

Kinship care program review recommendations and implementation

Kinship care was formally introduced as a placement option for children and youth in care in Alberta when the *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act* was enacted in 2004.

Given that the kinship care program has been used by the child intervention system for five years and the number of kinship care homes in the province has more than doubled during that time, the ministry scheduled a review of the program in 2009-10.

The review committee, made up of ministry staff with experience in the kinship care program, based their findings and recommendations on:

- Information from and discussions with external experts on kinship care, including Dr. Bruce MacLaurin, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Social Work, University of Calgary.
- Research done into kinship care policies and practices in other jurisdictions.
- Feedback from front-line staff at Child and Family Services Authorities and Delegated First Nation Agencies.

Committee Recommendation	Ministry Response	Ministry Action
1. Collaborate with Solicitor General to develop a provincial process that enables caseworkers to receive a criminal risk assessment of a kinship caregiver within the first 48 hours of placing a child.	Accept	Discussions are underway with Solicitor General and Public Security to identify processes that allow for more timely access to information and completion of a risk assessment. Implementation date: June 2010
2. Develop policy regarding timely and frequent contact with the kinship care providers and children placed when placement occurs, prior to the completion of full approval activities.	Accept	Policy will be developed and implemented to clarify contact expectations prior to the full approval of the home. Implementation date: April 2010
3. Strengthen policy to clarify that the kinship care agreement must be signed within 48 hours of the placement, to enhance and support the kinship caregivers' understanding of their role and responsibility associated with caring for a child in government care.	Accept	Policy will be revised and implemented to reflect this requirement. Forms will be updated as necessary. Implementation date: April 2010
4. Enhance policy to include a kinship care support plan that identifies/addresses circumstances unique to the kinship caregiver's capacity to meet the needs of the children placed. (Such as number and ages of children).	Accept	Policy will be revised to reflect the support plan requirement. A support plan template will be developed and implemented. Implementation date: April 2010
5. Modify the current foster care orientation to caregiver training so it has enhanced relevancy to the issues related to kinship care, to support kinship caregiver training.	Accept	Orientation to caregiver training will be reviewed and updated in both content and delivery format, to better reflect the needs of kinship caregivers. Implementation date: June 2010