

**NEWS RELEASE**

For Immediate Release  
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BC Directors Forum

**Canada gets failing grade from UNICEF:  
First Nations kids carry burden of poor health and social outcomes  
Canadian kids rank 31 out 38 countries assessed**

Coast Salish Territory- Indigenous Child Welfare Directors fear that the gaps between Indigenous child health outcomes and those of other Canadian children are becoming normalized.

In UNICEF's annual child health and well-being report card issued today Canada ranked 31 out of 38 countries assessed. Four countries that have a shared colonial history including Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the United States all figure in the bottom ten and experts attribute this to the poor health outcomes of Indigenous kids.

Mary Teegee, Chair of the BC Directors Forum which represents Delegated Aboriginal Agencies in British Columbia and Executive Director of Carrier Sekani Child and Family welcomes the independent report card. "Despite performing well on economic indicators, Canada does little to redistribute this wealth to create better outcomes for First Nation children," said Teegee "Instead Canada seems intent on litigating against anyone who challenges the status quo. Indigenous Child Welfare Directors echo UNICEF's calls for the Government of Canada to adopt Spirit Bear Plan as an important gap closing measure."

The Spirit Bear Plan is a five-part plan created in 2017, it has unanimous support of the Assembly of First Nations. The plan asks that Canada comply with Canadian Human Rights Tribunal orders and assess the government's role in poor outcomes for Indigenous kids.

The Directors Forum, a coalition of executives responsible for managing the 24 delegated Aboriginal Agencies in BC, agencies representing 60% of First Nations in the province. As a collective and expert voice on child welfare matters, the Directors Forum bring decades of frontline experience working with Indigenous children and families.

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