



2015

2016

Annual Report

supporting

protecting

caring

together



*Child and Family Services
of Western Manitoba*

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together

Thank you for taking time to read our Annual Report to the community. Our report highlights the work of Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba in demonstrating service excellence, leadership, teamwork and innovation. It also reflects on the past year of challenges, changes and growth for our Agency and staff.

Supporting, protecting, caring, together represents our values and beliefs on how best to achieve our Agency mission and goals:

- Providing early supports and services to families is the best way to prevent child maltreatment. Research supports this approach.
- Protecting children from maltreatment remains our primary mandate. Through our practice transformation, we are attempting to work more collaboratively with parents and their support networks with a focus on child safety.
- Demonstrating care and compassion for all our families and their children is a cornerstone of building effective helping relationships. This includes providing for children in care and supporting them into successful independence.
- Doing all of this together in partnership with the families we serve—and the communities we live in—is fundamental to our success as an Agency. We cannot—and do not—succeed in isolation.

Inside our report is an opportunity for the community to learn more about the complex and demanding field of child welfare, and to understand the role that our community plays in helping to keep children safe. We urge you to join with us in improving the system that supports the children and families who are most in need in our communities. We thank all of you for your continued support and dedication to the work of our Agency.

Phil Shaman

Phil Shaman,
President, Board of Directors

Dave McGregor

Dave McGregor,
Chief Executive Officer



"We cannot—and do not—succeed in isolation."

supporting

Our dual mandate is to protect children and strengthen families

Most of the community's awareness of the child welfare system is based on media coverage of the protection mandate.

The **Family Strengthening** role of our mandate is also critical for the community to understand and support. It is the best way to prevent children from being maltreated. If we can provide parents with the right tools, education and resources to meet the needs of their children at the right time, child abuse and neglect decrease. Fewer children will enter the care of a child welfare system. And, life outcomes for vulnerable children will start to change.

There is compelling research that shows if you can change the first five years of a child's life, you can change everything. Community investment in early childhood



education, parental support, and strengthening programs and services can help break the cycle of poverty and reliance on social programs through the life of a child.

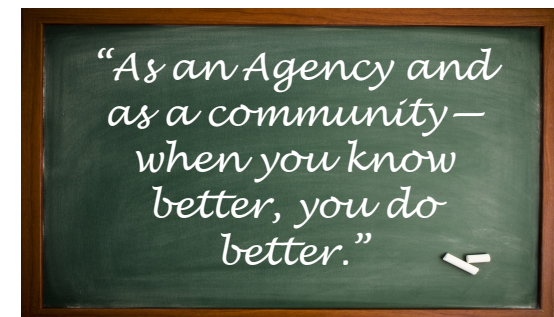
Over the years, our Agency has developed a service delivery model based on this research. In partnership with the community, we offer early childhood education programs for vulnerable families to support a child's learning and development. We offer other programs that support parents in meeting the education and development needs of their children through their own education and learning of parenting skills. We promote parental attachment and development through play and family literacy programs. We offer programs that link isolated parents to networks of support. We also help connect parents to the range of community services and resources that exist to support them.

We know that this approach is effective. Over 92% of the children that the Agency provides Family Services to are living safely in their own homes. The number of children served who are living in their homes with their families increases exponentially when the Agency's support (Differential Response) programs are considered.



These programs offer alternatives for families seeking help. Our Agency continues to have a large number of voluntary families (Family Enhancement) who approach us for support. The number of children in our Agency's care continues to decrease and is well below the provincial placement rate.

We need to have the continued support of the community to ensure that these programs and services are there for families who need them. As a private, not for profit organization, our Agency relies on individuals and businesses to partner with us through donations and sponsorships to ensure that these programs and services are available. Thank you to all who have supported us over the years.



supporting

Early Childhood Education and Development

Early childhood education programs are offered to vulnerable families to enhance the development of young children and to engage the parents in their role as their child's first and most important teacher.

Our Agency operates the **Victoria Day Care Centre** and a **Preschool Enrichment Program** for vulnerable children. These programs also provide parent education opportunities, links to other services and networks, and include transportation and meals. This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Preschool Enrichment Program—five decades of enhancing the developmental needs of preschoolers and supporting parents in their role as their child's first teacher.

Our Agency is also a partner with the **Crocus Plains Early Learning Centre**, designed for young moms who are attending secondary education. The Centre offers unique programming for teenage moms to encourage them to finish high school and to support them after they give birth.

The **Parent Child Home Program** supports the development of healthy attachment between parents and their preschool child through the use of toys, books and interactive play. This support occurs in the family's home over a two-year period and is facilitated by trained volunteers who become very connected to the family. Our program is the only Canadian site for this internationally recognized model of effective, early childhood education intervention for vulnerable children.

