



COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO THE CIRCUMSTANCES
SURROUNDING THE DEATH OF PHOENIX SINCLAIR

Commission Disclosure 0202

PROGRESS ON THE CHANGES FOR CHILDREN INITIATIVE

A Report from
Child and Family Services
Standing Committee

Winter 2008/09



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This report is presented by the Child and Family Services Standing Committee, the advisory group of the Manitoba child and family services system. This group has legislated responsibility for promoting cooperation and collaboration both within the child and family services (CFS) system and with other systems. In this report, the Child and Family Services Standing Committee is referred to as Standing Committee.

The work of Standing Committee continues to focus on three major areas:

- continuing implementation of the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry – Child Welfare Initiative (AJI-CWI)
- implementation of the Changes for Children initiative
- ongoing system development

We, the members of Standing Committee, are pleased to provide this report. The members of Standing Committee are:

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INTRODUCTION

This report documents progress made over the past year on improving Manitoba's child and family services (CFS) system.

The primary purpose of the CFS system is to:

- protect children who are at risk of abuse or neglect
- support and strengthen the well-being of families throughout the province, particularly those having difficulty caring for their children
- provide safe, loving and nurturing care for children when families can't

These are critical responsibilities. They are also very demanding. Every year, child and family services responds to tens of thousands of enquiries from concerned Manitobans. Every day, the CFS system supports almost 9,000 families and provides alternative care for nearly 8,000 children.

It has long been recognized that sweeping changes were needed to improve the CFS system. Reforms have been needed to address the damage and disruption the system has brought to First Nations and Metis children, families, and communities. An important start was made in the 1980s, when First Nations CFS agencies began delivering services on-reserve. However, as recommended in the 1991 Aboriginal Justice Inquiry Report, the entire system needed to be reorganized.

It wasn't until 2000, nearly a decade later, that action was finally taken. Work began that year on the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry - Child Welfare Initiative (AJI-CWI) which, by 2006, brought historic and unprecedented reforms to the CFS system. First Nations and Metis peoples regained the right to develop and control their own child and family services, and four new CFS Authorities were established.

In March 2006, Manitobans were shocked by news of the tragic death of a five-year old child. Three external reviews focusing on this tragedy, along with two other reviews of the CFS system, were released in late 2006. They identified longstanding problems in the CFS system, and detailed 289 recommendations for change. Combined with the reforms carried out under the AJI-CWI, the recommendations provide a blueprint for action, called **Changes for Children**, to improve the CFS system.

Standing Committee is committed to communicating the progress being made on Changes for Children. This report describes progress made during the second year and into the third year since the launch of Changes for Children in October 2006. The first report on Changes for Children was released in October 2007.

This report is also available online at www.changesforchildren.mb.ca.



THE ABORIGINAL JUSTICE INQUIRY – CHILD WELFARE INITIATIVE

The Aboriginal Justice Inquiry – Child Welfare Initiative (AJI-CWI) was established to address the child welfare recommendations of the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry (AJI). The AJI was commissioned in 1988 to examine the relationship between Aboriginal peoples in Manitoba and the justice system. The AJI final report, released in 1991, documented many serious problems in the CFS system and recommended a major restructuring.

In August 2000, following almost a decade of government inaction, the Manitoba government, along with First Nations and Metis leaders, jointly established the AJI-CWI. The goals of the AJI-CWI are to:

- recognize the First Nations and Metis right to control the development and delivery of child and family services to their peoples throughout Manitoba
- restructure the CFS system through legislation and other changes

By 2006, most of the restructuring was completed, including the establishment of four new CFS Authorities:

- The Metis Child and Family Services Authority
- The Southern First Nations Child and Family Services Authority
- The Northern First Nations Child and Family Services Authority
- The General Child and Family Services Authority

As well, the restructuring included:

- enacting *The Child and Family Services Authorities Act* and amending *The Child and Family Services Act* and *The Adoption Act*
- establishing new service delivery arrangements and partnerships throughout the province
- transferring responsibility for more than 3,600 cases, along with human and financial resources, to the Metis and First Nations Authorities and their agencies

THE EXTERNAL REVIEWS

In Autumn 2006, five external reviews of the CFS system were completed. Three of these reviews were commissioned in response to the tragic death of a five year old child:

- *Strengthen The Commitment - An External Review of the Child Welfare System* (Hardy, Schibler & Hamilton, September 2006)
- *Honouring Their Spirits - The Child Death Review: A Report to the Minister of Family Services and Housing* (Schibler & Newton, Office of the Children's Advocate, September 2006)
- *Recommendations - A Special Case Review* (Koster & Schibler, Section 4 Review, September 2006)

A fourth review, *Strengthening Our Youth - Their Journey to Competence and Independence* (Schibler & McEwan-Morris, Office of the Children's Advocate), was released in November 2006. It focused on services and supports provided to youth transitioning out of the CFS system.

The fifth review was released by the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) in December 2006. The OAG review examined the policies and procedures that were in place in the Child and Family Services Division of Manitoba Family Services and Housing prior to the restructuring of the system.

Together, these five reviews represent the most comprehensive examination of the CFS system ever done in Manitoba.

