

Ministry of Children and Family Development

2010/11 – 2012/13 SERVICE PLAN

March 2010



For more information on the British Columbia
Ministry of Children and Family Development
see Ministry Contact Information on Page 20 or contact:

Ministry of Children and Family Development

PO BOX 9770
STN PROV GOVT
VICTORIA, BC
V8W 9S5

or visit our website at

www.gov.bc.ca/mcf

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Message from the Minister and Accountability Statement



I am pleased to present the 2010/11 – 2012/13 Service Plan for the Ministry of Children and Family Development. Our service plan captures many elements of the future we envision and are working to create — it is a commitment made to all British Columbians.

This service plan represents a mid-way point in the organizational transformation that is driven by significant shifts in our vision and direction. The strategies and performance measures in this year's service plan have been updated to better reflect the Ministry's collective effort to embrace these changes. Over the past three years we have been moving away from a service delivery model sometimes viewed as reactionary toward a proactive approach founded upon five core pillars that recognize and build on the strengths inherent in all children and families.

This philosophy is embodied in *Strong, Safe and Supported: A Commitment to B.C.'s Children and Youth* — the Ministry's action plan that guides our work and our decisions. With an emphasis on prevention and early intervention, the five pillars contained in the action plan are based on a holistic approach to planning and delivering services and the best possible outcomes for children and families. We are focused on helping to build healthy families through early childhood development, quality child care, supports for children and youth with special needs, services for youth and support services for families. We are also focused on supporting an Aboriginal approach that is more inclusive and reflective of Aboriginal cultures and traditions.

We have seen success and — despite the challenges presented by the current fiscal climate — we will continue to build on what we have accomplished with our community partners. Over the next year, we will find better ways to support family connections, deliver healthy outcomes and continue on our journey with Aboriginal people, supporting them in developing and delivering services that reflect their culture and identity.

Like many organizations, we were faced with a choice: to wait for economic recovery and rebuild the old world, or continue to advance and build a new one. We chose to advance. We engaged our stakeholders, the contracted agencies that provide so many of our services, and asked them to work with us, to find efficiencies and, where possible, new ways of delivering programs. Ultimately, difficult decisions still had to be made, but they were informed by the experience and knowledge of our partners and service providers. As a Ministry, we value our partnerships and will continue to strengthen those we currently have and pursue new ones to help find new ways of delivering services and supporting families.

Success does not come by taking a linear path but rather through a confluence of new ideas, proven methods, strong partnerships and sound planning. While we have the courage to correct our course when needed, the end goal remains — a province where children and families are strong, safe and supported to reach their full potential.

The Ministry of Children and Family Development *2010/11 – 2012/13 Service Plan* was prepared under my direction, in accordance with the *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act*. All material fiscal assumptions and policy decisions as of February 11, 2010 have been considered in preparing the plan and I am accountable for the basis on which the plan is prepared and for achieving the specific objectives in the plan.



The Honourable Mary Polak
Minister of Children and Family Development and
Minister Responsible for Child Care
February 11, 2010

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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, residential, foster and alternative care options, adoption for children and youth permanently in care, 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 directly or through community service agencies. Some of the Ministry's service delivery partners include: contracted service providers, other ministries, family foster homes, school districts and health authorities.

The Ministry continues to work with Aboriginal communities and delegated Aboriginal agencies to support Indigenous people to make decisions about the policy and practices that affect their children, youth and families.

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 works to ensure that children, youth and families in B.C. are strong, safe and supported to reach their full potential. 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 its guiding document, *Strong, Safe and Supported: A Commitment to B.C.'s Children and Youth*. This document reflects a strengths and rights-based approach to supporting and protecting vulnerable children and youth. It outlines five pillars of an effective child, youth and family development service system: prevention, early intervention, intervention and support, the Aboriginal approach, and quality assurance. *Strong, Safe and Supported* represents ongoing Ministry transformation that allows for integrated responses for children, youth and their families based on individual needs and strengths.

In order to achieve the goals outlined in *Strong, Safe and Supported*, the Ministry identified four priorities that continue to guide the work:

1. The Ministry's Aboriginal transformation work includes supporting First Nations, Métis and other Aboriginal people to develop and deliver service approaches based on their culture and traditions.
2. Practice change includes a strengths-based developmental framework for assessment and planning. Through practice change, the Ministry will embed strengths-based practices into all program areas and develop new ways to serve our clients that reflect the principles outlined in *Strong, Safe and Supported*.
3. The Ministry will plan for and deliver an integrated case management system in cooperation with the ministries of Housing and Social Development and Citizens' Services. The integrated case management system will support practice change initiatives and other Ministry business needs.
4. The B.C. Children's Lens for government policy and program development will serve as an integrated framework for children and youth. The B.C. Children's Lens will increase the co-ordination of existing initiatives, recognize how ministries contribute to the healthy development of children and youth and identify where investments in children and youth can be made to have the greatest impacts. A cross government baseline will be established to enable assessment of progress and the impact that public policy is having on the healthy development of children and youth.

