Cultural Connection Plan: Supplementary Material and Research Organizer

PART A

To-Do List for Creating a Great Cultural Connection Plan for Your Child

You are embarking on a wonderful and exciting journey. There are countless paths you can take, but no matter what road you choose, there are a few simple steps that can help you make the most of your new adventure as a family.

With all the things to manage and learn, it may be easy to feel overwhelmed. Don’t worry! That’s normal. But if you follow the charts and supplementary information in these packages, you will be well on your way. Just take it one step at a time.

- **Start a binder or filing system.** Keep all your documents together to help you stay organized.

- **Capture it!** Take notes, pictures, and even record video if you have permission. It’s handy to keep a notepad and pen with you, and maybe a small digital camera or smart phone to capture important moments.

- **It’s a date!** Family schedules can be busy, so using a calendar can help you keep your schedule in order. Find a calendar you can write on and keep it in a place that’s easy for everyone to see. Mark down any events that relate to the cultural connection plan and your child. You might find it helpful to schedule times to contact certain people, especially when the relationships are new. Websites like [www.print-a-calendar.com](http://www.print-a-calendar.com) have free printable monthly calendars.

- **Spend Wisely!** Create a budget for cultural connection spending. It can cover things like books, videos, travel, art, or classes. Budgets reduce stress because you know your limits and you can monitor them. Remember, there are always free or cheap ways of doing things!

**Note:** you may be eligible for financial assistance through the “Supports for Permanency” program (see below).
What is protocol? Some of the people you meet will be giving you special knowledge or access into their community and lives. It's customary in Canadian Aboriginal communities to offer "protocol" to these people. Protocol is a way of showing your respect for someone. It can be as simple as tobacco, but can include things like blankets, or other gifts. Always find out what the protocol might be when you're in these scenarios.

PART B

Begin the Journey

- **Who's who?** Start by meeting with the caseworker. They have the most information about your child, including genealogy charts and photo albums. They might also have a cultural connection plan that you can use as a starting point. They will also have contact information for important people relating to the child. Ask your caseworker to introduce you to these people so you aren’t meeting them blindly. Find out if there is protocol for meeting with certain people. You can also ask your caseworker if they have any suggestions, such as people to contact, or research that may be helpful.

  Reach out to the child’s community by contacting the First Nations Designate, the band and if possible, the biological family. Patience is key. It may take you a few times to get a hold of some people. Let them know you want to create a family and community for your child. People are your best resource.
Once you’re here, you can begin to learn from them. Find out about their history, struggles and strengths. Make sure you offer the proper protocol to people who are sharing with you.

Find local Aboriginal agencies in your community. Many larger communities in Alberta have a Native Friendship Centre. See what programming and support they offer. Some of these agencies are listed below. You may not have easy access to the reserve your child is from, so this step can be very important.

- **Seek out a community mentor.** Ask the community for at least one person who can be a committed teacher and guide to you and your child. Your mentor can answer questions for you, explain traditions and activities, guide you in ceremonies and events, and teach you methods of traditional parenting and lifestyle. They can also act as a liaison between you and the community, and help schedule get-togethers. Make sure you offer the proper protocol to your mentor.

- **Study time!** Try learning about the culture from libraries, museums, documentaries, and online resources. Aboriginal awareness programs and Indigenous adoption courses (some are listed below) are incredibly helpful. The band may have a website, newsletter, or calendar you can sign up for.

- **Make it happen!** Once you’re ready, schedule a time for key members of your child’s life to meet. Let them know you want their input in the plan. Share your research and game plan with them. Remember when creating a plan: have defined timelines, dates and events to take part in. These are crucial to the plan’s success! Avoid phrases like “whenever possible” or “as necessary”. Ensure everyone’s responsibilities are outlined.

- **Set the next date!** Once the document is complete and signed, schedule a follow up time where everyone can meet again to check in and update the plan. This should be done about once a year. If anyone’s contact information changes, make sure everyone is updated with the changes.

- **Plan for roadblocks.** Roadblocks are an inevitable part of creating a Cultural Connection Plan, and that’s OK! Forming relationships, budget or time issues,
identifying the Aboriginal status of the child, or connecting to local Aboriginal activities are all places where you might experience challenges. Work with your mentor, caseworker, or other important members of your team to help solve the issues.

- **Keep talking!** Stay in constant communication with your mentor, your band, the biological family, your family, and most importantly, your child. This journey involves an ongoing conversation.