Three key conclusions emerged from the reviews:

- Factors such as poverty, poor housing, addictions, and the lack of effective responses to these factors by other systems, are root causes of family breakdown and the growing demands on the CFS system.
- The restructuring of the CFS system through the AJI-CWI was a major step forward and provides both the foundation and momentum on which to make other important improvements.
- The challenges identified in service delivery predate the restructuring, and the restructuring provides a unique opportunity to address these challenges.

Prior to the external reviews, plans were in place to address the key priorities remaining under the AJI-CWI, including new legislation, reviewing residential (group) care, funding models, and implementing prevention programs.

In October 2006, an initiative called **Changes for Children** was launched in response to the external reviews. As described in more detail on the next page, Changes for Children will complement and build on the AJI-CWI plans.

THE CHANGES FOR CHILDREN INITIATIVE

Changes for Children is an initiative to address the 289 recommendations of the external reviews. This initiative was announced on October 13, 2006 by the Leadership Council, a group comprised of political leaders from the Metis, First Nations, and Manitoba government. The Province of Manitoba is providing \$42 million over three years to begin work on this initiative.

Following the announcement, a group called the Implementation Team was formed to oversee initial work on Changes for Children. In August 2007, Standing Committee assumed responsibility for Changes for Children.

To provide accountability, the Office of the Children's Advocate and the Office of the Manitoba Ombudsman are responsible for reviewing and reporting on Changes for Children. Standing Committee meets quarterly with the Children's Advocate and the Ombudsman to review progress and work plans.

Changes for Children organized the 289 recommendations into seven major themes:

- Theme 1:** Keeping Children Safe through Primary Prevention Programs
- Theme 2:** A Priority Emphasis on Early Intervention for Families
- Theme 3:** Enhanced Support for Front-Line Child Protection Workers
- Theme 4:** Improved Communication
- Theme 5:** Strengthen the New Governance Structure
- Theme 6:** Fiduciary Obligation of the Government of Canada
- Theme 7:** Section 10 Reviews

Progress made on Changes for Children is presented in this report according to the seven themes.

KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE THROUGH PRIMARY PREVENTION PROGRAMS

The external reviews called for more and better prevention programs for children, families, and communities in Manitoba. Prevention programs focus on dealing with conditions that can lead to child abuse and neglect. Prevention services promote protective conditions that increase family health and well-being. They help caregivers find ways to parent effectively, even under stress.

The reviews emphasized that effective prevention is a shared responsibility among families, communities, the CFS system, and other service systems.

Four general recommendations from the external reviews relating to this theme are to:

- build stronger relationships among service systems
- involve community members in designing prevention strategies for their families
- reduce safety risks to children by better educating communities about child safety
- increase the options available to encourage children, youth, and families to engage in healthy behaviours

In response to these recommendations, a variety of prevention projects were completed or started in 2006/07:

- Educational materials on suicide prevention and water safety were distributed.
- Funding was provided for foster family recreation and child safety equipment.
- A project to enable CFS workers to provide police with identifying information in sexual exploitation investigations was launched.
- A new committee was formed to explore ways to promote better collaboration and integration of systems.

As well, a major prevention initiative was launched in April 2007. The Manitoba government, in collaboration with the four CFS Authorities, announced plans to enhance Manitoba's Coordinated Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Strategy. To date, the FASD Strategy has focused on helping children and families involved in the CFS system.

During 2007/08, work on the theme of prevention focused on four areas: inter-sectoral collaboration, FASD, suicide prevention, and safety education.

Summary of Progress

Inter-Sectoral Collaboration

- In June 2008, Standing Committee named two co-chairs of the **Child Welfare Inter-Sectoral Committee (CWIC)**. The CWIC's job is to work on recommendations relating to increased collaboration and integration of systems. Both co-chairs represent child welfare interests in the planning and design of major inter-sectoral initiatives, including FASD and suicide prevention strategies.

FASD

- In March 2008, Standing Committee and Healthy Child Manitoba came together to **coordinate the FASD recommendations** in Changes for Children through the Provincial Coordinated FASD Strategy. Work on the Strategy is ongoing.
- In April 2008, the Manitoba government announced funding for the creation of **FASD Specialist positions** at each of the four CFS Authorities. The positions have all been filled. The role of the specialists is to develop, implement, and evaluate FASD services delivered by CFS agencies. As well, the specialists offer expertise in case planning and help to improve access to needed services. The specialists work in collaboration with the following partners:
 - CFS agencies within their respective Authority
 - the Provincial Coordinated FASD Strategy (led by Healthy Child Manitoba)
 - FASD program and policy staff at Healthy Child Manitoba
 - the Joint Training Unit, a working group responsible for CFS staff training
 - the Coalition on Alcohol and Pregnancy
 - the FASD service community
- In April 2008, the **FASD Strategy Implementation Team (SIT)** was established. The SIT is comprised of the four Authority FASD Specialists and representatives from Healthy Child Manitoba. Its purpose is to design work plans for implementing the FASD recommendations from the external reviews.
- In May 2008, the **Spectrum Connections** program was launched. This program is delivered by FASD Life's Journey Inc. and provides services for youth and adults living with FASD. These services include:
 - clinical and consultation services
 - referrals for families needing support or resources
 - case management for people not eligible for other programs
 - transitional planning for youth
 - services for youth age 18+ and no longer eligible for CFS services
 - services for youth and adults not eligible for other programs
- Work is underway to develop **new standards for FASD services for children**, using best practice models. An independent contractor retained by Standing Committee has completed initial consultations and research, and has written a final report on findings.

