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# Honouring Jordan's Principle

Canadian Paediatric Society

March 28, 2025 | Presented by **Cindy Blackstock, PhD**



First Nations Child & Family  
Caring Society of Canada

Société de soutien à l'enfance  
et à la famille des Premières Nations  
du Canada



# Blatant and invisible colonialism

- Blatant Colonialism mutilates you without pretense; it forbids you to talk, it forbids you to act, it forbids you to exist. Invisible colonialism, however, convinces you that serfdom is your destiny and impotence is your nature; it convinces you that it is not possible to speak, not possible to act, not possible to exist.”

Eduardo Galeano, *The Book of the Embraces*, 1989



# Manifestations of colonialism

- Dichotomizes (savage/civilized)
- Dehumanizes
- Normalize/legitimizes discrimination
- Imposes language
- Engrains discriminatory relationships
- Disables resistance/rebuilding
- Deletes resisters from historical narrative

# INDIAN SCHOOLS DEAL OUT DEATH

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Startling Rate of Mortality is  
Shown in Report to the  
Department

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TWENTY-FIVE PER CENT

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Dr. Bryce Shows That Condi-  
tions Are Such as to En-  
courage Disease

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Article from the front page of Victoria's Daily Colonist, 16 November 1907.

Indians are cooped up under conditions fatal to them, and Dr. Bryce says he was often "surprised that the results were not even worse than they have been shown statistically to be." He says the conditions demand immediate remedy. What remedy? He has the statistics before him revealing a condition disgraceful to the country, he has visited many of the schools and wonders that the death-rate is not greater than twenty-five per cent, and yet he recommends *nothing*. His report is printed, many people will scan the title on the cover, some will open it, a few will read it, and so the thing will drift along for another year. And so with the next year, and the year after.

Such will be the course of events—the protests of medical officers buried in blue books and the complaints of missionaries lost in pigeon-holes—unless public opinion takes the question up and forces it to the front. Then Parliament will show a quick interest, pigeon-holes will give forth their dusty contents, medical officers will have a wealth of suggestions, and the scandalous procession of Indian children to school and on to the cemetery may possibly be stopped.



# Words Matter: Humanizing the Injustice

First Nations children are over represented in the child welfare system

Between 1989-2017, First Nations children spent over 78 million nights away from their families



# So much child welfare reform and so little change

**Most Child Welfare reform measures focused here versus on the causes**

First Nations Children **17.2 times** more likely to be placed in child welfare care

**72%** of all First Nations Children in Care are off reserve

**Child Welfare reform often codifies government lack of attention to structural risks as child welfare failures**

Child welfare system implements child welfare legislation

**very limited control over structural risks**

Statutory Definitions of Child Neglect: parent unable or unwilling to provide necessities of life –

