



Okanagan Service Delivery Area

Adoption Practice Audit

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Office of the Provincial Director of Child Welfare and Aboriginal Services

Quality Assurance Branch

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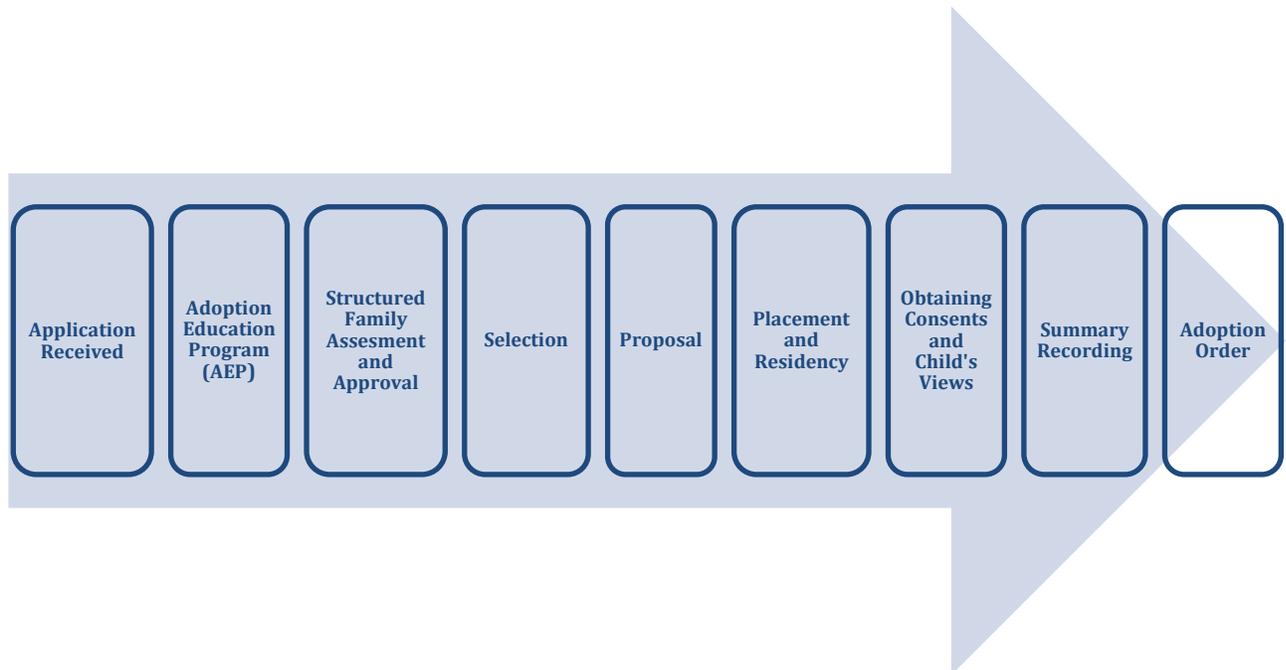
INTRODUCTION

This section of the report provides information about the purpose and methodology of the Adoption practice audit that was conducted in the Okanagan Service Delivery Area (SDA) in December 2016 through to April 2017.

1. PURPOSE

Practice audits are conducted regularly by the Provincial Director of Child Welfare (PDCW) across the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) service lines and for those services provided by Delegated Aboriginal Agencies (DAAs) under the Child, Family and Community Service Act (CFCSA). Practice audits are grounded in the Quality Assurance Standards (revised June 28, 2004) and Quality Assurance Audit Policy (effective June 1, 2016). These quality assurance audits examine compliance with legislation, policy, and operational standards, while providing a systematic approach to the evaluation and improvement of services. Practice audits also provide effective quality assurance oversight and public accountability, which in turn informs continuous improvements in practice, policy, and service delivery. Another intended outcome for practice audits is that children, youth, and families will receive quality, culturally safe, and restorative services and programs.

The Adoption Home (AH) practice audit is designed to assess achievement of key components of the Practice Standards and Guidelines for Adoption (MCFD, 2001). These standards and guidelines were implemented in April of 2001 and outline both standards for practice and procedural guidelines for the duties and functions of delegated adoption social workers under the *Adoption Act (RSBC 1996)*. See Appendix 1 for a complete listing of the specific Adoption Practice Standards that were assessed by this audit.



2. METHODOLOGY

Two groups of Adoption Home (AH) file records were selected from data extracted from the Ministry's Management Information System (MIS) on June 30, 2016:

- **Open AH records** with a file start date after Dec 31, 2010, that were still open on March 31, 2016
- 1. **Closed AH records** with a file start date after Dec 31, 2010 and a file stop date between April 1, 2015 and June 30, 2016

The audit is based on a review of AH records for adoption homes using a census sampling technique, wherein all file records that met the selection criteria were drawn and included in the audit. The only exception was with the relatively small number of AH records with out of country, inter-provincial, and territorial involvement, and where the prospective adoptive parent(s) reside outside of British Columbia (BC). These records were removed from the sample because the key Standards and Guidelines for Adoption (MCFD, 2001) in the audit apply only to prospective adoptive parent(s) who reside in BC and apply for adoption of a child in care residing in BC or a child who is under the guardianship of another province, territory or country. When the application is from prospective adoptive parents residing outside of BC an adoption worker from that other jurisdiction assumes responsibility for guiding the adoption process. The procedures for the adoption of children in care outside their guardian province are set out in the Provincial/Territorial Protocol on Children and Families Moving Between Provinces (June 21, 2011) and the Provincial/Territorial Protocol on Children, Youth and Families Moving Between Provinces and Territories (April 1, 2016).

The audit sampling method and MIS data extracts were developed and produced with the support of the Modelling, Analysis and Information Management (MAIM) Branch.

The total number of AH records in the census sample for the Okanagan SDA was 159. 50 of these AH records had been closed during the past 15 months (i.e., between April 1, 2015 & June 30, 2016), while 109 remained open as of March 31, 2016 when they were selected for auditing. There were 10 AH records removed from the audit because the prospective adoptive parent(s) reside outside of BC.

Physical file records as well as electronic records in the Management Information System (MIS), the Integrated Case Management (ICM) system and the Adoption Management System (AMS) were reviewed.

The selected records were assigned to a practice analyst on the provincial audit team for review. The analyst used the AH Practice Audit Tool to rate the records. The AH Practice Audit Tool contains 14 Adoption Critical Measures (ACM) designed to assess compliance with key components of the Adoption Standards using a scale with achieved and not achieved as rating options for measures ACM 1 and 2. A scale with achieved, not achieved, and not applicable as rating options is used for measures ACM 3 through ACM 14. The analyst entered the ratings in a SharePoint data collection form that included ancillary questions and text boxes, which were used to enter additional information about the factors taken into consideration in applying the critical measures.

In reviewing selected AH records, the analysts considered the entire practice that occurred during the life of the AH file leading up to the time when the audit was conducted (December 2016 through to April 2017).

Quality assurance policy and procedures require that practice analysts identify for action any record that suggests a child may need protection under section 13 of the *Child, Family and Community Service Act*. During this audit, the practice analyst watched for situations in which the information in the records suggested that a child may have been left in need of protection. When identified, these records were brought to the attention of the appropriate team leader (TL) and community services manager (CSM), as well as the executive director of service (EDS), for follow up, as appropriate.

3. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The findings are presented in tables that contain counts and percentages of ratings of achieved and not achieved for all of the measures in the audit tool (ACM 1 to ACM 14). The tables contain findings for measures that correspond with specific components of the Practice Standards and Guidelines for Adoption. Each table is followed by an analysis of the findings for each of the measures presented in the table.

159 Adoption Home (AH) file records were selected for this audit of the Okanagan SDA. However, not every measure in the audit tool was applicable to all of the AH records audited. This is necessary as not all applications by prospective adoptive parents result in the placement of a child for adoption and the granting of an Adoption Order by the court. Additionally, approximately two-thirds of the AH files audited remained open at the time of auditing and therefore by definition were still at some preliminary or penultimate stage of the adoption process.

The tables shown below present both the number of “not applicable” and the number of “applicable” records for each of the critical measures. The numbers and percentages for records rated “achieved” versus “not achieved” in each table are derived from the number of applicable records for that critical measure.

