



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

Caring Network News



Summer 2010

Update from CFNCS ...

Submitted by Linda Lucas, Executive Director

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Welcome all to another fiscal year at Caring for First Nations Children Society of BC.

The society continues to be a growing environment with many exciting projects in progress, including the society's joint efforts in the Partnership Forum, the Practice Standards Redesign, and many INAC deliverables. Our training centre has continued to grow and enable Aboriginal social workers to engage in learning that is conducive to best practices when working with Aboriginal children involved in the family justice system. We are excited about possible new training initiatives and as these ideas become more probable, the society is eager and looks forward to sharing them with our stakeholders.

Our policy team has been busy with a number of projects and we are pleased to welcome new additions to the policy team in order to accommodate the growing number of projects. As many of you know INAC will be "Moving to Actuals" for maintenance reimbursements by April 1, 2011 and the society will be involved in this project. There will be much transitional work in this area for both INAC and the delegated agencies. As the society continues to grow, we extend our thanks and gratitude to the community partners who have supported us in our growth. We thank the Department of Indian Affairs, the Ministry of Children and Family Development, our community supports and our society staff.

Thank you and we look forward to an exciting year!



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Training Update

Submitted by Melanie Scott

“Most of the things worth doing in the world had been declared impossible before they were done.”
– Louis D. Brandeis



This past quarter has been extremely busy for the Training team. In addition to delivering the Aboriginal Social Worker training, Family Preservation training and three Youth Agreement training sessions, two sessions of Aboriginal Pre-Adoption On-Line started and new curriculum is being developed for non-delegated child welfare, Executive Directors, and community workers.

We would like to thank Tina McIntrye, Donna Jardine, Michelle Reid, Laurie Harding and Heather Lawson for bringing their expertise to the training, and guest speakers Lester Joe, Hugh Braker, Anne Lowe, Nancy Hashimoto, Melanie Mark, Annabelle Fung and Marilyn Coupland for sharing their expertise with all the participants. Our hands go up to all of you for taking time out to enhance the social workers' learning, which makes a difference for their communities.

In March, 19 social workers completed their Guardianship training. Eight of these social workers were stopping at Guardianship, completing their field work and once finished, will work with children in continuing care. They will be responsible for permanency planning for these children and youth, and ensuring their needs are met in areas such as health, education, life skills, culture, community, family connections, spirituality, and recreation. Eleven social workers completed their Child Protection training and once their field work is completed, will work with families and communities to address child protection concerns and reduce risks while building strength and capacity. Three sessions of Youth Agreement

training were also delivered in Richmond, Prince George and Nanaimo over a period of two days each. Additionally, Family Preservation training occurred in Prince George with 18 participants coming from the North and the Interior. We have also launched two sessions of Aboriginal Pre-Adoption On-line Training with 48 potential adoptive parents who are learning about the history of Aboriginal people, ways to ensure Aboriginal children learn and are connected to their culture, heritage, extended family and communities, as well as racism, neo-colonialism, the legacy of colonialism and cultural plans.

In April, a new round of Aboriginal Social Worker training started with 11 participants from around the province. As well, the last session of Youth Agreement training took place in Nanaimo and the Aboriginal Pre-Adoption On-Line continued.

In May, the Voluntary Services components of the Aboriginal Social Worker training were completed. After this training and field work, social workers can work with foster homes, caregivers, and families seeking services to assist them with parenting. New curriculum was written for non-delegated child welfare, and the Supervisory training was updated and enhanced.

Congratulations to all the social workers and family preservation workers who completed training this quarter.

Please check out our web site for new training or training dates, and resources or articles of interest.



Guardianship



Family Support

Policy Update

Submitted by Shawn Hoey

Hi Everyone,

Change is a constant. The policy team at CFNCS continues to change as a result of growth. We welcome Kelly and Nedinska, the two analysts we had on contract, as permanent employees of the Society and look forward to extending a welcome to our third analyst, Leslie Morison, starting with us this month. We also congratulate Candace McKivett on her successful acquisition of the Executive Assistant position here at the society. It is comforting to know that her coolness will continue to impact and influence the policy team albeit from a different location within the building. Change is not finished with us yet; we still have to fill the vacancy left by Candace but the selection process should be over soon and we will welcome someone new to our team.

