EQUITY AND CULTURAL SAFETY IN EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE.

Prepared by: Eanimi Deborah Agube, Healthy City Scholar, 2022

Prepared for: Marisol Petersen, Social Planner, Arts, Culture and Community Services, City of Vancouver

Asuka Yoshioka, Social Planner, Arts, Culture and Community Services, City of Vancouver

Sherry Small, Urban Indigenous Early Learning & Child Care Planner, Developer, MetroVancouver Aboriginal Executive Council.

August 2022

Acknowledgements

The author acknowledges that the work for this project took place on the unceded ancestral lands of the xwməθkwəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), Stó:lō and Səl̓ílwətaʔ/Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

Marisol Petersen, Asuka Yoshioka and the City of Vancouver's childcare social planning team for their effort and guidance as mentors in the development of this project.

Sherry Small because she used her Nisga'a mentorship style of "Yuuhlamkaskw": she guided, counseled, cautioned, encouraged and supported the work through dialogue, discussion, and storytelling.

A vote of thanks also to Sarah Labahn, City of Vancouver Scholars Program Manager and Karen Taylor, Program Manager of the UBC Sustainability Initiative, for their continued support throughout this internship.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary

Purpose

There is a rising need for the City of Vancouver to take action around Indigenous access to culturally safe childcare that is both non-Indigenous and Indigenous-led. With the commitments senior governments have made to universal childcare, all levels of government must understand and prioritize cultural safety for Indigenous families. This research determines how inclusion practices and actions can promote cultural safety. This project focuses on discovering what elements contribute to cultural safety and was conducted in collaboration with a Nisga'a mentor, Urban Indigenous community members, and Early Childhood Educators and was supported by a literature review.

The purpose of this research is to provide insight into the following questions;

- What elements make up a culturally safe Early Learning Child Care (ELCC) environment?
- How can we combine these elements to ensure that Urban Indigenous children and families feel culturally safe in facilities and programs that promote and protect their interests?
- What simple actions support cultural safety for Indigenous children and families in the childcare system?

Findings

Understanding that cultural safety practices are added steps that can be taken to improve ELCC access and inclusion for Urban Indigenous families, we approached the project to determine the elements that need to come together to promote cultural safety.

Through interviews with community members, mentorship from a Nisga'a expert in ELCC, site visits to Indigenous and non-Indigenous childcare centres and a literature review.

- Welcoming environment: There is high importance on the environment a child is tended to in, as this contributes to supporting culturally safe development opportunities for children. Interviewees also emphasized their feeling about the childcare facility, which were greatly influenced by the staff and how welcoming and trustworthy they were.

- Representation of culture: To ensure children are exposed to their culture at an early age, it is beneficial to provide and showcase a diversity of Indigenous cultures to ensure that children witness identities that are true to them instead of a one-size-fits-all approach to teaching Indigenous culture and identity.

- Community and Family Based Involvement: family and community play a significant role in child development and should also play a central role in ELCC programs. Childcare services should welcome and include the participation of elders and families as part of the developmental process of children, ensuring that childcare services cater to children and families.

Suggestions

- Trust is key. Create ELCC spaces where people can ask the simple question, "can I trust you?" and believe they get affirmative answers. Urban Indigenous families need assurances that their children will be kept safe. Childcare educators must connect with children and families.

- Be intentional when providing teachings of diverse languages, arts and cultures. Address the ethnic and cultural distinctions of the children rather than providing blanketed teachings. Ethnic and cultural distinction ensures that children learn about their true identity without confusion. It can be done by actively identifying the children's ethnic and cultural identities and working with parents to learn traditional greetings, Indigenous language ABC's, traditional hairstyles and foods. Involving each child with their families allows learning to happen for everyone.

- Create opportunities to involve members and leaders of the community, such as elders, to participate in childcare's contribution and planning process. Ensuring that the child development process is not just left to the educators but is a shared responsibility by including family and community members.

Project Overview

Equity and Cultural Safety in
Early Learning and Childcare.

Rationale

As childcare is a constant social issue, the City of Vancouver is continuously working on actions to improve the childcare situation for families. In doing so, the City recognizes the need for inclusion and representation of Indigenous children and families in Vancouver and the unacknowledged barriers that could affect Indigenous children and families' access to childcare programs. This project explores the elements of childcare that make it culturally safe for Urban Indigenous families. Ensuring such elements are incorporated in all childcare programs will help address the missing link to promoting inclusivity and cultural safety among Urban Indigenous children and families in Vancouver. It will also support the significant efforts of childcare promotion and advocacy that the City is continuously embarking on around ensuring inclusive and equitable access to childcare.

This project has multiple demands, such as the need for representation in a system that has scarred and shunned Indigenous peoples and created inaccessibility. The conversation around cultural safety is ongoing and needs implementable actions in childcare. It is also a critical time for the City to increase its actions to support cultural safety in childcare, given that senior governments have recently committed to developing a universal childcare system, which includes expanding access to Indigenous-led childcare ("Canada-British Columbia Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement," n.d.).

In identifying the elements of cultural safety, childcare programs can take steps to ensure that Indigenous knowledge and identity are part of their early learning childhood development. The City of Vancouver has committed to fostering strong relationships with Indigenous peoples, so recognizing and implementing culturally safe elements in childcare is a crucial step toward relationship building with Urban Indigenous children and families and taking action to fulfil the promise of more accessible childcare provision and inclusivity.

Project Purpose

At the start of this project, I quickly reflected on the issue of defining cultural safety simply based on the word safety; even though a simple concept, safety is still dependent on the individual who experiences it. I assumed that when culture influences safety, yet another subjective description arises. Instead of defining cultural safety as a singular concept, this report focuses on the elements of cultural safety that can come together to ensure culturally safe childcare spaces are available to all children, particularly Urban Indigenous children. Interviews with Urban Indigenous community members, ongoing mentorship from a Nisga'a mentor, site visits to childcare facilities, and a literature review all informed the findings of this report. This report aims to provide insight into answering questions like;

- What elements make up a culturally appropriate ELCC environment?

- How can we combine these elements to ensure that Urban Indigenous children and families feel culturally safe in facilities and programs that promote and protect their interests?

- What simple actions support cultural safety for Indigenous children and families in the childcare system?

Project Limitations

This project builds upon the 2019/2020 "Children's Voices Our Choices" community engagement and the City of Vancouver's updated childcare strategy: Making Strides: Vancouver's Childcare Strategy and Early Actions (2022), by investigating actions needed to provide cultural safety in childcare. First, I want to recognize that as a non-Indigenous researcher conducting this work, I must acknowledge limitations in my understanding of some of the elements that make childcare unsafe for Urban Indigenous families in Vancouver. Secondly, I acknowledge that I am continuously learning about the history of the relationship between Canada and the Indigenous peoples. Finally, this research was conducted over four months between May and August 2022. This short period led to challenges with scheduling childcare site visits and interviews with Indigenous community members. The findings and observations should not be considered an exhaustive representation of all the elements contributing to cultural safety and inclusion among Urban Indigenous families.
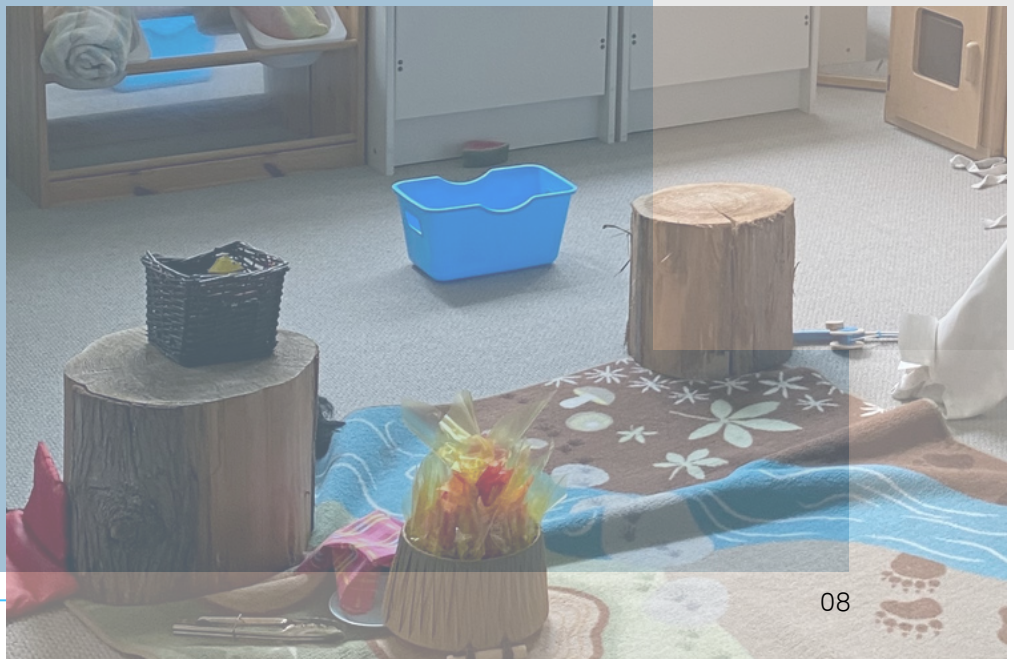
Background

