FOREWORD

Research funding structures are important drivers for change within our system. The transformative mandate for the Canadian Institutes of Health Research that is ensconced in legislation, has helped to create new models for funding and provides a constant reminder that research is a public good. A joint initiative of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council led to the establishment of the novel Community Alliance for Health Research Program in 1999. This was an important funding source for the work described in these chapters. This research program was set up, in part, to provide the funding structure required for extensive collaborations and sustainable partnerships that would address priority social issues. This funding model was intended to support research partnerships of mutual engagement and shared vision, not partnerships of convenience. It was recognized that establishing and nurturing partnerships involved real costs and that these costs had to be part of the funding equation.

The focus of this book is a composite set of partnerships in six Canadian provinces that tackled child neglect and maltreatment. As the authors point out, these tenacious and complex social concerns demand an ecosystemic approach. This approach is illustrated through numerous examples of innovative service delivery approaches that were a source of inquiry. The inequities that underlie the overrepresentation of some population subgroups (e.g. Aboriginals, disabled) in the child welfare system were of particular concern to the research teams and the prominence of their research studies in these areas is noteworthy. Partnership models are especially important if we are going to successfully address the layered social inequities that are reflected among vulnerable population subgroups in the child welfare system.

This book makes an exceptionally strong contribution in several ways. The exploration of partnerships is especially critical and the range of settings, the variations in policy and practice, and the distinctive origins and evolution of partnerships are all of interest.

This collection helps make tangible what really makes a partnership work. The authors describe the softer dimensions of triadic partnerships. Discussions of integrity, trust, like-mindedness, and the authentic recognition of complementary expertise are surfaced with helpful illustrative examples. There are also important discussions of essential structures that supported these "softer" dimensions. The development of partnership policies and guidelines, and the establishment of advisory boards and forums are just a few of the examples provided. There is some critical learning regarding partnerships that arise from the experience of these authors. Discussions of how to lead partnerships and how to achieve philosophical joining are welcome additions to the literature. The importance of uncovering divergent ideas and perspectives, and using these as a source of innovation and as a basis for risk-taking are considered. The identification of normative responses that may adversely influence partnerships, and the perceived elitism of research and researchers and thus the need for researchers to take a decentred position are amply described.

"Walking the talk" is evident throughout the book, making for a compelling read. The insights and voice of service delivery partners complement those of the research team members. The models that were established to facilitate and nurture these partnerships, plus the range of outcomes that are reflected, provide important guidance for others who are also working to realize the benefits of partnerships that involve researchers, service providers and clients. Importantly, the authors do not gloss over the difficulties encountered in their partnerships. The pragmatic challenges of competing demands on work time, information complexity, difficulties encountered in trying to get timely access to data and evidence, and threats to sustainability are all addressed.

Beyond the emphasis on partnerships, the book makes other contributions as well, bringing into focus the real life challenges of action-oriented research. Issues of recruitment, ethical tensions, research situated within major systems reorganization and the challenges of staff continuity will resonate with many readers. The lengthy timelines that are required for significant change processes are also highlighted.

Finally, this collection provides an important source of questions for research funding agencies on several fronts. The sustainability dimension is clearly an issue, bringing into question realistic timelines for research funding that is directed at substantive systems change. The importance of mechanisms to track the longer-term impact of partnerships funded through the Community Alliance for Health Research Program is

highlighted, as the partnerships forged and strengthened through such a program should provide a foundation for a continuation of programmatic research. The seeds for these important discussions have been planted in this book.

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PREFACE

Research-Community Partnerships in the Canadian Child Welfare Context

The literature on the benefits, as well as the challenges, of researchers collaborating with community partners (citizens, stakeholders, service providers, policy makers) to adddress important issues has emerged from several disciplines. It has only been recently, however, that the field of child welfare has focussed on the benefits and challenges of such collaborations. This may seem surprising for a field that, by its very nature, has close ties with community practitioners. In fact, it may be that so much research in child welfare has been carried out alongside community partners over the years that we have not felt a strong need to explore the benefits and challenges of using such methods.

