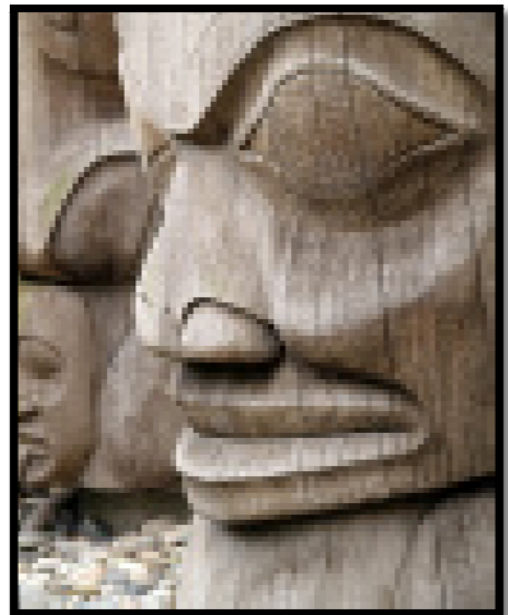


First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada Annual Report 2008



*Making a Difference for First
Nations Children and Families*
www.fncaringsociety.com

FIRST NATIONS CHILD AND FAMILY CARING
SOCIETY OF CANADA

302 251 Bank Street, Ottawa, ON K2P 1X3

7/25/2008

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HONORING

The First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada (the Caring Society) expresses its sincere appreciation to First Nations child and family service agencies, our members, funding organizations and partners who have made a positive difference for Aboriginal children, youth and families in 2008.

Special acknowledgements:

Assembly of First Nations
Andersen Family
Canadian Medical Association Journal
Canadian Paediatric Society
Centre of Excellence for Child Welfare
Child Welfare League of America
Editorial board of the First Peoples Child and Family Review
Factor Inwentash Faculty of Social Work, University of Toronto
Human Resources and Social Development Directorate, Social Development Partnerships Program
Jean Crowder, Member of Parliament, Cowichan
J.W. McConnell Foundation
Many Hands One Dream Coalition
McGill University Faculty of Social Work
Natasha Scott
National Collaborating Centre on Aboriginal Health
National Indian Child Welfare Association (NICWA)
Norway House Cree Nation
Ousley, Hanvey and Deep, LLP
The Printing House
Sandy Tunwell
SNAICC
Status of Women Canada
Working Group on the Rights of Indigenous Children and Families

FNCFCS MADE A DIFFERENCE FOR CHILDREN IN 2007/2008 BY:

- Supporting a Private Members Motion supporting Jordan's Principle tabled by NDP MP Jean Crowder to pass unanimously through the House of Commons on December 12, 2007.
- Encouraging over 1300 new supporters to endorse Jordan's Principle.
- Advocacy with the Provinces and Territories to support and implement Jordan's Principle resulting in the Western Premiers have announced their "strong support" for Jordan's Principle
- The Auditor General of Canada (May 2008) completed a review of Indian Affairs funding for First Nations Child and Family Services and found it to be inequitable.
- The Canadian Human Rights Commission (CHRC) has found that the human rights case filed by the Assembly of First Nations and the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada regarding inequitable child welfare funding is within the jurisdiction of the CHRC and should proceed to tribunal in the fall of 2008.
- Presenting to over 10,000 people in five countries and three continents.
- Publishing three editions of the First Peoples Child and Family Review.
- Contributing to over 100 news stories on Aboriginal child welfare this year throughout Canada and the United States
- Training nine Aboriginal youth and 21 Aboriginal women to deliver Caring Across the Boundaries programs in their regions.
- Working with the Many Hands One Dream coalition to develop principles to improve Aboriginal child and youth health

