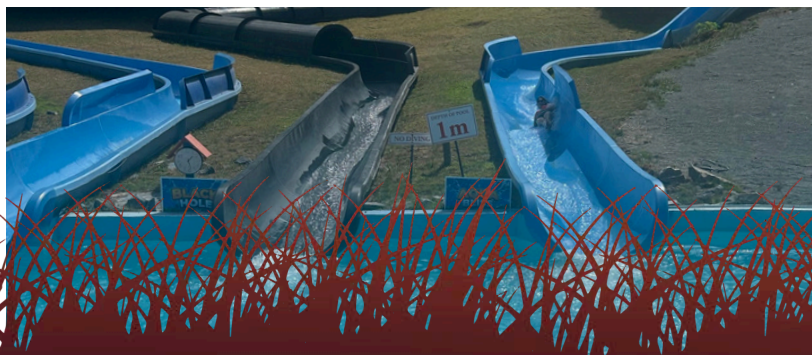


September 2026 NEWSLETTER



IN THIS ISSUE

September offered numerous opportunities for connection and wellness within our organization. The Culture Team facilitated cultural activities to strengthen community ties, while the Community Prevention Team promoted resilience and well-being. Mental Wellness shared information on ambulances, and IT's Tech Corner provided resources for navigating AI scams. As we reflect on this rewarding month, enjoy a creative break with this issue's coloring page!



Mission

We are all somebody’s seventh generation. We are committed to work with our communities to create the necessary change to ensure children currently in care have the advocates they deserve and seven generations from now, the need for a child welfare system will no longer exist as our families will be whole and healthy.



Vision

Work collectively to exercise nte?képmx and syilǎ inherent rights as we empower children, young people and families.

tekm míns | tá k’wúl’əm - Our Call to Action

We are at a critical moment in time. A great deal of change is taking place within the current political climate in which we exist. Bold steps are required to actualize the changes necessary for the communities we represent. For the first time since colonization, our action will fundamentally alter the foundation upon which outside governments have imposed political interests of assimilation through the systemic removal of our children.

For generations, our children have been the ones on the front line of federally and provincially legislated cultural genocidal regimes. Our families and communities were fractured but never broken. To achieve healing, justice and hope for each child ever removed from their parents, families and communities, it is up to us to provide a new reality for generations to come.

Through the wisdom of our ancestors, we have been taught the ways to care for one another. We must work toward a future markedly different from the current state wherein there are more Indigenous children in care now than at the height of the residential school era. While the current system is derived from legislation and policy, not of the Indigenous origin at a community level or otherwise, we undertake the process of decolonization to bring traditional knowledge, guidance and practices of the nte?képmx and syilǎ people forward in collaboration and guidance of our communities.

It is our responsibility to create the necessary change to ensure children currently in care have the advocates they deserve; and seven generations from now, the need for a child welfare system will no longer exist as our families will be whole and healthy. nte?képmx and syilǎ ancestors have anticipated this change and passed on their wisdom as we respond to this call to action. This very legacy is now ours to nurture and protect as we build a new platform where today’s children, young people, families and communities will remain together and rekindle their cultural ways of being.

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SCFSS STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

CULTURE OF CARING

- Communicate with one voice
- Integrate language and traditional teachings into programs and services
- Grow caregiver networks in alignment with traditional and community values
- Incorporate learning from Elders and Knowledge Keepers
- Return rights and responsibilities to our people through the development and implementation of Governance and Laws

