



## Letters from Our Members

Dear Parents Club

I would like to acknowledge you for reaching out and supporting many of us throughout the province through similar Parents Clubs like ours.

I would also like to share my appreciation of the Aboriginal Educational Support Workers here within SD #5. They have enhanced the confidence and support networks for the aboriginal students, parents, and guardians to work together and facilitate First Nations Parent Club nights. Both my daughter and I have participated in the Parent Club for nearly two years now.

Collaboratively, parents, students, and the Aboriginal Education Support Workers plan a schedule for the year; inviting guest speakers from the community-at-large, school, or from the local First Nation to better inform us on many diverse subjects.

Recently, at our meeting held in December 2004, we had a full agenda. Two students who had participated in a field trip "Exploring First Nation Health and Science Career Options" in Vancouver gave us a presentation. After this, Christmas music started playing in the background and a variety of activity stations were available to check out – from decorating cookies and Christmas crafts (which seemed to be most popular), sports games in the gym, and even family board games!

My daughter is attending Grade 10 at Mount Baker Secondary School here in Cranbrook and both she and I look forward to the First Nations Parent Club monthly meetings. They are informative, educational, social, and fun!

Thank you again for continuing to enhance opportunities through education. The First Nation's Parent Club is a venue that provides a valuable linkage between home and school.

*Sincerely,*  
*Marion Eunson, Parent, Cranbrook First Nation Parent Club*

We had our second Parent Club Board Game Night on December 9 from 8 – 9 p.m. The kids came in excited about the board game they wanted to play with their parents.

Snacks and juice were served and everyone got a chance to pull a name. The adults got to choose a prize while the children got to pull a prize from a bag.

Our turnout was five kids out of nine and three parents out of five (a 56% turnout).

Our next evening will be in January.

Thanks again for your support.

*Paulette Forbes*  
*Fort Babine School*  
*Smithers, BC*

## Supplies Are Limited, But Some Parents Club Calendars Are Left

Did you receive your 2005 Parents Club Calendar? If you haven't yet received one, you can call the Parents Club office at (604) 925 – 6087. But hurry!! There are only a few calendars left, and they will be distributed on a first-come-first-served basis.

*Here is a great way to slip a vegetable serving into a delicious loaf*

### Chocolate Zucchini Loaf

3/4 cup butter  
1 1/2 cup sugar  
3 eggs  
2 1/2 cups flour  
1/2 cup cocoa powder  
1 tsp salt  
2 1/2 tsp baking powder  
1 1/2 tsp baking soda  
2 cups grated zucchini  
1/2 cup milk  
2 tsp vanilla  
1 cup chopped walnuts  
1 cup chocolate chips

Cream the butter, sugar, and eggs together.

Combine the dry ingredients, and then add them to the creamed mixture.

Add the zucchini, milk, vanilla, and walnuts, and split between two loaf pans.

Sprinkle with chocolate chips.

Bake at 350 degrees for one hour.

# FIRST NATIONS PARENTS CLUB



# BULLETIN

MARCH 2005, ISSUE 1, VOL 6

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## Contact Us!

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## Happy Spring Parents Club Members

Well, it certainly has been an interesting winter, with way more snow than usual, and colder weather than many of us are used to. We hope that you have all been staying safe and warm, and enjoying some family time cuddled up together at home.

Remember that spring is coming! March 20 is the official first day of spring, and here at the Parents Club office we are more than ready for the new season to arrive. Playing in the snow has been fun, but now we are looking forward to the warmer weather and more time outside in the sunshine and fresh air.

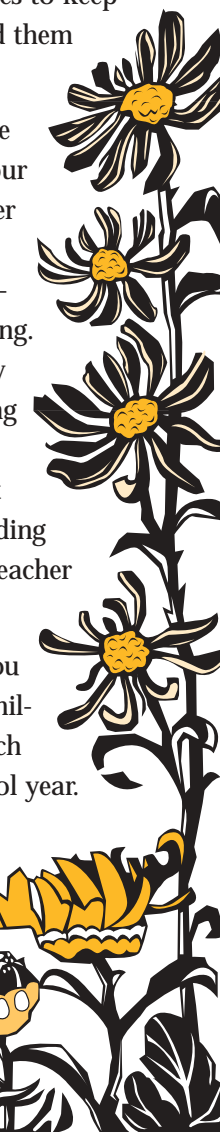
But with kids heading outdoors, it is important to think again about playground safety. According to the web site of Safe Kids Canada, more than 28,500 children in Canada are treated by hospitals for playground injuries, and 18 playground deaths have been reported since 1982. 16 of those deaths were due to strangulation when drawstrings, skipping ropes, scarves, or loose clothing became entangled in playground equipment or fences.

