



G

ROWING TOGETHER

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

BC FIRST NATIONS HEAD START

Getting Dads Involved



(ESKETEMC) GRAY OWL (DAD) AND SON NATHANYAL AT HEAD START YEAR-END AWARDS



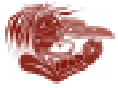
*sharing
successes*

Coordinator Debra Johnson and the staff at Esketemc Head Start in Williams Lake noticed that they had many successful parent programs where mainly women were participating. “Dads would come in to our program or a

workshop and there would be 20 moms and only one dad. We recognized that **we needed to offer something that would encourage dads to become involved** in the program.”

They invited a facilitator from the Williams Lake area to come in and do a “Dads

Continued on back page



Growing Together is a quarterly publication of BC First Nations Head Start On-Reserve program.

BCFNHS
Health Canada, FNIHB
Suite 540, Federal Building
757 West Hastings Street
Vancouver, BC V6E 3E6
Tel: (604) 666-1698
Fax: (604) 666-1690

Newsletter Coordinator: Kelly Terbasket

Design & Production: India Ink

Research/Writing Support: Deanna Cook

Head Start Logo: Delmar Johnny

Special thanks to those who contributed to this issue:

Kelly Edgar (Nitinaht Lake)
Debra Johnson (Williams Lake)
Natasha McDonald (Portage)
Ramona Melanson (Kuper Island)

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.

Send submissions or queries to:
India Ink, 2211 Sayward Street
Victoria BC V8R 3T4
E-mail: India_Ink@shaw.ca
Tel: (250) 598-0816



Printed in Canada with vegetable-based inks on recycled paper. *Please recycle!*

Head Start components in practice



VELMA EDWARDS, TONYA THOMAS, GAIL JACK AND MICHELLE SAM PREPARING GOOD FOOD BOXES AT SMUN'EEM HEAD START

Nutrition

THE SMUN'EEM HEAD START PROGRAM is located on Kuper Island, a small island off Vancouver Island that is accessible by ferry from Chemainus. Kuper Island is almost all Penelakut Tribe Reserve, and there are no stores on the island. We shop weekly for the Head Start program and bring in groceries by ferry so that we can offer snacks and a hot lunch.

The Spring 2003 issue of *Growing Together* came with a focus on nutrition and a Good Food Box program being offered at Syaykw Head Start in Sechelt. With a small amount of research we discovered there were other programs offered on Vancouver Island, and that we could do it with just a bit of organization and a whole lot of community support!

Our first Good Food Box was in June 2003, with 16 boxes. We shopped at a year-

round farmer's market. They were able to fax us their pricing sheet and get our order ready for pick-up. We brought the fruits and vegetables over and had community members distribute the boxes.

Since then we have had up to 24 Good Food Boxes each month, and the community is able to sign up at the Adult Program, health clinic or daycare each month. Families have been eating more fruits and vegetables, making their shopping dollar go farther and trying some new fruits and vegetables. The Head Start program simply collects the money, orders the vegetables and drops off the produce for packing and delivery by volunteers.

Thank you *Growing Together* for sharing Syaykw's success and for all the web sites for more information. Thank you Syaykw Head Start for letting your success become our success too.

Ramona Melanson
Coordinator, Smun'eem Head Start (Kuper Island)



WIN A GREAT PRIZE FOR YOUR HEAD START PROGRAM!

The regional office is seeking parent and family testimonies telling how the Head Start program has positively affected children and family members, and we are also seeking stories highlighting successes with the Head Start components. All entries received by the deadline will be entered in a draw for fabulous prizes!

Parent and Family Testimonies

Must be written by a parent, family member or elder. Tell us in your own words how the Head Start program has made a difference in the life of your child and/or your family. Must include a photo of the child (and the parent, too, if possible). Length: Maximum 1 typewritten page, single-spaced (handwritten entries okay, if we can read them).

Component Success Stories

In a one-page write-up, tell us in detail how your site has been successful in implementing one of the six Head Start components. Photos desirable, but not required. If you don't have a photo, send children's drawings (relating to health, nutrition, education, culture, and family).

Contest deadline: Friday, April 2, 2004

All materials must be postmarked or e-mailed **on or before** April 2, 2004 to be eligible. Entries can be couriered or sent by registered mail, or e-mailed. If e-mailing, document must be a Microsoft Word file. Digital photos can be e-mailed (if taking digital photos, use the "highest quality" setting on your camera). Send entries to:

Head Start Contest / India Ink
2211 Sayward Street, Victoria BC V8R 3T4
Tel: (250) 598-0816
E-mail: india_ink@shaw.ca

PRIZES to include: **Language Master machines** (value \$450.00 +), **native doll sets**, and **sets of hand drums**. Selected stories will appear in a new Head Start publication we are developing!