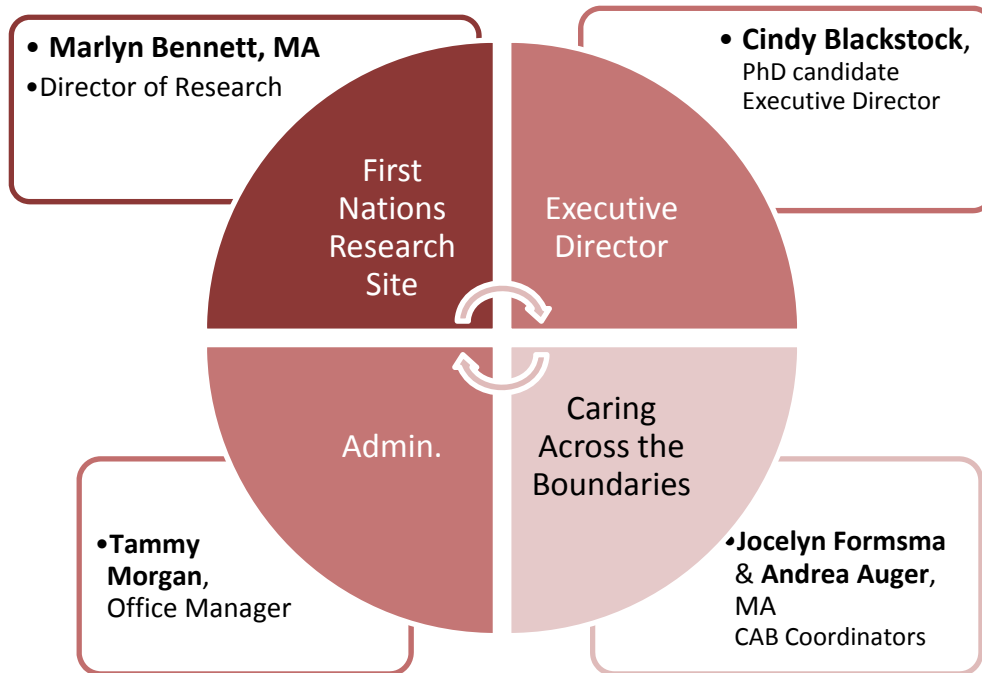
**Please support FNCFCS by becoming a member
or making a donation on line at
www.fncaringociety.com**

Who We Are

FNCFCS Board of Directors

Name	Affiliation	Board Position
Joan Glode	Mik'maw Family and Children's Services	President
Elsie Flette	Southern FN Authority, Manitoba	Vice President
Bill Gillespie	Nog Da Win Da Min Family and Community Services	Treasurer
Nancy Sandy	BC Member	Board Member
Carolyn Peacock	Yellowhead Tribal Services	Alberta Contact Person
Raymond Shingoose	Yorkton Tribal Council Child and Family Services	Board Member
Linda Deer and Robin Deconte	Kahnawake Shakotiiia'takehnhas Community Services and Kitigan Zibi CFS	Board Members
Kenn Richard	Native CFS of Toronto	Board Member
Landon Pearson	Carleton University	Board Member
Deborah Parker Loewen	Sask. Member at Large	Board Member
Judy Levis	Coordinator, New Brunswick First Nations Child and Family Services	Board Member

FNCFCS Staff



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. The 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 2007/2008.

FNCFCS Mission and Mandate

The First Nations Child and Family Caring Society believes Aboriginal communities are in the best position to design and implement their own child safety solutions and that as a national organization our best role is to provide quality resources for them to draw upon. 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 for 2008

Research	Policy	Education	Training
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aboriginal Women in contact with child welfare• 3 editions of First Peoples Child and Family Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Jordan's Principle campaign• Attawapiskat School Campaign supporter• Human Rights Case on First Nations Child Welfare Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Quarterly newsletter• Resource rich website with 1.2 million hits per year• Over 50 presentations reaching 10,000 people in 5 countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3 Train the Trainers sessions for Caring Across the Boundaries• Caring Across the Boundaries community sessions

Projects and Services: Living our Mission Statement

First Nations Research Site

The First Nations Research Site is 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 child welfare research that is generated by, and for, Aboriginal peoples. The Research Site was established in partnership with the Public Health Agency of Canada's Centre of Excellence for Child Welfare (CECW). The CECW is a research coalition of five leading organizations including the University of Toronto, Faculty of Social Work; The University of Montreal, Faculty of Social Work; McGill University, Faculty of Social Work; the Child Welfare League of Canada and the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada. As the site has evolved it has been pleased to expand the list of University partners and to actively support the Centre of Excellence for Child Welfare in running the Canadian Incidence Study on Reported Child Abuse and Neglect.

