

“Building a Community of Communities”: Results & Discussion of the National Roundtable on Aboriginal ECD: What Can Research Offer Aboriginal Head Start?



**ABORIGINAL
HEAD START**
Urban & Northern Communities



Co-Hosted by Aboriginal Head Start in Urban & Northern Communities & Centre of Excellence for Children & Adolescents with Special Needs

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Table of Contents

1.	Executive Summary	1
2.	Introduction.....	2
3.	An Overview of Aboriginal Early Childhood Development Programs and Services and Research In Canada.....	3
3.1	Emergence of Aboriginal Specific Early Childhood Programs and Services	3
3.2	More Recent Initiatives and Activities.....	5
3.3	An Overview of Aboriginal-specific ECE Research	6
4.	Methodology.....	11
5.	Summary of Themes from the National Roundtable on Aboriginal ECD - Focus Groups and Plenaries.....	13
5.1	Overview of Existing Research that Might Relate to Aboriginal Head Start	13
5.1.a	Evaluation Tools and Locally Driven Initiatives.....	14
5.2	Gaps in Aboriginal Early Childhood Development Research that Might Relate to Aboriginal Head Start	16
5.2.a	Non-responsive Research Methodologies.....	16
5.2.b	Lack of Baseline Data and Cultural Relevancy.....	17
5.3	Summary of Research Overview and Research Gaps	17
5.4	Principles to Guide Research in Aboriginal Early Childhood Development	18
5.4.a	Knowledge-based Principles	19
5.4.b	Researcher-based Principles	20
5.5	Envisioning a Community of Researchers Which Could Support Aboriginal Head Start in Canada	20
6.	Recommendations and Future Directions	23
6.1	Future Directions	24
7.	Resources and Sources	25

1. Executive Summary

On December 2, 2004 in Winnipeg, the Aboriginal Head Start Program and the Centre of Excellence for Children and Adolescents with Special Needs co-hosted a Roundtable to identify potential research topics in the areas of Aboriginal Early Childhood Development. Attended by a diverse group of forty-seven researchers, practitioners, community members, government officials, and other identified experts in the field of Early Childhood Development, participants at the Roundtable considered four questions:

1. What research is currently taking place in Aboriginal Early Childhood Development that could relate to Aboriginal Head Start?
2. What are the most fundamental gaps in Aboriginal Early Childhood Development that could relate to Aboriginal Head Start?
3. What principles should guide research in Aboriginal Early Childhood Development?
4. How do you envision a community of researchers in Aboriginal Early Childhood Development that could support Aboriginal Head Start?

This report begins with an overview of Aboriginal Early Childhood Development in Canada, including the history and foundations of many of the programs and services which are available to today's Indigenous children. Given the political and philosophical nature of participants' discussions during the December 2 meeting, the overview of Aboriginal Early Childhood Development in Canada is followed by a brief exploration of research issues particular to work with and for Indigenous communities.

The methodology and results section of this report (section 4) provides a critically evaluated record of the participants' views and input concerning research on Aboriginal Early Childhood Development, particularly research which has potential links with the Aboriginal Head Start Program. The research results, although not without some tension, provided a foundation for recommendations and conclusions, the second to last section of this report.

The final section of this report, entitled Future Directions, considers what will clearly be dynamic upcoming times in the area of Aboriginal Early Childhood Development. This paper provides a starting point for a broad group of people entering a new phase of Aboriginal Early Childhood Development research in Canada: as Indigenous peoples, community members, researchers, policy makers, and service providers move toward a future of strong and culturally empowered Indigenous peoples, the development and well-being of our Aboriginal children must never be far from our hearts and minds.

2. Introduction

Often when scholarly research, government policy, and the popular media synchronize in focus, it is indicative of the importance of an issue. Since the mid-1980's, the Government of Canada (initially through the Child Care Initiatives Fund and then through the Brighter Futures initiative under the National Plan of Action for Children) has articulated the importance of Early Childhood Development in Canada. Researchers focusing on Aboriginal Early Childhood Development in Canada articulate that Euro-western, or colonial, approaches often do not fit the needs, interests, or development and learning styles of Indigenous peoples and that many existing child development and child education protocols perpetuate assimilative visions toward Indigenous peoples and their children (Ball and Pence, 2001; Archibald, 1995; Battiste 1995). In late December 2004, *The Globe and Mail* published an article about the future of Saskatchewan (MacGregor, 2004: A4). The article highlighted what is known as a "population flip," a process whereby a shift occurs in a population's majority: in the case of Saskatchewan, demographers agree that sometime toward the middle of this century, Indigenous peoples will come to comprise the majority of the province's population. This "population flip" is associated with both a high birth rate in Indigenous communities and an exodus of and declining birth rate in the province's non-Indigenous population.

The overlap of between government policy and interest, scholarly research, and popular interest highlights the growing and imperative importance of Aboriginal Early Childhood Development in Canada. Although Saskatchewan's case is unique in Canada, it is nevertheless suggestive of a trend occurring across the country. Indigenous peoples, who for generations have lived (and who continue to live) within the context of colonization, are rebuilding their communities: their populations are growing and strengthening, and children are at the forefront of the growth. The time has thus arrived in Canada that researchers, service providers, and practitioners begin to seriously consider the issue of Aboriginal Early Childhood Development. The Aboriginal children of today will, without doubt, be the leaders of strong and influential communities of tomorrow: the early years of these children will form the foundation of that future.

3. An Overview of Aboriginal Early Childhood Development Programs and Services and Research In Canada*

3.1 Emergence of Aboriginal Specific Early Childhood Programs and Services

Aboriginal specific early childhood programs and services were virtually non-existent in the 1960's and 1970's. Those services that did exist were sporadic and inadequately funded and as a result often short-lived. There were two exceptions to this trend in the 1960's, one was the Canada/Ontario Agreement Respecting Welfare Programs for Indians (1965). This agreement not only ensured First Nations parents residing on reserve access to parental subsidies but also gave credence to First Nations communities' expression of the need for on reserve child care services. The second exception was the Hawthorne Report (1966) a government enquiry focusing on the socialization of Indian children and their preparation for integration into provincial education systems: the report brought the needs of these preschool children into public view. The report pointed to the inequity of service availability and accessibility between Indians living on reserve and the rest of Canada.

