



# Family-Centred Practice From the Perspective of Aboriginal Infant And Child Development Programs

Presenting for you today:

Diana Elliott, Provincial Advisor for AIDP

Jackie Watts, Provincial Advisor for ASCD

Rona Sterling-Collins, MSW, AIDP/ASCD/AECD Regional Advisor -  
Thompson, Cariboo Shuswap

Tanya Brown, Manager, Mother Bear Child Development

# Welcome to AIDP & ASCD

- The Aboriginal Infant Development and Aboriginal Supported Child Development Programs (AIDP/ASCD), both are 2 separate programs supported by; the BC Aboriginal Association of Friendship Centres (BCAAFC) and the Ministry for Children and Family Development (MCFD).
- Both AIDP/ASCD support Indigenous children and their families.
- As children age out of AIDP most often will transition to ASCD.
- AIDP/ASCD Programs share quarterly newsletters, group emails, and a Provincial Advisory Committee.
- AIDP/ASCD Programs have Regional Advisors, Practice Guidelines/Manuals, and websites.
- AIDP Website; <https://www.aidp.bc.ca>
- ASCD Website; <https://www.ascdp.bc.ca>

# Aboriginal Infant Development Programs (AIDP)

- AIDP offer support to families and infants who are at risk for or have been diagnosed with developmental delays. The organization has existed since 1992 and is one of the longest running aboriginal educational development programs in BC.
- Programs are voluntary, family centered, and primarily focused on children ages 0 -3 years (0-6 years in some communities).
- AIDP Consultants support families by providing home visits, activity planning, and developmental and family needs assessments in culturally sensitive and meaningful ways.
- AIDP Consultants support also assist families in accessing other health, social, and community services.
- Working with families, not just their children, supports early and lifelong learning and healthy outcomes for children.

# Aboriginal Supported Child Development Programs (ASCD)

- To support children who require extra supports to be included in child care settings and communities.
- Such inclusion nurtures a child's self-esteem, identity, and allows the child to participate in settings that will support development along with peers. Having a setting where children can get the supports they need to be included, helps the child to grow and learn in a safe and nurturing environment.
- ASCD programs are developed with cultural values, beliefs, and traditions in mind.
- Based on the Indigenous rights of the child, Aboriginal children and families will be supported to reach their fullest potential, through a strength-based, holistic and culturally responsive approach, that honors the whole child, and places the child at the centre of the "Circle of Support" to ensure they are included with their childcare, preschool, and community care settings.
- Culturally Relevant and Safe Support – when programs and services are led by Aboriginal communities, this leads to greater participation, retention, and satisfaction in programs.

# Huy'ch'qa

- Thank you for the invitation to spend time with you today
- I am Coast Salish (my father) and Nuuchah Nulth (my mother)
- My dad's father is a descendant of Chief Seattle
- My maternal grandfather was a hereditary chief
- My maternal grandmother's father was Scottish

