



**MANIWAKI NATIVE
FRIENDSHIP CENTRE**
**CENTRE D'AMITIÉ
AUTOCHTONE DE MANIWAKI**



Needs Assessment

0-6 Years Old

2019

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Early Childhood Needs Assessment

IN OUR CULTURE IT IS BELIEVED THAT EVERY CHILD IS BORN WITH A GIFT.

IT IS OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO HONOUR THE WAYS OF THE CREATOR AND LAY THE FOUNDATION FOR THOSE GIFTS TO FLOURISH; AS IT WAS INTENDED.

On behalf of those we serve, the Maniwaki Friendship Centre is honoured to provide the opportunity for the voices of the people to be heard through sharing and communication. This Needs Assessment and its findings are a report of the spoken words of the people and their wishes for their children. It is also the concerns of those service providers who have a vested interest in enhancing the lives of our future and seeing the children succeed.



Definition of Key Terms

Need

A Need refers to the gap or discrepancy between a present state (what is) and a desired state (what should be).

Needs Assessment

A Needs Assessment leads to action that will improve programs, services, organizational structures and operations, or a combination of these elements.

Aboriginal

A group of people Identified as being First Nation, Metis or Inuit.

Urban Aboriginals

A group of Aboriginal people who are displaced for various reasons from their communities and living outside of that community or settlement usually in a town or urban setting.

Native Friendship Centre (NFC)

Is a centre that seeks to improve the quality of life of urban Aboriginals and promote and foster mutual understanding between peoples. NFCs are urban multi-service outlets for Aboriginals with an open door policy that welcomes First Nations, Metis and Inuit regardless of status, nation and place of origin. A Friendship Centre offers a continuum of culturally relevant and safe services in the areas of early childhood, youth, health and social services, education, training and employment.



Acknowledgement

The Maniwaki Native Friendship Centre would like to thank the grassroots people who came together to share their stories and realities while living in the town of Maniwaki. It was an honour and privilege to have the continued support and devotion of our brothers and sisters by lending their voices to make sure the gifts of the creator; who are our children; are given every opportunity to live a full and productive life. It is also important to acknowledge the efforts, collaboration and openness of the participating Maniwaki organizations to build bridges between all families. The needs and opinions of the information shared in this report are the expressed concerns identified by the people who participated in the surveys and by the front-line workers who provide those services. It is no way an answer to all what needs to happen but a start of a new approach in the creation of a better understanding. As in our oral traditions, we have come together to speak of the ways of our people and what needs to take place to make that happen. It is also where we as people learn from one another and grow as a society that values their generations to come. In the spirit of friendship, we say Kichi Migwech for all that the creator has provided us and giving the opportunity to listen, be heard and therefore understand.

Mission Statement

The Maniwaki Native Friendship Centre strives to improve the quality of life of urban aboriginals by providing support services, advocacy, information and referrals on programs and services developed for aboriginal families living or passing through the region of Maniwaki. The Centre promotes healthy living through holistic means, offers cultural activities and eases the transition to living in an urban area. It provides a link between the urban aboriginal population and the local communities by acting as a liaison and promoting cultural awareness.



Executive Summary

The Maniwaki Native Friendship has developed an action plan on outlining the needs of the urban Aboriginal people who access services in the area of early childhood development in Maniwaki. It was important to understand which clients require and access services; the type of services accessed, the geographical location and proximity of the people to these services, and what services were lacking to meet the needs of individuals and families living in the town of Maniwaki. The Needs Assessment set out to learn if people were aware of what services were available, were they able to access them and if not, what prevented them from doing so. It was equally important to gain a full understanding of the realities Aboriginal people face when accessing same or similar services for their families when living in the town of Maniwaki. The approach and methodology of gathering information had to be conducive to the people wanting and needing services as well as inclusive of the service providers who share the challenges of providing equal and quality opportunities for learning.

Purpose of a Needs Assessment

The goal of the Needs Assessment was to identify the opinion of urban aboriginal people living in Maniwaki of the services within the community, their satisfaction with services and what particular services are needed and wanted. The Needs Assessment set out to determine the level of access, barriers, opportunities for improvement, change and development and requirements to develop culturally relevant programming in the area of early childhood development. It also set out to provide service providers the opportunity to gain first hand knowledge of the challenges Aboriginal people face while raising their children outside of their communities. The primary focus of the Needs Assessment centered around early childhood education from an approach that allowed for an Aboriginal perspective. Answers from service providers were cross referenced to determine the gaps in service delivery and the families who access these services.

Methodology

The Needs Assessment was planned and carried out in several phases: preparation, field work/data collection, data analysis and reporting findings.

Tools

Questionnaires:

For each focus group: parents/grandparents, caregivers, educators, service providers. All surveys were in English and presented by a member of the Barriere Lake Community and the Friendship Centre Executive Director.

Consent forms:

For the participants to share the information.

Incentives:

Respondents were given gift certificates to participate and the opportunity to read the findings.

The method used to collect data was determined by the following factors: location where participant and service provider surveys to be delivered and completed, age, number and gender of individuals to allow for measurable findings and predetermined timelines for completion. A contingency plan was put in the place to allow participants to complete the survey independently or with the assistance of an approved surveyor in the home or office or at the Maniwaki Friendship Centre. The surveyor had to be able to speak the language of the respondents.

Needs Assessment Indicators:

- a) Place of residency;
- b) Identifying existing services and opportunities in Maniwaki for families;
- c) Language of services provided;
- d) Identifying who are the service providers and interveners, their level of training, knowledge of Aboriginals and educational values, capacity to deliver culturally relevant programming;
- e) The profile of the Aboriginal families living in the town of Maniwaki;
- f) Identify who are the clientele who would access the services, gender and age of parents, social and economic status.