The establishment of the need for early childhood services on reserve continued through the 1970's and into the 1980's when Aboriginal peoples began speaking for themselves and articulating their own reasons for wanting early childhood services in their communities. In 1986, the Native Women's Association of Canada made the need for Aboriginal child care public in their presentation to the House of Commons. In the presentation, they stated:

The reason why child care is so important is because of the nature of our families, of the social and economic conditions of our men and women. Our children require child care so that we can break the cycle of poverty, we can break the cycle of alcoholism, but most important so we can pass on our culture, values and language. Without child care services designed by us for our children, in which Elders tell our children their history and assist in the teaching of our children their traditional languages and values, we will only continue to suffer racism, assimilation, and language loss. Our children will be more alienated as they grow up and the cycles of poverty, of violence and of abuse will continue. (p. 7)

* The contents of sections 3.1 and 3.2 are derived from previous research and writings on this topic by Margo Greenwood including: A Report Of The Assembly of First Nations Early Childhood Development National Discussion (2003), BC First Nations Children: Our Families, Our Communities, Our Future (2003), An Overview of the Development of Aboriginal Early Childhood Services in Canada (2001), Children are a Gift To Us: Aboriginal-Specific Early Childhood Programs and Services in Canada (2005).

Building a Community of Communities

Beyond the need for equitable child care services, the Native Women's Association described a holistic, contextual rationale, one more attune with Aboriginal children and families.

In the late 1980's the Child Care Initiatives Fund (CCIF) (1988), a seven-year contributions program designed to encourage and evaluate child care innovations and to enhance the quality of child care in Canada, was initiated. Although the CCIF had child care as one of its priorities, the fund was not designed to support the establishment or delivery of child care services. However, it provided an opportunity for Aboriginal groups to access funds for a variety of projects including: national child care inquiries; regional and community based needs assessment; development of formal training programs, program support materials, culture and language curriculum; and a wide range of service models.

One of the most significant benefits of the Child Care Initiatives Fund was the opportunities it provided for Aboriginal peoples to identify the nature and purpose of child care services in their communities. Specifically, the CCIF supported the creation of Aboriginal specific documents and research projects. Aboriginal people had the opportunity to write about themselves, their communities, and their vision for child care.

Aboriginal specific early childhood services began to emerge in the 1990's. Children's rights were also being addressed during the early 1990's. Following the 1990 World Summit for Children hosted by Canada, the Government of Canada initiated a five year National Plan of Action called Brighter Futures¹. These five-year initiatives sought to employ a community-determined approach to supporting the well-being of First Nations children and families living on and off reserve. The primary focus was on the developmental needs of children and youth between the ages of 0 and 23 years of age.

In 1993, the Liberal government's commitment to creating new child day care spaces in Canada made no mention of on reserve child day care, although there was a promise for an Aboriginal early intervention program included. The following year Minister Axworthy's Social Security Discussion Paper (1994) restated the federal government's child care commitment including First Nations and Inuit communities. Out of these federal government commitments emerged the First Nations and Inuit Child Care Initiative (1994) and the Aboriginal Head Start Initiatives (1994). Aboriginal early childhood programs became a reality in Canada.

The First Nations Inuit Child Care Initiative, announced in 1994, had a mandate to create 6,000 new child care spaces in First Nations and Inuit communities. The initiative came with a fiscal commitment of 72 million dollars in the first three developmental years and 36 million ongoing thereafter. The guiding principles for the initiative included the following concepts: one, First Nations and Inuit directed, controlled; two, community based, holistic and focused on child development; three, quality of service inclusive of: child/staff ratios, standards, regulations and licensing, training, environments, administration, funding, programming, and family and community involvement; four, inclusive, comprehensive, and flexible; five, accessible; six, accountable; and seven,

¹ This information is taken from the Discussion Guide developed for "A Dialogue on Canada's National Plan of Action for Children" 2004.

affordable (Joint First Nations/Inuit/Federal Child Care Working Group, 1995, pp. 14-15).

In the same year, Health Minister Dianne Marleau announced the Aboriginal Head Start Initiative. This 83.7 million dollar, four-year initiative was fulfilled by the federal government's commitment for an early intervention program that would serve Aboriginal parents and children living in urban and large northern communities. The program is guided by six specific program components: one, language and culture; two, parental and community involvement; three, health promotion; four, social support; five, education; and six, nutrition. In 2004, this program served 3,900 children in 126 urban and northern communities².

While these two programs began to address the needs of children and families in Aboriginal communities, the *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* (1996) reaffirmed the need for specific Aboriginal child care services stating that child care is viewed as a means of reinforcing Aboriginal identity, instilling values, attitudes and behaviors that give expression to Aboriginal cultures.

In 1997, the Aboriginal Head Start On Reserve Program was announced. This program, modeled after the Aboriginal Head Start Urban and Northern Initiative (1995), was to support First Nations children and families living on reserve. The primary goal of the On Reserve Head Start program is to demonstrate that locally controlled and designed early-intervention strategies can provide First Nations preschool children with a positive sense of themselves, a desire for learning, and opportunities to develop fully and successfully (p. 9). This on reserve program also employs the six program components of the Urban and Northern Initiative. In the year 2000 – 2001, 6,500 children in 168 Aboriginal Head Start On Reserve projects, comprised of over 300 communities, were served.

3.2 More Recent Initiatives and Activities

In the late 1990's a significant number of activities were undertaken that focused on young children, including Aboriginal children. Early in 1997 the federal, provincial, and territorial governments agreed to work together toward the well-being of Canada's children. In December that year, the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Council on Social Policy Renewal agreed to undertake the development of a National Children's Agenda. The foundation for the National Children's Agenda is a framework identifying the following intents:

1. to develop long term goals and a plan for achieving positive outcomes for young Canadians
2. to establish common federal/provincial/territorial priorities for action
3. to provide a basis for coordinated and integrated efforts and partnerships among many sectors which share responsibility for policies, programs and services for children and youth (National Children's Agenda Framework Task Group Report, p. 2)

² www.phac-afpc.gc.ca/dca-dea/programs-mes/ahs_overview_e.html#top

In September 2000, the Government of Canada announced the investment of 2.2 billion dollars over five years for Early Childhood Development programs in the provinces and territories through the Canada Health and Social Transfer. Through the Early Childhood Development Agreement, provincial and territorial governments may invest the funds in four areas:

1. promote healthy pregnancy, birth, and infancy
2. improve parenting and family supports
3. strengthen early childhood development, learning, and care
4. strengthen community supports

Despite the fact that documents supporting these initiatives made very little specific reference to Aboriginal children, Aboriginal early childhood continues to grow. In the January 2001 Speech from the Throne there was commitment to expand First Nations Early Childhood Development programs and services as well as the Aboriginal Head Start program. There was also a commitment to work with Aboriginal communities to reduce the number of newborn babies afflicted with fetal alcohol syndrome. These commitments were reiterated in the 2002 Speech from the Throne along with a new commitment to support the special learning needs of First Nations children. These recent Speeches from the Throne, more than any time in the past, recognize the unique needs of First Nations and Aboriginal children.

