



Northwest Alberta  
Child and Family Services  
Authority

# **Business Plan 2007-10**

**Alberta**

# Northwest Alberta Child and Family Services Authority

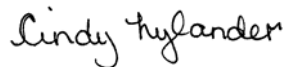
BUSINESS PLAN 2007-10

## ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT

This business plan for the three years commencing April 1, 2007 was prepared in accordance with the *Government Accountability Act, Child and Family Services Authorities Act*, and directions provided by the Minister of Children's Services. All material economic, and fiscal implications known at March 26, 2006 have been considered in preparing the business plan.

The Child and Family Services Authority's priorities outlined in the business plan were developed in the context of the business and fiscal plans of the Ministry of Children's Services. We are committed to achieving the planned results laid out in this business plan.

Signed by the Child and Family Services Authority Co-Chairs on behalf of the Northwest Child and Family Services Authority.



Cindy Nylander  
March 28, 2007



Judy Ostrowski  
March 28, 2007

## MINISTRY VISION

*Strong children, youth, families and communities.*

## MINISTRY MISSION

*Working together to enhance the ability of families and communities to develop nurturing and safe environments for children, youth and individuals.*

## CFSA VISION

*Safe, supported children and youth in nurturing families and communities.*

## CFSA MISSION

*Working in collaboration with partners for children and youth.*

## **SIGNIFICANT OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES**

### **Cost of Living**

The Northwest region is experiencing many of the same impacts of prosperity as the rest of the province, and in some ways more significant impacts. Lack of housing is an issue in many parts of the region, and the high cost of renting or purchasing what housing is available is creating hardships for many who would be considered to have good incomes. For those on a fixed income, such as AISH or SFI, the situation is unmanageable. Cost of living in the Northwest has been assessed at one of the highest levels in the country, in market-basket assessments of fuel, utility, grocery costs and such; making the perceived prosperity somewhat of an illusion.

### **Support Services**

Infrastructure, health and support services are not growing at the same rate as the population, and the primarily young people and families moving to the area find themselves without the services they require. Lack of medical professionals and skilled support people means that routine health care is difficult to access, and specialists needed to diagnose disabling conditions or mental health disorders are extremely rare. Timely access to developmental supports like speech therapy is prohibitive, and even accessing respite for a break can be very difficult for families. This reality has impacts on both FSCD and Intervention services, creating barriers to meeting all the needs of the children and families working with CFSA programs. The CFSA continues to work at integrating technology such as videoconferencing to create options for making such supports available.

### **Employment and Market Conditions**

Another impact of prosperity is that service providers are unable to hire and retain staff due to the inflated wages offered by other employers trying to compete for limited staff. Contracts are not keeping pace with the community wage standard, creating vacancies and putting extra pressures on the remaining staff. Smaller communities may be hit even harder, as they have a smaller pool of options to begin with. This issue, as well as skyrocketing costs for the buildings that house the programs, has led to closures of day cares and group homes; the result being that these services are not available to those who need them. The resulting lack of child care spaces, both pre-school and after school care, is a pressure point all around the region and creative solutions must be found by working closely with the community.

### **Urban shift**

Due to rapid growth, our major regional center, Grande Prairie, has crossed the threshold into a fully urban center with all the issues that accompany this. We find the services and community struggling to respond to more complex and disturbing issues. Increasingly, staff are responding to situations where drug production is occurring, and this is causing safety concerns for staff as well as the children living in these environments. Increased issues of prostitution/sexual exploitation of teens by older males has led to an increased use of responses through the *Protection of Children Involved in Prostitution Act*. Practice shifts and approaches must be made, and the implementation of the Casework Practice Model will provide a framework to guide this change. At the same time, it is possible that the growth may result in a greater range of supports and services over time, as skilled professionals are attracted to the area.

### **Family Violence and Bullying**

Family Violence continues to be a significant issue in all parts of the region but communities have embraced the opportunity to address this. Community-based networks continue to develop, numerous proposals for the Community Incentive Fund are submitted each year and training on the amendments to the *Protection Against Family Violence Act* has resulted in greater usage of its protective measures. An emphasis on family violence and bullying has resulted in implementation of new initiatives related to prevention, such as Roots of Empathy, and intervention through joint response teams including RCMP, Victim's Services and CFSA staff.

