



UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA  
FACULTY OF EDUCATION

# ENCARES

First  
Nations  
Children's  
Action  
Research and  
Education  
Service

2017-2018 

# ANNUAL REPORT

# ABOUT US



First Nations Child & Family Caring Society of Canada

Established in 2013 by Cindy Blackstock, the First Nations Children's Action Research and Education Service (FNCARES) is a partnership between the the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada and the University of Alberta's Faculty of Education. Drawing on well-established research on the structural drivers of disadvantage for First Nations children, youth, and families, we focus on translating research into practical, community-based solutions, and on involving children and youth in this process. We respect and support First Nations self-determination and are committed to engaging communities as partners and co-researchers in all stages of each project.

FNCARES organizes and hosts numerous public events each year, including lectures, workshops, film screenings, panel discussions, 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 promote further discussion and action concerning culturally-based equity for First Nations children and youth.



**Cindy Blackstock**  
*Director*



**Melisa Brittain**  
*Research Associate*

# A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

*Dear FNCARES Community,*

It's always an honour to reflect on the milestones achieved by our community partners and the FNCARES team, and we are proud to present our 2017/18 annual report.

Building on the success of previous years, we began the year with another well-attended public guest lecture on reconciliation at the University of Alberta featuring Dr. Alika Lafontaine's presentation on Indigenous health and the importance of equity. FNCARES also had the privilege of screening *(Dis)placed: Indigenous Youth and the Child Welfare System* several times, including at CGCER's annual conference, the University of Calgary's Faculty of Social work, and as part of the Marda Loop Justice Film Festival. The CGCER screening was followed by a panel discussion featuring former youths-in-care Donovan Waskahat and Jesse Downing, along with Derek Chewka of MacEwan University. A special thanks to all three for sharing their ideas on how to improve the child welfare system.

In February of 2018, we celebrated the release of Spirit Bear's first book, *Spirit Bear and children make history*, with a Teddy Bear Tea Party, attended by 150 local elementary school students in Edmonton. Students and their stuffies listened to a book reading featuring Elder Wilson Bearhead, Edmonton Mayor Don Iveson, Faculty of Education Dean Jennifer Tupper, Alberta Child and Youth Advocate Del Graff, and many others. Inspired by real events, this book tells the story of how children of all diversities came together to stand up for equity during the historic Canadian Human Rights Tribunal case on First Nations child and family services and Jordan's Principle.

Other milestones include a major redesign of the FNCARES website and a successful application for a three-year SSHRC research grant in support of *Just because we're small doesn't mean we can't stand tall: Reconciliation education in the elementary classroom*. This project will study teachers' perceptions of children's engagement in social justice reconciliation actions.

Spirit Bear and I would like to give special thanks to Melisa Brittain, for her hard work and dedication, the University of Alberta, and the many community members and partners who have helped make this past year a great success.

We look forward to what the next year will bring!

*Respectfully,*  
Cindy Blackstock

# ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT THIS YEAR

## EDUCATION AND ENGAGEMENT EVENTS

### *Incremental Equality = Discrimination: First Nations and Public Services*

On September 14, 2017, FNCARES co-hosted a public lecture with the University of Alberta's Division of Community Engagement, Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry, and the Office of Safe Disclosure and Human Rights. Dr. Alika Lafontaine and Dr. Cindy Blackstock spoke about the problems with incremental equality in public services for First Nations children, families, and communities to an attentive audience that included faculty and students from Medicine & Dentistry and Public Health, as well as health care practitioners and members of the broader community. All joined in a lively and informative discussion after the talk. Thanks to Dr. Jennifer Tupper, Dean of Education, for welcoming guests and giving the land acknowledgement, and to Charis Auger, Indigenous Peer Support Worker with the C.H.E.W. Project/iSMSS, for introducing the speakers and facilitating the Q & A.

Watch video of the lecture here: [bit.ly/2HeTyTs](http://bit.ly/2HeTyTs)



*Alika Lafontaine - Incremental Equality*



*Alika Lafontaine and Cindy Blackstock*



*Tweet about Alika Lafontaine talk*

## **Film screening and panel discussion at CGCER conference: *(Dis)placed: Indigenous Youth and the Child Welfare System***

On October 26, 2017, we screened our film *(Dis)placed* at the annual conference of the Centre for Global Citizenship Education & Research (CGCER) at the University of Alberta. The conference attracts scholars from around the world, and attendees were fully engaged as Donovan Waskahat, one of the young people featured in the film, performed a spoken word piece after the film, and as panelists Donovan Waskahat and Jesse Downing reflected on their experiences as youth within the system. Derek Chewka, Indigenous educator and former social worker, spoke about trying to make changes for Indigenous children and youth from within the system. Thanks to emcee Angela Wolfe, Associate Director of the Aboriginal Teacher Education Program at University of Alberta, and to our collaborators at CGCER for co-sponsoring this event.



