



## Vancouver Aboriginal Child & Family Services Society

*Our Children, Our Future, Our Responsibility*

**Social workers pursue permanency in ways that strengthen the child's Indigenous identity and support their rights to their relationships, culture(s), language(s), history(ies), and community(ies).** These rights are enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action, the CFCSA.

Permanency planning is done alongside the child, their parents, their immediate circle and their Indigenous community(ies). It recognizes that Indigenous people are fundamentally tied to the notion of identity in relation to their clan, extended family, heritage and territory. It means making **enduring connections in all four dimensions of permanency:**

1. **Relational permanency:** the child feels secure in a loving family context in which they are strongly connected with their own family, extended family and community;
2. **Physical permanency:** the child feels secure in a safe, stable and healthy environment in which the connections between territory, place and identity are strongly understood and nurtured;
3. **Cultural permanency:** the child feels securely connected to their culture, as expressed through practices and activities, spirituality, ceremony and language, and to a community that is consistent with their ancestry and supports the child to know who they are; and
4. **Legal permanency:** the child feels secure in a legal relationship of permanency that is confirmed by the court or otherwise recognized so that the child's legal guardianship is clear.

The four dimensions of permanency are interconnected. Strengthening relational and cultural permanency increases the likelihood of physical and legal permanency. In the past, focus was only on physical and legal permanency for Indigenous children and youth in care, with little to no regard for relational and cultural permanency which are the core components of Inclusive Foster Care.