

# Walking as One: Ministerial Panel on Child Intervention’s Final Recommendations to the Minister of Children’s Services

Principles	Recommendation
<p><b>Co-creating a positive future</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ensure Children’s Services applies specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely criteria to all the Panel recommendations within six weeks and send revised recommendations to the expert panel members for review, final ratification and public release.</li> <li>2. Ensure meaningful participation of Indigenous Peoples — First Nation, Métis and Inuit leaders and experts in the development and implementation of a thorough, detailed and measurable action plan related to the Panel’s recommendations by June 30, 2018.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Reconciliation</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Support development of partnerships and formal agreements to take action on the recommendations of the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Canadian Human Rights Tribunal decisions on First Nations child welfare.</li> <li>✓ Calls to action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.</li> <li>✓ United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.</li> <li>✓ Recommendations of the Child and Youth Advocate of Alberta.</li> </ul> <p><i>Measurable progress will require evidence of meaningful partnerships and formal agreements, as well as availability of resources, whether financial, human or other to support the development and implementation of community specific priorities.</i></p> </li> <li>4. Ensure First Nation, Métis and Inuit peoples and communities have opportunity and adequate resources for meaningful participation in developing culturally relevant policy and legislation to serve and care for their children. <p><i>Measurable progress will require evidence of increased Indigenous participation in developing policy and legislative processes and decision making; with recognition First Nation participation, priorities and needed resources will vary by community.</i></p> </li> <li>5. Collaborate with and invest in communities to enhance their capacity to self-determine the creation and implementation of programs and services. <p><i>Measurable progress will require evidence of increased participation of Indigenous Peoples in creating and implementing their own programs and services related to the child intervention system while recognizing that additional resources may be needed as partnerships move forward.</i></p> </li> <li>6. Fully implement Jordan’s Principle to resolve jurisdictional disputes between Alberta and the federal government regarding payment for services to First Nations children — services that are otherwise available to all other children in the province.</li> </ol>

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*Measurable progress will require evidence that First Nations children are receiving the services they need in a timely way, as well as increased collaboration and necessary resources between all orders of government to achieve this goal.*

7. Work with Indigenous communities to provide community-based historic trauma healing services, which include access to ceremony and cultural healing.

*Measurable progress will require evidence of new or enhanced trauma-informed, community-based services that include access to ceremony, culture and healing that are led by Indigenous organizations and communities, in partnership with the Government of Alberta.*

## Support Families and Communities

8. The Government of Alberta, in collaboration with its service-delivery partners, continue to take action on addressing root causes for child intervention involvement, including: direct, long-term poverty-reduction strategies, family violence prevention, and access to meaningful, culturally congruent family supports.

*Measurable progress on addressing root cause issues will require the Government of Alberta to set cross-ministry priorities, mobilize resources, evaluate and measure progress on strategies and initiatives, and build on existing efforts where appropriate.*

9. Mental health and addiction services must have specific responsive, culturally appropriate, accessible services for children, youth and families in the child intervention system, with a focus on expanding access (including for Albertans living in remote communities, rural areas, on- and off-reserve) to preventative mental health and addictions services and treatment, including secure services. The Government of Alberta should prioritize implementation of recommendations of the Valuing Mental Health report to improve services for children and families before, during and after their involvement in the child intervention system.

*Measurable progress will require enhanced funding to increase access to culturally appropriate mental health and addiction services for all Albertans regardless of where they live in the province.*

10. Achieve equity in services to support the health and well-being of children receiving child intervention services regardless of where they live in Alberta, including children with disabilities and complex needs. Strategies to encourage recruitment and retention of staff in rural and remote regions should be pursued. This would include equity of services between Child Intervention families and those

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	<p>receiving Family Supports for Children with Disabilities (FSCD).</p> <p><i>Measurable progress will require:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>evidence of targeted efforts to recruit and retain staff in rural and remote areas and improve rates of staff retention; and</i></li> <li>• <i>evidence that children with disabilities and complex needs within the child intervention system are receiving the same level and types of resources and supports as those in FSCD.</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Sustain Cultural Connections</b></p>	<p><b>11.</b> Improve transitional supports for youth in care to adult supports, and post-secondary opportunities that will help them succeed in life. This would expand upon supports already in place.</p> <p><i>Measurable progress will require enhanced resources and increased cross ministry collaboration; as well as evidence of increased numbers of youth in care who have accessed the adult services they need and increased numbers of youth receiving needed supports to access and complete post-secondary education.</i></p> <p><b>12.</b> Ensure policies and practices for family assessment, case planning and child placement are culturally relevant to families, and serve to strengthen connection to families, kinship and community. Where changes are required, policies and practices must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Be reframed to reflect an Indigenous worldview.</li> <li>✓ Include opportunities for children to learn language and cultural practices.</li> </ul> <p><i>Measurable progress will require evidence of changes to child intervention policies and practices to reflect an Indigenous worldview, as defined through active participation from Indigenous peoples and communities, as well as an increase in the numbers of children and youth learning their language(s) and cultural practices.</i></p> <p><b>13.</b> In cases when it is not possible for a child to be cared for by family, extended family or community, ensure children are provided with opportunities for meaningful and demonstrable cultural and kinship connections and enduring relationships in stable, permanent homes.</p> <p><i>Measurable progress requires resources, supports and training to support children in stable, permanent homes with enduring relationships, including meaningful connections to community and kin, as well as developing and tracking measures of success around children's safety and well-being.</i></p>
<p><b>Utilize the Strengths of Family Systems and Kinship Care</b></p>	<p><b>14.</b> Require contracted agencies to provide services that respect and reflect the culture, language and spirituality of the people they</p>

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serve.

