



# Niijaansinaanik

Child and Family Services

2021 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. We provide services that reflect values, beliefs, and principles rooted within the Anishinabek culture. We believe that the care of children and youth is the responsibility of an entire community. While working in the present, we acknowledge history and its impact on our people in relation 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 children, youth, and families. Our fundamental values emphasize maintaining strong culture and language values, that teach us how to live Mino Bimaadiziwin - *The Good Life*.

We operate around a culture-based Service Model framed around caring for our children and youth and

based on Mino Bimaadiziwin - *The Good Life*, diversity, our elders, the clan system and accountabilities, culturally restorative practices, and the seven Grandfather Teachings.

Providing culturally congruent child, youth and family well-being for Indigenous children, youth and families in the districts of Nipissing, Parry Sound and Greater City of Sudbury, in:

- Alternative Care
- Customary Care
- Kinship Care
- Cultural Services
- Prevention and Protection Services

Niijaansinaanik Child and Family Services are members of the Association of Native Child and Family Services Agencies of Ontario (ANCFSAO) and the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies (OACAS).

## WHO WE SERVE:

Sault Ste. Marie

Sudbury

Sturgeon Falls

North Bay

Ottawa





Niijaansinaanik Child and Family Services became a designated Child Well-Being Agency on April 1, 2021. 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 Indigenous children, youth and families in the districts of Nipissing, Parry Sound and Greater City of Sudbury. We began activities as a pre-designated Child Well-Being Agency in 2016. Niijaansinaanik Child and Family Services was incorporated as a non-profit organization of the province of Ontario in November 2018.

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## PRIVACY STATEMENT

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# Board of Directors



**Marnie Anderson, President, and Board Member - Wahnapiatae First Nation**

Marnie Anderson currently works at the Northeast Cancer Centre, on the Indigenous Health team, working to deliver cancer education and awareness to communities and organizations in the Northeast. She is also enrolled part-time in the Interdisciplinary Health graduate program at the School of Rural and Northern Health, Laurentian University and hopes to complete the program in the fall of 2022. She holds a bachelor's degree in Physical and Health Education from Laurentian University, specializing in Health Promotion and Physical Health. Marnie has a vast experience in planning, evaluating, and implementing programs for First Nations communities and organizations both on and off reserve, and is eager to participate and assist Wahnapiatae, and all First Nations served, as it builds on her personal interest in Indigenous children's health.



**Denise Restoule, Vice President - Dokis First Nation**

Denise has an extensive 30 year career in community health. She started at Health Services in Dokis First Nation as a Family Health Aide, which evolved into the Community Health Representative (CHR) Program. She was the Acting Interim CHR Coordinator for the Ontario region, a Drug and Alcohol Prevention Worker, and served as Health Director. Politically, Denise served as Councillor for many terms, and in 2006 was the first female to be elected Chief, where she was re-elected for five consecutive terms, retiring in 2016. Denise was also Deputy Chief. In May 2018, Denise was appointed by the Minister of National Defence as Honorary Lieutenant Colonel (HLCOL) with the Algonquin Regiment in North Bay.



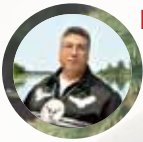
**Grace Contin, Secretary - Henvey Inlet First Nation**

Grace was a Board Member for the previous pre-designated 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 eight years and was a daycare worker for five years. She remains a strong advocate for children and families in her community. Grace is a mother of three adult children and has six grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. She is very much involved in their lives and is a proud Nokomis!



**Candace Geroux, Treasurer - Shawanaga First Nation**

Candace is from Shawanaga First Nation, where she and her family currently reside. She has more than 18 years of experience in Finance, and has worked in Health for the last six years. She is currently a Councillor with Shawanaga First Nation and holds the Health, Child, Cultural and Finance Portfolios within her community. Candace has been active within her community in recent years helping with the Annual Pow Wow through the Healing Centre and other events. Candace enjoys being out by the bay fishing or creating handmade beadwork in her spare time.



**Lloyd Myke, Board Member - Magnetawan First Nation**

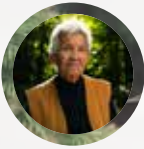
Lloyd Myke was elected in as Chief of Magnetawan First Nation in 2021. Previously Lloyd held roles with Council as Chief, Deputy Chief, and Head Councillor. Lloyd studied at Northern College of Applied Arts and Technology and worked with Boart Longyear Drilling Services. He was involved with the Anishinabek Nation Education Secretariat Anishinabek Educational Institute Leadership Council, and Chair of the Kinooaadziwin Education Body (KEB). As a Portfolio Holder, Lloyd was involved in the creation of the Land Code Development, and Election and Community Ratification for Magnetwan First Nation. In 2015, Lloyd and colleagues received a Community Builders Award - Environment Category for the effectiveness of mitigation measures used to prevent reptile mortality on Highway 69 through Magnetawan First Nation and Burwash.



**Shane Tabobondung, Board Member - Wasauksing First Nation**

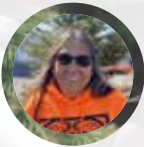
Shane Tabobondung is of Ojibwa and Pottawatomi ancestry and is a member of Wasauksing First Nation. Shane holds a Master's Degree in Indigenous Social Work studies from Wilfrid Laurier University. He has been professionally involved in health and wellness for the last 20 years. Shane has recently taken on the position of Director of Social Wellness in Wasauksing, where he works to professionally harmonize western medical approaches to health and the Indigenous wellness paradigm. Early in his career Shane served as elected Chief, and has served multiple terms on Council.

