ONECA

- ONECA is an organization comprised of First Nation Education Counsellors that was incorporated in 1985. The Ontario Native Education Counselling Association (ONECA) is founded upon principles that recognize that, although a variety of Counselling and educational tools and programs exist in Ontario, the development of Native communities requires tools and programs designed specifically to improving Native Counselling and Education services.
Definition: Transitions

- Transitions are defined as the strategies, programs, policies, curriculum and resources that makes First Nation, Métis and Inuit student changes from pre-school to elementary, from elementary to secondary, from secondary to post secondary, between institutions, from post secondary to home and from school to work seamless.
- It is the activities, events, people, values, support systems and environment that make these progressions between all levels effortless and comfortable.
- Transitions are solely about the First Nations, Métis and Inuit students having the tools and skills to move forward comfortably between all levels.
- *Excerpt adapted from* Walk In Our Moccasins: A Comprehensive Study of Aboriginal Education Counsellors in Ontario, ONECA, 2010*

Key Questions

1. Why do First Nations, Métis and Inuit Students have such difficulty making transitions through the education system?
2. How can we as educators, administrators, and counsellors assist with making transitions easier?
3. What needs to be in place?
Facts

- First Nation Schools are chronically underfunded
- Funding has been capped at 2% since 1996
- 28% Gap between First Nations and other Canadians
- 2008 it was reported that First Nation Children are eight times more likely to be removed from their homes than other Canadian Children
- Parental Engagement is lacking
- Lack of Education Counsellors schools and communities
- Lack of culturally relevant curriculum
- Students who graduate from First Nation School are often 2 grades behind in their studies
- Teacher retention is challenging
- First Nations students tend to be older when they enter post secondary

Latest Research by ONECA

- Walk In Our Moccasins: A Comprehensive Study of Aboriginal Education Counsellors in Ontario 2010
- Aboriginal Student Transitions Project 2011
- First Nations Métis Inuit Transitions Project 2011

www.oneca.com
The Challenges, Issues and Factors that Impact Transition

- Some of these include the absence of:
  - The presence of a full time Native Education Counsellor that has a designated cultural space that can provide a wide range of services (Silver & Mallett, 2002)
  - Schools that engage parents and communities to be equal partners in education
  - Having role models and mentors as a key influence in their lives
  - Wellness (physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually)
  - Academic preparedness and a clear pathway for career and program selection
  - Regular communication between all stakeholder groups

Recurring Themes

- Regular communication between stakeholder groups
- Access to information and assistance
- Ongoing support
- Culturally relevant services and content
- Funding support and assistance
The Common Link

What has ONECA done?

- Followed up on the reports by creating transition tools and have developed the framework for the First Nation, Métis, Inuit Portal to support students with transition.
Transition Supports Suggested by Counsellors, Parents and Students

- Preschool to Elementary
- Elementary to Secondary
- Secondary to Post-Secondary
- Between Institutions
- Post-Secondary to Home
- School to Work

Preschool to Elementary

- Celebration of transitions, like daycare graduation, with parent and community involvement,
- Engagement of parents and community with daycare and elementary school events,
- Assisting families with financial resources for school materials and extra-curricular activities,
- Participation in family literacy and math centres that promote cultural and linguistic resources,
- Meet the First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education Counsellor, department and First Nations, Métis and Inuit services/programs,
- Visits to Kindergarten (jump ahead day) and community BBQ's at the school/s,
- Programs like “Schools Cool” and other summer break bridging strategies,
- Drafting of Individual Plans for all students that track academic, social, mental, cultural, language and career development,
- First Nations, Métis and Inuit Headstart programs and the Early Years and Screening Identification process,
- Financial supports to subsidize classroom supplies and extra-curricular activities,
- Access to role models and opportunities in a variety of educational experiences,
- School bus orientation and “ride the big bus days”.
Elementary to Secondary

- Visits to the high school and secondary school tours,
- Meet the teachers and staff BBQ,
- Meet the First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education Counsellor, unit and First Nations, Métis and Inuit services/programs,
- Mentorship and buddy programs that come to the elementary school to discuss secondary courses, challenges and options (including dual credit courses),
- Parental and community involvement with events that celebrate transitions (Grade 8 graduation),
- Orientation to high school extra-curricular activities (social, physical, academic, trips),
- Assisting families with financial resources for school materials and extra-curricular,
- Organizing shared events between elementary and secondary,
- Workshops and tips on academic success,
- Access to role models and career events,
- Career guidance plans at the elementary level that drive secondary course selection,
- Taking students to high school in August to locate classes before the academic year begins,
- Consistency of at home routines in terms of sleep, meals, homework, play,
- Connecting parents/guardians with support networks and programs (parenting associations, libraries, recreational),
- Attendance at cultural events and connections with Elders that reaffirm First Nations, Métis and Inuit identity.