The purpose of the **In-Home Support Program** is to keep kids safe at home and prevent their need to come into care. In-Home Support services are designed to be flexible enough to respond to the needs of the family. Contracts are signed with families that address the safety concerns and meet the goals of the family's service plan. The number of families receiving these services included 25 Spanish speaking families who were also provided translation services from a Spanish speaking support worker.



supporting

Parenting Education and Support

Through the **Elspeth Reid Family Resource Centre**, the Agency provides an extensive range of family strengthening and support programs and services that are designed to help parents in understanding how to meet their children's needs. With over 40 parenting education courses, community presentations, networking and support groups, and family literacy and play opportunities, parents are supported in their critical role of promoting their child's growth and healthy development.



The **Westaway Bay Family Centre** experienced another year of growth and development in its third year of operation. It is an offshoot of the Elspeth Reid Family Resource Centre and is an attempt to provide more accessible services to vulnerable families and to help build a healthier community. Through a coalition of service providers, a limited number of support programs and services are offered in a Manitoba Housing unit in the Westaway Bay area in Brandon. An important component is the engagement of the facility's users who provide direction about what they want in their Centre. Outcomes indicate this is a very successful approach and one that we hope to replicate, with the help of our partners, to other vulnerable Brandon communities.

- 23,985 (16,717 adults and 7,268 children) visits
- 842 families served including 225 new to the Centre
- 3,671 parents attended groups
- 12 programs in rural areas
- 4,219 children provided with child care
- 964 supported access visits involving 2,597 people
- 81 families participated in 2015 summer activities
- 75 volunteers helped provide all of the above through 1,516 hours

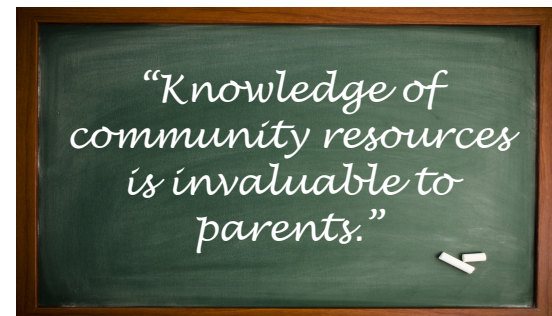
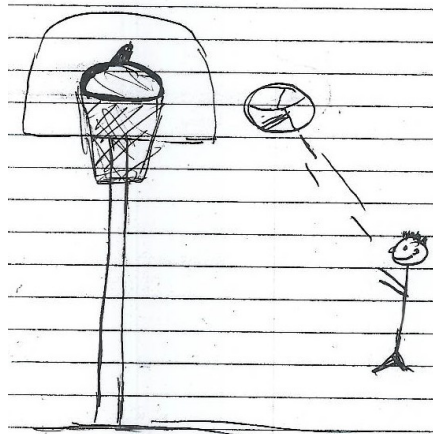
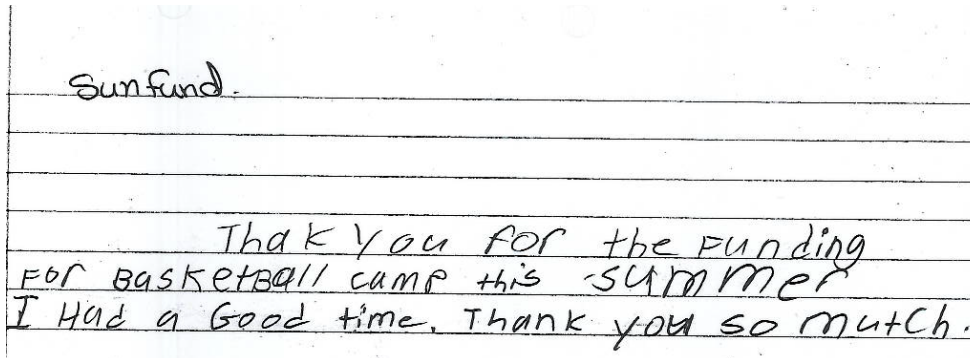


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Parenting Education and Support...continued

In partnership with the community, the **Sun Fund for Kids** raises money to send kids from financially disadvantaged families to summer camp. This is the only chance these kids have of experiencing all that camp can offer. A camp adventure can literally change a child's path in life, offering new opportunities to learn about the world and to meet other people. It can also provide a parent with much needed respite during a long, hot summer.

All of the Agency's community programs are connected through the role of our **Community Liaison Social Worker**. This person is present at our community program sites and is able to respond to parents who may be in crisis or simply looking for advocacy assistance or information. The liaison's knowledge of the community resources and the processes and procedures is invaluable to parents who need help in navigating the social service system. The liaison can also provide Intake services for families who require more intensive supports.



protecting

Protecting children from maltreatment remains our primary mandate

Our Agency believes that the best way to do this is by strengthening and supporting parents. However, this approach may not be enough and, in those situations, we are responsible to ensure that children are safe. Ideally, a child's safety is realized through collaboration and engagement with the family to address protection concerns. This can take time and requires that the child be cared for while the parents work towards reaching the safety goals for their family.