## Elders Advisory Circle



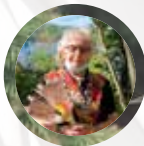
### **Joyce Tabobondung, Head Elder**

Elder Joyce Tabobondung was born and raised on Wasauksing First Nation. She worked for the First Nation for many years in various positions, including Economic Advisor for the Highway 69 Corridor, Ratification Officer, Elder Advisor, and serving the community as Chief. Joyce was instrumental in the forming of the Waabnoong Bemjiwang Association of First Nations Tribal Council, the Parry Sound Native Friendship Centre, and was Grand Chief of the Robinson Huron Treaty. Joyce was the Chief of Wasauksing First Nation during the formation of Gzaa-Gaah-Naa-Nig Anishinabek Child and Family Services in 1992. Throughout her years of service, she has always been involved with children, youth, and families and was on the developing team of Gaazoonanic (Those We Love) Child and Family Services and carried on with Niijaansinaanik Child and Family Services (Our Children).



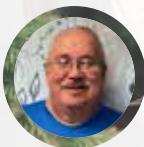
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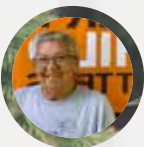
### **Audrey Tabobondung, Wasauksing First Nation Biidawbonook, (Before dawn) N'dizh N' Kaaz, Ngig (Otter) N'doodem (Clan)**

Audrey worked as a Native Child Welfare Worker for ten years in the Kenora area. There, she met Elders who helped guide her in her spiritual healing mission and she received her vision to pursue traditional teachings, one being the Jingle dress. Audrey is also an artist who combines traditional methods with new technology to create one-of-a-kind Anishinaabe inspired creations. Audrey serves as Elder, grandmother, and Nokomis to the children attending the Wasauksing's Migizoons (Little Eagle) Child Care. Audrey is a proud mother and grandmother!



### **Tony Tyson, Wahnapiatae First Nation**

Tony Tyson is proudly from Wahnapiatae First Nation, which is where he currently resides. He has been married to his wife for 40 years and they have four children and six grandchildren. Tony has worked for N'Swakamok Native Friendship as the Life Long Care Worker for 21 years. In his role, he organizes and offers programming and services to the Elders in the community. Tony is a Fire Keeper, Eagle Staff Carrier, Pipe Carrier, and Traditional Dancer. He is also a member of the Cultural Advisory Committee - Wahnapiatae, and a Board Member for Native Housing in Sudbury.



### **Veronica Dokis, Dokis First Nation**

Veronica "Meegis Kwe" - Bear Clan, is a first degree Midwiwin Elder. Veronica was born and raised on Nipissing First Nation, and comes from a family of 12 siblings. Her parents are Gabriel and Flora Beaucage from Nipissing First Nation. Veronica has six children and is a Gookimis to eight grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. Family is of the utmost importance to Veronica. A skilled crafts person, Veronica enjoys leather work, beading, basket making, coats, ribbon skirts/shirts and more. She enjoys the outdoors, hunting, fishing, gardening, and yard work.

# Message from the Executive Director

Joanne Koehler, BSW, MSW

We have been serving our communities since 2016. We were initially identified as a project, pre-designated agency to a provincial child protection/prevention agency. The past year was significantly special as it was the first full year as a fully designated agency.

We continue to maintain and grow in our capacity to serve children, youth, families, and the community's needs for culturally congruent services. In our first year as a fully mandated agency, we've continued building relationships and a strong team of staff, while meeting - or exceeding - provincially required ministry requirements and standards.

Our children, youth, and families come first, and that is shown through the strong guidance and direction Niijaansinaanik Child and Family Services receives from our Board of Directors and Elders. Our management staff upholds the mission and vision of Niijaansinaanik and shows resolution and courage in direction and planning. We are so grateful for the dedication of the growing staff at Niijaansinaanik - especially our front-line staff who show fortitude and dedication to their roles every day in serving the community. Front-line staff continued to ensure the safety of children was paramount while functioning under pandemic restrictions and First Nation emergency lock-downs. The pandemic restrictions also limited the ability to meet with our First Nations in a broader sense. We have started to




carry out in-person Community Engagement Sessions to assist us with hearing directly from community members and the opportunity for everyone to complete an anonymous survey evaluation of our services.

This year, we were grateful for the opportunity to gather face-to-face once again with our staff for cultural training, team building, and events. It was heartening to see our departments - especially our Cultural team work together to put events on for children, youth, and families on their spiritual journeys for healing and growth. In order to provide culturally congruent services to our communities, we have erected arbours in each of our communities. These arbours will be utilized to host talking circles, ceremonies, and meetings with families rather than have these take place from a western approach in an office. These arbours are also available for use by all community members through a booking system.

Three days were dedicated to the development of a new Strategic Plan as a newly designated agency. The main areas of focus in the next three years will be Protection/Prevention Servicing, Human Resource Capacity, Finance, and Fiscal Well-being, and Community Partnerships and Engagement. Meeting and maintaining success in these areas of sustainability will ensure an agency that is supportive and reflective of culturally appropriate services for all First Nation members in our service jurisdiction.

**MAAMWI GDOO-  
NCHIIKWAANAANIG  
ENCHIYANG**

**WORKING TOGETHER  
FOR OUR FAMILIES**



**Niijaansinaanik**  
Child and Family Services



# Strategic Plan



From June 7-9, 2022, Niijaansinaanik Board of Directors, Elders, Executive Director, and Management met with Bimaadzwin to prepare the Strategic Plan 2022-2024, in Rama First Nation.

Many priorities and opportunities were discussed including key areas of sustainability, short-term and long-term goals, and ensuring culture in all levels of service. The former Strategic Plan was reviewed, and action statements were updated. This year, we hope to update the Children's Bill of Rights for all children and youth served.

