

Aboriginal Early Years Strategic Plan

Community Engagement 2008 Regional Summary

Vancouver Coastal 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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Vancouver Coastal Region

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

Basic Needs (Food & water, safety, housing)

- Safe, adequate housing that is affordable and no waitlist
- Stable housing/food security
- Safe housing
- Nutritional food
- Safe environment
- More funding for basic needs such as clothes, transit, food
- A variety of safe places in urban settings (24/7)
- To be safe, non violent environment
- Have plenty of food
- Safe and secure housing

Poverty Reduction/Economic Status

- Not to experience poverty
- Good economic future
- Telling/supporting children to save money
- Every child eligible for childcare subsidy
- Better employment opportunity
- More financial support to curb crisis in families

Social Justice

- Live in a world that is free of discrimination
- To live someplace free of judgment, racism
- Be socially responsible, give back to the community

Culture & Language: Knowledge – Pride – Identity

- Awareness of their cultural identity
- Full-time Elder onsite attached to programs (knowledge/wisdom)
- More cultural pride
- Access to traditional foods
- Child to know about her culture – language is her beginning
- Traditional and cultural knowledge
- Honouring ourselves – value self – traditions followed
- Actively participate in cultural events
- Re-teach our communities – rites of passages, babes, youth, teen adult
- Learn culture (home culture)
- Good value system
- Follow our traditional medicines
- Cultural awareness
- A true understanding of what Aboriginal means, a strong sense of identity

Healthy Families

- Healthy parents
- Good Aboriginal role models – healthier lifestyles, food
- Aboriginal Foster Parents
- Support to maintain contact/attachment when children move
- Financial support so families can stay at home until child is school age
- More support to Aboriginal families who are fostering and choose to practice a value-based lifestyle
- Traditional talking circles to mediate between families/service providers
- Priority dream – family and babies stay together
- Funding for working moms
- More positive mentors for our sons
- Grow up in a drug and alcohol free home
- Children growing up with both parents – a mother and father
- Children are loved and nurtured
- Parents are their child's first teacher
- Less government involvement – more traditional involvement, learn from grandfathers and grandmothers

Health & Wellbeing

- Good mental/physical health
- Physical, spiritual, mental, emotional
- Each child should have their own identity and the opportunity to develop that identity
- Pride
- Teach children to respect elders and others
- Be spiritual... understanding their spirit
- Allowed to be a child
- Live with purpose and integrity, academic, self care, family plan with structure
- Celebrate success, rites of passage, children honoured
- Witness unity in community, the action of it

Emotional Wellbeing

- Emotional health
- Each child to know and feel loved with support to keep families together
- Self care and self love – unaware of self until early adult
- Respect for elders and self
- Individual (independent) – not afraid to ask for help

Recreation & Play

- Affordable physical activities (passes, aquarium, cultural access – not limited)
- More recreational opportunities and accessible recreational opportunities
- The right to play
- Safe place to play and recreation

Education

- Introduce senior/junior kindergarten to 3- and 4-year-olds

- More funding for education
- Equal opportunity to education
- Dream, hope that they complete high school, college, university, trade
- Positive communication, teachers/parents – school system
- Good education = opportunity, success
- Ongoing support with I.E.P. meetings
- Create awareness about drugs, alcohol
- More qualified special needs teachers (life-long training/learning) and workers
- Be taught and appreciate how to live successfully in both worlds – balanced

Accessible & Equitable Services

- Cultural awareness should be built into all other existing programs
- All programs give respect to parents, grandparents, who are raising the children
- Easier access to information @ special needs/resources
- Services/resources so children can stay with their parents/families
- Easy access to transportation for families
- Access to assessment/services/supports
- Community programs
- Proactive – not wait until there is a problem

Types of Services

- Development services – family life skills – crisis response/intervention
- Prevention and awareness of FAS/D
- Improved healthcare
- Maintain current levels of intervention and prevention programs
- Treatment program for drugs and alcohol
- Programs increases and created to stop abuse of all kinds (physical, emotional, mental, spiritual)
- More after-school programs

Child Care Services & Programs

- More affordable and accessible childcare/daycare
- Childcare (apply, still no guarantees affordable childcare)
- Universal childcare
- Easier access to childcare

Question 1: Telephone Responses

- They have the courage to reach for and grasp the stars. They share what they can with those less fortunate. They freely practice and model their spirituality. They leave education systems feeling stronger for having been there. They see the strength and beauty of their cultures in themselves and in others. Cultural diversity is honoured and celebrated in all sectors – Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal. They grow up in a more just, more connected and spiritual world than we are in right now
- 1 dream would be to build equitable ASCD programs that can be sustained over time. We need to move away from funding communities/organizations little pockets of funding where

they cannot deliver quality services and are challenged to fund support workers for children deemed eligible for support services. If they could pool their money together they could provide more quality programs that could be sustained over time.

