

There is an increasing amount of literature about Indigenous Child Welfare Practices. As you have seen in our methodology section, many people are contributing to writing about their experiences in Indigenous Research. In this section we will provide you with abstracts about Indigenous Child Welfare which will cover a variety of topics including best practices, policy, traditional teachings and education. We invite you to submit your abstract to our network and share your knowledge with us.

Maintaining Identities: The Soul Work of Adoption and Aboriginal Children

Abstract

Identity formation and preservation are complex issues. The purpose of this article is to explore the importance of identity and adoption for Aboriginal children in Canada. Some of the work has been adapted from a PhD study completed by the author in 2005. The objectives of this study were: (1) to describe how connectedness relates to health for First Nation adoptees, and (2) to explore legislative, policy, and program implications in the adoption of First Nation children. The author focused on First Nation children due to her location, which, at the time, was in the province of Alberta, where a provincial policy directive existed that impeded the adoption of First Nation children. The findings of the study suggest that, for First Nation adoptees, a causal relationship exists between connection to birth family and to community and ancestral knowledge, and health. The major finding is that loss of identity may contribute to impaired physical, spiritual, mental, and emotional health for First Nation adoptees. This article is presented from a broader lens that will consider how these findings apply to other Aboriginal populations, such as Métis children. This includes an examination of current literature that explores identity for Aboriginal children, including traditional spiritual perspectives on identity formation. The article provides suggestions on how identity can be preserved for adopted Aboriginal children through programs and policies with a focus on practice that honours the holistic development of Aboriginal children. Within this framework for child development, the resilience of children is fostered through a caring network of professional and personal supports. The article encourages the reader to view resilience from a broad range of factors, including connection to language, land, and culture as formative experiences for Indigenous children.

Carriere, J. (2008). Maintaining Identities: The Soul Work of Adoption and Aboriginal Children. In J. Pimatisiwin, *A Journal of Indigenous and Aboriginal Community Health*. Spring, 2008. Vol.6. No.1.

Promising practice for maintaining identities in First Nation adoption

Abstract

The purpose of this article is to explore the importance of identity in First Nation adoption. It is adapted from a PhD study completed by the author in 2005. The objectives of this study were: (1) describe how connectedness relates to health for First Nation adoptees, and (2) explore legislative, policy and program implications in the adoption of First Nation children. The findings suggest that, for First Nation adoptees, there is a causal relationship between connection to birth family, community and ancestral knowledge, adoption and health. The major finding is that loss of identity may contribute to impaired physical, spiritual, mental and emotional health for First Nation adoptees. This article provides suggestions on how identity can be preserved in First Nation adoption through programs, policies and practice.

Carriere, Jeannine (2007) Promising practice for maintaining identities in First Nation adoption. *First Peoples Child & Family Review*. Vol. 3 pp 46 – 64, Available from http://www.fncfcs.com/pubs/vol3num1/Carriere_pp46.pdf

Witnessing Wild Woman: Resistance and Resilience in Aboriginal Child Welfare.

Abstract

In Aboriginal child welfare, we recognize that the creation of First Nations and Aboriginal child and family services under the mandate of provincial authorities (be they delegated or through other arrangements) is not ideal. Nor do we believe that the creation of these forms of Aboriginal service provision offer a buffer from the complexities of Aboriginal-Non-Aboriginal relations given the often prickly, but seeming necessary relationship between the federal, provincial and Aboriginal community structures that are integral to the operation of the majority of Aboriginal child welfare services in B.C. As we write this chapter, we are at a specific time in history with a situation that is far from perfect. Yet, arguably, the provision of child and family services by Aboriginal people for Aboriginal people is far preferable to no services at all as was historically the case, or services administered solely by local mainstream authorities. Given our mixed feelings about the current state of Aboriginal child welfare from years of witnessing its evolution, we were left with the challenge of finding something to say that could honour this important work while simultaneously expressing caution. As such in this chapter, each contributor has put forward a unique perspective, in their own voice on protecting Aboriginal children and as the title

suggests each is an account of the Aboriginal communities' acts of resistance and resiliency in keeping Aboriginal children, families and communities safe.