*A copy of the Strategic Plan is available upon request.*



## Cultural Services

Over the past year, the Cultural Program completed several programs and activities, including:

- Monthly Sweat Lodge
- Youth Summer Camp
- Monthly Medicine Walk and Harvesting
- Naming Ceremony
- Family Circle
- Men's Circle
- Teaching Circle
- Hunt Camp
- Western Door Ceremony
- Bear Feast
- Pipe Ceremony
- Family Bundle Program
- Skirt Making
- Cultural Support for Heart and Spirit Training
- Sacred Fires
- Cultural Support for the New Workers IAW Pathways Training
- Hand Drum Making

A major accomplishment this year was leading the building, opening, and usage of arbours for ceremonial space, family gatherings, training, meetings, programs, and activities. Niijaansinaanik has arbours located:

### Completed Arbours

- North Bay Serenity Lane
- Wahnapiitae First Nation
- Henvey Inlet First Nation
- Dokis First Nation
- Wasauksing First Nation

### To be completed

- Shawanaga First Nation
- Magnetwan First Nation

Culture is healing - Many of our programs have brought opportunities for meaningful physical, emotional, spiritual, and psychological restoration and growth to our children, youth, families, and communities. With the easing of provincial health regulations, we were able to move from virtually, back to in-person. On average we completed 20 referrals for cultural services per month.

Over the fall of 2021, Niijaansinaanik culture staff participated in a pilot project Mooz Akinonmaaget Maa Aki (Moose who teaches land survival), which was a collaboration between the Greater Sudbury Police Services (GSPS), Niijaansinaanik Child and Family Services, Nogdawindamin Family and Community Services, Kina Gbezhgomi Child and Family Services, and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry. The pilot program had two Niijaansinaanik youth, and other area youth aged 12-17 years attend, with the goals of connecting with the land, learning new skills, building confidence, creating friendships, and building positive trusting relationships. We look forward to participating in the 2022 Fall Mooz Akinonmaaget Maa Aki interagency project once again in 2022.

Akinonmaaget Maa Aki - Fall 2021





L-R Alicia Fahrer, Pilar Welling, Kevin Morrison, Kyle Parnell, Rubecka Davidson, Lisa Henry, Veronique Girouard, Janice St. Germaine and Rod Nettagog - Completed IAW training Winter 2021



Sweat Lodge - North Bay location

The Culture Department facilitated two summer camps for children aged 7-12 years, over the weeks of July 18-22, and August 8-12, 2022, at 3 Mile Lake (Spirit Lake) in Wasauksing First Nation. In total, 28 youth participated in the week long camps. The

Summer camp was truly a team effort with our staff, Wasauksing First Nation, and local municipal services. The Cultural Program has grown every year in programming and staff, this year we added a Cultural Supervisor to the team. Tracking statistics and data allows the ability to show areas of success and where growth is needed. Regular reports are created for all to review and input recommendations for continued growth.

“ Culture and land-based activities are at the heart of Niijaansinaanik Child and Family Services. ”

We aim to provide healing support for our children and families to regain and strengthen their spirit and walk confidentially towards and in Mino-Bimaadiziwin - *The Good Life*. This year, the Niijaansinaanik Culture team will lead our first moose hunt for the youth. Our Cultural Program brings cultural knowledge and teachings to all Strategic Priorities of our agency to support the vision and journey we share with our families. The seven Grandfather Teachings are used to guide all of us in our personal and professional lives. The Cultural Team carries these values throughout its programs and activities.

## Prevention Services



Lindsay McConnell, Dianna Wheatley, Maretta Jones, Lorraine Beaudry, Ashley Martin, Michelle Ainsworth, Dean'na Dejarlais and Jodi Contin

Prevention services were launched in May 2021. Prevention uses the Redmane Data System to keep track of prevention services provided to families. This system was fully designed to specifically meet the needs of Nijjaansinaanik and the culturally relevant services that are provided to our children and families within our jurisdiction. The system went live on June 3, 2021 and began case management with the participants in their program. The Prevention Services Supervisor was invited to present the “Sacred Shell Concept” to Redmane’s conference in Saskatoon in October 2021 where it was well received.

Our first Prevention Conference took place October 27-28, 2021. Feedback was very positive and proved to be a successful event. Keynote Presentations and Speakers included:

- Dr. Kathy Absolon, PhD Minogizhigokwe – Shining Day Woman - Restoring Anishinaabe Kaandossiwin
- Bernadette Maracle - Manager of Prevention Services at the Association of Native Child and Family Services Agencies of Ontario (ANCFSAO) - Spectrum of Responsibilities in Prevention Services
- Adrienne Pelletier, Director of Social Development/ Kodanaawsawin, Anishinabek Nation- Anishnaabe Child Well Being Through a Prevention Lens

- Liz Taylor - Every Child Matters Peg Doll Painting Workshop
- Many members of the agency also were speakers and presenters.

One of the biggest areas of support that was provided to families was through supplying food vouchers and the assistance of learning how to do batch cooking or meal planning. The Batch Cooking demos and assistance helped families with meal planning according to their budgets.

Some other events the Prevention team participated in were:

- Community parades
- Community feasts with delivery to homes in the community
- Provided baby layettes for new parents
- Meal Planning / Batch Cooking
- “Clearing the Clutter” Event

A highlight of the year was watching a participant complete the Slow and Steady (Turtle Shell Concept) Aftercare Program which is offered to all participants for up to a year.

We were grateful this year to continue building relationships and met for two days with Health and Social representatives from member communities, to create a roadmap to continue building positive, healthy working relationships between Niijaansinaanik and member First Nations.



