

STORIES FROM PARENTS: RAISING PROUD INUK CHILDREN –

*“IT STARTS AT HOME”*

**STORIES FROM PARENTS: RAISING PROUD INUK CHILDREN – “*IT STARTS AT  
HOME*”**

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A Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Degree Requirements for the Degree of Master of Science (Global Health)

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McMaster University MASTER OF SCIENCE (2019) Hamilton, Ontario (Global Health)

TITLE: STORIES FROM PARENTS: RAISING PROUD INUK CHILDREN – “*IT STARTS AT HOME*”

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NUMBER OF PAGES: xiv, 94

## **LAY ABSTRACT**

Understanding how parents are raising their Inuk children in today's society is the focus of this project. The project involved speaking with parents/caregivers and learning about their experiences being parents/caregivers. The main ideas that many parents/caregivers spoke about were the importance of language, education (both formal and informal), and identity development. Parents recommended that parents themselves should take the initiative to raise their children – it starts at home. In addition, parents recommended that the community and organizations should support parents/caregivers that may not have the skills or knowledge to raise their children. Overall, the importance of everyone working together and contributing to raising the child was highlighted.

## ABSTRACT

### **Stories from Parents: Raising Proud Inuk Children – “*It Starts at Home*”**

**Background:** The Colonization, the residential school system, the Indian Act, TB sanatoriums, and the dog sled slaughter have all impacted the health of Inuit and resulted in intergenerational trauma. The impact of these events resulted in loss of culture, identity, language, and ways of living a subsistence lifestyle. Within Nunavut, Inuit are healing and are revitalizing *inunnguiniq*, which is the journey to obtain knowledge and skills that will help us enter society and live a good life.

**Methods:** Using a community-based participatory research approach 20 in-person semi-structured interviews were conducted in Iqaluit, Nunavut during November and December 2018, with parents/caregivers who were raising their Inuit children. The questions allowed the parents to broadly answer questions surrounding parenting, the supports and challenges, and stories about raising an Inuk child in today’s society. Data analysis was guided by grounded theory.

**Findings:** Using NVivo 12 Windows, three prominent themes were identified: 1) language, 2) education, and 3) identity development. Each theme is a reflection of how the parents who participated in this project and their own upbringing have impacted and influenced their parenting decisions. 1) Language connects to our culture and our identity. 2) The parents expressed obtaining a formal and informal education. Certain aspects of the Inuit culture cannot be taught in indoor classrooms, therefore the parents expressed the need for a more balanced education curriculum that incorporates Inuit culture as well as life skills

development. 3) Identity development focused on raising their children to learn certain Inuit values, which were *miksirkarniq* (having a strong foundation), *pijitsirniq* (serving, respecting and helping others), *pilimmaksarniq* (becoming skilled), and *avatitiniq kamattiarniq* (being aware of our environment).

**Conclusion:** Raising an Inuk child to retain their language, gain a robust balanced education, and develop a strong Inuk identity starts at home. Parents and caregivers need to receive the support from all organizations that support childhood development in order to further support raising their child.

**Keywords:** parenting, Inuit, education, language, identity development

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express a big heartfelt thank you to several people that helped make this dissertation a reality.

1. **The participants:** Thank you for sharing with me your stories about parenting. During and after each conversation, I was amazed at the strength you all possess. Raising a child is not easy, you all acknowledge that too, but your unconditional love for your children makes the journey worthwhile. I wish you all the very best in raising your children to “become whole” (as noted by a mother).
2. **My community.** I cannot name all of you, that might become another dissertation on its own, but I want to say *nakurmiik* for encouraging me to enjoy the beauty within my hometown. To all the individuals and organizations that helped during various stages of my project, thank you!
3. **Dr. Chelsea Gabel**, my supervisor. Thank you for challenging me to become a strong independent researcher and to value the importance of open communication in relationship building. I also learned the value of proper project management throughout this entire process. Thank you for always being present when I needed any questions answered.
4. **Dr. Andrea Baumann**, my committee member. Your silent mentorship and support helped me reach the finish line. Thank you Dr. Baumann!

5. **Michael Ladouceur**, the individual who encouraged a wide-eyed post-orientation Global Health student to pursue an idea that she had with her prior to joining the program. Michael, thank you so much for believing in this project. Your words of encouragement helped me overcome numerous challenges throughout this entire masters degree process. I finally did it!
6. **Shuvina Mike**, my community advisor. Thank you for being one of the first people that I spoke with regarding my research project. You shaped me into the researcher I am today.
7. **Dr. Gwen Healey Akearok**, my community advisor. Thank you for providing guidance on how I should challenge my thinking about my assumptions. I learned so much from you and I know I will continue to learn from you in the upcoming years. It is humbling to have a role model such as yourself living in my community.
8. **Linnea**, an individual who continues to challenge my thinking and personal aspirations. Thank you so much for our weekly conversations about growing as an individual. Throughout this entire masters degree process I learned valuable transferable skills that I could not have obtained without the support I received from you, thank you.

9. **My friends and colleagues**, there are too many to individually identify.

You all advised me (& encouraged me) either directly or indirectly during some difficult times in this research project - thank you from the bottom of my heart!

10. **My father (Appachchi), my mother (Ammi), and my sister (Nangi).**

Thank you all for believing in me during some of the most doubtful periods of my masters degree. I would not be receiving this degree without your unconditional love and support. You three are my heart. I look forward to celebrating my success with the three of you in the upcoming weeks!

## Table of Contents

<b>LAY ABSTRACT</b>	<b>III</b>
<b>ABSTRACT</b>	<b>IV</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>	<b>VI</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b>	<b>XI</b>
<b>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS</b>	<b>XII</b>
<b>DECLARATION OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT</b>	<b>XIII</b>
<b>DEDICATION</b>	<b>XIV</b>
<b>POSITIONING STATEMENT</b>	<b>XV</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT	3
INUIT HISTORY	3
RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS	5
<i>INUNNGUINIQ</i>	9
<i>INUIT QAUJIMAJATUQANGIT</i> PRINCIPLES	12
INUIT IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT	13
TUQ&URAUSIT	13
TRADITIONAL INUIT TATTOOING	15
<b>CHAPTER 2: METHODS</b>	<b>19</b>
STUDY DESIGN	19
INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE	20
COMMUNITY-BASED PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH	21
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK – GROUNDED THEORY	23
SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS	23
KNOWLEDGE DISSEMINATION	24
DATA COLLECTION	25
CONSENT	27
FOLLOW-UP	28
DATA ANALYSIS	28
RIGOUR AND REFLEXIVITY	30
LIMITATIONS	30
SUMMARY	31
<b>CHAPTER 3: FINDINGS</b>	<b>32</b>
LANGUAGE	34



GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION AND LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY	35
LANGUAGE ACQUISITION AND RETENTION	36
LOSS OF LANGUAGE	38
SUPPORTING LANGUAGE ACQUISITION AND RETENTION	41
<b>EDUCATION</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>48</b>
MIKSIRKARNIRQ (HAVING A STRONG FOUNDATION)	50
PIJITSIRNIQ (SERVING, RESPECTING AND HELPING OTHERS)	51
PILIMMAKSARNIQ (BECOMING SKILLED)	55
AVATITINIK KAMATTIARNIQ (BEING AWARE OF OUR ENVIRONMENT)	57
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>CHAPTER 4: DISCUSSION</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>CHAPTER 6: APPENDICES</b>	<b>70</b>
A. INUIT QAUJIMAJATUQANGIT PRINCIPLES	70
B. INTERVIEW GUIDE	70
C. INFORMATION LETTER & CONSENT FORM – ENGLISH	70
D. INFORMATION LETTER & CONSENT FORM – INUKTITUT	70
E. RECRUITMENT POSTER – ENGLISH & INUKTITUT	70
F. THEATRE PRODUCTIONS: <i>HUNTING &amp; QALUPALIIT</i>	70
<b>APPENDIX A: INUIT QAUJIMAJATUQANGIT BELIEFS AND PRINCIPLES*</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW GUIDE</b>	<b>73</b>
<b>APPENDIX C: LETTER OF INFORMATION AND CONSENT - ENGLISH</b>	<b>76</b>
<b>APPENDIX D: LETTER OF INFORMATION AND CONSENT - INUKTITUT</b>	<b>81</b>
<b>APPENDIX F: THEATRE PRODUCTIONS: <i>HUNTING &amp; QALUPALIIT</i></b>	<b>87</b>
<b>REFERENCES</b>	<b>89</b>

## LIST OF FIGURES

<b>FIGURE 1.</b>	The Inuit Story – The Power Curve	- Introduction
<b>FIGURE 2.</b>	Study Design	- Methods
<b>FIGURE 3.</b>	Inclusion / Exclusion Criteria	- Methods
<b>FIGURE 4A.</b>	Participant Profile – First Time Parents	- Methods
<b>FIGURE 4B.</b>	Participant Profile – Adoptive Parents	- Methods
<b>FIGURE 4C.</b>	Participant Profile – Parents’ Age Ranges	- Methods
<b>FIGURE 4D.</b>	Participant Profile – Parents’ Ethnicities	- Methods
<b>FIGURE 4E.</b>	Participant Profile – Parents’ Hometowns	- Methods
<b>FIGURE 5.</b>	Inuit Language Map	- Discussion

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

CBPR	Community-Based Participatory Research
Culture & Heritage	Department of Culture & Heritage
GN	Government of Nunavut
Health	Department of Health
IQ	Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit
ITK	Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami
NRI	Nunavut Research Institute
QHRC	Qaujigiartiit Health Research Centre
TCPS	Tri-Council Policy Statement

## **DECLARATION OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT**

All content presented in this document were written and completed by Aloka Wijesooriya. I acknowledge the contributions of Dr. Chelsea Gabel, Dr. Andrea Baumann, Dr. Gwen Healey Akearok, and Shuvinai Mike, who provided guidance on developing the research documents (i.e., letter of information and consent, interview guide, etc.), and guiding my writing process.

## DEDICATION

*I dedicate this dissertation to all the parents that are raising  
their Inuk child/ren to be proud of who they are.  
Stay strong and keep moving forward. You all inspire me!*

*I also dedicate this dissertation to my family, especially my parents.  
You raised a daughter that will forever remember your love.  
I am here because of you two – thank you!*

## **POSITIONING STATEMENT**

Before I present my research dissertation I would like to share my motivations for pursuing a project where different fields intersect: women & children's health and Indigenous people. I was born in Sri Lanka and I was raised in Canada's Arctic – Nunavut. Iqaluit, the capital city of Nunavut is the place where I call home. My parents raised me to respect everyone and my community taught me the importance of being open-minded. I grew up amongst Inuit community members who taught me the importance of education, whether it was skills-based or book-based; and culture, whether it was folklore oral storytelling or written stories. The person I am today is a reflection of my parents, where I grew up, and my past experiences.

I acknowledge that I am a non-Indigenous researcher conducting research within an Indigenous community. I spoke with community members who have intimate knowledge of working with the community. I received guidance from them throughout this research process. This research project pays homage to my hometown where families and parenting are evolving. I wanted to learn how parents, guardians, customary parents, and the community help raise an Inuk child. The goal of my research project is to share with my community, my territory, and the rest of the world the stories that parents/caregivers have shared about raising a child in a manner that captures Inuit culture.

This thesis is written in plain language format to allow a variety of readers to access this file (e.g., my community members, teachers, policy makers, and other international parents).

## **Stories From Parents: Raising Proud Inuk Children – “It Starts at Home”**

### **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

At present, Inuit live in four regions of Canada, collectively known as *Inuit Nunangat* (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, 2019).

“The term, “*Inuit Nunangat*,” is a Canadian Inuit term that includes land, water, and ice. Inuit consider the land, water, and ice, of our homeland to be integral to our culture and our way of life.”

The majority of Inuit live in northern communities located across Labrador, Québec, Nunavut, and Northwest Territories; and the vast majority of these communities are accessible only by air. It is important to recognize that Inuit, First Nations, and Métis have unique cultures, heritages, socio-economic, and geographic contexts (Smylie, 2000).

In the 2016 Canadian Census, 1,673,785 people reported Indigenous identity (4.9% of the total Canadian population), with 977,230 (58.4%) identifying themselves as First Nations, 587,545 (35.1%) identifying themselves as Métis, and 65,025 (3.9%) identifying themselves as Inuit (Statistics Canada, 2018). The Inuit population has increased by 29.1% from 2006 to 2016 (Statistics Canada, 2018). The Inuit are the youngest of the three groups, with an average age of 27.7 years, followed by First Nations people (30.6 years), and then Métis (34.7 years) (Statistics Canada, 2018). The two main factors that have contributed to the growing Indigenous population is first the natural growth, which includes



increased life expectancy and high fertility rates, and the second factor relates to changes in self-reported identification – more people are identifying as First Nations, Métis, or Inuit on the census (Statistics Canada, 2018).

The health and well-being of Inuit has been impacted by colonization (Smylie, 2000). Much has been written on the impact of colonization on First Nations, however, little has been written with respect to Inuit. Inuit suffered much of the same oppression encountered by First Nations (e.g., suppression of language and residential schools), although the time, impact, and mechanisms were different for Inuit (Smylie, 2000). It is necessary to recognize that colonization has had an impact on Inuit health and well-being, and thus affects the population's health needs, practices, and priorities (Smylie, 2000).

This research explored the supports and challenges that Inuit/non-Inuit parents/caregivers encounter in today's society when raising an Inuk child in 2018. The knowledge learned from these parents will help other parents, organizations, governmental bodies, and policymakers further support parents/caregivers as they raise their Inuk children. Learning from these parents allows us to gain first-hand knowledge about the particulars in raising an Inuk child. It is important to note that biological parents are not the only individuals being interviewed for this project. Any caregiver (i.e., an individual) who is helping raise an Inuk child had opportunities to share their experiences.

## **BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT**

### **Inuit History**

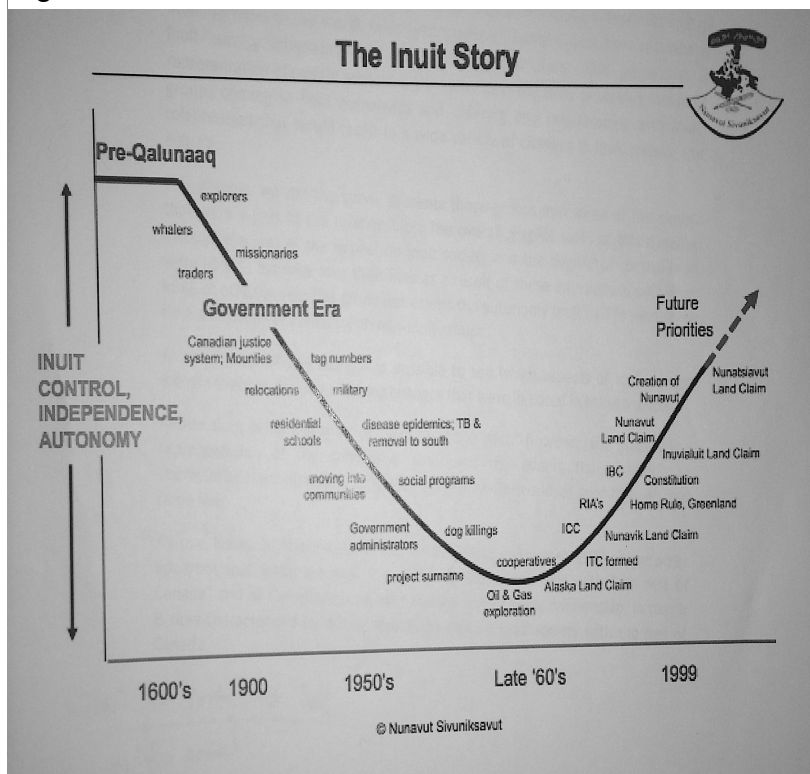
For hundreds of years, Inuit lived their lives in the Arctic without contact from the outside world. Over time, contact from the outside world entered the Inuit's lives. These forms of contact resulted in shifts within the Inuit. Historically Inuit lived throughout the circumpolar world: Russia, Alaska, Canada, and Greenland. In Russia, they are known as the Siberian Yupik and the Chukchi. They inhabit the northeastern part of Russia, the Chukchi Peninsula. In Alaska, they are known as Inupait and Yupik. In Greenland, they are known as the Kalaallit Inuit. In Canada, they are known as Inuit. The Inuit of Canada live all throughout the country. Most individuals that identify as Inuit reside in four distinct Inuit regions: the Inuvialuit Inuit (i.e., northern part of Northwest Territories), Nunavut Inuit (i.e., all of Nunavut), Nunavik Inuit (i.e., northern part of Quebec), and Nunatsiavut Inuit (i.e., part of Labrador). For the duration of this section, Inuit who reside in Nunavut will be discussed.

