

Overview of Child Welfare Governance in Canada and Lessons for Innovation from Outside Canada

Inter-Provincial Lessons on Child Welfare Governance

*Prepared by the Centre of Excellence of Child Welfare
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Purpose of this document

This document was prepared to provide background reference material for attendees at the forum. It presents:

- An overview of provincial and territorial governance and services in child welfare
- Lessons learned from other jurisdictions about innovations to governance and services in child welfare

Preparation of this document

Two main types of information were gathered. First, information about provincial and territorial governance models and services came from a systematic search of government websites and electronically available reports. The information was not confirmed with government officials in the various provinces, however, so what is reported may vary slightly from what actually exists. Second, information from other countries about the need for innovation, efforts to implement changes, and consequences of those efforts was gathered from a thorough search of academic publications and website material (including electronic reports). Wherever possible, this information was verified by sources from the jurisdiction in question.

Child Welfare Governance and Services in Canada

Governance structures and services offered by Canadian provinces and territories are outlined in the attached documents. Although there is considerable variation across jurisdictions, the overall trends in structure and scope of services, and focus of services are:

Structure and scope of services

- Services are generally centrally administered, with some recent shifts toward local governance
- Service mandates are discrete, with some recent shifts toward integration of services

Focus of services

- Narrowing focus of services to child maltreatment
- Increased emphasis on protection and risk assessment

Why look at governance models in child welfare now?

There is a growing interest in re-examining governance models in child welfare. Three main trends are contributing to this focus on reform:

1. Socio-political trends

- Governments perceive a need to contain public spending
- Governments perceive a need to be more accountable for public spending
- Governments have set prevention as a policy and practice priority
- Ecological models, including community building and integration of services, are

preferred for considering innovation

2. Increasing demands on child welfare systems
 - Reported cases and re-referrals have increased substantially in recent years
 - Child welfare services have moved in recent years toward addressing reported cases more as acute maltreatment incidents and less as chronic child welfare problems (i.e., more emphasis on investigations)
 - High profile child protection failures (e.g., deaths) increase the push for change
 - There is a lack of evidence that current services are leading to positive outcomes
3. Trend toward autonomy in Aboriginal communities

How have governments responded to date?

Provincial and territorial governments across Canada have responded to their perceived need for change in various ways. Some of the most common responses are listed below:

1. Reorganizing public administration, by creating new Ministries, councils, agencies, etc. (e.g., British Columbia: Ministry of Children and Family Development (June 5, 2001), Children's Commission (1996); New Brunswick: Department of Family and Community Services (2000); Québec: Le Ministère de la Famille et de l'Enfance (1997).
2. Moving toward more integrated government services (e.g., Alberta, Ontario, Saskatchewan)
3. De-centralizing services (e.g., Alberta)
4. Increasing reliance on communities (e.g., Alberta; also Newfoundland and Ontario)
5. Increasing accountability
 - Improved quality assurance
 - Monitoring progress toward meeting objectives
6. Increasing provincial funding for prevention and early intervention programs (e.g., Prince Edward Island, Saskatchewan)
7. Improving standards
 - All provinces have initiated improved standards for service delivery: services should be accessible to all children and youth, should be provided in a timely manner, and should be provided in the least intrusive manner as possible.
8. Focussing on risk assessment (e.g., Manitoba: Manitoba Risk Estimation System; Nova Scotia: Washington State Risk Factor Matrix)
 - All provinces now use risk management models/tools to help assess levels of required support.
9. Increasing training
 - Education for parents and community members
 - Training for child protection staff (e.g., Nova Scotia, Ontario, Saskatchewan)
10. Increasing autonomy for Aboriginal communities in child welfare governance (British

Columbia, Nova Scotia)

Lessons from Other Jurisdictions

Changes to child welfare governance and services have been initiated outside Canada. Changes initiated in the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia are outlined, and the lessons we can learn from these experiences are highlighted (see attachments for more detailed descriptions).

The United States

Key reasons for change:

- Strained capacity: The system cannot adequately handle all cases reported
- Over-inclusion: Families are reported, but need services, not an investigation
- Under-inclusion: Families are excluded because they are considered to be at low risk
- Service orientation: CPS system is stigmatizing, adversarial and authoritative
- Service delivery: Needed services are often unavailable, fragmented, or uncoordinated

Examples of reform initiatives:

- Family assessments or differential response systems: two or more methods of initial response
- Community-centred services: turn over to other providers, or co-locate services
- Delineate the relationship between CPS and law enforcement
- Collaboration between CPS and substance abuse agencies
- Collaboration between CPS and domestic violence services

The United Kingdom

Key reasons for change:

- CPS viewed as too intrusive
- Investigations and interventions often unhelpful
- Services fragmented and uncoordinated
- Shortage of services to support children at home

Reform initiative: Children Act of 1989

- Spelled out a new category — child in need of services
- Clarified that state intervention was only warranted to promote a child's well-being and to support a child's best interests
- Required local authorities to provide services to children in need
- Promoted closer collaboration among CPS, families, other services, and other professionals

Australia

Key reasons for change:

- Increase in reported child abuse and neglect
- Increase in re-notification, especially among high risk, multi-problem families
- Increase in investigations, but a low rate of substantiations

Examples of reform initiatives:

- Differential response system (South Australia): centralized intake, formal assessment tools, differential responses
- New Directions in Child Protection & Family Support (Western Australia): primary emphasis on support and providing services in partnership with families; less emphasis on protection

Learning from the experiences of other jurisdictions

We can learn a number of things from the reform initiative experiences of other jurisdictions that should prove helpful to provinces and territories in Canada that are considering changes to their child welfare services.

1. Understand the reasons for change to child welfare systems:
 - Identify the important factors that suggest the need for change, especially local factors
 - Describe clearly the goal of the change, and the principles that guide how change will occur
2. Understand the implications of changes for child welfare and other systems:
 - Think through the probable impact on current child welfare agencies and staff
 - Think through the probable impact on families and children
 - Estimate the impact on formal community services and informal helpers, including the demand for additional services and support
3. Set out clear parameters for changed child welfare services:
 - Describe the nature and scope of child welfare services
 - Identify the relationship between child welfare services and other services
 - Ensure that agencies have the tools and support from governance bodies to carry out their mandates; ensure that staff have tools and support from their agencies to carry out their responsibilities
 - Provide training to agencies and agency staff to implement and adapt to changes
4. Implement best practices, when adopted or adapted reform initiatives from elsewhere:
 - Establish roles and responsibilities of child welfare agencies
 - Implement clear screening procedures (i.e., distinguish investigative and assessment tracks)
 - Use good risk and needs assessments
 - Identify multiple problems within families (e.g., chronic histories, domestic violence,

- substance abuse)
 - Build capacity within child welfare agencies to respond to needs of children and families
 - Ensure that resources and services are available in communities to respond to needs of children and families
 - Collaborate with parents, where possible
 - Build collaborative relationships with informal helpers and other professionals (e.g., domestic violence agencies, substance abuse agencies, law enforcement)
 - Understand cultural influences on family behaviours throughout
5. Examine the effectiveness of changes:
- Proceed cautiously – it is too early to evaluate how effective recent reform initiatives are
 - Follow effectiveness evaluations in other jurisdictions
 - Set up comprehensive effectiveness evaluations of any planned changes

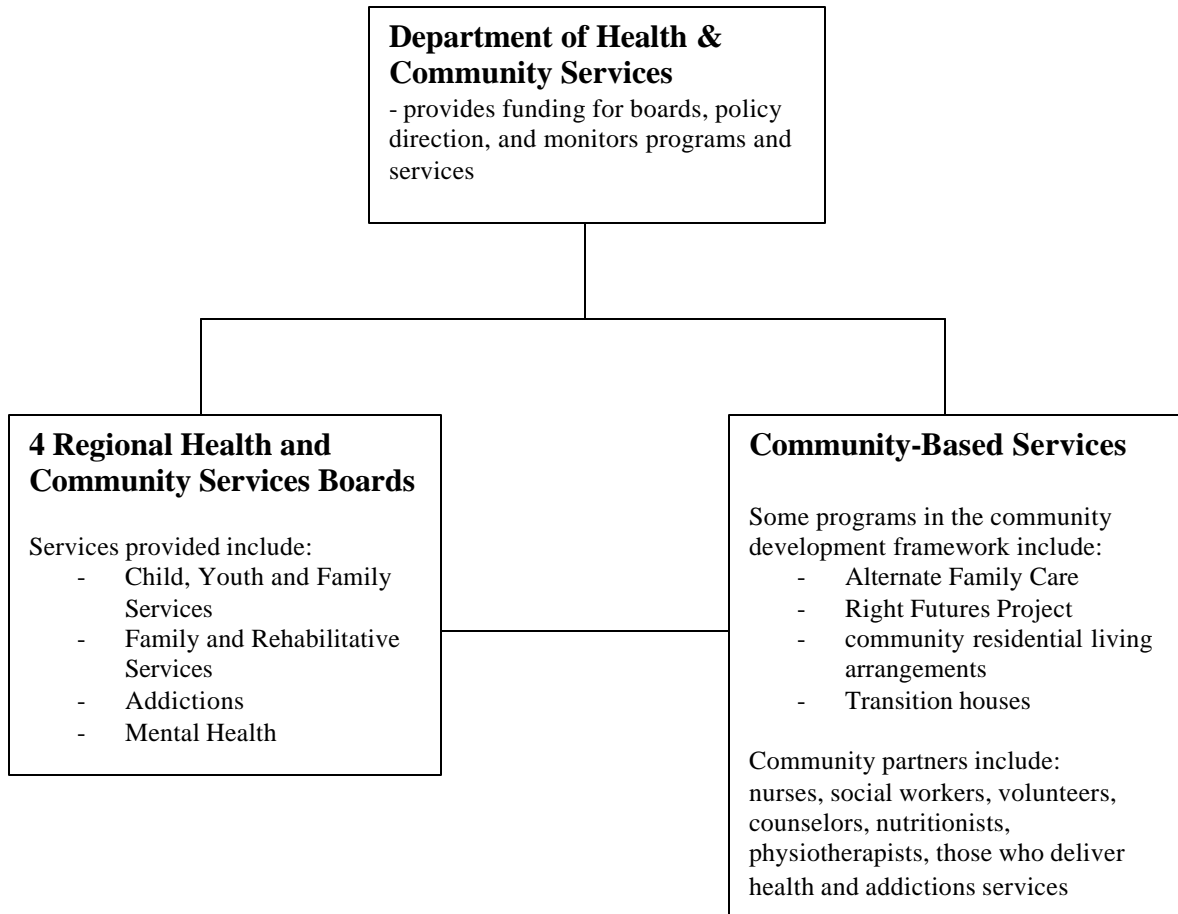
Appendix A



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Child Welfare Governance Structure: Province of Newfoundland & Labrador



Source:
www.gov.nf.ca

Child Welfare Investigation Process: Province of Newfoundland & Labrador

Step 1: Report

Under the *Child Welfare Act*, any individual with information concerning the abuse or neglect of an unmarried child under the age of 16, or suspects that a child may have been abused or neglected, is required to report that abuse to the Director of Child Welfare or a departmental social worker in a regional or district office. Failure to report may result in a fine of up to \$1000 or imprisonment of up to 6 months.

Step 2: Screening

All reports are evaluated by a social worker.

Step 3: Investigation

An investigation must be initiated within 24 hours of the report.

A social worker, in conjunction with a supervisor, will determine if police intervention (the laying of charges) is warranted. When both the police and the Department are investigating a case, the investigation is to be carried out jointly wherever possible, including interviewing the alleged victim together to reduce the number of interviews. The social worker will review the report with the parents to help determine what, if any, contributing factors were present.

In cases where physical injuries are visible or suspected, and in cases of alleged sexual abuse, a medical examination is arranged as soon as possible.

Risk assessment tools are utilized where appropriate.

Step 4: Case Management

Three options are available to social workers:

1. Voluntary Supervision -- The child remains within the home and receives appropriate services. The child and the family receive regular visits from the social worker to assure the child is not in danger.
2. Voluntary Care Agreement/Non-Ward Agreement -- Parents voluntarily and temporarily give up care of their child to the Director of Child Welfare. The agreement is generally for up to 3 months and may be extended for an additional 3 months.
3. Court-Ordered Protection -- Judges have three options available:
 - a. Supervision Order -- Guardianship is either retained by the parents or given by a Court to a third party under the supervision of the Director. The order is for a maximum of 12 months and specific recommendations may be made by the Judge.

- b. Order of Temporary Wardship -- Custody and guardianship is transferred to the Director of Child Welfare. The parents must consent to any medical treatment required by the child. Orders cannot exceed 12 months.
- c. Order of Permanent Wardship -- When a child is made a permanent ward, the parents lose their custody and guardianship rights and the child may be placed for adoption.

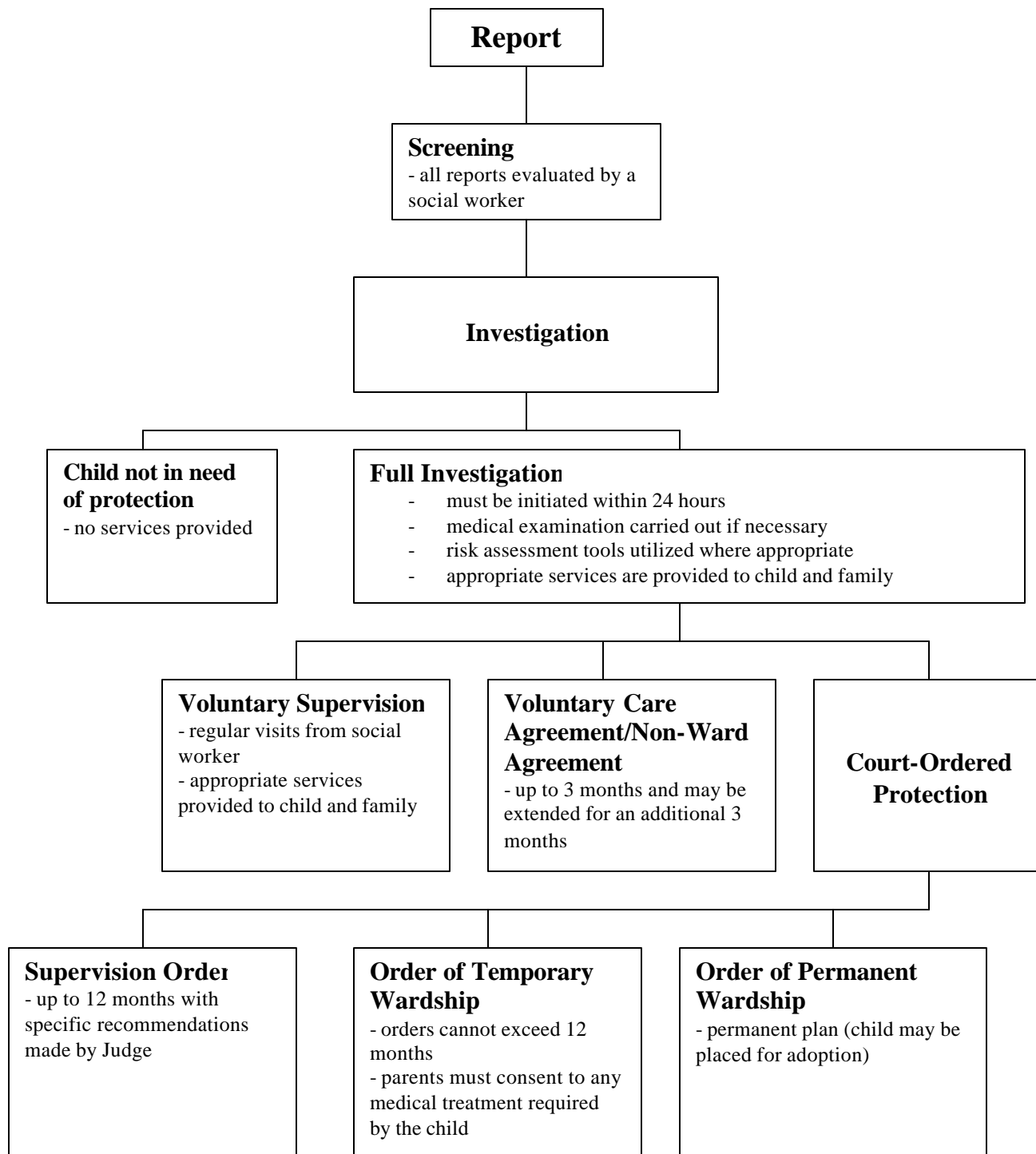
Youth Care Agreement: Temporary or permanent wardship extended to age 19.

Consent to Adoption: A parent may relinquish a child to the Director of Child Welfare for the purposes of adoption.

Source:

Federal-Provincial Working Group on Child and Family Services Information. (1994). Child Welfare in Canada. Ottawa, ON: Minister of Supply and Services Canada.

Child Welfare Investigation Process: Province of Newfoundland & Labrador



Source: Federal-Provincial Working Group on Child and Family Service Information. (1994). Child Welfare in Canada. Ottawa, ON: Minister of Supply and Services Canada.

Child Welfare Governance Structure: Province of Prince Edward Island

Ministry of Health and Social Services

Department of Health and Social Services

- Child, Family and Community Services Division

Children's Services Section (5 regions):

- provide provincial administration and direction through policy, program development, monitoring/quality assurance, staff training, intergovernmental and intersectoral collaboration and consulatory services to the following children's services:

- child protection
- children in care
- foster care
- group home care
- adoption, post-adoption
- family resource services
- youth services

Community Services Section:

- provide provincial support through policy and program development, intersectoral collaboration, monitoring of standards, research and analysis, and management of programs for:

- children and youth (prenatal to age 18)
- mental health
- addictions
- grants to community-based agencies
- housing
- family violence prevention

Regional Health Authorities

- child welfare services offered by 5 Regional Health Authorities
- receipt of child protection referrals, screening and investigation
- services to eliminate and reduce child protection concerns
- services for children in care, foster care and other residential resource services
- adoption
- birth parent counseling
- referral to provincial post-adoption services

Source:

www.gov.pe.ca

Child Welfare Investigation Process: Province of Prince Edward Island

Step 1: Report

Under the *Family and Child Services Act*, any individual with information concerning the abuse and neglect of a child under the age of 18, or suspects that a child may have been abused or neglected, is required to report that abuse to the Director of Child Welfare, or to a police officer. All professional individuals, excluding lawyers, are required to report all types of maltreatment. Failure to report may result in a maximum fine of \$1000.

Step 2: Screening

All reports are assessed by an intake worker to determine the urgency and seriousness of the situation. If the child is in immediate danger, an immediate response is initialized. A non-urgent report, outside of working hours, may be postponed until a convenient time in the next working day.

Step 3: Investigation

If the child is deemed to not be in need of protection, Department intervention ceases. If the child is deemed to be in need of protection a full investigation is conducted. If the child has been physically abused, undernourished, or maltreated, the child will be seen immediately by a physician. An immediate medical examination will be completed if there is evidence of recent sexual abuse or violence (forensic evidence should be collected within 24 hours).

Step 4: Case Management

Further investigations are conducted and the appropriate services are provided to the child and the family. If it is impossible for the child to remain at home and receive services, the Department has four options available to them:

1. Voluntary Agreement for Temporary Custody -- temporarily transfers custody, but not guardianship, to the Director of Child Welfare, for a period of up to 6 months. A child under the age of 13 may have the agreement extended for two additional 6 month terms; a child 13 or over may have it extended indefinitely to age 18.
2. Voluntary Agreement for Temporary Guardianship -- transfers the legal guardianship and custody of the child to the Director, for a period of up to 6 months. Provisions for extension are the same as a Voluntary Agreement for Temporary Custody.
3. Permanent Guardianship -- the parents voluntarily and permanently transfer the custody and guardianship of the child to the Director of Child Welfare or agency.

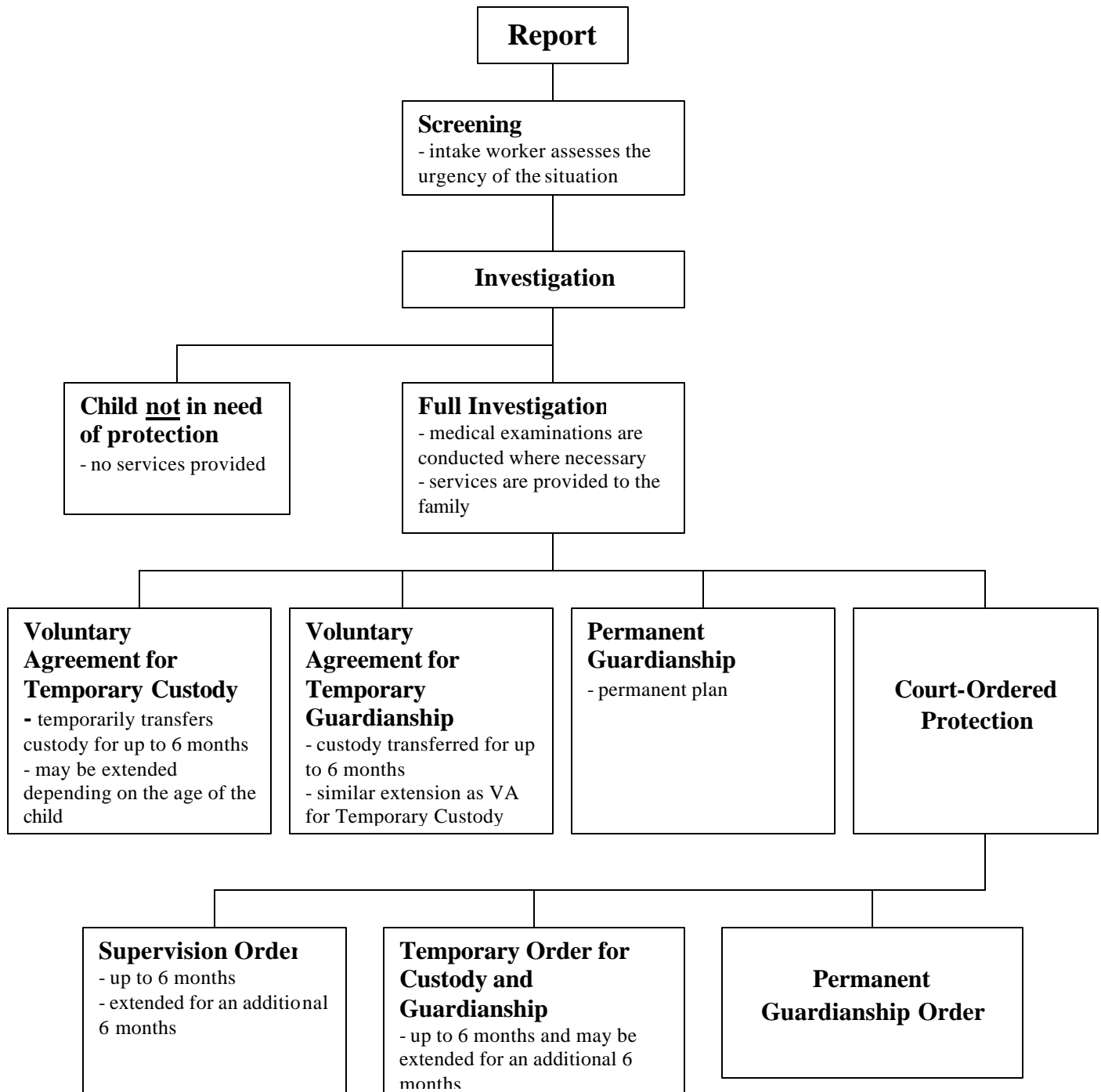
4. Court-Ordered Protection

- a) Supervision Order (up to 6 months but may be extended for an additional 6 months)
- b) Temporary Order for Custody and Guardianship (up to 6 months and may be extended for an additional 6 months)
- c) Permanent Guardianship Order (Director of Child Welfare sole guardian until child attains the age of maturity, marries, is adopted, or the order is terminated by the judge)

Source:

Federal-Provincial Working Group on Child and Family Services Information. (1994). Child Welfare in Canada. Ottawa, ON: Minister of Supply and Services Canada.

Child Welfare Investigation Process: Province of Prince Edward Island



Source:

Federal-Provincial Working Group on Child and Family Services Information.
(1994). Child Welfare in Canada. Ottawa, ON: Minister of Supply and Services Canada.

Proposed Child Welfare Reforms: Province of Prince Edward Island

Strategic directions for the Prince Edward Island model for Healthy Child Development:

1. Encourage the development of supportive and secure relationships.
2. Nurture early sensitive periods for learning.
3. Minimize known risks to healthy development.
4. Encourage and support early intervention.

Source:

www.gov.pe.ca

“...For Our Children: A Strategy for Healthy Child Development Summary Report”, Proposed by the Healthy Child Development Advisory Committee, October 2000

Child Welfare Governance Structure: Province of Nova Scotia

Community-based
Supports for

Prevention-Oriented
Children and Families

Department of Community Services

- Division of Family and Children's Services

Children's Aid Society or a Family and Children's Services Agency

Mi'Kmag Family and Children's Services Agency

Services Provided:

- child protection (6 district offices)
- child welfare agency evaluations
- child abuse register
- foster care programs
- adoption services (agency and private relative adoptions)
- child-in-care
- post adoption services
- counseling services for new and expectant mothers
- community residential services (establishes standards & policies, conducts evaluations, and provides licensing, training & budgeting for residential child-care facilities)
- child care (subsidized child care; licenses and monitors child care programs; develops policies and standards for child care centers; approves new early childhood education training programs; promotes awareness among parents and community members; conducts audits on child care programs to ensure quality assurance)
- early childhood development programs (programs include: Child Development Centres; Preschoolers With Special Needs; Early Childhood Education Training Programs; Early Intervention Services)

Services Provided:

- child protection (14 privately operated societies/agencies)
- foster care programs
- adoption – private relative adoption, agency adoption, and international adoption
- counseling services for new and expectant mothers

***** Non-profit agencies such as the Home of the Guardian Angel in Halifax also provide services i.e. counseling services, adoption services (agency)**

Services Provided:

- provides child protective services for native families living on reserves

Community Outreach Services:

- family violence programs
- summer camping programs (partnership formed with YMCA)
- services for physically and developmentally challenged children (enhancing support programs for families who care for their children at home, through in-home supports and respite care)
- family support programs/prevention initiatives

Child Welfare Investigation Process: Province of Nova Scotia

Step 1: Report

Under *The Child and Family Services Act* child protection workers and designated social workers are responsible for investigating **all** reports of alleged child abuse and neglect. Under Section 23 anyone who has information, confidential or not, concerning the abuse or neglect of a child under the age of 16, or suspects that a child may have been abused or neglected, is required to immediately report this information to the child welfare agency in the area in which the child resides. Failure to report suspected child abuse will, upon conviction, result in a fine of not more than \$2000, imprisonment not exceeding 6 months, or both. Failure of an individual who performs professional or official duties, with respect to a child, to report will, upon conviction, regardless of confidentiality issues, be fined not more than \$5000, imprisonment not to exceed one year, or both.

In total there are 20 child welfare agencies across the province: 6 District offices of the Department of Community Services and 14 privately operated societies/family and children's service agencies. Also, the Mi'kmag Family and Children's Services Agency is responsible for providing child protective services to native families living on reserves.

Step 2: Determination of Need/Screening Process

After a report of suspected child abuse or neglect, social workers/child protection workers must determine if the child is in need of protective intervention and/or services. Police are notified of all reports of abuse. An application to court may be made by the worker to determine if the child is in need of protective services. The worker may also take the child into care when there is reasonable and probable grounds to believe that the child is in need of protection. If the child is in immediate danger and access is refused, the worker may obtain a warrant to 1) conduct a search of the child's residence, 2) conduct a physical examination of the child, 3) interview the child, 4) search the premises for evidence, and 5) if necessary, take the child into care.

Step 3: Initial Investigation

Once the child has been deemed in need of protection an initial investigation will be conducted. The child will be interviewed by workers following the protocol of "The Step-Wise Interview: A protocol for interviewing children". Once all evidence is collected, it is evaluated by the child protection worker, in consultation with a supervisor and other members of the agency, to determine whether the case should be closed or further investigation is required. The Washington State Risk Factor Matrix (risk assessment tool) is used to assist workers in determining if a child is in need of protection and what services best address the needs of the child.

Step 4: Further Investigation vs. Case Closed

Once risk assessment is completed the child is either deemed in need of protection or the case is closed. If the case remains open, the child is referred to services that have been deemed appropriate for them. Services in Nova Scotia are **formal** community-based services. If the child is deemed not in need of protection, interaction with the child and

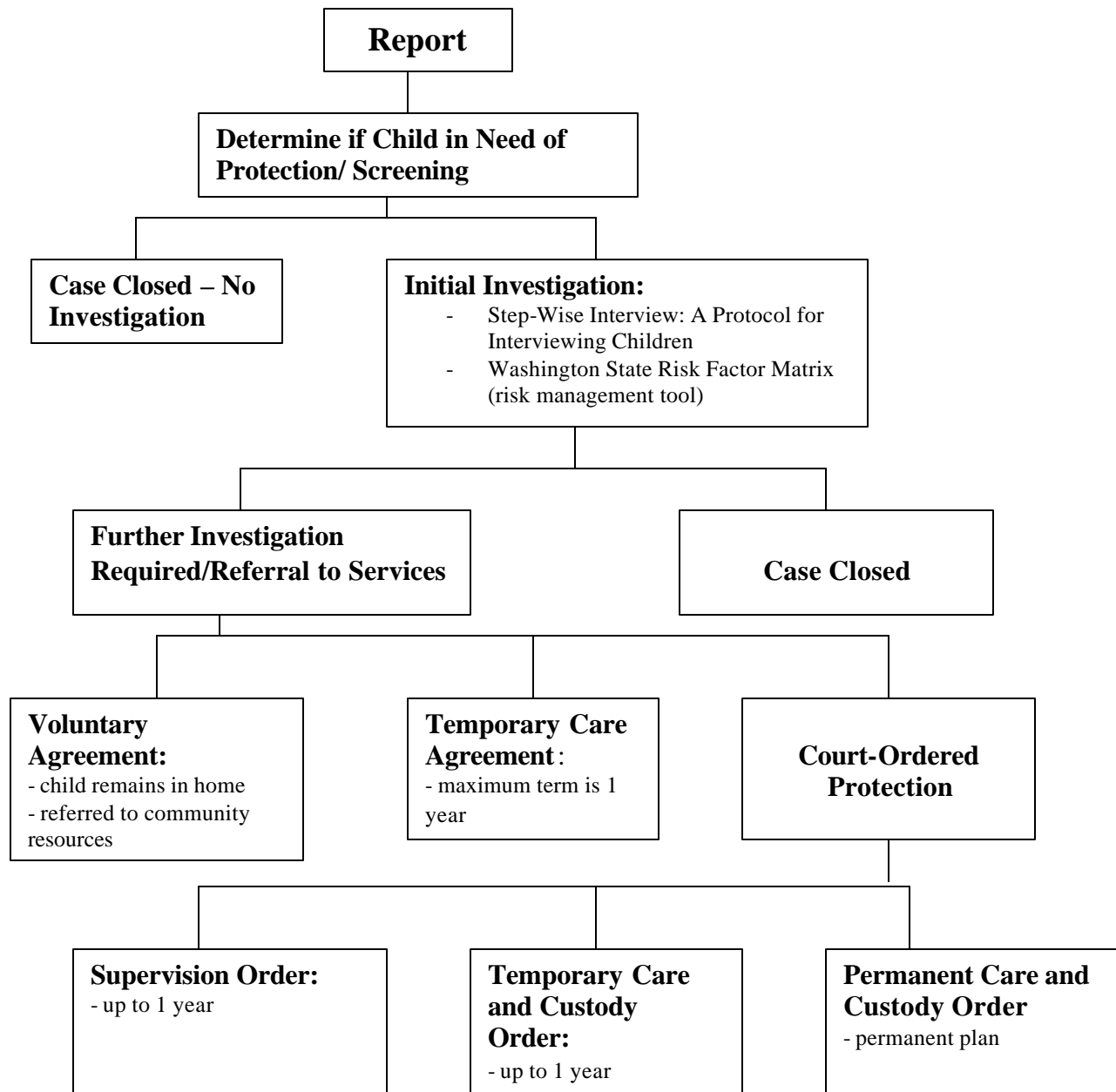
the family ceases. Continued protection is provided to the child in one of the following manners:

1. Voluntary Agreement -- Child remains in the home with the parent or the guardian. Support and services are provided by the worker on a voluntary basis. The child and family are referred to community resources.
2. Temporary Care Agreement -- The child is removed from the home temporarily. Mostly used in cases of neglect as opposed to abuse. Maximum term is 1 year.
3. Court-Ordered Protection -- Possible orders include:
 - a) Supervision Order (up to 1 year)
 - b) Temporary Care and Custody Order (up to 1 year from the date the child was found to be in need of protection – maximum duration varies by age)
 - c) Permanent Care and Custody Order (permanent plan – up to 18 years of age or 21 years of age if the child is disabled)

Source:

Federal-Provincial Working Group on Child and Family Services Information. (1994). Child Welfare in Canada. Ottawa, ON: Minister of Supply and Services Canada.

Child Welfare Investigation Process: Province of Nova Scotia



Source:

Federal-Provincial Working Group on Child and Family Services Information. (1994). Child Welfare in Canada. Ottawa, ON: Minister of Supply and Services Canada.

Proposed Child Welfare Reforms: Province of Nova Scotia

Province's main principles/beliefs concerning service delivery and programs:

1. Service delivery must be organized in such a manner as to ensure that children and youth are served as close to their homes, communities and natural support systems as possible.
2. Access to services must be timely.
3. Service providers must all be working towards the same goal: what is in the best interest of the child.
4. Must be accountable for practice.
5. Culturally appropriate services must be provided and diversity respected.
6. Case planning and ongoing evaluation of case plans should be a collaborative effort for parents, foster parents, and youth.
7. Provincially set program standards must be applied across all four regions.
8. Commitment to partnerships and joint service arrangements needs to be articulated in policy and supported from the highest levels of government.

Department of Community Services Accomplishments for 2000/2001:

1. Optimization of available resources through redesigning delivery systems to promote fairness/efficiency
 - The Department of Justice agreed to provide all legal services to the Children's Aid Society of Halifax and other child welfare agencies
 - A comprehensive assessment tool for the In-Home Support Program was implemented in all four regions
 - Further training provided to family support workers
 - Implemented the first two phases of the Parent Resources and Information Development and Education (PRIDE) foster care model

2. Focus policy/programs on equity, independence and life long learning
 - Training provided to residential youth care workers
 - Expanded Early Intervention services
3. Achieve quality and sustainability of services through innovative effective partnerships
4. Support prevention initiatives, thereby maximizing use of available resources for core service
 - Interdepartmental committee on family violence formed in fall of 2000: Department of Education, Justice and Health, Senior Citizens' Secretariat, Advisory Council on the Status of Women and the Disable Persons Commission
 - Implemented a comprehensive community-based integrated set of services for children and families in two areas of the province: early screening of mothers and newborns, ongoing and regular, monitoring, child centered programs and family support and integrated services
 - New prevention programs implemented under the Healthy Child Development Program

How to Improve Services:

1. Adopt a provincial, multidisciplinary approach that involves all those responsible for children (Parents, Community Services, Education, Health, Justice...)
2. An interdisciplinary, cross departmental committee coordinated by Family and Children's Services and having representation from Health, Justice and Education should be established in order to properly focus on hard to serve children and youth
3. Mental health services for children and youth need to be strengthened through partnership agreements
4. Partnerships are required at all levels -- local, regional and provincial
5. A continuum of services must be defined
6. Simple, practical resources to families can often be pivotal interventions for children

7. The Department must, in partnership with other government departments and service providers, develop and emphasize prevention, promotion and public education programs
8. Agencies must have more autonomy and flexibility to provide needed services
9. Agencies in the child welfare system need to promote continuity of care for children

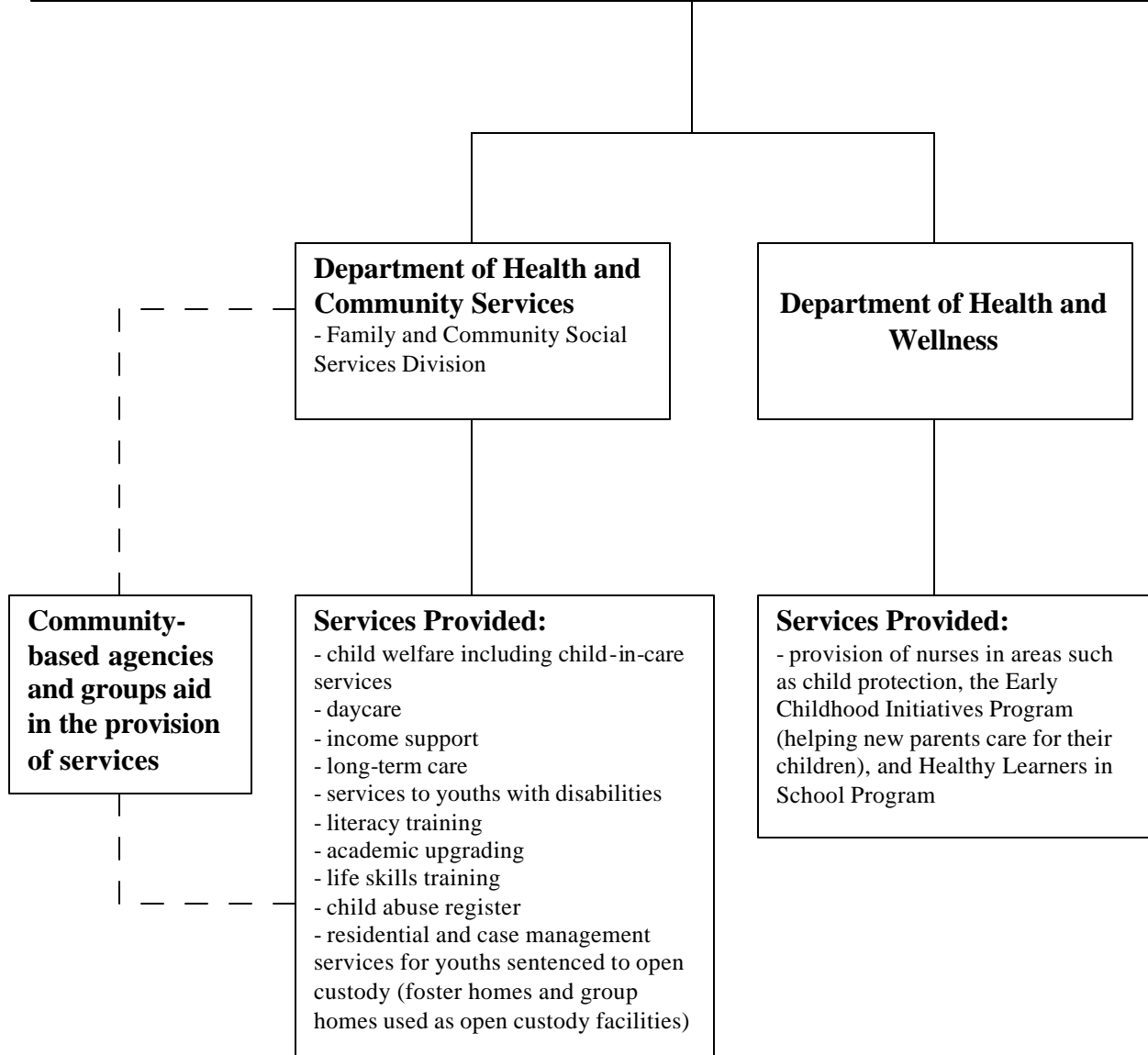
Source:

www.gov.ns.ca

Department of Community Services, Annual Accountability Report Fiscal Year 2000-2001

“Too Good to Lose: Better services to Children and Families”, Provincial Placement Review Project Report, (1996).

Child Welfare Governance Structure: Province of New Brunswick



Source:
www.gov.nb.ca

Child Welfare Investigation Process: Province of New Brunswick

Step 1: Report

Under the *Family Services Act* the Minister of the Department of Health and Community Services is responsible for investigating **all** reports of suspected child abuse and neglect in the province of New Brunswick. Authorized employees of the Minister, child protection workers, are responsible for carrying out investigations of suspected child abuse and neglect.

Any individual who has knowledge of suspected child abuse or neglect of a child under the age of 16, or a disabled child under the age of 19, is required to report that information to child protection authorities. Professional individuals (i.e. doctors) are also required to report, despite confidentiality issues. However, solicitor-client privileged relationships are exempt from this duty. Failure to report could result in criminal charges.

In total there are seven regional offices located throughout the province. Most services are provided by regional offices, however, some services are provided through contracts with private agencies and individuals. Ten of the province's fifteen Indian Nations have signed agreements that establish social service agencies within individual native communities to deliver their own child and family services. Reserves that do not have agencies, and those individuals that live off-reserve, receive services from regional offices in their area.

Step 2: Screening/Preliminary Assessment

Each regional office in the province has their own mechanism for screening alleged reports of child abuse and neglect.

Screening has two outcomes:

1. Acceptance of referrals (determined that the child's security or development may be in danger and that an investigation is warranted)
2. Redirecting individuals to the appropriate community resources (determined that the child's security and development are not in danger and that an investigation is unnecessary. The child and family may be referred to another agency or the appropriate community resources)

Step 3: Investigation

A preliminary investigation by child protection workers will result in:

- 1) the child will be deemed not in need of protection (no further investigation is carried out, however, the child protection worker may decide to continue working with the family or may refer the family to other services)
- 2) the child will be deemed in need of protection (further investigation, ongoing services, will be carried out to determine the best interests of the child; the child and their family will receive the appropriate services).

In cases where serious physical abuse/neglect or sexual abuse has occurred, child protection workers will refer for joint investigation with the police.

The police and child protection workers should work collaboratively in conducting interviews with the complainant, the child, siblings, the non-offending parent/guardian, and the suspect.

Arranging for a medical examination in cases of suspected physical and sexual abuse, must be done immediately.

Step 4: Case management and Treatment

Once it is determined that the child requires ongoing services, the child protection worker must devise a case plan for the child and their family based on what they believe to be in the best interests of the child. Options available to the worker are: Voluntary Agreement, Temporary Alternate Placement or Court-Ordered Protection (Supervisory Order, Custody Order, Guardianship Order).

Treatment and support services are to be provided to family members to enhance family functioning. Treatment may include individual, group, and family therapy and psychiatric and psychological assessments. Support services may include the provision of homemaker services, family support workers, and day care.

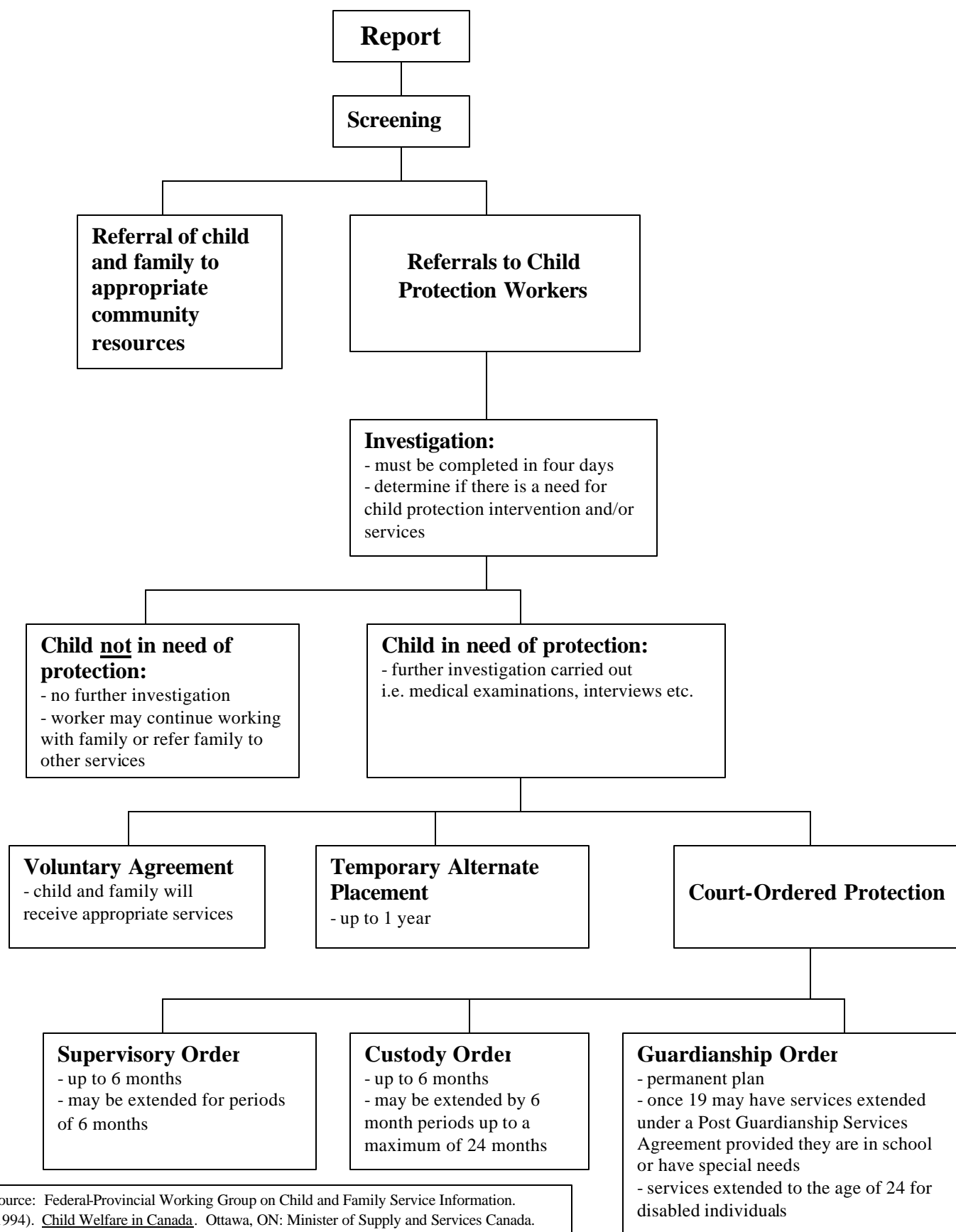
Services Provided:

Services provided to children and families are **formal** and community-based in nature.

Source:

Federal-Provincial Working Group on Child and Family Service Information. (1994). Child Welfare in Canada. Ottawa, ON: Minister of Supply and Services Canada.

Child Welfare Investigation Process: Province of New Brunswick



Child Welfare Investigation Process: Province of Québec

Step 1: Report

Under the *Youth Protection Act*, any individual with information concerning the abuse or neglect of a child under the age of 18, or suspects that a child may have been abused or neglected, is required to report that abuse to the Director of Youth Protection. All professional individuals, excluding lawyers, are required to report all types of maltreatment. A 24hour hotline operates from every Child and Youth Protection Centre. Failure to report may result in a fine of \$250 to \$650.

Step 2: Screening

All reports are received and processed to assure that:

1. the child is under the age of 18
2. the child's security and development is in danger
3. the informant and the information provided is credible

Decisions regarding whether to investigate must be completed within 3 days. The Director must also determine the severity of the case.

Step 3: Evaluation/Investigation

Once the Director has decided that a case should be investigated it must be coded in terms of its severity. When it is determined that a child is in immediate danger, the response must be immediate. If the child is thought to be in danger within the near future the response must be within 24 hours. In all other situations the response must be within four working days.

In order to determine whether the security or development of a child is in danger, the Director must:

1. assess the child's situation and living conditions
2. focus on the exact nature of the facts
3. focus on the impact of the facts on the child
4. assess the parent's capacity to protect the child
5. assess the child's environment

An interview of the child is conducted along with an interview of the parent. Medical experts may be consulted to assist in the substantiation of reports. All evaluations must be completed within 11 working days of the initial receipt of the report.

Step 4: Directing the Child

If a child is found to not be in need of protection they will have no further contact with the Director.

If the child's security and development are in danger, the Director will take control of the situation, not the child. The Director and the staff will determine the most appropriate intervention for the child.

The Director may proceed with one of the following:

1. Voluntary Measures (Agreements)

Include the following:

- a. The child remains within the home and receives measures from the family
The family will report on the progress of the situation periodically.
- b. The parents commit themselves to actively applying the measures intended to modify the situation
- c. The child will have no contact with certain individuals
- d. The child will be entrusted to other persons
- e. The child and his/her family receive the necessary counseling services
- f. Refer the child to a hospital or local community service center in order to receive the assistance and care they need
- g. The child and the parents report to the Director on a regular basis regarding the progression of the situation
- h. The child will receive certain health services
- i. The child will be entrusted for a specified amount of time to a foster family chosen by the social service center
- j. The child will follow a course of training, but not at school

Other conditions may be negotiated between the Director, the parents, and the child. If the child is 14 years of age or older they must provide their consent for any of the conditions.

Any agreement is not to exceed one year in length unless the child's security and development remains in danger.

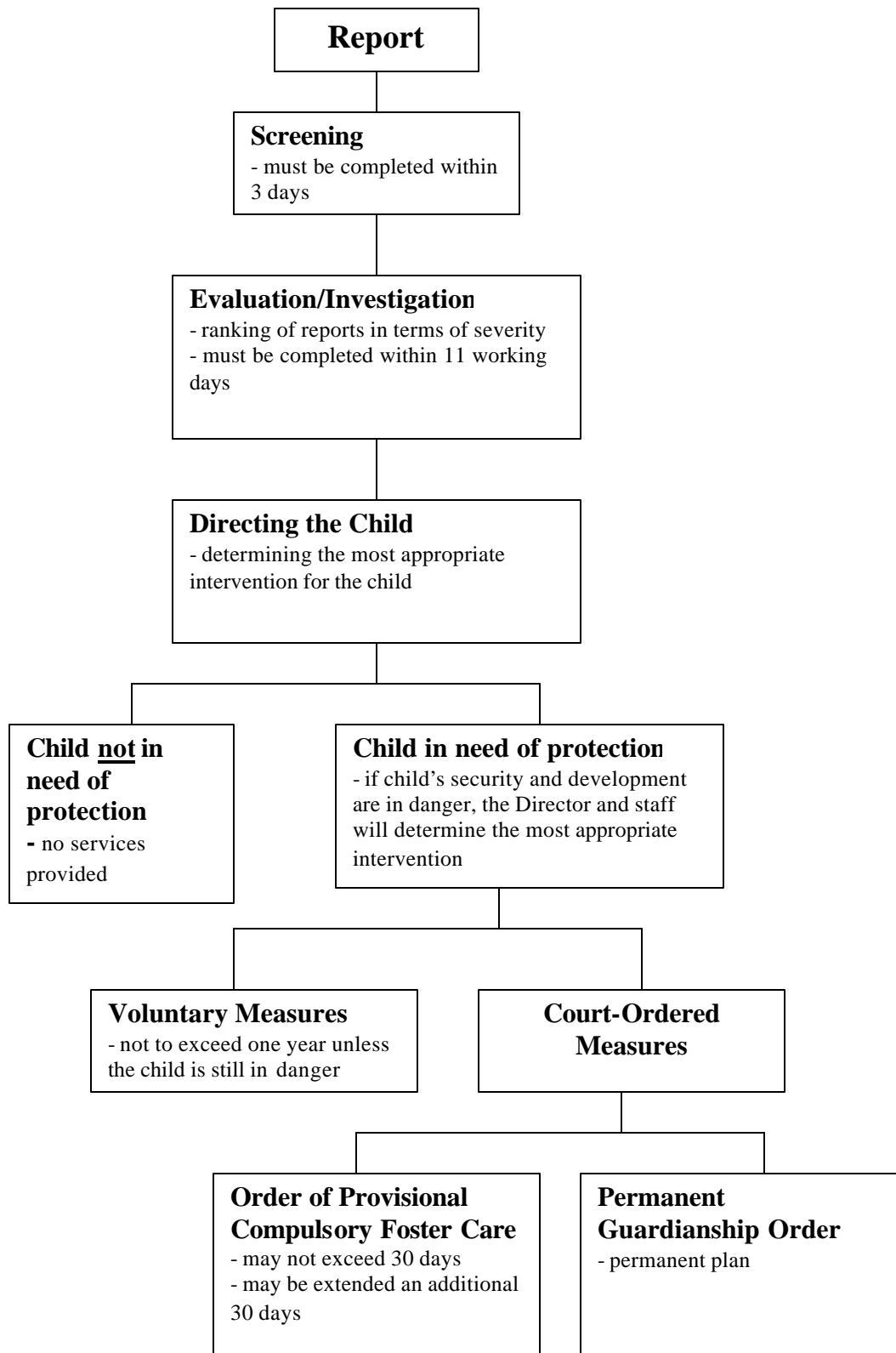
2. Court-Ordered Measures

- a. Order of Provisional Compulsory Foster Care -- Child is temporarily removed from the home and placed in foster care. May not exceed 30 days however may be extended an additional 30 days.
- b. Permanent Guardianship Order -- Permanent plan.

Source:

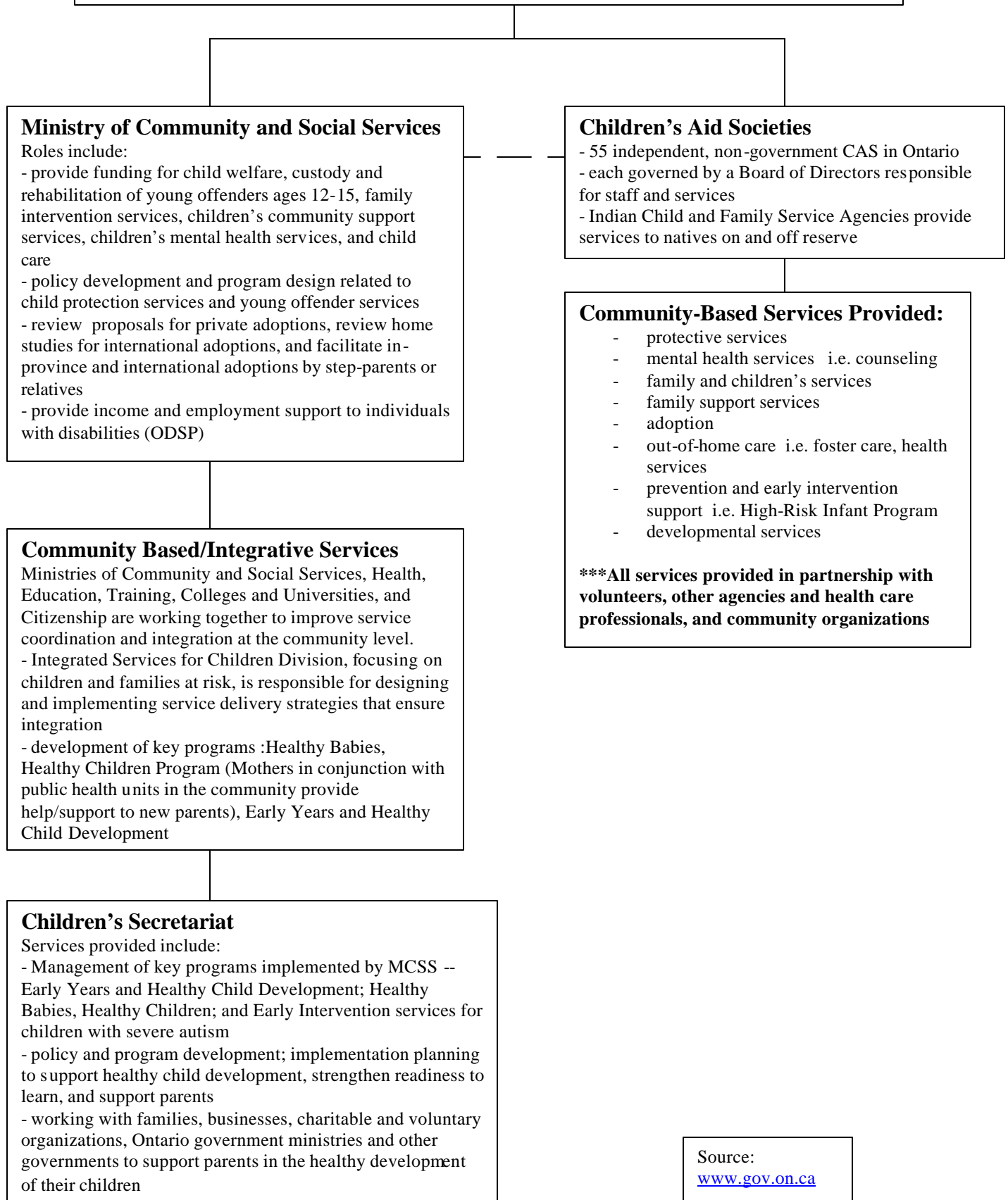
Federal-Provincial Working Group on Child and Family Service Information. (1994). Child Welfare in Canada. Ottawa, ON: Minister of Supply and Services Canada.

Child Welfare Investigation Process: Province of Québec



Source: Federal-Provincial Working Group on Child and Family Services Information. (1994). Child Welfare in Canada. Ottawa, ON: Minister of Supply and Services Canada.

Child Welfare Governance Structure: Province of Ontario



Child Welfare Investigation Process: Province of Ontario

Step 1: Report

Under the *Child and Family Services Act* any individual who believes a child under the age of 16 to be in need of protection is required to report the abuse or neglect immediately to a Children's Aid Society. Should the person inform another agency, such as the school or the police, they are still required to inform a Children's Aid Society. Professional individuals (i.e. doctors) are also required to report suspected abuse, regardless of confidentiality issues. However, solicitor-client relationships are not bound by this duty. Failure to report may result in a fine of up to \$1000 or 1 year in prison. In total there are 55 Children's Aid Societies throughout the province of Ontario. Five of these societies are designated as Indian Child and Family Service Agencies. Services are provided to natives on and off reserves in the territory in which they reside. Should an ICFSA exist in a region that also has a Children's Aid Society, the two agencies must collaborate on what is in the best interests of the child.

Step 2: Screening

An initial screening is carried out by a child protection worker to:

1. determine if a child is in need of protection or at risk of becoming in need of protection
2. clarify the urgency of the situation
3. to determine the appropriateness of CAS services to the child and family

Screening must be completed within 24 hours of the report of alleged abuse or neglect. The police refer any cases of a child under the age of 16 to CAS for investigation.

Step 3: Investigation

Once it has been determined that a case should remain open, a full investigation must be completed by a CAS intake worker. It is important that investigations are carried out with consideration of the child's special needs or cultural identity.

Joint interviewing (use of a video camera is preferable), with a police officer and a CAS worker is recommended.

A medical examination of the child, if one is required, must be completed within 24 hours. A family assessment may also be necessary (generally in neglect cases, parent-teen conflict cases, or less serious physical abuse cases)

It is imperative that a safety assessment is completed to determine the immediate safety needs of the child. If the child is deemed in immediate danger an investigation must commence within 6 hours. If the child is deemed to be in no immediate danger an investigation must be started within seven days. All investigations must be completed within 21 days.

Risk assessment tools are used to help the workers properly assess the needs and safety risk of children i.e. Child Well-Being Scale, Manitoba Risk Estimation System. These tools are not only used at the investigation stage but may be used at the intake and case management stages as well. Risk and safety of the child may be assessed every 6 months whenever there is new information to suggest that the child is at immediate risk of harm.

Step 4: Case Management

If a case falls below the intervention line the child is deemed to not be in need of protection. As a result, services are not provided to the child and CAS intervention ceases.

If a case falls above the intervention line the child is deemed in need of protection and the case is passed on to an ongoing case worker. The CAS worker has four main options available, depending on the safety risk and needs of the child:

1. Voluntary Agreement -- The child remains in the home and receives services thought to be appropriate. Must be terminated when the child reaches the age of 18.
2. Temporary Care Agreement -- Up to a term of 12 months. Must be signed before the child's 16th birthday. Must be terminated by the time the child reaches 18.
3. Special Needs Agreement -- Generally not used in the case of abuse or neglect. The Ministry will provide in-home services to those parents who are unable to provide the special services that their child requires.
4. Court-Ordered Protection -- All orders must be made before the child turns 16. Possible orders include: Supervision Order (from 3-12 months), Society Wardship Order (up to 12 months but may be extended for no longer than 24 months), Crown Wardship Order (ends once the child reaches 18 or marries, however, may be extended until the child reaches 21 if the child is in school or has special needs)

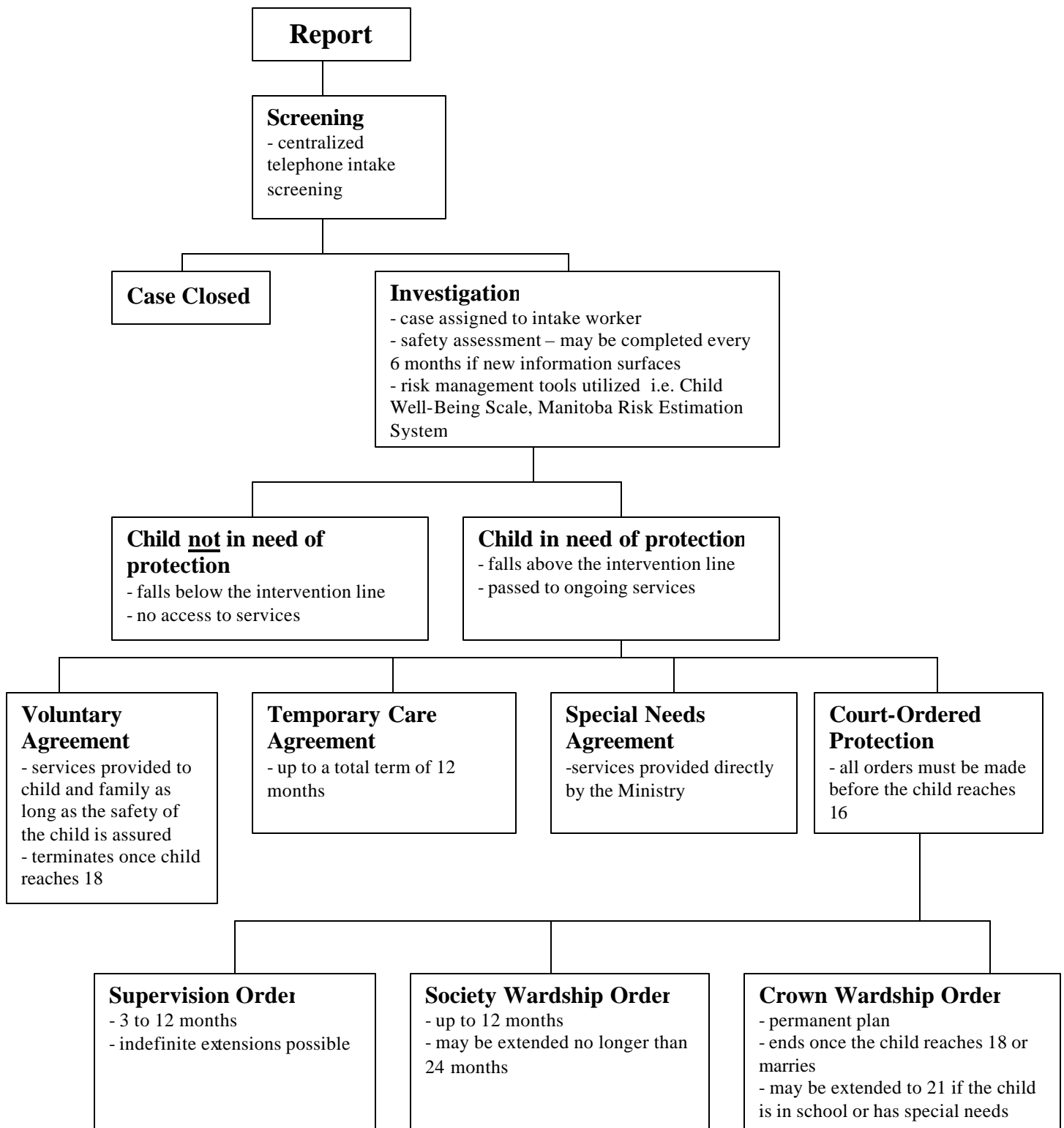
Services Provided:

Services are community-based and of both a **formal** and **informal** nature. All services are provided in partnership with volunteers, other agencies and health care professionals, and community organizations.

Source:

Federal-Provincial Working Group on Child and Family Service Information. (1994). Child Welfare in Canada. Ottawa, ON: Minister of Supply and Services Canada.
www.gov.on.ca

Child Welfare Investigation Process: Province of Ontario



Source: Federal-Provincial Working Group on Child and Family Service Information. (1994). Child Welfare in Canada. Ottawa, ON: Minister of Supply and Services Canada.

Proposed Child Welfare Reforms: Province of Ontario

Four main “shifts in direction” intended to address the failures of the previous system:

1. From government responsibility to shared responsibility

Rationale for change:

All segments of society should share in the responsibility of maintaining and enhancing the social and economic well-being of individuals.

Reasons for the shift:

- to promote self-reliance and supplement traditional supports from families, friends and communities
- to invest in people so as to decrease their dependence on social supports and consequently their need for future services
- to encourage partnerships among funding sources and voluntary organizations, so that Ministry funded and other programs can work collaboratively in communities

2. From services that respond only to entrenched problems, to services that anticipate, respond earlier and reduce the need for future services

Rationale for change:

Provide early effective supports that build on families strengths and link them to other supports in their community in order to avoid expensive and lengthy interventions.

Reasons for the shift:

- to improve the outcomes of services for individuals and families
- available resources can support services for more individuals and families

3. From services organized by agency, to services that respond to individuals and families

In addition to wasting scarce resources, the existence of so many disparate agencies creates difficulty for those seeking as well as delivering children’s and developmental services.

Problems of the current system include:

- system is complex
Often difficult for individuals to access the services they require.
- the system is structured by function rather than by need
Agencies are organized by the services they provide or the client groups they serve, rather than the needs they fulfill.
- the system lacks coordination

The manner in which services are organized makes it unnecessarily difficult and time-consuming for families to access services.

- too much overlap and duplication
Children are often assessed numerous times in a short period of time in order to determine the type of services that fulfill their needs.
 - administrative and infrastructure costs are higher than necessary
4. From addressing needs through growth, to doing better within existing resources
- Responding to pressures and problems by using limited public resources more effectively, rather than with additional funding. A need to improve the social service system by integrating services more comprehensively, and responding better to the needs of individuals.

What factors caused Ontario to adopt it's current model?

Many services were:

- provided in isolation from others
- did not work together as a whole system – agencies needed to work collaboratively for the well-being of children
- did not make the most efficient use of public dollars
- there needed to be better co-ordination of information regarding services --- individuals required a simpler way to obtain information on how to access services in their community

Access to more flexible and responsive services, and to service providers that are more accountable to those who use their services for children and individuals with developmental disabilities needed to be improved.

Ontario Child Welfare Reforms:

Child welfare reform initiatives for 2001-2002 include:

- use of mandatory risk assessment model
- tough new standards for all child protection cases
- a new database to track high-risk children across the province
- additional training for child protection staff
- a funding framework that reflects actual caseloads
- implementation of Ontario Early Years Centres across the province -- established to support parents and children
- enhance services for individuals with developmental disabilities – development of new places to live within the community for individuals with developmental disabilities

Nine specific goals for the reshaping of social services in Ontario include:

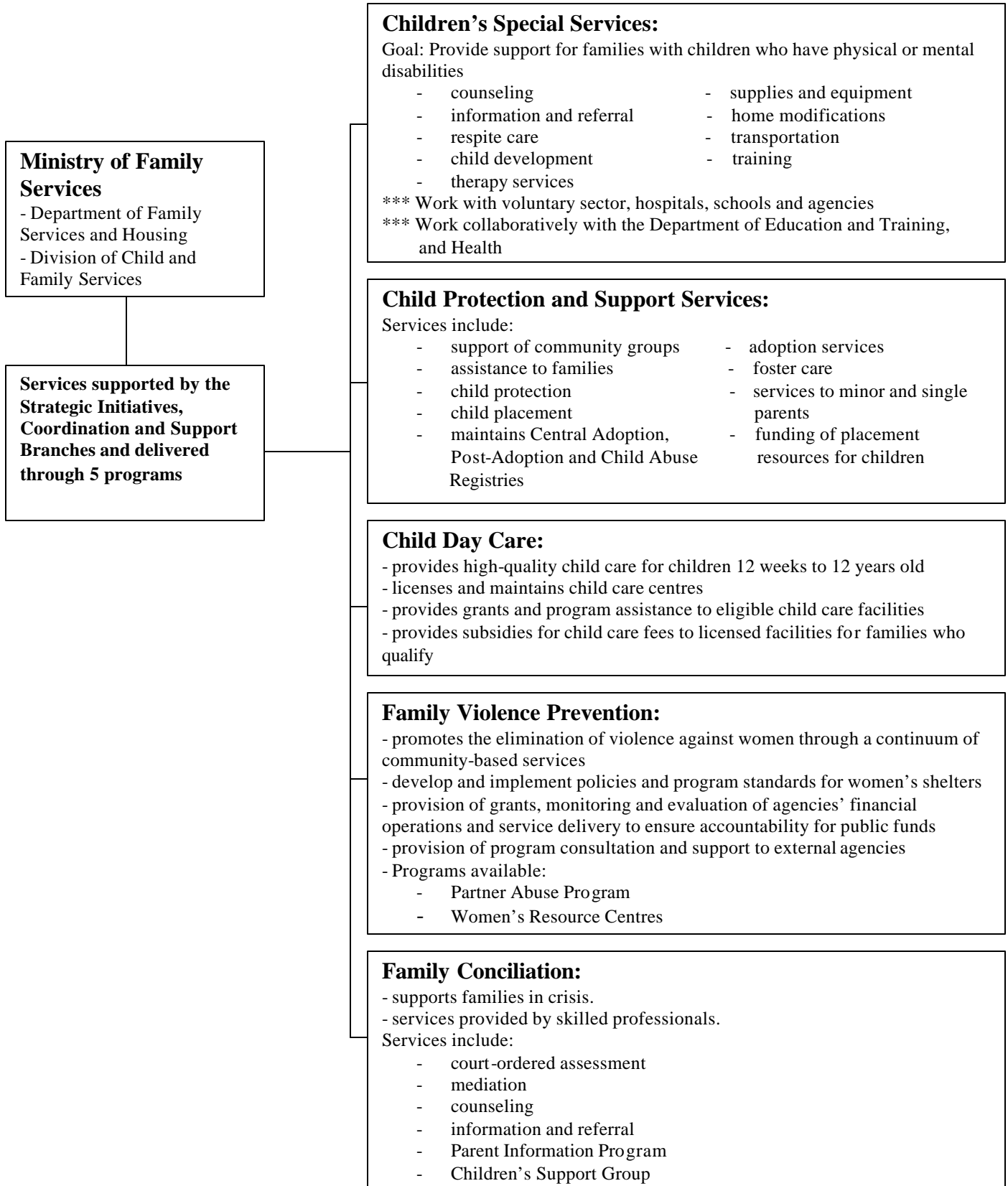
1. Ensuring that individuals and families everywhere in Ontario have access to a consistent range of core services for children's and developmental services.
2. Individuals most in need will receive essential supports.
3. Families and individuals will receive services earlier, before problems worsen and require more intrusive services.
4. Families and individuals will have easier access to coordinated services.
5. Families and individuals will receive services that respond to their needs
6. Families and individuals will be served by local systems that make the best use of resources
7. Lower administration costs for local systems
8. Families and individuals will receive services that lead to less reliance on government-funded services - - cooperation with community supports and informal networks is encouraged
9. Families and individuals will receive a coordinated set of services funded by the Ministry of Community and Social Services and other funders when necessary.

Source:

www.gov.on.ca

"Reinvestment Strategy for Children and Youth", (1997), Ministry of Community and Social Services
"Making Services Work for People", (1997), Ministry of Community and Social Services

Child Welfare Governance Structure: Province of Manitoba



Child Welfare Investigation Process: Province of Manitoba

Step 1: Report

Under *The Child and Family Services Act* any individual with information concerning the abuse or neglect of a child under the age of 18, or suspects that a child may have been abused or neglected, is required to report the abuse to a child protection agency or to the parent or guardian of the child. This duty is bestowed upon professional individuals, excluding lawyers, regardless of confidentiality issues. Failure to do so could result in summary conviction.

Child protection services are the responsibility of the Department of Family Services. Services are delivered by 15 agencies (5 native and 5 non-native agencies in addition to 5/8 regional offices of the Department). The Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre provides services to status and non-status Indians and Metis residing in Winnipeg.

Step 2: Preliminary Investigation

All reports of child abuse or neglect are investigated to determine if further intervention is necessary. All reports are responded by the end of the following working day. Investigation of all reports is the responsibility of the Department of Family Services and Housing. If it appears that serious physical injury or sexual abuse have occurred, a medical examination of the child is arranged.

The Manitoba Risk Estimation System, a predictive assessment tool, is employed province wide. The System is used after an agency's preliminary intervention to determine whether a child is at risk of being in need of protection.

Child abuse committees are set up to review, monitor, facilitate involvement of other disciplines, and provide recommendations to agencies

Step 3: Case Management

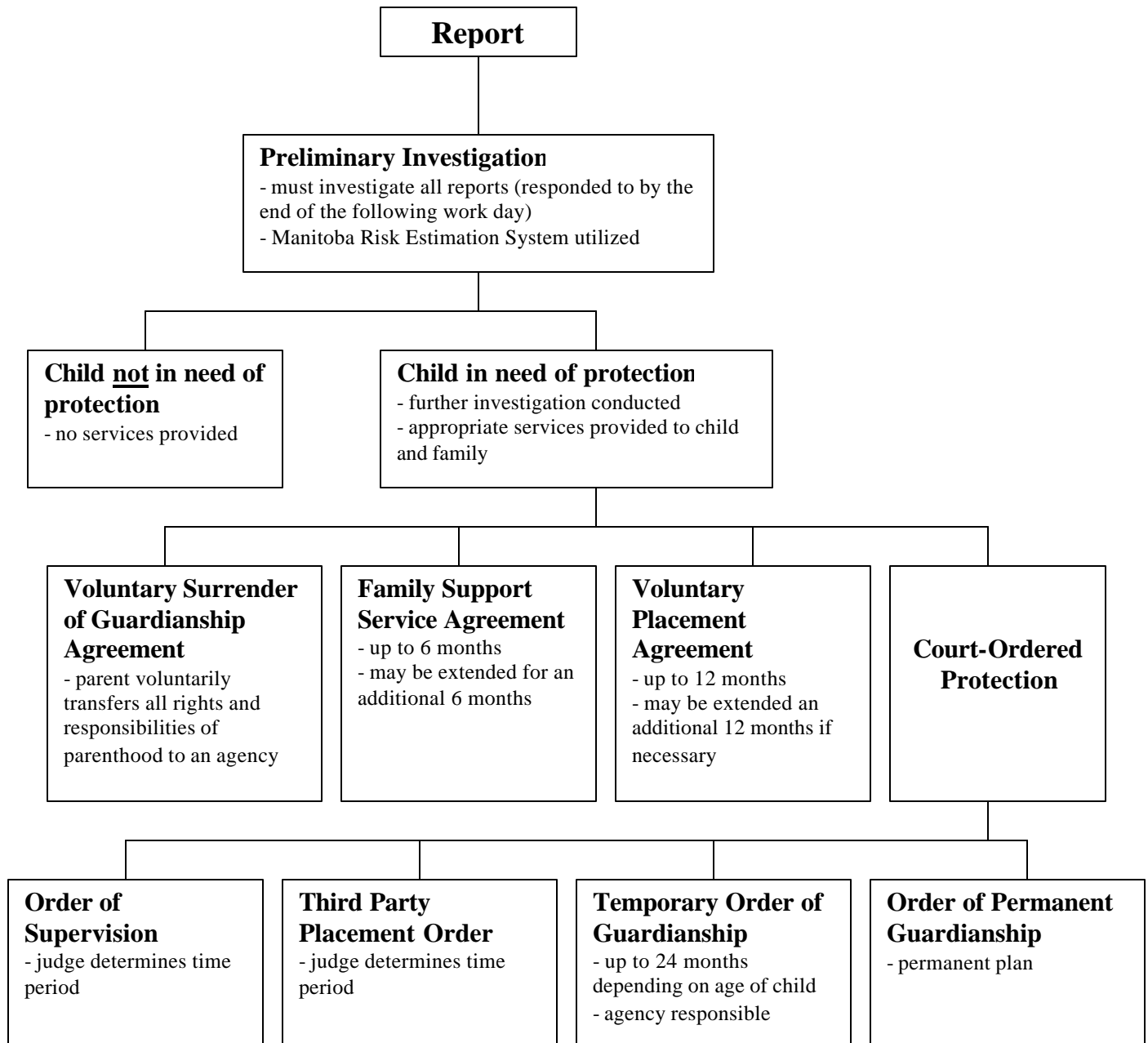
If the child is deemed not in need of protection the mandate of the department ceases. If the child is deemed in need of protection further investigations are completed and the appropriate services are provided to the child and family.

Child protection workers have three options available to them depending on the safety risk and needs of the child:

1. Family Support Service Agreement -- involves the placement of a homemaker or parent aide in the child's home to temporarily care for the child if the parents/guardians are unable to. Valid for 6 months but may be extended for an additional 6 months.
2. Voluntary Placement Agreement -- Up to 12 months. May be extended an additional 12 months where necessary.
3. Court-Ordered Protection -- May be one of four orders: a) Order of Supervision, b) Third Party Placement Order, c) Temporary Order of Guardianship, or d) Order of Permanent Guardianship
4. Voluntary Surrender of Guardianship Agreement -- Parent voluntarily transfers all rights and responsibilities of parenthood to an agency

Services are community-based and provided mostly on a formal basis, however, certain services (Children's Special Services) are also provided on an informal basis.

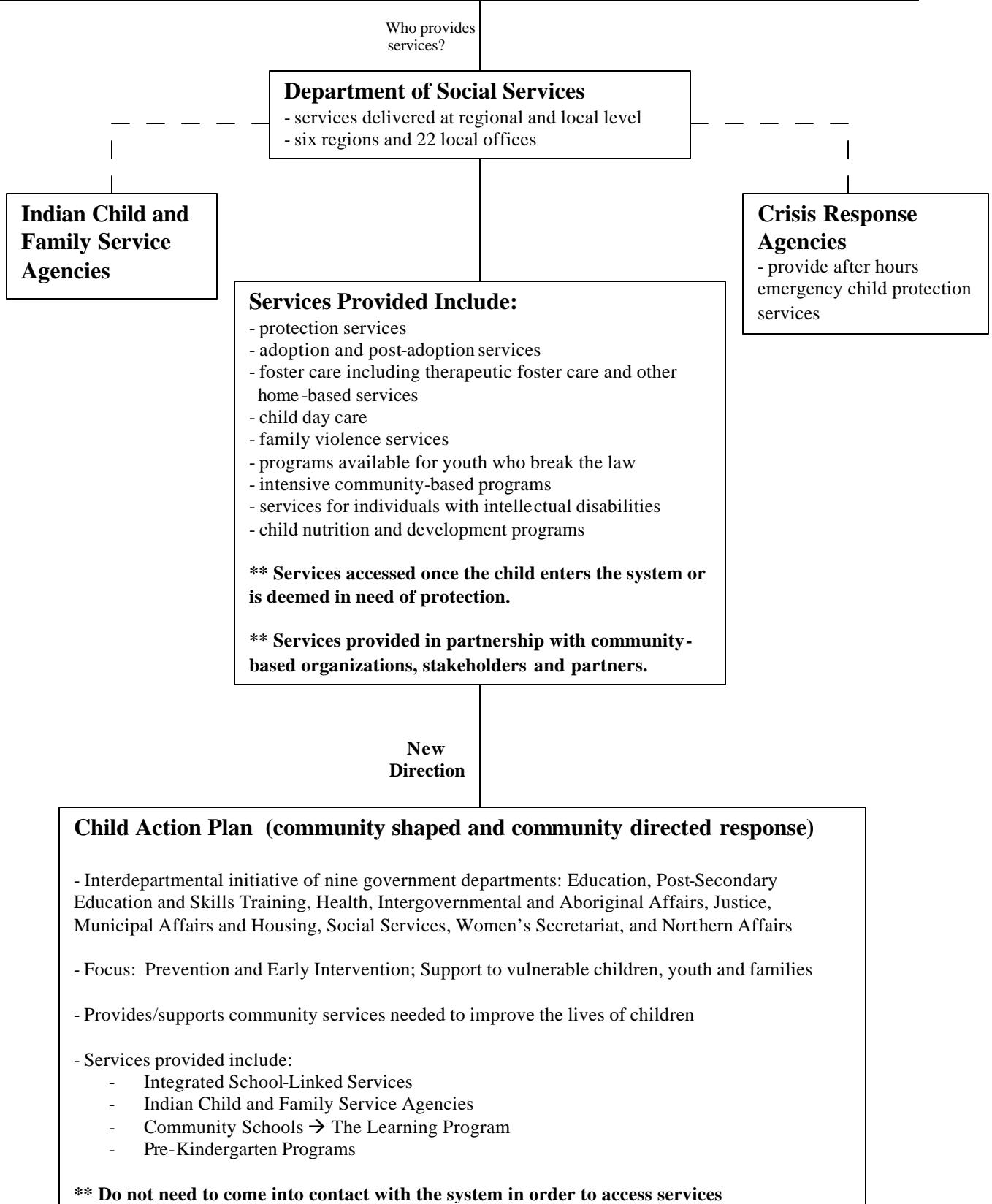
Child Welfare Investigation Process: Province of Manitoba



Source:

Federal-Provincial Working Group on Child and Family Services Information. (1994). Child Welfare in Canada. Ottawa, ON: Minister of Supply and Services Canada.

Child Welfare Governance Structure: Province of Saskatchewan



Child Welfare Investigation Process: Province of Saskatchewan

Step 1: Report

Under *The Child and Family Services Act* all individuals with information concerning the abuse or neglect of an unmarried child under the age of 16, or suspects that a child may have been abused or neglected, is required to report the abuse or neglect to the Ministry of Social Services or a child protection worker. The sole exceptions to this duty are for situations involving lawyer/client privilege or Crown privilege. Failure to report abuse or suspected abuse may result in a prison term of up to 6 months, a fine of \$5000, or a combination of the two.

Step 2: Screening

Step 3: Investigation

The investigation is the responsibility of the child protection worker.

An investigation may take place, depending on the severity of the abuse and the age of the child within:

1. the hour
2. 24 hours
3. 2 days

In severe sexual or physical abuse a medical investigation must be conducted immediately.

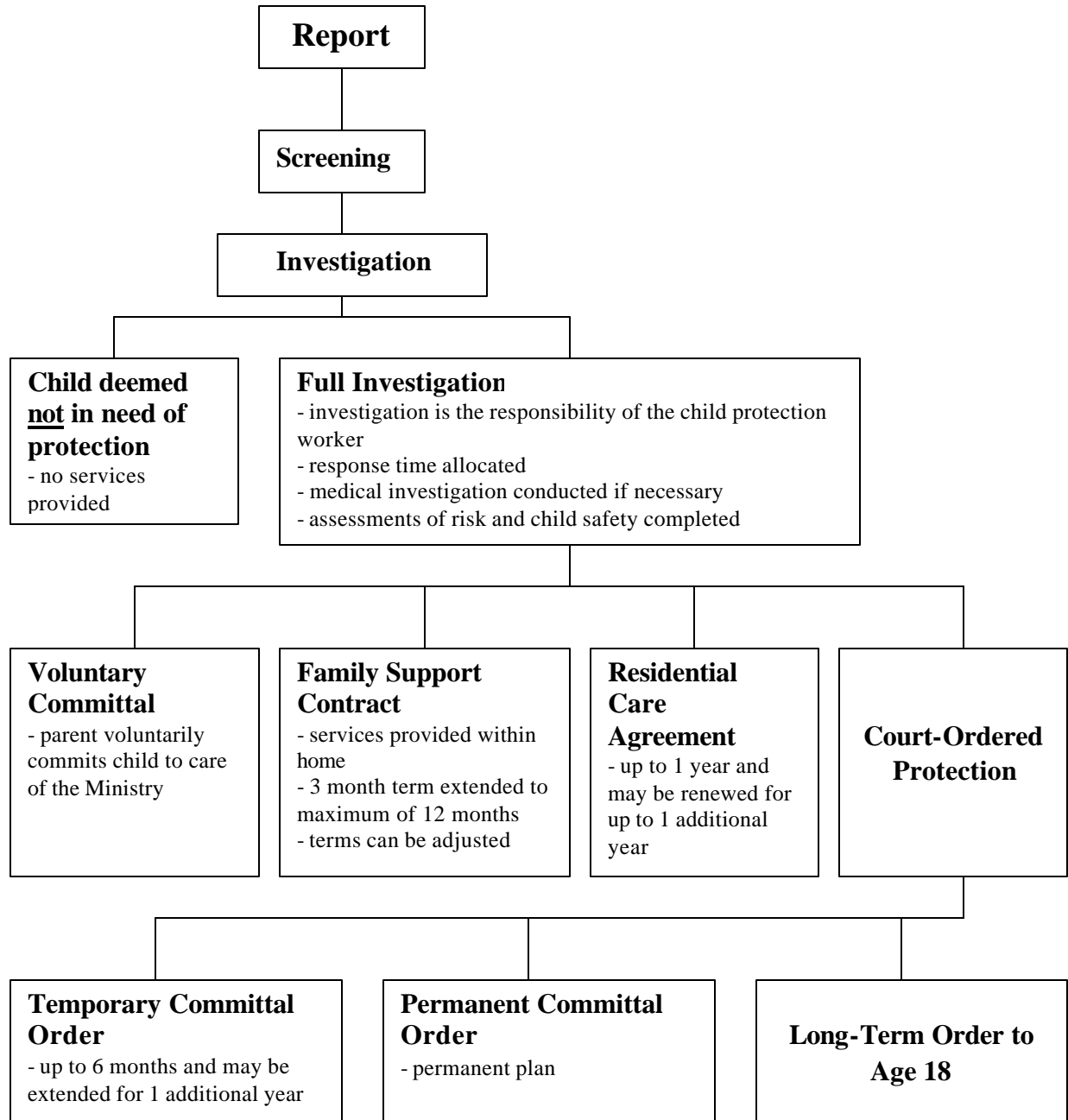
A family-centered case management model incorporating assessments of risk and child safety is utilized.

Step 4: Case Management

Options available include:

1. Voluntary Committal -- Parent can voluntarily commit a child to the care of the Minister and relinquish all custodial and guardianship rights.
2. Family Support Contract -- Support services are provided to the child and the family within the home. Up to a 3 month term and may be extended for up to a maximum of 12 months. Terms may be adjusted by the Minister if family requires ongoing services for a period of time longer than 12 month maximum.
3. Residential Care Agreement -- For up to 1 year and may be renewed for up to 1 additional year.
4. Court-Ordered Protection -- Three options available: 1) Temporary Committal Order (up to 6 months and may be extended for 1 additional year), 2) Permanent Committal Order (permanent plan), 3) Long Term Order to Age 18 (when an older child, under 16 years of age, is in need of protection and is unlikely or does not wish to be adopted, he/she is placed in custody of the Minister until age 18 while the parents retain guardianship).

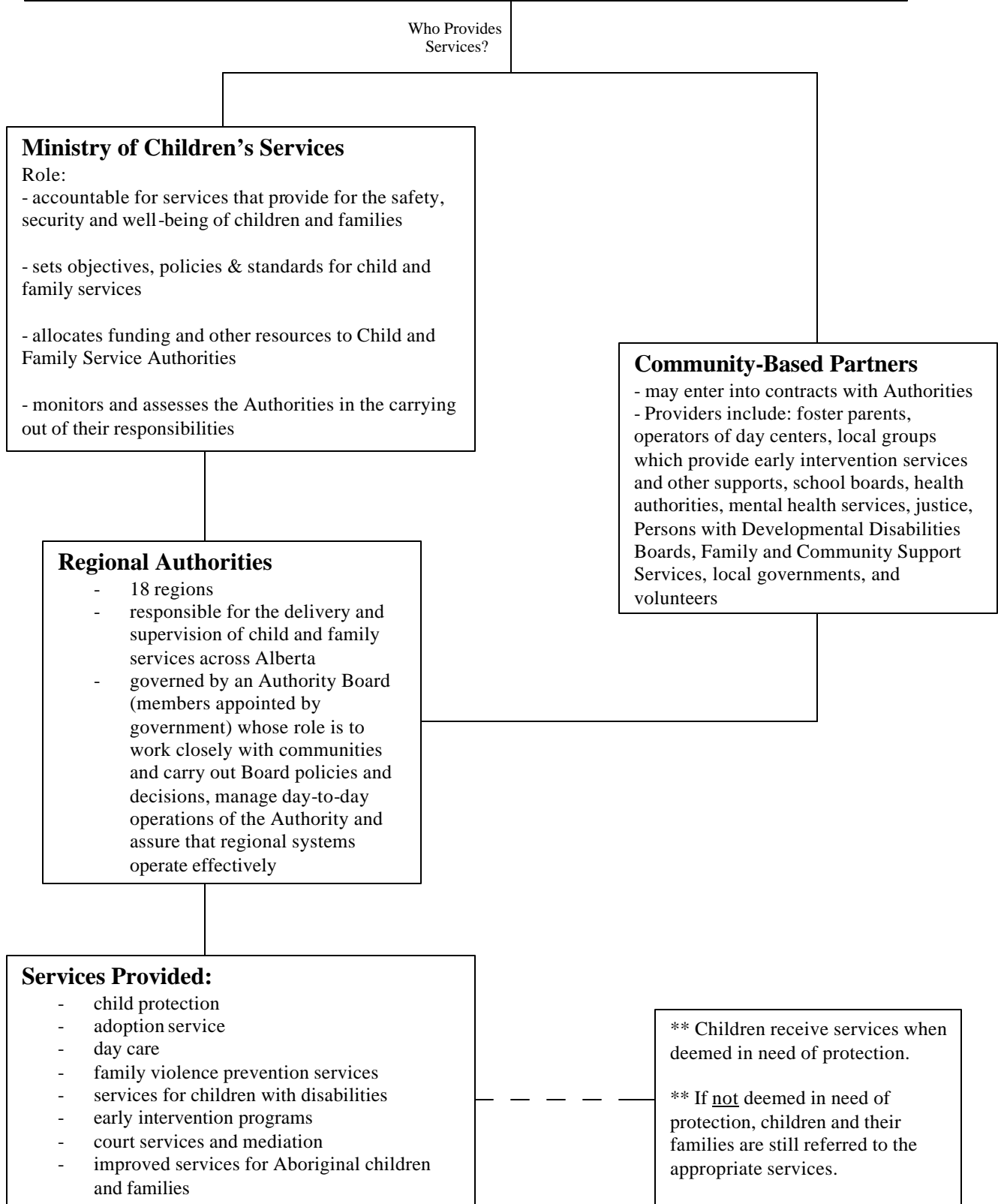
Child Welfare Investigation Process: Province of Saskatchewan



Source:

Federal-Provincial Working Group on Child and Family Services Information. (1994). Child Welfare in Canada. Ottawa, ON: Minister of Supply and Services Canada.

Child Welfare Governance Structure: Province of Alberta



Child Welfare Investigation Process: Province of Alberta

Step 1: Report

Under the *Child Welfare Act* any individual with information concerning the abuse or neglect of a child under the age of 18, or suspects that a child may have been abused or neglected, is required to report that information to a Child Welfare office or the Child Abuse Hotline (open 24 hours a day). Professional individuals, regardless of confidentiality issues, are also required to report any abuse or suspected abuse. Solicitor-client relationships are the only exception to this duty. Failure to report may result in a fine of up to \$2000 or six months in prison.

The Ministry of Children's Services, although accountable for services that provide for the safety, security and well-being of children and families, is not directly responsible for the deliverance of these services. Rather, 18 regional authorities, governed by an Authority Board, are responsible for the delivery and supervision of child and family services across Alberta.

Step 2: Screening

Once a report has been filed, the case is screened to determine if an investigation by a child welfare worker is warranted. The maximum amount of time permitted for screening is 3 days.

If it is determined that an investigation is unnecessary, the child and their family are referred to the appropriate community resources. The Child Welfare worker is required to enter relevant information concerning the case on the Child Welfare Information System (CWIS). This information is retained for a period of 90 days.

Step 3: Investigation

Once a full investigation is deemed warranted, a response time is assigned to the case. If a child is thought to be in immediate danger the response by child welfare workers must be immediate. If the child is not considered to be in immediate danger the worker has 10 days from the initial screening process to respond to the report.

All situations of suspected physical or sexual abuse must be reported to the police.

Generally a joint investigation is completed. A complete medical examination of the child must be completed.

Generally, a face-to-face interview is completed with the child and a separate interview is conducted with the child's parent(s) to determine not only the child's level of safety but the needs of the child and the family as well.

Step 4: Case Management:

Once an investigation is completed the child may be deemed not in need of protection. Although child welfare intervention is terminated, children and families may still be referred to the appropriate community-based services.

If a child is deemed in need of protection they are referred to the appropriate community-based services.

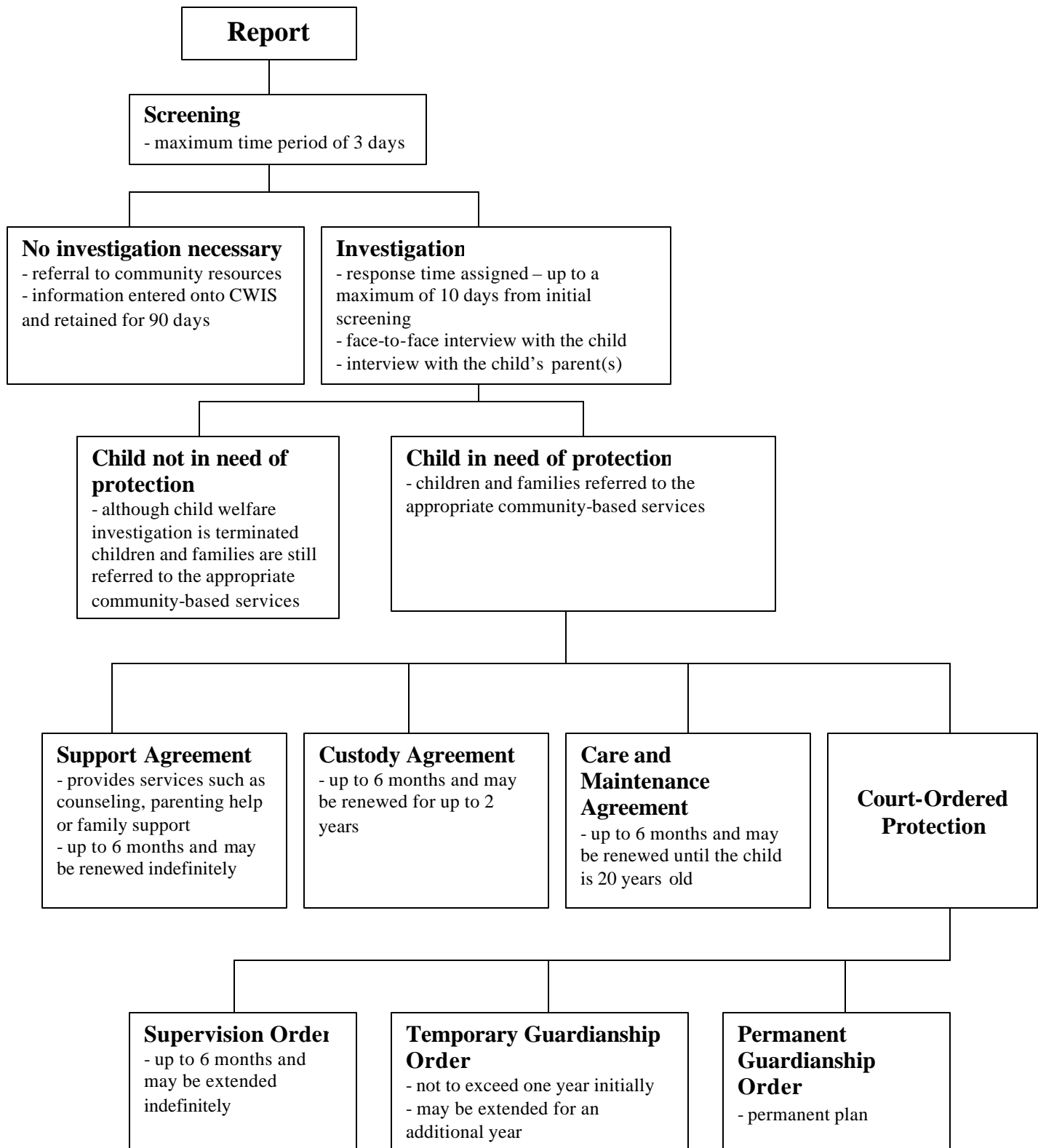
Child welfare workers can proceed in one of four manners:

1. Support Agreement -- Lasts up to 6 months but may be renewed indefinitely.
2. Custody Agreement -- Lasts up to 6 months. May be renewed for up to six months at a time, but must not exceed two years.
3. Care and Maintenance Agreement -- A child who has turned 18 may enter into this agreement in order to extend services. Lasts up to 6 months but may be renewed indefinitely until the individual turns 20 years of age.
4. Court-Ordered Protection --
 - a) Supervision Order (initial order must not exceed 6 months but may be extended indefinitely)
 - b) Temporary Guardianship Order (initial duration may not exceed one year and may be extended for one additional year)
 - c) Permanent Guardianship Order (permanent plan)

*** Any child 16 years of age or over who is living independently may also apply for a Support or Custody Agreement.

*** Any child who is the subject of a Temporary Guardianship Order or a Permanent Guardianship Order may also apply for a Care and Maintenance Agreement.

Child Welfare Investigation Process: Province of Alberta



Source: Federal-Provincial Working Group on Child and Family Service Information. (1994). Child Welfare in Canada. Ottawa, ON: Minister of Supply and Services Canada.

Proposed Plans for Reform: Province of Alberta

Alberta is in the advanced stages of planning for a new community-based system of service delivery for children and families. Four key pillars, which have guided the planning process, are as follows:

1. **Community-Based Services** → Communities view participation and access for all as guiding principals in service delivery. The roles of natural helpers, support networks, and cultural groups will be integrated and expanded within the professional delivery of service. Under this system the provincial government will continue to be accountable for services provided to children and families, however, is not directly responsible for the deliverance of services. Rather, 18 Child and Family Services Authorities across the province work in conjunction with community agencies, professionals and volunteers in delivering services and programs to children and families based on local needs.

Service providers include:

- foster parents
- operators of day care centers
- local groups which provide early intervention services and other supports
- school boards
- health authorities
- mental health services
- justice
- Persons with Developmental Disabilities Boards
- Family and Community Support Services
- local governments
- volunteers

Children and families are referred to community-based services if they are deemed in need of protection and if they are deemed not in need of protection, should the family still have problems and require assistance.

2. **Early Intervention Services** → Regional services should be timely and accessible, and should build on the families strengths so as to minimize the child and families need for crisis intervention.
3. **Improved Services for Aboriginal Children and Families** → Aboriginal communities will be responsible for planning and delivering services to Aboriginal children and families so as to reflect the values, beliefs and customs of First Nations, Metis and other Aboriginal people in a respectful, collaborative manner.
The First Nations and Metis Relations Branch, established on January 2000, provides assistance and advice on Aboriginal issues to the Ministry, and supports First Nations in the delivery of children's services and programs. The Branch's goal is to strengthen Aboriginal communities ability in providing services to

children and families and to ensure that the Aboriginal voice is heard in the community.

Top priorities in the Branch operational plan include:

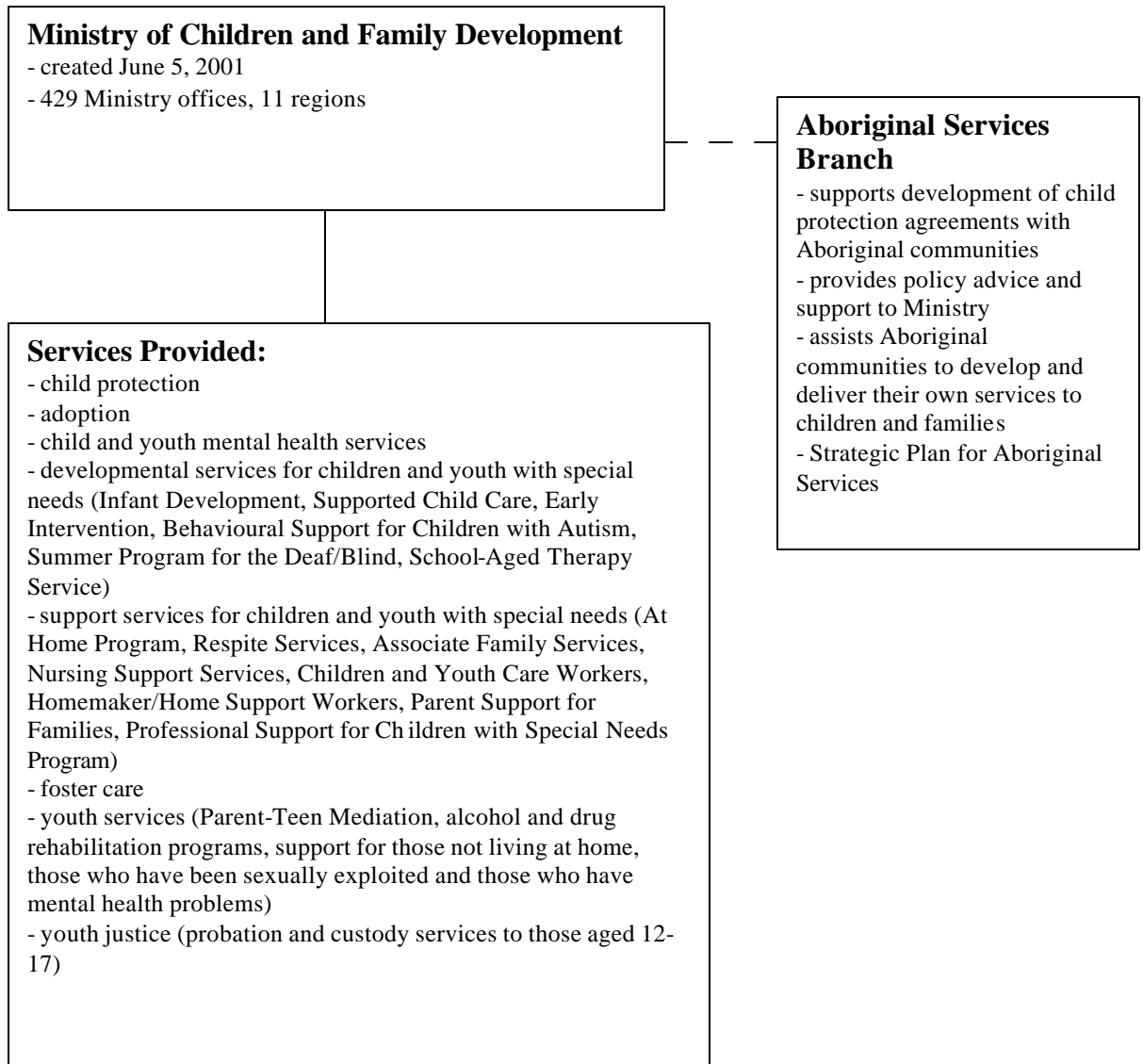
- the development and implementation of First Nations and Metis legislation, and an off reserve First Nation Policy Framework
- culturally appropriate training
- increased support for early intervention programs
- increased capacity building in Aboriginal agencies in the areas of policy, research, monitoring and evaluation
- greater clarity in relationships and communication with both community partners and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada

4. **Integrated Services** → Planning and service delivery will be integrated at the community, regional and provincial levels to facilitate barrier-free access to holistic services for children and families.

Source:

www.acs.gov.ab.ca

Child Welfare Governance Structure: Province of British Columbia



Source: www.mcf.gov.bc.ca

Child Welfare Investigation Process: Province of British Columbia

Step 1: Report

Under *The Child Family and Community Services Act* all individuals with information concerning the abuse or neglect of a child under the age of 19, or suspects that a child may have been abused or neglected, is required to report the abuse or neglect to the Director or a delegated social worker. Failure to report such abuse or neglect may be punishable under the act.

Suspected physical or sexual abuse must also be reported immediately to the police.

Step 2: Screening

Step 3: Investigation

If the family asks for assistance from the Ministry they are referred to Ministry or community support services.

Once a report is deemed necessary of a full investigation a response time is allocated. If a child is considered in immediate need of protection an investigation must be conducted immediately. A report is considered immediate if:

1. report is of severe physical abuse or neglect
2. report is of sexual abuse
3. family has a history of violence

If not considered immediate a report may be investigated within 24 hours, or beyond 24 hours, depending on the severity of the report.

All parties involved (police, medical health officer and social worker) must meet to plan a joint response.

The child, along with siblings, is interviewed as soon as possible.

Medical exams are conducted if there is visual evidence of physical abuse, or sexual abuse. A sexually transmitted disease test is conducted within 24 hours in cases of substantiated or confessed sexual abuse.

Family risk factors are assessed to determine if the child will be in danger of abuse within the near future.

Step 4: Case Management

After the completion of a full investigation and the child is deemed in need of protection there are four main options available:

1. Voluntary Care Agreement -- Support services are provided to the child and the family.
2. Short Term Custody Agreement -- For up to 3 months however may be extended for up to 6 months.

3. Special Needs Agreement -- Support services are provided to families with handicapped children for up to 6 months but may be extended indefinitely in 12 month intervals.
4. Court-Ordered Protection -- Three possibilities:
 - a) Supervision Order (up to 6 months)
 - b) Temporary Custody Order
 - c) Continuing Custody Order (all parental rights transferred to the Director).

Post Majority Services Program: for those individuals 19-21 who are current or former permanent wards who still require access to services.

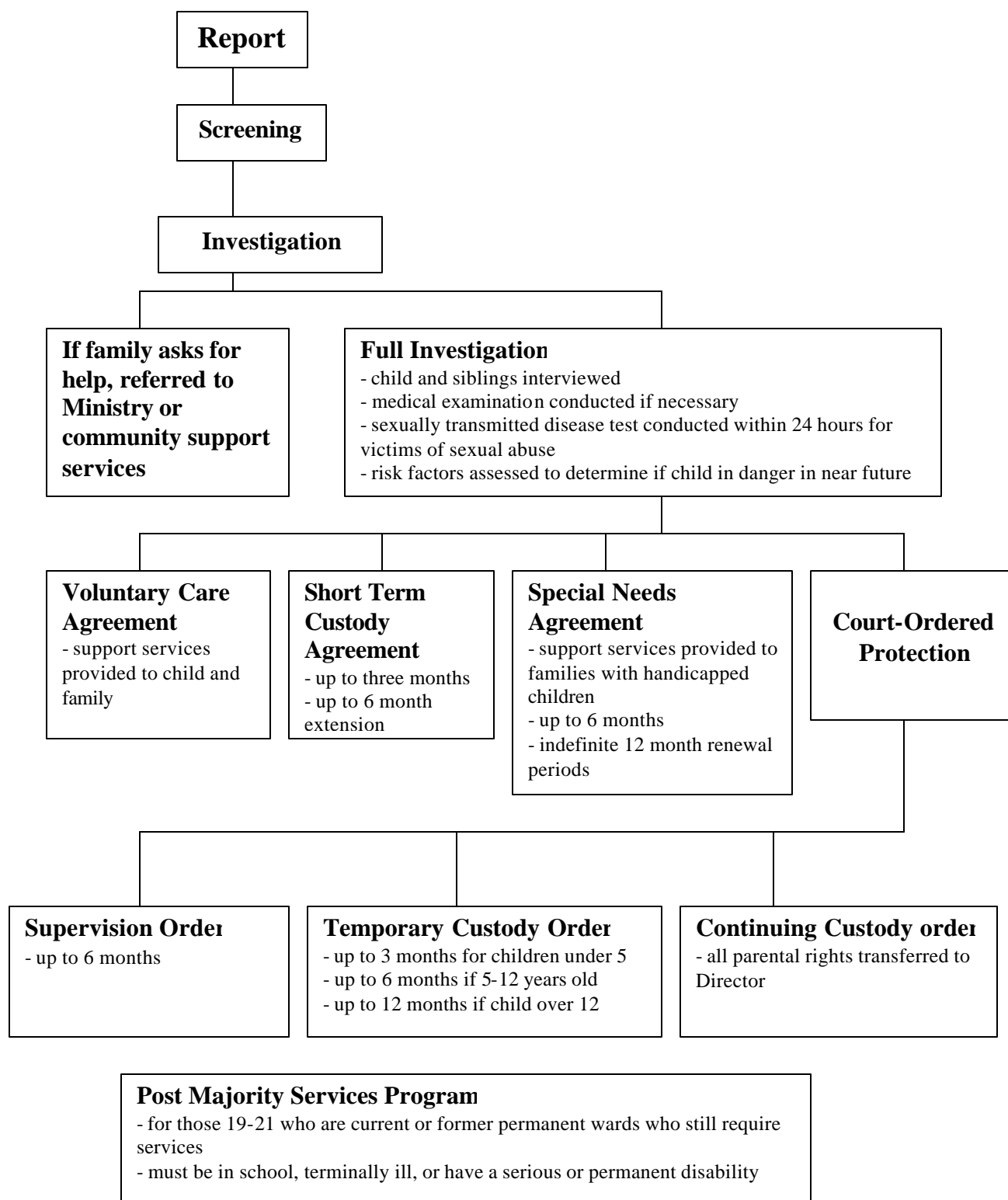
In order to qualify for this program the individual must be:

1. in school or in a training program
2. terminally ill
3. have a serious or permanent disability

Source:

Federal-Provincial Working Group on Child and Family Service Information. (1994). Child Welfare in Canada. Ottawa, ON: Minister of Supply and Services Canada.

Child Welfare Investigation Process: Province of British Columbia



Source:

Federal-Provincial Working Group on Child and Family Services Information. (1994). Child Welfare in Canada. Ottawa, ON: Minister of Supply and Services Canada.

Proposed Plans for Reform: Province of British Columbia

How to change service delivery and governance:

- Deficits to strengths
- Reaction and pro-action
- Centralization to community-based service delivery
- Fragmentation to connection
- Spenders to investors
- Short-term to long-term
- Knowing to learning

Strategic shifts required/intended:

1. Open, accountable and transparent relationships
 - Eliminate barriers between Ministry and community
 - Reduce “us and them” mentality
 - Share organizational and service delivery information with citizens, staff, and the community sector
2. Enable communities to develop and deliver services with a consolidated, comprehensive, community-based service delivery system
 - Accept and embrace diversity
 - Allow communities to decide what should be done, how, when, where and with whom
 - Eliminate or reduce the restrictions imposed on service providers and communities by legislation, regulations, policies and procedures
 - Involve clients and advocates in planning and decision-making process
 - Examine options for community-based governance
 - Develop community “leadership teams”
 - Increase collaboration and alignment of priorities and strategies across government Ministries

3. Strategic investments in capacity and resiliency building with evidence-based funding
 - Gather or receive information that helps monitor and evaluate the returns
 - Connect with people “sooner and more gently”
 - Shift from family support to family support
 - Partner with public health and community partners on public education and awareness, and partner with parents who are struggling to provide appropriate supports for their children
 - Train workers to better identify and evaluate opportunities to involve extended family and friends to support families and children
4. Promote family and community capacity to protect children and to support child and family development
 - Allow children to remain within the home and community wherever possible
 - Reduce the length of time a child stays in care
 - Build stable and continuous caring relationships for children who are committed permanently to care through adoption as soon as possible
 - Embrace community diversity in service delivery
 - Integrate risk assessment tool with a strengths and capacity assessment to better decision-making and planning
5. A community-based service delivery system for adults with developmental disabilities that promotes choice, innovation and shared responsibility
6. Building capacity within Aboriginal communities to deliver a full range of services with emphasis on early childhood and family development

Source: www.mcf.gov.bc.ca

Discussion Paper on Child, Youth, Family and Community Services (October 2001).

