



FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION STEERING COMMITTEE  
FIRST NATIONS SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION

# IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE *for the* TOOLKIT

*for* FIRST NATIONS PARENTS AND FAMILIES

DRAFT FOR REVIEW AND FEEDBACK





FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION STEERING COMMITTEE  
FIRST NATIONS SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION

#113 - 100 Park Royal South, West Vancouver, BC V7T 1A2  
604-925-6087 | Toll-free in BC 1-877-422-3672

Implementation Guide for the Toolkit for First Nations Parents and Families - Draft for Review and Feedback  
Copyright © 2025, First Nations Education Steering Committee and First Nations Schools Association

# IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE *for the*

## Toolkit for First Nations Parents and Families

To support the key role of parents in the educational success of their children, the BC First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) and BC First Nations Schools Association (FNSA) have prepared a Toolkit for First Nations Parents and Families.

- ▶ That resource includes a series of short, reproducible sections that can be pulled out and shared with parents as separate papers.
- ▶ The sections could also be adapted into newsletters, shorter messages, or possibly made into presentations for families.



### Parts of the Toolkit

**PART ONE:** Appreciating the importance of parental involvement in education

**PART TWO:** Understanding parents' rights, the structure of the school system, how to build positive relationships with school staff for the benefit of students, and what to do if difficulties arise

**PART THREE:** Supporting students who have exceptionalities and special learning needs

**PART FOUR:** Creating healthy and supportive learning environments at home

**PART FIVE:** Addressing technology use and online activities to keep children and teens safe and healthy

This Guide includes ideas for sharing the information included in the Toolkit – with suggested activities that parent groups and schools can implement to build on the Toolkit and facilitate discussion.

### **Notes About the Terms Used**

**Parents, Caregivers, and Families:** For simplicity, the term “parents” is often used in this Guide. However, the suggestions could be relevant for parents, grandparents, other family members, and other caregivers.

**Types of Schools:** These activities are meant to be useful for parents whose children are enrolled in public schools, independent schools, and First Nation schools.

# CONTENTS

SUGGESTED IMPLEMENTATION APPROACHES	1
WELCOME PARENTS INTO SCHOOLS	2
HOST FAMILY LANGUAGE, CULTURE, AND ON-THE-LAND ACTIVITIES	4
PROVIDE FAMILIES INFORMATION THEY NEED	6
RECOGNIZE PARENTS	8
BEDTIME ROUTINES WITHOUT SCREENS	9
REMIND PARENTS HOW VALUABLE THEY ARE	11
ACTIVITIES TO HELP US THINK ABOUT EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS	13
CONNECTING FAMILIES AND SCHOOLS	16
BUILDING CONFIDENCE FOR MEETINGS WITH SCHOOL STAFF	17
HOST A FAMILY BOOK CLUB	20
HOST AN “ATTENDANCE BASH”	24
BULLYING PREVENTION	27
CAREER AND EDUCATION PLANNING	30
TECHNOLOGY TALKS	35
PARENTS HELPING PARENTS: CONVERSATION STARTERS	48
SOURCES USED	53

The Toolkit for First Nations Parents and Families, and this Implementation Guide has been created by the BC First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) and BC First Nations Schools Association (FNSA) to support the importance of parental involvement in education.



The First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) is committed to supporting First Nations in their efforts to improve the success of all First Nations students in BC. FNESC facilitates collaborative services related to advocacy, research, professional development, program administration, and information sharing. See [www.fnesc.ca](http://www.fnesc.ca)



The First Nations Schools Association (FNSA) has a mandate to support First Nation controlled schools in creating effective, nurturing, and linguistically and culturally appropriate education environments that provide students with a positive foundation in all academic areas. More information is available at [www.fnsa.ca](http://www.fnsa.ca).

# SUGGESTED IMPLEMENTATION APPROACHES

Parent groups and schools are encouraged to consider the ideas included in this Guide, think about what topics and activities might be relevant for families in your community, and adapt any of the suggestions to make them relevant for your context. Relationships build and evolve over time, and it is important for everyone involved to consider what is most appropriate given the current circumstances. The intended goal is supporting all families and building positive home-school connections, which have been shown to benefit students, families, and schools in innumerable ways.

*"In our community, I organized a series of Zoom sessions for parents, during which we read through each section of the Parents Toolkit together. I had pizza delivered to the parents who participated, and they could keep their cameras on or off – however they felt comfortable – as we read through the information sheets and talked about how we could use the ideas. Some parents who don't usually attend events joined us. Some parents even joined sessions from their cars if they were out. And the exciting thing is we heard feedback from students showing that people are using the information. For example, a student told us their family is sitting down for family meals more often now!"*

**Feedback from a participant in the 2023 FNEC Education Conference**

*"It might be useful to use the Parents Toolkit in staff professional development sessions. It could help our staff build our capacity for sharing information with families."*

**Input from a March 2024 Attendance Capacity Building Session for First Nation School Staff**

*"Our community hired a family engagement coordinator – a former student from our school, whose sole purpose is to connect with parents, to find out what their concerns are, what they need, and help them advocate for their children. She is young, from the community, and she knows families – so she's someone who can talk to families in a non-threatening way. Parents don't ignore her phone calls, because they know who she is."*

**Input at the 2024 Attendance Workshop for School Governing Authorities**

*"We are planning a "bring your own buddy" program. Active parents will be encouraged to bring another parent to a PAC meeting, to an event at the school .... We can bring along one person at a time."*

**Input from a November 2025 Capacity Building Session for First Nations Parents**

# WELCOME PARENTS INTO SCHOOLS

Parent gatherings don't always have to be used to share information about serious topics. Parent groups and schools can arrange fun and stress-free opportunities for parents to come into the school. Welcoming events can be a chance for parents to see their children in the school environment, and for children to see that their families feel welcome and comfortable in the school.

A few ideas. Host a ...

- ▶ “Back-to-school BBQ Bash” – help kids and families feel excited about starting a new school year
- ▶ “Monday Morning Muffins” – drop off your kids at school and stay to have a healthy muffin with the students and staff
- ▶ “Donuts with Grown-Ups” – no one objects to a treat once in awhile
- ▶ “Friday Family Fry-Bread Feast” – maybe with a bowl of soup or chili; there's nothing better to make everyone feel positive about being together

Or when cold or rainy winter weather arrives, recognize the effort of students and families to come to school in spite of the weather. Try offering a warm welcome and a warm beverage to say, “thanks for getting here; come in and warm up with a quick chat.”

Some schools that have parents drop-off kids have handed out coffees when families pulled up in front of the school to say, “good morning, it's great to see you.”



*"Host family nights and family dinners. Sit with each family. Tell them something specific you enjoy about their child, a strength. Show families you notice their child. And then ask ... 'is there anything you need from us? Anything we can do to help?'"*

**Input at the 2023 FNSA Authorized Representatives Meeting**

*"Our school is the heart of our community. If we make the school a welcoming place to be, people will come ... which is good for our students and helps them to see that everyone cares about their education. We started offering "Pot of Soup Days" at the school – bringing people into the school to enjoy a healthy meal together. That helps build a school community that is reflective of our students."*

**Input at the 2024 Attendance Workshop for School Governing Authorities**

*"Food is huge. I cook a meal every Friday and I invite families to join me. When I started, three parents came. Then more joined us over time. Parents are not always comfortable coming into the school, but if we can make a connection to parents, that builds a connection with the whole family."*

**Input at the 2024 Attendance Workshop for First Nation Schools**

*"Invite parents to every event and cultural activity you offer. When students see their families in their school, they feel school is more connected to their lives and their experiences."*

**Input at the 2024 Attendance Workshop for First Nation Schools**

*"Any food programs really build connectedness. For example, each month we host a family breakfast. Attendance is really high. Anything that brings people into the school works."*

**Input at the 2024 Attendance Workshop for First Nation Schools**

*"We bring students door-to-door to personally invite families to school events."*

**Input at the 2024 Attendance Workshop for School Governing Authorities**

# HOST FAMILY LANGUAGE, CULTURE, AND ON-THE-LAND ACTIVITIES

Parent groups, community education staff, and schools can work together to host opportunities for families to spend time on the land. Nothing is more beneficial for everyone's well-being, and it is invaluable learning for students.

## Land-based learning opportunities with families ...

- ▶ are an important part of physical, mental, social, and spiritual wellness for students and their families.
- ▶ reduce stress and anxiety.
- ▶ teach youth how to be good stewards of the land (how to hunt, fish, trap, and monitor the lands, waters, and species).
- ▶ teach youth about the importance of protecting the land and treating it with respect, as their ancestors did before them.
- ▶ are an important form of climate change action.
- ▶ bring together Elders and young people to pass on knowledge and teachings.
- ▶ address the need for culturally relevant education for youth.
- ▶ provide a safe space for healing and build resilience of families and communities.

## The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples states:

- ▶ **Article 11:** 1. Indigenous peoples have the right to practise and revitalize their cultural traditions and customs. This includes the right to maintain, protect and develop the past, present and future manifestations of their cultures such as archaeological and historical sites, artefacts, designs, ceremonies, technologies and visual and performing arts and literature.
- ▶ **Article 13:** 1. Indigenous peoples have the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures, and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places and persons.
- ▶ **Article 14:** 1. Indigenous peoples have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning.

