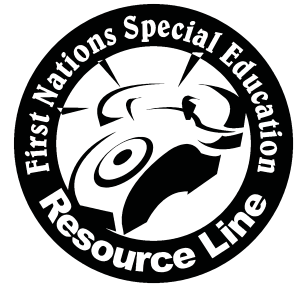


First Nations Special Education CONNECTIONS



Newsletter of the First Nations Special Education Toll-free Resource Line

Vol. 10, No. 7

Mar. 2010

Working with First Nations
students in BC?

Have special education
questions?

Call the Resource Line!

The Resource Line is a free service for
BC educators and parents.

It can help you brainstorm approaches,
guide you toward helpful resources,
help you to understand assessment
documents, and let you know about the
latest information on special education.

When you call or email, you will reach
the Resource Line Coordinator, Holly
Smith. Holly is available to answer your
questions, Monday to Thursday, 12:30
to 4:30 during the school year.

Holly also travels throughout the
province offering in-school support, so
if she is away when you call, she will
follow-up as soon as possible upon her
return.

Contact the Resource Line:

Toll-free 1-877-547-1919

hollys@fnesc.ca

Connections is the monthly newsletter
of the Resource Line. Back issues of
Connections are available from:

www.fnsc.ca/resource-line.htm

The Resource Line is a collaborative
project of the First Nations Education
Steering Committee (FNESC) and
the First Nations Schools Association
(FNSA), made possible thanks to
financial assistance from Indian and
Northern Affairs Canada.



Enlightening Article

Over the past two months, I have received a number of questions on the Resource Line about how to support primary students with 'classroom behaviour problems.' Madeline Price's article, Challenging Behaviour in Young Children, addresses these concerns and offers some suggestions for readiness and social learning.

Holly Smith, First Nations Special Education Toll-Free Resource Line

Challenging Behaviour in Young Children: How to Support Positive Change

**By Guest Contributor: Madeline Price, FNESC/FNSA Special
Education Program Consultant**

Perhaps due to gaps in social learning opportunities and readiness skills, students come to school and sometimes have trouble sitting still, moving from one activity to another, or keeping their hands to themselves. The following are some suggestions, which are consistent with the Special Education Program principles of early intervention and prevention, for supporting positive behaviour and helping children learn new skills so they can become confident learners.

"Seek First to Understand Before Being Understood" (Covey). In other words, build a relationship with the student and let them know that you are on their side. Do everything you can to help them succeed. Think about how you can change the environment so they can be successful. Try to see things from their point of view and always keep in mind that they really want to succeed but they are having trouble managing.

Remain calm and supportive. When a student's behaviour is inappropriate or a when a student may be in crisis, keep your voice calm, validate feelings, and provide the student with a "space" where he or she can calm down - a space that offers support and never punishment. When he/she is in this space and has calmed down, it is a good time to teach the appropriate behaviour.

Utilize Social Stories. This would be an excellent time to develop a social story with the student. Teaching the appropriate behaviour and using teachable moments are more productive and pro-active than punishing or nagging the student. You could also use pictures to illustrate what went wrong and what the student could have done instead. Try to be as concrete as you can, using role plays and giving examples.

Using visuals assists many students. You can also use a consequence-story strip. This is a little piece of paper with a few words and a picture. A picture story can tell what happens if you hit a classmate, and what happens if you don't hit. For example: if you hit, your friends will be sad and you will need to have a quiet time to calm down. The picture will show friends with unhappy faces. If you don't hit, you will have happy friends and the picture shows the student happy with his happy friends.

Another excellent strategy to help all young students is to have a visual class schedule posted in the class every day. Each activity is written separately on a card with a picture showing the activities in the order in which they occur. When each activity is finished you turn over the card and say, "Finished." At the end of the day you will have all the cards turned over.

Concrete measures of time are useful with students who have difficulty transitioning from one activity to another. Often, students do not understand how long they have to complete something. The concept of time is too abstract for them. You can make time more concrete by using a set of blocks. For instance, if you want the activity to be 5 minutes, stack five unifix cubes or 5 small blocks so that the student can see them. After each minute, remove a block. Tell the student that when all the blocks are gone, it is time to clean up. In this way, they can see time go by and prepare to make the change. Older students can move to a coloured timer that shows the passage of time.

If a student needs more support than others in the class, it is okay, and it is important to remember that equal treatment is not always fair. If a student requires this extra support, then this is what you must do. Remember, in the beginning of "positive behaviour support" the adults will have to work very hard to set the students up for success.

