

125  
YEARS

of STRENGTHENING  
FAMILIES in WESTMAN

2023-24



# A Community Cornerstone



Child and Family Services  
of Western Manitoba

# A MESSAGE FROM US

125 YEARS of STRENGTHENING FAMILIES in WESTMAN

The Agency was founded in 1899 on the belief of protecting children from neglect in the City of Brandon. In the first year of operation, the Agency asked the City of Brandon to write a bylaw to prohibit the sale of tobacco to minors and petitioned legislation to amend the Manitoba School Act to make education compulsory throughout the province for all children. From the start, the Agency became a voice in the city and the province to find ways to protect children and provide a safe and nurturing space.

By the early 1920's the Agency had no funds other than the \$1.00 membership fee collected from each member and appealed to the city for a grant to cover costs of care and transport of children to Winnipeg. When it became apparent that establishing a shelter in the city instead of sending children to institutions in Winnipeg would be cost effective, the Agency worked collaboratively with the Kiwanis Club, Salvation Army and the city to establish Brandon's Children's Shelter in 1921. Since then, we partner and collaborate with many organizations on various projects and fundraising events.

Volunteers have been an integral part of the Agency starting in the 1960's where volunteers were drivers and babysitters for the children while the mothers were in meetings. Today, we have robust volunteer opportunities to work with children and families with a Volunteer Coordinator training and organizing volunteers.

Over the last few decades, a shift in thinking happened where prevention programming became a priority. Forty years ago, we started the Family Resource Centre which grew out of the wish to support families and to offer them an opportunity to relax, chat with other parents and enjoy a little respite from childcare. Today, the Elspeth Reid Family Resource Centre is where the bulk of our prevention work happens with early literacy programs, parenting education and parent and child family activities.

Many generous donations and supporters over the years from families, farmers in the region to businesses and charitable organizations has allowed our Agency to thrive and initiate projects that have been identified by parents and families.

2024 marks the 125th year of our Agency's existence. A lot has changed since 1899 and the beginning of the Children's Aid Society of Brandon. What remains the same is the foundational belief in helping families and keeping children safe. We have greatly expanded our services and have grown in size, programs, and knowledge. The world is much more complex in many ways, as are the issues affecting families. There are alarming rates of poverty, domestic violence, dangerous substance use and mental health crises. At the crux of this are the children, the most vulnerable of all who need safety, nurturance, and stability to grow and thrive.

We continue to embrace adaptability and continual learning to address these needs. We do this by listening to our families, collaterals, and community. We appreciate your interest in our programs and practices and how we are achieving positive outcomes for children and families. You will see from our service trends our significant success in keeping children with their families, reducing the number of children in care, and the length of time they spend in care. This is a testament to the hard work and dedication of our staff as they work diligently with families and their support networks. Unfortunately, most attention to child welfare comes when tragedy strikes. We want to share success stories where we have made a difference. Reducing the stigma of child welfare helps families feel safe to reach out in their times of need and vulnerability.

Child welfare does not work in isolation. We will continue involvement with the extraordinary community collaborations and initiatives aimed at addressing the social issues often thought to be at the root of child maltreatment. As a cornerstone in our community, the Elspeth Reid Family Resource Centre will continue to offer numerous programs that support the needs and efforts of parents to grow their children up safely. Thank-you for being part of a community of caring people.



**Joe Ball**

President, Board of Directors



**Arlene Stewart**

Chief Executive Officer

# TRUTH & RECONCILIATION

Reconciliation is a process and a conscious path. So much is gained by reading history and participating in activities. Even more is gained by listening to those with stories to tell. As a child welfare agency, we have much to reconcile.

Following the principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, we acknowledge and apologize for the harmful practices that separated families and communities and contributed to the ongoing impacts of trauma.

The Act Respecting First Nations, Inuit, Metis Children, Youth and Families required changes to Manitoba's Child and Family Services (CFS) Act. The changes recognized Indigenous Governing Bodies (IGB's) and Indigenous Services Providers (ISP's) under Indigenous Law.



