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Ministry of
Children and Family
Development

2009/10 – 2011/12
Service Plan

February 2009



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Ministry of Children and Family Development
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Message from the Minister and Accountability Statement

I am pleased to present the 2009/10 – 2011/12 Service Plan for the Ministry of Children and Family Development. This plan establishes the Ministry's future goals and reflects our past accomplishments in supporting vulnerable British Columbian children and their families.

Building on the strengths that already exist in children, families and communities is the philosophy that guides our programs and services. With a primary focus on prevention and early intervention, our Service Plan outlines the work we will undertake, the goals we aim to achieve and the course we will chart over the next three years to help ensure that all B.C. children, youth and families are strong, safe and supported.

In April 2008, the Ministry released the *Strong, Safe and Supported* plan, setting the path forward for continuing to improve services to children and families. The Ministry will continue to publicly report on implementation of that plan. Achieving the plan's goals requires a solid foundation, a strong system of support accomplished through sound partnerships and, above all, committed people. Our relationships with our many valued community partners help support regionally significant programs and services for all British Columbians. In addition, we are moving to enhance coordination in cross ministry efforts to improve access, quality and provide a more streamlined service delivery system for essential government services.

Over the next year we will continue to build on our partnerships — both across government and in our communities. We will lead the implementation of the Children and Youth with Special Needs Framework for Action, an integrated strategy to foster collaborative action among the health, education and social service sectors, to help us reach our goal of better supporting families. We will continue to support Aboriginal people in developing and delivering services that reflect their identities and connect Aboriginal children to their culture and traditions.

Our 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 successes 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.

The Ministry of Children and Family Development 2009/10 – 2011/12 Service Plan 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 February 8, 2009 have been considered in preparing the plan and I am accountable for achieving the specific objectives in the plan.



Honourable Tom Christensen
Minister of Children and Family Development

February 9, 2009



Message from the Minister of State and Accountability Statement

Supporting quality child care is a priority for this government, and we work closely with parents, stakeholders and communities to create a strong foundation for early childhood development, early learning and child care. From capital investments in infrastructure to subsidies for parents to training supports for early childhood educators, this government is making strategic investments in programs and services that enhance the healthy development of children.

There are approximately 4,700 licensed child care facilities in B.C. operating in home environments and in regulated child care centres. In fall 2007, we announced a \$12.5 million investment to create 2,000 new child care spaces across B.C. By May 2008 more than 100 child care projects in 60 communities had received funding and more than 75 per cent are already operational. There are now about 90,000 licensed child care spaces that receive ongoing government funding — an increase of more than 25 per cent since 2003/04.

Government also provides subsidies for approximately 50,000 children from 37,000 families in B.C. to assist with the costs of child care for low and moderate income families. Overall, our annual investment in child care is close to \$300 million.

In February 2009, B.C. Council for Families will distribute the second half of the \$20 million Child Care Enhancement Fund to eligible child care providers. The fund contributes to quality improvements by providing funding for supplies, equipment and capital investments as well as professional development and training opportunities.

We will continue to work with our many valued partners — to strengthen existing relationships and develop new ones — to support a quality accessible and sustainable child care system that meets the needs of children and their families in communities across B.C.

I am the Minister of State 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's website,
- 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, and
- e) report on the results referred to in paragraphs (a) to (d) to the Government Caucus Committee on Social Development.



Honourable Linda Reid
Minister of State for Child Care

February 9, 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 over the next three years.

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* and accompanying Operational Plan, the culmination of months of collaboration and consultation with Ministry staff and partners. The *Strong, Safe and Supported* plan is responsive to the recommendations of the Hughes review and places a strong focus on early intervention and a needs-based approach to supporting and protecting vulnerable children and youth.

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.

On January 24, 2008, Premier Gordon Campbell announced that the B.C. government supports Jordan's Principle. Under Jordan's Principle, a First Nations child will have access to available health and social services without delay or disruption from jurisdictional disputes over funding. The Ministry is implementing this initiative in B.C. in collaboration with other B.C. ministries, First Nations representatives and the federal government.

