

# PIARANUT FOR OUR CHILDREN

Quality Practices for Inuit Early  
Childhood Education Programs



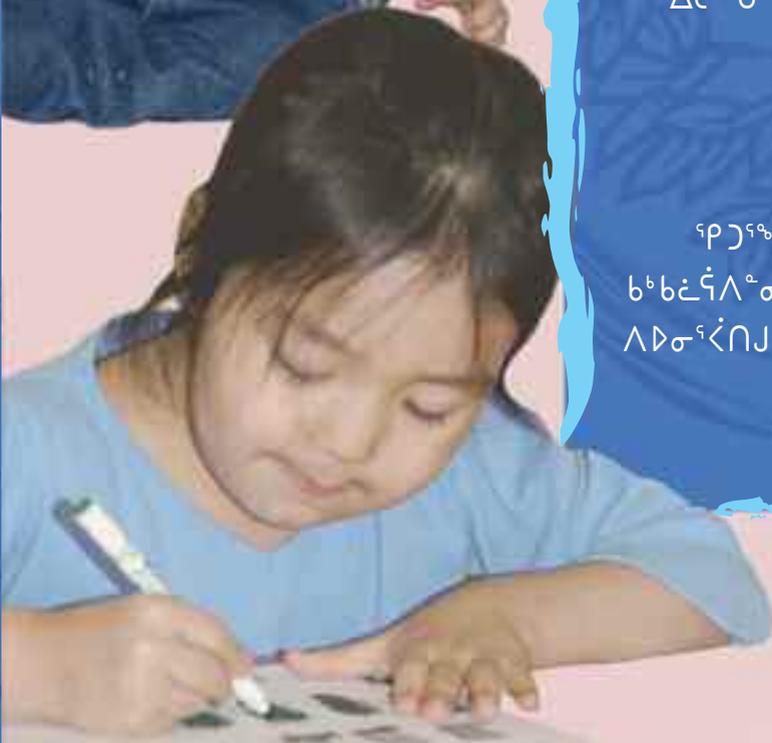
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PAUKTUUTIT  
INUIT WOMEN OF CANADA







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## SUMMARY

*Pauktuutit's vision of high quality Inuit Early Childhood Education programs is holistic, integrated and comprehensive. Children are viewed in the larger context of families and community. The health and well-being of Inuit children and their families is promoted to ensure that both are achieved to their fullest potential. A wide range of services and programs are offered to support families. They are grounded in Inuit values, traditions, and delivered in our languages.*

### **Partnerships & Relationships**

- are holistic in nature – children are viewed in the context of their own families as well as within the wider community;
- involve, support, and provide learning opportunities for parents in raising their children to be healthy, happy and to reach their full potential in life;
- are flexible in effectively serving parents employed and/or in training in both the traditional and wage economies; for example, extended hours, weekends, evenings;
- develop with other service providers and organizations to ensure a coordinated approach to meeting the needs of children and families;
- integrate and address the unique needs of children with special needs; and support them in reaching their fullest potential; and
- advocate on behalf of children and families.

### **Governance**

- is community based, locally designed, and delivered to ensure that the unique needs of each community are considered and met;

- is non-profit in nature;
- roles and responsibilities are defined clearly; and
- relies on the direct involvement of parents, Elders and other community members in decision making.

### **Policies & Procedures**

- developed in keeping with provincial/territorial legislation and local health authority;
- developed and implemented to ensure the health and safety of children at all times;
- are fair and consistent to assist program staff in decision making;
- accommodate northern realities and Inuit values; and
- communicated to parents to foster understanding and cooperation.

### **Culture & Language**

- are rooted in Inuit culture, values and traditions;
- preserve traditional knowledge with the involvement of Elders;
- provide traditional country food;
- incorporate materials and activities that are culturally based;
- celebrate the natural curiosity of children and fosters a love of learning; and
- promote the retention of Inuktitut

### **Personnel**

- includes Inuit staff;
- provides professional development opportunities to program staff in their own communities;
- recognizes life experiences as qualification for prospective program staff;
- involves Inuit in the design of training programs for staff in the north; and
- implements mentorship programs for new program staff.



## INTRODUCTION

### PAUKTUUTIT INUIT WOMEN OF CANADA

Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada is the national non-profit charitable association that represents all Inuit women in Canada. Our mandate is to foster a greater awareness of the needs of Inuit women, and to encourage their participation in community, national and international concerns in relation to social, cultural and economic development. Since incorporation in 1984, Pauktuutit addresses many of the serious social issues that affect our communities. We undertake comprehensive projects on family violence, abuse prevention, housing, traditional Inuit midwifery and birthing practices, tobacco cessation, economic development, intellectual property rights and early childhood development.

### QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

We know that high quality programs positively impact young children's growth and development. *"The early years lay the foundation for lifelong determinants of optimal health and well-being."*<sup>1</sup>

A great deal of research identifies factors that lead to quality programs. In general, it is widely accepted that quality programs protect the child's health and safety; support the child's healthy development across all developmental domains; and support the family in its role as the child's primary caregivers. While this is certainly true for Inuit, our project goal is to identify, share and promote what makes quality Inuit early childhood education unique.

### INUIT EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Relative to the rest of Canada, the need for organized child care in our communities is new. Today, many families in our communities rely on child care arrangements outside of the home or extended family. Despite barriers such as lack of capital funds and rigid provincial/territorial regulations<sup>2</sup>, communities have been diligent and resourceful in the design of child care programs to meet the needs of their families. Two distinct Federal programs have contributed significantly to the development of licensed child care spaces in the Inuit regions. The First Nations Inuit Child Care Initiative and the Aboriginal Head Start Initiative have changed the face of child care and pre-school education in the North.



*"Northerners have long recognized the need for quality early childhood programs and services. Many communities have developed excellent programs and services that support families and young children."*<sup>3</sup>



Program staff at licensed day care centres, Aboriginal Head Starts, and nursery schools serve many children in the North. At a glance, programs may resemble southern models of child care, but they are unique in many ways. Inuit-specific programs strive to renew and preserve Inuit language, culture, and child-rearing practices by integrating these into all aspects of programs. Further, programs



aspire to encourage children's health and development, spiritual growth, positive self-image and cultural pride.

Early childhood education programs in our communities do more than provide care while parents work or train – they have the capacity to pass on the knowledge, values and beliefs of our ancestors. At their best, programs in the early years give our children hope, strength and pride in who they are as Inuit.

*By sharing our strengths with each other,  
we learn and grow together – towards a  
healthy bright future for our children.  
Heidi Langille, Pauktuutit.*

## PROJECT STEPS

The process for this project was multi-faceted. A literature review was completed to establish widely accepted and well researched indicators of quality on an international scope. This information provided a baseline of knowledge and a springboard for developing telephone interviews. Telephone interviews were completed with 45 Inuit programs across Canada. The questions were designed to solicit input about elements of quality in Inuit programs, with a focus on culture and language. Program visits were conducted at seven exemplary Inuit early childhood education programs across Canada. The visits included observations, interviews with program staff, videotaping and still photos.

## THE GUIDE

The information from the literature review, telephone interviews and program visits is integrated into five sections. These sections capture the key components of quality Inuit early childhood education programs:

1. Partnerships & Relationships,
2. Governance,
3. Policies & Procedures,
4. Language & Culture Based Curriculum; and
5. Personnel.

Each section blends information gathered with practical suggestions and resources that help programs to achieve quality. The guide is not intended as a prescriptive tool directing programs what to do and how to do it. Rather, our goal is to provide programs with information that will support them in providing high quality programs, celebrate and showcase activities in communities, and share ideas and resources so programs can try new things. It is our hope that programs will find this guide a hands-on, useful tool that will support them in delivering the best program possible and enhance what they are already doing.



## DEFINITIONS

There are several terms used repeatedly throughout this guide. Although there may be other terms used to describe the same thing, we have chosen to rely on the following:

### ***Inuktitut***

- Inuktitut is used throughout to represent all Inuit languages and dialects.

### ***Early Childhood Education or Early Childhood Development Programs***

- These terms are used throughout the guide to describe licensed child care centres, nursery schools, and Head Starts.

### ***Quality Care***

- Quality care describes early childhood education of high quality and excellent standards.

### ***Parent***

- The term parent refers to parents, guardians or other adults who have primary responsibility for the care of the child.

### ***Centre Director***

- This term is used to describe the individual who manages the Early Childhood Education program on a daily basis.

### ***Program Staff***

- Program staff includes adults who work with children and provide care and education to children.







# Partnerships and Relationships

## INTRODUCTION

Our communities are built on traditional values of relying on each other. These values have remained intact despite many changes in our society. We depend on our connectedness to other people for our well-being. We must work together and develop collaborative working relationships for a common purpose.<sup>4</sup>

Connections to others occur at all levels of program delivery: child to child; staff to child; parent to child; staff to staff; board to staff; parents to staff; and program to community. These many relationships have one thing in common – the child. The child is at the centre of all that we do. We depend on these ties to assist us in providing quality care and education to our children.

## Relationships with Children

In quality programs, program staff strive to provide care that nurtures the child's growth and development, protects the child's safety and well-being, and supports the child's emotional health. In doing so, the child feels safe and cared for in their home away from home. The development of attachments to program staff is positive and healthy for the child's sense of self. Adults who care for a child can support healthy attachment through responsive care such as:

- physical contact during infant feeding – holding, touching, making eye contact and soothing sounds;

- using amautiq or packing shirts to soothe children and help with sleeping;
- responding in a positive way to the child's needs and signals with active interest and encouragement;
- consistent daily routines that increase the children's comfort with the world around them;
- clear limits that make the child feel protected but secure enough to reach out and learn;

*Welcoming families, other community people, and Elders into the centre also has the effect of opening up the program; bringing the program into the community and the community into the program. This helps to keep the program culturally relevant, and informal and welcoming rather than institutional.<sup>7</sup>*





- encouragement of children's communication and verbal exchange and
- shared interaction between child and adult rather than adult directed interaction.<sup>5</sup>

Positive behaviour management includes a comprehensive method that programs use to ensure the proper and caring response to children. Please see Program Policies & Procedures for more behaviour management information.

## Relationships with Community

Early childhood education programs establish and maintain cooperative working relationships with other organizations involved with children and families. Enhance program delivery by combining resources and expertise through collaboration and communication with other community agencies and services.

Elders in the community play a large role in the child-rearing and education of our children. In order to continue the preservation of our culture, language and traditional ways, Elders and community members must participate in early childhood education programming.<sup>6</sup> Please refer to the Culture & Language Based Curriculum section for practical suggestions about how to include Elders and other community members in a program.

## Relationships with Families

Early childhood education programs have the opportunity to strengthen and

empower parents by establishing and maintaining an open and cooperative partnership with each child's family. A strong relationship is nurtured by demonstrating respect and consideration for each family's child-rearing values and practices, acknowledging them as their child's primary caregivers, creating opportunities for families to feel comfortable in expressing their wishes and needs, providing a variety of user-friendly ways for families to become involved in program activities, decisions, and policy-making, and keeping family inquiries, conversations, and children's records confidential.<sup>8</sup>

The most important relationship a child will develop is with her parents. This relationship is often referred to as attachment or bonding. A strong bond between mother (or other primary caregiver) and child will help the child develop a sense of trust by knowing that she is cared for and well taken care of. Children with strong attachments are better able to handle stress, anxiety and changes.

### *Program staff can support a child's attachment to parents in the following ways:*

- invite and welcome parents to visit the program whenever possible;



- follow directions from parents about child's feeding, sleeping and other routines;
- support the child during 'good bye' routines; and
- share details about the child's day with parents.

To support mothers in this period of attachment and bonding, quality early childhood education programs support and promote breastfeeding friendly settings.<sup>9</sup>

***To maintain a breastfeeding friendly program, consider the following strategies:***

- designate a quiet corner with chair for moms to breastfeed;
- discuss individual plans for breastfeeding when registering an infant or toddler into program;
- be flexible and have an open door policy so moms can come and feed during lunch hour or other times; and
- support parents in supplying breast milk in bottles.

*"Quality child care includes supporting the success and continuation of breastfeeding."<sup>10</sup>*

## COMMUNICATION

Develop and maintain strong relationships by effective communication with parents. This will enhance a child's well-being as she is surrounded by caring, cooperating and communicating adults.

***In a true partnership with parents, communication is based on the following principles:***

- Parents are the child's first and most important caregiver and teacher;
- Parents know their child best;
- Parents have a responsibility and right to advocate for their child;
- The child and his best interests are at the centre of all communication and
- Communication must be ongoing, positive and solution based.



## Communication Strategies

### a) Intake & Recruitment

- Develop a pamphlet or flyer describing your services. Post at local stores, recreation centres, and hamlet offices;
- Host a monthly radio talk show. Select a theme each month to focus on, for example, healthy development, attachment, oral hygiene, and school readiness. Encourage community members to call in with questions;
- Host a meeting with community professionals (doctors, nurses, teachers) to share information about your program and begin building partnerships;
- Develop an information package or Parent Handbook that includes information about fees, schedules, holidays, policies, etc;
- Offer an orientation session to new families before the child begins the program;



- During the registration process, discuss with parents the different ways they can be involved in the program. Respect family differences and be creative about parent participation;
- Conduct home visits to complete registration for families who find it difficult to come to the program; and
- Host an annual Community Open House to showcase your program and provide information to families.

*“The foundation for good parent-teacher relationships is frequent and open communication, mutual respect and a clear understanding of what is best for each individual child.”*

#### **b) Administrative Concerns**

- Develop a positive relationship with parents;
- Speak and listen to parents about concerns in person whenever possible and in private when necessary for example late fees; and
- Send a handwritten note/memos or letters home to parents.

#### **c) Sharing Information**

- Create a resource library for parents to access information regarding children’s development, parenting, child guidance, and children’s health;
- Hold parent workshops or guest speakers on topics of interest and access expertise in your community, for example, invite the Kindergarten teacher to come and speak about school readiness;
- Share knowledge and expertise with parents on an ongoing basis, for example, toileting or child guidance;
- Develop a regular newsletter that outlines upcoming events and other program news, include ideas, tips and suggestions like simple craft ideas for home, country food recipes, or discipline strategies;
- Design and distribute a monthly calendar with dates to remember;
- Post notices and flyers for events on a bulletin board in the front hall or somewhere accessible for parents to view;
- Remind parents about upcoming events during drop-off and pick up time; and
- Call parents to remind them of event dates to encourage participation.

#### **d) Child Development Information**

- Display samples of children’s work;
- Display photographs of children engaged in activities;
- Collect samples of children’s work (drawings, paintings, and photographs of creations) in portfolios and share with parents;
- Develop or adopt a recording tool that helps program staff gather information about children’s development;



- Plan annual or bi-annual parent-teacher interviews;
- Regularly communicate with parents at pick up or drop off time or over the phone. If the child is present include the child if appropriate;
- Implement a daily or weekly communication book system. Each child has a notebook where program staff record information to communicate to parents. The parents respond to the information and write their own comments and send the book back to the program. This type of communication between parent and program staff helps prepare families for when their child attends school;
- Use anecdotal communications to parents about children using *How Was My Day* forms or *Daily Journal* forms that go home to parents each day. (See Appendices for a sample *Daily Journal*);
- Display an *All about Me* poster. Have children draw a picture of themselves and program staff fill out answers to questions that they ask the children about themselves. Over time, the drawings and answers evolve as the children grow and develop; and

- Maintain ongoing communication with parents of children with special needs. Updating parents about their child's integration and progress in the program is critical to successful inclusion. Encourage parents to share important information about the needs of their child regularly.

Always speak to parents if a concern arises about their child. Arrange a time for the parent to meet with the Centre Director and one program staff. Have concrete examples of concerns ready to present to the parents. Be sensitive to parents' worries and anxieties about their child and understand that it is very difficult to hear that there might be a problem with their child. Before ending the meeting, make a plan with the parent about next steps.

#### **e) Program Evaluation**

- Allow for parents' feedback through different means, including informal feedback;
- Develop a simple program evaluation questionnaire for parents to provide input and suggestions for change. Have parents complete this at least annually; and
- Plan a parent meeting once or twice a year. This is an opportunity to share information about the program and allows parents to ask questions and provide input. Provide child care during these meetings to support parents in attending.

## PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parents are great assets to early childhood education programs. They have endless skills, expertise and resources to share with children and program staff. Parents and program staff must work together to identify practical and manageable ways that parents can be involved in the program.

*“The more parents are involved in the program’s activities, the more likely they are to understand the teacher’s goals and practices.”<sup>12</sup>*

### **Suggested principles to guide program staff in fostering strong parental involvement:**

- Develop an open door policy so parents can drop in anytime;
- Create an inviting and inclusive atmosphere where parents feel welcomed and valued;
- Involve parents in ways that are meaningful to them and suit their family schedule; and
- Value parents’ input and involve them in decision making, for example, councils, boards or committees.

### **Ideas to involve parents:**

- field trips/program volunteers;
- Inuktitut speakers with children;
- hunt or sew for the program;
- make games/toys for program;
- fundraise;
- assist in maintaining outdoor play area after hours;

- prepare, collect or donate materials for crafts, for example, beads, fur scraps, toilet paper rolls, etc;
- Board or Parent Council;
- read or tell stories to the children;
- attend Annual General Meetings, Parent Meetings or events such as cooking night;
- assist with Special Events for example, Christmas Party, pot luck dinners;
- celebrate parents with a Parents Day; and
- hold a ‘Family Day’ so program staff can meet extended family members.

## COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Community partnerships are based on the belief that it takes a community to raise a child. In particular, collaboration among health care services, schools and early childhood education programs is of particular value in our communities. *“The two critical systems of greatest importance to children, those providing health services and education, need to collaborate”<sup>13</sup>*. This type of collaboration recognizes the link between children’s health and their learning potential.

### **Ideas for Community Partnerships:**

- Ask the local Community Health Nurse to conduct well child checks at the program;
- Take a field trip to the dentist/dental hygienist or invite him/her to the program to talk to the children about oral hygiene;
- Invite a firefighter or Police Officer to come and visit the children to talk about fire safety or road safety. Visit the fire/police station;

- Connect with other professionals in the community (Nutritionist, Grocer, Audiologist, Social Worker) to access resources that can be used in the program for example posters, pamphlets, handouts, videos, etc;
- Have the children perform at community events, for example, singing or drumming;
- Share training events with organizations, for example, school professional development days;
- Plan meetings with Kindergarten teachers to share resources and curriculum ideas;
- Visit the school to use the gym, playground and library;
- Offer your program as a site for student placements; and
- Arrange visits between your program and the Elders lodge/centre.



*“An integrated service delivery model involves true collaboration among the organizations involved. All partners spend time and energy, with expertise and action being contributed from all sides.”<sup>15</sup>*

## Integrated Service Delivery

Integrated service delivery builds on community partnerships and extends this to the next level. It is an approach where various services, programs, or streams of funding are combined to offer a range of services that address the care, education, health and well being of the child and families. The need for early intervention and developmental screening for children who may require additional support and services, also testifies to the need for integrated service delivery models.<sup>14</sup> The success of service integration depends on vision, creativity, cooperation and commitment.

## Models

There are two different models of integrated service delivery that warrant mention. The Kativik Regional Government (KRG) blends funds from Aboriginal Head Start, First Nations and Inuit Child Care Initiative, Government of Quebec, and Makivik Corporation to provide programs in all 14 communities in Nunavik. *“They offer a combined daycare/head start program with both full-time and part-time spaces.”<sup>16</sup>* This pooling of resources has resulted in a reliable and organized system of child care for families living in Nunavik.

*"We strongly believe in the value of sharing skills and knowledge. The greater our pool of talent and wisdom, the more children and families will benefit from quality programs that suit their needs."<sup>18</sup>*



The Igloolik Early Intervention Project has also been very successful in the integration of service delivery and the development of a variety of community partnerships. They blend funds from Aboriginal Head Start, Healthy Children Initiative, Community Action Program for Children (CAPC), Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program (CPNP), and Brighter Futures to deliver a Head Start program, play centre drop-in, home programs, evening program, teen parenting, and prenatal nutrition. *"Together these components form an integrated whole that is quickly becoming a focal point of community and interagency efforts for healthy children and families."*<sup>17</sup> (See Appendix 1B – Sample Inter-agency Collaboration and Partnerships)

There is a wealth of knowledge within our communities. Relationships and partnerships with different community service providers strengthen the early childhood education program in its role of providing care and education to young children.



