

FIRST NATIONS CHILD & FAMILY CARING SOCIETY OF CANADA

ANNUAL REPORT
2004/2005



Suite 1001 75 Albert Street,
Ottawa ON K1P 5E7
(613) 230-5885
www.fncfcs.com



HONOURING

We honour and appreciate the commitment of so many people and organizations across Canada and the world who have generously shared their wisdom, time and resources with the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada. Without all of you and the support of our members our work would not be possible and we are thankful to stand in your company to work on common ground:

First Nations Child and Family Service Agencies in Canada
The Assembly of First Nations
Pauktuutit Inuit Women's Association
NGO Working group for the Convention on the Rights of the Child
J. W. McConnell Family Foundation
Canadian Child Care Federation
National Children's Alliance
Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development
Social Development Directorate
First Nations and Inuit Health Branch
National Indian Child Welfare Association
Centre of Excellence for Child Welfare
Child Welfare League of America
Wade Baker and Mary Tasi Baker
Michelle Nahanee
Corbin Shangreaux
Kathryn Irvine
Judy Levi
Melanie Vincent
Fred Wien
John Loxley
Gerry Cradock
Nico Trocme
Valerie Lannon



FNCFCS BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND STAFF

FNCFCS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Name	Affiliation	Board Position
Joan Glode	Mi'kmaw Family and Children's Services	President
Elsie Flette	Southern FN Authority, Manitoba	President
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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'akehnhas 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
April Whitehead	Office Manager	Ottawa
Jacqueline Ramdatt	Policy Analyst	Ottawa
Jennifer Sinclair	ACCEL Program	Ottawa
Richard De La Ronde	Research Assistant	Winnipeg
Rachel Levasseur	Summer Student	Ottawa

ORGANIZATIONAL HISTORY

The First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada grew out of a grass roots movement to create a national organization to share knowledge and to stimulate action in Aboriginal child welfare at a national level. FNCFCS fundamentally believes that communities are their own best experts and as a national organization our best service lies in providing the widest range of information and resources possible for communities to draw from to implement their own best solutions.

Community feedback coupled with data from our website indicating that over 500,000 hits this past year alone seem to indicate that we are doing well in responding to community information needs. Although we are proud of our collective achievements we are also aware there is much more to be done to support First Nations children and families and the FNCFCS is committed to learning from the communities, young

people and our own experience so that we can do our best all the time.

The community as expert philosophy is integrated into all aspects of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society from the board of directors who all work at a community level in Aboriginal child welfare right through to our policy positions, projects and publications. This philosophy is supported by research that affirms that the most sustained outcomes for children and families come in environments where the right of Indigenous communities to make their own decisions is affirmed and respected.

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:

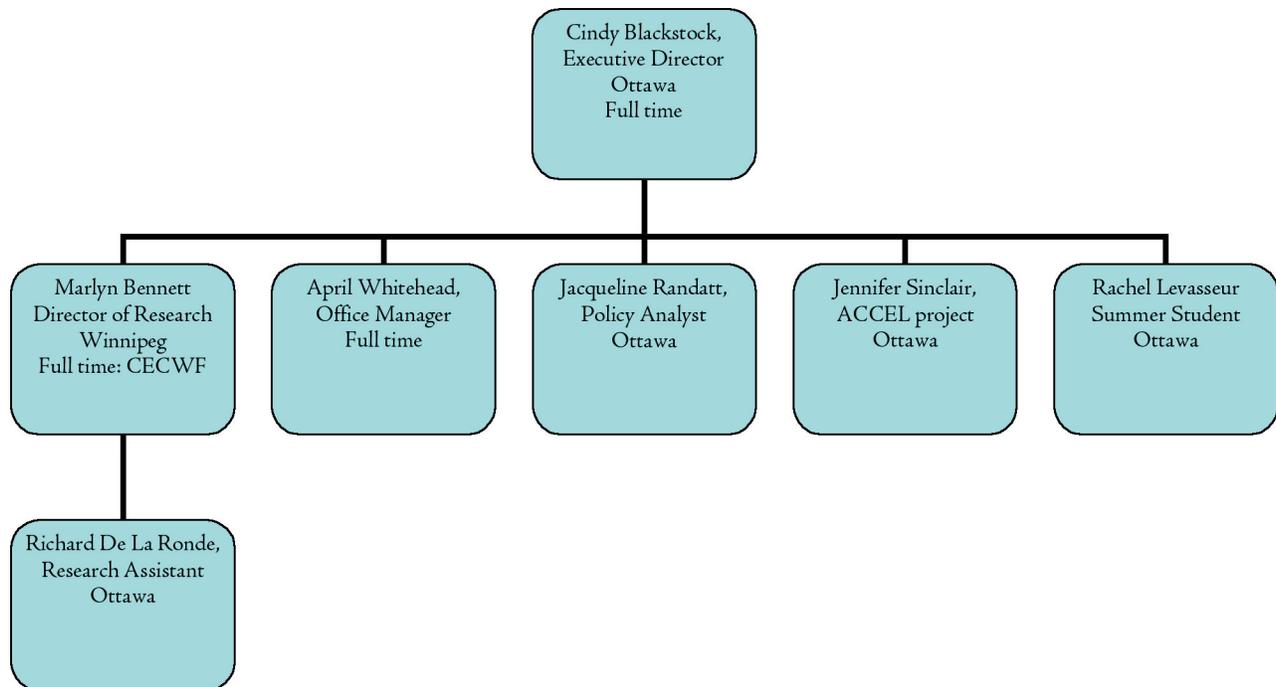
“BUILDING HELPING COMMUNITIES”

