

**Case Practice Audit
Gitxsan Child and Family Services Society (IQG)**

Fieldwork completed August 13-16 2012
Audit completed by Aboriginal Programs & Service Support, Quality Assurance, Ministry of Children and Family
Development

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Case Practice Audit Gitxsan Child and Family Services Society (IQG)

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of the audit is to improve and support child service, guardianship and family service. Through a review of a sample of cases, the audit is expected to provide a baseline measure of the current level of practice, confirm good practice, and identify areas where practice requires strengthening. This is the third audit for Gitxsan Child and Family Services Society (GCFSS). The first audit of the agency was conducted in August 2006.

The specific purposes of the audit are:

- To confirm good practice and further the development of practice;
- To assess and evaluate practice in relation to existing legislation and the Aboriginal Operational and Practice Standards and Indicators (AOPSI);
- To determine the current level of practice across a sample of cases;
- To identify barriers to providing an adequate level of service;
- To assist in identifying training needs; and,
- To provide information for use in updating and/or amending practice standards or policy.

Aboriginal Programs and Service Support (APSS) conducted the audit using the Aboriginal Case Practice Audit Tool (ACPAT). Audits of delegated agencies providing child protection, guardianship, family services and resources for children in care are conducted according to a three-year cycle.

2. METHODOLOGY

This process involved both a practice audit and an operational review.

The practice auditor conducted field work from August 13 to 16, 2012. The computerized ACPAT was used to collect the data and generate office summary compliance reports and a compliance report for each file audited. A sample size of 4 resource files, 6 child service files and 3 family service files were audited or approximately 30% of the open resource files and 50% of the open family service and child service files. These files were selected to ensure that a cross representation of files from each team member was reviewed.

Upon arrival at the agency office in Hazelton, the auditor met with the Executive Director of GCFSS as well as the Team Leader and other available staff to review the audit purpose and process. At the completion of the audit, the auditor met with the Team Leader and the Executive Director to discuss the preliminary findings of the audit.

3. AGENCY OVERVIEW

a) Delegation

GCFSS was formed in 1999 and received C3 Voluntary Services delegation in 2002. In 2004, the agency moved to C4 Guardianship delegation, however did not begin doing guardianship work at this time. This is the second C4 audit of the agency, with the last one occurring in August of 2009. This level of delegation enables the delegated agency to provide the following services:

- Permanent guardianship of children in continuing custody;
- Support services to families;
- Voluntary Care Agreements;
- Special Needs Agreements;
- Establishment of Residential Resources

The agency signed their initial Delegation Enabling Agreement in 1999 and the Delegation Confirmation Agreement (DCA) was signed in 2004. GCFSS is currently operating under an extension to the DCA that expires March 31, 2013.

b) Demographics

GCFSS is located on Gitxsan land in Hazelton, often referred to as “Old Hazelton.” Under the current agreement, GCFSS agrees to provide family and child services to Gitxsan citizens residing in five of the six communities of the Gitxsan Nation. They are: Gitanyow, Gitsegukla, Gitwangak, Glen Vowell and Kispiox. These communities are located in relative close proximity to the agency and all are accessible by road. Travelling times to these communities varies from 15 minutes to 1 hour. There are approximately 2089 registered on reserve band members for these 5 communities (*source: Statistics Canada 2011 Census*) The sixth community of Gitanmaax (population 627) opted out of being a part of the agency as of March 31, 2012.

Non-delegated programs such as family support and family group conferencing are child and family services which are also provided to nation members. GCFSS focuses on providing community based services which are culturally appropriate for Gitxsan people.

Staff who provide delegated services work closely with the other program areas provided by GCFSS. They also work closely with the local Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) office in Hazelton.

The communities are serviced by local hospitals/health units, public schools and RCMP detachments.

c) Professional Staff Complement

At the time of the audit, GCFSS delegated staff consisted of one team supervisor, one guardianship social worker, one resource social worker as well as a social work team assistant.

All delegated staff, with conduct and/or supervision of files at the time of the audit, has C4 delegation. The Executive Director, as well as the team assistant, has partial delegation.