Still, examining the process of research collaboration in child welfare has gained considerable importance in recent years. One reason for this is the growing trend to base policy and practice on the best knowledge available. 'Best knowledge' may emerge from a variety of sources, but we are more confident that it is the best available if it has emerged from sound research and program evaluation methodology that includes real child welfare practice. Another reason is that funding agencies often require the participation of community partners in applied research, and they sometime encourage knowledge transfer activities to make knowledge gained readily accessible to the broader community of stakeholders.

Research-community collaborations, then, have become important to child welfare in Canada, but the available literature may not be fully relevant to the field of child welfare or to the way research can be carried out in child welfare in Canada. There are 13 separate child welfare systems in Canada in our two official languages – one for each province and territory – and they are responsible for child protection issues that are sometimes very serious, and that occur over large tracts of land and

among numerous subcultures and language groups. In putting this book together, the editors recognized that this is only one of several dealing with this subject, but we sought to add a unique contribution to this literature by capturing the experiences of researchers and community partners about the benefits and challenges of conducting child welfare research in various regions of Canada. In particular, we wanted to capture both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal experiences, and French-language and English-language experiences.

The book's chapter authors have readily shared their experiences based on the research-community partnerships in which they were involved. In each case, they briefly describe their projects and present their main findings, and refer the reader to the full results that are published elsewhere – all available on the Canadian Child Welfare Research Portal (http://www.cecw-cepb.ca/home). The main purpose of this book, however, is to provide an opportunity for them to share their own ideas about the benefits and challenges of Canadian research-community partnerships. Thus, the reflections of the researchers themselves function as one type of data that stands on its own merits, although we do provide an analysis and summary of it at the end of the book. It is our intent that the material we present in this book will form a helpful basis for researchers, practitioners, and policymakers across Canada and elsewhere who wish to engage in effective research-community collaborations in child welfare.

How the Collaborative Research Projects Were Developed

In the fall of 2000, the Government of Canada announced research funding in the amount of $20 million over a five-year period for the improvement of life for young children and youth across the country. Five Centres of Excellence for Children's Well-Being (eventually four) were launched with funding from Health Canada, and later from the Public Health Agency of Canada. The mandate for these Centres of Excellence was to: analyze existing health data, conduct targeted research, provide policy advice, disseminate knowledge, and foster networks. The Centre of Excellence for Child Welfare (CECW) focussed engaged in all five of these functions, beginning in late 2000.

In early 2001, Nico Trocmé who at the time was Director of the CECW and based in the Faculty of Social Work, University of Toronto, obtained additional financial support of $1.8 million from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), within the framework of their Community Alliance for Health Research Program. This grant,

for a program or research entitled Canadian Child Welfare Research Partnerships, supported rigorous collaborative community research that brought together researchers, practitioners, managers and decision-makers to work on four research projects over five years in both Quebec and Ontario. The project guidelines included an evaluation of the research partnerships.

The year following the launch of these four large-scale projects, the CECW established its own funding program available to partnerships between child protection organizations and university researchers to evaluate promising interventions already in place within the participating child protection organizations. In total, 11 such partnerships in five provinces each received $25,000 from the CECW for their 18-month intervention evaluation projects. The researchers and community partners engaged in these 11 collaborative projects were asked to track the benefits and challenges of their work together.

In addition to these core research activities, the CECW also initiated the *Prairie Child Welfare Research Program* with additional funding from the Public Health Agency of Canada. This 3-year program made it possible to work directly with members of the Prairie Child Welfare Consortium (including researchers, government representatives, managers and practitioners) from Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta. Four separate research projects were carried out, two of which were structured around Aboriginal communities.

This ambitious set of research initiatives was then put into practice by the CECW and its 20 affiliated research teams across Canada. The research teams sought to help Canada's most vulnerable Canadians by striving to achieve the CECW's goal of improving the capacity of communities to protect their children and to enhance knowledge, research and policies within university settings.

In addition to promoting the production of high quality research results, the CECW wished to acquire an in-depth knowledge of how collaborative research partnerships functioned and how they can function most effectively within the context of Canadian child welfare. The idea for producing this book came at the moment when we were assessing the results of our research projects and the knowledge we had gained from them about partnerships. All of the research projects used research-community partnerships to generate evidence to examine the effectiveness of child welfare practices. We considered that the process for generating such evidence – both the benefits and the challenges – should be shared. Thus, our goal in producing this book was to gather,

translate and disseminate the knowledge generated by the partnerships. On a wider scale, we focussed on assessing current knowledge of the effectiveness of the strategies in coming to the aid of children in need and their families.