A group of GA agency staff attended the Peguis Sun Dance ceremony in July. The group received teachings at the Sun Lodge Village from Elder Sunman (pictured far right), prior to the ceremony. Clemene Hornbrook, Executive Director of Peguis CFS, is pictured fifth from left.



LEFT: GA group learning to wrap tobacco from Clemene Hornbrook, standing.  
RIGHT: The group shown being "doctored" by the dancers at the Sun Dance ceremony.

## Legislation Changes

Amendments to the CFS Act remove barriers for IGB's and ISP's who want to obtain jurisdiction over child welfare services for their families. This is an ongoing element of the transformation of child welfare to address the over representation of Indigenous children in care.

Legislation changes will support:

- Information sharing between provincial and federal service providers.
- Prioritizing restoring families and maintaining community, culture and language connections.
- Recognizing a wider range of placement options; prioritizing family and Kin.
- Increased focus on prevention, preservation and permanent connections.

## Land Acknowledgement

We at Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba acknowledge and respect the history, land and the people of this area; the traditional homelands of the Dakota, Anishinabek, Oji-Cree, Cree, Dene and Métis peoples.

# DESIGNATED INTAKE SERVICES

**2,098**

Intakes responded to this past year



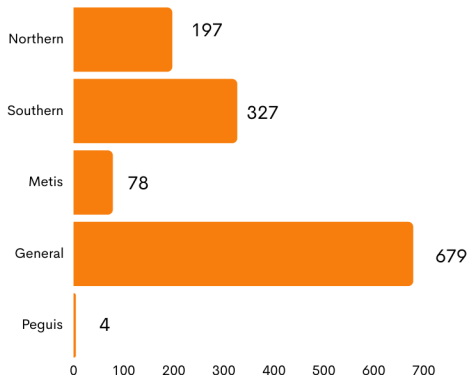
**430**

Transferred for ongoing services

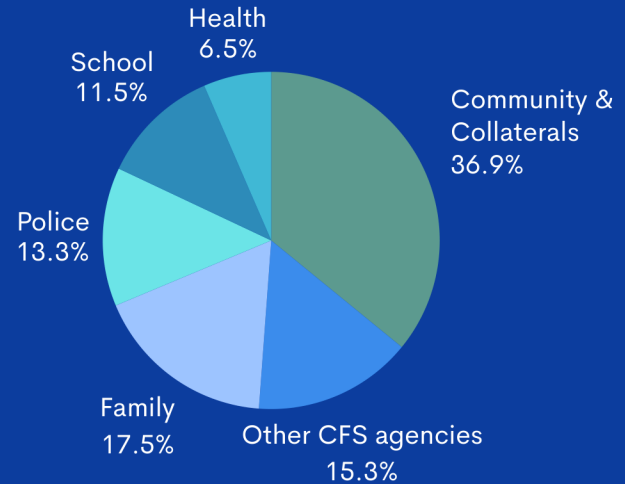
**Intake workers** respond to referrals of child maltreatment, family crisis and requests for support. Each situation is assessed for its needs and what intervention is best suited.

Each family is unique, but many are being impacted by similar issues. Poverty, parenting challenges, mental health, addictions and domestic violence are unfortunately very common themes.

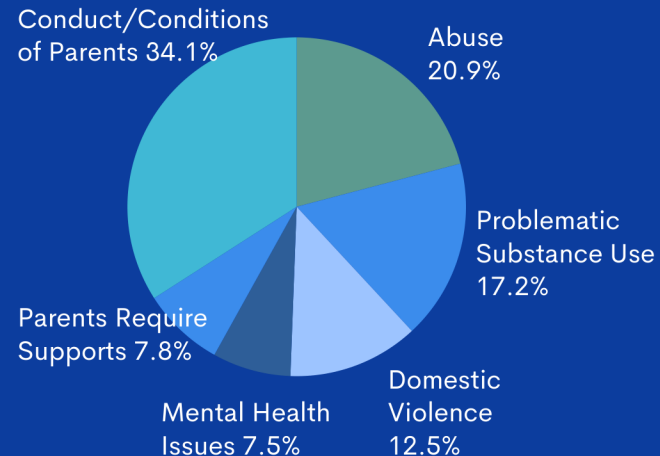
## Designated Intakes Services by Authority



## Intake Referral Sources



## Prominent Issues Present at Intake



# DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

As one of the most prevalent issues affecting families, intervention with **Domestic Violence** is crucial.