In addition to the delegated staff, GCFSS also has an administrative assistant/communications liaison, a finance officer, a family support worker, and a family conference co-ordinator on site.

d) Supervision and Consultation

GCFSS has a clinical supervision model that is accessed by workers with the use of an open door policy, phone calls and e-mail. Staff members participate in a 'stand-up' meeting every Monday as well as monthly team meetings. In turn, the Team Leader regularly meets with the Executive Director to receive supervision regarding non-delegated matters. Additionally, the Team Leader tracks caseloads with resource and guardianship workers on a monthly basis. Details of the individual cases are discussed, including issues and action plans. These are then reviewed the following month.

The GCFSS Team Leader completes annual evaluations with team members that include input from both. Training plans are reviewed and developed as needed inclusive of professional development as well as required training for delegated work.

4. STRENGTHS OF THE AGENCY

Agency staff is committed to serving their clients and the communities using a culturally sensitive approach. The Team Leader is making great strides in re-engaging community, and meets regularly with the band development workers to this end. Staff is knowledgeable of the services available in the communities, and recognizes the strengths and challenges facing each community. They attempt to work with the communities strengths and support them in the challenges they face. Staff members identified the knowledge that the Executive Director has of the communities served by the agency including the history and culture of the nations as a great asset in this endeavour. There is a strong commitment and emphasis on the provision of cultural activities for the children and youth in care. It is evident from speaking to the delegated staff and from the services and support provided to the children and youth in care and to the caregivers, that the agency staff is upholding the mandate and objectives of the society.

A further strength is the support the agency has for the professional development of the staff, who reported that there has been significant positive development in this area. The team has worked very hard to put an end to the lateral violence that was once an issue, and describe themselves as strong in communication with each other and as working well together. Staff has attributed this to having both a strong team leader and Executive Director.

5. CHALLENGES FACING THE AGENCY

Some of the challenges identified by staff during interviews are:

- The shortage of professional services such as medical, dental, mental health and drug and alcohol counselling available in the community. This creates difficulty when trying to arrange transportation for clients and children and youth in care;
- Lack of adequate housing and employment opportunities for community members; and,
- The pulling out of Gitanmaax, the largest community, has reduced funding from AANDC to the agency.

6. DISCUSSION OF THE PROGRAMS AUDITED

The audit reflects the work done by the staff in the agency's delegated programs over the past three years.

a) Resource files

As previously stated, four open resource files were audited. There was significant improvement shown in many areas as compared to the results of the 2009 audit. Many positive aspects were found in the resource files including 100 percent compliance for documenting supervisory approval, application and orientation and completion of home studies.

Documentation missing from some of the resource files included: agreements with caregivers, and monitoring and reviewing the family care home.

b) Family Service Files

As previously stated, 3 open family service files were audited. This program area showed excellent work being done. Of all the applicable standards, many were met with 100% compliance.

Missing in some instances were support service agreements and family service plans.

c) Child Service files

As already stated, 6 open child service files were audited. The results showed a significant decrease in compliance as compared to the 2009 findings. Although there were several standards that were 100 percent compliant, such as supervisory approval, deciding where to place the child, and meeting the child's need for stability and continuity of relationships, several were also 100 percent non compliant. These were: monitoring and reviewing the child's comprehensive plan of care, the social worker's relationship and contact with the child in care, and providing the caregiver with information and reviewing appropriate discipline standards. These aspects were also missing from the files audited in 2009.

7. COMPLIANCE TO THE PROGRAMS AUDITED

One auditor audited the resource, family service and child service files at GCFSS. The 'not applicable' scores were not included in the total.

a) Compliance to Resource File Practice

The files were audited for compliance to the Aboriginal Operational and Practice Standards and Indicators, C4 Guardianship resources including:

- Application and orientation of caregiver;
- Home study of caregiver;
- Training of caregiver;
- Signed Agreements with caregiver;
- Providing caregiver with written information regarding child; and,
- Monitoring and reviewing homes.

Four (4) open resource files were audited at GCFSS. The overall compliance to the resource standards was 85%.

