

Minto Children Learn Culture

One of the most unique children's classes held anywhere is taught at Minto. After the adults met to sing and dance native Athabascan songs during that Fourth of July celebration this past weekend, Dance Leader Evelyn Alexander gathered the children of the village together.

Most of the children were four to eight years of age, while some were as young as two. As the older villagers sang and maintained the beat, the youngsters grouped into a circle and imitated the dancing of their elders.

The young Athabascans then

filed into a single line and received individual coaching from Mrs. Alexander. They observed as she illustrated the porcupine, squirrel, and duck dances.

Later, they again grouped in to learn some of the ancient songs from their elders. In the way that parents have passed on

these songs and dances for generations, these parents were also teaching their children the ways of their people. This example is one of many which illustrates the determination of the native peoples of Alaska to keep alive the distinctive traditions of their cultures.