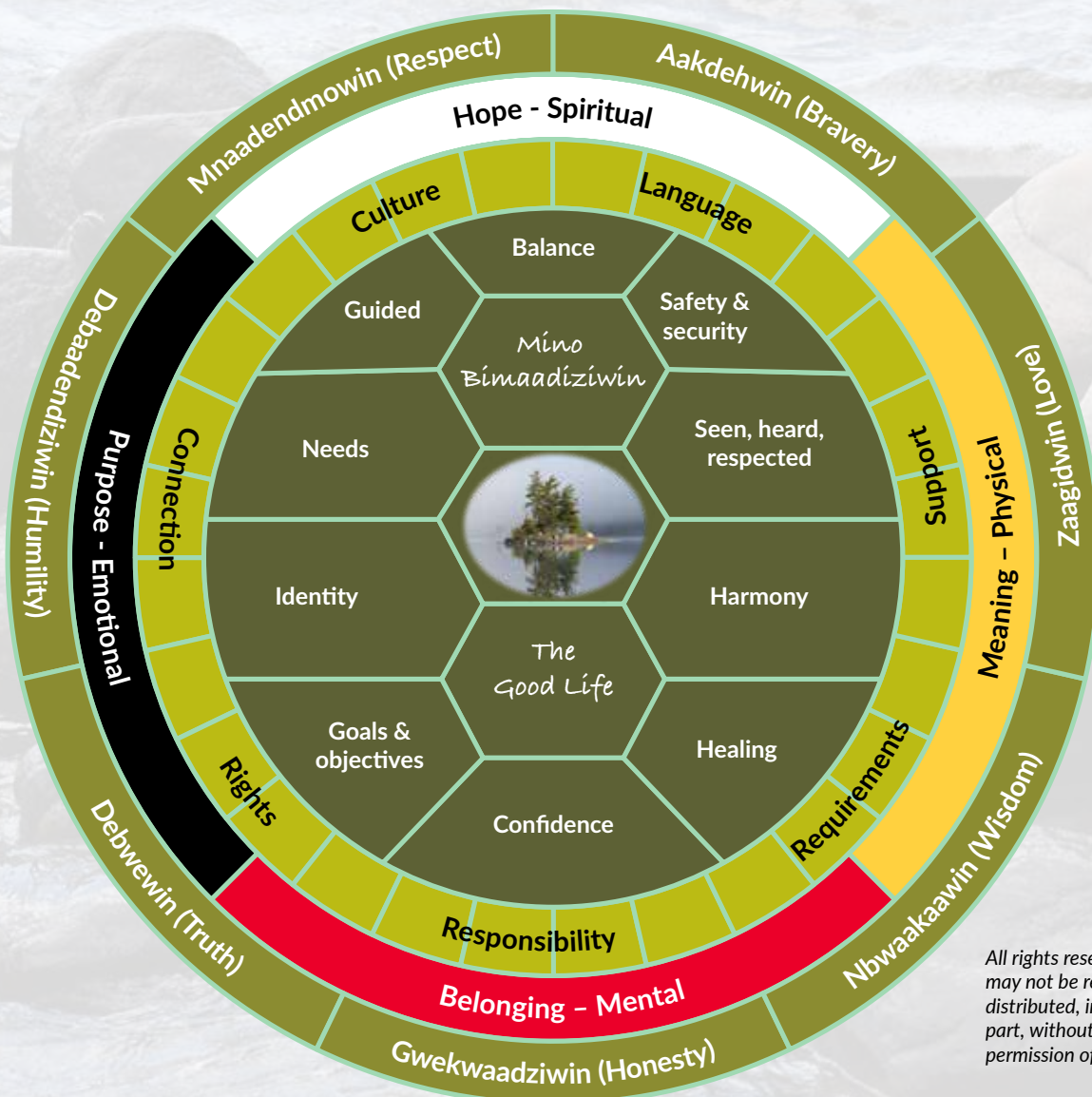
Presenter Dr. Kathy Absolon and Carrie Tabobondung



Jodi Contin

# Universal Sacred Shell Concept

Children, Youth and Families Visual Planning Tool



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## Protection Services

Niijaansinaanik Protection Services continue to provide services to the regions of North Bay, Parry Sound, and to members of our six First Nations that reside within the parameters of the Greater City of Sudbury. There are six protection workers and one Case Aide in the North Bay region. Seven protection workers, one Case Aide in the Parry Sound region, and three in the City of Sudbury. Niijaansinaanik Child Protection teams strive to reflect the cultural knowledge of the seven grandfather teachings, Wisdom, Love, Respect, Bravery, Honesty, Humility, and Truth.

Niijaansinaanik can take pride in our Indigenous New Workers training. We carefully review to add or revise to ensure our workers receive quality training to prepare them culturally and professionally. The training provides new workers with the knowledge of legislation and standards we are required to follow, and an understanding of the impact Indigenous people have endured due to colonization and historically being involved with child welfare agencies and the trauma caused at times. All new Child Protection workers have completed A New Pathway to Authorization Training, providing them to be authorized Protection Workers.

It is our goal to ensure that while sometimes protection services are necessary, service delivery will protect the rights of Anishinaabe children/youth to remain in their communities with their families, access their culture and language, and maintain their identities.

Regular band reviews and consultations are vital to improving communication and empowering the First Nation communities we serve. Niijaansinaanik endeavors to remain versatile and open with social concerns that impact our Families. We have supervisors who network with organizations on matters like human trafficking.

Teamwork is necessary to be a successful agency. Our Child Protection teams often assist each other, ensuring tasks are completed. They continue to learn their role with guidance and mentorship from the more experienced protection workers.

“ We must protect the rights of Anishinaabe children/youth to remain in their communities with their families, access their culture and language, and maintain their identities.”

## Family Support Services/ Doodemag Enji Maawnjidjik

The Support Services Department consists of three areas, Family Support Services, Volunteer Drive Program, and Jordan's Principle.

The workflow of the three areas of the Support Services department primarily supports four agencies' strategic priorities of service compliance, service excellence, CPIN, and employer of choice. All Support Services staff review and understand the protocols of the communities we serve, including the First Nations standards of practice.

There have been many positive outcomes of the Support Services department due to the work of the three areas of our department, such as the ability of family members to maintain connections across vast geographic distances for visits and other events such as ceremonies, healing lodges and pow wows.

