



May 7, 2013

Redford Government puts Children First

The Alberta government is increasing support and protection for children in Alberta.

The [Children First Act](#) supports the health, safety, education, security and well-being of children in Alberta by enhancing legislation and policies that affect children and youth. It is an important step in continuing the process of transforming how government supports the health, safety and success of Alberta's children.

"Ensuring children have the right start is crucial to their future success and quality of life," said Human Services Minister Dave Hancock. "The right start for our children is an important responsibility for parents, but there is also an important supportive role for community and government. When children are healthy, secure and supported they become productive adults who contribute to society."

Consistent with the direction outlined by Alberta's Social Policy Framework, the Act will assist government, community partners and families in breaking down barriers and encouraging collaboration to identify and meet the needs of children and youth.

Highlights of the proposed legislation include:

- Develop a Children's Charter to ensure government policy puts children first. The Charter will establish government-wide principles, priorities and roles to guide the development of policies, programs and services affecting children. The Charter will support Alberta's Social Policy Framework in guiding collaboration among departments, service providers and communities;
- Review all policies, programs and services across government that impact children and provide a report to the Alberta Legislature;
- Provide for more consistent, open and appropriate information sharing between those who work for the health, safety, and protection of children, including front-line workers in health, education, social work and law enforcement; and
- Allow for the disclosure of anonymized information to the Alberta Centre for Child, Family and Community Research. This information will be used by the Centre to conduct research for the Alberta government to support evidence-based decision making.

The Children First Act will also make related amendments to several pieces of legislation to achieve better outcomes for children:

- Amendments to the *Protection Against Family Violence Act* to formally establish a Family Violence Death Review Committee;
- Revamp the offence provisions within the *Drug Endangered Children Act*, *Protection of Sexually Exploited Children Act*, and the *Child Youth and Family Enhancement Act* to ensure that those who put children at risk are held accountable;
- Strengthen the mandate of the Child and Youth Advocate;
- Improve access to court-ordered financial support through the Maintenance Enforcement and Child Support Recalculation programs;
- Enhance access to counselling support for child victims of crime; and
- Confirm the commitment to Alberta's Promise by extending its renewal term.

"We are committed to making our province a better place for children," said Justice and Solicitor General Minister Jonathan Denis. "This legislation focuses on improved parental access to child support, continued funds for programs that help children who are victims of crime, and also increased safety for children through changes to protection orders."

Our government was elected to keep building Alberta, to live within its means and to fight to open new markets for Alberta's resources. We will continue to deliver the responsible change Albertans voted for.

-30-

Media inquiries may be directed to:

Craig Loewen
Press Secretary
Human Services
Phone 780-643-6210
craig.loewen@gov.ab.ca
[Twitter](#)
[Facebook](#)

To call toll free within Alberta dial 310-0000.

[Alberta Government](#) | [Newsroom](#) | [Ministries Listing](#) | [Human Services Home Page](#) | [News Releases](#) | [Top of Page](#) |

[Send us your comments or questions](#)

Copyright(©) 2013 Government of Alberta

