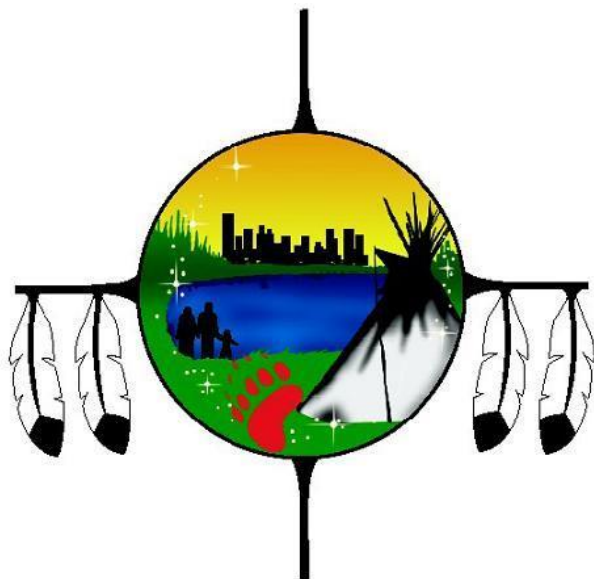


First Nations of Northern Manitoba Child and Family Services Authority

2008 – 2009 Annual Report



The First Nations Agencies of Northern Manitoba



Mr. David Monias, Executive Director
Awasis Agency of Northern Manitoba
101-701 Thompson Drive
Thompson, Manitoba R8N 2A2



Ms. Geraldine Shingoose, Administrator
Cree Nation Child & Family Caring Agency
P.O. Box 10130
The Pas, Manitoba R0B 2J0



Mr. Alfred Wood, Executive Director
Island Lake First Nations Family Services
General Delivery
Garden Hill, Manitoba R0B 0T0



Mr. Clarence Paupanekis, Executive Director
Kinosao Sipi Minisowin Agency
P.O. Box 640
Norway House, Manitoba R0B 1B0



Mr. Felix Walker, Executive Director
Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation Family &
Community Wellness Centre
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Nelson House, Manitoba R0B 1B0



Ms. Diane Deschambeault, Executive Director
Opaskwayak Cree Nation Child &
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Box 10550
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First Nations of Northern Manitoba Child and Family Services Authority Annual Report 2008 – 2009

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Message from the Board of Directors

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the First Nations of Northern Manitoba Child and Family Services Authority I am pleased to present the 2008 - 2009 Annual Report. In it you will find an overview of this past year's activities as well as our aspirations for the future.

It has been a challenging and productive year and without the dedication and commitment of our staff to support our agencies in their work with First Nations children and families, our progress would not be as significant as it is. We are truly grateful.

We also thank the First Nations CFS Agencies for their on-going pursuit to deliver the best possible service to children and families.

We recognize that the health of our families is central to the vibrancy of our communities and the sustainability of our culture. We look forward to continuing our work with community leaders and other support services in a shared vision of healthy children in healthy families residing in healthy communities.

Larson Anderson

Chairperson

Message from the Chief Executive Officer

This year has passed in a whirlwind of activity. As with all whirlwinds it has sometimes seemed chaotic. And as with all things in life, it has had at its core both form and substance. I am grateful for the opportunity to work with this young organization, to be a participant in establishing the structures and processes that will herald a new era in services to First Nations children and families.

Change brings confusion as well as hope, challenges as well as successes. Our year has been rich in all these things. Together, we have strengthened the organization and our ability to support the work of our agencies as we continue our journey of learning and discovery.

The staff at the Northern Authority has worked diligently to develop and improve how we respond to our agencies. The spirit of learning and collaboration has been evident in many of our achievements over this past year. We know that we must continue down this path to foster openness, responsiveness and meaningful support to our agencies.

We are learning how to work more effectively with our community leaders. We are listening to what they need from us and from our agencies. As we build the bridges of trust, we are learning how to transition towards our shared vision.

I am struck by the diligence, patience and sheer numbers of people required to build and sustain the momentum for transformation. The journey continues and I am privileged to walk with you.

Ekosi, Meegwetch,

Marie Lands, B.S.W.

Chief Executive Officer

Board of Directors

Awasis Agency of Northern Manitoba
Daniel Hamilton

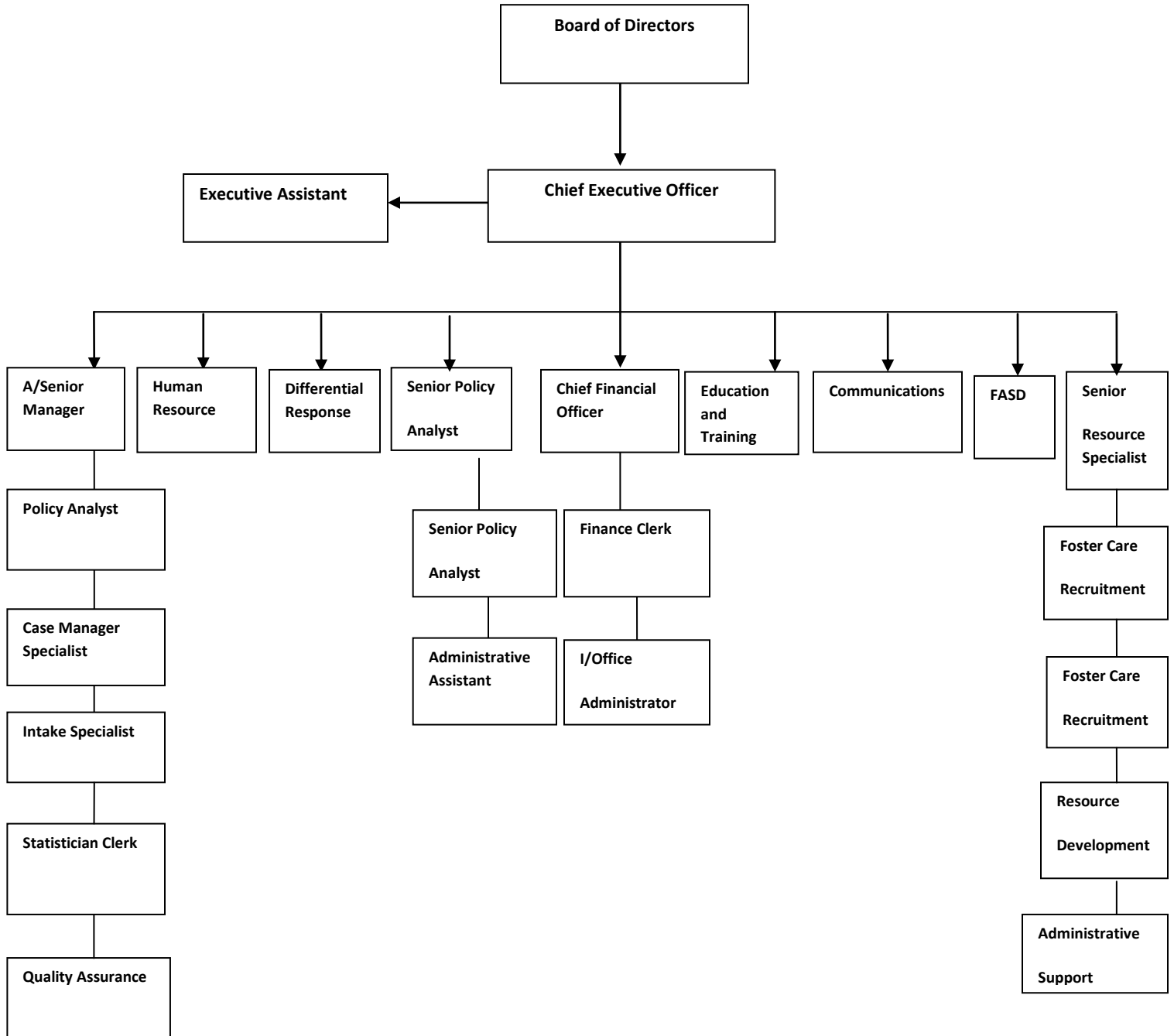
Kinosao Sipi Minisowin Agency
Larson Anderson

Island Lake First Nations Family Services
Arnold Flett

Opaskwayak Cree Nation Child and Family
Services
Josephine Budd

Cree Nation Child and Family Caring Agency
Darren Audy

Organizational Structure



The Staff of Northern Authority

(as of March 31, 2009)

Marie Lands, Chief Executive Officer

Shirley Allaire, Senior Manager

Shirlene Asham, Senior Policy Analyst / Acting Differential Response Coordinator

Mary Anne Clarke, Senior Resource Specialist

Joanne Crate, Resource Development Worker

Germaine Ducharme, Acting Intake Coordinator

Cheryl Freeman, Chief Financial Officer

Pamela Friesen, Executive Assistant

Andrea Grynol, Acting Senior Policy Analyst

Keith Guay, Foster Care Recruitment Coordinator

Theresa Henderson, Education & Training Coordinator

Karen McKay, Administrative Assistant, Resource Team

Ron Monias, Quality Assurance Coordinator

Heather Mowatt, Office Administrator

Alfred Muswagon, Case Management Specialist

Jacque Ogemow, QA Administrative Assistant

Ramona Pavagadhi, Quality Assurance Coordinator

Eugene Peterson, Policy Analyst/ Communications

Terri Sinclair, Acting Senior Policy Analyst

Mary Werba, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Specialist

Cybil Williams, Senior Policy Analyst

Eileen Young, Finance Clerk

The Northern Authority wishes to also acknowledge the service of staff that left during this past year.

Rose McKay, Chief Executive Officer

Amanda Azure, Resource Development Administrative Assistant

Garry Comegan, Resource Development Worker

Elijah Garson, Interim Administrative Assistant

Henrietta Pratt, Policy Analyst

Mary Sayese, Changes for children Administrative Assistant

Anna Smith, Case Management Specialist

Winona Young, Executive Assistant

Organizational History

Aboriginal Justice Inquiry – Child Welfare Initiative (AJI – CWI)

The AJI – CWI was the response of the Manitoba Government to the recommendations from the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry which was commissioned in 1988 to examine the relationship between Aboriginal peoples in Manitoba and the justice system. Part of the inquiry examined how Aboriginal people were treated by the child and family service system. The report issued in 1991 said that good work was being done by on-reserve First Nations agencies but these agencies were not able to serve people off-reserve. The report made several recommendations in this regard:

- Establish the Office of the Child Protector to protect the interests of children, to investigate any complaint into the practices of any child welfare agency and to be responsible to the Legislature.
- Provide all child and family service agencies with sufficient resources to enable them to provide a full range of direct and preventative services mandated by The Child and Family Services Act.
- Ensure the federal and provincial governments provide resources to Aboriginal agencies to develop policies, standards, protocols and procedures, and to develop computer systems that will permit them to communicate effectively, track cases and share information.
- Amend Principle 11 of The Child and Family Services Act to read: “Aboriginal people are entitled to provision of child and family services in a manner which respects their unique status, and their cultural and linguistic heritage.”
- Establish a mandated province-wide Métis agency.
- Expand the authority of existing Indian agencies to enable them to offer services to band members living off-reserve.
- Establish an Aboriginal child and family services agency in the city of Winnipeg to handle all Aboriginal cases.

