

# Print Media and Public Opinion Indigenous Child Removal in Saskatchewan

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## Introduction

During the infamous Sixties Scoop, thousands of Indigenous children were forcibly removed from their families and placed into the Canadian child welfare system. Although Indigenous adoption was promoted nationwide, Saskatchewan was the only province with a specialized adoption program that targeted exclusively Indigenous children. Beginning in 1967, the Adopt Indian Métis (AIM) program organized an advertisement campaign where photographs of Indigenous children available for adoption were placed across newspapers in the attempt to gather interest in adoption and fostering.

**AIM seeks to find homes  
for Indian, Metis children**

## Methodology

- Examined content in two leading newspapers (*Saskatoon Star Phoenix* and *Regina Leader-Post*) from 1960s to 1980s
- Analysis of AIM advertisements and their use of child images and descriptions
- Analysis of news articles, letters, and other content on AIM program and Indigenous child adoptions to reveal public opinions

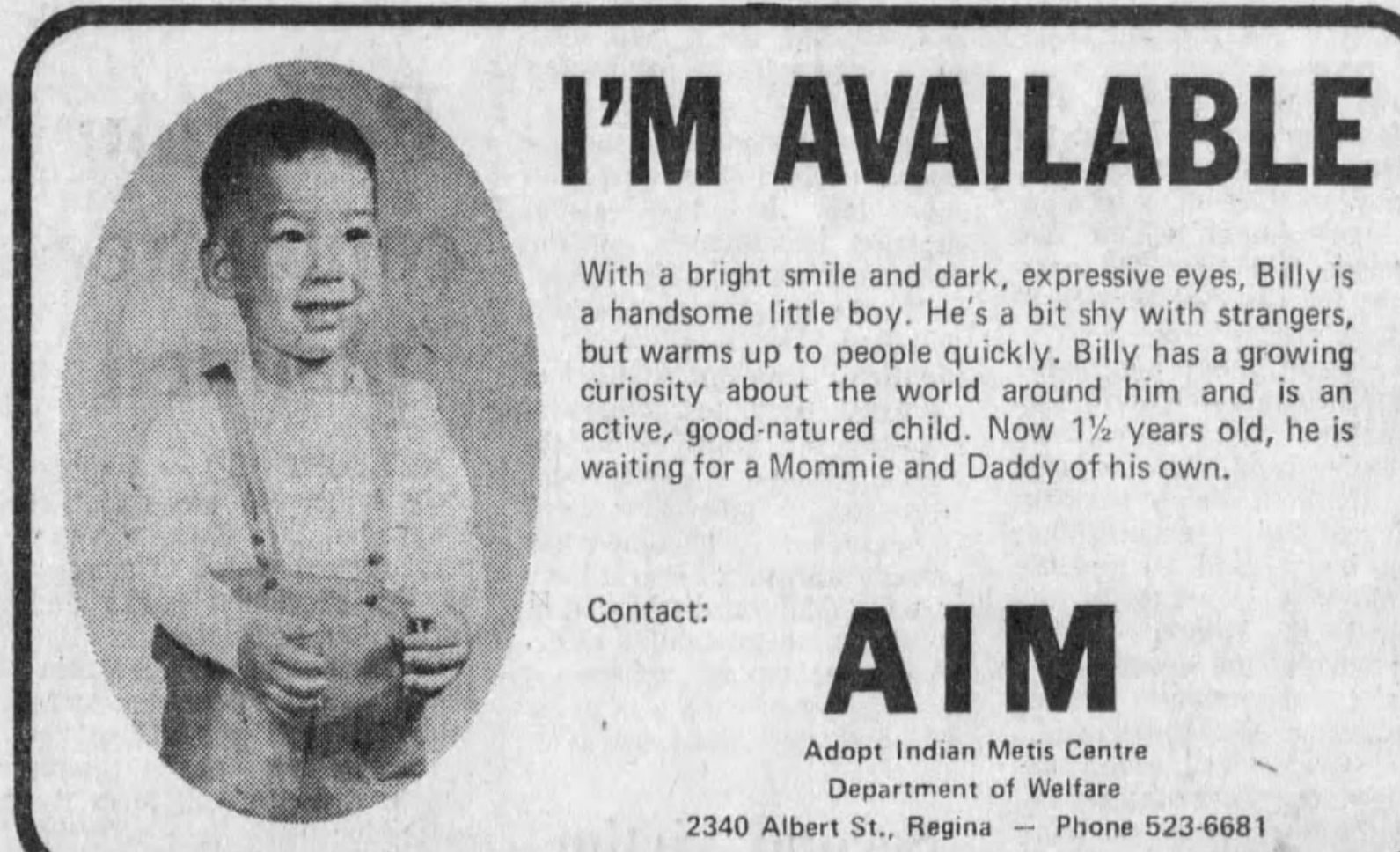
## Initial Findings

- Child's physical appearance and personality traits used to appeal prospective adoptive parents
- White, middle-class couples targeted as ideal adoptive parents
- Indigenous children were modelled as "acceptable" family members
- Saskatchewan public had a predominantly positive impression of program

**AIM results  
said splendid**

The Saskatchewan govern- the province, was launched  
ment's program in 1967  
ment's program in 1967

# Newspaper publications played an active role in persuading the Saskatchewan public in accepting the Sixties Scoop.



**I'M AVAILABLE**

With a bright smile and dark, expressive eyes, Billy is a handsome little boy. He's a bit shy with strangers, but warms up to people quickly. Billy has a growing curiosity about the world around him and is an active, good-natured child. Now 1½ years old, he is waiting for a Mommie and Daddy of his own.

Contact:

**AIM**  
Adopt Indian Metis Centre  
Department of Welfare  
2340 Albert St., Regina — Phone 523-6681



**LAURIE NEEDS A HOME!**



Would you like to have a pretty little Metis girl as part of your family? Laurie is very much in need of adopting parents of Roman Catholic faith. She is an active little girl; her green eyes and brown hair make her quite attractive. She is presently in grade one and has developed a keen interest in music. Interested couples are asked to contact:

**A.I.M.**  
**ADOPT INDIAN METIS CENTRE**  
Department of Welfare  
2340 Albert Street, Regina Telephone 523-6681

## Discussion

- Research reveals role of newspapers in facilitating and normalizing Indigenous child apprehensions during the Sixties Scoop
- Advances our understanding of specific processes that enabled this program to do its harmful work
- Highlights importance of research into role of mass media in supporting colonial programs that relied on public approval and even participation to succeed

**Adoption: 'rescue aspect' appeals to prospective parents**

## How did AIM impact Indigenous people?

- Portrayed Indigenous people as unfit to parent a child
- Promoted the idea that Indigenous children needed "saving"
- Reinforced stereotypical racial constructions of Indigenous people
- Indirectly contributed to an image of Indigenous children as undesirable to adopt
- Reinforced the idea that white, middle-class couples can raise Indigenous children better than Indigenous families and communities

## Indigenous Resistance Against AIM

It is important to note that Indigenous communities did not stay passive during Saskatchewan's AIM program. Early research findings reveal that Indigenous organizations like the Saskatchewan Native Women's Movement (SNWM) and the Métis Society actively challenged AIM and the province's welfare policies.

## Suggested Reading

Stevenson, Allyson D. *Intimate Integration: A History of the Sixties Scoop and the Colonization of Indigenous Kinship*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2020.

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undergraduate  
research  
symposium

SFU SIMON FRASER  
UNIVERSITY

**Chances of less-adoptable child improving**

By BEN POSE  
The chances of a less-adoptable child improving are slim, according to a new study by researchers at the University of Regina. The study, published in the journal *Child Welfare*, found that children who are adopted at a young age are more likely to be adopted by a family that is not the biological family. This is because biological families are more likely to be able to care for their own children. The study also found that children who are adopted at a later age are more likely to be adopted by a family that is not the biological family. This is because biological families are more likely to be able to care for their own children. The study also found that children who are adopted at a later age are more likely to be adopted by a family that is not the biological family. This is because biological families are more likely to be able to care for their own children.