



Dnaagdawenmag Binnoojiiyag  
**Child & Family Services**

# **2022 - 2027 Strategic Plan**

June 2022

# CONTENTS

<b>Message from the Board President and Executive Director</b> .....	2
<b>A. OUR ORGANIZATION</b> .....	3
A.1. Our Name .....	3
A.2. Mission .....	3
A.3. Vision .....	3
A.4. Values .....	3
<b>B. PLANNING PROCESS</b> .....	4
B.1. Engagement.....	4
B.2. Highlighted Themes .....	5
<b>C. OUR STRATEGY</b> .....	5
Overarching Goal:.....	5
Strategic Directions .....	6
Our Children, Youth, Families, Communities, and Nations .....	7
Our Commitments.....	7
Our Partners .....	8
Our Commitments.....	8
Our People.....	9
Our Commitments.....	9
Our Operational Accountabilities .....	10
Our Commitments.....	10
<b>D. Next Steps</b> .....	10

# MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

At Dnaagdawenmag Binnoojiiyag Child & Family Services, we provide an array of wholistic services to support the wellbeing of children, youth, and families. We seek to support families in the way they deserve—with care and authenticity, and by recognizing and respecting spirit. Through culturally based wraparound services, we form an inclusive, nonjudgmental circle of care.

In August 2020, Dnaagdawenmag Binnoojiiyag Child & Family Services began the process of developing a new strategic plan. It sets the foundation for a clear and focused future, uniting the organization under a common purpose and strategy. It considers the broad impacts of the current and future circumstances impacting our organization and the communities we serve, including the COVID-19 pandemic, the changes to national legislation and its implications for Indigenous communities, as well as the child welfare sector transformation. Throughout the strategic plan, we will ensure that children, youth and families remain at the centre of all we do.

In this complex and rapidly changing environment, the importance of collectively evaluating and setting a clear strategy became all the more urgent. We are confident in the direction this plan provides us for the next five years.

Governed by a volunteer board of directors from our member Nations, Dnaagdawenmag Binnoojiiyag Child & Family Services seeks to honour and support those we serve. To envision our future, we turned to our communities. It was essential for us to gather your ideas and input. We appreciate, and were encouraged by, the level of commitment and engagement from all. Thank you to all those who added their voices to the process and who took the time to share their thoughts, ideas, and concerns.

We are deeply committed to pursuing these four strategic directions. Together, we will continue in our mission to keep safe, take care of, protect, guide, nurture, and support our children, our youth, our families, our communities, our Nations.

Sincerely,

Chief Laurie Carr, Board Chair  
Director

Amber Crowe, Executive

# A. OUR ORGANIZATION

## A.1. Our Name

*Dnaagdawenmag Binnoojiiyag*

- Translates to: **To look after and to always keep children at the centre of our thoughts.** Chi miigwetch to Audrey Copegog, Beausoleil First Nation, for gifting us our name, *Dnaagdawenmag Binnoojiiyag* and to Keith and Anita-baa Knott, Curve Lake First Nation, for their interpretation of our name which means *to look after and to always keep children at the centre of our thoughts*. We acknowledge our name, to know and understand who we are so that we can move forward in a good way.

## A.2. Mission

*Aangwaamwin*

- Translates to: **Keep safe, take care of, protect, guide, nurture, and support** our children, our youth, our families, our communities, our Nations.

## A.3. Vision

*Niigaangaganaabimin*

- Translates to: **Looking ahead.** Dnaagdawenmag Binnoojiiyag Child & Family Services provides wholistic services to honour and support our children, youth, families, communities and Nations to sustain a strong, healthy and balanced foundation for life.

## A.4. Values

- **Wisdom** “*Nbwaakaawin*”—This incorporates the idea of intelligence and the idea of “putting it to good use.” Wisdom means the commitment to use what we know for the betterment of all.
- **Love** “*Zaagidiwin*”—Love includes the selfless and non-judgemental love of all others as well as self-love.
- **Respect** “*Mnaadendamowin*”—The importance of showing respect for and appreciation of others is necessary to be able to earn respect.
- **Bravery** “*Aakdehewin*”—The willingness to “do the right thing” and to accept the consequences that flow from that, to always act with integrity.
- **Honesty** “*Gwekwaadziwin*”—Flowing from courage is the need to always be forthright, to withhold nothing, both with others and with ourselves.

