

Uqausirmut Quviasuutiqarniq 2016

Background Information for Schools, Day Cares, and Libraries

What is *Uqausirmut Quviasuutiqarniq*?

Uqausirmut Quviasuutiqarniq is Nunavut's annual celebration of Inuktitut and Inuit culture. Uqausirmut Quviasuutiqarniq takes place from **February 1 to 28, 2016**.

Uqausirmut Quviasuutiqarniq means "celebration of our language." The purpose of Uqausirmut Quviasuutiqarniq is to promote and strengthen the use of Inuktitut in all areas of our lives. Many groups participate across Nunavut, including schools, day cares, libraries, work places, and community groups.

International Mother Language Day (Feb. 21)

Uqausirmut Quviasuutiqarniq takes place at the same time as **International Mother Language Day** (Feb. 21). On February 21 every year, communities around the world celebrate and promote the importance of mother languages. For more information, visit the United Nations' web page: www.un.org/en/events/motherlanguageday.

Department of Culture and Heritage Activities

Each year, the Department of Culture and Heritage celebrates Uqausirmut Quviasuutiqarniq by:

- Developing a theme and poster;
- Sending Inuktitut resources to schools, day cares, and libraries;
- Organizing special activities and events;
- Participating in radio and television call-in shows on language issues;
- Commissioning the creation of Inuktitut songs, films, and books and making them available to all Nunavummiut; and,
- Releasing an album of the winners of Qilaut, Nunavut's annual Inuktitut music contest.

We are currently expanding our Uqausirmut Quviasuutiqarniq activities so we can provide more resources and support to organizations that want to participate. Throughout 2016, we will be working with partners across Nunavut to develop new activities and resources for the 2017 celebration.

To get involved or to get news and information, please visit our website: ch.gov.nu.ca or contact Tocasie Burke, Manager of Inuktitut Affairs, Official Languages Division (867-975-5528; tburke@gov.nu.ca).

2016 Theme: *Inuit Annuraaqausingit*

The theme for *Uqausirmut Quviasuutiqarniq 2016* is ***Inuit Annuraaqausingit*** (“Inuit clothing”). Inuit clothing technology enabled our ancestors to thrive in the Arctic environment. Our traditional and new clothing designs are an important form of cultural and artistic expression, showing relationships, spirituality, and our perceptions of the world.

Our clothing practices are closely related to our language. In Inuktut, we express the skills, knowledge, and values involved in producing clothing, including the complex processes, tools, patterns, and techniques. In Inuktut, we also express the human relationships and learning experiences that are part of our clothing traditions.

During *Uqausirmut Quviasuutiqarniq 2016*, take time to teach others and learn more about our clothing traditions and diverse Inuktut clothing terminology. Use Inuktut with children to talk about the pieces of clothing they wear. Talk with elders about their knowledge of harvesting and preparing materials, designing and making clothing, and their memories of clothing throughout their lives. Talk with people from across Nunavut about variations in clothing technology, designs, and terminology in each region.

Some Suggested Activities

To promote knowledge of Inuit clothing technologies, designs, and terminology at your school, day care, or library, you could:

- Invite elders into the classroom to talk about Inuit clothing;
- Host a family or community event and invite knowledgeable community members to talk about Inuit clothing or to show off local designs in a “fashion show”;
- Support older students to compile a list of clothing terms used in the local dialect;
- Create posters with drawings of Inuit clothing items and related tools, labeled with Inuktut terms; and,
- Hold skills workshops during which students learn skills related to harvesting materials, preparing skins, designing, and sewing.