

Red Lake Tribal Nation Report to the Legislature on Tribal Child Welfare FY 2022

The image below reflects traditional Anishinaabeg clans and teachings that guide our work.



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Red Lake Tribal Nation Report to the Legislature on Tribal Child Welfare FY 2022

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Report Highlights for FY 2022

During 2022, Ombimindwaa Gidinawemaaganinaadog (Ombimindwaa) continued to make significant changes to the organization, staff training, and building practice capacity. Red Lake Nation officially began as an American Indian Child Welfare Initiative Tribe in 2021. As part of the agreement, Red Lake retained sovereignty over data about their tribal children and families, including limiting what data are entered in SSIS, how the data are reported (see Section 2.10-2.13 below) and oversight for how tribal child welfare information is shared. Below is some of the agreement language specific to data.

12.03 The State agrees not to collect information on Red Lake families without notice and permission of the Red Lake Nation.

12.04 The State agrees not to present information publicly on Red Lake families without notice and permission of the Red Lake Nation.

12.05 Red Lake Nation agrees to provide summary data of child maltreatment intake, response, and outcomes; number of family preservation cases; number of family group decision making cases; number of family reunification cases; number of children in placement and number of children reunified.

Historically, DHS publishes data reports that look two years back. In 2023, when DHS was prepared to publish their 2021 reports, they engaged in consultation with Red Lake Nation about how Ombimindwaa wanted data reported. Because Red Lake chose only to enter select data into the SSIS system (see 12.05 above), it is not possible for DHS to accurately report or analyze Red Lake information. For these reasons it was mutually agreed that DHS would redact Red Lake's data from their annual reports and Red Lake would develop and publish their own data report to the State Legislature starting in FY 2021. This year, 2024, Red Lake will submit their second data report directly to the legislature for FY 2022. The goal of this report is to meet our reporting obligation, provide additional context to Red Lake Nation's data, to inform readers of the complexities of tribal child welfare practice which differs greatly from county practice, and to document progress toward the goal of 100% family preservation and intergenerational family wellness.

As Red Lake Nation assumed full jurisdiction of the child welfare system, we built a new narrative through relationship development and shifting practice to a relative approach - Ombimindwaa Gidanawemaaganidog "Uplifting Our Relatives". Using a collaborative and inclusive process, we had to develop institutional capacity through infrastructure development, data collection, adding and realigning staff, practice model development, and training for staff and relative care providers. Because Red Lake Nation's child welfare practice is so different from county-based practice, this report must look different to reflect the paradigm shift centered on family preservation, not child removal. The report reflects the inherent interconnectedness between the child and their family, extended family, culture, community, and tribal nation.

Data Sovereignty

The Red Lake Tribal Nation is committed to track the effectiveness of its American Indian Child Welfare Initiative work with our tribal citizens. This is best done through looking at data in our community context and through the lens of our indigenous values and practices. This annual review, reported on the first year of the American Indian Child Welfare Initiative 2021, and continues in 2022, will assist in program development and outcomes based on organizational changes and using culturally centered practices. Annual reports will help us to continue to identify strengths and gaps in practice so that we may effectively target interventions to restore our communities to wellbeing and health.

As stated, Minnesota DHS produces an annual report (two year look back) on overall child welfare statistics to document and understand trends over time in child welfare in Minnesota. This year (2024) we review Red Lake FY 2022 data. Later this year we will submit a report for FY 2023 with the goal of being able to quickly report data shortly after the year ends so there isn't the challenge of looking back two years.

Here are some important definitions related to this report:

- Tribal Sovereignty-retained rights of Indian tribes in the US outlined in treaties.
- Data Sovereignty-right of tribes to oversee and manage any data related to their citizens. This includes design of data collection, methods used to gather information, actual collection of data, any review and interpretation of data, access and storage of data, ownership of data, and dissemination.
- Data-any information that helps to understand what is happening. It can be qualitative-observable or described in some way (interviews, focused groups, observation) or quantitative data-numbers, graphs, or other methods that can be collected (quantitative surveys, numbers, measurement).

This report is grounded in key concepts articulated in the *Roadmap for Co-Creating Collaborative & Effective Evaluation in Tribal Communities*. Tribal Evaluation Workgroup, Children's Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, US Department of Health and Human Services. September 2013. The key concepts include:

- Indigenous knowledge is valid and valued.
- Culture is a part of data and thus data is not culturally neutral.
- Responsible stewardship includes how to interpret and understand data.
- Tribes must exercise sovereignty when conducting evaluation and managing data.
- Appropriate use of data should benefit Native people.

Report Highlights-2022

- Maltreatment reports declined in 2022 from 468 to 713 in 2021.
- Screened out reports showed a slight increase from 2021 (78.1%) to 2022 (79.7%). The screening team criteria seems to be consistent between the two years.
- Maltreatment types remain relatively consistent with neglect cases (59.9%) being the most common reason for a report and parental drug use (26.1%) as the second highest reason for a report.