### **Aboriginal Children, Youth and Families**

The Northwest region is fortunate to have access to a wealth of partners in the Aboriginal community whose involvement can provide more options for permanency, cultural teachings and support, and guidance in providing services in a culturally appropriate manner. Nurturing these relationships is crucial to obtaining better outcomes for the disproportionately high number of Aboriginal children receiving services from the CFSA.

## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 2007-10

Through the CFSA's review of external and internal challenges, the strategic priorities described below have been identified. These are in addition to the important ongoing core activities of the CFSA

- 1. Continue to work at preventing, and responding to, family violence and bullying.**

Northwest Alberta CFSA has committed to incorporating the Prevention of Family Violence and Bullying principles and approaches into all CFSA services/programs. Community capacity building is underway through community-based networks who are addressing family violence and bullying in their area. Significant partnering projects have been established and are running as pilots, and the CFSA is committed to expanding these across the region to further enhance supports and services to address these issues.

**Linkage: Goals 1, 2 & 5**
- 2. Continue to support the development of new, and enhance existing early learning and childcare options.**

Continuing to implement the regional Strategic Plan for early learning and child care, the region will work with partners to; expand services and supports, build on existing partnerships and contracts, and work with communities to create solutions to their child care needs. Improving care options for families of children with disabilities will continue to be a focus area, as will meeting the needs of specific cultural and geographic communities. Phasing in of new Parent Link centers will continue as planned.

**Linkage: Goal 1 & 2**
- 3. Improve outcomes by continuing to enhance the range and impact of Aboriginal services and supports.**

Through partnerships with Aboriginal communities and organizations, the CFSA will further develop the means to support Aboriginal children and families in a manner that is culturally relevant and appropriate. The CFSA will continue to focus on permanency planning so that Aboriginal children achieve permanency early, or transition to adulthood successfully, with culturally appropriate environments and supports.

**Linkage: Goal 1, 4 & 5**
- 4. Improve outcomes for all children and youth receiving services, with emphasis on those in care.**

The casework practice model will improve outcomes by supporting a shift to more preventative involvement and allowing creative and non-intrusive responses to best meet family needs. The CFSA will also continue to focus on permanency for children in care and better outcomes for those involved in all programs across the continuum. The CFSA has committed to providing youth receiving services from us with the necessary skills and supports they require to prepare for a successful transition to adulthood. This is a priority area for Intervention Services and Family Support for Children with Disabilities programs, as we strive to prepare youth as best we can for future success.

**Linkage: Goal 1 & 3**
- 5. Improve responses to the impact of substance abuse on children and families through partnerships and community capacity building.**

The region recognizes that the many forms of substance abuse, and resulting effects, impact a large proportion of the children and families involved with the CFSA. We must respond appropriately; whether in intervention services, FSCD services or finding special needs childcare for a child with FASD. The Region will work with the community in supporting prevention efforts and developing solutions to meet the support needs of impacted individuals. The CFSA will access the Drug Endangered Children Act as needed to ensure the safety and well-being of children exposed to drug activity.

**Linkage: Goal 1, 3 & 5**
- 6. Enhance services to better respond to the needs of those involved with the Family Support for Children with Disabilities program.**

The responsibility to meet the needs of children with disabilities through the FSCD Act continues to evolve and expand. The CFSA continues to identify and respond to service gaps, staffing challenges, systems issues and addressing collective/common needs of children and families managing special needs. The CFSA is committed to working together with the families receiving services to build and enhance supports as appropriate.

**Linkage: Goal 2 & 3**

# CORE BUSINESSES, GOALS, STRATEGIES AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES

## Core Business One: Promoting the development and well-being of children, youth and families

### GOAL ONE **1** Children and youth will have a healthy start in life and the supports they need to reach their potential

**What it means** The CFSA recognizes the importance that the first six years of a child’s life play in terms of setting the foundations for children to learn, grow, and reach their potential. While parents have the primary responsibility for raising their children, government, communities, organizations, schools and businesses all have supporting roles to play in meeting the needs of children and youth. **Expected outcomes:** Children and youth are physically, emotionally, socially, intellectual and spiritually healthy. Children and youth meet individual developmental milestones.