Global and Local Policy

To further understand why this project focuses on cultural safety for Urban Indigenous children and families specifically, below are some legal imperatives from the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action and the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. These policies speak on the need for taking action regarding the rights of Indigenous children to education, which includes the early learning childcare system because early learning childcare educators are professional educators that encourage and impact child development.

All levels of government recognize the importance of Indigenous self-determination regarding the right to education and childcare. Article 14 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) states:

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions, providing education in their languages in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning.
2. Indigenous individuals, particularly children, have the right to all levels and forms of education of the State without discrimination.
3. States shall, in conjunction with indigenous peoples, take effective measures in order for indigenous individuals, particularly children, including those living outside their communities, to have access, when possible, to an education in their own culture and provided in their own language.

(UN General Assembly, 2007, p. 10)

Canada's Truth and Reconciliation:Calls to Action (2015) include similar sentiments regarding the right to follow childhood education actions.

12. We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to develop culturally appropriate early childhood education programs for Aboriginal families.

(Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action, 2015, p. 5-6)

Also, in the report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, Volume 3: Gathering Strength; the commission recommends;

3.5.3 Federal, provincial, and territorial governments co-operate to support an integrated early childhood education funding strategy that
a. extends early childhood education services to all Aboriginal children regardless of residence;
b. encourages programs that foster the physical, social, intellectual and spiritual development of children, reducing distinctions between child care, prevention and education;
c. maximizes Aboriginal control over service design and administration;
d. offers one-stop accessible funding, and
e. promotes parental involvement and choice in early childhood education options

(Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, Volume 3, 1996 p.422-423)

With the different guiding documents highlighting how different levels of government can work together to co-develop culturally safe childcare, the City of Vancouver endorsed the UNDRIP in 2013. After adopting a Reconciliation Framework in 2014, The City of Vancouver was designated a City of Reconciliation.

Amongst other things, the City of Vancouver's Reconciliation Framework commits to forming a sustainable relationship with local First Nations and Urban Indigenous communities; and strengthening local First Nations and Urban Indigenous relations. The Reconciliation Framework also proposes a goal of mutual respect, partnership and economic empowerment, three foundational components;

1. Cultural competency
2. Strengthened Relations
3. Effective Decision-making

(Framework for City of Reconciliation, 2014, p.2-5)

In 2014, Council passed the 2025 target—Healthy City strategy with a vision of "a city where together are creating and continually improving the conditions that enable all of us to enjoy the highest level of health and well-being possible." (Vancouver's Healthy City Strategy Report, Phase 1). This long-term strategy focused on 13 goals based on health

determinants and the goal targeted at early childhood is the "A Good Start" goal. To measure the success of this goal, the City has highlighted indicators such as Aboriginal Children, Vancouver's Child Population, Children in Low-Income Families and Licensed childcare supply (Social Indicators and Trends 2014: A Good Start).

Good Start Target: at least 85 percent of Vancouver's children are developmentally ready for school when they enter kindergarten(Social Indicators and Trends 2014: A Good Start).

By July 2021, the City of Vancouver Council approved an Equity Framework focused on forming sustained relationships of mutual respect, incorporating perspectives, and providing services that benefit local First Nations and the Urban Indigenous community (Equity Framework). This framework highlights a commitment to equity in City leadership, fostering strong relationships, and creating spaces for accountability. This framework has four main priority areas;
1. Foundation: vision, leadership, structure
2. Internal: human resources functions
3. Bridging: learning, communications, finance

4. External: community-facing functions (City of Vancouver's Equity Framework)

City of Vancouver's Role in Childcare.

As a result of the COVID pandemic, childcare became an essential service in Canada in 2020. The City of Vancouver has played a significant role and has supported the provision of 60% of all licensed full-day group care for children under three years and 46% of all licensed full-day childcare for children 3-5 years (Making Strides: Vancouver's Childcare Strategy and Early Actions report, 2022).

In the City of Vancouver's roles of advocacy and facilitation, they are working to provide more support to Indigenous children and families in childcare (Making Strides: Vancouver's Childcare Strategy and Early Actions Report, 2022). There is a need to expand support for Indigenous-led childcare programs and work on relationship building. There is also a need to ensure. Indigenous children and families feel culturally safe participating in the programs, using the facilities, and accessing more Indigenous-led centers.

The City of Vancouver and the Province of British Columbia's childcare strategies are guided by three shared principles;

1. Quality of Childcare: Ensuring the contribution to school readiness and the improvement of long-term overall health benefits (physical, mental and emotional)
2. Access to childcare: The delivery of more licensed childcare facilities and access to inclusive spaces in which all children feel safe.
3. Affordability of childcare: Addressing the increased cost of living and financial pressure on families through reducing childcare costs.

Since the 1970s, the City of Vancouver has "facilitated the creation of over 4,400 childcare spaces (including preschool), in partnership with developers, the Province, and non-profit organizations" (City of Vancouver, n.d). Some of the policies, initiatives and strategies developed since that time include the 2004 Joint Childcare Council, the 2014 City of Vancouver Healthy City Strategy and the 2022 Making Strides: Vancouver's Childcare Strategy.

CHILDCARE COMMUTMENTS AND MILESTONES

ALTHOUGH CHILDCARE IS A PROVINCIAL RESPONSIBILITY, THE CITY HAS SUPPORTED THE PROVISION OF QUALITY CHILDCARE SINCE THE LATE 1980S

1970S/1980S
CoV- BC Childcare portable Partnership Program

1990
Civic Childcare Startegies

1993
Childcare Design Guidelines

2002
"Moving Forward" Childcare Strategy

2004
Childcare Protocal

2005
Joint Childcare Council

2008
Childcare Technical Guidelines

2011
Council endorses the BC "$10-a-Day Plan"

2013
School Age Care Guidelines and MOU, VSB and Clty of Vanciuver

2014
City of Vancuver Healthy City Strategy

2018
BC Childcare Plan Universal Childare

2019
BC- CoV Memorandum of Understanding (infrastructure expansion)

2022
Making Strides: Vancouver's Childcare Strategy.

# Brief Descriptions of City Childcare Actions

Joint Council on Childcare

The Joint Council on Childcare (JCC) was formed in 2004 by the Vancouver School Board, Park Board, and City and is a point of "leadership in seeking resources, planning, development and coordination, problem-solving and monitoring of early learning and childcare" (Vancouver Joint Council On Childcare-Terms of Reference). Over the years, the JCC has expanded to include members from the Vancouver Public Library and Vancouver Coastal Health, Metro Vancouver Executive Council, as well as representatives from larger childcare operators, childcare resource hubs, unions that represent childcare workers, and the building sectors;

Healthy City Strategy

The healthy city strategy is a "long-term, integrated plan for healthier people, healthier places, and a healthier planet" (City of Vancouver, 2018). It contains thirteen goals based on the social health indicators, and each goal targets and measures. For childcare, the goal is "A good start," which is a way to ensure "Vancouver's children have the best chance of enjoying a healthy childhood" (City of Vancouver, 2018).

