

# SAFE AND CONNECTED

2018 - 2019  
Annual Report



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CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES  
OF WESTERN MANITOBA

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# A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT, BOARD OF DIRECTORS, AND THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Thank you for taking the time to read our 2018-19 Annual Report to the Community. As a private, non-profit agency, the reporting on our work with children and families including the outcomes achieved is critical to our ongoing efforts to be an effective, and community connected agency.

This past year the government of Manitoba began implementing significant changes to the child welfare system. This is because the current system and ways of working with vulnerable families is not sustainable. There are too many children coming into care, and the systemic outcomes achieved have not been very positive. The announced changes are in the area of Governance, Funding and Legislation and include a number of goals for this reform:

- Having less children in care;
- Having more prevention efforts and increased partnerships with community providers;
- Ensuring lifelong connections for children through reunification and permanence initiatives;
- Funding for results so that there is a shift of resources from looking after children in care to strengthening families so children do not need to enter care.

The challenge facing all of us is that this reform agenda is in a time where we are experiencing increases in some of the drivers of service (e.g. substance misuse and the rise of meth), along with an overall decrease in resources.

As an Agency and Authority, we have been on the path of transforming our child welfare practices over the past several years to achieve the goals of safety, permanency, and well-being. These practice innovations include:

- Engaging families and their support networks to create safety around children,
- Working in collaboration with the community to strengthen and support families while keeping children safe, and
- Supporting children in care to remain connected to their families and communities.

This report highlights our efforts to transform practices and the achievement of significant and positive results for children, families and communities that align with the government priorities. Yet, there is always more work to do!

Thank you all for your continued support.

Sincerely,



Kris Tufts,  
President, Board of Directors



Dave McGregor,  
Chief Executive Officer



*“Do the best you can  
until you know better.  
Then, when you know  
better, do better.”*

- Maya Angelou

# PRACTICE INNOVATIONS

The components of our Practice Framework are all intended to support children to be safe and connected within their family network. We have implemented these practices within an Agency culture of continual learning and reflection on the impacts we are having in our work with children, youth, families and communities. These practice innovations are aligned with our Agency's mission, goals and values; and are reflected throughout our continuum of services.

The practice innovations we have been able to implement over the last several years have led to the outcomes we are experiencing today. There has been a significant decrease in children coming into Agency care. More children are being safely cared for within their family and its support network. Children who do enter care are more often living with extended kin and are able to be reunified with their parents or move to permanency sooner. Families involved with Family Engagement are reporting greater satisfaction with the work of the Agency. They feel like they have a stronger voice in decisions made about their family. Youth leaving the permanent care of the Agency have more lifelong connections and support than before. Staff are practicing in a confident, competent, and compassionate manner.

Implementing effective changes in our practice is challenging. It takes vision, time, leadership, teamwork, and perseverance. It has not been easy, nor are we ever done. Our staff team has embraced this process of change and is commended for their dedication to improving their work with children, youth and families.

## Practice Innovations



Trauma Informed Care



Safety Organized Practice Model



Domestic Violence Informed Practice (Safe and Together Framework)



Family Engagement



Differential Response (Community Prevention)



Intensive Permanency Services



Youth Engagement



Staff Engagement

# TRAUMA- INFORMED CARE



## Trauma-Informed Practice Principles:

- Partner with clients
- Be Welcoming
- Respect Human Rights
- Be Strength Based
- Promote Safety
- Be Person Centered
- Earn Trust
- Offer a Helping Hand
- Share Power

A fundamental practice shift has been to better incorporate an understanding of trauma throughout our service delivery to vulnerable families. With the implementation of Trauma Informed Care (TIC), we are shifting practice in a manner that supports healing and growth, builds helping relationships; and avoids practices and decisions which can lead to further traumatizing the people we are hoping to serve. This learning comes through extensive training of trauma, grief and loss; and self-reflection around the impacts of our policies, practices and beliefs. “Creating a trauma-informed organization is a fluid, ongoing process; it has no completion date”.

