Learning, Growing and Leading 2012

A summary of research conducted to investigate philosophical frameworks and management structures to guide the development of Aboriginal Early Childhood Development programs and services.

Tillicum Lelum Aboriginal Friendship Centre and Vancouver Island University
Aboriginal Early Childhood Development
Linda McDonell and Danielle Alphonse
Sumshathut for the People is an art design that illustrates the importance of that which each professional carries with him/herself. That is, the spiritual self and the values that guide his/her thoughts, attitudes and actions. The words of the graphic remind one to reflect about the importance of maintaining balance in nurturing and supporting children, families, and community. The sun is sacred to First Nation people. The intent of the graphic is to show the connection to (and between) all First Nation people. Sumshathut for the People is a modern day design bridging the old to the present day. The sun represents warmth and growth needed as one develops oneself on the path to help others and community. Inside Sumshathut are the core beliefs that guide everyday practice. These beliefs help us remember the importance of our spiritual self and to hold in our heart the importance of Elders, traditional knowledge and the language of the community. Sun rays radiate the values encouraging us to support families and children with a strong focus on respect, holism, integrity, innovation, culture and relationship. The rays illuminate the importance of professional practice that is family centered, community driven, strength based, culturally focused, collaborative and ethical.

I acknowledge the Snuneymux’w people; those in other First Nation communities in the Vancouver Island region; Aboriginal organizations and agencies who participated in this research; and the families of Tillicum Lelum Aboriginal Friendship Centre who were such an important part of this research by answering some important questions about how we can enhance our professional work with children and families.

As well, thank-you to the Tillicum Lelum Child Care Advisory group whose words inspired this art design.

Danielle Alphonse/Qwul’stunä’wat

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BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres

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List of Abbreviations

AECD – Aboriginal Early Childhood Development
BC ACCS – BC Aboriginal Child Care Society
BCRIC – BC Regional Innovation Chair for Aboriginal Early Childhood Development
CCRR – Child Care Resource and Referral
ECCD – Early Childhood Care and Development
ECD – Early Childhood Development
FNPP - First Nations Partnership Program
HCZ – Harlem Children’s Zone
IECER – Institute for Early Childhood Education and Research
MA- Master’s
MCFD – Ministry of Child and Family Development
NCCAH – National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health
REB – Research Ethics Board
TRUCE – The Renaissance University for Continuing Education
UBC – University of British Columbia
VIU - Vancouver Island University

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Glossary

Aboriginal - is a term used that includes all the First Peoples in Canada: First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people.

Community-Based - programs and services that are community based are those that are located and delivered in the community.

Community-Responsive – programs and services that are community-responsive are those that respond to the needs and interests expressed by the people living and accessing services in that community.

Cultural Integrity – a program or service that has cultural integrity is one that observes the values and cultural protocols relevant geographic location and community within which the program or service is delivered.

Cultural teachings – reflect the traditional knowledge and lessons related to culture.

First Nations - First Nations people are those who identify as members of a specific territory or Nation such as in this region: Snuneymux’w, Stzu’minus, Cowichan, Halalt, Penelukut, to name only a few.

Holistic – a way of describing development that considers the whole child - physically, socially, cognitively, emotionally, spiritually, and culturally. Holistic development, programs and services suggest that we cannot view the child without considering the context of the child’s life, in particular his/her family and community.

HUB – an Early Childhood HUB provides coordinated and often centralized programs and services that support children and families and strengthen communities through inter-sectoral partnerships.

Indigenous - is a term used to include all First Peoples in Canada: First Nations, Métis, and Inuit.

Mainstream - is a term used to reflect the dominant culture of a society as well as ideas, activities, and occurences associated with that society.

Post-Modernist approaches – are those approaches that argue the modernist concepts of objectivity and consider how power and hierarchy influence how we understand our world. Post modernists encourage us to use theoretical frameworks such as constructivism to reconceptualise our thinking and approaches.

Re-Conceptualist approaches- the re-conceptualist discourse challenges what we have come to believe are the ‘scientific truths’ of early childhood. Re-conceptualists encourage us to rethink those truths - to reject the idea of there being one way to think about and/or define such things as quality.

Values – are those things we hold as important and that guide us to think and act in certain ways.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the late Spring 2011, Tillicum Lelum Aboriginal Friendship Centre (Tillicum Lelum) approached the Aboriginal Early Childhood Development (AECD) Regional Innovation Chair at Vancouver Island University (VIU) to propose the two organizations work together on a project that would examine current research and trends in AECD related to two specific areas. Tillicum Lelum and VIU agreed to undertake a collaborative project that would incorporate the following goals:

1. Developing a **collaborative, community-based model** on which to build culturally relevant AECD programs and services at Tillicum Lelum (in partnership with Vancouver Island University and other organizations and agencies).

2. Identifying a **culturally relevant, holistic, philosophical framework** for AECD programs and services that appropriately reflect the values of Tillicum Lelum and the community they serve.

The research and information gathering process included the following:

- A literature review of unique management models in AECD and of current trends in theoretical frameworks that guide service delivery for young children and their families.
- A survey of managers of selected AECD services/programs in the Vancouver Island region and other areas of BC to explore unique management models of service delivery and the values and ideals that guide those programs.
- A focus group discussion that explores the needs of the Tillicum Lelum community members such as Elders, parents and extended family, caregivers, and others. Participants share ideas about types of services needed for children and their families and the features of good quality AECD services.
- After the information gathering process, recommendations are proposed regarding options for the management and philosophical framework that will guide Tillicum Lelum’s AECD work at their new facility.

Tillicum Lelum expressed an interest early in the project development to explore Reggio Emilia as a philosophical framework. It was believed that this philosophy would be a good fit for AECD programs and services. At the same time, the AECD community was discussing the need to develop a uniquely *Aboriginal* approach. Thus, the researchers started with values generated by the Tillicum Lelum Child Care Advisory Committee and then reviewed common values and themes included in literature written by First Nations/Aboriginal/Indigenous authors, those examined in Reggio Emilia, as well as other approaches relevant to Aboriginal early childhood. There were four themes that were reiterated across all sources including the:

- importance of cooperation, working together;
- centrality and importance of parents, family and community;
• teacher (in First Nation communities the Elder) as nurturer and guide; and
• respect of and attention to the natural environment.

The telephone administered questionnaire (that included interviews with eighteen organizations and agencies offering services and programs to Aboriginal people) also identified these values as among those key to successful programming. They suggested that coming from a place of strength to support people where they are is essential to successful support services and programs and they stressed that teaching and reinforcing both culture and language is central to providing culturally and community relevant child and family support.

Tillicum Lelum wanted to identify administrative structures and approaches that would potentially enhance and strengthen the early childhood development services and programs that they planned to offer. Much of the literature reviewed referred to the importance of centralizing services to families. One of the reports that provided a clear, AECD focused model was Jessica Ball’s “Early Childhood Care and Development Programs as Hook and Hub: Promising Practices in First Nations Communities” (2004). The HUB model is believed to strengthen the efficiency and effectiveness of programs and services in Aboriginal communities by coordinating and connecting services and engaging families and communities in ways that promote healthy child development and support culture and language. This idea of coordinated, centralized services and agencies working across professions to support children and family was also reiterated by the organizations and agencies participating in the telephone administered questionnaire.

The Community Focus group discussion held at the Tillicum Lelum Health Centre also reinforced the ideas articulated in the literature review and the telephone administered questionnaire. Values such as the importance of building trusting relationships with caregivers, creating services and supports that are ‘family-building’ and are of good quality, affordable, equitable (in terms of availability), flexible, comprehensive and convenient. The focus group participants stressed the importance of an emphasis on culture, traditions, and language. There were also many suggestions generated by the group related to practical ways to support parents using programs and services at Tillicum Lelum (and other agencies).

A process of synthesizing values from each aspect of the project generated key values that would guide the program/service development. The Tillicum Lelum Child Care Advisory Committee discussions, the literature review, and the results of the telephone administered questionnaire and community focus group conversations each contributed to the overarching values of: respect, integrity, innovation, culture, holism, and relationship. The values generated that would guide the way in which services are delivered included: collaboration; cultural focus; strength-based orientation; family-centricness; community-based focus; and ethical approaches. These values were reinforced in a graphic representation called, “Sumshathut for the People” (on p. 38 of the report).

A number of recommendations were made that were based on the research undertaken and were believed to influence the type of programs/services provided as well as the quality of those programs/services.

**Recommendation One**

Identify ways for families (including parents, grandparents, Elders, and other community members) to be meaningfully involved in the planning, development, and delivery of the programs/services to be provided. This could include input and feedback to administrative policy for the AECD programs/services.

**Recommendation Two**

Establish a child care centre as a central service with other programs and services (as relevant to the community members using the service) providing support to child health and development, supporting family in their child rearing role, and building on the good quality programs that currently exist. Ensure as much as possible that services are contained in one physical facility. Where that is not possible develop structures and methods that ensure the programs/services are working together and toward similar goals.

**Recommendation Three**

Consider the range of physical space needs as identified in the report including: program activity space; kitchen space large enough for community kitchen; informal and formal meeting space for families and staff; outdoor space with lots
of natural play space. All space should be planned to be responsive to diverse abilities and culturally relevant. Space recommendations suggested in the different aspects of the project will inform the design and use of ECD programs and services at Tillicum Lelum.

**Recommendation Four**
Create physical space and access to natural environments that reinforce the importance of the natural world such as natural play space, space to grow and nurture traditional plants, walking trails, and access to other traditional outdoor activities.

**Recommendation Five**
Work with families, Elders, staff and administration to articulate culturally and program relevant statements of value and a philosophy that reflects those values to guide all aspects of program/service development and delivery. Specifically, consider how those values will influence the program and service quality and develop strategies and goals to ensure the program/service accomplishes its goals.

**Recommendation Six**
Work with families, Elders, staff and administration to identify and implement diverse programs/services both formal and informal to encourage peer support across the parents, staff and administrators.

**Recommendation Seven**
Recruit and select staff that hold similar values to those established by the Child Care Advisory group and the program/service developers and who are particularly committed to working as a team and collaborating both within the organization across the early childhood development service sectors.

**Recommendation Eight**
Establish a range of activities within the early childhood development programs/services to ensure the organization is culturally-centred and will provide opportunities for children, families, and staff to learn the language of the region. A cultural advisory committee with diverse Elder membership (that would reflect the cultural background of diverse regions) could inform the development of high quality cultural and language activities and reinforce the cultural integrity of the programs.

**Recommendation Nine**
Plan an ongoing, high quality evaluation of all programs, services, and people involving representation from across the stakeholders (children, family, Elders, staff, employers -both within and outside the organization - program/service administration, other professional sectors) to illuminate strengths and challenges and to identify issues and concerns that will inform improvements.

**Recommendation Ten**
Maintain close communication with other agencies and organizations (providing similar programs and services) and stay abreast of new research and leading edge programs to remain current and informed about ways to improve service and develop culturally responsive programs in AECD.

**Recommendation Eleven**
Utilize and reinforce management styles that are relationship focused and that encourage and facilitate collaboration across families, staff, and administrators.