Workforce Planning

The economic downturn and continued fiscal pressures experienced across government has required the Ministry to examine how services are delivered and look at innovative approaches to meeting staffing needs. Staffing priorities will be managed corporately across the organization. Work functions and organizational structures will be transformed to better align with *Strong, Safe and Supported*. Despite the current economic climate, the Ministry remains committed to exploring human resource strategies that will provide the future workforce necessary to support the infrastructure for the child and family development system.

Transfer of Responsibility of Services for Children and Youth with Special Needs

The Ministry continues to work with partner ministries to develop integrated and collaborative approaches to serving children, youth and their families. In October 2009, government transferred responsibility of services for children and youth with special needs and their families from Community Living British Columbia back to the Ministry. The Ministry continues to coordinate services for children and youth with special needs and their families in partnership with the Ministry of Health Services and the Ministry of Education under the cross-ministry Children and Youth with Special Needs Framework for Action. In addition, a protocol with other ministries and partners will guide improvements in early engagement regarding planning for youth who will need services as young adults. The Ministry's coordinated work with the Ministry of Housing and Social Development and Community Living British Columbia exemplifies a continued commitment to a comprehensive approach to services for all children and youth with special needs and in particular, youth with developmental disabilities.

Children and Youth Population

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 impact Ministry operations. The Ministry 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 908,878 in 2009, representing 20.4 per cent of British Columbia's total population. British Columbia's child and youth population declined by 4.2 per cent between 2001 and 2009. It is forecast to decline until 2011. Beyond 2011, the child and youth population is forecast to gradually begin to increase.

The Aboriginal child and youth population increased 11 per cent between 2001 and 2009 while the Aboriginal youth population (age 15 to 18) increased over 31 per cent.

Aboriginal children continue to be disproportionately represented among children in the Ministry's care. As of September 2009, approximately eight per cent of children in British Columbia and approximately 53 per cent of the 8,677 children in the Ministry's care were Aboriginal.

Performance Management

Performance management is an ongoing continuous quality improvement process and includes the development of performance measures. The Ministry continues to develop performance measures that align with *Strong, Safe and Supported* and support a culture of organizational learning and knowledge. As a result, some performance measures from the *2009/10 – 2011/12 Service Plan Update* have been modified and other performance measures have been replaced. The Ministry will continue to report out on the measures in the *2009/10 – 2011/12 Service Plan Update* through its Internet site.

In order to increase transparency, the Ministry is working to expand the overall number of performance measures that it reports publicly. To view Ministry performance measures and related results, please visit: www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/about_us/performance.htm.

Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Performance Measures

This section presents the Ministry's objectives and strategies aimed at the Ministry's five goals. These goals reflect the five pillars presented in *Strong, Safe and Supported: A Commitment to B.C.'s Children and Youth*. The objectives and strategies address the key elements of the continuum of services provided in an effective child, youth and family development service system:

- 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.

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

Objective: Children, youth and families are served by a continuum of developmentally appropriate services

Strategies:

- Continue to work with the Ministry of Education to align child care services to support the introduction of full day kindergarten in B.C.
- Continue to support healthy development of children and families through a range of early childhood development, family and community support services.
- Promote promising practices in preventing Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.

Performance Measure 1: Number of single-parent families who receive a Child Care Subsidy

Performance Measure	2008/09 Baseline	2009/10 Forecast	2010/11 Target	2011/12 Target	2012/13 Target
Number of single-parent families who receive a Child Care Subsidy	14,118	14,750	15,000	15,250	15,500

Data Source: Child Care Subsidy datamart

Discussion

Through the Child Care Subsidy Program, the Ministry assists low and moderate income families with the cost of child care to ensure a range of affordable, safe, quality child care options. Through this program, the Ministry provides subsidies to approximately 35,000 families and serves over 50,000 children each year. As the number of parents working full time continues to increase, the demand for quality child care will continue to grow.

