



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

Caring Network News



Winter 2008

Update from CFNCS ...

Submitted by Linda Lucas

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Hello, and welcome to another edition of *Caring Network News*. I hope you are enjoying the new regular features: Human Resources Corner and Money Corner. We welcome your input on these and other articles, so please contact us if you have any suggestions for future news items.

It's been a busy quarter here at the Society, but amidst all the work I was honoured to be invited to attend two very special events. Last month, Carrier Sekani Child and Family Services held a feast and ceremony, "We Lez Du Neeh", to honour Indian Residential School survivors and to celebrate the transfer of children into the care of the agency. Please see the back page of this newsletter for more details. This month I was able to attend a "Changing Hands Ceremony" at Lalum'utul'Smun'eem Child and Family Services, Cowichan Tribes. This celebration was a welcoming home of children to their traditional territory. Thank-you to both agencies for including us in these significant events.

The Society was delighted to welcome our new Manager of Training last month, Estelle Simard. We are confident her presence will go a long way toward filling the very substantial void created by the departures of both Grace Atkinson and Cheryl Ward earlier this year. Estelle comes to us from the Anishinaabe Nation, and you can read more about her inside this newsletter.

Thank you for your continued interest in, and support for the Society. I would like to take this opportunity to wish all of you a peaceful and happy holiday season with your family and friends.



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- quarterly newsletter
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Training Report

Submitted by Estelle Simard

“We hold our hands high to the participants of the training.”



The Aboriginal Social Work Training Program offers three levels of training that are required for delegation in the province of British Columbia. This training is presently offered to the Aboriginal Agencies in British Columbia. At this point in our fiscal year, we have achieved the following:

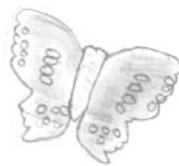
- Voluntary Services (1-5) – two deliveries of this session with a total of 35 participants in the last year.
- Guardianship – two deliveries of this session with a total of 47 participants in the last year.
- Child Protection – one delivery of this session and one coming up in December with a total of 29 participants in the last year.
- Board Training – two deliveries of this session with a total of 20 board members who participated.
- Supervisory – three components of this session were delivered to a total of 46 participants in the last year.

We are also in the process of delivering the final round of training for this year's program, with our dates and participant packages being sent out soon. Further, we are working on finalizing next year's training calendar; this will be posted on our website in the New Year.

In addition to this training, we have been delivering three auxiliary training sessions focused on Out of Care Options, Family Services, and Adoptions online.

1. Out of Care Options

Out of Care has provided participants with an opportunity to review the AOPSI standards and CFCSA requirements that guide practice as well as the reporting, monitoring, and review procedures to ensure best practice of these options. Out of care options is an alternative to bring children into care and is one mechanism to ensure the life continuity for a child. The training has been quite successful and over 70 participants have completed this project. We have had training sessions in Terrace, Prince George, Cranbrook, Kamloops, Port Alberni, and North Vancouver.



2. Family Preservation/Family Service

This is a time limited project that has educated non-delegated workers in various agencies through greater Victoria and Vancouver areas to better understand how the BC child welfare system works, and promote relationship building between prevention and protection services. The process of understanding has included:

- Orientation to court process in child welfare, and possible roles and responsibilities in their area as advocates.
- Orientation to the *Child, Family, and Community Service Act*, roles of delegated agencies, and working together strategies to benefit the child.
- Orientation to child protection workers, indicators of abuse and neglect, and failure to thrive. Also what practice standards are related to addressing risk.
- Orientation to risk assessment, developing a safety plan, and how to contribute to the overall process.
- Final orientation is to liability and working together with Ministries and delegated agencies.

This educational training has provided opportunities for non-delegated workers to contribute to keeping children safe and protected. Investing in community partners to increase supportive services for children was the main impetus to this project. To date we have had 42 people enrolled in these sessions.

3. Aboriginal Pre-Adoption Training

Aboriginal Pre-Adoption Training is an online course developed for people who are interested in adopting Canadian Aboriginal children. The information and learning from the activities support a commitment to promoting the emotional, physical, mental and spiritual well-being of these children.



- This year we have developed an online pilot project which began in 2008. We have a total of 20 participants at various levels within the program.
- Instructor Cheryl Ward has worked diligently to provide support and consultation via email throughout the duration of the course.

