

ONE VISION ONE VOICE

CHANGING THE ONTARIO CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM
TO BETTER SERVE AFRICAN CANADIANS



Ontario Association of
Children's Aid Societies
The voice of child welfare in Ontario

UNE VISION UNE VOIX :

CHANGER LE SYSTÈME DU BIEN-ÊTRE DE L'ENFANCE DE
L'ONTARIO AFIN DE MIEUX SERVIR LES AFRO-CANADIENS



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One Vision One Voice

What: Research, including community conversations, exploring the issues.

Why: Reduce the racial disproportionality in child welfare and improve outcomes for African Canadians who come into contact with the system.

Who: Steering Committee of individuals from the African Canadian community. Reference Group made up of CAS representatives.



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ONE VISION ONE VOICE: Changing the Child Welfare System for African Canadians

We lost money at the gates, in the bar and other overheads. We paid the managers the amount the associations could afford.
 Asking about the \$20,000 in the CSA received from Waterloo, Ontario, a handreader himself said, "It was stipulated by the Waterloo Council that the money not be used for prizes."

Increase in wards Black foster homes needed

BY CLAUDIO LEWIS

The number of black children becoming wards of the Children's Aid Society is on the steady increase, says Brian McPherson, a social worker with the agency.

He told Contrast during an interview, that the bulk of these are new, immigrant children, who, in a number of cases, find it difficult to adjust to the Canadian society, and to revere ties with their parents.

McPherson, a West Indian, says that the major problems occur when many of these children join their parents, from whom they have lived apart for many years.

"Some parents leave their children in the islands and come here to better their social and economic position, the children join them after many years, then the parents find out that they cannot be controlled. Some of these children eventually get into trouble with the law and the Children Aid Society has to step in."

"We don't like to take children from their parents, at the Children's Aid Society we believe that the best place for a child is in his own home with his parents. But where it can be proved that the parents can no longer control, provide or care for that child then under the Child Welfare Act, the Children's Aid Society must step in and ensure that the child's needs are catered for."

"Many of these problems," he said, "can be prevented, if only the immigration department will inform the Children's Aid Society of some of the immigrant children who will be joining their parents, after they have been apart for a long time."

"We can work with these people and reduce these problems. That is what the agency is here for," he concluded.

WHAT'S INSIDE

W. I. clobber England
SEE PAGE 13

South African Diary
SEE PAGE 5

Club Trinidad visit
SEE PAGE 9



Photo by Claudio Lewis

A pair of Queens wins. Miss Black Ontario, Diane Fenton, left, sits with Miss Montreal Carnival '76 Judy Joseph, during the fifth annual Spear Magazine Ball.

Look for it in CONTRAST

Registering this week in our columns Jaxx Bunde, which will feature articles, just as well as others who are doing their thing in Toronto's hot spots.

We kick off this column with a splash on Jerry Samuels, a Nova Scotia boy who has gained an international reputation over the past decade, and has now decided to return home to enrich the entertainment scene.

Beginning also next week will be a series on the successful and not so successful black Maritimers who came out of the East Coast a decade ago and have become a force in Toronto. They are doctors, engineers, contractors, big and small businessmen. These folks are together and they are all crisscrossing 'so if you touch one of them, brother, you are likely to have a whole army of cousins coming at you.

We call them affectionately, repeat affectionately, the Maritime Mafia. Look for them starting next week, in Contrast.

Frankie Perkins shot

Popular Frankie Perkins, aged about 38, was shot on Tuesday night behind the Paramount Hotel on Spadina Ave.

Around 1 p.m. he was taken to the Toronto Western Hospital where he was pronounced dead on arrival. There were apparently no

Jamaican wife still missing after two weeks

Mrs. Daisy Taylor, age 61, of 11 Hilda Cres. in Brampton left home on July 20th in search of work, and has not been seen since.

According to her husband, Naaman Taylor, age 56, his wife has never spent one night away from home in their 14 years of marriage. They are the parents of 4 children, ages 9 to 19 years and they came from Jamaica in 1968 to settle in Toronto. He is employed as a carman at the CNR.