- On similar note, we need to improve access to services - having a number of agencies providing the same services in same city is confusing for families. Encourage one agency with multiple services available such as a “one stop shop” or community hub. Create partnerships and make services more visible in the community. Also create a ‘stream lined’ integrated service so that families just have to fill out one form to access a variety of services.
- Our focus should be to mentor the programs to develop the capacity to deliver good services with ongoing support beyond capacity building and into service delivery.
- When non-aboriginal people are providing services to Aboriginal children and families, there should be general knowledge and understanding of their history. Respectful and responsiveness to cultural diversity within each community or Nation. Cultural training should be a core component.
- Children have the right to quality child care and adequate supports.
- To have a good experience in school, To love reading, To love learning and to enjoy it and have fun at school.
- My dreams for all children are that they are safe, healthy and happy and proud of who they are. Definitely to have a good education. That they are healthy and their health is well cared for and they have the right nutritious foods and medical care. That they are safe from any kind of harm. That their parents are educated on what a safe home is for example there are safe ways to store food and chemicals used in the home. That they are safe when they are in vehicles and are wearing their seat belts. They know how to cross the street. That we teach them to be safe from strangers but not so frightened or discouraged from being social. Parents know how to parent so children feel secure which in turn helps parents feel secure.
- To do better than I did, stay in school and graduate
- Have a steady and stable environment and feel safe so they are not moving around
- An alcohol and drug-free life.
- That they grow up thriving in homes that are well supported; have an abundance of food, love and shelter; healthy interactions; in communities that celebrates their strengths and and views these children through the lens of love. Children spirits’ are nurtured and fed so they feel strong and proud of who they are.
- It is my dream that all our children have the opportunity to grow up in strong families and to have fulfilling lives. I believe that as a community we have the resources to support families to be strong if we organize our resources well. Families thrive when our communities are inclusive. Everyone is welcome and children with special needs have a very welcome place. All children need stability, love, care, attention and encouragement to thrive. Children have a critical need for family, for people that are connected to them day in

and day out, for a lifetime. Our well being depends on the relationships that we have around us, there isn't anything more important.

- Have them prepared for their school experience so it will be a success and not a deterrent for them. That they have a voice knowing that there is already a lot of things that they are successful at. That our children know they are great just being who they are and it is not determined by how many colors or numbers they know. That they have a strong identity. They are good just the way they are
- They realize their fullest potential whatever that potential may be. That our children have the same opportunities as other children in Canada and British Columbia. That they have opportunities early in life, including education that honours their Aboriginal reality. That they are able to have opportunities for meaningful employment and income. That their education and their experiences in educational institutions reflect their Aboriginal realities.

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

- Basic needs met for our human rights
- More affordable housing
- Nurturing/nutrition – food security

Cultural Competency

- Educate and inform service providers

Building Capacity

- Less competition for funding for Aboriginal/Metis
- Training/Advocacy
- Secure funding
- Comes from grass roots and not government (policy/rules/regulations)
- Stable funding to implement all strategic plans and frameworks

Strengthening Families

- Making the parent the expert and supporting
- Empower parents/empower children
- Parents become experts –parents need to feel ownership over their space (a hub with a social enterprise to help parents build their self-esteem and give back to community)
- Education – parenting skills done in a non-threatening way
- Brining parents out of isolation
- Parents know when they need help
- Group homes for families – more housing

Strengthening Communities

- Community forums with food as a draw

Improved Model of Service Delivery

- To have a holistic approach around spiritual, mental, physical, emotional
- More aboriginal support and services – allocated funding
- Community-based services/relationships delivered by aboriginals
- The needs to find out by the community, deal with it on a provincial level
- Family strength-based approach – parent needs, community supports
- Building relationships
- We need HUBS (Aboriginal Lead Hubs) in East Van with drop-in and drop-in programs
- Collaboration of all organizations on issue of children and families
- Strong communication between agencies on behalf of children and families
- Identifying roles and responsibilities between agencies
- Mediator(s) is/are needed to ensure clear communication between agencies on behalf of children and families
- Mandate all service providers have wellness plans and wellness facilitators (i.e. counsellors) for children and families
- First nation prenatal programs that incorporate both traditional and Western styles
- Include traditional rites of passage (whole life from birth to death)
- Service to be developed is an “urban aboriginal” lifestyle program and parenting program
- Providing programs in more than one location (i.e. Mother Centre, Friendship Centre, etc.)
- Eldercare – Daycare go hand-in-hand
- Elders more involved
- True partnerships with community agencies (respecting various expertise that includes first nations expertise)
- Increased parent volunteers in programs, schools
- Schools to be more inclusive, welcoming to parent involvement

Types of Services & Programs

- Access to medical/dental services on a regular/consistent practitioner
- Easy access to healthy food and physical activities
- More access to trauma-based counselling
- More funded family drop-ins
- More visible support workers in schools, daycares, drop-ins, after school programs
- Single parent support groups (peer support)
- Clear identification of FASD, ADHD, etc.
- Early identification of above
- Health fairs that give information
- Better police force
- Universal, accessible childcare
- Support workers in M.E.I.A. offices
- Support groups for families who have special needs children
- Improved Respite services – more funding, easier to access

