



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

Caring Network News



Winter 2011

Update from CFNCS ...

Submitted by Linda Lucas, Executive Director

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Welcome all to a blustery but exciting holiday season! Many folks are just gearing up for well-deserved holidays as the Society wraps up a long-standing initiative. After many months of diligent efforts the DEA/DCA working group have successfully completed the draft template of the standardized language document. Special thanks are extended to the working group for their commitment to this important project. Simultaneously, the Society continues to work on the following projects:

1. The delivery of the Aboriginal Social Work delegation training
2. The delivery of Family Support Worker Training, Supervisory Training, Executive Director Training, Board of Director Training, and Designated Band Representative Training
3. Accreditation
4. AOPSI Re-Design
5. Monitoring progress of Move to Actuals
6. Supporting various committees, including Quality Assurance, SARG, Training Advisory Committee, and the Partnership Working Group (to mention just a few)
7. One-off trainings for agencies and communities seeking private opportunities or specialized training opportunities.

Some exciting features around our training that agencies can look for include our revised Supervisory Training and our upcoming Executive Director Training. The upcoming Executive Director Training will address employment law issues which have been raised on various occasions both at the Director's Forum Table and the TAC meetings. These issues include wrongful dismissals, professional discipline, harassment policies, employment contracts, labour relations, difficult employees, and having difficult conversations in the workplace. The Society hopes that this will provide an opportunity for Executive Directors to engage with the facilitator (a local lawyer who has worked primarily in Aboriginal communities) in discussing these very complex matters.

The Society wants to thank all our partners this season: the Ministry of Children and Family Development, Aboriginal and Northern Affairs Canada, and the Aboriginal Delegated Agencies for the work that has been completed this year. We would also like to send a warm welcome to the new Deputy Minister, Stephen Brown. The Society is blessed to be a part of the innovation and creativity in British Columbia when serving Aboriginal children and families. We also recognize that the partnerships are what strengthens the efforts and makes change viable.

A very happy holiday season to all!

Thank you



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Training Update

Submitted by Gail Roach-Leforte

“Appear weak when you are strong, and strong when you are weak.” – Sun Tzu

My lifelong motto of “Change is challenging” is proving itself each and every day to be a reality ... sometimes like a coach, sometimes like an annoying toddler but nonetheless recognizing that each action that I take or decision that I make is worthy of respect and care.

In this past quarter there has been a great deal of activity and fortunately we can punctuate our efforts with some fun! At the Society we had our annual team day and made drums and the following day we feasted the drums. Two Instructors – Laurie MacDonald and Loren Sahara – brought this ceremony alive with song and medicines and their good nature! This was not only a very moving ceremony but a way that symbolically brought all of the Society staff together at multiple levels.

And then the rush was on...the second session of ASW training commenced in September: Voluntary Services training was completed in November (21 participants) and celebrated with a graduation ceremony (see photo on following page). More and more, we are hearing comments at this celebration about the remarkable changes to the ASW training. Supervisors and Directors – and of course, the participants themselves – comment on the transformational content and procedure of training. Participants have stated that the training has ‘changed my life’, ‘changed my perceptions’, ‘will make a difference in how I deliver services to families’ and so on.

Guardianship training (16 participants) has just finished and Child Protection training is underway.

Besides the ASW, we have completed a session of Family Support Work training in Duncan (by Loren, Melissa and Ian), a private session of FSW training for Xyolhemeylh staff (by Laurie and T’oila) and a revised version of FSW was provided in Prince George (by T’oila).

Supervisory training was delivered in Richmond and 16 participants completed. This cohort was the first to receive training with our newly developed curriculum. Folks commented that they were going to file their training manual between their AOPSI and CFCSA manuals! The curriculum, the tools and the discussions, as well as the culturally appropriate and safe environment were the highlights reflected in the feedback forms. Thanks Ian – who instructed with me – for making this training happen in a good way!

AOL (Adoption-on-line) training is underway and many of the participants are moving through the curriculum at record speed. Thanks to Melissa and Loren who are facilitating this session. In the new year, Melissa will facilitate AOL.

Some of the challenges during this quarter have been wait-listing (for FSW training) on the one hand, and having to cancel training because of low registration numbers. I know that Board training, Designated Band Rep training and Supervisory training are vital for the overall success of agencies and yet, very recently, the registration numbers could not justify delivering these. I would welcome feedback from anyone who might have ideas to better coordinate these deliverables within regions so that we maximize the training and make it

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Training Update, continued

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easier for the smaller communities to take part in the training. One idea suggested is to have regional agencies consult with each other to bring the training to your area so that travel costs are minimized. That would be a collaborative effort that makes a lot of sense. Please forward your suggestions.

With the above concern in mind, agencies can take note that we are delivering sessions in Board, Designated Band Rep and Supervisory training in the new year. Also take note that we have developed Executive Director training and we will be delivering it in late February.

