf [21]	1.36 MB
Summary Report- Occupational Standards and Fair Wages for BC First Nations Early Childhood Educators 2014.pdf [22]	2.2 MB
What you Need to Know About Supporting the Inclusion of Elders in Early Childhood Development Settings 2014.pdf [23]	1.08 MB
Many voices, common cause - a report on the Aboriginal Leadership Forum on Early Childhood Development-Follow Up Session II (2004).pdf [24]	126.24 KB
Handbook of Best Practices in Aboriginal Early Childhood Programs, 2008.pdf [25]	3.2 MB
Considerations for Evaluating 'Good Care' in Canadian Aboriginal Early Childhood Settings.pdf [26]	1.38 MB
Vulnerable children in Canada- Research insights and policy options.ppt [27]	4.84 MB
Measuring Social Support in Aboriginal Early Childhood Programs .pdf [28]	123.42 KB
Aboriginal early childhood education in Canada- Issues of context.pdf [29]	378.82 KB
Aboriginal Children's Survey, 2006- Family, Community and Child Care.pdf [30]	544.38 KB
Aboriginal Quality of Life, IRPP Choices, 14(7).pdf [31]	371.43 KB
Where to from here? Building a First Nations early childhood strategy.pdf [32]	121.59 KB

Tags:
aboriginal [2]

Source URL (modified on 17 Sep 2020): <https://childcarecanada.org/resources/issue-files/policy-issues-indigenous-early-childhood-education-and-care-2015>

Links

- [1] <http://www.ecd-elcc.ca/eng/ecd/ececc/page00.shtml>
- [2] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/aboriginal>
- [3] <https://www.acc-society.bc.ca/>
- [4] <http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/index.php?p=3>
- [5] <http://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/15/06/honouring-truth-reconciling-future>
- [6] <https://www.canada.ca/en/crown-indigenous-relations-northern-affairs.html>
- [7] <http://www.afn.ca>
- [8] <http://abo-peoples.org>
- [9] <https://www.itk.ca>
- [10] <https://www.metisnation.ca/>
- [11] <https://www.nwac.ca/>
- [12] <https://www.pauktutit.ca/>
- [13] <https://www.canada.ca/en/indigenous-services-canada/services/first-nations-inuit-health/family-health/healthy-child-development/aboriginal-head-start-reserve-first-nations-inuit-health-canada.html>
- [14] <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/health-promotion/childhood-adolescence/programs-initiatives/aboriginal-head-start-urban-northern-communities-ahsunc.html>
- [15] <http://www.ecd-elcc.ca/eng/ecd/ececc/page18.shtml#tbl18bot>
- [16] <https://www.ccl-cca.ca/>
- [17] <http://www.ecdip.org/index.htm>
- [18] <http://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/06/08/te-wh%20C3%A0riki-early-childhood-curriculum>
- [19] <http://www.ero.govt.nz/National-Reports/Working-with-Te-Whariki-May-2013/Overview>
- [20] <http://www.cwhn.ca/en/node/42192>
- [21] <https://childcarecanada.org/sites/default/files/An%20Environmental%20Scan%20of%20Public%20Policy%20and%20Programs%20for%20Young%20Aboriginal%20Children%20in%20BC-%20A%20Cold%20Wind%20Blows.pdf>
- [22] <https://childcarecanada.org/sites/default/files/Summary%20Report-%20Occupational%20Standards%20and%20Fair%20Wages%20for%20BC%20First%20Nations%20Early%20Childhood%20Educators%202014.pdf>
- [23] <https://childcarecanada.org/sites/default/files/What%20you%20Need%20to%20Know%20About%20Supporting%20the%20Inclusion%20of%20Elders%20in%20Early%20Childhood%20Development%20Settings%202014.pdf>
- [24] <https://childcarecanada.org/sites/default/files/Many%20voices%20common%20cause%20-%20a%20report%20on%20the%20Aboriginal%20Leadership%20Forum%20on%20Early%20Childhood%20Development-Follow%20Up%20Session%20II%20%282004%29.pdf>
- [25] <https://childcarecanada.org/sites/default/files/Handbook%20of%20Best%20Practices%20in%20Aboriginal%20Early%20Childhood%20Programs%202008.pdf>
- [26] <https://childcarecanada.org/sites/default/files/Considerations%20for%20Evaluating%20%27Good%20Care%27%20in%20Canadian%20Aboriginal%20Early%20Childhood%20Settings.pdf>
- [27] <https://childcarecanada.org/sites/default/files/Vulnerable%20children%20in%20Canada-%20Research%20insights%20and%20policy%20options.ppt>
- [28] <https://childcarecanada.org/sites/default/files/Measuring%20Social%20Support%20in%20Aboriginal%20Early%20Childhood%20Programs%20.pdf>
- [29] <https://childcarecanada.org/sites/default/files/Aboriginal%20early%20childhood%20education%20in%20Canada-%20Issues%20of%20context.pdf>
- [30] <https://childcarecanada.org/sites/default/files/Aboriginal%20Children%27s%20Survey%202006-%20Family%20Community%20and%20Child%20Care.pdf>
- [31] <https://childcarecanada.org/sites/default/files/Aboriginal%20Quality%20of%20Life%20IRPP%20Choices%202014%287%29.pdf>
- [32] <https://childcarecanada.org/sites/default/files/Where%20to%20from%20here%3F%20Building%20a%20First%20Nations%20Early%20childhood%20strategy.pdf>