Land-based learning activities might take place outdoors on or near the school property, or on more distant cultural landscapes or sites of significance in the territory. They might be one-day activities, or they might be overnight camps.

Other types of family language and culture activities can also be invaluable.

### What's possible?

- ▶ Holding family language lessons, providing dinner and language learning resources for families to take home, possibly with language speakers and cultural experts invited to share their knowledge.
- ▶ Hosting family regalia making nights, traditional arts and crafts sessions, a feast, a family Truth and Reconciliation Day assembly and luncheon, a National Indigenous Day celebration, etc. ... perhaps organized with or even by students!

# PROVIDE FAMILIES INFORMATION THEY NEED

*"Ultimately, the family is the first place of learning. If kids are having real struggles attending, we need to ask ourselves 'How can we get re-sources home? How can we support learning in the home?'"*

Input from a March 2024 Attendance Capacity Building Session for First Nation School Staff

- ▶ **Parent groups, community education staff, and schools can work together to bring in guest speakers on topics of interest to parents.**
  - School staff might be able to talk about education-related topics, such as school expectations, how families can help children be ready to learn ...
  - Or an expert on important issues might be brought in, such as an expert on how to help students be safe online.

- ▶ **If possible, create a family resource center, where families can access a variety of information. This could be a space in a community building or in a school. Provide comfortable chairs and parenting magazines, pamphlets from relevant support service agencies, educational games to borrow, or books to borrow and read at home. Community education staff and/or school staff can drop into the centre to chat with families and encourage their invaluable efforts to support their children, or parents can speak with each other to share their experiences and advice. Parenting isn't easy. Talking with others is an important way to help.**

*"Many people do want to be part of a circle of caring and sharing. It is easier to be an advocate and support your children when other people are supporting you."*

Input at the 2024 Attendance Capacity Building Session with First Nations Parents

- ▶ **Or perhaps leave copies of the Parent Toolkit hand-outs in places families go, so they might pick up information that is of interest to them and read it when they have time.**
- ▶ **Try sending home "Resource Bags" filled with board games, learning videos, reading materials, and suggestions for specific activities parents can do with children at home. They're very popular.**

- FNEsc and FNSA have created a guide to Fun Activities For Learning Together At Home, to share ideas for learning opportunities families can enjoy together outside of school. See [www.fnesc.ca](http://www.fnesc.ca) for a copy. You could purchase things to help parents implement the activities in the guide, which could be available for all families or for loan.



- ☐ Books and paper for building paper airplanes
- ☐ Nice notebooks and pencil crayons, gel pens, markers etc.
- ☐ Toy clocks or cardboard clocks for children to learn about time (e.g. there are fairly inexpensive writable dry erase learning clocks, clock puzzles, toy clocks ...)
- ☐ Toys and books for children to learn to tie their shoelaces (e.g. books with instructions and laces built right in ... look on the internet for all different types)
- ☐ Measuring cups and spoons
- ☐ Playing cards and board games

*“A book is a gift you can open again and again.”*

GARRISON KEILLER

- Maybe try “Books Before Breaks.” Is it possible to give a free book to each student twice a year, before the winter and summer breaks? That way, all students have something appropriate to read when they’re not in school. Families could be encouraged to exchange the books to increase students’ access to varied reading materials.



# RECOGNIZE PARENTS

*"We need to make sure families feel our genuine appreciation. They are doing their best to support their children. They are our best and most important allies."*

Input from a March 2024 Attendance Capacity Building Session for First Nation School Staff

Parent groups, community education staff, or schools can find ways to provide positive reinforcement to parents. Everyone responds well to feeling seen and recognized.

## What might work?

- ▶ Use various methods (newsletters, hand-outs ...) to share information from the Toolkit for First Nations Parents and Families – see Part One hand-outs on The Valuable Role of Parents in Student Success and The Value of Parents' Support for Schools.
- ▶ Send home thank you post-cards to a few parents each month, with simple messages like:
  - "Thanks for doing all you can to help [student] come to school."
  - "Thanks for helping [student] study for the test last week. Your help made a big difference."
  - "Thanks for helping kids get to school when they missed the bus."
- ▶ Or share appreciation gift baskets, maybe with healthy treats.

*"We visited homes and gave out gift baskets for Mother's Day. We just said 'we want to thank you for everything you do.' That is a way to start conversations, and start building relationships."*

Input at the 2023 FNSA Authorized Representatives Meeting

*"We give out raffle tickets to parents who attend parent-teacher conferences, and we make a big deal of awarding prizes."*

Input from a March 2024 Attendance Capacity Building Session for First Nation School Staff

# BEDTIME ROUTINES WITHOUT SCREENS

Why not host an evening to promote the importance of sleep and role model some mellow evening activities. Invite families to an evening of relaxing fun.

- ▶ Anyone who is comfortable can wear their pajamas and slippers, and kids can bring a favourite bedtime toy.
- ▶ Ask everyone to turn off their phones or other devices.



Quickly share a few reminders about the importance of sleep, using the hand-out from the Toolkit for First Nations Parents and Families: *The Link Between Sleep and Success in School*

- ▶ Maybe enjoy a short game of bingo – adapting the sample bingo card on the next page. What would make great prizes for the winners? How about some books of bedtime stories, books with simple meditation tips, fun toothbrushes, or gift cards for families to buy pajamas ...?
- ▶ The kids can do some light stretching and everyone can enjoy some deep breathing. There are great apps with guided meditations and soothing sounds that families can try out and consider for use at home.
- ▶ Teachers or special guests can read-out-loud their most beloved bedtime stories.
- ▶ Then families can enjoy a bedtime treat of milk and cookies, while listening to relaxing music to provide some calm at the end of a busy day.

# Bedtime Bingo

S	L	E	E	P
Sleep improves our health and well-being	Having a bath or listening to quiet music can help us feel ready for bed	More sleep = more creativity	Sleep helps us focus better	Getting adequate sleep reduces our stress and anxiety
Having a regular bedtime usually leads to better rest	Toddlers and pre-schoolers need about 11 – 12 hours of sleep each night	Getting enough sleep improves our physical health	Teens should aim for 8-9 hours of sleep each night	Most people sleep better in a cooler room
5 – 12 year olds need about 9 hours of sleep each night	Avoid caffeine in the evening to get a good night sleep	 <b>FREE SPACE</b> <b>ENJOY A GOOD NIGHT'S REST</b>	Reading before bed promotes better sleep and literacy development	For most people, more sleep means fewer mistakes during the day
Too little sleep makes us grumpy	People who get more sleep tend to have fewer accidents	When we've had enough sleep, we enjoy our daytime activities more	Keep electronics out of bedrooms to promote sleep	Over time, not getting enough sleep leads to health problems
Better sleepers are often better problem-solvers	When we sleep more, we have more energy for fun the next day!	Adults need sleep, too! We can all try to get to bed at a regular time as much as possible	Getting enough sleep helps us pay attention in school and at work	Getting to bed on time helps us get up in time the next day – helping our attendance

# REMIND PARENTS HOW VALUABLE THEY ARE

A great activity for a parent's group or school is to remind parents of their invaluable role by sharing messages on bulletin boards, in newsletters or post-cards sent to homes, or using text or social media.



Some messaging can be found in the Toolkit for First Nations Parents and Families: *The Valuable Role of Parents in Student Success* and *The Value of Parents' Support for Schools*.

Or simple messages such as the following can be shared regularly.

- ▶ “Parent involvement in education is like the frosting on a cupcake; it makes it complete and oh so sweet.”
- ▶ “Education is like a basketball team; it needs all its players: parents, school staff, community members, and students.”
- ▶ “You make a real difference for your children when you get involved in their education.
- ▶ “A child’s ideas about education and its significance begin with their family. When you show your children that school matters to you, you set them up for success.”
- ▶ “Parents are children’s first and most important teachers, and the home is a child’s first and most important classroom. We appreciate everything you do for your children and our school.”
- ▶ “Families and schools: we are better together.”
- ▶ “Student success is the priority. Working together is the strategy. Parent voice can help make schools inviting for all of our students.”
- ▶ “Families + teachers = student success.”
- ▶ “Teachers can inspire students to reach academic success. Families can inspire children to use that success to change their world.”
- ▶ “We help students do well when we believe they can succeed.

*“Unless someone like you  
cares a whole awful lot,  
nothing is going to get  
better. It’s not.”*

**DR. SEUSS, THE LORAX**

- ▶ Educational success = committed teachers + involved parents x high expectations for student achievement.”
- ▶ “Learning requires collective effort: school staff + students + families + community.”
- ▶ “What you do matters. Alone we can do a little: together we can do a lot.”
- ▶ “A player who makes a team great is more valuable than a great player. Together, schools and families make great teams.”
- ▶ “Connecting home and school makes a positive learning community.”
- ▶ “Families + school staff + community = student success.”
- ▶ “We help all of our children and youth succeed when we show them their education is important to us.”



# ACTIVITIES TO HELP US THINK ABOUT EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS

## Talk About What Parental Rights Mean

Hand-out a sheet with the following information.