**Codifies structural risks as parental failure**

**Locus of Control**

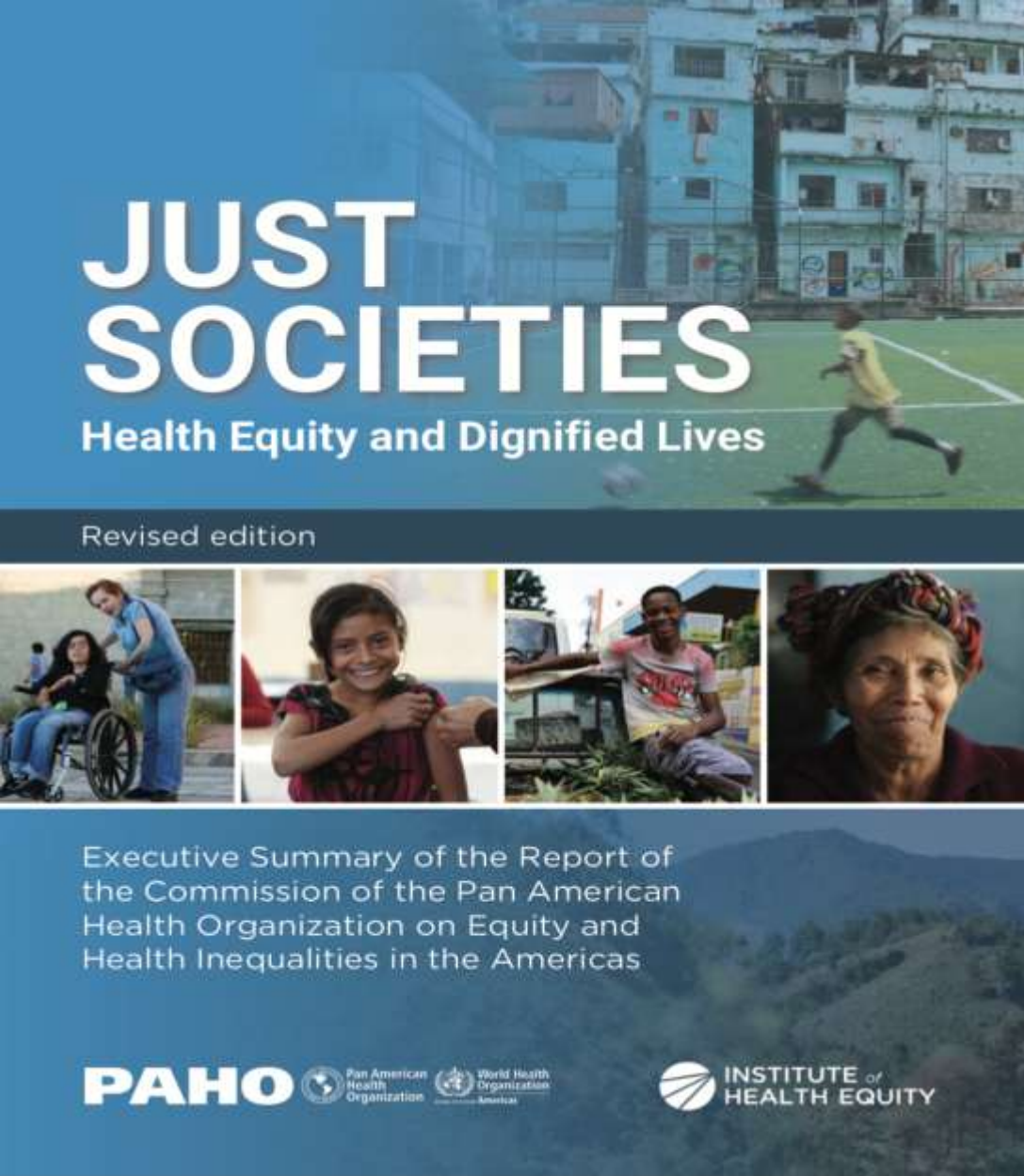
Services: Fed/Prov. Funding and community delivery → Family chooses to accept help if it is available

