



Touchstones of Hope: Community Visions and Laws as a Foundation for Bill C-92

Background

On June 21, 2019, Bill C-92, [An Act respecting First Nations, Métis and Inuit children, youth and families](#)ⁱ passed in the House of Commons and it came into force January 1, 2020. While some Nations, communities, and agencies were ready to move forward with the Act, many others have had questions on how to get started in the process. The Yellowhead Institute has several helpful resources including analysis and implementation strategies. In terms of costing, the Institute of Fiscal Studies and Democracy in tandem with the National Advisory Committee on First Nations child welfare, created a new approach to funding informed by First Nations Child and Family Service agencies, experts, and practitioners (see Important Resources).

The Touchstones of Hope, a holistic framework for defining child wellbeing, is a way forward for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Nations, communities, and agencies in the development of culturally-specific visions to inform legislation under Bill C-92.

The [Touchstones of Hope for Indigenous Children, Youth, and Families](#)ⁱⁱ is a movement toward ensuring grassroots development of children's services to ensure that Indigenous children and families have the same opportunities to succeed as all others. There five Touchstones of Hope Principles: self-determination, culture and language, holistic approach, structural interventions, and non-discrimination. They are intended to be defined by First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities, Nations and agencies that provide services to children and families so that the principles reflect the needs of respective Nations and communities.

Creating a Guiding Framework for Legislation

For Nations, communities and agencies who are starting from a beginning place in exerting control over legislation for children's services, it is important to explore these questions:

1. **Create a vision – this is a starting point and an end goal.** What does child wellbeing mean to your community/Nation? What does it look like when children are healthy, happy and living in dignity and respect?
2. What are the traditional laws and customs in your Nation, in your community/communities?
3. Who and what are needed to make your vision a reality (i.e. institutions, programs, services, staffing, etc.)?
4. What is the cost to get to your vision?

From your vision, part of what will emerge is the compatibility of community laws with Bill C-92. The Caring Society welcomes First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Nations, communities, and agencies to contact us to learn more about the Touchstones of Hope tool kit and resources to assist in the visioning process.

Important Resources

- **Spirit Bear Plan to End Inequalities in Public Services for First Nations Children, Youth and Families:** fncaringsociety.com/spirit-bear-plan

Analysis and implementation:

- Yellowhead Institute Analysis of Bill C-92: yellowheadinstitute.org/bill-c-92-analysis/
- Yellowhead Institute Implementation Strategies: yellowheadinstitute.org/resources/4981/

Costing:

- Institute of Fiscal Studies and Democracy, *Funding First Nations child and family services (FNCFS): A performance budget approach to well-being:* ifsd.ca/en/fncfs

ⁱ parl.ca/DocumentViewer/en/42-1/bill/C-92/royal-assent

ⁱⁱ fncaringsociety.com/reconciliation-child-welfare