

First Nations Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect (CIS), 2008

Research Agreement

First Nations CIS-2008 Advisory Committee

Joan Glode,
*Mi'kmaw Family &
Children's Services
of Nova Scotia*

Richard Gray,
*First Nations of Quebec & Labrador Health
& Social
Services Commission*

Betty Kennedy,
*Association of Native
Child & Family Services Agencies
of Ontario*

Monty Montgomery,
*Saskatchewan First
Nations Family &
Community Institute*

Trudy Lavallee,
*Assembly of
Manitoba Chiefs*

Judy Levi,
*North Shore MicMac
District Council*

**Linda Lucas &
Shawn Hoey**
Caring for First Nations Children Society

Carolyn Peacock,
Yellowhead Tribal Services Agency

Melanie Barrieau,
Assembly of First Nations

Marlyn Bennett,
*First Nations Child &
Family Caring Society*

Cindy Blackstock,
*First Nations Child &
Family Caring Society*

Anne-Marie Ugnat,
Public Health Agency

Entered into by [First Nations Child Welfare
Agency]

and the CIS Research team (Lead
Researchers: Nico Trocmé, McGill University;
Barbara Fallon, University of Toronto; Bruce
Maclaurin, University of Calgary; Vandna
Sinha, McGill University)

[Date]

The CIS Research team agrees to conduct this research project with the following understandings:

Research Purposes:

The purposes of this research project are: 1) to examine the incidence of reported child maltreatment in Canada and the characteristics of the children and families investigated by child welfare services; 2) to generate new knowledge about the nature of and response to maltreatment of Aboriginal children; 3) to increase the capacity for future research on child maltreatment in Aboriginal communities; and, 4) to inform evidence-based strategies for preventing and addressing abuse and neglect.

Scope of Research:

The First Nations component of Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect (First Nations CIS) is part of a national study of child abuse and neglect that is conducted every five years. The first two national studies were conducted in 1998 and 2003; they collected child welfare investigation information using a standardized data collection form which was completed by workers at child welfare agencies which voluntarily participated in the study. The CIS-1998 sample

included three First Nations child welfare agencies and CIS-2003 included eight. Data collection for the next cycle will follow the same procedures and will take place in 2008. Given the interest by First Nations in the CIS study, CIS-2008 will attempt to increase the number of participating First Nations child welfare agencies to 24.

Research Activities:

The CIS asks child welfare workers working in mainstream and Aboriginal agencies to report data on child welfare investigations using a standard, three page instrument (see Appendix A). This study collects data based on information in case files and knowledge of the case worker; it does not involve direct contact between the research team and children or families. Workers will be asked to complete a form for each new investigation for which a referral was received between October 1, 2008 and December 31, 2008. The full form takes approximately 15 minutes to complete.

Your agency has been designated a researcher who will assist in the research process:

Name: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

This researcher will have primary responsibility for facilitating the relationship between your agency and the research team. She will maintain regular phone/email communication with the person designated by your agency, will visit your agency to conduct worker training and data verification (approximately every 4-6 weeks throughout the data collection period), and will be available to deal with questions or issues that may emerge during the data collection process.

First Nations Oversight:

The First Nations CIS is overseen by a Canada-wide First Nations CIS Advisory Committee (see page 1 of agreement for list). The mandate of this committee is to ensure that the CIS respects the principles of Aboriginal Ownership of, Control over, Access to and Possession of research (OCAP principles) to the greatest degree possible given that the CIS is a cyclical study which collects data on Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal investigations. In order to facilitate aggregation of data collected from participating child welfare agencies and to facilitate comparison across study cycles, the First Nations CIS uses a standardized data collection instrument and set of data collection procedures. The First Nations CIS Advisory Committee members will inform the full process of

developing additional components of research design, implementing the research project, conducting analysis and disseminating findings through regular meetings and updates. They will provide advice on and approve the sampling framework, help ensure compliance with Aboriginal research ethics guidelines and facilitate the recruitment of participating agencies and communities. Committee members will help to establish parameters for and prioritize secondary analyses and to facilitate dissemination to interested communities. Given limited financial resources, the committee currently meets primarily by teleconference, but, given the vital mandate of this group, efforts are underway to find the financial resources to meet in person when necessary.

The First Nations CIS Advisory Committee will implement procedures for reviewing and approving any secondary research that proposes to use First Nations CIS data which is not included in the public-use CIS dataset. Those researchers who are focusing on CIS First Nations data will be required to submit their analysis proposal to the First Nations CIS Advisory Committee, in addition to meeting the ethics and research guidelines for the general CIS. The public-use dataset will exclude key identifying variables, making it impossible for users to identify the province, agency, worker or family for which data is reported. The public-use data set will also exclude information which would enable researchers to distinguish First Nations child welfare agencies from mainstream agencies. Research that distinguishes between First Nations and mainstream agencies will only be allowed once research proposals have been reviewed and approved by the First Nations CIS Advisory Committee.

Community Participation:

The research team will also work closely with individual agencies participating in the study to address their specific needs and concerns. However, it is important to emphasize that, given the national scope of the CIS, some aspects of the study design cannot be changed. Within the limitations imposed by the need to have a uniform research process across communities, the research team will incorporate and address local concerns and recommendations at each step of the project. The research team members and/or First Nations CIS Advisory Committee members will keep participating agencies updated about project progress and will directly answer community questions whenever requested.

