

## IMPROVING COMMUNICATION WITH INDIGENOUS STUDENTS' PARENTS

Quebec schools often have difficulty communicating with parents of Indigenous students because of cultural, linguistic and historical barriers. **Parents and relatives of Indigenous children need access to accurate information in a language they understand.**

Also, some Indigenous parents are still understandably reluctant to sign forms. It is important to take the time to explain the content to the parents, or to allow consent to be given verbally whenever possible.

In an Indigenous context, obtaining written consent (for school activities, etc.) can be complex. Who can sign authorizations? The notion of extended family implies that other people besides parents can act as parent figures. This concept is also important to keep in mind when doing activities that relate to attachment figures, such as making a Mother's Day card.

- Give parents the option of being accompanied by an **interpreter** at school meetings if they wish.
- **Ensure that messages to parents are accessible** for people with a low level of understanding of the language of instruction. Whenever necessary, communicate orally with parents to ensure that they have understood important written messages (e.g., that students must arrive early on the day of a field trip).
- **Communicate regularly with parents** through the children's agenda, as well as by email and phone. Personally invite parents to school and extracurricular activities.
- Offer to **meet with parents in a neutral location outside of the school.**
- Ensure that communication with parents is not only negative, also **praise their children's successes!**



## Elders

- Elders are highly valued and respected members of Indigenous communities. If you are hosting an Indigenous Elder at the school, make sure you understand and follow the appropriate protocol, which may vary based on the community and the situation (e.g., offer tobacco or a small gift in thanks). Also, make sure the person you are inviting to class is legitimate.
- While it is important to engage with and value the cultures of Indigenous students, care must be taken not to burden them with being the “experts” on Indigenous content or speaking on behalf of their nation or Indigenous people in general.

Click on tools to access



**TOOL 1** Map of First Nations, Inuit and affiliated Native Friendship Centres in Quebec

**TOOL 3** Resources for raising awareness about Indigenous realities

**TOOL 8** Selection of resources for the classroom

**TOOL 12** Working with an interpreter



### Turn to the Native Friendship Centres to:

- Help you develop or validate a concerted action plan to prevent and counter racism, discrimination and bullying.
- Promote job offers to encourage the hiring of Indigenous people.
- Invite Centres to take part in school events, and also participate in their events.
- Organize cultural activities.
- Connect with Elders, parents or community resource people.
- Help your school reflect on culturally safe strategies to invite and engage parents.
- Organize cultural activities at school (e.g., traditional cooking, crafts).
- Plan school projects to address coexistence issues.
- Referring parents/guardians of Indigenous students: a Friendship Centre is a gathering place for all Indigenous people in town!

## TAKE IT FURTHER



- [Aboriginal peoples Fact and Fiction](#), Book by Pierre Lepage (2019)
- [The Decolonial Toolbox: an Educational Pathway](#), by Mikana, Concordia University's Office of Community Engagement, and the Montreal Indigenous Community NETWORK (2022)
- [Laissez-nous raconter l’histoire crochie](#), Podcast by Marie-Andrée Gill (French only)
- [First Nations parental and community involvement Toolbox](#), by First Nations Education Council (FNEC)



## PART 4 -

# ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

## Roles and responsibilities of liaison officers in the public school system

The mandate of the Indigenous student support liaison officers in schools, school boards or school service centres is to support Indigenous students in their academic career so that they may be successful and remain in school. They ensure continuity of services for Indigenous students, while also promoting connections and collaboration between students and their families, the school and the community.

### Main responsibilities:

- Ensure students who arrive during the school year feel welcomed and included.
- Support Indigenous students in their school career (build a relationship of trust, allocate time to assess their needs, make sure they have access to services and support them to use these in a culturally safe manner, develop culturally adapted communication mechanisms, create a designated physical space).
- Support parents and guardians of Indigenous students in their involvement in their child's schooling (build a relationship of trust, organize information sessions, organize activities to create positive experiences at school).
- Ensure Indigenous students have access to all the services they are entitled to and may need (e.g., facilitate Jordan's Principle requests as needed).
- Show appreciation for Indigenous cultures and languages in the school.
- Raise awareness of Indigenous realities among non-Indigenous students and teachers (e.g., organize awareness and bridge-building activities, organize training sessions, hold conferences).
- Provide recommendations to school administration members to make structural changes.
- Ensure a safe, open line of communication (information and school records) between special education and regular education services for Indigenous students with a complex educational background.
- Create a firm connection between the school and the Friendship Centre. If there is no liaison officer for Indigenous students in the school, there must at least be a person designated as a contact for Indigenous families and organizations.

### Public network liaison officers must collaborate with:

- All school and after-school staff.
- The Native Friendship Centre and/or Indigenous community (at the beginning of the school year, for intervention plans or disciplinary meetings, to reach out to Indigenous families and to work toward reconciliation, to ensure access to all resources and services needed to complete students' cultural and linguistic education).
- Other schools, to support transitions and ensure optimal follow-up with students.









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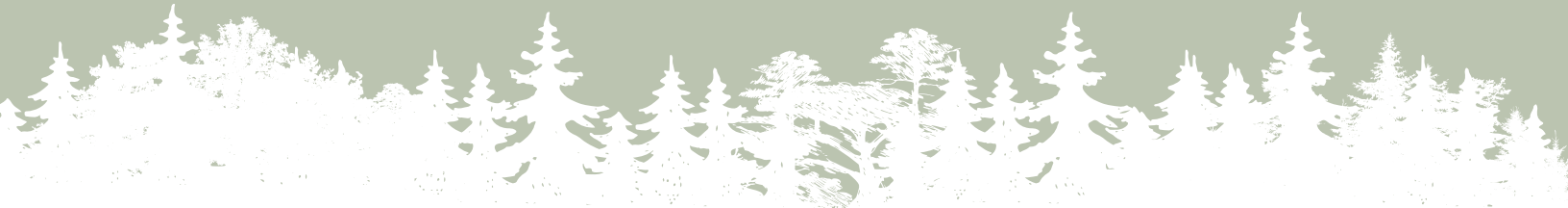
REGROUPEMENT  
DES CENTRES D'AMITIÉ  
AUTOCHTONES DU QUÉBEC

