



First Nations Child & Family Caring Society of Canada Inc.

“Building Helping Communities”

Volume 1, Issue 2

September 2002

Special Points of Interest:

- new FNCFC Executive Director announced
- Inventory of First Nations Child Welfare Research in Progress
- Research Project funded by Health Canada
- Introduction to a new assessment tool for children in care

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New Executive Director Appointed to Oversee FNCFC Society from Ottawa



After a lengthy search and interviewing many qualified individuals, the hiring Committee of the First Nations Child & Family Caring Society of Canada is formally pleased to announce the appointment of Ms. Cindy Blackstock as the new Executive Director for the First Nations Child & Family Caring Society of Canada Inc.

Ms. Blackstock is a founding member of the First Nations

Child & Family Caring Society of Canada and served as its Chair during the last two years. After much debate, Ms. Blackstock made the difficult but exciting decision to leave her current position as the Executive Director of the Caring for First Nations Children Society based in Vancouver, B.C.

Ms. Blackstock brings a wealth of experience and knowledge to her new position. Cindy has a B.A. in Psychology and is slated to soon complete her Masters of Management for Voluntary Sector Leaders from McGill University in Montreal. Cindy is a member of the Gitksan First Nation in B.C. She has worked with many First Nations peoples and organizations across Canada on family service initiatives utilizing the culture, values and traditions of First Nations peoples. She has

been instrumental in the supervision, design, development, and delivery of the first comprehensive provincial professional development program designed for First Nations Child and Family Service social workers in Canada.

Cindy is a gifted speaker and passionate about the role that First Nations peoples and governments play in the future development and delivery of social services as well as the professional training and research needs of First Nations child welfare agencies, locally, regionally and nationally. She has been an invited guest/keynote speaker at many conference venues across Canada such as Canada's

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Supporting Aboriginal Children and Youth with Learning and Behavioural Disabilities in the Care of Aboriginal Child Welfare Agencies

The First Nations Child & Family Caring Society of Canada Inc. is pleased to report the approval of \$200,000 funding from the Population Health Fund to undertake a research project entitled “Supporting Aboriginal Children

and Youth with Learning and Behavioural Disabilities in the Care of Aboriginal Child Welfare Agencies.”

This project is a two year project designed to develop a comprehensive understanding of

the needs of Aboriginal children and youth with Learning and Behavioural disabilities (L&BD), Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Fetal Alcohol Syndrome/Effects (FAS/FAE) in the care of

Continued on pages 6 and 7 ...

Supporting the Initiatives of Our Partners

The First Nations Child & Family Caring Society of Canada and the First Nations Research Site are very committed to the development of partnerships with other like minded organizations who are interested in the wellbeing of First Nations children as well as all children. From time to time we will update our membership on some of the child welfare initiatives our partners are engaged in which are occurring across Canada with the hope of securing more First Nation involvement, representation and participation in some of

these initiatives.

We would like to take this opportunity share with you a Canadian initiative that is currently being implemented by one of our partners, the Child Welfare League of Canada (CWLC), regarding the Canadian Looking After Children Project (CanLAC). CWLC would like to engage more First Nations child welfare organizations to participate in utilizing the CanLAC documentation so that this instrument is culturally appropriate for the purposes of First Nations child welfare agencies who provide

care to First Nations children and youth. It is also important that the information and data that is collected through the use of this instrument contributes to more accurate statistics reflecting the experiences of First Nations children and youth in care with both First Nations and non-Aboriginal agencies in this country. With that in mind, the following information on CanLAC was provided courtesy of *Shannon Balla* the Project Coordinator, with the CWLC. Please call her directly if you require a copy of CanLAC's newsletter or assessment documentation.

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The Canadian “Looking After Children” Project

By Shannon Balla, CWLC

The Canadian Looking After Children (CanLAC) project, based on the model developed in the United Kingdom in the early 1990s, attempts to improve the outcomes of children and youth in care by improving the quality of state parenting that they receive. This is achieved by building partnerships

between the key players – the foster parent(s), child welfare worker, child or youth in care, the child's biological family and other important people in the child's or youth's life.