Mrs. Daisy Taylor has been an outpatient at Pwll Memorial Hospital and Lakeshore Hospital, and is presently under medication. Attempts to contact her doctor were not successful but her husband says that her illness was not of a very serious nature, so as to cause her to disappear without notifying her family.

The Brampton Police were notified and they are continuing their investigation into the mysterious disappearance.



Daisy Taylor

Attempt to establish a black foster parent project

by Claudio Lewis

A black organization in Toronto is making a serious attempt to establish a black foster parent project to battle the shortage of black foster homes which now exists in Metro.

According to Ed Clarke, Chairman of the Black Resources Information Centre, the centre has already met with the Children's Aid Society and various churches in Toronto and discussed the shortages of the black foster homes.

As a result of those meetings, he said, BRIC established the "Black Foster Home" project, where an up to date registry of black families who are willing to act as foster parents will be maintained.

The move to establish the project resulted from the revelations in the Contrast that the Children's Aid Society were desperately in need of black foster homes, he said.

Social worker, Brian McPherson told Contrast recently that the Children's Aid Society were desperately in need of Black Foster Homes because there was an increase of black children, who were becoming wards of the agency.



Ed Clarke

Immigration decrease linked to rules

There has been a 25 per cent decrease in the number of immigrants entering Canada for the first quarter of this year from the same three months of 1975 the Immigration Department said recently.

Britain and the United States headed the list of countries as sources of immigrants. The movement from Europe to Canada has been declining recently and the figures show a drop to 35 per cent from 42.2 per cent in 1975. There has been an increase to 26.9 per cent from 24.3 per cent from Asia

former Chairman of the NBCC, said, "There exist a definite social problem with black children who end up in white foster homes."

He said that the problem of adaption for both the child and parent could be very difficult for both black child and white foster parent.

Clarke said that the centre will work closely with the placement service in the Children's Aid Society. The homes of all volunteers for the project will be visited by trained persons from the project to establish whether they meet standards set by the Children's Aid Society," he said.

Editor's Note: persons interested in becoming black foster parents are asked to call BRIC at 368-0539 or write to Black Foster Parents Project, c.o. Black Resources Information Centre, 167 Church Street, Toronto.

Augustine elected Grenada Association's president

by Bruce Cameron

In announcing the establishment of BRIC Foster Home Project, Ed Clarke,

The Consultations

16 consultation sessions with over 800 participants:

Toronto (East, West,
Downtown, LGBTQ, youth)

Peel Region

York Region

Durham Region

London

Hamilton

Windsor (general and
youth sessions)

Ottawa (general and youth
sessions)

Sudbury

Thunder Bay



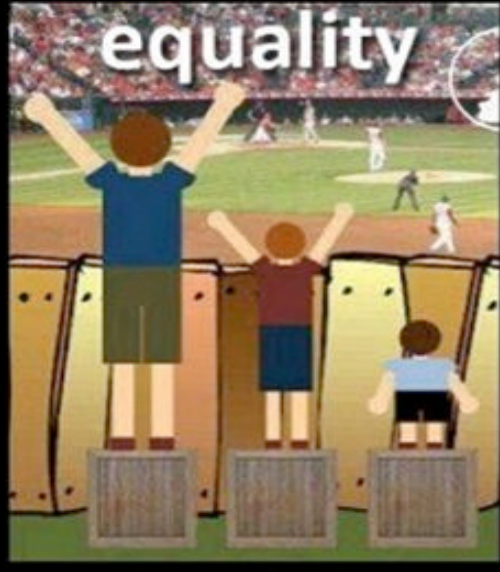
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Equality vs. Equity



EQUALITY=SAMENESS

GIVING EVERYONE THE SAME THING → It only works if everyone starts from the same place



EQUITY=FAIRNESS

ACCESS to SAME OPPORTUNITIES → We must first ensure equity before we can enjoy equality