In 1999 the Province of Manitoba established the Aboriginal Justice Implementation Commission. Memorandums of Understanding were signed by the Province of Manitoba with the Manitoba Métis Federation, the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs and Manitoba Keewatinook Ininew Okimowin in 2000 which lead to the AJI-CWI. Vision and mission statements were drafted to guide the initiative toward the development of a new system.

Vision Statement

A child and family service system that recognizes and supports the rights of children to develop within safe and healthy families and communities, and recognizes that First Nations and Métis peoples have unique authority, rights and responsibilities to honour and care for their children.

Mission Statement

To have a jointly coordinated child and family services system that recognizes the distinct rights and authorities of First nations and Métis peoples and the general population to control and deliver their own child and family serves province-wide; that is community-based; and reflects and incorporates the cultures of First Nations, Métis and the general population respectively.

AJI-CWI Response

The AJI-CWI response has included a major re-structuring of the child welfare system within the province. First Nations and Métis peoples regained the right to develop and control their own child and family services and four CFS Authorities were established under The Child and Family Services Authorities Act, proclaimed in November 2003.

The four child and family service authorities are results of this re-structuring. The authorities are responsible for administering and providing for the delivery of child and family services in Manitoba on a province-wide basis. The four authorities are:

- Métis Child and Family Services Authority
- First Nations of Southern Manitoba Child and Family Services Authority
- First Nations of Northern Manitoba Child and Family Services Authority
- General Child and Family Services Authority (for all other families)

Under the new system:

- The Province approves funding to the Authorities and serves as the final level of appeal in some matters. The Province maintains ultimate responsibility for the safety and protection of children in Manitoba, and for the overall child and family services system.
- Authorities design and manage the delivery of child and family services throughout the province, and provide funding to agencies which qualify to deliver services. Authorities will be the primary liaison between the Province and agencies.
- Working in partnership, the Province of Manitoba and the Aboriginal Authorities design laws, policies and standards.
- Agencies work together with the authorities and the Province of Manitoba in delivering child and family services. Agencies are directly accountable to the Authorities.

The major components of the re-structuring have been implemented and over the past year work has begun to update the Child and Family Services Act, develop a new and more integrated funding model, establish more Group 2 residential care resources and to roll out the Differential Response program.

The First Nations of Northern Manitoba Child and Family Services Authority

The First Nations of Northern Manitoba Child and Family Services Authority (Northern Authority) was established under The Child and Family Services Authorities Act, proclaimed in November 2003.

Six agencies providing services to 26 First Nations communities and people in the surrounding areas fall under the jurisdiction of the Northern Authority. They are the Awasis Agency of Northern Manitoba, Cree Nation Child and Family Caring Agency, Island Lake First Nations Family Services, Kinosao Sipi Minisowin Agency, Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation FCWC and Opaskwayak Cree Nation Child and Family Services.

There are two Designated Intake Agencies operating out of Cree Nation Child and Family Caring Agency and Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation FCWC that support Intake and After Hours services on behalf of all of the Authorities in designated geographical areas of northern Manitoba.

Governance

Mission

We assert our natural right and responsibility for the wellbeing of our children, families, and communities.

Values

We are committed to the wellbeing of our children, families and communities, and to respecting our people's traditions and cultures.

Vision

The voice for our
children,
a voice for our
people.

Finance

The role on the Financial Department is to ensure that accountability processes and fiduciary obligations are in place and met. This includes such activities as preparing and monitoring the annual budget, providing monthly financial statements, ensuring that the General Ledger and accounts payable and receivable are kept updated as well as providing an inventory control system for the organization.

Lease management is another function that is performed by the Finance Department. Further exploration was undertaken this year to determine how and when to increase the Northern Authority's presence in the North.

Funding agreements are negotiated and managed by Northern Authority with the Province through the Child Protection Branch, Family Services and Housing. The development of Service Purchase Agreements with the agencies is also well underway. This will act to further clarify the funding and reporting requirements and establish clear processes for accountability throughout the system.

Over this past year significant effort has also gone into participation with INAC in the development of a new federal funding model. It is hoped that this collaboration will result in resource allocations that are more in line with actual service needs for First Nations people in the North.

Information Technology

Enhanced IT Support

Over this past year the Northern Authority has increased both the cost effectiveness and timeliness of its information technology support through its new service vendor, Oxygen. The vendor is undertaking an assessment of current capacity and needs with a view to Northern Authority having the ability to communicate with all of its agencies on-line.

New System Development

The provincial IT project that is part of the Changes for Children Initiative is being lead by IBM. The purpose of this project is to develop a new system that will replace CFSIS and be consistent with case management practices and Differential Response. The project is currently in the requirements definition stage.

Quality Assurance

The Program

The Quality Assurance program is in its first year of development. Two Quality Assurance Coordinators and an administrative support person were assigned to this unit.

Quality Assurance Review – Cree Nation Child and Family Caring Agency

Prior to these full time positions being put in place the first quality assurance review was undertaken by a resource development team. Cree Nation Child and Family Caring Agency (CNCFCA) underwent this review and a report was issued in August 2008. The review exercise proved to be an extensive learning experience for both Northern Authority and CNCFCA. Twenty-two recommendations were made in three themed areas: governance, finance and service delivery. A project manager was hired and a detailed implementation plan developed under four headings (governance, finance, service delivery and human resources). The plan continues to be tracked and monitored and CNCFCA is making significant progress in implementing the recommendations.

Northern Authority has established a working relationship with CNCFCA and the Swampy Cree Tribal Council and is supporting CNCFCA in this process where ever necessary. The spirit of the implementation process is one of collaboration, learning and development with all parties taking an active role in strengthening all aspects of the organization. The staff at CNCFCA are developing a renewed sense of accomplishment and pride in their work and we honour their effort and conscientiousness.

Many of the resulting tools and frameworks will leave a legacy and have utility and application in the other agencies in the North thus strengthening the system as a whole.

Quality Assurance Review – Awasis Agency of Northern Manitoba

In October 2008 the Northern Authority began discussions with Awasis Agency of Northern Manitoba to conduct a quality assurance review on their case management process. Building on the previous review experience a project manager was hired at the inception of the review to support the review team. As well, a strong working relationship was developed with the agency to support the trust, understanding and communication necessary to work together. File reviews will be completed over the summer and a full report is due to be released in November 2009. Templates and procedures for future service delivery reviews are being created in conjunction with this process.

Education and Training

Education and training continues to be a priority in the development and maintenance of quality service delivery in child welfare. Northern Authority's commitment is to continuously offer and improve opportunities for learning and development. This commitment extends to its staff, its agencies' staff, support workers, care givers and whenever possible, collateral agencies and members of the community.

Education and training activities are undertaken and supported by the Northern Authority through a variety of mechanisms. Collaborative efforts as part of the Joint Training Unit form a substantial part of the education and training response. There are other activities that are coordinated or financed locally to provide more agency specific support.

Training and Conferences

Some of the training opportunities organized this year included: Crisis Counselling, Child Abuse Interviewing, Gang Awareness Training, Forensic Child Abuse Interview Techniques, ASIST Training, Critical Incidents Stress Management and Standards Training.

Northern Authority staff, foster parents and agency representatives participated in the Downs Syndrome Conference on September 17, 2008, sponsored by the Canadian Downs Syndrome Association. Northern Authority and agency representatives also participated in the Child Abuse Coordinators Conference on January 27 and 28, 2009, sponsored by the Child Protection Branch.

BSW/Aboriginal Child and Family Services Diploma Program

The University College of the North and the University of Manitoba have collaborated in the development of this diploma program which is scheduled to begin September 2009 with students from Cree Nation Child and Family Caring Agency and Awasis Agency of Northern Manitoba participating.

Joint Training Unit

The Joint Training Unit and the Provincial Training Coordinator continue to respond to recommendations as part of the Changes for Children Initiative. The following is the current status of these projects:

1. An orientation to the Child Welfare System with a focus on the realities of child welfare is under development in conjunction with the Office of the Standing Committee.
2. Seventeen new case management standards were developed and training was provided. The development and scheduling of training on all CFS standards continues.
3. The new training curriculum for foster parents is in the final stages of development. The development of Supervisor Training will be undertaken next.
4. The project to enable the provision of mentorship, peer support and stress management training for new staff will commence this coming year.
5. Efforts have begun to compile and distribute existing educational materials more effectively. Resources on water safety and healthy living were distributed to all agencies, child care facilities and communities.

Communications

This past year, the Northern Authority Board of Directors established a Communications Committee. This Communications Committee focused on improving the overall communications of the Northern Authority with First Nation leaders, agency Board of Directors and the general public.

To improve communications with leaders the Northern Authority:

- made presentations to the MKO Chiefs in Assembly at Norway House in November 2008
- met with Tribal Councils as invited including attending the SCTC annual assembly when invited this spring
- met with individual Chiefs as scheduling permitted

In undertaking the quality assurance review and the subsequent implementation of the recommendations with Cree Nation Child and Family Caring Agency, the Northern Authority made a commitment to establishing open lines of communication with the funding partners, the agency and the community leaders. The Swampy Cree Tribal Council is currently involved in working with the agency to support operational improvements. As well it is advancing the long term vision for child welfare where practice is governed by Cree law and congruent with Cree culture. The Northern Authority recognizes that positive change requires effort and commitment from many levels and will continue to orchestrate these important problem-solving discussions.

The Northern Authority maintains regular communications with the federal and provincial governments to coordinate the delivery of child and family services in the north. Monthly meetings with the Child Protection Branch provide a formal mechanism for facilitating this communication although more frequent communication occurs regularly and as needed.

Over the past year work has been undertaken to develop the Northern Authority website which will be launched in the coming months.

