

CONNECTED IN COMMUNITY



Child and Family Services
of Western Manitoba

2019 - 2020
Annual Report

A MESSAGE FROM US

Thank you for your interest in our Annual Report. We are pleased to share with you the continued innovations and achievements of our Agency that strive to respond to the needs of families and their children. We were excited to share this as well at the 2019 International Conference on Innovations in Family Engagement; highlighting our journey of prevention and early intervention services that spans years and is continuing.

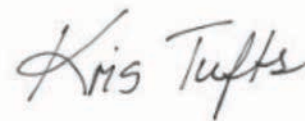
Child welfare reform in Manitoba continues on its path to improve the outcomes for children. With Single Envelope Funding, agencies have the predictability and flexibility to better focus their resources on maintaining children in their natural families. There is an increased focus on a shared community response for improving the well-being of children and families. Families need the support of their communities. In whatever their circumstance, children need lifelong connections and to grow up knowing who they are, where they came from and where they belong.

January 1, 2020 saw the implementation of Bill C-92, an Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families. This important legislation is part of the call to action for Child and Family Services from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and aims to reduce the number of Indigenous children in care and preserve connections to culture and community.

Our Agency is part of many community partnerships that collaborate to strengthen families' abilities to respond to the needs of their children.

We truly hope that you appreciate this year's Annual Report and learning more about the work we are doing.

The recent crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic has created many challenges. For some families and their children, access to their usual supports has been reduced or eliminated. There is heightened stress and worry about physical and emotional well being. Supporting children, youth and families during this time is also more complex. Our staff have remained dedicated to their role in helping to ensure the safety and well-being of children, youth and their families. They need to be commended for their extended resourcefulness, commitment, and compassion during this time.



Kris Tufts
Chair, Board of Directors



Arlene Stewart
Chief Executive Officer





*"I can do things you cannot, you can do things
I cannot, together we can do great things."*

- Mother Teresa

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

The Family Engagement Process puts families more in control of decision making that affects them. Families know what they need and what will work for them. They are the experts of their experiences and challenges. With open communication about worries and needs, issues that directly impact child safety and well-being can be addressed. Support networks are aware of the issues and supportive services and interventions can be targeted to the family's specific needs. The network, identified by the family, commits to keeping the family accountable to the plan developed at the meeting. The networks that families have identified clearly show the importance of their personal and community supports.

Our trained Family Engagement Facilitators have a key role in working towards our Agency's goal of improved family partnerships to support the safety and well-being of their children. Families are far more likely to follow plans that they have had a key role in developing.

The Family Engagement Program continues to grow. We have been achieving our goal of providing this opportunity earlier in the Agency's involvement with the family at the intake level. The process can be utilized at any point in a family's involvement with the Agency, and can occur multiple times. The response by families to this process has been overwhelmingly positive. Frequently a family will request additional meetings to continue with their plan.

Benefits of the Family Engagement process include:



Family preservation occurs more frequently



Children are placed at the center of plans and have a voice in decisions that affect them



Meaningful case plans are created that meet families' needs



Working relationships between workers and families are improved



Families feel respected and improve their own problem solving and decision making

This year, 95 families participated in the Family Engagement Facilitation Process.

203

In total, 203 individual children were served

17

17 children were able to leave care with a family plan in place

51

51 children averted care with a family plan in place

25

Of the 33 children in care after the FEM process, 25 went to a Place of Safety

“Our children’s future and the world’s future are one.”

Dr. C. Henry Kempe

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Our Agency recognizes the strength of our community partners and the importance of collaborating with these partners in order to keep children safe in their families and communities. The families we serve often face barriers with poverty, housing, addictions, education, mental health, among others. As such, a collaborative approach to strengthening is essential.

Community-based responses help to preserve stability for children by maintaining their connections and preventing the trauma of separation and loss. This work increases our capacity to ensure that several protective factors are in place for the families we serve.

