

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 youth (the youth) of the FR. The purpose of the FR was to analyze practice in relation to legislation, policies and standards; promote excellence in assessment and planning; and identify barriers to providing adequate services.

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 youth.

B. TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Was the Ministry's assessment of risk to the youth consistent with relevant legislation, policy, and service standards?
2. Was an appropriate service plan developed, implemented and monitored to address the safety needs of the youth?

C. BACKGROUND SUMMARY

The Ministry had involvement with the youth's family over a one year period. One parent had high risk issues that impacted their ability to function in their parental role. The youth had high risk issues and was resistant to services provided by the Ministry and a Ministry Program to resolve child protection issues. The youth had special needs, and was in care for a brief period of time before returning to the custodial parent's care. The youth was Aboriginal.

D. FINDINGS

1. The Ministry's assessment of risk was not consistent with relevant legislation, policy and service standards. The Ministry was aware of the family's situation and offered support services to the youth rather than addressing child safety concerns through protective responses and mandatory services.
2. An appropriate service plan was not developed, implemented and monitored to address the safety needs of the youth. Service planning provided to the youth and the family was not adequate to address the youth's high risk issues. Assessment and planning tools, required by policy, were not utilized to inform critical decisions, assessments and service plans.

E. ACTIONS TAKEN TO DATE

N/A

F. ACTION PLAN

1. *The Child Safety and Family Support Policies: Chapter 3: Child Protection Response Standard 3.1(11): Determining the Most Appropriate Response* is reviewed with involved Ministry staff to ensure there is clarity about how this standard guides practice.
2. Training is provided to those who work with high risk and disengaged youth to include: *Practice Guidelines for Using Structured Decision Making Tools* and *Practice Directive: Clinical Consultation and Support in Complex High Risk Child Protection Cases* to reinforce the importance of supervisory consultations.
3. *Practice Directive: Case Transfer & Joint Case Management* is reviewed with involved Ministry staff to ensure there is clarity about applying this directive.
4. *Practice Guidelines for Using Structured Decision Making Tools* is reviewed with involved Ministry staff to ensure clarity about completing a Reunification Assessment to ensure risks to the youth being placed in care have been addressed.