

...with Dad

Showcase on Aboriginal Father Involvement

February 23-24, 2011
Delta Meeting Room
Delta Ottawa Hotel & Suites
Ottawa, Ontario



NATIONAL COLLABORATING CENTRE
FOR ABORIGINAL HEALTH



CENTRE DE COLLABORATION NATIONALE
DE LA SANTÉ AUTOCHTONE

“I can still feel the softness of my father’s touch as he steadied my footsteps across that old log. For as long as I could remember that log had challenged me. I never got across it without jumping or falling off. But with Dad’s help I was able to conquer that challenge. His soft, gentle laugh that came on that momentous day was like the tolling of a bell. I felt so good. These memories of gentleness, of success, of laughter and of support are ones that I carry with me today.”

Margo Greenwood, Academic Leader, NCCAH



A MESSAGE OF WELCOME



On behalf of the National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health, I would like to acknowledge the sacred territory of the Algonquin People on whose lands we gather, and extend to each of you a warm welcome to our showcase supporting the positive involvement of First Nations, Inuit and Métis fathers in the care of children. As Grand Chief Ed John has said: “Fathers may well be the greatest untapped resource in the lives of Aboriginal children today.” His statement points to the huge gap in the lives of our children, families and communities when Dads are not included—as well as the profound difference Dads can make when we understand their needs, respect their perspectives, support their healing and encourage their involvement. With your help, we hope to explore and highlight the urgent need for a stronger role for Indigenous fathers in communities, programs, research and policies in Canada.

As understanding of the connection between father involvement and the health of children grows, more and more people are asking: What do dads need in their journey as fathers? How can we support participation of fathers in family-centered services? What teachings are important for children to learn with their Dads? And how can we promote the well-being of our children, families, communities and nations...with Dad?



Sharing Our Voices

Over the next day and a half, we will learn firsthand from a number of Indigenous fathers who are willing to share with us their personal experiences raising children. We will hear from Elders whose learnings are rooted in cultures and traditions, and from coordinators and leaders who offer father support programs and activities in First Nations, Inuit, Métis and urban communities.

We are pleased to welcome Mike DeGagné, who has served for more than a decade as Executive Director of the Aboriginal Healing Foundation addressing the traumatic legacies of the Indian Residential School System for First Nations, Inuit and Métis family systems in Canada. He will offer personal reflections on fatherhood as well as

A MESSAGE OF WELCOME



key learnings from the foundation's years of community work and research.

We welcome Dr. Jessica Ball, who led Canada's first study into Indigenous father involvement as part of a national study of fatherhood launched in 2003, and who opened up Aboriginal fathering as a new area of inquiry. We look forward to her insights promoting meaningful and relevant programming for First Nations, Inuit and Métis fathers. We are grateful to Brian Russell, provincial coordinator of the Father Involvement Initiative – Ontario Network who is also joining us to share his perspectives on connecting with children.

Finally, we are pleased to introduce Albert Pooley, President of the Native American Fatherhood and Families Association (NAFFA) in Mesa, Arizona, and a proud parent and grandparent. *His Fatherhood is Sacred™* program helps create links between past and present generations and builds on principles of Native American heritage. We look forward to hearing his wisdom concerning family as the heart of Indigenous cultures.



The Role of Fathers

Why does father involvement matter? Playing, learning, and growing “with Dad” is associated with healthy child development and resiliency. Positive father involvement helps promote increased self-esteem, positive social, cognitive and emotional development, improved school achievement, and better physical health and well-being in children and youth (Allen & Daly, 2007). It's also good for Dads. JR Olson works daily at the Peguis First Nation daycare in Manitoba and, as daycare coordinator Mindy Sinclair has seen, when he walks into a room all the toddlers scream with delight. “What JR has is truly magic—the love for children and the love that's given back to him,” she says.

Yet we also know Indigenous fathers cope with a multitude of barriers that make it difficult for Dads to be involved in raising children. Statistics show Indigenous men face high rates of unemployment, poverty, and racism along with challenges in obtaining adequate housing, health care or social services. We also know they experience a history of “disrupted fatherhood” across several generations— a result of colonization and policies of forced assimilation affecting languages, cultures, and ties to lands and families. For some, the disruption in healthy parenting in their own childhoods has led to challenges with addictions, mental health, anger, alienation and isolation. For many, parenting is something they feel they are doing blind, with no role models, few resources, and little support. As Jessica Ball suggested in her



research, Indigenous fathers may be “the most socially excluded population in North America.” That can and must change.

