

# Our Health Counts Thunder Bay

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

## Child School Experiences

Early childhood education (ECE) programs have been linked to improved intellectual, verbal and cognitive development, higher educational attainment, and better social and health outcomes.<sup>1,2</sup> For Indigenous children and their families, Indigenous-specific ECE programs (i.e. Aboriginal Head Start), schools, and curricula have the potential to address the legacy of residential schools.<sup>3</sup> The number of Indigenous-led schools are increasing across the country, yet funding and resources are inadequate.<sup>3,4</sup>

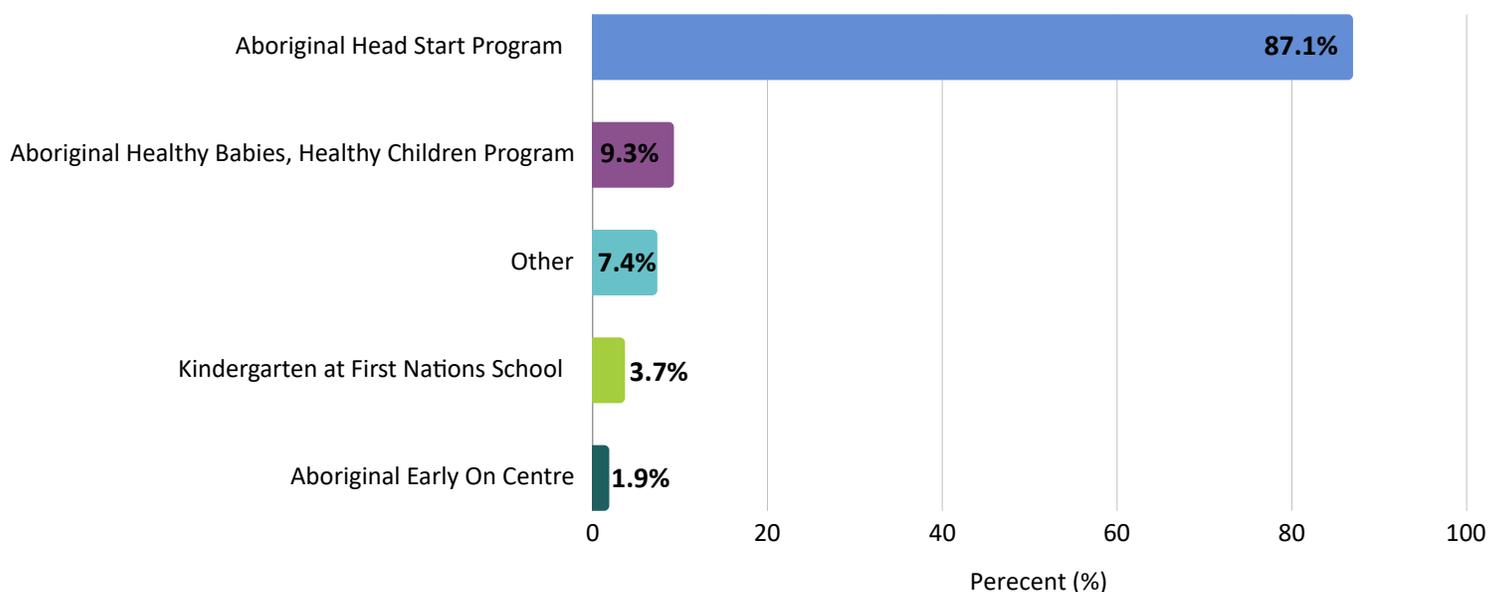
### Early Childhood Learning

**42%** of Indigenous children in Thunder Bay over the age of 2 years have attended an early childhood development or preschool program.

**70%** of children who attended an early childhood program went to a program designed specifically for Indigenous children.

