

newsletter

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Loving Justice National Plan

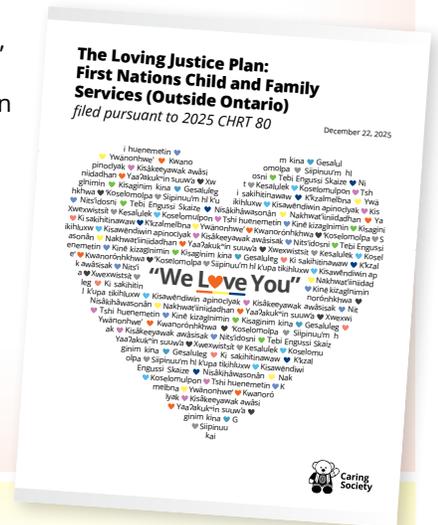
On August 20, 2025, the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal (Tribunal) issued [2025 CHRT 80](#), ordering Canada, the Caring Society, and the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) to submit plans and remedies for long-term national reforms to First Nations Child and Family Services (FNCFS), with the goal of permanently ending discrimination. Canada, the Caring Society, and the AFN had to file their submissions with the Tribunal by December 22, 2025, either jointly or separately. The Caring Society and AFN were further ordered to collaborate with the National Children's Chiefs Commission and ensure the voices of young people were included. As Canada refused to collaborate, two distinct plans were submitted to the Tribunal: the First Nations-led [Loving Justice National Plan](#) and [Canada's National Plan](#).

Loving Justice is a generational, First Nations-led framework designed to permanently end discrimination in FNCFS and prevent its recurrence. It is grounded in over two decades of First Nations resolutions, Tribunal findings, evidence, expert reports, and the recent national engagement with

First Nations, youth, Elders, and technical experts. The goal of Loving Justice is to help Canada avoid repeating past mistakes.

When Canada turned away from First Nations-led solutions 25 years ago, children paid with their childhoods – and Canadians later paid \$23.4 billion in compensation. None of that would have been necessary if the right steps had been taken at the time. Canada's new plan risks repeating that pattern. The Caring Society is encouraging Canada to choose the durable, evidence-based solutions in the Loving Justice National Plan now, so children can grow up safe and supported, and so Canadians are not asked to pay the human and financial costs of inaction again.

Visit fnwitness.ca to read Loving Justice and Canada's Plan.



Courageous Conversations on the Spirit Bear Podcast

This winter, the Spirit Bear Podcast released three new episodes in our Courageous Conversations series (Season 3, Episodes 19–21), each hosted by Gabrielle Fayant from the Assembly of Seven Generations.

The episodes highlight Indigenous youth leadership in calling for culturally grounded support and accountability to uphold the dignity and rights of Indigenous children and youth.

Find all Spirit Bear podcast episodes here: fncaringsociety.com/spirit-bear-podcast



Ontario Final Agreement Cross Examination and Upcoming Hearing

In early February 2025, the Chiefs of Ontario, Nishnawbe Aski Nation, and Canada released the [Ontario Final Agreement \(OFA\)](#), with the stated aim of stopping Canada's discrimination in FNCFS and prevent its recurrence. The Caring Society has submitted a response to the Tribunal regarding Canada's request to approve the OFA on FNCFS without condition and to end the Tribunal's supervisory jurisdiction. Hearings on the OFA were held before the Tribunal on February 26 and 27, 2026.

The Caring Society calls for the immediate release of funds for children and families, without requiring Tribunal approval of the agreement "without changes" and without releasing Canada from accountability under existing Tribunal orders. Children's rights must not be placed at risk by removing enforceable protections before Canada demonstrates lasting non-discrimination and substantive equality.

Visit fnwitness.ca to read the OFA submissions.



First Nations Kids Win at Federal Court of Appeal!

In December 2025, the Federal Court of Appeal upheld a major win for First Nations children by dismissing Canada's attempt to overturn Ms. Powless' win at the Federal Court. Ms. Powless had requested Jordan's Principle support for medically necessary mould remediation in her home, where she cares for two grandchildren. After Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) denied the request, she sought judicial review at the Federal Court, with the Federal Court ruling in her favour. Canada sought an appeal of the Federal Court's decision at the Federal Court of Appeal (FCA). The Caring Society and Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs participated as interested parties in the proceedings before the FCA.

The FCA agreed that ISC's denial of the remediation request was unreasonable. The FCA found ISC's decision lacked clarity, justification, and transparency, and did not align with the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal's orders on Jordan's Principle. Importantly, the FCA reaffirmed that ISC must demonstrate how it applies these orders when determining requests. This includes showing clear consideration of a child's unique needs, culturally appropriate services, substantive equality, and best interests of the child. The FCA also confirmed that ISC must show that it considered the real impacts its determination has on the child, including the child's health and safety.