In spite of the changes in personnel to the policy team, we continue to work on our projects and meet expectations set by ourselves and our partners. Ongoing projects such as the AOPSI Redesign continue to be a policy team priority. This project is currently in the community information gathering phase and has accumulated significant input from the communities that the delegated agencies support. Elders, caregivers, community leaders, practitioners and community members from communities across the province have provided their knowledge on how children were traditionally cared for by the community.

Further information about this project can be found on our website www.cfncs.com.

The ministry's initiative to transfer services for youth with special needs from Community Living BC (CLBC) back to the MCFD continues to engage the policy team. We continue to provide technical support to the working group on implementation of this initiative as well as disseminate information back to our agency partners.

The policy team has also completed a trial run of the Quality Assurance Baseline Survey with two volunteer agencies. After making some minor revisions to the survey, it is expected to be conducted across all of the delegated agencies serving children and families later this spring.

Short-term projects the team is currently working on include organizing the Executive Directors training to be held in Vancouver this spring and organizing the celebrations for the signing of the Partnership Terms of Reference.

And many more to the growing list. . .

The policy team welcomes the changes it has encountered over the last few months and looks forward to new opportunities and potential projects that come with an enlarged team.

Celebrating Another Year - Having a Summer BBQ



**Come Join Us:
Entertainment
Kids Activity
First Nations
Artists**

Caring For First Nations Children Society
664 Granderson Road, Victoria

**Tuesday, August 25, 2010
11 am – 3 pm**

Please RSVP to Michele Oatman
Tel: 250-391-0007 Ex: 221
Michele.Oatman@cfncs.com

Human Resource Corner

Submitted by Lori Fitzgerald, CHRP

Tips for showing new employees that they are valued

1. Introduce them to their coworkers. Describe existing employees' skills and talents a bit so the new employee knows who can aid them with what. (The recognition to existing employees doesn't hurt either!)
2. Use the buddy system. Have employees take turns introducing new employees to the organization.
3. Take the team to lunch so everyone has a chance to get to know the new person at a more personal level.

Remember that people who like their coworkers are much more likely to stay on and stay engaged. Help them build great relationships from the start!

Poor gadget manners increasing

An article from Robert Half Technology stated that the use of gadgets such as smartphones and other handheld devices may make employees more productive but hasn't made the workplace more polite, according to a survey of 270 Canadian chief information officers. More than four in 10 (42 percent) have seen increased instances of poor workplace etiquette resulting from more frequent use of mobile electronic devices.

Five tech-etiquette offenders

1. Misguided multi-tasker: Thinks emailing or texting during a meeting or conversation demonstrates efficiency.
2. Email Addict: Relies on a constant stream of emails, instant messages or texts to communicate, thinking it will save time.
3. Broadcaster: Has no shame when it comes to using a cellphone anytime, anywhere to discuss anything.
4. Cyborg: Keeps a wireless earpiece or headphones constantly plugged in.
5. Distractor: Puts phone to annoying vibrate mode.

EI rate hikes coming

Employment insurance premiums will have to increase by 35 per cent over the next three years to balance the EI reserve fund, according to a report from the Parliamentary Budget Officer. EI premium rates for employees will increase every year by the maximum allowable amount – 15 cents per \$100 of insurable earnings – starting in 2011 to reach \$2.33 per \$100 of insurable earnings by 2014, projected the study. The current rate is \$1.73 per \$100. The increase will raise the annual contribution per worker by an average of \$535 (\$223 paid by the employee and \$312 paid by the employer).

At HRG Human Resources Group, we provide a full range of human resource services. If you would like to consult with us on an HR issue please contact me at 250-655-0474 ext. 222. Alternatively, if there something you've always wanted to know about HR but have been too afraid to ask, just email us a question at info@hr gbc.com and we'll pick one or two questions to respond to in the spring newsletter. The deadline for your email is May 1, 2010. All questions will be handled confidentially and your name will not be published.

