

# **TRANSITION TO MANDATE**



## **A Work Plan**

**Native Child and Family Services of Toronto**

**June 25, 1995**

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<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	

This is a work plan for development activities towards NCFST's designation as a Children's Aid Society. The plan is comprised of two sections: The first contains a textual summary of the goals, objectives and activities of the developmental period, including key assumptions concerning how the work will be done.

Following that is a diagrammatic summary of the development phase, organized as a "critical path" over twenty-four months. That diagram contains a summary of the main activities, designated personnel who will have responsibilities for the work, and a projected time-line for each activity.

## **CORE ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS**

Several important assumptions guide this plan:

- That the change process in this case is a transition from a previous prevention-oriented agency to one with a fundamentally new integrated component to its mission and services, namely child protection. This will have clear implications for current work, and the organization of work, since all staff will contribute to child protection in one way or another. An important theme, then, is "the management of transition".
- Given the above, the proposed development plan incorporates activities which facilitate changes in service ideas and practices, management\staff roles and work relationships, resources, organizational supports (including policies and procedures), jurisdictional boundaries, community relationships, and staff attitudes towards the change.
- Given the importance of collective responsiveness and ownership for successful change, staff, management and Board members will actively contribute to development over the two transitional years.
- The development process will be ever sensitive to the need for culturally based ways of protecting Aboriginal children in urban environments. Thus, the plan includes opportunities for critically assessing protection services from a cultural standpoint, and negotiating suitable patterns of service and organization through the "exemption" mechanism in the CFSA.
- Finally, there is an assumption that some child protection services (e.g. Volunteer agreements) may be introduced incrementally during the development period, culminating in full service by April, 1997.

## **DEVELOPMENTAL GOALS**

The main purpose of the developmental period is to prepare NCFST for designation as a Children's Aid Society. The integration of child protection services and organizational supports will continue to reflect and implement the agency's culture based child and family services model as outlined in the document Native Family Well-Being in Urban Settings. Further, these changes will be consistent with Provincial legislative requirements, summarized in a framework entitled "The Designation of New Children's Aid Societies Under the Child and Family Services Act"

Towards this end, we propose 14 goals as follows:

### **Year #1**

1. To organize the agency for managing the transition process
2. To enhance and develop new services for carrying out a child protection mandate
3. To develop and implement a computerized management information system
4. To acquire and/or expand the agency's facilities and resources
5. To update and expand the agency's policies and procedures
6. To integrate protection and prevention services into the agency's cultural base.
7. To assess, develop, and provide orientation and training in support of the newly integrated protection and prevention services.

### **Year #2**

8. To assess and secure the professional resources (e.g.. Medical, legal, psychological) to support the child protection mandate.
9. To provide development for the Board of Directors
10. To facilitate community development in support of the child protection changes.
11. To develop a transitional service plan for Year 2.
- 12.. To effect jurisdictional and procedural protocols with Native and non-Native services.
13. To clarify outstanding issues (e.g. Adoption, exemptions) relevant to the mandate.
12. To complete an implementation plan for the new services.

## **DEVELOPMENTAL OBJECTIVES**

This section summarizes the main objectives for the developmental process, organized according to the 13 goals.

## **ORGANIZING THE AGENCY FOR MANAGING THE TRANSITION**

These tasks will help the agency prepare itself for managing and carrying out the developmental tasks over the two-year period:

### **Objectives**

1. Establish a transitional management team of the Executive Director, The Director of Services, the Program Co-ordinators, and front-line staff.
2. Identify and secure commitment of outside resource people to assist the process. (E.g.. Executive Director of a mainstream C.A.S.; ED of an aboriginal child welfare agency)
3. Orient middle management and staff to the child protection vision, as documented in the earlier submission to MCSS.
4. Identify change challenges and strategies for managing the transitional process.
5. Document the detailed service and organizational changes for child protection.
6. Staff key positions for child protection work, and for the development process: Director of Services and Child Abuse Specialist.
7. Develop a service plan for the first transitional year.

## **SERVICE AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

The service development tasks will provide concrete specification of the new services which will directly fulfill the child protection function in the agency. These include direct services such as emergency services (Safe House), and the specific child protection roles and tasks of existing Family Service Workers.