## Safe and Together

The Safe and Together framework for child welfare views domestic violence as a parenting choice of the perpetrator. It looks at ways that patterns of coercive control undermine the other parent, contribute to intersecting issues such as mental health and addictions, and create unsafe physical and emotional environments for children. Our newly certified Safe and Together trainer delivered the foundational but intensive 4-day core training to 16 more staff, carrying us further towards our goal of moving beyond a domestic violence informed agency to a domestic violence proficient agency.

## Safe At Home

Safe At Home is a project of the Children's Aid Foundation of Canada to respond to children and families impacted by domestic violence. The project has two components – Mothers in Mind and Caring Dads.

We deliver the Caring Dads program to fathers who have perpetrated violence to partners or children. We are grateful for the support of the Children's Aid Foundation to deliver this critical service.

## Caring Dads

Fathers play a critical role in the safety and development of children. Caring Dads works to enhance safety, show accountability and promote child centered parenting. Fathers learn about the impact of domestic violence on children and respectful non-abusive co-parenting.



Of participants reported feeling more child centred



Trained Caring Dads facilitators since beginning the program

“

“There were other dads going through the same thing. Which helps you feel like you are not alone and have support.”

”

-Caring Dads participant

# COLLABORATION

Child welfare does not work in isolation. We rely on the knowledge and services of others to support child safety and well-being.

94

New cases referred to Child Abuse Committee

The Child Abuse Committee is a multidisciplinary team that reviews reported cases of child maltreatment. The committee monitors abuse investigations and can make recommendations to the provincial Child Abuse Registry.

86

Referrals to Community Mobilization

Community Mobilization is an evidence based and multisector model to address social issues affecting safety, health, crime and community. The multiagency team looks at risk factors as well as protective factors.

500

Families received Services at ERFC

The Elspeth Reid Family Resource Centre is in its 40th year of welcoming families and strengthening their protective factors to respond to children with safe care and nurturance.

## “ Work at our Family Resource Centre

Exhausted and overwhelmed mom calls in tears. She is frustrated with the kids, hasn't slept in forever and feels like no one will help her. She is drowning in guilt and shame because she feels she is failing as a mom. She is sick of being broke, can't keep up with the housework and can't recall the last time she enjoyed the kids. A long conversation begins, and she vents for as long as she needs to. We ask if she is willing to accept our help. She accepts the offer of respite childcare. A small break to give her room to think about next steps. Not long and she is ready to come to programs. She remembers how to play with her children once again. We notice her smiling again and she laughs when the kids do. We keep encouraging her to keep coming back. We talk about developing a support system and coach her through her anxiety of trusting anyone ever again. Over the months she eventually starts to feel her energy coming back. The kids look more cared for. Their behaviours settle and she comes to understand it's because they have a happier mom.

”

# GUIDING PRINCIPLES

These are the four value pillars that guide the Agency's work in providing services for the children and families in the communities that we serve.



## COLLABORATION

Building safe, caring respectful relationships



## CONNECTION

Supporting, strengthening and developing a sense of belonging to community and culture



## ACCOUNTABILITY

Being responsible for our words, our actions and our impact



## INNOVATION

Encouraging diverse ideas and adaptability



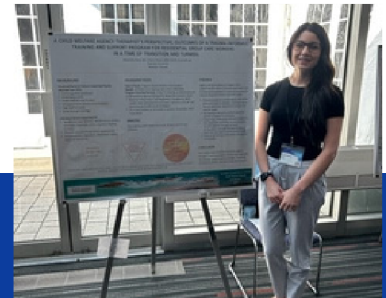
Our Foundation runs the BBQ at the Road Rebels' Cruise Nights raising money for our Elspeth Reid Family Resource Centre.



Our Family Engagement Facilitators at training for Family Network Meetings.



Our AGM every June making us accountable and sharing the work that we do in the communities that we serve.