- Three communities in Manitoba have accepted invitations to be sites for expansion of Healthy Child Manitoba's **Stop FASD** program. The three communities are Portage la Prairie, Flin Flon, and Dauphin. Stop FASD provides mentoring and other supports to pregnant and post-natal women at high risk of having alcohol and/or drug-exposed births.

Suicide Prevention

- In December 2008, the Manitoba government, in collaboration with Standing Committee, announced **Reclaiming Hope – a youth suicide prevention strategy**. The strategy will provide funding both to enhance existing services and to create new ones. Projects funded by the strategy will help to support communities, promote mental health, and improve access to mental health care.
- **Suicide intervention training** was provided to over 250 CFS staff, foster parents, and other care providers.

Safety and Educational Materials

- Resources on **water safety and healthy living** have been distributed to agencies, residential child care facilities, and communities. The resources on healthy living provide information on a variety of lifestyle issues, such as sexual activity, drug and alcohol consumption, housing, and nutrition.

Planned for 2009/10

FASD

- A priority for the Authority FASD Specialists will be to develop, implement, and evaluate **new standards for FASD services for children**.
- **New sites** of Healthy Child Manitoba's Stop FASD program will be established in the communities of Portage la Prairie, Flin Flon, and Dauphin.
- Standing Committee is planning to enhance the capacity of **FASD Community Coalitions** in identified sites across Manitoba. These coalitions are comprised of various professionals and parents who are supporting children and families living with FASD.
- Planning is underway to expand **pre- and post-diagnostic services for FASD** in rural and northern Manitoba. Standing Committee is developing this initiative in partnership with the Clinic for Alcohol and Drug Exposed Children, Manitoba Health, and the regional health authorities.
- Plans are in place to create **respite camps for children with FASD** in selected sites in Manitoba. The purpose of these camps is to provide a full day of respite to caregivers, as well as other direct services for children with FASD and their families.
- Standing Committee will sponsor a study on the experiences of **youth with FASD transitioning out of the care of the CFS** system. An independent research team will conduct the study and report on findings.

- Opportunities are being planned for speakers who are affected by FASD to share their stories in order to **raise awareness of FASD**, and to provide supports for caregivers and service providers.

Suicide Prevention

- Under the **Reclaiming Hope** suicide prevention strategy, work will begin on projects such as:
 - creating a youth crisis stabilization unit in Thompson
 - expanding workshops and peer supports for youth in northern Manitoba
 - improving access to mental health treatment in northern and rural Manitoba
 - implementing the Communities that Care suicide prevention program
 - enhancing the Mental Health First Aid training program
 - designing trauma training for service providers
 - evaluating youth leadership training and summer camp programs
 - enhancing bereavement support services

Safety and Educational Materials

- **Distribution of safety and educational materials** will be ongoing. Topics will include:
 - shaken baby syndrome
 - childproofing homes
 - crib safety
 - healthy living and obesity in children
 - FASD
 - internet safety
 - trampoline safety
 - water safety
 - bicycle safety
 - car seat safety
 - off-road vehicle safety
 - farm safety
 - firearms/dangerous materials storage
 - resources for gay, lesbian, and transgendered youth

Prevention services promote protective conditions that increase family health and well-being. They help caregivers find ways to parent effectively, even under stress.

A PRIORITY EMPHASIS ON EARLY INTERVENTION FOR FAMILIES

Early intervention services aim to keep families together, while ensuring that children are safe and protected. These services promote family unity by providing families with timely services and supports that can help them to address problems before crises develop.

One external review strongly emphasized the need for early, more intensive and effective supports to families at risk. This approach is referred to as the **differential response** model (DR). The external review noted that, in the last five to ten years, DR models implemented in other jurisdictions have proven to be very effective in helping families and building stronger communities. The external review also noted that over time, DR models offer promise to reduce the number of children coming into care of the CFS system.

DR represents a fundamental change in how child and family services are delivered. The emphasis is on prevention and early intervention to support families to care for their children at home. This kind of approach has long been supported by many in the CFS system. While there have been past efforts to implement a DR type of approach in Manitoba, these have been limited in scope or not sustainable. The external reviews recommended that there be specific and ongoing resources dedicated to this new model of service delivery within the CFS system.

Standing Committee is strongly committed to a DR approach in Manitoba. Following the recommendations and based on experiences in other jurisdictions, DR is being implemented in three phases in Manitoba. Substantial progress was made in 2006/07 and through much of 2007/08 during the developmental and capacity-building phase.

Each Authority engaged with their agencies and community stakeholders to provide education and information about DR and to promote the shift to an early intervention focus within the system. Work has continued on this important initiative as each Authority continues to build capacity and readiness to implement the new DR model with test sites in their agencies.