Secondary to Post-Secondary

- Excursions to post-secondary institutions that are live or web-based,
- Attend cultural, social and academic events at colleges and universities,
- Meet the staff and orientate with services at the First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education Units at colleges/universities,
- Parental and community involvement with transition events (Grade 12 graduation),
- Development of a career pathway plan for students that involves the secondary guidance department and potential post-secondary institutions,
- Offering of workshops on bursaries and scholarships available to First Nations, Métis and Inuit students,
- Hosting an application for post-secondary funds/sponsorship to First Nations, Métis and Inuit students,
- Academic skills, resources, training and services,
- Research and familiarity with programs and services available to First Nations, Métis and Inuit students in the city or town or location of school,
- Personalized tours of college/university that identifies students location of classes, cafeteria, library and other essential services,
- Mentorship and buddy programs that link students to a support networks.
Between Institutions

- Meet the First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education Counsellor, unit and First Nations, Métis and Inuit services/programs at the location,
- Ensure that credits are transferable between institutions,
- Offering of workshops on bursaries and scholarships,
- Plans on achieving a career pathway and various options,
- Virtual and live tours of college and/or university,
- Mentorship opportunities for additional support,
- Academic skills, resources, training and services,
- Reviewing the applicability of strategies in the secondary to post-secondary section to individual situations.

Post–Secondary to Home

- Contact with support network at home to inform of potential culture shock,
- Assist students with developing a plan to return home (living arrangements, supports, financial, social, cultural),
- Arranging a welcoming home event for students,
- Debriefing sessions with students,
- Creation of support groups (live and online) for students returning home,
- Connections with Elders and cultural resource people,
- Partner student with health, wellness, educational and social resources at home.
School to Work

- Cover letters, resumes and Curriculum Vitae (CV) workshops,
- Interview skills and mock interviews,
- Job search resources and web-based engines,
- Essential skills in the workplace information,
- Balancing work, life and/or school info,
- Volunteering resources and options,
- Mentorship opportunities info sessions,
- Placements and internships info sessions,
- Apprenticeship possibilities,
- Financial planning workshops,
- Small business opportunities for First Nations, Métis and Inuit workshops.

How to Support Students Through the Transition Year

- First Nations Métis Inuit Transitions
- Toolkits for parents, students, Counsellors and other professionals
Transitions Web Portal

Welcome to Transitions. This is the website that is committed to Aboriginal students in their educational, career and life endeavors.

We welcome you to our website that is committed to Aboriginal students in their educational, career and life endeavors!

Spotlight - The Latest News and Updates:

- Facebook - Discussion Groups
- Facebook - Live Chats

Contact Us

INTERACTIVITY:

- Facebook - Your Questions Answered
- Webinars

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WEB RESOURCES

- Aboriginal Students in School and Career Success
- Symbol of Feather for First Nations
- Symbol of Mulehuk for Inuit
- Symbol of Infinity Sign for Métis

Members Only:

- Information for Education Counselors
- Information for Parents/Guardians
- Information for Other Professionals
- Information for Communities

Preschool to Elementary Transitions

- Ahtee, Tansi, Segi, Wachay, Bonjir and Greetings.
- Transitions are defined as the strategies, programs, policies, curriculum and resources that make Aboriginal student changes from preschool to elementary, from elementary to secondary, from secondary to post-secondary, between institutions, from post-secondary to home and from school to work seamless. It is the activities, events, people, values, support systems and environment that make these progressions between all levels effortless and comfortable. Transitions are solely about the Aboriginal student having the tools and skills to move confidently between these levels. (OHECA, 2010).

Elementary to Secondary Transitions

Secondary to Post-Secondary Transitions

Post-Secondary to Post-Secondary Transitions

Post-Secondary to Home Transitions

School to Work Transitions

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Transitions Toolkits

- Brochures
- Info Sheets
- Posters
- Videos
Questions and Comments

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