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Children and Family
Development*

2007/08 – 2009/10 SERVICE PLAN

February 2007



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Message from the Minister and Accountability Statement

I am pleased to present the 2007/08 – 2009/10 Service Plan for the Ministry of Children and Family Development. This plan reflects the Ministry's goals and our strategies to achieve them over the next three years.

B.C. has an outstanding system of support that protects and empowers children and assists and strengthens families. We aim to make it even stronger.

The Ministry is continuing to move forward on a comprehensive process of transformation that will enhance child and family development services in British Columbia. This will result in regionalized decision-making, including a new model for Aboriginal child and family services directed by Aboriginal people.

Throughout this process and beyond, child protection will remain a key ministry priority and a key element of B.C.'s child and family development services. Over the past year, more than 100 additional social workers have joined the provincial team and another 300 will be recruited over the next two years to provide added support at the community level.

This year's Service Plan reflects the Ministry's commitment to improve outcomes for B.C.'s young children. Participation in cross ministry programs such as StrongStart BC and ActNow BC support healthy development, literacy and early learning opportunities for children.

Over the next year, we will implement year five of B.C.'s Child and Youth Mental Health Plan to enhance services for B.C. children and youth struggling with or at risk of developing mental disorders.

2007 will also mark the launch of the Ministry's first provincial youth advisory council to give youth a stronger voice in designing policy and services to meet their needs.

The Ministry will continue to work with Community Living British Columbia¹, the Crown agency responsible for services for the developmentally disabled, to achieve its vision of people with developmental disabilities leading good lives in inclusive, supportive communities.

Working with our government and community partners, B.C. is building an integrated service system that makes a positive difference in the lives of children, youth and families. The Ministry has great focus, great staff and great commitment to accountability and quality assurance through case reviews, evaluation, monitoring and reporting. The Ministry has

¹ For further information see Community Living British Columbia's Service Plan at: <http://www.communitylivingbc.ca>.

challenging, yet achievable goals within this Service Plan to guide us as we help children and families build on their strengths, work through their challenges and achieve their aspirations.

The Ministry of Children and Family Development 2007/08 – 2009/10 Service Plan was prepared under my direction in accordance with the *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act*. I am accountable for the basis on which the plan has been prepared. All material fiscal assumptions and policy decisions as of February 12, 2007 have been considered in preparing the plan and I am accountable for achieving the specific objectives in the plan.



Honourable Tom Christensen
Minister of Children and Family Development and Minister Responsible for
Community Living British Columbia

February 12, 2007



Message from the Minister of State for Child Care

I am proud of the steps taken in British Columbia to provide the strongest start possible for B.C.'s children. Government has many valued partners who share the responsibility for enriching young minds and maximizing their potential.

Child care is one of the most vital resources for B.C.'s parents. Despite a significant challenge posed by the loss of federal early learning and child care funding, the Province is protecting services for the province's most vulnerable children and families. The Ministry is protecting the provincial subsidy program which supports approximately 25,000 low and middle income families, as well as the supported child development program which ensures more than 5,500 children with special needs can take part in community child care programs.

Quality child care, combined with early childhood and infant development initiatives, are critical to success in school and in life. That is why the Ministry enthusiastically supports cross government initiatives such as LEAP BC, Success by 6® and StrongStart BC.

Across government, we are working with parents, caregivers, Aboriginal organizations and other community groups to enhance services for children and youth with special needs such as Autism Spectrum Disorder, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, and early hearing screening and intervention services.

The Service Plan reflects the Ministry's commitment to expand community centre style hubs around the province that offer integrated child and family development, education and health services, thereby making it easier for families to access a full suite of services.

Another innovative way we are striving to ease pressures on busy families is through WorkLife BC. This province-wide campaign encourages employers to gain the edge in a competitive job market by offering greater workplace flexibility for employees. In addition, we are committed to the Boost BC campaign, delivered jointly with the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia and the British Columbia Automobile Association, to increase booster seat use in B.C. for children four to eight years of age.

Families, communities, businesses, organizations and government are all crucial partners in contributing to safe, supportive environments for our children. Working together, we are achieving the Province's goal of making B.C. the best place to raise a family, live and play, work, invest and get ahead.

I am the Minister of State for Child Care and under the *Balanced Budget and Ministerial Accountability Act*, I am responsible for the following results for 2007/08:

- Develop and implement an action plan to maximize the benefits of federal contributions for child care and prepare a strategy for transition to an appropriate level of provincial funding.
- Collaborate with the Ministers of Advanced Education, Health and Education to explore the potential for a pilot program for parents of children with Autism.



Honourable Linda Reid
Minister of State for Child Care

February 12, 2007

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Ministry Overview

Purpose of the Ministry

The Ministry of Children and Family Development promotes and develops the capacity of families and communities to care for and protect vulnerable children and youth, and supports healthy child and family development to maximize the potential of every child in British Columbia.

The Ministry is responsible for a wide variety of regionally and provincially delivered services and programs that support positive, healthy outcomes for children, youth and families. These include: family development, early childhood development, services for children and youth with special needs and their families, child care, child protection, residential and foster care, adoption for children and youth permanently in care, community child and youth mental health, programs for at-risk or sexually exploited youth, and community youth justice services. The Ministry is responsible for a number of specialized provincial services including youth custody, youth forensic psychiatric services, the Maples Adolescent Treatment Centre and services for the deaf and hard of hearing.

The Ministry is organized into five service regions: North, Interior, Fraser, Vancouver Coastal and Vancouver Island. The Ministry serves people directly and also contracts with service providers to deliver its complex array of services. Approximately 49 per cent of the Ministry's funding supports contracts with community-based service delivery organizations.

Service delivery partners include: contracted community organizations, other ministries, family foster homes, Aboriginal communities, delegated Aboriginal child welfare agencies, school districts and health authorities. The Ministry's legislative mandate includes: the *Child, Family and Community Service Act*, the *Adoption Act*, the *Youth Justice Act*, the *Child Care BC Act* and the *Child Care Subsidy Act*.

Vision, Mission and Values

Vision

The Ministry of Children and Family Development envisions a province where children are healthy and respected, families are responsible and all live in safe, caring and inclusive communities.

Mission

To promote and develop the capacity of families and communities to care for and protect vulnerable children and youth, and to maximize the potential of every child in British Columbia by supporting healthy child and family development.

Values

As an organization, the Ministry of Children and Family Development values:

- **Service Excellence:** Providing and supporting the delivery of quality, effective, evidence-based services that strive for the optimal use of resources;
- **Partnerships with Aboriginal People:** Working with Aboriginal communities to develop, implement and deliver services for Aboriginal children, youth and families — respecting traditions, cultures and beliefs; and,
- **Dynamic Organizational Culture:** Focusing on continuous learning, respect, accountability, innovation and leadership excellence.