Making Strides towards a Good Start for All

This 2022 childcare strategy builds on Vancouver's long history of developing policies, tools, and strategies to address the local needs of children and families. The City's updated childcare strategy vision is to "work towards a future where all Vancouver families can access affordable, quality and inclusive childcare to work, learn and meet daily needs as part of a universal, public system that lifts up all families" (Making Strides: Vancouver's Childcare Strategy and Early Actions Report, 2022).
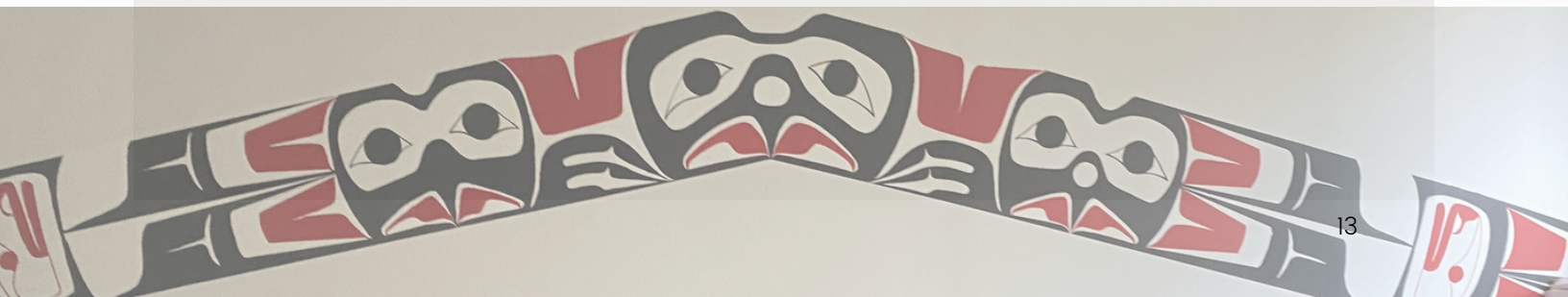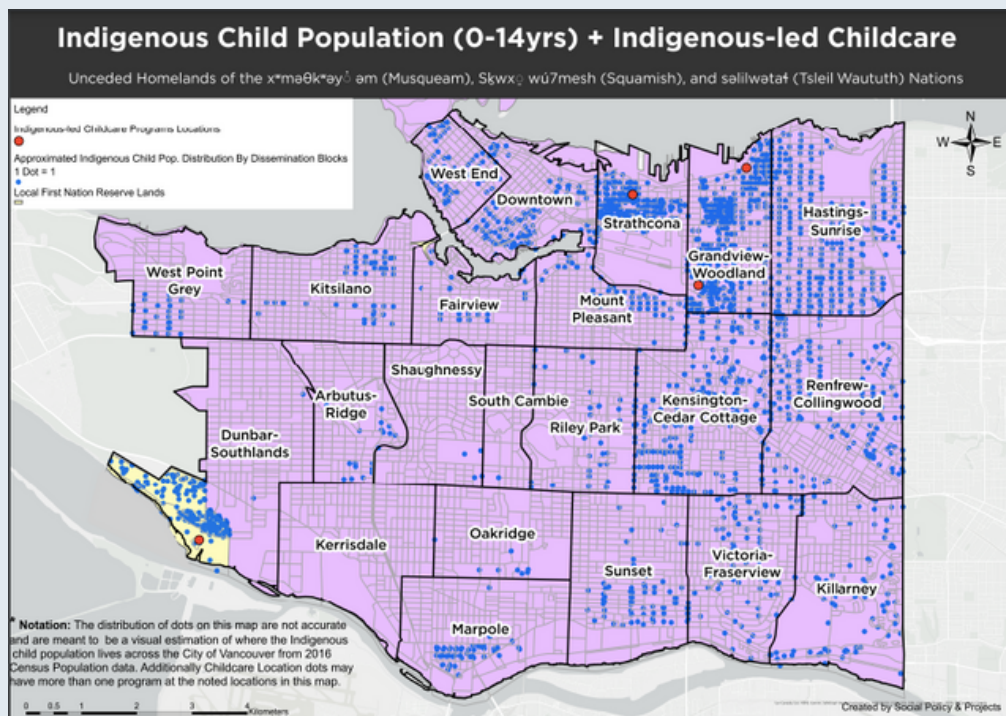
Barriers for Indigenous Children and Families in Childcare

In Vancouver, there is insufficient childcare for the number of families needing the services. So the primary barrier mentioned around childcare continues to be access to spaces and affordability; this is true for Indigenous and non-Indigenous families. This section highlights specific issues regarding the missing elements that could promote greater inclusivity for Urban Indigenous children and families in Vancouver, particularly in childcare facilities and program design.

<u>Lack of Indigenous-led programs and facilities</u>

Currently, there are three Indigenous-led childcare programs in Vancouver and one in Richmond, all frequented by Indigenous families residing in Metro Vancouver. With the widespread socio-economic diversity or locations where Indigenous families live in Vancouver, there needs to be an increase in early learning and childcare programs focusing on Indigenous traditional cultural practices, identity and language in various parts of the city for easier access. There are two part-time Indigenous-led programs that service the Indigenous children and families in Vancouver.

Indigenous Child Population (0-14yrs) + Indigenous-led Childcare

Unceded Homelands of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sḵwx̱wú7mesh (Squamish), and səlilwətaɬ (Tsleil Waututh) Nations

Lack of Indigenous Early Childcare Educators (ECE)

Limited data reflects the number of Indigenous ECEs in Vancouver. According to the 2016 Census data, of the 82,635 early childhood educators and assistants (ECEAs) and childcare providers (CCP) in Canada, only 7,380 were Indigenous workers. Indigenous workers accounted for approximately 9% of ECEAs and CCP workers, and of that number, only 7.8% lived in major census metropolitan areas such as Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver (Frank & Arim, 2021).

Lack of representation

Practising and expressing ones cultural identity is a proven protective factor that improves aspects of child development, like language and cultural identity (Elek et al., 2020). There needs to be more cultural awareness, knowledge hubs, historical understanding and cultural engagement to promote better cultural practices that enable children to build a connection to their culture and identity.

Lack of Urban Indigenous representation in planning and policy-making at different levels of government:

There is little data on the representation of Urban Indigenous peoples at the different levels of government regarding planning for childcare. There is a need for Indigenous engagement and advocacy to understand what is needed by families and children and to create room for community involvement in early learning and childcare program design. Without this representation, there is the risk of developing a "universal system of childcare" based on a Western perspective of one size fits all.

Research Approach

Several formal and informal research methods, Eurocentric and Indigenous-centric, were used to inform research findings. As a non-Indigenous researcher continuously learning about the history and practises of Indigenous peoples, different research methods were crucial as they allowed me to participate and witness more Indigenous forms of engagement and protocol. From participating in different ways of understanding and drawing knowledge to learning directly from the experiences of the Indigenous people I was introduced to, I interacted with and created links to a formal approach to research. This learning process would not have been possible without the presence of an Indigenous mentor and the partnership approach we took to this research. This report section describes the Nisga'a mentorship, literature review, site visits and interview methods I used.

Yuuhlamkaskw
("Mentorship" in the Nisga'a language)

As a guide to better learn and understand Indigenous histories, teachings and research approaches, I was honoured to have my Nisga'a mentor play the role of more than a guide. She embodied the role of a mentor with the gift of using Indigenous "**two-eyed seeing**" principles, which are deeply rooted in her Nisga'a Culture and refer to people who have a sound understanding of both western and Indigenous systems of being.

The Nisga'a word "**Yuuhlamkaskw**" refers to someone who is a guide, counsellor, cautioner, encourager and supporter, which describes my mentor's style. She counselled and supported the work through dialogue, discussion, and storytelling.