Our Children's Therapy Worker showcasing her research with U of R on Trauma Informed Training and support program for youth care workers.



# FAMILY SERVICES

Many agency programs work together to address families' needs. **Family Service Workers** work intensively to keep children with their parents. Substance use, mental health, violence, housing instability and poverty continue to rise as the main threats to the children.

When risks are too great and safety can't be assured, we look for children's existing, or possible connections to provide needed support.

## Voluntary Family Services



Of children served are  
in agency care

## Protection Family Services



"WHETHER BY  
ACTION OR  
SPOKEN  
WORD,  
PARENTS  
ARE THE  
IMPLEMENTS  
THAT WRITE  
THE STORY OF  
A CHILD'S  
FUTURE."

– Randi G Fine



# FAMILY SERVICES

## Family Engagement Meetings

Everybody needs somebody. **Support networks** provide needed help to parents and safety nets for children. Network members play a crucial role in completing case plans made together with parents, the agency and network facilitator.

158

Meetings

98

Families

207

Children

## In-Home Support Services

**In home support services** work with parents to improve parenting skills, address areas of worry, and build parents up when things feel overwhelming.

130

Families

Received In-Home support

255

Children

Received In-Home support



71%

Of these families averted children coming into care



**“EVERY CHILD DESERVES A CHAMPION – AN ADULT WHO WILL NEVER GIVE UP ON THEM, WHO UNDERSTANDS THE POWER OF CONNECTION AND INSISTS THAT THEY BECOME THE BEST THEY CAN POSSIBLY BE.”**

– Rita F. Pierson

# CHILDREN IN CARE

Agency workers, networks, resource families, and support services work together to meet the needs of children in agency care. With the dedication of all involved, the number of children living away from family and the length of time away from family, continues to decrease.



52% of children exited care within 1 month or less



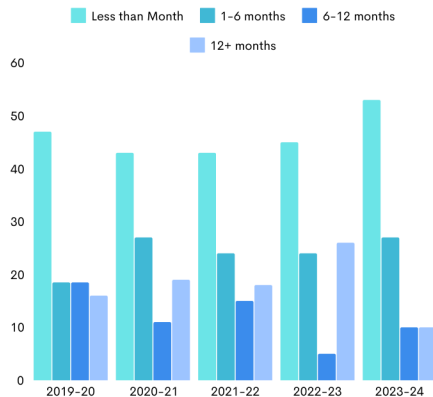
The time children spent in care decreased by 12% from last year



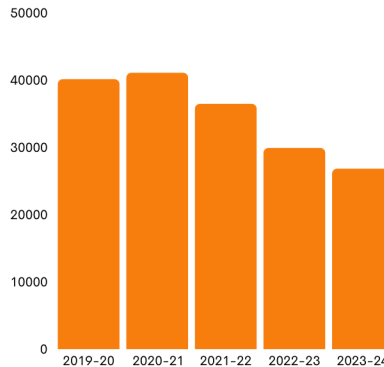
48% of children in care are currently residing in family or network placements

## Service Trends (2019-2024 comparisons)

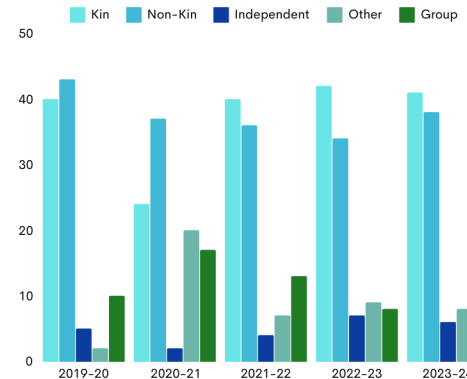
Time in Care



Total Days of Care



Types of Placements



Often our **Resource Parents** stay closely connected to their former placements.

## “ Resource Parents supporting families

This resource foster parent is a constant support to a young mom and her young children. She has provided housing, care for the children and unwavering support, as this mom was facing a crisis. This foster parent is a huge part of mom’s support network.



# CHILDREN IN CARE

As generations of children were separated from families, connections were lost but not forgotten. More and more children and youth in care are re-establishing important family and kin connections.

