



Prevention of Violence Against Indigenous Children

Cape Mudge

First Nation

Great Spirits of all who lived before...
Take our Hands and Lead us

**We are here because our
ancestors kept their
promise ...**





Now it is our turn...

Canada's Commitment to the United Nations World Fit for Children

We stress our commitment to create a world fit for children in which human development... founded on principles of democracy, equality, non discrimination, peace and social justice and universality and indivisibility, interdependence and interrelatedness of all human rights

**This is the last year of the
United Nations International
Decade of Indigenous
Peoples**

How are Aboriginal Children in
Canada doing?



Canada still has one of the few
race based acts in the world-
The Indian Act – it regulates
many aspects of First Nations
life... including determining
whether a child is a status or
non status Indian and thus
entitled to certain rights –
according to blood quantum
criteria

There are between 22,500 and 28,000 First Nations children in the care of the Canadian child welfare system... three times the number that attended residential schools in the 1940's.

First Nations Child and Family Caring Society, 2002; Child Welfare League of Canada, 2003; Blackstock, 2002

The chances of a First Nations child going into child welfare care are 1 in 17 whereas it for non-Aboriginal children it is 1 in 200

Blackstock, 2004

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

Increase in Status Indian children in care by Region 95-01

- BC 90.4%
- Alberta 52.7%
- Sask. 160.3
- Man. 11.4%
- Ontario 163.8%
- Quebec 93.8%
- Yukon 5.0%
- Atlantic 130%

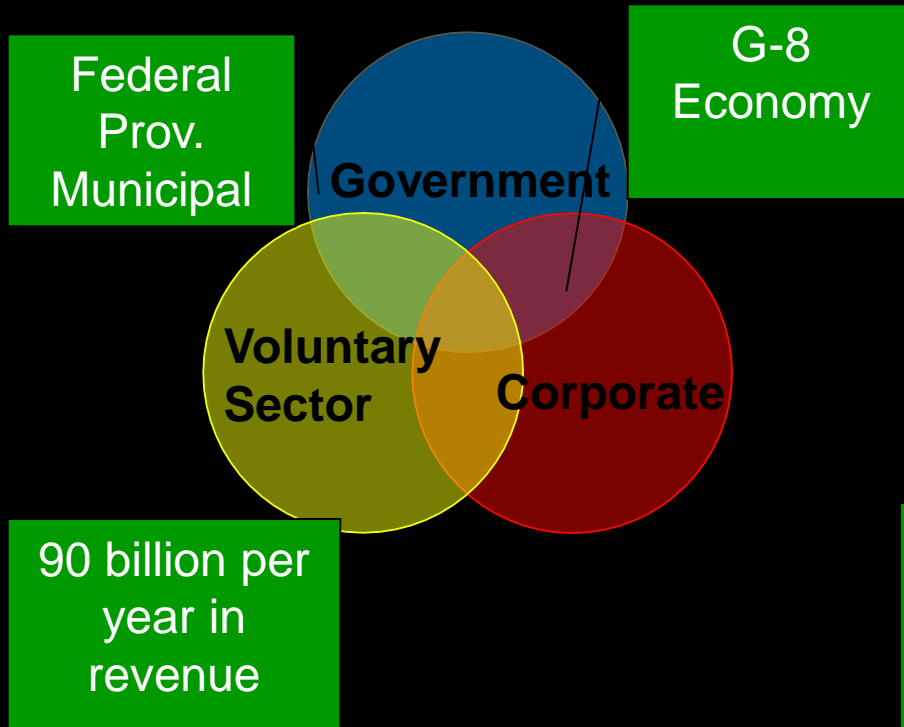
❖ Data represents on
reserve children only

Census data suggests the North
American Indian child population
decreased 1% during this same
time period