The Training Advisory Committee has forwarded a proposal for a blended model (on-line/face-to-face) ASW training. If this moves forward, it will mean that some of the in-class curriculum will be

redesigned for on-line training. This is clearly going to be quite the feat to accomplish but it will be an exciting venture. Fingers (and toes) are crossed as we await approval!

‘\o/’ My hands go up to our remarkable Administrative Assistants – Tina and Chelsea – whose tireless efforts make all of the above achievements possible. Their fingers (and sticky notes) are in every aspect of training rollout. They are the heartbeat of the training team!

On a December note, I hope that the holiday season is a gifted time for everyone, filled with laughter, togetherness and lots of rest!!

Miigwech, Gail



Training Graduation November 2011

Policy Update

Submitted by Shawn Hoey

If I had to identify one word to describe the work of the policy team over the past quarter, it would have to be “wow!”

The changes that occurred within MCFD’s leadership in March of this year are definitely affecting our work now. The province, with an orientation on the ‘do-able’ rather than the ‘transformational’, has MCFD making efforts to ensure that their core service areas are well defined and as effective as possible. It is an exciting transition where the policy team is being asked to bring our expertise to bear in many areas, from restructuring the Partnership Meetings to assisting in mapping out a five-phase child protection process for MCFD.

In 2008, Nancy Sandy of Sugar Cane Sandy’s Consulting Ltd. facilitated a number of workshops that led to the creation of the Partnership Terms of Reference. Three years later, the parties have come to a place where they are able to finalize the terms of reference. The restructure is in strategic alignment with the terms of reference. Working groups and committees engaged in work affecting delegated agencies now occur during the quarterly meetings of the Partnership. Agency Directors, who once were frequently called away from their communities to participate in multiple committees, are now spending more time in their agencies. In addition, locating these committees within the quarterly meetings of the Partnership has resulted in greater participation from a larger and more diverse audience to address matters as they arise. The committees scheduled for this quarter’s meeting include: AOPSI Redesign Steering Committee, Exceptional Costs, Quality Assurance, Operational Standards Review, and Kinship Care. We continue to build on the successful changes and to look for creative solutions to support the work of the Partnership.

We continue to bring administrative and technical support to the directors of delegated agencies

through the First Nations Directors Forum and the Métis Directors Forum. The Métis Directors will be holding their second meeting this quarter. While we are working with the Métis to identify how we can support their efforts, the First Nations Directors have revamped their meetings to better engage their membership. The portfolios of the First Nations Directors Forum are now being held during these quarters to ensure greater participation in matters affecting the First Nations agencies.

Two interesting MCFD initiatives that the policy team are working on include the Strategic Direction meeting and the Practice Improvement Project. Both of these efforts demonstrate a commitment to working in a different way regarding matters affecting child and family services. The purpose of the Strategic Direction meeting is to seek input from Directors of delegated agencies on how MCFD is to move forward in specific areas affecting delegated child and family services. Information gathered will help to inform the development of the next three-year strategic plan. The Practice Improvement Project is asking key stakeholders from within the system from social workers through to executive and other managers, “What should intake, assessment, analysis, planning and evaluation look like?” and map it. The desire being that this mapping process will better reflect and inform the work we are doing.

On a national scale, our work on the First Nation’s Advisory to Canada Incidence Study has resulted in the release of *Kiskisik Awasisak: Remembering the Children. Understanding the Over-representation of First Nations Children in the Child Welfare System*. We will continue to work with the advisory as the report is just the beginning. We have a continuing role in regards to secondary access applications to the data set come forward as well as participating in the dissemination report and planning next steps.

So, Wow! We have much going on and are excited about the journey on which we have embarked!

Human Resource Corner

Give and Earn Respect in the Workplace

Everyone wants it, everyone needs it, but not everyone gets or gives it. The “it” is RESPECT... and it’s something we all need to ratchet up in varying degrees. And, here is a powerful reminder about R. E. S. P. E. C. T:

- R**ecognize the inherent worth of all human beings.
- E**liminate derogatory words and phrases from your vocabulary.
- S**peak with people – not at them...or about them.
- P**ractise empathy. Walk awhile in others’ shoes.
- E**arn the respect of your coworkers through your behaviours.
- C**onsider others’ feelings before speaking and acting.
- T**reat everyone with dignity and courtesy

Source: www.walkthetalk.com



The first report of the First Nations Component of the Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2008 (FNCIS-2008), entitled, *Kiskisik Awasisak: Remember the Children. Understanding the Overrepresentation of First Nations Children in the Child Welfare System* was publicly released in mid November. FNCIS-2008 is the largest study of child welfare investigations involving First Nations children ever conducted in Canada. The study is overseen by an FNCIS-2008 advisory committee, composed of representatives from national and provincial level child welfare organizations and the Assembly of First Nations.

