



Atuaqsijut: Following the Path Sharing Inuit Specific Ways

Resource for Service Providers
Who Work With Parents of Inuit Children in Ontario

Acknowledgements

Best Start Resource Centre would like to thank Dianne Rogers for drafting the content for this resource, as well as the advisory members and expert reviewers who provided guidance for this project.

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Citation

Best Start Resource Centre. (2017). *Atuaqsijut: Following the Path, Sharing Inuit Specific Ways. Resource for Service Providers Who Work With Parents of Inuit Children in Ontario*. Toronto, Ontario, Canada: Author.

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Introduction

This resource provides Inuit specific knowledge and cultural practices regarding pregnancy and parenting. It shares best practices for service providers who work with biological, foster, and adoptive parents of Inuit children aged 0 to 6 years old. Inuit parents living in Ontario are often caught between two worlds – their familiar world in the north and a new world in the south. For the purposes of this resource, the north refers to Inuit regions of northern Canada called Inuit Nunangat (Inuit homeland) where Inuit traditionally live and the south refers to the province of Ontario. This resource offers information for southern service providers on the many challenges and opportunities for Inuit and non-Inuit parents raising young Inuit children in Ontario.




This resource was designed for a range of service providers including early childhood educators, social workers, maternal and child health workers, public health staff, community workers, health care providers, and hospital staff. The information can help service providers reflect on and improve their services to Inuit families. This resource offers information about:

- Inuit cultural values and beliefs
- Impact of colonization and intergenerational trauma
- Inuit knowledge and wisdom about pregnancy and parenting
- Inuit specific programs, services, supports, and best practices in Ontario

This resource offers information on culturally appropriate dialogue and service delivery for biological parents of Inuit children, as well as non-Inuit foster and adoptive parents of Inuit children. It includes information that is foundational to the Inuit way of being and about adapting to life after colonization. There are references to Inuit history and settlement and the importance of providing culturally enriched environments to strengthen understanding, respect, compassion, and hope for Inuit children. It is essential for service providers to understand how important cultural continuity is for parents and young Inuit children, especially those who are looking for Inuit knowledge and practices that relate to pregnancy, child birth, breastfeeding, and child development.





“At the heart and soul of the Inuit culture are our values, language and spirit. These made up our identity and enabled us to survive and flourish in the harsh Arctic environment. In the past, we did not put a word to this; it was within us and we knew it instinctively. Then, we were alone in the Arctic but now, in two generations, we have become part of the greater Canadian and world society. We now call the values, language and spirit of the past Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit [often referred to as IQ].”¹

You do not have to be an expert about the Inuit population in Ontario or in northern Canada to work with Inuit parents. You do need to know that Inuit culture differs from other Indigenous cultures and that the needs and expectations of Inuit are different. Depending on your depth of knowledge about Inuit culture, you may also want to review the information listed in the Additional Information section of this guide.

Service providers can use content of this resource with groups of parents or with individual parents, in a home visit, or in a community setting. Remember there are many different types of adult learners and adults are at various stages of learning. As you offer services to Inuit families, use a style that you are comfortable with and that sets a good learning environment such as:

- One to one discussion
- Group discussion
- Outdoor activities
- Role playing
- Story telling
- Offering printed handouts that use plain language



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Section 1: Background Information about the Inuit Population

This section provides a snap shot of Inuit specific background information that may help non-Inuit service providers understand Inuit parents, children, and families who seek Inuit specific services, programs, and supports in Ontario. There are references to publications that may be reviewed by service providers to broaden their understanding of various concepts, themes, and topics.

Inuit were once known as Eskimos, however the word Eskimo is considered to be a derogatory term among Inuit in Canada. One member of the Inuit population is known as an Inuk and more than one Inuk are referred to as Inuit.



The Inuit way of life, values, beliefs, and traditions are not the same as for First Nations or Métis. Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada states that there are many differences between First Nations, Métis, and Inuit. These names refer to the three main groups of peoples who are the traditional inhabitants of this land. First Nations historically lived in North America, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, below the Arctic. Inuit historically lived, and continue to live, along the coastal edge and on the islands of Canada's far north.



The Métis descend from the historical joining of First Nations members and Europeans. First Nations, Inuit, and Métis each have their own culture, based largely on the environment they traditionally inhabited.

Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami² provides a map of Inuit Nunangat, where Inuit of Canada reside. Inuit Nunangat is made of 4 regions: Settlement Region, Inuvialuit, Nunavut, Nunavik, and Nunatsiavut. The majority of Inuit still live in Inuit Nunangat and each of these Inuit regions has comprehensive land claim agreements.

Colonization of Inuit took place over a very short historical time period. The intensity of colonization caused Inuit to have their identity, culture, language, and ways of being suppressed through multiple federal/provincial and territorial government, and church run policies of assimilation and forced settlement that involved forced relocation and the purposeful destruction of Inuit societal systems.

Fifty years ago the majority of Inuit were living a nomadic lifestyle in on-the-land camps as bases for hunting, fishing, and trapping.³

“Inuit culture and Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit (Inuit knowledge, past and present) are a dynamic adaptive set of societal ways of being grounded in values and beliefs that do not change with time. For Inuit it is not a question of living in two worlds or even balancing two social systems, but rather of using cultural strengths to adapt successfully to the changes that confront communities and over which they can exert little control.” Key Informant

Service providers in Ontario focusing on strengths and Inuit specific philosophies can make the difference for urban Inuit.

“A high price has been paid for this rapid transformation.”⁴

“Inuit society was founded on a system of kinship relations, and these relations form the basis of a parent-child-extended family attachment philosophy. Separation and relocation during the settlement period traumatized families and disrupted family bonds, ways of knowing, languages, practices, the sharing of knowledge, and the essence of Inuit society by separating parents and children for long periods of time.”⁵

As explained in the Ottawa Inuit Children’s Centre document *Nipivut- Our Voice: A Community Needs Assessment for Inuit Families of Ottawa*,⁶ Inuit families living in Ontario are a relatively new phenomenon and living in southern urban or rural centres is a challenge for those accustomed to a different cultural life as well as for service providers trying to meet their needs. Families are moving to Ontario from the Arctic at an increasing rate to access medical interventions, further education, training, employment, and to stay connected with family members. The needs of urban Inuit parents and their children are not being met by pan-Aboriginal services and Inuit families are now asserting their right to Inuit specific services.

