



MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

WHEREAS Métis are a distinct Aboriginal people recognized in Section 35(2) of the Constitution Act (1982);

WHEREAS Métis people of B.C. are separate and distinct Aboriginal people with their own language history and culture;

WHEREAS Census Canada statistics from 2006 report 60,000 Métis people in British Columbia;

WHEREAS Métis people have identified the need for a province wide strategy with respect to services to Métis children, youth and families;

WHEREAS the Province of British Columbia and Métis Nation British Columbia, entered into the Métis Nation Relationship Accord, in May 2006, specifically to strengthen relationships with Métis people and close the gap in the quality of life for Métis people in British Columbia;

WHEREAS the Métis Nation British Columbia is the Métis political body in British Columbia;

WHEREAS the Métis Commission for Children and Families of B.C. is the designated community as identified under the Regulations of the Child, Family and Community Service Act (RSBC 1996);

WHEREAS Métis people of British Columbia will lead the planning and delivery of services to Métis families and children in British Columbia in order to ensure that they are culturally appropriate and comparable to services for all other citizens of British Columbia;

WHEREAS the Child, Family and Community Service Act is the provincial statute governing the provision of child welfare services in British Columbia, and the Ministry of Children and Family Development has responsibility for the administration of that statute;

WHEREAS the Ministry of Children and Family Development will work in partnership with the Métis Nation British Columbia and the Métis Commission on behalf of Métis people of British Columbia to ensure culturally appropriate services to Métis children and families;

WHEREAS for the purpose of this agreement, the parties define "Métis" as follows:

Métis means a person who self-identifies as Métis, is of historic Métis Ancestry, is distinct from other Aboriginal peoples and is accepted by Métis people.

Métis also includes people of mixed First Nation and European Ancestry who identify themselves as Métis, as distinct from First Nations people, Inuit or non-aboriginal people. Métis have unique culture that draws on their diverse ancestral origins such as Scottish, French, Ojibway and Cree;

WHEREAS the Child and Family Service Act defines an aboriginal child as follows:

"aboriginal child" means a child

- who is registered under the Indian Act (Canada),
- who has a biological parent who is registered under the Indian Act (Canada),
 - who is a Nisga'a child,
 - who is a treaty first nation child,
- who is under 12 years of age and has a biological parent who
 - is of aboriginal ancestry, and
 - considers himself or herself to be aboriginal, or
- who is 12 years of age or over, of aboriginal ancestry and considers himself or herself to be aboriginal;

between
MÉTIS PEOPLE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
 as represented by the
 Métis Nation British Columbia and Métis Commission for Children and Families of B.C.

and
MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT

As witnessed by:
MÉTIS CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICE DELIVERY ORGANIZATIONS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA.

THIS AGREEMENT MADE THIS TWENTY-SEVENTH DAY OF FEBRUARY 2011.

between
 Métis Nation British Columbia
 Métis Commission for Children and Families of B.C.
 and
 Ministry of Children and Family Development

Hereinafter referred to as "the Parties".

NOW THEREFORE THE PARTIES AGREE AS FOLLOWS:

- This Memorandum of Understanding, hereinafter "this Agreement", is a cooperative venture between the Métis Nation British Columbia, the Métis Commission for Children and Families of B.C., and the Ministry of Children and Family Development. It constitutes a framework, within which approaches to Métis child and family services may be discussed and initiated.
- This Agreement shall facilitate the involvement of Métis people of British Columbia in the development of provincial programs and services for Métis children and families. In order to achieve this objective the Parties agree:
 - To ensure a harmonious relationship between the Métis Nation British Columbia, the Métis Commission for Children and Families B.C. and the Ministry of Children and Family Development;
 - To foster the collaborative relationship in which Métis people of B.C. are leaders with respect to planning for families at risk and children in need of protection; and
 - Pursuant to the Child, Family and Community Service Act and any subsequent legislation, all reasonable steps will be taken by the Parties to develop an effective full continuum of service to Métis children and families.
- The parties have established and will maintain the Métis Child and Family Working Table to jointly determine key actions regarding general systemic issues relating to the safety and well-being of Métis children and families that:
 - is on a government-to-government basis;
 - recognizes that Métis people assert jurisdiction over their children and families regardless of residency;
 - recognizes that Métis people are in the best position to lead the development of and decision making around the laws, policy research and services for their children;
 - recognizes the importance of transferring the delivery of services to Métis communities; and
 - draws on the expertise of Métis service delivery agencies and research institutions.
- The Parties agree to meet regularly through mutual agreement to discuss and develop a service delivery protocol related to Métis children and families.
- Where a dispute arises between the Parties with respect to the interpretation, application or implementation of this MOU, the matter shall be referred to the following dispute resolution process:
 - Upon notification by either party of a dispute, the matter shall be referred to a Dispute Resolution Committee consisting of equal representation from each of the Parties, and a mutually agreed upon chairperson. This committee shall meet within three (3) working days of notification and the chairperson shall issue a report to the Parties within seven (7) working days. To facilitate this process the Parties may agree to a list of mutually agreed upon chairpersons.
 - The Parties agree that the application of the dispute resolution process will maintain the principle that the paramount interest is the safety and well being of Métis children.
- This Agreement shall come into effect as of the date of signature by the Parties, and will remain in effect for a (5) five-year period from that date. The Parties agree to complete an annual review of this Agreement on or by the anniversary date.
- This Agreement can be amended through written consent of the Parties.

PRESIDENT, MARLENE SWEARS
 Métis Commission for Children and Families of B.C.

HONOURABLE MARY POLAK
 Minister of Children and Family Development

MINISTER, DAVID HODGSON
 Children and Families, Métis Nation British Columbia

Witnessed in Support of this Memorandum of Understanding:

Anni Asblin
 Interior Métis Child and Family Services, Kamloops

Haun Murphy
 Kikino Family Services, Prince George

R. Paul
 Island Métis Family & Community Services Society, Victoria

Valerie Richards
 Métis Community Services Society BC, Kelowna

R. Paul
 La Société des les Enfants Michif (Métis Family Services), Surrey