Send as many entries as you like. Winners will be announced in our June newsletter.

Health

OUR WATER POLICY STARTED BY ACCIDENT as water was the fastest beverage to serve for children. We have been looking at different dental fact sheets for children and about how bad juice is for children's teeth. We decided to start giving everyone water to drink after that. We make a point of replacing juice with water or milk during our lunch and for the 2 snacks we serve. We either have milk or water for snack and lunch.

We have a fountain outside of our room. The children have fun having a drink at the fountain. We refer to it as "tap juice" and the children ask for this.

We have an unwritten policy that parents are aware of. We are always looking for ways to improve our nutrition program at the centre. The parents are wanting to see this developed into a policy. Parents' comments have been that they are really impressed with the way that their children are drinking water at home. The parents are replacing the juice or pop with water when they are in town. Parents are replacing the sippee cups with water instead of juice. We are happy to see that it is carrying on in the homes as well.

It has been a very casual thing that has happened and overnight it has become part of the program. We are choosing to have the water and the children are choosing to have water both at the centre and at home.

Kelly Edgar
Director, Asaabuus Daycare (Nitihaht Lake)



March 2004 is Nutrition Month!

Visit <http://www.dietitians.ca/english/frames.html> for info. Be creative! Highlight nutrition at your Head Start in a special way this month.

Head Start components

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

NEW WEB SITE FOR BCFNHS RESOURCES

Head Start program consultant Kelly Terbasket has developed a web site full of information and resources for on-reserve Head Start in BC, including downloadable copies of administrative documents, ideas for implementing Head Start components, back issues of newsletters, and more.

www.bcfnhs.org



*journeying
through
challenges*

Yekooche Head Start building outreach

VIEW OF THE YEKOOCHE
COMMUNITY IN WINTER



A Community-Based Collaborative Outreach Model

Head Start Programs on reserve have primarily focused on providing services in a centre-based setting. However, many of the highest need or-at risk families on reserve may not become involved in these programs. Outreach provides services to more families, bringing Head Start right to the home.

One challenge to delivery of outreach is costs (bands not having enough funds or staff available and qualified to design and implement their own outreach program). Sometimes outreach attempts fail when they try to use community members to implement the program who are not distanced enough from the families they are serving or have not yet completed their own healing. Other programs run into difficulty if they rely too heavily on one professional to be accepted by many families.

IN THE TINY, ISOLATED COMMUNITY OF PORTAGE (POPULATION 140), almost two hours from the nearest large centre (Fort St. James), the Yekooche First Nation Head Start is building an outreach model to meet the present needs of the children who are 0-6 in Yekooche. Although this is just the first year of the new program, it shows much promise as a **cost-effective outreach model that could be adapted by other reserves.**



Yekooche's Head Start program serves 13 families. Based in the elementary school, last year the program focused on offering centre-based day programs for children, with some parenting classes and a new toy lending library. This year Head Start is working together with others in the community to also use existing services so they can also connect with families in their own homes.

They have formed a Head Start Outreach **team which is made up of several people who share responsibility for weekly and monthly home visits** to families. The present team members include:

- the community youth development worker
- a primary school teacher
- an ECE
- the Head Start coordinator (who is also the child therapist)

Each person brings his/her own special skills and perspective to the group. Team members pool their resources and share ideas with each other, always with the focus on building positive connections with families. Families know that the team members work together and that individual home visitors share their experiences with the team so they can benefit from the full range of expertise and ideas in the group.

The Outreach team received a one-week training, delivered in the community by Head Start coordinator Natasha McDonald (a child therapist who has a psychology degree focused on play therapy and child development). A boxful of training materials was developed by Natasha from her own resources, and included communication skills, child development knowledge, how to work with families, how to make learning fun, step-by-step skill building, and developmental assessments.

Each home visitor has a box of developmental toys and a box of resources and forms and sees from two to four families. Team members have been able to limit the hours spent in outreach to up to five hours a week.



SALLY, ONE OF YEKOOCHE'S DEVOTED ELDERS

At the beginning of the school year, families were invited by home visitors to bring their children to the school for developmental assessments (infants and toddler assessments were done in the home). Natasha and the outreach team worked with the families to create individualized developmental plans (in five areas of development) by having parents choose goals to work on with their children from a general list outlined from the skills missed on the Portage Checklist.

