

Ministry of Children and Family Development

Service Plan Summary

2002/03-2004/05

Mission

To promote and develop the capacity of families and communities to care for and protect vulnerable children and youth and to support adults with developmental disabilities.

Strategic Shifts

The strategic shifts being undertaken by the ministry are as follows:

1. From a closed, reactive, defensive culture to open, accountable and transparent relationships.
2. From centralized decisions and a fragmented service delivery system to enabling communities to develop and deliver services within a consolidated, coherent community-based service delivery system.
3. From funding endless services to making strategic investments in capacity and resiliency building and providing funding for programs and services known to work. Capacity, in this context, means ability and potential. Resiliency is the ability to recover from challenging situations. We believe that individuals, families, and communities have the capacity to successfully face and overcome challenges, provided that they are given the opportunities and necessary supports to build and integrate this capacity.
4. From protecting children by removing them from families to promoting family and community capacity to protect children and to support child and family development.
5. From direct care and support for adults with developmental disabilities to a community-based service delivery system that promotes choice, innovation and shared responsibility.
6. From moving only child protection authority to Aboriginal entities to building capacity within Aboriginal communities to deliver a full range of services with emphasis on early childhood and family development.

Core Business Areas and Major Initiatives

The Ministry's goals and objectives are supported by five core business areas:

Adult Community Living Services: Provides residential and day programming support to adults with developmental disabilities. Residential services (continuing care) are provided in family care settings, semi-independent living, and in staffed resources. Training and support programs (day programs) include self-help skill development, supported work and home support.

Major Initiatives

- The ministry will be working with the community over the next year to develop and implement a new governance and service delivery structure. It is expected that implementation will be completed in 2004/05.
- A new provincial standardized eligibility and assessment process for community living services, which will ensure consistent criteria are applied across the province, will be developed and introduced by 2003 to ensure that resources are dedicated to those clients in the greatest need.
- Additional supports and incentives will be developed by 2003 so that families can keep their adult children at home as long as possible. The ministry will introduce a range of funding options for families to better meet their needs, including individualized and direct funding. Families will also be encouraged to contribute to the cost of services for their adult children.
- Independent living and family care arrangements will, where possible, replace existing staffed residential resources. Specialized cost effective residential resources will be established for adults with complex needs by 2005.

Youth Justice, Child and Youth Mental Health, and Youth Services: Youth Justice programs promote rehabilitation by providing services to those incarcerated in youth custody centres, and funding for a range of community based alternatives to custody, including day programs, intensive supervision, alternative measures and community service. Child and Youth Mental Health services include operation of the Maples Adolescent Treatment Centre, youth forensic psychiatric services to the courts and clients, and community mental health programs ranging from prevention to intensive support and treatment. Youth Services provides programs for at-risk and sexually exploited youth, including support workers, prevention and promotion services, and youth agreements.

Major Initiatives

- Regional child and youth mental health and regional youth probation services will be included in the same new governance and service delivery structure as Child Protection and Family Development.
- Due to declining demand as a result of a decreasing crime rate and improved community alternatives, surplus youth custody capacity will be reduced in the lower mainland in 2002/03.
- Programs such as Youth Outreach will be reviewed and better targetted to meet the needs of youth.
- The ministry will be working with the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General in 2002/03 to consider appropriate measures to fight child prostitution and youth crime.

Early Childhood Development and Special Needs Children and Youth: Early childhood development encourages the development of healthy children, preconception to age 6, in order to prevent further problems that would subsequently require more intensive interventions. Special needs services provide child-focused and family support programs and interventions that promote healthy development and functioning of children and youth to optimize lifetime opportunities and assist families in their role of primary caregivers. Early childhood development services will remain a strategic priority of the ministry. Specific attention will be paid to Aboriginal communities.

Major Initiatives

- The ministry will be working with the community to develop and implement a new governance and service delivery structure over the next year. It is expected that implementation will be completed in 2004/05.
- The ministry will develop the capacity of families to support their children with special needs by moving to a focus on family development services rather than generalized family supports by 2004.
- Programs will be targetted to those clients in the greatest need by developing restricted eligibility criteria and a new rate structure by 2004. A new rate structure would contain costs by designating specific levels of funding depending on need, thereby resulting in greater efficiency within the available budget, the result of which will be that more clients can be served. Families will be encouraged to contribute to the cost of services for their children.
- The ministry will increase choice by introducing individualized funding to families for some services such as services for children with autism.

Child Protection and Family Development: The Child Protection Program carries out the Province's responsibilities under the *Child, Family and Community Service Act*, to ensure that children found to be at risk of harm are protected from further abuse and neglect, and to promote the capacity of families and communities to support children.

The Program administers the children in care residential program, including foster care, contracted facilities, and independent living, and finds adoptive homes for children permanently in the care of the Province. Family development programs ensure that families whose children are at risk of harm receive the necessary support services. Changes to this area will be sensitive to the needs of families. New measures are intended to reduce the average cost per child in care. They will also reduce the number of children in care from the current 11 per 1,000 population, to closer to the national average of 9 per 1,000.

