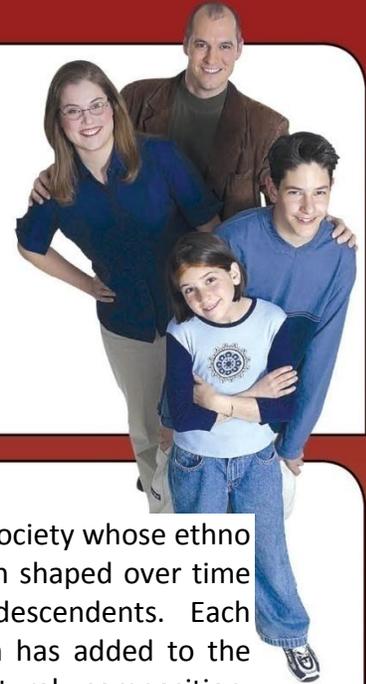




Family LINK Letter



Cultural Diversity

Walk down the street in one of Canada's major cities and you won't be surprised to hear a dozen languages spoken. Although Canada has two official languages (English and French), more than 200 languages were reported in the 2011 Census of Population as a home language or mother tongue. 17.5 percent reported speaking at least two languages at home, compared to 14.2 percent in 2006. In 2011, 80 percent of the population who reported speaking a language other than English, French or an Aboriginal language lived in one of Canada's six largest census metropolitan areas (Toronto, Vancouver, Montreal, Calgary, Edmonton and Ottawa).

Just as the natural environment depends on biodiversity, so the human environment depends on cultural diversity, because no one civilization encompasses all the spiritual, ethical and artistic expressions of mankind.

Jonathan Sacks

meetville.com

Canada is a multicultural society whose ethno cultural make-up has been shaped over time by immigrants and their descendents. Each new wave of immigration has added to the nation's ethnic and cultural composition. Over time, patterns of immigration have shifted. Historically, most immigrants came from Europe. But, more recently, the largest group of newcomers to Canada has come from Asia (including the Middle East). Everything we see around us has been influenced in some way by different cultures – our clothes, daily routine, music, food, art, sport and poetry are all as they are because they have been mixed with our knowledge of different cultural features. Through multiculturalism, we have opened our minds and have had the opportunity to learn about many different things: plus the country has benefited from it economically in many ways.

Brooks – City of 100 Hello's



The SPEC Association for Children and Families
Community Cultural Centre
#101-327, 3rd Street West, Brooks, Alberta.
E-mail: links@spec.ab.ca

403-501-5556 (direct line)

Immigration Diversity Stats

- In 2011, Canada had a foreign-born population of about 6,775,800 people. They represented 20.6% of the total population, the highest proportion among the G8 countries.
- Between 2006 and 2011, around 1,162,900 foreign-born people immigrated to Canada. These recent immigrants made up 17.2% of the foreign-born population and 3.5% of the total population in Canada.
- Asia (including the Middle East) was Canada's largest source of immigrants during the past five years, although the share of immigration from Africa, Caribbean, Central and South America increased slightly.
- The vast majority of the foreign-born population lived in four provinces: Ontario, British Columbia, Quebec and Alberta, and most lived in the nation's largest urban centers
- Combined, the three largest visible minorities groups-South Asians, Chinese and Blacks-accounted for 61.3% of the visible minority population in 2011. They were followed by Filipinos, Latin Americans, Arabs, Southeast Asians, West Asians, Koreans and Japanese

1 out of 5 people in Canada is a Visible Minority

Languages across Canada

- Of the immigrants who had a single mother tongue, close to one-quarter (23.8%) reported English as their mother tongue and 3.4% reported French. Among those whose mother tongue was other than Canada's two official languages, Chinese languages were most common, followed by Tagalog, a language of the Philippines, Spanish and Punjabi.
- Three-quarters (74.5%) of the foreign-born population were able to conduct a conversation in more than one language. In many cases, immigrants who could speak more than one language reported knowledge of English or French, in tandem with a non-official language: 61.2% were able to converse in English or French and one or more non-official language(s), 9.9% in English and French and one or more non-official language(s). Another 2.6% could speak English and French but not a non-official language. As well, 0.8% said they knew only non-official languages.

