



Issue 4
Summer 2003

G

ROWING TOGETHER

NEWS & RESOURCES FOR THE BC FIRST NATIONS HEAD START ON-RESERVE PROGRAM

BC FIRST NATIONS HEAD START

Singing and Dancing in Kitwanga

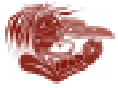


*sharing
successes*

CHILDREN AT KITWANGA HEAD START ENJOY PARTICIPATING IN A WONDERFUL **SONG AND DANCE PROGRAM** which passes on culture and language, and builds community. The song and dance program has been part of the community's school and daycare program since 1994.

Initially three elders, David Milton, Earnest Hyzims, and Ray Morgan, would come to the daycare once a week and teach children songs, how to dance to some of the songs and to come into the feast. These elders have since passed away, and now Calvin and Alvin Hyzims have taken over where their father left off.

Continued on back page



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We would love to hear from you!

Please send your photos, story ideas, draft articles, staff profiles, questions you would like answered, resource contacts, great curriculum ideas, and success stories you would like to share.

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Head Start components in practice



GORDON AND THE CHILDREN WORKING ON THE CANOE

Culture

LAST NOVEMBER, THE SPLATSIN CHILD CARE SOCIETY BUILT A TRADITIONAL COTTONWOOD DUG-OUT CANOE at their centre as a cultural project. Master canoe builder Gordon Marchand brought a length of cottonwood tree to the backyard of the centre, and began to hollow out the inside of the canoe.

The children were able to spend time each day watching Gordon as he chipped and shaped the canoe, and some of the older children got to try their hand at chipping. Teachers took bigger chips and used them for a craft project.

In December, the cultural program used cottonwood chips for smoking deer jerky on a home-made meat smoker/dryer.

Since Gordon finished the canoe and paddles in January, the canoe has been permanently mounted on the preschool playground for the children to use daily.

The canoe will lend itself to many unique teaching and learning experiences. Other local crafters are helping the project by building small dip-nets, harpoons, play salmon and other types of fish, fishing nets, and fishing poles for the children to use with the canoe.

THE FINISHED CANOE, INSTALLED AT THE PRESCHOOL PLAYGROUND



The Splatsin people were formerly known as being river people and for their use of Cottonwood dug-out canoes on the Shuswap River for transportation, canoe races, and fishing.

We felt it was important for children to regain that part of their identity, so that's why we wanted Gordon to come and do a hands-on canoe project with the children.

Deanna Cook, Head Start Coordinator, Enderby



Head Start components

- 1 Culture & Language
- 2 Education
- 3 Health Promotion
- 4 Nutrition
- 5 Parent & Family Involvement
- 6 Social Support



MARCELLA PAUL AND LEONARD WILLIAMS WITH THEIR CEDAR BARK HEADBANDS

Parent Involvement

A VERY SPECIAL EVENT WHICH HAS REALLY ENCOURAGED PARTICIPATION in Jan Stephens' Sechelt Head Start pre-natal program is the **Baby Welcoming ceremony**.

New babies are welcomed into the community at a gathering, given a cedar headband, a vest decorated with the double-headed eagle, and a laminated family tree.

Last year, one of the elders even crocheted blankets for every baby! A nutrition student who worked with Jan last summer compiled a memory book for the babies with the Sechelt language, beautifully illustrated.



NOAH LOUIE WITH GRANDMA SADIE, READING ON THE THEME OF "INSECTS"

Education

FOR FOUR YEARS NOW, OSOYOOS K4/K5 STUDENTS have been active participants in a **daily home reading program**. Initially, finding enough resources for the children to read with their parents each night for an entire school year was a challenge. However, by the end of the first year, staff were able to secure funds through their board of education to purchase a wide range of simple early literacy picture books that include several First Nations content books. The classroom library of take-home books continues to grow, and so do the appetites of their young readers!

Staff use an incentive chart program to track the number of books read by each student and prizes are awarded from the prize box to the students each time a level is completed. The children love making predictions about which of their classmates have completed a level when they see the prize box come out during dismissal time—staff usually turn it into a game of 20 questions to figure out who the big winner is for the day.

nutrition TIP

dudes with brains
eat food with grains

Because whole grains like whole wheat bread, whole wheat crackers, brown rice, oatmeal and cornmeal give us the energy that our brain needs to do its work.