3.1 Planning with Prospective Adoptive Parents

Table 1 provides compliance rates for measures ACM 1 through ACM 5, which relate to planning with prospective adoptive parents. These measures correspond with Adoption Practice Standard 43 - Providing Adoption Information and Accepting the Application to Adopt (ACM 1 & 2), Adoption Practice Standard 44 - The Home Study Process: The Adoption Education and Structured Family Assessment (SFA) Components (ACM 3 & 4), and Adoption Practice Standard 47 - Keeping the Written Family Assessment Current (ACM 5). See Appendix 1 for details. The rates in the table are presented as percentages of all records for which the measures were applicable.

Table 1: Planning with Prospective Adoptive Parents (N= 159)

Measure	# of Not Applicable Records	# of Applicable Records	# Rated Achieved	% Rated Achieved	# Rated Not Achieved	% Rated Not Achieved
ACM 1: Providing Adoption Information	0	159	30	19%	129	81%
ACM 2: Accepting the Application to Adopt	0	159	21	13%	138	87%
ACM 3: Completing the Adoption Education Program (AEP) Component of the Home Study Process	32	127	81	64%	46	36%
ACM 4: Completing the Structured Family Assessment Component of the Home Study Process	63	96	54	56%	42	44%
ACM 5: Keeping the Written Family Assessment Current	132	27	9	33%	18	67%

ACM 1: Providing Adoption Information

The compliance rate for this critical measure was **19%**. The measure was applied to all 159 records in the sample; 30 of the 159 records were rated achieved and 129 were rated not achieved. To receive a rating of achieved, the record contains documentation confirming the adoption worker responded to the prospective adoptive parent(s) within 7 working days and provided the prospective adoptive parent(s) with all of the information listed in Standard 43.

Of the 129 records rated not achieved, 104 did not have documentation that any of the information listed in Standard 43 was provided to the prospective adoptive parent(s), 18 did not have documentation that the information provided to the prospective adoptive parent(s) met all of the requirements listed in Standard 43, and 7 did not have documentation that the required information was provided within 7 working days. Of the 7 records that did not have documentation that the required information was provided within 7 working days, the average time it took was 16 days.

ACM 2: Accepting the Application to Adopt

The compliance rate for this critical measure was **13%**. The measure was applied to all 159 records in the sample; 21 of the 159 records were rated achieved and 138 were rated not achieved. To receive a rating of achieved, the record contains documentation confirming the adoption worker provided the prospective adoptive parent(s) with the forms and information required for the SFA component of the home study process within 10 working days of receiving the application, and then interviewed each applicant in person to determine eligibility and other relevant factors.

Of the 138 records rated not achieved, 50 did not provide the prospective adoptive parent(s) with the required forms and information for the SFA component within 10 working days of receiving the application, 12 did contain documentation confirming the prospective adoptive parent(s) were interviewed in person, and 76 did not provide the prospective adoptive parent(s) with the required forms and information for the (SFA) component within 10 working days of receiving the application, nor did they contain documentation confirming the prospective adoptive parent(s) were interviewed in person. Of the 76 records that did not provide the prospective adoptive parent(s) with the required forms and information for the (SFA) component within 10 working days, 36 did not record the dates the required forms were provided and, therefore, the average time it took was unknown and the remaining 40 did record the dates required forms were provided and the average time it took was 162 days.

ACM 3: Completing the Adoption Education Program (AEP) Component of the Home Study Process

The compliance rate for this critical measure was **64%**. The measure was applied to 127 of the 159 records in the sample; 81 of the 127 records were rated achieved and 46 were rated not achieved. To receive a rating of achieved, the record contains documentation confirming the prospective adoptive parent(s) completed the ministry-approved adoption education program (AEP) prior to the home study being completed and a certificate of completion is in the file, or in the case of a second adoption, the previous AEP was reviewed and any training deficiencies identified for the proposed adoptive parent(s) were upgraded.

Of the 46 records rated not achieved, 1 did not have documentation that the prospective adoptive parents completed the AEP component prior to the completion of home study, 33 did not contain a

certificate of AEP completion and 12 did not, in the case of a second adoption, review the previous AEP for training deficiencies and the proposed adoptive parent(s) did not receive upgrading.

This critical measure was not applied to 32 records in the sample. The reasons for being not applicable on this measure included: 11 had the AEP component still in progress, 14 had the application to adopt withdrawn before the AEP component was completed, 7 had the application to adopt terminated by MCFD before the AEP component was completed.

ACM 4: Completing the Structured Family Assessment Component of the Home Study Process

The compliance rate for this critical measure was **56%**. The measure was applied to 96 of the 159 records in the sample; 54 of these 96 records were rated achieved and 42 were rated not achieved. To receive a rating of achieved, the record contains an SFA covering all of the required components and it was completed within the 4-month timeframe, or supervisory approval for an extension to the timeframe and the reasons for the extension are documented in the record.

Of the 42 records rated not achieved, 4 did not contain an SFA, 5 did not have an SFA that covered all of the required components, 31 did not have an SFA completed within the 4-month timeframe and there is no documentation of supervisory approval and reasons for the extension to the timeframe, and 2 were in abeyance for more than 2 years and a new SFA was not completed. Of the 31 records that did not have the SFA completed within the 4-month timeframe the average time it took was 9 months.

This critical measure was not applied to 63 records in the sample. The reasons for being not applicable on this measure included: 13 had not started the SFA because the AEP had not yet been completed, 21 had the SFA still in progress, 19 had the application to adopt withdrawn before the SFA was completed, and 10 had the application to adopt terminated by MCFD before the SFA was completed.

ACM 5: Keeping the Written Family Assessment Current

The compliance rate for this critical measure was **33%**. This measure was only applicable to records where the initial SFA had been completed and approved for more than a year and the prospective adoptive parents were still waiting the placement of a child. The measure was applied to 27 of the 159 records in the sample; 9 of the 27 records were rated achieved and 18 were rated not achieved. To receive a rating of achieved, the record contains the required annual updates attached to the SFA and includes the required information and supervisory approvals.

All of the 18 records rated not achieved did not have annual updates to the SFA documented in the record.

This critical measure was not applied to 132 records in the sample. The reasons for being not applicable on this measure included: 35 did not have a SFA that was completed in its entirety and approved by the supervisor, 2 were in abeyance for less than 2 years, 18 had an SFA completed within the last year, 42 had an adoption occur within a year of the SFA being completed and approved by the supervisor, 23 had the application to adopt withdrawn before the SFA needed to be updated, and 12 had the application to adopt terminated by MCFD before the SFA needed to be updated.

3.2 Adoption Planning for the Child and with Birth Parents

Table 2 provides compliance rates for measures ACM 6 through ACM 10. These measures correspond with Adoption Practice Standard 26 - Selecting Prospective Parent(s) for a Child in Continuing Custody (ACM 6), Adoption Practice Standard 27 - Proposing the Adoption Placement of a Child to Prospective Adoptive Parent(s) (ACM 7), Adoption Practice Standard 50 - The Adoption Proposal and Preparing for Placement (ACM 8 & 9), and Adoption Practice Standard 37 - Transferring Care and Custody with a Birth Parent Pre-Placement Agreement (ACM 10). See Appendix 1 for details. The rates in the table are presented as percentages of all records for which the measures were applicable.

Table 2: Adoption Planning for the Child and with Birth Parents (N= 159)

Measure	# of Not Applicable Records	# of Applicable Records	# Rated Achieved	% Rated Achieved	# Rated Not Achieved	% Rated Not Achieved
ACM 6: Selecting Prospective Parent(s) for a Child in Continuing Custody	87	72	15	21%	57	79%
ACM 7: Proposing the Adoption Placement of a Child to Prospective Adoptive Parent(s)	89	70	34	49%	36	51%
ACM 8: The Adoption Proposal and Preparing for Placement	90	69	65	94%	4	6%
ACM 9: The Timing of the Adoption Placement	92	67	62	93%	5	7%
ACM 10: Transferring Care and Custody with a Birth Parent Pre-Placement Agreement (Voluntary Relinquishments only)	158	1	0	0%	1	100%

ACM 6: Selecting Prospective Parent(s) for a Child in Continuing Custody

The compliance rate for this critical measure was **21%**. The measure was applied to 72 of the 159 records in the sample; 15 of the 73 records were rated achieved and 57 were rated not achieved. To receive a rating of achieved, the record contains documentation confirming the child’s social worker reviewed the SFA and conducted a selection process involving at least the social worker’s supervisor and one other person involved in the child’s life (including but not limited to the foster parent, the guardianship worker, the adoption worker or a supervisor).

