

Our Health Counts Thunder Bay

An inclusive community-driven health survey for Indigenous peoples of Thunder Bay

Parenting and CPA Involvement

Racist, colonial policies have sought to eliminate traditional Indigenous societies and livelihoods, and planned the expiry of treaty obligations through processes of assimilation. Assimilationist policies have involved the involuntary and forced removal of generations of Indigenous children from their families through residential schools and Child Protection Agencies (CPA). The Truth and Reconciliation Commission defines these policies as 'cultural genocide'. Structural factors, such as institutional racism, barriers to safe, adequate housing, poverty, and racism within the health care system continue to leave Indigenous families at risk of CPA involvement.¹ Children who have grown up in care are also more likely to experience these structural disadvantages. There is an urgent need to address imposed colonial structural challenges such as poverty and child welfare policies that reward agencies and non-Indigenous foster families involved in Indigenous child apprehension and to support the revitalization of Indigenous family and community parenting and kinship ties. There are an increasing number of Indigenous-led CPAs which provide more culturally safe services to Indigenous families. These agencies aim to improve the outcomes of CPA interventions and ensure interactions between Indigenous families and CPA are mutually beneficial.^{2,3}

Parenting of Indigenous children in Thunder Bay

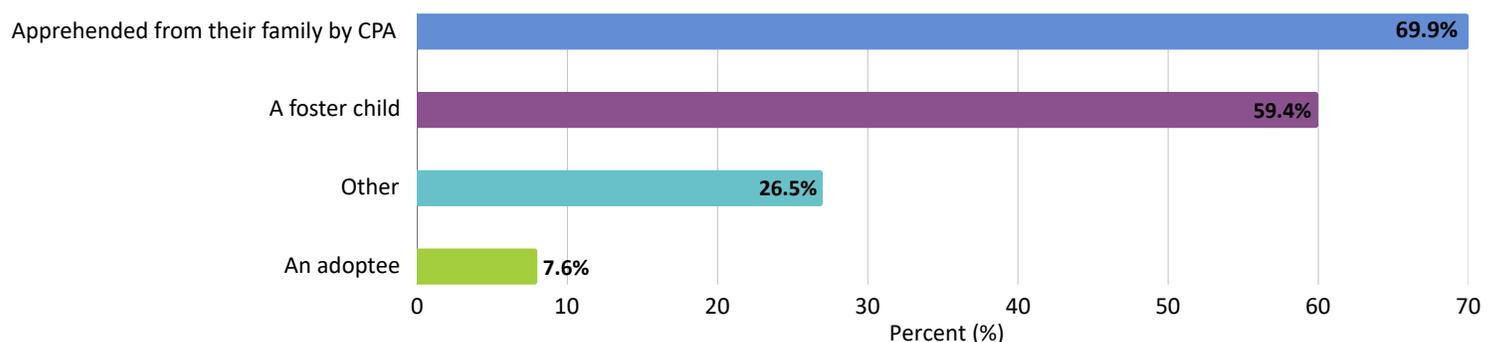
97% of Indigenous parents in Thunder Bay agreed or strongly agreed that they could make an important difference to their child

95% of Indigenous parents in Thunder Bay agreed or strongly agreed that they were able to do things that improve their child's behaviour

