Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre
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NIPIVUT – OUR VOICE

A Community Needs Assessment for Inuit Families in Ottawa

REPORT

Copies of this report are available in English and Inuktitut (Pigiarniq). Please contact Karen Baker-Anderson at 613-744-3133 ext. 215 or kbaker@ottawainuitchildrens.com to receive a copy of the report, the Executive Summary or the data collection tools used e.g. parent questionnaire, agency survey and focus group questions.

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- Alternative Learning Styles & Outlooks (ALSO)
- Amethyst Women's Addiction Centre
- Andrew Fleck Child Care Services: Children's Integration Support Services; Child Care Information
- Carleton Montessori School
- Centre 510 Rideau
- Child Care Information
- Children's Aid Society
- City of Ottawa: Children's Services Division, Public Health,
- Crossroads Children's Centre
- Eastern Ottawa Resource Centre
- First Words Preschool Speech and Language
- Gignul Non-Profit Housing Corporation
- Hawthorne Public School
- Hunt Club Riverside Community Service Centre
- Inuit Non-Profit Housing Corporation
- Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami
- Minwaashin Lodge
- Makonsag Aboriginal Head Start
- Nasittuq Corporation
- Odawa Native Friendship Centre
- Orleans Cumberland Community Resource Centre
- Oshki Kizis Lodge
- Ottawa Technical Learning Center
- Ottawa Police Services
- Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada
- Tewegan Transition House
- Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health
- Western Ottawa Community Resource Centre
- Youville Centre

DEFINITIONS

Inuit:	The contemporary term for Eskimo. Inuit in Inuktitut (the language of Inuit) means people.
Inuk:	The singular of Inuit is Inuk.
Inuktitut:	The most common language of Inuit in Canada. There are four main Inuit dialects in Canada: Inuinnaqtun, Inuktitut, Inuttitut and Inuvialuktun.
Aboriginal Peoples:	The indigenous people of Canada including Inuit, First Nations and Métis as included in the Constitution Act. Aboriginal and First Peoples are interchangeable. Aboriginal and First Nations are NOT interchangeable.
First Nations:	First Nations is a term that came into common usage in the 1980's to replace the word "Indian," which people found offensive. Among its uses, the term "First Nations peoples" refers to those registered under Canada's *Indian Act*.
Métis:	Métis are a people of mixed First Nation and European ancestry who self identify themselves as Métis, as distinct from First Nations people, Inuit or non-Aboriginal people. The Métis have a unique culture that draws on their diverse ancestral origins, such as Scottish, French, Ojibway and Cree.
Innu:	The name Innu is often mistaken for Inuit. The Innu, formerly known as the Naskapi-Montagnais Indians, are an Algonkian-speaking people whose homeland (Nitassinan) is the eastern portion of the Québec-Labrador peninsula.[i]
Country Food:	Traditional food that Inuit harvest including seal, whale, birds, caribou, fish and berries.
The south:	Not the warm south that most refer to. The "south" is what northerners call cities and rural areas outside of the 4 Arctic regions. For example, in planning for a trip to Montreal, Ottawa, or Winnipeg, one would say "I'm going to the south."
Parent:	Throughout this report the term parent is used to describe a parent, relative, guardian or other individual raising an Inuk child.

section 1

INTRODUCTION

The Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre (OICC)

Our History:

The Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre was established in August, 2005 by parents of children enrolled in Tungasuvvingat Inuit Head Start. Tungasuvvingat Inuit Head Start was first established in March 1997 under the umbrella of Tungasuvvingat Inuit. Tungasuvvingat Inuit was the program sponsor until April 2006. In keeping with its parent-driven philosophy and mandate embedded in the *Aboriginal Head Start Principles and Guidelines*, sponsorship of the Head Start was transferred by the Public Health Agency of Canada (renamed Sivummut Head Start) to the Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre. Since 2006, the Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre has grown into a multi-service hub of programs and activities for Inuit children and families in Ottawa.

Our Mandate:

The Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre (OICC) serves Inuit children and youth from birth to 13 years of age and their families. The objects of our organization are: 1) to provide Inuit children and youth with a learning environment that will enhance their overall development; 2) to foster positive parenting through support and education; and 3) to promote the retention of the Inuit culture and language.

Our Mission:

The Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre is dedicated to providing cultural, educational, and support services in a caring, respectful and collaborative environment that fosters strong and proud Inuit children and families.

Our Board of Directors:

In keeping with the philosophy of a community-driven organization, the by-laws of the OICC require that a majority of directors on the Board be parents of children enrolled in programs offered by the OICC, and a majority be Inuit. These measures ensure that all OICC programming is relevant to the community it serves. As such, our staff and Board of Directors are abreast of issues that Inuit families face in an urban setting.

Our Partnerships with Families:

We are committed to building capacity within families and within the Inuit community. We believe that families who are healthy and strong are able to raise healthy and strong children. Tapping into the strengths of families and building capacity from a place of strength and capability is a philosophy that permeates all of OICC programs. The staff of the Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre supports the belief that it is a parent's right and responsibility to be involved in all aspects of the planning, development, implementation and evaluation of their child's programming.

Our Programs:

We deliver the following programs to families with Inuit children between 0 and 13 years of age living in Ottawa:

a) **Sivummut Head Start Preschool Program:** A bilingual (Inuktitut/English) early intervention, half-day preschool program that serves 40 Inuit children between 18 months-6 years of age. Our main goal is to provide a beneficial and supportive learning environment for Inuit preschool children and their parents, and to give these children an educational **"head start"**. Sivummut Head Start is licensed by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services.

b) Inuit Family Literacy Project: A family based literacy program for Inuit children aged 0-13 years and their families. Our goal is to promote Inuktitut and English literacy skills in Inuit children and their families. We offer activities to develop and support emerging literacy skills in young children, support continued literacy in school age children, strengthen adult literacy, and foster parental involvement in their child's literacy development.

c) Youth Central: A youth focussed project that provides tutoring and homework support services to Inuit youth 7-13 living in the Ottawa area, and offers cultural skills and knowledge training to participants. Our goal is to increase Inuit children and youth's success at school by blending academic support with cultural competency.

d) Bridging the Gap: A school age program that supports students, parents and schools in improving success for Inuit learners. Program components include home – school liaison, parent support, cultural awareness and education for teachers and school staff and child support workshops.

e) Tumiralaat Child Care Centre: A full-day bilingual (Inuktitut/English) child care program licensed by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services for 26 children between 18 months-6 years of age. Daily activities include cultural games, stories, and songs, outdoor play, circle time, and a variety of group and individual hands-on learning opportunities. Traditional country food is served on a regular basis.

f) Uqausivut Project: A resource and education program aimed at the preservation of Inuktitut in an urban setting. Project activities include Inuktitut classes for children, youth and adults, an Inuktitut resource library, an Inuktitut children's DVD, parent workshops, and Inuktitut learning circles for children enrolled in Sivummut Head Start and Tumiralaat Child Care.

Through the hard work and dedication of our board and staff, we have earned a reputation as a viable, dynamic, and responsive community-based organization that is proactive in identifying and addressing gaps in service to our membership. Our Board of Directors is highly dedicated and committed to meeting the needs of Inuit children, youth and their families in Ottawa. A broad range of expertise exists within the board, and their vision is furthered through strong leadership and keen involvement. With a staff of 20, the Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre team is extra-ordinary. Each and every one shows their dedication to their work in their daily interactions, and their tendancy to "go the extra mile" for the children and families.

Project Background

Ottawa has the largest Inuit population outside of Northern Canada. The 2006 Census data reported that 725 Inuit live in Ottawa. However, Inuit organizations in Ottawa believe there to be over double this number, an estimated 1800. Further data from Statistics Canada documents the trend of a growing urban Inuit population in its reporting that 17% of Inuit currently reside in urban settings.[ii]

We know from anecdotals, experience and few written reports[iii] that Inuit are drawn to Ottawa by education and employment opportunities, safety from abusive relationships, health and community services and the desire to be close to friends and family who have previously relocated to Ottawa. We also know that families who leave their home community in the North are leaving behind a close-knit community, extended family support, traditional food, an intimate connection to the land,

cultural traditions and events, and the Inuktitut language. Adjusting to living in an urban centre can be difficult for many Inuit families and Inuit-specific support programs are essential.[iv]

We recognize that as the population of Inuit continues to grow in Ottawa, the challenge of meeting the unique needs will only intensify. We feel it is critical to establish accurate data, effective programming and relevant resources to support Inuit children and their families in Ottawa. The most effective way to do this is to hear from the families directly.

The purpose of this Community Needs Assessment is to collect information from parents of Inuit children 0-18 years of age living in Ottawa that will support long term planning, enhance program and resource development, increase collaboration, raise awareness and improve advocacy.

The information collected throughout this project provides a profile of Inuit families living in Ottawa. Reporting on demographics, the challenges and the benefits of living in an urban setting, blended with photojournalism, provides a unique combination of data that has not been formally collected to date. Hearing first hand from families about the benefits and challenges of living away from their homeland can only enhance what we already know as service providers and assist us in providing the best and most appropriate services possible.

As a result of this project, we anticipate the following outcomes:

- Increased awareness of the unique needs of Inuit families living in an urban setting.
- Increased collaboration amongst Inuit and non-Inuit service agencies.
- Improved service delivery for families with Inuit children.
- Improved access to funding sources to support and expand programming.
- Increased mobilization of resources to meet the needs of urban Inuit families.
- Increased sensitivity to the distinctness of Inuit culture and a decreased pan-Aboriginal approach to service delivery.

Methodology

The methodology for this project combined quantitative and qualitative data collection using focus groups, individual interviews, parent questionnaires, service provider surveys, and photojournalism.

a) **Community Based Research:** Community Based Research (CBR) **"is research that is conducted by, with or for communities."**[v] The goal of CBR is to foster change, enhance the quality of life for the members of a particular community, and to produce results that are essentially owned by the community.[vi] At the foundation of CBR are six principles which guide the research process: 1) research should be relevant to the community; 2) the ethical implications of the research must be considered e.g. confidentiality; 3) the process should build capacity; 4) research methods should be rigorous; 5) collaborative partnerships are fostered; and 6) the outcomes of the research should lead to positive change for the community. Our project activities were grounded in these principles and we feel confident in saying that this was a Community Based Research Project.

b) **Advisory Committee:** Nipivut was guided by an Advisory Committee made up of six parents of Inuit children, a community initiative representative and an academic representative from Carleton University. The purpose of the committee was to ensure that project activities were culturally appropriate, to maintain the overall integrity of the project, to provide experience and expertise to the delivery of the project, to represent the perspective of Inuit families in the delivery of the project, to ensure that participants' privacy was protected, to ensure that the project was rooted in the principles of Community Based Research and to ensure that data collection tools were appropriate.

c) **Tool Development:** The parent questionnaire, service provider survey and focus group questions were developed by the Project Consultants in collaboration with the OICC Executive Director and the Project Advisory Committee. Several parents were asked to complete the questionnaire to test the questions and make adjustments.

d) **Sample:** The sample for this project included 102 parents/guardians of Inuit children between the ages of 0-18 years, which met our targeted goal of 100 parent participants. One hundred and eighty-two children were represented by the parents who participated.

e) **Parent Questionnaire Distribution & Collection:** We used a variety of outreach strategies to distribute and collect the parent questionnaires. The bulk of questionnaires were completed during the focus groups held at various community agencies and Inuit organizations. In addition, we contacted parents at Inuit workplaces by email and telephone to ask if they wished to participate. The vast majority of parents who were approached chose to participate. Questionnaires were also available through the Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre and Inuit Non-Profit Housing and were available in English and Inuktitut. One hundred and two parents completed a questionnaire.

f) **Agency Survey Distribution & Collection:** The agency survey was developed to identify the following from Inuit/Aboriginal and non-Inuit/Aboriginal organizations: whether they were serving Inuit children and their families, how many families were they serving, what services were being accessed, barriers parents face in accessing services, barriers agencies face in delivering services, gaps in services, and cultural awareness of agency staff.

   Seventy-two agency surveys were sent out by mail to Social Service Organizations, Inuit and Aboriginal Organizations, Housing Corporations, Recreation Centres, Libraries, Shelters, Schools/Educational Facilities, Health/Medical Services and Government offices. Agencies were selected based on feedback from OICC staff and the Project Advisory Committee regarding what agencies were known to serve Inuit and those that are used for referrals. We received 30 completed agency surveys which exceeded our goal of 20 completed surveys, and represents a response rate of 42%.

g) **Parent Focus Groups:** Eleven focus groups were held in partnership with various Inuit and Aboriginal service agencies to gather more in-depth information than what was asked in the parent questionnaire. Most focus groups included a meal (often including country food) and the provision of child care. Questions were designed to collect information about the benefits and challenges of raising Inuit children in Ottawa. We met our target with 50 parents attending focus groups. Interpretation was available during all focus groups.

h) **Individual Interviews:** Individual interviews were offered to parents who could not participate in a focus group, but who wanted to provide more information. The questions were the same as those used for the focus groups. Twelve parents were interviewed individually. Interpretation was available to parents during interviews when required.

i) **Photovoice:** Photovoice is a unique blending of the use of photographs and written text to express opinions, beliefs, feelings, and attitudes about one's life and community. The goals of our Photovoice project were to encourage youth and parents to think critically about the meaning of community, to engage meaningfully with their community through discussion, creative thinking and activities and to increase understanding of the needs and perspectives of Inuit families in Ottawa.

   In partnership with the OICC Family Literacy Project, 17 individuals participated in the Photovoice process: 9 adults and 8 children ranging in age from 4-14 years. Outreach for participation in Photovoice was done through flyers and telephone calls to parents. Meals and child care were provided for each of the four sessions.

j) **Participant Honoraria:** We know that it can be difficult for parents to participate in meetings such as focus groups due to the demands of family life. As a gesture of appreciation and in honour of parents' time, participants were provided with a $10 Loblaws gift card for completing a questionnaire, $20 Loblaws gift card for participating in an interview and a $50 Loblaws gift card for taking part in a focus group. In addition, parents who completed a questionnaire were invited to enter their name in a draw for one of three family gift baskets. The honoraria amounts were decided upon by the Project Advisory Committee.

k) Limitations:

i. Sample: Our sample cannot be considered random as we did not locate participants randomly. We sought out parents through Inuit and Aboriginal service agencies and Inuit organizations.

ii. Timeline: The timeline for this project was very tight. We collected data over a 4-5 week period. It is possible that we might have gathered more data had we had more time for collection.

Project Partners

United Way/Centraide Ottawa & Success By 6: United Way/Centraide Ottawa has been serving the Ottawa community for 75 years, building capacity, mobilizing resources and forging partnerships. In 1998, a desire to increase attention and resources to the early years resulted in the formation of Success By 6. Success By 6 is a collaborative community initiative committed to the success of every child in Ottawa. Success By 6 is made up of partners from the public, private and non-profit sectors in Ottawa who work together with a shared vision of every child in Ottawa having the foundation to reach their full potential. Success By 6 provided in-kind support in the form of research and evaluation expertise, and will provide promotion and dissemination of project results through their partners including the Ottawa Network for Children.

Inuit Non-Profit Housing Corporation: Inuit Non-Profit Housing Corporation offers rent-geared-to-income housing for Inuit families and singles living in the Ottawa area. Inuit are given priority on a waiting list for 63 units, after which Aboriginal applicants are considered. Inuit Non-Profit Housing assisted the project team by distributing and collecting parent questionnaires, participating in the agency survey, and hosting a focus group.

Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health: Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health is a multi-service health and wellness centre that serves First Nations, Métis and Inuit in Ottawa. Wabano offers a wide range of traditional and western health services and programs to meet the needs of its clients. The centre supported the project team by participating in the agency survey and hosting a focus group.

Ethical Considerations

In keeping with the principles of Community Based Research we wanted to ensure that we considered all ethical implications of this project. We wanted to thoroughly discuss the impact this project might have on participants and ensure that outcomes were only positive for those involved. We developed the following questions to guide the Project Advisory Committee in discussing the project's impact on the community. These questions proved to be excellent in guiding the committee through reflection and discussion. (see **Appendix A** for discussion points related to these questions)

1. How do we provide adequate information about the project to parents?
2. How do we ensure respect for the community at all times?
3. How do we ensure respect for Inuit culture throughout the project?
4. How do we ensure confidentiality for parents who participate?
5. How do we get informed consent for participation?
6. How will the community have access to the final report?
7. How can we compensate parents for their contribution?
8. How does the community benefit from this project?

section 2

INUIT IN CANADA

Aboriginal Peoples in Canada

There are three different groups of Aboriginal people living in Canada. They are First Nations, Métis and Inuit. Each group has a unique history within Canada and distinct traditions, beliefs and cultural practices.

The Assembly of First Nations defines First Nations ("**Indians**" in the Constitution) as "**generally those registered under Canada's *Indian Act*.**" First Nations are a diverse group representing more than 52 nations (such as the Cree, Mohawk, Haida and others) and more than 60 languages."[vii]

Métis are a people of mixed First Nation and European ancestry who self identify themselves as Métis, as distinct from First Nations people, Inuit or non-Aboriginal people. The Métis have a unique culture that draws on their diverse ancestral origins, such as Scottish, French, Ojibway and Cree.

Inuit (meaning people in Inuktitut) were previously known as Eskimos. This term is no longer appropriate as Inuit find it distasteful. Inuit are indigenous to Canada's Arctic regions. Although Inuit are a federal responsibility, they are not a part of the Indian Act.[viii] Inuit pay taxes and do not live on reserves.

Although similar values are shared amongst the groups, it is important to recognize the distinctness of each culture. It is also important to note that within each indigenous group, many differences exist including traditions, ceremonies, language, and diet. A pan-Aboriginal approach to programs and services does not honour and respect each particular group.

Where do Inuit live?

Inuit historically lived, and continue to live, in Nunavut, Northwest Territories, Northern Quebec and Northern Labrador. These four regions in the Arctic are referred to as Inuit Nunaat which is a term that means Inuit homeland. Within the homeland there are 53 communities spread out across the Arctic. All of the land claims for Inuit have been settled since 2005. The land mass of Inuit Nunaat covers approximately 40% of Canada.

In 2006, 49% of all Inuit lived in Nunavut, 19% lived in Nunavik in northern Quebec, 6% lived in the Inuvialuit region in the Northwest Territories and 4% lived in Nunatsiavut in Labrador. An estimated 17% lived in urban centres and 5% in rural areas outside Inuit Nunaat. (**See Appendix B for map**[ix])

REGION	POPULATION[x]
Inuvialuit (Northwest Territories)	3,115
Nunavut	24,635
Nunavik (Northern Quebec)	9,565
Nunatsiavut (Northern Labrador)	2,160
Inuit outside Inuit Nunaat	11,005
Ottawa and Surrounding Area	725

Historical Factors Affecting Inuit Today

Early Explorers

The first recorded contact between Inuit and early explorers was with Sir Martin Frobisher in 1576 in the area of what is now called Frobisher Bay. These stories are still told within the oral history of Iqalungmiut (Inuit of the Iqaluit area) which makes it interesting to hear both sides of the story.

Regular contact truly started in the 1700's and 1800's when people like John Franklin, and Henry Hudson were searching for the Northwest Passage and the whalers were plying Arctic waters. When Europeans started hunting whales, this initiated prolonged contact with Inuit. When the whaling industry slowed down it was replaced with the fur trade in the early 1900's. This aspect of history effected many species of animals and Inuit in general. For example, the demand for fox pelts resulted in the decline of the fox population and the development of Hudson Bay Company posts throughout the Arctic.

Relocation

By the mid 1900's Inuit saw more government and missionary posts spring up to "**convert**" Inuit into Christians. Canada became quite interested in the Arctic at this time for sovereignty purposes during the cold war. This resulted in military posts with the Distant Early Warning Sites (DEW) in conjunction with the American Government. Because of these initiatives, Inuit were relocated into permanent housing in various settlements across the Arctic. Inuit were also relocated into the "**high**" Arctic for sovereignty purposes. Many Inuit did

not survive this transition because they were not familiar with the land and animal migration routes, and many starved to death as a result. This part of history is referred to as the **"High Arctic Exiles"** and resulted in the communities of Grise Ford and Resolute Bay which are now on the map of Canada as the two most northern communities in Canada.