Human Resource Issues

Competition for qualified professional staff, especially in remote and rural communities, continues to be a challenge. The Ministry is working on human resource strategies to explore opportunities that will provide the 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

Effective cross ministry partnerships are essential for the successful implementation of the initiatives directed at realizing the government's Five Great Goals and overall strategic direction. Successful outcomes for youth who are challenged by mental health problems or substance misuse, for example, rely on an integrated approach with public health agencies.

The Office of the Chief Information Officer is leading the cross government Social Sector Integrated Information Management Initiative. 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 Labour and Citizens' Services on planning for the strategic implementation of the new Integrated Case Management software.

In 2008, government transferred responsibility for adult community living services and Community Living British Columbia from the Ministry of Children and Family Development to the Ministry of Housing and Social Development. This process included the transfer of responsibility for services to children and youth with special needs, formerly provided through Community Living British Columbia, back to the Ministry, which is expected to be completed by October 2009. These changes to ministerial responsibility 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. Once the findings of the report are released, the Ministry will continue to work with the Ministry of Education on future planning.

Economic Forecast

The private sector now expects that B.C. will experience slower economic growth in 2009 and 2010 than it has in previous years. Risks to B.C. economic outlook include a prolonged United States recession, continued turmoil in global financial markets, slower global demand for B.C. products, volatile commodity prices and further moderation of domestic demand in B.C. Whatever the prevailing economic circumstances, the Ministry remains committed to supporting the healthy development of children, youth and families, preventing vulnerability in children and youth, and supporting Aboriginal people to exercise jurisdiction in the delivery of child and family services.

Demographic Changes

Between 2001 and 2006, B.C.'s child and youth population declined by 3.5 per cent. In 2006, the population of children aged 0-4 began to rise and is projected to increase by approximately 3.8 per cent from 2006 to 2009.

The Statistics Canada 2006 Census enumerated 71,880 Aboriginal children (aged 0-18 years), representing approximately 7.9 per cent of the child population in the province. While the overall child population in B.C. declined between 2001 and 2006, the Aboriginal child population increased by 9.8 per cent. This rise includes both an increase in population and an increase in Aboriginal self-identification. People who had not previously identified themselves as part of an Aboriginal group are now doing so.

Within the current Ministry service delivery structure, Aboriginal children continue to be over-represented in child welfare services. The number of Aboriginal children in care increased from 4,273 in 2001/02 to 4,788 in 2007/08, while the total number of non-Aboriginal children in care decreased from 5,776 to 4,449 in the same time period. Aboriginal children are also over-represented in the youth justice system.

Diversity and immigration will continue to be major features of the province's population, as the 2006 Census shows that B.C.'s foreign-born population increased to 27.5 per cent, up from 26.1 per cent in 2001 and 22.3 per cent in 1991.

Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Performance Measures

This section presents the Ministry of Children and Family Development 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.

The goals, objectives and strategies brought forward in the Ministry of Children and Family Development 2009/10 – 2011/12 Service Plan are the five pillars presented in *Strong, Safe and Supported: A Commitment to B.C.'s Children and Youth*. As such, the Service Plan goals 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. The goals, objectives and strategies also align with the Ministry's Operational Plan, which lays out more detailed action items and milestones.

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 Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder strategic 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 Forecast	2009/10 Target	2010/11 Target	2011/12 Target
Total number of Ministry funded licensed child care spaces	87,538	90,000	91,000	91,000	91,000

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

Discussion

The total number of licensed child care spaces supported by the Child Care Operating Funding Program is a measure of child care capacity and supply. The Ministry provides operating funding for child care spaces that are licensed by the Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport. The targets for the measures are based on the anticipated results of announced initiatives intended to increase the number of child care spaces.

