

Cultural Connection Plan: Supplementary Material and Research Organizer

PART A

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



culture: The ideas, customs, art, and social behaviour of a particular people



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 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).

- **Your little black book.** Keep track of contact information for people and organizations that can help create your plan. This includes people like the caseworker, First Nations designate, biological family, foster or kinship caregivers, and band members. Schedule follow-up calls when you don't get a hold of someone so you don't lose potential connections.



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.



Remember! Culture is not in events as much as it's in the way we live daily. As you continue on your path, look for ways to include your child's culture in your home on a daily basis.



- **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

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

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

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

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/fnmi/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

ipsociety.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 Mikai'sto/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-focussed 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

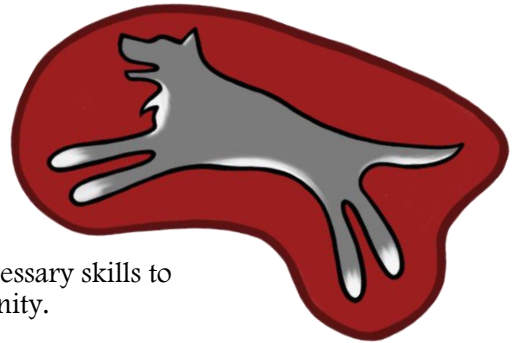
www.rdnfs.com

*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

www.facebook.com/pages/Sik-Ooh-Kotoki-Friendship-Society/378740155485304

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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www.bearpaweducation.ca

A department of Native Counselling Services of Alberta

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BearPaw Legal