



A quarterly publication brought to you by the Caring for First Nations Children Society

Caring Network News



Spring 2008

Update from the Caring for First Nations Children Society...

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Delegation Agreements and Signing Ceremonies

Submitted by Linda Lucas

I recently had the honour of being invited to Delegation Signing Ceremonies. The signing ceremonies were held at

- Lalum'utul'Smun'eem Child and Family Services, January 17, 2008 in Duncan, BC; and
- Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services, February 22, 2008 in Vancouver.

Lalum'utul'Smun'eem received their Adoption Delegation, which also included a traditional adoption ceremony. It was a very profound ceremony to witness with the traditional Tzinquaw Dancers and drummers providing an opening welcome. The traditional Cowichan adoption ceremony was also very profound and what I found so impactful was to see the happiness on the faces of the children and parents as they were led into the hall for the completion of the adoption ceremony. It was an inspiring event and I was grateful for the invitation.

Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services held their Delegation Signing Ceremony in Vancouver with a number of provincial and regional MCFD representatives, community members and service providers in attendance. It was an honour to witness the urban Aboriginal coming together to acknowledge VACFSS. The agency is the first urban agency to reach the full protection mandate, and we raise our hands to the staff at VACFSS for their accomplishments.

Canadian Incidence Study

The Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect is the Public Health Agency of Canada's national child maltreatment surveillance system. It is designed to examine the incidence of reported child maltreatment and the characteristics of the children and families investigated by Canadian child welfare services. The first two national studies were conducted in 1998 and 2003; data collection for the next cycle will take place in 2008. The Canadian Incidence Study in 2008 will increase the number of Aboriginal child welfare agencies participating in the study from 8 to 20.

The criteria for selection of agencies in BC is based on:

- The agency must be providing Full Protection and have intake and investigation information that covers a time period of at least two years
- The agency should be a larger agency so they can capture enough data for the study.



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Training Report

Submitted by Grace Atkinson

ABSW: After delivering Child Protection training to both training groups in January, the instruction team got busy preparing for a number of other training initiatives. In addition to the Voluntary Services training which begins March 3, 2008, Kim (with help from contractors Anne Cochran and Annie Simmonds and various Ministry staff including Russell Spilsbury, Anita Misri, Leslie Anderson, Frank Mossop, John Green, Debra MacIver, Rob Parenteau, Ray Bronson, Marika Czink, Anne Clayton) has been working on two sessions of Out of Care Options for supervisors to be held March 17-19th in Richmond and March 26-28th in Terrace, Cheryl and Laurie have been writing the curriculum for the Aboriginal Adoption On-line Training Program and contractor Jeff Ward has been developing the platform that the curriculum will be loaded into. Grace has been fielding calls about other training requests for CAT, Supervisory, Board and training for workers who support a delegated function.

Board: A session running in Williams Lake March 4-6th with participants from four agencies.

CAT: The CAT contract terminated at the end of November 2007. The RFP (Request for Proposals) has not yet been posted on BC Bid.

Supervisory: Module II, originally scheduled for March 11-13th has been postponed to April 15-17th in Prince George. CFNCs has been contracted by Xyolhemeylh to run Module I February 26-28th and Module II April 1-3rd in Abbotsford. Xyolhemeylh generously opened seats to other agencies to attend.

Chris is working (with help from Anne Cochran and Annie Simmonds) to have Module III ready for the end of March but it is progressing slowly because of other work commitments. It is still our plan to have Module III delivered in the summer of 2008.

Adoption: As mentioned in the ABSW report, CFNCs has been contracted to develop and deliver an on-line adoption training program for non-Aboriginal people interested in adopting Aboriginal children. This program is being run with a pilot group in February-March 2008 to work out the bugs and get a good evaluation of the content.

Articles of Interest

From: First Peoples Child and Family Review

Available online: www.fncfcs.com/pubs/onlineJournal.html

Aboriginal Fathers Support Groups: Bridging the Gap between Displacement and Family Balance

Candice Manahan and Jessica Ball

Abstract:

The Aboriginal Fathers Project set out to explore the roles of fathers in British Columbia's Aboriginal families. The project aimed to investigate the ways community programs could support fathers' involvement with their children, and increase their participation in family-centred programs. This article briefly describes the project and outlines a few of the major findings from the research. The article discusses findings from the project which highlight the impact of colonialism and assimilation processes on the roles of Aboriginal fathers. The suggestion to

develop father-specific support groups and the use of traditional practices and spirituality in the support groups is discussed.