Number Identification

During a time when government administrators were exploring the last frontier, a new initiative was formed called E-Number Identification System. Inuit culture has its own naming system. Typically a baby is named after a significant other, who may be deceased, and it is believed that the child will take on certain traits or characteristics of the person they are named after. By southern standards, this made it difficult for RCMP, Church missionaries and medical personnel to officially **"track"** Inuit. Ultimately, a system to start naming Inuit by numbers was created. A disk number was assigned that started with W or E to signify West or East.

Between 1945 and 1970 the E-Number system was widely used to issue family benefit cheques or other programs to Inuit. This continued until 1968 at which point the NWT Council proposed **"project surname"** so that Inuit would have two names to identify themselves by. Abraham Okpik travelled to every community in the Northwest Territories and what is now Nunavut to help assign surnames chosen by the Inuit. This has created its own set of problems as we have seen adult brothers and sisters with different last names.

Residential Schools

By the 1950's the government initiated educational institutions called residential schools in partnership with various churches. Inuit children were taken away from their families as young as five years old to attend these schools as part of the larger government assimilation project. Some Inuit suffered many types of abuse, were not allowed to speak Inuktitut and were taken away from their families. Almost 50 years later the Conservative Government formerly apologized for this dark history of Canada. The apology was delivered on June 11, 2008 and recognized the many hardships that resulted from residential schools. The official apology can be viewed at www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ai/rqpi/apo/sdlo-eng.asp.[xi]

Tuberculosis

Increased exposure to non-Inuit brought the introduction of new illnesses to Inuit camps and settlements. During the 1950s and 1960s, a tuberculosis (TB) epidemic occurred. During that time approximately 1600 Inuit were transported from their home settlements to southern hospitals for TB treatment.[xii] Oftentimes, Inuit were away from their families for several years and many died of the disease away from their loved ones. In the meantime, families suffered from a lack of information, from the loss of their family member; and TB infected individuals became estranged from their lifestyle and community. **"Adults died of the disease and were buried without their family's knowledge, while young children were sent from one hospital to the next without records."**[xiii] While treatments have improved over the years, TB remains a problem for Inuit as the rate of tuberculosis diagnoses is 23 times higher for Inuit than for all Canadians.[xiv]

Political Organization

By the early 1970's Inuit were concerned with the impact of resource extraction activities on Inuit homelands, Inuit lifestyles and the environment they relied on for food. In 1971 Inuit organized themselves to form Inuit Tapirisat of Canada now called Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami. This urgency to organize politically was partially brought on by the pressure from southern companies actively seeking the rich mineral resources of oil and gas deposits across the Northwest Territories and the development of hydro in Northern Quebec. Inuit leaders and politicians worked diligently over the next twenty years and on May 25, 1993 the largest land claims settlement in Canadian history was signed.[xv] Six years later a new Canadian territory was born – Nunavut.

> "One era ends, another begins. Before he died in his mid-90s in 1995, Pangnirtung's Akayuk Etuangat, the last of the whalemen, witnessed a blizzard of change that has taken industrialized countries at least 5,000 years to make. But he did not live to see the most gratifying achievement by his fellow Inuit — the creation of the new territory of Nunavut."[xvi]

See **Appendix C** for a timeline of some crucial turning points in Inuit political development.

Life in the North Today

Geography

The majority of Inuit communities have a population of less than 1000, and some as few as 250. Thirty-three percent of communities have more than 1000 residents, including Iqaluit, Nunavut's capital.[xvii] Most communities are remote, and can only be accessed by air year round and by sea in the summer. The cost to travel to the north is exorbitant: a return flight from Ottawa to Nunavut can be as much as $3000.

Inuit are traditionally coastal people so most communities except for Baker Lake (which is in the geographic centre of Canada) are on the coast. Communities will experience varying degrees of darkness in the winter months and daylight in the summer months. For example, Iqaluit (capital of Nunavut) has 24 hours of daylight in June, but only six hours of daylight in December. The average Nunavut temperature in January is -30 degrees Celcius, and in July the thermometer rises to approximately +15 degrees Celcius. Communities in Nunavut and Nunavik are above the tree line so tundra geography dominates. The landscape of each hamlet varies; some are flat while others are nestled amongst a mountainous terrain.

Community Life

Communities have elected municipal councils that govern each **"Hamlet"**. Hamlets are called this because of the small population that resides in the community. Because the communities are small and everyone tends to know everyone, you can literally walk into someone's house and have tea. Generally this is acceptable and people often comment that Inuit houses do not have door bells. Visiting family and friends is an important part of life in the North.

When you arrive off the plane into any Inuit community your first observation may be that there are many children playing outside. Inuit communities are small; parents have no reason to fear for their children and will allow them to play unsupervised.[xviii] The sense of community is very strong in Inuit culture and everyone is aware of what is going on.

Sometimes, cultural differences can cause misunderstandings when non-Inuit think that Inuit do not mind their children, which is not the case at all. Inuit traditionally emphasize child rearing practices which include: a great degree of freedom for the child, preference for indirect means of guiding a child's behavior, teaching by example and observation, patience, consistency, and using humor to distract the child from poor behavior.[xix] Child neglect is uncommon in Inuit society especially when the community is involved in all children's actions. In fact, children are the centre of the family and community, and are showered with great love and affection.

Infants are carried by their mothers in amautiqs (a woman's parka with a carrying pouch on the back) as they have been for centuries. Wearing an amautiq is a wonderful way to keep the baby warm and connected to its mother. Babies can be carried by their mothers for as long as four years. Likewise, children are breastfed longer than most Euro-Canadian children. **"In modern settlements, breast-feeding is still widely practiced. It usually continues for up to three years, but it is not unusual for a child of five to seek, and receive, the breast when it is requested."**[xx]

Food

Many families still go fishing and hunting in **"their"** spots and typically share their camping grounds with extended family. Depending on the season the community will go berry picking, fishing and camping together. Sharing of food is the norm. For example, when whales are caught, the whole community will help in the butchering and processing of meat and it is shared with nearby communities who may have been unlucky in their hunt. Traditional foods still constitute a majority of protein intake for Inuit.

"Country food", eaten by Inuit for thousands of years, still makes up a large part of the diet of many Inuit. It includes seal, whale, birds, caribou, fish and berries. Approximately eight in ten Inuit adults live in homes where sharing country food with other households is a common practice. Despite challenges associated with hunting including time constraints of work, 68% of adults in Inuit Nunaat reported harvesting country food in 2005, and 65% of Inuit lived in homes where at least half of the meat and fish eaten was country food. Although both men and women take part in harvesting activities, men are more likely to do so than women.

The cost of food in the North is often much more expensive than in the south. Food and any raw materials must be brought up by plane or ship in the summer months. Inuit have the option to purchase food through the food mail program. When this is done, Inuit can usually save quite a bit of money. Some Inuit do not use this program because there are some barriers to access such as having a credit card, or using a fax machine. **An example of the cost of food in Igloolik Nunavut is shown below compared to that of Ottawa:**

- **5 lb bag of potatoes in Igloolik is $8.75 while in Ottawa it is $2.49**
- **2 litres of 2% milk in Igloolik is $7.49 while in Ottawa it is $3.99**
- **5 kg of white flour in Igloolik is $23.59 while in Ottawa it is $9.99**

Celebrations

Inuit celebrate different seasons by gathering together for the arrival of spring and summer. The festival known as **"Toonik Tyme"** in Iqaluit, Nunavut's capital is usually in April and the community will have a large feast, many games and contests to mark the coming of spring. This has become quite the festival inviting many artists from across the Arctic and elsewhere to celebrate. Other celebrations include the day each land claim was signed, so for Inuvialuit it is on June 5th and for Nunavut it is July 9th. Christmas, New Year's and Easter are other holidays that are marked with great celebration. Dances, games, music and feasts are plentiful at these special times of the year.

Adoption

Adoption for Inuit is culturally acceptable, and is a practice that helps both the birth family and the adoptive family. Custom adoption occurs between two Inuit families and does not rely on legalities. A birth mother will decide to give her baby to another family for a variety of reasons. Another family or individual may have fertility problems, the birth mother may be young, the birth family might be large, or the adoptive family

may ask for the baby. Custom adoptions are open and the child most often knows who his/her biological parents are:

> "In Inuit society, there is no stigma attached to being adopted. It is a practice that is open and flexible, in which a child knows his or her birth parents and family members. If an adopted child lives in the same community as her or his biological parents and family, the child will know them and visit with them."[xxi]

Adoption between Inuit birth mothers, and non-Inuit families, is becoming more common. In this case, the adoptive family must undergo an intense process to be approved as a suitable family under the appropriate provincial and territorial authority.

Impact of Change

Over the last half a century, Inuit in Canada have experienced an incredible rate of change.

> "A brief fifty years ago, the vast majority of Inuit were living a traditional lifestyle centered upon nomadic hunting, fishing and trapping. While they were in regular contact with white people and modern institutions, traditional Inuit culture remained largely intact."[xxii]

The influence of the outside world has meant that Inuit have had to adapt to changes in lifestyle, diet, living arrangements, and economy.

Even so, Inuit have retained much of their culture, language, and way of life and continue to conduct traditional harvesting activities[xxiii] and participate in the Canadian economy. When looking at statistics for suicide, smoking and many other health indicators (**Appendix D**) it is important to view these numbers in the context of such rapid change. Inuit have adapted to said change throughout the millennia and will continue to adapt to survive. Inuit are resilient and they continue to survive on top of the world.

A word about 'N' Numbers

'N' numbers refer to the Non-Insured Health Benefits Program administered by Health Canada's First Nations and Inuit Health Branch (FNIHB). **"The Non-Insured Health Benefits Program is Health Canada's national, needs-based health benefit program that funds benefit claims for a specified range of drugs, dental care, vision care, medical supplies and equipment, short-term crisis intervention mental health counseling and medical transportation for eligible First Nations people and Inuit."**[xxiv] The purpose of the program is to assist First Nations and Inuit in reaching health and wellness on par with other Canadians.

An eligible recipient must be identified as a resident of Canada and one of the following:

- A registered Indian according to the *Indian Act;*
- An Inuk recognized by one of the Inuit Land Claim organizations; or
- An infant less than one year of age, whose parent is an eligible recipient.

Eligible recipients receive a letter with an associated number to present to pharmacies, dental clinics, and other health care providers that are covered under the program. Inuit children who are born outside of their territory can receive an N number as long as they have been registered with a land claim organization.

For example, in Nunavut a claim must be made with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, which is then sent to the home community of an eligible parent. When there are enough applications to be reviewed, a community committee is formed to decide if the applicant meets all the requirements. In small communities, this can take some time before the application is approved. Once an applicant has been approved, they are issued an identification card which is used along with a long form birth certificate to get their N-Number.

section 3

INUIT CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES IN OTTAWA

Introduction

One hundred and two parents participated in this project by completing a parent questionnaire. Fifty of those parents attended focus groups and 12 shared information through individual interviews. Of the 102 parents, 84 were birth parents to Inuit children, 14 were non-Inuit adoptive parents, and four were foster parents caring for Inuit children. The information to follow is a culmination of what we learned from parents in the questionnaires, focus groups and interviews.

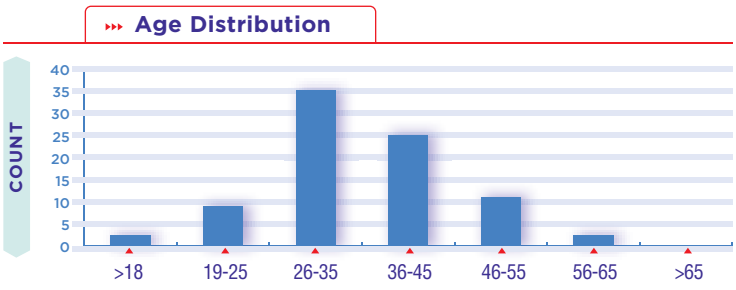
We chose to present the information in separate sections to honour the stories, strengths and challenges of parents. Although similar information was shared by all parents who participated, we found that there were also differences. In this section we present the information collected from the 84 birth parents of Inuit children. The information shared by adoptive and foster parents is presented in the next section.

Note: All bar graphs represent the number of responses not percentages. Pie charts are presented in percentages.

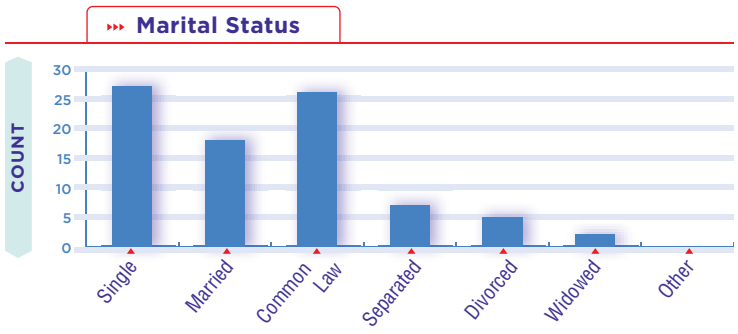
Demographic Profile of Families

Eighty-four birth parents of Inuit children participated in this project. These parents reported on behalf of 152 children, with an average number of two children in each home. Sixty-nine percent of parents had between 1-2 children, 21% had between 3-4 children, and 2% had between 5-7 children. Six parents did not answer this question.

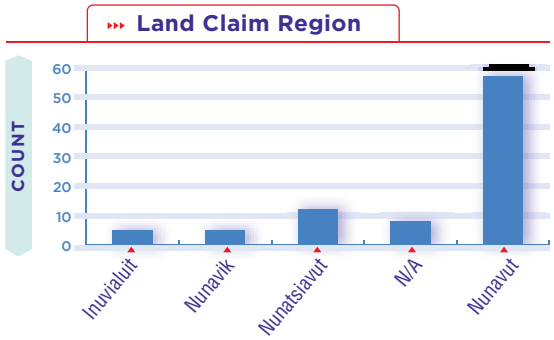
Forty-one percent of parents were between 26-35 years of age, 30% were between 36-45 years of age, 11% were between 19-25 years of age, one parent was under 18 years of age, 13% were 46-55 years of age, and two parents were 56-65 years of age.



Of the 84 parents who participated, 31% reported that they were living with a partner and 21% were married; the total representing 52% of parents. Forty-eight percent stated that they were single, separated, divorced or widowed.

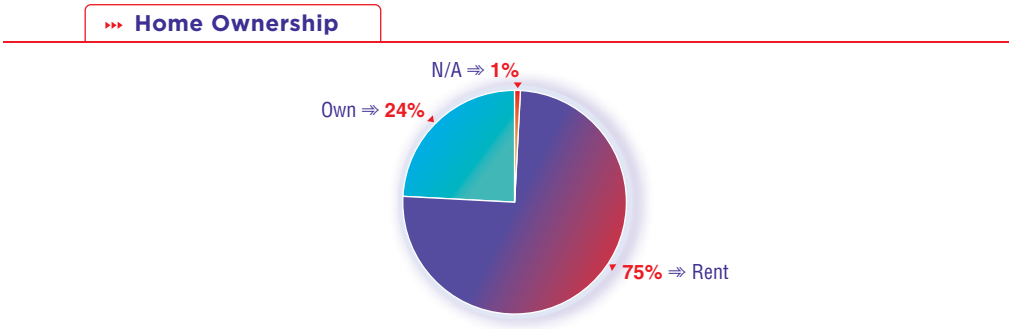


Of the 44 parents who were either married or living common law, nine were married to another Inuk. Thirty-five were either married or living common law with a non-Inuk partner. Thirty-four (39%) were single Inuk parents. Six (7%) parents were non-Inuit who had either divorced or separated from an Inuk partner. The majority of parents (75%) had extended family living in Ottawa, while 25% reported having none.

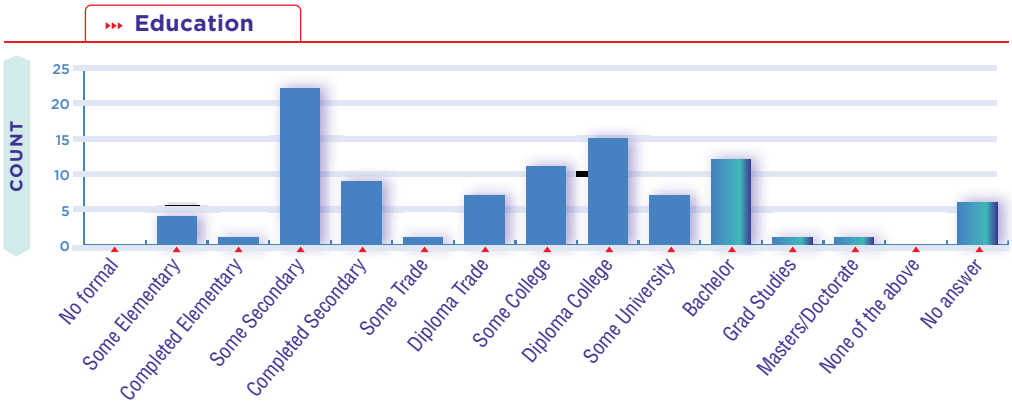


When asked what land claim region parents were affiliated with, the majority (68%) claimed Nunavut as their region of origin. Fourteen percent were from Nunatsiavut, 5% were from Nunavik, while 6% were from Inuvialuit. Seven parents did not answer this question. One parent was unable to answer because the community she is from in Quebec is not recognized by any of the land claim organizations.

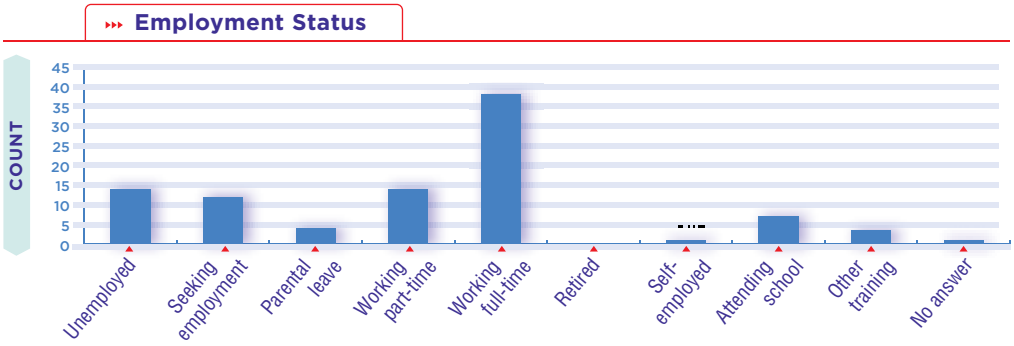
Most parents (75%) who participated in this project rented their current home or apartment. Twenty four percent owned their homes. One parent did not respond to this question. Ten percent had lived at their present address for less than one year. Fifty-six percent of parents had been living in their current home between 1-3 years, 15% between 4-6 years, and13% between 7-10 years. Two parents had been residing at their current address for over 10 years and two people did not answer the question.



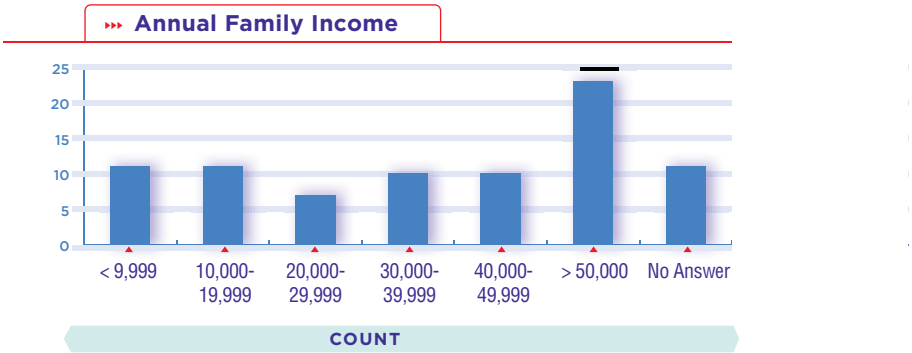
Thirty-two percent of parents had completed a post-secondary education at either a community college or university level. More specifically, 18% had received a college diploma and 14% had achieved a bachelor degree. One parent had begun studies at the graduate level and one had either a master's degree or doctorate. Over a quarter of the parents (26%) had completed some secondary level education. One reported that they had completed elementary school and four parents stated they had some elementary education. Several parents selected two answers to this question, e.g. college diploma and some university.



