

Research Trends and Implications for Practice: The State of Alberta's Children

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11 May 2007



FAMILY VIOLENCE

SAY SOMETHING

For your sake. For their sake.

www.acws.ca

1-866-331-3933

Its Your Business



It's Your Business:

The true measure of a nation's standing is how well it attends to its children.

UNICEF, Innocenti Research Centre, 2006.



Your child

hears
feels sees
knows...
what goes on in the home.

When children are aware a parent is being hurt and the security in the home is threatened – they need help.

 **ACWS**
Alberta Council of
Women's Shelters

Call for more information.

 Indian and Northern Affairs Canada Affaires indiennes et du Nord Canada

Canada

It's Your Business:

Alberta Council of Women's Shelters



- ACWS serves as the collective voice for 41 sheltering organizations through:
- *Networking and information sharing;*
 - *Acquiring adequate resources;*
 - *Undertaking policy and systems research in order to influence social change that reduces and prevents domestic violence;*
 - *Increasing public awareness of issues related to family violence;*
 - *Providing professional development for Alberta's sheltering movement.*

It's Your Business:

Where we work

- Alberta leads the provinces in domestic assault, homicide-suicide, stalking and is second in domestic homicide.
- From 2000 – 2006, over 170 homicides are conservatively estimated as domestic violence related. This represents about one third of all homicides in the province.



It's Your Business: *Canada's women*



- 1 in 4 are victims of domestic violence
- 51% have experienced either physical or sexual assault since the age of 16
- 7x more likely to be killed by an intimate partner than by a stranger
- 21% of abused women were assaulted during pregnancy

All data from Statistics Canada, *Family Violence Reports*.

It's Your Business:

Canada's Aboriginal women



- 3x more likely to be victims of family violence
- 9x higher spousal homicide rates than for non-Aboriginal women in Canada
- Rates of violent crime on reserves substantially higher than the rest of Canada: 8x higher assaults; 7x higher sexual assaults; 6x higher homicides.

Statistic Canada, *Family Violence*, 2005.

It's Your Business: *Canada's children*



- Children and youth are more at risk of physical and sexual assault than adults.
- Every 15 minutes, a child in Canada is assaulted by a family member.
- 1 million children will witness violence against their mother each year
- 3-5 children in every classroom witness violence in their homes
- 63% of adolescent sex offenders witnessed family violence during childhood (highest rates of sexual offending in males 13-17)

It's Your Business: *Canada's Aboriginal children*

- Aboriginal children living in homes with violence in remote and often under-serviced reserves could well be the most pressing and needful group at risk of crime and victimization.
- Family violence victims report 57% of Aboriginal children are exposed to family violence.

It's Your Business:

Child Abuse in Canada



A Girl in Canada

- 0-9 physical assault
- 9 – 13 sexual assault by parent
- 12 – 15 emotional abuse
- 14 – 15 sexual assault by extended family
- 16 and on, sexual assault by spouse

A Boy in Canada

- 0-3 physical assault
- 4-8 sexual assault by parent and family
- 8-11 emotional abuse
- 9 – 14 physical assault by family members
- 15 and on, assault by family and others

It's Your Business:

Risk factors contributing to delinquency



	Individual	Relationship	Community	Society
Prenatal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Substance abuse by mother •Poverty and teen pregnancy 	<p>Partner violence</p>	<p>Low community support for high risk mothers</p>	<p>Policies supportive of economic inequality</p>
Childhood / adolescence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Poor readiness to learn •Poor social skills, impulsivity, hyperactivity •Alcohol and drug abuse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Low family income •Poor parenting •Parental violence •Child abuse •Low school attachment •Delinquent peers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Low community resources for children and families •Quality/safety of neighborhood •High mobility •Low social cohesion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Social exclusion •Policies regarding school expulsion •Norms supportive of violence

Holly Johnson, "A picture of crime in Canada," HRSDC 2006.

