

# **GENERAL CFS AUTHORITY**

**ANNUAL REPORT  
2020/21**

**PARTNERING  
WITH FAMILIES  
& COMMUNITY  
IN  
UNPRECEDENTED  
TIMES**

## **OUR VISION STATEMENT**

"Children who are safe,  
happy, thriving and growing  
up with their family in a  
healthy caring community."



General Child  
and Family Services  
Authority





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**WELCOME TO THE  
18TH ANNUAL  
REPORT**

**OF THE GENERAL  
CHILD AND  
FAMILY SERVICES  
AUTHORITY**

## **OUR PARTNERSHIPS**

The General Child and Family Services Authority, along with the other three Manitoba child and family services (CFS) authorities (the Metis Child and Family Services Authority, the First Nations of Northern Manitoba Child and Family Services Authority and the Southern First Nations Network of Care) are tasked with overseeing, mandating and funding the services provided by CFS agencies throughout the province of Manitoba. Four agencies operate under the umbrella of the General Authority (GA).

In an extraordinary year, we celebrate the work done by all of our agencies in tandem with the GA as we endeavoured to ensure exceptional service to our children and families despite the challenges of a global pandemic:

- **CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES OF CENTRAL MANITOBA**
- **CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES OF WESTERN MANITOBA**
- **JEWISH CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICE**
- **WINNIPEG, RURAL & NORTHERN CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES**



## MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

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Another year gone by, and what a year it has been.

My deepest gratitude to my board colleagues, General Authority CEO Jay Rodgers, and to all our wonderful staff who continue to demonstrate commitment and courage in supporting children and families in these very challenging times.

We cannot look back at the history of child and family services in Canada without recognizing the destructive impact that child welfare intervention and practice has had on generations of children and families. We cannot and should not avoid our role in this history, and must accept accountability for systemically punitive and hurtful generational policies and practices.

Yet our accountability must also be anchored with a non-negotiable commitment to continue to do things better with – not for or to – the people we care about.

Our Authority continues to demonstrate significant year-over-year decreases in the number of children in care and has been a leader in developing innovative approaches in ensuring family permanency in children's lives.

We also ensured much stronger partnerships with the communities we serve, and more active involvement in community collaboration in all facets of our policy, planning, and implementation processes.

It is time to reflect and apologize for a system that has historically and relentlessly been oppressive and hurtful in so many ways. Yet we must continue to listen, learn and change so that we will be seen as allies who are welcomed rather than as enemies.

Philip Goodman  
General Authority Board Chair







## MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

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Welcome to the 18th annual report from the General Authority (GA). For the GA, our agencies and indeed the entire world, 2020/21 has been a year like no other. When the province announced the state of emergency in March 2020, I immediately recalled being the CEO of the GA during H1N1 about ten years ago. My first thought was that we have been through this type of situation before but COVID-19 was unlike any experience I have ever had during my career. This unprecedented time required the Authority and our agencies to work differently in partnership with the families and communities we serve. That is the theme for this year's report.

This report describes the actions taken by the GA during the state of emergency. Our Board of Directors showed very strong leadership and our agency directors immediately came together as we collectively developed and implemented a comprehensive emergency response plan. We then nimbly adjusted our responses as new public health restrictions were introduced. The safety and well-being of our staff and the children and families we serve was always at the forefront informing the actions taken by the Authority and our agencies.

Working with our Directors' Leadership Table (DLT), the Authority developed guidelines to assist our agencies in maintaining essential services within the context of the public health restrictions. Ongoing communication and transparency were critical to ensure agency staff were aware of the activities being co-ordinated by the Authority and the shifting expectations for practice.

Throughout the year, I was extremely impressed with the innovative thinking and creative things our agency staff did to ensure that children were able to safely stay connected with their families and community. The vignettes in this report provide inspirational stories and reflect the great work done by our agencies.

