

Review of Youth Protection Standards for First Nations in Quebec

Final Report

Presented to the *Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux*

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Health and Social Services Commission

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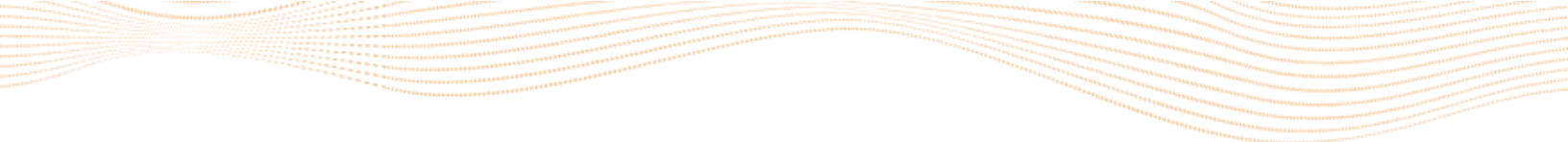
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INTRODUCTION

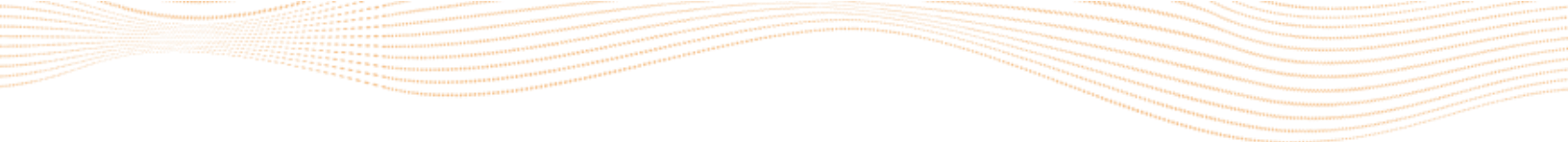
In 1977, the Lévesque government enacted the *Youth Protection Act* (YPA), and on January 15, 1979, the statute came into force (D'Amours, 1986). A decade later, the *Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux* (MSSS) observed an increasing lack of harmonization of professional practices in the different youth protection departments throughout Quebec and consequently commissioned an analysis of the departments' organizational processes behind the application of the YPA (Harvey, 1988). That analysis, performed by Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM) management science professor Jean Harvey, was published in a first report in 1988 (covering the receipt and processing of youth protection (YP) reports, assessment and referral, and laying out standards of practice) and then a second report in 1991 (on the application of measures). However, the analyses and recommendations received some controversial critiques at the time (Langlois, 1991). Indeed, throughout the reports, one maxim is omnipresent: "minimal intervention, maximum production." This focus on productivity and efficiency was equated with Taylorism, an early-twentieth-century approach used to increase industrial production (Laforest and Redjeb, 1986) that fell within the more general trend of New Public Management that emerged in the early 1980s, which sought improved organizational efficiency and the accountability of public bodies. This way of doing things profoundly changed professional practices and created work silos isolating the different youth protection services from each other.

Since the 1990s, several studies have attempted to change how the YPA is applied, particularly regarding youth protection intervention for First Nations. Numerous professionals from Indigenous organizations have called for flexibility, adaptation, and training with respect to Indigenous contexts, but these needs have never truly been considered (Guay and Grammond, 2010).

In recent decades, the MSSS has seen a significant increase in the number of youth protection reports, which has had a substantial impact on workers' tasks and on the service offer overall. Numerous social and legislative changes affecting youth protection have taken place, and the social transformations have also been associated with an increased demand for services. Several studies and consultations with Indigenous communities have increased our overall scientific knowledge of how the YPA is applied in Indigenous communities (FNQLHSSC, 1998). Nevertheless, it was not until January 2020 that the *Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families* (Bill C-92) finally came into effect in Canada. This statute profoundly reforms youth protection services and aims to eliminate the negative repercussions of imposing provincial youth protection laws based on notions that are in opposition to the values, beliefs, and visions of Indigenous peoples. It is a federal statute that recognizes the power of Indigenous groups to legislate and administer youth protection services. Accordingly, Indigenous groups that so desire can now create their own laws and define systems of care that align with their traditions. Until those laws are in place, the federal law provides for minimum standards (sections 10 to 17) that take priority over the province's YPA. Those minimum standards must be interpreted according to three principles, namely the best interests of the child, cultural continuity, and substantive equality, defined in sections 9 and 10.

Bill C-92 makes several changes to how the YPA may be applied in Indigenous contexts. Nevertheless, departmental standards have not been reviewed since the publication of the Harvey reports (1988, 1991). Standards of practice concern primarily maximum time periods and the length of interventions, and in themselves do not shed any light on the clinical relevance of the interventions that take place.

The increased volume of demand at all stages of the youth protection process has also put pressure on the provision of services and created a need for a better capacity to manage services. The MSSS therefore



undertook a major review of youth protection standards of practice in 2021. To this end, it has first ordered a collection and synthesis of the scientific, contextual, and experiential data that will be needed to produce youth protection standards of practice. As part of this project, the MSSS has asked the First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Health and Social Services Commission (FNQLHSSC) to provide the First Nations perspective.

1. STANDARDS OF PRACTICE IN YOUTH PROTECTION: DEFINITION AND APPLICATION OF CONCEPT

It seems essential that this report provide a definition of “standard of practice” (*“standard de pratique”*), the term used by the MSSS in describing its mandate to gather scientific, contextual, and experiential data for its review of youth protection standards of practice. According to the MSSS, the notion of standard of practice can be articulated as follows:

- A documented sequence of clinical interventions defined by evidence-based data and the experiential knowledge of clinicians that includes the practice sector objectives in order to foster access, equity, and quality of care and services for users and their family members.
- A clinical itinerary for users and their family members, standardized to ensure the same types of interventions take place following similar assessments and in similar intervention plans.

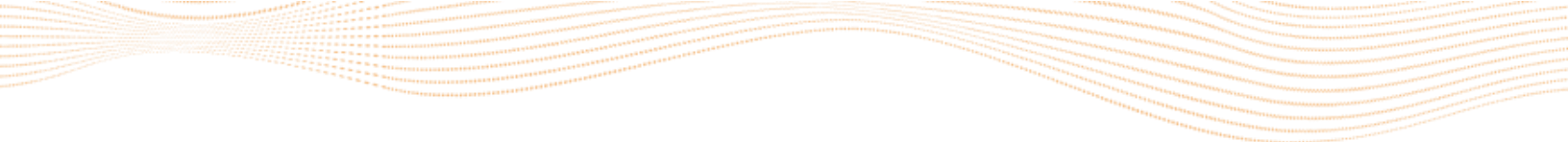
In addition, in its *Orientations relatives aux standards d'accès, de continuité, de qualité, d'efficacité et d'efficience – Programme-services Jeunes en difficulté – Offre de service 2007-2012* [Orientations for standards of access, continuity, quality, effectiveness, and efficiency – program of services for youth in difficulty – service offer 2007-2012], the MSSS sets out five criteria for developing a standard of practice.

Table 1: Departmental criteria for the development of a standard of practice (MSSS, 2007)

1. Access	Geographic, temporal, and professional accessibility of services.
2. Continuity	Harmonization of services between integrated health and social services centres (CISSS) and integrated university health and social services centres (CIUSSS) and community partners (e.g., referral mechanisms, communication modes), communication of information, coordination.
3. Quality	Quality of response (clinical approaches used), training and updating skills, clinical supervision, work tools and instruments.
4. Effectiveness	Compliance with prescribed time periods, compliance with collaboration and partnership agreements, consistency of services.
5. Efficiency	Maximum results with a minimum of resources.

In other words, the MSSS wants standards of practice to be adapted to the current context (that of First Nations communities) while also favouring an optimal organization and provision of services by institutions with a view to improving accessibility of services, quality of services (including results), and use of youth protection resources. According to the MSSS, standards of practice must also be clear, known, understood, and accepted as fair and valid guidelines for assessing the performance of the youth protection system.

Therefore, it seems clear that current standards are only partially developed and that they ignore processes that touch on the very core of interventions and the helping relationship with children and their families.



2. MANDATE

The mandate of this report is to submit proposals for the review of youth protection standards of practice for Quebec First Nations children and families. This work is undertaken in response to a departmental request and aims to expand on the standards of practice processes already established at a provincial level.

To this end, the FNQLHSSC was tasked with gathering and summarizing the experiential data needed to produce new youth protection standards of practice from First Nations communities. The process presented in this document therefore concerns experiential data only.

First, the FNQLHSSC team invited youth protection managers and workers in First Nations communities to fill out a confidential online questionnaire. The purpose of this data collection tool was to give them the opportunity to share their assessment of and perspective on various issues, statements, and priorities relating to youth protection and First Nations.

Second, a research team from outside the FNQLHSSC was asked to analyze the questionnaire results, continue the data collection through focus groups, and draft a report detailing the proposals made by the professionals consulted for the review of youth protection standards for First Nations in Quebec. The research team consisted of professionals with expertise in First Nations youth protection and sexual violence prevention in an Indigenous setting.

It should be noted that, from the beginning of the mandate in the summer of 2021 until the end of data collection in October 2021, all services in non-agreement First Nations communities, with the exception of communities covered by a specific regime established under section 131.20 (former section 37.5) of the YPA, were provided under a delegation to communities by the regional youth protection department. Delegation can cover one or many stages of intervention; as a result, the people who participated in the data collection potentially had varied experience in terms of their responsibilities over the different stages of youth protection intervention.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 OBJECTIVES

Two objectives were set for this report:

- Gather perceptions of the priority issues affecting youth protection practice from professionals working in First Nations communities.
- Offer proposals for the development of contemporary standards of practice for youth protection services for the First Nations.

3.2. DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

This evaluation included two rounds of data collection. First, participants completed an online questionnaire that gathered primarily quantitative results. The second round, which involved focus groups, aimed at validating results from the first round and giving professionals working in the field the opportunity to voice their opinions and influence the review of First Nations youth protection standards by drawing on their rich experience.

3.2.1 The questionnaire

The questionnaire, strongly inspired by the one used by the MSSS, was developed by Christiane Guay and the FNQLHSSC's research team. In particular, the statements were reorganized, and the response scale used was modified. The questionnaire was developed in French, then translated into English to be available in both languages. The questionnaire was tested internally by the research team. After the tests, the research team decided to add a question at the end of each section of the questionnaire asking participants to rank the most important statements from the section. The questionnaire was uploaded to the Survey Monkey platform so that participants could fill it out online. It contained the following sections,¹ which were each composed of several principles and statements:

- Legal and clinical principles
- Indigenous governance and collaboration between CISSS, CIUSSS, and Indigenous organizations
- Prevention and child placement in youth protection cases
- Tools used in interventions and in the application of the YPA
- Training and supervision of professionals in First Nations youth protection

The questionnaire contained 52 statements with scaled responses ranging from 1 for “strongly disagree” to 5 for “strongly agree.” The participants could also answer, “I don’t know.” A comment section was added after each statement to allow participants to explain their answers.

At the end of each section, participants were asked to rank the statements by order of priority from 1 to 5, or from 1 to 4 in the section on prevention and child placement. The following is an example of the wording of this question:

¹ Refer to Appendix 1 for a complete list and definitions of the principles and statements making up each of these sections.

“As part of the exercise to review the youth protection standards of practice, rank the five most important principles below [from highest priority (1) to lower priority (5)] that should be recommended to the MSSS.”

3.2.2 Focus groups

The external research team developed a grid for the group interviews.² Its structure was based on the five sections described above and the key results that emerged from preliminary analyses of the questionnaire results exclusively (results presented in Appendix 4). Participants were invited to react to the ranking of the statements and the proposals made by the questionnaire respondents. In total, participants were asked approximately 20 questions. The interview grid (Appendix 2) and the information and consent form (Appendix 3) are appended to this report. To facilitate discussions, a document entitled *Explanatory notes on the principles and statements of the review of standards for First Nations youth protection* was distributed to participants during the focus group meetings (Appendix 1). The meetings, which lasted between 1 hour and 2 hours and 15 minutes, were held on Zoom and hosted by two experienced focus group leaders.

3.3 RECRUITMENT

All non-agreement First Nations communities in Quebec were invited to respond to the questionnaire on the review of First Nations youth protection standards. The existence of the standards review was first announced during a meeting of the First Nations Child and Family Services Regional Round Table. The FNQLHSSC also sent an email to the Health and Social Services Directors from the communities represented at this table. The questionnaire was then sent by email to all those who had confirmed their participation, with an Internet link and the required instructions for completing the questionnaire.

Between June and August 2021, participants were asked to express their vision of the implementation of the YPA and related priorities.

In addition to the questionnaire, fourteen youth protection professionals (eight Francophones and six Anglophones) were invited to take part in focus groups scheduled for October 21, 2021. Email invitations were sent on October 6, 2021, asking the professionals to express their interest. In the Francophone focus group, four participants attended the meeting. In the Anglophone focus group, two participants took part in the discussion, but one left the meeting almost immediately.

It should be noted that it is possible for the same person to have participated in both data collections. Nevertheless, since the questionnaire did not collect any identifying information, it is not possible to establish a total number of participants in the project, but only per data collection. Furthermore, given the small number of participants, the results cannot be generalized and interpreted as the opinion of all First Nations communities.

² The full grid is available in Appendix 2.

3.4 PARTICIPANT PROFILES

3.4.1 Questionnaire participants

Of the nine participants, six were Indigenous and three were non-Indigenous. One participant only partially completed the questionnaire. The percentages presented below are based on the number of valid responses for each question.

Job title	Respondents
Manager	5
Clinical supervisor	2 (same questionnaire)
Social services consultant	1
Development officer	1
Clinic coordinator	1

Community	Respondents
Mashteuiatsh	2
Odanak and Wôlinak	2
Manawan and Wemotaci	1
Akwesasne	1
Pikogan, Winneway, Lac-Simon, Kitcisakik	1
Uashat mak Mani-Utenam	1
Kahnawake	1

3.4.2 Focus group participants

The focus groups had six participants. The majority were women who worked in communities from which questionnaire responses had been received. Of the participants, four were members of First Nations and two were non-Indigenous.

3.5 DATA PROCESSING AND ANALYSIS

Given the questionnaire response rate, the data were extracted in Excel format from the Survey Monkey platform. Averages were used to process and transcribe the data in the form of percentages. Open-ended questions were analyzed by subject grouping in an Excel document. For questions where respondents were asked to identify five priorities (see sample question in section 3.2.1), we compiled a cumulative list by determining how many respondents had ranked each statement in their list of five priorities. The statement that was ranked most often among the five priorities was selected, followed by the next highest, in descending order. In the event of a tie, we looked at the frequency with which the statement was ranked first. If there was still a tie at this point, we looked at the frequency with which the statement was ranked second. For the section where only four statements were proposed, we established the cumulative order based on the frequency with which each statement was ranked first, then second and so on. The results of the preliminary analyses based exclusively on the questionnaire are presented in Appendix 4 and were used to develop the focus group guide.

Focus groups were recorded on the Zoom platform to enable transcription. Once the verbatim transcripts were completed and validated, the recordings were destroyed securely. Subsequently, the qualitative data collected were analyzed using the NVivo software to categorize them by topic.

3.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This project, set up and led by the FNQLHSSC, was carried out in line with the *First Nations in Quebec and Labrador's Research Protocol* (AFNQL, 2014). Participation in the questionnaire and the focus groups involved minimal risk. Youth protection services can be a sensitive topic. A potential risk associated with this process was discomfort arising from some of the questions. It should be noted, however, that the questions concerned professional experiences in youth protection services and not the personal histories of the participants. Moreover, there was no obligation to answer all the questions.

Participation in both rounds of data collection was purely voluntary. Participants were at liberty to terminate their participation at any time by exiting the questionnaire or leaving the focus group.

