



*Cultural manual*  
for foster and adoptive parents  
of Aboriginal children

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# PREAMBLE

This manual was compiled by the Social Service Committee of the Urban Aboriginal Community Strategy Network. It was developed to support the foster and adoptive parents of Aboriginal children.

The need for this manual became evident when meeting with foster/adoptive parents and youth protection professionals. Many of these individuals were not aware of the spectrum of culturally relevant services available to urban Aboriginals or of the distinct traditions of each Aboriginal nation. Aboriginal children in care are entitled to services that respect their diverse cultural heritage.

It is our hope that the practical information and cultural insights contained in this document will facilitate and strengthen the bond between child and caregiver.

Aboriginal is an umbrella term which includes:

- First Nations (aka: Natives, First Peoples, Indigenous, Native Americans, etc.)
- Inuit
- Métis

A recognized "Status Indian" is an Indian within the meaning of the Indian Act, chapter 27, Statutes of Canada (1985);

- Status Indians are entitled to a status card which allows them access to health and social services through Health Canada (as well as other non-insured services);
- Inuit People are entitled to an N-beneficiary card, which gives them access to the same services as above;
- Métis is a recognized and organized group in some provinces, although not in Quebec. This group of people is of mixed ancestry, in fact "Métis" means "mixed blood people". They were the offspring of French fur traders from the North West Company or British and Scottish fur traders from the Hudson's Bay Company and Cree, Dene or Ojibway women. Métis have their own status cards which allow them a limited number of services. To obtain a status card, you must contact the Métis Nation Governments at (613) 798-1488 or consult the website at [www.metisnation.org](http://www.metisnation.org)

The following is from the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC)

## What is a Residential school?

In the 19th century, the Canadian government believed it was responsible for educating and caring for the country's Aboriginal people. It thought their best chance for success was to learn English and adopt Christianity and Canadian customs. Ideally, they would pass their adopted lifestyle on to their children, and native traditions would diminish, or be completely abolished in a few generations.

The Canadian government developed a policy called "aggressive assimilation" to be taught at church-run, government-funded industrial schools, later called residential schools.

The government felt children were easier to mould than adults, and the concept of a boarding school was the best way to prepare them for life in mainstream society. Residential schools were federally run, under the Department of Indian Affairs. Attendance was mandatory. Agents were employed by the government to ensure all native children attended.



## How many Residential schools and students were there?

Initially, about 1,100 students attended 69 schools across the country. In 1931, at the peak of the residential school system, there were about 80 schools operating in Canada. There were a total of about 130 schools in every territory and province except Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick from the earliest in the 19th century to the last, which closed in 1996.

In all, about 150,000 Aboriginal, Inuit and Métis children were removed from their communities and forced to attend the schools. Please refer to CBC digital archives:

[http://archives.cbc.ca/version\\_print.asp?page=1&IDLan=1&IDClip=4003&IDDossier=692&IDCat=360&IDCatPa=262](http://archives.cbc.ca/version_print.asp?page=1&IDLan=1&IDClip=4003&IDDossier=692&IDCat=360&IDCatPa=262)

After residential schools closed, the social workers followed in the footsteps of the missionaries, the priests and the Indian Agents to "save and protect" Aboriginal children. Many Aboriginal children were adopted into non-Aboriginal homes, which then lead to a myriad of identity and social problems as they lost their link to their Aboriginal roots.

- Defined as the "Sixties Scoop", despite the fact that the apprehension and adoption of Aboriginal children still continues to this day.

Taken from "Stolen from our Embrace", Suzanne Fournier and Ernie Crey, 1998.

When an Aboriginal child is adopted into a non-Aboriginal family, he/she may not be entitled to his/her Indian Status, treaty rights or beneficiary status if he/she is not registered before placement. Therefore, it is **crucial** that the social worker obtain the identifying information **before** the child is placed into care. Indian Status, treaty rights or beneficiary status may include but not limited to:

- Land entitlement;
- Free medical services (psychologists, optometrists, dentists, medication, etc.);
- Post-secondary education, which may include the tuition fees, books, and living allowance.

Some socio-cultural impacts are:

- Loss of language
- Loss of immediate and extended family
- Loss of connection with the community
- Loss of culture, traditions, and spirituality
- Identity crisis
- Way of life (hunting, fishing, traditional medicines)

If your child is Inuk, you must apply for your child's:

- beneficiary card
- then N-number
- your child is now covered for dental, glasses, prescriptions, psychologist, ambulance.

## Beneficiary card

If you have an Inuk child in your care you can apply for a Beneficiary Card at the Makivik Corporation in Kuujjuak.