# Appendix 1A: Daily Journal

Child's Name/ለሰዓታዊ ልጅ ስም::
Educator/ሰዓተኛ::
Date/ቀን::

What we ate today!/ምግብ ስራ ስራ	
<b>Breakfast/ምግብ ስራ</b>	
Menu/ምግብ ስራ, ለምሳሌ ስም:: _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> Didn't Eat/ምግብ ስራ የሌለኝ	<input type="checkbox"/> Ate Well/ምግብ ስራ ስራ
<input type="checkbox"/> Few Bites/ምግብ ስራ ስራ	<input type="checkbox"/> Ate Everything/ምግብ ስራ ስራ
<b>Lunch/ምግብ ስራ</b>	
Menu/ምግብ ስራ, ለምሳሌ ስም:: _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> Didn't Eat/ምግብ ስራ የሌለኝ	<input type="checkbox"/> Ate Well/ምግብ ስራ ስራ
<input type="checkbox"/> Few Bites/ምግብ ስራ ስራ	<input type="checkbox"/> Ate Everything/ምግብ ስራ ስራ
<b>Snack Time/ምግብ ስራ</b>	
Menu/ምግብ ስራ, ለምሳሌ ስም:: _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> Didn't Eat/ምግብ ስራ የሌለኝ	<input type="checkbox"/> Ate Well/ምግብ ስራ ስራ
<input type="checkbox"/> Few Bites/ምግብ ስራ ስራ	<input type="checkbox"/> Ate Everything/ምግብ ስራ ስራ
<input type="checkbox"/> I took a rest/ምግብ ስራ ስራ	<input type="checkbox"/> I took a nap/ምግብ ስራ ስራ
From:	To:
<b>My mood today/ምግብ ስራ ስራ</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Cheerful/ምግብ ስራ ስራ	<input type="checkbox"/> Wanted extra attention/ምግብ ስራ ስራ
<input type="checkbox"/> Quieter than usual/ምግብ ስራ ስራ	<input type="checkbox"/> Easily upset/ምግብ ስራ ስራ
<input type="checkbox"/> I was tired/ምግብ ስራ ስራ	
Activities I did today: _____	
Comments from Educator: _____	





## Appendix 1B: Samples of Inter-Agency Collaboration and Partnerships

### **Igloolik Early Intervention Project (IEIP)**

1. Baffin Early Intervention Team and school Program Support Teams help to determine the most appropriate materials for Home Program kits, and suggest useful resources for the centre and its programs. They have also provided background on fine and gross motor skills development, language development and augmentative communication.
2. IEIP supports Social Services programs for young mothers at risk through phone and personal contact at least once a week. Social Services also borrow our books and resources for their programs.
3. The Health Centre, Baffin Early Intervention Team and the IEIP jointly host a Health Fair.
4. Arctic College social work students have completed their practicum requirement with IEIP. The social work program also borrows resources on parenting from our library for their courses.
5. IEIP is an active member of the Hamlet Interagency Committee, providing a voice for children in community social development priorities.
6. The Attaguttaaluk Elementary School offers its kitchen to the Prenatal Nutrition class for weekly healthy cooking seminars.
7. Some Elementary School students attend an after school club to make activities and games for the home program kits. Others help tidy up in the IEIP Centre after school, and prepare activities for the 4 years olds.
8. IEIP sponsored a workshop on child sexual abuse during the teachers Professional Development week. This added to training opportunities for staff members of IEIP, as well as both schools.
9. Community firefighters visit the IEIP classes in the fall when fire safety is a focus in the curriculum.
10. IEIP is working with Igloolik Elders and the Igloolik Research Centre to gather information and background on traditional parenting methods.
11. IEIP is a member of the Screening Tools Pod of Program Support Teachers in the Baffin region who are working with the McMaster University and the Centre for Studies of Children at Risk. IEIP piloted a tool to assess children's readiness to learn.
12. IEIP hosted 2 Head Start workers from Paulatuk in a mentoring relationship. They gathered ideas to help them with their own project.





## Governance



### INTRODUCTION

Governance means how decisions are made, and who makes them. There are many different levels of governance related to Inuit early childhood education programs: federal government; provincial/territorial governments; Inuit regional organizations; non-profit organizations; District Education Authorities; and parent councils/committees/boards. All of these different bodies play various important roles in designing, funding, delivering and monitoring quality early childhood development programs. However, for the purpose of this resource, the focus will be local governance because the impact of decisions is specific to individual communities and programs.

### WHAT IS LOCAL GOVERNANCE?

Local governance is the way that decisions are made about an early childhood development program by people who use the service or live in that community. Local governance relies on the involvement of community members, parents and Elders. The local governance structure of each program differs by region, community, organization and type of program.

Some programs have a board of directors that is legally responsible for making decisions and setting policy. Yet in other programs, a parent council or parent

committee works with the sponsoring organization to ensure that the parents of the children attending the program have a voice at the table. In some regions, the regional Inuit organization administers the child care programs.

*“Children play a significant role in nation building and thus programs designed to address their needs suggests the need for a strong focus on community governance.”<sup>19</sup>*

### GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF LOCAL GOVERNANCE

*There are four general principles of governance for Inuit early childhood education that contribute to high quality programs<sup>20</sup>:*

- programs are not-for-profit;
- roles and responsibilities of governance are clearly defined;
- governance relies on the direct involvement of parents, Elders and community members<sup>21</sup>; and
- governance recognizes and fosters local control.<sup>22</sup>

*If parents are to feel a sense of ownership, they need to be involved in a governance structure that allows them to make important and meaningful decisions about the care and education of their children.*

**1. Programs are non-profit.**

Non-profit programs provide a service to the community and are governed by a volunteer board of directors.<sup>23</sup> The payment of parental fees for child care is not related to whether a program is non-profit or for-profit. The difference is that all revenue from non-profit centres goes back into the operation of the program. Revenue from a for-profit program is profit made by the owner(s).

**2. Roles and responsibilities of governance are clearly defined.**

It is critical that the roles and responsibilities of local governance be clearly defined and understood by all involved. Some decisions must be made by the legal operator of the program, (employee hiring/management), while other decisions are made by staff (what activities to plan). Of particular importance is a clear role definition between the board of directors and Centre Director.

**3. Governance relies on the direct involvement of parents, Elders and community members.**

Local management makes it possible to involve community members, Elders, families and children directly in program design and operation as well as in setting priorities and planning to ensure programming is responsive to the community's needs.<sup>24</sup> Community-based programs are created, implemented and governed by the community itself.



**4. Governance recognizes and fosters local control.**

A local governance structure should represent the people it serves. Inuit programs are best governed by Inuit, organizations that represent Inuit, and by parents whose children are enrolled in the program. Many boards or parent councils will ensure Inuit control by mandating that a majority of the membership seats are filled by Inuit. In addition, directors on a board are elected from the members of the organization.

## SUCCESSFUL BOARDS/ PARENT COUNCILS

### 1. Parent Involvement

An inclusive philosophy is required that is based on the recognition that parents are the most important decision makers in their child's life. An atmosphere of respect and trust is necessary to foster confidence and a desire for parents to volunteer. To support parents to be involved in meetings, programs can provide child care, meals, and transportation to meetings.

### 2. Decision Making

Democracy ensures that everyone at the table has a voice and an opportunity to express their opinions. It is important that board or council members understand how decisions are made, and agree to the chosen method of decision making: consensus or voting.

*Consensus* means that everyone at the meeting agrees to the same outcome or decision. This type of decision making takes more time. If everyone agrees to a certain decision, for example, the development of a transportation policy, then the process is complete. However, there

*"Quality early childhood services must be developed and delivered by the community to meet its own unique needs."<sup>25</sup>*

are times when an issue requires discussion and debate before consensus can be found. If consensus is being sought, it is important that the Chair ensures that everyone has a chance to talk and share their opinion.

*Voting* to make decisions still requires discussion of the issue, but can be less time consuming. For example, a transportation policy requires a decision. The issue is discussed by all to get a general idea of how people feel and what they think. The Chair then calls for everyone to vote on a transportation policy. More than half of the board or council members must vote in favour of the policy for the decision to be carried. In many cases, voting on issues involving money or controversial issues is supported by a motion.

*A combination of consensus and voting* to make decisions is common. Groups can state that the preferred manner of making decisions is through consensus, but





that voting will be applied as a last resort to a standstill issue. The most important factor in how decisions are made is that all members of the group agree to, and fully understand the process. Parents need to feel a true sense of power in decision making to remain invested in the process.

*“When decisions are made or even perceived to be made by staff without parental involvement, trust is destroyed and parental involvement will decline.”<sup>26</sup>*

### **3. Clear Roles and Expectations**

Each individual has a different role to play while working together for a common goal. In early childhood education programs there are fundamentally three local decision-making bodies: Centre Director; program staff; and board of directors/parent council. A Centre Director manages the daily operations of the program, supervises program staff, and follows all policies and procedures approved by the board. Program staff work together to plan and deliver the daily program for the children. The board of directors/parent councils make big picture decisions (funding, policies, and strategic planning).

For a board or council to be successful, everyone must understand what their role is (president/chair, vice-president/vice-chair, secretary etc...,) so they know what is expected of them. (See Appendix 2A – Board Positions and Duties)

### **4. Meeting Schedule**

It is beneficial to develop a meeting schedule prior to meetings being called (perhaps the first Monday of each month). Board of Directors of non-profit organizations are legally required to hold a minimum number of meetings throughout the year. Parent Councils have the flexibility to decide on a minimum number of meetings in their terms of reference.

### **5. Chairing**

Most often the President or Chair is responsible for leading the meeting.

#### **An effective chairperson:**

- is prepared in advance and familiar with the agenda, including background information to the items and what actions have already occurred;
- understands the rules of order;
- ensures everyone has an opportunity to participate in discussion;
- does not take sides;
- is able to summarize discussions and input; and
- does not dominate the meeting.<sup>27</sup>

### **6. Agendas**

The agenda lists all the business or topics that will be discussed at a particular meeting. Agendas help everyone stay focused on the issues at hand, and keep the meeting time manageable. Adopt an agenda format and be consistent with it from meeting to meeting.

## 7. Minute Taking

The Secretary is usually responsible for taking minutes of a meeting. The minutes are the official recording of what occurred at a meeting, what decisions were made, and what action items need follow up before the next meeting. The minute taker writes what is important to record; word for word recording is impossible and unnecessary.

### What to Include in the Minutes:

- name of the Board or Parent Council;
- date, time and place of meeting;
- names of people present and members who are absent;
- statement that the previous minutes and current agenda were approved;
- record of important discussion and decisions made for each agenda item. Briefly describe the main points discussed and any actions that are required as a result;
- all motions, resolutions, votes and decisions. Record who made and seconded each motion, and if it was carried;
- objective recording of what was discussed (don't include an opinion or judgment); and
- the adjournment time and the date, time and place of the next meeting.

Minutes should be made available to all parents of the early childhood education program. Even though a parent may not be sitting on the board or council, they have a right to know what occurred and what decisions were made that will ultimately affect their child and their community.

## 8. Confidentiality

Most of the information discussed at a board or parent council meeting is recorded in the minutes which are then available to parents. There are times when information is confidential, that is not recorded in minutes, and should not be shared with the greater community or membership, for example, staff salaries, or reasons for staff dismissal. At times, a member of a board or parent council will have access to information that is confidential or private. It is important to the integrity of the board, council, individual member, and program staff that this information not be shared with others.

## 9. Committees

Committees are formed to do work of the board or parent council in smaller groups. Committees meet outside of regularly scheduled meetings to work on an issue or project. Committees can also include parents of the program who are not part of the board or parent council. Individuals, who are uncomfortable in a large group, may be more at ease



working on committees. The work that a committee does, or a recommendation that they have, comes back to the whole board or parent council for discussion and approval. Develop a terms of reference for committees so there is no confusion about roles and responsibilities which can lead to conflict. Terms of reference spell out the purpose of the committee and what authority it has. (See Appendix 2B – Sample Terms of Reference)



#### **10. Conflict of Interest**

Conflict of interest occurs when someone who sits on a board or parent council is making decisions about something that they, or a member of their immediate family, may benefit from personally. For example, a member of a board should not decide on salaries if his spouse is employed by the organization. Likewise, a member who works for the local construction company that is putting in a bid for renovations to the building should not vote on the decision to hire that company. In both of these

examples, the member in conflict absolutely must not participate in the discussion and decision on the issue. This member should leave the room while the discussion and decision takes place. Having a conflict of interest policy protects a board or council member against real, perceived or potential conflicts of interest. (See Appendix 2C – Sample Board Conflict of Interest Policy)

#### **11. Training/Capacity Building**

Each individual has something unique to offer, and this philosophy gives value to each person involved. Training will provide information and skills to assist individuals in their role as decision makers and community leaders. Boards that are committed to capacity building will ensure that all members are supported in their role through support, orientation, training and mentorship. It isn't necessary to bring in people from outside the community to do this. Tapping into local expertise and resources is more cost effective and relevant.

#### **12. Recruitment**

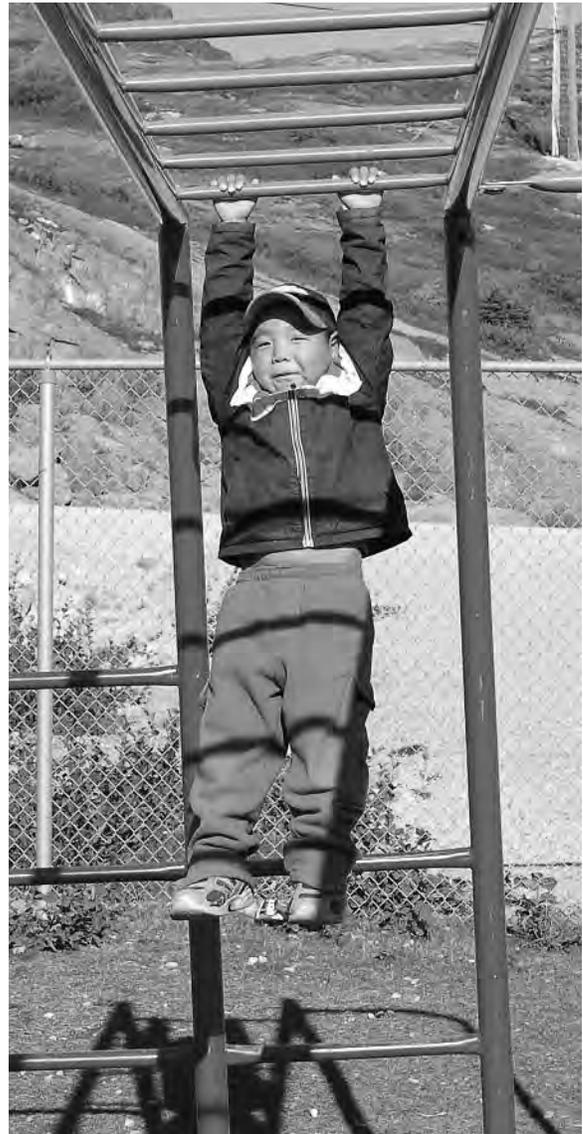
The turnover on boards or councils can be high. Develop a plan for filling vacant spots before they become vacant. This often means approaching someone who might be interested. There may be a parent who would be a strong addition to the group, but who has not come forward. The existing board, council or Centre Director should always be on the lookout for community members, parents and Elders who may want to join the group.

### ***13. Empowerment & Engagement***

A successful board, council or committee is one where members feel a sense of ownership and engagement in the process. When members feel that they make decisions that affect their community, they will engage in the process. Parents must feel a sense of empowerment and ownership of their child's program, and the body which governs it so they engage in the decision making process. If parents feel that their opinions matter, and that their voice can make a difference in their child's life, then being involved feels meaningful and important.

***Generally, a board is successful if all the participants feel that:***

- they have a purpose and sense of accomplishment;
- they contribute to discussion and their contribution is valued by others;
- creative ideas, alternatives or solutions are generated;
- they are committed to decisions made and actions taken; and
- they are willing to work together again.<sup>28</sup>







## Appendix 2A: Board Positions and Duties

### **PRESIDENT/CHAIR**

- acts as the leader of the organization;
- ensures that by-laws, vision and mission of the organization are followed at all times;
- sets the agenda;
- chairs all meetings;
- participates on committees;
- has signing authority;
- prepares the annual report;
- works closely with the Centre Director; and
- speaks on behalf of the corporation.

### **VICE-PRESIDENT/VICE-CHAIR**

- replaces the President as chair of meetings when President is absent;
- attends meetings regularly;
- participates on committees; and
- may have signing authority.

### **SECRETARY**

- records and distributes minutes in a timely fashion;
- attends meetings regularly;
- participates on committees;
- gives notice of all meetings of the board or its members including the Annual General Meeting (AGM); and
- keeps the seal, minute book, register, and other corporate documents up to date.

### **TREASURER**

- monitors the accounting records of the organization;
- attends meetings regularly;
- participates on the Finance Committee;
- works with the auditor and Centre Director in preparing annual financial reports; and
- has signing authority.

### **MEMBER AT LARGE OR DIRECTOR**

- attends meetings regularly; and
- participates on committees.





## Appendix 2B: Sample Terms of Reference

### **OOKPIK DAY CARE – FINANCE COMMITTEE**

**PURPOSE:** To oversee and monitor the financial practices of the Ookpik Day Care.

#### **MANDATE:**

- To develop, review and recommend sound financial policies and procedures;
- To advise the Board on issues related to financial operations;
- To review and make recommendations for approval of the annual operating budget;
- To review monthly financial statements;
- To review and make recommendations for approval of quarterly cash flow reports;
- To ensure that all financial obligations are met in a timely manner; and
- To review and make recommendations for approval of the annual audited financial statements.

#### **MEMBERSHIP:**

This committee will consist of the Treasurer, and a minimum of two additional members.

#### **MEETINGS**

Meetings will be held at the Day Care on a monthly basis, and thereafter as required.

#### **MEETING ATTENDANCE**

The meetings of the Finance Committee are important and all members are expected to attend.

#### **DECISION MAKING**

There will be times when the Finance Committee will make a decision or put forward a recommendation. Decision-making will be by consensus. If consensus cannot be reached, then a vote will be taken.

#### **REPORTING**

The Committee reports to the full Board of Directors.







## Appendix 2C: Sample Board Conflict of Interest Policy

### **OOKPIK DAY CARE**

A director of the Ookpik Day Care Board of Directors is in a conflict of interest when he/she, or a member of his/her immediate family, may benefit personally or professionally from the director's position on this Board:

- when the director puts his/her own interests above those of the organization;
- when the director or family member can benefit directly/indirectly from information received by the Board; and
- when the director has separate and competing interests and is unclear as to which interest he/she is representing.

When a director is in a conflict of interest he/she must do the following:

1. State that he/she is in a conflict of interest as soon as this conflict becomes apparent to him/her.
2. State his/her interest in the matter at hand prior to the issue being discussed.
3. Leave the room during any discussion or decision regarding the issue; and
4. Excuse him/her self from any discussion regarding the issue outside of meetings.

A conflict of interest may be actual, perceived or potential. Any director of the Board may declare a conflict of interest on behalf of another director who has not done so. The director declaring the conflict of interest must provide reasons as to why it has been declared. In the event that a dispute arises as to the presence of a conflict of interest, the matter will be resolved by a vote. The directors involved in the dispute will not vote. All conflicts of interest must be recorded in the minutes of the meeting where it was declared.





# Program Policies and Procedures

## INTRODUCTION

Policies and procedures are written statements about what is and is not permitted in an early childhood education program to ensure that programs are delivered in a fair, consistent, safe and healthy manner. Policies and procedures are clear rules of what is expected from parents, program staff and children. The development of certain policies and procedures is required by all provincial/territorial day care regulations (child protection, fire code, public health, zoning, building code etc...). Programs must develop specific policies that demonstrate compliance with various regulations.

## LEGISLATION

In Canada, the government of each province and territory sets minimum standards (regulations) that programs must meet to be licensed. In Nunatsiavut, Nunavut and Inuvialuit it is the responsibility of the provincial/territorial government to inspect, approve and monitor programs for compliance. In Nunavik, the Kativik Regional Government has been granted responsibility for licensing programs through a 23 year agreement with the Province of Quebec.<sup>29</sup>

Legislation provides the necessary requirements for licensing centres and specifies conditions of operation, for example, health and safety, physical space, staff qualifications, staff ratios, age groupings, group size and programming.

*“Legislation made without Inuit can become prohibitive in meeting Inuit priorities.”<sup>30</sup>*

## DEVELOPING POLICIES

Policies are set by the legal operator, board of directors and Centre Director with input from program staff and parents. The types of policies that a program develops depends on several factors: what kind of program it is, who it serves, what it offers, what its philosophy is, what its goals are, and what is required by the funder, provincial/territorial legislation, and the local health authority. Developing policies can be a daunting task at times. Breaking the process into smaller steps is helpful:

1. Start by examining your program philosophy, goals and objectives. For example whether you need to develop a policy on family outings is dependent upon whether they have been identified as important and valuable.





2. Determine what policies are required by the provincial/territorial legislation, and local health authority. For example, policies about required child immunization, child/staff ratios, and meal planning will be necessary due to day care legislation.
3. It is useful to gather policies from other early childhood development programs. There is a common way of wording policies and looking at examples can help with writing your own. It is perfectly acceptable to adapt policies from other programs to suit the needs of your program.
4. Include input from program staff and parents during the process of developing policies. Staff provide a valuable perspective on how a policy will actually work in a program. Parents should also be invited into the process because policies ultimately affect them and their children.
5. Write the policy first and then break it down into practical steps in a procedure to follow. For example, it is the policy of the program that children must have up-to-date immunization to enter the program. The procedure for this policy might include: 1) program staff collecting the records from parents; 2) having permission from the parents to contact the health centre for verification; 3) updating immunization records; 4) what happens if the child's immunization lapses while attending the program.
6. Write policies in a way that everyone can understand them. If program staff and parents don't understand them, they are less likely to follow them. Use language that is simple and straightforward. Procedures must be reasonable, logical and feasible.
7. Whenever possible and where appropriate, policies should be provided to program staff and parents in Inuktitut.
8. Review policies on an annual basis to ensure continued relevance and effectiveness. If a policy has been troublesome, then reflection and possible revision is warranted. This process continues throughout the life of a program. Trial and error, new legislation or health information, and a change in physical location can all lead to a change in policy.
9. Communicate policies to parents in the program. Sharing existing and new policies with parents is essential in working together to create a quality program. Be certain that parents understand the policy and its implications. Some policies may warrant a parent's signature indicating that they understand and agree to follow the policy, for example, behaviour management.

