



NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Children and Family Development
B.C. First Nations Leadership Council

B.C., FIRST NATIONS SIGN CHILDREN AND FAMILIES PROTOCOL

VICTORIA – The Ministry of Children and Family Development and the political executive of the B.C. Assembly of First Nations, the First Nations Summit and the Union of BC Indian Chiefs who form the First Nations Leadership Council have signed a Recognition and Reconciliation Protocol on First Nations Children, Youth and Families, an agreement to establish a common vision for First Nations child and family wellness in B.C.

“We have made significant progress in building a relationship of trust in working with First Nations since the Tsawwassen Accord in 2002. Over the last year in particular, discussions with First Nations leaders have been constructive to move forward with a nation to nation relationship that respects First Nation jurisdiction over children and families,” said Tom Christensen, Minister of Children and Family Development. “This protocol advances our shared goal of improving outcomes for First Nations children and families.”

The protocol establishes the principles upon which the First Nations Leadership Council and the Ministry of Children and Family Development will continue to work together, as well as a framework to support First Nations communities to exercise jurisdiction and responsibility for children, youth and families.

The next step is to jointly develop a comprehensive action plan to ensure child and family services are delivered to First Nations in a manner that respects and reflects their traditions and laws. An Interim First Nations Child and Family Wellness Council has been established by First Nations and will take the lead on work under the protocol.

“We are very pleased that First Nations have created an interim First Nations Child and Family Wellness Council with the expertise and leadership to achieve real progress on this most urgent of issues,” said Grand Chief Doug Kelly of the First Nations Summit and member of the First Nations Leadership Council. “We are fully confident that this protocol, which establishes a true collaborative partnership between the interim Council and the Province, can result in transformative change for First Nations children, youth and families in B.C.”

“The Interim First Nations Child and Family Wellness Council is a coming together of B.C. First Nations on the principles of First Nations jurisdiction and placing our children at the centre,” said Chief Robert Chamberlin, wellness council spokesperson. “We are committed to achieving the full realization of these principles on-the-ground in our communities and the signing of this protocol is an important first step.

“Our commitment, as Indigenous Nations, remains unbroken as we stand together for the survival, dignity, and well-being of our children. It is our sacred duty for those yet born to stand-up for our indigenous laws to ensure our children are safe and have a strong sense of belonging and identity,” said Chief Wayne Christian, wellness council spokesperson. “Today marks a positive step in our work together, in a government to government relationship, and we must continue to move forward in this community driven, Nation based process so that our children thrive not only today, but in the generations to come.”

The Recognition and Reconciliation Protocol builds significantly on the shared commitment of First Nations and the Ministry of Children and Family Development to improve the well-being of First Nations children, youth and families across the province. To view the protocol, please visit: www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/publications/Recognition_Reconciliation_Protocol.pdf

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