

RESEARCH SNAPSHOT

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Which Indigenous Early Years Services collaborative funding approaches recognize diverse community needs?

What you need to know:

Traditional funding models such as the proposal-based bid system do not meet the needs of Indigenous populations and communities. Issues include competitive funding models, lack of local, regional and federal government collaboration, the absence of community-level decision making, onerous reporting requirements, unmet needs, and funding inequities between on- and off-reserve populations.

What is this research about?

The British Columbia (BC) Ministry of Children and Family Development's (MCFD) Early Years Services Framework mandates services to support family preservation and wellness for Indigenous children up to the age of six.

In BC, Indigenous Early Years Services (EYS) are delivered through organizations contracted through MCFD via three main funding models: a proposal-based bid system (known as BC Bid system), needs-based approaches and income-testing approaches.

There are questions as to how these traditional funding models impact reconciliation, self-

determination, self-governance, (de)colonization and service delivery to support family preservation. This research explores alternative funding models that help to reduce these inequities and support MCFD's mandate.

What did the researcher do?

The researcher conducted a literature review of academic and grey literature to explore early years funding models in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the United States. The researcher used the University of Victoria (UVic) library catalogue and Google Scholar to find relevant literature published from 2000 to March 2019.

The researcher summarized and analyzed both traditional and alternative funding models and made recommendations for future policymaking and research.



UVic researchers reviewed literature to explore early years funding models relevant for Indigenous Early Years Services (Photo credit: FeeLoona from Pixabay).



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What did the researcher find?

The literature does not report on a 'correct' or perfect funding model for Indigenous EYS. Many of the funding models exclude Indigenous ways of knowing and being, self-determination, and community-focus.

The literature consistently reports that traditional and many alternate funding models create multiple obstacles to service providers, communities, and individuals in accessing funding and services.

These four funding models seem to address some of these issues with a common theme of collaboration:

- The *Needs-based model* can address (unmet) need and sub-populations that persistently do not access supports and services.
- The *Capacity-building model* has the potential to make Elders' knowledge central to support community-led health, education, and language initiatives.
- The *Partnership-based model* employs a non-competitive, relational way of being that holds the potential for Indigenizing funding and service programming and delivery.
- The *Formula regional-based model* is a co-developed approach between the Government of Canada and Indigenous leaders for K-12 education, which is intended to be responsive to changing needs.

How can you use this research?

This research provides a review of funding models to inform MCFD's EYS funding policy and program development, and is also relevant to policymakers and program coordinators of Indigenous EYS in other jurisdictions.

Suggestions for future research:

- Explore the costs associated with implementing funding models
- Examine how funding models are experienced by service providers and communities
- Develop Indigenous funding models as pilot projects

About the researchers

Elaine Laberge is a UVic graduate student. This project was completed as part of the [Graduate Studies \(GS\) 505](#) course and supervised by instructors Dr. Sibylle Artz and Ms. Thais Amorim. Facilitated by UVic [Research Partnerships and Knowledge Mobilization](#), GS 505 is a partnership between MCFD and UVic. This project was prepared on behalf of MCFD.

Keywords

Indigenous; First Nations; Inuit; Métis; Early Years Services; funding models

Citation

Laberge, E. (2019). *A Comparative Analysis of Indigenous Early Years Services Government Funding Models*. Victoria, BC: University of Victoria.

Content for this Research Snapshot was co-created by [UVic's Research Partnerships and Knowledge Mobilization unit](#), Elaine Laberge, Dr. Sibylle Artz and Thais Amorim.

Territory acknowledgement

We acknowledge and respect the ləkʷəŋən peoples on whose traditional territory the university stands, and the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSÁNEĆ peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.

We gratefully acknowledge the financial support of the Province of British Columbia through the Ministry of Children and Family Development.