



Letters from Our Members

Hello Stalimc (friend)

I am a member of the Nuxalk First Nations Parents Club. This Club is exciting and challenging, working towards helping our children. I am a very active Elder from our community and I have three grandchildren attending school.

We have just begun our Parents Club after seven or eight years and we will work hard to keep it going. We have at least twenty members attending, and hopefully it grows to more attendance in the future.

Having the First Nations Parents Club bulletin is informative and gives us lots of great ideas to share with every Club member.

Thank you to all the Parents Clubs all over the province.

*Howard Walkus
Nuxalk First Nations Parents Club*

I would just like to give you an update on the Aboriginal Infant and Family Development Program Parents Club.

We have been extremely busy since our last update. Our program continues to be a great success. The parents have had the opportunity to participate in a number of workshops, including Emotional Intelligence, Drug Awareness, Positive Guidance, Nutrition, Car Seat Safety, and 1234 Parenting

Program. Once a month we have an elder attend our program to teach the parents about their culture and traditions. This month we are having the Dental Department from the Health Unit come and do fluoride varnishing for our children. We also did some fun activities around Christmas such as Christmas baking, crafts, and 2 large Christmas parties. We have planned our workshops until the end of March and we look forward to such workshops as Conflict Resolution, Picky Eaters, Positive Guidance, Stress Bingo, and Nobody's Perfect Parenting Group. A lot of the ideas for our workshops are given to us by the parents. The attendance at these workshops is great and we still have to put people on a waitlist to get in. Our monthly newsletter is a big hit and in it we share information on our program, tips and recipes for parents, and activities to do with their children. We are continuing to see an ongoing commitment that these parents have to their children's mental, physical, and emotional development.

We think the First Nations Parents Club is a wonderful opportunity for our parents to come together and share stories and ideas. We would like to thank you for all of the information, incentive prizes, and support that we have received.

*Sandi Prevost
Club Coordinator*

April is Dental Month
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It is also important to get an early start on professional dental care. Children should learn that visiting the dentist is a regular part of life. Try to make the first visit to a dentist a positive experience. If your children sense that you are nervous, they may feel nervous, too. When you talk about going to the dentist, explain what will happen but don't add phrases like "it won't hurt" or "don't be scared." That might give your kids a reason to feel afraid.

Getting a good start on dental health will keep your kids smiling throughout their lives, so take advantage of Dental Health Month and make sure your whole family is up-to-date with your dental check-ups.

(The information included in this article was adapted from facts provided by the Canadian Dental Association at www.cda-adc.ca.)

Sweet Drop Biscuits

1 1/2 cups flour
1 1/2 tsp baking powder
1/2 tsp salt
1/2 tsp baking soda
1/4 cup sugar
lemon rind, optional
3 tbsp butter
3/4 cup buttermilk, sour cream, or yogurt

Mix the dry ingredients together, and then cut in the remaining ingredients. Spoon onto a greased baking sheet. Bake at 425° F for 12 - 15 minutes.

FIRST NATIONS PARENTS CLUB



BULLETIN

APRIL 2005, ISSUE 1, VOL 7

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**Recipe:
Sweet Drop Biscuits**



Contact Us!

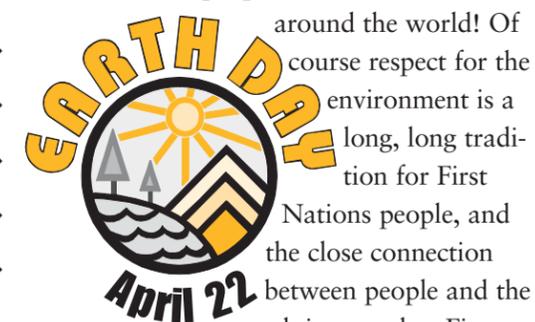
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Hello Again Parents Club Members

We hope that the school year is progressing well for you and your children. The great news is that spring is finally here, which should mean better weather and more time for all of us to spend outdoors enjoying the fresh air.