PROTECTION TO PREVENTION

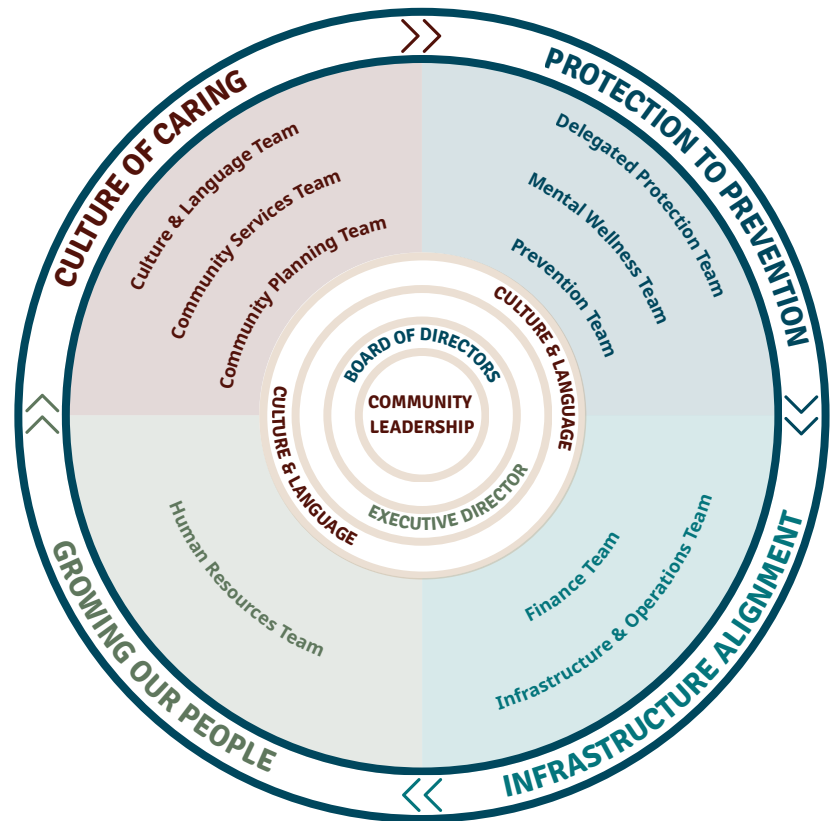
- Bring and keep our children home
- Align programs and services with our vision
- Shift our focus from fear to love
- Build community engagement and capacity
- Build trusting relationships

GROWING OUR PEOPLE

- Engage community expertise to support our vision
- Retain those committed to our vision
- Adopt, embrace, and implement cultural practice frameworks
- Acknowledge Post-traumatic Growth (PTG)
- Build professional capacity

INFRASTRUCTURE ALIGNMENT

- Realign budgets to shift from protection to prevention
- Improve Information Technology support in current and post COVID-19 environment
- Structure change management to achieve our collaborative vision
- Improve prompt management reporting
- Integrate programs and services to build community capacity



September Harvesting



This season, we gather the following items. Reach out to your knowledge keepers to learn about sustainable harvesting practices, how to pronounce these phrases, and the safe uses of these natural gifts. The phrases in red represent the **nłe?kepmxcín**, while those in turquoise are in **nsyilxcən**. Additionally, we have provided a QR code for you to listen to the accompanying audio file.

Connect with an Elder to share stories about gathering, and join us for our next "On The Land" event to reconnect with both nature and yourself.

		
Labrador Tea	íkecé?	ǰwəǰwǰmilp
		
Moose	syǰálxkn	papaláǰca?
		
Deer	smíyc	sǰa?cínm
		
Indian Celery (Seeds)	ćewete?	ǰáqwa

"All plants are our brothers and sisters. They talk to us and if we listen, we can hear them."
- Arapaho



CULTURE TEAM UPDATES - WOMEN'S GROUP

Moccasins, Memories and Mentorship - August 17th and 18th 2026

Women from across the five bands spent two evenings learning, visiting and making moccasins together at the Nicola office.

About half of the women had never made moccasins before. Molly Toodlican led the workshop, while women with previous experience shared what they knew and helped answer questions along the way. Everyone worked at their own pace, and there was plenty of pride as the finished moccasins came together.

Around 25 women attended, ranging in age from their twenties to their seventies, along with five children. With wildfires affecting the area, sitting together and focusing on their projects offered a calming break from the uncertainty. It gave the women time to enjoy one another's company and build healthy connections across communities and generations.