It's Your Business:

Canada's children: gangs



- Typical age range for gang members is 11-15 years; 17 is the average;
- Firearms usage increasing
 - Toronto doubled its number of gun-related homicides in one year
 - 2400 high school students carried a gun at least once in 2004
- Early identification of youth-at-risk is critical as a preventative factor;
- Inter-generational transfer of violence is a risk factor;
- Number of gang-related homicides in Alberta in 2004 doubled from the previous year.

RCMP Environmental Scan, *Youth and Gangs*, (2006).

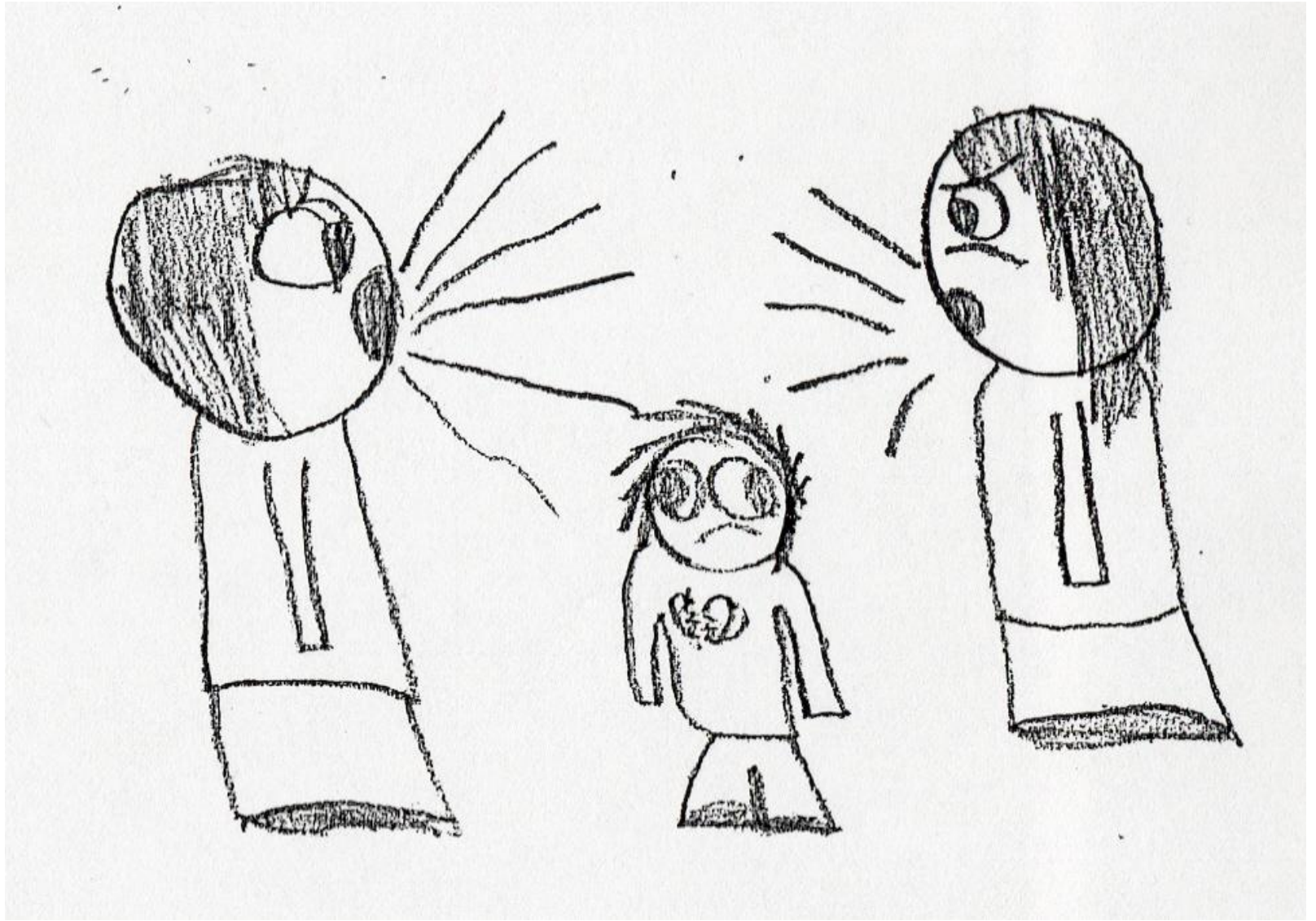
It's Your Business:

Family violence costs



- The costs of violence against women are at least \$4.2 billion. This includes costs associated with medical and criminal justice services, lost productivity, shelters and other services (Greaves et al 1995). About \$200 million is spent on operating shelters for abused women annually (Statistics Canada 2003a).
- The economic cost of child abuse to victims and adult survivors is estimated to be \$15 billion with \$11 billion associated with lost earnings alone (Bowlus et el. 2003).

Caught in the Middle



It's Your Business:

Children Exposed to Family Violence



- Risk Factors
- Behavioral outcomes
- Physical outcomes

It's Your Business:

Protective Factors

- Secure attachment of the child to adult family member;
- High levels of paternal care during childhood;
- Lack of associating with delinquent or substance-abusing peers;
- A warm and supportive relationship with a non-offending parent; and
- A lack of abuse-related stress.

WHO, *Preventing Child Maltreatment*, p. 16

Say Something:

Alberta's shelters respond



- Over 13,000 women and children were resident in shelter;
- Over 25,000 women and children were turned away;
- Crisis calls to shelters have more than doubled over the past two years.
- 53% of women admitted into Alberta emergency shelters self-identify as Aboriginal (2005)

Say Something:

Alberta's shelters respond

- 75% of women resident in shelter are at high or serious risk of assault or homicide
- By exit survey, over 95% are more able to keep themselves and their children safe, as a result of their stay in shelter;
- The number of women forced to return to abusive situations, due to lack of affordable housing in Alberta, has *increased by over 50%*.

Say Something:

On-reserve shelters respond

- 5 on-reserve Alberta shelters; 44 First Nation reserves
- On-reserve shelters served on average 10% of Alberta women and children resident in shelter
- 50% less funding from the federal government (INAC) than provincially contracted shelters

Say Something:

Alberta's shelters respond



In 2006, children were:

- 47% of residents in emergency shelters
- 65% of residents in on-reserve shelters
- 62% of residents in second stage shelters

Over 11,000 children were unable to be accommodated in shelters.

Say Something:

What the data indicates

- Women and children resident in shelter have fled from serious incidents of family violence;
- Aboriginal children represent over half of the children in all Alberta shelters and are an important demographic in need of specialist intervention that currently does not exist;
- Shelters are providing effective interventions and women are learning and willing to learn how to keep themselves and their dependants safe

Say Something:

What the data indicates

- Far too many women and children do not receive access to resident programs in Alberta's shelters, because there is simply not enough space
- While 57% of Aboriginal women access emergency shelters, only 34% enter second stage housing and are able to benefit from those longer and more preventative based programs.

Say something: Breaking the silence

Women talk with:	Tell women about shelters:
73% with someone close to them	32% friend or family member
30% with a doctor or nurse	4% doctor or nurse
22% with lawyers	18% police, RCMP
12% with the clergy	19% counselor
Statistics Canada, 2005.	YWCA, Effective Practices, p. 46.

Say something:

Woman resident abused as a child



Type of Abuse	% of Respondents
Emotionally abused	52%
Sexually abused	43%
Witnessed violence between parents	43%
Physically abused	42%
Neglected as a child	32%

YWCA, *Effective Practices in Sheltering Women*, (2006), p. 35.