Working Together...with Dads

This gathering brings together more than 100 individuals from across the country, including First Nations, Inuit and Métis fathers of all ages, Elders, parents and caregivers. Also gathered are researchers, decision-makers, directors, and administrators from father involvement, parenting, early childhood development and child welfare programs, as well as key members of federal and regional government agencies responsible for the funding and development of these programs.

Together, we will highlight programs, resources, initiatives and practices that support positive active father involvement—drawing on our collective wisdom, life experience, and the knowledge we have gained on our individual journeys. Although we are all from different places and backgrounds, we are connected by one

important common goal, a goal to improve the well-being of our children and families. We look forward to sharing together with all of you and, in particular...with Dads!

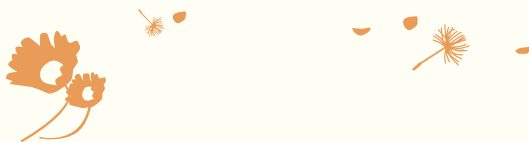
Meegwetch,

Margo Greenwood,
Academic Leader, National Collaborating
Centre for Aboriginal Health

“JR Olson is at the daycare every day and when he walks into a room all the toddlers scream with delight. What JR has is truly magic—the love for children and the love that’s given back to him.”

– Mindy Sinclair, Peguis First Nation
Head Start Program, Manitoba.

OBJECTIVES



The overall goal is to encourage and support involvement of fathers in the “good care” of children.

We expect to:

- provide information about father involvement programs, resources, initiatives, and practices;
 - promote the positive involvement and interaction of fathers with their children;
 - foster networking opportunities;
 - identify and document the need for and elements of successful father involvement programs and strategies; and
 - articulate future directions for father involvement programs and strategies.
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SCHEDULE

Arrival Day – February 22, 2011

6:00pm Registration
 Exhibit Set-up

Day One – February 23, 2011

7:30am Registration
 Hot breakfast will be available

8:30am Welcome Messages
 Welcome to the Territory – Elder Dorothy Meness
 Opening Prayer – Elder Paul Skanks
 Welcome to the Showcase – Margo Greenwood, Academic Leader, NCCAH
 Overview of the Showcase – Dan George, Facilitator

9:00am Keynote Speakers
 Mike DeGagné, Aboriginal Healing Foundation
 “Healing and Parenting: The Aboriginal Healing Foundation and the Role of Fathers”

9:45am Video: *Messages From the Heart*

10:00am BREAK



- 10:20am **Fathers Panel**
Each panelist will share reflections on fatherhood relating the importance of being involved, responsible, and committed fathers.
- William Aguir
 - Craig Christmas
 - Leo Hebert
 - Elder George Giant
 - Dion Metcalfe
 - Dennis Steinhauer
- Comments and Dialogue
- 12:00pm **LUNCH**
- 12:30pm **Keynote Speakers**
Jessica Ball, University of Victoria
"Preparing Programs Promoting Aboriginal Fathers' Involvement"
Brian Russell, Father Involvement Initiative – Ontario Network
"Into the Circle: Forging a Path into a Child's Life"
- 1:15pm **Panel of Father Programs**
A 'snapshot' introduction to each initiative followed by questions, answers, and action-oriented dialogue. Each Panel Presenter will share learnings from their work outlining key elements of a successful program. See program descriptions on page 9.
- *Skak Ha Dees T'iah – Children are Precious* – Travis Holyk
 - *Traditional Parenting* – Joe Migwans
 - *Full Circle Support* – Mel Bazil
 - *Nêâh Kee Papa – I am your Father* – Andrew Bird
 - *Sivummut Inuit Father's Group* – Fred Simpson
 - *Peguis Aboriginal Head Start* – JR Olson
 - *Father and Sons on the Land* – Jake Gearheard
- Comments and Dialogue
- 2:30pm **BREAK**
- 2:45pm **Break Out Groups (discussion worksheet)**
Building upon themes identified in the Panel of Father Programs, explore ways and means to advance key learnings at the individual, family, community and organizational levels.
- 3:15pm **Plenary Session: Reporting Back**
- 4:15pm **Overview of Day Two/Adjourn**
Free Evening

