

# IECSS Communiqué No. 13

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## **From the Project Director**

As we mark one year from the beginning of the COVID-19 lockdown, we are reflective about our research, the experiences of our participants and the work of our partners, research team and the members of our Advisory Committees, including the Wisdom Keepers at Keepers of the Circle and our International colleagues. In this communiqué, we are highlighting the work of our Youth Advisory committee who have been active this year in a range of activities, including analysis, advocacy, and knowledge mobilisation. Thank you to Abneet Atwal for her leadership in organizing these activities.

One year after moving to remote work, we are happy to report that we have been very successful in retention and recruitment of participants. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 stay at home orders, we have continued to interview families by phone. We currently have n=139 participants in the study. Since March 13, 2020, there has been an interview response rate of 83.9% from families in Cohort 1 and a 75% interview response rate amongst families in Cohort 2. This is a tremendous success, especially under the circumstances, and thanks are due to our research staff. Thank you also to our research team members who have been engaging in quick analysis of these data.

There is considerable interest in what we are learning. See below for forthcoming publications. We will be putting together a COVID-19 page on our website. If you have research findings from other work, we welcome contributions to the webpage. Note we have also been sharing research of interest (see below). If you have research or other activities that you think our community would be interested in, please let us know and we will feature it in future communiqués.

I am happy to share that Katie Ceolin, our Administrative Manager, will be going on maternity leave in July. We are sharing a job posting to replace her while she is away. Congratulations to Katie and I wish to acknowledge the tremendous contribution she has made to the project, and to our shift to remote work. We wish her well in her leave and look forward to her return.

Finally, I would like to share that a few of our team members have retired or have changed positions. Dr. Elaine Frankel and Dr. Karen Spalding have been part of IECSS since the very beginning. They have both made substantial contributions as researchers and as colleagues. I wish to thank both of them and wish them well in their retirement (although I still know how to reach them!). I also wish to thank Dani Grenier-Ducharme for his long standing support of IECSS and specifically his push for us to work in rural and remote communities.

I wish everyone good health and good care.

Kathryn Underwood, Project Director

## **IECSS Website**

### **Accessibility Upgrades**

The Tensions in Disabled Childhoods slideshow is now available on its own page of the website. This allowed us to ensure that the text is accessible to screen readers and that alt text is provided for images. Additionally, text files that are accessible to screen readers have been added to posters and presentations on the website.

### **Website Analytics**

We can now view the analytics for the IECSS website. This will give us an understanding about the audience viewing our content and where our website is being accessed from around the world. We plan to report this information in our communiqué on a biannual basis.

## **News from the Office**

We have continued to conduct interviews, recruit new participants, do transcription and mapping, and carry out analysis of interviews and maps remotely. We had limited access to physical files in the project office when it was allowed in November, but this has been stopped since the lockdown. This has slowed our progress on demographic and questionnaire data entry. We are working on ways to address this now that we are entering the second year of remote work. We are pleased to welcome Asshwi Krishnagopal back to our team as a research assistant.

### **Postdoctoral Research**

Alice-Simone Balter is a Postdoctoral Fellow working on the Inclusive Early Childhood Service System (IECSS) project in the Department of Family Relations and Applied Nutrition at the University of Guelph. She is an interdisciplinary educator and researcher with diverse research interests including sexuality education, social emotional competencies, pre- and post-service education, and critical disability studies. The common thread to her work is to promote educator, child, and youth health and well-being.

### **Masters Research**

Kate MacEachern is currently pursuing her MA in the Early Childhood Studies program at Ryerson University. Kate is focusing on the organization of French healthcare and disability services for Francophones in Canada. Kate is happy to use her prior knowledge and to learn more about disability theory and healthcare services for disabled children and their families because, in the future, she hopes to support hospitalized children.

