



PAYUKOTAYNO

JAMES & HUDSON BAY FAMILY SERVICES

Payukotayno
Strategic Plan

2017-2021



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Message from the Chair and Executive Director

This fall, the Payukotayno James & Hudson Bay Family Services (Payukotayno) Board of Directors embarked on a strategic planning process. We are a dedicated group of volunteers from all the communities served and have accepted the responsibility of the governance and stewardship of Payukotayno. Funder expectations evolve, practices in the sector change, and we know there are many challenges and opportunities before us. We believed that if we were to continue to work towards meeting the needs of this northern, rural region and the first nations communities we serve, then a robust, forward-looking plan would be needed to help guide our way.

From the outset, our board believed it was essential for us to gather input directly from stakeholders. It was especially important that our strategic plan reflect the needs of our community, so we engaged community members, clients, Chiefs and Councils, elected officials, stakeholders, partners, and staff, right across the communities that we serve in the James and Hudson Bay regions. We asked the pertinent questions: How are we doing? What do we do well? What could we improve upon? Are there service delivery gaps that we need to fill? Do the community and our partners need to know more about us and what we do?

The goal was to develop a five-year strategic plan based upon real engagement. We began with a critical analysis of the environment locally, regionally, and provincially. We then assessed our own organization's capacities and opportunities and, together, mapped out four new strategic directions to pursue. Lastly, the strategic directions are in keeping with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action for child welfare, which will ensure they remain grounded in principle and relevant in the years to come.

We are proud of the outcome and excited about our future—one that will see our children remain in our communities across the region. We thank everyone who took the time to participate, share ideas and give suggestions. Together, we will build a healthier community for children and families.

Sincerely,

Victor Linklater, Board Chair

Charlene Reuben, Executive Director

A. Introduction

Following an engaging planning process, the Board of Directors of Payukotayno has established the following four strategic directions with the overarching goal of “keeping our children in our communities”.



These four strategic directions will serve to focus our work over the next five years. They are driven by our mission, vision and values, and speak directly to the challenges and opportunities before us. The board believes these directions signal to all stakeholders invested in the success of Payukotayno that this organization is ready and able to meet its future head on. The spirit on which Payukotayno was founded—that of a sincere and deep desire for First Nations people to deliver their own child welfare services—is alive and well

in these new directions. Further, this is a plan that meets our community's desire to retain responsibility for the oversight and delivery of child welfare services that reflect the cultural values and social norms of our communities, with the ultimate goal of retaining children in the region.

The four directions build upon our successes to date. They envision a future for Payukotayno that is strong, client-focused, and connected to others through meaningful partnerships at every turn. They seek collaboration.

“Workers will do whatever it takes to make sure children are safe and well cared for.”
~ Payukotayno Staff Member

“Take care of the kid’s heart first, and then focus on personal growth. A culture of caring.”
~Partner/Stakeholder

Payukotayno has a bright future. Our strategy is to maintain our firm and unwavering commitment to deliver culturally appropriate services for the safety and well-being of children and families. Our new directions are generous in spirit, and rooted firmly in serving the needs of children, youth, families, neighbours, friends, and loved ones—which, we know, reflects the James and Hudson Bay region itself.

B. About Payukotayno

B.1) Brief History

The development of Payukotayno James and Hudson Bay Family Services was the result of the growing demand in the 1970s for First Nations people to deliver their own child welfare services. The child welfare system at the time was seen as being inadequate and inappropriate to the needs of the native people it was mandated to serve. Previous services did not reflect the cultural values and social norms of the native communities involved. Native people virtually had no choice but to accept services from a system whose alien concepts and standards frequently conflicted with those of native people, and this conflict tended to create and perpetuate problems and needs. Payukotayno was officially incorporated on July 12, 1984 under the direction of the Mushkegowuk Chiefs.

Out of this evolved the concept of native child welfare services, and organizations such as Payukotayno James and Hudson Bay Family Services emerged in the early 1980s. The concept of Payukotayno was endorsed by the Ministry of Community and Social Services with the assistance and support of North Cochrane District Family Services.