4. RESULTS

4.1 OVERALL VIEW OF QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

Most of the participants said that they agreed or strongly agreed with all the statements in the questionnaire. Among all the responses obtained (more than 400 responses: 52 statements with a minimum of eight responses each), only four responses indicated that the participant disagreed or strongly disagreed with one of the statements. Most of these responses (disagree/strongly disagree) were accompanied by comments explaining the choice (for example, different current practices in the community in question). In some cases, participants seemed not to fully understand some of the issues or statements, answering “I don’t know” and thus not taking a position.

By requiring participants to choose only five priority statements for each section, the prioritization exercise revealed which statements were the most supported by the respondents. The five most important principles, issues, or statements for each section were not the five most important for all the participants. Element #1 on every list was among the five most important for 75% of respondents. Element #5 on every list was among the five most important for 50% of respondents, except for the governance and collaboration list, where it was among the five most important for 37.5% of respondents. That section contained the greatest number of statements, so it is not surprising that the responses were more thinly spread.

The questionnaire respondents expressed a clear vision of the importance of self-determination and local governance in matters of youth protection, changes to update the minimum standards and the statements in Bill C-92, and a commitment by CIUSSS and CIUSSS directors and workers to promote reconciliation and cultural safety.

4.2. PRESENTATION OF RESULTS FOR THE FIVE SUBSECTIONS

Most of the participants were women. Therefore, where pronouns are necessary in the following sections, only feminine ones will be used to preserve confidentiality.

4.2.1 Legal and clinical principles

From the 10 statements presented in the questionnaire (see Appendix 1), the following were the five priorities selected by participants:

1. The best interests of the child
2. The right to self-determination
3. Priority of preventive services
4. Cultural continuity
5. Multiple attachments

During the focus group, participants were asked to react to the priority ranking established by the questionnaire responses. Their reactions to the ranking seemed mixed.

Although they agreed with statement 1, the best interests of the child, the participants wondered about its relationship with self-determination and about the ranking of cultural continuity. One focus group participant who had also completed the questionnaire said that every statement was important, and that it was difficult to make a choice: “When I was filling it out [the questionnaire], I found it hard because I would have made them all a priority.”

This may explain the concerns felt by focus group participants. More specifically, the statements in the legal and clinical principles section appear to be mutually dependent, and participants found that separating them by imposing a ranking order made them more nebulous.

As mentioned by a focus group participant, “There are many things that have to be considered” when it comes to the best interests of the child, including questions “about diligence and the duration of an intervention to be sure that the best interests of the child are being respected.” Several participants said that the best interests of the child are directly related not only to the statements about multiple attachments and family unity, but also to the statement about cultural continuity. The best interests of a child seem to occupy a central place in the communities, while also overlapping with other statements. Other focus group participants, however, stated that the right to self-determination should be the cornerstone of the legal and clinical principles.

“The order shown here is funny, but for sure, for me, since I am First Nations, I’m a little torn. Yes, to the best interests of the child, but I would tend to put the right to self-determination before it. Because we have to understand that in the context of interventions, it’s like we have taken responsibility for their children away from the First Nations.”

“To me, it’s the most important principle (the best interests of the child). However, I’m aware that we can’t get there without self-determination. Speaking from experience, a lot of efforts have been made, and it’s not necessarily bad faith, but the best interests of the child are often only touched on, or lip service is paid, but in reality, they are not truly taken into consideration, and it would make a big difference.”

In the questionnaire, it was pointed out that “communities should have the choice of self-determination because they know the services for which they are responsible.”

Several focus group participants said that the notion of cultural continuity cannot be separated from the best interests of Indigenous children, echoing the questionnaire finding that ingraining culture in children will enable them to pass it on to the next generation. For example, when discussing children placed in non-Indigenous families, a focus group participant observed, “What has always struck me the most are the adjustment problems [these] young people have [...]. They have no cultural continuity.”

In other contexts, cultural continuity problems exist at every stage of youth protection. If a family does not identify as First Nations, it will not be recognized as such, and as a result cultural continuity support will not be provided. Cultural continuity seems to be related to governance: It would occur naturally in a situation where First Nations governance was established. The Quebec network should therefore make this principle a priority so that cultural continuity can be ensured for the First Nations children under its charge.

On another note, the focus groups highlighted the fact that cultural continuity often tends to be misinterpreted. Beliefs and culture within communities can vary, depending on religious values, among other things. What’s more, the primary consideration should be the importance of the community and the local context.

“I’ve always been uncomfortable with the word “cultural” because some people confuse it with traditionalism. [...] The culture of each community is different. In my community, it’s extremely varied, especially in terms of belief systems. [...] Therefore, I think we have to consider communities on an individual basis.”

Also, the best interests of the child can be achieved if the child actively takes part in the decisions made about their situation. According to the focus groups, children, especially younger ones, are rarely consulted about their needs as they move through health and social services, even if they are able to express them.

The priority of preventive services in youth protection is part of a continuum of services ranging from prevention to intervention. The questionnaire results indicated the essential need for the Quebec network to be aware of the local services available in each community, so as to have an overall vision of what is offered in the child’s environment, just as it is necessary to “meet service needs to avoid having to meet protection needs.” This finding also emerged from the focus groups, during which participants explained that prior preventive intervention would reduce the risk of having to involve youth protection.

“We have to remember that prevention and protection are on the same continuum. I find that once a child is placed or falls under youth protection, it’s already too late. So really, I think we should make preventive services a priority, in the best interests of the child. However, I will always place the best interests of the child at the top of my list of priorities. It’s essential, as we always say.”

Finally, in support of the priority of preventive services, it was stated that “if there is no investment in prevention, children and families will find themselves in a never-ending cycle.”

After discussing this section, the participants were asked to indicate which statement was the most important to them. The best interests of the child and the right to self-determination were tied in first place, which is not surprising if one understands that these objectives are interwoven, as the participants explained.

→ *The best interests of the child, as defined by First Nations, and the right to self-determination are the clinical and legal principles that must take precedence in the revision of First Nations youth protection practises. The other principles identified can only be truly applied if these two elements are truly taken into account.*

4.2.2 Governance and collaboration

In the questionnaire, respondents were asked to choose five priorities from among 14 statements³ related to governance and collaboration issues (see Appendix 1 for all statements). These were the priorities selected:

1. Reconciliation and cultural safety
2. Need for MSSS directors to enable Indigenous organizations to fully exercise their autonomy over child and family services
3. Commitment of the CISSS, CIUSSS and MSSS to Indigenous partners
4. Clear and up-to-date collaboration agreements
5. Modification of the reference framework for life plans to reflect the minimum standards in Bill C-92

Some seemed surprised at the ranking, stating that full autonomy should be in first place instead of reconciliation and cultural safety. To others, the ranking was understandable if reconciliation is interpreted not as mere words but as a series of actions that include recognition and full autonomy.

During the focus groups, the word “allow” in the statement “MSSS directors allow Indigenous organizations to fully exercise their autonomy in child and family services” was called into question. It was pointed out that this statement highlights the power relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous organizations.

“Personally, when you make the report [to the MSSS], I would say in a comment that this is where we see the power relationship. Our situation is not equal. Together, what can we do? Together, what can we do to ensure we can provide services? That’s the crux of it. It’s the relationship that the provincial partners are going to have with the communities. So, the word ‘allow’ is misplaced in my opinion.”

This testimonial reflects the experience of the focus group professionals, because the network “allows” but does not recognize the competencies of the communities as equal partners. During the questionnaire, it was emphasized that “the MSSS and the CISSS-CIUSSS must *support* Indigenous organizations in their quest for autonomy” (emphasis added), a formulation that corresponds to an egalitarian vision. The aforementioned power relationship also includes a political and economic dimension, namely, that which is most profitable for the CISSS-CIUSSS is considered before the needs of the communities and, in particular, before the best interests of the child. For example, regarding the implementation of Bill C-92:

“Yes, if you look at what’s happening in Quebec right now, the government is challenging Bill C-92. In my opinion, these are mainly political concerns that do not take the best interests of the child into consideration.”

³ It should be noted that the questionnaire contained 15 statements for this section, but that one, concerning the implementation of information-sharing practices between youth protection and Indigenous organizations, was not included in the prioritization question, and was therefore removed from the list of statements provided in Appendix 1. The groups did, however, raise this issue during the discussion of this section.

For several participants, collaboration, intervention with families, and the movement toward full autonomy are hampered by problems of access to service data, which is often rationalized by the confidentiality of the files, a point also raised in the questionnaire.

“It’s obviously an issue. To give you an example, I wasn’t able to get statistics about communities as I worked on Bill C-92 with the DYP in recent months. We had no way to access statistics about DYP interventions in the communities that we serve.”

In addition, it appears that the CISSS and the CIUSSS provide only data that are easily accessible or that are useful to them. These organizations make no effort to provide communities with data that would really allow them to understand their members’ situations, not only in terms of current services but also from the perspective of developing an autonomous law with relevant territorial scope. To sum up, “As soon as it’s something specific to us, they’re no longer interested.” The financial framework for youth protection services must also be considered to understand the obstacles to full autonomy: “If it affects their bank account, there will be resistance. These organizations have practically built an empire on the suffering of our children.”

Added to this is the fact that the PIJ (Projet intégration jeunesse), the information system used in the Quebec youth protection network, can be somewhat difficult to use. The participants explained that it took several years simply to access the software. It should be noted that, to date, use of and access to this system vary considerably between communities. In addition, its complexity and the restricted access communities are given further add to their workload. During the questionnaire, the importance of being identified as a collaborator, to have access to the PIJ, was emphasized. One of the priorities in reviewing youth protection standards therefore seems to be accessibility.

“So, if we don’t give access and means to First Nations, well, I feel pretty useless, like I don’t have all the tools to be able to do my work. [And the reasons given have to do with] confidentiality issues. But there are other provincial systems and agreements that exist, for example with the police, who have the right to know. In short, we have to give the same access to communities that are under the provincial regimes.”

Nevertheless, the limitations of the PIJ were pointed out, particularly during the questionnaire, when it was emphasized that the PIJ is poorly adapted to Indigenous practices. These limitations include the obsolete vocabulary relating to First Nations, the fact that the software is not very user-friendly, and the fact that users need to be familiar with the files and their details to find their way around. Suggestions for improvement included adding a section on “reasonable efforts” to collect the contact details of all those who could take care of the child, if necessary (i.e., to take steps from the outset, not just when faced with placement, to avoid rushing things through), as well as developing a genogram. Finally, instead of improving the PIJ, it was pointed out that it would be crucial to have a database on Indigenous communities to avoid the problems of using the current tools.

Beyond the use of data, accessibility, or rather the absence and difficulties of accessibility, seem to be a symptom of pitfalls linked to collaboration with non-Indigenous services. As emphasized in the questionnaire, full collaboration means recognizing that communities are responsible for their children. As such, community-based teams must be considered full partners, in the same way as teams attached to a provincial institution. This level of collaboration cannot currently be achieved, as community services do not have access to the data they need to serve children well. What’s more, questionnaire respondents offered examples of collaboration

that recognize the value of community input, such as considering their experience when adapting tools to suit the community, rather than trying to do it for them, and developing best practices based on the views of key stakeholders, to avoid perpetuating abuses of power.

Collaboration is often jeopardized by systemic problems such as racism toward the Indigenous population and toward the community services as well. Many participants stated that the DYP's (Director of Youth Protection) obligation to inform a community about the placement of a child member is perceived "as a burden" and "they do it because it's an obligation. They don't understand what's behind it," which does not help establish a relationship of trust between the organizations. Both focus group participants and questionnaire respondents emphasized that collaboration is essential to achieving reconciliation and cultural safety. In addition, it was proposed that communities should also be open to the arrival of non-Indigenous professionals experienced in working with Indigenous communities.

"I think that cultural safety is one of the things we should consider when we're working in the field of youth protection, particularly with the TRC [Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada]. I see many non-Indigenous people doing their best, and people still criticize them. I find that so unfair to these people. I am almost certain that many of them today are sorry for what happened to us, even though they aren't the ones who committed the acts [related to the residential schools]. We should open our minds and try to welcome them, because we don't want this to become an even more difficult situation. It's important that we let them in, with a view toward truth and reconciliation."

Beyond the more individual aspects, this collaboration must also take shape in institutional relationships.

"As soon as there are communities with projects or bodies dealing with that area and that are self-governing, we will need to collaborate with provincial partners to develop specialized services for children, whether in child psychiatry or other fields."

The various obstacles described by the participants seem related to the theme of the government's commitment to Indigenous communities. The creation of laws and legal principles no longer seems sufficient for the communities. Professionals expect concrete actions in line with the logic of the written procedures and that have an impact on their professional experiences. They question the government's interest in such changes: Is it merely a public and political façade, or is there a genuine desire to improve current conditions in youth protection?

According to most of the participants, reconciliation also must involve the recognition of current issues concerning the way non-Indigenous organizations function when dealing with Indigenous realities. Although the participants agreed about the problem of systemic racism, they clarified that it ultimately comes from a lack of knowledge of Indigenous situations and cultural practices.

"If there are things that our partners need to work on, they should start with the organizational culture and make their way down to educating health and social service professionals. They should know the history. When we talk about residential schools, some people almost seem to think that it happened in another country. With the recent news about the bodies being

discovered, people are outraged that it happened in Canada, but there is a lack of knowledge about the history of First Nations in Quebec.”

The participants also stated that the demand for full autonomy must not be made without support, and that collaboration among the organizations is essential if it is to take place.

“Reconciliation and cultural safety also mean letting communities receive guidance. Because, yes, there are communities that need guidance in taking on this responsibility of governance.”

Although the idea of collaboration is explicitly defined in work policies, it is sometimes difficult to achieve and for the most part concerns how to work with case workers. Moreover, the questionnaire revealed that the work methods of CISSS and CIUSSS professionals were not consistent. It is also difficult to ensure recognition of the fact community needs vary depending on the nation. Several participants said that, in terms of reconciliation and cultural safety, collaboration must involve concrete actions with clear agreements.

The multiple legal and administrative steps that are required make professional interventions more challenging, particularly in cases involving placement outside the region or the province.

“I’ve also noticed something when the situation involves a baby being placed. I experienced it not long ago, when a baby was placed, and we had trouble bringing them back to the community. It’s almost like they wanted to keep the baby for the foster family. However, when it’s a teen who has lived practically his whole life in a non-Indigenous family and he starts having behavioural issues, they want to send him back to us. I notice that a lot.”

What’s more, during the questionnaire, difficulties were raised with federal funding rules for services when a report is made for a child outside their region. The current rules seem to limit the ability of communities to take good care of these children, since community services must navigate and negotiate financial commitments with external CISSS or CIUSSS. The two data collections seem to describe long and painful judicial processes for families. However, the measures put in place do not seem to be able to really meet children’s needs by adapting to the pace of each situation, and therefore don’t allow the parents enough time to get back on their feet and gain the capacity to properly fill their parenting roles. An important paradox seems to emerge here, between administratively complex judicial oversight and very short intervention periods that undermine the quality of work done by professionals.

As was the case for the first section, after discussion of this section, participants were asked which statement was the most important to them. The majority agreed that it was the statement about exercising full autonomy over Indigenous services. Here, the participants appeared to agree on the importance of this statement, which seems to be the cornerstone of the intervention work.

→ Recognition and support of First Nations’ full autonomy in child and family services by MSSS directors, together with updated support and collaboration in truly egalitarian relationships with the MSSS, the CISSS, and the CIUSSS, are necessary to develop services that are truly culturally safe and contribute to reconciliation. First Nations are waiting for concrete action, including access to data and financial resources, as this is the only way to demonstrate that commitments are more than just political window-dressing.

4.2.3 Prevention and placement

During the questionnaire, the four statements in this section were ranked as follows by the respondents:

1. Sufficiently focused continuous services to prevent placement and document preventive services provided to the family
2. Tool to identify immediate and extended family members and informal/traditional support options and to ensure personalized support to access these services
3. Mechanism to ensure personalized support and transfer to culturally safe preventive services
4. When removing a child from the family environment, explore the possibility of tutorship or customary adoption, apply the principle of cultural continuity, and regularly reassess the possibility of returning a child to their family

It should be noted that this section contained only four statements, and all focus group participants seemed to agree with the ranking.

