

Native and Mainstream Parenting Programs

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The purpose of this article is to describe Positive Indian Parenting and Cherish the Children Native, two Native parenting programs that teach traditional Native child-rearing practices and encourage a reliance on the extended family and elders for support. The article suggests that these parenting programs are more relevant for Native families and should be more effective in reducing child abuse and neglect in Native communities than would be true of mainstream parenting programs.

Following a review of the literature on mainstream parenting and Native parenting practices, the article compares programs developed for mainstream North American parents with those developed for Native people. It offers a theoretical framework for Native parenting programs based on Garbarino's ecological model. Two mainstream programs, Parent Effectiveness Training (PET) and Systematic Training for Effective Parenting (STEP), are compared and contrasted to two Native parenting programs, Positive Indian Parenting and Cherish the Children. The article concludes with a review of outcome evaluation studies done on mainstream parenting programs and a discussion of how some of this knowledge can be applied to Native programs.

Le but de cet article est de décrire les programmes Positive Indian Parenting et Cherish the Children Native, deux programmes autochtones d'éducation parentale qui enseignent des pratiques traditionnelles autochtones et qui encouragent un besoin de l'appui des anciens et de la famille élargie. L'article suggère que ces programmes sont mieux adaptés aux besoins des familles autochtones. Ils devraient être plus efficaces pour diminuer la violence et la négligence à l'égard des enfants des communautés autochtones qu'ils ne le seraient dans les programmes d'éducation parentale du courant majoritaire.

À la suite d'une étude de la documentation sur les pratiques

parentales chez les Autochtones et chez les parents nord-américains du courant principal, l'article compare les programmes développés pour les deux groupes. L'article offre un cadre théorique pour les programmes d'éducation parentale autochtones basé sur le modèle écologique de Garbarino. L'article compare et contraste deux programmes courants, Parent effectiveness Training (PET) et Systematic training for effective Parenting (STEP), avec deux programmes d'éducation parentale autochtones, Positive Indian Parenting et Cherish the Children. En conclusion, l'article examine une étude d'évaluation des résultats des programmes courants et une discussion des façons dont ces connaissances peuvent s'appliquer aux programmes autochtones.

In Native communities across North America, Native people are taking initiatives to develop culturally relevant child welfare programs to deal with the problems of child maltreatment. While it is extremely difficult to obtain accurate data, it is estimated that for Ontario as a whole there are 5,000 cases of physical abuse per year (Carrière, 1989). With a provincial population of approximately two million children, that would represent a rate of 2.5 per 1000. However, by all estimates, child maltreatment in Native communities is even higher still. In a recent study conducted by the Manotsaywin Nanotoojig Family Services Planning Project (1990), a survey that included twenty-four First Nation communities in Northern Ontario, including the seven communities of the North Shore Tribal Council, caregivers report that violence occurs in 14 percent of households. This is based on reported cases, but participants in community workshops consistently challenge that figure. Based on their experience, it is estimated that as many as half of all families in these communities have experienced family violence and 80 percent of respondents experienced violence before they were ten years old.

This demonstrates that child maltreatment in Native communities is an extremely serious problem. To reduce or eliminate this problem, hope is being placed in parenting prevention programs, like "Positive Indian Parenting," developed by the Northwestern Indian Women's Centre, and "Cherish the Children," a training program developed by the Minnesota Indian Women's Resource Center. However, it is important to evaluate these programs to determine if they are, indeed, effective, because, to date, there is still very little empirical knowledge of Native child welfare programs. Brad McKenzie, who is at the forefront of research in Canadian Native child welfare, recently observed that:

To date program evaluations have not adequately assessed specific outcomes, and this remains an important evaluation priority. [McKenzie, 1989, p. 10]

Theoretical Framework

The study of the effectiveness of parenting in the Native community is based on the theoretical assumption that the Cherish the Children program will reduce or eliminate child abuse. The authors of Cherish the Children acknowledge that Native parents today face a difficult task. Many Native parents have been influenced by Christianity and residential schooling which has eroded belief in traditional parenting styles. Cherish the Children encourages Native parents to return to a traditional style that involves a "gentle method of parenting" and a reliance on the extended family and elders and based on respect and dignity for all people (Minnesota Indian Women's Resource Center, 1988, p. 2).