A diagram that depicts the events that occurred in the past and its connection to the level of autonomy that Inuit possessed during each period is showcased in Figure 1. This figure is an active diagram that continues to incorporate the events happening today. A group of young Inuit studying at the Nunavut Sivuniksavut program in Ottawa Ontario developed this diagram. Following the diagram, details about certain events will be explained in detail.

“Before contact” is a phrase that will be used throughout this section to conceptualize the way of life before non-Inuit entered the Inuit’s homeland. Each point on the curve is a period in Inuit history that affects aspects of Inuit culture. The curve looks at the outside world and all the events impacting Inuit through that lens (See Figure 1).

In the past, Inuit lived a nomadic, subsistence lifestyle. A subsistence lifestyle is a non-monetary economy that relies on natural resources (e.g., animals, plants, etc.) to provide for their basic needs. This form of lifestyle resulted in Inuit being nomadic and following migration patterns of both land and marine animals (e.g., caribou, whales, and seals). Even today these animals are a source of food

Figure 1



and clothing to Inuit.

The animals hunted and plants foraged by Inuit contain high nutritional values, such as low fat, high protein, high calcium, high iron, and high Vitamin A (Department of Health, Government of Nunavut, 2013).

Skilled seamstresses created clothing items using animal skins that helped individuals stay warm. In the past, the skins (i.e., caribou or sealskin) were used as the tarp for tents (i.e., tupiks). This way of life is no longer the dominant way of life as events in Canadian history have impacted this way of life.

### **Residential Schools**

“Colonialism is the guiding force that manipulated the historic, political, social, and economic contexts shaping Indigenous/state/non-Indigenous relations and account for the public erasure of political and economic marginalization, and racism today. These combined components shape the health of Indigenous peoples,” (Czyzewski, 2011). As a result, in order to maintain and establish Arctic sovereignty, children, and families were relocated from their homes on the land to settlements throughout Arctic Canada (Royal Commission on Aboriginal People, 1996). Thus, the knowledge and practices followed by Indigenous peoples were shifted to European practices (McGovern, 2000).

Assimilation legislation was passed and the *Indian Act*, and the residential school system became a by-product (Royal Commission on Aboriginal People, 1996). The policy enacted in 1876, shortly after the 1867 Canadian federation, provided the new Canadian government a chance to remove the ‘savage’ from the Indigenous people and making it illegal for First Nations and Inuit peoples to own property, vote, or attend higher educational institutions. The idea was forced assimilation. The Europeans did not welcome the First Nations’ and Inuit’s customs, values, laws, and lifestyle – instead they forced their own customs,

values, laws, and lifestyles upon the First Nations and Inuit. This mentality took centre stage with the development of the *Indian Act* (Royal Commission on Aboriginal People, 1996). This piece of policy is still in place today stems from the idea of colonization, assimilation, and Christianization.

The impacts of colonization, the *Indian Act* (Royal Commission on Aboriginal People, 1996), and the residential school systems are intergenerational. Children who were sent away to residential schools were forced to suppress their cultural expressions using language, dress, food, or beliefs (Bombay, 2009). This suppression resulted in the children being ashamed of their identity (Bombay, 2009). “Loss of culture and language, and internalized racism left many in both groups feeling uncomfortable and isolated in their own communities as well as in mainstream society,” (Bombay, 2009, p. 14). The survivor’s adverse childhood experiences (i.e., abuse (Milloy, 1999), neglect (Milloy, 1999), malnutrition (Mosby & Galloway, 2017), poor parenting, household dysfunction) impacted their ability to develop coping strategies, cognitive styles, and positive appraisals (Bombay, 2009, p. 16). Bombay notes that intergenerational transmission of trauma within families occurred to those who survived residential school, grandparents’ and/or parents’ attendance at residential schools negatively affected the quality of parenting their children received (2009, p. 16).

According to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC), the Commission defines reconciliation as an ongoing process of establishing and maintaining respectful relationships (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of

Canada, n.d.). Healing is not an immediate occurrence, but is rather a process that involves individuals and everyone impacted by the recent events in history. Ending the effects of intergenerational trauma within communities can only happen when the individual feels empowered and open to letting the wounds of the past slowly heal. Immersing oneself in their traditional culture can act as a protective factor for Indigenous people, (Bombay, 2014, p. 328) along with the importance of building a strong ethnic and cultural identity (Bombay, 2014, p. 327; Sinclair, 2007). Identity both absorbs and reflects culture (Hoare, 1991). Until then, the cycle of historical trauma will continue to occur and, in the meantime, many loved ones within families and communities will become impacted.

Inuit are still healing from past traumas (Tungasuvvignat Inuit, 2007), which are still recent living memories. The memories of forced relocation, the residential school system, and the 60's scoop, are still fresh in many Inuit's eyes, minds, and hearts (Tungasuvvignat Inuit, 2007). Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (2014) report on the *Social Determinants of Inuit Health* report provide insight towards the effects of residential school for the families and communities:

*“Residential school experiences created a rift between elders and youth, inhibiting the intergenerational exchange of traditional knowledge, cultural values, parenting skills and language that is crucial to healthy relationships and identity formation. Physical, sexual, and mental abuse of pupils were also not uncommon in residential schools. Cultural repression, assimilation, and abuse combined to make some Inuit feel ashamed of their identities, alienated, and disconnected from their families (Wexler, 2006; Kirmayer et al., 2003; Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1995). Ultimately, the legacy of the residential school system is often cited as a source of ‘community trauma’ that continues to affect the health and*

*mental well-being of Inuit today. An additional impact can be seen in the loss of Inuit language and the increasing use of English in the home. For example, recent data from the 2007 - 2008 Nunavut Child Health Survey highlight the trends in language use suggesting that of those children surveyed, more than one-half (54%) were spoken to by adults in Inuktitut, whereas 36% were spoken to in English, and 10% were spoken to in both English and Inuktitut,” (Egeland, 2010).*

From 1867 to 1923 the first federally mandated residential schools opened. From 1924 – 1960, the Canadian government relocates Inuit families from Inukjuak, Quebec to present-day Pond Inlet, Grise Fiord, and Resolute Bay. From 1940s to 1980s, e-disc numbers were given to Inuit living in Canada in order to identify individuals for government administration purposes. From 1950s to 1960s, the coast guard ship C.D. Howe travelled from Québec to eastern and southeastern parts of Nunavut; they sent active tuberculosis (TB) patients down to provincial TB sanatoriums for treatment, lasting two years or more. From 1950s to 1970s, dogs (a vital element for life in the arctic) were killed by the government to limit Inuit from leaving the settlements – resulting in the pursuit of traditional livelihoods difficult. From 1961 – 1994, within a decade an estimated 20,000 Indigenous children are taken from their families, and fostered or adopted out to primarily white middle-class families – known colloquially as the 60’s scoop. From 1995 – onward, Gordon Residential School, the last federally run facility, closes in Saskatchewan (Legacy of Hope Foundation, n.d.). Each event not only impacted Inuit directly, but also affected future generations and community members.

### ***Inunnguiniq***

*Inunnguiniq*, the journey for a, “human being to become a capable individual,” (Tagalik, Joyce, Healey, & Zeigler, 2017), is a way of being that Inuit believe in and foster. “Some children are made into capable human beings, with proper direction, and others are not. A child who is made into a capable human being will not hurt in their heart when they face life’s hardships. A child who is not made into a capable human being will not be able to face hardships well,” (Tagalik, Joyce, Healey, & Zeigler, 2017, p. 7). Becoming a capable human being is about gaining the skills and knowledge to fully enter into society and live a good life. “A good life is considered one where you have sufficient proper attitude and ability to be able to contribute to working for the common good – helping others and making improvements for those to come,” (Tagalik, 2009). Today, Inuit who are healing from past traumas (O’Donnell & Wallace, 2015), which are still recent memories, are revitalizing *inunnguiniq*. The memories of forced relocation, residential schools, Inuit tuberculosis sanatoriums, and sled dog slaughter are still recent memories to Inuit living in Canada. Each event not only impacted Inuit directly, but also affected subsequent generations and Inuit communities. Reconciliation is the term being used throughout Canada to move forward from the past (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, n.d.), but reconciliation cannot happen until each individual has healed.

Supporting and promoting *inunnguiniq* is a method to share and help others heal. *Inunnguiniq*’s philosophy does not end once you turn the legal age of 18, as



it does in Western society, it continues until your last breath. In addition, when an individual passes away, they are not forgotten – a namesake may be given to a child of the next generation so that they can carry on the spirit of that individual. Therefore, *inunnguiniq* is a process that takes the form of a continuous loop. It was suppressed during the recent historical events in Canadian history, but Inuit are resilient (Dahl, 2000; Wachowich, Awa, Katsak, & Katsak, 1999). Colonization suppressed Inuit customs, traditions, and spirituality, but they were not lost entirely and community members are working to revitalize these practices for present and future generations to experience and embrace.

For *inunnguiniq*, Elders have identified 6 foundational principles of childrearing: 1) Developing habits (practices) for living a good life (i.e., a healthy lifestyle); 2) Showing compassion, serving others and building relationships; 3) Rising above hardship by allows looking for solutions; 4) Recognizing the uniqueness of each individual; 5) Being heart-centred (i.e., building strong moral characters); and 6) Always taking steps to make improvements (QHRC, 2010). From the *inunnguiniq* perspective, these principles are the building blocks to becoming a capable human being and should be embedded throughout a person's life. Unlike pediatric developmental milestones, which have age-related benchmarks, such as for walking or speaking, the *inunnguiniq* principles are competency-based and the benchmarks are achieved when the child is ready (Tagalik, 2009). For example, in 2004 an Elder – Atuat Akittirq spoke about her experiences growing up (QHRC, 2010) She said:

*Parents and Elders used to involve children in all the daily activities. That way of teaching taught us how to survive and made us become very skilled. When we talk about how we were taught and how we would like to see our children taught, it is difficult to see in today's setting because the teaching relied on the relationships we had with the adults who loved and cared for us. The way we were taught was done naturally working together in daily routines and as children we were wanting to know how to do these things because it gave us time to be with our parents and made us feel capable to be able to contribute (p. 177).*

This statement articulates Inuit perspectives on caregiver-child engagement in childrearing/parenting. The connections children have with their caregivers, their parents, or Elders and the skills they develop from an early age include the technical and emotional abilities to be resourceful and solution-seeking. It is the belief of the Elders that educating and empowering caregivers to practice *Inunnguiniq* can foster strong childrearing/parenting practices. Childrearing is multi-faceted and *Inunnguiniq* encompasses a unique worldview on many of those facets.

Inuit are moving forward in a society that is rapidly changing. The society they live in today is not the same as the one their ancestors inhabited. This is due to structural barriers, economic, and demographic changes and the introduction of new technologies. Yet, the skills and knowledge they possessed are being passed down. In the past, the necessity to hide this knowledge due to the shaming of their culture by the *Qallunaat* (i.e., European-Canadian) resulted in a generational gap between skilled Inuit. That said, today the Elders who have been through the healing process are teaching youth about their culture, language, and the skills they need to become capable human beings.

### ***Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Principles***

Healthy families, children, and communities is the vision for Nunavut's residents, Nunavummiut. Many organizations within the territory of Nunavut, the last of the three territories created in Canada, share this vision. The *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit* (IQ) beliefs and principles guide the Inuit culture. IQ translated into English is "Inuit knowledge", but interpreted as "what Inuit have always known to be true." There are hundreds of principles, but eight principles are familiar amongst the people in Nunavut due to the Government of Nunavut highlighting them in the territory's promotional material (See Appendix A). This research project will draw on those eight principles, in particular *pijitsirniq* (i.e., serving/providing for family and community), *tunnganarniq* (i.e., fostering good spirit by being open), *inuuqatigiitsiarniq* (i.e., living with other people side by side), *piliriqatigiinniqlikajuqtiinni* (i.e., doing things for common cause), and *qanuqtuurniq* (i.e., being innovative and resourceful) during the entire research process. *Pijitsirniq* was addressed through the objectives of the research project – a community-based project that focused on childrearing/parenting amongst Inuit families. In order to foster *inuuqatigiitsiarniq* throughout the process; consultations were made with community members to establish a relationship prior to commencing as well as during the research project. The fundamental principle of *inuuqatigiitsiarniq* is included in this study by acknowledging that caregivers are anyone that impacts a child's journey "to become a capable human being". The overall objective of the research project is to improve the

connection amongst Inuit families to their traditional childrearing practices while still acknowledging the influence modern society has on children. This goal encompasses the *piliriqatigiinniq* principles.

## **Inuit Identity Development**

### **Tuq&urausiit**

Community members use the term, “*Tuq&urausiit*”, and is a concept used by Inuit to address their relatives, acknowledging the relationships and kinships that bind them (Owlijoot and Flaherty, 2013, p. 7). Naming customs were practiced generations ago. Elders were the parents’ advisors when it came to deciding what names to give unborn children. Names were passed on to the unborn child, known as namesakes. The names were of loved ones who passed away a year or more ago, currently living, or non-family members who had an impact on the family and permitted them to use that name. The individuals who received those names were able to learn from their namesakes and learn about what they wished for that infant. This allowed the child to grow into the person that the namesake wished for them.

In 2012, Pelagie Owlijoot and Louise Flaherty interviewed 4 elders from the Kivalliq region, the southernmost region of Nunavut, about *tuq&urausiit*. The discussions amongst Owlijoot and Flaherty with the Elders provided insight into how naming customs were practiced before contact and after contact. It is noted, “Inuit use *tuq&urausiit* to show respect and foster closeness within our families

(Owlijoot and Flaherty, 2013, p. 7).” Moreover, “*tuq&urausiit* also helps promote healthier communities, resulting in less crime and violence,” (Owlijoot and Flaherty, 2013, p. 7). “Naming keeps our family histories alive and encourages us to work together and rely on each other through hardship,” (Owlijoot and Flaherty, 2013, p. 7).

