

# Aboriginal Early Years Strategic Plan

## Community Engagement 2008 Regional Summary

### *Interior Region*

The community consultation and engagement process for the Aboriginal Early Years Strategic Plan, funded and co-ordinated through the Ministry of Children & Family Development, was undertaken in November and December 2008. Information on this process is summarized in the '*Community Engagement Report*'.

This document summarizes key points and dialogue generated by two community gatherings and individual telephone interviews with family members, Elders, service providers and administrators in this health region. All participants were asked the same questions with the goal of further informing and guiding the development of a provincial strategic plan to address the health and wellness of Aboriginal children in B.C. Key points from the community gatherings have been collated under broad themes for each question. The transcribed responses from individual telephone interviews are also summarized under each question.

The information generated through this community consultation and engagement process highlights the knowledge, wisdom, compassion and determination of Aboriginal peoples to actively improve the quality of life for their children. It is hoped that this information, summarized in the '*Aboriginal Community Engagement Report*', and this regional summary will be used by community leaders and organizations for their own strategic planning and community development to promote the health and wellness of all their children.

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# Interior Region

## Question 1: *What are your dreams for your children?*

### **Basic Needs (Food & water, safety, housing)**

- Safe from physical, sexual, emotional abuse
- Abundance of food, clothing, and shelter
- Basic needs are met, they are not hungry and thirsty - access to healthy nutritious food

### **Social Justice**

- A balance in non-Native society and living with your own people
- To not experience racism

### **Culture & Language: Knowledge – Pride - Identity**

- Be joyful in their culture
- Freedom to learn and speak their own language and culture
- All have access to their culture
- Be proud of who they are and know their roots

### **Healthy Families**

- Live in a loving, nurturing home with lots of family and community
- Parents are emotionally stable
- Listening to the children and learning their voice
- Live in a healthy growing environment
- Children need to be understood by parents and community
- Consistent, positive, healthy people in their lives
- Elders are involved
- Recognition of extended family key to childhood development

### **Health & Wellbeing**

- All provided with the tools to thrive
- Healthy start from preconception
- Form healthy attachments
- Sense of belonging
- Strong identity

### **Recreation & Play**

- Being able to be a child and have fun
- Equal access to play
- Parents and adults know how to play and have fun
- They can just be children – to play and have fun

### **Education**

- Go further with education
- Education and access to services for special needs

### **Services**

- Children are at the center or focus of our planning and all that we do
- Abundant and appropriate funding for all services
- Service providers understand culture and values

## Community

- Standing together, strength in numbers.
- Surrounded by emotionally supportive, present, healthy community of adults
- Strong community structure

### Question 1: Telephone Responses

- To be raised in a safe environment (home, community, school) a wholistic environment so wherever they go they feel safe and can be themselves and proud of who they are. Basic needs to be covered so we can move to different things, like building a house. Be able to be the best they can be. Not to put all kids into a category that says, by this age you must be doing...but rather appreciate them as a human being and a child. Everyone comes with a gift and they are all different, we cannot put them in categories. Be valued and respected as individuals.
- That they have knowledge of their culture and heritage and linkages with traditional teachers. Safe and affordable childcare and early learning experience. That they are school ready is huge. That there are strong early learning very proactive programs taught by people within the community.
- To have equal opportunities for education, training and career success.
- To have a balance in both worlds – in their First Nations identity and yet to be able to function without discrimination in broader society;
- For our son, who has autism, to have opportunities to support his special needs challenges, and to have Aboriginal programs, services and therapies available in rural communities.....
- To have special needs programming for young adults with special needs where they have opportunities to function and contribute to the community and to society in a meaningful way, where they aren't 'tucked away' so that Society forgets about them....
- They grow up knowing their language, culture and ancestors. Literacy. Understanding our roots and our genealogy. Opportunities for them to experience different kinds of education and learning.
- That there is funding in place for all aboriginal communities (on and off reserve) to have a full range of programs for children and families from conception til they are off to school - prenatal, early intervention, family preservation, special needs program, school readiness, child care, head start, etc. And that all these programs are founded in culture and language rather than culture/language being one 'component' that is woven into a mainstream model of service delivery. My dream is that we build strong families to support the optimal growth of our children so that they can succeed and thrive and have fulfilling, healthy, happy lives like everyone deserves to. That we can rectify the trauma and cycles from our history of colonization and ongoing neo-colonization and oppression and that we not only 'close the gap' for aboriginal people with the rest of our society, but we give them the confidence and pride to share with the world our strengths and gifts as Aboriginal people.