The following values guide the planning and delivery of ministry services:

- **Protection of Vulnerable Children and Youth:** Upholding children's rights to support the safety and well-being of vulnerable children and youth;
- **Primacy of Family:** Supporting the right and primary responsibility of families to protect and support the growth and development of children and youth;
- **Supportive Services:** Using a strengths-based approach for services and providing the least intrusive service approaches to keep children and youth safe within their families whenever possible;
- **Integrity:** Ensuring actions align with values by promoting relationships of mutual trust, confidence and respect;
- **Partnerships and Participation:** Involving children, youth, their families and communities in the planning and delivery of services; and,
- **Fostering Community Capacity:** Recognizing and supporting communities so they can enhance the resilience of children, youth and families.

Strategic Context

The Ministry of Children and Family Development is establishing an integrated system of services designed to meet the needs of children and youth. The continuum of services encompass all of the Ministry's programs, including: prevention initiatives, early intervention and child and family development, and child protection services. As part of a comprehensive transformation process, all programs will be thoroughly evaluated and, where needed, changed to reflect a more efficient, flexible, culturally relevant, effective approach to services for children, youth, families and communities. The Ministry continues to build on successes to date, ongoing learning and best practices.

All communities, families, children and youth — regardless of the difficulties they may face — have substantial strengths and can contribute to their own well-being. The Ministry is taking an approach that focuses on these strengths and addresses the holistic and developmental needs of children and their families.

Federal Government Commitments

British Columbia works in partnership with the federal government to support early childhood development and child care services. Recent changes in federal funding to the province to support child care have resulted in a loss of \$455 million over the term of this Service Plan. This reduction in funding to the province will challenge the Ministry and its partners to find new and innovative ways to deliver services effectively.

The Ministry is committed to ensuring B.C. families have a range of quality, flexible, inclusive child care options, recognizing that child care is a shared responsibility. The Ministry looks forward to strengthening its partnerships with stakeholders including: parents, Aboriginal communities, school districts and community agencies to encourage the creation of more child care spaces, and to support the needs of B.C. children and families.

British Columbia continues to receive funding from the federal government under the Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Child Care to support early childhood development. The province is working with the federal government to secure a continuation of the federal contribution to support these services.

Independent Reviews of Ministry Services

During 2006/07, the Ministry received feedback from a number of external reviews concerning child welfare practices. Reviews have been forward looking, constructive and focused on continual improvements in the protection of children and youth. The Ministry has already made significant progress in implementing improvements to its practices. The Ministry remains committed to ongoing review of practices and policies to ensure that it builds on current successes and that services reflect best practices.

Increasing Integration and Collaboration with Other Ministries

In collaboration with other ministries, the Ministry leads the following priorities to support its goals:

- working with the Ministries of Health and Education to examine and improve service delivery for children and youth with special needs and their families. This includes: reviewing best practices around the world to improve access to services, establishing common criteria for eligibility, and achieving accountable, quality service delivery. This collaborative approach is currently guiding planning in the areas of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, Autism Spectrum Disorder and early hearing and intervention services;
- working with eight partner ministries to develop a new Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Provincial Plan for 2007/08 to 2010/11. The plan will summarize government-wide progress, establish government-wide priorities to address Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, and in consultation with community groups including Aboriginal organizations, incorporate the development and delivery of culturally appropriate services to Aboriginal children, youth and families; and,
- implementing (in 2007/08) year five of the Child and Youth Mental Health Plan for British Columbia to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of existing services and provide significant enhancements to service capacity.

The Ministry is working in collaboration with other ministries on the Social Sector Integrated Information Management Project to support the integrated, coherent delivery of social services. The project will include operational, front line and aggregate information for decision-makers at the program, ministry and sector level in a secure, privacy protecting manner.

Community Engagement

The Ministry continues to shift away from “top-down” service delivery to a more responsive system where community engagement in decision-making and service delivery are key priorities. The Ministry is proceeding with the devolution of authority and decision-making to the local level.

The Ministry is supporting Aboriginal people in developing their own governance models. As the first phase in this process, those Aboriginal planning committees that are ready to move forward to Interim Authorities will be supported to proceed as a Ministry priority.

Quality Assurance

The Ministry has — and oversees the use of — a wide range of quality assurance mechanisms including: the accreditation of service delivery organizations, audits, case reviews, evaluation, monitoring and reporting to ensure that planning decisions are linked to client satisfaction, efficiency, effectiveness and access. Staff and service providers follow local and international best practices to continually improve the effectiveness, efficiency and quality of services.

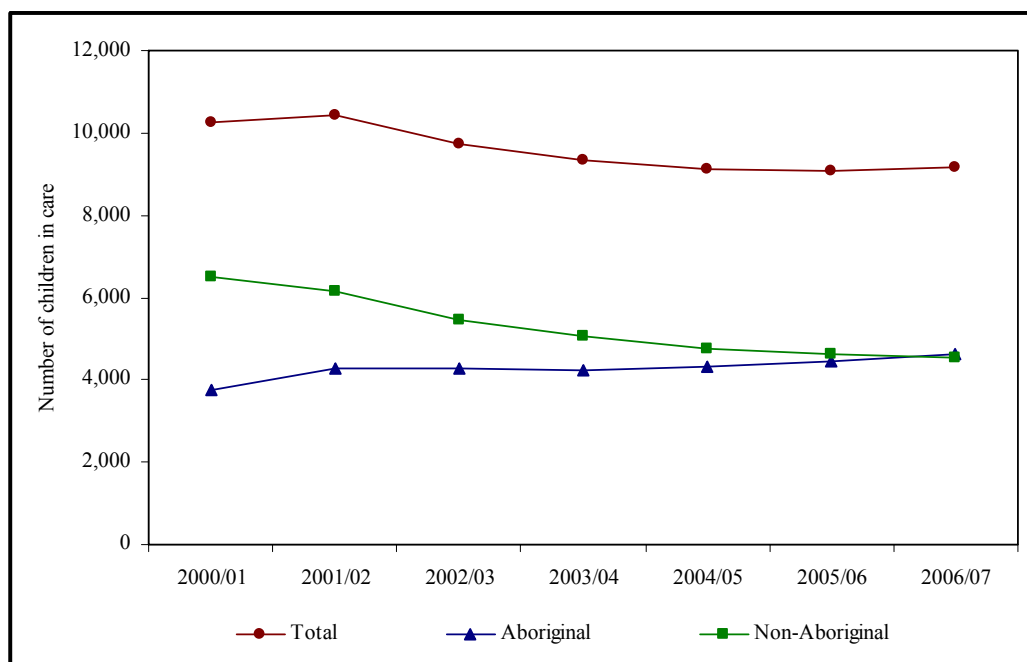
The Ministry is adopting comprehensive quality assurance mechanisms that are more integrated with ministry practices and build on the strengths of the Ministry, agencies and service providers. The Ministry is also assessing existing quality assurance mechanisms to ensure they align with the new approach. The Ministry will continue to support the accreditation of ministry and Community Living British Columbia contracted service providers and the implementation of performance-based contracts to help ensure that contracted service providers deliver efficient services that benefit children, youth, families and communities.

