

**For Immediate Release
Office of the Ombudsman
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OMBUDSMAN CONDUCTING INVESTIGATION INTO CHILD PROTECTION PRACTICES

VICTORIA – Acting Provincial Ombudsman Howard Kushner today announced that an investigation is being conducted into the child protection practices of the Ministry of Children and Family Development arising out of the recent issues involving the Ministry and Usma Nuu Chah Nulth Community and Human Services. “It is not our usual practice to announce an investigation at the outset,” noted Kushner. “But given the public concerns which have been raised, I have decided to inform the public of our involvement in conducting an independent review of the child protection practices of the Ministry.”

“The responsibility for establishing standards and investigating child protection concerns rests with the Ministry,” said Kushner. “Our role, in light of the concerns raised, is to determine whether the Ministry has taken adequate steps to ensure that the appropriate child protection standards are being upheld.”

In 2004, the Ombudsman Office responded to over 500 complaints and enquiries about the Ministry of Children and Family Development. “Our office has historically had a strong commitment to investigating concerns about public services to children and youth, a commitment which has continued even as the office has been restructured to meet reduced resources,” said Kushner.

“We respect the challenges and difficulties facing child protection staff when making decisions about the safety and well being of children,” he said. “Our interest is to ensure that the Ministry responds to current concerns and takes appropriate action to rectify any practice standards that may have been lacking.”

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