*l-r: Angela Wolfe, Derek Chewka, Jesse Downing, Donovan Waskahat, and Melisa Brittain*

## **Teddy Bear Tea Party and Book Launch**

On February 5, 2018, Spirit Bear landed in Edmonton to attend FNCARES' Teddy Bear Tea Party and Book Launch for the Western Canadian debut of his book, *Spirit Bear and Children Make History*. One hundred and fifty students from grades 2-5 joined Spirit Bear at Citadel Theater's Zeidler Hall, and held their own stuffed bears as they listened attentively to Cindy Blackstock, Edmonton Mayor Don Iveson, and six other special guests reading about Spirit Bear standing up for First Nations kids at the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal and working with children to make positive change. Thanks to our wonderful hosts Charlene and Wilson Bearhead; to our co-sponsors at the Faculty of Law, University of Alberta; to Dr. Hadley Friedland and her Indigenous Peoples and the Law class; and to all of our wonderful volunteers for this event.

**Read more about the event at the University of Alberta's Faculty of Law blog : [ualbertalaw.typepad.com/faculty/2018/02/in-the-media-spirit-bear-teddy-bear-tea-party-book-launch.html](http://ualbertalaw.typepad.com/faculty/2018/02/in-the-media-spirit-bear-teddy-bear-tea-party-book-launch.html)**



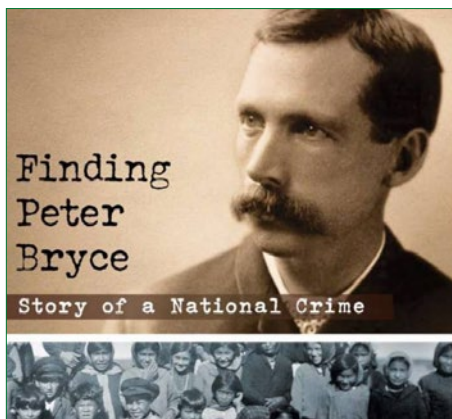
*Elder Wilson Bearhead reading to the kids*

## Lecture on Child Welfare for EDU 211

On February 5, following the Teddy Bear Tea Party and Book Launch, Spirit Bear and Cindy Blackstock presented a talk on Child Welfare and First Nations children to 500 pre-service teachers and guests in EDU 211: *Aboriginal Education and the Context for Professional Engagement*. EDU 211 is a mandatory 3 credit course in the Faculty of Education at the University of Alberta where students continue to develop their knowledge of Aboriginal peoples' histories, educational experiences and knowledge systems, further developing their understanding of the significant connections between such knowledge and the professional roles and obligations of teachers.



*Spirit Bear and Cindy at EDU 211 talk*



## Film Screening and Panel Discussion: Advocacy and Resistance from Within Colonial Systems

June 27, 2018: FNCARES partnered with Charlene Bearhead for a film screening of *Finding Peter Bryce: Story of a National Crime* (Dir. Peter Campbell, 2018) and panel discussion on advocacy and resistance from within colonial systems. In the early 19th century, Dr. Peter Henderson Bryce spoke truth to power from within the Department of Indian Affairs, the colonial government department that created and oversaw Indian Residential Schools. Following the short film, panellists Walter Brertton, Dr. Jill Konkin, and Charlene Bearhead discussed if and how it is possible to resist colonialism from within contemporary institutions and systems, and audience members shared their own experiences and insights.

## Film Screening at University of Calgary's Bachelor of Social Work program

On September 6, 2018, we screened our film *(Dis)placed* for incoming students at the University of Calgary's Faculty of Social Work, Central and Northern Alberta campus in Edmonton. After the screening, Julie Mann-Johnson, Associate Director Field Education/Instructor (Faculty of Social Work, U Calgary) and Melisa Brittain (FNCARES) fielded some excellent questions from students new to the program.