Of the 57 records rated not achieved, 27 did not have documentation that confirmed the child’s worker reviewed the SFA, 6 did not have a selection process that involved at least 2 others and 24 records did not have documentation that confirms the child’s worker reviewed the SFA nor was there a selection process that followed the required processes and involved at least 2 others.

This critical measure was not applied to 87 records in the sample. The reasons for being not applicable on this measure included: 46 had not yet selected a child for prospective adoptive parent(s), 1 selected a child that was under a voluntary relinquishment for the prospective adoptive parent(s), 27 had the application to adopt withdrawn before a child was selected for prospective

adoptive parent(s), and 13 had the application to adopt terminated by MCFD before a child was selected for prospective adoptive parent(s).

ACM 7: Proposing the Adoption Placement of a Child to Prospective Adoptive Parent(s)

The compliance rate for this critical measure was **49%**. The measure was applied to 70 of the 159 records in the sample; 34 of the 70 records were rated achieved and 36 were rated not achieved. To receive a rating of achieved, the record contains documentation confirming the child’s social worker has completed all of the requirements outlined in the standard prior to the child being proposed to the prospective adoptive parent(s).

Of the 36 records rated not achieved, 31 did not have documentation that all the requirements outlined in the standard were completed prior the child being proposed to the prospective adoptive parent(s), and 5 had all the requirements completed, but only after the child was proposed to the prospective adoptive parent(s).

This critical measure was not applied to 89 records in the sample. The reasons for being not applicable on this measure included: 49 had not yet proposed a child to prospective adoptive parent(s), 27 had the application to adopt withdrawn before a child was proposed to prospective adoptive parent(s), and 13 had the application to adopt terminated by MCFD before a child was proposed to prospective adoptive parent(s).

ACM 8: The Adoption Proposal and Preparing for Placement

The compliance rate for this critical measure was **94%**. The measure was applied to 69 of the 159 records in the sample; 65 of the 69 records were rated achieved and 4 were rated not achieved. To receive a rating of achieved, the record contains documentation confirming the required information was shared with the prospective adoptive parent(s), and a letter of acknowledgement was signed by the prospective adoptive parent(s).

Of the 4 records rated not achieved, 1 did not share the required information with the prospective adoptive parent(s), and 3 did not contain a letter of acknowledgement signed by the prospective adoptive parent(s).

This critical measure was not applied to 90 records in the sample. The reasons for being not applicable on this measure included: 49 had not yet proposed a child to prospective adoptive parent(s), 1 had proposed a child, but the prospective adoptive parent(s) have never signed a letter of acknowledgement, 27 had the application to adopt withdrawn before a child was proposed to prospective adoptive parent(s), and 13 had the application to adopt terminated by MCFD before a child was proposed to prospective adoptive parent(s).

ACM 9: The Timing of the Adoption Placement

The compliance rate for this critical measure was **93%**. The measure was applied to 67 of the 159 records in the sample; 62 of the 67 records were rated achieved and 5 were rated not achieved. To receive a rating of achieved, the record contains documentation confirming the adoption placement of a child with the prospective adoptive parent(s) occurred within 6 months of signing the letter of acknowledgement, or if the adoption placement occurred more than 6 months after signing the

acknowledgement letter, the reasons for the extension and supervisory approval of the extension are documented in the record.

All 5 of the records rated not achieved did not have a child placed with the prospective adoptive(s) within 6 months of signing the letter of acknowledgement and the average time it took was 10 months.

This critical measure was not applied to 92 records in the sample. The reasons for being not applicable on this measure included: 49 had not yet proposed the placement of a child to prospective adoptive parent(s), 2 had proposed a child, but the prospective adoptive parent(s) had never signed a letter of acknowledgement, 1 had proposed a child and a letter of acknowledgement was signed by the prospective adoptive parent(s), but the placement of the child occurred beyond the timeframe of the audit (June 30, 2016), 27 had the application to adopt withdrawn prior to the placement of a child, 13 had the application to adopt terminated by MCFD prior to the placement of a child.

ACM 10: Transferring Care and Custody with a Birth Parent Pre-Placement Agreement

The compliance rate for this critical measure was **0%**. This critical measure is specific to situations where the birth parent(s) was voluntarily relinquishing the child for adoption under the Adoption Act. The measure was applied to 1 of the 159 records in the sample; this 1 record was rated not achieved. To receive a rating of achieved, the record contains documentation confirming the child's best interests were reviewed, a Birth Parent Pre-placement Agreement was completed and signed, and the supervisor approved the agreement.

The 1 record rated not achieved did not indicate a birth parent pre-placement agreement was completed and signed with supervisor approval.

This critical measure was not applied to 158 records in the sample. The reasons for being not applicable on this measure included: 49 had not yet proposed the placement of a child to prospective adoptive parent(s), 2 had proposed a child, but the prospective adoptive parent(s) had never signed a letter of acknowledgement, 67 had proposed a child who is under a continuing custody order (CCO), 27 had the application to adopt withdrawn prior to the placement of a child, and 13 had the application to adopt terminated by MCFD prior to the placement of a child.

3.3 Consents, Post-Placement Services, and Adoption Completion

Table 3 provides compliance rates for measures ACM 11 through ACM 14. These measures correspond with Adoption Practice Standard 39 - Required Consents (ACM 11), Adoption Practice Standard 57 - Post-Placement Responsibilities of the Adoption Worker to the Child and the Adoptive Parent(s) (ACM 12), Adoption Practice Standard 60 - Preparing the Report on a Younger Child's Views (ACM 13), and Adoption Standard 61 - Preparing the Summary Recording (ACM 14). See Appendix 1 for details. The rates are presented in the table as percentages of all records for which the measures were applicable.

Table 3: Consents, Post-Placement Services, and Adoption Completion (N= 159)

Measure	# of Not Applicable Records	# of Applicable Records	# Rated Achieved	% Rated Achieved	# Rated Not Achieved	% Rated Not Achieved
ACM 11: Obtaining Required Consents	94	65	62	95%	3	5%
ACM 12: Post-Placement Responsibilities of the Adoption Worker	119	40	3	8%	37	93%
ACM 13: Preparing the Report on a Younger Child's Views	150	9	4	44%	5	56%
ACM 14: Preparing the Summary Recording	123	36	27	75%	9	25%

ACM 11: Obtaining Required Consents

The compliance rate for this critical measure was **95%**. The measure was applied to 65 of the 159 records in the sample; 62 of the 65 records were rated achieved and 3 were rated not achieved. To receive a rating of achieved, the record contains documentation confirming that all required consents for a child under a CCO or a voluntary relinquishment have been obtained prior to placement, or there is documentation the adoption worker has properly dispensed with obtaining consents.

All 3 of the records rated not achieved did not contain documentation that all the required consents were obtained prior to placement nor was there documentation that the adoption worker properly dispensed with obtaining consents.

This critical measure was not applied to 94 records in the sample. The reasons for being not applicable on this measure included: 49 had not yet proposed a child to prospective adoptive parent(s) or the proposed child was not accepted by the prospective adoptive parent(s), 5 had proposed a child to the prospective adoptive parents, but the child had not yet been placed or the consents had not yet been obtained, 27 had the application to adopt withdrawn prior to the placement of a child and, 13 had the application to adopt terminated by MCFD prior to the placement of a child.

ACM 12: Post-Placement Responsibilities of the Adoption Worker

The compliance rate for this critical measure was **8%**. The measure was applied to 40 of the 159 records in the sample; 3 of the 40 records were rated achieved and 37 were rated not achieved. To receive a rating of achieved, the record contains documentation confirming the adoption worker contacted the adoptive family within 1 working day after the adoption placement, visited the adoptive family home within 7 days after the adoption placement, and conducted at least 2 subsequent home visits during the placement period, and all of these visits met the requirements set out in the standard (i.e., assisting the adoptive family in meeting the child's specific needs as described in the plan of care, and consulting with the child about his or her views of the adoption placement).