As well, service development will include the development and all those changes in the roles and tasks of other agency personnel (e.g.. Treatment staff, Parent worker) which will allow them to integrate their work with the child protection function. For example, all personnel who come into contact with children in their prevention work will be able to assess, and work with high risk families.

### **Objectives**

1. Design Safe House for emergency services, including up-dated needs assessment, organizational and service description, budget development, location analysis, policies and procedures, networking with residential service sectors, and identification of alternative funding sources. (Product: detailed service model, organizational structure, job descriptions, budget).
  
2. Develop detailed descriptions of child protection roles, tasks, and working relationships within the agency and the community. (Products: revised job descriptions, training curriculum framework, agency expectations for child protection work).
  
- 3.. Complete a first draft of a Native Child Protection Practice Manual

### **MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM**

Developing ways of collecting, storing and accessing information will be a high priority transitional activity during Year 1. Information technology will be successfully implemented when both staff and management clearly understand and value the usefulness of systematically gathered information for planning, service submissions, service monitoring and evaluation, and ultimately the well-being of families and children. The Ministry of Community and Social

Services has clear expectations concerning their informational needs for budgeting decisions. The agency, too, needs to clarify their criteria for useful information, how and when it should be gathered, and by whom. Computerization forces information-gatherers and users to be clear. A plan for a computerized system is now being completed by a Consultant.

### **Objectives**

1. Clarify the information needs in an agency with prevention and child protection services, why such information is important, and how it will be used.
2. Establish information recording policies and procedures which will meet the needs of NCFST and COMSOC.
3. Implement a computerized information system.

## **EXPANSION OF FACILITIES AND MATERIAL RESOURCES**

NCFST lacks sufficient space and other resources to expand its services into the child protection realm. What is needed during this developmental period is a careful assessment of its current spatial arrangements, identification of needed space and other resources in relation to expanded services, and steps to acquire these.

### **Objectives**

1. Assess the need for resources, capital expansion, and transportation within the agency for all services.
2. Develop plan for, and secure, expanded facilities.

## **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Beginning in the first development year a process for developing policies and standardized procedures will be put in place. This will include updating policies which have been in place, and drafting new policies and procedures required by mandated agencies. It is proposed that the bulk of the policy development work be undertaken by the Board and Management, with possible support from a Consultant. Each manager will take responsibility for policy development in areas most relevant to his/her work (E.g.. Case management policy development by the new Director of Services).

## **Objectives**

Development of policies and procedures will take place for the following:

1. Financial management (including insurance and salary scales)
2. Child abuse: investigation, assessment and management
3. Case management
4. Emergency response
5. Admissions and placements
6. The rights of children and families; community accountability
7. Other CFSA-related policies: access orders and status reviews

## **THE CULTURAL BASE**

Establishing an aboriginal culture base to NCFST services is firmly entrenched in the general agency service model, and strongly reinforced in its mandate submission of 1994. To date, establishing a culture base for services has taken place through the processes of service model development, hiring, program design, training and consultation, the general “organizational culture” of the agency, and community relations.

Moving into the service realm of child protection may be the most challenging for maintaining culturally based services, because (the exemption clause notwithstanding) the Act is most specific and possibly unyielding in its requirements for responding to children at severe risk. It is



proposed, therefore, that special arrangements be put in place during the development period for assessing each new policy and procedure against the bench-mark of NCFST values and principles. This will not be an easy process, however, since many of the culture-based ideas are abstract, and not spelled out for specific service and organizational practices. Making values and principles more concrete, hence “more dynamic”, will be a useful process for staff learning, and for the process of seeking exemptions.

To accomplish this, it is recommended that (I) NCFST cultural values and principles be clarified for those drafting policies and procedures (ii) the E.D. provide an orientation to the Board, management and staff on the “cultural foundations of social service practice” (iii) an expectation is conveyed that such values and principles be incorporated into the policy-making process (iv) cultural consultants (e.g.. Elders) are used to comment on particularly problematic issues.