Trauma informed care is not a program but rather a heart centered, parallel process of approaching our clients and colleagues with empathy, respect, understanding and support. It is an organizational structure and treatment framework that involves understanding, recognizing, and responding to the effects of all types of trauma and understanding the role that trauma plays in disrupting a child’s ability to connect.

Grief work must be done for healing of connections and the restoration of the ability to connect. Kids need safety and connection. Trauma informed care are those interventions that connect and promote healing, rather than disconnect and do harm. TIC includes a focus upon building organizational and individual well-being, instilling a learning culture which focuses upon self-reflection on the impact of your work; and providing coaching and support in developing TIC skills.

TIC values connections and permanency. Specifically, we focus on:

- At the front end of service, avoid removal and placement of children where possible by increasing the level of family involvement in decision making (including placement), through facilitated family engagement
- Placement stability: we track and report on a child’s moves in care
- Use of kinship care: keeping children safe and connected with their extended family
- Placement of siblings together wherever possible
- Using group care only for therapeutic purposes
- Looking to build upon existing connections or renew lost connections through Family Finding practices, and
- Implementing urgent efforts at reunification and maintaining connections.



# FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Family engagement is a family-centered, strengths based approach to establishing relationships with families and accomplishing change together. Family Engagement builds upon Trauma Informed Care principles of collaboration, respect, earning trust and sharing power and responsibility. Family Engagement recognizes that every child comes from an extended family or safety network that has the strengths and capacity to look after children and ensure their safety, permanence and well-being.

Families are seldom involved with child welfare by their own volition, which makes meaningful engagement with families difficult. Families have often indicated that they have not felt involved in the decision-making process which occurs in the child welfare system.

The facilitated Family Engagement process provides a structured, facilitated process where families and their support networks come together with the Agency to look at the worries (Danger and Risk) for the safety of the children and to develop a plan that addresses those worries. This process ensures that there is transparency and clarity about why the Agency is involved, fully exploring family/network strengths and needs which are considered in the planning and ensuring that the voice of the child is part of the discussion in developing a plan that all can support.

This process has allowed our Agency to be able to partner with families more effectively and to overcome some of the challenges of working collaboratively within the child welfare setting.

Ongoing evaluation has indicated that Family Engagement:

- Promotes family buy-in to planning as they become active in the decision-making process,
- Enhances the helping relationship as families are motivated to make needed changes, and
- Promotes the safety, permanence and well-being of children and families as effective change occurs, leading to care being averted or reunification occurring sooner.

This past year, the Agency has been able to add a second facilitator position to achieve even more significant outcomes by offering the process sooner and closer to Intake, and increasing capacity to respond to more referrals.

This year, 96 families participated in the Family Engagement Facilitation Process. This resulted in:

91

217 children being served. Of those children, 91 were in agency care at the time of their referral.

74

74 children were able to leave care with a family plan in place. These children either returned to a parents' care, lived with extended family, or their extended family obtained guardianship.

126

126 children averted care with a family plan in place. Of those 126 children, 8 came into care as a result of the safety network working. This means 25 children were in care after FEM process.

13

Of those 25 children, 13 were placed with extended family members under a Place of Safety and 12 were in 'stranger care'.

10

As per our goal for the year, 10 families were referred at intake and 33 families were referred in the rural areas.

## FAMILY ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES



### Core Values of Family Engagement Practices:

- Family Centered
- Child and family safety-focused
- Well-being focused
- Strengths-based
- Culturally-relevant
- Community-based
- Trauma-informed

# SAFE AND TOGETHER



For several years, our Authority and Agency has been implementing the Safe and Together framework into our practice model. Safe and Together is a practice model that aims to improve how child welfare systems and practitioners respond to the issue of domestic violence .

Exposure to domestic violence is the leading cause of child maltreatment referrals in Canada. In close to 11% of our referrals last year, domestic violence was the identified issue bringing the family to the child welfare system. Further, we know that underlying the many other identified issues at Intake, domestic violence was often a precipitating factor.