Tears



Say something:

Shelter observations

Shelters know that for the child to be safe, their mom must be safe. Additionally, children need specialized help:

- CEFV interventions must be age and gender appropriate
- Culturally appropriate
- Must address the needs of older children

Say something:

Shelter observations

- Children do not leave the effects of family violence in the home. It travels with them into the classroom or shelter.
- Children across the full spectrum of ages are resident for 24 hours/day for up to 21 consecutive days
- Children resident in shelter may well be foreign language speakers, have special needs and health issues that intersect with their other needs

It's Your Business:

What women want help with



Help with children	Wanted at entry
How abuse affects children	55%
Child-care / day care and /or relief	43%
Counseling / groups for children	40%
Learning about healthy child development	30%
Dealing with a difficult child	25%
Dealing with my child's schooling / school	23%
Safety plans for my children	39%
Support / Advocacy	
Staff talking to community agencies with you	51%
Staff going to appointments with you	34%

YWCA, *Effective Practices in Sheltering Women*, (2006), p. 53.

Say something:

On exit: women get the help they need



Help with children	Very helpful	Somewhat helpful
Child care/day care and/or relief	63%	28%
How abuse affects children	71%	25%
Dealing with my child's schooling/school	72%	21%
Counseling/groups for children	54%	32%
Dealing with a difficult child	49%	40%
Learning about healthy child development	65%	28%
Safety plans for my children	77%	18%

YWCA, *Effective Practices in Sheltering Women*, (2006), p. 57.

Say Something:

It's hard to say you are abused



Although 9 out of 10 children considered themselves to have come from a warm and loving family background, detailed questions revealed that 16% had experienced serious maltreatment.

Many [youth] deny abuse even though the harm they suffered may have been severe.

Clare McVeigh, *Violent Britain*, (2005), p. 46.

It's Your Business: *What is working in Alberta*

Children in treatment groups significantly decreased their anxiety, improved their attitudes and response to anger, and decreased their sense of responsibility for both their parents and the violence.

Observation from an Alberta shelter, YWCA national study (2005)



Say something:

Shelters say more is needed

Needed programs:

- CEFV intervention groups
- Child support
- Court support and child witness programs
- Parenting support
- Education provision
- Supervised playtime
- Play therapy
- Babysitting
- Counseling
- Group work
- Outreach/follow-up
- Special needs interventions

Needed facilities and staffing:

- Outdoor play space
- Play resources
- CEFV intervention resources
- Educational resources
- Age specific beds
- Quiet space
- Specialist staff
- Tutors or education specialists

Say Something:

Shelters identify priority service gaps



Most needed services for children in shelter:

- Recreational opportunities and programming.
- Counseling, support groups and access to psychologist.
- Daycare provision
- Parenting programs
- Safe visitation programs

Say Something:

Shelters identify priority service gaps

Priorities for children resident

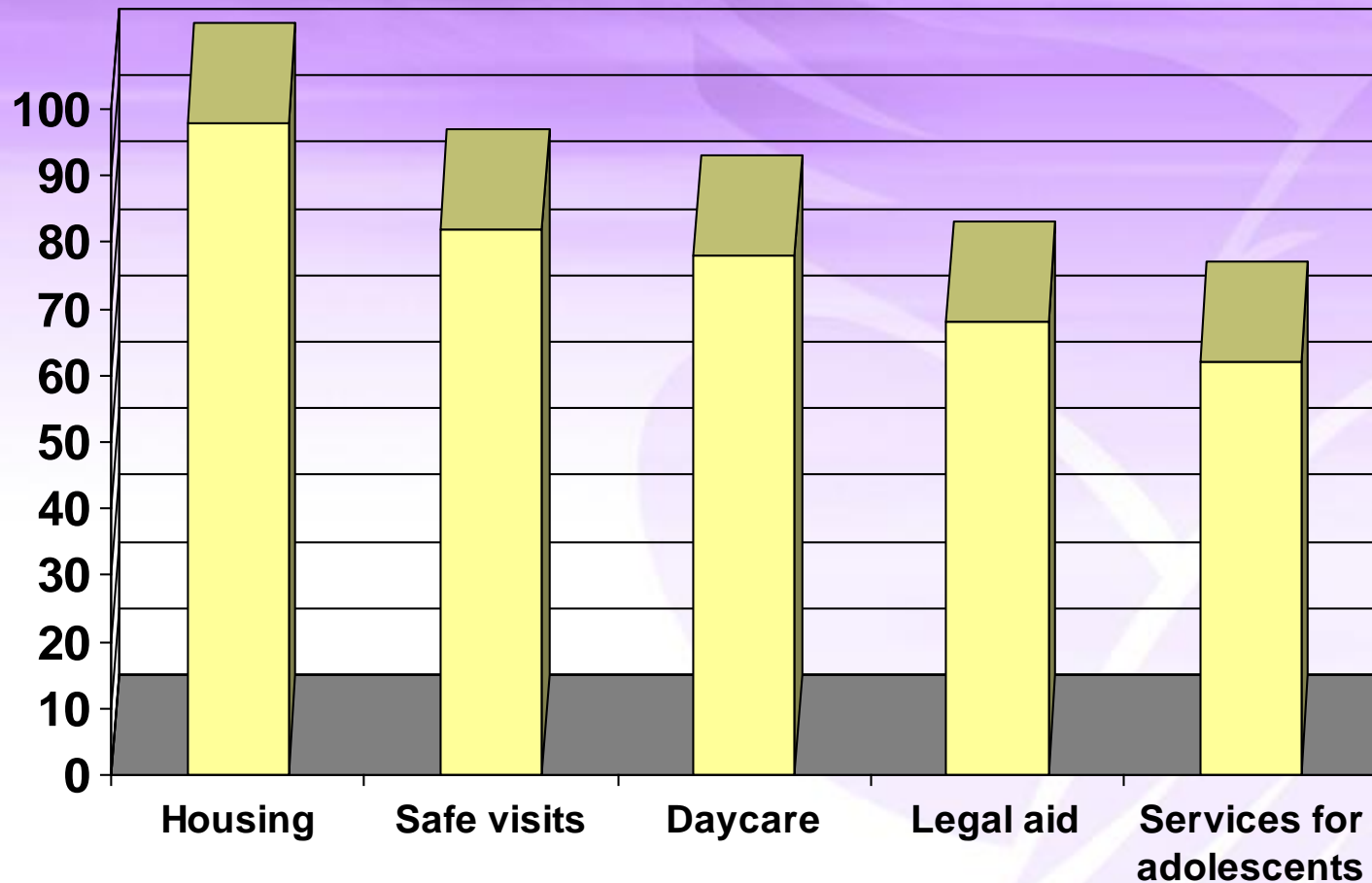
Shelter staff:
Affordable housing
Help for adolescents
Safe visitation

Shelter directors:
Safe visitation
Counseling service
Daycare

Shelter Board:
Affordable housing
2nd stage housing
Help for adolescents

Say Something:

Community service gaps for children



Say something:

A case in point: children's health



Children resident in shelter:

- Scored significantly lower in physical health status than other children in the same age range, region and social strata
- Had more diagnosable health problems than provincial norms
- Were more absent from school than the national average

Judee Onyskiw, "Health and Use of Health Services of CEFV", (2002).

Say something:

A case in point: education provision

Education service provision	# of shelters
Children attend their own school	21
Other	16
Local school with usual classroom/teacher	13
In-house teacher	3
Specialized school/location used as school outside the shelter	3
Local school with sequestered classroom/teacher	2

Say Something:

On-reserve shelter experience



Funded by INAC, on reserve shelters face unique issues. In remote, small communities, security and confidentiality are pressing matters. If using the school bus, everyone knows when a stop is made at the shelter. Walking long distances to the school isn't just about the time it takes; providing security for the child along the way is another issue. These shelters simply do not have the funding or staffing to drive the children to school.