Family visits are the right of children/youth and their families that Niijaansinaanik child and Family Services respect. The worker will support ongoing family

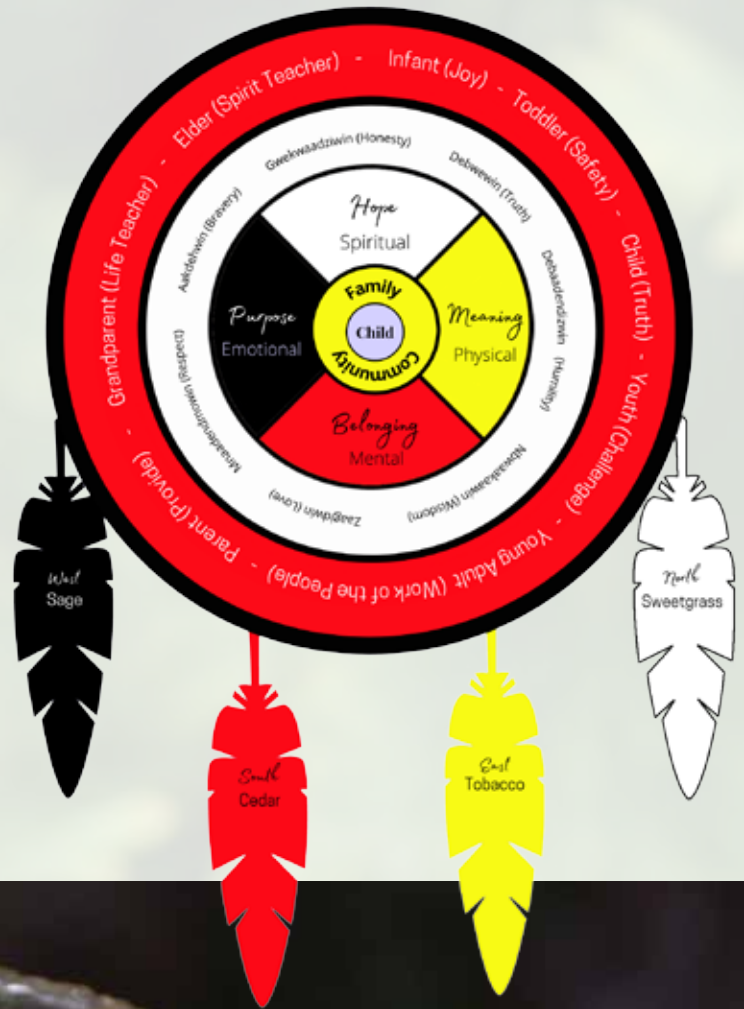
relationships through meaningful visits when children/ youth require an Alternative Care placement or there is the separation of one parent from the child/youth due to child protection risk factors.

Family members can visit and engage with each other in their home communities, thus creating a therapeutic process for families while connecting with their culture by participating in activities such as hand drumming.

Our location, “Doodemag Enji Maawnjidjik,” Where Families Gather, is our safe space home in the community; it is now fully equipped to support families for therapeutic family visits located on Highway 69 corridor, approximately 10 km south of Pickerel River Road.

Additionally, a second fully equipped Family Visiting space in North Bay is available to support families. The two locations enable family members to gather in a culturally safe location in the community when necessary.

**“ Doodemag Enji Maawnjidjik, Where Families Gather. ”**



# Quality Assurance and Measuring Impact

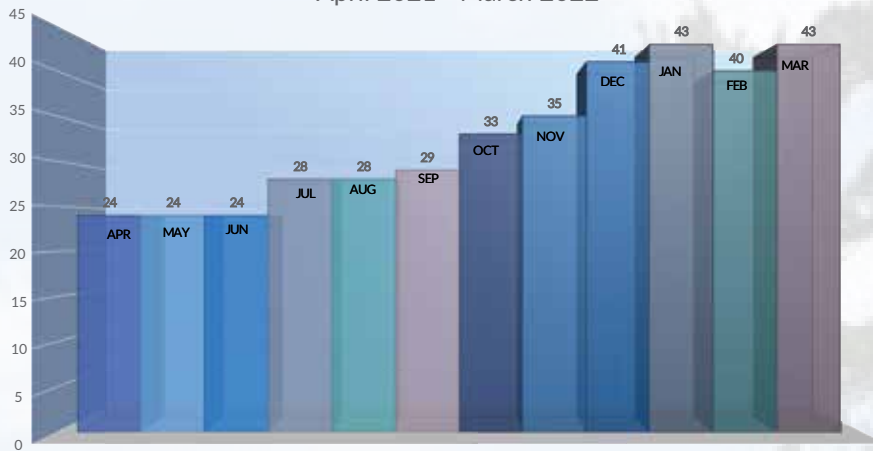
The QA department collects key information related to the quality of our service and provides various operational tools to support the achievement of service delivery excellence. QA assists with functionality and compliance-related troubleshooting for the Child Protection Information Network (CPIN) and compiles outputs from supplementary systems of record. A variety of standard and customized reports have been constructed to create a foundation for evidence-based data. The methodical generation of statistics provides outputs for dashboards, key performance indicators, and aggregate information for the Board of Directors (BoD), leadership, operations, and regulators to support the consistent service delivery to all our children, youth, and families we serve.

Our vision of achieving an Indigenous Child Well-Being Agency is demonstrated through data-informed results.