Several professionals did not seem surprised that the statement about removing the child from the family environment was ranked last because, in their opinion, it is essentially a last resort. Keeping the child with their family remains the priority.

“The life plan for a child is not necessarily tutorship, adoption, or something else; returning a child to their family is also part of the plan. This lets us talk to families about time periods for foster care and explain them again.”

There appears to be a major issue surrounding the time periods for foster care. Most of the professionals mentioned it several times, as they did the importance of taking the time to explain the placement process to both a child and the child’s parents. As for the notion of returning home, the questionnaire responses stressed the importance of maintaining contact with the family to encourage a return.

The statement about providing continuous services that are sufficiently focused to prevent placement and documenting the preventive services provided to the family was ranked first. Once again, only four statements were proposed for this section. It was therefore easier to reach consensus, given the smaller range of choices. Responses to the questionnaire highlighted the need to identify currently unmet needs to enable users to access the corresponding service. During discussions, a few of the professionals wondered how continuous services would be implemented.

“Because family interventions don’t happen during regular working hours. It involves being with the families to provide support when they need it. We wait; we call our clients; we wait for them to come, but that isn’t what we should be doing. We should go to them and support the families in their environments.”

The specific time an intervention takes place appears to be crucial to the professionals. Parents and children should be there at the same time, either in the evenings or on weekends. The importance of comprehensive support to ensure the best interests of the child and to address the parents’ personal issues that may be affecting their parenting practices and the care they give to their children were also mentioned. Frequent and

appropriately timed interventions are winning conditions for supporting parents. However, it was pointed out that few programs of this type are currently carried out.

In relation to the statement ranked in third place, discussions ensued on the fact that work with partners has already begun, although the positive effects are not yet noticeable.

“In my department, we’ve tried several tools and worked on a guide for the partnership between first-line workers and the DYP. We’ve also created tools to raise the workers’ awareness and specified the questions they should ask when intervening or when there is a report. This makes it possible for them to be identified even earlier, because we still arrive very late in the process to help the families. Identifying them earlier would really help our prevention role.”

To conclude this section, the focus group participants were asked which statement was the most important for them. Half of them chose the top-ranked statement.

→ *When youth protection services are offered, priority should be given to providing focused, continuous services, combined with documentation of preventive services offered to the family to prevent placement.*

4.2.4 Tools and youth protection

In the questionnaire, respondents were asked to choose five priorities from 14 statements related to youth protection tools (see Appendix 1 for all statements). The following priorities were selected:

1. A child and the members of their (extended) family should take an active part in every stage of the decision-making process
2. Workers must make the principles set out in Bill C-92 the focus of their work
3. Changes must be made to the way the DYP enters the lives of Indigenous families
4. The principles of Bill C-92 must be taken into consideration in any intervention plan
5. Standards of practice must take into account the impact of colonization and related issues

The professionals participating in the focus groups did not all seem to agree with the questionnaire results. For example, they believed that items not included in the list of five priorities identified by questionnaire respondents, such as culturally sensitive alternative living environments, deserved to be a priority.

The active participation of the child and their family in interventions was ranked first according to the questionnaire, and it was proposed that a family circle be held on a systematic basis. The professionals taking part in the focus groups seemed to agree that the role of the family network is essential and should be preserved in support measures. According to the participants, obtaining a general overview of the people surrounding the child, including close relatives and available services, should be one of the first tasks of a youth protection or preventive services intervention. They stressed that social services should be present in children’s life plans only temporarily. It is therefore essential to maintain and emphasize family and community resources.

“I believe that informal caregivers must play a role because they will still be there once we’re gone. As professionals, we’re there temporarily, but what’s important is the preservation of the family resources and community values of mutual assistance. Among all the family

members and the circle of caregivers, everyone [professionals and members of the support network] should be considered equal in status and importance.”

Informal caregivers are also seen as potential facilitators, helping to build trust between the child, the parents, and the services.

According to several participants, non-Indigenous services and Indigenous organizations should collaborate more to avoid court-ordered placement and to favour culturally safe intervention approaches or models.

“It’s important to understand that, for our families, interventions are intrusive. They cause trauma that is rooted in the sociohistorical context. A certain sensitivity is therefore required. So, when you understand this, how do you intervene in a way that uses culturally safe intervention models?”

Several participants noted that this last element, along with the statement about the creation of clinical tools evaluated and approved by Indigenous communities, was not among the top five priority statements. In their view, it is essential to create new tools specifically for Indigenous communities instead of adapting those that already exist, as the latter approach can be associated with neo-colonial processes.

“However, there is something major that we currently don’t have in practice that would be worth developing: clinical tools evaluated and approved by Indigenous communities. There are things that don’t make sense for our families. We would really benefit from developing that. If I put culturally safe clinical tools and practice guides [in the top 5] it’s because technically you’ve had them evaluated and approved by the Indigenous populations.”

This creation of tools is essential because “if these tools aren’t developed, we risk reverting to old practices.”

It is interesting to note here that learning about the social and historical backgrounds of the communities and the realities of their situations is not the only way to achieve culturally safe approaches. For most of the participants, developing intervention tools collaboratively with all the stakeholders in a child’s environment—including professionals and members of the family and community network—is a priority. Several of them, for example, as well as the questionnaire respondents, referred multiple times to how making a genogram during the intervention process can provide an overview of the primary resources available in the child’s network. These proposals are valuable for children who receive services while remaining with their families and for those who are placed, whether inside or outside their communities.

“Children are placed outside their communities, and we see that there’s a total lack of knowledge about the communities and their culture. We see how harmful this can be for the children, and how it can also lead to prejudice that hurts the children. Often, these children are unable to respond or to educate the family. Therefore, when front-line workers are absent, it can cause big problems for the child.”

Discussions also touched on the fact that the parents have a particularly negative view of DYP services, saying that these concerns can be explained by past trauma and by the fact that community members do not trust non-Indigenous services. The participants pointed out that current interactions—and particularly the lack of transparency with community members—undermine trust. It appears that, given the complexity and difficulty

of the interventions, lack of experience can weigh against some workers who shrink from dealing with certain issues head on.

The participants also referred to the important role that Indigenous support people play in interventions by ensuring the greatest well-being for families. This idea also came up in the questionnaire; respondents pointed out that some first-line workers in the community do not want to support professionals from the DYP and the CISSS or CIUSSS, since such support would be seen as jeopardizing the bond of trust with users. What's more, there appears to be a real issue around people's first language. The questionnaire responses highlighted the importance of everyone being able to express themselves in their own language. In the focus groups, it was pointed out that "language is really a thought process, and our process is different, and that's why sometimes our speech is less articulate in the language we use than it is in the one we're accustomed to speaking." In addition, regarding language and support:

"First, if we're in the provincial systems and we have parents dealing with interventions, it's important to have an Indigenous support person. That person will assist the families. Sometimes people say that they understand, but it's not true. For example, court or legal issues are sometimes not understood. The support person can help. Also, the fact that interventions are sometimes very intrusive and, as I said earlier, bring up intergenerational trauma, makes it beneficial to have someone who can provide explanations in a person's first language. Even if the people can speak French, sometimes it's easier for them to understand things their first language. Also, I think that providing safe support should be a priority. When we talk about cultural safety, this aspect could be taken into account."

A few participants brought up the possibility of flexible placement periods, which had already been mentioned in other sections. Although not many referred to it here, other participants brought up the issue surrounding this statement multiple times throughout the discussion. In this section, the notion is based on an understanding of the effects of colonization on communities and families and how they make the healing and recovery of parents more complex. This point was also made in the questionnaire. Respondents stressed that healing is a process that is unique to everyone, that parents must be allowed to take the time they need, and that the maximum period is insufficient for families to overcome their distrust of the DYP and the police and to work on their problems. In addition to flexible placement periods, it would be important to provide more detailed explanations of the conditions of the placement periods and of what the family will have to deal with.

In the Zoom survey presented at the end of the discussion on this section, half the participants agreed that the most important statement was the one concerning "standards of practice that take into account the impact of colonization and related issues."

→ *Divergences in concrete practice issues and tools deemed a priority emerged between participants in the two data collections. The overlapping priorities concerned the active participation of children and families in decision-making, the involvement of the DYP in the lives of families (in particular, the importance of using the first language and having an Indigenous support person), and the implementation of standards of practice that take into account the consequences of colonization and the issues arising from it.*

4.2.5 Training and supervision

In the questionnaire, respondents were asked to choose five priorities from eight statements relating to training and supervision (see Appendix 1 for all statements). The following priorities were selected:

1. Training programs should be developed in collaboration with Indigenous experts
2. Workers should be supported by a specialized and continuous training program
3. All workers should receive basic training
4. Workers should be supported by an elder or an Indigenous expert
5. Workers' case loads should be reduced so they can develop competency and ensure culturally safe interventions

Once again, focus group participants seemed to have mixed feelings about the rankings presented. However, they appeared to agree on the need for an Indigenous expert in interventions and training programs. This element had already been raised in the section on tools and youth protection, but unsurprisingly, it came up again.

“Experts who understand the community well and know how we should intervene with families. We have different characteristics from one community to the next. There can be differences in how we approach people, for example. That’s something that we have to consider. There is local colour that is important when intervening in communities. The experts on a community are its members.”

Several participants said that with Indigenous experts, new light could be shed on interventions and trust could be fostered between the family and non-Indigenous service providers. Collaboration with the Indigenous community is therefore central to an intervention because it can define the dynamics of any actions that follow. The participants also raise the possibility of a clash of ideologies between ancestral and academic knowledge.

“First, collaboration with the communities must be direct. When we have to set up more local training programs, we have to call on people from that community. However, there are also people who are in the field that we don’t recognize. As for the elders, they are individuals with doctorates, but not on paper. They’re experts on their cultures, and we don’t give their knowledge the same recognition as we give to more Western knowledge. The reason I mention elders or people with traditional knowledge is because they’re experts that we have to put in closer contact with other experts to create programs.”

Returning to programs that focus on culture is necessary if young people are to be reconnected to their roots, which is a need they have expressed.

“The impact it has is greater than all the Western approaches, which can’t help young people reconnect to their culture. We should encourage the creation of rehabilitation programs with more cultural activities. For example, with the history of the First Nations, but also the history of the nation. There is also this local expertise that must be honoured.”

Because they know that a lack of understanding can prevent a positive outcome in an intervention, the participants said that specific courses or even programs should be created. The students who complete the classes will be able to intervene safely. This way of doing things would limit the risks.

“This makes me think a lot about risk management. The first principle in intervention is to do no harm. After that we ask how we can help. So, if I have workers who are not experienced, who are the least bit uncertain, then I have children at risk of suffering from an abuse of power. When we are at zero risk, that means we’re not taking any chances. When I see the placement rate and the rate of judicialization, I think that in many of these situations, we chose zero risk, and we made a mistake.”

This means that risk management could therefore be controlled. The participants stated that professionals who are already working need training on, and immersion in, the realities of Indigenous life. Lack of experience and skills in Indigenous interventions could be a real danger. Some knowledge can only be acquired through experience in the field.

“When I started working, I was placed with three elders from the community, and I learned a tremendous amount. Where I am now, I’ve been placed with an elder. I never could have learned what she has taught me otherwise.”

Questionnaire respondents also agreed on the importance of immersion activities in the local environment. However, abstract knowledge of facts is not sufficient for interventions. In particular, it was pointed out during the questionnaire that for Indigenous populations, the best way to learn is to watch how a person works. According to focus group participants and questionnaire respondents, experiential knowledge allows professionals to understand the realities in the field, but also allows them to forge closer bonds with the communities.

“This also helps workers who are not in the community to integrate. I know that we don’t learn from our books or in our offices. What allowed me to learn the most personally was going to community activities and talking to families. That’s why I really like the statement ranked in sixth place [Workers should get to know communities and nations by taking part in sociocultural activities], because I think that this is the way we learn about the history of the nation and the families in general.”

Interpersonal knowledge therefore appears essential for practice and interventions. However, another participant said that workers’ characters are also shaped by their intrapersonal relationships and the way they were raised. In her view, youth protection workers must be very mentally stable.

“I suppose that the way people are raised will colour their ability to intervene. [...] your interpersonal skills may be good but sometimes your intrapersonal skills are what caused the problem. Sometimes, workers are in the field, and situations can be very delicate, and we don’t know what’s going to happen. Sometimes, you really have to look at your way of intervening and think about the negative impact it might have on your own life. Working with people in distress requires mental fortitude because it’s extremely taxing. Even though you know you’re doing a good thing, even though you know you’re protecting a child, it’s always heart-wrenching to see children and their parents cry. So, no matter what, it’s a difficult job.”

All these considerations are related to the observation that the practice of youth protection in general in Quebec would benefit from a better framework provided by a specific or specialized training program that could be offered by a government-run educational institution, for example.

In the Zoom survey for this section, most of the participants reported that the statement “workers should be supported by a specialized and continuous training program” should receive special attention.

→ In terms of the groups and the questionnaire, the priority training and supervision issues therefore concern guidance by a specialized, continuous training program, including training developed in collaboration with Indigenous experts and including, ideally, support by an elder or an Indigenous expert and a sociocultural immersion component.

4.3 PARTICIPANTS' EXPECTATIONS OF THE STANDARDS REVIEW

To wrap up the focus group discussions, the participants were asked to define their expectations of the review of First Nations youth protection standards.

Each participant expressed an opinion, and several points emerged. First, the practice frameworks should be redesigned, or, at the very least, Indigenous interventions should be disconnected from the current framework.

“However, the criticism I can make is that interventions should be re-evaluated, and they are fragmented. That has a significant impact. Interventions are fragmented: the report, the intervention itself, the application of measures, etc. All of it is fragmented, so how can we ensure continuity with the specialized services provided to families, both First Nations families and families in general, so that we can support them?”

Along the same lines, the benefit of developing a less rigid practice framework that favoured human contact over multiple administrative and judicial tasks was mentioned: “Personally, I hope we end up with a less rigid system, with fewer laws, more compassion, fewer deadlines, fewer repressive measures, and more assistance measures.” Another participant brought up the creation of a general, uniform framework for First Nations, but with the flexibility of a local sub-department that can make logical adjustments based on community realities, which would provide better protection for children.

5. CONSIDERATIONS AND PROPOSALS

The goal of this report was to gather experiential data from youth protection stakeholders in Quebec First Nations community services in order to support a review of standards of practice based on their realities. The report is part of a multi-dimensional review of current provincial standards. The objective was to uncover best practices and gather experiential knowledge to identify clinical interventions that can serve as a basis for the revised standards of practice. It should be noted that the MSSS wants the standards to promote the accessibility, equity, and quality of the care and services provided.

The participants' contributions to the questionnaire and the focus groups revealed three findings about the priorities that should be considered in the standards review to ensure they meet the needs of the First Nations in Quebec:

1. Self-determination and autonomy over child and family services is a priority.
2. The MSSS, the CISSS-CIUSSS and all network stakeholders must recognize, respect, and provide support for the skills and capacities of the First Nations. These institutions must also collaborate with First Nations with a view to promoting the best interests of children.
3. The process highlighted the fact that the current youth protection practice does not always ensure the best interests of First Nations children. The services should therefore be culturally safe for First Nations children.

The first part of this section will describe in detail the considerations and proposals that concern the foundations (principles) and the organizational structure (governance, collaboration) of youth protection services that are related to the first two findings. The second part will discuss those related to the third finding.

5.1 ENSURE A SOLID BASE FOR STANDARDS OF PRACTICE THAT ALIGN WITH FIRST NATIONS REALITIES

The process illustrated that current practice is detrimental to First Nations children, families, and communities in multiple ways, and that some of these issues spring from the very foundations and structure of the services. Accordingly, before proposing avenues for exploration that relate to actual practice, it seems essential to discuss the considerations and proposals that were raised about the principles and about how services should be governed. Standards of practice that align with the lived experiences of First Nations children, families, and communities can be developed if they start from a solid base.