**Structural Drivers**

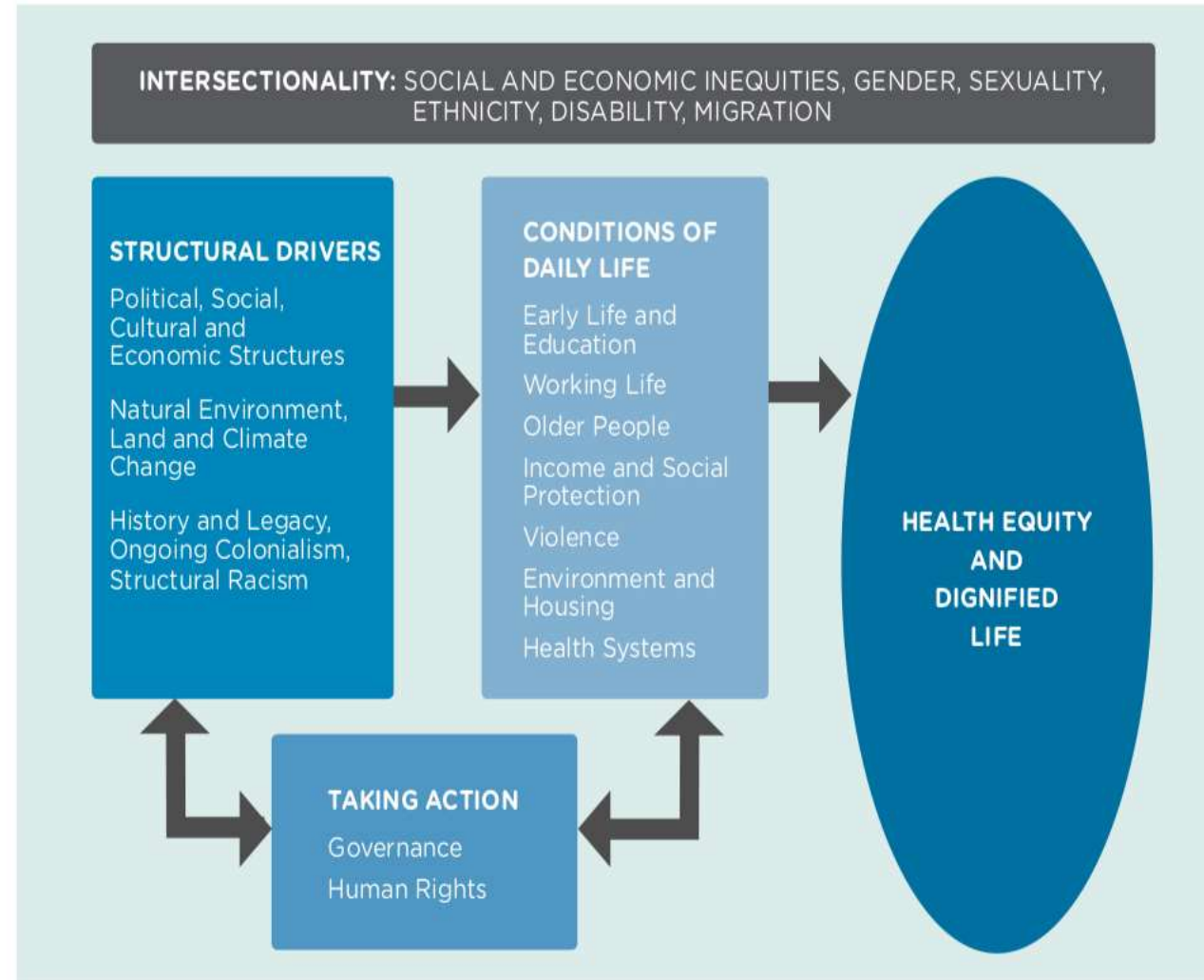
**Mental Health, Addictions, Domestic Violence, Poverty, Poor Housing**

**Root Causes**

Colonialism and lack of substantive equality for First Nations in public services on and off reserve