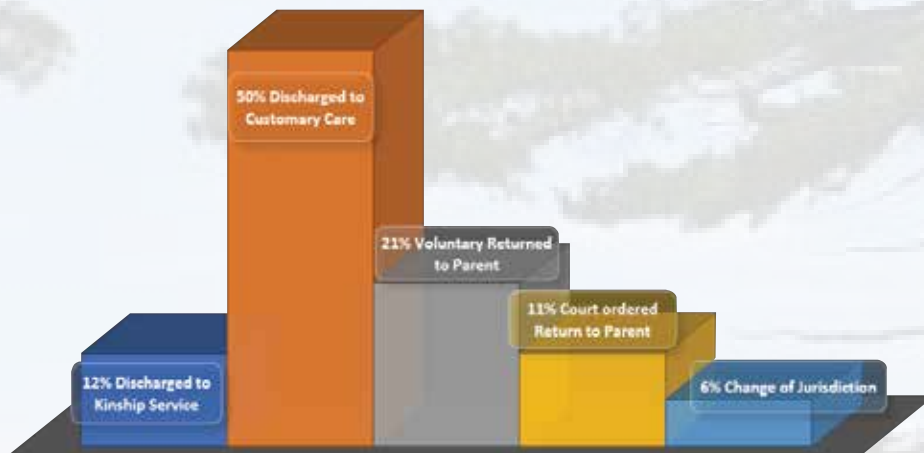
Within our first year of designation, 57% of our children in care (CIC) returned home or to an out-of-care placement such as Customary Care or Kinship.

“ Agency prevention efforts have minimized the days in care for children in protection situations, and prevention support programs and mechanisms have helped families build on their strengths and create Mino Bimaadiziwin - *The Good Life*. ”

Number of Children Placed in Formal Customary Care Homes  
April 2021 - March 2022



Reason Type for Children Discharged from Care (CIC)  
April 2021 - March 2022



The Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) Standard results were exceptional for our agency, particularly considering this was our first year of designation and employees had varying levels of experience with our new system of record (CPIN). Our agency's first yearly QIP performance in each standard component met or exceeded 90% on average. The QIP results validate that we are providing consistent service delivery.

After celebrating a successful designation and the launch of CPIN in early 2021, the QA Department constructed various foundational reporting for the agency to support operations and the quality of our service, including:

- Board of Directors (BoD) Dashboards
- Case Activity Due Date Trackers
- Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) standards
- First Nation Inuit and Métis (FNIM) reporting
- Prevention statistics
- Operational workload reports
- Jordan's Principle agency application status
- Support Services and Access
- Case type and statistics
- Service performance indicators and data quality validation

Over the last year, we have participated in many agency, interagency, sector initiatives, and projects, including:

- Indigenous Information System (IIS)
- Association of Native Child and Family Services Agencies (ANCFSAO) Privacy Communities of Practice

- ANCFSAO Data Quality
- IIS Request for Proposal (RFP)
- Information Technology Working Group (ITWG) & Privacy Community of Practice (CoP) Joint Working group and
- Various sector meetings (OACAS CPIN Lead, Q-Net, Quality Assurance Network Circle)

## Privacy

The Quality Assurance activities are designed to protect our service recipients' privacy and confidentiality. Our agency acknowledges that the safeguarding and confidentiality of our service recipient's personal information (PI) is essential. We continue to build on sustaining and strengthening our privacy culture with risk management tools, combined with training and knowledge sharing. In support of the First Nation's roadmap for information governance, we abide by the First Nations Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession principles; acknowledging that it is our data and our story.

The *Child, Youth and Family Services Act (CYFSA)* is our guiding regulation for our privacy legislation landscape, with *Part X* outlining the purposes and direction for collecting, using, and disclosing personal information in the child, youth, and family services sector. The Information and Privacy Commissioner (IPC) is our privacy oversight regulator, and prior to the March 31, 2022 deadline we successfully provided our agency's first privacy submission, as required. The Privacy team has developed a robust privacy inquiry tracking template that supports IPC reportability, including a comprehensive intake form for risk assessment, containment, and remediation where necessary.

## Children's Services

The Children's Services Team consists of five Children Services Workers, an Educational Liaison, Case Aide, and a Team Assistant. To ensure children and youth's physical, emotional, spiritual, and mental needs are met and that they are the center of all planning, the Children's Services workers work collaboratively with agency departments, as well as community representatives. Going forward we will continue developing culturally appropriate planning tools for our children and/or youth that continue to meet Ministry standards but also ensure that the children receive support and assistance that is individually, and culturally based.

**“ The Children's Services team ensures children and youth in Alternative Care placements, as well as all youth aged 16-21 who may reside independently, remain connected to their culture and their identity. ”**

This is done through supporting and maintaining family and community connections, bringing the children and youth to community ceremonies and events, and with the assistance of our cultural services team. Communities play an integral part in all planning for children and youth, the Band Representatives for each community

are notified and invited to all visits and planning for the children and youth as well as provided any relevant documentation. This ensures the Band and community are at the forefront of planning for their children. During this past year the Children's Services Team has assisted in repatriating several children back to their home communities and into the care of their immediate families, both locally and as far as Manitoba.

This past year has brought an abundance of success for our children and youth. In June of 2021, two of our youth were involved with a joint program with Greater Sudbury Police Services, completed their Hunter Safety Program, and attended a Moose Hunt; one youth attended, graduated from a culturally appropriate treatment and healing lodge, and continues to do well; and in June of 2022, one of our youth graduated from Secondary School.

An example of some of the distinct care and support offered by our Children's Services staff is in the way we advocate for our children and youth.

In July 2022, the Children's Services Team coordinated and chaperoned a culturally based camping experience for our older youth, with Turtle Concepts. This was very well received, and all of the youth were highly engaged, and all expressed a desire to return.

During this past summer, many of our children aged 7-12 attended two separate weeklong overnight camps hosted by our Cultural Department. All members of the Children's Services team attended with the children to support them throughout this experience.