# TOOLBOX

GUIDE TO WELCOMING AND INCLUDING INDIGENOUS STUDENTS  
IN QUEBEC ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS







## TOOLBOX

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# The Native Friendship Centre Movement of Quebec



REGROUPEMENT  
DES CENTRES D'AMITIÉ  
AUTOCHTONES DU QUÉBEC



## Affiliated Friendship Centres

- |  |  |   |  |
|--|--|---|--|
|    | Chibougamau Eenoou Friendship Centre<br>☎ 418-748-7667   |    | Centre d'amitié autochtone de Lanaudière<br>☎ 450-760-3865     |
|    | Val-d'Or Native Friendship Centre<br>☎ 819-825-6857      |    | Centre d'amitié autochtone de Sept-Îles<br>☎ 418-962-9229      |
|    | Centre d'amitié autochtone de La Tuque<br>☎ 819-523-6121 |    | Native Montreal<br>☎ 514-331-6587                              |
|    | Senneterre Native Friendship Centre<br>☎ 819-737-2324    |   | Centre d'amitié autochtone de Trois-Rivières<br>☎ 819-840-6155 |
|  | Maniwaki Native Friendship Centre<br>☎ 819-892-0892      |   | Shawinigan<br>☎ 819-729-0788                                   |
|  |  |  | Centre multi-services MAMUK<br>☎ 418-476-8083                  |



Conception graphique : Suzanne Lefontaine, 2015

Affaires autochtones et du Nord Canada / Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada

## THE 11 NATIONS

- |   |                              |   |                           |   |                                    |   |                             |   |                             |
|---|------------------------------|---|---------------------------|---|------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|---|-----------------------------|
|  | ABENAKI<br>Sturgeon / Kabasa |  | ALGONQUIN<br>Bear / Makwa |  | ATIKAMEKW<br>Moose / Mos           |  | INNU<br>Porcupine / Kak     |  | MI'KMAQ<br>Salmon / Plamu   |
|   |                              |  | CREE<br>Bustard / Nesk    |  | HURON-WENDAT<br>Beaver / Tsou'tayi |  | INUIT<br>Seal / Nattiq      |  | MOHAWK<br>Wolf / Okwaho     |
|   |                              |   |                           |   |                                    |  | MALISEET<br>Turtle / Kakona |  | NASKAPI<br>Caribou / Atihkw |



# KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION

## Quebec Native Friendship Centre Movement

### Summary of Research Findings

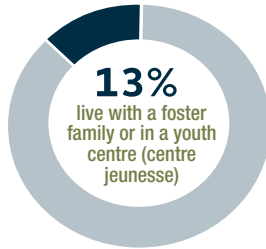
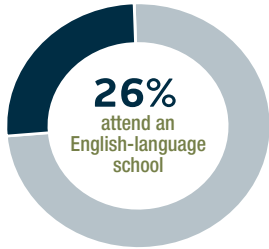
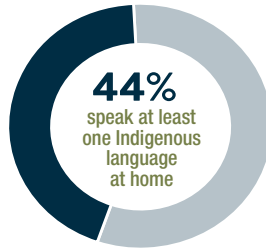
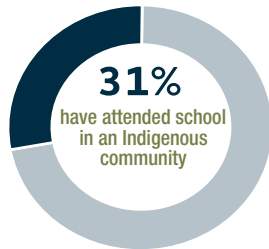


## UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORTING HARMONIOUS SCHOOL TRANSITIONS FOR INDIGENOUS YOUTH IN URBAN SETTINGS

RCAAQ-2020

### WHO ARE THE YOUTH WHO USE THE CENTERS' EDUCATIONAL SERVICES?

All the youth who use the Centres' educational services are members of one of the 10 First Nations of Quebec or of the Inuit Nation.



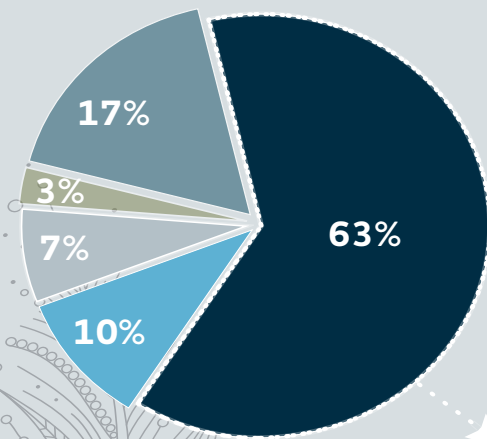
**56%**  
of the youth experienced at least one school transition beyond the usual change in cycle from elementary to secondary school.

**Nearly one-third of high school students have fallen behind in school**  
(i.e. are not classified at the grade level expected for their age).

Results generated from data collected on youth who used educational services in Native Friendship Centres during the 2018-2019 school year in seven cities (Sept-Îles, Montréal, Roberval, Joliette, Val d'Or, Trois-Rivières and Senneterre).

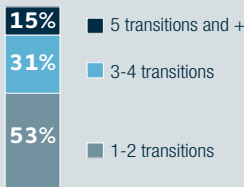
### WHAT DO THE SCHOOL TRANSITIONS LOOK LIKE?

Indigenous youth living in urban settings in Quebec experience transitions that involve changes in location, living spaces, school settings and cultural environments. School transitions are therefore more intense and complex for Indigenous youth than the usual transition from elementary to secondary school.



#### Types of Transitions

- Same community
- Same city
- Between cities
- No transition
- Community to city



#### Hypermobility of Indigenous Families

The majority (63.4%) of the people interviewed for this study experienced one or more transitions between a community and the city. Of these, more than half (53.3%) made one or two transitions, while 31% made three or four school transitions and 15% experienced five or more. There are obviously strong links between the communities and urban areas.

Results generated from data collected during interviews with Indigenous youth and their parents in five cities (Joliette, Maniwaki, Québec, Trois-Rivières and Roberval).



# KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION

## Quebec Native Friendship Centre Movement

### Summary of Research Findings



## UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORTING HARMONIOUS SCHOOL TRANSITIONS FOR INDIGENOUS YOUTH IN URBAN SETTINGS

RCAAQ-2020

### WHAT ARE THE REASONS FOR SCHOOL TRANSITIONS?

- » **Further education and schooling.** Sometimes this transition is a choice (for example, to have access to a better quality education). Sometimes, it is a necessity (for example when there is no high school in a community).
- » **Access to services and resources.** (Examples: services related to a learning disability, extracurricular activities, employment opportunities, housing).
- » **Family reasons.** (Examples: parental breakup, parents returning to school, youth's desire to live with a family member)
- » **Back-and-forth between community and city.** (Examples: temporary relocation to the city while waiting for housing in their community, desire to return to their community once their children's schooling or their own post-secondary or vocational diplomas have been completed).

The school transitions experienced by Indigenous elementary and secondary school-aged youth are inseparable from family reality and the challenges involved in moving to a new environment. The quality of a youth's transition is therefore directly linked to that of his or her family, hence the importance of offering specific services to Indigenous families in order to facilitate their transitions, and thus best support youth in their academic journey.

*"It's not just about the diploma. It's all the paths you need to take to build your identity [...] all the detours are good because it's all about learning"*

- Friendship Centre Employee (RCAAQ, 2020)

### HOW DO YOUTH EXPERIENCE THESE TRANSITIONS?

For youth and their families, a transition to an urban area means not only adapting to a new environment but also isolation from the family network. Youth often experience racism, culture shock and social isolation. Transitions also sometimes mean the loss of one's native language, an important part of culture.

In school, the educational experience of Indigenous youth is often influenced by other factors that are specific to them, and which can complicate their academic progress and daily life.

Linguistic situation

Inadequate procedures for welcoming and assessing students

Lack of knowledge of Indigenous realities by school staff

Curricula, pedagogies and institutional structures that do not take into account the specific needs and realities of Indigenous students

INDIGENOUS STUDENTS OFTEN HAVE  
**DISCONTINUOUS ACADEMIC TRAJECTORIES**  
AND **VERY LOW GRADUATION RATES.**



# KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION

## Quebec Native Friendship Centre Movement

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## UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORTING HARMONIOUS SCHOOL TRANSITIONS FOR INDIGENOUS YOUTH IN URBAN SETTINGS

RCAAQ-2020

### HOW TO SUPPORT HARMONIOUS SCHOOL TRANSITIONS?

#### In the city: raising awareness, reconciling and welcoming Indigenous newcomers

The urban environment must be welcoming and safe for Indigenous youth and their families. It is essential to work continuously to:

- Eliminate racism and discrimination;
- Raise awareness of Indigenous history and realities among public sector employees;
- Recognize and promote Indigenous cultures in the public space;
- Support activities that bring the different Peoples together in Quebec's cities and regions.

#### In the school: Providing culturally sensitive and safe educational support

For Indigenous youth attending Quebec schools, access to quality education must not depend on losing their identity and culture. Schools should:

- Incorporate Indigenous pedagogy into their teaching and make necessary curricular changes and offer academic support to Indigenous students to ensure cultural relevance;
- Review the methods used to assess and rank Indigenous students;
- Support students' acquisition of the teaching language while maintaining their Indigenous mother tongue;
- Strengthen and officialise collaboration between schools and Indigenous community organizations, such as Friendship Centres, particularly via formal agreements.

## Indigenous Pedagogy

Indigenous pedagogy is based on the following principles: learning happens through participation, experimentation and observation; authentic learning experiences are sought on the land; Indigenous Elders and knowledge keepers play an important role; the pleasure of learning and multisensory experiences are encouraged; the teacher acts primarily as a guide; and learning is focused on lifelong self-development.

#### Social and cultural factors: Supporting the families and their overall well-being

The academic trajectory of youth in transition is greatly influenced by their families' experiences, as well as by their well-being in all aspects of their life. It is therefore important to consider all the students' social, cultural, community and family contexts and to support these youth holistically to promote their school perseverance and success. It is important to:

- Foster interconnection between family, school and Indigenous community environments;
- Ensure that Indigenous families have access to culturally relevant services in the city that are provided in safe environments;
- Provide access to a community gathering space to help Indigenous youth expand their social networks, give them learning experiences that are culturally relevant and reinforce their sense of pride in their identity.



# KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION

## Quebec Native Friendship Centre Movement

### Summary of Research Findings



### UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORTING HARMONIOUS SCHOOL TRANSITIONS FOR INDIGENOUS YOUTH IN URBAN SETTINGS

RCAAQ-2020

## Ideas for action... IN SCHOOLS:

#### Creating spaces where Indigenous students come together.

Certain schools provide young Indigenous students with weekly activities and social support aimed at enhancing their identity and culture.

#### Assigning staff specifically dedicated to Indigenous students.

Certain schools have staff whose job is specifically to support Indigenous students with learning difficulties. These practitioners aim to build and maintain relationships with students, parents and the school community.

#### Creating a high-school teachers' committee for Indigenous people.

Some initiatives aim to enhance the value of Indigenous cultures in schools and the integration of Indigenous youth. For example, the Indigenous committee at the high school in Roberval is tasked with reflecting on the realities their students experience and making recommendations to the school administration.

#### Adopting an Indigenous pedagogy and

valuing Indigenous cultures. The structure of some educational institutions has been redesigned to support the transitions and educational experiences of Indigenous students. For example, Woodland High School in Maniwaki has incorporated Indigenous pedagogy into their teaching and has created space for Indigenous cultures and languages through visible recognition of the Indigenous presence in the school.

The success and effectiveness of many initiatives often depend on the involvement of one local person who is aware of the realities and needs of Indigenous students. Hence the importance of developing formal agreements with schools, to institutionalize best practices. (RCAAQ, 2020, p. 52)

Friendship Centres play a key role in the relationships that can be developed with schools. The Centres' staff work to strengthen ties with local schools with a view to supporting Indigenous children when it comes to their welcome at school, follow-ups, homework assistance, shuttle services, liaison with parents, etc.