On the topic of being outdoors, remember that Earth Day is celebrated each year on April 22. Earth Day is one of the biggest environmental events of the year. It has been estimated that 6 million Canadians will celebrate Earth Day. So will approximately 500 million other people in over 180 countries



around the world! Of course respect for the environment is a long, long tradition for First Nations people, and the close connection between people and the earth is central to First Nations cultures. Earth Day may therefore be a good time to talk with your children about your traditions related to your lands and the health of the environment. Your Parents Club might even consider organizing a community-wide clean up day or some other special event focused on the earth.

In Canada, April is related to some other special occasions, as well. For example, did you know that every April is named Dental Health Month? That designation is meant to encourage us all to make an extra effort to

think about the importance of good dental health practices. To do our part in promoting this issue, in this edition of the newsletter we've included a few dental tips that we hope you find interesting.

And yet another April happening ... National Volunteer Week runs from April 17 - 23, so in this newsletter we have shared some relevant ideas. Volunteering is a valuable way for young people to gain skills, experience the world of work, build their self-esteem, and contribute to their community in a meaningful way. Given all those benefits, we hope that parents will encourage their children to donate some time to a cause that interests them.

With all of those events coming up this month, we know that your Parents Clubs will be very busy in the weeks ahead.

The end of the school year can also be a hectic time, so please try to find some time to relax with your families. After all ... just being together is the real joy of life.



Need more information?

Is this the first time you've heard about the First Nations Parents Club? If you would like more information about the initiative, please contact our office at (604) 925-6087. The First Nations Parents Club is sponsored by the First Nations Schools Association to recognize the tremendous dedication of parents who support their children's learning. All Club materials and activities are available for free. To start a Club in your community, just contact us and request a Parents Club start-up package. We'd love to hear from you!



Kids Can Experience the World of Work By Being a Volunteer

If your children are not yet ready for paid employment, that doesn't mean they can't start getting prepared for the world of work. With the summer months coming up, your kids could think about volunteering some of their time for a worthwhile cause. It's an excellent way to fill some summer hours, and it will have important benefits for your kids.

Volunteering is a great way to learn new skills that will be useful in your children's future education and careers. You can help make their experience especially valuable by encouraging your children to take their volunteer activities seriously. Even though they are not being paid, they should still be dependable, punctual, and conscientious. That way, your children will learn responsibility and positive work habits. Volunteer work also looks great on resumes, which your kids will appreciate when they want a paid job later in their lives!

Volunteering also makes people feel really good about themselves. Contributing to their community teaches kids that they can make a real difference. Helping other people and seeing the value of their hard work is also a great way to build children's self-esteem and self-confidence.

What can your kids do? Maybe they can get a volunteer job with a community agency. If you live near an urban area, hospitals, libraries, child care centres, summer camps, and animal shelters are good places to start looking for volunteer positions. Kids can also help out someone they know personally, such as helping an Elder with gardening, cooking, cleaning, or other tasks.

To get started, talk to your kids about what they might like to do. Ask them what kind of work they feel they would be good at and enjoy. What kinds of skills they would like to learn? What kind of environment would they like to work in? Indoors or outdoors? Would they like to work with other people or would they enjoy working independently?



Once you have that basic information, ask family, friends, and co-workers for suggestions. They might know about a great volunteer job that's perfect for your kids. If one is close enough, you can also contact a local volunteer centre. Volunteer centres have a catalogue of volunteer positions. Many also provide information and education programs so that volunteers understand their rights, their responsibilities, and what to expect from a quality volunteer experience.



One more thing; don't forget to make sure that the volunteer jobs your kids are considering are safe. You should know where your children will be and exactly what they will be doing. If you're not sure what the job will involve, ask to attend an information session with your children or meet with the people who will be supervising the position. (You should do the same thing when your kids are going to start a paid job, as well).

Once you've taken those basic precautions, you and your kids can feel really great about the contribution they are making. You also might want to think about whether you have time to be a role model by sharing some of your own time for a worthwhile cause.

Here are a few interesting statistics on volunteering from Volunteer BC (www.volunteerbc.bc.ca). These numbers demonstrate how vital volunteers are in this province.

