



First Nations Parents Club

Bulletin

Enjoying the Season as a Family

The days are getting shorter and colder, but take heart - these chilly days are a great time for families! In this issue of the Parents Club newsletter, we'll look at some cozy indoor activities, recipes and conversation starters you might like to try with your kids. There are also ideas for helping your kids have a positive body image and tips for understanding what an individual education plan involves.

Is this a busy time of year for your Club? We at the Parents Club are amazed by the powerful force that parents and grandparents can be when we work together. The Parents Club salutes all of the parents and clubs for the creative work you are doing, which includes everything from health workshops to community tutoring programs, and from luncheons to community cleanup projects. We are reminded of the words of the famous anthropologist Margaret Mead, who once said, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." In fact, when our work is for our kids, there is an amazing passion and energy to make positive change happen!

Thanks again for sending us your Club news and recipes. We hope that you will keep them coming, and we look forward to sending you prizes to recognize your contributions.

Mark Your Calendar for the Parents Conference!

The First Nations Schools Association (FNSEA) is very pleased to announce the First Nations Parents Conference, happening May 27-28, 2010 in Vancouver, BC.

Would your Parents Club like to help host this conference? If so, contact Barb O'Neill at s_sec@fnsecc.ca or 1-877-422-3672 by **February 19, 2010**.

Watch for a registration kit in March 2010.

Career Cruising

Career Cruising is an amazing website that youth can use to explore careers, take a quiz to find out what careers might suit them, and plan a path for higher education. You need a login code to use the site, but if your child goes to a First Nations schools with grade 7 or up, the school will have the login information. Ask the principal about it!

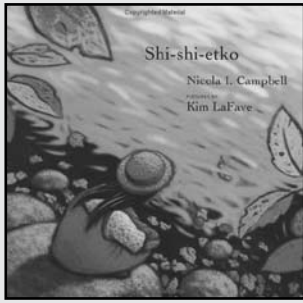
Please send us your stories and photos for the newsletter and the Club website. We always appreciate hearing news from the local clubs and we would love to have more funny or inspiring stories about parenthood to share. Send your submissions to info@fnesc.ca or by fax to 604-925-6097. Photo permission forms are online at fnsa.ca/parentsclub/index.html



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Family Reading Corner:



Shi-shi-etko, by *Nicola I. Campbell (Author), Kim LaFave (Illustrator)*
Suggested for Grade 2-6.

On her last few days before leaving for residential school for the first time, the young girl Shi-shi-etko visits her favourite landmarks – the stream, the swaying grass, the working bees - and she tries to save them in her memory.

This is a very moving story by a young author of Thompson/Okanagan and Métis ancestry, Nicola Campbell. One of the remarkable things about this story is that while it doesn't talk directly about residential schools at all, it is a powerful stepping-stone to those discussions, especially with older children.

Body Image 101

Children's sense of their body image is closely tied to nutrition and it is important to encourage children to understand and take responsibility for their own weight and health.

If you are looking for some information about this topic, try looking at www.missionnutrition.ca. That site includes some interesting questions to help you think about your own attitudes about food, body image, and health, as well as ideas about how your perspectives might be affecting your kids. It also includes many links to sources of additional information.

Here are just a few of the ideas shared on the Mission Nutrition.

- Help your children to understand that healthy people come in a variety of shapes and sizes and that there is no one "ideal" body shape.
- Teach your children to be aware of unrealistic and unhealthy images in the media.
- Encourage your children to focus on abilities rather than on appearance.
- Try to be aware of the messages you send about your body and the comments you make about other people's bodies.
- Enjoy the pleasure of healthy eating with your children and emphasize how all foods can fit into a healthy diet if eaten in the right amount.
- Find fun ways to be active with your children to help them experience the joy of physical activity.

Besides being linked to our own health and nutrition, our image of ourselves is also influenced by what we see in the media. For young people, this can be a huge influence on their ideas about beauty and their levels of happiness with their own bodies.

Indoor activities for the little ones...