There were only five bead colours available at first, but Jane McLeod brought additional beads to sell, giving the women more options for their designs. The group also enjoyed Indian tacos while they worked.

The two evenings showed how empowering it can be for women to gather, learn from one another and create something they are proud of. The workshop also inspired ideas for future activities, including mini moccasins and a possible collaboration with Lower Nicola Indian Band to make moccasins and rattles.



*Elijah Kennedy,
Cultural Program Coordinator*





COMMUNITY TEAM UPDATES - COLDWATER CULTURE CAMP

Culture and Connection at Coldwater Culture Camp - July 24th & 25th, 2026

For two days, rooms at the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology were filled with people learning, visiting and creating together during the annual Coldwater Culture Camp.

There was plenty to take part in throughout the camp, with something for everyone. Community members made hand drums, mini drums, cedar bracelets, pine needle baskets, devil's club necklaces, medicine ties and shirts. Other workshops included leathercraft, oil making and hair braiding. Youth activities were available throughout the camp, and community members had access to a health station where they made their own first aid kits.

Each evening offered new opportunities for connection and celebration. Elders shared Sasquatch stories, families gathered for a movie night, and participants enjoyed Nlaka'pamux Bingo and lahal games. Community members also came together for an Elders dinner with traditional foods and a recognition ceremony, where they had the opportunity to honour one another and celebrate Elders for their vital role in preserving and sharing cultural knowledge, traditions, and teachings.



The camp gave families an opportunity to spend intentional time together, catch up with familiar faces and meet new people. Laughter and conversation filled the rooms as participants worked on their projects and learned from facilitators and cultural knowledge holders.

Many hands went into making the camp possible, especially with the last-minute change of location due to the smoke at Gwen Lake. Thank you to NVIT for hosting us, the volunteers, cooks, facilitators, partner organizations, and committee members who contributed their time and knowledge, as well as everyone who came out to participate and make the Coldwater Culture Camp a meaningful experience.



Harmony Williams,
Community Prevention Worker

SECONDARY PREVENTION UPDATES

FNHA Treatment Pathways Training - August 18th & 27th 2026

Finding the right treatment option can feel overwhelming for relations and the staff supporting them. Two training sessions with the First Nations Health Authority gave SCFSS staff a clearer understanding of the guidance available throughout the treatment journey.

The first session focused on treatment pathways for youth and brought together 15 staff from Secondary Prevention and Delegation, along with a representative from Lower Nicola Indian Band. Another 15 SCFSS staff attended the second session, which focused on treatment pathways for adults.

Staff learned about referrals, applications, care coordination and available treatment options. The sessions also encouraged teams to look beyond the application process by considering how relations are supported before entering treatment, while attending a program and after returning home.

"It is really great that we can lean on FNHA to support with treatment centre information and application processes," shared one participant.

Staff seeking treatment centre information or assistance with an application can contact Vanessa Buonanno for youth treatment pathways or Angela Aspinall for adult treatment pathways.





INTERIOR REGION
First Nations Health Authority

Meet the FNHA Interior Region Mental Health & Wellness Team!

Regional Addictions Specialist
Angela.Aspinall@fnha.ca
1-(778)-694-9327

- Facilitates education and awareness of opioid agonist therapy (OAT), withdrawal management programs, and recovery opportunities.
- Advocates for emergency withdrawal management and recovery beds for First Nations adults.

Regional Addictions Specialist
Vanessa.Buonanno@fnha.ca
1-(250)-319-2486

- Facilitates education and awareness of opioid agonist therapy (OAT), withdrawal management programs, and recovery opportunities for First Nations youth.
- Advocates for youth specific emergency withdrawal management and recovery beds.



*Sarah Blonde,
Prevention Services Administrator*





MENTAL WELLNESS UPDATES

Ambulance Coverage and Emergency Care

Recent temporary disruptions to local hospital services have raised concerns about ambulance costs and where patients may be taken during an emergency. However, concerns about receiving a bill should never prevent someone from calling for help when urgent medical care is needed.