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 ✦ National Policy Review Research Project ✦ Canadian Incidence Study on Reported Child Abuse and Neglect ✦ First Peoples Child and Family Review on line journal ✦ Searchable databases on Aboriginal child welfare (over 2000 resources on line) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Convention on the Rights of the Child ✦ Presentations on First Nations child welfare ✦ FNCFCS quarterly newsletters ✦ Publications such as Keeping the Promise and the Wen:de report 	<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, Senate committees on First Nations child welfare ✦ Ethical guidelines for youth engagement ✦ Indigenous sub group for the NGO Working Group on the UNCRC 	<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 ✦ Workshops and keynote addresses at conferences and community events ✦ Youth mentor writer workshop ✦ Reconciliation: looking back; reaching forward: Indigenous peoples and child welfare conference

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



PROJECTS AND SERVICES: LIVING OUR MISSION STATEMENT

NATIONAL POLICY REVIEW RESEARCH PROJECT

Building on the 17 recommendations of the Joint National Policy Review of First Nations Child and Family Services (NPR) (MacDonald and Ladd, 2000), the National Advisory Committee of the Joint National Policy Review (NAC) requested that the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada (FNCFCS) undertake research to respond to the research questions identified in Phase One of the research project (Phase One report is available on line at www.fncfcs.com) to inform three possible funding options for First Nations child and family services:

- 1) Integrating recommendations of the NPR into the current funding formula, Directive 20-1, Chapter 5 (hereinafter called the Directive or Directive 20-1)
- 2) Linking First Nations child and family service agency funding with provincial child welfare funding levels
- 3) A new First Nations based funding formula.

The first two possible funding models are relatively well defined with the first having benefited from the recommendations of the Joint National Policy Review on First Nations Child and Family Services completed in 2000 and the second based on standardized provincial funding formulae where they exist. In terms of the restructuring of Directive 20-1, the seventeen recommendations to improve to funding to First Nations child and family services contained in the National Policy Review were validated in Phase one and formed the primary frame of reference for analysis of this option in Phase two (excluding the recommendation for a review of the funding arrangement in Ontario which will need to be done under a separate process).

The provincial option is also reasonably well defined although it is not always clear how specific child welfare services are funded within universal provincial social services funding pools. Moreover, there are instances where provinces have lost sight of the original funding formula over time and had simply adjusted the rate according to volume and cost of living indices. Analysis of this option did not yield a favourable result in that provincial funding formulas, where known, do not account for the higher service needs of First Nations children and families or the economies of scale or operating contexts of First Nations child and family service agencies. Although further work on this option will proceed in Phase Three, research results from Phase Two do not favour this option.

The First Nations model is potentially the most promising although it is undoubtedly the most difficult to develop as there are no pre-existing funding template models to refer to. The potential lies in the possibility of re-conceptualizing the pedagogy, policy and practice in First Nations child welfare in a way that better supports sustained positive outcomes for First Nations children. There are several theme related studies in Phase Two which will contribute to this model – such as the secondary analysis of the First Nations data set in the Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect (CIS) and the Management Information System report. Although other study methodologies will inform this model, these two sets are particularly important given that any new funding regime should be founded on evidence based research and data – not speculation. In terms of the CIS, this study describes the characteristics of children and their families who came into contact with the child welfare system over a three month period in 2003 (eight First Nations child and family service agencies participated.)

