

# An Act For Strong Families Building Stronger Communities

Part of the public action plan, *A Stronger, Safer Tomorrow*

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## Improved court access

For the first time, First Nations will be formally notified whenever an application for private guardianship is made for a child member of their Band. Currently, First Nations have no formal role in court processes involving member children.

## Closing loopholes

All guardianship applications for children in care will be made under the *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act* (CYFEA), which requires a mandatory home study and cultural connection plan, and is designed to meet children in care's needs. Currently, these applications can also be made under the *Family Law Act*.

## Expanded financial supports

Financial supports for permanency help pay for counselling, respite care, transportation and other important services. Currently, this funding is disrupted or cut off when a child's guardian changes. Under the new legislation, these supports will stay with the child to provide the help they need.

## Improved decision-making

New, mandatory decision-making criteria will help courts, caseworkers and others make better decisions about child safety and well-being.

Currently there are 16 matters that should be considered in all decisions. Under the new legislation, these will be reduced to 13 mandatory matters that must be considered in every decision made to support a child receiving services. This includes considering every facet of safety and well-being, including family and cultural connections.

## New guiding principles

Guiding principles will be added to the *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act* to help protect child safety and well-being. This includes a principle making Indigenous involvement a fundamental component of the system.

## Transparent public reporting

The new legislation will also create strict public reporting requirements designed to make the child intervention system more transparent and accountable.

Once the legislation comes into force, the Minister of Children's Services will be responsible for meeting strict reporting requirements. This includes publicly reporting:

- Every death, serious injury and serious incident within four days.
- Key statistical data.
- Findings and recommendations of designated reviews within one-year of the incident.
- Responses to external recommendations or any other reports.

## Stronger focus on safety

Increased emphases on safety will ensure that it's always a top priority for courts and caseworkers and a child's safety and well-being are considered holistically.

## Mandatory all-party reviews

Mandatory all-party reviews will occur every five years to make sure that CYFEA is still meeting children's needs.

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This legislation will come into force on February 28, 2019