Day Two – February 24, 2011



- 7:30am Hot breakfast will be available
- 8:30am Opening Prayer
- 8:40am Summary of Previous Day
- 8:50am Introduction to the Day's Activities
- 9:00am Keynote Speaker
Albert Pooley, Native American Fatherhood & Families Association
"Fatherhood is Leadership – The Most Important Kind of Leadership"
- 9:45am Elders Panel
A Panel of matriarchs share teachings and lessons learned from a life of parenting.
- Elder Rose Point
 - Elder Clara Dal Col
 - Shirley Tagalik
- 10:45am Small Group Discussions (discussion worksheet)
What is the role and responsibility for healthy parenting at the:
- individual level?
 - family level?
 - community level?
 - organizational level?
- 11:05am Plenary Session: Reporting Back
- 11:30am Plenary Discussion
- Where to from here?
 - What is our critical path forward?
- 12:00pm Closing Remarks
- 12:15pm Closing Prayer – Elder Paul Skanks





PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS



Skak Ha Dees T'iah – Children Are Precious

Strengthening the Role of Carrier First Nations Fathers

Travis Holyk, Carrier Sekani Family Services

The *Children Are Precious* project worked with young fathers to determine the role of Carrier men in child rearing, pre and post natal. The researchers recruited participants from member communities of Carrier Sekani Family Services, an agency responsible for health, social and legal services for eleven member First Nations in North Central British Columbia. Fathers from a member Carrier First Nation who had a child born within the previous two years discussed some of the challenges and obstacles they faced with the birth of their child. These included stresses associated with their economic situation, lack of time for one's self, and personal pressure to be the family provider. The research project and results will be discussed in greater detail in the presentation.

Learn more at www.csfs.org or 1 800 889 6855

Traditional Parenting Program

Joe Migwans, Skookum Jim Friendship Centre

The Yukon Traditional Parenting program combines two pilot projects: *Traditional Motherhood* and *Traditional Fatherhood*. Since 1995 the Centre has supported Yukon communities interested in delivering the program, which uses a traditional parenting facilitator's manual developed by staff and approved by Yukon First Nations Elders. Three-day workshops are offered throughout the year and include a focus on fathers and children while incorporating traditional activities like setting fishnets and snares, berry picking, sewing and tanning hides. The program provides practical, culturally-specific training for parents, who explore values and attitudes expressed in traditional child-rearing practices, and apply those values to modern skills in parenting. Also included are oral traditions, storytelling, the spiritual nature of child rearing, and the role of extended family. The Traditional Parenting Program at Skookum Jim provides a basis to support parents in finding strength in cultural traditions.

Learn more at www.skookumjim.com or 1 867 633 7680

Full Circle Support Program

Mel Bazil, Program Coordinator, Dze L K'ant Friendship Centre Society

As a father friendly program, the Circle of Supports Program in Smithers, BC delivers family-centered programs and provides strategies for families and persons living with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. Attempts to begin a father involvement program in our small town involved a visit with one man at a time. In lieu of a direct father involvement program, our program delivers day to day general services and workshops in a family-centered format but with father friendly

language. Fathers and men are supported and acknowledged, and father involvement research is applied in programs that address a multitude of root causes related to health, justice, and social issues. Healthy father involvement, along with supporting moms and children, is promoted through positive messaging and recognition of healthy activities. Programs support fathers and diminish the stigmas that can be associated with fathers facing barriers or separation.



Learn more at www.dzelkant.com or 1 250 847 5211

Nēâh Kee Papa – I Am Your Father

Andrew Bird, Coordinator, Manitoba Métis Federation

The *Nēâh Kee Papa* (Michif Cree for “I am your father”) parenting enhancement program in Manitoba supports the active involvement of fathers in their children’s lives and the healthy development of children. When a father participates he can access counseling, peer resource groups, guest speakers on topics of interest, and links to resources and programs. While fathers may enroll in an eight-session program, they may also complete the program over a number of months in a flexible format. Components include sessions on a father’s role, health and sexuality, effective communication/anger management, understanding rights as single parents and in custody relationships, and life skills. Partners and spouses of participants may also participate in several ways: in a separate program with a female facilitator, in a separate couples program, or by joining the men’s group. The program has been running since 1999, and is free and open to any male and/or their partners. *Nēâh Kee Papa* aims to empower young fathers to provide positive emotional support to their children, enhance their parenting skills, and support healthy family relationships.

