

# FNCARES

## ANNUAL REPORT

2021/2022



First  
Nations  
Children's  
Action  
Research and  
Education  
Service



UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA  
FACULTY OF EDUCATION



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Children's  
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This report reflects activities from August 2021–July 2022

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**First Nations Children's Action Research and Education Service**

Faculty of Education, University of Alberta

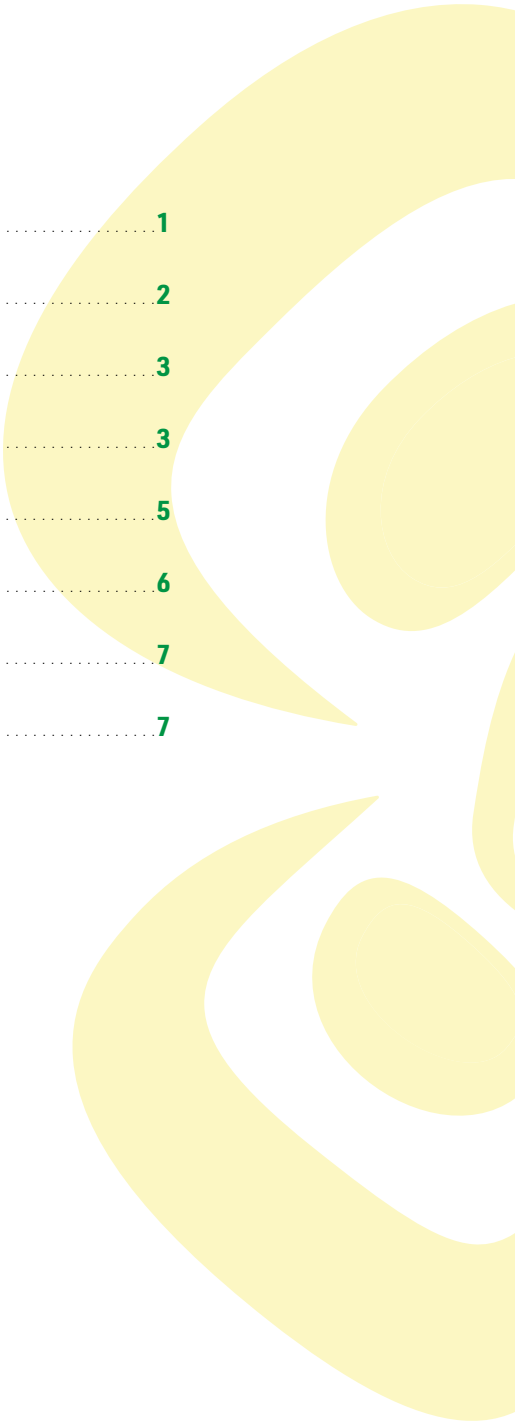
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# ABOUT US

The First Nations Children's Action Research and Education Service (FNCARES) is a partnership between the First Nations Child & Family Caring Society (Caring Society) and the University of Alberta's Faculty of Education. Established in 2012 by Dr. Cindy Blackstock, FNCARES draws on well-established research on the structural drivers of disadvantage for First Nations children, youth, and families to develop community-based solutions to ongoing discrimination and inequities. We respect and support First Nations self-determination and are committed to engaging communities, including children and youth, as partners and co-researchers in all stages of each project.

FNCARES works with community partners to organize and host numerous public events each year for both adults and children. These include lectures, workshops, panel discussions, film screenings and book launches, and other educational events that are free and open to the public. We also develop resources to educate about the structural drivers of disadvantage and encourage discussion and actions that promote culturally based equity and justice for First Nations children and youth.



*Cindy Blackstock (Director) and Melisa Brittain (Research Associate) plant flowers at Dr. Bryce's grave in Beechwood Cemetery in Ottawa.*



**First Nations Child & Family Caring Society**



**UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA  
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## A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



*Cindy Blackstock with Spirit Bear*

Challenging colonialism means questioning the basic assumptions of normative thinking and behavior. This year, FNCARES has worked with Dr. Steven Hassan, Director of the Freedom of Mind Institute, and author of *The Cult of Trump*, to explore the intersection between colonialism and undue influence to question the presumptive relationship patterns between First Nations and governments.