Along with the recognition and significant increase in the attention given Canadian children including Aboriginal children in the late 1990's and into 2000, there is also an apparent shift in government arguments and rationales used to justify the need for early childhood programs and services. Arguments that focused on the need for equity and employment support shifted to arguments in favor of children's overall well-being, of their healthy growth and development. These arguments are also beginning to acknowledge more holistic approaches and take into account the contexts of families and communities as evidenced in the design of programs such as the Aboriginal Head Start Programs.

3.3 An Overview of Aboriginal-specific ECE Research

While there is a growing recognition of the needs of Aboriginal children and their families and reflection of those needs in programs such as Aboriginal Head Start, there continues to be a need for research that supports and informs Aboriginal specific program design and care practices. Few Aboriginal-specific early childhood research studies exist. However, with the recent focus on Aboriginal early childhood program and service development there is a parallel interest in Aboriginal-specific research. Likewise a significant amount has been written about research with Aboriginal peoples in general and has produced key principles to guide research initiatives. The intent of the following paragraphs is twofold: one, to discuss some key research principles for working with Aboriginal peoples; and two, to provide an overview of research studies specific to Aboriginal early childhood. Given the newness of this area of inquiry, combined with the newness of Aboriginal-specific Early Childhood Development research, this paper can only provide a cursory review of existing knowledge and background in the areas.

Key to Aboriginal Early Childhood Development research in Canada are issues that rest within the concepts of epistemology (ways of knowing), ontologies (ways of being), pedagogies (ways of transmitting knowledge), and curriculum (official educational knowledge). With the recent emergence of Indigenous academics, these issues have begun to be articulated. Wilson (2003) puts this into perspective when she presents four stages in the evolution of an Indigenous research paradigm developed by Indigenous scholars. The first stage, Wilson, citing Steinhauer, explains that:

Indigenous scholars... situated themselves solidly in a western framework. There is little evidence that they attempted or even considered that the “western” way could be challenged. In fact in order to have their work considered in scholarly academic realms they strove to be western researchers of the highest caliber (p. 168).

Wilson goes on to explain that, “other Aboriginal scholars used the Western paradigm to write about their discontent and give voice to sentiments that were decidedly non-mainstream” (p. 168). Key Indigenous scholars that Wilson refers to include Vine Deloria and Howard Adams. Wilson’s second stage includes, “introduce[ing] the notion of paradigm, but seek[ing] to maintain mainstream Western influences to avoid marginalization” (p. 169). The third stage, according to Wilson, “began to focus on decolonization. This stage, best articulated by the Maori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) in *Decolonizing Methodologies*, suggests a process of Indigenizing Western methodologies” (p. 169). In the fourth stage, according to Wilson, “Aboriginal scholars have been allowed the respect of conducting their own research...[t]he use of an Indigenous research paradigm has allowed them to research that emanates from, honors, and illuminates their world views and perspectives” (p. 167).

A number of Indigenous scholars underscore the importance and rationale of research and its relationship to Indigenous knowledge. L.T. Smith (1999) states, “Research is implicated in the production of Western knowledge, in the nature of academic work, in the production of theories which have dehumanized Maori and in practices which have continued to privilege Western ways of knowing, while denying the validity for Maori of Maori knowledge, language and culture” (p. 183). Beyond the issue of voice and validity, Indigenous scholars speak to the issue of going beyond research for the sake of research. Menzies (2001) states, “There is a place for anthropological research in Indigenous communities, but only if anthropologists are willing to commit to participation in the process of decolonization” (p. 19). This is echoed by L.T. Smith (1999) who states:

The [research] agenda is focused strategically on the goal of self-determination of Indigenous peoples. Self-determination in a research agenda becomes something more than a political goal. It becomes a goal of social justice which is expressed through and across a wide range of psychological, social, cultural and economic terrains. (p. 116)

Meyer (2003) shares the same sentiments in stressing that the needs, wants and interests of the community must be taken into consideration by the researcher; Mayer states that “Research for us is not simply about asking ‘burning questions’ we want resolved, but rather, we are answering to a call to be of use.... We’re heading into our

Building a Community of Communities

own radical remembering of our future” (p. 249). This is reinforced by Weber-Pillwax who says, “The research methods have to mesh with the community and serve the community” (p. 168).

A key concept shared by many Indigenous peoples is relationality. Relationality speaks to the belief and understanding of interconnectedness of our world and all that is in it. In addition, relationality encompasses other realities that we cannot see, but are aware of. Wilson (2003) cites Steinhauer (2002) in explaining the concept of relationality in an Indigenous research paradigm:

An Indigenous paradigm comes from the fundamental belief that knowledge is relational. Knowledge is shared with all creation. It is not just interpersonal relationships, or just with the research subjects I may be working with, but it is a relationship with all of creation. It is with the cosmos; it is with the animals, with the plants, with the earth that we share this knowledge. It goes beyond the idea of individual knowledge to the concept of relational knowledge... you are answerable to all your relations when you are doing research. (p. 172)

Furthermore,

“If Indigenous ways of knowing have to be narrowed through one particular lens (which they certainly do not), then surely that lens would focus on relationality” (p. 173). In discussing Indigenous research methodology Wilson (2001) also introduces the concept of accountability within the context of relationality, “... an Indigenous methodology means talking about relational accountability. As a researcher you are answering to *all your relations* when you are doing research.... you should be fulfilling your relationships with the world around you.... This becomes my methodology, an Indigenous methodology, by looking at relational accountability or being accountable to *all my relations*” (p. 176).

The role of community is further emphasized by Menzies (2001) who provides general research guidelines that address the principle of respect in four basic steps. A summary of these four steps include:

1. Initiate dialogue – by either the researcher or community
2. Refine research plan in consultation with the Nation
3. Conduct research – community members as part of the research team
4. Writing, analysis, revision, and distribution – remain in contact with the community throughout this process – provide copies of all written documents; aim to leave skills within the community so they can carry out similar research projects themselves (p. 22)

The articulation and implementation of First Nations ways of knowing and being is a solid starting point in the transformation of First Nations education and development in general and Early Childhood Development in particular. The realization of this will in turn precipitate change in what we teach and how we teach, in our development, research, and education programs. In doing so we may be one step closer to a system of Early Childhood Development that is called for in the National Indian Brotherhood (now Assembly of First Nations) cornerstone statement of, “Unless a child learns about

Building a Community of Communities

the forces which shape him: the history of his people, their values, their language, he well never really know himself or his potential as a human being" (p. 4).

