

Our Health Counts Toronto

An inclusive community-driven health survey for Indigenous peoples in Toronto

Parenting and Child Protection Agency Involvement

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) reveals the colonial goals of Canada’s Indigenous policies over time. These goals included the elimination of traditional Indigenous governments and livelihood, and the planned expiry of treaty obligations through processes of assimilation.¹ The TRC defines these policies as ‘cultural genocide’. A key implementation of these assimilationist policies has involved the involuntary removal of generations of Indigenous children from their families through residential schools and Child Protection Agencies (CPA).¹ Structural factors, such as institutional racism, inadequate housing, poverty, and limited access to adequate health care continue to leave Indigenous families at risk of CPA involvement. Children who have grown up in care are more likely to experience these structural disadvantages. A focus on imposed colonial structural challenges such as poverty and child welfare policies that reward agencies and non-Indigenous foster families involved in Indigenous child apprehension in addition to supporting the revitalization of Indigenous family and community parenting and kinship ties is urgently required. There are an increasing number of Indigenous-led CPAs which provide more culturally safe services to Indigenous families. These agencies are aiming to improve the outcomes of CPA interventions and ensure interactions between Indigenous families and CPA are mutually beneficial.

Parenting of Indigenous Children in Toronto

OVER 95%

- Of Indigenous parents in Toronto feel they can make an important difference to their child.
- are able to do things that will improve their child’s behaviour.
- take time to play with their child everyday or a few times a week.

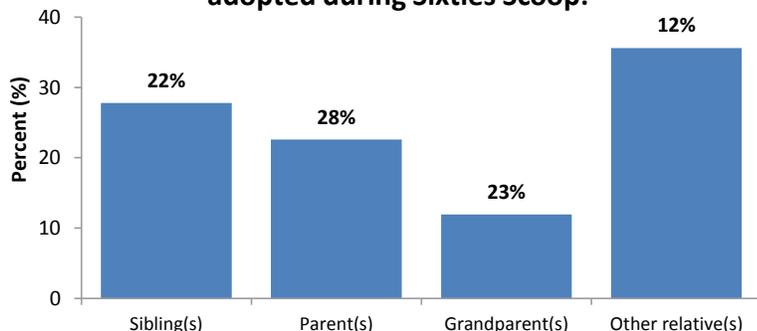
86% offer their child choices everyday.

91% encourage their child in sincere and specific ways everyday.

Sixties Scoop and Child Protection Agencies

22% of Indigenous adults in Toronto said they were adopted or had other members of their family adopted between 1951-1970, during the Sixties Scoop.

Of those who had someone in their family adopted during Sixties Scoop:



5% of Indigenous adults in Toronto said they were adopted between 1951 and 1970, during the Sixties Scoop.

8% of Indigenous adults in Toronto said they were adopted between 1971 to present.

Parenting and Child Protection Agency Involvement

Child Protection Agency Involvement

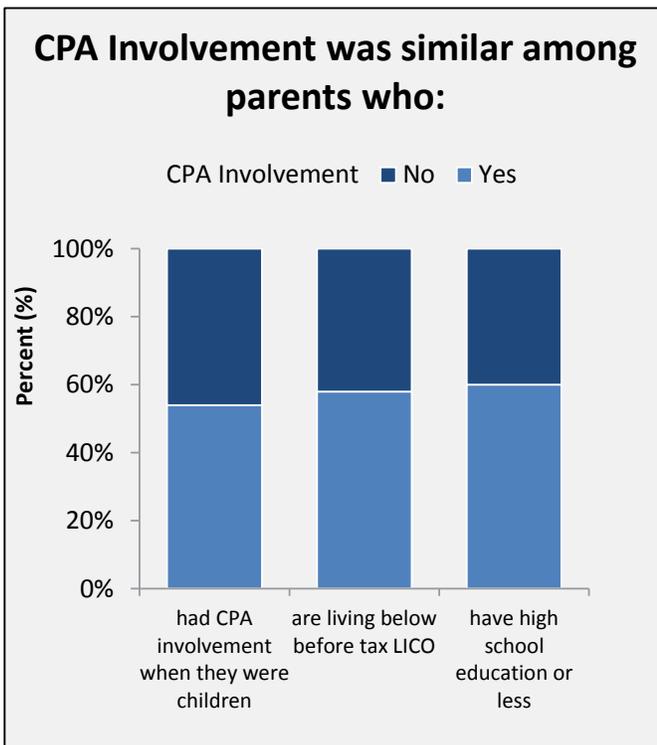
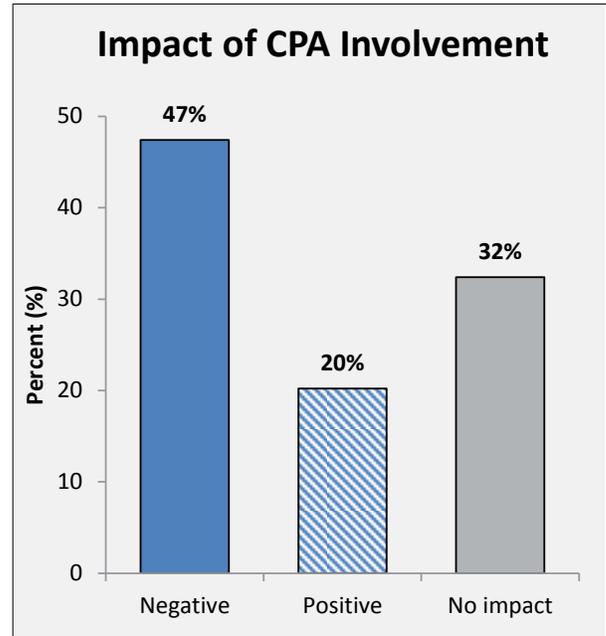
48% of Indigenous adults in Toronto had CPA involved in their care when they were children.