Green, J., Kovach, M., Montgomery, H., Thomas, R., and Brown, L. (in press) "*Witnessing Wild Woman: Resistance and Resilience in Aboriginal Child Welfare*". In Foster, L., & Wharf, B. (eds) *People, Politics and Child Welfare in B. C.* UBC Press: Vancouver

Learning Through Our Children, Healing For Our Children: Best Practice In First Nations Communities

Abstract

First Nations children are the children of the Indigenous peoples of Canada. They are over-represented in the child protection system. Child welfare in this country is delegated to the provinces, and so each of the eleven provinces has its own legislation and system of child welfare and protection services. In addition, this complexity is layered with the unique position of First Nations peoples. First Nations' growth and development has been deleteriously affected by centuries of colonial rule and disenfranchisement. Reservations were specifically developed to ensure colonial control of First Nations people. For centuries, First Nations children were forcefully taken into residential schools where they were physically and sexually abused. Through the residential school system, children were systematically denied access to their families, language and culture.. This historical legacy has recently been exposed by courageous First Nations elders and professionals who have sought to develop culturally competent forms of practice and living that will enable First Nations children, families and communities to heal and prosper within their own milieu and under their own direction. In this chapter, we wish to focus on best practices with children in First Nations communities, and so we describe a research project that we undertook to accomplish this. In the process of discussing this work, we will consider how First Nations culture has affected this research – how we conceived it; how we carried it out; and how we analysed it. We invite you to share this journey with us.

Green, J. and Thomas, R. (2005) "Learning Through Our Children, Healing For Our Children: Best Practice In First Nations Communities" in Lena Dominelli (Ed.) *Communities in a Globalising World: Theory and Practice for Community Empowerment.* Ashgate Pub.: UK

Child Welfare Course for Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal Students: Pedagogical and Technical Challenges

Abstract

This chapter describes the development of a Web-based undergraduate child welfare course at the School of Social Work, University of Victoria, Canada. The course presented two design challenges. Firstly, because the school delivers education to on-campus and also distance students, parallel versions of the course were needed—one in a Web-based format and the other in a classroom format. Both versions of the course were required to have the same learning content and outcomes. A second challenge was that course pedagogy needed to meet the learning needs of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students as well as prepare students for child welfare work in both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities.

Rice Green, J., & Dumbrill, G. C. (2005). A child welfare course for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students: Pedagogical and technical challenges. In R. MacFadden, B. Moore, M. Herie, & D. Schoech (Eds.), *Web-based education in the human services: Models, methods and best practices*. New York: Haworth Press

For Kayla John

Abstract

In the summer of 2004, 13-year-old Kayla John was found murdered in the small West Coast Community of Zeballos. The author listened to reports and wondered how this could happen in the village she was raised in and loved. Kayla dreamed of living in a community that was violence free and honored the teachings of hish'ist'stwalk - we are all one. This story is for Kayla.

Thomas, R. (2008). Indigenous Women in Canada; The Voices of First Nations, Inuit and Metis Women. *For Kayla John*. Canadian Woman Studies, Winter/Spring 2008, Volume 26, Numbers 3,4, November 2008, p.208-212., Toronto, A York University Publication.

A way of life: Indigenous perspectives on anti oppressive living

Abstract

The focus of this article is on the key elements of anti oppressive practices as examined by two Indigenous women who practice and teach anti-oppressive ways. Anti oppressive living is characterized as a "Way of Life" that values the sacred and traditional teachings of various Indigenous cultures. The medicine wheel is discussed and highlighted as an effective teaching tool to examine anti oppressive ways of living, practicing and perspectives.

Thomas, R. & Green, J (2007) A way of life: Indigenous perspectives on anti oppressive living. First Peoples Child & Family Review. Vol. 3 pp 91 – 101, Available from http://www.fncfcs.com/pubs/vol3num1/Thomas_Green_pp91.pdf