



UAKN
Urban Aboriginal
Knowledge Network

RCdU
Réseau de connaissances des
Autochtones en milieu urbain

RESEARCH PROJECT SUMMARY

Western Research Centre

Name of Project:

Kindergarten Transitions II: A Scan of Existing Supportive Programs for Aboriginal Children and Families in British Columbia

An investigation into the existence of transition programs in BC for Aboriginal children and their families.

Collaborating Friendship Centre and/or other urban Aboriginal organization:

Tillicum Lelum Aboriginal Friendship Centre

BC Regional Innovation Chair for Aboriginal Early Childhood Development, Vancouver Island University

Research Start-up Summary and Abstract:

Tillicum Lelum has recently shifted its organizational focus from intervention to prevention. Over the last two years, the organization has embarked on the creation of an ECD strategic planning process focusing on early childhood development. In 2011, Tillicum Lelum and the BC Regional Innovation Chair (BCRIC) for Aboriginal Early Childhood Development (AECD) at Vancouver Island University (VIU) partnered to collaborate on a small number of projects. The purpose of the most recent of these projects, *The Transition onto Kindergarten: A Community Approach to Integrating a Child's Fragmented World* (Beaton & McDonell, 2013) (Transitions I) explored and analyzed the research on the topic of how best to support young children during their transition from early childhood settings into kindergarten.

It was not the purpose of the initial Transition project to identify already existing programs that were supporting early childhood transitions to kindergarten. However, it was recognized that having more information about existing programs in British Columbia could inform the development of present and future services and programs. As a result Tillicum Lelum and VIU's BCRIC for AECD submitted a proposal to the Urban Aboriginal Knowledge Network (UAKN) to fund an investigation into the existence of transition programs in BC; in particular, programs for Aboriginal children and their families.

The UAKN Project objectives were outlined by the authors. It was intended that the project would advance our understanding about:

- Existing partnerships between childhood settings and kindergarten/primary in selected jurisdictions of BC.
- Methods and models utilized to create and maintain successful partnerships
- Elements of successful working partnerships
- Important aspects of building working relationships across systems and cultures

Engagement Objectives:

The research methodology included a survey of existing transition programs in the province of BC. The survey was carried out through telephone interviews with fourteen programs across the province. This undertaking required three initial steps to identifying the programs. First, programs were identified that support Aboriginal children and their families as they transition to kindergarten. To do this a Google search of BC programs was conducted using the following search terms: kindergarten transition, Aboriginal kindergarten transition, supported kindergarten transition, transitional kindergarten, transition to kindergarten program. A quick scan of each webpage was made, looking for programs that fit the particular criteria including programs that:

- Focus on supporting children as they transition from childcare or home settings into kindergarten.
- Serve Aboriginal children and their families; and
- Are located Urban/off-reserve.

Main contact:

Linda McDonell
3631 Farnsworth Road, RR 6, Cobble Hill,
British Columbia, V0R 1L4
250-740-6267
Linda.McDonell@viu.ca

Grace Elliott-Nielsen, Executive Director
Tillicum Lelum Aboriginal Friendship Centre
927 Haliburton Street
Nanaimo, British Columbia
V9R 6N4
Phone: 250-753-8291
educationcentre@tillicumlelum.ca