The FNEC/FNSA Special Education Program consultants, Holly Smith and Madeline Price, are also available to visit schools to support Positive Behaviour and can demonstrate for you how the strategies work.

Also, keep in mind that sending students home as a consequence sends a strong message to the student that they are not wanted at school. If you begin right away and develop a good relationship and use positive supports, you could avoid a longer term behaviour problem.

Related Resources:

To learn to write your own Social Stories visit the Gray Center at:

<http://www.editurl.com/chp>

SET BC's Picture SET has many suggestions for behaviour supports at:

<http://www.editurl.com/chq>



Literacy Thoughts to Ponder

Do you know how many books are in the homes of children in your class or community? Perhaps you can support home reading initiatives in your school by providing families with information about literacy and appropriate books for the children in their homes.

Here are some interesting ideas on literacy that teachers and administrators may wish to consider. They might also be useful additions if you are writing a proposal for literacy program funding.

"Most of the reading problems faced by today's adolescents and adults are the result of problems that might have been avoided or resolved in their early childhood years." *National Research Council, 2000.*

"Reading is typically acquired relatively predictably by children who... have had experiences in early childhood that fostered motivation and provided exposure to literacy in use." *National Research Council, 2000.*

"The single most significant factor influencing a child's early educational success is an introduction to books and being read to at home prior to beginning school." *National Commission on Reading, 1985.*

"The only behavior measure that correlates significantly with reading scores is the number of books in the home. An analysis of a national data set of nearly 100,000 United States school children found that access to printed materials--and not poverty--is the 'critical variable affecting reading acquisition.' *Jeff McQuillan, The Literacy Crisis: False Claims, Real Solutions, 1998.*

"Children who have not already developed some basic literacy practices when they enter school are three to four times more likely to drop out in later years." *National Adult Literacy Survey, 1993.*

“Children in low-income families lack essential one-on-one reading time. A recent report by the Packard and MacArthur Foundations found that the average child growing up in a middle class family has been exposed to 1,000 to 1,700 hours of one-on-one picture book reading. The average child growing up in a low-income family, in contrast, has only been exposed to 25 hours of one-on-one reading.” *Jeff McQuillan, The Literacy Crisis: False Claims, Real Solutions, 1998.*

“The most successful way to improve the reading achievement of low-income children is to increase their access to print. Communities ranking high in achievement tests have several factors in common: an abundance of books in public libraries, easy access to books in the community at large and a large number of textbooks per student.” *Newman, Sanford, et al. “American’s Child Care Crisis: A Crime Prevention Tragedy”; Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, 2000.*

Would you like strategies for supporting parents of young children to read with their children? Contact the Resource Line Staff for ideas and workshops: Deanne Zeidler 1-877-547-5926 or Holly Smith 1-877-547-1919.

Oral Language Teaching Series

Language Facilitation

By Guest Contributor, Ben Perry

FNESC/FNSA Speech/Language Therapist

“Language Facilitation” or “Environmental Language Intervention” are techniques that speech language therapists recommend to help children develop oral language. These techniques are natural habits for many parents and educators already. Using them more often and in more intense ways can support a child’s oral language development. The basic techniques involve: being child-centred; patience and waiting; and certain ways of responding.

Being child-centred means letting the child lead the conversation. When the adult follows the child, the conversation revolves around the child’s current interests and focus of attention. Talking about what children are paying attention to makes it easier for them to understand what you are saying – and often makes conversations more lively and natural! Another way to be more child-centred is to squat, kneel or sit down to a child’s level. If you are face to face with a child, they are more likely to pay attention to what you are saying, and you are more likely to notice what’s going on in their world.

Patience and waiting are important skills for facilitating language development. Children may need more time

to think about what they heard, and to think about what they are going to say. Adults have a tendency to follow up a first question too quickly. For example, we might say, “What do you want to do now?” followed by a two second pause, and then quickly offer a choice like, “Do you want to play with blocks or paint a picture?” That two second pause might not be long enough for that child – they might need a longer time to think, and waiting that long might feel uncomfortable to an adult. It is worth experimenting with “uncomfortable” pauses to see if a child talks more when given longer “thinking time.”

The final way that we can support children’s language development is to provide them with good models of oral language. By observing how complex their talk is we can speak to them using language that is just a little bit more complex. When a child says something simple, we can say it back to them, adding a bit more complexity or fixing some of the errors. For instance:

Child: I no want go.

Adult: You don’t want to go on the bus?

Using these language enrichment techniques in a conscious way will enhance children’s language development.

For more information on language facilitation, contact Benjamin Perry at benp@fnesc.ca.

