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FAMILY SERVICES

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## Information re-issue: \$40 Billion Federal agreement is not the end of the story for First Nations children

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For immediate release

In today's Federal announcement of a \$40 billion First Nations child welfare agreement, the Canadian Federal government has admitted that existing child welfare services, funded by the federal government, have failed Indigenous people and led to "...denials of services and created adverse impacts for many First Nations children and families..." This is the largest settlement in Canadian history.

The Agreement in Principle is confirmation to process the long-term reform of the First Nations Child and Family Programs and the implementation of Jordan's Principle to end the discrimination found by the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal. The amount for the proposed reform AIP is \$19.807 billion over the first five years in compensation for First Nations children and families harmed by historic and current federal underfunding of services.

Carrier Sekani Family Services (CSFS) reiterates the fundamental Tribunal order that Canada must ensure that discrimination ends for First Nations children, to ensure that systemic and foundational mechanisms are in place to prevent such discrimination from occurring again, and to compensate victims of this discrimination.

"We will continue to negotiate with the Federal Government to ensure that the discrimination ends and that it never happens again," said Mary Teegee, Executive Director of Child and Family Services at CSFS and the BC Board Representative on the First Nation Child and Family Caring Society. "We must ensure the full implementation of Jordan's Principle and solidify reforms that end the injustices so that another generation of children aren't harmed."

While headlines continue to focus on financial commitments, it is important to note that this issue is not just about monetary compensation – it is about justice for Indigenous children.

"We are all ethically bound to ensure that every child in this country, regardless of race or circumstance, is treated fairly and equitably," adds Teegee. These negotiations will continue until justice is achieved and all children have what they require to live up to their full potential. "In a first world country, demanding substantive equality shouldn't be an issue that has to be fought in court."

Child and family welfare issues are at the heart of the current state of emergency called by CSFS community Chiefs (with respect to the devastating impacts that opioids and toxic drugs are having on youth today). It is time for both the BC and Canadian government to act and not recreate past injustices.

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