

Our Health Counts Thunder Bay

An inclusive community-driven health survey for Indigenous peoples of Thunder Bay

Culture and Identity

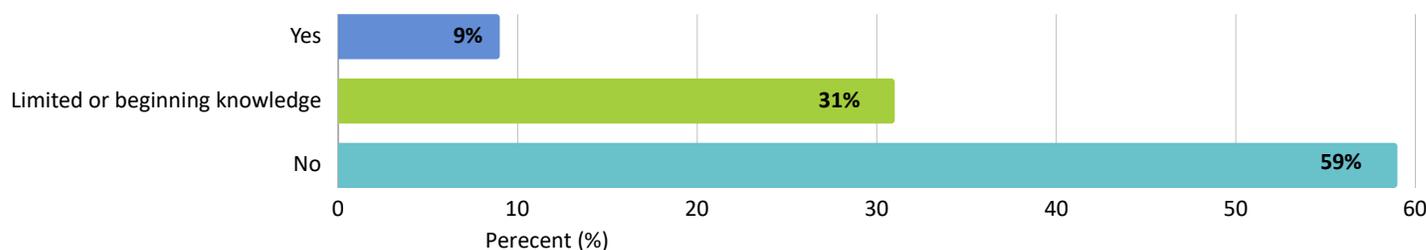
Involvement in cultural practices and traditions, including speaking Indigenous languages, are key elements of Indigenous health and wellbeing. The Indian Act, residential school system, Sixties Scoop and other forms of cultural oppression have attempted to destroy Indigenous cultural practices and languages.¹ Despite ongoing historical traumas, First Nations, Inuit, and Métis (FNIM) families have maintained many traditional practices. Among FNIM peoples living in urban and related homelands, most continue to practice their nation-specific cultural traditions and have a strong sense of cultural identity.²

Indigenous Languages

40% of children 2 years of age and older had some level of understanding of an Indigenous language

90% of parents/guardians feel that it is very or somewhat important for their child to learn an Indigenous language.

Can your child understand or speak an Indigenous language?



Indigenous Culture

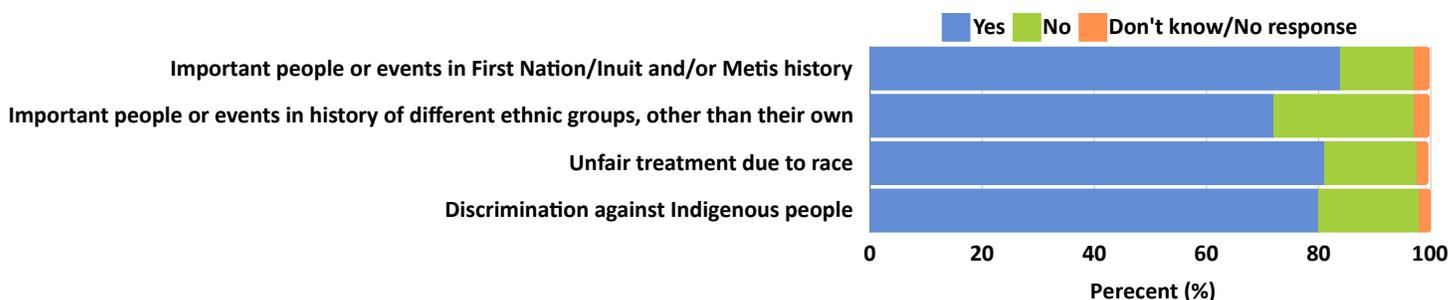
89% of Indigenous parents and guardians in Thunder Bay believe it is important or somewhat important for traditional cultural events to be a part of a child's life.

Common sources of cultural knowledge for Indigenous children in Thunder Bay were:

- **Grandparents** (58.5%)
- **Parents** (62.1%)
- **Aunts & Uncles** (41.8%)

84% of Indigenous adults in Thunder Bay have talked to their child about important events in First Nation, Inuit, and Metis history

In the past 12 months, have you ever talked to your child about the following:



Traditional Healing and Medicine

Over 1 in 4 Indigenous children in Thunder Bay had used and/or taken traditional medicines (e.g, smudging, teas, etc)



Policy Implications

We call on the city of Thunder Bay, provincial, and federal governments to work in partnership with Indigenous peoples living in urban and related homelands and urban-based Indigenous organizations to:

1. Fund an expansion of Indigenous language education programming for children and youth.
2. Expand the number and accessibility of dedicated safe spaces for the practice of ceremony and traditions.
3. Develop, fund, and implement an Indigenous language and cultural teacher/ knowledge keeper human resource strategy.
4. Further unpack and address barriers for Indigenous Peoples in the access of Indigenous language and cultural programming, services and supports.

