
News Release

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ECONOMIC ACTION PLAN

CANADA, QUEBEC AND FIRST NATIONS IN QUEBEC REACH AN HISTORIC CHILDWELFARE FRAMEWORK

KAHNAWAKE, QUEBEC (AUGUST 25, 2009) – Representatives from the Government of Canada, the Government of Quebec and the Assembly of First Nations of Quebec and Labrador today announced a historic framework for First Nations child and family services in Quebec.

The event was attended by the Honourable Chuck Strahl, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, Pierre Corbeil, Minister responsible of Aboriginal Affairs and Lise Thériault, Minister responsible of Social Services for the Government of Québec and Gilbert Dominique, Chief of the Mashteuiatsh community on behalf of Ghislain Picard, Chief of the Assembly of the First Nations of Quebec and Labrador.

"Today's announcement demonstrates the positive and growing working relationship we have with Quebec," said Minister Strahl. "Children represent the future of First Nation communities in Quebec – and today's announcement demonstrates our shared commitment to improving conditions for First Nations children and youth. Alberta, Nova Scotia and Saskatchewan also have tripartite agreements with the Government of Canada and we are proud to now sign a fourth historic agreement with Quebec".

The Framework with Quebec and First Nations in Quebec will provide \$59.8 million over five years to implement an Enhanced Prevention-Focused Approach to First Nations Child and Family Services (FNCFS) on reserves in Quebec.

"At the Mashteuiatsh socioeconomic forum, the Government of Quebec committed to work towards improving living conditions for Quebec First Nations. Today, thanks to the cooperation of the federal government and a remarkable collaboration among all of the partners, we are proud to observe that the commitment towards strengthening services to the family and children within the communities will become a reality," said Ministers Thériault and Corbeil.

The announcement of the tripartite framework in this province, following tripartite frameworks with Alberta, Saskatchewan and Nova Scotia, means that the new prevention model is now being implemented in First Nations communities in four provinces, covering nearly half of the First Nations children in Canada.

"This investment is very much appreciated by the First Nations of Quebec, and we want to thank the AFNQL, the First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Health and Social Services Commission (FNQLHSSC), INAC and the Quebec health and

social services ministry (MSSSQ) for all of their hard work over the past several months in this file, which is of the utmost importance for our children. The needs are desperate, and everything needs to be implemented quickly because we have been waiting for this money for a very long time. We hope that we can now actively re-engage in discussions with the government of Quebec in order to secure an extension to the deadline to implement the life-long projects. Thanks to both levels of government. This is a good start," said Gilbert Dominique, Chief of the Mashteuiatsh community, representing the Assembly of First Nations of Quebec and Labrador (AFNQL).

In 2007, INAC renovated its approach to Child and Family Services by introducing an Enhanced Prevention-Focused Approach that will ensure that more First Nations children and parents get the help they need to prevent the types of crises that lead to intervention and family breakdown.

"Today's announcement demonstrates that fact that First Nation are participating in Canada's Economic Action plan," said Minister Strahl. Under Canada's Economic Action Plan \$20 million over two years was provided to implement concrete changes in Child and Family Services on reserves across Canada.

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