57% of Indigenous parents in Toronto have had a CPA involved in the care of their child.

39% of Indigenous parents that had a CPA involved in the care of their child were dissatisfied/very dissatisfied.

There was no difference across age groups and involvement with CPA in the Indigenous adult population in Toronto.

20% of Indigenous parents in Toronto felt that their overall health and wellbeing was positively impacted by the involvement of CPA in their family.



Of Indigenous parents in Toronto who have ever had CPA involvement:

69% have been investigated due to a complaint or report.

12% had voluntarily sought support as a parent from the CPA.



15% of Indigenous parents reported having a child apprehended by a CPA.

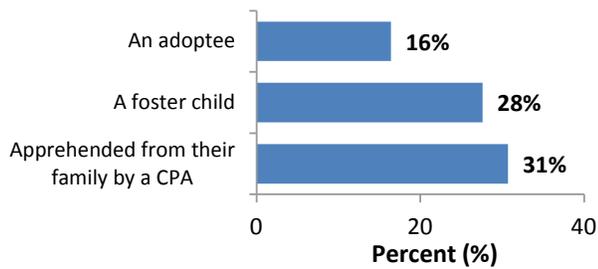
This is consistent with findings where **26%** of foster children (<14 years) in Ontario are Indigenous, yet account for only **3%** of the child population under 14 years old.²

72% of Two-Spirit parents indicated CPA involvement in the care of one of their children. This was similar to parents who did not identify as Two-Spirit.

Parenting and Child Protection Agency Involvement

Child Protection Agency Involvement

Indigenous adults in Toronto said they were:



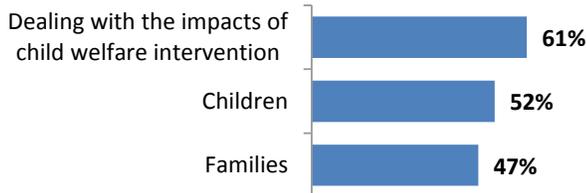
Statistics Canada has reported that Indigenous children are foster children at a rate **12x higher** than non-Indigenous children.

Only **42%** of Indigenous children in foster care in Ontario are living with at least one Indigenous adult.²

These findings highlight the need for more resources dedicated to Indigenous child protection agencies that better understand the importance of family integrity for Indigenous child and family welfare.

Needs

Many parents felt there was a lack of community resources serving Indigenous people to support:



25% of Indigenous families indicated that there are health or social services that they avoid.

53% indicated they used **Native Child and Family Services** in the past year.

12% indicated avoiding Indigenous-specific child protection services.

Policy Implications

Implement TRC Call to Action 1:

The federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments commit to reducing the number of children in care:

- Establish and implement an Indigenous led forum to discuss and act upon a wholistic and systematic approach to addressing children's wellbeing
- Provide culturally safe programs and resources to enable Indigenous communities and organizations to support children and families.

Definitions

Indigenous adults: persons self-identifying as Indigenous such as First Nations, Métis, Inuit, or other Nation aged 15 years and older living or using services in the City of Toronto. Indigenous children: persons self-identifying as Indigenous such as First Nations, Métis, Inuit, or other Nation aged 0-14 years living or using services in the City of Toronto. Parent: biological and non-biological parent and/or caregiver. Caregivers: parents with children under the age of 14 in their care who filled out a child survey

Population based estimates were created using respondent driven sampling (see Methods and Design Factsheet for more details)

Sources

1. Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015); 2. Turner (2016) Policy Recommendations – City of Toronto, provincial and federal policy makers work in partnership with urban Indigenous peoples and organizations to: before the policy implications.

◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ Our Health Counts: Community health assessment by the people, for the people ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆



For the full OHC Toronto report visit: www.welllivinghouse.com