Inuit children from northern Canada may also be fostered or adopted by southern non-Inuit families and these parents want to know where to find Inuit-specific programs, services, and supports to ground their children in their Inuit cultural identity.



“Rebuilding family attachments and community relationships can make a positive contribution to achieving health equality by enhancing family networks and revitalizing millennia-old pathways for sharing knowledge and holistic perspectives about health and wellness. The promotion of Inuit stories, wisdom, and practices are part of a collective movement to reclaim Inuit attachments and kinship in today’s communities, which can have a positive impact on health.”⁵

There is a growing awareness of the severity and complexity of Inuit health and well-being in Ontario. The following concepts and practices will help you, as a service provider, to understand the distinct forces influencing your practice when providing programs, services, and supports for urban Inuit. Colonization, intergenerational trauma, racism, urbanization, Inuit social determinants of health, legislation, and health policies and programs are all associated with Inuit family health and need to be carefully considered through the lenses of Inuit childrearing practices, naming traditions and child development, culture as foundation, cultural safety and competence, cultural humility, trauma informed practice, child welfare and confidentiality (see the following sections for details).

A - Inuit Childrearing

Inuit childrearing practices can differ considerably from southern Canadian traditions. The following quotes describe how Inuit children have often been raised, keeping in mind that some families may operate as follows but many do not:

*"To the outside observer, Inuit children enjoy a substantial amount of freedom ...[they] stay up much later than southern children, they are often fed when they are hungry and not according to a set meal schedule, and are disciplined in a different manner by their parents. To the uninformed observer, Inuit parents may appear indifferent or overly lax with their children. Again cultural differences account for this misconception."*⁴



"The Inuit way of being is about watching, listening and touching. This is how Inuit learn. Adults encourage children to watch. Always incorporate Inuit principles and values in early childhood education. You do not say to an Inuit child – 'now sit down and listen' – you engage them in different ways to watch and listen and try out new skills. In Inuit culture you might say 'It's time to pick up the bird's eggs (ptarmigan)' or 'It's time to chop the fish on the rocks' – it's always about action not sitting." Key Informant



"Inuit parents parent differently. They do not discipline their children in public. Children have a lot of freedom to learn, change and grow. There is not much supervision and they stay up later at night outside playing... They are treated as people not as children and have decision making powers in the family." Key Informant



The resource *The Inuit Way, A Guide to Inuit Culture*⁴ discusses modern Inuit childrearing practices, which continue to have a strong foundation in cultural practices, such as:

- Deep love of children
- More opportunities to learn through practice, play, and informal socialization
- Preference for indirect means of guiding childhood skills acquisition
- Teaching by example and observation
- Demonstrating patience
- Using humour to distract a child from poor behaviour
- Those who can help the child are involved in the child's life



B - Naming Tradition and Child Development

From the *Inunnguiniq: Parenting Program*,⁷ the practice of naming a child at birth sets into motion the dearly held developmental pathway known as teaching to the heart. Inuit child development begins at birth with naming the Inuit way. *Tuq&uraniq* is a way of addressing others by their namesake or based on friendship, kinship, or nickname without using actual names. Traditionally children are named at birth by the family, usually by a family Elder or the name may come through a dream. Those attending the birth, including the midwife, will give a blessing to the child in order to set a path before the child. For example, the person who wipes the newborn down might say they wish this child to always be safe on the sea.



“A female child could be named after a male relative and a male child could be named after a female. There is no shame in taking on the traits of the other gendered person. A boy can excel at sewing and a girl can excel at hunting. This is a fluid concept that is manifested in real life skills - very different from mainstream ideas about gender roles.” Key Informant

As discussed in the Inunnguiniq: Parenting Program Participant Handbook,⁸ the naming tradition includes the following:

- Skills and abilities are wished for the child by the attending Elder/midwife in the form of a blessing
- Unique gifts and abilities of each child are noted by observing and recognition
- Opportunities are created for the child to continually practice to become capable
- Opportunities are provided for the child to use their skills and give back to the family and community
- The process goes on as the child passes on his knowledge to his younger siblings or goes on to learn new things

C - Impact of Colonization

Inuit were forced from their nomadic lives to urban settings in one generation. A number of social factors dovetailed throughout colonization that increased the risk of trauma and the intergenerational impact of trauma. Indigenous ways were suppressed, forbidden and purposefully destroyed by colonizers who implemented new systems, which continue to perpetuate colonial policies to this day. The governments' colonial assimilation policies have resulted in Inuit experiencing living conditions many would expect to see in the developing world, which is the cause of profound sadness.



Inuit ways were crushed under colonization. This was the designed purpose of colonization. Many Elders were no longer able to teach Inuit societal values as they did before colonization and Inuit were forbidden to speak their language. Some Elders did not want their children and youth to be conflicted by the differences between the Inuit way of life and the new systems under colonization. They held back and did not offer resistance to the colonizers.

“Now many Elders feel guilty about not teaching cultural ways to children and youth.” Key Informant



Without grounding in cultural values, children and youth are caught between two very different belief systems. As they struggle with adjusting to mainstream life, they can be haunted by the following intergenerational impacts of colonization:¹⁰

- Loss of language and culture
- Family member addictions and mental health issues
- Family and/or community violence
- Family member arrest and/or incarceration
- Family member suicide
- Overcrowded housing conditions
- Homelessness
- Food insecurity
- Separation from parents, grandparents, extended family and/or community
- Forced relocation/resettlement across all Inuit regions
- Resettlement to southern urban centres



Too many Inuit children and youth are living without hope of improved prospects in the future. Some of these troubled children relocate with their families to Ontario and living in the south does not necessarily eliminate mental health issues related to intergenerational trauma. Making sure these children are identified as early as possible is key to remediating troubled family dynamics. Other Inuit children have been fostered or adopted to non-Inuit parents in the south through child welfare and may also require special attention and referrals to appropriate services and supports as biological family member addiction, mental health challenges such as post-traumatic stress syndrome, and suicide can have far reaching impacts on children.

The National Inuit Suicide Prevention Strategy¹¹ explains that there are now concerted efforts to provide a unified approach to suicide prevention through a shared understanding of the context, root causes, and underlying risk factors. Although Inuit youth have amongst the highest rates of youth suicide in the world, they did not historically suffer from disproportionately high rates of suicide.



