



BC FIRST NATIONS HEAD START PROGRAM

Head Start Mandate

- **What is Head Start**
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What is Head Start

BC FIRST NATIONS HEAD START ON-RESERVE (BCFNHS) is a Health Canada initiative, which funds holistic, community-based programs, designed to enhance early child development and school readiness for First Nations preschool children (birth to 6 years) on reserve.

The focus of BCFNHS is on locally-controlled and designed early intervention strategies – providing First Nations children with opportunities to develop a positive sense of them selves, a desire for learning and successes to build upon, based on the caring, creativity and pride that flows from a grounding, in their community beliefs and values.

As an “early intervention program” Head Start seeks to enhance school readiness and overall health and wellness, which are key factors for children’s future self-confidence and success.

But just as importantly, Head Start recognizes that culture is also a fundamental part of a child’s development. Enabling children to know and experience their history, values and cultural practices shows them that they belong, that they have a place and a context, and that they have a community identity they can be proud of. This, too, is a gift of untold value, as children grow and become young adults ready to take their place in the world.

Each Head Start project is encouraged to reflect the uniqueness of its First Nations community and culture, and to take into account the emotional, spiritual, physical, and intellectual needs of children for life long learning.

All Head Start Programming is built upon Six Key Components:

Culture and Language

Education

Health Promotion

Nutrition

Parent and Family Involvement

Social Support

(The six key components are described in detail in the 'Handbook: Models of Delivery and Best Practices' in Tab 5)

Head Start Principles

THE BCFNHS PROGRAM WILL:

- √ Support the spiritual, emotional, intellectual and physical growth of each child;
 - √ Support and encourage children to enjoy life-long learning;
 - √ Support parents and guardians as the primary teachers and caregivers of their children;
 - √ Encourage parents to play a major part in the planning, developing and evaluating the programs;
 - √ Recognize and support the role of the extended family in teaching and caring for their children;
 - √ Include the broader community as part of the project throughout all stages, from planning to evaluation;
 - √ Ensure the projects work with and are supported by other community programs;
 - √ Ensure resources are used in the best way possible to produce measurable outcomes.
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