### **Objectives**

1. Establish consistency of NCFST child protection services with the cultural base.
2. Update the NCFST service and organizational model to incorporate (I) the new child protection component (ii) service, program and organizational developments since the first version, and (iii) culture-based development work from this two-year period.

### **ORIENTATION AND TRAINING**

The development of orientation tools and on-going in-service training will be enormously important development activities over the next two year. The transition towards mandate provides a window of opportunity for NCFST to thoroughly assess and focus these functions for immediate and future needs. Orientation and training in child protection will be very important for all organizational levels, as will the development of learning materials, such as orientation packages. The Native Child Protection Practice Manual (see above) is a good example of a needed resource for staff and management.

Although a detailed training needs assessment will be completed, three training priority areas are envisioned: (I) the C.F.S.A. and all legislatively required technical functions associated with child protection (ii) cultural training, with emphasis on how cultural relationships and practices

can be used as tools to enhance service delivery, and (iii) helping process and techniques.

A suggested principle involves the use of internal staff and management as trainers or training assistants as much as possible. The Mooka'am staff, for example, have recently completed a thorough review of their treatment principles and practices, many of which are relevant to the helping process with other types of clients. (See Mooka'am Sexual Abuse Treatment Program: Program Description and Planning Guidelines, Pages 12-29)

Preparation for sound orientation and training will begin in the first year and finish in the second.

### **Objectives**

1. Complete orientation and training needs assessment within the three priority areas
2. Develop a curriculum framework for orientation and training in integrated prevention and protection services.
3. Develop an orientation\training plan which includes training principles, curriculum, goals, methods, training resources and a time framework.
4. Assess available training resources
6. Implement the first phase of the orientation\training plan.

### **PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES**

The integration of child protection services within the agency will require the support of a host of professional services. To complement the existing cultural consultation and program evaluation services, NCFST will need:

- Legal services
- Medical services
- Psychological and psychiatric services

In the case of legal services a decision should be made concerning the cost effectiveness of purchased services versus an in-house lawyer. Other considerations concern the suitability of specific personnel for an aboriginal culture based agency.

Elders and cultural teachers will continue in prevention program planning and delivery. As the agency develops a culture-based child protection system and practices, unique supportive roles for Elders will evolve. In some northern First Nations, for example, Elders have played important roles in the investigation process, have participated in local child welfare committees, and have contributed to the Employee Assistance function.

### **Objectives**

1. Assess the agency's specific needs for professional support services.
2. Describe the functional roles, responsibilities, and agency relationships of legal, medical psychological and other support services.
3. Assess the available services in Toronto.
4. Contract for services

### **BOARD DEVELOPMENT**

The transition to mandate will provide an excellent opportunity to review the needs of NCFST's Board of Directors. Obviously the Board will require up-dating on the CFSA, in order to become fully acquainted with child protection services, and the legal responsibilities of a mandated agency. This may also be a good opportunity to assess their requirements for the on-going orientation of new members, including the possible need for resources such as manuals on Board functioning.

### **Objectives**

1. To review and revise the policies and procedures related to Board composition and functioning, and provide the necessary developmental work for the Board's transition to a mandated agency.

## **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

The implementation of a new child protection component to NCFST's array of services will not happen in a vacuum. As an agency invested with protection, NCFST must establish a vast network of inter-agency relationships, strong links with the justice system, team-work with those more involved in emergency situations (e.g.. Police, hospitals, mainstream C.A.S.'), and new working relationships with Native service agencies, including those in the First Nations.

An important community development component is the clarification of the Community Child Welfare Council roles in child protection matters, including the court system. Since these will be new roles, efforts should be made to build the necessary understandings and skill development among Council members. Obviously, training in the CFSA would be essential.

Over and above the development of new community relationships, NCFST must develop a public legitimacy on another level, based on the respect and knowledge that the agency has the capacity to protect Native children. Fortunately, NCFST has done considerable work over the years in building working relationships in the local service sector, establishing links with Native organizations and several First Nations, identifying and using specialized resource people, and

generally establishing a “presence” in the Native and non-Native communities.