Learn more at www.mmf.mb.ca or 1 204 586 8474



Sivummut Inuit Father's Group

Fred Simpson, Early Childhood Education Teacher, Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre

Ottawa is home to the largest southern Inuit community in Canada. The mission of the Sivummut Head Start Program in Ottawa is to provide each child and family with a supportive learning environment that promotes Inuit culture and language. One of the six components of Aboriginal Head Start programs for the Sivummut Head Start is the involvement of parents and guardians in the program. Parents and guardians are the child's primary teachers and they have the most important influence on their child's development. It is the parents' right and responsibility to be involved in all aspects of the planning, development, implementation and evaluation of the program.

The Father's Group meets periodically throughout the year. Fathers are encouraged to participate in group activities, and to build a fun and trusting relationship through learning new skills and socializing together both with their children and a group of fathers.

Learn more at www.ottawainuitchildrens.com or 1 613 744 3133 (ext 232)

Peguis Aboriginal Head Start Program

Early Childhood Education and Father Involvement

JR Olson, Peguis First Nation

Peguis First Nation in Manitoba is increasingly known for sharing one of its noted "best practices"—the number of men who are currently working as early childhood educators in the community. In fact, Peguis Aboriginal Head Start program sent the first all-male childcare group on an exchange to British Columbia in 2010 to share knowledge about best practices in early childhood education with the Klemtu First Nation on the northern coast.



Mindy Sinclair, program coordinator for Aboriginal Head Start and Peguis Daycare, notes that men in mainstream ECE programs represent about 2% of staff, while in Peguis, they comprise about 25% of staff. Daniel Cook of the Peguis daycare said new parents are often surprised to see a man helping look after the kids. "There aren't many men in childcare and I wish they knew what they were missing out on. Every man has an inner child they're trying to let out, and children love it when you act like a child and play with them." Sinclair, who is working on a research project called *Aboriginal Men in Early Childhood Education*, says men help provide a complete learning experience for children. Peguis is the largest First Nation community in Manitoba, with a population of approximately 7200 people of Ojibway and Cree descent.

Learn more at www.peguisfirstnation.ca or 1 204 645 2359

Fathers and Sons on the Land

Jake Gearheard, Executive Director, Ilisaqsivik Family Resource Centre

In Clyde River, in Nunavut's far north, young men are mentored in land-based cultural workshops and community hunts by dog team to traditional camps of historical and cultural importance. These projects, organized by the Ilisaqsivik Society, promote mental, spiritual, and physical well-being and validate and transfer *Inuit Quajimajatuqangit (IQ)* associated with Inuit societal values, hunting, traveling, working with dogs, camping, and being on the land. About 16 older 'fathers' and Elders, along with 16 'sons,' including at-risk youth as well as young men in their early 20s, participated in the Ataata trip in summer 2010, and about 18 fathers and 18 sons are participating in the 2011 Qimmivut trip.

For Inuit men, significant cultural and social change within the recent past has drastically shaken the foundational beliefs of what it is to be a man in Inuit terms. In hunting, the reliance on snowmobiles which break down and are often in need of costly repairs has had major impact on ability to hunt and work as necessary, and in being rightly related to the land. In many cases, these changes have been devastating, resulting in loss of identity, self-esteem, positive male role models, depression, substance abuse, domestic violence, and suicide. On several levels, the roles of Inuit men in Clyde River are in transition, and it is essential for the wellness of the entire community that men successfully navigate this transition. The Qimmivut and Ataata trips affirm the role of land-based activities for Inuit men by providing the space, time and safe, familiar and empowering environments and activities that Inuit men often need to feel well. Fish and other country foods gathered during the trips are shared with community members upon the group's return, and workshops as the group travels reinforce skills, values, language and history.



The Ilisaqsivik Society is a non-profit health and wellness organization in Clyde River, home to about 830 people, providing family resources, healing and programs that develop the strengths of youth, Elders, parents and community members.