Data Collection

The Maniwaki Native Friendship Centre undertook an effort to gather information on already identified Aboriginal family groups living in Maniwaki, frontline workers and service providers who interact with these families on a regular basis. A questionnaire was developed that asked open ended questions to each group. Information was gathered on 25 of the families caring or parenting children ages 0-6 years of age and living in Maniwaki. The topic of the survey was based on the access to services in this area and the challenges faced trying to access these services. The focus group exchanges were led by a team of experienced Friendship Centre staff who have previously gained the trust and rapport with the participants. The data collected was used solely for the purposes intended and with the goal in mind of determining direct needs. Staff maintained and respected participant comments and rights to voice their opinion without judgement. Information about the survey was communicated in either English or if required in the Algonquin language.

Separate questionnaires were developed for parents and service providers. Family groups comprised of single parents, extended and blended families and service providers in the area of education, social and human services. Parents were canvassed from both genders either the father or mother. The service providers are those institutions or workers that provide services to aboriginal children and families on a regular basis in English.

Chart 1

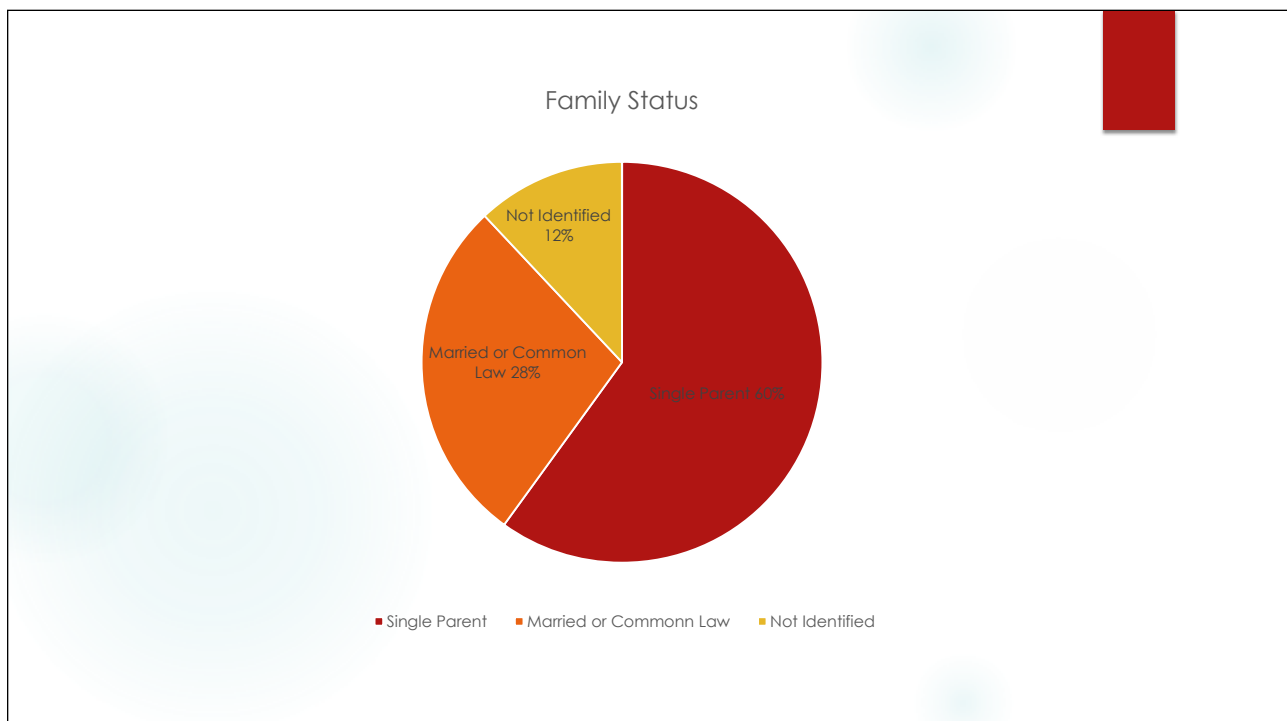


Chart 2

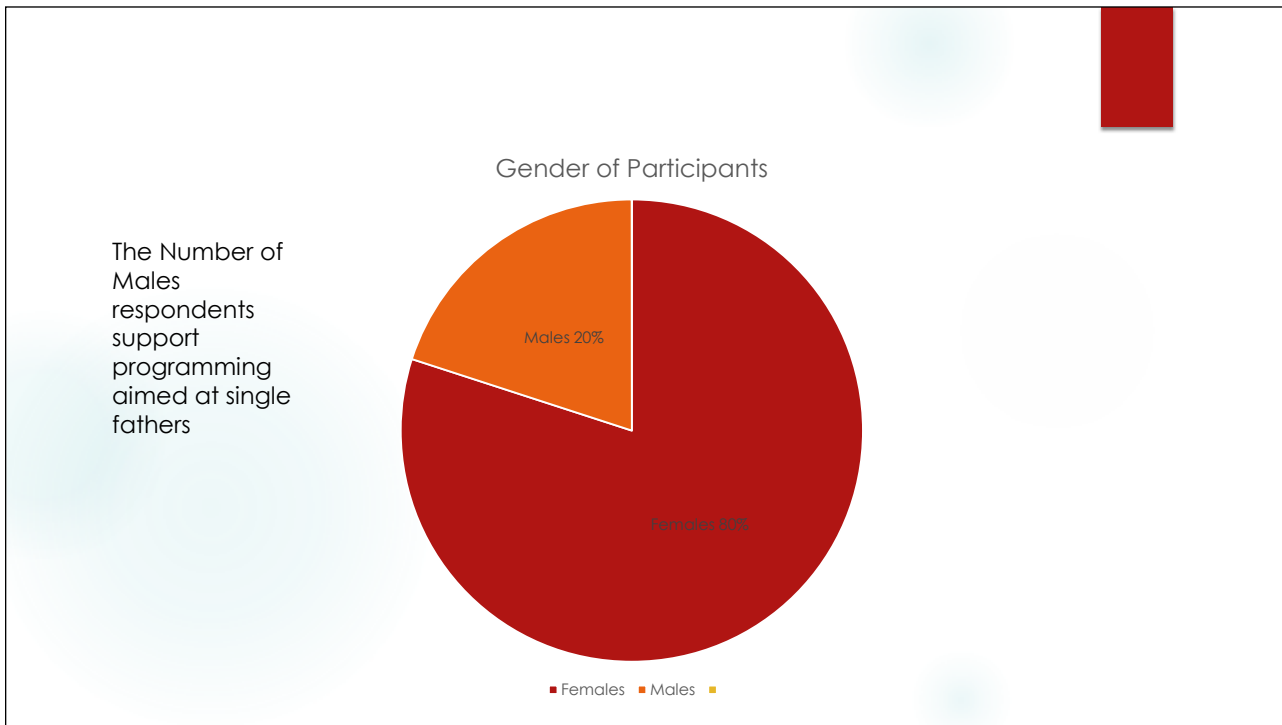


Chart 3

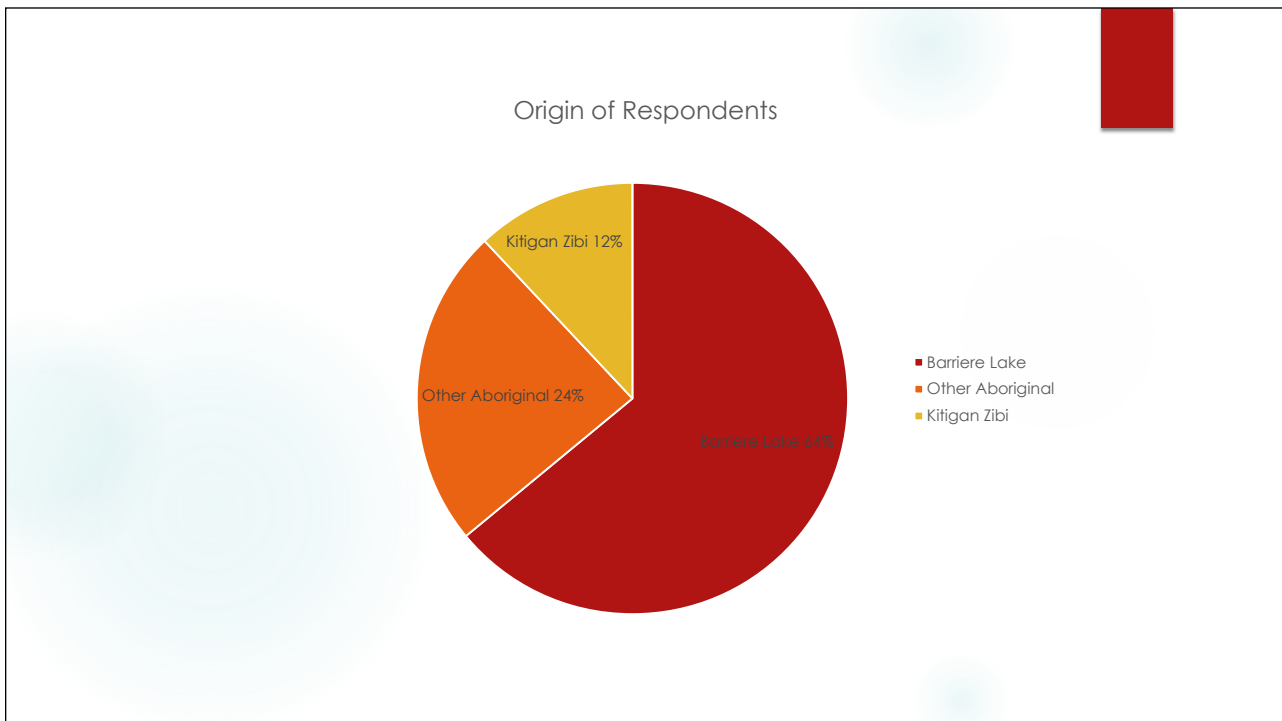


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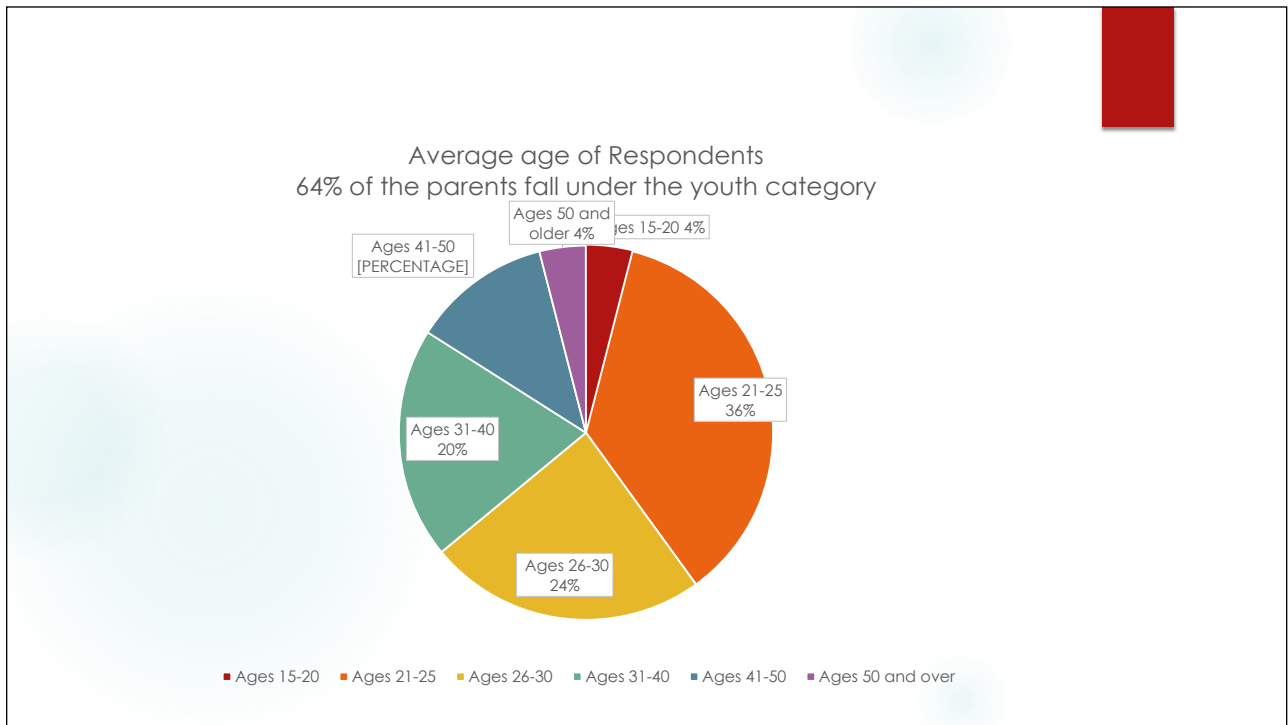


