

WINTER 2021

MAMUW OBIKI-AHWAHSOOWIN

EVERYONE WORKING TOGETHER TO RAISE OUR CHILDREN

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OUR MODEL

Mamow Obiki-ahwahsoowin is the Tikinagan service model. In Ojibway/Oji-Cree, Mamow Obiki-ahwahsoowin means, "Everyone working together to raise our children." It is a system of protecting and caring for children and supporting families that has been designed and is delivered by First Nations people.

OUR VISION

The Creator entrusted First
Nations with the sacred
responsibility of protecting our
children and developing strong
families and healthy
communities. The Chiefs
created Tikinagan to support
and strengthen our children,
our families, and our
communities. The future of our
communities is our children.

TIKINAGAN.ORG

For more information, career opportunities, or to become a Foster Parent, visit tikinagan.org.

FOSTER CONNECTION. BECOME A FOSTER PARENT

We need caring Indigenous
Foster Homes and Foster
Parents in the Thunder Bay
district to care for children. We
are looking for people who
support Mamow Obikiahwahsoowin, the Tikinagan
service model.



WORKING TO MAINTAIN CONNECTIONS DURING COVID-19

Connection is at the heart of Tikinagan Child and Family Services' unique service model, Mamow Obiki-ahwahsoowin, which means "everyone working together to raise our children.

"During the COVID-19 pandemic, as children's social worlds shrink, maintaining those connections is more important than ever, said executive director Thelma Morris.

We know that children and youth are interacting less with adults, so that is why it is so important we look to our service model," she said. "Everyone needs to work together to take care of our children.

Tikinagan turned largely to technology to maintain connections with children in care as much as possible. That has included launching a foster parent hotline with service in English, Ojicree, and Ojibway, providing cell phones to youth in care, and increasing check-ins over the phone or virtually.

Communication with foster parents has actually increased during the pandemic, said Morris, with check-ins by phone or video conference at least once per week.

"Support through ongoing communication for children, families, and foster parents has been essential during this time," Morris said. "And it's made a difference."

Many child protection agencies across the province and the country have reported lower numbers of child wellbeing concerns during the pandemic, Morris added, but Tikinagan's service levels remained steady.

The agency has worked to minimize in-person contact as much as possible during COVID-19. In-person contact with clients is limited to urgent child protection matters.

However, families can still seek support through the 24/7 phone line at 1-800-465-3624.

When in-person support is necessary, Tikinagan works to ensure families have sufficient PPE and workers are following all COVID-19 precautions, which can vary by community.

Tikinagan provides culturally appropriate care for First Nations children, the model emphasizes broad circles of family support, connection with elders, and hiring workers from local communities.

"Protecting children and supporting families at a time like this takes a community effort," said Morris. "By coming together, in spirit and not inperson, we are making a difference." "▷△·Ր"△dσ◁· ◁◁·ፓᇮ∖, በ४᠈Ր٩△·桽᠈, ┎桽 ▷ㅂܩ▽·σ┖◁·ґ\ ㅂ४५σ ॊь፦ ▷▽· ㅂ△ረ५∖," ┖·፮△° △₽⊃. "▷⊃᠈Ր △·Ր"△d桽◁· ୯º."

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RED ALERT! BULLYING HURTS!

YOUTH SPEAKS OUT AGAINST BULLYING WITH WINNING IMAGE

Thirteen-year-old Memekew Apetawakeesic-Morriseau is an aspiring artist who wants to share a powerful message about bullying.

Reflecting on difficult experiences that have happened in her own life and her community of North Caribou Lake First Nation, Apetawakeesic-Morriseau drew the winning image for Tikinagan Child and Family Service's "Red Alert! Bullying Hurts!" campaign.

The image captures a simple message about bullying: it hurts.

"Bullying has to be prevented because some children will take drastic measures to make the pain stop," says Apetawakeesic-Morriseau. "I want the bullies to know that they're severely hurting people, and they're making them feel like crap."





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Apetawakeesic-Morriseau's image, which pictures a young girl sitting knees-to-chest, surrounded by towering figures shouting negative statements, says the drawing depicts herself as a child and her own experiences with bullying.

"When I was about three or four, I was living in Fort Albany and these three girls came at me and said they'll cut me. I was on the ground and that's where the towering figures came from. "It was from one of my worst bullying experience. That's what helped me create the image."

But bullying isn't just a one-time occurrence for children and youth. Apetawakeesic-Morriseau shared another bullying experience that fuelled her creative process."I was hanging out with one of my friends we were swimming and then this older girl who was bullying me, she came and then she started taking my stuff away, started yelling at me [asking] me why are you crying?"

Apetawakeesic-Morriseau hopes her image will help other children and youth going through bullying know that they are not alone and help is available. She encourages anyone who is experiencing or has experienced bullying or cyberbullying to avoid giving in to the bully.

"Just try walking away. There is a point in life where you will just have to not fight back."

For her positive message against bullying, Apetawakeesic-Morriseau is recognized by Tikinagan Child and Family Services as being a difference-maker in the lives of her peers across the north. It further demonstrates that even youth are an important part in supporting Tikinagan's service model Mamow Obiki-ahwahsoowin, which means "Everyone working together to raise our children."

The campaign's slogan, "Red Alert! Bullying Hurts," was created by Joni Trout from Lac Seul First Nation. It was selected by a panel of First Nation youth, who judged more than 130 entries.

For supports on bullying in your community, children and youth can speak with your Parents, your local Tikinagan workers, NAN community Well-Being workers, Nodin Mental Health Services, NAPS, OPP, Teachers, and Principals at your school about some of the bullying or issues you may be experiencing.

You can also call the NAN Hope Line @ 1-844-NAN-HOPE or the Kids Help Line @ 1-800-668-6868 to speak with a professional counsellor.

For more information on Tikinagan's "Red Alert! Bullying Hurts" campaign, visit tikinagan.org.

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