



First Nations Children's Action Research and Education Service

Annual Report 2012/13

About Us

The First Nations Children's Action Research and Education Service (FN CARES) is a partnership between the University of Alberta and the First Nations Child & Family Caring Society of Canada. Established in June 2012 by Dr. Cindy Blackstock, FN CARES is located at the University of Alberta's Faculty of Extension (Edmonton), and is committed to translating the well-established research on the structural drivers of disadvantage for First Nations children, youth and families into pragmatic, community-based solutions. We respect and support First Nations self-determination in research by engaging communities as partners and co-researchers in all stages of each project. We are also committed to engaging children and youth in creating solutions to the issues that so directly affect their lives.

FN CARES Staff

Dr. Cindy Blackstock
Associate Professor, Faculty of Extension,
University of Alberta & Executive Director,
First Nations Child & Family Caring Society

Dr. Melisa Brittain
Research Administrator
FN CARES

Collaborative Research Team

Located at the University of Alberta's Faculty of Extension (Edmonton), FN CARES has established a multi-disciplinary network of over twenty leading researchers and practitioners from across Canada, and from the U.S. and Australia. Through initial consultations with collaborators, we have determined that the initial focus of this team will be on strategies designed to alleviate the effects of child poverty in First Nations communities. Since poverty is at the root of all other structural risk factors—substandard housing, substance misuse, and underfunding in education, health services, and child welfare—addressing poverty first will enable the greatest possible change in all areas of structural disadvantage for First Nations children and youth.



Guidelines for Ethical Research

FN CARES has developed a set of [Guidelines for Ethical Research](#) for carrying out projects that respect and support First Nations self-determination by engaging communities as partners and co-researchers from the earliest stages of project conception. This process ensures that First Nations priorities and interests determine project goals, and that the research process and outcomes will benefit the community in meaningful, discernible and lasting ways.

We are especially dedicated to engaging children and youth in self-determined research, and to developing practical tools to alleviate the multiple and deep effects of inequity on First Nations children and their families. For access to the Guidelines document, please see the Resources section below.



Education

As part of our education initiative, we established a lecture series at the University of Alberta, and held our inaugural event on March 19, 2013. Cindy Blackstock presented on how researchers can respect First Nations cultures, ontology, worldview and self-determination in all research projects pertaining to First Nations. Over sixty people attended, and the diversity of the group (faculty, students, university staff, practitioners, community organizers and government staff) indicates that there is a broad and diverse audience eager for more knowledge about our research and approach. We are currently planning our second lecture for the fall of 2013, and envision a series that will expand to four lectures per year, featuring both local and visiting experts in the field.





In the Works

Current Research Projects

- We are excited to be collaborating with Dr. Mary-Elizabeth Manley of York University on a project entitled ***Exploring the rights of the First Nations child through the arts: Our dreams matter too***. This SSHRC-funded project supports children and youth to engage in social justice through dance and other fine arts, and will culminate in a celebratory performance at the opening of the new elementary school in Attawapiskat in June 2014
- We are also co-investigators on the SSHRC-funded project Building Research Capacity with First Nations and Mainstream Youth Protection Services in Quebec at McGill University. This project seeks to understand the dynamics and outcomes of child protection services delivered to First Nations and non-First Nations children, and to increase the capacity of youth protection organizations to conduct this research in future
- FN CARES also collaborates with the First Nations Child & Family Caring Society on the journal First Peoples Child & Family Review: an interdisciplinary, peer reviewed, free e-journal that focuses primarily on First Peoples and Aboriginal child welfare administration, practices, policies and research. We are grateful for funding through SSHRC's Aid to Scholarly Journals Grant for this project.

Grant Proposals

- Our SSHRC Insight Grant application for ***Just because we're small doesn't mean we can't stand tall: Action research with children on reconciliation and social justice education***, received 4A status in last year's competition, and we are currently working to revise and resubmit the proposal, with the aid of a Killam Research Fund 4A Status grant from the University of Alberta. The objective of this research is to deepen and advance reconciliation efforts in Canada by creating knowledge about the best ways to teach reconciliation in elementary school classrooms;
- ***Indigenous children: Human rights and structural inequalities*** is a collaborative project by faculty and community organizations in Australia and Canada. It will develop a participatory and equality-based human rights framework to address Indigenous children's welfare and wellbeing through reforms that address structural inequalities in both national contexts;
- ***Understanding Child Welfare Organizations*** will research the impact of organizational factors on child welfare service delivery and outcomes for vulnerable families and children by creating unique partnerships between existing child welfare research networks and organizations.