Agency Relations

The child welfare system is a set of interrelated and interacting elements and for it to be effective, strong and trusting relationships between the agencies and the authorities must be nurtured. The Northern Authority is committed to this end. This work is continuous and over this past year has taken many forms.

Executive Meetings

The Northern Authority Chief Executive Officer meets monthly with the Northern Authority Board of Directors to focus upon the strategic direction of the authority and to maintain good governance. Meetings take place on reserve throughout Manitoba subject to the availability of meeting space and budget limitations. Each board member provides a link back to the agency community who appointed them.

The Chief Executive Officer of the Northern Authority meets monthly with the Executive Directors of the northern agencies to monitor and improve the overall operation of the child welfare system in northern Manitoba. In addition, meetings with individual directors are held to address issues specific to particular northern agencies. Changes in executive offices have also helped to strengthen working relationships.

The Northern Authority intends to increase the number of meetings with First Nation leaders and agency board of directors in the future to ensure that meetings take place with all stakeholders at least every 18 months.

Child Welfare Symposium

First Nations of Northern Manitoba Child and Family Services Authority were pleased to sponsor a northern child welfare symposium titled “Wisdom of the North.....Strength and Diversity of First Nation Child Welfare”.

The event occurred over two days, March 17th and 18th, 2009 on Opaskwayak First Nation at the Kikiwak Centre.

The purpose of the Symposium was twofold:

1. To recognize the strength and diversity in practice among northern First Nation child welfare agencies of the North.

2. To foster meaningful dialogue and discourse between First Nation agencies, community members, and the First Nation of Northern Manitoba Child and Family Services Authority.

The goal of the symposium was to bring child welfare practitioners, collaterals, and community leadership together to identify and support effective child welfare practices in Northern First Nation Agencies.

120 delegates from the six First Nation agencies of northern Manitoba, as well as collateral agencies, attended the event. Information tables were set up to highlight and showcase each agency's programming and innovative projects. Among the speakers that presented were:

KEYNOTE SPEAKER CHIEF OVIDE MERCREDI ON
"RECOVERY OF OUR CULTURE ON FAMILY BY
TAKING AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY"



DR.YVONNE POMPANA ON "DEVOLUTION OF
CHILD WELFARE TO FIRST NATIONS"

Other presenters were Bernadette Spence, CEO, Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services Society on "Wisdom of the North...Strength and Diversity of First Nations Child Welfare", Felix Walker, CEO, Family and Community Wellness Centre in the Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation on "Innovative and Community Driven Approaches to Child and Family Services" and Shirlene Asham, Policy Analyst with Northern Authority on "The Differential Response Model in Manitoba".

Office of the Child Advocate

The Children's Advocate's Enhanced Mandate Act, Bill 11 was proclaimed on September 15, 2008. Responsibility to conduct Section 10 reviews under The Fatality Inquiries Act was transferred from the Chief Medical Examiner's Office to the Office of the Children's Advocate. Under this law a review must take place when a child who has received child and family services the previous year, dies. Section 10 reviews are now known as Child Death Review Special Investigation. The scope of the investigation has also been extended beyond child and family services to any publically funded social service that, in the opinion of the Children's Advocate, should have been involved. The method of investigation has a greater community-based focus.

New staff positions (3.5) have been added to the Special Investigation Review Unit and the Manitoba Ombudsman will report annually on the government's progress in implementing recommendations arising from these investigations.

Collaborative Quality Assurance Reviews

Over this past year the Northern Authority has initiated two quality assurance reviews. The first was with Cree Nation Child and Family Caring Agency. There were a great deal of lessons learned in this process and every effort is being made to ensure that the implementation process, which is still underway, is a collaborative, developmental and transparent process with staff and with community leaders.

The second quality assurance review, which is also still in process, is of service delivery at Awasis Agency of Northern Manitoba. Guiding principles were established for this and future reviews based on collaboration, openness and strong working relationships between all parties. Time has been taken to develop those relationships and to conduct the review in a manner that will ultimately be helpful and supportive in assisting the agency in strengthening its core functions.

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)

Northern Authority FASD Program

The Northern First Nations Child Welfare FASD Working Group was established. The group consists of a representative from each of the six northern First Nations CFS agencies with the goal of building capacity at the agency level to develop innovative ways for CFS agencies to plan for children in care and support high risk moms and parents affected by FASD. This group of community based FASD Specialists will be consulted to advise upon and define some of the proposed initiatives that will be developed through the Provincial FASD Strategy as well as participate in the development of FASD Case Management Standards at a later date.

The NA FASD Specialist attended an FASD train the trainer session in The Pas, Manitoba during the week of February 2-6th, 2009

An FASD Symposium was held on March 25, 2009 in Thompson, Manitoba that brought foster parents, CFS practitioners and regional FASD service providers together to share program information and referral processes.

Two 2 day training events for CFS workers were coordinated featuring Donna Debolt (FASD Specialist in CFS Case management from Alberta). The locations were Thompson and Winnipeg.

FASD Working Groups and Committees

The FASD Interdepartmental Committee (FASD- IC)

Membership consists of representatives from the Manitoba Provincial departments of Health and Healthy Living, Healthy Child Manitoba, Justice, Education and Training and Family Services and Housing. The role of this committee is to develop and guide the overall Provincial FASD initiatives by providing input relevant to their respective departments. In 2008/09, the projected cost for the combined initiatives was estimated at over \$2.7 million.

The Northern Authority FASD Specialist has participated with this group to plan the overall Provincial Strategy. As part of this strategy the capacity of the Clinic for Drug and Alcohol Exposed Children will expand to include diagnostic assessment of adolescents, increased diagnostic capacity for northern communities, mobile outreach to RHAs, increased supports to families both pre and post diagnosis and addictions treatment resources that can accommodate women with their children.

Since the spring of 2009, representation on the FASD-IC on behalf of the Authorities is provided by a member from the Child Protection Branch.

The FASD Strategy Implementation Team (SIT)

This team is comprised of members are the four Authority FASD Specialists, a Child Protection Branch representative from Strategic Initiatives and a Healthy Child Manitoba (HCMO) representative. The committee has approved such initiatives such as three new sites for the STOP FASD Program in Flin Flon Dauphin and Portage La Prairie, support for Stepping Out on Saturdays, a respite program for FASD affected children in care, Northern Elder's Sharing Circle on FASD and a wide variety of other FASD supports.

The Joint Authority Team of Specialists (JAT)

This team includes the four Authority FASD Specialists. Their role is to develop common goals and joint initiatives for the Manitoba child welfare system including training events and resource development. The team has made several public presentations introducing the role of the CFS FASD Specialist. Additionally, resource lists for the CFS agencies, proposals to the SIT Team and group meetings with FASD service providers such as the Youth Justice program, FASD Life's Journey/Spectrum Connections, CADEC, Interagency FASD Network, Coalition on Alcohol and Pregnancy have occurred.

This group has begun discussions with CADEC to develop protocols between the CFS system and the diagnostic clinic as well as to streamline the referral process for children in care. Preliminary work has been undertaken toward the development of FASD case management standards.

The AMC-FASD Working Group

Each Manitoba First Nation community can be represented in this group and Federal funding for FASD projects is available through this group via FNIHB. The Northern Authority FASD Specialist has presented to this group in order to network with the Northern communities involved. Subsequently, a seat on the committee is pending.

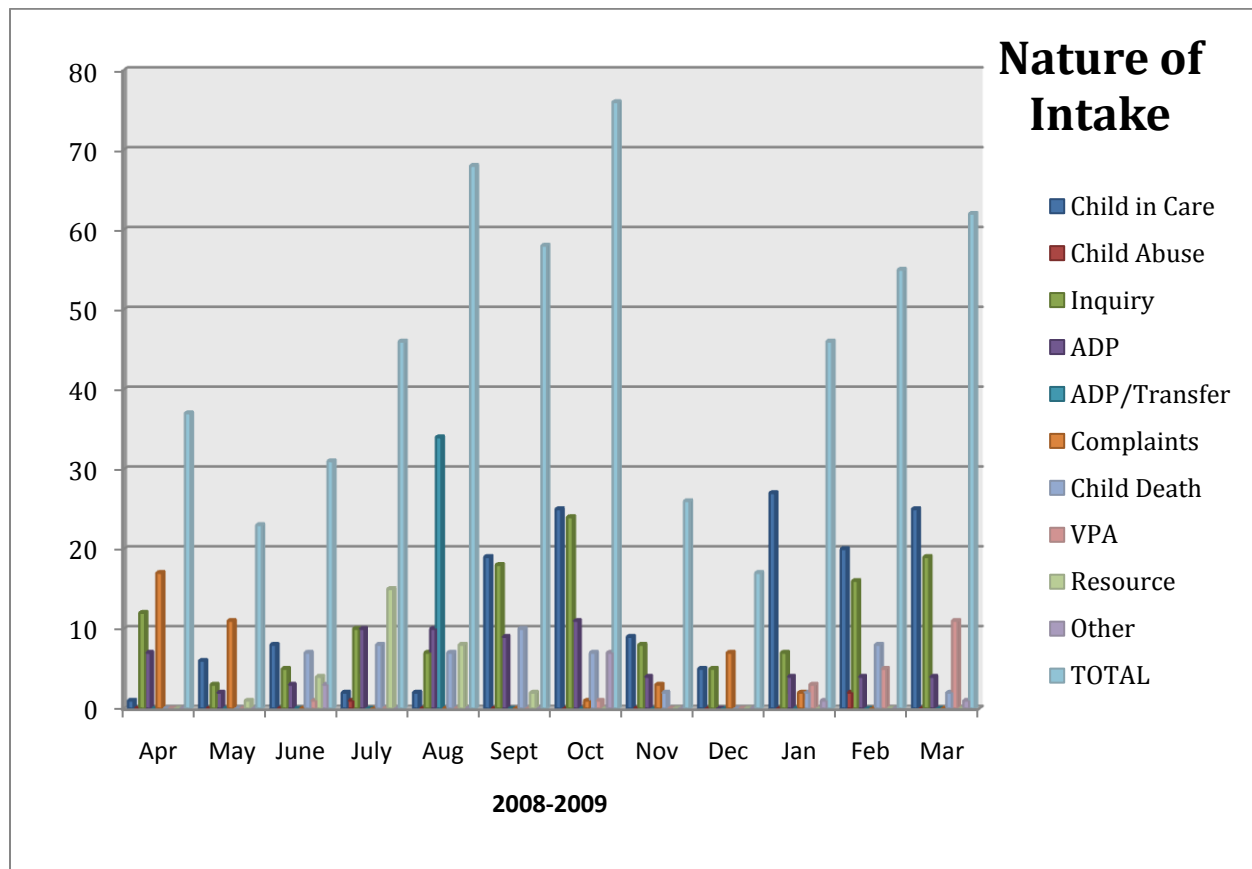
Duties and Responsibilities under Legislation

The Child and Family Services Authorities Act, states the duties and responsibilities of the Northern Authority. The following provides an overview of the nature and volumes of work for this fiscal year.