- That they get the best education possible and break the low education of their grandparents. That they learn their culture and their language and that maybe that be part of their school education.
- That they are proud of who they are and can stand up proudly and say they are Cree, that their heads don't hang low because of their Native ancestry. That they can be involved in sports and all kinds of events to have lots of good experiences in their lives.
- Equal opportunities for education, children graduate and go on to university
- That the parents encourage children to stay in school and learn, That they gain meaningful employment.
- Better Supports, there are lots of children born with FASD and behavioural problems and we have only one or two speech and language speech pathologists for example. We need more supports in all the special needs areas. Children are school ready and graduate and go on to pursue greater education and are living successful lives. That they have all their basic needs met like 3 nutritious meals a day.
- That they have a sense of belonging to the community and a sense of value to the community.
- Treated with respect and dignity.
- That they grow up feeling like they have strength. They have knowledge and confidence and

**Question 2: *What do you think are the most important things that need to happen in your community to improve the health & wellness of your children & families?***

#### **Basic Needs Addressed**

- Action needs to be taken on poverty, housing, transportation, and the other social determinants of health (SDH – see WHO commission on SDH)
- Housing
- Freedom from poverty
- Unconditional love and support
- Addiction free

#### **Cultural Competency**

- Cultural awareness training – train the trainer and all information is the same, have knowledge about all cultures in the area to better understand our clients and understand their values
- Educate and sensitivity training for MCFD staff and schools (teachers)

#### **Capacity Building**

- Consistent, comprehensive program
- Quit dividing the little dollars
- Fair share funding for Aboriginal communities
- Instead of 12 month of funding – The first year of funding to be considered or used for program orientation – building the program before expected full operation date.

- Long-term contracts for organizations (3-5 years)
- Economic development – communities need to be economically alive to nourish community, establish and moving forward in order for community to grow – ‘child minding drop in’ available
- Wise, long-term investment financially (i.e. for every \$1 spent on Early Life, save \$9-17 [?] later on in life)
- Funding is continuous, long term to give to communities to plan for the future
- Long-term commitment to funding by Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal leadership to fund the social programs required to build healthy communities for our children
- Appropriate salaries/staff levels – equal pay for Aboriginal staff

### **Strengthening Families**

- Stop placing our children in foster homes
- More family preservation
- More Aboriginal foster parents: appropriate foster training/ Training (more) for foster parents

### **Strengthening Communities**

- Community kitchens: here are our ideas, when families don’t know how to cook it, show them how to cook it
- Strong, positive leadership

### **Improved Model of Service Delivery**

- Focus on families as a whole
- Family centres
- A family place (like a daycare, open all day, caregivers can bring children, “public living room”), flexible
- Children need to be at the center of this discussion
- Service directory – phone assistance (like Enquiry BC)
- Removal of age restrictions or flexibility – those who may not be of the correct age but developmentally they are of age – why can’t they fit? – acceptance where people are at
- Agency collaboration
- After hours service delivery
- Make year one an observation stage to build trust and build relationship – deliverables are secondary, the client’s comfort level and safety is the main
- All service providers are networking and continuity in all services and follow through
- Mental health intake process, immediate response is needed, more Aboriginal workers
- Formalizing an interagency session to share calendars and invite a community guest, health nurses, etc.
- Acknowledge community dynamics in Aboriginal communities

### **Transportation**

- Transportation: real and adequate

### **Types of Services & Programs**

- Physio, speech and language therapists, trauma therapists
- Grandparents receiving respite care funding and supports funding
- Education: fully helped to greatest potential, supported SCD, one-on-one, help for any learning challenge

- Early intervention
- Adequate Aboriginal preschools
- Mentoring programs/Elders
- Access to nutrition programs
- Ministry supported Elders program

### **Government**

- Two streams of MCFD: child protection, family enhancement
- Review of BC Child Welfare Act: set up family enhancement stream rather than child protection
- Proactive, positive approaches from Ministry (not crisis driven)
- Aboriginal representation on Aboriginal MCFD team