- Strategies**
- 1.1 Work with communities to expand and improve access to early learning services and child care resources with special emphasis on development of, or improved access to, services for the following populations: (a) those in remote, rural or isolated areas, (b) immigrant families, (c) francophone families and (c) aboriginal families.
  - 1.2 Strengthen regional Youth in Transition planning, to better assist youth in making a successful transition to adulthood by improving outcomes in the areas of; education, employment, life skills development and moving into adult support services where needed.
  - 1.3 Emphasize coordination with partners and families in order to; effectively provide specialized services when needed for children with disabilities, transition them to adult services successfully and also to respond appropriately to children with complex needs.
  - 1.4 Continue to support communities in building resources to respond to family violence and bullying. Expand the current pilot projects geared toward prevention of family violence and bullying to additional sites across the region in order to more effectively respond to these issues.

Performance Measure	Last Actual June, 2006	Target 2007-08	Target 2008-09	Target 2009-10
1.a Percentage of families accessing the Family Support for Children with Disabilities Program that indicate the services provided had a positive impact on their child	89.2%	n/a*	90%	n/a*

**Note:** \* Survey done every 2 years.

**What it means:** This measure assesses the effectiveness of the Family Support for Children with Disabilities Program in making a positive impact on the children it serves.

Data Source: Family Support for Children with Disabilities Survey.

Performance Measure	Last Actual 2005-06	Target 2007-08	Target 2008-09	Target 2009-10
1.b Percentage of children under Permanent Guardianship Orders in Region 8, age 12 and up, who have specific life skills planning addressed through goals in their Concurrent/Transition Plan.	72.09%	100%	100%	100%

**What it means:** Region 8 has established a regional policy to support the philosophy that life skills and transition planning should begin early. Therefore, all children age 12 and over in our care will have a plan in place to address how they will develop the skills they will need to become independent. As children under Permanent Guardianship Orders are a more stable group, we will measure only this number, as the percentages may not make sense with children in temporary care being in the system for shorter periods.

For measurement purposes, compliance will be based on file sampling. File audits are completed on a random sampling basis, so each file sampled which fits the criteria of PGO aged 12-17 yrs, will be checked to determine if their plan has life skills goals included.

Data Source: Our internal file audit forms were modified to capture this data for children and youth under PGO status, ages 12 and up

Performance Measure	Last Actual 2005-06	Target 2007-08	Target 2008-09	Target 2009-10
1.c Percentage of parents involved with Home Visitation programs who report an increase in positive parenting skills.	80%	84%	88%	92%

**What it means:** Programs working in the areas of Early Childhood Development should be able to demonstrate an increase in parenting ability on the part of attendees. Home Visitation programs fall under the ECD category. Participants of Home Visitation programs complete a survey indicating whether they have increased their use of positive parenting skills as a result of the program. Survey results for compiled by the Home Visitation programs are reported.

Data Source: ECD reporting data through Quality Assurance unit.

## Core Business Two: Keeping children, youth and families safe and protected

GOAL TWO

# 2

### Families will be safe, healthy, and able to promote children's development

**What it means** The CFSA works with all its partners to promote community-based strategies and resources that help families be safe, healthy, resilient and self-reliant by overcoming at-risk circumstances and ensuring children reside in permanent, nurturing homes. **Expected Outcomes:** Children, youth and families overcome at-risk circumstances. Children, youth and families are safe, healthy, resilient and self-reliant.