The review of management information systems was also a critical report in that will describe the current capacity of First Nations agencies to collect and report data that could potentially inform a First Nations funding formula model. The MIS review includes key informant interviews with First Nations child and family service agencies using a variety of data management systems ranging from pen and paper to agency based MIS systems.

The research for Phase Two began in January 2005, when FNCFCFS identified an interdisciplinary research team including experts in economics, First Nations child and family services, sociology, substance misuse, community development, management, public administration, management information systems, psychology and law. Methodological approaches for research projects were designed in accordance to the requirements of each research question identified in Phase One. A key method was to conduct detailed case studies of 12 First Nations child and family service agencies and the provinces using standardized questionnaires administered by regional researchers. The surveys included questions describing the range of services currently provided and the costs associated with ensuring an equitable and culturally based funding formula going forward.

Selected First Nations child and family service agencies were also contacted by experts in management information systems, jurisdictional disputes and child maltreatment prevention services in order to inform the funding formula research.

The results of all research studies culminated in the publication of the Wen:de report which will be available for public release in October of 2005. The following is a list of the key findings of the report with the exception of the results of the CIS study which will be released in the fall:

- 1) Status First Nations children are drastically over-represented amongst both children in care and Aboriginal children in care. In three sample provinces one in ten Status Indian children were in care as of May 2005 as compared to just under one in 200 for other children.
- 2) The most common reasons why First Nations children come to the attention of child welfare authorities is physical neglect and failure to supervise.
- 3) First Nations children are twice as likely as their non Aboriginal peers to have their cases substantiated and to be admitted into child welfare care.

- 4) The cost of living increment has not been provided to First Nations child and family service agencies since 1995. What this means is that for the time period where we have data (1999-2005) the loss of funds due to inflation for the operations portion of the funding formula was 112 million dollars.
- 5) Funds for prevention and least disruptive measures are not adequate either in terms of program development, program delivery and evaluation or staffing requirements.
- 6) First Nations child and family service agencies are having significant success in placing children in culturally based placements.
- 7) Two thirds of First Nations agencies in the study sample report that funding for salaries and benefits was not sufficient in the current formula.
- 8) A large majority (84%) of First Nations child and family service agencies in the study sample felt that current funding levels were insufficient to provide for adequate culturally based services.
- 9) The First Nations child and family service agencies in the study sample reported an aggregate of 393 jurisdictional disputes that took an average of 54.25 person hours each to resolve.
- 10) First Nations child and family service agencies provide significant gift in kind consultation service to the provinces and federal governments.
- 11) Management information systems vary widely ranging from pen and paper to agency developed systems. In the vast majority of cases MIS systems do not meet minimum standards.

Based on these findings and the recommendations arising from the research reports the research team developed a questionnaire which was sent to all First Nations child and family service agencies in Canada (except those in Ontario which are funded under a separate funding agreement.) The results of this survey will enable more accurate economic modeling of the funding options and better inform the Joint National Policy Review National Advisory Committee in its selection of a new funding formula going forward.

Initial analysis of Phase Two research results indicates that re-designing the Directive whilst integrating foundational pieces to support the later development of a First Nations funding option is the most promising option.

Please visit the NPR project page on our website www.fncfcs.com for further information on this important research project.

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 FNCFCFS is community based and accessible to the Aboriginal peoples and organizations. The First Nations Research Site is a part of the FNCFCFS 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 FNCFCFS project:

- Publication of the second edition of the annotated literature review on Aboriginal child welfare is

complete and available on line at www.fncfcs.com. This important resource contains over 1600 resources on Aboriginal child welfare.

- The annotated literature review searchable database has been expanded to include new resources published in 2005. 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 eight First Nations Child and Family Service Agencies across Canada in this important national study. Findings to be released in October 2005.
- The First Peoples Child and Family Review, FNCFCFS on line journal, will launch its second edition this year.
- The publication of a study on children and young people with learning and developmental disabilities in the care of First Nations child and family service agencies available on line at www.fncfcs.com
- Hosting a youth mentor write workshop to support youth in submitting works for publication.

Over the coming year, the research site will begin secondary analysis of the CIS data collected in 2003 and will also be publishing a third edition of the First Peoples Child Welfare Review.

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 FNCFCFS 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 FNCFCFS, 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 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 ½ 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. FNCFCFS 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.

