



Who was Jordan?

JORDAN was a young boy from Norway House Cree Nation in Manitoba who was born in 1999 with multiple disabilities. He lived over two years in a hospital because federal and provincial governments could not agree on who would pay for his at-home care. The reason for this is that federal and provincial/territorial governments cannot agree on which government should pay for services to First Nations children on reserves so they typically do not provide the service until they can sort out the payment issue. Unfortunately, Jordan died at the age of 5 before he could experience living in a loving home. This would not have happened to a non-native child living off reserve in

similar circumstances. The Provincial government would have covered the costs immediately.²

Sadly, Jordan's experience is not unique. Research has shown that First Nations children all over Canada are routinely denied life-saving and life-wellness services available to other children due to government jurisdictional arguments.

Through Jordan's experience we know the price that many First Nations children pay. Jordan's death ignited a movement to uphold human rights for all First Nations children through the creation of the child-first principle called "Jordan's Principle."

² Trudy Lavallee, Honouring Jordan: Putting First Nations Children First and Funding Fights Second, *Paediatric Child Health*, Vol 10, No 9, November 2005, pp.527-529

What can you do?

We would ask that you write to the Prime Minister of Canada and to the Premiers of the provinces and territories asking them to take immediate action on the full and proper adoption and implementation of Jordan's Principle. Sample letters are available on the Many Hands One Dream website www.manyhandsonedream.ca. Please also encourage other individuals and organizations in your circle to continue to sign the *Joint Declaration in Support of Jordan's Principle* (located at www.jordansprinciple.ca) to demonstrate your commitment to First Nations children and to ensure that all governments put vulnerable First Nations Children with special needs first before any jurisdictional funding disputes.



For more information about Jordan's Principle, please contact:

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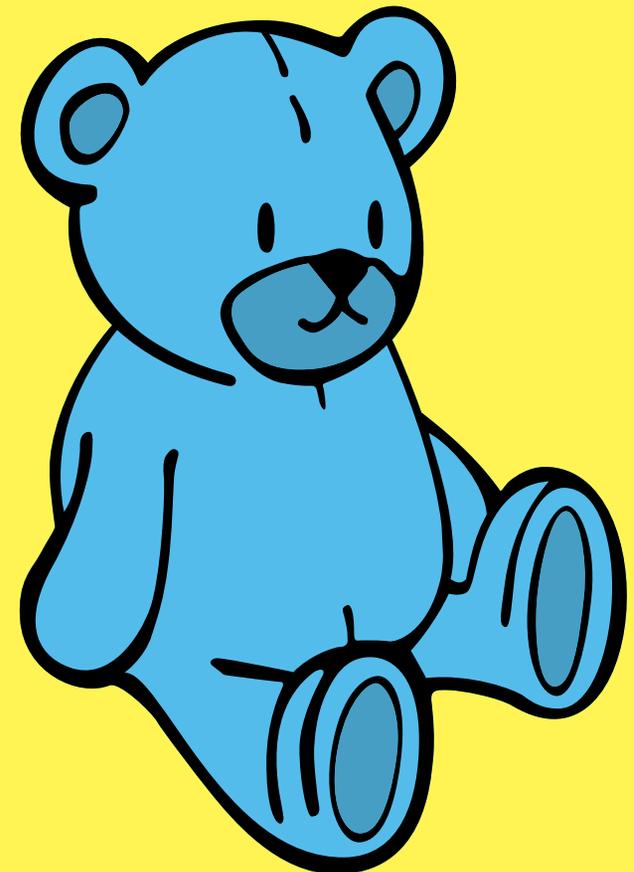
In memory of

Jordan River Anderson

October 22, 1999–February 2, 2005

"Jordan could not talk, yet people around the world heard his message. Jordan could not breathe on his own and yet he has given the breath of life to other children. Jordan could not walk but he has taken steps that governments are now just learning to follow."

Cindy Blackstock, Executive Director
First Nations Child & Family Caring Society



What is Jordan's Principle

JORDAN'S PRINCIPLE is a child-first principle to resolving jurisdictional disputes within and between federal and provincial/territorial governments within Canada. It applies to all government services available to children, youth and their families. Examples of services covered by Jordan's Principle include but are not limited to: education, health, child welfare, childcare, recreation, and culture and language services.

Where a jurisdictional dispute arises around government services to a Status Indian or Inuit child, Jordan's Principle requires that the government department of first contact pay for the service to the child without delay or disruption. The paying government can then refer the matter to intergovernmental processes to pursue repayment of the expense.

Given that Jordan's Principle is a child-first principle, it is imperative that governments meet the needs of the child as a first priority. The obligation to meet the needs of the child first should always supersede government interests to establish jurisdictional dispute processes or policy implementation policies.

Full and proper implementation of Jordan's Principle in each province/territory should include: an official statement of support from the head of government, inclusion in statements of government policy priorities (i.e.: Speech from the Throne), and an implementation plan developed with full participation of First Nations and Inuit governments and Non Governmental Organizations.

Jordan's Principle is consistent with government obligations set out in the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*, the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and many federal, provincial and territorial child-focused statutes.¹

¹ First Nations Child & Family Caring Society of Canada, Fall Newsletter, 2008, p.2

Principle Passed in House of Commons

Members of Parliament unanimously voted in favour of a Private Member's Motion in support of Jordan's Principle, which was tabled by NDP MP Jean Crowder. Private Member's Motion 296 passed the House of Commons on December 12, 2007 but the Federal Government has yet to fully implement Jordan's Principle.

Implementation and Interpretation of Jordan's Principle

In the Manitoba Provincial Legislature on May 21, 2008, Liberal Leader MLA Dr. John Gerrard introduced a first reading of Bill 233 to implement Jordan's Principle. Regrettably, the Bill did not receive support. On December 6, 2008, the Province of Manitoba and the Federal Government signed an agreement to begin work on the implementation of Jordan's Principle but only for children with complex medical needs. On April 22, 2009, the Government of Ontario formally pledged to work with First Nations on resolving this long-standing issue. To date, movement on both the adoption and implementation has been very slow and First Nations have NOT been meaningfully consulted on the implementation of Jordan's Principle.

While a number of provinces (Manitoba, British Columbia and, most recently, Ontario) have all pledged to adopt Jordan's Principle, no federal/provincial/territorial government has yet to **fully implement** Jordan's Principle. Furthermore, the interpretation of Jordan's Principle by governments is often so narrow that many First Nations children simply will not get equitable government services in areas like education, child welfare, justice and health that other Canadian children take for granted.

First Nation leadership across Canada have pledged full support for the adoption and implementation of Jordan's Principle. First Nations are committed to working with governments to ensure that Jordan's Principle goes beyond mere rhetoric and becomes an **equal and lived experience** for every First Nations child in Canada. The legacy that Jordan River Anderson left was one of equality, not partial equality, and it is time for all Canadian governments to fully step up to the plate and do what is right for First Nations children!

Jordan's Principle