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# Exploring Your Program “Connections to Land –based Learning” Webinar Presentation

Aboriginal Head Start On Reserve (AHSOR)

October 2020





## Learning Objectives:

- Review “Exploring Your Program Series”
- Understand the benefits of Land-based Learning
- Explore the importance of Land-based Learning during these unprecedented times
- Learn tools and strategies to incorporate the Land -based Learning into your Head Start Program





Ada Mawson,  
Head Start Advisor  
Vancouver Island



Lorrie Pada  
Head Start Advisor  
Interior Region



Lynne Bomford  
Head Start Advisor  
Northern Region



Denise Lacerte  
Senior Specialist, Healthy  
Children & Youth



Tara Mclaughlin  
Head Start Advisor  
Fraser & Vancouver Coastal Regions



## Introducing our Panelists



Syexwaliya, FNHA Elder Advisor and Knowledge Keeper from Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw. Ann Whonnock



Hamolic  
Liz Williams,  
Wo'umxhl  
Simalgyex Daycare  
Manager & AHSOR  
Coordinator



Interior Regional  
Manager of  
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## COVID-19 UPDATES FROM THE First Nations Health Authority

### FNHA News and Events

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In our last webinar held in August, we spoke to the Restart Planning Toolkit. Topics covered in the webinar addressed the considerations communities may determine during the Reopening of their Program; FNHA resources; External Resources; Head Start Operations and Staffing; Delivery Models such as Developing and Implementing Outreach and Regional Training.

### Resources for Sites

Restarting Operations

[Restart Planning Toolkit: Coordinators](#)

[Restart Planning Toolkit: Leaders](#)

[Developing Outreach Kits](#)

[Implementing an Outreach Delivery Model](#)

[Staying Connected with Children & Families](#)

[Restart Planning Toolkit Presentation \(video 32:17\)](#)

[Restart Planning Toolkit Presentation Participant Handouts](#)

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# We believe...



...that children, under the guidance of Elders, will learn to love learning throughout their lifetime.

# We believe...



...that our children have a right to live proudly as First Nations people in the lands of their ancestors.

## Reviewing Exploring Your Program Series “Connections to Land- based Learning”



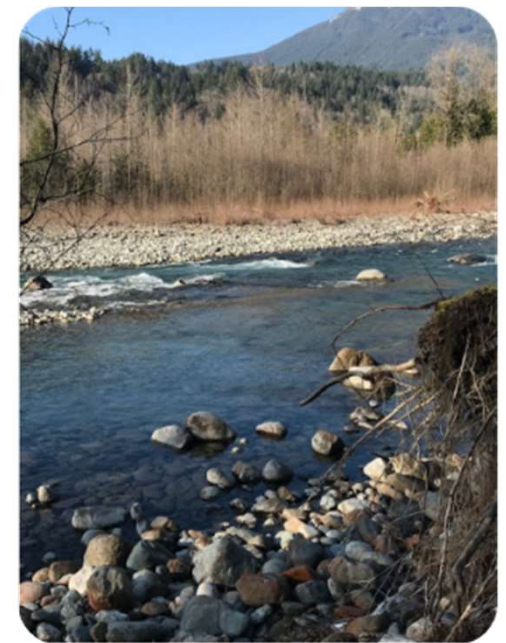
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For many generations, First Nations communities used elements such as life cycles, directions and the seasons of spring, summer, fall and winter to build and sustain their lives. Each territory varies in traditional beauty of its land, water, forests, mountains or terrains.

As communities take a closer look at their seasonal/cultural calendars and overall planning for program development, they may be searching for ways to explore new concepts. We have witnessed many communities weave the relationship of our land-based healing and teachings into their Head Start programs.