- **Humility** “*Dbadendizwin*”— This is compassion at its most basic level. We all share the same value in the eyes of our Creator, and we are called to reflect on that value in all of our dealings.
- **Truth** “*Debwewin*”— We must be truth-tellers to all both those with whom we have dealings and with ourselves.
- We also value:
  - **Inclusivity** and **Wholistic** (Mind, Body, Emotions and Spirit)

## B. PLANNING PROCESS

From August 2021 to February 2022, Dnaagdawenmag Binnoojiiyag Child & Family Services engaged Laridae, a leading management consulting firm, to guide the Board of Directors through a strategic planning process, leading to the adoption of a five-year strategic plan.

The strategic planning approach, based on best practices for non-profit organizations, supported the Board of Directors throughout the process as they championed the planning and provided oversight in developing the final strategy. It included research, a review of documents provided by Dnaagdawenmag Binnoojiiyag Child & Family Services, an environmental scan that situates the agency in the larger context, stakeholder engagement, and ongoing meetings with the Board, Executive Director, and the staff team to work towards the development of the final strategy.

### B.1. Engagement

Engagement served as the foundation for the process, informing subsequent discussion, deliberation, and decision-making. The process was designed to engage with and listen to the individuals who interact with Dnaagdawenmag Binnoojiiyag Child & Family Services on a regular basis, including the children, youth and families who have received services, alternative caregivers, staff, Elders, volunteers, Board members, community service providers, donors and funders, members of Indigenous communities that Dnaagdawenmag serves, and interested community members. As a result, Dnaagdawenmag Binnoojiiyag Child & Family Services’ strategic plan is informed by experience, evidence, and the most broadly held perceptions of all those they serve.

Engagement strategies included an online survey, sharing circles, and key person interviews. Throughout the engagement phase, from October 16 – November 9, 2021, input and feedback were gathered from **432 stakeholders**, including:

- 268 respondents to the online survey

- 160 participants at ten sharing circles
- Four (4) key person interviewees

The process had two general purposes:

- **Engagement:** To engage those who interact with the agency by gathering input, ideas, and suggestions; and by including them in the strategic planning process directly and in a meaningful way.
- **Education and Communication:** To educate those who interact with the organization about the work of Dnaagdawenmag Binnoojiiyag Child & Family Services and generally promote the work of the agency—as a positive legacy of the planning process.

## B.2. Highlighted Themes

The themes identified in the engagement process were core elements that helped guide the Board of Directors' and Senior Team's thinking leading up to, during and after the strategic planning retreat on October 26, 2021. Several themes emerged as areas where the organization excels or could expand and improve with a newly developed strategic plan. They were:

- |  |                                    |
|--|------------------------------------|
| • Organizational Culture                 | • Perceptions                      |
| • Communications                         | • Service Delivery                 |
| • Partnerships and Relationship Building | • Culture and Traditions           |
| • Talent Management                      | • Systems, Processes and Resources |
|  | • System Challenges                |

Strategic issues, data, the financial picture, and the overall external environmental landscape were identified and explored through a series of facilitated discussions. The key issues, opportunities, and challenges were determined and prioritized. The retreat culminated in unanimous agreement on four strategic directions.

## C. OUR STRATEGY

Overarching Goal:

In setting our strategic priorities for the future, the discussions led to the establishment of an overarching goal that sets the tone for future endeavours at Dnaagdawenmag Binnoojiiyag Child & Family Services.

**In five years, Dnaagdawenmag Binnoojiiyag Child & Family Services will be a strong multiservice agency, walking alongside communities to best serve our populations while**

**supporting the decolonization of child welfare, building lasting relationships, and prioritizing trust with children, youth, families, communities, and Nations.**

What this means, in the context of our work, is that we will continue to strive to deliver services that consider the underlying needs and circumstances of our children, youth, families, and communities. We will increase our focus on prevention and wholistic support and assistance for those we serve, helping to reform the child wellbeing sector.

### Strategic Directions

In direct response to what we heard from our communities, in addition to the internal and external considerations that shaped the planning process, our strategy is focused on:

- Our Children, Youth, Families, Communities, and Nations
- Our Partners
- Our People
- Our Operational Accountabilities

Dnaagdawenmag Binnoojiiyag Child & Family Services is committing to a five-year strategic plan. As such, these directions are broad and oriented to the future—providing a clear focus and direction while still allowing us to respond and adapt as circumstances evolve over the years. These directions provide a strong framework for developing annual operational plans with measurable goals and achievable objectives.