Purpose and Contents of the Book

The collection of chapters that make up this book aims to identify factors associated with successful research-community partnerships in the Canadian child welfare context that provide evidence for examining the effectiveness of child welfare practices. Its originality lies in its timely focus, its broad approach to research and research partnerships, and the way it sheds light on the various facets of youth protection. It includes 12 chapters divided into three sections.

Table P.1. Overview of the Book's CECW-Supported Collaborative Projects

Research title	Principal Investigator	Partners	Funded by	Book chapter
Large-scale collaborative researches				
Maltreatment and adolescent pathways (MAP) project	Christine Wekerle University of Western Ontario	Catholic Children's Aid Society (CCAS) Centre for Addiction & Mental Health (CAMH) Children's Aid Society of Toronto (CAST) McGill University McMaster University University of Toronto University of Western Ontario York University	CIHR CECW subgrant	3
Data analysis of services provided by youth protection: Secondary analyses of data from the CIS	Nico Trocmé, McGill University	CAST CCAS First Nations Child & Family Caring Society of Canada (FNCFCS) McGill University University of Toronto	CIHR CECW subgrant	5

Table P.1 Continued

Data analysis of services provided by youth protection: Secondary analyses of data from the EIQ	Micheline Mayer, Institut de recherche pour le développement social des jeunes (IRDS)	Centre Dollard-Cormier Centre jeunesse de Montréal – Institut universitaire (CJM-IU) IRDS	CIHR CECW subgrant	N/A
Evaluation of an emerging multidimensional model of intervention with neglecting families	Carl Lacharité, University of Trois-Rivières	Centre jeunesse de Laval Le Centre jeunesse de la Mauricie et du Centre-du-Québec Les Centres de la jeunesse et de la famille Batshaw University of Montreal University of Trois-Rivières	CIHR CECW subgrant	9
Intervention with attachment disordered children in the child welfare system	Nitza Perlman, Surrey Place Centre	Surrey Place Centre University of Calgary University of Toronto	CIHR CECW subgrant	10
Intervention evaluations				
Self-managed care: evaluating partnership, social networks and community-capacity building in the provision of a respite services	Valerie Barnby, Winnipeg Child and Family Services and Alexandra Wright, University of Manitoba	University of Manitoba Winnipeg Child and Family Services	CECW intervention evaluation grant	N/A

Table P.1 continued

Evaluating the effectiveness of the Beyond the Basics Parenting Groups for parents/caregivers of young children involved with child welfare	Deborah Goodman and Sharron Richards, CAST	Aisling Discoveries Child and Family Centre CAST CCAS Jane Finch Community and Family Centre Jewish Family and Child Service of Toronto Lakeshore Area Multiservice Project Native Child and Family Services of Toronto Toronto First Duty - ACTT-Second/ Dawes Project	CECW intervention evaluation grant	N/A
Evaluating factors that contribute to positive outcomes in the Awasis Pimicikamak Cree Nation's Kinship Care Program	George Muswaggon, Awasis Agency of Northern Manitoba Janet Mirwaldt, Office of the Children's Advocate Diane Hiebert-Murphy & Alexandra Wright, University of Manitoba	Awasis Agency of Northern Manitoba Office of the Children's Advocate University of Manitoba	CECW intervention evaluation grant	N/A
Evaluation of the parental capacity reinforcement program entitled Éduquons nos enfants sans correction physique	Marie-Ève Clément, Université du Québec en Outaouais (UQO)	Centre Mariebourg CJM-IU UQO	CECW intervention evaluation grant	N/A
Evaluation of the process and impact of the IRI-Accueil du Centre jeunesse de Montréal program	Christian Dagenais, Centre de liaison sur l'intervention et la prévention psychosociales (CLIPP); University of Montreal	CJM-IU CLIPP University of Montreal	CECW intervention evaluation grant	N/A