Chart 5

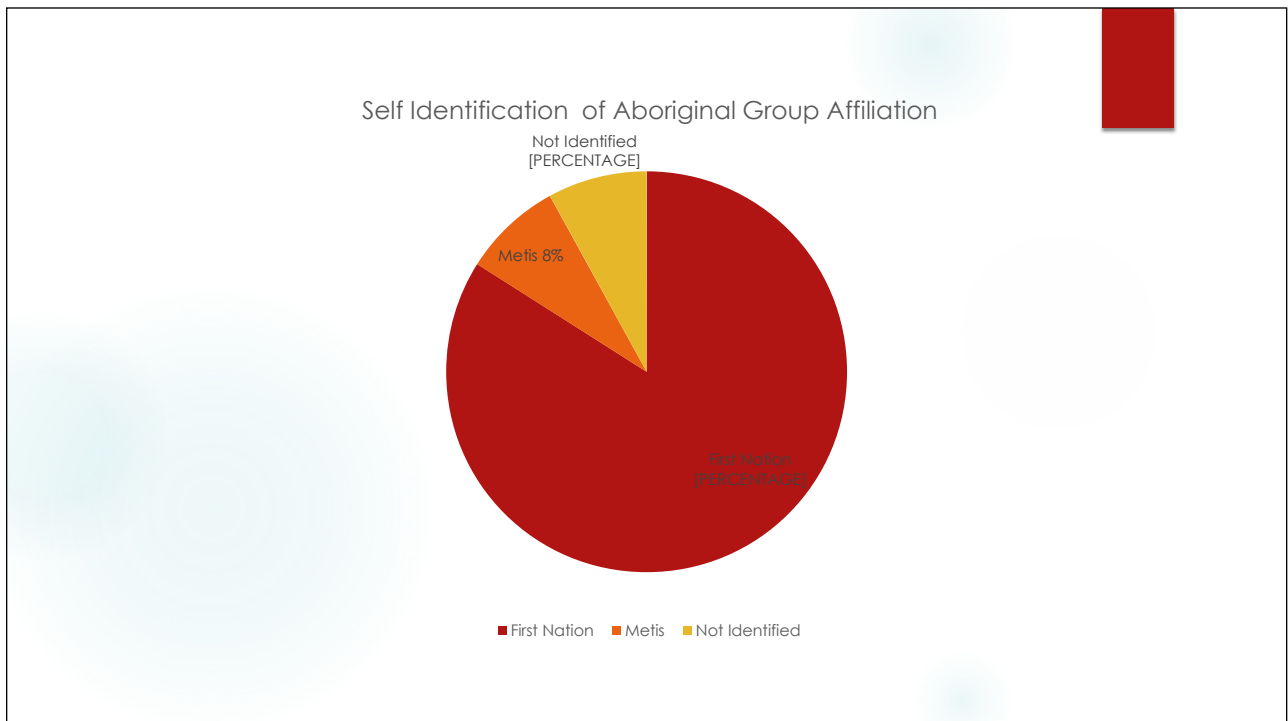
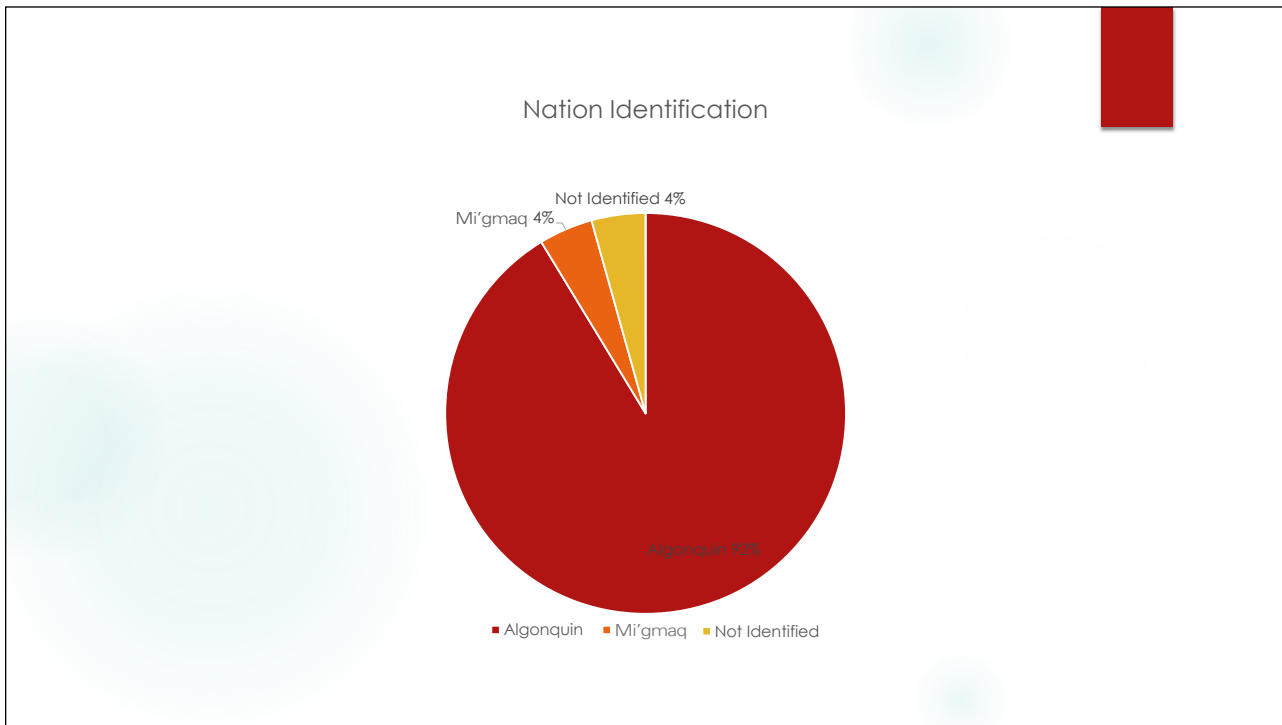