An important question is whether this theoretical framework is supported by the literature on child abuse. The work of James Garbarino provides this support. Garbarino's ecological model of child maltreatment (1977) is used to describe the causal factors that result in child abuse and neglect. Garbarino, who has written extensively on child abuse and neglect, attributes child maltreatment to a number of complex factors. He believes that only an ecological model can cope with the complexity of child maltreatment.

In using the word *ecological* here we mean to convey an interest in the way the organism and its immediate environment (the ecological niche) affect and respond to each other. . . . It means that in the case of maltreatment the intimate relationships between the child and the parents cannot be understood without understanding how the conditions surrounding the family affect interaction between child and parent. [Garbarino and Gillian, 1988 p. 21]

In his model Garbarino views maltreatment as role incompetence on the part of the parents:

The maltreatment of children is incompetence in the role of caregiver. . . . Maltreating parents appear to have had little basis for "rehearsing" the role of caregiver. [Garbarino, 1977, p. 24]

He states that there are two necessary conditions for child abuse. First, there must be cultural justification for the use of force against children:

A culturally defined concept of children as the "property" of caregivers and the caregivers as legitimate users of physical

force appears to be an essential component of child abuse.
[Garbarino, 1977, p. 725]

Garbarino believes that the Judeo-Christian civilization has long accepted the use of force in the discipline of children.

The second necessary condition for child abuse is the isolation from potential support systems. Garbarino believes that support systems are necessary to help the family cope with stress:

The importance of such support systems increases, of course, as a function of stressfulness of the family's (external) environment, the ideology of the individual and the sources of stress emanating from within the family itself. [Garbarino, 1977, p. 727]

In summary, Garbarino's theoretical model suggests that if a given family includes parents who are incompetent in their role as parents, is influenced by a culture that supports physical force as a form of discipline and is isolated from support systems, the likelihood of abuse and neglect is high.

Factors contributing to child maltreatment described by Garbarino exist in many Native families. The loss of their traditional way of life and forced assimilation have had a devastating effect on Native families (Dunning, 1959). Young parents today were raised by parents who were products of the residential school system, and who were encouraged to use harsh discipline. Many abused alcohol and drugs, and were poor role models for the next generation of parents. The new generation of young parents is repeating the cycle. Many of this generation are experiencing problems with drugs and alcohol and often abuse and neglect their own children. Furthermore, many have isolated themselves from community support systems.

Returning to the proposed theoretical framework, what emerges is a model of treatment with Cherish the Children being the focal point of the healing process:

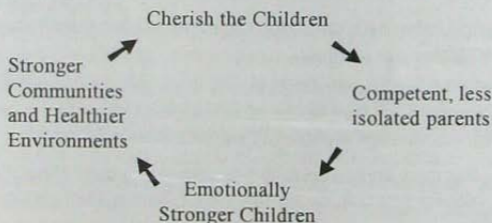


Figure 1: The Healing Process

While *Cherish the Children* does not rely on Garbarino's ecological model as a theoretical framework as such, the model does capture what this program is trying to achieve. *Cherish the Children* leads to more competent and less isolated parents who, in turn, will raise emotionally stronger children, who, when they grow up, will create stronger communities and a healthier environment for future generations.

Native Parenting Prior to Contact

To understand traditional Native parenting a brief review of selected works in the literature will be examined. Since it is beyond the scope of this paper to look at different First Nations, the focus of this review will be on the Anishnabe of northern Ontario. The Anishnabe were hunters and gatherers who lived a nomadic existence. The communities consisted of only a few hundred people and, in winter, hunting bands of twenty or thirty people would disperse in search of game (Driben, 1987). Before European contact, a large trade network existed involving the Anishnabe and the more horticultural Iroquois. Northern Anishnabe traded their furs for corn from the southern Iroquois nations (Trigger, 1985).

They practised the *Mi-de-win* religion (pronounced *mi-day-win*), the traditional religion of the Anishnabe. Among *Mi-de-win* beliefs are the teachings of the seven grandfathers: eternity, wisdom, love, honesty, humility, courage and respect. Respect is the teaching that deals with how people should relate to each other, including how parents should treat children:

Treat every person, from the tiniest child to the oldest elder with respect at all times.

