

**@GCnewsroom Tweet (INET POSTWEB publishes):**

Today, the #GC announced its support for the Muskeg Lake Cree Nation (Sask.) on taking the next step toward full #FirstNations control over child and family services. @GCIndigenous

**@Min IndServ Tweet - Ministerial Twitter account:**

Today, the #GC highlighted its support for Muskeg Lake Cree Nation (Sask.) to exercise jurisdiction in relation to child and family services ensuring the well-being of their children and youth. [\(news release link\)](#)

**@GCIndigenous Twitter account re-tweet (RT) Ministerial tweet**

**@GCIndigenous Facebook message in the voice of the Government of Canada:**

Today, the Government of Canada announced its support to Muskeg Lake Cree Nation (Treaty 6 Territory, Saskatchewan) on taking the next step on its journey toward full First Nations control in relation to child and family services. This step will allow the First Nation to implement their own law based on the Cree values of *wâhkôtowin* and *miyo-ohpikihâwasowin*. [\(news release link\)](#)

**Approved by Director (or delegate): James Sinclair**

**Date: January 26, 2021**

**News Release**

For immediate release

**Government of Canada supports Muskeg Lake Cree Nation jurisdiction over child and family services**

February 11, 2021 — Ottawa, Traditional Unceded Algonquin Territory, Ontario —  
Indigenous Services Canada

The Government of Canada is continuing the important work in full partnership with Indigenous Peoples to reform child and family services so that every Indigenous child has the opportunity to grow up in their communities, immersed in their cultures, and surrounded by loved ones.

Far too many children and families have been affected and suffer due to the broken child and family services system. We are addressing systemic issues within child and family services and are committed to working with Indigenous partners and communities to support children and families as they continue their healing journey. The Government of Canada is working hard to support Indigenous communities so that children and families never have to be subject to a broken system again.

In June 2020, Muskeg Lake Cree Nation Chief and Council, within Treaty 6 territory, informed the Honourable Marc Miller, Minister of Indigenous Services, and Saskatchewan Minister of Social Services, that the Nation was taking the next step on its journey toward full exercise of jurisdiction over child and family services under the *Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families*, thus transitioning to an implementation of their law based on the Cree values of *wâhkôtowin* and *miyo-ohpikihâwasowin*.

Muskeg Lake Cree Nation, Canada and Saskatchewan will begin coordination agreement discussions to ensure a safe, effective, and respectful transition of jurisdiction over child and family services to Muskeg Lake Cree Nation. Muskeg Lake Cree Nation has been working internally to strengthen and identify the key steps to exercise full jurisdiction in relation to child and family services. To this end, it has taken interim steps to establish a Muskeg Lake Cree Nation Kinship Council that guides the Nation during the transition period.

The Government of Canada will continue to support First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities in developing their own child and family services models that reflect their values and traditions so that we realize our shared goals of prioritizing the best interest of children, increasing the number of communities exercising jurisdiction in relation to child and family services, and decreasing the number of children in care.

### Quotes

“We support the approach taken by the Muskeg Lake Cree Nation as they assert their jurisdiction over child and family services. Indigenous Peoples have an inherent right to self-determination to decide for themselves which policies and programs will best protect vulnerable children in their communities. This Indigenous-led approach will improve the health and well-being of Muskeg Lake Cree Nation children and youth. We look forward to supporting the Muskeg Lake Cree Nation, and working toward a coordination agreement with the Nation and the Province of Saskatchewan.”

The Honourable Marc Miller  
Minister of Indigenous Services

"We are taking steps to bring full control over child and family services to our Nation with the direction and input of our families and community. Even during this pandemic, when our families have been under pressure and fear about today and the future, our main concern is our children. We have to move forward and bring our laws, values and practices into a new form with a law that will support Muskeg Lake Cree families. Our Government has developed a draft law and has established the terms of reference for a Kinship Council, which will be comprised of family heads who will inform and guide all steps in our process. We believe there should not be a single Muskeg Lake Cree Nation child in stranger foster care in Saskatchewan or anywhere else in Canada. We will use these new tools in recognition of our inherent and Treaty rights as First Nations governments. Our Government will act in the best interests of our children. All of our work is based on our Cree customs, traditions and values, which are captured by *wâhkôtowin* and *miyo-ohpikihâwasowin*, which give us responsibility to ensure that our children are cared for in a culturally appropriate way. At this time we are celebrating some of our first big steps forward on this journey, and expressing our gratitude for the assistance and support of Canada, our Treaty partner, with this essential work. We are proud to be among the first Treaty First Nations governments to serve notice to take

over child and family services, and we are doing so in a way that is coordinated and safe for our children and families."

Chief Kelly Wolfe  
Muskeg Lake Cree Nation

"Our families are pleased that the federal government is willing to partner on this approach to making sure our children are supported and cared for by our own families. Our children and grandchildren are at the centre of all we do, and with the work of our *wâhkôtowin* Kinship Council over the past few years, we have taken steps to assert our full control over children and families, based on our inherent and Treaty rights and responsibilities. It is important to remember that traditionally, our families have always raised our children, and as a community we believe our children deserve to live a carefree life where they feel safe, completely loved and grow into healthy adults not having to heal from childhood trauma. Our children have a right to be raised with our language, culture and kinship relations. This change to recognize our authority and our role as mothers, grandmothers, aunts and kinship working together is long overdue."

Tina Arcand  
Councillor, Muskeg Lake Cree Nation

*"piyisk! ta-pisiskeyimânanak awâsisak ka ki-môsaikipiticihk ekwa wahyaw e-sipwehtahcihk ta-wîc-âmâyit pîtos-iyiniwa. metoni tipiyawe wahkomâkanak e-tiwanitowak ekwa wanikiskisowatowak. awa awasis piko ta-sakihikot okâwîya ekwa ohtâwiwa ekwa tipiyawe wahkomâkana. mina maskêko-iyiniwak ta sihtoskâwachihk eoko-awasis."*

Translation: "It's about time something was done about those children taken away from their families and communities. They are put in non-native homes and provided with shelter and food. What they need is the love from family and community. That is the nourishment they need."

Nora Ledoux  
Elder and Matriarch, age 92 years, Muskeg Lake Cree Nation

### Quick facts

- January 1, 2021, marked the one-year anniversary of the *Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families*. This legislation was co-developed with Indigenous partners and communities who wish to exercise jurisdiction in relation to their own child and family services so that they can decide what is best for their children, their families and their communities.
- Through the July 2020 Economic and Fiscal Snapshot, the Government of Canada has committed over \$542 million over five years, starting in 2020-21, to

support the implementation of the *Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families* in full partnership with Indigenous partners.

- As of December 2020, a total of 26 confirmed Indigenous governing bodies have submitted a notice of request to exercise jurisdiction in relation to child and family services under the Act, representing 64 Indigenous groups and communities.
- The Government of Canada also invested over \$3 billion in additional funding over six years, until 2025, to continue delivering and reforming the First Nations Child and Family Services Program. This funding reflects the Government of Canada's promise to support child and family services with the predictable, flexible, long-term funding that they need and deserve.

### **Associated links**

- [Economic and Fiscal Snapshot 2020](#)
- [First Nations Child and Family Services Program](#)
- [Reducing the number of Indigenous children in care](#)
- [Notices and requests related to An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families](#)

### **For more information, media may contact:**

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