



Parents Club Success Stories

It is always a pleasure to share some news about the Parents Clubs that are working so hard throughout the province. Here are two letters from last spring. Congratulations to all of the committed Club members who are working so hard to support their children.

Port Hardy First Nations Parents Club Workshop Report

We met at 6 pm in the Port Hardy First Nations Room for a potluck dinner. There were 22 people present, including Elders, children, the Port Hardy Secondary School (PHSS) staff Vice-Principal, and the Superintendent of the School District.

Our guest speaker, Diane Jacobson, author of "My Life in a Kwagu'l Big House," arrived from Alert Bay just before 6 pm and we discussed her book and her inspiration for it. I bought three books from her, one for our PHSS library, one for the First Nations Studies 12 class, and one for our First Nations room. She gave a wonderful talk about her book; what and who had inspired her to write it, and not to quit or give up despite numerous rejections from publishers.

The book is presently going into its second printing. I suggested to our Vice-Principal and Superintendent that this book

perhaps could be included in the required readings for our First Nations Studies 12 class. They agreed. Therefore, I'm hoping that when the course is presented in our second semester they will include this book. This book is humorous, deals with living with a large extended family, the joys, the adventures of the children, and the supportive atmosphere every day. The author in her conclusion realized a chapter of her life was over and no one will experience that kind of childhood again.

Our next speaker was a couple that we had asked to represent us at the First Nations Parents Conference. They gave a short report on the sessions they had attended and they shared the valuable information that they had brought back with them.

This was our last meeting at PHSS for the First Nations Parents Club for this year. We thank the First Nations Parents Club for the funding to invite a guest speaker, to have sponsored a dinner, and to acquire some good

books. I am looking forward to working with you again next school year.

Gilakasla, Maggie Sedgemore,
PHSS First Nations Parents Club
June 6/06

Dear Parents Club Coordinator

I am writing today with an update on our group. We have a total of 6 families and we still meet on a monthly basis. There are 3 of us that meet with our children for tutoring. We rotate to different homes weekly. This will stop soon now that it is summer, but we are hoping to still meet as a group for luncheons. We have all had a good time and we would like to thank you for the extra financial support for workshops and resource materials.

Just a quick update. Hope to hear from you soon.

Charmayne Gagnon, Little Feathers Parent Group, Kelowna, BC
May 15, 2006

FIRST NATIONS PARENTS CLUB



BULLETIN

SEPTEMBER 2006, ISSUE 4, VOL 9

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Contact Us!

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Hello Again Parents Club Members

Wow! Can you believe that this is the seventh year of the First Nations Parents Club? It is hard to believe how much our Club has grown in that time. In fact, there are now 121 Parents Clubs in BC, with more than 2750 parent club members. That is excellent news, because parental involvement is such a key part of school success.

We certainly enjoyed a wonderful 2005/2006 school year. It was great to stay in touch with our regular publications and mail-outs, and it was especially exciting for us to meet so many club members at the third First Nations Parents Club Conference.

This year, we will continue to share education-related ideas, healthy recipes, and your experiences through this newsletter. We will also be distributing more Parents Club materials to active club members, including the latest edition of the Parents Club Calendar.

How can you receive those things in your community? Just send in your up-to-date contact form and then send us a story, poem, or an update to share with other Club members and wait to see what arrives in the mail. We always love to hear about your club activities and tips for other parents.

We hope the next few months are fun and educational for you and your children. We look forward to hearing from you as the year progresses.

The First Nations Schools Association

Do You Have Questions About Special Education?

If you have questions about the special education services that are available for your children, remember that the First Nations Special Education Resource Line is a free service that connects parents to the information they need. Lisa Ellis, the Resource Line staff person, would be more than happy to help you with any questions you might have. What can Lisa offer?

- Up-to-date information about special needs such as FAS, learning disabilities, and behaviour challenges
- Contact information for workshop presenters

First Nations Special Education Resource Line – Lisa Ellis Coordinator
Toll-Free Phone/Fax: 1-877-547-1919
Email: lisae@fnesc.ca

Hours: Monday to Thursday, 12:30 to 4:30 p.m. (24 hour voice mail)
See also www.fnsc.ca/resource-line.htm for more information.

- Specific strategies and effective materials to help students with specific needs
- Help with understanding student assessments

Need more information?

Is this the first time you've heard about the First Nations Parents Club? If you would like more information about the initiative, please contact our office at (604) 925-6087. The First Nations Parents Club is sponsored by the First Nations Schools Association to recognize the tremendous dedication of parents who support their children's learning. All Club materials and activities are available for free. To start a Club in your community, just contact us and request a Parents Club start-up package. We'd love to hear from you!

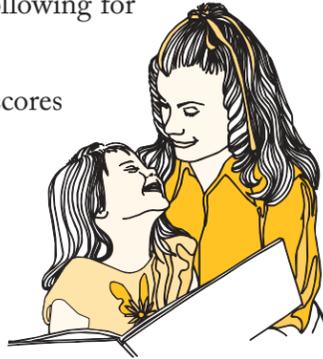


What Good Are You Doing?

Do you ever question the importance of your efforts to support your children in school? Well you shouldn't, because parental involvement in school and home learning is absolutely **critical** to student success. In fact, there is overwhelming evidence that when parents are involved, children do better in school and schools themselves improve.