Sometimes you may need to make a new policy to handle a new issue that has arisen, for example, late pick-ups, referrals, or complaint procedures.

## PARENT HANDBOOKS

Develop a parent handbook to communicate policies to parents. *“The family handbook was made so families could have a copy of important policies and information.”*<sup>31</sup> Most parent handbooks include the following:

- general Information (hours of operation, age group served);
- philosophy/goals of program;
- curriculum/activities;
- information regarding the Board of Directors or Parent Council;
- holidays;
- fees;
- program schedule; and
- relevant policies.

## RECOMMENDED POLICIES

### 1. Health & Safety

Health and safety policies guide program staff in providing a hazard-free environment, minimize the risk of injury by guaranteeing that indoor and outdoor areas, furnishings, toys, and equipment are in good repair and safe for use by the children; and that all potentially dangerous materials are safely stored.

The following policies, many of which are required by provincial/territorial day care regulations, help to promote and monitor the health and safety of children participating in early childhood education programs:

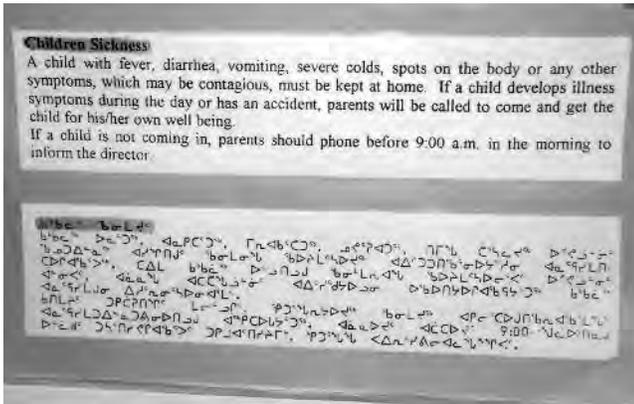
- Daily Health Observation\*
- Illness/Sick Children\*
- Sanitation
- Immunization\*

*“The health and safety of children is of prime importance. In addition to ensuring that children are safe from injury and infection, child care providers must demonstrate, model and promote sound health practices.”*<sup>32</sup>

- Child/Staff Ratios
- Medication Administration\*
- Fire Safety/Evacuation
- Emergency Procedures
- First Aid\*
- Toileting/Diapering
- Tooth brushing
- Reporting Child Abuse
- Weather/Power Closures
- Child Emergency Information
- Smoking & Substance Use\*
- Allergies/Food Sensitivities
- Child Release
- Food Safety
- Outdoor/Playground Safety
- Universal Precautions

\* (See Appendix 3A – Sample Policies)





## 2. Special Needs

A policy on children with special needs outlines the resources and services a program offers to parents of children with special needs. *“Quality childcare programs also act as a system for early identification of learning disabilities in children, and provide appropriate referrals for the family.”*<sup>33</sup> The following questions might be considered in the development of a policy on special needs:

- How do we define special needs?
- Are we able to accommodate children with disabilities?
- Is acceptance into our program granted for all children with special needs or is it decided case by case, depending on the unique needs of each child?
- What professionals and services are available in our community to help identify and support a child with special needs?
- What screening and assessment tools are appropriate and available in our community that will help identify children who require additional support?

- Do we have enough staff to accept several children with special needs into our program?
- What training and support is available in our community that will assist program staff in meeting the needs of children with special needs?
- How will we communicate amongst our program staff about a child with special needs?
- How will we ensure that the child’s needs are being met?

The answers to these questions will form the basis for a policy on special needs. (See Appendix 3B – Sample Policy Children with Special Needs)

## 3. Intake & Registration

Policies on intake and registration ensure fairness and consistency in admitting children. Many of the following policies are required by day care regulations. Others help communicate what is expected of families when they register a child in the program.

- Selection/Admission
- Registration Forms
- Payment of Fees
- Attendance
- Withdrawal from Program
- Arrival/Departure
- Personal Belongings
- Child Release
- Late Pick Up
- Confidentiality

#### ***4. Behaviour Management***

Behaviour management, child guidance or discipline are interchangeable terms for the same thing – how adults help children to express feelings appropriately, resolve conflict with others, and control aggression. Program staff, parents and volunteers use a variety of strategies to teach, model and support appropriate behaviour. A strong policy on behaviour management will include the following:

- What strategies are encouraged and permitted, (redirection, praise);
- What strategies are not permitted, (hitting, spanking, humiliating);
- Suggested strategies and how to implement them, (consequences, redirection);
- What the consequences are if a staff engages in prohibited acts, (written warning or termination of employment);
- What the consequences are if a child is continually aggressive or harmful to children or program staff, (one on one special help or in extreme cases temporary removal from the program).

(See Appendix 3C – Sample Behaviour Management Policy)

#### ***5. Parental Involvement***

An inclusive policy on parental involvement will outline the ways in which parents are invited and encouraged to participate in the program, how staff and parents will communicate, the hosting of family events, and parents' role on the board. Appropriate policies to ensure parental involvement need to be developed and implemented. Please see the Partnerships and Relationships section for ways to include parents.







## Appendix 3A: Sample Policies

### Health Policy

**Policy:** In order to ensure a healthy environment for children in the child care centres, programs must adhere to a strict health policy for illness, disease, and accidents.

#### Procedures:

- 1. Record of immunization** – A copy of the child's Immunization Record must be provided to the Child Care Operator, either by the parent or Public Health Nurse, prior to admission to a child care centre. Copies of the Immunization Records are kept on file in the child care centre in the child's individual file.
- 2. Daily observation** – Every child shall be observed daily by program staff for symptoms of communicable diseases and ill health. If the observation reveals that the child has developed illness symptoms of a communicable disease, ill health, or is involved in an accident the child shall be placed in the quiet room/area until the child's parent/guardian comes to pick up the child or is seen by Public Health Nurse. All communicable diseases are reported immediately to the nurse.
- 3. Notification of illness** – All parents will be notified when a child at the centre demonstrates symptoms of a potential communicable illness. The notice will recommend precautions for parents to take.
- 4. Symptoms requiring stay at home** – Any child with the following symptoms must be kept at home: fever, diarrhea, vomiting, severe colds (that prevent the child from participating in the program as normal), or spots (rash) on the body that is contagious or infectious.
- 5. First Aid** – A First Aid kit is kept readily available in each Child Care Centre, the contents of which comply with standards set by the St. John Ambulance Association. All program staff have an up-to-date First Aid Certificate.
- 6. Prescription medications** – If a child is required to take prescribed medication, then the program staff can only administer these with the written consent and the instructions of the parents as indicated on the *Prescribed Medication Consent and Record Sheet*. All medications will be carefully labelled with the child's name, date, and instructions. All medications will be kept in a locked cabinet; refrigerated medications will also be locked.
- 7. Record of medications** – The program staff will keep a daily record of the administration of medications to the children using the *Prescribed Medications Consent and Record Sheet*.
- 8. Non-prescribed medications** – Unless prescribed, medications will not be given to any child, at any time, unless in the case of a medical emergency.



## Appendix 3A: Sample Policies *continued*

- 9. Medical emergency** – When a child is registered, parents will be asked to sign a Medical Emergency Consent Form. This form gives permission to the program staff to take whatever emergency measures are deemed necessary for the protection of the child.

### **Alcohol and Drug Policy**

**Policy:** All parent and community events are non-alcoholic.

#### **Procedures:**

1. Any person who comes to an event who has consumed alcohol or drugs before attending is not permitted to stay.
2. A parent will not be permitted to pick up a child from the program if he/she is obviously intoxicated. If a parent does arrive in this condition, the following steps will be taken:
  - a. the policy will be explained to the parent;
  - b. the parent will be asked to leave the centre; and
  - c. the child will be kept on the premises until an emergency or alternative contact can be reached.
3. If the parent refuses to cooperate with these steps, and takes the child off the premises, the following steps will be taken:
  - a. emergency or alternative person will be contacted to relieve and help the parent; and
  - b. social services will be contacted if staff believe the child to be in immediate danger.

### **Smoking Policy**

**Policy:** Smoking is prohibited in any area of a program facility.

#### **Procedures:**

1. Program staff, family and community members will refrain from smoking in the child care centre.
2. This includes the program area, kitchen area, bathrooms and office area.
3. Adults who chose to smoke must do so in designated areas away from the children.
4. Adults who smoke are responsible for keeping matches, lighters, cigarettes, and ashtrays out of the children's view and reach at all times.
5. After smoking, program staff must wash their hands before returning to the program.
6. Program staff are encouraged to role model healthy life style choices to the children.



## Appendix 3B: Sample Policy – Children With Special Needs

**Policy:** Children with special needs will be included in the program and staff ensures the program will meet their needs.

**Procedures:**

1. Program staff are aware of the ISSP (Individual Support Services Plan) process and are encouraged to implement this process to assist children and their families.
2. Program staff continue to take ongoing professional development in the area of special needs.
3. If one on one service is required for a child with special needs, the centre may provide this. In some circumstances a parent is providing this service. New one on one staff follow the same orientation process as other program staff.
4. Program staff that offer one on one support for children are required to meet with the Centre Director for duties specific for designated children.
5. If, after observing a child, program staff suspects that he or she is having difficulty with any particular area of development then they must talk with the Centre Director and determine a plan for the child. Parents will need to be consulted and any follow up action will need to be in consultation with the parents. If an ISSP is put into place, the program staff may be asked to be a part of the ISSP team.





## Appendix 3C: Sample Behaviour Management Policy

**Policy:** In its disciplinary approach, this program aspires to the goals of guiding behaviour that fosters the child's social and emotional development, at the same time allowing children to understand that there are consequences to behaviours.

### Procedures:

- 1. Behaviour management** – Guiding children's behaviour should be based on a number of different approaches and techniques, depending on the situation. The main goal in guiding behaviour is to strengthen the child's self-concept and to help the child develop positive relationships with others. All program staff should be familiar with a number of techniques and use them where appropriate. Establishing a relationship with the children and a well-developed program that meets the children's needs is the foundation required such that the need for guiding behaviour should be reduced.
- 2. Parent notification** – If program staff have used the behaviour management techniques, but a child is continually disrupting or harming others in the program, parents must be notified, and a meeting arranged.
- 3. Professional Support** – If a program staff member is having problems with a child and have exhausted their own expertise, they should contact the Program Developer for Child Care for professional advice. S/he will offer suggestions or techniques or may contact a Child/Behaviour Management Specialist or the Child Care Consultant of Child Youth and Family Services. Together an Individualized Plan for the child will be arranged. This may include an assessment.
- 4. One on one support** – If the behaviour persists and the individual plan of behaviour management is not having a positive impact, if financially possible; the centre may provide one on one support. If one on one support is not financially possible, the centre will advocate for other agencies to help provide any necessary support.
- 5. Temporary removal** – If all the above actions are not effective, and one on one is not secured, and care of the other children is being affected (with supportive documentation), parents will be asked to remove the child from the Centre for a short period of time. This would be the last resort, and would be done gradually over several weeks in cooperation with the parents. Our program is geared towards children at risk; therefore those in greatest need should not be removed due to behavioural challenges. Once the individual plan is re-evaluated, the child will be reintegrated into the centre.





# Culture and Language Based Curriculum

## INTRODUCTION

Our culture is who we are as Inuit. It reflects where we have come from and it will lead us into the future. Our weather, language, beliefs, values, stories and traditions make up our culture. We must pass this knowledge to our children – they will keep the qulliq burning for future generations. Inuit day cares, nursery schools and Head Starts present a wonderful opportunity to teach our children about our culture; our rich heritage.

## CURRICULUM

The purpose of curriculum in early childhood development programs is to offer children a wide range of activities and learning opportunities that will enhance their development, growth, and learning, support their interests, expose them to a variety of experiences, and foster self-esteem. This combined with the strength and richness of our cultural heritage creates a curriculum that blends traditional knowledge with child-centred and developmentally appropriate activities.

## CULTURE & LANGUAGE BASED CURRICULUM

*Culture & language based curriculum for young children takes into account the following:*

- 1. The cultural heritage of children and community.**  
Integrate local traditional knowledge,

*“The songs of our fathers, our old stories which we used to hear from older people will be gone and we will never hear them again. All this will be lost, so let us wake up and restore our old methods and culture while there is still time.”<sup>34</sup>*

practices, food, skills, celebrations, and language. All aspects of the curriculum reflect a community’s cultural heritage – stories, hunting, traditional songs, and sewing skills.

- 2. The values and beliefs of the families involved in the program.**  
When planning curriculum, the values and beliefs of the families involved in the program must be considered. Their opinions about what they believe to be important in their child’s care and education is invaluable in planning for children’s learning.





- 5. The ways in which children learn.** Children learn in a variety of different ways. They learn from watching, listening, practicing, doing and playing. Planning a variety of different activities to embrace children's unique learning styles is important.

*"Children have an innate ability to learn about their world around them. Children develop their own interests and ideas about what excites them. Program staff can consider asking children what they are interested in, or simply observe children's play to determine what interests them."<sup>35</sup>*

**3. The philosophy, goals and objectives of the program.**

A program's philosophy, goals and objectives play a significant role in determining what should be included in curriculum planning. For example, if one of the program goals is to prepare children for Kindergarten, then school readiness activities are implemented into the curriculum.

**4. The ages and developmental stages of the children.**

Children's development is progressive and predictable but varies based on each child's unique experiences. Understanding various aspects of children's development will assist program staff in planning developmentally appropriate activities and experiences.

## CURRICULUM PLANNING

Theme based curriculum planning is a common method used by program staff to plan a range of activities for young children. Typically, weekly or monthly themes are chosen and activities are planned around the theme. This allows program staff to connect a wide range of activities to a common theme. Once a theme is identified (for example spring camping), program staff plan activities in the various activity areas of their program (art or dramatic play). Cultural themes include transportation, water, ice, weather, plants, fish, arctic animals, return of the sun, sea-lifts, hunting/camping, clothing, family and kinship, Elders, names and naming, and medicine and healing. (See Appendix 4A – Sample Weekly Program Plan)

An alternative to traditional theme based planning is emergent curriculum. Emergent curriculum stems from the interests of children and evolves throughout the day, week and month. Program staff plan activities by observing children to determine their interests, including children in the planning process and being flexible in their approach. Curriculum webs are used to brainstorm and record activities that are planned or emerge.

## PROGRAM SCHEDULE

Program schedules vary depending on a variety of factors: the length of the program (full-day or half-day), the physical layout of the facility, what flow has worked in the past, and the philosophy of the program. Consider the following when developing a schedule:

- what time most children arrive and depart;
- how many transitions are included (a change in activity);
- changing rooms or locations, for example, if the bathroom is down the hall;
- adequate play time or centre time so children can develop their ideas and play themes; and
- what must be included according to territorial/provincial regulations (rest period for full-day programs).

Include the following in a program schedule:

- meal time and/or snack time;
- free play/activity time, circle time and outdoor play;
- toileting/bathroom (may include face washing, teeth brushing, hand washing); and
- nap/rest time.

## TEACHABLE MOMENTS

Most often, curriculum is thought of as the activities that are planned for children, for example, art, games and stories. If the outcome of curriculum is children's learning, then curriculum in its broadest sense refers to planned activities as well as unplanned learning. *"Children do not discriminate between what is prepared and structured for them to learn and whatever else happens to them. It is all learning."*<sup>35</sup>

In this way, curriculum also refers to a spontaneous game of high kick; the conversation about how to pick berries that emerges at snack time; a discussion about the importance of hand washing during bathroom time, or helping a friend at tidy up time. These unplanned activities present wonderful teachable moments.

*"Traditionally, Inuit children learned by carefully observing and following the example set by their Elders. Inuit children continue to learn all traditional skills by the attentive observation of an older, more experienced person."*<sup>36</sup>

## DOMAINS OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT

### a) Physical Development

The setting in a quality early childhood education program is organized in such a way as to provide opportunities for daily gross and fine motor activities both inside and outside the facility (weather permitting). Plan different activities and have a variety of toys, materials and equipment accessible to provide opportunities for each child to explore his environment and develop his senses by observing things like colours, smells, tastes, sounds and textures.<sup>37</sup> Providing for children's active, physical play every day is very important. Think creatively about the uses of space so every child can play using their whole body actively for at least an hour.

*“They will be able to think and work things out; be able to deal appropriately with others ... have an understanding of their actions ... with this confidence, they will be able to work through different ideas and gain skills that are important to their community. They will know their limits and strengths, know how to deal with conflicts, and how to make good decisions.”<sup>38</sup>*

**b) Social Development**

A child’s social development is fostered by planning environments and activities that support and encourage positive social interaction and the development of social skills, fostering children’s ability to understand and cooperate with others, assisting children to understand the rules and expectations of adults and their peers, and assisting children to develop effective and socially acceptable ways to handle conflict. In keeping with what our Elders teach us, program staff encourage children to be respectful and good to others; and treat others equally, with kindness and smiles, regardless of their age or who they are.

**c) Emotional Development**

Foster children’s attachment to parents, encourage healthy relationships with other children, foster children’s self-esteem, encourage pride in cultural heritage, help children to be self-sufficient and independent, and help children feel comfortable and included in your program. All of this will support children’s emotional development.

**d) Creative Development**

Show appreciation of and encouragement for children’s creative expression, and introducing music, creative movement, art, dramatic play, stories and songs that reflect and affirm our culture in the program. Include traditional Inuit dance, music, drumming, stories, and songs in your program.

**e) Cognitive Development**

Encourage and support exploration and problem-solving, provide activities that support literacy and numeracy (concepts of number, counting, writing, and reading), encourage and support children to explain how they think things work, to predict what might happen, and to experiment, and offer experiences related to science, mathematics and social studies. These are all presented in a play-based curriculum.<sup>39</sup>

**f) Language Development**

Program staff can support children’s language and communication development in the following ways; support their attempts to communicate (gestures, signs, one, two and three word sentences), encourage the use of Inuktitut, provide opportunities to develop listening and understanding skills, encourage verbal and non-verbal expression, and facilitate dialogue with them and among each other by asking open-ended questions and seeking their opinions.<sup>40</sup>





## INUKTITUT LANGUAGE

In the words of John Amagoalik, “We must teach our children their mother tongue. We must teach them what they are and where they came from. We must teach them the values which have guided our society over the thousands of years. We must teach them our philosophies which go back beyond the memory of man. We must keep the embers burning from the fires which used to burn in our village so that we may gather around them again. It is this spirit we must keep alive so that it may guide us again in a new life in a changed world.”<sup>41</sup>

How a program integrates Inuktitut will depend on the availability of fluent speakers in their community. Many programs are able to offer a fully unilingual program while others programs are bilingual and operate in English and Inuktitut. Yet, other programs in communities where fewer fluent speakers live operate in English and program staff, Elders or other community members teach Inuktitut words, phrases, and greetings to the children. Strategies that can assist program staff in promoting the development of Inuktitut include: traditional books, stories, flashcards, counting, rhymes, games and dances; offering circle times where the Inuktitut is predominantly spoken; or setting up a language corner where proficient speakers speak individually with children.<sup>42</sup> (See Appendix 4B – Inuktitut in Early Childhood Education Programs)

## CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

The integration of children with special needs in an early childhood education setting is a goal for quality programs. Full integration relies on the commitment and dedication of all staff, and strong communication and partnership with the family. Please see the section regarding Program Policies and Procedures for more information including children with special needs.

***The following suggestions may assist program staff in a successful integration:***

- Communicate with the child’s family about how best to meet his/her needs.
- Adapt curriculum activities to suit a child’s abilities.
- Consult with professionals in the community with permission from parents.
- Develop an Individual Program Plan (IPP) to ensure that a child’s unique developmental needs are met. An IPP outlines the goals and objectives for a child with special needs.
- Make modifications to the facility to allow access and ease of movement i.e. build a ramp.
- Seek additional staff to assist the child in the program.
- Be creative and resourceful in meeting the needs of a child with special needs.



*“Elder members of the family held positions of high esteem in the household and the community. Children were taught from a very young age to respect their Elders and to try and anticipate their needs and wishes.”<sup>43</sup>*

## ELDERS

The inclusion of Elders in all aspects of an Inuit early childhood development program is paramount. Embrace their knowledge, skills and wisdom and seek their input and participation in our programs. There is great opportunity in early childhood education settings to ensure input from Elders:

- Hire Elders as staff;
- Invite Elders to the program for celebration days;
- Include Elders in training events as presenters or speakers;
- Invite Elders to the program to sing songs and drum dance, tell stories, treat skins/furs, demonstrate crafts and sewing;
- Host an Elder day and invite community Elders for tea or a luncheon;
- Visit the Elders’ lodge/centre with the children;

- Commission Elders to make or provide traditional games and toys; and
- Ask an Elder to demonstrate lighting a qulliq for the children, while talking about its significance.

## CENTRE SET UP AND LAYOUT

In quality programs a great deal of thought goes into the physical layout of the room, activity centres, wall displays, and the flow of the program within the physical environment. Often, program staff must work with an existing building that wasn’t designed for a children’s program. Creativity, reflection and experimentation go a long way to setting up a space where young children can learn, play and thrive. Strive for an environment that blends functionality with aesthetics.

### Activity Centres:

An early childhood development setting usually includes a variety of activity areas or centres that foster independence and confidence. Toys and materials are presented in an inviting and child-friendly manner to welcome children to that area. Common activity areas include:

- Art/Sensory
- Dramatic Play
- Reading/Books
- Block/construction
- Science
- Table Top (for example puzzles)





## TOYS/EQUIPMENT

- Provide a variety of toys and materials that support a balance of active and quiet play as well as a balance of individual and group play;
- Supply a variety of developmentally appropriate equipment for riding, climbing and balancing to support gross motor skill development;
- Offer a variety of props, materials and equipment that supports role-playing and other creative activities;
- Include adaptive equipment to allow children with special needs to participate as much as possible; and
- Have pictures or books that present children with special needs engaging independently in real-life activities.