- As of 1997, over one million – or 32% of all British Columbians – volunteered nearly 169 million hours. Those efforts have an estimated economic value of \$2.7 billion annually.
- There are over 21,000 registered societies in BC, and over half of them are registered charities. These societies rely on volunteers, donations and government funding for the good work that they do.
 - 28% of youth in BC (15-24 years) volunteer.
 - 37% of British Columbians between 35 and 44 are involved in volunteer activities, and 24% of all seniors (over 65 years) volunteer.



Making Changes as Smooth as Possible

At last year's First Nations Parents Conference, a group of participants discussed how to help students who will be making transitions in their educational lives. For example, children who are moving from a First Nations school to a public school may feel quite nervous about the change ahead. Children who are moving from an elementary to a secondary school, or from a secondary to a post-secondary situation, may feel the same way.

What can adults do to help children feel more secure about changes ahead? Here are a few ideas that were shared at the Parents Conference. We hope some of these ideas are useful to you.

If children will be attending a new school in the fall, it may be helpful to visit the new school during the previous spring, so that you and

your children can meet their new teacher and see their new classroom. Ask for an outline of what will be expected in the new school, such as the hours and important rules. That will allow you to prepare your children (and yourselves) over the summer, so you are all feeling ready for what's ahead.

If possible, invite teachers and other staff members from the new school into your community prior to the fall. That will give children a chance to meet the new staff people in a familiar, comfortable setting.

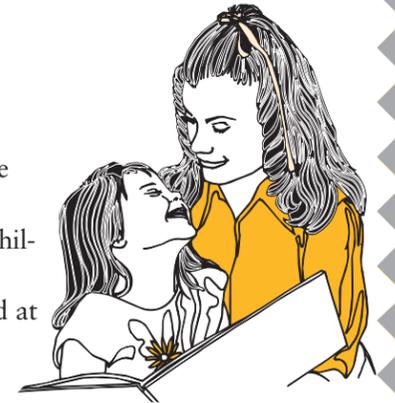
If you have children who will be entering Kindergarten, spend time during the summer reading books together and talking about what they can expect at school. Be positive and excited, to lessen any fear your children might be feeling.

If possible, have an older friend or

relative show your children around at a new high school or post-secondary institute so your kids do not feel lost on the first day of school.

Make sure that all important paperwork is transferred to the new school. Any assessments should follow your children to each new grade and new school. That will help to make sure your children's needs are fully understood, so that everyone can make their school experience a success.

If you have other suggestions to share with parents we'd love to hear from you.



April is Dental Health Month. Is Your Family Up-to-Date on Your Check Ups?



It is very important for all families to get an early start on regular dental care, and parents and children should brush and floss regularly throughout their lives. Not only is that important for your teeth; problems in your mouth can actually cause other health problems because of spreading bacteria and disease.

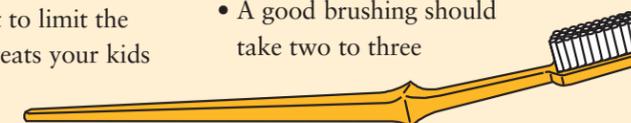
Even before children's teeth come in, parents can clean their mouths with a soft damp cloth. Good nutrition is also crucial for dental health. It is especially important to limit the amount of sugary treats your kids

eat from the very beginning of their lives.

Parents need to clean the teeth of very young children, and do it *with* kids as they get a bit older. The Canadian Dental Association says that only when children can write (not print) their own name are they ready to do a good enough job of brushing on their own. And even then parents should still monitor their brushing.

How do you know if you or your children are brushing correctly?

- A good brushing should take two to three



minutes. Try using a timer in the bathroom to make sure your children are taking their time.

- When brushing, use *gentle* circles. Don't scrub. You can hurt the gums by brushing too hard.
- Every surface of every tooth should be cleaned.
- Brushing right before bed is especially important. Otherwise, the germs (bacteria) and sugars that cause cavities will have all night to do their dirty work. Plus, when kids are asleep, they do not produce as much spit (or saliva), which helps keep the mouth clean.

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