

# Our Health Counts Toronto

An inclusive community-driven health survey for Indigenous peoples in Toronto

## School Experiences and Performance

Early childhood education (ECE) programs have been linked to improved childhood intellectual, verbal and cognitive development, higher educational attainment, and better social and health outcomes.<sup>1,2</sup> Indigenous specific ECE programs, such as Aboriginal Head Start, have been operating for over a decade. Aboriginal Head Start, other Indigenous ECE programs, and school curriculums have the potential to address the legacy of residential school by providing Indigenous children with culturally grounded education.<sup>3</sup> The number of Indigenous-led schools are increasing across the country, yet funding and resources are inadequate.<sup>4,5</sup> Some accounts indicate that First Nations children receive \$2,000 less for education compared to non-Indigenous children in Canada.<sup>5</sup>

## Early Childhood Learning

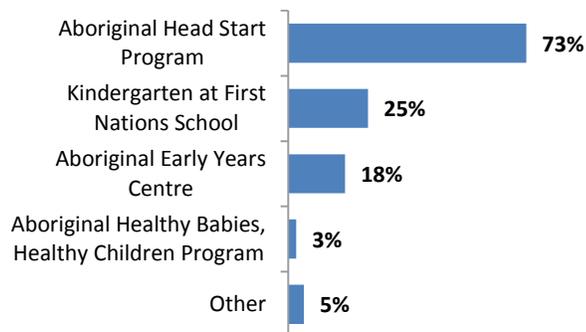
**76%** of Indigenous children in Toronto over the age of 2 years have attended an early childhood development or preschool program.

Based on UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund) recommendations, **Canada is trying to ensure that 50%** of 2-4 year old children regularly attend early childhood programs.<sup>6</sup>

**Half** of children who attended an early childhood program went to a program designed specifically for Indigenous children.

**68%** of Indigenous children in Toronto between 2 and 4 years of age have attended an early childhood development or preschool program.

### Indigenous-specific early childhood programs attended by Indigenous children in Toronto:



Seventh Generation Midwives Toronto

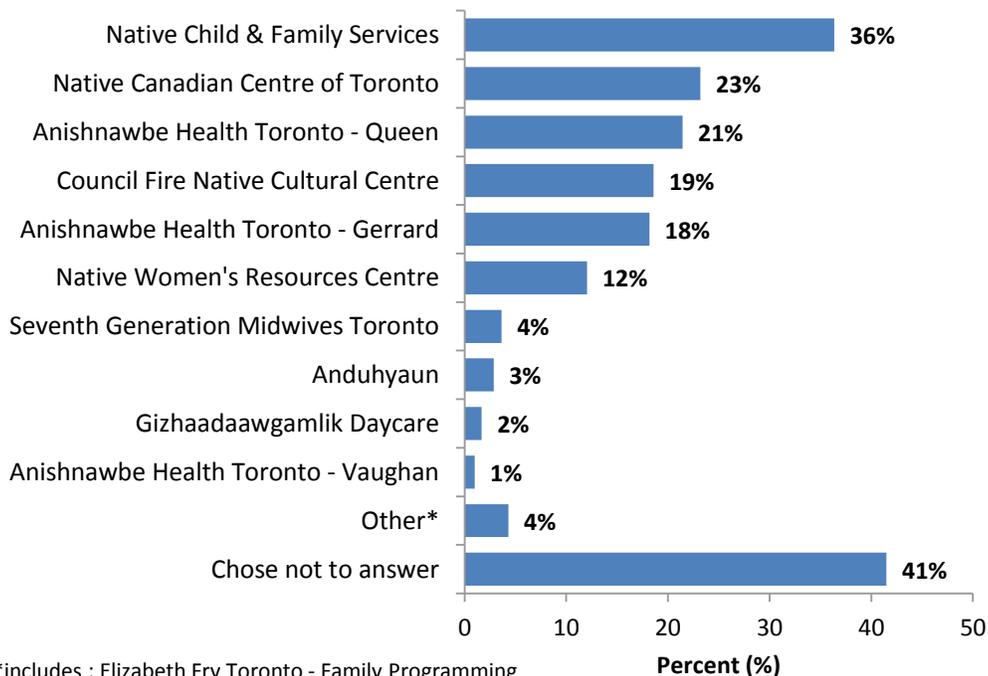


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## School Experiences and Performance

### Child Programs and Services

Indigenous children in Toronto have participated in events, programs, or services at the following places:



\*includes : Elizabeth Fry Toronto - Family Programming

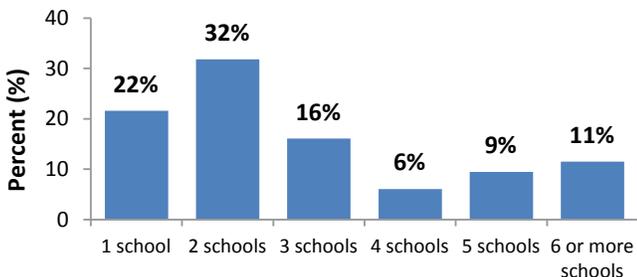
**73%** of Indigenous children that attended an early childhood learning program attended the Aboriginal Head Start Program.

