



Child Welfare League of Canada's Statement on Racism

Inequity, injustice, racism, colonialism and anti-Indigenous and Black racism have devastating impacts on people and on communities across Canada.

The Child Welfare League of Canada (CWLC) recognizes that systemic racism exists in our communities and institutions, that it is longstanding and deep-rooted, and that transformational change across systems will require courageous action. We acknowledge anti-Black racism, racism against Indigenous peoples and people of colour in the child welfare system and are committed to working together thoughtfully and differently across our networks to promote reconciliation, equity, inclusion and well-being.

We commit to anti-racism and will take proactive steps to fight racial inequity. We understand that a single focus on multiculturalism or diversity fails to address systemic racism and the unequal power dynamic between groups and the institutions that sustain it. In our sector, anti-racism involves consistently assessing the structures, policies and programs of child welfare services and, through monitoring outcomes, ensuring they are fair and equitable for everyone. It also involves critically examining the interconnected systems of education, policing, justice, and health services. This is complex work, but work we are deeply committed to.

CWLC's Board of Directors recognizes its power of influence and its responsibility to advance a governance approach that challenges the status quo and invites the voices, perspectives and experiences necessary to be a disruptive force against systemic racism. We understand the importance of naming the structures of oppression and privilege – such as the influences of white supremacy – which are foundational to institutions of power. As such we are committed to:



1. **Recognizing our privilege.** We recognize that the child welfare system in which most of us operate is predominately made up of white practitioners. Those who benefit most from white supremacy have greater access to power and resources within our system. This unequal power causes harm to those who work in our institutions, and to the children and families we serve.
2. **Educating ourselves.** We take full responsibility for doing the genuine work of allyship; this includes educating ourselves about systemic racism, antiracist practice, oppression, Canada's colonial history, Black history and white privilege.
3. **Checking in and speaking up.** We will be present and active in discussions about racism, anti-Indigenous and Black racism and white privilege. We recognize that lives are at stake and that the violence of racism is an everyday experience for many people. We will speak up when we witness instances of bias, racism and injustice in our workplaces and community, and we will welcome challenges to our own behaviours.
4. **Promoting diverse hiring practices.** We declare that the contribution of Indigenous, Black and people of colour is essential to providing services in child welfare and to leading the systemic changes that we know are necessary.
5. **Taking concrete action.** We commit to being action-oriented and outcomes-oriented in our approach and working with member agencies and the communities they serve to identify and execute concrete actions that address systemic racism within our sector.