**Recommendation Twelve**
Validate existing and seek out new partnerships to enhance and strengthen programs and services to increase currency and responsiveness.
Background

In the late Spring 2011, Tillicum Lelum Aboriginal Friendship Centre (Tillicum Lelum) approached the Aboriginal Early Childhood Development (AECD) Regional Innovation Chair at Vancouver Island University (VIU) to propose the two organizations work together on a project that would examine current research and trends in AECD related to two specific areas. Tillicum Lelum was just finishing the construction of a new facility that would provide housing and programs/services to youth and Elders at the new Tenth Street location. It was their intent to include other program and services needed by the local Aboriginal community - in particular, a child care program. After thorough discussion the two organizations resolved to undertake a project that would inform the plan for the child care service. Later, Tillicum Lelum advised the VIU AECD research team that they would like to expand services to include not just child care but were interested in considering a broader range of Early Childhood Development services that would meet the diverse needs of children, parents and families.

Tillicum Lelum intends to create a unique and innovative model of AECD service. Their vision is to identify a philosophical approach to guide their work with children and families that reflects current research and trends and that is most importantly, culturally and locally responsive. They have expressed a particular interest in the Reggio Emilia philosophy and in determining the potential fit of this philosophy to child and family services in their organization.

A project proposal was thus submitted to Tillicum Lelum to undertake a collaborative project that would incorporate the following goals:

1. Developing a collaborative, community-based model on which to build culturally relevant AECD programs and services at Tillicum Lelum (in partnership with Vancouver Island University and other organizations and agencies).

2. Identifying a culturally relevant, holistic, philosophical framework for AECD programs and services that appropriately reflect the values of Tillicum Lelum and the community they serve.

The research and information gathering process included the following:

- A literature review of unique management models in AECD and of current trends in theoretical frameworks that guide service delivery for young children and their families.
- A survey of managers of selected AECD services/programs to explore unique management models of service delivery used in the Vancouver Island and Lower mainland regions and the values and ideals that guide those programs.
- A focus group discussion that explores the needs of the Tillicum Lelum community members such as Elders, parents and extended family, caregivers, and others. Participants share ideas about types of services needed for children and their families and the features of good quality AECD services.
- After the information gathering process, recommendations are proposed regarding options for the management and philosophical framework that will guide Tillicum Lelum's AECD work at their new facility.
Literature Review

Introduction

Early in the project, Tillicum Lelum brought together a small group of individuals to form an Advisory Committee to work with the VIU researchers. One of the first activities of this group was to brainstorm key elements of a vision for Early Childhood Development Programs and Services at Tillicum Lelum. The purpose of this activity was to ensure that the work of the VIU team would be guided by the dreams and realities of the Tillicum Lelum community. The Advisory group identified the following values (these ideas are not in order of priority as we did not engage in a process of identifying the relative importance of these values in relation to the other):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Values to Guide the Tillicum Lelum AECD Vision</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Identified in Advisory Group Discussion September 27, 2011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Respect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Equity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Inclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Holistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Honesty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Cultural integrity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Tillicum Lelum control and ownership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Establishing alliances/partnerships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Developing a ‘ground up’ approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Community based and grounded in community development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Credibility and validation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Individual solutions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1. Values to Guide the Tillicum Lelum AECD Vision

Part I Cultural/spiritual traditions and teachings

Holistic and culturally relevant programs and services were emphasized as central to the AECD vision by the advisory committee in the values generation process as well as throughout all discussions in which the project partners engaged. For the purposes of the project questionnaire that was designed to gather information from other services providers holistic was defined as “programs/services that consider the whole child, physically, socially, cognitively, emotionally, spiritually, and culturally. Holistic also means that we cannot view the child outside the context of the family and community.” This definition will be used to frame the idea of culturally relevant and holistic in this report.

Tillicum Lelum expressed an interest early in the project development to explore Reggio Emilia as a philosophical framework. It was believed that this philosophy would be a good fit for AECD programs and services. At the same time, the AECD community was discussing the need to develop a uniquely Aboriginal approach. Thus, the researchers thought it would be useful to first look at some common values and themes included in literature written by First Nations/Aboriginal/Indigenous authors. That is, what are some of the key ideas in the literature that could be brought forward to our discussions to ensure the notion of ‘cultural integrity’ as discussed by the Advisory Committee? Next we could extrapolate the key elements of the Reggio Emilia approach defined in the literature and bring what is best about Reggio Emilia into a First Nations/Aboriginal/Indigenous (Indigenous) values framework.

The following discussion examines some of the key literature found related to both Indigenous writings about inherently Indigenous values and mainstream philosophical approaches to ECD. We then propose a model that attempts to integrate some of the most relevant and useful tenets of mainstream philosophy into a uniquely Indigenous perspective.

1 For the purpose of this discussion ‘best’ would be those elements of Reggio Emilia that would be identified as a good fit with the Tillicum Lelum vision.
Exploring Key Indigenous Knowledge and Values

Ellen Rice White (Kwulasulwut), a Snuneymux’w Elder, in her book “Legends and Teachings of Xeel’s The Creator” (2006) explained many of the values and beliefs held by the Snuneymux’w (the First Nation of the Nanaimo region) people through stories told and passed on across the generations. Kwulasulwut tells a story and then examines the meanings of the story. In an attempt to identify teachings that would promote community and cultural relevance in an AECD program, the reviewers pinpointed several key values arising from the stories. It is important to note that these values were extrapolated from the stories and most were paraphrased by the researchers. (Page numbers have been provided so the reader can refer to the original stories and explanation). The intent is to validate the interpretations through discussion with the Tillicum Lelum community. The beliefs generated from Kwulasulwut’s work that seemed most directly related to professional practice with child and family include:

- Respect is central to First Nation culture. This includes both respect for all things, both living and non-living (p. 40) and for all people, their culture and their spiritual beliefs (p. 45).
- Creating a positive learning environment will set the stage for later learning (p. 40).
- When people work together and remain positive good things will happen (pp. 41-42).
- Our feelings and intuition provide guidance if we listen carefully to them (pp. 43-44).
- Consistent and loving care of children will ensure that they will want to learn from us and come to us when they have a problem (p. 46).
- Teaching children about compassion and acceptance of others is the responsibility of all of us (p. 98).
- To hold kindness and love in their heart, children must feel kindness and love from others (p. 108).
- Being thankful for what we receive is expected of all First Nation people.
- Offering children choices and alternatives will help them learn to make better decisions on their own when they get older (p. 101).
- Passing on our teachings to future generations is the responsibility of all First Nation peoples (p. 44).

The literature review includes values from two other communities on Vancouver Island. First are related values/beliefs from the Quw’utsun community centred in the Cowichan Valley. Quw’utsun Syuwénsht (teachings of the Cowichan people) were developed with Cowichan Tribes to support First Nation teachings in the school system in Duncan, BC (Smith-Siska; 1994). The others noted below are values generated from the writings of the Wsáneć people reflected in the stories of the four First Nation communities centred in Saanich, BC (T’sawout, T’sartlip, T’seycum, and Pauquachin). The publications are Sencoten Sñepenek (Jack, H. and Sam, A; 2007) and SENCOTEN with stories told by Earl Claxton SR. (1993). As done previously, those values most easily associated with programs for children and families have been noted. The following list should not be considered an exhaustive list of values of these communities.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quw’utsun</th>
<th>Wsáneć</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The Family is the Heart of Life</td>
<td>• Respect others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Honour the Elders</td>
<td>• Living according to the natural rhythms of our world supports our health and well-being physically, spiritually, mentally, emotionally, and socially.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Each Person is Important</td>
<td>• Sharing with others is central to who we are as a people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Take Care of Your Health</td>
<td>• Being calm and kind will help us solve our problems and keep us strong.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Be positive</td>
<td>• Appreciate what we have.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Enjoy Today</td>
<td>• Listen to and learn from the Elders and others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Share What You Have</td>
<td>• Respect others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Everything in Nature is Part of Our Family-We Are All Relatives</td>
<td>• Living according to the natural rhythms of our world supports our health and well-being physically, spiritually, mentally, emotionally, and socially.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Take Care of the Earth</td>
<td>• Sharing with others is central to who we are as a people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Give Thanks for What You Have Been Given</td>
<td>• Being calm and kind will help us solve our problems and keep us strong.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Learn From One Another</td>
<td>• Appreciate what we have.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Respect the Rights of One Another</td>
<td>• Listen to and learn from the Elders and others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Take Responsibility for Your Actions</td>
<td>• Respect others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Help One Another</td>
<td>• Living according to the natural rhythms of our world supports our health and well-being physically, spiritually, mentally, emotionally, and socially.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Work Together for the Good of All</td>
<td>• Sharing with others is central to who we are as a people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Take Only What You Need</td>
<td>• Being calm and kind will help us solve our problems and keep us strong.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• All Things Are Connected</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2. Quw’utsun & Wsáneć Teachings (Claxton, E. 1993; Jack, H. & Sam, A; 2007; Smith-Siska, H; 1994)

Kathryn Irvine in “Supporting Aboriginal Parents: Teachings for the Future” (2009) a National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health publication, also described Indigenous cultural values based on her own review of the literature. Based on the work of Hart (2002), Cajete (1999) and Dumont (1996) Irvine noted the following key values: honesty; sharing; humility; kindness; bravery; honour; strength; and wisdom.

Some of the First Nation writings that were reviewed also reinforce the ideas of the four directions (north, south, east and west; four elements (fire, water, earth, and air); and/or four areas of development (physical, mental, spiritual, and emotional) that are key to survival and which help the people to find strength, balance and resilience (Rice-White, 2006; Lane, Bopp, Bopp, Brown, and Elders, 2004). Lane, Bopp, Bopp, Brown and the Elders in “The Sacred Tree: Reflections of Native American Spirituality” frame much of their discussion around the Medicine Wheel and the idea of the four directions. The authors provide the context for the idea of the Sacred Tree and its relationship to the four directions by saying: “Potentially the seed has a mighty tree within it. The four aspects of our nature (the physical, the mental, the emotional and the spiritual) are like seeds. They have the potential to grow into powerful gifts. (p. 13)” Therefore, if we harness the power of the four directions we can support individuals to enhance their own development of personal potential, volition, vision and values (pp. 12-18).

Part II Linking Aboriginal and Mainstream Approaches

Danielle Mashon as part of the requirement for her MA Thesis at UBC (Faculty of Graduate Studies) explored quality in Indigenous Early Childhood Development (2010). Mashon discussed the traditional approach to thinking about quality in mainstream ECD and considered how quality might be described by and for Indigenous communities using postmodern frameworks such as those described in “Beyond Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care: Postmodern Perspectives” (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence; 1999). Pacini-Ketchabaw and Pence in, “Contextualizing the Reconceptualist Movement in Canadian Early Childhood Education” (2005) explained how,
reconceptualist critiques have become a significant discourse that has fundamentally shifted ECEC practice, theory and research. The reconceptualist discourse questions assumptions of universality and the use, for example, of terms such as 'best' and 'appropriate' that suggest singularity of response in a diverse and complex world (p. 5).

Mashon (2010) suggested that these post-modernist/re-conceptualist frameworks may help us shift both the language we use to frame ECD and way we think about quality from a focus on the “scientific truths for early childhood ” (p. 17) such as quality control and quality assurance toward the idea of ‘meaning-making’. According to Dahlberg (as quoted in Mashon, 2010) “…the discourse of meaning-making calls for explicitly ethical and philosophical choices, judgments of value, made in relation to the wider questions of what we want for our children here and now and in the future – questions which must be posed over and over again” (p. 17). Mashon suggests that the post-modernist approach and specifically the philosophy of Reggio Emilia provides a framework within which to develop more culturally relevant ways to think about quality and Aboriginal Early Childhood Development (Mashon, 2010).