Summary of Progress

- Each Authority has completed a **comprehensive and detailed plan** for establishing DR projects for the test site phase of implementation. This involved extensive research into the experiences of other jurisdictions, both Canadian and international, where a DR approach has been utilized.
- Based on these plans, Standing Committee developed a **Manitoba-specific DR model** as well as a cross-Authority strategy for funding test sites across the province. These plans respect the AJI-CWI model by recognizing the importance of being responsive to the unique needs of families and communities throughout the province.
- The implementation strategy will allow for key elements of the DR approach to be **assessed and evaluated**. These include:
 - introducing DR as part of the intake process
 - offering a family enhancement service option
 - conducting research
 - formalizing partnerships with community service providers
 - continuing to expand capacity to support full provincial roll-out of the new model

- As part of designing the DR strategy, Standing Committee has developed and is testing a new **standardized risk assessment tool**. This involved extensive research into other jurisdictions and consultations with recognized experts. The standardized risk assessment tool is based on leading practice evidence and is designed to allow for a Manitoba-specific application.
- As a complement to the standardized risk assessment tool, considerable work has been done to develop a companion **strengths-based family assessment tool**. Both of these tools will serve as a useful guide for workers to conduct comprehensive assessments, identify factors that affect child safety, and establish case plans with families.
- A preliminary framework for **evaluating the DR test sites** has been developed and an Evaluation Advisory Committee has been formed with membership from all CFS Authorities and the Department of Family Services and Housing. The evaluation will focus on assessing outcomes, the overall effectiveness of the DR model, and practical application of the new tools.
- A **DR Coordinator position** has been created in each of the CFS Authorities to coordinate the DR development process within each Authority. The hiring process for these positions is either underway or completed at each Authority.

Planned for 2009/10

- The **standardized risk and the strengths-based family assessment tools** will be finalized after further consultations with front-line staff.
- **Comprehensive training** in the new DR model will be delivered for staff in the test sites.
- **New DR practice standards** will be developed for use in the test sites.
- The **DR evaluation framework** will be completed, including a comprehensive list of expected outcomes.
- **Evaluation Requests for Proposals** will be developed, contractors hired, and evaluation activities begun.
- **Test sites** will be established in each Authority based on the detailed implementation plans.
- Standing Committee will continue to conduct research, assess evaluation results, and enhance agency capacity to **prepare for full roll-out** of the DR model at the conclusion of the test phase.

ENHANCED SUPPORT FOR FRONT-LINE CHILD PROTECTION WORKERS

The external reviews identified heavy workloads among front-line CFS workers as a critical challenge facing the CFS system. Workload has been a longstanding issue in CFS systems in Manitoba and across the country. Overworking is bad for workers' health and job performance, and causes higher staff turnover. The external reviews stated that the workload problems must be addressed to allow CFS staff to follow best practices in their work with children and families.

In 2006/07, progress on this theme was made by:

- the creation of 64 new positions
- establishing the Training Working Group to work with the Joint Training Unit to review and enhance staff training
- streamlining and improving CFSIS, the CFS computer information system used by staff to collect and manage data on cases and services provided to families

In 2007/08, work continued in three areas: staff workload relief, staff training, and the redesign of CFSIS. The redesign of CFSIS is a two-part process. First, CFSIS underwent significant revisions to immediately make system improvements. Second, a new system is being developed to upgrade or replace CFSIS. The purpose of this work on CFSIS is to provide a more streamlined system that provides more and better information for staff, while reducing risk to children.

Work also began in a fourth area of focus: a review of CFS service delivery standards. Standards are written records of mandatory requirements for service delivery. Standards are written on a full range of service procedures, such as case management, child protection, foster care, and hotel usage. The intent of new service delivery standards is to help guide the CFS system towards best practices in service delivery.

Summary of Progress

Staff Workload Relief

- By December 2008, over 100 positions had been added to the CFS system since the launch of Changes for Children in October 2006.

Training

- Working on behalf of the four Authorities and Manitoba Family Services and Housing, the **Joint Training Unit (JTU)** is responsible for establishing and maintaining a training initiative to develop a qualified, culturally competent workforce for child and family services. Based on recommendations from the external reviews, the JTU set training priorities in three areas of practice:
 - critical incident stress management
 - suicide intervention and prevention
 - child abuse investigations
- The JTU has identified specific training needs and **training is underway** on a variety of topics in the areas of professional practice and administration. From April 1, 2007 to December 31, 2008, attendance at training sessions exceeded 6,200 (over 4,000 in specialized training and over 2,200 in competency-based training). Participants included CFS staff, support workers, and foster parents.
(See tables on pages 14 and 15.)