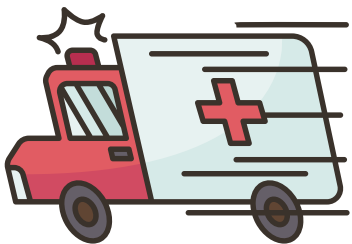
When someone calls 911, emergency responders can assess and stabilize the patient before transporting them to the nearest appropriate care facility. Even when local hospital services are temporarily affected, emergency care remains available.

The First Nations Health Authority Health Benefits Program covers ambulance transportation for eligible Status First Nations members in certain circumstances. In many cases, the bill is sent directly to FNHA when BC Emergency Health Services has the member's status number. If an eligible member receives a bill personally, it can be submitted to FNHA Health Benefits for review.

Ambulance Services That May Be Covered

FNHA Health Benefits may cover:

- Emergency ambulance transportation to a hospital
- Transportation from a lower level of care to a higher level of care, such as from a long-term care home to a hospital



Questions and Support

If you receive an ambulance bill or have questions about coverage, contact FNHA Health Benefits.

Phone: 1-855-550-5454

Bills Related to Accidents or Workplace Incidents

Some ambulance bills must be handled by another organization:

- Bills related to motor vehicle accidents should be directed to ICBC.
- Bills related to workplace incidents should be directed to WorkSafeBC.

During an emergency, always call 911. Do not delay emergency care because of concerns about ambulance costs.



Desiree Cosman,
Mental Wellness Clinical Manager



YOUTH TEAM MONTHLY UPDATES

Bridal Falls Water Park: Youth Team Making Memories Beyond Merritt - August 19th 2026

On August 19th 2026, Bridal Falls Water Park, Rosedale, B.C. - This summer, the Youth Team continued creating meaningful opportunities for local youth to connect, build friendships, and experience new adventures.

The outing provided a fun-filled day at the water slides and a much-needed escape from the smoky air that affected Merritt throughout much of the summer.

Nearly every youth who attended commented on how much they enjoyed having a break from the smoke, making the experience even more memorable.

Beyond the excitement of the water park, the trip created opportunities for youth to strengthen existing friendships and form new connections. For some participants, it was also a chance to travel outside the community during the summer, an opportunity they may not otherwise have had.

Experiences like these are an important part of the Youth Team's commitment to supporting the well-being of our youth. By providing safe, inclusive, and engaging activities, the team helps young people build confidence, develop positive relationships, and create lasting memories.

The smiles, laughter, and friendships formed at Bridal Falls are a reminder of the positive impact that accessible recreation and community-based youth programming can have on the lives of our relational youth.

"Getting away from the smoke was the best part of the trip."

"I hope we can do more trips like this in the future."

"I had so much fun on the water slides and got to hang out with friends all day."

One key lesson we learned is the value of providing youth with opportunities to experience activities and environments outside of their everyday routine. Something as simple as a day trip can have a significant impact on well-being, especially for youth who may face barriers to travel or recreation. We also saw how shared experiences naturally encourage friendship-building, social connection, and a stronger sense of belonging. Creating accessible and inclusive opportunities for youth to connect, have fun, and explore new experiences can have lasting positive effects on their confidence, relationships, and overall well-being. Ultimately, we want every youth to feel connected, supported, and empowered to reach their full potential.



Jessie Luka,
Youth Outreach Worker



EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Scw'exmx Child and Family Services Society (SCFSS) is family-centered and guided by n̓eʔképmx and syilx traditional knowledge and principles. SCFSS utilizes prevention and protection strategies with the collective goal to keep children with their families and communities. SCFSS recognizes historical challenges and is guided by traditional strength and wisdom to build family and community capacity in a monumental shift from protection to prevention.