These foods also provide fiber to keep our insides clean, lower blood cholesterol and help control blood sugars.





journeying through challenges

Using Traditional Foods

IN MANY FIRST NATION HOMES ACROSS B.C., foods like moose meat, deer meat, baked salmon, dried salmon, smoked meat/salmon, canned salmon, oilcan oil, seaweed, dried berries, and root vegetables have been common staples of meal times.

First Nation methods of preserving and caring for food are somewhat different than in non-native communities. When we prepare for winter months we utilize preservation methods such as drying, smoking, canning, and freezing our food. We have no official means of grading our own food when we process it, but have relied upon traditional preserving techniques learned from our parents, extended family, and grandmas and grandpas.

As First Nation people, we have always eaten traditional foods—many of us have grown up on these staples of the land and feel it is important to share this with our children.

First Nation people are now depending on our child care centres to teach our children about their culture and language, to promote their cultural identity, and to fulfill this traditional role of the grandparents.

Rosalind Williams, Cultural Teacher, Enderby

But we are in a different economy now. Many parents have to work from Monday to Friday and often don't have the same amount of time to show our children traditional values, or even the time to go out on the land and gather food sustenance. Some knowledge has been lost due to children (who are now parents) growing up in residential schools and foster homes away from their homes and communities. We are now struggling to re-learn our culture and heritage, and are often short of resource people in our own families and communities.

Head Start Programs have big shoes to fill. We need to know how to safely incorporate cultural programming and traditional foods into our child care centres while meeting all licensing and environmental health regulations.

Many Head Start programs are licensed facilities and as such, fall under the Community Care Facility Act and the Child Care Licensing Regulation under the authority of the Province of British Columbia.

The interpretation of the regulation dealing with nutrition (section 32—see opposite page) falls to Licensing Officers and child care licensees (Head Start Programs)—the regulation does not specifically state how traditional foods are to be prepared.

Under the child care regulations, Head Start Programs are responsible to ensure that all food served is healthy. Head Start program kitchens are licensed and inspected under the federal authority of Environmental Health Officers of Health Canada. All cooking staff should have Food Safe certificates and follow safe food preparation methods to ensure children's health and safety.

HOW DO WE FIND A BALANCE between interpreting regulations, food safeness, environmental health, federal and provincial legislation and regulations, and the cultural needs of communities?

Above all, it is the responsibility of Head Start staff to ensure that food is safe before giving it to children—young children under the age of three are especially susceptible to food-borne illnesses. Head Start Programs are responsible for what is served to their children and could be liable if a child suffers from a food-borne illness.

Many Head Start Programs follow the guidelines set out in *Food Flair for Child Care* which clearly outlines food safe practices. *Food Flair* recommends that child care centres accept only donations of unopened food, and never accept donations of canning. *Food Flair* advises centres to establish specific policies about receiving food donations (policy areas can include discussion of trusted sources, food safeness, as well as traditional foods).



ROSALIND WILLIAMS AND MARSHALL MAKING JERKY

Community Care Facility Act

CHILD CARE LICENSING REGULATION

*Nutrition***32 (1)** The licensee shall ensure that:

(e) the food supplied to a child in a facility is sufficient in quantity and kind, to supply the child with all or part of the nutrient intake per day in "Recommended Nutrient Intakes for Canadians", is recommended for children in the relevant age group, taking into consideration the number of hours the child is in the facility and the child's food preferences and cultural background.

The **Food Flair For Child Care** resource package is available from community nutritionists or child care licensing officers.

In the phone book under the Province of BC Listings, Health Authority, look for "Community Care Facilities Licensing" and find Child Care Licensing Officer, or Community Nutritionist. Either should be able to give you a copy of the *Food Flair* resources or give you a relevant address, as well as provide advice on childcare regulations and the health and safety of food served in a child care.

Gather as many ideas as possible to ensure that you are responsible and totally confident in the food-safety of the food you are serving.



SPLATSIN CHILDREN
SMOKING MEAT,
NOVEMBER 2002

AT THE SPLATSIN CHILDCARE CENTRE IN ENDERBY, THE HEAD START PROGRAM INCORPORATED SOME TRADITIONAL FOODS INTO MENUS, with great care.

As part of the hunting unit in November, children learned how to traditionally smoke deer jerky. Knowledge of this process and how to build the smoker was given to cultural teacher Rosalind Williams by band elder Emmeline Clemah.

