

## Section 6

Update on the implementation of  
recommendations from:

**Management of Aboriginal Child Protection Services**

May 2008

October 2009



Norma Glendinning  
Assistant Auditor General  
Office of the Auditor General  
8 Bastion Square  
Victoria BC V8V 1X4

Dear Norma Glendinning:

**Re: Follow-up review of Office of the Auditor General Report on  
*Management of Aboriginal Child Protection Services***

The Ministry of Children and Family Development is pleased to provide an update on the progress in implementing recommendations contained in this report as at July 31, 2009.

The ministry has identified Aboriginal child and family services as one of its key priorities, as evidenced by the decision to protect investments throughout 2009/10 and the significant work taking place within the ministry's Aboriginal transformation agenda. This agenda is aimed at working with Aboriginal people to improve outcomes for their children and families and support them in seeking out solutions within their own communities.

Since we last reported out on the audit recommendations, we are pleased with progress in our collaborative work with individual First Nations and Aboriginal organizations around the province, including those who are pursuing new Indigenous child welfare service delivery models in their communities.

In March 2009, the Minister signed a Recognition and Reconciliation Protocol on First Nations Children, Youth and Families with the B.C. First Nations Leadership Council. In addition, B.C. has implemented Jordan's Principle to prevent jurisdictional funding disputes between the provincial and federal government from interfering with First Nations children's access to available health and social services.

Ensuring equity of services in First Nations communities continues to be an issue. The ministry has taken an active role in supporting First Nation delegated agencies in the development of a new on-reserve services funding formula. A new framework was tabled with the federal government in September 2008 and the ministry continues to urge the federal government for a formal response.

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There are 24 delegated agencies in the province and another five agencies are currently being funded to develop service delivery models. By the end of 2008/09, 1,832 Aboriginal children in care were served by a delegated Aboriginal agency, a healthy improvement over the previous year when slightly more than 1,500 Aboriginal children were served by a delegated agency. In fact, this exceeds the ministry's service plan performance targets.

In terms of improving outcomes and maintaining quality in Aboriginal child protection services, the ministry is also in the process of redesigning child protection standards to support an evidence-based, high-quality Indigenous approach.

Your initial report acknowledged the challenges and complexities in Aboriginal child protection and we have appreciated your office's interest in what continues to be a priority for the ministry.

Sincerely,

Lesley du Toit  
Deputy Minister

Enclosures (2)

**RECOMMENDATION STATUS SUMMARY**  
*Management of Aboriginal Child Protection Services As at July 31, 2009*  
 (Please tick implementation status for each recommendation)

Auditor General's Recommendations	Implementation Status				
	Fully	Substantially	Partially	Alternative Action	No Action
1. We recommend the ministry, in consultation with First Nations and Aboriginal organizations, determine whether transfer of all child protection services to Aboriginal agencies is still viable and, if not, adjust the service delivery approach to support some continued ministry service that meets the needs of Aboriginal children and their families.			✓		
2. We recommend the ministry adopt the protection standards used by Aboriginal agencies as their own for Aboriginal children and their families.				✓	
3. We recommend the ministry, in consultation with First Nations and Aboriginal organizations, develop and monitor measures that determine whether a child's needs are met and if good outcomes are achieved				✓	
4. We recommend the ministry, in consultation with First Nations and Aboriginal organizations, obtain province-wide, community-by-community knowledge of Aboriginal child protection needs.					✓
5. We recommend the ministry, in consultation with First Nations and Aboriginal organizations, determine the resources (including social workers and support services) required to meet those needs in a culturally appropriate way.			✓		
6. We recommend the ministry make a persuasive business case for the funding needed to deliver the services in an effective way.		✓			

Auditor General's Recommendations	Implementation Status				
	Fully	Substantially	Partially	Alternative Action	No Action
7. We recommend the ministry, in partnership with Aboriginal agencies, develop Aboriginal human resources to meet the needs of both the Ministry and delegated Aboriginal agencies.		✓			
8. We recommend the ministry, in consultation with First Nations and Aboriginal organizations, establish an effective change management strategy.			✓		
9. We recommend the ministry, in consultation with First Nations and Aboriginal organizations and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada collect and evaluate meaningful information on any child protection service delivery gaps; and find solutions to close those gaps.				✓	
10. We recommend the ministry provide information to the Legislative Assembly and the public on the cost, successes and challenges of the Aboriginal child welfare program, consistent with the B.C. Reporting Principles.		✓			

**PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING RECOMMENDATIONS FROM**  
*Management of Aboriginal Child Protection Services*  
**As at July 31, 2009**

**General comments**

The MCFD Annual Service Plan Report for 2008/09 identified that 1,832 Aboriginal children in care were served by Delegated Aboriginal agencies in 2008/09, compared to 1,527 in 2007/08. Ministry funding to Delegated Aboriginal agencies increased from \$45.7 million in 2007/08 to approximately \$67 million in 2008/09. The percentage of children in care served by Delegated Aboriginal agencies exceeded performance targets.

