



Qaujigiartiit Health Research Centre, Iqaluit, NU

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The Story of the Inunnguiniq Parenting Program

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OVERVIEW

- What is Qaujigiartiit?
- Why Parenting?
- The goals of Inunnguiniq & parenting model
- Decolonizing trauma-informed approach
- Components: Healing, Relationships, Story-telling, Skill-building
- Reactions to the program
- Next...



QAUJIGIARTIIT HEALTH RESEARCH CENTRE

- Qaujigiartiit is a community-driven, Nunavut-led, health and wellness research centre that facilitates the identification of and action on health research priorities identified by Nunavummiut.



QAUJIGIARTIIT HEALTH RESEARCH CENTRE

- We want to enable health research to be conducted locally, by Nunavummiut, and with communities in a supportive, safe, culturally-sensitive and ethical environment, as well as promote the inclusion of both Inuit Qaujimagajatuqangit and western sciences in addressing health concerns, creating healthy environments, and improving the health for all Nunavummiut.



WHY PARENTING?

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- 2006-2008, conducted public engagement sessions in communities across Nunavut
- Want to be responsive to the needs of Nunavummiut
- Among other topics, parenting support was a universal theme
- History of trauma and colonization: Residential schools, forced (re)settlement, and evacuations for Tuberculosis treatment
- Parents and children were separated as a result



CHILD AND YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

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- Awarded funding in 2010 from Public Health Agency of Canada for a 5-year project to explore mental health of children and youth in Nunavut
- Evidence-based parenting program which reflected Inuit childrearing philosophy was 1 part of this important project
- Other components included:
 - primary data collection with youth using photovoice;
 - a needs assessment of mental health services for children and youth;
 - an evidence-based youth wellness camp program



LIT REVIEW & CONSULTATION

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- Reviewed existing programs offered sporadically in different communities
- Reviewed former policy and history related to parenting support
- Conducted post-program evaluation of a Nobody's Perfect Program pilot in Nunavut in 2010
- Collaborated with Nunavut Dept. of Education's Elders Advisory Committee to gather perspectives on childrearing



ELDERS

- Elders Advisory Committee - meeting since 1999
- Had 10 years of information on childrearing and family
- Developed a set of pamphlets - 'Inunnguiniq: Advice from Inuit Elders'
- Abilities, characteristics, and feelings for each stage of child development - never distributed
- Became basis of program

What's Special About Me at this Age?

Character Building

- I am starting to think about how I want to live and what I want to be known for.
- I am aware of fairness. I am also aware of differences between my friends and me.
- I need you to teach me about being a good person and living a good life. I am developing my core values.
- I look up to my heroes.

Communication

- I am learning to use relationship terms. I am learning about how I am connected with others.

We never used names, even for our friends, but we used relationship terms to show that we valued and respected others as friends. Children should use these terms and know how they are connected to others

Skill Building

- I remember everything. I am very impressionable. I need you to protect me from bad experiences that will create bad memories.
- My special talents are starting to show. You can see what I might be good at in the future. I need you to notice this and encourage me.
- I need clear instructions about what the expectations are. I know you have my best interest in mind, so I trust everything you tell me.

Applying Inuit Values

Love — *Inunnguiniq* is the Way to Show Love



Commentary

We love our children, so we care about their future. Our role is to prepare them to live a good life and be successful. To do this, we must care for them from birth, always putting their needs first. We must set clear expectations and teach them discipline to meet the expectations.

In the past, we were disciplined more than kids are today. Our parents slapped us when necessary, but never without a warning first and a chance to correct our behaviour. Our parents slapped us on the bum if we didn't follow the warning and they would explain the reason.

Never slap a child without warning or explanation. That causes the child not to trust you. Never yell angrily because the child will feel humiliated. Discipline children with a quiet, stern voice.

Reminders

- ✓ To prevent sickness, teach children to blow their noses gently and often.
- ✓ Teach good hygiene routines, such as hand washing, coughing into the arm, and brushing and flossing teeth. Teach six-year olds to be responsible for their own hygiene.