Literature Review

We are busy carrying out a comprehensive Literature Review of current research on Indigenous children and poverty, including definitions of Indigenous child poverty, structural determinants, impacts on children and youth, and most effective interventions to date, with a particular focus on community-based solutions. The findings will be summarized in an article, and will be used to inform future projects to be determined through discussions with our Collaborative Research Team.

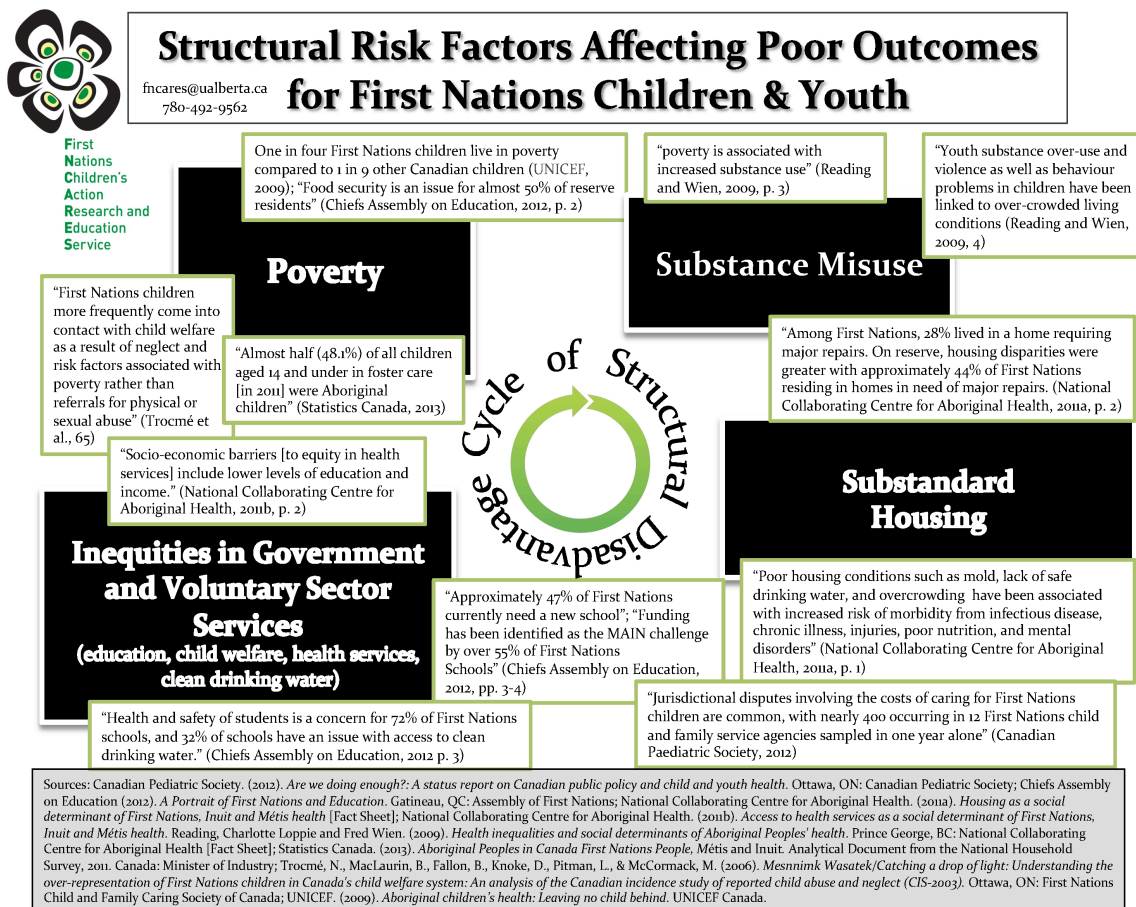
* Special thanks to Graduate Research Assistant Clare Mulcahy and the University of Alberta's Grant Assist Program for helping us with this extensive review.



Resources

Concept Map: Structural Risk Factors Affecting Poor Outcomes for First Nations Children & Youth

<https://docs.google.com/a/uAlberta.ca/file/d/0B1>



Bibliography: Research on Structural Risk for First Nations Children and Youth

<https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B1khWr1owhVjQ05DaEEweDNkUEk/edit>

This bibliography of the existing research on structural risk for First Nations children and youth is updated regularly.

Guidelines for Ethical Research

<https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B1khWr1owhVjamZyWEN4bVdjUzA/edit>

This document outlines our guidelines for carrying out projects that respect and support First Nations self-determination.

FN CARES Website

<http://www.extension.ualberta.ca/research/institutes-and-centres/fncares/>

Our website, launched in February, 2013, provides an important resource for research on the structural risks undermining the success of First Nations children and their families, and will feed into the growing resource material currently available on the Caring Society's Research Database.

First Nations Child & Family Caring Society's Research Database

<http://www.fncaringsociety.com/publications/search>



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