**Figure 1.1.**  
**Conceptual framework**



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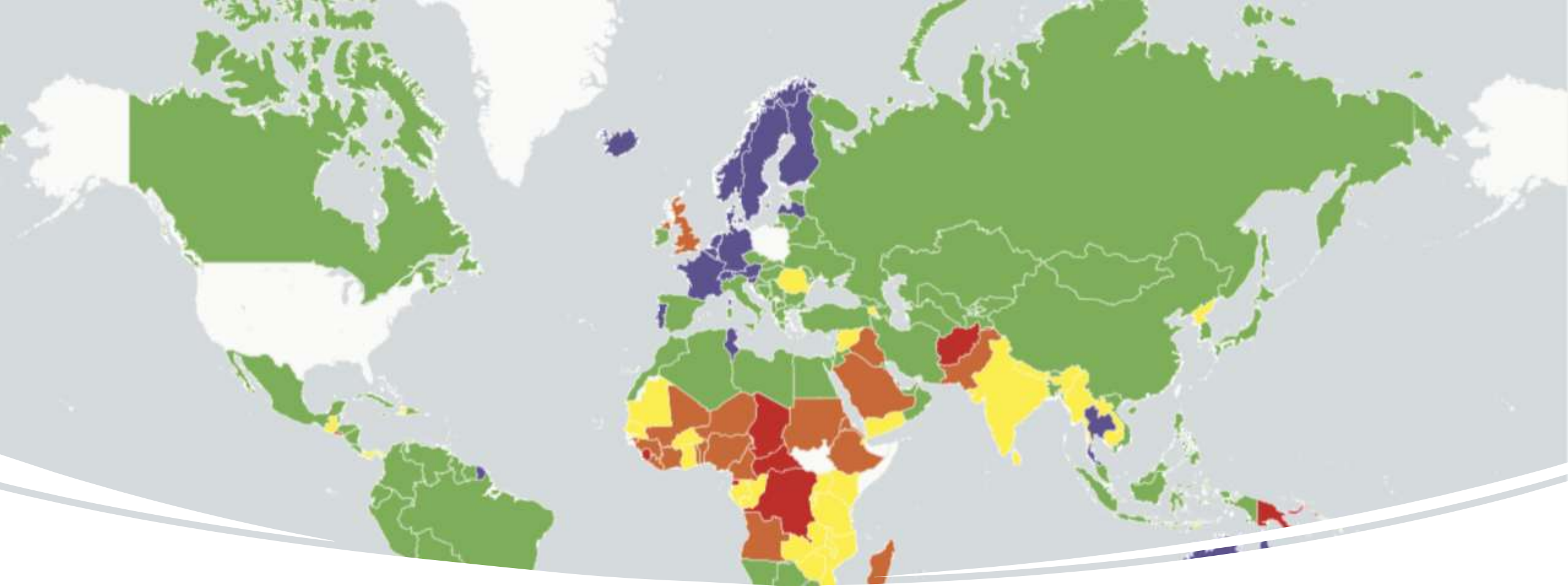
[www.paho.org](http://www.paho.org)





## UNICEF: State of the World's Children

- Three Mega Trends
- Demographic Transitions
- Climate and Environmental Crisis
- Frontier Technologies



# Kids Rights Index

- **KidsRightsIndex.org)**
- Canada: 66<sup>th</sup> in the world
- Child Rights Environment (i.e.: legislation, gov't budgets): 140<sup>th</sup> in the world





# What is the CHRT case about?

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**Stop Canada's discrimination against First Nations children, youth and families now and forever in:**

**First Nations Child and Family Services**

**Jordan's Principle**



# Jordan's Principle

- Named after Jordan River Anderson
- Sacred and legal principle
- Access the education, health, and social services supports First Nations children on and off reserve need when they need them
- Need: professional note and guardian's consent
- Call 1-888-JP-CHILD 24 hours a day





Cindy Blackstock ✓  
@cblackst



#31 "[#isitgenocide](#)"? In 2013, hearings at the CDN human rights tribunal began on Canada's failure to fund child welfare equitably and implement Jordan's Principle. This federal government document shows how they treated First Nations and other children differently.

- Federal and provincial policy differ in terms of the length of time a child must wait before being able to apply for new mobility equipment and the number and/or types of mobility devices the government will pay for a particular child.

*Service Example: A child with multiple disabilities and /or complex medical needs requires a wheelchair and stroller and requires that a lift and tracking device be installed in his/her family home. The Non-Insured Health Benefits Program (NIHB) will provide children with only one item, once every five years. If the item is a wheelchair, NIHB supports the provision of manual wheelchairs only, which must be fitted with seating inserts in order to accommodate small children. If the item is a ceiling mounted lift and tracking device, funding is not provided by NIHB to install the device in the family home. If these same children were to reside off reserve, they would be eligible to receive more than one mobility devices (if needed) and any installation costs would be borne by the provincial program providing the mobility device.*





**Cindy Blackstock** ✓  
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#28 "[#isitgenocide](#)" In 2005, Jordan Anderson died after spending 2+ yrs in hospital unnecessarily as gov'ts argued his care costs b/c he was First Nations. Jordan's Principle is his legacy. In 2011, the feds awarded themselves for never declaring a Jordan's Principle case.