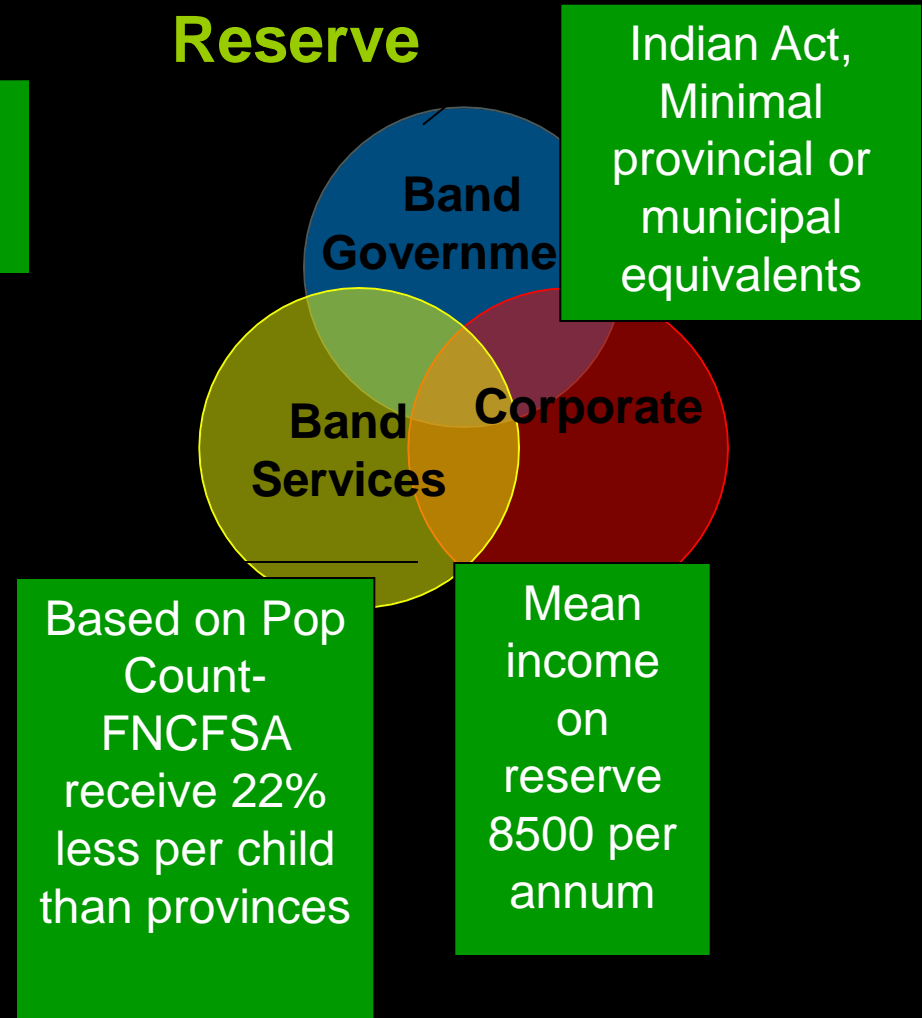
Statistics Canada, 2001

Contrasting Community Supports

Canada



Living on Reserve



Voluntary Sector Initiative Study

- FNCFSA identify poverty, neglect and substance misuse as key concerns on reserve.
- FNCFSA agree VS supports would help
- Only 4 FNCFSA reported receiving services from voluntary sector organizations this past year – all at the initiated request of FN and all programs were time limited
- 3 FNCFSA reported receiving funding to develop their own VS resources- all time limited funding
- Other than federal funding, FNCFSA use raffles, bake sales, car washes, dinners etc to enhance range of services to children and youth

VSI National Study Results

- 100% of VS organizations surveyed served children youth and families
- 0% of the VS organizations knew what the needs of FN children, youth and families on reserve were in detail, 77% said they were somewhat aware – 23% did not know.
- VS organizations do want to work with FN but need information on needs, agency structures, and how to build effective respectful relationships.

Linking with the National Policy Review

The current First Nations child and family service funding formula does not provide adequate resources to allow FNCFSA to meet legislated requirements in respect to prevention and least disruptive measures

INAC document obtained under
Access to Information (2002)

Linking with CIS Results comparing Aboriginal and non Aboriginal children

- **Neglect twice** as likely to be the primary form of maltreatment in Aboriginal families
- **65% of** Aboriginal children in CIS are **First Nations**
- Aboriginal children functioning approximately **on par with non Aboriginal children**
- Aboriginal children **twice as likely to be placed in care**
- **If poverty, inadequate housing and substance misuse** are controlled for there should be no over representation of Aboriginal children in child welfare care

Blackstock, Trocme and Bennett, 2004

Trocme, Knoke, Blackstock, 2004

Linking with Keeping the Promise

- **Poverty** – 3 of 5 Aboriginal children under 6 live in poverty- Average income on reserve 6400-7500 per annum.
- **Urbanization** – 70% of Aboriginal people live off reserve. Most move to access services, school, jobs
- **Substance Misuse**- Aboriginal youth 11 times more likely to misuse solvents- avg. age of initial use 9 years old.
- **Youth justice** – 78% of Aboriginal youth in prison are First Nations
- **Education** – 30.7% of First Nations youth on reserve graduate
- **Youth Suicide** – 38% of all First Nations youth (10-18 years) deaths are suicides
- **Accidental injury** – First Nations infants and toddlers die from accidents at 4-5 times the rate
- **Child Welfare** – 2/3 of all substantiated cases involving Aboriginal families were First Nations (status and non status)