### **Question 2: Telephone Responses**

- Our health care is diminishing; we need full benefits for our health in all aspects. In the community we need to see more Aboriginal organizations run by Aboriginal and Métis people. We need to stay together; our culture is more about giving and sharing. Community reform, we need to work harder at building relationships. Children are not seen as an asset and they need to be. We currently do not have a daycare or urban head start, and we need one, but there are currently no dollars. Actually, I am not very aware of all the services but those are for sure missing.
- Have more supports of organizations that provide the services. We need the Chief's and leaders to understand what we as ECE workers are actually doing. If they really understood then they would know how to support us better.
- Prenatal education for both parents, Education around attachment and nutrition for parents
- Dads to stay involved with families
- Public education about resources in the community
- Sustainable and adequate funding for early intervention programs
- Awareness on the parent's part to encourage their commitment to advocate what's best for their children
- Very important that a First Nations rep be on the ECD committee
- All children need to be able to get their shots, have a good Dr., and be able to get other services if they need or want it. My grandchildren see the naturopath and I think it helps them a lot, especially my grandson with his allergies, if his parents didn't make the money they do, he couldn't go and have this done. All children should have this right. All families need to have the choice if they want to send their children to preschool, and there are not enough of the preschools that are specifically for native children or that even talk about our ways, teachings and our unique culture. Our children's wellness also means that they feel like they are part of a community, our friendship centres help with this, but they need more money to have more events and more activities for families to feel comfortable there; and then they will come to the centre for help and counseling when they need it.

- We need more funding to implement the programs that we want to. Our communities know what they want, many have done their own ECD plans and if they haven't they know what they need the most. Most of them are in critical needs of quality child care services just like every other community in this province. But also, many of them need way more funding going into early intervention and there is huge gap in services to children with special needs. We have a patchwork of services coming down from many different sources and within these silos communities still have huge gaps that remain unaddressed.
- My main point here is that communities, Nations and regions know what their needs and gaps are and have plans for what the services they want to deliver. The province needs to support those processes where possible to build capacity at those levels. In other words, bring decision making closer to home so that communities/Nations/regions can build their own capacity and deliver services based on their own identified priorities.
- As leaders, we need to work together and stop running organizations like silos. We need to work towards building the capacity of each organization and the whole community. We need to listen to the needs of our children and elders, we need input from everyone.
- We need to be more proactive in prevention. There is a lot spent on intervention, which is good, but we need more focus on prevention. Prevention at the earliest age possible and including recreation, food, culture.
- Better governance structures need to be developed that are not INAC/Govt. Driven; Community constitutions and policies;
- Better accountability by all programs and services; they tend to be 'worker focused' and
- Not 'client focused' at this time; opportunities for community members to have voice into programming and services – we are never asked what we need and want, therefore services do not reflect the true needs of the people. More funding for children and youth programming is needed. Special needs programming must be profiled and have adequate funding to support children and families; Special needs children are the most vulnerable of Society, yet there is very little service or attention paid to these kids.
- FUNDING!!! Money makes things work. We need more culturally trained people. Culturally relevant trained ECE Staff in early learning. Take basic ECE programs and change them and make it relevant to where they are from and tailor it to their needs. Taking the current daycare licensing regulations and tailoring it to the aboriginal people. For example in one area they wanted to jar salmon and they were told by the licensing officer that their approach was not in the bylaws and the staff got into such an uproar because this is part of their heritage and way of life they had to rethink it. Not all licensing fit aboriginal communities.
- More relationships with other agencies and work together, doesn't matter who has the contract but the focus is for the betterment of the children. More clarification with jobs that we are all doing and how we can work together better. In order for us to benefit from those who are holding jobs, like SCD. Better communication with other agencies. More awareness

of the services that are in place, families who need the most are not even in a place to look for services, so we need to reach for those families. How do we engage families are at bigger risk. All professionals need to have a better understanding of their power, we can intimidate without even realizing. For example the vocabulary we use, can families understand us? We need to find ways to better serve families. Build an organization that has all of us working together; one not ten little ones.

