



February 10, 2022

VIA E-MAIL & MAIL

Ref: 267489

NAME  
ORGANIZATION  
E-mail: E-MAIL

Dear NAME:

Our government is committed to reconciliation and, as Minister of Children and Family Development, I will work with Indigenous Peoples to transform child and family services in British Columbia to deliver services that meet the needs of Indigenous children, youth and families and addresses the systemic overrepresentation of those children and youth in the child welfare system. This includes working with Indigenous governing bodies towards exercising jurisdiction for child and family services and continued dialogue with Indigenous communities that are planning for increased decision-making authority or jurisdiction. In doing so, we pledge to embark in partnership on a collaborative journey that is consistent with the provincial *Declaration Act*, the federal *Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families* and the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*.

Our focus in the design of reformed legislation, regulation and any new policy or system of supports for children and youth must reflect those human rights principles and legislative obligations, as well as our [Letter of Commitment](#) sent on August 31, 2021, to the First Nations Leadership Council. This letter commits the ministry to actively engage and co-develop policy, practice and legislation changes with Indigenous Peoples (including First Nations, Métis and Inuit).

For the ministry, that requires us to reflect on the history of colonialism and racism, including in residential schools, that affects all our systems of support. We acknowledge this will be a major shift for the ministry that requires structural change and that there is substantial work to be done with your partnership. There are large scale system-wide changes that need to be addressed. For example, we are committed to reforming the *Child, Family and Community Service Act*, the legislation that guides the work of social workers and the child welfare system in British Columbia.

In addition to these broad changes, there are also more focused changes required for legislation, policy and practice. We will seek your input and create space to listen so we understand how to ensure more immediate changes support a long-term vision for child and family services that are culturally appropriate, and support positive outcomes, connected families and healthy communities.

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Ministry of  
Children and Family  
Development

Office of the  
Minister

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Victoria BC V8V 1X4

Location:  
Parliament Buildings  
Victoria

As we work to decolonize services, we want our invitations for engagement to be accessible, predictable and transparent. There are several ways we will keep you informed of the work that is happening and provide opportunities to be involved.

These include:

- A regular newsletter (see enclosure) that will describe all priority initiatives, how you can participate and who you can contact should you want to engage directly;
- A single Web site link with updated information that you can access any time to check our progress: [www.gov.bc.ca/mcfdtransformation](http://www.gov.bc.ca/mcfdtransformation);
- Correspondence directly to Indigenous Peoples to highlight significant initiatives;
- Web-based interactive opportunities to share your priorities, opinions and ideas when it is convenient for you, including surveys, consultation drafts, and discussion papers posted on [www.engage.gov.bc.ca](http://www.engage.gov.bc.ca);
- Engagement sessions with Indigenous Peoples for large-scale systemic changes;
- Special advisory circles for key systemic initiatives, including legal and technical advisory committees.

The newsletter is one of the many ways we will provide updates on the progress of our work together and opportunities for engagement. The newsletter will be shared with Indigenous Peoples, leadership partners and service providers including (but not limited to) the First Nations Leadership Council, Métis Nation British Columbia and Delegated Aboriginal Agencies. It will also be on our Web site.

We welcome input and I encourage you to participate in upcoming opportunities so that, together, we can successfully move forward and achieve real and meaningful change that respects your rights and improves services and supports for Indigenous children, youth and families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M. Dean". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly stylized font.

Mitzi Dean  
Minister

Enclosure

# Indigenous Child and Family Service Newsletter

Ministry of Children & Family Development | February 2022



Welcome to the first edition of a ministry newsletter meant to support our commitment to ongoing consultation and collaboration with Indigenous Peoples, partners and governments to develop legislation and services consistent with the provincial *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* and the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. We will listen to the children, youth and families we serve, knowing their voices and experiences are central to the creation of services that truly meet their needs.

## What's New

### Children and Youth with Support Needs Transformation

We recently announced changes to the Child and Youth with Support Needs services. The current array of services dramatically underserves Indigenous Peoples.

There are many paths forward and we want to engage with communities on their vision for how services are delivered to meet community needs.

Working with Indigenous advisors and communities we will ensure all of our services are welcoming for Indigenous families. We will engage with Indigenous Peoples on your vision for these services.

### Child, Family and Community Service Act Reform

This is a critical reform of child welfare legislation. The Act has not kept pace with the need for decolonization and contributes to the over representation of Indigenous children and youth in care.

