

Aboriginal Child Care in Ontario and Quebec

Submitted to:

The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples

Prepared by:

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Executive Summary

Child care plays an important role in the improvement of social and economic conditions in Aboriginal communities. As in mainstream society, the availability of high quality child care services enables Aboriginal parents to pursue employment and training opportunities while ensuring their children are cared for in a safe and nurturing environment. But, in Aboriginal society, there are factors that distinguish the need for child care from that of the mainstream. For example, relatively high rates of single parenthood augment the need for day care services. Moreover, where there are high rates of family violence or alcoholism, there is a need for child care to enable parents to participate in healing activities. Increasingly, culturally-appropriate child care is seen as a vehicle for cultural revival, through the teaching of Aboriginal languages and traditions and the involvement of Elders in child care programs.

This report examines the current situation with respect to Aboriginal child care in Ontario and Quebec and makes recommendations for addressing Aboriginal child care issues and problems in the region.

There were several objectives underlying this research. The first was to identify the various forms of child care available to Aboriginal families, the extent to which the need for child care is being met, and the barriers to increasing the **quantity** of child care available. With regard to the **quality** of child care, the research set out to determine the extent to which Aboriginal child care in the region is culturally-appropriate and/or geared to Early Childhood Education, as well as the barriers to increasing the quality of child care. The objectives of the research also included preparing profiles of **innovative models** of Aboriginal child care, and determining the reasons for failure or success of initiatives in the region. Key issues in the areas of jurisdiction, funding, regulations and training were identified and discussed.

The principal methodology for this research has been **qualitative**, using a review of the relevant literature on Aboriginal child care in the region, and interviews with key informants working in the field of Aboriginal child care service delivery, policy, or administration.

In Ontario, almost 40% of the First Nations in the province have licensed child care centres, while in Quebec, only an estimated 10% of the First Nations have licensed child care programs. The main reason for the difference is the existence of a 1965 federal-provincial agreement on the funding of Aboriginal child care in Ontario. While the federal government reimburses Ontario for a large percentage of provincial expenditures for child care, it does not provide funding in Quebec.

Northern and remote areas of Ontario are the least developed in terms of child care. This is seen both as an indication of a lack of support by Band Councils for child care, and a reflection of the lack of employment and training opportunities. In Quebec, the shortage of Aboriginal child care can be attributed to the lack (until recently) of information and training in English, the lack of access to existing Early Childhood Education training programs, and the existing provincial system for allocating child care spaces.

The development of culturally-appropriate Aboriginal child care continues to be a challenge in both provinces, due to the lack of funding for culturally-based child care training programs. Through the federal Child Care Initiatives Fund, innovative models of training have been developed in both provinces, but the future of these programs is not assured, due to lack of funding.

There is very little culturally-appropriate child care available off-reserve, although Ontario now has five urban-based Aboriginal child care programs.

Lack of funding is a major problem in both provinces. This includes funding for the capital costs of constructing day care facilities, as well as funding for staff salaries. With low staff salaries, day care centres are faced with high staff turnover and inconsistent provision of care.

Child care regulations are not perceived by First Nations to be reflective of Aboriginal culture and values, nor appropriate to the reality of life in remote Aboriginal communities. First Nations are demanding more flexibility in the legislation, especially with regard to staff qualifications, housing standards, food, and ratios of staff to children. At the same time, provincial authorities are demonstrating increasing openness and flexibility in addressing the needs of First Nations.

Recommendations for change include the establishment of a clear federal policy on Aboriginal child care, support for the establishment of provincial Aboriginal child care providers organizations, increased funding for culturally-appropriate training and program development, separate funding for Aboriginal child care, coordination between the various provincial and federal social programs, review of all child care regulations and First Nations control over all aspects of Aboriginal child care in the region.

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Part 1

Introduction

1.0. Introduction

For Aboriginal peoples, high quality child care is increasingly being seen as an integral part of the process of community healing and development. Aboriginal children are viewed as valuable community resources, as they represent the link through which Aboriginal traditions and cultural values can be transmitted to future generations. High quality child care programs have the potential not only to free parents to pursue employment and training opportunities, but also to ensure that the physical, emotional, cognitive and spiritual needs of their children are met. Moreover, when child care programs are designed according to traditional cultural values and practices, they provide a locus for the revival and strengthening of Aboriginal languages and traditions, and the restoration of individual and community spiritual health and cultural pride¹.

For Aboriginal women, who have among the highest rates of unemployment, single motherhood and poverty in the country, the need for child care is critical. The provision of high quality, affordable child care enables them to pursue gainful employment and participate in healing activities. Recent research has also indicated that when Aboriginal women are closely involved in the planning and development of child care initiatives, there is the potential for their empowerment through the acquisition and enhancement of skills in communications, fund-raising, lobbying and planning².

This report presents an **overview** of the Aboriginal child care situation in one region of Canada - the provinces of Ontario and Quebec. The scope of the research is fairly broad, covering several dimensions of Aboriginal child care. Due to time and space limitations, however, the depth of analysis presented herein is not comparable to a comprehensive, long term research project. Readers interested in further exploring Aboriginal child care issues are referred to the Bibliography provided at the end of this report.

1.1. Methodology

The methodology comprised a literature review, key informant interviews and analysis of written submissions from key informants.

The literature review process involved a search of computer databases at the University of Guelph and the Child Care Resource and Research Unit at the University of Toronto. Additional literature was provided by organizations, individuals and communities contacted during the research.

1 Assembly of First Nations (AFN) (1989) Native Council of Canada (NCC) (1990)

2 Wasteneys, Clare (1994).

Key informants were identified in consultation with Aboriginal organizations and government representatives. Each key informant was provided with a list of the research questions (by FAX), and given the choice of responding in a telephone interview or in a written submission. On average, the telephone interviews took 1.5 hours to complete. All but two of the interviews were carried out by telephone, with semi-verbatim notes recorded directly into computer files.

Interviews were conducted with 23 key informants, four representing Quebec, 17 representing Ontario and two representing both provinces. The relatively low number of key informants in Quebec is reflective of the relatively small infrastructure for Aboriginal child care in Quebec.

The following individuals and/or organization were consulted for this research:

Ontario

Valerie Plain (Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services)
Alison Trantor (Odawa Aboriginal Home Child Care Agency)
Janice Mason (Binoojiinyag Kinoomaadwin - Cambrian College)
Jackie Esquimaux-Hamlin (Gizhaadaawgamik)
Rosemary Trudeau (Wikwemikong Hub Centre)
Frances Sutherland (Moose Factory Day Care)
Lorraine Kenny (Equay-wuk Women's Organization)
Sara Mainville and Gloria Daybutch (North Shore Tribal Council)
Francis Jock (Akwasasne)
Lucille Kelly (Onegaming Day Care)
Representative of Anduhyun Native Women's Hostel
David Rydholm (Social Policy Analyst, INAC-Operational Policy)
Gertie Beaucage (Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres)
Kim Anderson (Chiefs of Ontario)
Jemima Scott (Attawapiskat Day Care)
Dixie Shilling (Curve Lake Day Care)

Quebec

Simone St.Germain Roy (Day Care Coordinator, Quebec Native Women's Association)
Lucie Morissette (Day Care Consultant - Chisasibi and Kuujuaq)
Darky Gagné (Kativik Regional Government)
Margaret de Serres (l'Office des Services de Garde a l'Enfance)

In addition, more than 20 Quebec Aboriginal child care representatives were consulted during the Native Child Care Services Seminar organized by the Quebec Native Women's Association on June

28-29, 1994, in Montréal, Quebec. Based on participants' responses to Royal Commission questions, a written submission was prepared by Lucie Morissette, an Aboriginal day care consultant.

Ontario/Quebec

Marie McCue (Child Care Initiatives Fund - off-reserve)

Francine Knoops (Child Care Initiatives Fund - on-reserve)

1.2. Organization of Report

This report is organized according to the order of questions being asked by the *Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*, as follows:

1. Within the province, what is the current situation with respect to the provision of child care for Aboriginal families living on and off reserve, including urban areas?
 - a) In what **forms** is child care being provided?
 - b) To what extent is the need for child care being met?
 - c) What child care services and facilities have been developed?
 - d) What are the **obstacles** to increasing the quantity of child care available to Aboriginal families?
2. What is the situation with respect to the **quality** of child care being provided?
 - a) To what extent is the provision of child care provided in a manner that is culturally appropriate?
 - b) To what extent is child care geared to providing early childhood education?
 - c) What are the **obstacles** to increasing the quality of child care available to Aboriginal families?
3. What **innovative models** of child care have been developed in the region?
4. What initiatives have **not** succeeded and what obstacles were encountered in these instances?
5. What are the issues concerning **jurisdiction and funding** of child care in the province?
6. What **regulations** pertain to child care in the region? How responsive are Aboriginal, provincial and federal authorities in meeting the child care needs of Aboriginal families in a culturally appropriate manner?
7. What is the situation with respect to the **education and training** of Aboriginal staff in early childhood education?

a) What **barriers** need to be overcome in this area?

8. What **solutions and/or recommendations** should the *Royal Commission* consider?

Since there are major differences in the situation existing in Ontario and Quebec, each section is divided into two parts, representing each province.

Readers will note that there is some repetition among the various sections of the report. For example, the sections discussing barriers to developing child care programs (in Parts Three and Four) refer to specific areas, such as training and regulations, that are more fully discussed in later sections of the report.

1.3. Definitions

For the purposes of this report, the following definitions will be used:

child care: the care and nurturing of children.

licensed/regulated child care: any child care service that is licensed and monitored by a recognized authority (usually the province); the provider, the service and the building must meet standards set by the licensing authority.

culturally-appropriate child care: the care and nurturing of children in a manner appropriate, or relevant to the cultural values and traditions of Aboriginal communities and families. Some Aboriginal key informants suggested a distinction between culturally-appropriate care and Aculturally-based@ care, the latter being child care that is based directly on traditional cultural values and practices.

day care: the provision of child care for children whose parents or guardians are working or studying; also may include provision of respite care for parents who are under supervision of the Native Child Welfare program.

day care centre: a facility and program designed specifically for formal, regulated, group care of children; care of children is provided by qualified care givers (certified or uncertified).

Early Childhood Education (ECE): formal, post-secondary education in the theories of child development (cognitive, physical, emotional, social) and the practice of child care and education; usually associated with training for certification through a college.

family day home: private home in which licensed or unlicensed child care is provided.

home child/day care: regulated care and nurturing of children by, and in the home of, a qualified care giver.

informal child care: unregulated care and nurturing of children; includes "babysitting" by extended family members or non-relatives

latch key program: care of school-aged children after school hours, either in a day care centre or in private homes

1.4. Description of Region

This report covers the region encompassing the provinces of Ontario and Quebec.

According to the 1986 *Census of Canada*, there were 167,380 Aboriginal people living in Ontario. Of these, 88 percent identified themselves as North American Indian, 9 percent as Métis, 1 percent as Inuit and 2 percent with multiple origins³.

Based on 1992 statistics, there are 126 First Nations, with a total registered Indian population of 121,867. The registered Indian population living **on-reserve** was 63,415 in 1992, representing 52.0% of the total. Meanwhile, 58,445 or 48.0% of the registered Indian population was living **off-reserve** in 1992⁴.

The major Aboriginal organizations in Ontario are the Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians, the Chiefs of Ontario, Grand Council Treaty #3, Nishnawbe-Aski Nation, Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres, Ontario Métis and Aboriginal Association, the Ontario Native Women's Association, and the Union of Ontario Indians.

In Quebec, there are 39 First Nations, with a total registered Indian population of 52,562 in 1992⁵. There are 10 Indian nations, including the Abenakis (1,618), Algonquins (6,537), Attikameks (3,880), Crees (10,557), Hurons-Wendat (2,519), Malecites (272), MicMacs (3,723), Mohawks (12,229), Montagnais (11,828) and Naskapis (475)⁶. More than 70% of the registered Indian

3 ONAS (1992)

4 Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (1993)

5INAC (1993)

population was living **on-reserve** in 1992, while 29.2% were living **off-reserve**⁷.

Most of the Indian population of Quebec is covered by the *Indian Act*; however, under the *James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement* of 1975, and the *Northeastern Québec Agreement* of 1978, the Cree and Naskapi living in the James Bay region are covered by a separate legal framework, with particular rights.

Aside from the registered Indian population, there are an estimated 6,848 Inuit, living in 14 villages in Northern Quebec. These villages are similar to non-Aboriginal municipalities in Quebec, with a mayor and village council. In addition, there are approximately 40,000 people in Quebec who identify themselves as Aboriginal (non-registered), living off-reserve.

6 Quebec, Secrétaire aux Affaires Autochtones (1992)

7INAC (1993)

Part 2

Quantity of Aboriginal Child Care in Ontario & Quebec

2.0. QUANTITY OF ABORIGINAL CHILD CARE

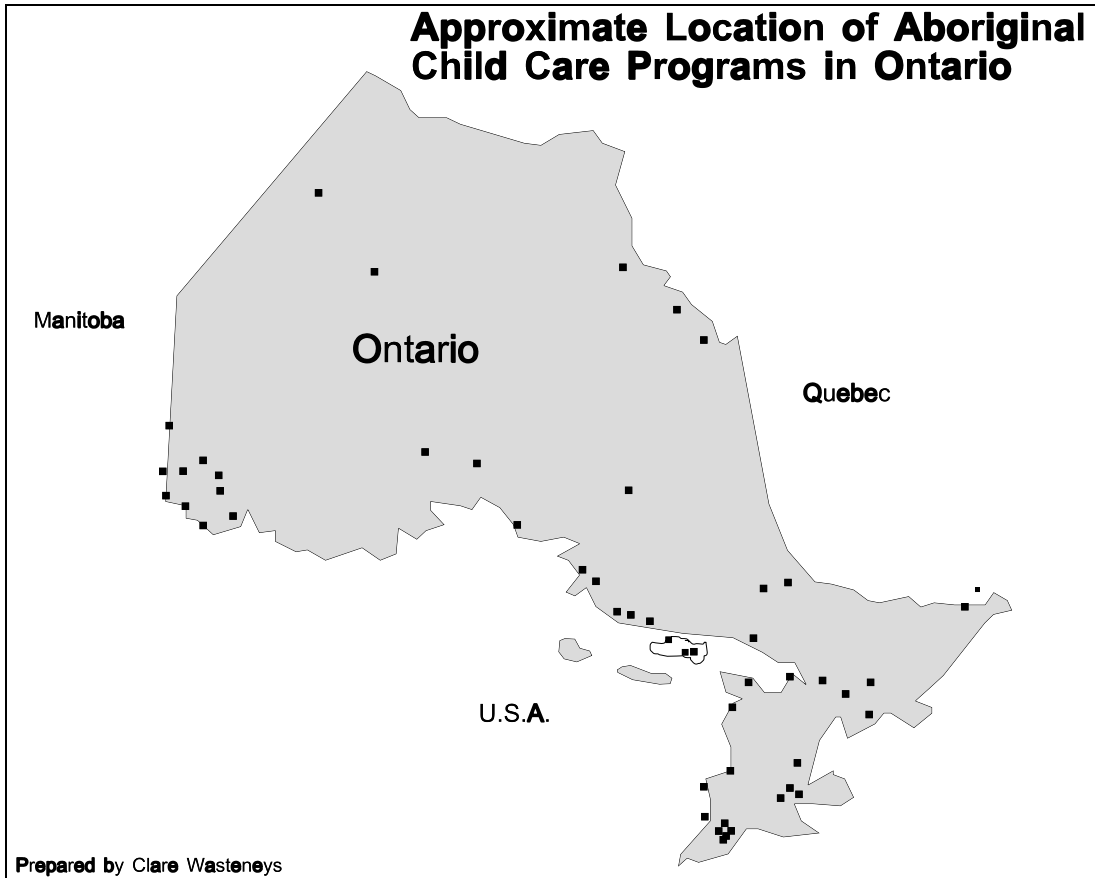


Figure 0: Approximate Location of Aboriginal Child Care Programs in Ontario

2.1. QUANTITY OF ABORIGINAL CHILD CARE IN ONTARIO

Ontario has the largest Aboriginal child care structure in the country⁸. There is a provincial Aboriginal child care providers network⁹, and services that have been developed have ranged from family day homes to day care centres to integrating pre-kindergarten with day care. The relatively

8 See: Wasteneys (1994) (chapter five); CRRU (1993); AFN (1989).

9The Native Association for Early Childhood Educators. In 1994, key informants observed that the organization was not operating fully.

high provision of on-reserve Aboriginal child care services in the province is attributed to the existence of a unique federal-provincial agreement, the **1965 Indian Child Welfare Agreement**, which clearly sets out the jurisdiction and funding responsibilities of each level of government. This agreement will be further discussed later in this report.