"The elevated rate of suicide among Inuit in Canada is the most urgent challenge facing our people and it demands a national response. The four regions have rates of suicide that range from five to twenty-five times the rate of suicide for Canada as a whole."¹¹



The specific objectives of the National Suicide Prevention Strategy¹¹ are:

- Creating social equity
- Creating cultural continuity
- Nurturing healthy Inuit children from birth
- Ensuring access to a continuum of mental wellness services for Inuit [in the north and the south]
- Healing unresolved trauma and grief
- Mobilizing Inuit knowledge for resilience and prevention

For information on actions and interventions to address the high number of deaths by suicide among Inuit please refer to the National Suicide Prevention Strategy¹¹ at www.itk.ca/national-inuit-suicide-prevention-strategy.

Despite the rapid change and negative influences on the Inuit way of life, Inuit remain strong and resilient. They have settled all of their land claims with the Federal Government of Canada, have the strongest Indigenous language in Canada, have successful Regional Governments implementing strategies that support Inuit, by Inuit, and have many cultural traditions and practices that are thriving in Canadian culture.

D - Culture as Foundation

Elders are encouraging Inuit to reclaim cultural practices, principles, values, and beliefs. They encourage continued practices such as harvesting, sharing, eating country food, and promoting the use of the Inuktitut language and its multiple dialects. This has contributed to the resurgence in cultural skills, Inuit performance arts, and women's traditional facial and body tattooing. Some Inuit women see facial and body tattooing as an expression of cultural pride and spirituality. Similarly, throat-singing promotes pride in Inuit cultural practices and contributes to the feeling of wellness. As service providers it is important to make room for and admire expressions of cultural identity and to strengthen Inuit cultural pride.



Decolonization is required for healing from post-colonial trauma to take place. Elders play an important role in this process. If you are planning an event for Inuit families, if feasible, invite an Inuit Elder to open the event. Unlike First Nations' practices, a gift of tobacco is not offered to Inuit Elders. An honorarium and a small gift (often food) may be offered as a thank you. An Inuit Elder can light the qulliq, a traditional oil lamp that provides heat and light, may offer an opening prayer in Inuktitut, and/or tell a story that shares Inuit cultural values, beliefs, and practices. These cultural opening activities set the tone for dialogue from the heart, as is the Inuit way.

For further information about Inuit culture you can refer to *The Inuit Way, A Guide to Inuit Culture*⁴ at http://apihtawikosisan.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/InuitWay_e.pdf.

E - Cultural Safety and Cultural Competence

Service providers who have skills in cultural safety and cultural competence matter to Inuit families who are seeking programs, services, and supports. These skills are essential for addressing the rights of Inuit.

The National Aboriginal Health Organization (NAHO) Cultural Safety fact sheet¹² defines cultural safety as being aware of and being able to analyze power imbalances, institutional discrimination, colonization, and colonial relationships as they apply to health care and health education. Service providers, regardless of their own ethnic origins, need to communicate an understanding of Inuit social, spiritual, and historical realities by offering a respectful and warm welcome, listening empathetically, and offering choices without diminishing the cultural identity of the individual. In so doing the service provider may ask questions about the Inuit culture and invite Inuit parents and children to share their skills and/or seek their input about program development that reflects Inuit culture.

NAHO¹² defines cultural competence as a set of behaviours, attitudes, and policies within an agency that govern how service providers can work effectively with Inuit. Cultural competence can be demonstrated by ensuring that policies, programs, and activities that include parents and children of Inuit lineage reflect Inuit societal values. A policy that ensures the presence of Inuit Elders in agency activities is one way to practice cultural competence.



“When a child learns how to light the qulliq (seal oil lamp) it gives him cultural pride and self-confidence. Let Inuit people show who they are. Invite them to demonstrate their skills (i.e. throat singing). Also having the opportunity to be on the land is important to self-esteem and confidence. The Inuit heart still longs for the land because of the blood memory of every Inuit person.” Key Informant



Cultural safety and cultural competency training among service providers promotes awareness of how to address the needs of Inuit who want to access programs, services, and supports. Cultural safety and cultural competence can improve the confidence levels of service providers as well as empower urban Inuit who approach an agency. Inuit specific cultural information and links to training can be accessed by contacting:

- The Ottawa Inuit Children’s Centre, www.ottawainuitchildrens.com
- Tungasuvvingat Inuit, www.tungasuvvingatinuit.ca
- Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health, www.wabano.com
- Children’s Hospital of Eastern Ontario, www.cheo.on.ca

F - Understanding Cultural Humility

“Clients bring their own expectations, experiences, beliefs, communication styles, and attitudes to all health care encounters. Health professionals also bring their own assumptions, previous experience with clients of a particular culture or group, as well as their knowledge of health issues and the health care system to patient encounters.”¹³

As a service provider you may feel concerned about how to support Inuit parents on a cultural level. Cultural humility is a term that describes a person’s preconception about a particular culture. It refers to the difference between what you know and what you think you know about that culture. People often use oppressive language and stereotypes without being aware of generalizations that perpetuate power over people of a different culture. How a service provider speaks to Inuit parents is a reflection of life-long learning. To counteract unconscious assumptions it is important for service providers to raise their awareness by educating themselves about other cultures and engaging in self-reflection or a community of practice that focuses on cultural humility.

“Cultural humility incorporates a lifelong commitment to self-evaluation and critique, to redressing the power imbalances ... and developing mutually beneficial and non-paternalistic partnerships with communities on behalf of individuals and defined populations.”¹⁴

G - Trauma Informed Practice

Healing is the most important task of a parent who is suffering from current trauma or a post-traumatic stress disorder. Healing programs enable parents to learn how to be more effective parents. Many Inuit parents do not know about their own history of colonization. They may struggle with parenting, Inuit language and cultural skills. You should take time to discuss past traumatic events. You can also offer to show one of the National Film Board films or a segment of a film such as *Between Two Worlds*, *Martha of the North*, *Vanishing Point*, *Tunniit*, or *Arctic Defenders*. Several other film titles are listed in the references and Additional Information section at the end of this document. Recognizing, accepting, and talking about trauma helps people to move from stigma, guilt, and shame to improved self-esteem, empowerment, and self-reliance. Trauma-informed practice means knowing about historical issues, cultural practices, and creating a physically and culturally safe environment.



Feeling safe leads to being able to make better choices, being heard, and respected. When dealing with groups or individuals showing signs of trauma, arrange for a safe space for a parent to speak with an Elder who has experience in trauma counselling or with a trauma-informed service provider.