Undue influence reduces critical thinking and creativity to create black and white dichotomies that operate like reflexes, repeating behaviour patterns across generations. Reclaiming the authentic self as an individual, group, or Nation can happen if basic assumptions are identified and tested against reliable evidence. For example, in our work with First Nations children, I originally assumed that the government was discriminating against First Nations children because it did not have a solution to fix the system, and that the answer was to write a report. Surely, if they had a solution, they would fix it. But as our panel on "A National Crime: Is it Over?" showed, I was wrong. There are reports documenting the harms to children arising from government discrimination dating back over a century, but my assumption that government would "do better if it knew better" was so ingrained, that I had not looked at the long history of evidence showing this was not the case.

Language is part of undue influence, so we need to pay attention to when basic human rights are framed in the language of "reconciliation" for Indigenous peoples and in the language of "entitlements" for others. And we must pay attention to when vacant apologies by institutional wrongdoers foist the "healing" narrative onto victims without reforming themselves to ensure the abuses don't continue.

Truth, Justice, and Reconciliation begin by setting ourselves free to learn from the past and to embrace the creative ingenuity of our ancestors. FNCARES will continue to explore these and other important topics in the year ahead.

Respectfully,  
Dr. Cindy Blackstock

# ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT THIS YEAR

## Education and Engagement Events

### Mind Control and Colonization – Part I

On December 8, 2021, FNCARES hosted a webinar featuring Dr. Steven Hassan, Dr. Pam Palmater, and Dr. Cindy Blackstock to explore connections between Dr. Hassan's work on authoritarian mind control and colonization in Canada. Dr. Cindy Blackstock began by discussing how propaganda has always been part of colonialism, forming the government's messaging, shaping non-Indigenous views of First Nations, and helping to create a climate that enables human rights violations and ongoing injustices. For Dr. Blackstock, Dr. Steven Hassan's work on mind control has the potential to help disrupt limited thinking, affirm First Nations ways of knowing, and allow for true self-determination.

Dr. Steven Hassan, founder of [Freedom of Mind Resource Center](https://freedomofmind.com)<sup>1</sup> and internationally recognized expert on cults, brainwashing, and authoritarian control, outlined his theory of mind control, including the BITE model and influence continuum. He explained how, as a means of gaining and maintaining coercive control, colonial governments assert undue influence and authority over Indigenous peoples in ways that can create a sense of individual and cultural insecurity.

Dr. Pamela Palmater, Mi'kmaw citizen, lawyer, and Professor and Chair in Indigenous Governance at Toronto Metropolitan University, spoke about how colonial ideology tries to silence, villainize, and control First Nations people who intervene in the discourse of "Canada the good." We must, she asserted, continue to disrupt state propaganda, political rhetoric, corporate mantras, white supremacy, and anti-First Nation racism that allows for the continuation of the "worst and longest-running genocide to continue unabated in Canada," the blaming of First Nations, and the internalization of blame by First Nations peoples.

> [Watch video of Mind Control and Colonization – Part I](#)<sup>2</sup>



*Clockwise from top left: Pam Palmater, Melisa Brittain, Steven Hassan, and Cindy Blackstock*

1 <https://freedomofmind.com>

2 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NYHuBgR-Otk&t=488s>

## A National Crime: Is it Over?

Canada's reputation as a bastion of human rights amid global headlines of hundreds of "Indian" children in unmarked graves in 2021 was defended by many, who suggested that people back then did not know the children were dying. And even if they did know, defenders said, "we can't judge the past by the values of the present." However comforting, these defenses crumble in the face of work by Peter Henderson Bryce, a renowned public health expert appointed Medical Inspector for the Department of the Interior and Indian Affairs in 1904, whose pamphlet *The Story of a National Crime: An Appeal for Justice to the Indians of Canada* was published in 1922.

Bryce documented the devastating rates of illness and death of Indigenous children in residential schools owing to unequal health care funding and terrible health practices in the schools. He also documented the opposition he faced by Duncan Campbell Scott, a leading bureaucrat on the residential school file. Even Bryce's direct pleas to Prime Minister Laurier to save the children's lives went unanswered.