Demographic Changes

The following shifts and projections for the B.C. population may affect the demand for ministry services:

- The total population of children and youth (aged 0–18 years) in B.C. is approximately 900,000. Since 2000/01, this population has declined by 5 per cent and is projected to continue to decrease through to 2009/10;
- B.C.'s population of children aged 0–6 is projected to increase by 2.1 per cent from 2005/06 to 2009/10;
- Aboriginal children accounted for 9.3 per cent of the total child population in 2005/06 — up from 9.0 per cent in 2000/01; and,
- Aboriginal children continue to be disproportionately represented among children in the Ministry's care. Overall, the number of children in care declined by 11.3 per cent between 2000/01 and 2005/06 while the number of Aboriginal children in care increased. Of the B.C. child population, approximately 1 in 100 children are in the Ministry's care. Approximately 1 in 20 Aboriginal children are in the Ministry's care and approximately 50 per cent of all children in care are Aboriginal (Chart 1).

Chart 1. Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal Children in Care Caseloads



Notes:
 Figures reported are fiscal year averages (April to March).
 2006/07 results are December 2006 average year-to-date caseloads.

Workforce Changes

The Ministry is well served by a committed and professional workforce and is finding ways to support staff, particularly those who work in direct service delivery. However, as the workforce ages, a higher number of staff with significant experience are planning for retirement. There will be increasing competition for qualified staff, creating challenges for ministries and government, especially in rural communities. The Ministry's workforce issues vary from those of other ministries, particularly in the move to Aboriginal led service delivery.

To address these challenges and support the Ministry's workforce, ministry activities will include: building workforce capacity to support the move to Aboriginal led service delivery; enhancing capacity at the direct service delivery level to improve practice and develop skills that ensure an adequate level of social work services are maintained; and, defining the Ministry's future service delivery through collaborative consultation with community partners and regions. The Ministry is also addressing these challenges through its contribution to the government's Corporate Human Resources Plan.

The plan can be viewed at: http://www.bcpublicservice.ca/hrplan/CHRP_Oct06.pdf.

Core Business Areas

The Ministry's core business is children and family development, with a continuum of services ranging from prevention and early intervention, to specific care services.

The service continuum is supported by four key areas of budget responsibility: Child and Family Development; Early Childhood Development, Child Care and Supports to Children with Special Needs; Provincial Services; and Executive Support Services. These responsibilities will be realigned by 2008/09 to support a regionalized model of service delivery.

1. Child and Family Development

Child and Family Development provides a range of services for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children, youth and families including: child protection, residential, guardianship, foster care, permanency and adoption planning for children and youth permanently in care, community child and youth mental health services, community youth justice services, and services to strengthen and preserve families.

2007/08 Budget: \$704,733,000

Full-Time Equivalents: 3,114

2. Early Childhood Development, Child Care and Supports to Children with Special Needs

Early childhood development services include: family resource centres, infant development and supported child development. Child care services include subsidies and information services for families and funding and other supports for child care service providers. Developmental and support services for children and youth with special needs include: early intervention and school age therapies, family support programs such as nursing support services, medical benefits and key worker/parent supports for families of children with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, and intervention services for children and youth with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

2007/08 Budget: \$429,862,000

Full-Time Equivalents: 312

3. Provincial Services

Provincial Services includes the administration and delivery of specialized institutional services for children and youth such as: treatment programs for psychiatrically ill or conduct-disordered adolescents, youth custody services, youth forensic psychiatric services and services for the deaf and hard of hearing.

2007/08 Budget: \$61,267,000

Full-Time Equivalents: 621

4. Executive and Support Services

Executive and Support Services provides overall advice, direction, leadership and support to Ministry programs. This includes: overarching policy and legislative support, information technology, audit, staff development, performance management and related research functions, intergovernmental relations, and administrative services including facilities and records management, contracts, financial support and services to support the business of the Ministry.

2007/08 Budget: \$23,668,000

Full-Time Equivalents: 234

Community Living Services

Community Living British Columbia is a Crown agency responsible for directing operations, enforcing standards and managing funds related to the delivery of services to children and adults with developmental disabilities. For further information regarding Community Living British Columbia refer to: <http://www.communitylivingbc.ca>.

Ministry Monitoring — Community Living Services

This area provides general support and monitoring of Community Living British Columbia to ensure that service and financial accountability requirements are met.

2007/08 Budget: \$674,000

Full-Time Equivalents: 5

Transfers to Community Living British Columbia

These transfers provide funding to Community Living British Columbia for the governance, management, operations and delivery of services and supports to children and adults with developmental disabilities.

2007/08 Budget: \$646,440,000

Further Ministry Information

For more information on ministry programs and services, view: <http://www.gov.bc.ca/mcfd>. For an overview of the Ministry's Information Resource Management Plan, view: http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/about_us/irmp.htm.

New Relationship

The Government of British Columbia is leading Canada in developing a New Relationship with First Nations and Aboriginal people. Guided by principles of trust, and by recognition and respect of First Nations' rights and title, the Province is committed to building a stronger and healthier relationship between government and Aboriginal people. Working together will bring tangible social and economic benefits to Aboriginal people across the Province and narrow the gap between Aboriginal people and other British Columbians.

In order to improve the effectiveness of service delivery, the Ministry has worked with Aboriginal people and strengthened existing partnerships. As a part of this important work, the Ministry is supporting Aboriginal people in developing their own governance models for service delivery. As the first phase in this process, those Aboriginal planning committees that are ready to move forward to Interim Authorities will be supported to proceed as a ministry priority.

The Ministry works with a number of Aboriginal organizations to develop and deliver programs and services, such as child care and early childhood development. Collaborating with Aboriginal people will contribute to instilling cultural values in service providers' work and providing guidance for culturally appropriate service delivery.

The Ministry believes in reconnecting Aboriginal children in government care to their communities, culture and extended families. Aboriginal service delivery agencies are responsible for the direct delivery of child welfare services to Aboriginal people through 24 delegation agreements, serving approximately 31 per cent of Aboriginal children in care. The Ministry also works with First Nations and Aboriginal communities on approaches to improving child welfare service delivery and outcomes for ministry delivered services.

The Ministry is working closely with Indian and Northern Affairs Canada to provide a more effective approach to programs and services delivered on- and off-reserve for Aboriginal children and youth.

Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Results

Overview

Ministry Service Plan Goals

This section presents the Ministry's four goals:

1. The identification and strengthening of effective services for children, youth, families and communities in B.C. within a strengths-based, developmental approach.
2. The Ministry supports Aboriginal people to design regional models and implement services for Aboriginal children, youth, families and communities.
3. A fully regionalized model of governance and delivery of services.
4. Transform the Ministry of Children and Family Development as an organization to support Goals 1, 2, and 3.

Engagement and consultation with the children, youth, families and communities of British Columbia is a key component in supporting the safety, health and well-being of children and youth. This will require meaningful involvement and greater authority for communities and families with regard to decision-making, resources and service delivery.

The Ministry continues to evaluate its performance measures to ensure they are meaningful, reflect the direction of the Ministry and focus on the desired outcomes for the individuals receiving services. This work includes a process with Aboriginal and community partners to refine and develop additional performance measures to be included in the 2008/09 – 2010/11 Service Plan.