Upon surveying the research, it becomes readily apparent that there is a dearth of research studies or inquiries in the arena of Aboriginal early childhood education.

A national study was undertaken in 1998, entitled, *First Nations Quality Child Care: A National Study*. This study examined implementation models for the development of First Nations quality child care programs. In addition, jurisdiction options for First Nations child care were explored. Key findings of this study identified six concepts and components that a First Nations quality child care program must address. Specifically, the six components that a child care program must encompass include:

1. provide safe, loving and nurturing care for children
2. meet the needs of the children, families and communities
3. facilitate the passing on of the culture and language from generation to generation
4. provide children with opportunities to learn their culture and language so they are instilled with a sense of pride about who they are
5. foster all aspects of children's growth and development
6. give children opportunities to learn and develop school readiness skills. (Greenwood and Shawana, 2000, p.2)

Participants in this study spoke to the role of child care and child development in their communities. Formal child care and child development services were nonexistent in many Aboriginal communities. Feedback was adamant that child care and child development programs and services should not reflect policies of assimilation similar to the residential school experience. Consequently, the position of participants was clearly First Nations control over the development and delivery of child care services in their communities (Greenwood and Shawana, 2000).

Other recent studies have begun to address specific areas that include, but not necessarily focus only on, early childhood education. Special needs in education has been the focus of several studies and/or research papers. Hurton's 2002 paper, *A Review of First Nations Special Education Policies and Funding Directions Within the Canadian Context*, provides the context for the current state of First Nations special education policy and funding along with recommendations to improve services for children and youth with exceptional needs. However, most research within this document has focused on school-aged children. Early identification and intervention of special education is only very briefly touched upon. In the same vein McBride (2004) penned a document entitled *Funding Students with Special Needs: A Review of Pan-Canadian Practices*. Within the document, this author presents an analysis of funding approaches and protocols to support the education of children with special needs. Again, the bulk of content is centred upon older children. Another study written by MacDonald (2003), *Children and Adolescents with Special Needs: A Review of Provincial British Columbian and Canadian Federal Law and Policy Direction*, provides a review of provincial (British Columbia) and federal government legislation and regulations pertaining to children and adolescents with special needs. The inclusion of early childhood special needs is perfunctory.

Another recent publication by Ball (2004), *Early Childhood Care and Development Programs as Hook and Hub: Promising Practices in First Nations Communities*, is a study in partnership with eight First Nations communities. Five focus areas identified by Ball include:

1. early childhood educator training
2. early childhood education program delivery models
3. inclusion of cultural identity in programming
4. parental involvement
5. success of programming – sustaining success (p. 21)

In summary, most research in the field of Aboriginal early childhood education has been practice or process oriented. This should not be surprising, given the recent emergence of formal Early Childhood Development and education programs in Canada. As has been pointed out previously, early childhood education in this country has developed from a 'top down' approach in all areas including: funding, policies, regulations, jurisdiction and so on. In essence, Early Childhood Development and education at the community level began with a 'sink or swim' approach. Thus, practice was the focal point of need at the community level and has been reflected in early studies. Aboriginal Early Childhood Development programs require expanded research, but with early childhood education programs now more firmly established in Aboriginal communities, we are beginning to see research in this later area branch out. Marie Battiste (2002), provides future directions for educational research in general, which also strongly resonate with Aboriginal early childhood education. Among others, her recommendations include:

- Affirming Traditional Teachings of Next Generations
- Developing and Supporting Indigenous Knowledge in Educational Institutions
- Encouraging Research and Innovations in Classroom Work
- Developing and Adopting Principles and Guidelines for Respectful Protocols
- Developing Research and Capacity Building in Indigenous Knowledge and Pedagogy
- Developing New Theory and Innovative Practices
- Supporting Professional Capacity Building for First Nations Education (p. 33-39)

4. Methodology

The broadest goal of the Aboriginal Head Start Program, including both the On Reserve and the Urban and Northern initiatives, is to prepare young pre-school aged Aboriginal children for their school years. The Aboriginal Head Start Program focuses on preparing young Aboriginal children by meeting and addressing their social, emotional, spiritual, health, nutritional, and psychological needs. Early childhood development is thus central and integral to the Aboriginal Head Start program. There is a challenge, however, with regard both to the lack of knowledge about what research is currently taking place concerning Aboriginal Early Childhood Development and with regard to how contemporary Aboriginal Early Childhood Development research might be effectively linked to and employed by the Aboriginal Head Start Program.

On December 2, 2004 a diverse group of forty-seven researchers, practitioners, community members, government officials, and other identified experts in the field of Early Childhood Development gathered together in Winnipeg, Manitoba, in order to consider Aboriginal Early Childhood Development in Canada. Supported and facilitated by the Aboriginal Head Start Program and the Health Canada funded Centre of Excellence for Children and Adolescents with Special Needs, participants in the National Roundtable were tasked with four objectives. First, participants documented existing research pertinent to Aboriginal Head Start in Canada. Second, participants identified research gaps in the area of Aboriginal Early Childhood Development and considered those gaps in relation to Aboriginal Head Start. Third, participants developed a series of vision statements regarding principles which might guide a community of Aboriginal early childhood researchers that would support Aboriginal Head Start. Finally, participants developed a series of recommendations that would realize or actualize their vision. To ensure feedback was included which fell outside these four areas, sessions were also facilitated to include “what did we miss?” components, thus ensuring a fully inclusive process.

To achieve the objectives of the National Roundtable on Aboriginal Early Childhood Development, participants were guided by four broad yet encompassing questions: two questions guided morning discussion sessions while two questions guided afternoon sessions. During the morning sessions, comprised of four groups with approximately ten participants in each group, discussion focused on the questions of:

- What research is currently taking place in Aboriginal Early Childhood Development that could relate to Aboriginal Head Start?
- What are the most fundamental gaps in Aboriginal Early Childhood Development that could relate to Aboriginal Head Start?

During the afternoon sessions, also comprised of four groups with approximately ten participants in each group, discussion focused on the questions of:

- What principles should guide research in Aboriginal Early Childhood Development?
- How do you envision a community of researchers in Aboriginal Early Childhood Development that could support Aboriginal Head Start?

This last question was further focused by facilitators who encouraged participants to consider both the strategies and structures which would actualize a research community dedicated to Aboriginal Early Childhood Development and the concrete first steps that would start the establishment of a research community supportive of Aboriginal Head Start.

