



TI ENCOURAGED BY ONTARIO GOVERNMENT'S PLAN TO REDESIGN CHILD WELFARE

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Tungasuvvingat Inuit (TI) is encouraged by the Ontario Government's plan to redesign the provincial child welfare system. The pillars for reform, announced on July 29, 2020, and overall direction align with what we have heard is needed from urban Inuit families and community members.

Executive Director (Acting) Amanda Kilabuk stated, "It is positive that the government recognizes the current system is not working, specifically for Indigenous children. The over-representation of Indigenous children in the system is staggering, and the outcomes are significantly worse. We are encouraged by the government's strategy to focus on strengthening families and communities through community-based prevention and early intervention. A system that supports more family-based options over group-care aligns with the priorities identified by TI in consultations with staff and community and is in line with the model that TI is developing."

TI has been working in partnership with the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services through Ontario's Indigenous Children and Youth Strategy to transform the provision of child welfare services for Inuit in Ontario. Recent changes to the Child, Youth and Family Services Act in 2017 mean that Inuit are now recognized as a distinct Indigenous group in Ontario. TI is currently working with ITK and other Inuit partner organizations to ensure that the rights afforded to Inuit children, youth and families under the Act are realized.

Julie Hodson, Child & Policy Manager at TI says, "We believe these changes will provide more positive experiences to Inuit children and youth at risk in a system that does not currently support their well-being. Bold and transformative action is needed, and this will require a shift in resources towards community-generated solutions. The importance of honouring and advancing a distinct approach for Inuit cannot be understated. We must build on the solid foundation for change that was co-created through Ontario's Indigenous Children and Youth Strategy."

TI is optimistic that part of the transformation will include:

- Dedicated funding for community-based prevention.
- Support for urban Indigenous-led models.
- Openness for legislative and regulatory changes to support the plan.
- A distinct approach that recognizes the unique context of Inuit in Ontario.

We embrace the ministry's forward-looking vision for the redesign of the Child Welfare System as a priority. A modernized Child Welfare System that advances Indigenous-led approaches and fosters community-based solutions is vital. TI's vision is that all Inuit children and youth in Ontario will grow up and thrive in the care of their family and community, with a strong sense of cultural identity.