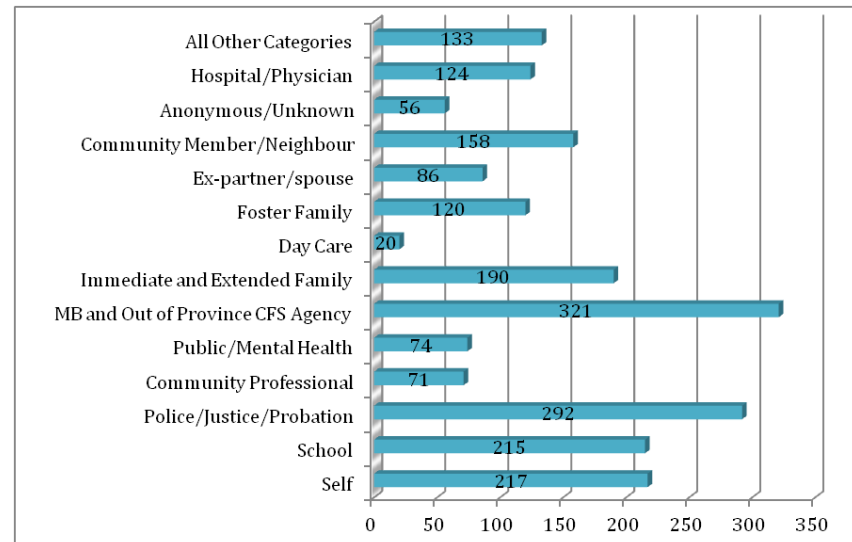
As the **Designated Intake Agency (DIA)** for the Westman region, our Agency responds to community referrals of children who may be at risk of maltreatment. We provide this service 24/7, with after hours referrals being responded to on an emergency basis. If a person has reasonable grounds to believe that a child is or may be in need of protection, that person has a duty to report these concerns to the Agency.

In many cases, referrals result in direct contact with children and families for the purpose of assessing the noted concerns. These investigations are conducted in accordance with a standardized framework which guides the gathering and assessment of information and assists in making critical decisions regarding child safety.

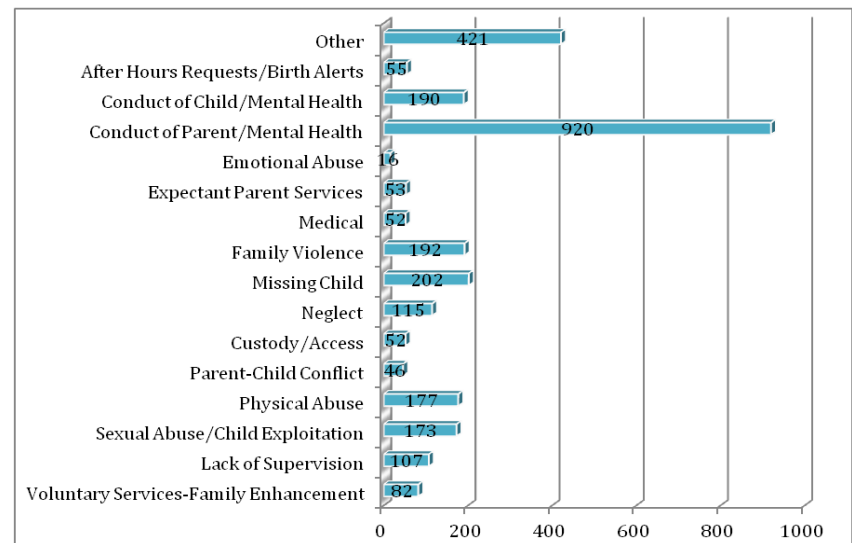
When safety of the child is a significant concern, the family will receive assistance through Family Services. This is when families can choose which service provider they want to work with, often selecting a culturally appropriate agency for ongoing services.

- In 2015, DIA responded to over 2,000 referrals from the community; 217 were self-referrals
- 58 investigations were referred to the Child Abuse Committee

Source of referrals:



Issues Identified at Intake:



protecting

Family Services

Ongoing services are provided when a family's issues and needs cannot be met at the Intake stage (usually within 30 days). Families can receive Protection, Voluntary, or Expectant Parent Services. Case movement totals for 2015-2016 include:

- 622 protection family services with 1,380 children in those families
- 196 voluntary family services with 349 children in those families
- 26 expectant parent services
- 844 total families with 1,729 total number of children in those families



“92% of the children we work with in protection family services are living at home.”