Mashon goes on review some of the studies and projects that have explored the contexts within which Aboriginal Early Childhood Development programs and services have emerged. She discusses points made by a number of organizations/agencies over the past two decades that underscore the importance of attending to issues, interests, and visions of Aboriginal people including: Assembly of First Nations (1989); Native Women’s Association of Canada (1988); First Nations Inuit Child Care Initiative (1995); Aboriginal Head Start (1995); and Greenwood and Shawana’s study on quality, “Whispered Gently Through Time. First Nations Quality Child Care: A National Study” (1999) to name only a few. She then goes on to discuss a study that explored AECED ideas about quality undertaken by the BC Aboriginal Child Care Society (BC ACCS) in 2010. The study results suggested five values inherent in Indigenous quality child care and which require and support a unique approach to thinking about Indigenous programs in AECD. These include the importance of:

1. Indigenous knowledge;
2. Self determination;
3. A holistic view of child development;
4. Family and community involvement;
5. Indigenous language.

In a number of their own publications, the BC ACCS also has strongly stated the need to ensure that Aboriginal families, communities, and educators articulate their own visions of and approaches to child care. In “BC Aboriginal Child Care Society Responds to Ministry of Education Draft Early Learning Framework” they describe their involvement “with other First Nations organizations in the development of an Early Learning Framework…that reflects the views of BC First Nations communities, leadership, educators and service providers” (p. 4). They also have developed a definition of AECED quality that they suggest will better ensure culturally relevant and appropriate AECED services and programs (BC ACCS; 2005). Further, BC ACCS has provided opportunities for their members to share their perspectives of quality AECD (BC ACCS; 2004).

Pacini-Ketchabaw, Kocher, Berger, Isaac and Mort in, Thinking Differently about Quality in British Columbia: Dialogue with the Reggio Emilia Early Childhood Project (2007) referenced BC ACCS to provide some support for the potential fit with the BC government's Early Learning Framework and Reggio Emilia. BC ACCS stated that the philosophy of Reggio Emilia “fits well with how First Nations want to develop our early childhood care, education and development systems” (2007; p. 3). However they also underscore the importance of “looking within our own families, communities and cultural traditions, and reflecting on our collective histories to find our own visions for our children that reflect the diversity amongst First Nations in the province.”(2007; p. 3). While Pacini-Ketchabaw et al (2007) do not suggest that Reggio Emilia would provide the framework to guide development they do propose that “lessons learned from Reggio Emilia …[may] enrich and strengthen the research and service-development processes that are currently underway in First Nations/Aboriginal communities” (p. 10).
Creating a Philosophical Context: Key Concepts of Reggio Emilia

The Institute for Early Childhood Education and Research in the Faculty of Education describes six fundamental principles of the Reggio Emilia approach to care and education. These include:

1. **The child as protagonist, collaborator, and communicator** – the idea that children are “strong, powerful, and competent from birth” influential in their own learning and development: that is, rather than being passive learners they are actively seeking and constructing knowledge and communicating understandings with others.

2. **The teacher as partner, nurturer, guide and researcher** – teachers are partners in the co-construction of knowledge with children – exploring and learning together. Educators watch, listen and learn to support children's learning in ways that reflect the children's interests, questions and abilities.

3. **Cooperation as the foundation of the educational system** – cooperative and collaborative relationships with colleagues are considered central to the Reggio philosophy and all staff involved in the program (including support staff such as cooks and custodians) are considered an important part of the overall learning environment.

4. **The environment as the ‘third’ teacher** – the environment is considered both organic and dynamic, changing and responding to a variety of influences including people and conditions. It is believed environments richly supplied with various materials inspire creative exploration and endless opportunities for learning.

5. **The parent as partner** – parents are valued as important contributors to children's learning in the school environment. They are encouraged to participate in planning, implementation and decision-making in the Reggio program.

6. **Documentation as communication** – Reggio teachers have a responsibility to carefully observe and document their observations and to use those observations to tell a story about what they learn about a child, the children or an experience. This documentation is an inclusive activity used to support and to share the learning of children and of teachers. Children and families are invited to participate in and contribute to the process of observation and documentation.

( [http://earlychildhood.educ.ubc.ca/community/research-practice-reggio-emilia](http://earlychildhood.educ.ubc.ca/community/research-practice-reggio-emilia) )

Looking Within Indigenous and Reggio Emilia Values: Discovering similarity and difference

At first glance, the Indigenous and Reggio values seem quite different. Both however seem both broad and far-reaching and specific all at the same time. Some of the Indigenous values and beliefs are quite concrete and specific, almost prescriptive with a clear sense of direction and of what is expected (such as ‘offering children choices and alternatives will help them learn to make better decisions’ and ‘take care of your health’). Others have a more global message such as ‘feelings and intuition must guide what we do’, ‘respect others’ and ‘living according to the natural rhythms of our world supports our health and well-being physically, spiritually, mentally, emotionally and socially’. The Indigenous messages can be related as much to life and living as to how we might treat children in an early learning and care environment. They provide rich and meaningful messages that can provide guidance about how a person should live their life and what their responsibility is to others and to the earth. The Reggio principles also seem both broad and specific – however, rather than messages that relate to life in general they focus more directly on values that inform professional actions such as Principle 1. ‘the child as protagonist, collaborator and communicator’, Principle 5. ‘the parent as partner’ and Principle 4. ‘the environment as the ‘third teacher’. However, if one looks beneath the explicit messages in the principles to the description of how those principles are expected to work and what will be accomplished by observing the principles, the similarities are more visible. For example, the description to Principle 1 suggests “the image of the child as rich in resources, strong, and competent. The emphasis is placed on seeing the children as unique individuals with rights rather than simply needs” (Rinaldi, 1998, p. 114 as quoted on the IECER website, Research into Practice: Reggio Emilia). This description helps the reader to understand that the intent of the philosophical approach of Reggio
is more far reaching in terms of the experience of the child and the ways in which those experiences may influence the child’s life. In the explanation for Principle 4 the author states that “the school is a living organization, involved constantly in interchange, self-nourishment, and adjustment” (Wien, 1997 as quoted on IECER website, Research into Practice: Reggio Emilia). The message of the environment suggests it possesses almost human qualities – emphasizing the importance of providing constant care, attention, and renewal opportunities to the physical space and everything in that space including the people. As such, the importance of the principle and its broader influence to the child’s learning and life experience is clearer.

Rather than examining each of the Reggio principles and its relevance to the Indigenous values expressed in the First Nation and Aboriginal readings in this text it makes sense based on the foregoing information, to create a philosophical model in which the Indigenous values are central and encompassing and within which the elements of Reggio Emilia that would be relevant and useful could be integrated. Engaging in a process of creating a model that reflects Indigenous values and teachings and incorporating Reggio values (as appropriate and relevant) is in keeping with the Tillicum Lelum values outlined at the outset of this paper. In particular, the values such as: developing a ground-up approach; being creative and innovative; ensuring credibility and respectfulness; being inclusive and holistic; and demonstrating cultural integrity all seem values pivotal to such a process.

To begin to solidify the key elements of the philosophical framework for the Tillicum Lelum program, a table that summarizes the key values of each of the First Nations teachings (Snuneymux’w, Quw’utsun, Wsáneć, and Reggio Emilia) is presented below (Table. 3).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Snuneymux’w</th>
<th>Quw’utsun</th>
<th>Wsáneć</th>
<th>Reggio Emilia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Respect for all things, both living and non-living (p. 40) and for all people, their culture and their spiritual beliefs.</td>
<td>- The Family is the Heart of Life</td>
<td>- Respect others.</td>
<td>- The child as protagonist, collaborator, and communicator.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- A positive learning environment will set the stage for later learning (p. 40)</td>
<td>- Honour the Elders</td>
<td>- Living according to the natural rhythms of our world supports our health and well-being physically, spiritually, mentally, emotionally, and socially.</td>
<td>- The teacher as partner, nurturer, guide and researcher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Feelings and intuition must guide what we do (pp. 43-44).</td>
<td>- Each Person is Important</td>
<td>- Sharing with others is central to who we are as a people.</td>
<td>- Cooperation as the foundation of the learning environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Consistency, kindness, and nurturing supports healthy child development.</td>
<td>- Take Care of Your Health</td>
<td>- Being calm and kind will help us solve our problems and keep us strong.</td>
<td>- The environment as the ‘third’ teacher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Accept responsibility (p. 98).</td>
<td>- Be positive</td>
<td>- Appreciate what we have.</td>
<td>- The parent as partner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Be thankful for what we receive (p.100 &amp; 105).</td>
<td>- Enjoy Today</td>
<td>- Listen to and learn from the Elders and others.</td>
<td>- Documentation as communication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Offering children choices and alternatives will help them learn to make better decisions on their own when they get older (p. 101).</td>
<td>- Share What You Have</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Passing on our teachings to future generations is the responsibility of all First Nation peoples (p. 44).</td>
<td>- Everything in Nature is Part of Our Family-We Are All Relatives</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Take Care of the Earth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Give Thanks for What You Have Been Given</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Learn From One Another</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Respect the Rights of One Another</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Take Responsibility for Your Actions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Help One Another</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Work Together for the Good of All</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Take Only What You Need</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- All Things Are Connected</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3. Key values articulated by Snuneymux’w, Quw’utsun, WSANEĆ, and Reggio Emilia.
Part III Administrative/Management Structure

The proposal developed by VIU and Tillicum Lelum in the first few weeks of planning our project together articulated a goal for the project that would develop an administrative framework for the delivery of Aboriginal Early Childhood Development services and programs. From the beginning Tillicum Lelum was clear that a child care centre was needed to support the parents involved in programs at Tillicum Lelum and those parents who were studying and/or working in the community. Very quickly the agency realized that while child care was central to a quality AECD program, the program would be of even more value if they could create a broader range of AECD services to support the holistic needs of children and their families. This belief was reinforced by a trip taken by two Tillicum Lelum staff, Chris Beaton and Tony Schactel to New York City to visit the Harlem Children’s Zone (HCZ). Beaton and Schactel had heard about the HCZ and the work done there to develop a holistic approach to health, education and social development by addressing the developmental and educational needs of children beginning in infancy. What they found in their first visit strengthened their earlier realization that creating child care programs for children was an essential part of supporting healthy child development and that creating a web of services around the child care program would enhance that care by also providing necessary and/or complementary services to the families of the those children.

The HCZ was originally established in 1997 to focus on reducing truancy of the children of Harlem. As the organization grew, the focus expanded to include the families of the children who were attending HCZ programs. Because of an emphasis on comprehensive program evaluation the complexity of addressing issues experienced by the HCZ children became clear. In a quarterly report, A Look Inside Harlem Children’s Zone: A Message From the President the president stated,

_The Foundation of our work rests on a couple of simple but innovative concepts: that it is hard to raise healthy children in a disintegrated community and that local institutions can reverse even the most devastating conditions by drawing community members together. So we have made it part of our mission to engage residents in promoting the healthy development of Harlem’s children (p. 1; 2002)._

The report goes on to describe the remarkable progress that had been made by engaging families in the HCZ Baby College. The Baby College located in Central Harlem provides resources and supports to families from conception through school entry. Central Harlem is a community gradually changing from primarily low income families to growing numbers of middle class and professional families. Despite this change, at the time the article was written, over 60% of families lived with incomes below the poverty line (2002). The curriculum for the Baby College was designed by a world renowned child development specialist, Dr. Terry Brazelton and emphasizes the exploration of child-rearing issues and strategies to address issues among the parents, grandparents and other participants. During the discussions, staff encourage skill and knowledge development by focusing on caregiver strengths and experience. The program also facilitates the development of social networks that provide opportunities for parents to continue supporting each other outside the program. Outreach is also considered an essential part of the program with HCZ staff conducting home visits to talk to parents not involved and inviting them to join the program.