The training course will cover:

- The context for training
- The impact of colonization and residential schools
- The importance of cultural identity for Aboriginal children
- The challenges in developing a positive racial identity for Aboriginal children
- The significance of developing and maintaining a child's connection to their family, extended family, culture and community
- Information about post-adoption services and resources

While this course is designed to provide information, it is also intended to offer guidance and support for participants as they learn about the issues that are critical and essential for nurturing and supporting an Aboriginal child into adulthood. The next session for this pilot will be announced shortly.

New Staff

Meet the Manager of Training Services



Estelle Simard is from the Anishinaabe Nation and a member of Couchiching First Nation. She has just been hired at the Caring for First

Nations Children Society as the Manager of Training Services, and we are proud to have her here with us at the Society.

Much of Estelle's experience was in the culturally competent management of integrated children's mental health and child welfare services at Weechii-it-te-win Family Services. She has direct supervisory and clinical services expertise with Aboriginal people and has specialized in family preservation strategies.

She also specializes in training focused on Historical Trauma, Internalized Oppression, Addiction, Suicide Risk and Protective Factors, Family Violence and Working with Sexual Abuse Victims, Families, and Offenders.

In addition, she has presented at national and international forums on child welfare on "cultural attachment theory". Her greatest strength is influencing the Aboriginal paradigms in the non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal world. Challenging the status quo of mainstream child welfare practice is a cornerstone to her unique personal practice model. Estelle has recently completed her MSW thesis with the University of Minnesota Duluth. It is entitled *Culturally Restorative Child Welfare Practice – A Special Emphasis on Cultural Attachment Theory*.

She is the proud daughter to George and Priscilla Simard as well as the proud mother of Jeremy and Fallon Andy. She is a willing "learner" with a deep quest to be all that the Creator intended her to be.

Join us to welcome Estelle!

Carol McFadden, CFNCS – Program Coordinator



Hi there, my name is Carol McFadden and I am struggling at the moment with this bio as I am not use to writing about myself or my accomplishments, and

it feels like a big risk so... here goes. I am Tsimshian, Tlingit, Irish and Scottish. I raised my son who is now 19 years old and an absolute gift to me.

I know the impact and magnitude of the work we all do, as my family was caught in the sixties scoop.

I can tell you one of my accomplishments that I am proud of is having a short story published in an anthology of Native Women. OK, so... that is a bit about me you don't know.

Here is the bit about me you might know. I am the new Program Coordinator here at CFNCS. I have worked at different First Nations organizations as well as Government offices. I am the person at the office you would most likely talk to if you phoned with any questions about training.

Policy Update

Submitted by Shawn Hoey

Greetings from the policy shop. Wow! It has been a very busy quarter.

It is exciting to be part of the Partnership Forum as this group continues to move forward in new and exciting ways. The partners – INAC, MCFD and the delegated agencies – all have slightly different agendas and have been able to put aside their differences and work together to support each other in creating better opportunities for First Nations, Aboriginal, and Métis children and families. The word must be out as to the effectiveness of this organization as there is increasing interest in bringing initiatives to this group. One initiative in particular, the Aboriginal Operational Practice Standards and Indicators, is rooted in the history of the partnership. Keeping with that history, the revised Operational Standards are ready for approval just in time for the start of the Practice Standards review.

There is much excitement buzzing about the Practice Standards Review. All the partners have expressed a desire to create practice standards that meet legislative requirements

but start from Indigenous models of supporting and protecting children. Such standards would go far towards the development of an Indigenous child welfare system in BC. Other work that we have and continue to be involved in includes, but is not limited to:

- Canada Incident Study of Abuse and Maltreatment
- Aboriginal Practice Forum
- Aboriginal Contracting and Procurement
- Out of Care Options
- Integrated Case Review
- Quality Assurance Framework
- Information Systems Transformation
- Training Working Group
- Child Welfare Assessment Tools
- Standardized Costing
- Implementation of Jordan's Principle
- Preventative Services Roll-Out

I am proud to be part of this policy team, and I would like to acknowledge Norma McAllister, Policy Analyst, for her tireless efforts, Candace McKivett, Office Assistant, for her amazing ability of keep all this work organized, and Linda Lucas, Executive Director, for her leadership and guidance.

We all look forward to a new and exciting future for First Nations child and family services.

Secwepemc Child & Family Services Urban Office Grand Opening

Secwepemc Child & Family Services (SCFSA) celebrated the opening of their second Kamloops office, October 16. This new office, located in the heart of North Kamloops, expands the agency's service delivery to include the urban First Nations families of Kamloops, as well as the seven Secwepemc communities they continue to serve.