PROTECTIVE FACTORS



Nurturing and attachment



Concrete support in times of need



Knowledge of parenting and child development



Supportive social and community connections

Community Connections at a Glance



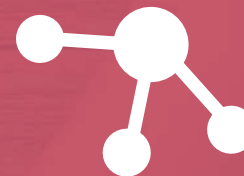
Community Mobilization in it's 5th year with community agencies responding to approximately 600 referrals since it's launch



Westaway Bay Family Resource Center has operated for over seven years



Our Community Liaison social worker at Elspeth Reid Family Resource Center provides early response to families in our community



Numerous multi-disciplinary community coalitions and committees exist to address the vulnerabilities of families.

FAMILY STRENGTHENING

Our agency's service delivery model has at its core, the belief that mobilizing families' strengths leads to more capable families and stronger communities. Strengthening parenting knowledge and capacity increases the ability to respond to children's needs. We know that focusing on and improving families' protective factors reduces the risk of abuse and neglect, improves family functioning and can keep more children out of care and safely at home with their families.

Our family strengthening programs are aimed at responding to both children's and parent's needs. Parenting can be hard. It can be made harder for some who face extra challenges. Receiving support before these challenges become overwhelming is critical for all, and especially families who may be more vulnerable. We work within our values framework to provide a respectful and supportive response to families' needs.

This year, our Agency served approximately 1,299 families through Family Strengthening programs.



Family Strengthening

- 522 - Elspeth Reid Family Resource Centre
- 254 - Voluntary Family Services
- 71 - In-Home Support Programs
- 34 - Westaway Bay Family Resource Centre
- 14 - ParentChild+ Program
- 9 - Rural Family Strengthening Program



Child Care

- 67 - Preschool Enrichment Program
- 63 - Victoria Daycare Centre
- 20 - Crocus Plains Early Learning Centre



Summer Programs

- 154 - Sun Fund for Kids
- 91 - Summer Family Activities Program

DESIGNATED INTAKE SERVICES

As the designated intake agency for the Westman area, our agency responds to referrals and requests for service on behalf of the 4 Child and Family Services Authorities. The implementation of a screening tool and screener role has helped to ensure consistency in how we respond to referrals. Children and families can be impacted by many challenges such as substance use, mental health, housing and basic need instability and domestic violence. Our agency strives to provide a trauma and evidence informed response to these issues facing families. Last year we responded to 2253 intakes.

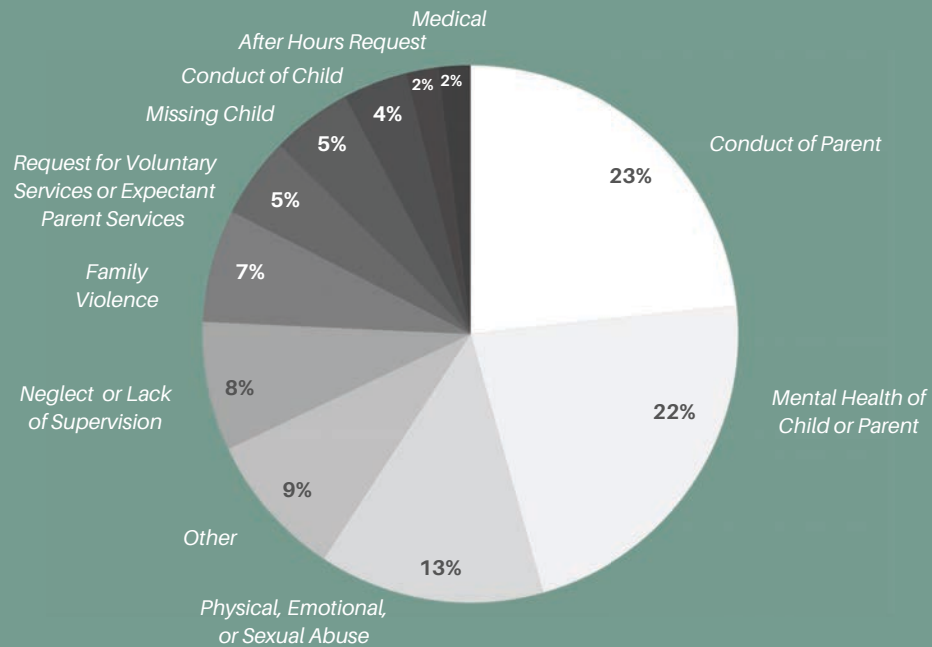
Our agency has demonstrated a commitment to engaging families in developing safety plans to ensure children remain at the forefront at all levels of intervention. When imminent safety threats are identified and children have been removed from their family, the intake worker ensures the family is offered a Family Engagement Meeting within 4 days in an effort to develop a plan for the children to return to family as quickly as possible.