 **Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada**      **Affaires autochtones et Développement du Nord Canada**

### 2011 DEPUTY MINISTERS' RECOGNITION AWARD NOMINATION FORM

This award may be presented to an individual or a team which, at the time of its nomination, was employed by Indian and Northern Affairs, including members of the executive group, term and casual employees, students or other partners (if applicable).

#### CANDIDATE(S)

Name (Mr./Ms.) or Team Name (in both official languages) : Jordan's Principle Implementation Team	Individual Nomination : <input type="checkbox"/> Team Nomination* : X Name of Team Leader : Odette Johnston (AANDC) and Carolyn Harrison (HC)
Title : Director, Children and Families Directrice, Enfants et familles	Sector/Region/Organization : ESDPP/HQ/Social Programs Reform Directorate Secteur des programmes et des partenariats en matière d'éducation et de développement social/AC/Direction de la réforme des programmes sociaux

[Learn more here.](#)



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@cblackst

Update. Jordan's Principle was part of the CDN Human Rights Case and thanks to several legal orders, over 250K products and services were provided to First Nations children this past year.

12:16 AM · Jun 29, 2019 · [Twitter Web App](#)



# Working Together

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Over 7 Million Jordan's Principle services, products and supports

Over \$20 Billion in new supports in child, youth and family services

\$23.4 Billion in compensation for victims of Canada's Discrimination



# 2020 CHRT 36: Jordan's Principle off reserve

- Affirms that non status First Nations children resident off reserve who are recognized by their First Nations are eligible for federally funded Jordan's Principle services, products and supports;
- This recognition is **ONLY** for the purposes of Jordan's Principle
- Orders Canada to provide funding to First Nations or First Nations organizations authorized by the First Nation to develop and implement a recognition process;
- Canada appealed 2020 CHRT 36 and the Federal Court dismissed the appeal. Canada did not appeal to the Federal Court of Appeal so the order stands.





# Jordan's Principle Request Types

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Individual

Group

# Analysis of ISC Jordan's Principle data (IFSD, 2022):

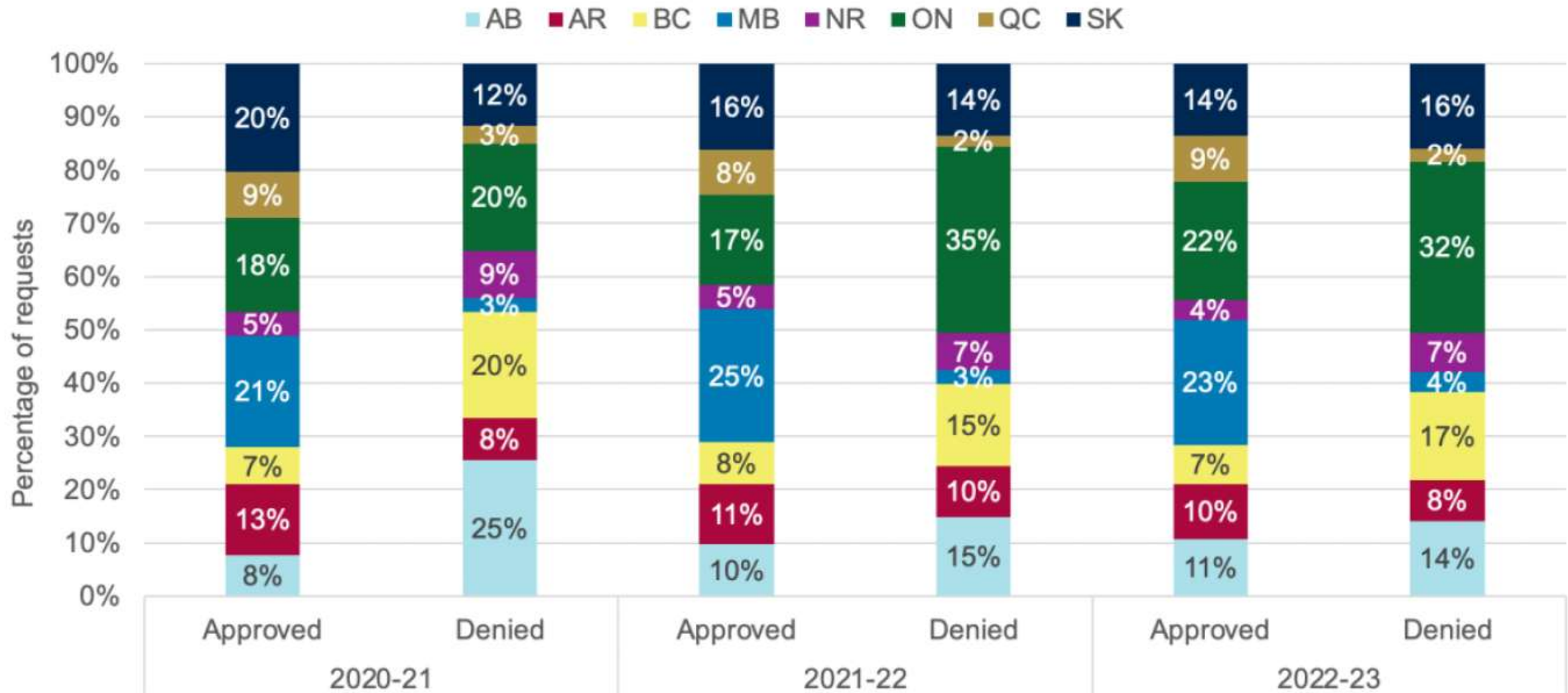
- Requests increased 625% between 2017 and 2021
- 50% increase between 2019-20
- Only 10% of that increase due to COVID
- Over 50% of requests were for under 5K - majority between \$100-999
- Significant Regional Variation – Alberta has highest rates of denials (34%)
- Plugging shortfalls in federally funded programs
- **Read the IFSD data Report at:**  
<https://www.ifsd.ca>