The right to self-determination and autonomy over services that are in keeping with the best interests of the child. The right to self-determination was identified as an indispensable clinical and legal principle in youth protection by both the questionnaire respondents (second most important principle) and by the focus group participants. The exercise of full autonomy by First Nations over their own child and family services was also unanimously selected as a priority in matters of governance and collaboration. Furthermore, these two elements were central to all the focus group interviews.

The First Nations are not asking for their autonomy and capacity to govern child and family services to be allowed; rather, they are demanding that it be respected. Bill C-92 makes this goal attainable. Quebec's court challenge of the Act⁴ has been interpreted as a political issue that does not take the interests of Indigenous children into consideration. The commissioners of the Special Commission on the Rights of the Child and Youth Protection (CSDEPJ) recommend supporting the Indigenous people's right to self-determination and self-government in matters of youth protection, stating that Indigenous peoples should be able to create their own laws, that their jurisdiction to execute and enforce them must be recognized and, above all, that they must be provided adequate funding. That said, like the statement in the questionnaire that was brought up in the focus groups, the commissioners use the verb [TRANSLATION] "allow" ("*permettre*") in their recommendation: [TRANSLATION] "Allow Indigenous directors to create their own laws on family and youth protection" (CSDEPJ, 2021, p. 297). The focus group participants emphasized that this perspective runs contrary to the notions of respect and recognition, placing Indigenous peoples in a position subordinate to the provincial government.

⁴ Quebec challenged the constitutional validity of this statute, arguing that social services fall within provincial jurisdiction. On February 9, 2024, the Supreme Court of Canada rendered its decision. *An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families* is valid as a whole. The decision can be found here: <https://decisions.scc-csc.ca/scc-csc/scc-csc/en/item/20264/index.do>.

Self-determination and autonomy would enable First Nations to create services based on principles that reflect their reality. The participants in this process determined that the principle of the best interests of the child, in the broadest sense, was indispensable, ranking it first in the questionnaire section on principles. They also stressed its importance in focus group discussions. They said that this principle is sometimes hard to dissociate from others presented (e.g., cultural continuity, multiple attachments) because it includes the latter, or at least cannot be achieved without them. While the best interest of the child is an important factor in the YPA, the fact remains that the definition and interpretation proposed in the Act do not correspond to how the First Nations understand it.⁵

Similarly, self-determination and autonomy would enable First Nations to prioritize preventive services, a principle that was ranked third in the questionnaire and identified as important in the focus group discussions. Preventive services within First Nations communities have been receiving funding for only the last decade or so. In a decision in January 2016 (*First Nations Child & Family Caring Society of Canada et al. v. Attorney General of Canada*), the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal recognized that the federal government discriminated against First Nations children by not providing equitable funding for services for them. The principle that preventive services must be made a priority in the service offer for children and families is now prominent in Bill C-92.

To summarize, the First Nations feel that self-determination and autonomy in this regard would enable them to provide necessary, appropriate and timely services, and that the principles underpinning these ideals would align with their view of the world and their cultures. The best interests of the child would be central and determined within their own cultural context. Cultural safety and continuity would flow naturally from the services provided.

The need for a gradual transfer of autonomy. The First Nations recognize that progress toward autonomy takes time and may require guidance from provincial and regional bodies. The transition toward autonomy and self-determination must not cause communities any additional harm. Communities want to be well prepared and ready to respond to their members' needs. One of the major obstacles in progress toward autonomy, not to mention collaborative work and day-to-day interventions, is limited access to relevant data. Given the way services currently operate, non-Indigenous organizations very often hold most of the data about the children and families in youth protection. In other words, community services have access only to the data that the CISSS-CIUSSS agree to send them. As a result, it is difficult for the communities to understand certain critical aspects that are needed to properly plan the transition to self-government; for example, they do not have access even to information as essential as the proportion of their population currently receiving services, or to any information that can help them understand the population's needs.

Thus, even if self-governed youth protection services will no longer be subject to ministerial standards of practice, they should still be given support as that power is being reclaimed.

Continue collaboration to promote full autonomy. In the opinion of the First Nations individuals who took part in the data collection process, the reclaiming of autonomy appears to be the next logical step. To ensure a favourable outcome, however, collaboration between communities and non-Indigenous service providers

⁵ At the time of the consultations, Bill 15, *An Act to amend the Youth Protection Act and other legislative provisions* had not yet been introduced in the National Assembly. It now includes an entire chapter on provisions specific to Indigenous peoples, including a section on the best interests of Indigenous child.

should continue according to certain conditions that will require adjustment over time and in accordance with the situations of individual communities. The experience that non-Indigenous service providers have with taking charge of children in youth protection could be useful, as could the history of mistakes not to be repeated. That said, collaborations should also be maintained or developed when it comes to related services, particularly the specialized ones that help ensure the well-being of children. Given the situation in communities, it is unlikely that they will all be able to develop the full range of services that children, youth, and families in the different communities need. Full autonomy will therefore more likely be achieved, and be successful, if non-Indigenous public service providers recognize their roles and responsibilities toward First Nations children. This will directly contribute to maintaining or developing collaborations to support First Nations organizations and individuals, as experiences are shared to better equip those organizations for the transition.

Take concrete actions for reconciliation. The data collection participants drew attention to a noticeable gap between theory and practice. Although reports from the multiple commissions and the national and provincial inquiries in recent years (in particular, TRC, 2015; CSDEPJ, 2021; NIMMIWG, 2019; Viens, 2019) have made it clear that Indigenous powers must be reclaimed, current practices have not been able to adequately meet this need because of a lack of collaboration between services and a failure to develop the conditions and knowledge transmission mechanisms required to intervene benevolently. Community members have already expressed these needs, but concrete action is yet to be seen. It appears that First Nations expect true commitment from the MSSS and the CISSS-CIUSSS about youth protection for First Nations children. In short, reconciliation is achieved through concrete actions, not simply through spoken or written words.

Recognize the competencies of Indigenous organizations. The participants, aware that communities do not have specialized services, lauded the exceptional work of the current front-line and youth protection services in the support they provide to families. It is therefore essential that this competence be recognized by CISSS and CIUSSS service departments, and in particular by the professionals who work there. Similarly, the participants explained that notions of power and power imbalance play significant roles in collaborations between First Nations organizations and non-Indigenous services. Minimizing the efforts made by First Nations organizations and the quality of their work reinforces the view that the competencies of the communities are not as valid as those of the dominant system.

Make data accessible to First Nations community services. Sometimes the power imbalance is expressed non-verbally, through a failure to recognize the effectiveness of interventions provided by First Nations services. But it can also be more overt when it manifests as a lack of access to data, a failure to share information, or tools that are ill-adapted to the realities of the First Nations communities. Ill-adapted tools mean that some useful information remains uncollated or cannot be easily accessed. The failure to share information precipitates a power imbalance, where non-Indigenous service programs hold the powers of understanding and dissemination. Although there is no guarantee that First Nations services subject to the YPA will be fully autonomous, it is nevertheless incumbent on the CISSS and the CIUSSS to share their power by collecting relevant information and allowing access to information about the situations of First Nations children in youth protection.

Recognize the economic and political power imbalance. The findings foregrounded by the participants are also related to economic and political issues. First Nations communities often find themselves pressured by placement measures and the timelines for these actions. The Western approach to youth protection is focused on a need for efficiency and effectiveness, and this runs counter to the Indigenous way of doing things, which involves a very different concept of time. As a reminder, efficiency is a criterion of the standards of practice,

defined by the MSSS as achieving maximum results with minimum resources. Thus, economics are at the heart of interventions. In concrete terms, the MSSS wants interventions to be carried out quickly at low cost, leaving little room for quality and benevolence. The participants also explained that the timeline for implementing actions depends on political campaigns during which promises are made that will never see the light of day. It is clear, then, that youth protection interventions with children and their families are a world away from the economic and political issues of a social industry. The promises made to Indigenous communities—for example, to implement the calls to action from the Viens Commission (Public Inquiry Commission on relations between Indigenous Peoples and certain public services in Québec, 2019)—are not among the government’s priorities, and Indigenous families are left to suffer.

5.2 CULTURAL SAFETY AT THE HEART OF PROPOSALS FOR THE REVIEW OF FIRST NATIONS STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

If communities can exercise self-governance and self-determination over child and family services, making them completely independent from the Quebec system, they may be able to reclaim a certain power over the management of youth protection situations.

It should be noted, however, that current changes in governance are works in progress, and that a majority of Quebec First Nations communities are subject to the YPA.⁶ During the Quebec-wide consultation, workers clearly expressed a need for a standard that considers the quality, and not merely the quantity, of interventions (Lafortune et al., 2020). In this respect, cultural safety, a concept referred to multiple times in the focus group discussions, appears to be an essential element of youth protection practices, and its role in the creation of new standards merits consideration. It would, indeed, make it possible to provide families with culturally safe services. The process revolves around several elements that were raised throughout the data collection process, in particular in the sections on prevention and placement, the YPA application process, intervention tools, and the supervision and training of professionals.

5.2.1 Standards that reflect the specific nature of interventions

Take the necessary time to intervene to protect the best interests of the child. The participants brought up the concept of time on several occasions. Caught up in the urgency of an intervention, Indigenous families often are not given explanations about the intervention itself or the placement measures. Although the process may be explained in documents and in conversations, parents reportedly have difficulty understanding the ins and outs of the intervention. This factor, particularly regarding the placement periods, was brought up by several focus group participants. It must be understood that the goal of removing a child from their family environment is not to separate him or permanently from the family. Moreover, separation is all the more difficult when there are no Indigenous foster families in the community. In such a case, the child is plunged into an unfamiliar world that generally does not reflect the values with which they have been raised. Indeed, in situations where a child is uprooted from their family and culture, it can be questioned whether their best interests are indeed being protected. The duration of the placement period is also critical information for families who have no way of knowing when their children will return to the community. Trust in non-

⁶ At the time of writing, only the community of Opitciwan had its own law in force. The communities of Manawan and Wemotaci are subject to the *Système d’intervention d’autorité Atikamekw (SIAA)*, a special regime that must nevertheless comply with certain key elements of the YPA.

Indigenous services may be hampered by a lack of communication and by processes the families perceive as risky. The notion of time, which is often underestimated, should be studied more to understand the positive effects of time on the interventions.

Choose the specific time of intervention to promote effectiveness. The participants stated that the time chosen to carry out an intervention in a family environment is often inappropriate or not adapted to the child's primary environment. Interventions should not be limited to traditional service hours (9 a.m. to 5 p.m.), but rather take place in the morning before school and at supper time. Workers would be better able to observe the child's everyday experiences and to watch them interact in the family milieu. Adapting to the rhythm of family life and intervening at the right moments could make interventions more effective. Of course, this type of intervention would require workers, who are generally overloaded, to have some flexibility in their schedules.

Recruit qualified professionals to intervene in Indigenous contexts. During the questionnaire process, a major issue was brought up by one of the participants, namely, that specific knowledge of Indigenous communities should play a more significant role in the hiring of workers. It is worth noting, however, that it is difficult to recruit professionals in Indigenous environments, just as it is challenging to maintain a stable team (due to personnel turnover). Another criterion to consider in addition to knowledge of the history of communities is interpersonal behaviour. Indigenous and non-Indigenous people communicate and express themselves very differently. As stated above, the concept of time is different between the two milieus, but divergences can also be found in communication styles (e.g., speaking rate, interpretation of silences in conversation).

5.2.2 Standards of practice that align with contextual and structural features

Train professionals in Indigenous experiences and history. In a similar vein, the participants in the data collection said that personnel in non-Indigenous organizations require training to understand local realities. Trained professionals would ensure cultural safety in the intervention process. Aside from more traditional types of training, some forms of learning, such as taking part in the cultural activities of a community, should be prioritized so that workers can understand what community life is like and how they operate collectively. It must not be forgotten that the relationship between non-Indigenous and Indigenous peoples is coloured by a colonial past that caused the latter much suffering, the repercussions of which are still felt by current generations. At the moment, these traces of the past hinder the creation of trust between communities and non-Indigenous organizations. It should also be noted that colonialist actions are not merely things of the past; certain current practices—the failure to share information, systemic racism, the stigmatization of Indigenous populations—reproduce neocolonialist practices. It is therefore up to non-Indigenous organizations to find solutions that foster benevolence in interventions and to assert the need for non-Indigenous professionals to ensure culturally safe intervention practices.

Establish or maintain continuity of services to provide comprehensive support. Along the same lines, the participants spoke of a lack of continuity of services, particularly when situations like youth protection interventions in Indigenous communities are delegated to non-Indigenous organizations. During youth protection interventions, non-Indigenous organizations usually push the first-line services aside, and the latter may have trouble obtaining information about the child's placement. It must be remembered, however, that the YPA is an exceptional measure and therefore usually temporary, and that the objective of placement is to return the child to their family. Therefore, ensuring continued contact between services is critical to providing effective guidance for families and supporting the child's return. In addition, the participants stated that the

fragmentation of interventions even within the same service hinders their proper conduct. The multiple stakeholders involved and the lack of communication between services does not serve the best interests of the child. On the contrary, a failure to communicate could even result in repetitive interventions or interventions that take longer than they would if first-line services were able to follow up and intervene with the child and family.

5.2.3 Standards of practice that recognize the importance of the community

Involve the community in interventions. One of the last issues identified by the participants concerned the recognition of the power of the communities. The Indigenous perception of family appears to be extremely different from that of non-Indigenous peoples. The community plays a special role in the daily lives of children, beyond the nuclear family unit. Although non-Indigenous workers might find it surprising, every member of the community can play a role in taking care of a child. Therefore, the family, in the broad sense of the term, must receive greater recognition for its active role in providing real and solid support to children and parents. Although the duration of a youth protection intervention is limited, it is essential to think about the child's return to the family setting. Unlike youth protection services, the support network that was there before will also be there after. Recognizing the community's role in each stage of the intervention would therefore be beneficial and promote the best interests and well-being of the child.

Support interventions by creating a new role of Indigenous support person. The difficulty of the process and the vagueness that surrounds the subsequent stages, especially if they involve the placement of a child, are often very worrying for Indigenous parents and can cause much anguish. The participants in the data collection exercise brought up the possibility of an Indigenous support person to provide guidance for parents if their child is placed. On top of the complexity of the legal proceedings, the language barrier creates a real obstacle for parents. Community members do not necessarily speak French or English as their first language. A resource who can also act as an interpreter could make it easier to support and guide both parents and children. During meetings with youth protection professionals, the support person could reassure the parents and be a kind of safety net. Parents could confer with that person after the meetings to make sure they understand the issues that were discussed. The support person could also make it easier to build trust between parents and non-Indigenous workers.

Favour systemic interventions that support children and their families. The most drastic youth protection intervention is child placement. It can result from various factors or situations involving the parents, such as domestic violence or the child's problematic behaviour.

Although placement can avoid exposing children to such factors, parents often continue to struggle with their own personal issues. The participants said that a child cannot be removed from the family environment without offering the parents help with their own challenges. The parents' recovery is a necessary precondition to a child's successful return to the family. Treating the removal of a child from the family as a long-term solution does not seem to be an option. That is why support must be offered to the parents, who may also be suffering from past or present trauma that prevents them from fully taking care of their children. More systemic care—that is, care at several levels for both the affected child and their family members—appears to be a more salient solution than support focused solely on taking over responsibility for the child.

Create tools that are adapted to, evaluated by, and approved by communities. Youth protection interventions should be supported by tools created by or with Indigenous populations, and they should reflect the local realities of each nation and each community. It must be understood that, beyond the Indigenous

context, each community has its own needs and cultural specificities. It would be contrary to the principles of cultural safety to assume that all communities can use the same tools. The generalizing of Indigenous needs seems to be an easily identifiable error and unfortunately one that is too commonly committed by non-Indigenous organizations. Once again, the notion of time appears to be a factor, as the creation of tools specific to each community will involve major work requiring time and flexibility. Co-creation is often described as a complex process (creation, tests, evaluation, and production), but the results of collaborations are often very positive. The more the tools align with community circumstances, the more likely they are to be used and to achieve their goals.