Falls account for almost three-quarters of all playground injuries, and those accidents mainly involve climbers, slides, or swings. Five to nine year olds are the age group most frequently injured on playgrounds, probably because they are able to play at greater heights but lack a sense of danger. Children of this age require especially close supervision.

In this newsletter we've included a few more hints about playground safety for you and your parents club colleagues to keep in mind. We hope you find them useful.

Inside you'll also find some information about how your club might try to help other parents come into the school and show their children that they value learning. By creating an opportunity for parents to do something fun and relaxing in the school, more people might become comfortable attending school events and parent/teacher interviews.

The FNSA wishes all of you a great spring with your children. We'll be back in touch before the end of the school year.



### 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!



## How Can You Promote Parental Involvement At School?

The research is clear; having parents involved in schools is one of best ways to ensure student success. Seeing parents in the school helps children believe that their parents value and are interested in their education. It also reinforces the concept that home and school are connected and that school is an important part of community and family life.

Many, many studies have concluded that parental involvement during early, middle, and high school years has perhaps the most significant positive impact on student achievement. Parental involvement can of course take a variety of forms, including attendance at school activities, being a member of a parent advisory council, and volunteering for school events. Involvement can also mean simply enjoying fun activities in the school building.

First Nations Parents Clubs can play a key role in promoting all of those activities. Several parents clubs in British Columbia have organized special events to bring parents and kids together. We would like to encourage even more Clubs to work with the school in your area to jointly organize fun afternoon or evening activities in the school. Here are just a few ideas you might want to try.

Maybe you could organize a **Family Movie Night** at the school. This might involve spreading blankets out on the gym floor, making some popcorn, and picking a great movie that children and adults all can enjoy.

A **Family Arts and Crafts Night** would be great fun. With the help of a few volunteers who are willing to share their special talent, everyone can have a good time learning a new art or craft. Sewing, beading,

drawing, carving ... all would make for great family fun. Perhaps the school could help purchase the necessary supplies, or a nearby craft store might be willing to help with a donation.

A **Family Reading Night** is another possibility. To make this more interesting, you could consider inviting guest readers, such as the Chief or a Council member, a local police officer or firefighter, or even a teacher or parent dressed up in costume! The evening could also include activities such as limerick or poetry readings, sing-a-longs, and maybe some book raffles.

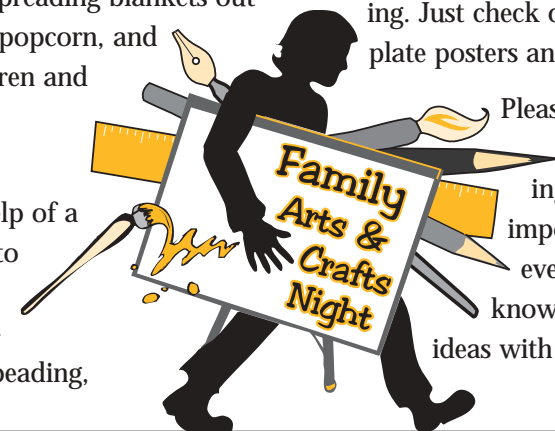
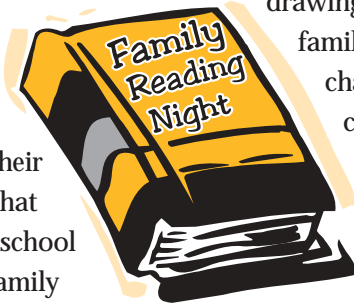
A **Family Fun and Games Night** might be a great, relaxed way to encourage parents to come into the school. This might involve families playing Board games together, or other games such as group juggling or charades.