### **Postdoctoral Research**

Abneet Atwal is a PhD candidate at Brock University in the Child and Youth Studies program. As a project coordinator on the IECSS project she has been involved in recruitment, interviews, transcription, and mapping, as well as leading Youth Advisory Committee activities. Under the supervision of Dr. Kathryn Underwood and Dr. Donato Tarulli, Abneet will be working with data from the IECSS project for her dissertation. Specifically, analyzing data from families who immigrated, migrated, or have travelled to access services. Through her analysis, she also aims to examine how different characteristics of these families and children impact their experience. Abneet hopes to begin analyzing this data starting in the summer of 2021.

## Youth Advisory Committee Report

The IECSS Youth Advisory Committee was launched in October 2018. Since then, the youth advisors have been involved in different activities such as writing research briefs, translating some of our work into child-friendly language, and working on a kids' page for our website. Additionally, IECSS is sponsoring two of our youth advisors, Munashe Z. Nyenya and Grace Sweetman, who are a part of the Children's Advisory Team for the Day of General Discussion (DGD) on the theme of Children in Alternative Care. In total, 30 young people were selected to be a part of the advisory committee from 250 applicants. The DGD is scheduled for September 2021. Munashe and Grace have provided a brief update on their participation in the activities so far.

**Report By: Munashe Z. Nyenya, Grace Sweetman (Youth Advisory Committee members) with Abneet Atwal.**

Meetings have been held with different members of the children's and youth advisory teams since 2020. The meetings usually have people from different countries and sometimes there are translators to support the children and youth who need translation due to language or other barriers. Meetings usually include an icebreaker to help participants get the meetings started and for the children and youth to get to know each other. For example, during the November meeting we were asked to find something in the room that had a sentimental meaning and to explain what it meant to us.

Since November 2020, the advisors have been asked to participate in different activities. All of the youth completed the DGD induction course. The units in the course included topics on; i) What is the UN, ii) The youths' role on the advisory team, and iii) What is alternative care? The course was presented through a platform called Moodle. We brought forward some concerns to the organisers around the accessibility of Moodle. They increased the contrast of Moodle to improve accessibility. We have also completed different surveys related to planning and organizing the DGD. For example, we completed a survey to provide our thoughts on the DGD Concept Note. Lumos, one of the organizing partners for the DGD, hired a researcher to conduct consultations with children about alternative care. As a part of this initiative, all of the advisors were sent a survey to complete about the type of person who should be hired. Munashe helped with reviewing the responses to the survey filled out by all of the advisors. Grace volunteered to help with deciding on which questions should be asked in the interviews with the researchers. These ideas were important in selecting the research team for this project.

Over the next several months we will be participating in different activities and meetings. Our last virtual meeting was on the 4th of March 2021.

We are excited to participate in the DGD in September!

### **Coming Soon: Kids Page**

Several of the youth advisory members are providing consultation to create a series of kid friendly pages for the project website. We are also working with Sullivan Dymont, an illustrator from the community, to prepare child-friendly illustrations that reflect the theme of each page with a diverse representation of children and youth. Stay tuned for the launch of this series.

### **Forthcoming Youth Publications:**

Davies, K., Doucet, G., Atwal, A. & Underwood, K. (in submission). What disabled children and their families can teach us about schooling.

### **Recent IECSS Publications**

We are pleased to announce that the following publications came out since our last communiqué. Stay tuned for more publications.

Church, K., Vorstermans, J., & Underwood, K. (2020). [Tensions in disabled childhoods: Representing transinstitutionalization](#). Canadian Journal of Disability Studies, 9(3), 120-142.

Frankel, E., Underwood, K., Powell, A. (2020). Chapter 40: Early intervention for young children. In I. Brown & M. Percy (Eds.), [Developmental Disabilities in Ontario](#). (4th ed., pp. 433-455). Toronto: OADD.

Parekh, G., & Underwood, K. (2020, June 24). [Child care after the coronavirus pandemic should be more inclusive of children with disabilities](#). The Conversation.

Underwood, K., & Ceolin, K. (Eds.). (2019). [IECSS in Action! A community action evaluation project](#). Toronto: Ontario, Ryerson University.

