



The General Child
and Family Services
Authority

Annual Report

April 1, 2008 to March 31, 2009

SIXTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

October 13, 2009

Norwood Hotel
112 Marion Street
Winnipeg, MB



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Message from the Chair



This is the last time that I will be reporting to you on behalf of the Board of Directors of the General Child and Family Services Authority. After serving six years as Board chair, I will not be renewing my term effective November 2009. So I would like to take this opportunity to reflect on some of the accomplishments of the Board of Directors and the General Authority. Although there have been many accomplishments, there are some that are outstanding as I look back. Let me share them with you.

On November 24, 2003, we were officially proclaimed as the Board of the General Child and Family Services Authority. We began our journey by thinking about three basic questions:

1. How best can we fulfill our role in the newly restructured child and family services system?
2. What are the goals and service improvements we want to achieve as an authority and as a service system?
3. What strategies do we need to move forward?

With resources from the Department and our combined expertise and commitment to hard work, we were able to answer these questions and immediately develop our present constitution, by-laws, vision and mission statements to guide our work. The Board then engaged in a comprehensive strategic planning session to set our future course.

Most recently, in June 2008 the Board hosted a unique and very successful summit gathering where staff, supervisors, Board members, foster parents and youth from all agencies were invited to participate. Our Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Jay Rodgers, will be speaking in depth about this tremendous event and other program developments at the General Authority.

As a Board of Directors, we are confident that we have built a solid platform for the future. We have been kept well informed by our CEO (of the needs and concerns of the agencies under our governance) and therefore have been able to participate effectively in decision making at the General Authority and to give direction to its ongoing work in the delivery of child and family services to the Manitoba community.

Jay, the Board is most appreciative of your efforts on our behalf. We are greatly encouraged by the leadership and community contribution you have shown as the Chief Executive Officer of the General Authority. In May of 2008, the Board welcomed Janice Rees as the new Chief Financial Officer of the General Authority. Janice brings a wealth of experience to this position, formerly held by Dale Robinson who is now retired.

I would also like to acknowledge the tremendous contribution of the past board members who have renewed their terms:

Jan Sanderson – *Vice Chairperson*

Guy Jourdain – *Secretary*

Doreen Draffin – *Treasurer*

Beth Beaupre – *Member at Large*

I would like to give special thanks to Ellen Fleishman, a Board member who has been with us from the beginning but, for personal reasons, is unable to renew her term. Also I would like to acknowledge the three new members who have added their energy, commitment and expertise to the Board during this past year:

Nicole Chammartin – *Executive Director of the Canadian Mental Health Association (Winnipeg)*

Karyn Glass – *Chartered Accountant*

Laura Crookshanks – *a social worker from Brandon who will be representing the Westman Region of our province.*

Once again, I would like to extend sincere appreciation to the management and staff of the General Authority. When we started on our journey as Board Members six years ago, we were assisted by an administrative team of three people. One of those people – Anne Pratt – is still with us. Thanks Anne. Our staff continues to meet each new challenge with enthusiasm and professionalism. As a Board of Directors, we are encouraged by the renewed energy that we see in the General Authority today. We continue to build our relationships within the Department of Family Services and Housing and we are appreciative of its support. We also appreciate the spirit of partnership and collaboration shown by our colleague authorities.

As I vacate the chair on the Board that I have been pleased to fill for six years, I want to personally thank all of you for your encouragement and support.

Reflecting on the past achievements of the General Authority and recognizing its growth and expanded capacity for the development of new service initiatives, I feel that General Authority will not only continue to enhance the delivery of services to children, youth and families, but it is also positioned to show real leadership. Based specifically on the principles outlined in our vision and mission statement, the General Authority will be able to build effectively on the strengths of individuals, families, and communities of Manitoba.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jean Ayre
Board Chair



The General Child
and Family Services
Authority

Message from the Chief Executive Officer

It is with great pleasure that I write this message for the 2008/09 Annual Report from the General Child and Family Services Authority. This past year has again been extremely busy but also extremely rewarding.

As an Authority, we have made great strides in the last year in developing a renewed energy, vision and culture to guide the future of our service system. I am very proud of this work and commend the Directors of our agencies and service regions who, collectively, have shown tremendous leadership. The accomplishments that you will read about in this report would not have been possible without their leadership.

There was an event that occurred this year that really defines the philosophy and approach that we have embraced at the General Child and Family Services Authority. This occurred on June 12, 2008 and is known as *the Summit*. This was an unprecedented province-wide innovative strategic planning session hosted by the Board of Directors of the General Authority. The theme for the one day gathering was, *"Conversations that Matter: Using Appreciative Inquiry to Build a Strengths Based Future for Child Welfare"*. This was no ordinary strategic planning session; it represented a collaborative and inclusive process wherein General Authority staff and stakeholders from all agencies and service regions were invited to participate and contribute to building a collective vision for serving children, youth and families.

Design and facilitation of such a large scale event would not have been possible without the collaborative efforts and internal expertise offered by a cross section of General Authority staff and stakeholders. This committed group, who became

known as Conversation Table Hosts, offered their time and energy to assist in the design and facilitation of the one day gathering. We are extremely grateful for their contribution.

"I am very proud of this work and commend the Directors of our agencies and service regions who, collectively, have shown tremendous leadership."

Approximately 200 staff and stakeholders, which included foster parents, social workers, supervisors, administrative and support staff, agency directors, board members and youth, participated in this unique event. Participants shared their stories and experiences and offered their ideas on how to embrace a strengths perspective in planning and service delivery.

For me, it was a humbling and touching experience to be in the room with so many skilled and caring people. It is simply unfair that front line workers do not get the public recognition they deserve for the services, support and humanity that they show in their work.

More than anything else, the Summit re-affirmed our commitment to work in a different way; a way that honors and respects three foundational values. First we must continue to embrace a strengths based approach as the philosophical framework to guide our work. Second, we must continue to focus and build on our successes. Third we must continue to be inclusive where diverse and unique opinions are welcomed and our youth, staff and stakeholders have a voice to shape policy and practice.

I encourage you to read the remainder of this report which describes the exciting and innovative work that was done by the General Authority and its agencies/service regions over the last year. We are especially proud of the work done by our Youth Engagement Strategy Team again this year. The Team continued to give youth a voice in our service system. This is incredibly important to us.