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

- The First Nations Research Site has actively participated in the planning for the third cycle of the Canadian Incident Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect (CIS). We anticipate that eleven First Nations Child and Family Service Agencies across Canada will be included in the third cycle of this important national study.
- 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 conferences and events this past year. In particular, the Director of the FNRS is scheduled to present at 5 upcoming events in 2008/2009. These are:
 - *October 3rd, 2008, Launch of the research findings from the Jumping through Hoops Report, Ka Ni Kanichihk Inc., 455 McDermot, Winnipeg, MB.*
 - *November 2008, 2nd Annual Creating Hope for the Future Gathering – "Remembering, Honouring our Past" - November 9, 10, 11, & 12 @ River Cree Casino in Edmonton, AB.*
 - *March 9-12, 2009 Aboriginal Policy Research Conference, Ottawa, Ontario*
 - *June 28th - July 4th, 2009, 31st Congress of the International Academy of Law and Mental Health Conference, New York City, USA.*
 - *April 19-22, 2009, Access to Prevention, Protection, and Treatment: A Matter of Fairness, Justice, and Action (27th Annual Protection Our Children: National American Indian Conference on Child Abuse and Protection), Reno, Nevada, USA.*
- Presentations to students from six universities.
- FNCFCS also contributed to two books jointly published by the Centre of Excellence for Child Welfare and the Prairie Child Welfare Consortium. These books are respectively titled: *Putting a Human Face on Child Welfare: Voices from the prairies* AND *for Action in Child and Family Services: Voices from the Prairies*.
- The Research Director of the FNRS also contributed to a book jointly edited by Brian Howe and Katherine Covell of Cape Breton University. The title of the book is: *A Question of Commitment: Children's Rights in Canada*.
- The Research Director of the FNRS also contributed to a newsletter produced by the Northern American Council on Adoptable Children and to the CWLC's journal *Canada's Children*.
- The Research Director also assisted in the development of a number of fact sheets on Aboriginal child welfare for the National Collaborating Centre on Aboriginal Health (NCCAHA).
- The annotated literature review searchable database has been expanded to include new resources published in 2007 and 2008. The database is available at no charge on our website www.fncaringsociety.com.

Over the coming year, the Director of the FNRS will plan for the 2008 cycle of the CIS and will also be publishing a 6th edition of the First Peoples Child Welfare Review.

First Peoples Child and Family Review

The 2007-2008 year has been very productive for the First Peoples Child and Family Review online journal. The First Peoples journal continues to be available for free from the Caring Society's website, as well as through Lund University's *Directory of Open Access Journals* (DOAJ, www.doaj.org) in Sweden. This year the journal also signed another 2 year commitment to appear in *EBSCO Publishing's* database of journals, an information resource for millions of researchers in thousands of institutions worldwide (www.ebsco.com).

The journal continues to be a successful resource used by many students and instructors at the university level, including those working within administration, within frontline practice and by many individuals working at policy levels. Numerous copies of the journal are available through various libraries at the University of Manitoba and other libraries across Canada.

Hits to the Caring Society's website have increased considerably over the years and now number over 1 million per year. On average, there are over 550 hits to the journal website monthly. The journal is consistently among the top 5 visited pages on the FNCFCS website. To date, there have been over 6,668 hits to the journal website since the beginning of 2007. In addition, interest in the journal and increased responses to our Call for Papers means that we are publishing on average of 10 articles per issue (amounting to approximately 20 articles published a year). This indicates that our journal has become an important resource to many scholars, researcher's, academic institutions and frontline providers as a credible and unique Aboriginal based research resource in that it:

1. Supports Aboriginal academics by providing a credible peer review mechanisms for publication of cultural knowledge and thus Aboriginal writers are submitting papers that they might have held back from other publishers;
2. Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal social work students use it in their academic training;
3. It is being used by service providers and policy makers in both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal child welfare jurisdictions across Canada; and
4. Our pool of contributors and reviewers (from both the scholarly and non-academic communities) continually grows with every issue published.