My Nisga'amentor promoted "**communal knowledge**" in this project, which she described as deep listening, openness and honesty to reflect with the person sharing. For example, in conversation, it is essential to ask, "do I hear you right?" which provides space to be vulnerable and corrected. Using the **relational care** principles, I was also introduced to highlight the importance of understanding that everything interrelates and that everyone should be made to know that they have something to offer. These Indigenous approaches were calling on my inner knowledge of some golden rules such as:

- Respect: nurturing positive thoughts and feelings of Indigenous peoples' knowledge and experiences;
- Courage: being authentic in my engagement with Indigenous peoples;
- Honesty: sharing with Indigenous peoples when I do not understand; and
- Humility: offering space and time for Indigenous peoples to feel honoured, gift-giving tokens of appreciation for their shared time, space and profound wisdom.

Some Indigenous approaches are reflected in this report and are part of the Indigenous-centric research approaches I utilized. To provide more context, through my observation and research, my general understanding, I am providing a translation of my understanding of these Indigenous approaches and how they contributed to this project.

- **Two-eyed seeing:** The ability to view the world from different perspectives and create connections, links and ways to exist through the different perspectives. This Indigenous term describes viewing the world from a Eurocentric system and an Indigenous knowledge base.

- **Dancing in two worlds**: This term is the Nisga'a term similar to "two-eyed seeing," used to describe the ability to acclimate to a Eurocentric world system while still being true to one's Indigenous cultural identity. The act of being part of claiming your identity in spaces that might seem unfamiliar while navigating these unfamiliar spaces.

- **Communal Knowledge:** This is knowledge passed on within the community gathered from experience and passed on through active listening to ensure the owners of the story that it will be retold fairly and accurately. It can be seen in expressing a way of life, cultural values, and practices. It can be understood as individuals having a sharing understanding or knowledge.

- **All my relations:** This refers to the connection and link to all things, pulling understanding from all sources and recognizing that we are all related (people, birds, mountains, trees, rivers and much more). This term allowed us to tell stories, build links and recognize every element's importance to the world.

- **Witnessing:** a way in which knowledge is rendered and passed on in many Indigenous cultures. This term calls on the responsibility to honour and remember the stories, experiences and teachings you observe.

Literature Review

The literature review aims to identify elements contributing to cultural safety that the City of Vancouver could consider when developing childcare spaces to promote cultural safety for Indigenous children and families. The literature reviewed included frameworks and policies, academic papers and reports on elements to provide culturally safe spaces. Most notably, the literature review was informed by several documents representing the voices of Indigenous peoples. Article 14 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples report, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action, and the Government of Canada's Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework.

While each of the aforementioned documents deserves to be studied individually, I ultimately decided it was necessary to summarize the "heart" of these documents. When presenting findings from the literature review to partners, I stress the importance of the following points:

01

Indigenous-led and culturally appropriate education/ childcare;

02

No segregation of children based on race or special abilities;

03

Hiring Indigenous people at all levels to run educational/ childcare programs;

04

 Access to culture and language for rban Indigenous peoples;

05

Community members should be welcome in the classroom;

In the analysis of the findings, we also used the guiding principles articulated in the Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework, including,

• Indigenous knowledge, languages and cultures
• First Nations, Inuit and Métis determination
• Quality programs and services
• Child and family-centred
• Inclusive
• Flexible and adaptable
• Accessible
• Transparent and accountable
• Respect, collaboration and partnerships

The elements I found to be connected to cultural safety and recommendations outlined in this report are grouped into themes influenced by reflections from interviews and gathered knowledge from community members and childcare educators.

Site Visits and Observations

From May to July 2022, I was privileged to be welcomed into four childcare facilities with different age group programs; the earliest program catered to children as young as ten months old. The sites provided different insights and perspectives into my understanding of childcare programs. One thing I found that they all had in common was their pursuit of providing quality child care to the children in their care. The staff graciously welcomed me, my Nisga'a mentor, and the City of Vancouver staff, providing guidance to this research project. They took time out of their busy schedules to provide detailed tours of their facility, including the history of their centres and the programs' successes. Also, the different ways they practice cultural safety in their facilities were highlighted, and they allowed us to observe the attributes of the spaces.

The visits were organized through working connections between the City staff on the research team, the Nisga'a mentor, and the childcare facility coordinators. For some of the site visits, the research team had a personal relationship with the childcare programs and the coordinators, which likely helped the team gain access to the site. Having pre-existing relationships with the program staff helped facilitate access to our visited facilities and built trust. For the Indigenous-led site, we learned that bringing a gift was a meaningful way to acknowledge the contribution made by staff and a blanket was given to provide the team leader with continued strength to do the good work.

A total of four childcare program sites were visited: two were Indigenous influenced and two non-Indigenous influenced. Of the Indigenous-influenced facilities, one facility was Indigenous-led, the other had a significant number of Indigenous identifying children and families represented, and an Indigenous staff that played an excellent role in advocacy and providing support for the children and families. While the non-Indigenous-influenced facilities had no Indigenous identifying children in their care, they did acknowledge the importance of Indigenous representation. They were interested in working in partnership with local host Nations to learn and teach the children more about Indigenous history in Vancouver.

Below are critical observations from the site visits conducted.

Observations of the non-Indigenous-influenced sites:

- There was a natural progression in the different levels of care provided by age group;
- The classrooms followed a path that felt like a roadmap that took the observer from the infant program to the toddler and preschooler spaces;
- The staff mentioned exploring children's interests while the childcare educators worked with parents to develop learning plans;
- The movement felt structured and firm, almost like building blocks that ensured children follow a linear progression in the facility's design and the implementation of the programs; and
- This linear progression was evident in the step-by-step design of the facilities and the programs as the children graduated each level.

Observations of the Indigenous-influenced sites:

- There was more staff interaction and catering to the children and their families; this was evident in how the staff connected with the parents and grandparents when they came to pick up the children. For example, lunch leftovers that the children had were packed and given to the care providers;
- The programs had a higher staff-to-child ratio (1:4 for the Indigenous-led program). In the Indigenous-led program, staff came from different backgrounds, representing the different Indigenous communities;
- As expected, there was more cultural representation in the outdoor and indoor physical play areas, like crafted number flags with Indigenous language translations, drums and cultural art;
- The facility design followed the requirements needed in a childcare facility. The classroom spaces felt like open spaces with an unrestricted flow and nurturing of natural curiosity that promoted natural curiosity, with children taking the lead in the discovery process;

- The movement around the spaces had a more organic progression, creating a less systemic impression and ambiance; and
- The environment held lots of community representation and felt like an immersive experience in which we got the opportunity to be part of a holistic process.

Key Informant Interviews and Reflections

This project could not be possible without taking time to listen, observe and witness the community needs or the relationships between the participants and the Nisga'a mentor supporting this project. Built on knowledge focused on conversations with individuals involved in childcare practices, experts with experience working with Indigenous children and families, early childcare educators, interviews with community members, and project leads with relevant experiences. These conversations gathered input on their experiences with cultural safety, essential considerations in the program process and knowledge about existing childcare programs.

The key informant interviews were with four Nisga'a identifying community members. Two interviews occurred during an Annual Nisga'a BBQ at Trout Lake in Vancouver. The Nisga'a mentor

invited me to this event, and I was graciously welcomed into the community by everyone I was honoured to interact with. These interviews felt like sharing conversations with people willing to share their knowledge, providing information and insight into their childcare experiences and as professionals. I was open to learning and grateful for their time. I could not complete the other two interviews in person, so my Nisga'a mentor helped connect me to a total of 10 people willing to be interviewed during the BBQ. However, due to time constraints, I could conduct two additional interviews. Another two interviews happened remotely, one over a phone call and the other over a Zoom call at the interviewee's request at the time of their choosing. Three interviews were approximately 15- 20 minutes, except for the zoom call, which lasted almost an hour.

