Working With Families
SESSION 10

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Name of Instructor: Roxana Zuleta
Mothercraft College
Learning Outcomes

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the larger world of the child by working with families in a partnership which promotes “Cultural Awareness” and “Global Diversity”

2. Demonstrate the communication skills necessary for building and enhancing the practitioner/family partnership in Early Childhood Education and explore benefits and barriers to the partnership within an anti-bias framework

3. Explore and examine community resources for families and staff
Agenda

• Presentation by: Carrie Shaw and Arselia Johnson (Saya) from Native Child and Family Services of Toronto

• Chapter #9 Aboriginal Families
  • In Class Research Exercise

• Resources:
ABORIGINAL FAMILIES

• ABORIGINAL GROUPS: METIS, INUITS, FIRST NATION

• “The terms indigenous or aboriginal are used in Canada to refer to population of people who identify themselves as descendants of original habitants” (Wilson, pg. 324)

Link to traditional games:
http://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/sport/traditional-aboriginal-games-activities#axzz3bSUqcd4X
Provincial/territorial number registrations as a percentage of national registrations, as of March 31, 2013

- Alberta: 44%
- British Columbia: 20%
- New Brunswick: 12%
- Newfoundland and Labrador: 12%
- Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island*: 3%
- Ontario: 3%
- Quebec: 3%
- Saskatchewan: 1%
- Yukon, Northwest Territories, Nunavut and Non-Geographic Area Code*: 0.1%

Other Aboriginal*:
- Non-Status Indian: (213,900) 15.3%
- Inuit: (59,115) 4.2%

Registered Indian:
- Métis: (418,380) 29.9%
- Registered Indian (697,510) 49.8%

https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1370438978311/1370439050610
SOME STATISTICS
Text. Page 325

- Life expectancy is 5-7 years lower than other Canadians
- Immunization rates are 20% lower than the general population
- Aboriginal children are twice as likely to live with a lone parent or other relatives
- Teen parents
- 50% of children with illnesses lack proper health care services
- Infant mortality is three to seven times higher than the rest of the population
- Fetal alcohol syndrome may affect one in five Inuit and first Nation Children
Holistic health incorporates the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual needs of the individual, family and community. Things become holistic when all of the dimensions of the whole being are considered. We may address each dimension individually but must realize they are all connected. Each part enhances, supports and affects the others. Individual wellness is reflective of how each of these factors is addressed.

The Holistic Support Wheel Tool will guide you in supporting each dimension of the child. The child is at the centre of the wheel with each dimension creating their whole being. To support the child you must consider how each dimension can be supported. You can use this format to assist you in creating a care plan. Use a strength-based approach and consider underlying and historical factors.

A caregiver plan is also important. For Aboriginal children to thrive, we have to support their caregivers in a holistic way as well.
Early childhood development is an important **determinant of health**

- “For Aboriginal people, social, economic and political disparities underlie many of the health inequities that currently exist between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. These disparities can challenge individual and group efforts to raise healthy children and develop strong families and communities” (National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health, 2013).

- Historical factors continue to have an impact on Aboriginal communities, families, children and youth, but the history and consequences differ by nation, community and individual (Pimotisiwin: A Good Path for Pregnant and Parenting Aboriginal Teens).
Common strengths across Aboriginal cultures

Although Aboriginal cultures vary greatly, common strengths include the importance of:

- children
- extended family
- Elders
- connectedness with the land, plants and animals
- community
- sense of humour
ABORIGINAL CHILDCARE PHILOSOPHY (Text, pg. 332)

• “Sense of belonging fashions young people to listen to others in their clan/band members. The sense of belonging includes nature as well”

• “Native children are encouraged to acknowledge the achievement of others. One with more skills is considered a role model”.