2.1.1. Aboriginal Child Care Centres in Ontario

In 1994, there are approximately 50 Aboriginal child care centres in Ontario. There are 45 on-reserve centres (including four due to open in 1994) and five off-reserve.

Only three of the five **off-reserve** centres are operating: the Gizhaadaawgamik day care in Toronto, the Sweetgrass day care in London and a child care program at the Georgian Bay Native Friendship Centre. Two others are due to open in 1994 at the Native Friendship Centres in Thunder Bay and Fort Erie. An Aboriginal home child care program is operating in Ottawa, out of the Odawa Native Friendship Centre. Two other child care programs are being developed in Toronto, at the Anduhyauun women's hostel, and in Sault Ste. Marie, at the Native Friendship Centre.

In recording statistics¹⁰ for **on-reserve** child care, Indian Affairs divides the province into four districts: Western, Southern, Sudbury and Sioux Lookout.

In the **Western District**, in the Southern region of Northwestern Ontario, there are 15 First Nations that have on-reserve day care centres or services. These are listed in the following table. The remaining 30 First Nations in the Western District are without formal child care services. A new day care program is due to open in Anishnabe Wauzhushk in September 1994.

First Nation	Number of Spaces	Type of Program
Anishnabe Wauzhushk Onigum (Rat Portage)	32	Day Care Centre (DCC) - opening September 1994
Constance Lake	36	DCC
Couchiching	32	DCC
Grassy Narrows	30	DCC
Gull Bay	26	DCC

10 Information presented in the charts on Aboriginal day care in Ontario were provided by Indian Affairs, Operational Policy (1994)

QUANTITY**Aboriginal Child Care in Ontario & Quebec**

First Nation	Number of Spaces	Type of Program
Iskutewisaakaygun	32	DCC
Long Lake #58	32	DCC
Northwest Angle #33	n/a	Whitefish Bay DCC
Northwest Angle #37	n/a	Whitefish Bay DCC
Onegaming	26	DCC
Pic River	16	DCC
Shoal Lake No.40	26	DCC
Wabaseemoong	30	DCC
Washagamis Bay	n/a	Transportation to DCC at Whitefish Bay
Whitefish Bay	45	DCC
TOTAL	363 (12 centres)	

The highest level of provision of Aboriginal child care services in Ontario is found in the **Southern District**, where 19 of 25 First Nations have day care services. Those having day care programs are listed in the following table. In addition, four communities plan to expand or build new day care centres in 1995-1996.

First Nation	Number of Spaces	Type of Program
Akwesasne (Mohawks of)	140	Day Care Centre (DCC), Latch Key Program (LKP) and Private Home Programs (PHP)
Alderville	52 (planned for Sept. 1994)	DCC
Beausoleil	60	DCC and LKP
Chippewas of the Thames	29	DCC

QUANTITY**Aboriginal Child Care in Ontario & Quebec**

Curve Lake	47	DCC and LKP
Golden Lake	25	DCC
Kettle Point	48	DCC
Moravian of the Thames	35	DCC
Muncey Delaware Nation	44	DCC
Nawash (Chippewas of)	56	DCC
New Credit	32	DCC
Onyota'a:ka	24	DCC
Rama (Chippewas of)	30	DDC, LKP and PHP
Sarnia (Chippewas of)	30	DDC
Saugeen	45	DCC
Six Nations	89	DCC, LKP and PHP
Tyendinaga (Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte)	36 (64 spaces planned for March 1995)	DCC
Walpole Island	64 (115 spaces planned for January 1995)	DCC
Wasauksing	57 (planned for Nov. 1994)	DCC
TOTAL	834 (288 planned)	

In the **Sudbury District**, in Central-Northeastern Ontario, 12 of 34 First Nations have centres. A total of 22 First Nations are without formal child care services. See the table below.

First Nation	Number of Spaces	Type of Program
Attawapiskat	24	Day Care Centre (DCC)
Batchewana	56 (2 centres)	DCC
Fort Albany	24	DCC

Garden River	73	DCC
Mississauga #8	40	DCC
Moose Factory	55	DCC
Nipissing	16	DCC
Sagamok Anishnawbek	25	DCC
Serpent River	19	DCC
Sucker Creek	26	DCC
West Bay	64	DCC
Wikwemikong	64	DCC
TOTAL	486 (13 centres)	

In the **Sioux Lookout District**, located in the extreme Northwestern part of the province, only two of 23 First Nations have day care centres. The two centres are planned to open in July 1994, in the communities of Bearskin Lake (21 spaces) and Kasabonika (12 spaces).

2.1.2. Home Child Care for Aboriginal Families in Ontario

Home child care services are provided on three reserves. Akwesasne has a home child care agency and 26 home child care providers¹¹. Six Nations and Rama have home child care providers, but it is not known whether or not either has a formal home child care agency.

Since 1992, the Mamaweswen North Shore Tribal Council has been trying to establish a home child care agency to serve seven First Nations. A one year training program was developed and some providers have been trained and are operating family day homes, but the agency has not been approved for funding¹².

In Northwestern Ontario, there are no formal home child care programs.

2.1.3. Aboriginal Child Care Agencies

11 Francis Jock, Akwesasne First Nation. Personal communication, June 29, 1994

12 Gloria Daybutch, North Shore Tribal Council. Personal Communication, July 4, 1994.

The only Aboriginal child care agencies in Ontario are the Odawa Aboriginal home child care agency in Ottawa, and a home child care agency operating in Akwesasne. The North Shore Tribal Council is trying to develop a home child care agency, but is facing some difficulties in the process, as will be described later in this report.

2.1.4. Informal Child Care

It is difficult to determine the extent to which informal child care is provided. Nevertheless, it is clear that in Northern and remote areas of Ontario, the major source of child care is informal, home-based care, due to the lack of day care facilities and regulated home child care programs.

Although informal child care may be high quality, there is no guarantee, since there is no regulation or supervision of care givers. Moreover, homes in which informal child care is provided do not have to meet health and safety standards.

2.1.5. Resource Centres

Child Care Resource Centres are regarded by First Nations as an essential service¹³. Child care resource centres provided a variety of services to Aboriginal families, including parenting support, resource material, toy lending libraries and workshops. Day care centres that house resource centres are referred to as "hub centres". There are four Aboriginal hub day care centres in the province, in Wikwemikong, on the Six Nations reserve, in Akwesasne and in Walpole Island.

The Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres provides family support programs through every Friendship Centre in the province. These programs vary according to the needs of the Aboriginal community, but are similar to the Head Start model developed in the United States. Programs may include such services as well-baby clinics, parenting workshops, pre-conception awareness for teens, and parenting support.¹⁴

2.1.6. To What Extent is the Need Being Met in Ontario?

It is difficult to accurately determine the extent to which the need for child care is being met without carrying out a comprehensive needs assessment for the province. The needs assessment would have to consider not only the number of centres or spaces available as compared to the numbers of children in the appropriate age groups, but also the demand for employment, training

13 Ontario Indian Social Services Council (1993), p. 8

14 Gertie Beaucage, Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres. Personal communication, June 1994.

and healing programs among Aboriginal parents and guardians. Unfortunately, such an in-depth study has not been carried out to date; therefore, this report presents only very rough indicators of the need.

The provision of Aboriginal child care in Ontario has increased considerably since the 1965 Indian Child Welfare Agreement was signed. However, based on the statistics provided above, it appears that there is a disparity among the four districts of Ontario in terms of meeting the need for **on-reserve** Aboriginal child care. In Southern Ontario, over 75% of the First Nations have day care centres, and there are new day care centres planned. In both the Sudbury and Western districts, approximately 35% of First Nations have day care centres. Meanwhile, only nine percent of the First Nations in the Sioux Lookout district have day care centres, and those that do have long waiting lists for spaces. The latter district is characterized by a relatively high percentage of remote or limited access communities.

The need for **off-reserve** Aboriginal child care falls far short of being met, as there are only five existing Aboriginal child care centres, in Toronto, London, Thunder Bay, Midland and Fort Erie. In the remaining urban and off-reserve centres in the province, there are no culturally-based child care services available for Aboriginal families. In fact, in recent consultations by the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS) with off-reserve Aboriginal people, one of the major concerns was the difficulty faced by Aboriginal parents in gaining access to culturally-based services, due to the overall scarcity of such services in off-reserve settings¹⁵. In part, this is reflective of a growing awareness among Aboriginal parents of the importance of culturally-appropriate child care.

Meanwhile, there were also concerns about the difficulties faced in securing spaces in existing programs, whether culturally-based or not. One of the main barriers was the lack of adequate **transportation**, or the financial means to secure adequate transportation, to existing day care centres. Another problem was the lack of services available to parents who would like to pursue **educational** or training opportunities, rather than employment. Affordability was also a major concern, as many participants felt the existing system was **too expensive**, particularly for single mothers. Often, there are long waiting lists for subsidies, without which most participants could not afford the cost of the child care service.

Another issue is the need for increased provision of care for children with special needs, including those suffering the effects of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, in both on and off-reserve centres. At present, there are insufficient trained staff to handle these special needs. In addition, some key informants felt that these children would be better cared for in a child care program, whether or not

15 OFIFC/OMAA/ONWA (1993), p. 12

the parents were employed or at school, since the parents were likely to be in need of healing and/or relief.

2.1.7. Obstacles to Increasing the Quantity of Child Care in Ontario

Lack of funding is perhaps the main obstacle to increasing the quantity of Aboriginal child care in Ontario. This prevents the development of new day care facilities, and means that day care staff salaries are low. Consequently, there is difficulty keeping day care employees, as other agencies pay higher salaries than day care centres. Often, Aboriginal day staff will only work at a day care centre until they find a more financially rewarding job.

Another obstacle is a lack of coordination between child care and employment or community economic development. According to key informants, there is a need to view child care from a community development perspective, to enhance the capacity of adult community members to participate in employment or training opportunities, rather than basing child care on current employment opportunities or statistics. The new **Jobs Ontario Initiative** may address this issue, but it is still too early to determine the extent to which it will succeed or be sustained.

Another barrier to increasing the quantity of child care services is the lack of coordination with other child-related services, such as Brighter Futures¹⁶ or Native Child Welfare. It was suggested that the quantity and quality of on-reserve child care might increase if funding for all child-related programs was pooled. This might enable communities to develop more flexible programs, and more flexibility in terms of day care spaces.

In Northwestern Ontario, one of the apparent barriers to developing child care programs is the lack of support of Band Councils for child care. According to key informants, child care is not seen as a priority, as the prevailing attitude of men in remote communities is that women should stay at home. Another reason suggested was that in remote communities there are few employment or training opportunities that would justify the need for a day care centre. Moreover, there is a general lack of familiarity with the notion of formal child care, as well as a lack of awareness of the process involved in developing a child care program.

With regard to the quantity of **home child care**, one of the concerns raised in the off-reserve consultations by MCSS was that current legislation and regulations associated with establishing licensed home child care were perceived to be too stringent by Aboriginal people¹⁷. Moreover,

¹⁶Brighter Futures is a Health Canada initiative that focuses on children from birth to age six, including pre-natal and post-natal care of mothers.

¹⁷OFIFC/OMAA/ONWA (1993) p. 13

the standards for housing that must be met for licensing, may not be appropriate for reserve communities.

2.2. QUANTITY OF ABORIGINAL CHILD CARE IN QUEBEC

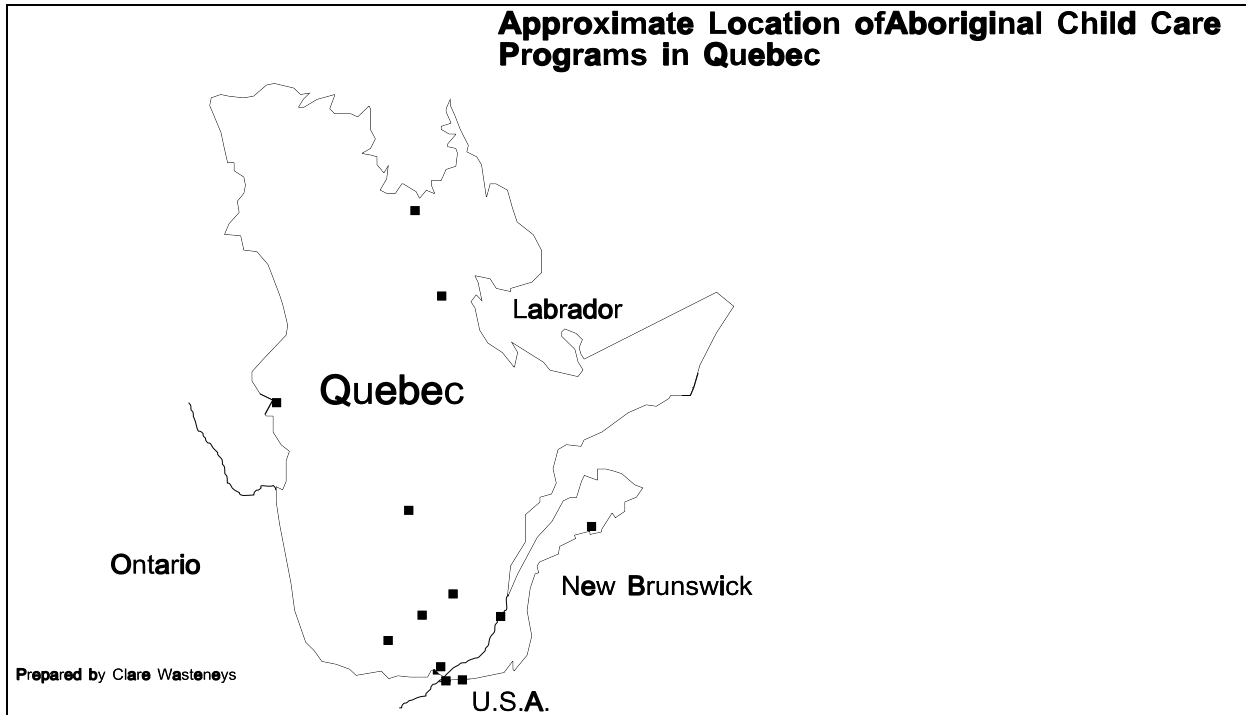


Figure 0: Approximate Location of Aboriginal Child Care Programs in Quebec

2.2.1. Aboriginal Child Care Centres in Quebec

There are currently eleven on-reserve Aboriginal day care centres operating in Quebec¹⁸. Of these, six are licensed: in **Kuujuuaq** (Northern/Inuit), **Chisasibi** (James Bay Cree), **Mistissini** (James Bay Cree), **Mashteuiatsh** (Southern/Montagnais), **Restigouche** (MicMac) and **Matimekosh** (Montagnais). An additional day care has apparently been approved in **Pointe-Bleu**, which would be the first non-treaty First Nation to be licensed by the province.