**Question 3: *What do you think needs to happen in your community to ensure that your culture & language are passed onto your children?***

**Foundations**

- Set a good example, instil pride
- Make it fun – singing, dancing, story-telling
- Healthy role models

**Language Revitalization**

- BC needs a list of interpreters for many languages (e.g. health and justice)
- BC Language/Heritage and Culture Foundation: documenting online various languages
- Culturally specific events
- Language and culture classes in public and private schools

**Role of Elders**

- Provide support for Elders who went through the residential school trauma to forgive themselves for not working on their language and culture (i.e. fund trauma recovery for Elders of residential schools and offer language restoration process)
- Constant involvement with Elders

**Aboriginal Curriculum & Programming**

- Teach children at schools
- All ages programming – include songs, food, values, or rituals
- Cultural camps
- Youth program sensitivity – culture is strong in our community, but when it is to be passed onto our children there doesn't seem to be an understanding of how important it is  
\*Healthy Mentors\*
- Enable positive attachments – education and re-establish that play is important and teaching parents to play and have fun
- More Aboriginal teachers, MCFD workers

**Cultural Competency**

- Spread culture to mainstream society so they understand
- Important in urban sessions that other walks of life are coming to the urban centre and are valuable and treated with respect

**Question 3: Telephone Responses**

- We need to engage the Elders, respectfully, sometimes we take them for granted. Respect how they want to teach the children, not necessarily how society wants us to teach. This can

be intimidating for Elders. Elders singing a song can be as valuable or more valuable than mainstream teaching. Don't put their natural gifts into boxes. We need to remember the language does not always come automatically, we need to make sure they are comfortable first and help out however they can, then they will start to speak the language. Be ready for the Elders and support them. Some children will not be A plus students, but if they have culture and their soul and their heart and spirit are there and they are proud of that they are ready for the challenges life will bring. They need to be proud of who they are first.

- First and foremost we need to start at a very early learning level – when they are babes. 1<sup>st</sup> peoples language grants need to start with infants. Elders need to be paid. Transportation needs to be provided to get them to the learning centre. Have a full time fluent speaker at the centre. We want to implement culture and language but we need training on how to do that. Off reserve centres on the coast are totally different from the Interior so we need training tailored to that specific region. And COMMUNICATION...
- A priority must be placed on culture and language programming by leaders and service providers; We need language programming in all school programs starting at pre-school level (immersion would be the best) thru to gr. 12; Language programming needs to be accredited. Cultural programming also deserves development and funding....right now, community members have to seek out culture and language on their own, if they are motivated enough....all programs should have a culture and language aspect to it, with some funding to support it, and accountability processes to ensure it actually gets implemented.
- Talk to the Elders, Our culture and language has to be more mainstream in the schools, important for all people to know who they are. Resources and books need to be part of the Educational Curriculum. More focus around ceremony and ensuring children take part in that.
- Parents need as much support, or more, we need to work with them.
- Government needs to be providing much more funding to each Nation and to the First Peoples Culture, Language and Heritage Foundation to support the language preservation efforts and curriculum development, training of language teachers, etc. Right now, First Peoples gets a disproportionately low amount of funding compared to the rest of the 75 language groups across Canada! We have something like 35 languages in BC which is close to half of the language groups across Canada and yet we get funding based on our population. This is not a fair distribution and the result is that we are on the verge of losing our languages here in BC.
- In my own community what needs to be happening is that we need much more curriculum development, especially for the younger years. There is some language curriculum out there in Band schools but that is for older children.
- In terms of culture and tradition, we need to help our people to break free of their own internalized oppression and the way we've been conditioned to think of programs and services. Many of the services being delivered are identical to mainstream, with the exception in some cases that we have Aboriginal people working in them. But with the

critical shortage of ECE's in our province, we have troubles even finding non-Aboriginal people to come and work in the ECD programs in Aboriginal communities. What i would like to see is workshops that help our communities to 'think outside the mainstream box' of service delivery and identify what do 'aboriginal' services look like for your community. How can you establish a foundation in culture/language in your service delivery?

- Language needs to be in the kindergarten and earlier schooling too. I am not sure the public schools will ever be open to having our language in the schools; they still have a long way to come. We need to be able to have camps in the summer for our kids where Elders can come together and share culture, language, rights of passage and food.
- We need fluent elders and others from the different communities to attend and participate in preschool groups by narrating, playing, giving simple instructions in their language and singing so there is an acceptance of cultural differences by the children, thus creating learning opportunities
- Our children should have access to programs that help them maintain their cultural identity
- We need to hire our own people. Society thinks you need to have a big diploma on your wall but we have people in our community who have the knowledge of our culture and language but no diplomas. We need to value that knowledge and hire them in our programs. We need more aboriginal ECE workers.
- I don't know how much culture and language is even alive, I don't see it very active and present at meetings gatherings etc. Urban programming is harder to do this and we need more gatherings, like family night, to learn the language, have fun, eat together. But these all need dollars to do this and prevention is a big part of it.
- The family needs to see the importance and value their own culture; it needs to be family centered. If Parents are communication in their own language this is good because they show by role modeling and lead by example.