In closing, I would like to express by deepest gratitude and thanks to the staff of the General Child and Family Services Authority. We have tremendously skilled staff here at the Authority whose energy and commitment to improving the lives of children, youth and families is truly remarkable.

I would also like to thank the Board of Directors for their support and guidance during the last year. A special thanks to Jean Ayre who is stepping down after six years as our Board Chair. Jean's kindness and wisdom has been an inspiration to us all.

Respectfully submitted,
Jay Rodgers
Chief Executive Officer

Finance Committee Report

I am pleased to provide the report from the Finance Committee for the 2008/ 2009 fiscal year. The General Authority continued to be a financially stable organization prepared to meet current requirements and future challenges. Our Auditor has provided an opinion that the financial statements for the period ending March 31, 2009 present fairly, in all material aspects, the financial position of the General Child and Family Services Authority.

“There is a current year operating surplus and cumulative surplus.”

The results of its operations and cash flow for the year have been prepared in accordance with Canadian generally accepted accounting principles. The Authority has a positive cash flow; there is a current year operating surplus and cumulative surplus as noted in the audited financial statements.

The General Authority uses three funds to manage its financial operations. These include the operating fund, the transition fund and the agency fund. The operating fund is used to support the staffing and operating requirements of the Authority, as well as new initiatives and one-time only expenditures. In 2008/2009 additional funds were received in support for the following activities or special initiatives:

- age of majority initiatives;
- differential response phase 2 project development and start up;
- standards consultation;

- additional staff resources;
- human resource and communication services;
- board governance training;
- space requirements;
- on-going funding commitment for FASD specialist;
- support to Standing Committee;

The transition fund was established to provide for authority development and agency support related to the restructuring of the child and family services system. The General Authority uses this fund to support the expansion and amortization of its office and agency staff requirements respecting the restructuring of the child and family services system.

The agency fund provides funding to child and family services agencies under the jurisdiction of the General Child and Family Services Authority to support the delivery of services including agency staffing, operating requirements and the delivery of family support services.

Thank you to the General Authority staff for their support.

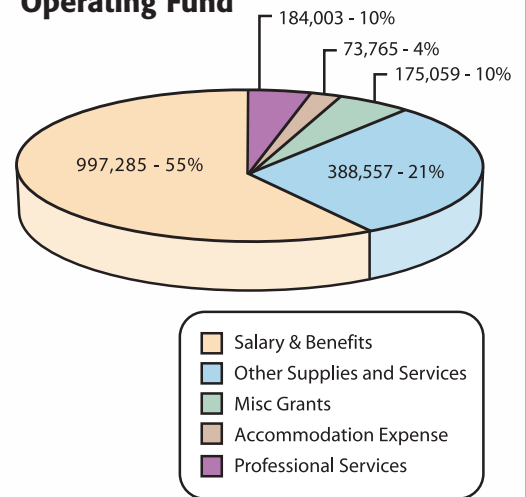
Doreen Driffin

Finance Committee Chair

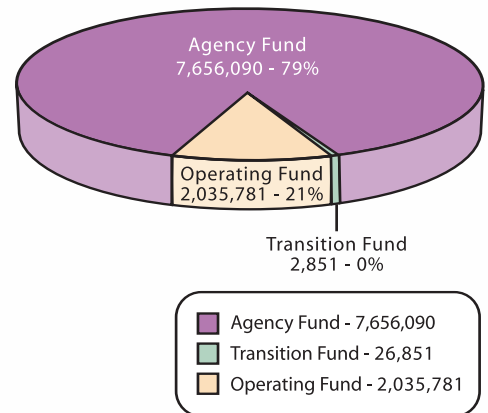
FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

For the year ended March 31, 2009

Summary of Expenses - Operating Fund



Fund Revenue 2008/2009



Overview of the General Child and Family Services Authority

The *Child and Family Services Authorities Act* (the Act) was proclaimed by the Province of Manitoba on November 24, 2003. The Act formally established a concurrent jurisdiction model where three Aboriginal Authorities and one General Authority assumed responsibility for providing services to their community members throughout the Province. Following a strategic planning session in 2004 the Board approved the following Vision, Mission and Principles Statements.

Vision:

**Healthy, Safe Children
Responsible, Nurturing
Families, Caring
Communities**

Mission:

The General Child and Family Services Authority is a non-profit organization responsible for the administration and provision of child and family services by the agencies under its jurisdiction.

The Authority is governed by a Board of Directors responsible for the management of fiscal resources, the development of policies and the establishment and monitoring of standards.

We are committed to the protection and care of children by building on the strengths of individuals, families and communities.

Statement of Principles:

In conducting our business, the General Authority will apply and promote the following principles:

1) CHILD / FAMILY – CENTERED PRACTICE

- The best interest of the child is paramount.
- A child functions best within a supportive family and community. To the greatest extent possible, families will be supported to provide a healthy, safe environment.
- Policies and practices are strength-based, asset-focused and promote family and community-based systems of care and mutual support.

2) EFFECTIVE AND RESPONSIBLE SERVICES

- Quality services are designed to meet the needs of those we support.
- Services are evidence based, comprehensive, responsive and recognize and respect diversity.
- The delivery of quality service is best achieved through promotion and support of a well qualified workforce.
- Public accountability and fiscal responsibility are fundamental to the work of the Authority.

3) PARTNERSHIPS

- We value and promote partnerships with all stakeholders in the area of services to children and families.