These interviews gave a different perspective of how the literature perceived the elements of cultural safety and taught me that everyone has a different expectation and interpretation of the need for cultural safety. The subjective views of cultural safety and inclusion in childcare confirmed some challenges I encountered in defining cultural safety for Indigenous people in early learning and childcare. However, the interviews

Lemphasized healing and preservation through kindness. To better understand who and how the interviews transpired, here are some brief descriptions of who the participants were;

Participant 1

Although they had a baby, they walked with me and found a shady area during the bbq to answer the questions and conversate. With a history as a professional childcare providers, they had an insight into ways cultural safety could be included, including the presence of Indigenous art, books, and songs and having people from different Indigenous backgrounds present their culture. Having shared and participated in the design of childcare spaces, I could appreciate the excitement about the questions. They shared personal struggles with searching for childcare and barriers faced. With a child present, I watched her give the child fruits, let them explore the space around them and cater to their needs. They emphasized the need for childcare services to have family support practices and be "more than a place for children."

Participant 2

My first impression of a person enjoying a burger, dancing and volunteering their time to have a conversation is that the person was kind and happy. The insights they gave were nothing less than my first impression of them. They were passionate about the kindness needed to make children feel like they belonged. Their ideology for how children should be treated was simple, "treat them how you would like to be treated." She had stories of escapades of caring for herds of children, sometimes more than thirty plus at a time. As a parent who had used childcare programs, she highlighted some things that she thought were elements of cultural safety, like the ability for children to learn about their history and culture and the importance of an environment that gives children the opportunity to feel free and have a voice.
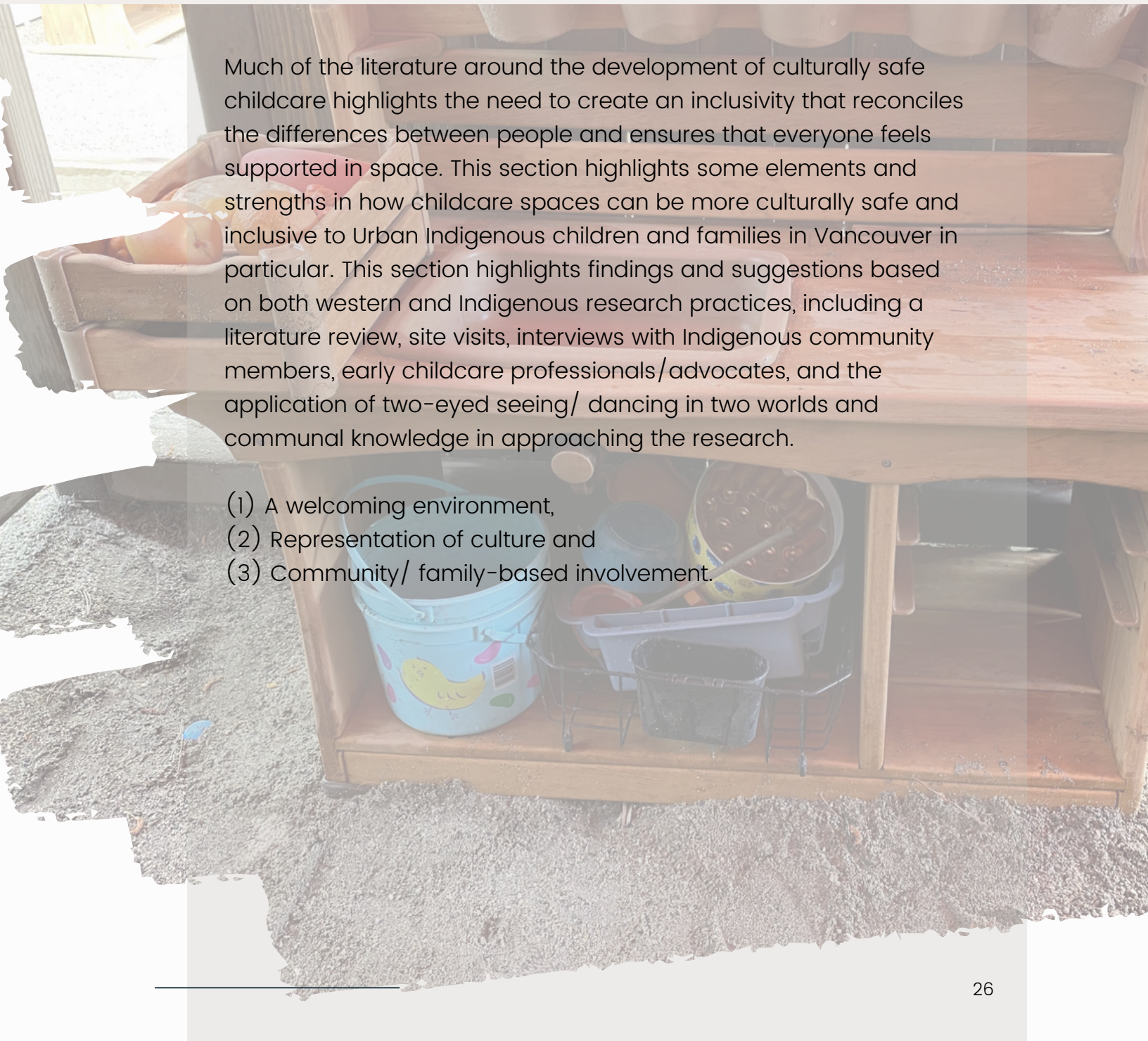
Participant 3

Speaking as both a parent and an aspiring childcare educator, I conducted this interview over a phone conversation. Having the opportunity of a different view of cultural identity, they had an approach to the critical needs of culturally safe childcare facilities. Their insights worked more towards the importance of being able to dance in two worlds and figuring out how Indigenous knowledge and Western ideologies complement each other. After twenty minutes, this participant reemphasized childcare educators' significant role in child development.

Participant 4

As an advocate for childcare and representation for many years, with a wealth of knowledge passed down for generations, this participant taught me much about cultural safety and its importance. They proved that even across a Zoom call, they could pass on the knowledge that felt like listening to moonlight stories. With insights based on experience, the interviewee focused on the importance of the distinction of culture and the need to shy away from teaching a diluted and unified history of Indigenous peoples. The hour spent on this call provoked the understanding of the dangers of the one-size-fits-all model teaching Indigenous people's histories.

Findings and Suggestions

Much of the literature around the development of culturally safe childcare highlights the need to create an inclusivity that reconciles the differences between people and ensures that everyone feels supported in space. This section highlights some elements and strengths in how childcare spaces can be more culturally safe and inclusive to Urban Indigenous children and families in Vancouver in particular. This section highlights findings and suggestions based on both western and Indigenous research practices, including a literature review, site visits, interviews with Indigenous community members, early childcare professionals/advocates, and the application of two-eyed seeing/ dancing in two worlds and communal knowledge in approaching the research.

(1) A welcoming environment,
(2) Representation of culture and
(3) Community/ family-based involvement.

A Welcoming Environment

The literature regarding the connection between child development and the environment highlights the significance of the physical and non-physical environment. It views the environment as a "third teacher" after the parents and the teachers (Roy, 2015). The interviews conducted as part of this study support the belief that the spaces we access play a significant role in understanding cultural safety. However, when asked how spaces could make people feel respected, welcomed and represented, every research participant described a non-physical attribute of the environment and used a familiar word, "kindness." Noting kindness is a remarkable attribute in understanding how people feel and experience the world.

While access to the physical space and the location are crucial elements, especially with so few Indigenous-led facilities, the interviews shed additional light on the aspect of the environment, commenting not only on the physical attributes but also on the non-tangible aspects. Research participants emphasized how the staff played a more significant role in making the environment feel either culturally safe or unsafe than the building structure, citing instances of trust based on their interactions with some care providers. One research participant commented on the importance of feeling like the staff treated the children like they were their own when in their care. This highlights the need for early childhood educators (ECEs) to be viewed as primary caretakers and teachers during children's care hours to build better interactions and bonds. This is relevant because exposure to bonds and the environment is crucial to developing children's brain architecture (Diamond & Whitington, 2015).

