

Customary Care Agreements

Helping families stay
strong and together



What is a Customary Care Agreement?

A Customary Care Agreement is for Indigenous children. It is a plan between you, a customary care-giver identified with help from your Nation and CFS.

- It is voluntary. No court is involved.
- You help choose who cares for your child.
- The child lives with a caregiver from your Indigenous community who shares your culture.
- The caregiver must be approved by CFS. Your Nation may help identify caregivers.
- The agreement explains what help and support will be given.
- You stay involved in important decisions for your child.
- The caregiver may make some day-to-day decisions. The types of decisions will be written in the agreement.
- Your child is not in the care of a CFS agency.

Signing an agreement does not take away your role as your child's parent.

How can a Customary Care Agreement Help?

- You can get help while your child stays connected to community and culture.
- You help make the plan for your family.
- You stay involved in decisions for your child.
- CFS and Nations work together to create Customary Care arrangements that reflect each Nation's culture, language and ways of caring.

The caregiver may be able to receive the Canada Child Benefit. This may include the Child Disability Benefit if your child qualifies.

How do I ask about a Customary Care Agreement?

You can ask about an agreement at any time.

- If you already have a CFS worker, talk to them.
- Your CFS worker can review your situation to see if an agreement is a good fit.
- If an agreement is a good fit, your worker will explain what support may be included.

Important to Know

Customary Care Agreements are not regular financial support programs.

CFS offers them when there are challenges that, if left unaddressed, may lead to safety concerns for a child.

If your family is already caring for a child safely without CFS, an agreement may not be offered.

If you are looking for help but don't need CFS involvement, call **211** or visit **mb.211.ca** to find services in your community.

- You can ask for an agreement.
- CFS decides whether it's the right fit.
- Not all families will be offered one.
- If safety concerns remain, CFS may take more steps to keep a child safe.
- Signing an agreement does not take away your role as a parent.

What help may be included in a Customary Care Agreement?

Support depends on your family's needs.

CFS agencies may offer some services directly or help connect you to programs in your community. The kinds of help that may be included are:

- Parenting programs, family helpers or youth mentors.
- Daycare or summer programs for children.
- Help applying for housing or emergency shelter.
- Referrals to counselling, mental health or addictions support.
- Indigenous cultural programs, land-based healing, Elder teachings or traditional medicines.
- Limited financial help like bus fare, food or children's clothing.

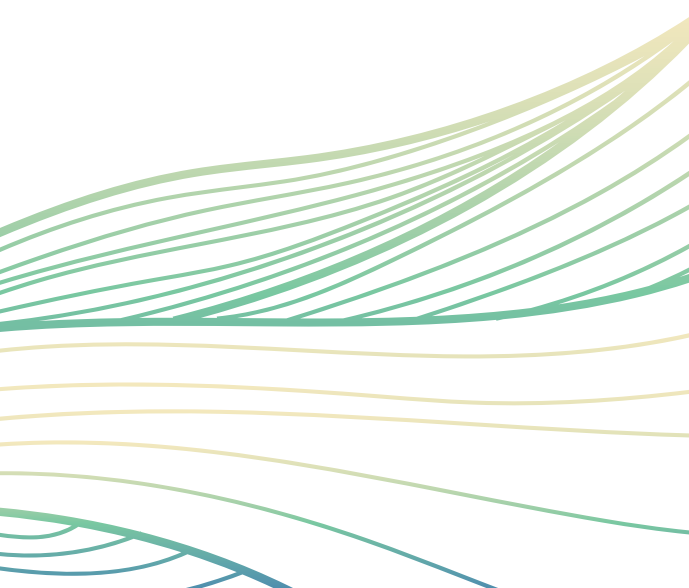
Your CFS worker will talk with you about what supports are available and how to access them.





Working together to keep families strong

In October 2024, new agreements that give CFS more ways to help families stay together became law.

- Family support agreements
 - Kinship care agreements
 - Customary care agreements
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Need Help or More Information?

Talk to your CFS worker about whether a customary care agreement could help your family.



Scan the QR for a list of CFS contacts or visit:
manitoba.ca/fs/childfam/cfsagencies.html