JTU Specialized Training

Type of Training	Number of Participants		
	Apr 1/07 Mar 31/08	Apr 1/08 Dec 31/08	Total
Investigating Child Abuse/Child Abuse Committees	319	135	562
Relationship-Based Strength Approach to Discipline	201	280	481
Critical Incident Stress Management	503	112	615
Suicide Intervention and Prevention	188	226	414
Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder	21	33	54
Non-Violent Crisis Intervention	296	51	347
Administrative Training	38	277	315
Child and Youth Care	12	293	305
Crisis Intervention	63	116	179
Standard First Aid/CPR	30	96	126
Board Development	42	69	111
Legal Requirements for Information Sharing in Child Protection	91	18	109
Documentation and Forms Training for Front-Line Workers	23	9	32
Foster Parent Appeal Process Training	76	0	76
Education and Training with Institutions	43	2	45
Colonization and Decolonization of Aboriginal Peoples	22	29	51
Total	1877	2149	4026

**By December 2008,
over 100 positions had been
added to the CFS system since
the launch of Changes for
Children in October 2006.**

JTU Competency-Based Training

Type of Training	Number of Participants		
	Apr 1/07 - Mar 31/08	Apr 1/08 - Dec 31/08	Total
Family Centered Child Protective Services	110	111	221
Care Planning and Family-Centered Casework	94	117	211
Child Abuse and Neglect and Child Development	99	92	191
Understanding and Working with Sexually Exploited Children and Youth	114	65	179
Case Management, Investigation and Reporting	83	96	179
Culture and Diversity	104	69	173
Supervision and Case Management	85	98	183
Separation, Placement and Reunification	86	61	147
Child Welfare Practice	68	49	109
Family Systems Impact of Abuse and Neglect on Child Development	57	48	105
Management of the Child and Family Services System	50	45	95
The Job: Child and Youth Care Work as a Profession	60	34	94
Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Behavior	62	7	69
Managing Work Through Other People	42	18	60
Working with Supervisors	20	34	54
Working with Sexually Abused Youth	27	21	48
Training Trainers	25	23	48
Transfer Training: The Supervisor's Role	24	18	42
Group Work	28	12	40
Supervising and Managing Group Performance	26	14	40
Total	1,224	1,032	2,256

- The Manitoba government continues to provide **CFSIS training for staff**. From April 1, 2007 to December 31, 2008, more than 500 staff have participated in training.
- A **foster parent training curriculum development project** is underway. A design team has been established. It has completed a document review and is currently gathering input from the foster care community.

Information System Redevelopment

- Following consultations with staff and management, work was completed on **redesigning CFSIS** to immediately make system improvements. The redesign allows for:
 - improved access to information for designated workers
 - improved security for highly sensitive cases
 - better coordination among different parts of the system
 - easier navigation through the system
 - improved tools to manage foster home licenses more effectively
 - better recording of medical information for children in care
 - better tools to identify children in care with high-risk medical needs
 - improved accuracy and easier inputting of records
- A commitment was made to replace CFSIS with a **new, improved system** that will be consistent with case management practices and DR in CFS agencies.

- In November 2007, IBM was hired to work with Standing Committee to **establish design principles** for the new computer information system.
- The **redevelopment process is underway**. IBM has submitted a report to Standing Committee. The focus of work has been to confirm priorities for the new system, identify cost-effective development options, choose the best option to pursue, and generate a work plan for getting the new system in place. As well, extensive consultations were completed with over 100 CFS staff.

Service Delivery Standards

- In November 2007, Standing Committee approved a **Standards Development Protocol**. The Protocol guides the development of new standards, following AJI-CWI principles of cultural inclusivity and best practices in service. As well, use of the Protocol ensures that staff are consulted before standards are put in place.
- Draft standards were developed by Standing Committee. Consistent with the Standards Development Protocol, the drafts underwent an extensive review process. Feedback on the drafts was provided by staff from each Authority, and from a cross-Authority committee with representation from the Child Protection Branch. In Summer 2008, **18 new standards documents** were approved.
- **Training modules** were developed to introduce staff to the new standards. Training using the modules began in Autumn 2008.

Planned for 2009/10

Staff Workload Relief

- Implementation of new provincial and federal CFS agency funding models will provide further staff workload relief.

Training

- The Authorities will develop an orientation package for all new staff.
- More training for staff and foster parents will continue to be provided on a wide range of topics relating to professional practice and administration.

Information System Redevelopment

- Evaluation of the current system to identify opportunities for streamlining CFSIS will be completed.
- Definition of system requirements will be completed. These definitions state what users of the system want the system to do, and will be used to help choose a new system.
- The formal selection process for choosing a new computer information system will begin and be completed.
- Work continues on solving ongoing connectivity problems experienced by some agency offices.

Service Delivery Standards

- An annual plan to review and revise standards will be developed, consistent with the new Standards Development Protocol.
- Case management standards will be refined to guide the case management process more effectively.

Training priorities have been set, specific training needs have been identified, and training is underway on a wide variety of service topics.

Theme 4:

IMPROVED COMMUNICATION

The fourth theme for change identified by the external reviews is the need for improved communication throughout the CFS system. The restructuring of the system created many new communication challenges. It was recommended that these challenges receive prompt attention.

In 2006/07, a wide range of projects, such as consultations, website development, and funding commitments, all helped to improve communication – both inside and outside the CFS system. In 2007/08, further progress was made to improve communication, primarily in the areas of youth engagement and staff engagement.