Although sometimes these relationships take time to develop, the Centres are major allies for the schools with whom they collaborate. Centres facilitate youth's transitions from community to city and make a real difference in students' school perseverance and daily lives.



# KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION

## Quebec Native Friendship Centre Movement

### Summary of Research Findings



### UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORTING HARMONIOUS SCHOOL TRANSITIONS FOR INDIGENOUS YOUTH IN URBAN SETTINGS

RCAAQ-2020

## Ideas for action... IN FRIENDSHIP CENTRES:

**Providing culturally relevant activities and services for children and adolescents.** These activities build self-confidence and break isolation while providing youth with a safe and nurturing place where they can meet, receive support and have positive experiences.

**Provide services to support learning.** This resource is especially important because it not only provides urban Indigenous youth with academic support, but also stimulates their interest in and motivation for learning. These services also aim to strengthen youth's social identity by fostering identity-based pride and providing a culturally safe space.

**Strengthening a sense of belonging to an urban Indigenous community.** The Centres organize many family and cultural activities that foster intergenerational relationships and mutual support (cooking, studying, cultural outings, women's circles, crafts, group dinners, Indigenous language classes, etc.).

**Providing culturally relevant resources and services for parents and youth.** Whether for employment preparation programs, cultural retreats, childcare services, individual guidance (for financial assistance requests, legal proceedings, search for housing, etc.) or to facilitate access to medical and psychological services, the Native Friendship Centres in Quebec try to meet the many needs families in urban settings face on a daily basis.

MAMUK features a culturally safe space to offer their services to support learning.



The Centre d'amitié autochtone de Lanaudière has created a parents' group to enable parents to come together in solidarity, to share, to support each other in healing and to face together the challenges related to parenthood.



The Maniwaki Native Friendship Centre organizes cultural activities to strengthen youth's pride in their Indigenous identity, such as holding a drummers' group.



# KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION

## Quebec Native Friendship Centre Movement

### Summary of Research Findings



## UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORTING HARMONIOUS SCHOOL TRANSITIONS FOR INDIGENOUS YOUTH IN URBAN SETTINGS

RCAAQ-2020

### PROMISING PRACTICES OF COLLABORATION BETWEEN CENTRES AND SCHOOLS

**School liaison officers in the Native Friendship Centres.** A promising practice for collaboration is the hiring of a school liaison officer by the Centre d'amitié autochtone de Trois-Rivières and paid for by two school boards (via MEES measures). This resource works to develop relationships with the 72 schools in greater Trois-Rivières. Since being hired in the fall of 2018, this employee has been meeting with school principals to promote the importance of paying attention to the specific needs and realities of Indigenous students in their schools.

**Raising awareness of Indigenous realities among the various non-Indigenous actors.** The more knowledgeable the various urban authorities (whether academic, political, etc.) are about Indigenous realities, the better they will be able to implement measures to take more adequate action with families. For example, the Maniwaki Native Friendship Centre has offered cultural activities to all students and staff of the city's school, which introduced non-Indigenous to Anishinabeg culture while promoting the cultural heritage of Indigenous students.

**Concerted action in urban settings.** Through the *Local tables on accessibility to services for urban Indigenous people*, employees of several Centres are working to bring together frontline actors and decision-makers not only to facilitate Indigenous access to the services to which they are entitled, but also to ensure complementarity among and continuity between these services.

Native Friendship Centres provide much-needed support to both children and families to facilitate transitions. The Centres' staff members are remarkable in their sensitivity, open mindedness and listening skills. It is by paying this kind of attention to youth, to their daily concerns and emotions, that staff members build special relationships with youth and provide them with the help, support and attention they need to feel more comfortable and better equipped during the many transitions they experience. Since many Indigenous youth must transition to an urban environment to pursue their studies, participating in the Centres' activities is a holistic way to enrich their academic experience.

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research was initiated by the Regroupement des centres d'amitié autochtones du Québec (RCAAQ) and conducted in collaboration with researchers from the University of Concordia. Its objectives were to obtain overall profiles of the school transitions urban Indigenous youth experience; determine what a harmonious school transition is or could be for Indigenous parents and youth; and identify promising practices that could support Indigenous youth through their school transitions. The views of four groups were gathered: children in elementary and secondary school (in or out of school) who have experienced a school transition; their family members; Friendship Centre employees who are directly involved in educational services for youth; school representatives (principals, teachers, practitioners). 120 questionnaires, distributed in seven Native Friendship Centres, were filled out by parents or legal guardians of First Nations and Inuit youth aged 6 to 17 who attended Native Friendship Centre educational services during the 2018-2019 school year. A qualitative data collection also took place in five Friendship Centres between October 2018 and February 2019. The Native Friendship Centres that were consulted were those of Sept-Îles, Montréal, Roberval, Joliette, Val-d'Or, Trois-Rivières, Senneterre, Maniwaki and Québec.

The full research report *Understanding and Supporting Harmonious School Transitions for Indigenous Youth in Urban Settings* is available at [www.rcaaq.info](http://www.rcaaq.info), under the publications tab.

For more information on school transitions experienced by Indigenous youth in urban settings, or to discuss the support available to Centres for implementing initiatives to foster harmonious school transitions, please contact the Regroupement des Centres d'amitié autochtones du Québec.



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## RESOURCES FOR RAISING AWARENESS ABOUT INDIGENOUS REALITIES

The [Guide réflexif pour l'inclusion des perspectives autochtones dans la formation à l'enseignement](#) is a collaboration between the faculties of education of Laval University, Sherbrooke University and UQTR, under the responsibility of Annie Pilote, professor at Laval University. is a guide for reflection, designed by the Faculté des sciences de l'éducation at Université Laval, for the inclusion of First Peoples' perspectives, knowledge and realities in teacher training.