Subsequent home visits or visits at the school might include chatting about life, hands-on demos of a target skill for parents to work on with their child, helping parents set family goals, or talking about community services parents might wish to access.

Every two weeks, team members meet for an informal sharing and support session in the evening. Over coffee and tea, they talk about each family and share successes and challenges. Team members give each other ideas, encouragement, and lots of support, and are able to change which families they support when necessary for various reasons.

We are focusing on decreasing delays in development, increasing awareness of child development best practices, raising awareness about FAS, decreasing behavioral challenges in children and preventing child abuse and neglect.



SNACK TIME AT YEKOOCHE HEAD START



Yekooche Head Start building outreach

Growing Together:

Why did you begin this outreach program?

Natasha:

We started this program because I knew that many of the children in the program were showing global delays in their development. Since starting kindergarten with delays this great is correlated with not graduating high school, we wanted to empower families to support their own children to reach their maximum developmental potential. This is a critical age for every child's growth. I believe in supporting families to raise their children and I felt that our Head Start program needed to start focusing more on parents. They are the ones who will be with their children for life.

"Parents have been very supportive of outreach since the program started three months ago and have been patient as we worked out the bugs", Natasha says. "One parent said, "I love our visits and look forward to them." Another parent reported that they are glad to understand where their child was developmentally and to know what types of fun games they could be encouraging."

Because the community is isolated and does not have ready access to specialists, Outreach staff are currently trying to arrange for a group trip with parents and children to see a pediatrician and a speech pathologist in Prince George. The pediatrician will do specialized assessments and where there may be delays needing attention, could provide documentation that would support requests for additional funding. Staff are also working on the possibility of having a speech pathologist come to the community for two days of consecutive appointments.

Challenges still being faced include connecting with some families, creating schedules that work for families and home visitors and making the assessments and materials more cultural.

We hope that our model will reach the entire community, meet the needs of families who have young children, develop a strong sense of team amongst professionals, parents and elders and most importantly support the idea that learning is fun.

Tessa Fraser, Home Visitor and Youth worker (Portage)

Assessment Tools

Two resources for outreach assessments :

Portage Checklist

A developmentally sequenced checklist administered through a program of home visits. Can be used alone without training.

Ages and Stages

A series of simple questionnaires designed to be completed by or together with parents to screen infants and young children for developmental milestones during the 0 - 5 years.

Both these tools are available on loan from the BC Aboriginal Child Care Society. There is no fee for borrowing, but you must become a member to have borrowing privileges (\$10 - \$20 for yearly membership).

BCACCS, #209-1999 Marine Drive
North Vancouver V7P 3J3
Tel: (604) 990-9939
E-mail: library@acc-society.bc.ca
Web: www.acc-society.bc.ca

More information and suggestions regarding assessments in the BCACCS *Handbook of Best Practices in Aboriginal Early Childhood Programs, 2003* (p. 105 - 113).

"Kids Bins"

With additional funds that were available, the Head Start Outreach developed bins with \$300 worth of developmental toys and materials—one for each family in the outreach program. Families are asked for 30 hours of volunteer time helping with Head Start in exchange for the box. At present parents are starting to work their hours and we are going to hook a giant medicine wheel circle time rug with the families.

If you have any questions, or would like more information from Yekooche about the program being developed, feel free to contact Natasha McDonald at the Jean Marie Joseph School in Portage. Natasha is happy to share resources with other sites.

Tel: (250) 996-6104

Fax: (250) 996-6102

E-mail: natasha@yekooche.ca



Head Start Staff

Laura Millar



LAURA (R) WITH MARGOT GREENWOOD AT THE AWARDS PRESENTATION

Position:

Infant Toddler Daycare Supervisor

Location:

Snc'c'amala?tn Okanagan Early Childhood Centre (Vernon)

inside Head Start

Laura was one of two Head Start staff honored with the BC Aboriginal Child Care Recognition Award at the Unity for the Children Conference held in Vancouver this past December. Look for a profile of Rosalind Williams in our summer issue.

The children keep me going, they are the main thing. I have become so close to all of the children here.

Laura began working as the Infant/Toddler Supervisor at the Snc'c'amala?tn Early Childhood Education Centre when it opened in 1997. She took on the position of Director of the Centre and then Coordinator of the Head Start program in 1999. But her heart is with the Infants and Toddlers and she returned to this role in 2000. She has always loved children and working with them. She loves Okanagan singing and drumming and is never impatient with the little ones.

