



Developing Culturally Sensitive Evaluation and Assessment Tools for Early Childhood Programs

KEY FINDINGS

The suggestions made by all participants to guide the research aspect were categorized into four areas: parent outreach and orientation, staff orientation and training, creating additional space and time for cultural input and feedback and project administration and management.

- Parent outreach and orientation is important and must be collaborative and focus on strengthening relationships and allow opportunities for parents to inform development of assessment for learning tools and strategies.
- Elder/professional staff orientation and training is collaborative, engaging with the inclusion of focus group sessions to ensure knowledge is shared related to the Qeq program and related research (assessment learning) to school district teachers once children transition to the kindergarten program.
- Creating additional space and time for cultural input and feedback is necessary and the evaluation tools must be adjusted to allow for this input, create more diverse opportunities, ensure that the research team is involved with cultural events and activities to increase exposure to community and cultural traditions, practices, and ways of knowing that contribute to the development of culturally sensitive and responsive research tools and processes.
- Project administration and management that focuses on strengthening relationships, connect families, strengthen the assessment for learning approach, improve coordination and planning for all partners involved, revisit Qeq values on a regular basis, inclusion of Elders and ensure that there is equity across the partnerships.

INTRODUCTION

The research report Developing Culturally Sensitive Evaluation and Assessment Tools for Early Childhood Programs focused on what was learned from the evaluation process and how this has influenced the development of evaluation and assessment tools. The work of this project was summarized into six research goals.

The TLAFC recognized the importance of comprehensive and rigorous child assessment and evaluation programs to validate the efficiency and effectiveness of Qeq College to ensure the plan would align well with cultural values and Aboriginal ways of knowing relevant to both the local First Nation communities and the TLAFC community. Aligning content, teaching methods and assessment tools with cultural values is well supported in AECD literature.

PARTNERSHIPS

Tillicum Lelum Aboriginal Friendship Centre (TLAFC) BC Regional Innovation Chair (BCRIC) for Aboriginal Early Childhood Development (AECD) School District 68

The Qeq College Partners (Tillicum Lelum Aboriginal Friendship Centre, School District 68, and the BC Regional Innovation Chair for Aboriginal Early Childhood Development research team at Vancouver Island University) would like to acknowledge the many parents, Elders, community members, early childhood educators, kindergarten teachers, and support workers that contributed to the Qeq College Transitions Year program and to the research undertaken for this important project. Huy ch'qa

METHODOLOGY

Qualitative methods used were structured and unstructured interviews and focus group discussions. The methods in this study used were all action oriented, participatory, strengths-focused, and collaborative to ensure research data are used to create and inform innovative and responsive solutions to build high quality and culturally and community responsive programs. Aboriginal families, Elders and other community members are a central part of the research process and are involved in research planning, tool development, analysis and evaluation.

CONCLUSION

The relationships and processes can be challenging at times as this project is large and complex and involves many partners and participants. The families and communities must be a part of this process to ensure that cultural relevance and sensitivity is included in resources to support the transitions from an early childhood setting to kindergarten which can be considered a potentially vulnerable time. The suggestions made by all participants to guide the research aspect were categorized into four areas: parent outreach and orientation, staff orientation and training, creating additional space and time for cultural

input and feedback and project administration and management.

For more information on this project visit:

<http://uakn.org/research-project/creating-effective-high-quality-transitions/>

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