

SUMMARY: FILE REVIEW

Of the Critical Injury of Children known to the Director

A. INTRODUCTION

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

For the purpose of the FR, Delegated Aboriginal Agency (the agency) records and ministry records were reviewed. The FR focused on the period of ministry involvement prior to the critical injury of the children.

B. TERM OF REFERENCE

Was the assessment of, and planning for, the children's safety and well-being consistent with relevant legislation, policy and standards; in particular, did the assessment and planning consider/address how the parent's special needs affected their ability to parent?

C. BACKGROUND SUMMARY

There was a longstanding history of child welfare concerns both in British Columbia and in another province relating to capacity and criminal behaviours of the children's parent. Child welfare services were provided throughout most of the life of the children. While in the other province, the parent engaged in services and addressed the concerns. Once the parent relocated to British Columbia, the parent minimally engaged in services, and was resistant to agency involvement. The children are Indigenous.

D. FINDINGS

The assessment and planning for the children's safety and well-being was not fully consistent with relevant legislation and policy. During the period under review, the agency received three reports concerning the parent's parenting capacity, and the response was to provide support services; this did not address the concerns for the children's safety and well-being, and the parent only briefly accessed the agreed upon services. The parent's band was not provided with the opportunity to support the family.

Assessment and planning did not adequately consider the parent's past assessment about a specific issue or address the impact the parent's specific special needs had on their parenting capacity. This resulted in service plans that were not sufficient to reconcile the concerns for the children's safety and well-being.

Prior to the agency ending their last involvement with the family, a new report about a specific issue was received by the ministry. The family's history did not appear to be accounted for when the decision was made that the report was not a protection concern. Had the agency been made aware of this report, further contact with the children could have been considered to reassess their safety and well-being prior to ending the agency's involvement.

Neither of the assessments of the children's vulnerability correctly concluded the vulnerability level of the children as the more accurate rating of "high"; subsequently, the agency ended their involvements without adequately addressing the concerns present for the children. Consultation was sought prior to ending the agency's involvement; however, direction to complete further activities prior to case closure was not followed. This resulted in no service provision during the last six months of agency involvement.

E. ACTIONS TAKEN TO DATE

1. The child protection and family service teams participated in training on a specific assessment tool and approach.

F. ACTION PLAN

1. The child protection and family services teams are informed that when a new report or file is received it is their responsibility to review information, conduct a current child safety assessment, and monitor the child's safety and well-being.
2. The guidelines that govern the closure of files, which include observing the child in their home before closing a file, are reviewed with the child protection and family service teams.
3. The child protection team and family service team are provided more in-depth training on a specific assessment tool and approach.

The review was completed in April 2018. The above action plan is due for full implementation in June 2018.