

First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada

ANNUAL REPORT 2003/2004



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FNCFCS Board of Directors and Staff

FNCFCS Board of Directors

Name	Affiliation	Board Position
Elsie Flette	Southern FN Authority, Manitoba	President
Joan Glode	Mic Maw Family and Children's Services	Vice President
Bill Gillespie	Nog Da Win Da Min Family and Community Services	Treasurer
Kelowa Edel	Xyolhemeylh Health and Family Services	Board Member
Carolyn Peacock	Yellowhead Tribal Services	Alberta Contact Person
Raymond Shingoose	Yorkton Tribal Council Child and Family Services	Board Member
Linda Deer	Kahnawake Shakotii'a'takehnhas Community Services	Board Member
Harry Sock	Big Cove Child and Family Services	Board Member

FNCFCS Staff

Name	Position	Office Location
Cindy Blackstock	Executive Director	Ottawa
Marlyn Bennett	Director of Research	Winnipeg
Samantha Nadjiwan	VSI Project Coordinator	Ottawa
Patrick Bourke	Summer Student	Ottawa

Organizational History

The First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada (FNCFCS) was developed in 1998 at a national meeting of First Nations child and family service agencies (FNCFSA) at the Squamish Nation. Meeting delegates agreed that a national non profit organization was required to provide research, professional development and networking support to the First Nations child and family service agencies in Canada. An interim board was elected and the organization became incorporated in 1999.

In 2001, the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada, in partnership with the Center of Excellence for Child Welfare, established the first research site devoted to the affirmation and support of First Nations child welfare research in Winnipeg, Manitoba. This research site disseminates research information to First Nations child and family service agencies, provides professional development programs on research, and oversees national First Nations child and family service related research projects.

Building on the existing infrastructure, the FNCFCS, with the support of the Voluntary Sector Initiative, established a partnership and networking office in Ottawa in 2002. In addition to being the head office of the society, this office is conducting a national research project on the nature and extent of collaboration between First Nations child and family service agencies and the voluntary sector. The goal of the project is to provide First Nation child and family service agencies (FNCFSA) with meaningful supports to ensure that First Nations children, youth and families have access to the significant social supports of the voluntary sector. This would include promoting the development and support of culturally based voluntary sector organizations on reserve to meet family needs and promote a higher quality of life.

As a result of a diversified funding plan, FNCFCS has continued to operate its Ottawa Office in tandem with the First Nations Research Site in Winnipeg during fiscal 2004/2005.

FNCFCS Mission and Mandate

The prime objective of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society is to support First Nations Child and Family Service Agencies by providing culturally relevant knowledge, skills and resources. In light of this primary objective, the Board of Directors of the FNCFCS developed the following mission statement for the Society:

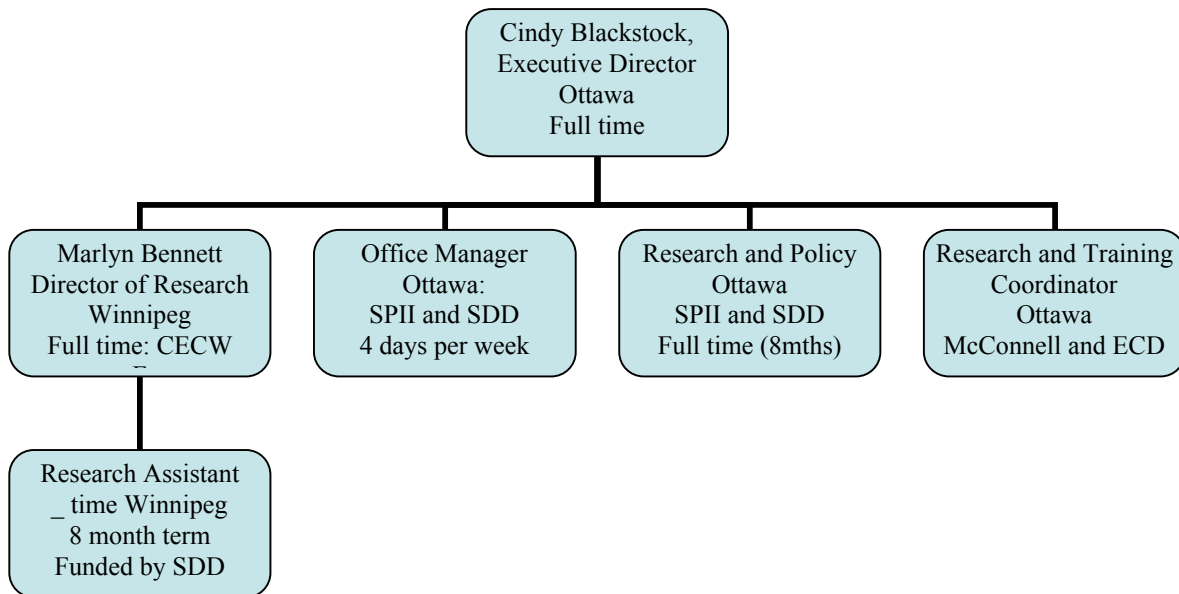
“Building Helping Communities”