Intake

The intake function in the authority screens all service intakes, provides a response where possible, completes initial documentation, and forwards the file for further follow-up when required.

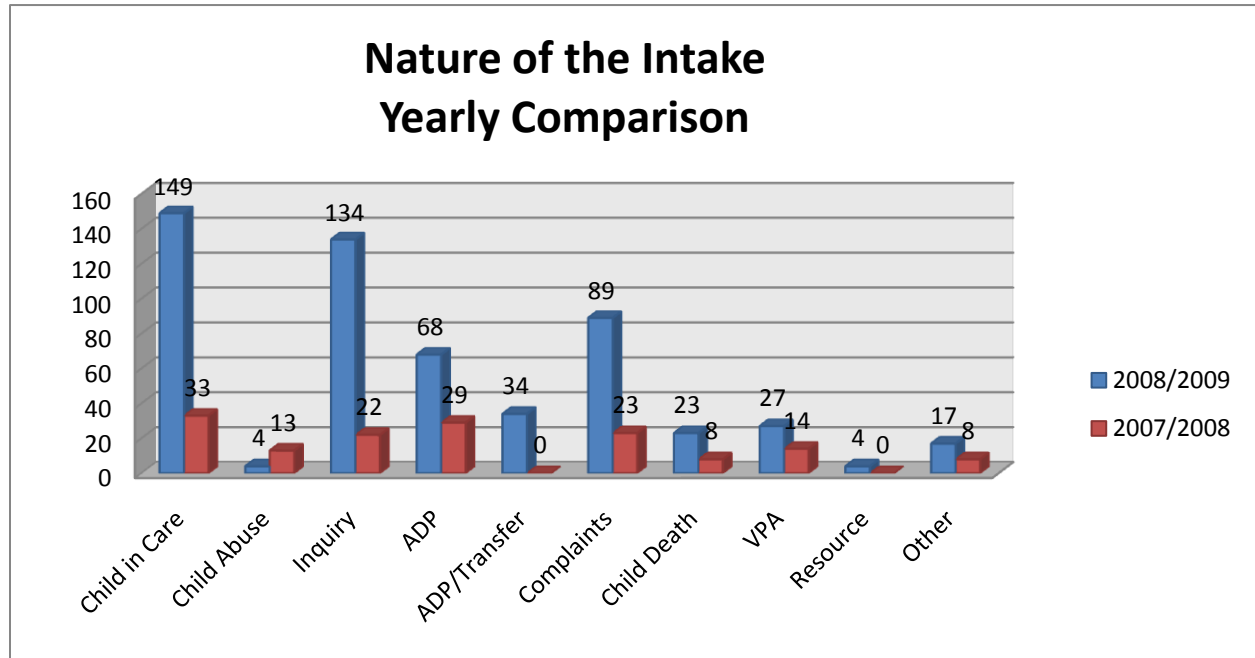
The most frequent type of intake was case consultation related to children in care. This was followed by general inquiries.



ADP – Authority Determination Protocol

VPA – Voluntary Placement Agreement

The recorded intake activity shows a dramatic increase this year. Possible reasons for this are the improvements in the tracking system and a better understanding of what the role of the Authority is and what support is available.

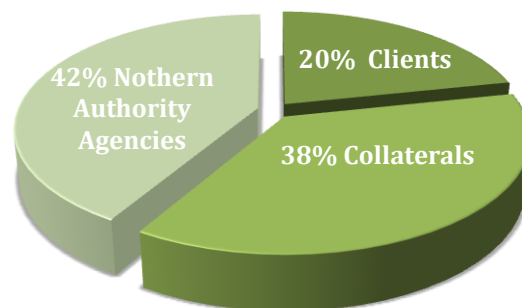


ADP – Authority Determination Protocol

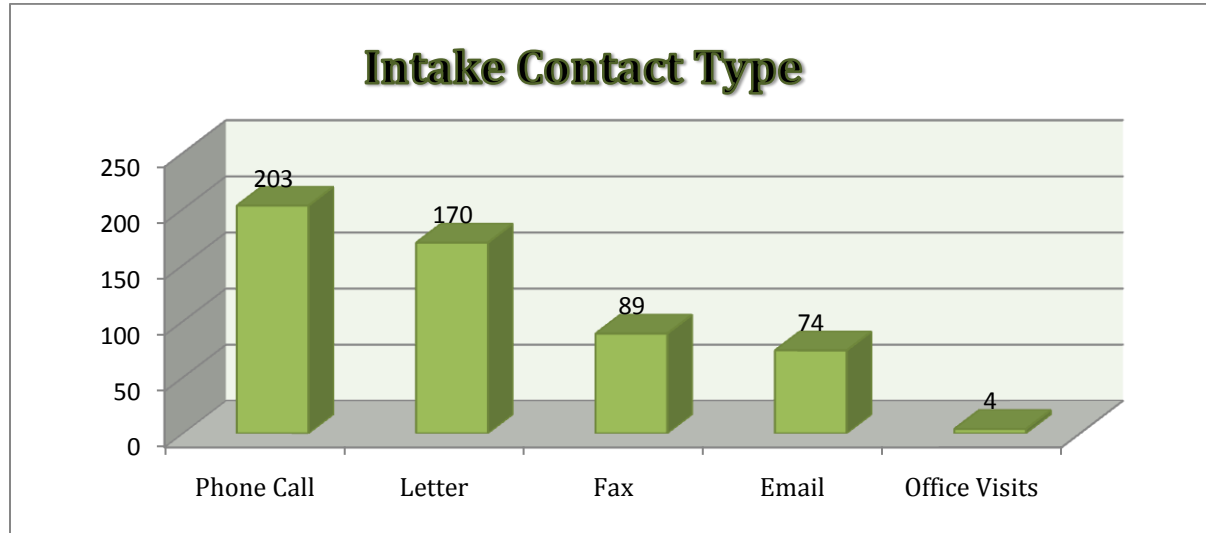
VPA – Voluntary Placement Agreement

The primary source of intakes was from the northern agencies. This breakdown remains consistent with previous years and with findings from other authorities.

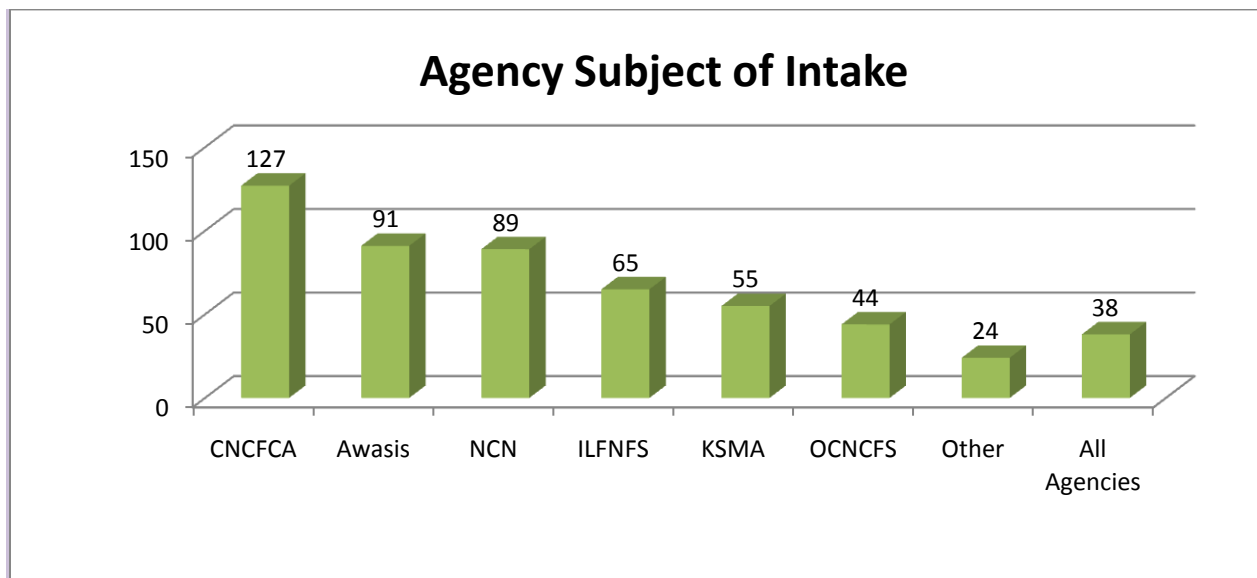
Source of Intake



The predominant form of contact is by telephone (203) with contact by letter following closely behind (170).



The majority of intakes were agency specific with Cree Nation Child and Family Caring Agency the subject of 127 intakes. Thirty-eight of the intakes were non-agency specific and only twenty-four were not related to agencies.



Resource Development

The Resource Team works cooperatively to assist the agencies in developing placements of all kinds including foster care, places of safety, emergency placements, high risk children's placements, child specific placements, and in developing their support worker programs. Assistance is provided to agencies through the monthly Northern Alternative Care Network Committee meetings as well as other frequent communications. We assist by gathering system information, identifying patterns and making recommendations.

Hotel Reduction Strategy

As participants in the provincial strategy to reduce the number of children placed in hotels, the Resource Team works closely with the agencies and monitors and reports on hotel usage and the use of the provincially funded emergency shelters. The Resource Development Coordinator (RDC) represents the Northern Authority at the Inter-Authority Emergency Placement Resource Relocation and Transfer Group, which is assisting Southern Authority and ANCR with the reformation of Winnipeg's emergency shelter system. The Resource Team has also been involved in the inter-sectoral working group for the provision of crisis stabilization services and a Crisis Stabilization Unit in Thompson.

The RDC is also researching the steps required to develop residential units ,on-reserve in order to assist any agency which may request that service.

Foster Care Recruitment

The Resource Team assists agencies in developing both specialized and child specific emergency placements, foster homes and places of safety and provides a response on issues directed to Northern Authority from agencies, care providers, collaterals, and children in care.

This area provides assistant to agencies in developing training such as orientations for foster parents, people offering places of safety and support workers as well as additional training for caregivers at the request of agencies. A quarterly Northern First Nations Foster Family Newsletter is also published.