Reflections on Intergenerational Trauma: Healing as a Critical Intervention

Ashley Quinn

Abstract:

The high numbers of Aboriginal children placed in provincial and territorial care demonstrate the need for effective interventions that directly address the legacy of trauma from colonialization. This paper argues that healing is a critical component of any intervention seeking to help Aboriginal Peoples and their children. Research on healing and recent government initiatives and legislation directed at preserving traditional Aboriginal healing practices are discussed. This article concludes with recommendations for various community members involved in the healing of Aboriginal Peoples.

Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services Society Signs Delegation Confirmation Agreement



Marilyn Hedlund (MCFD), Kathy Louis (President VACFSS Board) and Bev Dicks (MCFD)



Michael Kennedy and Holden Chu (MCFD), and Bernadette Spence (VACFSS)

Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services Society (VACFSS), the Provincial Director of Child Welfare and the Vancouver/Coastal Region of the Ministry of Children and Family Development signed their Delegation Confirmation Agreement on Friday, February 22nd, 2008. The ceremony took place in the afternoon at the Trattoria Banquet Room in the Italian Cultural Centre at 3075 Slocan Street, Vancouver.

This agreement is the first of its kind in British Columbia to encompass the full spectrum of child and family services for an urban Aboriginal agency. The signing marks the transfer of Child Protection services in Vancouver to VACFSS commencing April 1st, 2008.

The transfer is a major milestone for urban Aboriginal agencies in the province of British Columbia as it establishes a template for other Aboriginal agencies striving to become fully delegated. Arising from a determination by the Aboriginal community to have their children and families supported by an Aboriginal agency sensitive to their culture, history and wisdom, the agreement signifies a shift in the thoughts and actions in British Columbia toward the care of Aboriginal children and families by Aboriginal agencies.

The signing marks the outcome of a process that began on December 14th, 2001 with the signing of the Delegation Enabling Agreement between the three groups. The agreement has been a product of the committed partnership between VACFSS and the government of British Columbia, who have worked in unison toward this common goal. As evidence of this partnership, Marilyn Hedlund, the Provincial Director of Child Welfare; Beverly Dicks, Regional Executive Director for the Vancouver/Coastal Region of the Ministry of Children and Family Development; and VACFSS President Kathy Louis all spoke at the signing. Members of the urban Aboriginal community and partner agencies to VACFSS were invited to support VACFSS as they took this historic step forward in assuming responsibility for child protection services within an urban context.

For more information, please contact Trevor Eggleton, VACFSS Communications and Public Relations Associate at 604-875-7016 or e-mail trevor_eggleton@vacfss.com.



Cowichan Tribes Achieves Adoption First!



Ernie Elliott, General Manager Cowichan Tribes, Jenny George and Lise Haddock, Lalum'utul'smun'eem Child and Family Services, and Cowichan Tribes Chief Lydia Hwitsum

Cowichan Tribes is the first and only First Nation in the Province of BC to sign an Adoption Enabling Agreement with the Provincial Ministry of Children and Family Development. This means that Cowichan Tribes has now regained their inherent right to plan adoption for their own children.

Cowichan Tribes, through their Lalum'utul'Smun'eem Child and Family Services delegated agency, now provides the full spectrum of children

and family services to Cowichan members who live on reserve, including adoption services.

On January 17th, 2008, Cowichan Tribes celebrated the official opening of their Adoption Program, by signing an historical Adoption Enabling Agreement Declaration with the Province of BC, and by honouring the adoption of 10 Cowichan children into their new adoptive families through a cultural ceremony. Due to the need to provide privacy to the children and

their new families, the event was by invitation only.

"This is an historic agreement for British Columbia," said Tom Christensen, Minister of Children and Family Development. "The agreement truly reflects the goal of both the Ministry of Children and Family Development and the Cowichan Tribes to ensure that the cultural, linguistic and spiritual needs of the children of Cowichan Tribes are met and nurtured."

Chief Hwitsum stated, “Cowichan Tribes Chief and Council are excited to take this step. This step is a realization and expression of our inherent right and responsibility for our Cowichan children.”