Web site : [Perspectives, savoirs et réalités des Premiers Peuples](#) (French only)

[Ashukan Stratégies](#) offers customized training to raise awareness of Indigenous issues and to equip people to work in collaboration with First Peoples.

[Mikana](#), which means “path” in Anishinabe, is an Indigenous non-profit organization whose mission is to work for social change by educating different audiences on the realities and perspectives of Indigenous peoples. Activities, training and workshops are offered for schools.

An educational program on the historical and contemporary realities of Indigenous peoples called [The Decolonial Toolbox: An Educational Pathway](#).

[The Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue \(UQAT\)](#) offers a variety of continuing education programs that address Indigenous issues.

[The Université du Québec à Chicoutimi \(UQAC\)](#) offers a series of six continuing education courses in cultural safety.

[Utapi Consultants](#) mission is to encourage people to become allies for Indigenous causes by raising awareness among the general population and professionals about Indigenous realities, from a perspective of decolonization of the mind.

[The Government of Canada's "Indigenous Learning Series"](#) provides access to resources, courses, workshops and events that will increase your cultural skills and awareness of issues related to First Nations, Métis and Inuit Peoples in Canada.





## EXAMPLES AND MODELS: FRAMEWORK, POLICY AND AGREEMENT PROTOCOL

### Reference framework for school boards

The Centre de services scolaires de l'Or-et-des-Bois has created a reference framework, [Soutenir la persévérance scolaire et la réussite éducative des élèves autochtones](#), which supports school and centre staff providing services to encourage the perseverance and educational success of Indigenous students.

### School board policies for Indigenous student self-identification

The Ontario Ministry of Education's publication [Building Bridges to Success for First Nation, Métis and Inuit Students - Developing Policies for Voluntary, Confidential Aboriginal Student Self-Identification: Successful Practices for Ontario School Boards](#) is available to assist school boards.

### Agreement protocol between a school and a Friendship Centre

It's a good practice to put in place an agreement protocol between the school and a Native Friendship Centre. Engaging partners, defining specific goals and collaborating with them are effective ways to support the educational success of Indigenous students. The Friendship Centre functions as a bridge between schools in the community and those in the city, ensuring that families are supported in this transition.

Examples can be found in the publication [Lifelong Learning: Supporting Educational Success for Aboriginal People in Urban Areas](#) from the RCAAQ.

### The action plan

The Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue (UQAT) has developed an expertise in teaching and research for, by and with Indigenous people. The [UQAT and Indigenous Peoples Action Plan](#) document is a model that places Indigenous realities at the heart of its strategic planning and the deployment of its resources.





## CHECKLIST

### FOR DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING A WELCOME AND INCLUSION PLAN

The following is a non-exhaustive list of elements to consider when you developing a welcome and inclusion plan.

- The school team has set up a **committee responsible for welcoming, including and supporting Indigenous students**.<sup>1</sup> This committee may include teachers, child care staff, professionals, the Indigenous liaison officer from the French centre de service or English school board, parents of Indigenous students and an intervener from the Friendship Centre.
- Work time is recognized** for school team members who are involved in welcoming and including Indigenous students and in follow-up with them, in proportion to their level of involvement.<sup>2</sup>
- A member of the school team is designated as the lead**, or at least the point of contact, for parents/guardians of Indigenous students. This person maintains the link with the Native Friendship Centre.
- Training sessions** for teachers and special educators are organized each year to increase their awareness of the realities of Indigenous students.
- Activities that celebrate Indigenous cultures are organized throughout the year.
- Indigenous cultures and languages, as well as the local/regional history of Indigenous Nations, are **visible** in the school.
- A progressive welcome** with parent participation has been organized for new Indigenous students during the first week of school. The Native Friendship Centre may also be involved.
- Staff scheduling is planned in such a way as to **welcome students at any time during the year**, and time is allocated for teachers to review students' school records.
- One day of the week is dedicated to welcoming new students** throughout the school year. A plan for the day has been designed and adopted by the teaching team.<sup>3</sup>
- Follow-up mechanisms** are in place to support youth in grade six who are at risk of experiencing a more difficult transition to high school, starting in April for the following year. The teams of the two schools concerned and an intervener from the Friendship Centre are involved.

<sup>1</sup> This committee should be recognized as part of the staff workload for the school year with a total number of hours allocated.

<sup>2</sup> The proportion of the workload allocated to this task will depend on the number of students. For example, in a school attended by 10 Indigenous students with an "inclusion plan," the Special Education Technician might have 10 assigned hours in their workload per cycle.

<sup>3</sup> Sample plan: tour of school with parents and Friendship Centre intervener; welcome by liaison officer; lunch with a teacher and some classmates. Integration in class the next day.





## CHECKLIST

### FOR DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING A WELCOME AND INCLUSION PLAN

- The student's **language inclusion** needs have been assessed in order to support them in learning the language of instruction, while supporting preservation of the Indigenous first language.
- Measures** are planned to ensure cultural safety for Indigenous students and to encourage learning about their culture, language and history.
- A discussion** is organized at the beginning of the school year with the Friendship Centre to build trust with the parents/guardians of Indigenous students.
- A starter kit**<sup>4</sup> with basic, plain-language information has been provided to students and/or their parents or guardians.

**The school's code of conduct and information about how the classroom works** have been explained to the students and their parents/guardians as well as to the Friendship Centre team.

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<sup>4</sup> Examples of information to include: names of students in the class, list of required school materials, information on extracurricular activities, information on daycare, school calendar, schedule, available student support services and details for a contact person should the need arise.



