

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NUNATUKAVUT COMMUNITY COUNCIL ADDITION TO THE PROVINCIAL CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES ACT A SIGNIFICANT STEP IN SUPPORTING NUNATUKAVUT INUIT FAMILIES

HAPPY VALLEY-GOOSE BAY, LABRADOR, August 3, 2021 – The NunatuKavut Community Council (NCC) today announced it has been added to the provincial *Children, Youth and Families Act* (CYFA). This allows NCC to appoint an Indigenous Representative to help provide cultural connections for NunatuKavut Inuit children and youth who are in care and custody of the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development (CSSD).

Kristy Dyson has been appointed as NCC's Indigenous Representative. Effective immediately, she will contribute to case planning in assisting with the development of cultural connection plans on behalf of NCC, which fosters the connection and continuity to the child's or youth's culture. In accordance with the federal child welfare legislation, *An Act Respecting First Nations, Inuit, and Métis children, youth and families*, Kristy will also be notified before a significant measure is taken regarding NunatuKavut Inuit children and youth. NCC is committed to helping support NunatuKavut families who are involved in this process.

NCC was added to the CYFA in May of 2021. The Act is intended to be child and youth-centred, family-focused and culturally responsive. Involvement in child protection with the addition of an Indigenous Representative is a new and significant program area for NCC. It provides an opportunity to directly support the health, security and wellbeing of NunatuKavut Inuit children, youth and families.

Quick Facts

- NCC is the representative governing body for approximately 6,000 Inuit who reside primarily in south and central Labrador.
- NunatuKavut means "Our Ancient Land" in Inuttitut and is the traditional territory of the Inuit who belong to this territory.
- In July 2018, NCC entered into talks with the Government of Canada on the Recognition of its Indigenous Rights and Self-Determination (RIRSD). In September 2019, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed.

Quotes

"Having the NunatuKavut Community Council named in the *Children, Youth and Families Act* is a significant milestone for NunatuKavut Inuit children and families. I would like to thank the Premier, as well as Minister Abbott and Minister Dempster, for ensuring that this important piece of legislation now includes NCC. With the assistance of Kristy Dyson, our Indigenous Representative, we can now help provide much-needed cultural support to our own children, youth and families who are involved in the provincial child protection process. This is a positive and meaningful step toward reconciliation, particularly for NCC and the people we represent."

-- Todd Russell, President of NCC

“I am pleased to have brought forward amendments to the Children, Youth and Families Act to include the NunatuKavut Community Council to the Schedule of Indigenous governments and organizations. This is an important step forward to further enhance service delivery to and improve outcomes for Indigenous children, youth and families throughout the province.”

-- Honourable John G. Abbott, Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development

“Following extensive consultations with Indigenous governments and organizations, I was delighted to have introduced legislation in the House of Assembly that provided for Indigenous representatives. I am extremely happy that the NunatuKavut Community Council is availing of this opportunity. I welcome the appointment of Kristy Dyson as the Council’s representative. Ms. Dyson will provide cultural support for children and families of NunatuKavut involved in the child protection process. The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador is committed to strengthening relationships with Indigenous governments and organizations.”

-- Honourable Lisa Dempster, Minister Responsible for Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation, Minister Responsible for Labrador Affairs, and MHA for Cartwright L’Anse au Clair

Associated Links

- Further information on NCC can be found at www.nunatukavut.ca. Please also join in the conversation at [Facebook.com/nunatukavut](https://www.facebook.com/nunatukavut), Twitter [@nunatukavut](https://twitter.com/nunatukavut) and YouTube by searching NunatuKavut.

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What Is child protection?

In Newfoundland and Labrador, the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development's (CSSD) mandate is to help ensure the safety and well-being of children and youth. When there is a concern of maltreatment (harm, abuse and/or neglect) by a parent, social workers within CSSD are required to assess the safety and risk to a child or youth.

While NCC's Indigenous Representative will not be involved in this assessment process, she will be there to support families through the process and ensure they remain connected to their Inuit culture. It is, therefore, important that the family identify themselves as NunatuKavut Inuit during this process so that our Indigenous Representative can be appropriately notified.

What is considered a significant measure?

A significant measure includes:

- Child/youth entering into care (through a Protective Care Agreement, removal with/without a warrant or through a custody order granted under the CYFA)
- Returning a child in the care/custody of a manager to a parent
- Laying an application seeking custody
- Applying for a subsequent order
- Laying an application of non-compliance
- Laying an application to transfer custody of a child in continuous custody to another person
- Laying an application to authorize medical treatment
- Consenting to adoption
- Placing a child, who is in the care/custody of a manager, in an Out of Province Placement

Who has a duty to report?

Every person within Newfoundland and Labrador has a legal obligation to immediately report suspected abuse and neglect for children (under age 16) and youth (ages 16 and 17) to ensure they are protected from harm. To report a concern, call CSSD toll-free 1-833-552-2368 or contact your local police department.

What happens if child protection becomes involved with my family?

CSSD is required by law to investigate whether a child is in need of protective intervention once a report is received about possible child abuse, neglect or harm.

Sometimes the initial contact is in the form of an unscheduled home visit or a telephone call to arrange a meeting to discuss the concerns. A social worker will conduct an assessment and, where protection concerns have been identified, they will work with family to develop a plan to address those concerns.

As mentioned previously, NCC is not involved in this initial process but will be notified before a significant measure is taken. NCC's Indigenous Representative will also receive notice of any court hearings related to the child protection process of NunatuKavut Inuit children and youth.