Board of Directors

Jean Ayre, Chairperson

Jan Sanderson, Vice Chairperson

Guy Jourdain, Secretary

Doreen Draffin, Treasurer

Ellen Fleishman

Kathy Levine (Resigned)

Karyn Glass

Nicole Chammartin

Laura Crookshanks

General Authority Staff

During the 2008/09 year the General Authority welcomed a new Chief Financial Officer, two Standing Committee Policy Analysts, a Program Specialist, a Resource Development Specialist and two Administrative Assistants. The following are the General Authority Staff for the 2008/09 year:

Jay Rodgers, A/Chief Executive Officer

John Borgfjord, A/Chief Financial Officer
(Retired)

Janice Rees,
Chief Financial Officer

Christy Holnbeck,
Senior Manager

Anne Pratt,
Senior Administrative Assistant

Pat Wawyn,
Program Specialist - Community Inquiry

Jeanette Grennier,
Program Specialist - Alternative Care

Jan Christianson-Wood,
Program Specialist -
Protection and Family Services

Cathe Umlah, FASD Specialist

Laura Morton,
Resource Development Team

Laurie Gulowaty,
Resource Development Team
Administrative Assistant

Maria Agusti,
Resource Development Team

Rick Manteuffel,
Standing Committee Policy Analyst

Chris Chimuk,
Standing Committee Policy Analyst

Lori Desrochers, Policy Analyst
Administrative Assistant

Pamela Zorn,
Training Coordinator

The General Child and Family Services Authority 2008/09 Activities and Highlights

With proclamation of *The Child and Family Services Authorities Act* in 2003, there was a significant shift of powers from the Director of Child Welfare to each of the four new child and family services authorities. Most powers directly related to the operation of child and family services agencies were transferred from the Director to the four authorities. The authorities are responsible for mandating, funding and overseeing the services provided by child family services agencies throughout the province of Manitoba.

“This section of the report provides an overview and summary of the key activities and service initiatives undertaken by the General Child and Family Services Authority during the 2008/09 year.”

Within the General Authority, these services are provided by three private not for profit agencies (Jewish Child and Family Services, Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba, Child and Family Services of Central Manitoba) and by the Department of Family Services and Housing through Winnipeg

Child and Family Services and four rural and northern service regions (Interlake Region, Eastman Region, Parkland Region, Northern Region). In Churchill, General Authority child and family services are delivered through the Regional Health Authority.

This section of the report provides an overview and summary of the key activities and service initiatives undertaken by the General Child and Family Services Authority during the 2008/ 09 year.



A Renewed Strategic Framework:

The Board of Directors of the General Child and Family Services Authority (the General Authority) has been actively engaged in strategic planning since the inception of the organization. At its inaugural strategic planning session, the Board developed an approved vision, mission and statement of principles. These documents are clearly consistent with the vision and mission of the Department of Family Services and have been used as a framework in more recent strategic planning exercises.

In October 2006, the Department of Family Services and Housing released the *Changes for Children* document which sets out the Department's strategic direction for the child and family services system in Manitoba. As a follow-up to the release of the *Changes for Children* document, the

General Authority conducted a “best practices visioning” session with all agency and service region Directors. This visioning session led to the development of the Authority's annual operational plans for 2007/08 and 2008/09.

In June 2008, the General Authority hosted a strategic planning session with attendees from all levels of all agencies. The primary purpose was to share details of the 2008/09 operational plan, develop value statements and allow front line staff from all agencies to provide their opinions on how to prioritize and plan service enhancements over the next one to three years. This was the first time that all agencies under the jurisdiction of the General Authority came together to conduct strategic planning in this manner. The results of the day were summarized in a report made available to all staff. This was followed by a series of workshops with agency staff to further refine a statement of core values for the Authority.

Based on the key finding, values and recommendations from the June 2008 session, the General Authority Board of Directors embarked on a process to update their strategic plan for the 2009/10 year. Beginning in January 2009, the Authority Board of Directors devoted time at each monthly meeting to develop a new strategic plan for the Authority. By the end of 2008/09, the Board had considered a proposed strategic framework comprised of eight statements. When finalized, these statements will set the longer term direction for the Authority and provide strategic context for the Authority agencies to update their annual operational plans.

Office of the Child and Family Services Standing Committee:

In 2003, the *Child and Family Services Authorities Act* enshrined a new entity called Standing Committee as a permanent and necessary feature of a concurrent jurisdiction system. Standing Committee's role is to ensure that the foundational requirements for the new child and family service system are put in place across the delivery systems in each of the four authorities. This role expanded in 2007/08 when Standing Committee became responsible for the Changes for Children initiatives and monitoring the 289 recommendations from the external reviews. The Office of the Child and Family Services Standing Committee was established in 2007/08 as a permanent resource in response to the external reviews. The reviews concluded that Standing Committee required additional resources not only to carry out its current responsibilities, but also to advance the continuing AJI-CWI devolution process. The organizational structure, scope of responsibility and governance of the Office were designed by Standing Committee to respect the partnership model of the AJI-CWI and to further the longer-term goals of the devolution process. Consistent with this partnership model, each Authority was provided with resources to hire two professional staff to collaborate on completing system-wide foundational work.

On behalf of Standing Committee, since being established, work at the office has focused on:

- reporting on and designing plans for the continued implementation of the 289 recommendations from the external reviews
- participating in inter-sectoral initiatives

- providing professional support to assist Standing Committee to complete and report on its foundational work

Presenting and articulating the collective interests and priorities of Standing Committee and the unique interests of the General Authority continues. The work projects completed since the inception of the Office has embodied the vision and priorities of the General Authority. During 2008/09 this included the development and delivery of training across all General Authority agencies and service regions on new foundational standards, research and co-development of system wide protocols, participation on working groups to develop implementation plans for the external review recommendations requiring an inter-sectoral response and leading presentations on themes and trends in the system with external stakeholders.

Advancing a Differential Response Model of Service Delivery:

The single largest financial commitment in the Changes for Children agenda is to create a differential response capacity in the child and family services system. These models are prevention focused in that the primary intent is to intervene early in a supportive manner with families. Consistent with the recommendations in the external reviews, differential response is being implemented in a phased approach. During the first phase of planning, the authority provided informational and educational seminars to agencies/service regions and stakeholders.

For Phase II, during 2007/08 the General Authority worked with its agencies and service regions to develop

specific plans to implement three types of differential response pilot projects. The Authority is funding family enhancement projects at five agencies or service regions across the province to offer families an alternative service path through comprehensive assessment and supports. One project involves a partnership arrangement between an existing resource centre and a General Authority agency to offer families a service alternative at intake. Also included in the Authority's plans are three capacity building projects. Two are intended to explore the potential for a different and earlier service response for families affected by domestic violence (demonstration project with one agency and one service region) while in the third project, the Authority will work in partnership with community leadership, settlement organizations and other stakeholders to provide new Canadian families with information on child welfare law and parenting expectations early during the settlement process.