This mission is achieved through the following mandate which was developed in partnership with First Nations Child and Family Service Agency Directors at a meeting hosted by Kingsclear First Nation in Fredericton New Brunswick in 1999.

Mandate and Project Summary

Research	Public Education	Policy	Professional Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ First Nations Research Site ➤ Canadian Incident Study on Reported Child Abuse and Neglect ➤ First Peoples Child Welfare Review on line journal ➤ Searchable databases on Aboriginal child welfare 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Convention on the Rights of the Child ➤ Presentations on First Nations child welfare ➤ FNCFCS newsletters ➤ Publications such as Keeping the Promise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Assist with the research necessary to implement the National Policy Review on First Nations Child and Family Services. ➤ Submissions to the UN, Parliamentary committees etc. on First Nations child welfare 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Caring Across the Boundaries training programs ➤ Research workshops for First Nations child and family service agencies and Aboriginal young people ➤ Feature workshops such as interfacing with the media ➤ Workshops and keynote addresses at conferences and community events

Organizational Chart



Projects and Services: Living our Mission Statement

First Nations Research Site

The First Nations Research Site moved from the University of Manitoba, Faculty of Social Work to the Southern First Nations CFS Authority office in December of last year as part of our commitment to ensure FNCFCSS is community based and accessible to the Aboriginal peoples and organizations. The First Nations Research Site is a part of the FNCFCSS and is intended to provide a national research forum for First Nations child welfare agencies, organizations, researchers, policy makers, front line workers, caregivers and volunteers who are interested in culturally based quality child welfare research that is generated by and for the benefit of Aboriginal peoples and communities. The Research Site was established in partnership with the Health Canada Centre of Excellence for

Child Welfare (CECW). The CECW is a research coalition of four leading organizations including the University of Toronto, Faculty of Social Work; The University of Montreal, Faculty of Social Work; the Child Welfare League of Canada and the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada. This partnership, along with the gift in kind contributions of the University of Manitoba, has significantly assisted building the Research Site's capacity.

The following significant achievements highlight the value of this important FNCFCs project:

- Publication of the second edition of the annotated literature review on Aboriginal child welfare is in its final stages of preparation
- The annotated literature review searchable database has been expanded to include new resources published in 2004. The database is available at no charge on our website www.fncfcs.com
- The First Nations Research Site has actively participated in the second round of the Canadian Incident Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect (CIS). This has resulted in the inclusion of ten First Nations Child and Family Service Agencies across Canada in this important national study.
- Two papers summarizing findings from CIS-98 were published. The first contrasts the experiences of Aboriginal children and families coming into contact with the child welfare system with their visible minority and non visible minority counterparts. The second explores the possible drivers of the over representation of Aboriginal children in the child welfare system. These papers are:
 - *Child Welfare Response to Aboriginal and Non Aboriginal Children in Canada: A Comparative Analysis* authored by Cindy Blackstock, Nico Trocme and Marlyn Bennett. [Violence Against Women](#)
 - *Pathways to the Overrepresentation of Aboriginal Children in Canada's Child Welfare System*. Authored by Nico Trocme, Della Knoke and Cindy Blackstock. Submitted to [Social Services Review](#)
- The First Peoples Child Welfare Review, FNCFCs on line journal, will launch its first issue this year.
- As part of the First Nations Research Site's commitment to ensuring a strong community connection, Marlyn Bennett and Cindy Blackstock have presented at over 40 community, national and international conferences this past year.
- FNCFCs also contributed to the Centre of Excellence for Child Welfare book [Community Collaboration and Differential Response: Canadian and International Research and Emerging Models of Practice](#). See the article

entitled *USMA: Cherished ones; Precious ones, the children: A First Nations Approach to child, family and community well being*. Authored by Debra Foxcroft and Cindy Blackstock. PP. 105-112.

