

**Ministry of
Children and Family Development**

**2009/10 – 2011/12
SERVICE PLAN UPDATE**

September 2009



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Message from the Minister and Accountability Statement



I am pleased to present the *2009/10 – 2011/12 Service Plan Update* for the Ministry of Children and Family Development, which outlines the Ministry's approach to supporting vulnerable British Columbian children, youth and their families.

Recognizing and building on the strengths inherent in all children, families and communities is our philosophy for programs and services. The vision and principles set out in the *Strong, Safe and Supported* plan continue to guide our work and lay the foundation for a strong system of support accomplished through sound partnerships.

We will continue to build on our partnerships — both across government and in our communities. With an emphasis on prevention and early intervention, we are developing a new assessment planning and practice model that supports strengths-based practices to meet the needs of children, youth and their families. Our commitment to support Aboriginal people in developing and delivering services that reflect their identities and connect Aboriginal children to their culture and traditions will remain a priority.

The Ministry's success is measured by the healthy development of children, youth and families and our ability to provide all British Columbians with the best possible chance to succeed, as families, as communities and as a province.

Our past accomplishments and future achievements would not be possible without the talented and dedicated Ministry staff and partners working in communities throughout B.C. It is my privilege to work with them, to be guided by their professionalism and knowledge and to see the positive results of their efforts each and every day.

I am also the Minister Responsible for Child Care and under the *Balanced Budget and Ministerial Accountability Act*, I am accountable for achieving the following results for 2009/10:

- a) work with the Ministry of Education to align child care spaces and infrastructure to support the outcomes of the Early Childhood Learning agency feasibility study,
- b) work with the Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development and the Ministry of Education on the recruitment and retention of early childhood educators,
- c) bring together child care resource and referral representatives to identify professional development opportunities for early childhood educators and other child care service providers, and report the results of the Early Childhood Educator Registry Survey on the Ministry of Education's website, and
- d) work to improve service delivery for B.C. families by streamlining the Child Care Subsidy Program and continuing to implement the recommendations of the Citizen Centred Regulatory Reform Initiative.

The Ministry of Children and Family Development *2009/10 – 2011/12 Service Plan Update* was prepared under my direction, in accordance with the *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act*. I am accountable for the basis on which the plan has been prepared. All material fiscal assumptions and policy decisions as of August 25, 2009 have been considered in preparing the plan and I am accountable for achieving the specific objectives in the plan.



The Honourable Mary Polak
Minister of Children and Family Development and
Minister Responsible for Child Care

August 25, 2009

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Purpose of the Ministry

The Ministry of Children and Family Development promotes and develops the capacity of families and communities to care for and protect vulnerable children and youth, and supports healthy child and family development to maximize the potential of every child in B.C.

The Ministry is responsible for regional and province-wide delivery of services and programs that support positive and healthy outcomes for children, youth and their families. In order to effectively and efficiently deliver services and programs, the Ministry is organized into five regions: North, Interior, Fraser, Vancouver Coastal and Vancouver Island. The Ministry's responsibilities include: family development, early childhood development, services for children and youth with special needs, child and youth mental health, child care, child protection, children in the home of a relative, residential and foster care, adoption for children and youth permanently in care, community child and youth mental health, programs for at-risk or sexually exploited youth, and community youth justice services.

In addition, the Ministry is responsible for a number of specialized provincial services such as youth custody, youth forensic psychiatric services, services for deaf and hard of hearing children and youth, and the Maples Adolescent Treatment Centre.

The Ministry serves children, youth and families either directly or through community service agencies. The Ministry's service delivery partners include: contracted service providers, other ministries, family foster homes, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities, delegated Aboriginal child welfare agencies, school districts and health authorities.

The Ministry's legislative mandate includes the *Child, Family and Community Service Act*, *Adoption Act*, *Youth Justice Act*, *Child Care BC Act*, *Child Care Subsidy Act* and *Social Workers Act*.

Strategic Context

The Ministry of Children and Family Development works to ensure that children, youth and families in B.C. have the best chance possible to thrive and succeed. The following section highlights key opportunities and challenges that are expected to impact the Ministry's programs and operations.