Until 1992, the only licensed day care in Quebec was the one in Kuujuuaq, which is an Inuit village

18 Numbers of spaces at these centres were not available at the time of writing.

on Ungava Bay. The other First Nations have received their licensing in the past two years. The day care centre in Matimekosh was a non-Aboriginal centre operated by the town of Shefferville, but since the mine in Shefferville closed, the First Nation has taken over operation of the day care centre.

Informal or unregulated day care centres have been operating in **Weymontachie** (South/Attikamek), **Kanasetake** (Mohawk), **Maniwaki** (Algonquin) and **Akwesasne** (Mohawk). All of these centres receive funding by their band councils or through fund-raising activities.

The day care in Kanasetake¹⁹ is operating in a small house provided by the federal government, which does not meet provincial licensing requirements. The neighbouring community of Oka has a day care centre, but there is no culturally-based service provided. The day care centre in Maniwaki has been experiencing difficulties in maintaining services and has recently been forced to close. Meanwhile, in Akwesasne (which spans the U.S.- Canada and Ontario-Quebec borders), there are actually three day care centres, two in Quebec and one in Ontario, as well as a Head Start program in the American portion of the reserve.

There is one school-based private day care centre operating in **Wendaki** (Huron-Wendat), which is a reserve located in a suburb of Quebec City. The program is partly funded by the Child Care Initiatives Fund. It is also a commercial or "for-profit" day care that is surviving because the population served are largely non-Aboriginal families who can afford the cost²⁰.

There is no off-reserve or urban Aboriginal child care in Quebec.

2.2.2. Home Child Care for Aboriginal Families in Quebec

There are three licensed Aboriginal home child care agencies in Quebec.

One is operated by a non-profit corporation, Anjabowa Kinwhymausogomik, in the Cree community of Chisasibi. This community's experience with developing the home child care agency, which was established in 1992, has been the basis for a comprehensive manual for starting and operating an Aboriginal home child care agency²¹.

19 See section 4.1.2 for more information on the program.

20The day care began as a private centre partly because the Band Council at the time was opposed to provincial permits and funding. However, there is now a new Band Council and the day care director intends to ask them for support in securing provincial funding so that Aboriginal parents can have access to the day care.

21The manual is entitled *Starting and Operating a Native Home Day Care Agency*. It was written by Lucie Morissette, who is a day care consultant who has assisted Aboriginal women in Quebec with the development of on-reserve day care programs. Funding was provided by the Child Care Initiatives Fund.

Akwesasne has a home child care agency, licensed by the province of Ontario. There are currently 26 home child care providers operating child care services in their homes, and the community is considering expanding the program.

In the Kativik region in Northern Quebec, a regional home day care agency is being developed in Kuujjuaq²². A license has been obtained from the province for 50 spaces, which is a very small number for 14 communities. Consequently, the Kativik Regional Government has decided to try the formula in only four of the communities, and if it proves successful, additional funding will be requested for up to 150 spaces. The home child care program will commence operation in September 1994. Providers are now being recruited and will be provided with 45 hours of training, which exceeds the provincial government's requirement of 24 hours.

Kativik regional government considers the home day care model to be an essential alternative to day care centres for communities in which the population is not high enough to justify a centre.

2.2.3. Aboriginal Child Care Agencies in Quebec

As mentioned above, there are two Aboriginal child care agencies, one in Chisasibi and one in Akwesasne, although the one in Akwesasne receives most of its funding from Ontario. In addition, a home child care agency is being developed in the Kativik region.

2.2.4. Informal Child Care

There is far more informal or unregulated child care used by Aboriginal families in Quebec than in Ontario. This is partly due to the lack of formal child care services, which have only been developed in a small number of Aboriginal communities. It has also been attributed to both a preference of some Aboriginal parents to continue to use the extended family system, and a reluctance of home care givers to formalize their services, due to the regulations and paper work involved. According to key informants, the informal services are **unreliable**, which means Aboriginal women often have to miss work or leave school.

2.2.5. To What Extent is the Need Being Met in Quebec?

It is important to reiterate the point made in section 2.1.6: To have an accurate picture of the need for child care would require a comprehensive needs assessment for the province that took into

²²Key informants reported that there are some home day care providers in the non-Aboriginal community in Kuujjuaq. In some instances, these providers care for large numbers of children (10-12). They are unsupervised and do not provide receipts.

consideration the demand for employment, training and healing programs, as well as numbers of spaces relative to numbers of children needing care. That notwithstanding, it appears that the need for Aboriginal child care services in Quebec is greater than the supply. Key informants reported that there are no reliable Aboriginal child care providers in most Aboriginal communities in the Quebec, which is a major factor in high levels of absenteeism from work and school. Another rough indicator of a higher need than supply is the fact that there are currently numerous requests from First Nations for more child care services. Key informants pointed out that although there may be existing services in adjacent non-Aboriginal communities, they do not meet the cultural and linguistic needs of the Aboriginal community.

The need for child care has been met only in those communities with secure, adequately funded day care programs. The situation seems to be somewhat better in communities that are part of the **James Bay Agreement**, which includes the Cree and Inuit communities on James Bay. All of the Mohawk communities have day care centres, but none of these are licensed or regulated programs. With the closing of the day care centre in Maniwaki, not a single Algonquin community has a day care centre, although Témiscamingue is now in the process of developing a corporation for the purposes of establishing a day care program.

In the Kativik region of Northern Quebec, there is only one official day care service for 14 Inuit communities, located in Kuujuaq. That centre is licensed for 44 children, while other services are provided informally in private homes. Nevertheless, the regional government is in the process of trying to meet the need for child care through home child care. In addition, two day care centres have recently been approved by the province for construction in Povungnituk and Kuujjuarapik (Great Whale).

The Kativik Regional Government is currently trying to support the development of centres, in Kuujjuarapik and Povungnituk, by guiding them through the 14 or 15 steps that must be reached before a program can operate. Communities that are at the initial stages of the approval process for day care centre projects are Kangiqsujaq, Quaqaq and Tasiujaq. Each has been in contact with provincial authorities and is proceeding with the first steps in the development process. It appears, however, that funding has become a barrier, as provincial funding will apparently be insufficient even to cover the cost of moving construction material to these communities.

2.2.6. Obstacles to Increasing the Quantity of Aboriginal Child Care in Quebec

As in Ontario, key informants mentioned **inadequate funding** as the main obstacle to increasing the quantity of Aboriginal child care in Quebec. Most of the day care programs that are currently operating depended on funding from the federal CCIF program which has no further funds available.

Existing provincial funding mechanisms are geared to numbers of day care spaces, based on norms

established in the South. Therefore, provincial funding is often not sufficient to cover the relatively high cost of construction in Northern and remote communities, as well as the costs associated with training child care providers.

In addition, there are real costs associated with the planning and development of a child care program (for example, Aboriginal communities often have to hire a consultant to guide them through the development process). These costs are only partially funded by OSGE, so that communities must seek other funding sources. Key informants said that the financial support of Band or regional councils was critical to the successful development of day care programs.

A complicating factor in Aboriginal communities is the fact that **reserve land cannot be mortgaged**, which makes it difficult for Aboriginal communities to secure the funding for day care development. Key informants observed that banks tend to be hesitant to fund non-profit corporations in Aboriginal communities. While it appears that the financial situation in Cree and Inuit communities is somewhat better than for other First Nations (because of the *James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement*), even these communities have had to do a lot of fund-raising in order to develop day care programs. For example, in Chisasibi, the day care Board of Directors raised approximately \$100,000 through fund-raising campaigns to help finance their day care project²³.

Some Aboriginal communities in Quebec perceive the government's **development plan** as a barrier to developing day care centres. In the development plan, Aboriginal communities are treated the same way as non-Aboriginal communities, without adequate consideration of the special needs of Aboriginal communities. Moreover, as planning is done by region, reserves that are adjacent to non-Aboriginal communities with existing day care centres have difficulty in obtaining approval for separate day care services.

Key informants also suggested that Aboriginal communities are often discouraged by the complexity of the **legal framework** for child care in Quebec (see section 7.2.), particularly since there are few resources to guide them through the process. The *Act respecting child day care* and its Regulations are very specific with regard to building specifications, staff/child ratios and staff qualifications. This can lead to long delays in obtaining child care permits and funding.

Another obstacle is the lack of appropriate or accessible **information** about child care. The provincial government has produced documentation about the procedures and structures associated with developing child care programs; however, for Aboriginal communities, there is a lack of awareness of how to obtain this material. Moreover, the documentation may not be easily understood, since it contains numerous legal terms.

23 Morissette, Lucie (1994). Summary of Workshops - Native Child Care Services Seminar.

A continuing problem is the fact that most of information provided by the government is in **French**, and most of the staff of l'Office des Services de Garde à l'Enfance (OSGE) are unilingual (French), whereas most of the Aboriginal people in the province have English or an Aboriginal language as their first language. There is also the perception that OSGE is reluctant to translate documentation into English or Aboriginal languages. To address the need for translated material, some OSGE documents have been translated into English and Inuktitut, by the Quebec Native Women's Association and by the Kativik Regional Government. In addition, at least four manuals have been produced in English that explain the process of developing an Aboriginal child care program²⁴.

Some key informants felt that OSGE does not fully understand the reality of life in remote Aboriginal communities. One respondent said "sometimes we feel l=Office does not look at the map, beyond the end of the road". Existing provincial day care regulations were considered to be good, but too complicated and difficult to apply in Northern and remote communities.

Moreover, some respondents complained that OSGE does not provide adequate support to remote areas. For instance, people in the Kativik region have had difficulty trying to convince anyone from OSGE to visit the region to assist communities through the various stages and regulations involved in developing a day care program. This was perceived as an important need, as Inuit people in this region are not used to "complicated" regulations and are unfamiliar with the legal structures associated with formal day care programs. In addition, when people in the North try to contact staff at OSGE, many experience problems finding someone who speaks English, or who will provide the support they need. Consequently, it was observed that it takes far longer to develop day care programs in Northern Quebec than in the South.

Lack of training was considered to be another major barrier to the development of new programs²⁵. The regulations require that one out of three day care staff must be qualified and experienced²⁶, which is a challenge in Northern and remote areas. One of the main obstacles is the fact that there are very few day care centres in which trainees can gain experience. One day care centre that is experiencing problems because of a lack of training is in Kuujjuaq. When the

24Pauktuutit (1989) is a guide to starting day care centres. QNWA has produced a similar guide. Two manuals prepared by Lucie Morissette (1994) are comprehensive manuals that explain, in detail, the steps involved in starting and operating a day care centre and home child care agency in an Aboriginal community.

25 Further issues associated with training are found in Parts Three and Nine of this report.

26Childcare Resource and Research Unit (1994); Morissette, Lucie. Summary of Child Care Services Seminar, Montreal June 28/29, 1994.

day care first opened, formal training of staff was not a requirement, but now OSGE requires one in three staff members to be formally trained.

Another barrier is the **low salary** provided to day care workers, compared with the salaries provided for public sector jobs in Aboriginal communities. Low salaries are a problem common to day care centres throughout the province, which led to strikes by provincial day care workers in 1993²⁷. Consequently, it is difficult to persuade people to enrol in an ECE training program. Moreover, those who do complete the training are qualified for jobs with Aboriginal school boards, which provide higher pay, more benefits and longer holidays. It is especially difficult to find a competent Aboriginal Day Care Director, who would require extensive training in day care coordination and promotion, human resource management and budget administration.

Finally, key informants questioned whether most band councils consider child care to be a priority. It was suggested that, for the most part, day care is still a "women's issue" in many Aboriginal communities. Without band council support for development of day care programs, it is doubtful that the efforts of Aboriginal women will succeed.

27Child Care Resource & Research Unit (1994), *Child Care in Canada: Provinces and Territories*

Part 3

Quality of Aboriginal Child Care in Ontario & Quebec

3.0. QUALITY OF ABORIGINAL CHILD CARE

3.1. QUALITY OF ABORIGINAL CHILD CARE IN ONTARIO

3.1.1. Extent to Which Child Care is Culturally-Appropriate in Ontario

The development of culturally-appropriate child care is a priority for First Nations in Ontario. In particular, there is an increasing demand for child care services to be provided in Aboriginal languages.²⁸ At the same time, concerns have been expressed by some members of the off-reserve Aboriginal community regarding the need to provide child care that would help prepare Aboriginal children for life in both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal society.²⁹

From available sources, it is difficult to determine the extent to which existing on-reserve child care services are culturally-appropriate. For the most part, key informants had difficulty responding to this question, due to the lack of a clear definition of "culturally-appropriate". Given the **varying cultures** that exist among First Nations in Ontario, there are numerous possible interpretations of what might constitute culturally-appropriate child care. A program that would be appropriate to the culture of one community, may not be appropriate to a neighbouring community. For example, one "culturally-appropriate" program may include teaching of Aboriginal languages, but be based on mainstream values, while another "culturally-appropriate" program may be based on traditional values, but not use Aboriginal languages.

Nevertheless, it is clear that Aboriginal communities are becoming more aware of the importance of traditional cultural teachings and language. There is increasing recognition of the benefits of teaching Aboriginal children about their traditional culture and values, as such knowledge is easier to retain at an early age. Many Aboriginal communities now see the central goal of child care as restoration and preservation of Aboriginal cultures, traditions, beliefs and languages³⁰.

Very few communities have developed child care programs that provide exclusively Aboriginal content, such as traditional teachings, Aboriginal languages, and involvement of Elders. The programs developed in Wikwemikong and Curve Lake are two examples of culturally-based programs, as each provides teaching in Aboriginal language and culture. Some staff members in these centres have received ECE training through the Binoojiinyag Kinoomaadwin program at

28See, for example, Payukotayno (1994), OISSC (1993), OFIFC/OMAA/ONWA (1993), Gizhaadaawgamik (1991), Big Trout Lake (1993).

29 OFIFC/OMAA/ONWA (1993).

30 See, for example, Ojibways of Onegaming First Nation (1993), pages 11-15; Mamaweswen (1993); Wikwemikong (1994);

Cambrian College. Both communities have received special funding for these initiatives (see section 4).

Key informants suggested that programs were more likely to be culturally-appropriate if staff had received training in a culturally-appropriate ECE program, as mainstream ECE training tends to focus on the provisions of the *Day Nurseries Act*, some of which may not be consistent with traditional culture or child-rearing practices.

3.1.2. Extent to Which Child Care is Geared to Early Childhood Education

All licensed day care centres must follow the provisions of the *Day Nurseries Act*, which requires that one staff member for each group of children must have a two-year ECE diploma or the equivalent³¹. Therefore, one can conclude that all the licensed Aboriginal day care centres in the province provide child care geared to Early Childhood Education.

3.1.3. Obstacles to Increasing the Quality of Aboriginal Child Care in Ontario

According to key informants, there are numerous obstacles to developing culturally-appropriate Aboriginal child care programs. One of the main obstacles is the **lack of culturally-appropriate ECE training programs**. The Cambrian College "Binoojiinyag Kinoomaadwin" program is currently the only Aboriginal ECE program in the province. Moreover, students who enrol in the Cambrian College program must be willing to leave their home community, and may have to take a leave of absence from work and transport their families to Sudbury. For many, these sacrifices, as well as the financial costs of going to school, are obstacles to enrol in the program³².