### PARENTAL RIGHTS AND ALL SCHOOLS

For students attending any type of school (public, independent, or First Nation schools), parents can expect to:

- ☐ be informed about and involved in making decisions that directly affect their children, including changes in the courses or programs they are enrolled in.
- ☐ be informed of all school policies, programs, rules, and routines.
- ☐ be consulted about and provide consent before any formal assessment of their children takes place, and be informed about the results.
- ☐ have their concerns listened to, with a prompt and respectful response.
- ☐ be able to speak to school staff, such as teachers, education assistants, or the principal, when they have questions or concerns or if they need information.
- ☐ have a support person help them when meeting with school representatives, if requested.
- ☐ receive regular and understandable reports about their children's progress.
- ☐ be involved in planning and reviewing their children's Individual Education Plan (IEP), if they have one.

---

### IF YOUR CHILD ATTENDS A PUBLIC SCHOOL

The *BC School Act* sets out rules for how public schools must operate, and it states that parents are entitled to:

- ☐ be informed of their children's attendance, behaviour, and progress in school.
- ☐ receive annual reports about the general effectiveness of education programs.
- ☐ examine all records kept for their child.
- ☐ be consulted regarding the placement of children with disabilities and diverse abilities.
- ☐ be involved in the planning, development and implementation of their child's education program.
- ☐ belong to a parents' advisory council (PAC).

---

## RIGHTS TO A RACIST FREE EDUCATION

Parents and students have rights under the *Human Rights Code*.

- ❑ Schools have a responsibility to respect, protect, and fulfill the human rights of the students in their schools, including when they are on school property during the school day, on school field trips (including when they are away from school and outside of school time), and on school buses.
- ❑ Also, “Indigenous individuals, particularly children, have the right to all levels and forms of education of the State without discrimination” (United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 14.2). The provincial government passed the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (Declaration Act) into law in November 2019.
- ❑ These human rights mean that your child has the right to learn in a setting and in a way that is free from discrimination, racism, and hate speech, and you also can expect to interact with the school without experiencing racism.

---

## PRIVACY RIGHTS

All parents and students have rights to privacy.

- ❑ In Canada, all organizations are accountable for their privacy practices.
- ❑ Privacy is about organizations taking reasonable steps for collecting, using, sharing, and protecting personal information – which means information that can identify you and you might not want to be public.
- ❑ Legally, organizations have to follow appropriate privacy standards, and they must respond to complaints that may be raised.
- ❑ How organizations are following privacy laws is overseen by privacy regulators across the country.

---

## ACTIVITY

Parents can work in small groups for 15–20 minutes discussing what it looks and feels like when their rights are being recognized, and what it looks and feels like when a right is being ignored. Then discuss your ideas as a group.



More information is available in the Toolkit for First Nations Parents and Families, hand-outs on: *the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Parents' Education Rights and Responsibilities, The Rights of Families to Racist-Free Educational Opportunities, Parents' Privacy Rights, and Roles and Responsibilities of Education Personnel.*

## Thinking About Student Rights

Parent groups could listen to the following poem and talk about how it makes them feel. Students do not have to earn the right to learn. What does that mean to us? How can families help students feel empowered about their right to learn?

### MY RIGHT TO LEARN

By Robert Prouty

I do not have to earn  
The right to learn.  
It's mine.  
And if because  
Of faulty laws  
And errors of design,  
And far too many places where  
Still far too many people do not care –  
If because of all these things, and more,  
For me, the classroom door,  
With someone who can teach,  
Is still beyond my reach,  
Still out of sight,  
Those wrongs do not remove my right.

So here I am. I too  
Am one of you  
And by God's grace,  
And yours, I'll find my place.

We haven't met.  
You do not know me yet  
And so  
You don't yet know  
That there is much that I can give you in return.  
The future is my name  
And all I claim  
Is this: my right to learn.

Published in a Human Rights-Based Approach to Education for All. United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNICEF).

[https://www.right-to-education.org/sites/right-to-education.org/files/resource-attachments/A%20Human%20Rights-based%20Approach%20to%20Education%20for%20All\\_0.pdf](https://www.right-to-education.org/sites/right-to-education.org/files/resource-attachments/A%20Human%20Rights-based%20Approach%20to%20Education%20for%20All_0.pdf)

# CONNECTING FAMILIES AND SCHOOLS

- ▶ **Parent groups could ask the school principal to join an evening “Question and Answer” session with parents, or schools could host a session themselves. Provide refreshments, invite parents to attend, and have some questions ready to help get things started, such as:**
  - What is the school doing to help students feel connected to the school?
  - How does the school help students build their sense of identity?
  - How will parents receive reports about their students’ progress?
  - What is the best way to contact school staff if families have questions or need information?
- ▶ **Or a hosted evening could provide an opportunity for the principal to share the school’s policies for attendance, positive behaviour management, technology use, privacy, etc. Talk about:**
  - Are all families aware of the policies?
  - Are the policies working for families?
  - What might make them even more effective?

**Encourage parents to ask any questions they have, or just share their thoughts about the school and what would help their children learn.**

- ▶ **Another great activity for an evening discussion could involve families and school staff getting together to discuss how to help all students feel welcome, seen, and part of a community of learners. Talk about what it would look and sound like if students felt a sense of belonging. Examples ...**

- ☐ Students talk about feeling happy at school.
- ☐ Students are excited to talk to their families about fun things they did at school.
- ☐ Students are getting individualized supports when they need them.
- ☐ Students have friends at school.
- ☐ Students feel like they are valued for who they are.
- ☐ Students see their language and culture celebrated at the school.

## WHAT ELSE?

**Talk about how families and schools can work together to help students feel they belong at school.**



**See the hand-outs in the Toolkit for First Nations Parents and Families: *Helping Your Child Feel Connected to School and Helping All Children Build Friendships.***

# BUILDING CONFIDENCE FOR MEETINGS WITH SCHOOL STAFF

Are parent conferences coming up soon? Is it report card time?

Host a lunch or evening session for parents to talk about tips for meeting with school staff.



Review the relevant materials in the Toolkit for First Nations Parents and Families: *Suggestions for Meeting With School Staff, Questions To Ask At Parent Teacher Interviews, and What To Do If You Have a Concern About Your Child's Education*

- ▶ If parents are interested, practice how to feel comfortable asking and answering questions.
- ▶ Some people find role playing useful. Invite any interested parents to role play a parent-teacher conference. How can you talk about challenging issues in ways that are solution-oriented?
- ▶ Talk together about what families want teachers to know about their children and how families can convey their understandings.

You could also try the following activity.

## Stepping Outside of Our Comfort Zone

For many parents, volunteering in the school, attending school events, or meeting with school staff is not comfortable. All of us experience difficulty when we are expected to do things that are new to us or that make us uneasy.

Try this activity to explore this idea more.

- ▶ Place a hula hoop or a mat on the ground to represent the “comfort zone.” For example, attending a parent-teacher conference might not be easy for all parents.



- ▶ Have a volunteer step in the hoop or on the mat. Talk together about what might make people want to stay in the “comfort zone.” What things are challenging? What makes us worried?
- ▶ Then talk about what might help people step out of the “comfort zone.” Practice offering encouragement and suggestions to address things we find worrying. Maybe try some scenarios, such as: “imagine that your child wants to drum at school, and you aren’t sure how to ask the school to let them;” or “there is no culturally safe space at school, and I don’t know how to advocate for that;” or “the school wants to put my child on the Evergreen path, and I am not happy with the decision and I feel like I need to do something about that.” What can other parents say to help boost our confidence for approaching situations like these?
- ▶ Have the volunteer step out of the hoop or off the mat. Talk about how we feel when we step outside that space. Does it feel a bit frightening at first? That’s normal and ok. Can we also see that when we step outside of our comfort zones we are free to move around more, go further?
- ▶ What can we do when we are stuck in the “comfort zone”? How can we help our children if they like staying within their comfort zone?

Families can try this activity with their kids, to talk about how they can feel more comfortable taking risks. This can be especially important for children who have feelings of anxiety or worries. Being able to try new things is critical for their learning and lifelong well-being.

*“When we first used this activity, we felt uncomfortable at the beginning. But as we kept at it, things became better, and by the end we were all laughing friends. It situates parents as experts giving advice to other parents. We shared our first reactions – like we might come out like a mama bear. Then we talked about how that is a normal reaction. We were then able to chat about responding in the most productive way.”*

**Input from a March 2024 Attendance Capacity Building Session for First Nation School Staff**

## What's another way to use this type of activity?

Lay down a square mat as an image of “a box.” How can we step out of the box? Use out of the box thinking? How can schools and families work together in innovative ways to support the diverse and unique needs, experiences, and identities of all students – including students who have exceptionalities?

- ▶ What is keeping our thinking in the box? Do families think that school staff are sometimes in the box?
- ▶ Can families and schools step outside the box to meaningfully address First Nations students' unique identities? What about stepping outside of the box about how to engage families?
- ▶ Families know their children best! They know things that can help others “think outside the box” about their children's strengths, talents, and what will help them grow and develop. Families should share what they know.
- ▶ Families can also ask professionals for new, different, “out-of-the-box” ideas they can use to help their children succeed – because all children can succeed.