There are many other programs and services at HCZ directed at supporting holistic child development. These programs are described in a number of issues of _A Look Inside Harlem Children’s Zone (2002; 2006; 2007; 2008)_ available on their website. A sample of these programs include:

- Harlem Gems and Head Start programs created for three and four year olds.
- Child abuse and neglect prevention programs.
- Language and literacy programs.
- Programs for children and youth with behavior challenges.
- Programs called “Beacons” providing after school services for children and youth.
- Middle School Academy that supports children during the challenges and transitions of the middle years.
- Programs to support parents are linked to all children’s programs.
• The Renaissance University for Continuing Education (TRUCE) a program to assist youth to attend post-secondary education.

• Employment services and technology centre for youth and parents.

The idea of creating and linking a broad range of Early Childhood Development services to a child care program such as developed by the HCZ is explored in a number of articles and publications that examine the importance of holistic and cultural programming for Aboriginal populations in Canada.

In a recently updated publication by the Coast Salish Employment and Training Society (CSETS) on Vancouver Island, the importance of providing vital supports to parents alongside child care services enhance the health of children, families and communities was articulated. Of twelve issues raised by the child care managers and caregivers in a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis, ‘parenting issues’ (including promoting health parenting and improving supports to families to create healthier communities) was rated number three in priority. Further, the report described several aspects of a strategy to enhance their “Children First” agenda. A few of the key components of CSET’s strategy that relate directly to service provision includes:

• Childcare professionals and communities uniting to support and promote services.

• A ‘One Stop Shop’ approach that supports families, ECEs/caregivers, and children through needed resources and services.

• Parents communicating effectively with each other.

• More information and resource sharing.

• Creating strong linkages between programs (p. 4; 2011)

In a 2005 publication in the Journal of Aboriginal Health “Early Childhood Care and Development Programs as Hook and Hub for Inter-sectoral Service Delivery in First Nations Communities” Jessica Ball discusses outcomes of research conducted to examine the success of the University of Victoria’s First Nations Partnership Program (FNPP) to deliver early childhood training. These programs were community driven; community planned and community delivered in partnership with the FNPP. Ball describes three examples where First Nation communities established multi service organizations linked to child care centres, creating community HUBs. She explains how:

Co-location of child care with other services enables ready access to health monitoring and care, screening for special services and early interventions. Once parents are involved in bringing a child to a community centre-based program, many learn about and access programs for themselves and other family members… multi purpose, community based service centres can become a focal point for social cohesion and can provide a cultural frame around service usage that informs external service providers and offers cultural safety for community members (p. 36; 2005).

In the same article, Ball creates a visual illustration of the HUB model. She stresses that this model both enhances service provision and strengthens community involvement and engagement. Ball’s model (see facing page) shows both the type of AECD and related services communities can provide and the ways in which these services can promote and support culture and language.

In Jessica Ball’s Hook and Hub (2005) the 2002 Romanow Commission was a key reference to support inter-sectoral service delivery (such as that illustrated above). Similarly, Loppie Reading and Wien in the National Collaborating Centre on Aboriginal Health (NCCAH) publication, “Health Inequalities and Social Determinants of Aboriginal Peoples’ Health” (2009-2010) also underscore the importance of holistic and inter-related services within the context of health services. Loppie Reading and Wien state,

Indigenous ideologies embrace a holistic concept of health that reflects physical, spiritual, emotional and mental dimensions. However, it is the interrelatedness of these dimensions that is perhaps most noteworthy. It has
become widely accepted in mainstream health literature and, to some extent, practice that a “silo” approach to prevention and treatment of ill-health fails to address the complexity of most health issues. This is particularly true for Aboriginal peoples, who have historically been collectivist in their social institutions and processes… (p. 3).

This suggests that the mainstream tendency to fragment services and thus service delivery while creating many challenges for people generally, is of particular concern when programs and services are intended for Aboriginal people. It makes intuitive sense that the reverse is also true. The idea of centralizing service in a ‘one-stop shop’ has been discussed in the early childhood sector for decades as a way to improve services to families. Further, the idea of providing services in an integrated way has been reflected many times over the years in conversation with both those working with children and families and the families themselves in mainstream and Aboriginal communities. As noted earlier, research has also supported inter-sectoral delivery as an important way to strengthen the efficiency and effectiveness of programs and services. Providing services in the HUB model in Aboriginal communities also strengthens cultural continuity. Loppie Reading and Wien describe cultural continuity as “the degree of social and cultural cohesion with a community” (p. 18; 2009-2010).

The National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health (NCCAH) has undertaken the development of a project “Messages from the Heart: A Showcase on Aboriginal Childrearing – Caring for our Children and Families” that would look at the literature related to “increasing our understandings about the need to develop truly supportive programming, services, and resources that are capable of effectively addressing the needs of Aboriginal parents” (Irvine, K; 2009; p. 3). In a

Figure 4. ECCD as a Community-Based Hub (c) J. Ball 2004
concluding statement of the research and literature review Kathryn Irvine commented,

“Adopting a wholistic approach in working with Aboriginal parents requires that programs, services, and resources seriously consider the interconnection of physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being in the lives of parents. In considering cultural dimensions of the whole being, we can begin to wholistically support Aboriginal parents to help their children flourish” (p. 36; 2009).

Three forums have been held by NCCAH to explore different dimensions of caring for children and families. The first, held in February, 2010 “The Showcase on Aboriginal Child Rearing” provided the opportunity for over a hundred (primarily Aboriginal) participants from across the country to share their experiences with and cultural values related to child rearing. A summary of conference proceedings identified three key priorities from those discussions: 1) to continue conversations with Aboriginal people across the country to ensure that we continue to expand our understandings about what is important to Aboriginal people; 2) to provide ongoing support to parents and to the people working with children and families; and 3) to increase opportunities for children to build a strong sense of cultural identity, a sense of belonging and pride in their Aboriginal heritage.

The second “A Showcase of Aboriginal Father Involvement” held in February, 2011 brought First Nations, Inuit, and Métis fathers together to explore the importance of men in the lives of children. In “…with Dad Strengthening the Circle of Care” the authors reflect on the impact of colonization on Aboriginal men and its affect on the parenting of their children. They describe how, during the forum “Again and again, the message reverberated: fathers must be invited back into the family circle and they must be supported in their healing journeys – for the health of their children, families, communities and First Nations, Inuit and Métis nations” (NCCAH; 2011). This message about father involvement seemed important and instructive as Tillicum Lelum considers the key programs and services that will comprise their framework for AECD.

The third “The Sacred Space of Womanhood: Mothering Across the Generations” was held January 24th and 25th, 2012. While the final reports of the discussion have not yet been published, the focus of the session was to showcase research and programs on First Nations, Inuit and Metis women and mothering. The forum brought together women and men from different regions of Canada. The participants were primarily Aboriginal but many were Non-Aboriginal people representing various services, programs and government agencies serving Aboriginal children, youth and families. Forum delegates and speakers discussed the history and context of Aboriginal mothering, the effects of residential school on mothering, programs and services that serve women and support healthy mothering, and explored the ways in which Aboriginal mothering can be supported through future planning. During the conference several agencies providing services to Aboriginal parents (with an emphasis on mothers) showcased their agencies and described the work undertaken to support mothers. One of the overarching issues that most groups spoke to was the problem resulting from fragmentation of services and mothers having to tell their story over and over again at different agencies in order to address their needs. Several agencies described the importance of providing support to families by centralizing services and creating a welcoming, nurturing environment for both children and their mothers (and family more generally).

Tillicum Lelum Aboriginal Friendship Centre has provided services for individuals and families in Nanaimo since 1965. They presently provide a range of services from four different locations including the Administration offices (Centre Street); Health Centre (602 Haliburton Street); the Education Centre (927 Haliburton); and the Salish Lelum Youth and Elders Housing (Tenth Street). Services include: education and training, employment services, programming for children and youth, support programs for parents/family, counseling, nutrition, health and wellness, culture and recreation programs, youth drop-in, and leadership training to name only a few. As well, the centre provides itinerant services such as the hospital liaison program. In a collaborative research project with a number of organizations, Tillicum Lelum identified a number of goals that they believed would help to improve both access to and the quality of health services for Aboriginal people in the community. While the goals articulated in the earlier Health project are focused on health access they also speak strongly to those points raised in the literature review and to the statements of the respondents in the Tillicum Lelum/VIU project related to the importance of: holistic care; reflecting the culture of the community; cultural awareness and pride in cultural identity; addressing mainstream ideologies that conflict with
the community culture and goals; of establishing effective communication across services; maintaining a strong client-centred focus; and creating a welcoming and nurturing environment. The goals articulated in the health project report “In From the Margins Helping Hands” (2006) that seemed most reflective of information collected for the purpose of the current project include:

- Reduce the negative impact of a health care system historically rooted in the colonial structure by providing holistic health services that enable people to have power over their health (client-centred).
- Move from a medical model to providing holistic health care by increasing education and integration of Aboriginal culture into services and programs.
- The availability of the required staff and programs creates access for clients. Flexible, family oriented, accessible and stable services means client-centred care.
- Create healthy families by providing a variety of educational opportunities and programs.
- Increase the visibility and use of services by ensuring effective communication between organizations and the presence of outreach services in the community.
- Creating a sense of pride in Aboriginal culture, history and their community through education and building maintenance as a tool to build self-esteem.
- Offer an open and welcoming environment from the point of first contact to create a connection with staff while assuring clients of a safe place to access services and healing.
- Treat clients and their families fairly and with respect by providing client-centred services in an open, supportive, and welcoming environment.

Project Methodology

There were three different aspects to the Tillicum Lelum/VIU project:

- First, was the literature review that explored different philosophical frameworks that were believed to be reflective of and/or responsive to Aboriginal spiritual and cultural suitable to guide delivery of early childhood development programs and services. As well, the literature was examined for examples of suitable administrative/management models with a particular focus on integrated service models.
- Second, a survey instrument was designed that was used to conduct telephone interviews with selected organizations (primarily Aboriginal organizations) delivering services and programs to Aboriginal children and their families.
- Third, a community focus group was held with parents and early childhood professionals to respond to questions about AECD services in their community. Following an analysis of information collected in these three different processes the VIU team would meet with the Tillicum Lelum Child Care Advisory group to consider the information collected and to generate recommendations for the proposed Tillicum Lelum AECD programs/services and their subsequent delivery.

The design and development of the telephone questionnaire and the community focus group format were lead by the VIU team with input and feedback from Tillicum Lelum to the development of the data collection tools. At the same time, the team prepared the application to the Research Ethics Board (REB) to undertake the research aspect of the collaborative project. The documents that accompanied the REB application included: invitations to the two processes (the telephone administered questionnaire and the focus group discussion); information packages for potential respondents and meeting participants; the telephone questionnaire tool; the community focus group questions and meeting format; the consent forms for participants in both processes; and authorization from management for their staff to participate in the telephone surveys. These documents were also vetted by Tillicum Lelum and suggestions used to modify documents as needed.