This single effort has proved effective as the number of children entering care at an intake level was significantly reduced over this past year. Safety plans developed with a family's safety network focus on addressing the worries for the children and enhancing the resources for the family. It is a comprehensive intensive way of working with families at their first point of contact with the agency. It requires agency, family and community support.

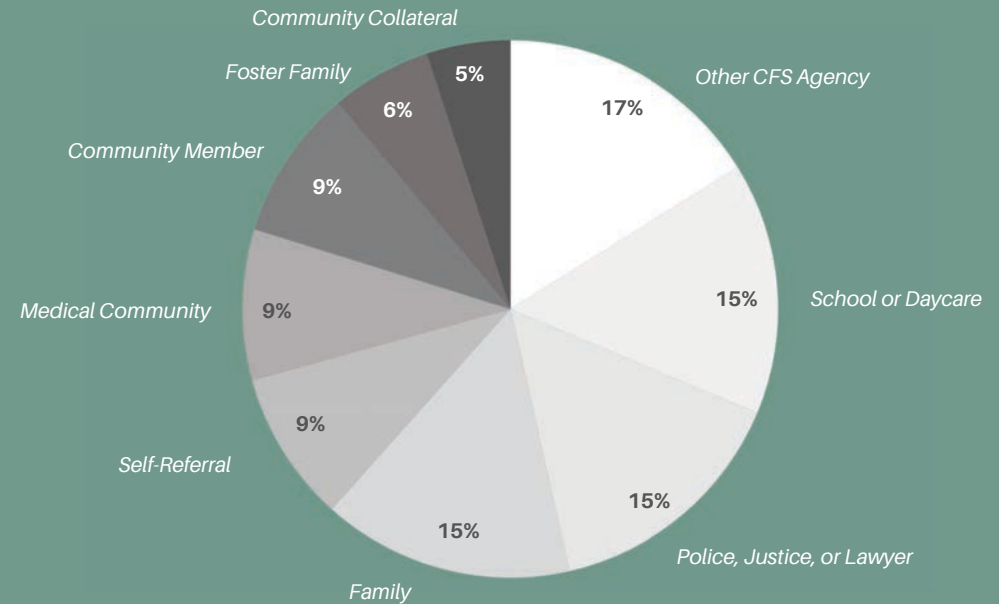
We continue to be part of the Community Mobilization Hub table and Steering Committee. This is a collaborative rapid response to individuals and families at acutely elevated risk, aimed at reducing these risk factors to improve safety and well-being. It is another example of a community focused system of shared responsibility to respond to vulnerable children and families sooner.

To help understand the scope and issues surrounding child maltreatment, our Agency participated in the 2019 First Nations/Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect. This is a national study of child maltreatment investigations involving 25 Indigenous and 40 non-Indigenous agencies throughout Canada. It is anticipated the study and report will be completed in the upcoming year.

