

BACKGROUND – SASKATCHEWAN CHILDREN AND YOUTH AGENDA

PROGRESS TO DATE

Considerable progress has been made through the **\$34.03 million investment in 2011-12** in the four key cross-government approaches which currently comprise the Saskatchewan Children and Youth Agenda.

Child Welfare Transformation (\$15.33 million) - Government is focusing on three key areas: working differently with First Nations and Métis partners; enhancing preventative supports; and renewing the child welfare system.

- Two historic Letters of Understanding were signed in August 2011 with the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations and the Métis Nation - Saskatchewan.
- Social Services is piloting a risk assessment model in Saskatoon to help front-line staff evaluate level of risk in child protection cases. This can result in a variety of supports being provided to children and families based on the level of risk.
- The addition of 30 new front line child protection workers has improved our capacity and ability to provide services to children and families.
- A new approach to conducting Home Assessments for First Nations children who can be placed as non-wards has been designed. Contracts have been signed with three First Nations Child and Family Service Agencies including Yorkton, Agency Chiefs and Peter Ballantyne. This approach is freeing up front-line child protection workers to focus on case planning and management and is more effective because the First Nations agencies have existing relationships with the communities they serve, making the placement process much more efficient.
- A contract was recently signed with Ranch Ehrlo to provide funding for five treatment foster homes to work with the Ranch to support children with intense needs through the Treatment Foster Care pilot program. To date, two homes have been approved and training and placements have occurred.
- In order to help keep families together and prevent children from coming into care, three new CBOs (601 Outreach in Saskatoon, Society for the Involvement of Good Neighbours in Yorkton and Fox Valley Counseling Services in Regina) have been contracted to provide intensive family supports and after-hours services to families.
- Funding for the Saskatchewan First Nations Family and Community Institute has allowed important new projects to move forward, including examination of custom adoption, co-ordination of training for group home staff and delivery of workshops on the accreditation process.
- The Aboriginal Child Welfare Courtworker pilot program in Regina works with partners in Social Services, Justice, Legal Aid, Courts and the community to provide services to parents appearing before the Courts on child protection matters. Many First Nations families find the Courts intimidating and difficult to navigate. Since 2010, courtworkers in Regina have assisted with court processes in approximately 30% of child apprehension cases.

Eliminating the Education and Employment Gaps for First Nations and Métis Peoples (\$17.1 million) - Government is focusing on both shorter and longer term actions as well as engagement with First Nations and Métis people and organizations. Initiatives for 2011-12 included:

- Establishment of a Joint Task Force Agreement with the FSIN to find practical solutions to ensure that First Nations and Métis peoples can be fully engaged in the Province's prosperity. The Task Force appointments are expected shortly, with the Task Force report to be complete early in 2013.
- Forty new Pre-kindergarten programs have been supported in 23 communities. Thirty-five of the programs began operating in September 2011, with five programs to be established on completion of facility renovations.
- A number of successes have resulted from funding to improve outcomes for First Nations and Métis apprentices:
 - As of June 30, 2011, approximately 13.5% of apprentices were First Nations or Métis. This percentage is higher than the 8.3% of First Nations and Métis people in Saskatchewan's labour force in 2011;
 - As of January 2012, 1,281 First Nations and Métis apprentices were registered for this program, and in 2011-12, 607 First Nations and Métis apprentices will receive technical training; and
 - Between 2007 and 2011, the number of First Nations and Métis apprentices has increased by 24% along with the number of First Nations and Métis Journeyman Certifications, which has doubled from 61 in 2006-07 to 123 in 2010-11.
- The province-wide implementation of a 2010-11 pilot project to develop employment skills for people with low literacy levels has shown great success. Because of this partnership with industry, post-secondary institutions, communities, and First Nations and Métis organizations, approximately 545 students participated in 24 programs in 2011-12.

Comprehensive Services: Supports for Individuals with ASD and FASD, and FASD Prevention (\$1.6 million) - Funding directed towards autism-related Community Supports and Interventions has resulted in:

- The ability to hire additional therapy positions in all health regions. These positions include occupational therapists, speech language therapists, social workers and support workers; and
- Substantial increases in direct client service hours for children and youth, ranging from 100 to 750% across regions. Regional client caseloads have also increased from 10 to 67% across regions. Seven hundred and eighty-seven (787) children and youth received Autism Spectrum Disorder services as of May 15, 2011.

In order to tackle issues related to Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, or FASD, a number of initiatives were undertaken over the past year:

- Workshops and youth-focused prevention campaigns were held across the province to help educate people about FASD;
- The Regina Community Clinic Life Skills and Addictions Program provided programming to 45 adults with FASD.
- Children in the FASD Family Support Program improved their school attendance and none have dropped out. This program works with 26 families in the Saskatoon area. 61.5% of families have Child and Family Services involvement so the program is providing support to families at risk of separation.
- An additional mentor position at CUMFI has allowed them to accept 8 new female clients who have children in their care or are working toward getting their children back.

Building Partnerships to Reduce Crime in Saskatchewan:

- On September 7, 2011, *Building Partnerships to Reduce Crime* was released to government Ministries, police and community stakeholders. The initiative represents a new way for government, police and community to work together to help children, youth and vulnerable people.
- Prince Albert has started its own community mobilization program to reduce crime. Community Mobilization Prince Albert, or CMPA, involves police, Ministry officials from Social Services, Justice and Attorney General, Education, Health, Advanced Education, Employment and Immigration and CPSP, as well as other community partners.
- To date, the CMPA has been tracking and reporting its progress and successes in a number of areas, including crime and violence levels, emergency room admissions, prosecution files, and child and family protective files.
- CMPA reports that their activities have made a contribution to the following statistics reported for Prince Albert between February and October 2011:
 - 14.7% reduction in reported crime;
 - 15.6% reduction in crimes against persons;
 - 10% reduction in emergency room visits;
 - 12% reduction in public prosecutions;
 - 32 families diverted from Ministry of Social Services intake; and
 - 8.9% reduction in police calls for service.