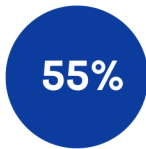


Children in care (CIC) are in family placement

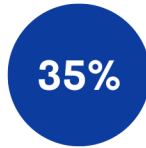


Children left the care of the agency to family guardianship

Of the children who exited Agency care:



Returned to parent care

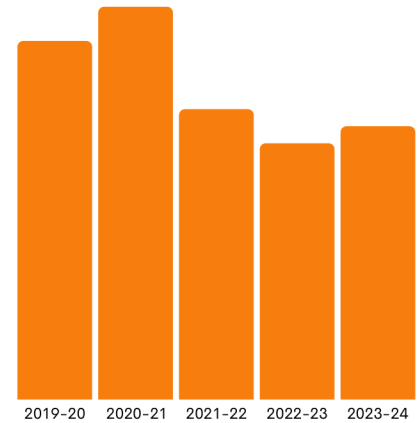


Transferred to another agency



Reached age of majority

Service Trends in Number of CIC



The **Family Finding** framework guides the practice of searching for family and supports that carry children beyond their time in care.

## “ Family Finding in Practice

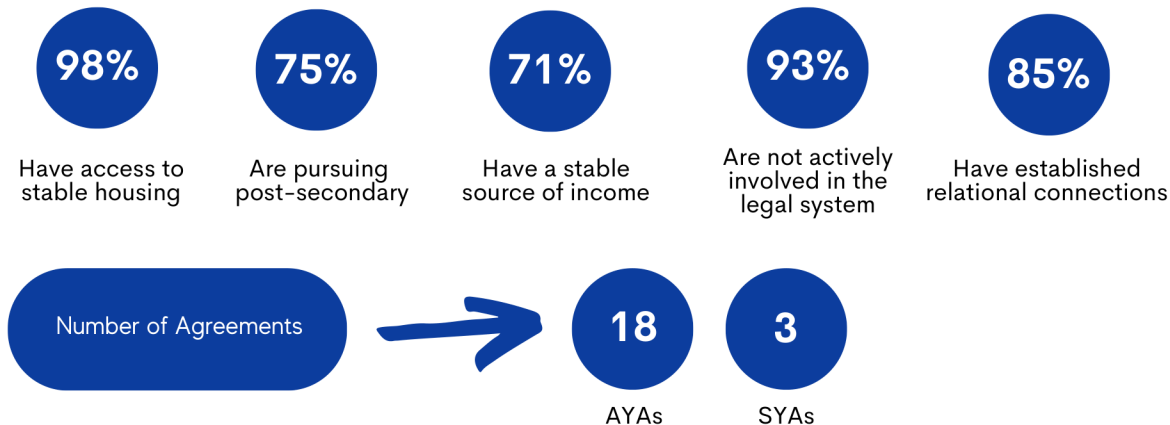
After determining who would hold the family information we were missing for two young children in care, the worker found and approached grandma who had not known her grandchildren had been in care for some time. After explaining we were looking to find more family connections for these siblings, grandma shared her own past struggles and history and was able to help locate family on the paternal side, with many aunts, uncles and cousins.

This was the part of the family tree we had been missing all along. The family then was able to share their hopes for the children and their willingness to work with us to have the children come into their homes and community. They not only wanted to welcome the children, but the children’s mother as well. It was important for them to communicate to the mother they did not want to take her children, only help care for them. As we moved along in the process we were able to arrange a visit for the family, children and birth mother as well as the foster parents who opened their home to the family to allow them more time together and to better understand the children’s needs. We hope to move towards a family placement in the near future and are grateful for this family coming forward and wanting to be a part of these children’s lives.



# AGREEMENTS WITH YOUNG ADULTS

Youth turning 18 do not have to leave care without supports. **Agreements with Young Adults** (AYA) under the Child and Family Services Act and **Supports for Young Adults** (SYA) under the Social Services Administration Act, allow agencies to continue financial, emotional and practical support to help the transition to adulthood and independence.



