



the power of an image when we offered this type of workshop to parents accompanied by their child. Chances are that seeing Innu parents reading in a video capsule at the beginning of the workshop, but also hearing the light tone and the humorous interventions, may have contributed to the interest and to the involvement of parents.

During the summer of 2017, it was decided to produce five new capsules, featuring Innu parents and dealing with various topics relating to parental involvement. The need to develop this original intervention approach through new workshops (see Table 1) became apparent. Since the presentation made on the subject during the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the Convention on Perseverance and Academic Achievement for First Peoples<sup>2</sup> in October 2017, the teaching guide including the description of the workshops has been refined and, gradually, we proposed a positive modelling approach to further involve the parents of our communities and to facilitate the work of early childhood workers.

This approach is defined as follows:

***The positive modelling approach** aims to propose an intervention to model a desirable behaviour by focusing on the power of an image, a positive vision making possible the action desired by these individuals put into context during a concrete activity.<sup>3</sup>*

Following the principles issued by Beauregard et al. (2011) in the review of scientific literature on family and community literacy, which highlighted, among other things, the importance of developing a parent's sense of competence, we believe that parents of at-risk students need positive interventions and support following the reflection initiated by the video images, hence the design of parenting workshops related to video capsules. They need to project themselves, to visualize

themselves in action in order to be challenged (ministère de l'Éducation, 2004 and 2005).

### Objectives of the parental involvement workshops

The goal of the Uipat Tutetau/Agir Tôt Parenting Workshops is to **encourage the parents to get involve so that they feel confident and competent in their parenting role.**

Three specific objectives emerge in the workshops:

- Discuss**, from the proposed images, on themes and concrete ways to experience them.
- Reflect** on the images, themes and their importance.
- Experience** a concrete and positive activity with their child, linked to the images conveyed and to each of the themes.

### Themes selected for the workshops

Among the first themes selected, we drew on our observations of the environment and the comments of teachers in our communities. The five major recurring themes for helping the child attending school were related to breakfast, sleep, physical activity, the impact of technology, and the purpose of education. If parents support their child on these areas, we should see an improvement in success, especially for at-risk students.

Here is a table presenting the five parenting workshops that we propose in this guide, the short film and their objectives:

Title of the workshop	Short film	Objective of the workshop
Au clair de la lune... SOS dodo les enfants!	UNIUI PISHIM Le soleil devant	Discuss and reflect on ways to improve children's sleep as the family's. Experience a positive activity at school, during the evening with the children.
Je craque pour toi, mon coco!	PETAPAN Le petit jour	Discuss and reflect with the parents about the awakening of their household. Experience having breakfast at school with the children.
T'es pas <i>game</i> !	KA METUENANUT La joute	Discuss and reflect on way to foster physical participation of children. Experience a fun physical activity at school, with the children.
Rallye-toi à moi!	NETE ISHPIMIT Le sommet	Discuss and reflect on the future of children, the purpose of school and the support they can provide to children in fulfilling their dreams. Have a positive experience with your children as part of an outdoor group activity.
3,2,1... virage virtuel	ASHU KA UAUITSHIUET En appui	Discuss and think about the different constructive ways to use technology and social media in children's daily lives. Experience an activity with technology at school.



## Parental involvement workshop development in three phases

The parenting workshops must be simple to motivate the parents to participate. Three phases are required to stimulate parental involvement: identification with peers, parents in action, and modelling and integration of desired behaviours.

### 1) Stimulation of peer identification

The idea is to offer a meaningful image for First Nations and the desired involvement of parents with their child. Thus, the short video capsules serve as a simulation for the parental involvement workshops. They are important for achieving the desired participation and are therefore presented at the beginning of the workshops.

The images of Innu parents are supported by a text, read in Innu language, proposing a model of intervention and a reflection related to the theme. Since audio is in the Innu language, subtitling in French enables other parents and francophones from other nations to understand the message conveyed. Everyone must feel included and understood.

