

## **Funding First Nations child and family services (FNCFS): A performance budget approach to well-being**

*How does this work connect to An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families (formerly, bill C-92)?*

- Three core principles frame *An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families* (section 9): acting in the best interest of the child; substantive equality of services; the importance of cultural continuity.
- With the goal of holistic well-being, this work presents a performance architecture (the *Measuring to Thrive* framework) and a funding architecture to reform the resourcing and results tracking of the First Nations child and family services (FNCFS) system.
- The Act affirms the right to self-governance and provides a platform for interested Indigenous governing bodies to assume jurisdiction in child and family services.
- Whether through an existing FNCFS agency or through the development of an alternative structure, the planning, delivery, and ongoing assessment of child and family services requires financial resources.
- This work aligns to the spirit and letter of the Act in three ways:
  - 1) **Defines funding parameters:** There are no clear funding mechanisms in the Act (other than a requirement to negotiate an agreement to determine fiscal arrangements for the provision of child and family services). This work defines a funding approach for the provision of FNCFS with a future-focused vision rooted in well-being to support equity and the best interests of the child through a culturally informed approach.
  - 2) **Promotes equity in service provision:** The approach is designed to fund service providers to deliver their mandates by addressing root causes of contact with the protection system, e.g. poverty. Resource allocation is informed by relevant data (collected by First Nations for First Nations) and need.
  - 3) **Emphasizes First Nations control:** Funding is transferred in a ‘block’ to promote flexibility in resource application by service providers. This means that those on the ground can allocate resources to promote the best interests of the child in a culturally informed way, without penalty.
- The proposed funding approach responds to the requirement in the Act to determine fiscal arrangements that address long-term positive outcomes, substantive equality, and needs. Designed and built from the bottom-up, this funding approach captures a critical mix of resources and structures for thriving First Nation children, families, and communities, as expressed by those working on the ground.