



We Value

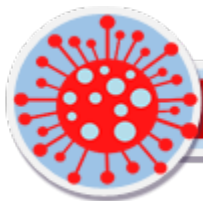
Safety – Families – Relationships - Collaboration – Being Open & Willing to Change

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR THE PERIOD September 22nd, 2020 – October 27th, 2020

This year's Dress Purple Campaign will be held on October 27th. It's a provincial awareness initiative letting families know we are Here to Help and encouraging families to reach out for help when needed – to any agency, service or community partner. If you want to participate in creating a short video wearing purple and explaining how and why you support the children, youth, and families in their communities, we will be happy to share it! Here's a [video from Premier Ford](#), and [Nicole Bonnie, CEO of the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies](#).



We have two dates scheduled to begin collective bargaining with the Union in November.



COVID-19

COVID Update

Our agency response will continue to be guided by equity and the set of values that we established at the beginning of the pandemic:

- Compassion & Kindness - For people we serve, for people in the communities, for our colleagues & for ourselves.
- Flexibility - We are going to need to be flexible as things emerge.
- Do our part in protecting lives and health.
- Prioritize what service we can continue to provide
- Good & frequent communication
- Take pressure off the medical system so it can respond to the most vulnerable & do the critical work

The second wave is here and rates of new cases continue to rise in the country, in Ontario

and in Indigenous communities. New restrictions are in place province wide and further limits in specific communities. Local numbers have been increasing and we continue to encourage staff to do all the things that prevent spread and increase everyone's physical safety - maintain physical distancing; good hand hygiene; wear a mask; stay home if you are not feeling well and follow all the required public health requirements.

The reopening of schools has created impacts for families and our staff who have school aged children. When isolation is required, it impacts the ability of staff to conduct in person visits. We continue to monitor the overall HR impact of this. It has been identified as a provincial issue as well.

We have reviewed reception coverage as well as the use of volunteers and made the decision to keep things the same until January when we will re-assess. Reception front doors will remain locked during lunch and over breaks. We will continue not using volunteers. This decision is connected to the rising COVID numbers in Ontario and now locally.



Chasing Zero

We are chasing having all children and youth growing up safe with families. It is at the heart of everything we do. Success Marker: Zero children & youth growing up in care by 2020.



The research with Dr. Kiaras Gharabaghi on Chasing Zero will be presented to the Board at the November Board meeting. He will present to staff the following day.

Foster family recognition week is the week of October 19th. Gift cards were sent to caregiver families to enjoy a meal as a token of our appreciation of everything they do.



All at the Table

There is a place for everyone at our table. No one person or group sits at the head. People of all ages, abilities, backgrounds, races, cultures, genders and sexual orientations are welcome to pull up a chair and have their voices help shape our services and decisions. Success Markers: Family involvement in case conferences increases by 10% a year beginning in 2016. Families have a way of telling us if our services were helpful and why.

We continue to work at including equity in everything we do. During the Board meeting, I will provide an overview and update on the work that is occurring within the agency and within the community.

Micro aggressions are an important health and safety concern in our work place and we continue to work on addressing and eliminating them. We have created a process for responding that has been shared with all staff. Below is an article providing further Canadian context, research and information on micro-aggressions in the workplace.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/race-relations-study-racism-workplace-microaggressions-1.5389208>



Journey Beside

We will continue to work beside our First Nation partners to ensure the safety, permanency and well-being of their children and youth. We commit to learning from one another and sharing our agency's resources to support First Nations children, youth and families. Success Marker – a minimum of 80% of staff, foster parents, Board members and volunteers have participated in at least one local training or [learning opportunity](#) per year regarding Indigenous People.

We have continue to consult with the three local First Nations on a regular basis – both for specific family situations as well as broader agency issues. This has replaced the Indigenous Working Group meetings for now.

Recently, a survey for provincial reporting on the Indigenous Commitments went out. We will be completing it and participating in a provincial virtual gathering where the results of the survey and the progress the sector has been making, or not making, will be shared.

Our congratulations to the new Chief Charles Sampson & Council on Walpole Island First Nation who were elected last month.

<http://walpoleislandfirstnation.ca/chief-council/>

Our congratulations to Chris Plain who was re-elected as Chief on October 9th and to all the elected Council members. The First Nation also recently ratified a claim from the federal government which owed the Nation from a sale that occurred in 1853-1854.

<https://bit.ly/3kC6NOK> .

We condemn the violence and racism happening in Nova Scotia right now against Sipekne'katik First Nation fishers over their protected rights to lobster fish. The lack of response by law enforcement and the Canadian government has been extremely concerning and further evidence of how systemic racism is showing up. There have been statements by Indigenous leaders and communities including Aamjiwnaang First Nation and Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler.

If you're looking to do something to support the fishers, the NAN statement included this:

Donations for the Sipekne'katik fishers can be made electronically via e-transfers or PayPal to monicah@sipeknekatik.ca. Donated funds will be used to support the fishers by replacing fishing gear and paying legal and wharf fees.

<https://www.facebook.com/aamjiwnaangadministration/photos/pcb.3414844421896226/3414842121896456>

<https://www.nan.ca/news/nan-supports-sipeknekatik-first-nation/>

[AFN chief calls for resignation of RCMP commissioner as N.S. fishery dispute continues- CBC News Nova Scotia](#)



Our Stories

By sharing our heartfelt stories, challenges and the changes we are making, we can better educate our community about the valuable work we do with children, youth and families. Success Marker: We have an annual communication plan that provides the public with more information about the work we do.

I'm sharing another story about great advocacy and work being done:

- Grandparents had care of their young grandchild who was acting out and had recently been kicked out of daycare. The grandparents were very overwhelmed and needed supports;
- The worker connected them with community services including Pathways, a new daycare, summer camp, St. Clair Child & Youth Services and a pediatrician;
- The worker was a strong advocate for the child to start access with a sibling in foster care;
- The child started school, was well connected to supports and had a relationship with a sibling and our services were no longer required.

- The grandmother (who could be difficult to engage) said she appreciated how much the worker helped them and the grandmother didn't want the file to close. She believed the worker genuinely cared about them and their success;
- The worker could see how much the grandparents loved their grandchild and knew that they would not give up;
- The worker engaged the grandparents by being hands on with them: picking them up and taking them to appointments.

Key Learnings:

- Even though it might take some work, it is important to strongly advocate for sibling access- something so simple (like multiple emails) makes a big difference in the life of a child.
- A decision made early in the work with a family sets the stage for future decisions. In this case the worker's advocacy for sibling access paved the way for the young child's relationship with not only this sibling, but, another one born recently. There was no question about the importance of sibling relationships because of the work that the worker did early on.



My Circle

Each of us has the responsibility to ask ourselves "What role do I play in helping us meet our goals?" and "How am I committing myself to our mission?" This is your circle. Success Marker: everyone has a personal goal that helps us achieve our strategic goals.

We have achieved our success marker in this area. Here are a couple of circles:

"I will continue to share the importance of keeping family connections for our children in care as we explore permanency."

Christine Porter

"I will treat every person with respect and dignity and will acknowledge, at all times, their inherent worth."

- Amal Yusuf



Getting Better Together

COVID has added new challenges in staying focused on wellness in the workplace. Over the past month, The Getting Better Together committee recently organized physically distanced outdoor walks. This allows some social time and physical activity in a safe and healthy manner.



**Submitted by:
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