This reform will:

- Promote positive changes to services
- Support Indigenous jurisdiction and shared decision making
- Align with the *Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families* (federal), and the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (provincial)

Indigenous Peoples must have every opportunity to drive these changes. We are working with Indigenous partners, including distinctions-based advisory circles (First Nations and Métis), so their knowledge and input can guide engagement as we develop new policy and legislation together.

#### Feedback opportunity

- Consultations with Indigenous Peoples will begin in early 2022
- For information contact Nimmi Takkar at [nimmi.takkar@gov.bc.ca](mailto:nimmi.takkar@gov.bc.ca)
- Learn more at [www.gov.bc.ca/ChildYouthSupportNeeds](http://www.gov.bc.ca/ChildYouthSupportNeeds)

#### Feedback Opportunity

- Engagement will begin in early 2022
- For information contact Emily Horton at [emily.horton@gov.bc.ca](mailto:emily.horton@gov.bc.ca)

*The Ministry of Children and Family Development gratefully acknowledges that it conducts its work on the traditional territories of Indigenous Peoples throughout British Columbia.*

## Early Learning and Child Care

Through the Childcare BC Plan, we are creating thousands of quality, affordable child care spaces, building better facilities, and training more people to become early childhood educators.

We value your input and would like to know what you think is most critical as we continue to evolve early learning and child care.

We also want to hear from child care providers, community service partners, parent organizations, local governments, school districts and child care advocates.

There will be several ways to participate over the coming months including specific opportunities for Indigenous Peoples to design the path forward for distinctions-based child care for First Nations, Métis and Inuit families.

### Feedback Opportunity

- Engagement began in December 2021
- For information contact the Childcare BC Engagement Team at [childcarebc.engagement@gov.bc.ca](mailto:childcarebc.engagement@gov.bc.ca)
- Learn more or sign up for notifications at [www.gov.bc.ca/childcarebcengagement](http://www.gov.bc.ca/childcarebcengagement)



## Specialized Homes and Support Services

Supporting children and youth by intervening earlier and with better supports is a priority for the ministry.

We will establish a responsive network of Specialized Homes and Support Services for children and youth needing more than what community-based and outreach services can provide them.

In addition to collecting feedback online, the ministry is also meeting regularly with Delegated Aboriginal Agencies representatives.

### Feedback Opportunity

- Provide feedback online at [www.engage.gov.bc.ca](http://www.engage.gov.bc.ca)
- For information contact Emily Horton at [emily.horton@gov.bc.ca](mailto:emily.horton@gov.bc.ca)



# Work in Progress

## Indigenous Child & Family Services Jurisdiction

We are currently meeting with five Indigenous Governing Bodies who are seeking to exercise jurisdiction for child and family services under the *Federal Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families*. Along with representatives from the federal government, we are working with the Indigenous Governing Bodies to support the development of tripartite coordination agreements.

We continue to work with First Nations and Métis as they pursue their self-determined goals of increased authority, decision making and/or jurisdiction over child and family matters.

## Policy and Practice Adjustments

The ministry regularly makes smaller focused changes to specific policies or practices in order to bring them into alignment with the federal Act, to provide clarity to staff and service providers, or address input and recommendations from those we serve and oversight bodies. As we move forward we will include information about those proposed changes and seek your input.

## What Engagement Will Look Like

There is a lot of work we need to do to rethink and co-develop legislation, policy and service delivery to reflect a new approach to child welfare.

As we work to decolonize services in the best interests of Indigenous children and youth, we want our invitations for consultation to be accessible, predictable and transparent.

We are developing ways to ensure you have access to important information and how you can be engaged including:

- This newsletter describing priority initiatives
- A single website link with updated information
- Web-based opportunities to share your feedback
- Engagement sessions to engage and consult
- Special advisory circles for key systemic initiatives
- Direction/discussion papers and consultation drafts

### For Information

- For information contact Denise Devenny at [denise.devenny@gov.bc.ca](mailto:denise.devenny@gov.bc.ca)



### For Information

- Learn more at [www.gov.bc.ca/mcfdtransformation](http://www.gov.bc.ca/mcfdtransformation)

## We Want to Hear From You

Do you have feedback about this newsletter?  
We would love to hear it!

Send it to us at  
[mcf.engagement@gov.bc.ca](mailto:mcf.engagement@gov.bc.ca)