



Niijaansinaanik

Child and Family Services

2018 ANNUAL REPORT





Niijaansinaanik

Child and Family Services

Niijaansinaanik means “Our Children”
in Anishinaabemowin

About Us

Niijaansinaanik Child and Family Services is a culture based organization responsive to the holistic needs of all children, youth and families. Niijaansinaanik provides services that reflect values, beliefs, and principles rooted within the Anishinbek culture. We believe the care of children and youth is the responsibility of an entire community. While working in the present, we acknowledge history and its impacts on our people in relations to outside influences, and strive to build a strong, healthy future for all children, youth, families and communities.

We are committed to providing culturally centered protection, prevention, advocacy, care and cultural services for all families, infants, children and youth who experience abuse or are at risk of experiencing any type of abuse, neglect, or abandonment.

Values

Culture & Language - Teaches us how to live *Mino Bimaadiziwin: The Good Life*. We value language, and aim to include Anishinaabemowin in all programs and services offered by the agency. We respect that diversity is a part of creation. We hold our Elders in high regard, understanding that our survival is due to their wisdom, knowledge, life experience and teachings. In the new year, we will be working to update our language database of working translations.



Elder Joyce Tabobandung and Artist Debbie Jackson

In the 1990's, Chief Flora Tabobandung of Wasauksing First Nation had a vision of a better life for the Anishinaabe children in our communities. Her vision involved her leading children to a safer lifestyle. Following through with her vision, she shared it with Chief Flora and Chief Joan Nagonosh of Magnetawan First Nation. These two leaders were paramount in the initial development of a child and family service agency known as *Gzaa Gaah Naa Nig Child and Family Services*. Due to lack of funding support, this agency was dissolved and our current agency was developed years later in 2016. With the assistance from the elders of Wasauksing and Nipissing First Nation, our new name came to be known as Niijaansinaanik. Artist Debbie Jackson from Wasauksing First Nation created what is now our official logo for Niijaansinaanik Child and Family Services.



Nijaansinaanik was incorporated as a non-profit organization of the province of Ontario in November 2018. We began activities as a pre-designated Child Well Being agency in 2016. This designation is historic as it is a necessary step in reclaiming jurisdiction over child welfare services to the First Nations we work with, and by resolution of the Council of Chiefs to support servicing of all other Indigenous children and families in our jurisdiction of Nipissing and Parry Sound.

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Message from Executive Director and Board President

Joanne Koehler & William Diabo

The past three years have been a dedicated concentration of capacity building within the organization to ensure that the First Nations of Wasauksing, Shawanaga, Magnetawan, Henvey Inlet, Dokis and Wahanapitae have an agency within their jurisdiction that will acknowledge their inherent right to service their own. These communities have had no support with respect to Indigenous service in the area of child welfare services. These services were provided by mainstream service agencies that lacked the ability to provide culturally congruent services that truly met the need of the child, the family and the community as a whole.

Initially under the direction of Waabnoong Bemjiwang Association of First Nations, the work to complete the required activities as a Pre-Designated Child Welfare Agency towards designation began in the fall of 2016. Over the next three years, grass roots capacity building and infrastructure development resulted in a shift from recognition as “Project” status to a non-profit organization known today as Niijaansinaanik Child and Family Services.

We are currently building on our infrastructural work plan to meet the full staffing needs of a Designated agency prepared to service the communities from a prevention and protection mandate while adhering to our community developed and driven Indigenous Service Model. Our Council of Chiefs recognized the importance and considered the distinct needs of all Indigenous children and families and signed a Resolution directing Niijaansinaanik Child and Family Services to provide service to all Indigenous peoples in the area of child welfare within our jurisdictional boundaries.

Our staffing component has grown exponentially over the last year and a half. The frontline staff and Supervisors are seconded to Nipissing/Parry Sound Children’s Aid Society and providing protection services to our 6 First Nation community members as well as all other Indigenous peoples in the urban areas of Sudbury, North Bay and Parry Sound. The Alternative Care staff are very busy recruiting new Alternative Care homes and servicing the new homes that have opened under our license. Our staff are to be commended for their hard work as they are ensuring that children and families are receiving culturally congruent services in both areas of prevention and protection.

There is a sense of new hope among the members of Wasauksing, Shawanaga, Magnetawan, Henvey Inlet, Dokis and Wahnipitae First Nations because Niijaansinaanik is an Anishinaabek organization that has developed the infrastructure that will support the safety, health and well being of children. We hope to influence and inform new policy and practice in the field of child welfare that will ensure interventions when required are well-intentioned in a way that ensures ‘Mino-Bimaadiziwin’ for all.

