



For Immediate Release

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CHIEFS SET TO APPROVE FIRST NATIONS CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES COMPENSATION AGREEMENT FROM GOVERNMENT

Treaty 6 Territory, Saskatoon SK – The Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations (FSIN) has been asked to provide its approval of a compensation agreement for First Nations children and their families who experienced discrimination due to Canada’s underfunding of the First Nations Child and Family Services (FNCFS) and the narrow definition of Jordan’s Principle.

In 2022, the federal government announced over \$23 billion in compensation for approximately 300,000 First Nations who were underfunded by FNCFS and Jordan’s Principle.

First Nations leaders will review the revised Final Settlement Agreement while in Ottawa this week at the Special Chiefs Meeting at the Assembly of First Nations (AFN)

The compensation recognizes the serious harms committed against First Nations children, youth, and their families from April 1, 1991 to March 31, 2022. This includes unnecessary family separation and denial of lifesaving and life-wellness services.

The First Nations Caring Society, under the direction of advocate Executive Director Dr. Cindy Blackstock says, “To truly honour them and the Residential School and Sixties Scoop survivors, we must ensure this is the last generation of First Nations children who are hurt by the Government of Canada. That work continues and they are our inspiration.”

Blackstock filed the original human rights complaint with the AFN in 2007 accusing Canada of underfunding the on-reserve welfare system. There was also a class-action lawsuit filed, generated in Quebec in 2019.

Through the collective efforts and negotiations of the Caring Society and the Assembly of First Nations over the last year, another \$3 billion was secured towards the settlement from the original Agreement-in-Principal was announced in 2022.

The final settlement guarantees \$40,000 to each child removed from their homes in First Nations communities. The federal government committed another \$20 billion to reform the Child Welfare and Family Services system.

There are currently 16 First Nations Child Welfare and Family Agencies operating in the province.

Once approved by Canada's First Nations Chiefs, the AFN will take the Final Settlement Agreement through approvals at the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal and the Federal Court of Canada to ensure the compensation is delivered as soon as possible.

FSIN Chief Bobby Cameron and First Vice-Chief David Pratt are in Ottawa this week for a national Assembly of First Nations meeting. Vice-Chief Pratt is the Health, Child Welfare and Social Development portfolio holder.

QUOTES

"First Nations children were treated like second-class citizens in their native homeland by the federal government. This compensation is hard fought and long overdue for those who suffered under an inequitable child welfare system. For those apprehended from their families First Nations, we grieve for them and the harm the pain felt during their childhood. We must make sure that the children growing up today never have to suffer the same way generations, upon generations of First Nations people have suffered growing up in a colonial environment," said FSIN Chief Bobby Cameron.

"We thank Dr. Cindy Blackstock and the First Nations Caring Society for their work to draw attention to struggles faced by First Nations children across Canada. Nothing can turn back time and erase what happened. Who knows what kind of lives those children would be leading today if they hadn't been subject to discrimination and were properly supported. Instead, we know many First Nations children grew up in poverty," said First Vice-Chief David Pratt.

RESOURCES

Eligible First Nations seeking immediate emotional support can contact Hope for Wellness Help Line, toll-free: 1-855-242-3310 or online chat at www.hopeforwellness.ca

<https://fncaringsociety.com>

Those eligible are children removed from their homes under the First Nations Child and Family Services Program between April 1, 1991 to March 31, 2022. Those impacted by the narrow definition of Jordan's Principle from December 12, 2007 to November 2, 2017. And children who were delayed in receiving public service or product from April 1, 1991 to December 11, 2007. Some caregivers are also eligible for compensation.

<https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1646942622080/1646942693297>

About FSIN

The Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations represents 73 First Nations in Saskatchewan. The Federation is committed to honouring the spirit and intent of the Treaties, as well as the promotion, protection and implementation of the Treaty promises that were made more than a century ago.

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