This is critically important, as family violence is one of the more significant factors when assessing Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES). A higher ACES score indicates significant childhood trauma, which research evidence indicates leads to poorer lifelong health and wellness outcomes for all of us.

Historically, child welfare systems have not responded effectively to domestic violence. We tended to hold the victims living with domestic violence responsible for protecting their children, rather than the perpetrator to cease being abusive. We held the victim responsible for 'failing to protect' and to a higher standard of parenting responsibility than the fathers; with the result that many children entered care. The risk to the child increased as victims were reluctant to seek help, fearing a referral to child welfare.

Safe and Together aligns with our Trauma Informed Care approach and provides a framework for partnering with survivors (mothers) and intervening with perpetrators (fathers) in order to enhance the safety and well-being of children. It is important that we have implemented this 'practice lens' throughout our service delivery system.

## Safe and Together Principles:

- Keeping child safe and together with non-offending parent: Promotes safety; healing from trauma; stability and nurturing
- Partnering with the non-offending parent as default position: Efficient; effective and child-centered
- Intervening with perpetrator to reduce harm and risk to child: Engagement and accountability

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## The assessment framework includes understanding:

- Perpetrator's pattern of coercive control
- Actions taken by the perpetrator to harm the child
- Full spectrum of non-offending parent's efforts to promote the safety and well-being of the child
- Adverse impact of the perpetrator's behaviour on the child
- Role of substance abuse, mental health, culture and other socio-economic factors

**As part of our implementation of Safe and Together, our Authority and Agency has:**



Provided extensive training to our front line and supervisory staff teams on the Safe and Together model.



Developed a core group of mentors with advanced training to support social workers and supervisors in the ongoing development of practice skills. This mentor group also included victim advocate groups.



Developed certified Safe and Together Trainers on staff who will train all new employees.



Completed some preliminary research on the use of Safe and Together by our Family Services Workers. This was done in collaboration with Brandon University and the Safe and Together Institute.



Provided information and understanding about the Agency's implementation of Safe and Together to various community collateral agencies.

**As an Agency, our next steps in implementation include:**

- Ongoing research which includes understanding the experience of the Safe and Together framework from victims living with domestic violence, and from the perpetrators of the domestic violence (including the outcomes of the Caring Dads program), and understanding the impact for children using the Safe and Together framework for domestic violence. These research efforts will be done in collaboration with Safe and Together Institute and the University of Toronto (Caring Dads).
- Continued community education and collaboration around the Safe and Together framework.

# CARING DADS



As part of implementing Domestic Violence Informed practices, we are learning to intervene more effectively with fathers to lead to a reduction in risk and harm to their children. The Caring Dads program helps the Agency to be more effective in this work.

Through participation in this program, fathers develop the skills to cope in healthier ways with frustrating situations, increase their understanding of how different fathering choices and decisions affect their children, increase their awareness of their controlling, abusive and neglectful behaviours.

This program is offered in collaboration with community-based co-facilitators. To date, participants are reporting an increased understanding of the impacts of their behaviour on their child and demonstrated positive changes in their parenting.

# DESIGNATED INTAKE SERVICES

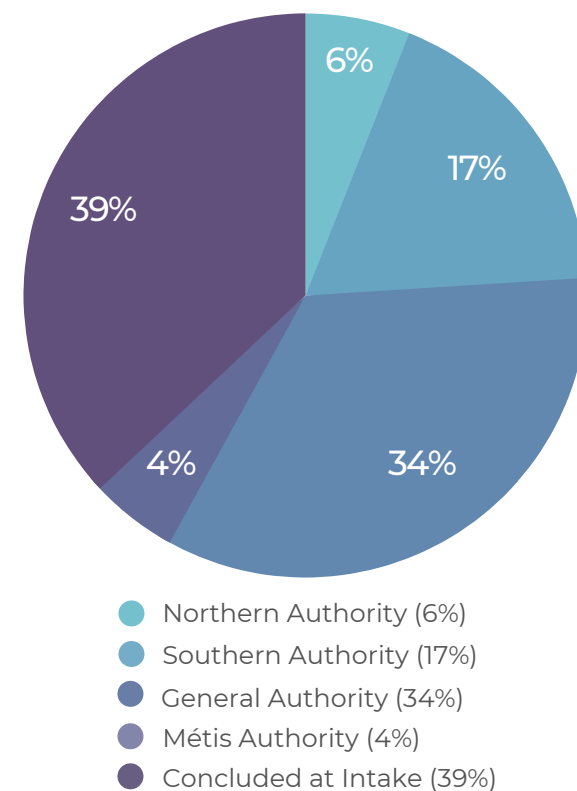
The Agency serves as the Designated Intake Agency on behalf of the four Child and Family Services Authorities in the Westman area. Intake Services provides a single point of entry for families and the community to access the child welfare system. Intake plays a critical role, as it may be the first experience for families when they come in contact or have need for child welfare services.