- Strategies**
- 2.1 Work with other ministries and partners to reduce substance abuse, to support high risk mothers, to prevent disorders caused by pre-natal drug or alcohol exposure such as Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, and respond to the needs of affected parents, children and youth. Work with the *Drug Endangered Children Act* to keep children safe from drug activity.
  - 2.2 Ensure access to home visitation, parenting skills, parenting resources (i.e. Parent Link Centers) and other early intervention programs across the region to ensure family preservation, within available resources.
  - 2.3 With community partners, continue to implement prevention strategies and to strengthen community-based resources for children and family members experiencing family violence, or are impacted by bullying. Implement amended *Protection Against Family Violence Act* in daily casework to improve safety for victims.
  - 2.4 Work with other ministries and community partners, and formalize protocols where appropriate, to ensure a seamless continuum of supports to help address the complex needs of families and their children in all program areas.
  - 2.5 Ensure that the regional, governance, ministry and provincial priorities regarding services to Aboriginal people are implemented across the service continuum, so that Aboriginal children and families are able to receive services that are culturally appropriate and fit their needs.

Performance Measure	Last Actual (2004-05)	Target 2007-08	Target 2008-09	Target 2009-10
2.a Percentage of families accessing Ministry programs that indicate positive impacts for their children.				
<u>Programs surveyed are:</u>				
Foster Care	77.9%	n/a*	90%	n/a*
Childcare Subsidy	95.3%	n/a*	96%	n/a*

**Note:** \* Surveys done every two years.

**What it means:** One key outcome indicator for how programs and services are performing involves feedback from the users of those programs and services. This measure involves client surveys of key ministry programs where clients can provide feedback on their satisfaction with services received and their perception of the program's impact on their family.

Data Source: Multiple client surveys, conducted bi-annually.

# 3 Children in need will be protected and supported by permanent, nurturing relationships

- What it means** Every child deserves a home where they are safe and nurtured. The CFSA intervenes to support families in providing children with environments that are safe and nurturing and free from abuse and neglect. When circumstances require children to be taken into care, the goal is to reunite the children with their families or to place children in other nurturing permanent homes as soon as possible. **Expected Outcomes:** Children and youth in need are protected from further abuse and neglect. Children and youth in care are placed in secure and stable environments that allow for the development of life-long relationships and connection to family, culture and community.
- Strategies**
- 3.1 Ensure the organization has the means, mechanisms, competency and capacity to meet its obligation to ensure licensing requirements are met in order to ensure safe and supportive environments for children placed in care.
  - 3.2 Develop non-institutional placement alternatives for very high needs children and youth in order to ensure their emotional, developmental and physical needs are met and they are able to reach their potential.
  - 3.3 Refine and implement treatment and preventative services for children who are under the *Protection of Children Involved in Prostitution* Act to improve outcomes for children and caregivers.
  - 3.4 Develop recruitment and support strategies to attract and maintain foster parents, in order to ensure adequate placement options and appropriate matching for children in care.
  - 3.5 Continue to focus on permanency for children in care by ensuring exploration of adoption and private guardianship options, while educating about the Supports for Permanency program, in order to increase the number of children placed in permanent and nurturing homes.
  - 3.6 Continue to implement regional and provincial quality assurance measures and safety standards to improve the quality, consistency and accountability of Intervention, FSCD and other services.

Performance Measure	Last Actual (2005-06)	Target 2007-08	Target 2008-09	Target 2009-10
3.a Percentage of children who suffer injury that results in hospitalization or death while receiving protective services.	0.2%	0%	0%	0%

**What it means:** Protection from serious harm is a key priority for all protective services. This measure provides an indication of Children's Services' performance in keeping children in protective services safe from harm.

Data Source: Child Youth Information Module

Performance Measure	Last Actual (2005-06)	Target 2007-08	Target 2008-09	Target 2009-10
3.b Percentage of children who experience another incident of child maltreatment within twelve months of a previously confirmed incident of child maltreatment.	25.5%	22%	21%	20%

**What it means:** A goal of child intervention services is to prevent future maltreatment of children who receive these services. This measure is designed to assess the performance of the ministry in its effort to reduce the recurrence of maltreatment.

Data Source: Child Youth Information Module

Performance Measures	Last Actual 2005-06	Target 2007-08	Target 2008-09	Target 2009-10
3.c Number of children in the permanent care of the Director who are adopted.	18	20	22	24
3.d Number of children, in the permanent care of the Director, for whom Private Guardianship Orders are granted.	9	10	11	12

**What it means:** Ensuring children are supported by permanent nurturing relationships is a key objective of the Ministry. This measure provides an indication of the number of children for whom legal permanency is achieved through adoption and Private Guardianship.