On March 31, 2016, there were:

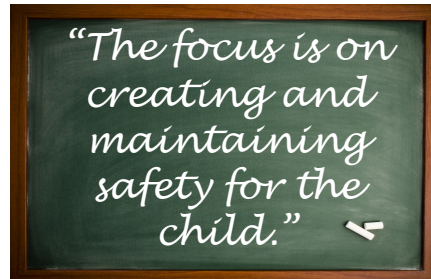
- 148 voluntary family services cases—246 children in those families with a service rate of 11.5 children/1000
- 414 protection family services cases—941 children in those families with a service rate of 44 children/1000
- 9 expectant parent services

protecting

Family Services...continued

Collaborative, Safety Focused Practice Framework—Our Agency has successfully implemented a collaborative, safety focused practice framework to guide our social workers and supervisors in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities with the children and families they serve.

The goal is to build safety around children by engaging the family and their support networks in a plan that addresses identified safety concerns. The framework is guided by the workers' use of structured decision-making tools that help guide the assessment of danger, risk and family capacity. It also leads to the development of effective safety plans through the collaborative case consultation process. A key aspect is the engaging of the parents and their support network to focus on creating and maintaining safety for the child.



To enhance this practice, the Agency has created a Collaborative Practices Facilitator pilot position to help social workers, supervisors and families through the networking process. The Facilitator will prepare, support and engage parents and their networks in developing an effective safety planning process, and aid the social workers and supervisors in providing clear information to the family about what the Agency is concerned about and why we are involved with them.



The Agency has participated in some initial quality assurance reviews of the Practice Framework. A high degree of fidelity to the framework was identified through random file audits. The goal is to eventually interview parents, children, and their networks about their experiences and whether they felt heard and respected, their views and opinions were fully considered, and if a mutually identified plan to create safety for the child was achieved or not.



Safe and Together—As part of the Practice Framework the Agency has implemented Safe and Together, which focuses on intervening with families where there is intimate partner violence.

Safe and Together provides social workers with skills and strategies to engage fathers around their choice to be violent with a partner and the negative impact that decision has on the children. Workers are also able to align their interventions in support of the mother and her efforts at protecting the children from exposure to the domestic violence.

This approach is consistent with victims' advocate groups that support abused women. It tries to build on the shared outcome of safety for the mother and the children by holding the father accountable. More training will be provided in fall 2016 as we seek to deepen our practice skills in this area.

caring

The Agency is working hard to strengthen and support families so that children can remain at home safely

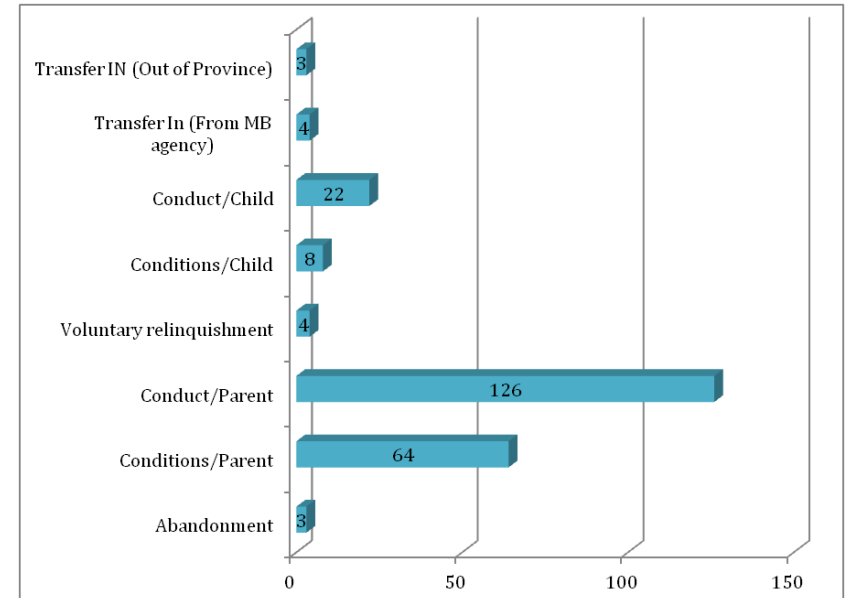
When this is not enough, children enter care. The goal when children enter care is to reunify them with their family as soon as it is safe to do so. This involves working with parents to mitigate protection worries and to implement safety plans. It may also mean developing a family, or Kinship, placement so that the child is safely cared for by someone they know. In some situations, the child may be unable to return to their parents or extended family care, and the Agency then needs to provide intensive Permanency Services so that the child will have permanent connections for when they leave Agency care.

Resource Development staff and care providers are responsible for ensuring that the emotional, behavioural and developmental needs of the children in Agency care are met. Staff and care providers make sure children who cannot stay in their homes are provided with a safe, stable and nurturing environment. This team includes foster parents, residential youth care providers, volunteers, adoption, youth engagement, and Children's Therapy social workers.