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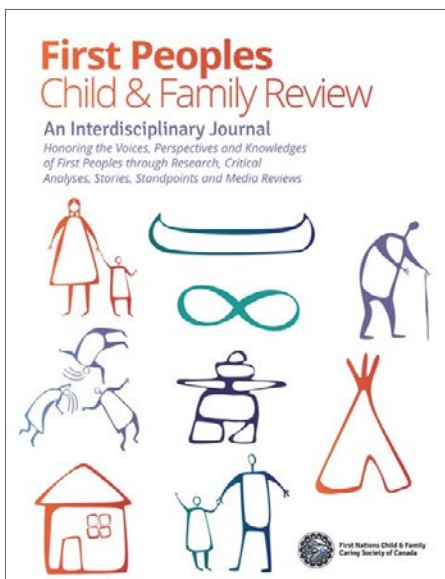
## RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS

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### **Successful SSHRC Research Grant Application**

In 2017-2018, we applied for and won a 3-year research grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Council of Canada (SSHRC) for *Just because we're small doesn't mean we can't stand tall: Reconciliation education in the elementary classroom*. Led by Dr. Cindy Blackstock (McGill University) and co-investigators Dr. Nicholas Ng-A-Fook (University of Ottawa) and Dr. Susan Bennett (Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario), a team of dedicated reconciliation educators from across the country will study the impacts of the Caring Society's social justice-based reconciliation campaigns on students and teachers at the elementary level.

This research will inform the creation of professional development workshops, sample lesson plans, and age-appropriate resources to enable educators to effectively address the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) Calls to Action in regard to transforming the educational system in Canada.



### **Online Journal: First Peoples Child and Family Review**

Editor-In-Chief: Dr. Cindy Blackstock

*The First Peoples Child and Family Review (FPCFR)* is a peer-reviewed, interdisciplinary journal that centres the voices and perspectives of Indigenous peoples on research, practice, and policy concerning First Peoples children and families. The journal is hosted through the Open Journal System (OJS), which allows for open access to research and publishing. Two editions of FPCFR are published each year, and we welcome submissions in written, audio, visual, or other academic and creative forms. Submissions can be in English, French, an Indigenous language, or American Sign Language. People of all ages and backgrounds, including children and youth, are encouraged to submit their work.

**Call for Submissions: [fncaringsociety.com/sites/default/files/call\\_for\\_submissions\\_volume\\_14\\_issue\\_2\\_0.pdf](https://fncaringsociety.com/sites/default/files/call_for_submissions_volume_14_issue_2_0.pdf)**

**To access current and archived editions of the journal, visit [journals.sfu.ca/fpcfr/index.php/FPCFR/index](https://journals.sfu.ca/fpcfr/index.php/FPCFR/index)**

### **Indigenous Knowledge Portal**

FNCARES partners with the Caring Society on their Indigenous Knowledge Portal, a searchable database providing access to resources related to Aboriginal children and families in Canada and similar countries. The database includes an annotated bibliography of journal articles, literature reviews, reports, guides, films and books, and links to all the Caring Society's educational 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*.

**Visit the Indigenous Knowledge Portal : [fncaringsociety.com/ikp](https://fncaringsociety.com/ikp)**

## RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND DISTRIBUTION

### *(Dis)placed: Indigenous Youth and the Child Welfare System – Teaching Guide, Grades 9-12*

This teaching guide for grades 9-12 is designed to accompany our documentary film *(Dis)placed: Indigenous Youth and the Child Welfare System*. The film features the voices of Indigenous youth as they reflect on their prior involvement with child welfare and share their multiple strategies of resistance to assimilation and state control. The guide provides teachers with necessary background information on the connections between Canada's colonial history, especially residential schools, and the ongoing inequities experienced by First Nations children and youth.

The teaching guide was co-authored by Sarah Auger, a doctoral student in Educational Policy Studies at the University of Alberta with a specialization in Indigenous Peoples Education, and Melisa Brittain, Research Associate for FNCARES. Thanks to the Office of the Dean, Faculty of Education, University of Alberta, for funding this resource, and to our reviewers: John Boutilier, Wendy Driscoll, Sarah Gazan, Lisa Howell, Bobbie-Jo Leclair, Sylvia Smith, and Rochelle Starr.

Indspire recently included the teaching guide and film on their “Successful Practices” website, and it is also listed by the following education websites: The Equity Knowledge Network; Canadian Society for the Study of Education; and Canadian Journal of Education.