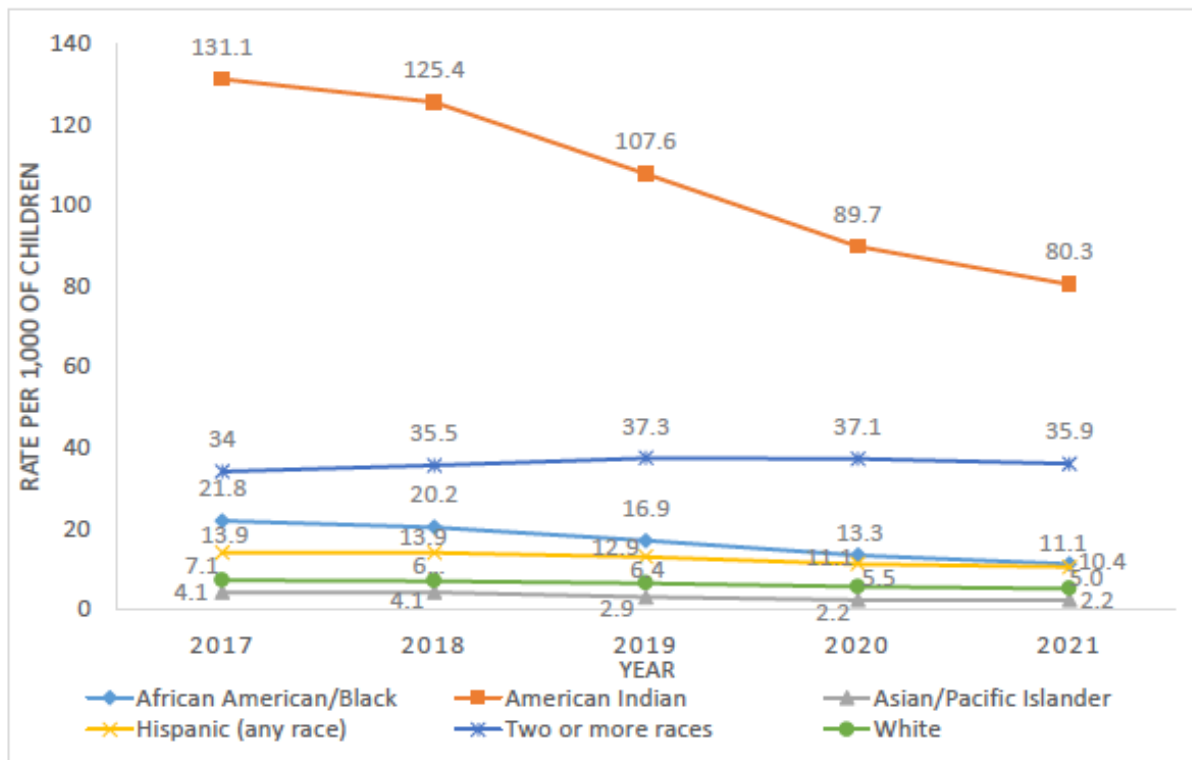
Introduction

Disproportionate American Indian Representation in the Child Welfare System

Minnesota's out-of-home care and permanency report on 2021 data shows a 5-year downward trend in out of placement for all groups including American Indians although significant disparities continue to exist. It should be noted that American Indians are also highly represented in two or more races category which has less variability.

Five-year trend of the rate per 1,000 children in out of home care by race/ethnicity, 2017-2021

Figure 2. Five-year trend of the rate per 1,000 of children in out-of-home care by race/ethnicity, 2017 - 2021



Minnesota's 2021 out-of-home care and permanency report, p. 6. (2023).

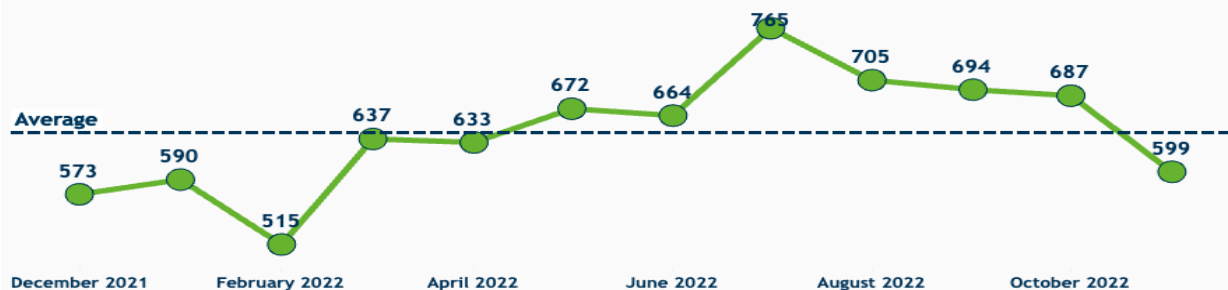
American Indian children remain significantly over-represented in out of home care. In 2021, the rate of American Indian children in care was 80.3 while the rate of white children was 5.0. When you add in the category for two or more races, of which American Indians are the most highly represented population, the total goes up to 116.2, well above any other group. Minnesota has not published its 2022 data report yet.

The graphic below was taken from Minnesota's child welfare dashboard (link below graphic) that shows the variability of reports per month during 2021-2022.

Maltreatment reports received

DHS receives reports of alleged maltreatment in many licensed programs that serve children and vulnerable adults. At the end of **November 2022**, there were **11,512** of these programs. In the last 12 months, between **December 2021** and **November 2022**, DHS received **7,734** reports of alleged maltreatment in these programs.

In the last 12 months, between **December 2021** and **November 2022**, DHS received an average of **645** reports of alleged maltreatment each month.



Between **December 2021** and **November 2022**, the most common types of reported maltreatment were **Neglect** for minors and **Neglect** for vulnerable adults.

<https://mn.gov/dhs/partners-and-providers/licensing/maltreatment-dashboard/>

Minnesota Data

Children enter out-of-home care for many reasons; in the previous five years, Minnesota has seen a shift from neglect to caretaker drug abuse as the most common primary reason for removal for children across the age span (Minnesota's Out of Home Care and Permanency Report, 2021). However, it seems to be shifting back, according to the DHS maltreatment dashboard (see above), in 2022, the most common reason for a report was neglect. This is consistent with Red Lake data that show for 2022, neglect cases represent almost 60% of all screened in cases.

Of the Minnesota reports received, assigned, and completed between December 2021 and November 2022, 33% were substantiated. For Red Lake the number of screened in reports were 20.3%, much lower than the state's cases.

The intersection of poverty and neglect has been well documented in recent years. Families and children living in poverty are shown to have a greater risk of being reported to child welfare, especially for neglect. The following excerpt comes from the article "System Transformation to Support Child and Family Well-Being: The Central Role of Economic Supports". (Weiner, et. Al., 2021)

Families below the poverty line are three times more likely to be substantiated for child maltreatment (Drake & Jonson-Reid, 2014). Economic disparities and historical systemic disadvantages have fueled disproportionate child welfare system involvement among families of color; Black, Latino, and American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) families are disproportionately more likely to be poor due to longstanding systemic conditions (Semega et al., 2020). Evidence about the root causes of child maltreatment has been well documented, including poverty-related risk factors such as unemployment, single

parenthood, housing instability, earlier childbearing, and lack of child care (Escaravage, 2014; Marcal, 2017).