In addition, the CIS research team is committed to increasing the capacity of Aboriginal communities and child welfare agencies to collect and analyze child welfare data. The research team will work with interested parties to support their capacity development efforts. For example, in May 2008, the

research team held a week-long workshop for child welfare personnel and researchers on use of the First Nations CIS data set. Given the success of the first workshop, and participant feedback indicating a need for further training, the CIS research team will seek funding to provide similar workshops on a yearly basis. The research team will prioritize spaces in the workshop for Aboriginal researchers and staff of Aboriginal child welfare agencies. In addition, the research team could provide consultation on how agencies may make better use of their own data, provide technical support in the event the agency wishes to extend the CIS data collection period and work with individual agencies to provide additional support for their research activities.

Reporting:

By the end of 2010, each participating agency will receive a written report which summarizes the data collected from their agency. To protect the anonymity of workers who complete the CIS forms, the community reports will present only aggregated agency/community level statistics. In order to ensure that results are communicated in a fashion that is useful and accessible to community members, CIS researchers are currently seeking funds to support on-site dissemination visits to each participating agency.

All participating agencies will have access to the CIS data relating to their own agency and will also be able to apply for access to the public-use data set containing information on all cases in the CIS data set. In order to facilitate use by community members, the CIS research team will sponsor a series of research methods workshops in which they train participants in the use and analysis of First Nations CIS data. The first workshop in this series was held in summer of 2008.

Data Sharing, Distribution and Storage:

All data collection instruments submitted to the research team will be archived in a secure filing cabinet, approved by the RCMP as per the contractual agreement with Public Health Agency of Canada, Injury and Maltreatment Section. Confidentiality of case information and participants including workers and agencies/offices are maintained throughout the study process. The First Nations CIS dataset will be housed at the Center for Research on Children and Families at McGill University and proposals to use the First Nations CIS dataset will be reviewed and approved through the process developed by the First Nations CIS Advisory Committee.

Informed consent and confidentiality:

The CIS is restricted to examining information that has already been gathered through standard child welfare investigations. The research team has no direct contact with children or families and participating workers are not asked to collect any supplemental information for the CIS. Permission to collect non-identifying investigation information will be sought from community leaders, child welfare authorities and community ethics boards as deemed necessary by participating child welfare agencies.

No identifying information will be included in the data sent to the research team. However, to allow for on-site verification of the data, near-identifying information (family initials, children's first names and case file number) will be collected on a tear-off portion of the form that will remain at the child welfare agency/office. Any identifying information that is inadvertently included on the form will be blacked-out on-site by the designated researcher before the forms are sent to the research team for data entry.

Ethics approval for this project has been given by the McGill University Ethics Board, the University of Toronto Ethics Board and the University of Calgary Ethics Board. The CIS research team will work with participating agencies to obtain additional approvals – e.g. from community ethics boards, agency board of directors or band councils – as deemed necessary by participating agency directors.

Funding, Benefits and Commitments

Funding:

The research team has received funding and other forms of support for First Nations CIS data collection from: The Public Health Agency of Canada, The Ministry of Children and Youth Services (Ontario), The Manitoba Department of Family Services Housing, and the Centre for Excellence on Child Welfare.

Benefits:

The main researchers who wish to use this research project for their benefit are: Dr. Nico Trocmé, Dr. Vandna Sinha, Dr. Barbara Fallon, Bruce MacLaurin, Cindy Blackstock, Shelley Thomas Prokop, and Elizabeth Fast. Through the methods workshops and other capacity building activities sponsored by the research team, several Aboriginal researchers will also be trained on using the data set.

The researchers will submit a descriptive First Nations report to the funding agency in 2011. Scientific presentations in peer-reviewed publications and

conferences will be made. The final report and other publications will be reviewed by the First Nations CIS Advisory Committee members prior to publication. The First Nations CIS Advisory Committee and the CIS research team are committed to ensuring that CIS data reaches Aboriginal communities in a way that informs their work and will work together to develop a meaningful dissemination strategy for the First Nations component of the CIS.

Commitments:

The researchers agree to abide by the agreements described above. Researchers also agree to inform the participating agency about the progress of the project in a clear, specific, and timely manner and to act as a resource to the participating agencies on research related questions that are of relevance to them.

The participating agency agrees to work with the researchers in order to collect data in a manner consistent with other sites. The participating agency also agrees to encourage the active participation of agency staff in the study and to provide feedback to the research team on the overall study.

The primary commitment by participating agency is projected to be 6-8 months of involvement starting in July 2008. Between July and October, agency representatives will work with researchers to: obtain any approvals that are necessary in order for the agency to participate in the study, describe the case flow process and obtain the background information needed for the study, generate child welfare worker support for the study, and set a date for training child welfare workers in data collection. The ½ day, on-site training session will familiarize child welfare workers with the data collection instrument, review the data collection guidebook and answer any questions about filling in forms. This training will be held in early-mid October.

Through many revisions of the data collection instrument based on experience and extensive feedback, the research team has attempted to make the form and guidebook as user friendly as possible. Previous study cycles have indicated that it takes approximately 15 minutes to fill out one data collection instrument. The total amount of time spent on the project depends on the number of new investigations that are completed between October 1 and December 31, 2008. The researcher who is assigned to your agency will provide on and off-site support to ensure consistent data collection.

Agency participation in this study is purely voluntary and you may choose to terminate participation at any time. If an agency decides to terminate their participation in the study, the research team agrees to cease data collection in the agency. Furthermore, if an agency that is terminating participation in

the study requests it, the research team will agree not use the data already collected from the agency in any way.

Having read the above, we agree to work together on the Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect in Keeping with this agreement.

Signed by:

Date:

Date:

Agency:

(Signature of Designated

Researcher)

Name:

Position:

(Signature of Agency Contact

Person)

Name:

Position:

Date:

Nico Trocmé

Principal Investigator, Canadian
Incidence Study of Reported Child
Abuse and Neglect