On May 18, 2022, in honour of the 100th year anniversary of the publication of *The Story of a National Crime*,<sup>3</sup> FNCARES hosted a webinar to discuss Bryce's attempts to reveal crimes against Indigenous children in residential schools when they were happening, how the colonial mindset enables mainstream Canada to continuously turn away from its history of genocide, and what people are doing to learn from the past, educate for the future, and hold government accountable for ongoing injustices. The webinar featured Dr. Cindy Blackstock, Dr. John Milloy, Dr. Amber Johnson, Dr. Ian Mosby, and Dr. Eva Jewell.



Dr. Eva Jewell, Research Director at Yellowhead Institute

Dr. Cindy Blackstock began by speaking about Bryce's efforts to hold government to account during his life and drew parallels between what the public, government, and media knew of injustices then and now, and how we must continue to demand government accountability for both past and current injustices. Afterwards, Drs. Milloy and Johnson presented their paper *A Cruel Kindness: Laying the Foundations of Federal Child Welfare Policy in the 1920s and 1930s*,<sup>4</sup> which examines

responses by non-Indigenous people who worked in the Indian Residential School system when confronted with the atrocities carried out by the system. Their analysis provides insight into the deep roots of discrimination against Indigenous peoples in Canadian settler thought.

Drs. Mosby and Jewell presented their work that tracks Canada's lack of progress towards completing the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action*,<sup>5</sup> noting that the government completed more actions in the three weeks following the discovery of unmarked children's graves at the former Kamloops Indian Residential School in 2021 than they had the

3 <https://fncaringociety.com/publications/story-national-crime-appeal-justice-indians-canada>

4 <https://fncaringociety.com/publications/cruel-kindness-laying-foundations-federal-child-welfare-policy-1920s-and-1930s>

5 [https://ehprnh2mwo3.exactdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Calls\\_to\\_Action\\_English2.pdf](https://ehprnh2mwo3.exactdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf)

three years prior. They attribute this urgency in completing the actions to Canada's attempt to save face on the world stage as its image was threatened by international news stories, and they argue that the calls selected for fulfilment were largely symbolic rather than structural. While symbolic gestures can have some positive impact, they noted, the Calls to Action that require systematic changes must be fulfilled to end the ongoing national crime.

- > [Watch video of A National Crime: Is it Over?](#)<sup>6</sup>
- > [Read Yellowhead Institute's Calls to Action Accountability status updates by Drs. Ian Mosby and Eva Jewell](#)<sup>7</sup>

## Research

### **Just because we're small doesn't mean we can't stand tall: Reconciliation education in the elementary classroom**

This SSHRC-funded research project studies the impacts of the Caring Society's social justice-based reconciliation campaigns on elementary students and teachers. Led by Dr. Cindy Blackstock (McGill University) and co-investigators Dr. Nicholas Ng-A-Fook and Dr. Susan Bennett (University of Ottawa), this project is advancing knowledge about implementing a social-justice reconciliation approach within elementary school curriculum frameworks and standards and creating knowledge and resources that school boards and educators can use to implement this education in elementary classrooms.

In our [one-minute video for social media](#),<sup>8</sup> researcher Dr. Lisa Howell presents one of our main findings: contrary to what many educators and parents believe, "when children learn about past injustices and current inequities, instead of feeling shame or guilt, they feel empowered." Our research found that when they learn about the history of residential schools and the current discrimination faced by First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples, students feel empowered to learn more, stand in solidarity with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples, and use their voices to become agents of change.



*Dr. Lisa Howell in video for social media.*

In response to our findings, the research team is developing an interactive online resource for teachers and educational professionals called *The Spirit Bear Virtual School for Teachers*. On this website, educators will find the *Spirit Bear Beary Caring Curriculum* and lesson plans for

6 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SQFAuKwfUNc>

7 <https://yellowheadinstitute.org/trc/>

8 [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=106MK0r1-\\_I](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=106MK0r1-_I)



each campaign; they will have access to resources that share how educators with experience in elementary and secondary education for reconciliation have engaged with the Caring Society resources; and they will have access to webinars designed to help them teach the curriculum.