During the year the Agency provided care for a total of 328 children and youth, with 154 children remaining in our care at March 31, 2016. Of these young people, 72 are in the permanent care of the Agency. Agency placement rate is seven children/1000.



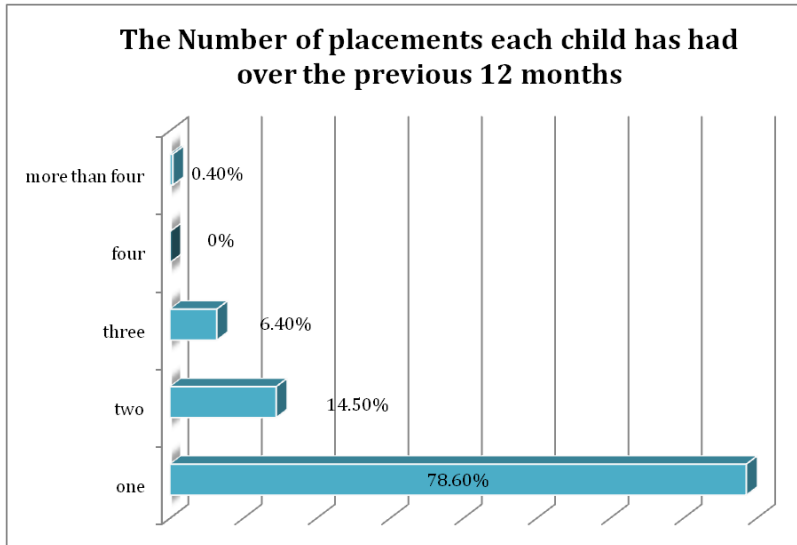
The reasons why children and Youth entered Agency care are varied:



Of all the children who entered Agency care last year, 65% were part of a sibling group. We were able to place most of these children together in the same foster home as we know this is best for them. Where that was not possible, supported access between siblings was provided to maintain their sibling bonds.

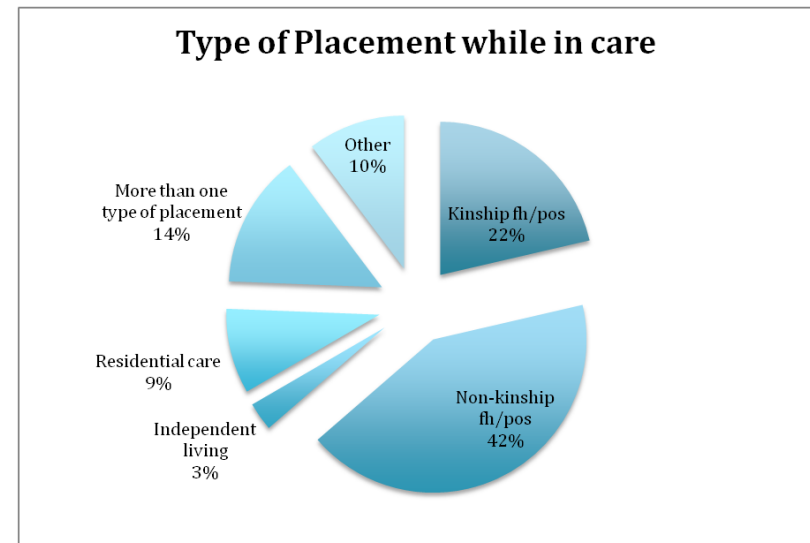


The number of times that a child has to move while in care is a significant factor in a child's coping with loss and grief experiences. The goal is to minimize the amount of losses—for example, changing workers, switching schools, having to make new friends, etc.—a child experiences when moving happens. It really is impossible to try and quantify the number of losses that children may experience as they move through placements.



Almost 80% of the children who left the care of the Agency last year experienced only one placement within the previous 12 months. This is due to dedicated and committed caregivers, and resource development staff providing support and resources. Sometimes when a child enters care on an emergency basis, and after determining the child cannot return home, a more permanent resource is identified and developed—for example, an extended family member which prompts a placement move into a preferred placement. There is often a range of reasons why a child moves while in care. Our role is to ensure that these moves are for the right reasons and to limit them as much as possible.