This is often the first opportunity to engage families in assessing and addressing any identified problems and concerns regarding the safety of their child. Intake responds to referrals to ensure that children are safe, assess whether there is a need for ongoing services, and help families decide which Authority they want to receive services from. Last year, 74% of new families, chose to receive services from CFS of Western Manitoba.

We successfully implemented a second Family Engagement facilitator position so that families and their support networks could access this service closer to the point of Intake and hopefully avoid bringing children into care for emergency purposes.

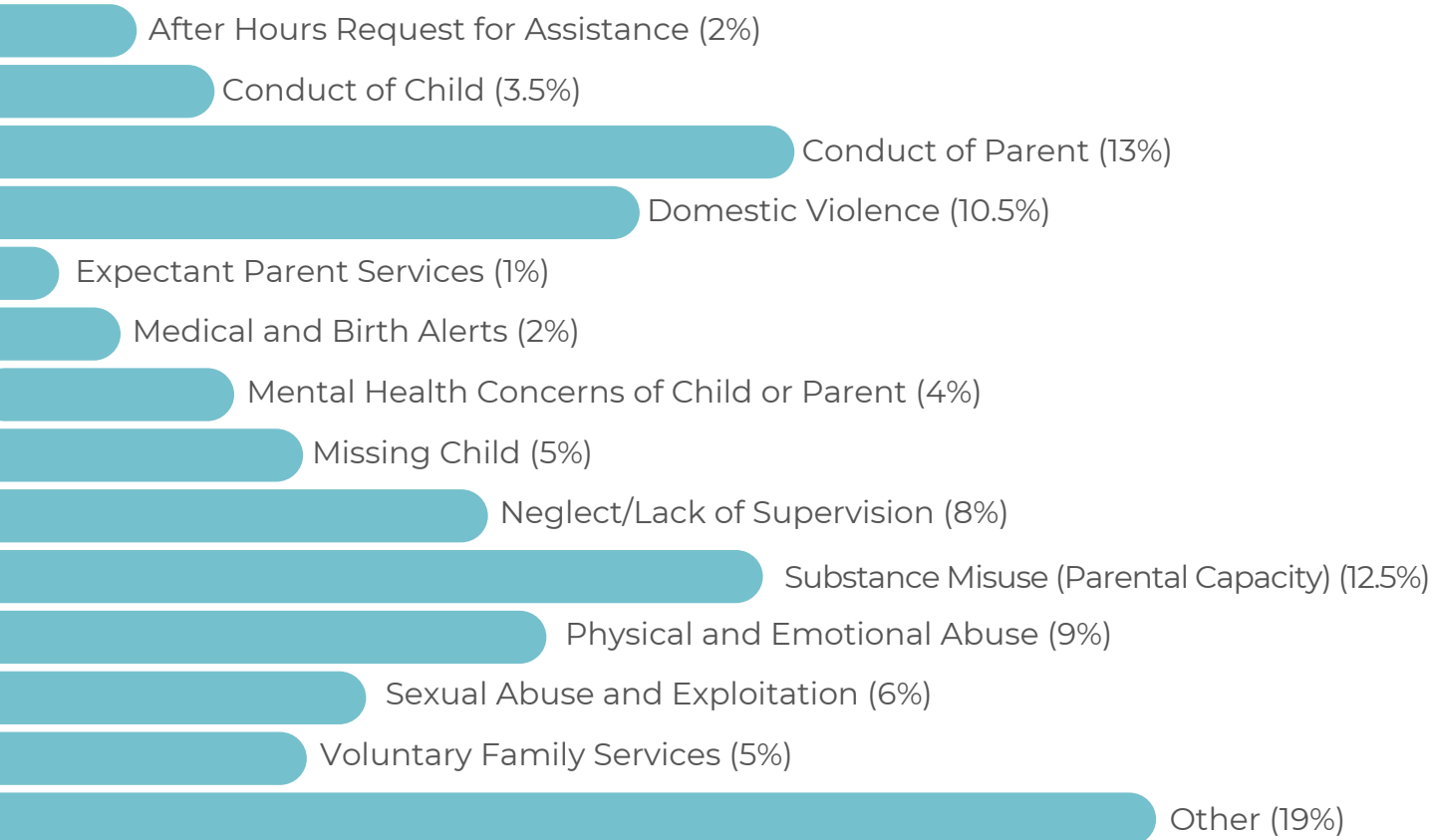
Last year we responded to 2530 intakes.