### Exploring your Program “Connections to Land -based learning”

- Getting started
- Administration- budgeting, staffing, planning, training
- Hours of operation, schedules, materials
- Building curriculum and incorporating the 6 key components
- Community Involvement



# Your journey begins here.



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## Land-based Learning and Administration

### Budget, materials and resources

- Outdoor learning is very economical. Some programs may have a “home base” which can be used as a shelter from the weather while along providing a dry/warm area. For example: a gazebo or covered structure. This area may also be used as a pick/up drop off or to hold parent meetings. Consider partnering with other departments in your community or local organizations, for items such as materials/supplies
- If you are not returning to the meeting place for snacks/lunch, consider what you may need for bagged snacks/lunches
- Staffing program ratios can be quite flexible and using parents as volunteers will make a difference
- High quality outdoor clothing, back packs, bear bells
- Items for building a dry and/or warm space. For example: tarps, ropes, blankets,
- Two-way radio, GPS
- First aid kits for each child’s backpack and for staff
- Wild plant food guidebooks with images
- Wagon for transporting items



## Program planning and development

- Look at developing policies and procedures as well as handbooks for parents and/or staff Handbooks; factor in Emergency Preparedness/Evacuation planning; create maps on where you gather
- Registration and age groups- some may choose to offer 3 or 4 yr old camps as the children are potty trained and can carry their own bags, feed themselves etc.

## Hours of Operation and Daily Schedule

- Daily schedules can be flexible and/or adapted to the needs of your community
- Consider your arrival and departure times, as these can vary
- Be flexible with drop off and pick up
- Be flexible with your enrollment, for example, part time or full time
- Consider the essential workers' schedules and how your program can accommodate their needs, for example, these families would drop off earlier and/or pick up later than the other families



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## Team building and Training Needs

- First aid, outdoor safety
- Building confidence in ability to offer the program
- Identifying poisonous plant species
- Outdoor safety
- How to identify and harvest traditional plants, foods or medicines



## Staffing Needs

- Connect with your local Child Care Licensing Officer to discuss your plan and needs
- Address human resources needs such as job descriptions, roles and responsibilities
- Identify any materials/supply needs for staff such as high quality coats, boots, hats
- Build buy-in on staffing placement, whether indoors or outdoors



## Building Land-based Curriculum

For many years, we have witnessed communities gather and develop curriculum with knowledge holders, Elders, traditional healers, community members and parents to participate in experiential learning during the planning process, providing the opportunity to offer or speak to other protocols/teachings for consideration. Such as: offerings, prayers or other honourings.

We suggest that you follow your community's protocols while promoting awareness, inclusion and belonging. This is a wonderful opportunity to engage your community, find out their talents and ask for their help. For example, other community programs may assist in designing and/or building picnic tables. Do you have community members that are interested in developing a community garden, or maybe caretaking the garden? Reach out and find your community partners and collaborate.



## The benefits of Land-based Learning

As the child is the learner, we have observed the importance of meeting them where they are at. It's about the process, not the outcome. It's about building the children's confidence as they learn through play in their natural environments.

Outdoor play supports our respect and connection to the land which is important for our mind, body and spiritual wellbeing. There are many benefits and life skills to be learned through risky play which include fostering problem solving, building resiliency and persistence just to name a few.

Land-based learning has endless possibilities, including sensory and fine/gross motor play. Introducing a child to the experience of touch, smell, listen and observation further builds upon their appreciation, while enhancing their social - emotional and spiritual wellbeing.



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**Culture and Language:** share and explore teachings of our plant foods and medicines or other traditional ways of living. Promote and inform animal awareness and safety. Invite language speakers, Elders, or knowledge holders to share their gifts and talents.

**Examples:** take a medicine walk; learn how to harvest/gather and/or preserve plants, foods and medicines. Prepare a meal using the plants gathered. Prepare a meal together/develop a recipes book. Refer to [www.firstvoices.com](http://www.firstvoices.com) to incorporate your language.

**Education:** develop and create opportunities for language/literacy skills, physical activity and motor development. Oral storytelling, songs and creation stories have been passed down for many generations. This is a great way to explore the history of our plants, medicines and wildlife while developing our relationship with the various elements of land such as the lakes, rivers and forests.

**Examples:** use of your traditional language; encourage social development and competence; use of skills such as math, science and concepts. Provide the children with small notebooks to reflect upon what the children witness and/or observe. Request families to donate/collect hides, bones for a dinosaur dig, shells for counting, rocks for telling story etc.