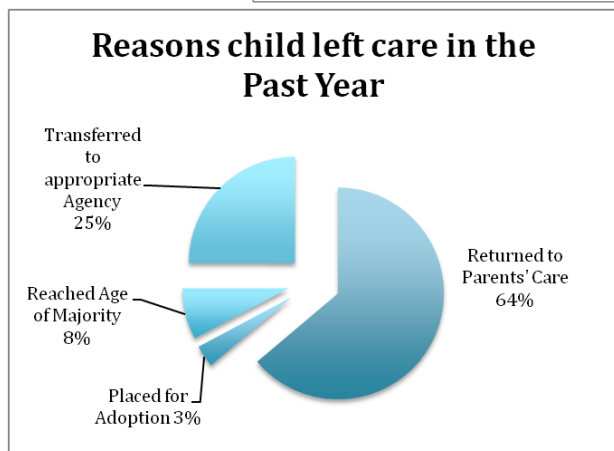
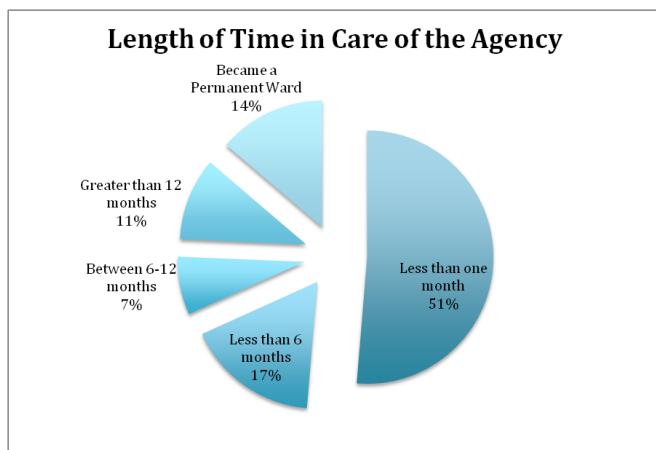
The Agency tries to explore Kinship placement options—that is, someone known to the child and who can provide a safe, care-giving role—for children entering care. Last year, 22% of placements were in Kinship care. Our goal is to seek this type of placement whenever possible, however, they can take time to develop.





Children In Care...continued

For children who left Agency care last year, 51% left within one month of entering. And almost 70% left within six months. As the Designated Intake Agency, children often enter care on an emergency basis and can be safely returned to their parents once those concerns are mitigated. Or the file can be transferred to their culturally appropriate Agency if the child remains in care. Maintaining family connections for these children while in care is critical.



Thirteen young adults transitioned out of care, having reached their age of majority and having completed their extension to care transition plan (if applicable). Their outcomes include:

Current living conditions	2 living with parents 8 living independently 3 supported living
Level of education	5 still in secondary school 8 did not complete secondary school
Main source of income	6 employed 2 students (EIA) 4 disability (EIA) 1 other
Extended care	8 Yes 5 No
Preparation for youth leaving care....	5 independent living program 4 referral for adult services 2 other 2 none

There were 11 children who re-entered care during the year after having been returned home.

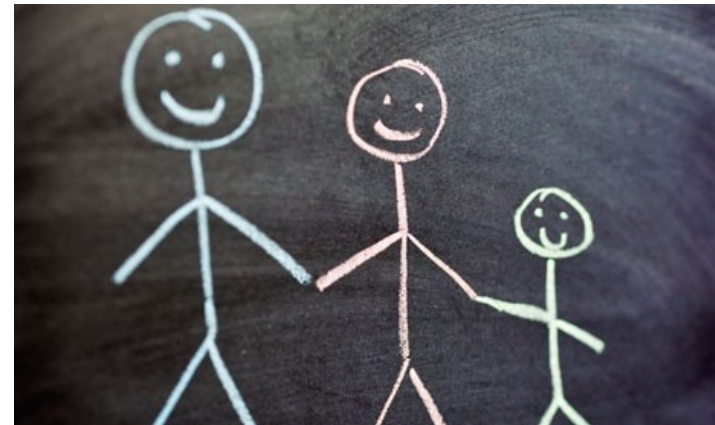
There were 29 infants under age one who entered Agency care this past year. Of those, 13 have returned to their parents' care, eight were transferred to their appropriate authority for ongoing service and support, and eight remain in Agency care as of March 31, 2016.

Supported Access Services—It is critical that children in care and their parents remain connected through Supported Access Services, which provides support and direction to parents so that the access experience is helpful and enjoyable. This may involve weekly or more frequent visits, usually involves travel for both parent and child, and can be ongoing for the length of time that the child is in care. As well, support and debriefing is offered after the visit. Last year, Supported Access Services were provided to 84 families involving 139 children in care.



Care Providers—At March 31, 2016, 102 foster and Kinship (including Places of Safety) families were looking after children in Agency care. Our Resource Development team's role is to recruit, license and develop these resources. Training and support is provided so that care providers are able to meet the needs of children in their care. Our goal is to have enough foster homes licensed and trained so that we can enhance matching a child and their needs to an appropriate resource who is able to then meet those needs.