For the preparation of the deer jerky, staff took many precautionary steps to prevent any chance of food-borne illness. The meat was donated by the husband of the cultural teacher, who could verify that it was properly cleaned and processed at a local meat processor and that the deer meat had been frozen properly and was not out-dated (or freezer-burned). The meat was still frozen when sliced thinly for the jerky and immediately refrigerated

once the marinade was put on. The centre used a tested marinade recipe from a cook book. The meat was taken from the refrigerator and immediately put on the traditional smoker to dry into jerky, and smoked with cottonwood chips. The process of dry-smoking the jerky took approximately four hours.

Head Start staff also had a traditional meat luncheon that day where 'Elk Roast' and 'Moose Stew' was served to parents and children. Staff knew that the meat was processed at a local meat processing store and had first-hand knowledge that the hunters who donated the meat were trusted hunters who follow good food-safe and processing techniques. The traditional food was cooked in the Head Start inspected kitchen by their 'Food Safe' cook. The children all had signed permission slips from parents acknowledging that they could eat the traditional meats.

The Licensee (Head Start program) must ensure all food is handled, stored, processed and served in a safe, healthful way.

We encourage all licensees to develop a comprehensive food plan for their centres that includes traditional and other culturally appropriate meals and snacks.

These plans may differ from centre to centre, however each plan would include food choices and how foods are processed, handled, stored and served.

The topic of food safety can be discussed with your local Environmental Health Officer or Licensing Officer. If you have any questions or concerns, don't hesitate to call your local licensing program.

Bev Guest, E.C.E., B.A.
Child Care Licensing Specialist
Interior Health





Using Traditional Foods

WHEN THE CREE-ATIVE WONDERS HEAD START PRESCHOOL PROGRAM WANTED TO SERVE TRADITIONAL FOODS IN THEIR PROGRAM,

they did their homework first. They contacted the Environmental Health Officer in Prince George and told her of their plan to serve traditional foods to children. The EO told them they could serve traditional foods provided they followed safety regulations and Food Safe. “She was really good,” says Nancy Anderson (Head Start Coordinator).

The EO also provided a letter of recommendation, which Cree-Active Wonders then submitted to their local Licensing Officer, who approved their plan. “She visits our program once or twice a year and is really impressed with our program.”



Cree-Active Wonders serves traditional foods quite often, including: moose, dried moose meat, bannock, deer, rabbit, and berries. Meat is obtained from local hunters that are known to the centre. “People are always happy to donate game meat to our centre,” says Nancy. “At home that’s what we eat, why not serve it at the daycare as well?”

Nancy does double-duty as a cook and coordinator. She is the main cook and prepares a majority of the meals but also welcomes volunteers from the community, especially elders. The centre has a fire pit outside and elders have helped to teach drying meat, moose meat on a stick. “We cook the meat by the fire and have some tea,” says Nancy. Other foods they have tried are: bannock on a stick, moose meat stew, moose stir fry, fried bannock, and oven bannock.

The parents and community are in full support of this initiative to serve traditional foods to their children. Parents are informed through their child’s registration forms, where they are asked if they object to children eating traditional foods. There have been no objections to date. The Cree-Active Wonders Parent Handbook informs parents of the program goal—to give children every experience in their traditional culture, language, and food.

If you are considering serving traditional foods in your centre:

- Use proper food handling techniques
- Know your source of food (who handled it and how)
- Restrict this to food sources that you know are safe (keep it limited because of spoilage, handling, processing)
- Advise parents (so they are aware of what their child is eating)
- Prepare the food on site in an inspected kitchen
- Use common sense (make sure the food is in good condition, doesn’t have a rancid or fermented smell, good colour... decide if you think it is safe to eat yourself or to serve to your own child. If you don’t know—don’t serve it)

Source:
Richard Lawrence (Manager of Environmental Health Services for the First Nations and Inuit Health Branch of Health Canada).

An elder did say...they have to taste it this way and to know that this is our way. They felt it was good that we’re doing this. This is our food, and for our children to carry it on [traditional food gathering and usage], they have to be able to experience it and enjoy it.

Nancy Anderson, Head Start Coordinator, Moberly Lake

Head Start Staff

Stella Pettis



STELLA (CENTRE) AT THE 2002 ABORIGINAL CHILD CARE SOCIETY AWARDS

Position:

Language Teacher

Project:

Seabird Island Head Start

Location:

Agassiz, B.C.

*inside
Head Start*

I like teaching the younger children the language and culture.

They are so eager to learn. The children also teach their parents what they learn at school. It makes my heart glad that the language won't die because we have some young children that want to teach the language.