Payukotayno was officially incorporated on July 12, 1984, to assume total responsibility for child welfare services previously handled by other agencies in the south. Its new mandate was to build new services geared to meet the requirements of the Child and Family Services Act and to take into account the traditional aspects of the Cree people.

B.2) Understanding Payukotayno Today

Payukotayno James & Hudson Bay Family Services is 1 of 47 Children's Aid Societies (CAS) in Ontario. Payukotayno protects children from physical, sexual, and emotional abuse and neglect, while also providing parents and caregivers with the support they need to build healthy families. It offers Child Welfare, Children's Mental Health, and Youth Justice Services. The agency serves the six First Nation communities and one municipality located along the western James Bay coast.

There has been significant growth over the past eight years, both in staff size and client volumes. Payukotayno currently provides the following services:

- Child Protection
- Child Care
- Foster Care
- Children's Mental Health
- Youth Justice
- Special Services

Children in care numbers have increased significantly over the past year; however, the number of protection files has decline. The complexity of clients has also changed since the last strategic plan.



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There are currently 90 staff, an increase of 25% since 2011/12. The number of staff has been increased due to the number of clientele being served and to enhance Payukotayno's effectiveness as it relates to deadlines, standards, and quality.

All funding received comes from the provincial government. The current funding model is the same across the province and does not take into account geography or other unique factors.

B.3) Mission, Vision, and Values

Payukotayno's Vision

Our families and communities are healthy and empowered to nurture and care for their own.

Our Mission

In partnership with our communities, Payukotayno delivers culturally appropriate services for the safety and well-being of children and families.

Guiding Values

Payukotayno recognizes the importance of aligning our values with the natural laws of humans.

- **Wisdom:** To cherish knowledge is to know Wisdom. Wisdom is to be used for the good of the people. This word also means "prudence," or "intelligence."
- **Love:** To know Love is to know peace. Love must be unconditional. When people are weak they need love the most. This form of love is mutual.
- **Respect:** To honour all creation is to have Respect. All of creation should be treated with respect. You must give respect if you wish to be respected.
- **Bravery:** Bravery is to face the world with integrity and with a fearless heart. Do what is right even when the consequences are unpleasant.
- **Honesty:** Honesty in facing a situation is to be brave. Always be honest in word and action. Be honest first with yourself, and you will more easily be able to be honest with others
- **Humility:** Humility is to know yourself. This word also means "compassion." You are equal to others, but you are not better.
- **Truth:** Truth is to know all of these things. Speak the truth. Do not deceive yourself or others.

C. Overview of the Planning Process

The Board of Directors of Payukotayno commissioned the strategic planning process in their roles as governors and stewards of the organization. The planning scope laid out a process to identify organizational priorities and position it to protect children from physical, sexual, and emotional abuse and neglect, while also providing parents and caregivers with the support they need to build healthy families. In order to effectively draw stakeholder input, ensure confidentiality of responses, and encourage all opinions and views, through a tendering process, the Board engaged the services of an independent firm to facilitate the process. The process took place between the months of September to December 2016.

C.1) Stakeholder Engagement

C.1.1) Stakeholder Engagement Overview

Increasingly, non-profit and public sector organizations both desire, and are expected, to "check in" periodically with the stakeholders who interact with them most often. Strategic plans that provide meaningful direction rely on an authentic engagement process, one that genuinely seeks input and allows for those invested in the success of an organization to provide ideas, input, and feedback. Of course, conceptually, leadership means to ask tough questions, make decisions, encourage commitment, and provide the direction an organization requires.

Properly done, stakeholder engagement is in no way an abdication or devolution of leadership. It's the opposite. Leaders who reach out and seek the input of the people delivering or receiving services every day are far more likely to craft future strategic directions that resonate with those they most affect, and those who must implement them.



Setting out with the goal of creating an inspiring and actionable strategic plan, Payukotayno saw meaningful stakeholder engagement as a critical early step in the process. Before identifying the strategic priorities, the Board reached out to capture and engage the voices of Payukotayno's community of stakeholders. Their feedback will serve to strengthen and shape the next strategic plan.

