



### Background:

On April 1, 2019 amendments to the BC Child, Family and Community Service Act (CFCSA) came into force. These provincial amendments are intended to reduce the over-involvement of the child welfare system in the lives of Indigenous children through earlier involvement and collaboration with Indigenous communities in decision-making and planning for their children who are involved in child welfare services. The amendments allow Delegated Aboriginal Agencies (DAAs) and the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) to regularly share information with Indigenous communities regarding their children in care and in 'out of care options'\*. Regular and consistent reporting to Indigenous communities will provide increased transparency and open further opportunities to work collaboratively on planning and caring for Indigenous children. These changes align with the advice and recommendations provided by Grand Chief Ed John in his in-depth report on Indigenous child welfare in B.C.

### Why are We Making Changes to the CFCSA?

The CFCSA is being changed to:

- Affirm that Indigenous children are entitled to 'learn about and practice their Indigenous traditions, customs and languages, and belong to their Indigenous communities'.
- Build stronger planning and support networks for children, youth and their families by honouring Indigenous communities' rights to have greater involvement in child welfare decisions and to help keep their children and youth out of care, safe in their home communities and connected to their cultures.
- Support greater collaboration between Indigenous communities and the director in caring for, supporting and protecting Indigenous children through agreements.

### Information Sharing Agreement:

Under the new sections of the CFCSA, an Indigenous community can enter into an agreement with the director to receive a quarterly report, which provides information about their community's children who are in care with a DAA or MCFD. The purpose of the report is to ensure the community knows about their children and has an opportunity for increased collaboration and partnership in planning for those children.

A standardized template is available for entering into these agreements. They are signed by an authorized representative of the Indigenous community and a Designated Director under the CFCSA. Indigenous communities who are supported by a DAA may enter into an agreement with the DAA. Indigenous communities who are supported by MCFD may enter into an agreement with MCFD. For Indigenous communities working with both a DAA and MCFD, a collaborative discussion will occur to determine the best way to meet the community's needs.

\* Out of Care Options (kinship placements) refer to options for the care of a child or youth by family members or other significant adults, rather than approved foster parents, when the child's parents are unable to care for him or her.



### What Information Will be Shared?

The director will provide the following information to the Indigenous community on a quarterly basis (March, July, September and December):

- The names, dates of birth and CFCSA legal status of the Indigenous community's children, who are:
  - Children in care (this includes children in the care or custody of a director).
  - Children in the custody of a person other than a parent under a director's supervision (out of care option).
- The names of parents, except for children in care under Voluntary Care or Special Needs Agreements.
- Title and contact information of staff employed with MCFD or a DAA who can respond to questions about the identified children.

If your community is interested in entering into an Information Sharing Agreement, please contact the Practice Manager or Executive Director (ED) at the DAA, or Director of Operations at MCFD. Alternatively, for further information contact the ministry using the email address given below.