Major Initiatives

- A new governance and service delivery structure will be developed over the next year. It is expected that implementation will be completed in 2004/05.
- Available tools and supports will be refocused in 2002/03 to increase the role of the family in addressing a child's identified risks. Funding will be directed to those family development programs that show evidence that they increase a family's capacity to care for their children.
- Legislative changes will be considered to increase flexibility in the delivery of child protection services, including family conferencing and placing children with extended family.
- Children in residential care will, where possible, be shifted from staffed group homes and other contracted resources to family foster care beginning in 2002/03.

Corporate Services, Program and Regional Management: Corporate Services and Program Management provides overall direction, development and support for ministry programs, including support for all regional operations. This includes policy and legislative support, governmental relations, audit, performance management and related research functions, administrative services, and financial and decision support services. The area will also provide support for the establishment of new governance structures.

Major Initiatives

- The ministry will develop and implement new regional governance and service delivery structures, to be completed in 2004/05. This will include the establishment of province-wide standards for locally delivered programs, the establishment of accountability and performance management mechanisms and the increased use of output and outcome based contracts for service.

Ministry Resources

	Fiscal Year				Percent Change 2001/02 to 2004/05
	(restated Estimates) 2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	
Operating Expenses (million \$)	1,553	1,558	1,394	1,191	-23.0%
Base FTEs	5,076	4,907	4,598	3,963	-21.9%
FTEs transferred to regional authorities	—	—	—	(2,800)*	—
Remaining Ministry FTEs	—	—	—	1,163*	-77.1%*

*The 77 per cent FTE reduction includes a transfer of approximately 2,800 FTEs in 2004/05 to regional authorities under new community governance structures. Once these transfers are complete, there will be 1,163 FTEs remaining in the ministry.

Government Priorities relating to the Ministry of Children and Family Development:

New Era Commitments Included in 2002/03-2004/05 Service Plan

- *Stop the endless bureaucratic restructuring that has drained resources from children and family services.* The new governance models to be introduced by the ministry will create more stability in the system and ensure more effective service delivery for children and families.
- *Increase emphasis on early childhood intervention programs for families with special needs children.* The ministry will develop and implement a new service delivery model to support and promote family and community capacity in the delivery of early intervention services to children at risk of developing special needs.
- *Work with foster parents to help them improve care and placements of foster children.* The 53 hour BC Foster Care Education Program is currently underway, presented through the community college system. The ministry is reviewing the screening process for foster families and the protocols for abuse/neglect allegations in foster homes. Foster care will be a component of the new governance model to be introduced for child protection and family development.
- *Focus on early identification of at-risk children and measures aimed at preventing crisis situations before they arise.* As part of a new governance model, the ministry will be working with the community to develop and implement a service delivery structure to support the delivery of early intervention services to children at risk of developing special needs. This would include the implementation of programs that would help develop family capacity to meet the needs of their children.
- *With Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, fight child prostitution and youth crime with specific legislation aimed at providing greater protection to children at risk and greater parental responsibility for children who commit crimes.* The ministry will be working with the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General in 2002/03 to consider appropriate measures.

Key Projects (June 25, 2001 letter from the Premier) Achieved

- *Review the current legal status of children with autism and make recommendations.* The Crown has filed an appeal to overturn the BC Supreme Court decision that the provision of treatment to children with autism is a Charter obligation of government. Families involved in the litigation have filed a cross appeal asking the Court of Appeal to overturn the Supreme Court decision not to grant reimbursement for past treatment expenses. As well, the families are seeking an order for future costs for treatment when recommended by a medical practitioner or psychologist.

Key Projects Included in 02/03-04/05 Service Plan

- *Examine opportunities for greater local delivery of family services.* Government has approved the development of new governance and service delivery models. The ministry will be implementing the new models over the next three years in a way that will consider how best to deliver family services at the regional level.
- *Develop a plan to lead an increase in family support services.* In 2002/03, the ministry will be reviewing its current family development programs and will be considering how best to refocus tools and supports to increase the role of families in addressing identified risks to children in ways that keep children within their immediate and extended families.
- *Develop a framework for attracting more foster parents and support today's foster parents.* Regional personnel will be developing plans in 2002/03 regarding projected needs for foster care, in order to meet the range of services required across the province by 2004/05.
- *Develop a plan for aboriginal children receiving ministry services in cooperation with the Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services.* An interministry committee will be developing a plan in 2002/03 for coordination of provincial services.
- *Provide greater support to childhood development programs.* The ministry will be reviewing its current family development programs in 2002/03 and will be considering how best to refocus tools and supports to increase the role of families in addressing identified risks to children.
- *Examine opportunities for parental education initiatives.* The Ministry will be exploring opportunities for enhanced parental education programs in 2002/03.