But it wasn't just the pandemic that created challenges for our service system in 2020/21. The Authority played a leadership role and supported our agencies to respond to significant changes in policy. Responding to the realities of the pandemic, the province announced that agencies could provide supports to all young adults turning 18 in care and continue to offer supports to young adults beyond the age of 21. Our service system also had to adapt given the emerging expectations resulting from the enactment of Canada's first federal child and family services legislation. In collaboration with the DLT, the GA developed a comprehensive policy statement to ensure agencies practised in a way that was consistent with that new legislation. During the year, the Authority also hosted interactive webinars to inform agencies about the new legislation, and more are planned for 2021/22.





## MESSAGE FROM THE CEO CONT'D

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July 2020 marked the end of birth alerts. Our agencies responded by implementing new practice approaches designed to partner with community to offer supports to expectant moms early during pregnancy. The GA supported this shift by issuing a set of leading practice guidelines to complement the new standards developed by the Child and Youth Services Division (CYSO).

While this was an unprecedented year, the pandemic did not stop the GA from continuing to evolve and strengthen our service system. Our Authority led implementation of Single Envelope Funding (SEF) which gives our agencies the flexibility to reallocate resources in support of prevention, early intervention and reunification. The statistics in this report show that the GA continues to make progress. We created a new data analytics and evaluation unit during 2020/21. This represents a tremendous advancement in our capacity to track service trends, do quality assurance and implement evaluation studies to learn more about the outcomes we are achieving. A key accomplishment was the Authority's development of SEF success indicators which we now have the expertise to track and measure on a regular basis.

In February of 2021, the Board of Directors approved a new supported guardianship policy. This will be the first program of its kind in Manitoba when fully implemented. We also continued to evolve our practice by offering workshops on the Family Finding model, which has shown great success in many other jurisdictions. We completely shifted our approach to training. The GA launched a staff intranet site in January 2021, which enhances the great progress we made in developing and implementing virtual training options. An e-learning portal is under development and should go live this calendar year.

What a year it was! I would like to thank our board of directors for their support, guidance and strategic thinking. I would also like to thank our funders and commend my colleague authorities and the CYSO for being true partners during this unique time. Finally, we couldn't have accomplished as much as we did this year without the phenomenal leadership shown by our agency directors and the inspiring and incredible work done by our Authority and agency staff.

Jay Rodgers  
CEO, General CFS Authority



## OUR BOARD & STAFF

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### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Philip Goodman – Chair

James Lowry – Vice-Chair

Vacant – Secretary

Craig Johnson – Treasurer

Lorne Belmore – Member

Gregg Hanson – Member

Meaghen Johnston – Member

Darlene MacDonald – Member

Lizanne Lachance – Member

### GENERAL AUTHORITY STAFF

\*Cyndy Brooks – Wendy's Wonderful Kids Recruiter

Del Bruneau – Administrative Assistant – Resources

\*Andrea Dixon – Wendy's Wonderful Kids Recruiter

Claudette Dorge – French Language Services Co-ordinator

Allison Dunfield – Media Specialist

Thomas Ens – Program and Leading Practice Specialist

Jennifer Fallis – Program Specialist

Kerri-Lynn Greeley – Program Specialist

Jeanette Grennier – Program Specialist

Laurie Gulowaty – Program Specialist – Resources

\*Christy Holnbeck – Associate Chief Executive Officer

Lyvine Laysa – Financial Analyst

Teresa Mayer – Manager, Data Analytics and Evaluation Unit

\*Monica Mazur – Executive Assistant/Office Manager

Angela McGloan – Program Specialist – Resources

\*Laura Morton – Program Specialist

Louis Nault – Chief Financial Officer

Tracy Oleschak – Program Specialist

Reeja Pappully – Wendy's Wonderful Kids Recruiter

Janice Rees – Financial Consultant

Jay Rodgers – Chief Executive Officer

Lisa Schmidt – Program and Leading Practice Specialist

Rachel Wiebe – Policy Analyst

\*Left the employment of the GA in 2020/21



## FINANCE REPORT

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I am pleased to present the 2020/2021 finance report and audited financial statements. The General Authority continues to be a financially stable organization. Our auditors, Magnus LLP, have once again provided an unqualified opinion that the financial statements “present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Authority as at March 31, 2021 and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with the Canadian Public Sector Accounting Standards.”