*Just because we're small research team meeting in Ottawa, June 2022. Left to right: Sunny, Cindy Blackstock, Madelaine McCracken, Nicholas Ng-A-Fook, Spirit Bear, Melisa Brittain, Lisa Howell, Sylvia Smith.*

Watch for The Spirit Bear Virtual School for Teachers online soon! In the meantime, learn more about the school and the I am a Witness learning guide by watching the [Spirit Bear Virtual School Webinar: I am a Witness Learning Guide](#)<sup>9</sup> and by reading our [Research Report](#),<sup>10</sup> available in both French and English.

## FNCARES Resource Development

FNCARES works year-round with the Caring Society to produce resources that are free and accessible to the public. This year, we worked with Dr. Steven Hassan of [Freedom of Mind Resource Center](#)<sup>11</sup> to produce three information sheets on Mind Control and Colonization:

- Propaganda, Mind Control, and Undue Influence in Colonial Canada
- Understanding Colonial Mind Control Patterns Using the BITE Model & Influence Continuum
- Strategies for Overcoming Colonial Mind Control

> [Read Information Sheets on Mind Control and Colonization](#)<sup>12</sup>



9 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R0LcrGsXHBE>

10 <https://fncaringociety.com/publications/research-report-just-because-were-small-doesnt-mean-we-cant-stand-tall-reconciliation>

11 <https://freedomofmind.com>

12 <https://fncaringociety.com/publications/mind-control-and-colonization-information-sheets>

We also created information sheets in both English and French on the [Settlement Agreement in Principle Regarding Compensation for First Nations Children](#),<sup>13</sup> the [Agreement in Principle on Long-Term Reform of the First Nations Child and Family Services Program](#) and [Jordan's Principle](#),<sup>14</sup> and [Children Back, Land Back: A Follow-Up Report of First Nations Youth in Care Advisors](#).<sup>15</sup>

## Publications

### First Peoples Child & Family Review

This online, peer-reviewed, interdisciplinary journal<sup>16</sup> honours the voices of First Peoples and their allies and supporters. Focusing on research, practice, and policy concerning First Nations, Métis, and Inuit children and families, the journal is published bi-annually and hosted through the Open Journal System. A [Special Edition by children and youth](#)<sup>17</sup> published in August 2021 (Volume 16 No.1) honoured Shannen Koostachin and [Shannen's Dream](#)<sup>18</sup> for safe and comfy schools. Contributions explore how First Nations kids in Canada are still treated inequitably and discuss the changes needed to ensure all First Nations children and youth have the opportunity to pursue their dreams.



## Knowledge Portal

The Knowledge Portal is a searchable database hosted by the First Nations Child & Family Caring Society that provides access to resources on Indigenous children and families in Canada. The database includes an annotated bibliography of journal articles, literature reviews, reports, guides, films, books, and links to all the Caring Society's educational resources as well as to external resources. It also provides links to all legal documents generated by the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal on First Nations child welfare and to the *First Peoples Child & Family Review*. The Caring Society follows the First Nations principles of ownership, control, access, and possession (OCAP) of data and information and provides open access to all the documents included in the database.

Search the Knowledge Portal at [fncaringsociety.com/knowledge-portal](https://fncaringsociety.com/knowledge-portal).<sup>19</sup>

13 [https://fncaringsociety.com/sites/default/files/compensation\\_aip\\_info\\_sheet.pdf](https://fncaringsociety.com/sites/default/files/compensation_aip_info_sheet.pdf)

14 [https://fncaringsociety.com/sites/default/files/aip\\_on\\_long-term\\_reform\\_info\\_sheet\\_english.pdf](https://fncaringsociety.com/sites/default/files/aip_on_long-term_reform_info_sheet_english.pdf)


15 [https://fncaringsociety.com/sites/default/files/children\\_back\\_land\\_back\\_0.pdf](https://fncaringsociety.com/sites/default/files/children_back_land_back_0.pdf)

16 <https://fncaringsociety.com/knowledge-portal/first-peoples-child-family-review>

17 <https://fpfcr.com/index.php/FPCFR/issue/view/37>

18 <https://fncaringsociety.com/what-you-can-do/ways-make-difference/shannens-dream>

19 <https://fncaringsociety.com/knowledge-portal>



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