AOPSI – Voluntary Services Standards	
Standard 28 Supervisory Approval Required for Family Care Home Services	4 files (100%) compliant
Standard 29 Family Care Homes – Application and Orientation	3 files (100%) compliant 1 file not applicable

Standard 30 Home Study	3 files (100%) compliant 1 file not applicable
Standard 31 Training of Caregivers	3 files (100%) compliant 1 file not applicable
Standard 32 Signed Agreement with Caregivers	1 file compliant 2 files non-compliant 1 file not applicable
Standard 33 Monitoring and Reviewing the Family Care Home	2 files compliant 1 file non-compliant 1 file not applicable
Standard 34 Investigation of Alleged Abuse or Neglect in a Family Care Home	1 file (100%) compliant 3 files not applicable
Standard 35 Quality of Care Review	No files applicable
Standard 36 Closure of the Family Care Home	No files applicable

b) Compliance to Family Service Practice

The files were audited for compliance to the Aboriginal Operational and Practice Standards and Indicators, C3 Guardianship family service including:

- Information and referral for service;
- Supervisors approval regarding voluntary service;
- Family Service Plan and components for support;
- Review of Family Service Plan;
- Support Service Agreements with families;
- Voluntary and Special Needs Agreements; and,
- File Documentation.

Three (3) open family service files were audited. The overall compliance to the family service standards was **87%**.

The following provides a breakdown of the compliance ratings:

AOPSI – Voluntary Services Standards	
Standard 1 Receiving Requests for Services	3 files (100%) compliance
Standard 2 Supervisory Approval Required for Voluntary Services	3 files (100%) compliance
Standard 3 Information and Referral	3 files (100%) compliant

for Voluntary Services	
Standard 4 Involving the Aboriginal community in the Provision of Services	3 files (100%) compliant
Standard 5 Family Service Plan Requirements and Support Services, Voluntary Care and Special Needs Agreements	2 files (67%) compliant 1 file (33%) non-compliant
Standard 6 Support Service Agreements	1 file (33%) compliant 2 files (67%) non-compliant
Standard 7 Voluntary Care Agreements	No files applicable
Standard 8 Special Needs Agreement	No files applicable
Standard 9 Case Documentation	3 files (100%) compliant
Standard 24 Transferring Voluntary Services Files	1 file compliant (100%) 2 files not applicable
Standard 26 Closing Voluntary Services Files	No files applicable
Standard 27 Voluntary Services Protocols	1 file (100%) compliant 2 files not applicable

c) Compliance to Child Service Practice

The files were audited for compliance to the Aboriginal Operational and Practice Standards and Indicators, C4 Guardianship child service including:

- The quality and adequacy of the plan of care;
- The frequency and adequacy of the care plan review;
- The level of contact with the child;
- Placement stability and deciding when and where to move a child;
- The degree of stability and continuity provided to the child while in care;
- Informing the child and caregiver of the rights of children in care;
- Informing the child and caregiver of appropriate discipline policy; and,
- The level of file documentation.

Six (6) open child service file were audited. The overall compliance to the child service standards was **56%**.

The following provides a breakdown of the compliance ratings:

AOPSI – Guardianship and Voluntary Services (VS) Standards	
Standard 1 Preserving the Identity of the Child in Care and Providing Culturally Appropriate Services (VS 11)	5 files compliant 1 file non-compliant
Standard 2 Development of a Comprehensive Plan of Care (VS 12)	No files applicable
Standard 3 Monitoring and Reviewing the Child’s Comprehensive Plan of Care (VS 13)	6 files (100%) non-compliant
Standard 4 Supervisory Approval Required for Guardianship Services (Guardianship 4)	6 files (100%) compliant
Standard 5 Rights of Children in Care (VS 14)	1 files compliant 5 files non-compliant
Standard 6 Deciding Where to Place the Child (VS 15)	6 files (100%) compliant
Standard 7 Meeting the Child’s Need for Stability and continuity of Relationships (VS 16)	6 files (100%) compliant
Standard 8 Social Worker’s Relationship & contact with a Child in Care (VS 17)	6 files (100%) non- compliant
Standard 9 Providing the Caregiver with Information and Reviewing Appropriate Discipline Standards (VS 18)	6 files (100%) non-compliant
Standard 10 Providing Initial and ongoing Medical and Dental Care for a Child in Care (VS 19)	4 files compliant 1 file non-compliant 1 file not applicable
Standard 11 Planning a Move for a Child in Care (VS 20)	1 file (100%) compliant 5 files not applicable
Standard 12 Reportable Circumstances (VS 21)	No files applicable
Standard 13 When a Child or Youth is Missing, Lost or Runaway (VS 22)	No files applicable
Standard 14 Case Documentation (Guardianship 14)	3 files compliant 3 files non-compliant
Standard 15 Transferring Continuing Care Files (Guardianship 14)	3 file compliant 3 files non-compliant
Standard 16 Closing Continuing Care Files (Guardianship 16)	No files applicable
Standard 17 Rescinding a Continuing Custody Order (Guardianship 17)	No files applicable
Standard 19 Interviewing the Child about the Care Experience (Guardianship 19)	1 file (100%) compliant 5 files not applicable

Standard 20 Preparation for Independence (Guardianship 20)	No files applicable
Standard 21 Responsibilities of the Public Guardian and Trustee (Guardianship 21)	No files applicable
Standard 24 Guardianship Agency Protocols (Guardianship 24)	5 files compliant 1 file non compliant

Standard 8 Special Needs Agreement	No files applicable
Standard 9 Case Documentation	3 files (100%) compliant
Standard 24 Transferring Voluntary Services Files	1 file compliant (100%) 2 files not applicable
Standard 26 Closing Voluntary Services Files	No files applicable
Standard 27 Voluntary Services Protocols	1 file (100%) compliant 2 files not applicable

8. ACTION PLAN

On March 6, 2013, the following action plan was developed in collaboration between Gitxsan Child & Family Services Society and MCFD Office of the Provincial Director of Child Welfare & Aboriginal Services:

Actions	Person Responsible	Completion date	Actions taken to date
Resources:			

<p>1. St. 32 – Signed agreement with caregivers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review all resource files to ensure there are signed agreements. • Complete agreements for those that are required 	<p>Team Leader/Delegated Manager</p> <p>Team Leader/Delegated Manager</p>	<p>March 13, 2013</p> <p>April 30, 2013</p>	<p>Completed – March 13/13 Agency ED confirmed with practice analyst that all resource files were reviewed for signed agreements.</p> <p>Completed – April 30/13 Agency ED confirmed with practice analyst that all missing agreements have been completed.</p>
<p>2. St. 33 Monitoring & Reviewing the Family Care Home</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource files to be reviewed for reviews. • Complete annual reviews for those that are required. 	<p>Team Leader/Delegated Manager</p> <p>Team Leader/Delegated Manager</p>	<p>April 15, 2013</p>	<p>Completed – April 15/13 Agency ED confirmed with practice analyst that all resource files have current annual reviews on file. A BF system has been set up for the annual reviews.</p>
<p><u>Family Services:</u></p> <p>1. St. 5 Family Service Plan requirements for Support Services, Voluntary Care & Special Needs Agreements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review FS files for signed agreements/plans. 	<p>Team Leader/Delegated Manager</p>	<p>March 31, 2013</p>	<p>Completed – March 31/13 Agency ED confirmed with practice analyst that all family service files have been reviewed for</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Missing documentation to be completed immediately. 	<p>Team Leader/Delegated Manager</p>	<p>April 15, 2013</p>	<p>incomplete documentation. Completed – April 15/13 Agency ED confirmed with practice analyst that all incomplete documentation has been completed on the family service files.</p>
<p>2. St. 6 Support Service Agreements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review FS files for signed support service agreements. Missing documentation will be immediately completed. 	<p>Team Leader/Delegated Manager</p> <p>Team Leader/Delegated Manager</p>	<p>March 31, 2013</p> <p>April 15, 2013</p>	<p>Completed – March 31/13 Agency ED confirmed with the practice analyst that all family service files have been reviewed for signed support service agreements. Completed – April 24/13 Agency ED confirmed with practice analyst that all incomplete support service agreements have been completed.</p>
<p><u>Child Services:</u></p> <p>1. St. 5 Rights of Children in Care</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> GCFSS will meet with all children in care to review s.70 rights. The attached form (Appendix A) will be completed and signed according to instructions within 	<p>Team Leader/Delegated Manager</p> <p>Team Leader/Delegated Manager</p>	<p>March 31, 2013</p> <p>March 31, 2013</p>	<p>Completed – March 31/13 Agency ED confirmed with practice analyst that the SWs have reviewed S.70 with all children in care of the agency. Completed – March 31/13</p>