### **SETTING THE FRAMEWORK - FUNDING FOR RESULTS**

2020/21 marked the second year that the GA agencies operated under the Single Envelope Funding (SEF) approach in support of the “Funding for Results” pillar of child and family services transformation – one of four pillars of CFS transformation announced by the Manitoba government in 2017. SEF provides flexibility in budgeting for the service continuum of CFS built on the ability to reallocate monies for new and innovative programming and expansion of existing services to improve outcomes for children, youth and families through prevention, reunification and lifelong connections. Because funding levels remain stable over the three-year funding period, the GA and its mandated agencies can plan for the achievement of strategic objectives in a predictable funding environment, rather than facing funding uncertainty every 12 months. The GA is nearing the finalization of the SEF contribution agreement and we are excited to solidify this new funding approach.

These significant shifts to a results-based funding method require extensive policy review and development, procedure development and reporting for successful implementation and to ensure its benefits are realized. In January 2021, the provincial SEF policy manual was adopted by the GA providing the policy framework to support this important work.

The provincial manual provides the policy framework for the GA to develop and implement innovative policies and procedures in support of the first two pillars of CFS transformation. The GA has created a prioritized list for SEF policy development, which has been presented and accepted by the GA Board of Directors' finance committee. The first priority was an agency surplus/deficit and contingency fund policy, which was approved by the Board in December 2020. An excellent example of policy innovation developed under the provincial SEF manual is the GA's supported guardianship policy, which was approved by the Board in February 2021 (for more details on the supported guardianship program, see page 18). The coming year will see further development of SEF policy aimed at creating an environment of innovation and support for agencies in attainment of the first two pillars of transformation.