FNRS Research Initiatives

In addition to producing the First Peoples journal, the First Nations Research Site is also involved in a number of community based research initiatives. Two of the following research initiatives are now complete:

1. The Family Court Diversion Project

REPORT PRODUCED: *Bennett, M. (2008). Jumping Through Hoops: A Manitoba Study Examining Experiences and Reflections of Aboriginal Mothers Involved with the Child Welfare and Legal Systems with respect to Child Protection Matters. Report prepared for Ka Ni Kanichihk Inc. and the Steering Committee of the Family Court Diversion Project. Winnipeg, MB: Ka Ni Kanichihk Inc. Available online at: <http://www.kanikanichihk.ca> and <http://www.fncaringsociety.ca>.*

This collaborative community-based research project funded by Status of Women Canada focused on the development of collaborative responses to understanding and developing appropriate actions to address the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal women and children involved in the child protection system in Manitoba. This project, spearheaded by Ka Ni Kanichihk Inc. and other community-based organizations jointly identified Aboriginal women and children's involvement with the child protection system as a concern among Aboriginal women who report feelings of confusion and isolation when interacting with the child protection system and lack confidence to manoeuvre their way through the court processes which they find intimidating and devaluing. Aboriginal women have also reported that they do not find support through existing services, either because they feel these services are not appropriate or sensitive, or because the services lack capacity to respond to their needs. This project was overseen by a Steering Committee comprised of experts from the legal and child welfare professions, and other non-profit community-based organizations working with Aboriginal women in Manitoba.

“Jumping through Hoops” is a prominent perspective that emerged from the Aboriginal mothers’ stories and reflections about their experiences with child welfare and family court systems. The report provides a narrative accounting of Aboriginal mothers/grandmothers experiences and perspective about being involved with child welfare, includes a demographic overview about the mothers and grandmothers involved in the study and ends with a number of solutions identified by the mothers/grandmothers about how the child welfare and family court systems can be improved to work better for Aboriginal women and children. While these recommendations appear to advocate “tinkering” with the system, it may be partially due to the fact that Aboriginal mothers (and arguably extends to social workers’) lack of knowledge about the range of alternative dispute mechanisms available. The research methods in this study draw upon interviews and talking circles conducted with Aboriginal women, as well as interviews conducted with community advocates and lawyers (who represented Aboriginal mothers in child protection matters) during the months of March to June 2007.

A public launch of the research findings is scheduled for Friday, October 3rd, 2008 in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Troy Westwood (a.k.a. Little Hawk) will perform his song “Where Are You God?” live upon the conclusion of the PowerPoint Presentation to a collage of images depicting strong Aboriginal mothers and children from Manitoba.

2. Communities 4 Families Downtown Parent-Child Coalition

REPORT PRODUCED: Bennett, M. (2008). *Stress, Coping and the Impact on Parenting in the Downtown Residential Communities of Winnipeg: Interview, Focus Group and Online Survey Results*. Winnipeg, MB: Communities 4 Families Downtown Parent-Child Coalition. Available at: <http://www.communities4families.ca> and at http://www.fncaringsociety.com/docs/C4F_Final_Report_2008.pdf.

The First Nations Research Site, conducted community-based interviews, focus group sessions and an online survey to examine the sources of stress experienced by parents residing in the downtown residential communities of Winnipeg, including ways parents cope and how these stressors and ways of coping impacted on parenting. The research was conducted for and funded by the Communities 4 Families Downtown Parent-Child Coalition. The research methodology utilized a mixed methods approach focusing on a variety of data sources using qualitative and quantitative tools. Information from parents residing in the downtown residential communities of Winnipeg was gathered one of three ways:

1. Through *Personal Interviews* with parents living in the downtown residential communities of Winnipeg (Interviews were conducted throughout the months of July 2007 through February 2008);
2. Through *7 Roundtable Discussions* with parents in various downtown residential community locations (held during September 2007 through February 2008); and
3. Through a 15 minute *Anonymous Online Survey* targeting downtown residential community parents (conducted through Survey Monkey from July to October 2007).

