

## Integration of Indigenous Culture

### June Focus: Connection to the Land Around Us: Reverence for Water

#### What is Indigenous Pedagogy?

*It is a holistic practice of teaching that incorporates Indigenous worldviews throughout all components of our learning environments, including how we interact with children and families, how we develop our daily routines, how we set up our physical spaces, and how we intentionally engage children in learning opportunities. Educators are viewed as active learners and researchers alongside children, and role model looking and listening as part of the learning process.*

*Some Indigenous world views we have explored to date include the respect for the environment, animals, and each other, the interconnectedness of all living things, oral traditions, land-based teaching, the appreciation for the wisdom provided by Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and Cultural Advisors, and spiritual wellbeing. We will focus on respect for water as part of the environment for our June focus.*



Figure 1: Artwork by Christi Balcourt

“Reverence for water is a key aspect of many Indigenous worldviews. Indigenous cultures often regard water as a sacred and life-giving force that deserves deep respect and careful stewardship. This reverence is reflected in various practices, ceremonies and teachings that emphasize the interconnectedness of all life and the vital role that water plays in sustaining it. Treating water with reverence aligns with Indigenous values of harmony with nature and the responsibility to protect and preserve natural resources for future generations.”

#### Activity Suggestion:

##### 1. Connecting with the Water Around Us

- During outdoor playtime, guide children to collect a variety of fallen natural materials from their play yards. Consider items such as stones, pinecones, twigs, leaves and flowers. Ask children to hold on to their special found item.
- Invite children in small group gatherings and engage them in a discussion about bodies of water they have visited. Show the children a globe or map and point out various bodies of water, referencing rivers, lakes and oceans. Talk about how water is everywhere and essential for all living things.

- In the middle of the gathering, place a transparent container of water. One by one, ask each child to gently place their found item into the bowl as a symbol of respect for the water. As they do this, encourage them to say something they are thankful for about water. Prompts can include:
  - “It helps flowers to grow.”
  - “It cools us down in the summertime.”
  - “It is a home for fish!”.
- As children are placing their item in the water, ask them for what they notice about the water. Challenge them to describe some of its attributes such as movement, temperature, and even density. This focus on observation encourages children to appreciate the qualities of water.

### Book Suggestion:

**“We are Water Protectors”** by Carol Lindstrom and illustrated by Michaela Goade

This book tells the story of a young girl who speaks up to protect water from harm. She shares the belief in the sacredness of water and the importance of keeping it clean and safe for all living things. This book teaches young children about the value of water, the need to care for the environment, and inspires children to become stewards of the Earth.