Chart 6



Results Based Assessment

The Needs Assessment was a tool used to design and create an action plan for the creation and development of a culturally relevant early childhood education program for Aboriginal children. The results were used to determine service need and type as well as service delivery methods. Data analysis was used to identify challenges faced by service providers in providing educational services to Aboriginal children ages 0-6. Data extracted also assisted in determining the language of service delivery, subject matter and frequency for scheduling purposes.

Client Benefits

- The client will benefit from a holistic approach to program planning that is client driven and services a multitude of needs;

- Program service delivery will expand to improving the overall family well being including but not limited to: a better understanding of the family dynamics; co-existing social, emotional and physical health needs and prevention;
- The delivery of the six principles of the Urban Head Start program will be facilitated and benefit directly from leadership and guidance of an already established structure and operational planning;
- The Head Start staff can learn and directly benefit from existing Maniwaki Native Friendship partnerships;
- The primary benefactors of the program are the children who will now have increased access to in a timely manner that are much needed and adapted to their realities. A different approach that may have been done in the past by various service providers. This will have a positive impact for all stakeholders and recipients of those services; We may not be able to do it all but together we can try;
- Early intervention will allow the individual child to benefit sooner from additional services provided under Jordan's Principle;
- Single parents will have an opportunity to participate in other Friendship Centre's programming due to proximity and support offered through the Head Start program;
- The Head Start program will benefit from the already existing cultural resources secured by the Maniwaki Native Friendship Centre such as language speakers and knowledge keepers who are fluent enough to understand more than one dialect and knowledgeable enough to convey important traditional knowledge and cultural practices to families;
- Employment opportunities will provide individuals with opportunities that may not have otherwise existed. For example to be bilingual with an Indigenous Language and either English or French will assist them in the work place.

Maniwaki Native Friendship Centre Benefits

- The Maniwaki Native Friendship Centre can introduce programming to target groups at an earlier stage of child development and before they go to school that will encompass a lifelong learning environment;
- The Maniwaki Native Friendship Centre can support intergenerational programming that can be cross cultural from an indigenous point of view;

- The Maniwaki Native Friendship Centre will have added benefits to increased awareness of client profiles and client needs;
- The Head Start programming will assist the Maniwaki Native Friendship Centre staff to create awareness of the services offered by creating this direct link to clients;
- Knowledge sharing and culture can be shared not only in the program but with other activities benefitting those who may not have access to culturally relevant programming;
- The Maniwaki Native Friendship Centre will benefit from secured funding that is sustainable.

Key Findings

The key findings of the major needs of the urban Aboriginal community in Maniwaki are prioritized according to short term and long term goals; essentially needs and wants and was is practicably viable to implement and acquire effective opportunities and results. The study revealed that many of the families were not aware of the services provided for early childhood and other areas for children ages 0-6 in English. Those who were aware and did wish to access services were unable to do so in English or language of their choice or were put on waiting lists with a prolonged waiting time. Prolonged waiting lists for Assessments coupled with costs and affordability caused unmet needs and interventions occurring if at all at later dates due to high volume and lack of resources. Participants wanted their children to learn from an educational institution which accepted their traditional beliefs and learning styles. Many individuals identified barriers to learning opportunities such as costs, transportation, language, location, culture differences and mutual awareness.

Service providers and Educators identified a willingness and desire to provide quality services but lacked the required resources to assist children with co-morbid needs either preventing them from adjusting in mainstream institutions and facilities or prolonging the integration of the children in their facilities. Service providers were not fully aware nor are they required to be sensitized to Aboriginal needs from diversified aboriginal cultural backgrounds.

Major findings indicate the need for early intervention and early learning opportunities that are affordable and are culturally relevant. Educators must be qualified in early childhood education and preferably have traditional knowledge to share. Participants felt that the Educators should speak English and Algonquin or French. Programming should be developed for children as early as infants and toddlers at the age before they enter school. Parents wanted the program to be culturally relevant and prepare them to learn. Most parents wanted daily programming in English. Parents also identified not knowing what services were available.

In areas of health: most children were exposed to television or a computer by the age of 6 as frequently as 2 hours per day. Most children wanted to participate in activities and exercised regularly, some however parents did not feel there was a safe place for their children to play outside. Most of the children consumed traditional foods as part of their daily diet, however also consumed processed/ non-nutritious meals. The majority of the parents relied on a food bank to provide food for their child on an occasional basis. All service providers indicated that the parents they work with relied on a food bank on a regular basis. Over half of the parents did not breastfeed their children and the majority of the parents did not expose their children to smoke or smoking in the home.

When asked about mental health issues 35% of the parents or their spouse identified having suffered from post partum depression but had access to support. 35% of the parents identified as having suffering from or suffered from other mental wellness issues such as anxiety or depression. Most children had access to a doctor and most did not see a nurse. Most parents had access to a dentist. These services were accessed in various centres either in their home community or a clinic. Some parents identified having difficulty to access medical services due to language barriers.

On the social level most families rented their homes and experienced a difficulty in finding a suitable place to rent. Some of the parents experienced prior difficulties with the law and little had current charges pending. Some parents had children currently or previously under the care of Youth Protection. Some families reported to have more than 6 people living in their home including the children. A large portion of the families that completed surveys identified as being young single parents and receiving social assistance. A large portion of the parents did not complete high school.

