

**Child Wellbeing Roundtable**  
Annual Report to the board of CMCCF  
October 2022

The Child Wellbeing Roundtable began to meet in January 2021 with a vision to see cultural communities positively influence child welfare policy, services and practices. Broadened participation (from Winnipeg, The Pas, southern Manitoba) has confirmed our conviction that the issues we continue to raise concerning the wellbeing of children and families in cultural communities in our province, reach far beyond the perimeter of Winnipeg and are common to many cultural communities as they interact with the Child and Family Services (CFS) system.

The Roundtable has met regularly, according to plan. These meetings have taken place online and have included introductions of ourselves and our respective communities, learnings from cultural communities as they interacted with CFS, and sharing of common concerns and hopes.

Most recently, we engaged in two sessions with CFS leadership, in which we shared respective hopes and aspirations pertaining to interacting with and supporting cultural communities. There was an indicated and spoken desire for future collaboration. The Roundtable then engaged in further learning and conversation on the theme of trust, as this was a recurring theme when we reflected on what some of the sticking points are for us in relation to CFS. A subsequent presentation by the roundtable was made to CFS leadership on June 22, 2022. In this presentation, we asked CFS leadership to *“provide us with three concrete priority areas to collaborate on toward strengthening trust to achieve meaningful and timely change – with cultural communities being at the centre of child welfare’s approach. These three priorities must serve the community and not the CFS system.”* At the time of the writing of this report, we are awaiting a CFS response.

Two main areas of concern emerge for the Roundtable in relation to Child and Family Services and the wellbeing of our families:

- 1) As cultural communities, we believe that we can and should be active participants in the creation and implementation of policies as they pertain to our children and families.
- 2) We do not trust the CFS system to be proactive, responsive or willing to engage with cultural communities in ways that are life giving and forward looking (healthy, creative and research-based). We believe the system leaves little room for CFS leadership and staff to trust cultural communities to make sound choices for their children and families.

We are committed to this work and to engaging in it with respect for all involved. As we move forward, we may need to publicly call for more accountability from the CFS system. We continue to educate ourselves on best practices, culturally sensitive approaches to services to families in other jurisdictions and learning from our respective communities.

Respectfully submitted by

Humaira Jaleel & Deborah Martin-Koop  
Child Wellbeing Roundtable co-chairs

October 13, 2022