Findings of Keeping the Promise

- **Persistent and disproportionate rights violations** in all categories reviewed
- Policy **solutions have often been developed** but are not adequately implemented
- Programs such as **Aboriginal Head Start and the Child Tax Benefit are inadequate** to respond to the multiple rights violations.
- Rights violations are **interdependent with other rights violations** and could be substantially redressed if RCAP were implemented.
- Canada has failed to redress these rights violations despite having **reported four successive surplus**

What this means for children

Living off reserve

Health Care
Education
Parks and
Recreation

Employment
Housing
Opportunity

Living on reserve

Some band
services; limited
provincial
services

50% Poverty
Housing crisis
High
Unemployment

#1



#78



#34

Arts/Culture
Social Services
Recreation

Programs often
provided only if funds
can be raised in
community

What we are going to do

- Continue to support the implementation of the National Policy Review
- Work with Aboriginal peoples, Canada, and the United Nations to ensure the full implementation of the CRC for Aboriginal children and youth
- Reconciliation conference in child welfare
- Publish CIS -03 results on Aboriginal children (10 First Nations CFS agencies participated)

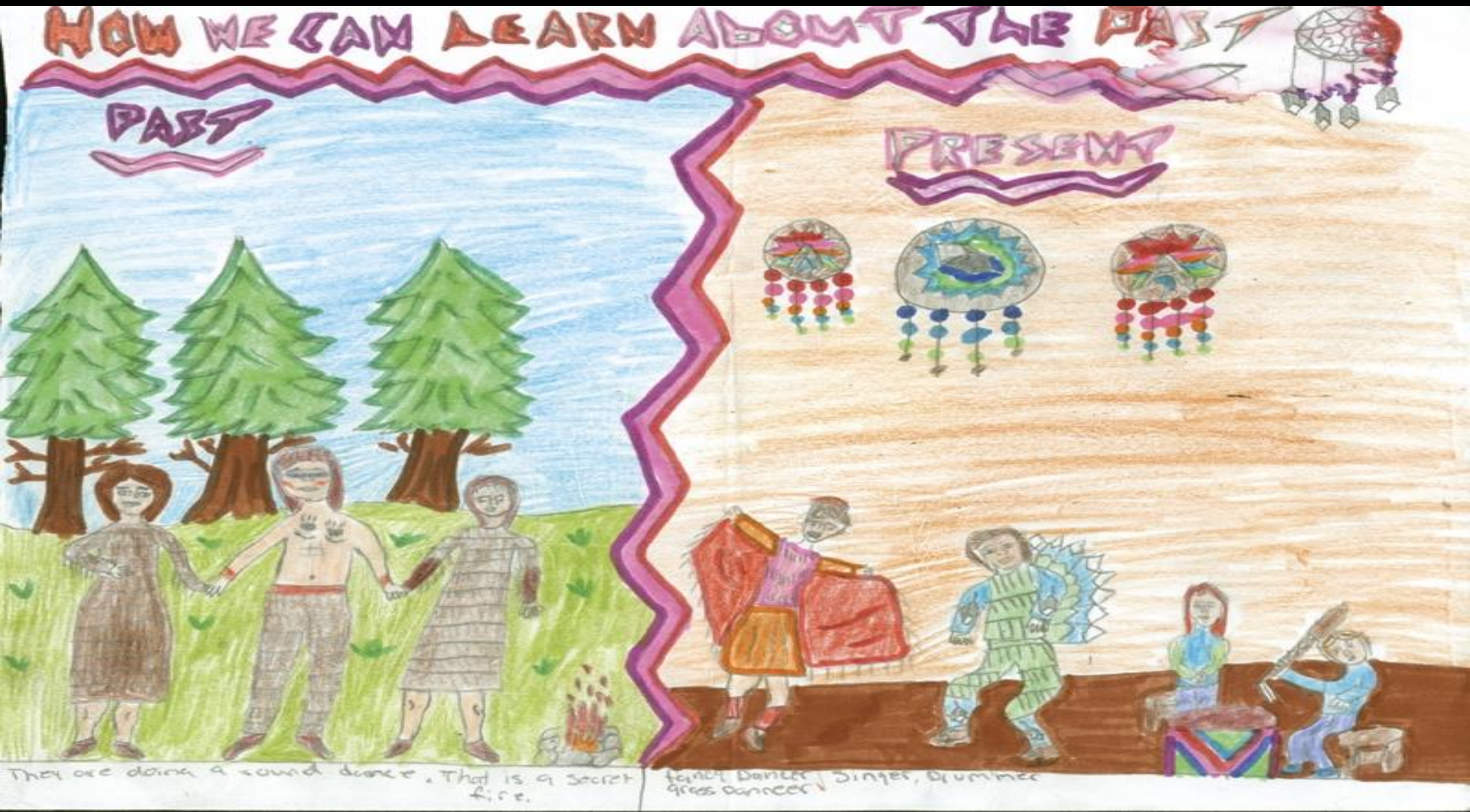
Caring Across the Boundaries

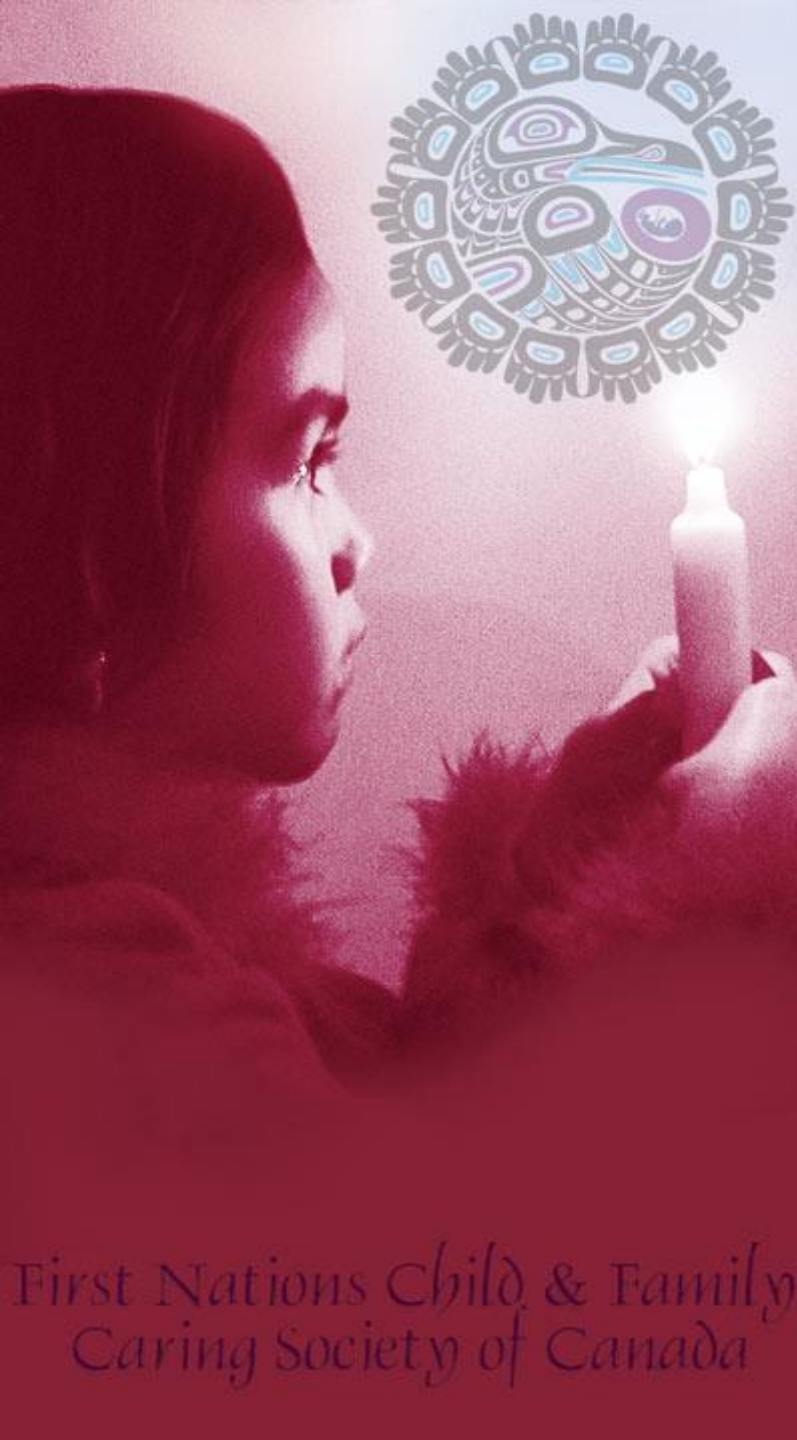
- Full research report available on line at www.fncfcs.com
- Caring Across the Boundaries Curriculum completed. Geared to:
 - Voluntary Sector
 - First Nations Child and Family Service Agencies
 - Young people
 - Philanthropic Community and Government
 - Collaboration Module (brings everyone together)

What you can do to help

- Understand that **Indigenous peoples are in the best position to make decisions for Indigenous children**
- De-normalize the rights violations **faced by Aboriginal children and youth in Canada**
- **Speak out** courageously and loudly **until Canada implements the solutions already developed (National Policy Review; RCAP)**
- **Support the development of** broad based coalitions that specifically redress the rights violations of Indigenous children worldwide

Most importantly learn from the past... we can do much better – they deserve much better





Honour our
ancestors and
connect the chain of
hearts... and
responsibility- it is
the way it is meant
to be

www.fncfcs.com

First Nations Child & Family
Caring Society of Canada