No person should be made to feel "put down" by you; avoid hurting other hearts as you would avoid a deadly poison. [Bopp, Bopp, Brown & Lane, 1984, p. 2]

Since no written history exists of family life of the Anishnabe prior to contact with the Europeans, the only source of information is oral history as told in stories and legends preserved through time and passed along for generations. Basil Johnston (1976), an Anishnabe author, has recorded these stories and legends in written form in the hope that the heritage of his people will be better understood. Traditional Anishnabe stories describe the stages of life of young people. The first important event in a person's life is the naming ceremony. The name is normally given by an elder at the request of the parents soon after the birth of the child. The boys receive names related to climatic conditions or from the anticipated character of the boy, while the girls receive names derived from plants, varying weather

conditions or the uses of water. During the next two or three years, the young child spends most of the time in a *Ti Ki Na Gen*, the Anishnabe word for cradle.

As soon as the children are old enough, their education begins. Skills of living are taught by example. Native history and culture are taught through stories. At about age seven, the education of boys and girls begins to differ. The boys to follow the men of the village and are trained to hunt and fish. A great event in the life of a boy is when he has made his first kill. This is normally followed by a celebration to recognize the boy as a provider of food. The girls follow their mothers and learn to cook, make clothes and care for young children. When not otherwise occupied, young girls watch older women make baskets or prepare hides. For a girl, the attainment of womanhood, at the time of her first menstruation, was considered her greatest gift. A special lodge was built for her and from four to eight days she would live in this lodge by herself and keep a vigil. She would abstain from food and take only water (Johnston, 1976).

Because of the precarious nature of Indian subsistence, knowledge of the natural environment was essential. They believed that the world was made up of spirits or "manitous" with *Kitchi Manitou* being the Great Spirit. Religious education was seen as the foundation of a successful life, and fasting and dreams were important aspects of this education. Future events were predicted through dreams. While the Europeans viewed these ceremonies as pagan nonsense, their psychosomatic effect on the believer was substantial (Schmalz, 1991).

Native Parenting after Contact

Christian doctrine has greatly influenced Native people. Bruce Trigger, an authority on the early contact between Europeans and Natives, found that the Jesuit missionaries encouraged corporal punishment of Huron children by their parents to help them become "good Christians" (Trigger, 1985 p. 267). Trigger points out that up to that time corporal punishment was considered inhuman and disgusting by Native people.

Some of the earliest writings about the Anishnabe people that make reference to parenting practices date back to the mid-1800s. George Copway (1972), or *Ka-Ge-Ga-Gah-Bowh*, an Anishnabe chief who became a Wesleyan minister, described the traditional history of the Anishnabes in a book first published in 1850. He complained about the discipline practices used in White schools, suggesting that "this whipping to learn is brutish and degrading—I might add, savage" (Copway, 1972, p. 258). Soon after, Johann Kohl, a German historian, described life among the Lake Superior Anishnabes in a book first published in 1860, and reprinted in 1985. He

writes that "many Indians bring up their children as strictly as the Presbyterian families" (Kohl, 1985, p. 276). There was no mention of the use of corporal punishment, but he stated that these children were well disciplined.

This description is in sharp contrast to the work by Rev. Peter Jones (1970), a missionary who was himself Native. First appearing in 1861, his book provided a history of Anishnabe people and their conversion to Christianity. He described parenting practices in the following manner:

In family government, I regret to say, my countrymen are very deficient; no discipline is enforced upon their children, consequently they grow up without restraint, and become self-willed and disobedient to their parents and guardians. . . . They (the parents) scarcely ever inflict any punishment upon them beyond angry looks, and a little angry talk. [Jones, 1970, p. 67]

Much later, in 1929, Frances Densmore published a book entitled *Chippewa Customs*. Chippewa is the English variation of the word Ojibway. Regarding the "governance of children," Densmore stated that Anishnabe parents used gentleness and tact and that fear was used as a form of control, but "not to the extent which injured the child (Densmore, 1929, p. 58)." He also mentioned that one or more grandparents were usually found in each household. Grandmothers helped the mother bring up the girls and grandfathers would help to bring up the boys.

