Child Welfare's Reconciliation Timeline

The Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies' <u>acknowledgment and apology</u> for the harmful role child welfare has played historically, and continues to play, in the lives of Ontario Indigenous children, families, and communities is an important point on the sector's path to Reconciliation. However, the Reconciliation pathway does not have an end. See the timeline below to trace the journey so far.

Aboriginal Services Advisory Committee formed

April 1, 2011

OACAS formed an Aboriginal Services Advisory
Committee composed of Executive Directors of five
Aboriginal child welfare agencies, along with five
Executive Directors of non-Aboriginal agencies
serving large Indigenous populations. The Committee
was formed to address issues and advise the OACAS
Board on increasing the organization's
responsiveness to the needs of Ontario Aboriginal
children and families. This Committee has since been
renamed the ANCFSAO (Association of Native Child
and Family Services Agencies of Ontario)/OACAS —
Indigenous Sector Committee.

Development of a Reconciliation Framework begins

January 1, 2013

The Aboriginal Services Advisory Committee started work to develop a "Reconciliation Framework" to guide Reconciliation efforts within Ontario's child welfare sector.

Sharing a Good Heart: Reconciliation Framework

December 1, 2013

The Aboriginal Services Advisory Committee released the <u>Sharing a Good Heart: Reconciliation Framework</u>. The Framework serves as a guide for Children's Aid Societies (CASs) to asses their existing child welfare practices and relationships with the Indigenous communities they serve.

OACAS Strategic Plan 2012-2017

April 1, 2012

OACAS identified supporting and collaborating with Ontario Indigenous communities in bettering the health, well-being, and life chance of Indigenous children as one of its <u>four</u> <u>strategic directions</u> in its five-year strategic plan.

First annual Aboriginal Youth-in-Care Gathering

August 10, 2013

The first annual Aboriginal Youth-in-Care Gathering (later renamed the Indigenous Youth-in-Care Gathering) took place at Seneca College. The event continues to be held every summer, and a winter leadership camp for Indigenous youth was added in 2016.

Sharing a Good Heart Symposium

October 7, 2014

OACAS hosted the "Sharing a Good Heart Symposium". The event was the experiential component organized to accompany the release of *The Other Side of the Door: A Practice Guide for Child Welfare Professionals in Working with First Nation, Inuit and Métis Peoples*. This took place at Kempenfelt Centre, where non-Indigenous CAS leadership, Indigenous CAS leadership, and FNMI knowledge keepers and Elders built relationships, experienced ceremony and teachings, and had discussions about making the child welfare sector a culturally safe and appropriate space for Indigenous children, families, and communities.

Restoration of Jurisdiction survey completed *June 1, 2015*

A *Restoration of Jurisdiction* survey was completed by all OACAS member agencies. The results provided a snapshot of where agencies were at that moment in time, along the continuum of Reconciliation with Indigenous people and communities, compared against the *Reconciliation Framework*.

First Bringing Our Minds Together Think Tank *April 5, 2016*

OACAS hosted the first Bringing Our Minds Together Think Tank, a gathering of Ontario First Nations, Inuit, and Métis community leaders and service agencies to help inform OACAS and the child welfare sector's Reconciliation journey.

The Other Side of the Door *November 3. 2014*

OACAS released <u>The Other Side of the Door: A Practice Guide for Child Welfare Professionals in Working with First Nation, Inuit and Métis Peoples</u>. The practice guide was developed by Kenn Richard, Executive Director, Native Child and Family Services of Toronto, to strengthen understanding of the history of colonization within child welfare, the culture and strengths of First Nation, Inuit, and Métis families and communities, and prepare all child welfare professionals to fulfill the unique obligations under the Child and Family Services Act with respect to providing services to Indigenous families.

Development of a Memorandum of Understanding with ANCFSAO

March 1, 2016

The Association of Native Child and Family Service Agencies of Ontario (ANCFSAO) and the OACAS began discussions regarding a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to work together in a collaborative and coordinated partnership to improve outcomes for Indigenous children and families. This includes assisting to build capacity at ANCFSAO and Indigenous child welfare agencies, as well as share resources.

Emerging Practices/Actions survey launched *July 15, 2016*

An Emerging Practices/Actions survey was designed to capture developments in the sector that may facilitate Reconciliation, as well as samples of Reconciliation best practices that could be shared across the sector.

New child protection worker curriculum launched

January 9, 2017

OACAS launched an extensively revised <u>curriculum</u> <u>for Ontario's child protection workers</u>. The Child Welfare Pathway to Authorization Series is designed to be more responsive and better reflect the realities of child welfare work in Ontario using an anti-oppressive framework. It covers topic such as equity, human rights, and anti-racism, with a significant focus on Indigenous content.

Resource Information Overview: Emerging Practices in Child Welfare Sector to Support Indigenous Communities

December 1, 2016

OACAS released <u>Resource Information Overview:</u> <u>Emerging Practices in Child Welfare Sector to Support Indigenous Communities.</u> This resulted from the <u>Bringing Our Minds Together Think Tank</u> and the <u>Emerging Practice/Actions</u> survey released in summer of 2016, where it was suggested that information be compiled to showcase what reconciliation practices were actually being utilized by the field.

Second Bringing Our Minds Together Think Tank

April 4, 2017

OACAS hosted the second Bringing Our Minds Together Think Tank for the group to reconnect and to present the findings of the Emerging Practices/Actions survey. At this event, participants agreed that the timing was right for a formal acknowledgment and apology from the Ontario child welfare sector to Indigenous communities and families.

Ontario child welfare sector unanimously agrees to 8 Reconciliation commitments

July 6, 2017

The Ontario child welfare sector unanimously agreed to eight commitments to further the Reconciliation agenda. Children's Aid Societies committed to:

- 1. Reduce the number of Indigenous children in care.
- 2. Reduce the number of legal files involving Indigenous children and families.
- 3. Increase the use of formal customary care agreements.
- 4. Ensure Indigenous representation and involvement at the local Boards of Directors.
- 5. Implement mandatory, regular Indigenous training for staff.
- 6. Change the inter-agency protocol to include Jordan's Principle as a fundamental principle.
- 7. In consultation with Indigenous communities, develop a unique agency-based plan to better address the needs of the children and families from those communities.
- 8. Continue to develop relationships between their local agency and the local Indigenous communities.

The measuring and tracking of each of these commitments is being undertaken at a local and provincial level. Agencies are committed to reporting on outcomes in each of these areas.

OACAS Board of Directors agrees to 4 Reconciliation commitments

Sept 21, 2017

The Board of Directors of the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies has made the following four key commitments:

- 1. Shift resources to Indigenous organizations so that they are better able to provide services for and advocate on behalf of Indigenous children, families, and communities.
- 2. Support Indigenous leadership in their quest for self-governance and legislation regarding the care of children within their local communities.
- 3. Support Indigenous autonomy in the development of specific Indigenous services and the child welfare system.
- 4. Support and encourage non-Indigenous agencies to work with local Indigenous communities to ensure that children and families are served in a way that leads to Reconciliation.

The commitments made by the Ontario child welfare sector represent an acknowledgement that it must do better, be held accountable to results, and work in a framework that recognizes and supports Reconciliation with Indigenous communities.

"A Moment on the Path" Gathering

October 1-3, 2017

OACAS hosts "A Moment on the Path" at Geneva Park in Orillia to apologize for and acknowledge the role the child welfare sector has played historically, and continues to play, in the lives of Ontario's Indigenous children, families, and communities.