1. Throw a tea party! Use real tea and teacups
2. Toss a blanket over a table to make a fort – add some flashlights and a picnic lunch for even more fun
3. Balloon volleyball
4. Make a sand-free sandbox using a plastic bin or aluminum-foil roasting pan as your box. Fill with rice or oatmeal and add some scoops, funnels, spoons and toy cars
5. Playdough – see the recipes below...

Cooked Playdough (flour and salt)

3 cups flour 1.5 cups salt
 6 tsp cream of tartar 3 tbsp oil
 3 cups water

1. Dissolve salt in the water.
2. Pour all ingredients into a large pot.
3. Stir constantly over medium heat until a ball forms by pulling away from the sides.
4. Cool enough and then knead the dough mixture until the texture matches playdough (1-2 minutes).

Store in plastic container. This playdough should last for at least 3 months.

Kool-Aid Play Dough

The children will love the smell of this playdough!

2 1/2 cups flour 1 cup salt
 3 tbsp vegetable oil 2 cups boiling water
 2 packages unsweetened Kool-Aid

Mix dry ingredients. Add oil and water. Wearing gloves, knead for 10 minutes. Store in zip lock bag in refrigerator.

Playdough recipes reprinted with permission from www.creativekidsathome.com





Talking with Gwen Point...



*Her Honour
Gwendolyn
(Gwen) Point
from the Stó:lō
Nation is the
mother of four and
the grandmother of
twelve. She is a
professor at the*

University of the Fraser Valley and before that she was the education manager for the Stó:lō Nation. For many years, Gwen and her husband Stephen Point (now the Lieutenant Governor of BC), organized the annual powwow weekend in Chilliwack and they have been strong supporters of language, culture and First Nations education.

The Parents Club asked Gwen some questions on behalf of our readers.

Lessons learned as a parent...

"The first lessons I was taught and I share with our children are to Listen - not to just listen with your ears – rather, to listen with your heart and ears. The next skill is to be careful how you 'speak' and be careful 'what you say.'"

"My grandmother told me that the reason your mouth is between your mind and your heart is you consult both before you say something. She also said how are you going to think about what you've heard if you're talking all the time, and how will you think about what you've seen today if you're talking all the time?"

"As a parent, I also learned that each child is a gift and that each child is different. One child maybe interested in science, one in math and another in music. A parent must nurture and support each child and provide many opportunities for each child to develop their interests."

On learning language and traditions as a family...

"I'd encourage all community members to learn their traditional language. If one grew up hearing the language, one can relearn their language. Our traditional languages are so important as they hold our values and traditions for our families and our communities."

"Fluency in any language will happen with everyday spoken conversation. It is great to learn the basic words and expressions and then begin using the language all the time especially at home. I tell fluent speakers to only speak to their family members in the language this helps those listening to hear the sounds and in time they will learn the language in a more natural way."

"Another wonderful thing for parents to do with their children is to sing or dance to our traditional music. Families or communities can bring in those who know the songs or dances. I remember being told once that the songs were lost in one community and I suggested they then learn from other communities and perhaps that is why they were living in another community. In time the family moved home and they are now singing and dancing their traditional songs and dances. Some were new songs and some were new dances, what was very special is someone came and shared with them songs and dances they remembered their community once had."

On the role of parents in schools...

"Parents must get involved with their children's schools and not be afraid to do so. This can be as simple as volunteering for sports day or reading to their child at

The ABCs of IEPs: A Parent's Guide

Children who are experiencing some difficulty in school are sometimes put on an IEP. An IEP is an Individual Education Plan. It describes an education program that has been developed specifically for your child. The program is meant to help your child achieve success in school.

Tips:

- ✓ You have a right to know if your child is going to be placed on an IEP.
- ✓ You also have a right to be involved in its design.
- ✓ You have information that will help make the IEP right for your child because you can answer questions about your child's health, needs, interests, friends and home life. That is important!
- ✓ Being on an IEP may affect your child's graduation. An IEP may provide for courses that are outside those required for a Dogwood graduation certificate.

