

# First Peoples Child & Family Review

An Interdisciplinary Journal Honouring the Voices, Perspectives, and Knowledges of First Peoples through Research, Critical Analyses, Stories, Standpoints and Media Reviews

## Foreword

Marc St. Dennis

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## An Interdisciplinary Journal

*Honoring the Voices, Perspectives and Knowledges  
of First Peoples through Research, Critical Analyses,  
Stories, Standpoints and Media Reviews*

## Foreword

Marc St. Dennis<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>MA, Coordinating Editor of First Peoples Child & Family Review, First Nations Child & Family Caring Society of Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

Contact: [mstdennis@fncaringsociety.com](mailto:mstdennis@fncaringsociety.com)

Dear First Peoples Child & Family Review Community,

It is my great pleasure to present this issue of the *First Peoples Child & Family Review*, which includes six articles ranging from speeches to academic publications to personal stories. Thank you to all of the peer reviewers who provided thoughtful feedback and to the authors for sharing their knowledge, experience and stories!

The editorial team and I believe that meaningful reconciliation engages young people in learning about our collective past and thinking creatively about the future. In this issue's first article *Youth and reconciliation* it is our privilege to honour the voices of Erin Samant and Daxton Rhead, two outstanding youth advocates for Indigenous equity. Samant and Rhead share with us their understanding that education and community are critical components of reconciliation.

If you seek inspiration to stand up for the good things in this world, then look no further than Nicole Flynn's rousing speech *I can make a difference and so can you!* Flynn describes her experience as an advocate for people with development disabilities – drawing a parallel between Canada's horrible treatment of Indigenous peoples and those with developmental disabilities – and how her work has brought her to the office of the Prime Minister of Canada.

We are pleased to publish Sébastien Grammond's and Christiane Guay's article *Understanding Innu normativity in matters of customary "adoption" and custody*. In this article, which first appeared in French in the McGill Law Journal in 2016, Grammond and Guay present the preliminary results of a research project they undertook on behalf of the Innu community of Uashat mak Mani-Utenam. Central to the purpose of Grammond's and Guay's research is the principle that Indigenous communities know and can implement effective alternatives to Western interpretations of child welfare.

In *Ontario's history of tampering and re-tempering with birth registration records* Dr. Lynn Gehl reveals what appears to be a disturbing trend of intentional modification of birth registration records. Gehl argues that the practice of preventing or removing the birth fathers' information from these records, in addition to Canada's 'Proof of Paternity' policy, which assumes all unidentified fathers are non-Status Indians under the *Indian Act*, puts Indigenous children in "double jeopardy" of not knowing who their father is and being denied their treaty rights.

Adopting a framework based on the Two Row Wampum belt, Brittany Madigan, author of *Voices of youth: how Indigenous young people in urban Ontario experience plans of care*, shares the stories of two Indigenous youth and their experiences in Ontario's child welfare system. Through interviews with these youth, Madigan explores the relevance of certain provincially mandated documentation requirements for children in care. Madigan leaves us with nine recommendations to support positive experiences and well-being of Indigenous youth in care.

*The waters of sexual exploitation: understanding the world of sexually exploited youth* by Cathy Rocke and Laurie MacKenzie is a visual tool designed to foster an understanding of the lived experiences of sexually exploited youth. Rocke and MacKenzie point out that Indigenous youth are disproportionately involved in the world of sexual exploitation and argue that a better understanding of the experiences of these youth will lead to more effective interventions.

The editorial team is thrilled to announce that issue 12(2), which will be published in December, 2017, will be our second child and youth edition! Canada is celebrating its 150th birthday. However, the events of the past century and a half have not always been cause for celebration. From the residential school system to the 60s scoop, to today's overrepresentation of Indigenous children in child welfare, it is important to acknowledge the discrimination that Indigenous children continue to face. This special edition is a chance for children and youth across Canada to share their thoughts on the past 150 years, along with their hopes for the future.

In good spirit,

Marc St. Dennis