In 2008/09, the Authority continued moving toward implementation of these differential response pilot projects by working with its agencies and service regions to finalize detailed staffing models for each project, writing job descriptions and interview schedules for hiring project staff and beginning to develop service standards, guidelines and streaming protocols for the new service model. It is expected that all projects will be in place during the 2009/10 year. Each project will participate in an external evaluation that is being coordinated through an inter-authority working group.

In addition, the General Authority sponsored a number of front line and supervisory staff to attend training to assess the potential for implementing a new strength-based approach to child protection work in a differential response environment. This approach, (known as the "Signs of Safety" model) is a partnership and collaboration grounded, strengths-based, safety-organized approach to child protection work. This model expands the investigation of risk to encompass strengths and safety strategies that can be built upon to stabilize and strengthen the child and family's situation. Staff who attended the conference provided their opinions, perspectives and support for adopting this model given that it strongly complements the differential response approach.

Strength-Based Assessment and Structured Decision Making Tools for Front Line Staff:

During 2007/08, the General Authority led an inter-authority working group to research and select an actuarial risk probability tool for testing across differential response pilot sites in Manitoba. The working group recommended that Manitoba adopt a tool that was being used in Ontario. With this work completed, the General Authority proceeded in 2008/09 to research best practice approaches for assessing family strengths and needs. Dr. Brad McKenzie, a Professor from the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Manitoba, along with the Authority's Differential Response Coordinator, convened an expert panel comprised of agency staff to conduct a detailed examination of needs and strengths based assessment tools used in various jurisdictions. Through this process a consensus based assessment tool was identified and

adapted to be more reflective of the Manitoba system for testing in the Authority's differential response pilot sites in 2009/10. The endorsement of these assessment tools for testing reflects a move towards adopting a Structured Decision Making (SDM) approach which provides workers with objective and reliable tools with which to make the best possible decisions for individual cases. The effectiveness of these tools will be a key component of the evaluation being done on the differential response pilot projects.

Mobilizing our Strengths - Youth Engagement:

During 2007/08, the General Authority established a Youth Engagement Strategy (YES) Team led by two former youth in care. The primary purpose was to provide opportunities for current and former youth in care to share their experiences and perspectives about the services they received while in care and to propose recommendations for how the Authority and its agencies could establish a more formalized structure for ongoing youth engagement. Terms of Reference were developed to guide Phase One of the YES Team's work. For the first phase of their work, the Team used interviews, focus groups and a dedicated phone line to consult with current and former youth in care, agency staff and other key stakeholders. This work continued throughout 2008/09. It is expected that the final report of Phase I will be released early in the 2009/10 year.

Although the final report was not completed during 2008/09 the YES Team did provide a detailed presentation to the Board of Directors of the General Authority on their preliminary findings and recommendations. One

recommendation was to have a youth symposium in each service area around the province. In response, the General Authority provided funding for each agency/service region to support youth engagement activities between January and March 2009. The purpose is to support opportunities for youth to learn about child and family services initiatives; encourage youth to share their stories with staff and management, and provide opportunity for youth to give advice and influence the design of service initiatives.

Various agencies and service regions within the General Authority held youth engagement events during 2008/09. Agencies and service regions hosted dinners or other similar activities with youth in care which were attended by agency staff and management. At these events, youth were able to share their experiences and issues and talk about their growth and achievements while in care. Youth forums were also held with a more specific focus on hearing ideas to better support youth transitioning from care to independent living. Other agencies used recreational activities with facilitated breakout sessions to obtain feedback from youth on what is working well, what can be done better and what can be done to improve services.



Acting on another recommendation from the YES Team, the General Authority sponsored the two members of the Team to become certified as PRIMER trainers. PRIMER is best described as training to encourage professionals working with children and youth to be more sensitive to the realities of what it is like to grow up in care. This training, developed by the National Youth In Care Network, is interactive and uses different forms of media to tell stories from youth about their in care experiences. During 2008/09, the YES Team delivered the PRIMER training on a pilot basis on three occasions and is currently making final changes to the curriculum to incorporate feedback received at these sessions and to include content specific to the Manitoba context.

In response to the presentation from the YES Team, the General Authority Board of Directors agreed to prioritize other recommendations for implementation in 2009/10. These include:

- continue to provide funding for youth engagement events;
- establish a Youth Advisory Council that will meet regularly with the Board of Directors;
- host a youth retreat where current and former youth in care will be asked to provide advice and recommendations on Authority initiatives;
- create ongoing opportunities for youth who are less comfortable with face to face contact to share their stories, experiences and opinions;
- develop a mentorship program and improve supports for children transitioning from care.

The General Authority will provide an update on these initiatives in next year's annual report.

Staff Engagement Activities and "The Summit":

Following on last year's commitments, the General Authority implemented a staff engagement standard in 2008/09. This standard sets out expectations for each agency and service region to have processes in place for staff at all levels to influence the key policy and program decisions that affect service delivery, participate in initiatives designed to build morale and assist in developing strategies to improve the working environment. To support this standard, the General Authority provided funding for staff engagement activities to be held in each agency and service region. The type of event or activity was at the discretion of each agency and service region provided it met the expectations set out in the standard.



Some agencies and service regions have created formal staff engagement or staff empowerment committees that meet regularly with management. The Chief Executive Officer of the Authority also met with these committees at various times during the 2008/09 year. The CEO of the Authority also continued to meet with the Child Welfare Staff Representative Consultation Committee that was established in 2007/09 in partnership with the Manitoba Government and Employees Union.

One of the most significant staff engagement events that occurred during 2008/09 was the "Summit" meeting

that occurred on June 12, 2008. The work accomplished at the General Authority *Summit* meeting was compiled in a report and distributed to attendees and all staff throughout the General Authority. The report captures and summarizes as themes, many of the stories, values and "wish list" recommendations from participants.

As a follow-up and based on one of the major themes from the report, General Authority agency staff were involved in a process to develop a value framework to guide policy development, planning and practice. A staff generated statement of values was shared with the General Authority Board of Directors and was integral to their work on developing a new strategic framework for the Authority.