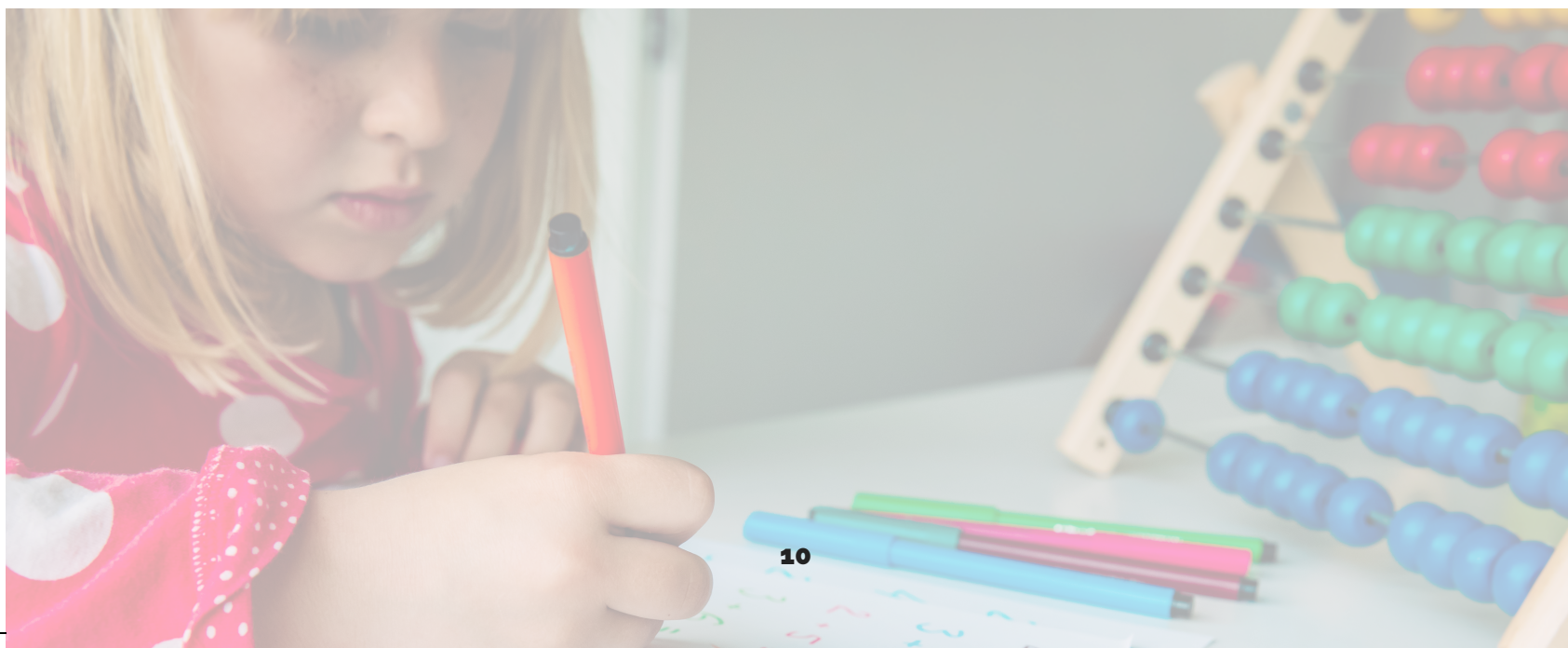
## FINANCE REPORT CONT'D

The added flexibility and autonomy of SEF comes with a responsibility to ensure achievement of results and financial accountability at the GA. In 2020/21 the GA agency financial accountability framework was developed to meet the new financial accountability responsibility. This new framework is embedded in SEF policies and procedures, agency funding agreements, agency financial reporting requirements, an agency risk management approach and an internal audit program.

In early 2020/21, after consultation with our DLT and the Child and Youth Services Division (CYSD), the GA finalized a set of key success indicators to measure the results of SEF with regular reporting on many of these indicators occurring throughout 2020/21. Implementation of the accountability framework will take place over the coming fiscal year 2021/2022.

### **MOVING FORWARD – FUNDING FOR RESULTS**

Through funding flexibility across the service continuum, autonomy in resource deployment, financial accountability and data-driven measurement of results, SEF creates an environment primed for innovation for CFS transformation in Manitoba. The GA and its agencies are in a positive financial position to maximize the benefits of SEF by supporting service delivery to generate positive outcomes for children, youth and families. As we move into our third year of SEF in 2021/22, we are excited to witness the results achieved as we have persevered through the difficulties of operating under the pandemic.







