

Independent First Nations: EDUCATION

*Indigenous Early Childhood
Programs and Assessment*

November 3, 2022





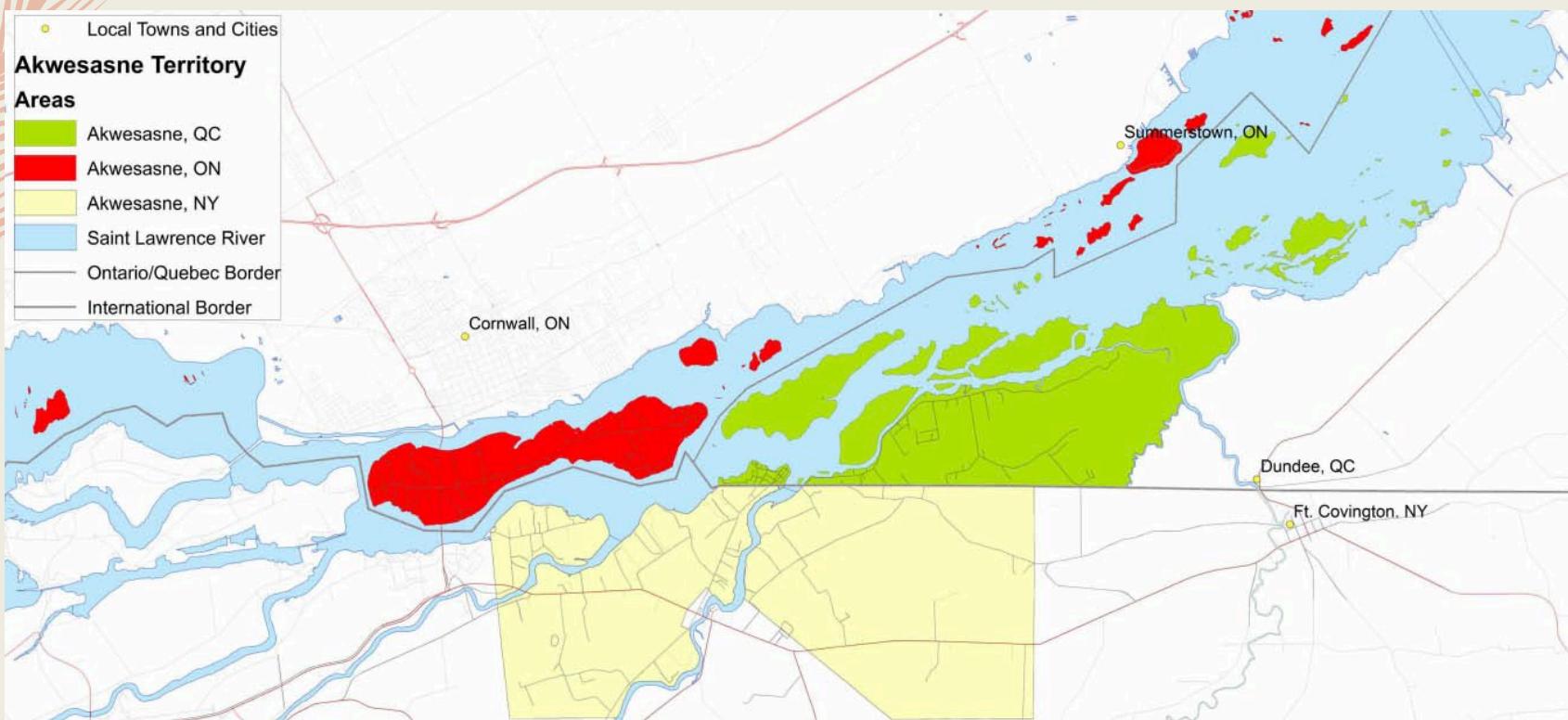
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Akwesasne – An Interesting Place





