



Child and Family Services
of Western Manitoba

CFS Matters!

Winter 2022 Newsletter

As we welcomed the winter and holiday season, we also had our lives disrupted again with the surge of Covid-19 cases. The impact of this is felt across our communities. Worries for safety, connection and overall well-being can take their toll.

As we embark on this new year, we remain committed to supporting and collaborating with families and communities to strengthen safety networks. The stress and uncertainty of the pandemic is frequently countered by the successes of this collaboration.

Our Agency's staff and caregivers continued to adapt with flexibility and commitment to the goal of strengthening families to protect children. Despite some significant challenges, our Agency maintained focus on our recently revised goals:

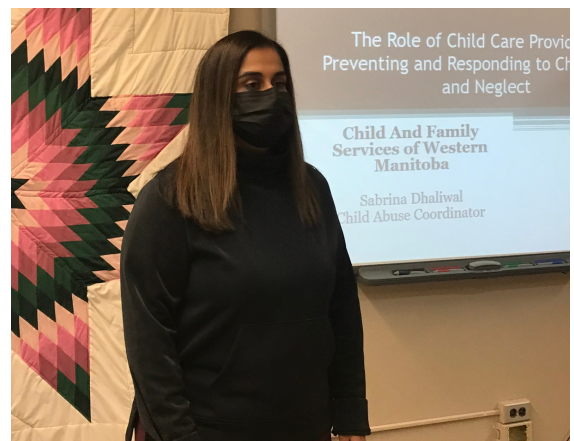
- Families are strengthened and supported
- Children are protected from neglect, abuse and exploitation
- Children in our care are nurtured and supported in ways that promote their well-being
- Children and Families will benefit from the Agency working in partnership with the Community
- The health and well-being of children and families in Western Manitoba will continue to drive our Agency's commitment to improve the services we deliver locally.

Much of the essential work our staff do cannot be done from home. Social workers, in-home support workers, administrative assistants, daycare and group care staff, resource parents, drivers and Resource Centre outreach have continued their unwavering support of children, youth and their families. In this way, the isolating impact of the pandemic has been lessened by the efforts of our staff and caregivers.

It is our hope for all that 2022 brings more opportunities than challenges and more moments of peace than turmoil.

Arlene Stewart
Chief Executive Officer

Joe Ball
President, Board of Directors



Our Child Abuse Coordinator, Sabrina Dhaliwal, sharing information to an Early Childhood Education class. We provide a variety of educational presentations to community partners and members.



ELSPETH REID FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRE

Where community meets children & families

Happy New Year to you and your family! December was an active month at our Centre while we wrapped up Fall programs and did our Christmas support to families.

Once again, it was our pleasure to receive community donations of food and gifts to share with our families. Our staff worked very hard to compile parcels for 55 different families and this was deeply appreciated by parents. Santa came by for a visit and many families enjoyed a chance to talk with this jolly fella and we captured some very special photos.

Our calendar of Winter programs has been emailed out and it can be found on our website. Feel free to pop in for a copy as well. Rest assured all safety measures are in place as we continue efforts to support the community by strengthening families.

All the best to Brenda Lacerte as she retires from her Volunteer Coordinator position and remains with us as a half time Facilitator. Congratulations to Shawna as she takes on the Volunteer Coordinator position while remaining in her ParentChild+ position.

We enter into this New Year wishing you good health, much love and memory making moments with your precious children. Please always know we are here to help.

FAMILY STRENGTHENING

Child Care at Family Resource Centre

Our winter programming has started and we are happy to see many new and returning families to the center. We are continuing to follow public health orders to ensure our space is safe and healthy. Child care staff have been working diligently to ensure our environment is inviting and children have the opportunity to learn and explore through play.

We are fortunate enough to have received a new van for transporting and that has contributed immensely to the amount of people we are able to accommodate. We are looking forward to the New Year and continuing to support our families through these difficult times.

Victoria Day Care Centre

Victoria Day Care Centre has been able to continue programming throughout all of 2021 with the cooperation of our families who are keeping sick children at home. It has been wonderful for the children to be able to immerse themselves in their play, and continue to learn, grow and nurture friendships in a safe place.

We look forward to the time when we can welcome parents back into our building, but until then it is still an inviting place for their children.



