

**Gitxsan Community Information Gathering Session Themes
Kispiox June 8, 2010**

Question: How are children cared for in the community? What is the role of families in caring for children?

- *Traditionally, extended family and/or community members would step in to take over care – e.g. adopt - and/or teach the children. This is the case for any/all families and especially when families need help*
- *The role of extended family in caring for children and practicing traditional ways has changed, and language and knowledge of culture has been lost, in large part due to legacies of residential schools*

Question: What should happen if parents are having challenges looking after their children? Who needs to be involved?

- *Seek solutions within the extended family (e.g. via Family Group Conferences)*

Question: What are traditional values?

- *Whole-community approach to caring for children*
- *Learning from elders (elder family members); inter-generational teaching*
- *Feast system / Clan system*
- *Children need to know who they are and where they come from: their traditional name, clan, rank, and role within the community*

Question: What should change in MCFD legislation / child welfare practice?

- *Policies need to focus on providing support/resources to birth families*
- *Need to focus on prevention-related programs and activities for children and families: recreation, sports, arts/creative outlets, traditional/cultural activities and foods*
- *Need to have a culturally grounded “safe home” in the community where children can be cared for, till parents are ready to care for them*
- *Families need to have more information about their children who are in care (e.g., care plans and custodial agreements) and more knowledge about their rights in being involved in their children’s care*

- *First Nations (Delegated) agencies need to have more information about Aboriginal CICs; a central FN agency should have information about all Aboriginal CICs*
- *Funding/policy needs to adequately resource the reconnection of the child with his/her home community/Nation*
- *Practice (practice standards) should be guided by the traditional ways of each community – and in an Aboriginal worldview*
- *Requirement of a criminal record check for caregivers is problematic*
- *Standards are too procedural*
- *Aboriginal children should not be placed in non-Aboriginal homes outside the community*
- *Need for Aboriginal social workers and culturally safe workers*