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Children were traditionally designated as chiefs at or before birth and their initial training towards that end would begin at an early age but intensive preparation to become a chief began in adulthood. This is true to a lesser degree today.

It is especially true today that the intensive training of chief's heirs occurs in the young adult years when young people have demonstrated their potential.

The meritorious qualities which have always been required of an heir include wisdom, patience, generosity, self-control, the desire and ability to look after his family's interests, knowledge of the territory, good judgment, fairness and kindness. He should also be a hard worker, know the language and laws well, be a good speaker and have a spouse who supports him in his endeavours.

A chief must expend more time, energy, thought and wealth than all others for the benefit of the people.

One of the most important areas of responsibility for a young person who is a chief's heir is learning to conduct feasts.

In recent years, the burden for young Gitksan and Wet'suwet'en has doubled because today it is expected that young people, especially those of high standing, be competent in two worlds. They must speak two languages, know two cultures and be successful in two economies to be considered a leading citizen, a burden most members of Canadian society are not expected to carry.