

Strong Communities Make Strong Families

& Prevent Entry into the Child Welfare System for African Nova Scotian

Families

African Nova Scotian Families and Communities Remain Strong with:

A sense of community & intergenerational bonds

Resilience to diverse forms of oppression

Did You Know That...

Canada has a problem with anti-Black racism. This results in overrepresentation of children of African descent in the child welfare system^{1,2}.

Some other contributing factors include: overrepresentation, racialized poverty, immigration stress, lack of cultural awareness, family placement dynamics, policy impacts, & a lack of culturally-relevant services³.

Child welfare social workers need

to...

- Understand that African Canadian families are wary of child welfare workers
- Help families access alternative sources of support
- Build trust & credibility within the community
- Prevent entry into the child welfare system
- Minimize trauma to children and families
- Take cultural safety training to avoid misinterpreting cultural parenting practices.

- Consider that ANS have parenting practices in their cultural upbringing & racial experiences.
- First make placements with family or in the community members if apprehension is unavoidable.

Community organizations...

- Help families strengthen relationships
- Provide early intervention programs & resources to prevent crisis situations & possible involvement with the child welfare system

Other Communities Overrepresented in the Child Welfare System...

- Understand their role in addressing structural, community, & individual barriers so that ANS families do not enter the child welfare system. These barriers include Eurocentric policies, lack of access in rural communities, stereotyping, & difficulty navigating the child welfare system.
- Recruit Black social workers in all aspects of child welfare.

- Are Urban Indigenous & immigrant and refugee communities, which often face similar challenges to ANS here in HRM.
- Have common strengths of culture as well as close family & community ties.

Supports & resources are essential to strengthening & keeping ANS families together. You can check these at strongcommunities.laurentian.ca.

1 One Vision One Voice Steering Committee (2016). One Vision, One Voice: Changing the Ontario Child Welfare System to Better Serve African Canadians. Toronto: Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies.

2 Ujima Design Team. (2015). The Nova Scotia Home for Colored Children Restorative Inquiry. Halifax: Nova Scotia.

3 Black Community Action Network of Peel. 2015. Pathways and Prevention of African Canadian Disproportionalities and Disparities in the Child Welfare System: A Position Paper. Brampton: Black Community Action Network of Peel.