According to one research participant, the sense of kindness and welcoming children and families received on entry played a significant role in building connections and trust that children would be safe. A research participant explained that a sense of inclusion and cultural safety is as simple as consistent positive nonverbal communication. We are reminded that Indigenous people have dealt with a history of violent and unkind actions, especially in the residential school and child welfare systems. So while kindness seems like a non-issue, it carries more meaning than just a word. Kindness shows people that the colour of their skin does not affect how they will be treated or cared for. Kindness reminds people that they can trust their children's voices will be heard and respected. It allows children to learn their limits and explore the world while learning from the actions of the people around them.

Suggestions

- Trust is key. Creating spaces where people can ask the simple question, "can I trust you?" and believe that the answers they get are an assurance that their children will be kept safe. We must build on how childcare educators can connect with children and families.
- Learn and address unconscious biases that limit open interactions with children and families. Provide staff with cultural training to learn ways of showing kindness and unlearn unsafe beliefs.
- Hire and train qualified natural knowledgeable Indigenous child developers who are trauma-informed based on experience. More Indigenous people need to be part of the early learning and childcare system. This helps provide a model for community development and involvement. Having Indigenous people as part of the staff provides opportunities for recommendations and promotion of cultural safety practices and people who can address unrecognized trauma.
- Create open spaces that ensure that the environment caters to children and families alike. This can be done by having family rooms that are shared and multifaceted, in which parents can bond with other parents and educators, use the room for their needs, provide teachings of their culture to educators, have meals and more.

Representation of Culture

The need for representation is simply the need to create links that connect children and families to their identity. For Indigenous children, these links must reflect who they are, as they have to dance in two worlds daily. Cultural representation allows people to build meaning with other members of their culture (Hall, 2020). Elements such as exposure to cultural history and belief systems, use of traditional language and exposure to people who have shared identity, arts, and songs are ways to build cultural identity.

For Indigenous children, a connection to their identity is incredibly pertinent, as history accounts for the cleansing of their identity through the existence of cultural genocide mechanisms like the residential school. These "schools" attempted eradicating Indigenous language, culture, traditions, family ties, and rites. The interviews for this project highlighted the use of language and exposure to cultural history as elements needed to improve cultural safety and inclusion in the childcare system. This supports the literature reviewed in emphasizing the importance of language, stating, "when a language disappears, so too does a part of a culture" (Deer, 2019). In Indigenous knowledge, language is not only the capacity that allows us to communicate ideas but also a complex structure in which meaning is stored.

In the study by Ball and Simpkins (The Community Within a Child), the people interviewed elaborated on the importance of using Indigenous languages when incorporating cultural activities into childcare. Some of the research participants in this project highlighted that the introduction to language need not be complex and is as simple as incorporating traditional languages into daily actions, like greetings or teaching children their ABCs in their traditional languages. This basic introduction "reinforces the idea that authenticity lies within a person and is bound to their own stories" (Ball & Simpkins, 2004). Another suggestion by one of the research participants is using songs, which allows the children to participate in their cultural development and create a safe association with elements of their culture.

The various histories, customs, and arts tie us to associations of who we are and are as crucial in a child's development as art and life are in regaining Indigenous identity (Brown, 1998). With a rich diversity of cultures among Indigenous peoples, children must be exposed to traditions that are true to their identity. After all, "by drawing on the Native past, Indigenous peoples attempt

to preserve a particular historical trajectory of their own, separate from the history of the colonizers" Wilson, K., & Peters, E. J. (2005). One of the research participants highlighted that many childcare facilities' actions in cultural representation are lacking in presenting cultural distinction. The conversations from the interviews highlighted the importance of providing cultural history and representation that goes beyond the surface and reflects the children's distinct identities. Specific identity distinctions help address the confusion children may face when dancing in two worlds; it also ensures that Indigenous knowledge is not addressed under a singular umbrella but rather representative of the different nations and traditions.

Suggestions

- Be intentional when providing teachings of diverse languages, arts and cultures. Address the ethnic and cultural distinctions of the children rather than providing blanketed teachings. Ethnic and cultural distinction ensures that children learn about their true identity without confusion. It can be done by actively identifying the children's ethnic and cultural identities and working with parents to learn traditional greetings, Indigenous language ABCS, traditional hairstyles and foods. Involving each child with their families allows learning to happen for everyone.

- Allow spaces for diverse and multiple members of different Indigenous communities to be representatives and voices for cultural safety practices. The need for multiple Indigenous people from different communities is because a singular representative does not encapsulate the different practices and needs of people from different Indigenous communities. Childcare programs include a mix of children and families that identify by a mix of ethnic and cultural backgrounds, so they should be a representation of voices. This widespread representation was seen in the Indigenous-led program and is noted to be an advantage.
- Take practical action to preserve cultural history to ensure children get a chance to explore who they are, like storytelling with knowledge holders. Actions like building relationships with Indigenous nations and leaders on the lands childcare facilities are on is a step toward building trust and representation

Community and Family Based Involvement

The themes presented during the interviews with community members and the literature suggest that family and community connections are crucial to child development for Indigenous peoples. Ball and Simpkins (2004) noted, "Traditional or Indigenous knowledge as an experience-based relationship with family, spirit and the land, an understanding and wisdom gained through observation and teaching…." The keywords/phrases in this quote are "family" and "wisdom gained through observation and teachings," community members reference the importance of passing on knowledge. When asked about the best way children can harness and build their relationship with their identity, all interviewees emphasized the need for community and family to p[lay a role in the process. An action of involvement in all spaces allows everyone to learn.

During the conversations with the research participants, they underlined the importance of childcare facilities providing more than just services for children, but also programs that held space for family members and children alike. This concept is incorporated in the literature as it highlights the effectiveness of parents, elders and community involvement in promoting a conducive knowledge-sharing environment (Halido, 2013). A family/community-oriented

approach to childcare is an "indispensable ingredient for engendering optimal learning habits in children" (Honig, 1979). Family and community involvement is even more significant regarding cultural safety, as family/community members are the ultimate knowledge keepers and the most suitable for providing the learning process required to form identity. With the need to teach children of their true identity, there is a requirement to provide multiple people from different Indigenous communities with teachings and advocacy to avoid the risk of generalization of Indigenous knowledge.

Through the interviews, there is a better understanding of the importance of a community-based approach as it provides a space for everyone to be responsible for children's development. This approach leaves room for community knowledge keepers to be part of the knowledge dissemination process, allows for a power shift and answers the question, "what of us is in here?" (Ball & Pence, 2014). The community and family-based approach ensure that children's communities are co-contributors in child development and that children are exposed to culturally safe practices. This approach ensures interconnectedness by passing on cultural and integral values to the children.

cultural and integral values to the children.

There is literature that advocates for the importance of family participation through acts like school events, parent-teacher meetings and involvement in programs. Although this promotion of participation is noble, some of the research participants mentioned that it does not account for the parents that do not have the luxury of being in childcare facilities during scheduled events or for extended hours. The essential need for childcare and labour force involvement aligns with the City of Vancouver's interest yet creates a difficulty regarding participation for parents. This requirement of labour force participation highlights the need for childcare spaces to "be more" than services catering to children but should be more inclusive in providing spaces that parents can interact with more flexibly rather than structured. Providing flexibility in how parents and the community can be involved gives secure links to their families and community with childcare professionals.

Suggestions

- Be flexible with engagement. Recognize the limitations in parent participation, like time constraints. Provide a space for parents to be involved with the engagement they came to participate in, for example, having a parent's room that is a shared space that evolves according to the family and community needs; and guarantees ongoing participation. Families can continue their work and be close to their children if these spaces are equipped.
- Create opportunities to involve members and leaders of the community, such as elders, to participate in childcare's contribution and planning process. This ensures that the child development process is not just left to the educators but is made personified by adding family and community members.

Personal Reflection

Beginning

There is a constant desire to have concrete understandings and answers to social problems, but this project has taught me that solutions and issues are not as simple when human experiences are involved. Cultural safety is one of those situations with subjective solutions, not because of complexity, but instead a problem with how we address it. Early into the project, we realized we needed to know " the elements required to ensure cultural safety" (Sherry Small, 2022) instead of a definition. In trying to find the elements, I learned that cultural safety's complexity stems from understanding inclusion.