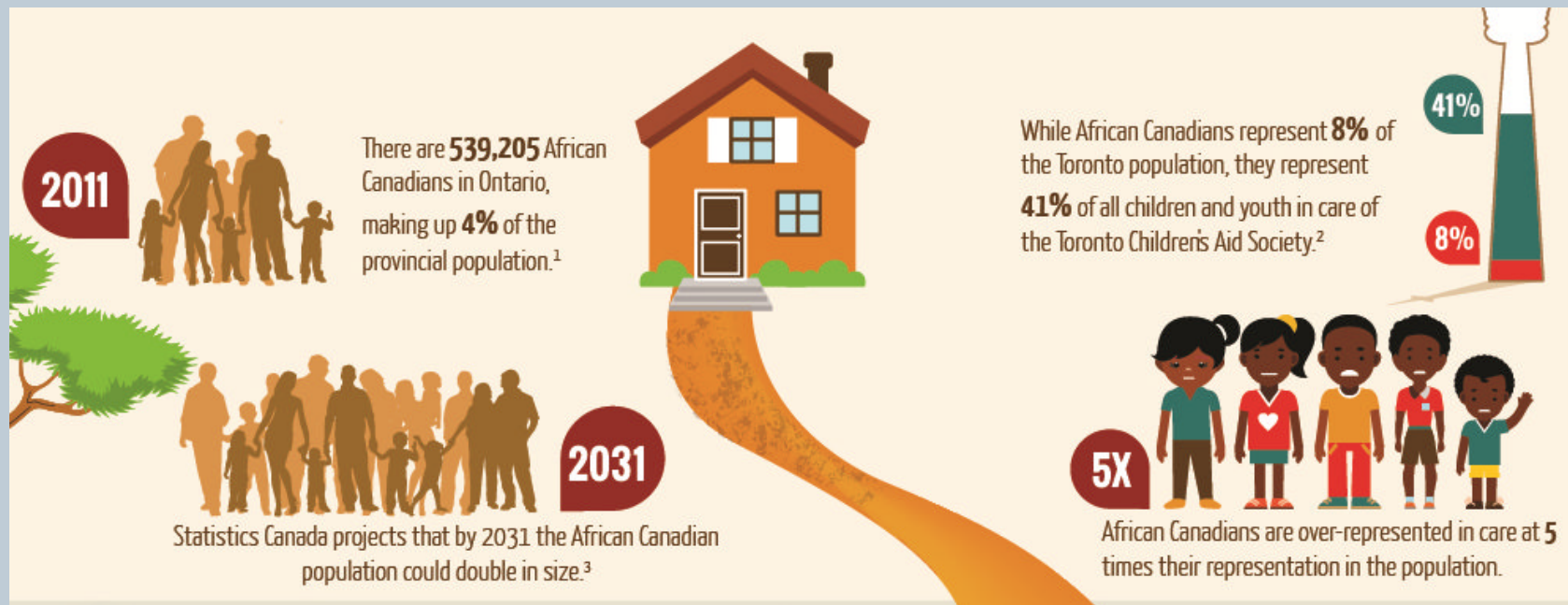


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Child Welfare System



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Entry to the System



There are no significant differences in the overall incidence of child maltreatment between Whites and people of African descent. However, professionals and individuals are more likely to report people of African descent than Whites to child welfare.⁴



When a report to child welfare has been made, people of African descent are investigated twice as often as Whites.⁶



Poverty, not the type or severity of maltreatment, is the single most important predictor of placement in foster care and the amount of time spent there.⁵



White children who are abused or neglected are twice as likely as children of African descent to receive services in their own homes.⁷



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In the System



Children of African descent remain in foster care longer, move more often, receive fewer services, and are less likely to be returned to their home or adopted.⁹



When an investigation is found to have been substantiated, children of African descent are 36% more likely than White children to be placed into foster care.⁸



Most White children who enter the system are permitted to stay with their families, whereas most children of African descent are taken away from theirs. Child welfare for children of African descent usually means shattering the bonds with their parents.¹⁰