The report focuses on the aggregate (collective) findings from the personal interviews, roundtable of focus group discussions held during the period from July 2007 to February 2008 and the aggregate results of the online survey. The study's findings and results can also be found on the Communities 4 Families' website located at <http://communities4families.ca>.

3. A Regional Study of Child Welfare Outcomes in Aboriginal Communities: A Participatory Pilot Project

The goals of this project are to identify the types of helping services provided to Aboriginal children and families receiving services from Aboriginal child welfare agencies in the Province of Ontario, to assess the usefulness of elements of the LAC framework and Outcome Indicator Matrix for assessing outcomes for children and families and to make recommendations for how outcome measurement in an Aboriginal child welfare content should occur.

Major Research Questions:

1. What are the perceptions of Aboriginal children and families about the types of services that they receive and how these should be assessed?

2. What are the experiences of service providers in utilizing the LAC outcomes, the Outcome Indication Matrix or other evaluation tools in generating utilization-focused, culturally appropriate indicators of child welfare outcomes?
3. What adaptations to existing outcome measurement strategies, including the use of LAC and the Outcome Indicator Matrix, are required to provide a culturally appropriate and utilization-focused framework for evaluation with Aboriginal children, families and communities?

This one year pilot project is funded by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services and is being conducted through a partnership arrangement involving the Association of Native Child and Family Services Agencies of Ontario, the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada (FNCFCFS) and the Faculty of Social Work, University of Manitoba. The Research Team includes Marlyn Bennett from the FNCFCFS, Brad McKenzie from the University of Manitoba and Shannon Balla as the Project Coordinator. Ethics approval for the study has been granted by the University of Manitoba. The Research team recently conducted a workshop in Toronto with the four Ontario First Nations CFS Agencies involved in this study to explore outcomes issues as it relates to child welfare in the Ontario context. A final report is scheduled to be complete by end of October, beginning of November, 2009.

FIRST NATIONS RESEARCH SITE CONFERENCE

CARING ACROSS THE BOUNDARIES:

Bridging Knowledge Gaps, Services and Policies to Support First Peoples Child Welfare and Health Conference, May 28-30, 2008, Winnipeg, Manitoba

The Director of the FNRS was successful in receiving a \$50,000 Knowledge Translation Grant from the Aboriginal Capacity and Development Research Environment (ACADRE) through the Centre for Aboriginal Health Research (University of Manitoba) / Canadian Institute on Health Research (CIHR). This conference was designed to address information gaps affecting child welfare and health services, practices and policies to First Peoples children, families and communities dealing with disabilities, special needs, FASD, mental health and addiction needs of families involved with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal child welfare agencies. Various scholars, practitioners, professionals and community experts from the child welfare and health professions were invited to shed light on the need to collaborate on understanding how to address and provide solutions for closing the gaps in knowledge, services and policies across these two fields. Remembering Jordan the young man behind “Jordan’s Principle” was a key aspect of the conference. A “Jordan’s Principle” pin with a teddy bear was created and distributed to all who participated in the conference. The presentations from this conference will appear in two journals: *The First Peoples Child and Family Review* (release in January 2009) and the *International Journal on Mental Health and Addiction* (release in March 2009). Printed copies of the First Peoples Child & Family Review

journal along with a video CD will be disseminated to all conference participants and posted to the conference's website once finalized. This event was co-sponsored by the First Nations Child & Family Caring Society of Canada, the Faculty of Social Work (University of Manitoba), the Centre of Excellence for Child Welfare, the Centre of Excellence for Children and Youth with Special Needs, the Faculty of Education (University of Western Ontario) and the Southern First Nations Network of Care in Manitoba.