## Why am I sharing this?

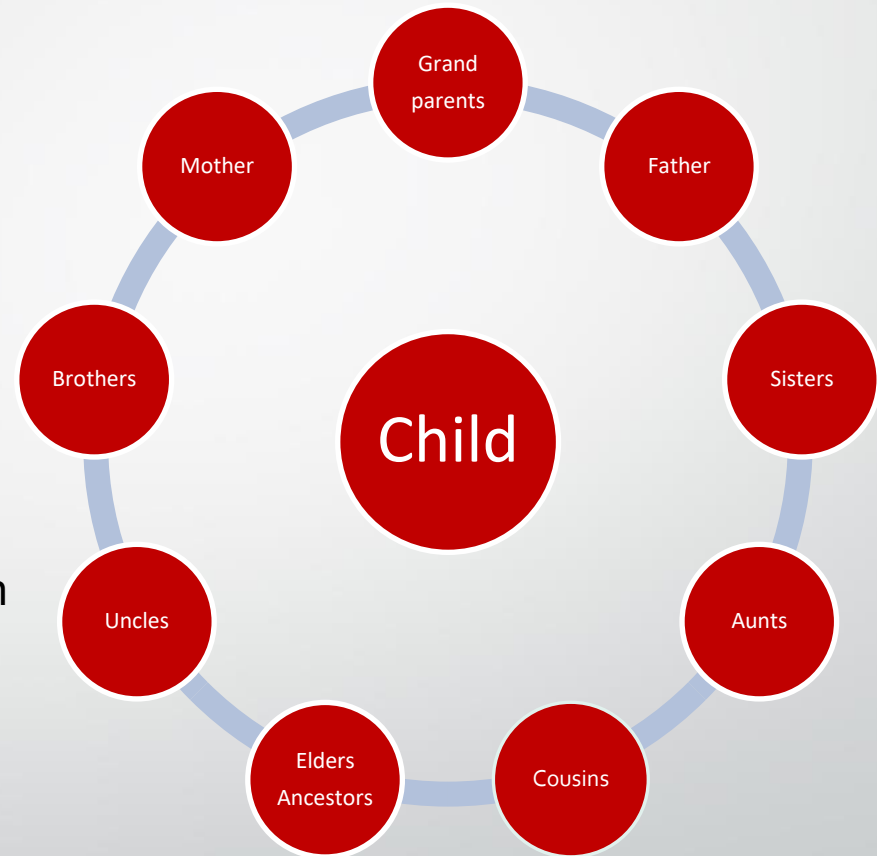


# Aboriginal Infant Development Programs

“Because our people had that strong belief, whatever happened, to keep our family circle strong. With a circle, there is no beginning, no ending. Within the family circle, we have the grandparents, who were the teachers, the young moms, the young dads, big brothers, big sisters, uncles and aunts, cousins. They’re all in the outside circle.

And every one of them had an obligation to the little ones in the centre. Children were never growing up without somebody there all the time.”

*(Shuswap Elder – 2004)*



# **Hard to Reach. Non-Compliant. No Show for Appointments. Doesn't Step Up.**

- Why is it so hard to engage Indigenous people?
- Why don't Indigenous People participate in our programs?
- Why do Indigenous People not come back after one or two times?
- How long are you going to use residential schools for a crutch?
- I am sick of having the TRC rammed down my throat.
- I am a native Canadian too, I was born here.
- They deserve to have their kids removed.
- I don't have any sympathy.



# What if We Asked?



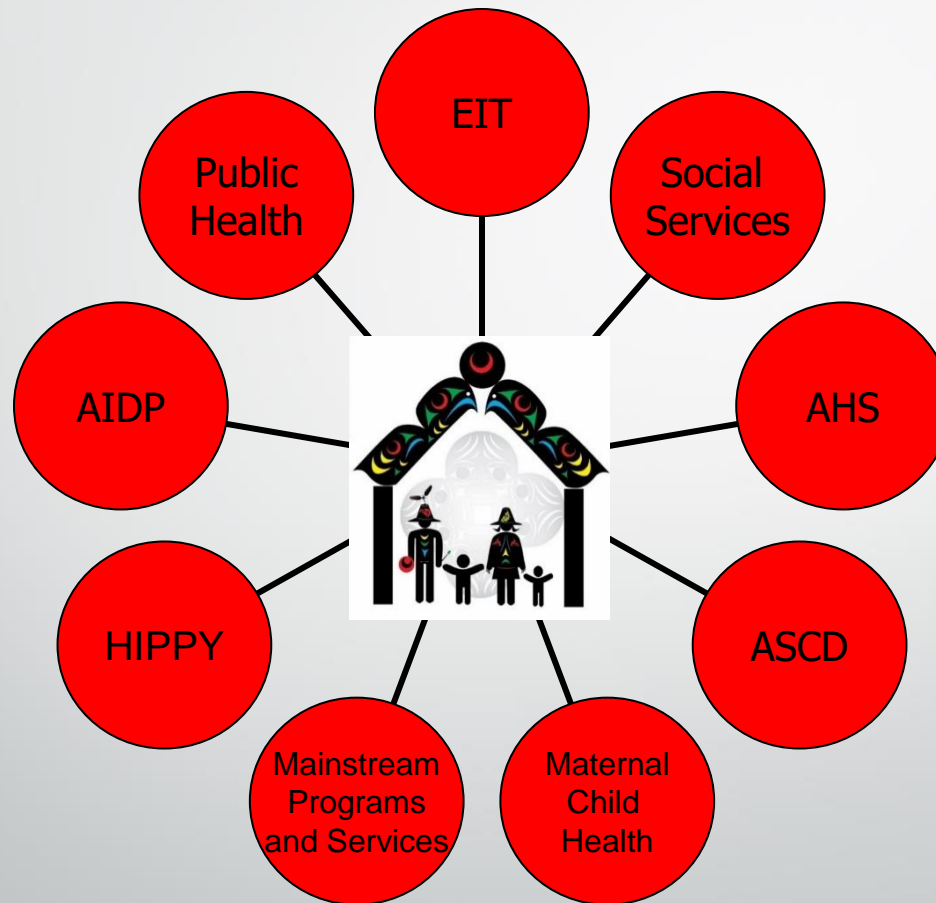
- How can we make it easier for Indigenous families or staff?
- How can we engage families to feel welcome?
- How can we make it more comfortable for Indigenous families to want to come back?
- What do I need to learn about the families or colleagues I work with?
- What can I learn and do different from the TRC?
- I may be a Canadian, but where did my family come from?
- What is my knowledge or understanding of the history of Canada and Indigenous People?



