

A photograph of three young Indigenous children, likely of Māori descent, smiling warmly at the camera. They are in a classroom setting, with a wooden table and a blue wall with educational posters visible in the background. The child on the left has long dark hair and is wearing a blue top. The child in the middle has short dark hair and is wearing a green top. The child on the right has short dark hair and is wearing a light green top. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

INDIGENOUS EARLY LEARNING & CARE

UNDERSTANDING THE NEEDS OF
INDIGENOUS CHILDREN AND THEIR
PARENTS/CAREGIVERS

MOTIVATIONS



Informed by principles of social accountability



UNDRIP: rights to self-determination & autonomy



Amplifying the needs, experiences of those most impacted by policy, systems change

EARLY LEARNING & CARE: EPE "GAME CHANGER"

- Impacts of intense, well-funded, and well-designed ECD on the life-trajectories of excluded populations is well-known/understood.
- We also know the role of access and affordability of early learning and care in terms of mediating the cycles of poverty.
- How are we considering, if at all, this fact vis-a-vis the needs and lived-realities of Indigenous children and their parents/caregivers in the city of Edmonton? .. and the role ELC can play in redressing the vast over-representation of Indigenous peoples and children in poverty.

ARTICULATING THE PROCESS

- Talking Circle
 - traditional practice
 - Non-hierarchical
 - Builds trust
 - Narrative (qualitative vs quantitative)
- Start in a good way, relational.
 - Met with Co-Chairs of EPE Indigenous Circle
 - Elder blessing
 - Food
 - Funded transportation/childcare (in some cases)
- Permission
 - From parents, caregivers
- Analysis
 - By Indigenous peoples, for Indigenous peoples.

WHY IS THIS APPROACH IMPORTANT

- Protracted history of research "on" Indigenous peoples > conclusions drawn, inferences made > inaccurate, unresponsive, and mis-representative
- Focused on ensuring we were responsive to the 4 R's of Indigenous engaged research:
 - Respect
 - Relevance
 - Reciprocity
 - Responsibility
- Long history of symbolic responses to pre-supposed needs > primarily focused on Indigenizing spaces, without understanding systemic problems in terms of access, affordability, or how to redress colonization within a given field.

WHAT EMERGED?

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- 10 themes emerged from the 6 Talking Circles
 - Findings present considerable hope & opportunity for creating systemic change... but also risk.
 - ELC is complicit in ongoing cycles of oppression and dispossession.
 - Majority of Indigenous participants had intersections with the Child Welfare system – legacy and ongoing.
 - Historical context of Indian Residential Schools, 60s Scoop, Millennial Scoop ... linger on. Ever-present
 - Need for Indigenous childcare workers as cultural knowledge brokers, protective factor.
 - In-service and pre-service training

What change is happening?

- Conversations emerging about addressing the recommendations
- Not yet focused on addressing the systemic issues within childcare

Now What?

- Upstream and downstream recommendations
 - CW Policy
 - Training/development
 - Funding and service delivery models
 - Changing behaviour and action of people within and across systems.

DESIGNING FOR
THE FUTURE

INDIGENOUS EARLY LEARNING & CARE IN THE CITY OF EDMONTON

Articulating the experiences, perspectives,
and needs of Indigenous parents and
caregivers.

[https://www.ecelc.ca/publications-
archive/7wl7pe11ru7l1cqly3xt2fnlxftkii](https://www.ecelc.ca/publications-archive/7wl7pe11ru7l1cqly3xt2fnlxftkii)