Summary of Progress

- The CFS Authorities and their agencies have begun work to develop a **youth engagement strategy**. The purpose of the strategy is to:
 - give current and former youth in care a voice to share their stories about being in care
 - involve current and former youth in care in new program and policy development
 - improve communication with youth in care about their rights and advocacy programs
 - collect feedback from youth transitioning out of care and into adulthood about their experience in the CFS system
 - mentor and support youth transitioning out of care and into adulthood
- The Standing Committee established the **Vision Catchers Fund** to provide more opportunities for youth transitioning out of care.
- Each Authority has begun developing **mentorship programs** to enhance support for youth leaving care.
- A variety of **staff engagement activities** took place, including:
 - continued publication of staff newsletters
 - staff recruitment and retention workshops, including a strategy session hosted by the Manitoba Government and General Employees Union (MGEU)
 - think tanks and a summit providing for dialogue on a wide variety of CFS issues
 - regular and scheduled communication with staff regarding progress made on Changes for Children recommendations
- In November 2007, two one-day conferences called **Child and Family Services in Manitoba – Trends and Challenges** were held in The Pas and Winnipeg. A total of 475 participants attended the conferences, including staff from CFS agencies, collateral service providers, the media and others. These conferences explored the trends, challenges, and future of CFS in Manitoba.
- In December 2007, a conference called **Training for Child Abuse Committee Coordinators** was hosted in Winnipeg by the Joint Training Unit and the Child Protection Branch. Based on the success of this event, a second conference was held in January 2009.
- Preliminary work has begun on developing a **website for each Authority**.

Planned for 2009/10

- Standing Committee will continue work on developing a **youth engagement strategy**.
- Authorities will establish **youth mentorship programs** for youth transitioning out of the CFS system.
- Standing Committee and individual Authorities will complete development of **Authority websites**, continue distribution of staff newsletters, and develop and implement other staff engagement activities.

A wide range of projects are underway to improve communication both inside and outside the CFS system.



Theme 5:

STRENGTHEN THE NEW GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

The fifth theme for change identified by the external reviews highlights the need to strengthen the new governance structure of the CFS system.

As described earlier in this report, the CFS system in Manitoba is now administered by four CFS Authorities. There is also Standing Committee, a group comprised of the CEOs from the four Authorities and the Director of Child and Family Services. Standing Committee is the advisory body with legislated responsibility for promoting cooperation and collaboration across the CFS system and with other systems. The work of Standing Committee continues to focus on three major areas:

- continuing implementation of the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry - Child Welfare Initiative (AJI-CWI)
- implementation of the Changes for Children initiative
- ongoing system development

The external reviews strongly supported the new governance structure, which embodies the spirit and intent of the AJI-CWI. The reviews concluded that Standing Committee requires additional resources not only to carry out its current responsibilities, but also to advance the continuing AJI-CWI process by assuming greater responsibility for the CFS system. Specifically, the external reviews recommended certain staffing levels and funding that should be provided to support the work of Standing Committee.

The Manitoba government has allocated resources to strengthen the new governance structure. In 2006/07, progress on the theme was achieved by creating an interim staff team to support implementation of the Changes for Children initiatives. It was always the

intent that this interim team would be replaced with a permanent office, as recommended in the external reviews. In 2007/08, a permanent staff team and office was established.

Funding and staffing of the Office of the Child and Family Services Standing Committee is consistent with the recommendations in the external reviews. The organizational structure, scope of responsibility and governance of the Office were designed by Standing Committee to respect the partnership model of the AJI-CWI and to further the longer-term goals of the devolution process.

Summary of Progress

- In Spring 2008, the **Office of the Child and Family Services Standing Committee** was established. The following 16 permanent positions were created:
 - 1 Coordinator
 - 1 Administrative Assistant
 - 1 Financial Officer
 - 9 Policy Analysts (2 from each Authority and 1 from the Child Protection Branch)
 - 4 Administrative Support positions (1 for each Authority)
- Since being established, **work at the Office** has focused on:
 - designing plans for the continued implementation of the 289 recommendations of the external reviews
 - participating in inter-sectoral initiatives
 - delivering training on new practice standards
 - providing professional support to assist Standing Committee to complete its foundational work

Theme 6

FIDUCIARY OBLIGATION OF THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA

This theme relates to the shared responsibility among provincial and federal governments for child and family services. Under the Canadian constitution, provincial governments are responsible for CFS systems, but the federal government is the primary funder of systems on-reserve.

The external reviews recommended that federal and provincial governments work together to ensure funding is distributed fairly to help children and families no matter where they live.

One important area where progress has been made is **Jordan's Principle**. This is a child-first principle for resolving disagreements about paying for a child's needs. Under Jordan's Principle, if governments disagree who should pay for services to a Status Indian or Inuit child, the government department of first contact must pay without delay. The paying government can then arrange repayment of the expense later. Jordan's Principle applies to any kind of government service available to children, youth and their families.

In keeping with the spirit and intent of the AJI-CWI, Standing Committee has steadfastly supported Jordan's Principle and remains committed to its use in Manitoba and across Canada.

