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- [Français](#)
[Home](#)
[Regional Offices](#)
- [Contact Us](#)
[What's New](#)
[Electronic Services](#)
- [Help](#)
[About INAC](#)
[Programs & Services](#)
- [Search](#)
[News Room](#)
[Publications & Research](#)
- [Canada Site](#)
[Site Map](#)
[Art, Culture & History](#)

[A - Z Index](#)

[News Releases](#)

[Indian & Inuit Art](#)

[Northern Affairs Program](#)

[Employment](#)

[Education](#)

[Kids' Stop](#)

[Treaties](#)

[Status - F.A.Q.](#)

[Programs](#)

[Services](#)

[PSAB](#)

[Sustainable Development](#)



First Nations Child and Family Services Program

Objective

The main objective of the First Nations Child & Family Services (FNCFS) Program is to assist First Nations in providing access to culturally sensitive child and family services in their communities, and to ensure that the services provided to First Nations children and their families on-reserve are comparable to those available to other provincial residents in similar circumstances.

To this end, the program funds and promotes the development and expansion of child and family services agencies designed, managed and controlled by First Nations. Since child and family services is an area of provincial jurisdiction, these First Nation agencies receive their mandate and authorities from provincial or territorial governments and function in a manner consistent with existing provincial or territorial child and family services legislation. In areas where First Nations Child & Family Services agencies do not exist, DIAND funds service which is provided by provincial or territorial organizations or departments.

Background

The DIAND First Nations Child & Family Services Program is one component of Social Policy & Programs, which include Adult Care, Children's Programs, Social Assistance, Family Violence Prevention and other social services that address individual and family well-being.

Several Cabinet and Treasury Board decisions since the 1960's have granted DIAND approval and funding to enter into agreements with provinces, territories and First Nations organizations for the delivery of child welfare services for on-reserve First Nations children and their families.

DIAND expenditures for child and family services on reserve have increased more than 61% from 1992 to 1999, Much of the increase was due to the establishment of FNCFS agencies in jurisdictions where previously the provinces had been providing only minimal services on-reserve.

In 1997-1998, there were 79 First Nations Child & Family Services agencies delivering services to over 70% of on-reserve children and youth across Canada, from birth to 18 years of age. In the same year, another 36 agencies (primarily in Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia) were in various stages of planning and development. It is estimated that all of the organizations currently in development will be in operation by 2001-2002, at which time 91 percent of the on-reserve population in Canada will be receiving services from First Nations Child & Family Services agencies.

Eligibility

The First Nations Child & Family Services Program provides services, where authorized, to registered First Nations individuals living on-reserve. First Nations Child & Family Services agencies are administered by First Nations, in co-operation with provincial or territorial authorities.

Key Initiatives

First Nations Child & Family Services Joint National Policy Review : DIAND and First Nations jointly initiated a review of DIAND's national policy with respect to First Nation Child & Family Services, to be undertaken jointly with the Assembly of First Nations. The review was undertaken consistent with Canada's commitment to work with First Nations in a spirit of partnership. The purpose of the review was to identify how the current policy could be improved to better meet the objectives of assisting in the development and establishment of First Nations Child & Family Service agencies that provide culturally sensitive child and family services to First Nation people on-reserve at a level comparable to services provided in similar circumstances. It was completed in June 2000. Copies are available from the Assembly of First Nations.

Block Funding: DIAND is exploring the use of block funding. The objective of block funding is to provide First Nations Child & Family Service agencies with the flexibility to re-allocate a portion of the maintenance dollars currently restricted to providing services for children in care, according to their own priorities. This could enhance program efficiency and effectiveness if money could be re-allocated to services for children in their own homes.

Compliance Activities: As part of DIAND's effort to develop measures that ensure accountability to the Parliament of Canada and First Nation people themselves, compliance methodologies are being developed for programs which are reimbursed on the basis of actual expenditures. To this end, a compliance methodology is being considered for the maintenance component of the First Nations Child & Family Services program.

- [Frequently Asked Questions](#)

Contact Info:

For further information on the Child and Family Services program in your community, contact the [DIAND regional office](#) nearest you.

Other Links:

- [Provincial or Territorial Government departments of social service](#)
- [First Nations Child and Family Services](#)

[Back to Index Page](#)

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[Important Notices](#)