
Weechi-it-te-win Family Services Timeline of Events

Time Immemorial: Traditional Child Care Law and Customary Care Practices

- 1620-1996 Residential Schools
Impacts of stolen generations and loss of parenting/family/cultural paradigms
- 1950-1970 “60’s Scoop Era”
Many of our local First Nations children adopted out to non-native homes as a result we had generations lost
- 1965 Child Welfare Agreement
Child Welfare Act
- 1966 H.B. Hawthorn’s study describes child welfare services available to Indians in most of Canada as “the situation varies from unsatisfactory to appalling. He also stated that the provinces should be encouraged to extend all welfare services, including child welfare, and that Indians should be induced to accept them. (Johnston, Patrick. Native Children and the Child Welfare System. The Canadian Council on Social Development, 1983.
- 1975 Shift in Policy and Practice occurred as a result in the First Nation (Big Grassy) communicating concerns to the child welfare agency and prompting a response to endeavor to work with the community and Big Island
- 1977 A tripartite review of social services delivered to Indian residents as a result of the 1965 memorandum was begun by representatives of the federal and provincial governments and Indian organizations in Ontario. One of these reports in 1977, “A Starving Man doesn’t Argue” (see historical documents) was phase one and “Community Care-Indian Control of Indian Social Services” was the latter. These reports lay the foundation for planning, administration and service delivery of an Indian controlled system of child welfare. This was all supported by Ontario as long as it was developed within the auspices of the 1965 memorandum. From this report the Native Child Welfare Prevention Program was designed on reserve.
- Child Welfare worker hired for the Morson area to work with the two communities. Chief Joseph Big George opens his home as a foster home to try and help keep children in need of care in the community

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- 1978 May; a proposal for an experimental program was forwarded to Children's Services Division for funding, under the sponsorship of FACS. December; proposal for prevention workers approved
- 1979 January; Bands from both BI and BG met with FACS to decide on the composition and terms of reference for hiring committees for each band. There were four applicants from BG and two from BI, Moses Tom was selected from BG and Joseph Big George from Big Island; they assumed their duties on March 1, 1979
- Within the next few years each of the ten first nations had native prevention workers in their communities which were liaisons with the local Children's Aid Society. This program was then reviewed as in the report by the Hudson McKenzie group on the Prevention Worker Program. It was also during this time that the First Nations leadership was bringing attention to the high numbers of native children adopted into non-native homes in Canada, the United States and Europe
- 1980/88 Cultural and Ceremony re-immerses and is practiced openly
A vision happens that relays the message that WFS needs to have a drum and discussions are shared with the ten first nations about this vision. This vision also conveyed that there should be small pipes for our residential programs.
- 1982 March 15; Rainy Lake Region Tribal Chiefs Resolution-"intends to take measures necessary to ensure that our children and families are protected and that we are hereby serving notice by this resolution that we are commencing the process to create Indian Child Welfare legislation alternatives."
- With the Chief's mandate, planning began for the program of community care that was to become Weechi-it-te-win Family Services. A Native Child Welfare Planning Committee, composed of nine prevention workers and one band administrator, began work to develop a concept and a plan for an "Indian Alternative"
- 1983 Tripartite Agreement: An Interim measure; Chiefs' resolution in April 21, 1983. An interim strategy that would give communities control now-under the existing provincial CFSA and the federal/provincial CWA of 1965-without jeopardizing future self-government initiatives or legislation. The Chiefs agreed to enter into a tripartite, inter-governmental agreement among the RLTA Chiefs, the Minister of Indian Affairs and the Minister of Community and Social Services.
- By the close of 1983, the interim board had hired a community coordinator and a secretary, and had opened an office for Weechi-it-te-win

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- Family Services. Over the next three years, the ten First Nations were consulted and a permanent board was installed replacing the interim board. Corporate management functions were organized and administrative systems were put into place
- 1984 Customary Care recognized under the CFSA
- 1984 During this time there were a number of standing committees and focus groups reviewing aboriginal child welfare. With the provinces intentions of creating a new Child and Family Services Act, the leadership was able to have recognized many of the rights the native community had in caring for their own children and families. More than 30 such provisions were included in the CFSA of 1984 with Part X being central.
- 1986 WFS assumed the administration of funding for the Native Child Welfare Prevention Program for the ten member bands, and worked toward achieving “society status” to administer the entire range of child and family services.
- 1987 March; Chiefs reiterated their mandate to Weechi-it-te-win to negotiate and agreement with the Federal Government for the funding of our community care program.
April; Weechi-it-te-win Family Services as an Agency
September 2; marked the official recognition of Weechi-it-te-win Family Services as a designated child protection agency by the Minister of Community and Social Services John Sweeney.
- 1987/88 TLC’s Sweat lodge comes; Burt Yerxa, Jim Windego, Jim Bushkagan, Buddy Friday oversee. Burt Yerxa relays that the Sweat lodge ended up in the exact same spot as the Sweat lodge carried long ago by an old man on Couching. (G.Potson, 2007)
- 1991 First year of Spring and Fall Ceremony for WFS(G.Potson 2007)
- 1992 First Annual Weechi-it-te-win Family Services Powwow
- 1999 WFS receives it’s Drum, Pipe, and Eagle Staff(G.Potson, 2007)
- 2000 WFS receives it’s Drum, Pipe, and Eagle Staff(G.Simard, 2007)
- 2001 Willie Wilson is given what are known as our Grandmother scrolls that were found at Clearwater Lake. A shake tent ceremony takes place to get instruction on how to proceed with the Scrolls. The Scrolls are housed in a room made specifically for these items-we call it our Grandmother Room(W.Wilson, 2007)

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- 2002 Elder Steve Johnson has a vision and a name comes from that vision for our Drum; Maangoinniinay is recognized(G.Potson, 2007)
- 2006 Weechi-it-te-win Family Services hosts “Nii si to taa ti win” with co-sponsor Kenora-Patricia Child and Family Services. This cultural competency conference reaffirms Weechi-it-te-win commitment to Anishinabe families and children by inviting the field to come together to share in learning to better service Anishinabe families and communities.
- 2007 83% of Anishinabe Children in Care under Customary Care agreements and placed within the circle of protection model of child welfare as developed by Weechi-it-te-win Family Services
- 2007 Weechi-it-te-win Family Services hosts a 20th Anniversary Celebration that includes keynotes speakers locally, nationally, and internationally to speak on First Nations Child Protection and Prevention. Workshops were inclusive for children, families, customary care families, service providers, and communities.



Weechi-it-te-win Family Services commits to Naaniigaan Abinoojii to protect and nurture our Children the Anishinabe Way!