Another obstacle is the **perceived lack of flexibility** in the provincial day care **legislation**. For example, one of the requirements of licensing is having a fence around the playground of the day care centre, for the protection of children. In one community, this was seen as contrary to the traditional approach to protecting children, which would have been achieved through teachings. There is also the **perception** that the regulations do not permit **Elders** to participate in day care programs unless they have ECE training. According to the MCSS Native Policy Analyst, however, opportunities for discretion are built into the regulations³³.

In some First Nation communities, an on-going challenge to developing culturally-appropriate

31 CRRU (1994), p. 35.

32 See: Union of Ontario Indians, Child Care Providers Survey (1990)

33 Valerie Plain, Ministry of Community and Social Services. Interview June 7, 1994.

programming is the lack of consensus within the community on the extent to which traditional cultural practices or languages should be incorporated into child care programs. Some key informants described the difficulties in meeting the needs and interests of both "traditional" and "non-traditional" parents, all of whom wished their children to learn their values. Nevertheless, key informants observed that there is a definite, albeit slow movement toward restoring traditional ways.

Another obstacle is the lack of **funding** to develop culturally-appropriate materials and to lower the ratio of children to care givers. Funding for a greater number of care givers would be more consistent with traditional approaches to child-rearing, and would provide for remuneration of Elders who participate in the day care program.

One issue that was raised by key informants is the lack of culturally-appropriate ways of **monitoring** child care programs. Currently, all monitoring is carried out by the province, based on non-Aboriginal systems and procedures. It was suggested that there may be alternative approaches that should be explored.

The obstacles to developing programs geared to ECE are the same as the obstacles to increasing the quantity of licensed Aboriginal child care programs, described in Section 2.1.7.

At the same time, key informants observed that the Ministry of Community and Social Services is receptive to communities who are trying to ensure that their services are culturally-appropriate. Moreover, with support from the Child Care Initiatives Fund (1988-1995), there is more information available about culturally-appropriate child care models³⁴.

3.2. QUALITY OF ABORIGINAL CHILD CARE IN QUEBEC

3.2.1. Extent to Which Child Care is Culturally-Appropriate in Quebec

As in Ontario, key informants felt it would be difficult to determine whether or not a program was culturally-appropriate, due to **varying cultural beliefs** and, consequently, perceptions of what would constitute cultural appropriateness. At the Native Child Care Services Seminar in Montreal, June 28-29, participants concluded that a child care program would be culturally-appropriate if the program were designed in **collaboration** with all stakeholders in the community (i.e., parents, educators, elders, etc.), according to their values, beliefs and cultural traditions.

34 Reports of CCIF projects in Aboriginal communities are available through the National Child Care Information Centre in Ottawa, Endurant the Childcare Resource and Research Unit of the University of Toronto.

Nevertheless, key informants agreed that there were certain **features** that would likely be found in a culturally-appropriate Aboriginal child care program. These included an emphasis on native spirituality and values of sharing, non-competitiveness, self-reliance, and harmony with nature. In traditional Indian and Inuit culture, a child=s education relies to a great extent on observations, humour and teasing, without much interference from adults³⁵. (Consequently, Aboriginal day cares are often considered by non-Aboriginal people to be too permissive). Other features might be the use of Aboriginal languages and traditional ceremonies (e.g., walking out ceremonies), and the presence of Elders for telling stories and teaching traditional skills.

At present, there is wide variation in the extent to which **Aboriginal languages** are used in existing Aboriginal day care centres in Quebec. Key informants observed that Aboriginal languages are used extensively in day cares that have opened on reserves where Aboriginal languages are commonly spoken. This is mainly the case for communities speaking the Cree, Inuktitut and Attikamek languages. In communities that want children to learn their Aboriginal language but where the language is not widely spoken, such as Restigouche, efforts are under way to bring in Aboriginal language teachers, which requires additional funding. In at least one community, however, the teaching of Aboriginal language at the day care is not seen as a priority.

Key informants reported a **lack of accessible culturally-appropriate material** in Quebec. Nevertheless, some of the Aboriginal communities with on-reserve day care programs have managed to develop culturally-appropriate programs, with funding provided by the Child Care Initiatives Fund (CCIF). For example, training programs in Chisasibi and Kuujuaq were funded by CCIF. Only a few communities, including Pointe Bleu and Huron-Wendaki, have developed culturally-appropriate programs without CCIF funding.

The fact that provincial day care **legislation** is set up for **parent control** provides the opportunity for the development of culturally-appropriate child care programs in Quebec. Whereas in Ontario "the Director" has discretion over implementation of child care legislation, in Quebec the law itself is flexible. Therefore, most First Nations that have established day care programs have managed to find ways of providing services that are culturally-appropriate. For example, in Chisasibi, the day care found a way to get around the regulation that requires approved cribs for infants, by hanging traditional hammocks above approved cribs.

In urban or off-reserve communities, there are currently no culturally-appropriate child care services, although the Montréal Friendship Centre has been exploring ways of developing a program.

35For further discussion on traditional child care practices, AFN (1989), NCC (1990) and Wasteneys, Clare (1994), chapter five.

One example of a culturally-appropriate program is the training program being developed by the Kativik Regional Government, that will be based on Inuit culture and the reality of life for community members in the region. Existing ECE training programs provided at Quebec colleges include courses that are not considered to be relevant to Inuit people in the Kativik region. For example, one of the courses focuses on the history of day care services in Quebec, which is not seen to be as relevant to the Inuit as traditional approaches to Inuit child care. Furthermore, in provincial programs there are no courses that address family issues such as child abuse or alcoholism, whereas the Education Board would like child care providers to be able to identify such problems and be able to deal with them effectively.

Currently, the Kativik Education Board is reviewing all courses and trying to adapt them to Inuit reality. Although training programs have been developed in Quebec that are adapted to Mohawk and Cree culture, Inuit communities assert that they have a different reality and therefore cannot apply a Mohawk or Cree training program.

3.2.2. Extent to Which Child Care is Geared to Early Childhood Education

There was **insufficient information** available to accurately determine the extent to which Aboriginal child care in Quebec is geared to Early Childhood Education (ECE). All licensed programs are required to have a program of activity in order to be eligible for grants, and provincial regulations require at least one in three day care staff to have ECE qualifications³⁶, which would suggest that all **licensed** Aboriginal day care centres are geared to ECE. Meanwhile, however, the bulk of child care services in Quebec are unregulated and do not require ECE training. Since these programs are not monitored, it is unclear to what extent they follow ECE standards. However, without ECE trained providers, it is reasonable to suggest that they would be less likely than the licensed centres to provide care geared to ECE.

There appears to be increasing awareness among Aboriginal communities of the need for ECE training for child care programs. For example, in the Kativik Region, having day care geared to early childhood education is a priority. There is some concern in the region that the existing education system is inadequate to prepare students for further studies. Many students who have finished secondary level five have been unable to successfully complete post secondary studies, the failure rate being 50-60%. It was suggested that the problem at the secondary school level exists because not enough attention has been paid to education at the early childhood level. Therefore, the regional government feels it is important to provide a greater focus on education within day care programs in the region. Furthermore, within the training program for day care providers, the

36 CRRU (1994); Morissette (1994)

regional government invited ECE experts from the South to the region, in order to ensure that the certificates that were provided were the equivalent of those in the South.

3.2.3. Obstacles to Increasing the Quality of Aboriginal Child Care in Quebec

Obstacles to increasing the quality of Aboriginal child care in the province include the lack of culturally-appropriate **ECE training** programs, the lack of **funding** for special programming, and the **low salaries** paid to ECE trained child care workers and directors, which forces them to seek other employment opportunities. Innovative, culturally-appropriate projects were developed under the Child Care Initiatives Fund, but this source of funding is ending in 1995.

In Northern Quebec, one of the problems being faced is the difficulty in finding Inuit-specific **resources** to be used in culturally-based programs. It appears that both Vanier College and the Kativik Education Board are supportive of developing Inuit materials, but it has been difficult to find Inuit people who are able to become involved in the initiative. An attempt was made to find a full-time employee to work with a resource person from the College, but there was very little response from the Inuit community. One of the explanations for this problem is that Inuit resource people are already in great demand for other activities in their communities. Some Inuit resource people simply do not have the time to participate, while others do not want to travel away from their home communities.

Part 4

Innovative Models of Aboriginal Child Care Developed in Ontario & Quebec

4.0. INNOVATIVE MODELS OF ABORIGINAL CHILD CARE

According to key informants, **all** First Nations that have developed child care programs in the region have developed innovative programs. The cases described in this section are by no means the only innovative programs. To a large degree, these were simply the programs for which sufficient information was available.

4.1. ON-RESERVE

4.1.1. Wikwemikong Hub Centre - Ontario¹

The Wikwemikong reserve is located on Manitoulin Island, in Central Ontario. The on-reserve population was 2,311 in 1991³⁷.

History

Since 1971, the Wikwemikong First Nation has had a nursery school, initially administered by the Chief and Council and since 1987, by the Wikwemikong Board of Education. The nursery school addressed the need for a "headstart" program for children entering kindergarten, and filled some of the need for child care, but the 1980's the need for child care exceeded the capacity of the nursery school. In the late 1980's a day care program was developed, based on the "hub" or resource centre model. The program is housed in a culturally-appropriate building.

Since it opened, the Wikwemikong Hub Centre has provided full day care spaces to 40 children, and nursery school spaces for 32 children in the morning and 31 in the afternoon. It also provides a toy library and resource library, as well as a mobile library to satellite settlements that are part of the reserve. The centre is open two evenings a week. In addition, until July 1994, there has been a resource teacher funded by the Ministry of Community and Social Services, to provide care for five children with special needs.

The Wikwemikong **Cultural and Language Program** was developed to teach young children at the Hub Centre their Aboriginal language and culture. The program is based on the philosophy that "Language is Culture and Culture is Language", and that the foundation for community healing and cultural revival must begin during the preschool years. The program is seen as a way to revitalize the Ojibwa language and culture in the community. A proposal for funding was submitted to the Child Care Initiatives Fund in 1990, and was approved in 1991 for two years. Funding was provided to hire a person to develop a curriculum and to implement the program.

37 Ontario Native Affairs Secretariat (1992)

Results and Reasons for Success

The project has succeeded in producing culturally-appropriate materials for language teaching, such as illustrated booklets, song tapes and videos. According to key informants, the project has given children in the community a good introduction to the Ojibwa language. The resources could also be used in other Aboriginal child care programs. In fact, in order to sustain funding for the language program, one of the suggested ideas is to mass-produce the resource material for sale.

The reasons for success of the project include the support of the Chief and Council for the project and the enthusiasm of the women working on the project. In addition, the rationale, goals and procedures of the project were set out clearly in the proposal to CCIF. This indicates the importance of skills in proposal writing and communicating with government program officers.

Meanwhile, however, the overall Hub Centre program has suffered the loss of funding for its resource teacher (in July 1994), which the community considers to be a vital part of the child care program. The Ministry is replacing the resource teacher with a resource consultant for the whole of Manitoulin Island. The consultant's responsibility is to train day care staff to provide for special needs.

4.1.2. Kanasetake Integrated Childcare Program - Quebec

Kanasetake is a Mohawk community with a population of 1,707, located in Southern Quebec, 53 km. west of Montréal, and adjacent to the village of Oka³⁸.

The community has a small day care centre, operating in a house provided by the federal government. The community has been exploring the possibilities for provincial licensing and funding, but at present, is not licensed by the province.

Kanasetake is developing an innovative childcare system. Its proposed structure reflects an integration of preventive programs, including the day care centre, home care services, education, community health services, a Head Start program and other community social services. At the center of the model is a Board of Parents that would oversee the various programs.

The model being used is similar to the integrated model of the Better Beginnings, Better Futures Project which is currently being carried out in four First Nations communities in Ontario³⁹. It is

38 Quebec. Secrétariat aux affaires autochtones (1992).

39Ontario. Ministry of Community and Social Services. *Better Beginnings, Better Futures: An Integrated Model of Primary Prevention of Emotional and Behavioural Problems*. (1989).

also contains elements of the Head Start model that has been carried out in the United States for almost 30 years⁴⁰, with a focus on low-income families.

The Kanasetake project is still in the early stages of development, yet it represents an innovative approach to planning community child care services. For example, the program would attempt to follow a set of eight different philosophical perspectives on child care, including "a means of early promotion of Mohawk language and culture", "an Aboriginal headstart program", and "a form of social assistance for low-income families"⁴¹.

4.1.3. Chisasibi Home Child Care Agency - Quebec

The James Bay Cree community of Chisasibi has developed an Aboriginal home child care agency that is culturally-based. The agency, named Anjobowa Kinwhymausogomik, is a non-profit organization established in 1990, with a mandate to establish and maintain a child care centre in Chisasibi.

History⁴²

Efforts to establish a day care centre in Chisasibi began in 1980, when a group of concerned women started to raise awareness of the need for a day care centre among community members and the Band Council. In 1989, two women (one from Chisasibi, the other a child care consultant) were hired by the Cree Health Board for a six month period to conduct a feasibility study for day care in the community. The study was sent to OSGE in January 1990, along with a request for a permit and funding for a day care centre.

In February 1990, a group of women formed the non-profit corporation - Anjobowa Kinwhymausogomik - and established the first Board of Directors for the day care. The Band Council was approached to provide a building for the day care, and in June 1990, the Band Council decided to lend a building to the corporation and to renovate the building to meet regulations.

Meanwhile, OSGE rejected the request for a permit and funding, due to the lack of trained staff in the community⁴³. Nevertheless, following regional fund-raising efforts, the day care centre was

40 See Friendly, Martha (1994).

41 Kanasetake Education Center. "Childcare Rational for Kanasetake". Draft April 1994.

42 Morissette (1993) pp. 175-177; Morissette (1994).

43 OSGE also wanted to wait for the results of five proposed pilot projects, which would be funded by the federal Child Care Initiatives Fund (CCIF) and sponsored by the Quebec Native Women=s Association, before giving any permits to Aboriginal communities. Mistissini

opened in December 1990, with spaces for 24 children from 18 months to six years of age. Staff comprised four local educators who worked under the supervision of the day care consultant.

In 1990, a proposal was submitted to the Child Care Initiatives Fund (CCIF) to hire the day care consultant for an additional 18 month period, in order to train and supervise day care staff, coordinate an ECE training program, develop a home child care agency, and prepare manuals for starting and operating Aboriginal child care centres and agencies. In September 1991, CCIF granted the proposal.

The ECE training program was provided by teachers from Vanier College in Montréal, who taught three part-time courses in the community during the summer of 1991. The remaining components of the training program were carried out between February 1992 and Winter 1993. This training included 80 hours of culturally-specific training provided by four Cree teachers.

In December 1991, a group of educators, parents and Board members from Chisasibi traveled to Montréal to meet with OSGE program officers to discuss their application for licensing and funding of a day care centre and home child care agency. In February 1992, OSGE granted a permit and funding for a 55 space day care centre and a 25 space home child care agency.

Work began on the new day care facility in the Spring of 1992, including a large scale fund-raising campaign. Construction began in October 1992 and the day care opened in June 1993. Meanwhile, the home child care agency began operation in August 1992. In 1992, there were four home child care providers, caring for children between three months and 12 years of age.