Today, *tuq&urausiit* is not predominant amongst young Inuit. Naming customs are not followed as often as before. An Elder in an interview with Owlijoot and Flaherty spoke about the difference when she was growing up to today, as noted by Matilda Sulurayok in July 2012:

*“Q: In those days, were naming and tuq&urarniq more common than they are today?”*

*A: Yes, we did use tuq&urausiit a lot more than we are using them today. Even I was using it all the time to all my relatives in the past. Once we found out who we were related to, we were told, ‘You are related to him or her, so he or she is your ‘aunt’ or ‘uncle’.’ Today, elders included, it does not seem to matter anymore, since we lost too much already. Most young people are speaking English too much.” (Owlijoot & Flaherty, 2013, p. 22)*

Although the practice is not as common now as it was before, elders are encouraging young Inuit to learn and continue to foster these practices for next generations to come, as noted by Matilda Sulurayok in July 2012:

*“Q: What about naming a child – would this child carry the tuq&urausiq of his or her namesake?”*

*A: Yes, children used to carry the tuq&urausiit of their namesakes in the past. Today we are not using tuq&urausiit as much as we did, including me. I tell my children, ‘You will have to pass on what I taught you, so remember the things I tell you.’ (Owlijoot & Flaherty, 2013, p. 18)*

All of these helped build a sense of connection to that namesake and the family as a whole.

## **Traditional Inuit Tattooing**

Traditional Inuit tattooing is a rite of passage for women after puberty. One Inuk woman, Alisa Hivaruq Praamsma, mentioned that, “When [she] moved north in the 1990s, [she] would occasionally hear whispers about the generations before who had the markings – a proud rite of passage,” (Johnston, 2017, p. 14). Another Inuk woman, Catherine Niptanatiak, reiterated this point, “They [the traditional tattoos] are used as a rite of passage and a source of pride,” (Johnston, 2017, p. 20). These markings are an expression of the Inuk woman and all that she is.

Traditional Inuit tattooing is a practice that has not been practiced in Nunavut since the 1900s. The last inked Inuk woman passed away in 2005. Shortly thereafter an Inuk woman, Angela Hovak Johnston, began the journey to revitalize Inuit tattooing back into the Inuit culture. In 2016, Johnston visited the community of Kugluktuk, Nunavut and marked women with symbols full of cultural and personal meanings. The women she spoke with shared their stories about the past, present, and their future thoughts and experiences with tattooing.

One particular woman, April Hakpitok Pigalak, that Johnston’s colleague Denis Nowoselski tattooed shared an experience as a child with an Elder about the change of practice from the past (Johnston, 2017, p. 18):

*“I remember a time when I was a kid: we had an Elder visit, telling stories. I don’t quite remember the exact event or location, but the thing I will never forget was when someone asked the Elder a question about a tradition, and she answered back in Inuinnaqtun. The translator said that it was something the Elder didn’t want translated or feel comfortable speaking about. The translator later said that it was something that Inuit*

*were told to no longer practice. I don't remember much detail about the topic, but I remember the look on her face. The moment of silence after she refused to speak of it. The feeling I felt. I was so young, but I had heard about times like this through my elderly adoptive parents' recollection of school and Western religion and not being able to speak their language or practice any of their traditions, and I felt deep pain for them. To not be able to love who you are, to not carry pride in who you are and your culture, to not enjoy things once loved, traditions that once brought joy to families and friends."*

This story of the Elder who could not share a part of her culture with a young child because people told her when she was young that practicing that practice was not allowed. Losing a part of your identity occurred to Inuit women who were no longer allowed to practice tattooing. A gap in generations occurred, where women were not tattooed until mid-2000 in Nunavut.

Today, in the communities you see it wherever you go. The women, young and old, proudly show their beautiful tattoos to the world. They embrace their Inuk identity with more pride. One Inuk woman, Theresa Papak Adamache, poignantly summed up this experience "I've always embraced my culture through song and dance, though not as often as I would like to. Having the tattoos is my permanent symbol of who I am, where I come from, and where my heart will always be: with our people. (Johnston, 2017, p. 60)" Tattooing is a part of the Inuit culture. It is another way that we are connected as one.

Tattooing in both the past and today is a way to showcase a woman's beauty. As noted by Inuk woman, Doreen Ayalikyoak Ewyagotailak, "The elders said traditional tattoos were used to look nice, as they didn't have makeup back in their day. One Elder told me that tattoos aren't what people think they are about,

such as kids, family, and so on. Women were tattooed for beauty. When I asked the elders if I could have my own meaning for my tattoos, they said it wouldn't matter. My tattoos symbolize my kids," (Johnston, 2017, p. 30). The meaning behind the tattoos are shaping the deep personal connection the woman has to the tattoo and their connection to their culture. Similar to Evyagotailak's story, women symbolized Js or Vs on their face to represent family members and loved ones. While for others it is a form of beauty: "My tattoo symbols don't have meanings. I know other women, and also women in other communities, have their own different meanings for their tattoos; my tattoos are my makeup, for beauty," (By Nancy Nanegoak Kadlun, In Johnston, 2017, p. 52). Finally, one Inuk woman sums the essence of tattooing as we move forward (By Wynter Kuliktana Blais, In Johnston, 2017, p. 60):

*"As a working Inuk mother, I understand that my stresses and my uncertainties continue to revolve around this contemporary society. I understand that the women before me also had complex stresses and uncertainties of their own. I understand that regardless of the challenges, these women before me persevered and always maintained beauty within themselves. Understanding our similarities and our differences, I choose to honour ancestors, I choose to honour myself, and I choose to honour my children."*

In the following chapters, I will present the project's study design (i.e., **Methods** chapter), its themes (i.e., **Findings** chapter), a discussion of the findings compared to current literature and initiatives (i.e., **Discussion** chapter), followed by some recommendations (i.e., **Conclusion**), and material used to complete this project (i.e., **Appendices A-E**). The study design focused on using a community participatory-based research approach and allowed grounded

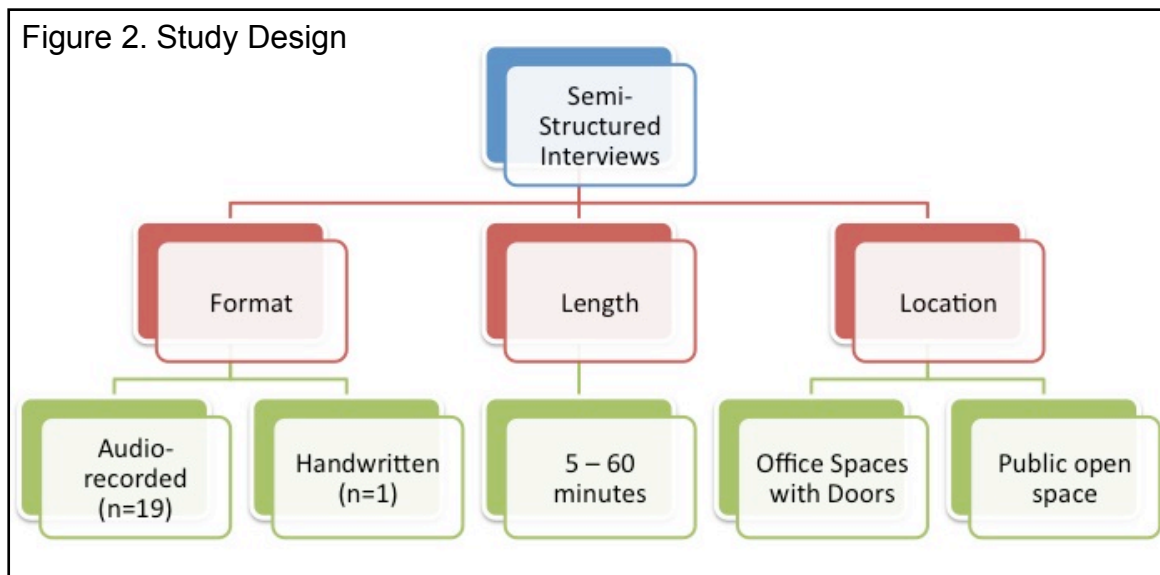


theory to conceptualize the findings. The themes gathered from the study were language (i.e., acquisition and retention), education (i.e., informal and formal systems), and identity development. In the discussion chapter I present initiatives that are being done at various levels (i.e., locally, nationally, or internationally) to support the themes expressed by the parents. Finally, this dissertation concludes with some concrete policy and program recommendations that decision makers and stakeholders can consider to support parents raising an Inuk child.

## CHAPTER 2: METHODS

### STUDY DESIGN

Hearing the parents' stories about raising an Inuk child occurred in a Qikiqtani community, Iqaluit, within Nunavut Canada between November to December



2018. The study design is visualized in Figure 2. This dissertation discusses the research conducted using a community-based participatory research approach and grounded theory as the foundations for this research design. Community members who had past experience working with the community and conducting research with the community provided advice on how to structure

Figure 3. Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria

#### Inclusion Criteria

- Caregivers (Inuit/non-Inuit)
  - Mothers
  - Fathers
  - Guardians/Customary adoptive parents
  - Grandparents
- Over age of 14 years

#### Exclusion Criteria

- Under 14 years
- No experience supporting the growth of an Inuk child

and phrase the questions in a culturally-appropriate and respectful manner. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants (N=20) who met the inclusion/exclusion criteria (See Figure 3). The transcripts were transcribed and analyzed using NVivo 12 (See Data Analysis section). Following an iterative process, interviews were conducted until data saturation was achieved and no further themes could be analyzed. The results of the qualitative interviews led to themes being analyzed and are presented in the **Findings** chapter.

The literature that supported the methods section was developed by focusing on a search strategy that targeted certain sociology, social science, health, medicine, and general databases by using specific keywords: Medline, CINAHL, PubMed, Scopus, ScienceDirect, Web of Science, Proquest Social Science, and Google Scholar. The keywords used to develop the methodological section included, but not limited to: qualitative study designs; grounded theory; iterative process; semi-structured interviews; community-based participatory research approach; arts-based research; Theatre of the Oppressed; Indigenous people; Inuit; Canada's history; oral storytelling; and childrearing.

## **INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE**

First, acknowledging the importance of Indigenous knowledge and the knowledge systems that were passed down from generation to generation for centuries is a body of knowledge that should not be unacknowledged. This understanding supported the progression of this research project. Knowledge systems are defined within the context of the United Nations Educational,

Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Both definitions allude to the importance cultures and societies place on the understandings, skills, and philosophies that form the local-level decision making process.

*“UNESCO, local and Indigenous knowledge refers to the understandings, skills and philosophies developed by societies with long histories of interaction with their natural surroundings. For rural and [I]ndigenous peoples, local knowledge informs decision-making about fundamental aspects of day-to-day life. This knowledge is integral to a cultural complex that also encompasses language, systems of classification, resource use practices, social interactions, ritual and spirituality. These unique ways of knowing are important facets of the world’s cultural diversity, and provide a foundation for locally-appropriate sustainable development.” (UNESCO, 2017)*

*“IPCC, The term ‘indigenous knowledge’ is used to describe the knowledge systems developed by a community as opposed to the scientific knowledge that is generally referred to as ‘modern’ knowledge. Indigenous knowledge is the basis for local-level decision-making in many rural communities. It has value not only for the culture in which it evolves, but also for scientists and planners striving to improve conditions in rural localities.” (IPCC, 2007)*

With this knowledge, Indigenous people in Canada endured, survived, and are working towards reconciling with their past.

## **COMMUNITY-BASED PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH**

Community-based participatory research (CBPR) is used to not only foster good spirit by being open amongst all members of the research team but also to remove the distinction of who is doing the studying and who is being studied (Minkler & Wallerstein, 2003). CBPR is a way to approach research and allows the community be seen as a unique identity and builds on the strengths and

resources of the community, and promotes a co-learning and empowering process that attends to social inequalities (Israel, Schulz, Parker, & Becker, 2001).

The community involvement began at the initial stages of this research study. Qaujigiartiit Health Research Centre (QHRC) was contacted to determine whether any research opportunities were present in the community. Inuit women's health was the target area during the initial discussions with the community advisor. The student-researcher identified the resource, *Inunnguiniq Parenting Program*, for the study, which led the community advisor to guide the student-researcher into developing the research objectives. This resource initiated the development of the research question. The research questions guiding this project focused primarily on Inuit's knowledge of parenting practices from mothers, fathers, grandparents, or caregivers in the community.

CBPR promotes the sharing, ownership, and use of the findings (Minkler, 2004). Therefore, a big consideration made for this project was ensuring the findings from the study were given back to the larger community. Community youth developed two scripts using the findings from the parents and then performed those scripts to a live-audience. The audience mainly consisted of elders and extended family. Using CBPR ensured the focus of the Inuit's vibrant culture on oral storytelling as the mode to pass knowledge between generations. Respecting this practice, storytelling was the viable vehicle for communication. Therefore, addressing the gap between delivery methods by using storytelling in

a dramatic manner supported learning to not only the target audience, but also for anyone who was supporting a child's growth.

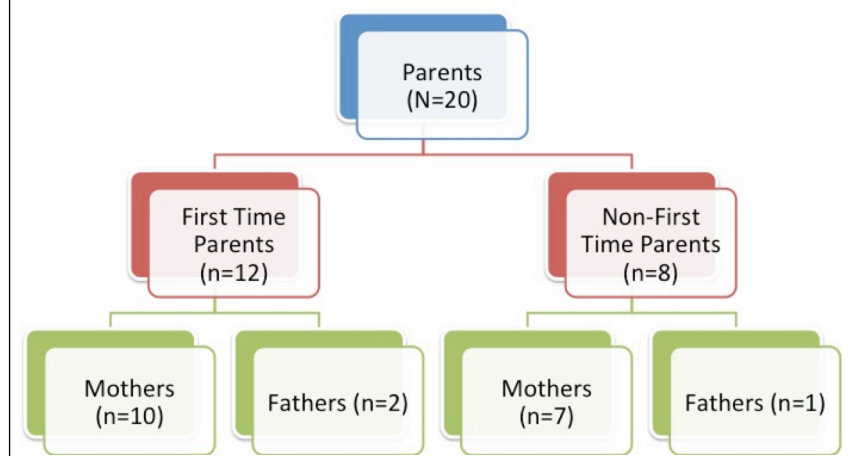
## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK – GROUNDED THEORY

Grounded theory was used in collaboration with community-based participatory research approach. “Stated simply, grounded theory methods consist of systematic, yet flexible guidelines for collecting and analyzing qualitative data to construct theories 'grounded' in the data themselves,” (Charmaz, 2006, p.2). The data drives the theory created. “Grounded theories [are] products of emergent processes that occur through interaction. Researchers construct their respective products from the fabric of the interactions, both witnessed and lived,” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 178). The theory developed from the data will allow readers to understand the broadness and relevance of the research question.

### SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

The project also draws on semi-structured interviews which

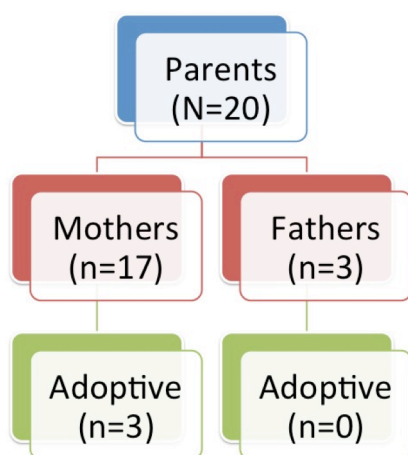
Figure 4a. Participant Profile



follows the grounded theory methods of Kathy Charmaz (2006). The theory

created from this research project is dictated by the research data (See **Findings** chapter for the theory). During each interview the interviewees shared their experiences, concerns, or tribulations surrounding parenting. The interviewees were parents. Within *inunnguiniq* everyone is a caregiver since each individual contributes something (i.e., technical, academic, emotional, spiritual skills, etc.) to the child's growth. In this study sample the potential caregivers included first-time parents (n=12), single parents (n=2), adoptive parents (n=3), parents of different age ranges – 19-30 (n=10); 31-50 (n=8); and 51+ (n=2), and Inuit parents (n=19). See Figure 4a – First-Time Parents, Figure 4b – Adoptive Parents, Figure 4c – Parents' Age Ranges, Figure 4d – Parents' Ethnicities, and Figure 4e – Parent's Hometown respectively. Recruitment of the participants occurred using a snowballing technique. After receiving permission from the establishment's contacts, research posters were placed in a public health centre, local post office, and daycare centres.

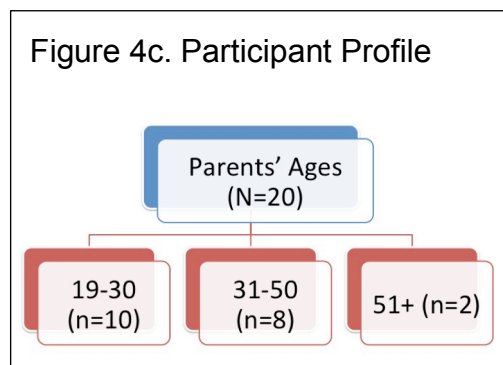
Figure 4b. Participant Profile



## KNOWLEDGE DISSEMINATION

When it comes to communication of knowledge, a core challenge is the effectiveness of its delivery. Many intervention methods are being used to encourage childrearing in Nunavut. Facilitated workshops with an Elder

present, workbooks, storybooks, and trained instructors and facilitators sharing their insight all contribute to communicating about childrearing. Until the introduction of a writing system by the Moravian missionaries, focus on Inuit culture was dependent on oral storytelling as the mode to pass knowledge down from generation to generation. This way of knowledge transmission remains vibrant in Inuit communities. Storytelling remains an important vehicle for



communication.

Performance arts are also a vibrant part of Inuit culture. Literature suggests that performing arts are important for engaging learners in a dynamic manner (Parson & Boydell, 2012), contribute to

improved language and communication skills (Kontos & Naglie, 2007), and permit participants to share information about health and wellness in a way that reduces stress or discomfort with a particular topic material (Fraser & al Sayah, 2011). The audience viewing the drama/performance also benefit from the opportunity to share messages and even interact (Rossiter, et al., 2008).

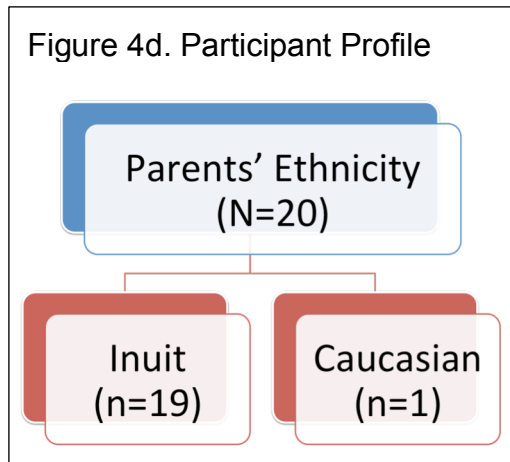
## DATA COLLECTION

In pursuant of the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami and Nunavut Research Institute Guide for researchers, this CBPR approach strived to avoid the common misconceptions that communities have about research (ITK & NRI, 2007). The level of community involvement were maintained and respected Article 9.1, 9.2,



and 9.4 of Chapter's 9's Tri-Council Policy Statement (Panel of Research Ethics, nd). As stated by Dr. Linda Tuhiwai Smith, the need to decolonize research methods is essential when working alongside Indigenous communities (Smith, 1999a). Understanding the Indigenous research agenda is important in order to establish meaningful partnerships between researchers spending time in Indigenous communities. The project focused on sharing the findings with the community through an arts-based drama. The specific aspects of the Indigenous research agenda processes focused within this project were decolonization, mobilization, and transformation (Smith, 1999a, p. 115). Throughout the research process steps were taken by the student-researcher to bracket Western-based ideologies that did not promote the voices being heard within the stories of the parents. Moreover, the "insider/outsider research" mentality was considered and placed at the forefront of the researcher's mindset during the study (Smith, 1999b, p. 137-140).

Other key concepts that were respected within this research project involved respecting local data ownership (See Methods Section, Consent heading), avoiding a delayed reporting time of data collected to community members (See Methods Section, Follow-up heading), and respectfully adding the expertise and knowledge from the participants in its appropriate context within the research study (p. 3-4) (ITK & NRI, 2007). Ethics approval was obtained from both NRI (#01 030 18N-M) and McMaster Research Ethics Board (#2018-144).



The themes collected through the semi-structured interviews were utilized by local Inuit actors to aid their creation of an Inuktitut script. The script was produced and showcased to community members once the study's data collection period was complete. Participants were made aware of

this plan before commencing the interviews. A confidential electronic invitation was sent to the participants.

All participant quotes were anonymized to their relationship to their children (e.g., mother/father, single parent, first-time parent, and/or adoptive parent). Participant quotes used in academic publications or dissemination materials will be carefully chosen to ensure that the individual could not be indirectly identified based on the quote's content. Quotes will not be directly linked to participants in any way. Data released in publications or presentation materials will be of generalized findings, highlighting relevant examples, if necessary.

## Consent

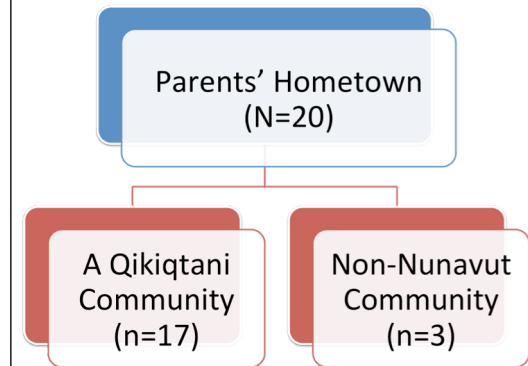
Prior to beginning the student-researcher provided both an oral explanation of the study, how the data will be used for developing a theatrical script, and their rights as a voluntary participant. Once the oral explanation was provided, the student-researcher asked the participants if they wished to receive a consent form in either Inuktitut or English. The participants read the document at their

own pace. Once the form was signed, the student-researcher began the recorded semi-structured interviews.

### Follow-up

No direct follow-up occurred for this project with the participants. However, the themes that surfaced from the data resulted in two theatrical scripts being created by local youth Inuit actors. The parents who participated in this research

Figure 4e. Participant Profile



were invited to these performances. During an 8-week production process, the youth brainstormed the most important themes (based on the findings) to share with the community. Two scripts were written and translated into Inuktitut by the youth – *Hunting* and *Qalupaliit*. These actors performed the scripts to Elders and other community members. Although, this was not part of the research project's scope, the student-researcher used the theatrical performance as a method to creatively share this study's findings to the community.

### DATA ANALYSIS

The student-researcher used NVivo 12, a qualitative data analysis computer software package produced by an Australian company – QSR International, to analyze 18 semi-structured interview audio files of 20 participants. The transcribing process was iterative in nature. As the student-researcher

transcribed the interviews (text data) the student-researcher could see whether more data was needed to reach data saturation.

After reaching data saturation, the remaining interviews were transcribed. “Nodes,” the technical term used in NVivo 12 to represent codes, were assigned to the text data. Categories were identified (open coding) based on the interview questions. The categories consisted of personal childhood experiences, supports, challenges, and the values/life lessons they want to teach their child/ren. Following open coding, the parent nodes were coded into child nodes (axial coding). The child nodes that were identified came from the text data within the parent nodes. These child nodes consisted of themes within the categories. Once axial coding was completed, select quotes that expressed the overall themes of all the other participants were used to formulate a theory about the data (selective coding). The theory is presented in the **Findings** chapter.

This original list of recurring concepts and themes was narrowed through (a) eliminating less prevalent or less salient themes, and (b) combining closely related themes until the number of themes had been narrowed to a manageable number (less than 20). The interviews were then revisited to make certain that sufficient data were available to support each theme. Following this step, it became apparent that some themes had been overstated (and were cut from the list) while other themes had substantial support across interviews. Next, in the findings section, the top 3 themes are presented, first relating to language, second relating to education, and third relating to identity development.

## **RIGOUR AND REFLEXIVITY**

The student-researcher followed a reflexive process. After each interview, the student-researcher noted down within a personal journal the thoughts about the participant, the content within the interview, and the current state the student-researcher was in throughout the interview. Common ideas that were raised from the journal involved getting to the interview location on time, children being present during the interview, someone opening the door and interrupting the interview, the need to clarify the interview questions, the student-researcher talking too much and not letting the interviewee speak, excessive use of “and”, “so”, “like”, “amazing” and other words throughout the interviews.

As the student-researcher transcribed the interviews into text data, the student-researcher noticed the quality of the transcripts from the first participant to the last participant. The student-researcher became comfortable with the interview guide and became flexible with how the interview progressed. The parents guided the conversations. At the beginning, interview 1, the student-researcher strictly followed the interview guide and did not allow the parent to elaborate their responses. Following that first interview, the student-researcher began to find their interviewing voice and the confidence to dive deeper into the stories the parents were sharing with the student-researcher occurred.

## **LIMITATIONS**

The research is limited that the findings are based on data from parents who are working (n=13) or students (n=7), where the sample population is small

(N=20), and where the length of time for the data collection was short (2 months). The perspectives from parents who were adoptive (n=3) and one of which was Caucasian (n=1) may have impacted the analysis. However, the parents met the inclusion criteria and shared similar experiences as the other parents interviewed.

The parents were mothers (n=17). I recognize that the research and analysis would have been more balanced if I had more fathers' perspectives. However, given the constraints mentioned above, this was not feasible. A further limitation is that the sample of parents was mainly between the ages of 19 to 50 (n=18), therefore, the perspectives of adolescent (14-19 years old) parents and grandparents (50+ years old) are not represented.

## **SUMMARY**

Overall, the research design required the support from various community members who had up-to-date working knowledge about the study population. The interviews were conducted in a respectful manner where consent, privacy, and confidentiality were maintained. Throughout the process, I was aware of my emotions and assumptions, as well as any biases I had towards the data being collected. This occurred through journaling the reactions post-interview.

### **CHAPTER 3: FINDINGS**

The findings from the interviews reveal that raising an Inuk child in today's society starts at home. Being proud of being Inuk stems strongly from knowing your language, receiving a balanced education (both informal and formal systems), and knowing and understanding your identity. The community further supports the growth of the child by providing opportunities to obtain these teachings. In the following pages, I will explore these three prominent themes alongside select quotes to illustrate the sentiments behind those messages.

In Iqaluit Nunavut, during the months of November and December 2018, I spoke with 20 parents raising their Inuit children. Their stories and suggestions were shared with the student-researcher during five to 60-minute-long conversations. Only one interview lasted five minutes long. The others exceeded that amount and neared the 60-minutes duration. During the shorter interviews, less than 15 minutes (n=4), parents shared their experiences using high-level examples to answer all the questions with a few stories included. The longer interview, between 15 to 29 minutes (n=5) and 30 to 60 minutes (n=11) focused on the parents going in-depth and sharing story after story for each question asked.

The parents ranged from those aged 19-30 (n=10), 31-50 (n=8), and 51+ (n=2). Parents were either first-time parents (n=12) or non-first-time parents (n=8). From the first-time parents, ten (10) were mothers and two (2) were fathers. From the non-first-time parents, seven (7) were mothers and one (1) was a father. Amongst the 20 parents interviewed, three (3) were adoptive mothers.

The parents self-identified as either Inuit (n=19) or Caucasian (n=1). The one Caucasian parent, who met the inclusion criteria, was an adoptive mother raising her young Inuit children to learn about their Inuit identity & culture and become capable human beings. 18 parents mentioned they could speak Inuktitut. Majority of the parents grew up in a Qikiqtani community (n=17) or a non-Nunavut community (n=3).

Note: For this chapter I will use “I” when referring to myself, the “student-researcher”.

I learned a great deal from the parents that I interviewed for this project. From these discussions, three important themes emerged. These include:

- 1) language;
- 2) education; and
- 3) identity development.

Other sub-themes were identified during the iterative coding process. Within this chapter, I will share the narratives of the parents regarding only these three core themes. In the **subsequent discussion** chapter, I will explore in detail how their suggestions and recommendations may contribute to systemic and project-based initiatives within the territory.

Most parents in this study described how their past experiences helped them prepare to become parents. The experiences arrived from either babysitting their little siblings or cousins as well as reflecting on how they were raised by their parents. The positive and negative experiences about their own upbringing and



the way that today's society functions impacted them when raising their own children. These personal realizations that the parents observed impacted their vision for how to raise their children. In general, all the parents spoke about their wish to have their children become capable adults. A quote from one of the mothers interviewed expresses this wish.

*"I guess it is all about the real parents to teach their children the skills the[y] need to survive in the world."* – Mother, First-time parent

In the following pages, I present the core three (3) themes and the parents' unique perspectives on each theme.

## **LANGUAGE**

A recurring theme amongst a number of the parents focused on the importance of language and the need to teach their children Inuktitut. The importance of language was explained by most parents as essential in terms of its connection to identity and being Inuk. In the Qikiqtaaluk and Kivalliq regions of Nunavut Inuktitut is spoken, whereas in the Kitikmeot region it is Inuinnaqtun. All the parents I spoke to were from a community within the Qikiqtaaluk or Kivalliq region. Throughout this chapter, Inuktitut may be used to describe both Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun together. For the parents in this study they described how learning the language allowed them to learn certain aspects of their culture easily. These past experiences were things they wanted to teach their children. Although the importance of teaching Inuktitut to their children was emphasized by almost all of the parents they also expressed a few areas of concern.

## **Geographic Location and Language Proficiency**

Several parents within the study emphasized their observations about how language proficiency differentiates between communities within the territory. This observation led other parents to share how their personal upbringing is different to how they are raising their children. Many of the parents grew up in communities where Inuktitut was the primary language spoken at home and in the community. A few parents highlighted how although English was taught in the school, Inuktitut was also taught to the children too. However, when the parents spoke about what it is like now, they expressed the difference between language proficiency between the communities. The parents expressed how the population is growing and certain communities, such as Iqaluit have a diverse demographic resulting in Inuktitut not being spoken as often in the community. The following quotes are findings expressed by nearly all of the parents regarding Inuktitut language proficiency in the community. The parents highlighted how difficult it is to promote Inuktitut to their children while living in communities where Inuktitut is not used all the time. One parent shared her insights on the language being spoken in the community when she was a kid to now as a parent.

