



# News Release

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For Immediate Release  
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## **REPRESENTATIVE RELEASES BASELINE REPORT ON DELEGATED ABORIGINAL AGENCIES**

VICTORIA – Underfunding of Delegated Aboriginal Agencies (DAAs) means Indigenous children are being removed from their homes and placed in care simply because the funds are not there to provide support services to their families, finds a report released today by B.C.’s Representative for Children and Youth, Bernard Richard.

*Delegated Aboriginal Agencies: How resourcing affects service delivery* details the experiences of those who work in the agencies that deliver child and youth services to Indigenous communities and to many Indigenous children and families living outside those communities. This report sets a baseline against which future improvements can be assessed. A similar review of Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) offices – *The Thin Front Line* – was completed in 2015.

“Current funding levels by both the federal and provincial governments seriously undermine the capacity of DAAs to deliver essential services to vulnerable children and their families,” said Richard. “In fact, DAAs operate under a funding model that provides inequitable supports and services for Indigenous children in B.C. compared to what their non-Indigenous counterparts are likely to receive, as has been found in previous RCY reports. In addition, instead of supporting prevention services, the funding model actually makes it more likely that Indigenous children will be removed from their families – a situation that I find appalling.”

This report finds that despite the landmark 2016 finding by the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal that federal funding of Indigenous child welfare is discriminatory, the federal government has not addressed the issue. This situation, combined with inequitable and confusing funding arrangements between the B.C. government and DAAs, has resulted in real differences in the availability of supports and services for B.C.’s Indigenous children, depending on where they live.

“Furthermore, DAAs’ funding does not take into consideration that their need is actually greater to address the intergenerational effects of residential schools and other colonial policies in Canada,” said Richard. “The goal should be that DAAs are able to offer services that address the real needs of Indigenous families in a culturally based way.”

This report finds that DAAs are struggling to cover operational costs, including salaries and benefits, meaning they often cannot pay equal wages to those offered by MCFD. In addition, DAAs face many similar challenges to ministry offices that include high caseloads leading to an inability to meet provincial child protection standards, as well as recruitment and retention issues.

There are promising signs that the provincial government intends to address many issues identified in this report, including a significant lift to MCFD's budget for 2017/18 and a commitment to implement many of the recommendations of Grand Chief Ed John's November 2016 report, *Indigenous Resilience, Connectedness and Reunification - From Root Causes to Root Solutions*.

“New resources are not yet in place and it has yet to be seen whether they will be sufficient to meet the enormous challenge,” said Richard. “I intend to work with the ministry to monitor progress, with the findings of this report used as a baseline to evaluate future improvements. The situation is dire. We must do more than commit to change – we must take action.”

This report is based on interviews with 45 DAA staff who work in child protection and guardianship, including front-line social workers, team leaders and executive directors. It is also based on an extensive international and national literature review of staffing issues in Indigenous child welfare systems, an analysis of more than 150 related documents provided by MCFD and an examination of the many reviews and reports released on Indigenous child welfare in Canada in recent years. DAAs serve nearly 1,900 of the 7,000 children in the care of the B.C. government.

The report can be accessed at: [www.rcybc.ca/daareport](http://www.rcybc.ca/daareport)

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