Question 2: Telephone Responses

- We need a comprehensive community plan that includes: health, education, economic development, social wellness, culture, language and self determination. We need to foster more partnerships. We need strong leadership.
- The very most important thing is we as adults need to recognize and value children as human beings and not just children. Teachers, daycare workers and preschool workers are paid less than football players and long shore men who sometimes have no training. And teachers get 15-16 dollars an hour to care for our children. We are not treating our children like they are our most valuable resource and then we wonder why we can't keep people in the early childhood field.
- We all need to have a better understanding of what children need in order to thrive and to be successful. All important adults in children's lives need a basic understanding of children's development that brings in the new knowledge with the traditional knowledge. Through brain imaging and other brain research we are only now recognizing that we need to be doing some things in different ways. There is knowledge in research communities that is not getting to the parents and community. There is traditional knowledge that is not being passed on and acted on. Sometime we see parents and children struggling because parents expect the child to be developmentally more capable. Sometimes children have undiagnosed learning differences and are blamed for behaviours over which they have little control. Staff working in early childhood centers may not know the parent/family-child relationship(s) is fundamental to the child's development and may not know how to best support relationships within a child's family system. The focus of our efforts needs to be on supporting the child within the context of the family and community in which he or she lives to ensure every child has a stable, loving and developmentally encouraging environment.
- We have to start with basic needs. In this country, province, city, we have to deal with poverty. We have to care for families. If you aren't caring for the parents, you aren't caring for the children.
- We have to support families to care for their children in a much different way. If we ever want to end this legacy of other people caring for our children when they are at risk, then we have to provide much higher levels of support for those families. We need to help them recover from whatever is stopping them from being the loving parents that they are.
- Help and assistance for parents to break the cycle of addictions for self-healing
- More alcohol and drug treatment for families
- More emotional support (i.e. counseling and parenting programs on how to cope with stresses in the home)
- We need to b There needs to be places for families to go and feel that they can do and learn all of these things to help their children feel safe. But first the parents need to feel safe and comfortable to attend such a place. For example at the Mother Centre and Health and Spirit Lodge parents I have talked to parents who will go because they need to get out of the

house or get a cup of coffee or get clothes, food or need someone to take care of their child. They need child care where there are no wait lists and they can drop their child off if they just need a break.

- Be proactive rather than reactive
- We need more programs like the Red Fox Program which is an active healthy lifestyles outreach program for First Nations living in urban settings. We need more qualified special needs workers and teachers. We need access to more information and resources for people with special needs. One of the most important things that need to happen in my community to improve the health and wellness of our children is increase the supports for families. Often the families do not have the tools or support necessary to provide the basic care and safety for their children. Many families do not have safe affordable housing for their children; this must be in place in order to improve the health and wellness of our children.
- More funds for parents that are struggling, they don't get enough on social assistance
- We need to provide bus passes so parents can get to and from the programs
- We need more parent supports in all areas – for instance, drug and alcohol/addictions – there is a lot of healing that needs to take place
- Recruit and retain Aboriginal staff into Aboriginal programs. We need to build successful mentoring relationships in order to build capacity in Aboriginal communities to deliver the ASCD services.
- From provincial perspective, I think there needs to be a process that engages communities, children and families, to have a dialogue and give input into “what does this service (ASCD specifically) need to look like?” We need to determine that first, identify what Aboriginal people want their services to look like. Mainstream guidelines are interpreted differently in every community making for a variety of interpretations of SCD/ASCD services. I'd like to see Aboriginal people identify what the ASCD program ideally would look like for Aboriginal communities. Would they be different then mainstream, if so, what would that look like?
- Adequate training to support the staff who are supporting the children and families. Whether the family is going through crisis or living in a remote or isolated area. They have stories and at some point some of those stories will be shared with the worker and does the worker have the skills needed to provide proper supports or make appropriate referrals where needed.
- Offer similar services in each community. Not all communities have the same services available. For instance, some communities might have family support worker positions but in other communities there are no services like that and therefore they (ASCD) need to have the skills to deal with the families' needs. Training should happen at the regional levels because communities won't have the funding and capacity to deliver their own training. ASCD workers need to know when to make an appropriate referral and the follow up steps. Ideally

it would be someone like Sue Sterling in the Interior Region to organize the training all the regions need positions like this.

- Supports catered to meet the needs of the families.
- Recognize the additional challenges such as transportation smaller remote communities for families to access services.
- . Societal education/decolonization --- we are a “culturally literate” society. Our communities need to allow ourselves to heal, we need to honour the past and build on those strengths that got us through it! We need to reconnect with our families, communities, nations, ways of being, languages. We need to remember and model the sacredness of the child, women, and family. We need to educate mainstream society at every possible turn. We need to be positive and never give up hope—the state of the world depends on this.