*“It’s not that much different than when I was a kid. There is a lot less Inuktitut being spoken, especially living in a bigger place instead of a smaller community. I don’t know. But we just adapt.” – Mother, First-time parent*

*“One of the...challenges we have at home is we try to teach her – we try to teach as much Inuktitut as we can. Or even the ways – it’s hard to – like with her she grew up like it was Inuktitut all the time. [“she” being significant other] That’s their first language. I was kindof the same. My*

*parents told me that I was only speaking Inuktitut until I was a few years old. Then English was introduced to me. Growing up here [in Iqaluit] with more of a variety of people from everywhere English being the main language in town it's challeng[ing] for us to keep both languages going strongly for her. I think that would be the main one.” – Father, First-time parent*

A few parents described the differences between communities and language proficiency. Again, by the vast majority the parents referred back to their childhood upbringing and shared how they noticed that certain communities today still have a stronger connection to their language than other communities. Several parents communicated how these communities are maintaining their language. The response they articulated was how language is made an important aspect of raising their children and growing up within the community. This observation made by many of the parents shed light onto how different communities have different language profiles, one father shared his insights on the different geographic locations.

*“Yes, Northern Baffin. Or northern parts of Nunavut is a lot stronger than – even southern ones like [this other Qikiqtani community]. It's just I think [sic] Iqaluit's the main place where English is the go to languages compared to any other community in Nunavut.” – Father, First-time parent*

As presented, the location where you reside impacts your language proficiency.

### **Language Acquisition and Retention**

Parents raising their Inuit children in today's society expressed the importance of having their children learn their language. In a territory where there are three official languages: Inuktitut, French, and English – parents observed that English

is becoming the default language. Many parents expressed concerns that learning and retaining Inuktitut is not as strong in today's generation of young Inuit children as in the past. The importance of learning Inuktitut connects the child to their culture and the lessons that can be learned. Most of the parents shared how their experiences with acquiring and retaining Inuktitut impacted them when raising their children. Their past experiences are driving their need, showcased in the quotes below, towards fostering language acquisition and retention amongst their children.

A grandfather shared the importance of how language connects us to our family.

*“...I kept my language. So right now because I got [sic] grandkids and a son and a daughter I make sure they can speak the language. And what I am trying to teach them is to care and provide love for each other in the family.”* – Father, Grandfather

A mother shared how knowing Inuktitut makes it easier to teach children Inuit values.

*“...Language barrier, would be the most because if your child doesn't understand Inuktitut speaking you can't really teach them Inuit values. Like maybe you can translate them what you are trying to say but they won't understand the Inuit values until they're able to speak it or understand. Maybe they can but you have to speak to them in English and that is not really the way you pass on your Inuit knowledge.”* – Mother

*“Keep their Inuktitut language strong at a young age. Like right from baby so they could keep their language and teach them about Inuit culture and values.”* – Mother

A number of parents however shared the reality that English is becoming the primary language that most individuals in the territory are utilizing. This

realization that the parents have made has caused them to find creative methods to teach their children their language. Many parents who have a proficiency in Inuktitut or their partners have taken it upon themselves to teach their children their language. These lessons are occurring at home. After learning about this from parents, they further elaborated their concerns by stating that although we speak to our children in Inuktitut at home it takes them a while to switch from English to Inuktitut once they come back from elementary school or daycare. A point highlighted by several of the parents focused on ensuring that in these public-learning spaces that Inuktitut speakers be present. Having such a person present, in the parents' eyes, would allow for their children to continue speaking the language.

*“...I just wish that Inuktitut would be the default of Inuktitut speaking people, just to promote it more. Just to hear that in public places would be helpful.”* – Mother, First-time Parent

### **Loss of Language**

Although many parents expressed the benefit of speaking Inuktitut at home and within the community, some parents did not have a strong proficiency in the language to teach their children. Therefore, they too are learning Inuktitut with their children. Several parents who are facing this situation expressed the importance of having support from peers, community, and organizations to encourage the language being spoken amongst social circles, in public spaces, and at the workplace. Many parents expressed how language proficiency differs based on generation. These observations made by the parents resulted in them

expressing certain concerns about how the language is slowly fading within communities that do not strongly support Inuktitut. Another observation made by the parents and the loss of Inuktitut in the community is the prevalence of English in the homes and the communities. Many parents spoke about English being the “default language” for everyone in the communities and at homes. The importance to speak Inuktitut, no matter the proficiency levels, was emphasized by several parents in this study. Below are several quotes illustrating these stories shared by the parents.

*“In my hometown, Inuktitut is very strong. Inuktitut here in Iqaluit I find it’s fading rapidly. People in my generation can speak it but not fluently.” – Mother, First-time parent*

*“Because everybody just constantly speaking in English. That is just the main thing now in Nunavut. It’s just English. It’s getting harder for our children and our generations, like my younger brothers. They can understand but they can’t speak the language it. They can understand it but they won’t speak it. Yeah.” – Father, First-time parent*

*“The younger generations, I have nieces and nephews who are Inuit they don’t, they don’t even understand. My daughter understands but she doesn’t really speak.” – Mother, First-time parent*

*“Language barrier. I find a lot of young women my age are able to speak Inuktitut but their children are just speaking English. They [the children] don’t understand Inuktitut anymore because the parents aren’t speaking Inuktitut enough at home. And lack of Inuktitut classes in the schools, Inuktitut teachers, Inuktitut programs....” - Mother*

Several parents discussed a reason why Inuktitut is not being spoken at home. The connection is to both the proficiency levels of the parents as well as the time used to practice the language. The importance of speaking the

language, no matter, the proficiency level was emphasized. Simply speaking the language allows the children to learn.

Another point highlighted by a few of the parents included how their significant other impacts the language learning. If the significant other does not speak Inuktitut then it is up to the parent themselves to teach Inuktitut to their child/ren. A few parents shared how they need to remind themselves to speak in Inuktitut at home in order to help their child gain the language. Below are a few quotes that illustrate the importance of speaking to their children in Inuktitut at home and how not doing so can impact language acquisition.

*“It’s the parents who choose to speak a lot of English more to their children and not teaching the language.”* – Mother, First-time parent

*“... He has got an English speaking father only. He is not getting again the environment he need[s] to maintain Inuktitut in his life. I myself don’t have that. We don’t have that quite often. It is a bit difficult. We tend to refer to English...”* – Mother, First-time parent, Adoptive parent, Single parent

*“And there is always that mind playing where my dad forced us to speak English at home so it’s always difficult to force myself to speak Inuktitut. That is a challenge for me.”* – Mother, First-time parent

*“So right now it seems like the children must learn English to go forward to move forward in life.”* – Father, Grandfather

There are multiple factors that contributed to the loss of Inuktitut amongst the children as described by the parents. These include: geographic location; parents/significant other’s proficiency levels; speaking at home; speaking in the community; past childhood experiences; speaking and learning the language; and support from peers and community members to learn or practice the language. Parents described these factors either individually or in combination.

One particular parent, a single first-time adoptive mother, shared her experiences by including all the factors described above and a few others to illustrate the struggles she faces. Although she expressed her challenges with learning and teaching the language to her child, she expressed her determination to learn the language. She explained that it is a part of who she is much like how, by a vast majority the parents described it.

*“No. It is so difficult cause we were taught [English] everyday. I find it challenging, cause I went outside and did outside training with my employment. Unless I was speaking to someone everyday I would be able to maintain it [Inuktitut] but its very difficult if you’re not. And of course, in society here if you are not in the culture or speak the language then you are sort of ousted almost. Like you’re a leper. Like you are not accepted. So normally they wouldn’t speak to you they would speak to you in whatever language. Because I look more white than Inuk they speak to me in English and not speak to me in Inuktitut. And then I sort of get chastised for not saying it properly. That was even more difficult not being able to learn and be, what is the word I am looking for? It’s like discouraged [me] from learning. Yeah. So it goes two-fold and you try to overcome those challenges. There are opportunities available. I try and jump on them as much as possible. I would rather not loose it.” – Mother, Adoptive parent, Single parent*

### **Supporting Language Acquisition and Retention**

A number of parents also expressed how to support language learning amongst their children at home, in the community, and by the government and other organizations.

#### ***At Home***

Many parents emphasized the simplicity and importance of supporting their children to acquire and retain Inuktitut. Although, they see there are external challenges present they are determined to teach their children – as illustrated in



the quotes below. The parents highlighted how teaching their child/ren starts at home. Speaking to their child/ren is the first way to introduce and help their child/ren learn the language. Key people that support language acquisition at home, as highlighted by the parents are significant others and family members. Significant others who also have a level of proficiency in Inuktitut support their child/ren to learn the language from both parents. Family members who visit/care for the child/ren was also an important person for the parents interviewed. The family members provide an opportunity for children to immerse themselves in the language and improve their own proficiency too. The more exposure the child has to Inuktitut the more chances the child has to question and learn their language. Below is a quote from a mother who eloquently describes the sentiments of almost all the parents who participated in this project.

*“It starts at home, it really does. I know everyone says that all the time but the parents actually have get involved in speaking Inuktitut at home because learning start at home. And if the parents are just speaking [English] and then the children will just speak English. If the parents are speaking more Inuktitut, even if the children don’t understand right away, but if you just continuously speak it to them they will question you, “what does that mean?” They will learn what it means. That process, they’ll teach their children without evening knowing. If you just speak Inuktitut at home, even if your child doesn’t understand it as first. IF you explain to them what you are saying and what the word means they will get it.” – Mother*

Generally the parents expressed the importance of their children being exposed to language while being around family too.

*“...And my extended [family], I always encourage them to speak in Inuktitut with her. And out in public if we go to the store or running errands, when they notice that I am only speaking Inuktitut with her, if they can they will go along with what I am doing. That is nice, but at the same time I*

*think Inuktitut is a lot less strong in Iqaluit than it is in my hometown. So like ever summer I spend at least a month there and completely immerse her, which I noticed it has helped especially this past summer just [because] she is developing her language so quickly now.” – Mother, First-time parent*

### ***In the Community***

Most of the parents in this study expressed how language could be promoted within the community and specific venues in the communities, such as schools, daycares, and other public spaces. The parents highlighted how others and themselves can support their children acquiring or maintaining the language. The parents expressed creative ideas about this objective. One parent expressed the importance of schools supporting language training for children by hiring more Inuktitut-speaking teachers and staff at schools and daycare centres. Another method that a few parents shared were speaking more Inuktitut in public spaces. A few parents noted how in social situations parents and children speak to each other in English as opposed to Inuktitut, even if they are Inuktitut-speaking individuals. The study highlighted how speaking the language no matter the location is important for the child to continue their learning experience beyond the home.

*“.... It is important to us that living in the north they receive Inuktitut language training at school as well as English. They learn traditional ways at school as well as your regular North American ways that we know. But having that continual contact of knowing where they are from biologically can only help them grow and prosper better. We encourage them to be the best they can be within, be the best they can be with the tools they have been given. To use every part of themselves to grow. Their identity. Their cultural background. Their language. I have 2 of my children are bilingual, speak French as well as English – fluently and a little bit of Inuktitut. I have one that can read in Inuktitut. It is sort of all varying*

*levels but we have exposed them to everything.” – Mother, Adoptive parent*

One parent expressed the ideas shared by many of the parents with this quote pertaining to speaking more Inuktitut within the community.

*“Everywhere I go if I see an Inuk person or if there is someone that speaks Inuktitut, then I speak Inuktitut to them. I kind of initiate that Inuktitut conversation even if they greet me in English or something. I will respond in Inuktitut, especially if my child is around. I speak to my child really obviously in Inuktitut wherever we go. I think it promotes. It helps people to, it pushes them to speak Inuktitut as well. But that is on a bigger level I think that would have to come from businesses themselves and the government departments themselves, but as for me and what I can do is initiate the Inuktitut conversations.” – Mother, First-time Parent*

A few parents shared similar thoughts about early-childhood facilities speaking to their children in Inuktitut as opposed to English.

*“They [referring to childcare workers] speak to my child in English as well and I know they can speak Inuktitut. I just wish that Inuktitut would be the default of Inuktitut speaking people, just to promote it more. Just to hear that in public places would be helpful.” – Mother, First-time Parent*

Overall language acquisition and retention can occur in many locations, which was illustrated in the above quotes. Supporting language retention at the system-based levels will be discussed in the next sub-section within this chapter.

### ***By the Government and Other Organizations***

Many parents spoke about the ways in which the government and other organizations can support language acquisition and retention of Inuktitut. One aspect many parents highlighted in the interviews focused on the Nunavut *Education Act* and the consultations that were being conducted in late 2018, during the time of the interviews. The parents highlighted how the amendments

that are being made should incorporate the importance of language into the student curriculum and parts of the act. Below is a quote that illustrates the feelings of the parents regarding the legislation amendments.

*“I know they are doing amendments to the Education Act and I know they are travelling to the communities for community consultations, which is a step in the right direction. And they are updating their curriculum and posting it online for people to access. I am in [a university program] so I have to look at the Nunavut curriculum a lot. So we are still based on Alberta curriculum a lot of time for a lot of the classes. But Nunavut is creating their own curriculum. I am hoping the Department of Education is doing their due diligence to have it at the up to the national level. But I think as a parent what I can do is advocate for my kid when she is in school and communicating with the teachers and support staff there. But I do know they’re going in the right direction.” – Mother, First-time Parent*

Parents stressed the importance of finding ways to support parents to teach their children Inuktitut through various organizations and select government agencies. These parents, much like the others, emphasized the importance to have Inuit that are providing the training to other Inuit. A suggestion made focused on looking at resources already available in Inuktitut.

*“I guess they could start off by listening to the local radio, CBC radio. There’s lots of Inuktitut speaking on that, especially first thing in the morning and lunch time and during the afternoon but they are in school. Maybe get some Inuktitut books to read to your children but not all parents know how to read and write Inuktitut as well. They can speak it but all can read or write it. I guess they can learn to read and write themselves. I don’t know, maybe there should be an actual Inuktitut program in place for the parents and not just for the children. Like when parents go to Arctic College [the community’s post-secondary institution] if they are taking nursing, NTEP [a bachelor of education program], office administration, there’s one slot for an Inuktitut class but maybe if there was an actual just learning how to speak and read Inuktitut I guess that would be interpreter translator program, but maybe just an actual 4-week course, 2-week course where Inuit parents could learn to read and write Inuktitut would be a solution.” – Mother*

## EDUCATION

Education can hold many different meanings to the reader. For participants in this study, their definition of education focused on formal schooling and related systems. All parents expressed the need for education to prepare their children to understand how to become capable adults and to connect with their Inuit identity. These parents highlighted the importance of receiving education that develops theoretical and practical knowledge and skills that would help their children eventually become capable human beings.

One parent captured the wishes of all the parents with these two quotes.

*“There has gotta be more. I think the government needs to change the education system so that the education system [is] good according to what Inuit want.”* – Father, Grandparent

*“More resources, whether it being teaching learning centres or creating booklets to have more authority more control at the community level rather than the European style of working out the education system. Yes, we can we have to balance them.”* – Father, Grandparent

Parents reported feeling that an understanding of the current education system and its connection to the parents and their parenting expectations needs to be understood. Many of them highlighted the importance for the education system to provide opportunities to learn based on the students’ strengths within the disciplines. Another important feeling expressed by the parents in this study revolved around incorporating Inuit values into the teachings, whether it is formal or informal instruction. The following quote provides insight into how the current education system is viewed by the parents.