The income status of families is a significant predictor of involvement with the child welfare system (McLaughlin, 2017; Pelton, 2015; Conrad-Hiebner & Byram, 2020; Brooks-Gunn et al., 2013), and county-level poverty rates are associated with foster care placement rates among children of all races (Wulczyn et al., 2013).

Clearly, any solution to high disproportionality and inequity in the child welfare system must address poverty and include the provision of concrete and economic supports to families rather than child removal. Data show that:

1. Poverty plays a significant role in substantiated child welfare cases and many American Indian and children of color are disproportionately impacted by poverty.
2. Almost 70% of Minnesota reports are unsubstantiated (79.7% of Red Lake reports) pointing to an overreporting to the child welfare system that takes time and resources from the most egregious child abuse cases.

In a 2023 Harris National Poll of child welfare the following was found:

- 3 in 4 Americans agree that parents who have been neglectful can care for their children when they receive needed supports; half say the same for abuse
- But, in terms of the functionality of the current system, most think that at best the system functions the way that it was designed to operate (child removal)
- Too often, decisions on whether the child welfare system should intervene in families are influenced by socioeconomic/poverty biases (73%)
- Too often, decisions on whether the child welfare system should intervene in families are influenced by racial biases (60%)
- The US public thinks that the system should keep children with their families in situations of child removal and that parents should have more time to address challenges.

(Child Welfare Initiative, November 8, 2023)

Ombimindwaa practice shares the philosophy that children are best provided for within their own family structures and that the provision of concrete resources can mitigate issues of poverty and therefore reduce parental stress to allow children to remain safely at home. Red Lake also screens out a high percentage of their reports by referring families to voluntary services.

The second most common reason for placements of young children, under three years old, are related to caregiver drug or alcohol use (both Minnesota and Red Lake). Since Minnesota began implementation of these new FFPSA standards in October of 2021, the most common out of home settings experienced by children entering care were family foster homes, with about 82% of children spending time in that type of setting during the year. Family foster homes include relative and non-relative foster and pre-adoptive homes and pre-kinship homes. Around 11% of children spent time in residential treatment centers, while another 8% were in group homes and around 6% spent some time in a juvenile correctional facility. The pattern varies with age. Nearly all (99.6%) of children under the age of 6 are in family foster care settings while just over

half (54%) of children 12 and older spent time in family foster care settings. Most of Red Lake's children in need of care are with relative placements.

Ombimindwaa Gidinawemaaganinaadog Practice Model

Ongoing disproportionality of American Indian children in the child welfare system served as a driving force for the Red Lake Nation to assume jurisdiction over child welfare for its families. Red Lake knew they could work with families more effectively and reduce unnecessary trauma caused by child removal and family disruption, so they restructured their old child welfare system to a new way of practice starting with renaming the agency to Ombimindwaa Gidanawemaaganidog "Uplifting Our Relatives." Our agency is focused on decolonizing from a county way of practice to an indigenous way through development of a culturally driven practice model, shifting staff to upfront prevention efforts, active efforts for family preservation, developing resources and programs to assist families in need with culturally supportive ways to restore family and community wellbeing across the lifespan. Ombimindwaa has engaged in strengthening internal and external partnerships that support our practice model. This has meant training and retraining staff to think in decolonized ways using customs and traditions that have been passed on through many generations to 'uplift relatives' without judgment, fear of punishment and loss of their children. This restorative way of practice has been highly successful as you will see in this report.

Background

Red Lake child welfare began exploring the need for a family preservation program in 2019 and started to outline the program in 2020 to empower and maintain families rather than remove children. The model includes utilizing traditional family circles (Family Group Decision Making) to address and mitigate emergency concerns for families that would otherwise lead to potential involvement with child protection. Increasing natural supports to family members promotes a return to Indigenous community practice and successful Indigenous models of family preservation. Our practice model had to re-define many of the colonized terms we inherited from county practice and reframed them in cultural ways consistent with treating those we serve as our relatives because culturally they are our relatives.

We are committed to uplift our relatives in our community and renamed our agency from "Family and Children's Services" to Ombimindwaa Gidinawemaaganinaadog, which means "Uplifting all of our Relatives". This name symbolizes our organization's worldview that we are interconnected to all life and to our cultural relatives. Our ways tell us that everyone and everything has a purpose and deserves respect and care. We commit to truly assist those we serve, through transformation in service modalities, policies and procedures, and emphasizing practices that uplift our relatives.

To further reinforce this shift, we also changed program names including shifting the terms client to relative, staff to community service providers, foster parents to relative care providers, investigation to response, and child protection case managers to reunification service providers. These changes reflect our goal of 100% prevention and reunification. Red Lake Nation does not use Termination of Parental rights, and Ombimindwaa does not participate in adoptions.

Ombimindwaa (formerly Family and Children Services) provides a variety of intergenerational services within child welfare including both voluntary and involuntary services as well as a variety of mental health services certified by Minnesota Department of Human Services, such as Mobile Crisis Services, Children's Therapeutic Services and Supports (CTSS) and Adult Rehabilitative Mental Health Services (ARMHS) as well as Outpatient Mental Health Services. Ombimindwaa began providing public health nursing services during FY 2021, as well as crisis response services. In addition to integrating traditional practices in all our operations, we offer cultural services on an ongoing basis.

During 2021, Ombimindwaa updated the vision statement to reflect our new practice model. In 2022, staff training and discussions often centered around the vision statement and new practice model.

Our vision is to return to our healthy and harmonious way of life, living within our clans, within our communities, in traditional family structures where everyone between our youth and elders are reconnected. Ombimindwaa Gidinawemaaganinaadog restores wellness and healing through traditional Anishinaabe family preservation where we build and strengthen family connections while overcoming barriers.