Kiskisik Awasisak examines data on initial, child maltreatment-related investigations opened by 89 provincial/territorial agencies and 22 First Nations and urban Aboriginal agencies during a three month period in 2008. It shows that, in the agencies included in the study sample, the overrepresentation of First Nations children: began at the point of first contact with the agencies, increased with each major case disposition during the investigation period, was driven primarily by cases of neglect, and was associated with caregiver and household risk factors such as poverty, substance abuse, domestic violence and having few social supports. Accordingly, the study points to multiple factors which pose chronic challenges to their abilities of First Nations families to ensure the well being of their children and suggests that child welfare agencies must have the necessary resources to offer longer term, comprehensive services designed to help families address these challenges.

The *Kiskisik Awasisak* report is available from: www.cecw-cepb.ca/fn-cis-2008 .



Notice of Annual General Meeting

**Caring for First Nations Children Society
17th Annual General Meeting will be held on:**

Date: Monday, December 12, 2011

**Place: Bayanihan Community Centre
1709 Blanshard Street
Victoria, BC**

**Time: 5:00 pm dinner
followed by the AGM**

**For membership applications, please visit:
www.cfncs.com/about-cfncs/membership**

Please RSVP to Candace.McKivett@cfncs.com



The Representative's Quarterly Update



It's my pleasure to write in your newsletter again, particularly as there are always things going on that I like to share with you.

I want to start by congratulating you on your very successful training events. My

Deputy Representative was honoured to attend the Aboriginal Social Worker graduation in early November, and to sense the achievement and pride among the graduates. Although there is no question that the work is hard and stressful, it is uplifting to know, as B.C.'s Representative for Children and Youth, that people are choosing this path – in fact, there are record numbers of enthusiastic students attending and graduating. They, like me, see that the rewards in terms of self fulfillment and a future healthy society are immense. So I thank you for your commitment to education that combines classroom and practical experience to benefit Aboriginal children, their families and communities.

It is an understatement for me to say that much more needs to be done to improve the lives of Aboriginal children, to ensure they have opportunities to grow and reach their potential. Earlier in November, my fellow child and youth advocates across Canada and I submitted a special report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child titled *Aboriginal Children – Canada Must do Better: Today and Tomorrow*. The purpose of this report is to highlight the critical circumstances facing Canada's Aboriginal children today, and to contribute to the UN's current review of Canada's 2009 report on the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

We believe our special report offers a more realistic picture of Aboriginal children's lives than what Canada has reported. Our report asks the UN Committee to encourage Canada to develop and implement special measures that will assist Aboriginal children, and all children, with the fulfillment of their human rights under the CRC.

The shocking statistics bear repeating, even in this newsletter whose readers are fully aware of the situation for Aboriginal children:

- 49 per cent of off-reserve Aboriginal children under six live in low-income families compared to 18 per cent of non-Aboriginal children
- 57 per cent of off-reserve Aboriginal children in cities live in low-income families
- Aboriginal children in B.C. are six times more likely to be taken into government care than non-Aboriginal children
- 54 per cent of the children in government care in B.C. are Aboriginal
- In 2006, 34 per cent of Aboriginal people aged 25 to 64 had not completed high school, compared to 15 per cent of non-Aboriginal Canadians
- A third of Aboriginal children live in families where access to food is a concern
- Nine in every 1,000 infants are born with fetal alcohol syndrome.

Canada's obligation to implement the human rights of Aboriginal children is found in the many human rights treaties and international initiatives that Canada has ratified or endorsed. And yet, living with a legacy of colonialism, racism and exclusion, our Aboriginal children face a bleak reality and future.

In our special report, the Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates, of which I am

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president, states that improved strategies, leadership and coordinated efforts are required immediately within Canada. The report has 40 recommendations, including the creation of a monitored and evaluated national Aboriginal children's plan aimed at reducing intergenerational poverty.

We also recommend:

- improved health infrastructure in remote communities
- a national Aboriginal educational framework
- a national commission to examine child trafficking, sexual exploitation and homelessness
- doing more to ensure that provinces, territories and the federal government live up to their commitment that the government of first contact will provide for the health and welfare needs of any Aboriginal child.

Assembly of First Nations National Chief Shawn A-in-chut Atleo welcomed our report and urged all levels of government to take seriously its recommendations. Atleo stated that the report speaks to the need for First Nations to be fully

engaged in decisions that impact the current reality and future of First Nations peoples, particularly youth and families.

I see the submission to the UN as representing an opportunity to elevate the issues of Aboriginal people. Clearly, the country needs to work harder on the rights of Aboriginal children. With organizations such as yours working to improve the quality of children's lives, I remain hopeful that we will one day see the full implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in Canada.

Remember, if you or your children need to talk to an advocate, please contact my Office. You can reach us from anywhere in the province at 1-800-476-3933 or email us at rcy@rcybc.ca

I hope you enjoy the upcoming holiday season with friends and family.

Sincerely,
Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond
Representative for Children and Youth



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- quarterly newsletter
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- access to message posting

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To join online please go to:
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