

The Emily Sam Inquest:

Below are the four recommendations made by the Coroner's Jury that pertain to Family and Children's Services, and the department's response.

Recommendation # 1: "All of Mr. David Barnes recommendations continue to be implemented."

- The Barnes recommendations have strong support from management and staff of Family & Children's Services. Accordingly there is a commitment to following through on implementation of the recommendations.
- David Barnes made 11 recommendations. Ten of the 11 are either fully implemented or being implemented. The 11th recommendation will be implemented once the current recruitment action is completed.

Recommendation # 2: "To further address Mr. David Barnes recommendation # 9 we recommend ALL extended family & caregivers involved with the child be listed with Family & Child Services. These people MUST have a RCMP background checks completed. Unless these conditions have been met they may NOT be involved with the care of the child. Time line: Effective Immediately"

- We understand why the jury made this recommendation
- It is F&CS policy and practice to require criminal record checks and personal references for anyone proposing to care for a child in the director's care and custody
- This requirement is a sensitive issue, particularly for extended family offering their homes to care for a child in the director's care and custody
- Where children are residing with their parents or other persons who have guardianship of the child, the legal responsibility for assessing the safety of alternate caregivers rests with the parent
- Part of our work with families already involves coaching parents to develop suitable "safety plans" to address risk areas in their lives. As part of this work we will instruct staff to pursue more rigorously with families the legal ability of extended family members to care for their children, and to include this information in the written case plan

Recommendation # 3: "To further address Mr. David Barnes recommendation # 10 regarding staff training on neglect, we recommend it be expanded to include a Public Awareness Education Program."

- We are especially pleased with this recommendation, since a longstanding concern of our child welfare service has been the connection between substance abuse by parents and the chronic neglect of children
- We will work with the department's Health Promotion unit, which has extensive experience designing and presenting successful public education campaigns, to create a public awareness education program.

Recommendation # 4: "All cases under the care of Family & Children's Services involving death have an independent review. Time Line: Effective Immediately"

- We fully agree with the need to do an independent review where any child dies while receiving services from F&CS
- Very few children either in care or involved with non-residential services have died over the past decade. The majority of these deaths were as a result of natural causes