Child Protection Agency (CPA) Involvement

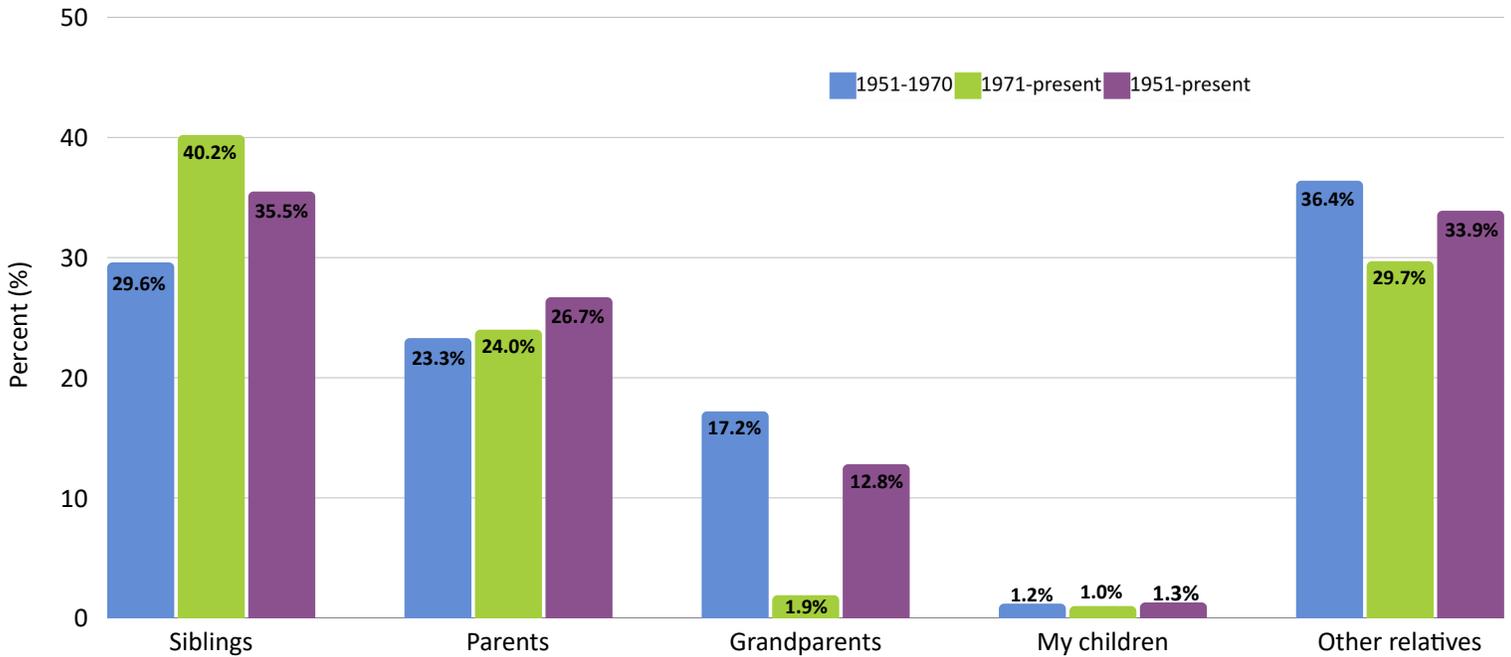
51% of Indigenous adults in Thunder Bay said CPA was involved in their care when they were a child. Statistics Canada has reported that 54% of children in foster care in Canada are Indigenous, but account for only 8% of the child population.⁴

Types of CPA Involvement for Indigenous adults for who CPA was involved in their care during childhood



33% of Indigenous adults in Thunder Bay had members of their family adopted between 1951 and the present.

Among Indigenous adults who had family members adopted, which family members were adopted?

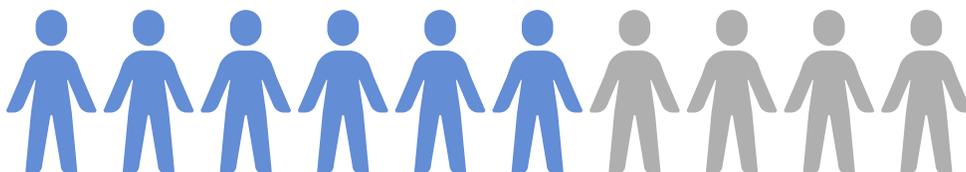


Child Protection Agency (CPA) Involvement Among Parents

51% of Indigenous adults in Thunder Bay said CPA was involved in the care of one or more of their children.

53% of these Indigenous adults in Thunder Bay for whom CPA was involved in the care of their children said that their overall health and well being has been **negatively impacted** due to involvement of CPA with their family.

60% of these Indigenous adults in Thunder Bay for whom CPA was involved in the care of their children said they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their experience with the CPA.



Community Resources

Nearly 50% of Indigenous adults in Thunder Bay felt there were inadequate community resources serving Indigenous people in Thunder Bay for addressing the impacts of child welfare intervention.