### **(Dis)placed** **Indigenous Youth and the Child Welfare System** **TEACHING GUIDE – Grades 9 to 12**

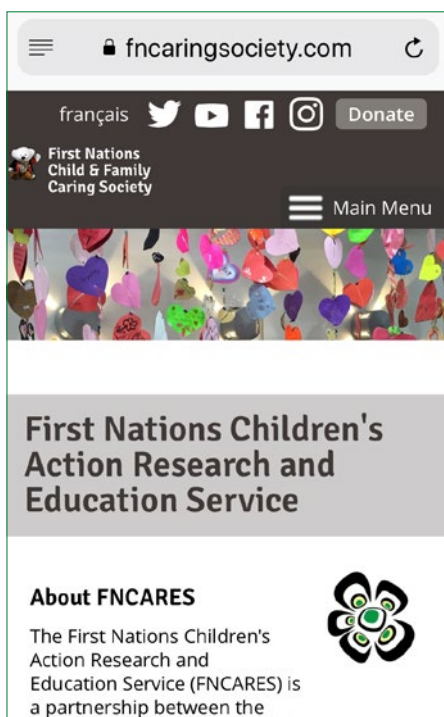
Produced for FNCARES by Sarah Auger and Melisa Brittain  
Faculty of Education, University of Alberta



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*The teaching guide is available online for free:  
[fncaringsociety.com/publications/displaced-indigenous-youth-and-child-welfare-system-teaching-guide-grades-9-12](http://fncaringsociety.com/publications/displaced-indigenous-youth-and-child-welfare-system-teaching-guide-grades-9-12).*





Mobile compatible website

## Website Update

In 2018, the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society overhauled its website content and redeveloped layout and design, making it more user-friendly and mobile compatible, centralizing reconciliation and educator/school resources. The FNCARES pages are now located in the Indigenous Knowledge Portal, amongst other interrelated educational resources and research publications.

Visit the FNCARES website: [fncaringsociety.com/fncares](https://fncaringsociety.com/fncares)

## Information Sheets

In collaboration with the Caring Society, FNCARES regularly creates reader-friendly information sheets that make our research and activities accessible to the public.

See two of our info sheets here:

**United Nations Human Rights Council: Universal Periodic Review on Canada:** [bit.ly/20h7egA](https://bit.ly/20h7egA)

**First Nations Child Poverty: A Literature Review and Analysis, Summary of Chapter Two:** [bit.ly/2vpkEAc](https://bit.ly/2vpkEAc)

## Film distribution

Since 2017, Vtape, Canada's leading artist-run, not-for-profit distributor of video art, has done an excellent job of distributing our film *(Dis)placed: Indigenous youth and the child welfare system* to diverse organizations, including college and university libraries, public libraries, child and family service organizations, government departments, and film festivals. This year, we signed up with a second distributor, McIntyre Media, to help get our film into more educational institutions. Both distributors make the film available through multi-year streaming copies, DVDs, and as one-time screening rentals. It is available at a reduced rate to community organizations through Vtape, and all proceeds from the film are donated to non-profit organizations serving Indigenous youth.

Highlights of distribution: Toronto Public Library bought 5 DVDs for distribution across the wider Toronto area and the film screened at the Marda Loop Justice Film Festival. Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society in Kelowna, B.C. also screened the film, which was followed by a youth panel discussion.

Visit the film's website for more information: [kingcripproductions.com/displaced.html](https://kingcripproductions.com/displaced.html)

Order *(Dis)placed* through Vtape: [vtape.org/video-catalogue-basic-search](https://vtape.org/video-catalogue-basic-search)

Order *(Dis)placed* through McIntyre Media: [mcintyre.ca/titles/210000](https://mcintyre.ca/titles/210000)

# PHOTOS FROM SPIRIT BEAR BOOK LAUNCH



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1. l-r: Paul D. Patton, Cindy Blackstock, Jennifer Tupper, Charlene Bearhead
2. Del Graff, Alberta's Child and Youth Advocate, reading to the kids
3. Cindy Blackstock and Spirit Bear rally students
4. Volunteers and teddies
5. Citadel Theatre packed as Charlene Bearhead opens the event

# PHOTOS FROM SPIRIT BEAR BOOK LAUNCH



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6. Mayor Iveson reading

7. l-r: Cindy Blackstock, Spirit Bear, Melisa Brittain

8. Law student volunteers at Edmonton book launch

9. Readers at Spirit Bear book launch



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This report reflects activities from *June 2017 – December 2018*.

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

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