Table P.1 Continued

Family Group Conferencing: assessing long-term effectiveness of an alternative approach to child protection	Sandra Cunning, George Hull Centre for Children and Families	CAST CCAS Etobicoke Children's Centre George Hull Centre for Children and Families Jewish Family and Child Service of Toronto Native Child and Family Services of Toronto University McGill	CECW intervention evaluation grant	N/A
Impact of service provider change on the protection of children	Terry LeBlanc, Children's Aid Society of Simcoe County	Children's Aid Society of Simcoe County York University	CECW intervention evaluation grant	N/A
Lessons learned from the Changing the Script Program: Supporting Foster Parents to "Go the Distance" with the Children in their Care	Jacqueline Mankiewicz Smith, The Circle of Children in Care	CCAS Surrey Place Centre The Circle of Children in Care	CECW intervention evaluation grant	N/A
The use of family conferencing and Circles in child welfare in the Mi'kmaq community in Nova Scotia	Joan Glode, Mi'kmaw Family & Children's Services (MFCS) of Nova Scotia	Dalhousie University MFCS of Nova Scotia	CECW intervention evaluation grant	6
Effectiveness of a respite care program for young children living at home and followed by child welfare	Marie-Andrée Poirier, University of Montreal	CJM-IU Maison Répit-Providence University of Montreal	CECW intervention evaluation grant	7
Addressing the effects of child maltreatment through the lens of domestic violence: Wood's Homes Habitat program	Ann Lawson, Wood's Homes	University of Calgary Wood's Homes	CECW intervention evaluation grant	8

Table P.1 continued

Prairie collaborative researches

Determinants of children with disabilities (including FASD) coming into the care of mandated child welfare agencies	Don Fuchs, University of Manitoba	Child Protection Branch, Manitoba Child and Family Services Prairie Child Welfare Consortium (PCWC) University of Manitoba	PHAC/ CECW prairie project	4
Evaluation of the Baby First Home Visiting program to determine the impact of prevention in cases reported to youth protection	Noreen Ek, Brandon University and Sid Frankel, University of Manitoba	Brandon University Centre for Manitoba Health Policy Research Healthy Child Manitoba PCWC Regional Health Authorities University of Manitoba	Health Canada	N/A
Leadership Development Forums in Aboriginal Child Welfare- Alberta	Jean Lafrance, University of Calgary	Alberta's Métis Settlements Blood Reserve Métis Child and Family Services Region PCWC Surgeon Lake First Nation University of Calgary	PHAC/ CECW prairie project	N/A
Leadership Development Forums in Aboriginal Child Welfare- Saskatchewan	Sharon McKay, University of Regina Shelley Prokop-Thomas, First Nations University of Canada	First Nations University of Canada PCWC Saskatchewan Indian Child and Family Services (ICFS) University of Regina	PHAC/ CECW prairie project	N/A

The first section consists of two chapters that provide an overall empirical framework within which to consider research-community partnerships in child welfare. In Chapter 1, Michael Saini and Sophie

Léveillé report on the results of a systematic synthesis of qualitative empirical research conducted between the research and user communities. The findings highlight the obvious need to develop and put into place the necessary tools to evaluate the strategies and outcomes of research partnerships in the field of youth protection. In Chapter 2, Nico Trocmé, Wendy Thomson and Claude Laurendeau propose a model for the dissemination of knowledge that was put to the test in a Montréal community. It focusses on placing university research resources and expertise at the disposal of managers in a child welfare agency to support an evidence-based approach to developing and monitoring its programs and policies. The chapter provides a description of the model and the preliminary results of its evaluation.

The second section of the book outlines eight instances of the process of successful research-community partnerships by describing the methodologies and results of several different types of research projects. It includes four research partnerships over five years: three intervention evaluation projects and one study from the Prairie project. The eight chapters are arranged according to the focus of the research: whether it is an evaluation of the needs of a specific clientele (needs assessment), an evaluation of the impacts of an intervention, or an innovative social program. The researchers begin with an explanation of the research and with an analysis of the nature, benefits, and challenges of the research project. The analysis of the research partnership is then followed by an assessment by a frontline worker; our intention was for a user of the research findings to have the last word.