As an Indigenous organization serving the n̓eʔképmx and syilx communities, SCFSS prioritizes the hiring of n̓eʔképmx and syilx community members. Following community member priority and pursuant to Section 41 of the BC Human Rights Code, preference may be given to qualified applicants of Indigenous ancestry.





Scw'exmx Child & Family

WE ARE HIRING!

- **Culture & Language Integration Manager**
- **Caregiver Coordinator**
- **Family Service Team Leader**
- **Human Resources Coordinator**

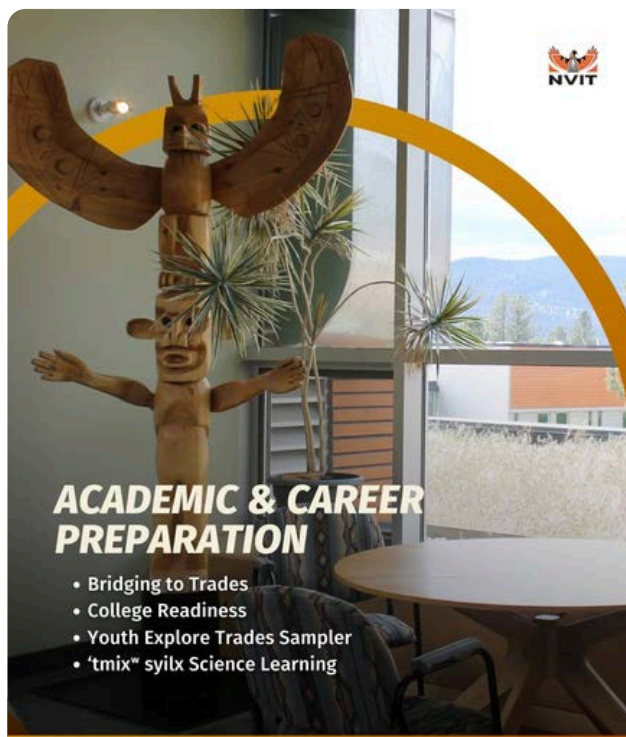


Check out our newest job postings by visiting:
<https://www.scwexmx.com/employment-opportunities>

APPLY NOW

See our full postings and apply on our website at www.scwexmx.com

EDUCATION/TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

ACADEMIC & CAREER PREPARATION

- Bridging to Trades
- College Readiness
- Youth Explore Trades Sampler
- 'tmix' syilx Science Learning

Learn more at nvit.ca



HEALTH

- Access to Practical Nursing
- Health Care Assistant

Learn more at nvit.ca



TRADES

- Professional Cook 1 and 2
- Residential Construction Foundation
- Carpenter Level 1 and 2
- Electrician Foundation
- Welder Foundation

Learn more at nvit.ca



HUMAN SERVICES

- Indigenous Holistic Wellness and Addictions
- Indigenous Human Services
- Bachelor of Social Work

Learn more at nvit.ca

Focus Web Development	Futures GIS/GPS Mapping
Foundations GIS/GPS Mapping	 First Nations Technology Council

FALL COURSES NOW OPEN

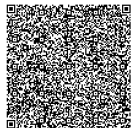
Last week, we opened registration for three FREE online training programs:

- Foundations GIS/GPS Mapping
- Focus Web Development
- Futures GIS/GPS Mapping

Whether you're looking to build technical skills, explore a career in technology, or take the next step in your learning journey, these programs offer practical, industry-relevant training in a supportive environment.

Training is free for eligible Indigenous learners ages 18–35 living in BC, but spaces are limited.

[LEARN MORE](#)





FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES



K'en T'em Scholarship Program

On behalf of K'en T'em Limited Partnership, the Citxw Nlaka'pamux Assembly is excited to share this new opportunity! K'en T'em Limited Partnership (KTLP) is proud to support nle?képmx learners, students, apprentices, and community members pursuing education, training, certifications, and professional development opportunities. This scholarship program is made possible through the generosity and commitment of our valued industry, community, and business partners who have contributed funding to help support educational success and workforce development within nle?képmx communities.