**Question 4: *What do you think needs to happen in your community to ensure that children's programs & services are provided in a culturally relevant, co-ordinated & integrated way?***

#### **Unity & Co-ordination**

- Unity, coordination, cooperation
- Strength in numbers and intention (work together to highest good)
- Programs are run in silos – need to coordinate
- Include all children – urban: people are scattered, we need to reach families that don't participate in F.C. or Métis C & S (i.e. school advocates – coordinate with schools, health nurses, doctors)
- Develop a communication strategy inviting all/everyone that might be interested (Aboriginal navigators)

- Communication needs to include: Mailing lists, video/TV, newspapers, emails, go into classrooms, pamphlets, phone, radio, cable, moccasin telegraph (word of mouth)
- Plan of action
- More trust, more accountability at local level – reporting is on your own community vision/plan
- Respect work that’s already been done
- Mentor programs – prevent burn-out of staff

#### **Cultural & Language Programs**

- Exposure to cultural traditions and ceremonies (i.e. traditional arts, crafts, sweat lodge, foods, music)
- Summer cultural programs
- Mini pow wows
- Respect for cultural history when families are accessing services and have funding available for it

#### **Cultural Competency**

- Service providers need to know and practice culture themselves
- Service providers have training needed to deliver services and really know the community working with (i.e. culture)
- To have our own people to teach our children
- Respect for territory/jurisdiction
- Respect for the child so the child learns respect

#### **Role of Elders**

- More healthy Elders to support programs/events
- More support to Elders – transportation, money, spending time with them
- Teaching Elders about the F.C. and the programs – they need to understand so we can learn from one another
- Elders: go to their homes
- Storytelling – Elders
- Go into Elders care home with children

#### **Funding Changes**

- Funding comes down comprehensive, not in silos
- Ongoing funding
- Shared funding in communities, as a community having decision power to build on successful existing programs and enhance it and keep it going and last forever
- Aboriginal and Métis organizations should get the same money as mainstream and work with mainstream organizations to see how and what they are providing to our people
- Funding should follow the child and parent’s choice (e.g. special needs).

#### **Question 4: Telephone Responses**

- As a parent be involved, find out who is holding the events and be part of the movement to ensure that the program continues. Be Hands on for example parents could join the parent and teacher council (I have) so I know what is going on and I can have a say.

- Funding for those services period needs to happen. The resources to make the curriculum culturally relevant is a key piece. Have funders understand what is culturally relevant and this is not always understood when it comes to evaluation that it is hard to evaluate some of the key pieces of how we do things.
- We need to have an immersion program and immerse the children in their language and culture at all times, no English. In the urban setting we have Chicolten, Carrier, Shuswap, Cree etc. We would go by the main language of the area we are in but we also need other resource people to teach the other languages and we need to have parent's involved in the language classes along with their children.
- We need well-educated First Nations staff in all areas to provide services and to be trained at the same level as other communities
- We need a First Nations representative involved at all levels of policy and decision making from zero to university and we need funding to make this happen
- Everything needs to be controlled by us, and we need enough money from government to make sure we can do things and offer really good programs to families and children. Too many programs are just barely getting by and not really able to give the best to the children and their families, what kind of example does this set?
- Coordination and Integration needs to start from top down. Government needs to quit working in silos and begin integrating ECD at the provincial and federal levels so that we can support this happening at community levels. In many cases there are strong leaders in our communities who are already doing this very difficult task within the current infrastructures of funding distributions. But in most communities, the damage has already been done, the program managers are into turf wars over their small budgets, fighting over funding and children to sustain their own jobs. How can we expect communities to work together between programs when the funding is so low and they are barely able to sustain their programs. Perhaps if we allowed them to pool their funding and develop one solid program that promotes quality service delivery, but we don't because each little pot of money has its own reporting requirements and mandates and they have to fulfill those in order to keep getting the funding.
- When you run Aboriginal programs, you need to have Aboriginal people run these programs: they know their community and their people best. Programs and services must be properly resourced. 1 Year Pilot Projects do not provide stability. We need stable and consistent funding for programs and services: 3-5 year funding agreements. This would allow us to build a strategic plan and implement the programs in the best way possible.
- Key organizations such as Nzen'man in our zone (area) needs adequate funding to provide some of the key programs such as ASCD and AIDP, FASD, etc. As a non profit group, it makes it easier to deliver ECD programming in an effective way. Leadership and Communities also need to be mandated to develop community ECD work plans together....so that all departments are working together to support ECD programming and not in silos.