Most of the parents (63%) who participated in this project were either working part-time or full-time with the majority working full-time: 16% working part-time; 46% working full-time. Twenty-five percent of parents reported that they were unemployed and/or seeking employment. Four parents were on parental leave, one was self-employed, and ten were attending school or other training. One parent did not answer. Some parents selected two options in response to this question e.g. unemployed and attending school.

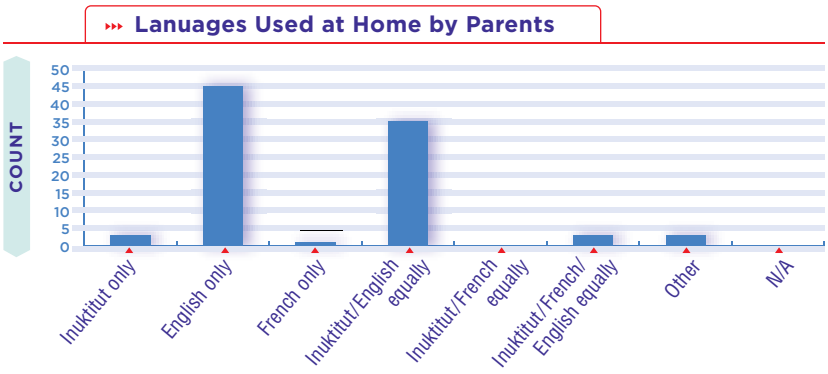


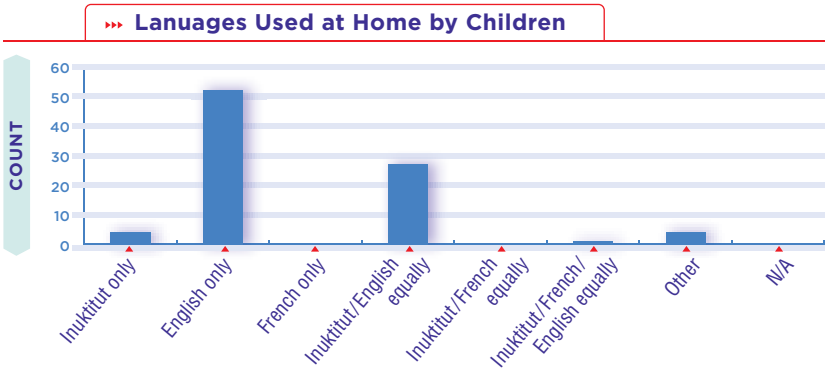
Eleven parents (13%) told us that they were making below $9,999 a year in family income. Likewise, thirteen percent stated that they had an annual income of $10,000-$19,999. Seven parents (8%) reported an income of $20,000-$29,999, while 12% reported making $30,000-$39,999 and 12% at $40,000-$49,999. Twenty-seven percent of parents had a family income of over $50,000. Twelve parents (14%) chose not to answer this question.



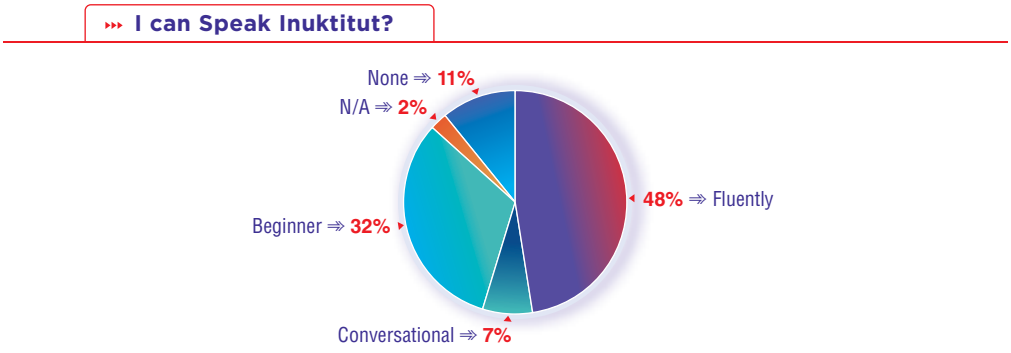
Language

Slightly over half of parents (52%) reported that they were speaking predominantly English at home. Forty percent spoke both Inuktitut and English at home. Only two parents indicated that they speak Inuktitut most often at home. When we asked what language children spoke most often at home, the number that spoke predominantly English rose to 62%. Thirty percent of parents stated that their children speak Inuktitut and English at home.



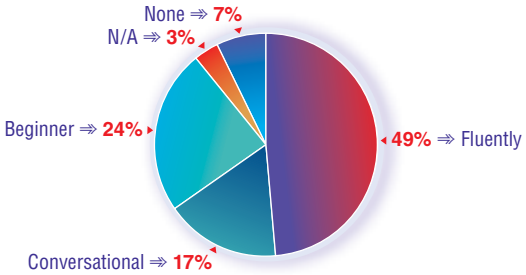


When asked about the level of speaking, understanding and reading Inuktitut, the results for each question differed. Almost half (48%) of parents could speak Inuktitut fluently. Thirty-two percent stated that they considered themselves beginners, 7% felt they were at a conversational level, while 11% didn't speak any Inuktitut.



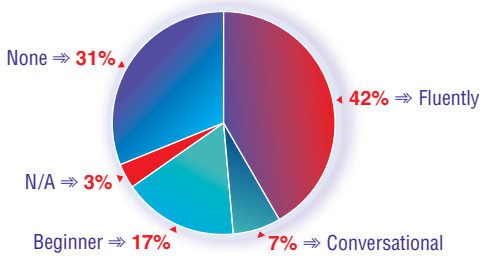
Forty-nine percent (49%) of parents were able to understand Inuktitut fluently. Twenty (24%) could understand at a beginner level, 17% were able to understand at a conversational level and 7% could not understand Inuktitut at all.

I Can Understand Inuktitut?



Again, almost half of the parents (42%) could read Inuktitut syllabics fluently. Seventeen percent considered themselves beginners, 7% could read at a conversational level, and 31% couldn't read Inuktitut at all.

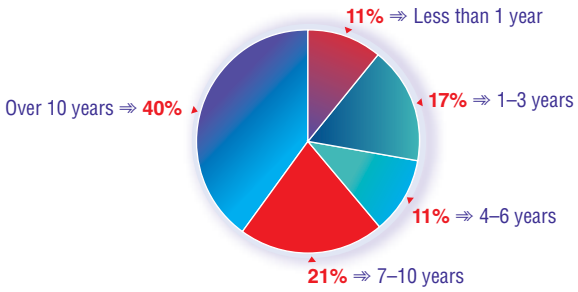
I Can Read Inuktitut?



Living in Ottawa

Forty percent of parents had lived in Ottawa for more than ten years. Almost one quarter (21%) had been living in Ottawa between seven and ten years, followed by 17% who had resided in Ottawa between one and three years. Eleven percent were Ottawa residents for 4-6 years while another 11% had moved to Ottawa less than a year ago.

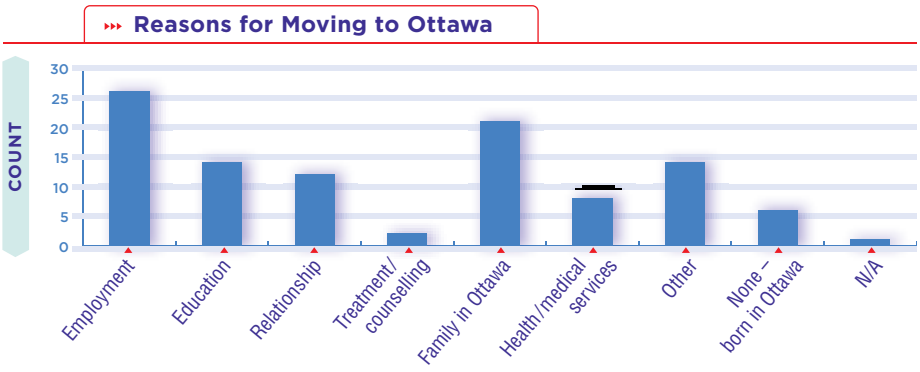
How Long Have you Lived in Ottawa?



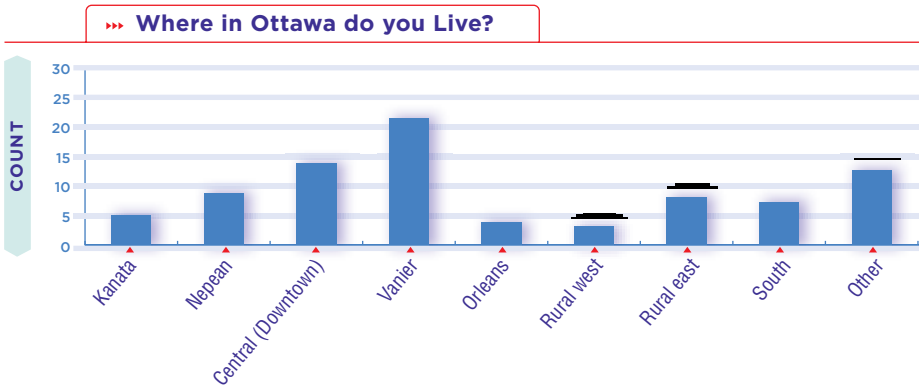
The most common reason for moving to Ottawa was employment at 31%, followed by having family in Ottawa at 25%. Sixteen percent of parents stated that education was the reason they moved to Ottawa, while 14% moved because of a relationship. Eight parents (9%) had relocated to the city to have better access to health and medical services. Two parents chose to live in Ottawa for treatment and counselling services. Seven percent of parents indicated that they were born in Ottawa and 16% said they moved to Ottawa for reasons other than what was listed on the questionnaire. Other reasons included access to child care services, leaving abusive relationships, lower cost of living and wanting to leave a small town. Several parents selected more than one answer to this question.

> "When I moved here, it was strictly for medical purposes. I wasn't aware of any specific programs and services. I found a place on my own. I went through my daughter's surgeon's advice. I received counselling through CHEO to get established. Only once I was established, I learned about the services. I did everything on my own, no family. That's only when I started to get to know people and that there was Inuit community – only after the fact."

> "I moved here for family and to get more help with the kids – I left my community to find my community."

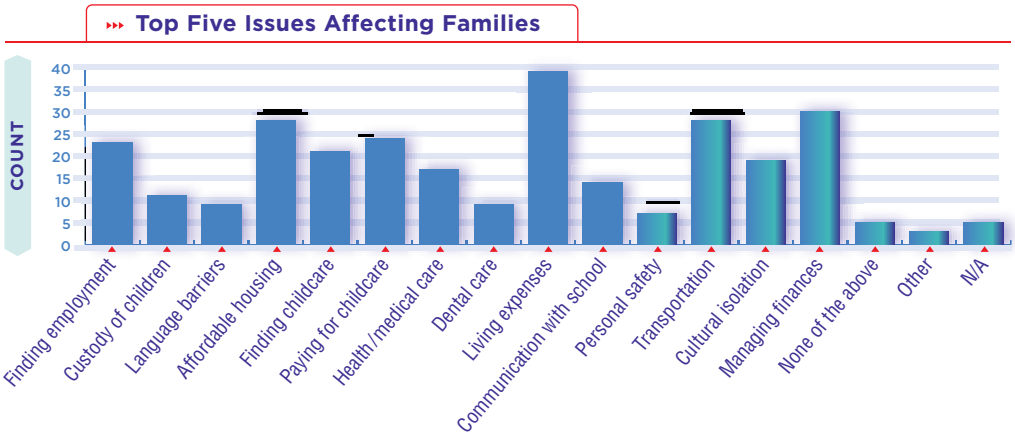


One quarter (25%) of parents that participated in this project lived in Vanier. Seventeen percent of parents lived in Ottawa central/downtown, 11% lived in Nepean, 10% resided in rural east, 8% lived in Ottawa south, 6% lived in Kanata, 5% in Orleans and 4% indicated rural west. Thirteen parents (14%) lived in "other" areas of Ottawa.



Challenges

When asked about the top five issues affecting their families, the most common issues reported by parents included living expenses, managing finances, transportation, cultural isolation, finding employment, affordable housing, health and medical care, and finding/paying for child care.



During focus groups, we asked parents to elaborate on the challenges they face living and raising children in Ottawa. Most of the challenges discussed reiterated what we know from serving Inuit children and parents in Ottawa: culture shock, difficulty maintaining culture and language, as well as finding affordable housing. However, many stories of experiences with racism and discrimination were shared by parents.

Culture Shock/Adjustment to City Life

One of the greatest challenges faced by parents we spoke to who had relocated to Ottawa was a feeling of culture shock and adjustment to city life. Parents talked about how difficult it was to leave a small northern community and adjust to living in a completely different setting. They shared what it is like to live in the North where everybody knows each other, and support from family or friends is just a few doors away.

"Up north there's only like 700 people there. The only place we can go to is the community hall, work, relatives or friend. Everyone knows everyone."

Although parents chose to move to Ottawa, many talked about feeling homesick for their homeland; the simplicity, and peace and quiet of the north, country food, being on the land, hunting, camping, and generally knowing that they belonged somewhere. Feelings of isolation were common for some parents as they adjusted to urban life.

"Inuit do want to succeed. It's hard to live in the city if you don't know what you're doing."

"It was the most difficult time just being alone with my child and not knowing other family, because my parents were always there helping me with my son in the north. I was trying to go to school and work with no support."

The strain of city life was difficult for many as they talked about pollution, fear, noise, getting around, schedules and deadlines, cost of housing, and basically learning how to navigate their new surroundings. Many parents commented on being shocked and confused that people didn't smile or say hello to each other on the street as they do in their home communities.

"I had never seen so many people in my life. I tried to hide from people in the washroom."

"I used to smile at everyone because everyone does that at home. [People in Ottawa] thought I was crazy."

Several parents shared their struggles with the use of alcohol and drugs; the challenge of attaining and maintaining sobriety in an urban setting. Coming from northern communities where alcohol is limited or even prohibited, made easy access to substance even more enticing for some.

"Drugs and alcohol are cheap in Ottawa and it is easy to get into trouble."

"Alcohol and drugs are available everywhere. So it took me 7 years to get over partying."

"My big challenge is alcohol and trying to be away from it. So I learned to keep away from it because I love my children, myself and my granddaughter. I want to stay strong."

Parents who had participated in Tungasuvvingat Inuit's Mamisarvik Treatment program felt grateful for the positive impact it had on their life and their ability to stay sober.

"There's no trauma and addictions programs in the small communities in the north. I had drinking problems for many years but I've been doing this program in Ottawa and it helps."

Although parents appreciate the lower cost of living in Ottawa compared to the north, many parents found that managing living expenses was more difficult in Ottawa away from family support, informal and affordable child care arrangements, family and community activities and not having to pay for transportation.

"It's hard to raise children when we don't have money to go where the fun places are for our children i.e. swimming, play centres."

> "Rent was very expensive; I didn't have much money leftover for food. I had to go to a donation church for a food hamper. I didn't have enough to feed myself."

> "I had to quit school or quit work because I had no childcare support. I'm glad they [OICC] have the daycare now."

> "I lived with my mom who owned her house, so we didn't pay any rent. Now I rent a three bedroom for $1,105."

> "Child care is too expensive. Even though my husband makes so much money, it all goes to a mortgage and food. We can't apply for a subsidy, then I can't go to work."

Another challenge related to city life that was discussed was the need for transportation. In home communities, people can virtually walk everywhere; there is no public transit. Learning how to use the bus system and pay for transportation is a challenge for many. Although parents did agree that once they learned how to get around the city, they appreciated the services of public transit, aside from the cost.

Maintaining Culture and Language

In keeping with feelings of isolation adjusting to city life, parents also spoke about the challenge of maintaining their culture and language in Ottawa. Living in an urban setting meant adapting to the new way of life for many. While some parents recognized that losing some aspects of Inuit culture was inevitable, they also shared feelings of sadness in this reality.

> "When we were at home, you could walk in and watch someone sewing, and then there would be others drinking tea. How do I get my kids to sew? I learned how to sew when I was back home. I never went to a program and said show me how."

> "Losing culture and your language. Kids are losing language and adults too. We don't have access to country food, can't fish. It's not just eating it but going out and getting it. Losing your cultural music, like throat singing. Not enough access to cultural traditions."

> "Inuit children need more support such as keeping their language and following more traditional customs such as drum dancing."

Employment & Housing

Several parents stated that one of their greatest challenges was finding employment. They discussed their frustration in not being employable because of a lack of training. They were interested in partaking in employment training and upgrading but didn't always know how to do this or where to go for help.

> "Biggest issue right now is jobs. Ottawa, is a town that depends on paper, experience doesn't matter. I have tons of experience with youth work. They rather choose someone with a certificate. Here they don't see the experience. They see the degrees."

Other parents noted problems in finding and keeping affordable, safe and quality housing, in particular outside of Vanier.

> "Inuit Non Profit Housing is in Vanier but I don't want to live there because that is where I partied and did drugs and I do not want to go there again. It isn't safe for my daughter to live in Vanier. Inuit housing should own more buildings in different areas of Ottawa so I don't have to go to Vanier. They need to expand the housing for Inuit people to other areas."

Several parents pointed to homelessness as a difficult issue for them, either personally or in relation to someone they knew. They felt saddened in seeing homeless Inuit on the streets, knowing that in the north homelessness does not exist in small Inuit communities.

Discrimination/Judgment

Perhaps the most agreed upon challenge faced by Inuit living in Ottawa was experiences with racism, discrimination, judgment and disrespect. We heard countless stories of parents who had been treated very poorly because they were Inuit, who had been exposed to degrading comments and remarks, and whose values and cultural practices had been attacked by members of the general public, service agency personnel and government employees including the police. An astounding lack of awareness and compassion led to many parents feeling inadequate, unworthy and unwelcome.

> "They would call me savage in Vanier. The French people called us savages all the time or called me chief."

> "My kids had eggs thrown at them and kids would say "Go home where you belong, go back to China."

> "Ontario Works was degrading. When I went in the first time, the worker said, 'oh you are from Labrador? I lived in Labrador for 10 years'. The lady was interested in what she was doing there. At the end of the conversation, she was like so you were on social services there too. She says – 'isn't that what most aboriginals do.' It's discriminating."

> "We were riding the bus with our son, sitting in the front where the kids usually are, an older couple watching what they are doing. Feeling like under a microscope. Saying comments within ear shot. Some of the comments they made where like, they eat raw meat. But then it started getting negative. They were trying to have a big effect on me. People just don't know any better."

> "I have had 'run-ins' with the police who automatically labelled me "drunk" even when I was sober because I am Inuit. I have been called a prostitute and also the police

have not believed me when I was being beaten up by my boyfriend who said "she fell" when he actually pushed me down. I want non-Inuit organizations to know that all Inuit are not drunks and drug addicts."

"We used to get cash transfers, one time my parents sent me some money, and there was an Inuk lady ahead of me. The lady in front of me was intoxicated and had alcohol problems. The teller was rude. He was saying, we are all the same. He throws the money at her. Then it was my turn. I told him my name. Then he looks at me. You are going to go do the same thing. You are all the same. Like I said to him, we are not all the same. Some people have issues they have to deal with. I'm an Inuk too just like that lady, but I have a child that I have to take care of. That's why I'm here to pick up money for my child. That was really racist what you said. I want your ID number; I want your name so I can talk to your manager. He said that he didn't have a manager. I went home and called. That made me so upset. Moving down to Ottawa makes you stronger. You are not afraid to say anything anymore. When I first moved down, I was scared."

"Sometimes like white people, especially men think that we are bums, alcoholics and prostitutes. I didn't like that when I got there. If I wait for someone in Rideau, they think I'm a panhandler. I was having a smoke outside and someone tried to give me money. Even my daughter, it's happened to her. We are not all like that."

"We are very intelligent people. Some people look down on us because we are indigenous people; they think we are not very smart. They

still think we live in igloos, eat raw meat and commit sacrifices. We are modern people, we live in modern houses. We are just like everyone else. The stereotypes of being Inuit or native, it's a distorted image. We are great people, we are very intelligent people. It's not against the law to ask for help."