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

Language Revitalization

- Find/identify who knows culture/language
- Parents – ask family about language
- Commitment from schools – language (students)
- Providing the resources, culture/language i.e. Carson Graham Squamish Cultural studies
- Record it – Practice it – Aboriginal kids
- Recording – language from parents
- Specific funds for urban aboriginal culture and language in order to enhance urban aboriginal language and culture

Cultural Revitalization

- Network (e.g. events – Xmas party) Ha’ SI, Gold River, BC – Newspaper, online access
- List – community mapping – resource booklist
- Vancouver Wellness Society i.e. Aboriginal Historical Site/Society (rather than piecemeal)
- Break down the shame (barriers) (youth, children)
- Training – child in the home of a relative – appropriate funding
- Network – Foster Parents – provide cultural sensitive
- Listen and hear parents’ stories
- Document history/culture
- Develop capacity building in the urban aboriginal community

Aboriginal Curriculum & Programming

- Within our schools system first nation programs that teach first nation culture and language
- Develop programs also within the urban community as well

Cultural Competency

- Cultural safety – non-native society (mainstream)
- Training of FN and NFN public of why maintaining aboriginal culture and language is important

- Why do think it is important? We are a large part of Canada's rich heritage
- Ensure an enhanced cultural experience between urban aboriginal and non-urban aboriginal groups
- So that we communicate with one another to ensure that our culture and language are honoured (via instilling cultural sensitivity with groups through sharing activities –drum groups, jigging, carving, regalia making, etc.).

Question 3: Telephone Responses

- I need to actively seek the teachings, to travel to Mission to learn *Ucwalmicw*, to travel home to attend band meetings, gatherings, and bring my children with me. I need to take the time to spend time to listen to, observe and support my Elders in their roles to pass on their knowledge, wisdom and experiences. Mainstream society needs to be re-educated
- 3Communities to determine what services need to look like. For example, in one community language might be a priority whereas in other communities they might have other priorities. Community based approach vs. 'one model to fit all'. Elders should guide this process along with the parent representation.
- Again, we need to recruit and retain Aboriginal staff to be delivering the services, as well as provide the ongoing support, training and mentoring.
- Enhance supports to communities that would like to build their language back up.
- We need more First Nations programs, like language and culture, dancing, drumming
- We need to bring back cultural traditions and more community gatherings to celebrate, practice and bring people together
- We can pass down our culture and language in our community by beginning with families. Culture and language begins at home with parents and grandparents. If we teach our children to be proud of their culture and language and instill in them a sense of pride when sharing traditional practices and knowledge, they will carry this with them as they grow older.
- I am not sure because I am just starting to learn about my west coast culture. The friendship centre here is too far and my children don't like to go there because it takes us about an hour to get there and mainly because of the area it is in which is the east Hastings area. Not all aboriginals in Vancouver live in the downtown eastside. If there were places central and in other neighbourhoods that would help.
- My children went to a school where the First Nations Support Worker introduced himself and said he was there to support my children with homework etc but when my daughter went she didn't want to go back. There is only so much coloring one can do around culture.
- We assume that elders know their culture and language and some feel a lot of shame and guilt around not knowing their language and culture and not being able to pass it on to their children. We need to make our community a safe comfortable place for them. Because of the residential school we need everyone to understand that we did the best we could and we still are and we did not have control. Our parents did the best they could with what they had.

We need to accept them for who they are. We need to teach elders about culture and language and make it safe for them to pass it on. Storytelling doesn't have to be about culture but can be about life experiences. If they are good at making bread, knitting, baking pies, cleaning let them share that with others it doesn't always have to be beading. Meet them where they are at and once you built their trust teach them cultural activities that they can be successful at. We want to get them involved by showing an interest in them not by forcing them. Treat everyone as your own family and neighbours with respect. Use common courtesy and find out who they are, where did they come from and who are their mom and dad, like we used to.

- We need more funding to help the elders find resources
- I would like to learn my language – I wouldn't know where to look, or where to start so we need to find the people who can teach the various languages and cultures that are in an urban setting
- .Funding needs to be provided towards the early years. Culture and language needs to be an essential component to all early years programs delivered in Aboriginal communities - in our daycares, preschools, drop-in programs, etc.
- The teachings of the Elders and cultural teachers needs to be passed on during the early years when children are most able to embrace the teachings.
- . We need to do a much better job of educating everyone that language and culture is so important for human development. Learning a second language has its advantages in terms of brain development and executive functioning; children who know two or more languages have certain brain advantages. The mainstream world needs to be behind this and to see the benefits of Aboriginal languages as important or more important for BC as French. A recent advertisement for Pacific Coastal was done first in English and then in a coastal aboriginal language. With more awareness there may be more funding opportunities and more language classes offered, it will become the norm rather than the exception that Aboriginal language courses are available. It may pass into law as it has in New Zealand and in Norway and Sweden. There is the more important issue of who people are; they are defined by the words they speak, the culture that the words capture, that only the native language can capture. Language and culture cannot be separated, therefore for culture to truly live on it must have language.
- That is tough as we are struggling to find a cultural teacher. At this time, there are only 4 fluent speakers on the territory the school is on. We have been trying to access the 1st Voices website but with the diversity here we can't always get what we need. There are a lot of languages here in BC on the verge of extinction. We need resources, cd's, videos and interactive programs. We need money put into having the professional visitors sit with the elders and gather information. For example the Language Master would be a great resource but we need more of them and funding to get them. We are need more money and time is of the essence as we are losing our elders.