Summary of Progress

- In June 2007, the Province of Manitoba announced it would **adopt Jordan's Principle as policy** as long as the federal government decided to make it policy as well.
- On December 12, 2007, Members of **Parliament voted unanimously** in favour of a motion to support Jordan's Principle.
- In September 2008, the Province of Manitoba and the federal government **agreed to**

implement Jordan's Principle. They agreed that First Nations children living on-reserve with multiple disabilities who access multiple service providers should receive the same level of service, in a culturally-appropriate way, as other children with similar needs living in similar areas.

- In December 2008, a working group of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, representatives of the First Nations of Southern Manitoba CFS Authority and the First Nations of Northern Manitoba CFS Authority, and the Manitoba and federal governments completed a draft **framework and funding model** for on-reserve CFS program delivery and funding. The funding model includes maintenance, enhanced operations, and differential response (DR) components. It is anticipated that this collaborative strategy will:
 - strengthen and support First Nations families to care for their children
 - reduce the number of First Nations children in care
 - reduce and potentially eliminate inequities in funding and services relating to residencies on or off reserve

Planned for 2009/10

- In early 2009, the working group's proposed framework and funding model will be **submitted to the federal government**. It is expected that First Nations CFS agencies will begin to receive funding in Autumn 2009. First Nations acknowledge that the proposed funding model has important shortfalls that require ongoing review.

For more information on Jordan's Principle go to www.fncaresociety.com.

SECTION 10 REVIEWS

The final theme of recommendations from the external reviews relates to Section 10 of *The Fatality Inquiries Act*. This law requires that a review must take place when there is a death of a child who has received child and family services in the previous year. The reviews expressed a concern about the system's capacity to fulfill Section 10 requirements and recommended the need to:

- relocate responsibility for conducting Section 10 reviews from the Chief Medical Examiner's office to the Office of the Children's Advocate
- increase staffing and travel resources for Section 10 functions
- assign responsibility for independent review of recommendations to the Office of the Ombudsman

It is important to note that the Chief Medical Examiner retains responsibility for investigating cause of death, and maintains the power to call for a public inquest if necessary.

Summary of Progress

- Bill 11, *The Children's Advocate's Enhanced Mandate Act*, was proclaimed on September 15, 2008. This legislation transferred the responsibilities for conducting Section 10 Reviews from the Chief Medical Examiner to Manitoba's Children's Advocate.
- Section 10 reviews are now referred to as **Child Death Review Special Investigations**.
- The **scope of investigations** has been extended beyond child and family services.

Now, investigations include reviews of any publicly-funded social service provided to the child, or any service that, in the opinion of the Children's Advocate, should have been provided.

- The investigation method now has a stronger **community-based emphasis**. Investigators may now visit residences, community meeting places, and publicly-funded agencies that had contact with children in care prior to their death. In the past, Section 10 reviews generally relied on file reviews, telephone calls, and some personal interviews.
- An **advisory committee** has been formed to review reports and draft recommendations from special investigations. Committee members come from a wide range of disciplines.
- **3.5 new staff positions** have been added to the Special Investigation Review Unit.
- As recommended in the external reviews, the **Manitoba Ombudsman** will report annually on government's progress in implementing recommendations arising from Child Death Review Special Investigations.

Summary of Progress Made in Implementing Changes for Children During 2006-09

The list below summarizes progress made to address recommendations from the external reviews. It includes activity since the launch of Changes for Children in October 2006 to February 2009.

Theme 1: Keeping Children Safe through Primary Prevention Programs

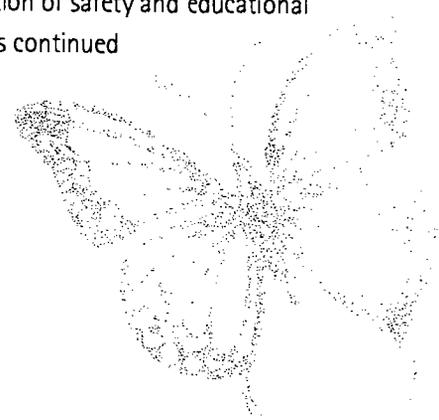
Now in Place

- Suicide prevention materials distributed
- Recreational component of basic foster rates increased
- Central fund for purchase of child safety equipment created
- Youth Identification Project launched
- Co-chairs of the Child Welfare Inter-Sectoral Committee named
- Standing Committee/Healthy Child Manitoba partnership to work on FASD recommendations in Changes for Children started
- FASD Specialist positions created
- FASD Strategy Implementation Team (SIT) established
- Spectrum Connections program launched

- Research and initial planning on new standards for FASD services for children started
- Three communities for expansion of Stop FASD program accepted
- Funding for the Reclaiming Hope youth suicide prevention strategy announced
- Suicide prevention training provided to over 250 staff, foster parents, and care providers
- Water safety and healthy living educational materials distributed

Planned for 2009/10

- Work on implementing new standards for FASD services for children started
- Stop FASD program expanded into three new communities
- Capacity of FASD Community Coalitions enhanced
- Pre- and post-diagnostic services for FASD expanded
- Respite camps for children with FASD created
- Study on experiences of youth with FASD transitioning out of care completed
- Presentations by speakers affected by FASD organized
- Work on implementing Reclaiming Hope started
- Distribution of safety and educational materials continued