Supporting Agencies Through Training:

As was done in 2007/08, the General Authority Training Coordinator prepared a detailed training plan for 2008/09 in consultation with all agencies and service regions. This was done as part of a broader approach through the Joint Training Unit where the coordinators from the four authorities also developed a broader plan to address training needs common across the service system. In 2008/09, over 1400 staff and caregivers from the General Authority and its agencies attended some form of training. Specific training offered throughout the year includes:

- 118 individuals received training in suicide intervention and prevention techniques;
- 91 staff participated in the Child and Family Services competency training;
- 342 agency staff attended the introduction and basic training on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD);



- 20 staff participated in advanced FASD training to become team leaders at their agency;
- 90 agency staff received training in Non Violent Crisis Intervention techniques;
- 180 staff, foster parents and other caregivers attended training in relationship based strengths approach to discipline;
- 81 staff received training in conducting child abuse investigations;
- 200 agency staff attended training in new and revised child and family services program standards;
- 63 managers and supervisors attended training on how to manage attendance and absenteeism in the workplace;
- 34 staff participated in Critical Incident Stress Management training as part of an Authority-wide plan to establish peer support teams in each agency and service region;
- 77 participants from General Authority agencies attended gang awareness workshops;
- 14 staff attended a workshop on strategies for dealing with vicarious trauma and compassion fatigue;

- 63 foster parents and support staff received training in CPR/First Aid;
- 10 staff attended training to learn intervention skills when working with autistic children;
- 10 staff attended a conference for child abuse coordinators and 27 staff attended the Downs Syndrome conference in September 2008.

In addition to the above the General Authority also provided funding in support of Board training and planning sessions held in private agencies.

Supporting Agencies through Resource Development:

During 2008/09, the Authority's Resource Development Team continued to develop and implement a coordinated strategy to address both immediate and long term placement needs of children in care. During this fiscal year the Resource Team was involved in a number of activities including:

- monitoring the use of hotel placements for children in care in efforts ensure compliance with the conditions under which a hotel placement is permitted as outlined in the provincial hotel placement standard;
- taking a lead role in the development of an audit tool and assisting in the completion of a Place of Safety standard compliance review;
- assisting agencies to locate and secure placements for difficult to place children and youth;
- ongoing participation on inter-Authority committees including the Foster Parent Curricula Design Team to develop a competency based training manual for foster parents and the

Circle of Care Committee designed to provide support and direction to the provincial recruitment campaign; and

- conducting a needs analysis to assist in planning for new placement resources for children currently residing in shelters.

“FASD activities at the General Authority increased substantially in 2008/09.”

Initiatives for Families Affected by FASD:

As part of the role of the FASD Specialist within the General Authority, support services are provided to all agencies and service regions related to Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders. This includes program planning, resource development, case consultation, assisting agencies to access diagnostic and support services and training related to FASD.

FASD activities at the General Authority increased substantially in 2008/09. There has been a heightened awareness and response in the Province to improve services for children and families affected by FASD. The General Authority has contributed by focusing on FASD prevention, education and consultation.

During 2008/09, the General Authority FASD Specialist provided educational seminars for staff at all General Authority agencies and service regions. She also consulted with agency staff on dozens of cases involving a child or family affected by FASD.

Training has been provided to over 300 staff and foster parents and five agencies or service regions participated in the FASD Team Leader Initiative. Through this initiative, twenty staff attended advanced FASD training to become peer experts available to provide support and consultation for their colleagues at the front line level. In addition, information packages on FASD were distributed to all foster parents licensed by a General Authority agency. Agencies and service regions were also provided with FASD resource packages which included a computer animated learning tool.

During 2008/09 the FASD Specialist participated in a number of inter-sectoral program initiatives such as Spectrum Connections and the Stop FASD program. The FASD Specialist also represented the General Authority on the FASD Strategy Implementation Team (SIT). This Team is comprised of the four authority FASD Specialists, Healthy Child Manitoba, the Child Protection Branch and the Office of the Child and Family Services Standing Committee. SIT has been responsible for the development of programs and resources for children and youth affected by FASD within the child welfare system. SIT meets monthly to identify programs and resources related to FASD within the child welfare system. The Team has prioritized a number of new initiatives for implementation



in 2009/10. Examples include an expansion of diagnostic services for children suspected of having FASD, hiring a coordinator the

“There is clearly a need for to improve the education and awareness training about the child and family services system as part of the settlement process for New Canadians.”

Coalition for Alcohol and Pregnancy (CAP), establishing a new public education campaign, providing grants to 11 new FASD coalitions and establishing a respite camp for children with FASD between the ages of 3 to 12. The General Authority will report on the status of these new initiatives in next year's annual report.

Promoting Preventive Services for New Canadians:

Recently, Winnipeg Child and Family Services established a family service unit to provide one contact point

and culturally appropriate service for New Canadians. New immigrants and refugee families have and will continue to represent a significant source of population growth in Manitoba. These families can arrive with little understanding of parenting expectations and child welfare law in Manitoba.



There is clearly a need for to improve the education and awareness training about the child and family services system as part of the settlement process for New Canadians. During 2008/09, the General Authority initiated a project for this purpose co-sponsored by Winnipeg Child and Family Services and Jewish Child and Family Services.

In 2008/09 the General Authority participated on a Steering Committee with representatives from WCFS and Jewish Child and Family Services. After the Steering Committee approved terms of reference, the Authority contracted with an external consultant to undertake this feasibility study. After extensive consultations with service providers, government representatives and community stakeholders, the consultant prepared a draft final report in March 2009. The report indicates that there is broad based support for proceeding with this project and provides recommendations for next steps.

Directors' Common Table Highlights

Since its inception, the General Authority has recognized the importance of having a structure in place for agencies and service regions to shape policy, collaborate to achieve greater consistency in service delivery, plan collectively and to collaborate on decisions that have wide implications across the Authority's service system. The Directors' Common Table (DCT) was created for this purpose. Senior managers from all General Authority Agencies and service regions are represented on this committee. DCT has adopted a consensus model for making decisions.

Throughout the year the Director's Common Table met regularly to discuss common issues, engage in joint planning, be updated on new initiatives and resolve issues across agencies or service regions. Following is a list of key decisions that were made by the DCT in 2008/09 to ensure consistency and representativeness across all General Authority agencies and service regions.