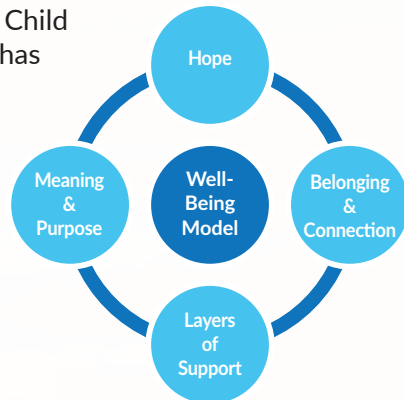
We currently work closely to support the following First Nations: Henvey Inlet, Dokis, Magnetawan, Shawanaga, Wasauksing, and Wahnipitae. In October 2018, we received a Council of Chiefs Resolution advising that Niijaansinaanik is able to assist all Indigenous, Metis, and Inuit children within the jurisdiction of services.



Niijaansinaanik Service Model

All children are sacred. It is believed that each child chooses their parents. Parents have been given a responsibility from the Creator to love and protect their child. We (kinship, community, clan and nation) have a collective responsibility to ensure the safety and well-being of children.

Our Culture Based Child Well-Being Model has 4 outcomes:



The model reminds us of important elements and responsibilities. We aim to cultivate hope, belonging and connectedness to family, community and the land. Our familial relationships provide meaning to life, and an understanding of purpose. Anishnaabe children must be surrounded by layers of support, not limited to: Family, extended family, community, clan and Nation to support these outcomes.

In addition to the Culturally Based Service Delivery Model, we also aim to be informed and practise according to knowledge and understanding of the following 8 Delivery Principles.

- 1. Trauma Informed** - Views symptoms as adaptive coping mechanisms. Understands the inter-generational impacts of colonialism and people are resilient and have strengths.
- 2. Strengths-Based** - Focuses on the strengths and abilities of people not on “what’s wrong with the person”. As personal awareness of strengths increases, so will self-empowerment.
- 3. Restores Balance** - All the strengths and resources needed are already present within our communities and in our cultural teachings, ceremonies and practices.
- 4. Spiritually Grounded** - The use of Elders, traditional teachers to help us use ceremonies, sweat lodge, fasting and land based teachings to ground and centre the spirit.

- 5. Culturally Safe** - Service providers seek to address the effects of colonialism by ensuring that they seek to understand and protect the cultural identity of the individual, are aware of how their own power and privilege may effect the relationships and trust of people they work with.
- 6. Engages Community** - Everyone within community is valued and restored to their place within the circle.
- 7. Reciprocal Relationships** - Internal and External protocol agreements, MOUs and Service Delivery Agreements clearly map out various roles and responsibilities.
- 8. Accountable** - All parts of the Service Delivery System are accountable to one another. Clan system can be tied to accountability.

Cultural Based Service Model

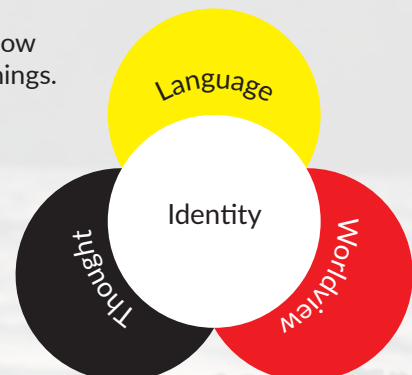
The service model is framed around caring for our children.

The objective of the service model is to keep children safe and healthy within our communities.

Our Fundamental Beliefs are based on Mino Bimaadiziwin - the Good Life, diversity, our elders, the Clan System and Accountabilities, culturally restorative practices and the seven Grandfather teachings.

Seven Grandfather Teachings:

- To cherish knowledge is to know **Wisdom**.
- To know **Love** is to know peace.
- To honour all of creation is to have **Respect**.
- **Bravery** is to face your foe with integrity.
- **Honesty** in facing a situation is to be brave.
- **Humility** is to know yourself as a sacred part of creation.
- **Truth** is to know all of these things.



Meet our President and Board Members



Board President – Board Member - Magnetawan First Nation

William Diabo

William grew up in Toronto, Kahnawake and Dunkirk, New York, until he was 18 years old. He returned to Magnetawan in 1990, and has since been working for the people. William brings a wealth of experience in Health, Police, Governance, Community, Political, I.T. Management, Child and Family Services, and more.

William holds an Honors Management Certificate. For almost 20 years he served as Volunteer Board Member and Working Group Representative for Magnetawan First Nation. He has served as Board Director, Secretary, and for the past 11 years, and President of the Board of Shkagamik:Kwe Health Centre. William served as President of the Board of Gezhtoojig Employment & Training for 7 years, and Board Director and Finance Committee Chair for Aboriginal Police Services for 8 years. Acting as Area Health Board Director for 4 years, William stayed very active in Health and governance. He was also on the UOI Child Well Being Law Working Group from 2016-2018. William is still committed to the UOI Governance Working Group which he joined in 2016, and has also been Board Director and President on the Niijaansinaanik Child and Family Services since then.

