



# Residential Review and Redesign Project Background

## Background

The Residential Review and Redesign Project is being jointly undertaken by the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) and the Federation of Community Social Services of BC (Federation) with the aim of improving the experience and outcomes of children and youth who are in some form of residential care delivered through MCFD. Our scope is broad - including kinship care, foster care, staffed care and tertiary care, within the child welfare, youth justice, child and youth mental health and special needs streams of service.

During phase one for the Project, the two partners gathered information from a variety of sources in order to better understand the current state of residential care for children and youth in BC – including what was working and what was not working well – and to understand what others believe makes a positive difference in the lives of children and youth who are in residential care. Through community and stakeholder consultations, reviews of research literature, reports and descriptions of initiatives from BC and other jurisdictions, and analysis of statistical data, a broad and deep understanding of residential care issues and opportunities has been developed.

The Project is not restricted to an identification of what resources are available or insufficiently available but also includes how those resources are developed, supported, and accessed. Accordingly, matters such as policies and procedures, recruitment and procurement practices, training, human resource supports and related concerns that directly support the operation of the residential care system are in scope.

## Types of Residential Services

The Project includes the full range of types of residential services broadly categorized into:

**Kinship Care:** includes the Extended Family Program (EFP) under section 8 CFCS Act, other kin-related Out of Care Options available under the CFCS Act such as transfer of guardianship to relatives, as well as placements of children in care with relatives through “restricted foster care”, i.e., all circumstances where children in need are assessed and placed with relatives with funding and supports through the CFCS Act.

**Foster Care:** foster care placements of children in care under the CFCS Act (excluding restricted foster care, which is included with kinship care).

**Contracted/Staffed Residential Care:** includes contracted, agency-based and staffed residential services such as group homes and shelters but also includes contracted family care-based models of residential services where, for example, agencies recruit, train and provide ongoing support to the family-based caregivers and the child or youth through supplementary staffing and programming.

**Tertiary Care:** includes mental health hospital-based facilities designated under the Mental Health Act and youth custody centres as well as any future Safe Care or Secure Care services that may be developed, all of which are (or would be) directly operated by MCFD or Health Authorities.





## Advisory Group & Project Team

The Federation and MCFD agreed that this review needed to be guided by people who were very knowledgeable about residential services. A Residential Review Consultation Advisory Group was established to provide overall advice and feedback on the project and findings. The Advisory Group is comprised of representatives from MCFD

and from the community services sector, across regions and areas of practice. See Page 3 for the list of Advisory Group members and the Project Team. This Project team is comprised of staff from MCFD and the Federation, working as equal partners, and is co-led by Jennifer Charlesworth, Executive Director of the Federation and Alan Markwart, Senior Executive Director from MCFD.

### *The Three Guiding Beliefs for the Project :*

- 1) All children and youth need permanency –safe, stable & nurturing homes and lifelong relationships.
- 2) Out-of-home residential placements are critical bridges between care and return home or to an alternative permanent family.
- 3) Every child in residential care should experience high quality care, as few placement disruptions as possible, achieve permanence as soon as possible, and be prepared for transition to adulthood as needed.

## The 4 Key Theme's that Emerged

**Achieving Permanency:** the organizing principle or framework within which residential services are provided and key outcome. Broadly understood as ensuring family, community and cultural connectedness and stability.

**Deliver an array of accessible residential services:** A comprehensive array that includes capacity to address the needs of children and youth with complex needs.

**Supporting Foster Caregivers:** Enhancing recruitment, retention, training and support in order to promote increased stability for children and youth while in care and to better support plans for reunification; transition to an alternative permanent family, or preparation for adulthood.

**Working Together:** Strengthening relationships

and decision-making processes through increased engagement with birth families, extended family, foster caregivers, service providers, community partners, children and youth.

## Next Steps & Final Reports

The next steps in the Project include:

**Working Sessions** - In March and April two 2-day working sessions with representatives from MCFD staff teams in each region, foster caregivers, community service providers and youth, to review findings, identify prospects and opportunities for action, and suggest and prioritize short, medium and longer term strategies for change. The first working session will take place March 15-16 and will address achieving permanency and strengthening foster care; the second will take place April 12-13 and will address the array of residential care services.



**Online Survey** - Near the end of April an online survey will be released that will be asking for feedback on the possible actions developed in the March and April Working Sessions.

**Key Informant Interviews** - In March and April we will initiate key informant interviews with leading scholars, practitioners and change-makers in the field of residential care, to obtain ideas and suggestions for residential care review.

Four reports are planned for summer 2011 completion: 1) *MCFD/ Federation Final Residential Review Report*; 2) *Report on the Aboriginal Consultation*;

3) *Report on Kinship Care*; 4) *Report on Specialized Tertiary Care*.

These reports, and their attendant recommendations, will inform the development of a MCFD five-year strategic plan of the residential services system. The five-year strategic plan will, given the current fiscal climate, involve no-cost and low-cost improvements in the initial years such as changes to policies and procedures, training, practices and communications, enhancements to collaborative work, realignment of existing resources, etc. before proceeding to address service and resource gaps in the later years of the plan.

### Advisory Committee Membership - January 2011

Name	Organization	Role
Alan Markwart	MCFD, Senior Executive Director Provincial Services	Co-Chair
Jennifer Charlesworth	The Federation of Community Services of BC, Executive Director	Co-Chair
Melanie Filiatrault	BC Federation of Foster Parents Association	Federation Member
Heather Bayes	BC Federation of Foster Parents Association	Federation Member
Laurie Birdsall	Pacific Community Resources Society	Federation Member
Gary Mavis	Federation of Aboriginal Foster Parents	Federation Member
Michele Fortin	Watari Youth and Family Alcohol and Drug Counselling Service	Federation Member
Nanette Taylor	Hollyburn Foster Parent Support Services	Federation Member
Shane Picken	ARC Programs	Federation Member
Jocelyn Helland	Federation of BC Youth in Care Networks	Federation Member
John Belfie	North Okanagan Youth and Family Services Society	Federation Member
Sandi Wiens	MCFD, Director, Policy and Legislation	MCFD Member
Rob Parenteau	MCFD, Director of Operations, Services to Aboriginal Children & Families	MCFD Member
Robert Watts	MCFD, Executive Director Of Integrated Practice, North	MCFD Member
Mark Armitage	MCFD, Regional Executive Director, Vancouver Island	MCFD Member
Dennis Padmore	MCFD, Regional Executive Director, Vancouver Coastal	MCFD Member
Phil Schwartz	MCFD, Provincial Services	Project Coordinator
Warren Helfrich	FCSSBC	Project Coordinator
Jackie Behrens	MCFD, Provincial Services	Project Team
Ken Moore	Executive Director of Maples (seconded to Project Team)	Project Team
Annette Harding	MCFD, Provincial Services	Project Team

For further information on the Project and any questions you may have, please refer to the Federation's website: [www.fcscbc.ca](http://www.fcscbc.ca) or contact Jennifer Charlesworth at [Jennifer@fcscbc.ca](mailto:Jennifer@fcscbc.ca)