Theme 2: A Priority Emphasis on Early Intervention for Families

Now in Place

- DR promotion and educational activities conducted by Authorities with their agencies
- Research on DR best practices completed
- Comprehensive plan for establishing DR test sites completed by Authorities
- Manitoba-specific DR model and cross-Authority strategy for funding test sites developed
- Preliminary framework for evaluating DR test sites developed
- New standardized risk assessment tool adopted
- Development of strengths-based family assessment tool started
- Authority DR Coordinator positions created

Planned for 2009/10

- Standardized risk and strengths-based family assessment tools finalized
- Comprehensive training in the new DR model delivered for staff in test sites
- New DR practice standards for test sites developed
- DR evaluation framework completed
- DR evaluation begun
- DR test sites established in each Authority
- Preparations for full roll-out of DR continued

Theme 3: Enhanced Support for Front-Line Child Protection Workers

Now in Place

Staff Workload Relief

- Over 100 CFS positions added

Training

- Training provided by Joint Training Unit continued
- Training priorities set in three key areas of practice, and specific training needs identified
- Training in professional practice and administration provided (total attendance exceeded 6,200)
- CFSIS training provided to over 500 staff
- Foster parent training curriculum development project started

Information System Redevelopment

- Work on temporary redesign of CFSIS completed
- Commitment to replace CFSIS made
- Work to establish design principles started
- Extensive consultations completed with over 100 CFS staff

Service Delivery Standards

- Standards Development Protocol completed
- 18 new standards documents drafted and approved
- Training Modules for new standards developed

Planned for 2009/10

- Funding models to provide further staff workload relief implemented
- Orientation package for all new staff developed
- More training on professional practice and administration topics provided
- Evaluation of opportunities for streamlining CFSIS completed
- Definition of system requirements for the new CFSIS completed
- New computer information system selected
- Work on connectivity problems continued
- Annual plan for standards review and revision developed
- Case management standards refined
- Consultations with stakeholders on progress on Changes for Children held regularly
- Development of a youth engagement strategy started
- Vision Catchers Fund and mentorship program for youth leaving care established
- A variety of staff engagement activities carried out
- Two Child and Family Services in Manitoba - Trends and Challenges conferences held
- Two Training for Child Abuse Committee Coordinators conferences held
- Planning to develop Authority websites started

Theme 4: Improved Communication

Now in Place

- New communication processes for managing intake of new cases across agencies implemented
- New consultation process for developing new service delivery standards established
- Cross-Authority communications team established
- Changes for Children website launched
- Funding to develop CFS Authority websites provided
- Funding for communication tools provided to agencies
- Joint resolution for staff and youth engagement developed

Planned for 2009/10

- Development of youth engagement strategies continued
- Youth mentorship programs established by Authorities
- Authority websites completed
- Work on staff engagement activities continued



Theme 5: Strengthen the New Governance Structure

Now in Place

- Additional resources for quality assurance dedicated to each Authority
- Staff team established to support the work of Implementation Team and Standing Committee on Changes for Children
- Office of the Child and Family Services Standing Committee established
- 16 staff positions at the Office created

Theme 6: Fiduciary Obligation of the Government of Canada

Now in Place

- Manitoba and federal government agreed to implement Jordan's Principle
- Manitoba and federal government agreed to use individual case reviews to resolve issues
- Draft framework and funding model for on-reserve CFS program delivery and funding completed

Planned for 2009/10

- Draft framework and funding model submitted to the federal government

Theme 7: Section 10 Reviews

Now in Place

- Interim protocol developed to outline revisions to Section 10 Review process
- *The Children's Advocate's Enhanced Mandate Act* proclaimed
- Section 10 reviews changed to Child Death Review Special Investigations
- Scope of investigations expanded
- Use of stronger community-based emphasis for investigations adopted
- Advisory Committee for special investigations established
- 3.5 staff added to Special Investigation Review Unit
- Ombudsman tasked to write annual reports on progress implementing Child Death Review Special Investigations



PROGRESS ON THE CHANGES FOR CHILDREN INITIATIVE

A Report from Child and Family Services
Standing Committee

For more information about the Office, contact:

Office of the Child and Family Services

Standing Committee

202-150 Henry Avenue

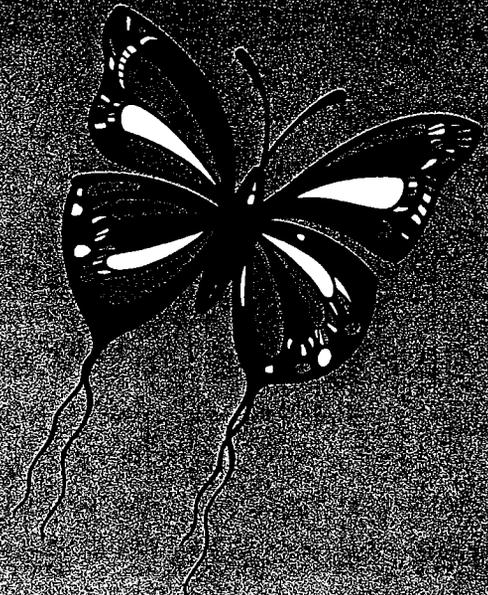
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*Cette information existe
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