**80%** of Indigenous children in Toronto attended events/programs/services at Native Child & Family Services, Native Canadian Centre of Toronto, and/or Anishnawbe Health Toronto (Queen).

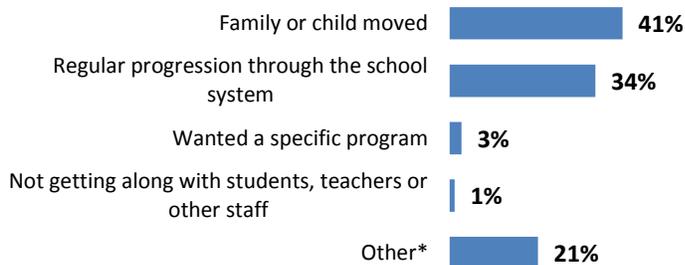
**34%** of Indigenous adults said that community resources for Indigenous children are inadequate in Toronto.

### School Mobility and Performance

**42%** of Indigenous children in Toronto (5 years+) have attended 3 or more different schools since preschool or kindergarten.



Of the children that changed schools, the most recent change of schools was due to the following reason:



\*includes: Concerns about standards/quality of teaching, New school was located closer to home, Wanted a more culturally appropriate school

◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ Our Health Counts: Community health assessment by the people, for the people ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆

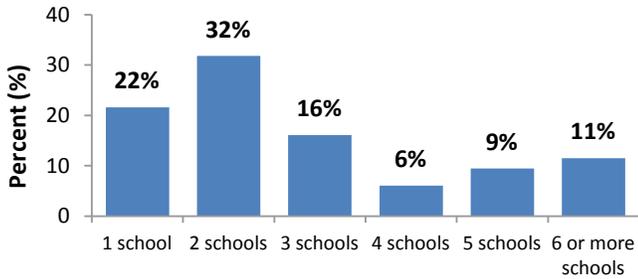


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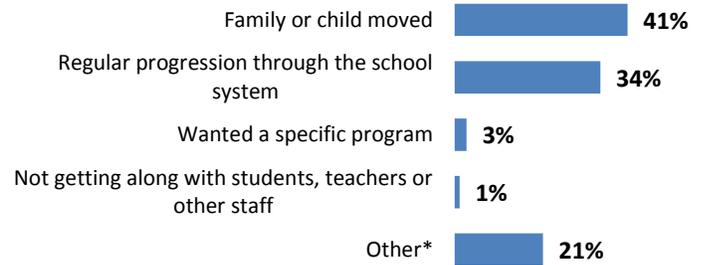
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#### Policy Implications

##### Implement TRC Call to Action 12:

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

##### Implement TRC Call to Action 7:

Implement TRC Call to Action 7: We call upon the federal government to develop with Indigenous groups, a joint strategy to eliminate educational gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians.

##### Additional Recommendations:

City of Toronto, provincial and federal policy makers work in partnership with urban Indigenous peoples and organizations to:

- Sustain and expand Indigenous specific culturally programming and supports throughout the school system from early childhood education to college and university.
- Develop and implement Indigenous specific programs and services to ensure Indigenous children with learning disabilities have access timely access to comprehensive learning assessments and appropriate school and community supports.
- Develop and implement longitudinal research opportunities to better understand the impacts of mobility, including school changes, on educational experience and performance.

#### Definitions

Indigenous adults: persons 15 years or older self-identifying as Indigenous, such as First Nations, Métis, Inuit or other Indigenous Nations, living or using services in the City of Toronto; Trans/Other: includes Trans, Other and you do not have a category that applies to me; Trans: Transgender, Transsexual, or Gender Queer.

Population based estimates were created using respondent driven sampling (see Methods and Design Factsheet for more details)

#### Sources

1. UN General Assembly (2007); 2. Smylie et al. (2016); 3. Truth and Reconciliation Canada (2015)

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