The Caring Across the Boundaries

Caring Across the Boundaries (CAB) was created by the FNCFCS in response to a call from First Nations child and family service agencies for greater access to quality of life and prevention services from all sectors of society. Caring Across the Boundaries was created to address the lack of culturally based voluntary sector quality of life and prevention services available to children, youth and their families' resident on reserve. By promoting knowledge sharing and collaboration between First Nations child and family service agencies and voluntary sector organizations, Caring Across the Boundaries aims to ensure that First Nations children, youth and families have equal access to the wide range of services and resources offered by the voluntary sector.

It is a program developed and implemented in the spirit of:

- Facilitating collaboration between Voluntary Sector and First Nations peoples
- Providing awareness and education for First Nations & the Voluntary Sector
- Providing space and opportunity to interact, connect and network
- Facilitating the development of action plans focused on building relationships with each other
- Supporting the further development of culturally based on-reserve voluntary sector organizations
- Engaging Canadians in the reconciliation process to promote the best outcomes for Aboriginal and non Aboriginal children and young people.

Caring Across the Boundaries is an interactive workshop that facilitates collaboration between First Nations child and family services agencies and the voluntary sector. The program was developed based on research which found that First Nations children and youth on reserve have almost no access to the broad range of prevention and quality of life services provided by the voluntary sector (FNCFCS, 2003).

The goal was simple: Provide the reason and the opportunity for people to come together to learn about each other, share experiences and work together to create steps

for decreasing the service gaps for First Nations children, youth and families. CAB has been operating since 2004. Since that time, a number of communities have hosted both the CAB: Original curriculum as well as the CAB: Youth Focus with great success. The most recent phase of the CAB is the Touchstones for Leadership: Reconciliation in Child Welfare curriculum which will bring together leaders in child welfare to engage in a process of Reconciliation utilizing the values base known as the Touchstones.

The Touchstones for Leadership: Reconciliation in Indigenous Child Welfare is a result of a gathering held in Niagara Falls in 2005. At this gathering Indigenous and non-Indigenous leadership within child welfare gathered to create a vision of how to better serve Indigenous children, youth and families. The result of this gathering was the document entitled *Reconciliation in Child Welfare: Touchstones of Hope for Indigenous Children, Youth and Families*. This document outlined 5 guiding principles and 4 phases of engaging in a Reconciliation process.

The document was just the beginning. 2 years later, the National Indian Child Welfare Association hosted, in conjunction with their annual conference, the second Reconciliation gathering that drew communities to highlight their successes with reconciliation activities.

In addition to the gatherings, a university curriculum has been developed (but not yet piloted) and there have been many presentations across Canada and the World spreading the message of the Touchstones of Hope.

The Touchstones for Leadership: Reconciliation in Child Welfare is the most recent initiative of this movement. This program, written by Indigenous curriculum expert Margaret Kovach, PhD., is an interactive and engaging curriculum that intends to bring together leaders in Child Welfare from the community and the child welfare system for the purposes of moving forward together on a new path for the well-being of children, families and communities.

The curriculum is divided into 5 modules based upon the Touchstones of Reconciliation. The Touchstones are five guiding principles to follow when working with Indigenous communities. Each of the modules can be used individually or in sequence.

There are a number of activities within each of the modules that are intended to bring the participants through the four phases of Reconciliation: Truth Telling, Acknowledging, Restoring and Relating.

This year, with the generous support of Social Development Partnerships Program and the Status of Women we have been able to train Aboriginal women and Aboriginal young people to facilitate the Caring Across the Boundaries and Touchstones of Reconciliation programs. The website and other promotional materials have been enhanced and we are pleased to offer many more resources in both French and English.

The Touchstones of Reconciliation program was piloted with nine First Nations child and family service agencies and government officials from the Ministry for Children and Families in Prince Rupert, British Columbia. Initial reports indicate the three day was a great success and has generated a lot of interest among participants to continue the reconciliation in child welfare movement.

In addition, Social Development Partnerships Program has supported presentations on reconciliation to social work students at the University of Victoria, Dalhousie University, Ryerson University, the University of Toronto and the University of Ottawa.