Research shows that family involvement in education results in the following for students.

- Higher grades and test scores
- Better attendance rates
- More homework completion
- More positive attitudes and behaviours
- Higher graduation rates
- A better chance of enrolment in higher education



When parents are visible in the school and enthusiastic about learning, children understand that education is valuable. That helps them take school more seriously and work harder to achieve success. Also, three factors – student attendance, reading in the home, and reasonable television watching – are especially crucial for high student achievement. Those are factors that parents can best control.

Parents know more about their children than anyone else, and so their input into decision-making is key. Parent volunteers can help to improve school programs. Being involved also helps parents stay in touch with what is happening in the school, helping everyone work together more effectively.

So remember how valuable your help can be, and take the time to be involved in your children's education. It will be well worth the effort.



What is Bullying?

Learning that your child is being bullied can be very stressful and upsetting, and when it happens many parents feel anger, confusion, and guilt. That reaction is natural, but parents need to get beyond those feelings and focus on helping their children deal with the bullying. To help parents do that, here are a few tips for recognizing and addressing the problem of bullying.

Signs of Bullying

Some children are good at hiding their feelings and they may not tell anyone that they are being bullied. You might suspect bullying if your child:

- suddenly doesn't want to go to school or consistently wants to miss phys ed class;
- comes home with cuts, bruises, and/or torn clothes;
- continually needs to replace possessions or lunch money (perhaps they are being stolen);
- begins losing previously good friends;
- is especially moody, bad tempered, quiet, or withdrawn;
- starts to avoid leaving the house;
- shows aggression to brothers and sisters;
- begins doing less well at school; and/or
- can't sleep or seems anxious.

What To Do Next

If you think your young child is being bullied but you're not sure, ask a few simple questions.

- What did you do at school today?
- Did you do anything you liked? Did you do anything you didn't like?
- Who did you play with? What sort of games did you play? Did you enjoy them? Did you want to play different games with someone else?
- Are you looking forward to going to school tomorrow?

For an older child, ask the following.

- What did you do at lunchtime today?
- Is there anyone you'd like to invite home?
- Is there anyone at school you don't like? Why?

- Are you looking forward to going to school tomorrow?

Try to find out about your child's school experience.

Getting Help

If you suspect your child is being bullied, **do not** over-react and storm into the school demanding action. That can make things much worse! Also, if you weren't sure that your child was being bullied, maybe the school was also unaware of the problem. Most schools take bullying very seriously when they know what is happening. Give everyone a chance to plan an effective response.

As a first step, see the teacher and describe your concerns in a non-confrontational way. Ask if the teacher has noticed anything. How is your child getting along with classmates? Does your child seem unhappy in school? Is your child welcomed in games on the playground? Does your child usually eat with other children at lunch?

If you are still uncertain whether bullying is a problem, ask the teachers and the principal to keep an eye on the situation.

Tips for Dealing with Bullying

If you find out that bullying is happening, **do not** confront the bully's parents. This can lead to serious arguments and it can create new problems. Instead,

here are a few things you can do.

- Keep a diary of what your child says is happening.
- Keep in constant touch with the school, explaining that the problem is ongoing. Put your concerns in writing and ask that your letters be kept in your child's school file.
- Ask to see the school's bullying policy.
- Talk with the school about how contact between the bully and your child can be monitored and limited, or about how the bully can be better supervised.
- If you are meeting with the school, write down your questions and concerns so you don't forget them. You can also bring along a friend or relative to help you listen and ask questions. This is an emotional issue, which can make it difficult to listen effectively.
- If your child is very unhappy, you may want to consult with a

doctor or counsellor to get professional help. It is important to make sure your child is supported emotionally while everything else is going on.

- In very serious cases, the police may be brought in to help deal with the situation. The police likely have school liaison officers who are experienced with this issue. They can help a great deal.

Schools are responsible for keeping children safe while they are at school. Fortunately, schools are better informed than ever before about bullying and its terrible consequences, and your school should be equipped to help you deal with the problem. Work with the school staff to determine the best strategy to help your child.

(The information in this article was adapted from Bullying Online at www.bullying.co.uk).

Apple and Squash Soup

Here's a recipe to enjoy the wonderful fruits and vegetables of fall.

2 tbsp vegetable oil	2 tbsp minced onion
1 celery stalk, chopped	2 large apples, chopped
1/2 tsp nutmeg	1/2 tsp cinnamon
3 cups peeled and diced squash	4 cups chicken stock
1/4 cup whipping cream	1/2 tsp each salt and pepper
Garnish	
1 tbsp butter	1 large apple, diced
1/8 tsp ground cinnamon	1/8 tsp grated nutmeg

In a large saucepan, heat the oil and cook the onion, celery, and chopped apple until soft. Stir in the nutmeg and cinnamon and cook for 1 minute. Add the squash and stock. Bring to a boil, then reduce to a simmer and cook, covered, for about 30 minutes or until the squash is tender. In a food processor, puree the soup with the cream and add salt and pepper to taste.

For the garnish, heat the butter in a small frying pan. Add the diced apple, cinnamon, and nutmeg, and saute for 2 minutes. Sprinkle on the soup and enjoy.