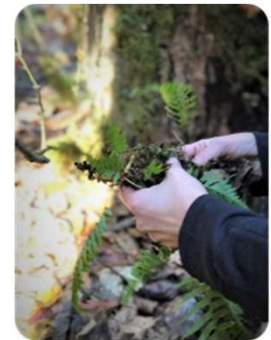
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**Health Promotion:** going on a walk/hike supports not only physical and mental wellbeing, it also assists in our spiritual wellbeing.

There are many benefits to harvesting/gathering plant medicines or wild vegetables. Promote linkages or visits from your local health providers or other specialists. Offer traditional wellness workshops and invite your families to learn through their child's development.

**Examples:** collect licorice root to prepare tea for your Elders. Gather wild Indian celery, potatoes or wild elderberries for your salad.

Bring a plant medicine book with you to identify salmon berries or a small bucket to collect berries.



**Social Support and Family Involvement:** Invite guest speakers or extend an invitation to weavers, traditional medicine holders, carvers, knitters, drum makers, artists, beaders, hunters, trappers and other traditional knowledge holders, Elders or language speakers. Consider other wellness or healing opportunities or traditional gatherings. Invite families to share their members' gifts and/or knowledge such as your favorite traditional foods, crafts, dances, art, and drumming.

**Examples:** cedar pulling; harvesting clams; tanning hides; smoking or drying food fish; collecting stones; gathering natural materials such as logs to create building blocks; weaving or beading regalia; harvesting and sharing healing medicines/teas; naming ceremonies. Share "Good News or Medicine" (post what you are doing in community newsletters, social media etc.).

**Nutrition:** share meals, snacks or recipes together such as harvested plants, deer, moose, elk, fish, clams or other traditional stews. Share teachings on harvesting, fishing, hunting and the cultural value of our traditional foods. Invite Knowledge holders such as hunters/gatherers and offer a workshop to promote awareness and exploration.

**Examples:** harvesting licorice fern— which is good for sore throats, colds or coughs. Learn how it grows all year round and how it can be collected during Winter, Fall, Spring and Summer. How to clean/prepare a fish or wild game; learn safety and ways to preserve.







## “Connections with our Plants, Foods and Medicines”

Our second series of “Exploring your Program” we learned the process of Invitation; Knowledge pathway and transformation; Building Curriculum; Working with Plant foods; Sacred Offerings; Animals; Body, Mind and Spirit.

Our BC First Nations peoples harvest a variety of plants, foods and medicines during different times of the year. Some Harvesters may only harvest the root, the leaf or bulb, while others may draw upon the whole plant for its medicinal/spiritual use. It has been told that we only take what we need as we walk softly upon the earth. We encourage you to learn about the procedures or protocols within your community.



## How to Incorporate Lessons from the Land

The land connects the Body, Mind and Spirit. The land connects us with who we are as spiritual beings and life long learners.

- It presents opportunities for what you may hear, see, touch, smell or feel.
- Explore elements such as our Earth, rocks, water, other trees, air, or metals. This may also include the cosmos such as the sun, moon, and stars.
- Incorporates all of the developmental domains such as: Spiritual; Social-Emotional; Physical and Intellectual and Well-being.
- Land-based learning has endless possibilities to feed our souls.





Education is a key Social Determinant of Health and, especially in the Early Years, and can have a major influence on the health and quality of an individual's life.

Consider how you will prepare your wellbeing prior to heading out on the land. For example: what is needed for protection, witnessing and reflection.

Similar to the use of our oral story-telling, our knowledge and values connects us to our ancestors and how much our land matters to us.



### Additional positive Outcomes

- Fostering problem solving
- Building resiliency and persistence
- Understanding consequences to action
- Developing curiosity and wonder
- Witnessing shifts in energy, perspectives, inclusion and positive behaviors



## Strong Body, Strong Mind and Strong Spirit

Our Land is “alive” and the Earth is our Mother. We have listened to our Elders and our Ancestors and ancient beings whom have provided the teachings we need to know.