The Ministry continues to collect, monitor and make available additional statistics and reports² on trends and outcomes associated with services provided to children, youth and families.

Linkage to the Five Great Goals

The Ministry supports government's Five Great Goals for a Golden Decade:

1. Make British Columbia the best-educated, most literate jurisdiction on the continent.
2. Lead the way in North America in healthy living and physical fitness.
3. Build the best system of support in Canada for persons with disabilities, those with special needs, children at risk, and seniors.

² Please see: <http://www.gov.bc.ca/mcfd>.

4. Lead the world in sustainable environmental management, with the best air and water quality, and the best fisheries management, bar none.
5. Create more jobs per capita than anywhere else in Canada.

These goals provide an overarching focus and direction for all provincial ministries and agencies. Over the next three years, the Ministry will:

- contribute to Great Goal 1 through early childhood development and child care programming;
- contribute to Great Goal 2 through ActNow BC and other initiatives designed to promote healthy living for children in child care centres and for youth through programs such as life skills training in community centres;
- support Great Goal 3 through:
 - delivery of child welfare services;
 - implementing the Child and Youth Mental Health plan;
 - many cross ministry initiatives;
 - implementing initiatives to assist youth at risk; and,
- support Great Goals 4 and 5 where possible, through its programs and initiatives.

Strategies for achieving ministry goals and objectives are discussed in the Performance Plan section of this Service Plan.

Cross Ministry Initiatives

The Ministry is involved in a number of major cross ministry partnerships which provide a coordinated, comprehensive approach to addressing key issues and/or supporting government's Five Great Goals. The Ministry's actions in these areas include:

StrongStart BC

The Ministry of Children and Family Development is leading the coordination of initiatives across a number of ministries to help improve outcomes for B.C.'s young children. StrongStart BC supports the healthy development and early learning of young children (birth to age six). The initiative's priorities are: early diagnosis for hearing, sight and dental problems; booster seat awareness; informing parents of the link between early childhood physical education and skill development; building 16 new StrongStart Centres for early childhood education; and, enhancing language and cultural opportunities for Aboriginal children.

ActNow BC

This initiative led by the Ministry of Tourism, Sport and the Arts combines cross government and community-based approaches to promote healthy living choices for British Columbians. Programs and initiatives champion healthy eating, physical activity, tobacco cessation, and healthy choices during pregnancy. The Ministry supports this initiative by working with other ministries to prevent chronic disease and improve health and wellness, and by

increasing educational resources for early childhood development to improve population health and chronic disease prevention.

Literacy

The Government of British Columbia has set a goal to make B.C. the best-educated, most literate jurisdiction on the continent. To be considered literate, a person has sufficient reading skills to understand and process printed information encountered in everyday activities. The Ministry of Education is leading the development and implementation of the Provincial Literacy Action Plan — ReadNow BC — to help British Columbians improve their reading skills. The Ministry's early childhood development and readiness to learn initiatives support literacy development for children.

Crystal Meth Strategy

The Government's Crystal Meth Strategy, led by the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, counters the use and production of Crystal Meth through an integrated framework that strengthens partnerships among communities, service providers and law enforcement agencies. The Crystal Meth Secretariat was established in 2005 to support new and continuing initiatives based on prevention, treatment and enforcement. The Ministry is participating by distributing information and facilitating education about Crystal Meth and enhancing resources to support high-risk youth and the staff who support them.

Regulatory Reform

British Columbia continues to make regulatory reform a priority across government, making it easier for businesses to operate and succeed in B.C., while still preserving regulations that protect public health, safety and the environment. The Ministry supports government's Regulatory Reform Initiative and has implemented the Regulatory Reform Policy — targeting a zero net increase in regulatory requirements through 2007/08. The Ministry is committed to controlling the regulatory burden and improving regulatory quality by:

- analyzing adoption services processes to assess how and where time may be saved for children, youth and parents;
- identifying existing policies and regulatory requirements that may be streamlined or reduced once the adoption process analysis nears completion; and,
- monitoring all new ministry legislation, regulations and policies.

Citizen-Centred Service Delivery Initiative

Citizen-centred service delivery is a government-wide initiative to coordinate information, programs and services so that they can be presented to citizens in a way that takes their needs into account. The Ministry is committed to citizen-centred service delivery and uses the opinions and interests of the people served to define expectations, set priorities and establish service standards. The Ministry will continue to evaluate and improve programs and services to be more efficient, culturally relevant and effective based on international and local best practices. For example, Aboriginal people will play a central role in determining the delivery of services to Aboriginal children and families.

Performance Plan

Performance Plan Summary Table

Great Goals	Ministry Mission To promote and develop the capacity of families and communities to care for and protect vulnerable children and youth, and to maximize the potential of every child in British Columbia by supporting healthy child and family development.		
<p>1. Make British Columbia the best-educated, most literate jurisdiction on the continent.</p> <p>2. Lead the way in North America in healthy living and physical fitness.</p> <p>3. Build the best system of support in Canada for persons with disabilities, those with special needs, children at risk, and seniors.</p>	Ministry Goals	Ministry Objectives	Performance Measures
	<p>1. The identification and strengthening of effective services for children, youth, families and communities in B.C. within a strengths-based, developmental approach.</p>	<p>1.1 Supports to children, youth, families and communities recognize their strengths and enhance their development.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Per cent of children who enter kindergarten "ready to learn". Number of children whose families receive a child care subsidy. Per cent of socio-economically disadvantaged children whose grade level is as prescribed for their age. Rate of recurrence of child neglect and/or abuse by family.
	<p>2. The Ministry supports Aboriginal people to design regional models and implement services for Aboriginal children, youth, families and communities.</p>	<p>1.2 Children, youth and families have access to a wide range of support services that are more holistic and integrated.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Per cent of children with adoption plans who have been placed. Rate of youth in custody based on a proportion of all 12-17 year olds (per 10,000).
	<p>3. A fully regionalized model of governance and delivery of services.</p>	<p>1.3 Culturally appropriate services are strengthened and enhanced.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of children safely placed with extended family or in community as an alternative to coming into care.
	<p>4. Transform the Ministry of Children and Family Development as an organization to support Goals 1, 2, and 3.</p>	<p>2.1 Aboriginal communities and agencies have greater opportunities to design and deliver services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Per cent of Aboriginal children in care who are served by delegated Aboriginal agencies.
	<p>3.1 Regional governance models are developed by and for communities that align with unique community-based strengths, priorities and challenges.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance measure(s) under development. 	
	<p>4.1 Strengthened relationships with internal and external partners, stakeholders and communities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Per cent of agencies required to be accredited, that achieve accreditation. 	
	<p>4.2 Ministry employees are fully engaged, healthy and contributing to transformation in their work environment.</p>		

Goal 1: *The identification and strengthening of effective services for children, youth, families and communities in B.C. within a strengths-based, developmental approach.*

The primary responsibility for the healthy development of children and youth remains with the family. Stable, life-long attachments keep children and youth healthy, safe and respected in their communities. Families and their networks of support are best positioned to provide such attachment. Ministry services focus on enhancing the capacity of communities, individuals and families — recognizing and building on their inherent strengths — to help ensure that all children and youth are safe and respected; supported by healthy families and inclusive communities; physically, mentally and emotionally healthy; and, able to learn effectively.

