



*Institute for  
Research on  
Public Policy*

*Institut de  
recherche  
en politiques  
publiques*

For immediate distribution – June 26, 2008

## NEWS RELEASE

### *Poor living conditions mean bleak future for Aboriginal kids*

#### **Study calls for more broad community-led programs to address crisis**

**Montreal** – Aboriginal children, especially those in rural and northern Canada, are the least-supported in the country in terms of their access to the basic elements of quality of life, according to a new study released by the Institute for Research on Public Policy.

The study, “Promoting Equity and Dignity for Aboriginal Children in Canada,” found that a large proportion of young Aboriginal children continue to lack adequate housing, food security, clean water and access to services. Their situation is compounded by other factors, including the impact of residential schools on the parenting abilities of generations of Aboriginal mothers and fathers. Environmental risks and acute health problems appear to be at an especially critical level among First Nations children living on reserve and among Inuit children across the North, according to the study’s author, Jessica Ball.

“While health and development indicators show that Aboriginal children are more likely than non-Aboriginal children to need health services and early interventions, they are far less likely to receive them,” says Ball. “These legacies need to be recognized in government policy decisions and program investments.”

The federal government should increase its investment in Aboriginal Head Start in order to significantly expand the program and other family-centred, holistic, preventive and community-driven initiatives, argues Ball. “Equitable opportunities for quality of life will allow generations of Aboriginal children to benefit from and contribute to a postcolonial society that protects and nurtures its youngest members and their diverse cultural heritage.”

“Promoting Equity and Dignity for Aboriginal Children in Canada,” by Jessica Ball, a professor at the University of Victoria’s School of Child and Youth Care, can be downloaded free of charge from [www.irpp.org](http://www.irpp.org).

-30-

For more information or to request an interview, please contact the IRPP.

To receive the Institute’s monthly newsletter via e-mail, please subscribe to the IRPP e-distribution service by visiting its Web site, at [www.irpp.org](http://www.irpp.org).

**Media Contact:** Kate Shingler    Cell: (514) 235-8308    Email: [kshingler@irpp.org](mailto:kshingler@irpp.org)