It is recommended that NCFST, during its second developmental year towards mandate, fully prepare itself for its new relationships with its community environments. Much of this preparatory work will be reinforced through the training process.

### **Objectives**

1. Plan and carry out a program for promoting community awareness concerning NCFST’s child protection services.
2. Develop child protection networks within the service sector.
3. Clarify mutual responsibilities and working relationships with the local Native agencies, and the appropriate First Nation services.
4. Clarify the functions, roles, and relationships of the Community Child Welfare Committee.

### **JURISDICTIONAL AGREEMENTS AND PROCEDURAL PROTOCOLS**

Successful implementation of any new community services requires clear understandings within the community concerning who has the responsibility for what services, and for which clients. Moreover, where service providers must work together and support each other towards common goals, such as child protection or family well-being, guidelines for these working relationships are often formalized into procedural protocols.

Jurisdictional agreements and procedural protocols have special significance in NCFST’s assumption of a child protection mandate, since other C.A.S.’s exist in Toronto with possible conflicting ideas concerning who should service Native clients. Also, by entering the child protection field, NCFST will quickly come into contact with other service professionals and agencies, such as the police and hospitals. Incidents of child abuse evoke the response of a emergency system of players who must act with co-ordination and efficiency.

The completion of the following two developmental objectives are necessary for these realities:

1. To establish jurisdictional agreements concerning the appropriate delivery of child protection services to Native people in Toronto.
2. To develop procedural protocols with other service providers in the child protection field.

## **ADDRESSING OUTSTANDING ISSUES**

A number of residual planning activities should be addressed before the end of Year 2. These pertain to certain future directions for the agency, including the need for adoption services, and expanding NCFST's territorial jurisdiction.

Other issues, such as successor rights, relate to the process of making the transition to mandate. Should agency staff become unionized, the issue of successor rights may become very real, with Toronto CAS staff possibly making a claim to child protection jobs at NCFST.

Finally, as policy work is underway, a number of ideas will arise concerning those Ministry requirements for which NCFST would seek exemption. A few examples include staffing qualifications, the "five day rule", and Foster Care standards. In each case, NCFST policy planners will identify exemption areas, make a case for changing the requirement, and propose a culturally suitable alternative. This draft suggestion will be presented to the management transition team who will in turn make a recommendation to the Board of Directors for ratification.

## **Objectives**

1. Assess the need for expansion in NCFST's territorial jurisdiction, based on recent and projected residential patterns of Native people beyond Toronto.
2. Assess the appropriate response to the needs for permanent child placement by the agency, including the development of contemporary adoption services and customary adoptions.
3. Address the issues related to successor rights and other unionization issues.
4. Identify NCFST exemptions from NCFST.

## **IMPLEMENTATION PLANNING**

Early in the second year, a final implementation plan for delivering child protection services should be in place. Central to the plan should be a decision concerning the range of protection services to be offered, and the timing. At least three options are currently under consideration, two of which involve an incremental process of introducing protection services:

- Full authority by NCFST, with all protection services offered by April 1997
- By April 1996, Authority stays with C.A.S.', with Native staff seconded to NCFST providing limited protection services, such as voluntary agreements.
- Full Authority taken by NCFST, by April 1997, with selected protection services provided elsewhere under Purchase of Services Agreements.

Careful formative evaluation could be conducted as implementation proceeds, with all the adjusting or fine-tuning processes which typically flows from such evaluation.

Towards the end of the second year the agency will be required to submit its first service plan for delivery of mandated services. Preparation for this will be no small challenge since NCFST has limited experience with child protection service plan development. Fortunately, two Aboriginal agencies (Tikinagan Child and Family Services, and Weechi-It-Te-Win Family Services) have operated under mandate for several years and should be helpful.

The service plan will likely involve an up-to-date summary documentation of the service model and its new child protection resources and practices. Thus the service plan will be an important time for completion of all developmental activities.

### **Objectives**

1. Develop and review options for assuming Authority and implementing child protection services.
2. Develop a written implementation plan.
3. Develop a service plan and budget for the first year of mandated services.

## **DEVELOPMENTAL WORK PLAN: ACTIVITIES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND TIME-LINES**



