

# First Peoples Child & Family Review

## An Interdisciplinary Journal Honouring the Voices, Perspectives, and Knowledges of First Peoples

## Foreword

Brittany Mathews

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# First Peoples Child & Family Review



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## Foreword

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It is with great pleasure that we bring you Volume 15, Issue 1 of the *First Peoples Child & Family Review*. Although this issue was not guided by a particular theme, the articles are connected by a common narrative of rights and responsibilities. The articles remind us that we all have a right to participate in matters that affect us and a responsibility to uphold that right for everyone. This includes the right to participate in society and its institutions equitably and in a manner that is relevant to the individual and/or group. The right to participate is codified in Article 25 of the *United Nations International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*. It is further enshrined in the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, which codifies that Indigenous peoples have a right to participate in a manner that is culturally, politically, and socially relevant. The *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* also protects the rights of children to participate in matters that affect them and to express their views.

In equal measure to the right to participate exists the responsibility of Canada and all citizens to uphold these rights in a manner consistent with the group or individual. The right to participate requires respect for freedom of assembly, association, and expression. When we consider what these freedoms mean in the context of Indigenous children, families, and communities, it includes the freedom for all peoples to come together to non-violently defend and promote their collective rights, including the right to self-determination. We all have a responsibility to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to participate safely and free from discrimination, and to be heard in a manner that is culturally, politically, and socially relevant to us. This issue of the *First Peoples Child & Family Review* reminds us how we can promote and uphold the right to participate in meaningful ways, as children, families, researchers, and service providers. Now, more than ever, as Canadians are increasingly engaged in what it means to be in reconciliation with Indigenous children, families, and communities, it is important to once again affirm our responsibilities to uphold and protect the right to participate.

In “Connecting Myself to Indian Residential Schools and the Sixties Scoop,” authors Salazar and Crowe-Salazar demonstrate the importance of children participating in matters that affect them and the right to be heard. Together, the authors explore ways that family experiences in the Indian

Residential School system and the Sixties Scoop are connected to their contemporary experiences, concluding that, “Residential schools may be over, but that pain remains forever.” This reflection demonstrates the power of upholding a child’s right to participate and be heard, and transforming that into an opportunity for learning.

In “Exploring the Effectiveness of Métis Women’s Research Methodology and Methods: Promising Wellness Research Practices,” authors Gaudet et al. discuss ways that researchers should ensure that Métis women participation in research is culturally relevant. Indeed, the article points out how the contributions, roles, and responsibilities of Métis women, both historically and contemporarily, are not well understood by researchers. Their research methodology centres Métis women’s ways of knowing and being, thus, furthering understanding of Métis kinship roles and responsibilities as Aunties.

Chambers and Saddleman authored, “Moving Towards a Language Nest: Stories and Insights from n̄kmaplqs,” which offers a way forward in Indigenous language revitalization. The authors discuss the challenges and successes of developing a language nest as an early language learning program for Syilx children with the intention of being “at home in the language.” The article presents themes of the right to participation, namely, how Indigenous children have a right to participate in language revitalization. The authors argue that language nests offer a way to place children at the heart of “kinship networks and knowledge systems” after being deliberately disrupted for generations through colonial policies.

In “Cree Relationship Mapping: *n̄hiyaw kesi w̄hkotohk*—How We Are Related,” by Makokis et al., the authors engage in a process of “re-vealing” concepts and teachings that formed the foundation of *n̄hiyaw* family and community relationships. By challenging the Western-based concepts of child development and understandings of children and families, and centring *n̄hiyaw* teachings and worldviews, the article shares culturally appropriate ways that service providers can work with Indigenous children and families. Central throughout the article is the core right that Indigenous children and families have to engage with service providers in a manner that is culturally relevant.

In “Familial Attendance at Indian Residential School and Subsequent Involvement in the Child Welfare System Among Indigenous Adults Born During the Sixties Scoop era,” authors Bombay et al. provide research that is one of the first to quantitatively link intergenerational cycles of risk between the Indian Residential School system and Sixties Scoop. The article supports what has been well-documented qualitatively: The overrepresentation of Indigenous children in the child welfare system is linked to intergenerational cycles of risk initiated by the Indian Residential School system. Ultimately, the findings support the need for increased investment in Indigenous-led and culturally relevant interventions to address intergenerational trauma and to make the required systemic changes to the child welfare system so that all Indigenous children and families can live in dignity and respect.

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Nagy et al. authored “Human Trafficking in Northeastern Ontario: Collaborative Responses” as a critical anti-human-trafficking response to the lack of information and resources – in addition to such factors as remoteness and systemic underservicing of communities in Northeastern Ontario – in an effort to develop a service mapping toolkit. With a particular focus on Indigenous persons, the authors argue that upholding self-determination and human dignity is key to supporting trafficked persons.

Together, the articles in this issue of the *First Peoples Child & Family Review* remind us of the myriad ways that we must promote and uphold the right to meaningful participation. Indigenous children, families, and communities have a right to participate in a manner that is culturally, socially, and politically relevant. All of us – as children, families, community members, researchers, and service providers – have a responsibility to uphold this right in ways that are safe, non-discriminatory, and honour the self-determination and dignity of Indigenous children and families.

In good spirit,

Brittany Mathews

Coordinating Editor

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