## Concluded / Transferred Intakes

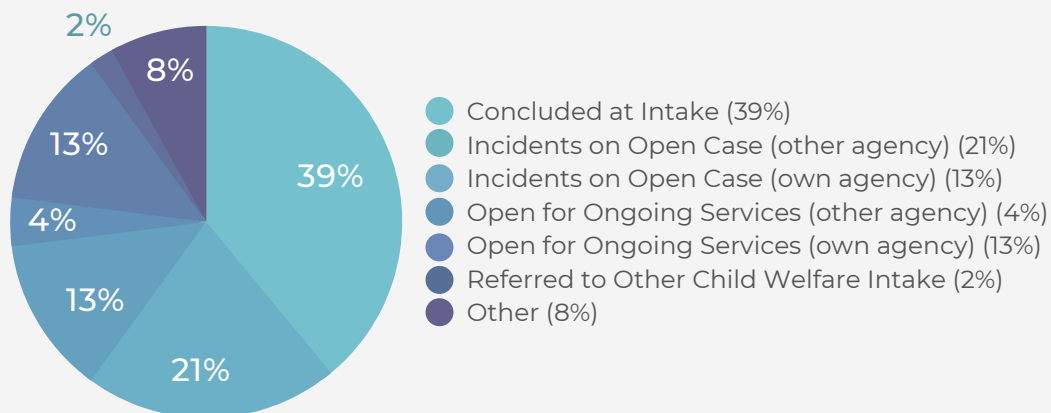


*The Intake program was restructured this year to include a 'screener' role and we have implemented the use of a screening tool. Both of these changes are designed to improve the consistency and reliability of our initial response to new Intake referrals.*

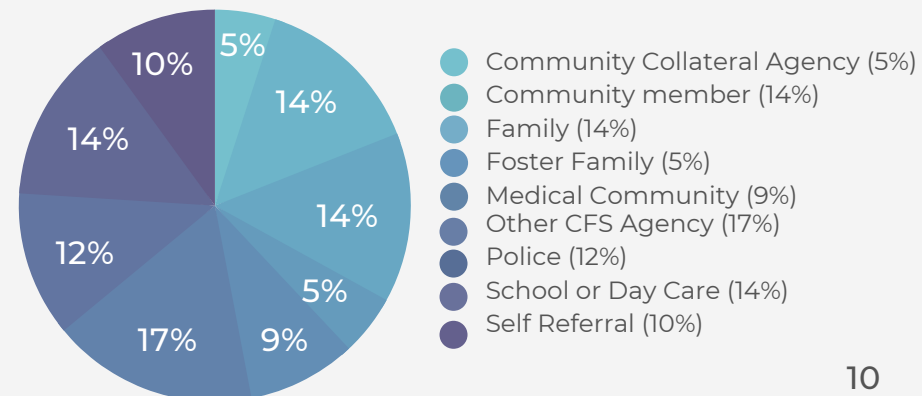
## Issues Identified at Intake



## Concluded Intakes



## Source of Referrals





# DIFFERENTIAL RESPONSE

Our Agency has long believed that the best way to prevent child maltreatment is by supporting and strengthening parents to meet the needs of their children. This has remained a cornerstone of our Agency's service delivery.