Red Lake's Ombimindwaa worked hard in its first two years to build its infrastructure and staffing. Currently Ombimindwaa has over 100 staff under its umbrella of services. For child protection, Ombimindwaa has about 40 staff working in various capacities, such as case aides, case managers, intake and response, and administration. The relative (client) to community service providers (direct staff) ratio is currently 19:1. New staff and positions continue to be added. Ombimindwaa also partners with several local universities and offers internships to promising students (many native) to continually develop our workforce.

Starting in 2021 and continuing in 2022, Red Lake Nation contracted to become part of Minnesota's American Indian Child Welfare Initiative and receives state funding for various child welfare efforts, including placement costs, staffing, and supplies. The budgeted monthly foster care costs aren't sufficient to cover all expenditures, so tribal Self-Governance and Tiwahe funds help pay for costs. Because the Red Lake Nation is committed to family preservation, Self-Governance funding will continue to be a critical piece of our child welfare operations. Our goal is for placement costs to continue to decrease substantially as we focus on reunification and prevention. With this approach, we have experienced more successful outcomes and fewer removals. We continue to require increased funding in prevention-based and culturally supportive services, to strengthen family systems and prevent removals.

Ombimindwaa continues to increase its staff to relative ratio to encourage relationship development including adding cultural staff whose responsibility is to translate practices into the Ojibwe language, support staff, and offer traditional ceremonies to relatives in need.

Systemic Integration of Culture

We believe that ‘culture is the cure’ and that when families are connected to culture many risk factors are minimized or mitigated. We accomplish this through the systemic integration of culture throughout agency structures, policies, and practices based on indigenous worldviews and lifeways.

Our intergenerational services are rooted in Anishinaabe worldview, language, knowledge, history, teachings, and technology. Each one of our Community Service Providers are equipped with a unique set of skills and qualifications that emphasize an Anishinaabe way of life. When working with families we embrace the seven (7) Anishinaabe grandfather teachings - Zaagi’idiwin (love); Manaaji’idiwin (respect); Debwewin (truth); Gwayakwaadiziwin (honesty); Inendizowin (humility); Nibwaakaawin (wisdom); and Zoongide’ewin (bravery). Our value system helps us live Bimadiiziwin (a good life).

We offer person-centered cultural approaches, resources, and services. Cultural services that demonstrate the agency is committed to cultural competence and culturally based practices. We have regular sweat lodges, seasonal ceremonies and feasts, access to cultural advisors and mentors, connection to the Anishinaabe community and the Ojibwe language.

This statement, taken from the Ombimindwaa Children’s Mental Health Respite grant provides a description of this way of practice. *In Anishinaabe ways of being, we understand that we are created equal, must help support and uplift one another, and our original teachings guide how we are to live. They provide that framework of how to do that work, in a way that is natural and traditional to our worldview, and therefore healthiest for our community. We know that we need to ensure our children are safe and being cared for. We also know that we have an equal responsibility to the parents to make sure they have the help and support needed to raise their children. If we only focus on the children, then we lean toward judging the parents. If we focus on both, have compassion and empathy for both as we are instructed by our teachings, then the dynamics change and our approach changes. Not only does our approach change, but then our decision points change, because parents become engaged in the process. They make decisions on what is best for their families, what they need, support and services they want. When our decision points change, our outcomes begin to change, from placing children in care to maintaining them at home with services. The CMH respite program creates additional resources for families and helps discover pathways to community support. (p.1)*

Culturally integrative accomplishments include:

- Continued development and use of an Indigenous way of practice that enables workers to successfully connect with families. More are added each year.
- Staff training to instill knowledge and relay an expectation that staff will practice in a culturally based manner.
- A commitment at Intake to divert cases to family preservation, provide emergency resources to families, focus on crisis stabilization, and develop ongoing support as reflected in the high number of screened out cases.
- Focus on intensive family engagement, family group decision making, assessing maltreatment risk and resiliency, providing services and resources to address issues that place families at risk of entering the child protection system.

- Active efforts link relatives to spiritual services such as ceremonies that strengthen, heal, and stabilize families in crisis and restore natural helping systems. Red Lake provides many resources to address the needs of families living in poverty.
- Increasing the numbers of voluntary cases and self-referrals to meet family needs and prevent involuntary cases.
- Services include ongoing case management, financial and programmatic resources that keep families from entering the child system and address factors that can lead to a report.
- Access to services to build protective factors within the family for wellness and long-term stability.

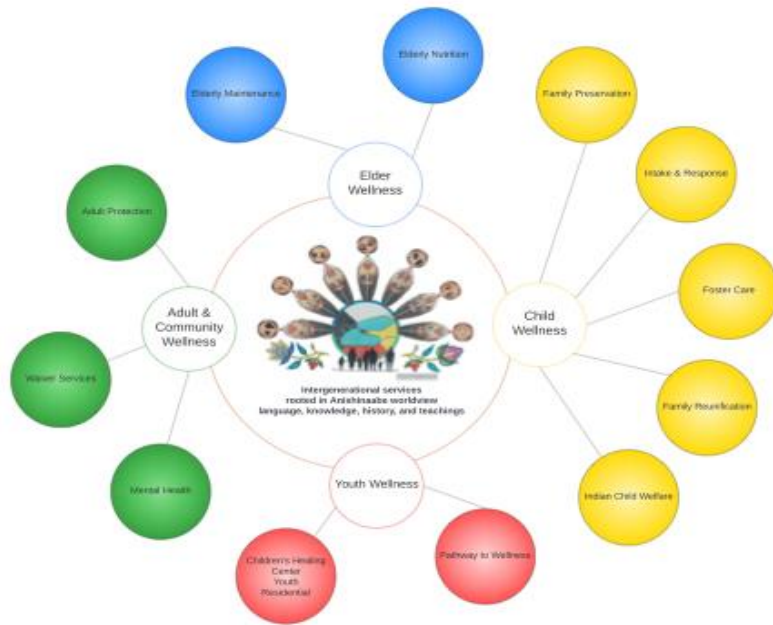
Culture as a Protective Factor

Research studies show that culture is a protective factor and can ameliorate trauma when it does occur (https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/diverse_populations/americanindian/resilience/).