An extensive study was conducted by Inez Hilger (1939) on 150 and fifty Chippewa families in Minnesota. The study, which was part of her doctoral work, described in some detail the effects of White cultural influence. She divided her sample into three generations, each covering thirty-three years. The oldest was born between 1839 and 1872, the second between 1871 and 1905, and the last since 1905. The first generation spoke only "Chippewa" and practised the Mi-de-win religion. "They unhesitatingly say that modern education has been no substitute for traditional, parental practice" (Hilger, 1939, p. 77). She also described the involvement of grandparents:

At times grandparents live in the homes where grandchildren live. Other older people, following their traditions, adopt, not legally but in "Chippewa way" one or two of their grandchildren. Grandchildren so adopted live their lives entirely under the influence of grandparents. [Hilger, 1939, p. 78]

The second generation included in the sample showed a wide range of acculturation to European culture. The largest group were Catholic, Episcopal or Methodist, but they still lived in common-law marriages. They

spoke both English and Chippewa. They still gathered wild rice but became dependent on cold packed meat and vegetables. The last and youngest generation showed the greatest degree of acculturation. They all spoke English and only a few spoke Chippewa, although many understood it. Only a few practised the Mi-de-win religion. Hilger concludes by underscoring how much change had taken place in three generations. Only vestiges of the traditional culture were evident in the third generation (Hilger, 1939).

The Anishnabe of southern Ontario were encouraged by the government to give up their traditional economy, based on hunting and trapping, and turn to agriculture. Far more land was needed to support a band through hunting and trapping than through farming. This was not the case for the Anishnabe living on the north shore of Georgian Bay. Since the poor climatic and soil conditions precluded farming, traditional pursuits of fishing, hunting and trapping were practised long after southern Anishnabe had become farmers (Schmalz, 1991). Based on a description by Flannery (1940), the Anishnabe from the North Shore of Lake Huron still lived a traditional lifestyle in the 1930s. They would disperse each winter to survive by hunting, fishing and trapping. Traditional ceremonies such as the naming and fasting ceremonies were still practised and they still relied on dreams for guidance.

With reference to parenting practices, the Flannery recorded the belief, held by the Spanish River Anishnabe, that animals approached young infants and made love to them. The animal that made love to a child would take the child away if the mother was abusive or neglectful. With respect to disciplining young children, Flannery stated that threats about bears, big birds or spirits was enough to frighten the child into proper behaviour.

Mainstream Parenting Practices

The traditional Native way of raising children is in sharp contrast to mainstream North American practices. The dominant mainstream thinking during the nineteenth century in North America was that children were naturally evil and stubborn, and needed to be civilized. Furthermore, women and children were viewed as chattel—or the property of the man of the house. Studies on child abuse and family violence suggest that this philosophy is a contributing factor in creating conditions leading to abuse:

Along with his image of himself as the "head of the house," the offender often believes that he has "entitlement" to his wife and child victim; he refers to them and treats them like possessions. [Martens, 1988, p. 53]

With the onset of the twentieth century, the emerging philosophy was

that children were innocent, with impulses that were neither good nor evil, and that love and kindness should be used instead of control and punishment (Strong, DeVault, Suid and Reynolds, 1983). Traditional mothers viewed the development and happiness of infants with indifference while, in modern society, they placed the welfare of their small children above all else (Shorter, 1977). It is believed that the new attitude of seeing children as innocent and requiring a more benign form of discipline were more useful in a swiftly developing society. People could no longer rely on a strict code of behaviour. Instead, children had to become autonomous and self-reliant (Strong, DeVault, Suid and Reynolds, 1983).

From the 1950s on, more and more North American parents turned to "experts" on child-rearing for guidance. One such expert was Dr. Benjamin Spock (1945). Spock wrote a series of books on child care in which he advocates a far more lenient approach and discourages corporal punishment. He qualified this by stating that he did not believe in permissiveness, but he was clearly against a harsh and domineering approach based on fear (Spock, 1988).

During the 1960s and 1970s, dramatic changes in the family continued. In his study of the modern family, Shorter (1977) found that capitalistic, consumer-driven society had eroded the strength of the nuclear family. He talked about an adolescent indifference to the family's identity, a preference for peer relations over family ones and the rejection of parental values. Women and men had become almost preoccupied with self-awareness and self-development, and the family was often seen as a hindrance.

Parent Training Programs

In the 1970s, a growing number of mainstream parents turned to parent training programs such as Parent Effectiveness Training (Gordon, 1970) and Systematic Training for Effective Training (Dinkmeyer and Mackay, 1976). These programs will be examined in some detail and contrasted to Positive Indian Parenting and Cherish the Children.