24% of Indigenous adults in Thunder Bay felt there were inadequate community resources serving Indigenous children in Thunder Bay.

23% of Indigenous adults in Thunder Bay felt there were inadequate community resources serving Indigenous families in Thunder Bay.

Policy Implications

We call on the city of Thunder Bay, provincial, and federal governments to work in partnership with Indigenous peoples living in urban and related homelands and urban-based Indigenous organizations to:

- Increase funding and grant more autonomy to Indigenous-led CPAs to ensure interventions are community-driven, integrate local cultural practices and traditional healing methods, and foster cultural connectedness.⁵
- Examine and address how investigations of child neglect predominantly target Indigenous children and develop a culturally safe framework to understand and transition from the existing methods of evaluating suspected neglect cases.^{2,3}
- Integrate Indigenous healing approaches within Canadian child welfare services and actively support and improve access to cultural programming for children, individuals, and families to support family health.
- Create and implement accountability measures for child welfare agencies to effectively address the substantial dissatisfaction expressed by Indigenous parents and families in Thunder Bay and related homelands.
- Fund the creation of Indigenous-led services that utilize a trauma-informed approach to promote community and family wellness throughout and after child welfare interventions.

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.
- Ensuring that social workers and others who conduct child-welfare investigations are properly educated and trained about the potential for Indigenous communities and families to provide more appropriate solutions to family healing.¹

Definitions	Indigenous children: persons 1 to 14 years self-identified as Indigenous by their parent or guardian, such as First Nations, Métis, Inuit or other Indigenous nations, living or using services in the City of Thunder Bay
Sources	1. Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015); 2. Caldwell & Sinha (2020); 3. Quinn et al., (2022); 4. Statistics Canada (2024); 5. Ball & Benoit-Jansson (2023)
Authors	Julia Iannace, Marcie Snyder, Lisa Avery, Stephanie McConkey, Raman Brar, Michael Rotondi, Janet Smylie
Citation	Iannace, J., Snyder, M., Avery, L., McConkey, S., Brar, R., Rotondi, M., & Smylie, J. (2024). Our Health Counts Thunder Bay: Parenting and CPA Involvement [Fact sheet].

Population-based estimates created using respondent-driven sampling



Our Health Counts Thunder Bay

Parenting and CPA Involvement Reference

Our Health Counts Thunder Bay is an inclusive community-based health survey for Indigenous peoples of Thunder Bay and is part of the largest Indigenous population health study in Canada.

Adult participants were selected using respondent-driven sampling, a statistical method which uses social networks in the community to recruit Indigenous people living in the city.

Child surveys were completed by OHC Thunder Bay adult survey participants who were parents/custodial relatives/guardians of children 14 years of age or younger. Children resided with them and were under their care.

Survey Question	RDS Prevalence Estimate (95% Confidence Interval)
I can make an important difference to my child	
Strongly agree/ agree	96.7% (94.0, 98.9)
Disagree/ strongly disagree	0.5% (0.0, 1.6)
No response	2.6%
I am able to do things that improve my child's behaviour	
Strongly agree/ agree	94.6% (91.3, 97.8)
Disagree/ strongly disagree	2.1% (0.5, 4.3)
Don't know	0.5% (0.0, 2.1)
No response	2.6%
I take time out to play or do something fun with my child	
A few times a week or less	36% (29.0, 42.4)
Everyday	36% (29.5, 43.0)
No response	27.9%
I offer my child choices	
A few times a week or less	22.5% (16.6, 28.4)
Everyday	47.8% (40.8, 55.3)
Don't know	1.0% (0.0, 2.6)
No response	28.4%
I encourage my child in a sincere and specific way	
A few times a week or less	11.8% (7.5, 16.1)
Everyday	59.6% (53.2, 67.2)
Don't know	0.5% (0.0, 1.6)
No response	27.9%
Were you or other members of your family adopted 1951-1970, during the Sixties Scoop	
Yes	20.4% (15.0, 25.8)
No	54.4% (47.8, 61.0)
Don't know	24.8% (18.9, 30.6)
Declined	0.5% (0.0, 2.2)