Figure 9

# Percentage of requests by region by final decision by fiscal year



Source: Indigenous Services Canada (ISC).

Notes: 1) AR stands for Atlantic Region. 2) NR stands for Northern Region.

# **ISC: Behaving their way into non-compliance**

**Canada chose not to implement multiple recommendations and solutions to improve compliance since 2018**

**Canada did not implement back to basics properly (i.e.: ensuring professional letters).**

**Canada did not disclose the backlogs until January 2023**

**Canada did not engage the Jordan's Principle Operations Committee (JPOC), National Advisory Committee (NAC) or Expert Advisory Committee (EAC) to address its non-compliance**



# Canada: Rolling back Jordan's Principle

- **Over 135K cases in “backlog”**
- **Cutting categories of service**
- **Not paying bills in a timely manner**
- **Unclear funding for Coordinators**
- **Spewing colonial stereotypes instead of fixing internal management (i.e., mechanizing intake forms)**

Featured National News

'If Mason didn't have hockey, I don't know if I'd have a son': The kids and the communities caught in the Jordan's Principle fiasco

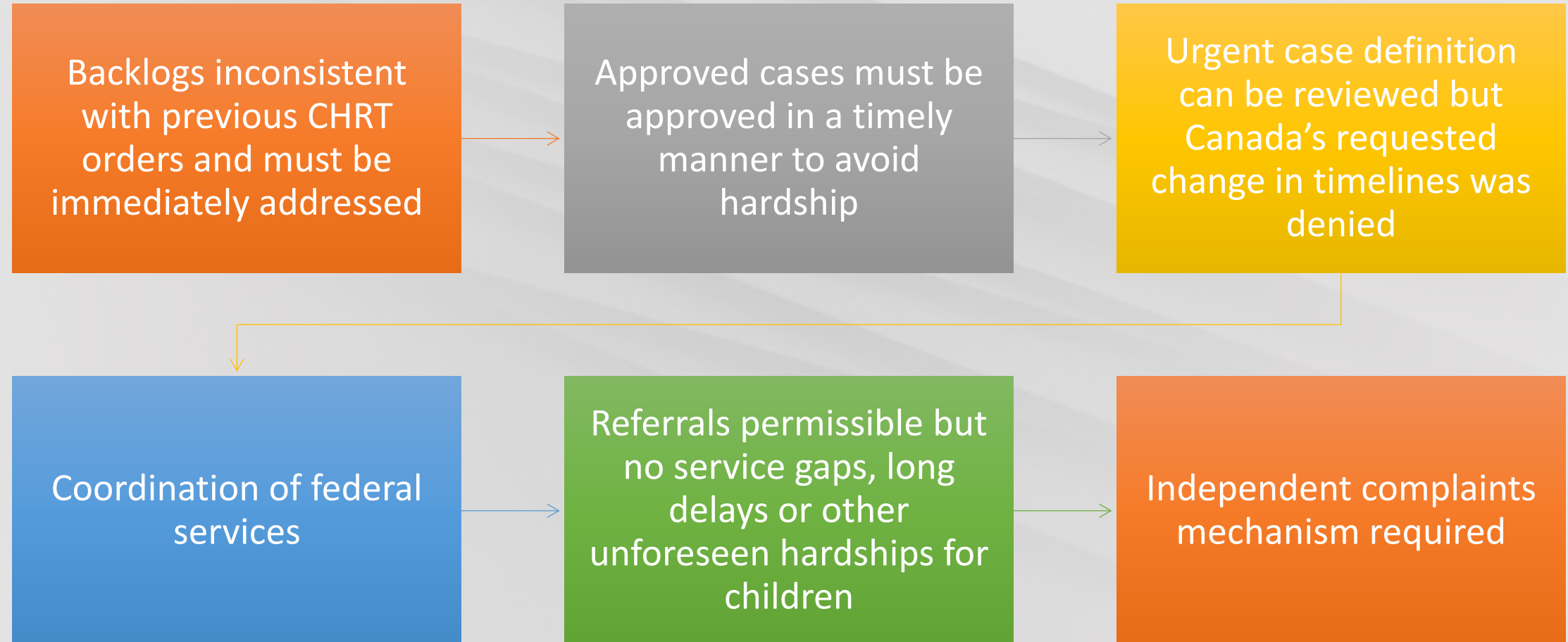
By Karyn Pugliese  
Mar 07, 2025



Mason Jacko (left) and Heath Smith (right) best friends whose lives centered around hockey. Photo courtesy Rosie Jacko.



# Key findings: 2025 CHRT 6





# Jordan's Principle Caring Society Proposals

- Fund gaps in education and health that Jordan's Principle is filling;
- Presumptive approvals for requests under \$500 - \$1000 with a professional letter;
- Improve quality control
- Data collection to track outcomes and compliance.



# Accountability in Our Lifetime:

A Call to Honour  
the Rights of Indigenous  
Children and Youth



