



Giving Voice to Urban Aboriginal Families

KEY FINDINGS

Major themes that emerged from the research were as follows below:

- **Love** – Children need to know they are loved and wanted;
- **Healthy Way of Living** – Choosing to live healthy by eating well and having physical activity through being a close-knit family;
- **Identity, Culture and Tradition** – Important to restore their confidence, and knowing that they can turn to their songs and turn to their families. Children need to know that they can turn to their families, and turn to their culture and know that it will bring them pride;
- **Support Programs & Resources** – The need to have programs where the varying ages are served and having inclusive programming;
- **Families** – Having a strong family and support system;
- **Quality Time** – Fostering relationships through parental involvement. Through spending time with your children whether it is a physical activity, being outdoors, or playing with them and reading to them. It all contributes to the well-being a child;
- **Safety** – Safety and stability establishes a good environment for the child's development;
- **Community** – The whole community contributes to raising the child;
- **Education and Learning** – You can help to make the child strong and independent through learning;
- **Respect** – There needs to be respect established in the family; and
- **Building Individually** – Being open to their individuality.

INTRODUCTION

There have been reports completed, that illustrated the urgent need to preserve cultural identity for Indigenous children and families. The report from the South Vancouver Island – Early Years Action Plan 2015-2020, identified that Aboriginal children and families who are living in an urban setting can and should ask for services offered in the region.

The Premier of British Columbia has also identified the need for improvement in the service delivered for Aboriginal families. The Guiding Principles of the Child, Family and Community Services Act state:

Aboriginal people should be involved in the planning and delivery of services to Aboriginal children and their families ... The cultural identity of Aboriginal children should be preserved

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada also discusses the importance of providing cultural programming to Aboriginal children. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission states that:

We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to develop culturally appropriate early childhood education programs for Aboriginal families (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 94 Calls to Action).

PARTNERSHIPS

The coordinators partnered with the University of Victoria, different Aboriginal stakeholders in education, the British Columbia Association of Native Friendship Centre and the Hulitan Family Services Society. They also worked with individuals in the Greater Victoria Capital Region who are working with young children and raising young Aboriginal children.

METHODOLOGY

There were interviews that were held in the community. There were 108 interviews conducted that involved individuals who were raising children or working directly with young Indigenous children, ages 0-8 across southern Vancouver Island. The individuals who were interviewed were asked what they believed contributed to the well-being of their young children. There were 846 responses. Five community members analyzed their responses.

MAIN FINDINGS

There was a ten-minute video that was produced by the organizers. The link is below. The video provides additional information and evidence to support the growth of Indigenous children in the South Vancouver Island region.

Some of the topics that are illustrated in the video pertain to:

- Encouraging children to pursue their education;
- Teaching them their cultural teachings;
- Promoting healthy eating habits and physical activity;
- Fostering dental health care; and
- Providing culturally relevant programming (through learning songs and storytelling with community Elders);

CONCLUSION

There are many factors that can be attributed to the development of Aboriginal children's well-being. The main factors include:

- Love;
- Healthy Way of Life;
- Identity, Culture and Tradition;
- Support, Programs and Resources;
- Family;
- Quality Time;
- Safety;
- Community;
- Education & Learning;
- Respect; and
- Building Individuality.

For more information on this project visit:

http://uakn.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/WRC-Final-Paper_Giving-Voice-to-Urban-Aboriginal-Families_2016-1.pdf

ABOUT US:

Main Contact and information:

Beverly Smith, D.Phil. (Oxon)
Associate Director, Centre for Early Childhood Research and Policy University of Victoria
reach@uvic.ca

Authors and Affiliations:

Beverly Smith,
Adjunct Professor,
Department of Psychology,

University of Victoria

Suzanne Jackson
Aboriginal Engagement Coordinator
Success By 6 (south Vancouver Island)

Leslie Brown,
Retired Professor
University of Victoria and Adjunct,
BC Association of Native Friendship Centers

Helen Raptis
Associate Dean, Faculty of Education
University of Victoria
Danielle Smith
Director, Aboriginal Stakeholder Engagement
Provincial Office of the Early Years



The Urban Aboriginal Knowledge Network, the UAKN, is a community driven research network focused on the Urban Aboriginal population in Canada. The UAKN establishes a national, interdisciplinary network involving universities, community, and government partners for research, scholarship and knowledge mobilization. For more information visit: www.uakn.org



Social Sciences and Humanities
Research Council of Canada

Conseil de recherches en
sciences humaines du Canada

Canada