## CURRICULUM AREAS

We have gathered some preschool curriculum ideas from our program visits and telephone interviews that may assist programs in providing a *Culture and Language Based Curriculum*. The focus here is on activities for children between two to five years of age. The ideas presented do not exhaust the possibilities. Creativity and resourcefulness go a long way in developing a truly relevant curriculum for young Inuit children. Establishing connections with local sewers, hunters, carvers, woodworkers, storytellers and Elders, is an excellent way to involve the community in an early childhood development program.

### *Music/Dance Ideas:*

- Teach traditional songs;
- Translate English songs into Inuktitut;
- Demonstrate and teach juggling songs;
- Have child sized drums made and include them in your program;
- Teach children how to throat sing;
- Use songs during routines and transitions, for example, washing hands, good morning songs, and tidy up songs;
- Include songs about numbers, colors, and shapes;
- Write traditional songs down and share them with parents;
- Create movements to accompany songs; and
- Teach children local square dances and jigs.

### *Storytelling/Books*

Storytelling was our ancestor's way of passing knowledge, traditions, stories, legends, myths, songs, beliefs and history.<sup>44</sup> Storytelling continues to be an invaluable teaching tool in children's programs.

### *Ideas:*

- Invite Elders and other community members to tell stories on a regular basis;
- Set up a reading/book centre with books easily accessible by children;
- Include a variety of Inuit or Northern themed books;
- Contact your regional school board for Inuktitut books;
- Translate English children's books by inserting the translated text into the book;

- Create your own books. Where programs are unable to order books program staff can make culture/language specific books;
- Include reading and storytelling in your program on a daily basis; and
- Make felt pieces to accompany books or stories. Use felt stories on a homemade felt board at circle time and allow children to recreate the story in the book centre.

### **Circle Time**

Circle time is a planned group time where children enjoy songs, puppets, finger plays, stories, dancing and games. Circle times foster turn taking, language and listening skills, self-expression, and cooperation. Pass traditional knowledge to children through activities such as storytelling, singing traditional songs, the use of Inuktitut, bone games, and sewing demonstrations.

The length of circle time, the activities planned and the content included will vary depending upon the age of the children and the number of children in the group. Circles for preschool aged children might include a show and tell time where children develop language skills and confidence in sharing their item or story with the group. (See Appendix 5C – Keys to an Effective Circle Time)

#### **Circle Activities:**

- Attendance/Calendar activities;
- Songs/music/movement;
- Books/stories, including felt board stories;
- Bone and string games;
- Puppet shows;
- Mitiq Mitiq Nilliq (duck duck goose);
- Who Made Your Kamiks? and
- Juggling.

*“Traditionally, Inuit did not have a written language. All of Inuit history, knowledge, values and beliefs were passed on from generation to generation by word of mouth. The information was contained in both songs and stories, repeated to children by their parents and grandparents as they grew.”<sup>45</sup>*

### **Country Food**

Incorporate a variety of country foods such as caribou, seal, muktak, and fish into a balanced and nutritious menu. Programs may be required to comply with local regulations to serve country food. For example, in some communities meat must be certified or licensed from Renewable Resources. When programs face barriers to serving country food, it is critical to advocate for their inclusion.



#### **Ideas:**

- Collect country food recipes from the community;
- Consider allowing parents to pay child care fees by trading country food;
- Encourage local hunters to donate country food to the program;
- Visit an Elder’s Centre and eat country foods with Elders;
- Invite local hunters to the program to talk to the children about their experiences;
- Demonstrate cleaning and preparation of country food; and
- Display pictures of traditional food in the dramatic play area.

### *Field Trip Ideas*

- Visit an Elder's centre if there is one in your community;
- Take small groups of children to visit Elders in their home;
- Visit the school or arena – plan gross motor activities or games in the gym;
- Take a trip to the community or school library to have story time and borrow books;
- Walk to the school play structure if your program doesn't have one;
- Have a picnic in the nice weather;
- Visit the health centre – a nurse could talk about the importance of hand washing, or measure the children to see how tall they are;
- Walk to the beach and watch the sea lift and
- Visit the local grocery store and do a treasure hunt for foods from the four food groups.

### *Outdoor Play Ideas*

- If there is space outside, set up canvas tent during camping theme;
- In warm weather plan picnics and walks around the community;
- Take the children sliding, try sliding with sealskins;
- Build snow forts and igloos and
- Include child sized qamutiqs for pulling each other.



### *Art/Sensory Experiences*

Art and sensory activities support young children's natural desire to touch, feel and create. Sensory experiences such as playdoh, sand and water allow children to become absorbed in the sensory nature of the materials and experiment. Art activities and sensory experiences can be soothing and calming for many children as they explore the properties of the materials.

#### *Ideas:*

- Make popsicle stick qamutiqs;
- Have child sized unsharpened ulus made and use them with playdoh;
- Do soap carvings with children;
- Fill the water bin or water table with snow (or water and freeze it) and add plastic arctic animals, toy snowmobiles and qamutiqs;
- Collage with bits of fabric, fur and skins;
- Invite a local artist to the program to practice art or demonstrate how to make a craft or carving;
- Draw Inuit items or symbols and children can fill with coloring, collage materials, or sand;
- Make a footprint and two hand prints on construction paper to make an ookpik; and
- Use rocks to make Inuksuit.

### *Dramatic Play*

Dramatic play allows children to play out their experiences, feelings and ideas. Young children represent what they have observed or experienced through their dramatic play, for example, nursing a baby, changing a diaper or cooking supper. Provide children with a variety of child sized **real** items to encourage them to 'try on' different roles for example mother, father, baby, storekeeper.

**Ideas:**

- Include child sized amautis, atigis, qamiks, silapaqs, dickies, ullipakak, mukluks, snow goggles and packing shirts;
- Have sealskin or other skins/furs in the dramatic play area;
- Set up a small nylon tent to support camping play;
- Commission local sewers to make Inuit dolls, doll clothing, and puppets, and include these in the dramatic play area; and
- Include stuffed arctic animals to include in play and cuddle with.

**Table Top**

The table top area refers to activities and games that foster skills such as matching, sorting, letter recognition, whole/part, and number concepts. Many table top activities promote eye hand coordination and fine motor development. Programs may be able to access some table top activities from mainstream sources (for example arctic animal puzzles), but most of the time program staff need to make their own.

**Ideas:**

- Make memory or matching games on cardboard using Inuit pictures, symbols and words;
- Use coloring pages with Inuit or Northern pictures;
- Make bingo games with pictures of animals, syllabics or other pictures;
- Use an assortment of bones with holes for children to thread onto string;
- Make a northern food sorting game using the northern food guides and pictures of different northern food; and



- Reinforce name recognition by making tracing pages of each child's name in Inuktitut. Use a dotted line or a highlighter marker and children can trace over the lines.

**Blocks**

Blocks provide a range of opportunities for children to develop gross motor skills, spatial awareness and creativity. When children play and build with blocks they are learning about size, shape, weight, balance, stability and problem solving. Simple wooden blocks can be supplemented with several items that reflect life in the north.

**Ideas:**

- Have snowmobiles, plastic arctic animals, kayaks, and boats available with blocks.
- Include small wooden qamutiqs;
- Include wooden carved tools for example snowknife and skinning knife;
- Have local carpenters or carvers make small wooden skidoos, qulliqs, ulus, skinning surface, and snowmobiles; and
- Use permanent marker to write syllabic alphabet on small cube blocks.

### **Science**

A science table or corner exposes children to many real and natural items that can be brought in from the outdoors. Science tables encourage children to touch, feel, explore, experiment, ask questions and make predictions.

#### **Ideas:**

- Display various local flora covered in plastic labelled with names;
- Include a magnifying glass with items such as antlers, arctic cotton, animal skulls/bones, and carvings; and
- Display a variety of dried skins and furs.

### **School Readiness**

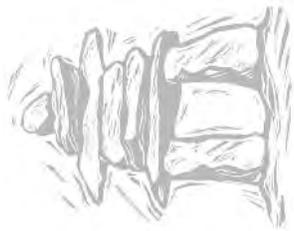
School readiness refers to the skills that will assist a child to be successful in Kindergarten. Most often, it is thought that skills such as fine motor skills, name recognition, writing, calendar, following routines, and cooperating in a group are the primary skills needed to be successful in Kindergarten. While this may true, research is now emphasizing that the most important factors for successful transition into school are good social skills, strong communication skills and a positive attitude towards learning and new experiences. A blend of these two streams of thought will ensure that children leaving an early childhood education program to start Kindergarten will enter with the following abilities:

- Able to hold a pencil, crayon, or small object with control in hands;
- May write some alphabet letters;
- Able to run, jump, hop on one foot, control movements, balance;
- Understand and follow oral directions in first language;
- Can focus on an interesting task;
- Can sit still long enough to share a story;

- Can use language skills to solve problems and express thoughts and feelings;
- Know what print is and what it is used for, and may know some letters and numbers;
- Know what books are and the purposes of reading;
- Able to form social relationships with children and adults outside the family<sup>46</sup>; and
- Is excited about learning and has a positive attitude towards school.

#### **Ideas:**

- Create a photo album of the new school to keep on the book shelf. Include photos of the front door, the classroom, the activity areas, the playground and the teachers;
- Arrange a class field trip to a Kindergarten class. Make it short and pleasant;
- Encourage Kindergarten teachers to visit your program prior to the start of school;
- Read books about going to Kindergarten;
- Invite a few children who are in Kindergarten who were in your program last year to come back and tell the children about school;
- Develop a portfolio of the child's work to share with a new teacher;
- Play school in the dramatic play area. Use props such as paper, pens, and syllabic flashcards;
- Practice raising hands at circle time;
- Ask the Kindergarten class to make a book for the preschool kids about going to Kindergarten; and
- Visit the new school playground and library.<sup>47</sup>



# Appendix 4A: Sample Weekly Program Plan

THEME: Animals – Hunting						WEEK: March 18 -21					
AREAS	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY						
<b>Creative</b>	Ookpik puppets	Popsicle qamutik	Animal prints with paints using plastic arctic animals	Paper plate animal masks	Animal collages						
<b>Sensory</b>	Snow with plastic arctic animals	Snow with plastic arctic animals	Frozen water with plastic sea mammals	Making animal tracks in playdoh with plastic animals	Making animal tracks in playdoh with plastic animals						
<b>Blocks/ Construction</b>	Blocks with wooden qamutiik, snowmobiles, plastic igloos, and plastic arctic animals, Arctic Lego										
<b>Cognitive/ Table Top</b>	Animal puzzles	Arctic animal lotto game	Animal flash cards	Memory game using animal cards	Memory game using animal cards						
<b>Science Table</b>	Furs, skins, hunting tools, pictures of animals, antlers, bones										
<b>Dramatic Play</b>	House set up with clothing – atiggit, amalu, amaustiit, stuffed arctic animals										
<b>Circle</b>	Visit from hunter to talk about animals; pictures of animals; "umajurlutaa" (hunting song)	Tallimat mitiralaat (5 little ducks) Lesson about arctic birds – pictures and book	Nanuk, Nanuk What do you see? Book and felt story "Naatimmiik, tuttumik, nanurmik...qiniquunga" (looking for animals)	Five Little Nanuk with finger puppets; "Ilumi mikijmiaagut nangittuq" (hunter song)	Cleaning and washing seal skin; Bone game; Elder storytelling						





## Appendix 4B: Inuktitut in Early Childhood Education Programs

### 1. **Language Nest**

#### **(Inuktitut immersion program):**

- Immerse young children in their culture and language within a nurturing and protective environment that includes the concept of extended family;
- Offer an Inuktitut Infant Care Program at the critical time of language development, between birth and the toddler years. Ideally extend the language nest program until child enters school where Inuktitut immersion is provided;
- This program depends on program staff being fluent in Inuktitut.

### 2. **Unilingual Program (Inuktitut only)**

- All aspects of the program are offered in Inuktitut only;
- This approach works in communities where Inuktitut is spoken fluently by most of the community, all the program staff and most of the children.

### 3. **Bilingual Program**

#### **(Inuktitut and English or French)**

- Inuktitut and English are used equally: for example language by one staff or some parts of program in Inuktitut and others in English;
- This approach works in a community where some program staff but not all program staff speak Inuktitut fluently.

### 4. **English Program with Inuktitut Teaching**

- English is the language spoken in the program;
- Inuktitut is taught to the children at circle time or story time, etc;
- This approach is used when program staff are not fluent in Inuktitut but can teach some vocabulary to the children for example numbers, songs, calendar, greetings, animals, etc.





## Appendix 4C: Keys to an Effective Circle Time

***For circle time to be an effective learning experience, program staff need to plan.***

***Here are some ideas to consider when planning circle time experiences:***

- Know your children – their ages, interests, and abilities;
- Circle time should last only as long as children are engaged;
- Watch for signs that children are getting tired;
- Make circle time a positive experience – plan activities that keep frustration at a minimum;
- Think about how to introduce important skills and concepts;
- Be prepared! Have the materials you need ready. Don't keep children waiting;
- To get children's attention, whisper or talk quietly. To help children calm down before a story, sing a song that starts off energetically and then ends more slowly or quietly;
- Vary the activities from day to day depending on the needs of the children. Plan for a mix of active and relaxing activities; cognitive, physical, social/emotional, and language activities that include a range of content knowledge;
- Recognize that short circle times can happen several times during the day;
- Plan for the transitions into and out of circle time. Keep the transitions brief, fun, positive, and calm to engage children as they move from one activity to the other;

- If a child seems to have trouble participating, ask another adult, to sit nearby, or position yourself near the child in advance. A gentle touch or encouraging smile may be all that is needed to refocus the child. You might also involve the child as a helper by inviting him or her to pass out materials or sing a song;
- Be flexible about participation. It's okay if some children don't want to participate in some activities. By offering that child a choice to join in or to read a book quietly, you can help him feel in control within limits; and
- Be flexible! Have fun! Stay positive!

### **Consider the Age of the Children**

Circle time must be different for various age groups. The amount of time spent in the group and the complexity of activities should be considered in relation to the age of the children.

- Three-year-olds might spend 15 minutes in circle time, especially if there is a mix of listening to a story and then responding to some open-ended questions. Movement activities, finger plays, and simple conversations are important with this age group;
- Children ages 4-5 can usually be engaged for 15-20 minutes and can tackle some more complex circle time activities. For example, you can become the scribe as the group invents a story or dictates their recollection of events.





## Personnel



### INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education staff are the cornerstone of this profession. With knowledgeable, reliable and caring Inuit staff, quality programming is within reach. Program staff assume a tremendous, yet rewarding responsibility. They provide a valuable community service to parents by delivering reliable, safe and stimulating care and education.

### FACTORS AFFECTING QUALITY

- Staff Characteristics
- Staff Qualifications
- Working Conditions
- Wages and Benefits
- Staff Turnover
- Staff Management
- Group Sizes/Ratios
- Personnel Policies
- Professionalism
- Training/Professional Development

### STAFF CHARACTERISTICS

Early childhood education staff work with our communities' most vulnerable group. The quality of the interactions between young children and the adults who care for them has a significant and enduring impact on children's lives. Because of the intimacy of the relationship and the potential to do harm all staff are called to a high level of commitment.

### STAFF QUALIFICATIONS

Staff qualifications required for positions in early childhood development is determined by the employer. Qualifications include the required training, skills, abilities and experience for each position. Some qualifications must be included to comply with provincial/territorial day care legislation, for example, level of training. Informal life experiences of staff can be used as part of the qualifications needed for the job. (See Appendix 5A – Sample Job Posting, Educator)

*“Children who have established positive relationships with their child care provider will exhibit happiness and comfort in the child care setting, which can be one of the best indicators of a quality program.”<sup>48</sup>*

### WORKING CONDITIONS

The quality and nature of the workplace in early childhood development programs influences the quality of care and education provided to the children. Most often, if employees are happy in their jobs, they are more likely to feel motivated and enthusiastic about providing an excellent service to families.



## WAGES & BENEFITS

Research shows that low wages and poor working conditions result in job dissatisfaction and high turnover rates.<sup>49</sup> Employees must feel that their work is valued. Adequate wages and benefits provide meaningful compensation for the critical work that program staff do. In quality programs, employers strive to provide fair wages and ample benefits to promote the retention of employees over time.

## STAFF TURNOVER

One of the most difficult challenges facing programs is staff turnover. It can be devastating for management, fellow staff, children, and families when programs are faced with changes in staff on a regular basis. High staff turnover is not uncommon in this profession as programs struggle with providing adequate salaries, positive working conditions, and ample benefits. Developing strategies for recruitment and retention of program staff is essential in providing caregiver consistency in young children's lives.

## STAFF MANAGEMENT

Although the Board of Directors is the legal employer of all employees of the organization, the Centre Director is hired to supervise and direct program staff on a daily basis. The Centre Director follows personnel policies approved by the Board and ensures that all employees understand their responsibilities. The role of

the Centre Director in programs is vital to the success and quality of program delivery. Centre Directors act as leaders, listeners, problem-solvers, administrators, and teachers. The responsibilities of the Centre Director are vast, and the daily responsibility for the welfare of the children enrolled in the programs rests with them.

In a high quality early childhood education programs, Centre Directors:

- hire and maintain knowledgeable, sensitive and motivated program staff;
- ensure a healthy, well-organized environment and a purposeful daily program that meets the needs of the children being cared for and their families;
- administer the overall organization consistent with legislative requirements and with the direction of the organization's governing body;
- manage the program's financial resources effectively; and
- communicate positively and effectively with parents, staff and community.

***Several factors contribute to successful management and supervision of staff:***

### ***Director's administrative style***

The Centre Director's leadership style impacts program staff performance, morale and team development. Aspects of a Centre Director's administrative style that contribute to quality include



provision of support to program staff, a well-organized but flexible working environment, opportunities for input into program policies and practices by staff, and opportunities for professional growth and development for staff as well as the Centre Director.<sup>50</sup>

### ***Staff Communication***

In a quality program, Centre Directors set the tone for positive and open staff communication. They establish and maintain open and collaborative working relationships with program staff and encourage them to support each other as a team. Program staff develop strong relationships with one another by seeking out ideas and experiences from each other; resolving differences of opinion appropriately, respecting confidentiality, and by offering verbal and practical support to one another.<sup>51</sup>

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*“Building community capacity is key to delivering programs and services at the community level.”<sup>52</sup>*

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### ***Employee Performance***

Current and detailed job descriptions form the foundation for strong employee performance. Employees must know what is expected of them and what duties they must perform on a regular basis. Most

job descriptions will include the following: job title, position summary, tasks, duties, or responsibilities; qualifications and requirements, weekly hours and salary. Secondly, orientation to the job gives the employee an opportunity to ask questions and ensure that they are clear about what their job entails.

Regular supervision and feedback is critical for program staff to know whether they are fulfilling their responsibilities effectively. It is the role of the Centre Director to provide ongoing and regular feedback to employees that assists them in refining their skills and abilities. A combination of informal and formal feedback is necessary to allow the employee time to work on specific areas of need and improve their performance. Informal feedback can be as simple as saying *“I liked your art activity today, it really engaged the children”* This type of feedback is immediate and motivates program staff to continue to work hard. Formal feedback includes annual performance appraisals.

Often, written reviews are mandatory after a probationary period of employment, and annually thereafter. Performance appraisals document an employee’s strengths and areas for improvement based on the responsibilities outlined in the job description. A fair review process ensures that employees are aware of what skills are being evaluated. (See Appendix 5B for a sample performance appraisal)



## GROUP SIZES/RATIOS

Adequate staff/child ratios enable the type of adult/child interaction that supports a child's development and well-being. A favourable ratio allows program staff to focus on developing relationships with children by being sensitive, responsive, nurturing, non-restrictive, and by providing care that stimulates children to learn and enhance language and social skills. Similarly, smaller group sizes permit program staff to be more responsive and spend a larger proportion of their time interacting with children.

## PERSONNEL POLICIES

Developing personnel policies ensures that program staff have a clear understanding of what is expected of them, and what their rights are as employees. The legal operator and employer of each early childhood education program will determine which policies are necessary for their organization.

All policies must comply with federal and provincial/territorial employment legislation that sets minimum standards for such things as minimum wage, hours of work, statutory holidays, deductions, annual vacation and vacation pay, sick leave, overtime, breaks, termination, and maternity/parental leave. Further, provincial/territorial human rights legislation, and workplace health and safety legislation must be complied with at all times.

In addition to legislated standards and practices, personnel policies that are important to develop in an early childhood development setting include:

- Police Records Checks
- Confidentiality
- Employment of Relatives
- Conflict of Interest
- Personnel Records
- Punctuality/Attendance
- Smoking
- Alcohol & Drug Use
- Violence in the Workplace
- Harassment
- Staff Professional Development
- Conflict Resolution

## PROFESSIONALISM

Professionalism refers to the attitudes, behaviours and practices of program staff. Program staff who believe that the work they do is important and can make a difference in the lives of young children will strive to deliver high quality programs to young children and their families. One aspect of professionalism that can be challenging in small communities is confidentiality. A clear policy on confidentiality ensures the privacy of program staff, children and parents.