The CanLAC project is attempting to bring some of the successes that the British model has achieved to the

Canadian population of children and youth in care by building upon the work that has been done in this country and elsewhere over the past several years. *Looking After Children* (LAC) as it originated in the UK, relies on a developmental model in which a child's progress is examined in a holistic way by examining 7 dimensions on a yearly basis through the use of the core LAC tool, the Assessment and Action Record (AAR).

The seven developmental dimensions are:

- Health
- Education
- Identity
- Family and Social Relationships
- Social Presentation
- Emotional and Behavioural Development
- Self Care Skills

CanLAC is a strengths-based model that moves beyond



Photo courtesy of Health Canada

harm reduction to maximizing well-being; aiming for outcomes for children and youth in care that are similar to those of children and youth in the general population. At the core of CanLAC is an emphasis on promoting dialogue between the child, caregivers and child welfare worker, in order to create a comprehensive and collaborative plan of care to guide and monitor the development of children and youth in care. Further, it allows for a systematic evaluation of child outcomes and interventions at an individual, organizational and national level, through data aggregation. This allows for the development of national data regarding the experiences and outcomes of children and youth in care, something that has been sorely lacking to this point.

Following a full endorsement by the Provincial and Territorial Directors of Child Welfare in November of 2001, the CanLAC project held the first national meeting of LAC Coordinators in Montreal in early February

2002. From that meeting came a clear sense of enthusiasm about the LAC model and a strong commitment to improving outcomes of children and youth in care. Several versions of LAC are in use across the country with various strengths that must be explored and integrated into a national model. Staff of the CanLAC project will support jurisdictions at any level of implementation and using all



licensed LAC tools. The materials currently being used in the CanLAC project are based on the Ontario version of LAC tools, which have particular research-related capabilities including the ability to easily aggregate data and comparability to the NLSCY. By this time next year, staff of the CanLAC project hope to build on the strengths of each version used in Canada to develop a truly national tool, which can accommodate the regional diversity across our country while maintaining a core data set that can be compared with the national data gathered in the National Longitudinal Survey on Children and Youth. In doing this, we can help to determine what factors influence the resiliency of children and youth in our society, and help promote success and well-being for all children.

We are also very excited to have been asked to participate

in the UK's pilot project, using an evolution upon the LAC model; an assessment framework for use with children and youth 'at risk'/'in need' in their communities, living in their families. At this point, four Canadian sites have expressed interest in participating in the pilot stage of this international initiative. These materials are anticipated

to be available for pilot implementation as of April 2002.

The CanLAC Team has been coordinating with each jurisdiction to determine the best way in which we can move forward in promoting LAC in Canada. The feedback received to date has helped to define the course of the project for 2002-2003.

For the next year, CanLAC project priorities include:

- Facilitating networking and information sharing between interested jurisdictions
- Supporting the implementation of LAC in participating jurisdictions and encouraging engagement by others.
- Raising awareness regarding the benefits of LAC for children and youth in care, for workers, and for caregivers.
- Consulting with stakeholders to further the development of a national Assessment and Action Record that reflects regional diversity and the particular needs of constituent groups
- Engaging with stakeholders to ensure that the process of bringing LAC to Canada is a collaborative one, reflecting the knowledge and experience of all involved
- Fortifying relationships with the Directors of Child Welfare in order to promote outcome-focused child welfare practice in Canada
- Organizing meetings of key stakeholders and facilitating training
- Compiling a database of LAC materials nationally and internationally



Photo courtesy of Health Canada

“The CanLAC Project ... attempts to improve the outcomes of children and youth in care by improving the quality of state parenting that they receive.”

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Photo courtesy of Health Canada

CanLAC Continued ...

- Participating in conferences and workshops regarding improving outcomes for children and youth in care
- Publishing newsletters and developing a CanLAC website to assist interested parties in keeping abreast of new developments in the CanLAC project

For more information about the project or to be included in

their newsletter database, please contact the CWLC's CanLAC Project Team:

Implementation & general inquires:

Victoria Norgaard
Project Team Leader
victoria@cwlc.ca
Shannon Balla
Project Coordinator
sballa@cwlc.ca

Research:

Louise Legault
Research Coordinator
louise@uottawa.ca
Marie-Claude Simard
Coordinatrice de recherche (Quebec)
Marie-claude.simard@mtl.centresjeuness.qc.ca

Survey on the Inventory of First Nations Child Welfare Research in Progress in Canada



As part of our research activities in partnership with the Centre of Excellence for Child Welfare, the First Nations Research Site (FNRS) is conducting a survey to find out the research projects currently being conducted across Canada that deal specifically with First Nations child welfare issues.

