

# Federal Court approves \$23B First Nations child-welfare settlement <sup>[1]</sup>

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### Excerpts

OTTAWA - A Federal Court judge has verbally approved a landmark \$23-billion settlement that will see Ottawa compensate more than 300,000 First Nations children and their families over chronic underfunding of on-reserve child-welfare services.

The settlement comes more than 15 years after the Assembly of First Nations and the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society jointly launched a human-rights complaint that sparked a years-long legal battle with Ottawa.

...

The 2007 complaint revolved around allegations that Ottawa's underfunding of on-reserve child welfare services amounted to discrimination, and that First Nations children were denied equal access to support including school supplies and medical equipment.

...

Child welfare was also among the central issues flagged in the report by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which spent six years delving into the painful residential school system that operated from the 1870s to 1996.

The proposed settlement includes \$23 billion in compensation for more than 300,000 children and their families, and another \$20 billion to reform the child welfare system.

...

Indigenous Services Minister Patty Hajdu said the settlement's approval is one piece of a broader reform of the child welfare system, and survivors have said a monetary sum won't heal the traumas they've experienced.

"Families were shattered. People grew up not knowing anything about their backgrounds, their true connection to culture or language," she said Tuesday.

"And First Nations children with profound disabilities did not get access to the supports they needed to thrive."

...

But she added issues persist in the child welfare system.

Blackstock said First Nations children living on-reserve are still subject to inequitable access to health care, and Ottawa must do more to protect them.

"We need to make sure the government of Canada actually treats children fairly. Not only today, but the day after tomorrow, and the year after," she said.

...

"The best apology Canada can make is changed behaviour; making sure it doesn't hurt another generation of kids," said Blackstock.

**Region:** Canada <sup>[3]</sup>

**Tags:** indigenous children <sup>[4]</sup>

Truth and Reconciliation <sup>[5]</sup>

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