

Media Release

FSIN Communication Unit



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NATIONAL CHILD DAY: A TIME TO HONOR THE RIGHTS OF FIRST NATIONS CHILDREN LIVING WITHOUT BASIC HEALTH AND SOCIAL SUPPORTS

(SASKATOON) National Child Day falls on Tuesday, November 20 and it is an ideal time to honor the contributions and steadfast service of our child care workers.

“First Nations have always believed that it takes a community to raise a child and there is an urgent need to build capacity within our communities to ensure our children are healthy in body, mind and spirit. The gaps in services must be addressed,” says Vice Chief Guy Lonechild who is responsible for the FSIN Health and Social and Urban Development Secretariat.

In an effort to provide support for childcare workers and First Nations children, Saskatchewan First Nations leaders passed a resolution supporting Jordan’s Principle on October 25, 2007.

Under this principle, when a jurisdictional dispute arises between two government parties (provincial/territorial or federal) regarding payment for services for an on-reserve First Nations child that are available to other Canadian children, the government of first contact must pay for the services without delay or disruption. It can then refer the matter to jurisdictional dispute mechanisms. This meets the needs of the child while still allowing a jurisdictional dispute to be resolved.

Vice Chief Lonechild proposes that a Health and Wellness Trust be set up by the federal and provincial governments as a way to implement Jordan’s Principle - in a manner that will eliminate gaps for First Nations children.

Vice Chief Lonechild is speaking at a Best Practices in Early Childhood Education & Honoring our Caregivers conference on Tuesday, November 20 at TCU Place in Saskatoon. The conference is hosted by the Saskatchewan First Nations Early Childhood Circle. “We want to congratulate the ICFS Agencies in our province that are celebrating many years of service to their communities, and thank them for their commitment to providing support, strength, and unity to the First Nations children and families of Saskatchewan.”

Aboriginal Head Start and daycares in First Nations communities strive to instill a sustaining, caring, and nurturing environment for pre-school children based on a culturally-appropriate, holistic model encompassing the emotional, spiritual, physical, and mental health needs of children for life long learning. The Aboriginal Head Start program targets children 0-4 years old.

Vice Chief Lonechild is pleased to announce that the newly organized Saskatchewan First Nations Family and Community Institute will be supporting the ICFS Agencies in the area of best practices and policy development for Saskatchewan First Nations children and communities. It is an Institute that has brought together Federal, Provincial and First Nations stakeholders.

ICFS Agencies have also recently completed the Saskatchewan First Nations Prevention Framework Agreement, which when passed by the federal Treasury Board, will realize new prevention dollars for the ICFS Agencies across Saskatchewan starting in the 2008-2009 fiscal year. Vice Chief Lonechild is optimistic about the potential policy directions and best practices that will be developed for Saskatchewan First Nations children and their communities. It is about the children and providing the best programs and services for First Nations children wherever they reside and all our activities and plans should be based solely on improving their health and well being and eliminating gaps in service delivery.

Vice Chief Lonechild will speak to conference delegates at 9:15 a.m. on Tuesday, November 20 and will be available for a media scrum afterward for all interested reporters.

For more information, please contact Vice Chief Lonechild's policy analyst, Luwayne Tanner at (306) 291-1864