Initial evaluations demonstrate that CAB is highly effective in creating relationships and collaborations between First Nations and the voluntary sector – a long term score card evaluation framework is being used to measure the impacts of the program over time. In the meantime, we have been thrilled to receive the support of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development to expand the Caring Across the Boundaries curriculum family by working with Aboriginal young people to write a youth version of the program which is now available for delivery.

In the future, FNCFCFS 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 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 selected and actively engaged in sustainability plan for ACCEL project.
3. Branding for ACCEL project complete
4. Launch of website completed www.accel-capea.ca
5. Resources translated into French, Inuktitut, and English
6. Over 400 articles on Aboriginal ECD have been identified and annotated for inclusion in an on line searchable database.

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 the ACCEL website www.accel-capea.ca for more information on this important project.

JOINING HANDS ACROSS THE WORLD: WORKING WITH INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS FOR THE BENEFIT OF FIRST NATIONS CHILDREN IN CANADA

A key priority for the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society is to ensure First Nations families have the same opportunity to safely care for their children at home as other Canadians. To this end, we submitted a report to the United Nations Committee on the Convention on the Rights of the Child Day of General Discussion on Separated Children and participated in Senate Human Rights Committee Hearings on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Additionally, FNCFCFS has joined hands with CORE from India to establish an Indigenous Sub Group at the NGO Working Group for the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Sub Group has already submitted a proposal to conduct a worldwide study on the rights of Indigenous children whilst developing an international catalogue of human and written resources respecting Indigenous child rights. The sub group represents the only international organization that specifically focuses on the rights of Indigenous children and will provide an important mechanism for Indigenous and non Indigenous peoples to ensure that the rights of Indigenous children are at the forefront of international discussions on human rights, child rights and Indigenous rights. Watch for articles in future issues of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society newsletter for updates on this important development.

Another important international activity of the FNCFCFS which directly benefits First Nations communities in Canada is the Reconciliation: Looking back; reaching forward: Indigenous Peoples and Child Welfare Conference. This highly interactive invitational leadership conference will be held in Niagara Falls on October 26-28, 2005. The goal of the conference is to look beyond services to Indigenous children to explore the very philosophy of child welfare itself – identifying those aspects of child welfare that support or aggrss the well being of Indigenous children and families. The sponsors of this event: Six Nations of the Grand River, the Centre of Excellence for Child Welfare, the National Indian Child Welfare Association (US), the Child Welfare League of America, the Child Welfare League of Canada and the FNCFCFS have all committed to an ongoing movement to redesign social work in favour of Indigenous children. Delegates attending this conference will also be required to work at a community level to engage in these discussions. Please visit our website for further developments as this important movement takes the next steps in ensuring child welfare supports Indigenous children and families in the best way possible.

ORGANIZATIONAL MEMBERSHIPS AND AFFILIATIONS

- 1) Centre of Excellence for Child Welfare. Co-Director
- 2) Indigenous Sub Group of the NGO working Group on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Co-convenor.
- 3) International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect. Member
- 4) National Children's Alliance, Member
- 5) Child Welfare League of Canada, Member
- 6) Winnipeg Social Planning Council, Member

SUMMARY AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Thanks to the guidance of our board of directors and the support of our members, the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society has made a significant contribution of knowledge, tools and resources to support First Nations communities in caring for their children. These contributions have bridged the local community level with international works bringing together the best of the world's resources for the benefit of all Indigenous children and young people.

We are committed to maintaining 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. This will include the launch of a train the trainers program to ensure Caring Across the Boundaries is available to communities when needed and at a minimal cost. We will also continue with our work to support First Nations child and family service agencies to receive adequate and equitable financial and knowledge supports to enable them to meet the needs of children and families in their communities. The Reconciliation: looking back, reaching forward: Indigenous Peoples and Child Welfare event will also contribute significantly to reshaping child welfare in a way that better supports First Nations children.

Although we have made significant progress, there is much more work to be done by FNCFCFS in the following year:

- 1) Supporting the development of a new and equitable funding formula for First Nations child and family service agencies
- 2) Engaging mainstream child welfare in meaningful and sustained efforts to redefine child welfare in a way that better supports Aboriginal children.
- 3) Continuing research to better understand the reasons for the drastic over-representation of Aboriginal children in care and their experiences throughout the in care continuum.
- 4) Continue to promote the universal collection of disaggregated child welfare data by Aboriginal cultural group.
- 5) Working with our partners to further develop the ethical guidelines for youth engagement
- 6) Engaging the Canadian public and non profit groups in respectfully working with First Nations communities to improve the well being of First Nations children and young people

As a small organization with six 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 as we work toward a better future for First Nations children.