The Northern Authority is also represented at the following Inter-Authority Committees:

- 1) Alternative Care Sub-Committee
- 2) Foster Parent Training and Curriculum Design Committee
- 3) Circle of Care

Foster Parent Appeal Process

Under Manitoba's CFS Act, the authorities play a key role in the legislated foster parent appeals process for the removal of children and licensing/re-licensing denials. As a result of the AJI-CWI case transfers, some agencies were able to locate extended family and culturally applicable placements, resulting in children being moved and higher than normal numbers of appeals. The Resource Team has not only continued its role in this process, but in the past year has begun the process of further developing and formalizing its own internal Foster Parents Appeal process, and is assisting the agencies in developing strategies to prevent the needs for appeals, and in assisting the agencies with their required processes. Work will be continuing in this area.

Complaints and Grievance Process

As per the amended provincial standards of 2008, each authority and every agency is required to have a documented grievance and complaint process and policy that are approved at the Authority level. The Resource Team is continuing the development of these policies as they pertain to placement and resource issues followed by formal approval.

Participation in the Quality Assurance Review Process

The Resource Team provided extensive assistance to Cree Nation Child and Family Caring Agency, both in the review process as well as the implementation of recommendations. The team also assisted in the development of review indicators for foster homes and places of safety.

Specialized Supports

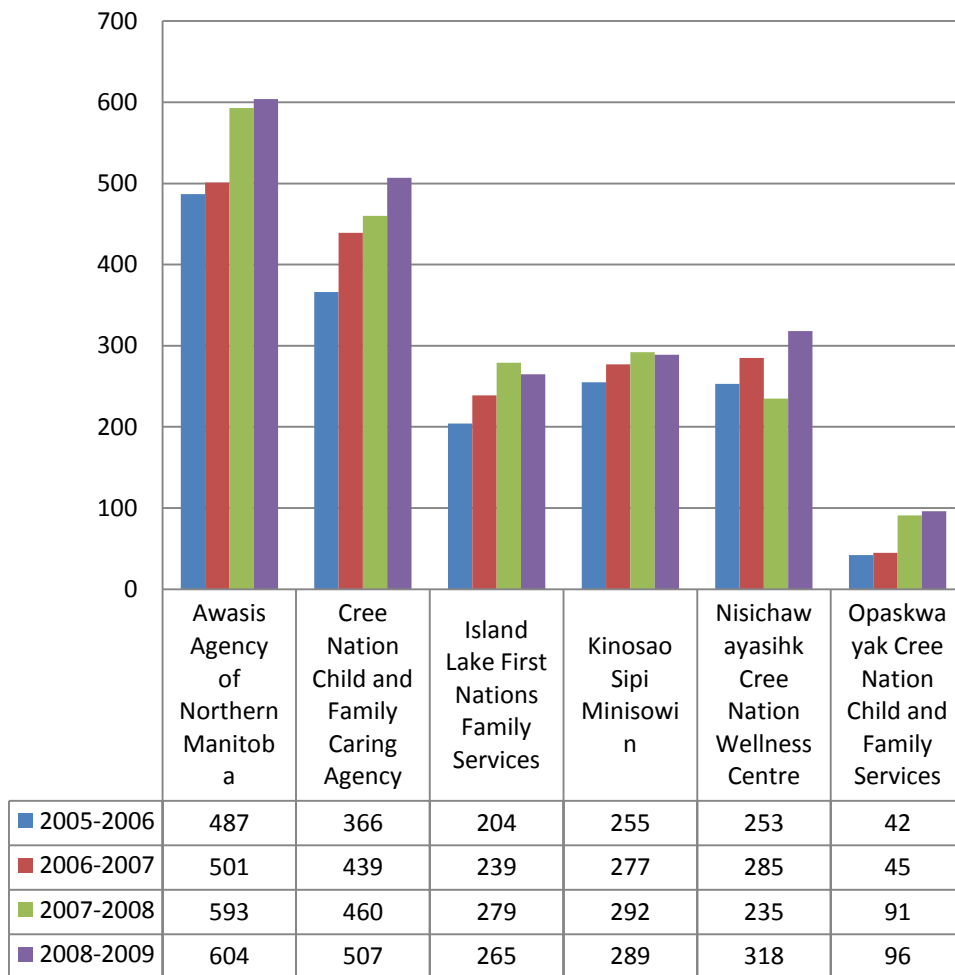
Northern Authority responded to two First Nations communities requiring crisis response support. In 2008 the Northern Authority attended a community forum in Mathias Colomb First Nation. In partnership with Awasis Agency of Northern Manitoba, MKO and the Province of Manitoba the Northern Authority supported the planning and organization of support to Shamattawa First Nation.

Northern Authority is also represented on the Inter-provincial Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy Working Group, with direct involvement in the committee that will be addressing PYI discharge issues.

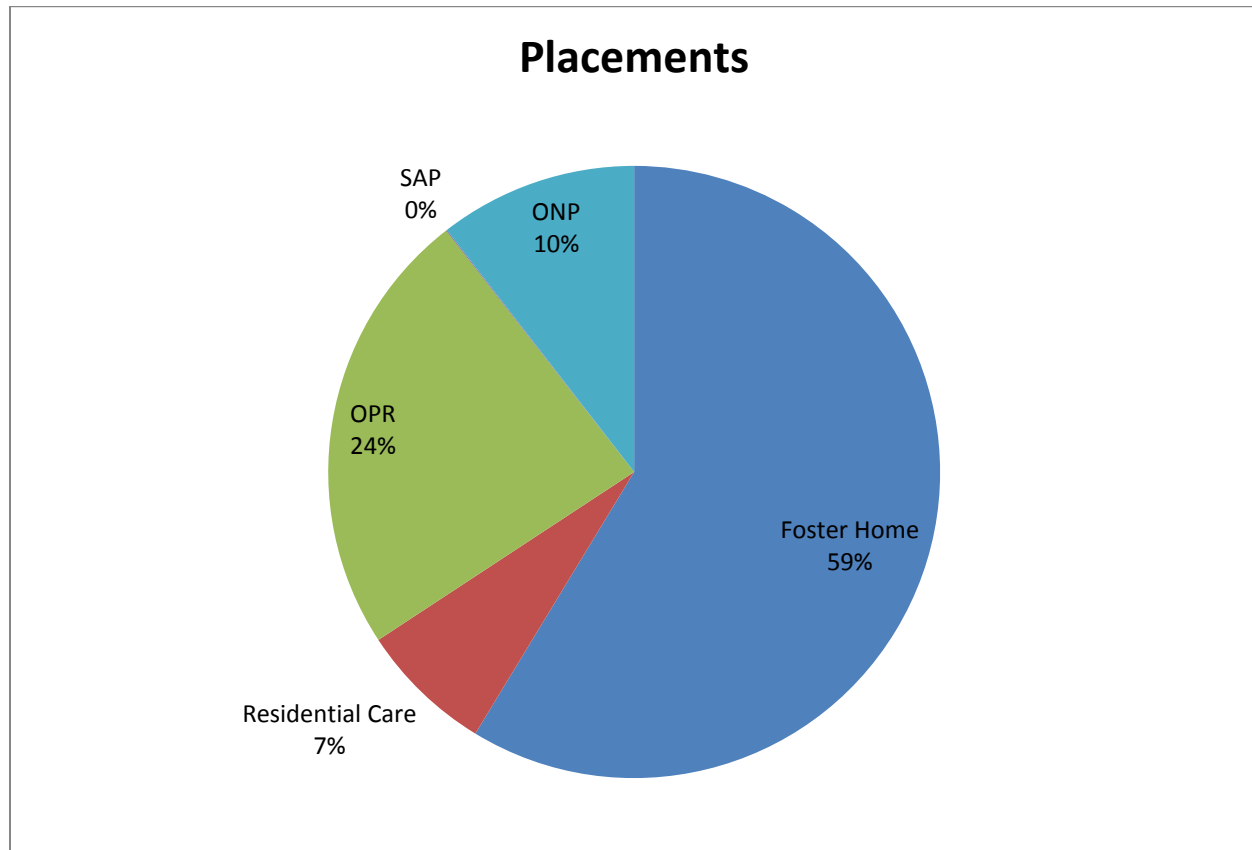
Children in Care

The following chart compares the number of children in care with previous years. This includes both federal and provincially funded cases. In 2008-2009 there were a total of 2079 children in care in the six northern First Nations agencies. This is a 6.2% increase over the previous year. Island Lake First Nations saw a slight decrease in the number of children in care.

Children in Care 2006-2009



The following chart shows a breakdown of placement types in use at March 31, 2009. 1227 children were in foster homes, 207 were in a non-pay type of care such as a correctional facility, health facility or placed in a home with relatives, 499 were in other paid resources such as a place of safety, out of province living situation or in independent living and 145 children were in a residential facility.