- I just facilitated a session such as this in the Okanagan and it was great to see the depts.. working together for the kids.
- I am not in favour of any more provincial organizations, as they tend to take up too much \$\$ in admin. and the \$\$ never make it to the communities..... I would be more in favour of Regional groups such as ECD/APFA or zone programming.....preferably zone programming.
- Special needs programming deserves funding and profiling, esp. For Aboriginal children.....especially beyond 0 to 6 year olds, this seems to be where the \$\$ go, which is fine to an extent, but school age kids literally get forgotten....there is very little programming for them.
- All communities need head start funding and programming.
- First we need integrated file management bringing everybody on board who is working with children and families from 0-6 and take an inventory and make sure there is no duplication of services. Do joint efforts together for greater results. Mapping of services and taking stock of resources that are available helps to know who is doing what and with what age group and also list your contact people. Pooling your funding resources and offer bigger, better services and have protocol agreements in place to do this. Post the goals and objectives of the program. Be very vocal with your government funders and be proactive.
- We need financial support and more money to provide appropriate programming. For example, we haven't had an increase in budget for 4 years, but gas has gone up a lot so we are having to take money from Elders honorarium and supplies. We need a bigger commitment from Gov't. It is really hard to plan for 5 years when we have only one year funding. It takes a lot of work, time and resources. This needs to be easier and more efficient so we have time for things that really matter. We need to work better with our organizations in our community. Grants are okay, but we need to have ways to make these grants to continue past one year. We cannot expect our Elders to work for free, you don't work for free and I don't work for free, so why should we ask our Elders to work for free????? How does Gov't expect culture and language without providing funding for this to happen in the best way possible.

**Question 5: *What do you think needs to happen in your community in order to build on the existing strengths of children, family's program service providers & your community as a whole?***

### **Culture Revitalization**

- Back to traditional values: importance of children
- Go back to traditions: back to clan-type systems (find something to replace clan system)
- Funding to support the Elders in supporting our children and families

- We need to evaluate and measure our success and define a culturally-based tool to do this rather than the government's measurement tool
- Following through and walk the walk/talk the talk

### **Improved Model of Service Delivery**

- Partnerships between families, programs, community agencies (Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal), Ministry
- Stop isolation and really promote programs – maintaining our collective voice ensuring that good services go to Métis and Aboriginal families (stop internal colonization) and recognize our strengths
- We need to be mindful that we are the practitioners and leadership needs to understand their role and lead and not do the job of service providers (micro managing)
- Build on success of programs – increase funding to programs that work
- Kookum's Inc. Agency - Grandma support/adopt a grandma/grandpa
- Aboriginal people on MCFD Aboriginal team
- Holistic services to Aboriginal people – wrap around support to families instead of mainstream, top-down system

### **Funding**

- Long-term contracts – consistency
- Effective use of funds
- Strong safe – is this going to be like Aboriginal family accord – where are the guarantees to Aboriginal communities?
- Longer funding versus 12 months – need care funding no more of the project funding
- Government needs to put more funds into existing programs rather than starting new pilot projects

### **Question 5: Telephone Responses**

- We need extra resources and support. Strong Start and our programs need to work better together, not start new programs but strengthen what is already happening. School Districts need to be prepared to welcome our children, they need to understand our ways our children and our culture. For the School District to not only focus on the ABC's and colors, but more importantly on their emotional and social intelligence. Programs like Seeds of Empathy and Roots of Empathy help with this and need to be offered to all children. Retrain people in the school system to understand our history and the importance of our culture and language. They need to understand us better and this will help our children stay in school and do well in all areas of their life.
- Cooperation between programs, increased communication where everybody needs to put their cards on the table. Everybody wants the best for their children so we need to work towards those goals together. We are not here for ourselves we are here for our children and we need to be respectful of everyone as each service and program is bringing something to the table. I have been to round table discussions where everyone brought ideas to the table and shared what is working for them in their community so we do not always have to reinvent the wheel. Be aware of what is happening in other communities and link together

to support each other. Mentoring of people who have put programs in place and work with them and find out how they went about it. We need consistent ongoing funding put towards culture and language.