As we move through the upcoming years, we respectfully acknowledge everyone's individual journeys and will continue to balance the needs of those we serve, of our organization, and of our funders, while remaining focused on our vision and rooted in our values.

We have incorporated our four strategic directions into the medicine wheel. The following graphic was developed in consultation with our Elders and Knowledge Keepers, to visually show the relationship between self and each strategic direction. In Haudenosaunee and Ojibway perspectives, everything begins with the self. This concept provides balance and harmony to the four strategic directions, with an understanding of the ongoing work to decolonize and heal minds.



## Our Children, Youth, Families, Communities, and Nations

We seek to continue to strengthen our relationships with the children, youth, and families we serve—being approachable, communicative, and supportive—and by being connected to and invested in the communities to which they belong. By listening and sharing information, we hope to reduce stigma, increase awareness, and amplify and empower voices across the sector. As we move forward, it is with a strong vision for the future and **the collective goal of building healthier families and communities**. We will continue to focus the vast majority of our time on keeping families together and supporting them.

As First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities make decisions on how best to support and serve their citizens and members, we commit to being a trusted partner and advisor, walking alongside them and sharing our knowledge and resources throughout the journey. We will remain here in partnership to support the communities and their children and families as they drive these changes—whether by acting as the facilitator when capacity is needed, a close advisor as they develop a plan, or as a resource when questions arise.

### Our Commitments

Over the next five years, we commit to *Our Children, Families, Communities, and Nations* through:

- **Engagement:** Prioritizing open, consistent communication and engagement with those we serve on an ongoing basis, to create unity between our agency and the communities we support. We seek to build trust, strengthen perceptions, and ensure the voices of those we serve remain integral to our planning and decision-making.



- **Multi-Service:** Shifting our focus to an expansion of our multiservice offerings, within a wholistic model of care – including prevention, early intervention, support, and clinical services—so that we can best serve our populations.
- **Culture:** Keeping culture and traditional knowledge as the foundation of our work, ensuring children, youth, families, communities, and Nations feel adequately supported with culturally appropriate services that are inclusive of all beliefs.
- **Enhanced Awareness:** Communicating clearly, consistently, and with intention to reduce misconceptions about child well-being services, increase awareness of all aspects of our agency, provide education and support, and advocate for system changes.
- **Service Agreements:** Building strong relationships with the communities and Nations we serve as they move forward with decisions related to building capacity and defining their own laws and regulations. We will leverage our experience, wisdom, and history with the child welfare sector to support these communities and ensure continued capacity and cohesion across the sector.

## Our Partners

We recognize the importance of relationships in all that we do. We seek to walk alongside our partners, collaboratively helping to strengthen and improve the health of our communities. With respect, humility, and appreciation, we will maintain our commitment to work in partnership—not competition—while leveraging our collective strengths to bridge gaps for children, youth, and families. We commit to being open and truthful in our communications. We will focus on and strengthen the key partnerships that are in alignment with our agency’s mission, vision, and values. We will take a unique partnership approach with each of the communities we work with that recognizes their particular features.

We recognize that we “walk in two worlds” and apply a two-eyed seeing approach to constantly balance both mainstream and Indigenous mandates. We commit to being grounded in our values and moving forward in a purposeful manner.

## Our Commitments

Over the next five years, we commit to *Our Partners* through:

- **Substantive Equity:** Advocating for and working with our partners to help ensure substantive equity for Indigenous children, youth, and families.
- **New Partnerships:** Forging new partnerships to support an expansion of our services, while investing in reciprocal relationships with core partners that support and align with our service models and values, to leverage our combined strengths to wholistically support children, youth and families.
- **Service Gaps:** As the province redesigns child welfare and amid investments in child welfare reform at the federal level, developing focused solutions to address service gaps in ways that leverage our core strengths and complement any services currently in place, while ensuring that we do not impose on any existing Indigenous services.
- **Teaching:** Where not possible for a service to be provided with an Indigenous agency, supporting our mainstream partners in furthering their own education on FNMI history and current issues and actualizing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission recommendations, to help ensure a trauma-informed approach and culturally appropriate supports.