Intensive Permanency Planning Services—The Agency found caring, supportive, and loving adoptive families for 11 children, with seven adoptions being finalized over the year. The Agency has 55 Adoptive applicants. Several Agency staff participated in the 3-5-7 training that provides skills and activities for working with children in care on permanency needs. All Agency staff participated in a two-day Grief, Loss and Trauma professional development training that strengthens our skills and understanding to support healing with children in care.



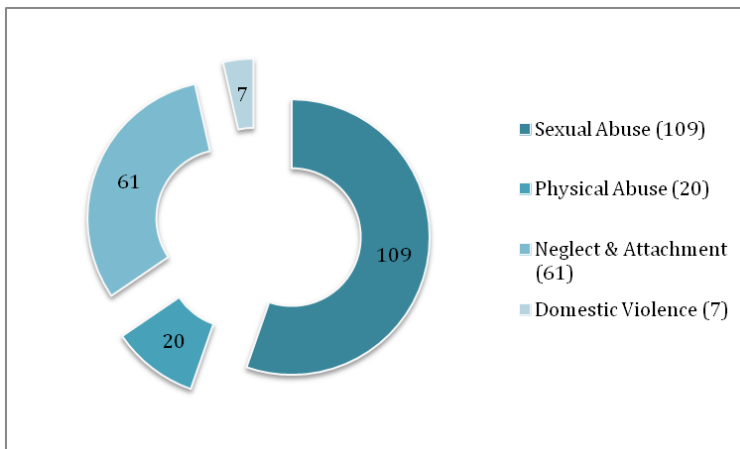
Youth Engagement Program—We provided continued support and financial aid to 12 youth between the ages of 18—21 years of age through our transition program. Three youth were provided with financial support to access post-secondary education. Youth Engagement events were held throughout the year to help connect youth to other youth in care, and to provide them with an opportunity to talk about their care experiences so the Agency can continue to strengthen its ability to meet their needs.



Children In Care...continued

Children's Therapy Program—Our Agency is fortunate to have two therapists to support our work with traumatized children and families. Social workers and caregivers are supported to better understand a child's trauma and learn how to be more effective in responding to the child's needs. The therapists work with the children to provide support in healing through awareness, understanding, and coping skills.

Primary type of trauma at time of referral:



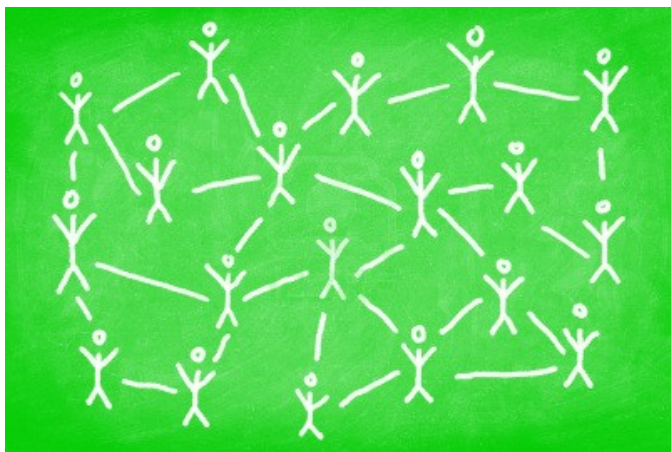
together

Child welfare cannot work in isolation

One of our Agency's strengths has been our ability to work closely in partnership with the community to protect children and strengthen and support families. Child welfare cannot work in isolation. We rely on the community to support our **Family Strengthening** programs and services.

We have been working hard over the past few years to transform our practices to be more collaborative, strengths based, and safety focused. Our practice initiatives include having a greater focus on engaging families and their support people in creating safety plans for children. To strengthen this approach, we have created a pilot position to enhance and develop our collaborative practices with families and their support network.

This method must be built on the interconnectedness of social services in our region. We need to continue to strengthen our work with our community partners to elevate child well being in our area. Our ability to partner together has a direct impact on a family's experience with the social services system.



Community Partners—We work with a wide range of service providers and partners to keep families together and children safe. They include (but are not limited to):

- Police services and first responders
- Health providers
- Education
- Child and adult mental health
- Domestic abuse services
- New settlement groups
- Housing programs
- Addictions services
- Cultural and religious centres



While each of these organizations provides a valuable service on their own, they do not operate in a vacuum. The organizations rely on each other to do the best work possible to keep children and families healthy, safe and whole. Agency staff representatives also serve on a large number of community coalitions, committees, and teams that exist to address the social issues that contribute to family and community vulnerabilities. This is important community development that the Agency is proud to be part of.

Some examples of successful community partnerships include:

Westman Community Mobilization—This broad community coalition has just successfully completed its first full year of operation. One of its primary goals is to improve working relationships between agencies so that by better understanding each others' roles and programs, etc., it becomes easier to connect to each other. This also leads to improved trust between agencies, enhanced communication, and better outcomes for the families we serve.