The most effective way to achieve this is by collaborating and partnering with the community to identify needs and gaps in services and mobilizing to meet those needs. Our Agency has continued to demonstrate its willingness and capacity to work in this community engagement approach. The Agency has earned the trust and support of the community by acting in accordance with its stated values of collaboration, engagement and respect; and demonstrating to the community that they are able to make a positive difference in the lives of children and families.

The Agency's community prevention programs are designed to provide early needed help for families who are struggling with challenges that, if left unaddressed, could result in children being in need of protective services in the future. This is the definition of Differential Response.

In this past year, close to 1800 families participated in Agency community prevention programs. Many of these programs were offered in partnership with another community resource. The Agency remains fully committed to working as part of the community to address the needs and vulnerabilities that lead to children entering care.

Our continuum of services includes:

**Early Childhood Education programs for vulnerable families:**

- Crocus Plains Early Learning Centre
- Victoria Day Care Centre
- Preschool Enrichment Program
- Parent Child Home Program

**Voluntary Family Services to strengthen and support parents:**

- In Home Family Supports
- Community Liaison Social Worker
- Sun Fund for Kids

**Parenting education and support through accessible, community based and driven resource centers:**

- Elspeth Reid Family Resource Centre
- Westaway Bay Family Centre
- Family Summer Activity Program
- Rural Family Strengthening Program

**Community Engagement Initiatives and coalitions to address family and community vulnerabilities:**

- Westman Community Mobilization Program
- Community Advisory Board (CAB) on Homelessness

## Families Involved in Agency Differential Response Programs



831

Elspeth Reid Family  
Resource Centre

253

Voluntary Family  
Services

82

In Home Support  
Programs

73

Supported Access and  
Reunification

40

Westaway Bay Family  
Resource Centre

38

Rural Family  
Strengthening



88

Victoria Day Care  
Centre

67

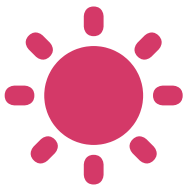
Preschool Enrichment  
Program

13

Parent-Child Home  
Program

8

Crocus Plains Early  
Learning Centre



173

Sun Fund for  
Kids

97

Summer Family  
Activities Program

As a result of our Differential Response Programming, a total of **1,763 families** in Western Manitoba received much needed support. These types of supports are intended to strengthen families and to reduce the number of children that come in to Agency care.

## DIFFERENTIAL RESPONSE



# BUILDING LIFELONG CONNECTIONS

We know that the outcomes for youth in care who leave care without permanent, lifelong connections are poor. For some of these youth, there is an extensive history of trauma, loss and separation. We have to ask ourselves, “What would be good enough for your own child or a child you loved”. This is the compelling reason to change our approach and the urgent need to act.

Intensive Permanency Services (IPS) is an approach to working with youth to promote healing of relational trauma so that they are able to re-connect; to find those family and extended kin members who may have lost contact with the youth, and to build and support lifelong connections. IPS is intensive, action oriented, and a youth-led process to promoting permanency. It occurs over four phases:



**Phase 1 Trusting:** Building trust with the youth while exhaustively searching for family connections



**Phase 2 Healing:** Helping the youth to heal from trauma while starting to connect to lost loved ones



**Phase 3 Connecting:** Connecting and healing relational trauma



**Phase 4 Supporting:** Supporting and integrating healthy relationships

Jurisdictions that implement the IPS approach report an 85% success rate at developing lifelong connections for youth in permanent care.