Of the 37 records rated not achieved, 17 did not have documentation confirming the adoption worker visited the child within the required timeframes after placement and 20 had 1 or more of the visits with the child that did not meet the requirements set out in the standard.

This critical measure was not applied to 119 records in the sample. The reasons for being not applicable on this measure included: 49 had not yet proposed the placement of a child to prospective adoptive parent(s), 7 had proposed a child to the prospective adoptive parents, but the child had not yet been placed, 23 had a child in a 6-month placement (or residency) period that had not concluded, 27 had the application to adopt withdrawn prior to the placement of a child, and 13 had the application to adopt terminated by MCFD prior to the placement of a child.

ACM 13: Preparing the Report on a Younger Child’s Views

The compliance rate for this critical measure was **44%**. The measure was applied to 9 of the 159 records in the sample; 4 of the 9 records were rated achieved and 5 were rated not achieved. To receive a rating of achieved, the record contains documentation confirming the adoption worker met with the child in private and gathered the required information, completed a full report on the younger child’s views, and the report was approved by the supervisor.

Of the 5 records rated not achieved, 2 did not have documentation confirming the adoption worker met with the child in private and gathered the required information, 2 did not have a full report completed on the younger child’s views, and 1 did not confirm the adoption worker met with the child in private and gathered the required information and did not have a full report completed on the younger child’s views.

This critical measure was not applied to 150 records in the sample. The reasons for being not applicable on this measure included: 49 had not yet proposed the placement of a child to prospective adoptive parent(s), 7 had not yet placed a child with the prospective adoptive parent(s), 26 had a child in a 6-month placement (or residency) period that had not concluded or preparing a report on a younger child’s views was not yet due as the adoption had not yet been finalized, 27 involved a child who is less than 7 or over 12 years of age, 1 had the application to adopt withdrawn after the placement of a child, , 27 had the application to adopt withdrawn prior to the placement of a child, and 13 had the application to adopt terminated by MCFD prior to the placement of a child.

ACM 14: Preparing the Summary Recording

The compliance rate for this critical measure was **75%**. The measure was applied to 36 of the 159 records in the sample; 27 of the 36 records were rated achieved and 9 were rated not achieved. To receive a rating of achieved, the record contains documentation that after the 6-month placement (or residency) period expired, a current prior contact check (PCC) was conducted and a Summary Recording was completed.

Of the 9 records rated not achieved, 1 did not have documentation that a PCC was conducted on the prospective adoptive parent(s) after the placement (or residency) period expired, 5 did not have a Summary Recording completed after the placement (or residency) period expired, and 3 did not have documentation that a PCC was conducted on the prospective adoptive parent(s) or a Summary Recording completed after the placement period expired.

This critical measure was not applied to 123 records in the sample. The reasons for being not applicable on this measure included: 49 had not yet proposed the placement of a child to prospective adoptive parent(s), 7 had not yet placed a child with the prospective adoptive parent(s), 26 were in the 6-month placement (or residency) period that had not yet expired, 1 had the application to adopt

withdrawn after the placement of a child, 27 had the application to adopt withdrawn prior to the placement of a child and, 13 had the application to adopt terminated by MCFD prior to the placement of a child.

Records Identified for Action

Quality assurance policy and procedures require practice analysts to identify for action any record that suggests a child may need protection under section 13 of the Child, Family and Community Service Act. No records were identified for action during the course of this audit.

4. OBSERVATIONS AND THEMES

This audit reviewed 159 AH records that had been opened by the Okanagan SDA during the 5-year period between January 1, 2011 and March 31, 2016. As of June 30, 2016, 109 of these records remained open while 50 had been closed sometime between April 1, 2015 and June 30, 2016. Among the closed records, 23 concluded with a completed adoption and the granting of an adoption order. The remaining 27 closed records either had the application withdrawn by the prospective adoptive parents (21) or the application process was terminated by MCFD (6).

Among the 159 records reviewed for this audit, 84 involved a general application by prospective adoptive parents (53%), 1 involved a birth parent(s) voluntarily relinquishing their child and consenting to an adoption placement (1%), while 51 were foster to adopt applications (32%) and 22 were child specific applications involving family members (14%).

This section summarizes the observations and themes arising from the record reviews and audit findings. The observations and themes relate to identified strengths and areas needing improvement. Some relate to specific critical measures and corresponding standards and policy requirements, while others are informed by themes that emerged across several measures. The purpose of this section is to inform the development of an action plan to improve practice.

The SDA overall compliance rate for all 14 critical measures was **47%**.

4.1 Strengths

There was moderate (64%) compliance rate for the critical measure associated with Completing the Adoption Education Program (AEP) component of the home study process (ACM 3). Over half of the applicable records (81 out of 127) had an official notice on the record that the AEP program had been completed. The practice analyst noted that the official notice was often the Completion Verification Sheet rather than AEP certificates.

There was a very high (94%) compliance rate for the critical measure associated with the Adoption Proposal and Preparing for Placement (ACM 8). Documentation to support an achieved rating included a completed proposal package and a signed acknowledgement letter indicating that the adoptive parents read and acknowledged the package contents. A significant majority of the applicable records (65 out of 69) contained documentation confirming the required information was shared with the prospective adoptive parent(s) and an acknowledgement letter was signed subsequently by the prospective adoptive parents.

Similarly, there was a very high (93%) compliance rate for the critical measure associated with the Timing of the Adoption Placement (ACM 9). Nearly all of the applicable records (62 out of 67) contained documentation confirming the adoption placement occurred within 6 months of the signing of an acknowledgement letter. Of the 5 records rated not achieved, all did have an acknowledgement letter signed by the adoptive parents, but the placement was not within 6 months of signing the letter. Documentation of the acknowledgement letter was strong in this SDA.

The critical measure associated with Obtaining Required Consents (ACM 11) had an extremely high (95%) compliance rate. Almost all of the applicable records (62 out of 65) contained documentation confirming the required consents for a child under a CCO were obtained prior to the placement. Of the 3 records rated not achieved, all did not contain documentation that all the required consents were obtained prior to placement. It was noted that the only record associated with a voluntary relinquishment was rated not achieved for this critical measure.

Lastly, the critical measure associated with Preparing a Summary Recording (ACM 14) had a moderately high (75%) compliance rate. The standard for this critical measure also requires that a current PCC be completed prior to completion of the Summary Recording. There was documentation of both a current PCC and a Summary Recording in three quarters of the applicable records (27 out of 36).

4.2 Challenges

The critical measures associated with Adoption Standard 43, Providing Adoption Information and Accepting the Application to Adopt (ACM 1 and ACM 2), both had very low compliance rates (19% and 13% respectively). There was very limited documentation to indicate the calendar date when prospective adoptive parent(s) initially contacted MCFD to express interest in adoption and when the adoption worker responded. As such, the file documentation was generally insufficient to determine whether the adoption worker's response was within 7 working days. In addition, it was difficult to determine whether the information that was provided to the prospective adoptive parent(s) within 7 days of the initial contact and the forms and information that were provided to the prospective adoptive parent(s) within 10 days receiving the completed application met all of the requirements listed in the standards. Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, 88 of the 138 records rated not achieved at ACM 2 (accepting the application to adopt) did not contain documentation confirming the prospective adoptive parent(s) were interviewed in person to determine eligibility and other relevant factors. Recording the date the prospective adoptive parent(s) initially contacted MCFD to express an interest in adoption, the date the adoption social worker responded and describing the required forms and the information that was provided (usually in a letter) and the date(s) the prospective adoptive parent(s) were interviewed in person will greatly improve the compliance ratings for these measures.