Cultural interventions show positive outcomes including “personal wellness, positive self-image, self-efficacy, familial and non-familial connectedness, positive opportunities, positive social norms, and cultural connectedness” (SAMHSA, <https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/nc-oy1-task-3-culture-is-prevention-final-2018-05-31.pdf>).

Ombimindwaa practices intergenerational services because many Red Lake families are multigenerational. All services are framed as “wellness” as the goal is to restore harmony and balance to families. The graphic shows how services are provided across the lifespan to support intergenerational needs and are consistent with Anishinaabe teachings about the circle of life. Organizational chart development was supported with assistance from the Children’s Bureau Capacity Building Center for Tribes.

Ombimindwaa Gidinawemaaganinaadog Organizational Chart



Process/Practice Mapping

The graphic below shows how Red Lake cases are processed at different decision levels from intake, screening, involuntary and voluntary tracks, to case disposition and closure. It shows the complex processes that staff use in determining how cases will proceed. Because Red Lake is a closed reservation, any child abuse case that rises to the level of criminal prosecution is cross reported to the FBI and goes through federal court. Those cases included in the data report.

Process or practice mapping is a widely recognized tool for visually understanding how organizations are organized and in onboarding new staff. This map was developed in collaboration with the University of Minnesota's FFPSA Tribal Partnership and James Bell Associates.

See link for an article and additional information: <https://www.jbassoc.com/resource/using-process-mapping-to-improve-services-for-families-involved-in-tribal-child-welfare-facilitators-guide-and-mapping-tool/>

Ombimindwaa Gidinawemaaganinaadog Process Map



Link to Ombimindwaa Brochure

[29024-Red-Lake-OMBIMINDWWA-Family-Children-Adult-Service-Brochure.pdf](https://redlakenation.org/29024-Red-Lake-OMBIMINDWWA-Family-Children-Adult-Service-Brochure.pdf)
(redlakenation.org)

Data

When Ombimindwaa joined the American Indian Child Welfare Initiative the out of home placement numbers were very high. In the first two years of the Initiative, we were able to close cases that had lingered too long in the systems and to refine our intake and response to reports so that we screen out most cases (79.7%) in 2022. We are working to develop and implement a data

system, Beraton, that will allow us to better track data. Currently we use Procentive and have limited use of SSIS to protect our data sovereignty.

Ombimindwaa agreed to provide the following data elements provided in the table below. Most of the data are from SSIS supplemented with some data from other Ombimindwaa data tracking systems. As is often the case, these required elements are not consistent in the way in which Ombimindwaa collects data and as a result make accurate tracking difficult.

Ombimindwaa Data FY 2022 on Required Elements

1. # of child maltreatment reports received	Total	Screened Out Reports	Screened In Reports
2. # of alleged child victims screened in by maltreatment type	468 *157 (this number is higher than 95 because they are counted more than once if screened in in multiple maltreatment type) **umbrella of neglect can include educational neglect, welfare, and safety 94 (59.8%)	373 (79.7%) Many are served in family preservation	95 (20.3%) Drug Use Concern 41 (26.1%) Educ Neglect/Juv. Del. 3 (2%) Physical Abuse 1 (.63%) Sexual abuse 21 (13.37%) Welfare/Neglect 76 (48.4%) Safety 15 (9.5%) Total 157* (100%)
3. # of completed family investigations documented	52 (54.7%) *family investigation N=95 screened in		*Family Investigations (in SSIS) are only 72 hour holds that lead to out of home placements. The rest (about 44%) comprise referrals to family preservation (not documented in SSIS) and some cases screened in and dropped at ECP hearings are not in SSIS.

4. Timeliness to initial face to face contact for alleged victims	*51.3 (54%) met goal for timeliness N=95 screened in but 52 (54.7%) are family investigations.		*This data only reflects 72 hr. holds only- found in SSIS. Data does not include cases referred to family preservation or cases dropped at ECP hearings.
5. # of new substantiated child victims	*99 (100 %) N=95 screened in		*Some are for multiple children or more than one report
6. # of alleged child victims where safety plan was warranted/completed	*15 (15.6%) (only represents those documented in Procentive) while it is best practice to complete a safety plan during response visits, this is not documented in SSIS		*More safety plans are in individual case plans, not SSIS, so require a burden to review. This number does not reflect the safety plans in individual case notes or made verbally.

Discussion of Data-2022

The data above only reflects the six data elements agreed upon in the Red Lake contract with DHS and mostly represents data found in SSIS. Red Lake also uses Procentive to track child welfare data. Because SSIS data input is limited, its challenging to gather data on elements #4 (only reflects 72 hour hold data documented in SSIS) and element #6 since those data are only documented in Procentive, not SSIS. The data provided show a limited snapshot of Ombimindwaa outcomes for 2022, but clearly don’t tell the whole story. Nonetheless, they are useful in seeing an overall trajectory of practice across years. Once Ombimindwaa fully launches the Beraton data system, it will be easier to track the six data elements.

Data element 1: Number of child maltreatment reports received.

Actual maltreatment reports declined in 2022 (468) from 2021 (713). Reports come from a variety of sources including law enforcement, schools, early childhood programs, community members, medical providers, and other system providers. Red Lake is not covered under MN PL-280, meaning that there is federal law enforcement (but no state law enforcement) within reservation boundaries. Sometimes the FBI is involved in bringing federal child welfare charges against Red Lake citizens and those would be reflected in these numbers.

According to the Children’s Bureau Maltreatment Report for 2021, nationally, 48.5% of all child welfare reports are screened out. Overall, in 2021, Minnesota screened out 58.7%, Beltrami county (closest to Red Lake) screened out 49.7% and in 2021, Red Lake screened out 78.1% of reports. In 2022, Red Lake screened out 79.7% of cases showing a slight increase in screened out reports from 2021. The screening team seems to be using consistent criteria (similar 2021 and 2022 numbers) when screening cases in or out.

