

newsletter

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Update on the Case for First Nations Kids

Negotiations for Long-Term Reform

On December 31, 2021, the Parties to the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal complaint reached an Agreement in Principle (AIP) on Long-Term Reform of the First Nations Child and Family Services (FNCFS) Program and Jordan's Principle.

While an important first step, the AIP is non-binding. It is a pre-agreement that lays out a path for reaching a final agreement to meet the Tribunal's orders, end Canada's discriminatory conduct, and ensure the discrimination is not repeated.

The AIP sets out \$19.8 billion over five years for a reformed approach to funding First Nations child and family services, for capital assets related to the FNCFS Program, and capital assets for Jordan's Principle. The Reformed Funding Approach comes from a three-phase study by the Institute of Fiscal Studies and Democracy (IFSD) on outcomes-based funding approaches for child and family services and will be further refined according to feedback from First Nations agencies piloting the approach.

As part of the AIP, the Parties also agreed to seek a consent order from the Tribunal for immediate measures. A consent order is an order that sets out terms agreed to by all Parties. The Tribunal issued this consent order (2022 CHRT 8) on March 24, 2022. It orders Canada to provide \$2,500 per First Nations person on reserve and in the Yukon for child welfare prevention services and to fund at actual cost post-majority supports for federally funded youth aging out of care and First Nations young adults who have aged out of care up to age 26.

The Parties are working towards a Final Settlement Agreement, which will be binding and include a dispute resolution mechanism to hold Canada accountable after the Tribunal ends its jurisdiction.

Another AIP was signed for compensating First Nations children and families affected by Canada's discrimination in First Nations child welfare and Jordan's Principle. The Caring Society is not a signatory to this AIP but maintains that compensation must uphold the minimum standard set out in the Tribunal orders. The final agreement on compensation is in progress.

For more information on the Agreements in Principle, including information sheets, please visit fnwitness.ca.

For more information on compensation, please reach out to Sotos Class Actions at sotosclassactions.com/cases/first-nations-youth.

"First and foremost, we pay tribute to the children lost in residential schools; we pay tribute to the Residential School and Sixties Scoop survivors and youth, and to the young people and families who have been harmed due to Canada's ongoing discriminatory conduct. We must acknowledge that their truth-telling set the path for this progress to ensure that they are receiving the justice that is owed."

—First Nations Child & Family Caring Society
January 4, 2022 statement



Children Back, Land Back

Led by the Assembly of Seven Generations (A7G), *Children Back, Land Back* provides recommendations from First Nations youth in care and former youth in care on reforms required in the First Nations Child and Family Services Program and Jordan's Principle to end the discrimination and prevent its recurrence. Organizers held two focus groups and a national survey to gather input from First Nations youth experts to inform the negotiations that led to the AIP on long-term reform.

A7G is a youth-led non-profit organization based in Ottawa focused on cultural support and empowerment programs and policies for Indigenous youth while being guided by traditional knowledge and Elder guidance.

The young people who participated made clear how crucial it is to hear from First Nations youth in and from care because they know the problems and solutions first-hand, and any decisions made about them intimately affect their lives. As stated in the report, "It is not understated to say that amplifying First Nations youth voices in and from care and committing to the changes they need is a matter of life and death."

First Nations young people made the following recommendations to ensure the thriving of First Nations children, youth, families, and communities:

- 1 Acknowledgement of harm by governments across Canada followed by action to redress.
- 2 Creation of youth in care accountability mechanism to hold Canada accountable to Indigenous children and youth.