*Measurable progress will require evidence that contractors consistently provide services that respect and reflect the culture, language and spirituality of those served. This may require changes to the procurement process, additional monitoring and expanded cultural training for contracted service providers.*

15. Adopt a methodology of restorative practice to promote family participation in decisions that affect them, including family assessment, case planning and child placement.

*Measurable progress will require evidence of increased collaboration with, and participation of, families in decisions that affect them using restorative practices, particularly those related to assessment, case planning and child placement.*

16. Strengthen kinship care assessment and ensure that appropriate training and supports are in place for kinship care providers. Prioritize kinship placements, in line with best practice to support both safety and well-being.

*Measurable progress on a strengthened kinship care approach will require:*

- *evidence of enhanced and strengthened policies and practices, including assessment to support the safety and well-being of children in kinship homes*
- *evidence of enhanced training and resources for kinship providers; and*
- *culturally appropriate, evidence-based methods are in place to gather kinship caregiver input, and measure safety and well-being outcomes of children in kinship homes.*

17. Use diverse, culturally relevant collection methods to understand the experiences of all children, youth and families served to directly inform improvements to the quality of the child intervention system.

*Measurable progress will require the creation of findings of an ongoing research project that gathers feedback about the experiences of all families who come to the attention of the child intervention system. This will require the development of a culturally appropriate research methodology.*

### Support a Strong, Stable Workforce

18. Take action to ensure the workforce in Children's Services — including frontline, management and contracted agencies — reflects the population served by the Ministry. Recruit, train and retain staff with a culturally appropriate methodology.

*Measurable progress will require evidence of effective cultural understanding training for all staff and managers within Children's*

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	<p><i>Services, as well as targeted efforts to increase the number of Indigenous staff within the ministry. The department along with the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees and Corporate Human Resources will work together to establish targets and measures for a diverse workforce that reflects the culture of the children, youth and families served.</i></p> <p><b>19.</b> Undertake a formal review of the child intervention workplace with consultants chosen by management, employees, and the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees, and examine the need for more peer-support opportunities.</p> <p><i>Measurable progress will require completion of the workplace review within 12 months, monitoring of the effectiveness of a peer-support program, mentorship and other actions that may result from the review; and making timely adjustments as required.</i></p>
<p><b>Combatting Discriminatory Mindsets</b></p>	<p><b>20.</b> Support Albertans, through training, education and communication, to be more knowledgeable about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Indigenous Peoples, their history, and current realities of racism and discrimination.</li> <li>✓ The lasting effects of colonization on Indigenous families and its relationship to overrepresentation in the child intervention system.</li> </ul> <p><i>Measurable progress will require evidence of provincially available anti-racism public awareness materials and messages, as well as cultural understanding training for cross-ministry partners that is co-designed with Indigenous peoples and communities, and pre and post evaluation of cultural understanding and baseline data to measure public perceptions over time.</i></p>
<p><b>Enable the Change</b></p>	<p><b>21.</b> Update the <i>Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act</i> to ensure the Act:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ includes a broad inclusive understanding of family;</li> <li>✓ links the safety and well-being of children to cultural connectedness and diversity of child-rearing practices;</li> <li>✓ removes contradictions and ensures consistency throughout the Act; and</li> <li>✓ Clarifies the role of band designate.</li> </ul> <p><i>Measurable progress requires evidence of:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a review of the Act;</li> <li>• policy revision that aligns with the Panel's principles and recommendations; and</li> </ul>

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- *meaningful participation in the revision of legislation and policy from Indigenous peoples and communities.*

- 22.** Increase the post-secondary application, admissions and completion rate of Indigenous students in social work and related disciplines by working with Indigenous peoples, communities and post-secondary institutions to increase child intervention program capacity and improve program delivery.

*Measurable progress will require enhanced collaboration with post-secondary institutions and cross ministry partners to develop explicit strategies with targets and measures to attract, admit and support more Indigenous students to complete post-secondary programs in social work and related disciplines.*

- 23.** End the disparity in child protection and early intervention services for First Nations children living on-reserve in Alberta by:
- ✓ enhancing access to provincially funded, culturally relevant prevention and early intervention services,
  - ✓ advocating for funding equity from the federal government to adhere to the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal and fully implement the Truth and Reconciliation Commission recommendations related to improving the health and welfare of children, youth and families, and
  - ✓ In the absence of federal funding for equity in child protection, end the disparity with provincial funding.

*Measurable progress will require evidence of resource targets and increases to committed funding – whether provincial, federal or both – to provide child protection and early intervention services on First Nations reserves that are comparable to those available to children, youth and families in Alberta who live off-reserve.*

- 24.** The Government of Alberta will collaborate with Indigenous peoples and communities on Indigenous-led, collaborative research in alignment with First Nation Principles of OCAP Ownership, Control, Access and Possession by Indigenous communities. This research will include evaluating and informing child intervention policies and practices. Research funders will be encouraged to offer grants to prioritized projects in support of this recommendation.

*Measurable progress will require evidence of:*

- *the Government of Alberta's participation in community-based, Indigenous-led applied research partnerships that will enhance the quality and safety of care of children in the intervention system; and*

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- *adopt and align research projects to the principles of First Nation OCAP.*

**25.** The Government of Alberta will support and use research on emerging practice and policy to:

- ✓ determine the relative merit and impact of interventions over time, and
- ✓ identify future directions and alternative approaches

*Measurable progress will require evidence of ways that research is used to inform policy, alternative practice approaches and ongoing quality assurance.*

**26.** Conduct and use longitudinal research on short- and long-term outcomes associated with children who come to the attention of the child intervention system to inform decisions and improve future outcomes for children, youth and families.

*Measurable progress will require evidence of collaboration, processes with Indigenous and child intervention experts to develop and implement a clear methodology with benchmarks and timelines related to longitudinal research, as well as evidence of its use throughout policy development.*