



FEMMES AUTOCHTONES DU QUÉBEC INC.
QUEBEC NATIVE WOMEN INC.

Press release
For immediate release

New measures for Indigenous children: Families need proper representation

Kahnawake, December 2, 2021 — Quebec Native Women (QNW) welcomes the creation of a specific chapter for Indigenous children and families in Bill 15, An Act to amend the Youth Protection Act. QNW also applauds the government's decision that processes and services for youth must be culturally appropriate, with and by the Indigenous communities and individuals involved.

Yesterday's announcement by the Minister of Health and Social Services confirmed the implementation of several recommendations of the MMIWG, the Viens Commission and the Laurent Commission. Among other things, this announcement provides for priority to be given to the culture of Indigenous children without neglecting their ties with their extended family and the people in their community. However, QNW questions the issue of self-determination of Indigenous communities who wish to manage the fate of their own children.

While there are undeniable concerns about the conflict between the two levels of government over the division of powers, it is important not to forget to include First Peoples' self-determination. Indeed, the Government of Quebec is challenging the constitutionality of Bill 92, which is before the House of Commons. It is therefore imperative to include in the discussion of youth protection the traditional power and knowledge of Indigenous communities and families who wish to control the fate of their children.

Considering that Indigenous communities often see the Director of Youth Protection (DYP) as a continuation of the residential schools, QNW suggests an increase in training and the integration of Indigenous personnel in the DYP. These actions will help to heal the painful memories of the residential schools and to adapt the services offered.

"In its youth protection reform, the Ministry of Health and Social Services claims to be responsible for Indigenous youth. Although it has consulted with Indigenous partners, what will happen to the actual application of the Bill, through colonial state processes? It is not just a question of a simple consultation in good faith, it is necessary that the needs and priorities of Indigenous families be truly represented," says Viviane Michel, President of QNW.

About QNW

Founded in 1974, Quebec Native Women is a non-profit organization that represents First Nations women in Quebec as well as urban Indigenous women.

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Source:

Doreen Petiquay Barthold

Communication Officer

Quebec Native Women

Business Complex, River Road

C.P. 1989, Kahnawake (Quebec) J0L 1B0

[514-757-1508](tel:514-757-1508) | communication@faq-qnw.org