

Wen:de Series of Reports Summary Sheet

March 12, 2007



FIRST NATIONS
CHILD & FAMILY
CARING SOCIETY
OF CANADA



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Wen:de: We Are Coming to the Light of Day

Scope

This report summarizes the findings of the second phase of the three phase research project to inform the development of an equitable federal funding model for First Nations Child and Family Services by responding to the research questions identified in phase one to inform each of the three funding formula options (1) remodel the existing funding model (2) link First Nations Child and Family Service Agency funding to provincial funding formulas and (3) develop a new First Nations based formula. Further, Phase Two describes the implications of these findings for the three funding formula options.

Methodology

In this study, the Canadian Incidence Study on Reported Child Abuse and Neglect (CIS) is used to describe 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). Further, the review of the MIS is a critical report in that it describes the current capacity of First Nations agencies to collect and report data that could potentially inform a First Nations funding formula model. However, the key methodological approach for this research project was to conduct a detailed case study of 12 First Nations child and family service agencies and the provinces using standardized questionnaires administered by regional researchers. The survey includes questions describing the range of services currently provided as well as to map out optimal levels of service and the costs associated with ensuring an equitable and culturally based funding formula going forward. Further, selected First Nations child and family service agencies were contracted by experts in management information systems, jurisdictional disputes and child maltreatment prevention services in order to inform the funding formula research. Tight time frames have impacted the ability of the research team to fully analyze all aspect of the project, however, results suggest that given the variety of research methodology, the expertise of the research team and the cooperation of First Nations Child and family service agencies and the federal and provincial governments have yielded substantial information to guide the National Advisory Committee in its efforts to develop a new funding formula.

Wen:de The Journey Continues

Scope

This report presents the final phase of a three phase research project which was designed to inform analysis of three funding formula options for the First Nations child and family services. Phase One of the research project focuses on the identification of three funding formula options and the identification of the research questions that needed to be addressed to inform each option. Phase Two focuses on the response to these research questions and Phase Three involves the development and costing of the recommended changes.

This report is prepared for INAC to inform the development of a Memorandum to Cabinet seeking authority to implement the recommended improvements to the funding formula for First Nations Child and Family Service Agencies approved by the National Advisory Committee. The report begins by introducing the research aims, the research team, the method and limitation of the research before presenting an evidenced based analysis of why the redesign of Directive 20-1 option is being recommended as compared to the other two funding formula options. Finally, recommendations for reforms to Directive 20-1 are described, supporting evidence is identified and calculations to arrive at cost implications are provided.

Methodology

For Phase Three, a national survey instrument was developed for First Nations Child and Family Agencies in Canada (excluding Ontario). The instrument leveraged Phase Two research results and was developed in consultation with project researchers and key informants. The survey instrument for this phase was compiled as a select version of the second phase instrument, focusing on areas requiring additional information identified by agencies and/or the research team. The survey instruments were sent out to 93 First Nations Agencies in Canada. Researchers in each province were retained to support agencies in the completion of the survey via the phone or site visits if required. The survey was also available in electronic form format on the FNCFCSA website. Participating agencies received no financial compensation for their participation, however, notes of appreciation were sent out to all respondents.

This methodology garnered 35 completed surveys, or 36% of the population of FNCFCSA. This is remarkable given the short time frame for completion of the surveys (one month) and the fact that the survey was administered during the summer months when many staff takes holidays. Overall, the survey sample for Phase Three is representative for most purposes and can be relied upon with confidence. The survey

results are reported in aggregate from throughout this report in order to respect the anonymity of respondents.

Key Findings from Wen:de: We are Coming to the Light of Day and Wen:de the Journey Continues

- The primary reason why First Nations children come to the attention of the child welfare system is neglect. When researchers unpack the definition of neglect, poverty, substance misuse and poor housing are the key factors contribution to the over representation of First Nations children amongst substantiated child welfare cases.
- The formula drastically under funds primary, secondary and tertiary child maltreatment intervention services, including least disruptive measures.
- Additional funding is needed at all levels of FNCFSA from governance, administration, policy and practice in order to provide a basic level of child welfare services equitable to those provided off reserve by the provinces.
- An additional 109 million dollars is needed in year one of the proposed formula to redress existing funding shortfall along with levels of funding indicated in Wen:de for subsequent years
- Jurisdictional disputes between and amongst federal and provincial governments are a substantial problem with 12 FNCFSAs experiencing 393 jurisdictional disputes this past year alone. These disputes often result in First Nations children on reserve being denied or delayed receipt of services that are otherwise available to other Canadian children.
- The impact of jurisdictional disputes on children is tragically outlined in the case of Jordan who was a First Nations born to a family resident on reserve in Manitoba. Jordan stayed in hospital unnecessarily for two years due to a jurisdictional funding dispute between the province, INAC and Health Canada. Sadly, Jordan passed away before the jurisdictional dispute could be resolved and thus he never had a chance to live in a family home. We have developed Jordan's Principle to jurisdiction disputes in his memory. Under this principle, if a jurisdictional dispute arises respecting services to a First Nations child, and these services are otherwise available to other Canadian children, the government of first contact must fund the service without delay or disruption. The paying government body can then refer to the matter to a jurisdictional dispute mechanism for review. This would cost government nothing and would ensure that the needs of children come first. If this was in place when Jordan was in hospital, he would have lived part of his life in a family home.