This measure focuses on a vulnerable subset of all Child Care Subsidy clients, the number of single-parent families who are receiving a child care subsidy. Access to quality child care programs has a positive impact on children’s well-being and developmental outcomes. For vulnerable children, access to safe, quality child care can help to ensure success in school and throughout the life-span and reduce the need for intervention services later in their lives.

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

Objective: Child, youth and family services build on inherent strengths

Strategies:

- Increase the use of collaborative practices such as family group conferencing, mediation and family development response.
- Expand kinship agreements with extended family or community to address individually assessed needs.
- Work with other ministries to improve collaborative practice through increased information sharing and awareness of the effects of domestic violence on children.

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

Performance Measure	2008/09 Baseline	2009/10 Forecast	2010/11 Target	2011/12 Target	2012/13 Target
Children having to leave their parental home who are able to remain with extended family or community	709 ¹	761	800	850	900

Data Source: Management Information System/Social Worker System

¹ Number revised to reflect improved methodology

Discussion

Permanent, stable relationships are a major determinant of whether children feel safe and secure. If a child has to leave their parental home, the Ministry or delegated Aboriginal agency, strive to place the child with people who know the child and will maintain a positive, life-long relationship with them, their families and communities, thereby minimizing disruptions to children and their families.

This measure identifies the number of children who were placed by agreement in an out of care arrangement with a relative or a person with significant ties to the child. Compared to the 709 children in 2008/09 that had to leave their parental home but were able to remain with extended family or community, there were 3,144 children brought into care and placed with foster parents or other placements that did not involve extended family or community. Over time, the proportion of children placed with extended families or communities is expected to increase.

Performance Measure 3: Number of families participating in Collaborative Planning Decision Making processes

Performance Measure	2008/09 Baseline	2009/10 Forecast	2010/11 Target	2011/12 Target	2012/13 Target
Number of families participating in Collaborative Planning Decision Making processes	2,967	3,989	4,400	4,800	5,300

Data Source: Management Information System/Social Worker System, Family Group Conferencing Information System and the Dispute Resolution Office

Discussion

Through building on inherent strengths, vulnerable children, youth and their families can be supported to increase their capacities and competencies. Research demonstrates that early intervention strategies can develop resilience in children and families, effectively supporting them without the need for removal or more serious interventions.

This measure represents the number of families who have experienced collaborative planning and decision making processes, which lessen the likelihood of more intrusive intervention measures. In 2008/09, the Ministry screened 35,219 families into various services or processes ranging from referrals to community organizations through to more intensive child protection investigations. Of these, 2,967 families, or 8.4 per cent were screened into collaborative decision making processes. Over time, the number of families participating in a collaborative planning decision making process is expected to increase.

Collaborative planning decision making processes consist of:

- Family Group Conferencing — a formal meeting where members of a child or youth’s immediate family come together with extended family and members of the child’s community who will, or who might, participate in the development of a plan for the child. Family Group Conferencing is a process designed to promote cooperative planning and decision-making and to rebuild a family’s support network;
- Mediation — a process for working out disagreements with the help of a trained, neutral person (a mediator). Mediation is a process that helps people focus on the best interests of the child, and work towards a solution that is acceptable to the people involved; and
- Family Development Response — builds family capacity to safely care for the child. At the heart of Family Development Response is moving away from investigation as the primary response to keeping children safe, to a range of responses and community based options to keep children safe within their families and communities.

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

Objective: Individual child and youth plans are based on individual needs and reflect a strengths and team based approach

Strategies:

- Continue to work with the Ministry of Education and care providers to find opportunities within schools and at home, to improve educational attainment of children under continuing custody orders.
- Develop comprehensive, strengths-based plans for children and youth that consider connection to culture and community, through Child and Family Support, Assessment, Planning and Practice.
- Assess and develop services for youth with special needs transitioning into adulthood based on individual needs through the Cross-Ministry Transition Planning Protocol for Youth with Special Needs.
- Redesign residential services to allow for alternative placement options based on individual needs and assessments.

Performance Measure 4: Number of children under a continuing custody order who enter grade seven and are still in school three years later

Performance Measure	2008/09 Baseline	2009/10 Forecast	2010/11 Target	2011/12 Target	2012/13 Target
Number of children under a continuing custody order who enter grade seven and are still in school three years later ¹	91.9%	93.3%	94%	94.5%	95%

Data Source: Management Information System/Social Worker System and Ministry of Education enrollment data

¹ This measure is calculated as a moving average, using the previous three years data.