## Customary Care

As a department, we support the commitment to ensuring children remain within their community and be cared for within their cultural belief system. Together with the First Nation and workers, both sides worked to create strong partnerships that support care providers to ensure the emotional challenges of a child or youth not residing with the parents are lessened and we commit to supporting the child/youth, family, and/or caregiver in all ways in attaining Mino-Bimaadizwin - *The Good Life*. This year, the Customary Care team embraced the process of coordinating with First Nations to attain Band Council Resolutions (BCRs) and facilitated reconciliation of Customary Care Agreements amongst all members of the family circle. During the last year we have achieved a 79% increase in Customary Care homes.

The department's foundation is rooted within the seven grandfather teachings. We maintain a

continuous practice of open and continual dialogue that applies to all aspects of the work we do. Customary Care has evolved to now supporting two full-time workers and continues to work interdepartmentally to ensure any agreement developed creates a foundation of service, support, and review all in the best interest of the well-being of the child/youth, and family.

**“ We support the commitment to ensuring children remain within their community and be cared for within their cultural belief system. ”**






# Alternative Care

“ Alternative Care provides family-based residential care, routine, physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual support to children and youth in need of protection and out-of-home placement when necessary. ”

The department strives to keep children and youth within their families and communities and works closely with Recruitment, Customary Care, Kinship Care, Protection, Prevention, Children’s Services team, Volunteer Services, Family Support Services, and other departments. We keep the child/youths’ well-being and safety at the forefront. Alternative Care works closely with our Culture department, to support the Agency’s vision of promoting cultural opportunities, wellness, awareness, and well-being to children, youth, families, caregivers, and communities.

We successfully received our license renewal for approvals of Alternative Care homes from the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS), and received a special mention regarding the home training process of Heart & Spirit being “...a decolonizing process to unpack unresolved colonial issues for our families.” Moving forward we will continue to increase our visibility, presence, and rapport in each community. We also reach out to prospective caregivers so children and youth can remain in a familiar, culturally congruent placement when required.

-  Niijaansinaanik received full license renewal with the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) to approve Alternative Care Homes
-  31 new Caregivers completed Heart & Spirit
-  16 new Alternative Care Homes
-  48 Recruitment events in-person and online outreach sessions for prospective Caregivers - More than 200 hours!

(April 1, 2021, to March 31st, 2022).

## 2021 Events

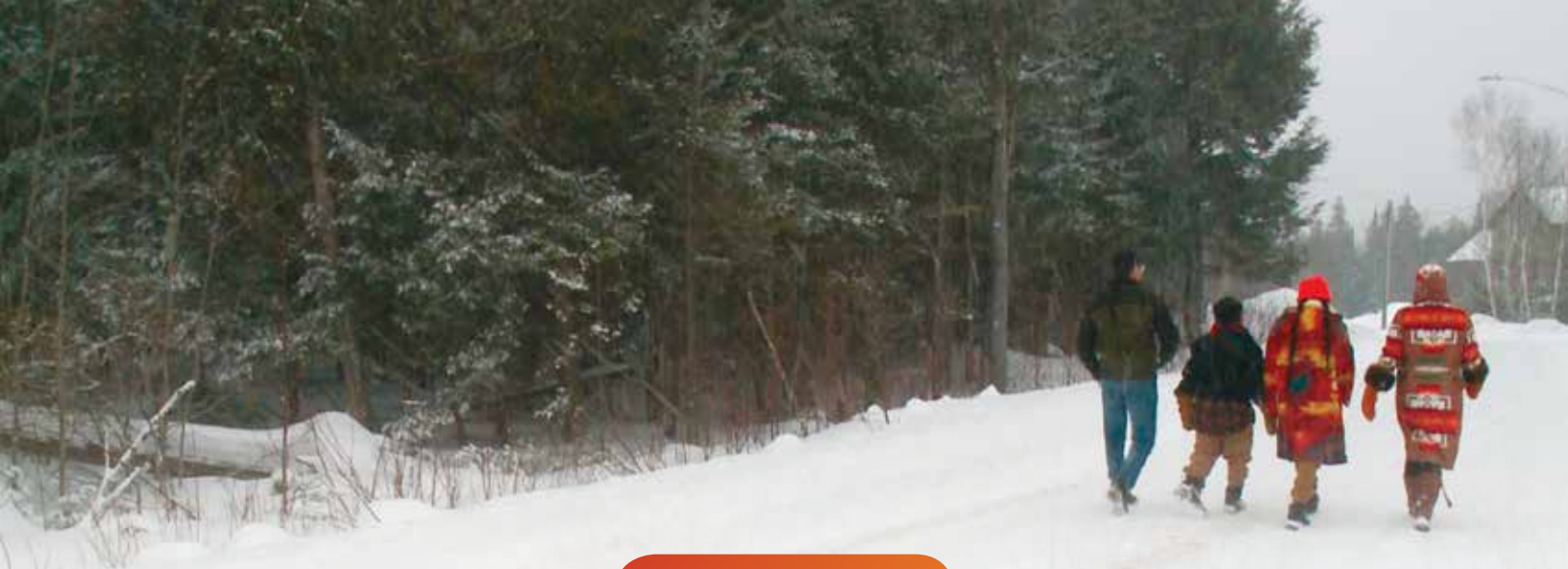
- Life Book Workshop Training for caregivers to assist children/youth
- Holiday dinner
- Monthly newsletter featuring family engagement activity, colouring pages, seasonal cultural recipes, program updates
- Bi-weekly in-person and online recruitment sessions, information booths, and BBQs
- Recruitment Pow-Wow attendance
- Recruitment outreach in First Nation newsletters
- Car seat training
- Non-violent crisis Intervention training
- Round Dance December 2021
- Family Fall Gathering
- Alternative Caregiver recruitment radio ad and commercial
- Complete reviews and processes – Home Assessments in accordance with Agency and Ministry standards
- Conduct monthly home visits and annual reviews



Lillian Couchie and Ashley Martin



Lillian Couchie, Sandra Belanger and Sophie Leblanc



## Kinship Services



The Kinship Services team has grown to two full-time workers, and we have seen a gradual growth in Kinship services provided among the three areas (Parry Sound, North Bay, and Sudbury) serviced by the Agency. In October 2021, families who provide care under “Kinship

Services” were recognized within the province with additional financial assistance, for providers supporting and caring for the children and youth.