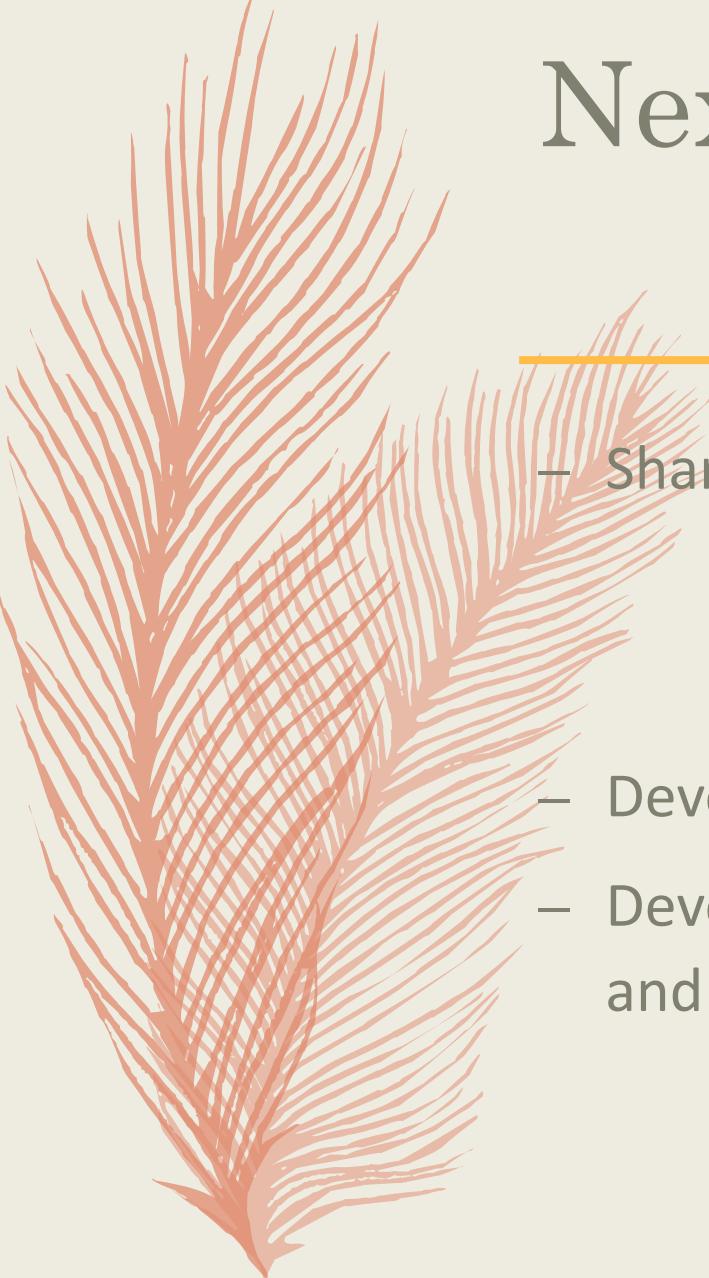
Background: Early Years

- The US has federal policy on special education
 - Strong support for idea that **Early Intervention** begins at birth
- HEAD START Programs: US Head Start began in 1965 (ACE Study)
- Akwesasne – Southern side – Head Start program for decades
 - AHSOR program – Northern side - ~2000
 - Focus on providing services to young children w/special needs
 - Still faced too many barriers
- Assessment: Akwesasne's program continues to evolve – Full Day structured pre-school program, assessments are embedded in SFA



Research Project

- Hypothesis: Indigenous peoples have always viewed children as gifts from our Creator – “Sacred Little Bundles”. Our children may have gifts that are misdiagnosed in mainstream educational systems. A focus on strengths and gifts through an Indigenous lens would benefit our children and in the long term, our communities.
- First step – research into gifted and talented studies – a literature search
- Develop an Indigenous definition for “giftedness”
- The Ontario Ministry of Education (1984).
- "...an unusually advanced degree of general intellectual ability that requires differentiated learning experiences of a depth and breadth beyond those normally provided in the regular school program to satisfy the level of educational potential indicated."
- ABC “..one who has the potential for unusual accomplishment in any of several areas, including intellectual and creative ability, musical, artistic and athletic performance and social and leadership skills.”



Next steps....

- Share information found from research
 - Raise awareness of special gifts in our children
 - Encourage nurturing of strengths in all our children
- Develop resources for parents
- Develop resources for educators in our early learning programs and schools

If you have any suggestions for a definition
of “giftedness” from an Indigenous
perspective, please contact me:
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Questions?

Niawen ☺