



Health  
Canada

Santé  
Canada

*Your health and  
safety... our priority.*

# Aboriginal Head Start On Reserve Program



Canada



## Getting a Head Start in Life!

The Aboriginal Head Start On Reserve Program nurtures the healthy growth and development of First Nation children. With programming designed and delivered by communities, the Aboriginal Head Start Program supports the physical, developmental, emotional, social, cultural, and spiritual well-being of children from birth to age six.

Children in the Aboriginal Head Start Program gain:

- opportunities to develop self-confidence
- a greater desire for learning
- an excellent start in their journey towards becoming successful young people

***“...the Head Start Program is really important because the first few years of a child’s life are just so important to their future development... it’s like the foundation for their future.”***

*Deborah Terrance, Associate Director,  
Akwesasne Mohawk Board of Education.*

Nutrition    Health Promotion    Parental Involvement  
Education    Social Support    Culture and Language



Children in the Aboriginal Head Start Program take part in fun and educational activities.

These activities are built around:

- culture and language
- education
- health promotion
- nutrition
- social support
- parental involvement

***“They come home from school... they’ll be singing their language... they’re excited actually, to go to school... that’s what I like about the program.”***

*Susan Head, Parent.*

## **Learning and Having Fun...**

Children in the Aboriginal Head Start On Reserve Program have lots of opportunities to learn and play. The Program offers activities based on the needs and interests of the community, and children may learn such things as the days of the week, numbers, colours and shapes in their First Nation language.

Education   Social Support   Culture and Language  
Nutrition   Health Promotion   Parental Involvement



## Celebrating a Way of Life...

When children join the Aboriginal Head Start Program the whole family and community benefits!

Through songs, stories and games in their First Nation language, children can connect with their culture. Drummers, traditional dancers, story tellers and Elders from the community may drop by to share their knowledge and teachings.

***“If the children understand their culture, then they understand themselves.”***

*Mindy Sinclair, Early Childhood Education Coordinator, Peguis First Nation.*

Children may learn how to make healthy food choices through snack programs or they may go on field trips with staff, parents and other family members. Some programs hold Family Days or other special events like community feasts, gatherings and open houses and invite families and community groups to participate.

The Aboriginal Head Start Program may also offer various workshops for parents, as well as home visits and other activities to encourage parents and families to be involved in the program regularly.



## Parents, Family, and Community Are Important!

*“Any time one raises a child you learn everyday... the learning process never stops and that’s the most amazing part of being a foster parent and parent...is that you never stop learning... you think you’re teaching... but you learn too...”*

*Alan Knockwood, Parent/Foster Parent,  
Indian Brook First Nation.*

Parents, guardians and other family members are the most important teachers in a child’s life. The Aboriginal Head Start On Reserve Program knows this and provides support. It helps parents and other caregivers learn and improve skills that contribute to healthy child development. It also works with families to help strengthen family relationships.

The Aboriginal Head Start Program encourages parents, families and community members to play a key role in running the Program. It also builds relationships with other community programs and services so that children get the best care.



## How to Get Involved...

Local management is a key to the Aboriginal Head Start On Reserve Program's success in meeting the needs of children.

If you're a parent or guardian of pre-school aged children or would like to volunteer to help with your local Program, contact your local Aboriginal Head Start On Reserve Program.

For more information on the Program, contact First Nations and Inuit Health through **1 800 O-Canada (1-800-622-6232)** and ask for the Aboriginal Head Start On Reserve Program regional contact in your region or visit the Program's website at: [http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fniah-spnia/famil/develop/ahsor-papa\\_intro-eng.php](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fniah-spnia/famil/develop/ahsor-papa_intro-eng.php)

*"...you can see that on the children's faces... you can see it on the parents' faces... that this program does work, that it is a success."*

*Vivian Scott, Cross Lake First Nation Aboriginal Head Start On Reserve and Recipient of the Prime Minister's Aboriginal Educator Award.*

© Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada, represented by the Minister of Health, 2010

HC Pub.: 3571 | Cat.: H34-198/2010E | ISBN: 978-1-100-11075-2

Nutrition Health Promotion Parental Involvement  
Education Social Support Culture and Language