Applications will be accepted until October 5, 2026. Following the application deadline, the K'en T'em Scholarship Committee will review all eligible submissions and select recipients in accordance with the established scholarship criteria.

Successful and unsuccessful applicants will be contacted by email after October 12, 2026. Please ensure that your contact information is accurate and up to date when submitting your application.

k"uk"scémx" for taking the time to apply. We wish you success in your educational, training, and career journey.

We would also like to thank the generous sponsors that have helped make this opportunity possible:



For more information and to apply please scan the provided QR code or follow the link provided in this post.

For support with the application process please call 250-378-1864 or connect with your community's CEC!



Citxw Nlaka'pamux Assembly Bursary Program

Are you a Citxw Nlaka'pamux Assembly member who has graduated from high school, a post secondary program or diploma, completed an individual level trades program, or completed your Red Seal/Journeyman certification since 2024? If so you may be eligible for a CNA Bursary!

- **\$500** High School Graduation Bursary
- **\$500** Post Secondary - 1 Year Program Bursary
- **\$1500** Post Secondary Diploma - 2 Year+ Bursary
- **\$500** Individual Level Trades Bursary for each level of Trades training completed
- **\$1500** Red Seal/Journeyman Certification

All certificates or diplomas must have been earned from 2024 to present year to be eligible for a bursary. Each successful bursary application must include:

- A completed Citxw Nlaka'pamux Assembly Bursary form
- Proof of membership (status card from CNA Participating Band)
- A letter requesting the bursary (sample letters are available upon request)
- A copy of official transcript and diploma/certificate

For more information about the Bursary Program or to request a Bursary Application Form please contact: CNA Employment & Training at 250-378-1864 or administration@cna-trust.ca.



Your Best Defense is You - September Tech Corner

Getting ready for Cyber Security Awareness Month. Can you trust what you see and hear?

Artificial intelligence can create convincing messages, photographs, voices, and videos. A fraudulent request might appear to come from someone you know, including a relative, colleague, or trusted organization.

The technology might be new, but the safest response is familiar: pause, connect, and confirm. If a message asks for money, information or immediate action.

1. **Pause** – Urgency and pressure are warning signs. take a moment before replying, clicking or sending anything.
2. **Connect** – Call the person using a number you already know. Do not rely on the contact details in the message.
3. **Confirm** – Ask a personal question, check with another relative or use a family verification word.
4. **Check the Source** – A family display name, picture, or voice can be copied. Confirm through another trusted channel.
5. **Protect Codes** – Never share a sign-in or verification code with someone who unexpectedly contacts you.
6. **Talk as a Family** – Agree now on how your family will verify unusual or urgent requests.

Family Tip:

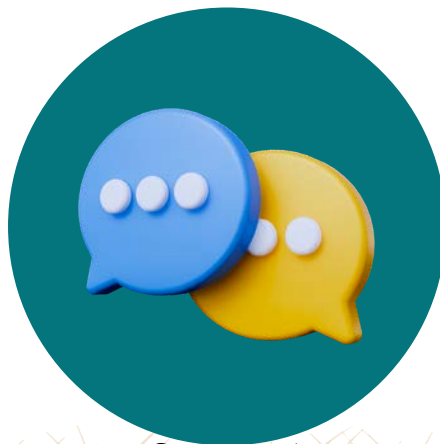
Chose a family verification words. Pick a word or short phrase that is easy for your family to remember but difficult for someone else to guess. Use only when confirming an unexpected request. A familiar name, photo, or voice is no longer enough on their own to prove who sent a message.

How SCFSS is Protecting Information in the Age of AI:

SCFSS has established clear safeguards for the responsible use of artificial intelligence. Staff may only use approved, enterprise-level AI tools for Society work. Staff also receive guidance and training so that AI is used carefully, with human oversight and respect for privacy, cultural integrity, Indigenous data sovereignty, and community trust.