Along with other components—such as assessing the opportunities and risks facing Payukotayno — stakeholder engagement plays an important role in informing decisions for the organization's future.

Multiple stakeholder groups were engaged via focus groups, online surveys, interviews, and community town hall meetings. These stakeholder groups included:

- Payukotayno frontline staff
- Payukotayno management
- Payukotayno Board members
- Chiefs and Councils
- Local non-profit organizations
- Community members
- Current and past clients
- Elected officials

C.1.2) Engagement Mediums

The engagement sessions and opportunities were promoted by email, word of mouth, bulletin boards, satellite offices, and social media.

Survey: A confidential online survey was conducted, available to community members, community leadership, stakeholder/partners, and agency staff. Anonymity was guaranteed to encourage participants to be comfortable and honest in their responses. Paper copies were made available on-site in all the communities served by Payukotayno.

In-Person Focus Groups: Focus groups were held for each identified audience (frontline staff, middle management, senior management, community, stakeholders/partners, as well as Chiefs, Councils, and elected officials). A separate focus group was facilitated for each audience in respect of different roles, needs and topics. The participants were engaged during each of the focus groups and a comfortable rapport developed over the course of the process.

- Five Partner/Stakeholder Engagement Session (including service providers) were scheduled: Moosonee, Fort Albany, Moose Factory, Kashechewan, and Attawapiskat.
- Five Staff Engagement Sessions (including: staff, middle management, and senior management), held in Moosonee, Attawapiskat, and Kashechewan.

Community Town-Hall Meetings: Five open-house style meetings were scheduled in Fort Albany, Moosonee, Kashechewan, Peawanuck, and Attawapiskat.

Key Informant Interviews: Key informant interviews are qualitative in-depth interviews with individuals considered knowledgeable about the community, the organization and/or the CAS sector. The purpose of these interviews is to collect detailed information from experts who—with their particular knowledge, experience, and understanding—may provide insight on challenges, opportunities and potential solutions.

C.1.3) Engagement Purpose

Before moving ahead and striking new strategic directions, Payukotayno decided early on to seek input from a wide array of stakeholders. In doing so, Payukotayno is ensuring that its next strategic plan is one that has a solid base informed by experience, evidence, and the broadest-held perceptions.

The survey and the in-person sessions had two general purposes:

1. To engage stakeholders by gathering input, ideas, suggestions and including them in the planning process directly and in a meaningful way
2. To educate stakeholders about the work of Payukotayno and generally promote the mission and vision to the community (as a positive legacy of the planning process)

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C.1.4) Engagement Statistics

An online survey, focus group sessions, and community meetings were held to engage stakeholders in the strategic planning process.

- a. The survey was open for two weeks, from October 18th to November 9th, 2016.
- b. The number of respondents that completed the survey was 82.
- c. The number of individuals who participated in focus groups and key informant interviews was 89.
- d. The total number of individuals engaged, not including Board members, was 171.

C.1.5) Strategic Planning Focus Group Schedule

Date	Audience/ Location
October 31, 2016	Mushkegowuk Deputy Grand Chief (Moose Factory)
October 31, 2016	Frontline Staff (Moosonee)
October 31, 2016	Middle Management Staff (Moosonee)
October 31, 2016	Mayor of Moosonee
October 31, 2016	Service Providers (Moosonee)
November 1, 2016	Fort Albany Chief and Council
November 1, 2016	Service Providers (Fort Albany)
November 1, 2016	Community (Fort Albany)
November 1, 2016	Community (Moosonee)
November 2, 2016	Service Providers (Moose Factory)
November 2, 2016	Service Providers (Kashechewan)
November 2, 2016	Community (Kashechewan)
November 2, 2016	Kashechewan Chief and Council
November 3, 2016	Peawanuck Leadership/Service Providers/Community
November 3, 2016	Service Providers (Attawapiskat)
November 3, 2016	Community (Attawapiskat)
November 4, 2016	Frontline Staff (Attawapiskat)
November 4, 2016	Attawapiskat Chief and Council
November 4, 2016	Senior Management (Moosonee)

Summaries of the focus group and key informant interview commentary, as well as the survey results, were provided to the Board in advance of the strategic planning retreat. While the community meetings were lightly attended, with the exception of Peawanuck, generally there was strong representation from the Council members and partners/stakeholders, and ample opportunity for in-depth conversations. Topics that came up during informal discussions at each location included the desire to see kids in care remain in the region, access to prevention services, and increased communications (internal and external). There were many positive comments about Payukotayno, with attendees making a point of complimenting staff on the job they are doing.