Reasons for Success

One of the main reasons for the success of the Chisasibi project is the determination of women in the community. Through their perseverance, and with the assistance of the day care consultant, they have not only succeeded in establishing a day care program, but have also acquired skills and confidence in the process.

Another reason for the success of the project is the role played by local Aboriginal authorities. The project received support from the Band Council and the Cree Regional Authority, both of which appear to have a relatively high capacity to raise money for community projects. Like other Cree communities that negotiated the *James Bay Agreement*, they are well organized and semi-autonomous, which enables them to move quickly when funding becomes available.

A third reason for the success of the project was the support provided by the Child Care Initiative

was a pilot project, Chisasibi was not, which created a conflict between the two communities. Eventually, the proposed pilot projects did not begin and both communities went on to develop child care programs in similar ways.

Fund, which enabled the community to hire the day care consultant. Fortunately, the consultant has a special interest in Aboriginal day care, and was committed to the Chisasibi project.

Problems Arising

Despite the overall success of the project, there were a few problems.

Only three of the 10 trainees who started the program completed the training. Some trainees had language difficulties (English was used for reading and assessments), some were not eligible for funding, and some found better-paying jobs during the three year training period. The training program also experienced funding problems due to a lack of involvement of the local adult education agency in the organization and coordination of the program. Transporting children also became a problem, because the new day care centre was located somewhat far from the center of the community.

4.2. OFF-RESERVE

4.2.1. Gizhaadaawgamik - Toronto, Ontario¹

Gizhaadaawgamik is a non-profit, culturally-based Aboriginal child care program which operates out of a First Nations school in Toronto. "Gizhaadaawgamik" means "a place to care for the children" in Ojibway.

History

In 1989, a preliminary study was carried out by the First Nations School of Toronto and Native Child and Family Services. The study revealed that there was a need for a "Native Way Child Care Centre" in Toronto, due to a high percentage of single parents, a high percentage of parents on Welfare, and the expressed preference of parents for a culturally-based child care program. Existing Aboriginal child care services were limited to three part-time programs. Moreover, there were long waiting lists for subsidized day care spaces in Metropolitan Toronto.

A five-phase proposal was submitted to the Child Care Initiatives Fund (CCIF) in 1989. Funding was provided for a three year pilot project. The program started with a 24 space pre-school program, and has subsequently added a 30 space school-aged program. Initial management of the program was handled by a seven-member Board of Directors representing the Aboriginal community, the Toronto Board of Education and Ahkinomagai Kemik Education Council. Subsequently, parents of children in the centre became members of the Board.

The program reflects traditional Aboriginal values, spirituality, language and culture in its daily

activity plans. It also meets the educational needs of children, in a holistic sense: social, emotional, spiritual, physical and cognitive. Cultural activities at the centre include traditional teachings, language lessons, visits by elders, traditional drumming and dancing, and the use of traditional foods.

Gizhaadaawgamik has achieved everything it set out to achieve, and has provided a much-needed service in the city. At the early stages, there were some problems with high turnover of staff, but currently there is a high level of commitment of staff members, and the program receives a lot of support from the Board of Education and the Ministry of Community and Social Services.

Reasons for Success

The project has been successful due to the dedication of the people behind the project, particularly the "strong family members" who were on the Board of Directors. The Board has been consistent in their dealings with the government, by always presenting a positive image and showing how children benefit from the program. In response, the provincial government and the Municipality of Metro Toronto have both been supportive of the program.

4.2.2. Sweetgrass Child Care Centre - London, Ontario¹

The Sweetgrass Child Care Centre is located at the N'Amerind Friendship Centre, in the city of London, in Southern Ontario. The Centre opened in 1988, following the efforts of members of the Aboriginal community of London to develop a day care program. Licensing and funding are provided by the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services.

Sweetgrass is one of only two urban Aboriginal day care centres in Ontario and Quebec. The centre has a capacity for 32 children between the ages of 2.5 and five years, some of whom are non-Aboriginal. A day care supervisor and the executive director of the Friendship Centre monitor the program, while management is the responsibility of an Aboriginal Board of Directors.

The program includes cultural activities, such as language teaching circles, traditional arts and crafts, traditional ceremonies and drama-storytelling. The child care program is linked to the other programs offered at the Friendship Centre, including a culturally-based resource centre, and a community education program. The latter provides training for students in education or work experience programs, such as field placements for Early Childhood Education programs.

4.2.3. Odawa Home Child Care Agency - Ottawa, Ontario¹

History

Approximately 10 years ago, a committee interested in developing group child care programs for Aboriginal children in Ottawa was formed. With funding from the Child Care Initiatives Fund, a needs assessment was conducted, which identified a need for a group care, as well as a need for sensitization of non-Aboriginal day cares to native culture. Subsequently, a proposal for funding to address these needs was submitted to the Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS). Due to the small number of Aboriginal children in the city, MCSS responded to the proposal by suggesting home care, and provided start up funding for home child care.

To address the need to sensitize the community about native culture, an additional proposal was submitted to the Child Care Initiatives Fund for a project called "Towards Native Sensitization". This initiative received funding for the development of resource materials to be used to train staff in existing day care centres, for the establishment of an Aboriginal toy and resource library, and for a one-day Aboriginal child care conference.

According to a key informant, the sensitization project proceeded on a stop/start basis, with a high turnover of staff. There were three different executive directors in one year, and at one time there was no executive director to run the project. It was suggested that these problems may have been because the project was not clearly defined. Nevertheless, a manual was produced which dealt with the particular needs of and problems faced by Aboriginal children and provided an orientation to Aboriginal culture and traditional approaches to child-rearing⁴⁴. The manual was sent out to all area school boards, Child Welfare offices, and other organizations with programs for Aboriginal children. Workshops were given to day care providers in some existing centres. Unfortunately, funding for this initiative ended in 1994.

The home child care agency is still operating in 1994. There is a home visitor who meets with each potential family day home provider to inform them of the regulations and assess the provider's ability to provide quality care. Final approval of providers includes a police check for any criminal record. Once a home is approved, the home visitor matches the needs of parents to the attributes of the family day homes, such as geographic location, personalities, and number of spaces available.

The Odawa program is trying to be specific for Aboriginal children, but the home visitor claimed the program would not survive without providing services to non-native children. This is because

⁴⁴ Odawa Sweetgrass Home Child Care Agency (1994). This is an excellent resource for both non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal care givers, to understand traditional Aboriginal culture and to learn how to address the particular needs of Aboriginal children.

funding is based on numbers of children served and there are currently insufficient numbers of Aboriginal children served to justify funding. Funding is provided under a purchase of service agreement, requiring 44 spaces to be filled.

Apparently, it has been a challenge to find Aboriginal home care givers, as most Aboriginal women come to Ottawa to go to school or work, so do not have time to be a full-time child care provider. Nevertheless, there are now nine Aboriginal care givers (although a few will be leaving soon for maternity leave) and 11 non-Aboriginal care givers. Most of the Aboriginal children are in Aboriginal homes; however, it has proven difficult to place children from a particular Nation with a provider from the same Nation, due to the diversity of Nations in the Ottawa area (including Mohawk, Ojibway, Algonquin, Inuit and Cree).

All care givers are provided with training in home child care, CPR and First Aid. There is a home child care provider course available through Algonquin College in Ottawa, but this program is not specific to Aboriginal child care. Apparently, there have been discussions between Algonquin College and the Odawa child care committee about including an Aboriginal component in the college's ECE program.

Currently, Aboriginal children are given priority for spaces in the program. The percentage of spaces allocated to Aboriginal children has increased from 25% when the program started to 50% in 1994.

The home child care program is now directed by the Board of the Odawa Friendship Centre, although the child care office is not located in the Friendship Centre building.

Issues Arising

A number of reasons were suggested for the difficulties encountered in finding Aboriginal care givers for the home child care agency. One reason is that many potential care givers live in apartments, which are not considered suitable for home child care. The regulations were seen to be "off-putting" for some potential care givers. In addition, some potential care givers may not be comfortable with the procedure for a police check for all family members over 18 years. This procedure includes checks for previous family violence, child sexual abuse, drug and alcohol abuse.

Another issue is the fact that some Aboriginal families have grandmothers who come to the city to look after the children, but they cannot get a subsidy unless they provide care to other children. Also, the regulations stipulate that subsidies are not available if the care is provided in the parents' own home.

Although the home child care program fills a need in Ottawa, there is still a need for an Aboriginal

child care centre. It was suggested that some parents prefer leaving their children in a day care centre, rather than leaving them with one unsupervised "stranger". Moreover, it is considered easier to offer culturally-based care in a centre, than in a family day home.

The Odawa Board is interested in establishing a day care centre, but the current Friendship Centre building is an old house, inappropriate to house a day care centre. There is a need for a building with sufficient space for both the friendship centre and group care. One of the barriers faced is the lack of suitable, affordable space in the area of the city where the Friendship Centre is currently located - down town and close to the bus station.

4.3. INNOVATIVE CHILD CARE TRAINING PROGRAMS

Two programs are described in this section, the Binoojiinyag Kinoomaadwin ECE program at Cambrian College, and the Kativik Regional Government training program in Kuujjuaq, Quebec. Additional programs that are not included here include the training carried out by Vanier College in Chisasibi, Quebec and the Odawa child care training manual, both of which are described briefly under previous sections on innovative child care models.

4.3.1. Binoojiinyag Kinoomaadwin - Ontario¹

Note: This program is also known as the Anishnabek Early Childhood Education Project.

History of the Program

In 1989, the Union of Ontario Indians conducted a survey of Aboriginal Child Care programs in the province of Ontario. Results indicated a need for more fully qualified Native Early Childhood Educators; a lack of trained supply teachers; a lack of experienced teachers; a lack of staff training; a lack of Native refresher courses; and a need for and interest in an early childhood education program specifically to serve the needs of Native Early Childhood Educators in developing skills in planning culturally-appropriate curriculum, teaching and nurturing Native children and transferring skills to Native parents.

Funds were secured from the Child Care Initiatives Fund of Health and Welfare Canada to:

- develop an Early Childhood Education program which incorporated Native cultural and linguistic components throughout the entire curriculum
- develop "credit" Native specific courses which could be used as professional development, refresher or orientation for day care staff, e.g., Native language, arts, music, Native

parenting, etc.

- develop mechanisms by which staff with partial E.C.E. qualifications could complete their diploma requirements in order to be promoted and/or hired by Native and other Child Care agencies

A steering Committee was established with members representing each of the four geographic regions of the Union of Ontario Indians, including one representative from a Day Care Centre and one other representative from each area. The other representatives included an Elder, a Band Councillor, an E.C.E. student and a Kindergarten teacher.

Community input was obtained by:

1. An intensive survey of Day Care workers
2. Native Early Childhood Education Conference Consultation
3. Community Consultation Workshops

Through the tendering process, Cambrian College in Sudbury Ontario was selected to collaborate with the Union of Ontario Indians and Anigawncigig Institute to develop and deliver this program.

In September 1991, the Binoojiinyag Kinooaadwin Native Early Childhood Education Diploma program was offered on campus in a two year format and through distance education in a four year format.

The program meets current Ontario provincial standards and competencies which have been established for all Early Childhood Education programs in the province. The Binoojiinyag Kinooaadwin program also meets the following cultural and linguistic competencies:

1. Understand unique dimensions of Native child, family and community.
2. Foster appreciation of First Nation's language, culture and identity.
3. Incorporate Native content in programming.
4. Link with community resources.

Fundamental to the success of students enrolled in the distance delivery of Binoojiinyag Kinooaadwin Native Early Childhood Education Diploma program is the role of the Support

Services Officer (SSO). The SSO travels to students' communities to provide tutoring, monitoring, counseling, ongoing support and encouragement, and the personal contact which is missing in distance delivery education. The use of SSO's has contributed to an increased retention rate and subsequent successful continuation in the program.

Funding Issues

In 1991-1992, funding was obtained from Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) and Canada Employment and Immigration (CEIC) - Pathways to Success, to begin operation of the Binoojiinyag Kinoomaadwin program. Funds were secured to hire a program manager, a full-time secretary and four full-time support services officers (SSO's) (six staff positions).

In 1992-1993, expected funding from the Ministry of Community and Social Services and from the Ministry of Colleges and Universities (MCU) Aboriginal Education and Training Strategy was not secured. Funds from CEIC and INAC were not sufficient to maintain operation of the program at optimal levels. SSO's were reduced to three (five staff positions) and some other expenses were reduced. One time bridge funding was obtained from the Ministry of Energy, Mines and Resources.

In 1993-1994, expected funds again were not secured from MCU, INAC and CEIC. Program staff were reduced to part-time secretary, two full-time SSO's and a full-time manager/support services officer (a total of 3.5 staff positions). Other reduced expenses were also possible.

In 1994-1995, reduced funding is expected from the Ministry of Education and Training Aboriginal Education and Training Strategy, INAC, and CEIC. Staffing at a minimum with a part-time secretary, a manager/SSO, and 1.5 SSO positions (three staff positions).

For the future, there is no guarantee of funding sources available to initiate subsequent intakes of the Binoojiinyag Kinoomaadwin Distance Delivery Program.

4.3.2. Kativik Training and Home Day Care Agency - Quebec¹

A training program is being developed in the Kativik region of Quebec. This program is innovative since new courses are being developed based on an adaptation of provincial training programs to the Inuit culture. This has been possible through the recent reform of the vocational education system in Quebec as well as increased flexibility of OSGE. Vocational training at the secondary school level has been combined with training at the college level, in order to allow colleges to develop their own certificates (one year programs). Therefore, it is possible to make training more culturally appropriate. Currently, certificates have to be approved by the province, but with the reform of the education system, different certificates can be developed based on local

culture and needs.

The training program is being managed by the Kativik Education Department. The department has decided not to wait for funding from the Ministry of Education and has proceeded to provide funding for income support and adaptation of provincial training programs. Provincial training programs have been used in order to meet the requirements of OSGE, but courses have been adapted to Aboriginal needs. Inuit-specific courses are being developed and will be delivered in Inuktitut. An ECE teacher from Vanier college will be hired to work with an Inuit resource teacher, who will deliver the training.

The Kativik training program is in the early stages of development. The first training began in the summer of 1994 and subsequent courses will be based on the outcome of the first training program.

Earlier, in 1989-1990, the Kativik Regional Government carried out the CCIF-funded *Paintsivik Project*, through which culturally-specific educational material was developed. This material included development profiles and activity cards for use by child care providers, as well as a training video called "About Children and Child Care Services". The video includes information regarding child care regulations and procedures for starting a child care services. The educational materials that were produced were applied in a training program for staff of the Iqitauvik Day Care Centre, as well as representatives from all of the Inuit communities in the Kativik Region⁴⁵.

The Kativik region is also developing a **home child care** program. Although the program is based on models used in the South, the way it will be used in the region may be different than in the South. There is some concern about the potential for people to use the program, since parents will be required to declare the service in their income tax, which may be unacceptable for those providing the service. The challenge is to convince providers that the benefits, in the form of training, toys, equipment and guaranteed income, are greater than the costs in terms of having to pay income tax.

45 Government of Canada. Child Care Initiatives Fund. *Inuit Child Care Projects*. 1994.

Part 5

Unsuccessful Initiatives

5.0. UNSUCCESSFUL INITIATIVES**5.1. Introduction**

Most of the "innovative" child care models in Ontario and Quebec have been developed with funding from the Child Care Initiatives Fund. According to CCIF program officers, any application that did not deal with research, development or demonstration was referred to provincial child care authorities. This included day care centres. On-reserve initiatives have included needs assessments for child care programs, but funding did not cover the cost of start up or operation of a day care centre.