Strong, Safe and Supported: A Commitment to B.C.'s Children and Youth

In April 2008, the Ministry released *Strong, Safe and Supported: A Commitment to B.C.'s Children and Youth*, the culmination of months of collaboration and consultation with Ministry staff and partners. The *Strong, Safe and Supported* plan provides overall direction for the Ministry's programs and service delivery, taking an integrated child centred approach to meeting a child's needs while developing capacity in families and communities.

Intergovernmental Relations

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada and the Ministry are working with the Directors of First Nations Child and Family Services Agencies to develop an approach that will support First Nation agencies in the delivery of culturally appropriate prevention and protection services for First Nations children and families living on-reserve. The Ministry continues to work closely with the other provinces and territories to share best practices and improve outcomes for children, youth and their families.

The Province is applying Jordan's Principle to all First Nations children under the age of 19 living in B.C. and covers all health and social services currently available to all children within a child's geographic region. B.C. is working with First Nations representatives and the federal government to support the implementation of Jordan's Principle and to address jurisdictional disputes on a case-by-case basis.

Workforce Planning

With current economic forecasts and the resulting labour market changes, in aggregate, the supply of labour is outstripping demand and recruitment is not the challenge previously anticipated, at least in the short term. The Ministry will continue to explore human resource strategies that will provide the future workforce needed to support the infrastructure for the child and family development system, including Aboriginal delegated agencies, the full range of service providers and the Ministry itself.

Integration and Collaboration with Other Ministries

The Office of the Chief Information Officer is leading the cross government Integrated Case Management project. This initiative puts the client at the centre of service planning and encourages communication among clients, workers, Ministry partners and contracted service providers. As part of this initiative, the Ministry continues to work collaboratively with the ministries of Housing and Social Development and Citizens' Services on planning for the implementation of the new software.

In June 2008, government transferred responsibility for Community Living British Columbia¹ from the Ministry of Children and Family Development to the Ministry of Housing and Social Development. At the time, government announced that responsibility for services to children and youth with special needs provided through Community Living British Columbia, would transfer back to the Ministry. This is expected to be complete by October 2009. These changes were made to facilitate greater integration of services between provincial ministries and to enable improved access to services and programs for children, youth and adults with disabilities. The Ministry of Housing and Social Development, this Ministry and Community Living British Columbia continue to work closely to ensure a seamless and integrated service delivery system to provide a full continuum of services for children, youth and adults within the community living sector.

The Ministry worked with the Ministry of Education, through the Early Childhood Learning Agency, to assess the feasibility of full school day kindergarten for five-year-olds, and of providing parents with the choice of full school day pre-kindergarten for four and three-year-olds. The Early Childhood Learning Agency report: *Expanding Early Learning in British Columbia for Children Age Three to Five*² was released in April 2009 and the Ministry will continue to work with the Ministry of Education on the action plan outlined in the report.

Economic Forecast

British Columbia's economy contracted modestly by 0.3 per cent in the 2008 calendar year, according to preliminary data from Statistics Canada. The recession marked the first annual decline in the province's real GDP since 1982. The main contributor to the contraction in B.C.'s real GDP in 2008 was a 6.8 per cent decline in real exports of goods and services.

Economic decline in B.C. is expected to continue through 2009 with a return to modest growth in 2010. Risks to B.C.'s economic outlook include a severe and prolonged American recession, continued turmoil in global financial markets, slower global demand for B.C. products, further appreciation of the Canadian dollar, volatility in financial and commodity markets as well as ongoing moderation of domestic demand in B.C.

Managing staffing costs has always been one of the prime considerations in maintaining overall government affordability, and since 2001 this government has been diligent in reviewing staff spending each year. This is particularly true in these current economic times. All governments are in the similar position of having to balance spending and service levels against revenues that have declined over the past year in this extraordinary fiscal climate.

Staffing costs can be managed through removal of unfilled positions, retirements, staff efficiencies gained through coordination and collaboration across government, administrative program changes and, if necessary, a reduction in the staffing budget. In the 2010/11 Budget, we will be managing staffing costs in the context of the current economic climate, examining all opportunities to continue to reduce these costs where possible. In the 2009/10 Budget every effort has been made to preserve staffing levels for frontline services.

¹ Community Living BC www.communitylivingbc.ca/

² Expanding Early Learning in British Columbia for Children Age Three to Five report www.bced.gov.bc.ca/ecla/

In future years, government will continue to review its staffing budget to ensure those resources are allocated prudently, efficiently and towards government's key priorities.

