



## **ALIGN Statement: Nurturing Children's Needs: Analyzing the Connection of Gender Policy, Human Rights, And Parental Relationships in Alberta**

### **Understanding the Importance of Gender Policy in Alberta: Promoting Children's Rights and Well-Being**

Gender policy plays a crucial role in promoting children's rights and well-being in Alberta. Policies that recognize and protect gender as a fundamental aspect of human identity help to create an environment where children can develop their full potential, free from discrimination and bias. Along with empowering children to explore their identities and aspirations without limitations or fear of judgment, gender policy can support the holistic development of children by fostering healthy relationships within families. Policies that address systemic inequalities encourage parents to question stereotypical gender norms and roles, reducing the risk of family violence and promoting equal sharing of caregiving responsibilities between mothers and fathers. This not only benefits children by providing them with diverse role models but also enhances co-parenting relationships, leading to more supportive and nurturing environments.

### **Exploring the Intersection of Child Rights and Parental Relationships: Implications for Child Development and Well-being in Alberta**

In Alberta, the examination of the intersection between the rights of the child and the development of strong parental relationships is crucial for healthy child development. Ensuring the well-being of children is a multifaceted task that requires a delicate balance between parental responsibilities and children's needs. In Alberta, this intricate balance demands careful consideration of gender policy, human rights, and the availability of natural supports and professional services that support the parental relationship. The polarizing of children's and parents' rights is an oversimplification of the intersecting factors that support healthy child development. The well-being of all Alberta children rests on our ability to ensure they are safe, free from discrimination, and connected to their caregivers.

The impact of strong parental relationships on child well-being is irrefutably positive<sup>1</sup>. Children need relationships with their parents that are loving, safe, and mutually respectful to tackle the

challenges of growing up – and these relationships become even more critical when children face adversity, like poverty and discrimination. The disruption or rupture of this relationship is heartbreaking and often life-altering for the child and parent. Public policy, combined with effective services, has the power to affirm the parent/child bond while still protecting the child's right to safety, especially for children who may be vulnerable within their families as they develop their gender identity.

Comprehensive gender policies should encompass parental relationships, acknowledging diverse family structures and promoting equal rights for all parents and children. Therefore, ALIGN urges the government to consult further on the proposed gender policies. As consultation continues, it is our hope that further exploration is had with diverse groups regarding the basic rights of children and their families right to make decisions in safe and healthy ways.

---

<sup>1</sup> See, for example: Harvard Centre for the Developing Child - [Three Early Childhood Development Principles to Improve Child Outcomes \(harvard.edu\)](https://www.harvard.edu/development-principles-to-improve-child-outcomes)