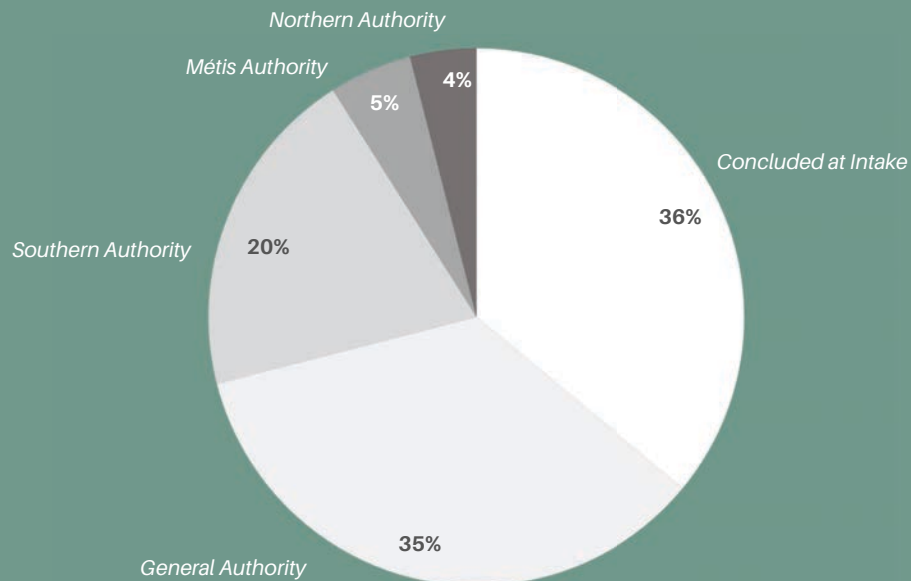
Issues Identified at Intake



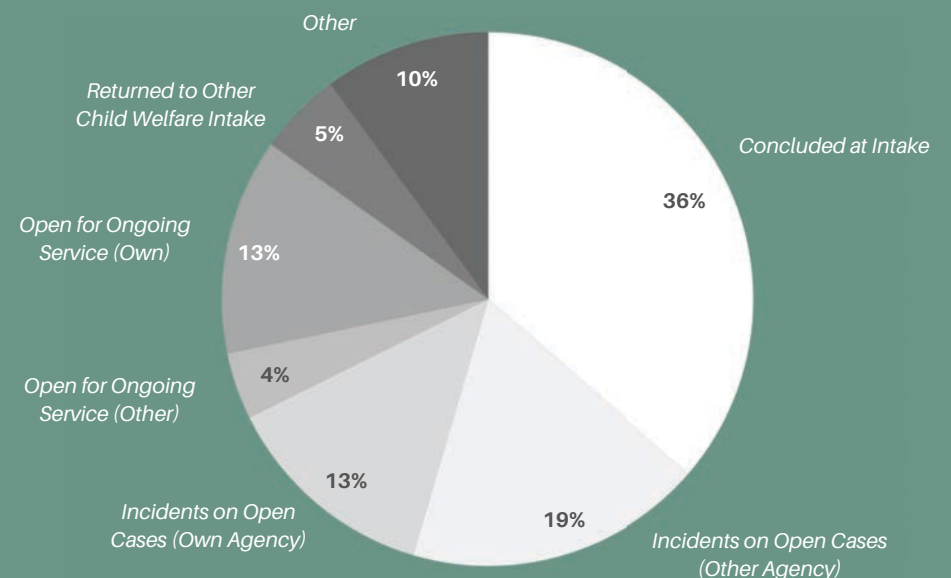
Source of Referrals



Transferred Intakes



Concluded Intakes



SAFE AND TOGETHER

Our expanded use of the Safe and Together framework has provided more thorough assessments in domestic violence, focusing on holding perpetrators accountable for their behaviour, and partnering with the survivor to promote children remaining with their non-offending parent.

Our Agency is committed to implementing the Safe and Together framework in our work with domestic violence. Our next steps in implementing this framework include:



Continued community education and engagement



Ongoing training



Domestic violence cohort to enhance training outcomes



Assessing the experiences and perceptions of the families we work with under this framework

We also collaborated with the General Authority to develop a certified in-house trainer, overseen by the Safe and Together Institute. In February 2020, four days of training were delivered to 22 participants. Evaluations conducted by the Safe and Together Institute's research team following the training showed that:

- 85% of participants developed skills related to assessment of perpetrators patterns of abuse
- 100% developed skills to identify the impact of the perpetrator's pattern of abuse on child and family functioning.
- 72% learned skills to partner with the survivor
- 100% can identify the adult survivor's strengths
- 85% learned practice skills to safety plan with the survivor
- 85% developed case planning skills to intervene with the perpetrator
- 100% developed domestic violence-informed documentation skills

CARING DADS

One of the core principles of the Safe and Together Framework is to intervene with perpetrators to reduce risk and harm to children. The model calls for the perpetrators to be part of the solution rather than them continuing the behaviors that are cause for concern. The Canadian based Caring Dad's program was identified to be the much-needed service we were looking for to provide Westman families.

