

SUMMARY: FILE REVIEW

Of the Death of a Child Known to the Ministry

A. INTRODUCTION

The Ministry of Children and Family Development (the ministry) conducted a File Review (FR) to examine case practice regarding the subject child (the child) of the FR.

For the purposes of the FR, ministry records and BC Coroners Service documents were reviewed. The FR focused on the period of ministry involvement prior to the death of the child.

B. TERM OF REFERENCE

1. Was the assessment of the child's safety and well-being, particularly in relation to a high-risk issue, consistent with relevant legislation, service standards, and policy?

C. BACKGROUND SUMMARY

The ministry had longstanding involvement with the child's parents regarding concerns related to criminal issues and high risk behaviours. The ministry did not assess these concerns according to policy prior to the birth of the child. After the child was born, the parent and child resided with the child's great grandparent. The parent continued to engage in a high-risk behavior, and the ministry did not monitor the high-risk situation. The child was in the care of the parent when the fatality occurred. The child was Aboriginal.

D. FINDINGS

1. The assessment of the child's safety and well-being was not consistent with relevant legislation, service standards, and policy. The ministry did not offer support to the parent according to policy, and did not use the available tools to assess the safety and well-being of the child. The ministry did not collaborate with service providers or establish a plan to support the parent prior to the fatality.

E. ACTIONS TAKEN TO DATE

1. All staff in the involved office have reviewed the applicable policy, specifically pertaining to the high risk issue.

2. A new process was initiated for the team to follow regarding high-risk incidents and service requests.
3. The team leader has completed Clinical Supervision training.
4. Social workers have been hired specifically to assist in covering caseloads that are temporarily not covered.
5. Ongoing work is occurring to strengthen ties with a community agency.

F. ACTION PLAN

1. The ministry implements a practice protocol with a community agency for providing services in a specific high risk circumstance.

The review was completed in March 2017. The above action plan is due for full implementation in December 2017.