The lower number of reports in 2022, may be the result of providing voluntary as part of Ombimindwaa practice model. Families may be coming for services before there is child welfare report. All screened out reports are offered voluntary services and/or referred to alternative services. This is reflected in data element 5 - number of new substantiated child victims – since Ombimindwaa only screens in child welfare cases that require a child welfare response and refers a high percentage of cases to family preservation and voluntary services, the number of new substantiated cases is higher than national data. In 2022, there were 99 new cases which reflects 100% of screened in cases (several reported more than once). Ombimindwaa does not seem to be seeing the recidivism usually seen in child welfare. (see data element 5)

Data element 2: Number of alleged child victims screened in by maltreatment type.

The 95 reports screened in by Intake and Response fall into a variety of maltreatment types. To understand maltreatment type and why the overall numbers are higher than the total screened in cases (95 vs. 157), some cases have multiple children in the family, and some families have multiple reports for the same concern. The high number of screened out cases reflect that sometimes situations don't meet the definition of child maltreatment and many more are able to be addressed through the provision of voluntary, family preservation services rather than entering the child welfare system. While there were less reports in 2022 and maltreatment types varied slightly, consistent with national data, most of Ombimindwaa 2022 reports fall under the umbrella** of neglect (59.9%). This is slightly less than 2021 (68.5%) reports for neglect related cases.

Several maltreatment types used in 2021 were not reported in 2022 (endangerment and abandonment), and in 2021, no educational neglect was reported but in 2022 there were 3 cases. This variation might be related to training, worker discretion, or some other unknown factor.

As stated in the 2021 report, it makes sense that Red Lake would receive a high percentage of neglect cases as it is one of the poorest areas in Minnesota although Minnesota and national levels for neglect are slightly higher. It could be that Ombimindwaa is addressing neglect through its referrals to voluntary services and its use of a food pantry and other concrete supports to families, thereby lessening these cases coming through the child welfare door. This will be an important data element to track into the future to see if Red Lake's model continues to make a difference in lessening neglect cases.

In 2022, parental drug abuse, the second highest maltreatment type, accounts for 26.1% of screened in reports compared to 20% in 2021. It's too soon to make any conclusions about the variation but often how a worker codes a report means it can fall under other maltreatment types or may require voluntary services and/or referral to chemical health and treatment.

In 2021, physical abuse was 10 (5%) of the screened in reports but in 2022, there was only 1 (.63%) physical abuse screened in report. National data shows 16 % are victims of physical abuse and in Minnesota 23.2% are victims of physical abuse. Again, this may be worker discretion in coding or referring these cases to voluntary services.

In 2021, sexual abuse accounted for 6 cases (3%) of screened in reports but in 2022, there were 21 screened in cases of sexual abuse (13.37%). It is unknown if this is related to many cases or several that had multiple victims or for some other reason. Nationally 10% of children are victims of sexual abuse and in Minnesota 14.7% are victims of sexual abuse. (Children's Bureau Maltreatment Report for 2021; Minnesota DHS Legislature Report on Maltreatment, 2021).

In 2022, there were no screened in cases related to domestic violence, abandonment, or endangerment.

Differences in maltreatment types are likely due to several factors including how abuse categories are defined, worker discretion, how data are tracked, and the Ombimindwaa practice of offering voluntary services rather than standard child welfare tracks. These numbers are an indication that Ombimindwaa practice is working in reducing trauma to families, reducing out of home placements, and seeing positive outcomes by shifting resources to early intervention.

Data element 3: Number of completed family completed investigations

Best practice for any screened in report to Ombimindwaa is to complete a family assessment or family investigation. Family Investigations (54.7%) are in SSIS and are comprised of 72 hour holds that become out of home placements. The rest (about 44%) comprise referrals to family preservation for family assessment (not documented in SSIS) and some cases that are screened in but dropped at ECP hearings (not in SSIS). Only slightly more than 50% of screened in cases result in child placement.

Family Preservation is consistent with the Ombimindwaa practice model and looks at both needs and strengths. Red Lake continues to develop its Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) capacity and to improve data tracking in the future through Beraton.

Data element 4: Timeliness to initial face to face contact for alleged victims.

The data table shows that 54% of Ombimindwaa staff met the goal for timeliness for face-to-face contact for screened in reports; however, this data is only for cases requiring a 72 hold which is what is documented in SSIS. Given that 44% of cases are referred to family preservation, it is not an accurate measure of the timeliness in all cases, only those receiving family investigations that result in child removal. This data is also based on the level of response to needs; therefore, the definition of timeliness is dependent on the threat level and is somewhat fluid. Ombimindwaa has three levels of response depending on the level of threat and if imminent harm exists and cases that meet level 1, and sometimes level 2, result in 72 hour holds. Our goal would be to reach 95-100% once data is tracked through Beraton.

Level 1: If the report indicates imminent harm or danger is present, then the agency must send out a Response Worker immediately. If it is after hours, then the agency may request that tribal police investigate and discuss potential follow up by phone with Ombimindwaa staff.

Level 2: If the report indicates concerns for safety of the child, but not imminent danger, the response timeline is within 24 hours. Ombimindwaa will send out Response Workers to engage with a strengths-based response.

Level 3: If the report indicates concerns screened in for follow up, but does not rise to

the level of immediate concerns, the response timeline is 7 days. Ombimindwaa will send out Family Assessment/Response workers to offer a strengths-based response.

Data element 5: Number of new substantiated child victims.

In Red Lake in 2022, out of the 95 screened in cases, 99 new child victims were substantiated (100%). This indicates that some reports come in more than once or that each child is reported separately.

As mentioned in data element 1, the high percentage of new substantiated child victims reflects the fact that Ombimindwaa only screens in child welfare cases that require a child welfare response. This data strongly suggests that by providing family preservation early in the process, only those families that require non-voluntary court intervention are being served by child welfare response workers. Most cases in Red Lake are being served by family preservation.

Data element 6: Number of alleged child victims where safety plan was warranted/completed.

Data element 6 is not reported in SSIS and therefore limited data on how many safety plans were completed. The 15.6% of safety plans documented were in Procentive and does not represent a true count. Like family assessments, data element 3, Ombimindwaa best practice is for response workers to complete safety plans, when needed, with families. Safety plans may be informal such as a conversation rather than a formal written plan that is documented in case files. Other times completed safety plans are handwritten or typed but not added to SSIS. This reflects the emergency response nature of the work. This is an area for staff improvement through training, supervision and data input. Red Lake's summer staff training is specifically addressing safety planning and will stress the importance of documentation.

