



# FNCFS REFORM

Long-Term Reform of the First Nations  
Child and Family Services (FNCFS) Program

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## Chiefs of Ontario and Nishnawbe Aski Nation Celebrate Historic Approval of the Ontario Final Agreement by the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal

**(Toronto, Ont. -- March 30, 2026)** — Today, the Chiefs of Ontario (COO) and Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) are pleased to announce a monumental turning point for First Nations children and families. Following years of advocacy and the conclusion of hearings in Ottawa, the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal (CHRT) has formally issued its decision to approve the Ontario Final Agreement (OFA).

The Tribunal's decision confirms that the Ontario Final Agreement is sufficient to achieve the objectives of its previous orders to address and eliminate systemic racial discrimination in First Nations Child and Family Services in Ontario. At the heart of the Tribunal's decision is the principle of substantive equality, and the ruling affirms the inherent right of First Nations to care for their own children and to design services grounded in their laws, traditions, and priorities.

“Today is about children. With the approval of the Ontario Final Agreement, our Nations are reclaiming control over our most precious assets, our children and our future,” said Ontario Regional Chief Abram Benedict. “This work has always been for the children, and we are finally securing the jurisdiction necessary to ensure they grow up immersed in their culture and supported by the love of their communities.”

The Tribunal further underscored the urgency of its ruling, noting that any delay would risk significant harm to children and families, including the potential loss of critical funding. As a result, the approval was issued through an expedited letter of decision, with full reasons to follow.

“This work has always been about the authority of our leaders, and that has been affirmed by the Tribunal. This agreement puts the authority for the care of our children back where it belongs – with our families, leader and communities. This historic decision marks a significant shift in the structure of FNCFS Program in Ontario and provides strong support for our work on remoteness and its broader approach to substantive equality. The Tribunal has acknowledged that the remoteness quotient is an important, ground-breaking, innovative and valuable tool. Miigwetch to everyone involved for getting us to where we are today,” said Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler, Nishnawbe Aski Nation.

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This landmark approval signals the end of systemic racial discrimination in the First Nations Child and Family Services in Ontario, and the beginning of a new era defined by First Nations jurisdiction, equity, and self-determination.

The agreement ensures that First Nations across Ontario finally have the resources and authority necessary to care for their own children and youth within their own communities. The approved agreement establishes a comprehensive framework for long-term reform, including safeguards to ensure accountability, continuous improvement, and sustainability of services beyond the life of the agreement. The Tribunal also reinforced that its original orders, including the requirement for Canada to cease discriminatory practices, remain in full force during and after the agreement. These orders are final, binding, and enforceable, ensuring that reforms are durable, and that systemic discrimination is permanently eliminated.

“This agreement is about more than just a settlement, it is about achieving substantive equality for our children and families, said Grand Chief Joel Abram, Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians. “For too long, our communities have been forced to operate within systems that did not reflect our realities or meet our needs. This approval affirms our inherent right to care for our children in ways that are equitable, culturally grounded, and responsive to our nations. Today marks a critical step towards true self-determination and lasting change.”

With the approval of the OFA secured, the focus now shifts to the monumental task of implementation. The Chiefs of Ontario and Nishnawbe Aski Nation are fully committed to supporting First Nations as they undertake the critical work required to implement this agreement at the community level.

We encourage First Nations and stakeholders to stay engaged and informed as we move toward implementation. For updates, documents, and further information, please visit: <https://www.fncfsreform.ca/>

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