William served as Chief for 3 terms, and is current member of Council of Magnetawan First Nation.



Vice President Board Member – Dokis First Nation

Denise Restoule

Denise has an extensive 30-year career in community health. She started the Health Services for Dokis First Nation as a “Family Health Aide” which evolved into the “Community Health Representative” (CHR) Program. She was the Acting Interim CHR Co-Ordinator position for Ontario Region, spokesperson and a Keynote Speaker at the first National CHR Conference.

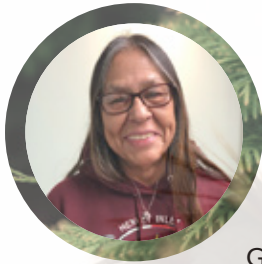
She has worked in Dokis as Drug & Alcohol Prevention Worker and then the CHR position. Denise coordinated, developed and negotiated for Dokis, Nipissing and Bear Island (Temagami FN) for the Transfer of Health Services from Canada, for the First Nations to assume administrative responsibility of their health services. She has served as Health Director of Dokis First Nation.

Denise has an extensive political career, serving as Councillor over many terms, and in 2006 was the first female to be elected as Chief of Dokis and was re-elected for 5 consecutive terms until retirement in 2016, and later as Deputy Chief. As Dokis Chief, she oversaw development the Okikendawt Hydro Project, helped Dokis achieve the “Pollution Probe Award”, presented by the Premier of Ontario. In May 2018, Denise was appointed by the Minister of National Defense as Honorary Lieutenant Colonel (HLCOL) with the Algonquin Regiment in North Bay.



Treasurer- Board Director - Wahnapiatae
Marnie Anderson

Marnie currently works at Laurentian University for the Aboriginal Children’s Health and Wellbeing Measure (ACHWM) where she shares it with communities across Ontario and Canada. She holds a Bachelor of Physical Education at Laurentian University, specializing in Health Promotion and Indigenous Studies, and achieved an advanced diploma in Physical Fitness and Leisure Management at Cambrian College. With several years of experience in planning, conducting, evaluating and implementing programs for First Nations in several different areas both on and off reserve, she is eager to participate and assist Wahnapiatae with her knowledge, as it builds on her personal interest in Indigenous children’s health.



Secretary - Henvey Inlet First Nation
Grace Contin

Grace was a board member for the previous pre-designation agency *Gzaa Gaah Naa Nig Child and Family Services* for the entirety of their existence. In her home community of Henvey Inlet First Nation, she was the Child Welfare Prevention worker for 8 years and was a daycare worker for 5 years. She remains a strong advocate for children and families in her community. Grace is a mother of three adult children and has 6 grand children and 3 great grandchildren. She is very much involved in their lives and is a proud Nokomis!

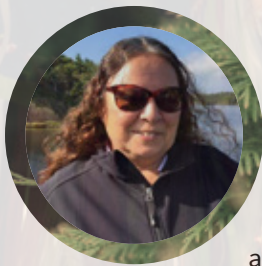


Board Member - Wasauksing First Nation
Dale Copegog

Wawasquene n’dizhn’kaz, Migizi dodem, Wasauksing donjaba.

Dale has worked in the social field for many years at Wasauksing Administration office, focusing in the areas of Ontario Works, child welfare, youth services, restorative justice and community wellness programming.

Dale has been a contributing member on many committees/boards such as: Board of Manotsaywin Nanotoojig; a member on the Advisory Committee for B’sanibamaadsiwin Native Mental Health; a member of the Ontario Native Welfare Administrators Association and, most recently, was involved with Waabnoong Bemjiwong’s development of a Child Well-Being Agency. Dale is looking forward to contributing as a board member during an exciting time for our nations as we work towards operating our own unique agency that meets the needs of our children and their families.



Board Member - Shawanaga First Nation
Patricia Pawis

Patricia grew up in Shawanaga First Nation. She holds a Social Work diploma from Confederation College in Thunder Bay, ON. Patricia contributed to the Parry Sound Friendship Centre Board for 20 years, and served 16 years in the capacity as a political leader in Shawanaga First Nation. She stays active and involved with many community committees and different boards. Patricia has been employed as Service Administrator at the Shawanaga First Nation Healing Centre, and was involved with Gzaa Gaah Naa Nig Child & Family Services. Patricia takes great pride and fulfillment by being involved in my Community and with Family.

Service Report

Over the last year the Alternative Care program, Cultural services Program, Youth Program, Jordan's Principle program, Quality Assurance, CPIN and Child Protection Services have all been created.