TRC Call to Action 14: We call upon the federal government to provide sufficient funds for Indigenous-language revitalization and preservation. The preservation, revitalization, and strengthening of Indigenous languages and cultures are best managed by Indigenous people and communities. Funding for Indigenous language initiatives must reflect the diversity of Indigenous languages.³

TRC Call to Action 48: We call upon the church parties to the Settlement Agreement, and all other faith groups and interfaith social justice groups in Canada to respect Indigenous Peoples' right to self-determination in spiritual matters, including the right to practice, develop, and teach their own spiritual and religious traditions, customs, and ceremonies, consistent with Article 12:1 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.³

MMIWG Report Calls to Justice 2.5 : We call upon all governments, in partnership with Indigenous Peoples, to create a permanent empowerment fund devoted to supporting Indigenous-led initiatives for Indigenous individuals, families, and communities to access cultural knowledge, as an important and strength-based way to support cultural rights and to uphold self-determined services. This empowerment fund should include the support of land-based educational programs that can assist in foundational cultural learning and awareness.⁴

Definitions	Indigenous children: persons 1 to 14 years self-identified as Indigenous (First Nations, Metis, and/or Inuit) by their parent or guardian, and living or using services in the City of Thunder Bay.
Sources	1. Allan & Smylie (2015); 2. Smylie et al. (2011); 3. Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015); 4. MMIWG (2019)
Authors	Iannace, J., Snyder, M., Avery, L., McConkey, S., Brar, R., Rotondi, M., & Smylie, J. (2024). Our Health Counts Thunder Bay: Child Culture and Identity [Fact sheet].
Citation	Iannace, J., Snyder, M., Avery, L., McConkey, S., Brar, R., Rotondi, M., & Smylie, J. (2024). Our Health Counts Thunder Bay: Child Culture and Identity [Fact sheet].

Population-based estimates created using respondent-driven sampling



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Child Culture and Identity Reference

Our Health Counts Thunder Bay is an inclusive community-based health survey for Indigenous peoples of Thunder Bay and is part of the largest Indigenous population health study in Canada.

Adult participants were selected using respondent-driven sampling, a statistical method which uses social networks in the community to recruit Indigenous people living in the city.

Child surveys were completed by OHC Thunder Bay adult survey participants who were parents/custodial relatives/guardians of children 14 years of age or younger. Children resided with them and were under their care.

Survey Question	RDS Prevalence Estimate (95% Confidence Interval)
Can your child understand or speak an Indigenous language?	
Yes	9.1% (5.3, 13.9)
No	58.6% (51.0, 65.5)
Limited or beginning knowledge	30.6% (24.1, 37.6)
No response	1.6%
How important is it to you for child to learn an Indigenous language?	
Very important	57.2% (50.6, 63.4)
Somewhat important	33.0% (27.3, 38.7)
Not very important	6.1% (3.0, 9.2)
Not important	2.2% (0.4, 4.4)
No response	1.3%
How important is it to you that traditional cultural events are a part of the child's life?	
Very important	57.7% (51.1, 64.3)
Somewhat important	31.7% (25.5, 37.8)
Not very important	6.1% (3.0, 9.6)
Not important	1.7% (0.4, 3.5)
Don't know	1.3% (0.0, 3.0)
No response	1.3%
Who helps your child understand their culture?	
Grandparents	58.5% (51.9, 64.7)
Parents	62.1% (56.8, 69.1)
Aunt and Uncles	41.8% (35.6, 48.0)
Other relatives	32.15 (26.4, 38.3)
Friends	10.5% (6.6, 14.9)
School teachers	23.3% (17.6, 29.0)
Community elders	16.2% (11.8, 21.5)
Other community members	11.0% (7.4, 14.9)
Online or social media	7.4% (3.9, 11.0)
Reading material	3.9% (1.7, 6.6)
No one	3.9% (1.7, 6.6)
Other	1.7% (0.4, 3.5)



Well Living House



Our Health Counts Thunder Bay

Child Culture and Identity Reference

Survey Question	RDS Prevalence Estimate (95% Confidence Interval)
In the past 12 months, have you ever talked to your child about important people or events in First Nation/Inuit and/or Metis history?	
Once	10.8% (5.7, 15.9)
2-3 times	30.4% (23.1, 37.6)
4-5 times	21.7% (15.1, 28.9)
6 times or more	21.0% (14.4, 27.5)
Never	13.0% (7.9, 18.8)
Don't know	0.7% (0.0, 2.1)
No response	2.1%
In the past 12 months, have you ever talked to your child about important people or events in history of different ethnic groups, other than their own?	
Once	10.1% (5.0, 15.2)
2-3 times	24.6% (18.1, 31.8)
4-5 times	18.8% (12.3, 25.3)
6 times or more	18.1% (12.3, 24.6)
Never	25.3% (18.0, 33.3)
Don't know	0.7% (0.0, 2.1)
No response	2.1%
In the past 12 months, have you ever talked to your child about unfair treatment due to race?	
Once	13.7% (8.6, 18.8)
2-3 times	28.9% (21.7, 36.2)
4-5 times	11.5% (6.5, 17.3)
6 times or more	26.8% (20.2, 34.0)
Never	16.6% (10.8, 23.1)
No response	2.1%
In the past 12 months, have you ever talked to your child about discrimination against Indigenous people?	
Once	12.3% (7.2, 18.1)
2-3 times	22.4% (15.9, 29.7)
4-5 times	13.0% (7.2, 18.8)
6 times or more	31.8% (23.9, 39.8)
Never	18.1% (11.5, 24.6)
No response	2.1%



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Survey Question	RDS Prevalence Estimate (95% Confidence Interval)
Has child ever been seen and/or treated by a traditional healer?	
Yes	2.6% (0.8, 4.8)
No	95.1% (92.0, 97.7)
Don't know	1.3% (0.0, 3.0)
No response	0.8%
Has child ever used and/or taken traditional medicines?	
Yes	25.9% (20.2, 32.1)
No	71.8% (65.6, 77.1)
Don't know	1.3% (0.0, 2.6)
No response	0.8%



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