We must walk together and show our children how we travel together as one. This is our time to share, encourage, learn and grow together.

Storytelling has been one of the many pathways to life's lessons, which are passed down through our Ancestors.

Knowledge was not shared through a book; rather it was shared through relationships, experiences, observations, exploration and valuable teachings or lessons.

We can observe the many living markers such as Petroglyphs, totems, food caches, root cellars and/or homes such as a pit houses.



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## Our basket and the Holistic Vision of Wellness

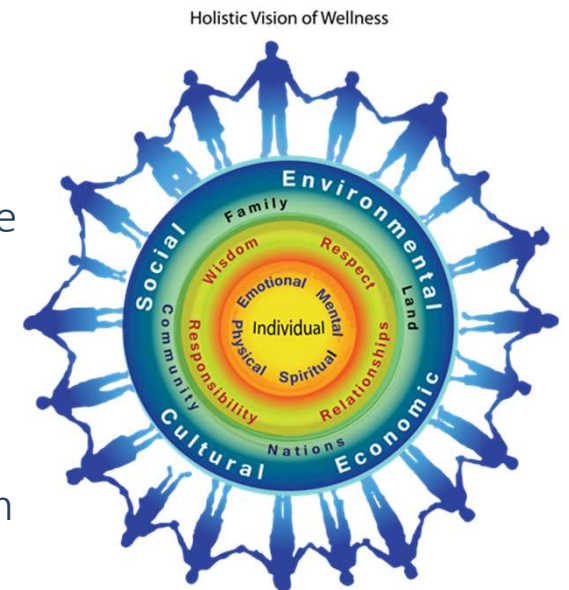
Our Elders have shared many important teachings with us. When we take a closer look within, we further connect with our highest sense of self and who we are. This includes the four teachings of our Spiritual, Emotional, Mental and Physical well –being.



The healing journey starts within, and as we build upon our tool basket we weave in our cultural teachings; our prayers, our plants medicines; our ceremonies. We may also seek support from other Healers and Knowledge keepers. It has been told that this is how we take good care and balance in the relationship between our personal power and our energy. Connect, Breathe and Balance.

We are the role models and our Children, our Elders and our Families need us for the work that we do. As we share our gifts with others, we look at the holistic vision of wellness. When we do this, we are considering our future generations to come.