The morning and afternoon sessions, each just over an hour long, culminated in two plenary sessions, sessions designed to allow a “reporting back” to each other by members of the small groups and a time to contemplate/raise any issues which might have been missed or left out from the small breakout sessions. During the larger plenary sessions, the results of the small breakout sessions were synthesized and then circulated for consideration, a process which generated even further thoughts and suggestions. The National Roundtable on Aboriginal Early Childhood Development was thus a dynamic and flexible process designed to generate the most comprehensive perspectives possible on the potential direction of Aboriginal ECD research for Aboriginal Head Start research in Canada. The outcomes of and the discussions generated during both the small sessions and the plenary sessions were recorded and form the foundation of the results section (following) of this report.

5. Summary of Themes from the National Roundtable on Aboriginal ECD - Focus Groups and Plenaries

Participants tasked with deliberating the guiding questions were divided at the onset of the day according to areas of interest and professionalism. The resulting four groups, each with a collective area of specialization in Early Childhood Development, were:

1. training and professional development
2. parents and community
3. prevention and early intervention
4. programs, including curriculum, pedagogy, and evaluation

While the four groups considered the guiding questions from markedly different perspectives, clear commonalities are discernable throughout all the responses.

Both the morning questions (Re: existing areas of ECD research with Head Start potential and gaps in research) generated responses that were more “overview” in nature. Participants were nevertheless concerned, however, with injecting philosophical and political considerations into their “overview” discussions. This demonstrates and reinforces, as many Aboriginal scholars and community members are insistent in articulating, the universal interconnectedness of ideas and actions that is central to many Indigenous people and those who are committed to Indigenous worldviews and perspectives. In other words, even when asked to provide an overview of existing research and programs which might relate to Aboriginal Head Start, participants tempered their responses with considerations of “who is asking for this information?”; “can Indigenous community members be fully served, respected, and accounted for in answering the question?”; “what might be left out when providing this information?”; “can the question be holistically answered without the words and guidance of Elders?” and; “who stands to benefit from the answers collected?”.

During the afternoon sessions, these philosophical considerations became more foundational, driving both the participants’ envisioning of an ECD research community and their contemplations of principles which might guide such a research community.

5.1 Overview of Existing Research that Might Relate to Aboriginal Head Start

As one participant noted, it is vital when providing an overview of existing research to consider how one might apply and/or adapt existing knowledge to community needs, including the community needs at the level of Head Start. This observation makes clear that while sentiments decrying “re-inventing the wheel” are valuable, it is also important to note that “cookie-cutter” approaches to programming or research methodologies, particularly in the arena of Aboriginal Early Childhood Development, should be avoided. In other words, while it is vital to establish an overview of existing Aboriginal ECD research which might link to Aboriginal Head Start, no assumptions should be made about the blanket transferability of such research between communities, Nations, and programs. With these caveats stipulated, participants provided their overviews of

research and research-based initiatives which are taking place across Canada and which might be of interest to Aboriginal Head Start.

In total, thirty-four initiatives and programs, both research and service based, were identified by participants as having potential relevance and importance to Aboriginal Head Start. Participants repeatedly noted that research exists in many forms in First Nations and Inuit communities and that often communities partake in and produce initiatives without identifying those initiatives as “research” per se. It was noted, however, that effort should be made to account for and consider such locally developed and locally relevant projects, an endeavor not fully addressed in the one day Winnipeg Roundtable. Associated with this observation was the call for a broad, comprehensive, and long-term scan to identify initiatives at the community, regional, provincial, national, and international levels (**see Recommendation 2, page 23**). Research developed and actualized in New Zealand was cited a number of times as having potential relevance to Canada’s Aboriginal Head Start. The successful manner by which New Zealand Maori have ensured bilingualism in their children, in addition to Maori successes in culturally empowering parents and other family members, were both cited as exemplaries which Canada should consider.

School-based initiatives focused on Inuit values and expectations, including attitudes of service, others were cited as noteworthy from Nunavut and Inuit communities. With regard to technology, the recent Aboriginal Children’s Circle of Early Learning (ACCEL) (formally known as the Aboriginal Service Providers Network), and the Special Needs Information Service housed with the Centre of Excellence for Children and Adolescents with Special Needs (CECASN) were cited as examples and existing infrastructures which Aboriginal Head Start might benefit from linking with or drawing upon. The Human Early Learning Project (HELP), a multi-disciplinary cross-sectoral initiative housed at the University of British Columbia (UBC), and the Statistics Canada initiative of developing (by 2006) an Aboriginal equivalent to the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY) were both cited as existing (or soon to exist) repositories of research which could prove important to Aboriginal Head Start.

The basic principles behind the National Children’s Agenda, although understood as not specifically appropriate to First Nations and Inuit children, were cited as potential tenets which might inform objectives of research done by/for Aboriginal Head Start. Both the Community Action Plan for Children (CAPC) and the Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program (CPNP) were also cited as producing research which may have potential import for Aboriginal Head Start. Although participants did not list specific research report titles or research results generated by CAPC and CPNP, it was suggested such programs be investigated by Aboriginal Head Start in order to draw from existing research results.

5.1.a Evaluation Tools and Locally Driven Initiatives

With reference for the need to increase research concerning program evaluation, participants noted a number of existing evaluation tools which merited the attention of Aboriginal Head Start in Canada. Many participants, after acknowledging the existence of these evaluation tools, cautioned that Aboriginal Head Start make efforts to ensure accessible and culturally relevant forms of evaluation which can be both easily and effectively employed by community members and front-line practitioners and which are

cost effective, meaningful, and consistent over time. Finally, participants noted that while they either had direct experience with the tools or knew of the tools, in a large number of cases the evaluation tools were adapted to suit the local and specific needs of a community. Whether adaptations to these tools would change their validity was not discussed, nor was it the focus of attention. However, these adaptations, noted participants, were an area of potential Aboriginal Head Start research, particularly because without the locally imposed adaptation, a number of the evaluation tools were seen as having potential conflicts with the cultural needs of First Nations and Inuit peoples (**see Recommendation 3, page 23**). The National Work Sampling System (WSS) was highlighted by a number of participants as having had some efficacy in their programs and communities. The Weschler Individual Achievement Test (WIAT), the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS), and the Home Instruction Program for Pre-school Youngsters (HIPPY) were also all cited as evaluation tools which would benefit from concentrated Aboriginal Head Start investigation.

Finally, a number of more locally specific and community-driven initiatives were discussed as holding potential for Aboriginal Head Start. The *Sharing our Success* project produced research regarding successes in twelve schools with Aboriginal populations ranging from 30% to 100% in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and British Columbia. The *Lifeways Suicide Prevention Program* was cited as being very adaptable and customizable to community needs; the program is holistic in nature, addressing substance abuse issues and improving rates of school completion while lowering rates of truancy. Individual communities and provinces were observed to have repositories of texts which Aboriginal Head Start might effectively draw upon, including resources such as books and stories produced by Elders concerning community education. In Nunavut, two locally developed initiatives were noted as having potential import for Aboriginal Head Start: a research project addressing iron-deficiency in children was cited as a potential model for community health research, while a guide for playgrounds which met the specific geographic, climactic, and cultural needs of Inuit children was cited as emblematic of how practical Early Childhood Development infrastructures can be researched and developed in consultation with community in order to provide appropriate outcomes.

In the Comox Valley, British Columbia, a study is underway to ascertain how the Aboriginal Head Start program, and other Aboriginal specific child development and school readiness programs, might be evaluated from a non-deficit model perspective; the Comox Valley initiative focuses on identifying gifts and giftedness in Aboriginal children. In Kamloops, British Columbia, a program is being developed which focuses on community observation and documentation of programs aimed at child sensitive curriculum; in the same community, a mentoring program between community members and child development workers is in the development phases. The Northwest Territories was noted as another region which is successfully developing and employing mentoring programs, in addition to developing a comprehensive and Territory-wide Aboriginal Head Start site evaluation program which arose as a hybrid of local input and three existing evaluation tools (WIAT, PEABODY, and ECERS). Finally, the University of Victoria is investigating evaluation tools and working with communities to address Aboriginal children's development and to consider the role of fathering in Aboriginal children's development.

5.2 Gaps in Aboriginal Early Childhood Development Research that Might Relate to Aboriginal Head Start

As with the hesitations surrounding their provision of an overview of Aboriginal ECD research initiatives, participants suggested the research gaps which they identified in Aboriginal Early Childhood Development should not be understood as encompassing all the existing gaps. Similarly, participants expressed that research gaps did not pertain to research subjects not yet covered; rather, research gaps included fundamental worldview differences which continued, in the words of many participants, to separate the researcher from the research topic and the interests of the investigator from the interests of Indigenous communities. Although one participant noted the danger of speaking homogenously about “researchers” (the participant noted that equivalent disregard of multi-variance in research subjects or communities was unacceptable) a number of participants noted their frustration that research continues to be guided by particular expectations and protocols which are often neither developed by the community nor with the interests of the community as the full and final motivating basis of the research. As one participant noted, it continues to be a gap (from the perspective of communities) that research methodologies and protocols are primarily driven by academic institutions (and their members) who are ultimately accountable to a system which demands they publish successful results in peer reviewed journals in order that the researchers receive and secure ongoing funding and recognition from their institutions. This environment, observed the participant, will always privilege the demands of the academy over the immediate and imperative needs of the community; it might also result in budgetary control over research dollars remaining in the hands of academic institutions and researchers as opposed to in the hands of communities.

5.2.a Non-responsive Research Methodologies

This fundamental tension between community interests and research agendas was evident throughout discussions of the day; participants noted both that “research is never neutral: power attaches to different people who use it in different ways” and “‘partnerships’ in research [are] often not true partnerships [in that] the community agencies involved with the university don’t always adequately represent community interests”. There exists, as another participant noted, an ongoing concern on the part of Indigenous people regarding the lack of connection between research and how that research might relate to community.

For some participants, the greatest gap in Aboriginal Early Childhood Development research was the lack of an appropriate model by which to carry out the research; this was emphasized in observations that a full research “paradigm shift” was needed before research could be meaningfully done with Aboriginal communities. This paradigm shift would involve the development of a fundamentally new research framework which accounted for Indigenous perspectives on child development. The current conceptualization of ECD, noted one participant, is fundamental Western in its view of development occurring in “chunks” and in its dichotomous construction of identity/culture/spirituality and health. The new model or framework would vary from both traditional quantitative or qualitative research methodologies. As one participant noted in reference to discussion concerning gaps in Aboriginal ECD research which

might pertain to Aboriginal Head Start: “we have yet to establish what constitutes research”.

In addition to the gaps concerning how to address fundamental methodological and worldview differences, participants focused both on gaps in culturally specific information and research and on gaps in information-based research which would assist in gaining a clearer overview of the status of Aboriginal Early Childhood Development in Canada. From an information-based perspective, a number of participants noted that knowledge dissemination and knowledge application and transfer continue to constitute a great challenge, a challenge which Aboriginal Head Start could potentially address. Head Start, as one participant observed, may benefit from the coordinated collection and subsequent dissemination of data from across sites and regions in order to make such knowledge evenly and equally available across communities (**see Recommendation 4, page 23**).

5.2.b Lack of Baseline Data and Cultural Relevancy

It was observed that longitudinal and baseline data concerning Aboriginal Early Childhood Development was extremely sparse and thus difficult to attain. In addition to a dearth of baseline and longitudinal data, gaps exist in the area of comparative research between Aboriginal Early Childhood Development in rural versus urban areas and in the area of school transition research. There is little information regarding the impact of Aboriginal Head Start curriculum on Kindergarten success rates and, as other participants noted, research might meaningfully be conducted on both extending the Aboriginal Head Start curriculum into the Kindergarten setting and on looking at school environments being ready for Aboriginal children as opposed to Aboriginal children being made ready for the school environment. Health information and research was another area that participants noted could be strengthened, particularly research concerning rates of (and the specificities of) special needs, dental care, early nutrition, high and low birth weights, early onset diabetes, hearing, and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) (including family impact of FASD).

Cultural relevancy was never far from the thoughts of participants. As was observed by one participant, we must always be thinking about the child; while we are programmed to “think in the box” it might help to imagine a child rather than a box, thus repositioning ourselves outside the box and “inside the child”. This child-centred insistence related to cultural considerations, including the concern that nothing culturally specific and appropriate has been developed for the assessment of Inuit curriculum and programs (which results, according to one participant, in a feeling of overwhelmedness in Nunavut) and a concern regarding the lack of research pertaining to the delivery of a “culturally-generic” programming and curricula as opposed to culturally specific programming and curricula that recognizes and incorporates cultural diversity.

5.3 Summary of Research Overview and Research Gaps

Four predominant themes presented themselves during the morning and afternoon sessions of the Roundtable on Aboriginal Early Childhood Development Research with possible relevancy to Aboriginal Head Start:

1. The need to engage Aboriginal communities.
2. The need to re-evaluate research methodologies when conducting research with Aboriginal communities on Aboriginal Early Childhood Development.
3. The need to establish a firm research base from which to conduct ongoing research.
4. The need to build capacity in Aboriginal Early Childhood Development research arenas by ensuring sustainability and recognizing the power and potential of authentic partnerships.