Inunnguiniq

Childrearing Advice from Inuit Elders

6 Years



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CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE FOR CHILDREN'S WELL-BEING

Children and Adolescents with Special Needs

About this Age

Six-year olds are very aware of their peers. They like to socialize with other kids, not just relatives. This is a time to teach social skills, such as being a good sport and having compassion.

At this age, kids like to tease each other. Some boys at this age will experiment with being assertive. They might fight rather than back down.

Six-year olds tend to want to compete with others. They want to slide the fastest, run the farthest, and go off the jump the highest. Teach them to admire winners and not to show disappointment. This is a time to teach children to be "good sports" and celebrate the successes of others.

Six-year olds really notice differences, so this is a time to teach compassion. All children need good treatment, good food, and proper clothes. Teach your child to have compassion and help meet the needs of other children. This will prevent bullying and teasing. Teach six-year olds that we have a responsibility to care for others, even as children. Teach this now and at every age.

At this age, children can contribute to the family. When they contribute, tell their namesake about it and make a big fuss. Encourage the child all the time. Recognize their growing role as a capable human being. This will motivate the child to keep developing their skills. Their development is a blessing for the whole group.

Ungatinguaq is a term for "playing house" as a child. Encourage six-year olds to pretend. It helps them envision what they can become in later life.

What Parents Can Do

- **Prevent negative peer influence.** Be aware of your child's friends. Prevent your child from being influenced. Teach him to stand up for his values. Remind your child about expectations, beliefs, and the importance of family reputation.
- **Build your child's self-esteem.** Your child will remember positive or negative messages she gets now. This will influence her whole life. Protect your child from negative words about her and counter any that come to her. If you say negative things in anger, apologize. But, it is better to avoid saying negative things to your child in the first place.
- **Teach responsibility.** Give your child chores that he is able to do. Support him to take ownership of the task. For example, in the past children were each assigned puppies to look after. They would feed them, develop a relationship, and be told about their progress on the dog team over the years.

More advice from elders to share with your six-year old:

"I was always told if someone was mean to me, to just move away and avoid the confrontation. Go find someone else to be with. When that person notices that you always leave when they are mean, they will know that it doesn't get to you."

"We were told not to judge others because their circumstances were different from ours. We were also told to always be aware that you are part of a family, so don't participate in something your family would not do."

Parenting Skills to Practice for this Age

Support your six-year old by trying these parenting activities.

- Ask your child about his friends and how they are. Suggest ways he can be a better friend. Encourage your child to notice what is happening in his friends' lives. Help him find ways to care for friends who are in need.
- Encourage your child to tell stories to the family. Give her your full attention.
- Encourage your child to practice writing the names of friends and relatives. Practice with him.
- Play games that develop physical skills. Play tag, bat and ball, and soccer.
- Play memory games, such as "concentration." Show a set of objects and then cover them. Ask your child to see how many she can remember.
- Get your child to help with everyday tasks, such as cooking, cleaning, serving others, and helping grandparents.

Tips for Parents

- ✓ The most important thing to a six-year old is to spend time with you. Spend time on the land with them. Introduce them to what they need to learn in life to be successful. Notice what they are good at and enjoy doing. Encourage them.
- ✓ Teach six-year olds about weather. Get them to experience all types of weather. Teach them to dress properly for the weather.
- ✓ Have your six-year old spend lots of time with grandparents and other elders. Help them build these important relationships.

INUNNGUINIQ PARENTING PROGRAM
CURRICULUM GUIDE



Based on the Knowledge of Inuit Elders
Developed by Shirley Tagalik and Margaret Joyce
and the Qaujiqarlit Health Research Centre