Over the coming year, the research site will begin secondary analysis of the CIS data collected in 2003 and will also be publishing a second edition of the First Peoples Child Welfare Review. We are pleased to announce that last years goal of adding another staff person to the site has been realized with a part time research assistant beginning work at the Research Site in late September 2004. We hope to add additional staff as funds allow.

The Caring Across the Boundaries Project

First Nations child and family service agencies face significant challenges in meeting the needs of children and families who have been substantially impacted by colonial policies of residential school, social exclusion and inconsistent recognition of existing rights and title. The agencies respond to these multi-generational impacts with limited targeted prevention and community development resources contained in the federal funding formula. This situation not only calls for supporting the recommendations of the *Joint National Policy Review of First Nations Child and Family Services* but also for the mobilization of the significant skills, knowledge and resources of the voluntary sector in Canada. The voluntary sector accounts for 90 billion dollars in revenue each year which is deployed to support a myriad of causes including social services and child youth and family programs.

The FNCFCS is committed to working with First Nations child and family service agencies, the voluntary sector, the philanthropic community and government to ensure that First Nations children and families are able to access and benefit from voluntary sector resources. In line with this goal and with the support of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development Canada, the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society received funding from the Voluntary Sector Initiative (Sectoral Involvement in Departmental Policy Development Initiative) to determine the current nature and extent of collaboration between First Nations child and family service and the child, youth and family serving voluntary sector.

The project consisted of four phases: 1) literature review 2) surveys of FNCFSA, the voluntary sector, and governments to determine engagement patterns and develop suggestions to promote collaboration 3) key informant interviews and 4) completing the final research report and developing professional development tools and programs based on research findings.

The following is a summary of the results of this research project:

- The literature review and annotated bibliography segment is has been posted in data base format on our website www.fncfcs.com. The literature review confirmed that there is very little information published on collaboration between First Nations and the voluntary sector either in Canada or abroad. There was only one unpublished resource that specifically dealt with the issue of engagement between First Nations child and family service agencies and the voluntary sector in providing services to First Nations children, youth and families living on-reserve.
- Survey results and key informant interviews revealed that there was negligible evidence that First Nations children, youth and families benefit from voluntary sector resources nor is there any substantial investment in on reserve forms of volunteerism that support children and families. The full results of the research project are available on line in a report entitled “Caring Across the Boundaries: Promoting Access to Voluntary Sector Resources for First Nations Children and Families.”

This report informed the development of a comprehensive professional development program called Caring Across the Boundaries. This program consists of primer modules for First Nations, the voluntary sector, philanthropic communities, governments that can be delivered in sessions ranging from _ day to 2 days depending on the knowledge level of participants. There is also a collaboration module which brings together representatives from these various groups to explore ways of promoting respectful collaboration and expanding on reserve voluntary sector resources to benefit First Nations children and their families. FNCFCS already hosted a very successful pilot of the collaboration module at the National Children’s Alliance policy symposium in March of 2004 which was attended by over 40 leaders from Aboriginal and Non Aboriginal child and family service organizations. The results of this program have ranged from major national non profits integrating strategic objectives into national plans to support First Nations and Aboriginal children to emerging collaborations between Aboriginal and non Aboriginal organizations to provide services to families.

With the generous support of the J.W. McConnell program, the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society will be piloting the Caring Across the Boundaries program at six sites across Canada in 2004/2005. Five First Nations child and family service agencies were selected from the applications received through a national call for applications from First Nations communities throughout Canada. The remaining session will be hosted by Aboriginal young people to benefit Aboriginal young people in October of 2004. An evaluation framework for the project has been designed and we are now underway with planning the sessions. An addition to the Caring Across the Boundaries training series for 2005 will be a youth module as well as an information kit for First Nations leadership.

In the future, FNCFCS hopes to expand this popular program to include a train the trainer component so that the certified instructors are available at a community level to conduct this training.

Aboriginal ECD Providers Clearinghouse and Network

The First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada (www.fncfcs.com) in partnership with the Canadian Child Care Federation (www.cccf-fcsge.ca) are proud to be working with Aboriginal ECD providers across Canada to design and implement the two year ASPN project. This project which began in May of 2004, is graciously funded by the First Nations and Inuit Health Branch of Health Canada. The following text is a synopsis of the project and key accomplishments

Project Goals Include:

1. Development of a comprehensive and accessible clearinghouse of Aboriginal ECD resources
2. Development of an interactive website and database on Aboriginal ECD
3. Development of a sustainable network of Aboriginal ECD providers
4. Professional development resources such as journals, teleconferences and e-bulletins

Accomplishments:

1. Strategic planning and visioning session attended by over 40 Aboriginal ECD providers.
2. Management committee selection criteria developed and posting for positions completed.
3. Selection committee for the management committee developed.
4. Branding options for ASPN in development for presentation to the management committee
5. Annotated literature review underway – 100 articles already annotated.
6. Strategic planning document in development based on meeting with Aboriginal ECD providers.
7. Over 400 articles on Aboriginal ECD have been identified and annotated for inclusion in an on line searchable database.