**Progress by recommendation**

Self-Assessed Status	Actions Taken Since Report Issued	Results of Actions and/or Actions Planned (with information on implementation, including dates)
<b>Recommendation 1:</b> We recommend the ministry, in consultation with First Nations and Aboriginal organizations, determine whether transfer of all child protection services to Aboriginal agencies is still viable and, if not, adjust the service delivery approach to support some continued ministry service that meets the needs of Aboriginal children and their families.		
P	<p>The Ministry continues to recognize our ongoing responsibility to develop service viability plans for the transfer of delegated services to Métis and First Nations organizations.</p> <p>Regional MCFD offices have been aligned to support Aboriginal Teams to assist with transfer of child protection and family support resources and support regionally based Aboriginal service delivery approaches.</p>	MCFD continues to receive proposals from First Nations, Metis and urban Aboriginal organization.
<b>Recommendation 2:</b> We recommend the ministry adopt the protection standards used by Aboriginal agencies as their own for Aboriginal children and their families.		
AA	<p>MCFD will not be adopting the Aboriginal Operational Practice Standards and Indicators (AOPSI) standards at this time and is instead looking at redesigning standards to support an Indigenous approach.</p> <p>Funding has been provided to support the redesign of practice standards. Engagement with Indigenous scholars has begun and a community consultation framework is being developed.</p>	A decision on whether the Ministry will adopt the redesigned Indigenous standards will be made when the new Indigenous standards are complete. Project completion is targeted for Fall of 2010.

Status

- F or S – Recommendation has been fully or substantially implemented
- P – Recommendation has been partially implemented
- AA – Alternative action has been undertaken, general intent of alternative action will address OAG finding
- NA – No substantial action has been taken to address this recommendation

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Self-Assessed Status	Actions Taken Since Report Issued	Results of Actions and/or Actions Planned (with information on implementation, including dates)
<b>Recommendation 3:</b> We recommend the ministry, in consultation with First Nations and Aboriginal organizations, develop and monitor measures that determine whether a child's needs are met and if good outcomes are achieved.	<p>AA</p> <p>MCFD is supporting First Nations and Aboriginal organizations to lead Integrated Quality Assurance for Aboriginal services including development of meaningful measures.</p> <p>MCFD is undertaking a major initiative in partnership with Ministry of Housing and Social Development and Ministry of Labour Citizen Services to develop a new computerized integrated management system.</p>	<p>The Integrated Case Management (ICM) system planning is inclusive of Aboriginal agencies. Aboriginal delegated agencies will have opportunities to take part in the release of ICM.</p>
<b>Recommendation 4:</b> We recommend the ministry, in consultation with First Nations and Aboriginal organizations, obtain province-wide, community-by-community knowledge of Aboriginal child protection needs.	<p>NA</p> <p>See Recommendation 9</p>	
<b>Recommendation 5:</b> We recommend the ministry, in consultation with First Nations and Aboriginal organizations, determine the resources (including social workers and support services) required to meet those needs in a culturally appropriate way.	<p>P</p> <p>The Standardized Costing Framework has been completed.</p> <p>The Ministry provided annualized funding to Caring for First Nation Society, a provincial organization to address human resource strategies, training and development of cultural competences. The First Nations Directors Partnership Forum recently formed a Human Resource Working Group. A separate Joint Training Advisory Committee (TAC) consisting of MCFD, INAC and agency representatives has been established to examine effective delivery of training needs and to identify emerging issues and provide advice and recommendations to address the issues.</p>	<p>The Standardized Costing Framework will be used to help inform decisions in relation to the transfer of resources.</p>