Caring Dads is a group intervention program for men who have abused or neglected their children, or exposed them to domestic violence. The Caring Dads program was designed from the premise that gender-based violence and violence against children are intertwined, and that these two issues should both be addressed together.

Domestic violence research tells us that children who grow up in homes where domestic violence is prevalent, are more likely to be in violent relationships in the future. Intervening with this cycle can contribute to healthier families in current and future generations.



All participants reported improvements in their own child-centered parenting



All participants reported improved relationships with their children as a result of the group



All participants reported less conflict between themselves and their co-parent as a result of the group



Facilitators noticed significant reductions in participants' hostility toward their CFS worker

"I look at that list of effects of violence on kids and I don't want that to be my son, I would never want him to see me in that way."

- Caring Dads Participant

TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE

The ongoing shift to provide a trauma informed response applies to all of our services and programs. This means recognizing the impact of trauma, the impact of contact with child and family services, and responding in a way that resists re-traumatization. It means applying the question to both adult caregivers and children, “what happened to you”, not “what’s wrong with you”. It’s understanding that pain-based behaviours are normal reactions to painful experiences of grief and loss when separation occurs in families. We work with the “whole” child, their families, experiences and unique situations. A focus on healing trauma has a focus on improving outcomes for children and their families.

This is how trauma-informed principles have informed the work of our Agency:

Children’s Therapy Program

Addressing parent and child trauma

Development of a Trauma Cohort

Staff across many program areas receiving specialized training will act as mentors for other staff and help respond to situations with complex trauma

Membership in PART (Practice and Research Together)

Staff can access evidence-based information and training in current best practices

Restructuring group care resources for youth

This restructure focuses on healing, reconnecting, lifelong connections and supports and aims to provide safety and security for youth as they are preparing to launch into independence.

Partnership with University of Regina

Evaluating our trauma responsiveness and providing training for youth care providers

Focus on Reunification

Safely returning children to family as quickly as possible and utilizing evidence informed tools to assist with assessment and planning

In-home support and resource development

Workers provide support, guidance and encouragement to kinship or family placements and the children in their care.

Trauma training for Resource parents

When children are in non-kinship placements, resource/foster caregivers are provided with trauma training that furthers their understanding of children’s needs and what has happened to them, not what is wrong with them

Intensive Permanency Services

A youth driven model of healing trauma and achieving permanent relational connections for youth in care. Since its beginning, 12 youth have participated in this process.

OUR VISION FRAMEWORK

Safety

We believe that all people have the right to be safe within a trauma focused network of security and support

Relationships

We believe that healing occurs when people feel a connection with each other when they are trusted, valued, respected, and supported, through openness, honesty, and collaboration

Family

We believe in working collaboratively with families to help them become stronger in order for their children to stay in their own homes

Permanency

We believe that all children have the right to timely permanence and a sense of belonging and connections to their families of origin

Community

We believe that collaboration with the community is fundamental in supporting and strengthening children and families

Innovation

We believe that innovation occurs through an openness to new ideas and a commitment to utilizing new practices within an evidence-based framework


Inclusiveness

We believe that inclusiveness occurs when all people feel safe and are empowered to contribute their unique and diverse opinions and ideas

CHILDREN IN CARE

We know that children who grow up in care can have significantly poorer later in life outcomes, particularly those children without permanent connections. For instance, according to the Report of the Legislative Review Committee (2018), former children in care encounter high rates of unemployment, contact with the justice system, and housing instability.

Reducing the number of children in out of home care can require increased efforts to have them safely remain at home. When it becomes necessary for children to come into care, these increased efforts are focused on swift reunification when safe to do so, having children in kin or family placements when possible, and providing stability and permanency quickly. Our Agency is committed to supporting children to maintain relationships that are important to them. We know that connections to family, community and culture are essential. And this is every child's right.



“We delight in the beauty of the butterfly, but rarely admit the changes it has gone through to achieve that beauty.”