Pause



Connect



Confirm

Take a moment, protect what matters.



First Nations Health Authority
Health through wellness

Learn more about diabetes and gum disease

Diabetes and gum disease

Diabetes is a health condition characterized by the inability of your body to properly manage glucose (sugar) levels in the bloodstream, leading to high blood sugar. There are three main types of diabetes: type 1, type 2, and gestational diabetes.

Gum disease is caused by a bacterial infection that leads to inflammation of the gums and bones supporting your teeth. There is a higher chance of developing gum disease if diabetes is not controlled.



Did you know?

- Approximately 5.7 million Canadians live with diabetes.
- Uncontrolled diabetes can delay healing and increase inflammation in the mouth.

What is the link between diabetes and gum disease?

- Gum disease can cause inflammation that affects the body's insulin response. This can, in turn, raise blood sugar levels and increase the risk of uncontrolled diabetes.
- High blood sugar can increase the amount of sugar in your saliva. This feeds the gum-disease-causing bacteria, leading to infection and inflammation in the mouth.
- Diabetes can impact your immune function which can make it more difficult for your body to fight the infection causing gum disease.

What are some ways to maintain and improve my oral health?

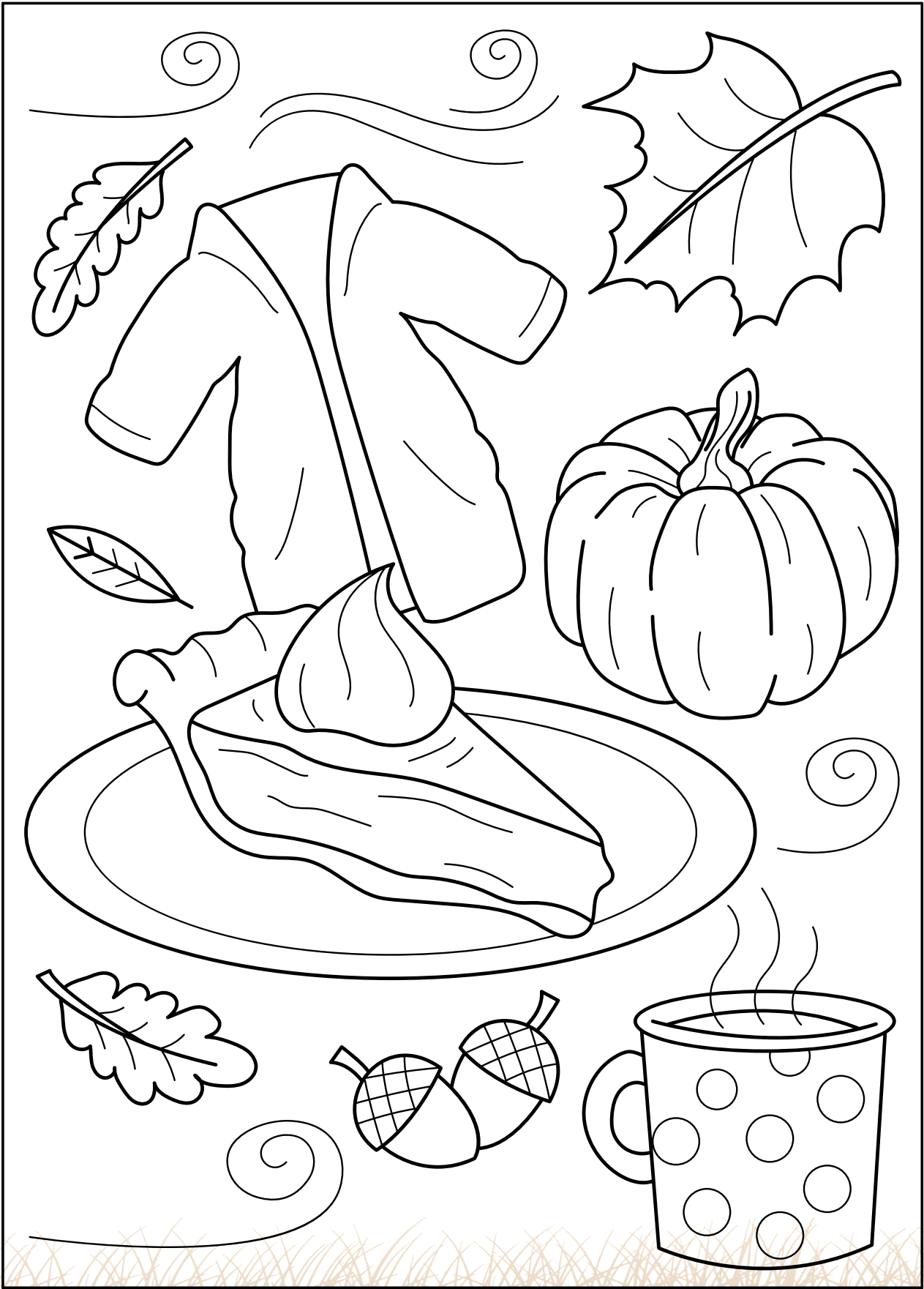
- Brush your teeth twice daily, floss once daily, and see a dental professional regularly for checkups and cleanings.
- See a medical professional regularly to manage your diabetes and control your blood sugar levels.
- If you see signs of gum disease, see a dental professional immediately to prevent it from worsening. Signs of gum disease to look for include:
 - red, swollen, tender, or bleeding gums
 - gums that pull away from teeth and/or;
 - loose teeth.