- **Quality Assurance Framework** – The DCT approved a new Quality Assurance Framework to be fully implemented in 2009/10. This includes a statement of principles and terms of reference for a Quality Assurance Committee to coordinate and oversee this work across the system. The framework includes five components of quality assurance work: a cycle where all standards will be assessed within a defined time period; core standards to be assessed every year; follow-up on higher risk areas identified through prior reviews, outcomes and performance measurement and program evaluation.
- **Outcomes Matrix** – After considerable research, the General Authority developed an outcomes

matrix based on known research, literature and leading practices in other jurisdictions. The matrix includes five outcome domains (family and community support, safety, permanency, service effectiveness, child well-being) and twenty individual outcome indicators under those domains. For performance measurement, the matrix also shows the desirable trend that should be seen over time. The DCT participated in the development and approved the final version of this Outcomes Matrix.

- **Child In Care Annual Review Form** – The DCT consulted on and approved the substantive redesign of the Child in Care Annual Review Form. The form will now collect more detailed information on outcomes and trends over time in key indicators.
- **Differential Response Planning** – The DCT agreed to move towards a model of Structured Decision Making by endorsing risk and strengths/needs assessment tools for testing in the Authority's differential response pilot sites.
- **Youth Engagement** - After receiving a presentation from the Authority's Youth Engagement Strategy (YES) Team, the DCT formally endorsed the Team's recommendations from Phase I of their work.
- **Staff Engagement** - The DCT approved the content of an Authority specific standard to ensure that each agency and service region under the General Authority will develop and implement a staff engagement strategy.
- **Child and Family Services Information System Applications** – The DCT approved improved security access for certain staff at

each agency and service region. This expands the availability of important case information across all General Authority agencies and service regions.

- **General Authority Standards Manual** - The DCT approved the format and distribution of a General Authority Standards Manual that includes all child and family services standards currently in place in the province.
- **Standards Consultation Feedback Document** – The DCT agreed to distribute of a document to all staff outlining the feedback received from the standards consultation process.
- **Standards Training** – The DCT endorsed a plan to develop a standards training package and deliver training on the new and revised provincial standards contained within the Child and Family Services Standards Manual.
- **System-Wide Reviews** – The DCT agreed to a process for the General Authority to undertake a system-wide review to determine compliance with requirements related to Places of Safety, face to face contact with children in care and foster home licensing renewals. This included the endorsement of the Place of Safety Audit Tool and process for conducting the review within each of its agencies and service regions.
- **Conflict and Courtesy Service Protocol** – To ensure consistency in approach, the DCT approved a new protocol to assist agencies in situations where a conflict of interest exists and courtesy service must be provided from another agency or service region in order to resolve that conflict.

ISSUES AND INQUIRIES

With the proclamation of *The Child and Family Services Authorities Act* (CFSAA) in November 2003, a number of duties were transferred from the Child Protection Branch (CPB) to the four authorities. This section focuses on the duties and responsibilities of the General Authority associated with case related and service delivery matters of its mandated agencies.

The General Authority is mandated for ensuring its agencies provide services and follow the practices and procedures in accordance with legislation and provincial standards. Concerns and inquiries from the community and organizations regarding service provision, agencies, and staff are received by the Authority.

The General Authority is also mandated to advise the Minister about child and family services matters with respect to concerns from the community and agency service recipients, as well as issues reported in the media. The General Authority investigates these matters and advises the CPB who coordinates this function on behalf of the Minister.

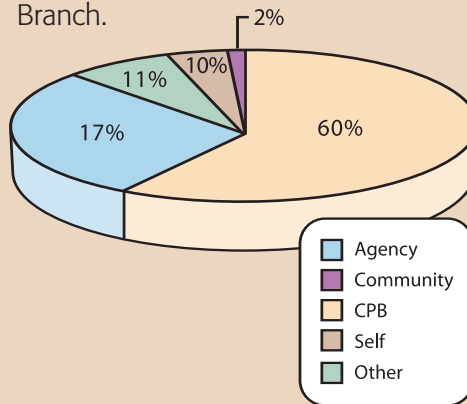
While inquiries received at the GA are largely from the CPB, referrals are also received from the community, agency service recipients, and external sources such as the Office of the Children's Advocate and Office of the Provincial Ombudsman.

The Authority has continued to develop collaborative working relationships with its agencies. Both the authority and its agencies have mutually benefitted from this increasingly supportive and consultative relationship.

This past year there were 456 referrals, an increase of 43% from the previous year's total of 320.

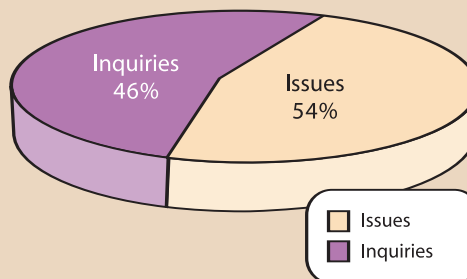
Source of Referral:

Consistent with previous years, the largest percentage of referrals (60%) were received from the Child Protection Branch.



Inquiries/Issues:

Referrals are defined as either an inquiry or an issue. An issue is where an individual raises concerns with the provision of services as stipulated under *The Child and Family Services Act*. An inquiry is viewed as a response to a specific request for information from the Department, media or community. The Authority recorded 208 issues versus 248 inquiries.



An Enhanced Quality Assurance Capacity

Under the new legislation passed in 2003, the authorities assumed responsibility for monitoring the quality of services delivered by mandated agencies. Each year, the General Child and Family Services Authority regularly undertake quality assurance activities to ensure agencies are in compliance with service expectations. This year the Quality Assurance activities at the General Authority increased both in scope and intensity.

Building on the Quality Assurance Framework approved by the Board and endorsed by the Directors' Common Table, the General Authority implemented a structured and comprehensive approach to quality assurance. Specific activities were focused on the measurement of agency performance in relation to prescriptive requirements such as standards (quality assurance reviews), the development and redevelopment of measurement tools in order to better determine outcomes, the development and implementation of training in standards and culminating in the establishment of the Best Practices Unit at the General Authority. Highlights for 2008/09 are summarized on the following pages.



Case Reviews:

In 2008/09, the General Authority conducted a detailed review on 45 individual cases. The purpose of each review is to monitor the quality of services in comparison with legislation, provincial standards, policies and known best practice approaches. The conclusions of each review are shared with the agency and used as an opportunity to learn and strengthen service delivery. Often, the review conclusions support the agency's case decision. Occasionally, the General Authority will make recommendations to ensure the highest quality of service is provided to our children and families.

