

Understanding Aboriginal Delegated Agencies: Information for Aboriginal Families

Aboriginal delegated agencies are part of the Ministry of Children and Family Development and provide child welfare services. Child protection laws in BC recognize the importance of Aboriginal family ties to Aboriginal children. Aboriginal delegated agencies are part of an effort to restore the responsibilities of child protection and family support to Aboriginal communities. Aboriginal delegated agencies may have the authority to remove your child from your home and place your child in care.

If a social worker tells you you're being investigated for a child protection matter, he or she may be working for an Aboriginal delegated agency.

Aboriginal delegated agencies may offer the following services:

- support services for the whole family,
- help with preparing voluntary care agreements for children,
- help with writing, monitoring, and reviewing your child's plan of care,
- help with writing special needs agreements for your child if your child has special needs,
- monitoring how your child is doing while he or she is in care, and
- help for youth who are moving towards independence.

Some Aboriginal delegated agencies also have the power to:

- receive and investigate reports of child abuse and neglect,
- remove your child from your home and place him or her in a relative's care (such as an aunt, uncle, or grandparent), and
- get supervision orders to make sure your child is safe and healthy.

Aboriginal delegated agencies work with families living on and off reserve.

If you live on reserve, your band may already be involved with an Aboriginal delegated agency. If you live off reserve, your local city or town may have an Aboriginal organization that is also a delegated agency.

If you are being investigated by the ministry, and your band or Aboriginal community is represented by an Aboriginal delegated agency, you can ask the ministry to inform the delegated agency of the investigation.

In the **Lower Mainland**, you can contact the following Aboriginal delegated agencies:

Aboriginal Child and Family Services Society (Vancouver) at 604-872-6723 or 1-877-982-2377 (call no charge)

Métis Family Services (Surrey) at 604-584-6621

In **Victoria**, you can contact **Surrounded by Cedar Child and Family Services** at 250-383-2990.

NOTE

If a social worker from the ministry or an Aboriginal delegated agency tells you that you're being investigated for a child protection matter, you have the right to get a lawyer. *Contact legal aid immediately to find out if you qualify for a free lawyer.*

Legal aid:

604-408-2172 (Greater Vancouver)
1-866-577-2525 (call no charge, elsewhere in BC)

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For a full list of the Aboriginal delegated agencies in BC, see the ministry's website:
www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/about_us/aboriginal/delegated/pdf/agency_list.pdf.

Whether you're being investigated by the ministry or an Aboriginal delegated agency, you can ask for a representative from your band or friendship centre (such as a social worker) who will support

you during the investigation and help to make sure your child stays connected to his or her Aboriginal family and community.

For more information on what you can do if you are under investigation for a child protection matter, please see our fact sheet *Understanding Aboriginal Child Protection/Removal Matters*.

Your important details

Date the ministry started investigating: _____

Name of ministry social worker: _____

Date you called legal aid for lawyer: _____

Name of lawyer: _____

First Nation/Band or friendship centre contact: _____

Court dates

Access order application date: _____

Presentation hearing date: _____

Protection hearing date: _____

Adjournment date: _____