Official delegates from Cowichan Tribes, the provincial Ministry of Children and Family Development, INAC representatives, and a delegation from Yellowhead Tribal Council (Edmonton, AB) were on hand to witness the momentous ceremony. Yellowhead Tribal Services Agency is the only other Canadian First Nation delegated agency to provide adoption services to its

children and families and as such was invited to participate and celebrate in the achievement of Cowichan Tribes.

The next phase of the development of the Cowichan Tribes adoption program will be to provide adoption services for their children regardless of where they reside, to recruit new adoptive families for the children who need an adoptive home, and to provide services to birth parents who wish to place their children for adoption. After solidifying their own adoption program, Cowichan Tribes is also willing to assist other First Nations

who may wish to plan for their children through adoption. Cowichan Tribes’ value that “Our children are sacred” is indeed demonstrated by the development of their new Adoption Program. Children who cannot be raised by their own parents no longer have to remain in foster care. The children can now have a permanent home that will raise them to remain connected to their culture and community and extended families.

For more information, please contact Ernie Elliott, Cowichan Tribes General Manager at (250) 748-3196.

Out of Care Options Training

Submitted by Kim Grzybowski

The Department of Indian Affairs Canada (INAC) and the Ministry of Children and Family Development have jointly agreed to fund Out of Care Options for First Nations and Urban Aboriginal Agencies. The Society has been busy developing a training package for supervisors which will be delivered during the last two weeks in March, the first being in Richmond and the other being in Terrace. It was agreed that it would be a good idea to ensure agencies that are providing field placement support,

after new staff had been attending the Aboriginal Social Work Training Program had people in the agency who are knowledgeable about the Out of Care Options.

Following these two sessions the Society will be scheduling orientation sessions in each agency. The hope is that the Supervisors, a Society instructor and the relevant Practice Analyst will assist staff in understanding the options that are available as alternatives to bringing children into care.

You ask what Out of Care Options are; well that is a very good question. Social workers will be able to work in collaboration with parents on different out of care options by placing their

child with another person rather than the child being placed in foster care by the director under the *Child, Family and Community Service Act*. These options can range from transferring custody to another person other than the parent, youth agreements and support services thus reducing the number of children in care. Another area INAC has agreed to fund is post adoption assistance for adoptive families who have adopted children with special service and placement needs.

This is an exciting time in child welfare to have other options for out of care arrangements for children. Stay tuned for up coming training for Aboriginal Agencies.

Become a Member of CFNCS!

Corporate and Individual memberships are available and entitle the member to benefits such as:

- reduced registration fees for conferences
- quarterly newsletter
- access to the resource centre
- access to message posting

Membership Fees

Annual Individual Membership Fee is \$20
Annual Corporate Membership Fee is \$200
Please make all cheques payable to:
Caring for First Nations Children Society
3rd Floor, 7728 Tetayut Road
Saanichton BC, Canada V8M 2E4

To join online please go to:
www.cfnsc.com/membership.htm

Jordan's Principle

–with permission from Kelly A. MacDonald, B.A., LL.B., LL.M.

As the federal and provincial/territorial governments sort out their respective jurisdictional and funding responsibilities, the urgent needs of [First Nations] children and families are falling through government jurisdictional cracks...ⁱ

The “jurisdictional debate” between the federal and provincial/territorial governments, relates to a long-standing disagreement over which government has the ultimate legislative, constitutional, fiscal, and moral responsibility for the provision of services to First Nations children. This debate has resulted in First Nations children falling through the “cracks” and being denied services entirely based on their race and place of residence.

In 2005, a child-centered alternate dispute mechanism/principle was proposed entitled *Jordan's Principle*ⁱⁱ. This *Principle* ensures that First Nations children are no longer denied services that they are entitled to. Under this *Principle* the government or ministry/department of first contact must pay for the services without delay or disruption. The paying government can then refer the matter to a jurisdictional dispute mechanism.

The *Principle* is named in honour of a young Manitoba boy who died in hospital while the Federal and Provincial governments argued over who would pay for his specialized care (close to his home community). Sadly, at the age of 5, Jordan passed away – he never got to go home.

On December 12th, 2007, the House of Commons unanimously passed a motion (296) in support of *Jordan's Principle*. It is now up to the Federal and Provincial governments to make *Jordan's Principle* a reality.