Data Source: Child Youth Information Module

**Note:** Northwest Alberta CFSA included an "Under Development" measure in the 2006-09 Business Plan, which read as follows: Percentage of children in care under PGO or PGA status, in Region 8, who leave care via an Adoption or Private Guardianship Order. However, as the Ministry has now added a similar measure as noted above, the regional measure will be dropped.

**Core Business Three:**

**Promoting healthy communities for children, youth and families**

GOAL FOUR

**4**

**The well-being and self-reliance of aboriginal children, families and communities will be promoted, supported and comparable to that of other Albertans**

**What it means**

First Nations, Métis and other Aboriginal peoples have the desire, ability and commitment to improve outcomes for and the success of Alberta's children, families and communities. The CFSA works with First Nations, Métis and other aboriginal peoples to build on the strengths of aboriginal communities in developing the governance, accountability and service delivery capacity to promote the care of their children, youth, and families. **Expected Outcomes:** Aboriginal communities have the capacity to meet the needs of children, youth and families. There is a reduced number of aboriginal children represented in the child intervention caseload. Aboriginal children, youth and family receive culturally appropriate services.

**Strategies**

- 4.1 Continue to work in partnership with Aboriginal community agencies and organizations, to improve cultural awareness and sensitivity throughout the region's general population.
- 4.2 Enhance existing relationships with First Nations, Métis and other aboriginal peoples and communities in order to: continue to collaborate on permanency planning options for children receiving services from the CFSA, identify cultural support options and improve coordination of services.
- 4.3 Develop and implement a plan, with partners in the First Nations, Métis and other aboriginal communities to better address the cultural and language needs of children in care, particularly youth in residential care, within available resources.

**Performance Measure**

**Last Actual  
(2005-06)**

**Target  
2007-08**

**Target  
2008-09**

**Target  
2009-10**

4.a Percentage of aboriginal children who suffer injury that results in hospitalization or death while receiving protective services.

0%

0%

0%

0%

**What it means:** Protection from serious harm is a key priority for all protective services. This measure provides an indication of Alberta Children's Services' performance in keeping aboriginal children safe from harm.

Data Source: Child Youth Information Module

**Performance Measure**

**Last Actual  
(2005-06)**

**Target  
2007-08**

**Target  
2008-09**

**Target  
2009-10**

4.b Percentage of aboriginal children in foster care/kinship care that are placed with aboriginal families.

34.8%

40%

41%

42%

**What it means:** When children and youth must be removed from their homes, efforts should be made to place them in families that are geographically, culturally appropriate and socially familiar and nurturing to the child. Focusing on aboriginal children in foster care, this measure is an effort to show how the ministry is performing in its efforts to achieve ethno-cultural placement matching thereby contributing to reconnecting aboriginal children to their cultural roots and environment. Note: this measure has been modified from 2005-06 reporting to include Kinship Care., so the Last Actual indicated above reflects the re-calculated numbers for last year.

Data Source: Child Youth Information Module

## 5

## Communities will have the capacity for shared planning and delivery of services that promote the well-being of children, youth and families

**What it means** Children must have safe places to learn, grow and thrive outside the home, and a strong connection to family and community. The CFSA works in partnership with Albertans to build on the unique capacity of communities to deliver the right services for children, youth and families, in the right place, and at the right time. **Expected Outcomes:** Communities are responsive to issues/needs faced by children, youth and families. Children, youth and families participate in decisions that affect them.

- Strategies**
- 5.1 Adopt a community capacity approach, as a solution to broad societal issues, through continued partnering in order to share resources, responsibility and expertise to tackle the problems that impacts families. (Mediation, PFV, FCSS)
  - 5.2 All levels of the organization will create opportunities for stakeholder input and shared planning with the community, in order to ensure continuous improvement and innovation so that CFSA services can best meet the needs of children and families.
  - 5.3 Ensure continued active involvement at operational and governance levels where opportunities exist to influence direction and policies at the local, regional, ministry and provincial levels.