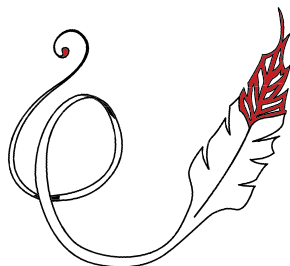
Contact  
Ms. Nancy White  
at (819) 964-2925.

## N numbers

If the child in your care is Inuk from Nunavik, you must register him/her with the Makivik Corporation in Kuujjuak.

Again, you may contact Ms. Nancy White at (819) 964-2925.

She will need to know from which land holding the child is from and will also need the child's full-sized birth certificate.



## The A-List/ Adoption Register

The following information is quite extensive. For any clarifications please see Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada website at [www.aandc-aadnc.gc.ca](http://www.aandc-aadnc.gc.ca)

If your child is First Nation, you must apply for their Indian Status. Call Northern Affairs Canada at 1(800) 567-9604.

If your child is Métis, you can contact the National Métis association for Métis membership at (613) 232 - 3216

How to apply for Non-insured health benefits

Your child must have an Indian Status Card or if s/he is Inuk an "N" number. Call (514) 283-1575.

For Professional services, please see directory at the end.

The A-List is a computerized record of registered Indian children adopted by non-Indians. It is a special protected Adoption Register kept separate from the Adoption Stores and Indian Register to ensure confidentiality. By placing the name of a child on the A-List, an active record for the child is created on the A-List. The child no longer has an active record in the Indian Register until such time as he/she transfers from the A-List to the Indian Register.

The A-List was first introduced in 1961 and is now part of the Adoption Sub-system on the Inuit relation secretariat (IRS). At the time of the 1984 conversion to the computerized IRS, only those records of individuals active on the A-List were included in the computerized A-List. Reference must be made to the Adoption Binders for information on adoptions by non-Indians of persons who transferred from the A-List to the Indian Register previous to 1984.

The types of adoptions recorded on the A-List are as follows:

- i) Indian children adopted by non-Indians;
- ii) Indian children registered under birth identities, adopted by non-Indians AND 18 years of age or over when adoption recorded.

## Indian Children Adopted by Non-Indians

An Indian child adopted by Non-Indian parents does not lose Indian status or band/group affiliation. Information about the adopted child is recorded on the A-List.

The result is:

- The child's existing registry page and number under the birth identity are marked as "Inactive";
- The child's birth name is added to his/her birth band/group's A-List report;
- No cross-reference information is provided to identify the placement of the child;
- No entry will appear on the change report since there is no actual decrease in the band/group population (Note: The child is on the registry group's A-List report);
- A child on the A-List is not eligible for a Certificate of Indian Status. However, the child or the adoptive parents can request that the Registrar issue a letter of confirmation of Indian status, if one was not issued at the time the adoption was recorded. Such a letter is often required to enable the parents to claim the health care benefits to which the adoptee is entitled.
- The Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) Program of Health Canada provides to registered Indians and recognized Inuit and Innu living in Canada, a limited range of goods and services if they are not available through other private, federal, provincial or territorial insurance plans and all eligibility criteria is met. One exception to this is children who are in the care of child welfare authorities.

Children in the care of a child welfare authority are excluded from receiving NIHB benefits until they are no longer in care. This is based on the NIHB Co-ordination of Benefit Policy which is in place to ensure that NIHB will not provide or pay for health services for Inuit and registered Indians where such services are available to provincial or territorial residents under other federal,



**Indian Children Registered Under Birth Identities, Adopted by Non-Indians AND Within 6 Months of 18th birthdays or Older When Adoption Recorded**

provincial or territorial health plans or other programs. For children in care of a First Nations Child and Family Service agency (FNCFS) or other established child welfare authority, the child welfare authority is to access all established alternative programs to which the child has an established eligibility which would include provincial programs.

NIHB benefits include drugs, dental, medical supplies and equipment, vision, transportation, in short term crisis intervention and mental health counselling. When a First Nation or Inuit child is no longer in the care of the provincial or territorial child welfare authority, the following office may be contacted to find out about eligibility for these benefits:

***First Nations and Inuit Health Branch (FNIHB) Health Canada***

***Regional Office***

Please forward a copy of the enclosed "To whom it may concern letter" with your correspondence to the FNIHB Regional Office. This letter will be used to determine the date of eligibility for NIHB Benefits. Please ensure all receipts for benefits are kept, as reimbursement will be made for eligible benefits back to the date that the client is no longer in care, with proof of payment.

**WHEN THIS SITUATION OCCURS:**

- Adoptee's registry number is marked inactive on his/her register page;
- Adoptee's birth name is added to the A-List for his/her birth band/group and immediately transferred from A-List and given a new registry number in the band/group under the adoptive name;
- No cross-reference information is provided to identify the placement of the adoptee;
- No entry will appear on the change report since there is no change in the and/group population.



