

Institute of Fiscal Studies and Democracy's (IFSD) Resources on Reform of First Nations Child and Family Services



In January 2016, the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal (CHRT) ruled that First Nations children were being discriminated against in First Nations Child and Family Services (FNCFS). Overrepresented in a system that incentivized the placement of children in care, First Nations children and agencies were deemed to be underfunded relative to their needs. Through subsequent orders, the CHRT ordered analysis of the complete costs of FNCFS based on the needs of First Nations agencies and the children they serve.

Since 2018, the Institute of Fiscal Studies and Democracy (IFSD) has been working at the request of the Caring Society and the Assembly of First Nations to support the long-term reform of FNCFS in alignment with the CHRT rulings. Below is a list of resources developed by IFSD to support long-term reform of FNCFS.

Final Reports

Phase 1 - Enabling First Nations Children to Thrive (December 15, 2018)

<https://ifsd.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/ifsd-enabling-children-to-thrive-february-2019.pdf>

In Phase 1 of the project, IFSD analysed the wholistic costs of FNCFS and identified gaps in funding for prevention, poverty, information technology, and capital. IFSD makes eight recommendations for funding and structural changes to the FNCFS program and three recommendations for further research. The report was submitted as evidence to the CHRT by the Caring Society in January 2019.

Phase 2 - Funding First Nations Child and Family Services: A Performance Budget Approach to Well-Being (July 31, 2020)

https://ifsd.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/2020-09-09_final-report_funding-first-nations-child-and-family-services.pdf

In Phase 2, IFSD developed a bottom-up, needs-based block funding approach and a performance measurement framework (*Measuring to Thrive*).

Phase 3 - Funding First Nations Child and Family Services: A Blueprint for Program Reform (April 2025)

Full Report:

https://ifsd.ca/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/8833_IFSD_FNCFS-Phase-3-Report_AUG2025_EN_F.pdf

Executive Summary:

https://ifsd.ca/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/8833_IFSD_Executive-Summary_JUNE2025_EN_F.pdf

In Phase 3, IFSD tested and modelled a budget approach to well-being from Phase 2 in First Nation and agency specific delivery models. The report provides a blueprint for FNCFS Program reform with consideration of structure, funding, accountability, and transition.

First Nations Not Affiliated to an FNCFS Agency (no date)

Full Report:

https://ifsd.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/2024-07_en_first-nations-not-affiliated-to-an-fncfs-agency-final-report.pdf

Executive Summary:

https://ifsd.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/2024-07_en_first-nations-not-affiliated-to-an-fncfs-agency-executive-summary.pdf

This report analyses the current funding, needs, and options for FNCFS reform for First Nations not affiliated to an FNCFS agency and makes seven recommendations for moving forward.

Monthly Updates

Interim Update: First Nations Child and Family Services (Phase 3) (March 2024)

Summary:

https://ifsd.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/fncfs-2024-03_agencies-jurisdiction-monthly-update-summary_en.pdf

Full Draft:

https://ifsd.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/fncfs-2024-03_agencies-jurisdiction-monthly-update_en.pdf

FNCFS Post-Majority Support Services

(October 2023)

https://ifsd.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/fncfs-2023-10_agencies-jurisdiction-monthly-update_en.pdf

Monitoring Performance in FNCFS

(August/September 2023)

https://ifsd.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/fncfs-2023-09_agencies-jurisdiction-monthly-update_aug-sep_en.pdf

Sharing Perspectives on the Importance of Measurement in FNCFS - Video

(August 2023)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UAPy1TtKMmY>

Sharing Lessons from the Preparation for the Measuring to Thrive Pilot - Video

(August 2023)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EZ11s9cFvtA>

Transition Framework

(May 2023)

https://ifsd.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/fncfs-2023-05_agencies-jurisdiction-monthly-update_en.pdf

FNCFS Agencies and First Nations Exercising Jurisdiction

(April 2023)

https://ifsd.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/fncfs-2023-04_agencies-jurisdiction-monthly-update_en.pdf

Capital Needs Summary for FNCFS Agencies and First Nations Exercising Jurisdiction

(March 2023)

https://ifsd.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/fncfs-2023-03_agencies-jurisdiction-monthly-update_en.pdf

Funding Approaches for FNCFS

(January 2023)

https://ifsd.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/fncfs-2023-01_monthly-update_en.pdf

Indicators for Testing in 2023 (Measuring to Thrive Workshop Summary)

(November 2022)

https://ifsd.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/fncfs-2022-11_indicators-for-testing-and-isc_en.pdf

FNCFS Agencies: Analysis of Questionnaires

(December 13, 2022)

https://ifsd.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/fncfs-2022-12_agencies-monthly-updates_nov-dec_en.pdf

For more information, visit IFSD's website on FNCFS:

ifsd.ca/fncfs/