*“We found it useful to work with our School District to host one or two Parent-Teacher conferences in our community. This made many families more comfortable attending. Also, our community is isolated and it is hard for some parents to make it to town. The added benefit of hosting conferences in our community was that school staff got to experience the commute from the school to our community – which our kids do by bus twice a day!”*

**Input from a November 2024 Capacity Building Session for First Nations Parents**

*“We live quite a long drive from the school our high school students attend, so we organized a “Go As a Group” initiative. Our families went to parent-teacher conference night together – helping everyone get there, and providing each other support as we went.”*

**Input from a November 2024 Capacity Building Session for First Nations Parents**



Resources to help include the hand-outs in the Toolkit for First Nations Parents and Families: *Suggestions for Meeting With School Staff, Questions To Ask At Parent Teacher Interviews, and What To Do If You Have a Concern About Your Child's Education?*

# HOST A FAMILY BOOK CLUB

Parent volunteers or school staff could make literacy fun by hosting a book club for families. By age groups, kids can read the same book and meet in small groups with an adult volunteer (or maybe teens), who can ask questions and get kids talking. Invite any interested members of the family to come along – moms, dads, aunties, grandparents ... everyone can talk about books. Include healthy snacks and maybe share small rewards for reading the book and taking part.

*“You’re never too old, too wacky, too wild,  
to pick up a book and read to a child.”*

DR. SEUSS

## Great slogans to promote your club?

- ▶ Think Outside the Book
- ▶ Bookworms Unite
- ▶ Fiction Addiction
- ▶ Reading is Lit
- ▶ Book Club Squad
- ▶ Pages Turned: Friendships Formed

Perhaps you can have t-shirts made for book club members.

## Fun things book clubs can do together, in addition to discussing the books?

- ▶ Go on a book-themed scavenger hunt.
- ▶ Act out a scene.
- ▶ Draw yourself into the book’s story.
- ▶ Play charades using words or characters in the book.
- ▶ Make bookmarks.

A few other book club resources are shared on the following pages.

## Book Club Prompts

Put questions in a hat and let participants take turns pulling out a question. Change up the questions however you want to. Or another great activity ... have older kids lead this activity with younger kids, or ask readers to make up their own questions to put in the hat.

- ▶ If a reader doesn't want to answer the question they pick, let them pass or pick another question.
- ▶ Book club should be fun.

What's one word that sums up this book?	Name one emotion you felt when reading this book?	Which character did you like the most?	Which character did you like the least?	Did this book remind you of anything else you've read?
Did you like the ending of the book?	What part of the book did you like the most?	Would you like to read another book by this author?	What was your favourite moment in the book?	Did you learn anything new by reading the book?
Did anything in the book surprise you?	Could you relate to the characters in the book?	Will you recommend this book to a friend?	Is there anything you would like to ask the author?	If you were to illustrate this book, what would you most want to draw?

## Sample Book Club Discussion Guide

TITLE		RATING ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
GENRE <input type="checkbox"/> FICTION <input type="checkbox"/> NON-FICTION		NO. OF PAGES
DATE STARTED	DATE FINISHED	
WHAT I LIKED MOST ABOUT THE BOOK	MY FAVOURITE CHARACTER	
MY FAVOURITE PART	WHAT I COULD RELATE TO	
OTHER NOTES		

## Library Scavenger Hunt for Book Clubs

Ask the school or local library to help host a scavenger hunt.

### Can you find ...

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> A book about an animal              | <input type="checkbox"/> A book that has been made into a cartoon or movie |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A biography                         | <input type="checkbox"/> A book written by a local author                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A picture book                      | <input type="checkbox"/> A book you have read twice before                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> An atlas                            | <input type="checkbox"/> A book with no words                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A book about our community          | <input type="checkbox"/> A book with words in your language                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A book with a “z” in the title      | <input type="checkbox"/> A book about sports                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A book that is longer than 10 pages | <input type="checkbox"/> A book about science                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A book with a red cover             | <input type="checkbox"/> A book you can’t wait to read                     |



## Book Club Rules

Add some fun and humour to your club by making up rules.

1. Be kind and unwind. Let's relax and share our ideas in a happy space.
2. Make your best effort to complete the book – but come if you haven't. That's ok. Listen to others. Get inspired for your next read.
3. Comfort is key. Sit back. Bring a pillow or blanket. Wear your pajamas if you want.
4. Laughing is essential. Laughter reduces stress and spreads goodness.
5. If a book makes you want to dance ... that's ok, too.
6. Eating the snacks is optional. But really ... why wouldn't you? Who says no to snacks?
7. Everyone here is encouraged to dream. Remember ...

*“Books train your imagination  
to think big.”*

TAYLOR SWIFT

### To get the fun rolling ...

Q: Why did Dracula go to the library?

A: He wanted to sink his teeth into a good book.

Q: Why was the library so tall?

A: Because it had a lot of stories.

Q: Why is the physics book always so unhappy?

A: It has a lot of problems.

Q: How many books can you fit in an empty backpack?

A: One. After that the backpack isn't empty.

Q: What does a librarian take fishing?

A: Bookworms.

Q: When is a green book not green?

A: When it's read.

Q: Why was the encyclopedia removed from the library?

A: It couldn't control its volume.

Q: What is a car's favourite type of book?

A: Auto-biography.

# HOST AN “ATTENDANCE BASH”

- Organize a fun evening to celebrate the value of coming to school (adapted from [www.attendanceworks.com](http://www.attendanceworks.com))



Offer refreshments, and start by sharing some information from the Toolkit for First Nations Parents and Families about the importance of attendance. Talk about some of the ways parents help their children get to school.

- Then enjoy some fun activities together, which you can record and share on your school’s web site or through social media (with permission of the participants, of course). Examples ...

Ask groups of parents and/or kids to come up with fun attendance slogans. Share a few ideas to get people started. With permission, record groups sharing their slogans, and award prizes to all the participants.

A few samples to share.

- Every School Day Matters.
- Attendance Matters. Be Smart. Be There.
- Attend School. Every day. All day. All the way.
- Attend today. Achieve tomorrow.
- Bright futures begin with good school attendance.
- It’s cool to be in school
- Be an Attendance “HERO” – Here, Everyday, Ready, On-Time
- On Time: On Target for Success

- Ask groups to write a song about developing routines to help kids get to school on time. For example ... to the tune of *Row Row Row Your Boat* ...

Wake up, brush our teeth  
Then put on our clothes  
Eat some breakfast, grab our lunch  
This is how it goes

We won’t watch TV  
That will make us late  
When we catch the bus on time  
We feel really great

When we get to school  
We can learn and play  
We will try to be on time  
Each and every day

- **Purchase materials for families to create a “Routines that Rock” chart. Provide poster board, paper, colorful markers or gel pens, foam shapes, Velcro dots, glue, etc.**

Families can use the supplies to draw a chart on the poster board with three columns. They can paste Velcro dots in column 1 and 3, and write tasks in the middle, such as set alarm, organize breakfast, pack backpack, get clothes ready ...

### BEFORE SCHOOL

	TO DO	DONE
	WAKE UP <input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	BATHROOM <input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	BREAKFAST <input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	BRUSH TEETH <input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	MAKE THE BED <input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	GET DRESSED <input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	LUNCHBOX, WATER <input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	PACK/CHECK BACKPACK <input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	COMB HAIR <input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	SHOES, OUTERWEAR <input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	LET'S GO! <input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

HAVE A GREAT DAY!

Using the foam, everyone can make fun pieces to Velcro in column 1. When their child completes a task – perhaps in the evening to prepare for the next day, or in the morning – they can move the foam piece from column 1 to column 3. If they complete the chart, they can earn a small reward ... perhaps an extra bedtime story, a sticker, tickets they can collect to claim a reward ...

## Other attendance focused ideas?

- **Recognizing and celebrating parents can be an especially valuable component of attendance strategies.**
  - One community holds a parent award night at the end of each year, providing gifts and prizes to parents of students with excellent and improving attendance.
  - One school uses family attendance prizes of paper towels, laundry soap, dish soap, etc., which the parents really appreciate.
  - Meat draws as an incentive prize for families can provide a main protein for holiday meals – such as turkeys in October, hams in December ... Parents are provided a raffle ticket for each day their child is in school. In response to this initiative, a student was heard to say, “I went to school every day so I could earn my dad a chance to win a prize.”

*“The great thing about incentives that benefit the whole family is they really encourage everyone to support one another.”*

Input at a 2024 Attendance Capacity Development Session with First Nations Parents

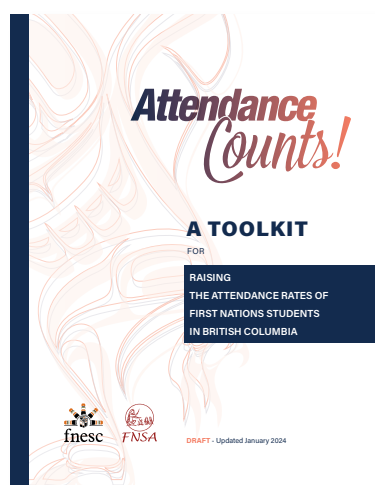
► **Involve families and the community in an attendance campaign.**

- Raise awareness by creating and putting up posters in the school and community, adding relevant articles to community newsletters, handing out mugs with attendance slogans ...
- You could organize a community-wide “attendance counts” day, handing out t-shirts with catchy slogans that everyone can wear that day.
- Attendance campaigns might be launched by inviting a special guest speaker to talk about the importance of being in school on time every day, and/or previous graduates can be invited to share how their success was increased by attending school regularly.