- **Laws and Regulations:** Through the devolution of child well-being services, collaborating with and being a trusted partner and advisor to communities we serve and mutually helping one another to build capacity, while ensuring we are in compliance with any changing laws, standards and expectations.

## Our People

It is through our compassionate, committed staff, volunteers and alternative caregivers that we support children, youth, and families. We value each individual's contributions and the collective impact their work enables. We recognize the current challenges across the child welfare sector when it comes to recruitment, the pressures on our people and those they serve because of the COVID-19 pandemic and the changing nature of work. We commit to investing in our staff and volunteer capacity and knowledge and ensuring a positive workplace culture with high levels of well-being and satisfaction—enabling them to represent Dnaagdawenmag Binnoojiyag with positive energy, pride, and commitment.

As is the case with our services for children, youth and families, we prioritize respect, honesty, transparency, authenticity and wholistic well-being in the relationships we hold with our people. We recognize and appreciate the large number of staff who participated in our planning process, and we are committed to continuing that engagement in the future. We will move forward with ensuring our organization remains a learning environment, with teaching, culture, and values embedded in all we do.

### Our Commitments

Over the next five years, we commit to *Our People* through:

- **Decolonizing Ourselves and Our Workplace:** Recognizing that we are all on a personal and collective journey to decolonize our minds, hearts, and spirits in an effort to Indigenize all aspects of our work.
- **Equity Integration:** Providing ongoing training to integrate equity into all that we do, in a way that comprehensively reflects the diversity of all those we serve.
- **Well-being:** Focusing on well-being and addressing compassion fatigue, while ensuring our efforts are rooted in an understanding of and commitment to our mission, vision and values.
- **Recruitment and Retention:** Developing focused strategies to support staff, volunteer and alternative caregiver recruitment and retention, including an emphasis on succession planning and career pathing.
- **Engagement:** Engaging staff in solution building, with clear, focused internal communications and meaningful opportunities for feedback and input.
- **Resilience:** Fostering resiliency and flexibility, with a focus on ensuring a collaborative, strengths-based, learning environment.
- **Resources:** Ensuring our people are well-trained and have access to ongoing knowledge, resources, and cultural supports to help them carry out their roles effectively. We will also work to reduce the administrative requirements wherever possible.

## Our Operational Accountabilities

A healthy and sustainable organization is underpinned by clear, efficient systems and processes. Dnaagdawenmag Binnoojiiyag Child & Family Services has grown significantly over the past few years and continues to evolve. We recognize the importance of reviewing our operations to ensure a strong foundation and the flexibility to expand and contract in response to need. Through our adaptations to the ever-shifting environment amid the pandemic, we learned new ways of approaching our work and will adopt innovative practices that are consistent with the relational basis of the work that we do. We commit to using our resources in ways that ensure that we remain purposeful, responsive, and accountable, strengthening communities and—above all else—supporting children, youth and families. Further, we will participate and collaborate in activities that build sector-wide capacity with priority to Indigenous initiatives.

### Our Commitments

Over the next five years, we commit to *Our Operational Accountabilities* through:

- **Stewardship:** Committing to environmental stewardship and ensuring that the decisions regarding our physical resources are made with integrity, respect towards Mother Earth, and in accordance with environmental and cultural best practices.
- **Funding:** Advocating for funding and exploring ways to diversify revenue in a way that will ensure our continued ability to provide wholistic services, while being accountable for our resources and adaptable as resources ebb and flow.
- **Change Management:** Being flexible, adaptable, and intentional with how we implement change across the organization.
- **Systems and Processes:** Ensuring the necessary technology, systems, and procedures are in place to support staff, volunteers, and alternative caregivers in their work, bolstered by clearly communicated processes and training.
- **Governance:** Reflecting on the organization's governance structure, composition, and succession planning to ensure Dnaagdawenmag Binnoojiiyag is accountable to the wider populations we serve.
- **Space:** Ensuring our physical spaces are welcoming, inviting and reflect our values, balancing the need for safe and functional community spaces.

## D. NEXT STEPS

Our new strategic directions provide Dnaagdawenmag Binnoojiiyag Child & Family Services with strategic focus and a clear framework to drive change and progress. The Board has committed to the following next steps:

1. The strategic plan will be communicated internally and externally;
2. Annual organizational goals and objectives will be developed that align with, and advance each strategic direction;
3. Progress updates will be provided quarterly; and
4. Feedback will be sought regularly as the directions are implemented and results are known.