To date, all of the initiatives funded by CCIF have met their objectives, although some program components may not be sustainable after CCIF funding ends in 1995. There may have been innovative projects that did not succeed in the competition for CCIF funding, but this information was not available.

The following cases provide an illustration of the challenges faced by Aboriginal communities in developing culturally-based programs.

5.2. Kativik Regional Government - Resource Teacher

In 1993, the Kativik Regional Government came very close to signing an agreement with l'Office des Services de Garde à l'Enfance (OSGE), for funding to hire a child care resource person to be based in Kuujjuaq. This resource person would have provided services to communities in the region. OSGE had agreed to the job description and funding for a two year period, but did not agree on the salary. Due to the high costs of moving a qualified person to Kuujjuaq from the South, the cost would have been about \$100,000. According to a key informant, the document outlining the agreement was prepared, but OSGE finally said that money was not available. This key informant suggested the decision may have been for political reasons, as OSGE may have been reluctant to set a precedent.

With the anticipated establishment of a provincial Aboriginal day care association in Quebec, it was suggested that OSGE feared that other Aboriginal communities would demand resource teachers for their communities, once they became aware of the service in the Kativik region. The Kativik Regional Government has attempted in vain to persuade OSGE to reverse their decision.

5.3. North Shore Tribal Council Home Child Care Agency

For over a year, the Mamaweswen North Shore Tribal Council has been attempting to establish a

home child care agency to serve seven First Nations along the North Shore of the Great Lakes. With funding from the Child Care Initiatives Fund and the Aboriginal Women's Program, a program coordinator was hired and home child care providers were trained. Some homes have been upgraded to meet safety standards, small equipment has been purchased, and there are some family day homes operating; however, funding for the agency has not yet been secured and the program coordinator has gone on one year leave of absence due to the lack of guaranteed funding. No provincial funding is available for the home child care agency, so the Tribal Council has applied for funding under the Self-Employment Assistance Program of Canada Employment and Immigration.

Key informants described a "catch 22" situation faced in developing home child care agencies. In order to justify funding for hiring a home visitor, there would need to be at least 20 family day homes, but in order to obtain funding for family day homes, there must be a home visitor.

5.4. Odawa Native Day Care Centre

Although the Odawa Home Child Care Program has been implemented with some degree of success, the desire of the Odawa Friendship Centre to establish a day care centre has not been realized. Apparently, the Ministry of Community and Social Services feels that the numbers of Aboriginal children in the city of Ottawa are too low to justify a centre. In addition, there is a continuing problem in trying to find a suitable building in the down town area to house both the Friendship Centre and the day care centre.

Nevertheless, the Aboriginal community in Ottawa is continuing to pursue the project, as some parents prefer centre-based care to home child care. Moreover, a day care centre connected to the Friendship Centre is seen as an effective means of providing cultural and language teaching.

5.5. Day Care Centres in Northwestern Ontario

Although limited information was available at the time of preparing this report, it is apparent that some of the needs assessments that were carried out in Northwestern Ontario through the Child Care Initiatives Fund have not gone any further⁴⁶. It is not clear why these projects have not proceeded, but it was suggested that it may have been due to the difficulty in adapting mainstream models of child care in the North. In contrast, Aboriginal communities in Southern Ontario have managed to adapt the day care model to their needs. It also was suggested that Northern communities may have less experience with community development and less access to expertise in formal child care.

46 Needs assessments were carried out by Big Trout Lake First Nation and by the Windigo Tribal Council.

Part 6

Jurisdiction & Funding

6.0. JURISDICTION AND FUNDING

6.1. FEDERAL ROLE IN ABORIGINAL CHILD CARE

Under the *Constitution Act* of 1867, section 91(24), the federal government has jurisdiction for Indians and lands reserved for Indians⁴⁷. Meanwhile, the provincial and territorial governments have jurisdiction over child welfare and child care services. This situation has created a continuing jurisdictional ambiguity over Aboriginal child care in some parts of the country. The federal government has argued that provincial governments should be responsible for funding child care, while some provincial governments argue that the federal government should fund child care services that are directed to reserves or status Indians⁴⁸.

The Aboriginal child care situation in the Ontario and Quebec region illustrates the variations that have evolved across the country in terms of federal and provincial roles in Aboriginal child care. While Ontario has had a long standing agreement with the federal government that clearly sets out funding arrangements, in Quebec, there is no similar agreement, although the **1975 James Bay Agreement** established that the province should extend child care services to reserves in the James Bay region. The Department of Indian Affairs has a clear and substantial role in Ontario, while it does not have a significant role in Quebec.

In the late 1980's, the federal government announced a proposal for a *National Strategy on Child Care*, that would provide \$60 million for child care in Aboriginal communities. Unfortunately, this strategy was abandoned when the federal election was called in 1988, and nothing similar has replaced it.

In general, federal policy regarding Aboriginal child care is "fragmented and poorly developed"⁴⁹. The *Child Care Initiatives Fund* has made a significant contribution to the development of culturally-appropriate child care programs, but it is due to end in 1995, and a replacement program has not been announced. The Liberal Government's promise of an Aboriginal *Head Start* program may address some of the child care needs of low income Aboriginal families, but the details of the program have yet to be ironed out. The *Brighter Futures* Initiative provides funding for small projects that focus on young children and their parents, but the funding does not address the need for child day care.

⁴⁷Cassidy, Frank and Robert Bish. *Indian Government: Its Meaning in Practice*. The Indian Act narrows the federal government's jurisdiction to status Indians.

⁴⁸ Fanjoy, Sylvia (1993)

⁴⁹Child Care Resource and Research Unit (1994), p. 81

The *Federal Action Plan on Social Security* is expected to be released sometime in the Summer of 1994, which will address the child care situation in the country, among other social programs. Subsequently, the government intends to carry out extensive consultations with Aboriginal communities.

Meanwhile, there are varying degrees of support among First Nations in the region over the whole notion of provincial jurisdiction over Aboriginal child care. In part, opposition to provincial authority is consistent with the goal of First Nations to be self-governing and to have direct funding for, and ultimate authority over, all aspects of Aboriginal child care⁵⁰. At the same time, however, First Nations recognize that the province is the current source of funding for child care, and there is no clear federal alternative on the horizon. In Ontario in particular, there is some reluctance to lose the relative security of the cost-sharing agreement between the federal and Ontario government⁵¹.

6.2. JURISDICTION & FUNDING IN ONTARIO

6.2.1. Jurisdiction for On-Reserve

Ontario is in the unique situation of being the only province with a long-standing agreement between the federal and provincial government for the jurisdiction and funding of Aboriginal day care. The *1965 Memorandum of Agreement Respecting Welfare Programs for Indians* allows for the delivery of a limited range of provincial welfare services on-reserve. Schedule C, section (c) of the Agreement specifies that this includes services that are "included in day care services provided to children in day nurseries and the supervision of such day nurseries under *The Day Nurseries Act* R.S.O. 1960, Chapter 87". The schedule further specifies these services as "day care services for children of working mothers", and "protection and preventive services in the fields of child and family welfare...".

The agreement sets out the terms and conditions by which the federal government will reimburse the province for the delivery of Aboriginal child welfare services. Aboriginal day care programs are administered by the province, through the Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS). The Child Care Branch of MCSS is responsible for developing policy and legislation, coordinating planning, licensing programs, ensuring compliance with regulations, administering operating grants and some subsidies and providing on-going support.

50 This has been clearly expressed in 1993 consultations between the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services and on and off-reserve Aboriginal groups

51 Ontario Indian Social Services Council (1993), p.4.

Actual licensing and monitoring of programs, as well as planning and implementing local community plans, are the responsibility of 13 "area offices" in the province. Each area office establishes Area Planning Guidelines, consistent with the **1992 Ontario Child Care Management Framework**. Any applications for new or expanded programs are considered in relation to the *Framework*, as well as in relation to the particular guidelines and priorities of the area office⁵².

The issue of jurisdiction was raised during 1993 consultations with First Nations over proposed child care reforms in Ontario. First Nations are opposed to the proposal that legislation be developed that incorporates the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Community and Social Services. First Nations feel that any transfer of jurisdiction to the Ministry of Education may jeopardize the federal fiduciary responsibility to First Nations that has been assured under the 1965 Child Welfare Agreement between Indian Affairs and the Ministry of Community and Social Services. Instead, it was suggested that the Ministry of Education should integrate kindergarten into the child care system, and provide education dollars to day care centres for program development⁵³.

Another issue raised through the consultations is that of **First Nation control** of day care programs. Currently, Aboriginal day care programs are administered by First Nations, following provincial legislation. It is stated in the consultation report that "[n]ew provincial legislation must recognize the right of First Nations to move from their current management of day care programs to assuming full control and direction of those services"⁵⁴. The Ontario Indian Social Services Council is now investigating options for full First Nations jurisdiction over child care.

6.2.2. Funding On-Reserve

The Day Care program under the 1965 Agreement includes funding for licensed day care centres and licensed home child care. Indian Affairs provides the municipal share of the operating costs of day care, directly to First Nations, based on a projected annual operating budget negotiated between each First Nation and the respective local area office of MCSS. The remaining operating budget is provided directly by the province. Approximately 93% of this budget is charged back to the federal government, according to the terms of the 1965 agreement.

Under the *Day Nurseries Act*, First Nations, like municipalities, can directly operate day care

52 CRRU, 1994, p.39

53 OISSC, 1993

54 OISSC, 1993, p. 9

centres and home child care agencies. They can also administer the child care fee subsidy for band members, for which the band must contribute 20% of the cost⁵⁵. Parents living on-reserve are currently eligible for subsidized day care services without having to undergo a needs or means test. Relatively low daily fees are charged by band councils to cover some of the operational costs of day care. First Nations are opposed to any proposal to require means testing for Aboriginal families, as they feel this "could have an adverse effect on many families and undermine Band Council authority to administer the programs"⁵⁶.

Since 1975, from 80% to 100% of the capital costs of new construction or expansion are paid for by the province, with no reimbursement by the federal government. Where less than 100% of the capital costs are covered by the province, individual First Nations must cover the remaining capital funds. Often, these funds are obtained from the "minor capital budget" provided annually to the First Nation by Indian Affairs⁵⁷.

Since 1988, the federal government's **Child Care Initiatives Fund (CCIF)** has been a source of funding for on-reserve child care projects focusing on research and development. In Ontario, CCIF funded at least ten projects, including child care needs assessments and feasibility studies, an Aboriginal child care conference, the development of culturally-appropriate training (at Cambrian College), and development of a culture and language program (Wiwemikong). Although CCIF did not cover capital or on-going operating costs, it has enabled Aboriginal communities to have better access to provincial funding, by enabling them to carry out the preliminary steps in the application process. CCIF is now in its "sun-setting" phase, with no replacement funding program on the horizon.

Another new source of funding in Ontario is the child care component of the **Jobs Ontario Training Fund**, administered by the Ministry of Community and Social Services. Through this initiative, the province plans to create up to 30,000 new child care fee subsidies, in order to increase access to training and employment. Funding is provided for up to 100% of the operating costs of child care centres, as well as up to 100% of the capital costs of constructing or renovating day care facilities, which is seen as a further means to create employment.

One of the conditions of Jobs Ontario funding is that there is a clear link to training or job creation, as determined by Regional Aboriginal Management Boards (AMBs). According to key informants, there are still issues to be resolved with regard to the funding of training in Early

55 CRRU, 1994, pp.36 and 39

56 OISSC, 1993, p.6

57 David Rydholm, Indian Affairs: personal communication, June 1994

Childhood Education. At present, there is a lack of consistency among AMBs in terms of their support for ECE training as a source of job creation.

Despite the continuing growth of the on-reserve Aboriginal child care system, there are continuing problems faced in securing sufficient funding to meet the actual child care needs of Aboriginal communities. First Nations regard operational funding as **insufficient** to provide for language and resource teachers, or higher staff/child ratios, all of which are considered essential by First Nations.

For example, one of the issues raised by key informants is the difficulty in securing funding for **resource teachers**, whose services are considered to be important components of a **holistic approach** to child care. According to one key informant, the Ministry is cutting back funding for resource teachers, in favour of regional resource consultants who would have responsibility for providing services to several communities. This was not viewed as a positive step, as it would be impossible for one consultant to provide the same level and frequency of care as a resource teacher in each community.

6.2.2. Jurisdiction & Funding Off-Reserve

The 1965 Agreement applies only to reserve communities and to registered Indians living off-reserve for up to a year. Therefore, Indian Affairs does not provide funding to off-reserve day care centres, and Aboriginal families in urban or off-reserve centres are not eligible for subsidized day care services without a needs test. In order to develop an Aboriginal-specific child care centre, an off-reserve group would have to form an approved corporation, and raise 20% of the funding on their own. This is a very difficult undertaking, given the fact that the group would have no tax base. Alternatively, the group would have to convince the Municipality that the project was a priority over other day care centres, which would not be an easy undertaking.

Many of the participants in recent MCSS consultations with off-reserve Aboriginal people⁵⁸ considered the needs test to be "intrusive". This is partly due to the fact that the tests are carried out by staff in municipal welfare systems, which automatically attaches a negative connotation to the test, as perceived by Aboriginal parents.

As above, off-reserve Aboriginal groups are calling for a child care system which is Aboriginal determined, organized and managed, with specific funding for Aboriginal child care for both on and off-reserve Aboriginal communities. In order to manage the system, it was suggested that Aboriginal child care committees be established along the lines of the Aboriginal Management Boards which coordinate training and employment programs in the province.

58 OFIFC/OMAA/ONWA, 1993

6.3. JURISDICTION & FUNDING IN QUEBEC

6.3.1. Jurisdiction

The presence of ambiguities in federal-provincial jurisdiction was seen as detrimental to the development of Aboriginal day care facilities. Key informants observed that there has been an on-going jurisdictional dispute in Quebec between the federal and provincial governments. The provincial government has not wanted the federal government to interfere in its decisions, but at the same time, the province has not always been willing to support funding and development of Aboriginal day care programs.

At present, child care is considered a provincial responsibility. **L'Office des services de garde à l'Enfance (OSGE)** is the semi-autonomous body responsible for establishing standards and regulations, administering child care legislation and grants, and coordinating the child care system in Quebec. At least 51% of the voting membership of OSGE must be parents whose children are in child care programs. The other body responsible for child care is **le ministère de l'Éducation** (Ministry of Education), which looks after school-age child care programs provided by provincial school boards⁵⁹. Although clarification of provincial jurisdiction should, in theory, facilitate the development of Aboriginal day care programs, it has created a barrier for some communities in which the band councils prefer to deal with the federal government⁶⁰.

Within Quebec, there are also regional differences in jurisdiction for Aboriginal child care. Inuit communities are clearly under provincial jurisdiction, due to the status of Inuit communities as municipalities. Meanwhile, Inuit, Cree and Naskapi communities in the James Bay region have a unique relationship with both the federal and provincial government, through the **1975 James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement**, which provides for the extension of provincial child welfare services to Aboriginal communities.

Like the on-reserve situation, off-reserve Aboriginal child care is under provincial jurisdiction and does not receive funding from the federal government. The recently announced Head Start program may be geared to off-reserve Aboriginal groups through Friendship Centres, but this initiative is still in its preliminary stages of development.