*“Lawn signs can be given out so families can proudly and collectively show that they are attendance champions. Creating this connection and excitement in homes will demonstrate to students that schools and families are partners.”*

Input at the 2024 Attendance Capacity Building Session with First Nations Parents

## Other Resources to Help



### ATTENDANCE COUNTS!

#### A TOOLKIT AND AN INFORMATION GUIDE FOR FAMILIES

These guides were written to share information with parents and caregivers about the very important topic of student attendance. Many First Nation parents shared their thoughts and ideas to help inform these guides.

# BULLYING PREVENTION

Some families may be interested in attending an evening session to talk about how to prevent and address bullying and cyberbullying. Parent groups might want to host an event, or a school might start a discussion about the topic once they have established positive relationships with families. Or a parent's group and school could co-host a session, trying to encourage solution-based discussions for the benefit of students.



The Toolkit for First Nations Parents and Families includes hand-outs on: *What Parents Should Know About Bullying and the Rights of Families to Racist-Free Educational Opportunities.*

- Perhaps the evening can begin with a quiz ... using paper or an online quiz tool, like Kahoot. Some questions to start your thinking ...

## Bullying Questions and Answers

---

**True or False?** “Bullying is a natural part of childhood.”

**Answer:** **False.** Bullying may be common, but it is not ok. According to [www.safecanada.ca](http://www.safecanada.ca), around one-third of Canadians have experienced bullying as a child. But abuse is not a normal part of childhood. Bullying is serious and harmful, and it can be illegal. Bullying is a human rights issue.

---

**True or False?** “Words will never hurt you.”

**Answer:** **False.** Words can hurt a lot. Words can leave deep emotional scars. The effects of bullying are immediate and long-lasting, putting children and teens who are bullied at risk for a number of physical, social and mental health problems.

---

**True or False?** “No one deserves to be bullied.”

**Answer:** **True.** No child deserves to be hurt. All children and teens should feel safe and respected.

---

---

**True or False?** “Bullying hurts all young people.”

**Answer:** **True.** Children who are bullied can suffer mental health impacts, decreased school attendance, low self-esteem, and other physical and social problems. Children who bully are learning to use power and aggression to control and victimize other children. They may suffer from guilt or internal conflict, and if their behaviour is not addressed, they risk a lifetime of difficult relationships with others. All children involved in bullying – those who are bullied, those who bully others, and those who watch bullying – need support to promote healthy development, positive relationships, and to protect their welfare.

---

**True or False?** “Telling a teacher about bullying is ‘tattling.’”

**Answer:** **False.** Children need to know the difference between ‘tattling’ and ‘telling.’ Tattling is meant to get *someone* in trouble; telling is meant to protect someone. Secrecy allows bullying to continue.

---

**True or False?** “Children and youth who are bullied don’t always tell an adult.”

**Answer:** **True.** Young people may not report bullying because they fear retaliation. They also may fear that adults won’t take their concerns seriously, or will make the situation worse. Families should work with schools to teach students how to report bullying, and set up processes for reporting safely.

---

**True or False?** “Ignoring bullying will make it go away.”

**Answer:** **False.** Ignoring the problem will not make it go away. In fact, it may make the situation worse, because it sends a message that nothing will be done. Adult intervention is usually needed to stop bullying – and it is our responsibility to step in. By promoting healthy relationships, we can prevent bullying and support children and youth in developing strong interpersonal skills, understanding and respect, and social responsibility.

---

**True or False?** “Most children and youth who observe bullying want to get involved.”

**Answer:** **True.** The good news is that most children and youth think that bullying is “not cool” and feel that they should do something if they see it happen.

---

**True or False?** “Cyberbullying rarely starts before middle school.”

**Answer:** **False.** Cyberbullying can begin as soon as kids have access to a cell phone, tablet device, or computer. If children are too young to access social media, it can happen through texting or gaming. There is potential for cyberbullying whenever kids are using technology to interact, especially when they do so unsupervised.

---

---

**True or False?** “Cyberbullying is less harmful because it doesn’t happen face-to-face.”

**Answer:** **False.** Cyberbullying can be very hurtful because it’s public, it spreads quickly, and it’s ongoing. The Internet does not turn off.

---

Families can talk about how they can help prevent bullying, and how they can work with schools to keep First Nation students safe and supported. If relevant, school staff can also be invited to join in the discussions to talk about the school’s anti-bullying policies and procedures, and strategize how everyone can work together to create school settings in which all students feel respected and valued.

# CAREER AND EDUCATION PLANNING

*"Our community hired a primary and a secondary graduation coach. They work with our students who attend public schools to help them create a pathway to their goals. We want them to know that they have someone on their side who can advocate for them. They help students connect to training coordinators and post-secondary coordinators. We need to make sure kids aren't falling through the cracks. Our kids need relationships and consistent support."*

Input at a November 2024  
Session for First Nations  
Parents

- ▶ Host a "Planning and Pizza Night" with families, creating "vision boards" together. Provide poster board or large sheets of paper, images, scissors, glue, coloured markers, maybe glitter .... Families can talk together while their children post images, write words, draw pictures, etc. that show their hopes for their futures -- providing a great opportunity for important dialogue.

Schools could also use this activity to build "school connect-  
edness." School staff could circulate through the room, learning about students' dreams and providing encouragement and suggestions for pursuing their goals.

- ▶ Bring in a guest speaker or a few role models to talk about their career journeys. What helped get them where they are today? Did they take a direct route to their goals, or were there some twists and turns along the way? What helped keep them going if they felt they had taken a wrong turn? Everyone benefits from learning that it is ok to make a misstep and try again sometimes.
- ▶ Host a "meet and greet" with the community education staff who are responsible for post-secondary education. This will allow for information sharing about the supports and funding available for students who want to pursue more education after grade 12.
- ▶ Order career-related books and host a reading night with parents. Parents can read with their children or in groups. Or older students can read to families. Some ideas?
  - *Miss Dorothy and Her Book Mobile*. Gloria Houston
  - *A Teacher Like You*. Frank Murphy and Barbara Dan
  - *The Berenstain Bears Hospital Friends*. Mike Berenstain



- *What Do People Do All Day?* Richard Scarry.
- *What Color Is Your Parachute for Teens.*

Or you can ask your school to recommend other titles your families will enjoy.

- **Host a group tour of a post-secondary institute. Even younger children might be inspired by a fun trip to a campus. Or find out if a post-secondary institute can send someone to your community as a guest speaker for families.**

*"Parents are the key. They have the most influence over students now, and they will have the most influence throughout their lives. So we have started taking parents to tour post-secondary institutions. We want to help parents see the opportunities that are available to their children and teens. We talk about how they can help their kids get to post-secondary – including the importance of attendance. The parents come back from the tours inspired to encourage their kids to graduate and move on to post-secondary. Schools need to help families see the value of education."*

**Input at the 2023 FNSEA Authorized Representatives Meeting**

- **Host an evening session to help students – with families – talk about financial literacy, post-secondary funding and budgeting.**
- **Host an evening to discuss post-secondary requirements and grade 11 and 12 course selections. See attached hand-out to help.**

*"Parents need the same information as our kids. We need to be on the same path together. School staff need to meet with students and families so we can get the same information and be on the career planning journey together."*

**Input at a November 2024 Session for First Nations Parents**



**The Toolkit for First Nations Parents and Families also includes hand-outs on: *What To Know About Choosing Courses?* and *Helping Your Children Become Career Ready.***

# HANDOUT

## What Families Should Know About Graduation Options

Students who attend BC public schools, and most students who attend First Nation schools, can complete high school with one of the following credentials.

- ▶ The Dogwood Diploma (British Columbia Certificate of Graduation)
- ▶ The Adult Dogwood Diploma (British Columbia Adult Graduation Diploma)
- ▶ The Evergreen Certificate (the British Columbia School Completion Certificate)

**The majority of school age students should graduate with the Dogwood Diploma.**

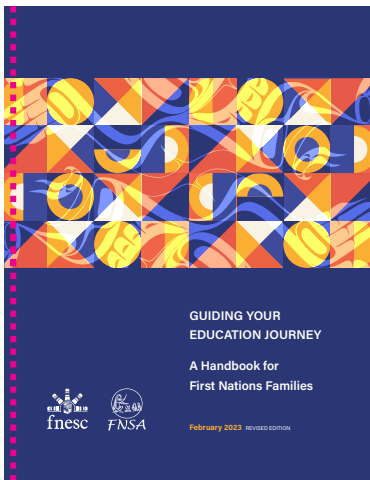
**If a school age student is not on a path to graduate with the Dogwood Diploma, that decision should be discussed immediately with the student and their family.**

Dogwood Diploma	Adult Dogwood Diploma	Evergreen Certificate
Requires minimum 80 credits (typically 20 x 4-credit courses) from grades 10 to 12.	Is not intended for school-age students.	Is not a graduation certificate.
Requires 4 credits of Indigenous focused coursework.	Students must be <i>at least 18 years old</i> to begin pursuing an Adult Dogwood.	Is meant to celebrate the achievement of students who are unable to complete the Dogwood, but who have completed personal goals that will allow them to transition to meaningful options after grade 12.
Requires students write 3 provincial Graduation Assessments (Numeracy 10, Literacy 10, Literacy 12).	Students who turn 18 are <i>not</i> required to move to the Adult Dogwood path. Students of any age can choose to complete the Dogwood Diploma.	The Evergreen will limit what choices are open to students after they graduate.
Should be the goal for almost all school-age students.	Requires minimum 20 credits (typically 5 courses), but adult students are not limited to only 5 courses.	<i>Only</i> students who have <i>very serious</i> intellectual disabilities and very complex exceptionalities should be pursuing an Evergreen or other non-graduation certificate.
Adults can also choose to complete the Dogwood Diploma.	No provincial Graduation Assessments are required for the Adult Dogwood, but the Assessments could be required by a post-secondary institute for admission. Adult students can take the Assessments.	Not all students who have an Individual Education Plan should be on the Evergreen path. Most students who have special learning needs can achieve the Dogwood.