*“Like our education system in Nunavut, especially in the communities is not on par with the rest of Canada, which is kind of concerning. I don’t want to have to move down south just for my daughter to get a good education. I want that Inuit values instilled in her. I don’t think I can raise her in the south and still have those Inuit values instilled in her. So that is kind of, I think in here in Iqaluit it is a bit easier cause we have so many options like just within the schools themselves. The different streams and levels they can take. It is not as limited. So there is education. I know they are getting better. There are a lot more options. At the high school, compared when I went that was not that long ago...”* – Mother, First-time parent

Parents overwhelmingly expressed their wishes for their child/ren to learn life skills in addition to the theoretical textbook-based knowledge. The parents want their children to obtain an education that teaches them coping skills, practical life skills, culture-specific skills, and options within education paths. Parents connected education with language and emphasized the importance for their children to gain Inuktitut instruction in the classroom setting. Another important aspect that many parents shared was learning more about ones’ culture at school. The sense of identity development can be developed amongst the children while at school. In the quotes below a couple parents share the sentiments expressed by many of the parents.

*“There seems to be a lack of traditional skills being provided at the school-level. They only get Inuktitut lessons for 45 minutes per day or 45 minutes a week. And hardly anything at high school where working with seal skin or building a kamiks or making harpoons. That is very small but those are the skills they need to know to just so they can identify who they are.”* – Father, Grandfather

*“If we do more this will help. Help moms and dads become better parents but we can’t do it alone. We’ve got to have help with education and everybody else.”* – Mother

The importance of having these learning strategies be included in the

education system is important. All parents shared the value of gaining such an education. The parents shared the importance of using formal schooling to help them make a difference in their communities. The difference occurs by combining lived-experiences with theoretical schooling and applying that combined understanding to everyday practices.

*“Our purpose of bringing the kids north and raising them here, cause we certainly could raise them in Ontario where we both had jobs and there was no reason to move north, except for the children’s sake. Is to empower them enough to have the kind of education, the kind of worldly experience that when they are an adult and they graduated from university and they have their bachelors or they do their masters, like you are doing, they can come back and give back. Having lived here, having seen both worlds, having recognized both first hand extreme poverty, and difficulties in alcoholism and substance abuse, and whatever else, and also having lived a different life with us that does not include any of those things will hopefully prepare them to be able to address those things in the future. That’s our goal. ...” – Mother, Adoptive parent*

*“I am hoping that Inuit children would be able to attain a reasonable grade 12, go to college, go to university and pursue what kind of skills that they want.” – Father, Grandfather*

In summary, to the parents, education is more than learning from textbooks, it is about preparing their children for a future where they have the skills to live life.

## **IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT**

*“I think regardless of what race, they have to know who they are. Where they were born. And what race they are. For example, I am Inuit. So I made sure that my children are Inuit and they know about it so that that is important to me.” – Father, Grandfather*

*“... I don’t want her to feel like she has anything less than anybody else that she is not less than anybody else. I want her to feel proud of that. And that she is proud that she is Inuk with the values that I can give her. So I want her to be proud of who she is and not ashamed for whatever reasons.” – Mother, First-time parent*

*“I think it starts in the home. I was raised in a[n] Inuktitut-speaking household. My father is a hunter. We were raised to respect our elders and all of that. I am worried that with all the changes in technology, changes to more English speaking in Nunavummiut that it’s be harder but at the same time IQ principles are kindof universal values. So like respecting people, being welcoming, I think they are just universal values – good things. Just because there is more non-Inuktitut speaking people it won’t affect those values.” – Mother, First-time parent*

The theme, identity development, focused on how a child forms a sense of understanding about themselves as they grow up and interact with their Inuit culture and social norms. This formation of self is fostered by the parents/caregivers who are raising the child. In Inuktitut, parenting and childrearing are described using an all-encompassing word described as *inunnguiniq*. In English *inunnguiniq* is raising a child to become a capable human being (Tagalik, Joyce, Healey & Zeigler, 2016, p. 7). Another Inuktitut word that pertains to identity development amongst children is *miksirkarniq*. *Miksirkarniq* is giving proper direction so that the child will develop well and have a strong foundation (Tagalik, Joyce, Healey & Zeigler, 2016, p. 7). This is a key part of *inunnguiniq*. The parents whom I spoke to shared how their lived-experiences and how they were raised impacted who they are today as parents. In the following subsections, I provide narratives of the parents describing what they wish to teach their children in order to become capable human beings. The areas the parents focused on were character building, communication, and skill building whilst incorporating Inuit values. The key Inuit values discussed by the parents included 1) *miksirkarniq* (having a strong foundation), 2) *pijitsirniq* (serving,



respecting and helping others), 3) *pilimmaksarniq* (becoming skilled), and 4) *avatitiniq kamattiarniq* (being aware of our environment).

### **Miksirkarniq (having a strong foundation)**

*Miksirkarniq* refers to giving proper direction so that the child will develop well and have a strong foundation (Tagalik, Joyce, Healey & Zeigler, 2016, p. 7). Finding a balance and adapting to the current society is something that almost all the parents spoke about. Parents spoke about raising their children to learn about their culture and its traditions and customs while also preparing their children for the future. The parents spoke about the idea of teaching the children the good lessons they learned while they were young to their children. Beneficial lesson being passed on from one generation to the next is something that the parents reflected upon. Much like the other parents, a mother specifically expressed the need to raise her daughter not traditionally but a combination of tradition and modern values.

*“I am talking about just raising my daughter to be a strong women basically but traditionally the women served others in Inuit culture. I don’t want to think of it like a clash. I want it like the best of those two things. That’s is what I want. I know it is going to be a little bit tough just because those two might clash. Just because we’re moving forward as a society, moving away from the super traditional things, doesn’t mean we have to abandon them.”* - Mother, First-time parent

Another parent spoke about setting structure for their child in order to establish a foundational framework. The mother spoke about the impact having such a structure had on her when she was growing up and the importance it will have on the child when they get older. Similar to the other parents, their past

experiences shape how they wish to raise their child/ren. The good lessons that they learnt are kept and passed on, while the bad lessons are shared as cautionary tales. Their childhoods shaped what they wished for their children. One parent shared her experiences and the aspect about her culture that helped her identify as a young Inuk. Other parents shared similar sentiments – their childhood experiences are guiding them with raising their children.

*“...We really want her to have good work ethic and schedule and routine. I think that is really important for young children cause it will help them when they get older. ...” – Mother, First-time parent*

*“Also growing up I want her to grow up with cultural things we do like going out camping together, being together as a family, like teaching her these things because it also really helped me. I think that is how I want to guide her with her life cause those are two special things that really helped me with my childhood and with my grandparents. Yeah, I would want to raise her that way – guide her that way.” – Mother, First-time parent*

### **Pijitsirniq (serving, respecting and helping others)**

A reoccurring value that occurred amongst the parents was raising their children to respect themselves, their parents, and their community. Several parents shared how respect was taught. They all stated that they learned it from their parents and grandparents. Respect is something that is taught and then passed on to the next generation. Like many of the parents, this one particular mother shared her own upbringing and its impact on her parenting.

*“Yes. Like always be respectful of others. Those are pretty much common sense knowledge but their parents and their grandparents were hard-working people and they tried their best to raise their children right. My mother and my grandmother passed that along to me and my siblings.” – Mother*

The parents reflected on the challenges of teaching respect to their children.

However, each parent who shared these sentiments also pointed out that respect is developed through small actions and thoughts that have bigger meanings. Another mother expressed the importance of learning how to respect yourself and others. The lessons that this mother teaches her child involve understanding consequences and its double effect. She shares a similar experience that other parents expressed about finding unique ways to teach respect to a young child.

*“Some of the values? To really respect himself. To be proud of who he is. And be respectful of others. One of the biggest things I find and maybe this is one of the challenges is he is having difficulty understanding consequences. One of the things, we’ve, at least I have started doing with him was helping him understand that the consequences between what his actions are. So if he is bullying someone or if he’s being bullied the consequences of that. He sort of knows what the consequences of that would be so that he can respect other, not just others but but also himself too. To understand that, “You may get back at someone for something,” but the consequences is that it is hurting someone but it is also hurting himself. Really understanding the two-fold consequence action.” – Mother, Adoptive parent, Single parent*

The same mother also shared how she teaches respecting women to her son. Most parents that I spoke with had daughters (n=15). Only 11 parents had a son as either their only child or part of an all-male household (n=5) or part of their larger mixed gender-identified family (n=6). Amongst these parents, the ones who have sons, the importance to teach their sons respect was emphasized. One mother shared her experience with having a conversation with her son and teaching him how to become a respectful self-identified male in society. Those 11 parents whom I spoke with provided valuable insight towards how teaching respect to a boy can be slightly different than to a girl. The importance of having parents such as the one below teaching her son about respect is essential.

*“Yeah, one of the biggest things I find is respecting women. And respecting, no he is a big pusher of no. He means no. And so I’ve always said to him, “That’s the same with him. So if you are tickling me and I say no, that means no.” If someone were to touch him a certain way, no means no. Or if he were touching someone in some way and someone says no then that is inappropriate and you have to say done. Things like that are some of the things that I like to teach him. Some of the values, valuing the persons’ personal space. And walking away from situations where his personal space is being violated.”* Mother, Adoptive parent, Single parent

Another piece of teaching respect is being welcoming to others. This is an important part of the Inuit culture and is reflected by several parents, the customs of the culture create a slight friction between the current needs of the children. In this study’s context, the parents referred to “serving others” as putting the needs of others before the needs of their own needs. Three differing viewpoints came about regarding this particular value. A few parents expressed the importance of being welcoming and putting others ahead of yourself. Another set of parents expressed the importance of addressing your needs before thinking of others. The final set expressed the importance of a balance between the two ends of the spectrum. These parents understood that it would be an acceptable balance to teach their children to be both welcoming and being aware of their own needs. In the narratives shared below, two parents articulated their views on serving others, a value shared by several parents. One mother shared the importance of thinking of others before yourself. Another mother spoke about the importance of finding a balance between serving others and addressing ones needs. The importance of balancing the values from the past to today’s society will be discussed in this following sub-section.

*“The values. Yeah. Treating everybody equally. Putting people ahead of yourself. It’s not all about you, it’s about everybody else. Having community harmony. Working together. Having healthy relationships.” – Mother, Adoptive parent*

Another mother spoke about finding a balance of serving others.

*“I want her to be welcoming and thinking about how to say it in English. [Student-researcher: “You can say it in Inuktitut if you want. It is totally fine with me.”] Inuqatigiitqarniq. Being a good human, being a good person. Serving others but at the same time I don’t want her to feel so obligated to serve others. In the Inuit culture, serving others is a very big other, especially serving your elders and anybody older than you, your family. Sometimes that might affect her own personal goals, like if you are focused on serving others all the time then you can’t work on knowledge and skills acquisition. I think it’s just, there has to be balance.” – Mother, First-time parent*

She further expressed her thoughts on how developing personal identity is just as important as community identity.

*“We are working on helping her develop her own sense of self. Like being able to say no to things if she doesn’t want a hug from Uncle Bob or whatever she doesn’t have to. I want her to feel like she’s the boss of herself, but at the same time she needs to be respectful of other people. Does that make sense? [Student-researcher: “It does!”] Cause a lot of the time when you are raised to be too nice and to serve others you might put your own needs aside. And I don’t want her to do that. That is how I was raised and that is how my mother was raised. She put others before us. But I want [daughter’s name], my daughter to place herself first and then if can then she can help others. But I want her to place herself first.” – Mother, First-time Parent*

Following this value, the importance of teaching ones child to become skilled was emphasized. The type of skills were not generalized, rather the importance of life skills were emphasized.

### **Pilimmaksarniq (becoming skilled)**

Developing a strong identity was shared by many parents, and their method of achieving this focused on teaching their children how to sew and hunt. Sewing and hunting are extremely significant in the Inuit culture and shapes ones' identity. Hunting and sewing are ways to show you are providing for your family and your community. The food harvested from the land and sea are consumed as nutritious meals for the entire family. The hides from the animals harvested are used to design pieces of clothing that can be worn as both fashionable accessories and warm pieces of clothing. In the quote below, a mother shares how she is teaching her daughter to appreciate her identity through sewing.

*"I teach her what I can. I do a lot of sewing at home. That is something I grew up. Last time she asked me when I was making her some seal skin mitts and she said she wanted to learn how to make mitts. I said absolutely. It was very late last night. But I thought I remember when I was in school in the north making my first pair of mitts. I need her to know from when she is young that it is very warm to make your own sealskin mitts. And that she's gonna know that sewing is just a part of her culture. Like my grandma did it. ..."* – Mother, First-time parent

In addition to the culture-specific skill, many parents shared their thoughts on developing life-related skills that can be transferred into different environments such as school, work, and personal life.

*"...You can't say yes to everything that your child asks of you or else there going to become really dependent on you as a young adult. And not provide every little financial thing to them. Cause then they will get lazy to work for themselves to support themselves and make sure they go to school all the time so they can learn the basic life skills. Like, if I hadn't gone to school I would have never known to work here. To know how to read and write."* – Mother

Many parents spoke about the importance of resiliency, i.e., “getting back up” once you end a relationship, whether romantic or through friendship. One parent in particular shared her thoughts about how children should have proper skills to cope with broken relationships.

*“This day and age as soon as, even adults when they break up they are freaking trying to commit suicide or are committing suicide. Why are kids exposed to that you know in this day and age? You can break up. You break up, go find somebody else but they are taking it so much to heart. I don’t know why. Maybe they do have to start looking at coping courses at school. It is not the end of the world when you break up with somebody. It’s not the end of the world when your friends are not your friends. There are many other little kids who can be your friend. Why are they taking it so hard to cope because they don’t know how? Even though we try to teach that at home.”* – Mother, Adoptive parent

Many parents also spoke about proper communication, this in connection to being respectful to others. Communicating is important amongst all humans. Each culture has a different style of communication. In Iqaluit, although a lot of the residents are from the Inuit culture there are others from other cultures living in the community. Therefore, the importance to find a balance between communication skills is essential. One parent shared her observations about the Inuit culture and communication styles. She encouraged parents to help teach their child/ren to learn these communication styles in order to move forward within society. Although, communication is important a limitation mentioned by the parents focused on technology and its infiltration into today’s society. Technology is creating a communication barrier that the parents are working to balance with free play and time outside much like during their childhood years.

*“Kids today have no idea about communication skills. They don’t look at*

*people's eyes. Inuit are naturally very shy anyways, and they are kind of scared to look at your eyes but you know mom and dad raised us to look at people in the eyes. You know, acknowledge them and respect them. Say yes, when you say something good. [laughter] But this day you know the kids just look at their phones.” – Mother, Adoptive parent*

### **Avatitinik kamattiarniq (being aware of our environment)**

An important part of parents' identities relates to their culture and their connection to the land. All their experiences growing up in their hometowns impacted them when helping their children work through their identity development. Inuit value their environment and are taught to be conservationists-like individuals from a young age. Harvesting from the land or sea is done with respect and foresight for both the animals that are hunted and the family as well as community they are providing the food for. Overharvesting is not done. Inuit understand the importance of animal life cycles and migration patterns in connection to harvesting. One parent shared the sentiments of many other parents regarding this connection. Hearing about the importance of the environment from many of the parents showcased the bigger message behind raising these proud Inuk children – a connection to world as more than just humans but also the environment.