Parent Effectiveness Training or PET directed parents away from using punishment:

Many of our P.E.T. parents have proven to us that punishment can be discarded forever in disciplining children, and I mean *all kinds of punishment*, not just the physical kind.
[Gordon, 1970, p. 3]

Thomas Gordon, who developed PET, suggests that conflicts between parents and children frequently involve situations where parents impose their authority and power on children, resulting in a winner and a loser.

Instead, he proposes that parents use a "no-power method, or more accurately, a no-lose method" (Gordon, 1970, p. 196). He believes that, to be effective, the solution to the conflict must be acceptable to both parent and child. As Gordon suggests, this involves treating children like adults.

The program outlines several major techniques to improve parent-child relationships. PET encourages parents to develop active listening skills and become more empathic and understanding. Parents are urged to avoid imperatives and blaming and to use I-messages as a way of encouraging children to respond to parental requests. Another technique is teaching values to communicate the parent's position on important issues. Finally, PET also stresses the importance of problem-solving, as opposed to coercion, to deal with conflicts.

STEP is another popular parenting program used extensively by child welfare practitioners. It is also offered in many Native communities. Because it is used so extensively, it will be reviewed in some detail. The STEP program is normally offered to small groups of parents during weekly sessions lasting two to three hours, depending on the length of the discussion. Each session covers a specific theme and involves a brief presentation, some exercises and an assignment for the week. A form is provided for parents to help them assess their weekly progress. The full program runs for nine weeks.

During the first week, the topic is "Understanding children's behaviour and misbehaviour," which covers the basic child-rearing principles of the program. While acknowledging the recent changes that have taken place in child-rearing philosophy in the dominant culture, Dinkmeyer and McKay describe traditional parenting in the following manner:

In the more rigid, autocratic society in which most of today's parents were reared, relationships between people were understood in terms of a pecking order: of superiors and inferiors. In the home, father was considered the supreme authority. Mother was supposed to be subservient to him, and the children were supposed to be subservient to both of them. [Dinkmeyer and McKay, 1976, p. 6]

In STEP, this philosophy is replaced with "Democratic principles of child-rearing":

The democratic parent provides opportunities for children to make decisions, within limits, and to be accountable for these decisions. In this program you will become familiar with a disciplinary technique that replaces reward and punishment,

permits choice, and allows children to become responsible for their own decisions. It develops self-discipline. This alternative to reward and punishment is called "natural and logical consequences." [Dinkmeyer and McKay, 1976, p. 7]

Similar to PET, STEP recognizes children as equal members of the family, not with the same power as parents—since parents still maintain the responsibility for setting limits—but with the right to choose courses of action on matters that affect them and to accept the consequences of their behaviour.

The second lesson, "Understanding more about your child and about yourself as a parent," deals with emotions and how they are used by children as tactics to manipulate their parents to achieve some desired goal. It tells parents not to be "trapped" by these tactics and becoming either overly domineering or overly lenient. STEP suggests that parents should discourage competition between siblings and encourage co-operation. It also suggests that, if parents show respect to their children, the children in turn will learn to respect themselves.

The third lesson deals with encouragement, building children's confidence and self-worth. Parents are urged to focus on strengths and assets. By using encouragement, parents can help each child produce his or her best effort.

Lesson four is about listening and lesson five is about exploring alternatives and expressing feelings. These teach parents to become effective listeners by encouraging eye contact and using posture that indicates interest. Parents are told to resist imposing solutions by listening to solutions offered by children. If children are unable to offer alternatives, parents are urged to help children brainstorm to find alternatives.

The sixth and seventh lessons are central to the STEP program; these deal with natural and logical consequences. They move parents away from using reward and punishment to applying natural and logical consequences. By allowing children to experience the consequences of their behaviour, the authors of STEP suggest that children will become more responsible and independent.

The eighth lesson is about the family meeting. It is suggested that holding family meetings encourages children to have input and take responsibility for family decisions. Family meetings recognize children as equal, a position that is consistent with the democratic principles of child-rearing outlined in lesson one.

The last lesson is a summary of the previous eight lessons. It reinforces the basic principles of the program and suggests ways that parents can keep from being discouraged by outside influences such as friends and neighbours

who may question the STEP approach. It also suggest that parents should not take full responsibility for their child's success or failure, but should be optimistic that, if they have set realistic goals, they will succeed.