Children and Youth Population³

The number of children and youth in the province is one of the key determinants of the Ministry's caseload and changes in the total population of children and youth may have an impact on Ministry operations. The Ministry closely monitors these and other changes to align Ministry programs and services to the changing needs of children, youth and their families.

The total population of children and youth (aged 0 - 18 years) in British Columbia was 912,585 in 2008, representing 20.8 per cent of British Columbia's total population. British Columbia's child and youth population declined by 3.8 per cent between 2001 and 2008. It is forecast to decline until 2010. Beyond 2010, the child and youth population is forecast to gradually begin to increase.

The Aboriginal child and youth population increased just over ten per cent between 2001 and 2008 while the Aboriginal youth population (age 15 to 18) increased by nearly 30 per cent.

Aboriginal children continue to be disproportionately represented among children in the Ministry's care. As of March 2009, approximately eight per cent of children in British Columbia and approximately 52 per cent of the 8,959 children in the Ministry's care were Aboriginal.

³ Population figures are based on BC Stats data

Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Performance Measures

This section presents the Ministry of Children and Family Development's objectives and strategies aimed at the following five goals:

- Goal 1: Place a primary focus on preventing vulnerability in children and youth by providing strong supports for individuals, families and communities.
- Goal 2: Provide early intervention services to vulnerable children and youth within their families and communities.
- Goal 3: Provide intervention services and supports based on the assessment of individual needs.
- Goal 4: Aboriginal people will be supported to exercise jurisdiction in delivering child and family services.
- Goal 5: Child, youth and family development services will be based on evidence gathered through a strong quality assurance system.

These goals reflect the five pillars presented in *Strong, Safe and Supported: A Commitment to B.C.'s Children and Youth*. The Service Plan objectives and strategies address the key elements of the continuum of services provided in an effective child, youth and family development service system: prevention; early intervention; intervention and support; the Aboriginal approach; and quality assurance.

Goal 1: Place a primary focus on preventing vulnerability in children and youth by providing strong supports for individuals, families and communities

Objective: An increase in the health and well-being of children and youth, and a decrease in preventable vulnerabilities

Key Strategies:

- Develop a cross ministry five-year Early Years Plan that integrates key activities and priority directions, based on the input of provincial, national and international experts and stakeholders.
- Implement the ten-year Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder provincial plan.
- Strengthen parents’ or caregivers’ ability to cope with challenges and promote healthy development in their children.

Performance Measure 1: Ministry funded licensed child care spaces

Performance Measure	2007/08 Actual	2008/09 Actual	2009/10 Target	2010/11 Target	2011/12 Target
Total number of Ministry funded licensed child care spaces	87,538	92,751 ¹	91,000	91,000	91,000

Data Source: Ministry of Children and Family Development, Child Care Operating Funding Program datamart.

¹ 2008/09 Actual has been revised to 92,751 from 92,743.

Discussion

The performance measure represents the total number of licensed child care spaces supported by the Child Care Operating Funding Program. The Ministry provides operating funding for child care spaces that are licensed by the Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport. The number of funded child care spaces is dependent on the number of licensed providers that apply for operating funding.

Early childhood development and child care services support the healthy development of children and assist parents as they work and learn. The quality of care children receive from parents, child care providers and community programs is critical to ensuring success in school and later life.

Goal 2: Provide early intervention services to vulnerable children and youth within their families and communities

Objective: An increase in the strengths, capacities and competencies of vulnerable children and youth and their families served by the Ministry

Key Strategies:

- Improve access to supports and services through the implementation of the cross government Children and Youth with Special Needs Framework for Action.
- Work with First Nations and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada to develop and implement a new federal/First Nations model for on-reserve services.
- Continue improving capacity to intervene early.
- Increase the use of collaborative planning mechanisms.
- Increase the use of alternatives to bringing children and youth into care.

Performance Measure 2: Children safely placed with extended family or in the community

Performance Measure	2007/08 Actual	2008/09 Actual	2009/10 Target	2010/11 Target	2011/12 Target
Number of children who are identified as having to leave their parental home due to risks to the child's safety and well-being, that are able to remain with extended family or community	761	724	800	800	800

Data Source: The Management Information System and the Social Worker System.

