

**Knowledge Mobilization Project:**

Information for agencies working with African Nova Scotian communities

**Did you know that…**

* African Nova Scotian (ANS) children continue to be over-represented in state care1. However, we do not have a full picture of how many African Nova Scotians are in the child welfare system.
* Eurocentric policy development has created structural challenges that undermine trust between African Nova Scotian communities and the child welfare system.
* Previous involvement with the child welfare system haunts families, as they are anxious that child welfare authorities might get involved, take their children away again, and relive the trauma.
* Providing resources to local organizations that support families that are at risk of being involved with child protection can demonstrate that the system is not there to take children away.
* Culturally relevant programming, provided by African Nova Scotian workers, is integral to avoiding entry and re-entry into the system.

**ANS families and communities have supports through…**

* Strong community ties, which serve as a protective factor.
* Kinship support, which both serve as a protective factor and can minimize stressors for children and families in the event of child welfare intervention through keeping children with their biological family or in their local community.
* Early intervention programs, school supports, equitable resources and community organizations, which strengthen family relationships.
* Trusted community based programming, which can provide legal and other information to parents to increase their understanding of the role of child protection.

**Intersecting factors that shape the experience of ANS families include…**

* Gender, race, colonialism, geography, lack of services, and socio-economic status. For example, ANS parents recognized that their parenting practices differ from White parents parenting styles, but also note that ANS parents are responsible for preparing their children to live in a racist society and hold their children accountable for inappropriate behaviours.
* Surveillance of people who are in poverty, particularly racialized people, by institutional authorities or community members.
* Social determinants, such as inadequacy of housing and lack of income security, which may limit the capacity of parents to regain the necessary stability to return children home from provincial care.
* Perception of Black bodies, which have an impact on the interaction between child welfare workers and families, often creating tension because of perceived aggression or rudeness on the part of Black parents.

**When working with ANS families and communities, we recommend…**

* Building relationships between organizations and the Department of Community Services to coordinate services and improve communication, making it more seamless for families to access resources.
* Greater representation of ANS health professionals and child welfare workers, with mandatory cultural safety training as part of the orientation process for non-ANS staff.
* Facilitating the alignment of the court system’s demands and child protection deadlines with the reality of people’s lives by matching the services and resources available to meet the needs of the families.
* Addressing structural factors that affect ANS families in their interactions with child welfare
* Supporting families through skills-based education in order to keep children in the home instead of separating children from families.
* Ensuring that all people involved in a child welfare case understand the ANS cultural context, such as lived experience with racism and how this has an impact on parenting practices.
* Recognizing the contributions of the Black community in foster parenting and kinship care.
* Emphasizing the importance of addressing intersectionality when thinking about protective factors and preventative programming.

**Additional Information and Resources:**

For more information please contact us at [strongcommunities-families@laurentian.ca](mailto:strongcommunities-families@laurentian.ca) or

call: 902-494-6693

**Other communities overrepresented in the child welfare system…**

* Are urban Indigenous and newcomer communities, which often face similar challenges to ANS communities here in HRM.
* Have common strengths of culture as well as close family and community ties.

Supports and resources are essential to strengthening and keeping ANS families together. You can see the list of resources shared with community members accompanying this infographic.

**Source:** Torres, S., Waldron, I., Ross, N., Metallic, N., Grant, W., Guasdal, W., & Moriah, J. (2022)

*Examining Protective Factors for Children’s Welfare: The Case of Indigenous, African Nova Scotian & Immigrant and Refugee Children in the Halifax Regional Municipality*. Laurentian University, Sudbury, Ontario.

**Project Purpose:** To identify support systems and strategies to strengthen the capacity of families from urban Indigenous, African Nova Scotian, immigrant and refugee populations in the Halifax Regional Municipality to mobilize communities to prevent the entry or re-entry of children into provincial care.

1 Nova Scotia Collage of Social Workers (2021)*. Children and Family Services Act: 4-Year Review.* <https://nscsw.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/CFSA-Review-Submission-Final.pdf>

**African Nova Scotian Community Resource List:**

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| **Organization Name** | **Programming Offered** | **Location** | **Contact** |
| African Diaspora Association of the Maritimes (ADAM) | Supports for African people who move to Nova Scotia | 200 Kempt Rd #202, Halifax, NS B3K 4X1 | (902) 404-3670 |
| African Nova Scotian Affairs | Multiple programs; supports projects and activities that bring ANS together to network and share ideas | 3rd Floor, 1741 Brunswick St, Halifax, NS B3J 3X8 | (902) 424-5555 |
| Caring and Learning Centre | Programs and services aimed at strengthening families and building strong bonds within the community | 57 Jarvis Lane, Halifax,  NS B3K 3J3 | (902) 453- 5089  caring.learning@mulgravepark.ca |
| Family SOS | Child-centered organization that offers multiple programs and services toward building strong and healthy families | 2006 Gottingen St.  Halifax, NS B3K 3B1 | (902) 455 5515  info@familysos.ca |
| YMCA –Immigrant services | Variety of programs and outreach services | 104-7071 Bayers Road Halifax, NS B3L 2C2 | (902) 457 9622 |
| Dartmouth Family Centre  Dartmouth, NS | Multiple programs and services to families that promotes healthy living | 107 Albro Lake Rd, Dartmouth, NS B3A 3Y7 | (902) 464-8234 |
| North Preston Daycare | Child Care Centre that offers daycare for infants, toddlers, kindergarten, and preschoolers | 52 Cain St, North Preston, NS B2Z 1A2 | (902) 453-5008  [npdaycare@eastlink.ca](mailto:npdaycare@eastlink.ca) |
| NS Brotherhood Initiative | Educational workshops and health clinics, with a focus on the health needs of African N.S. men | 260 Wyse Road, Dartmouth | Colin Campbell: [Colin.Campbell@nshealth.ca](mailto:Colin.Campbell@nshealth.ca)  Tel: 902-434-0824  [nsbrotherhood@cdha.nshealth.ca](mailto:nsbrotherhood@cdha.nshealth.ca) |
| Upper Hammonds Plains Community Centre | Facility that hosts various events | 711 Pockwock Road, Upper Hammonds Plains | n/a |
| North Preston Community Centre | Multi-purpose facility that offers programs and hosts multiple community event | 44 Simmonds Rd, North Preston, NS B2Z 1A3 | (902) 434 3807 |
| East Preston Daycare/Family Resource Centre | Unique and useful programs, groups, workshops and events for children, youth and children. | 1900 Highway 7  East Preston, NS  B2Z 1M2 | Family resource centre: 902–462–7266, Daycare: 902–462–0054 |
| Association of Black Social Workers | Educational and community based programs, ranging from clinical counselling to professional development. | 1018 Main St, Dartmouth, NS B2W 4X9  (902) 407-8809 | Veronica Marsman: vmarsman@me.com |
| North Preston Health and Wellness Centre | Provides health care and wellness programming | 44 Simmonds Road, North Preston  Nova Scotia, B2Z 1A3 | 902-434-3809 |
| Black Educators Association | Multiple services, supports and educational programs; provides educational bursaries/scholarships to students. | 2136 Gottingen Street, Halifax  Nova Scotia, B3K 3B3 | 902-424-7036 |
| Mulgrave Park Family Resource Centre (Parenting Journey) | Safe, supportive and friendly programs and services that help families build strong bonds within the community; resource center | 57 Jarvis Lane, Halifax  Nova Scotia, B3K 3J3 | 902-453-5089 |