

How to do a briefing note



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Briefing Note Adoption: Long Term Implications of Adopting Families Sarah

Murphy 6/8/2010 Adoption: Long Term Implications of Adopting

Families Prepared For: BY: Issue: It is accepted practice to first try to find homes for First Nation??™s children within their extended family and in their Band/Nation. First Nations children are less likely to be adopted out to non-First Nations families. Background: Prior to the 1920??™s adoptions were handled by privately through churches and not through regulations by the government (Ontariogenweb, 1997). Around the 1950??™s if a child was neglected or abused only then would the government intervene (Office of the Auditor General of Canada, 2008). After the era of residential schools Child Welfare was expanded to include First Nation Reservations.

Alcohol and physical abuse as well as the breakdown of family structures were an after effect of residential schools, leaving many families unable to care for their own (Dolha, L., 2009). 1960??™s the 60??™s scoop forcibly removed First Nation??™s children from their homes and adopted by non-First Nations families (British Columbia, n. d.). It was thought that First Nation??™s were incapable of caring for their children. In the 1980??™s First Nations took it into their own hands to develop proposals and policies of their own that would work for them as well as to help with their negotiations with the government (British Columbia, n. d.

). 1982 amendments to the Canadian Constitution were put in place to protect the rights of aboriginals (British Columbia, n. d.). 1982 research indicated that there had been ??? no attempt to secure aboriginal homes for aboriginal children??? (Dolha, L.

, 2009). Approximately 10, 000 Status Indian children were adopted out to non-First Nations homes between 1960-1990, this is not including First Nation??™s children that did not have their status (Dolha, L., 2009). First Nations tribal councils started to develop culturally appropriate approaches to aboriginal child welfare in the 1980??™s (Dolha, L., 2009). 1990 brought about the introduction of the ??? national First Nations Child and Family Services program to fund First Nations Child and Family Services (FNCFS) agencies?? (Dolha, L.

, 2009) which facilitated in developing the following agreements: 1.?? Provincial/territorial government agreements transfer authority to First Nations or tribal councils to administer child and family services on-reserve under provincial child welfare legislation?? (Dolha, L., 2009). 2. Funding by the Federal government which was allocated based on the ??? population and geographical location?? (Dolha, L., 2009).

Research has shown that adoptions on First Nations children by non-First Nations families have failed in the past, especially as the child reaches adolescence (Dolha, L., 2009). Current Situation: Today most First Nation??™s agencies have received delegated authority over child welfare services to provide services on the reserves. If there is a concern for a child??™s welfare then these agencies will investigate the said report, and take appropriate action to ??? ensure the safety and protection of children and promote their well being?? (Office of the Auditor General of Canada, 2008). Custom adoption is preferred among most First Nations. This open process is supported by the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) to try

and keep First Nations™s children with First Nations families whether it is extended family or community members (British Columbia, n. d.

). Custom adoption is temporary/alternate care that ensures that the child will receive a cultural upbringing by a First Nations family that is relevant to his /her band (British Columbia, n. d.

). Custom adoption has the same effect of an adoption order under the Adoption Act when the court makes this declaration pursuant to an application under section 46 of the Adoption Act (British Columbia, n. d.).

Discussion: What has been addressed by the Custom Adoption model is that First Nations children can only be placed with First Nations families, and not with non-First Nations families.

This brings forth the conclusion that First Nations believe that non-First Nations are incapable of taking care of First Nations children. Where is the evidence that supports this Is it apparent in all adoption cases where a non-First Nations family has adopted a First Nations child How much research has been done on First Nations children who were raised by non-First Nations™s families and had a good experience growing up The assumption is that non-First Nations will not provide a culturally appropriate upbringing for the First Nations child, and that the child will grow up estranged from their culture. It is not carved in stone that this is how it will be. If non-First Nations are willing to learn about First Nations culture so they can pass it on to their adoptive child/children then First Nations™s should be more open to teaching about culture. It should not matter the race, culture, or ethnicity of an adoptive

parent as long as they are there to love, nurture, and care for the child in a way that is respectful of their bands culture. Options: 1.

Offer cultural education, to non-First Nations families wishing to adopt a child. See that they attend certain events and become involved in the community before fully adopting a First Nation??™s child. Ensure that the child receives cultural education throughout their Elementary and Secondary education. 2.

Have a board of First Nations and non First Nations people make a decision on an adoption of a First Nations child. 3. Operate within the framework of the custom adoption, with an addendum leaving the door open for a non-First Nations adoption? 3. Offer financial assistance to a First Nations family wanting to adopt a fn family member. 4.

Accept that the Custom adoption model is working? for First Nations? people.? Recommendations: Offer cultural education, to non-First Nations families wishing to adopt a child. See that they attend certain events and become involved in the community before fully adopting a First Nation??™s child. Ensure that the child receives cultural education throughout their Elementary and Secondary education.

Rationale: Only allowing for the adoption of First Nations children by First Nations would further separate people from one another. It could be said that First Nations children should be allowed to be adopted by a loving family irregardless of race, ethnicity, or culture, as long as that child is provided for financially, and culturally. References: Dolha, L.(March 2009). First Nations

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