Performance Measure	Last Actual (2004-05)	Target 2007-08	Target 2008-09	Target 2009-10
5.a Percentage of community stakeholders reporting an increase in the community's ability to meet the needs of children, youth and families.	56.7%	n/a*	65%	n/a*

**Note:** \* Surveys done every two years.

As a result of an internal review, the measure will be discontinued in the 2008-2011 Ministry Business Plan. Work is underway to develop a replacement measure based on departmental and regional input addressing Goal 5.

**What it means:** Involvement of community stakeholders at the local level improves the delivery of services to children and better enables response to specific community needs. This measure involves a survey conducted with a comprehensive listing of community stakeholders provided by the Child and Family Services Authorities.

Data Source: Community Partners Survey

Performance Measure	Last Actual (2005-06)	Target 2007-08	Target 2008-09	Target 2009-10
5.b Percentage of children and youth who received family enhancement services and afterwards did not require protective services.	87.7%	88%	89%	90%

**What it means:** This measure is about the effectiveness of family enhancement - a child intervention delivery approach that engages families with community-based services to resolve issues before they escalate to a level that requires protective services. With the implementation of the new *Child and Family Enhancement Act*, the nature of delivering enhancement services is changing. A new baseline is being established in 2005-06.

Data Source: Child Youth Information Module

CHILDREN'S SERVICES  
**REGION 8 - NORTHWEST ALBERTA CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES AUTHORITY**  
**STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS**  
(thousands of dollars)

	Comparable			2007-08 Estimates	2008-09 Target	2009-10 Target
	2005-06 Actual	2006-07 Budget	2006-07 Forecast			
<b>REVENUE</b>						
<b>Internal Government Transfers</b>						
Transfer from Department	29,433	31,317	31,566	33,328	34,312	34,639
<b>Other</b>						
Miscellaneous - Inter Authority	198	144	144	200	200	200
Other Revenue - Donations/External	61	30	30	30	30	30
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>29,692</b>	<b>31,491</b>	<b>31,740</b>	<b>33,558</b>	<b>34,542</b>	<b>34,869</b>
<b>EXPENSE</b>						
<b>Promoting the development and well being of children, youth and families</b>						
Child Care	2,355	3,757	3,757	3,244	3,244	3,244
Family Support for Children with Disabilities	3,711	2,949	2,949	3,735	4,053	4,053
Prevention of Family Violence	58	50	50	50	50	50
Parenting Resources Initiative	382	382	382	392	392	392
Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Initiatives	117	121	121	125	125	125
<b>Keeping children, youth and families safe and protected</b>						
Child Intervention Services	14,743	15,735	15,782	16,679	17,130	17,357
Foster Care Support	4,778	4,800	4,800	4,899	5,014	5,014
Protecting Children from Sexual Exploitation	-	-	202	202	202	202
Child and Youth Support	290	316	316	293	293	293
<b>Promoting healthy communities for children, youth and families</b>						
Community Initiatives	538	788	788	859	859	859
<b>Support Services</b>						
Program Support	2,178	2,190	2,190	2,519	2,619	2,719
Board Governance	207	235	235	336	336	336
Capital Amortization	24	24	24	25	25	25
Inter-Authority Services	198	144	144	200	200	200
Valuation adjustments	36					
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>29,615</b>	<b>31,491</b>	<b>31,740</b>	<b>33,558</b>	<b>34,542</b>	<b>34,869</b>
<b>Gain/(Loss) on Disposal</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Net Revenue (Expense)</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Decrease(Increase) in Capital Assets</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Surplus (Deficit)</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>NEW CAPITAL INVESTMENT</b>						
Less: Disposal of Capital Asset						
Less: Capital Amortization	(24)	(24)	(24)	(24)	(24)	(24)
<b>INCREASE (DECREASE) IN CAPITAL ASSET</b>	<b>(24)</b>	<b>(24)</b>	<b>(24)</b>	<b>(24)</b>	<b>(24)</b>	<b>(24)</b>