

FNREEES: DID YOU KNOW?



The FNREEES Did You Know? series feature data from the First Nations Regional Early Childhood, Education and Employment Survey (FNREEES). Providing an unprecedented perspective on life in First Nations communities, the FNREEES helps fill data gaps in the areas of early childhood education and development, youth employment and education, and adult employment and labour force conditions.

This series brings FNREEES national findings to bear on pressing policy questions in areas the survey addresses. Its purpose is to help ensure that the collective views and experiences of First Nations people, as expressed in the FNREEES, point the way to positive change.

What do First Nations people value most? The answer to this question is crucial and could potentially promote positive change in First Nations communities by giving direction to policy- and decision-makers. The task takes on even more significance as First Nations shape their individual and collective futures emerging from the legacy of the Indian Residential School system.

The FNREEES, which was conducted by First Nations for First Nations, provides an unprecedented, holistic view of what First Nations people regard as important in their child-rearing, learning and work paths. Results from the FNREEES make it clear that First Nations people on reserve and in northern communities value their families and communities as sources of care, support and meaning.

The Importance of Family

FNREEES results suggest that the majority of First Nations people prefer to raise their children at home, within their family. Key findings from the child section of the survey indicate:

- Most First Nations children were cared for by their biological parents, grandparents or great-grandparents in their own homes. Slightly more than 1 in 5 (21 percent) of children aged 0 to 11 years were cared for outside the home.
- When primary caregivers of First Nations children who did not attend regular child care were asked why they did not, 84 percent identified that it was not needed.
- When asked where their children were cared for, 43 percent of primary caregivers indicated in their own home with a relative. 14 percent of caregivers indicated that their children received care in someone else's home with a relative.
- When asked about sources of parenting support, the source primary care givers cited most frequently (94 percent) was family and friends.
- Less than one fifth (19 percent) of First Nation children who had not been in the care of their parents or guardians since birth were in foster care.

The FNREEES also demonstrates the importance of family support for formal schooling in the transitional years of youth. The section surveying 12- to 17-year-old youth found:

- A large majority (88 percent) of First Nations youth believed it was very important to their mothers (or female guardians) that they graduate from high school; 81 percent said it was very important to their fathers (or male guardians).
- First Nations youth reported that their parents, guardians, or family members had:
 - spoken to, corresponded with or visited their teachers (75 percent)



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- attended a school event such as a play, cultural event, sports competition or science fair (70 percent)
- talked to them about how they were doing in school several times per week (34 percent) or per month (23 percent)
- helped youth with their homework when they needed it either all (20 percent) or most (29 percent) of the time.

These findings highlight the reality that the majority of First Nation parents and families value and promote the success of their children in school.

Analysis of the FNREEES also found significant links between the happiness of youth at school and parental involvement in their child's schooling.

The Importance of Community

According to the FNREEES, a large proportion of First Nations youth and adults value their communities by actively giving back to them: a high percentage of First Nations youth volunteer without pay in their community. More than 2 in 5 (41 percent) of First Nations youth surveyed by the FNREEES said they had volunteered in their community in the previous year (time commitments range from three times in the past year to once a week).

Further evidence of the importance of community can be seen in the adults surveyed by the FNREEES. More than three-quarters (78%) of working First Nations adults reported that their main job was on-reserve or in northern First Nations communities. When asked why they chose to work in a First Nations community, the most common reasons related to family and community. Nearly 1 in 3 (29 percent) said they worked within a First Nations community to be close to family. Nearly 1 in 4 (23 percent) said they did so to "give back to the community."

Main reasons for choosing to work within a First Nations community among First Nations Adults (18+)

	%	95% CI
To be close to family	29.4	[26.9, 32.1]
To give back to the community	22.9	[20.5, 25.5]
Financial reasons	17.6	[15.2, 20.3]
To build capacity in my community/ Support community development	14.8	[12.2, 17.8]
To stay connected to my culture, language, and traditions	8.7	[7.3, 10.3]
To create opportunities for others	3.7	[2.7, 5.0]
Other (write-in response)	2.9	[2.1, 3.9]
Total	100	[-]

Conclusions

Despite the devastating legacies of colonization, Indigenous people are deeply resilient. First Nations families and communities are vital elements of that resilience, and promise to be in the future as well.

The FNREEES findings illustrate the deeply rooted family and community values of First Nations respondents. The findings also suggest a need to invest in strong, healthy First Nations families and communities as the appropriate structures of care and support for First Nations children, youth young adults.

For more information about the FNREEES & FNIGC, please visit FNIGC.ca