59CRRU, 1994

60 Morissette, Lucie, 1994. Summary of Workshops - Native Child Care Services Seminar.

6.3.2. Funding

In contrast to the situation in Ontario, the federal government does not provide specified funding for Aboriginal child care in Quebec. There is no federal-provincial agreement for Aboriginal child care similar to the *Ontario Indian Child Welfare Agreement*, and no mechanism for federal reimbursement of provincial payments to First Nations.

The criteria for the development of new day care services that are eligible for funding is set out in a 1992 provincial regulation called *The Regulation respecting the annual fixing and allotment for new centres and agencies of the number of places for which an exemption, financial assistance or grants may be obtained*. Child care programs that are controlled by a majority-parent Board of Directors are favoured for development, and receive more funding than non-parent controlled Boards. In addition, although there is no specific funding policy for Aboriginal child care, the provincial government views Aboriginal child care as a priority for funding. This has been demonstrated by the increase in the number of Aboriginal day cares funded by the province in the past few years.

For funding purposes, the province is divided into 16 regions, then sub-regions called Municipalités Régionales de Compté (MRC). Within these sub-regions, funding is determined by the numbers of children in a particular age group, the number of mothers working in the labour force, the number of single parents, and the percentage of day care spaces that are occupied in the sub-region. In addition, OSGE uses the results of a province-wide survey, which was conducted in 1988 to determine the preference of parents for various types of child care. However, Aboriginal parents were not included in the survey, which raises questions as to the level of awareness within OSGE of the needs and preferences of Aboriginal communities.

Provincial child care subsidies are available to Aboriginal parents, but, in contrast to the situation in Ontario, **Aboriginal parents must pass an income or means test.**

There are eight types of grants available to day care centres and parents, including grants for development and start-up, operating, infants, special needs children, training, summer day care, collective benefits/insurance and financial assistance to parents ⁶¹.

Key informants expressed concern that provincial funding does not consider the particular reality of Aboriginal communities. For example, one of the problems faced by remote communities is the tendency for provincial funding to fall short of the actual costs of constructing new facilities, due to

⁶¹The actual amount of funding available under each grant may vary year by year. Figures for 1993-1994 are set out in Morissette (1993) and CRRU (1993).

the relatively high costs of transporting construction materials and labour to remote areas.

Key informants observed that increases in federal funding for child care tend to "push" the province, through OSGE, to provide more funding. For example, the Child Care Initiatives Fund was seen as an effective way of stimulating OSGE to provide more funding for Aboriginal child care. This is due in part to the fact that the CCIF funding enabled First Nations to carry out the initial stages of developing child care programs, such as needs assessments, which meant that the communities were better prepared when they approached OSGE for funding. Therefore, it was suggested that federal funding should be guaranteed so the province would be more willing to fund Aboriginal child care programs.

With shortages in provincial day care funding, First Nations have had to be creative in their use of different sources of funding. For instance, some communities have developed programs with funding from the federal government's Brighter Futures initiative. While Brighter Futures does not cover day care, it has been possible to justify funding by demonstrating how child care programs "improve the safety of the children" or "prevent child abuse".

Some Aboriginal communities, mostly in the South, are opposed to provincial jurisdiction over Aboriginal child care. Without federal government funding for child care, these communities have attempted to cover the costs of day care through other funding sources, which has proven difficult.

Part 7
Regulations

7.0. REGULATIONS**7.1. REGULATIONS IN ONTARIO**

Licensed on-reserve day care is subject to provincial legislation, regulations and licensing requirements. Under the *Day Nurseries Act, R.S.O. 1990*, First Nations are treated in a manner similar to municipalities, in terms of funding and administration.

Ontario Regulation 262, 1990, applies to child care centres, nursery schools, or group care for five or more unrelated children under 12 years of age (under 18 for developmentally handicapped children). The regulations also apply to supervised home child care for up to five children from 0-12 years, where not more than two of the children may be under two years, and not more than three may be under three years. In addition, resource centres may be regulated.

The staffing requirements of child care centres are set out by the regulations, which specify that supervisors must have a two year ECE diploma (or the equivalent) and at least two years experience working in a day nursery or child care centre with children of the same age as those in the centre where the supervisor is employed. One staff member for each group of children must have a two year ECE diploma, or equivalent. The "or equivalent" provision means that the Ministry may waive the requirements for an ECE diploma, at the discretion of Program Advisors from the Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS).

Compliance with the Act and its Regulations is monitored by MCSS Program Advisors, who must conduct an annual inspection of all licensed child care facilities.

There were widely varying views expressed by key informants regarding provincial regulations for staffing. Some observed that the province seemed to be very open to recognizing the qualifications of Aboriginal care givers aside from ECE training, and providing "letters of discretion". At the same time, other key informants claimed that it was difficult for some Aboriginal day cares to meet regulations for staff qualifications. One area for which there was consensus was on the need to increase the ratio of staff to children, in order to be more consistent with traditional child-rearing approaches.

Generally, the prevailing message expressed by key informants, and by Aboriginal groups in the 1993 Ontario Government=s "Setting the Stage" child care reform consultations⁶², is that First Nations should play the lead role in setting standards and regulations for Aboriginal child care. There is general agreement among Aboriginal groups that the *Day Nurseries Act* needs to be

62 OFIFC/OMAA/ONWA (1994)

changed to include sections specific to First Nations. However, if the province continues to set child care standards, then resources must be provided to First Nations to meet those standards. One example provided was that provincial standards for space (room dimensions) may require additional funds for renovation⁶³.

7.2. REGULATIONS IN QUEBEC

In Quebec, Aboriginal child care programs are subject to provincial legislation - ***An Act Respecting Child Day Care, R.S.Q., c. S-4.1***. The Act pertains to child care services offered by day care centres, home child care centres, home child care agencies, and school day care centres⁶⁴. In addition, it is anticipated that nursery schools and stop-over centres will soon come under the Act.

There are four regulations pertaining to child care: a regulation respecting day care centres, a regulation respecting home day care agencies and home day care, a regulation respecting financial aid and exemption, and a regulation respecting the fixing and annual allocation of day care spaces. In addition, there are other laws and regulations that may affect day care, such as corporate law or building codes. For example, most day care centres in Quebec require the formation of a non-profit corporation, according to part III of the ***Companies and Partnership Declaration Act R.S.Q., c.38***.

Regulations regarding staffing differ from those in Ontario. In Quebec, one in three staff members must have a college or university degree in Early Childhood Education (compared to one qualified staff member per group of children in Ontario), or three years of experience plus a college "attestation" degree or certificate. Regulations also specify that a child care centre must have a Board of Directors with at least 51% parent members, or a five member parent advisory committee.

Inspectors from OSGE may visit any licensed child care operation to monitor compliance with provincial regulations; however, there is no specification for the frequency of these inspections.

Most key informants felt that existing regulations were satisfactory, but needed to be **more flexible** in recognition of the unique reality of Aboriginal communities in the province. Key informants pointed out that there were **too many** regulations, which causes long delays in acquiring child care permits and funding.

There were concerns expressed regarding the appropriateness of some of the regulations to the reality of Aboriginal communities. For example, one of the regulations that was seen to be

63Ontario Indian Social Services Council (1993), p.3

64 Morissette, 1993

inappropriate to the reality of Aboriginal communities is that concerning the design of day care centres. At present the regulations require that an architect must approve the building plans. In most of the isolated communities, there are no resident architects or lawyers. Therefore, this often means that an architect from Montréal must be flown up to Northern communities, which may cost \$5,000 for a single visit.

On the other hand, it was noted that provincial regulations are set up in a manner that enables Aboriginal communities to develop culturally-appropriate programs. For example, having parent-run Boards enables parents to control programming to reflect their cultural values and language.

While it was acknowledged that legal incorporation is important, most Northern communities lack the legal personnel to understand the legalities of developing day care programs. For example, very few people in Aboriginal communities are familiar with the procedure for requesting Aletters patent@, which is a requirement for OSGE funding of non-profit day care centres. Moreover, they cannot simply drive to Montreal to discuss a legal problem with l'Office des Services de Garde à l'Enfance.

Key informants suggested that regulations should reflect Aboriginal approaches to child care, which are quite different from approaches used in the South. For example, in Inuit communities, children are treated as full-fledged community members and, accordingly, are provided with a higher degree of autonomy than children in the south. For southerners, this may be perceived as neglectful, but for the Inuit, this is an important part of preparing children for life as adults. Just as people in the South would not wish to have Inuit child-rearing approaches imposed on them, so the Inuit do not wish Southern child-rearing approaches to be imposed on them.

Part 8

Responsiveness of Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal Authorities

8.0. RESPONSIVENESS OF ABORIGINAL & NON-ABORIGINAL AUTHORITIES

8.1. ONTARIO

8.1.1. Responsiveness of Non-Aboriginal Authorities

The Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS) has demonstrated a commitment to working with First Nations to reform the child care system in Ontario, through a province-wide consultation process. Commencing in the Fall of 1992, this consultation has involved both on and off-reserve Aboriginal organizations, who have in turn consulted with Aboriginal community members. The results of these consultations have been reported in two important documents:

1. *Final Report of the Aboriginal Child Care Consultation with Off-Reserve Aboriginal Peoples*, which was submitted by the Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres, the Ontario Métis Aboriginal Association and the Ontario Native Women's Association.
2. *First Nations Child Care Conference March 22-24, 1993: A Summary Report*, which was submitted by the Ontario Indian Social Services Council.

The consultation process was guided by a document released by MCSS, entitled *Setting the Stage*, which described proposed reforms in four areas: **quality, affordability, accessibility and sound management**.

Although Aboriginal key informants spoke positively about this consultation process, there were continuing doubts expressed about how flexible the province will be in meeting the actual needs of Aboriginal communities. For example, one of the MCSS proposals deals with changes to the legislation, to address the need for greater flexibility of services in order to meet the needs of diverse communities in the province. In the consultations, First Nations expressed concerns that the new legislation "would not be flexible enough to meet the needs and suit the resources of their communities"⁶⁵. Instead, First Nations assert that any new legislation must include a section specific to, and developed by, First Nations, respecting First Nations' right to self-government.

Another way the provincial government has responded to the needs of the Aboriginal community, is by hiring a member of the Aboriginal community as Native Child Care Policy Analyst⁶⁶ at MCSS. This individual has served as liaison between Aboriginal organizations and the Ministry throughout the consultation process.

65 OISSC, 1993, p. 3

66 At the time of writing, the person holding the position had left and had not been replaced.

8.1.2. Responsiveness of Aboriginal Authorities

In the past few years, there has been increasing acceptance of and support for the notion of formal child care, by Aboriginal authorities. Increasingly, child care is being viewed by Aboriginal authorities as an integral element of both community healing and economic development.

Nevertheless, a continuing concern of Aboriginal women, especially in Northern and remote communities, is the lack of support by male-dominated band councils to the idea of day care. According to key informants, the prevailing attitude of male leadership in Northern communities is that "women should stay at home". This was also reported as a problem in some Southern communities, where day care staff are apparently "not given respect" by their Chief and Council. One of the reasons offered for this is that men who are in management or leadership positions have the financial means to support having their wives stay at home. Consequently, it was suggested that they could not identify with women who needed to find employment outside their homes, which would require the availability of reliable day care services.

Another issue raised by key informants was the lack of consistency in Ontario among Regional Area Management Boards (AMBs), who are responsible for the administration of funding for training programs. While some AMBs have accepted ECE training as part of their mandate, it was reported that other AMBs have taken the position that ECE training is the mandate of colleges, and do not provide funding. Another reason offered for the lack of support for ECE training by some AMBs is that most of the people applying for training funds are already employed by a day care centre, whereas the priority of certain AMBs is for unemployed applicants. Consequently, funding has been available for ECE training in some regions, but not others.

8.2. QUEBEC

8.2.1. Non-Aboriginal Authorities

Although the provincial government has been criticized for being unresponsive to the needs of Aboriginal communities, it was noted by key informants that the body responsible for day care has shown **increasing flexibility** and understanding of some of the particular needs of Aboriginal communities. For example, Aboriginal communities have been able to develop culturally-based training programs with the support of l'Office des Services de Garde à l'Enfance (OSGE). As one key informant said "the onus is now on our side...OSGE has shown flexibility... now we have to prove that it is possible".

Nevertheless, there are still concerns about the overall lack of support for Aboriginal day care in **remote** areas of the province. As mentioned earlier in this report, one of the biggest challenges

RESPONSIVENESS OF GOVERNMENT Aboriginal Child Care in Ontario & Quebec

faced by Aboriginal communities is dealing with the language of government communication (French), which is a major problem when trying to comprehend the legal documentation that is associated with the development of day care programs. Moreover, residents of remote communities do not feel that OSGE provides adequate support to their communities, in terms of coming to their communities to help them understand the various stages and regulations associated with formal day care development. It was also observed that attempts to obtain information from OSGE by telephone were often unsuccessful, due to language differences.

Another issue is the fact that there were no Aboriginal respondents to a recent province-wide survey that OSGE used to determine the preference of parents for various types of child care. This raises questions as to the level of awareness within OSGE of the needs and preferences of Aboriginal communities.

Key informants felt there was a need for an Aboriginal child care representative to sit on the Board of Directors of OSGE, to help ensure that the specific needs of Aboriginal communities are met. Key informants also suggested that there should be a meeting of all the representatives of different provincial and federal authorities involved in child care: OSGE, Human Resource Development Canada, The Ministry of Education, Indian Affairs, Secretariat des Affaires autochtones, and QNWA.

8.2.2. Responsiveness of Aboriginal Authorities

In Quebec, it appears that **regional** Aboriginal authorities are very responsive to the need for culturally-appropriate child care. For example the Kativik Regional Government and the Cree Regional Authority have both been highly supportive of the efforts of Aboriginal women in the province to develop day care programs.

At the same time, key informants reported that in some Aboriginal communities, day care is still seen only as a "women's issue". Therefore, it may require considerable effort on the part of Aboriginal women to convince the male-dominated band councils of the importance of formal child care.

One of the Aboriginal organizations that has helped to raise awareness of the need for quality child care in Aboriginal communities is the **Quebec Native Women's Association (QNWA)**. This organization has served as a voice for Aboriginal women in lobbying both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal authorities to support Aboriginal child care. In addition QNWA has been instrumental in the development of a provincial native day care association, in order to represent the native community.

RESPONSIVENESS OF GOVERNMENT Aboriginal Child Care in Ontario & Quebec

At a June 1994 assembly of Aboriginal child care representatives, it was decided that QNWA will serve as the organizational base for the day care association, as it already has the necessary organizational structures and procedures. The specific mandate of QNWA, as recommended by participants, would be to:

- Coordinate the development of an Aboriginal Early Childhood Education training project;
- Find ways to translate the OSGE principal documents needed to set up and operate child care services in Quebec;
- Set up a documentation centre to gather all the native material regarding children (books, video-audio cassettes, posters, etc.) which have been prepared in native education centres but not distributed to other communities;
- Lobby provincial and federal governments, associations and agencies to obtain bigger grants for Aboriginal child care centres and discuss Aboriginal child care concerns;
- Coordinate an annual meeting to regroup all Quebec child care centres and project representatives. Coordinate regular meetings of a child care advisory committee;
- Be the first line of support to the native child care centres and projects, to answer their questions or help them to contact OSGE;
- List and contact all the other relevant provincial and national and non-native associations to inform them of Quebec child care concerns and to gather information about their respective mandates (e.g., courses for training child care directors, etc.), and
- Promote networking of Aboriginal child care representatives in Quebec by means of a newsletter, in order to decrease their sense of isolation and provide them with new ideas.