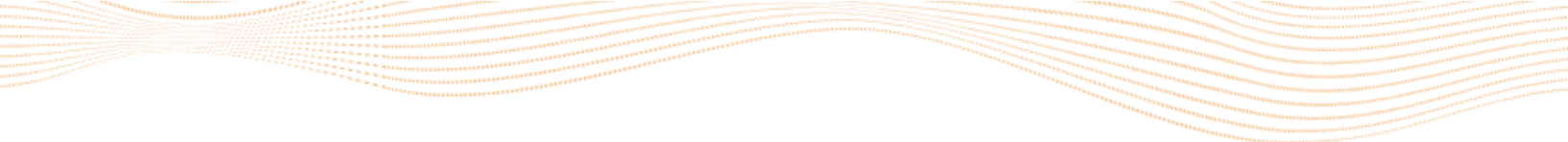
5.3 FINAL FINDINGS

This project was an opportunity to consult communities that have felt concerned by the review of the government's youth protection standards. Two distinct data collection methods were used, in French and in English. It is important to emphasize that the scope of the results is limited. The results reflect only the perspective of the communities that took part in the process, for example. It did not aim to exhaustively detail each community's position; rather, the intention was to gather the perspective of communities that were interested in the exercise. Although there is no way of knowing why the other communities chose not to participate, it might be supposed that they were not interested (preferring, for example, to focus their energies on their self-government plans) or that they lack resources and were unable to allow personnel to take time off to participate in the data collection.

Some of the points raised in this consultation echo recommendations made in April 2021 by the CSDEPJ. In December 2021, after the data collection for this project wrapped up in October of the same year, Bill 15 was tabled, amending the YPA in response to the CSDEPJ report. The bill includes changes that affect Indigenous children, the implementation of which might support some of the avenues suggested here, at least in part. However, as the AFNQL and the FNQLHSSC pointed out in a press release (2021) when Bill 15 was tabled, it does not meet the CSDEPJ's recommendations for self-government and self-determination.

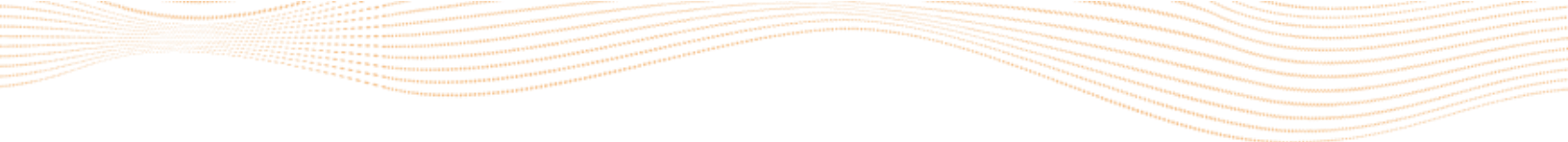
This last section of the report has elucidated some of the main findings of the data collection on the review of standards for youth protection for First Nations. We will conclude by presenting the following highlights from the findings:

- The right to self-determination and self-government—for example, exercising their power to act and their responsibilities when it comes to their children—are priorities for the communities.
- The best interests of the child and cultural continuity are the cornerstones of services for First Nations children and families. For example, the child and family must be supported by a process that aligns with their reality.
- The competencies of Indigenous organizations must be recognized to promote harmonious relationships and collaboration in the best interests of the child. For example, benevolence must be promoted in interventions and between services.
- Adapting to the families' lifestyles and intervening at appropriate times to increase effectiveness is critical. For example, with knowledge of the families' everyday lives, workers can better understand families and intervene in ways that are more respectful of their realities.

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- Quality and qualified personnel must be recruited, and they must also receive initial and ongoing training, including on specific facets relating to interventions in First Nations contexts. For example, interventions must be respectful to families but also to non-Indigenous workers (who must be better equipped to intervene through training programs).
 - Continuity of services is critical. The service offer must include comprehensive support and favour systemic interventions. For example, interventions should focus on both the family and the parents.
 - The competencies and power of communities must be recognized as a collective vision that justifies the creation of the role of a support person and local tools. For example, the community must play a bigger role and be encouraged to act in the interests of the community.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX 1: EXPLANATORY NOTES ON THE PRINCIPLES AND STATEMENTS OF THE REVIEW OF STANDARDS FOR FIRST NATIONS YOUTH PROTECTION

THE PRINCIPLES

BEST INTERESTS OF THE CHILD: This principle presupposes considering the Indigenous child's need to maintain **ongoing relationships with their family, community, and culture**. This is just as important as their **physical, psychological, and emotional well-being and safety**. In determining what is in the best interests of the child, Bill C-92 identifies eight factors to consider (e.g., preserving their cultural identity and connection to language and territory, considering the child's views and preferences, considering customary care).

CULTURAL CONTINUITY: This principle requires measures to **develop a strong cultural identity**. Cultural continuity is **essential to the well-being** of Indigenous children, families, groups, communities, and people. The transmission of the languages, cultures, traditions, and knowledge of Indigenous peoples is integral to cultural continuity. The principle of cultural continuity means:

- 1) Recognizing that the best interests of Indigenous children are often promoted when they **reside with members of their family** and when the **culture** of the Indigenous group, community, or people to which they belong is **respected**,
- 2) Maintaining **ongoing relationships** between Indigenous children and their families, communities and culture,
- 3) Providing services in a way that **does not contribute to the assimilation or destruction** of the group to which the Indigenous children belong, and
- 4) Considering the **unique challenges** of the Indigenous children's region.

SUBSTANTIVE EQUALITY: This principle requires implementing measures that consider the **unique causes of children's historical, social, economic, etc. disadvantage**, so that they have the same opportunity to thrive as other children in Quebec. Substantive equality means:

- 1) Ensuring that Indigenous children, their families, and Indigenous organizations **can exercise their rights without discrimination**, specifically the right to have their views and preferences considered in decisions affecting them,
- 2) Considering the **rights and needs of Indigenous children with disabilities** to participate in their families, communities, villages, or reserves,
- 3) Respecting **Jordan's Principle**, i.e., that **no jurisdictional conflict** (between the provincial and federal governments, for example) results in gaps in services for Indigenous children and their families,

- 4) Respecting **Joyce's Principle**, meaning the **right to access all health and social services, without discrimination**, and the right to enjoy the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health,
- 5) Respecting that Indigenous children **cannot be taken into care** or placed solely **due to the socioeconomic conditions** or health status of their parents or caregiver,
- 6) Establishing **concrete measures** to address the **constraints of accessing various specialized or cultural services** (e.g., providing interpreters; providing telehealth and tele-mental health services to isolated communities and villages; providing transportation to children, parents, or family members to foster bonding during placements or court appearances; funding land-based healing for urban children), and
- 7) **Considering stressors associated with socioeconomic disparities** faced by Indigenous families and difficult living conditions in Indigenous communities and villages (lack of housing and employment opportunities, high cost of living, etc.).

SHARED RESPONSIBILITY: This principle is based on the **unique place** of Indigenous children within the extended family, and on concepts of the family that value the **role and responsibilities of all family members**, including **community members**, for the children's well-being. It means that the responsibility for the care, nurturing, upbringing and supervision of an Indigenous child rests primarily with the parents, but also with the immediate and extended family and the community. The latter must be involved in finding solutions for an Indigenous child throughout the assessment and intervention process, including before, during and after placement in an alternative setting.

MULTIPLE ATTACHMENTS: This principle means that an Indigenous child develops very early **emotional attachments with several family members** and not exclusively with the biological parents. Decisions made regarding Indigenous children must consider these multiple attachments and promote the maintenance of the emotional ties between the child and any family member, particularly where the child requires alternative placement.

FAMILY UNITY: This principle indicates that decisions made about an Indigenous child must aim to **keep the child in the family environment**. Where, in the best interests of the child, they cannot remain in the family environment, the decision must be made to provide a living environment that:

- 1) Considers **customs and traditions** in the case of adoption, whether or not they are recognized under articles 199.10 or 543.1 of the Civil Code [1],
- 2) Ensures **cultural continuity** and the **maintenance of emotional ties** with the child's parents, extended family, community, or village,
- 3) Offers the possibility of the child **being placed with or near their siblings** or other members of their family, and
- 4) **Prioritizes placement** with their parents; another family member; a member of their community, village, or nation; a member of another community or nation; and, as a last resort, any other adult.

The principle of family unity also requires **regularly reassessing the possibility of the child returning to live with their parents** or, if that is impossible, with an extended family member.[1] Art. 199.10:

Conditions under any Quebec Aboriginal custom that is in harmony with the principles of the interest of the child, respect for the child's rights and the consent of the persons concerned may be substituted for conditions of suppletive tutorship. Art. 543.1: Such an adoption which, according to custom, creates a bond of filiation between the child and the adopter is, on the application of either of them, attested by the authority that is competent for the Aboriginal community or nation of either the child or the adopter.

REASONABLE EFFORT: This principle is based on the idea that where an Indigenous child is at risk of being removed from their home environment, the DYP or the FNCFS agency, if the latter is carrying out this responsibility, **must demonstrate that reasonable efforts** have been made for the child to continue to **reside with a parent** or other family member, unless an immediate placement is in their best interests.

PRIORITIZING PREVENTIVE SERVICES: This principle is based on the idea that to prevent Indigenous children being taken into care and placed in alternative care, preventive, prenatal and **early intervention** services must take precedence over other services.

CULTURAL SAFETY: This principle aims to **strengthen and enhance cultural identity**, and **protect family relationships, culture, and language**. It requires the active participation and consultation of parents, family members and children in finding solutions that concern them. It requires workers, reviewers and managers to:

- 1) Have in-depth knowledge of the **sociohistorical and contemporary realities of Indigenous peoples**, including their notions of family, world views, beliefs, values, traditions—both generally and specific to the community or village in which they are intervening,
- 2) Have in-depth knowledge of the **legal frameworks** applicable to Indigenous peoples, such as Bill C-92 and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP),
- 3) Recognize the **effects of colonization** and the **intergenerational trauma** it has created, power relationships and systemic discrimination,
- 4) Consider the **socioeconomic challenges** faced by Indigenous families (e.g., poverty, lack of housing, limited employment opportunities) and,
- 5) Be aware how their **own cultural biases impact their interventions and decision-making**.

Cultural safety also requires access to programs, services and intervention approaches that are based on Indigenous peoples' world views, values, traditions, and knowledge (e.g., medicine wheel, land-based healing programs).

RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION: This principle, recognized internationally (UNDRIP) and in Bill C- 92, includes **jurisdiction over child and family services**, including the legislative authority for such services and the administration and enforcement of laws made under that legislative authority.

GOVERNANCE AND COLLABORATION

COMMITMENT OF MSSS AND CISSS-CIUSSS DIRECTORS TO:

- 1) **Work cooperatively** and in **partnership** with Indigenous peoples to promote the dignity, well-being and full development of Indigenous children and youth, their families, and their communities,

2) Discuss with Indigenous peoples to **support a comprehensive reform of youth protection services** for Indigenous children and families, and

3) **Provide funding** and ongoing support to develop and implement community-based initiatives for the well-being of Indigenous children and families.

RECONCILIATION AND CULTURAL SAFETY: In youth protection services, these require:

1) Recognition of Indigenous peoples' **right to self-determination**,

2) Recognition of the **additional hours** involved in interventions with Indigenous families, and

3) **Financial support** for achieving substantive equality.

MSSS DIRECTORS ENABLING INDIGENOUS ORGANIZATIONS TO EXERCISE FULL AUTONOMY IN CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES, notably by **financially supporting** them and by:

1) Facilitating the **signing of coordination agreements** under Bill C-92 with Indigenous governing bodies that wish to exercise their **legislative authority** and,

2) Facilitating the **signing of agreements** under sections 131.20, 131.23 or 131.25 of the YPA (former sections 37.5, 37.6 and 37.7) with Indigenous groups or organizations that wish to **take over responsibility for youth protection services** without compromising their option to later opt for a coordination agreement under Bill C-92.

AMENDMENT OF REFERENCE FRAMEWORK FOR LIFE PROJECTS TO REFLECT THE MINIMUM STANDARDS OF BILL C-92: For many Indigenous people, healing is a lifelong project and cannot be bound by time limits such as those described in the YPA (maximum placement period and maximum period for voluntary measures). The DYP should therefore **not apply such time limits to Indigenous children and families** in youth protection interventions. To that end, the reference framework for life projects must be amended to reflect the minimum standards of Bill C-92, including section 4, which requires **regularly reassessing the possibility for the child to return to live with their parents** or, if this is impossible, with an extended family member.

RECOGNITION OF TUTORSHIP OR CUSTOMARY ADOPTION CERTIFICATES: The DYP must recognize certificates of tutorship or customary adoption under article 199.10 or 543.1 of the Civil Code as any form of secondary tutorship or adoption. Therefore, under section 131.16 of the YPA (former section 71.3.1[1]), **the DYP must terminate its intervention** with an Indigenous child **once the child has been placed** in the care of a person or family that has been **issued a certificate of custody** (tutorship) or customary adoption. The Director shall consider the Aboriginal tutorship or customary adoption contemplated in article 199.10 or 543.1, as applicable, of the Civil Code if he considers that either of those measures is likely to **ensure the interest of the child and the respect of their rights**.

CLEAR AND UP-TO-DATE COLLABORATION AGREEMENTS: Youth protection interventions involving an Indigenous child and their family must be carried out in **partnership with key individuals**, stakeholders from Indigenous organizations or resources that **surround the family**, whether they reside in a community, village, or urban area. As a result, **clear and up-to-date collaboration agreements** must be in place between the DYP and the various intervention sectors, including Friendship Centres, first-line services, the early childhood and school communities, and community organizations. Partnerships with **informal resources**, such as elders and Indigenous informal caregivers, should also be encouraged.

*** The following statements are written with a view to improve the quality and effectiveness of services provided to Indigenous children and families. ***

JOINT DEVELOPMENT OF MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES FOR PRACTICES, CLINICAL PROCESSES AND SERVICES: Those strategies should be **developed with Indigenous leaders and organizations** and rely on **regular reporting from the perspective of Indigenous children and families** that are or have been subject to protective measures.

ADAPTING ELECTRONIC RECORDS (IDENTIFICATION OF THE NATION, COMMUNITY, FAMILY INFORMATION): The child's **electronic record** (PIJ) must identify the **child's nation and community or village of origin**. It must also contain information about the **child's immediate and extended family** to ensure **cultural continuity** and **foster emotional ties** with these individuals. This verification must be done at the time reports are received and processed (RTS), and this information must be verified at the assessment stage to adapt the intervention by applying the sections of the YPA and Bill C-92.

MECHANISMS TO ENSURE NOTICE IS GIVEN TO INDIGENOUS ORGANIZATIONS BEFORE SIGNIFICANT MEASURES ARE TAKEN: Before taking any significant measure such as placement (section 12 of Bill C-92 and section 131.8 of the YPA [former section 72.6.0.1]), a **mechanism** should be developed to **ensure that notice is given to Indigenous organizations** within a **reasonable timeframe**.

MAKING THE PIJ AVAILABLE: Access to the client information system (PIJ) **should be made available to Indigenous organizations** that want it and that have youth protection responsibilities.

INVOLVING INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN MSSS CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES COMMITTEES: Indigenous communities, villages and organizations **must be consulted and involved** in the various MSSS committees and institutions related to child and family services.

CISSS-CIUSSS DEVELOPING A MECHANISM FOR COLLECTING AND ANALYZING LONGITUDINAL DATA AND SHARING THESE DATA WITH INDIGENOUS ORGANIZATIONS UPON REQUEST: CISSS-CIUSSS need a **mechanism to collect and analyze longitudinal data on Indigenous children and families** (grounds for placement, number of reports, assessments, interventions, placements, regular reassessments, etc.). These data **must be shared** with Indigenous leaders and organizations upon request.

COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL RULES REGARDING THE FUNDING OF YOUTH PROTECTION SERVICES FOR INDIGENOUS CHILDREN (WHEN A CHILD CHANGES REGIONS): In cases where a child is transferred from one region to another or from a community to an urban setting (or vice versa), CISSS-CIUSSS **must follow the federal rules for funding youth protection services** for Indigenous children (e.g., the place of residence during the report determines who funds the services).

