

Child Intervention System Review

Terms of Reference

Background

Alberta's child welfare system has evolved significantly since 2001, when government approved implementation of the Alberta Response Model (ARM). ARM is a child intervention differential response system, aimed at addressing short- and long-term needs of children, youth and families who come into contact with the system. It is family-centred practice with child-centred outcomes.

In 2001, a review of the *Child Welfare Act* was announced, as it was clear that the act did not enable full implementation of ARM. In 2004, the *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act* was proclaimed.

To fully realize the intent of the new legislation, a change in casework practice was required. This change, to provide effective and responsive interventions that could be measured, and to ensure consistent practices that support improved outcomes for children, youth and families, led to the implementation of the Casework Practice Model in 2008. The Casework Practice Model involves a stronger focus on intake and assessment of children, youth and families at the initial contact stage, to ensure services planned are as effective as possible.

The most recent systemic change has been the shift to an increased focus on improved outcomes for children, youth and families receiving intervention supports and services.

At this time, it is important to validate that the right model for child intervention supports is in place, and to hear from child intervention specialists on how to make the system stronger. This review also follows through on a commitment made by western Canadian ministers responsible for social services to share best practices and advance continuous improvement in their jurisdictions.

Scope of the Review

The review panel will examine the following questions:

- Are the necessary checks, balances and processes in place to ensure accountability and transparency in the child intervention system?
- Does the system have the capacity to effectively respond to emerging societal trends, service demands, and evolving workforce and practice issues?
- Is the system organized and aligned with leading practices and evidence-based research?

Key Deliverables

- The co-chairs will present a report and recommendations to the Minister that focus on continuous improvement, identify current strengths, and suggest areas that could be strengthened.

Accountability

- The Minister will appoint the co-chairs and panel members.
- The co-chairs are accountable to the Minister.

Membership

- Co-Chair: Nico Trocmé, Philip Fisher Chair in Social Work, McGill University and Scientific Director of the Centre of Excellence in Child Welfare
- Co-Chair: Peter Dudding, Executive Director, Child Welfare League of Canada
- Dorothy Ahlgren, co-Chair, Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police/Crime Prevention Committee
- Mike DeGagné, Executive Director, Aboriginal Healing Foundation
- Jane Fitzgerald, Executive Director, Children's Aid Society of London & Middlesex
- Sandra Harrison, Alberta Mental Health Patient Advocate
- Josie Hill, Executive Director, Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre
- Kenn Richard, Executive Director, Native Child and Family Services of Toronto
- Gayla Rogers, Dean, University of Calgary Faculty of Social Work
- Cal Dallas, MLA, Red Deer-South

Public Input

Opportunities for public input will include:

- Establishing a website and inviting the public to respond to discussion guide questions posted online.
- Inviting formal, written submissions from key partners and stakeholders in the child intervention system.
- Hosting a symposium to gather input from delegates, facilitated by the Alberta Centre for Child, Family and Community Research.

Deliverable Timeframe

- A report and recommendations will be provided to the Minister of Children and Youth Services in spring 2010. The report findings will be released publicly.

Confidentiality

- The *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and the *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act* apply to all information and records collected, created, maintained or stored for this review.