OPR – Other Paid Resource

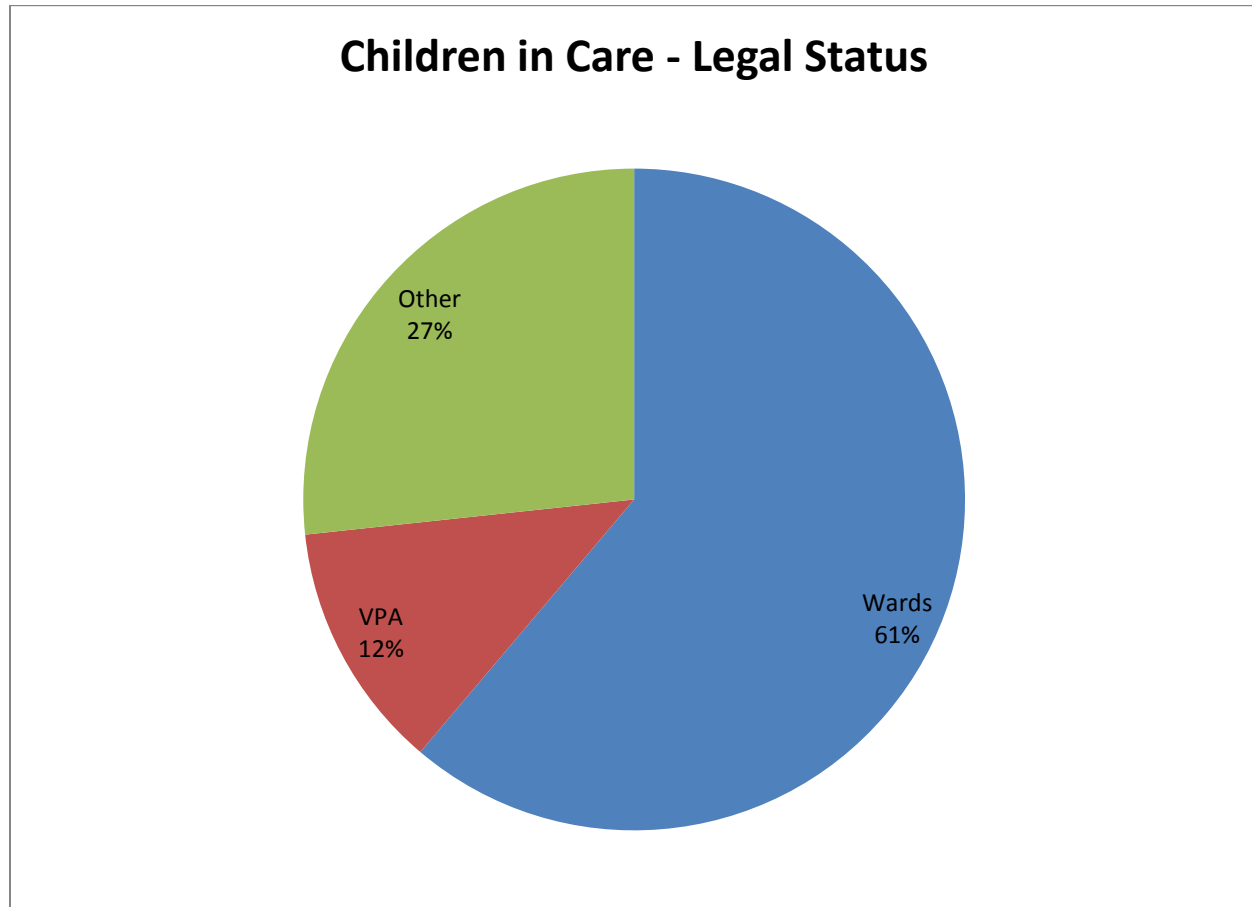
SAP – Select Adoption Probation

ONP – Other Non-Pay

Placement Types

Agency	Foster Home	Res-idential Care	OPR	SAP	ONP	Total
Awasis Agency of Northern Manitoba	393	11	160	0	40	604
Cree Nation Child and Family Caring Agency	174	58	203	0	72	507
Island Lake First Nation Child and Family Services	193	25	0	1	46	265
Kinosao Sipi Minisowin Agency	232	13	29	0	15	289
Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation Family and Community Wellness Agency	167	16	91	0	44	318
Opaskwayak Cree Nation Child and Family Services	61	24	10	0	1	96
Total	1220	147	493	1	218	2079

As of March 31, 2009, the legal status of 1272 children in care were permanent wards, voluntary wards or temporary surrender of guardianship, 555 were either under apprehension or in transitional planning (extension of care) and 252 were in care through a voluntary placement agreement.



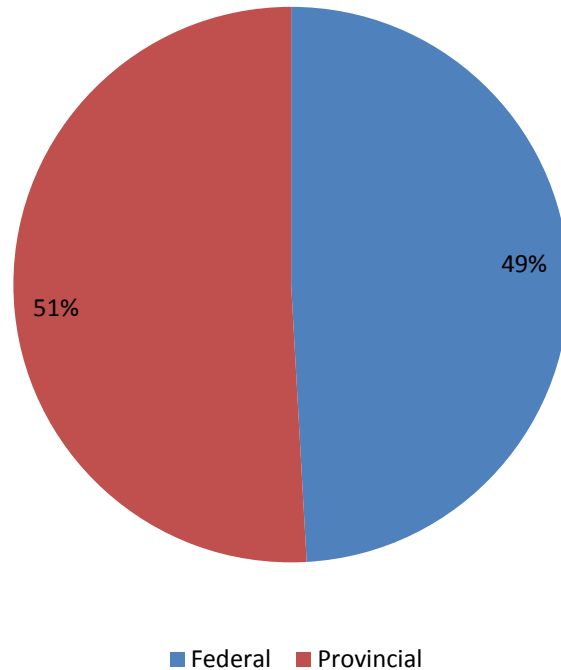
First Nations of Northern Manitoba Child and Family Services Authority
Children in Care - Legal Status - 2008/09

VPA – Voluntary Placement Agreement

Legal Status

Agency	Wards	VPA	Other	TOTAL
Awasis Agency of Northern Manitoba	371	132	101	604
Cree Nation Child and Family Caring Agency	284	25	198	507
Island Lake First Nation Child and Family Services	171	31	63	265
Kinosao Sipi Minisowin Agency	203	37	49	289
Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation Family and Community Wellness Agency	171	24	123	318
Opaskwayak Cree Nation Child and Family Services	72	3	21	96
Total	1272	252	555	2079

Legal Responsibility

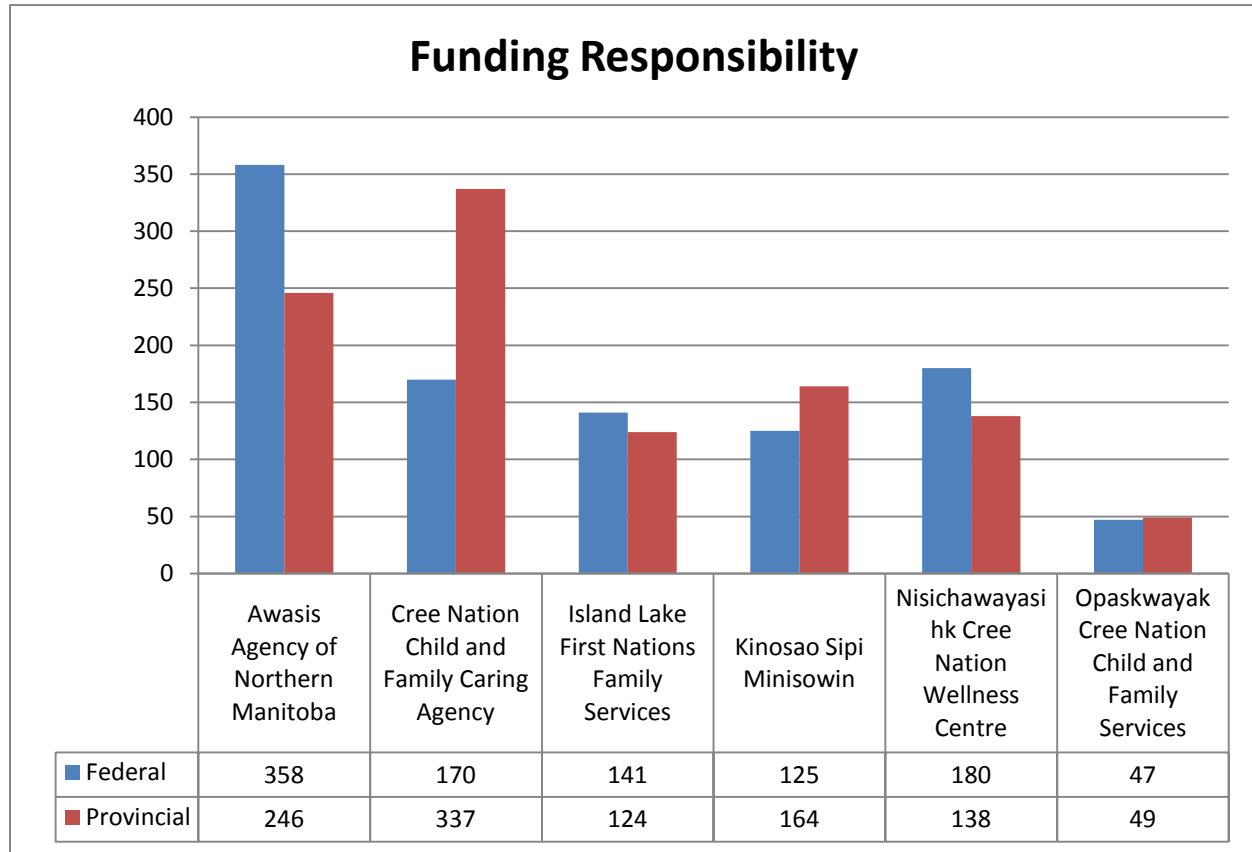


Funding for children in care is received from both federal and provincial governments based on a residency requirement at the time the child enters care. The province is responsible for 51% of the children in care, the federal government for 49% of the children in care in the 2008/09 fiscal year.

First Nations of Northern Manitoba Child and Family Services Authority										
Children In Care										
2006 - 2008										
Agency	2005/2006			2006/2007			2007/2008			2008/2009
	Federal	Prov.	Total	Federal	Prov.	Total	Federal	Prov.	Total	
Awasis Agency of Northern Manitoba			487	300	201	501	347	246	593	358
Cree Nation Child and Family Caring Agency			366	136	303	439	143	317	460	170
Island Lake First Nations Family Services			204	126	113	239	156	123	279	141
Kinosao Sipi Minisowin			255	130	147	277	153	139	292	125
Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation Wellness Centre			253	136	149	285	97	138	235	180
Opaskwayak Cree Nation Child and Family Services			42	36	9	45	50	41	91	47
Total			1607	864	922	1786	946	1004	1950	1021

Note: 2005/06 Federal Provincial breakdown not available at time of publication.