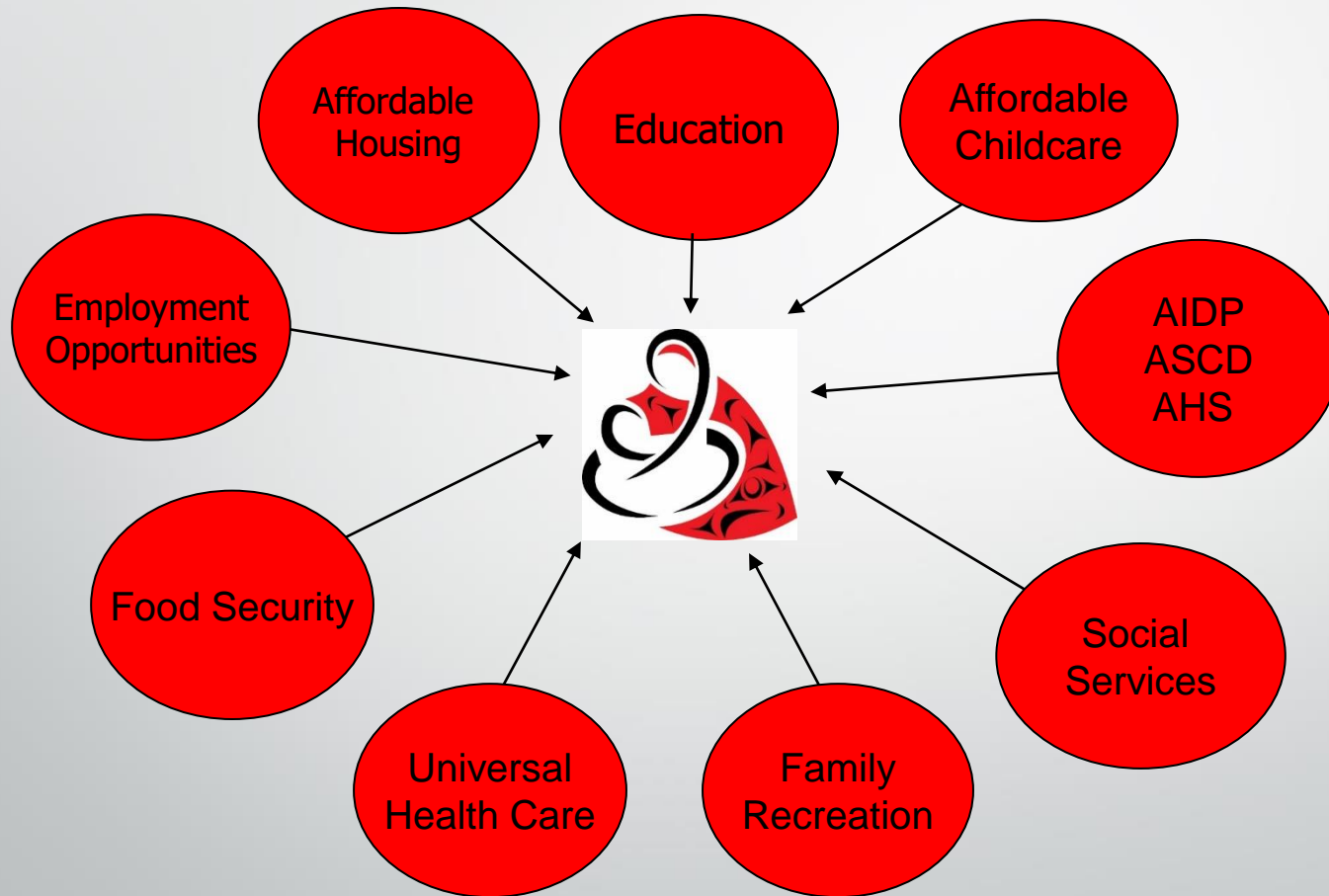
# **Family Centred Family Focussed Family Directed Family at the Centre**



# ECD Programs or Services



# Community Services



# Who I Am

- Hen'le
- Rona Sterling-Collins, Quist'letko from the Nlaka'pamux Nation
- Raised on a small reserve called Joeyaska where I live among my extended family
- Have an MSW and I've had my Consulting Business for 25 years
- I am a Mom to two and a grandma to a 2 year old
- Our son Wyatt has autism and this has encouraged and challenged me to become an advocate and educator for him and other Indigenous children and adults with disabilities

# Cultural Safety

- To understand the lived experiences of many Indigenous people, we need to know the "colonial context," the historical and ongoing process of White European domination over Indigenous peoples and lands. This includes colonial policies such as the *Indian Act* and the legacy of the Residential School System, and the impact of these on Indigenous peoples' lives.