## Key Considerations:

- ▶ Regardless of which graduation certificate a student is working toward, they should consider their education and employment goals after graduation.
- ▶ Specific courses, and sometimes good enough grades, are often required for post-secondary studies. The Dogwood alone does not guarantee acceptance to post-secondary. What courses students take matters, as well.
- ▶ The Dogwood Diploma, because it requires more credits, often offers more post-secondary opportunities for students. Almost all school-age students should be on the Dogwood path. Adult students can choose the Dogwood path.
- ▶ In the public education system, First Nations students receive the Adult Dogwood more often than other students – although it may not enable them to transition to post-secondary as easily.
  - *If your child is being put on the Adult Dogwood path, talk to the school.*
  - Students who are under age 18 cannot be on an Adult Dogwood path. Students who turn 18 do not have to be put on the Dogwood Path.
- ▶ Adult students who are pursuing the Adult Dogwood may choose to take more than the five required courses in order to access their post-secondary goals. Five courses is the *minimum* needed to achieve the Adult Dogwood. Adult students are *not limited* to taking five courses.
- ▶ If your child has an Individual Education Plan (IEP), it is important to know if they are on a modified program. A modified program may be the right choice for *some* students who have very serious special learning needs, but it is not necessary for the majority of students who have an IEP. It should never be the choice for a student who does not have an IEP.
  - If your child is going to be placed on a modified program, find out why. Ask questions.
  - Students on a modified program will graduate with the Evergreen, not the Dogwood. *This will affect their future opportunities.*

- ▶ **If your child is on a path for the Evergreen or Adult Dogwood Diploma, ask questions.**
- ▶ **Who made the decision and why? Why is your child not on a path to the Dogwood Diploma?**
- ▶ **Your agreement is needed about any decisions that will impact your child's future choices.**



More information about planning for post-secondary and careers is available in the FNSC and FNSA publication: *Guiding Your Education Journey: A Handbook for First Nations Families* (available from [www.fnesc.ca](http://www.fnesc.ca))

# TECHNOLOGY TALKS

Almost all parents are looking for suggestions related to safe and constructive use of technologies. The Toolkit for First Nations Parents and Families includes a section with hand-outs on:



*Using Social Media in Healthy, Positive Ways*

*Tips for Creating a Family Technology Use Plan*

*Keeping Up With Technology Issues*

*Helping Students Understand: What Goes Online Stays Online, and Everyone Can See It*

*Play Safe: Tips for Online Gaming*

*What is AI, and Why is Everyone Talking About It?*

*What is Meant by the Term Digital Literacy?*

*Signs Your Child or Teen May be Overusing Technology*

*Let's Talk About "Fake News"*

*Using Screen Time in Positive Ways*

## What else can be done?

### Messenger App Training

If schools are using apps to connect with families, such as ClassDojo, Seesaw, ParentSquare, TalkingPoints, SchoolMessenger, etc., provide a family evening with training, guided practice, and questions and answers.

- To make it more fun, provide refreshments and consider having students lead the demonstrations.

### Technology Fun and Games Night

Host a technology game night with refreshments and prizes.

Media Smart: Canada's Centre for Digital Media Literacy ([www.mediasmarts.ca](http://www.mediasmarts.ca)) has a vast collection of resources for parents and teachers to promote digital literacy. In fact, there are so many resources it may be useful to have help looking through all the resources and planning a games night for families.

Perhaps a community member or school employee can help, or this could be a great project for a group of older teens. They could organize an event or a series of events as part of a work-study program, or it would be a great school project.

The Media Smarts web site includes games families can play online to promote kids' understandings of online safety issues. A few examples:

- ▶ **#ForYou:** A Game About Algorithms: #ForYou is a card-based pattern-matching game that helps youth aged 13 to 18 understand the role that algorithms play in their online and offline lives, and the value of their personal information to companies that use those algorithms. The game is designed to be delivered either in school or in community spaces such as homework or coding clubs.
- ▶ **Reality Check: The Game:** On the internet, it can be hard to tell what's true and what's false—but we have to make a lot of decisions based on how reliable we think things are. In Reality Check, you'll learn how to find clues like finding where a story originally came from and comparing it to other sources, as well as how to use tools like fact-checking sites and reverse image searches.
- ▶ **Data Defenders (Grades 4-6):** Data Defenders is an interactive game that teaches children and pre-teens the concept of personal information and its economic value, and introduces them to ways to manage and protect their personal information on the websites and apps they enjoy.
- ▶ **Co-Co's AdverSmarts:** This interactive unit is designed to help kids between the ages of 5 and 8 recognize the marketing techniques used on commercial websites that target children.
- ▶ **Privacy Pirates:** This tutorial introduces children, ages 7-9, to the concept of online privacy and teaches them to distinguish between information that is appropriate to give out and information better kept private – and to recognize how this may change in different contexts.
- ▶ **Other sample quiz games for families to play together are included on the following pages. Invite families to come, complete the quizzes together, have fun, eat snacks, and win prizes – while talking about important safety tips we all should know.**

## Play Online Safety Charades

Place the following notes in a hat or bag. One at a time, players can pull out a note and act out what is written on the paper. Then everyone can collectively answer the accompanying reminder.

### ***Typing an email***

Q. Is it smart to share your email with strangers?

A. No.

### ***Blowing out birthday candles***

Q. Is it smart to share your birth date with strangers?

A. No

### ***Taking a selfie***

Q. Is it smart to share videos or photos with strangers?

A. No.

### ***Opening a combination safe or a locker combination***

Q. Is it smart to keep your passwords secret?

A. Yes.

### ***Scoring a goal in soccer***

Q. Is it ok to share your team photo with families?

A. Yes.

### ***Calling someone on the phone***

Q. Is it smart to share your phone number with strangers?

A. No.

## Create Your Own Recipe for Online Kindness

Parents and their children can create a family recipe for online kindness. For example ...

### INGREDIENTS

**3** kind words or compliments I  
can use online:.

---

---

---

**2** things I can do to help others  
who are being treated unkindly  
online

---

---

**3** people I can go to for help if I  
am having trouble online:

---

---

---

Something constructive I can  
do when I see something I  
disagree with online

---

---

---

---

**DIRECTIONS:** Mix all of the ingredients together and enjoy. Make this a recipe you use again and again.



## Talk It Out

Parents or students can read a possible scenario and talk about what kids could do. It could also be a fun activity for kids to make up some scenarios and put them in a hat. Then, kids could pull them out and a group of kids could brainstorm responses. A few ideas to get started are included below.

<b>SCENARIO</b>	Someone online asks for your parent's credit card information
<b>WHAT TO DO?</b>	Don't do it! Tell an adult right away.

<b>SCENARIO</b>	A bully posts mean comments about you online.
<b>WHAT TO DO?</b>	Don't respond. That might make things worse. Ask for help from a trusted adult at home or at school.

<b>SCENARIO</b>	A classmate is trying to hack into the social media accounts of friends.
<b>WHAT TO DO?</b>	Tell the person they should stop. If they won't, tell an adult.

<b>SCENARIO</b>	An online stranger keeps sending messages asking for your personal information and where you live.
<b>WHAT TO DO?</b>	Don't give any information. Don't respond at all. Tell an adult right away. Block the person so they cannot communicate with you in the future. If you can, report the issue using online reporting tools.

<b>SCENARIO</b>	A social media vlogger livestreams themselves deliberately spilling hot coffee onto unsuspecting pedestrians.
<b>What to Do?</b>	Unsubscribe from the channel and report the nasty content using online reporting tools.

## Play Two Truths and a Lie

Have players think of two true statements about themselves and a lie that's believable enough to trick other players. Take turns sharing these statements with the group and guessing which two are true and which one is the lie.