# RECOGNIZED PROMISING PRACTICES FOR MORE EQUITABLE ASSESSMENT OF INDIGENOUS STUDENTS

RECOGNIZED PROMISING PRACTICES	
<b>SCREENING</b>	Conduct the screening as an interdisciplinary team including the teacher
	Involve the student, family and community in screening
	Adopt a preventive approach in conducting screening
<b>CASE HISTORY</b>	Always do a case history
	Gather a variety of medical, academic, socioeconomic and family information about the student as part of a holistic approach
	Use student observation to develop the case history
	Hold an interview with the student to develop the case history
	Hold an interview with the student’s family and community to develop the case history
<b>ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES</b>	Learn about the student’s cultural and linguistic background before conducting the case history
	Use only informal procedures and approaches with Indigenous students
	Use a variety of assessment strategies
	Ensure that assessment strategies are implemented by people who share the student's language and culture
	Train the professionals who implement the assessment strategies
	Develop appropriate assessment strategies
	Use tests that are valid for Indigenous populations
	Take extra care when interpreting formal test results
	Inform the student's family of the tests used
	Use comprehensive assessment strategies
Use dynamic assessment strategies	
Use differentiated assessment strategies	
<b>CONCLUSION</b>	Share the criteria used to determine areas where difficulties exist
	Establish the conclusion or diagnosis as a team of professionals, including the teacher, and in collaboration with the parents
	Support the conclusion or diagnosis with diversified data
	Ensure that the student’s difficulties are not caused by their specific cultural or linguistic background before making a conclusion or diagnosis
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	When making recommendations, suggest collaborative ways to help students succeed
	Make use of all the data collected on the student in order to make culturally appropriate recommendations
	Make recommendations accessible to parents

Source: Borri-Anadon, C. et al. (2019). “Pour une évaluation plus équitable des besoins des élèves autochtones: une synthèse des connaissances provenant d’écrits scientifiques et de deux communautés atikamekw”. *Revue de la persévérance et de la réussite scolaires chez les Premiers Peuples*, vol. 3, p. 10–13; our translation.



## CHECKLIST

### FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF AN INTERVENTION PLAN

- Parents/guardians are **aware of, and able to exercise, their rights regarding their child's education.**<sup>1</sup>
- Parents/guardians have been given the opportunity to **involve an interpreter, a Friendship Centre intervener and/or other family members** in meetings with the school team.
- Care is taken to ensure that parents/guardians understand the information being shared with them.
- The **diagnostic tools used are adapted for Indigenous students** and the professionals involved have been provided with the necessary information to use them.
- Care is taken to ensure that the **student's assessment, diagnoses and placement** are not influenced by:
  - linguistic or cultural biases of professionals;
  - trauma or culture shock, or difficulties encountered by the student in their personal and family life.
- Care is taken to ensure that any **learning difficulties diagnosed** are not a result of difficulties in understanding the language of instruction.
- The school team is familiar with the student's **academic history**. The school previously attended by the student has transferred their files, in order to facilitate follow-up of the student's academic progress and the continuity of the services offered.
- Parents/guardians are aware of the intervention plan.**
- Regular communication is maintained with parents/guardians** to keep them informed of activities and work in progress, as well as of the progress made and difficulties encountered by their child.
- If the student is given an individualized education plan or placed in special education classes, a plan is made **to bring them back into the standard trajectory**. This plan is shared with the student and parents/guardians.
- The teaching team has received training** in cultural safety to raise their awareness of Indigenous realities.
- The student has access to support services as needed for **learning the language of instruction.**<sup>2</sup>

**It is important to ensure that parents/guardians understand that the suggestions made in their child's intervention plan are not mandatory. They can make their own suggestions, request changes or refuse them.**

<sup>1</sup> For example, they might have access to an information sheet, a personalized contact, support from a Friendship Centre liaison officer, interpreter services, etc.

<sup>2</sup> Like the *Services d'accueil et de soutien à l'apprentissage du français* (SASAF) and the *Services de soutien linguistique d'appoint en francisation* (SLAF) offered to immigrant students.



## SELECTION OF RESOURCES FOR THE CLASSROOM

### Resources related to school issues

- [Indigenous Education - The National Centre for Collaboration](#) provides educational tools for Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators teaching students and learners of all ages.
- The Musée de la civilisation offers the [First Peoples Digital Kit](#), which includes stories and educational content in a fully online format.
- TFO Media Group offers a series of education capsules named [«Les Autochtones, tu connais?»](#). They talk about the cultures and perspectives of First Nations, Inuit and Métis.
- The Val-d'Or Native Friendship Centre has created the [Gabriel Commanda Educational Kit for schools](#), intended for elementary and high school students. The initiative allows students to learn about First Peoples and raises awareness about racial discrimination.

### Resources related to language issues

- [Nikamowin](#) is a platform for discovering and listening to music by Indigenous artists.
- [Social and Emotional Learning Among Aboriginal Students](#) is a pedagogical tool created in a context of openness to the educational realities of the First Nations and Inuit of Quebec. It offers concrete ways for teachers to support their students' social and emotional learning (in 11 languages).
- The [ÉLODIL resources](#) offer several language awareness activities (preschool and elementary levels) that introduce students to linguistic diversity from an intercultural education perspective.
- [Indigenous Languages - Glossaries, Dictionaries and Writing Resources](#) from the Government of Canada provides definitions and equivalent terms in Indigenous languages, as well as useful writing tools.

If you are a professional working with Indigenous students and you would like more information or additional resources related to language issues, please contact the RCAAQ at [infos@rcaaq.info](mailto:infos@rcaaq.info).





## SELECTION OF RESOURCES FOR THE CLASSROOM

### Resources related to coexistence issues

- The [“Reconciliation: A Starting Point”](#) mobile app is a reference tool for learning about First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples, including key historical events and examples of reconciliation initiatives.
- [Radio-Canada’s Espaces autochtones](#) features podcasts for discovering music (such as [Mâmawi Musique with Moe Clark](#)) and informative content (such as Parole Autochtone with [Mélissa Mollen Dupuis](#)).
- [The First Nations Youth Literature Inventory](#) from the First Nations Education Council (FNEC) gives teachers, librarians and other education professionals easy access to children’s books written by Indigenous authors, or on topics of interest to First Nations members.
- [Social Justice Resources](#) from the British Columbia Teachers’ Federation.

### Documentaires

- *Le mur invisible*, a documentary by Laurence B. Lemaire, in which the filmmaker meets two young Atikamekw women (2021).
- *Je m’appelle Humain*, a documentary by Kim O’Bomsawin that explores the past with Innu poet Josephine Bacon (2021).
- *Trick or Treaty?* a documentary film by Alanis O’Bomsawin (2014).