Native Parenting Programs

In trying to come to grips with the problems of abuse and neglect, many Native communities relied on programs such as PET and STEP. However, other Native leaders developed programs advocating a return to traditional Native values. Positive Indian Parenting (The Northwestern Indian Child Welfare Institute, 1986), and Cherish the Children (Minnesota Indian Women's Resource Center, 1988) are two examples that seem to offer an approach more in line with Native cultural heritage than programs developed for the dominant society like PET or STEP.

The first program to appear, was Positive Indian Parenting, designed to provide a brief, practical, culturally specific training program for Native parents. The program has two goals. The first is to help Indian parents explore traditional Native child-rearing practices and to apply these to modern practices. The authors admit that there is a wide variety of traditions and practices among the numerous and different Aboriginal Nations but they hope that there are enough universal values among Native people that the program will be relevant to most. They suggest that each community must adapt the program to suit its needs. The second goal is to help parents in developing positive attitudes towards traditional practices. It is hoped that parents will accept that traditional practices are still relevant today.

The program manual, which is written for the trainer, is divided into two parts. The first includes five chapters that cover a variety of topics related to leading workshops: general training issues, training Native participants, leadership skills, effective use of self and the organization of the training sessions. The second part of the manual provides the lesson plans and background literature for the actual training sessions. The program is divided into eight sessions, each following roughly the same format. Each starts with a welcome followed by a warm-up discussion. Next comes a brief lecture on a particular topic, and a longer discussion. After a short break, there is another brief lecture and a discussion, as well as some practice time to learn the new skills. Each session then ends with a social time.

Eight topics are covered in the sessions. The first reviews traditional Native parenting, with an exploration of its relevance today. The second covers the importance of storytelling in traditional child-rearing. The third is about the cradle-board, and deals with the importance of nurturing. The fourth explores harmony and balance, and how traditional Native families constantly strived to maintain harmony in their family life. The fifth covers

discipline and traditional Native behaviour management which includes the use of teasing and shunning. The sixth session, "Lessons of Mother Nature," explores how Native families used nature to teach living and social skills. The seventh deals with the role of praise and the ability of parents to encourage positive behaviours on the part of children. The final session looks at what Native parents face today; the purpose is to give parents an opportunity to consider Native parenting under modern conditions.

As mentioned, each session has time set aside for parents to practise the new skills. For instance, in the session on discipline, parents are invited to participate in role-playing where teasing is used to control a child who is whining and arguing. There is also an opportunity to role-play shunning. A child interrupts a parent and the parent, after telling the child once to stop, is encouraged to ignore the child until the child gets the message.

In *Positive Indian Parenting* the traditional Native approach is compared to "White" parenting:

Discipline was done differently by a traditional family. When the child misbehaved the family would tease the child and make the child feel bad for a short while. That teasing sometimes seemed cruel, but after the child learned what he or she had done wrong, the family would forget that incident. The teasing was never an attack on the child and was tempered with kindness. In white society punishment is harshly given out by spanking, and the child told that he or she is "bad." When a child is treated this way the child learns to feel that he or she is bad. Also, they may learn to hit those who are smaller. [Northwest Indian Child Welfare Institute, 1986 p. 205]

Another difference is that Native people believed that raising children is a community responsibility. The extended family and other members of the community were always relied on by the nuclear family to help with child-caring duties. There is less a sense that children belong to their parents and much more a sense that children are the responsibility of the community. In addition, *Positive Indian Parenting*, places a great deal of emphasis on the participation of the parents. There is no attempt to suggest that there is only one way to raise children, but rather that Native parents have choices and that the suggestions made in the program are suggestions and nothing more.

The second Native Parenting program, *Cherish the Children*, a training program developed by the Minnesota Indian Women's Resource Center (1988). *Cherish the Children* was written specifically for Anishnabe mothers to teach "parenting skills to Indian mothers with young children." Since the program was developed for Anishnabe people by Anishnabe people, it was

culturally relevant to the needs of the communities. In January 1990, a workshop describing the program was run for Native child welfare prevention workers of the North Shore Tribal Council, which represents the seven Anishnabe First Nation communities along the north shore of Lake Huron. The prevention workers provide the direct prevention and protection services to the communities. Each community, depending on its size, has one or two workers. The reaction of these workers was very positive. They felt that encouraging Native parents to return to traditional forms of parenting would help to reduce the extent of child maltreatment so prevalent in Native communities.