In their letter of nomination, her colleagues wrote: "We nominated Laura for the 2003 Aboriginal Child Care Recognition Award because of her dedication, compassion, love and caring she has demonstrated to her children in her room. If there was anyone who ever deserves the award, it is she. Laura always thinks of the

children first and ways to assist them in developing for the up coming years. Since her years of being at the centre she has seen numerous children graduate from our Kindergarten program. Her positive outlook and reputation for providing outstanding care has greatly contributed to the growth of the Centre. The Infant/Toddler room is now busting at the seams thanks to Laura."

Laura has worked for her community in several roles. When she was a Community Health Representative she organized a Diabetes walk and has continued to promote health by fundraising for Muscular Dystrophy.

Laura will be retiring this year and her community is pleased to recognize her contribution and commitment. Her teaching is: "The children must come first." Congratulations Laura!

Only Workshop.” “We got older men from our community to talk to the younger men about their experiences as fathers and the things that they experienced and would like to change. The workshop was designed to get men thinking about the different ways they could become involved in their child’s education.” The facilitator suggested that the Esketemc Head Start use outdoor activities as a tool to get dads involved.

This has blossomed into many different activities where dads can be involved throughout the year—such as walking to the creek and talking about parenting issues, taking the children into the traditional territories to pick sage, fish for trout, talk about plants and animals, or whatever the natural landscape offered them while out on a walk, and chores around the centre.

The most noticeable change since dads have been involved in the program is that they feel that they are an important part of the programs. “A lot of the men said that they wanted to participate in their child’s upbringing but didn’t know how. The men’s role in our community has changed over the past years. Previously, men didn’t interact with their children as they were working doing hard labor or in the bush...things have changed and now men are starting to participate in their child’s upbringing. The men now drop off their children and get involved that way. The men have found it very tough. A lot of our men believe that raising children is a woman’s job. They are finding it a struggle to change their own way of thinking to be able to help out with their kids more. It was good for the men to talk together and find out that other dads were struggling with that same thing.”

Esketemc Head Start is also brainstorming other ideas to get men more involved. They are planning to start having a male helper volunteer list, asking men to sub at their centre, do outdoor activities, work with the children, have lunch with the children. “We always have coffee on and snacks and lunch to make men feel welcome anytime. It’s been a long process but each little thing is building onto each little piece of our puzzle.”

Debra Johnson
Coordinator, Esketemc Head Start (Williams Lake)

CALENDAR

March 2004

FNESC/FNSA Speakers Series

March 5 (Prince George) “Managing Conflict in Education Settings”

March 8 (Nanaimo) “Behavior Management: A School-Wide Approach”

March 15 (Campbell River) “Literacy: Strategies for Improving Reading for At-Risk Learners”

March 12 (Kelowna) “Managing Conflict”—as above

March 17 (Vancouver) “Literacy”—as above

March 26 (Kelowna) “Behavior”—as above

Toll free: 1-877-422-3672

E-mail: fnesc@fnesc.ca

April 23 – 25, 2004

First Nations School Association conference: “Making Our Mark Together” (Vancouver).

Tel: (604) 925-6087

Fax: (604) 925-6097

Toll-Free: 1(877) 422-3672

April 25 – 27, 2004

Leaders and Healers II (Victoria). Three-day conference, over 20 workshops plus key-note speakers and performances. Workshops include: Diabetes Prevention in Native Communities, The Power of One in the Community, and much more. Many aboriginal presenters. Full conference or day rates.

Tel: (250) 598-1039

Fax: (250) 472-7664

E-mail: barbarasmith@focusconferences.com

Web: <http://www.focusconferences.com/focus2004.html>

May 4, 2004

Secondary Disabilities of FAS: Protective Factors and What Works (Abbotsford).

\$75 (\$50 students and FAS caregivers)

Tel: Erin Arkenstyn-Volger at 604-850-5106

E-mail: erin_av@hotmail.com.

May 13 – 15, 2004

Caring Together: Opening Doors (Richmond).

Annual Early Childhood Educators of BC conference. Workshops, Trade Show, Resource Fair, Silent Auction and more!

Tel: (604) 709-6063

Toll free: 1 (800) 797-5602

Fax: (604) 709-5662

E-mail: ecebc@direct.ca

Web: <http://www.cfc-efc.ca/ecebc/conf.htm>