### Community Resources for Your Cultural Connection Plan

**Alberta/Available Everywhere**

**AANDC Alberta Region Head Office (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada)**
If your child is entitled to be a registered Indian, you should learn about what they may be eligible for. AANDC Alberta can help you understand more about these processes and features. Also in the Alberta office is the Federal Interlocutor for Metis and Non-Status Indians.
780-495-2773
403-292-5901
[www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca](http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca)

**Royal Alberta Museum – Aboriginal Culture Exhibit**
This exhibition is one of the largest explorations of First Peoples' history on the continent, with stories spanning 11,000 years and 500 generations.
[www.royalalbertamuseum.ca/events/exhibits/permanent.cfm?id=17](http://www.royalalbertamuseum.ca/events/exhibits/permanent.cfm?id=17)

**Blue Quills First Nations College**
An Indigenous education centre serving the academic and training needs of people of all cultures. As an Indigenous non-profit educational institution, a prime objective is to promote a sense of pride in Indigenous heritage and reclaim traditional knowledge and practices.
780-645-4455
[www.bluequills.ca](http://www.bluequills.ca)

**Child and Family Services**
Child and Family Services unite children with families who are interested in bringing a child into their lives.
[humanservices.alberta.ca/services-near-you/15010.html](http://humanservices.alberta.ca/services-near-you/15010.html)

**First Nations, Metis and Inuit Schools in Alberta through Alberta Education**
A list of all schools in Alberta, including separate lists of band-operated schools, Metis settlement schools, and all provincial schools and programs with a First Nations, Metis and Inuit focus.
[education.alberta.ca/admin/fnni/learning/schoolsjurisdictions.aspx](http://education.alberta.ca/admin/fnni/learning/schoolsjurisdictions.aspx)
**Halford's**
A retail and wholesale store offering leather, fur, and craft. Go to the bottom of the website page to order your free catalogue.
1-800-353-7864
www.halfordsmailorder.com

**Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump World Heritage Site**
Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump is an archaeological site known around the world as a remarkable testimony to the life of the Plains People. The Jump shows a method of hunting practiced by Native people of the North American plains for nearly 6,000 years.
403-553-2731
history.alberta.ca/headsmashedin

**Indigenous Perspectives Society – Online Adoption Course**
This online course identifies historical and contemporary impacts on culture and the regeneration of positive cultural identity development. Activities support a commitment to create and maintain connections through promoting holistic well-being of Indigenous children. Call for more details.
250-391-0007
jpsociety.ca/training/adoption-program/

**Maskwacis Cultural College**
Maskwacis Cultural College's philosophy, processes, and functioning are based on the values, wisdom, teachings and beliefs of the Cree culture.
780-585-3925

**Metis Nation of Alberta**
The Metis Nation of Alberta exists to advocate on behalf of and meet the needs and aspirations of Métis people in Alberta. There are 7 offices across Alberta.
1-800-252-7553
www.albertametis.com

**National Inuit Youth Council**
The NIYC provides guidance and input into issues of interest for Inuit youth in Canada.
1-866-262-8181
www.niyc.ca

**Native Counselling Services of Alberta**
NCSA offers various Aboriginal-focussed family and community wellness programs across Alberta. NCSA also has a legal resource department, which produces videos, podcasts, pamphlets, and workshops aimed at giving people a better understanding of Aboriginal culture and legal rights.
780-451-4002 (Head Office)
www.ncsa.ca

**Native Women’s Association of Canada**
NWAC works to advance the well-being of Aboriginal women and girls, as well as their families and communities through activism, policy analysis, and advocacy.
1-800-461-4043
www.nwac.ca
Old Sun Community College
Old Sun Community College develops and offers quality courses, programs, and services tailored to meet the needs of the Siksika Nation and individuals while preserving the Siksika Way of Life.
1-888-734-3862
www.oldsuncollege.net

Red Crow Community College
The Mission of Mikâ’istî/Red Crow Community College is to meet the cultural, educational, and training needs for the Blood Tribe and beyond. While the system does not intend to exclude anyone, and maintains an "open door policy", its primary purpose is to meet the needs of the Blackfoot population.
403-737-2400
www.redcrowcollege.com

Supports for Permanency
Through this program, the province of Alberta provides funding opportunities for families who adopt or obtain private guardianship of a child through the Government of Alberta.
humanservices.alberta.ca/adoption/14844.html

Travel Alberta – Aboriginal Sites and Activities
This website identifies major Aboriginal activities and heritage sites across the province. It also has links to discounted passes and trip planning.
travelalberta.com/Things%20to%20Do/Culture%20and%20Heritage/Aboriginal.aspx

Yellowhead Tribal College
Yellowhead Tribal College provides accredited programs in a flexible, supportive academic environment that nurtures First Nations cultures and traditions, with a commitment to life-long learning.
1-877-982-3382
www.ytced.ab.ca