*At the end of the game discuss the following terms and the importance of being watchful for lies on the Internet.*

Watch out for ...	
<b>Catfishing:</b>	Creating a fake identity or account on a social networking service to trick people into sharing their personal information or into believing they're talking to a real person behind a legitimate account, profile, or page.
<b>Clickbait</b>	Manipulative online content, posts, or ads designed to capture people's attention and get them to click on a link or webpage, often to grow site traffic and collect information via cookies in order to make money.
<b>Deceptive or fake news</b>	News that intentionally lies or distorts the truth. More and more fake news is being spread via social media and on the internet. Watch out!
<b>Front Group</b>	A group that is pretending to be something it's not in order to hide the identity of the people who really run the group.
<b>Manipulation</b>	Controlling or influencing another person or situation unfairly, dishonestly, or under threat. Also, things you find online may be manipulated, such as a photo that has been edited to make you believe something that isn't true.
<b>Scam</b>	A dishonest attempt to make money or gain something else of value by tricking people.
<b>Phishing</b>	An attempt to scam you or trick you into sharing login information or other personal information online. Phishing is usually done through email, ads, or sites that look similar to ones you're already used to.
<b>Spearphishing</b>	A phishing scam where an attacker targets you specifically by using pieces of your own personal information.

---

### What can help ...

---

<b>Be sceptical</b>	Willing to question claims of truth. It is important to be sceptical if you think something you hear or read sounds odd or unbelievable. Double check.
<b>Check for Credibility</b>	Something that is believable; someone who is credible uses evidence so you can be confident they are telling the truth. Similar terms include trustworthy, reliable, authentic ... meaning real, genuine, accurate, not fake.
<b>Check for Evidence</b>	Facts or examples that prove something is true or false. This might be data or information that has been verified to be true. Facts are different from opinions or guesses or what people think about an issue.
<b>Check if it's Verifiable</b>	Something that can be proven or shown to be true or correct.
<b>Use Firewalls</b>	Programs that shield computers from most scams and tricks.

---

## Match the Phrase With Its Meaning

Draw a line between the phrases on the left and their meanings on the right.

1 When In Doubt, Talk It Out	A Cybercriminals often entice gamers into clicking bad links or downloading malicious files by offering cheats or hacks – which is known as “phishing.”
2 Stay safe while you surf	B Children and teens need to be very careful about sharing personal information online. If someone asks for personal information, they should not share it without asking a trusted adult first.
3 Think before you click	C When creating a post online, consider ... T = is it TRUE?   H = is it HELPFUL?   I = is it INSPIRING?   N = is it NECESSARY?   K = is it KIND? If no, re-think what you are going to say.
4 Data is gold; protect it like treasure	D The more information you post, the easier it may be for a criminal to use that information to steal your identity, access your data, or commit other crimes. Think carefully before you share.
5 If Asked to Share and Your Parents Aren't Aware — SAY NO!	E Say something. If something happens online that makes you feel uncomfortable or hurt, tell someone. Everyone makes mistakes online sometimes. Don't be worried. Just let someone know and ask for help.
6 Profiles are private	F We can find a lot of great information using the Internet, but we need to make sure we are always thinking “safety first.”
7 If you don't know the sender, it might be a pretender	G When creating online profiles (such as gaming sites or social networks), fill in only what is necessary, leaving out identifying or revealing information. Or lots of sites have the option to have a private profile. This means only people you have accepted as friends can see your information and what you post. Be sure to not invite anyone else to see your profile.
8 Share with care	H More and more companies are interested in capturing and using your data and personal information. Data has real value. When using technology, think about who wants your information and for what purposes.
9 THINK	I Be wary of clicking on links or downloading anything that comes from a stranger or that you were not expecting. You can verify links before clicking on them by hovering over them with your cursor to see the links' true destination. Remember ... if an offer seems too good to be true, chances are it is.
10 If you suspect deceit, hit DELETE	J Some people lie about who they are online. People can pretend to be older, younger, or a different gender. They may have bad intentions. If you get a message from someone you don't know, tell an adult.

Answer Key: 1. E; 2. F; 3. A; 4. H.; 5. B; 6. G; 7. J; 8. D; 9. C; 10. I

## Quick Quiz. How Much Do We Know About Technology?

1. According to researchers, approximately what percentage of young people between the ages of 13 and 17 use a social media platform?

Circle one choice:            50%            75%            95%

2. Which of the following issues contribute to the impact of social media on the mental health of youth?

- A. The amount of time children and teens spend on platforms.
- B. The type of content they access.
- C. How much it disrupts other activities in their lives.

Circle one choice:            A            B            C            All of the above

3. Social media is a reliable source for news and information ...

- A. Always
- B. Sometimes
- C. Never

Circle one choice:            A            B            C

4. Children should turn off location services on their smartphones / digital device cameras to avoid being tracked by strangers.

Circle one choice:            True    False

5. Downloading cheats or mods from websites other than the official game website is fine.

Circle one choice:            True    False

6. Signs that your children might need a break from gaming include ...

- A. They only play occasionally and spend plenty of time outdoors having fun.
- B. They are getting angry or upset at other people or the game.
- C. It doesn't seem to be interfering with their homework or outside fun.

Circle one choice:            A            B            C            All of the above

7. It doesn't matter what young people share online. They are young and it won't have any serious consequences.

Circle one choice:            True    False

8. Artificial intelligence is becoming a part of our daily lives, but we need to be informed and think carefully about how we use it.

Circle one choice:            True    False

## How Much Do We Know About Technology Answer Key

1. **95%.** Almost all young people are using social media. We have a hand-out on what families can do to help make social media use healthy and safer. See the Toolkit for First Nations Parents and Families hand-out: Using Social Media in Healthy, Positive Ways
2. **All of the above.** Young people are affected by social media in different ways, and there is no definite amount of screen time that is ok for all kids and teens. Think about its impact. Does it seem to be impacting your kids in good or bad ways? We have a hand-out on this topic. See the Toolkit for First Nations Parents and Families hand-out: Signs Your Child or Teen May be Overusing Technology
3. **“B” - Be very cautious.** You cannot always believe information you find posted online. “Facts” that are shared through social media are often unreliable. It is important to consider who is sharing information and why. Talk to kids about what is fact, what is opinion, and what might be fake. It is not always easy to tell. See the Toolkit for First Nations Parents and Families hand-out: Let’s Talk About “Fake News”
4. **True.** Many mobile digital devices have GPS, which allows us to use map Apps to find our way around. But that brings with it some dangers. See the Toolkit for First Nations Parents and Families hand-out: Keeping Up With Technology Issues
5. **False.** Mods can contain viruses that will damage your computer or mobile, and give hackers access to your personal data. Whenever you can, always use the app store or official websites. See the Toolkit for First Nations Parents and Families hand-out: Play Safe: Tips for Online Gaming
6. **“B”** - Warning signs that a break is needed include getting frustrated or unhappy about the game, ignoring other important things that need to be done, sitting too long and getting physically uncomfortable, and continuing even when getting tired and hungry.
7. **False.** Children and teens need to understand that how they represent themselves online may be evaluated and assessed by future employers or post-secondary institutes. They should be very thoughtful about what they share through social media.

---

8. **True.** AI can be a useful tool for many different reasons. But ...

- AI can change pictures, videos, audio recordings, and words that are shared online. Everyone needs to think very carefully about what information and images they are sharing. AI might use your child's information and images in ways that could be embarrassing or harmful.
  - AI is based on limited data and the information may not be current.
  - The information used to "teach AI" may not represent everyone. AI could generate stereotypes or racist materials. Students and families should watch for these problems.
  - We all need to remember that AI sometimes makes mistakes. It can give incorrect answers, wrong information, or make things that don't work properly.
  - Families can help schools teach students to think for themselves. Students should critically evaluate AI-generated content. They can double-check information generated using AI by looking at other sources.
-

## Spotting Fake News

Look at the examples below of things you might see online. Check the box of what might be fake news and describe what made you think twice.

	Is it fake?	What makes you think so?
1. Winter lasts for 21 years on Uranus. <a href="http://www.kids.nationalgeographic.com">www.kids.nationalgeographic.com</a>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2. Everyone knows that alligators only live to be two years old. It's obvious.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3. Why does everyone keep saying sugar is bad for us. <b>It's not true.</b> Those people are just stupid. You should eat as much sugar as you want.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4. Did you no that oreos where invented in Prince Goerge, British Columbea. Wierd but troo.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5. The most overdue library book was over 10,000 years late. <a href="http://www.truefacts.org.nfw">www.truefacts.org.nfw</a>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
6. Some hummingbirds can weigh up to 30 pounds!!!! It's True!!! Isn't that neat????	<input type="checkbox"/>	
7. We should all be drinking more energy drinks. The National Energy Drink promotion organization states: "energy drinks are completely safe for kids of all ages – even babies."	<input type="checkbox"/>	
8. You see a photo of Bill Nye online, and he is wearing a t.shirt that says "Don't believe scientists. We should all use as much fossil fuel as possible."	<input type="checkbox"/>	
9. Weather forecasters warn of high winds and flooding. (Headline from Environment Canada, March 2002)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
10. One survey found that about a third of kids who shared a story later found out it was fake or inaccurate. If someone accidentally shares a false story, they don't need to be embarrassed. After all, many others have done this, too! But the responsible action is to try to stop the spread of false information by posting a note that explains that the post turned out to be fake. You can also encourage your friends to do the same if you've shared it with others.	<input type="checkbox"/>	