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<b>Recommendation 6:</b> We recommend the ministry make a persuasive business case for the funding needed to deliver the services in an effective way.	
S	<p>MCFD supported Indian and Northern Affairs/BC Region and First Nation Delegated Agencies in preparing their business case for submission to the federal government. The framework document identifies the need for a new funding model to replace Directive 20.1. A new funding model would provide a continuum of services and supports, including prevention and early intervention.</p> <p><b>Recommendation 7:</b> We recommend the ministry, in partnership with Aboriginal agencies, develop Aboriginal human resources to meet the needs of both the Ministry and delegated Aboriginal agencies.</p>
S	<p>The framework document was tabled with the federal government in September 2008. A formal response is pending.</p> <p>As of September 2008, the number of Aboriginal staff in the ministry doubled from 119 to 240.</p> <p>The Aboriginal Child Protection Recruitment Project in the North region resulted in 26 Aboriginal social workers being employed by MCFD and delegated agencies. MCFD, Delegated Agencies and the University of Northern British Columbia plan a project to train 20 MCFD team leaders beginning in January 2010.</p> <p>During the 2008/09 fiscal year, 224 Aboriginal social workers participated in various training sessions. This is an increase of 62 participants. Caring for First Nations Society developed specific curriculum related to address a new practice shift focused on out-of-care options to be included as a core component of the their regular training package. A 3 day Out-of-Care training module was developed and delivered to staff of the Delegated Agencies in 8 locations throughout the province.</p> <p>Six Aboriginal Interns completed their internship with MCFD in 2008/09. The Aboriginal Youth Internship Program will begin its 3<sup>rd</sup> cohort in the fall of 2009. Four Aboriginal Interns are placed with MCFD.</p>

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<p><b>Recommendation 8:</b> We recommend the ministry, in consultation with First Nations and Aboriginal organizations, establish an effective change management strategy.</p>	
P	<p>In January 2009, MCFD provided a public report on progress made on the Aboriginal Approach as identified in the <i>Strong, Safe and Supported Plans for Practice Change</i>.</p> <p>MCFD signed a <i>Recognition and Reconciliation Protocol</i> with the First Nations Leadership on March 30, 2009. Funding was provided to support the development of an Interim First Nations Child and Family Wellness Council to oversee the implementation of the Protocol.</p> <p>MCFD is supporting a nation based approach to Indigenous child and family service delivery.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 9:</b> We recommend the ministry, in consultation with First Nations and Aboriginal organizations and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada collect and evaluate meaningful information on any child protection service delivery gaps; and find solutions to close those gaps.</p>	
AA	<p>MCFD in partnership with First Nations and Aboriginal organizations is implementing strategies to close the gaps as resources become available.</p> <p>The cross-government implementation plan for Jordan’s Principle was implemented in March 2009 to ensure a child first approach that commits the provincial government to ensure that jurisdictional disputes do not prevent First Nations children from accessing available health and social services.</p> <p>MCFD supported Indian and Northern Affairs/BC Region and First Nation Delegated Agencies in preparing their business case for submission to the federal government. The framework document identifies the need for a new funding model to replace Directive 20.1. A new funding model would provide a continuum of services and supports, including prevention and early intervention.</p> <p>The Ministry continues to work with the Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation on the implementation of the <i>New Relationship/Transformative Change Accord</i> and <i>Métis Nation Relationship Accord</i> to support cross-ministry strategies to help reduce the socio-economic gap. In accordance with MCFD’s commitment to</p>

A follow-up report will be provided to the OAG in January 2010.

An Indigenous Child at the Centre Action Plan has been completed.

MCFD will be regularly receiving progress report against plans approved to date.

The framework document was tabled with the federal government in September 2008. A formal response is pending.

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	<p>children and youth, MCFD, MARR, the Ministries of Education and Healthy Living and Sport are supporting the First Nations Early Childhood Development Council and other Aboriginal organizations, communities and service providers with the development of Aboriginal Early Childhood Development Strategic Plans.</p> <p>The Integrated Case Management (ICM) system planning is underway and inclusive of Aboriginal agencies. Aboriginal delegated agencies will have opportunities to take part in the release of ICM.</p>	
<p><b>Recommendation 10:</b> We recommend the ministry provide information to the Legislative Assembly and the public on the cost, successes and challenges of the Aboriginal child welfare program, consistent with the B.C. Reporting Principles.</p>		
S	<p>MCFD continues to report out to the Standing Committee for Children and Youth on Strong, Safe and Supported. In November 2008, MCFD presented to Public Accounts Committee.</p> <p>The Ministry of Children and Family Development Strong, Safe and Supported Operational Plan 2007-2012 was updated to January 31, 2009 and publicly released.</p>	

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