- Maya Angelou



Of the children who exited Agency care, 73% returned to their parents' care. This is a 7% increase from last year.



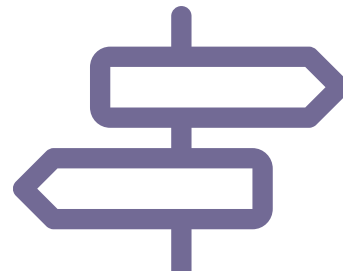
Of the children that entered care this year, 45% were out of care within 1 month.



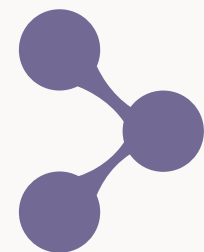
As per our annual point in time count on March 31, 2020, our Agency had 108 children in care. This is a 13% decrease from last year and a 24% decrease over two years.



Our total volume of Days Care decreased 6.2% since last year and 15% in the last two years.



Of the children who came into care, 56% experienced only one placement until the preferred placement was achieved.



Of all Child in Care placement types, 40% were in kinship care. We work hard to ensure that, when possible, children are in the care of their own family systems.

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

The Youth Engagement Program continues to offer opportunities for youth to get together with other youth in care as well as with Agency staff.

We understand the importance for youth to have a voice and choice with the decisions in their lives. Interacting in a fun, meaningful, nurturing way helps youth feel supported and encouraged to make positive choices.

August 2019 saw the one-year anniversary of our Agency's youth facility, the Development and Engagement Center (the "DEC"); a place inspired and named by youth in care. The DEC has been used in multiple ways with youth connected to our Agency. It provides a safe, confidential, friendly environment for workers and youth to meet. It is also host to several groups such as the Skills for Independent Living course, facilitated by our Youth Engagement Specialist and Youthworks Employment Mentor.



Roughly 60 youth are involved in the Youth Engagement Program



13 youth were celebrated at our annual age of majority celebration



14 youth attended programs focused on life skills



35 children and youth shopped at our Christmas Store



Roughly 20 youth participated in our various engagement events

AGREEMENTS WITH YOUNG ADULTS

Most youth still require support after turning 18. This can be particularly true for youth who have been in care. Agreements with Young Adults can be offered to youth in permanent care of Child and Family Services and provide them with ongoing emotional and financial support up until the age of 21.

Our goal is to help prepare youth for independent living or a longer term supported living arrangement. Many young adults with agreements are completing education, are employed, or both. As part of the agreement, they develop goals with action steps in their transition plans that get reviewed annually.

While still receiving supportive guidance from workers, these young adults work on acquiring life skills that contribute towards a more successful launch into independence.



Our Agency had 20 young adults with agreements in 2019



We had 12 young adults who left the support of the Agency



Of these, 10 were living independently, 1 with a friend and 1 with a parent



9 completed secondary schooling, 2 remain in secondary school and 1 is attending university



As their main source of income, 9 were employed, 2 were receiving employment and income assistance



All 12 youth had a permanent relational connection

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

For the Year End, March 31, 2020

Unaudited, Prepared by Mark Gillis, Comptroller

	Revenue	Expense	Surplus/Deficit
Executive Core	1,073,698	1,073,698	0
Central Program	5,072,391	5,076,199	-3,808
Designated Intake	1,249,452	1,249,452	0
Resource Centre	552,894	552,894	0
Prevention	629,630	629,630	0
Group Care	924,331	1,073,447	-149,116
EPR	490,868	412,418	78,450
Enhanced Children Support	338,737	342,435	-3,698
Victoria Daycare	538,670	560,969	-22,299
Preschool Enrichment	421,215	421,215	0
Child Maintenance	3,694,062	3,403,814	290,248
Youth Employment Program	56,350	52,523	3,827
TOTAL	15,042,298	14,848,694	193,604



OUR SUPPORTERS

Our Agency genuinely appreciates the funding support of the Province of Manitoba for our mandated programs, and the many private donors who make our family strengthening programs possible.

Further, because we operate as a private and not-for-profit organization, we rely on public funding through donations, grants and sponsorships. This support ensures that these services remain available for 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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