Service policies were created for each of the service areas and have been submitted and approved by the Ministry. The outstanding areas requiring program and policy development are Volunteer Services, Support Services and Prevention Services. Program development in Cultural Services was expanded to include traditional parenting and men's and women's circles. The Cultural Services team has also begun holding staff cultural days quarterly to provide teachings to staff and help them begin to build their own bundles that will assist them in their work with families and personal wellness.

Ongoing meetings with the Ministry continue to take place as the work continues on the designation work plan. Recruitment and hiring of Child Protection staff is underway. Currently the agency has one child protection supervisor and 6 child protection workers that have been hired and seconded to Nipissing and Parry Sound Children's Aid Society (CAS) in North Bay. These staff are currently undergoing training to become authorized child protection workers. All have been trained on Child Protection Information Network (CPIN) at Nipissing and Parry Sound Children's Aid Society. Two of the new works have come from other agencies already authorized and have begun to build

their caseloads comprised of our First Nations member communities.

Interviews are taking place in the South to begin staffing this area with Child protection workers and a Child Protection supervisor. Recruitment and interviews have also taken place to staff the Children Services supervisor and Children's services workers for both the North and the South.

Meetings with all the First Nations took place and Protocols were drafted with all the communities. Work is still being done to complete protocols with Education, Hospitals and Friendship Centres. The Service Model has been presented in all of the communities as well as the Alternative and Customary Care Program and Jordan's Principle.

Work with the communities will begin to support communities with the development of their Customary Care programs. Training on Customary Care for communities will also be part of this support.

Child Welfare Information Network (CPIN) project planning is under way. The hiring of the Protection Manager has been completed and they will head up the CPIN project working closely with Quality Assurance supervisor and the Director of Services on this project. The project also includes members of the Ministry CPIN team, Child Welfare Operations Branch and support from ANCFSAO system lead.



Care Services & Culturally Congruent Practices in Child and Family Services



Alternative Care Program

In December 2018, the agency received approval from the Ministry of Children Community and Social Services, as licensed to approve Alternative Caregivers (Foster Care parents). Workers have received various training to gain a better understanding of all child welfare requirements, including the Ministry of Children Community and Social Services requirements for foster care licensing. Workers also received cultural training that has helped to ensure services are being delivered in an appropriate way. Some of the key training that the staff received were: HEART & SPIRIT Indigenous curriculum and SAFE & PRIDE provincial curriculum. In addition, the Alternative Care workers completed mentoring with the Children's Aid Society for the District of Nipissing & Parry Sound for a several months.

In the Spring of 2019, a strong focus and effort was put towards awareness and recruitment. Staff attended several information sessions/booths both on and off reserve. There has been a very positive response. We are very proud to say that at five foster families transferred to Niijaansinaanik Child and Family Services and are now Alternative Caregivers. To date to have six approved Alternative Caregivers and eight children are currently in these homes. Workers continue to plan, recruit, complete home assessments and provide support to the Alternative Caregivers.

Our first Alternative Care Orientation was held September 14, 2019 in Wasauksing First Nation for all approved Alternative Caregivers and their children. These families transferred from Children's Aid Society for the District of Nipissing & Parry Sound foster care to Niijaansinaanik Alternative Care Program. The day involved giving the adults had an opportunity to learn more about the agency, meet other Alternative Caregivers and to receive cultural teachings. The children were kept busy with lots of fun activities and the youth spent the afternoon fishing and receiving teachings.

Niijaansinaanik Child and Family Services facilitated the first Pre-Service training for new Alternative Caregivers and applicants who are in the process of becoming an Alternative Caregivers. The four day Pre-Service training was customized to blend both the provincial guidelines (SAFE curriculum) and Indigenous cultural practices and values (SPIRIT curriculum). The training was facilitated by: Lorraine Dodd, Manager of Resources, Perry Mcleod-Shabogesic, Manager of Cultural Services and Melanie Chevrier, Alternative Care Worker. Nine families completed the training and received their Certification of Completion. Evaluations received stated that the most useful thing about the training was the cultural component, including the medicine wheel exercise and the information (manual, video and discussions). The agency will facilitate the next Pre-Service Training in the Spring 2020.

Customary Care

Niijaasaanik Child and Family Services places priority on placing children with family and community first with a preference to utilize Customary Care above all other permanency options.

It is the desire of Niijaansinaanik that Customary Care Agreements be reached before any court applications are required. Respecting that each community has their own values and beliefs and own processes, the Agency has developed protocols with each First Nation that outlines the specific steps necessary when proceeding with a Customary Care Agreement.

Customary Care is recognized under *Part IV of the Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017*. The First Nation, Inuit or Metis community has the legal right to declare that a First Nations, Inuit or Metis child is being cared for under customary care, a society or entity may grant a subsidy to the person caring for the child. (*Part IV, Section 71 of CYFSA*). Customary Care refers to an arrangement for an extended family member or other Band member to care for another family's children, because their own parents are not able to provide care or protect them at that point in time. When the child's protection cannot be ensured with their parents, the extended family or community members may be able to provide care until the parents are able to resume caregiving. Such an arrangement can be short or long term.