Discussion

Education is an important part of healthy child development. Measuring educational outcomes provides valuable insight into how children in care are doing relative to other children and creates opportunities for planned interventions that will help them to succeed. One of the most important determinants of school success is stability and remaining connected to the education system. For this reason, the Ministry has developed a new measure that will enable it to determine the percentage of children in its long-term care who remain connected to the education

system for at least three years after transitioning from grade seven. This measure replaces: *per cent of children in care under continuing custody orders whose grade level is as prescribed for their age.*

The Ministry remains committed to working with the Ministry of Education to track educational outcomes for children in care relative to other children in order to identify opportunities for planned interventions to help them succeed. Each year the Ministry publishes the *Educational Experiences of Children Under a Continuing Custody Order* report which tracks educational performance measure outcomes. To view the report please visit: www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/foster/publications.htm.

Performance Measure 5: Aboriginal children cared for through Aboriginal communities and providers

Performance Measure	2008/09 Baseline	2009/10 Forecast	2010/11 Target	2011/12 Target	2012/13 Target
Per cent of Aboriginal children having to leave their parental home who receive services delivered by delegated Aboriginal agencies, Aboriginal foster care providers or Aboriginal friends and family	53.2%	55.0%	56.5%	58.0%	59.5%

Data Source: Management Information System/Social Worker System and Resource and Payment System

Discussion

Healthy development outcomes for Aboriginal children in care can be improved through a strong and ongoing connection to their culture and traditions.

This new measure broadens the previous measure from children served by delegated Aboriginal agencies to also include those children served by the Ministry who are receiving services delivered by Aboriginal foster care providers or Aboriginal friends and family. As the Ministry continues to expand options as they relate to Aboriginal service delivery, the number of Aboriginal children who remain connected to Aboriginal caregivers is expected to increase.

Performance Measure 6: Children in “out of home care” for at least two years who experienced no change in placement

Performance Measure	2008/09 Baseline	2009/10 Forecast	2010/11 Target	2011/12 Target	2012/13 Target
Per cent of children in “out of home care” for at least two years who experienced no change in placement	54.1%	55.5%	55.7%	55.9%	56.1%

Data Source: Management Information System/Social Worker System and Resource and Payment System

Discussion

Social stability is essential for children to develop a sense of belonging and identity as they cope with separation from their families. Some placement changes are necessary and can be beneficial in terms of ensuring the right fit for the child or youth, as minimizing moves while in care increases their sense of stability, identity and belonging. This measure reflects the proportion of children in care who remain in the same placement for at least two years. With continued implementation of *Strong, Safe and Supported* and the use of strengths-based assessments of the child and family, this proportion is expected to increase.

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

Objective: Aboriginal children and youth live in strong, healthy families and sustainable communities where they are connected to their culture and traditions

Aboriginal people are disproportionately represented in the social service system — for example, a disproportionate number of Aboriginal children are in care and Aboriginal people experience lower levels of health and well-being than other British Columbians. Addressing these gaps requires strong reconciliation strategies. Aboriginal children, youth and their families need to be receiving services through an Aboriginal service system which strongly connects children and youth to their cultures and traditions.

Aboriginal people (B.C.’s Indigenous population) include all First Nations, Métis and Inuit people regardless of where they reside.

Indigenous child and family development policy and practice are most effective when they reflect and reinforce the intrinsic and distinct aspects of Indigenous cultures, customs and languages. Indigenous approaches must be developed based on both the rights and developmental needs of the child and within the context of the child’s family, community and culture. Effective Indigenous child and family service approaches include proactive strategies to

identify and address systemic and structural barriers that impact the well-being of Indigenous children, families and communities.

In supporting this goal, the Ministry is committed to working with Aboriginal leaders in developing future performance measures that are meaningful to them and their communities.

Strategies:

- Work with Aboriginal communities to design and deliver community based Aboriginal services.
- Implement a reconciliation approach to Indigenous child and family development services.
- Align ministry staff roles to support services to Aboriginal children, youth and families.
- Identify and address systemic barriers underlying socio-economic challenges facing Aboriginal communities.

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

Objective: An integrated quality assurance system that supports continuous organizational learning and a culture of improvement

Strategies:

- Build linkages with external researchers to support evidence-based practice and practice-informed evidence.
- Develop quality assurance standards to support practice change across regions.
- Develop an array of performance measures that reflect practice change.
- Increase public reporting on performance measures and related results.
- Implement an integrated case management system to improve practice and support evidence-informed decision making.