Always be aware of the language you use to describe your Inuit parents or their community. Using positive and open language is a key factor to identifying and addressing trauma in compassionate and strength-focused manner.

“Some Inuit are offended by service providers asking too many questions (i.e. trauma may be triggered), but it is still best to ask. Just try to ask with true interest and be honest and authentic about your intentions.” Key Informant

Whether or not Inuit parents have experienced trauma and violence, ensure that you work in a manner that is not re-traumatizing. Create safety in the interaction by providing choices and by supporting safe coping skills. Refer to the following resources to learn more about trauma and violence:

- What Do these Signs have in Common? Recognizing the Effects of Abuse-related Trauma: www.camh.ca/en/education/about/camh_publications/Documents/Flat_PDFs/Women_Signs_Trauma.pdf
- Trauma-Informed Practice Guide: www.bccewh.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/2013_TIP-Guide.pdf
- Trauma Matters: Guidelines for Trauma-Informed Services in Women's Substance Use Services: www.jeantweed.com

If parents are interested in support regarding issues related to trauma and violence, refer them to a health care provider for specialized counselling.

H - Child Welfare

When working with Inuit families, create a warm and safe environment for parents of Inuit children. It may be difficult to provide a sense of safety if child welfare is involved because parents are fearful about having their children removed from their care. These fears are fueled by parents who have had their children apprehended as well as the history of residential schools where by children were stolen from their parents. Inviting an Elder may help to create a safer setting. Remember to refer for healing if needed.



Service providers and Inuit families must begin with awareness of the issues that may lead to child welfare involvement. Some parents may need a referral to healing circles or to mental health or addiction services. Service providers must be non-judgemental, be willing to ask questions with warmth and understanding, and be able to accept the Inuit parent's circumstances. A service provider can do this by grounding conversations in Inuit values and always showing respect by listening, providing choices, and assuring the parent of confidentiality (while also being clear regarding duty to report child abuse or neglect, etc.). These skills help to support parents and ensure feeling of safety.

*"Colonization disrupted many cultural systems, including Inunnguiniq. But not enough attention has been given to the trauma that it left behind. The need for healing has often been ignored. This has left many multi-generational and unresolved issues. These issues affect families and communities."*⁹

I - Concept of Confidentiality

It is difficult to estimate the numbers of Inuit living in Ontario because some Inuit do not identify as Inuit for a myriad of reasons, some related to lack of trust. When working with families and individuals, we need to inform and remind ourselves and participants about confidentiality, as there are countless and expansive kinship connections. The national Inuit population is approximately 60,000 and there are Inuit from all four regions of Inuit Nunangat living in Ontario.¹⁵

“A big barrier for Inuit parents is administrative paper work, trying to understand everything from permissions to confidentiality. Everything needs to be thoroughly explained about how programs will benefit their child. They will sign if told to do so. Service providers need to be vigilant and make sure the parent truly understands what they are signing.”

Key Informant

As a service provider, know the exceptions to confidentiality and ensure that the Inuit parents using your services are aware of your professional obligations. The exceptions to confidentiality are issues that concern:¹⁶

- Child protection (e.g., a participant discloses child abuse or neglect)
- Self-harm (e.g., if a participant confides that they are thinking of taking their life)
- Harm to others (e.g., if a participant intends to injure another person)





Section 2: Key Cultural Information

This section covers key cultural information and the value of adjusting your service delivery and supports to parents of Inuit children.

Inunnguiniq is the process of making a human being. The six foundational principles of Inunnguiniq⁹ identified by Elders describe practices parents can follow and use to teach their children. The six foundational principles are:

1. Develop habits for living a good life
2. Rise above hardships by always looking for solutions
3. Be heart-centered (develop a strong moral character)
4. Show compassion, serve others, and build relationships
5. Recognize the uniqueness of each individual
6. Always take steps to make improvements

A - Inuit Foundational Laws

Inuit societal values and beliefs provide the foundation of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit [IQ]. It is the values and beliefs themselves that compose IQ. They are considered holistic, continuous, and direct a person throughout his/her life. Inuit values and beliefs are included in health, healing, and wellness practices in the north by Inuit service providers. For Inuit, who have always lived in harsh climates, survival is achieved by working together and passing on the values, skills, and principles for living a good life.

“Everything we do is inundated by individualism, and this is so different from the Inuit way of being.”¹⁹

The following beliefs are foundational laws known as Maligait, held by Inuit for generations. They provide a foundation for all Inuit in a lifelong process of learning how to live a good life.⁹

1. Respect all living things
2. Work for the common good
3. Continually plan and prepare for a better future
4. Maintain harmony and balance

B - Inuit Core Values

The 38 Inuit core values that help turn the four Maligait principles into action include:⁹

Resilience	Listening	Unpretentious
Practice	Significance	Apologize
Cooperation	Adaptability	Acceptance
Sharing	Observation	Oneness
Love	Strength	Interconnectedness
Survival	Volunteer	Trust
Conservation	Taking the Long View	Helping
Teamwork	Consensus	Responsibility
Resourcefulness	Endurance	Perseverance
Patience	Strength	Honesty
Moving Forward	Generosity	Equality
Mastery	Respect	Improvisation
Family	Unity	

The Inunnguiniq: Parenting Program, Facilitator’s Guide⁹ includes a facilitator training booklet with graphics related to the values in the table above. It illustrates how these values can be applied to the day to day lives of Inuit.



C - Story Telling and Inuit Societal Values

Inuit values are often taught through storytelling, an integral part of Inuit culture. There is tremendous value in storytelling as a learning tool and storytelling can be suggested as a helpful parenting practice. Alison Cox, author of *The Healing Heart*,¹⁷ points out that storytelling can reach a group or individuals and that storytelling is comforting for adults and children alike. Cox adds that storytelling has been used as an effective learning tool over thousands of years and that leaders and shaman have recognized storytelling as a great way to deliver a message. She points out that listeners often shut down during lectures but they relax into stories.



Ancient stories offer profound truths that have survived many tellings. A person hearing a story may not understand the deeper truth about the story right away. Sometimes the story needs to be talked about by those telling and listening before it can be understood. Inuit stories are grounded in wisdom that is relevant for all generations and ages throughout time. The following is an example of an ancient story taken from *Keeveok Awake!*:¹⁸

“The legend of how Sedna became a sea goddess is told throughout the Arctic. The story varies from one region to the next. However, in all versions, a young woman becomes the mother of all sea creatures. As the sea goddess, Sedna has dominion over her creatures and controls the availability of seal, walrus, fish, whale, and other sea animals to Inuit hunters. This version is a compilation of many Sedna stories.