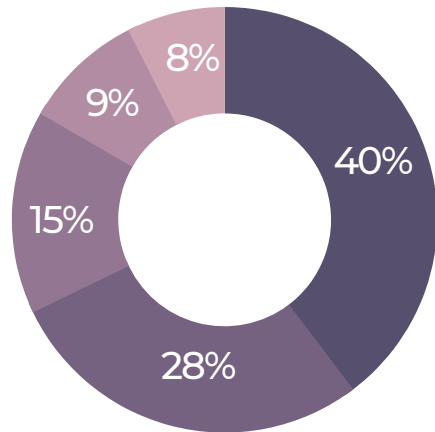
## OUTCOMES FOR YOUTH AGING OUT OF CARE

15 young adults left the care of the agency last year

- 6 out of 15 youth had been involved in an extension of care through an Agreement with Young Adult (AYA)
- 4 were living with parents/extended family; 9 living independently, 2 living within adult services programs
- 5 were still completing Grade 12; 5 had completed Grade 12; 3 were attending university/ college; 2 did not complete Grade 12
- 5 were employed; 3 were receiving student support; 6 were receiving EIA/Disability; and 1 unknown
- Preparation for independence included: Independent Living program (5), Youth Works (employment) (5); referral to adult services (4) and other (6)

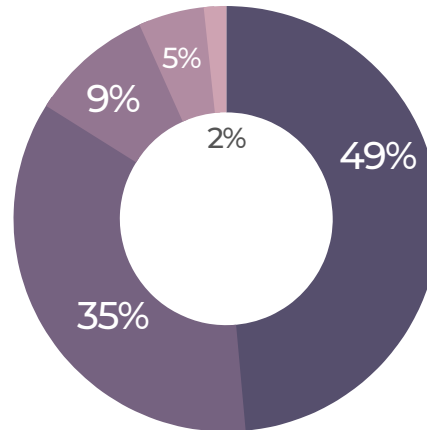
# CHILD IN CARE DATA

## Length of Time in Care



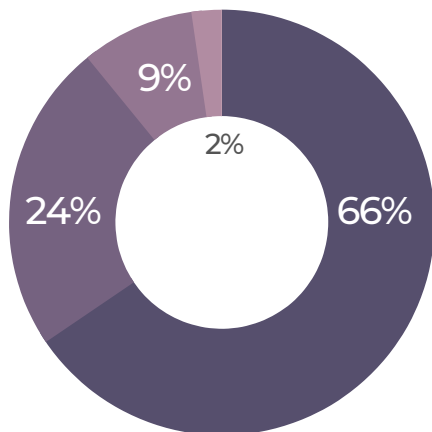
- Less than 1 month
- Between 1 and 6 months
- Between 6 and 12 months
- Greater than 12 months
- Became a permanent ward

## Placement Type in Care



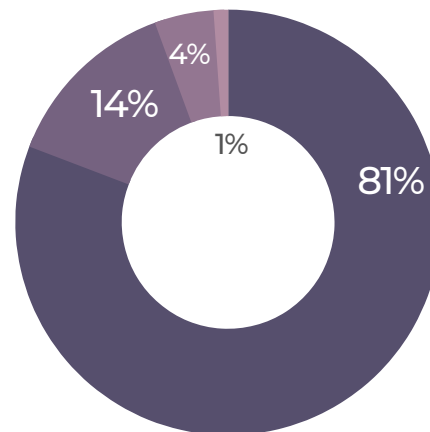
- Kinship care
- Non-kinship care
- Group care
- More than 1 type
- Independent living

## Reason Child Left Care



- Reunified with parents
- Transferred to appropriate Authority
- Reached age of majority
- Placed for adoption

## Number of Placements



- 1
- 2
- 3
- More than 3



Our Child in Care data suggests that our Agency is doing well to ensure that, where possible, children spend the shortest possible amount of time in care with the fewest amount of placements.

Further, when possible, children are placed in a Kinship foster family and are reunified with their parents upon leaving Agency care.

# OUTCOMES

Having a focus on understanding the impact your services are having for the families they are intended is a critical component of becoming a Trauma Informed Agency. A government priority is to change the funding model to focus on those programs and services which are proving to be effective. We need to be able to demonstrate Progress, Impact and Outcomes.