Within this second section, a Needs Assessment sub-section is composed of chapters 3, 4, and 5. Chapter 3 reports on a collaborative community action study involving university researchers and the child welfare service provider community in Ontario, including executive directors, supervisors, and frontline workers. The various authors (Chris Wekerle, Maria Chen, Eman Leung, Randall Waechter, Anne-Marie Wall, Harriet MacMillan, Nico Trocmé, Michael Boyle, Bruce Leslie, Deborah Goodman, Brenda Moody, The MAP Project Advisory Board, and Tara Nassar) describe a longitudinal study designed to fill some of the knowledge gaps that currently exist regarding the transition of child welfare-involved youth through the critical period of adolescence. The chapter reports research conducted on behaviour of at-risk youth between 14 and 17 years of age.

Chapter 4 outlines the results of an exploratory descriptive study of children with disabilities in the care of the child welfare system

in Manitoba. Don Fuchs and Linda Burnside discuss the multi-level research-practice partnership among government policy makers, service providers, and university researchers that took place.

In Chapter 5, Barbara Fallon, Nico Trocmé, Bruce MacLaurin, Della Knoke, Tara Black, Caroline Felstiner and Cindy Blackstock provide evidence that the richness and the breadth of a unique Canadian epidemiological dataset makes it applicable to academics and professionals from diverse backgrounds such as health, law, social work and psychology. They further illustrate that such a platform is conducive to the creation of community networks across Canada.

The Impact Evaluation sub-section consists of three chapters. In Chapter 6, Fred Wien and Joan Glode describe a Nova Scotia research project to evaluate the implementation of family group conferencing by an Aboriginal agency, comparing it to the way in which child welfare cases are handled in mainstream child welfare systems. They highlight the distinctive characteristics linked to conducting collaborative research in Aboriginal communities.

In Chapter 7, Marie-Andrée Poirier, Danielle Lessard and Isabelle Perreault emphasize the need to reflect prior to undertaking research in partnership in order to define the collaborative nature of partnership research. They provide an example of the evaluation of a community project in Montréal devoted to very young children in need by coming to their aid with short-term shelter or respite care from their family environment.

In Chapter 8, Susan Gardiner, Bjorn Johansson, Ann Lawson, Bruce MacLaurin and Janet McFarlane share their research-community partnership experiences during the evaluation of an intensive residential treatment program in Calgary for adolescent boys who have witnessed domestic violence and who are experiencing serious behavioural disturbance.

The Innovation sub-section of the book consists of two chapters. In Chapter 9, Carl Lacharité and Guylaine Fafard present a new approach to child neglect, and offer strategies to reduce its incidence. They illustrate how various communities in Québec have worked together in defining, applying and evaluating the program. They propose methods for overcoming the numerous challenges faced by community development centres.

In Chapter 10, Nitza Perlman, Barry Isaacs, Anne Pleydon and Kevin Sullivan express the point of view of the main players in youth

protection. They outline the results of qualitative analyses of interviews with treatment foster children in Ontario to explore relationships between a treatment outcome/success and the children's perceptions of their experiences in the program.

Finally, Chapters 11 and 12 make up the third and last section of the book. In Chapter 11, the authors set out the factors associated with successful partnerships, their quality criteria and the relation between the two, as they emerged from the results of our overall analysis of the effectiveness of the 20 projects. The research led them to develop a typology of the effectiveness of partnerships.

Chapter 12 synthesizes and analyzes ideas presented in the first 11 chapters by pointing out key "musts" for effective research partnerships and by offering a unique checklist for putting research partnerships into practice. The chapter also sets out important work to be addressed in developing effective research-community partnerships in the future.

It is our hope that the book will lead the way to open dialogue between members of the research community and research users in the field of child and youth protection; that it will foster response to our network projects; and, in particular, that the information in it will be discussed as baseline knowledge for methods of gathering evidence for effective child welfare practices in Canada through research-community partnerships. To paraphrase a saying by French writer Jean Cocteau "*Un beau livre, c'est celui qui sème à foison les points d'interrogation*" – "A good book is one which poses many questions."

We wish you happy reading!

Sophie Léveillé
Nico Trocmé
Ivan Brown
Claire Chamberland