Once there was a young woman named Sedna. She lived in the Arctic with her mother and father. She loved her mother and father very much and was very content. Her father was a skilled hunter, so he provided very well for his family. Sedna had plenty of food and warm furs to wear. She liked the comfort of her parent’s home and refused to marry. Many Inuit men desired Sedna for a wife and asked her parents for permission to marry her. But Sedna refused them all. Even when her parents insisted it was time for her to marry she refused to follow tradition and obey them.

This continued for quite some time, until one particular Inuk came to visit Sedna. This man promised Sedna that he would provide her with plenty of food to eat and furs for clothes and blankets. Sedna agreed

to marry him. After they were man and wife, he took her away to his island. When they were alone on the island, he revealed to her that he was not a man at all, but a bird dressed up as a man! Sedna was furious, but she was trapped and had to make the best of it. He, of course, was not a good hunter and could not provide her with meat and furs. All the birdman could catch was fish. Sedna got very tired of eating fish every day.



They lived together on the island for a time, until Sedna's father decided to come and visit. Upon seeing that his daughter was so unhappy and that her husband had lied to her, he killed the birdman. Sedna and her father got into his kayak and set off for home. The birdman's friends discovered what they had done and wanted to avenge the birdman's death. They flew above the kayak and flapped their wings very hard. The flapping of their wings resulted in a huge storm. The waves crashed over the small kayak making it almost impossible to keep the boat upright.

Sedna's father was so frightened that the storm would fill his kayak with water and that he would drown in the icy waters that he threw Sedna overboard. He thought that this would get the birds to stop flapping their wings, but it did not. Sedna did not want to be left in the water, so she held tightly to the edge of her father's boat and would not let go. Fearing that she would tip him over, the father cut her fingers off, one joint at a time. From each of her finger joints different sea creatures were born. They became fish, seals, walruses, and whales.

Sedna sank to the bottom of the ocean and there became a powerful spirit. Her home is now on the ocean floor. If you have seen her, you know she has the head and torso of a woman and the tail of a fish. Sedna now controls all of the animals of the sea. The Inuit who rely

on these animals want to maintain a good relationship with Sedna, so that she will continue to allow her animals to make themselves available to the hunters. Inuit have certain taboos that they must follow to keep Sedna happy. One of these says that when a seal is killed it must be given a drink of fresh water, not salt water.

If the hunters do not catch anything for a long time, the Shaman will transform himself into a fish. In this new form, he or she will swim down to the bottom of the ocean to appease Sedna the Sea Goddess. The Shaman will comb the tangles out of Sedna's hair and put it into braids. This makes her happy and soothes her anger. Perhaps it is because Sedna lost her fingers that she likes to have her hair combed and braided by someone else. When she is happy, she allows her animals to make themselves available to the hunters. Animals do not mind giving themselves up to provide food, clothes, and shelter for the Inuit." (Story included with permission from The University of Alberta Press)

D - Urban Inuit Realities in Ontario

According to the Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre's Research Report: Background for an Inuit Children and Youth Strategy for Ontario:¹⁹

- Inuit are a very young population. In 2011, 35% of Inuit in Ontario were 0-14 years of age.
- Inuit constitute a small but very fast growing population. The dramatic increase in numbers is not due to the birth rate alone – many Inuit move to Ontario from the North each year.
- 82% of Inuit live in the urban areas of Ottawa, Toronto, Kitchener-Cambridge-Waterloo, Oshawa, St. Catharines-Niagara, and 18% live in rural areas.
- Ottawa has the largest Inuit population outside of Northern Canada.

Statistics Canada reported that in the North, 71% of children under the age of 6 years received the focused attention from their grandparents at least once a week.²⁰ When Inuit families move from the north they are separated from grandparents, extended family members, and community who would have provided support.



E - Inuit Inter-generational Trauma

The impacts of the historical realities did not necessarily lessen with time or when families move. Parents and children live with the impacts of intergenerational trauma that may negatively affect their lives for years and generations. Many Inuit children have been fostered or adopted to parents in the south. Life in urban centres is full of many unexpected challenges for Inuit parents and children, as summarized from the document, *Nipivut – Our Voice: A Community Needs Assessment for Inuit Families of Ottawa*.⁶ These impacts can be one or several of the following:

- Cultural isolation
- Culture shock
- Cultural differences in childrearing
- Adjustment to city life
- Discrimination
- Isolation from and loss of extended family member support



“We have different values and morals. We have lots to offer and we are not all alcoholics and addicts.”²¹

The impact of these conditions may increase the risk of mental health/addictions issues for parents, which can lead to a higher risk of family violence. Service providers must report any serious issues related to child safety to child welfare agencies.

F - Inuit Social Determinants of Health and Well-Being

“The social determinants of health are the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age, including the health system. These circumstances are shaped by the distribution of money, power and resources at global, national and local levels, which are themselves influenced by policy choices. The social determinants of health are mostly responsible for health inequities - the unfair and avoidable differences in health status seen within and between countries.”²¹



According to the resource by Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami on the social determinants of Inuit health in Canada, the determinants that are most important in Inuit everyday life include:²⁹

1. Quality of early childhood development
2. Culture and language
3. Livelihoods
4. Income distribution
5. Housing
6. Personal safety and security
7. Education
8. Food security
9. Availability of health services
10. Mental wellness
11. Environment

As stated in this resource there are several challenges affecting the quality of Inuit early childhood development. They include:²⁹

- Infant mortality
- Suicide
- Chronic illness, including heart disease, diabetes, etc.
- Infectious diseases such as tuberculosis and respiratory illnesses
- Income distribution
- Low levels of education
- Limited employment opportunities
- Inadequate housing conditions
- Food security issues

For further information on social determinants of Inuit health refer to www.itk.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/ITK_Social_Determinants_Report.pdf.

G - Communication

“It is important to know that silence is not disrespectful - Inuit people communicate with their eyes - raising the eyebrows means yes and wrinkling the nose means no. Silence and no direct eye contact is not disrespectful.” Key Informant

Inuit are not accustomed to talking at great length conversationally, especially when meeting mainstream service providers for the first time. Conversation becomes more expansive as trust builds and emotional safety is assured.