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 model for on-reserve services.
- Continue improving capacity to intervene early on issues of early childhood mental health.
- Increase the use of collaborative planning mechanisms in child welfare.
- 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 Forecast	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	742	720	800	800	800

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

Discussion

Permanent relationships are a major determinant of whether children feel safe and secure. This performance measure captures the use of placements involving kin or a person with a significant tie to a child. If a child has to leave their parental home, the Ministry strives to place the child with people who know the child and will maintain a life-long relationship with them, their families and communities, provided such a placement is determined to be safe and appropriate.

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 Forecast	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%	80.0%	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 its long term 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, and the 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 - reduce

Performance Measure	2007/08 Actual	2008/09 Forecast	2009/10 Target	2010/11 Target	2011/12 Target
Recurrence of child neglect and/or abuse by family ¹ - reduce	20.1%	21.0%	18.9%	18.4%	18.4%

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

¹Neglect 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

Reducing the rate of recurrence of child neglect and/or abuse by family is a priority of the Ministry. This measure is directly linked to the outcome of ensuring child safety in the community. When it is established that a child (0-18 years of age) has been or is at risk, the Ministry works with families and provides services to reduce future harm and address the needs of the family. This measure identifies the proportion of families that neglect and/or abuse their children within 12 months of a previously confirmed incidence of child neglect and/or abuse. The targets for this measure are based on past trends and the increased use of alternative to care options.

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

Performance Measure	2007/08 Actual	2008/09 Forecast	2009/10 Target	2010/11 Target	2011/12 Target
Per cent of children with adoption plans who have been placed ¹	18.0%	17.0%	18.0%	18.0%	18.5%

Data Source: The Adoption Management System.

¹Adoption is a component of permanency planning for children in long term care.

Discussion

The Ministry is committed to children being permanently connected to their families and to seeking a permanent family home for all children who would otherwise remain in the Ministry's care until adulthood. There are circumstances when adoption is in the best interest of the child. This measure shows the number of children who are placed for adoption within the fiscal year as a percentage of all the children in care who have a plan for adoption. The targets for this measure are based on past trends and reflect the Ministry's commitment to ensuring that children have permanent family homes.

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 and implementation 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 Forecast	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%	38.7%	38.0%	40.0%	42.0%

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

Discussion

The Ministry recognizes the importance of providing culturally appropriate prevention and support services, and improving outcomes for Aboriginal children. The Ministry is continuing to work with Aboriginal agencies on building capacity and planning for the transition of services.

This measure shows the proportion of Aboriginal children in care who are receiving services delivered by delegated Aboriginal agencies. The targets for the measure are based on 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 level.
- 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

Core Business Area	2008/09 Restated Estimates ¹	2009/10 Estimates	2010/11 Plan	2011/12 Plan
Operating Expenses (\$000)				
Child and Family Development.....	796,266	798,085	803,814	804,892
Early Childhood Development, Child Care and Supports to Children with Special Need.....	505,980	522,157	529,350	529,599
Provincial Services.....	64,516	63,871	62,537	61,652
Executive and Support Services.....	22,166	18,600	18,600	18,158
Total.....	1,388,928	1,402,713	1,414,301	1,414,301
Full-time Equivalents (Direct FTEs)				
Child and Family Development.....	3,350	3,238	3,238	3,165
Early Childhood Development, Child Care and Supports to Children with Special Needs.....	315	403	403	398
Provincial Services.....	604	589	589	575
Executive and Support Services.....	273	207	207	201
Total.....	4,542	4,437	4,437	4,339

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

Ministry Capital Expenditures (Consolidated Revenue Fund) (\$000)				
Executive and Support Services.....	7,853	1,464	1,022	4,144
Total	7,853	1,464	1,022	4,144
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

¹These amounts have been restated, for comparative purposes only, to be consistent with the presentation of the *Estimates 2009/10*. Schedule A of the *Estimates 2009/10*, present 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