Procedures to ensure confidentiality include:

- A written policy on confidentiality;
- Discussing as a team the importance of confidentiality;

- Staff sign an oath of confidentiality;
- Staff are disciplined if confidentiality is broken, for example, verbal warning, written warning; and
- Strict adherence to discussing confidential information behind closed doors.

*“Ongoing training of Inuit workers, such as the successful model in Nunavik, is needed. On-going curriculum development that includes Inuit child rearing practices will help ensure that workers will be providing the best care possible for our children.”<sup>53</sup>*

## TRAINING/PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

A comprehensive training strategy and plan for Inuit combines formal pre-service training with ongoing in-service and on the job training. In addition, specialized training for Centre Directors and bookkeepers must be addressed.

### **What Works:**

- Community delivery of in-service training programs;
- Flexible delivery including on-line learning, and distance education;
- Mentoring and on-the-job training;
- Elder involvement in training;
- Support programs to assist adult students while in training;
- Prior learning assessment or recognition for previous experience;



- Train-the-trainer models, send one staff to training then have that staff train the other staff;
- Training material/curriculum that blends contemporary content with traditional knowledge;
- Professional development workshops that address relevant concerns, for example, FASD;
- Partnerships with community agencies for professional development, for example, workshops at the elementary school;
- Exchanges or visits to other early childhood education programs to engage in dialogue and sharing of ideas and techniques that staff have found to be successful in working with children in their program; and
- Regional/national training events sponsored by funders, governments, and regional Inuit organizations.

*“We learn best in training situations where feedback is immediate and readily applicable. A coaching relationship would fill this gap and ensure consistency of skills over time.”<sup>54</sup>*





## Appendix 5A: Sample Job Posting, Educator

### **Full Time Position (40 hours per week)**

Under the authority of the Centre Director, and working closely with other employees, the selected candidate is responsible in all aspects related to the early intervention strategy of their learning skills, spiritual, emotional, intellectual and physical growth of each child. The educator is also in charge of the planning and application of well balanced program of activities for the age group assigned to them.

#### Tasks

- Assist with the preparation of activity programs based on the centre's philosophy and policies;
- With the work team, strive to create a happy atmosphere of caring, growth, learning, stimulation, creativity and respect;
- Plans, organizes and leads daily activities designed to stimulate intellectual, physical and emotional growth of children;
- Encourage cooperation and participation among children;
- Maintains constant supervision of indoor and outdoor play periods;
- Directs and assists children with their everyday needs, in the development of proper eating, resting and toilet habits;
- Help in the service of lunch and snacks;
- Follows good safety and hygiene practices;
- Encourages open communication with the parents concerning the needs, progress or problems of their children;
- Takes part in training sessions and attends personnel meetings; and
- Performs all other related tasks.

The selected candidate must:

- Be 18 years of age or older;
- Be in good physical and mental health;
- Be punctual;
- Be available to be present during all opening hours, to provide care to the children;
- Must be willing to take part in training sessions and attend personnel meetings; and
- Be Bilingual, Inuktitut/English, Inuktitut/French (Knowledge of Inuktitut is a must to be able to work with Native children/families).

The following will be considered advantageous:

- Have a Sec V diploma although exceptional and relevant work experience will be considered;
- Have earned a diploma or certificate in early childhood education and/or have attended courses in early childhood education;
- Have previous experience in working with children as a parent, as a baby-sitter or in a day care centre; and
- Have a diploma in First Aid Training.

Salary: To be determined, the salary is determined according to experience and training.





# Appendix 5B: Sample Performance Appraisal

Name:
Position:
Date:

Use the following scale to rate performance:

<b>Exceptional</b> 5	<b>Very Good</b> 4	<b>Acceptable</b> 3	<b>Needs Improvement</b> 2	<b>Unacceptable</b> 1	<b>Not Applicable</b> 0
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General		Has ability to focus a group on a goal (leadership).
		Possesses necessary theoretical and practical knowledge.
		Uses effective oral communication.
		Uses common sense in resolve problems.
		Develops and maintains good interpersonal relations.
		Demonstrates creative thinking.
		Has ability to adapt to different situations.
		Demonstrates interest and motivation at work.
		Works diligently and quickly.
		Acts decisively when required.
		Assumes her responsibilities.
		Demonstrates initiative.
		Demonstrates accuracy and care for finishing touches.

Duties		Develops developmental activities that match children's needs and interests.
		Plans, leads and assesses daily activities according to the age and tastes of the children as well as available materials.
		Provides constant supervision of children.
		Communicates regularly with parents about their children's behaviour and needs.
		Assists children with Arrival/Departure.
		Assists children with hygiene.
		Assists children with meals/snacks.
		Ensures that educational material is kept clean and organized.
		Ensures that children's clothing is cared for properly.
		Helps the cook serve meals and snacks.
		Participates in training activities.
		Welcomes and introduces new childcare staff to the centre.
		Performs other job-related duties.
	Is aware of the health situation of the children for whom she provides care.	



# Appendix 5B:

## Sample Performance Appraisal continued

Use the following scale to rate performance:



<b>Personal Factors</b>		Is able to work under stress.
		Shows initiative.
		Comes to work regularly and on time.
		Has agreeable attitude.
		Respects procedures.
		Works well with program staff and management.

<b>Overall Assessment of Performance</b>		Exceptional
		Very Good
		Acceptable
		Needs Improvement
		Unacceptable

Assessment summary: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Training Needs: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_



## Challenging Behaviour



### INTRODUCTION

As educators and parents, we have all had experiences with children's behavior that have challenged our patience and skills. Regardless of the reasons, some children in our programs require extra attention from staff to manage in a group setting. How many of us have felt overwhelmed and frustrated because we have one or two children in our group whose behavior stands out from the others? We hope that this chapter of Piaranut supports what you are already doing to help children with challenging behaviour, as well as give you new ideas and strategies to try.

### WHAT IS CHALLENGING BEHAVIOR?

Most children go through stages or periods of time when their behaviour is challenging. A child who is tired or hungry will behave differently than one who is rested with a full tummy. A toddler who is frustrated because she can't tell you exactly what is bothering her may lash out at others to get what she wants. Many factors affect children's behaviour on an ongoing basis, e.g., time of the day, hunger, fatigue, changes in routine, emotions, parenting styles and family transitions such as the loss of a loved one or divorce.

Children who experience typical daily frustrations need our assistance to learn how to express their feelings and play cooperatively with others.

However, some children need even more assistance, guidance and patience. Children whose behaviour is affected by other factors such as Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), learning disabilities, or speech and language delays need us even more to have the knowledge and skills to assist them in developing appropriate behaviour so that they can succeed in groups setting such as Head Start, daycare, playgroups and ultimately elementary school.

Regardless of the cause, challenging behaviour can be defined as any behaviour that:

- interferes with children's learning, development, and success at play;
- is harmful to the child, other children, or adults;
- puts a child at high risk for later social problems or school failure.<sup>55</sup>

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*"If you love the child, there is a way to improve. We were taught to treat people equally." Elder<sup>56</sup>*

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We often think of children with challenging behaviours as those children who are aggressive towards others, e.g., hitting, biting, kicking, taking toys, etc. While children who display aggression are challenging for educators, we also know that



children who are disruptive and impulsive, who have trouble paying attention, and who can't follow routines also require additional attention and assistance.

The following sections provide information, ideas and suggestions gathered from various Inuit Early Childhood Education (ECE) programs combined with current research on supporting children with challenging behaviour.

## PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

The philosophy of an ECE program will determine how children with challenging behaviours and their families are supported. A program's philosophy is like a guiding light that illuminates the road ahead or an Inukshuk on the land telling us where to go. It guides your decision making, program planning, and determines your approach to behaviour guidance.

Programs that believe that every child is unique and special and that it is their role to assist all children reach their potential have the following beliefs in common:

**1. Children First:** Most people who work with children believe that children's needs come first. Most ECE staff believe that children need to be surrounded by caring adults in order to grow into caring adults themselves. Our purpose in becoming caregivers and educators of young children is to teach and guide them in becoming the best they can be.

**2. Strength Based:** All children come to our programs with strengths and needs. Building on each child's unique strengths is essential to developing new skills and behaviours. For example, if a child has difficulty paying attention at circle time but really likes to help teachers, having him/her sit beside you to turn the pages of a storybook will engage him/her in the circle activity while focussing on the positive 'helping' behaviour.

Strengths that you might look for in children with challenging behaviours include:

- Creative
- Artistic
- Musical
- Helpful
- Affectionate
- Persistent, committed
- Energetic, physical
- Self assured, confident
- Love hands-on activities

*Every child has special strengths and abilities that deserve to be celebrated. Emphasize these strengths as often as you can. Find one area of interest or skill in the child and build on it."*<sup>57</sup>

### 3. Understanding the Behaviour:

Children with challenging behaviour are not behaving in a particular way on purpose. Most often, challenging behaviours are caused by other factors and the child is not in control. It is true that children can learn certain behaviours to get attention, but even that is based on a need of the child i.e. the need for attention.

*“These kids are not mean and ‘bad’ on purpose. Dealing with them means a lot of patience, understanding and being non-reactive, and redirection instead of correction or direction. The parent or caregiver needs to stay calm, consistent and supportive.”<sup>58</sup>*



### 4. Change Environment Not Child:

Children with challenging behaviour often have difficulty fitting into a regular group setting such as daycare or Head Start. Early Childhood Education staff may need to make changes to the physical environment or routine to help a child manage in their program. For example, the bathroom is quite small and you know that it causes a lot of stress and frustration for some children to have too many children in there. You could decide to have a basket of books outside the bathroom for waiting children and only allow two children inside at one time. Rather than expecting the child to fit into the environment, you change the environment to fit the needs of the child.

**5. Success for Child:** A fundamental belief necessary for supporting children with challenging behaviours is the desire for their success in your program. Even though staff may feel frustrated at times, an underlying desire to help the child succeed is necessary. It takes maturity and professionalism to rise above the difficulties to do everything you can to help the child do well in your program. At the end of the day, if every child goes home feeling good about themselves, you have succeeded.

*“Children who do not listen, or act on my requests make me a better teacher. They cause me to reflect on my actions and change or accommodate the children’s interests and my own.” Educator*



## CHILD'S PERSPECTIVE

As ECE staff managing the daily routines, activities and events in a busy program, most often we wish for the day to go smoothly. Children with challenging behaviour present situations on a daily basis that interrupt the routine, hurt other children, test our patience and disrupt well-planned activities. This can lead to frustration and disappointment for educators as they try to meet the needs of all the children in their group.

However, as professionals in our field we must look beyond our own needs to the needs of the children. We must challenge ourselves to take the perspective of the child by looking at the situation or behaviour from his/her point of view. This helps us to remember that children do not behave in a certain way to intentionally 'ruin' the activity or the day. Most often, their behaviour is an outcome of an underlying need, emotion, or factor beyond their control.

For example, a child who continuously takes toys from other children may in fact be trying to engage in play with the other children, but does not have the social skills to know how to do this. The other children probably react negatively to that child because she/he always takes their toys. So the child gets the message loud and clear that the other children do not want to play with him. But inside she/he really wants to be with them, so she/he uses the only way

she/he knows to get their attention which is to take their toys. Without adult support and intervention, it becomes a vicious cycle of a child seeking negative attention from her/his peers and in the end not learning how to play appropriately with others.

*"Preschoolers with aggressive behaviour who are also rejected by their peers experience more stress."<sup>59</sup>*

Questions to ask yourself or to discuss with your team when trying to understand a child's behaviour include:<sup>60</sup>

- What is the child trying to tell us?
- Does the child feel enough control over his situations; do we give him enough choices?
- How would I/we feel if we were in this child's situation?
- Can I/we look at the problem differently?
- Have things changed for this child that affect how he behaves?
- How can we help him?
- Are things happening that could cause anxiety for this child?
- Have there been any recent changes in the child life?

- Have there been any changes to the child's routine?
- What are the child's strengths and abilities?
- How can we build in these strengths to find a solution?

*"Often what is considered to be problem behaviour is no more than a person finding different ways of making sense of their world."<sup>61</sup>*

See Appendix A for exercises that can help educators understand what a child might be telling them through his/her behaviour.

## LEADERSHIP/ TEAM WORK

Supporting children with challenging behaviour effectively depends on program leadership and teamwork. The role of the Centre Director is critical in setting the tone for program staff. A solution-based and positive attitude goes a long way in leading others to have the same. Centre Directors encourage, motivate, model, and praise their staff in their daily interactions with children.

It is also important to have ample time to discuss the program's approach to behaviour guidance to ensure consistency and commitment to specific strategies. Everyone interacting with children, including volunteers must understand what strategies are encouraged and which are not.

- Meet regularly as a team to review and discuss children's progress.
- Decide as a team what strategies will be used when to ensure consistency amongst staff.
- Observe co-workers for frustration and tag team if necessary to support one another.
- Develop action plans for individual children that identify their strengths, areas of need, triggers, etc.
- Provide ample orientation to volunteers so they know what is expected of children and staff.
- Develop behaviour management policies and distribute to parents and volunteers.
- Post reminders of behaviour guidance strategies around the room to visually remind staff of what strategies they can use.
- Find out about professional development opportunities within your community or region; attend when possible to continue to develop as an early childhood educator.



## POLICIES

Most provincial/territorial regulations require that all Inuit ECE programs develop a policy on behavior management. Behavior management, child guidance or discipline are interchangeable terms for the same thing – how adults help children to express feelings appropriately, resolve conflict with others, and control aggression. Program staff, parents and volunteers use a variety of strategies to teach, model and support appropriate behavior. A strong policy on behavior management will cover the following:

- What strategies are encouraged and permitted i.e. redirection, praise.
- What strategies are not permitted i.e. hitting, spanking, humiliating.
- Suggested strategies and how to implement them i.e. consequences, redirection, time-out.
- What the consequences are if a staff member engages in prohibited acts i.e. written warning or termination of employment.
- What the consequences are if a child is continually aggressive or harmful to children or staff i.e. temporary removal from the program.



## BONDING

Developing positive relationships with children in our programs is essential to their well-being. Bonding with children with challenging behaviours can be difficult at times as we face our own feelings of frustration and reactions to their behaviour. Making a commitment to connecting to those children will assist educators in their work with them.

*“Your connection with a child is the most powerful tool you have as a teacher.”<sup>62</sup>*

Ultimately, it is easier to guide children’s behaviour when you have a strong relationship with them. Some suggestions about how to build relationships include the following:<sup>63</sup>

- Be positive about what the child is doing well, e.g., praise for sitting at circle.
- Spend one-on-one time with the child every day. Find a time to sit and do an activity with the child no matter how hectic the day is. It could be doing a puzzle together or asking him to help you prepare snack. Giving the child the choice of what to do together is also helpful.
- Share personal stories or experiences with the child, e.g., your trip on the land over the weekend.
- Use his name often, which shows respect and caring for him.
- Create a special signal of praise that is just between you and him, e.g., a special wink that tells him he is doing well.

See Appendix B for more ways to develop relationships with children.

## ELDERS

Elders play a very important role in Inuit ECE settings. Including Elders in your program will ensure that cultural knowledge, stories and traditions are maintained. Storytelling in particular is a traditional way to teach children how to behave in a group, family or community. In addition, stories have a calming effect on many children.



*“The unikkaaqtuat [old stories] are beneficial to children. At one time these stories were true, but because they are so old they just became stories. They are very useful for children. There are all sorts of stories that can be told to children. Most times, children start settling down when you tell a story. Most of the stories that we heard were true and they have a definite benefit for children.” Elder<sup>64</sup>*

Knowing this makes our job as early childhood educators all the more important as we guide and teach young children in our programs. If we can help a child at a young age develop appropriate behaviours they will do better later in life.

*“Behaviour problems can lead to trouble at school. Because of their problems with social skills, emotional control, and language development, many children with challenging behaviour come to school unprepared for the most basic task of their early school years – learning to read.”<sup>66</sup>*

## EARLY INTERVENTION

Research tells us that children with “attention and behaviour difficulties are at risk for experiencing problems such as negative parental-child interactions, problems with aggression, learning difficulties, grade repetition, increased contact with police, substance abuse, depression, anxiety, stress, social concern and lower self-esteem.”<sup>65</sup>

*“By believing in the child, expecting a lot of him, and supporting him as he extends his reach, a caring adult can help him to believe in himself and to develop competence and confidence.”<sup>67</sup>*

## BASIC MESSAGES

Underlying all your interactions in guiding children’s behaviour are basic messages about what you believe as an adult helping children. Your words and actions should support the following messages:

- I care about you and what happens to you;
- I am here to teach and help you;
- You can’t hurt other people;
- You can’t hurt yourself;
- You can’t hurt toys, or furniture;
- You don’t always get what you want;
- I am on your side; and
- If you make a mistake, keep trying.

*“If children are taught about how they are supposed to behave, they can try to do these things. As they try to do the new things, it will be awkward at first but with practices they will get better.” Elder<sup>68</sup>*

## PREVENTION

Prevention is key! Supporting and teaching children with challenging behaviour is highly affected by our ability to prevent problems or conflicts before they occur. Planning, preparation, and keen observation help to ensure that a child has the best chance at success while in your program. The following prevention strategies may help a child in your program.

### **a) Environment**

A caring environment that is consistent and predictable for children supports the development of appropriate social skills. Children with challenging behaviour need to know that they are in a safe and calm place, and that they can predict their daily experiences to some degree.

Physical environments that are chaotic and over-stimulating can make some children feel overwhelmed and agitated. Having too much to look at and choose from is distracting for many children.

- Simplify the décor of your room. Limit decorations, pictures and other items on the walls.
- Keep hands-on activities simple and straightforward.
- Limit the number of children at activity areas to avoid crowding and frustration.
- Store toys and materials in an orderly fashion, i.e. labels on storage containers.
- Create an area of the room that is quiet and calm for children to relax in when they are overwhelmed or over-stimulated.

- Dim the lights and play calming music during quiet activities.
- Close or cover activity areas of the room that are off limits.
- Display materials in ways to promote independence and reduce frustration, e.g., accessible bins or baskets at the child's level.
- Use soft paint colours when decorating the room. Avoid bright colours on the walls.

*"An environment which is noisy, overly cluttered, has strong smells, is brightly lit with fluorescent lighting or has busy patterned carpets or bright wall colours can create over-stimulation and distract the [child] from the information you are trying to share."<sup>69</sup>*

See Appendix C to help you evaluate your environment.

### **b) Curriculum/Activities**

When planning daily activities, ECE staff considers the needs of all the children. However, special consideration of the needs of children with challenging behaviour will help staff plan activities effectively and possibly prevent problems.

- When setting up activities, set up a few items that help children engage in positive play when they enter that area. For example, in the dramatic play area, set up the table with dishes and put a few dolls on the chairs.

- Allow children to make choices throughout the day so that they feel empowered.
- Provide sensory toys or gadgets for child to manipulate during group activities such as circle. This allows the child to fidget with something like a squishy ball while listening to a story.<sup>70</sup>
- Break children into smaller circle groups so there are fewer wait times for turns.
- Ensure that there is ample opportunity for appropriate active play, e.g., gym time, outdoors, music and movement, creative dance, etc.
- Provide small mats for children to sit on during circle time. This sets the expectation that children stay on their own mat. If a child is having a particularly difficult time staying in their space, try using a booster seat on the floor.
- Make up stories to share at circle time about the expectations in your program for appropriate behaviour.

### **c) Triggers**

Triggers are events or actions in a child's environment that lead to a certain response or behaviour. By observing children in your program and working closely with parents, you can learn what triggers individual children.

For example, a child may be sensitive to noise. If one day, you have a guest speaker come in to circle time who is particularly loud, you may realize that the child seems irritated and overwhelmed by the visitor. This in turn may affect his behaviour during circle time.



Knowing this child's triggers ahead of time allows staff to react more supportively of the child rather than assuming the child is being disrespectful or disruptive at circle time. Perhaps during that time the child can come away and work on an individual activity in a quiet area, rather than participate in the circle.

Another example might be a child who you know becomes extremely irritated and agitated by how things feel such as clothing or materials. A scenario with this child might be in the dramatic play corner when a group of children decide to dress up as animals and put on a spontaneous play. The animal costumes in the center are very fuzzy and have thick seams on the inside. You know this ahead of time and you might offer an alternative to this child. You might suggest that he/she draw a picture of his animal to tape to his shirt instead. In this way, you respect the child's sensitivities, have preempted a possible breakdown and have allowed him to be successful in the group.

#### **d) Structure/Routines/Consistency**

Structure and consistency in a program is important for children with challenging behaviour. Being able to predict the events of the day allows them to feel a sense of control and confidence in their surroundings.

- Keep routines and transitions consistent. If there are changes, be sure to give children advance warning so they can be prepared for the change.
- Make sure you have the children's attention before giving instructions about an activity or routine.
- Establish eye contact when talking to a child about something. Bend down to the child's level to speak to him/her.

- Use pictures or other visuals that break down routines into simple steps, e.g., taking off coat, hanging up coat, put mitts in basket.
- Use group time to ask children to review the daily routine and select visuals that represent certain times of the day. For example, you might assume that a picture of a toilet would indicate bathroom time, but in fact the children prefer a picture of a sink.
- Use songs or catchy phrases as cues to begin transitions in the routine. For example, tidy up songs, turning lights off and on before snack time. Be creative and ask the children for input about what songs or transition cues could be used.
- Create rituals that help to ease transitions. For example, as you begin a quiet activity such as story time or nap time, you might say to your group "zip it, lock it, and put it in your pocket" with accompanying actions.<sup>71</sup>
- Be consistent about routines such as meals, e.g., children sit in the same spots every day, put their dishes in the same bins when finished, etc.
- Repeat your instructions for routines or expectations as much as needed. Ask the child to tell you back what you told him.
- Give warnings to children of upcoming transitions. For example, let the children know that in five minutes it will be tidy-up time. This allows children to prepare for the transition emotionally and physically as they finish up what they are doing and mentally say good-bye to the activity.
- Be concrete and simple in your explanations or instructions. Tell them step by step what to do.