Next Steps (within three months):

1. Selection of the management committee (August 15, 2004)
2. First meeting of the management committee (September, 2004)
 - a. Decision on ASPN name and branding
 - b. Decision on features of website clearinghouse

- c. Identification of best practices in communication strategies
3. Development of communication strategy
4. Continued development of website, literature review and database.
5. Development of public relations materials for inclusion in community newsletters and for distribution in regional and national arenas.

Longer Term Next Steps (three months – 2 years)

1. Identify a sustainable framework for the ASPN in partnership with Aboriginal ECD providers
2. Complete ASPN editions of Research Connections
3. Complete teleconferences on areas of interest to ASPN providers
4. Identify diverse language needs and how best to support distribution of materials throughout the continuum of Aboriginal cultures and contexts.
5. Build the branding integrity of the ASPN

Please visit our website www.fncfcs.com for more information on this important project.

Policy Networking: National and International Activities

A key priority for the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society is to support the implementation of the 17 recommendations included in the *Joint National Policy Review on First Nations Child and Family Services* completed in 2000. To this end, we submitted a report to the United Nations Committee on the Convention on the Rights of the Child and participated in the United Nations Day of General Discussion on Indigenous Children. We are pleased to see that the United Nations concluding observations on Canada's report on the Convention on the Rights of the Child includes a specific reference to the value of First Nations child and family service agencies.

The First Nations Child and Family Caring Society has also disseminated copies of the *Joint National Policy Review* to key decision makers and policy makers within provincial and federal governments as well as within the Aboriginal and non Aboriginal voluntary sector.

Along with the many other activities of the Society, a key goal is to ensure that First Nations child and family service agencies are aware of and included in international discussions relevant to First Nations children youth and families. A key objective of the FNCFCS was the establishment of a relationship with the National Indian Child Welfare Association of the United States in order to share experience and work collaboratively on projects of North American concern. We are pleased to see that this important relationship is moving respectfully forward in a positive direction and has resulted in the following:

- Filing letters of support for proposed amendments to the US Indian Child Welfare Act that would recognize First Nations, Métis and Inuit children so that they will be considered indigenous children for the purposes of the Act having all the concordant protections it provides.
- Along with the National Indian Child Welfare Association Child Welfare League of America, the Child Welfare League of Canada and the CECW, we are planning a leadership conference that looks beyond program delivery to see how social work itself can be changed to better support Aboriginal children and families. This invitational conference will be held in October of 2005 and is lead by an esteemed planning group which includes Elder and youth participation.

Along with our work with NICWA, we are establishing relationships with other Indigenous child and family service providers internationally. In fact, the FNCFCS executive director has been invited to participate in an panel on Indigenous child welfare at the International IPSCAN conference in Brisbane Australia and also to participate in another event in November in New Zealand. Furthermore, FNCFCS has also submitted a proposal in partnership with Indigenous researchers in New Zealand and Australia as well as with the Pauktuutit Inuit Women's Association in Canada to explore resiliency factors that influence parental decisions for child well being and health. Additionally, FNCFCS is part of a consortium of international partners that is submitting a proposal to explore child and family service interventions.

Summary and Future Directions

Thanks to the guidance of our board of directors and the support of our member organizations, the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society has a strong foundation on which to ensure our continued commitment to provide First Nations and Aboriginal communities with the highest standard of resources so that they can implement their own community based solutions.

We will continue our focus of affirming and promoting indigenous ways of knowing and being in child welfare whilst advocating to ensure that First Nations child and family service agencies have the resources needed in order to deliver the highest quality culturally based child, family and community services. We anticipate releasing the youth module of Caring Across the Boundaries and the information kit for First Nations leadership in March of 2005

As a small organization with three staff members we are proud of our progress to date and thankful for the support of our members, the First Nations and Aboriginal communities, as well as our government, academic and voluntary sector partners. Without your support and encouragement the progress we are proud to report to you this year would not have been possible.