

SUMMARY: FILE REVIEW

Of a Critical Injury of a Child Known to the Ministry

A. INTRODUCTION

The Ministry of Children and Family Development (the Ministry) conducted the File Review (FR) to examine case practice regarding the subject child (the child) of the FR. The purpose of the FR was to: examine and analyze the case practice in relation to legislation, policy, and standards; promote excellence in case practice; and identify barriers to providing adequate services.

For the purposes of the FR, Ministry records were reviewed. The FR focused on the period of Ministry involvement prior to the critical injury of the child.

B. TERM OF REFERENCE

1. Prior to the child's reunification with the child's parents, was collaboration and planning between child protection social workers and the Aboriginal community sufficient to meet the safety and cultural needs of the child?

C. BACKGROUND SUMMARY

The Ministry had longstanding involvement with one of the child's parents during a previous relationship and no previous history with the child's other parent. The child's parents had high risk and criminal behaviours that impacted their ability to function in their parental roles. The parents received and were engaged in Ministry services to improve their capacity to provide safe care to their child. The child was in foster care briefly while the parents addressed the child protection concerns, and subsequently returned to the parents' care. The child was Aboriginal and not in care at the time of the critical injury.

D. FINDINGS

1. Prior to the child's reunification with the parents, there were elements of planning and collaboration between child protection social workers and the Aboriginal community. However, the required Structured Decision Making (SDM) tools for the provision of ongoing protective services were not used in accordance with policy and

Best Practices Approaches to assess the safety needs of the child, to inform case decisions, or to inform a service plan. There were ongoing concerns about the high risk behaviour of the child's parents prior to and following the child's reunification with the parents. The concerns were not documented as new child protection reports in the system or responded to as new incidents as required by policy. Not completing assessments and planning according to policy could have contributed to the child returning to and remaining in an unsafe situation.

E. ACTIONS TAKEN TO DATE

1. Section 13, "When protection is needed", of the *Child, Family and Community Service Act (CFCSA)* has been amended.
2. The Best Practices policy document has been revised to include the *CFCSA* amendment.
3. Team Leaders and staff received training regarding the particular practice issue.
4. Team Leaders and staff received training regarding the revisions to the *Chapter 3: Child Protection Response* (Chapter 3) policies and standards. Community Service Managers and Executive Directors received an orientation session regarding the Chapter 3 policies.

F. ACTION PLAN

1. The Executive Director of Service shares the report with Community Service Managers and Team Leaders and reinforces the need to consider:
 - The impact of being in an Aboriginal community when assessing the safety and well-being of children and youth; and,
 - The necessity of documenting concerns, consultations, assessments, and service plans.