Once all documents were approved by the REB (November 14, 2011) the recruitment process began. The following
criteria were identified to guide the selection process for the telephone administered questionnaire.

*Agencies and organizations invited to participate in the project survey were those that incorporated some or all of the following features:*

- A management structure that provides programs and services in Aboriginal Early Childhood Development;
- The programs/services are community-based; that is they are provided for the Indigenous communities either on or off-Indigenous lands;
- The programs/services have a visible mandate to provide culturally relevant and locally appropriate services;
- The values and ideals that guide the service provision complement Aboriginal values and culture.
- The program will ideally include innovative approaches to delivering programs/services to children, family and community. (*Taken from the information package faxed or emailed to potential participants November, 2011*).

The first interview was undertaken November 21 with the final telephone questionnaires scheduled for January 31, 2012. A total of 22 potential questionnaire participants were contacted with 18 questionnaires completed. There were a number of complications experienced by the interviewer/researcher. Reaching potential participants was challenging as the Christmas season approached. The consent and authorization processes required time for both the researcher and potential participants to organize. On several occasions when participants were contacted at a prearranged time the individual was not available. After several messages were left and not responded to the researcher would move on to another potential recruit.

The focus group was organized by Tillicum Lelum January 6, 2012. Approximately ten people (elders, parents of young children and AECD professionals) were invited to participate. The day of the session, six participants including four parents and two AECD professionals were present. Three Tillicum Lelum administrative staff and the VIU AECD team were also present. Three of the individuals who had planned to attend but who were unable to at the last minute were contacted by telephone to provide an opportunity to respond to the questions.

Data collected through the telephone questionnaire were consolidated and inputted in table format with each participant’s responses laid side-by-side. This allowed us to view the data in a way that facilitated comparison and contrast. Responses were then categorized (as applicable) and charted. Where anecdotal information did not lend itself well to charting, information was organized in text format.

Because there were less data (as a result of a small number of participants) the information collected from the community focus group sessions was categorized in text only and was used to add to and to support (or refute as might be appropriate) the data collected in the telephone questionnaire and the literature review.

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2 Innovative program/services will reflect a holistic approach that is community driven and adapts the principles of the organization with the traditional and cultural values of the community it serves.
Results and Discussion

Telephone Administered Questionnaire

As noted previously the recruitment and interviewing of participants for the telephone administered questionnaire began mid-November 2011. At the end of the data collection in February 2012 a total of eighteen organizations had been interviewed and data entered.

Question 1. Aboriginal Background of Respondents

The first question asked the respondent to identify whether he/she was First Nation; Metis, Inuit, or Non-Aboriginal. 42% of the respondents self identified as Aboriginal (First Nation, Metis, or Inuit). 58% were Non-Aboriginal.

![Figure 5. Aboriginal Background of Respondents](image)

Question 2. Population Served

As shown in the chart below, 44% of the populations served were First Nation and 14% each of Metis, Multi-cultural (14%), and Non-Aboriginal (14%) and 11% Inuit.

![Figure 6. Population Served](image)
Question 3. Region Served

More than half of the organizations reported serving the Coast Salish region (54%) with North Coast and Haida reported by 11% of the organizations and 27% serving the Carrier Nations. 11% reported serving ‘other’ regions. These regions included: West Coast and lower mainland; Kwakwaka’wakw; the North; urban non-reserve; Renfrew Collingwood; and other Nations.

![Figure 7. Region Served](image)

Question 4 Professional Role of Respondents

The respondents were encouraged to note all roles as might apply to their work. Nine people reported the professional role of Early Childhood Educator and eight people reported the role of administrator/manager; early childhood development specialist and family support worker roles reported in three cases, and two cases each reported the professional role of social worker and child and youth care worker. Two respondents indicated roles in the ‘other’ category. These roles included: researcher and child care program coordinator.

![Figure 8. Professional Role of Respondents](image)
Question 5  Program and Service Types

Again respondents were free to report as many services as relevant for their organization. ‘Early Childhood and Child Care Services’ (14) and ‘Cultural Programs’ (15), and ‘Parent Counselling and Support’ (15) were reported the most frequently. ‘Speech, Language and Literacy’ was noted 12 times, ‘Early Intervention’ ten times, ‘Health’ 9 and ‘Child Protection’ 6. ‘Other’ was mentioned four times and included: nurse, doctor, and pre/post natal care; Head Start; housing, mental health and addiction transition house, youth justice, family violence, service planning, and foster parent resources.

Figure 9. Program and Service Type

Question 6. Holistic Services Provided

This question asked whether the respondent believed the organization met the holistic needs of children and families. 87% of respondents believed that the organization did provide holistic services. Equal numbers of respondents reported that they thought services did not meet the holistic needs (7%) or were unsure (7%).

Respondents reporting that holistic needs were met were asked to provide examples of the ways their agency supported holistic approaches. Rather than charting this information, the description below explains the various approaches used by the programs/agencies.

Examples of holistic activities program were providing included:

- Organization is working toward Hul'qumi'num immersion.
- Open door policy to families and community.
- All First Nation workers.
- Staff is trained to respond to family and community needs.
- Staff has a good understanding of history and affects of colonization.
- Our strategic planning processes balance the medicine wheel – balanced for babies through Elders.
- When there are gaps in services the organization adjusts to accommodate.
- The whole family is involved – including aunties, grandmas.
- Services are family-centred and strengths based.
- Service meets the needs of parents so they are able to fulfill their parenting role in an effective way.
- Services are relationship-based providing strong, supportive mentorship.
- We consider the whole child, whole person, whole family.
• The child is considered within the context of the family and we work with the whole family.
• Service collaborates with families, professional teams, First Nation communities, and government.
• Work with communities where they are at.
• We have the autonomy and flexibility to consider the family and to work with family to support each child. We look at each family with each family to identify needs.
• Provide resources to families as they are needed such as: food security, court processes, counselling, housing, and native healing.
• Elders are involved to follow cultural protocol and community involvement.
• Consider government structure, spiritual connection to the creator, seeds of empathy programs, child abuse prevention, language and culture programs.
• Connected to other agencies (specialists, therapists, VIHA etc.).
• Service connects families to Elders.
• Spiritual programming built in – creating connections to the creator.

This question also asked respondents to identify additional services and programs they think would help to ensure holistic needs are met. There were few responses to this question. The ones noted (by two different respondents) included:

• We are working toward meeting holistic needs.
• Need ceremony within agencies.
• Cultural development doesn’t always work well- often clashes with government programs.
• Mandate does not reflect practice.
• Issues are funding related.
• Province dictate the programs communities need instead of being community directed.
Question 7. Program and Services Providing Cultural Activities

This question asked about the ways that organizations were ensuring services/programs are culturally relevant. Responses varied somewhat with 17 respondents indicating that ‘Family, Community and Cultural Teachings’ were an important part of their organizational activities; 16 cited ‘Elders as Participants and Teachers’ as a key activity; and 15 noting ‘Educational Activities.’ ‘Language and Cultural Activities and Events’ were noted by thirteen respondents and ‘Ceremony’ by 11. The ‘Other’ category noted in ten cases included: Aboriginal cultural person to support families; celebrations to honour the sacredness of life; one respondent suggested that services were “integrated with other cultural teachings”; Chief representing each nation; service planning to support communities in ECD; anti-bias curriculum; multicultural activities; staff mentoring, participating with drumming; granny and grandpa kits; cultural advisor provides a spiritual place to support families; Coast Salish games; help for funerals.

Examples of activities that organizations were providing (not included in the other category) included:

- Language
- Traditional arts and crafts
- Tribal journey
- Pow-wows
- Mini-Potlatch
- Preparing and serving traditional foods
- Nature walks and other nature based activities
- Wing Chief children looking after community
- Ceremonies such as smudging
- Berry picking
- Children’s drumming group
- Drum making
- Button blanket weaving
- Family portraits

Figure 11. Programs and Services Providing Culturally Relevant activities.
Question 8  Cultural Activities That Could Be Provided

This question asked if there were cultural activities that programs/agencies would like to do but presently were not doing. 70% of the respondents reported that there were activities they were not presently doing; almost 12% said there were not any that they were missing; and 17% were unsure.

Figure 12. Cultural Activities that Could Be Provided

When asked for examples of the activities they would like to do more of, activities included:

- More weaving
- More language
- Traditional dance
- Elder on staff
- Elder to facilitate teachings and programs
- Women's and men's circles
- Hold cultural nights
- Language component to every program
- Strengthen connection to the Long House
- More access to First Nation healing
- Coming of age ceremonies
- More access to traditional foods – traditional foods to be accepted by government licensing
- Naming ceremonies.
Question 9 Barriers to Implementing Cultural Activities

Question nine inquired about whether there were barriers to implementing more cultural activities. As shown below there were four general barriers identified including funding (50%); mainstream values/ideology (10%); value differences (10%); and shortage of Elders and first language speakers (30%).

![Figure 13. Barriers to Implementing Cultural Activities](image)

Question 10 How are Programs Funded?

This question attempted to understand the ways in which cultural activities are funded in the programs/agencies. The provincial government was named as a source of funding in 12 cases; nine respondents identified the federal government; private funders were named as a source by four respondents and the municipality in two cases. Two respondents did not answer the question and five indicated ‘Other’. Other included: Aboriginal grants; a local Nation Trust; Elder’s proposal; and own fundraising.

![Figure 14. How Programs are Funded](image)
Question 11 Key Values Held by Organization

Values related to the cultural focus of the program (16); family and client-centredness (10); community-based (9); and strengths-based perspectives held (8) were the top four values. Others noted included: play-based (5); universality (2); and selectivity (1). (A universal focus applies where the program/service is universally available to all who wish it and the selective programs are those which are offered to a discrete and selected population.)

Figure 15. Key Values Held by Organizations

Question 12. Philosophical Approaches of Organization

This question asked about philosophical frameworks that guide the program/service. While there were not any respondents who provided detailed descriptions of the philosophy that guided programs in their organization, their comments reinforced many of the values described in responses to question 11. During the process of reviewing comments and noting philosophical statements made by the respondents it seemed responses fell into five general categories including: 1) commitment to holistic approaches that include spiritual and cultural focus; 2) family & client centredness; 3) strengths-based perspectives; 4) advocacy; and 5) community-based focus.

Holistic Approaches that include a Spiritual and Cultural Focus:

- Supporting peace for children.
- Each child is a gift of the creator.
- Support local indigenous cultures.
- Reggio – not just through natural environment but also ties to culture.
- Six components of Reggio fit: culture, language, family support, health and hygiene, nutrition, parental involvement, kindergarten readiness
- Cultural focus is woven through all programs.
- Children learn through play.
- Support creativity.
- Diversity in all programs.
- Holistic and universal.
- Building capacity and trust with staff.
- Creating a gathering place.
Family and Client Centredness:

- Strengthen and support families.
- Parents are the first teachers and the role of the organization is to support them.
- Build a support system for parents.
- Meet ongoing needs of community members to achieve success in education and work.
- Understand that child care is essential to meet the needs of the family.
- Relationship-based services are key to working with families.
- Family is central.
- Nurturing children and families.
- Strengthen family reunification and perseverance.
- Be responsive by connecting family immediately to resources.

Strengths-Based Perspectives:

- Strength-based holistic model.
- Follow the lead of the participants – support their healing path and the gifts and strengths of each person.
- We believe that families do the best they can with what they have been given due to history and circumstance.
- Support autonomy through a holistic approach.
- There is wealth in education.