Learn more at www.ilisaqsivik.ca or 1 867 924 6565

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



Dr. Jessica Ball

Jessica Ball is a professor in the School of Child and Youth Care at the University of Victoria, Canada. She is a third generation Canadian of Irish and English descent. She is privileged to have grown up and raised a family on the traditional territories of the Coast Salish Peoples. Jessica has consulted on a wide variety of projects around the world, mostly addressing the health and well-being of Indigenous children and families. She is the principal investigator of an interdisciplinary, grant funded program of research on the cultural nature of child and family development (www.ecdip.org). Projects include father's involvement, Indigenous children's health, early language development, evaluation of quality child care and child development outcomes, early screening and intervention, and child care capacity building in rural and remote communities. Jessica is a member of the Father Involvement Research Alliance and was a co-principal investigator in the first national study of fatherhood, leading the Indigenous fathers component of the study. She has authored or co-authored of over 100 journal articles and book chapters and four books.



Mike DeGagné

Mike DeGagné is the Executive Director of the Aboriginal Healing Foundation, a national Aboriginal organization dedicated to addressing the legacy of Canada's Indian Residential School System. He has worked in the field of addiction and mental health for the past 25 years, first as a community worker on-reserve in northern Ontario and later with the Addiction Research Foundation (ARF), the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse (CCSA), and the National Native Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program (NNADAP). Mike lectures nationally and internationally on issues of Aboriginal health, residential schools, reconciliation, and governance. He serves on a number of boards including Champlain Local Health Integration Network (LHIN), is currently the Chairman of the Child Welfare League of Canada, and past Chairman of Ottawa's Queensway Carleton Hospital. His PhD focuses on Aboriginal post secondary education.



Brian Russell

Brian Russell is the Provincial Coordinator of the Father Involvement Initiative – Ontario Network where he provides training and resource development for programs and communities in Ontario. He also delivers programs for dads in his community in Toronto.



Albert Pooley

Albert Pooley is the President of the Native American Fatherhood & Families Association (NAFFA) in Mesa, Arizona. Born into the rich traditions of both Navajo and Hopi heritage, Mr. Pooley has been married to his wife Julia for 40 years, and has six children and ten grandchildren. Mr. Pooley is internationally recognized for his *Fatherhood is Sacred™* program, created specifically to meet the needs of Native Americans by building upon motivating principles of Native American heritage, promoting a deeper understanding of how to strengthen and unite families through responsible fatherhood and motherhood, and creating links between past and present generations. To date, the program has served over 3000 Native American fathers across the United States. These culturally sensitive curriculums are currently used by 42 tribes and seven urban centers.



“An involved father really has a big impact on a child’s emotional behavior and physical well-being.”

– Andrew Bird, Nēah Kee Papa program

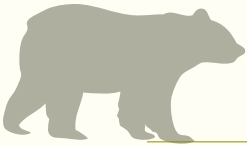
SHARING WITH DAD

Whether it's sharing a hug or a hunting trip, asking for help when you need it or just hanging out, on the next few pages, we invite you to write down and share a few life lessons across the generation gap!



Eight Things a Father Can Learn From His Children

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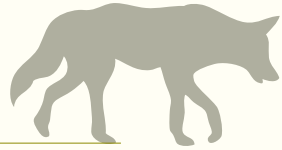
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Eight Things Children Can Learn From Their Father

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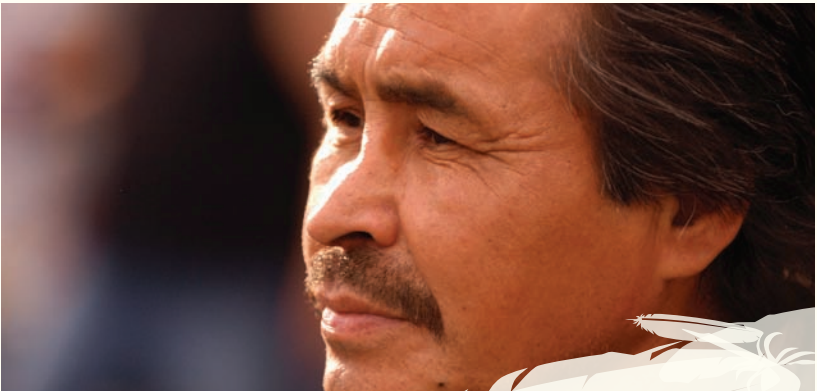
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sharing knowledge · making a difference
partager les connaissances · faire une différence

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