Chart 7

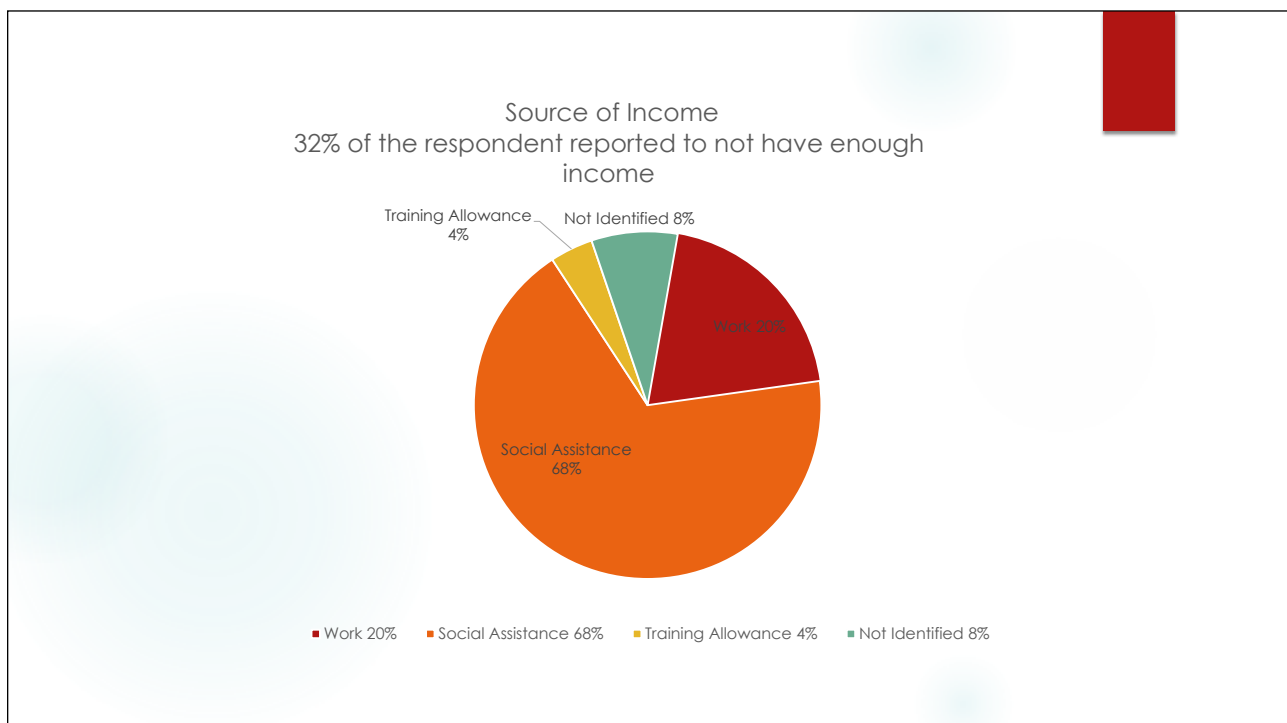


Chart 8

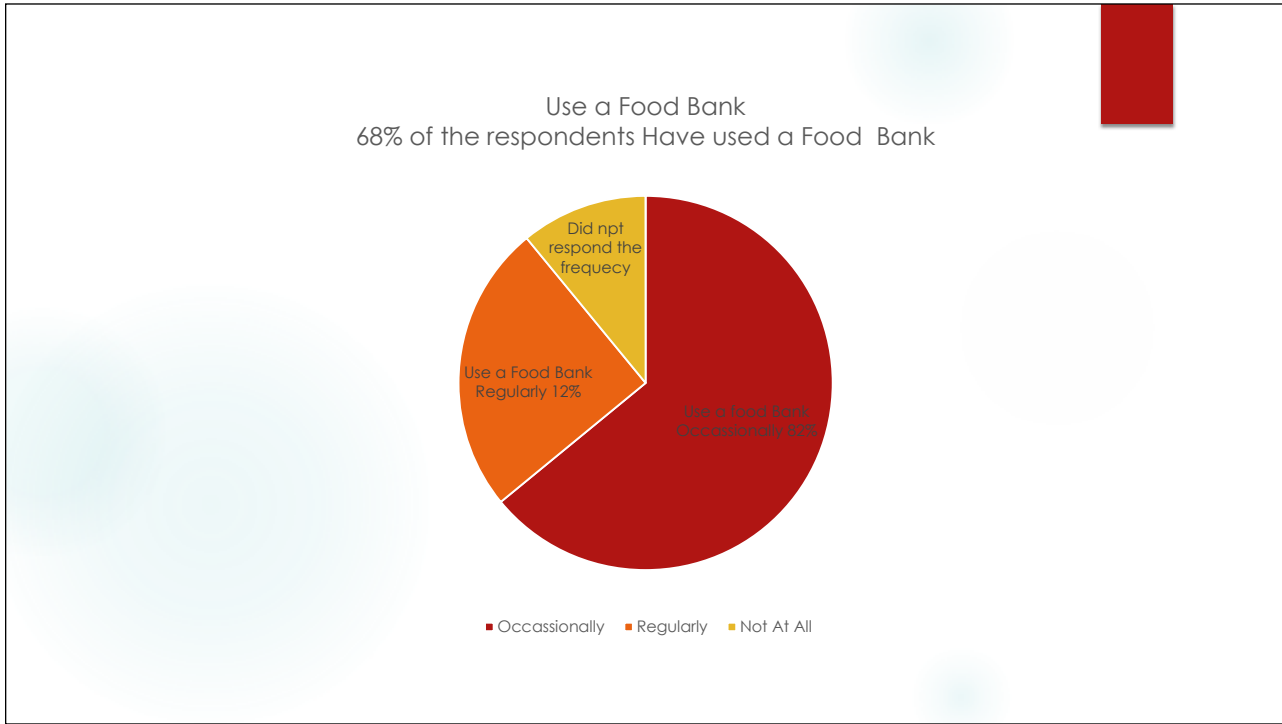
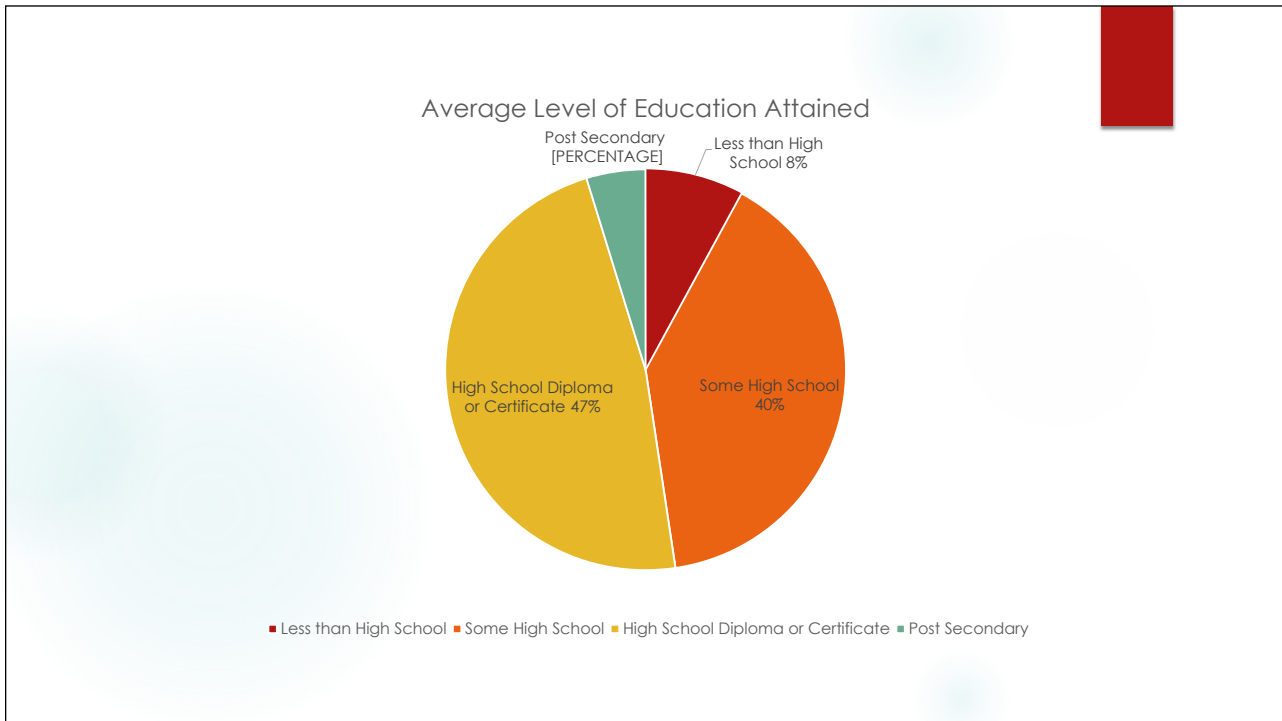


Chart 9



Physical Health Indicators: Both parents and service providers indicated that the children do not get enough physical activity or play due to safety reasons and access to a safe place to play for the children that required adequate space, supervision and access.

From an educational perspective, some families reported to have children who have issues with development or already identified learning disabilities such as speech and autism. Parents identified as not having the financial resources to pay for special services. Almost all respondents identified behavioural issues and school readiness as an area of need.

Service providers were also given the opportunity to share their thoughts on service delivery. Respondents felt that there were comorbid or multiple challenges in learning. When asked if the children were dressed appropriately for the weather - all but the school answered no. Barriers for learning included behavioural challenges, attendance, language barriers, academic support and preparedness. Service providers reported a lack of resources that prevented them from delivering the quality and level of services to meet the adequate needs of the children they serve.

When asked if the parents were knowledgeable of the services available - most answered no or the service not accessible. When asked all service providers identified that the families that they worked with were not aware of the services provided in Maniwaki or were unable to access the services due to language barriers.

In the area of program development service providers identified the need for programming that involved the parent, that was structured and involved routine. Service providers identified issues in accessing early and quick assessment in areas of occupational and speech therapy. Areas that were identified for support services were: Academic, Health, Social, Communication and Cultural programming and Awareness. Areas for programming had to take into account costs and affordability, transportation and scheduling to meet the need of the parents who access these services.