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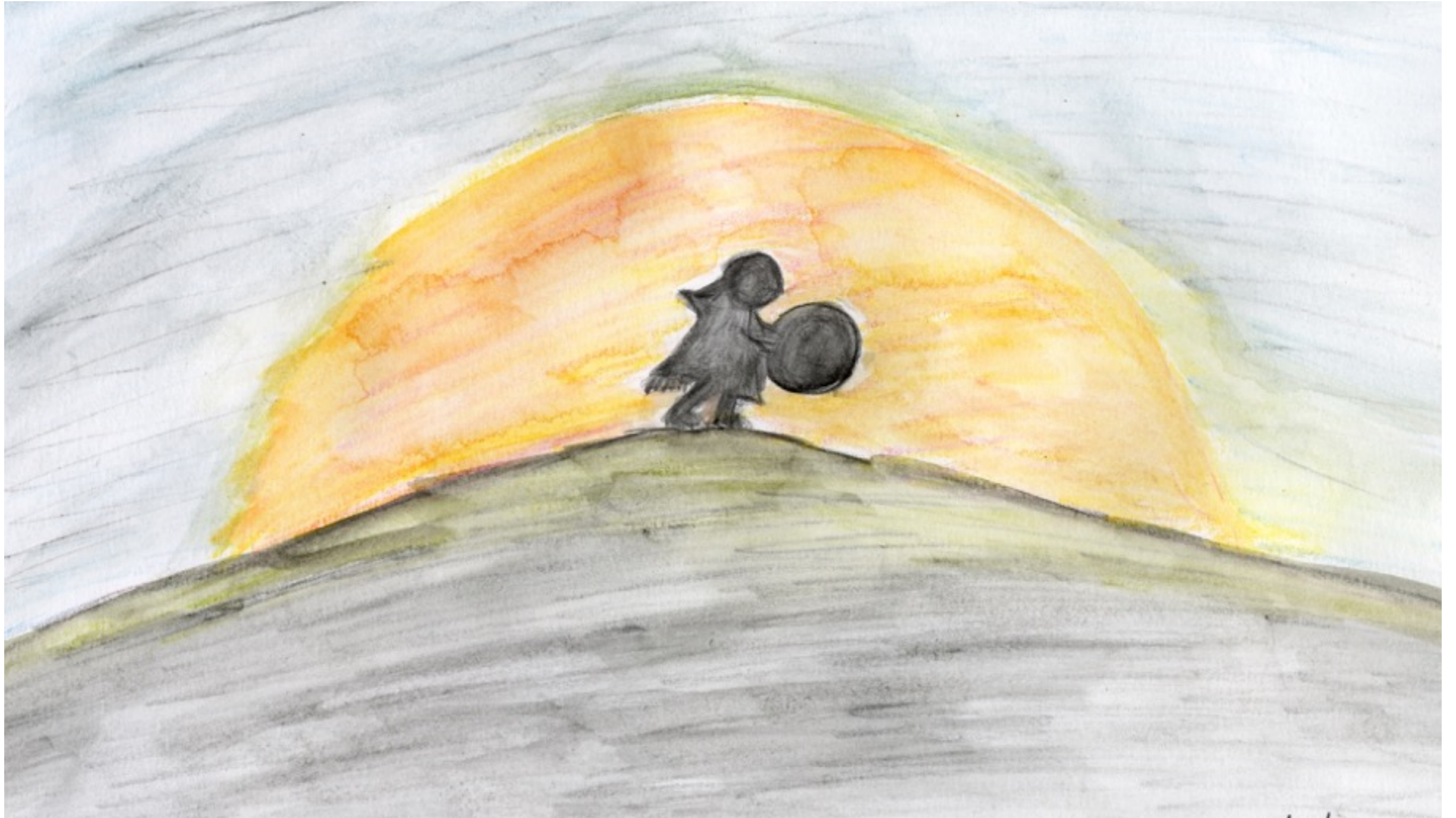


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CURRICULUM

- Curriculum was written by 2 long-term Nunavut educators: **Shirley Tagalik** and **Margaret Joyce**
- Extensive experience with the Elders committee and with teaching
- Revised and updated with the help of the Nunavut Literacy Council
- Support from the Nunavut Dept. of Health to continue updating and revising modules

INUNGUINIQ ΔοΰJΔσ⁹⁶



IMPACTS OF COLONIZATION ON PARENTING

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“We want to understand how Inuit in the past were successful at teaching their children about the IQ principles, that helped them back then, because we feel the same principles can help our children today—to look at things from this perspective and continue to develop the skills that will help them to have a productive life and to be helpful to others in need.”