- Control over our education system is needed. Our basic needs are not currently being met, we need them to be met in all areas: housing, safety, food & nutrition, etc. We also need to be free of poverty and oppression. We need access and equality to services and education. As Dr.'s we can only do so much in supporting the wellness of children and families, especially when they are living in poverty and not able to provide nutritious food for their children or themselves.

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?*

Aboriginal Representation

- Strengthen the voices of the aboriginal community – recognizes the diversity
- Aboriginal delivering Aboriginal services
- Hiring more aboriginal people to bridge the gap and build the trust in the community
- Consistent funding for aboriginal programs
- Incorporate education for careers and early years K-12

Improved Model of Service Delivery

- Collaboration between families, service providers, policy makers
- Education to parents at home with young children

Cultural Competency

- Culturally sensitivity to deliver service to a targeted group
- Awareness to the intergeneration effects of the residential school system (service providers, families)
- Cultural orientation for all employees in an aboriginal agency or services to change perspectives

Community-based

- Community service partnerships (relationships) to share each other's strengths
- Global equality
- Bottom up approach and government has to stay out of the planning and programming
- Bring back the Matriarchal System to the urban community, this is the tradition of our people
- To allow the non-aboriginal community to work with us but not decide for us – it takes a community to raise our children
- Play and recreation programs – mini soccer league

Building on Strengths

- Take a look at positive programming that exists – like the Aboriginal Mother Centre, Young Parents Program @ Friendship Centre, Young Fathers Program, Building Blocks, Literacy Programs with grandparents (Reading Raven) – don't reinvent the wheel
- Celebrate and honour our children

Question 4: Telephone Responses

- We need to continue to have cultural workers and community workers in all communities. We need cultural workers in all our ECE programs and education systems. ECE has a strong cultural basis in some areas, but it needs to be strengthened with resources and funding to make sure culture is in all programs where our children go. We need to be investing in our children!
- We need to have somebody teaching who the culture and language is relevant to. For example; the Cree language if you have a Cree teacher or visitor then you know they will put their heart and soul into it because it belongs to them. If we had tools like language master and had permission to use it and had the correct pronouncement and enunciation then we could have another version of Quality Classroom but with an Aboriginal focus.
- Staff working with families need to be reflective of the same culture as the families they are serving. If that is not possible we need to make sure that we train and evaluate staff to ensure that they are culturally competent and respectful of the families they are serving. When the parent picks up the child it is a wonderful time for service providers to show the child how their family members are respected and regarded. It is very important for the child to see how their parents are valued. As service providers we have a huge responsibility to show children that their parents are valued and supported especially if their parents are struggling. Building Blocks is a program that recognizes this is happening in all settings that young children attend.
- We need to practice family centred care and follow the lead of the family to what ever degree possible and foster connections with the family. For some families culture may not be of great significance. Some families may have been separated from their culture. As service providers in supportive roles we would want to provide opportunities for them to reconnect with their language and culture and link them to other families who share their heritage.
- We have to ensure that there is proportionately the right amount of funding going to Aboriginal agencies and that we are supporting Aboriginal agencies with the autonomy to develop services that are culturally relevant.
- Have a site run by First Nations people where language and culture are practiced daily – like drumming, singing, and language classes
- We need cultural teachers to teach proper protocol
- We need to get parents involved but first we need to make sure they feel comfortable and safe. If there is a committee made up of parents ,elders, teachers and someone from the non-Aboriginal community and then get input from everybody to use them as resource people. That way you have a diverse group and you can find out what resources are available out there. If there isn't then can we develop a book in our language for children 0-6 . You can develop culturally relevant material with your committee to make for your program.
- The government needs to stop the cutbacks and bring back the money so we can access these places that provide programs. We start going to programs and then all of a sudden

they're gone. We need more hands on activities, like button blankets. We are tactile learners.