## TRANSFER FROM THE A-LIST

An adoptee who appears on the confidential A-List can be transferred to the published Indian Register upon request after turning eighteen years of age, or, before age 18, in the special circumstances. When a transfer from the A-List occurs:

- The adoptee's A-List record is marked inactive;
- The adoptee is removed from the A-List Report;
- The adoptee is given a new registry number in the and/group under the adoptive name and no parental information will appear;
- No entry will appear on the change report since there is no change in the band/group population.

## Common myths about Aboriginal peoples:

We wish to dispel prevalent myths about Aboriginal peoples; these abound because of a lack of awareness about the uniqueness of Aboriginal peoples across Canada and because of media stereotyping. These stereotypes are especially damaging to children who may lack the ability to refute them and who actually start to internalize damaging views of themselves. The following excerpt written by Joseph Riverwind (Taino) is a light hearted and humoristic view of the stereotyping of Aboriginals and does not reflect the cultural diversity of all Aboriginal Peoples. Consult:

[www.bluecorncomics.com/stbasics.tm](http://www.bluecorncomics.com/stbasics.tm) for more on this topic.

The Basic Indian Stereotypes

By Joseph Riverwind (Taino)

The Basic Indian Stereotypes:

- 1) Lazy — not motivated to work
- 2) Savage or wild
- 3) Get drunk quickly or drink a lot
- 4) Lack sense of humor
- 5) Most of the work they can do is associated with handicrafts
- 6) Want their land back
- 7) All Aboriginals live on reserves
- 8) “Eskimos” still live in igloos
- 9) All look the same

# A

## Aboriginal words

The following includes greetings in different Aboriginal languages. As language is an important part of identity we encourage you to teach your child any of the following greetings especially if their nation is listed below. Contact your child's band council for more comprehensive information about learning an Aboriginal language.

### MOHAWK- KANIEN'KE HA

- She:kon - Hi (Say-goh)
- O:nen - Bye (oh-nah)
- Nia:wen - Thank you (knee-ah-wah)
- Io - You're welcome (yo)

### CREE – NIHIYAW

- Eenou nii - I am Cree
- Tansi - Hi, how are you?
- Ikosi - Goodbye
- Mahti - Please

### INUKTITUT

- Inuvunga - I am Inuk (ee-noo-voo-ngha)
- Qanuipit - How are you? (ka-noo-ee-peat)
- Tavvauvutit - Goodbye (tah-vow-voo-teet)
- Nakurmik - Thank you (nah-koor-mick)
- Ilali - You're welcome (ee-lah-lee)

### ALGONQUIN

- Kwe-kwe - Hello
- Meegwetch - Thank-you
- Ki mino pimadiz na - How are you?

## Enhancing cultural ride through activities:

We know that fostering or adopting a child can be a challenging experience, especially when your child's culture does not match your own. The following are cultural activities that you can enjoy with your child which may help decrease the cultural gap:

- Become a member of the NETWORK. The website is [www.reseaumtlnetwork.com](http://www.reseaumtlnetwork.com) and receive their monthly newsletters. Community events and cultural gatherings are listed.
- Watch free documentaries online about Aboriginal peoples on CBC Passionate Eye website: <http://www.cbc.ca/passionateeye/>
- Watch APTN (Aboriginal Peoples Television Network) on TV or online.
- Subscribe to The Nation or the Eastern Door (Aboriginal newspapers).
- Join Tasiutigiiit, an organization that supports cross-cultural families of Inuit and Aboriginal children; Tel: (450) 479-6827
- Attend cultural events with your child. Each year there is a Pow Wow in Kahnawake (always the second weekend of July).
- Spend Aboriginal day with your child. June 21 is National Aboriginal day. There are always festivities in the city. You can learn more in the NETWORK newsletter.
- For cultural events check out *Terres en vues/Landinsights at nativelynx.qc.cc*
- Check out the McCord museum to learn about their culture (514 398-7100).
- Bring your child to traditional ceremonies. Be willing to do some research into finding ceremonies that match your child's nation. Seek out an Elder from your child's community. Call the NETWORK for additional information.
- Bring your child to the First Nations Garden at the Botanical Gardens.

## Outstanding Aboriginal/ Role Models:

- **ADAM BEACH**

Is a Saulteaux actor from Ashern, Manitoba, he grew up with his two brothers on the Dog Creek First Nations Reserve at Lake Manitoba. He is best known for his roles in *Smoke Signals* (1998), *Windtalkers* (2002), *Flags of our Fathers* (2006) and *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* (2007).

- **BUFFY SAINTE-MARIE**

Born on the Piapot Cree Indian reserve in the Qu'Appelle Valley, Saskatchewan. She is a Cree singer-songwriter, musician, composer, visual artist, educator, pacifist, and social activist. She founded the Cradleboard Teaching Project, an educational curriculum devoted to better understanding of Aboriginal peoples. She has won recognition and many awards and honours for both her music and her work in education and social activism.