The compliance rate with Adoption Standard 43 (as measured by ACM 1 and ACM2) may also be improved by modifying the "Adoption Intake and Recruitment Tracking" form this SDA used in the majority of records. Specifically, including information on this form about when and what information was provided, as well as confirmation of eligibility for the prospective adoptive parent(s) both prior to and following the receipt of an application would be helpful in meeting the standard. Additionally, some records had a checklist of forms included in an adoption application package; it may be beneficial for this SDA to utilize this form for each record and include the physician's report in the checklist. Also, recording the date the adoption package was provided and the date the application forms were returned would also increase compliance. Within the Okanagan SDA, it was also noted in some records that when documenting information on the prospective adoptive parent(s), only 1 prospective adoptive parent's name was listed on the electronic record. However, the corresponding physical files identify 2 adults/partners residing in these households,

who are being assessed and potentially approved as prospective adoptive parents. This leaves some inconsistency between the electronic and physical files and it is recommended that each adoptive worker list all eligible parties on MIS, AMS and ICM database systems to correspond correctly with the information gathered and listed on the physical file.

The critical measure associated with the Completion of the SFA (ACM 4) had a moderately low (56%) compliance rate. In most of the records rated not achieved (31 out of 42), the SFA was not completed within the 4 month timeframe and there was no documentation of an approved extension. The timeframe for when these SFA's were eventually approved ranged from 5 to 17 months. Of the remaining records (11 out of 42) rated not achieved on ACM 4, 4 had no written SFA on file, while 5 had a SFA that was incomplete and 2 had been in abeyance for beyond 2 years with no new SFA on file.

There was a low (33%) compliance rate for Keeping the Written Family Assessment Current (ACM 5). Of the 27 applicable records, 18 were rated not achieved as the SFA was not updated annually. After prospective adoptive parent(s) have been approved for adoption and until an adoption placement occurs, the adoption worker must request updated information from the prospective adoptive parent(s) annually. All records rated not achieved were solely due to the lack of an annual update. As prospective adoptive parent(s) can wait varying lengths of time to be matched and familial circumstances change, it is imperative that SFA's remain current in order to ensure appropriate and successful matching, placement and adoption completion. Had the prescribed S.A.F.E update document (which was introduced in August 2014) been utilized this critical measure would have received a 100% compliance rate.

The critical measure for Selecting a Prospective Parent(s) for a Child in Continuing Custody (ACM 6) received a very low rating of 22%. Of the 72 applicable records, 57 received a not achieved rating. Of these 57 not achieved records, 51 contained no indication that the child's worker reviewed the SFA. Also within these 57 not achieved records, 30 contained no indication that the selection process was followed. Ensuring that adoption workers understand how to document these components of their work will improve future compliance to this critical measure. The critical measure associated with Proposing the Adoption Placement of a Child to Prospective Adoptive Parent(s) (ACM 7) had a low (49%) compliance rate. Among the 34 out of 70 records rated not achieved on this measure, 31 did not contain documentation of the child's worker completing all the requirements prior to the proposal and 5 had documentation that all the requirements were completed, but only after the proposal was made. The compliance rate for this critical measure may be improved by ensuring that the documentation includes the child's birth, social and medical history, placement history, life experiences and previous Plans of Care. This documentation should also include how this information was shared with the prospective adoptive parents, including discussions around openness and obtaining supervisory approval prior to proposing the child.

There was an extremely low (0%) compliance rate for Transferring Care and Custody with a Birth Parent Pre-placement Agreement (ACM 10). However, there was only 1 applicable record and it was not achieved due to the Birth Pre-placement Agreement not being completed and not signed by the birth parent.

In the critical measure associated with Post Placement Responsibilities of the Adoption Worker (ACM 12), the compliance rate was 8% due to insufficient documentation to meet the requirements set out in Standard 57. This measure was applied to 40 records and, in almost half (17 out of 40 records), there was no documentation of any contact or visit by the adoption worker with the adoptive family or with the child once the child was placed in the adoption home. The non-compliant records also lacked documentation on consulting the child about his or her views of the adoption and assisting the prospective adoptive family in meeting the child's specific needs as described in the plan of care at the time of proposal. More thorough documentation of post placement contact with the child is required to improve this very low compliance rate.

Lastly, there was a low (44%) compliance rate for the critical measure associated with Preparing the Report on a Younger (aged 7 to 12) Child's Views (ACM 13). Over half of the applicable records (5 out of 9) did not contain documentation confirming the adoption worker met with the child in private, gathered the required information, and completed a full report that was approved by a supervisor. Specifically, 2 did not have a Report on a Younger Child's Views placed on the file, 2 did not have clear documentation that the adoption worker met with the child in private to gather information and the final record did not have either a report on file or evidence of meeting the child in private.

5. ACTIONS TAKEN TO DATE

In October of 2016 the Centralized Services Hub in Victoria commenced with screening and assessing all prospective caregivers on behalf of the SDAs, including those applying to become adoptive parents. This screening work has been extended to all 13 SDAs across the province. This Hub is intended to provide ease of access for the public across a broad continuum of in-care and out-of-care services and will lessen the workload of front line staff by moving some administrative functions from district offices.

On October 31, 2016 MCFD launched a new online Adoption tool province-wide that will streamline the adoption process for waiting families and help ensure children in care find a permanent family and home sooner. This new online tool 'Adopt BC Kids' provides a personalized user-friendly portal for prospective adoptive families to view information about adoption, view their application process, track what documents have been received and processed by MCFD, and better understand the next steps. Once approved, prospective adoptive parents can also browse the photos and videos of children waiting to be adopted. Anyone interested in becoming an adoptive can begin their journey through the online portal at www.gov.bc.ca/adoptkids.

The introduction of the Adopt BC Kids web portal and the enhanced role of the Centralized Services Hub in screening adoption applications may have a positive impact on the ability of SDAs to consistently meet the requirements set out in Adoption Practice Standards 43 and 44 (i.e., Providing Adoption Information and Accepting the Application to Adopt (ACM 1 & 2), and The Home Study Process: The Adoption Education and Structured Family Assessment Components (ACM 3 & 4).

On May 9 and 10, 2017 the Okanagan SDA co-hosted an adoption forum for the Interior Region (Okanagan, Kootenay's and Thompson Cariboo Shuswap SDA's). The intent of the forum was to bring together adoption workers from across the region to talk about what is working and not working and develop a plan to move forward. The forum was considered a success and the management team for the Interior Region has committed to an annual adoption forum going forward.

The SDA is building a community of practice and will be facilitating monthly meetings of adoption and guardianship staff to facilitate the matching of prospective adoptive parents and children in care. One of the reasons for this community of practice is to promote consistency in adoption practice across the SDA. There is one centralized adoption team with staff in Penticton and Vernon but the connections between the adoptions staff and the guardianship staff who have children in continuing custody needs to be strengthened. There are currently two workers identified as adoption transitions workers and there is work in progress to hire an additional three adoption transitions workers so that all areas of the SDA will have support from these workers.

<p>3) The Director of Operations and Team Leader will meet with adoption staff and review the practice and documentation requirements in regards to: post-placement responsibilities of the adoption worker to the child and the adoptive parents (APS 57); preparing the report on a younger child's views (APS 60); and preparing the summary recording (APS 61). (Addresses ACM 12, 13 & 14)</p>	<p>Barry Fulton, EDS; Kemp Redl, DOO; Darren Jones, DOP</p>	<p>Dec 31, 2017</p>	<p>Adoption Workers have a clear understanding of the practice and documentation requirements following placement. Ongoing interactions and communications with adoptive parents and children placed for adoption are better reflected in case file documentation.</p>
<p>4) The Centralized Services Hub will now be the primary means of accepting general applications for adoption, obtaining written consents, and documenting the assessment of the screening information obtained on applicants.</p> <p>The SDA will modify their current use of the Adoption Intake & Recruitment Tracking Form to ensure when applications are accepted at the SDA level they are providing the required adoption information within prescribed standards and accepting the application to adopt (APS 43). (Addresses ACM 1 and 2)</p>	<p>Barry Fulton, EDS; Kemp Redl, DOO; Darren Jones, DOP</p>	<p>Dec 31, 2017</p>	<p>The SDA has an efficient process of providing adoption information and accepting adoption applications that is well documented. Prospective adoptive parents will receive a prompt response and follow-up when they submit an application to adopt.</p>

Appendix 1 – Listing of Adoption Practice Standards Assessed by Audit

Adoption Practice Standard 43: Providing Adoption Information and Accepting the Application to Adopt