Discussion

This measure identifies the number of children who were placed by agreement in an out of care arrangement, by either the Ministry or an Aboriginal delegated agency, with a relative or a person with significant ties to the child. This measure previously did not include placements by an Aboriginal delegated agency. Permanent relationships are a major determinant of whether children feel safe and secure. If a child has to leave their parental home, the Ministry or Aboriginal delegated agency strive to place the child with people who know the child and will maintain a life-long relationship with them, their families and communities.

Goal 3: Provide intervention services and supports based on the assessment of individual needs

Objective: Children and youth receiving services from the Ministry will demonstrate increased resilience and capacity to cope with their challenges

Key Strategies:

- Re-design residential care services.
- Continue to use mediation and family group conferencing as a means of increasing family and community involvement in case planning and decision making based on the child's needs.
- Implement the Children and Youth with Special Needs Framework for Action in collaboration with the ministries of Health Services and Education.
- Work in partnership with the Ministry of Housing and Social Development to improve developmental outcomes for youth with special needs transitioning to adulthood.

Performance Measure 3: Children in care under continuing custody orders whose grade level is as prescribed for their age

Performance Measure	2007/08 Actual	2008/09 Actual	2009/10 Target	2010/11 Target	2011/12 Target
Per cent of children in care under continuing custody orders whose grade level is as prescribed for their age	78.1%	78.7%	82.5%	83.0%	83.0%

Data Source: Ministry of Education enrolment data, Ministry of Children and Family Development Management Information System and Social Worker System.

Discussion

Education is an important part of healthy child development. From a Ministry perspective, it is particularly important to know how children in care — those under Continuing Custody Orders — are doing in school and whether they are making appropriate progress. This measure provides insight into whether children under a Continuing Custody Order are in a grade that is appropriate for their age. For example, a child six years of age before the end of December of the school year is typically in grade one.

The measure is consistent with the Government Strategic Plan measure —“Disadvantaged children in an age appropriate grade”. The Ministry’s performance measure focuses on children with a Continuing Custody Order whereas the government’s performance measure is broader and includes children and youth in the Ministry’s care, those with youth agreements and in out of care options and children living in families who receive income assistance. The Ministry’s targets reflect government's ongoing commitment to improve educational outcomes for disadvantaged children.

Performance Measure 4: Recurrence of child neglect and/or abuse by family

Performance Measure	2007/08 Actual	2008/09 Actual	2009/10 Target	2010/11 Target	2011/12 Target
Recurrence of child neglect and/or abuse by family ¹	20.1%	20.9%	18.9%	18.4%	18.4%

Data Source: The Management Information System and Social Worker System.

¹ Neglect is a failure by the parent or guardian to provide for a child's basic needs. Neglect may include failure to provide food, shelter, basic health care, supervision or protection from risks, to the extent that the child's physical health, development or safety is, or is likely to be, harmed. Abuse is defined as physical or sexual maltreatment or emotional neglect.

Discussion

When it has been established that a child is at risk, the Ministry works with the family to reduce the risk of future harm by providing services that will address the needs of the child and family. This measure identifies how well the Ministry is doing at meeting those needs and reducing further incidents of abuse and/or neglect.

To measure the rate of recurrence, all investigations with protection findings are reviewed to see if there was another incident within the previous 12 months. The Ministry reports out on all protection findings and on recurring incidents to provide a more comprehensive picture of child protection.

The Ministry continues its efforts to increase the use of Family Development Response as an alternative to investigations in less severe cases where the risk to the child is low and the family and Ministry are able to work cooperatively. The Ministry is reviewing the child protection decision making model and the result will be a new assessment planning and practice model that supports collaborative, strengths-based practice, and promotes alternatives to investigation and court processes.

Performance Measure 5: Children with adoption plans who have been placed

Performance Measure	2007/08 Actual	2008/09 Actual	2009/10 Target	2010/11 Target	2011/12 Target
Per cent of children with adoption plans who have been placed	18.2% ¹	16.6%	17.0%	17.0%	17.0%

Data Source: The Adoption Management System.

