

First Nations Infants and Child and Family Services Involvement

A Multiyear Population-Based Study Into Rates of CFS Involvement and Termination of Parental Rights Amongst First Nations Infants in Manitoba



First Nations infants born in Manitoba between 1998 and 2014, and followed until their 5th birthday (or until March 31, 2019) experienced staggering rates of Child and Family Services involvement compared to non-First Nations infants.

36% of all First Nations infants had an open CFS file in their first year, compared to a rate of 8.5% in non-First Nations infants.



That's **1 in 3** First Nations infants, at a rate 4.2x higher than non-First Nations infants.

First Nations infants are:



6.5x

more likely to be removed from the home of their birthing parent



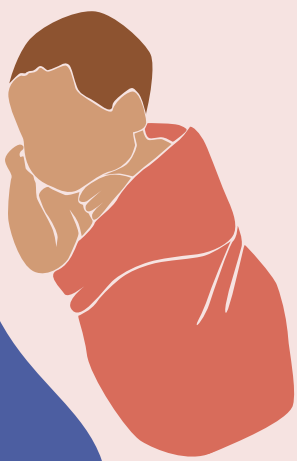
7.7x

more likely to become a permanent ward before age 5



5.6x

more likely to be apprehended at birth



Inequities in infant removal risk persists across the perinatal period, with the highest inequity found between 28 days and 365 days of age, where **First Nations infants are 7.9x more likely to experience apprehension.**

First Nations infants experienced a 22% increase in CFS involvement over time, compared to a 2% increase among non-First Nations infants.

Calls to Action:

- End the practice of infant apprehension and fund First Nations-led models that support the preservation of family and cultural bonds. For example, invest in First Nations-led family reunification homes.
- Empower First Nations-led customary systems of care so that children grow up connected to their Nation and culture.
- Establish community-based, supportive spaces outside of CFS where families in crisis can be referred to as a first-line strategy to strengthen families and keep them intact.



Source:

Kenny, KS., Wall-Wieler, E., Frank, K., Courchene, L., Burton, M., Dreaver, C., Champagne, M., Bennett, M., Brownell, M., Anderson, M., & Urquia, ML. (2024). *Infant Rates of Child Protective Services Contact and Termination of Parental Rights by First Nations status from 1998–2019: An Example of Intergenerational Transmission of Colonial Harm. Child Abuse & Neglect.*



Link to Paper