We are currently developing a Customary Care program that is based on Indigenous cultural belief systems and that recognizes and respects inherent rights of Indigenous people. The agency has a Customary Care Coordinator who works collaboratively with the First Nations and Protection Agencies to Develop Customary Care Agreements. The Coordinator has provided education and awareness to the First Nations and has assisted in the review and development of several Customary Care Agreements.



The agency has completed a Draft Customary Care Manual. Over the past year, the workers have been providing education/awareness sessions throughout the region. On November 2018, the agency held a Customary Care Forum in Shawanaga First Nation for all First Nation members to learn about what is Customary Care and what is a customary care agreement. This one day session was facilitated by Lawrence Jourdain. Ongoing Customary Care information sessions have been held in the member First Nation communities.

Niijaansiinaanik Child and Family Services currently has nine Customary Care Agreements signed. The agency workers are coordinating, monitoring, providing support and ensuring all the proper documentation is completed. Successful completion of all agreements have required working collaboratively with the families, First Nations and Children's Aid Societies.



Quality Assurance & Measuring Impact

The Quality Assurance Department for Niijaansinaanik Child and Family Services commenced in December of 2018. The Quality Assurance worker was seconded to the Nipissing Parry Sound Children's Aid Society (CAS) in order to complete reviews of all First Nation files at the Society, on their Frontline Legacy System. These reviews included child care files, customary care files, kinship files, investigation files, ongoing protection files, and any open and active file identified as First Nation, Inuit or Metis. The purpose of the file review was to ensure that data was accurate in the system, and that all First Nation, Inuit, Metis files would be noted appropriately as such. The result of the review would assist and help prepare Niijaansinaanik with staff planning, based on the number of anticipated files we would acquire from Nipissing CAS.

The file review continued for a period of approximately 6 months. During that time, some of the observations were that there were a significant number of files that were not identified in their data system as First Nation, but were First Nation families. In some instances, the families were not identified in the system, therefore were not being offered First Nation services and no band was being consulted. In other instances, workers were aware that the family identified as First Nation, bands were consulted, and First Nation services were being offered, however these families were not identified in the system as First Nation. Not entering First Nation data into the system resulted in a disproportionate number of First Nation files showing in our statistics. A number of files were also identified as First Nation, with an unknown band.

Niijaansinaanik and Nipissing Children's Aid Society continue to work together ensure that files are accurately identified. Currently underway is the beginning stages of completing another file review, as the Society has switched over to a

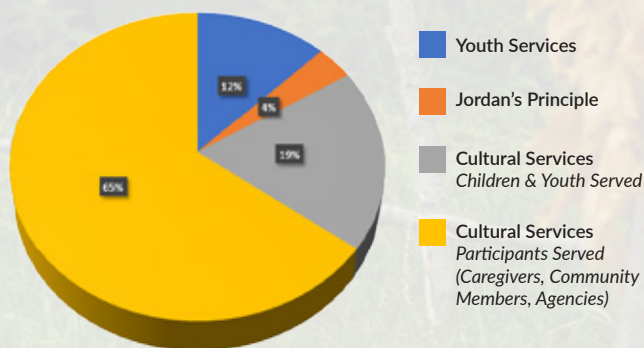
new data software, CPIN (Child Protection Information Network), which has come with new challenges. In order to alleviate some of the struggles staff may have with inputting FNIM data, a "tutorial" has been developed with the assistance of the CPIN trainer from Nipissing CAS, with the goal that workers can use this as a guide to properly enter information into CPIN, resulting in a more accurate representation of FNIM files at the agency.

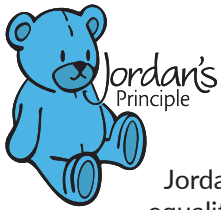
In December 2019 there will be a week-long training offered for Cognos Analytics, which is the reporting side of CPIN being utilized by Quality Assurance teams across the province.

It is also the role of Quality Assurance to learn Privacy protocol, and to take the lead as Privacy Officer, as the new Privacy Protocol approaches (Part X) in January 2020.

Furthermore, Quality Assurance is responsible for recording our prevention statistics, which includes our Youth Program, Jordan's Principle Program as well as our Cultural Program. Please find an illustration and brief analysis of the programs below:

Prevention Services





Jordan's Principle

Jordan's Principle is a service which supports equality for First Nations children when accessing services such as Speech Therapy, Medical Services, Mental Health services and more. Our Jordan's Principle team has helped many families throughout the months of service.