The Hon. Ted Hughes in his *BC Children and Youth Review* recommended that the Federal and Provincial government address the jurisdictional issuesⁱⁱⁱ. The new

Representative for Children and Youth recently echoed this recommendation and called upon the provincial government to implement *Jordan's Principle*^{iv}. Here's how you can support this call for action:

- Write the Premier urging the provincial government to implement Jordan's Principle.
- Copy your correspondence to the First Nations Leadership Council^v.
- Write your MP and register your support with the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada <www.fnfcfs.com>

Jordan's Principle – Update

Submitted by Shawn Hoey

Since the New Year, two significant events took place. First, on January 24th at the long awaited Indigenous Child at the Centre Chiefs' Forum, the Premier announced that the Province would endorse Jordan's Principle, thus making BC the first provincial jurisdiction to acknowledge Jordan's Principle. Second, on February 12th the news release of the Throne Speech announced that, “The Province will work with First Nations and the federal government to put Jordan's Principle into action . . .”

It is important to continue our call to action and to keep the government accountable to their commitments. Please help reduce the numbers of children falling through the cracks by writing your MLA, MP, the Premier and the Prime Minister and requesting the full implementation of Jordan's Principle.

ⁱ The Ad Hoc Coalition on the Rights of Aboriginal Children in Canada, *Aboriginal Children and Youth: Urgent Needs and Unmet Obligations. A Brief to the U.N. Committee on the Rights of the Child* (2003) online: <http://www.kairoscanada.org/e/aboriginal/rptACACC.pdf>

ⁱⁱ Kelly A. MacDonald & Kylie Walman, *Jordan's Principle: A Child First Approach to Jurisdictional Issues*, Chapter 3 in WEN:DE We are Coming to the Light of the Day (FNCSC, 2005).

ⁱⁱⁱ Hon. Ted Hughes, *BC Children and Youth Review: An Independent Review of BC's Child Protection System* (April 7, 2006). Recommendation No. 14.

^{iv} Representative for Children and Youth, *2007 Progress Report on the Implementation of the Recommendations of the BC Child & Youth Review* (Nov. 26, 2007).

^v First Nations Leadership Council c/o:

- BC AFN: #507 – 100 Park Royal South, West Vancouver, BC V7T 1A2 Fax: 604-922-7433
- First Nations Summit: #1200 – 100 Park Royal South, West Vancouver, BC V7T 1A2 Fax: 604-926-9923
- Union of BC Indian Chiefs: #500 – 342 Water Street, Vancouver, BC V6B 1B6 Fax: 604-5726

Policy Update

Submitted by Shawn Hoey

Here we are at a quarter to four on the day my policy update submission for the newsletter is due. Perhaps, that is enough said.

The Indigenous Child at the Centre Chiefs' Forum on January 23rd to 25th was well attended and brought together Chiefs and service providers from around the province in an effort to develop an action plan.

The challenging objectives of the Chiefs' Forum were:

- Determine the priority of children and families in First Nations politics;
- Determine what is needed to ensure First Nations can fully exercise self-determination in relation to children and families;
- Examine the cost/financing of child and family services (e.g. Directive 20-1);
- Examine the distinction between delegation of legislation vs. administrative authority;
- Determine how an Early Childhood Development Strategy links with an "Indigenous Child at the Centre Action Plan";
- Develop a draft "Indigenous Child as the Centre Action Plan"; and
- Determine the need and timing for a second follow-up Forum.

Although the final report has not been released yet, the Forum did bring to light a number of unresolved and unspoken issues. As such, it was a great beginning, and, with adequate resources and support, the process has huge

potential for the development of a First Nations child welfare governance model or models.

The February 12th Throne Speech of the 4th Session of the 38th Parliament announced a number of initiatives to strengthen the New Relationship with BC's First Nations. Two significant to our work are:

- The Province will work with First Nations and the federal government to put Jordan's Principle into action, and to strengthen services for Aboriginal children and families. That principle says the interests of Aboriginal children must always be paramount, and that no child, on- or off-reserve, should be put at risk due to jurisdictional disputes.
- New legislation will enable Aboriginal authorities to assume legal responsibility for the delivery of most child and family services in their communities.

At present, the provincial government has given both their endorsement of and commitment to work with different parties to put Jordan's Principle into action. Implementation is still a long way off. The article on Jordan's Principle in this newsletter will provide you with information and contacts on how you can keep the governments accountable to their commitment.

