
NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
2018CFD0042-001132
June 7, 2018

Ministry of Children and Family Development
Métis Nation British Columbia

Métis in B.C. set to take over control of their own child welfare

KAMLOOPS – The 90,000-strong Métis community in British Columbia is one step closer to taking over child welfare authority for their children and families, with the historic signing of an agreement between the Métis Nation British Columbia (MNBC) and the Province.

“Children deserve to grow up with their families and in their communities,” said Katrine Conroy, Minister of Children and Family Development. “By working together with Métis communities, we will help more kids grow up safe, happy and connected to their culture — upholding our commitment to implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.”

Conroy signed the MNBC and British Columbia Joint Commitment (Joint Commitment) with MNBC president Clara Morin Dal Col at a ceremony in Kamloops, setting the goal of transferring authority to MBNC by 2021.

The main objectives of the Joint Commitment are to significantly reduce the number of Métis children and youth in government care, support family preservation, and work on the legislative and other requirements to support transfer of authority over B.C.’s Métis children and families to MNBC.

“By signing this joint commitment, we assert the right to develop our own laws, our own policies, and our own practices in accordance with our traditions. As we reclaim authority, we will focus on the restoration of our most vulnerable children and families to our kinship networks, to our communities and to our Métis Nation,” said Dal Col. “We will focus on building a system of preservation and restoration, a system based on the successes of the five Métis child and family service agencies, for our people throughout the province. I am pleased to be working with the Province on this historic step forward for Métis children and families in B.C.”

Currently, the approximately 520 Métis children and youth in government care receive services through the ministry, through delegated Métis-serving agencies in Kamloops or Surrey, and, where agreed, through other delegated Aboriginal agencies around the province.

Following the transfer of authority, the ministry will be able to refer Métis children and families to Métis-specific child and family services as established by MNBC. Over the next three years, the ministry and MNBC will develop the requirements necessary for the legislative transfer of authority.

In September 2016, MNBC, the Métis Commission and the ministry established the Métis Working Table (MWT) to address systemic issues with services to Métis children and families. A Métis practice working table also focuses on social welfare practice issues related to planning for Métis children. The MWT will lead discussions to support the transfer of child welfare

jurisdiction.

Quick Facts:

- As of April 2018, there were approximately 520 Métis children in care (not including those under voluntary care or special needs agreements).
- There is no recognized land base for Métis in B.C., and they do not have the same funding relationship with the federal government as First Nations communities.
- The ministry provides \$100,000 annually to MNBC to support cultural training for ministry staff, and training, education and support for Métis youth aging out of care.
- There are two Delegated Aboriginal Agencies (DAAs) providing services to Métis children and families — the Métis Family Services in Surrey and Lii Michif Otipemisiwak — that received full delegation in November 2017.
- In May 2018, the Province introduced draft principles to guide the implementation of the principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and the Truth and Reconciliation of Canada’s Calls to Action.
- The 10 draft principles will guide provincial government employees in their daily work with Indigenous peoples in the spirit of respect and collaboration.

Learn More:

About the draft principles to guide British Columbia’s relationship with Indigenous peoples:

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2018PREM0033-000978>

About Métis Nation British Columbia’s services to children and families:

<https://www.mnbc.ca/directory/view/340-ministry-of-children-families>

Contacts:

Government Communications and Public
Engagement
Ministry of Children and Family Development
250-356-1553

Métis Nation British Columbia
Tracey Thornhill
Director of Communications
604 557-5851

Connect with the Province of B.C. at: news.gov.bc.ca/connect