Well Living House



ANISHNAWBE
MUSHKIKI
COMMUNITY HEALTH & WELLNESS



Ontario
Ministry of Health & Long Term Care

Our Health Counts Thunder Bay

Parenting and CPA Involvement Reference

Survey Question	RDS Prevalence Estimate (95% Confidence Interval)
If yes, who	
Siblings	29.6% (18.0, 41.3)
Parents	23.3% (12.7, 34.0)
Grandparents	17.2% (4.9, 29.4)
My children	1.2% (0.0, 6.6)
Other relatives	36.4% (23.1, 49.6)
Were you or other members of your family adopted 1971 to present?	
Yes	12.8% (9.1, 16.6)
No	67.6% (61.4, 73.8)
Don't know	19.5% (13.8, 25.1)
Declined	0.1% (0.0, 0.7)
If yes, who	
Siblings	40.2% (26.0, 54.5)
Parents	24.0% (11.4, 36.7)
Grandparents	1.9% (0.6, 3.2)
My children	1.0% (0.0, 2.4)
Other relatives	29.7% (15.9, 43.6)
Was a child protection agency ever involved in your care when you were a child?	
Yes	50.8% (44.3, 57.3)
No	47.1% (40.6, 53.6)
Don't know	1.2% (0.1, 2.2)
Declined	0.9% (0.0, 3.3)
In what capacity or capacities was a child protection agency involved in your care	
As a child you were apprehended from your family by a child protection agency	69.9% (62.5, 77.4)
You were/are a foster child	59.4% (51.0, 67.9)
You are an adoptee	7.6% (5.5, 9.7)
Other	26.5% (20.0, 33.1)
Has a child protection agency ever been involved in the care of one of your children?	
Yes	51.3% (43.5, 59.2)
No	48.3% (40.0, 56.1)
Declined	0.4% (0.0, 2.2)



Well Living House



Our Health Counts Thunder Bay

Parenting and CPA Involvement Reference

Survey Question	RDS Prevalence Estimate (95% Confidence Interval)
In what capacity has a child protection agency involved in the care of one or more of your children?	
You were/are a foster parent	1.2% (0.0, 2.7)
You were/are an adoptive parent	0.3% (0.0, 0.6)
You were investigated as a parent by a child protection agency due to a complaint/report	62.9% (52.7, 43.1)
You voluntarily sought support as a parent from a child protection agency	9.8% (3.3, 16.3)
Your child has been apprehended by a child protection agency	49.4% (38.8, 60.0)
Your child is/was a foster child	23.2% (14.5, 32.0)
An adoption to another family of one or more of your children has been arranged/ supported by a CPA	0.5% (0.0, 1.4)
You were referred by the child protection agency to other community services	1.4% (0.0, 4.2)
Other	31.0% (22.1, 40.0)
How would you rate your experience with the child protection agency/ agencies?	
Very Satisfied/satisfied	8.8% (3.1, 14.5)
Acceptable	30.7% (21.2, 39.3)
Dissatisfied/ very dissatisfied	59.9% (49.9, 69.9)
Don't know	0.3% (0.0, 2.1)
Declined	0.7% (0.0, 1.6)
If you have had a CPA involved in the care of one of your children, do you believe that your overall health and wellbeing has been affected by the involvement of a CPA in your family?	
Yes, positive impact	13.8% (8.3, 19.3)
No impact	24.4% (15.1, 33.7)
Yes, negative impact	53.1% (42.6, 63.5)
Don't know	6.6% (3.0, 10.2)
Declined	2.2% (0.0, 4.6)
Adequate community resources addressing children?	
Yes	48.2% (41.7, 54.6)
No	23.6% (18.1, 29.2)
Don't know	28.2% (22.0, 34.4)
Adequate community resources addressing families?	
Yes	53.4% (46.9, 60.0)
No	22.8% (17.3, 28.3)
Don't know	23.8% (17.9, 29.7)
Adequate community resources addressing impacts of child welfare interventions?	
Yes	22.7% (17.5, 27.9)
No	48.6% (42.0, 55.1)
Don't know	28.8% (22.6, 34.9)



Well Living House

