

FNREEES: Did You Know?



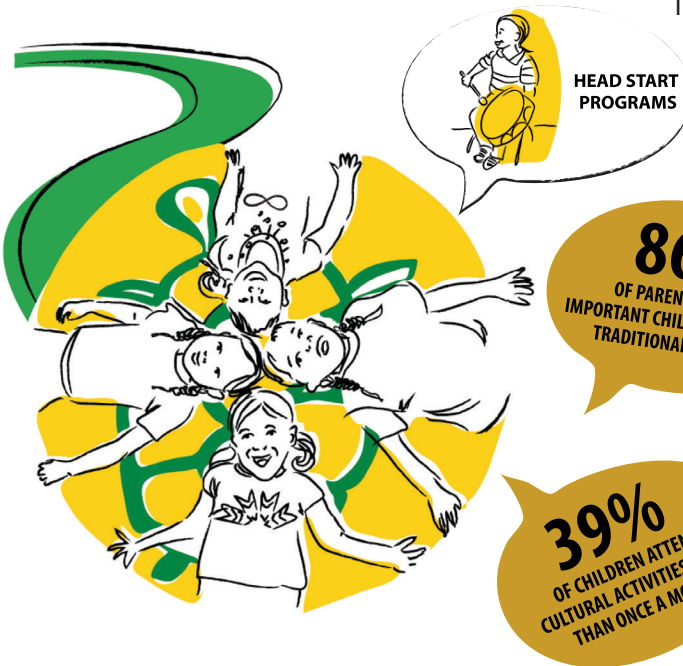
FNIGC | CGIPN
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The FNREEES Did You Know? feature data from the First Nations Regional Early Childhood, Education and Employment Survey (FNREEES). Providing an unprecedented perspective on life in First Nations communities, the FNREEES helps fill data 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.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION: What Are First Nations Families, Communities, Schools and Programs Contributing?



In its final report, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) called on federal, provincial, territorial and Aboriginal governments to develop culturally appropriate early childhood education programs.

The report states that such programs could help address the legacy of residential schools and promote reconciliation.

86%
OF PARENTS SAY IT IS
IMPORTANT CHILD LEARNS ABOUT
TRADITIONAL TEACHINGS

39%
OF CHILDREN ATTEND
CULTURAL ACTIVITIES MORE
THAN ONCE A MONTH

Preliminary national level data from the First Nations Regional Early Childhood, Education and Employment Survey (FNREEES) suggest that First Nations families, communities, and programs transmit vital cultural knowledge. Even without programs the TRC rightly calls for, the FNREEES shows that First Nations families, communities and programs are doing their part to provide culturally-appropriate early education.

Childhood Education Begins at Home

According to the FNREEES, parents and communities are the main source of children's cultural education. The majority (86%) of First Nations parents and guardians said it was either very important or somewhat important for their children to learn about the traditional teachings of their people. The FNREEES also found that 2 in 5 (39%) First Nations children attended cultural activities (including drumming, singing, storytelling, or powwows) more than once a month.

Beyond their support for traditional teachings and cultural activities, family and community are also the primary source of exposure to First Nations languages. More than one-third (35%) of First Nations children were exposed to a First Nations language at home all or most of the time. And more than one-quarter (28%) were exposed to a First Nations language in their community all or most of the time.

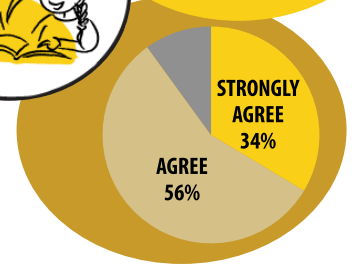


Schools and Head Start Programs

The same might be said for schools. Though many parents regretted the lack of First Nations language training in the classroom, the FNREEES found that most First Nations parents were pleased with the cultural supports their children received. When asked if their child's school supported First Nations culture through teaching or other activities, the majority of parents (90%) either agreed or strongly agreed.



CHILD'S SCHOOL IS SUPPORTIVE OF FIRST NATIONS CULTURE
90%



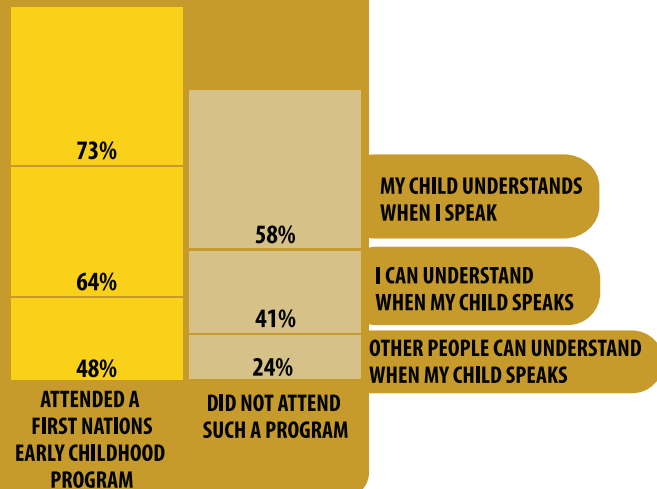
For pre-school aged children, the FNREEES suggests that an education program designed and delivered by communities in a culturally appropriate way has positive effects on early childhood development. As the graph below illustrates, First Nations parents whose children attend an early childhood program designed for First Nations (such as the Aboriginal Head Start On-Reserve Program) reported that their children are reaching communication milestones at higher rates than parents whose children did not attend such programs.

Successes in Cultural Education

The report from the TRC makes it clear that much work remains to be done to ensure that First Nations children receive culturally appropriate early childhood education. Yet the FNREEES data suggest that First Nations communities and other governments need not start from scratch. First Nations people, communities, programs and education institutions are already transmitting vital cultural knowledge to the next generation. This is a finding to note—and celebrate.



COMMUNICATIONS MILESTONES



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