• “Power is fostered by encouraging the expression of autonomy. Children are taught to obey to achieved desired behaviour”

• “Native children are taught to be generous, unselfish And to give without expectations. Altruism is considered the highest of virtues”.
Creative Arts, Culture, and Healing: Building an Evidence Base

Figure 1: Holistic Healing = Restoring Balance

Holistic Healing = Restoring Balance

The Natural World
Nation

Community
Family
Individual

Physical
Emotional
Mental
Spiritual

Personal & Historic Trauma
The Need for Healing

- Colonization & the residential school legacy (physical & sexual abuse, loss of language, culture, family, community, land, resources, etc.)
- Ongoing racism, disparities in economic, social & health status

Strengths & Resiliencies

- Individual skills, personalities, resources, and relationships
- Connection to culture, spiritual identity, language, family, community, nation, and the natural world
- Supportive social & economic environment
The Circle of Courage

Independence
Is fostered by opportunities to grow in responsibility and autonomy
"I am in charge of my life"

Mastery
Requires opportunities to creatively solve problems and meet goals for achievement.
"I am able to solve problems"

Generosity
Is shown through opportunities to show concern in acts of kindness and altruism.
"I am considerate to others"

Belonging
Is developed through opportunities to build trusting bonds of human attachment.
"I am important to someone"
1. “Belonging, the child is giving a sense of self-importance within the general context of his or her community. The child learns that each member of the community belong and have a role to pay”

2. “Mastery, the child is giving the means and opportunity to become the best he or she can in various skills and in acquiring knowledge”

3. “Independence, the child is giving appropriate opportunity to develop independence”

4. “Generosity, the chid learns to consider generosity as a highly virtuous trait”

*Circle of Courage, Inc. Lennox, South Dakota. Artist: George Blue Bird
Inclusive Practices

- Positively Interact with Students
- Use Inclusive Language & Appropriate Modes of Address
- Actively Discourage Classroom Incivilities
- Encourage Open, Honest & Respectful Class Discussion

Culturally Inclusive Classroom
A number of themes emerged from the scan, consistent with key informant interviews:

- Aboriginal control of education;
- Culturally relevant programming that includes history and language;
- Connections to extended family and the community;
- Appropriate teaching methods based on Aboriginal learning styles;
- Support for positive Aboriginal self-identity;
- Participation in early learning programs to offer improved school success; and
- Assessment and evaluation.
Some suggestions for involving parents and community

http://www.beststart.org/resources/hlthy_chld_dev/pdf/FC_K13A.pdf

- Asking parents what they expect their children to learn
- Asking parents or grandparents if they would be willing to share songs, stories, and other cultural knowledge
- Hosting regular open houses to update parents on their children’s progress
- Producing a monthly newsletter and calendar for parents
- Providing a suggestion box for parents asking for specific ideas on how to incorporate culture into the program; and
- Inviting community leadership to all events and ceremonies and keep them informed of new services.
Research findings
The following ideas were common themes in creating a welcoming, culturally affirming space for Aboriginal families:

• viewing the child as strong and competent
• the importance of family and community in the forming of identity
• the role of Elders in developing social and cultural identity
• the learning of mainstream skills in preparation for school. (Saffigna, Franklin, Church and Tayler / Department of Education and Early Childhood Development 2011. Pg. 20)
Group Reflection

• From the Carrie’s presentation, write two findings on Aboriginal Children and Families in Early Years Settings

• Where you surprise by the findings?

• Share one or two ideas/concepts you learned from today’s class that will impact your approach to programming in the classroom

• Can you relate Native/aboriginal knowledge with other perspectives/theories?

• You will present your group next class
Reflective Question

• Video on Partnerships with families

• Discussion

Reflective Question:
1. How will you create an inclusive environment in your program? or
2. Write a reflection on today’s presentation
References

• Saffigna, Franklin, Church and Tayler / Department of Education and Early Childhood Development 2011.
• http://www.beststart.org/resources/hlthy_chld_dev/pdf/holisticsheet_bw.pdf
• https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1316530132377/1316530184659