“Service providers with Connected Care [CHEO] understand that the way Inuit communicate is different from mainstream. Parents do not question what is going on; they listen to authority and talk with their eyes. They are resilient (i.e. surviving colonialism), are acutely aware of the challenges they face having to adapt to new systems and cultures, especially in the area of health care (i.e. social determinants of Inuit health). They feel isolated in urban centres in Ontario and may not be connected to services they need. Traditionally the whole community raises the children, which is different from mainstream communities. In Ontario they are without their extended family which creates more challenges.” Key Informant

H - Inuit and Non-Inuit Adoptions

“Tiguaq means the one I chose... in Inuit culture; adoption is common and fairly positive. There is no shame – the birth mother is able to choose an adoptive mother.”²¹

When an Inuit child is adopted, he/she usually grows up knowing and/or is aware of their biological and extended family. Decisions are occasionally made by the courts to declare an adoption closed if it is determined that the best interests of the child include not having contact with the biological parents.



“Not all Inuit parents are comfortable self-identifying due to discrimination and concerns about [child welfare] apprehending their children. There is a more concerted effort now for [child welfare] to keep Inuit children connected to the urban Inuit community through kinship care. They try to find out who in the community is connected to a child so the child can stay with an older brother, sister or best friend, however the kin still must pass [child welfare] screening.” Key Informant

Custom adoption amongst Inuit is described as the practice of privately arranging adoption between two Inuit families where the responsibility for a child is transferred from one family to another. This is an important cultural and historical practice for Inuit and is strongly supported by Inuit communities. No home study is conducted and social workers and lawyers are not involved in the process.

Custom adoption includes the practices of open adoption and kinship adoption. Open adoption is a term that is in keeping with the Inuit tradition.

Most adoptions are considered open with the birth parents maintaining contact with the children to varying degrees – whether the adoptive parents are Inuit or non-Inuit. The adoptive practices are considered to be in the best interest of the children by providing extended family support to ensure optimum health and well-being. Children grow up knowing their biological parents and siblings even if they live in another community.²²



Kinship adoption is a term used to describe the practice of a child being adopted by extended family members. It improves family connections and affirms the belonging and attachment of many nuclear families to the larger kinship group.

For more information about recognition and acceptance of custom adoption (which includes open adoption and kinship adoption), refer to the toolkit by the Adoption Council of Canada.²³

“There is no shame associated with traditional custom adoption. If a pregnant woman cannot take care of her baby, an auntie, uncle, sister, or parent can take over – there is no legal adoption process, no shame - it is normal and accepted.” Key Informant

Non-Inuit adoptive parents in Ontario need to access Inuit specific programs, services, and supports. These culturally-based early childhood programs and services are essential to support and to strengthen the cultural identity of the adopted children. Such programs improve the families and children’s self-esteem and cultural pride. For more information on non-Inuit adoptive families please refer to Nipivut – Our Voice: A Community Needs Assessment for Inuit Families of Ottawa,⁶ available at: www.ottawainuitchildrens.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/nipivut_eng.pdf.



Section 3: Using Resources and Tools to Better Support Inuit Families

"The tradition in those days was to build a new birthing igloo for the labour and delivery just prior to a woman giving birth." ²⁴

"In those days, before they had cotton threads, they would use sinew. They used the muscles of the caribou leg because even if it dampens, it wouldn't come loose to bind the umbilical cord." ²⁴

The following pages review 6 Inuit specific resources with brief descriptions and excerpts that are key to the Inuit traditional way of life, pregnancy, and early childhood development. These resources can further inform and orient service providers regarding Inuit culture. They offer information that may be included in programs, services, and supports in Ontario to help Inuit and non-Inuit parents and their young Inuit children feel more welcome and at home in a mainstream environment. These publications are available from links provided and are free to download and print.



A - The Inuit Way, A Guide to Inuit Culture⁴

Produced by Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada

“As a people, we have undergone immense changes in a generation. Despite the many changes our society has encountered, we retain strong ties to the land and our traditions. The Inuit continue to have a strong, unique culture that guides our everyday life – our close ties to the land, a dedication to community and a strong sense of self-reliance.”⁴

Main content in the resource:

This resource provides a full and comprehensive description of traditional Inuit culture as it relates to contemporary Inuit life. It is available in both English and Inuktitut and offers an enormous amount of information about history, child rearing, family dynamics, modern family dynamics, Inuit societal values and diet. The goal of this resource is to inform and educate non-Inuit about Inuit cultural ways of being. Some of the themes and topics that may be of interest to service providers are as follows:

- **Traditional Diet** - A traditional diet for breastfeeding includes large amounts of the fat of sea mammals (i.e. blubber) and fish oil which are rich in Omega 3 fatty acids, vital to the healthy development of the human body.
- **Breastfeeding** - Elders and health workers remind everyone of the benefits of breastfeeding.
- **Naming Inuit Children** - The naming blessing is known as kipliitaujuq and an amulet (i.e. an ornament or piece of jewelry) is given at birth that is sewn into the child's parka and retained a keepsake.
- **Raising Inuit Children** - Children were expected to develop self-reliance, discipline and assume adult-like tasks very early in their development.
- **Learning Styles** - Knowledge, from an Inuit perspective, is grounded in knowing and experiencing. Tukisiumaniq means building understanding or making meaning in life. Silatuniq means experiencing the world.
- **The Role of Grandparents** - Inuit children spend a lot of time with their grandparents who teach them about social and cultural values.
- **Fostering and Adoption of Inuit Children** - Fluid bonds exist between parents and children which extend to adoption practices as children can be gifted to relatives or a couple who have not been able to conceive themselves.

How this content can be used with parents:

This resource can be used to refer to cultural identifiers that are familiar to Inuit parents thereby demonstrating the service provider's knowledge and acceptance of Inuit culture. Cultural information by topic can be selected and added to an existing parenting program curriculum to enhance self-esteem, cultural pride, and identity of Inuit parents. This resource offers an opportunity to merge both northern and southern concepts of parenting and child development, breaking down barriers amongst parents. This information is especially useful if there are only a few Inuit parents in a rural or urban community parenting group. Opening up discussion about Inuit ways of being provides space for Inuit parents to share their knowledge and experience as a cultural exchange and can provide respectful and enriched discussions about similarities and differences.



B - Born on the Land with Helping Hands Calendar²⁴

Produced by Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada

Main content in the resource:

The goal of this resource is to provide Inuit specific pregnancy and birthing information in a useful journal format for Inuit women to track the development of their baby and to make sure their baby is born healthy and happy. This colourful and engaging Inuit pregnancy calendar (in English and Inuktitut) helps Inuit mothers prepare for the arrival of their baby. It was developed and designed by Inuit Elders, researchers, and service providers.