C.2 Board Strategic Planning Session

The Board of Directors met in Moosonee on Saturday, November 26th and Sunday November 27th for an in-depth strategic planning session. Through presentations and facilitated discussion, strategic issues, operational data, financial trends, and an environmental scan were considered. Key issues were mapped along with the opportunities and challenges that needed to be addressed in the new strategic plan.

The Board distilled the information collected from the focus groups and findings from the online survey, and applied the themes that emerged from stakeholder engagement to the range of information under discussion. The Board reached consensus on four draft strategic directions.



D. Our Strategic Directions

Payukotayno is committing to a five-year strategic plan. As such, the directions are broad and oriented to the future. This allows the organization to respond and adapt as circumstances change over the years. The four directions are also in keeping with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Calls to Action. The directions offer a framework for the development of annual plans with measurable goals and objectives. These annual plans (not included as part of this document) will make the directions operational. The strategic directions will help Payukotayno focus on the areas where improvements can make the most difference to the community and ensure that Payukotayno continues to thrive and grow.

Our Primary Goal: Keeping Our Children in Our Communities

Our primary goal is to ensure our children remain in our communities. We know our children thrive when they stay connected, connected to our culture and teachings, connected to our language and identity, connected to our communities and families.

All our strategic directions support this overarching goal:

- **Over the next five years we will work with each of the communities we serve to ensure our children our safe, protected, and cared for in an environment that is as close to home as possible.**
- **Children needing to go south will only occur in rare circumstances.**

The following four strategic themes will allow us to achieve our overarching goal:



1. A locally-developed Service Delivery Model

Our communities require a locally-developed service delivery model. This means that the way we provide services for children needs to be culturally appropriate and reflective of our region.

Our Commitments

Over the next five years, we commit to:

- Collaborating with our communities and partners to design a Service Delivery Model that builds on traditional knowledge and puts children and families at the centre of all we do.
- Creating a structured process to engage the Ministry of Children and Youth Services and other aboriginal-serving agencies in the development and implementation of the Service Delivery Model.
- Ensuring that the service delivery standards are flexible and designed to meet distinct local needs and recognized gaps in services.
- Continuing to build and nurture partnerships with other community agencies to maximize the reach and impact of our collaborative efforts.
- Reviewing our quality and performance metrics in an ongoing and transparent way with our communities.
- Work with the community to identify the philosophy that underpins the service delivery model to reflect the needs/beliefs of our region.
- Develop a comprehensive prevention strategy with our partners.

4. We call upon the federal government to enact Aboriginal child-welfare legislation that establishes national standards for Aboriginal child apprehension and custody cases and includes principles that:

- i. Affirm the right of Aboriginal governments to establish and maintain their own child-welfare agencies.
- ii. Require all child-welfare agencies and courts to take the residential school legacy into account in their decision making.
- iii. Establish, as an important priority, a requirement that placements of Aboriginal children into temporary and permanent care be culturally appropriate

~ Truth and Reconciliation Commission

2. A Strong Voice for Children across Our Region

The children in our communities need Payukotayno to be a strong voice for their needs. Strengthening our communications and advocacy is a priority. We know it is essential to keep everyone who cares about children in our communities informed of the work we are doing.

Our Commitments

Over the next five years, we commit to:

- Working with the Ministry of Children and Youth Services to ensure our resources match our geographic and cultural needs, taking into account the history and multi-generational impacts of residential schools.
- Ensuring that Payukotayno has an annual strategic communications plan that has, at its foundation, our cultural values.
- Strengthening our stakeholder engagement through an increased focus on external communications tools, such as newsletters, social media, and community outreach.
- Collaborating with our partners and community leaders to deepen the understanding of Payukotayno's mandate and scope of service.
- Ensuring we have strong internal communication processes and structures in place to provide our staff with the information and support they need to serve children.
- Strengthening formal and informal protocols for working with our partners to better serve children and families.

