



**MA MAWI WI CHI ITATA CENTRE**  
*We all work together to help one another.*

February 20, 2016

Mr. Ron Ensom  
National Coalition on Physical Punishment of Children and Youth  
c/o Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario  
401 Smyth Road  
Ottawa, ON K1H 8L1

Dear Mr. Ensom,

Please accept this letter on behalf of the Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre, Inc. to express our enthusiastic support and full endorsement of your joint statement on physical punishment of children and youth that states:

*“The evidence is clear and compelling — physical punishment of children and youth plays no useful role in their upbringing and poses only risks to their development. The conclusion is equally compelling — parents should be strongly encouraged to develop alternative and positive approaches to discipline.”*

Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata is a grandmother in the Winnipeg family of community service providers. She was established in 1984 to reclaim Indigenous people's inherent role and responsibility as the caregivers for Indigenous children and families in Winnipeg. We are a community mandated, Indigenous directed and supported human service organization, delivering children in care and community based programs and services to Indigenous families. The name Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata translates from Ojibway into the phrase “*we all work together to help one another*” and our programs and services are developed and operate within a philosophy that is embodied in our name. These words reflect a vision of collective responsibility and reciprocity that drives our leadership in Indigenous community based care in Winnipeg.

In 2015, the Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre served just over 24,000 Indigenous people, safety to over 300 children in care of child and family services and over 550

***Strengthening Children and Families... Investing in Our Future***

Indigenous volunteers helping to build a community of caring. We take great pride in our strength and value based approach to supporting Indigenous families in Winnipeg.

It is this value base rooted in our traditional Indigenous beliefs and values of the sacredness of children and youth in our community. We believe children are sacred beings and it is our role and responsibility to be their most important and influential teachers and caregivers in their growth and development. We also believe it takes a community to raise a child and invest in our future generations.

The concept of 'spare the rod, spoil the child' / and physical punishment is a European concept brought to Indigenous peoples mainly through the Residential School experience from 1870 to 1996. As a result, we are in full support of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's recommendation to repeal Section 43 of the Criminal Code and agree that any form of physical punishment is a relic of a discredited past and has no place in Canadian schools or homes.

We also have reviewed your research and support the science that validates the joint statement and we are hopeful more levels of government will endorse and prioritize the development of related policies and legislation to protect children's basic right against any form of violence directed towards them.

We would like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to the National Coalition on Physical Punishment of Children and Youth for your leadership on this issue and for every minute invested in creating this joint statement which we are truly honored to be a part of.

It would be our pleasure to discuss this letter in more detail. Please feel free to contact our Executive Director, Diane Redsky at [dredsky@mamawi.com](mailto:dredsky@mamawi.com) or by phone at (204) 925-0300 at your convenience.

Respectfully Submitted,



Ms. Jade Harper, Chairperson

Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre, Inc. Board of Directors