Edmonton

Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society
Bent Arrow offers programs and services based on traditional Indigenous values and teachings. These programs are intended to empower spiritually, emotionally, physically, and mentally so people can walk proudly in both the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities.
780-481-3451
www.bentarrow.ca

Ben Calf Robe/St. Clare School
A Catholic, K-9 school in Edmonton offering traditional Aboriginal education fused with the Alberta Education curriculum, including Cree language courses.
780-471-2360
www.bencalfrobe.ecsd.net
Canadian Native Friendship Centre
The CNFC exists to improve the quality of life of Aboriginal people in an urban environment by supporting self-determined activities, encouraging equal access to and participation in Canadian society, while respecting Aboriginal cultural distinctiveness.
780-761-1900
www.facebook.com/pages/The-Canadian-Native-Friendship-Centre/98230106357

Dreamspeakers Festival Society
The Dreamspeakers Festival Society supports and educates the public about Aboriginal culture, art, and heritage. They also hold an annual Aboriginal film festival in Edmonton.
780-378-9609
www.dreamspeakers.org

Indspire
Indspire is an Indigenous-led registered charity that invests in the education of Indigenous people for the long term benefit of these individuals, their families and communities, and Canada.
1-855-463-7747
www.indspire.ca

Prince Charles School
A public K-6 school offering traditional aboriginally-focussed education fused with the Alberta Education curriculum, including Cree language courses.
780-455-5533
princecharles.epsb.ca

Sun and Moon Visionaries Aboriginal Artisan Society
Sun & Moon Visionaries Aboriginal Artisans Society serves and promotes the mental, emotional, spiritual, and physical well-being of Aboriginal people and artisans through the positive reinforcement of Aboriginal culture and heritage.
780-433-3097

Calgary

Aboriginal Friendship Centre of Calgary
An organization dedicated to providing advocacy of Aboriginal social and cultural services, while serving as a support and community resource to other Aboriginal Service Agencies on the local, provincial, and national level.
403-270-7379
www.afccalgary.org

Aboriginal Futures Career and Training Society
Aboriginal Futures provides educational, training, and employment services to Aboriginal people who live in Calgary or the surrounding area.
403-253-5311
www.aboriginalfutures.com
Calgary Urban Aboriginal Initiative
CUAI provides a home for ongoing discussion, coordination, and informed action in support of Calgary urban Aboriginal issues and initiatives.
403-268-1241
www.cuai.ca

Ghost River Rediscover Society
Serving the urban Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community, GRR offers traditional and cultural-based indoor and outdoor leadership programming.
403-270-9351
www.ghostriverrediscovery.com

Metis Calgary Family Services
Metis Calgary Family Services provides a variety of cultural, recreational, and educational programming to persons requiring an Aboriginal-specific delivery, regardless of status.
403-240-4642
www.mcfs.ca

Pathways Community Services Association
Pathways draws on Aboriginal teachings to respond to emerging social issues, and provide support services that allow families and communities to thrive.
403-247-5003
www.pathwayscsa.org

Piitoayis Family School
A K-6 alternative program that teaches the Alberta Education programs of study through a diversity of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit perspectives and experiences.
403-777-7860
schools.cbe.ab.ca/b244/default.htm

Urban Society for Aboriginal Youth
USAY provides essential programming and services to Calgary’s Aboriginal youth between the ages 12-29.
www.usay.ca

Red Deer

Red Deer Aboriginal Employment Centre
A non-profit organization that provides culturally appropriate employment assisted services to Aboriginal People in Red Deer and surrounding areas.
403-358-7734
www.rdaes.com
Red Deer Child Care
Red Deer Child Care offers several childcare options, including one Aboriginal-focused playschool program.
403-347-7973
www.reddeerchildcare.ca

Red Deer Native Friendship Society
Provides Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people with traditional cultural teachings to help the transition to urban life, enhancing quality of life.
403-340-0020
www.rdnfs.com

Lethbridge

Family Ties Association
Family Ties assists families and individuals in developing the necessary skills to gain independence, and experience success within their community.
403-320-8888
familyties.ca

Opokaa’sin Early Intervention Society
OEIS strengthens and supports connections among First Nations children, families, and community through advocating, education, and the sharing of culture.
403-380-2569
www.opokaasin.org

Sik-Ooh-Kotoki Friendship Society
Provides service to off-reserve, urban Aboriginal people in the City of Lethbridge, who are in need of a support system.
403-328-2414

Aboriginal News Resources for Your Cultural Connection Plan

Alberta Native News
www.albertanativenews.com

APTN National News
aptn.ca/news

CBC News Aboriginal
www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal

First Perspective
www.firstperspective.ca

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