In this resource you will find:

- A colourful pullout wall poster to follow baby's growth in utero
- Elder's wisdom
- Culturally-based nutritional information
- Recipes for country food such as qallunaatitut (i.e. seal stew) and tuktu (caribou) that are good sources of iron
- Advice about country foods such as arctic char, caribou, Misiraq (a dip made from seal or whale blubber/fat), seal, walrus, shellfish, and plants such as seaweed, willow and mountain sorrel (qunguliit).²⁴ Country foods can be found at the Nunavut Country Food Store in Ottawa.

How this content can be used with parents:

As a service provider you can share this colourful and informative pregnancy calendar with Inuit parents and discuss ways they can prepare for the arrival of their baby. You can initiate many discussions about nutritional intake and markers along the journey of fetal development. The calendar provides a forum for passing down special knowledge from mother to daughter, from grandmother to granddaughter for a safe and healthy pregnancy and birthing healthy babies the Inuit way while keeping an important part of the Inuit culture alive. It can be used as a journal of each woman's pregnancy to record information that can be shared with children as they get older.

"As an Inuit person you do not have to be 90 years old to have been born on the land in an igloo or a tent." Unknown Author

C - Traditional Inuit Pregnancy and Childbirth: Documenting the Wisdom of Inuit Elders about Traditional Birthing and Midwife Practices²⁵

Produced by Pauktutit Inuit Women of Canada

“Health professionals from the south can become more sensitive to Inuit birthing ways while promoting cultural pride in the heritage of Inuit midwifery.”²⁵

Main content in the resource:

This handy one-pager provides information from Inuit Elders in the North who also served as midwives. This resource presents concise information about Inuit birthing and midwifery for educational purposes. The one-pager was developed after interviewing 75 Inuit Elders in 10 northern communities who described their pregnancy, birthing, and midwife experiences.

How this content can be used with parents:

This resource can be offered to parents in tandem with the Born on the Land with Helping Hands Calendar.²⁴ It is an especially interesting record of cultural midwifery information that helps revive and maintain Inuit specific birthing information. It can be used by service providers for cultural midwifery advocacy and as a practical reference of services and supports for the development of healthy pregnancies.



D - Katujjiqatigiitsuni Sanngini: Working Together to Understand FASD²⁶

Produced by Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada

Main content in the resource:

The resource helps Inuit service providers and community women understand FASD. It offers a framework for developing ideas about how families who are raising Inuit children with FASD can be supported. The resource was developed and designed by Inuit researchers and service providers about FASD within an Inuit cultural framework. It emphasizes the Inuit societal value of working together for the common good. It also recognizes that FASD is a primary concern for Inuit due to the negative impacts associated with colonization (i.e. mental health and addictions issues).

The goals of the resource are to:

- Define the roles of helpers and reflections of one's own personal experiences, feelings and triggers
- Review basic information about FASD
- Discuss addiction during pregnancy
- Offer strategies for helping women who are drinking or using other drugs
- Question the resources and support in the community for women at risk
- Develop a personal plan for well-being



"I believe that Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder education needs to be one of the top priorities in Inuit communities. Over the last three or four generations women have been given different information from Elders, health representatives and friends about how alcohol affects our unborn children." ²⁷

How this content can be used with parents:

The content from this resource can be used in an Inuit pre-pregnancy sexual health class as well as in a pregnancy and delivery group that focuses on personal plans for a healthy pregnancy. The resource is also a participant handbook that can be used to raise awareness of the issues of addiction and FASD. It is designed to engage and support Inuit pregnant and parenting women to learn about addiction and see what kinds of support might work best for them.

E - Inunnguiniq: Caring for Children the Inuit Way¹

Produced by the National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health, Shirley Tagalik

Main content in the resource:

This resource defines the concept of Inunnguiniq, which is the process of socialization and education. It is literally translated as the making of a human being. The Elders who informed a revival of this worldview hope that it will drive changes in the way child development is addressed within families as well as institutional frameworks and practice. The cultural expectation emphasizes the need for understanding the relevance of Inunnguiniq for healthy child development. It discusses how children can become accomplished according to their interests and abilities, through a holistic rather than a linear mainstream approach of strictly defining stages of child development. A framework for holistic child development ensures a good attitude, critical thinking, skill development, and proper behaviour.



How this content can be used with parents:

This resource provides a description of the holistic ways of being interconnected in the world as they relate to Inuit values. It describes the understanding and practice of the socializing process known as Inunnguiniq in healthy child development. It can be used to initiate discussions with parents about how both Inuit specific cultural ways of being and mainstream approaches can be helpful in strengthening a child's development in the south. Children can be assessed according to meeting the benchmarks of ages and stages as well as according to interests and abilities to merge two world views – the north and the south.

F - Family Health - Inunnguiniq Parenting Program²⁸

Produced by Qaujigiartiit Health Research Centre

Main content in the resource:

These rich cultural resources are based on parenting best practices as reported by Elders. This parenting program was developed by the Qaujigiartiit Health Research Centre in 2009 in collaboration with Inuit Elders for Inuit living in Nunavut. Facilitator training is offered in Ontario.

The goal of these resources is to introduce strengths-based, empowerment practices and perspectives by teaching from the heart in order to:

- Revitalize Inunnguiniq (values and beliefs) for our lives today
- Support healing
- Rebuild the role of extended family and community child rearing

You can inquire about workshops at (867) 975-2476.