Advocacy:

- Serve as a liaison between communities and government.
- Advocate for children and families.

Community-Based Focus:

- Ethical, community-based approach.
- Community is part of the learning.
- It takes a whole community to raise a child.
- Commitment to collaborate with community to discuss their needs.

Question 13 – Management Model/Structure of Organization

Question 13 focused on the management model used by the organization. While there wasn’t a great deal of information about the management models in each of the programs, it seemed there were three general approaches noted:

1. (More traditional) top-down hierarchal approach with Chief and Council/Board of Director, managers, program managers, front-line workers;
2. Management/team approach with managers of each program making decisions together with input from staff;
3. ‘Flat’ collaborative approach with management, staff and clients from various programs interacting and informing decision-making (consent to share information across programs).
Overall, regardless of the model described, most respondents described positive work environments that emphasize holistic approaches, collaboration and autonomy. They also spoke of strong values related to staying connected as staff (regardless of whether services/programs were delivered from the same location) and a commitment to working closely with clients to ensure approaches that were strengths-based, family-centred, and culturally-focused. Despite the commitment to these values, (as noted in the analysis of questions 14 and 15) most respondents noted challenges with workload, getting together regularly, and/or sharing information across programs.

While the information shared about the management model or structure was limited, Questions 14 and 15 provided some helpful information about what works and what doesn't in regards to the management/administrative structure. Respondents were asked to describe their perceptions of the strengths and challenges of the administrative/management structure of the system within which they are presently working (or have worked). Following is a summary of both strengths and challenges discussed by the interview participants. An effort has been made to ensure the words of the respondents are reflected in the summaries.

**Question 14. Perceived Management Strengths**

When asked to comment on what they believed were the strengths of the organizational structure and system of management, respondents spoke positively about their managers when they:

- Are helpful and supportive.
- Are organized.
- Remain strengths-based focused.
- Facilitate trusting environments both among staff and between staff and families.
- Encourage connections/communication among staff and between staff and families.
- Emphasize coordination and collaboration.
- Are creative and encourage creativity in others.
- Are flexible.
- Are experienced – one respondent suggested that “long term managers have a good understanding of the programs and services”
Question 15. Perceived Management Challenges

Respondents spoke to a variety of challenges they experienced in the workplace or that they perceived as an issue for others. During the analysis process, the opinions of the interview participants were framed within themes of communication/miscommunication; administrative/management structure and style of leadership; time; and differences in values. An explanation of each theme follows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication/miscommunication</th>
<th>Differences in values</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Administrative Structure &amp; Management Style</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Several respondents talked about the communication challenges that occur when it is difficult to get together. The frequency and number of meetings can be an issue and individuals missing meetings can affect one’s ability to stay on top of everything. One person described how if one meeting gets missed it can create a backlog of information causing lengthy delays sharing information with staff. Similarly, another person suggested that it is critical to “ensure a flow of information and to keep the lines of communication open”.</td>
<td>• One respondent indicated that it feels sometimes like there should be greater value for “the merit of each child’s life”. Another was frustrated that administrators/decision makers sometimes “… view childcare as babysitting”.</td>
<td>• A heavy workload — several respondents talked about overload and/or not enough time to do everything they are required to do.</td>
<td>• Respondents also spoke of the existence of overlaps in service and how this can be frustrating and affect communication and ultimately the work of the organization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Others suggested that it is sometimes frustrating to maintain communication with team leaders and other teams when the workload is heavy. In one case the respondent suggested that “the agency is growing quickly” making it hard to keep up.</td>
<td>• One respondent noted that getting the job done is more challenging because oftentimes, “Different people have different priorities.” This idea of difference also came up in relation to different commitments in the statement, “attendance of participants is sometimes unreliable.”</td>
<td>• Having enough time to meet expectations is a challenge. For example, one respondent suggested “building cultural capacity is a step by step process”.</td>
<td>• One respondent cautioned that, “A top-down hierarchal structure does not work well.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Another person talked about feelings of isolation they experience when there isn’t someone to talk with who understands the program.</td>
<td>• Another respondent who spoke about ethical practice and the importance of its fit with cultural ways suggested that “leaders must role model the core values”. This respondent also emphasized that ethical practice must fit with cultural ways and that “there needs to be a focus on the core values.”</td>
<td>• Need more time to connect with families.</td>
<td>• There was one suggestion that, “people are not being made accountable when they don’t follow through.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Respondents noted in different ways that it is important that relationships are viewed as key to working in AECO. One suggested that building relationships with staff, families and the ministry can be challenging.</td>
<td>• There was a call by some respondents to “do things differently” to address the disconnect created by the long history of oppression by government policy and direction.</td>
<td></td>
<td>• One respondent emphasized, “Responsiveness to a crisis within the staff must be dealt with without blaming and judgement.”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Another said that there was “not enough management to support the staff – they are stretched with not enough time to be able to support all the programs.”</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Questions 16 & 17 Physical space and environment

- These questions asked the respondent about how the physical environment both compliments and presents challenges to the services provided to children and their families. Responses were varied. A list of responses to each question follows.

**Complimentary Aspects of Physical Environment**

The analysis of the responses to this question raised a number of themes within which to capture the individual responses. The generated themes include: child/family health and safety; capacity to provide comprehensive services/programs; ability to attend to holistic needs of children/family; inclusivity of physical space (from a disabilities perspective); and aspects of the space that ensure quality of programming.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child/family health and safety</th>
<th>Capacity to provide comprehensive programs and services</th>
<th>Ability to attend to the holistic needs of children and family</th>
<th>Inclusivity of physical space (from a disabilities perspective)</th>
<th>Aspects of physical environment that encourage quality programming</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Warm, safe well-maintained physical environment.</td>
<td>Easy access for parents to all areas and access to community.</td>
<td>Welcoming signage</td>
<td>Wheel chair accessible.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A therapy room.</td>
<td>Child friendly.</td>
<td>Open space, ramps, elevator increases access.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A space to hold community events.</td>
<td>Space for parent activities.</td>
<td>All parts of the building are on the same level — this is important for an open door policy.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kitchen.</td>
<td>Located on reserve — this increases exposure to pow wows; potlucks, prayer, cultural activities.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meeting space enhances team building.</td>
<td>Outdoor playground.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cultural emphasis in the environment.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Great space for families, welcoming, creates trust with school system (important because of residential school experiences.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| Challenging aspects of the physical environment |

Themes noted that reflect the variety of responses to this questions include: physical location of the programs/services; space allocation; funding/resource shortages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical location of programs/services:</th>
<th>Space allocation:</th>
<th>Funding/resource shortages:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staff/social workers are in a different building.</td>
<td>Not enough/need more space.</td>
<td>Lack of resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On reserve — remote location.</td>
<td>No playground for outdoor play.</td>
<td>Funding is a challenge — the building needs to be upgraded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services are at different sites.</td>
<td>Older building.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remote location.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More limitations in what can be done when the location of the program is sometimes far away from isolated First Nation communities.</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program/children’s activities can be loud for a school space.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When on reserve it is sometimes difficult to navigate funerals and other cultural events that have an impact on the operations of the program; also it is challenging to shift the cost of program and facility to the family.</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation is an issue for some.</td>
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</table>
Question 18 Sharing Visions

This question asked the respondent to dream a little. We suggested that she/he imagine him/herself was in charge and could make any changes they chose. What would they add or change? What would they do differently? The responses to this question were surprisingly brief suggesting that from her/his perspective the organization within which they worked was already doing well in terms of the programs and services they provided and the way those services were delivered. The comments included:

- I would encourage integrated case management.
- I would have family circles.
- I would have cultural and language ‘nests’.
- I would increase communication across all programs.
- I would pay my staff more!
- I would put all services in one organization.
- I would make sure all voices are heard when strategic planning.
- I would create a holistic team making sure there was representation of all programs on the team.
- I would create more connections between foster parents and community programs.
- I would respect the process.
- I would ensure accountability to and consistency of policies and procedures from one department to another and would create a back-up plan if I am unable to meet expectations.
- I would feed and house all families.
- I would ensure that children are exposed to cultural and language learning at the key learning time (0-6). These years are important ones to expose both children and families.

Question 19 Respondent’s Final Thoughts

This final question offered the respondent a chance to add any information they thought important or that they felt they had missed. Again, the comments suggested a high value for the programs/services they worked in and an awareness of the systemic challenges faced by those organizations. As well, the comments suggest it is the people/managers/workers that create a ‘quality’ program/service.

Comments include:

- Great place to work.
- Staff and family challenges are working out.
- People can express themselves.
- We grow ‘authentically’ from their experiences.
- The Head Start on reserve programs serve the components*; we blend the components throughout – education/learning; the importance of the environment and seasons.
- Money is a big thing – we have a hard time to do what we do with the amount of money allocated. We are always trying to be creative to make things fit.
- I appreciate the support given – it is a growing and learning environment.
- I am satisfied.
- The program has a ‘home’ feeling.
• I value the experience and knowledge [of the people I work with].
• It’s a wonderful place.
• We have good relationships and partnerships with mainstream programs in the community. We try to make sure the gaps are filled.
• The service is evolving every year – as we learn from each family.

* The Aboriginal Head Start Association of BC has established six components to guide AECD program and service development. These components relate to: culture & language, education & school readiness, health promotion, nutrition, social support, and parent and family involvement (http://www.ahsabc.net/viewcategory/4).

Community Focus Group

The Community Focus group session was held Friday, January 6, 2012. Participants included several parents and two AECD professionals. The group was brought together for a facilitated discussion that would focus on four questions:

• Based on your personal knowledge, what are some of the current types of services and programs that are available for Aboriginal children and families in your community.
• If you were to enhance those services/programs what would you include to ensure the holistic needs of children and families are met.
• What are some of the core values you believe are key to quality service in the Aboriginal community?
• If you were to design a model for services/programs to Aboriginal children and families what do you think should be some key features of that service/program?

Participants engaged in an open and energetic discussion. The facilitator had a flip chart page for each question. Often when discussing responses related to one question, information would emerge that related to another question. When this happened, in order to continue the flow of conversation, the facilitator attempted to include responses on appropriate page.

Question One: Based on your personal knowledge, what are some of the current types of services and programs that are available for Aboriginal children and families in your community.

For the purpose of this report responses to Question 1. were collated and categorized into four general areas: family/parenting support; health; children’s programming; supported early childhood development; and recreation activities.

Family/Parenting support:

• Opportunity for parents to talk
• Parenting group at Princess Royal have child minding services for under-fives.
• Building Better Babies
• Walking with Elders
• Counsellors
• Outreach
• Some linkages between Snuneymux’w and Princess Royal.
Health:

- Post Natal care at Princess Royal now available.
- Linkage to nurses
- Prenatal care,
- Visiting health practitioners
- Home support
- Children wellness
- Wellness groups at Snuneynmux’w
- Some service to Tilicum Lelum (dental)

Children's Programming:

- Pre school
- Daycare
- Strong start- Drop in preschool (0-5)
- School Readiness Programs for 0-5
- Head start
- Sign in daycare and then to pre school
- Daycare and pre-school combined

Supported Early Childhood Development

- Day care provides services such as Infant Development and Supported Child Development

Recreation activities:

- Neutral Zone-drop in (0-25) centre/meals
- Movie nights
- Special events-dinners crafts
- Fitness
- Basketball/sports
- Games (pool)

Question Two: If you were to enhance those services/programs what would you include to ensure the holistic needs of children and families are met.