When prospective adoptive parent(s) contact the ministry expressing an interest in adoption, you must respond within 7 working days and:

- clarify your responsibilities under the *Adoption Act* and the *CFCSA*, including giving paramount consideration to the child's best interests in all circumstances
- provide them with information about adoption, including:
 - eligibility requirements
 - pre- and post-placement services provided by the ministry
 - services available through licensed adoption agencies, and adoption support groups
 - the regulation of payment of birth parent expenses
 - the children awaiting placement
 - post-adoption assistance
 - the adoption process, including time frames and requirements
 - the home study process, explaining that it consists of an education component and an objective, structured family assessment with no guarantee of approval or of an adoption placement
 - openness and access in adoption
 - the importance of preserving the Aboriginal child's cultural identity, and
 - the fee schedule for applicable services

You must personally interview each applicant to determine:

- whether the applicant is eligible to adopt a child in British Columbia
- in the case where they are applying for a child with special service needs, whether the applicant(s) have a reasonable understanding of the long-term impact of these needs and are prepared to accept the significant behavioural and emotional issues associated with these needs, and
- whether the applicant is Aboriginal

When prospective adoptive parent(s) submit an application to the ministry for children awaiting placement, you must:

- register the application with Adoption Branch [in the Adoption Management System]
- begin the home study process for:
 - those applying for a specific child in continuing custody awaiting placement
 - those applying for a child in care with special service needs where you have determined that they understand the long-term impact of those needs and are prepared to accept the issues associated with them

- within 10 working days, provide them with the applicable forms and information required for the structured family assessment component of the home study process, and
- advise Adoption Branch of the decision to begin the home study process

If the application is for a child with no special service needs or a child with only special placement needs, wait for Adoption Branch to request that you begin the home study process.

You must make contact annually with applicants waiting for the home study process to begin.

Adoption Practice Standard 44: The Home Study Process: The Adoption Education and Structured Family Assessment Components

In order to approve applicants for adoption, you must complete the education component and structured family assessment component of the home study process.

For the educational component of the home study, you must ensure that the prospective adoptive parent(s) complete a ministry-approved education program.

For the structured family assessment, you must conduct the assessment according to ministry-prescribed guidelines.

When conducting the structured family assessment, you must:

- gather the following documents:
 - results of prior contact checks
 - the results of all criminal record searches
 - physician’s reports
 - a minimum of four references
- conduct a fair and impartial assessment process that includes:
 - individual and joint interviews if there are two applicants
 - interviews of any young children living in the home as part of the interview with their parent(s)
 - interviews separate from those with the parent(s) of any child 7 years of age or older to determine the child’s views about the proposed adoption
 - separate, in-person interviews with other members of the household
 - at least one interview with all members of the household together so that you can assess how they relate to each other
 - at least one interview held in the prospective adoptive parent(s) home
- allow for sufficient time to determine the readiness of the prospective adoptive parent(s) to adopt a child with the special service and/or placement needs for which they have applied, and
- complete the requirements for approval as described in Practice Standard 46

Once the education component and structured family assessment have been completed, you must complete a written family assessment that:

- describes the preparation of the prospective adoptive parent(s) as required in the Adoption Regulation
- summarizes the structured family assessment, and
- includes a recommendation as to the prospective adoptive parent(s)' ability to parent by adoption a child with the special service and/or placement needs for which they have applied, and identifies the number and ages of children they are approved to adopt

You must complete the written family assessment at least 3 months and no longer than 4 months after all required documentation, as described above, has been gathered. If the written family assessment cannot be completed within 4 months, you must:

- document the reasons for the delay, and
- obtain the approval of your supervisor/team leader.

Adoption Practice Standard 47: Keeping the Written Family Assessment Current

After prospective adoptive parent(s) have been approved for adoption and until an adoption placement occurs, you must request updated information from them:

- annually
- when there has been a change in their circumstances, and
- when they change their request for the age or special needs of a child or in the number of children

The updated information must be attached to or incorporated into the original written family assessment.

In addition, you must:

- reassess prospective adoptive parent(s) and revise their written family assessment recommendation when there is a change in their circumstances or a change in their request for the age or special needs of a child or in the number of children
- conduct a prior contact check and request new criminal record searches from prospective adoptive parent(s) every two years as part of the yearly update
- attach any yearly updates to the written family assessment
- where there are significant changes in the family's circumstances or when two years has passed since the family's approval, integrate the update into the written family assessment, and
- obtain your supervisor's signature on any updates that require a reassessment or new recommendation or that are integrated into the written family assessment

In order to keep all information on prospective adoptive parent(s) current, you must begin a new home study process:

- when a new child becomes part of the prospective adoptive family either through birth or through adoption, and/or
- when a written family assessment has been in abeyance and/or closed for a total of 2 years

Adoption Practice Standard 26: Selecting Prospective Parent(s) for a Child in Continuing Custody

When selecting prospective adoptive parent(s) for a child in continuing custody, you must:

- determine whose views you will consider when deciding which prospective adoptive parent(s) will meet the child's special service and placement needs, and at a minimum include your supervisor/team leader and one other person
- obtain and review the written family assessments to determine the characteristics and abilities of the prospective adoptive parent(s) you are considering
- weigh all relevant factors as outlined in section 3 of the *Adoption Act* and Practice Standard 1 to determine if adoption placement with the prospective adoptive parent(s) being considered would be in the child's best interests
- obtain and consider the views of those you are involving in the selection process, and
- when there is more than one plan which may meet the child's needs and there is disagreement about which plan can best meet the child's needs, involve your regional manager responsible for adoption

Adoption Practice Standard 27: Proposing the Adoption Placement of a Child to Prospective Adoptive Parent(s)

Prior to proposing the adoption placement of a child in continuing custody with prospective adoptive parent(s), you must:

- ensure that the child is thoroughly prepared and ready for an adoption placement
- participate in the review of the child's comprehensive plan of care and complete the "Specific Needs" and "Desired Outcome" categories in the child's comprehensive plan of care, including both present and future needs
- determine whether the prospective adoptive parent(s) agree to the level of openness you have determined is in the child's best interests
- obtain the approval of your supervisor/team leader to propose the child to the prospective adoptive parent(s)

When proposing the child to the adoption worker for the prospective adoptive parent(s), you must share the following, after removing identifying information:

- the comprehensive plan of care completed for the proposal, as described above
- the child's previous comprehensive plan of care
- the child's written placement history and life experiences (refer to Practice Standard 22), and
- all relevant information about the child and the birth family

When the prospective adoptive parent(s) have agreed to accept the adoption of the proposed child, you must:

- obtain from the adoption worker for the prospective adoptive parent(s) the completed and signed comprehensive plan of care and letter acknowledging information they have received
- determine with the adoption worker for the prospective adoptive parent(s), your supervisor/team leader and their supervisor/team leader whether the prospective adoptive parent(s) understand and have the capacity to meet the special service and placement needs of the child, and
- obtain your supervisor's/team leader's approval of the completed comprehensive plan of care before beginning pre-placement visits.

Adoption Practice Standard 50: The Adoption Proposal and Preparing for Placement

When an adoption placement of a child is proposed, you must:

- ensure that all information on the child provided by the child's worker is shared with the prospective adoptive parent(s) and their physician
- ensure that prospective adoptive parent(s) have the opportunity to consult with medical professionals and/or others about the child's care
- assess the prospective adoptive parent(s)' ability and readiness to meet the specific needs of the child
- complete a statement, for the prospective adoptive parent(s) to sign, that acknowledges the documentation and information that has been provided about the birth parent(s) and the child
- unless the child proposed has been voluntarily placed under the Adoption Act and has no special service needs as defined in section 26(c) of the Adoption Regulation :
 - as participants in the review of the child's comprehensive plan of care, determine with the prospective adoptive parent(s) their plan to meet the child's needs
 - complete the "Description of services to be provided based upon the child's needs and "Target date" categories of the child's non-identifying comprehensive plan of care
 - obtain your supervisor's/team leader's approval and signature on the comprehensive plan of care.