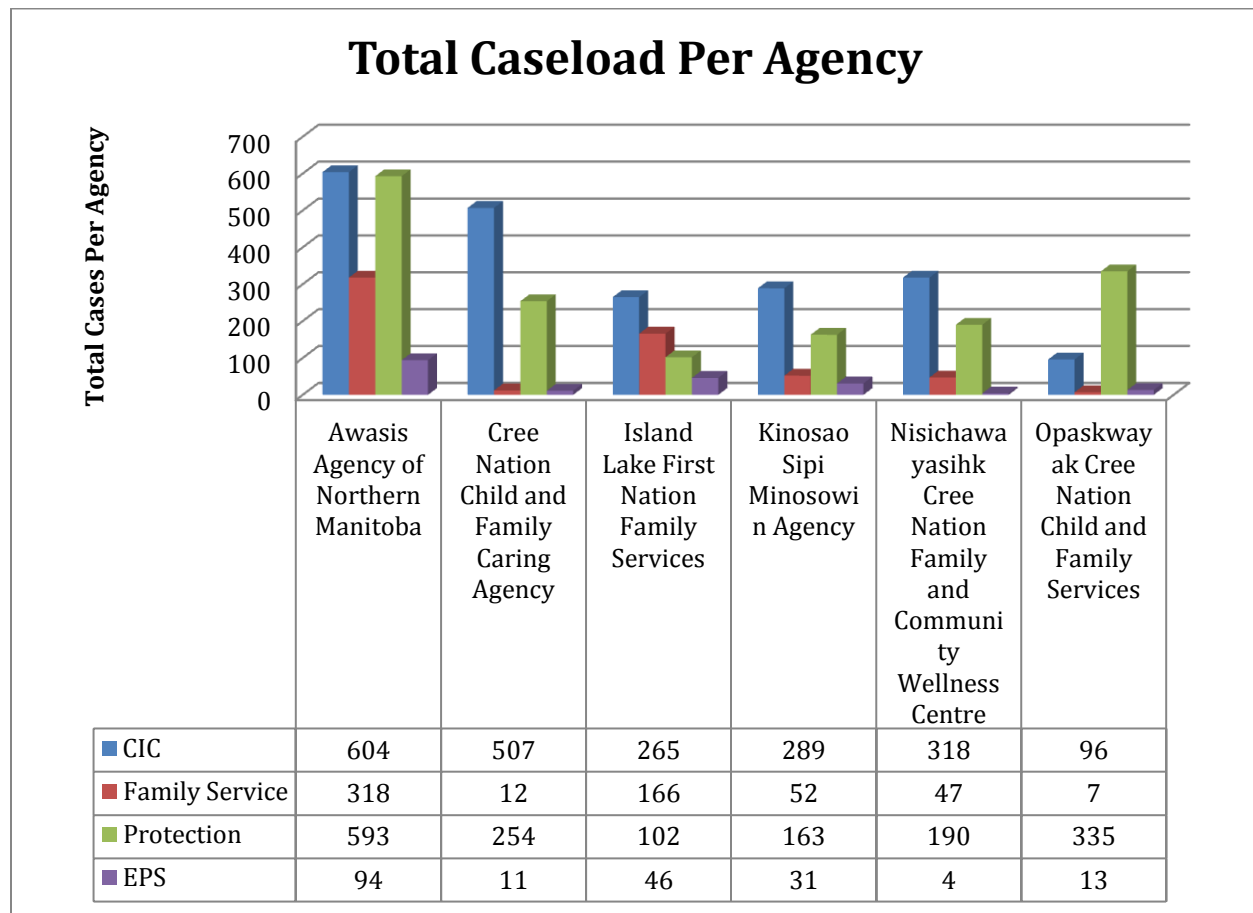
The following chart displays the breakdown between federally and provincially funded cases by agency. It is interesting to note that Cree Nation Child and Family Caring Agency is the only agency to have almost 100% more provincially funded cases when compared to its federally funded caseload.



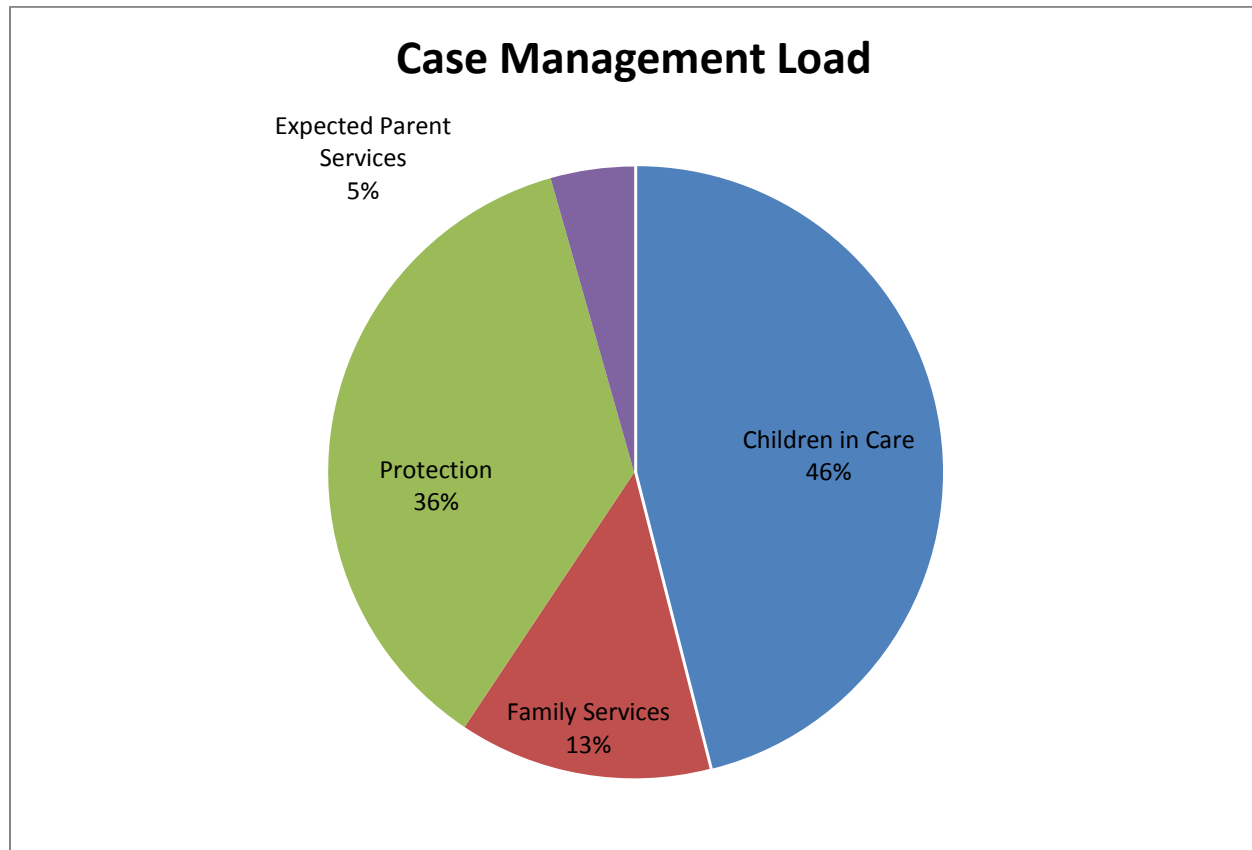
Agency	Federal	Provincial	Total
Awasis Agency of Northern Manitoba	358	246	604
Cree Nation Child and Family Caring Agency	170	337	507
Island Lake First Nations Family Services	141	124	265
Kinosao Sipi Minisowin	125	164	289
Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation Wellness Centre	180	138	318
Opaskwayak Cree Nation Child and Family Services	47	49	96
Total	1021	1058	2079

Case Management

As of March 31, 2009 northern First Nations agencies had a total caseload of 4517 cases. 2079 cases involve children in care, 602 are family service cases, 1637 are child protection cases and 199 involved expectant parent services. The following bar chart shows the distribution of cases across the agencies.



The distribution of types of cases across the northern CFS agencies is displayed below.



Support for 271 children with special needs was funded between April 1, 2008 to March 31, 2009. Of this there were 32 new requests for special needs funding and 59 one time requests. Two agencies, Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation Family and Community Wellness Centre and Island Lake First Nations Family Services, account for all of these requests.

Agency	New Special Needs Funding	Renewal of Special Needs Funding	One Time Funding
Awasis Agency of Northern Manitoba	0	0	0
Cree Nation Child and Family Caring Agency	0	0	0
Island Lake First Nations Family Services	23	56	34
Kinosao Sipi Minisowin Agency	0	0	0
Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation Family and Community Wellness Centre	9	124	25
Opaskwayak Cree Nation Child and Family Services	0	0	0
Total	32	180	59

Child Death Reviews

On September 15, 2008 The Child and Family Services Act was amended making the Children's Advocate responsible for conducting a review of services after the death of a child who was, or had been, receiving services through the child welfare system. This review is known as a "Special Investigation Review".

The Northern Authority is responsible for collecting and reporting information regarding the death of children within its jurisdiction. Forty-two children died in this fiscal year from a variety of causes, more than half of which were related to prior medical conditions. Of this number sixteen children had prior contact with the child and family service system.

Repatriation

Under Northern Authority's Repatriation Program three families were reunited this past year. Services in this program include funding to family members for the reunion, pre-reunion counselling, on-going counselling, treaty re-instatements, birth family information, community profiles and searches, referrals to the Manitoba Post Adoption Registry and the Adoption Unit in Ottawa, and requests for repatriation program information.

Looking Ahead

Our envisioned future and the information and resources required to move toward it are under constant refinement. Together with our vision, mission and values, the following goals will form the foundation for moving ahead:

Strategic Goals

1. Strengthen the service: To support agencies in delivering community-based, culturally appropriate services; increasingly focused on prevention.
2. Strengthen the system: To put in place a leading edge delivery system and the operational management to support it.
3. Support transformation through partnership and accountability: To support the accountability of CFS to the community and collective accountability of the community to its people for building and sustaining healthy communities.

Outcomes

In the coming years we are committed to enhancing our ability to focus on and measure the following outcomes:

Societal level: Healthy children in healthy families living in healthy communities.

- Children are safe/protected when in need.
- Families are supported in being able to provide safe, healthy nurturing environments. (Birth families, Foster families/Places of Safety, Adoptive families)

Indicators/measures:

- Reduced number of children in care,
- Reduction in amount of time children stay in care,
- Reduction in repeat apprehensions.
- For those children in care: increase in children able to stay in their community, increase in children able to receive customary care, decrease in number of times a child is moved/increase in stable environment for child.

Agency level

- Strong partnerships within the communities.
- Standards of practice are met or exceeded in culturally appropriate ways.

Authority level

- Accountability/transparency supports: Information and processes are in place to support timely decision-making and accountability to clients, communities and the public at large.
- Organizational system supports: Structures and processes are in place for operational management and governance including financial, human resource, information technology, administration and governance.
- Service delivery supports: Structures and processes are in place for the delivery of comprehensive quality services.

Operational Plan 2009-2010

1. Quality Assurance

- 1.1 Develop the framework for the Quality Assurance Program.
- 1.2 Develop a schedule for QA reviews.
- 1.3 Establish template and procedures for conducting reviews, including DIAs.
- 1.4 Establish policy and procedures for follow-up of review recommendations/implementation process.
- 1.5 Collect and present data regarding concerns with existing standards.
- 1.6 Develop a framework for an accreditation process to present for discussion.