Part 9

Education & Training Issues

9.0. EDUCATION & TRAINING

9.1. EDUCATION & TRAINING IN ONTARIO

9.1.1. Key Issues

In 1993 consultations by the Ministry of Community and Social Services with First Nations in Ontario, there were several issues raised relating to training and education of Aboriginal child care providers. The same issues were raised by key informants for the purposes of this report.

One of the main issues is the need for on-going, culturally-appropriate training for Aboriginal child care providers and managers, as well as cross-cultural training for non-Aboriginal child care workers who work with Aboriginal families and children.

Another issue is the need for more **resource teachers** at Aboriginal day care centres. In this regard, there is a need for training of Aboriginal child care providers to deal with special needs children. There is also a perceived need for ECE training programs to include more skills development in management, administration and accounting, as well as in communication and counseling.

The role of **Elders** in day care programs is a continuing issue. Regulations requiring ECE qualifications for staff are seen to impede the important role of Elders in transmitting cultural awareness and language skills to children and staff. Key informants said that in order to support the role of Elders, there is a need to recognize non-formal qualifications (e.g. traditional knowledge) in both regulations and funding.

Another area needing attention is training in parenting skills⁶⁷ for Aboriginal parents, to ensure that Aboriginal children also receive quality care at home.

9.1.2. Programs Available

There are several training programs available in Ontario for Early Childhood Education (ECE), usually in community colleges such as Fanshaw (London), Confederation (Thunder Bay), Sir Sanford Fleming (Lindsay), Algonquin (Ottawa), and George Brown (Toronto). The only culturally-based training for ECE is provided by Cambrian College, as described in section 4.3.1. At present, however, the distance education component of the program is in jeopardy, and key

⁶⁷The lack of parenting skills in some Aboriginal families has been attributed to the practice, in the past, of sending children to residential schools where there were no positive parenting role models. It has also been attributed to general cultural and economic erosion of Aboriginal communities through colonization. See Wasteneys (1994); AFN (1989).

informants expressed doubt that the Cambrian College program is sufficient to meet the need for culturally-appropriate training in the province.

In Northwestern Ontario, efforts are under way in 1994 to arrange training in a number of fly-in communities, through a purchase-of-services agreement with Confederation College. The Kenora area office of MCSS is assisting the communities with this initiative. This is an important step toward increasing the provision of day care services in remote communities in the Northwest, as access to training is considered a barrier to the development of programs. At present, the training appears to be based on mainstream models of training in Early Childhood Education, with non-Aboriginal teachers being hired to deliver the training. Nevertheless, it is possible that the training could become culturally-based, especially if funding is sufficient to support the development of culturally-appropriate materials and curriculum.

9.1.3. Need for Culturally-Appropriate Training

In both on and off-reserve consultations regarding day care reforms in Ontario, many participants expressed the need for culturally-based and flexible training for Aboriginal child care workers. As much as possible, it was felt that training should be provided in Aboriginal communities, through distance education. As mentioned earlier, however, there is only one culturally-appropriate training program operating for the entire province. There is also a need for cross-cultural training and awareness-raising about the need for more Aboriginal cultural content in urban/off-reserve day care programs, for non-Aboriginal child care workers, as well as for local and area day care supervisors⁶⁸.

9.1.4. Barriers to Education and Training

One of the main barriers to training is the lack of access to existing training programs for Aboriginal women and men living on reserve, especially in the North. Most of the college programs in ECE require students to leave their home community and live in a strange environment and culture in one of the urban centres in the province. In a study prepared for the Union of Ontario Indians, the desire of most potential students to stay at home, or close to their home community, was identified as an obstacle to participation in ECE training⁶⁹.

The lack of **funding** for culturally-based training and distance education was seen as a major barrier to the education and training of Aboriginal child care providers. Existing college programs are not perceived to be culturally-relevant or accessible to Aboriginal students, but culturally-appropriate

68 OISS (1994); OFIFC/OMAA/ONWA (1993).

69 Union of Ontario Indians (1990).

training would require additional funds in order to adapt existing programs or develop new curricula. Moreover, there is inadequate funding for on-going training to maintain the required complement of qualified Aboriginal day care staff at established and new centres.

A related barrier is the fact that ECE training does not fall under the mandate of the Ministry of Community and Social Services. Instead, specific training for ECE is the mandate of the Ministry of Education. Moreover, the potential for developing culturally-specific training depends on the particular priorities of individual colleges, each of which has many needs to consider, within a climate of decreasing budgets. Therefore, unless special funding was made available to colleges to develop new or adapted Aboriginal ECE training programs, it is unlikely that such programs will be developed.

Many key informants spoke of the existence of a "chicken and egg" problem faced in developing culturally-based ECE programs. In order to have child care training, there is a need for child care centres in which trainees can do their practicums. At the same time, in order to secure licensing of a day care centre, there is a requirement for a certain number of trained staff members.

9.2. EDUCATION & TRAINING IN QUEBEC

9.2.1. Programs Available

In Quebec, there are ECE training programs available through the CEGEP (community college) system, but for the most part, these programs have been inaccessible or not culturally-appropriate for Aboriginal child care providers. Most are provided in urban centres, and most are offered only in French. This has led to the current problem of a lack of trained day care staff in Aboriginal communities, which impedes licensing and funding.

Nevertheless, there have been a few training programs implemented on reserve in the past few years that have demonstrated both the potential for, and limitations of, culturally-appropriate, community-based training.

For example, in 1992-1993, Vanier College delivered an on-reserve ECE training program to women in Chisasibi, with funding provided by the Child Care Initiatives Fund. This program was directed to mature learners and provided credit for child care experience. The training has been viewed as successful in providing culturally-appropriate and accessible child care training. Key informants noted, however, that the training was an isolated effort which does not address the need for replacement staff at the day care. Moreover, there has been no evaluation of the quality of the training.

The Kativik Regional Government is developing a training program in Kuujjuaq, in conjunction with Vanier College. The Kativik Education department has placed a priority on child care training, and has gone ahead with the program without waiting for support from the provincial Ministry of Education. One of the issues associated with this initiative is the relatively high cost of delivering the training, given the need to hire both an ECE teacher from the South and an Inuit resource person from within the Kativik region.

Key informants mentioned two other Aboriginal child care training programs, one delivered by St. Félicien College in Mistissini (an "attestation" course) and another delivered by Vanier College in Kanasetake.

The development of all these training programs has been facilitated by funding from the Child Care Initiatives Fund, the lobbying and liaison efforts of the Quebec Native Women's Association, as well as the "openness" of the community college system in Quebec.

Meanwhile, efforts to establish a provincial association of Aboriginal child care providers are coming close to being realized in 1994. At a June 1994 meeting of Aboriginal child care professionals, in Montréal, it was decided that the Quebec Native Women's Association will serve as the organizational base for the Association.

9.2.2. Need for Culturally-Appropriate Training

As in Ontario, there is a clear need for more culturally-appropriate child care training for Aboriginal communities, as expressed by key informants in interviews for this report, as well as by participants in the 1989 and 1990 studies by the Assembly of First Nations and the Native Council of Canada⁷⁰.

Moreover, since the lack of trained staff has been seen to be a barrier to licensing and funding, it is important that training programs be provided that are **both culturally-appropriate and accessible**. Although there have been a few culturally-appropriate training programs developed in Quebec, these have been, for the most part, isolated, short term and lacking any evaluation.

9.2.3. Barriers to Training

As in Ontario, the **lack of funding** is a major barrier to the development of culturally-appropriate ECE training programs. The costs of delivering distance education courses in remote communities are very high, especially when Southern ECE teachers need to be brought up to the region.

70 Assembly of First Nations (1989) and Native Council of Canada (1990). Both reports emphasized the critical need to have culturally-appropriate child care training in order to contribute to the preservation of Aboriginal culture and languages.

Language may be a barrier to both participation in, and development of, Aboriginal child care training programs. There are only a small number of English language colleges in Quebec, so most of the ECE programs are offered in French. In addition, existing courses for accreditation by the Ministry of Education do not have much Aboriginal content, which is an issue being challenged by the Quebec Native Women's Association.

The low salary paid to child care workers is also seen as a barrier to participation in child care training, as there is less incentive to spend the time to train when higher salaries and better benefits can be obtained in other public sector jobs in Aboriginal communities.

Another barrier is the fact that most ECE training programs require secondary school diplomas, which may exceed the level reached by Aboriginal women in some communities. In this regard, key informants questioned whether the standards for child care training are appropriate to the reality of life in Aboriginal communities.

Part 10

Recommendations

10.0. RECOMMENDATIONS**Introduction**

In 1989, the Assembly of First Nations released a comprehensive report on First Nations Child Care in Canada. This report contained 75 recommendations for changes to the Aboriginal child care system. Similarly, the 1990 report released by the Native Council of Canada, on urban and off-reserve Aboriginal child care, contained 25 recommendations. In addition, recent consultations between the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services and Aboriginal organizations have produced recommendations for reform of the child care system in Ontario.

During research for this report, key informants reiterated many of the recommendations from these various studies. However, based on the overall research, including the literature review and consultations with government representatives, not all of those recommendations were considered feasible (although many would be considered ideal). Instead, the following recommendations are offered:

10.1. POLICY

1. There is a critical need to establish a federal policy on Aboriginal child care, to address disparities in the provision and quality of Aboriginal child care services among and within the provinces. This policy should cover issues of training, funding, control and regulations. Any development of federal policy must include the full participation of on and off-reserve Aboriginal child care representatives, from every province.
2. To further ensure that child care policy reflects the actual needs of Aboriginal communities, a comprehensive needs assessment should be carried out for the entire region. This assessment would consider the present and future needs of Aboriginal parents for employment, training and healing in relation to existing and planned child care services. It should also consider the needs of Aboriginal children, such as for cultural learning and safety.
3. Child care policies for off-reserve Aboriginal people should be clarified.

10.2. CULTURE & LANGUAGE

1. There needs to be increased support to develop culturally-based child care programs. All aspects of child care programming need to be explored, including culturally-appropriate ways to monitor child care programs. A general framework can be used, but programs

must be relevant to the particular culture of each nation or community.

2. Language and culture teachers should be provided for Aboriginal child care programs, if desired. The involvement of community Elders as transmitters of language and culture should be encouraged through remuneration or other incentives.
3. All Quebec regulations and policies should be translated into English and/or Aboriginal languages.

10.3. COORDINATION

1. A comprehensive examination of all federal and provincial policies, programs and funding mechanisms for Aboriginal child care is needed. The present system appears to be piecemeal, without coordination among various provincial and federal initiatives.
2. In order to streamline funding for child care programs, as well as to more accurately assess the need for child care, there should be integration between the various agencies responsible for child care, Native Child Welfare, education, employment training and other social services. For example, coordination is needed between employment incentive training programs, such as Jobs Ontario, and child care training.
3. To ensure that the needs and interests of Aboriginal communities are fully understood by provincial child care authorities, there should be an Aboriginal community liaison officer or program advisor in provincial and federal ministries responsible for child care.

10.4. FUNDING

Generally, the following recommendations involve increased funding for Aboriginal child care programs. It is acknowledged, in the present climate of fiscal restraint, that this will be difficult. Creative ways of redistributing existing funds will need to be explored. It must be stressed, however, that investing today in high quality Aboriginal child care programs (i.e. providing a positive, nurturing, and culturally enriched environment for Aboriginal children and enabling parents to work, learn or heal) will reduce the future need to fund programs to deal with social problems (e.g. alcoholism, family violence, unemployment, etc.).

1. There should be a separate funding allocation for Aboriginal child care in each province (i.e. separate from non-Aboriginal child care).
2. In connection to the recommendations on policy, an equitable system of funding is needed to ensure that there is equitable access to child care services among and within provinces.

This funding must consider the relatively high cost of providing day care services in Northern and remote communities.

3. More funding is needed to support the development of **resource centres** providing support services to Aboriginal families, such as parenting workshops.
4. First Nations living in urban areas should have access to the same level of funding for child care (such as subsidies without means testing) as on-reserve residents.
5. There is a critical need for a replacement program to the **Child Care Initiatives Fund** (CCIF). Innovative projects developed under CCIF should be guaranteed further funding to continue. For example, Gizhaadaawgamik in Toronto and the Cambrian College ECE program have filled critical needs, but their futures are in jeopardy without continued funding.
6. Increased funding for day care staff salaries is needed, to encourage community members to participate in ECE training, and to provided the financial security necessary to prevent high staff-turnover.

10.5. JURISDICTION

1. Clarification is needed of respective roles of federal, provincial and Aboriginal authorities in the provision of Aboriginal child care across the country. Existing ambiguities must not be allowed to continue, as they impede the development of Aboriginal child care programs.
2. Mechanisms for ensuring First Nation control over all aspects of Aboriginal child care should be explored.

10.6. REGULATIONS

1. All existing provincial regulations should be evaluated according to their relevance and appropriateness to Aboriginal communities. This is especially important in the context of remote communities in the Northern areas of each province. Specific regulations for First Nation communities should be developed, in full collaboration with Aboriginal child care representatives.
2. A directive should be given to provincial program advisors or inspectors to ensure the application of the flexibility provisions that are built into provincial legislation and

regulations. For example, the involvement of Elders should be encouraged by program advisors, by waiving the requirement for ECE qualified staff to be present with each group of children.

3. Regulations for home child care providers need to be simplified and adapted to the needs of Aboriginal families. Moreover, the traditional, extended family system of providing child care should be enhanced by exploring ways to provide child care subsidies to Aboriginal families when care is provided by (qualified) extended family members.

10.7. TRAINING

1. Assistance should be provided in securing adequate funding to pursue subsequent intakes of students into the Binoojiinyag Kinoomaadwin Early Childhood Education Distance Delivery Program. Developed curriculum from the Binoojiinyag Kinoomaadwin program should be utilized in professional development programs for Aboriginal Early Childhood Educators and other related professional agencies. There should also be a mechanism to ensure that the curriculum is widely shared, evaluated and further developed.
2. Evaluations should be conducted of the Aboriginal child care training programs carried out in Chisasibi and Mistissini, Quebec, to determine the viability of reproducing the model in other communities.
3. Support should be provided to the reproduction of existing Aboriginal Early Childhood Education **resource material**, in order to facilitate sharing with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal agencies serving Aboriginal children and/or Early Childhood Education students.
4. A system or **network** of Aboriginal child agencies in the province should be established. Attempts have been made to establish provincial associations for Aboriginal child care providers in Ontario and Quebec, but both lack the funding and staff to establish a formal organization. At the very least, funding should be provided to hire a coordinator for these associations and fund annual conferences.
5. There is a need to have **Aboriginal child care consultants** trained throughout the region that can promote the development of culturally-appropriate Aboriginal child care programs, by providing training and guidance through the planning process. Ideally, these would be people who have been involved in culturally-appropriate training programs, such as Binoojiinyag Kinoomaadwin.

6. Increased support is needed for the training and hiring of **resource teachers** for special needs children in every Aboriginal child care program. Where numbers do not justify a full-time resource teacher in each community, it is critical that Aboriginal resource consultants be hired for sub-regions in each province. These resource consultants would then be responsible for providing culturally-based training for Aboriginal child care providers in caring for special needs children.
7. Awareness-raising about the importance of child care programs in overall community development should be provided to Band Councils, in the form of workshops.
8. Increased support should be provided to Aboriginal parenting skills training programs, such as the Equay-wuk parenting project in Northwestern Ontario.
9. Community-based training in proposal writing, fund-raising and program planning is needed, to enhance the capacity of Aboriginal communities to have access to government child care funding initiatives.

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