



A Moment on the Path

Child Welfare's Journey Toward
Reconciliation with Indigenous People



Ontario Association of
Children's Aid Societies
The voice of child welfare in Ontario

Child Welfare Sector Commitments to Reconciliation

On July 6, 2017, the Ontario child welfare sector unanimously agreed to prioritize Reconciliation with Indigenous communities through **eight key commitments**.

Each Children's Aid Society has committed to:

- Reduce the number of Indigenous children in care.
- Reduce the number of legal files involving Indigenous children and families.
- Increase the use of formal customary care agreements.
- Ensure Indigenous representation and involvement at the local Boards of Directors.
- Implement mandatory, regular Indigenous training for staff.
- Change the inter-agency protocol to include Jordan's Principle as a fundamental principle.
- In consultation with Indigenous communities, develop a unique agency-based plan to better address the needs of the children and families from those communities.
- Continue to develop relationships between their local agency and the local Indigenous communities.

The measuring and tracking of each of these commitments is being undertaken at a local and provincial level. Agencies are committed to reporting on outcomes in each of these areas.

The Board of Directors of the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies has made the following **four key commitments**:

- Shift resources to Indigenous organizations so that they are better able to provide services for and advocate on behalf of Indigenous children, families, and communities.
- Support Indigenous leadership in their quest for self-governance and legislation regarding the care of children within their local communities.
- Support Indigenous autonomy in the development of specific Indigenous services and the child welfare system.
- Support and encourage non-Indigenous agencies to work with local Indigenous communities to ensure that children and families are served in a way that leads to Reconciliation.

The commitments made by the Ontario child welfare sector represent an acknowledgement that it must do better, be held accountable to results, and work in a framework that recognizes and supports Reconciliation with Indigenous communities.

These commitments are connected to the historical injustices perpetrated against First Nation, Inuit, and Métis communities by the Canadian government and Provincial child welfare systems, including residential schools and the Sixties Scoop. These colonial legacies have resulted in community impairment, intergenerational trauma, and the overrepresentation of Indigenous children in child welfare.