



News release

For immediate release

Splatsin, Canada and British Columbia sign historic coordination agreement for First Nations children and families

March 24, 2023 — Splatsin, Secwépemc Nation, Enderby, British Columbia —
Indigenous Services Canada

First Nations children thrive when they can stay with their families and their communities, surrounded by their culture and language. As part of the Government of Canada's commitment to implement the United Nations *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, we will continue to work towards self-determination for First Nations, Inuit and Métis.

Today, at a ceremony in Enderby, British Columbia, Kukpi7 (Chief) Doug Thomas of Splatsin; the Honourable Patty Hajdu, Federal Minister of Indigenous Services; and the Honourable Mitzi Dean, BC Minister of Children and Family Development; celebrated the signing of the first coordination agreement in British Columbia, pursuant to the *Act respecting First Nations, Inuit, Métis children, youth and families*. This agreement supports the ongoing exercise of Splatsin's jurisdiction of their Child, Family and Community Services under *Spallumcheen Indian Band Bylaw #3-1980* and Secwepemc law.

Over the next 10 years, the agreement will transfer \$136.2 million to Splatsin to support their ongoing delivery of child and family services grounded in their culture and family systems. Splatsin has taken care of their children and families since time immemorial under Secwepemc law, and has been exercising jurisdiction and protecting Splatsin children under their Bylaw since 1980. Splatsin will continue this work, as they have always done.

This agreement is a historic milestone as it is the first coordination agreement in British Columbia and the fifth agreement in Canada. The coordination agreement addresses the coordination of services, the delivery of emergency services, mechanisms for First Nations children to exercise their rights, and fiscal agreements that are needs-based, sustainable and consistent with the principle of substantive equality. The coordination agreement also establishes funding from the federal and provincial governments to ensure that the necessary financial resources are in place.





By working together, we are making progress towards supporting Indigenous Peoples to determine and implement solutions for their children and families and towards improving the well-being of Indigenous children and youth, their families and communities, and future generations.

Quotes

“Splatsin has been looking after our children since time immemorial and more formally with our Bylaw since 1980. This high level of responsibility for our children falls not just on the shoulders of leadership, but every Splatsin community member. It takes a community to raise a child and at Splatsin we do our best to live by those words. I raise my hands up to our community and each and every person involved in caring for our most vulnerable children and youth in the past, present and into the future.”

Kukpi7 Doug Thomas
Splatsin

“Splatsin has always known what is best for their children and families, but decades of interference undermined culture, language and family connection. Today, with Splatsin and the province of British Columbia, we signed a historic coordination agreement to ensure Splatsin children and families can thrive, surrounded by language, culture and strong supports. Colonial and racist policies have left decades of intergenerational trauma by pulling families apart, but today is a new chapter in our country that will help with the ongoing healing and strengthening of community for First Nations peoples. Congratulations to everyone involved in this tremendous work that will support the best interests and wellness of Splatsin children and families.”

The Honourable Patty Hajdu
Minister of Indigenous Services

“We know Splatsin have always been caring for their children, and they have worked tirelessly over the last 40 years to ensure that Splatsin children, youth and families are connected to their culture, community and laws, despite the constraints of the child welfare system. Today, we have witnessed the culmination of that work with the signing of this agreement. I am honoured to join with Splatsin, on their territory, for this beautiful ceremony marking the agreement, the first coordination agreement to be completed in BC. We look forward to the important work ahead together as we coordinate jurisdiction with Splatsin, putting children and youth at the centre of all we do.”





The Honourable Mitzi Dean
BC's Minister of Children and Family Development

Quick facts

- For most Indigenous children, Child and Family Services are provided under the legislation of the province or territory where the children and families reside.
- On January 1, 2020, *An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families* (the Act) came into force. The Act affirms the inherent right to self-government of Indigenous Peoples, which includes jurisdiction over child and family services, provides a pathway for Indigenous communities to exercise jurisdiction over child and family services and sets out principles applicable, on a national level, to the provision of child and family services to Indigenous children.
- In November 2020, the Prime Minister announced over \$542 million in funding to advance First Nations, Inuit, and Métis engagement to co-develop the implementation of the Act and to support Indigenous communities and groups in building the capacity to establish their own child and family services systems.
- Through Budget 2021, the Government of Canada invested an additional \$73.6 million to be used over four years, starting in 2021–22, for additional resources to implement the Act.
- Through Budget 2022, the Government of Canada invested an additional \$87.3 million over three years, starting in 2022–23, to increase capacity building and funding for coordination agreement discussion tables to support the exercise of First Nations, Inuit and Métis jurisdiction in relation to child and family services.

Associated links

- [Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families](#)
- [Reducing the number of Indigenous children in care](#)
- [Notices and requests related to An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families](#)
- [More support to advance reform of services for Indigenous children and families](#)

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