The implementation of Kinship Services with families allows for family or ‘kin’ to care for children without an additional worker coming to the home monthly. Funding specific to start-up costs was increased to help alleviate the purchase of supplies for homes. This relief as well as other funding initiatives and supports allows a family to make a balanced choice between Customary Care and Kinship Services both being the least intrusive

and most supportive to all involved when a child can no longer be in their parent’s care.

The Kinship Team have spent a great deal of time meeting with workers and families in assisting family mapping, building genograms, and meeting with families to information about their services. Within all the departments we are connected to the communities we serve; We have a presence in the community and do our best to develop and become partners with our Band representatives. Together, we are working very hard and succeeding in building capacity for all our families and offering services on a far more personal level. The team honoured the Kin service process in ensuring that all standards were met to service children, youth, and families within the Kin process.

**“ We are connected to the communities we serve. ”**

## Volunteer Drive Program

Our Volunteer Drive program was fully operational by August 2021 and has been assisting with providing transportation for family members involved in any of our services. Currently, eight volunteer drivers cover the entire region. Our volunteers have completed over 55,000 kilometers and over 800 hours of volunteer driving. Outreach for volunteer recruitment occurred in all six of our member communities, and a



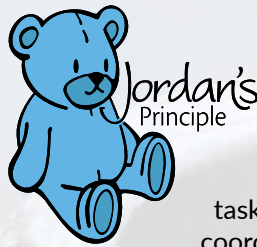
volunteer appreciation event is being planned in conjunction with the Alternative Care team. This department strives to be creatively aligned with Niijaansinaanik's vision.

More than  
800 hours  
of driving

Over  
55,000km

## Jordan's Principle

Our in-house Jordan's Principle Coordinator assists community members with their applications to Jordan's Principle. Over the past year, the Jordan's Principle Coordinator created a series of Niijaansinaanik-specific forms for clients to apply to Jordan's Principle through our Agency. These forms gather all the information necessary to develop statistical information not only for reporting requirements but also to put together a good application. In addition, data is collected through software developed explicitly for Jordan's Principle applications.



Coordinator assisted with 70+ applications to Jordan's Principle and completed outreach in Dokis, Wahnapiatae, Henvey Inlet, Wasauksing, and Shawanaga. Due to residual COVID restrictions, the remaining communities continue to be a vital task to complete outreach. The outreach team will coordinate with the North Bay Friendship Centre to let our communities know we are here to help.

\$431,000 for our  
member nations and  
other First Nations

70+  
applications

In the past year, 26 Jordan's Principle approvals were approved for over \$431,000 for our member nations and other First Nations. The Jordan's Principle

# Departments

## Human Resources

As of April 1, 2021, we celebrated our designation and moved into sustaining capacity. Human Resources had successfully filled the majority of positions within the Agency, and the team was able to focus on other Human Resources duties, as recruitment demands slowed. We had a total of 80 staff as of April 1, and had grown to 99 staff by the end of March 31, 2022, representing a growth of 24%. We hired 41 new staff, with six internal staff receiving promotions, with the majority moving from contract positions to permanent positions.

We have been able to hire community members, who provide service directly to the communities and families we serve. The Director of Human Resources reviewed policies with the Leadership team on October 14, 2021, our Human Resources Officer presented a Performance Appraisal Presentation at a Leadership Meeting on February 28, 2022. On March 30, 2022, the Director of Human Resources attended a Job Fair in Noelville hosted by Employment Options.

We also completed the following:

- AODA legislation compliance reporting
- Joint Health & Safety meetings and monthly inspections
- Ministry of Health regulations with regards to Covid-19, including the tracking of staff daily check-ins
- Employment Standards & Health Safety information
- WHIMIS & Safety Training for staff during orientation
- Expanded the bi-weekly payroll submission to Finance
- Monthly attendance reports for Supervisors, monthly reports for the Director of Service
- Board approved new Human Resource policies

Our Agency was able to offer competitive compensation and improved benefits for staff by moving to the OMERS Pension Plan, and Canada Life Benefits with an Employee Assistance program. The Board also approved new Human Resource policies which provided a greater benefit to our staff.

## Information Technology

Over the past year the Information and Technology (IT) department implemented a help desk ticketing system. The purpose of the help desk is to provide a centralized resource (the first point of contact), to answer questions, troubleshoot issues, and facilitate solutions.

IT has also:

- Procured cell boosters at sites that had poor cellular reception. The boosters make it possible for staff to use cell phones in the office for backup and emergency purposes
- Installed Starlink internet at the Family Support Services House in Henvey Inlet First Nation. Starlink provides a faster more stable internet connection
- Over the next couple of months IT is planning to implement a secure printing solution. This solution will allow users to print using a key fob
- Roll out a Multifactor Authentication (MFA) System for office 365. MFA will increase our security by adding another layer of security to access our systems.

We look forward to growing our team and working together to provide high-quality services to meet the challenges of keeping everyone connected, even in rural and remote communities.

## Legal Department

The Legal Department prioritizes resolving matters out of court, including but not limited to Alternative Dispute Resolution and Customary Care agreements when possible. Our team works interdepartmentally to keep the best interests, safety, and well-being of children, youth, and families at the forefront. When attending as required by the *Child, Youth and Family Services Act*, and other applicable legislation at all levels of court and tribunals, we ensure the delivery and operation of required services and supervision are aligned with our Agency's values, mission, and beliefs. We will continue to work closely with QA to ensure our team's priorities are actualized.

# EVERY CHILD MATTERS







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Child and Family Services

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