## FINANCE REPORT CONT'D

### WORKING TOGETHER

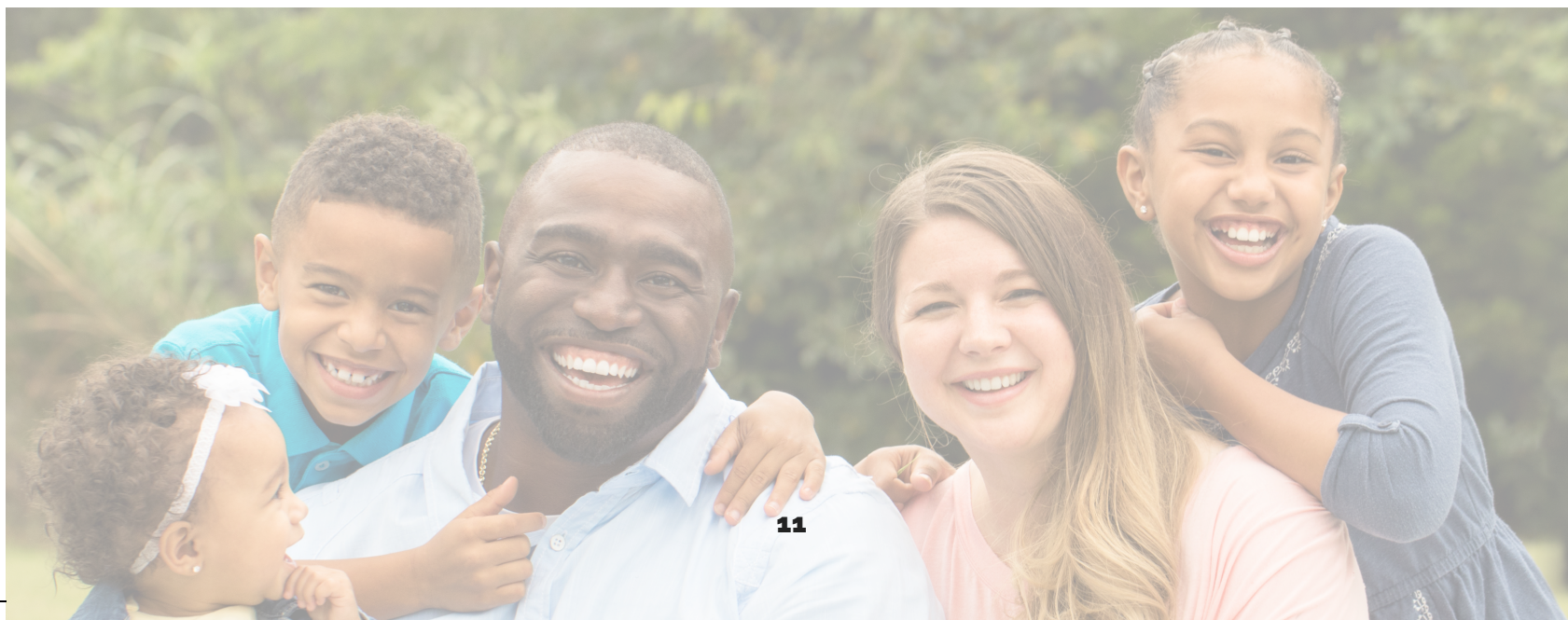
The CFS system in Manitoba relies on numerous entities to do their part in order for the system to function, which results in a need for ongoing collaboration, partnership and engagement. Finance plays a major role in supporting the ongoing success of the system. Throughout 2020/2021, the GA participated in finance-related discussions including the following:

- Bi-weekly finance meetings with senior representatives from the four authorities and the Department of Families throughout 2020/2021
- Regular meetings with the authority SEF implementation committee
- Regular meetings with agency finance leadership in 2020/2021, with a focus to support SEF implementation
- Regular finance meetings between authority Chief Financial Officers (CFOs)
- Participation in committees and working groups with the CYSD and other authorities

I want to thank Louis Nault, our CFO, and Lyvine Laysa, our financial analyst. I want to also thank our CEO Jay Rodgers, Minister of Families Rochelle Squires, her deputy minister and assistant deputy ministers as well as our administrative partners in the Department of Families.

On behalf of the entire organization, thank you to all our funders, other partners as well as management and staff for their commitment to making 2020/2021 a successful year.

Craig Johnson,  
Treasurer & Finance Committee Chair



# SECTION 1: PARTNERING WITH AGENCIES TO LEAD

## THE GA RESPONSE TO COVID-19

Beginning in March 2021 and continuing throughout this fiscal year, our Directors' Leadership Table (DLT) continued to meet weekly to co-ordinate pandemic planning and communication. Early on, the DLT created General Authority Guidelines and each agency completed an Emergency Pandemic Response Plan (EPRP). A key element of the EPRP is the Authority's response should an agency be unable to provide essential services due to the impact of the pandemic. Should this occur, the GA would explore deployment of Authority staff first and then staff from another agency. If this was not sufficient, the Authority would seek additional assistance from the Child and Youth Services Division. Fortunately, throughout 2020/21, all GA agencies were able to continue delivering the full range of essential services and no deployment of staff was required.