SCFSA continues to work with the local Ministry of Children & Family Development Aboriginal Services offices, transferring service responsibilities for First Nations families from MCFD to the fully delegated agency.

SCFSA has assumed responsibility for Kamloops First Nations children in the care of MCFD. The agency is proud to provide a spectrum of services: family support,

therapy, resources, child protection and guardianship. Holistic practice, community involvement and respect for the Secwepemc culture are all part of the agency's commitment.

This new location, and its growing services, signify the Secwepemc Nation's move toward a nation-based child welfare authority.

Human Resource Corner

Submitted by Lori Fitzgerald, CHRP

Employment Contracts

Although governments change statutes and courts re-write the common law regarding employment, one thing which remains constant is the value of a written employment contract. An employer's best (and, in some cases, only) opportunity to dictate its preferred employment terms is through binding, enforceable contracts of employment.

It makes sense to tailor the employment contract rather than using a generic version. Employers should give consideration to including at least some, if not all, of the following items:

1. The contract should identify the date of commencement of the employment (and, if the contract is intended to be for a limited term, the expiry date). It is highly preferable that the commencement date of the employment is after the date on which the employee signs the contract. This way, employees can't come back to an employer and claim they didn't know about the terms or were pressured to sign.
2. The employer's policy manual should be expressly incorporated into the contract. This gives the contents of the policy manual binding, contractual force. A copy of the policy manual should be provided to the employee along with the contract so that they have the opportunity to review it before signing.
3. If the employer seeks the benefit of an initial probation period, the elements of the probation should be set out. This is one of the most useful clauses an employment contract can contain. The absence of a detailed probation clause will surely undermine an employer's attempt to dismiss a short-term employee without notice or pay in lieu.
4. In seasonal or cyclical businesses, the contract should provide the employer with the discretion to impose temporary, unpaid layoffs. This protects the employer against the assertion that an unpaid layoff amounts to a constructive dismissal (the right to impose an unpaid layoff is not an implied term of the relationship and must be agreed upon by the parties).
5. The employer should include a thorough confidentiality (or non-disclosure) clause to prevent unauthorized use and exploitation of the employer's information. Types of information typically protected will include information regarding families and children that have had contact with the agency, financial information, third party contractors, trade secrets and intellectual property, etc.
6. Especially in businesses where the employee may be developing ideas for workshops or training programs, the contract should clarify the ownership of the work product. Many employers assume, incorrectly, that they automatically gain ownership of everything their employees create. Such a clause is intended to remove all doubt about the employer's ownership entitlement.
7. Enforceable non-competition and non-solicitation covenants are also recommended, at least when the employee poses a competitive threat. These clauses are, however, notoriously difficult to create in a manner which will be binding at a later date. The less restrictive the covenant, the more likely it is to be upheld by a court. Employers should first answer whether they even require such protection from a particular employee.
8. A severance formula is required to address the implied common law requirement of reasonable working notice of termination. This is, without a doubt, the single most important content in an employment contract. The employer has the discretion to impose an advantageous severance formula but it must be at least as generous as that required in the applicable (provincial or federal) employment standards legislation.
9. An item which is often missing from employment contracts is a clause clarifying what happens to employee benefits upon the cessation of the relationship. It is essential for the employer to ensure there is no lingering obligation to provide continued insurance coverage after the employment comes to an end.
10. Finally, issues relating to entitlement to overtime pay can, and should, be addressed in the employment contract. If the employee is not a manager, the contract should confirm that work attracting overtime pay rates must only be performed with the employer's prior authorization. If the employee is considered a manager, the contract should emphasize that the employee's salary is intended to cover all hours of work (such that extra pay, whether at straight-time or at overtime pay rates will not be paid).

An employment contract can contain many other types of clauses but these are the ten most critical items. Employers who properly utilize written employment contracts addressing these topics will find they have an ability to avoid ever having to walk into a courtroom.

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 afraid to ask just email us a question and we'll pick one or two questions to respond to in the spring newsletter. The deadline for your email will be February 1, 2009. All questions are handled confidentially and your name will not be published.

The Money Corner

Submitted by Frances O'Donovan, CGA

Moving Accounting into the Twenty-First Century

For many years in Canada the accounting “bible” was Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP), and as such dictated the standards for the audit process and financial statement presentation. As the auditor’s report at the front of your audited financial statements says “...we conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards.”