After all, We are One Heart, One Mind

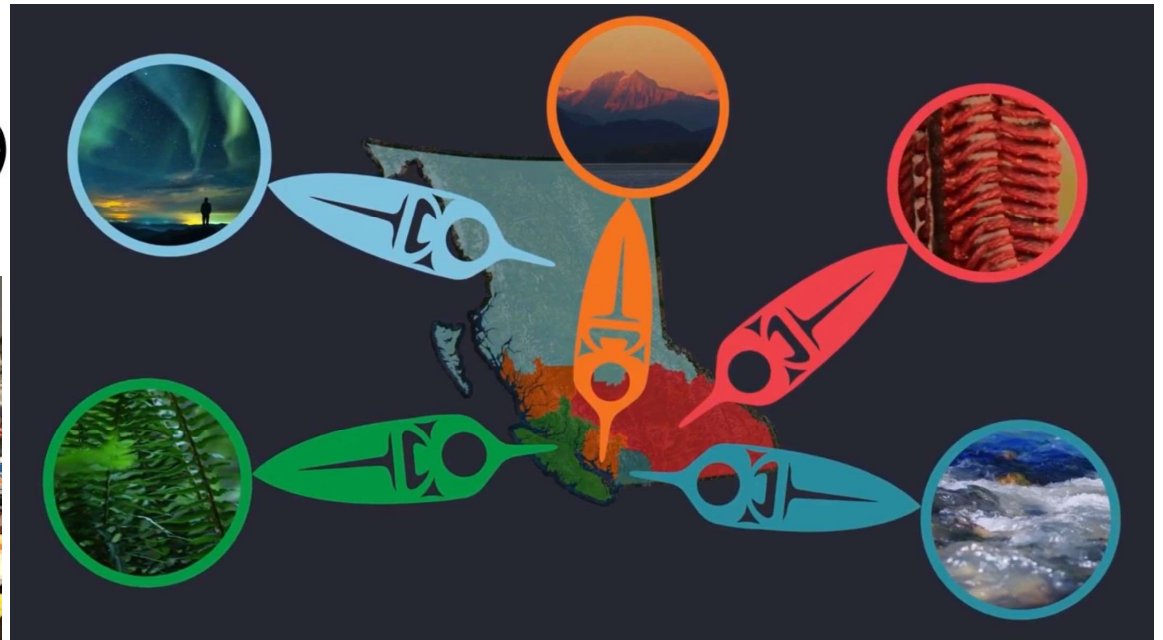


Liz Williams, Gitwangaak First Nation  
"Healing in the time of fear"



# First Nation Health Authority Head Start on- Reserve Advisors

- Training and/or workshops
- Team Building
- Administration-Budgeting, Human Resources
- Support Parent, Family and Community involvement
- Program Planning, Design and Development
- Overall Program Operations



# Panelists



Hamolic, Liz Williams



Casey Neathway



Syexwaliya, Ann Whonnock



Question for each panelist:  
What recommendations would you have for a community wanting to start a land-based program?

# Questions and Answers Box





## Resource List

Aboriginal Head Start on-Reserve

<https://www.fnha.ca/what-we-do/maternal-child-and-family-health/aboriginal-head-start-on-reserve>

“Exploring Your Program”

[Part 1: Connections to Land-based Learning](#)

[Part 2: Connections with our Plants, Foods and Medicines](#)

[Part 3: Fostering Education](#)

Traditional Food Fact Sheets

[https://www.fnha.ca/WellnessSite/WellnessDocuments/Traditional\\_Food\\_Facts\\_Sheets.pdf#search=traditional%20foods](https://www.fnha.ca/WellnessSite/WellnessDocuments/Traditional_Food_Facts_Sheets.pdf#search=traditional%20foods)

Canning Foods-your guide to successful canning

<https://www.fnha.ca/WellnessSite/WellnessDocuments/FNHA-Canning-Foods-Your-Guide-To-Successful-Canning.pdf#search=traditional%20foods>

Traditional Healing

<https://www.fnha.ca/what-we-do/traditional-healing>

First Nations Perspective on Health and Wellness

<http://www.fnha.ca/wellness/wellness-and-the-first-nations-health-authority/first-nations-perspective-on-wellness>

As I Remember It: Teachings (ʔəms taʔaw) from the Life of a Sliammon Elder

<http://publications.ravenspacepublishing.org/as-i-remember-it/index>

Supporting the Scared Journey

<https://resources.beststart.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/E31-A.pdf>



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Wild Foods and Medicines

<https://www.goodgrub.org/wild-foods/wild-foods-medicine-resources>

<https://www.wernative.org/gear/NativeInfusion%20PDF.pdf>



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BC Early Learning Framework

[https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/early-learning/teach/earlylearning/early\\_learning\\_framework.pdf](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/early-learning/teach/earlylearning/early_learning_framework.pdf)

Outdoor play Canada Risk –Benefit-Assessment Toolkit

<https://www.outdoorplaycanada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/risk-benefit-assessment-for-outdoor-play-a-canadian-toolkit.pdf>

Outdoor risky play

<https://www.earlylearningservices.com.au/2016/10/26/challenge-risk-childrens-play/>

<http://www.child-encyclopedia.com/outdoor-play/according-experts/outdoor-risky-play>

Outdoor Learning Schools

<https://www.outdoorplaycanada.ca/>

<https://www.freshairlearning.org/other-programs>

<http://www.saplingsoutdoorprogram.ca/saplingsnatureschool>

<https://muddybootprints.com/>

<https://langleyforestschool.com/>

<https://naturalstart.org/about/member-spotlight/squaxin-island-child-development-center/>

<https://childnature.ca/>

Advancing Early Childhood Education Outdoors Now

<https://eceanow.pwias.ubc.ca/>



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## Aboriginal Head Start On Reserve