- We need to support our children and their successes. Honouring them continually in a traditional way; through ceremony. We need to bring our culture into mainstream for this, so our children can be proud of who they are. We need to continue this honouring and celebration throughout their lives. We need incentives for families to help with their budgets. We also need incentives around nutrition. Lots of our children are going to school without breakfast or without a healthy breakfast. We need them to provide them with healthy food in order to support them to achieve. We need to work together as organizations. Our way is to bring people together over food, culture is food and food is culture. We need to come together to eat, laugh and share dialogue where we focus on the children, not the politics.
- First I need to reflect on what are our strengths? Our values, our land, our history, our languages, ceremonies/traditional practices, our spirituality. How do we build upon those?
- I'll focus on our value of family connection. We could build on that by supporting Aboriginal specific policy and mandates that allow for family involvement and supports. For example, ASCD needs to include the whole family and supporting children in their homes and in the community rather than only in child care settings like mainstream SCD. As well, we need Aboriginal specific child care regulations so that whole family can be an integral part of child care delivery. Spacing regulations and criminal record checks make it difficult for communities to involve their Elders, younger siblings and extended families in their programs. As well, the food safe stuff makes it hard to utilize traditional foods in the programs.
- I think my main point in all these questions is that communities need to be given the autonomy and flexibility to develop, deliver and evaluate their own programs based on their own needs, priorities and capacities.
- Our community needs money. We have this really nice Aboriginal daycare on the other side of town, but they ran out of money and didn't get enough funding to run properly so that building is sitting empty instead of being used by children. We also need our leaders to stop talking about how important children are, but rather do things to show how important children are. It seems like so much of what is available for children is only part time or doesn't run in evenings or weekends, when working families could benefit from coming together.
- Sustainable funding for existing programs
- We really need First Nations representation on the ECD
- We need more outreach services, prenatal education
- We need a community health nurse who understands the importance and can teach the culture
- We need transportation for families to get to services

- We need to build trust and be consistent with the programs we offer. Even if no one shows up for a workshop you as a service provider be there. They need to learn to trust you and know that you will be there for them. Give food vouchers out to those who attend the classes especially for low income families and at risk families. We need more communication with other service providers and programs. We need to get together with other programs and on a regular basis to find out what kinds of services are available to see how we can best help the families and children we are serving. We need more staff and help to support these children and their families. We need to have more awareness on self-care for the service providers and appreciation for them so they don't burn out.
- We must address the social determinants of healthy like poverty and basic needs.
- Funding that is adequate and respectful wage.
- Funding that is equivalent of non aboriginal services so that we get qualified staff.
- Consistent long term funding; minimum of 5 years

DON'T GIVE UP!

## **DESIRED SERVICES**

- Physio, speech and language therapists, trauma therapists
- Grandparents receiving respite care funding and supports funding
- Education: fully helped to greatest potential, supported SCD, one-on-one, help for any learning challenge
- Early intervention
- Adequate Aboriginal preschools
- Mentoring programs/Elders
- Access to nutrition programs
- Ministry supported Elders program

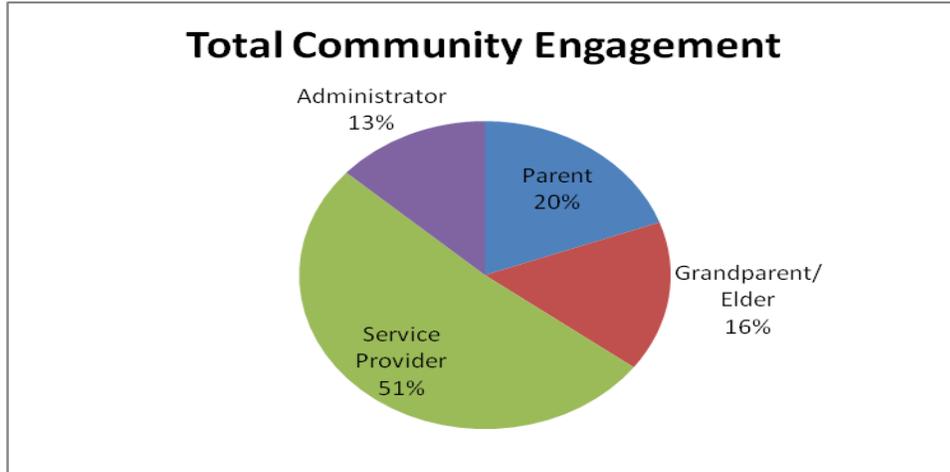
## Total # of Participants in Community Engagements: 216