MAINTAINING COMMUNITY (FRONT-LINE) SERVICES DURING THE DYP'S INTERVENTION: With a **focus on collaboration and building a safety net around the family**, community (front-line) services must not withdraw when the DYP intervenes.

PREVENTION AND PLACEMENT

MECHANISM ENSURING PERSONALIZED SUPPORT AND TRANSFER TO CULTURALLY SAFE PREVENTIVE SERVICES: When a **report is not screened-in for investigation**, a **service corridor** between the front-line and youth protection services must be put in place to **ensure personalized support and transfer** to culturally safe preventive services.

DEVELOPING A TOOL TO HELP IDENTIFY IMMEDIATE AND EXTENDED FAMILY MEMBERS AND TYPES OF INFORMAL/TRADITIONAL SUPPORT, AND ENSURING PERSONALIZED TRANSFER TO THESE SERVICES: To ensure an Indigenous child is protected and to prevent them from being placed in an alternative environment, a tool must be implemented to enable workers to:

- 1) **Identify** immediate and extended **family members**,
- 2) **Identify** the types of **informal and traditional support** and **culturally safe services** available in the community, village, or urban setting, and
- 3) Provide a **personalized support and transfer** to these services.

ENSURING A HIGH LEVEL OF ONGOING SERVICES TO PREVENT PLACEMENT AND DOCUMENT PREVENTIVE SERVICES PROVIDED TO FAMILIES: To ensure an Indigenous child is protected and to prevent them from being placed in an alternative environment, a mechanism must be put into place to **document the preventive or prenatal services** provided to parents or families and to **identify problems accessing** specific services or programs.

WHEN A CHILD IS REMOVED FROM THE HOME, EXPLORING THE POSSIBILITY OF TUTORSHIP OR CUSTOMARY ADOPTION, RESPECTING THE PRINCIPLE OF CULTURAL CONTINUITY, AND REGULARLY REASSESSING A POSSIBLE RETURN TO THE FAMILY: When an Indigenous child is to be removed from the home environment (in emergency or non-emergency situations), a process must be initiated to explore the possibility of **considering tutorship** or **customary adoption** according to the provisions of the Civil Code or any other custom or tradition relating to adoption. If such an agreement cannot be reached, the alternative environment must be **chosen per the placement priorities** of Bill C-92 and **the principle of cultural continuity**. The possibility for the child of returning to live with their parents or, if this is impossible, with another extended family member must also be regularly reassessed.

TOOLS AND YOUTH PROTECTION

RETHINKING THE ARRIVAL OF THE DYP IN THE LIVES OF INDIGENOUS FAMILIES: Seen as a system that “takes away children,” the arrival of the DYP in the lives of Indigenous children and families is a systematic reminder of the history of residential school oppression. It is therefore **critical to rethink how workers enter Indigenous families’ lives** (e.g., establishing a two-member team consisting of a non-Indigenous worker and a support worker [or interpreter] who is a member of the community or village or, in an urban setting, a person working for an Indigenous resource or organization).

ACTIVE PARTICIPATION OF THE CHILD AND MEMBERS OF THEIR (EXTENDED) FAMILY

IN ALL PHASES OF THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS: Any youth protection intervention with an Indigenous child and their parents should focus on **concrete means** that enable the child, parents and extended family members affected by the situation **to be consulted and actively participate** in the **selection, application, and review of measures** (e.g., family circle or conference, caregiver circle).

PROMOTING CULTURALLY SAFE APPROACHES OR INTERVENTION MODELS: Culturally safe approaches or intervention models will particularly consider **historical trauma** and the **complexity of the needs** of Indigenous families.

THE WORK DONE BY CHILD AND FAMILY WORKERS MUST BE BASED ON THE

PRINCIPLES OF BILL C-92: The work must revolve around the **best interests of the child** (as set out in Bill C-92), **cultural continuity**, and **formalizing an intervention plan** that is consistent with the customs and traditions of the community, village, or nation to which the child belongs.

THE PRINCIPLES OF BILL C-92 MUST BE CONSIDERED IN ANY INTERVENTION PLAN: The intervention plan must be developed **with the child, their parents** and extended family members and must:

- 1) Build on **the strengths of the family** and **cultural protective factors** (e.g., preserving the language, culture, connection to the land, the child's emotional ties to extended family members, the principle of shared responsibility) and,
- 2) Focus on **culturally safe intervention programs or services** (e.g., land-based stays or activities, community healing initiatives, ceremonies).

In the case of an Indigenous child placed in an alternative environment, the intervention plan must include **concrete measures** to ensure **cultural continuity**, maintain **ongoing relationships** with their family, community and nation, maintain **emotional ties** with family members, ensure **a high level of direct intervention** with the child and their family to promote family reunification, and regularly **get the child's views** on their placement experience with and without the presence of the adult caregivers.

CULTURAL SENSITIVITY OF THE ALTERNATIVE LIVING ENVIRONMENT: In the case of an Indigenous child placed in an alternative environment, the living environment's sensitivity to the child's culture must be **assessed**, and the service plan provided by this environment must **include concrete measures** to ensure the child's **cultural continuity**.

FLEXIBILITY REGARDING PLACEMENT DURATION: Historical trauma and Indigenous values require flexibility, **respect for the pace** of the child and the family, and the **time needed to heal** for Indigenous families. Therefore, within the minimum standards of Bill C-92, the **maximum placement period** and the **maximum period** for agreements on voluntary measures as specified in the YPA **must not apply**.

ESTABLISHING MECHANISMS TO LIMIT THE USE OF JUDICIAL MEASURES: **Voluntary measures** should be given priority to **limit** the use of **judicial measures** and **lessen the impact of judicialization** on Indigenous families.

STANDARDS OF PRACTICE THAT CONSIDER THE CONSEQUENCES OF COLONIZATION AND THE ISSUES related to Indigenous **communities** and villages and to Indigenous families living in **urban areas**.

CLINICAL TOOLS ASSESSED AND APPROVED BY INDIGENOUS POPULATIONS: All clinical tools made available to youth protection workers in Indigenous settings must have been **validated with Indigenous populations** (e.g., assessment tools for abuse, child and adolescent development, risk of discontinuity and removal, parental behaviour, attachment, SSP).

CULTURALLY SAFE CLINICAL TOOLS AND PRACTICE GUIDELINES: Workers intervening with Indigenous children and families need to be **better equipped** by having access to **culturally safe tools** and **practice guides** that have been **developed with, or recognized by, Indigenous experts**.

IDENTIFYING CLINICAL BEST PRACTICES, COMMUNITY INITIATIVES AND CULTURALLY SAFE INTERVENTION PROGRAMS CREATED OR RECOGNIZED BY INDIGENOUS EXPERTS AND VALIDATED BY INDIGENOUS LEADERS AND ORGANIZATIONS: A **review** of clinical best practices, community-based initiatives and culturally safe intervention programs, and a **practice framework** should be created or recognized by Indigenous experts and **validated by Indigenous leaders and organizations**.

THE DECISION TO END AN INTERVENTION, *once its objectives have been achieved, should be made in consultation with the parents, the child, and the extended family.*

TRANSITION TO INDEPENDENT LIVING MUST INVOLVE THE FAMILY AND/OR THE COMMUNITY: The transition to independent living for Indigenous youth requires the involvement of their families and their home communities or villages (where applicable). The worker responsible for implementing the measures must **support the youth in their journey** toward self-sufficiency by respecting the principle of **substantive equality** and promoting **access to services** (e.g., housing supports).

TRAINING AND SUPERVISION

TRAINING DEVELOPMENT WITH INDIGENOUS EXPERTS: Youth protection interventions for Indigenous children and families require **clinical and legal expertise**. Therefore, all training should be **developed by and with Indigenous experts** or those considered experts by Indigenous leaders and organizations.

BASIC TRAINING FOR ALL WORKERS: All institutional workers, managers and legal team members serving Indigenous children and families should receive basic training on:

- 1) ***The Indian Act, Bill C-92***, particularly the minimum standards provisions, and the United Nations Declaration on the **Rights of Indigenous Peoples**
- 2) Indigenous **realities**
- 3) The organization of **health and social services** for Indigenous peoples

COACHING OF WORKERS THROUGH A SPECIALIZED AND ONGOING TRAINING PROGRAM: The work of youth protection workers intervening with Indigenous children and families must be **guided by a specialized, ongoing training program** that considers First Nations and Inuit **contexts** separately. This program should include training on:

- 1) Sociohistorical and contemporary **realities**
- 2) Historical **trauma** and related **social issues**

3) **World views**, conceptions of family and **Indigenous** childrearing, healing, and conflict-resolution practises

4) Approaches and intervention models that ensure **cultural safety**

INTRODUCING WORKERS TO THE REALITIES OF COMMUNITIES AND NATIONS THROUGH PARTICIPATION IN SOCIOCULTURAL ACTIVITIES: Institutions providing youth protection services in an Indigenous community or village, or to urban-based Indigenous children and families, must provide an opportunity for workers to **learn about the sociocultural realities** of the child's community and nation by allowing them to **participate in community or cultural activities**.

INTEGRATING AN INDIGENOUS COMPONENT INTO ALL CONTINUING EDUCATION OFFERED TO WORKERS: Institutions providing youth protection services within an Indigenous community or village, or to urban-based Indigenous children and families, must ensure that **all continuing education on specific topics** (e.g., child and adolescent development, mental health, family violence) incorporates an Indigenous component **developed or recognized by Indigenous experts** and validated by Indigenous leaders and organizations.

REDUCING WORKERS' CASELOADS TO DEVELOP THEIR SKILLS AND ENSURE CULTURALLY SAFE INTERVENTIONS: The challenges associated with intervening with Indigenous children and families justify the **appropriateness of reducing workers' caseloads** to let them develop their skills and **ensure culturally safe interventions**.

COACHING OF WORKERS BY AN ELDER OR AN INDIGENOUS EXPERT: Youth protection workers who intervene with Indigenous children and families must be **rigorously supported** through coaching, supervision, or mentorship by an **elder or an Indigenous expert**.

TRAINING AND SUPERVISION OF NON-INDIGENOUS FOSTER FAMILIES TO ENSURE CULTURAL CONTINUITY: Non-Indigenous foster families caring for an Indigenous child need training and supervision to be able to **effectively meet the child's needs**, particularly in terms of **cultural continuity**.

APPENDIX 2: FOCUS GROUP GUIDE - STANDARDS REVIEW

Introduction:

You were invited to contribute to the review of youth protection standards of practice for interventions with First Nations children and families. We will start with the consent process, to confirm that everyone present is comfortable with participating in this focus group, and we will answer any questions you may have before you consent.

Consent process

Once all consents have been obtained

Concretely, we will go through a series of questions, split into five sections, namely: legal and clinical principles; governance and collaboration; prevention and placement; YPA application process and intervention tools; and, finally, training, clinical supervision and coaching for workers.

The goal of a focus group is to exchange and stimulate ideas. As the focus group moderators, we will share with you some findings from the questionnaire that the FNQLHSSC ran this summer; as such, the questionnaire results will guide our questions.

With the invitation to this focus group meeting, you received a document entitled “Explanatory notes;” this document includes the definition of the principles, challenges, and statements that we will talk about today. Make sure you have it open to refer to it whenever needed. The document is divided into the same five sections that will guide this focus group. We will clearly signal what section we’re at, but do not hesitate to ask us to repeat what section we’re discussing or to clarify any elements discussed.

Section 1: Principles

The judicial and clinical principles are the core components of youth protection and provide the framework for the general practice of youth protection.

1. What do you think of the order of priority of the five principles?
2. Are they surprising to you?
3. How would these principles apply in service delivery within Indigenous or First Nations organizations? And within the CIUSSS and CISSS? What differences could occur?
4. The best interests of the child were rated as the most important principle. In the questionnaire, one participant underlined the importance of providing care according to Indigenous customs, while also preserving the cultural identity of the child. What do you think?
5. In the questionnaire, someone also raised the question of bias and prejudice toward Indigenous/First Nations cultural practices (parenting practices, speaking an Indigenous language, etc.). What actions could be taken to prevent these situations?

****ZOOM SURVEY****

Section 2: Governance and collaboration

In this section, we will talk about who oversees what, or who should oversee what, and we will also discuss what is important to ensure optimal collaboration between government institutions, such as the CISSS and CIUSSS, and Indigenous/First Nations organizations for the well-being of First Nations children, families, and communities.

6. What do you think of the order of priority of the five principles?
7. Are they surprising to you?
8. Cultural safety did not make the top 5 principles (previous section); however, “reconciliation and cultural safety” was rated as the most important statement related to governance and collaboration. How do you explain these results?
9. The questionnaire results appear to support First Nations’ full autonomy in child and family services, with the items related to government institutions and YP “practice” in CISSS-CIUSSS ranking at the bottom of the list. What do you think of this perspective?
 - a. Follow-up question: For example, compliance with funding rules (MSSS) when a child changes regions: issue that received the most “I don’t know” answers and ranked 7th. What do you think of this rating?
10. A questionnaire participant mentioned the presence of systemic racism in health and social services. To what extent is it important that government institutions recognize systemic racism?
11. The need for closer collaboration between YP services (CISSS-CIUSSS) and preventive services by Indigenous/First Nations organizations was raised. This issue ranked 6th on the questionnaire priorities. According to your experience, what do you have to share with us about this topic?
12. The need to communicate and share relevant information between the CISSS-CIUSSS and Indigenous/First Nations organizations was raised a few times in the questionnaire’s comments, including the current limits caused by confidentiality rules. Do you think it is important to prioritize a mechanism to ensure information sharing?

****ZOOM SURVEY****

Section 3: Prevention and placement

In this section, we will talk about the relationship between prevention and youth protection services, how to prevent placement, and what must be done if placement is being considered.

13. What do you think of the rankings of the statements?
14. Are they surprising to you?
15. What other statements could have been proposed in this section?

****ZOOM SURVEY****

Section 4: YPA application process and intervention tools

In this section, we will discuss how the YPA is applied in everyday practice, and we will talk about the tools that can be used to implement it.

16. What do you think of the rankings of the statements?
17. Are they surprising to you?
18. Two of the statements in the top 5 involve principles put forward in Bill C-92. Would you explain why it is essential to consider these principles in this review of YP practice standards?
19. A participant mentioned that increased participation of the child's family network during the intervention (and any potential placement) would be essential. What do you think?
20. Among the statements that garnered less support, we have the following statements: "tools adapted or created by populations" and "identifying culturally safe practices and programs created by Indigenous." What do you think?
21. A questionnaire participant proposed personalized, customized support. How do you think this could be applied in your professional reality?
22. The statement that was ranked as the most important was the active participation of the child and members of their (extended) family in all phases of the decision-making process. How do you think this could work in your professional reality?

****ZOOM SURVEY****

Section 5: Worker training, clinical supervision and coaching

The title of this section is self-explanatory: training of workers, but also their clinical supervision and the coaching they should receive.

23. What do you think of the rankings of the statements?
24. Are they surprising to you?
25. The development of training by Indigenous experts for CISSS-CIUSSS workers was rated as the top priority. How do you imagine the implementation of a training program developed with Indigenous experts?
26. In the results of the questionnaire, many suggestions were put forward, such as immersion activities in an Indigenous setting, more frequent meetings between the CISSS-CIUSSS professionals and those from First Nations organizations, and training programs including and in-depth knowledge of Indigenous realities. What do you think of these suggestions?

****ZOOM SURVEY****



Closing question

We thank you very much for your participation in this focus group today. Before we end the discussion, we have a last question for you.

Following this discussion, what are your expectations regarding this review of youth protection practice standards?

Alternative closing questions

What are the major issues related to applying these principles to the reality of Indigenous/First Nations peoples?

Is there anything that we have not discussed that you would like to bring forward?