Continued on following page

Update on the Case for First Nations Kids (continued)

- 3 Ethical Indigenous youth standards accompanied by accountability and reviews to ensure those who work with youth in care adhere to an ethical standards.
- 4 Keeping families together by ensuring they have access to culturally relevant supports and services.
- 5 Fair and equitable funding that centres the well-being of children and young people.
- 6 Commitment to restoring and preserving Indigenous cultures and languages.
- 7 A moratorium and evaluation of discriminatory or problematic programs and policies.
- 8 Family reunification services supporting youth in and from care who wish to reconnect with their family and community.
- 9 Supports to transition to adulthood that ensure youth in care thrive as they age out of the child welfare system.
- 10 Establishing a national network of Indigenous youth in/from care to ensure they are involved in decision-making that impacts child welfare.
- 11 Creation of a Foundation to offer opportunities for children and youth in care to participate in community-based projects

Read the full report at a7g.ca/reports.

Bear Witness Day

Bear Witness Day is celebrated annually on May 10! Bear Witness Day is Spirit Bear's *bear*thday and it is a day where we honour Jordan River Anderson. The day calls on Canada to respect the legacy of Jordan River Anderson by fully implementing Jordan's Principle.



There are many ways to honour Jordan, learn about Jordan's Principle and celebrate Bear Witness Day. People of all ages are invited to bring their teddy bears with them to school or work on May 10. You can host a teddy bear tea party in your class or at home and read *Spirit Bear and Children Make History!* The film, *Spirit Bear and Children Make History*, will also be available to view for free around Bear Witness Day.

Be sure to spread the word and share your celebrations on social media using the hashtags **#JordansPrinciple** and **#BearWitnessDay**.

Check out our website for more ways to celebrate Bear Witness Day at fncaringsociety.com/BearWitness.

Reconciliation Ambearristers Spotlight

The Reconciliation Ambearrister we want to highlight is Maskwa! Maskwa was given to Mrs. Oldnall and her Grade 4 class at Thickwood Heights Elementary School as a part of the Reconciliation Ambearrister program. Maskwa is from the Mikisew Cree Nation in Fort Chipewyan, Alberta.

Mrs. Oldnall shares that the class feels honoured to be a part of the Reconciliation Ambearrister program and are very grateful for the Caring Society's resources showing the complete and true history of the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada. Spirit Bear's Guide to the Truth and Reconciliation (TRC) Calls to Action have kept their school on track and teachers come back to them time and again as a reference.

Shirley-Ann Oldnall, alongside other teachers, has used the Caring Society resources to make a commitment to learning about reconciliation thus building a foundation for change. For example, teachers use the resources to explain the reasons why Shannen Koostachin

wanted a safe and comfy school for her community in ways that connect to colonialism, assimilation and the inequities First Nations children face and also how they can act.

Their Ambearrister, Maskwa has become the symbol of reconciliation in their school community. Teachers and students think carefully about what they can do, and then go back to the TRC Calls to Action; a reiterative process facilitates critical thinking. This has opened the door to so many other initiatives like jam making for Elders, art installations of book characters, poetry and crafts, and each one of these activities is prefaced by learning, research and understanding. With Maskwa, Mrs. Oldnall's class have all become aware that they need to do better, and they know that they can.



To learn more about Reconciliation Ambearristers, please visit fncaringsociety.com/Reconciliation-Ambearristers.

Honouring Memories, Planting Dreams

Celebrated in May and June, Honouring Memories, Planting Dreams invites people of all ages to plant heart gardens in memory of children lost to the residential school system, to honour residential school survivors and their families, and support the legacy of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). Alongside your garden, you can make your own heart messages (with paper/recyclable resources) and place them in your local community garden too. The act of planting represents our commitment to reconciliation.

Like planting a garden, taking part in reconciliation takes ongoing attention and learning. Representing the process of reconciliation, a garden is alive and requires our collective care and commitment to prosper. Both are places where knowledge and action meet, where we honour the past, and prepare for the future. Spirit Bear teaches us all about this in his free book, *Spirit Bear: Honouring Memories, Planting Dreams*. Read it with your class, family or at daycare. There's even a learning guide to accompany the book to help guide your conversations for education and action!

Read more about how you can celebrate Honouring Memories, Planting Dreams at honouringmemoriesplantingdreams.ca.



New Financial Literacy Resource Now Available!