Chart 10

The Number of Children That Are Impacted by the results of this survey

- ▶ Number of Children 0-6 Years Old
- ▶ Ages 0-2: 19
- ▶ Ages 3-4: 30
- ▶ Ages 5-6: 45



All respondents to the surveys responded yes when asked if the Maniwaki Native Friendship Centre could help. All survey respondents were in support of the development of an early childhood program. More than half of the parents identified the need for daycare and/or a Head Start program and learning opportunities. The majority of the respondents indicated that programming should be or can begin part time such as half days for the younger children and full days for the older children. All respondents support daily programming. Those who respondents who had children that attended school were in support of after school program activities.

Phase 1-Preparation

A workplan and communication plan was developed by the Maniwaki Friendship Centre staff and in the English language. All surveys were prepared and reviewed by the Friendship Centre Executive Director and resource people adept in the area of early childhood education delivery. Questions were developed by individuals experienced in the field of aboriginal program development and delivery. Target groups were identified as Aboriginal parents who had children between the ages of 0-6. Answering surveys were voluntary and were to answers to be kept confidential.

Phase 2- Data Collection

Staff researched and gathered information on current services provided by Maniwaki. Staff coordinated surveys by going door to door, going to a school where children attended and the Centre Jeunesse in Maniwaki. Frontline workers from the Native Friendship centre were provided with the same survey to get feedback from them on their views. Parent respondents self identified as being First Nation or from an Aboriginal group. Surveys were reviewed with no names and addresses attached to identify the respondents. The results were cross referenced for validity and identifying commonalities!

