

**Themes from Kamloops information gathering session  
at Secwepemc Child and Family Services, July 2010**

**Question: What are traditional values?**

- *Learning from elders (elder family members); inter-generational teaching*
- *Importance of culture and language; children and families need to be grounded in their own culture*

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

- *The responsibility for caring for children lies with the community and nation; the community needs to assume this responsibility if families are having difficulties*
- *The traditional role of grandparents, aunties and uncles is to look after children*
- *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 prevents families from helping out when parents have challenges looking after their children?**

- *Families share the experience of trauma, violence, alcohol use, FASD and financial issues, just as parents do*

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

- *Seek collaborative solutions within the extended family and community*

**Question: What should change in MCFD/child welfare practice, policies and programming priorities?**

- *Legislation and practice (practice standards) need to be guided by an Aboriginal worldview and the traditional ways of communities*

- *Chief and Council need to have a voice in decision making regarding child welfare issues prior to removing child from the home or community; Leadership need a voice in AOPSI redesign process*
- *Aboriginal (Delegated) agencies need to have more information about Aboriginal CICs; a central Aboriginal agency should have information about all Aboriginal CICs (First Nations need more information about CIC)*
- *Funding needs to focus on (parenting/support) programs with a strong cultural component*
- *Funding/Policies need to have more of a prevention focus - focus on providing support/resources to birth families (in order to, whenever possible, help prevent child coming into care)*
- *Policy/practice needs to focus on reducing the number of placements for children, supporting more continuity in caregivers*
- *Funding/policy needs to adequately resource and support social workers to take on advocacy role on behalf of families*
- *Social workers' practice needs to be culturally safe and culturally competent*
- *Social workers need to use a strengths-based approach in working with families, and including families in decision making*
- *Practice needs to be funded to enable holistic, inter-sectoral/inter-disciplinary networking between groups/agencies in the community, in order to better support families*
- *Need to ensure that child has ongoing involvement in the nation's/community's ceremonies and celebrations*