The responses to this question focused mainly on ways to support parents in their parenting role as well as identifying supports that would allow them to continue their education and work outside the home:

- Programs for children can provide good ideas for activities and different ways to do things.
- Having child minding helps out a lot- different adults work with children while parents have some down time.
- Having one place to go (example of the Teen Learning Centre) where parents and children could be onsite. Parents were available to children as needed.
• After school care.
• Opportunities for socializing, getting to know others.
• Learning from other parents who can share their experiences - parents learn that they are not alone.
• Assistance with transportation – bus tickets or shuttles to take kids to school and home.
• Vouchers and gift cards especially if expecting or nursing.
• Programs that can provide meals - helps out both cost and convenience.
• Being able to continue school, reduce isolation helps young people to see how complicated and hard it is to raise children as a young parent.
• Information regarding licensing and program availability such as is available through Child Care Resource and Referral.
• Great for children to spend time with and learn from the daycare workers.
• Opportunity for children to socialize outside the family.

Question Three: What are some of the core values you believe are key to quality service in the Aboriginal community?

Parents shared some of the values about quality child care services:

• Affordability.
• Equity and fairness for caregivers and parents.
• Learning about cultural history: language traditions, stories, and understanding the color differences in the art and knowing the shapes in First Nations art.
• Family building.
• Flexibility.
• Convenient (time and place).
• Continuity.
• Comprehensive services.
• Trust between child, parents/family, and caregivers.
• Quality: good fit for child and everyone: caring nurturing supportive care.
• Enough physical space for the children.

Question 4: If you were to design a model for services/programs to Aboriginal children and families what do you think should be some key features of that service/program?

• Education information for young parents at the school.
• Childcare for children of different ages so parents only go to one place.
• Affordable and convenient.
• Pick up and drop off at home.
• Bringing all children together 0-5 after school etc.
• Meeting range of needs of parents.
• Resume-building programs to support entry to employment and study.
• Support for transition to childcare.
• Developing a plan for child care: who is targeted? What is the criteria? How is it funded? What subsidies are available?
• Find ways to make early childhood development/child care affordable.
• Establishing policies/protocols that make sense for both caregivers and families.
• Skill building- entrepreneurial skills - help parents to understand importance of equity and fairness.
• Time-frame for daycare be established – it should be fair and affordable.
• Take advantage of ECD training available for e.g. Child Care Resource and Referral.
• Build strong start into programs
• Creating a vision to benefit the child socially, emotionally and cognitively

We created a 'parking lot' for issues/comments that did not necessarily fit with a particular question. These comments included:

• Childcare at Snuneymux’w has priority for local band members (and so availability of spaces for those outside the community may be affected).
• Child Care has huge wait lists (need to get on list when they are pregnant).
• Several comments were made about the loss of the teen learning centre some years earlier. Participants suggested that having programs onsite at the school was helpful. Others worried that having services available right at the school might send the wrong message to youth.
• Availability of childcare is an issue overall. Participants expressed a wish for family grouping in the child care programs to improve access and availability of services for all children in the family.
• Cost of transportation continues to be an issue.
• Before and after school challenges exist because it is not widely available.
Summary and Conclusions

There were many parallels in the data collected in each of the three parts of the Tillicum Lelum/VIU research. The exploration of the Indigenous literature of Quw’utsun, Snuneymux’w, and Wsáneć illuminated many key values that each were reflective of the other and that resembled many of the values generated by the Tillicum Lelum Child Care Advisory in our early project planning discussions. These values were also reiterated in the work done by the BC Aboriginal Child Care Society in several of their projects and Danielle Mashon in her masters work. Each of these endeavours examined key tenets of Aboriginal Early Childhood Development reinforcing the Indigenous values uncovered earlier - and doing so in a way that was specific to the provision of early childhood services. While the discussions related to the post modernist and reconceptualist literature and the principles of Reggio Emilia were not focused specifically on Indigenous early childhood there was support in the literature reviewed that suggested a ‘goodness of fit’ between those theoretical perspectives and the development of philosophical frameworks for AECD.

Not surprisingly, the Indigenous values were also reiterated in both the telephone interviews and the community focus group discussions. The themes of respect and integrity; the importance of Elders, family and community; building on individual and family strengths; the importance of the vitality of Indigenous languages and culture; and the centrality of the natural world to personal and cultural identity were all strongly reinforced in every part of the research process.

As well, the themes that emerged in the literature exploring models of AECD program/service development, planning, and delivery such as: the strength of creating service HUBS to ensure inter and cross-sectoral collaboration and sharing; the centrality of family and community in the lives of children; the essential nature of involving family and community in meaningful ways; and the importance of integrating cultural integrity into each aspect of the administrative and organizational systems were all noted as essential to successful, collaborative professional communication and relationship-building. All these qualities and strategies were believed key to the effective and efficient functioning of the organization.

Sumshathut for the People

As the results of the three components of the project were summarized, we thought closely about the key themes that were raised across the discussions and the relationship of those themes to the values generated by the Tillicum Lelum Child Care Advisory committee early in the process. We believed it was an important contribution to the design of a philosophical framework for Tillicum Lelum’s AECD programs and services to clearly delineate the values reiterated by all participants. Below, is a graphic representation of the discussion framed within the sun or Sumshathut. As pointed out in the description of Sumshathut for the People on the back of the front cover of this report, the intent of the Sumshathut symbol is warmth, nurturance, and connection. This symbol and the words within are intended to both capture and illustrate the spiritual and cultural values that were strong themes throughout all discussions and readings.
Recommendations

Project recommendations were considered in collaboration with the Tillicum Lelum Advisory Committee. These recommendations will inform the ongoing design and development of the Tillicum Lelum Early Childhood Development Services. The recommendations have not been numbered as priorities for action were not identified at the time of publication.

Recommendation One

Identify ways for families (including parents, grandparents, Elders, and other community members) to be meaningfully involved in the planning, development, and delivery of the programs/services to be provided. This could include input and feedback to administrative policy for the AECD programs/services.

Recommendation Two

Establish a child care centre as a central service with other programs and services (as relevant to the community members using the service) providing support to child health and development, supports family in their child rearing role, and builds on the good quality programs that currently exist. Ensure as much as possible that services are contained in one physical facility. Where that is not possible develop structures and methods that ensure the programs/services are working together and toward similar goals.

Recommendation Three

Consider the range of physical space needs as identified in the report including: program activity space; kitchen space large enough for community kitchen; informal and formal meeting space for families and staff; outdoor space with lots of natural play space. All space should be planned to be responsive to diverse abilities and culturally relevant. Space recommendations suggested in the different aspects of the project will inform the design and use of ECD programs and services at Tillicum Lelum.

Recommendation Four

Create physical space and access to natural environments that reinforce the importance of the natural world such as natural play space, space to grow and nurture traditional plants, walking trails, and access to other traditional outdoor activities.

Recommendation Five

Work with families, Elders, staff and administration to articulate culturally and program relevant statements of value and a philosophy that reflects those values to guide all aspects of program/service development and delivery. Specifically, consider how those values will influence the program and service quality and develop strategies and goals to ensure the program/service accomplishes its goals.

Recommendation Six

Work with families, Elders, staff and administration to identify and implement diverse programs/services both formal and informal to encourage peer support across the parents, staff and administrators.

Recommendation Seven

Recruit and select staff that hold similar values to those established by the Child Care Advisory group and the program/service developers and who are particularly committed to working as a team and collaborating both within the organization across the early childhood development service sectors.

Recommendation Eight

Establish a range of activities within the early childhood development programs/services to ensure organization is
culturally-centred and will provide opportunities for children, families, and staff to learn the language of the region. A cultural advisory committee with diverse Elder membership (that would reflect the cultural background of diverse regions) could inform the development of high quality cultural and language activities and reinforce the cultural integrity of the programs.

Recommendation Nine

Plan an ongoing, high quality evaluation of all programs, services, and people involving representation from across the stakeholders (children, family, Elders, staff, employers -both within and outside the organization - program/service administration, other professional sectors etc) to illuminate strengths and challenges and to identify issues and concerns that will inform improvements.

Recommendation Ten

Maintain close communication with other agencies and organizations (providing similar programs and services) and stay abreast of new research and leading edge programs to remain current and informed about ways to improve service and develop culturally responsive programs in AECO.

Recommendation Eleven

Utilize and reinforce management styles that are relationship focused and that encourage and facilitate collaboration across families, staff, and administrators.

Recommendation Twelve

Validate existing and seek out new partnerships to enhance and strengthen programs and services to increase currency and responsiveness.
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APPENDIX 1

Tillicum Lelum Aboriginal Friendship Centre and Vancouver Island University (VIU)
Aboriginal Early Childhood Development Partnership

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PROJECT SUMMARY

Background Information

The Tillicum Lelum and Vancouver Island University's (VIU) Innovation Chair for Aboriginal Early Childhood Development (AECD) have collaborated on a partnership between to examine current research and trends in AECD related to two specific areas. The project goals include to:

1. Developing a collaborative, community-based model on which to build culturally relevant AECD programs and services at Tillicum Lelum (in partnership with Vancouver Island University and other organizations and agencies).

2. Identifying a culturally relevant, holistic, philosophical framework for AECD programs and services that appropriately reflect the values of Tillicum Lelum and the community they serve.

Why are Tillicum Lelum and Vancouver Island University's Chair for AECD pursuing this work?

Tillicum Lelum (Nanaimo Friendship Centre) is in process of considering a range of Aboriginal Early Childhood Development services and programs at their new facility in Nanaimo. They intend to create a unique and innovative model of AECD service. Their vision is to identify a philosophical approach to guide their work with children and families that reflects current research and trends and that is most importantly, culturally and locally responsive. Tillicum Lelum has expressed a particular interest in the Reggio Emilia philosophy and in determining the potential fit of this philosophy to child and family services in their organization.

What will the two organizations explore in this partnered project?

The research and information gathering process will include the following:

- A literature review of unique management models in AECD and of current trends in theoretical frameworks that guide service delivery for young children and their families.

- A survey of managers of selected AECD services/programs to find out more about unique management models of service delivery used in the Vancouver Island and Lower mainland regions and the values and ideals that guide those programs.

- A focus group discussion that will explore the needs of the Tillicum Lelum community members such as Elders, parents and extended family, caregivers, and others. Participants will share their ideas about what type of services are needed for children and their families and what the features of good quality AECD services would be.

- After the information gathering process, recommendations will be made regarding options for the management and philosophical framework that will guide Tillicum Lelum's AECD work at their new facility.
TILLICUM LELUM ABORIGINAL FRIENDSHIP CENTRE AND VANCOUVER ISLAND UNIVERSITY (VIU) ABORIGINAL EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP PROJECT

The AECD Research Team plans to contact fifteen to twenty-five agencies/organizations on Vancouver Island and across the province of British Columbia to request their participation in the Partnership Project.

Agencies and organizations invited to participate in the project survey are those that incorporate some or all of the following features:

- A management structure that provides programs and services in Aboriginal Early Childhood Development;
- The programs/services are community-based; that is they are provided for the Indigenous communities either on or off-Indigenous lands;
- The programs/services have a visible mandate to provide culturally relevant and locally appropriate services;
- The values and ideals that guide the service provision complement Aboriginal values and culture.
- The program will ideally include innovative approaches to delivering programs/services to children, family and community.