Some parents spoke about feelings of discrimination even amongst Inuit. They talked about feelings of inadequacy and isolation for Inuit who had not learned to speak Inuktitut growing up. They noted that there can be a sense of not being a "real Inuk" if they didn't speak Inuktitut. Similarly, non-Inuit spouses or partners did not always feel welcome in the Inuit community in Ottawa.

"As a non-Inuk (married to an Inuk) it is at times difficult to connect to the Inuit community, especially because I don't speak the language. The OICC helps. Thanks for all your programming."

"Now that I am a well paid employee I am not welcome in the urban Inuit community. There is a reverse racism at work in Ottawa. I am called 'a wannabeInuk' because I am trying to learn the language. People say "what are you doing here, you are not Inuk."

"I am embarrassed that I do not speak Inuktitut."

Parents spoke in unison about the need for increased awareness of Inuit culture within service agencies and government departments. They believed that if non-Inuit became better educated about Inuit culture that they might show more respect and compassion for their needs, and the needs of their family. The need for cultural sensitivity training was echoed repeatedly from parents.

"We need education for service providers such as CAS for increased awareness. It would be beneficial for better understanding of Inuit and culture. Inuit are not just living in the Arctic anymore."

Childrearing Practices

Another challenge parents shared was reactions to differences in childrearing between Inuit and non-Inuit. As discussed earlier, many differences exist between Inuit childrearing practices and those of mainstream Canadians. Many parents felt judged by non-Inuit for the way they raise their children. One parent spoke of the disapproving looks she would get from non-Inuit mothers at the park when she allowed her children to take moderate risks on the play structure. Inuit children are honoured and respected in a way that allows them to learn and make mistakes. Parents do not always follow structured daily routines that are common for non-Inuit, e.g., mealtimes and bedtimes. Parents wished for respect, tolerance and support from non-Inuit in how they raise their children.

"Inuit methods of raising children differ considerably from those in southern Canadian traditions. To the outside observer, Inuit children enjoy a substantial amount of freedom, as indicated by the fact that when they are not in school, children stay up much later than southern children, they are often fed when they are hungry and not according to a set meal schedule, and are disciplined in a different manner by their parents. To the uninformed observer, Inuit parents may appear indifferent or overly lax with their children. Again cultural differences account for this misconception."[xxv]

"We use amautiqs to carry our babies so that they won't be cold or too far away from us."

"Bottle feeding is not always stopped at an early age."

"Parents learn about raising kids by experience. It's a cultural way of learning things. If you go outside without your boots on, you're going to be cold so next time you wear your boots. It would be good for social workers to know that there's a different teaching to children. It would be helpful if they would have cultural sensitive workshops; even the teaching about the amautiq. They say they are not good for kids. People complain about the strollers because they take so much room and the amautiq barely takes room. And babies fall asleep."

"Social workers cannot understand how we are brought up because they never went up there. They don't understand our traditions; we are more laid back up north than here. I heard about it over and over again, some social workers didn't understand. I saw so much of that in my building. People are losing their kids to CAS. That really broke my heart. Some of the parents would have a hard time adjusting to being down here. They got so many things to see. It's crazy down here you know, compared to up north, where everything is slow and everybody knows everybody."

Children's Aid Society (CAS)

Another challenge that many parents talked to us about was their experiences with the Children's Aid Society. We heard countless stories of parents feeling as though their children were apprehended without cause or adequate information. Many parents felt that the CAS had intervened based on cultural differences in childrearing rather than a true safety concern for their child.

"They can't keep taking our children away. They don't understand how we raise children in a very holistic way."

> "People are exasperated with the CAS, kids in the north, they are brought up differently."

In cases where families did need support, parents felt that the CAS should play a more supportive and preventative role in assisting parents in keeping their children with them whenever possible. We were also told of many encounters with social workers who seemed to be biased against Inuit.

> "CAS is very intimidating and invasive. They need to be more preventative, rather than to intervene."

> "The Inuit Children's Aid worker is not "Inuit" – why is she representing Inuit ways? Although she is helpful sometimes and tries to learn about the Inuit culture she makes a lot of over power and patronizing remarks. She was unprepared to help me as an Inuit woman."

> "CAS should ask questions, respect first, and not just take the boy. Have further investigations. Not just barge in. Also they think that Inuit just want to drink. We are not here for that. Ontario Works, she didn't even talk to me or anything, then behind my back, she sent a CAS behind my back without even telling me. She seems like she doesn't like me. It was hard. The next time I have an appointment with her, I'll bring someone from T.I."

Health Care

Several parents spoke about their challenges in accessing adequate health care for their family. They spoke of their frustration in not being able to find a clinic due to the shortage of physicians and the wait list at Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health. One parent spoke of her frustrations with the health care system in relation to her child who has a severe cardiac condition. She felt that parents without family support in Ottawa are likely to feel the burden of caring for a sick child due to a lack of service coordination and health care supports.

Many parents also expressed great frustration with using their 'N' number in Ottawa. They are often faced with health care providers who have no knowledge of this program, what it does, or how it works. Because of the lack of education and awareness, parents are often trying to educate dentists, health care professionals, and optometrists alike about the program. Identification is also a concern with the program. When applicants are successfully accepted into NIHB program they are issued a piece of paper 8.5x11 with a number informing them that they now qualify. Many health care providers view the paper and wonder if it is official documentation. Other parents shared stories of having to wait until medications were approved.

> "It would be nice to streamline the N number process for everyone. Make it more accessible. There should be one website, that if you are from this land claim, you fill out this form."

> "To have a list of what organizations take the n number. Raise awareness of the number and the NTI number. Like if you need dental, this place takes it."

> "Pharmacies down here, some don't know the number exists. They don't always believe you. Government places don't know what these cards mean."

"We need proper health insurance. My daughter has like 6 to 8 medications that she will take for the rest of her life. She needs like 4 different vitamins, they are not covered. If they see the medication they don't know the name of they will accept if faster, but the vitamins, if she doesn't take them, she's going to die soon. We were in the hospital twice because she didn't have the vitamin K."

"Getting the kids their "N" number was ridiculously difficult. I found out after a long period of research. There was a lot of bureaucratic rigmarole; I was finally directed to FNIHB and all the contact information was there. It must be tough for Inuit people who are less resourced – you need access to the internet and then you need to know your way around the internet. Literacy is an issue with a lot of Inuit so this would be very difficult."

"The Constitution states that all Canadian Citizens may move freely to any province – so 'N' numbers should be based on descent not current location."

Benefits of Living in Ottawa

Despite the many challenges expressed by parents, we also learned of a multitude of benefits and positive aspects of living in Ottawa. When asked what parents liked most about living in Ottawa and what the benefits were for their family, a variety of perspectives were shared.

Most parents felt strongly about living in Ottawa because of the level of support for Inuit. In the words of one parent, **"Ottawa is an Inuit friendly city."** The large Inuit community in Ottawa was an important reason why many parents liked living here. Many parents spoke about how comforting it was to walk down the street and see other Inuit. It made them feel at home and that they belonged. The Inuit community was described as tight-knit, close, supportive and welcoming.

Parents also appreciated the different programs and resources for Inuit offered through organizations such as the Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre and Tungasuvvingat Inuit that help them adjust to living in an urban setting. The presence of Inuit organizations in Ottawa also allowed them to maintain their culture and traditions in a city away from their homeland, and to receive support in general.

"I learned to appreciate my culture. Because up north, you don't think about it. It's just a way of life. But there's so much focus here, and it's so promoted here. Living here, it really opens my eyes and be more proud of my culture. You don't think about that you need to prove anything. Here you get to appreciate."

"It was hard not to have family here. A friend of mine helped me out. I started going to T.I. and they helped me. I found a place and T.I. helped me out with my three kids."

"OICC supported me the most. OICC was supportive and embracing. They were here for the children ... [they do] what's best for the child. They really had a supportive and inclusive good message. It's about the kids first. [If] the kid is hungry, let's feed him. My son went to Head Start. I'm here to speak for my kid."

"T.I. is a big help. It is a major part of the Inuit community. There's a sense of peace knowing someone is willing to help."

"I have been raising my children here in Ottawa for close to 10 years. I have been living down south from the Iqaluit, Nunavut. We first lived in the country where there were no services for Inuit. We have now been here in Ottawa for 3 years now. I am very happy. There are services and programs for Inuit. It seems like since I moved from the North to South, that I have been more interested in my culture and traditions. I guess living up North, you don't realize how important it is until you move away from it. So I am thankful and grateful that my family and I can keep our culture and traditions with all the services and programs here in Ottawa. Keep up the good work you all do here for us Inuit."

Parents also expressed their desire to live in Ottawa to be close to family who also lived in the city. The support they received from family was very important to their sense of well-being. Relocating from a small northern community can be overwhelming and parents felt better prepared to tackle their move if family was close by. Many people stayed with relatives while they got settled and learned how to "get around" the city.

"It would be so challenging without family. I don't know how I would cope without a family. They helped financially and with directions in the city. They supported me. If I wouldn't have them here, I don't think I'd make it."

Employment and educational opportunities in Ottawa also ranked high for the parents we spoke to. Many parents told us that they felt their children would receive a better education in Ottawa than in the North. Parents also were drawn to the city because of improved opportunities for employment.

"I left school when I was very young. Then I decided to go back when I sobered up and it took me 4 years to get high school. Now I'm going to College. I came here to be near my children. Next thing I know I have a diploma."

"I'm happy to be living here and raising my son. He's going to have a good education."

"My life has already improved because I am working part time and going to school. I am now reliable."

Many parents were drawn to Ottawa because the cost of living was lower than in their home community. They discussed the benefit of lower food prices and the array of choices in purchasing fresh produce. One mother talked about how exciting it was to buy fresh meat as opposed to meat that was freezer burned (in a store in the North). Likewise, numerous parents were grateful for so many choices for retail shopping. They were thrilled to be able to have more than one or two stores to shop for children's clothing and household items.

Most parents expressed their gratitude for Ottawa as a moderate size city that was generally clean, quiet, safe and beautiful. One parent called Ottawa a big town with a small town feel. Access to green space and countryside was mentioned by several parents as a benefit of living in Ottawa compared to larger cities such as Toronto. Several parents also preferred the climate in Ottawa over the harsh winters in the North.

Parents spoke about having access to a wide variety of recreational and extra-curricular activities for their children and family. They appreciated Ottawa for its availability of museums, galleries, summer festivals, parks and outdoor activities. It was generally felt that Ottawa offered a large variety of family oriented activities.

> "My sons play competitive hockey so Ottawa provides access to their love of hockey. The children are much closer to their father here as he has an interest in their chosen sport. In schooling one of my sons has an individual learning program and I'm not sure if this would be available up north. The children are much happier here. We actually have access to seal and char here too."

> "There are more things to do. I can take my kids to events. There are more resources and more activities."

Other positives that were shared by parents included access to health, medical and dental care, more child care choices, improved housing, access to treatment and counseling services and easy transportation. A few parents said they liked that Ottawa was a multicultural city and they felt this would have a positive influence on their children.

> "Medical was very beneficial. A lot of the services were easy to access for my daughter. Everything was right here. The only thing was very difficult was finding no English speaking people coming down for medical. Because of no interpreter, there was a delay in the results. I don't know if there are Inuktitut translators available."

Several parents also shared their feelings about how they have changed their life for the better living in Ottawa. They were grateful for the support they received from various agencies that helped them heal, grow and develop self-confidence in their new life.

"Things became positive, not in shelters anymore. I can take care of my kids without CAS. I went back to school and I am a teacher now."

"I am proud to be Inuit. I was never proud because growing up I was teased. Here it is very welcoming to be comfortable with who I am."

"I've struggled with addiction since I've been here living in Ottawa, so almost 10 years now. CAS took my children away until I got my act together. Now I'm working full time and going to school after years and years and years."

"I went into rehab in August 2008 and have kept my sobriety since then and am restarting my life again."

"Learning all about myself. Helped me to see myself and be more confident. I never saw myself before."

"It has made me stronger because I have to depend on myself."

"Medically there was help. Had cluster headaches, now haven't had one in two years. Positive, met my girlfriend and am settling down. Now I'm a family man, the best thing a man can be. New dream happening."

Programs and Services

When asked if parents were aware of services and activities available in Ottawa for their children and their families, 50% felt that they were. Forty-four percent felt somewhat aware and 6% were not aware of programs and services. Forty-eight percent stated that they did not have difficulty finding out about services, 16% said they did have difficulty and 36% responded with somewhat.

When parents were asked what services they were using on behalf of their family, quite a variety of organizations were identified. The asterisks indicate which services parents felt were the most important for their family.

Inuit/Aboriginal Organizations:

- Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre – all services *
- Tungasuvvingat Inuit – all services *
- Odawa Native Friendship Centre *

Education:

- Schools
- Local Preschool Programs
- Adult High School
- Makonsag Aboriginal Head Start
- Montessori
- Canterbury High School for the Arts

Child Care:
- Children Resources on wheels (CROW)
- Various child care centres
- YMCA-YWCA afterschool program

Medical/Health:
- Various Medical Clinics
- Pinecrest Queensway Community Health Centre
- OHIP
- Non Insured Health Benefits *
- Wabano Center for Aboriginal Health *
- Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO) *
- Larga Baffin

Counselling/Treatment:
- Ottawa Family Services
- Amethyst Women's Addiction Centre
- Sandy Hill Addiction Services
- Rideauwood Addictions and Family Services
- Trauma Treatment Center

Housing:
- Ottawa Housing
- Inuit Non Profit Housing Corporation*
- Gignul Non-Profit Housing Corporation

Parental Support/Education:
- City of Ottawa – Healthy Babies
- Parent Resource Centre

Women's Support:
- Women Shelters *
- St-Joes Women's Drop-in
- The Well
- Centre 510 Rideau *
- Tewegan Transition house
- Minwaashin – Aboriginal Women's Support Centre *

Teenage/Young Parents:
- Bethany Hope Centre for Young Parents
- St-Mary's Home
- Youville Centre

Recreation:
- Various Sports
- City of Ottawa Recreation
- Beavers

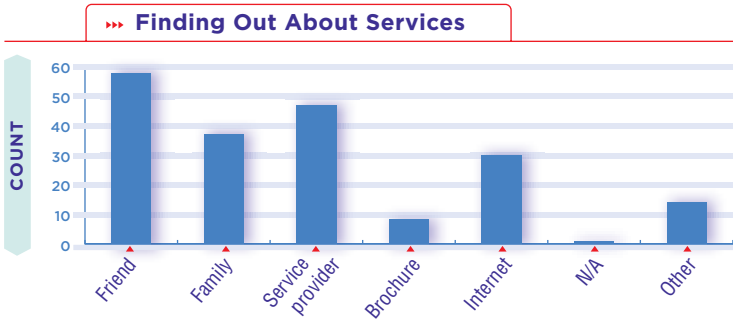
Youth:
- Youth Services Bureau
- Operation Go Home

Government:
- Employment Insurance
- Ontario Disability Support Program
- Ontario Works
- Ottawa Police

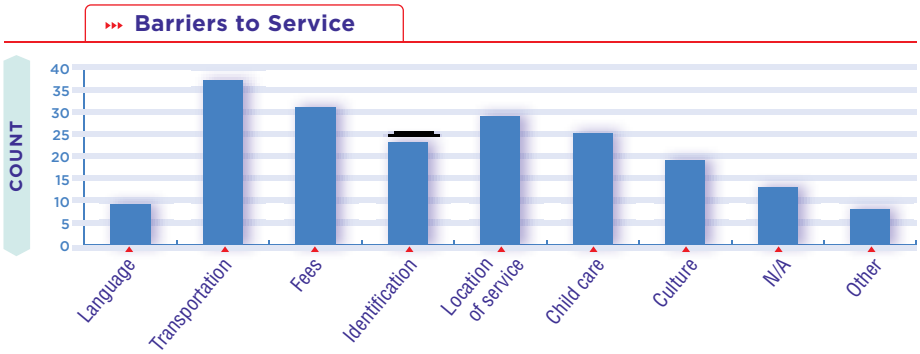
Poverty:
- St-Vincent
- Salvation Army
- Food Banks
- Shepherds of Good Hope

Other:
- Children's Aid Society (CAS)
- Onadoga
- St. Luke's Anglican Church

Asking how parents found out about services in the community revealed a strong tendency for communication to travel by word of mouth. The most common way to learn about programs and services was from talking to a friend or family member. Many parents indicated that they received information directly from service providers. The internet was another useful way to discover what was available for families. Brochures did not seem to be an effective way to reach parents.



The greatest barrier for parents in accessing services for their family was transportation, followed by fees, location of service, child care and identification. Somewhat surprisingly, culture and language did not seem to be a critical barrier for most families.



Other barriers that were identified included finding a physician, wait times for health care services, financial restraints to pay for parking and gas, and waiting lists for services such as Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health and Sivummut Head Start.

> "I was expecting that they were taking me with open arms. I was four months pregnant. And, they said I can't take you. That was hard. People need to have more welcoming attitude. They are so used of a small community. When you are from a small community, you are never turned away."

Many parents elaborated on the lack of information and communication regarding programs and services. They expressed frustration because they felt that they did not have access to information about services for their families, in particular Inuit-specific services. Several parents asked to be added to an OICC email distribution list or mailing list so they could have advance notice of upcoming events.

Yet, other parents spoke of their frustration in trying to learn about professional services in Ottawa. It was noted that in small home communities, everybody knows what is available; there is no searching involved.

> "Service provider addresses are only available for health care professionals. It seems like nobody wants to give any information to the average Joe. If you had all the programs available, you don't have enough advertising until it's too late and now you're in jail."

"I had a criminal charge, I had to go see psychiatrist. He gave me a list of anger managements programs. They give me a list of places but we all need access to that information not just professionals so we can get the information immediately."

A barrier for families that was expressed repeatedly was the location of services. We heard from many parents that they felt that services were too centred in Vanier. They stressed that not all Inuit live in Vanier, and that families living in other areas of Ottawa were losing out.

"Community – based services are in Vanier which is difficult for me to get to as I live in the Hintonburg area. Minwaashin offers services in centre town for Inuit but not enough. I can't make it to the programs in Vanier."

"Basically, all the services are in Vanier. They should be looking at other areas in Ottawa to establish a satellite office to not have transportation issues."

"Inuit specific programs and services are too centralized in Vanier, should consider decentralizing to all 4 corners of Ottawa."

"Raising Inuit children in Ottawa is good and bad. Being able to access OICC services for those that work full time and do not live in Vanier would be awesome."

Similarly, the time that services were offered proved to be a barrier for many. Parents felt that they would have better access to cultural programs if they were delivered at times that accommodated working parents. Events held during the day limited the attendance of many families and they pleaded for more activities to be held on the weekends.

We asked parents if the services and activities available in Ottawa met the needs of their family. The majority (62%) of parents felt that services did meet their family's needs, 30% stated that they did not, and 8% did not answer this question.

"Anything is possible down here compared to up north. They have limited things, limited everything. Down here, it's unlimited. I find they help each other more. Seems like there's support. You can ask anyone to know things you can do. When we were limited in money, there is other things to do.Like public library, a cheap way of being resourceful."

When parents elaborated on what services were still needed, a variety were identified ranging from more youth programming to increased and focussed settlement services for Inuit new to Ottawa.

A strong desire to have more programming for youth was very evident in parents' feedback. Parents recognize that the needs of their older children and youth are different from their young ones. They talked about a huge "gap in services" for the middle years including afterschool programming, drop in programs, computer access, homework support, training and employment support, volunteer opportunities, and adjustment/settlement support.

"It is really hard raising teenage children, it's like an impact on them – culture shock. It affects the whole family when there are no resources or information we can get when we first move to a city."

"It would be good to provide services for Inuit youth which are targeted at kids who are not at risk. My kids would like to learn the traditional arts like wood carving, drum making and have access to Elders – to take part in their culture. I would also like to attend Inuktitut classes with my sons."

"I know there's a lot of programs out there for teenagers but there are never any for my daughter's age [6–12 years old], like art program that she could go to on the weekend or after school. Just for her age group. Cause every time my son is leaving, she wants to go."

"We need more activities for teens 14 and 15 years old."