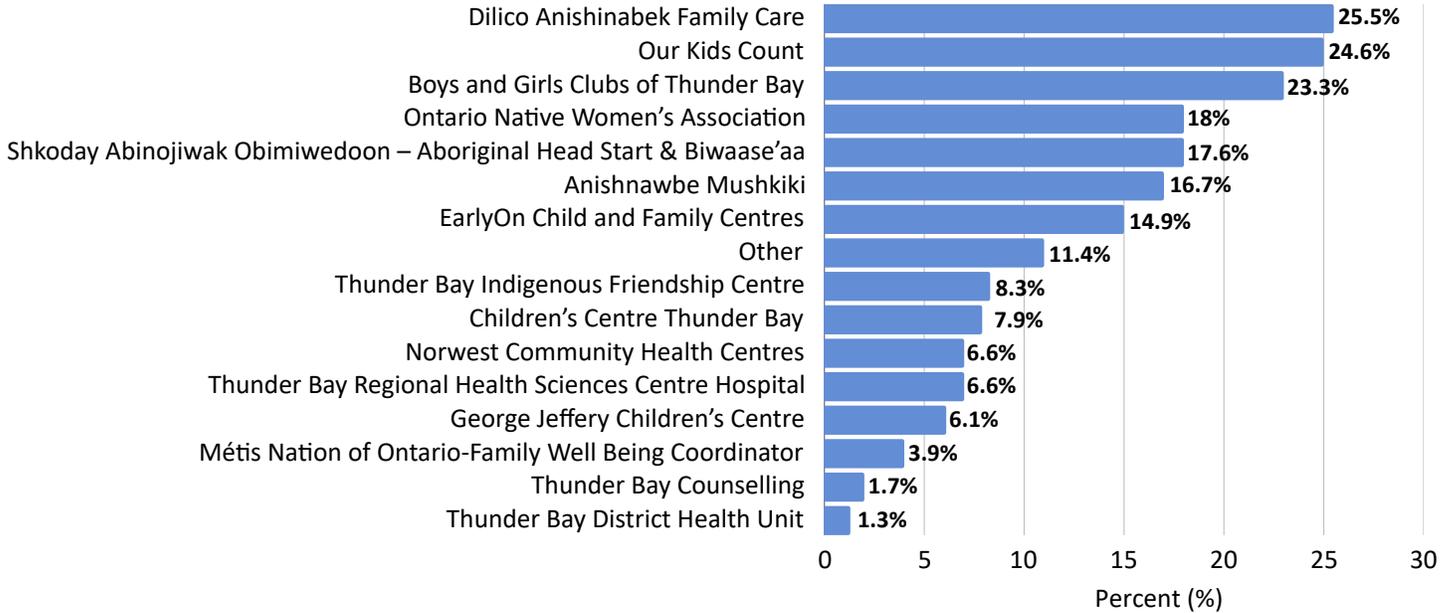


Indigenous-specific early childhood programs attended by Indigenous children in Thunder Bay (Check all that apply):



## Childhood Programs and Services

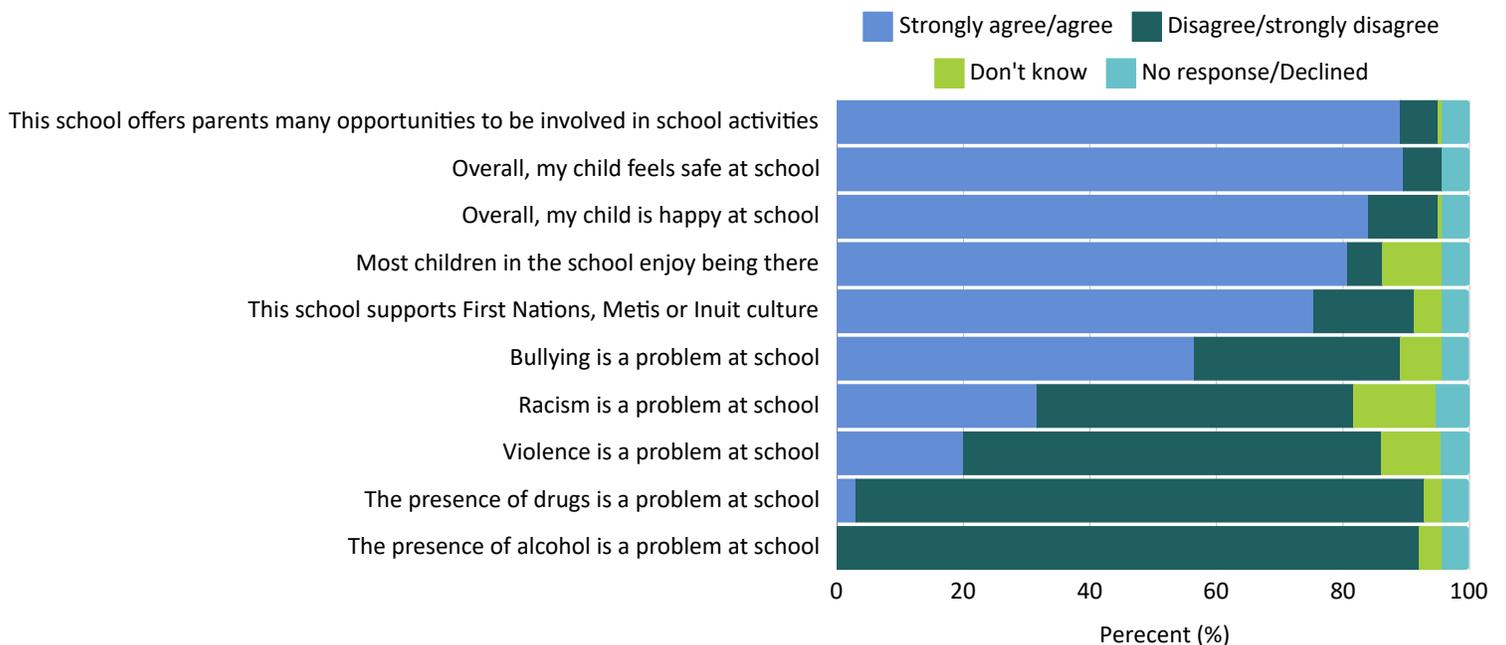
Indigenous children in Thunder Bay have participated in events, programs, or services in the following places:



## School Safety and Mobility

Overall, Indigenous children in Thunder Bay felt safe (90%) and happy (84%) at school, however parents/guardians of Indigenous children in Thunder Bay identified racism (32%) and bullying (57%) as important problems at their child's school.

Parents/guardians of Indigenous children age 5 years and older were asked how they felt about the following statements about their child's school:



**40%** of Indigenous children in Thunder Bay 5 years of age and older 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 reasons:**

- Family or child moved (48.7%)
- Regular progression through the school system (19.5%)
- New school was located close to home (17%)

### 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. Sustain and expand Indigenous trauma-informed, culturally safe programming and supports throughout the school system from early childhood education to college and university.
2. Develop and implement longitudinal research opportunities to better understand the systemic drivers and impacts of mobility, including school changes, on educational experiences and successes.
3. Increase Indigenous staff, administrators, and decision-makers in schools, and within the education system.
4. Hire educators and school administrators who are appropriately trained to provide safe, compassionate, trauma-informed educational experiences for Indigenous children, and that competencies in these areas be a requirement for teacher certification.

**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.<sup>5</sup>

**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.<sup>5</sup>

<b>Definitions</b> 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.	Population-based estimates created using respondent-driven sampling
<b>Sources</b> 1. Rao et al., (2019); 2. Foundation for Child Development (2020); 3. Greenwood et al., (2020); 4. Halseth & Greenwood (2019); 5. Truth and Reconciliation Canada (2015)	
<b>Authors</b> Julia Iannace, Marcie Snyder, Lisa Avery, Stephanie McConkey, Raman Brar, Michael Rotondi, Janet Smylie	
<b>Citation</b> Iannace, J., Snyder, M., Avery, L., McConkey, S., Brar, R., Rotondi, M., & Smylie, J. (2024). Our Health Counts Thunder Bay: Child School Experiences [Fact sheet].	



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## Child School Experiences 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)
<b>Has your child attended an early childhood development or preschool program (for 2 years and older)?</b>	
Yes	41.8% (35.3, 48.9)
No	54.3% (46.7, 60.8)
Don't know	3.2% (1.0, 5.9)
Not applicable	0.5% (0.0, 1.6)
<b>If yes, was this program designed specifically for Indigenous children?</b>	
Yes	70.1% (59.7, 80.5)
No	29.8% (19.4, 40.2)
<b>If yes, which Indigenous specific program did you child attend? (Check all that apply)</b>	
Aboriginal Head Start Program	87.0% (77.7, 94.4)
Aboriginal Early On Centre	1.8% (0.0, 5.5)
Aboriginal Healthy Babies Healthy Children Program	9.2% (1.8, 16.6)
Kindergarten at First Nations School	3.7% (0.0, 9.25)
Other	7.4% (1.8, 14.8)
<b>Has your child ever participated in events, programs or services at any of the following:</b>	
Dilico Anishinabek Family Care	25.5% (19.8, 31.7)
Children's Centre Thunder Bay	7.9% (4.4, 11.4)
EarlyON Child and Family Centres	14.9% (10.5, 19.8)
George Jeffery Children's Centre	6.1% (3.0, 9.2)
Our Kids Count	24.6% (19.3, 30.3)
Boys and Girls Clubs of Thunder Bay	23.3% (18.0, 28.6)
Thunder Bay Counselling	1.7% (0.4, 3.9)
Anishnawbe Mushkiki	16.7% (11.8, 22.0)
Shkoday Abinojiwak Obimiwedoan – Aboriginal Head Start & Biwaase'aa	17.6% (13.2, 22.4)
Thunder Bay District Health Unit	1.3% (0.0, 3.0)
Thunder Bay Indigenous Friendship Centre	8.3% (4.8, 12.7)
Norwest Community Health Centres	6.6% (3.9, 10.1)
Metis Nation of Ontario-Family Well Being Coordinator	3.9% (1.7, 7.0)
Ontario Native Women's Association	18.0% (13.2, 22.9)
Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre Hospital	6.6% (3.5, 10.1)
Other	11.4% (7.4, 15.4)