One of the definitions of inclusion states "the practice or policy of providing equal access to opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized" (Oxford Languages). This concept of accessibility translates to having an open invitation or an open arm, which is the minimum for inclusion. Nevertheless, there is more to accessibility than just open doors. This open-arms approach seems to be the standard of what agencies and facilities view as their action toward inclusion. We can see the advertisement of inclusion in the global and local policies, emphasizing a willingness to accept all people in the childcare system, as if more than the bare minimum.

Through this project, I found that the standard of inclusion has become the mastering of the particular element of inclusion which is an act of decency. The way I can not call myself a tailor because I know how to thread a needle is the same way we can not advertise being inclusive simply because we do not act on biases and remain decent to people around us. An inclusive advertisement can be argued as an act of politeness and ensuring that there is no apparent discrimination. For inclusion to be possible, there needs to be more effort, which is where cultural safety comes into play.

Inclusion involves supporting and embracing the people you are trying to include, not just offering an open arm. I think this is the most important part of inclusion. Organizations can work on creating programs, services and much more to promote equity and cultural safety. Still, if they do not take steps to ensure the services are used, inclusion is not achieved. Cultural safety ensures that by providing open

access, you can address some reasons people might not be okay with just an open hand. Advocacy and consultancy are critical in delivering inclusive methods. Through this project, I learned about actions of lived trauma that could quickly go unaddressed simply because we all have different experiences with a school system. These actions vary from using rooms in childcare to a lack of understanding of cultural practices. For example, from a culturally safe perspective, having parent observation rooms is not the safest, as children lived through the trauma of being observed during residential schools, not as a way of accessing positive development but instead as a way of accessing the purging of their identity.

Journey

I am continuously learning that dismantling what you know and acknowledging that you need to learn new concepts are startling and require vulnerability. This project made me challenge my practical understanding and theoretical assumptions. I found that practical knowledge versus knowledge gained from the literature reviewed played different roles. Literature tends to take an academic sense, yet I could recognize that experiences come in various forms.

while taking on a participatory position. Having limited knowledge of childcare in Canada or Vancouver, I had to start from scratch and learn about the processes and challenges that come with childcare services.

By taking on a participatory role, I had the opportunity to observe and witness the acceptance of Indigenous people into their spaces and communities. Sitting with people with the best knowledge, providing space for them to speak without restrictions and providing a sense of openness to ensure presumptions do not create barriers in how they tell their stories enabled me the opportunity to learn, be part of the sharing of communal knowledge and take a step toward treating people how I would like to be treated. As a first-generation immigrant, I related to the concept of two-eyed seeing, loosely translating to the ability to learn and act with Indigenous and Western knowledge while gathering strength from both (Jeffery, Kurtz & Jones, 2022). This ability

helped me view this project from both the lens of a researcher and a member of society in need of more cultural safety measures in a social system. The research done for this project gave me a better sense of the importance of oneness and harmony to ensure mutual respect for all life.

Building on the link between cultural safety and inclusion is the importance of creating room for multiple voices and recognizing the need for fluidity in our actions toward inclusion. For example, in the interviews, all participants had different perspectives about the elements of cultural safety because of their different experiences. One of the distinctions was about the environment. My initial understanding focused on the attributes of the physical environment. Still, from listening to the interviewees, I realized that for cultural safety, the non-tangible characteristics of the environment played a significant role. They cared more for the feeling they got when approaching the sites; they cared that the staff there had a welcoming, kind and trusting persona.

This shift in the focus of the environment should not have been a surprise, as the significance of the non-tangible characteristics of the environment did not go unnoticed in the Indigenous-led programs and facilities. The Indigenous-led childcare program we visited operates in a leased space co-located with seniors housing, where they have different cultural and socio-economic populations. These not ideal attributes of the environment are evident to the staff, as they must be trauma-informed and conscious of interactions within the outside physical environment. Regardless of the complications of the physical environment, this space felt culturally safe and welcoming because of staff interactions, relationships and the non-tangible aspects of the facility.

Interpretation

It is not easy to question our habits; generally, we need exposure to diversity to challenge the things we know that make us comfortable. Without the Nisga'a mentor, many significant findings may have gone unnoticed, and there would have been limited opportunities to challenge my learning. Like the importance of gratification in Indigenous culture, we came to three of our site visits empty-handed with no token of appreciation for the time program staff spent teaching us about their programs. There is a vital need for relationships with a panel of diverse people to ensure that representation is stress and pressure-free and that

there is no expectation that one person is the voice of a culture of people; this way, multiple voices are heard.

From these experiences, I believe cultural safety is not a complicated concept because it is rooted in kindness and information sharing. Ensure that policies and inclusive actions represent the people to whom the actions benefit. Through this project, I learned that the facilities' outside and inside are necessary for building cultural safety. However, the physical attributes are not all that make the space culturally safe. I have learned that even though childcare facilities cater to children, the Indigenous way of being does not stop catering to just the children but ensures that nobody is left behind. They guarantee that programs and facilities are more than just childcare programs but also act as a space of refuge for the children and their families. I have learned that cultural safety is in using the space and, more importantly, the people using it, the feeling, energy and representation.

Takeways

- As advocates and non-Indigenous community members, it is vital to recognize the importance of gift appreciation and giving when engaging with Indigenous practitioners/ research participants. Knowledge shared is a form of gift giving, as it is a service provided freely. Shared lessons require the knowledge holders to be vulnerable to carry the advocates along with them and include others in their knowledge. Inclusion comes with appreciation and a need for gratefulness, which is shown through gift-giving in Indigenous cultures.
- This research project would not be possible without the connections with the Nisga'a mentor and the City staff and in turn, their relationships with the research participants. There needs to be active inclusion in the project. Without community members and partners, engagement is limited, and policies cannot be developed in ways that represent the experiences of those who require the policies.

- There is a need to provide a space for Indigenous voices to be heard. Cultural safety and inclusion ensure that children have a chance to be heard. They are allowed to explore the world and learn their limits. Cultural safety ensures we are giving Indigenous children and families a space void of the fear of not being understood.
- There needs to be more Indigenous-led early learning and childcare programs accessible to all Indigenous peoples, promoting a cultural distinction learning approach so that all cultures are represented. That requires funding opportunities and Indigenous staff running the facilities and programs.

Conclusion

This project is intended to inform a more extensive effort the City of Vancouver is making to promote cultural safety and inclusivity among Urban Indigenous families in Vancouver's childcare network. This report includes perspectives on some elements that make up culturally safe spaces for Indigenous children and families, derived from conversations with Indigenous community members, childcare advocates and professionals. Recognizing the limited timeframe and that there remains a need for more community involvement in a research project like this one, the elements of cultural safety identified in this project include: a welcoming environment, culture representation, and community-family-based involvement. There is still a need for more literature to be reviewed on Indigenous cultural safety in the childcare system and how senior governments and municipal partners can respond by implementing those elements in childcare programs.

Much of the literature around the development of Indigenous cultural safety in childcare highlights the need to create an inclusivity that reconciles the differences between people and ensures that everyone feels supported. From our findings, we can understand that cultural safety is not complex but is rooted in advocacy, representation and kindness. I learned that to enable authentic action of cultural safety and inclusivity, advocacy is a requirement because only through advocacy can we challenge the standard of service that has not necessarily been representative of Indigenous people, cultural diversity, and histories. Relationships and connections are vital in providing culturally safe spaces for Indigenous people. Among the three elements highlighted in the report, the key points are as follows;

1. Welcoming environment: emphasizes the importance of the feeling Indigenous children and families have in their childcare facility, caring more that the staff were welcoming and trustworthy than what the facility looked like.
2. Representation of culture: ensuring diverse Indigenous cultures are represented to ensure that children witness identities that are true to them instead of a one-size-fits-all approach to teaching Indigenous identity.
3. Community and Family Based Involvement: family and community play a significant role in Indigenous child development, and childcare services should change the narrative to include families as part of the developmental process, ensuring that childcare services cater to children and families.

