



Sask. First Nations child and family groups get \$105 million from feds

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REGINA -- First Nations child and family service agencies in Saskatchewan will get almost \$105-million more in federal funding over the next five years.

Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations Vice-Chief Guy Lonechild said the agencies will now be in a better position to look at answers other than apprehending children from their families, by ensuring support and services are there before families reach a crisis. But Lonechild said the needs of children will still be considered first.

First Nations children have been marginalized and forgotten for too long, he said.

"Today we think that it's time to put the Indian back into the child," said Lonechild, referencing Prime Minister Stephen Harper's recent apology over a residential school system that tried for many years to do the opposite of that.

"Over the last few decades First Nations child and family service agencies have done their best to protect and keep safe our most vulnerable community members," he said.

"This new money will help to provide enhanced services."

There are 17 First Nations child and family service agencies in Saskatchewan. As of March 2007, there were more than 1,100 Saskatchewan First Nations children in care, according to the federal government.

Indian Affairs Minister Chuck Strahl, who made the announcement at a downtown Regina hotel, said the framework agreed to with the Saskatchewan government and First Nations is similar to a model the federal Conservative government forged last year in Alberta.

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