There are times that children, youth and families require additional supports. The Ministry plays a key role in providing services and supports to meet these needs, including child protection services. The Ministry may provide or arrange support services for the family, supervise the child's care in the parents' home, or protect the child through removal from the family and placement with relatives, a foster family or specialized residential resources. There are many reasons why children and youth³ come into the care of the Ministry; it may be due to neglect⁴ or abuse, or the child may require medical or other special care. The most common reason is that parents are unable to care for their child.

Core Business Areas: *Child and Family Development, Early Childhood Development, Child Care and Supports to Children with Special Needs, Provincial Services, and Executive and Support Services.*

Objective 1.1: *Supports to children, youth, families and communities recognize their strengths and enhance their development.*

The Ministry, through its continuum of services, will play a vital role in supporting the diverse needs of children, youth and their families. Research has clearly shown that preventative and early childhood development and support services contribute to better outcomes for children and reduce the need for later intervention in families' lives. The Ministry is working in partnership with other ministries to plan and strengthen early childhood development and services for children and youth with special needs in B.C., to

³ The age of youth is defined differently depending on the program provided. For example, high risk youth refers to youth aged 16–18 while youth in the youth justice system includes youth aged 12–17.

⁴ Neglect is a failure by the parent or guardian to provide for a child's basic needs; it may include failure to provide food, shelter, basic health care, supervision or protection from risks, to the extent that the child's physical health, development or safety is, or is likely to be, harmed.

provide parents with information and to increase service choice and flexibility. The Ministry works in partnership with Community Living British Columbia to support services for children with special needs and their families.

The Ministry is committed to ensuring communities have access to quality and sustainable child care and preschool experiences. Child care programs are based on a family-centered approach that supports parents with as much choice as possible. Child care subsidies assist low and moderate income families with the cost of child care so they may pursue employment, education or other community activities such as volunteering, while providing quality early learning experiences for children. Supported child development services assist families with children with special needs to participate in community child care settings.

Families and communities increasingly participate in decisions about the care of children and youth, through such approaches as family group conferencing, mediation, kinship agreements and independent living arrangements for youth. In recent years, the Ministry has developed a range of options to protect and care for at-risk children and youth in their families and communities, rather than in foster care. The Ministry will use participatory evaluations to ensure that these options meet the needs of children, youth, families and communities.

Key strategies include:

- assisting in the development of a provincial early childhood development evaluation framework that can be used throughout B.C.;
- enhancing community-based family support programs to increase the number of families that are strengthened and better able to support their children and youth;
- working in partnership with the Ministry of Children's Services in Alberta, through the Trade, Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement, to establish a seamless transition between the two provinces for early childhood educators; and,
- providing additional support and educational planning through schools and caregivers to help socio-economically disadvantaged children succeed at school.

Performance Measures

The *Per cent of children who enter kindergarten "ready to learn"* measure relates to government and ministry priorities for early childhood development services that support children's readiness to learn. It is measured using the Early Development Instrument, coordinated by the Human Early Learning Partnership.⁵ The Early Development Instrument is administered by kindergarten teachers and assesses children's individual development in areas such as physical well-being, emotional health, social knowledge, language skills and general knowledge. The Early Development Instrument also highlights differences in

⁵ <http://www.earlylearning.ubc.ca> an interdisciplinary research institute in early childhood development involving six of B.C.'s universities.

children's development across neighbourhoods and helps communities to identify gaps and opportunities so they can plan for future investments. This measure is in the Province of B.C. Strategic Plan with a long-term target to reach 85 per cent by 2015/16.

The ***Number of children whose families receive a child care subsidy*** measure counts the monthly average number of child care subsidies provided by the Ministry. The number of subsidies in any given year depends on the number of families that apply. All eligible families who apply for child care subsidies receive funding. The child care subsidy targets reflect the expected uptake of the subsidy program (i.e., increased applications).

The ***Per cent of socio-economically disadvantaged children whose grade level is as prescribed for their age*** measure is determined through enrolment data from the Ministry of Education reported early in the school year. It measures how well socio-economically disadvantaged children are progressing in school and is a good measure of whether the system of support for disadvantaged children is generating desired outcomes. Targets for the measure reflect the government's 10-year commitment to reduce the gap between socio-economically disadvantaged children and other children with respect to grade level and children's age. This measure is in the Province of B.C. Strategic Plan with a long-term target to reach 95 per cent by 2015/16.

The ***Rate of recurrence of child neglect and/or abuse by family*** measure describes the proportion of families who neglect and/or abuse their children within 12 months of a previously confirmed incident of neglect and/or abuse. Recurrence within a set period of time may indicate an ongoing problem, which may signal the need for increased intervention services. Trends and the focus on reducing the neglect and abuse of children and youth have been factored into establishing targets for this measure.

Performance Measures	2005/06 Actual	2006/07 Target	2007/08 Target	2008/09 Target	2009/10 Target
Per cent of children who enter kindergarten “ready to learn”. ¹	Data available every three years		75%	Data available every three years	
Number of children whose families receive a child care subsidy. ²	22,612	24,000	24,480	24,480	24,480
Per cent of socio-economically disadvantaged children whose grade level is as prescribed for their age. ³	86% (95% for all other children)	87%	88%	89%	90%
Rate of recurrence of child neglect and/or abuse by family. ⁴	18.1%	17.5%	1% less than 2006/07 actual	1.5% less than 2007/08 actual	2% less than 2008/09 actual

¹ Data Source: HELP <http://www.earlylearning.ubc.ca/>. The 2007/08 target has been adjusted as preliminary information indicates less than 75% of children may be developmentally ready to learn.

² Results are based on monthly averages. 2007/08 target has been adjusted to reflect actual uptake. Future year targets will be adjusted as more information becomes available.

³ Socio-economically disadvantaged children are those that are in one or more of the following categories: Children in care; Children in out-of-care placements; Children of Income Assistance recipients; Children in the Home of a Relative; Individuals with youth agreements; and Children under supervision orders. This measure’s results are from multiple data sources.

⁴ Data Source: the Management Information System and the Social Worker System. The 2006/07 target has been restated to be consistent with national data collection methodology.

Objective 1.2: *Children, youth and families have access to a wide range of support services that are more holistic and integrated.*

The Ministry is committed to investing in community-based initiatives throughout the province that improve the integration of services and support a holistic service delivery system. Initiatives such as Success by 6® and Children First⁶ promote healthy pregnancy, birth and infancy; improve parenting and family supports; promote resiliency; strengthen community supports; and, build capacity across the province. The Ministry is also committed to supporting the development of neighbourhood hubs — centres where early child development, child care and family services are co-located to meet family and community needs.

⁶ Please see: http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/early_childhood/index.htm.