The Caring Society is excited to announce the launch of a new resource on financial literacy for Indigenous peoples, developed in partnership with the Royal Bank of Canada (RBC): <https://www.rbc.com/indigenous/financial-literacy-for-indigenous-peoples.html>.

The Caring Society and RBC created the Financial Literacy for Indigenous Peoples Course in response to a recommendation from First Nations youth who gathered

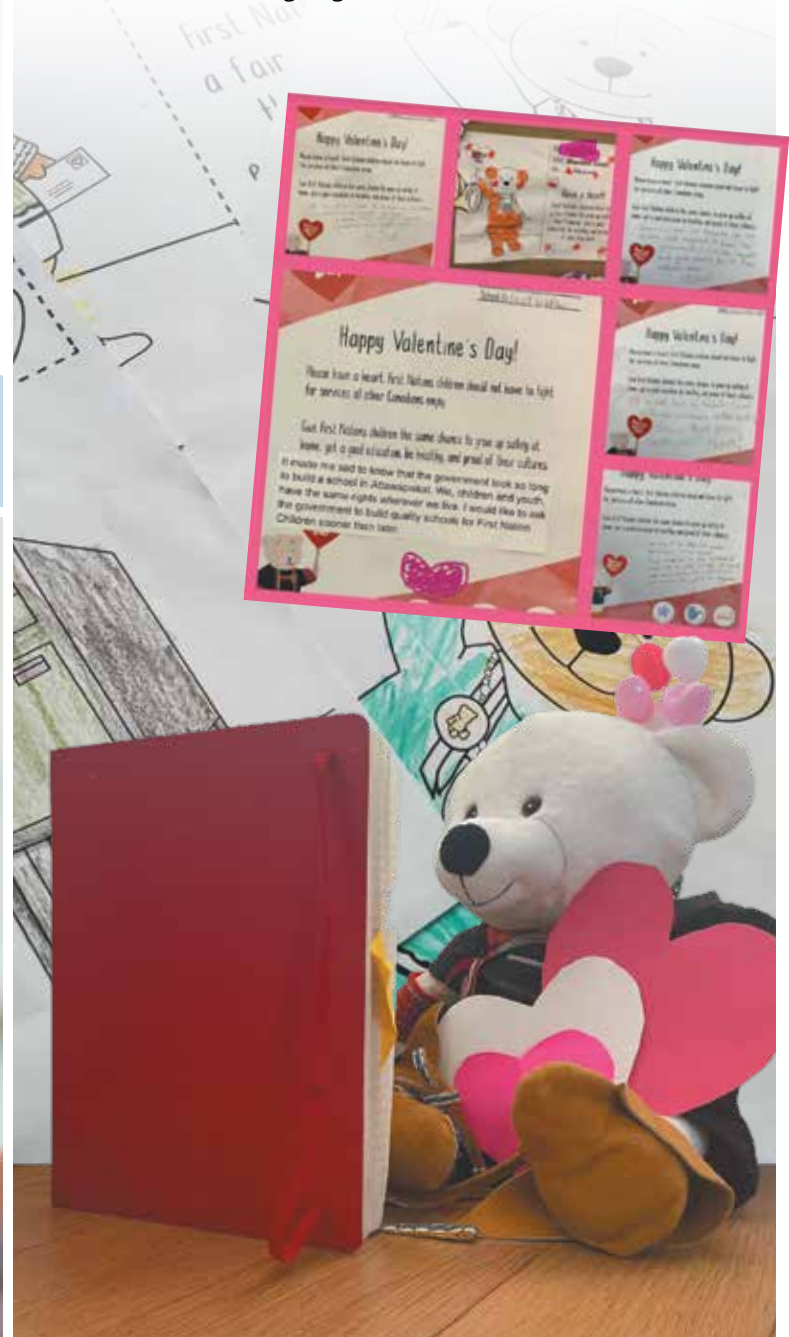
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Have a Heart Day

Have a Heart Day was celebrated on February 14, 2022! Schools and communities participated virtually this year and it was a great success! We witnessed the strength of children and youths' voices by demonstrating their commitment to reconciliation and ending discrimination against First Nations kids. Many wrote letters and messages to provincial, municipal, and federal government officials to stand against discrimination. Others learned more about Jordan River Anderson and Shannen Koostachin. Many created their own Spirit Bear Plans and responded to his guide for enacting the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action.