¹ Revised

Discussion

This measure shows the number of children who are placed for adoption within the fiscal year as a percentage of all children in care who have a plan for adoption. As the Ministry continues to move forward with a strengths-based approach that focuses on supporting families staying together, it is anticipated that there will be a decrease in the number of children requiring adoption plans. The targets for this measure have been amended to reflect current trends. The Ministry's commitment to ensuring that families are supported and children remain with their families will continue to be based on an effective assessment of the individual needs of a child and their family.

Goal 4: Aboriginal people will be supported to exercise jurisdiction in delivering child and family services

Objective: Aboriginal children, youth and their families are receiving services through an Aboriginal service system which strongly connects children and youth to their culture and tradition

Key Strategies:

- Support Aboriginal people in making a choice of governance model/s and facilitate, through funding, capacity development and any necessary legislation, the successful implementation of the chosen governance model/s.
- Support Aboriginal people in the work of designing a child and family development service system that reflects their culture and traditions.
- Support the development of a five-year Early Years Plan for Aboriginal children.

Performance Measure 6: Aboriginal children in care who are served by delegated Aboriginal agencies

Performance Measure	2007/08 Actual	2008/09 Actual	2009/10 Target	2010/11 Target	2011/12 Target
Per cent of Aboriginal children in care who are served by delegated Aboriginal agencies	31.9%	39.1%	41.0%	42.5%	44.0%

Data Source: The Management Information System and the Social Worker System.

Discussion

This measure shows the proportion of Aboriginal children in care who are receiving services delivered by delegated Aboriginal agencies. The Ministry and Aboriginal communities continue to work together to provide culturally appropriate services and improve outcomes for Aboriginal children. The Ministry is committed to supporting Aboriginal people to exercise jurisdiction to provide services and to develop alternative models of service delivery that reflect Aboriginal culture and traditional ways of practice.

The Ministry continues to work with Aboriginal agencies on building capacity and planning for the transition of services to delegated Aboriginal agencies. It is anticipated that there will be an increase in the number of Aboriginal agencies available to provide child protection services over the next three years and the targets for the measure have been increased to reflect the trends to date and the continuation of strategies to safely transfer responsibility for Aboriginal children in care to delegated Aboriginal agencies.

Goal 5: Child, youth and family development services will be based on evidence gathered through a strong quality assurance system

Objective: Increased effectiveness, efficiency and accountability of supports and services for children, youth and their families served by the Ministry

Key Strategies:

- Strengthen quality assurance and reporting at the provincial and regional levels.
- Increase provincial and community-based organizations’ engagement and involvement in service delivery evaluation.
- Support continuous learning and service improvement through a range of research and human resource development activities.

Resource Summary

Resource Summary Table

Full Time Equivalents (FTE) numbers for each Ministry are currently being reviewed across government and therefore are not reported in this Service Plan Update. FTE's are routinely reported in the Public Accounts and more detailed information will now be publicly reported in a new Annual Report on the Corporate Human Resource Plan, released each Fall. For more information, see the Budget and Fiscal Plan documentation.

Core Business Area	2008/09 Restated Estimates ¹	2009/10 Estimates	2010/11 Plan	2011/12 Plan
Operating Expenses (\$000)				
Child and Family Development	792,499	793,630	793,807	794,897
Early Childhood Development, Child Care and Supports to Children with Special Needs	505,012	520,264	522,150	522,450
Provincial Services	63,213	62,887	61,515	60,663
Executive and Support Services	21,418	17,358	17,358	16,928
Total	1,382,142	1,394,139	1,394,830	1,394,938
Ministry Capital Expenditures (Consolidated Revenue Fund) (\$000)				
Executive and Support Services.....	7,853	1,098	171	262
Total	7,853	1,098	171	262

Other Financing Transactions (\$000)				
Executive and Support Services Human Services Providers Financing Program				
Receipts	125	123	123	123
Disbursements	0	0	0	0
Net Cash (Requirements)	125	123	123	123

¹ These amounts have been restated, for comparative purposes only, to be consistent with the presentation of the September Update 2009 Estimates 2009/10. Schedule A of the September Update 2009 Estimates 2009/10, presents a detailed reconciliation.

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Community Living British Columbia

www.communitylivingbc.ca

Ombudsman

www.ombud.gov.bc.ca

Public Guardian and Trustee of British Columbia

www.trustee.bc.ca

Representative for Children and Youth

www.rcybc.ca/content/home.asp