Research has shown that even where children and youth are at high risk for neglect or abuse, they can be very resilient when they have a close bond with an emotionally stable adult, enabling them to receive sufficient nurturing and establish a sense of trust.⁷ The Ministry strives to place children in care with people they know who will maintain a life-long relationship with them and their families, whether the placement is permanent (adoption), or temporary.

The Ministry is working to provide better services for specific child and youth populations, such as: youth in conflict with the law; children and youth at risk of, or suffering from, mental disorders; and, high-risk children and youth, such as those who are sexually exploited or homeless.

Key strategies include:

- supporting children and families involved in the adoption process in order to facilitate placements of children in care for adoption;
- supporting recruitment and educational events for families to support and strengthen their ability to care for adoptive children;
- implementing year 5 of the Child and Youth Mental Health Plan for B.C., in cooperation with the Ministries of Health and Education;
- developing, in partnership with stakeholders, a strategy to improve access to services for children, youth and families in rural and remote areas of the province;
- participating on the Premier's Task Force on Homelessness, Mental Illness and Addictions to increase transitional housing in the province;
- continuing to increase the effectiveness of community-based alternatives to youth custody through innovative, non-custodial approaches;
- continuing to work with Aboriginal communities and justice system partners to reduce the over-representation of Aboriginal youth in custody; and,
- working with the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General to address issues related to the sexual exploitation of youth, including human trafficking.

Performance Measures

The measure *Per cent of children with adoption plans who have been placed* indicates the number of children who are placed for adoption within a fiscal year as a percentage of all the children in care who are legally available for adoption and have a plan for adoption. The targets were set with consideration to other strategies, initiatives and consultations with the Ministry's regions. With fewer children in care over the past five years, there are smaller numbers of children each year for whom adoption will be an option.

⁷ Vaillant, G.E. (1993). *The wisdom of the ego*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. Werner, E.E. (1995). Resilience in development. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*. 4(3), 81-85.

The **Rate of youth in custody based on a proportion of all 12–17 year olds (per 10,000)** is the annual average of the daily population of youth (aged 12–17 years) in custody per 10,000 youth as a proportion of all 12–17 year olds in B.C. and is a standard measure used across Canada. The measure gauges the degree to which the youth correctional system relies on incarceration and indicates the effectiveness of community-based alternatives to custody. The targets are based on historical and demographic trends in B.C. Although the overall number of youth in custody has declined, diverting youth with low needs and those who commit minor offences to community justice programs has left a greater concentration of youth in custody with high needs (e.g., Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder and mental illness), and more serious offence histories.

Performance Measures	2005/06 Actual	2006/07 Target	2007/08 Target	2008/09 Target	2009/10 Target
Per cent of children with adoption plans who have been placed. ¹	17.7%	19%	18%	19%	20%
Rate of youth in custody based on a proportion of all 12-17 year olds (per 10,000). ²	4.2 per 10,000	Maximum 6 per 10,000	Maximum 6 per 10,000	Maximum 6 per 10,000	Maximum 6 per 10,000

¹ Data Source: The Adoption Management System. The 2007/08 target has been adjusted to reflect a declining number of adoptions in 2006/07.

² Data Source: The Management and Analysis Reporting System and BC Stats.

Objective 1.3: *Culturally appropriate services are strengthened and enhanced.*

Research and experience confirm that maintaining and improving the safety and well-being of children and youth is best achieved in the context of healthy families and inclusive communities. Strengthening and enhancing culturally appropriate services to B.C.'s diverse population of vulnerable children, youth and families is a Ministry priority.

Key strategies include:

- supporting new community-based Aboriginal service systems to better reflect Aboriginal cultures, traditions and languages;
- utilizing an Elders' advisory council to ensure that the voice of Aboriginal people is heard in the design and delivery of services and working with Aboriginal Planning Tables to ensure inclusive planning and appropriate services for Aboriginal children, youth and families;
- working with Early Intervention Therapy stakeholders and Aboriginal community representatives to develop practice guidelines that foster multi-disciplinary teams and assessment strategies for children and youth requiring intervention support services;

- continuing to provide information to support the service and cultural needs of children who are deaf or hard of hearing and their parents, through the Deaf Access Office and a consultative social worker who provides advice to all social workers throughout the province;
- supporting the involvement of ethno-cultural committees in ministry planning to reflect the cultures, traditions and languages of all ethnicities in British Columbia; and,
- providing information resources for parents and families that are accessible to more cultures, including translated print resources.

Performance Measure

One of the key elements of the child welfare system is placing children with people who know them and will maintain a life-long relationship with them and their families when they return to their parents. The ***Number of children safely placed with extended family or in community as an alternative to coming into care*** reflects the importance of maintaining the continuity of family and community relationships for vulnerable children. The measure captures the use of a variety of options for keeping children and youth out of care and for children and youth leaving care (through placements with kin or a person with significant ties to the child). The targets for this measure are set based on historical trends.

Performance Measure	2005/06 Actual	2006/07 Target	2007/08 Target	2008/09 Target	2009/10 Target
Number of children safely placed with extended family or in community as an alternative to coming into care. ¹	642	700	700	700	700

¹ Data Source: Management Information System and the Social Worker System. The 2007/08 target has been adjusted to reflect practice shifts. Future year targets will be adjusted as more information becomes available.

Goal 2: *The Ministry supports Aboriginal people to design regional models and implement services for Aboriginal children, youth, families and communities.*

Historically, Aboriginal people viewed B.C.'s child welfare system with distrust. During the 1960s and 70s, many Aboriginal children and youth were placed with non-Aboriginal families, and child welfare workers were generally seen by Aboriginal people as a threat to their families and communities. During the 1980s, Aboriginal communities began to raise awareness around the need for an Aboriginal service delivery system. By the early 1990s, attitudes — and the child welfare system — had changed dramatically. The *Child, Family and Community Service Act* supported Aboriginal communities to establish their own child and family service agencies with delegated child welfare authority from the Ministry,

explicitly recognizing the vital importance of culture and heritage and the need to preserve ties to family and community.

Aboriginal people, in collaboration with the Ministry, will lead the planning, development and delivery of services in their communities and continue to develop a network of partnerships with Aboriginal organizations. Aboriginal families and communities are actively engaged in making decisions that affect them and ministry services in general have become much more culturally responsive. The Ministry supports the development and expansion of delegated Aboriginal agencies in order to provide Aboriginal children and families with services that are more consistent with their culture.

Core Business Areas: *Child and Family Development, Early Childhood Development, Child Care and Supports to Children with Special Needs, Provincial Services, and Executive and Support Services.*

Objective 2.1: *Aboriginal communities and agencies have greater opportunities to design and deliver services.*

Aboriginal people will lead the design and implementation of child and family development services for Aboriginal children, youth, families and communities delivered by Aboriginal people. The Ministry will learn from and respond to its partners in order to support Aboriginal leaders and their communities to identify needs and develop solutions for their own communities.

Delegated Aboriginal agencies provide essentially the same services as ministry child welfare workers, with delegated authority under the *Child, Family and Community Service Act*. In consultation with Aboriginal leaders, the Ministry is working to increase the scope of services delivered by Aboriginal agencies and communities in order to increase the central role of B.C.'s Aboriginal people in the service delivery system.