As discussed in this report, promoting inclusion among Indigenous children and families needs action, and cultural safety recognition is essential for this action. There is still a need for future steps to ensure that the elements of cultural safety for Urban Indigenous families seeking to access childcare are recognized. We hope that the findings and recommendations are practical and instrumental.

Appendix 1: Interview Questions

1. In what ways do childcare spaces make you feel
     i. welcomed?
     ii. Respected?
     iii. Represented?
   a. What attributes of childcare facilities make you feel like you can trust that your children will be safe?
2. How can childcare programs/facilities be more comfortable to promote cultural engagement so children can feel at home?
   a. What would it look like if you were to design an early learning childcare space?
3. How can childcare programs be more grounded in emotional, spiritual and cultural practices so children can stay connected to their identity?
   a. How can childcare centers promote a body, mind, spiritual and emotional balance to ensure children and families feel supported?
4. In what ways can childcare programs invite parent/family participation?
   a. How can childcare spaces promote community building that represents family values?

Appendix 2: References

Context

- Cultural Connections for Learning . (n.d.). Retrieved from Cultural Safety: https://www.intstudentsup.org/diversity/cultural_safety/
- BC Budget . (2018). Retrieved from https://www.bcbudget.gov.bc.ca: https://www.bcbudget.gov.bc.ca/2018/childcare/2018_Child_Care_BC.pdf
- Canada announces historic first early learning and child care agreement. (2021). Retrieved from https://pm.gc.ca: https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/news-releases/2021/07/08/canada-announces-historic-first-early-learning-and-child-care
- Canada Communication Group. Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. Ottawa. . (n.d.). Retrieved from http://data2.archives.ca/e/e448/e011188230-03.pdf
- Canada-British Columbia Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement – 2021 to 2026. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://www.canada.ca/en/early-learning-child-care-agreement/agreements-provinces-territories/british-columbia-canada-wide-2021.html#h2.2
- Equity Framework: Getting our house in order. (n.d.). Retrieved from City of Vancouver: https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/equity-framework.pdf
- Framework for City of Reconciliation. (2015). Retrieved from City of Vancouver: https://council.vancouver.ca/20141028/documents/rr1.pdf
- Healthy City Strategy. (n.d.). Retrieved from City of Vancouver: https://vancouver.ca/people-programs/healthy-city-strategy.aspx
- Joint Childcare Council Meeting. (2019). Retrieved from City of Vancouver: https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/2019-02-14-joint-childcare-council-rts-13012.pdf
- Making Strides: Vancouver's Childcare Strategy and Early Actions. . (2022). Retrieved from City of Vancouver: https://council.vancouver.ca/20220608ag/documents/cfsc2.pdf
- Social Indicators and Trends 2014 (Goal: A Good Start). (2014). Retrieved from City of Vancouver: https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/factsheet1-a-good-start.PDF
- Curtis, E., Jones, R., Tipene-Leach, D., Walker, C., Loring, B., Paine, S., & Reid, P. (2019). Why cultural safety rather than cultural competency is required to achieve health equity: a literature review and recommended definition. International Journal For Equity In Health, 18(1). doi: 10.1186/s12939-019-1082-3

- Elek, C., Gubhaju, L., Lloyd-Johnsen, C., Eades, S., & Goldfeld, S. (2020). Can early childhood education programs support positive outcomes for indigenous children? A systematic review of the international literature. Educational Research Review, 31, 100363. doi: 10.1016/j.edurev.2020.100363
- Frank K. & Arim R. (2021). Indigenous and non-Indigenous early learning and child care workers in Canada. Retrieved from https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/36-28-0001/2021008/article/00005-eng.htm
- Gerlach A. Gulamhusein S. Varley L. & Perron M. (2021). Structural Challenges & Inequities in Operating Urban Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Programs in British Columbia. Journal Of Childhood Studies 46(02) 1-19. Doi: 10.18357/jcs462202119581
- Jeffery T. Kurtz D. Jones A.(2021) Two-Eyed Seeing: CUrrent approaches and discussion of medical applications. BC Medical Journal 63(2) 321-325. https://bcmj.org/articles/two-eyed-seeing-current-approaches-and-discussion-medical-applications#:~:text=ABSTRACT%3A%20Two%2DEyed%20Seeing%20issees%20through%20a%20Western%20lens
- Truth and reconciliation commission of Canada: Calls to action - gov. www2.gov.bc.ca. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/british-columbians-our-governments/indigenous-people/aboriginal-peoples-documents/calls_to_action_english2.pdf
- UN General Assembly. (2007). United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Retrieved http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf
- Williams R. (1999). Cultural safety - what does it mean for our work practice? Australian And New Zealand Journal of Public Health 23(2) 213-214. Doi: 10.1111/j.1467-842x.1999.tb01240.x

Community and Family- Based Involvement

- Aboriginal children: the healing power of cultural identity. (2021). Retrieved from https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/health-promotion/childhood-adolescence/programs-initiatives/aboriginal-head-start-urban-northern-communities-ahsunc/aboriginal-children-healing-power-cultural-identity.html

- Ball J. & Pence A. (2014). Supporting Indigenous Children's Development. Vancouver: UBC Press.
- Ball J. & Simpkins M. (2004). The Community within the Child: Integration of Indigenous Knowledge into First Nations Childcare Process and Practice. The American Indian Quarterly 28(3) 480-498. Doi: 10.1353/aiq.2004.0091
- Harvard Family Research Project (2006). Family Involvement In Early Childhood Education. https://knilt.arcc.albany.edu/images/f/fc/Earlychildhood.pdf
- Hilado A. V. Kallemeyn L. & Phillips L. (2013). Examining Understandings of Parent Involvement in Early Childhood Programs. Early Childhood Research & Practice 15(2) n2.
- Honig A. S. (1979). Parent involvement in early childhood education (Vol. 1934). Washington DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.
- R D. (2022). Family Engagement: A Partnership Between Childcare Centers and Families - Child Watch. from https://childwatch.com/blog/2018/11/02/family-engagement-a-partnership-between-childcare-centers-and-families/#:~:text=Parent%20involvement%20occurs%20when%20parentsspecial%20events%20a%20program%20offers.

A welcoming Environment

- Biddle K. Garcia-Nevarez A. Roundtree Henderson W. & Valero- Kerrick A. (2013). Playing and Learning Environment. In Early Childhood Education Becoming a Professional. Sage Publications. Retrieved from https://www.sagepub.com/sites/default/files/upm-binaries/53567_ch_10.pdf
- Diamond A. & Whitington V. (2015). Studying early brain development: Educators' reports about their learning and its applications to early childhood policies and practices. Australasian Journal of Early Childhood 40(3) 11-19.
- How Children Learn - Early Learning and Child Care Curriculum. Retrieved from https://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/education/elcc/content/curriculum/learn.html
- Roy C. (2015). The Importance of Early Learning Environments. Retrieved from https://naturalpod.com/the-importance-of-early-learning-environments/#:~:text=Environments%20should%20be%20welcoming%20andhelp%20their%20ability%20to%20learn

Representation of Culture

- Ball J. & Simpkins M. (2004). The Community within the Child: Integration of Indigenous Knowledge into First Nations Childcare Process and Practice. The American Indian Quarterly 28(3) 480-498. Doi: 10.1353/aiq.2004.0091
- Brown II E. K. (1998). Indigenous Identity: Of What are Art and Life Made
- Deer F. (2019). Ancestral languages are essential to Indigenous identities in Canada. Retrieved from https://theconversation.com/ancestral-languages-are-essential-to-indigenous-identities-in-canada-117655
- Hall S. (2020). The work of representation. In The Applied Theatre Reader (pp. 15-24). Routledge.
- Wilson K. & Peters E. J. (2005). "You can make a place for it": Remapping urban First Nations spaces of identity. Environment and Planning D: Society and Space 23(3) 395-413.