Learn more about how to manage diabetes here: [HealthBeat_ManageDiabetes.pdf](#)

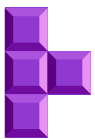
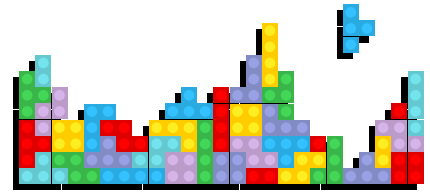
Learn more about the First Nations Health Authority's Oral Health program, at <https://www.fnha.ca/what-we-do/maternal-child-and-family-health/dental-therapy> or scan the QR code.





FAMILY FUN GRID

Complete fun family activities and fill in the grid below!
Bonus block included for you to create your own activity!



**GO FOR A
FAMILY
NATURE
WALK**



**HAVE A
FAMILY
PICNIC**



**COOK A
MEAL
TOGETHER**



**NO PHONE
HANG OUT**



BUILD A BLANKET FORT



**COLOUR
TOGETHER**



**HAVE A
BOARD
GAME
NIGHT**



YOU PICK:



SCW'EXMX CHILD & FAMILY NEWSLETTER SIGN UP!



Would you like to receive newsletters
and updates from Scw'exmx Child &
Family? Scan or click the QR code below
to sign up for our newsletter today!



www.scwexmx.com • facebook.com/scwexmxchildandfamily • Instagram.com/scwexmxchildandfamily



Scw'exmx Child & Family

Child Wellness Concern After Hours? Please Call:

1-800-663-9122

Children's Help Line for Children and Youth

Do you need help?

If you don't feel safe or you have a concern, you can call this number 24-hours a day for free from any phone.

310-1234

Scw'exmx Child & Family Services Society

Office Hours: Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Downtown Address: 1988 Quilchena Ave., Merritt, BC V1K 1B8

Culture & Language Address: 2099 Nicola Avenue, Merritt, BC V1K 1B8

Mailing Address: 1750 Lindley Creek Rd, Merritt, BC V1K 0A3

Prevention Hub Address: 2475 Merritt Ave, Merritt, BC V1K 1B8

Quilchena Address: Unit #2 - 3512 Highway 5A, Quilchena, BC V0E 2R0

Telephone: 250-378-2771

www.scwexmx.com

Facebook Page: facebook.com/scwexmxchildandfamily



Healthy Children



Healthy Communities



Healthy Families