APPENDIX 3: INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM

Information and consent form



FIRST NATIONS OF QUEBEC
AND LABRADOR HEALTH
AND SOCIAL SERVICES
COMMISSION

250, Place Chef-Michel-Laveau, suite 102
Wendake, Quebec G0A 4V0
☎ 418-842-1540 📠 418-842-7045 cssspnql.com

Focus group

Project:

Review of youth protection standards of practice for interventions with First Nations children and families

Project team: This is an initiative of the First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Health and Social Services Commission (FNQLHSSC), funded by the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux du Québec (MSSS). The FNQLHSSC has contracted Virginie Attard, MSW, and Mireille De La Sablonnière-Griffin, PhD, to collect and analyze the data and write the report.

What is the objective of the project?

The objective is to propose to the MSSS changes to the youth protection standards of practice for interventions with First Nations children and families.

What does your participation involve?

Participants will contribute to the project by taking part in a focus group. The focus group meeting will last 90 to 120 minutes. During the meeting, some questions may be asked through Zoom's polling feature; they will be anonymous.

When will you participate?

The meeting will be held via Zoom on October 21 from 1:30 p.m. to 4 p.m..

What are the benefits and risks involved in participating?

By participating in the focus group, you will assist in developing proposals for reviewing the youth protection standards of practice for interventions with First Nations children and families. Participating in this project may lead you to reflect on interventions involving children and families, carried out either by CISSS and CIUSSS caseworkers or caseworkers in community organizations. By participating, you may also be able to shed light on your own professional reality, allowing you to optimize your interventions and collaborations or maintain their quality.

To our knowledge, participating in the focus group involves little to no risk. Youth protection services may be a sensitive topic for some people. As a result, participants risk potential discomfort when answering certain questions. It is important to note that the questions are centred on your professional experience with youth protection and not your personal experiences. Further, participants are not obliged to answer all the questions.

Information and consent form

Is this a confidential process?

Yes. All information gathered by the project team will remain confidential. The meeting will be recorded through Zoom, and audio and video files will be transcribed in a way that protects participants' anonymity. Names that could identify you or any person or place will not appear on the transcript. All information will be processed in a collective rather than individual manner. Neither your identity nor that of your employer will be disclosed when the results are disseminated.

Participants agree to maintain the utmost confidentiality regarding any personal information that they may hear during the focus group meeting. Further, during the meeting, they must avoid saying the names of people not participating in the discussion.

The following people will have access to the audio or video files, transcripts or information and consent forms: members of the FNQLHSSC project team and the persons they hire to assist with the project, namely Virginie Attard, Mireille De La Sablonnière-Griffin and the person tasked with transcribing the focus group discussion (this person will sign a confidentiality and data destruction agreement before being given access to the recording to be transcribed).

Audio and video files will be stored on password-protected computers to which team members have sole access. These files will be sent in a secure manner (encryption or password). The files of the recordings will be securely destroyed once the transcripts have been completed and validated. Transcripts will be stored on one or more password-protected computers to which team members have sole access. The copies of the transcripts stored on the transcriber's computer will be securely destroyed once the transcript has been completed and validated. The copies of the transcripts held by Mireille De La Sablonnière-Griffin and Virginie Attard will be securely destroyed once the final report has been completed and validated by the FNQLHSSC.

The FNQLHSSC will keep the information and consent forms in a secure network location accessible only to the research sector. They will be securely destroyed seven years after the end of the project.

Is your participation free and voluntary?

Yes. Your participation in this project is free and voluntary. This means that you agree to participate in the project without any external pressure or coercion. You are free to end your participation at any time during the focus group meeting without providing an explanation. You are also free not to answer questions. However, once the meeting has been recorded, we will not be able to edit out your remarks; nonetheless, you will not be identified in any way.

Information and consent form

How do I confirm that I wish to participate?

If you would like to participate, please sign this document now to indicate your consent. There are two ways to return the signed document:

- You can sign this document before the meeting with an electronic signature and return it to Virginie Attard at the following email address: virginieattard8@gmail.com.

OR

- You can print the document, sign it, scan it or take a picture of it (the text and your signature must be legible), then send it to Virginie Attard at the following address: virginieattard8@gmail.com.

If you are unable to sign and return the form beforehand, you can also give your oral consent at the beginning of the focus group. Your consent will thus be recorded via Zoom.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank you for your valuable contribution to this focus group. Given your professional experience and your knowledge of Indigenous realities and issues, your participation is essential in terms of proposing new youth protection standards of practice for interventions with First Nations children and families.

Contact information

If you have any questions or comments, please contact Wyatt Dumont, Child and Family Services Analyst-Advisor, at the FNQLHSSC:

Wyatt Dumont
250 Place Chef-Michel-Laveau, Suite 102
Wendake, Quebec G0A 4V0
T: 418-842-1540, ext. 2812
F: 418-842-7045
wyatt.dumont@cssspnql.com

Information and consent form

Consent to participate in the focus group

I hereby acknowledge that I have read this information and consent form. I understand the objectives of the project and what my participation involves. I confirm that I have been given ample time to consider my decision to participate. I acknowledge that I have had the opportunity to ask questions about my participation and that any questions I asked were answered satisfactorily. I understand that I can withdraw from this project at any time, without penalty and without the need to justify myself. I voluntarily consent to participate in this project.

I voluntarily consent to participate in this project.

☐ YES

☐ NO

Name in block letters

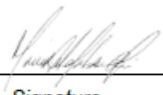
Signature

Date

Signature of the project team member:

Mireille De La Sablonnière-Griffin

Name in block letters



Signature

October 16, 2021

Date

APPENDIX 4: QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

4.1 The principles

4.1.1 The best interests of the child⁷

Of all the principles related to this question, 89% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed that the best interests of the child and respect for the child's rights are essential. One of the participants said that the child must be at the heart of the intervention priorities, as should the identification and recognition of the child's culture. The respondent spoke of the importance of [TRANSLATION] "care according to custom." Another participant supported this comment and emphasized the importance of preserving the child's identity.

4.1.2 Cultural continuity

Of all the principles related to this question, 100% of participants agreed or strongly agreed with the importance of cultural continuity for Indigenous children so that they may develop strong cultural identities. One of the respondents explained that the cultural roots children have are what will later allow them to pass on that culture to the next generation. Another remarked that cultural continuity also depends on Indigenous services being recognized in every community that assigns importance to cultural identity.

4.1.3 Substantive equality

All participants agreed or strongly agreed with every principle in this question. One of the participants stated that it is essential to consider the circumstances of each community and to understand the family's experience without prejudice. This participant added that the farther a community is from a large urban centre, the more difficult it is for its members to access specialized services. Another participant corroborated this and said that substantive equality can be fostered by providing services that acknowledge the community's history as well as the past traumas and the socioeconomic conditions of the group to which a child belongs.

4.1.4 Shared responsibility

All participants agreed or strongly agreed with every principle in this question. According to one participant, whose community has established Indigenous governance over youth protection, the foundation of those services is the engagement and involvement of the immediate and extended family and of the community. The family, considered a key element in conflict resolution, is included in discussions from the first intervention on. The participant said that the process enables child protection through social monitoring.

⁷ See Appendix 1 for a further explanation of the principles presented.



Another respondent suggested that the group of resource persons who can be called on to help families in difficulty should be broadened to include extended family, significant individuals, and informal caregivers, and that these people should also be involved in interventions. A third participant noted that, while the family is at the heart of an intervention, it cannot be the only entity responsible for the outcome, adding that communities must identify their role in the process and apply foresight. More concretely, the participant explained that workers in communities should apply this philosophy in interventions, even though they often receive minimal support from parents and families.

4.1.5 Multiple attachments

All participants strongly agreed with every principle in this question. One of the participants provided further information about multiple attachments. Children living in communities are in frequent contact with close relatives, and often children are placed with a family member. In this participant's opinion, the relationships among family members in communities are very important, and children live in a type of "family circle." As an example, the participant explained that more than one family might live together and that children in such cases know their extended family members very well. The participant also said that parents should suggest the person to whom the child might be entrusted, and that children are comfortable being raised with multiple attachments. A second participant expressed similar thoughts: "Culturally, the children [of the Nation] receive supportive care from several people and will even approach the person who can best meet their specific needs, depending on the strengths of the people around them."

4.1.6 The family unit

All participants agreed or strongly agreed with every principle in this question. According to one participant, community involvement is a considerable asset when adapting or developing new practices for non-Indigenous organizations that can directly influence the lives of community members; one such practice is ensuring greater familiarity of the situation in the field. Another respondent stated that the removal of a child from their living environment has serious repercussions on the community, adding that it is essential to demonstrate that every effort was made before ordering a child's placement, and in all cases to minimize the impact that placement can have.

4.1.7 Reasonable effort

All participants strongly agreed with every principle in this question, stating that reasonable efforts must be made to fully mobilize services and support to avoid placing an Indigenous child outside their family circle or community. Two of the participants emphasized that parents should be informed promptly if there is a risk that their child will be placed, and that every effort—not just reasonable ones—must be made to keep the child in their environment.

4.1.8 Priority of preventive services

All participants strongly agreed with every principle in this question: preventive services should take priority. One of the respondents stated that the DYP should be aware of local services offered in each

community so that it has an overview of what is available in the child's environment. Another respondent stated that the DYP often intervenes too late, and that "the need for services must be met so that we do not have to meet the need for protection."

4.1.9 Cultural safety

All participants strongly agreed with every principle in this question on the importance of cultural safety. One participant explained that every Indigenous nation possesses its own knowledge and customs. In this participant's view, the DYP should broaden its knowledge of the past and present realities of Indigenous communities in terms of their histories, cultures, and relationships, and learn to carry out interventions that respect communities' processes and languages. Another participant agreed with those views, adding that respect must be present and discernable in interventions with Indigenous people, and that interventions should take specific cultural characteristics into consideration.

4.1.10 The right to self-determination

All participants strongly agreed with every principle in this question regarding international recognition of the right to self-determination, including jurisdiction over child and family services, and in particular the power to legislate such services and to execute and oversee the application of legislation enacted under that power. According to one of the respondents, "communities should have the choice of self-determination because they are familiar with the services they are responsible for."

4.1.11 Integration of the minimum standards of the *Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families*

All participants strongly agreed with every principle of this question regarding amending the YPA. One of the respondents stated that a single youth protection model should not be imposed on everyone. Special attention should be given to interventions with Indigenous peoples. Another respondent reiterated that being able to work with Indigenous communities without prejudice or judgment requires an understanding of their knowledge and customs.

Principles related to legal and clinical aspects, in order of priority:

1. The best interests of the child
2. The right to self-determination
3. Priority of preventive services
4. Cultural continuity
5. Multiple attachments
6. Substantive equality
7. Reasonable effort
8. Cultural safety
9. Family unity
10. Shared responsibility

Findings on the principles

Most or all of the respondents answered that they agreed or strongly agreed with the principles as stated. Even the principles that received the least support in the prioritization exercise still received agreement or strong agreement from all the participants.

Changes needed to apply the principles to practice

The respondents offered several proposals. The first was that it would be interesting to develop training programs for interventions with Indigenous families. Training sessions could be led by Indigenous workers, and special attention would have to be paid to the recognition of cultural competency and Bill C-92.

Another proposal was to change the responsibilities of the provinces and the federal government vis-à-vis the self-determination of the communities, and for federal and provincial services to collaborate with Indigenous communities. This proposal is related to a suggestion that the MSSS support the integration of amendments to the YPA as well as significant changes in practice.

Along similar lines, the cultural and systemic biases inherent in the YPA and its application must also be recognized; nuances must be brought to the wording of the Act (e.g., the definition of neglect); and true flexibility must be incorporated in interventions (e.g., time periods, performance indicators).

Other statements that should be added to the section on legal and clinical principles

Two statements were proposed by the questionnaire participants, namely tangible and ongoing collaboration between the different stakeholders (e.g., the MSSS and the CISSS) to implement all the principles and improve practices, and the recognition of the expertise of First Nations in the protection of their children.

4.2 Governance and collaboration

4.2.1 Undertakings by MSSS directors

Of all the principles in this question, all the participants agreed or strongly agreed with the undertakings by the MSSS (1) to cooperate with Indigenous peoples as partners to promote the dignity, wellness, and full potential of Indigenous children and youth, their families, and their communities; (2) to enter into a dialogue with Indigenous peoples to support a profound reform of youth protection services for Indigenous children and families; and (3) to provide ongoing funding for the development and implementation of community initiatives to ensure the wellness of Indigenous children and families.

One of the respondents explained that local services have improved in the communities but that specialized services are still insufficient. Another stated that it must be acknowledged that the current model is a failure.

4.2.2 The role of reconciliation and cultural safety in youth protection services

For all the principles in this question, 88% of the respondents strongly agreed, while 12% disagreed. One participant explained that a service that truly meets the needs of Indigenous children and families must take into account the perspectives of the individuals involved and respect their language and context. In this respondent's view, the availability of workers should be assessed to ensure they have enough time to intervene while still meeting those needs. Another respondent emphasized the importance of admitting that systemic racism exists.

MSSS and CISSS-CIUSSS directors must guarantee means to enable Indigenous organizations to exercise their full autonomy over child and family services, in particular by supporting them financially and by (1) supporting coordination agreements under Bill C-92 with Indigenous governing bodies that wish to exercise their legislative authority; and (2) supporting agreements under section 131.20 (former section 37.5), 131.26 (former section 37.6), or 131.25 (former section 37.7) of the YPA with Indigenous groups or organizations that wish to take on responsibility for youth protection services without forfeiting the option of a coordination agreement under Bill C-92 in the future.

4.2.3 MSSS funding of Indigenous organizations enabling them to exercise full autonomy over child and family services

All participants agreed or strongly agreed with every principle in this question. One of the participants emphasized that “the MSSS and the CISSS-CIUSSS must support Indigenous organizations in their steps toward autonomy.”

4.2.4 Reflection of Bill C-92 standards in the YPA

All participants agreed or strongly agreed with every principle in this question. One participant mentioned the importance of working toward family reunification, while another suggested extending the legislation to cover all Indigenous people, whether or not they live in a community.

4.2.5 Recognition of tutorship or customary adoption certificates by the DYP

All participants agreed or strongly agreed with every principle in this question. One of the participants stated that the principle is based on respect, the law, and the best interests of the child.

4.2.6 Collaboration between DYP services and existing services in communities

All participants agreed or strongly agreed with every principle in this question. One of the respondents stated that “it means recognizing the fact that the community is responsible for its children.”

4.2.7 Co-development of strategies for follow-up and evaluation of practices, clinical processes, and services

All participants agreed or strongly agreed with every principle in this question. One respondent added that not only is it important to consult and involve the communities and to consider their experiences with intervention, but it is also necessary to adapt tools in collaboration with the communities, not to do it in their place. Another participant explained that “when developing best practices, the perspective must be that of the people concerned, to avoid perpetuating abuses of power.”

4.2.8 Inclusion of more information about families in report files

All participants strongly agreed with every principle in this question. One respondent explained that the vocabulary used in official documents is obsolete (e.g., “American Indians,” “reserves”) and should be replaced by “First Nations members” and “communities.” Another person proposed that genograms be developed to gather the information needed. Still another participant suggested that a “reasonable efforts” section be created with contact information for people who can take a child if placement is required, stating that it is important to talk to the family about their protection plan for the child before anything like that happens.

4.2.9 Sharing of information between youth protection and Indigenous organizations

For all the principles in this question, 88% of the respondents strongly agreed, and one participant answered, “I don’t know.” One participant explained that confidentiality issues currently hinder quick collaborative interventions. This participant added that the ways in which professionals from the CISSS-CIUSSS work are not uniform, and that prevention and protection teams in the communities should be considered partners just as the teams affiliated with any other provincial institution would. Such an approach could facilitate the exchange of information between organizations. Another participant said that community workers must be full collaborators, and a final participant said that workers should have access to *Projet intégration jeunesse* (PIJ). It should be noted that this statement was not included in the prioritization question at the end of the section.

4.2.10 Reasonable deadlines to submit information

All participants strongly agreed with every principle in this question. One of the participants said that there is room for improvement here, citing an example of an application received on Friday and a hearing before the judge taking place on Monday. This very short deadline gives neither the family much time to prepare, nor the workers enough time to support the family.