the document.			Agency ED confirmed with the practice analyst that the S.70 form has been reviewed and signed by all children in care of the agency.
<p>2. St. 14 Case Documentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All CS files to be reviewed for plans of care, recordings. CS files with missing plans of care will have these immediately completed. CS files with no current review recording will have these immediately completed and placed on file (see Appendix B). GCFSS will document ongoing contact and communication with the child and this information will be placed on the CS file. GCFSS will meet with all caregivers to review child specific information, and appropriate discipline standards. The meeting with caregivers will be documented on both the CS and RE files as applicable. 	<p>Team Leader/Delegated Manager Team Leader/Delegated Manager</p> <p>Team Leader/Delegated Manager</p> <p>Team Leader/Delegated Manager</p> <p>Team Leader/Delegated Manager</p> <p>Team Leader/Delegated Manager</p>	<p>March 31, 2013</p> <p>September 30, 2013</p> <p>April 30, 2013</p> <p>March 31, 2013</p> <p>March 31, 2013</p> <p>March 31, 2013</p>	<p>Completed – March 31/13 Agency ED confirmed with practice analyst that all CS files have been reviewed for incomplete documentation – plans of care, recordings. In progress – SWs working on completing outstanding CPOCs. Completed – April 30/13 Agency ED confirmed with practice analyst that review recordings have been completed for those CS files noted as incomplete and the recordings have been placed on file.</p> <p>Completed – March 31/13 Agency ED confirmed with practice analyst that all caregivers have been met with to review child specific information, and</p>

			appropriate discipline standards and it will be attached to CPOC.
<p>3. St. 15 Transferring Continuing Care files</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review all CS files being managed outside of the location service area, and arrangements made for co-management/transfer. Any exceptions to policy specific to the file transfer guidelines will have a plan presented immediately to the Director. 	<p>Team Leader/Delegated Manager</p> <p>Team Leader/Delegated Manager</p>	<p>March 31, 2013</p> <p>September 30, 2013</p>	<p>Completed - March 31/13 Agency ED confirmed with practice analyst that all CS files being managed outside of LSA have been reviewed & arrangements have been made for co-management/transfer.</p> <p>In progress Practice analyst provided exception form to agency on September 24/13.</p>

Appendix A

Rights of Children in Care – S. 70 CFCSA

Purpose: to ensure that all Children and caregivers are aware of the Rights of Children in Care as per Section 70 of the CFCS Act.

Procedure: social workers are to review the rights of Children in Care under the CFCS Act with all children in care and their caregivers. After the social worker has reviewed the document with the child/youth and all 3 parties are to sign and date this form acknowledging that these rights have been formally reviewed. In the event that the child/youth does not have capacity due to age, special needs etc, the social worker is to review this document with a relative or person who knows the child and has the capacity to act in the child's best interests (not including the caregiver of the child).

Note: even very young children, non verbal children/youth and children/youth with special needs must have these rights reviewed with them using child friendly, uncomplicated language.