- Joe Karetak, Arviat (CSS June 2004)



6 PRINCIPLES OF INUNNGUINIQ

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- Develop habits for living a good life
- Rise above hardship through continual solution seeking
- Build a strong moral character, being heart-centred
- Show compassion, serve others and pay attention to relationship-building
- Recognize the uniqueness of each individual
- Continually make improvements (until one becomes able)




PURPOSE

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The goals of this program are to:

- Bring back Inuit parenting teachings and practices in ways that work today
- Recognize the need for healing from the colonial past and the trauma which resulted in breaking the system for *inunnguiniq*;
- Rebuild the strengths of Inuit parenting and bring the heart-centred *inunnguiniq* practices back into parenting in Nunavut today.



To revitalize
inunnguiniq
for our
lives today.

To support
healing.

To rebuild the
role of extended
family and
community
in child-rearing.



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“Today we worry about censoring Inuit ways of living, Inuit stories, Inuit ways of childrearing, and I see a lot of obstacles that our Inuit way of life has bumped into. This has drastically changed and impacted how Inuit cope with life’s new pressures, and I see too many people trying to solve problems plaguing them without ever considering where the problems we are facing originated.”

- Joe Karetak, CSS, 2004



DECOLONIZING TRAUMA-INFORMED

- Recognize the need for healing
- Allow people time to grieve for what was lost
- Support the process of becoming self-aware
- Strengthen self-esteem and confidence as parents through cultural teachings
- Build in time for healing in land camps, families, across the community & generations





RELATIONSHIPS

- Relational worldview
- Mutually supportive relationships
- Creating networks of support for parents
- Elder mentors
- Relationships to land & nature
- Family & belonging

Photo credit: Shirley Tagalik, Arviat NU

The Iceberg Healing Manual

RECONNECTING PEOPLE

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- Understanding the need for healing and support - basic ideas and referrals
- Looking to the past in order to successfully go forward into the future
- Family relationships and kinships as the strength of Inuit Qaujimaqatuqangit

INUIT STORIES

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- *Unikkaaqatigiinniq* - the philosophy of story (the power and meaning of story-telling)
 - Kiviug
 - Kaujagjuk
- Old stories and songs hold deep meaning, provide inspiration, and convey morals and values.
- Revitalize older stories and help parents develop their own stories about their children





SKILL-BUILDING

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- *Pilimmaksarniq* - to develop skills through effort, practice, and action
- Understanding how children develop skills and nurturing their capabilities
- Continually improving ourselves as parents and building our own skills
- Inuktut, family activities, budgeting, household responsibilities, modelling behaviours, family meals, etc.

6 MODULES

- Living a ‘good life’ (words from the elders)
- Relationship-Building
- Inunnguiniq - Teaching to the heart
- Pilimmaksarniq - Skill development
- Communication
- Healthy Family Nutrition

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Living
a Good Life

Nutrition

Relationship
Building



Communication

Teaching to the
Heart

Pilimmaksarniq
(Skills Development)



EVIDENCE-BASE

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- Piloted in 2011/12 in 10 communities
- Revised and re-piloted in 4 communities in 2013/14.
- Launched in 2015
- Undergoing another update to remain responsive to the needs of Nunavut parents
- 139 people have been trained as facilitators
- Adaptable to different venues (high school, community, workplace, etc.)



REACTIONS

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➤ **After taking this program my children are:**

- Spending time listening to the stories I tell them from Elders.
- Really believing in their namesakes and knowing that they have to help Elders when they need help.
- My number one priority.
- Touched. I call him by his name(sake) he noticed that and he likes it. Thank you very much.
- Closer and loving, caring, changing, behaving better, helping me, understanding about parenting.
- Healthier, happier, listening more. I'm still teaching them.
- Eating healthy food I cook for them and healthy snacks.
- I started teaching my child to sew, make bannock, cut fish.



WHAT NOW?

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- On-going challenge to obtain funding for on-going activities
- Collaborating with supportive partners
- Still running in a handful of communities
- Developed into a 2-week course for ECE students
- Requests to develop training program for frontline workers, social workers, teachers, program managers, etc.



QUESTIONS?

- Contact us!
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