*“...I am trying to make her appreciative of the land and everything that is around and of the animals that we eat. Because we don't, I don't eat pork or beef or anything. The only kind of meat that I eat is fish, tuktu – which is caribou, maataq – which is whale. She asked me about the tuktu, I would say we are so lucky to have this one tuktu. It allowed us to have it. Because I remember hearing stories about that when I was younger. And even with the seals, the hunters when they are getting it they take water in their mouth and put it into the seal's mouth because they want it to be hydrated in the afterlife. So I teach her those kinds of things. Everytime we are having tuktu she says, 'does this tuktu, did this tuktu really want us to*



*eat it?’ I say, ‘yes he is so happy that he died for us to eat.’ So I try and teach her those kinds of things.” – Mother, First-time parent*

## OVERALL

The parents in this project are striving to work hard to raise their children to appreciate the different aspects that make them who they are: their language, their education, and their identity. Many parents in this study shared these aspects and they focused on using these themes as guideposts to help their children become those capable human beings. This chapter only shared a small portion of the quotes I received from the parents regarding these three themes. Parenting is full of numerous emotions and the parents expressed their frustrations, their joys, and their hopes. The parents all want what is best for their children. Three parents beautifully summarized the wishes all the parents had for their children.

*“...I want to her to have good manners. She does. Just things that could help her develop into a great person.” – Mother, First-time parent*

*“What else can I add to that? I don’t know. I want, I would love all these Inuit children – I think it is different growing up now – to be proud of who they are. Because growing up downsouth there is a lot of stereotypes about those cultures. ... They stereotype them. Even when I was downsouth I would feel racist comments. I don’t want this generation; I think they are becoming proud Inuit. I want them and I want my daughter to never feel like she is any less than anybody else. I want her to feel proud and stick up for herself and make sure that she is no less and anybody else. And I hope that she can learn that from her interracial parents. And I don’t [think] there is anything that I would add.” – Mother, First-time parent*

*“If I had to leave this planet tomorrow, I would hope that the kids know that to be leaders and not followers. To think things through before making a decision. To consult the community and others but not always take it on blind faith. To be kind. To be generous. Those are the IQ principles to keep a community safe and growing. To be hard-working and to be respectful. Those are the things that I really hope if they can keep all of those to a certain extent then I think they can’t help but be good citizens. And that is really our job as a parent. To take the child, raise them up to be good, focused, productive member of society with extra strong abilities of knowing from right and wrong and a good conscience and being and willing to be helpers of their neighbors and respectful of others. That is all I can ask for. I hope we are doing that. Some[things] are more accounted than others. Whenever we have time to sit down and reflect on what it is we want them to know, we try to insert little life lessons into everyday and hope for the best.” – Mother, Adoptive parent*

## CHAPTER 4: DISCUSSION

Speaking with the parents and hearing about their stories in raising a child resulted in different themes. The themes were discussed in the **Findings** chapter. In this chapter the themes are discussed in connection to current literature and reports from public and private organizations.

Three prominent themes were discussed in the Findings chapters. In this chapter, **Discussion**, I will discuss how the peer-reviewed literature as well as the grey literature from public and private institutions informed my findings. Although in the **Findings** chapter themes were individually described, I noticed that they are interconnected. Therefore, for the duration of this chapter the discussion between these themes will overlap. The headings from the **Findings** chapter will still be maintained.

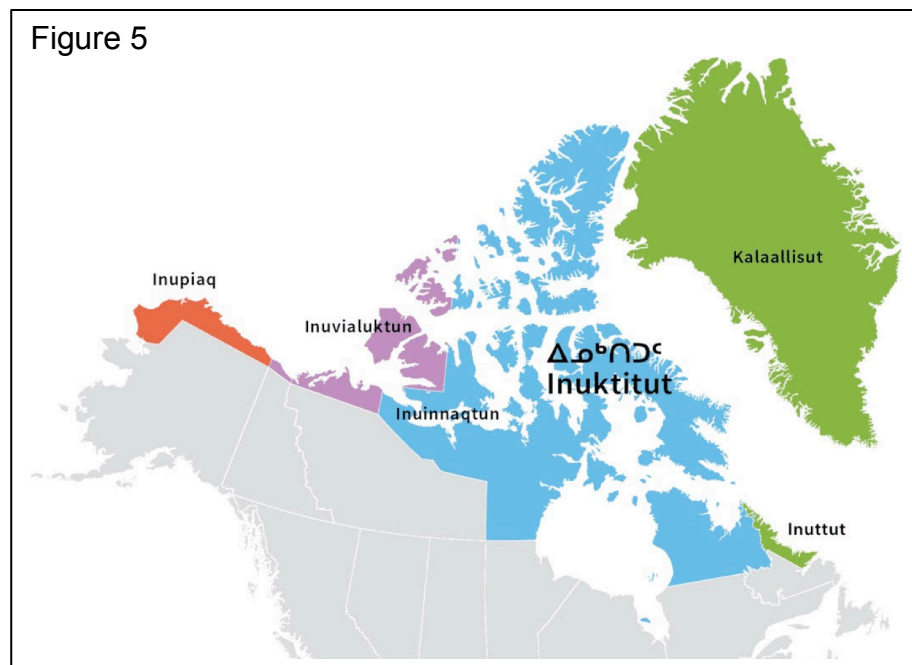
### LANGUAGE

The literature states the importance of a strong home language environment for children. Heritage language is a non-dominant language (e.g., English) being spoken at home (Gollan, Starr, & Ferreira, 2015). The younger the child and the more exposure the child has towards the heritage language the more likely the child will learn the language (Gollan, Starr, & Ferreira, 2015; Bedore, 2012). The fewer people that speak the home language, on a day-to-day basis will result in the loss of proficiency in the home language (De Houwer, 2007; Gathercole & Thomas, 2009). Therefore, researchers have stated that it is important for individuals who are learning a language to expose them on a regular basis to that language of practice (Kenji & d'Andrea, 1992). Parents raising multi-linguistic

children, research state that more exposure to the heritage language supports language acquisition and retention (Gathercole & Thomas, 2009; Tsai, Park, Liu, & Lau, 2012).

This rapid loss of languages as noted by researchers resulted in traditions and values of certain cultural groups being lost (Whitbeck, Walls, Johnson, Morrisseau, & McDougall, 2009). The loss of that language and connection to their identity can have adverse effects on the individual such as emotional and behavioural consequences (Whitbeck, Walls, Johnson, Morrisseau, & McDougall, 2009).

In Canada  
Inuit speak  
Inuktitut,  
encompassing  
both Inuktitut and  
Inuinnaqtun.  
Throughout  
Canada, the  
United States,  
and Greenland



Inuit speak the same language with varying dialects (Tusaalanga, 2019). Below see Figure 5 the Inuit Language Map, which showcases the geographic location and its different language dialects (Tusaalanga, 2019). Understanding the

language would be difficult for people who not are geographically nearby (Tusaalanga, 2019).

## **EDUCATION**

Language is the main theme discussed by numerous parents in the research project. Teaching children their heritage language is reinforced and developed at home (Gathercole & Thomas, 2009). Organizational reports have described the importance of language being maintained and developed at home (Skutnabb-Kangas, Phillipson & Dunbar, 2019). The impact of language erosion – the loss of language – is noted as impacting the proficiency levels of the current Inuktit speakers and older Inuktit speakers (Skutnabb-Kangas, Phillipson & Dunbar, 2019). The parents spoke about education and language as important pieces for the current generation and future generations. The biggest concern they mentioned focused on ensuring that their children receive educational teaching in Inuktit (including either Inuktitut or Inuinnaqtun) and the language carries forward.

A cause for this loss can be attributed to Canada's history and the "linguistic genocide" that a recently published report cited (Skutnabb-Kangas, Phillipson & Dunbar, 2019). This form of genocide is a result of the Canadian government's attempt to assimilate Inuit with the rest of Canada's English-speaking population (Skutnabb-Kangas, Phillipson & Dunbar, 2019). An outcome of this forced assimilation led to English becoming the language of all forms of communication. In the report written by Skutnabb-Kangas, Phillipson & Dunbar, it is stated that

language and education work alongside each other, “teaching *through the medium of a second or foreign language is additive*, it can start early” (2019). “Additive teaching/learning adds to a student’s linguistic repertoire. In *subtractive* teaching/learning, the new language is learned at the cost of the mother tongue (subtractively), instead of in addition to the mother tongue” (Skutnabb-Kangas, Phillipson & Dunbar, 2019). Moving forward to today (circa 2018), the children of those that experienced residential school or their grandchildren shared their experiences with teaching Inuktitut to their young children. The parents whom I spoke to could speak Inuktitut of varying proficiency levels (n=18). They were all aware and personally connected to Canada’s history, however their focus is moving forward and raising their child/ren to obtain Inuktitut. Therefore, the conversation I shared with the parents dwelled deeper into ways to support language acquisition and increase language retention amongst the new generations.

Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated (NTI) an internationally recognized advocacy organization for Inuit coordinates and manages Inuit responsibilities set out in the Nunavut Agreement and ensures that the federal and territorial governments fulfill their obligations. In a report NTI stated that:

*Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun are vital to the intergenerational transfer of Inuit knowledge, history and philosophy, and are in many cases the only means of communication available to Elders. As the language spoken most often in the home, the Inuit language is the preferred mode of communication for a majority of Nunavut residents and thus the most appropriate and effective language of educational instruction. The Inuit language provides access to the distinct worldview of our people and an entire way of life: its use adds a layer of meaning and context to the world we live in and in*

*doing so, reinforces the cultural, geographic, and ethnic identities and ties that make us unique. (NTI, 2011)*

The sentiments expressed by this reputable organization resonate with the stories shared by many of the parents. Language is important. Teaching our children Inuktitut is important for us to learn and understand who we are as young Inuit.

Further it is noted that, “parents will have to become more involved in this process by contributing to language acquisition in the home” (NTI, 2011). “The home is the most important site for the preservation and intergenerational transmission of language. When the transmission of a language from parent to child is switched from one language to another simultaneously across many home environments within a community, a process of language shift may occur whereby entire generations of children do not inherit their heritage language, generating a cycle that may lead to language extinction if drastic measures are not taken” (NTI, 2011).

One such program in Nunavut that is focusing on preserving the language and Inuit values in the territory is the Piruvik preschool concept. Two female individuals from Pond Inlet Nunavut named Karen Nutarak and Tessa Lohead developed an early childhood education program (Oudshoorn, 2019). They wished to see change in her communities and the territory they call home. The concept blends Montessori teaching methods with Inuit traditional knowledge to create a learning environment that’s led by children’s innate curiosity. They wanted to see a better future for current and future generations. Their idea led

them to receiving a national award to fund their project. Today their project is being ready to be delivered in Pond Inlet and expanding to Iqaluit and other Qikiqtani communities, no communities formally announced (Coleman, 2019). This real-world example connects to the wishes the parents shared about educating their children through both formal and informal ways.

### **IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT**

Incorporating revitalization language instruction in schools is important for children to learn their Indigenous languages and strengthen their identity (Reyhner, 2010). Heritage language speaking teachers ensure that the environment that the students are learning within promotes strong cultural identity connections (McCarty, 2003). Parents spoke about teaching their children values that are universal: being respectful, being healthy, and being happy. These three prominent wishes the parents wanted to provide to their children as they grow older. The importance of all of these aspects the parents spoke about centres on the importance of having their culture and their heritage maintained and passed on to the next generations (Skutnabb-Kangas, Phillipson & Dunbar, 2019).



## **CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION**

In this concluding chapter, I will provide a list of the recommendations made by the parents. I encourage policy makers and decision makers in all levels of government, Inuit organizations, and parents/caregivers themselves to view this chapter and its supporting material as a valuable resource in developing policies, projects, and programming to support parenting and raising children.

*“If you are not going to do anything about these challenges then what is the point of discussing it?” – a single mother*

This parent makes a valid point. All the well-intentioned research being done in the world will mean nothing if progress is not made to address these challenges and further support the areas that are working. Throughout this research project, I further learned that parents living in Qikiqtani communities are strong people who want the best for their children. It is the same sentiment that all parents have for their children – a better future. I am not a parent but hearing the stories from all these parents made me think about how I want to raise my child/ren, if I am fortunate enough to have one (or more) in my life. The stories that I presented in this dissertation are not merely to meet the program requirements and earn a degree. I present these findings and my recommendations so that any reader will feel compelled to speak to their local government representative at the municipal, provincial/territorial, or national level and express their thoughts. The ideas I hope they will express will be shared at the end of this chapter.

This research project used semi-structured interviews. The findings indicated that the parents, both mothers and fathers, expressed their wishes to have stronger acquisition and retention in the language of Inuktut, a balanced education system incorporating both formal and informal ways of learning/teaching, as well as building a developed sense of identity for their children. The parents in this study shared the need for parenting to begin at home. The importance of creating a home environment that supports these findings was shared. The findings from this study shed light into the importance of stakeholders being involved in parenting at various stages: individual, organizational, and systemic.

The research further provided an opportunity for the parents to voice specific recommendations to ensure that parenting is supported amongst parents raising their Inuit children. These consisted of various considerations for school programming initiatives, including classes for adolescent children to learn about parenting, as well as ways to systemically support parents raising their children in today's society. Specific recommendations emerging from the conversations were:

- Community-based
  - o Supporting parents and caregivers to have the skills and knowledge necessary to teach their child/ren Inuktut. Exposing the children to Inuktut on a daily basis is essential to support language retention.

- Allowing parents and caregivers who are strong leaders within the community to promote language in school programming. The idea is getting the parents and caregivers involved.
- Systemic-Based:
  - Ensure the Education Act considers the importance incorporating the values of Inuit culture into the education curriculum.
  - Encourage more Inuit who can speak Inuktitut to become involved in the education system and teach children the language.
  - Supporting children to feel proud of who they are by being exposed to their culture and language throughout the community.

Finally, this study explored parenting amongst Inuit families. It sought to hear stories about what supports and challenges parents encountered when raising their children. Becoming a capable human being, *inunnguiniq*, requires various aspects of a person's life to be developed.

I entered this research project looking to learn about what experiences parents encounter when raising their children. Upon completion of my project, I exited with knowledge from parents who are raising a child while they are playing a “tug-and-war between cultures” as one parent expressed. It is not an actual war but rather the challenge of trying to find the balance between maintaining their Inuit culture while being immersed in another culture.

Implications and recommendations for future research should focus on using community-based participatory research approach to work with communities to

support the needs the community would like addressed and further enhance their strengths. The researchers should have a strong understanding and willingness to learn about the context of the community before entering it. Conversations should be the focus when conducting research with Indigenous communities. Significant efforts should be made to ensure that the results of future research are accessible to those that may find them useful.

My wish to all the readers is that you take the time and use your voice to make a difference in the services, programs, infrastructure, and policies/laws that are created to better our lives and the lives of the next generations.

## **CHAPTER 6: APPENDICES**

### **A. Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Principles**

### **B. Interview Guide**

### **C. Information Letter & Consent Form – English**

### **D. Information Letter & Consent Form – Inuktitut**

### **E. Recruitment Poster – English & Inuktitut**

### **F. Theatre Productions: *Hunting & Qalupaliit***

## **APPENDIX A: *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit* Beliefs and Principles\***

### **1. *Inuuqatigiitsiarniq***

The concept of respecting others, building positive relationships and caring for others *Inuuqatigiitsiarniq* is showing respect and a caring attitude for others. When each person considers their relationships to people and behaves in ways that build this relationship, they build strength both in themselves and in others and together as a community. This is foundational to Inuit ways of being.