- **CAREY PRICE**

Born on Anahim Lake, BC. He is a member of the Ulkatcho First Nations. Price became a household name in Canada when he was select 5th overall in the 2005 NHL entry draft. He became goalie for the Canadiens in 2007-2008 .

- **CARLA ROBINSON**

Born on Kitimat, BC is a television journalist and anchor for CBC Newsworld. Carla is a member of the Haisla and Heiltsuk First Nations.

- **ELISAPIE ISAAC**

Singer-songwriter, adopted at birth by an Inuit family and was raised in Salluit, Quebec she also kept close ties with her biological parents – an Inuk mother and a father from Newfoundland. The “mix of cultures” she experienced as a child soon gave her the desire to travel, to take risks and to express the duality she carried within her.

- **JORDIN TOOTOO**

Born in Manitoba but grew up in Rankin Inlet, Nunavut where he was taught to skate and play hockey by his father. As the first Inuk to play in the National Hockey League he has become a role model for youth in Nunavut.

- **KENOJUAK ASHEVAK**

Born in an igloo in an Inuit camp, Ikirasaq, at the southern coast of Baffin Island, Nunavut. She is a pioneer of modern Inuit art. She became one of the first Inuit women in Cape Dorset to begin drawing in the late 1950s. She has since created many carvings from soapstone and thousands of drawings, etchings, stone-cuts, and prints — all sought after by museums and collectors. She designed several drawings for Canadian stamps and coins. In 2004, she started to design the first Inuit-inspired stained glass window for a chapel.

- **LEONA AGLUKKAQ**

Born in Inuvik, Northwest Territories. Prior to running as an MP she was an MLA in the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut, representing the electoral district of Nattilik. She was the Minister of Health and Social Services and the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women in the Executive Council of Nunavut. She is currently the Minister of Health in the Federal Cabinet.

- **TAYLOR LAUTNER**

Is an American actor, who has Native American ancestry: he is part Ottawa and Potawatomi. Taylor had his breakthrough role in the Twilight Saga movies.

# RESOURCE LIST

## **DENTISTS WHO HAVE ABORIGINAL CLIENTELE**

Dr. Irwin M. Fried

4141 Sherbrooke O suite 319  
Westmount, Quebec H3Z 1B8

(514) 935-5587

Please remember to bring a photocopy  
of their status to the appointment

## **GLASSES**

Vision 21/20

2120 Guy street

Tel: 514-931-3591 Fax: 514-931-3592

New Look

930 rue Sainte-Catherine O

Montreal, H3B 1E2

Tel:(514)875-1001

Fax:(514) 875-1016

## **RESOURCES AND LINKS**

Please see resource book created by First Nations  
Human Resources Development Services of  
Montreal (FNHRDSM)

1255 rue de Square Phillips, suite 1007,

Montreal (Québec) H3B 3G1

telephone: 514-283-0901

## **CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE COUNSELLING SERVICES:**

Pascale C. Annoual M.A., Art Therapist

Tel: (514) 913-7039

[www.aatq.org](http://www.aatq.org)

Marcelle Durrum, M.S.W, Therapist

Tel: (514) 793-1558

[keti@sympatico.ca](mailto:keti@sympatico.ca)

Suzy Goodleaf M.Ed, Psychologist O.P.Q.

Tel: (450) 635-5108

[suzy.goodleaf@sympatico.ca](mailto:suzy.goodleaf@sympatico.ca)

Mike Standup, Spiritual Healer/Teacher

Tel: (514) 318-7859

It is important to know that each Nation has its own traditional values, culture and language. We recommend that you research the Nation of the child in your care and we have provided the following links.

### LINKS

Canadian Child Welfare Research Portal  
[www.cecw-cepb.ca/aboriginal-child-welfare](http://www.cecw-cepb.ca/aboriginal-child-welfare)

Nunavut Culture, Language, Elders, Youth  
[www.gov.nu.ca/cley](http://www.gov.nu.ca/cley)

First Nations Holistic Lifelong Learning  
<http://cli.ccl-cca.ca/FN/index.php?q=home&l=en>

Aboriginal Canada Portal  
<http://www.aboriginalcanada.gc.ca/acp/site.nsf/eng/index.html>

### Shopping for kids:

- Goldtex textiles - clothes
- Bebe magg - cribs, strollers, etc.
- Mega vente d'entrepot – clothes
- Children's place – clothes (only during specials)
- Loblaw's (Joe's Collection) – clothes
- Bôbébé - Clothes
- Jolie Frimousse - Clothes
- Salvation Army / Renaissance  
 – clothes & Toys

