

Government of Saskatchewan
Ministry of Social Services
Response to the
Advocate for Children and Youth
Two Tragedies Report

November 2014

**ADVOCATE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH SPECIAL INVESTIGATION REPORT, MAY 2014
TWO TRAGEDIES: HOLDING SYSTEMS ACCOUNTABLE
MINISTRY RESPONSE/ACTION PLAN NOVEMBER 2014 STATUS UPDATE**

ACY RECOMMENDATION	MINISTRY RESPONSE/ACTION PLAN	YTCCFS RESPONSE/ACTION PLAN
<p>Recommendation 1: That the Government of Saskatchewan develop and implement well-resourced early childhood development and poverty reduction strategies to advance the goals of its Child and Family Agenda.</p>	<p>The Ministry accepts this recommendation and it is in progress.</p> <p>In the October 22, 2014 Throne Speech, the Government of Saskatchewan announced the development of a Poverty Reduction Strategy and acknowledged the work of Poverty Costs. Currently, Saskatchewan has the second lowest poverty rate in Canada.</p> <p>The Province has increased its investment in the Child and Family Agenda by \$8.7 million in 2014-15.</p> <p>Nine KidsFirst programs will receive \$14.61 million jointly from the Ministries of Education and Health in 2014-15.</p> <p>To support the social, emotional, intellectual, language and literacy development of three- and four-year olds, an additional 15 new Prekindergarten programs will be created in 2014-15.</p> <p>The Mental Health and Addictions Action Plan recommendations are expected to be released later this year which will inform future planning.</p>	<p>Not applicable – see Ministry Action</p>

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<p>Recommendation 2: That the Ministry of Social Services and Yorkton Tribal Council Child and Family Services Inc. ensure high quality child protection casework by implementing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A formal process to measure staff competence in the use of Structured Decision Making (SDM[®]) tools; • A formal process to measure competencies in supervision; and • A standardized supervision tool to assess whether casework policy standards are met. 	<p>The Ministry accepts this recommendation and it has been implemented.</p>	<p>YTC CFS accepts this recommendation and it has been implemented.</p>
<p>Recommendation 3: That the Ministry of Social Services contract with the Children’s Research Centre to complete an SDM[®] workload estimation study that determines standards for caseload size in Saskatchewan. Once the study is completed, implement the recommended standards.</p>	<p>The Ministry accepts this recommendation and it is in progress.</p> <p>The Ministry is finalizing a contract with the Children’s Research Centre to develop a tool which will assist the Ministry in the assignment of cases based on workload.</p>	<p>Not applicable – see Ministry Action</p>
<p>Recommendation 4: That the Ministry of Social Services amend policy to require a case conference with all key service providers involved with a family within the initial Assessment and Case Plan timeframe (90 days) and thereafter as necessary.</p>	<p>The Ministry accepts this recommendation and it has been implemented.</p> <p>The Ministry has amended this policy as per this recommendation.</p>	<p>Not applicable – see Ministry Action</p>
<p>Recommendation 5: That the Ministry of Social Services strengthen its policy to ensure that scheduled family visits are maintained. The following standards should be embedded in policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documented supervisory review when a visit is cancelled; • Rescheduling cancelled visits as soon as possible when in the best interest of the child. 	<p>The Ministry accepts this recommendation and it has been implemented.</p> <p>The Ministry has strengthened its visitation policy and standards as per this recommendation.</p>	<p>Not applicable – see Ministry Action</p>

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<p>Recommendation 6: That the Ministry of Social Services, in consultation with the Children’s Research Centre, amend their Safety and Risk Assessment tools to ensure they support the assessment of each parent’s household when parents live apart but there is joint legal custody.</p>	<p>The Ministry accepts this recommendation and it has been implemented.</p> <p>The Ministry, in consultation with the Children’s Research Centre, has concluded that the current tools and SDM policy address the intent of this recommendation.</p>	<p>Not applicable – see Ministry Action</p>
<p>Recommendation 7: That the Ministry of Social Services research and implement methods for evaluating the quality of case practice and the outcomes of services for children and families.</p>	<p>The Ministry accepts this recommendation and it is in progress.</p> <p>The Ministry has conducted research in this area and has begun implementation of outcome measures.</p>	<p>Not applicable – see Ministry Action</p>
<p>Recommendation 8: That the Ministry of Social Services conduct compliance reviews on First Nations Child and Family Services agencies on a yearly basis, rather than the current practice of every three years.</p>	<p>The Ministry accepts this recommendation and it has been implemented.</p>	<p>Not applicable – see Ministry Action</p>
<p>Recommendation 9: That the Ministry of Social Services ensure Child Death and Critical Incident Reviews are comprehensive and include a review of services provided to the child by other service systems. The Ministry of Social Services should consult with these bodies about the development of protocols for information sharing when conducting these reviews.</p>	<p>The Ministry accepts this recommendation and it has been implemented.</p> <p>The Ministry has formally consulted with officials from other service systems regarding the development of protocols for sharing information when conducting reviews.</p>	<p>Not applicable – see Ministry Action</p>
<p>Recommendation 10: That Regina Qu’Appelle Health Region examine whether the criteria for initiating incident reviews of various types need to be adjusted, in light of their experience with Derek’s case.</p>	<p>The Regina Qu’Appelle Health Region accepts this recommendation and it has been implemented.</p> <p>Mental Health and Addictions Services, Regina Qu’Appelle Health Region has instituted a new critical incident reporting process which requires this type of incident to be reviewed.</p>	<p>Not applicable – see Ministry Action</p>

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<p>Recommendation 11: That the Ministry of Social Services and the Ministry of Health and their related agencies conduct joint critical incident reviews for children and youth served by both the Ministry of Social Services and the Mental Health and Addictions system within the preceding twelve months.</p>	<p>The Ministries of Social Services and Health accept this recommendation and it is in progress.</p> <p>The Ministry of Health will lead discussions with the Ministry of Social Services, Advocate for Children and Youth and other stakeholders to examine joint reviews of critical incidents and individuals with complex needs.</p>	<p>Not applicable – see Ministry Action</p>
<p>Recommendation 12: That the Ministry of Social Services and Yorkton Tribal Council Child and Family Services Inc. develop the protocols identified in their Agreement but not yet in place. Of these, the following protocols should receive immediate priority:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff training, development and support; • Child abuse investigations; and • Integrating health, education and family services. 	<p>The Ministry accepts this recommendation and it is in progress.</p> <p>Officials from YTC CFS and MSS have met three times since August. Progress regarding the protocols in the Delegation Agreement is occurring.</p>	<p>YTC CFS accepts this recommendation and it is in progress.</p> <p>Officials from YTC CFS and MSS have met three times since August. Progress regarding the protocols in the Delegation Agreement is occurring.</p>
<p>Recommendation 13: That the Ministry of Social Services increase its knowledge and understanding of Yorkton Tribal Council First Nations Child and Family Services Inc.’s operations to better support their capacity to deliver quality services.</p>	<p>The Ministry accepts this recommendation and it has been implemented.</p> <p>Through the assignment of a dedicated First Nation and Métis Services consultant to work with YTC CFS, the Ministry has increased its knowledge and understanding of YTC CFS’s operations and capacity to deliver quality services.</p>	<p>Not applicable – see Ministry Action</p>
<p>Recommendation 14: That Yorkton Tribal Council First Nations Child and Family Services Inc. fully develop its database system to make all current and historical information accessible to staff that require it.</p>	<p>Not applicable – see YTC CFS Action</p>	<p>YTC CFS accepts this recommendation and it has been implemented.</p> <p>YTC CFS has developed and fully implemented a case management database system.</p>
<p>Recommendation 15: That Yorkton Tribal Council First Nations Child and Family Services Inc. develop policy to create and clarify a working relationship between prevention and protection programming.</p>	<p>Not applicable – see YTC CFS Action</p>	<p>YTC CFS accepts this recommendation and it is in progress.</p> <p>YTC CFS is currently developing a written procedure regarding communication between the prevention and protection programs.</p>

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<p>Recommendation 16: That the Ministry of Social Services and Yorkton Tribal Council First Nations Child and Family Services Inc. provide written progress reports to the Advocate on the applicable recommendations within three months of the release of this report and every three months thereafter for a period of one year.</p>	<p>The Ministry accepts this recommendation and it is in progress.</p>	<p>YTC CFS accepts this recommendation and it is in progress.</p>
<p>Recommendation 17: That the Ministry of Social Services, Ministry of Health, and Regional Health Authorities jointly develop mental health and addictions services to ensure immediate access to mental health and addiction services for high risk families with child protection involvement.</p>	<p>This recommendation is under consideration.</p> <p>The Mental Health and Addictions Action Plan recommendations are expected to be released later this year which will inform future planning.</p> <p>The Ministries of Social Services and Health met with the Advocate on November 3, 2014, to discuss this recommendation further.</p> <p>Prioritization for mental health and addictions services in health regions is based on level of need and risk.</p>	<p>Not applicable – see Ministry Action</p>
<p>Recommendation 18: That the Ministry of Social Services, the Ministry of Health, and Regional Health Authorities expand outreach and intervention programs for children with FASD.</p>	<p>The Ministry accepts this recommendation and it has been implemented.</p> <p>The Ministry of Social Services has developed an intervention program to support families in caring for their children with intellectual and cognitive disabilities, inclusive of FASD.</p> <p>Over the past year, the Ministry of Health evaluated its FASD programming. The evaluation showed satisfaction with the current programming, but flagged a need for expansion in some areas.</p>	<p>Not applicable – see Ministry Action</p>