Say something:

Key issues in providing education

- **Engaging the child:** they need to stay connected to their education
- **Engaging the moms:** supporting moms and schools to connect
- **Transportation:** funding for buses or taxis is needed
- **Safety:** collaboration between the shelter and school
- **Documents:** transferring children between local schools or across provincial borders

Say something:

A case in point: shelter location



- Women's shelters need to be placed in child-friendly areas, with proximity to parks, schools and daycares;
- Well supplied shelters with bright environments needed for positive impact;
- Too many shelters located in low cost land away from needed services.

Megan Kammerer, unpublished paper, (2006).

Say something:

ACWS response: networking

Shelters share best practice:

- Outreach follow-up for children
- Elder care for Aboriginal children
- Children's lawyer
- Safe visitation
- Education

Say something:

ACWS response: resources

- Parity reports
- Salary reviews
- Aspirational standards
- Shelter Emergency fund
- Federal Early Learning and Childcare Initiative
- Fund raising support

Say something:

ACWS response: research

Policy and research capacity

- ACWS engages all levels of government, corporate sector and community stakeholders, foregrounding family violence.
 - Memorandums of Understanding
 - Parity reports
 - Violence in the workplace
 - Homicide tracking
 - Gender analysis

Say something:

ACWS response: research



ACWS member shelters collect data on HOMES database:

- Aggregates of general demographics and specialists fields, such as:
 - Police response: on assault charges laid; arrests; no response; follow-up, etc.
 - My abusive partner lied to authorities, as ranked: police; child welfare; judge; my employer; medical
 - Danger Assessment: risk of assault or homicide; perpetrator threatens with weapon; perpetrator owns a gun; believe perpetrator is capable of killing them
 - Exit surveys: changes as a result of shelter stay

Say Something: *ACWS response: research*



NCPC submission to develop specialist interventions for Aboriginal children exposed to family violence:

- Identifying and facilitating traditional Aboriginal parenting strategies;
- Creating culturally relevant services for Aboriginal CEFV;
- Fostering traditional healing and cultural activities among women who want to live without violence in their relationships;
- Assisting children with safety planning and recovery from witnessing violence;
- Increasing partnerships and collaboration between child and family serving agencies involved through shelters


Say something:

ACWS response: public awareness



- Media campaigns
 - Specialist campaigns on Children Exposed to Family Violence
 - Silent Witness
- Public awareness
 - November Family Violence Prevention Month
 - Breakfast with the Guys
 - *Standing Together*

SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL WOMEN'S AND SENIORS' SHELTERS.



ACWS
Alberta Council of Women's Shelters

PREVENTING FAMILY VIOLENCE,
I've made it my business.

Family violence is **NOT** someone else's problem.
IT'S OUR PROBLEM.

It affects us all...
our communities...
our children...
YOU.

LANNY MCDONALD, HOCKEY HALL OF FAME

To find out how you can help visit www.acws.ca
To get help call 1-866-331-3933

Say something:

ACWS response: professional development



Training for shelters and community partners

- CEFV
- Danger Assessment
 - Potential for research project on Danger Assessment implementation in Alberta Shelters (CIF funded)
- Crisis Intervention Worker Certificate Program: On-line training with Portage College
- Bursary program for shelter managers
- IODE training fund

It's Your Business:

Keys to healthy child development



Canada identifies:

- Adequate income for families with children;
- Effective parenting within strong and cohesive families;
- Supportive and inclusive communities.

A Canada Fit for Children, p. 8

ACWS and/or member shelters:

- Seek improvements in social assistance
- Provide parenting support
- Leaders in implementing community collaboration and building safer communities

Say Something:

What we've learned

The role of women's emergency and second stage shelters in protecting children from family violence cannot be overstated. Because of their interventions, many children have found safe haven.

So much more needs to be done!

Say something:

ACWS response: looking ahead



ACWS will host the first ever World Conference on Women's Shelters in autumn 2008

- This developed from attendance at the Inter-American conference in Mexico City (2006)
- A key theme in the World Conference will be CEFV, with a focus on child trafficking

Mark your calendars and watch our webpage:

www.acws.ca



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