Niijaansinaanik Child and Family Services commenced with the delivery of Jordan's Principle Services in April 2018. The Coordinator was immediately tasked with the development and implementation of all required program documentation. Much time and effort were dedicated towards consultation with Regional Focal Points during this phase of program development in an effort to ensure our documentation met and exceeded government requirements. During this early stage resources were also allocated to community engagement. We reached out to Band Representatives and were invited to deliver an information session at the Nipissing Parry Sound District Children's Aid Society.

In mid May the first referrals were received. In early June another Coordinator joined the team. Community

engagement continued to be a priority with the first of several community information sessions occurring at the Wahnapiatae Administration Complex in July. Community information sessions were also delivered at Henvey Inlet and Magnetawan First Nations. Shawanaga First Nation hosted an information session for their parents and caregivers in early December.

Since program inception we have seen a steady influx of referrals. Our team is assisting over 50 children and their families/caregivers to navigate the bureaucratic process and apply for a variety of products and services including but not limited to sports registration fees, sports equipment, music lessons, daycare fees, transportation costs, summer camps, autism services, furniture, furnaces, vehicles, assessments, school supplies, assisted devices, new clothes, and family court legal fees. We have also assisted one community school with a group application for a new bus.

In the last half of 2018, we assisted a minimum of 12 Jordan's Principle requests per month.

Since April 2018, our Jordan's Principle worker assisted First Nation families obtain \$106,829.16. \$253,835.61 was requested from Jordan's Principle from April 2018-December 2019, and the remainder is still awaiting government approval.



Jordan's Legacy

Jordan River Anderson from Norway House Cree Nation in Manitoba was born in 1999, with multiple disabilities and stayed in the hospital until he passed away at the young age of 5. When he was 2 years old, doctors said he was able to move to a specialized home suited to care for his complex medical needs, however, the Federal and Provincial government could not agree who should pay for his home-based care. In 2007, the House of Commons passed Jordan's Principle to ensure First Nations children get the services they need, when they need them. Today, Jordan's Principle is a legal obligation.

Cultural Services

Cultural services can be provided to support children and families on healing journeys to stay connected, or to reconnect with culture and traditions. We respect all healthy spiritual paths, and are happy to work with you for other cultural or traditional requests, including:

- Sweat Lodge
- Pipe Ceremony
- Naming and Colours Ceremony
- Fasting and Vision Quest
- Welcoming Ceremonies
- Rites of Passage Ceremonies
- Traditional Land Base Teachings
- Family Circles
- Cedar Bath
- Other requests

In the past year the Cultural Program has grown in numbers of staff as well as opportunities to service member communities. Cultural/Social Investment is a priority for our agency to assist in bringing balance to our First Nation's members on and off reserve. Requests for support for their own programs as well as for their children and families continues to build as well. The interaction between our member First Nations and Niijaansinaanik has assisted in positive relationship building.

Internally the policy development for the cultural program was finalized in early Spring with some funding applications submitted in 2018 and approved in 2019 that supported new positions. Staffing has been a priority for Niijaansinaanik Child & Family Services which has included the Cultural Services Program. Dave Rice was hired on as a Cultural Helper along with Janice St. Germaine as the Cultural Coordinator in June 2019. This boost to the staff of

the Cultural Program increased our presence overall but specifically to our southern catchment area. One more Helper Position is still slated to be filled in the up-coming year.

The Cultural Program commenced in June 2018. The first few months were spent on development of the program. In January 2019 referrals were being made and by February, services were being delivered in our communities, as well as other communities which included North Bay, Sudbury, St. Charles and Orillia.

Some of the services offered have been Family Circles, Cedar Baths, Teaching Circles, Crisis Response Meetings and, naming ceremonies. These services are geared towards families, children, and groups of individuals. In the month of August, many children from all communities were invited and attended a Cultural Art and Storytelling Workshop in Orillia, ON.

In September, events took place in four of our First Nations, including Shawanaga, Wasauksing, Dokis, Magnetawan, as well as in other communities.



Elders Advisory Circle

An Elders Advisory Circle was established with Terms of Reference being adopted by the Elders to help guide them in their role within the Agency. Quarterly meetings have been established and are being conducted. In other program development this past year the Cultural Program supported a number youth camps. Sweat lodge building and teachings, storytelling, medicine walks are just a few of the cultural events led by the Cultural Program.

Alternative Care Parenting Pre-Service Training

In October Nijjaansinaanik Child & Family Services held our initial Alternative Care Parenting Pre Service Training. This “Heart & Spirit” course was developed by our agency to balance western parenting techniques and knowledge with Indigenous traditional parenting roles, teachings and practices. The session gifted Alternative Care parent participants the knowledge they will need to become successful Alternative Care Parents for our children. Ceremony, intellectual and experiential learning was the basis for this 4-part session.

