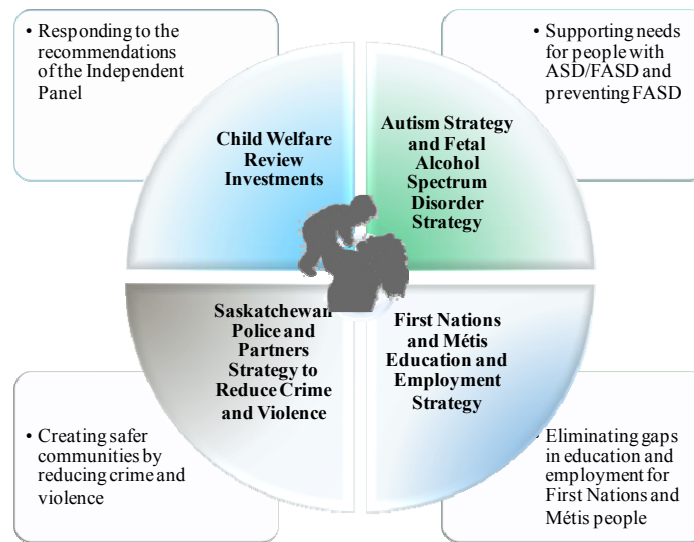


## Saskatchewan's Children and Youth Agenda

The Province's 2011-12 Budget includes the first ever Saskatchewan Children and Youth Agenda budget, which invests more than \$34 million in a new, cross-government approach to the complex issues facing Saskatchewan children, youth and families.

The Cabinet Committee on Children and Youth, formed in December 2010 in response to the Saskatchewan Child Welfare Review Panel's report, led the development of the Saskatchewan Children and Youth Agenda multi-ministry budget proposal. The proposal incorporates provincial strategies focussed on improving those key determinants which drive Child Welfare, First Nations and Métis Education and Employment, and Autism and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. Additionally, the Saskatchewan Police and Partners Strategy to Reduce Crime and Violence will continue to support the Children and Youth Agenda through initiatives involving police services and community leadership.

### Saskatchewan Children and Youth Agenda



The issues, challenges and solutions regarding each of the above-mentioned strategies are fundamentally linked by nine common themes:

- 1. Many clients are common across sectors**, and they interact closely with a number of ministries and service systems. Clients can be affected by poverty, unemployment, lower education levels, mental health issues, substance abuse, maltreatment, violence or abuse.
- 2. There is a strong evidence base for action** and Government is well-positioned for research-supported and evidence-based decision making and action.
- 3. Prevention is a key underlying theme with all the strategies and across sectors.**
- 4. Investment in the early years will have a positive and long-term impact.** Investments in early childhood development, learning and care are included in the cross-government approach.
- 5. Government needs to work differently** with community stakeholders, First Nations, Métis and others to attain shared leadership and responsibility, since Government does not solely own the problems or solutions.

6. **Engagement with First Nations and Métis people is essential** to ensure solutions are appropriate to culture and communities.
7. **Individual and Family Supports really make a difference** to client outcomes.
8. **Socio-economic determinants of health matter.** Challenges associated with poverty, housing, disability, addictions, lack of parenting, unemployment, unsafe family and community settings need to be addressed.
9. **There are high social and economic costs associated with inaction** for individuals, families and communities, in addition to increased expenditures by human service ministries.

The Saskatchewan Children and Youth Agenda identifies funding and programs across several ministries that address the common problems facing children and their families at risk, such as lower education levels, unemployment, mental health issues and substance abuse. This new, cross-government effort will allow for a comprehensive, targeted approach to these challenges.

The following table describes the new investments being made across ministries in the Children and Youth Agenda in 2011-12.

## Saskatchewan's Children and Youth Agenda

(Thousands of Dollars)		2011-12 Increases
Ministry	Description	
<b>CHILD WELFARE REVIEW</b>		
Social Services	First Nations Case Management Payments	1,500
Social Services	Home Assessments and Treatment Foster Care provided by CBOs	1,250
Social Services	Intensive Family Supports <sup>1</sup>	1,000
Social Services	Increase Child Protection Workers - 30 FTEs	750
Social Services	Visitation and Supervision for Children in Care and Families Provided by CBOs	500
Social Services	Further Child Welfare Response Consultation and Planning	400
Social Services	Family Finders	350
Social Services	Saskatchewan First Nations Family and Community Institute	300
Social Services	Out-of-Home Residential and Extended Family Care	8,400
Health and Education	Early Childhood Intervention Programs and <i>KidsFirst</i>	280
First Nations and Métis Relations (FNMR)	First Nations and Métis engagement related to the Children and Youth Agenda	350
Justice and Attorney General	Aboriginal Courtworker Child Welfare Pilots	200
Justice and Attorney General	Northern Transportation and Safety Initiative	50
Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport	After School Program	-
<b>Sub-Total Child Welfare Review</b>		<b>15,330</b>
<b>FIRST NATIONS AND MÉTIS EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT</b>		
Advanced Education Employment and Immigration (AEEI), Education and FNMR	Task Force on First Nations and Métis Education and Employment	2,000
AEEI	Adult Basic Education - Essential Skills for the Workplace, First Nations and Métis people	4,425
AEEI	Provincial Training Allowance, First Nations and Métis people	2,575
AEEI	Apprenticeship Training for First Nations and Métis people	600
Education	Prekindergarten Programs <sup>2</sup>	2,600
Education	School Capital for Prekindergarten Programs <sup>2</sup>	2,000
Education	First Nations and Métis Education Initiatives Fund	1,400
Education	High School Completion Initiatives Fund	1,000
Education	Individual Achievement Accounts	500
<b>Sub-Total First Nations and Métis Education and Employment</b>		<b>17,100</b>
<b>AUTISM STRATEGY AND FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDER STRATEGY</b>		
<b>Autism Strategy</b>		
Health	Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) - Interventions	900
Health	ASD - Diagnosis and Assessment	100
<b>Sub-total Autism Strategy</b>		<b>1,000</b>
<b>Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Strategy</b>		
Health	FASD - Community Supports	300
Health	FASD - Prevention/Education	200
Health	FASD - Diagnosis and Assessment	100
<b>Sub-total Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Strategy</b>		<b>600</b>
<b>Sub-Total Autism Strategy and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Strategy</b>		<b>1,600</b>
<b>Total Saskatchewan's Children and Youth Agenda</b>		<b>34,030</b>

1. An additional \$1.05 million was provided for this initiative in 2010-11 for 24 emergency child welfare spaces.

2. Prekindergarten is not exclusively targeted to First Nations and Métis children: however, this investment by the Ministry of Education is expected to benefit many First Nations and Métis children and families.

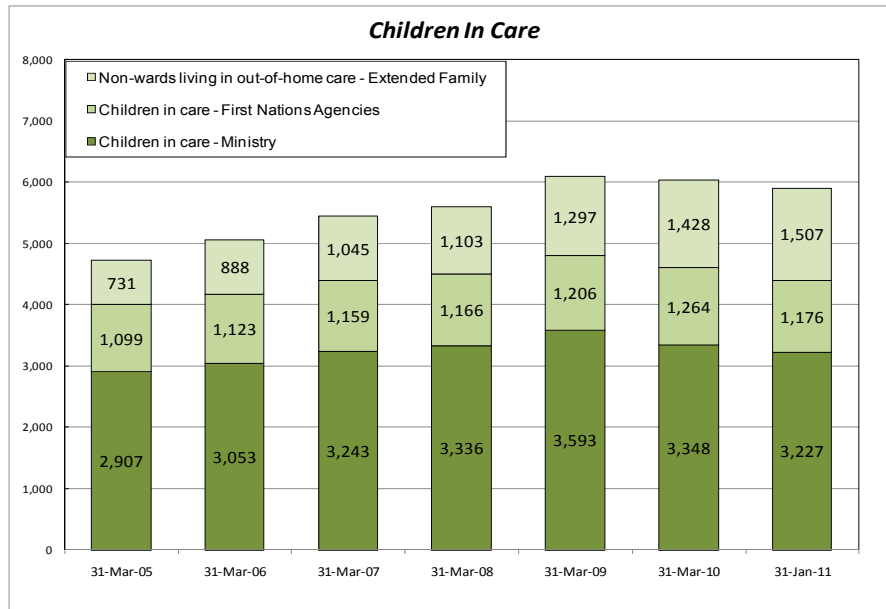
## **Child Welfare Review Investments**

In 2009, the Government of Saskatchewan commissioned an independent panel to undertake a comprehensive Child Welfare Review. The panel released its report on December 16, 2010 following an extensive consultation process with stakeholders and First Nations and Métis organizations. The report made 12 recommendations which focus on fundamental change including prevention and key determinants; working differently with First Nations and Métis partners; and changing the child welfare system. The Province's initial response to the Review includes the creation of the new Cabinet Committee and the new initiatives being implemented in the 2011-12 Budget. Additional initiatives and enhancements are expected to be implemented in the future and in future budgets.

The new 2011-12 Child Welfare Review Investments of \$15.3 million will fund areas that have the most urgent need. These investments will form part of a long-term strategy as the Government moves toward addressing the recommendations of the Child Welfare Review Panel.

- Support First Nations Child and Family Service Agencies to provide better case management for children in the Province's care who are placed on-reserve - \$1,500,000;
- Develop new services with Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) to provide therapeutic foster care services for children with developmental or behaviour difficulties and home assessments for foster care, extended family placements and adoptions - \$1,250,000;
- Develop a 24/7 intensive family support model to prevent children from coming into care by utilizing in-house supports and counseling to help families during critical times such as 3:00 to 11:00 p.m. - \$1,000,000 (additionally, capital funding was provided in 2010-11 to develop the infrastructure for 24 new spaces for emergency/respite care for short-term placement);
- Add 30 new Full-time Equivalent (FTE) Child Protection Workers to the frontlines in the child welfare system to address immediate pressures in the current system - \$750,000;
- Support the development of CBO-managed visitation, supervision, transportation supports for children in care with families - \$500,000;
- Consult and plan for the next phase of the Ministry's response to the Child Welfare Review Report - \$400,000;
- Increase the capacity of the Family Finders program to find First Nations families for First Nations children in care off-reserve - \$350,000;
- Provide funding to help First Nations and Métis representatives participate in an overarching dialogue process with Government across the key inter-ministerial strategies - \$350,000;
- Increase the capacity of the First Nations Family and Community Institute to support capacity building and training for standards and policies in First Nations Child and Family Services Agencies - \$300,000;
- Provide new funding for out-of-home residential and extended family care - \$8,400,000;
- Increase funding in Early Childhood Intervention and Development programs and KidsFirst - \$280,000;
- Provide funding to enable further pilots of the Aboriginal Courtworker program with emphasis on supporting child welfare cases - \$200,000;
- Provide funding for transportation of northern women and children in abusive situations to shelters - \$50,000; and,
- Develop an after-school strategy with various sector partners.

While clearly there are needs in the system that have to be addressed now and in the future, there has been some recent progress regarding children in care. The number of children coming into care appears to have stabilized or might even be declining and more children, particularly First Nations children, have been placed with First Nations and relatives on- and off-reserve.



## First Nations and Métis Education and Employment

The elimination of the persistent gaps in education and employment outcomes between First Nations and Métis people and non-Aboriginal people in Saskatchewan is a priority for the Province. This goal can only be achieved through shared ownership of the challenges by everyone and by engaging with First Nations and Métis people.

The Province will work in partnership with the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN) and the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) on actions to increase First Nations participation and success in education and the labour force. An independent task force is also contemplated to undertake a broad provincial public consultation focusing on First Nations and Métis people, including youth, on- and off-reserve, as well as provide a shortlist of recommended practical solutions to eliminate the gaps in education levels and employment.

The 2011-12 Budget provides for the following investments, totaling \$17.1 million, in First Nations and Métis Education and Employment outcomes, the task force, post-secondary training opportunities, high school completion and success and prekindergarten.

- Funding for the Task Force on First Nations and Métis Success in Education and Employment - \$2,000,000;
- Increased expenditures in Adult Basic Education which expands on a new approach to the program by focusing on literacy and numeracy, offering the program within students' communities, practical supports to help students stay in the programs and by offering real workplace experiences - \$4,425,000;
- Increased Provincial Training Allowance funding will provide cost-of-living support to First Nations and Métis students in post-secondary training programs - \$2,575,000;
- Allocating \$600,000 in funding to support First Nations and Métis people entering skilled trades programs through apprenticeship training;
- As a key investment by the Ministry of Education, adding 40 new prekindergarten programs for 640 more children, while not exclusively targeted to First Nations and Métis children, will benefit many

First Nations and Métis children and families. Prekindergarten fosters social development and school success, promotes language development and engages families - \$2,600,000 in program operational funding and \$2,000,000 in capital to develop prekindergarten classrooms;

- Double the existing First Nations and Métis Education Initiatives Fund to support school divisions to implement educational outcome initiatives in their First Nations and Métis Education plans - \$1,400,000;
- Support school divisions to implement specific initiatives aimed at improving high school completion rates for Aboriginal students across the Province - \$1,000,000; and,
- Building on the success of the Individual Development Accounts program in Saskatoon, the Government will support programs in additional Saskatchewan communities that involve corporate, business, education and community partners in working with students to stay in school, set and meet financial goals, while developing job readiness skills - \$500,000.

### **Autism Strategy and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Strategy**

The Government is implementing significantly enhanced strategies to prevent Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder and to support and assess individuals with Autism and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. These initiatives, totalling \$1.6 million for 2011-12, will support both individuals and their families.

The Autism Strategy contains the following investments:

- Enhancing rehabilitation therapies by adding more speech language pathologists, occupational therapists, psychologists and support workers in areas of high demand - \$900,000; and,
- Increasing ASD diagnostic, assessment and intervention services by adding one psychologist to an existing multidisciplinary health care team - \$100,000.

The Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Strategy includes the following investments:

- Launching a pilot FASD family support program to assist affected families with parenting skills and accessing services, the provision of additional mentorship services to help individuals with FASD to build lifeskills and to be engaged in positive vocational and recreational activities and for the provision of an addictions program for individuals with FASD - \$300,000;
- Developing an FASD prevention strategy targeting northern youth and additional health care provider training that will increase capacity to screen pregnant women for alcohol consumption and to provide brief interventions for women with at-risk drinking behaviour – \$200,000; and,
- Enhancing access to adult FASD diagnostic, assessment and intervention planning services by adding one psychologist to an existing multidisciplinary health care team - \$100,000.

### **Saskatchewan Police and Partners Strategy to Reduce Crime and Violence**

The Province has identified the reduction of crime and violence as a priority for ensuring the safety and security of Saskatchewan citizens. In 2011-12, the Government will continue its investment in police enforcement capacity. Beyond these investments, human service agencies will carry on their collaborative work applying best and promising practices to reduce crime and violence.

### **Conclusion**

The Government's new approach to inter-ministerial planning, as reflected by the Children and Youth Agenda, will provide better co-ordinated, comprehensive and responsive strategies to critical issues facing Saskatchewan people, and will ultimately result in better outcomes and brighter futures for some of the Province's most vulnerable people.