

Integration of Indigenous Culture

Focus for December: Spiritual Wellbeing

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 world views we will introduce as we proceed throughout our integration of Indigenous culture 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.

Our next series of activities will focus on the following:

Spiritual Wellbeing

Spiritual wellness encompasses positive feelings of belonging and a strong sense of connectedness to oneself, to people, to one's surroundings, and to the natural environment. It involves self awareness, a sense of calm, and a motivation to act with purpose to create these meaningful, higher-level relationships. Within Indigenous cultures, spiritual wellbeing involves forging strong connections with the natural world, showcasing an immense respect and honour for all of Earth's components.



Activities:

1. Connecting with our Senses: Storytelling Stones

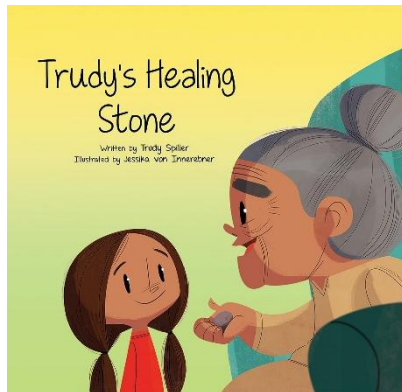
- a. Gather a collection of clean, smooth stones, a small basket or fabric cloth and invite a small group of children to join you in a quiet space. Pass the basket around, and invite children to close their eyes and feel the stones. Ask them to

select the one stone that ‘feels right’ to them. Guide them to hold it in their hand, and ask prompting questions such as:

- Tell me what your stone feels like?
 - Can you describe its texture?
 - Does it feel warm or cool?
- b. Invite children to close their eyes and hold their stone gently. Guide them to take a deep breath and feel the stone in their hand. State, “You’re holding something very old and very special. Can you feel how old and special it is?”
- c. Challenge children to tell a story about their stone, guiding them to think about where their stone came from and how it got here! Prompt them to imagine some scenarios such as:
- It got bumped out of a river.
 - It rolled down a mountain.
 - It got washed up by the ocean waves.
- d. Guide children to think about the possible different journeys that their stone could have taken to land in their hands now!
- e. Ask children to return it back to the Earth during their next outside time.

Book Suggestion:

“Trudy’s Healing Stone” by Trudy Spiller



Trudy Spiller, a member of the Gitksan Nation in British Columbia, shares a gentle teaching about using the special stone to process feelings like sadness, anger, or frustration with the help of Mother Earth. In the story, a young girl learns from her grandmother to hold a stone when she is experiencing strong emotions. By speaking to the stone and then returning it to nature, she finds a sense of relief and balance.