The shocking exposures in the financial world in recent years, i.e. the Enron scandal, has resulted in the introduction of new legislation such as the *Sarbanes Oxley (SOX) Act* and the Canadian equivalent, and some major changes in reporting guidelines. In Canada GAAP is now in the process of being replaced by IFRS (International Financial Reporting Standards).

GAAP is a principles-based system which focuses on presenting the business reality of business transactions. IFRS Advisory Services, KPMG, Toronto, says “... since a principles-based system relies on the professional judgment of those applying the standards, it may be possible for two well-qualified accountants to apply the standards differently.” As a result of this factor, IFRS requires more disclosures than Canadian GAAP.

IFRS is the official reporting standard which was recently adopted by over 100 countries around the world. It has been around, in various forms, since 1973, and was previously known as IAS (International Accounting Standards). However, it has only recently begun to be used more prevalently throughout the world.

Why the move to IFRS? Up until the late 1990’s, each country had its own set of accounting and reporting standards. With increasing globalization, companies or investors who do business in several countries need to understand each nation’s accounting principles. In addition, if a Canadian company is listed on a foreign stock exchange, it needs to comply with foreign regulations to reconcile its financial statements to foreign accounting standards. If every country uses different accounting standards, investors have difficulty comparing companies and investors ultimately bear the costs of translation. The goal behind IFRS is to harmonize accounting between countries which should ultimately make it easier to conduct business internationally and raise funds in global capital markets.

On Feb. 13, 2008, the Canadian Accounting Standards Board decided to make IFRS mandatory for all publicly accountable enterprises in Canada starting in January 2011. IFRS will impact almost everyone, but Canadian businesses have a decided edge over many countries in that Canadian GAAP is similar to IFRS. However, there are significant changes to accounting in Canada that will come into being over the next several years.

How are organizations affected? At the present time only publicly accountable enterprises such as public and crown corporations as well as other entities, such as government business enterprises and government business type organizations, are immediately affected by IFRS. Mandated to change their reporting to comply with IFRS, if a Canadian public company does not convert to IFRS by 2011, its stock could be de-listed from Canadian stock exchanges.

“On a conceptual basis, IFRS and Canadian GAAP are very similar. However, across many aspects, there are significant differences when one starts looking at the two reporting standards in detail,” Matt Bootle, partner, Professional Practice Group, Ernst and Young, Calgary. “The specific differences will depend on the particular industry and the actual company.” Some industries where IFRS will mean significant accounting changes are financial services, utilities subject to rate regulation, insurance, manufacturing, and oil and gas.

The requirements for private companies, pension plans, public sector entities (to which the standards contained in the CICA Public Sector Accounting Handbook apply), and not-for-profit organizations (as defined in the CICA Accounting Handbook) have not yet been finalized, but each of these sectors may end up with its own specific set of accounting standards. It has been suggested that there may be as many as five or six sets of different accounting standards in Canada – each with varying degrees of IFRS content depending on the type of entity involved.

Stay tuned for more information, as the impact to non-profit organizations becomes clear.

The Representative's Quarterly Update

Hello everyone and I thank the Caring For First Nations Children Society for giving me the opportunity to share a few thoughts with you about some issues very dear to my heart.

For five years running, B.C.'s child poverty rate has been the highest in Canada. We know that children who live in poverty don't do as well in school, aren't as healthy and often don't have the social attachments to engaged adults required for them to flourish. Given the recent economic downturn, concerns for vulnerable children have got to be 'top of mind' for those of us who advocate on their behalf – and I take this one step further – as a civil society – we all have a responsibility to be more aware and willing to act. Despite the great strengths we have in Aboriginal communities, there are often limited supports. Vulnerable children and their families are going to need us more than ever in the challenging times ahead.

While I am concerned about all children living in poverty, B.C.'s Aboriginal children and families should be a particular focus given their significant vulnerability in several key areas. Poverty compounds a child's risk in a profound way, making the hills of life steeper and harder to climb. Vulnerable children are usually born to vulnerable parents. A civil society will not leave it to struggling families to combat their children's vulnerability alone. We need to support them to build resilience and overcome the intergenerational trauma that devastates their lives. The services we provide must be meaningful and accessible so that Aboriginal children and their families have the same opportunities for success as non-Aboriginal children and their families.