Underwood, K., Moreno-Angarita, M., Curran, T., Runswick-Cole, K., & Wertlieb, D. (2020). [Theory, ethics, and methods: International disabled children's childhoods](#). In D. Goodley, K. Runswick-Cole, & K. Liddiard (Eds.), *Interventions in Disabled Children's Childhood Studies* (65-67). (1). Sheffield: iHuman Press.

## Resources from the Community and Our Team:

### New Resources from Our Team Members:

Our research team members hold a wide range of expertise and are active in many research projects across Canada and the globe. We have featured publications and research from our team members that may be of interest to other team members, partners and staff.

Curran, T., Jones, M., Ferguson, S., Reed, M., Lawrence, A., Cull, N., & Stabb, M. (2020). [Disabled young people's hopes and dreams in a rapidly changing society: a co-production peer research study](#). *Disability & Society*.

Douglas, P., & Martino, A.S. (Eds.). (2020). [Disability Studies in education-Critical conversations \[special issue\]](#). *Canadian Journal of Disability Studies*, 9(5), (pp. 1-558).

Ineese-Nash, N. (2020). [Finding our power together: Working with Indigenous children and youth during the COVID-19 pandemic](#). *Journal of Child and Youth Services [special issue]*, 41(3), (pp. 274- 276).

Janus, M., Pottruff, M., & Reid-Westoby, C. (2020). [Hidden future front line: Educators' perspective on the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on kindergarten children \(HiFLEC study\): Descriptive report](#). Offord Centre for Child Studies, McMaster University, Hamilton, ON.

Parekh, G., & Brown, R. (2020). [Naming and claiming: The tension between institutional and self-identification of disability](#). *Canadian Journal of Disability Studies*, 9(5), (pp. 347-379).

Magaña, S., Tejero-Hughes, M., Salkas, K., Gonzales, W., Núñez, G., Morales, M., Garcia, M., & Moreno-Angarita, M. (2021). [Implementing a parent education intervention in Colombia: Assessing parent outcomes and perceptions across delivery mode](#). *Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities*.

Snoddon, K., & Weber, Joanne. (2020). [Commentary: Shapes and sites of deaf people's](#)

[transinstitutionalization](#). Canadian Journal of Disability Studies, 9(3), (pp. 16-27)

### **Forthcoming Publications:**

Parekh, G. & Underwood, K. (in submission). Learning in a pandemic: The time of Coronavirus and the early years. Blog post.

van Rhijn, T., Underwood, K., Frankel, E., Lero, D., Spalding, K., Janus, M., Haché, A., & Friendly, M., (in submission.). The role of childcare in creating access for all and inclusive communities.

Underwood, K., van Rhijn, T., Balter, A., Feltham, L., Lawrence, B., Parekh, G. & Douglas, P. (in submission). Pandemic effects: Ableism, Exclusion and Procedural bias.

### **Research to Watch:**

**Re-storying Autism in Education: Advancing the Cultures and Practices of Inclusion.** Funded by SSHRC Insight Grant, 2019-2023 (led by Dr. Patty Douglas).

**In Depth Case Studies Exploring Youth Learning and Mental Health.** Funded by Research Manitoba (led by Dr. Breanna Lawrence).

**Living Life to the Fullest.** Funded by the Economic and Social Research Council Standard Grant, April 2017-April 2020 (led by PI Dan Goodley, Co-Is: Katherine Runswick-Cole and Kirsty Liddiard).

**Efficacy of Online American Sign Language Teaching Model for Parents of Young Deaf Children During the COVID-19 Pandemic.** Funded by Ryerson University, Faculty of Community Services COVID-19 Rapid Response Research Grant (led by Dr. Kristin Snoddon).

**Missed opportunities for early intervention: Determinants of prevalence and characteristics of children with impairments unrecognized in health systems by kindergarten age among the 2009 birth cohort of Ontario children (MOFEID).** Funded by CIHR (led by PIs: Dr. Magdalena Janus and Astrid Guttmann, Co-Is: Catherine Birken, Marni Brownell, Eric Duku, Anne Gadermann, and Heather Manson).

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