Also in 2008/2009, the General Authority joined the Community Service Delivery Branch, WCFS Senior Management, and the Director of Programs of the Manitoba Adolescent Treatment Centre as Standing Committee Members to review complex case situations. These cases often cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of all parties and/or where the course of action is not clear. This mechanism allows stakeholders to come together to discuss complex/conflictual situations in an inclusive, respectful and confidential forum. Membership is fluid allowing for the inclusion of individuals, internally and externally, with expertise that is relevant to the issues of the cases being reviewed. Minutes, which include role responsibility and goal setting, are provided to the participants.

Beginning in May 2008, nine new complex cases that were defined as high risk or presented with systemic issues were heard by the Committee. Due to the complexity of these cases, the Committee has met on more than one occasion to review the progress and to establish new goals.

The response from workers and supervisors who have accessed this process has been positive. WCFS staff value the support and suggested direction offered by the membership.

The Best Practices Unit:

Based on advice from a staff committee, the General Authority created the Best Practices Unit to consolidate all quality assurance work into one responsibility centre in the organization under the direction of a single manager. The Best Practices Unit is comprised of three staff (one new quality assurance specialist and two re-assigned staff) as well as a senior manager. The Unit was developed to provide a coordinated, organized approach to sustaining support and encouraging a culture of best practice and continuous quality improvement across the General Authority agencies and service regions.

The unit is founded on the notion of evidenced based practice in child welfare and its primary functions are to conduct research and analysis in best practices, to support General Authority agencies to full their quality assurance role and to ensure the responsibilities of agency oversight are carried out.

Quality Assurance Reviews:

Reviews of agency performance in relation to standards and legislation are a cornerstone of the General Authority's responsibility in quality assurance. The General Authority completed a number of these reviews in 2008/09 including a Place of Safety audit (with a new auditing tool developed), a face to face contact review as well as reviews of foster home licensing renewals and staff checks. In addition, a comprehensive rotational review schedule for standards quality assurance was developed as

part of the planning process for 2009/10 and will be implemented on a cyclical basis.

The Outcomes Matrix:

The Outcomes Matrix is a table of outcome measures in child welfare grouped under five outcome domains (family and community support, safety, permanency, service effectiveness, child well-being) and twenty individual outcome indicators under those domains. For performance measurement, the matrix also shows the desirable trend that should be seen over time. The matrix was derived from leading research on outcomes in child welfare and is comprised of measures adapted from the Children's Bureau in the United States and the National Outcomes Measures (NOM) in Canada as well as those designed by General Authority staff to address the specific needs of the Authority and its agencies/service regions. The Outcomes Matrix was reviewed and approved by agency directors and, in its final form will guide the collection of information that can provide a quantitative response to how effective service delivery is in the General Authority. This information will be invaluable for future planning, programming and research.

The Child in Care Annual Review

During 2008/09 the General Authority significantly redesigned the Child in Care annual review form. This form is utilized to review annually the plan for children in care (a legislated requirement). The form was re-designed to more closely respond to the legislation, to be easier for social work staff to use and to have an enhanced capacity both in the type and range of outcome data collected.

Standards Training:

A training package on the new sections of the Manitoba Child and Family Services Standards Manual was developed by General Authority staff

and training was provided to all agencies and service regions in the fall of 2009. The sections taught centered on Child Protection, Voluntary Family Service and Foster Homes. Training for 2009/

10 will focus on the Manual's case management standards structured along natural case movement and major decision points.

Extensions of Care and Maintenance:

Under legislation, the General Authority is responsible for the review and approval of Extensions of Care and Maintenance for permanent wards who require care beyond the age of majority. This fiscal year a total of 80 requests were approved. This represents a significant (70%) increase when compared with the number of requests approved in 2007/08. The following chart illustrates the number of approvals granted by agency and reason for request:

AGENCY	REASON FOR REQUEST			TOTAL
	Completion of Education	Waiting for Supported Living Services to Begin	Independent Living Skills Development	
Winnipeg	26	4	13	43
Interlake	1	0	1	2
Eastman	6	2	3	11
Central	2	0	0	2
Western	8	0	4	12
Northern	3	0	3	6
Parkland	1	0	0	1
Jewish	1	0	1	2
Churchill	1	0	0	1
TOTAL	49	6	25	80

Mixed Facility Licenses:

The General Authority reviews and approves requests for mixed facilities, where foster families provide care for both children in care and adults. The following illustrates approvals granted this year, which have decreased in comparison to last year's total of 17 approvals (35% decrease). This is the second consecutive year that the number of approvals has decreased.

AGENCY	TOTALS
Winnipeg	4
Interlake	3
Eastman	2
Central	0
Western	2
Northern	0
Parkland	0
Jewish	0
Churchill	0
TOTAL	11

Foster Home License Variances:

Under the Foster Home Licensing Regulation, provisions are made whereby certain regulations may be varied with the approval of the Authority. This includes:

Regulation 7(5)

Of the children cared for "no more than two can be infants and no more than three can be under the age of five years".

Regulation 7(4)

"Licensee shall not provide care and supervision in the foster home for more than a total of seven persons."

The General Authority approved 5 variances this year in comparison to 12 last fiscal year for an overall decrease of 58%. The following chart outlines these requests by agency/service region and the type of variance requested.

AGENCY	REGULATION 7(5)	REGULATION 7(4)	TOTAL
Winnipeg	3	0	3
Interlake	0	0	0
Central	0	0	0
Eastman	1	0	1
Western	1	0	1
Northern	0	0	0
Parkland	0	0	0
Jewish	0	0	0
Churchill	0	0	0
TOTAL	5	0	5

Services to Minor Parents:

The General Authority receives copies of all Notice of Live Birth to a mother under age 18. The Program Specialist checks the Child and Family Information System to ensure that services have been offered to the minor parent. If services have not been offered, the Program Specialist follows up with the agency.

In cases where the minor parent is under 16 years of age the Program Specialist has contact with the agency to ensure that the appropriate procedures have been followed to determine if an abuse investigation should be conducted.