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Survey Question	RDS Prevalence Estimate (95% Confidence Interval)
<b>How many different schools has your child attended altogether? Please include preschool and kindergarten</b>	
1	25.8% (18.1, 33.6)
2	31.0% (22.4, 39.6)
3	22.4% (14.6, 29.3)
4	6.0% (2.5, 10.3)
5	3.4% (0.8, 6.8)
6 or more	7.7% (3.4, 12.9)
None, my child has not attended school	0.8% (0.0, 2.5)
Don't know	0.8% (0.0, 2.5)
Not applicable	1.7% (0.0, 4.3)
<b>For your child's last change in schools, what was the main reason for changing schools?</b>	
Concerns about the standards and quality of teaching	3.6% (0.0, 8.5)
Family or child moved	48.7% (37.8, 59.7)
Marks too low/Not progressing well	1.2% (0.0, 3.6)
Moved for child to join sports team	1.2% (0.0, 3.6)
New school was located closer to home	17.0% (9.7, 25.6)
Not getting along with teachers or other school staff	1.2% (0.0, 3.6)
Regular progression through the school system	19.5% (10.9, 24.0)
Wanted a specific program	3.6% (0.0, 8.5)
Other	3.6% (0.0, 8.5)
<b>How do you feel about the following statements about your child's school</b>	
<b>Overall, your child feels safe at school</b>	
Strongly agree/ agree	89.8% (84.7, 94.9)
Disagree/ strongly disagree	5.7% (2.1, 10.1)
No response	4.3%
<b>Overall, your child is happy at school...</b>	
Strongly agree/ agree	84.0% (77.5, 89.8)
Disagree/ strongly disagree	10.8% (5.7, 16.6)
Don't know	0.7% (0.0, 2.8)
No response	4.3%
<b>Most children in the school enjoy being there</b>	
Strongly agree/ agree	81.1% (74.6, 87.6)
Disagree/ strongly disagree	5.0% (1.4, 8.6)
Don't know	9.4% (5.0, 14.4)
No response	4.3%



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Survey Question	RDS Prevalence Estimate (95% Confidence Interval)
<b>This school offers parents many opportunities to be involved in school activities</b>	
Strongly agree/ agree	89.1% (83.3, 94.2)
Disagree/ strongly disagree	5.7% (2.1, 10.1)
Don't know	0.7% (0.0, 2.1)
No response	4.3%
<b>This school supports First Nations, Metis or Inuit culture (through teaching and/or activities)</b>	
Strongly agree/ agree	75.3% (68.1, 82.6)
Disagree/ strongly disagree	15.9% (9.4, 21.7)
Don't know	4.3% (1.4, 7.9)
No response	4.3%
<b>Racism is a problem at school</b>	
Strongly agree/ agree	31.8% (23.9, 39.8)
Disagree/ strongly disagree	50.0% (42.0, 57.9)
Don't know	13.0% (7.9, 18.8)
Declined	0.7% (0.0, 2.1)
No response	4.3%
<b>Bullying is a problem at school</b>	
Strongly agree/ agree	56.5% (48.5, 64.4)
Disagree/ strongly disagree	32.6% (24.6, 40.5)
Don't know	6.5% (2.8, 10.8)
No response	4.3%
<b>The presence of alcohol is a problem at school</b>	
Disagree/ strongly disagree	92.0% (87.6, 96.3)
Don't know	3.6% (0.7, 7.2)
No response	4.3%
<b>The presence of drugs is a problem at school</b>	
Strongly agree/ agree	2.8% (0.7, 5.7)
Disagree/ strongly disagree	89.8% (84.7, 94.9)
Don't know	2.8% (0.7, 5.7)
No response	4.3%
<b>Violence is a problem at school</b>	
Strongly agree/ agree	20.2% (13.7, 27.5)
Disagree/ strongly disagree	65.9% (57.9, 73.1)
Don't know	9.4% (5.0, 14.4)
No response	4.3%



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