



B.C. First Nations Head Start **Visiting the Salmon Run**

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ONE FINE FRIDAY MORNING IN SEPTEMBER, OUR 3-YEAR-OLD CLASS made a special trip to the creek to see the kikinee run. Along with a few dads, we piled into the van and drove off to the best site to see the fish. We walked down to the creek, where two men from the fisheries department talked to us about what the kikinee were doing—how the male and the female fish were different colours and how the eggs are laid and then fertilized. We got to see a large group of fish and tried to see the different colours. That was hard when there were so many fish all crowded together, so we also looked along the edge of the bank for egg deposits. We didn't get to see any eggs after all.

Afterwards, we decided to take some of the dead fish and look inside their mouths at their teeth. We painted the sides of the fish and made fish prints on paper we brought with us. The fish prints showed us more clearly how many scales the fish had and how the scales overlapped each other.

In our program, we had been looking at the life cycle of different kinds of animals—so our trip to the creek was an extension of that. A lot of the children had never been that close to a live fish in the river. I myself had never seen the fish run before and this was a wonderful opportunity to experience something new together with the children. Being able to touch a fish, look closely into its mouth, and paint and take prints from it made this an experience to cement the learning that we were doing—one we won't forget for a long time. Also, because fish are a very important cultural aspect of our lives, it tied in culture, language (around the fish and the fish life cycle), and parent involvement in the program as part of the Head Start philosophy.

We did some hands-on learning that day that we will never forget!

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