



Humanity over bureaucracy in child protection

What's not working



Surveillance
Investigation
Reporting

A better way

Connection
Trust
Community



Child Protection System

— shift —→

Child Connection System



Colonial system of care assumes 'power' over First Nations families & communities

First Nations agency

First Nations communities hold the power, resources and leadership to care for their kids

Rules take priority; kids raised in systems constrained by red tape

People over paperwork

Relationships take priority; kids raised by attuned adults

Manages safety risks through surveillance and paperwork; overlooks the risk of relational deprivation

Reframe risk

Protection through safe, secure relationships; balanced against safety risks

Performance measured by outputs and compliance with procedures

Meaningful measures

Performance measured by quality of relationships and what children, families and carers say is meaningful

Careworkers bound by fixed relationship boundaries based on clinical concepts of professional distance

Real relationships

No one-size-fits-all approach to relationship boundaries; flexible and responsive based on what makes sense in context

Starting point is the 'system knows best' and that families, kin and carers shouldn't be trusted

Trust in lived experience

Starting point is that family, kin, carers and attuned adults closest to the child are best placed to guide the way

Restricted careworkers; oriented to protect the system from liability through policies and regulation

Compassion-led practice

Empowered careworkers: oriented to building a child's connections, with freedom to ask 'how can I help?' and follow through

Centralised government; often disconnected from children and families

Community-centred

Supported by local networks, organisations and peers that are better placed to connect children and families

Myth

Governments can protect and care for children through laws, regulations and audits. Adding even more rules can keep children safe.

Reality

Families and communities can keep kids safer through real relationships. But it's messy, imperfect and often painful, because it's human.

Less red tape. More human connection.

Because kids in care need to feel safe, secure and loved.

Centre for
Relational Care