Elsbeth Reid Family Resource Centre
255 - 9th Street
Brandon MB R7A 6X1
204-726-6280



Family & Community Development Centre
Unit 4, 613 - 10th Street
Brandon MB R7A 4G6
204-726-7033



Preschool Enrichment Program
2nd Floor, 2227 Brandon Avenue
Brandon MB R7B 0S9
204-727-6650



Victoria Day Care Centre
1st Floor, 2227 Brandon Avenue
Brandon MB R7B 0S9
204-728-9845



FAMILY FINDING

Establishing enduring support networks for children

Family Finding™ is the practice of rigorously searching for and engaging extended family members and other supportive adults to establish an enduring support network for children.

It is based on the belief that children need a sense of belonging and unconditional love for health, growth and development. Permanent supportive connections can improve the life outcomes for children and youth involved in child and family services systems.

The goals of Family Finding™ are to:

- Prevent unnecessary family separation and support youth and children who are in care in developing meaningful and forever connections with adults who will love them across their lifespan.
- Ensure safe, stable and healing connections for all youth. For youth in out of home care, ensure the development of a timely permanent plan by developing a resilient and comprehensive network of supportive adults.
- Support youth in developing a healthy sense of identity and provide family members with the opportunity to meet the needs within a family system.
- Enable young adults emerging from care to live safely and productively within their communities.
- For those with lifetime care needs, to increase connectedness and decrease dependence on formal service systems.
- Enhance family-driven decision-making.
- Create and honor culturally competent, family-led healing with young people, parents, relatives and all network members.

The General Authority engaged with Kevin Campbell, creator of the Family Finding™ model, to deliver two staff training sessions as well as accelerator practice sessions.

We have infused the philosophy and practice throughout our Agency and have prioritized our children and youth currently in permanent care.

We also incorporate a “family seeing” lens starting from a family’s first involvement with our Agency.

Families identify their support networks and children identify safety people. Creating safety networks with families for their children starts by asking the following questions:

- Who loves this child?
- Who might love this child?
- Who could learn to love this child?
- Who does the child love?

Children need safe loving permanent connections and families need supportive healing to create this.

-Family Finding.org



FIRST NATIONS/CANADIAN INCIDENT STUDY 2019

The Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect (CIS) is a national initiative to collect data on children who come to the attention of a child welfare authority due to alleged or suspected abuse and/or neglect.

The CIS examines the incidence of reported child maltreatment and the characteristics of the children and families investigated by child welfare authorities in the year the study is conducted.

-Canadian Child Welfare Research Portal

The 2019 public report is titled “Denouncing the Continued Overrepresentation of First Nations Children in Canadian Child Welfare.” The study was directed by the Assembly of First Nations with core funding from the Public Health Agency of Canada. It is a collaboration between FN/CIS research team and the First Nations Advisory Committee with the goals of:

- Monitoring National level data on investigations involving First Nations children compared to non-Indigenous children as intended by the Truth and Reconciliation’s calls to Action, including:
 - Investigating the type and severity of maltreatment
 - Documenting caregiver, household and child characteristics of families investigated
 - monitoring short-term investigation outcomes such as placement and reunification
- Ensuring the appropriate contextualization of findings.
- Disseminate research results to First Nations communities.

The primary researcher, Dr. Barbara Fallon from the University of Toronto, shared the overall findings for the national study virtually with our staff in October 2021. The 2019 CIS was the 4th national study and the third study in which our Agency participated.

Overall, 16 First Nations agencies and 47 non-Indigenous agencies participated in the study that collected data over a three-month period (October to December 2019).

First Nations children (aged 0-15) in Canada were 3.6 times as likely to be the subject of a child maltreatment related investigation compared to non-Indigenous children in 2019.

Of all investigations conducted by our Agency over the 3-month period, 276 were sampled for the study. Of these, 38% were Substantiated Investigations, and of these, Exposure to Intimate Partner Violence was the primary concern.

40.7% of the 276 investigations involved an indigenous child. The most frequently noted concerns or Risk Factors for the Primary Caregiver in all of the 276 investigations were being the victim of intimate partner violence, few social supports, mental health issues and alcohol abuse.

At the conclusion of the investigation, 31% of families were transferred for on-going child and family services. Out of all the sampled investigations, only 2.2% required out of home placements. Nationally, 13% of investigations involving First Nations children resulted in an out of home placement compared to 4% for non-Indigenous children.

The link to the Report is available on our website if anyone is interested.



THANK YOU

Our community of caring people are amazing

Thank You to the Westman community for their generosity over the holiday season for the families that we serve.