How this content can be used with parents:
Use the training materials to discuss the following topics with parents:

- Healthy eating and nutrition
- Roles of parents in raising and guiding children
- Roles of extended family in child rearing
- Importance of the land
- Wellness counselling and healing from trauma
- Stages of child development
- Inuit perspectives on child rearing
- Practical life skills grounded in Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit
- Interpersonal communication skills (for partners and children)
- Positive discipline methods
- Exploration of ourselves and our actions through reflection





Section 4: Inuit Specific Programs, Services & Supports in Ontario

In Ontario there is an evolving focus on community-based solutions with an understanding of Inuit ways of being, values, and parenting practices for Inuit children. For more information on strategies to improve accessibility to Inuit specific programs, services, and supports, please refer to Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre – Research Report: Background for an Inuit Children and Youth Strategy for Ontario.¹⁹

Service Provider	Program	Target Group	Key Activities	Contact Information
Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre (OICC)	Sivummut Head Start	Inuit children 18 months to 6 years & their parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preschool cultural program for toddlers & preschoolers 	Manager of Early Years (613) 744-3133 ext. 228 www.ottawainuitchildrens.com
	Tumiralaat Child Care Centre	Inuit children 18 months to 2 years Full days, daycare subsidies available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preschool cultural program for toddlers & preschoolers • Inuktitut language and culture taught daily • Healthy meals and snacks including country food • Transportation provided 	Manager of Early Years (613) 744-3133 ext. 228
	Women's and Men's Circles	Parents/guardians of children up to age 13, weekly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Childcare and food provided • Referrals to other agencies for support • Individual support • Cultural activities 	Parenting Coordinator (613) 744-3133 ext. 219
	Inunnguiniq Inuit Parenting Program	Parents of Inuit Children and Youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inuit Specific Parenting Program 	Parenting Coordinator (613) 744-3133
	Kindergarten	Junior and Senior Kindergarten age children (children turning 4 or 5 in the calendar year)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OCDSB curriculum • Inuktitut language and culture taught throughout the day • Transportation provided • Healthy meals and snacks and country food when available • Field trips 	Manager of Early Years (613) 744-3133 ext 228
	Uqausivut Language Program	Inuit children, parents, Community members, teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inuktitut Language classes • Resource Library for families, organizations, schools etc. • Instructional resources 	Uqausivut Language Program Coordinator (613) 744-3133 ext. 218
	Family Well-being Program	Parents/families of Inuit children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly Family Drop-in • Weekly Youth Drop-in • Monthly Culture Night • Monthly Adoptive/ Foster Parent Night • One on One support • Referrals • Centralized Intake 	Manager of Family Well-being (613) 744-3133 ext 211

Service Provider	Program	Target Group	Key Activities	Contact Information
<p>Tungasuvvingat Inuit Family Resource Centre (FRC, 297 Savard)</p> <p>Tungasuvvingat Inuit Family Well-being Centre (1071 Richmond)</p>	<p>Parenting Program</p> <p>Pre/Post Natal Program</p>	Inuit children 0-6 & their parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birthing support/information • Infant development, infant massage • Community kitchen/nutritional lunch & welcome gift basket for newborns • Parenting workshops -Individual and family support • Parent relief care • Book/toy lending • Culture workshops • Special Community events • Children's Aid Society access visits • Community support program to help families adjust to an urban setting and to help families involved with the Children's Aid Society 	<p>Family Services Manager (613) 749-4500 ext. 30</p> <p>Family Wellness Coordinator (613) 565-5885</p> <p>Manager - Family Well Being (613) 565-5885 ext. 200</p> <p>www.tungasuvvingatinuit.ca/</p>
<p>Akausivik Inuit Family Health Team - Medical Clinic 300-24 Selkirk Street Vanier</p>	Medical Care	Inuit children & their families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Testing, treatment, medication and prescriptions for medical issues in Inuit children 	<p>(613) 740-0999</p> <p>www.champlainhealthline.ca/displayservice.aspx?id=23928</p>

Service Provider	Program	Target Group	Key Activities	Contact Information
Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO)	Connected Care	Inuit children & their families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides culturally competent, quality care and improves the medical processes and care coordination with Ottawa Health Services Network Inc. (OHSNI) pediatric case managers – sending pediatric specialists to do clinics in Nunavut to decrease the need to travel to Ottawa • Works closely with OHSNI to coordinate care of Inuit children & youth coming to CHEO 	Connected Care Manager (613) 737-7600 ext. 2366 www.cheo.on.ca
Nunavut Country Food Store	Country Food	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Order country foods or buy in person, i.e. Arctic char, caribou 	263 MacLaren Street, Ottawa (613) 680-3225
Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health	Circle of Care	Inuit children and their families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inuit specific alternate dispute resolution process, English & Inuktitut • Parents develop a family-plan with an Elder, family, friends and child welfare to ensure child safety while remediating child welfare concerns 	Circle of Care Coordinator (613) 748-0657 ext. 238 www.wabano.com

Service Provider	Program	Target Group	Key Activities	Contact Information
Toronto Inuit Association	Will be providing Inuit specific programs, services and supports in Toronto for Inuit families	Inuit children and their families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning stages for future programs, services or supports 	Facebook www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=toronto%20inuit%20centre
Ottawa Health Services Network Inc. (OHSNI)	Medical services for Inuit people in the North and in Ottawa	Inuit children, youth and their families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides special medical services, communication between medical personnel & Inuit families, administrative support for appointments, nursing case management, medical records management, Inuktitut interpretation services, and medical escorts for children, youth, and family members (not for infants) 	Director of Operations (613) 298-8201 ext. 112 http://ohsni.com

Key Messages

Knowledge:

- Inuit work towards the common good of the community rather than focusing on individualism.
- Inuit child rearing practices can be different from mainstream practices. Inuit children are often given more freedom to learn experientially and the relationship between child and parent is more fluid because of the responsibilities and involvement of grandparents, aunties, uncles, and the community in child rearing.
- Families benefit by supporting and celebrating Inuit identity and understanding cultural knowledge and Inuit child rearing practices.
- Inuit Elders, teachings, and stories are important to Inuit families.

Practices:


- Invite Inuit Elders and grandparents to assist in programs for Inuit parents. Elders can assist Inuit who want to decolonize and reclaim cultural practices. Decolonization requires becoming aware of one's authentic culture.
- Build Inuit societal values into programming, services, and supports.
- Accept, understand, and listen to Inuit parents suffering from trauma and/or culture shock, without judgement, to help them feel safe and understood.
- Ask Inuit parents questions about their children as they may be uncomfortable requesting information and advice from service providers.
- Support parents of foster/adoptive Inuit children to maintain cultural ties in order to strengthen cultural identity. When children feel proud of their cultural heritage their self-esteem improves.
- Provide alternate dispute resolution models such as Circle of Care (see page 36) to assist in resolving tensions between Inuit families and child welfare.
- Link service providers with resources and cultural information to improve the health and wellbeing of Inuit children 0-6 in Ontario urban centres.





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- Kneel jump: www.youtube.com/watch?v=OR5kW0WMJsA
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National Film Board of Canada (NFB): Inuit Historical Films

www.nfb.ca or 514-283-9000

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- Between Two Worlds
- Arctic Defenders
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