## Spotting Fake News Answer Sheet

1. **I'd believe this.** This is reported on National Geographics Fun Facts page for kids. That's a really reliable site for interesting facts.
2. **Watch out.** No real sources are cited. It says "everyone knows." That seems suspicious. According to National Geographics Fun Facts page for kids, alligators can live to be 80 years old.
3. **Be careful.** The tone is really aggressive and sounds angry. In fact, excessive intake of sugar is linked to a range of health concerns.
4. **Does this look reliable, with all of the errors?** In fact, according to National Geographics Fun Facts for kids, Oreos were invented at a Nabisco factory on Ninth Avenue in New York City in 1912. That part of the street is now known as "Oreo Way."
5. **Check out the URL on this one.** It looks made up. Does that fact seem likely? National Geographics Fun Facts for kids claims the most overdue library book was 288 years late. Which of those statements seems more realistic? Still not sure? 288 is also reported on [www.guinnessworldrecords.com](http://www.guinnessworldrecords.com), and on the web sites of the Sidney Sussex College, and Westchester Magazine. 288 years seems more believable now.
6. **Reliable sites rarely use that much punctuation** – especially about a fact. A hummingbird of that size likely wouldn't be able to get off the ground. National Geographics Fun Facts page for kids says some hummingbirds weigh less than a penny.
7. **Check out the source for this quote.** The agency created to promote energy drinks says they are safe. Hmmm.... In fact, the Canadian Paediatric Society states that energy drinks are not safe for children. See [www.caringforkids.cps.ca](http://www.caringforkids.cps.ca). Which source would you believe?
8. **Bill Nye is one of the most famous scientists and environmentalists in North America.** Would he be likely to wear a t-shirt like that? Images can be altered or completely made up.
9. **Check the date.** Is it still relevant?
10. **No fake news here!** This advice was posted on [www.natgeokids.com](http://www.natgeokids.com) – a reliable source for information. The suggestions seem reasonable, they aren't exaggerated, and many other web sites that focus on internet safety share similar information. This advice is worth believing.

# PARENTS HELPING PARENTS: CONVERSATION STARTERS

Parent groups or schools could host some family gatherings, with refreshments and some fun games organized for the kids while the adults have time to talk together and share their support.

Parents can try using some of the following conversation starters, and if they find them useful, families can also try these strategies at home with their kids.

## 1. The Jar of Life

### Materials:

- ☐ A very large wide-mouthed jar.
- ☐ Enough 2-inch rocks to fill the jar.
- ☐ Enough small pebbles to fill the jar.
- ☐ Enough salt to fill the jar.
- ☐ 2 cups of coffee.

1. Fill the jar to the top with the 2-inch rocks. Say “the jar seems full.”
2. Pour the pebbles into the jar and they should fill in gaps around the rocks. Now the jar seems full.
3. Pour the salt into the jar. The salt will fill the spaces between the pebbles. The jar seems full again.
4. Then bring out the two cups of coffee and pour the contents into the jar.

### Explain:

- ▶ The jar represents your life. The rocks are the important things: time with your family, activities to promote your health, your culture and community ... If everything else was lost and only they remained, your life would still be full.
- ▶ The pebbles are other things that matter, like your job, maintaining your house, the activities that are especially meaningful for you.
- ▶ The salt is everything else. The small stuff.
- ▶ If you put the salt into the jar first, there is no room for the pebbles or the rocks!

What about the coffee, someone might ask? Well, no matter how full your life may seem, there's always room for a cup of coffee with a friend.

### How can you extend this activity?

Give people a worksheet and ask them to:

- ▶ List your rocks. Are they time with family, staying healthy, contributing to your community ...
- ▶ What are your pebbles?
- ▶ What is the sand?
- ▶ Does the coffee remind you of any special moments or people in your life?

## 2. Filling Our Cups

- ▶ Ask meeting participants to imagine their child has a cup of milk.
  - When their cup is full, they feel secure, happy, and ready to learn.
  - When their cup is becoming empty, some children may start to feel anxious. When that happens, some students may misbehave, become upset, seek your attention, or try to find other ways to show you their cup needs refilling.
- ▶ What fills a student's cup? Spending time with friends, doing fun things with their families, going out on the land, feeling safe, enjoying relaxing activities, feeling successful, positive connections at school ...
- ▶ What empties a student's cup? Loneliness, being overtired, feeling hungry, excessive screen time, being bullied ...
- ▶ What do you think?
- ▶ What can families do to keep kids' cups full? What activities help? How can schools help?

Once parents have practiced this strategy themselves, they could use this idea to start a conversation with their teens. What do they say "fills their cup"? What empties it?

- ▶ We all benefit from thinking about what helps us feel energized and optimistic, and what brings us down. Learning to reflect on what affects our well-being is a lifelong skill that benefits everyone.
- ▶ Understanding what their children find “cup-filling” can help parents recognize when their children might need some rest, maybe some energizing exercise, or some time on the land to feel the healing power of nature ...
- ▶ Parents can also share what they learn with teachers.
  - Teachers can better support students when they know what can help students keep their cups full.
  - Parents can also let teachers know if there are times when their child’s cup might be a bit low – such as when they are having a bad day or if something happens that makes them upset. That way everyone can be extra patient and understanding.

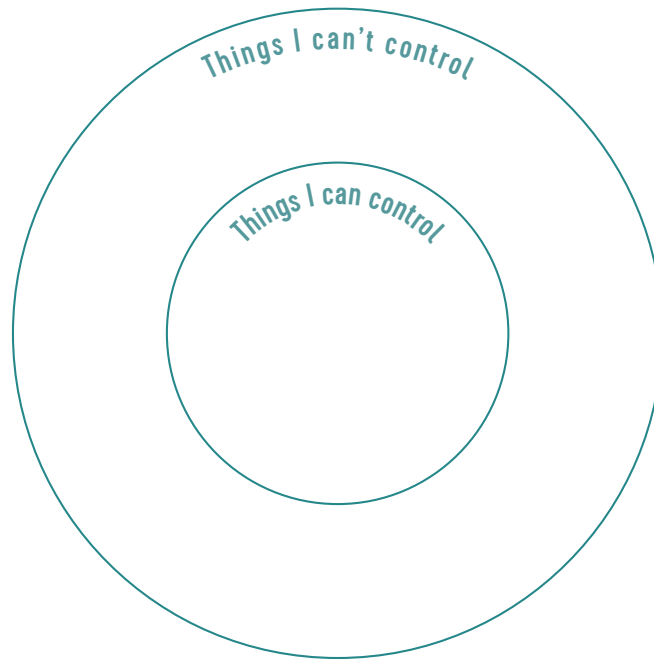
An extension of this activity could be to create a “self-care jar.” On slips of paper, write down what activities help you feel relaxed when needed, or energized when you need a boost. What fills your cup when you need it? Put the papers into a jar and pull one out when you need it. Then try to find time to do that cup-filling activity as soon as you can.

Another extension for families might be to read the book *You Hold Me Up* by Monique Gray Smith and illustrated by Danielle Daniel. Find the book read aloud at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tb-GUFslpWUU>.

**How do things that hold us up fill our cups?**

### 3. Focusing On What We Can Do

- Hand out a worksheet with the following.



Invite parents to add words in the circles.

Ask people to talk about what they can and cannot control. Some things might fit in both categories. In some ways, our health is in our control because we can think about how much sleep we get, what foods we eat, etc. But our health isn't completely in our control ... we pick up colds, we get hurt sometimes ...

#### Questions to think about ...

- Do we take time to think about what is in our control and what isn't? Is it helpful to do so?
- For example, our children will almost certainly be exposed to technology. That is not in our control, so it probably isn't helpful to focus on how we can stop that. But we can do things to help keep our kids safe online. That is in our control.
- How does it feel when things are not in our control? How can we deal with that? Does it help to think about what related things are in our control?
- It is important that we devote more time and energy to things we can control, versus trying to manage things we can't.

As an extension of this activity, parents can think about what is in their control, what is in their children’s control, and what is in the school’s control. How can parents, students, and schools do the things that are in their control to help address key issues, such as student attendance, anti-bullying, safe technology use ...?

This also might be a good activity for parents and school representatives to do together, to explore roles and responsibilities and how everyone can work together.

## Let’s Talk About What We Can Do

What We All Want

(e.g. higher attendance, students feeling they belong at school, students feeling safe ...)

What Parents Can Control	What Students Can Control	What Schools Can Control
.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....

What Parents Can Do	What Students Can Do	What Schools Can Do
.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....

# SOURCES USED

The information in this Guide was adapted from many sources, including some found at.

- ▶ **Be Internet Awesome.** [https://beinternetawesome.withgoogle.com/en\\_us](https://beinternetawesome.withgoogle.com/en_us)
- ▶ **MediaSmarts. Canada's Centre for Digital Media Literacy.** [www.mediasmarts.ca](http://www.mediasmarts.ca)
- ▶ **Common Sense Education.** [www.commonsense.org](http://www.commonsense.org)
- ▶ **Attendance Works.** [www.attendanceworks.org](http://www.attendanceworks.org)







FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION STEERING COMMITTEE  
FIRST NATIONS SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION

#113 - 100 Park Royal South, West Vancouver, BC V7T 1A2  
604-925-6087 | Toll-free in BC 1-877-422-3672



fnesc



FNSA

FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION STEERING COMMITTEE  
FIRST NATIONS SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION