

# **CHILDREN IN CARE SERVICES**

## **PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

Sandy Bay CFS (“the Agency”) maintains as primary its legally mandated responsibility to ensure the safety and protection of children throughout its work with families in the community. Where intervention to prevent children from coming into care has not been successful, it is necessary that a range of resources be available to provide care, nurturing, and supervision to ensure the healthy growth and development of the child.

These resources may be for emergency, short-term or long-term placements. Placement resources include adoption homes, foster homes, group homes and institutions. Additional placement resources may include proctor programs, professional parents, alternative parenting and extended family placements.

The goals and principles for children in care are as follows:

### **GOALS**

- Ensure the continued safety of the child;
- Develop permanency plans for children;
- Ensure children in agency care receive adequate care and supervision to meet their needs in the least restrictive way;
- Provide resources and services to enable children to deal with issues in a constructive way and where possible, return home;
- Prepare the family of the child in care for the child’s return;
- Provide services to meet the needs of children in care, function in the least restrictive environment possible and establish stability in their living environment; and
- Develop and implement a continuum of support services for the service provider(s).

### **PRINCIPLES**

Every child in care is entitled to:

- Decisions made in their best interests;
- Freedom from physical, emotional and sexual abuse;
- Adequate and appropriate food, clothing and housing;
- Live in a clean, emotionally and physically safe environment;
- Receive adequate and appropriate medical, dental and optical care;
- Receive an education that considers their potential and/or handicaps;
- Freedom of thought and conscience;
- Reasonable enjoyment of privacy;

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- Access to Manitoba's available services and resources free from discrimination based on race, religion, and ethnic origin and which respect their cultural and linguistic heritage;
- Appropriate care and services to meet their needs and to enable them to function successfully within the community;
- Ample opportunity to integrate and reintegrate into the neighborhood and larger community;
- Regular contact with a child and family service agency;
- Placement with an individualized, time-limited, goal-oriented plan of care;
- Have their family prepared for a placement;
- Appropriate adult counseling, support, and supervision;
- Be informed of their rights, have their opinions heard, and be included in any decisions affecting their life; and
- A continuous family environment in which they can flourish.

### **PARENTS/GUARDIAN'S RIGHTS**

- Be involved in making plans for their child;
- Be consulted when changes are considered for the plan;
- Attain visitation rights. The parent/guardian must be aware of the agency worker's right to limit visiting (other court-ordered visits), set the time and place for visiting, with the foster parent's cooperation;
- Appeal any decision made by the agency worker affecting their child or themselves, including an appeal to the courts concerning visiting privileges;
- Receive assistance in resolving family problems; and
- Attend any court hearing affecting the child and parental rights.

Even a child in permanent care may have an emotional bond with his/her family. The fact that a child is a permanent ward does not necessarily restrict his/her family's involvement. The agency reviews the child's relationship with birth/extended family on a planned basis to determine the nature and extent of the involvement.

As guardian of a child, Sandy Bay CFS shall:

- a) Have the care and control of the child;
- b) Be responsible for the maintenance and education of the child;
- c) Act for and on behalf of the child; and
- d) Appear in court and prosecute or defend any action or proceeding in which the child's status is or may be affected.

### **PROCEDURES**

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**Legal Status** – A child may come into care through a Voluntary Placement Agreement (VPA), Voluntary Surrender of Guardianship (VSG) or an order of guardianship.

A VPA is a contractual agreement whereby an agency assumes legal responsibility for the care of a child. A VSG involves a voluntary transfer of guardianship. An order of guardianship by a court may be granted with or without the consent of a parent or guardian.

**Agency Manuals** – Agency manuals are available for all staff and clearly identify the agency's policies and procedures with respect to children in care (philosophy, expectations of worker regarding prescreening, quality of referrals, and worker contact). This includes how workers internally access resources and deal with emergency situations. At a minimum the criteria for emergency intake includes when:

- a) The child is abandoned;
- b) The child's immediate physical safety cannot be guaranteed due to abuse, self-injury or physical surroundings;
- c) A runaway child is found; and
- d) The court orders the child's placement.

### **PLACEMENT RESOURCES USED BY AGENCY**

The children presently in care of Sandy Bay CFS are placed in a variety of resources, including;

- foster homes
- own home
- place of safety
- group home
- other