Many parents commented on the lack of an unstructured drop in centre for Inuit to gather with their children. While they appreciated all the structured programs offered by Tungasuvvingat Inuit and the Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre aimed at skill development, positive parenting, and cultural knowledge, what many parents crave is a place where they can simply be with other Inuit; share country food, talk, watch their children play, sew, and support one another. Many parents spoke about how this type of setting would support Inuit in who they are rather than trying to learn a new skill.

"We need a place to hang out – a drop in, a place to hang out and get the services we need. More informal and relaxing."

"I want Inuit to have a community centre. T.I, was a drop-in centre before but it seems like they are closing that. That if the OICC could have a drop-in like a friendship centre."

"Every function, every get together is always to teach you, always wanting to improve you. No function besides Christmas to just come and be."

Several parents talked about the need to help Inuit when they first arrive in Ottawa; to provide information that would assist them to settle in, adjust to an urban setting, and understand

culture shock. One parent expressed this need when she/he said that more Inuit will be coming from the north. This parent felt that there was a need for staff at Inuit organizations dedicated to settlement concerns to help parents **"learn how to live in the city"**. Other parents agreed that a central resource would be helpful for newcomers – a service that would provide information on what to expect in the city, what resources are available, and where to go to get help for specific issues. Applying for a health card can be overwhelming when parents are coping with many other settlement needs.

> "We need easier access to important information for Inuit in Ottawa like knowing how to find their "N" number. All the questions Inuit would have coming to Ottawa should be directed to one source – how to set up in a big city, an orientation service – one stop shop."

> "Mother asked subsidized housing for a space. Mother went to housing office and said I'm not leaving until you give me a place to stay. They called the cops on her and made her leave. In Labrador, you went to see George and told him you need a place, and he would find you one."

> "Have a pamphlet to explain about the city and having a pamphlet about Inuit based organizations would really help. Instead of all the frustrations I went through. A pamphlet to have places to go to."

Although organizations such as the Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre and Tungasuvvingat Inuit provide a wide range of cultural programs, services and events, parents still desire more. They asked for more community gatherings, country food, time with Elders, outings to the country, traditional skill development such as sewing and drum dancing, and more opportunities to simply socialize with other Inuit. Many expressed their concern over the declining use of Inuktitut and wished for more programs to teach and support the use of Inuktitut in Ottawa.

> "Children need a regular Inuktitut language class. I am the only one who speaks it and they are in an environment where English is their main language used most often."

> "More organized cultural activities would be nice."

> "Keep the culture alive – more teachings, more Inuit Days. Education is key."

> "Keep up the language, as it is so important."

> "Inuit children need more support such as keeping their language and following more traditional customs such as drum dancing."

> "Teach them (children) to love who they are and be proud of themselves and their heritage."

> "I think it's extremely important to keep a child's culture with them and let them grow up knowing who they are and keeping connected to their culture."

Other services that were still needed included respite care for parents, affordable summer programming for children, safe

and affordable housing outside of Vanier, improved access to a variety of child care options including infant care, after-school care, emergency care, and evening care. Several parents also called out for Inuit specific family counseling, help for abusive and violent relationships and programs/support for single parents. A desire to connect with Elders in Ottawa was expressed by many parents.

Several parents also spoke about the difficulty in accessing funding for post-secondary education.

> "My children are beneficiaries of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement. As Inuit living outside Nunavut, I want to ensure that they are able to access their full benefits as beneficiaries. The needs and priorities of Inuit living in urban centres are not always addressed. In particular, the education needs of Inuit living outside of Nunavut. It is often difficult to access funding for the pursuit of post-secondary education."

Additional services that parents felt were needed to meet their needs included an Inuit-specific women's shelter, a community garden, family counselling, employment training, and a parenting support group. It was also noted that facilities for Inuit should be handicap accessible.

> "We need more workshops. Like business workshop. How to start business, how to get a sponsor. Workshops around particular skills. For working people, it's hard to come to the workshops. Have weekend workshops with child care."

Many parents expressed their gratitude for feeling that services for Inuit were improving. They appreciated that some service providers were making an effort to connect with the Inuit community.

> "Since Wabano opened, health care is so much better."

> "Better integration of several of the services. Now Ottawa police want to connect early on with children; they canoe and kayak from Dow`s Lake to Victoria island. "Paddling with a cop". It was so heart-warming. To take time with the next generation."

> "The message is getting out, that there are Aboriginal people in the city and they are good people too. There are happy white kids in grade 6, learning about throat singing. Police are telling kids to grow up with their Inuit traditions and still be cool."

> "There's a bigger Aboriginal community to fall back on – T.I., OICC, Wabano. People that have lived here longer and who have more experience and understand the culture of Ottawa share how to get around."

Likewise, many parents expressed their gratitude for Inuit specific services available for their family.

> "I am very happy to raise my children where there is an Inuit Head Start and Family Resource Centre where my kids are very happy to be Inuit. They learn songs, Inuktitut, and eat Inuit food."

"I just want to let you know that you are helping us. Both my children have gone through Inuit Head Start here. I am proud of your abilities. They ask questions about my community, they want to know and they say they want to visit my community. There are hard times however, but it is what we all go through in our own life. Thank you very much."

"We have now been here in Ottawa for 3 years now. I am very happy. There are services and programs for Inuit. It seems like since I moved from the North to South, that I have been more interested in my culture and traditions. I guess living up North you don't realize how important it is until you move away from it. So I am thankful and grateful that my family and I can keep our culture and traditions with all the services and programs here in Ottawa. Keep up the good work you all do here for us Inuit. Thank you."

"The Inuit community and OICC have been an absolute blessing for my children and family. Raising a multi-cultural family is very involving and demanding at times. OICC is an additional support system. It has and continues to enrich our family culturally, emotionally and socially."

"OICC is a great place to have Inuit children to attend because culture and language is introduced."

"I very much appreciate the opportunities to provide cultural and community information to my child, born in Ottawa with no Inuktitut in the home. Events like the police kayaking are great to bring the community to attention."

"I am so grateful that the Head Start and Daycare is here – somewhere my children can meet other children like them and learn about their culture."

Lastly, we asked parents to tell us what they wanted non-Inuit service providers to know about Inuit living in Ottawa. The responses revealed layers of feeling misunderstood, judged, misrepresented and stereotyped. For the most part, parents wanted agency staff to know more about their community, culture, strength, resiliency and values so that they might understand where Inuit come from and what is important to them.

- "We are a tight knit and supportive community"
- "Inuit are awesome."
- "That we are away from home."
- "Inuit love to laugh and smile. Smile and be welcoming. Inclusion is very important. Do not isolate anyone."
- "Enjoy Inuit culture as a diverse culture."
- "That we are not savages. We have a culture just like other people. We were brought up that way. We like it and want to preserve it. Seals, bears, furs will always be in our culture."
- "Nunavut's serene landscape."

- "The hardships of Inuit in my community."
- "The prices of all things back in our Nunavut community."
- "We may not all be well educated, but we are eager to learn."
- "We eat differently."
- "Inuit raise their children differently."
- "Food is the way the community takes care of each other – full tummy = happy."
- "I want them to know where Inuit go."
- "That we have to get help for those who have nothing to wake up to – no employment, no education and no money."
- "We are a separate group. There are many kinds of Inuit, not all have the inner city problems – and then some "grow out of them."
- "Do not judge us. It is important to my children to keep Inuit culture. Inuit need each other, it's important."
- "Inuit are important – culturally and traditionally."
- "We have different values and morals. We have lots to offer and we are not all alcoholics and addicts."
- "Greater awareness of the beauty, richness and history of our culture and people, especially to avoid stereotyping."
- "Greater understanding of needs of families especially the front line service providers."

They wanted the strengths and beauty of their culture to be recognized by non-Inuit, rather than stereotypical generalizations that may stem from hearsay or limited exposure to Inuit.

- "We are not all alcoholics and drug users."
- "We are not all panhandlers."
- "We are employable."
- "We are intelligent people."
- "That we exist, stop racism towards us, we are not all the same."
- "We are culturally different, not stupid."
- "We are very intelligent and educated."
- "We are proud and hardworking."
- "We are equals. What we eat and what we do makes no difference to who we are."
- "We are human like any other race."
- "That we are not all crazy."
- "They need to be able to fully explain things in an easier language."

Ultimately, the parents we spoke to wanted to be treated fairly and with respect.

- "I would like them to know that all the stigmas they hear about Inuit are not true. We are educated and we should be treated with respect."
- "Learn to respect my Inuit culture and my people."
- "Acceptance – it doesn't matter who you are."

We also heard that parents wanted to be recognized and respected for the distinctness of their culture separate from other Aboriginal cultures.

- "We are not First Nations."
- "We are the last recognized nation."
- "There's lots of us and we're not First Nations."
- "That Inuit culture is unique from other Aboriginal cultures, and the needs are different."
- "Inuit are not First Nations; and Aboriginal services do not always meet the needs of Inuit families."

Non-Inuit Adoptive Families in Ottawa

Fourteen non-Inuit adoptive families participated in this project, 14 % of our total sample. All fourteen families were non-Inuit raising an Inuit child or children in Ottawa. A total of 20 Inuit children (9 boys and 11 girls) had been adopted into the families we spoke to. The stories of how families came to adopt Inuit children were quite varied. Some adoptions were through Children's Aid Society (CAS), several were Northern adoptions, two were non-Inuit Grandparents who adopted Inuit grandchildren while several were between families that knew one another.

The majority of these adoptions were considered to be open. Open adoption occurs when the adopted child and family knows who the birth family is, and maintains varying degrees of contact with the family. In many cases, the adoptive families that we spoke to were approached by the birth mother revealing a hint of custom adoption.

> "Tiguaq means the one I chose. While in English language we would say the one we would give away. But in Inuit culture, adoption is common and fairly positive. There is no shame – the birth mother is able to choose an adoptive mother." Adoptive parent.

The adoptive parents spoke very highly and passionately about the benefits of open adoption to their child (ren), their family and the birth mother/family. Most often, contact with the birth family was maintained through phone calls, emails, letters, birthday and Christmas gifts, photographs, and visits between families. A few families had organized trips to Nunavut to visit the birth family and some birth parents had come to Ottawa to visit. The frequency of contact varied amongst families, but the importance of any contact was highlighted by all.

> "Open is best as the child needs to know his or her birth mother if it's safe and the conditions are right. We are all one and no separation is valuable for all concerned including adoptive parents and family." Adoptive parent.

> "She understands where she came from; she'll be stronger because of it." Adoptive parent.

Parents shared a multitude of benefits of open adoption for their child. They believed strongly that children would have a greater sense of identity, would remain connected to the Inuit culture, would know where they came from (no secrets) and where their roots are, as well as know that they were loved by both families.

> "She loved him. I don't want him to ever think that he was abandoned. She just couldn't provide for him, so she chose us." Adoptive parent.

> "I was able to provide him with stability while still maintaining close contact with both parents and extended family." Adoptive parent.

The other great benefit that parents spoke of is access to health information in an open adoption. Having current and valid information about the birth family's health and medical history helps the adoptive family immensely. Parents also discussed the benefit of having an open line of communication so that information about the child's health, growth and development can be shared between the two families.

Adoptive parents believed that open adoption was the best for the birth mother and family as well. All parents recognized that the adoption stemmed from love for the child and wanting what was best for him/her. Many felt that the loss for biological parents might be lessened knowing where and with whom the child is, as birth parents are able watch their child grow, learn, develop and have a sense of knowing that he/she is well cared for and loved.

"It is beneficial to the mother's self-esteem to have control of the adoption." Adoptive parent.

"Mom loves her and wants to see her, how she is growing and progressing, she wants to stay connected." Adoptive parent.

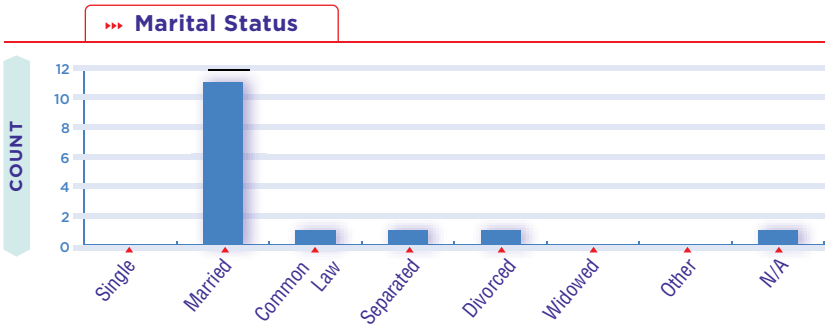
"Our daughter's adoption is closed and her birth mother has chosen not to have any contact now or in the future. So basically we are raising our family as best as we can and are very open to any advice regarding our daughter's cultural heritage."

In the few families where the adoption was closed, the child's emotional well-being and safety was the reason contact with the birth family wasn't permitted. One adoptive parent reported that **"if it is not safe for the child to see the mother because of drugs and alcohol"** then visits would not be allowed. In some cases, contact had been encouraged but planned visits often fell through resulting in great disappointment for the child. We were also told that sometimes a birth mom will request a closed adoption because she finds that easier to get on with her life.

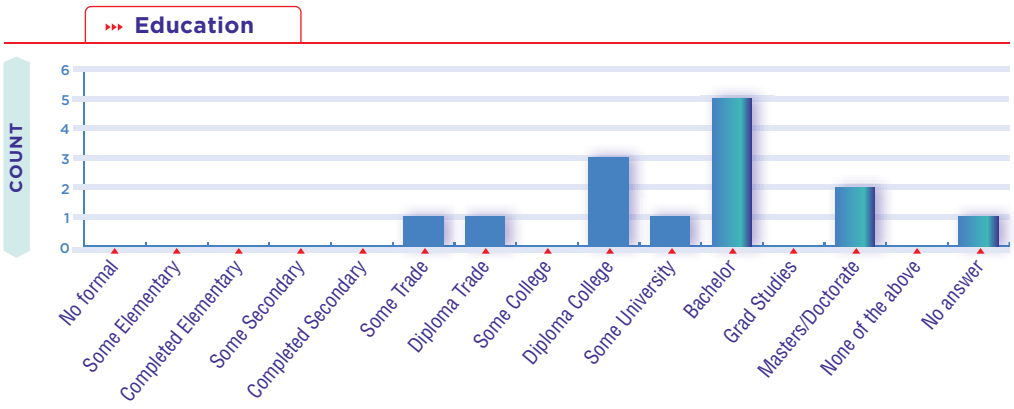
Adoptive parents experiencing a closed adoption told us that they continued to talk to the child (ren) about their birth family and the Inuit culture. Despite not being able to have contact with the birth mom, they were committed to teaching the child about his/her ancestry. Oftentimes, if a birth mom was not well enough to maintain contact with the child, a relationship with extended family had been nurtured.

Demographic Profile of Non-Inuit Adoptive Families

The majority of the non-Inuit adoptive parents (71%) were between 36-45 years of age. There were no parents younger than 26 years of age. Most parents (79%) were married; two parents were single parents as a result of separation or divorce.

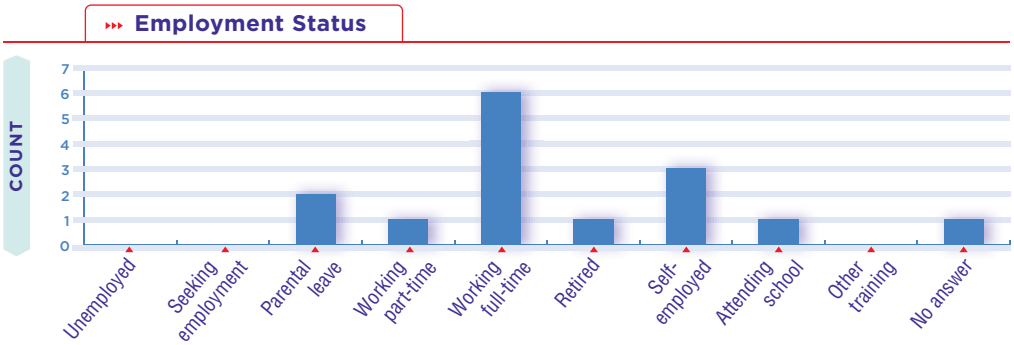


Ten of the fourteen (71%) respondents owned their home, 3 rented and 1 did not answer. The average length of time that families had lived at their present address was 7.5 years, with one family as long as 22 years and another family less than a year. Seventy-one percent of non-Inuit adoptive families had extended family living in Ottawa.



All of the parents had either started or completed a post-secondary education. The most common post-secondary degree amongst the adoptive group was a Bachelor's degree. Two parents had completed graduate work at the Master's or Doctorate level.

The majority of parents in this group worked full-time, with variations on other employment status. None of the parents were unemployed. Ninety-three percent of parents reported an annual income of over $50,000 while one parent had a family income $30,000 – $39,000.

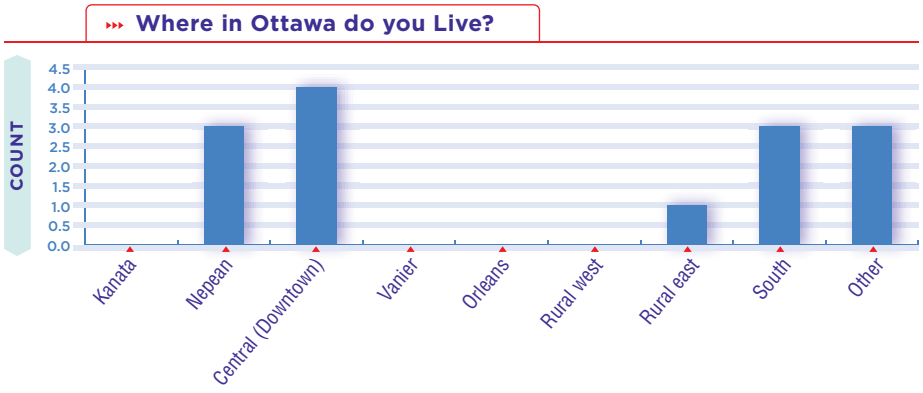


All participants (100%) reported English as the language most spoken at home by parents and children. As expected, most adoptive parents were not able to speak, understand or read Inuktitut. However, 43% reported that they could speak Inuktitut at a beginner level, 50% stated that they could understand Inuktitut at a beginner level, and 28% could read at a beginner level. These numbers indicate that non-Inuit adoptive parents are attempting to learn to speak and understand Inuktitut.

When asked what land claim region their child was affiliated with, 85% of the children were beneficiaries of Nunavut. Nobody reported that their adoptive child was from any of the other three land claim regions; the remaining 15% resulted from parents who did not answer the question.

Living in Ottawa

The great majority (79%) of adoptive families had lived in Ottawa for ten years or more. The areas that families lived in Ottawa were fairly equally dispersed between Nepean, Central, South and Other. There were no families living in Kanata, Vanier, Orleans or Rural West. Seventy-one percent had extended family living in Ottawa.



Most parents felt that Ottawa was a great place to raise children. They appreciated the small size and general safety of the city, its proximity to green space and outdoor recreation activities such as skiing, access to health and medical care, the varied activities and programs for children, as well as employment and educational opportunities available.

Many parents spoke about the importance of living in Ottawa in order to be connected to the Inuit community and to have access to cultural programs and resources. Some families relocated to Ottawa specifically because of services offered by Inuit organizations such as the Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre.

"I feel fortunate to raise Inuit children in Ottawa. The Inuit community seems to be growing here for lots of reasons. For us, we left the North mainly because of lack of medical facilities. We were commuting to Ottawa every 4-6 months for a week or two at a time for doctor's appointments. With the services and support for Inuit in Ottawa, it seemed like the best decision to make to move here."

Adoptive parent.

"Outside of Nunavut, this is the next best place to be if you are going to raise an Inuit child. The city has an amazing and dynamic Inuit population. The Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre has been instrumental in helping to bring our son his culture. He has access to language, games, positive role models and a sense of community that is invaluable for developing his self-esteem."

Adoptive parent.

"We feel we can offer our Inuit children the greatest access to Inuit culture here in Ottawa, compared with other jurisdictions outside of Nunavut. Inuit cultural programs are very important to us."

