



# GUIDANCE FOR GOVERNMENTS:

## *Supporting Significant Connections for children and youth in the Context of COVID-19*

### The Bottom Line

The emotional, relational, and physiological needs of children and youth are usually met through social connection and access to family and culture. During COVID-19, support is needed to protect, maintain, and increase connections to family, community, culture and language for children involved with child welfare.

### **Child Welfare Recommendations: Guidance for Governments**

Designate child welfare and protection as essential services.

Allow service providers and social workers the flexibility they need to be creative in arranging visits for children and youth with parents and/or significant others.

Permanently include registered social workers as mental health practitioners in the Public Service Health Care Plan (PSHCP). This will allow continued and proper support of individuals and communities in the recovery of mental, social, and health consequences of COVID-19.

Cover the cost of technology for children, youth, families and Elders so that significant connections can be maintained (e.g., tablets, cellphones, laptops, wi-fi).

Fund service providers and communities, enabling them to offer free accessible online mental health support, including access to Elders, counselling, and psychiatry.

Offer supports and services to young people in care immediately and unconditionally so that they can maintain significant connections.

Ensure poverty reduction efforts are robust and that barriers to accessing provincial, territorial and federal benefits are eliminated for those who are in the most precarious situations.

## Child Welfare Recommendations: Guidance for Governments

Increase annual cost of living funding for all violence against women shelters to ensure the sustainability of services to keep women, children, and youth safe during and after COVID-19.

Comply with Human Rights Tribunal rulings and immediately end the inequitable funding of child and family services in First Nations communities so that they are better able to meet the needs of children, youth and families.

Ensure no young person transitions out of care during the pandemic.

Ensure all young people in and from care receive support for mental health, housing, basic needs, and maintaining social connections with no conditions attached.



For original sources and documents, please visit: [www.childtraumaresearch.ca](http://www.childtraumaresearch.ca)

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