4.2.11 Availability of PIJ to Indigenous organizations with youth protection legislation

All participants agreed or strongly agreed with every principle in this question. One of the participants stated that the PIJ would be very useful, but that the content must be adapted to Indigenous practices. Another participant made a similar comment, stating that the PIJ is not necessarily user-friendly and that you must know the files and their specific characteristics very well to be able to find your way around.

4.2.12 Consultation and participation in MSSS committees on child and family services

All participants strongly agreed with every principle in this question. Two participants mentioned a caveat regarding the participation of Indigenous community members. It is not sufficient merely to attend in person; participating members must also be able to express their own points of view and react to those of other stakeholders.

4.2.13 Longitudinal studies to identify the experiences of Indigenous populations, and transfer of results to Indigenous organizations

For all the principles in this question, 88% of the participants strongly agreed, while 12% disagreed, the latter indicating that their communities have their own organizations to perform studies and gather statistics. Another person stated that this practice would make it possible to follow the development of children placed outside communities.

4.2.14 Compliance with (MSSS) funding rules when a child changes regions

For all the principles in this question, 63% of the participants strongly agreed, while 37% answered “I don’t know.” Participants provided several comments to qualify their answers in this regard. One explained that, if a report is made in an urban environment and a child has to be sent back to their community of origin, the institution that intervenes should continue to provide funding for the duration of the placement. Another participant stated that “the place of residence at the time of the report is not always the best indicator or the easiest to manage. For example, funding could be attributed to the organization

that assumes responsibility for the services provided to the child.” In one of the last comments, the participant mentioned that there are significant funding issues as a lot of time is invested in explaining the rules to the external CISSS and CIUSSS and negotiating financial issues with these institutions. This person would like to see the rule that applies to non-Indigenous children (transfer of responsibility to the CISSS or CIUSSS of the region where the child is placed) also applied to First Nations children to facilitate the task at hand and limit the time spent repeating and explaining the rules and negotiating payment for services.

4.2.15 Non-withdrawal of local services during DYP intervention

All participants strongly agreed with every principle in this question. Moreover, two participants stated that local services must remain involved in the DYP’s interventions. Once again, the participants noted the importance of adapting to the Indigenous context, for example by holding meetings with families in their own environment instead of requiring service users to travel, which can be difficult for a large family.

Governance and collaboration issues, in order of priority:

1. Reconciliation and cultural safety
2. Need for MSSS directors to allow Indigenous organizations to fully exercise their autonomy over child and family services
3. Commitment of the CISSS, CIUSSS and MSSS to Indigenous partners
4. Clear and up-to-date collaboration agreements
5. Modification of the reference framework for life plans to reflect the minimum standards in Bill C-92
6. Maintenance of local services during DYP interventions
7. Compliance with federal funding rules for youth protection services for Indigenous children
8. Mechanism to ensure that Indigenous organizations are notified before any significant measure is taken
9. Adaptation of electronic records (to indicate the nation, community, family information)
10. Provision of PIJ access frameworks
11. Tied (i.e., only one person ranked these issues in their list of 5 priorities, and each was ranked 4th),
 - a. Joint development of strategies for monitoring and evaluating practices, clinical processes, and services
 - b. Indigenous participation in MSSS and institutional committees
 - c. Establishment by the CISSS-CIUSSS of a mechanism for collecting and analyzing longitudinal data, and sharing these data with Indigenous organizations upon request
12. Recognition of certificates of tutorship or customary adoption (only one person ranked this issue in their list of 5 priorities, and it was ranked 5th)

Findings on the issues

Most or all of the respondents answered that they agreed or strongly agreed with the issues presented. Some of the participants seemed to be less familiar with a few issues, since they preferred not to take a position (answering “I don’t know”). Nevertheless, most of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with even those principles that received the least support in the prioritization exercise.

Changes needed to apply the principles to practice

The respondents submitted a number of proposals for change. First, one participant underscored the notion of reconciliation and stated that means should be put in place for CIUSSS-CISSS workers and Indigenous workers to discuss their practices, and for Indigenous organizations to share their knowledge about Indigenous realities. Discussions and partnerships of this kind would make true collaboration among professionals possible. Similarly, other proposals held that Indigenous communities would like the parties to have meaningful discussions, and that their rights and powers should receive the same recognition as those of non-Indigenous organizations.

Other statements that should be added to the section on governance and collaboration principles

Participants made no proposals.

4.3 Prevention and placement

4.3.1 Employ a mechanism to ensure personalized support and transfer to culturally safe preventive services

All participants strongly agreed with every principle in this question. One person stated that the term “transfer” should be used instead of “corridor.” Although the score is favourable, two participants added some qualifications to their support for this principle. For such a principle to succeed, a case manager would have to coordinate the pooling of the skills of health, employment, and education services. According to the participants, vigilance would be required over problems and over the reasons a report is not accepted, and interventions would have to take place before there is any endangerment.

4.3.2 Use a tool to identify immediate and extended family members and informal/traditional support options and to ensure personalized transfer to these services

All participants strongly agreed with every principle in this question. Prompted by the question, one participant proposed that the tool be created in collaboration with Indigenous partners. This way communities will contribute to the development of new practices, and Indigenous knowledge can be integrated. Regarding tools, two respondents proposed that a genogram be developed to identify resource persons who could be recruited to help families.

4.3.3 Provide sufficiently focused continuous services to prevent placement and document preventive services provided to the family

All participants strongly agreed with every principle in this question. One participant emphasized that it is essential to consider and consult existing services in each community. Another added that it would be a good idea to identify needs that have not been met and then give users access to the corresponding services.

4.3.4 Explore the possibility of tutorship or customary adoption when removing a child from the family environment, apply the principle of cultural continuity, and regularly reassess the possibility of returning the child to the family

Eighty-eight percent of the respondents agreed with this statement, whereas 12% answered “I don’t know.” Three participants offered proposals that followed the same logic. Contact with family should be

promoted and maintained in the interest of protecting the child's rights. Regular and close contact will make returning to the family environment easier.

Statements on prevention and placement, in order of priority:

1. Provide sufficiently focused continuous services to prevent placement and document preventive services provided to the family
2. Use a tool to identify immediate and extended family members and informal/traditional support options and to ensure personalized transfer to these services
3. Employ a mechanism to ensure personalized support and transfer to culturally safe preventive services
4. Explore the possibility of tutorship or customary adoption when removing a child from the family environment, apply the principle of cultural continuity, and regularly reassess the possibility of returning the child to the family

Changes needed to apply the principles to practice

According to the participants, it is critical to involve communities in the implementation of the above principles and to establish close collaboration between local (preventive) services and youth protection services. To encourage this collaboration, managers and directors must have profound knowledge of not only Indigenous culture but also each community's specific characteristics. In their opinion, their workload is significant, and additional human resources would make it possible to support communities in their interventions.

Other statements that should be added to the section on prevention and placement principles

One of the participants submitted that the specific criteria for removing Indigenous children must be identified to ensure a response that is culturally adapted to the fundamental needs of Indigenous children.

4.4 TOOLS AND YOUTH PROTECTION

4.4.1 Changes must be made to the way the DYP enters the lives of Indigenous families

For all the principles in this question, 88% of the participants strongly agreed, while 12% answered "I don't know." One respondent explained that it is important to ensure that everyone understands and can express themselves in their own language. A second participant stated that Indigenous workers do not want to be associated with the DYP, and that often, when the situation is tense, they do not want to accompany professionals from the DYP and the CISSS-CIUSSS at the risk of undermining the trust that users have in them. There is also a need to train Indigenous workers who support users.

4.4.2 The child and the members of the child's (extended) family should take an active part in every stage of the decision-making process

All participants strongly agreed with every principle in this question. Although this statement ranked high, one participant stated that there has been considerable reflection on this subject, but that it has yet to be

applied in practice. Another said that systematically holding family circles would be an excellent way to involve the family environment in an intervention.

4.4.3 4.4.3 Culturally safe approaches or intervention models must be favoured

All participants strongly agreed with every principle in this question. One of the participants said that this statement is unavoidable if people are to feel understood and reassured.

4.4.4 4.4.4 Workers must make the principles set out in Bill C-92 the focus of their work

For all the principles in this question, 88% of the participants strongly agreed, whereas 12% answered “I don’t know.” One respondent replied that this statement is especially important when a child is placed in a non-Indigenous environment.

4.4.5 The principles of Bill C-92 must be taken into consideration in any intervention plan

All participants strongly agreed with every principle in this question. One participant stated that the parent himself or herself must propose an intervention plan that includes Indigenous informal caregivers. In this participant’s view, a parent has the capacity to understand the problems and needs support to make changes.

4.4.6 Alternative living environments must be culturally sensitive

All participants strongly agreed with every principle in this question. One stated that intervention plans should take the needs of the parent into account (they should be “tailored”).

4.4.7 Placement periods must be flexible

For all the principles in this question, 88% of the participants strongly agreed and 12% answered “I don’t know.” One participant said that, for Indigenous peoples, healing is an individual’s unique journey. Parents must be allowed the time they need. According to this participant, a child must be as close as possible to their immediate family, from the very beginning of placement. This participant also raised the issue of the judicialization of the situation: If the parent is not opposed to placement, why is a court hearing necessary? Often, contact between a child and their family is maintained, and grounds for protection are no longer the same when the situation is reviewed. Returning the child to their family environment is the primary objective for Indigenous communities. “It’s the First Nations way of living and doing things.” A second participant corroborated the statements of the first. The second participant stated that the maximum placement period is insufficient, and that family members need time to overcome their wariness of the DYP and the police and to gather their strength to work on the issues they are facing.

4.4.8 Mechanisms must be put in place to limit court-ordered measures

All participants strongly agreed with every principle in this question. One participant noted that the family’s consent is essential to the process. A second participant proposed calling on a mediator when court action is being considered.

4.4.9 Standards of practice must take into consideration the impact of colonization and related issues

All participants strongly agreed with every principle in this question.

4.4.10 Clinical tools must be evaluated and approved by Indigenous populations

All participants strongly agreed with every principle in this question. One of the respondents explained that this idea is excellent, to the extent that it is possible. Realistically, however, the tools must at a minimum be nuanced and truly adapted to the local situation, and their use must promote cultural safety.

4.4.11 Clinical tools and practice guides must be culturally safe

All participants strongly agreed with every principle in this question.

4.4.12 Identify clinical best practices, community initiatives, and culturally safe intervention programs created or recognized by Indigenous experts and validated by Indigenous leaders and organizations

All participants strongly agreed with every principle in this question. One of the participants remarked that communities' involvement is essential because Indigenous people are best positioned to identify and respond to the needs of their communities. Another respondent stated that this practice already informally exists among communities.

4.4.13 The decision to end an intervention and the attempt to achieve the objectives should be made with the parents, the child, and the child's extended family

All participants strongly agreed with every principle in this question. One of the respondents proposed that the people who helped develop the plan should also contribute to the decision-making process (e.g., family circle).

4.4.14 The family and community must be involved in a person's transition to independent living

All participants strongly agreed with every principle in this question. One respondent said that a provincial program including the factors named in the statement should be developed.

Statements about intervention tools and youth protection, in order of priority:

1. The child and the members of the child's (extended) family should take an active part in every stage of the decision-making process
2. Workers must make the principles set out in Bill C-92 the focus of their work
3. Changes must be made to the way the DYP enters the lives of Indigenous families
4. The principles of Bill C-92 must be taken into consideration in any intervention plan
5. Standards of practice must take into account the impact of colonization and related issues
6. Culturally safe approaches or intervention models must be favoured
7. Placement periods must be flexible
8. Mechanisms must be put in place to limit court-ordered measures
9. Tied:
 - a. Clinical tools must be evaluated and approved by Indigenous populations
 - b. Clinical tools and practice guides must be culturally safe
10. The decision to end an intervention and the attempt to achieve the objectives should be made with the parents, the child, and the child's extended family
11. Tied:
 - a. Identify clinical best practices, community initiatives, and culturally safe intervention programs created or recognized by Indigenous experts and validated by Indigenous leaders and organizations
 - b. Alternative living environments must be culturally sensitive

12. The family and community must be involved in a person's transition to independent living (no one mentioned this in their 5 priorities)

Findings on the statements

Most or all of the respondents answered that they agreed or strongly agreed with the statements presented. Even the statements that received the least support in the prioritization exercise received agreement or strong agreement from all the participants.

Changes needed to apply the principles to practice

According to the participants, multiple changes are needed, including the achievement of self-determination by First Nations peoples, maximum cooperation from the MSSS and the CIUSSS allowing access to information, and the development of programs and teams of expert workers. One of the participants is aware of the difficulty of this task: "It's complicated for a provincial-level sector to apply all these changes and different principles for users."

Other statements that should be added to the section on intervention tools and youth protection

The participants did not submit any proposals.

4.5 TRAINING AND SUPERVISION

4.5.1 Training programs should be developed in collaboration with Indigenous experts

All participants strongly agreed with every principle in this question.

4.5.2 All workers should receive basic training

All participants strongly agreed with every principle in this question.

4.5.3 Workers should be supported by a specialized continuing education program

All participants strongly agreed with every principle in this question. One of the respondents said that the program should include immersion activities in Indigenous communities.

4.5.4 Workers should get to know communities and nations by taking part in sociocultural activities

All participants agreed or strongly agreed with every principle in this question. One respondent said that Indigenous populations learn by watching how a person works. According to this respondent, the more professionals go out into the field with Indigenous people, the more connections they will build.

4.5.5 An Indigenous component should be integrated in all continuing education programs for workers

All participants strongly agreed with every principle in this question. One participant stated that characteristics specific to Indigenous communities should be emphasized.

4.5.6 Workers' caseloads should be reduced so they can develop their skills and ensure culturally safe interventions

All participants agreed or strongly agreed with every principle in this question. According to one participant, everyone's work standards and caseloads should be reviewed. This participant added that interventions in Indigenous settings require more time than they do in non-Indigenous settings. Another participant corroborated the other's statements and said that there is a significant shortage of workers in communities because working conditions are not competitive.

4.5.7 Workers should be supported by an elder or an Indigenous expert

All participants strongly agreed with every principle in this question. One said that vigilance over practices is required because bad habits are hard to break but easy to relearn.

4.5.8 Training and supervision should be given to non-Indigenous foster families to ensure cultural continuity

All participants strongly agreed with every principle in this question. According to one, "placement should aim to be as short as possible, and we must work to ensure the child can be returned to their family. Therefore, the foster family must have a clear understanding of its role, and it must help ensure the child maintains a connection with their family and community, thus remaining connected to their culture. This can be achieved through different methods involving the Indigenous community."

Statements about training and supervision, in order of priority:

1. Training programs should be developed in collaboration with Indigenous experts
2. Workers should be supported by a specialized continuing education program
3. All workers should receive basic training
4. Workers should be supported by an elder or an Indigenous expert
5. Workers' caseloads should be reduced so that they can develop their skills and ensure culturally safe interventions
6. Workers should get to know communities and nations by taking part in sociocultural activities
7. An Indigenous component should be integrated in all continuing education programs for workers
8. Training and supervision should be given to non-Indigenous foster families to ensure cultural continuity

Findings on the statements

All the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statements presented. Even the statements that received the least support in the prioritization exercise received agreement or strong agreement from all the respondents.

Changes needed to apply the principles to practice

According to the participants, to apply the conditions presented in the statements, human resources will be required, including trained workers who are committed to meeting the challenge. Second, a dialogue must be opened between organizations, and the needs of Indigenous populations must be heard. In other words, the participants stated that the desire for change must be real and must be implemented "by putting words into action."



Other statements that should be added to the section on training and supervision

The participants did not make any proposals.

VISION

First Nations individuals, families and communities are healthy, have equitable access to quality care and services, and are self-determining and culturally empowered.

MISSION

To accompany Quebec First Nations in achieving their health, wellness, culture and self-determination goals.



FIRST NATIONS OF QUEBEC
AND LABRADOR HEALTH
AND SOCIAL SERVICES
COMMISSION