We would like to share the amazing schools, families, children, and youth who have demonstrated how big their hearts are to the ongoing work of reconciliation!



Financial Literacy (continued)

in 2019 to talk about the changes needed to child welfare and the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal (Tribunal) ruling on compensation. The Tribunal ordered Canada to pay \$40,000 to eligible First Nations children, their parents or grandparents affected by the government's discrimination in child welfare and Jordan's Principle. Access to financial literacy information is also a recommendation made by residential school survivors in past reports.

The course is broadly designed and intended to be a resource for all Indigenous peoples. Care was taken to address topics raised by the Youth Advisors, such as the need for information about predatory financial institutions. The Youth Advisors also talked about how recipients might use the compensation, such as making a down payment on a house, post-secondary education, or supporting training and participation in competitive sports. In response, the course covers key subjects like the basics of money and banking, protecting one's money, managing debt and credit, and saving and investing. The course takes about two hours to complete, and users can work through it at their own pace.

Read the 2019 report from First Nations youth at fncaringsociety.com/publications/justice-equity-and-culture-first-ever-yicc-gathering-first-nations-youth-advisors.

Mind Control and Colonization

Melisa Brittain, FNCARES



First Nations Children's Action Research and Education Service

On December 8, 2021, FNCARES presented

a virtual talk on Mind Control and Colonization. Dr. Cindy Blackstock began by discussing how propaganda has always been part of colonialism, forming the government's messaging, shaping non-Indigenous views of First Nations, and helping to create a climate that enables human rights violations and ongoing injustices. Dr. Blackstock discussed how she and other First Nations peoples are also influenced by colonial propaganda and often form relationships with government in ways that reinforce it. For Dr. Blackstock, Dr. Steven Hassan's work on mind control has the potential to help disrupt limited thinking, affirm First Nations ways of knowing, and allow for true self-determination.

Next, Dr. Steven Hassan, founder of **Freedom of Mind Resource Centre** and internationally recognized expert on cults, brainwashing, and authoritarian control, outlined his theory of mind control, including the BITE model and influence continuum. He explained how, as a means of gaining and maintaining coercive control, colonial governments assert undue influence

Participants, clockwise from top left: Dr. Pamela Palmater, Dr. Melisa Brittain (moderator), Dr. Steven Hassan, Dr. Cindy Blackstock.

and authority over Indigenous peoples in ways that can create a sense of individual and cultural insecurity.

Dr. Pamela Palmater, Mi'kmaq citizen, lawyer, and Professor and Chair in Indigenous Governance at X University, then spoke about how colonial ideology tries to silence, villainize, and control First Nations people who intervene in the discourse of "Canada the good." We must, she asserted, continue to disrupt state propaganda, political rhetoric, corporate mantras, white supremacy, and anti-First Nation racism that allows for the continuation of the "worst and longest-running genocide to continue unabated in Canada," the blaming of First Nations, and the internalization of blame by First Nations peoples.

Watch the full panel discussion here at bit.ly/MindControlColonization.



First Nations Child & Family Caring Society of Canada

Membership Information

If you would like to join the First Nations Child & Family Caring Society as a Member under one of the following categories:

Individual Membership: \$75

Student Membership with ID or Elder: \$5

Small FNCFCFS Agency Membership (1-50 employees): \$500

Large FNCFCFS Agency Membership (50+ employees): \$1,000

Small Associate Membership (Organizations with 1-50 employees): \$500

Large Associate Membership (Organizations with 50+ employees): \$1,000

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