In October, my Office hosted the first annual Champions for Children and Youth 2008 BC Summit in Vancouver. We discussed everything from child rights and safety, to mental health issues, to education, to the unacceptable realities experienced by First Nations children. We had representatives from international research institutions present their data. We heard from Children's Commissioners from New Zealand and Finland and gleaned some insight into their successes and challenges. Leaders from B.C.'s First Nations communities honoured us with their presence and shared with us their experience. The Summit was an extraordinary gathering and a summary of the event will be posted on my website in the coming weeks.

My mandate as B.C.'s Representative for Children and Youth includes work in advocacy and the monitoring and evaluation of the child-serving system. My team and I have been working hard on a number of reports aimed at providing British Columbians with a broad view of the status of vulnerable children in our province. In late November, my Office released an *Update on the System of*

Services for Children and Youth with Special Needs where I expressed my concerns about the accessibility of services, wait times and other issues. We are also working toward the completion of reports on topics ranging from the Youth Justice System to a critical look at the Sexual Abuse Intervention Program, and exploring in greater depth the concept of full-day kindergarten. Regardless of the activity of my Office, First Nations children are uppermost in our mind and we are perpetually assessing if the child-serving system is providing support and conditions for their optimal development.

Most likely, you will have contact with my Office through our Advocacy role. With a dedicated focus on improving outcomes for children, my team of advocates help children and youth who are receiving designated services to navigate their way through the child-serving system. I have eight talented advocates in our three regional offices who are available and eager to assist you. They have opened nearly 2000 new cases since our office opened its doors in April of 2007, and I am proud to say they have been key players in the resolution of many complex scenarios. My team of advocates are consistently child-focused and dedicated. Their work reflects the organization's unwavering commitment to improving the lives of the vulnerable children and youth of this province, ensuring their voices are heard and that they are given the opportunity to participate in decisions affecting them.

With the holiday season upon us, I reflect on the tremendous joy my children bring to me. They love this time of year – the lights and the trees and the decorations and the spirit of giving and gratitude that we embrace in our home. To know and experience joy is something that strengthens my personal commitment to advocate for vulnerable children for whom joy is rare. We all need to do what we can to change the unacceptable circumstances that trap our children and youth in lives that are painful and fearful. We have a long road ahead, but I have absolute faith in our ability to collectively raise these children up and to give them the tools and the opportunities they deserve to succeed.

Enjoy this special time with your families, and on behalf of my staff and my own family, I wish you all the very best of your dreams and hopes for the coming year.

Sincerely,



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

Carrier Sekani Family Services Honours Residential School Survivors with Historic Events

Submitted by Barby Skaling, Carrier Sekani Community Health Manager, We Lez Du Neeh Event Coordinator

Carrier Sekani Family Services hosted two significant gatherings to acknowledge the past injustices of residential schools. We Lez Du Neeh (Letting Go) Ceremony was held on October 23, 2008, followed by an All Clans Bah'lats (potlatch) the following day.

These events were very important for our communities as they marked a milestone and legacy of one of our many goals and commitment to the healing and empowerment of Carrier and Sekani people.

The keynote address at the opening by CSFS Board President Nancy Williams and Executive Director Warner Adam, encouraged the continuing process of healing from the legacy of residential schools. These events were part of the process, including embracing their culture and using it as a tool to help residential school survivors release their pain and to move forward for the betterment of their children and grandchildren.

The first day witnessed "Wiping of the Tears" through stories shared by community members who attended Lejac Residential School and reflected on their life's challenges after their residential school experience and their current healing journey. The Healing Circles were led by the CSFS Mental Wellness Team, the Addictions Recovery Program team and IRSSS Team from Vancouver, BC. The day ended with a Burning

Ceremony. During the burning ceremony tissues were used for tears, and paper with the Lejac Residential School picture, which individuals wrote on to Let Go were burned. A poster presentation was created by Nadleh Whuten member Bev Ketlo of Lejac Residential School Survivors who had gone to the spirit world. Stories were shared of some of the survivors who were frozen to death.

An all clans Bah'lats the following day marked another significant event: honouring the Residential School Survivors of the Carrier and Sekani Nations and to mark the transfer of children

in care from the province to Carrier Sekani Family Services and to seat them within the clans system as governed by the laws of the Bah'lats (potlatch).

An event of this magnitude called upon many people to assist in bringing it all together and it was a major success.

To all the Hereditary Chiefs, Clan Leaders – Chiefs and to the staff of Carrier Sekani Family services, Misyh! Thank you for your ongoing support. Awit Zah.

For further information contact:
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