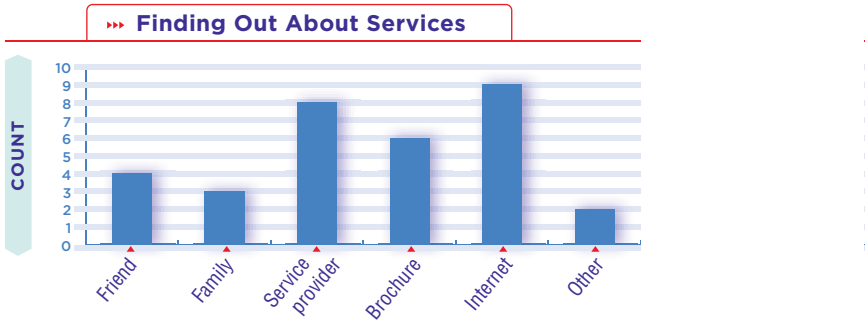
Adoptive parent.

Programs and Services

Adoptive parents are accessing a variety of services on behalf of their Inuit child (ren): Odawa Native Friendship Centre, Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre, Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health, Tungasuvvingat Inuit Family Resource Centre, Crossroads, First Words, Mothercraft, Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO), local preschools, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Parent Resource Centre, Ottawa Public Library, Ontario Early Years, City of Ottawa Recreation, and Open Door Society.

Seventy-one percent of parents felt that the services available in Ottawa met the needs of their family.

We asked parents to tell us how they found out about services for their child (ren). The three most common ways reported were the internet, a service provider or a brochure. Word of mouth was not a common way to share information about services.



When asked about barriers to accessing services, fifty percent of the families reported that the location of service was the greatest barrier for them. We heard very clearly from parents that services were too centralized in the Vanier area and that this often prohibited their attendance because of where they lived. They wished for services to be spread out in other areas of the city where Inuit live. Parents also shared their frustration at not being able to attend day time events because they were working. They felt their children missed many opportunities when programs were not offered in the evenings and weekends.

> "We need children's activities that take place on evenings or weekends. An activity during the weekdays limits access for us as it necessitates missing work or school." Adoptive parent.

> "We need more Inuit cultural activities in a variety of locations in Ottawa as well as activities that allow our children to socialize with other Inuit children." Adoptive parent.

Other reported barriers included transportation, identification for their child, access to information about services, time services are offered, and waiting lists.

"Being a non-Inuk parent to an Inuk son is challenging and not knowing the services are out there and how to get him involved in certain programs." Adoptive parent.

"A regular newsletter, website or email mailing list to assist in the timely notification of events and changes/cancellations of events would be very helpful."
Adoptive parent.

Another barrier to accessing services that was revealed by adoptive parents was the fact that they were non-Inuit. They spoke of a feeling of not being accepted by some Aboriginal and Inuit service providers even though their child they were accessing services for was Inuk.

"Because of the adoption I did feel stigma of interracial situation. I felt nervous around the Inuit community... like I'm taking a child away from their community. That's why I wanted to understand the people, community, culture and help my gut." Adoptive parent.

Many parents expressed their gratitude to the Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre for their inclusive and child-centred approach. They felt supported and recognized as members of the community because the needs of their Inuk child took precedence above all else.

"OICC Staff and Board are Inuit and non-Inuit, I think that helps because there's already a solid relationship. It's all about the kids. So you feel comfortable as a non Inuit parent. Went to workshop at T.I. and felt more like an outsider."
Adoptive parent.

"My husband and I adopted our child at birth in Iqaluit. We live east of Ottawa, but do all our business, services, shopping, etc, in Ottawa. We are so thankful that the OICC exists so our daughter can learn and foster her culture and language."
Adoptive parent.

When asked what services they felt they still needed for their child, the most overwhelming response was more programming for children between 6–13 years of age. Parents were concerned about the loss of cultural programming for their child once they graduated from Head Start.

> "Learning about and fostering a culture and language is a lifelong process, not just the first 6 years. I wish there was more available after Head Start is done."
> Adoptive parent.

Several parents spoke about the need for respite care, more community gatherings and access to country food. Lastly, many parents expressed the desire to connect with other adoptive families raising Inuit children to support one another and share experiences. The idea of forming a support group which included time with Elders surfaced repeatedly throughout the focus groups and interviews.

> "I need more connection to other adoptive families of Inuit children."
> Adoptive parent.

> "It was really great to connect with you all the other night! It is nice to meet with others that understand the issues I have faced and will continue to deal with as an adoptive mom of a wonderful Inuk child. We should find a way to routinely meet with each other and other adoptive and foster parents, perhaps once a month or every two months. Maybe some funding for a service like this will become available as a result of the community needs survey!"
> Adoptive parent by email following a focus group.

Challenges

Several challenges of raising Inuit children were identified by non-Inuit adoptive parents who participated in this study. A dominant theme that emerged was the unique challenges of cross-cultural adoption. Many parents told us that they had experienced some level of prejudice for being non-Inuit parents raising Inuit children, both within the Aboriginal community and in the broader community. They shared stories of reactions from some agency staff that left them feeling insecure and excluded.

> "Trying to integrate into Aboriginal services was hard. Having to repeatedly explain my situation and the particular reaction I got. Once explained the open adoption, people were more accepting. Some people in the community were really not happy at the idea of a white couple adopting Aboriginal, certain parts of the community."
> Adoptive parent.

> "Inuit services were extremely open, but not as accepting from general Aboriginal services. For the white people, had to explain open adoption." Adoptive parent.

> "You want to be able to talk to the community, just be able to interact with the community that you want your son to be part of. You want to know about that and when you don't know anything about the community, it's difficult. So the bigger issues were interracial."
> Adoptive parent.

At the root of these challenges was the desire to foster a sense of belonging and cultural pride in their children. Adoptive parents were extremely dedicated to helping their child maintain a connection to the Inuit community, but didn't always know how to do this or felt at times uncertain about their place in the community. Parents asked for additional support and resources from Inuit service agencies to be able to provide the strongest cultural base from which their child could grow and learn. Their deep desire and commitment to do the best for their Inuit children was clearly apparent.

"We would like to learn more about Inuit culture and to support our daughter becoming more familiar with her Inuit heritage and language. When she was younger we did not know of the services. We would be very interested in meeting other adoptive parents as CAS has not been helpful with regards to Inuit cultural information and support for multi-cultural adoptions – we have had none. As our daughter gets older she gets more curious." Adoptive parent.

"For those of us interested in this beautiful culture we need a place to learn about the culture [to help support our children]. Need a resource area to learn about the culture. Learn about the people, the culture, and the history." Adoptive parent.

"I want them to continue to know their culture. What is there out there? Like how many are Graduating this year from Head Start. Need to keep these 6 year old kids connected to their community and their culture." Adoptive parent.

"We went for a consultation with an Elder, storytelling. It was explained to us that living up North children were removed from their families and put into schools. We felt the white guilt stuff happening during that talk. The Elder said, thank you for taking care of our children, you are not the white people we are talking about. If you want to be part of the community, you search for intellectual understanding. The parents of these children you have adopted never learned how to parent because they were never parented." Adoptive parent.

"I want him to be proud of who he is and carry that identity. Trying to learn about the culture was something I was interested in. The public library was a big help, I rented books and videos. I want to understand what they've gone through because these are the people I want to be part of my son's life. I want him to be proud of his culture and heritage." Adoptive parent.

"We need assistance to help him grow culturally." Adoptive parent.

Another common challenge that parents brought forward was around health care for their child. Some parents experienced the same problems with their child's N number as reported by Inuit families in general: bureaucracy in attaining a number and lack of knowledge in the health care system and pharmacies.

"The N number is an identification number that gives them certain health benefits, and inoculation benefits, tuition, dental. Nobody tells you how to get it. I emailed the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs and clearly explained my situation and they sent me the wrong form. I had told you he was an Inuit child. No one tells you, and your child misses out. Circle that one really big. Help knowing the right information. If you are born up north, they probably have one but I'm not sure." Adoptive parent.

Many parents expressed the need for more physicians to be educated about caring for Inuit children: typical growth patterns, diet, and food sensitivities. Several parents spoke about discovering their child being lactose intolerant, which is common for Inuit, but their physician did not have this particular knowledge.

"I'd love to get a doctor that knows about their culture, their genetic predispositions." Adoptive parent.

Another family spoke of a lack of facts within the medical profession regarding northern immunization schedules. In compliance with the City of Ottawa Health Department's requirements for school entry, their child had to complete a test for Tuberculosis because she was born in Iqaluit. However, the child had been vaccinated against TB at birth as all infants in Nunavut are. The same family's other adopted Inuk child's treatment for pneumonia was complicated by a focus on possible tuberculosis.

"Adoptive parents need to understand medical issues, i.e. the shots kids have had up north. Conflicting records between north and Ottawa." Adoptive parent.

Gratitude

Despite the challenges that adoptive parents spoke about, the greatest sentiment that was shared, was their immense gratitude for having the privilege of raising an Inuit child. Stories of how the adoption experience had changed their lives were plentiful. Parents spoke of the Inuit community, culture, values, and beliefs with deep respect. A sense of sincere dedication to the raising of strong Inuit children permeated throughout focus groups and interviews. For the most part, adoptive parents have felt welcomed into the community and they wished to say **"thank you"**.

In the words of a grandmother raising her Inuk granddaughter, **"it has been a joyful challenge."** She goes on to say that she feels honoured to be part of this community and doesn't know where she would be personally without it. She has found a purpose and sense of belonging through raising her granddaughter and being connected to the Inuit community. She feels a sense of joy and gratitude for what her granddaughter has brought to her life. Similar sentiments were expressed by another grandmother raising her Inuk grandson when she says **"I am grateful that I have the privilege of the company of my grandson who functions as my prime motivator for maintaining my health, employment and generally being engaged with my Inuit family whom I love beyond all else."**

> "It has been a great experience, [we] feel so lucky and blessed to be taken in by this community and be given a child." Adoptive parent.

> "Inuit birth parents can't always find an Inuit family for a baby. At a time in their life when they can't care for their baby, they are willing to trust other families." Adoptive parent.

> "We adore this child. Our whole family adores him. He brings joy to our lives and to our older teenage children every day. It is emotionally overwhelming. He was given to us for a reason and we totally honour him." Adoptive parent.

Foster Families in Ottawa

Four foster families participated in this project by completing a parent questionnaire, attending a focus group and/or being interviewed. Ten Inuit children were represented by the foster parents that we spoke to. All the foster parents but one (didn't know), reported that the children in their care were affiliated with Nunavut. The amount of contact with the birth family differed in each foster family and even between each child in each foster family (if the children were not related). For example, in one family with three Inuit children, some children might see their birth mother or family 2-3 times a week, while for another child visits might occur once or twice a year. There was agreement amongst the families that maintaining contact was important for both the child and the mother/family for the same reasons discussed by adoptive families. Again there were situations where it was in the child's best interests to limit or prohibit contact with the family.

> "We prefer the open fostering arrangement as it works very well. It really helped both parents and children to regroup with the original family. They don't feel the loss as much and the children are attached to the biological mother no matter what. Seeing birth parent keeps the feeling of detachment from happening." Foster parent.

> "Oftentimes the foster parent is thought of as the enemy as the birth parents are angry that they no longer have their children with them. Open contact allows for family pride to stay intact when integrating all parties."
> Foster parent.

When discussing services for Inuit children, CHEO, OICC and Wabano were identified as the most important. Foster families experienced the following barriers in accessing services and programs: transportation, medical needs of children and lack of communication and knowledge of programs/services. Services that were still needed included respite care, help with medical expenses and equipment, as well as programs for children older than 6 years.

> "When my child graduates from Head Start I feel like I'm going to drop into a void." Foster parent.

Like adoptive families, foster families felt very grateful to be caring for Inuit children. They demonstrated deep feelings for the children in their care. They wished the best for them and felt honoured to be caring for them.

> "We are new foster parents, it is just an all around beautiful experience."
> Foster parent.

> "He's the most wonderful kid we've ever had. He's a joy – caring, respectful, helpful, loving and affectionate." Foster parent.

The words of one foster mother emphasized the positive outcomes for many families whose children are in care.

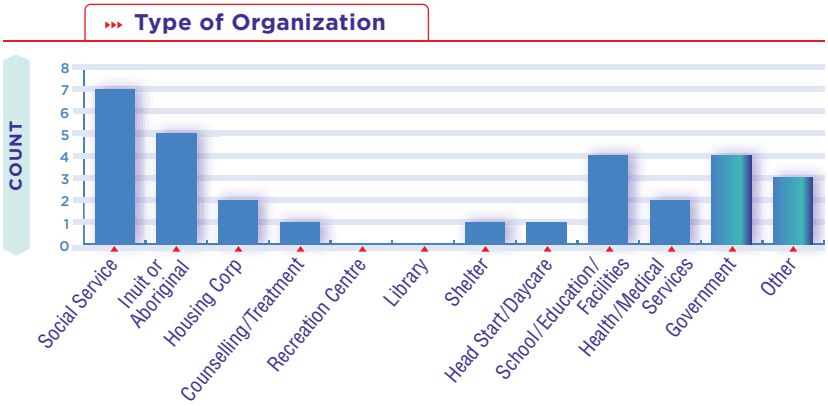
> "I want people to know how committed Inuit are and how I've seen a lot of families improve their life with hard work and good support. It has not been a waste of money."
> Foster parent.

section 4

SERVICE AGENCIES

Agency Profile

Thirty of the 72 agencies that were sent an agency survey completed it, indicating a 42% response rate. Surveys were returned from a variety of agencies with the highest return rate from social service agencies, followed by Inuit or Aboriginal organizations.



When asked whether services were offered to residents in all of Ottawa, 70% responded that they were. Thirty percent, which represented schools and Community Resource Centres, offered services in a particular catchment area.

Eighty-six percent of respondents reported that they were providing programs and services to Inuit children between 0–18 years. Of the 14% that stated that they were not, two were housing corporations that offered housing to Inuit children and parents, but not **"programs and services"**. Others noted that they offer programs and services to all children in Ottawa, including but not specifically, to Inuit. Sixty-eight percent of agencies told us that they were providing programs and services to parents of Inuit children between 0–18 years.

When asked what the total number of Inuit children and parents of Inuit children served in 2008, many respondents could not answer as they do not gather this information specifically for Inuit. Of those that did answer, a total of 654 Inuit children were served by the agencies that participated. Agencies reported serving 312 parents of Inuit children (excluding Wabano). It should be noted that Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health stated that a total of 861 Inuit had received primary health care in 2008. However, they were unable to determine how many of these were parents of Inuit children 0–18 years of age.

Ninety-three percent of agencies stated that they do not receive targeted funding to serve Inuit children 0–18 years, and 90% did not receive targeted funds to serve their parents.

Table One

TYPE OF SERVICE	0 YEARS	7–12 YEARS	13–18 YEARS	PARENTS OF INUIT
Counselling/Crisis Intervention	9	10	11	11
Mental Health	4	6	6	6
Recreation	5	5	3	4
Emergency & Short Term Shelter	3	3	3	4
Addictions Treatment	0	0	2	4
Employment Training/Assistance	0	0	1	5
Poverty/Hunger	6	6	6	6
Education	4	4	5	6
Health Promotion	5	5	5	5
Public Safety/Crime Prevention	2	4	5	4
Affordable Housing	3	3	5	5
Medical Services	3	3	3	4
Early Intervention i.e. preschool	13	3	3	4
Child Care	12	4	2	1
Advocacy	9	8	9	11
Parent Education/Workshops	5	4	5	11
Parent Support	6	5	6	8
Home Visits	8	5	5	7
Referrals	11	11	10	14
Other (see below)	4	7	5	4

The agencies that participated offered a variety of services to Inuit children and their parents. The following table (Table 1) indicates the number of agencies that offer these types of services to each age group.

Other services reported included parent support for meetings with CAS and schools, a language program, a youth group, assistance with high school applications, foster care, adoption services, support for children with special needs, family events, identification replacement, health promotion and life skills training.

We asked agencies if they thought the services and activities available through their organization, fully met the needs of Inuit children and their families. Only 12% felt they did. Eighty-eight percent of agencies felt that their services did not fully meet their needs. We then asked what the five most important needs of Inuit children and their families not being met were, the responses from agencies included (not listed in any particular order):

Financial Support

- Food security
- Financial support
- Transportation support
- Core funding for OICC

Housing
- Access to safe and affordable housing
- Second stage
- More affordable units
- More 1 bedroom units

Recreation
- Recreation – children, youth, parents

Parenting/Child Development
- Support for children with special needs
- Early intervention
- Health promotion
- Parent support
- Respite for parents
- Coordination of services for parents
- Social programs for parents and children that include recreation, home food and interest based programs i.e. crafts, sewing, cooking
- Alternative foster care within families (kin) in the community
- Awareness of urban expectations for newly arrived families from Nunavut
- Access to culturally sensitive approaches to supervised access programs

Education
- Urban specific life skills training
- Employment training; support for entry into workforce
- Education funding; support in achieving educational goals
- Inuit educators and support staff within schools; support for integration into schools; advocacy
- Educational curriculum that is reflective of Inuit culture
- Expanded early years/literacy/health programs provided by culturally appropriate agencies and organizations

Culture
- Cultural support and programs i.e. camps,
- Elders
- Recognition of the distinctness of Inuit culture from First Nations
- Inuktitut language support i.e. immersion programs
- Cultural sensitivity training for non-Inuit service agency personnel
- Availability and provision of country food

Health
- Access to health and medical services
- Increased contact with Larga Baffin and CHEO

Youth
- Youth programs – recreation, drop ins

Mental Health
- Addictions treatment
- Mental health support – therapists, counsellors

Child Care
- Availability of licensed, subsidized child care services within culturally appropriate centres
- More information workshops with parents on how to access child care in Ottawa

Advocacy
- Outreach services, networking
- Advocacy with the Children's Aid Society
- Settlement services for newcomers

We also asked agencies to rank the following types of services based on their experiences serving Inuit children and their parents. Among the most highly ranked were counselling and crisis intervention, recreation, emergency and short-term shelter, addictions treatment, employment training and assistance, poverty reduction, education, affordable housing and child care. Table 2 below presents all responses.

Table Two

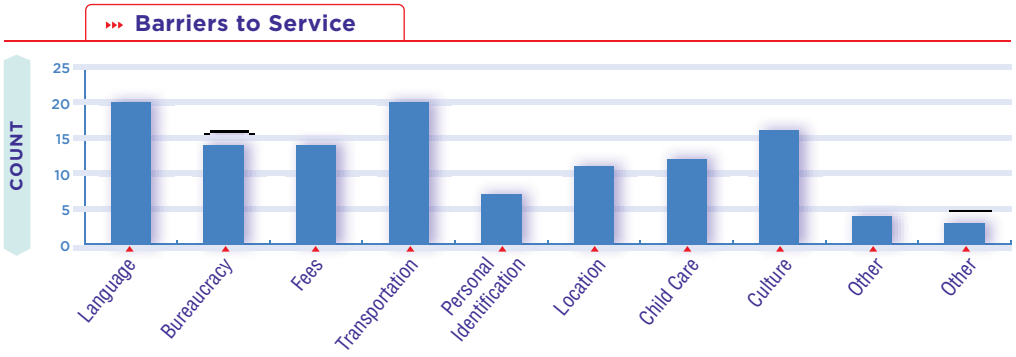
TYPE OF SERVICE	1 Least Important	2	3	4	5 Most Important
Counselling/Crisis Intervention	0	0	3	5	10
Mental Health	0	0	3	4	8
Recreation	0	4	3	5	10
Emergency & Short Term Shelter	0	0	4	3	10
Addictions Treatment	0	0	1	7	9
Employment Training/Assistance	1	0	3	10	4
Poverty/Hunger	0	0	2	6	10
Education	0	0	2	9	8
Health Promotion	0	1	3	6	7
Public Safety/Crime Prevention	1	3	3	1	8
Affordable Housing	0	0	1	5	11
Medical Services	0	1	1	7	8
Early Intervention i.e. preschool	0	0	3	7	9
Child care	0	0	3	5	10
Advocacy	0	0	3	5	8
Parent Education/Workshops	0	1	3	8	8
Parent Support	0	0	3	6	7
Home Visits	0	0	6	5	4
Referrals	0	0	3	4	0
Other – System Navigation	0	0	0	0	1

Seven agencies noted that they were planning on providing new or additional services to Inuit children and their parents. Additional services included more cultural programming, summer employment, more affordable housing, cultural literacy, youth recreation programming, and a fathers group. Agencies were then asked to respond to the following statements regarding their service delivery for Inuit children and their families. Table 3 below tallies the responses along the rating grid from 'not at all' to 'completely'.