Brooks Community Adult Learning Center

Brooks Community Adult Learning Center provides ESL instructions to immigrants, refugees and Temporary Foreign Workers as well Employability Enhancement Skills and General interest courses to the wider community. Their student population number is approximately 160. Students originate from countries such as China, Columbia, Congo, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Mauritania, Mexico, Somalia, Sudan, Ukraine etc. They offer eight classes of Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) and two ESL classes each day and which are taught by their very capable and experienced instructors.

BCIS Immigration

Brooks & County Immigration Services is a not-for-profit organization that provides settlement and integration services to all immigrants, refugees and temporary foreign workers. This assistance covers many levels through one-on-one sessions, group workshops and community outreach.

Our Settlement Counselors guide clients through the many aspects of moving to a new centre. Finding appropriate housing, a family doctor, schools for children or employment are just a sample of the services they provide. We also assist clients with applying for benefits, completing difficult to understand forms, or setting a budget for their household. We also hold a monthly session for people new to Brooks in order to answer some of the questions they may have, and to help familiarize them with their new home.

For those looking for work, or for a change in their career, we have an Employment Counselor on staff. In addition to assisting people with their resumes and cover letters, we are a resource for interview skills, advice on what is expected in the Canadian workplace and for employers seeking specifically-trained applicants.

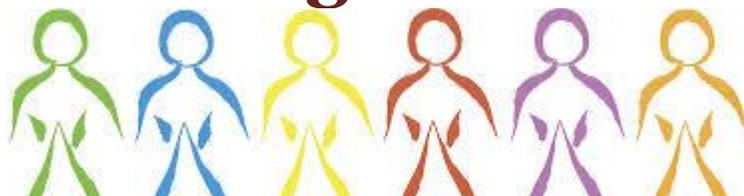
The Spec Association

LINKS is here to help you as the first point of entry for services for children and families. If our staff don't know the answer, we will find someone who does. We will advocate for you and connect you to the people that you need. LINKS works with community members and agencies to ensure family needs are met. At LINKS we also have Newcomer services. We can help with a number of things:

- Find community information on housing, child care, schools, medical needs, banking, etc.
- Help filling out government forms and applications
- Translation and interpretation services.
- Assist with family crisis by giving support and referral information
- Learn about and guide you through, often confusing government systems
- Provide you with a free copy of the Local LINKS Booklet
- Access support groups
- Register your child in school
- Planning opportunities to gather, learn about Canadian culture and practice speaking English

Our services are free, confidential, and available in a number of languages including French, Spanish, Filipino, Punjabi, Hindi, Urdu, Mandarin, Somali, Swahili and English.

1 out of 5 in Canada's population is foreign born!



City of Brooks

Diversity and inclusivity are just two things the City of Brooks organization strives to achieve in its daily interactions with residents and visitors alike. Brooks Mayor and City Council play a pivotal role in shaping our community into the diversity friendly and welcoming place that it is today. With strong support from the Mayor and City Council, the City of Brooks has been able to form many positive relationships with its stakeholders, implement many new ideas and projects, and host many celebratory and inclusive events.

- The City of Brooks website, www.brooks.ca, has a Google translator toolbar option which allows readers to view content in over 50 different languages.
- The City of Brooks offers free welcome packages that are available for all residents and visitors to pick up at City Hall. These packages consist of a map, leisure centre pamphlet, visitors guide, City of Brooks community profile, and much more.

Con't

- The City of Brooks partners with many organizations to promote and host special events including: Wheelchair Basketball Tournaments, Chinese New Year Celebrations, National Aboriginal Celebrations, Alberta Culture Days, Seniors Appreciation Week, International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Hate Crimes Awareness Day, and many other important dates throughout the year.
- The City of Brooks provides its staff with annual diversity training in order to continually equip them with the skills and understanding to work with different values, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours.
- In 2012, the City of Brooks approved a three year partnership plan outlining specific actions the City can take to become more welcoming and inclusive and combat racism and discrimination. This plan can be viewed in the Welcoming and Inclusive section on www.brooks.ca

VISION

A caring and committed community where kids are resilient and valued.

MISSION

Revealing potential in kids through positive, proactive programs for children and their families.

If you would like to subscribe to the Family LINK Letter, contact LINKS at 403-501-5556 or links@spec.ab.ca



WWW.SPEC.AB.CA