Key strategies include:

- supporting Aboriginal planning processes to enable development of regional models;
- identifying, documenting and showcasing Aboriginal best practices with children, youth and families;
- continuing to support new delegated Aboriginal agencies and expanding the scope of existing Aboriginal agencies in order to support the safe transfer of children in care to the care of delegated Aboriginal agencies; and,
- reviewing employment criteria and strengthening curriculum and training for First Nations and Métis child and family service practitioners to bring more Aboriginal people into the service delivery system.

Performance Measure

The *Per cent of Aboriginal children in care who are served by delegated Aboriginal agencies* is a measure of the proportion of Aboriginal children in care who are receiving services delivered by and for Aboriginal people. Targets are based on the continuation of strategies to safely transfer responsibility for children in care of the Ministry to delegated Aboriginal agencies.

Performance Measure	2005/06 Actual	2006/07 Target	2007/08 Target	2008/09 Target	2009/10 Target
Per cent of Aboriginal children in care who are served by delegated Aboriginal agencies. ¹	30.6%	36%	36%	To be determined	To be determined

¹ Data Source: the Management Information System and the Social Worker System. The 2007/08 target has been revised to reflect progress to date.

Goal 3: A fully regionalized model of governance and delivery of services.

The Ministry recognizes the value of people participating directly in decisions that affect them. A community has firsthand knowledge of the challenges it faces and is better positioned to inform and enable the best local service delivery system. Moving the governance and delivery of services to a regionalized model will enhance the capacity of regions to make decisions and deliver programs and services that better meet the needs of their children, youth, families and communities. Best practices at the community level will guide service delivery and the Ministry will support communities to develop the services that best meet their unique needs. The Ministry is developing performance measures to support this goal and related objectives in consultation with its stakeholders.

Core Business Areas: *Child and Family Development, Early Childhood Development, Child Care and Supports to Children with Special Needs, Provincial Services, and Executive and Support Services.*

Objective 3.1: *Regional governance models are developed by and for communities that align with unique community-based strengths, priorities and challenges.*

Children, youth, families and communities are in the best position to identify their strengths, priorities and challenges. In partnership with families and communities, the Ministry will move to assessment and decision-making strategies that identify unique strengths, needs,

and risks of communities and those they serve in order to develop governance models based on a continuum of services.

The Ministry is committed to investing in community-based initiatives that reflect integration of services at the community level. The Ministry will continue to build on good practices and research through initiatives such as piloting innovative projects. Reviewing alternatives to foster care, supporting early childhood development and expanding community service hubs are examples of the Ministry's commitment to ensuring regional services are integrated and reflect local solutions.

Key strategies include:

- decentralizing decision-making, resources and services to the regional and community levels;
- supporting the development of community and regional plans based on a continuum of services;
- providing collaborative planning options and processes to engage families and community members. Examples include family group conferences to bring children, youth, families, extended families and professionals together to plan for keeping a child safe and the use of traditional cultural practices for planning and resolving disagreements;
- providing leadership with ministry partners to establish or expand five community hubs to support early child development and learning that offer integrated services for families;
- supporting extended family and community members to care for vulnerable children and youth through kinship care agreements and other alternatives to foster care;
- enhancing community-based family support programs such as Family Resource Programs that provide parent education, support and opportunities for families to learn parenting skills and enhance their resiliency; and,
- developing in partnership with stakeholders, a strategy to improve access to services for children, youth and families in rural and remote areas of the province.

Goal 4: Transform the Ministry of Children and Family Development as an organization to support Goals 1, 2, and 3.

The Ministry is accountable for the quality and availability of its services, including those delivered by its contracted service providers. The Ministry continues to implement performance-based contracts with agencies and community organizations to improve service quality and ensure available resources reach the people who need them most.

The Ministry is evaluating the way it does business and strengthening its processes and practices in order to achieve the Ministry's goals and objectives more effectively. The process includes building and strengthening new and existing relationships to help ensure that children and youth are healthy and safe in their families and communities. It also includes providing an environment where staff are fully engaged, healthy and contributing to the

Ministry's goals, within a dynamic organizational culture that focuses on continuous learning, respect, accountability and leadership excellence.

The Ministry is developing performance measures to support this goal in consultation with its stakeholders.

Core Business Areas: *Child and Family Development, Early Childhood Development, Child Care and Supports to Children with Special Needs, Provincial Services, and Executive and Support Services.*

Objective 4.1: *Strengthened relationships with internal and external partners, stakeholders and communities.*

The Ministry will continue to build on successful partnerships with service providers, school districts, community agencies, Aboriginal communities, municipalities, the federal government, other provincial ministries, families, children and youth — developing tools and leveraging opportunities to increase collaboration in service design and implementation. The Ministry will use the tools of accountability, quality assurance, monitoring, evaluation and performance-based contracting to ensure service excellence. In addition, accreditation of agencies ensures that service providers operate within a set of internationally-recognized quality assurance standards and best practices.

Key strategies include:

- supporting organizations to achieve and maintain accreditation;
- working with the government's Chief Information Officer on a case management project to improve service delivery and planning;
- encouraging youth participation in a youth advisory council to ensure their perspectives are included in the design and delivery of services; and,
- reviewing and implementing effective complaint resolution procedures which are based on problem-solving and restorative practices.

Performance Measure

The *Per cent of agencies required to be accredited, that achieve accreditation* assesses the proportion of agencies who achieve accreditation out of those who are required to be accredited. All agencies receiving more than \$500,000 annually from the Ministry are required to be accredited.

Performance Measure	2005/06 Actual	2006/07 Target	2007/08 Target	2008/09 Target	2009/10 Target
Per cent of agencies required to be accredited, that achieve accreditation. ¹	70%	100%	100%	100%	100%

¹ Data Source: Accreditation database and reporting from agencies.

Objective 4.2: *Ministry employees are fully engaged, healthy and contributing to transformation in their work environment.*

The Ministry's greatest strength is its staff — the dedicated, talented individuals who choose to serve the province's most vulnerable children, youth and families. To support them, the Ministry is promoting innovation, emphasizing continuous learning, encouraging dynamic leadership and recognizing strengths in an environment that upholds the principles of respect, integrity, fairness, transparency, consistency and equity. A confident, competent, valued and empowered staff will lead to increased empowerment of the whole service delivery system — ensuring that every child, family or community served has opportunities to use and build support networks and to act on their own choices and sense of responsibility.

Key strategies include:

- providing professional development opportunities to staff with an emphasis on front-line staff, community service managers, practice analysts and leaders to build the specific skills and experience they need to develop fulfilling, rewarding career paths;
- emphasizing respect, trust, innovation, well-being and teamwork in all of the Ministry's activities to ensure that all staff can participate as fully as possible in decision-making regarding the Ministry's service delivery and the work environment; and,
- incorporating recruitment and retention activities consistent with government's Corporate Human Resources Plan to ensure sufficient human resources, including recruitment and retention of Aboriginal staff within the Ministry's provincial and regional offices.