Building helping relationships within the community and shifting the perception of mandated service providers could also replace fear with hope for these families. The first year has many examples of families at high risk who were approached by members of the coalition. Of those, 87% of the families or individuals were connected to supports. The first year of operation has also demonstrated improved system collaboration and a decrease in response times for high risk families.

Healthy Child Coalitions—The Agency is a partner in three Healthy Child Coalitions in our region. Over the years, several initiatives have been developed through these partnerships to support children and families. One example is the Westaway Bay Family Centre, now in its third year, which grew out of the Brandon group's vision to provide more accessible supports and services to a vulnerable community. Another is the annual Milestones Preschool Wellness event, whose goal is to identify preschool children who may need supports to have success in future learning. Milestones has been running for several years.

Crocus Plains Early Learning Centre

—A partnership between the Brandon School Division, the Prairie Mountain Health Authority and our Agency successfully developed an eight space child care centre for infants of young moms who are still in secondary school. The program is designed to provide enhanced parenting education that focuses on child development, promotes healthy growth and development for the babies, and supports the young moms in completing their high school education.



Service Excellence and Performance Measurement

The Agency seeks to improve the public's confidence in and engagement with the child welfare system by being collaborative, accountable and transparent. These efforts include:

- 1) Using performance measures and reporting on family and youth outcomes.
- 2) Greater use of collaborative practice skills including engagement and participation of family networks, and support systems in child welfare decision-making and safety planning.
- 3) Learning about leading and emerging practices in child welfare through participation in international professional development, and memberships in the Child Welfare League of Canada and Practice and Research Together (PART).
- 4) Sponsoring training initiatives in Westman.
- 5) Having all of the Agency's management team and social workers registered through the Manitoba College of Social Work.



Sexually Exploited Youth—We are working with our local partners and the Province on developing a specialized resource for sexually exploited youth in the Westman area. This is so that there is support locally and youth are not moved to Winnipeg to receive services.

Healthy Workforce—Our Agency employs 45 professional social workers supported by 120 other workers (direct service, residential care, child care, clerical administration, accounting, executive). Their dedication and commitment is an essential dimension to the sustainability of the system. Challenges include recruitment and retention in a sector often criticized in the media, making it a less desirable field to enter or remain in.

The Agency is striving to help change the narrative around child welfare in the media through community presentations and by providing positive stories for the media to report. Child welfare is honourable work—it is important and essential.

Excellence in child welfare depends on a system where the professionals, care providers and volunteers who deliver the services are equipped with the right tools and necessary supports to carry out their roles and responsibilities. This means continually strengthening the capacity of our staff members, Board members, foster parents, volunteers, and programs to fulfill their mandates by providing leading practice training, education and support opportunities, using state of the art information systems with adequate administrative supports, and providing safe working conditions including manageable workloads and clear expectations.

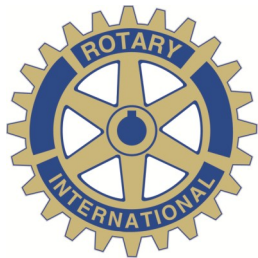
Our Agency's Staff Engagement Committee has continued to offer opportunities for all staff to build connections with each other, and to have a role in shaping the Agency's strategic planning to address emerging needs and challenges.





Service Excellence and Performance Measurement...continued

The Agency appreciates the funding support of the Province of Manitoba for its mandated programs, and the many private donors who make operation of our family strengthening programs possible. We rely on this private fundraising from (but not limited to) our Foundation, the United Way Brandon and District, the Rotary Club of Brandon, the Brandon Area Community Foundation, and the Road Rebels Car Club to help keep these services operating.



Rotary Club
of Brandon



Through this variety of community partnerships, Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba will continue to work hard at preventing children from becoming in need of protection.



financials

Statement of Revenue and Expenses for the year ending March 31, 2016



CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES OF WESTERN MANITOBA

	<u>Revenue</u>	<u>Expense</u>	<u>Surplus/Deficit</u>
Executive Core	1,085,394	1,085,394	0
Central Program	4,952,876	4,893,614	59,262
Other	0	0	0
Designated Intake	1,210,287	1,210,287	0
Resource Centre	352,915	352,915	0
Parent Child Home Program	33,798	33,798	0
Early Learning Canada	16,000	16,000	0
Brandon Early Years	23,122	23,122	0
Prevention	623,836	623,836	0
Residential Care	2,312,476	2,232,842	79,634
Victoria Daycare	537,949	559,238	-21,289
Preschool Enrichment	365,807	365,807	0
Healthy Child Manitoba	82,889	82,889	0
Child Maintenance	4,173,994	4,193,472	-19,478
TOTALS	15,771,343	15,673,214	98,129

*Unaudited
Prepared by Mark Gillis, Comptroller*

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