As a private, non-profit Agency, we rely on the support of the community to be able to provide prevention services. Businesses and community members want to invest their donations in services that have shown to make a difference. Further, engaging staff around understanding data supports the learning culture and an openness to change.



Our number of children in care decreased by 11% from the previous year. Our point in time count on March 31, 2019 indicated we had 124 children in care, compared to 139 the previous year. In addition, on March 31, 2019 we had 21 Agreements with Young Adults in place to provide further supports to youth transitioning out of Agency care.



Our total volume of Days Care for the year also decreased by 9% from the previous fiscal year. When we look at the total 17 months of the Block Funding pilot project, our Days Care decreased by 11% compared to the previous 17 months.



The Kinship care rate increased from 37% to 49% of placements. This is a significant increase and is the result of many of the practice innovations to keep children safe and connected. Kinship placements are recognized as the best option when children need to come into care as it keeps them connected to their family, community and culture while dealing with trauma and loss.

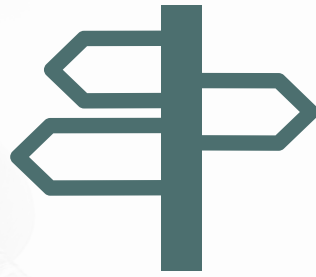


90% of the children we work with in Family Services (Protection and Voluntary) are living in their homes. Energy and resources are directed at keeping children safe and connected within their families wherever possible.



In this past year, 66% of the children who left the Agency's care were returned to parents' care. This is similar to last year's data.

The Agency has a significant supported access and reunification program to support children in care to remain connected to their family.



Our Agency continues to work towards minimizing placement disruptions for children in care as this increases the traumatic impact of loss and separation for children. This past year, 81% of children in care experienced one placement, 14% experienced two placements, and 5% had three or more placements.



Our Agency serves approximately 25,142 children in the Westman region. Based upon this, 4.9 children were in care per 1000 children that we serve (March 31). This placement rate represents a further decrease from the previous two years (5.7/1000, and 6.5/1000). This metric indicates that the Agency's approach to supporting and strengthening families while keeping children safe and connected is effective.



Based upon the child population that we serve in the Westman region, our service rate for children living at home in Family Services (Protection and Voluntary) is 70 children per 1000 children that we serve. This is the same rate as last year. This rate would increase significantly if all the children involved in the Differential Response programs were included.

*"Do all the good you can.  
By all the means you can.  
In all the ways you can.  
In all the places you can.  
At all the times you can.  
To all the people you can.  
As long as ever you can."*

- John Wesley



# STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2019

*Unaudited | Prepared by Mark Gillis, Comptroller*

	Revenue	Expense	Surplus/Deficit
Executive Core	1,059,960	1,059,960	0
Central Program	5,229,959	5,051,795	178,164
Designated Intake	1,279,070	1,279,070	0
Resource Centre	550,279	550,279	0
Prevention	515,355	515,355	0
Group Care	810,884	1,035,568	-224,684
EPR	256,805	441,200	-184,395
Enhanced Children Support	337,539	338,789	-1,250
Victoria Daycare	560,416	553,709	6,707
Preschool Enrichment	384,205	384,205	0
Child Maintenance	5,859,034	5,119,177	739,857
Youth Employment Program	43,002	43,002	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16,886,503</b>	<b>16,372,109</b>	<b>514,399</b>



# OUR SUPPORTERS



MANITOBA COMMUNITY SERVICES COUNCIL INC.

Supporting Manitoba non-profit community service organizations with funding provided by the Province of Manitoba



We appreciate the funding support of the Province of Manitoba for our mandated programs, and the many private donors who make our family strengthening programs possible.

As a private, not-for-profit organization, we rely on this public funding through donations, grants and sponsorships to ensure that these services remain available for the families who need them. Through this network of caring community people and business groups, we can continue to work hard at preventing children from becoming in need of protection.



# CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES OF WESTERN MANITOBA

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