### Online resource directories

- [Perspectives, savoirs et réalités des Premiers Peuples](#) is a resource directory that is a joint initiative of Université Laval, Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières and Université de Sherbrooke.
- [Nunavik-IcE](#) is an e-learning platform developed by Kativik Ilisarniliriniq. The site was created to foster the development and sharing of educational resources relevant to Nunavik communities.

Ready-to-use materials for educators are available from the [First Peoples’ Postsecondary Storytelling Exchange \(FPPSE\)](#)



## SELECTION OF RESOURCES FOR DEVELOPING PRACTICES AND POLICIES TO SUPPORT INDIGENOUS STUDENTS' EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS

- [RIRE's thematic collection on the inclusion of Indigenous students](#) offers a (non-exhaustive) overview of the educational inclusion of Indigenous students in different school levels based on articles and resources from its virtual library.
- The British Columbia Ministry of Education has created the [Aboriginal Worldviews and Perspectives in the Classroom: Moving Forward](#) project, which suggests concrete practices that teachers can adopt to help their students improve their academic performance.
- The [Creating Racism-Free Schools through Critical/Courageous Conversations on Race](#) guide has been developed by Manitoba Education and Training.
- The [British Columbia Early Learning Framework](#) is an example of First Nations inclusion in the collaborative development process.
- The [Guide to Inspiring Initiatives for the Educational Success of Aboriginal Students](#) from Quebec's Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur describes the achievements of French and English elementary schools that provide language of instruction services and support for Indigenous students.
- [Pédagogie autochtone et pédagogie du lieu: proposition d'un modèle d'enseignement autochtonisé](#) by Diane Campeau proposes a model that promotes the integration of Indigenous cultural dimensions in teaching and learning activities.
- Best Start Resource Center has developed the manual [A Child Becomes Strong: Journeying Through Each Stage of the Life Cycle](#) to provide culturally specific teachings and information on the development and education of First Nations children.



# KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION

## Quebec Native Friendship Centre Movement

Overview of the scientific knowledge on an issue



### Indigenous Languages, Bilingualism and Early Childhood

RCAAQ-2020

#### WHAT SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH TELLS US ABOUT BILINGUALISM AND INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES

Indigenous peoples in Quebec are struggling to preserve their languages, which are at the heart of their culture and identity (Taylor et al., 2008). In urban areas, the preservation and transmission of Indigenous languages is a particularly great challenge and a concern for many parents. Accurate information is key to children's parents and entourage optimally supporting their children's development. Scientific knowledge can thus guide parents and educators in making informed decisions while also considering each family's context and needs

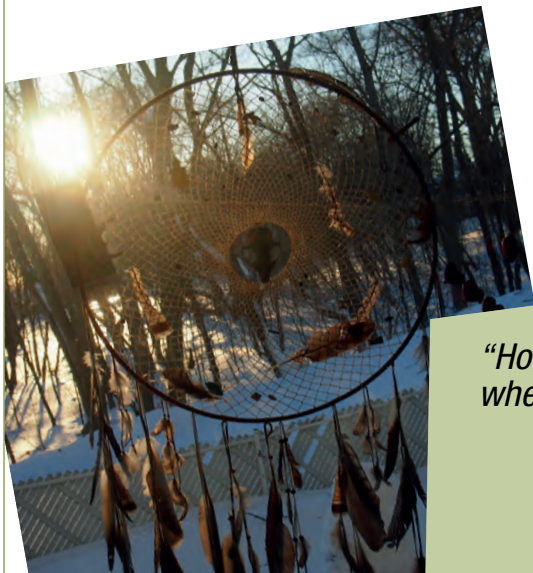
#### It is normal that children who are learning a second language:

- Mix their first and second languages in the same sentence (Davialt, 2011)
- Have fewer vocabulary words in one of the languages (when both languages are considered, bilingual children will have as much vocabulary as a unilingual child of the same age (Tupula Kabola, 2016)
- Don't know how to express a person, object or concept in one language, but are able to do so in the other language (it depends on the contexts in which they are exposed to each language)

#### WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT BILINGUALISM:

- Bilingualism does not cause language or learning problems or difficulties.
- Bilingualism will not worsen a language disorder.
- Knowledge and mastery of the parents' first language is an asset for children' optimal development and overall well-being.

*None of these observations should ever trigger a shift in the home from the mother tongue to a second language. It should always be the parents who choose which language is spoken at home.*



***“Home is practically the only place where we can speak our language.”***

*—Parent and Native Friendship Centre member*



# KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION

## Quebec Native Friendship Centre Movement

Overview of the scientific knowledge on an issue



### Indigenous Languages, Bilingualism and Early Childhood

RCAAQ-2020

#### DATA ON INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES IN QUEBEC

In general, the data from the Statistics Canada 2016 Census show that several Indigenous languages are still very much alive and in use. Approximately 70 Indigenous languages are still spoken and used in Canada.

**In Quebec**, over 40,000 people have an Indigenous mother tongue. The following table presents a comparison of the Indigenous languages in Quebec with the largest numbers of speakers.

LANGUAGE	APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF SPEAKERS	% OF THE POPULATION WHO SPEAK THE LANGUAGE IN THE NATION
<b>Cree</b>	<b>15 000</b>	<b>81%</b>
<b>Inuktitut</b>	<b>12 000</b>	<b>98%</b>
<b>Innu aimun</b>	<b>8 700</b>	<b>45%</b>
<b>Atikamekw</b>	<b>6 150</b>	<b>81%</b>
<b>Algonquin</b>	<b>1 185</b>	<b>11%</b>
<b>Naskapi</b>	<b>590</b>	<b>45%</b>
<b>Mi'kmaq</b>	<b>485</b>	<b>8%</b>
<b>Mohawk</b>	<b>365</b>	<b>2%</b>

In some nations, more than 80% of members speak and use their Indigenous language. This illustrates exceptional vitality in the Canadian context.