Table Three

STATEMENTS	NOT AT ALL	SLIGHTLY	A FAIR BIT	VERY MUCH SO	COMPLETELY
Our services are geared to the needs of Inuit children and their families.	7	7	4	5	3
We provide interpretation services for Inuktitut speaking parents of Inuit children.	14	4	2	1	3
We provide translation services for Inuktitut speaking parents of Inuit children.	14	5	1	2	2
Parents of Inuit children seem to feel comfortable in our programs.	1	1	8	6	5

When asked about barriers that parents face in accessing services for their families, agencies felt that transportation and language were the greatest at 67%, followed closely by culture at 53%. Almost half (47%) of agencies reported that bureaucracy and fees were also common barriers. Child care was considered a significant barrier at 40%, and location of services offered was slightly lower at 37%. Twenty-seven percent of agencies noted that personal identification was considered a barrier for families. Other barriers reported included lack of trust for service providers, lack of cultural sensitivity, lack of interpretation and translation services, and lack of knowledge of available services.



Agencies had the following suggestions when asked what could be done to reduce barriers for parents of Inuit children so that access to services would improve:

- Increase funding for programs targeting Inuit families.
- Provide incentive based volunteer opportunities.
- Deliver Inuit specific programs at Aboriginal organizations.
- Increase number of programs and program locations.
- Increase understanding of the specific needs of Inuit families.
- Increase services in Inuktitut.
- Improve Inuit advocacy and liaison workers to support families at CAS.
- Improve school supports for Inuit children.
- Provide funding for transportation i.e. bus passes, tickets.
- Provide child care services at agencies offering programs.
- Increase support for parents attending meetings, appointments, etc.
- Ongoing collaboration with community partners.
- Improve awareness of Inuit culture i.e. sensitivity training for staff.
- Increase staffing to help parents navigate and liaise between resources.
- Increase access to subsidized child care spaces.
- Increase funding to support the needs of Inuit children in child care.
- Increase awareness and communication with Inuit parents.
- Improve links and partnerships with Inuit organizations.
- Increase in home support for parents.
- Increase support and staff to assist parents i.e. Family Support Worker.
- Increase settlement support and information i.e. identification, birth certificates, school registration, health cards, income taxes, library cards, city services, etc.
- Reduce bureaucracy.

Several agencies had specific requests for improved interagency collaboration to increase awareness and strengthen services for Inuit children and their families.

"This Community Profile and Needs Assessment is an important first step to open the doors for dialogue between the OICC and service providers."

"Hold a community forum with Inuit parents and service providers to identify parents concerns and needs. Compile an inventory of needs and requests from parents and staff. Hold further meetings with service providers to draft a proposal for addressing needs of Inuit families."

"Find a location where we could offer workshops to parents on finding child care that would be accessible for parents. Offer child care during the workshop."

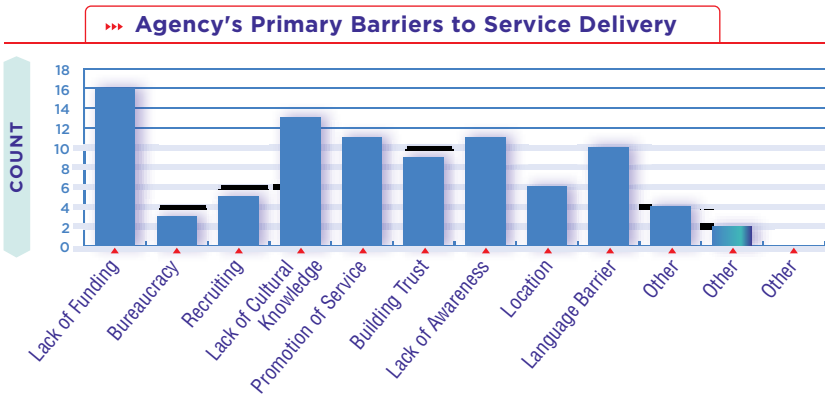
"Equity based services that fit each client, rather than asking the client to fit into the service."

"Host an Open House and Centre Visit to get to know Inuit in their community, spend time getting to know their culture, and to understand their needs and so on."

"Provide information about programs and services to agencies across the City and provide a contact name for future reference."

"The Inuit service providers have already done so much and are always open to collaborative initiatives. The Ottawa CAS thanks the Inuit service agencies for facilitating the community consultation in 2007 with the Inuit community and participation on our joint liaison committee. This has done much to increase CAS's awareness and knowledge of the historical significance of the relationship with Child Welfare and the traditional culture and child rearing practices – all to better serve the families and children. But more needs to be done. I hope you will continue to partner with us in the development of an alternative dispute resolution process for Inuit families involved with CAS."

We asked agencies to identify their primary barriers in delivering current services, or of those services they would like to provide to Inuit children and their families. The most common reported barrier for agencies was lack of funding at 55%. Forty-three percent of agencies felt that a lack of cultural knowledge was a barrier for them. Promotion of service and lack of awareness of available services were equally reported as barriers at 37%. Thirty-three percent believed that language was a barrier in delivering services at their agency, while 30% reported that building trust within the Inuit community was a significant barrier. Recruiting and retaining staff, bureaucracy, and location of service were reported less frequently at 17%, 10% and 10% respectively.



We then asked agencies what could be done to remove or mitigate barriers that they identified. The following suggestions were made:

- Establish a working group of service providers to explore avenues of collaboration of services
- Promote awareness of services within Inuit community and between agencies
- Hire Inuit speakers
- Train agency staff to increase awareness and cultural competency/sensitivity
- Increase collaboration and partnership opportunities
- Acknowledge existence of differences
- Increase community engagement to impact change
- Increase sustainable funding and resources
- Improve interagency communication
- Establish a liaison/support worker between CAS & parents
- Provide information and update on available services at Inuit organizations

Agencies also expressed the need for additional resources such as cultural materials, posters, and books that would enhance their programs and services.

Finally to assess agencies' understanding and knowledge of Inuit culture, we asked them to rank the following statements from **'strongly disagree'** to **'strongly agree'**. Table 4 below represents the varying responses.

In general, the agencies that participated in this project were keen on establishing and maintaining partnerships with Inuit organizations to ensure responsive programming to Inuit children and their families. For the most part, their identified gaps in services paralleled those recognized by parents. The agencies that responded expressed a strong desire to strengthen services for Inuit children and their families, while acknowledging their limitations including lack of targeted funding and human resources. They were optimistic however, of affecting change and moving towards a deeper understanding of the needs of the community.

Table Four

STATEMENTS	STRONGLY DISAGREED	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
I feel that I understand the basic elements of Inuit culture.	0	5	7	16	0
I feel that I have an understanding of what it's like to be an Inuk (Inuit) child in an urban setting:	2	12	7	6	0
I have easy access to Inuit cultural materials:	2	6	6	10	3
I would benefit from a cultural workshop to increase my awareness of Inuit culture.	0	0	3	14	10
My agency includes Inuit cultural programming in our services.	6	6	8	4	3
My agency promotes awareness of Inuit culture with staff.	2	6	6	10	3
My agency promotes awareness of Inuit culture with community.	1	5	11	6	3

> "We are committed to building capacity within families and within the Inuit community. We believe that families who are healthy and strong are able to raise healthy and strong children."
>
> Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre

section 5

PHOTOVOICE

Our Photovoice project consisted of four sessions, each with a particular goal and activity.

The first session was an information session where parents and youth were introduced to the concept of Photovoice using a PowerPoint presentation and a presenter to explain the purpose of Photovoice and the methods to be used. Adults were in one group while youth were in a separate room, and were given a similar, though more age-appropriate presentation.

Some topics discussed were the meaning of community and why we take photos. This was especially important to give the younger participants an understanding of the purpose of the project. Both groups were told that participation in the project would require a commitment to attend and fully participate in all four sessions. At the end of the information session youth and parents were asked if they were interested in participating. Those who chose to participate were asked to fill out a release form to allow us to share their photos with others.

The second session was an introduction to photography. Two photographers explained the artistic and technical elements of photography and did a show and tell session where they explained the elements in a photo using their own work as an example. When the photographers had completed their presentation, participants were asked to choose one photo from a wide variety of laminated photos. They were then split into groups where they discussed why they chose that particular image and what it meant to them. The goal of this exercise was to encourage participants to get comfortable discussing photography and also to start looking for and describing the different elements of a photo.

Participants were given their cameras near the end of this session and sent out on a scavenger hunt looking for different subjects and items in the area. When they came back they were separated into groups and again they discussed their photos. At the end of the session, participants signed out their cameras so they could work on their community photos before the next session. The photographs to be taken were intended to respond to two questions: 1) what do you like about your Ottawa community? and 2) what would you like to change?

The third session consisted of a photo review. Participants brought back the cameras and the photos they'd taken during the week, and described their photos. At this point they were asked to explain what they thought were their top two photos and why. The group also had some input at this point, but ultimately the choice for the top two photos was left to the participant photographer.

The fourth and final session was a writing workshop and final wrap-up. Participants were split again according to age group with parents in one group and youth in another. The groups took part in different creative writing and descriptive exercises aimed at encouraging free-form thinking and expression. The participants then wrote about their own photos describing not only the photo's content, but also context and what the photo meant to them.

The final product of the project was two photographs taken and chosen by participants with some input from the group. The individual participants then wrote a descriptive paragraph about each of the photos they chose.

The Photovoice process revealed a great deal about the participants' perspectives on living in Ottawa's Inuit community, and life in Ottawa in general. In line with all Photovoice projects, the focus was the impact photographs can have in conveying powerful messages, and in acting as a means for self-advocacy. While participants were asked to be mindful of composition, lighting, framing, and focus, the priority was ultimately to be the content of the photo. The emphasis was always on the message and story within the photo, not the quality of the photograph itself.

One notable and unexpected result of this project was the intergenerational dialogue that emerged. Parents and youth brought very different perspectives of community to the table, and this in turn led to discussions that may not have emerged had the project been done with one age group. The large group also began discussing different issues depicted in their photographs. Some themes that emerged were the problems with traffic, environmental degradation, lack of maintenance of recreational facilities, lack of community activities at night, and issues surrounding identity and belonging. Many participants also focused on Ottawa's natural beauty and history as sources of pride.

The different experiences and life stages of participants most likely contributed to the diversity of viewpoints presented in the final photographs. This diversity also likely improved the overall quality of the discussion.

The project resulted in many participants feeling excited about the medium of photography, and wishing to continue taking photographs to express themselves. It also seemed to increase awareness of certain issues and fostered a healthy discussion about different aspects of life in Ottawa's Inuit community.

The photos that were taken as part of this Photovoice project were shown in a community photography display in May 2009. This exhibition was another opportunity for participants and the community at large to discuss the issues depicted in the photographs.

“Trees in the City”

The trees in green had colour all year. The other trees are waiting to bud later when summer is near. Growing up together in a city field outside boundaries and fences of steel. This is what makes all cities beautiful.

photographer ⟩⟩ **Gary Lewis**

“Traffic”

Our traffic shows where we are today. Stop, go and get out of the way!
Schedules, deadlines and rush, rush, rush. Cars trucks or your favourite bus.

photographer » Gary Lewis

“Preventable Deaths”

Over the years I've heard different stories about how there's been six or seven deaths that have occurred all over the King Edward stretch since 1994. The most recent was a cement truck that got in a collision with a small Toyota Corolla Vehicle. The woman who was driving the car did not make it out alive. Before that, a senior citizen got killed just by crossing at the intersection. It's sad just knowing that it could all have been prevented by re-routing tractor-trailers. Traffic in general in the downtown core is a major issue.

photographer ⟩⟩ Glen Boyer

“My Home, My House”

I’m proud to be living in the capital of Canada and to have the Parliament in my hometown. I like how it attracts a lot of tourists and helps with our economy. I was also always told that having immigrants in Canada is important, otherwise we wouldn’t have everything we have, like different points of view, different buildings, different types of cuisines etc. Even though I don’t like the Prime Minister, I still like to have him in the capital.

photographer ⟩⟩ Glen Boyer

“The City Builds Spaces for Communities to Grow”

This space was provided for youth to come and go, practicing their sport in their own way, at their own pace. This skater has friends waiting their turn, willing to cheer a successful trick or ruefully sympathize with a spill. Different overlapping sets of youth, (skaters, bikers and taggers) all use this space for their activities with no apparent conflict, so there is art and action going on all over with no teams, uniforms or coaches required.

photographer ⟩⟩ **Jennifer Harris**

“The City Builds Spaces for Communities to Grow”

This space was built for our youngest, and this is the place with obscenities and liquor bottles left for them to see. The message "Music Makes the World Go Round" is etched into one side of this play structure – nice, inspirational positivity. But the message the "big kids" have added might catch more attention. After taking this photo, I took a whole two steps to throw the empty vodka bottle into the very apparent garbage can. This just broke my heart.

photographer ⟩⟩ **Jennifer Harris**

“The Locks”

In this picture you can just go here and see what’s going on around; different people who walk by and museums. Depending on the weather, the boats move either from the river to the canal or the canal to the river. There are different activities you can do. There’s excitement just for the scenery. It’s beautiful here. Now that it’s springtime, everything is growing.

photographer ⟩⟩ **Mahtoonah Arngna’naaq**

“Too Much”

There’s too much traffic. It’s not fun to see. They’re cutting down trees to build more roads and buildings. There’s too much construction. All the rigs are depressing. The buses I don’t mind because they get people around everywhere. The vehicles are depressing. They’re just pollution. It’s making the air unhealthy. You see all the smog everywhere because of it. The fear of having accidents; you never know what’s going to happen.

photographer » **Mahtoonah Arngna’naaq**

“Litter in Ottawa”

I feel very sad because Ottawa is a beautiful city that should be treated with respect. But unfortunately people litter in Ottawa and don't pick up their garbage. Ottawa is beautiful when people pick up their garbage.

photographers ⟩⟩ **Jasmyn (7 yrs) and Jaelyn (11 yrs)**

“Beautiful Ottawa”

Ottawa is beautiful. It has wonderful colours and wonderful people. Its nature is gorgeous. It has beautiful trees, flowers and buildings. The flowers come in all different colours and sizes, just like the people.

photographer ⟩⟩ Jaelyn (11 yrs)

“Art in the Heart of Vanier”

What I like about this picture is that there is art on schools and there are trees and bushes, and 20-floor homes.

The winters are not that cold and some people are nice.

photographer ⟩⟩ Hezron (13 yrs)

"You Better Not Mess With the OICC"

What I like about this picture is that there are signs of "No Smoking". There is a park and there is my little buddy.

It is an Inuit house, and my mom works there.

photographer ⟩⟩ **Hezron (13 yrs)**

“Blue Branches and Dark Branches”

photographer ⟩⟩ **Aaron (11 yrs)**

Dark Branches:

It's energetic...I like the feelings I get from both pictures. It almost feels like they're people.

One's really bright and one's not so well.

continued ⟩⟩

Dark Branches:

It's lazy... I chose this because it shows how dark it is at night.

“M”

I like the letter "M" and I'm going to make a cloud of things that start with "M".

photographer ⟩⟩ Max (8 yrs)

“The Invisible Spiderman”

photographer ⟩⟩ **Max (8 yrs)**

“24 Hour Sun”

I took this photo because I liked the warm colours and then the dark night behind. The warm colours are in focus and the dark/scary background is blurred out.

photographer » **Carissa Arianna (14 yrs)**

“Bird”

I like this photo because it shows that there is nature in the city and that people care enough to spend their time on the animals.

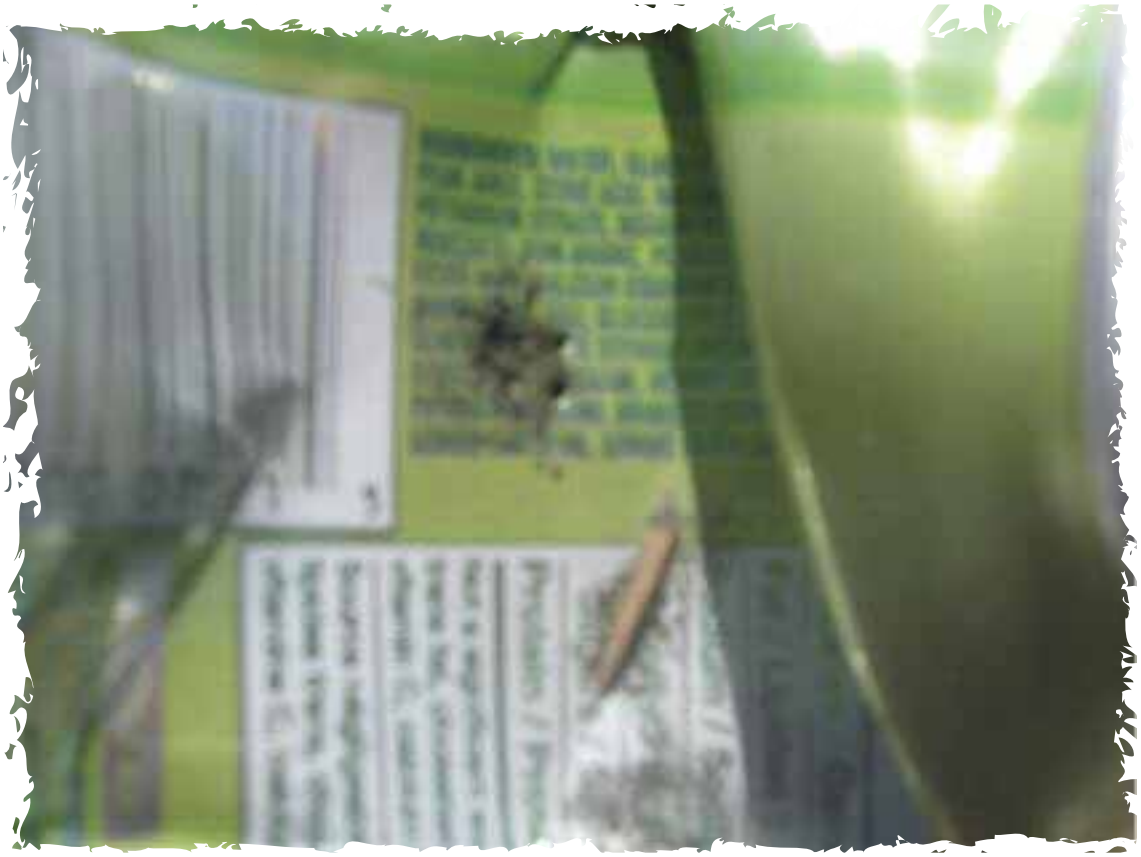
This is at a bird sanctuary where they take in hurt birds and bring them back to health 'til they let them go.

photographer » Carissa Arianna (14 yrs)

Untitled

I tried to take a picture of the sun. I thought it would be like a beautiful afternoon but everything was dark except for the sun and it was soo kool.

photographer ⟩⟩ Christina (14 yrs)



Untitled

This photo is of a pop can pipe that I found in a park. This is used to smoke some kind of drugs and it is so wrong that they would just leave it. They could at least throw it in the garbage.

photographer » Christina (14 yrs)

“Katsua’s Brother Keenai”

What is happening? He’s loving me. He affects my life by making me happy. He is sitting in my old high chair for the first time. Katsua is happy that we adopted his brother so they could be together. Cynthia now has two brothers.

photographer ⟩⟩ Katsua (4 yrs)

"False Start"

photographer ⟩⟩ **Brian Horvath**

You might look at this photo and simply see a hospital emergency entrance. For my wife and I, it is a symbol and the trigger for a memory that would best be left in the past. Last winter, my son appeared to be suffering from a cold. Over the course of a few days his cold seemed to be moving down to his chest. After a visit to a walk in clinic we decided to take him to the Queensway Carleton Hospital. The doctor asked many questions and upon discovering he is Inuk, there was a noticeable change in the line of questioning. The questions became very focused on his connections to the north, whether he had travelled there recently, or been around anyone recently from the north. We explained that he was adopted and has always lived in Ontario and never travelled outside the province. They did some x-rays and referred us to CHEO.