Families whose Jordan's Principle requests have been denied for reasons similar to those in the Powless case may have grounds to challenge the decision.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the family who bravely brought this case forward. Their courage and strength paved the way to this important precedent that will help protect and uplift so many other First Nations children and families across the country.

Read the information sheet about the decision at fncaringsociety.com/publications/federal-court-appeal-decision-canada-attorney-general-v-powless-information-sheet.



Senate Passes Motion Recognizing May 10 as Bear Witness Day

On February 5, the Senate passed a motion recognizing May 10 each year as Bear Witness Day, a national day of action to honour Jordan River Anderson and his family and to call for the full implementation of Jordan's Principle, the legal rule ensuring First Nations children receive the services and supports they need, when they need them.

Introduced by Senator Brian Francis, supported by Senator Kim Pate, and seconded by Senator Amina Gerba, the motion urged Canadians to "bear witness" to the inequities that First Nations children continue to face in accessing services to meet their needs.

Although the Tribunal ordered the Government of Canada to fully and properly implement Jordan's Principle in 2016, major challenges persist. Senator Francis noted that many First Nations children are still waiting for their requests to be determined by ISC. Instead of addressing these delays, ISC introduced unilateral changes that have resulted in further denials, disruptions, and barriers to urgently needed supports.

Recognizing Bear Witness Day reinforces the call for Canada to fully and properly implement Jordan's Principle. Bearing witness means insisting, again and again, that every child matters.

To watch the Senate pass the motion, go to bit.ly/4ubZscP.



New Information Sheet on ISC Bulletins

This information sheet summarizes bulletins created and circulated by Indigenous Services Canada identifying changes they have made to the First Nations Child and Family Services program and Jordan's Principle without discussion or consultation with First Nations or the co-complainants in *First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada et al. v. Attorney General of Canada*. The practice of making and announcing changes without consultation does not comply with Tribunal orders, including an order in **2018 CHRT 4** for Canada to consult with the parties to the complaint to eliminate the discrimination substantiated in **2016 CHRT 2**.

Given how quickly and without notice ISC continues to issue these bulletins, ensuring that First Nations have access to a consolidated and accessible summary of these changes is essential.

Find the bulletins information sheet and a link to copies of the bulletins here: fncaringsociety.com/publications/bulletins-indigenous-services-canada-regarding-fncfs-and-jordans-principle-released-0

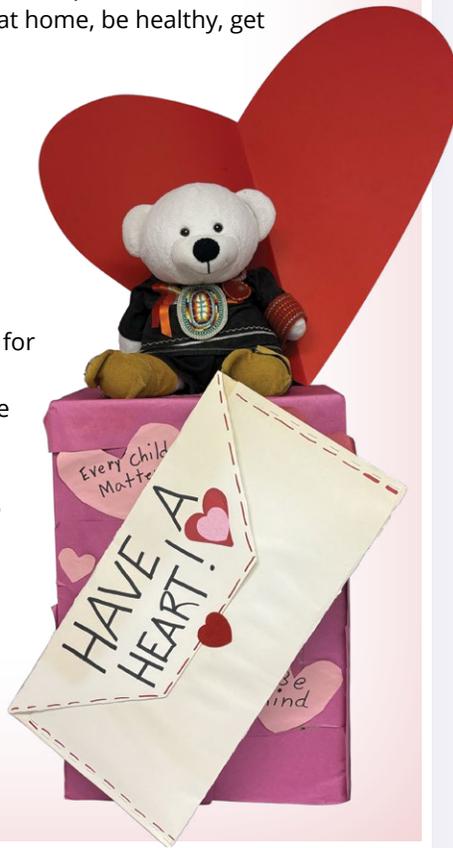
Have a Heart Day 2026

Over 10 years ago, students gathered on Parliament Hill for the first annual Have a Heart Day to ask elected officials to have a heart for First Nations kids. They shared Valentine's cards, poems, and songs to ask elected officials to support equity for First Nations children and families. Every year since then, students have gathered on February 14 to urge decision-makers to stop the discrimination and ensure First Nations kids can grow up safely at home, be healthy, get a good education, and be proud of who they are.

This year, the Caring Society hosted its annual Have a Heart Day event on February 12 on unceded Algonquin territory. Over 700 children and youth from over 15 schools and community organizations gathered at Meridian Theatre in Ottawa to share the letters they wrote to Prime Minister Carney and other elected officials.

We are immensely grateful to St. Monica's school for crafting the mailbox for students to drop their letters as well as to Henry and Camille from Pierre Elliot Trudeau Elementary School for emceeing the event. We were also extremely honoured to have MP Lori Idlout in attendance. With thanks to Senator Brian Francis, the student's letters will be delivered to the Prime Minister's Office!

Across the country, more than 25 organizations, schools, community groups, and caring individuals mailed over 2,000 letters to their elected officials. The Caring Society is grateful to all those who came together to advocate for loving justice for First Nations kids.