1.ii) "Providing adequate resources to enable Aboriginal communities and child-welfare organizations to keep Aboriginal families together where it is safe to do so, and to keep children in culturally appropriate environments, regardless of where they reside."
~ *Truth and Reconciliation Commission*



3. A Healthy and Sustainable Organization

A healthy and sustainable organization has strong systems and processes in place, is financially viable, and invests in its own renewal. Payukotayno recognizes it has a unique role to play in the region and that children's safety and well-being depend on our services that are culturally appropriate and available when needed.

Our Commitments

Over the next five years, we commit to:

- Continually reviewing all services with the intent to make continuous improvement to performance and quality.
- Ensuring kids in care remain close to home, and repatriating children who are returning to our region.
- Further developing local and culturally appropriate options for kids in care, including kinship, customary care, foster care, receiving home, and adoption.
- Developing partnerships to invest in a local group home that provides programming and services.
- Continuing to invest in, and keep up with, information technology needs.

2) We call upon the federal government, in collaboration with the provinces and territories, to prepare and publish annual reports on the number of Aboriginal children (First Nations, Inuit, and Métis) who are in care, compared with non-Aboriginal children, as well as the reasons for apprehension, the total spending on preventive and care services by child-welfare agencies, and the effectiveness of various interventions. Monitoring and assessing neglect investigations.”

~ Truth and Reconciliation Commission



4. A Vibrant Workplace Culture

In order to provide the best possible service to children, we will ensure a positive and healthy workplace culture through supportive initiatives and strong internal communications. All staff will be educated and trained about the history and impacts of residential schools and the potential for Aboriginal communities and families to provide more appropriate solutions to family healing.

Our Commitments

Over the next five years, we commit to:

- Providing all staff with the ongoing training needed to ensure they are successful, including cultural competencies and traditional teachings, as well as education about the ongoing impacts of residential schools and the sixties scoop.
- Investing in attracting and retaining staff with the appropriate knowledge, skills, and abilities.
- Developing a robust orientation and onboarding program that takes into account the uniqueness of each of the communities we serve.
- Maintaining a positive workplace culture through supportive initiatives and strong internal communications.
- Continuing to provide our staff with the tools and resources needed to practice self-care, both traditional and western.

1.iv) “Ensuring that social workers and others who conduct child-welfare investigations are properly educated and trained about the potential for Aboriginal communities and families to provide more appropriate solutions to family healing.”
~ *Truth and Reconciliation Commission*

E. Next Steps

The new strategic directions will guide Payukotayno by providing a framework for decision making. The strategic directions will form the basis for annual operational planning, with goals and objectives, measurement against targets, and tactics and tools for execution. The strategic directions will be communicated internally and externally, and will drive progress as Payukotayno continues to evolve in response to the needs of the community and changes in broader child welfare policy.

F. Conclusion

The Board of Directors and senior management are proud of the success of Payukotayno and excited about the future. Our strategic directions will help ensure that we make steady progress toward agreed outcomes and enable us to maintain and improve services and programs.

We thank everyone who participated in the strategic planning process, whether in-person, completing the survey, or by submitting comments. We have listened to the feedback and considered it carefully. The time and thoughtful attention given to our questions are greatly appreciated.



Appendix 1: Board of Directors and Senior Staff

Name	Role	Organization
Victor H. Linklater	Board President	Taykwa Tagamou First Nation
Nellie Trapper	Vice President	Moose Cree First Nation
Pauline Sackaney	Treasurer	Town of Moosonee
Jenesse Martin	Secretary	Kashechewan First Nation
Gail Tomatuk	Member	Local Services Board
Victor Weapenicappo	Member	Moose Cree Band
Luke Gull	Member	Weenusk First Nation
Janice Solyts	Member	Town of Moosonee
Vacant	Member	Attawapiskat First Nation
Vacant	Member	Fort Albany First Nation
Charlene Reuben	Executive Director	Payukotayno Staff