

## **Film examines First Nations men and fatherhood**

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### **Times Colonist**

June 17, 2007

PHOTO: Mike Glendale with his children, five-year-old Lola and one-year-old Jake, at their Victoria home.

"The minute I knew I was going to be a dad, I just jumped up in the air," recalls Mike Glendale, a 27-year-old father of two.

He's still one happy dad.

Never mind partying with the other guys. Being there for Lola, now five, and Jake, along with their mother, Deanna, is the biggest thing in his life, and it shows, as he plays, laughs, cuddles and cares for them. A recent business trip left him "in full-blown depression" because he missed them so much.

"The best part of fatherhood can only really be experienced if you're there," says the host of A Channel's *The New Canoe*. In that way, Glendale, a member of the Kwa'Kwa' Kewa Kw Nation, is covering father-child territory he never knew in his own life. His father - of non-native descent - left when he was only one, and he did not meet him again until he was 15.

"I come from a generation of boys that didn't have fathers," says Glendale, the youngest of six B.C. men documented in *Fatherhood: Indigenous Men's Journeys*.

**The film is part of the University of Victoria's larger Indigenous Fathers Project, the first in Canada to explore the experiences of native men with a view to what they have to offer one another and their kids.**

A writer, Glendale has also chosen to work nights as a maintenance man so he can spend days with his kids.

"When I look back, it's not going to be snapshots - it's going to be panoramic."

Jake is a giggling "intense little dude" prone to climbing all over the computer station.

Lola is a "thespian" who likes to sing out the window when the spirit moves her and is the designated "guardian of the flies."

Glendale is philosophical about what he missed with his own father. He would not trade learning to shave over the phone with his auntie in Seattle.

When he was 15, his family handed him a Christmas card containing his father's name and phone number. They've had a lot of two-hour conversations since then. It's an unconventional connection, but a healthy one, he says.

Growing up, Glendale found stable father figures in his uncle Kevin and his mother's husband, Steve, who came on the scene when he was seven.

"Something that fathers do for you is help you keep yourself in check," he says. "Young boys are rammy, often, and angry and excitable, and dads teach you how to channel that and I never got that."

But he buckled down and earned a diploma in conflict analysis before his first child was born.

Glendale laughs a lot but says that fatherhood is a "humbling experience" that has made him feel whole.