



Aboriginal Guardianship support model workshop

WHO
WE
SPOKE
WITH:

- Guardians – from both of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal backgrounds
- Most guardians are grandparents, great-aunts & uncles
- Majority of guardians are retired
- Most care for more than one child
- Children & Young People (C&YP) ages range from 4-17 years
- Some recently left guardianship and living at home (now aged 18 &19)
- More than 1 in 3 C&YP live with disability and /or special needs



THEMES

OPPORTUNITIES

WHEN I BECAME A GUARDIAN

- I had little information or understanding about guardianship
- I was given little choice and coerced
- The process was rushed
- There was no additional financial support for the kids
- I had no knowledge of the process
- We received little written documentation about the transfer
- Our family requested PRR or shared care order and were told NO
- We were told 'guardianship or nothing'
- I don't have the kids' documents
- I don't have a copy of the kids' care orders
- We don't get any regular information
- I have no information about changes to guardianship

I'LL DO ANYTHING FOR THE CHILDREN

- I get by with limited support that the kids need - our Aboriginal family is resilient



WE HAVE STRONG RELATIONSHIPS

- The kids have strong relationships with my extended family, & my own kids

WE MAKE ALL THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE KIDS

- We're so busy just living our lives
- We ensure constant contact with the family
- Its hard keeping in contact with the other siblings
- We use facetime or get another phone number to call if parents are not present

I HAVE CULTURAL SUPPORT

- Through our strong Aboriginal families
- An Aboriginal mentor for the kids would be a good thing

KIDS' NEEDS ARE CHANGING

- I have to keep up with the kids' emerging & changing needs as they grow older
- Being a guardian is hard work

I have concerns for the kids when they are leaving care



THEMES

Connection to culture, family and country is limited for non-Aboriginal guardians and families

Getting by on my own – with little additional support

CULTURAL SUPPORT

- We travel back to country for important family and community events
- We eat traditional food regularly
- Family is strong in our cultural which is passed onto the grandchildren
- Kids know their Aboriginality & history – part of a large family practicing cultural



CULTURAL CONNECTIONS

- Access to cultural activities is limited (*some families*)
- Cultural camps would be great
- Access to Aboriginal mentors would be great
- Limited understanding of Aboriginality (*non Aboriginal guardians*)

SPECIAL SUPPORT NEEDS

- Children have special & behavioural needs
- Disability support needs
- Trauma and mental health issues

DENTAL & MEDICAL SUPPORT

Access to contingency funds assistance

ONGOING FAMILY CONNECTION

- My kids are connected to family well but it is getting more expensive to travel
- Better supported sibling & family contact opportunities is needed
- It's difficult due to different types of care arrangements and locality

Kids & siblings get lost in the gaps between support & care systems

RESPIRE SUPPORT

- Cultural camps
- Family or other options would be good

Taking good care of my kids is getting expensive, more than I can afford

DCJ MATTERS

- We had good case workers previously & during transition (*some families*)
- I feel like they think I'm a pest asking for information and support I should have gotten
- Accessing DCJ support feels like a closed door - difficult getting information, documents, assistance, entitlements, contingency-financial support to cover emerging needs of the kids

Insights about your journey



- DCJ Community Service Centre
- FACS Caseworker
- Aboriginal Medical Service
- School

- Family
- Extended family
- Friends
- Out of Home Care service provider
- Other supporters



Opportunities for change

Which opportunities are you most excited about & why



What would great support or services look like for you?



What specifically would make your life better?



Challenges?



- Who would you interact with
- What would you do with them
- Where is the best place to go
- What would be happening
- How would you find out about new support



More ideas?