## “ Supports to Young Adults in practice

A youth born in another country came into the care of the agency without his immigration paperwork. This made obtaining needed identification almost impossible. After reviewing files, contacting family and networks, applying to Immigration, Refugees and Citizen Canada, meeting with Westman Immigration Services, and waiting for months on end for responses as to whether each new document found would suffice in obtaining his permanent resident card, all efforts reached a standstill.

The worker advocated to take this now young adult to the embassy out of province to obtain a passport from his country of origin. Within two months of this successful trip, this young man with the help of his worker was able to acquire his permanent resident card, social insurance number, and Manitoba photo identification. He is now eagerly applying for employment and taking steps towards achieving his independent living goals.”

# STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

For the Year End, March 31, 2024| Unaudited, Prepared by Mark Gillis, Comptroller

## REVENUE

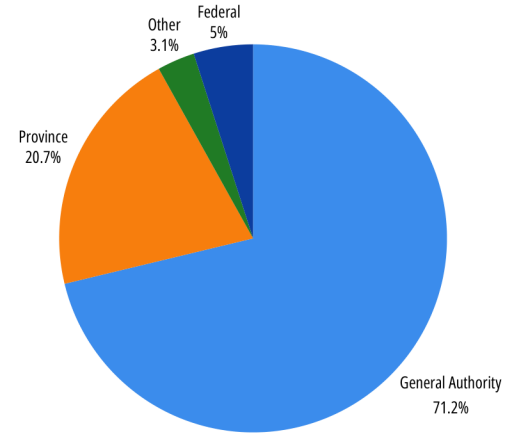
General Authority	10,450,468
Province of Manitoba	3,033,602
Government of Canada	458,443
Other	727,254
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,669,767</b>

## EXPENSE

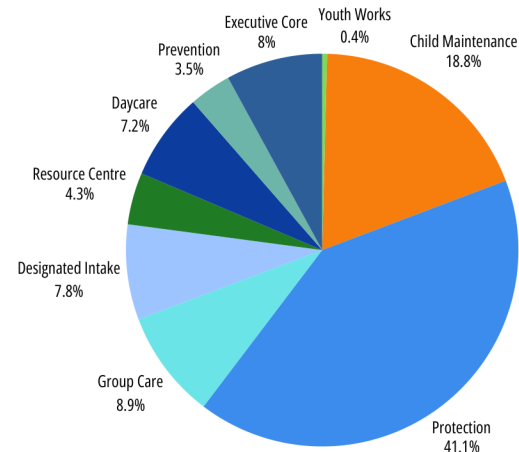
YouthWorks	51,560
Child Maintenance	2,388,000
Protection	5,206,484
Group Care	1,132,383
Designated Intake	993,373
Resource Centre	542,744
Daycare	911,012
Prevention	438,568
Executive Core	1,009,282
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,673,406</b>

<b>Surplus/(Deficit)</b>	<b>1,996,361</b>
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## 2023-24 Funding



## 2023-24 Expenses by Program



# CARING COMMUNITY

Our community supporters are the reason why we can help so many children and their families throughout the year.

## ROAD REBELS CONTUNED SUPPORT



Thank you to the Road Rebels Car Club's continued support of our Elspeth Reid Family Resource Centre. Cruising the Night BBQ and the Trivia Night's proceeds all go to the Drop In Playtime and car rides for the families that we serve.

## ROTARY SUPPORTS US



Thank you to the Rotary Brandon Chapter that hosts the Rotary Wine Festival Gala and the proceeds from this event go to our Family Resource Centre.

## TOY DRIVE DONATION DAY



Thank you to the Canadian Tire Brandon for hosting our first Toy Drive for Change event supporting the families that we serve in providing toys for those who otherwise would not be able to provide a toy for their child during the Holidays.



## SUN FUND GOLF TOURNAMENT



Thank you to the Sun Fund Golf Tournament held in June every year in support of The Sun Fund for Kids Program. It exists to send Westman children to summer camps around the region who come from situations that otherwise would prevent their participation.

# OUR SUPPORTERS

Thank you to all of our wonderful supporters



Our Agency genuinely appreciates the funding support from the General Authority and 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.



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