- In order to ensure that culturally relevant programs and services are provided in a coordinated and integrated way it is critical that the agencies that are delivering the programs and services are knowledgeable and respectful of all Aboriginal nations. The pan-Aboriginal approach is ineffective and often confuses Aboriginal children. Each nation of people has a unique culture, including Metis, and it is difficult to instill a sense of pride in who you are if you are confused about your own culture and language.
- Have more First Nations daycare and Aboriginal Head Start sites
- The Aboriginal Head Start program educates children and parents
- We need more First Nations Early Childhood Educators
- We need to go back to the way First Nations lived before when it was a community effort to raise a child.
- Informed decision making model to determine what the services should look like - equal representation from communities, the families that are accessing the services, as well as community partners, other service programs, education, health, Elders would all give input into how services will be delivered. (Similar to an Advisory Committee or Steering Committee). That way you would hope to see culture and language incorporated into it, whatever that community or Nation feels is a priority. Ongoing input from this committee is also important to give opportunity to shift overtime and guide decisions about service delivery as the community grows.
- Partnerships should be created with other service providers in the Nation and greater community. These partnerships will allow services to reach more people, share costs in some areas such as training
- Again, reference to cultural training for non-aboriginal service providers servicing Aboriginal children and families. (In my experience, when surveying Aboriginal service providers, cultural training was also a priority for them.)
- Smaller communities could be encouraged to pool their resources together to create a larger, more sustainable program. Create partnerships and work in collaboration. An example would be one program servicing 4 or 5 communities. Each community had representation on the Advisory Committee and an equal voice in creating the service delivery model.
- Look at programs that may have a similar purpose to ensure that services do not overlap; For example, AIDP serves children 0-6 and ASCD serves 0- 12 with some services to 19. How can these programs work together to ensure that there is no overlap. Look at other home visiting programs such as HIPPPY etc.....Integrate their services.
- There must be true community participation every step of the way on the road to integrated program delivery. Decolonization of the entire education system--- colonized instructors cannot(for the most part) be expected to deliver Indigenized curriculum or incorporate

Indigenization frameworks. Parents and caregivers AND community Elders need to be at all planning, evaluations, training etc tables.

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

- Increased cultural events
- Understanding where you came from...to know where you are going (history...residential school...relearning to be a better parent/mother/father/spouse, etc.)
- Implement cultural component

Improved Model of Service Delivery

- Medical care – consistent care, valued information isn't lost
- Same/more family doctors OBGYN
- Central – E, W, N, S – OBGYN
- Continue cultural programs after school/evening/weekend
- Healthiest babies – possible, extended 2 or 3 years (age)
- Providing opportunities for dialogue with community members (e.g. at Neighborhood Houses, Community Centres)
- Connect children and parents with school teachers, principal, police, school board, service providers, health fairs
- Networking with families
- School – teach, MCFD – family, same page – respect, continuity of staff involvement
- Communication – i.e. newsletters, community meetings (provide childcare, food, bus tickets/transportation)
- Connections between all to be able to work together
- FN Parent Club (www.fsca.com) – parents actively involved i.e. volunteer, Terry Fox Run, book fair, talent show, homework clubs, Cooking Fun 4 Families, volunteer all year long actively – welcoming for both families and school staff

Aboriginal Representation

- Increased funding for community youth and parent events that give the opportunity to give opinion, input, share...
- Voice on the VSB – city council and everything
- More Aboriginal First Nations Support Workers
- More dollars for FNSW
- Parents involvement – PAC meeting – keep it informal
- More advocacy
- Invite them to the school – food, coffee, healthy food
- Have Elder in school
- Have Elder in the community

Types of Programs & Services

- Mobile screening units – dental, vision, hearing (go to the people rather than the clinic, regular basis)

Address Basic Needs

- Increase affordable housing
- Access to affordable/healthy food, fruits and vegetables/proteins

Funding

- Adequate funding to provide resources
 - Provide nutritional snacks
 - Relevant programs, services, and support
 - Building on existing resources (proven to be successful)
 - Long term \$\$\$
 - **Not** having to compete for same pool of funds
 - New facilities

Question 5: Telephone Responses

- Children: every class/session/day begins with an acknowledgement of each child's strengths or gifts—this can easily be done with a daily opening circle specifically for this. Children also need to hear that we learn from them, too! Families: need to be treated like they are who they are--- the most important and primary teachers/caregivers of the child. We can build on this by taking into account and practicing what the parents tell us about their child. (where possible and appropriate). Programs: the best way we can build on a program's strengths is to expand them! We all know about shortages in funding, staffing etc--- we should always find a way to expand those aspects of a program that are working. Service providers: to build on their strengths we need to allow them opportunities to come together with their peers to share best practices, to rejuvenate, etc. Community: programs need to be welcoming and respectful of, and value the strengths that are present in the community—this starts by expecting to find strength and acknowledging those strengths--- than we can start to build on them. The easiest way to do so is to have community members share what they know about their cultures/communities/ways of being whenever possible. Hopefully this will eventually work into paid positions for more community members to work with their communities children.
- 5For ASCD, the communities are all at such diverse stages in building child development services, I would tend to think about regional support and mentorship. Currently there are two regions in the province that have Regional Coordinators to support Aboriginal programs. This has been an asset to success of creating quality programs.
- Having the shared decision making model so you're getting input from everyone around determining what kind of services should be developed. Shared input to make informed decisions. Participation from elders, community members and community service partners. Create an advisory that will continue to guide the services.