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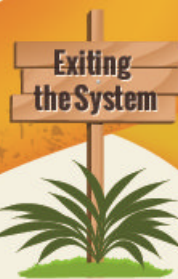
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Exiting the System



Children of African descent exit foster care most frequently through adoption or "aging out" of the system. White children exit most frequently through reunification with families.¹¹



There are a number of negative outcomes for children of African descent who remain in foster and institutional care until they "age out" of the system, including: not completing high school, teen pregnancy, homelessness, unemployment and involvement with the criminal justice system. They also experience isolation from family, culture and community.¹²



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The Historical Context:

Canada's history of Slavery and Anti-Black Racism

- Slavery ended in 1834
- “Jim Crow Laws”
- Legalized discrimination
- “Sun Down Towns” ie. Dresden
- Segregated schools (last school closed, 1965)
- Black townships destroyed and communities disappeared
- Housing discrimination
- 1st race riots in North America - Nova Scotia



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The Immigration System:

- Points system
- Domestic Workers (50s & 60s)
- Skilled trades labourers (60s & 70s)
- “Barrel-children”

The Present: A Legacy of Systemic Racism and Anti-Black Racism

- The Racialization of Poverty
- Unemployment, Underemployment and Social Exclusion
- Normalized outcome disparities in all sectors for African Canadians
- Efforts to create change, made by those in the community and within organizations, have been met with harsh consequences

African Canadian Contributions to a better Ontario for all:

- Ontario Racial Discrimination Act, 1944
- First Human Rights Code in Canada (in Ontario)
- Changes to Immigration Policy to allow more racialized people into Canada
- Charter of Rights and Freedoms (builds on Human Rights Code)
- Reforms in Policing: Special Investigations Unit and Public Oversight of Policing



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Today's Contribution: One Vision One Voice

- Decades of African Canadian community expressing concerns, lobbying government official and CASs
- Community-led initiative
- Community-based research
- The Recommendations capture the voice of the community and address child welfare practice as well as systemic change

The Consultations

Questions:

- What are the issues that bring African Canadians into contact with CAS?
- What are the issues once they become involved with CAS?
- What are your recommendations for change?

Community Recommendations

Changes to Ontario's child welfare system

- ✓ Change the funding formula.
- ✓ Create an African Canadian Children's Aid Society.
- ✓ Mandate collection and reporting of disaggregated race-based data.

Community Recommendations

- ✓ Increase oversight and accountability.
- ✓ Change curriculum of the schools of Social Work.
- ✓ Increase funding for African Canadian community agencies.

Community Recommendations

- ✓ Establish Disproportionality and Disparity Office.
- ✓ Develop a “Bill of Rights” for parents and children.
- ✓ Establish an African Canadian Advisory Committee.
- ✓ Review Ministry guidelines and standards through a race equity lens.

Community Recommendations

Changes within child welfare agencies

- ✓ Ensure family-centred approach to child welfare.
- ✓ Increase use of kinship placements.
- ✓ Increase cultural matching of foster and adoptive families with children and youth in care.

Community Recommendations

- ✓ Keep children and youth in their communities.
- ✓ Support White foster and adoptive parents.
- ✓ Ensure appropriate financial supports for African Canadian children and youth.

Community Recommendations

- ✓ Ensure African Canadian children and families have access to culturally appropriate services.
- ✓ Improve education and training of child welfare staff.
- ✓ Engage and partner with the African Canadian community.

Community Recommendations

- ✓ Develop and implement an Employment Equity Program within CASs.
- ✓ Educate mandated referrers.

Community Recommendations

African Canadian Community

- ✓ Coordinate community services.
- ✓ Educate African Canadian parents about child welfare.

Phase II

Implementation Phase

Focus on:

- Capacity building for the field
- Data and outcomes
- Relationship development with African Canadian community (services)
- Development of accountability mechanisms for the field
- Sustained improvements
- All Black provincial staff gathering
- All Black provincial youth in care gathering
- Care giver gatherings
- African Canadian families served gatherings