Strengthening First Nations Communities: The key to safer children

Cindy Blackstock: October 30, 2006
Children in care as a percentage of the total child population for each cultural group

Percentage of all children in care by race as of May 2005

- FN: 10.23%
- Metis: 3.31%
- Other: 0.67%

Blackstock, Prakash, Loxley & Wien, 2005
Child Pop by Race Vs CIC by Race

3 sample provinces

Blackstock, Prakash, Loxley, & Wien, 2005
According to government of Canada data the number of First Nations children in care resident on reserve increased by 71.5% nationally between 1995-2001.

McKenzie, 2002
Basic Principles of Child Protection

- Safety and Well being Paramount
- Has tools to ensure Safety and Well Being
- STATE steps in when family fails to ensure safety and well being
First Nations children come to the attention of child welfare for different reasons than non-Aboriginal children.
Child Maltreatment by Race

First Nations

Non Aboriginal

Trocme et.al. 2006
First Nations children are removed at more than twice the rate of their non Aboriginal peers and child functioning differences between the populations can not explain this.
Child characteristics by First Nations status for substantiated or suspected maltreatment 2003 CIS*

Trocme et. al., 2006
More child characteristics by First Nations status for substantiated or suspected maltreatment 2003CIS*

- Alcohol Abuse: First Nations 3%, Non-Aboriginal 3%
- Drug/Solvent Abuse: First Nations 3%, Non-Aboriginal 3%
- Sex behav: First Nations 6%, Non-Aboriginal 5%
- Special ed: First Nations 12%, Non-Aboriginal 10%
- Irregular school: First Nations 30%, Non-Aboriginal 11%
- Criminal/YO: First Nations 5%, Non-Aboriginal 2%
- Psychiatric Disorder: First Nations 3%, Non-Aboriginal 4%

Trocme et. al., 2006

*P<.001
The key drivers of the neglect are at the level of the caregiver: Poverty, Poor Housing, and Substance misuse are the only factors that explain the over representation of FN children in Care
Contrasting Community Supports

Canada

First Nations on Reserve

G-8 Economy. Avg. income 37,757 per annum

115 billion per year in annual revenues

6 instances child on reserve receiving voluntary sector services

109 million less provided for child welfare on reserve

7165.00 annual per capita average income

Federal Prov. Municipal

Government

Corporate

Voluntary Sector

Band Services

Voluntary Sector

Corporate

Blackstock & Trocme, 2005
Society

Family

Child

Poverty and Inadequate housing key risks

Risk Assessment models only focus on child and family

Does not account for over representation

Substance misuse by caregiver in domain of family change if services available
Taking a new journey:
Supporting Community Care for Children by Implementing Wen:de Recommendations
Cost of equal child welfare funding for FN children on reserve

- Federal Surplus: 13 billion dollars
- Wen:de: 109 million dollars

Loxley et.al., 2005
Touchstones of Hope: Guiding Values

- Self-Determination
- Culture and Language
- Holistic Approach
- Structural Interventions
- Non Discrimination

Blackstock, Cross, Brown, George, & Formsma, 2006
What you can do to help

• Actively support the implementation of Wen:de recommendations with provincial and federal governments
• Go on line to register your support for Jordan’s Principle and ensure fed/prov governments adopt it (www.fncaringsociety.com) Encourage others as well.
• Go on line to see the Reconciliation in Child Welfare: Touchstones of Hope for Indigenous Children document – register your support and begin implementing it. (www.reconciliationmovement.org)
• Identify structural risk in child maltreatment/neglect cases and develop service plans that address these issues – avoid use of risk assessment models that do not account for structural risk in neglect cases.
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www.fncaringsociety.com
www.reconciliationmovement.org