**Gabrielle Fayant and Carrington Christmas**

Edited by Brittany Mathews

Schulich School of Law, Dalhousie University

**Schulich Law Scholars**

Reports & Public Policy Documents

Faculty Scholarship

3-31-2022

## Doing Better for Indigenous Children and Families: Jordan's Principle Accountability Mechanisms Report

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*National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation*

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### Recommended Citation

Naiomi Metallic, Hadley Friedland & Shelby Thomas, "Doing Better for Indigenous Children and Families: A Report on Jordan's Principle Accountability Mechanisms" (Caring Society & Department of Indigenous Services Canada, 2022).



# 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Jordan's Principle: May 10, 2025

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- Bear Witness Day
- Spiritual ceremonies to honour Jordan and all children hurt or lost
- Teddy bear parades, tea parties
- Screen Spirit Bear and Children Make History and Jordan River Anderson the Messenger
- Let elected leaders know you support Jordan's Principle



# What you can do



Call on federal government to return to the negotiation table to end Canada's discrimination now and forever with a national mandate aligned with AFN Resolutions 2024/60 and 2024/ 61



Call on Federal Government to comply with CHRT orders and provide First Nations with the tools for success for Jordan's Principle.



Participate in Bear Witness Day to Honour Jordan River Anderson and advocate for Canada to comply



Integrate Jordan's Principle into health care education and practice

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🐦 @SpiritBear



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