

Children and Families Act Summary

This Act establishes a series of principles that apply to programming and regulations to support the delivery of child and family support services on Tsawwassen Lands to TFN Member families. Included in these are the principle that the health, safety and well-being of children is paramount to the future of the Tsawwassen First Nation, and that the family is the primary influence on the growth and development of a child and as such should be supported to provide for the care, nurturance and well-being of a child. The physical, social, cultural and spiritual bests interests of a child must in all cases be given the highest importance.

Tsawwassen Government provides a range of support services directed primarily at providing family support and to the extent possible, keeping children in the care of their families in the TFN community. Tsawwassen Government staff includes a manager who is designated by Executive Council to be responsible for oversight of TFN's child and family services program. Under the Act, this manager is assigned various duties to ensure that the maximum degree of support is provided and that there is a close working relationship with the provincial Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD). The Act requires that TFN collaborate with MCFD in the planning and delivery of support services, and that these services should be integrated wherever possible and appropriate with the services provided by BC provincial ministries and community service agencies. Child protection continues to be the responsibility of the Ministry; however the TFN manager works closely with MCFD to ensure that Tsawwassen children get the best possible services and that their interests are looked after. The manager can also act as the representative of Tsawwassen Government in court proceedings related to the removal or custody of a Tsawwassen child.

Under the Act, Tsawwassen Government also provides support services related to adoption of a Tsawwassen child, provided that the birth parent or guardian requesting placement agrees to the involvement of the TFN manager in the adoption process. The TFN manager will provide information about adoption and the alternatives to adoption to the birth parent or other guardian requesting placement, will document and preserve information about the child's biological family for the child, and will provide the adoptive parents with information about Tsawwassen First Nation and the child's biological family.