

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT REGARDING CHILD WELFARE SERVICES IN THE RAINY RIVER DISTRICT

November 28, 2013

A major change will be taking place soon in the provision of child welfare services within the Rainy River District.

What? Effective December 06, 2013, an historic agreement will be signed between Kenora-Rainy River Districts Child and Family Services (KRRDCFS) and Weechi-it-win Family Services (WFS) that will allow WFS to provide child welfare services to all of their band members living off their First Nation communities within the Rainy River and Kenora Districts.

Why? The Chiefs of the Rainy River Tribal Area created WFS in the 1980's with the intent that this new agency, a designated Children's Aid Society, would provide child welfare services to all of their band members living both on and off their First Nation communities.

Over the years since that time there have been numerous attempts by the government to change the legal jurisdictions within the Rainy River District to allow WFS to increase its jurisdiction to include band members living off their First Nation communities. For various reasons these attempts did not reach fruition and the jurisdictional issue remains stalled at the ministerial level.

Part X of the Child and Family Services Act speaks to the principle that First Nations children and families should, whenever possible, receive child welfare services from an aboriginal agency.

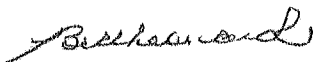
When KRRDCFS was incorporated in July of 2011, its management staff began meeting with the management staff of WFS with the goal of achieving an agreement whereby WFS could provide child welfare services to their band members living off their First Nation communities. This goal is both consistent with the original intent of the Chiefs of the Rainy River Tribal Area as well as with the Directions of the KRRDCFS 2013-2016 Strategic Plan ([see www.krrdcfs.ca](http://www.krrdcfs.ca)).

When? This agreement has been reached and will take effect following a formal signing ceremony on December 06, 2013.

How? The most significant change will be the referral of child protection concerns regarding band members of the 10 First Nation communities located within the Rainy River District. These referrals will now be made directly to WFS rather than to KRRDCFS. If there is uncertainty as to which agency should be contacted, either agency would be pleased to accept your call and direct your information to the appropriate agency or, if necessary, provide any service that may be required at the time of referral and redirect to the appropriate agency once the immediate safety of the child is assured.

The primary focus for both agencies continues to be the immediate safety, well-being and best interests of children.

Who? For further information, please contact Laurie Rose or Arlene Parker from WFS at 274-3201 or Bill Leonard or Carmen Marginet from KRRDCFS at 467-5437.



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