Policy Networking: National and International Activities



Norway House families, Grand Chief Ron Evans, MP Jean Crowder, Chief Marcel Balfour, Jerlene Anderson, Councillor Mike Muswagon and Ernest Anderson on December 12, 2007 – the day Jordan's Principle Motion 296 passed unanimously through the House of Commons.

FNCFCS has worked with the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs and Norway House Cree Nation to promote Jordan's Principle. This child first principle to resolve inter governmental jurisdictional disputes regarding funding for children's services has been endorsed by over 1700 individuals and organizations. In May of 2007 when MP Jean Crowder (NDP) tabled a private members motion in the House of Commons in support of Jordan's Principle. On December 12, 2007, Private Members motion 296 in support of Jordan's Principle was passed unanimously by the House of Commons. Jordan's father, Ernest Andersen and his older sister Jerlene, were joined by other children and families from Norway House in the

gallery of the House of Commons to witness this historic moment. As Ernest Anderson so rightly pointed out the good done in Jordan's name that day would be nothing but a moral victory unless the provincial and federal governments implemented it. A month later, BC Premier Gordon Campbell became the first Premier to announce full support for Jordan's Principle and table an implementation plan. This was followed by an announcement by the Western Premiers that they all strongly supported Jordan's Principle.

In the summer of 2007, the Canadian Paediatric Society released its annual report card on government compliance with children's health policy and best practice. Every province and territory received a poor rating on the implementation of Jordan's Principle except Nova Scotia. Given the growing support for Jordan's Principle by groups such as the Canadian Medical Association Journal we are hoping that CPS will be able to report that all provinces and territories have adopted and fully implemented Jordan's Principle within the next year.

The First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada was proud to join with the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) in filing a complaint with the Canadian Human Rights Commission (CHRC) against the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development Canada alleging that the inequitable funding for First Nations children and families on reserve resulted in unequal benefit under child welfare laws. The Canadian Human Rights Commission has now formally accepted the complaint and has referred the matter to full tribunal. We are hopeful that the federal government will agree to allow this case to be heard on its merits and not appeal the ruling to federal court. The safety and well being of First Nations children is too important to allow unnecessary delays in the process.

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, the Centre of Excellence on Child Welfare and the Child Welfare League of America to reposition child welfare to improve the outcomes for Aboriginal children. The Reconciliation in child welfare movement is continuing with the following projects and results:

- Several US States and Canadian provinces are using the Touchstones of Hope for Indigenous children youth and families document (available at www.reconciliationmovement.org) to redesign services for Aboriginal children and families.
- Participation in the National Council on Adoptable Children Conference in July of 2008 celebrating the reconciliation theme.
- Touchstones of Hope curriculum piloted in Prince Rupert, British Columbia with over 120 participants.

Along with our work with the Reconciliation movement, we are proud to work with the Many Hands One Dream (MHOD) Coalition to re-center Aboriginal child health services in a way that better support Aboriginal children and youth (www.manyhandsonedream.ca). The MHOD coalition is beginning to develop curriculum for health care providers on how to actualize the principles.

FNCFCFS is proud to be Co Convenor of the Indigenous Sub Group on child rights (ISG) which is working with the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child and expert writer Margo Greenwood to develop a General Comment on the Rights of Indigenous Children. The Committee is currently preparing a final draft for review and we are hopeful that the General Comment will be available for use in the spring of 2009. For more information on the General Comment please visit (www.isg-ngogroup.org)

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 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 working to ensure that First Nations child and family service agencies have the resources needed in order to deliver equitable culturally based child, family and community services.

As a small organization with three staff members we are proud of our progress to date and are thankful for the support of Aboriginal child and family service agencies, our members, First Nations 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.

Want to Make A Difference for Aboriginal Children?

Go on line to www.fncaringsociety.com to find six ways you can make a difference for Aboriginal children and youth in under 15 minutes and think about supporting FNCFCFS by becoming a member or making an on line donation.