2. Finance

- 2.1 Complete development and administration of Service Purchase Agreements with the agencies, Contribution Agreements with the funders and Community Service Agreements between the agencies and communities.
- 2.2 Define the roles and responsibilities within the Finance Unit.
- 2.3 Create a common communication and reporting policy supported by clear, consistent and workable processes. Include not only how information will be reported but also how information will be analyzed and used. The goal is to become experts in the collection of relevant information and the use of that information for analysis and decision-making. Broaden the existing Northern Authority Finance Committee to include agency representatives.
- 2.4 Participate in 5 year AJI-CWI Review.
- 2.5 Implement Acc-Pac system to support financial management
- 2.6 Continue monitoring INAC direction regarding funding model.

3. Information Technology

- 3.1 Develop coordinated and networked information systems between the agencies and Northern Authority. Create the ability for the Northern Authority to generate system wide reports based on existing agency information systems.
- 3.2 Establish internal internet usage policy.
- 3.3 Assign internal IT help desk role.
- 3.4 Assess and provide IT training to staff.
- 3.5 Investigate how to compile and share information more efficiently.
 - 3.5.1 Create Intake database
 - 3.5.2 Examine how to maximize use of video conferencing for meetings and training.

4. Resource Development

- 4.1 Develop more placements on reserves.
- 4.2 Develop more northern placements for high risk children. Establish a Federal /Provincial protocol for a northern high risk facility
- 4.3 Provide training for caregivers (access curriculum, develop schedule, coordinate roll-out)
- 4.4 Develop protocols for spiritual healing and recovery programs that use the natural environment and are open to all organizations.

5. Human Resources

- 5.1 Review and revise the personnel policies.
- 5.2 Update the orientation manual.
- 5.3 Implement a HRIS for tracking human resource activity.

- 5.4 Review and update the benefits program (EAP, language bonus, flexible hours, etc.).
- 5.5 Develop and implement a performance management system, including exit interviews.
- 5.6 Update job descriptions.
- 5.7 Establish a student placement program.

6. Training

- 6.1 Develop orientation to the child welfare system that includes the northern First Nations context.
- 6.2 Establish process, policy, procedures and tools for agency and authority training needs assessment, development, delivery, follow-up and evaluation.
- 6.3 Develop /customize /share training materials that are culturally appropriate and fit the context necessary for our agencies.
- 6.4 Continue roll out of standards training.
- 6.5 Develop process for tracking all agency and authority training activities.
- 6.6 Develop a northern training institute.

7. Community Relations

- 7.1 Continue to advocate for and support transparency between the federal, provincial and First Nations governments. Agency and Northern Authority Boards and Executives will continue to encourage this with all parties. It is currently unknown what consultation process has or will be undertaken with Chiefs and Councils, MKO and AMC regarding federal process changes.
- 7.2 Improve communication with and between Northern Authority and its agencies and boards, the provincial and federal governments, collateral agencies and families. Establish communication protocols.
- 7.3 Continue the development and management of the website.

- 7.4 Provide information and awareness of Northern Authority roles and activities through newsletters, brochures, posters and local First Nations media awareness announcements.
- 7.5 Create a greater Northern Authority presence in the north
- 7.6 Improve the focus on community
- 7.7 Develop a media relations protocol.

8. Governance

- 8.1 Develop the policy process including a framework for governance, finance, administration, human resources, service delivery. Determine the process for developing and reviewing policies and create the schedule for policy development and review.
- 8.2 Develop framework for board training and development. Develop common Board training regarding the legal, financial and child welfare responsibilities of the Board. Include clarification of the political and non-political role that they assume. This could be done in conjunction with the MKO General Assembly and shared among the agencies.
- 8.3 Participate in Board development/training activities.

Changes for Children Initiative

At this point in time in the evolution of Manitoba's child and family services system it is important to acknowledge and discuss the impact of the Changes for Children Initiative and the participation of all parties in the implementation of it.

In late 2006, in response to a child death and five reviews of the child welfare system in Manitoba which detailed 289 recommendations for change, the Changes for Children Initiative was launched. Together with AJI –CWI, it provides the blueprint for action to improve the CFS system.

The Standing Committee, comprised of the Chief Executive Officers from the four Authorities and the Executive Director from the Child Protection Branch, is the advisory group of the Manitoba child and family services system. It is responsible for promoting cooperation and collaboration within the CFS system as well as with other systems. Its major areas of focus are the implementation of AJI-CWI and Changes for Children and on-going system development. Standing Committee meets quarterly with the Children's Advocate and the Ombudsman to review progress and work plans. An excerpt from the Changes for Children website is provided on the next pages to clarify the vision and guiding principles for the Changes for Children workplan. Following that is a brief update on the status of the workplan. A full progress report is available online at www.changesforchildren.mb.ca



Changes for Children Vision

Planning

The planning process that respects the AJI-CWI partnership and decision making, embraces principles of inclusiveness, transparency and best practices and result in meaningful and sustainable changes for children, families and communities

Service Delivery

An integrated system that is responsive and coordinated where families and communities are respected, engaged, and supported to protect, value, nurture and love their children.

Workforce

A stable, supported workforce that is confident in their ability to collaborate with families, systems, collaterals and communities to provide timely, culturally responsive services that meet the needs of children, youth and families.

Governance

A jointly coordinated child and family services system that recognizes the distinct rights and authorities of First Nations and Métis peoples and the general population to control, manage, deliver and oversee their own child and family services on a province wide basis.

Outcomes

A child and family service system that recognizes and supports the rights of children to develop within safe and healthy families and communities, and recognizes that First Nations and Metis peoples have unique authority, rights and responsibilities to honour and care for their children.

Workplan Guiding Principles

These principles will be used by the Implementation Team to ensure that the workplan is consistent with the objectives of the new governance model, demonstrably strengthens the child and family services system, and furthers the application of best practice approaches most likely to achieve positive outcomes for children and families.

The workplan must be consistent with the following two principles:

- I. **Respect for the spirit of the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry – Child Welfare Initiative (AJI-CWI)** – the Changes for Children workplan will demonstrate respect for the spirit, intent and longer term objectives of the AJI-CWI.
- II. **Clear linkages to child welfare** – the workplan will clearly demonstrate how the capacity of the child and family service system will be strengthened and ensure that vulnerable children, youth, families and communities who require, or are likely to require, service are the primary beneficiaries.

In addition, the workplan will also advance one or more of the following principles:

- I. **Reconciliation: increased understanding and mutual respect** – the workplan will demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of families, communities and service delivery systems and will foster working relationships that adhere to the concept of reconciliation in child and family services.
- II. **Evidence based** – the workplan will be grounded in the best and most current available evidence derived from research, proven practice and other sources known to result in positive outcomes for children, youth and families.
- III. **Child safety and child and family well-being** – the workplan will recognize that child safety, enhancement of family and child well-being remain of paramount consideration.
- IV. **Strengths-based and resilience focus** – the workplan will encourage the use of strength-based approaches in service delivery, positive resilience strategies, and, through collaborative decision-making, promote the self-determination and empowerment of children youth and families.
- V. **Systems integration** – the workplan will demonstrate a holistic approach by encouraging integration with existing programs and systems and by promoting multi-sectoral partnerships. To the degree possible, the workplan must address existing inequities within Federal, Aboriginal, Provincial and Municipal initiatives.
- VI. **Community-based** – the workplan will encourage partnerships with community by building the capacity of existing networks, fostering new networks and providing opportunity for community members to participate in strategies to improve the delivery of child welfare services.

- VII. **Inclusion of culture** – the workplan will respect traditions, language and values of children, youth and families.
- VIII. **Accessibility and equity** – the workplan will promote greater accessibility for services to all children, youth and families throughout the province for whom there is a need.
- IX. **Continuous quality for improvement** – the workplan will promote a culture of organizational excellence aimed at continual assessment of how the system is doing, utilizing performance indicators and current research to inform and refresh best practice.
- X. **Supported work force** – the Changes for Children implementation and plan will prioritize a supported work force by advancing effective training and skill development strategies, promoting programs designed to mitigate workplace stresses and embracing the known best practice goals of manageable workloads and increased time available for face-to-face contact with children, youth and families.

Progress Summary

In organizing the Changes for Children Initiative the 289 recommendations from the five reviews were organized into seven themes. The following is a summary of the progress report released by the Standing Committee for the winter of 2008/09.

1. Keeping children safe through Primary Prevention Programs. In 2007/08 work in this area focussed on intersectoral collaboration, FASD, suicide prevention and safety education.
2. Early Intervention for Families. Each authority has completed a detailed plan for establishing Differential Response projects for the test site phase of implementation. A standardized risk assessment tool and a standardized strengths-based family assessment tool have been developed. An evaluation framework for the test sites is developed and DR Coordinator positions have been created within each Authority. The hiring process for these positions is underway.
3. Enhanced Support for Front-Line Child Protection Workers. Over 100 positions have been added to the CFS system. The Joint Training Unit has focussed on critical incident stress management, suicide intervention and prevention and child abuse investigations as well specific training needs in a variety of topics. A Foster Care Training Curriculum is under development. Information system redevelopment to replace CFSIS with a system

that is consistent with case management practices and DR is underway with IBM. 18 new standards documents were released and training modules to support them have been in use since Autumn 2008.

4. Improved Communication. Work has begun on a youth engagement strategy to give former youth in care a voice. The Vision Catchers Fund was established to provide more opportunities for youth transitioning out of care and each Authority has begun work to develop mentorship programs to support youth leaving care. A variety of staff engagement activities have been held as well as several conferences. Websites for each authority are under development.
5. Strengthen the New Governance Structure. The Office of the Child and Family Services Standing Committee was developed and 16 permanent positions were created.
6. Fiduciary Obligation of the Government of Canada. The Manitoba and federal governments agreed to implement Jordan's Principle. The implication of this is that First Nations children living on reserve with multiple disabilities who access multiple service providers will receive the same level of service in a culturally appropriate way, as other children with similar needs living in similar areas. A draft framework and funding model for on-reserve CFS program delivery and funding has been developed in collaboration with all relevant stakeholders.
7. Section 10 Reviews. Legislation has transferred responsibilities for conducting Child death reviews to the Office of the Children's Advocate, the scope of the investigation has been extended, there is a stronger community-based emphasis, an advisory committee has been formed, 3.5 new staff positions have been added to the Special Investigations Unit and the Manitoba Ombudsman will report annually on the implementation of recommendations arising from Child Death Reports.

Appendix A

Audited Financial Statements