*"The best way to do this is through balanced discipline. Don't let them become quick-tempered. You need to be consistent with them. If you consistently show both love and discipline, the child will grow nicely. Children will become fearful of you if they have been intimidated too much." Elder<sup>72</sup>*

See Appendix D for information on evaluating routines and transitions.

#### **e) Setting Limits**

Setting limits allows children to know ahead of time what is expected at certain times of the day or areas of the room. Examples of limits are being able to slide down the slide but not walk up the slide or having a 10 minute turn on the swing.

- Set limits about how many children are allowed in an activity area at one time. Post this as a visual reminder to the children by having three faces on a card in that area for example.
- Discuss as a group what the rules and limits for the classroom might be. Children who contribute to rule setting are more likely to follow those rules.

#### **f) Modeling**

Modeling is a very effective strategy to teach children what is expected of them. If we want children to be respectful of others, then we must show them how, through our interactions with them, with parents and with co-workers. If we want children to express their feelings, then



we model this for them by sharing ours, e.g., "it makes me very happy when you share with Thomas."

#### **g) Choices**

Offering children choices gives them a sense of control and independence that they need to develop feelings of empowerment and self-motivation.

While allowing for choice is encouraged in early childhood settings, keep in mind that for some children it may be difficult. Deciding where to play at free play time may be overwhelming for some children. It may be helpful to walk with them to two or three centres to allow them to make a choice. They will be able to see what is offered in that area that day and make a concrete choice.

*"If you allow the children to decide for themselves – rather than controlling them – they don't have to look for inappropriate ways to seek power and assert their independence."<sup>73</sup>*

### *h) Expectations*

Children need to know what is expected of them throughout the day. We can't assume that children always know what to do and when. Stating what the expectation is for a certain activity can help prevent difficulties.

For example, at the end of circle time as you prepare for snack time, you might say to the children, "As we go to snack, I expect you to walk quietly to your spot at the table." Or, as you prepare to go to the school library for a visit, you might review what the expectations are for walking through the hallways.

- Make your directions clear and concise. Use simple language to explain what a child is expected to do.
- State what the expectations are for the children during a particular routine or activity before you begin, e.g., when we walk to the gym, where do we put our hands?
- Allow children to tell you what the expectation is, e.g., "can you tell me what we should do when we walk to gym?" (walk quietly, keep our hands to ourselves, and stay in line).
- Adjust your expectations accordingly. Some children may not be able to complete the dressing time quickly. If rushing them through the routine always ends in mutual frustration, then adjust your expectation for that child. Allowing them to take an extra 10 minutes (providing they can be supervised) to get dressed to go outside demonstrates a child-centered and supportive approach.
- Repeat, repeat, repeat!

### *i) Supervision*

Adequate supervision is a critical strategy to prevent situations from occurring and/or escalating. Keen observation will help educators learn about what the precursors are for certain children or which children have more difficulty getting along.

- Watch children's reactions such as body language and facial expressions for signs of frustration that may lead to conflict or outbursts.
- Avoid certain combinations of children who may have difficulty together, e.g., sitting two children away from each other at snack time to prevent conflict.
- Arrange the room to ensure that you can see all areas from anywhere. Avoid having corners and other areas that you cannot supervise well.

## **GUIDANCE STRATEGIES**

Planning ahead will help children with challenging behaviours manage in a group setting. However, ultimately early childhood educators must intervene many times a day to help children develop self-control, express their feelings and play cooperatively with their peers. The following strategies prove useful in guiding children's behaviour.

### *a) Ignoring*

Children with challenging behaviours may feel as though they are "getting into trouble all the time." If behaviour is not putting the child or other children at risk of being hurt, it is often effective to ignore it. Ignoring certain behaviour allows the child to have a break from the constant attention he most likely experiences.

*"If you discipline the child all the time, constantly, it seems that they tune you out. If they are doing something and you know nothing bad is going to happen, you should just let them be. Don't discipline the child. You should only discipline them at appropriate times" Elder<sup>74</sup>*

#### **b) Redirection**

Redirection is perhaps the most widely used strategy to guide children's behaviour. Redirection is an effective method to intervene and refocus a child's attention and energy elsewhere. It is particularly effective with toddlers, whose attention shifts frequently anyway. With preschoolers, warnings and explanations are important so that children understand why they have to move to another activity or area of the room.

#### **c) Repeat and Redo**

Repeat and redo is a specific technique to help children learn appropriate behaviour in a concrete way. For example, the expectation while in the community school is that children walk from the gym to the classroom. If a child runs from the gym, a repeat and redo approach would mean she/he has to return to the gym and repeat what was expected, in this case walking. Then he/she would be praised for meeting the expectation, e.g., "nice job walking from the gym."

#### **d) Conflict Resolution**

Children in preschool settings are not too young to learn how to identify and solve conflicts amongst themselves. Using the following six steps to assist children in resolving conflicts teaches them about problem solving:

- i. Approach calmly, stopping any hurtful actions;
- ii. Acknowledge children's feelings;
- iii. Gather information;
- iv. Restate the problem;
- v. Ask for ideas for solutions and choose one together; and
- vi. Be prepared to give follow-up support.<sup>75</sup>

*"It's useful to remember that conflicts are normal events that provide excellent teaching and learning opportunities and that children are more likely to honor solutions they've thought of themselves."<sup>76</sup>*

#### **e) Positive Reinforcement**

Positive reinforcement for children's behaviour is a very powerful strategy. Most children are highly motivated by adults' response to their actions, work, behaviour and interactions. They crave validation and attention for their efforts. Providing attention for behaviour that you want to see will go a long way in encouraging positive behaviour.

- Praise children when they engage in behaviours that you want to see, e.g., keeping their hands in their lap at circle time or helping to tidy up.

- Use different types of praise such as a wink, a smile, a thumbs up or a pat on the back rather than always saying something verbal. If you always say the same thing such as “good job”, it can go unheard over time.
- Use positive statements rather than negative ones. Explain to the children what you want them to do instead of what not to do. For example say “I would really like to see you sitting on your chair” rather than “Don’t jump around.” This really helps children know what you want them to do while also framing your language in a positive way to avoid using ‘don’t’ too often. Then when the child does sit down, give him a thumbs up or a ‘thank you’.

*“We should not let children be intimidated so that when they grow up they won’t intimidate others. Children who are intimidated take revenge when they become adults. To prevent this cycle, you shouldn’t intimidate them.” Elder<sup>77</sup>*

#### **f) Reminders/Warnings**

Simple reminders can help children remember what is expected of them. When entering the lunch room for example, you might have a signal, word or phrase that reminds the children to walk quietly to their spot at the table, e.g., “walking feet to where we eat”.

Warnings also allow children to take control of their behaviour and make choices. For example, if a child has been at the sand table and has been reminded

several times about throwing sand, you could provide a warning about what the consequence might be if he isn’t able to stop, e.g., “Johnny, I have asked you two times to stop throwing the sand. I am concerned that Sarah will get sand in her eyes. If it continues, you will have to find somewhere else to play. I know that you are able to play in the sand without throwing it.” In this example you have told Johnny what he is doing that is unacceptable, what the expectation is, why you are setting a limit and what will happen if it continues.

#### **g) Proximity**

At times, simply moving close to a child or group of children can change the behaviour. For example, a child who is tossing beads onto the floor from the manipulative table may stop if you move over to the table. Your presence may be all that is needed to remind the child that this is not acceptable. This gives the child to a chance to self-correct his/her behaviour with very little intervention.<sup>78</sup> At group times or during activities, it is also helpful to position yourself closest to children with challenging behaviours.

#### **h) Consequences**

Natural and logical consequences encourage children to take responsibility for their actions. Natural consequences are ones that occur naturally as a result of certain actions or behaviour, e.g., a child’s hands will get cold if they refuse to wear their mitts. Logical consequences are those that educators create that make sense in relation to the behaviour, e.g., if a child spills milk, a logical consequence would be to have him/her help wipe it up. For logical consequences to be effective they should:

- be related to the child’s actions;

- be respectful of the child's feelings; and
- be reasonable so that he/she doesn't interpret them as a threat or form of punishment.<sup>79</sup>

#### *i) Time away*

Many educators believe that time-outs are punitive and not very effective in changing children's behaviour. More and more, ECE staff are favouring 'time-away' which allows children to calm down and regroup in a more dignified and respectful manner. A designated quiet space in the room allows children to take time away where they might punch a pillow, read a book, listen to music or whatever is helpful for that child to calm down and return to the group. Unlike time-outs where children are left on a chair or something similar, advocates for time away encourage staff to support children during time away, e.g., talking, rubbing back, sitting together, etc.

The goals of time away include the following:

- To give the child the chance to regain control in a safe place;
- To encourage the child to re-enter the play when he is calm so that he is successful with his peers;
- To help children recognize when their feelings are building to a dangerous level;
- To help children identify when they are ready to reenter the group;
- To allow the rest of the group to continue its activities.<sup>80</sup>

#### *j) Listening to Children*

Developing strong listening skills is important if we are to understand what motivates a child's behaviour. Acknowledging the feeling behind the behaviour is important in helping children to identify and express what they are feeling.

By asking a few simple questions, we can assist children in expressing their thoughts and feelings. Questions such as the following will help draw out what is happening for a child at a particular time:

- Your face is very red Sam, are you angry?
- What did John do to make you feel this way?
- Can you think of why you feel so frustrated?
- Where you feeling mad when you threw the block?

Keep in mind the following keys to effective listening skills with young children:

- Acknowledge the feeling behind the behaviour.
- Pay attention to non-verbal behaviour.
- Move to the child's level and make eye contact.
- Use cues to let the child know you are listening.
- Paraphrase what the child has said.
- Check the feelings behind a child's statement or actions.
- Ask open-ended questions.<sup>81</sup>





## CARE FOR THE CAREGIVER

It is extremely important that ECE staff take care of themselves and each other when supporting children with challenging behaviour.

- Always remember that the child is not willfully trying to challenge you or ruin your day. Tell yourself this in your head over and over if needed, e.g., create a phrase like “he’s a child and he needs me to stay calm” that you can say to yourself when needed.
- Forgive yourself when you handle a situation poorly. Reflect on the situation and try again the next time.
- Talk to your co-workers about how you are feeling.
- Take the breaks you are entitled to, e.g., go for a short walk on your lunch hour to clear your head.
- Seek support from your supervisor.
- Get enough rest so you are fresh for the next day.

## WORKING WITH PARENTS

In order to support a child with challenging behaviour, it is really helpful to develop a sense of partnership with his/her family. Open and honest communication between parents and teachers builds a foundation of mutual trust, and support necessary to work together towards the best interest of the child.

When meeting with parents concerning their child’s behaviour, keep the following in mind:

- Be non-judgmental in your approach with parents.
- Understand that parents may feel guilty about their situation.
- Know that parents may be on the defense when hearing about problems with their child.

- Keep a positive attitude toward solving any problems. A solution-based approach will help parents feel as though you are working together.
- Send a message that parents are the experts about their child and that you both have his/her best interests in mind - essentially that you are on the same team.
- Ask about what works at home and be willing to try this if feasible in your program.
- Share with the parent what is working in the centre and offer suggestions for home.
- Use your best listening skills when parents are expressing a concern or point of view. The process is reciprocal and parents will feel respected if you really hear them.
- Begin discussing a plan of action and use positive language to support plan, e.g., “I will let you know... we’ll work together on this...we’ll find a way.’ You may need to schedule a follow up meeting to finalize an action plan.
- Develop methods of regular communication so that parents stay in the loop about the child’s progress, e.g., daily communication book.
- Maintain an open door policy so parents can visit at any time.

See Appendix E for more information about working with parents.



## Resources

### Publications:

Let's Talk FASD, VON Canada  
[www.von.ca](http://www.von.ca)

The Inclusive Early Childhood Classroom  
(Gould and Sullivan, 1999)

Challenging Behaviour in Young Children  
(Kaiser and Rasminsky, 2007)

Guiding Children Indirectly Towards Self-  
Regulation (Hearron & Hildebrand, 2005)

A Different Look at Challenging Behavior  
(Loomis and Wagner, 2005)

Guiding Young Children (7th edition)  
(Hearron, P.F. & Hildebrandt, V2005)

Meeting the Challenge: Effective Strategies  
for Challenging Behaviours in Early  
Childhood Settings. (Kaiser, B, & Ras-  
minsky, J.S. 1999)

Guiding Young Children: A problem-  
solving approach (3rd edition).  
(Reynolds, E. 2001)

### Websites:

The Challenging Behaviour Foundation  
Website [www.challengingbehavior.org](http://www.challengingbehavior.org)

Centre on the Social and Emotional  
Foundation for Early Learning  
[www.vanderbilt.edu](http://www.vanderbilt.edu)

Centres of Excellence for Children's Well-  
Being [www.excellence-earlychildhood.ca](http://www.excellence-earlychildhood.ca)

For routines and transitions visual  
symbols that help the kids can be down-  
loaded from this and other sites:

[http://www.visualaidsforlearning.com/  
products/index.htm](http://www.visualaidsforlearning.com/products/index.htm)

[http://www.practicalautismresources.  
com/printables](http://www.practicalautismresources.com/printables)

Behavioural observational triggers/  
documentations:

[http://www.polyxo.com/documents/  
#data](http://www.polyxo.com/documents/#data)

<http://www.polyxo.com/fba/>

### Other:

Meeting the Challenge, An Aboriginal  
Perspective CD-ROM and Training  
Workshops





## Appendix 6A: Listening to Non-Verbal Behaviour

Children often communicate to us without using words. Their behaviour gives us messages about their thoughts, feelings and needs. As effective listeners, we need to have ways to check that we correctly understand the message they are sending. When we see a child behaving in a certain way, rather than jumping to conclusions about

the behaviour, we first take a moment to think about all of the possible messages the child may be sending. Then decide on the one we think is most likely and check it out with the child by telling what we noticed and asking a question. If we are wrong, we can check out another guess. The exercise below shows that process:

Behaviour	Guesses About Meaning	Checking the Meaning
You are trying to prepare some materials for craft. A child keeps climbing up on your lap. The child grabs a pair of small scissors, and tries to cut up the papers you are working on.	The child likes to cut. The child is interested in what you are doing. The child wants to help. The child wants you to come and play. (Can you think of any other possibilities?)	I notice that you keeping climbing up on my lap. I'm wondering if you want to play with me?
You are vacuuming the floor after lunch. A child keeps pulling the plug out and dashing away.		
Two children are building a roadway with blocks. Another child is standing about a metre and a half away watching and smiling slightly.		
When it's time to clean up, one child continues to read in the reading corner.		

Source: *Canadian Child Care Federation, Meeting the Challenge: An Aboriginal Perspective*

## Appendix 6A: continued

### Listening for Feelings

When a child or an adult is conveying strong emotion, the first thing to do is to acknowledge that emotion. In order for them to be able to move on (e.g. to problem-solving), the person needs to know that you understand their

feelings. We can make sure we are interpreting feelings correctly by guessing at the feeling then asking a “checkout” question. This exercise will help you practice listening for feelings.

Example	Possible Feelings	“Checkout” Questions
A child, working on a craft activity exclaims “This is too hard!”	She’s frustrated. She’s angry. She’s tired. She’s bored. She’s hungry.	It sounds like you’re having a hard time with this craft, am I right?
A child bursts into tears just after her mother leaves in the morning.		
Your co-worker says, “Try as I might, I just can’t seem to get it right!”		
A child, smiling, shows you a picture that she has just finished.		
A child says to you, “I wish you were dead!”		

Source: Canadian Child Care Federation, *Meeting the Challenge: An Aboriginal Perspective*



## Appendix 6B: Some Ways to Build Relationships with Children

1. Greet children. Smile.
2. Use children's name positively (not synonymous with "no, stop or don't").
3. Make eye contact when speaking to children.
4. Squat, kneel or sit to be at children's level while talking to them.
5. Use descriptive feedback (avoid "good job" syndrome).
6. When you tell a child that you'll listen to him or her later, be sure you do.
7. Describe why you are concerned about a child's behaviour.
8. Give children opportunities to be competent and capable during routines.
9. Give children attention when they are behaving positively instead of focusing on attention while they are misbehaving.
10. Ask children if you can join them in play and don't be upset if they say "no".
11. Make sure that your verbal and non-verbal communication match.
12. Respond quickly to children's cries or other signs of distress.
13. Use routine times (like diapering) to give individual attention to children.
14. Avoid "swooping" in to blow a child's nose or wipe their face.
15. Acknowledge children's feelings when they are upset.
16. Acknowledge children's feelings when they are happy or excited.
17. Tell the child's parent what she/he did well that day.
18. Ask the child if you can put his/her name on artwork.
19. Sit by the children when she/he is playing and comment positively on what is happening.
20. Notice what the child is interested in and bring in a book that she/he might like.
21. Get involved in children's play and follow their lead.

\* Compiled by Mary Lynne Matheson, ECE instructor, Grant MacEwan College, 2005





## Appendix 6C: Evaluating the Environment

Complete these questions as you look critically at the environment in your room.

- Is there enough space so that children can play without interfering with each other?
- Are there pathways and large, open spaces that invite children to run?
- Are there enough play materials so that children do not have to compete for a chance to play with them?
- Are there too many toys, pictures, colours that could result in over-stimulation?
- Does the play environment change to reflect the current interests of the children?
- Is the environment sterile and uninviting?
- Are materials and toys developmentally appropriate so that children are challenged yet not frustrated?
- Are toys stored in bins and labeled with words and pictures so children can easily find them and put them away?
- Are there elements in the room that soften the environment such as pillows, rugs, water, sand, modeling media, fabric, plants?
- Are there places to be alone and places to play in small groups?
- Listen. What do you hear? How does noise impact children's behaviour?

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Source: *Canadian Child Care Federation, Meeting the Challenge: An Aboriginal Perspective*





## Appendix 6D: Evaluating Programming, Routines, and Transitions

Complete these questions as you evaluate your program:

- Are children actively engaged with the materials and activities in the playroom?
- Do children know what to do and how to do it?
- Do children understand the behaviour expectations within the room?
- Do children have opportunities to be involved in sensory experiences such as modeling media, water and sand play?
- Do children have opportunities to make choices about what activities they will be involved in?
- Is the schedule balanced to include indoor and outdoor, active and quiet experience?
- Do we avoid having children spending a lot of time waiting and in lineups?
- Do children have opportunities to be involved in open-ended activities? (activities where there can be many possible results).
- Is there a large enough block of free play time so that children can be free to become involved in more complex play activities such as block building and dramatic play?

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Source: *Canadian Child Care Federation, Meeting the Challenge: An Aboriginal Perspective*



## Appendix 6E:

### RESOURCE SHEET

Canadian Child Care Federation



#87

# Practitioners and Families Together: Encouraging Positive Behaviour

Families and early childhood practitioners have complementary areas of expertise that make them ideal partners in helping children develop social competence. Families bring their hopes and dreams for their children, along with the deep understandings that they have acquired through their years of childrearing. Practitioners bring their professional skills and experience as well as their observations of the children's interactions in a group setting.

It is fun for practitioners and families to share children's social successes. However, finding ways to work together to address challenging behaviours can be more difficult. Practitioners may hesitate to initiate a discussion they believe will be distressing to parents. Parents' investment in their children may cause them to feel frustrated, inadequate or helpless when their child is having problems; they may respond by withdrawing or becoming defensive. There might be language and/or culture barriers that require extra effort and understanding. While there is much that parents can contribute to discussions of challenging behaviour, it is practitioners who have the professional responsibility to initiate and facilitate a collaborative strategy to address the behaviour.

#### Preparing for Collaboration

To support collaboration, practitioners should:

- Build a relationship of mutual trust, respect and openness

from the very beginning. Convey warmth and caring, establish regular communication and encourage information sharing.

- Honour the knowledge, experience, goals and feelings of the parents.
- Actively appreciate diversity as an opportunity for learning about different ways to live in the world.

#### Discussing Challenging Behaviour

Communication skills such as active listening and problem-solving that practitioners use in their work with children are also important in discussions with parents.

- Arrange a time and place for discussion that is private and where neither party feels hurried
- Bring specific observations of the challenging behaviour.
- Be sure to mention things they appreciate about the child.
- Describe the behaviour and why they are concerned about it.
- Ask parents about their experience with, and understanding of, the behaviour.
- Listen carefully and with empathy in order to fully understand families' expectations and viewpoints.
- Engage parents in brainstorming possible causes and solutions.
- Find a mutually acceptable approach that draws upon the strengths of all perspectives.
- Develop a plan of action that shows how practitioners and the family will address the behaviour.
- Plan for another meeting to discuss progress.

#### Messages from Families to Practitioners

- We appreciate your concern for our child.
- We value your insights and knowledge.
- We are willing to share relevant information about our child's life in order to better understand his/her behaviour.
- We hope that, by working together, we can find ways to address the challenging behaviour.
- We are willing to follow through at home.