*“I’m so proud to speak my language [...] My identity is my language.”*

–Native Friendship Centre member

*“It’s important to keep our culture going and it’s important to try to keep our language going. It’s who we are.”*

– Native Friendship Centre staff member



# KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION

## Quebec Native Friendship Centre Movement

Overview of the scientific knowledge on an issue

### Indigenous Languages, Bilingualism and Early Childhood

RCAAQ-2020

*“To speak the language is to teach it, to make it come alive...”*

—Elder and Native Friendship Centre member

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# INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES AND NATIONS IN QUEBEC

Nation	Person's name	Hello!	Thank you!	Resources for learning words
Innus	Innu-aimun	<i>Kuei</i>	<i>Tshinashkumitin</i>	<a href="#">Innu-aimun</a>
Wolastoqiyik Wahsipekuk/Maliseet	Wolastoqey latuwewakon (Wolastoqey language)	'Qey	<i>Woliwon</i>	<a href="#">Wolastoqey</a>
Atikamekw	Itewin atikamekw	<i>Kwei</i>	<i>Mikwetc</i>	<a href="#">Atikamekw</a>
Kanien'kehá:ka/Mohawk	Kanien'kéha	<i>Shé: kon</i>	<i>Nià: wen</i>	<b>Mohawk: Speak Mohawk app (available on <a href="#">App Store</a>)</b>
Mi'gmaq/Micmacs	More recent: Mi'gmaw  Older: Elnu	<i>Gwé</i>	<i>Welalin</i>	<a href="#">Mi'gmaq</a>
Naskapis	liyuw-iyimuuun	<i>Waachiya</i>	<i>Tshi nashkumitin</i>	
Cris de l'Est Cree, Eeyou	liyyiyuymuwun	<i>Wachiya</i>	<i>Migwech</i>	<a href="#">Cree</a>
Anicinapeg/ Algonquins	Anicinapemowin	<i>Kwé</i>	<i>Mig8etc-migwetc</i>	<a href="#">Anicinapemowin</a>
Hurons-Wendat	Wendat	<i>Kwe</i>	<i>Tiawenhk</i>	<a href="#">Wendat</a>
Inuit	Inuktitut	<i>Ai</i>	<i>Nakurmik (Nunavik)</i>	<a href="#">Inuktitut</a>
Waban-Aki/Abénaquis	Aln8ba8dwaw8gan (la langue abénakise)	<i>Kwaï</i>	<i>Wliwni</i>	

Inspired by the *Secrétariat aux affaires autochtones, Quebec*

To learn more, you can visit [Indigenous Languages: Maps, Apps & Websites](#) from the Canadian Language Museum





## WORKING WITH AN INTERPRETER

For use by the school team, in order to work effectively with an interpreter when meeting with parents/guardians of Indigenous students

BEFORE INTERPRETATION	
What should you do?	Why?
Arrange the meeting space to make it less formal: for example, arrange chairs in a circle/triangle rather than having parents/guardians sit on one side of the desk.	Minimize power relationships to make parents/guardians more comfortable.
Allow more time than usual.	Everything must be said twice.
If the school has hired the interpreter, ensure that they are comfortable interpreting for the parent/guardian.	The interpreter or parents/guardians may be uncomfortable if there is a conflict of interest, a family relationship, etc.
If the school has hired the interpreter, check that the parents/guardians are comfortable with the interpreter.	
Remunerate the interpreter.	It is the responsibility of the school to provide parents/guardians with the means to understand the information shared with them.
DURING THE MEETING	
What should you do?	Why?
Be sure to speak directly to the parent/guardian, not the interpreter.	The discussion is with the parents/guardians, and a relationship of trust must be built with them.
Avoid technical language and acronyms. Give information in small amounts at a time, clearly and completely.	Sentence-by-sentence interpretation is the most reliable approach and reduces the risk that elements will be left out.
Allow parents/guardians time to absorb the information, reflect and discuss with each other as needed. Don't be afraid of silence!	The information will be better understood and discussions will be more constructive as a result.

Adapted from the [Bank of Interpreters of the Centre intégré universitaire de santé et de services sociaux de la Capitale-Nationale](#) (April 2018).



## JORDAN'S PRINCIPLE

### "ENSURING ALL FIRST NATIONS CHILDREN GET THE SERVICES THEY NEED"

#### Jordan's Principle:

- Puts the child's interests first;
- Pays for health and social services and related supports for First Nations children in situations where they would otherwise not have access to publicly funded programs.

The services offered to the child must meet the requirement of substantive equality, must be culturally appropriate and must safeguard the best interests of the child.

#### Eligibility

First Nations children who are registered (or in the process of being registered), whether they live in communities or not (on- or off-reserve). Specifically:

- Children between 0 and 17 years old;
- Parents, guardians or families in cases requiring the participation or presence of parents (family psychology follow-up, development of parenting skills, funding for housing or accommodation, etc.).

### IN SOME CASES, GROUP REQUESTS CAN BE MADE

#### How to submit a request

1. Call the Jordan's Principle Call Centre 1-855-572-4453 to get in touch with your local service coordinator;
2. Confirm the eligibility of the child or group;
3. Complete your application for services under Jordan's Principle and gather the relevant documents to support your request.





## JORDAN'S PRINCIPLE

### REQUESTS ARE ASSESSED ON A CASE-BY-CASE BASIS

#### Examples of services for children that may be covered:

- Academic advisor
- Teaching assistants
- Tutoring services
- Special education teacher
- Speech therapy
- Remedial education
- School supplies
- Assistive technologies and electronics (e.g. computer with speech synthesis, WordQ)
- Psycho-educational assessments
- Adaptations for reduced mobility

Native Friendship Centres can be important allies in making your request under Jordan's Principle. As well as having access to information about requests, Friendship Centres have an agent dedicated to supporting Indigenous parents making requests under Jordan's Principle. Contact a Friendship Centre near you for more information.

#### To find out more:

[Jordan's Principle](#) from Indigenous Services Canada

[Jordan's Principle](#) from the Assembly of First Nations