In the process of conducting this inventory, we would also like to be able to identify First Nations and/or Aboriginal researchers (who may be private consultants, employees, government analysts or university academics or students) who are doing research on behalf of and/or for First Nations peoples, communities and governments in relation to child and family matters.

We are looking for basic information such as a brief description and the title of the project/research currently underway; what might be unique about the goals of the project and/or research; who oversees the project/research being conducted; who might be involved in the project/

research on a partnership basis; where the project/research is currently at and the sources of funding that support the project/research being undertaken.

Embedded in this survey is also one question aimed at the feasibility of conducting a survey on a national scale that looks the maltreatment of children and youth in First Nation communities across Canada—we are looking for support in making sure that the statistics in this area are accurate, up to date, as well as to ensure that ownership, control, access and the production of information issues pertaining to First Nations child welfare and social work remains within the power and authority of First Nations agencies and organizations to use for policy and developmental purposes.

We have drafted a simple and short survey to assist in getting at some of this information which can be found to the right of this page. The questions asked are self-explanatory however if assistance is required in filling out this

survey, please do not hesitate to contact the Research Coordinator of the FNRS at (204) 474-8261 or by emailing bennettm@ms.umanitoba.ca. The deadline for submitting a completed survey is November 30th, 2002 at which time an in-depth analysis will be conducted with results posted by mid-February 2003 on both the websites of the Centre of Excellence for Child Welfare (cecw-cepb.ca) and the First Nations Child & Family Caring Society of Canada Inc. (fnfcs.com).

Please assist us in obtaining this valuable information by filling out the questionnaire on page 5. Once completed tear out and mail or fax to the First Nations Research Site, CECW, c/o Faculty of Social Work, University of Manitoba, 413A Tier Bldg, Winnipeg, MB, R3T 2N2, Fax (204) 474-7592.

*The FNFC Society of Canada and the Centre of Excellence for Child Welfare would like to thank you in advance for your prospective contributions and your participation in this survey, your input is greatly needed and appreciated. **Miigwetch!** Thank you!*

**The Caring
Society's
Mission
Statement is
based on
"Building
Helping
Communities"**

Executive Director Continued ...

Children: Canada's Future Conference (June 2002); Positive Systems of Child Welfare (June 2002); Aboriginal Child Care Conference (2001); Building the Successes of First Nations Agencies (2000); and the Cornwall Policy Symposium on Child Welfare (2000) among others.

In addition, Ms. Blackstock contributes significantly to the community and non-profit sectors of First Nations peoples and other child welfare organizations across Canada. She is a board member of the Child Welfare League of Canada and is a First Nations advisor to the Centre of Excellence for Child

Welfare. She has been involved in many other community initiatives such as the First Nations Summit Child Welfare Committee, the National Policy Review Joint Steering Committee, Early Childhood Educators of BC Taking Care Advisory Committee and was a board member of the North Vancouver Child and Youth Justice Committee.

The new Executive Director takes up her position as of October 1st, 2002. One of Cindy's first major responsibilities will be to locate a national office for the First Nations Child & Family Caring Society of Canada. The office will be situated in central Ottawa. In addition to her administrative duties, the Executive Director will be responsible for organizing an

national conference for First Nations Child Welfare agencies annually, which will serve as an opportunity for the First Nations Agencies to meet collectively to discuss current First Nations child welfare developments and initiatives that are ongoing across Canada. Annual general meetings of the Board of Directors may also be called to coincide with these national conferences. Cindy will also be instrumental in overseeing all research work being conducted by the First Nations Research Site in conjunction with the Centre of Excellence for Child Welfare located at the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Ms. Blackstock's phone no. and contact information will appear in the next newsletter (coming December 2002),

Project on Children with Learning Disabilities Continued ...