After the prospective adoptive parent(s) have confirmed their interest in parenting the child you must:

- forward to the child’s worker:
 - a copy of the prospective adoptive parent(s)’ letter of acknowledgement
 - the completed comprehensive plan of care, if required
- if the child has special service needs, determine with the child's worker and both your supervisors/team leaders whether the prospective adoptive parent(s) can meet the special needs of the child
- if the child does not have special service needs, obtain the approval of your supervisor/team leader for the placement to proceed
- negotiate the terms of openness agreements and where possible complete openness agreements involving children in care, and
- arrange pre-placement visits and placement with the child’s/birth parent’s worker according to the written plan
- conduct a new prior contact check (including a check for protocol investigations) if the one completed at time of proposal is more than 30 days old

When it has been determined that the prospective adoptive parent(s) can meet the needs of the child, the placement of the child must occur within 6 months. If the child cannot be placed within 6 months, you must document the reasons and obtain the approval of your supervisor/team leader.

Adoption Practice Standard 37: Transferring Care and Custody with a Birth Parent Pre-Placement Agreement

You must ensure the birth parent(s) transfer care and custody to the Director of Adoption with a Birth Parent Pre-placement Agreement if they have made one of the following interim adoption placement plans:

- to place the child with prospective adoptive parent(s) prior to the signing of adoption consents, or
- to place the child temporarily with caregivers prior to the signing of adoption consents.

Prior to entering into a Birth Parent Pre-placement Agreement to place the child temporarily with caregivers, you must:

- determine that placing the child with caregivers is in the child’s best interests
- advise the birth parent(s) of their right to obtain independent legal advice
- determine the length of the Birth Parent Pre-placement Agreement, and
- ensure your supervisor/team leader reviews and agrees to the proposed agreement.

After placement of the child with caregivers, you must:

- involve the birth parent(s) in decisions affecting the child and inform them in a timely manner about significant developments in the child’s life, and

- unless birth parent(s) have indicated in writing that they do not wish to be notified, make reasonable efforts to promptly notify them in the following circumstances:
 - if it is determined that the placement will not proceed in a home chosen by the birth parent(s) or guardian
 - if it is determined that the placement will not proceed because an adoption home for the child is not available
 - if the child dies, or
 - if the child develops a serious condition or has an injury that may result in the child's death or may cause serious or permanent impairment of the child's health.

If the child remains in care under a Birth Parent Pre-Placement Agreement or by adoption consents longer than 30 days prior to an adoption placement, a comprehensive plan of care is required.

Adoption Practice Standard 39: Required Consents

Before placing for adoption a child:

- who is in the continuing custody of a director under the *CFCSA*, or
- who is under the guardianship of a director pursuant to section 29 of the *Family Relations Act* (now under Section 51 of the *Family Law Act*)

you must obtain the consent of the child, if he or she is 12 years of age or over and has the capacity to consent. (If it is determined that the child does not have the capacity to consent, refer to Practice Standard 41)

Before placing for adoption a child whose birth parent(s) are voluntarily planning adoption under the *Adoption Act* you must:

- obtain the consent of the child, if he or she is 12 years of age or over, and
- make reasonable efforts to obtain the consent of each of the following:
 - the birth mother
 - the father, as defined in section 13(2) of the *Adoption Act* and
 - any person appointed as the child's guardian

Before completing all adoptions you must obtain all required consents for the court, including the consent of the Director of Adoption, unless:

- an individual is not capable of consenting
- an order has been granted dispensing with a consent, or
- you are applying to dispense with consent

In a direct placement or in an adoption under section 48 of the *Adoption Act* you must advise prospective adoptive parent(s) that it is their and their lawyer's responsibility to determine who must consent and obtain the required consents.

Adoption Practice Standard 57: Post-Placement Responsibilities of the Adoption Worker to the Child and the Adoptive Parent(s)

In exercising your guardianship role with the child, you must ensure that the rights of the child in care are affirmed and respected and that all applicable guardianship duties and responsibilities as specified in Practice Standards for Guardianship are carried out, including but not limited to:

- maintaining regular contact with the child and prospective adoptive family by:
 - contacting the prospective adoptive parent(s) by telephone or visit within one working day after placement
 - visiting the child and prospective adoptive family in their home within 7 calendar days after placement
 - contacting prospective adoptive parent(s) of a child with special service needs at least once each month, either by telephone or in person, and visiting the child and prospective adoptive family in their home at least 2 additional times within the 6 month post- placement period
 - visiting an infant with no special needs and the prospective adoptive family in their home at least 2 additional times within the 6 month post-placement period
 - if the post-placement period extends beyond 6 months, visiting the child and prospective adoptive family in their home at least every 90 days
- assisting the prospective adoptive family in meeting the child's specific needs as described on the comprehensive plan of care prepared at the time of proposal
- consulting with the child about his or her views of the adoption placement and, if the child is at least 7 years of age and less than 12, ensuring that a written report on the child's views is prepared for the adoption completion, and
- reviewing the child's comprehensive plan of care

Adoption Practice Standard 60: Preparing the Report on a Younger Child's Views

After a child who is at least 7 and less than 12 years of age has been placed for adoption and before applying to the court for an adoption order, you must privately interview the child, so that the child's views on the adoption can be heard and recorded.

When conducting the interview and writing the Report on a Younger Child's Views, you must:

- determine the child's views and understanding of the following:
 - the effect and meaning of adoption
 - the proposed adoption and any proposed change of the child's name

- relationships with other persons who are significant in the child's life
- where applicable, how his or her racial, cultural, linguistic and spiritual identity can be maintained
- provide the above information within the report and in addition include:
 - your name and occupation
 - confirmation that you met with the child at a place and in a manner that allowed the child to freely express his or her views about the adoption
 - identifying information about the child and the prospective adoptive parent(s), and particulars respecting the interview, and
- obtain your supervisor's/team leader's approval and signature on the report.

You must submit the report to the court when applying for an adoption order.

Adoption Practice Standard 61: Preparing the Summary Recording

Before completing the Summary Recording, you must complete a current prior contact check on the prospective adoptive parent(s).

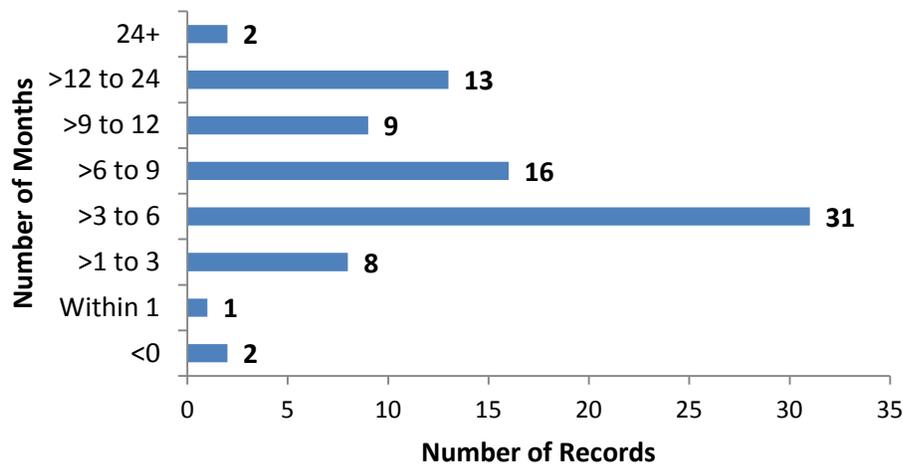
To assist the Director of Adoption in making a recommendation to the court as to whether an adoption order should be made, you must prepare a Summary Recording containing:

- the observations, assessments and facts upon which the Post-placement Report is established, and
- information as to whether the requirements of the *Adoption Act* have been met.

Appendix 2 – Time Intervals Observed for Stages in the Adoption Process

In reviewing the 159 AH files (both open and closed) for this audit, the practice analysts on the provincial audit team made a number of observations about the time intervals for some of the stages in the adoption process. These observations are unrelated to the compliance ratings for the fourteen separate Critical Measures presented in the body of this report. However, the four bar charts displayed below, do provide some insight into the time it takes for Adoption workers in the Okanagan SDA to guide prospective adoptive parents through the adoption process.