# Completed with Parents: 42

# Completed with Grandparents/Elders: 34

# Completed with Service Providers: 111

# Completed with Administrators: 2

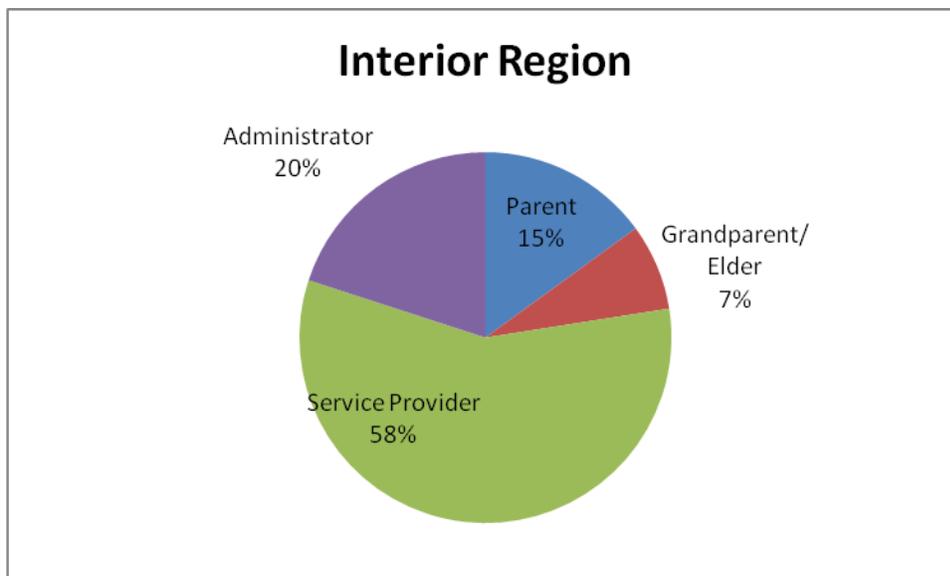


## Interior Region

December 1<sup>st</sup> Host: Métis Commission for Children & Families of BC: Kamloops

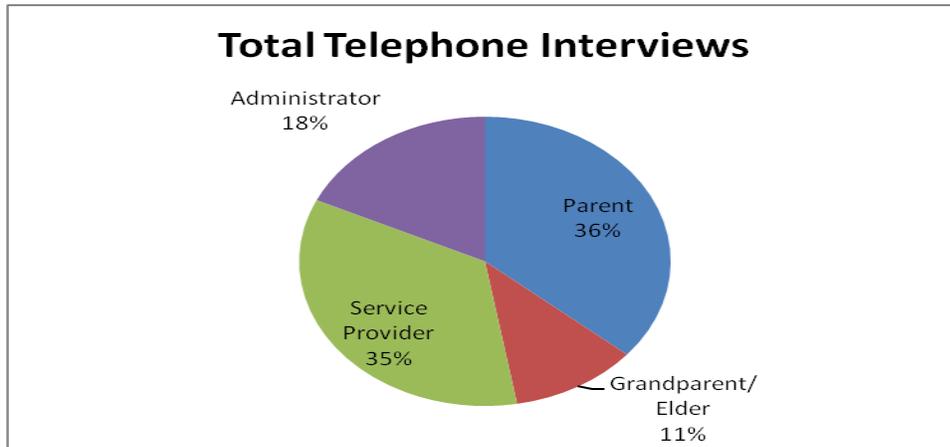
December 2<sup>nd</sup> Host: Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society: Kelowna

**Total # of participants: 40**



## Total # of Telephone Interviews completed: 72

- # Completed with Parents: 26
- # Completed with Grandparents/Elders: 8
- # Completed with Service Providers: 25
- # Completed with Administrators: 13



## Interior Region

- Total # of participants: 10
- Parent: 4
- Grandparent/Elder: 1
- Service Provider: 2
- Administrator: 3

*\*Three individuals identified as Parent and Service Provider, by their request they have been calculated here as Parent.*