At CHEO, we were directed to a small room to wait. It seemed odd that this room was separate from the other rooms but this was not our primary concern. When a rotation of different medical staff came though our room asking questions, performing a blood test and assessing his condition, we wondered why they were all wearing masks. Again, the questions focused around his northern connections and heritage. We again explained that he was born in Toronto, and that we had adopted him when he was only a few months old. They switched on a large ventilation system designed to channel or filter air. This seemed quite odd to us and yet we put our faith in this team of people because they were the professionals with all the experience.

After some prodding on our part, the doctor informed us that they believed our son likely had TB and that we were going to be staying a while. We were placed in an "isolation room". He received two different medications to treat his sign of TB and acetaminophen and ibuprophen for his fever. The doctor came and said they could not locate the X-ray and that my wife should drive back to the Queensway Carleton Hospital and get another copy. They also took X-rays at CHEO and other tests and determined it was not TB, but bacterial pneumonia. We were removed from the isolation room.

Four days had passed before they revised their treatment to deal with the pneumonia. According to our doctor, had this delay not occurred they would have had a proper diagnosis much sooner and the treatment would have been much more aggressive. Why does this matter? In the days that the delay occurred, my son appeared to have an improvement and we thought we'd be leaving. It turns out that the bacterial infection was blooming and created a pleural effusion. We were told that he was going to require surgery and have a chest tube inserted into his lungs. During the days leading up to his surgery, he had unrelenting fevers that the medications could not keep down, and had to be pinned down to take. It was a frightening and stressful time for all.

continued »

My son now has just celebrated his fourth birthday. There are a number of scars that will always remain, both the ones that will stay with my son forever and the other that remain with my wife and I. What do I hope comes out of this? That medical staff and first responders learn what is fact and what is fiction with regards to modern Inuit and Urban Inuit medical needs, stats and common genetic traits. We try not to hold any malice to the people who treated my son because at the end of the day they saved his life. What is important to note is how far it had to go. If there was no stereotyping and they had taken into account the likelihood of TB in someone who has never been to the north and was born and raised in Ontario things could have been dealt with much sooner and there would be no scars.

We have noticed on a number of occasions a lack of actual knowledge about how Inuit may be different from Caucasians. We have heard comments from residents and our own doctors that have left us thinking "did he just say that?" General statements like "Inuit are generally very short and small" and more. Most Inuit that I know, in particular children, are actually much taller and heartier than Caucasian people. My wife and I are not Inuit and have recently attended an adoptive parent focus group and it appears this is a reoccurring theme. I hope this brings to light something that we can make better in our city and help medical staff have better data in the future. We need to have health stats for Inuit and Urban Inuit that is relevant and current to help doctors and medical staff make more informed decisions sooner.

“Perceptions”

I hope these words and photos illustrate a point and could help invoke a change for the better. I am including this second photo I am calling it "Perceptions". As you can see in this photo, as you look at a photo your perceptions can shift around as you take in what you have read, what you see, and, how he looks. When you consider everything that happened to my son, he found joy in something simple and in that moment the events of the two weeks we were in CHEO disappeared for a moment.

Thank God we have the services of CHEO in this city as I shudder to think what might have been had we lived somewhere isolated or a small town without these kinds of services. The city and province are doing many things right but obviously there are still some things that need to be fixed. I leave you with this photo.

photographer ⟩⟩ Brian Horvath

“Sense of Community”

Ottawa has the largest Inuit community in all of Southern Canada, but as a proud Inuk, the sense of community is lacking in our city. This is because all services are focused on learning and wellbeing 9a.m. to 5p.m. Monday to Friday.

I believe that in order to bring a sense of community we need an unstructured time in the evening and weekends just to be who we are as Inuit. That will empower us and move us toward health and wellbeing.

photographer ⟩⟩ Jessie Kangok

"Little Ottawa"

I am a PROUD INUIT WOMAN who is very fortunate to be able to pass on a part of my legacy to my 2 year-old son in a setting that is not accustomed to my language and culture.

Living in Ottawa, which has the largest Inuit community in Southern Canada, I am proud and grateful that the OICC helps us as a community to learn and teach our ways to each other. To me that makes Ottawa a little smaller than it really is.

photographer ⟩⟩ Jessie Kangok

“Jasmyn”

In this picture, Jasmyn is being herself. She's out in the city. She gets to be crazy. She feels free to be whoever she is, wherever she is. She wasn't like that when we were in Labrador. I think she got that from me.

In Labrador they think I should be who they think I am, and I think it was the same for Jasmyn. In Ottawa we have anonymity. We don't have to worry about people saying "don't do that!", or "don't do that!", "you're not being like everybody else".

photographer ⟩⟩ Holly Jarrett

“Anonymous”

You don't know who these people are. You can't identify them. There's no definition to who they are or where they have been. You lose a little bit of who you are and what makes you who you are in a city. I'm Inuk. You can't see that I'm a mom, an Inuk, a sister, a daughter. You don't know that these are my children. Because of the anonymity, we lose a little bit of who we are.

No one looks me in the face and smiles to say "hello" here in Ottawa, outside of the Inuit community. If I see an Inuk walking down the street or on the bus, I always speak to them.

photographer ⟩⟩ Holly Jarrett

section 6

SUMMARY OF NEEDS

Reducing Barriers:

- To increase access to Inuit-specific programs and services for families living outside of Vanier.
- To increase access to Inuit-specific services by offering programs and services in the evenings and weekends to accommodate working parents.
- To reduce barriers and increase access to Inuit-specific programs and services by assisting parents with transportation.
- To increase access to programs and services at the Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre by providing regular and ongoing information to parents such as newsletters, flyers and calendars.
- To improve coordination of services for families at the Ottawa Inuit Children's Services through the services of a Family Support Worker.

Adjustment to Urban Life:

- To assist parents in the settlement and adjustment process when relocating to Ottawa by providing support, information and resources about living in Ottawa, e.g. identification, health card, public transit, housing, child care, employment, etc.

Culture & Language:

- To increase cultural retention by providing additional cultural events such as family outings, community feasts, country food, time with Elders, visits to the country, and traditional skill development such as sewing and drum dancing.
- To support the retention of Inuktitut through ongoing Inuktitut classes for children and adults, Inuktitut immersion programs, and Inuktitut resources.
- To increase opportunities for Inuit children and their families to gather in an unstructured environment to promote community sharing, support and cultural retention.

Education & Employment:

- To increase access to employment opportunities by providing employment and training support.
- To improve access to funding sources for post-secondary education through research and advocacy.

Child Care:

- To assist parents in accessing affordable and quality child care services for their child (ren) through information, education and support.
- To increase access to licensed, subsidized child care services within culturally appropriate centres.

Youth:

- To increase cultural and recreational programming for Inuit youth, including but not limited to, summer camps, afterschool programming, drop in programs, computer access, homework support, training and employment support, volunteer opportunities and adjustment/ settlement support.

Recreation:

- To increase recreational programming for children and families including organized sports.
- To increase Inuit children's access to summer camps and other recreational opportunities through partnerships and collaboration with community recreation agencies.

Parenting:

- To increase support for non-Inuit adoptive families through the development of a family support group to share experiences and establish socialization opportunities for children.

- To increase support for parents through the provision of parenting support groups, respite care, targeted support for single parents and programs for children with special needs.

Mental Health/Treatment:

- To increase mental health support for families through the increased provision of individual and family counselling.

- To increase addiction and recovery support through programs, support groups and second stage housing.

Health Care:

- To increase awareness of the unique needs of Inuit children accessing health and medical services outside of Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health through information sharing with clinics, nurses and physicians.

- To increase access to health and medical services at Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health.

- To reduce difficulties with the Non-Insured Health Benefits program by increasing awareness of the program in health services and pharmacies in Ottawa.

Housing:

- To increase the availability of affordable and safe housing in Ottawa, in particular, outside of Vanier.

Cultural Awareness:

- To increase cultural awareness of community agency staff through sensitivity training and access to cultural information and materials.

- To increase awareness of the strength of Inuit culture within the broader Ottawa community through education, communication and advocacy.

- To increase awareness of custom adoption practices and the needs of non-Inuit adoptive families in Ottawa through education, communication and advocacy.

- To increase awareness of Inuit culture distinct from First Nations and Métis through education, communication and advocacy.

Interagency Collaboration:

- To increase availability of Inuit foster families through community awareness and ongoing recruitment.

- To continue collaboration with the Children's Aid Society to strengthen cultural awareness, increase supports for parents and improve outcomes for children.

- To increase non-Inuit service agencies' awareness of Inuit specific programs, resources and supports through increased communication and information sharing.

- To increase awareness of the strengths and needs of Inuit children and their families through improved interagency collaboration and communication.

APPENDICES

appendix A

INUIT FAMILIES IN OTTAWA: A COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Ethical Guidelines

1. How do we provide adequate information about the project to parents?

- Explain the purpose clearly in the cover letter
- Tell them how it will benefit their family
- Tell them when it will benefit their family
- Provide examples of things that might change as a result of the information gathered
- Provide an information session to explain the project
- Advisory Committee input
- Explain principles of Community Based Research in focus groups and info sessions "for, by and with" community

2. How do we ensure respect for the community at all times?

- Advisory Committee
- Information is shared in a respectful manner
- Use respectful language in communications and questionnaire
- Focus group facilitator and interviewer must be sensitive to potential triggers i.e. left abusive relationship in north
- Facilitator, interviewer must be prepared to support parents if needed and provide referrals
- Interviewers and facilitators need to respect the information collected and treat with care
- Project should build on strengths not weaknesses of community

3. How do we ensure respect for Inuit culture throughout the project?

- Written material is translated into Inuktitut e.g., questionnaire, letter, report
- Elder to attend focus groups
- Focus groups and interviews in Inuktitut
- Interpretation available during English focus groups
- Provide food, country food, child care, prizes

4. How do we ensure confidentiality for parents who participate?

- It is the parents' choice to participate and can withdraw at any time
- No names collected
- A Confidentiality Agreement will be signed by project team
- Facilitator, note taker and interpreter will take signed agreement to focus groups and one on one interviews so participants see them
- Focus group participants will sign a Confidentiality Agreement
- Group rules about sharing information at beginning of focus group

5. How we do get informed consent for participation?

- Explain on questionnaire that permission is given by completion of questionnaire since we can't get signed consent
- Explain at focus groups that permission is given by participation in focus group

6. How will the community have access to the final report?

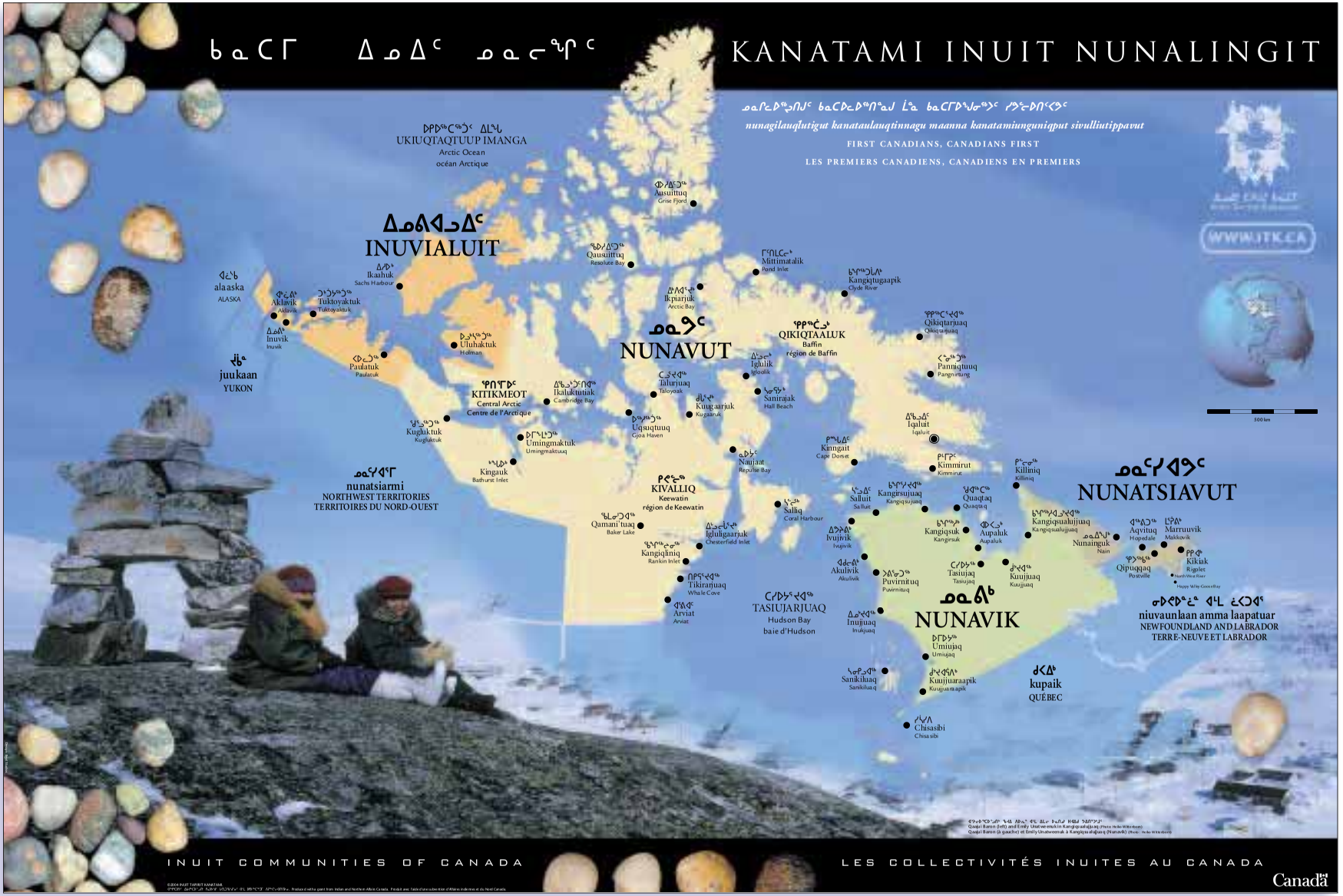
- OICC Website
- Copies available at OICC
- Copies at all partner agencies
- Host a Community Night to release report and explain how info will be used

7. How can we compensate parents for their contribution?

- $10 Loblaws card for questionnaire
- $100 prize basket draw for questionnaire
- $50 Loblaws card for focus group or interview
- Advisory Committee $30 honorarium for each 2 hr meeting

8. How does the community benefit from this project?

- Improved services for families
- More responsive services for families
- Increased awareness of unique needs of Ottawa Inuit families at a local, provincial and national level
- Agencies become more culturally sensitive
- Potentially additional resources for services
- Strengths of the community are highlighted
- Builds on the voice of the community
- Engages community in process – empowering



Credit source: Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami www.itk.ca

appendix C

HISTORY OF POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT FOR INUIT

- 1576,1577 and 1578 Sir Martin Frobisher sails into Frobisher Bay in three voyages.
- 1670 Hudson Bay is granted its charter over Rupert's Land.
- 1719 – 1911 Era of whaling in Northeastern Arctic.
- 1920 – 1930 Era of fur trading and entry of government police in the Arctic.
- 1940's Building of air bases in Arctic for resupply of European war needs.
- 1950's First schools, and start of rapid transition of living associated with higher disease and poor economic situation, also Inuit received the right to vote before First Nations (1960).
- 1970 Inuit Tapirisat of Canada, (now Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami) is created along with Committee for Entitlement of Original People (COPE) in the Northwest Territories. COPE changed its name to Inuvialuit Regional Corporation which is responsible for the land claim in NWT.
- 1972 Northern Quebec Inuit Association now called Makivik Corporation is responsible for land claim in Northern Quebec.
- 1973 Labrador Inuit Association is created which is responsible for land claim in Northern Labrador.
- 1975 Signing of James Bay Northern Quebec Agreement Land Claim. The creation of Baffin Region Inuit Association is created in what is now called Nunavut.
- 1976 Kitikmeot and Kivalliq Inuit Association are created which also now form a part of Nunavut.
- 1977 The first Inuk Senator is appointed: Mr. Willie Adams.
- 1977 The Inuit Circumpolar Conference is created to represent an international presence for Inuit which includes Canada, Denmark, Russia and United States.
- 1980's Other specific Inuit organizations come into existence, Inuit Broadcasting Corporation and Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada.
- 1984 Inuvialuit Regional Corporation signed their land claim with Government of Canada.
- 1993 Mr. Jack Anawak, first Inuk to hold a cabinet position in the federal government. Mr. Anawak served as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minster of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (1993 – 1996).
- 1993 Now known as Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. sign their land claim agreement. The territory now known as Nunavut is created in 1999.
- 1994 Ms. Mary Simon, Canada's first Ambassador for Circumpolar Affairs, as well as first Inuk to hold an ambassadorial position (1994 – 2003). Ms. Simon also served as Canada's ambassador to Denmark (1999 –2001).
- 2005 Labrador Inuit Association settled their land claim and is now called Nunatsiavut Government in Northern Labrador.
- 2008 The Honourable Leona Aglukkaq becomes the first Inuk to hold a senior cabinet position in the federal government. Minister Aglukkaq is Minister of Health (2008– present).

appendix D

FACTS ABOUT INUIT TODAY

Population / Demographics of Inuit

Population/Demographics of Inuit

- From the 2006 census 50,485 identified themselves as Inuit which represents 4% of the total Aboriginal population which was 1,172,790. According to the census there was a 26% increase from 40,220 in 1996.[xxvi]

- In 2006, the median age of the Inuit population was 22 years, compared with 40 years for non-Aboriginal people. Inuit were also younger than First Nations people, whose median age was 25 years, and Métis, whose median age was 30. (The median age is the point where exactly one-half of the population is older, and the other half is younger.)

- In 2006, 12% of the Inuit population was 4 years old and under, more than twice the proportion of 5% among non-Aboriginal people. Similarly, 11% of Inuit were in the age group 5 to 9, compared with only 6% of non-Aboriginal people. While over one-half (56%) of all Inuit were aged 24 and under, about one in three non-Aboriginal people (31%) were in this age group.

Health & Social Conditions of Inuit

- About 58% of Inuit adults smoked on a daily basis, and another 8% smoked occasionally. The daily rate was over three times the 17% among all adults in Canada, according to the 2005 Canadian Community Health Survey.

- The Inuktitut language was strongest in the regions of Nunavik and Nunavut where more than 9 out of 10 Inuit could speak the language well enough to carry on a conversation. In contrast, the figures were 27% in Nunatsiavut and 20% in the Inuvialuit region.

- About 59% of Inuit children in Inuit Nunaat were reported to have received dental care, compared with 77% of Inuit children who lived outside Inuit Nunaat. Many communities in Inuit Nunaat do not have a resident dentist. Instead, dentists from southern Canada fly into the communities on an irregular basis.

- Life expectancy is the number of years, on average, that a person can expect to live. Life expectancy in Inuit communities is 15 years lower than average Canadians.[xxvii]

- Suicide rates for Inuit are more than 11 times higher than the overall Canadian rate.[xxviii]

- The infant mortality rate for Inuit communities is declining but is still 4 times higher than that for Canada as a whole.[xxix]

- Inuit Nunaat as in other remote regions of Canada has challenges in recruiting full-time doctors. For example: Nunavut has 8 doctors for a population of 30,000, 4 of these doctors do not live in the territory.

Food insecurity among Inuit children

- About 30% of Inuit children had experienced "food insecurity" at some point. That is, they had gone hungry because the family had run out of food or money to buy food. This proportion was highest (39%) among children in the territory of Nunavut.

- Of the group of children who had experienced hunger, this was not a regular occurrence for 33% of them. However, for over 4 in 10 of these children, this happened every month, or even more often.

Health of Inuit children[xxx]

- Nearly three-quarters (74%) of Inuit children aged 6 to 14 were reported to be in excellent or very good health, about the same proportion as in 2001.

- Over one-third (35%) of Inuit children aged 6 to 14 had contact with a pediatrician, general practitioner or family doctor in 2006.

- Among all Inuit children aged 6 to 14, the most widely diagnosed chronic health conditions were ear infections, allergies and asthma.

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Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre

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