#### Useful Phrases for Practitioners and Families

- "We've noticed that... Have you ever noticed that at home/at the centre?"
- "How do you handle that when it happens?"
- "We've noticed that... seems to help."
- "These are some of the things we're doing to help (your child) learn to (make friends, talk about feelings etc.)."
- "How can we work together to help him/her with this?"
- "Here are some things that are happening at home/at the child care that might be influencing (the child's) behaviour..."

#### Messages from Practitioners to Families

- We know, appreciate and care about your child.
- Behaviour challenges are an opportunity to teach social skills.
- We respect the knowledge and insights that you bring.
- We know some strategies for dealing with the situation.
- Working together, we will succeed in helping your child develop positive social skills.

Prepared by Carole Messing for the Canadian Child Care Federation. Permission is not required to make photocopies for public education purposes. Photocopies may not be sold. To purchase this resource sheet, contact the Canadian Child Care Federation, 201-383 Parkdale Ave., Ottawa, Ontario, K1Y 4R4. Phone (613) 729-5289 or 1-800-858-1412. Fax: (613) 729-3159. Email: info@cccfcf-fcsge.ca. Website: www.cccfcf-fcsge.ca. © CCCF 2008.

Source: Canadian Child Care Federation, *Meeting the Challenge: An Aboriginal Perspective*



# Injury Prevention



## INTRODUCTION

Injury prevention is not new to Inuit. For thousands of years Inuit survival has depended on traditional safety knowledge and practices, developed by necessity in the harsh northern environment, and passed on from one generation to the next.

The safety and well-being of the community and all its members endures as a core Inuit value. And this is true for Inuit early childhood education (ECE) programs where “injury prevention” is a fundamental goal. What does injury prevention mean? Injury prevention in ECE means the many practices and procedures undertaken by staff, parents and children, to keep children from hurting themselves and others.

Inuit children are especially vulnerable to injury. Studies have shown that injuries are the leading cause of death for children and youth in Aboriginal communities in Canada.<sup>82</sup> Serious injuries can have devastating long term effects on individuals, families and communities. Most injuries are the result of events that can be predicted and avoided.<sup>83</sup>

ECE programs recognize that with careful planning and the creation and maintenance of a safe, nurturing environment for children, injuries can be prevented. Best practices in injury prevention are founded in the traditional knowledge of elders in each community combined with the many principles,

approaches and practical tools developed by Inuit ECE programs, tailored to the realities of caring for children in the north.

Injury prevention work is important not just because it keeps kids safe while they participate in ECE programs. In keeping with traditional ways, children will learn by observation to be injury conscious, gaining knowledge and tools that will serve them well throughout their lives.

*“Inuit children are especially vulnerable to injury. Studies have shown that injuries are the leading cause of death for children and youth in Aboriginal communities in Canada.”<sup>82</sup>*

## Terms Used in this Chapter

**ECE:** This means ‘early childhood education’ and refers to all of the programs that are offered in communities to care for and teach children in the 0-5 age range.

**Environmental factors:** These are all of the things in the physical environment of an ECE program that can impact on the safety of children. For example, furniture, play structures, toys etc.

**Inuit Nunangat:** This is the Inuit term for to the Inuit ‘homeland’ which is made up of four regions of northern Canada where



Inuit are settled, Inuvialuit, Nunavut, Nunavik and Nunatsiavut.

**Injury prevention:** This term refers to the work done by adults who care for children to keep children from hurting themselves and others.

**Policy:** This term refers to the ‘rules’ set up in ECE programs to keep kids safe. One example of a policy is, “all children attending the day care must wear indoor shoes”. Policies are usually written down and agreed to by all of the people involved in the ECE program, the Board, the Director and staff.

**Prevention measures:** These are the concrete steps taken by ECE program staff to keep kids safe. For example, always ensuring that the kitchen door is closed and locked, to keep kids away from hot stoves and cooking tools, is a prevention measure.

**Procedure:** This term refers to actions that staff of the ECE program have agreed to carry out, to keep kids safe. For example, setting a weekly schedule for cleaning and disinfecting toys is a procedure.

**Structured physical activity:** This term refers to physical activity that is organized and led by an adult.

**Vicarious trauma:** This term refers to the impact that witnessing terrible or troubling events can have on the emotional and mental wellbeing of children.

**WHMIS:** Workplace Hazardous Material Information System.

## UNDERSTANDING INJURIES IN ECE PROGRAMS

While there are no statistics available about injuries in ECE programs in Inuit Nunangat (homeland) specifically, Canada-wide, ‘falls’ are considered to be the leading cause of serious injuries in child care settings. Other injuries that can occur are minor, such as bruises and scrapes. More serious injuries can also occur, including head injuries, broken bones, burns, choking, drowning and suffocation. Because boys are usually involved in more active, physical activity than girls, they tend to be injured more often.<sup>84</sup> More generally, there are two types of injuries to children, those that are child-related and those that are environment-related.

Child-related injuries may result from actions by some children against each other such as pinching, biting, hitting, pushing or throwing objects. Injuries can also be related to child development factors, for example when children are learning to walk and climb but are still unable to balance themselves. These child-related injuries can be reduced through constant adult supervision and teaching children about appropriate behaviour.

Environmental factors that may contribute to children’s injuries include the many indoor and outdoor hazards (toys, play equipment, furniture, beds, kitchens, chemicals, drugs etc.) that can be controlled by ECE program staff so that injuries are prevented from happening. A commitment by staff to injury prevention/safety awareness, along with good policies, procedures and practices, can make a big difference in keeping kids safe.



It is interesting to note that certain times of the day and particular circumstances in ECE programs can increase the risk that injuries will happen. The most common times for injuries are:<sup>85</sup>

- when children are tired and hungry (before lunch or at the end of the day);
- if caregivers are absent, busy or less watchful;
- when caregivers underestimate a child's ability and forget to anticipate their progress;
- if a child in the day care is sick or hurt and the routine and focus of adults is disrupted;
- when hazards are around;
- during outings; and,
- when children or caregivers are new to the program and are not used to their surroundings.

## INJURY PREVENTION – KEY INGREDIENTS<sup>86</sup>

ECE programs have two injury prevention goals: (1) to reduce the number of injuries that occur; and (2) to reduce the seriousness of those injuries. There are a number of key ingredients in successful injury prevention and the governing bodies, directors, staff and parents involved in ECE programs each have an important role to play.

**Safety awareness:** It is important to actively engage in injury prevention, commit ourselves to it, learn about it, work on practical solutions to avoid injuries, and remain constantly watchful for potential hazards to the safety of the children in our care.

**Adequate and nurturing supervision:** ECE programs are required by provincial/territorial law to uphold specific staff to child ratios. Staff should be aware of the ratio in effect in their region and knowledgeable about all of the regulations governing ECE programs (see page 114] for links to provincial/territorial laws governing ECE).



*“Each location and indeed each room where children spend time in an ECE program or facility has hazards that can put them at risk of injury.”*



Many injuries in ECE settings can be avoided through the actions and quick reactions of adults. But this involves the constant presence of adults who can focus their attention adequately. Young children cannot be left alone and so it is really important that sufficient staff are present to supervise all the children, all of the time. When children behave in ways that put themselves or others at risk, staff need to intervene in ways that are appropriate to the age of the child, while using the opportunity to teach them about acceptable behaviour and safety.

**Safe indoor and outdoor spaces:** Each location and indeed each room where children spend time in an ECE program or facility has hazards that can put them at risk of injury. These spaces need to be equipped, organized and monitored so that risks are reduced. The checklist attached as Appendix A is a useful tool for reviewing indoor and outdoor safety issues.



***Age-appropriate activities for children:***

By matching the needs, skills and abilities of the children with appropriate, fun activities, we can reduce the likelihood that injuries will occur. Consider their size and strength when selecting toys to play with and plan field trips with safety in mind.

***Safety policies and procedures:*** ECE programs should have injury prevention policies and procedures. Policies state the ‘rules’ that the program will follow and ‘procedures’ (also sometimes called ‘guidelines’) explain how the rules are to be implemented.

Policies and procedures are important because they formalize injury prevention as an objective for the program and more importantly give everyone, directors, staff and parents, clear, practical guidance on the best way to provide a safe environment for kids. ECE programs may use the checklist in Appendix 7A as a starting point for developing their own injury prevention policy. In Appendix 7B you will find an example of how a policy is written, it is a nutrition policy used in Nunavik to guide the nutrition practices of ECE programs.

Much work has already been done in developing procedures for ECE programs and again, these can be adapted depending upon the situation. Health Canada has a thorough standards guide developed by First Nations, Inuit and Aboriginal Health department of Health Canada:

[http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fniah-spnia/pubs/famil/\\_develop/2003\\_ahs-papa-ref-guide/index-eng.php](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fniah-spnia/pubs/famil/_develop/2003_ahs-papa-ref-guide/index-eng.php)

Policies and guidelines should be reviewed annually and if necessary, revised. They are also useful tools for training new staff and should be shared with parents. The engagement of parents in supporting the work of the program is really important.

*“ECE programs are an important investment by the community in its future and governing bodies have a central role to play in leading and supporting injury prevention.”*

## **ROLE OF ECE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

ECE programs are governed at the local level by a board of directors or advisory committee made up of parents, elders, community members and a representative of the community council.<sup>87</sup> ECE programs are an important investment by the community in its future and governing bodies have a central role to play in leading and supporting injury prevention by:

- establishing injury prevention policies for the ECE program; and,

- communicating with the community at large about issues arising in the ECE program and engage them in problem-solving.

## ROLE OF ECE PROGRAM DIRECTORS

Directors of ECE programs play a key role in child safety through their leadership and by establishing a culture of injury awareness in the program. By culture we mean that injury prevention becomes an integral part of the program and is reflected in the participation of all those involved, staff, parents and children. On a practical level, directors are responsible for ensuring the best conditions possible are created for children to be safe. Their job includes:

- raising injury prevention issues in staff meetings on a regular basis;
- assessing staff training needs and organizing training that is needed (for example, first aid);
- working with the board of directors to develop an injury prevention policy for the program;
- implementing the injury prevention policies and procedures;
- ensuring that staff understand the policies and are actively applying the procedures of the program;
- making parents aware of the program's injury prevention policies and procedures;
- ensuring that the program meets the standards for staff to child ratios and qualifications for their province/territory;
- ensuring that injuries and accidents that occur are being reported and dealt with appropriately, for example, incident reports are completed and parents are informed;



- reporting on suspected cases child abuse or neglect;
- liaising with the community to ensure that injury prevention policies and procedures are coordinated with community-wide emergency plans; and,
- monitoring the program's injury prevention work on a regular basis.

## ROLE OF ECE PROGRAM STAFF

Staff members are front line workers. They are responsible for keeping kids safe. Their job includes:

- watchful "safety aware" supervision of children;
- anticipating dangerous situations where children could hurt themselves or others and intervening appropriately;
- teaching children how to play without hurting themselves or others;
- participating in the development and implementation of injury prevention policies and procedures;
- taking initiative to point out potential hazards in the environment;
- being good safety role models for children;
- when child abuse or neglect are suspected, working with the director to address the issue and report if necessary; and,

- working with their director to seek training when needed.

## ROLE OF PARENTS

Parents obviously have a great interest in the safety and security of their children and they want to know that ECE programs are actively working to maintain a safe environment for their children. Parents can also be very helpful to ECE programs by participating in injury prevention approaches and they can be encouraged to do so through communication.

ECE programs should talk with parents about injury prevention and make all policies and procedures available to them. Parents can participate in problem-solving on safety issues informally, through discussion and more formally via safety committees that are sometimes set up in ECE programs. Other responsibilities of parents are:

- communicating with ECE program staff about any physical or other health issues affecting their child that could have an impact on the child's behaviour in the program; and,



- doing their part to uphold the policies and procedures, for example, providing their children with indoor footwear.
- Have there been any changes to the child's routine?
- What are the child's strengths and abilities?
- How can we build in these strengths to find a solution?

*"Providing a safe environment for children means paying attention to safety issues in the indoor and outdoor spaces they spend time in, as well as creating a positive, nurturing emotional environment."*

## WHAT CHILDREN NEED TO BE SAFE

Providing a safe environment for children means paying attention to safety issues in the indoor and outdoor spaces they spend time in, as well as creating a positive, nurturing emotional environment. The Injury Prevention Checklist provided in Appendix 7A is a tool that ECE programs can use to review their injury prevention measures to see if there are any gaps or areas that need improvement.

### **Safety Indoors**

Injury prevention indoors focuses on eliminating hazards in the environment and adopting procedures to help keep children safe. Inuit ECE programs have identified a number of indoor safety issues that are particularly important:

- children must be supervised at all times while indoors;

- adult to child ratios required by law in each province/territory must be upheld;
- 60 minutes of structured physical activity should be provided;
- children and staff must wear indoor shoes (or kamiks) to protect their feet and keep them from slipping and falling;
- tables and benches with sharp edges must be removed or made safer (with plastic piping for example);
- broken toys and other choking hazards must be removed (a device for measuring the choking hazard of toys and other items is available at: [www.wellpromo.com](http://www.wellpromo.com));
- electrical outlet child safety caps must be installed on all outlets;
- qulliq, candles and flashlights should be kept in a safe place for use in the event of a power outage;
- hot water temperature should be adjusted to avoid scalding;
- space heaters should not be used;
- heating sources should be child-proofed;
- rules for consistent hand-washing should be implemented to ensure that germs are not spread among children and staff; (see [www.pauktuutit.ca](http://www.pauktuutit.ca) for a Nunavik Regional Board of Health chart on infections in day cares);
- regular sanitizing of toys and play equipment should be carried out (see examples of ECE cleaning schedules on the Pauktuutit website: [www.pauktuutit.ca](http://www.pauktuutit.ca));
- staff are trained in first aid and a well-equipped first aid kit is available (see Appendix 7F for a list of contents);
- maintain awareness of boiled water orders in the community and provide bottled water when necessary;



- periodic fire drills must be carried out;
- controls are in place to verify individuals authorized to pick up and drop off children;
- clear policies and procedures are in place regarding who may visit the facility and for what purpose; and,
- policies and procedures are in place to deal with inappropriate behaviour by individuals visiting the facility.

### ***Safety Outdoors***

Structured outdoor activities are an integral part of ECE programs. When possible outdoor areas should be enclosed with fencing. Inuit ECE programs have identified other outdoor safety issues that are particularly important:

- children must be supervised at all times when they are outdoors;
- children need to be properly dressed for cold weather and outdoor activities should be avoided if the temperature is below 25 degrees Celsius;
- outdoor activity should be cancelled when there animal and/or weather advisories in effect;
- the use of sunglasses is recommended for outdoor activity to prevent snow blindness; and,

- sunscreen and hats are needed to protect kids from UV rays.

### ***Emotional Well-being***

Injury prevention involves not just the physical safety of children but their overall well-being, which includes their mental and emotional health. ECE programs must strive to care for children in ways that are nurturing and affirming. The Challenging Behaviour chapter of this document provides many practical ideas and approaches for dealing with conflict and other behavioural issues in ECE programs (see pages 75-101).

For Inuit, the preservation of their language and culture are integral to their well-being and this is certainly true for children in ECE programs. The Culture and Language Based Curriculum chapter of this document discusses how to ensure that ECE programs reflect and support Inuit culture and language, including many practical ideas and activities (see pages 47-63).

*“Children can also experience vicarious trauma resulting from witnessing violence experiencing the death or suicide of a family member, or other traumatic events.”*

Part of being a good caregiver involves being aware of the mental and emotional state of the children in your care. Child abuse is a serious threat to the health and safety of children. ECE staff spend a lot of time with children and are thus in a unique position to pick up on signs of distress. If ECE workers have concerns



about abuse affecting a child in their care they should speak to their program director about it. In turn, the director will speak with the parents, when required.

Children can also experience vicarious trauma resulting from witnessing violence experiencing the death or suicide of a family member, or other traumatic events. It is important that caregivers be aware of the signs and symptoms of distress and that they communicate with parents and their program director when concerns arise about a child's mental and emotional well-being.

### **ACTIVITIES FOR ECE SAFETY PROMOTION**

**Learning from Elders** – Elders in your community are sources of wisdom about injury prevention. Invite elders to the ECE program to meet with children and share their stories about living on the land in earlier days and their knowledge of safety issues. Integrating elders in programs benefits children and elders and is a simple approach for sharing traditional knowledge between generations.

**Have Fun Play Safe colouring book** – Provide children with pages from this colouring book (by Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami) to colour and talk with them

about the safety practices illustrated. The pages can also be sent home with the children to promote discussion with their families. The colouring book can be downloaded in PDF format: [www.itk.ca/sites/default/files/ITK\\_Colouring\\_Activity\\_book.pdf](http://www.itk.ca/sites/default/files/ITK_Colouring_Activity_book.pdf).

**Police partnerships** – Invite police officers in your community to meet the children and talk with them in an age-appropriate way about safety issues that they have observed in the community.

**Walks on the tundra** – in the spring when the tundra is coming alive again, take groups of children for walks to observe signs of growing life. This is especially helpful for boys who need plenty of physical activity. Structured activity for boys is an important dimension of quality ECE programming and should be addressed as it can contribute to greater safety in ECE programs.

## REPORTING INJURIES

Record-keeping about incidents where children are injured in ECE programs is important for a number of reasons. With record-keeping and tracking ECE programs can gain insights into the nature and causes of injuries taking place in their programs and identify concrete prevention measures. Changes may be needed to be made to the physical environment of the program or to the procedures, or sometimes both.

Inuit ECE programs may also benefit from sharing injury-related information within and across regions, and at the provincial/territorial level, again, with the purpose of strengthening their safety measures or advocating for changes at

*“All incidents resulting in injuries should be recorded and filed in a central file and in the child’s file, and parents should be informed.”*

the regulatory level to benefit children. Across regions for example, if a toy is found to repeatedly cause injuries in one location, other communities/regions may choose to remove that same toy from their program.

All incidents resulting in injuries should be recorded and filed in a central file and in the child’s file, and parents should be informed. Injury reports should be reviewed every three months by the program director. This will facilitate the identification of patterns occurring that may point to needed adjustments or to new prevention measures. For example, time of day, specific play equipment or staffing issues might emerge as risks that need to be addressed.

A sample injury report is provided in Appendix 7C. Additional sample injury reports from Nunavik and Nunatsiavut are available on the Pauktuutit website: [www.pauktuutit.ca/index.php/injury-prevention/publications-resources](http://www.pauktuutit.ca/index.php/injury-prevention/publications-resources).





## SAFETY FOR ECE PROGRAM STAFF

Adults who work in early ECE programs do face safety issues in their workplace. Among the most common are back injuries resulting from the repeated physical labour involved in picking up and carrying children. Regular exposure to the strong chemicals used for cleaning toys and equipment can also pose risks for staff safety. And staff are constantly exposed to the illnesses that children bring into the program.

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*“There are tools available from the federal government to guide ECE program staff in the safe use, storage and handling of hazardous cleaning products such as bleach.”*

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A few simple measures can reduce risks for staff, for example:

- Back safety – circulating simple instructions and reminding staff about how to safely pick children up to reduce the risk of back injuries.
- Protection from cleaning agents – wearing of rubber gloves when using cleaning agents and doing so in an open space to allow fumes to evaporate quickly.
- Reducing transfer of illnesses – sending sick children home, encouraging regular hand washing by staff and providing plenty of hand sanitizer in the workplace.

There are tools available from the federal government to guide ECE program staff in the safe use, storage and handling of hazardous cleaning products such as bleach. The Workplace Hazardous Material Information System (WHMIS) was developed to help Canadians interpret the national Hazardous Products Act and includes worker safety sheets and worker education programs. Find out who is trained in WHMIS in your community. More information can be found at the Health Canada website: [www.health.gc.ca/whims](http://www.health.gc.ca/whims).

Employees of ECE programs are also protected by provincial/territorial workplace health and safety regulations. ECE program directors and staff should be familiar with the regulations in effect in their area:

**Nunavut & Northwest Territories**  
Workers’ Safety & Compensation  
Commission (WSSC)  
[www.wcb.nt.ca](http://www.wcb.nt.ca)

**Quebec**  
Commission de la santé et de la sécurité  
au travail du Québec (CSST)  
[www.csst.qc.ca](http://www.csst.qc.ca)

**Newfoundland & Labrador**  
Occupational Health and Safety  
[www.gs.gov.nl.ca/ohs/](http://www.gs.gov.nl.ca/ohs/)

## PROVINCIAL/TERRITORIAL LAWS

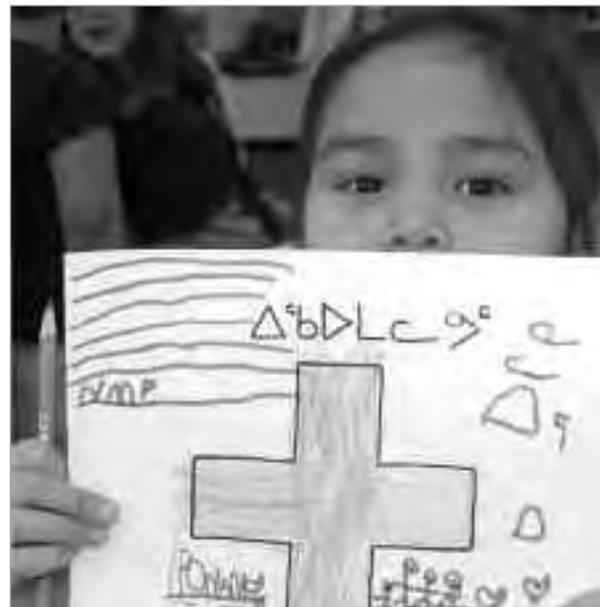
Each province and territory has passed a law or 'Act' to govern the licensing and operation of day cares. The purpose of these laws is to establish legally binding standards that protect the safety of children and day care operators as well. Day care operators are obliged to be familiar with and follow the day care law of their province/territory. Though the language used in these Acts is somewhat legalistic, with careful reading, they contain a lot of very helpful information and guidance about running a day care and in particular, injury prevention issues.