Have You Been to Spirit Bear School?

Originally created to help educators across Canada engage their students in the Caring Society's social justice and reconciliation campaigns, the Spirit Bear Virtual School has amazing resources for everyone who wants to learn along with Spirit Bear. Featured resources include *Spirit Bear's Beary Caring Curriculum*, the *Jordan's Principle Learning Guide*, and *My Voice Matters*, a film featuring young people who participated in the campaigns when they were in elementary and secondary school. The former students speak brilliantly about how practicing loving justice for First Nations children can change all our lives for the better.

The Spirit Bear Virtual School also features interviews with experienced educators who share their knowledge about teaching the Caring Society's reconciliation-based campaigns in their elementary classrooms, and you'll find links to Spirit Bear's books, films, and other great resources.

Visit the Spirit Bear Virtual School to learn more: fncaringsociety.com/spirit-bear/spirit-bear-virtual-school



Honouring 10 Years Since the Landmark Tribunal Ruling

January 26, 2026, marked the 10th anniversary of a historic victory for First Nations children and families. On January 26, 2016, the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal released a landmark ruling finding that the Government of Canada is racially discriminating against First Nations children in its provision of the First Nations Child and Family Services Program and by failing to implement Jordan's Principle. The Tribunal ordered Canada to immediately end its discriminatory conduct and put in safeguards to ensure the discrimination does not happen again.

Despite progress, full compliance has required persistent oversight. Since 2016, the Tribunal has issued more than 30 non-compliance and procedural orders, each aimed at ensuring that Canada ends its discrimination against First Nations children.



We honour the First Nations children, youth, families, and leaders whose efforts made this landmark ruling possible and whose persistence continues to advance equity and non-discrimination.

Read the ruling here: fncaringsociety.com/publications/2016-chrt-2-2016-tcdp-2

Upcoming Events

In the coming months, there will be many opportunities to participate in reconciliation-based events and campaigns. Consider this your official invitation to learn, connect, and most importantly, take action!

Elderbeary Day – March 20

Each year on March 20, we honour and celebrate the valuable contributions of our Elders, who do so much to teach and raise our little ones.

Check out fncaringsociety.com/elderbeary-day for ideas about how you can show your appreciation to an Elder in your life this March!



Bear Witness Day – May 10

This May 10, join us to “Bear Witness” to ensure Jordan’s Principle is fully implemented. Bear Witness Day honours Jordan River Anderson and the sacred gift of his name to the creation of Jordan’s Principle.

For information about how you can celebrate this May, visit fncaringsociety.com/bear-witness-day.

Honouring Memories, Planting Dreams – May and June

Every May and June, individuals, groups, and organizations across the country plant heart gardens in memory of children lost to the residential school system, to honour residential school survivors and their families, and to support the legacy of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Learn how you can participate in Honouring Memories, Planting Dreams here: fncaringsociety.com/honouring-memories-planting-dreams



First Nations Child & Family Caring Society

Membership Information

Join the First Nations Child & Family Caring Society as a Member under one of the following categories:

Individual Membership: \$75

Student Membership with ID or Elder: \$5

Small FNCFCFS Agency Membership (1–50 employees): \$500

Large FNCFCFS Agency Membership (50+ employees): \$1,000

Small Associate Membership (Organizations with 1–50 employees): \$500

Large Associate Membership (Organizations with 50+ employees): \$1,000

Awards and Scholarships



Shannen’s Dream Scholarship

The fifth annual Shannen’s Dream Scholarship opens soon! This scholarship is for First Nations youth (30 years of age and under) enrolled in post-secondary education. As a pay-it-forward scholarship, recipients must use their skills to contribute positively to their community in the spirit of Shannen’s Dream. The 2026 scholarship deadline is April 30.

Spirit Bear Award

The Spirit Bear Award recognizes groups of children and youth (18 years of age and under) of all backgrounds who demonstrate a commitment to the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions Calls to Action. The deadline for applications is April 30.

Jordan’s Principle Scholarship

The ninth annual Jordan’s Principle Scholarship will be opening later in 2026. This scholarship is for First Nations post-secondary students of all ages studying children’s holistic health and wellbeing.

Coming Soon

The Caring Society is thrilled to announce two new awards honouring Raymond Shingoose, whose over 40 years of unwavering leadership have strengthened First Nations child and family services, and Mary Teegee, whose exceptional and courageous support has uplifted First Nations children and youth in care.

The Raymond Shingoose Leadership Award will recognize a First Nations leader in child and family services whose service and advocacy have made a meaningful impact for First Nations children, youth, and families.

The Mary Teegee Caring Award will recognize a frontline social worker whose love, courage, and dedication uphold the wellbeing, culture, and strengths of First Nations children and youth in care.

More information about our awards and scholarship can be found on our website: fncaringsociety.com/awards-scholarships.

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