Family Healing/Guiding Circles

Family healing and guiding circles have become and intricate part of the relationship our agency has nurtured with families on their healing journey. These options help to create a space that allows for honest reflection and gentle guidance. Along with the Family Healing/Guiding Circles, the Cultural Program has also established a number of diverse community circles that focus on general challenges community members face as well as specific ones like Men’s and Women’s circles. One on one counseling/circles have also become an important activity ranging from youth to adult. First Nation Health centres, Social programs, schools and organizations are beginning to increase their requests for support in this area. Requests for workshops, ceremonies, teachings, circles and supporting communities in their Child and Family services and cultural programs have become regular requests for our agency. A Circle Program is near completion and will be delivered to families and children in care in 2020 along with a Traditional Parenting Program.

Traditional Parenting Program

This program is designed to assist families in regaining their balance and well-being in their roles as parents.

Dates to be determined.



History & Timeline

A DETAILED HISTORY OF NIIJAANSINAANIK



Niijaansinaanik
Child and Family Services

1992-1995
Formerly known as *Gzaa-Gaah-Naa-Nig Child and Family Services*. Original funding agreement between *Gzaa-Gaah-Naa-Nig* and the *Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS)*. Provincial government discontinues funding and the organization was forced to cease providing services.

MARCH 2016

Chiefs mandate *Waabnoong Bemjiwang Association of First Nations (WBAFN)* to pursue the development of a First Nations Children Services Agency for member First Nations and Shawanaga First Nation (Independent).

APRIL 2016

Draft budget submitted to MCYC for consideration to support development of a Child Well Being Agency.

SEPTEMBER 2016

WBAFN and MCYS sign service contract for WBAFN to begin development as a pre-designated Child Well Being Agency servicing the First Nations of: Wasauksing, Shawanaga, Magnetawan, Henvey Inlet, Dokis, Nipissing and Wahnapitae.

DECEMBER 2016

Operations begin with hiring of Project Manager to guide process under WBAFN Board of Directors. MCYS indicate 5-stage (A,B,C,D,E) process to be completed before designation.

Stage A begins.

JANUARY - NOVEMBER 2017

Community Consultation with youth, communities, service providers, Chiefs and elders take place. Organizational Steering Committee developed with community representatives. Urban Indigenous populations consulted.

DECEMBER 2017

STAGE A - (Community Consultations) conclude. Ministry approval to begin Stage B.

Continued

A DETAILED HISTORY OF NIIJAANSINAANIK



Niijaansinaanik
Child and Family Services

FEBRUARY - NOVEMBER 2018

Further capacity building with development of an Organizational Service Model, Elders Advisory Committee, Policies and Procedures, increase in staffing occurs.

OCTOBER 2018

Resolution of Council of Chiefs to support servicing of all Indigenous Children and families in the jurisdiction of services.

NOVEMBER 2018

Incorporation as a Non-Profit Organization of the Province of Ontario.

DECEMBER 2018

New Board of Directors assume roles for the Organizations. Alternative Care License is acquired allowing the organization to recruit and open Indigenous Alternative Care homes.

MARCH 2019

Naming Ceremony takes place on Nipissing First Nation as the new organization receives name "Niijaansinaanik Child and Family Services"

JULY 2019

Stage B Activities (Capacity Building) Completed. Cultural Ceremony held in West Nipissing with Deputy Ministry Mernard in attendance. Correspondence sent to Ministry indicating the completion of Stage B and preparedness to advance to Stage C.

NOVEMBER 2019

3-Day Strategic Planning occurs with Board of Directors in Rama, ON. Ontario Chiefs pass resolution supporting designation of Niijaansinaanik to occur Spring 2020.

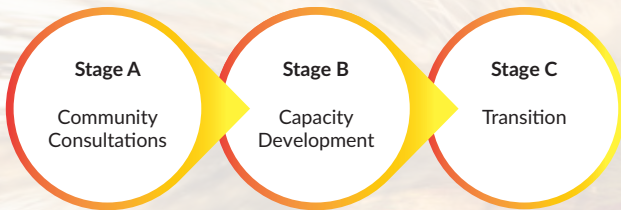
NEXT STEPS

● **Stage D (Ministrial Designation)**

● **STAGE E (Sustaining Capacity)**

Published Dec. 2019

Designation Stages



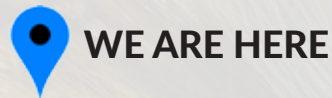
STAGE A – Community Consultation

First Nations communities are required to complete a community assessment confirming interest, support and readiness. This task was completed in one fiscal year. A business plan was forwarded to the ministry to demonstrate that there was interest and support, and that the current organization was endorsed to pursue designation.