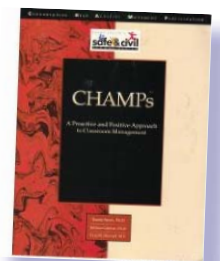
FNESC/FNSA Special Education Lending Library

The FNESC/FNSA Special Education Lending Library has many valuable resources for your work with First Nations students with special needs. Please note that the lending library is available to FNSA member schools only.

CHAMPS: A Proactive and Positive Approach to Classroom Management

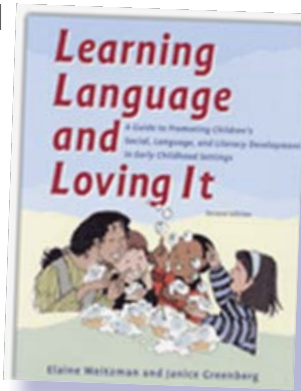
Sprick, R., Garrison, M. and Howard, L., 1998

This is a systematic guide for classroom teachers who want to improve their current classroom management plans. The eight modules are structured to help teachers identify and maintain the effective parts of their current plans, while identifying and strengthening weaker parts of their management plans. This resource will help any teacher manage the behaviours of students more positively and effectively.



Learning Language and Loving It Guidebook: A Guide to Promoting Children's Social, Language & Literacy Development in Early Childhood Settings, Second Edition

Weitzman & Greenberg, 2002



This guidebook provides a comprehensive, simple guide to creating an enriched and inclusive environment that fosters the social, language and literacy development of preschool children in childcare settings. It has practical strategies for teachers, speech-language pathologists and other professionals who work with young children and who are responsible for creating learning environments that maximize children's language, social and literacy skills.

The companion DVD has real-life examples of teachers using strategies in play and daily activities to create enriched, interactive language-learning environments that include children who have special needs and language delays, children who are second language learners, and children who are typically developing.

Language Development Questions?

Parents and teachers are very welcome to call Deanne Zeidler on the Speech and Language Resource Line at 1-877-547-5926. This is a free service.

Useful Websites

Youth in BC

Crisis Intervention and Suicide Prevention Centre of British Columbia

<http://youthinbc.com>

Youth in BC is an online service that lets BC youth connect live, one-on-one with a crisis chat volunteer, obtain email support from professional staff, locate timely and accurate information on different issues, and connect to referral services in their own community. This is a service for all youth who need a safe, respectful place to access support and information. It is also a resource for parents and professionals who are looking for topic-specific information and resources for various youth-related issues.



Dates for your Calendar

MARCH 2010

March 26, Vancouver. Increasing the Social Skills of Children with ASD: Targeting Acquisition and Motivation. The topic of the morning session is 'Improving the Social Behaviour of Children with ASD'. The afternoon's topic is 'Let's Play: Incorporating Peers in the Treatment of Children with ASD'.
<http://www.actcommunity.net/>

March 27, Vancouver. Bridges to Adulthood for Learners with ASD: Targeting Skills for the Next Environment. Presented by Dr. Gerhardt, internationally recognized for his research and practice in providing supports for teenagers and adults with ASD.
<http://www.actcommunity.net/>

March 31-April 1, Vancouver. The Special Education Association (SEA) is proud to present the 35th Annual Crosscurrents Conference (right before the Easter long weekend) at the Westin Bayshore Hotel. Keynote plus a variety of quality sessions and exhibitors for regular and special education. For information contact or visit the website. Exhibitors contact Karen Bell at karbell@shaw.ca

APRIL 2010

April 14-17, Vancouver. *Facing the Future Together: Where Do We Go From Here?* Fourth National Biennial Conference: Adolescents and Adults with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.
<http://www.interprofessional.ubc.ca/Adults.html>

April 19-23, Delta. Introduction to Autism Spectrum Disorders-Practical Applications (ASD). The training program includes practical hands-on training and application exercises of critical elements in teaching students with autism and ASD.
<http://www.autismoutreach.ca/training/course-calendar>

April 23-24, Vancouver. First Nations Schools Association Annual Conference and AGM, *Valuing and Caring for All*. Classroom-tested strategies and workshops spanning a wide variety of subjects and grade levels are offered. Keynote address by Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond, and a featured workshop by Kagan Cooperative Learning.
<http://www.fnsa.ca/currentevents.htm>

April 26-29, Delta. Introduction to Applied Behaviour Analysis. Completion of this course provides the participant an overview of ABA history and theory, but the emphasis will be on practical hands-on coaching and training.
<http://www.autismoutreach.ca/training/course-calendar>