Resource Summary

Core Business Areas	2006/07 Restated Estimates ¹	2007/08 Estimates	2008/09 Plan	2009/10 Plan
Operating Expenses (\$000)				
Ministry Operations Vote				
Child and Family Development.....	643,234	704,733	722,526	729,834
Early Childhood Development, Child Care and Supports to Children with Special Needs ²	535,332	429,862	451,585	461,705
Provincial Services.....	59,120	61,267	62,253	63,114
Executive and Support Services.....	22,570	23,668	24,293	24,553
Total Ministry Operations	1,260,256	1,219,530	1,260,657	1,279,206
Community Living Services Vote				
Ministry Monitoring — Community Living Services.....	666	674	680	686
Transfers to Community Living British Columbia ..	611,963	646,440	672,811	701,796
Total Community Living Services	612,629	647,114	673,491	702,482
Total Ministry	1,872,885	1,866,644	1,934,148	1,981,688
Full-time Equivalents (Direct FTEs)				
Ministry Operations Vote				
Child and Family Development.....	2,939	3,114	3,139	3,139
Early Childhood Development, Child Care and Supports to Children with Special Needs.....	275	312	313	313
Provincial Services.....	621	621	621	621
Executive and Support Services.....	227	234	238	238
Total Ministry Operations	4,062	4,281	4,311	4,311
Community Living Services Vote				
Ministry Monitoring — Community Living Services.....	5	5	5	5
Transfers to Community Living British Columbia ..	—	—	—	—
Total Community Living Services	5	5	5	5
Total Ministry	4,067	4,286	4,316	4,316

Ministry of Children and Family Development

Core Business Areas	2006/07 Restated Estimates ¹	2007/08 Estimates	2008/09 Plan	2009/10 Plan
Ministry Capital Expenditures (Consolidated Revenue Fund) (\$000)				
Ministry Operations Vote				
Executive and Support Services	26,282	19,517	13,853	13,853
Total Ministry Operations	26,282	19,517	13,853	13,853
Other Financing Transactions (\$000)				
Ministry Operations Vote				
Executive and Support Services				
— Human Services Providers Financing Program				
Receipts	36	125	125	125
Disbursements	0	0	0	0
Net Cash Source (Requirements)	36	125	125	125

NOTES:

¹ These amounts have been restated, for comparative purposes only, to be consistent with the presentation of the *Estimates* 2007/08. Schedule A of the *Estimates* 2007/08, presents a detailed reconciliation.

² Amounts have been adjusted to reflect the federal government's decision to discontinue the Agreement-in-Principle between the government of Canada and government of B.C. for Early Learning and Child Care (September 2005).

Appendices

Appendix 1: Information to Note

About Us

For online information about the Ministry view:
http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/about_us/index.htm.

Contact Information

For questions or enquiries about Ministry services phone toll-free **1 877 387-7027** if you are outside Greater Victoria. In Victoria phone **387-7027**. Staff with the Client Relations Branch of the Provincial Office can provide general information regarding Ministry services, and specific enquiries are referred to program staff or regional offices. The mailing address for the Ministry of Children and Family Development is: PO Box 9770 Stn Prov Govt Victoria, B.C. V8W 9S5. For phone numbers and addresses of Ministry offices see the provincial government blue pages of a telephone book, or view the information online: http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/regions/regional_offices.htm.

Helpline for Children in British Columbia

Phone **310-1234**, free from anywhere in the province anytime; to use the telephone device for the deaf, dial **1 866 660-0505**. The Helpline for Children provides round-the-clock access to professionals to respond to concerns that a child under the age of 19 years may be abused. Abuse can be abandonment, desertion, neglect, ill-treatment or failure to meet physical, emotional or medical needs. Calls can be anonymous — and abuse can be stopped. For online information view: http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/getting_help/help.htm.

Adoption Site — for information on adopting one of B.C.'s waiting children

For information on adopting a child, phone toll-free in B.C.: **1 877 ADOPT 07 (1 877 236-7807)** or phone a nearby ministry office. Hundreds of children in the permanent care of the Ministry are waiting to be adopted into permanent, loving families. Applicants do not need to be married, wealthy or own their own home to adopt a waiting child. Please phone today for information or view: <http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/adoption/index.htm>.

Be a Foster Parent — B.C.'s foster parents make a positive difference for vulnerable children in need

For information, phone the B.C. Federation of Foster Parent Associations' Fosterline at **1 800 663-9999** (outside B.C. phone **1 604 660-7696**) or the Federation of Aboriginal Foster Parents toll-free at **1 866 291-7091**. For online information view: <http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/foster/>.

Child Care B.C. Helpline — for information on child care

For information and referrals for B.C. child care programs and services for parents and child care providers phone **1 888-338-6622**. For online information view: <http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/childcare/>.

Autism Site — for information for parents on Autism Spectrum Disorders

For online information view: <http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/autism/index.htm>.

Human Early Learning Partnership (HELP) Site — for information on early childhood development research

For information on the Human Early Learning Partnership (HELP), an interdisciplinary research partnership related to early child development view: <http://www.earlylearning.ubc.ca/>.

Community Living British Columbia's Website

For information on services for children and adults with developmental disabilities, phone **1 877 660-2522**. For online information view: <http://www.communitylivingbc.ca/>.

Appendix 2: Glossary of Terms

Child and youth mental health: refers to children and youth with mental disorders that interfere significantly with daily functioning, such as: anxiety disorder, conduct disorder, attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder, any depressive disorder, substance abuse, pervasive development disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, schizophrenia, Tourette's disorder, any eating disorder and bipolar disorder.

Child care: refers to the care and supervision of a child in a child care setting, other than: a) by the child's parent; or, b) while the child is attending an educational program provided under the *School Act* or the *Independent School Act*.

Children in care: refers to any child under 19 years of age in the care of the Director under the *Child, Family and Community Service Act*.

Children and youth with special needs: children with special needs have significant impairments in one or more of the following areas: health, cognition, behaviour, communication, sensory motor, social/emotional/behavioural or self-help (adaptive), and require specialized supports to enhance or improve their health, development or participation in daily activities at home, school and in their communities.

Delegated Aboriginal agencies: refers to Aboriginal agencies with delegated child welfare authority under the *Child, Family and Community Service Act*.

High-risk youth: refers to youth aged 16 to 18 who experience significant and often multiple challenges in their transition to adulthood such as: sexual exploitation, alcohol and drug misuse, living on the street, and mental health problems.

Out-of-care options: alternative care arrangements with extended family or close friends for children at risk of neglect or abuse who are temporarily unable to live with their parents.

Sexually exploited youth: refers to a person under the age of 19 who has been manipulated or forced to engage in sexual activity in exchange for money, drugs, food, shelter or other considerations.

Strength-based approach: approach for service planning and delivery that focuses on the substantial strengths of communities, families, youth and children — regardless of the difficulties they face — and acknowledges the ability of each to contribute to solutions to address their identified needs.

Supported child development: a range of consulting and support services that support children with special needs to participate in inclusive community child care settings, including preschool.