

Identity & Culture

Identity & Culture >> Traditional Practices >> **Language**

Issues Identified: Language plays a central role in preserving First Nations identity, philosophy/worldview and traditions; it is important to support traditional language use within the community (especially the youth).

Proposed Indicator: **# 20** – % of youth who speak traditional language

Suggested Measure: Compare the number of youth who speak their traditional language with the number who do not.

Information Source: Existing data and suggested questions that could be used in a local survey are provided below. Limitations to the existing data are noted below (see *).

A) RHS (Adolescent survey): http://www.naho.ca/firstnations/english/pdf/key_docs_adolescent.pdf

Question 12 - What languages do you speak? (A list of Aboriginal languages to check off is provided)

Note: Community level data for RHS survey exists; must be accessed by community.

The following related data also exists from the RHS (adolescent survey):

Question 9 – What language do you most often use in daily life?

Question 10 – How important is it to you to speak your First Nations/Inuit language?

Question 11 – What languages do you understand?

B) <http://www.statscan.ca> >> (English / French) >> Community Profiles >> 2001 Aboriginal Peoples Survey Community Profiles or 2001 Aboriginal Population Profile >> Child / Saskatchewan / Choose a community

% of children who can speak or understand an Aboriginal language	
Importance of child speaking and understanding an Aboriginal language:	
Very important or somewhat important (%)	
Not very important or not important (%)	
% of children who understand an Aboriginal language:	
Very well or relatively well	
With effort / A few words / Not well at all	
% of children who can speak an Aboriginal language:	
Very well or relatively well	
With effort / A few words / Not well at all	
% of children who receive help learning an Aboriginal language from:	
Grandparents	
Parents	
Aunts and uncles	
School teachers	
Other persons	

How to use this measure:

- Step 1)** Identify the number of youth in the community.
- Step 2)** Identify the number of youth who speak their traditional language, by using existing data (as in the table above) or by conducting a local survey. Suggested survey questions can be found in the Regional Health Survey (RHS) as well as the 2001 Aboriginal Peoples' Survey Community Profiles.
- Step 3)** Use the 'Indicator Calculation Tool' formula to calculate the measure.

Indicator Calculation Tool	Calculation Example
$\frac{(\) \text{ \# of youth who speak their traditional language}}{(\) \text{ \# of youth in the community}}$ $\frac{(\)}{(\)}$ $\times 100$ <p>= % who speak traditional language</p>	$\frac{(225) \text{ youth who speak their traditional language}}{(300) \text{ youth in the community}}$ $\frac{225}{300}$ $= .75 \times 100$ <p>= 75% speak traditional language</p>
<p>X = multiplied by () = Insert number here _____ = divided by</p>	

What does this information mean?

Although this information indicates the number of youth who speak the language, more information would be needed to determine the frequency of use and fluency. Understanding the extent to which the traditional language is being passed on to youth could be used to determine the effectiveness of existing cultural and language programs and events, and to support proposals for traditional language education in the schools.

*** Limitations of the Existing Data:**

As not all community members took part in the Regional Health Survey or the 2001 Aboriginal Peoples' Survey, the data may not accurately reflect the participation levels in a particular community, and should be used with caution.