Similar to Positive Indian Parenting, Cherish the Children stresses the importance of going back to the "old ways" of raising children. Throughout the program, parents are encouraged to draw on traditional Native strengths, such as the extended family, community elders and Native spiritual beliefs, to help them carry out the task of raising and educating children. Children are taught certain values such as sharing, co-operation and the importance of participating and contributing to community life. The purpose of the program is to help parents raise children who will grow up emotionally strong, and who will, in the process, help strengthen the community.

The program is comprised of five modules, each of which includes two or three lessons. Each lesson is designed to last forty-five minutes to two hours depending on the length of the discussion. As is the case with Positive Indian Parenting, each lesson of Cherish the Children involves lectures and discussions, but, unlike the former, it also includes some written activity such as filling out worksheets on related topics.

The first module in Cherish the Children deals with family life skills and includes two lessons: one looking at Anishnabe families long ago and the second at Anishnabe life today. The purpose of the module is to encourage parents to integrate traditional practices in current parenting methods. It emphasizes the importance of traditional family activities such as berry picking and picnics. Involving elders and the extended family in raising children is strongly promoted. Using traditional storytelling as the instructional medium, the module shows how raising children in the old days was a community responsibility. It encourages young parents today to go back to this approach and use the help of the community.

The second module is about communication and the goal is to help build the child's self-confidence. The first lesson looks at the importance of self-esteem for both parent and child. Parents are encouraged to use a lot of praise. The second lesson deals with listening skills, and the third with talking skills. Parents are urged to show interest in children by actively listening to them. There is also a lot of emphasis placed on using overt signs

of affection. Interestingly, some Native men from Serpent River who participated in the Cherish the Children program stated that they had been raised to believe that touching children was taboo. Many of the participants find that they have some unlearning to do.

The next module is about child development issues and is provided to inform parents of basic facts about physical and emotional development. There is only one lesson and it covers developmental milestones, growth charts, toilet training and language development. Parents are told not to rush their children but to let nature take its course.

Module four is about nutrition and safety and also provides basic information for parents. The first lesson deals with nutrition and the second with health and safety. In the lesson on nutrition, parents are encouraged to pay attention to their children's diets. While acknowledging the importance of current knowledge about diet and nutrition, the lesson also points out that traditional Native foods such as deer meat, fish and wild rice were very nutritious. Mothers are also strongly encouraged to breastfeed. Lesson eight, on health and safety, is divided into two parts. The first focuses on health, including the importance of immunizing children against childhood diseases, the kind of care sick children need and the need to keep medical records up to date. The second part deals with safety and looks at how children were protected in traditional communities as well as normal precautions that all parents should take to keep their children safe.

Module five is about teaching and learning. The three lessons cover topics such as learning through play and traditional Native games, learning by helping and the importance of children doing chores to help parents, and preparing children for school. In lesson nine, parents are encouraged to make traditional Native toys to help children learn about their cultural heritage. Lesson ten, on household chores, is provided simply to get parents to teach children that they must do their share to help the family. The final lesson suggest ways parents can teach children at home and how parents can prepare children for outside school.

In comparing Cherish the Children to STEP, many similarities are found. Both programs discourage punishment. Both recognize the importance of active listening, of building the child's self esteem and showing respect. Native culture has always discouraged competition and encouraged co-operation, and STEP also urges parents to follow this philosophy. It seems that, in getting parents to move away from traditional Euro-parenting practices, STEP brings parents closer to the traditional Native philosophy of child-rearing.

However, some basic differences still exist. Unlike STEP, which only focuses on the immediate nuclear family, Cherish the Children explicitly

encourages parents to rely on the extended family, elders and the community. It recognizes the important role that grandparents and elders should play in raising children. It also emphasizes the importance of community activities such as pow-wows so that children will grow up recognizing that they are part of a community.

In a recent article on cultural aspects of prevention programs, Schwager, Mawhiney and Lewko (1991) point out that STEP fails to acknowledge the distinct cultural differences of Native communities. They conclude that STEP is, therefore, inappropriate for Native parents. On the other hand, they state that Cherish the Children, because of its emphasis on sharing, co-operation and participation, is far more acceptable.

The Evaluation of Parenting Programs

There are presently no studies examining the outcomes of Positive Indian Parenting or Cherish the Children. A review of the studies on mainstream parenting practices are presented only to suggest that parenting programs in general are effective. It is hoped that by reviewing these studies, some knowledge can be acquired in terms of what would make Native parenting programs more effective.