Limitations

In 2022, year two, Red Lake is still developing infrastructure, hiring and training staff. Since most Ombimindwaa data is not entered into SSIS, it is problematic to track some data accurately. Red Lake is building its own custom data system which is a multiyear task. Ombimindwaa also uses Precentive, which is used primarily for mental health, but Red Lake expanded it to child welfare and family preservation to have an integrated system. In 2022, we acknowledge that our data is limited and does not fully reflect the scope of work that was done with families. Data for this report was found in a variety of places, mostly SSIS, but some also in Procentive. As Ombimindwaa develops its own data system, tracking and reporting data will improve. Ombimindwaa continues to provide staff training and ongoing supervision to improve reporting.

Data Systems

January 2021 our Intake, Response, Reunification Case Management and IV-E teams began utilizing SSIS and continued to become more familiar with SSIS in 2022. We launched SSIS training late 2020 and training continued through the beginning months of 2021. We upload 72

hour holds, intakes that lead to out of home placement, and all data relating to out of home placements including voluntary placements and voluntary mental health placements in SSIS. We utilize spreadsheets and agency internal drives to store other intake and response data that is not in SSIS. In addition, we utilize Procentive for Family Preservation and for Child Welfare Targeted Case Management (CWTCM) billing. We are working with Beraton to have a data system that meets all our child welfare data needs.

Challenges

During 2022 we were coming back from the COVID-19 Pandemic and continuing to build infrastructure and hire additional staff. Ombimindwaa has many young staff just out of college, and they require training and supervision to become seasoned child welfare professionals. As workers become more familiar with entering data, more consistent documentation will occur. Services continue to be provided on an ongoing basis and staff were successful in maintaining contact with our relatives and ensuring that they received quality services and resources needed for family preservation. Like other child welfare systems, there are always challenges related to not getting qualified applicants who can work effectively in tribal systems.

It is taking time to get our Beraton system up and running but progress is being consistently made with a goal for implementation in 2024. While Red Lake is ready to implement the new system, DHS has not been able to provide the list of required elements that would make our new system consistent with SSIS elements to assure we are meeting Minnesota requirements for their federal reports.

The table below compares data collected in 2021 to data collected in 2022.

Comparison between 2021 and 2022 Data

1. # of child maltreatment reports received	Total Reports	Screened Out Reports	Screened In Reports
	2021 713	2021 557 (78.1%)	2021 (21.8%) 156* (some already in placement)
	2022 468	2022 373 (79.7%)	2022 95 (20.3%)
2. # of alleged child victims screened in by maltreatment type	2021 *200 (this number is higher than 156 because they are counted more than once if screened in in multiple for maltreatment type)	2022 *157 (this number is higher than 95 because they are counted more than once if screened in for multiple maltreatment type)	2021 & 2022
			Drug 40/41 (20%) (26.1%)
			Abandonment 11/0 (5.5%) (0%)
			Physical Abuse 10/1 (5%) (.63%)
	**umbrella of neglect can	**umbrella of neglect can include educ	Sexual abuse 6/21 (3%) (13.37%)

	include abandonment, endangerment, neglect, welfare, and safety (68.5%)	neglect, welfare, and safety (59.9%)	<p>Endangerment 26/0 (13%) (0%)</p> <p>Welfare/Neglect 90/76 (45%) (48.4%)</p> <p>Safety 10/15 (5%) (9.5%)</p> <p>Domestic Violence 7/0 (3.5%) (0%)</p> <p>Educ Neglect/Juv. Del. 0/3 (0%) (2%)</p> <p>Total 200/157 (100%)</p>
3. # of completed family assessments/ investigations documented	2021 91 total (58.3%) N=156 screened in	2022 52 (54.7%) *family investigation N=95 screened in	*Family investigations (in SSIS) are only 72 hour holds that lead to out of home placements. The rest (about 44%) comprise referrals to family preservation (not documented in SSIS) and some cases screened in and dropped at ECP hearings (not in SSIS).
4. Timeliness to initial face to face contact for alleged victims	2021 137 (88%) met goal for timeliness N=156 screened in	2022* 51.3 (54%) met goal for timeliness N=95 screened in	*this data reflects 72 hrs. holds only-in SSIS. Data does not include cases referred to family preservation or cases dropped at ECP hearings.
5. # of new substantiated child victims	2021 142 (91%) N=156 screened in	2022 99 (100%) N=95 screened in	99 (100%) N=95 screened in; some for multiple children or more than one report on same child(ren).
6. # of alleged child victims where safety plan was warranted/ completed	2021 Unknown-while it is best practice to complete a safety plan during response visits, this was not documented in SSIS	2022 *15 (15.6%) (this data only represents those documented in Procentive).	*While it is best practice to complete a safety plan during response visits, this was not documented in SSIS. More safety plans are in individual case plans, not SSIS, so require a burden to review. This number does not reflect the safety plans in individual case notes or made verbally.

Comparison of Data-2021 vs. 2022

The data above only reflects the six data elements agreed upon in the Red Lake contract with DHS and mostly represents data found in SSIS. Red Lake also uses Procentive to track child welfare data. These data provide a limited snapshot of Ombimindwaa outcomes for 2021, but clearly this doesn't tell the whole story. Nonetheless, they are useful in seeing an overall trajectory of improvement.

Data element 1: Number of child maltreatment reports received.

As with most child welfare programs Ombimindwaa receives a high number of maltreatment reports annually. Reports come from a variety of sources including law enforcement, schools, early childhood programs, community members, medical providers, and other system providers. Maltreatment reports declined in 2022 (468) from 2021 (713); over a 65% reduction in reports. It's hard to know why there is such a large drop (245 fewer reports) than the previous year. It may be that families are starting to come for services prior to a child welfare report but there is no definitive way to know. Tracking over the next few years will help to tell the story more fully.