70 (1) Children in care have the following rights:

- (a) to be fed, clothed and nurtured according to community standards and to be given the same quality of care as other children in the placement;
- (b) to be informed about their plans of care;
- (c) to be consulted and to express their views, according to their abilities, about significant decisions affecting them;
- (d) to reasonable privacy and possession of their personal belongings;
- (e) to be free of corporal punishment;
- (f) to be informed of the standard of behaviour expected by their caregivers and of the consequences of not meeting their caregivers' expectations;
- (g) to receive medical and dental care when required;
- (h) to participate in social and recreational activities if available and appropriate and according to their abilities and interests;
- (i) to receive the religious instruction and to participate in religious activities of their choice;
- (j) to receive guidance and encouragement to maintain their cultural heritage;

- (k) to be provided with an interpreter if language or a disability is a barrier to consulting with them on decision affecting their custody or care;
- (l) to privacy during discussions with members of their families, subject to subsection (2);
- (m) to privacy during discussions with a lawyer, the representative or a person employed or retained by the representative under the *Representative for Children and Youth Act*, the Ombudsman, a member of the Legislative Assembly or a member of Parliament;
- (n) to be informed about and to be assisted in contacting the representative under the *Representative for Children and Youth Act* or the Ombudsman;
- (o) to be informed of their rights, and the procedures available for enforcing their rights under
 - (i) this Act, or
 - (ii) the *Freedom of Information and Privacy Act*.

(2) A child who is removed under Part 3 is entitled to exercise the right in subsection (1) (l), subject to any court order made after the court has had the opportunity to consider the question of access to the child.

(3) This section, except with respect to the Representative for Children and Youth as set out in subsection (1) (m)(n), does not apply to a child who is in a place of confinement.

Child in Care Signature	Date:	Caregiver Signature	Date:
Significant Adult Signature	Date:	Social Worker	Date:

PROVIDE A SIGNED COPY TO ALL PARTICIPANTS

Appendix B Sample Review Recording

Name:

File #:

Resource Information:

Contacts: *school? therapists? social worker? Relatives and community members the children are in contact with? Respite caregivers?*

Aboriginal Community:

Family: *can copy location screen off MIS and format properly*

History of Involvement: *How did we become involved in this child's life? How long ago was that? What has involvement looked like to date? Where have the children resided? Why are the children not living together? Why were they separated? Describe the relationship of the children. What has planning looked like to date? Who has historically been involved in planning? When did the DAA receive the file? What has planning looked like since the DAA took over responsibility for managing this case? What have been the successes and struggles during this process?*

Health and Behaviour: *If there are assessments on file, what info do we have to support/dispute the validity of those assessments? What are the behavioural strengths, needs, concerns, current diagnosis? Meds? IEP with school? Learning differences?*

Cultural Planning: *Summarize what cultural planning has involved to date. Who has been involved? How has the cultural identity of the child been supported/fostered? What does the child know about their culture and heritage? Has the child been maintaining regular contact with their Aboriginal community and culture? If so, who have been the*

primary contacts and when was the last visit? Who took them? If not, what have been the impediments to ensuring this standard? You can do a separate cultural plan, or insert the cultural plan in here...cultural plan should list specific actions/activities that will take place, when they will take place, who will ensure it happens. ie. Trip to Cheslatta Nation on August 25, 2009 for the purpose of...child to be accompanied by guardianship worker... guardianship worker, etc. Drumming Group every Wednesday at the PGNFC from 5 – 7pm...transport provided by guardianship worker, supervision provided by whoever. Sibling and familial and community access. It would probably be better to do a separate cultural plan with this info. When you do the cultural plan include a history of the community (cut and paste from somewhere) and it would be important to include a genogram.

Service Plan: *reunification of siblings; resource needs; relationship with siblings and family; specific services to be provided; cultural needs and planning; educational needs; health and behavioural needs and services to be provided; ongoing guardianship responsibilities.*

Summary: *Include here a brief synopsis of the key pieces from history, cultural plan and service plan. Include your experiences, findings, observations and areas that you want to make sure are highlighted.*

Guardianship Worker

Date

Team Leader

Date

PRACTICE AUDIT SIGNATURE PAGE: GITXSAN CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES SOCIETY

The following recommendations have been added by the Deputy Director of Child Welfare:	



Alex Scheiber
Deputy Director of Child Welfare, MCFD

Date: September 26, 2013