- More support to families so they can provide input. Provide training and support in a family centred practice so that staff know when to when to advocate for a family when they don't have the ability to advocate for themselves. And when ready, empower them to advocate for themselves.
- Create a strength based model of service delivery. Build on the strengths of the child, the family and the community or Nation.
- Honor the rights of the child!
- We need to put ourselves out there more, advertise more because a lot of families don't even know that the services exist
- We could put advertisements in the newspaper that the community is having an event or circle or family meeting – by word of mouth, hand out flyers, go to the schools, let Aboriginal workers know in the schools (let them know that they need to hand out flyers)
- We need to open the doors of communication between all service providers and programs
- Building on the existing strengths of children means identifying what those strengths are. Each child has different strengths and this requires that service providers care for each child as a unique individual as parents and grandparents do. Strengths can be increased by connecting service providers with parents and grandparents. This can be accomplished by creating programs that are effective at home with families, and with service providers.
- 3 and 4 year olds should be introduced into the school system like in Ontario they offer junior and senior Kindergarten. Offer full day kindergarten to all students not just First Nations and Special Needs. We need more affordable and accessible daycares available for various ages. Right now there are wait lists for 5 years, my mother actually got a call when her girls were in grades 7 and grade 9 from a daycare where she had put the names of her children down when they were young. That is an example of how bad the wait lists are. I notice there are empty lots and vacant floors in buildings make use of these resources and build a daycare
- These Programs and services need to be made comfortable for parents to want to attend and stay once they get there. A lot come from out of town and so they are not sure they are coming into foreign territory for example some come from the coast and some come from the prairies and they don't want to offend anyone. Service providers need knowledge of the diverse cultures that are coming to access their services or at least to know the basics. If they don't then they need to be interested and find out more from their clients.
- We need to expand the programs that are successful and have funding that is provided on a consistent basis.
- We need to have a strengths based perspective and a child focused perspective. If you have a child who has some learning delays, we need to see that child through the lens of strength rather than deficit. For example if a child is prone to having temper tantrums, we would view that child as 'strong spirited' rather than 'behaviour challenged'.

- I think we all know exactly what needs to happen for our children and families. We need the political will to make it happen, to see the importance of the early years. We know that children do best within their own family home, that is loving and nurturing and safe. If children are living in homes where they are hungry or they are dealing with parents who are struggling with addictions, they are not being supported to be the best that they can be. Poverty is so shameful in this country. We deal with the aftermath of poverty rather than the core issue of it.
- We need the spirit to turn from despair to hope. There is so much more knowledge and skill. These children are going to be our future leaders.
- There are many very positive initiatives underway at the child, family and community level. We need to be celebrating some of these successes in powerful ways. I don't think we do that enough. We need to be looking at children's services as 'Rights', as 'Entitlements', not as charity, or as meeting their needs. They are entitled to these services as a right. This is where we need to use Jordan's Principle in our documents, and referencing it when ever it is appropriate. We need one Aboriginal Early Childhood Framework that provides an overarching vision of what we need to do in order for all our young children to be successful. Families with young children are mobile and are less likely to have a stable home and economic security. It is not in their best interest to have two Aboriginal frameworks, possibly three frameworks if we include the non Aboriginal Early Years Framework. It is conceivable that a family would be on reserve, off reserve in Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children's services all in a year (or a month) and under possibly three Frameworks? The Early Years Framework does not reference children at risk and with disabilities and they need to be part of this. How are we going to create a framework that makes parents of children with special needs feel included or parents who have special needs themselves feel included? AIDP services need to be connected to the Early Years services and fully referenced.
- In order to build on the strengths of the children and families we need to ask them what they need and then listen to them. We need to find out how we as service providers can support them by advocating and empowering the family. By listening to them we are showing them a form of respect and by advocating for them respectfully they will feel their voices are being heard and in turn they will be able to speak for their children and families themselves.
- Continue negotiating the reinforcement of our community plans. We need to continue to advocate for ourselves and our children and their families. We need to coordinate our efforts to have partnerships; partnerships with each other, our towns, and partnerships with government needs to be fostered.
- We need to reach out to our Urban brothers and sisters. The focus of the province has been on 1st nations or those with Status, and not enough attention has been paid to the Metis people, the Urban people or the at risk populations. We need to encourage 1st Nations communities to reach out to their disbursed community members.

DESIRED SERVICES

- Development services – family life skills – crisis response/intervention
- Prevention and awareness of FAS/D
- Improved healthcare
- Maintain current levels of intervention and prevention programs
- Treatment program for drugs and alcohol
- Programs increases and created to stop abuse of all kinds (physical, emotional, mental, spiritual)
- More after-school programs
- Mobile screening units – dental, vision, hearing (go to the people rather than the clinic, regular basis)

Child Care Services & Programs

- Universal, accessible childcare and more affordable for parents who have to pay
- Access to medical/dental services on a regular/consistent practitioner
- Easy access to healthy food and physical activities
- More access to trauma-based counselling
- More funded family drop-ins
- More visible support workers in schools, daycares, drop-ins, after school programs
- Single parent support groups (peer support)
- Clear identification and early identification of FASD, ADHD, etc.
- Health fairs that give information
- Support workers in M.E.I.A. offices
- Support groups for families who have children with special needs
- Improved Respite services – more funding, easier to access