That Aboriginal communities are caring for their children and that non-deficit based research can (and should) recognize and account for that work was mentioned by a number of participants. The sentiment speaks to including (if not making primary) communities in all steps of the research process, from the establishment of research projects right up to the writing and dissemination of the research results. This has the potential of establishing new and innovative research methodologies which would more meaningfully reflect Indigenous worldviews and perspectives. Establishing innovative research methodologies would complement the gathering and establishment of baseline data and information, the collection of which is needed in order to gain a full understanding of what constitutes Aboriginal Early Childhood Development in Canada.

Research is not, however, about establishment of knowledge and information without reciprocity to the communities from where that knowledge and information originated. Capacity building should thus be fundamental to any Aboriginal Early Childhood Development research activity undertaken by or through Aboriginal Head Start. Capacity building includes ensuring appropriate funding is available to communities so that they can represent their needs and visions equally alongside those who more traditionally guide and envision the research agenda and process. Capacity building also means ensuring that any and all research developed or undertaken by Aboriginal Head Start is located in communities, with the needs and future directions of communities being accounted for in every step of the research process. Finally, participants noted the absence of Indigenous representatives at the Winnipeg Roundtable, a lack which many participants hope will be rectified during the continuation of this process.

5.4 Principles to Guide Research in Aboriginal Early Childhood Development

Discussions regarding the overview of existing Aboriginal ECD research, and the gaps which exist in that research, were not separated from discussions of foundational principles and philosophies, both of which participants associated with the topics dealt with during the morning sessions. The afternoon sessions, however, focused participants' consideration of what principles should guide research in Aboriginal Early Childhood Development in Canada. As participants noted, guiding research principles pertaining to Aboriginal peoples exist in the form of OCAP (Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession) principles and in recommendations developed under RCAP (the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples). These two foundations, participants noted, should not be overlooked or unaccounted for in efforts to develop further principles to guide Aboriginal Early Childhood Development research. Recognizing this, however, participants articulated a number of specific principles which were considered relevant when conducting Aboriginal ECD research.

The principles of which participants spoke are classifiable into two broad themes: “knowledge-based principles” and “researcher-based principles”. Knowledge based principles pertain to the way that information, data, knowledge, and research is produced and circulated. These principles tend to be associated with *how* research is conducted and generated, the reasons behind the research, and *what* happens to the research. Researcher-based principles pertain to the attributes and characteristics of those *who* conduct the research; this second theme appeared to be more difficult for participants to articulate, yet there was recognition that certain principles needed to be embraced by the very people who conducted and produced research.

5.4.a Knowledge-based Principles

In the area of knowledge-based principles, participants identified over a dozen principles which should guide the development, conducting, production, and circulation of research (**see Recommendation 5, page 23**). Superseding (yet connecting) all other principles was that research needs to be community collaborative and community relevant. Participants reiterated the import of authentic partnership between research funders, research agencies, and communities. It is not, argued participants, sufficient for funding to be controlled by “principle investigators” at research institutions and allocated to communities only as communities become components of the research process. This construction of research negates the possibility of communities developing, from the ground up and from the onset, the research agenda and direction. As one participant noted, meaningful Aboriginal participation, in all phases of the research, is key.

Flexibility was another key principle identified. This principle incorporated notions of research being “community-based and community-paced”, speaking to desires that research account for the significant amount of time it takes to genuinely account for and consider the broad base of views that comprise a community or a group of community stakeholders. Research regarding Aboriginal Early Childhood Development cannot be, according to participants, conducted in a speedy fashion designed to fulfill the time requirements dictated by non-community protocols and workplans. Associated with the former three principles are the principles of balance and openness. These later two would ensure research designs that account for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous worldviews and which ensure frank and fair dialogue between all research stakeholders. As one participant noted, it is imperative to ensure a structure in which research is conducted in the language of a community (this is particularly relevant in northern and Inuit communities) and that the results of the research are translated and given back to the community in a timely manner.

Five practical knowledge-based principles were identified with reference to what communities would ideally appreciate research recognizing and accounting for in the research process. Too often, observed participants, the existing strengths of communities are overlooked: a guiding principle of research production should thus be a strength-based perspective which values and recognizes the inherent resources of communities. This is not to suggest that research projects should not make every effort to build capacity and capital in communities, a further guiding principle identified by participants. Linked to the guiding principle of building capacity was the articulation that Aboriginal Early Childhood Development research should strive to create a positive

environment, should inject training or mentoring of community members into its agenda, and should always be needs-based.

5.4.b Researcher-based Principles

The researcher-based principles complement the knowledge-based principles: in other words, the principles that participants stated should guide research methods and protocols are best actualized when researchers themselves internalize a variety of guiding principles. For instance, participants noted that researchers should always be humble as they partner with and carry out research with communities. This principle of humility would ensure that researchers fully internalize an understanding that expertise exists in abundance outside the traditional academic research context. Principles of humility would also, as another participant noted, ensure sensitivity to self-reflection and would lead to researchers taking additional steps toward acknowledging a variety of behavioral and cognitive worldviews.

The principle of humility was associated with a second researcher-based principle identified by participants: self-reflexivity. Self-reflexivity, as one participant noted, insists that researchers “do not know it all” or do not necessarily even know more than community members: self-reflexivity insists upon knowing “where you put your ‘I’” which in turn shifts power to encompass Indigenous worldviews. Finally, participants noted that respect was a fundamental guiding principle of Aboriginal Early Childhood Development research. The principle of respect spanned a broad variety of contexts: participants insisted that researchers respect community; that research efforts respect traditions, values, histories and relationships with the community; and that research results be respected. As one participant succinctly observed, respect involves a fundamental shift in thought and worldview from a position which asks “what can the world and research subjects offer me” to “what can I do for the world and for the research subjects with whom I am involved”.

5.5 Envisioning a Community of Researchers Which Could Support Aboriginal Head Start in Canada

Work done by participants at the National Roundtable on Aboriginal Early Childhood Development was not limited to theoretical considerations. The final culmination of participants’ work was the deliberation of concrete next steps which could translate into the formation of a research community to support research agendas of Aboriginal Head Start in Canada. As with all the other areas participants were asked to consider, this final area was not discussed outside larger political and philosophical contexts. The containment of this potential community to only Aboriginal Head Start was seen as potentially problematic by one participant. Some participants noted that other working models existed which could simply be “tapped into” as opposed to creating a community from scratch. There were other concerns voiced, including the questions of: “who takes responsibility for the [research community] structure?”; “where is the money to implement these next [and concrete] steps?”; “who’s responsible for taking action?”; “do we want a national body?”; “who will develop the framework for all of this?” and; “who should be responsible for the money?”. With these caveats in mind, it is still possible to understand a dominant theme as having emerged from the envisioning of a community

of researchers which could support Aboriginal Early Childhood Development research (and not simply Aboriginal ECD research associated with Head Start) in Canada. This dominant theme might best be understood as reflected in what one participant called “a community of communities”.

As efforts are made to develop a “community of communities” which would support Aboriginal Early Childhood Development research in Canada, attention must be paid to ensuring that the research supports much more than just Head Start programs. Instead, the “community of communities” should strive to be cross-sectoral, cross-departmental, inter-ministerial, and interdisciplinary. In efforts to build such a structure, further meetings and roundtables are imperative, but at those future gatherings it is vital to ensure the presence of more parents, youth, and community members. A number of participants observed that prior to future meetings with both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people present, Aboriginal people should be afforded the opportunity to discuss research issues and Early Childhood Development research internally, without the pressure of responding to interests which might lay outside their communities and Nations. It was stated numerous times that not enough Indigenous people were present at the Winnipeg Roundtable, a gap which would need to be addressed in the future.

As the “community of communities” is realized, protocols appropriate to all stakeholders and members would be learned and transferred, and training and information sharing would be built in as part of the research strategy. Specific structures and actions were identified as achievable in the short term. For instance, one participant noted that “given the fact that there have been several reports that have not moved forward, this report needs to be taken through the appropriate government processes to ensure decision making around funding and policy”. In other words, one crucial step in moving toward a “community of communities” that would support Aboriginal Early Childhood Development research in Canada is to champion and support the wide dissemination and uptake of this report. Additionally, participants encouraged each other to establish and nurture mentoring programs and advocacy opportunities which would in turn form the foundation for the “community of communities”. If parents, youth, community members, and front-line workers are expected to form equal partnerships with academics, policy makers, and government officials in the vision of a “community of communities,” then it is important to develop and solidify a capacity (based on mentoring and advocacy) which would enable such partnerships.

According to some participants, in order to make the vision a reality, three fundamental questions must be answered and the answers must be circulated and acted upon as widely as possible:

1. From where is the funding flowing, and when?
2. Who is responsible for taking action, and when?
3. When will outcomes be available?

Responding to these questions will assist in the formation of a foundation for the “community of communities”. For instance, in response to the first question, consideration may be given both to the amount of influence communities have into the agendas of funding organizations and to the need for communities to shape the direction of funding imperatives. In response to the second question, many of the research

Building a Community of Communities

principles identified by participants can be applied to concepts of taking actions: for instance, there is a need to incorporate flexibility to address the diverse nature of all communities involved in the “community of communities”, as is there a need to ensure (within the “community of communities”) principles of holism, respect, responsiveness, and meaningful collaboration between all participants. Finally, in response to the third question raised by participants, a significant process for knowledge uptake which builds on longer term processes must be conceptualized.

As the answers to these questions are established, and after funding is established, every effort must be made to ensure a living and integrated research agenda that realizes enough dynamism to adapt and change over time. The structure of a “community of communities” will necessarily and importantly draw upon and employ existing electronic clearing houses of information and any baseline and statistical information established by quantitative research bodies.

6. Recommendations and Future Directions

Given the variety of voice and perspective collected during December 2's National Roundtable on Aboriginal Early Childhood Development, the resulting recommendations are broad and dynamic in nature. The recommendations flow both from an understanding of the history and contemporary state of Aboriginal Early Childhood Development programming and research and from the views and perspectives gathered during the Roundtable discussions.

Participants articulated the need to re-evaluate research methodologies when conducting research with Aboriginal communities on Aboriginal Early Childhood Development; the need to establish a firm research base from which to conduct ongoing research, and; the need to build capacity in Aboriginal Early Childhood Development research arenas by ensuring sustainability and recognizing the power and potential of authentic partnerships. Given this, it is recommended that:

1. Ongoing and collaborative effort be made to establish new and innovative research models and research frameworks through which to conduct research about Aboriginal Early Childhood Development;
2. Baseline profile data be established and collected regarding Aboriginal Early Childhood Development in Canada: collection of this baseline data should include a broad, comprehensive, and long-term scan to identify initiatives in Aboriginal Early Childhood Development at the community, regional, provincial, national, and international levels;
3. Review current assessment, evaluation, and diagnostic tools pertaining to Aboriginal Early Childhood Development; upon review, establish culturally relevant and culturally specific assessment, evaluation, and diagnostic tools with ongoing input from Indigenous communities;
4. Establish means to coordinate the collection and subsequent dissemination of data from across sites and regions in order to make such knowledge evenly and equally available across communities. This should be done through culturally appropriate methods and should focus on current research, best practices, locally developed solutions, and programming examples;
5. Aboriginal Early Childhood Development research be generated on the principles of community collaboration, respect, humility, self-reflexivity, and flexibility: these principles adhere to and are respectful of the diversity of Indigenous worldviews and ways of being;
6. All results of Aboriginal Early Childhood Development research be designed to directly benefit community and build capacity for community to move toward conducting their own research;
7. As the program and direction of Aboriginal Early Childhood Development research is developed, Aboriginal people should be afforded the opportunity to

Building a Community of Communities

discuss research issues and Early Childhood Development research internally, without the pressure of responding to interests which might lay outside their communities and Nations. This can be facilitated at the community, regional, or provincial levels prior to it occurring at the national level;

8. A “community of communities” of Aboriginal Early Childhood Development researchers be assembled to encourage research for future generations of Indigenous children, peoples, and communities.

6.1 Future Directions

One context in which to begin implementing these broad recommendations is special needs. This is one key area of Aboriginal Early Childhood Development identified by both the Centre of Excellence for Children & Adolescents with Special Needs and Aboriginal Head Start in Urban and Northern Communities who co-hosted this National Roundtable. Consequently, these organizations should convene future meetings with a specific focus on special needs. Particular areas to be addressed may include: definitions of special needs; identification of children with special needs; and culturally and linguistically appropriate models. These issues should be approached within the framework of the recommendations outlined above.

7. Resources and Sources

Aboriginal Head Start On Reserve Program: www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fnihb/cp/ahsor/

Aboriginal Head Start Urban and Northern Program: www.phac-afpc.gc.ca/dca-dea/programs-mes/ahs_overview_e.html#top

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Building a Community of Communities

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