Providing voluntary services is consistent with the Ombimindwaa practice model. All screened out reports are offered voluntary services and/or referred to alternative services. This is reflected in data element 5 - number of new substantiated child victims (100%) – since Ombimindwaa only screens in child welfare cases that require a child welfare response and refers a higher percentage of cases to family preservation and voluntary services the number of new substantiated cases is higher than state and national data. (see data element 5)

Data element 2: Number of alleged child victims screened in by maltreatment type.

In 2022, the 95 reports screened in by Intake and Response fall into a variety of maltreatment types. To understand maltreatment type and why the overall numbers are higher than the total screened in cases (95 vs. 157), some cases have multiple children in the family, and some families have multiple reports for the same concern. The high number of screened out cases reflect that sometimes situations don't meet the definition of child maltreatment and many more are able to be addressed through the provision of voluntary, family preservation services rather than entering the child welfare system. While there were less reports in 2022 and maltreatment types varied slightly, most of Ombimindwaa 2022 reports fall under the umbrella** of neglect (59.9%). This is slightly less than 2021 (68.5%) reports for neglect related cases. It could be that Ombimindwaa is addressing neglect through its referrals to voluntary services and its use of a food pantry and other concrete supports to families, thereby lessening these cases coming through the child welfare door. This will be an important data element to track into the future to see if Red Lake's model continues to make a difference in lessening neglect cases.

Several maltreatment types used in 2021 were not reported in 2022 (endangerment and abandonment), and in 2021, no educational neglect was reported but in 2022 there were 3 cases. This variation might be related to those reports going straight to family preservation, training, worker discretion, or some other unknown factor.

In 2022, parental drug abuse, the second highest maltreatment type, accounts for 26.1% of screened in reports compared to 20% in 2021. It's too soon to make any conclusions about the variation but often how a worker codes a report means it can fall under other maltreatment types or may require voluntary services and/or referral to chemical health and treatment. It might also be related to more of those cases being referred to family preservation.

In 2021, physical abuse was 10 (5%) of the screened in reports but in 2022, there was only 1 (.63%) physical abuse screened in report. National data shows 16% are victims of physical abuse and in Minnesota 23.2% are victims of physical abuse. Again, this may be worker discretion in coding or referring these cases to voluntary services.

In 2021, sexual abuse accounted for 6 cases (3%) of screened in reports but in 2022, there were 21 screened in cases of sexual abuse (13.37%). It is unknown if this is related to many cases or several that had multiple victims or for some other reason. Nationally 10% of children are victims of sexual abuse and in Minnesota 14.7% are victims of sexual abuse. (Children's Bureau Maltreatment Report for 2021; Minnesota DHS Legislature Report on Maltreatment, 2021).

In 2022, there were no screened in cases related to domestic violence, abandonment, or endangerment. Again, these cases may have been referred to family preservation. Maltreatment types, not including these three, remained relatively consistent between 2021 and 2022 except for sexual abuse which was higher in 2022. Cases falling in the neglect umbrella fell from 68.5% in 2021 to 59.9% in 2022.

Differences in maltreatment types are likely due to several factors including how abuse categories are defined, worker discretion, how data are tracked, and the Ombimindwaa practice of offering voluntary services rather than standard child welfare tracks. These numbers are an indication that Ombimindwaa practice is working in reducing trauma to families, reducing out of home placements, and seeing positive outcomes by shifting resources to early intervention.

Data element 3: Number of completed family investigations.

Best practice for any screened in report to Ombimindwaa is to complete a family assessment or family investigation. In 2022, family investigations (54.7% in SSIS) are comprised of 72 hour holds that become out of home placements. The rest (about 44%) comprise referrals to family preservation for family assessment (not documented in SSIS) and some cases that are screened in but dropped at ECP hearings (not in SSIS). In 2021, this number was 58.3% of family investigations so while slightly less, similar across years. Red Lake continues to develop its Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) capacity and to improve data tracking in the future through Beraton.

Data element 4: Timeliness to initial face to face contact for alleged victims.

The data table shows that in 2022, 54% of Ombimindwaa staff met the goal for timeliness for face-to-face contact, down from 2021 (88%); however, 2022 data is only for cases requiring a 72 hour hold which is what is documented in SSIS. Given that, it is not an accurate measure of the

timeliness in all cases. Our goal would be to reach 95-100% of all cases once data is tracked through Beraton.

Data element 5: Number of new substantiated child victims.

In Red Lake in 2022, out of the 95 screened in cases, 99 new child victims were substantiated (100%) up from 91% in 2021. This is much higher than state or national levels. High rates indicate that some reports come in more than once or that each child is reported separately.

As mentioned in data element 1, the high percentage of new substantiated child victims reflects the fact that Ombimindwaa only screens in child welfare cases that require a child welfare response. This data strongly suggests that by providing family preservation early in the process, only those families that require non-voluntary court intervention are being served by child welfare response workers. We will monitor this data point in future years to see if remains high.

Data element 6: Number of alleged child victims where safety plan was warranted/ completed.

Data element 6 is not reported in SSIS and therefore limited data exists on how many safety plans were completed. In 2021, no data were provided and in 2022, 15.6% of safety plans were documented in Procentive. This does not show an accurate count of all safety plans completed. Like family assessments, data element 3, Ombimindwaa best practice is for response workers to complete safety plans, when needed, with families. Safety plans may be informal such as a conversation rather than a formal written plan that is documented in case files. Other times completed safety plans are handwritten or typed but not added to SSIS. This may reflect the emergency response nature of the work. This is an area for staff improvement through training, supervision and data input. Red Lake's 2024 summer staff training is specifically addressing safety planning and will stress the importance of documentation.

Looking Forward

The Red Lake Nation and Ombimindwaa began a historical journey by asserting sovereignty and full jurisdiction over its tribal child welfare cases in 2021. In start-up years 2021 and 2022, a great deal was accomplished, gaps were identified, and strategies were developed that will be implemented in the years to come. As part of that, our agency will continue to develop and refine its services and reporting capacity to meet the contractual agreement in a way that provides an accurate picture of practice and outcomes. Full implementation of Beraton will be a big step in the right direction. There are many opportunities that Ombimindwaa leadership and staff are ready to embrace as we move into the future.