We partnered with Canadian Tire Brandon to support and help as many at risk children this holiday season. We helped around 350 children with our CFS Holiday Gift Tree that was setup in Canadian Tire in Brandon from November 12 until December 19, 2021. This Holiday initiative has not run for five years and we were delighted to have Canadian Tire host us.



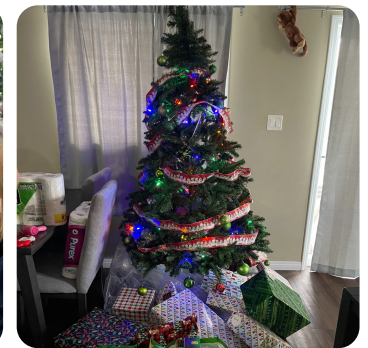
CFS Holiday Gift Tree in Canadian Tire and our shopping haul in Canadian Tire



Thank you to Canadian Tire Brandon and their employees for their support through the holidays and for being part of our community of caring people! Without your support we could not have helped so many families that needed it.

Thank you to the United Way Brandon and the businesses that sponsored their Holiday Tree Auction event.

Twelve of our families benefited from this amazing event where businesses decorated trees and sponsored in-need financially disadvantaged families providing essentials, toys and so much more! Thank you for everything you did and provided for our families.



CFS Western employees at the United Way Holiday Tree Auction and delivering one of the trees to a deserving family

Many individuals, companies and community groups supported our families either financially or through some in-kind donation. Thank you for being part of our community of caring people in and around the Westman region. We received lots of toys, blankets, baby clothes, knitted-wears and so much more! Thank you again.



Community members that donated baby clothes and toys to the families that we serve.



GENERAL AUTHORITY AGM HIGHLIGHTS

October 5th marked the 18th annual General Authority AGM where they highlighted the successes and challenges that were faced over the past year. A significant accomplishment was the creativity and innovation that was apparent within the member agencies of the General Authority. The agencies adapted and supported staying connected, keeping children safe and encouraging a healthy caring community in these uncertain times.

There were four areas that were highlighted in the AGM as successes, namely, agency innovation during COVID, supporting transition to adulthood strategies, family finding and the supported guardianship model and youth engagement networks.

There were video vignettes shared on the strategies implemented to keep kids connected with families through a kindness clotheslines, front yard story-time and craft kits and letters mailed to children in care.

The importance of young adult agreements was shared with a video testimonial from a former youth in care. She shared how her experience within the system and her social worker that was a role model and mentor to her helped set her up for success in her goals of completing post-secondary education and transitioning into adulthood.

The importance of supported guardianship that encourages opportunities for kinship was discussed where the General Authority and its member agencies are leading the way with a system of practise that focuses on healing is possible.

Youth engagement networks were explored with the team from Voices, where they discussed their method of engaging youth in care by mentoring one another and creating a community through equipping youth to be an advocate for themselves and encouraging empowerment through support and community.

This unprecedented year was filled with challenges but the General Authority and its member agencies walked a path of continuous improvement and showed commitment to doing things better than previous years.



THE FOUNDATION FORUM

Joe Ball, On behalf of the Foundation

If the last few years have taught us anything, it is the importance of community. Between the civil unrest down South, and the COVID pandemic world-wide, we're watching people struggle with what it means to be a good neighbour.

For most folks, the strongest bonds are family bonds. Over the recent holidays, despite the pandemic, most people managed to gather with family for at least a small feast. But the bonds of family, as vital as they are to our health and well-being, are not enough. At times our needs are more than any one family can provide. We need community, that larger context in which our families live, to be truly well. As the saying goes, "it takes a village to raise a child." How we look after and look out for our neighbours defines our community.

Child and Families Services of Western MB is simply one piece of what makes our community in South Western Manitoba a good place to live. The Agency's Mission Statement recognizes this. It states, "CFS of Western MB exists so that children are safe and nurtured in strong loving families within a community of caring people."

Our Foundation is one way for that community of caring people to act in the best interests of children and youth. Your donations are used for Agency places and programs that strengthen families, and support children and youth. Our CFS Western Foundation relies on the generosity of those who seek to meet the needs of their neighbours. Our Foundation motto is "Together, we are stronger."

Through your support, families are stronger, and our community is a better place to be. Thank you for your support, and for all that you do to create community here in Western Manitoba.



255 9th Street, Brandon MB R7A 6X1
204-726-6122
www.cfswestern.mb.ca/foundation

**CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES
OF WESTERN MANITOBA
FOUNDATION INC.**