Photo by AIDP Program of BC

# Cultural Safety

To be equitable and culturally safe, Indigenous nations and organizations may define cultural safety in a manner appropriate to the interests and needs of their children and youth. Cultural safety is an outcome based on respectful engagement that recognizes and strives to address power imbalances inherent in the system. It results in an environment free of racism and discrimination, where people feel safe.

Source: First Nations Health Authority

# What You Can Do

## Putting cultural safety into action

- 1. Do something!** Having good intentions is not enough. Take action to make change. Speak out against racism, ask questions of those with more understanding, find allies and create a support system for yourself that can help you advocate for culturally safe approaches.
- 2. Take responsibility for your own learning.** Read, reflect and ask questions. Do not expect this learning to come from Indigenous people.
- 3. Take time for self-reflection.** Be aware of your own assumptions and biases. Question everything you have 'learned' about Indigenous people and take steps to actively disrupt the stereotypes.
- 4. Commit to lifelong learning.** Be prepared to be uncomfortable. Understanding colonialism and the legacy of racism is an ongoing and difficult task.
- 5. Incorporate culture and language into your programs. Utilize Indigenous Elders and Resource People. Ask Indigenous families what they would like to see in the programs.**

<https://www.heretohelp.bc.ca/visions/indigenous-people-vol11/what-indigenous-cultural-safety-and-why-should-i-care-about-it>

# Home Visiting

- Both AIDP and ASCD Services can be conducted in a home visiting format or outreach format, where the services reach out to the families.
- This can be in the family's home or in a community-based setting.
- Home visiting helps to bridge parent and family involvement in your program.
- It is a great way to reach families who do not attend centre-based programs.
- To accommodate transportation and isolation issues that many families face.
- To encourage parents as baby's first teacher.
- To provide support and education to the parents.
- To offer additional supports (screening and assessment, parenting information, developmental information, linkages to other resources, etc) to the parents.



# What do the families need?



- When AIDP and ASCD was first incepted in 2007 in our Nation (Merritt/Lytton Area), we did a comprehensive needs assessment. What we heard from parents and the communities is that they wanted services designed to meet the needs of the child and families.
- We also heard that many school age children with special needs were not receiving adequate (or any) supports and they wanted ASCD Services to assist with this.
- The ASCD Programs in Merritt and Lytton provide services up to age 19, with a focus on school age children. Services are offered in a community-based, outreach format.
- It's important that programs are designed to meet the needs of the children and families in whatever setting is most suitable to them.

Photo by Bing

# Sharing my story

Who am I?

- Early childhood and supported child development for 30 years
- Work with Indigenous communities to create early years programs
- Currently working as a Manager of a childcare program on reserve
- Mother of two young adults and 8 foster children
- German and Scottish ancestry

# Building Relationships

*"Before you understand that your own culture dictates how you translate everything you see and hear, you will never be able to see or hear things in any other way"*

Rupert Ross – from Dancing with a Ghost

Understand your own cultural identity and beliefs

# Building Relationships

- Be trustworthy



*"Trust is not built in big, sweeping moments. Its built in tiny moments every day."*

Brene Brown



# Building Relationships

- Be transparent
- Be a good listener
- Be respectful
- Be invested
- Be involved
- Be patient



# Questions / Answers

- Questions & Answers
- Quick Closing: We appreciate the opportunity to present to you today. We hope you found our information helpful to the important work you do with children and families.

# Contact Information

- Tanya Brown [Tanya\\_Brown@squamish.net](mailto:Tanya_Brown@squamish.net)
- Diana Elliott [advisor@aidp.bc.ca](mailto:advisor@aidp.bc.ca)
- Rona Sterling-Collins [ronasc@telus.net](mailto:ronasc@telus.net)
- Jackie Watts, Provincial Advisor for Aboriginal Supported Child Development Programs  
[advisor.ascdp@bcaafc.com](mailto:advisor.ascdp@bcaafc.com)