New Staff



CFNCS welcomes Associate Director



Rachelle Dallaire

My name is Rachelle Dallaire and I have been privileged with the opportunity to fill the Associate Director position with CFNCS. I was born in Kirkland Lake, Ontario, which is a small French mining town. I lived there for only a short period of time before moving to Temagami, traditional Ojibwe territory in Northern Ontario. My ancestry is Ojibwe, Mohawk and Montagnais Métis. I am pleased to have been able to call British Columbia home since 2005 when I moved here with my daughter Chantale. Since residing in British Columbia, I have been employed as a drug and alcohol counselor for the Salvation Army and as a Native Family and Youth Advocate with the Native Courtworker and Counseling Association. My vocational endeavours mean little to me in comparison to my family gifts; I am the proud mother of a beautiful spirit, Chantale Marie, age 7, and a proud auntie to Jacob Jean, age 15 months. I am especially thankful to the traditional people of this territory who continue to embrace me and welcome me on their land to be a part of the vision.

New Policy Analyst Hired



Leslie Morison

Leslie is honoured and excited to have been chosen as Policy Analyst for the Caring for First Nations Society. Leslie is of Cree heritage from Saskatchewan. She was born and raised in North Vancouver and has been living with her family in Victoria for the last 30 years.

Leslie holds a Masters Degree in Leadership and Training achieved in 2004 from Royal Roads University. Her thesis was focussed on the recommendations that First Nations Elders gave to improve wellness in their respective communities.

Leslie has spent the last five years working in the provincial government in progressively senior roles as a Senior Policy Analyst in the Aboriginal Health Branch and recently as a Project Manager, Mental Health and Addictions. Leslie is passionate about working to improve the lives of Aboriginal people and especially the lives of children and their families. As her mother was taken from her reserve as a child with no process in place, Leslie is personally invested in and committed to the work of Caring for First Nations Children Society in ensuring that children are placed in safe, culturally appropriate homes with the proper documentation in order.

Update on the Practice Standards Redesign Initiative

The Process

In acknowledgement of the traditional roles of family and community for the caring and well-being of our children, the process had to start from this traditional place. This redesign belongs to the people who have participated in the process, and the children, families and communities where delegated agencies practice. Each of the information gathering sessions around the province have been locally organized to meet the needs of those involved. The information gathered belongs to those communities and participants. Themes are and will continue to be identified from the information that is being shared. Those themes will provide the building blocks for writing the standards. We will continue to confirm the information gathered, themes identified and steps to take through the agencies, the working group and the steering committee.

Accomplishments

- Literature review completed
- Information gathering sessions held in Duncan, Vancouver, Victoria, Prince George, Prince Rupert, Surrey, and Cranbrook, with sessions taking place in Kamloops and Williams Lake this week.
- By the end of May, over 400 people including elders, Indigenous scholars, practitioners, and community members connected to 120 BC First Nations communities, urban Aboriginal groups in Victoria and Vancouver, and the Métis will have participated in the information sharing process.

Next Steps

- Continue the information sharing sessions to ensure that we are inclusive of all
- Continue to identify themes
- Follow up with participants to ensure that we are getting it right
- Complete the thematic analysis
- Draft the new practice standards
- Celebrate our success

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
664 Granderson
Victoria, BC Canada V9B 2R8

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

Aboriginal Operational and Practice Standards and Indicators

Introduction

The Aboriginal Operational and Practice Standards and Indicators (AOPSI) emphasize the importance placed upon family and community within Aboriginal cultures. Though the emphasis of some of these standards differ from those of the Ministry, the safety and protection of children are always paramount. The AOPSI standards either meet or exceed those established by the Ministry.

History

In 1996, a meeting was held in Whistler, British Columbia. Participants at this meeting included the Executive Directors of Aboriginal Child and Family Service Agencies, the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development Canada, and the British Columbia Ministry of Children and Families. One of the initiatives to come out of the meeting was an agreement to establish a reference group that would proceed with the development of an Aboriginal Audit and Review process.

The first meeting of this reference group took place in March 1997. The reference group agreed that before an audit and review process could be established, the reference group would need to develop operational and practice standards for Aboriginal Child and Family Service Agencies. The standards would be the basis for measuring Agency compliance in an audit and review process. The reference group developed operational readiness criteria that enables First Nations Child and Family Service Agencies to sign Delegation Enabling Agreements (DEA) and went on to develop operational and practice standards for each level of delegated authority. The result of their work is the Aboriginal Operational and Practice Standards and Indicators (AOPSI) which was reviewed and approved by the Director of Child Protection and the Executive Directors of the First Nations Child and Family Service Agencies in 1999.