Agency	Number of Notices of Live Birth to a Mother age 16 to 18	Number of Notices of Live Birth to a Mother under age 16	Total
Winnipeg	88	5	93
Western	28	0	28
Central	27	0	27
Parkland	1	0	1
Northern	6	0	6
Interlake	6	1	7
Eastman	14	1	15
JCFS	0	0	0
Churchill	0	0	0
TOTAL	170	7	177

SERVICES TO FAMILIES

Voluntary Placement

Agreements:

Under Section 14(1) of The Child and Family Services Act, an agency may enter into an agreement with a parent, guardian or other person who has actual care and control of a child, for placing the child without transfer of guardianship in any place which provides child care where that person is unable to make adequate provision for the care of that child".

The following table shows the number of Voluntary Placement Agreements approved by agencies for this year:

AGENCY	NEW	RENEWALS	TERMINATIONS
Winnipeg	269	259	101
Western	12	6	8
Interlake	11	15	3
Central	42	39	12
Parkland	4	1	2
JCFS	2	0	0
Northern	20	2	1
Eastman	58	54	5
Churchill	0	0	0
TOTAL	418	376	132



REPORTS FROM OFFICE OF THE CHIEF MEDICAL EXAMINER OFFICE OF THE CHILDREN'S ADVOCATE

During 2008/09 new legislation was passed which transferred the responsibility for child death reviews from the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner to the Office of the Children's Advocate. Currently, under Subsection 8.2.3(1) of The Child and Family Services Act the Office of the Children's Advocate is empowered and required to review the services provided a child when the child was in the care of, or received services from, an agency under this Act within one year before the death, or whose parent or guardian received services from an agency under this Act within one year before the death. This responsibility formerly fell to the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner under the Fatality Inquiries Act. For this fiscal year the General Authority received review reports from both the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner and the Office of the Children's Advocate.

The Children's Advocate "must review the standards and quality of care and

services provided under this Act to the child or the child's parent or guardian and any circumstances surrounding the death that relate to the standards or quality of the care and services". The Office may also recommend changes to standards, policies or practices.

During 2008/09 the General Authority received a total of 18 reports prepared by both the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner and the Office of the Children's Advocate. The General Authority will review and discuss the recommendations with the specific agencies involved and then follow up with those agencies to monitor progress of implementation.

During 2008/09, the General Authority concluded 11 reports comprising 13 recommendations from the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner and from the Office of the Children's Advocate (including some reports issued in 2008/09 but related to prior fiscal years). Reports are considered "concluded"



when the Chief Medical Examiner or the Children's Advocate has found that the agency services met or exceeded standards and made no recommendations or when an agency has satisfactorily responded to recommendations that were made in the report.

During 2008/09, the General Authority received notice of 9 child deaths (compared to 21 in 2007/08). In 7 of these cases, the family had received service within the previous 12 months. Three of the children were in care. In all seven cases, the death was due to natural causes (100%). Of the two cases that had no agency involvement in the last twelve months, one death was undetermined and one was due to suicide.

Children in Care Statistics:

The General Authority regularly tracks trends regarding the number of children in care of its agencies. This is tracked and analyzed by legal status, age and other variables. When there is a noticeable increase in children in care, the General authority will follow up with the agencies involved to gain further explanatory information about this trend. As shown in the table, the General Authority agencies experienced a 1% decrease in the number of children in care when compared with the previous fiscal year.

General Authority	2007/2008	2008/2009
Central	99	96
Western	129	141
Churchill	18	13
Eastman	149	190
Interlake	62	66
JCFS	18	22
Northern	85	81
Parkland	19	19
Winnipeg	1077	1011
Total	1656	1639

Scholarships and Awards for Children and Youth

Vision Catchers Fund:

In 2007/08 each Authority was provided with resources to establish a new program called "Vision Catchers". The Vision Catchers Fund was established to assist youth in care to develop their strengths, maximize their potential and pursue their career aspirations. In the General Authority, funding is available to support youth age 16 to 21 who are currently in care to enhance their special talent/skill and further their career goals. Funding can be used for: specialized study in high school, purchasing supplies needed to pursue a career, job search assistance, accessing post secondary education, attending technical training or an apprenticeship program. In 2008/09, General Authority Agencies provided Vision Catchers funding totaling \$25,000 to support 19 youth pursue their talent or career goal.

Keith Cooper Scholarship:

This spring the committee awarded scholarships to 8 General Authority recipients including:

Alberto Boscio

Jainna Cabral

Tiffany Claeys

Danielle Claridge

Jacqueline Evanuk

William Halibiski

Lisa Neufeld

Kayla Nygren

Scotia Stay in School Awards:

The Scotia Stay in School Award program was established in Ontario with the Children's Aid Foundation in 2001. Scotia Canada began to expand this program across Canada in 2007 and partnered with the General Authority in December 2007.

“The Vision Catchers Fund was established to assist youth in care to develop their strengths, maximize their potential and pursue their career aspirations.”

Under this program, three types of awards are available including:

• **Stay in School Awards**

The Stay in School Award program was established to recognize elementary and high school students who are doing exceptionally well in school given their personal circumstances and to encourage them to complete high school and move on to post-secondary. The award itself is a combination of \$50 cash and a \$200 Canada Savings Bond.

• **Graduation Awards**

The Graduation Awards were established to recognize at risk, disadvantaged students for meeting their immediate education goals and successfully graduating from Grade 8 or 12. The awards are \$50 for graduation from Grade 8 and \$100 for graduation from Grade 12.

• **Leap to Learning Tutoring**

To support educationally at risk children and youth to meet their academic goals and reach their learning potential.

To date, the General Authority has approved Stay in School Awards for nine children or youth for a total of \$2,250. Funding in support of five applications for tutoring was also approved (total of \$3,226.00.)

Miracle Fund:

The CIBC World Markets Children's Miracle Fund was established at the Children's Aid Foundation in Toronto in 1999 to provide opportunities and supports to children, youth and families served by the Child and Family Services which enhance their physical, mental, social and developmental well being. The General Authority partnered with the Children's Aid Foundation in December 2007 to administer this fund in Manitoba.

Funds up to \$250 may be provided for any number of activities including:

- basic necessities, such as: safety gates, strollers, glasses, cribs, mattresses and winter clothing;
- cultural events and school trips;
- health and well being items/activities;
- music lessons;
- sports and recreational activities, and;
- travel costs to special events with extended family members

Over the past fiscal year, the General Authority approved applications for a total of \$12,201.29 in funding support for 49 individual children and youth.



The General Child
and Family Services
Authority



**The General Child
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