Survey Results

Parent Surveys Delivered: 25

Parent Surveys Completed: 25

Service Provider Surveys Delivered: 9

Service provider surveys completed: 9

The target group required that 25 families, 8 service providers and 1 educational institution to be surveyed to allow for a diverse sampling.

Phase 3- Data Analysis and Findings

- Surveys completed and compilation of results
- Identification of barriers and gaps
- Self Identification of participants and volunteer efforts of stakeholders
- Identification of support required to meet identified needs
- Age and gender of participants
- General Knowledge of parents on issues of: Health, Education and childcare
- Proposed Program delivery methods and frequency
- Family dynamics-target group for service delivery
- Self Identification of participants and volunteer efforts of stakeholders

Phase 4- Report Writing

Step 1: Prepare draft version of the report

Step 2: Edit and finalize report findings

Step 3: Approval of final version and printing

Step 4: Identifying measurable results and communicating an action plan

References

- Urban Aboriginal Head Start Program from Health Canada
- Quebec Education Plan
- Centre Des Petites Enfance
- Position paper for the Regroupement des Centre Amities Autochtones
- Maniwaki Native Friendship Centre Needs Assessment

Summary of Survey Questions for Parents only

- Gender;
- Level of Education;
- Languages;
- What language do you prefer services in;
- How many children associated and identifying age groups and gender of the children;
- Where do you live;
- Who do you live with;
- How many people do you live with;
- Community of origin;
- Social Status and source of family income;
- Legal and social issues;
- Does your child attend daycare or childcare;
- What barriers if identified prevents accessing services;

- Do you know what services are available in Maniwaki;
- Do you require services of food banks;
- Does your child get physical exercise on a regular basis;
- If not what are the reasons;
- Are the children exposed to smoke, media (television and computer);
- Do your children eat meat, fruit, dairy, traditional foods;
- Did you experience postpartum depression;
- Do you or your spouse experience or have experienced mental wellness issues;
- Did you get support for this;
- Do you access medical and dental services on a regular basis;
- Does your child attend daycare;
- If not what is the reason;
- Would the Maniwaki Friendship Centre benefit from a Head Start Program;
- What should a childcare program look like;
- Who should be the educators;
- What do you want your child to learn and in what language;
- Should there be a schedule;
- What is the best time during the day and frequency of delivery;
- What age should learning begin;
- Do you know what services a daycare provides;
- Are there concerns you see with the children in school, entering school or at home;
- What are those concerns.

Summary of Questions for Service Providers and School/Educators

- Do you provide services in the following areas:
Health, Social, Childcare or other;
- How many children do you provide services to;
- In what areas do you provide services in;
- Do you know if the parents access support services;
- Do you know if parents have legal or social issues;
- Do you know if parents deal with youth protection;
- Do parents require food banks;



- Do the children get physical exercise;
- Do the children get education in the following areas: morals, values and ethics, arts and music, health education;
- Do parents participate in traditional activities and ceremonies;
- Are parents aware of the services available;
- Are there any issues in providing services to Aboriginal Children attending the institutions or that you work with ;
- Do the children have lunches on a regular basis and are these lunches nutritious;
- Are the children prepared for learning;
- Do the children experience difficulties with learning and what are those difficulties;
- Are the needs of the children met;
- What is preventing you to assist the children in their learning or are there any barriers;
- Could the Friendship Centre provide support in these areas and what are those support services.

Action Items for Consideration

Action 1: Identifying if Parents Are Aware of the Services Available

- Develop a communication plan to educate parents on what services are available in Maniwaki;
- Invite guest speakers to promote their services and create links and awareness for parents;
- Acquire parent and caregiver feedback.

Action 2: Access funding to develop culturally relevant programming

- Prepare annual operational budgets to implement quality programming and identifying core and supplementary needs;
- Identify costs associated with human resources such as staffing and recruitment of trained staff;

- Establish capital costs to meet programming needs such as: rent a building, equipment, material, maintenance, support services, possible transportation services, curriculum development.

Action 3: Establishing Governance

- Creating a terms of reference for a parent committee;
- Creating policies and guidelines;
- Creating program pamphlets outlining service schedules, missions, objectives, age and culturally appropriate educational programming;
- Creating an organizational structure that oversees operations.

Action 4: Establishing Work Environment and Commitments

- Creating work code of conduct, hiring practices, job title and descriptions, identifying employee benefits and salaries;
- Creating hours of operations, scheduling;
- Establishing and identifying second level services and needs for external or support services such as janitorial, catering, resource people, external linkages.

Action 5: Establishing Program Delivery Modules and Plans

- Creating age appropriate programming that is culturally relevant and meets the 6 components of a Head Start Program for Urban Aboriginals;
- Hours of operation, caregiver and parent interaction and communication;
- Activity based and special events;
- Celebrating important milestones and traditional practices;
- Incorporation of traditional celebrations such as dancing, arts, music, teachings;
- Establishing measurable benchmarks for child participants;
- Identify level of accommodations required to meet emotional, social, intellectual and physical needs of children;
- Creating and honouring intergenerational learning environments;
- Interacting and exposure to school readiness and preparedness;
- Supporting opportunities for parental involvement;

- Emphasizing cultural identity and citizenship;
- Creating an inclusive environment for learning opportunities that address special needs;
- Celebration of seasonal customary practices indoors and outdoors.

Action 6: Monitoring and Follow Up

- Early intervention following appropriate timelines;
- Establishing proper supervision procedures and protocols for child safety needs;
- Identifying reporting requirements and communication plans for parents, governing bodies and funding agencies;
- Identifying program and service evaluation requirements and implementation;
- Monitoring inventory controls.

Action 7: Identifying Administrative Needs

- Recruiting participants;
- Managing volunteers and staff supervision;
- Recruiting resource people;
- Managing and monitoring expenditures;
- Instilling positive work environment and organizational behaviour;
- Managing critical incidents and minimizing negative impacts;
- Understanding cultural needs and promoting awareness;
- Establishing publicity protocols and public communications;
- Creating physical environments respecting cultural realities.





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**CENTRE D'AMITIÉ
AUTOCHTONE DE MANIWAKI**



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