If you make the decision to participate in a telephone interview to complete the questionnaire, VIU’s Ethics committee asks that we have two forms completed and submitted prior to the telephone interview. These forms include:

- written consent of your willingness to participate; and
- written authorization from the administrator of your organization/agency verifying their approval of your participation.

We have attached both the consent and the authorization forms for your review and completion. If you decide to participate, these forms should be submitted to me prior to confirming the date and time of the interview.

Please read the forms carefully before signing so that you have an understanding of your rights related to participation. As well, please ensure that your organization/agency administrator/manager has copies of the information to review in order to ensure informed approval for your participation.

If you or your administrator/manager have any questions or comments related to the invitation, interview and/or the information gathering process, or the use of the information collected please feel free to contact either myself (Linda McDonnell) or my colleagues Danielle Alphonse and Chris Beaton. Our phones numbers are included on the Project Summary.

We are very excited about what we can learn from organizations and agencies such as yours who have provided vital and good quality services to children and families and are hopeful you will agree to contribute to this process.

Thank-you for considering this request. We look forward to talking with you further about this important project.

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Innovative program/services will reflect a holistic approach that is community driven and adapts the principles of the organization with the traditional and cultural values of the community it serves.
APPENDIX 2

Tillicum Lelum and Vancouver Island University (VIU) Aboriginal Early Childhood Development Partnership Project
Telephone Administered Questionnaire Participant Consent Form

Date: November, 2011

Meeting Organizer/Facilitators:

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Background Information

Tillicum Lelum Aboriginal Friendship Centre and VIU’s Innovation Chair for Aboriginal Early Childhood Development are working together on a project the outcome of which is to develop:

1. A collaborative, community-based model on which to build culturally relevant AECD programs and services at Tillicum Lelum in partnership with Vancouver Island University.

2. A culturally relevant, holistic, philosophical framework for AECD programs and services that reflect the values of Tillicum Lelum and the community they serve.

As a representative of a community agency/organization providing multiple services to children and families we are contacting you to participate in a telephone administered questionnaire in November, 2011.

The telephone administered questionnaire should take about thirty to forty five minutes of your time to complete. You will be asked twenty questions in total. Four questions relate directly to the organization such as clients served, geographic location of the agency, the interviewees role with the agency, and the types of services/programs provided. Other questions relate to the management structure, philosophical approaches used, strengths and challenges experienced, physical environment and finally your suggestions to strengthen services/programs to children and families.

What will be done with the information that is collected?

Following the interview, information collected will be organized by themes. Information related to the models and approaches used will inform recommendations to the Tillicum Lelum Aboriginal Friendship Centre. As well, suggestions related to both the physical space and enhancement of services/programs will be considered as a management model and philosophical approach to services is developed. A summary of what was learned in the interview process will be submitted to the funder (Tillicum Lelum Aboriginal Friendship Centre).

The information collected in this process will inform the development of a holistic, culturally relevant service delivery model for AECD at Tillicum Lelum. All data both paper and electronic will be stored in the office of the BCRIC for AECD at VIU. (Paper files will be kept in a locked file cabinet in the locked office.) This data will be used only by the AECD Chair and assistant researchers. The final summary report will be available to you at your request.
How is confidentiality protected?

There is no known harm to you in responding to the interview questions.

At no time in the written reports will information be linked to you as an individual.

You can choose not to answer any questions or not to participate in this research for any reason and at any time. If you have any concerns about your treatment as a participant in this research, please contact the VIU Research Ethics Officer at 1-888-920-2221 (ext 2665) or by email at reb@viu.ca.

I have read and understand the above information and understand that I may ask questions in the future.

I consent to participate in this project and to allow the information I provide to be used in this research.

Name________________________________________________ Date_____________________________

Huy chq u!          Kleco Kleco!         Gile’kesla!

Thank-you!
APPENDIX 3
Aboriginal Early Childhood Development (AECD)
in Aboriginal Communities

Questionnaire

Please answer the following questions including comments as appropriate to support your opinion and/or explain your response. If you require more space for any questions or wish to comment further on any related topic, please feel free to use the reverse side of the questionnaire.

For telephone survey information only

Participant Information:
(For survey/contact use only):

Name of contact: ________________________________ Organization: ________________________________

Consent Form signed: □ Yes □ No Date: ____________________ Time: ____________________

Interview Date: ______________________ Researcher: ________________________________

Please check the box in front of the option that most closely describes you.

1. I am:
   □ First Nation  □ Métis  □ Inuit  □ Multi-cultural  □ Non-Aboriginal

2. My agency/organization provides child/family services and programs for the following population:
   □ First Nation  □ Métis  □ Inuit  □ Multi-cultural  □ Non-Aboriginal

3. My agency/organization serves the following region (please note, it is the intent of this question to know the region in which your organization is located rather than the people to whom you provide services):

   □ Coast Salish  (Greater Victoria, Eastern Vancouver Island & West Coast Lower Mainland)
   □ Nuu-chah-nulth  (Western Vancouver Island)
   □ Kwakwaka’wakw, Heiltsuk, Haida Nation, Tsimshian  (Northern Coast & Haida Gwaii)
   □ Carrier Nation
   □ Other  (Please specify)
4. Please check the box that most closely reflects your professional role related to work with children and family in your agency/organization: (Note: if respondent has difficulty checking only one box it is appropriate to indicate all boxes that apply.)

- Elder
- Chief or Council Member
- Band Administrator
- Education Department (please specify your title)
- Language Teacher/staff
- Interested Community member
- Parent
- Primary Caregiver
- Family Member (other than parent)
- Agency/Organization Manager
- Child and Youth Care Worker
- Family Support worker
- Social Worker
- Teacher
- Early Childhood Educator
- Health professional
- Early Childhood Development Specialist
- Other (please specify)

5. Please check the items below that best reflect the programs/services that your agency/organization provides to children, youth and their families:

- Early Childhood Education/Child Care
- Programs for Youth
- Parent Education/training
- Parent Support/Counselling Support
- Cultural Programs
- Child Protection
- Speech/language/literacy programs
- Early intervention/Infant Development
- Supported Child Development (services to children with special needs)
- Health programs
- Other (please specify):

6. Based on your understanding of the services/programs available in your agency/organization, do you think the services/programs reflect the holistic needs of the children and families you serve? (For the purpose of the questionnaire, holistic is defined as programs/services that consider the whole child, physically, socially, cognitively, emotionally, spiritually, and culturally. Holistic also means that we cannot view the child outside the context of the family and community.)

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

If yes, please list some of the ways you support holistic approaches in your program/agency.
If no, please identify additional services and programs you think would help to ensure the holistic needs of children and their families are met.

_______________________________________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________________________________

7. Many agencies/organizations that provide service to children and families work to ensure that these services are culturally relevant. Please check the appropriate boxes below that reflect the ways in which you support/promote the cultural competence of staff and/or the cultural relevance of services:

- In our program we include:
  - Elders as participants and teachers
  - Family, Community and Cultural teachings
  - Language
  - Educational activities (eg. traditional arts and crafts; nature-based activities.)

- Cultural activities/events (eg. Tribal Journey, Pow-wows, preparing and serving seasonal and traditional foods).

- Ceremony

- Other (please specify):
  ______________________________________________
  ______________________________________________

8. Are there cultural activities that you would like to provide but presently are not providing?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

If yes, please describe:

_______________________________________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________________________________

9. Are there specific barriers you experience in your efforts to provide culturally relevant services?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

If yes, please describe:

_______________________________________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________________________________
10. Are you aware how cultural activities in your agency/organization are funded?

☐ Yes  ☐ No  ☐ Unsure

If yes, please check the box that applies:

☐ Federal government  ☐ Private funders
☐ Provincial government  ☐ Fees paid by users
☐ Municipal government  ☐ Other (please specify):
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

11. Many agencies/organizations subscribe to a set of values that guide service delivery. If this is true of your agency/organization please identify and prioritize your top three values from the list below with (1) as most important and (3) as least. Please feel free to suggest a value that is not on the list. Please note your new value under ‘other’:

☐ Family/client centred  ☐ Play-based
☐ Strengths-based (focus on strengths rather than challenges)  ☐ Community-based (services are based in the community)
☐ Culturally-based (focus on ensuring culture is considered an essential part of service)  ☐ Community-responsive (services respond to changing community interests and needs).
☐ Culturally responsive (responds to different or changing cultural interests and needs)  ☐ Universal (available to all who wish to use the service)
☐ Selective (only available to select population)
☐ Other (please specify):
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

12. Many agencies/organizations use particular philosophical approaches to service delivery (in part or across all programs). If this is true in your agency/organization please describe the philosophical approach used:

_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________

13. Please describe briefly the management model/structure your agency/organization uses to administer the services/programs provided to children and families:

_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
14. Based on your own experience, what do you think are the strengths of the management model you use (for example, you might want to say something like, “our services and programs are well coordinated” or “our administrative structure ensures equity and fairness across all staff” or “issues raised by staff or clients are dealt with quickly and fairly”). *(This question is intended to identify what is working well in your organization not to assess or evaluate the agency).*

_______________________________________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________________________________

15. Based on your experience, what do you think are some of the challenges/issues/barriers of your management structure? (For example, you might want to say something like, “it is frustrating that one program may not always know what is happening in another program” or “community participants do not attend regularly”; or “sometimes the process of each intake/program is not understood by others working in the agency”). *(This question is intended to identify potential challenges in your organization not to assess or evaluate the agency).*

_______________________________________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________________________________

16. In what ways does the physical environment of your organization (both indoors and out) support or complement the services provided?

_______________________________________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________________________________

17. In what ways does the physical environment of your organization (both indoors and out) present challenges to the services provided?

_______________________________________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________________________________

18. If you were in charge of your agency/organization what changes would you make to enhance the service to children and their families related to either the types of services/programs offered or the ways in which your agency/organization manages those services/programs?

_______________________________________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________________________________
19. If there is anything further you would like to share about your organization or the services provided please feel free comment below:

_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________

20. May we contact you again if we require further information about either the service delivery model or philosophy/theoretical framework used by your organization?

☐ Yes  ☐ No  ☐ Unsure

If yes, please provide:

Name ________________________________________________________________

Telephone contact: ______________________________ Email ______________________________

Huy chq u!  Kleco Kleco!  Gile’kesla!

Thank-you!
APPENDIX 4

Aboriginal Early Childhood Development in Aboriginal Communities:
Tillicum Lelum and Vancouver Island University Early Childhood Development Project

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Community Focus Group Meeting Format

1. Welcome, introductions, Purpose and plan for the session

2. Overview of project
   • Background
   • Project Goals & Objectives & Timeline

3. Project Consent Form:
   • Distribution of forms
   • Explanation of consent
   • Questions/comments
   • Signing and collection

4. Facilitated group discussion:
   • Based on your personal knowledge, what are some of the current types of services and programs that are available for Aboriginal children and families in your community.
   • If you were to enhance those services/programs what would you include to ensure the holistic needs of children and families are met.
   • What are some of the core values you believe are key to quality service in the Aboriginal community?
   • If you were to design a model for services/programs to Aboriginal children and families what do you think should be some key features of that service/program?

5. Other ideas or suggestions?

6. Wrap up and debrief.
   • Questions/comments about the project or the facilitation process.
   • Distribution of Debriefing Form with BCRIC AECD Contact information.