WELCOME
The Ottawa Inuit Community

- Ottawa is home to the largest population of Inuit outside of Northern Canada.

- There are approximately 1800 Inuit living in Ottawa.

- It is an extremely young population. (Average age of Inuit is 25)

- People move to Ottawa for employment, education, medical services, healing and to be near family.
THE OTTAWA INUIT CHILDREN’S CENTRE

Vision
Strong culture, strong families, strong community

Mission
In partnership with parents and the community the Ottawa Inuit Children’s Centre fosters strong and proud Inuit children, youth and families

Mandate
The OICC serves Inuit children and youth from birth to 13 years of age and their families. The objects of our organization are: to provide Inuit children and youth with a learning environment that will enhance their overall development; to foster positive parenting through support and education; and to promote the retention of the Inuit culture and language.
Celebrating Our Culture
Why an Inuk JK/SK Program?

- There was a concern from families that our children would be an educational system that was not seen as always being culturally appropriate and was not community based.

- When we teach children about their culture and heritage we create a community of strong resilient children and families. It is not just about objects and textbooks.

- There was a concern that our parents would not have the access to the wide range of services and support that they were currently accessing in community based programs that value and honour their heritage and culture.
Solutions

We suggested to the Ministry Of Education that the OICC partner with the OCDSB and have a full-day learning JK/SK Inuk Kindergarten class which would be located within the community.
Partnership

- Ministry of Education heard us and said how, when where and when?
- We suggested that we partner with RE Wilson Public School because:
  - There was already and established partnership
  - Is a school with a number of our children enrolled
  - Close in proximity to OICC
  - They were like minded and we trusted them
How.....

- Held a community meeting and principal from RE Wilson attended where we confirmed interest from parents
- Parents registered children at the OICC as well as school board
- We worked to make adjustments in terms of space
- The school board posted position for teacher
- We participated in selection
- We did the orientation of the staff from board
How....

- Classroom started in October 2010 with 16 Inuit children, one school board teacher and our cultural teacher.
- We now have a school board teacher, school board ECE and our cultural teacher.
- The OICC provides transportation, space, food, field trips, special events, visits from community partners, cultural materials and parental support.
- Children follow the school board circuleum and assessment and the children enrolled get the additional supports that the school board offers.
Our Partner
Learning Through Play
Our Language
Celebration Who We Are!
Results

- The children did amazingly well last year and are off to a great start this year.
- The children are staying connected to their community while getting a rich educational and experience that is play-based and cultural. Children with exceptional needs are getting identified and are getting support from through RE Wilson and the board.
- There were some issues that we needed to work through
  - Space and resources
  - Transportation
  - Staff support
  - Coverage for staff
  - Some issues around responsibility
  - Cultural differences
What it Takes

- The desire – it is a lot of work
- The space
- Strong relationships
- Open, constant communication
- Flexibility
- The ability and desire to work through situations and solve problems
Why – Because it is so Worth it!