Aboriginal Child Welfare organizations across Canada. This project intends to develop culturally appropriate resource guides and/or program materials designed to increase early identification and support to agency staff, foster, adoptive and birth families supporting children suspected of having a L&BD. It is also believed that providing information and help to parents to understand and support these "high risk" children and youth will reduce the families' reliance on child protection services by building the capacity of parents to best support their children and youth with disabilities. It is believed that this will also reduce the risks of secondary problems (emotional problems, early exit from school, involvement in criminal activities, multiple foster home placements, etc.) among Aboriginal children and youth living with L&BD.

The Project is designed to

provide early intervention and support to families of children seen as "high risk" for struggles throughout childhood and into adult life. As such it makes a significant contribution in the areas of Childhood and Adolescent Development. The Project is enhanced by its partnership with community members and community agencies representing over 100 community-based programs dedicated to the healthy development of children and families across Canada. This partnership will provide many opportunities for growth and partnerships both within the project group and in the community at large.

The project intends to develop a comprehensive look at the scope of the issue and the needs of Aboriginal children involved in Aboriginal Child Welfare organizations, paying particular attention to developing a better understanding of the ways in

which Aboriginal Child Welfare agencies can better respond to the needs of this vulnerable group of children. Further, the Project will develop a group of materials that will provide staff and families with support in identifying early signs of L&BD issues as well as ways in which to remediate and increase capacity among affected children.

The Project will carry out these goals within a two-year time span. In the first year, the Project will conduct a mail-out survey of all Aboriginal Child Welfare organizations in Canada asking questions related to the number of children identified or suspected of having a L&BD. The study will look at levels of support provided to these children/youth along with information related to identified needs within the

Continued on next page ...



Photo courtesy of
Health Canada

Child with Learning Disabilities Project Continued ...

Child Welfare system with regards to the provision of support to these children. Follow-up in-depth interviews will be conducted in up to 20 locations paying particular attention to regional, cultural and language diversity and the special issues facing northern families. As well, regional meetings will be held with foster, adoptive and birth families to solicit information and support at the end of the

first year funding. Regional working groups including representatives from Child Welfare staff and administration, families, elders and community leaders will be selected to form a steering committee to provide leadership during phase one and two of the Project.

Phase two of the Project will use the information garnered in the survey, intense interviews and regional meetings to

develop "family friendly" materials to help families better identify L&BD problems in their child or children. This material will also include information on how to increase skills in affected children in the early or preschool years as well as information on how to support children at various developmental stages. The type of material offered, including format and languages,

will be determined after consultation with community partners and the regional working groups. All material will be made available across the country through the First Nations Child & Family Caring Society of Canada Inc.

For more information on this Project, please call Marlyn Bennett at (204) 474-8261.

Editorial Board Members Needed for new First Nations Social Work Review Journal

Deadline: November 30, 2002

The First Nations Social Work Review (FNSWR) is a new journal being developed by the First Nations Child & Family Caring Society of Canada as part of its commitment to engage and utilize the knowledge systems of First Nations peoples in the research it conducts and proposes to publish in the coming years. The journal will be published twice a year online as of January 2003.

The First Nations Child & Family Caring Society of Canada is seeking individuals

with working knowledge and experience, specifically in the Aboriginal social work field, to join the Editorial Board of the *First Nations Social Work Review* Journal. We need several positions to be filled by November 30, 2002.

Ideally, individuals should be independent and dedicated with working knowledge and experience in program delivery, developing policies and/or conducting Child Welfare focused research within a First Nations context. Members will be chosen from across Canada taking into account regional

representation including equal representation between male and female individuals who have worked for mandated and/or non-mandated Aboriginal child welfare agencies organizations in Canada.

The Editorial Board will select articles to be published twice a year online. Members will meet two or more times a year and/or hold conference calls as required to deal with the management of the FNSWR journal and to discuss and choose articles for publication in each issue. For more

information on the responsibilities of these positions, see our web site at www.fncfcs.com. Interested applicants are requested to submit a letter of interest and curriculum vitae by **November 30th, 2002** to:

Ms. Cindy Blackstock
First Nations Research Site
University of Manitoba
c/o Faculty of Social Work
413A Tier Building
Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3T 2N2
Telephone (204) 474-8261,
Fax (204) 474-7594, or
Email:
bennettm@ms.umanitoba.ca.