For example, the Child Day Care Act of Nunavut covers many important topics including:

- the definition of what a day care is and how these facilities can be licensed, and the competencies that staff must have;
- record-keeping that day cares must undertake (eg. keeping health information about the children on file);
- the physical requirements of a facility including the size of play spaces that are acceptable and the separation of sleeping and eating areas;
- requirements for furnishings and equipment;
- safety issues for outdoor activity areas;

- guidelines for programs (eg. that they should reflect the cultural backgrounds of the children);
- nutritional standards and guidelines for meal preparation;
- cleanliness standards;
- guidelines for supervision of children;
- parental involvement; and,
- handling hazards in the day care, and emergency procedures.

The laws governing the operations of day cares are available on the following government websites. They are updated on a regular basis so make sure you have the most recent one:





***Nunavut***

Nunavut Child Day Care Act

[www.justice.gov.nu.ca/apps/authoring/dspPage.aspx?page=CURRENT+CONSOLIDATIONS+OF+ACTS+AND+REGULATIONS&letter=C](http://www.justice.gov.nu.ca/apps/authoring/dspPage.aspx?page=CURRENT+CONSOLIDATIONS+OF+ACTS+AND+REGULATIONS&letter=C)

***Inuvialuit Settlement Region,  
Northwest Territories***

The Northwest Territories Child Day Care Act [http://www.justice.gov.nt.ca/PDF/REGS/CHILD\\_DAY\\_CARE/Child%20Day%20Care%20Standards.pdf](http://www.justice.gov.nt.ca/PDF/REGS/CHILD_DAY_CARE/Child%20Day%20Care%20Standards.pdf)

***Nunatsiavut, Newfoundland  
& Labrador***

Child Care Services Act

<http://assembly.nl.ca/Legislation/sr/statutes/c11-1.htm>

***Nunavik, Quebec***

An Act Respecting Childcare Centres and Childcare Services

[http://www2.publicationsduquebec.gouv.qc.ca/dynamicSearch/telecharge.php?type=2&file=/C\\_8\\_2/C8\\_2\\_A.html](http://www2.publicationsduquebec.gouv.qc.ca/dynamicSearch/telecharge.php?type=2&file=/C_8_2/C8_2_A.html)



## Resources

### Websites:

#### **[www.csa.ca](http://www.csa.ca)**

The Canadian Standards Association publishes standard requirements for play spaces and play equipment intended for use by children aged 18 months to 12 years. The latest edition of the standards was published in 2007 and is titled, *Children's Playspaces and Equipment*.

#### **[www.cps.ca](http://www.cps.ca)**

The Canadian Paediatric Society (CPS) publishes *Well Beings*, the definitive guide to child care in Canada. First published in 1992, the 2008 updated version provides the latest new information, evidence and best practices in child care. It is packed with useful forms, checklists, tools and resources. *Well Beings* can be purchased at the CPS website.

#### **[www.caphc.org/programs\\_injury.html](http://www.caphc.org/programs_injury.html)**

This link will take you to the injury prevention page of the Canadian Association of Paediatric Health Centres. Their mandate is to support member and partner organizations through education, research, and quality improvement initiatives to promote health service delivery for Canadian children and youth. Recent projects featured on the injury prevention page include keeping kids safe in cars and the developmental outcomes associated with the use of physical punishment.

#### **[www.redcross.ca](http://www.redcross.ca)**

The Canadian Red Cross offers first aid programs for children and adults of

varying levels of skills and interest. The ChildSafe course helps parents and caregivers learn basic first aid and safety knowledge such as creating a safe environment for children, preventing injuries, and knowing what to do in an emergency.

#### **[www.ccsc-cssge.ca](http://www.ccsc-cssge.ca)**

As part of its Occupational Standards for Early Childhood Educators project, the Child Care Human Resources Sector Council has prepared a series of videos that can be viewed online. The videos feature presentations on how to use occupational standards for ECEs and training gaps analysis.

#### **[www.hc-sc.gc.ca/cps-spc/pubs/indust/toys-jouets/index-eng.php](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/cps-spc/pubs/indust/toys-jouets/index-eng.php)**

The 2006 *Industry Guide to Canadian Safety Requirements for Children's Toys and Related Products* covers a range of important topics for ECE programs.

#### **[www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fniah-spnia/pubs/famil/\\_develop/2003\\_ahs-papa-ref-guide/index-eng.php](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fniah-spnia/pubs/famil/_develop/2003_ahs-papa-ref-guide/index-eng.php)**

This link is for the *Standards Guide for First Nations Head-Start Programs*, Health Canada. It provides standards that are very relevant for early childhood education programs in the north, covering all aspects of service delivery including program services, education services, facilities, human resources, administration and nutrition.



**[www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fniah-spnia/promotion/injury-bless/index-eng.php](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fniah-spnia/promotion/injury-bless/index-eng.php)**

This link is for the injury prevention page of First Nations, Inuit and Aboriginal Health, of Health Canada. Here you can find links to injury prevention regional offices and obtain information about unintentional injuries.

**[www.pauktuutit.ca/index.php/injury-prevention/publications-resources](http://www.pauktuutit.ca/index.php/injury-prevention/publications-resources)**

Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada is actively working to promote injury prevention awareness and strategies among Inuit. Check out the injury prevention pages of their website to learn about their priorities and activities.

**[www.pauktuutit.ca/index.php/injury-prevention/publications-resources](http://www.pauktuutit.ca/index.php/injury-prevention/publications-resources)**

Journey to the Teachings is an injury prevention training manual developed by the First Nations and Inuit Health Branch of Health Canada incorporating traditional knowledge, First Nations and Inuit perspectives. The package includes a facilitator manual and guide, slides, hand-outs, activity sheets, regional data in injury, and certificates of completion. The target audiences for the training are workshop facilitators and community practitioners/service providers working in First Nations and Inuit communities.

**[www.safecommunitiescanada.ca](http://www.safecommunitiescanada.ca)**

Safe Communities Canada is a national charitable organization dedicated to helping communities across the country build the capacity and resources they will need to promote safety for their citizens.

**[www.safekidscanada.ca](http://www.safekidscanada.ca)**

Safe Kids Canada is the national injury prevention program of Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children. The program works to help keep children safe by providing information on how to prevent injuries. The web site includes excellent fact sheets on safety prevention tips for infants and young children under the age of five.

**[www.smartrisk.ca](http://www.smartrisk.ca)**

SMARTRISK is a national charity dedicated to preventing injuries and saving lives, by helping Canadians to see and manage the risks in their lives. Their main focus is youth, the age group at peak risk for injury.

**[www.thinkfirst.ca](http://www.thinkfirst.ca)**

ThinkFirst is a national non-profit organization dedicated to the prevention of brain and spinal cord injuries. ThinkFirst teaches school-aged children and youth, sports teams, and community volunteers, to safely participate in the activities they enjoy.



## Appendix 7A:<sup>88</sup> Injury Prevention Checklist

**Note:** This checklist covers recommended safety measures and may be adapted to reflect legislation in each province/territory. An “Initial Inspection Check List” from Nunatsiavut is available at: [www.pauktuutit.ca/index.php/injury-prevention/publications-resources](http://www.pauktuutit.ca/index.php/injury-prevention/publications-resources).

Injury Prevention Checklist				
Indoors	OK	Action required		
		Please specify	Assigned to	Date completed
<b>Fire</b>				
• Smoke detectors are installed in all rooms.				
• Smoke detectors are checked regularly & batteries are changed every 6 months.				
• A fire extinguisher is in place, checked regularly & staff are trained.				
• Fire exits are clear.				
• Full fire drills are held every six months.				
• Monthly “up to the door” drills are held.				
• Weekly practice fire drills are held for the first month of start-up (for new kids).				
• A fire evacuation plan is in place.				
<b>Emergency Plan</b>				
• An emergency preparedness plan is in place & is coordinated with community-wide emergency plans.				
<b>First Aid</b>				
• All staff are trained in first aid.				
• Program has a first aid kit & the contents are checked regularly.				

# Appendix 7A:<sup>88</sup> continued

## Injury Prevention Checklist

Injury Prevention Checklist				
Indoors	OK	Action required		
		Please specify	Assigned to	Date completed
<b>Drinking Water</b> • Safety of drinking water is checked regularly.				
• Alternative water sources are obtained when necessary.				
<b>Clothing</b> • Children & staff are required to wear indoor shoes or kamiks.				
• A spare change of clothes for each child is kept at the day care.				
<b>Furniture</b> • Furniture is kept in good condition or repaired to be used for its original purpose.				
• Furniture is free of sharp edges, splinters, pinch & crunch points.				
• Rugs are secured with slip-proof under-carpeting.				
• Heavy objects are stored on lower shelves.				
<b>Windows</b> • Cords & window coverings are kept out of children's reach.				
<b>Hazardous Materials</b> • Toxic materials & cleaning products are in containers and out of reach for children.				
• Ceilings & walls are free of cracked or broken plaster & peeling or chipped paint.				
<b>Hallways &amp; Stairways</b> • Clear of toys, boxes or other items that may cause tripping.				
<b>Gates &amp; Doors</b> • Areas where children are not permitted are closed off with secure doors or safety gates.				

# Appendix 7A:<sup>88</sup> continued

## Injury Prevention Checklist

Injury Prevention Checklist				
Indoors	OK	Action required		
		Please specify	Assigned to	Date completed
<p><b>Gates &amp; Doors</b> cont'd</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finger guards are installed to protect children's fingers from being pinched in doors.</li> </ul> <p><b>Note:</b> information about these guards can be found at:  <a href="http://abiggyboom.com/francais/Catalogue3.html">http://abiggyboom.com/francais/Catalogue3.html</a></p>				
<p><b>Wiring, Electrical Plugs &amp; Appliances</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Safety caps cover electric plug outlets.</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Small electrical appliances are well away from sinks or tubs.</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Electrical fans are out of children's reach.</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Space heaters are not being used.</li> </ul>				
<p><b>Toys</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Toys are in good condition &amp; free of sharp edges, pinch points, splinters or broken parts.</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Toys are regularly cleaned &amp; disinfected.</li> </ul> <p><b>Note:</b> sample cleaning &amp; sanitizing checklists are available at:  <a href="http://www.pauktuutit.ca/index.php/injury-prevention/publications-resources">www.pauktuutit.ca/index.php/injury-prevention/publications-resources</a>.</p>				
<p><b>Kitchen</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Poisonous materials are stored in child-proofed cupboards.</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scissors, knives &amp; other sharp items are out of children's reach.</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plastic bags are not accessible to children.</li> </ul>				
<p><b>Sleeping</b></p> <p><b>Note:</b> may not apply to all centers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cribs are in good condition with no loose or missing slats.</li> </ul>				

# Appendix 7A:<sup>88</sup> continued

## Injury Prevention Checklist

Injury Prevention Checklist				
Indoors	OK	Action required		
		Please specify	Assigned to	Date completed
<b>Sleeping</b> cont'd <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cribs, beds &amp; mats are located away from windows &amp; blind cords.</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cribs have less than 1" (2.5cm) gap between mattress &amp; crib side.</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bumper pads are free of cuts or breaks.</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bumper pads &amp; large toys are removed from cribs of infants who can stand.</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vinyl pads &amp; rail covers for playpens are free of cuts or breaks.</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Soother cords are removed if children are sleeping with a soother.</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evacuation cribs are in place (one crib per 5 children that use a crib).</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weekly washing of sleeping mats &amp; bedding.</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mats are stored separately to avoid cross-contamination.</li> </ul> <p><b>Note:</b> for evacuation crib info: <a href="http://www.wintergreen.ca">www.wintergreen.ca</a>.</p>				
<b>Activity/Play Areas</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Equipment is free of loose parts – bolts, nails or splinters sticking out.</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Structures higher than 2' (60cm) have mats under &amp; around them.</li> </ul>				
<b>Bathrooms</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Platforms or stools used at hand basins are stable &amp; slip-proof.</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Toxic materials &amp; cleaning products are not accessible to kids.</li> </ul>				

# Appendix 7A:<sup>88</sup> continued

## Injury Prevention Checklist

Injury Prevention Checklist				
Indoors	OK	Action required		
		Please specify	Assigned to	Date completed
<b>Bathrooms</b> cont'd • Hot water temperature is adjusted to a safe level for infants/toddlers.				
• Children are supervised when using the bathroom.				
• Child toilet seats are used (no potties).				
<b>Security</b> • Policies are in place about who may enter the facility, for what reasons & to deal with inappropriate behaviour by visitors.				

# Appendix 7A:<sup>88</sup> continued

## Injury Prevention Checklist

**Note:** Outdoor activity once a day is recommended (weather-permitting). Additional outdoor checklists: “Daily Visual Inspection of Outdoor Play Area” and “Seasonal Maintenance and Repair Checklist”, from Nunatsiavut, are available at: [www.pauktuutit.ca/index.php/injury-prevention/publications-resources](http://www.pauktuutit.ca/index.php/injury-prevention/publications-resources).

Injury Prevention Checklist				
Outdoors	OK	Action required		
		Please specify	Assigned to	Date completed
<b>Entries &amp; Exits</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fences &amp; gates are stable &amp; free of nails, nuts/bolts sticking out.</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Walkways and steps are shoveled and salted (or other slip-proofing).</li> </ul>				
<b>Equipment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Climbing structures, slides &amp; swings are stable.</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rungs, rails &amp; steps are free of splinters or sharp edges.</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Swing hangers, chairs &amp; seats are in good condition.</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Equipment parts are not broken, worn, cracked, rusted or missing.</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nuts, bolts &amp; screws are tight, recessed and/or covered with plastic caps.</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ropes, chains &amp; cables are in good condition.</li> </ul>				
<b>Outdoor Surfaces</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Surfaces under swings &amp; play structures are shock absorbing.</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Loose materials on the ground are raked &amp; there are no holes or bare spots.</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Play area is free of garbage, glass, sharp objects &amp; animal droppings.</li> </ul>				
<p><b>Note:</b> a daily visual inspection grid used in Nunavik is available at: <a href="http://www.pauktuutit.ca/index.php/injury-prevention/publications-resources">www.pauktuutit.ca/index.php/injury-prevention/publications-resources</a></p>				

# Appendix 7A:<sup>88</sup> continued

## Injury Prevention Checklist

Injury Prevention Checklist				
Outdoors	OK	Action required		
		Please specify	Assigned to	Date completed
<p><b>Transportation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When children are transported by Qamuti an adult is always present in the Qamuti.</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children wear helmets when being transported by Qamuti (as per provincial/territorial regulations).</li> </ul> <p><b>Note:</b> guidelines from Nunatsiavut on skidoo &amp; Qamuti transport are available at: <a href="http://www.pauktuutit.ca/index.php/injury-prevention/publications-resources">www.pauktuutit.ca/index.php/injury-prevention/publications-resources</a></p>				
<p><b>Weather</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children are dressed appropriately for outdoor activity (hot or cold).</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outdoor activity is not permitted when the temperature (with wind chill) goes below -25°C.</li> </ul> <p><b>Note:</b> heat index and wind-chill factor charts for ECE programs are available at: <a href="http://www.pauktuutit.ca/index.php/injury-prevention/publications-resources/">www.pauktuutit.ca/index.php/injury-prevention/publications-resources/</a></p>				
<p><b>Sun</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sunscreen is used to protect children's skin.</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For sun protection children wear hats &amp; sunglasses (especially in winter to prevent snow blindness).</li> </ul>				
<p><b>Security</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Measures (such as fencing) are in place to keep children safe from unwelcome visitors during outdoor activity.</li> </ul>				

Appendix 7A:<sup>88</sup> continued

# Injury Prevention Checklist

Injury Prevention Checklist				
Outdoors	OK	Action required		
		Please specify	Assigned to	Date completed
<b>Garbage</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Garbage bins are put away from outdoor activity areas so that children won't hit their heads.</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Garbage is safely enclosed inside bins or bags so that it isn't accessible to animals.</li> </ul>				



## Appendix 7B: Nunavik Childcare Centre – Nutrition Policy

- Children will receive breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack.
- The improved 4 week menu to prevent iron deficiency anemia will be used at all childcare centers. Any changes to the menu must be verified with KRG Childcare Consultant and approved by the Board of Directors of the daycare.
- Country foods will be served at least 3 meals a week except in cases where there is a lack of availability.
- Children with allergies or special diets must provide a written note from their doctor.
- In the case where a child has a nut allergy, nuts will be forbidden in that daycare.
- Menus for children on prescribed special diets will be dealt with individually, as the need arises. For example, a child with a diagnosis of a fish allergy will not be served any fish, products containing fish or fish oils. A special menu will be developed for this child.
- Children are not permitted to bring juice or other foods from their home to daycare.
- No juice will be served between meals. Water will be offered to children when they are thirsty.
- Babies 18 months of age and older, are not allowed bottles in daycare. Sippy cup are not allowed at the nap time.
- If juices are to be served with meals, they must be unsweetened (no sugar added), and the quantity is not to exceed ½ cup of juice per meal.
- Pacifiers, bottle nipples or chewing toys must not be dipped in sugar, honey or jam.
- Carnation milk will not be served in daycare.
- Sugary cereals like Fruit Loops, Lucky Charms, will not be served in daycare.
- Soft drinks (ie. Coke, Pepsi, 7-Up, Sprite, etc) will not be served in daycare.
- Kool-Aid, Crystal Light, Tang and other fruit drink crystals will not be served in daycare.
- Infants aged 1 year old and less should not be given cow's milk. Only iron-enriched infant formula or breast milk should be used.
- 1% or skim milk will not be served at daycare.



# Appendix 7C:<sup>89</sup> Sample Injury/Incident Report Page 1

Child's name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of injury: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Parents notified: Y  N  Time: \_\_\_\_\_

When was the facility director (if applicable) notified of the injury?

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) of the staff on site at the time: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) of the staff who witnessed the injury: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Where did the injury occur? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What was the staff-to-child ration when the injury occurred? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Describe the injury (type/extent). If appropriate, use drawings to indicate where the injury was located on the child's body: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Describe how the injury occurred (include sequence of events, the child's behaviour or actions, who was there, group size and age mix, where staff were located and action taken). \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

If toys, play equipment or the physical environment (such as stairs, windows) were involved, describe how: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



# Appendix 7C:<sup>89</sup> continued

## Sample Injury/Incident Report

### Page 2

Was first aid administered? Y  N

What was done and by who? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Was further action taken (eg. child taken to hospital, taken home)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Doctor's contact information, if one was consulted: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

If the child remained at the facility, what was the child's level of participation? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Other comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What corrective action should be taken to prevent further injuries of this type? Consider:

- the type or level of supervision;
- the need for additional staff training;
- the repair, replacement or elimination of equipment or toys;
- the reorganization of space or furniture; and,
- the reinforcement of rules or limits.

Signature or reporting child care practitioner: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of facility director or co-worker: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of parent/guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix 7D:<sup>90</sup> Consent Form – Emergency Care and Transportation

Note: This form may be included in the program's registration package.

Name of child: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

If, at any time, due to such circumstances as an injury or sudden illness, medical treatment is necessary, I authorize the child care staff to take whatever emergency measures they deem necessary for the protection of my child while in their care.

I understand that this may involve contacting a doctor, interpreting and carrying out his or her instructions, and transporting my child to a hospital or nursing station, including the possible use of a vehicle, Qamuti, or ambulance to get there.

I understand that this may be done prior to contacting me, and that any expense incurred for such treatment, including ambulance fees, is my responsibility.

Parent's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Centre director's signature: \_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix 7E: Checklist for Taking Children on the Land

Complete these questions as you look critically at the environment in your room.

- appropriate seasonal clothing for everyone including clothing for warmth, wind-proofing, rain and sun protection
- comprehensive first aid kit
- emergency drinking water and food supplies
- emergency shelter such as a tent, or tools for building a shelter
- emergency kit (tarps, rope, knife, gas stove, matches, flares)
- a fire arm
- travel plans and estimated return date/time have been left with appropriate authority
- knowledge of current and forecasted weather conditions
- knowledge of current ice conditions
- compass/GPS
- electronic communication device (walkie-talkie, cell phone, SAT phone)



## Appendix 7F: Checklist – First Aid Kit Contents

Note: A list of first aid items should be posted in the first aid box.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> first aid manual  | <input type="checkbox"/> triangular bandages                                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 pair of bandage scissors  | <input type="checkbox"/> individually wrapped sterile bandage compresses       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 pair tweezers for splinters   | <input type="checkbox"/> roll of hypoallergenic adhesive tape (25mm by 9m)     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 pair of disposable gloves   | <input type="checkbox"/> individually wrapped antiseptic swabs                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> a disposable device used for cardiopulmonary resuscitation              | <input type="checkbox"/> sterile adhesive bandages of various shapes and sizes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> individually wrapped sterile adhesive bandages (25mm x 75mm)            | <input type="checkbox"/> eye bandages  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> sterile gauze compresses (102mm x 102mm)                                | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 rectal thermometer                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> rolls of sterile gauze bandages (4 rolls-50mm x 9m, 4 rolls-102mm x 9m) | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 oral thermometer                                    |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> alcohol swabs   |



## Endnotes

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