Is it possible to think that a video capsule would be used to model a desirable behaviour in an individual? According to Deslandes and Bertrand (2004), in some individuals, the visualization of behaviour perceived in a peer can lead to inner reflection and probably change. Seeing other parents of the same culture and generation act enhances the incentive to do the same thing. Because it is often different for individuals experiencing difficulties, or having experienced difficulties related to school or parental support (Deslandes & Royer, 1994), it is important that the parent can, not only "visualize" himself or herself in action, to propose a concrete activity during the workshop, and thus, to develop his or her competence as a parent, but also to have a positive experience as part of his or her role as a parent (Gervais, 1995).

### 2) Parents in action

The suggested activities on the workshop sheet can be simple. However, they must allow parents to have with their child a positive experience related to the theme—which they may not do at home. In doing so, parents will build self-confidence, which will allow them to become more involved as soon as they are home.

In order to engage them, we offer two to three activities per workshop. The parents watch a short film suggesting concrete actions: already, the fact of discussing it, of thinking about it, of seeing and hearing it, sets them in action. Then, they are offered a concrete activity to do with their child, related to the theme.

In our literacy workshop, for example, we first could see images of parents of different ages (fathers, mothers, grandparents, etc.) reading outside, in the park or at home, in other words, in various contexts. Then, books (mainly

children's books) were placed on tables and, after viewing the video, the parents were invited to get up and participate in the proposed reading. At the Pakuashipi Literacy Workshop, a father, still dressed in his snowsuit and apparently wanting to leave early, took the time to undress and read a book to his three-year-old daughter. He then confessed to having loved reading a story to his child, which he rarely did at home, believing that she was too young.

### 3) Modelling and integration of desired behaviours

The activity always ends with a discussion, around a snack. This feedback on the activity allows parents to share resources and strategies and to be open to new opportunities to integrate the concepts underlying the intervention (Larivée, 2012). Peer modelling is then encouraged. The moment is also opportune, for example, to offer readings or listen to the parents who think they have a problem, etc.

On at least two occasions during the proposed workshops, parents came to tell us that they had noticed a problem with their child and they were seeking a solution. In one case, the child lacked motivation for reading, while in the other case the child had difficulty reading. Since the discussion was open at the end of the workshop, participants were able to express that they had experienced similar situations and had consulted their child's teacher, who has been of great help in giving them tips for reading.

At the end of the workshop, it is important to take the time to thank the participants and take a picture as a souvenir. This allows parents present to highlight their participation and contribution to the well-being of their child.

## To conclude

A parent experiencing problems will certainly not want to be dictated a course of action to adopt with his or her child. In a positive modelling approach spirit, the intervention begins as soon as the workshop is promoted to parents.

Generally, the parents involved will come to all activities; however, it must always be kept in mind that the parents to be reached are the ones who are experiencing difficulties. From this perspective, the tone and title of the workshop should not include a prescription or judgment that would cause the parent of an at-risk student to flee. On the contrary, the workshops should make parents want to attend. The images and the model proposed are just as important, hence the concern to offer quality workshops to parents in the communities. Parental workshops are being implemented in the seven communities served by the Tshakapesh Institute. Let's hope they inspire a lot of parents and practitioners for years to come.

To act early with children, it is necessary to continue to work with parents. It is necessary to propose concrete actions in the communities, because, as the old saying goes: prevention is better than cure! ■



## Material accessible

The video capsules and PDF files of these workshops are available on the Tshakapesh Institute website under the *Parental Involvement* tab at the following address: [www.tshakapesh.ca](http://www.tshakapesh.ca). Each capsule lasts between two and four minutes.

## Acknowledgement

We would like to thank and acknowledge the impeccable work of Martin-Pierre Tremblay, a film director close to Innu communities, who made it possible for us to present a positive vision of First Nations on which our intervention is based.

## NOTES

- 1 Video capsules produced on the Uashat Mak Mani-Utenam community as part of the Avenir d'enfants Project, in collaboration with the FNQLHSSC, Avenir d'enfants, INNU TAKUAIKAN UASHAT MAK MANI-UTENAM, Uauitshitun santé et services sociaux and the AUASSIS early childhood Centre, published in January 2017. Online at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-uKhoq0iDRk>
- 2 Workshop to present the video capsules for parental involvement Convention on Perseverance and Academic Achievement for First Peoples, in October 10-12, 2017–Hilton Québec.
- 3 Definition that I propose as an educational consultant (Éducaro inc.) as part of my role as Agir Tôt counselor for the parents of communities served by the Tshakapesh Institute.

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