Performance Measure 7: Number of publicly reported performance measures

Performance Measure	2009/10 Forecast	2010/11 Target	2011/12 Target	2012/13 Target
Number of publicly reported performance measures	17	25	30	35

Discussion

Increased public reporting on Ministry performance supports a stronger quality assurance system. In order to monitor progress, a new performance measure has been introduced. This measure identifies the number of performance measures the Ministry publicly reports on either through the Service Plan or other mechanisms, thereby enhancing transparency. Please see www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/about_us/performance.htm for a list of currently reported measures.

The Ministry will be working to develop a performance measure that assesses the implementation of the Child and Family Support, Assessment, Planning and Practice (CAPP) framework. CAPP is a team-based collaborative approach designed to support better outcomes for children, youth and families and to provide staff with a consistent, developmental approach to their practice. It involves conducting strengths-based assessments of the child and family to meet their identified needs.

Research identifies that to transform, an organization must be able to learn through the creation, acquisition and transfer of knowledge and evidence. As the Ministry continues to implement *Strong, Safe and Supported*, additional performance measures will be developed to support continuous learning and measure the Ministry's progress. The Ministry continues to work to ensure its service delivery systems are responsive to new evidence and promising practice, leading to improved programs and services.

Resource Summary Table

Core Business Area ¹	2009/10 Restated Estimates ²	2010/11 Estimates	2011/12 Plan	2012/13 Plan
Operating Expenses (\$000)				
Children and Family Development.....	746,757	747,313	748,976	748,976
Early Childhood Development, Child Care and Supports to Children with Special Needs.....	510,507	520,932	521,233	521,233
Provincial Services.....	51,909	50,442	49,592	49,592
Executive and Support Services.....	15,015	15,006	14,576	14,576
Total	1,324,188	1,333,693	1,334,377	1,334,377
Ministry Capital Expenditures (Consolidated Revenue Fund) (\$000)				
Executive and Support Services.....	1,098	188	455	213
Total	1,098	188	455	213
Other Financing Transactions (\$000)				
Executive and Support Services Human Resource Providers Financing Program				
Receipts	123	29	29	29
Disbursements	0	0	0	0
Net Cash (Requirements)	123	29	29	29

¹ The Ministry is working to align its core business areas to Strong, Safe and Supported.

² The 2009/10 restated estimates reflect a change in funding model for corporately provided operations support such as accommodation, most information technology, freedom of information, corporate accounting services, payroll, and corporate sustainability. Funds previously held in Ministries for these activities were centralized into Shared Services BC, the existing service delivery body for these services.

Ministry Contact Information

General Ministry enquiries:

Client Relations: 250 387-7027 (in Victoria), or toll-free: 1 877 387-7027
or E-mail: MCF.CorrespondenceManagement@gov.bc.ca

Mailing Address:

PO Box 9770 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria BC V8W 9S5

Ministry's Regional Offices

Fraser

Mailing/Physical Address:
101 – 10221 153rd Street
Surrey BC V3R 0L7
Telephone: 604 586-4100
Facsimile: 604 586-4151

Interior

Mailing/Physical Address:
400 – 1726 Dolphin Avenue
Kelowna BC V1Y 9R9
Telephone: 250 470-0888
Facsimile: 250 470-0890

North

Mailing/Physical Address:
462 – 1011 Fourth Avenue
Prince George BC V2L 3H9
Telephone: 250 565-4367
Facsimile: 250 565-4427

Vancouver Coastal

Mailing/Physical Address:
601 – 700 West Georgia Street
Vancouver BC V7Y 1B6
Telephone: 604 660-2433
Facsimile: 604 660-1090

Vancouver Island

Mailing Address:
PO Box 9727
Victoria BC V8W 9S2
Telephone: 250 952-4707
Facsimile: 250 952-4282

Physical Address:

140 – 4460 Chatterton Way
Victoria BC V8X 5J2

Hyperlinks to Additional Information

About Us

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Contact Us

www.gov.bc.ca/mcf/contacts.html

Ministry's Homepage

www.mcf.gov.bc.ca

Ministry Listing of Publicly Reported Performance Measures

www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/about_us/performance.htm

Educational Experiences of Children Under a Continuing Custody Order report

www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/foster/publications.htm.

Ministry Regions

www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/regions/index.htm

Community Living British Columbia

www.communitylivingbc.ca/

Ombudsperson

www.ombudsman.bc.ca/

Public Guardian and Trustee of British Columbia

www.trustee.bc.ca/

Representative for Children and Youth

www.rcybc.ca/content/home.asp