While most of the studies carried out have focused on STEP, a few have reviewed PET. Root and Levant (1984) looked at Parent Effectiveness Training and rural parents. They investigated attitude changes toward child-rearing practices in thirty rural parents taking PET, compared to a control group of fifteen parents who received no training. Results showed significant changes in the PET parents' child-rearing attitudes as measured on a parent attitude survey compared to control subjects. Wood and Davidson (1987), who conducted a study to evaluate Parent Effectiveness Training, found that the program did cause changes in the cognition of the nine parent participants on active listening, confrontation and conflict resolution. The parents also reported considerable success in reaching goals identified at the commencement of the course.

Similar positive results were obtained in evaluating STEP. Nystul (1982) administered the Attitude Toward Freedom Scale and the revised Parent Attitude Research Instrument to twenty-eight participants ranging in age from twenty-three to fifty. Of these, fourteen attended the nine-week STEP program and the other fourteen acted as a control group. Results revealed that STEP parents were significantly more democratic in their child-rearing attitudes and had a significantly lower tendency to be strict with their children.

Brooks et al. (1988) administered the Parent Attitude Scale and the Child and Adolescent Adjustment Profile both before and after testing to

forty-four experimental participants who attended the STEP program and fifteen control participants. The authors found significantly more improvement in attitudes of parents as measured on the Parent Attitude Scale and in their perception of their children's behaviour than in the control group. These results were strengthened by subsequently having the control group attend the STEP program, thereby becoming the treatment group. The same instruments were then administered a third time to this group, and again the results showed significant improvement in attitude.

Less conclusive were studies conducted on children of parents who participated in parenting programs. A study by Gianotti and Doyle (1982) on learning for disabled children found a significant difference on the Piers-Harris Children's Self Concept Scale in favour of children whose parents received training as compared to a control group. However, scores remained low compared to those obtained with non-handicapped children. On the other hand, another study by Chant and Nelson (1982), looking at parent-child communication and based on a single-subject design, showed improvement of the child's expression of feelings after the mother attended Parent Effectiveness Training.

This is similar to the mixed findings of studies done on the STEP program. Jackson and Brown (1986) studied the effects of the STEP program in improving parental attitudes toward their children and enhancing both children's perception of their parents' functioning as well as their self-conception. There were sixty-two children in the experimental group and ninety-four in the control group. The average age of parents was 32.3. While there was a significant improvement in parental attitudes, no positive changes were found in children's self-concept or their perception of their parents' functioning.

Follow-up studies also showed mixed results. Taylor and Swan (1982) administered to twenty-two parents who had undergone Parent Effectiveness Training one year previously and to eight control parents a twenty-four item questionnaire on how they would handle typical parent-child situations. Their adolescent children were also asked how their parents would handle these situations. The results confirmed that parents were no longer using PET techniques any more than control parents.

This last finding is consistent with those found in a review conducted by Bidgood and van de Sande (1990). Parent training programs are effective but the effects are short-lived. Follow-up studies revealed a return to old and more familiar parenting practices. This suggests that ongoing support is needed for the new skills to become more firmly established.

This is relevant to Native parenting programs in two respects. This first is that parenting programs are effective in terms of changing attitudes about

parenting. The second and more significant is that, unless follow-up work is provided, parents will return to more familiar parenting practices. This suggests that some regular follow-up is essential if the positive changes are to be reinforced.

Conclusion:

Anishnabe communities, which lived a traditional existence based on hunting and gathering, were closely knit. Members of the community had a purpose and everyone contributed. They had to be because the very survival of the community depended on it. Parents, grandparents and, in fact, the whole community took an active part in raising children to ensure that they learned the skills necessary for the ongoing survival of the community. They taught by example and used teasing and shunning, but expectations were high. When the traditional economy of hunting and gathering became irrelevant the fabric of the community broke down. Parents began to neglect their children and became permissive and aloof. The challenge is to rekindle that sense of community.

This is what programs such as Positive Indian Parenting and Cherish the Children are trying to achieve. These programs are teaching traditional Native child-rearing practices and encouraging Native parents to rely on the extended family and elders for support. Programs such as PET or STEP do not emphasize the importance of the community, and while there is no empirical evidence comparing these two approaches, it is believed that Positive Indian Parenting and Cherish the Children are more effective in meeting the needs of Native parents.

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