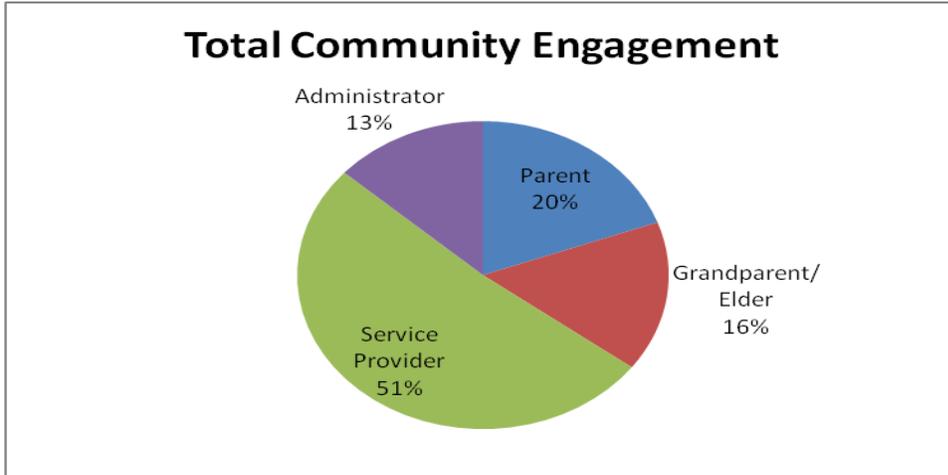
Total # of Participants in Community Engagements: 216

Completed with Parents: 42

Completed with Grandparents/Elders: 34

Completed with Service Providers: 111

Completed with Administrators: 2

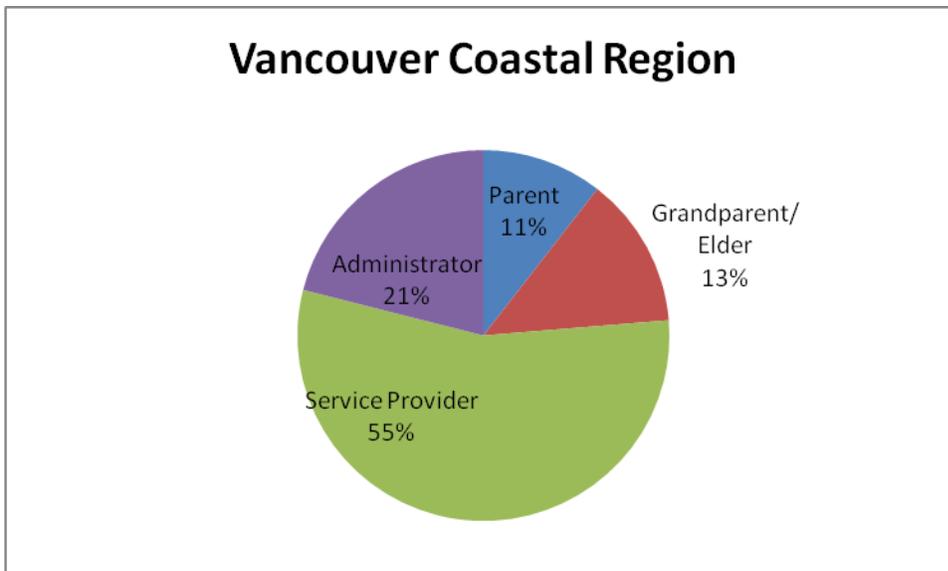


Vancouver Coastal Region

November 24th Host: Vancouver Native Health Society: Vancouver

November 25th Host: Vancouver Native Friendship Centre: Vancouver East Side

Total # of participants: 38



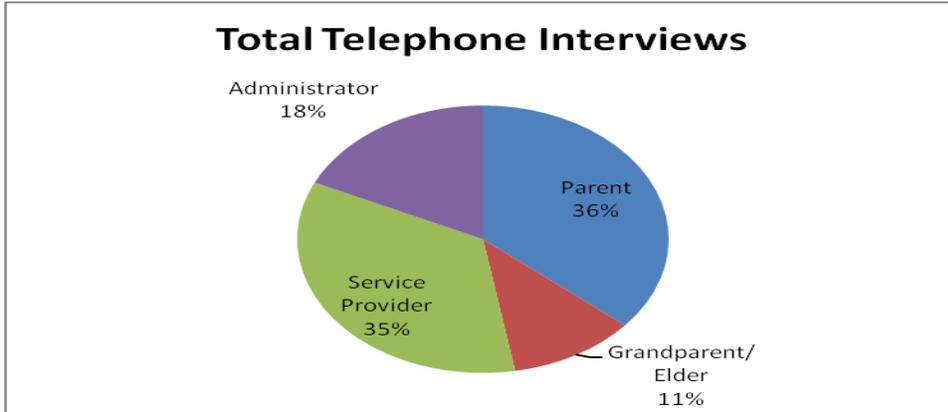
Total # of Telephone Interviews completed: 72

Completed with Parents: 26

Completed with Grandparents/Elders: 8

Completed with Service Providers: 25

Completed with Administrators: 13



Vancouver Coastal Region

Total # of participants: 11

Parent: 5

Grandparent/Elder: 1

Service Provider: 2

Administrator: 3

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