Seabird Island Head Start was very excited to see their own Stella Pettis receive the BC Aboriginal Child Care Society 2002 Recognition Award this past November. Stella has been an incredible asset to children, families, Band staff, school, teachers and her Nation with her hard work and dedication to the culture and language of her community.

Stella ("Star") is a Seabird Island band member who has lived in the community for most of her life. She had six brothers and five sisters, but two brothers and a sister have died. She is now the second eldest in the family, with lots of nieces, nephews, grand-nieces and grand-nephews.

Stella has been learning and teaching the Halq'emeylem language for the past 30 years, starting in the 1970s when she began working with the Sto:lo Nation elders group. She has attended workshops on Language Immersion and Cultural Teaching Styles, taught Halq'emeylem at

community schools, transcribed Halq'emeylem tapes into English, and researched the history and culture of the Sto:lo people, making sure that correct information was used for curriculum development. Stella worked on the development of the culture and language curriculum and resources presently used by the community.

Stella continues to teach with the Preschool Program, (a Head Start-enhanced program) and with children at Seabird Island Community School. She is also involved with the Seabird Island Cultural Committee—ensuring that cultural events and celebrations within the Seabird Island Community School are culturally appropriate.

When she isn't busy with all this, Stella says, "since there are so many of us in our family, they like playing soccer, baseball, hockey. I enjoy watching and cheering them on. I also enjoy, reading, doing crossword puzzles and playing bingo."



Song and Dance With Children, continued from cover

An adult Song and Dance group also meets once a week. According to Head Start Teacher Joyce Williams, the group is “part of the Head Start program, but the doors are open to the whole community. We have have 15 involved so far. We are trying to get the elders involved too. Usually two or three elders participate.”

Head Start staff have developed their own childrens’ CD of 25 Gitksen songs, making audio recordings and also filming some of the performing. A summer student created the CD as a special project. The songs include (English titles): Slippery Fish, I Love You, Good Morning, Feast Song, and others.

How we present the actions to the new songs we learn at the feast hall gives the children a sense of pride of who they are.

Head Start staff member Milli Hyzims

Kitwanga Head Start’s newest song is about recent local history. It was created during the time the Gitksens objected to getting provincial licences on their territory and they had a marshmallow war with the fisheries. It is called the “Anki Iss Song”. Head Start staff and children recently performed “Anki Iss” for the Chiefs’ gathering in the Kitwanga community hall.



Congratulations!

Pacific Regional Director of the First Nations and Inuit Health Branch, **DR. JAY WORTMAN**, who oversees the B.C. Head Start program, was recently honored with the 2003 National Aboriginal Achievement Award!

To visit the awards website, visit: <http://www.naaf.ca/naaa.html> and click on “Recipients”.

CALENDAR

July 7 – 18

2003 Summer Literacy Institute: Bridging Cultures, Strengthening Communities (Vancouver).

Week 1: *Family & Education (FACE) Training and Overview of Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY)*.

Week 2: *Aboriginal Literacy and Parenting Skills Training or Learning Communities: Linking Life-long Learning and Literacy in a Knowledge-based Society*.

One week—\$600 (\$700 with accomodation)

Two weeks—\$1200 (\$1400 with accomodation)

Toll-free in BC: 1-800-663-1293

Tel: (Vancouver area) 684-0624

Fax: (604) 684-8520

E-mail: jasmussen@literacy.bc.ca

July 13

Bridging the Cultural and Geographical Divide—One Day Forum (Vancouver).

Case studies, panel presentations and plenary session. Keynote speakers and panelists from Prince George Native Friendship Centre, Upper Skeena Learning Community Partnership, UVic, Chief Dan George Centre for Advanced Education, BC First Nations Education Steering Committee, Lillooet Learning Communities Society, and Fraser/Thompson Canyon Learning Communities Partnership.

Cost: \$85 (\$50 for Summer Literacy Institute participants).

Contact Summer Literacy Institute (above).

August 20 – 22

“Grandmothers and Grandfathers Pulling Together For Our Future: Our Children.” 27th Annual Aboriginal Elders’ Gathering (Coquitlam).

Contact: Merv Thomas, Circle of Eagle’s Lodge Society, Tel: (604) 874-9610

August 20 – 23

Promise Into Practice—7th International Child and Youth Care Conference (Victoria).

Representatives from residential care, ECE and education, street work, child welfare, family preservation and family support from 50+ countries, working in areas of direct practice, supervision, organizational leadership, education and training, research and policy development.

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