

STRONG, SAFE AND SUPPORTED

Practice Change Products

ABORIGINAL SERVICE DELIVERY CHANGE:

**A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK
FOR MINISTRY STAFF**



ABORIGINAL SERVICE DELIVERY CHANGE

A Conceptual Framework for Ministry Staff

This framework is an internal guide for ministry staff in moving forward with the ministry's key priority of supporting First Nations, Métis and other Aboriginal people in developing and delivering a service approach based on their culture and traditions. This framework is not meant to guide Aboriginal people.

Vision

Aboriginal children and youth live in strong, healthy families and sustainable communities where they are connected to their culture and traditions.

The dignity, survival and well-being of Aboriginal people is respected and actively supported by ministry staff throughout the organization.

Call to Action

There are clear reasons why the well-being of Aboriginal children, youth and families is one of the ministry's top priorities, as reflected in the Strong, Safe and Supported action plan.

Research indicates Aboriginal people are disproportionately represented in the social service system, with a disproportionate number of Aboriginal children in the ministry's care. The level of health and well-being of Aboriginal people is lower than other British Columbians, and socio-economic gaps have been clearly identified.

Inequality exists in terms of access to ministry resources and the ability of all children to access comparable services, regardless of residency.

Past practices related to Residential Schools, the "Sixty's Scoop," and discrimination have negatively impacted the well-being of Aboriginal communities, children, youth and families. As these practices were closely associated with family and child welfare, strong **reconciliation** strategies are needed from the ministry.

Opportunities and Challenges

Within the context outlined above, five key challenge areas have been identified that require responsive action from the ministry:

1. Relationships
2. Recognition and Reconciliation
3. Socio-Economic Gaps
4. Financial Barriers and Budget Restraints
5. Systemic Barriers

Principles

Ministry staff will apply the following five principles to all of our work with Aboriginal children, youth, families and communities:

Self-Determination: Aboriginal people are in the best position to lead the development of and decision-making around the laws, policies, research and services for their children, youth and families.

Culture and Language: Aboriginal child and family development policy, practice and approaches are most effective when they reflect and reinforce the intrinsic and distinct aspects of Aboriginal cultures, customs and languages.

Holistic Approach: Aboriginal child and family development approaches are most effective when they are centred on the best interests of the child and delivered within a holistic approach that takes into account the full range of the child's developmental needs, within the context of family and community, as defined by Aboriginal people.

Structural Interventions: Effective Aboriginal child and family services must include proactive strategies to identify and address systemic and structural barriers that impact the well-being of indigenous children, families and communities.

Non-Discrimination: Aboriginal people are entitled to equal access to child and family development services that are responsive to their needs and based on indigenous knowledge and culture.

Adapted from the *Touchstones of Hope for Indigenous Children, Youth and Families*.

Key Actions

To address the five areas of opportunity and challenge identified above, the ministry will work towards the following key actions:

1. **We acknowledge** the need to adopt a reconciliation approach in child welfare. Our actions will be guided by the principles and values of the *Touchstones of Hope for Indigenous Children, Youth and Families*.
2. **We will allocate** resources to offset funding inequities.
3. **We will align** human resources and staff roles within the ministry to ensure we are structured to support Aboriginal children, youth and families, as a top priority of the ministry.
4. **We will bring together** key partners from across governments, provincial ministries and service providers to identify and address systemic barriers underlying the larger socio-economic challenges facing Aboriginal communities.
5. **We will support** Aboriginal self-determination through service delivery initiatives that are developed, evaluated and driven by the Aboriginal community.