Caring Society T-Shirts for Sale

The Society still has a number of T-Shirts for sale bearing the First Nations Child & Family Society logo. The logo is presented in blue, purple and black. The T-shirts are \$20 each and come

in the following sizes:

Children's (6-8), (10-12)
Women's (Medium, Large)
Men's (Medium, Large and Extra-large).

To order contact Marlyn at (204) 474-8261 or fax your order to (204) 474-7594 or email: bennettm@ms.umanitoba.ca



**FIRST NATIONS
CHILD & FAMILY
CARING SOCIETY
OF CANADA, INC.**

c/o Faculty of Social Work
University of Manitoba
413A Tier Building

Phone: 204-474-8261
Fax: 204-474-7594
Email:

bennettm@ms.umanitoba.ca

**Our Web Site has
now been launched
but is undergoing
reconstruction—
Visit us at:
www.fncfcs.com**

**Staff of the
First Nations
Research Site :**

Marlyn Bennett,
Research Coordinator
bennettm@ms.umanitoba.ca

**Executive Director of
FNCFC Society of
Canada:**

Cindy Blackstock
cblackst@telus.net



The First Nations Child & Family Caring Society of Canada is a national research and professional development organization which builds upon the traditional value of interdependence by establishing national capacity to network, access information, develop effective policies and conduct research for and on behalf of 105+ First Nations Child & Family service providers across Canada. The 2001/2002 Board Members are as follows:

Elsie Flette, *Chair*, West Region Child & Family Services, Rolling River First Nation, P.O. Box 280 , Erickson, Manitoba, R0J 1P0, Phone (204) 636-6100 or (204) 985-4050, Fax (204) 636-6158, email: elette@wrcfs.mb.ca.

Bill Gillespie, *Secretary*, Kuuwanimano Child & Family Services, 210—119 Pine Street S., Timmins, Ontario, P4N 2K3, Phone (705) 268-9033, Fax (705) 268-9272, email: billg@vianet.ca.

Joan Glode, *Director*, Mi'kmaw Family & Children's Services of Nova Scotia, Box 179, Shubenacadie, Nova Scotia, B0N 2H0, Phone (902) 758-3553, Fax (902) 758-2390, email: glodejm@gov.ns.ca.

Raymond Shingoose, *Director*, Yorton Tribal Council Child and Family Services Inc., 21 Bradbrooke Drive, Yorkton, Saskatchewan, S2N 2J8, Phone (306) 782-8838, Fax (306) 782-7780, email: ytcfs@sk.sympatico.ca.

Donald Horne, *Director*, Shakotia'takehnhas Community Services, P.O. Box 1440, Kahnawake, Quebec, J0L 1B0, Phone (450) 632-6880, Fax (450) 632-5116, email: dhorne@axess.com.

Harry Sock, *Director*, Big Cove Child & Family Services, P.O. Box 1078, Rexton, New Brunswick, E4W 5N6, Ph (506) 523-8224, Fax (506) 523-8226.

The Board members are elected annually at an Annual General Meeting. Each Board member

Next Annual General Meeting of the Society: Ottawa, Ontario, September 30, 2002

Interested in Becoming a Member of the Society?

If you wish to become a member of the First Nations Child & Family Caring Society of Canada, please fill out the registration form below. Membership includes quarterly newsletters, access to research and resource materials, subscription to the upcoming new *First Nations Social Work Review* journal which will be published twice a year, and informed of current issues related to First Nations child welfare.

Yes, I would like to join the First Nations Child & Family Caring Society as a member under one of the following categories:

- Individual membership (\$75)
- Student membership with ID (\$25)
- Small Agency membership (\$350)
- Large Agency membership (\$600)

| | |
|------------------|--------------|
| LAST NAME: | FIRST NAME: |
| JOB TITLE: | EMPLOYED BY: |
| MAILING ADDRESS: | |
| CITY: | PROVINCE: |
| POSTAL CODE: | EMAIL: |
| PHONE: | EXT #: |
| | FAX: |

Payment Information:

Please make cheques or money orders payable in Canadian funds to First Nations Child & Family Caring Society of Canada Inc. and mail along with this form to:

First Nations Child & Family Caring Society of Canada Inc.
c/o Faculty of Social Work, University of Manitoba
413A Tier Building, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3T 2N2