The controversy surrounding the regional Aboriginal authorities' movement is bound to increase with the creation of the Authorities Enabling Legislation. Presently, there are no regional Aboriginal authorities and two interim authorities. According to the

Deputy Minister, moving from an interim to an authority can only take place with a reasonable consensus from communities, urban organizations, Nations and delegated agencies.

The Preventative Services Roll Out is gathering momentum. Three groups, comprised of Agency, MCFD and INAC representation, have formed. They are the working group, the steering committee, and the advisory committee. A project charter has been developed and progress is being made. Norma McAllister of the Society has taken a leading technical role and is active in all three groups. Thank you Norma!

A number of other collaborative issues on the policy front that the Society is involved in include MCFD's Quality Assurance Framework Development, CLBC protocol development, and the operational and practice standards review.

Stay tuned for more updates in the next newsletter.



Upcoming Conferences

Expanding Horizons for the Early Years 2008: Practice, Research and Promoting Change

Learn about new approaches to assessment and intervention for infants and young children for application in practice; become informed about emerging research findings; create opportunities for networking among colleagues.

Presented by Infant Mental Health Promotion (IMP)

When: April 4 – 5, 2008

Where: Toronto, ON

www.sickkids.ca/imp/

Third National Biennial Conference on Adolescents and Adults with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome

Theme: FASD and Mental Health: The Wisdom of Practice

Presented by: Connection, BC's Women's Hospital and Health Centre, Ministry of Children and Family Development and Public Health Agency of Canada.

When: April 9 – 12, 2008

Where: Vancouver, BC

www.interprofessional.ubc.ca/

[Brochures/Brochure_AdultswFASD_2008.pdf](#)

Helping Canadian Kids Thrive: National Conference on Positive Youth Development

Conference goals include: connecting Canadians of all ages involved in strengths-based youth development; and investigating how communities can improve and enhance themselves through social development, awareness and engagement.

Educating and exciting participants about what is available to support your Positive Youth Development efforts through Asset Building, Youth

Entrepreneurship, Community Development, Youth Engagement and other effective approaches.

Presented by Thrive Canada

When: May 1 – 2, 2008

Where: Kamloops, BC

www.thrivecanada.ca/

Growing Attachments Conference, Deborah Gray, MSW, MPA

Deborah brings forward practical, yet flexible ways to move children, from early infants to early teens – into their new families. Learn the effects of neglect and trauma on brain and emotional development and more importantly, how to recognize them. Discover home and school approaches that encourage children to flourish, even after trauma and neglect. More than ever, families need professionals who will thoroughly prepare them as their family grows.

When: May 5, 2008

Where: Saskatoon, SK

www.fncfcs.com/events/docs/Growing_Attachments_Conference_Deborah_Gray_2008

Joining Together: Changes and Challenges in Child Maltreatment

The purpose of the conference is to highlight innovations, advances and challenges in the identification, investigation and management of child maltreatment. The conference will showcase forensic investigation strategies, practice interventions and current research. A multi-disciplinary approach will be modeled and advocated.

Presented by Canadian Society for the Investigation of Child Abuse

When: May 12 – 14, 2008

Where: Calgary, AB

www.csicainfo.com/index.cfm?pageid=51

9th Annual National First Nations Child and Family Services Conference

The conference theme, “Connecting with our most Precious Resources; Our Children, Communities and Ourselves”, reflects a resolution toward nurturing communities. Our need to promote a safe, wholistic community is integral to effective service delivery by our people.

Conference Goals

The goals of the 9th Annual National Child & Family Services Conference includes: facilitating the exchange of skills and information on research, practices and systems in Child Intervention; promoting and strengthening sustainable networking and information sharing; and maintaining a positive collaboration between government to First Nation.

When: May 19 – 23, 2008

Where: Edmonton, AB

www.ytsa.ca/default.aspx?ID=2-4-1

Social Work National Conference 2008: Human Rights in a Diverse Community

Join us in the world's most diverse city for this first-of-its-kind national social work conference bringing together clinicians, educators and researchers from across the country. This dynamic conference aims to stimulate dialogue and inspire new insights into issues of human rights and access to services.

Co-sponsored by: Canadian Association of Social Workers and Canadian Association of Schools of Social Work.

Hosted by: Ontario Association of Social Workers

When: May 22 – 25, 2008

Where: Toronto, ON

www.socialworknationalconference2008.org/