In 2003, the Ministry of Children and Family Development contracted with the Caring for First Nations Children Society to conduct a review of the AOPSI Practice Standards. The purpose of the review was to:

- enhance the quality of social worker practice by ensuring that the standards that guide practice and form the basis of the audit process are culturally appropriate, achievable, and sound;
- ensure that the AOPSI practice standards are consistent with the revised Ministry practice standards and legislative and regulatory requirements;
- ensure that the AOPSI practice standards reflect the recommendations of case reviews for child protection practice;
- update and incorporate any additional changes required to the practice standards.

To complement the release of the revised practice standards in 2005, a review was begun the same year to revise and update the operational standards that govern the organizational development and service planning components of an agency. The revised standards were released in 2008. Currently, the AOPSI Practice Standards are being redesigned. The purpose of the Redesign is to implement a new model developed from an Indigenous worldview and accountable to the First Nations Director of Child Welfare.

Purpose of Operational Standards

The delegation of authority to provide child welfare services flows from the *Child and Family Community Service Act* (CFCSA). When Aboriginal communities seek to develop their own delegated child and family service agencies, they must meet operational standards and requirements. Operational standards assist agencies and the Ministry by establishing criteria for the delegation of authority for child welfare services under the CFCSA. The operational standards are also important tools for the financial review operational review and practice audit (“Common Audit”) of Aboriginal Child and Family Service agencies.

The standards establish the operational readiness criteria that an Agency must meet in order to sign a DEA and/or to receive funding from Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC).

The operational standards address:

- governance;
- service delivery model;
- financial administration;
- human resources;
- communication;
- administration (e.g. information sharing, records management).

For each of these components there is a standard statement and a list of criteria for achieving the standard. These standards represent minimum expectations of performance and it is recognized that an agency may well exceed these standards.

Purpose of Practice Standards

The practice standards are the foundation for providing child and family services and represent minimum expectations of performance. The standards ensure that agency social workers and supervisors deliver quality services to children and families. Additionally, practice standards are important tools for the Common Audit of the Agency.

For each of the practice standards there is a standard statement and a list of criteria for achieving the standard. These standards represent minimum expectations of performance and it is recognized that an agency may well exceed these standards.

The Representative's Quarterly Update

Hello everyone. I hope you are enjoying the spring weather and that you are getting ready for the beautiful summer I hope we'll have in British Columbia this year!

In my work as B.C.'s Representative for Children and Youth, it is my privilege and my priority to consult with Aboriginal people and communities across our province. It is absolutely essential that Aboriginal children be supported in a way that respects their unique sense of place, culture, language and community. I know from my experience as a judge, as an Aboriginal person and as a mother, that our children are best served by strengthening their family and cultural ties. There are far too many Aboriginal children today who are not benefiting from those ties and we will all pay the price.

More than 50 per cent of the province's approximately 8,500 children in care are Aboriginal, even though Aboriginal children make up only seven per cent of B.C.'s child population. In the North the numbers of Aboriginal children in care are even higher. About one out of ten of B.C. Aboriginal children are in care, in the home of a relative or in a kith and kin agreement.

Given these unacceptably high numbers, how do we best get Aboriginal children back into healthy communities, families and cultures that will nourish them?

We must start by ensuring that the safety and well-being of children is put first, and focus on ensuring that their rights are upheld.

And in returning children to communities and families, we must first ensure that the community also has the capacity to put the children's safety, well-being and rights first.

It is important to remember that there are remarkable successes in Aboriginal communities in British Columbia. We have a very long history of a child-focused culture, in looking after our own children.



Our families and kinship communities have huge assets – including a deep love and commitment toward children. We need to nurture children's learning spirit. We need to lift them up and ensure them a good path. We are seeing more and more of our young people travelling this good path, overcoming odds, taking on huge challenges. They make us extremely proud as they return to our communities to help the next generations.

I thank the editors of the *Caring Network News* again for allowing me space here. I am grateful for the work you do on behalf of children and youth and as always, I encourage you to contact my Office should we be able to assist you in child advocacy matters. We can be reached by phone at 1-800-476-3933 or by email at rcy@rcybc.ca.

Sincerely,

Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond
B.C.'s Representative for
Children and Youth