### **2. *Tunnganarniq***

The concept of fostering good spirit by being open, welcoming and inclusive

*Tunnganarniq* is being welcoming to others, being open in communications and inclusive in the ways people interact. Demonstrating this attitude is essential in building positive relationships with others.

### **3. *Piliriqatigiingniq***

To develop a collaborative relationship and work together for the common good

The essential Inuit belief that stresses the importance of the group over the individual should pervade all teaching. Expectations for students will reflect working for the common good, collaboration, shared leadership and service. *Piliriqatigiingniq* also sets expectations for supportive behaviour development, strong relationship building and consensus building.

### **4. *Avatimik Kamattiarniq***

To show environmental stewardship

Inuit support and maintain environmental wellness through their respect for and the importance they place on relationship building.

Students will be expected to articulate respect for mutually interdependent relationships and to demonstrate responsible behaviours that seek to improve and protect these relationships in ways that meet global challenges to environmental wellness and sustainable futures.

### **5. *Pilimmaksarniq***

To be empowered and build capacity through knowledge and skills acquisition

Building personal capacity in Inuit ways of knowing and doing are key expectations for students. Demonstrating empowerment to lead a successful and productive life, that is respectful of all, is a powerful end goal of the educational system.

**6. *Qanuqtuurnarniq***

To be resourceful and seek solutions through creativity, adaptability, and flexibility

The ability to be resourceful, seek solutions, use resources innovatively and creatively, to demonstrate adaptability and flexibility in response to a rapidly changing world, are strengths all our students should develop. Resourcefulness should be demonstrated in all learning and also thinking that seeks to improve the context in which Inuit live.

**7. *Aajiqatigiingniq***

To cooperate, develop shared understanding to arrive at decisions through consensus

All students are expected to become contributing members of their community and to participate actively in building the strength of Inuit in Nunavut. Being able to think and act collaboratively, to assist with the development of shared understandings, to resolve conflict in consensus-building ways, and to consult respecting various perspectives and worldviews, are expectations that cross all curricula.

**8. *Pijitsirniq***

To contribute to the common good through serving and leadership

The concept of serving is central to the style of leadership and is the measure of the maturity and wisdom of an Inuk. Key here is the understanding that each person has a contribution to make and is a valued contributor to his/her community. Students will be expected to demonstrate this kind of leadership and commitment to serving the common good.

Government of Nunavut, Department of Education (2007)

\*Not all the IQ principles are listed, only the publicized ones by the government.

## **APPENDIX B: Interview Guide**

### **INTERVIEW: Inuit childrearing practices**

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this interview. I really appreciate it. I would like to provide you a little background about my project before we begin. My project is about learning the supports and challenges Inuit families encounter when raising an Inuk child. This information collected will be used to create a drama about childrearing that will be presented to community members in Iqaluit. If you are interested, you are invited to attend this performance. Local Inuit actors will perform the theatrical performance and the audience will get a chance to help change the dialogue about childrearing in today's changing society.

If, at any time during this interview you feel uncomfortable or wish to stop please let me know. As we progress through this interview, if you do not wish to answer a certain question or complete this interview then you are free to say so. Your participation in this interview is voluntary.

1. Before I begin with the specific questions about parenting, I would like to learn a little bit about you. Have you always lived in Iqaluit, Nunavut? (yes / no).
  - a. If yes ask, how many years have you lived in this community?
  - b. If no ask, did you grow up in another community other than Iqaluit?

2. What was it like growing up in your childhood community? Did both you and your parent or parents grow up on the land? (yes / no)
  - a. If yes, ask, can you tell me a little bit about your childhood memories about growing up on the land?
  - b. If no ask, can you tell me a little bit about your childhood memories about growing up in a community?

3. Thank you for sharing your childhood stories about growing up on (either the land or in the community mentioned). Today, how do you understand childrearing / parenting practices and what does it mean to you? Probing questions:
  - a) Do you have any children or are their children who are a part of your life in the community?
  - b) When you think about what is needed to raise a child, what do you think of?

4. In today's society, do you think parents and caregivers in our communities experience challenges with the Inuit parenting practices, or childrearing? (yes / no)



a. If yes ask, please tell me more about what you think the challenges might be.

b. If no ask, please tell me more about what is currently working well for parents.

5. In order to address these challenges, what supports do you think parents or caregivers in our community might need in raising their children? Probing responses:

- a) Education on childhood development
- b) Emotional support
- c) Support to heal from trauma
- d) Drop-in programs at schools
- e) Practice sewing or hunting
- f) Awareness from others about the Inuit parenting practices
- g) Opportunities to educate others about the Inuit parenting practices
- h) Prepare foods, cooking classes
- i) Learn ways to be active with the family
- j) Help managing a budget or finances
- k) Anything else that pops into your mind

6. For you, what are the 3 most important lessons or values about Inuit parenting that you believe children should be taught or exposed to by their parents/caregivers? Also, if you have children (will not mention the "if" if I already know from question 3) what do you want your children to learn from you? Probing responses:

- a) Respecting other people who look, talk, and behave differently
- b) Listening to elders
- c) Respecting the family
- d) Respecting the land
- e) Respecting the animals
- f) Respecting the environment
- g) Being active
- h) Eating healthy
- i) Being kind
- j) Going to school
- k) Listening to teachers
- l) Getting an education
- m) Being able to handle emotions
- n) Anything else that pops into your mind

7. This is the last question I have for this interview. Is there anything else you would like to share about the Inuit parenting practices that we did not get a chance to discuss?

Again, thank you for your time and sharing your valuable stories and thoughts with me. I really appreciate it.

## APPENDIX C: Letter of Information and Consent - ENGLISH



### Childrearing/Parenting among Inuit families in today's changing society

**Hello/Ullakuut!** My name is Aloka Wijesooriya. Several years ago I left Iqaluit to complete my post-secondary schooling downsouth. Now, I am completing a research project as part of my masters degree. I acknowledge that having grown-up in Iqaluit, many Iqalumiut may know me. Please know, that if anyone is interested in contributing to this research project, that your participation is entirely voluntary and not an obligation to help me because you know me.

We are interested in learning about the childrearing/parenting among Inuit families. We would also like to hear your stories about the supports, challenges, and lessons on childrearing/parenting. We are hoping you can help us by participating in an interview. Below is some information so that you can decide if you would like to participate.

#### What is this research about?

- The proposed study builds on current Inuit parenting practices (Inunnguiniq) and seeks to understand it further by understanding the challenges and gaining insights into the successes, strengths, barriers, and problems.
- This information is important because it will help with the evaluation process of Qaujigiartiit Health Research Centre's resource, *Inunnguiniq Parenting Program*.
- In addition, this research will help in the creation of a theatrical script created by local Inuit actors and then performed to all community members in Iqaluit, Nunavut.

#### What would I have to do?

- If you agree to participate, we would like to learn about your experiences with childrearing/parenting. We would also like to hear the supports needed for successful childrearing/parenting and the challenges present for successful childrearing/parenting.
- With your permission, we would like to audio-record the conversation. We would also like to share some of your quotations in our writing, if that is okay with you.
- An individual from the community will be working as an interpreter. He/she has signed an oath of confidentiality that he/she will not tell others that you participated, and he/she will not tell others what you tell us.

#### How long will it take?

- The interviews will be approximately 1 hour long.
- If more time is needed, we may schedule another date.

#### What do I get in return for my time?

- As a thank you for your time, you will be invited to attend the theatrical performance created local actors. You and your identified guests will receive seats to watch the performance.

#### Are there any risks to participating? Any benefits?

- We will be talking about your experience with parenting, which may result in emotional distress. A list of potential support resources will be available to you, if you wish to access any help.
- We will be talking about ways to move forward with childrearing, which may result in participants feeling empowered.
- We will be performing the themes and select quotations you provide during a theatrical performance.



#### Will anybody know that I participated?

- Confidentiality is very important to us. We will not tell anyone that you participated.
- This conversation will happen one-on-one with an interpreter present to allow participants, who wish, to speak in Inuktitut. The information from the interpreter will be kept confidential throughout the research process.
- During the theatrical performance, no names will be mentioned only the broad themes or select quotations.
- Do note that the stories you share may be identifiable depending on what information is shared, but you do not have to share quotes or parts of stories that you do not feel comfortable sharing.

#### What happens to my information?

- Aloka Wijesooriya is responsible for keeping your information secure. She will not share the audio-recording or typewritten transcripts of the recording with non-authorized individuals.
- The data collected will be kept on an encrypted USB device that only the researcher can access. No identifiable information will be located on the data being stored on the electronic files within the encrypted USB.
- The audio-recordings from the interviews will be deleted once they are transcribed into typewritten text.
- The typewritten transcripts will not contain any identifiable names. If there are names present, then pseudonyms will be used in place. The anonymized transcripts will be used for data analysis.
- Once the research project is complete the researcher will keep the records (i.e., both electronic and physical) for 10 years before destroying the data.
- Qaujigiartiit Health Research Centre may use the data collected for further evaluation of their Inunnguiniq Parenting Program. It is understood that further analysis of the data may require another ethics board approval.

#### What if I don't want to answer a question?

- You **do not** have to answer any questions you aren't comfortable with. You can skip any question. If you skip a question, you will not be penalized in any way.

#### What if I decide I don't want to continue with the interview?

- You can leave the interview at any time.
- You will have the opportunity to review the audio recordings transcript and the final thesis to ensure that we are capturing your story accurately. .

#### How can I learn about the results of this research?

- The results will always be in aggregate form. This means that no one will be able to link the results back to you. Your name will not be listed in any reports, papers, presentations, or other writing.
- Sharing the results within the community is very important to our research team. Results will be used to develop a theatrical script, which will allow all community members to learn about this study's results. Results will be shared with the Qaujigiartiit Health Research Centre for its evaluation of the *Inunnguiniq Parenting Program*. The themes gathered from the results will also be shared with other community organizations that have a vision on improving childrearing among Inuit families.



**How do I get more information?**

**Aloka Wijesooriya**  
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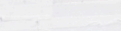
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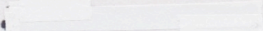
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Tel: 

*This study has been reviewed by the Nunavut Research Institute (NRI #01 030 18N-M) and McMaster Research Ethics Board and received ethics clearance (MREB # 2018-144).*

*If you have concerns or questions about your rights as a participant or about the way the study is conducted, please contact:*

**McMaster Research Ethics Secretariat**  
**C/O Research Office for Administrative Development  
And Support**

Hamilton, Ontario, Canada

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**C/O Mosha Cote**

Iqaluit, Nunavut, Canada

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Tel: 867-979-7279

You do not waive any legal rights by agreeing to take part in this study.

See next page for Consent Form.



**What do I do if I want to participate in this study, and I am under 18 years old?**

IF YOU WANT TO BE IN THE STUDY, SIGN YOUR NAME ON THE LINE BELOW AND RECEIVE CONSENT (PERMISSION/ APPROVAL) FROM YOUR PARENT/ GUARDIAN:

Child's name, printed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Parent/ Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**What do I do if I want to participate in this study (and have received consent, if under 18)?**

CONSENT FORM

- I have read the information presented in the information letter about a study being conducted by Aloka Wijesooriya, of McMaster University.
- I have had the opportunity to ask questions about my involvement in this study and to receive additional details I requested.
- I understand that steps will be undertaken to ensure that this interview will remain confidential unless I consent to being identified.
- I understand that if I agree to participate in this study, I may withdraw from the study at any time. I also understand that, if I wish to withdraw from the study, I may do so without any repercussions.
- I have been given a copy of this form.
- I have been fully informed of the objectives of the project being conducted. I understand these objectives and consent to being interviewed for the project.

Name of Participant (Printed) \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Witness (Printed) \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. I agree that the interview can be audio recorded.

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

2. I agree to have my responses from this project used in future related projects.

- ☐ yes ☐ no

3. ☐ Yes, I would like to receive a summary of the study's results.

Please send them to me at this email address \_\_\_\_\_

Or to this mailing address: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ No, I do not want to receive a summary of the study's results.

4. I agree to be contacted about a follow-up interview, and understand that I can always decline the request.

- ☐ Yes, please contact me at: \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ No



What do I do if I want to participate in this study, and I am over 18 years old?

CONSENT FORM

- I have read the information presented in the information letter about a study being conducted by Aloka Wijesooriya, of McMaster University.
- I have had the opportunity to ask questions about my involvement in this study and to receive additional details I requested.
- I understand that steps will be undertaken to ensure that this interview will remain confidential unless I consent to being identified.
- I understand that if I agree to participate in this study, I may withdraw from the study at any time. I also understand that, if I wish to withdraw from the study, I may do so without any repercussions.
- I have been given a copy of this form.
- I have been fully informed of the objectives of the project being conducted. I understand these objectives and consent to being interviewed for the project.

Name of Participant (Printed) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Witness (Printed) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. I agree that the interview can be audio recorded.

☐ Yes

☐ No

2. I agree to have my responses from this project used in future related projects.

☐ yes

☐ no

3. ☐ Yes, I would like to receive a summary of the study's results.

Please send them to me at this email address \_\_\_\_\_

Or to this mailing address: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ No, I do not want to receive a summary of the study's results.

4. I agree to be contacted about a follow-up interview, and understand that I can always decline the request.

☐ Yes, please contact me at: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ No







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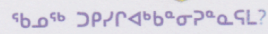
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## **APPENDIX F: Theatre Productions: *Hunting & Qalupaliit***

**Performance Dates:** April 25 & 26, 2019

**Production (25<sup>th</sup>):** *Hunting* – Written and Translated by R.K.

**Production (26<sup>th</sup>):** *Qalupaliit* – Written by T.T. and Translated by R.N.

**Performance Venue:** Elders' Qammaq, Iqaluit, Nunavut

**In Attendance:** Elders, family, and friends from the community

**Cast:** 3 self-identified females & 1 self-identified male – 14 to 19 years old

**Director/Producer/Stage Manager/Prop Master:** Student-Researcher

**Rehearsal Dates:** April 6, 7, 9, 13, & 16, 2019

**Workshops:** March 22, 23, & 26, 2019

**Rehearsal & Workshop Venues:** Elders' Qammaq & Iqaluit Aquatic Centre's Multipurpose Room

**Cast Party:** April 28, 2019 at Iqaluit Aquatic Centre's Multipurpose Room

**Narrative:** Between February and April 2019, the student-researcher utilized the themes gathered from the research conducted and presented two theatrical productions to the community of Iqaluit. Casting occurred in February, workshops occurred in March, and rehearsals occurred in April. The performances occurred on April 25 and 26, 2019 at the Elders' Qammaq in Iqaluit, Nunavut. Four Inuit youth (14 to 19 years old) brainstormed a theme for the scripts using the prominent and minor themes from the interviews. The themes the youth felt were

important were language and community. The youth (three self-identified females and one self-identified male) worked with the student-researcher to achieve this production. Two youth wrote scripts that combined their folklore and language together. The scripts were translated into Inuktitut. The student-researcher directed the scripts. The youth came together and utilized their own wardrobes for costumes (e.g., polar bear ski pants, seal skin gloves, and rabbit fur trapper hat). The youth performed their unilingual scripts to Elders, family, and friends from the community.

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## **APPENDICES**

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