You have a right to ask any questions about changes made to your child's education program and what those changes will mean for our child's future. By doing that you can help make sure that your child has every opportunity for success!

You can call the Special Education Toll-free Resource Line at 1-877-547-1919 to discuss IEPs and to ask questions. Holly Smith is the FNESC/FNSA Special Education Resource Person who runs the Resource Line and she welcomes calls from parents on all sorts of topics. It is a free service.

Adapted from Talking About Special Education Volume IV: A Handbook for Parents, 2000, FNESC/FNSA.



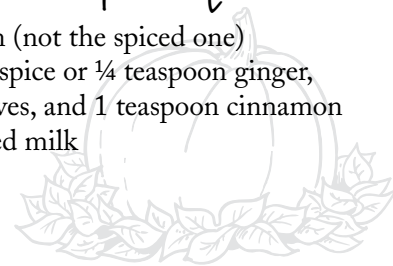
Parents Report

What a wonderful first meeting of our school year – it was a great dinner and great company! Our Aboriginal Health Nurse visited and we had a discussion on diabetes and heard the latest news on the H1N1 flu virus. We had a door prize of a First Nations Parents Club coffee mug for the first one in the door (a grandmother) and we enjoyed lamb stew, rice, homemade baking, powder biscuits, salad and pumpkin squares for dessert. The pumpkin squares were a hit, and so I will include the recipe:

*Maggie Sedgemore,
Port Hardy Secondary School*

The “You’ll-Never-Have-Plain-Old-Pumpkin-Pie-Again” Pumpkin Squares

2 – 8 ounce cans pumpkin (not the spiced one)
2 teaspoons pumpkin pie spice or ¼ teaspoon ginger, nutmeg, 1/8 teaspoon cloves, and 1 teaspoon cinnamon
13 ounce can of evaporated milk
3 eggs
1 cup white sugar
¼ teaspoon salt



Mix all together, with mixer for two minutes then pour into a 9x13 greased pan.

1 yellow cake mix, sprinkle over mixture in pan
1 cup chopped pecans or walnuts, sprinkle over cake mix.

Then drizzle 1 cup melted butter (or more) over all the mixture. Bake at 350 degrees for 50 minutes.

I served this with vanilla yogurt but it is good with whipped cream too. Enjoy!!

JUST FOR FUN!

Pride is what you feel when your kids net \$143 from a garage sale. Panic is what you feel when you realize your car is missing.



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 toll-free at 1-877-422-3672. 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!

Talking with Gwen Point...

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home. If it is difficult to take the first step to going to a child’s school I would suggest parents teaming up and going with a friend or two. I would also suggest calling and requesting the principal to visit the First Nation community to meet parents and grandparents and perhaps brainstorm activities that would be culturally relevant to the First Nation community. Hosting one annual school event or meeting a year would help parents connect with the school.”

Last thoughts?

“Enjoy your children and enjoy being parents. I tell parents and communities I believe we have been through enough now. I also tell them we create our future by the thoughts we have and by what we do today. With that in mind let us create a wonderful future together with our children on that is based on who we are and includes our First Nation traditions.”

Conversation Starters

Want to have some interesting discussions with your child? Try out these questions – but be prepared to answer them too!

- What’s the best advice an adult ever gave you? What’s the worst?
- What is a subject or topic that isn’t taught in your school, but you would really like to learn about?
- What would you do if you were at a party and someone asked you to do something that you knew could get you in trouble?
- Do you think you are a role model for anyone? Why or why not?

Do you have a pre-teen or teen girl?

They might like to try the quizzes on the Dove Campaign for Real Beauty website here www.dove.ca/en/#/cfrb/girlonly/ The quizzes are fun and include topics like Image Manipulation: Can you tell the difference between Photoshop and the real deal?, Body Facts and Fiction, and How Do You Impact Other’s Self Esteem? This part of the website is informative (not sales-oriented) and it has a colourful magazine-style that will likely appeal to this age group.

For boys of the same age, they can find good information in the Guy’s Health section of the Canadian based Kids Help Phone at www.kidshelpphone.ca.