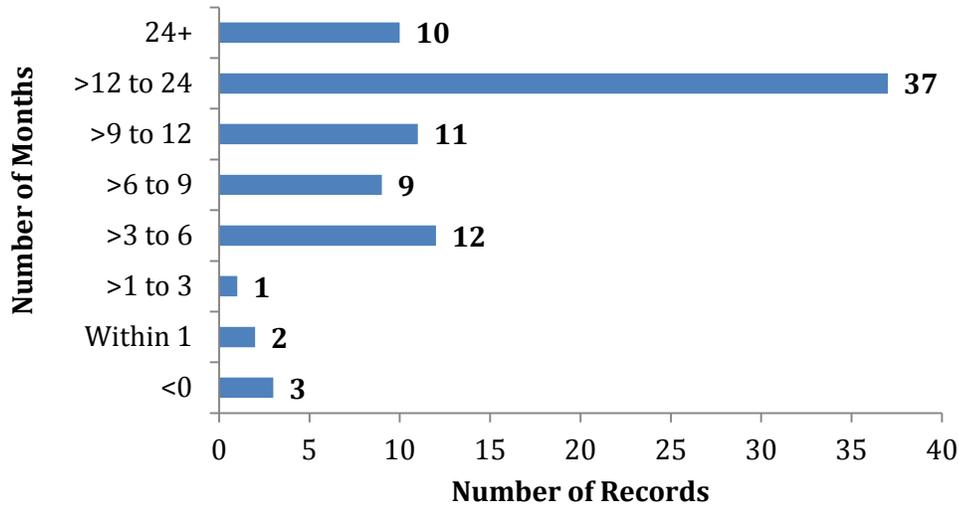
Figure 1: Time from Opening of AH Record to the Completion of the Adoption Education Program (AEP), SDA 12 Okanagan



Note:

1. Figures are based on adoption MIS/AMS open/closed records with start date after Dec 31, 2010 with close dates between April 1, 2015 and June 30, 2016 or still open on March 31, 2016.
2. N=82 of 159 records are included in this time calculation. Includes all 81 records rated Achieved on ACM 3, plus 1 records rated Not Achieved on ACM 3 because the AEP had been completed after the Home Study component was completed.
3. No completion dates for 77 records due to: no certificate confirming completion of AEP in file (33), it was a second adoption and the AEP was not reviewed/training status upgraded (12), AEP still in progress (11), application to adopt terminated by MCFD before AEP completed (7), or withdrawn before AEP completed (14).
4. There were 2 records with an AEP date prior to MIS open date because the AEP was completed prior to the opening of the AH record in MIS.

Figure 2: Time from Opening of AH Record to the Completion and Approval of the Structured Family Assessment (SFA), SDA 12 Okanagan



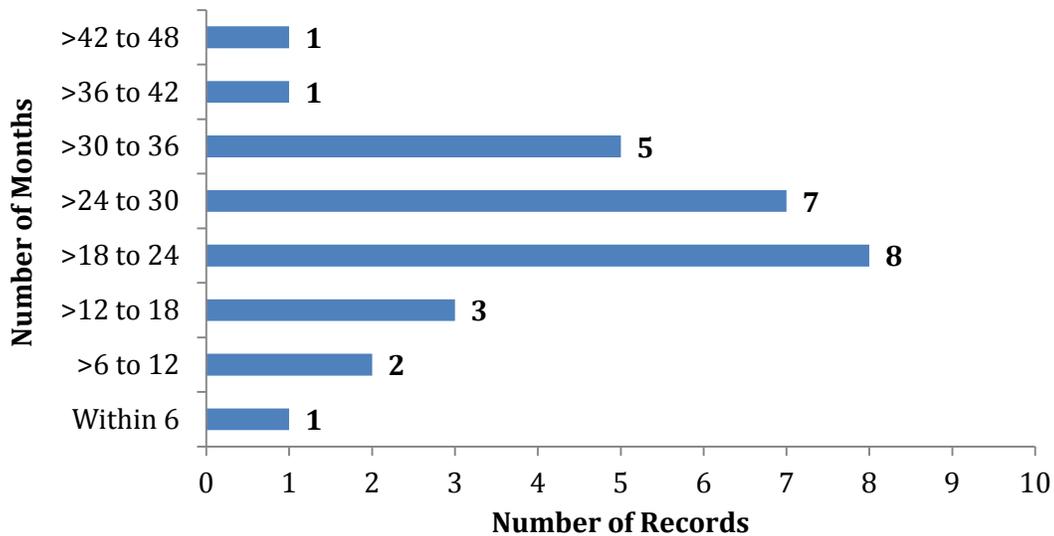
Note:

1. N=85 of 159 records are included in this time calculation. Includes all 54 records rated Achieved on ACM 4, plus 31 records rated Not Achieved on ACM 4 because the SFA was not completed within the 4-month timeframe.

2. No approval dates for 74 records due to: no written SFA in file (4), SFA was incomplete (5), record was in abeyance for more than two years and a new written SFA was not completed (2), application to adopt was terminated by MCFD before SFA completed (10), withdrawn before SFA completed (19), written SFA not started & AEP not yet completed (13), or written SFA still in progress (21).

3. There were 3 records with completion dates for the SFA prior to the opening the AH record because the SFA was completed by a contracted agency within one year of opening the AH Record in MIS (2) and there was a delay in opening the AH record for the applicant who had previously adopted a child through MCFD (1).

Figure 3: Time from Opening of AH Record to Completion of the Summary Recording, SDA 12 Okanagan



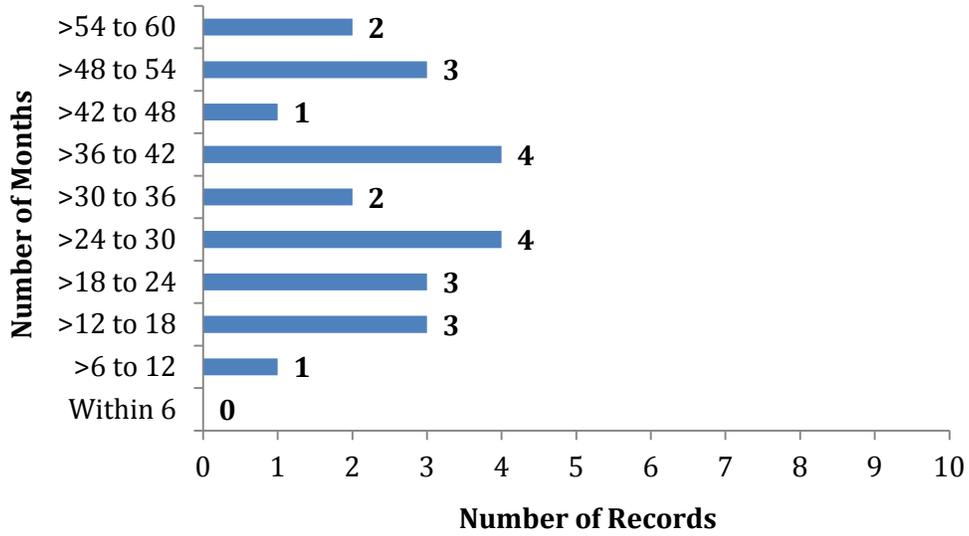
Note:

1. N=28 of 159 records are included in this time calculation. Includes the 27 records rated Achieved on ACM 14, plus 1 record rated Not Achieved on ACM 14 only because a PCC was not also completed upon the expiration of the adoption placement.

2. No completion dates for 131 records due to: no summary recording in file (8), or 6-month placement period not yet expired (26), or a child has not yet been proposed to the prospective adoptive parent(s) (49), or application to adopt was terminated by MCFD (13) or withdrawn (27), or child not yet placed with prospective adoptive parent(s) (7), or placement disruption occurred (1).

3. Summary recordings are completed at the conclusion of the adoption placement and are required documentation before a Court package can be prepared and submitted.

Figure 4: Time from Opening of AH Record to the Closing of the AH Record, for Completed Adoptions, SDA 12 Okanagan



Note:

1. N=23 of 159 records are included in this calculation. Includes only AH records that have been closed because an Adoption Order was obtained and the adoption completed.
2. This calculation includes any AH file closed in MIS (as of June 30, 2016). Closure dates are either before or after the Adoption Order is granted.