Any kind of fun event would be great. You just have to organize some refreshments, get together a few supplies, maybe include a couple of contests, advertise the event, and then have fun!

In case your Club would like to organize an event with the local school, we have made up some posters and invitations that you can download from the web.

That way, you can just add a few details about your event and you will be ready to print the materials you need to let parents know what's happening. Just check out [www.fnsc.ca](http://www.fnsc.ca) to find the template posters and invitations.

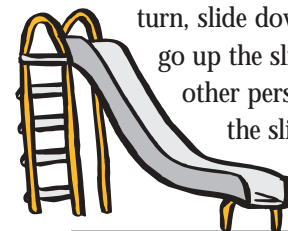
Please tell us if there are other ways that we can help make organizing a fun evening easier, and most important – if you do organize an evening for parents, please let us know about it. We'd love to share your ideas with other Clubs.



## Playground Safety

Here are a few safety ideas to keep in mind when your kids head off to the playground.

- To avoid injury check out what your kids are wearing. Take off anything that could strangle your child, including strings or drawstrings on clothing. Do not let your child take skipping ropes or bike helmets onto playground equipment.
- Dig the heel of your shoe into the surface of the playground to see how deep it is. It should be at least 15 centimetres (6 inches) deep. If the surface is not deep and soft, keep your child on equipment that is close to the ground. If the surface has worn away at the bottom of a slide or under a swing, push more of it into place with your shoe.
- Make sure any high equipment has good handrails, barriers, and railings to prevent falls.
- Watch out for areas where your child's head or neck could get stuck. Safe spaces are smaller than 9 centimetres (3 1/2 inches) or larger than 22.5 centimetres (9 inches). Places to check include the spaces between the steps on a slide, and spaces between railings.
- Look for broken glass, garbage, sharp edges, and bolts that stick out. Pick up any glass or garbage. If your child is old enough, teach him or her to stay away from sharp edges or bolts.
- Watch young children closely, and teach them to use the playground safely. Help them learn to wait their turn, slide down feet first, don't go up the slide ladder until the other person has gone down the slide, hold on to railings, sit down on swings and



slides, and keep away from moving swings and the bottom of slides.

- Children under 5 years should stay on equipment that is no higher than 1.5 metres (five feet). They should also be within a parent's reach at all times. Playgrounds often have equipment for different aged children. If children need help to climb on a piece of equipment, they should not use it.

This information was adapted from a more thorough article at [www.safekidscanada.ca](http://www.safekidscanada.ca). You can look there for many more safety ideas.

Perhaps playground safety would be a good focus for a Parents Club activity. You could consider any of the following things to do.

- Your Parents Club could invite in a guest speaker to talk more about playground safety.
- Members of your Parents Club could each be asked to bring in a bit of information about playground safety to share with each other at your next meeting.
- Maybe your Parents Club could take a group trip to the playground to look around for safety hazards. This could be a parents only event, or kids could come along to learn about safety tips and the rules for playing safely.
- If the nearest playground is littered, your Parents Club could go and clean up the area and make sure it is a safe and enjoyable place for kids to play.

Does your club have other ideas? If so, please let us know so that we can share the information with others.



## Getting the Information You Need About Special Education

Do you have questions that relate to special education? Maybe you think your child might have special needs, and you're wondering what to do next. Maybe you have a child who is being tested for special needs, and you would like some help understanding what is happening. Maybe you have a child who has been diagnosed with special needs, and you would like some ideas for making your home the best environment possible.

If you need assistance with those or any other special education issues, please feel free to call the First Nations Special Education Toll-Free Telephone Resource Line. Lisa Ellis is available by telephone to provide information or ideas to help you in meeting your child's needs. Some of the services Lisa can provide include:

- helping parents to understand special education assessment results and prepare for the development of an Individual Education Plan (IEP);
- talking about the types of services that may be available in schools for students with special needs, as well as ways that parents can support their children's learning at home; and
- providing information about other resources that may help, including books, videos, and support groups.

Please feel **free** to call the First Nations Special Education Toll-Free Telephone Resource Line with any of your questions. The **free** telephone number is 1-877-547-1919, and the hours of operation are Monday – Thursday, 12:30 – 4:30 p.m. Did we mention that this service is absolutely free?