STAGE B - Capacity Development

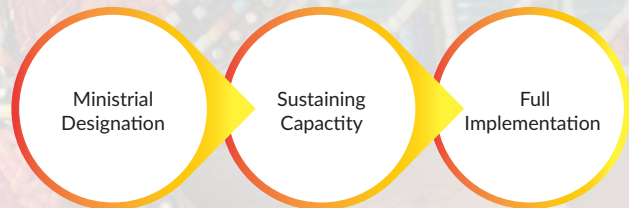
We provided the ministry with specific documentation to demonstrate preparedness to begin delivering child protection services, including: Policies, procedures and other documentation related to operational and business processes; and A comprehensive Service Delivery Model description with a detailed budget to include both one-time start-up and ongoing operating costs.

The ministry completed a documentation review as well as on-site interviews with staff, various community members, and other professionals to assess the organization's capacity, strengths and potential risks for designation. We are awaiting confirmation to advance to Stage C – Transition.



STAGE C - Transition

At this stage, the Aboriginal organization will be supported by the designated CAS responsible for delivering services in the jurisdiction to develop full capacity as a Child Protection Agency. The organization will undertake additional activities that demonstrate their ability to meet all expectations to develop capacity, including: recruiting additional staff, providing training opportunities for staff, finalizing protocols and relationships, and preparing and developing all aspects of service and funding requirements.



What's Next?

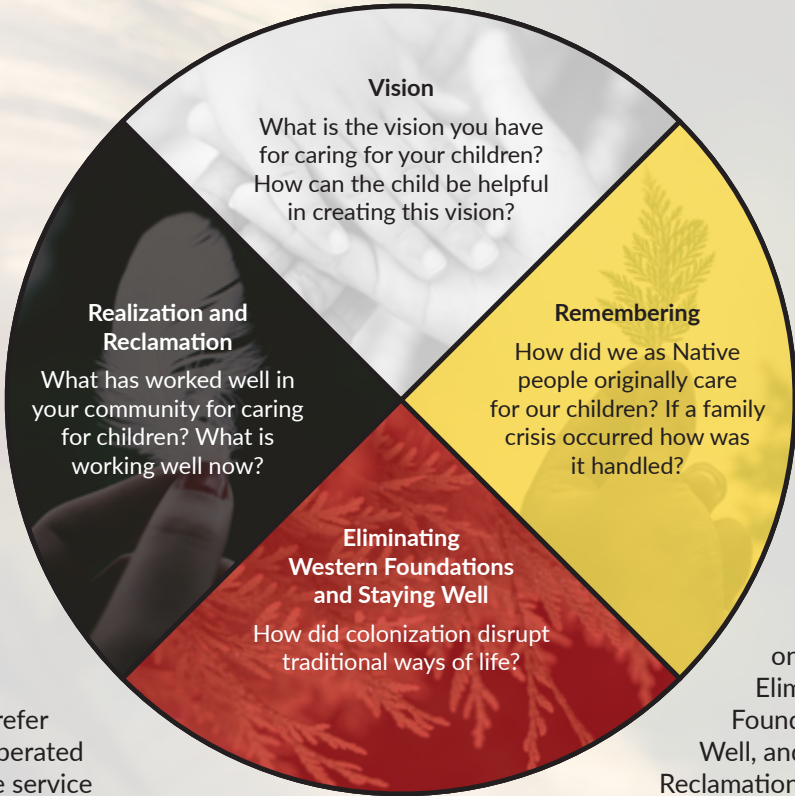
STAGE D - Ministerial Designation

The review team recommendation for designation along with supporting documentation goes forward to the Minister for approval. The Minister considers and if in agreement, designates with or without conditions.

STAGE E – Sustaining Capacity

The newly designated organization undergoes a review one and two years post designation to determine ability to sustain and build on their capacity to provide child and family well-being services.

Community Consultations and Conclusion



From our surveys, an overwhelming 94% answered they would prefer a First Nation led and operated designated child welfare service delivery.

Community consultations were held in each community. The Organizational Steering Committee coordinated a feast to welcome members of the communities and as a thank you for those who provided their input. Niijaansinaanik delivered presentations to explain the inception of the organization, and to update on the ministry stages of capacity building. We also explained the benefits of working with our Service Model from the prevention and protection, over regular experiences with non-indigenous Children Welfare Associations. Each participant was asked to answer questions based

on: Vision, Remembering, Eliminating Western Foundations and Staying Well, and Reconciliation and Reclamation.

We also asked participants to explain their vision of: Child protection, pre-contact caring, traditional parenting and role of child protection.

We are fortunate to have multi-level input from grassroots to ministry. We listen closely to families, children, staff, elders, committees, and from stakeholders within our governance structure to ensure Niijaansinaanik is moving forward together. We will continually analyze, improve and be a child and family service that enhance 'Mino-Bimaadiziwin' – The good life.

Thank You: First Nations and Stakeholders



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