Throughout 2020/21, the GA continued to play a major role in co-ordinating the acquisition and distribution of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). One program specialist was designated to co-ordinate orders and ensure that agencies had enough supplies. Deliveries were organized centrally from our office.

Due to the pandemic, the Authority shifted to a rotational staffing model consistent with the public health guidelines. While our office remained open, with the Authority's support, the majority of staff on any given day were working at home during 2020/21. In March of 2020, the Authority made the decision to suspend all in-person training. This continued throughout 2020/21.

Much of the work done by child welfare agencies, especially front-line workers, required regular in-person contact with children, youth, families, caregivers and community members. In consultation with the DLT, the GA created Guidelines for In-Person Contact. This document was meant to help inform decisions about whether in-person contact was considered essential, what precautions should be taken before and after having in-person contact and what contact might be done in ways that did not involve direct, in-person meetings. Workers and supervisors were quick to respond to this challenge.





## PANDEMIC COMMUNICATION

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The unprecedented nature of the COVID-19 pandemic meant an increase in co-ordination and communication between the Children and Youth Services Division (CYSD), Public Health, CFS authorities and CFS agencies. In 2021, the CYSD regularly sent circulars to guide CFS practices to ensure the safety of workers, families and children. Topics included foster parent guidelines, foster parent travel, COVID-19 adoption/post-adoption practice guidelines and cyber safety, among others. The DLT reviewed and discussed each circular before distribution to ensure consistent interpretation and implementation across the General Authority service system. These circulars provided important information and direction for agencies during the pandemic. All circulars were posted on both the GA website and the newly launched GA staff intranet (see page 16). The DLT often created and sent supplementary written guidelines and clarification to complement the circulars.

Throughout 2020/21, our CEO participated in meetings of the Emergency Management Team (EMT), comprised of representatives from the four authorities and the CYSD. The EMT met weekly to ensure consistent interpretation of information in circulars and other material, and application of COVID-19 restrictions across all four authorities.

During this fiscal year, the CEO also provided regular updates on the activities of the DLT, GA staff and the work of our agencies regarding COVID-19, along with other pertinent information, via a system-wide email. All “Messages from the CEO” were also posted online.

In May 2020, the Authority launched a COVID-19 information page on the GA website (<https://generalauthority.ca/covid-19/>). This page included a continuously updated list of all circulars, all CEO messages related to the pandemic, articles about COVID-19 in Manitoba and GA-specific information. In early January 2021, the GA launched a staff intranet which also included a dedicated COVID-19 section. The online COVID-19 resources will remain on these websites throughout 2021 and into 2022.

As the pandemic became a part of daily life over the past year, both the GA and its agencies learned numerous strategies to continue the important practice of working with children and families. Throughout the pandemic, our work continued and in some ways, the GA and its agencies thrived as out-of-the-box thinking and new ways of working became part of our practice. The following pages feature examples from our agencies of the innovative thinking and creative ways to ensure children continue to feel connected to their families and communities.





## COVID-19 VIGNETTES

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A worker used the new focus on virtual meetings to her advantage. During the pandemic, the worker and foster family decided to do very brief visits with the child's mother by placing the toddler in a high chair with crayons and paper. That way, instead of one longer visit, mother and child were able to have "several, short visits per week."

She also found that other foster parents who may have been afraid to use online conferencing platforms before the pandemic began using them with ease.

"We had families who didn't want to use technology before and now they are doing a quick pop-in at bedtime with the biological parents. It can promote more contact."

~ From Winnipeg CFS

When a child moved to a new home, a team from CFS of Western Manitoba worked with her former foster parents, who sent about 30 small gifts for the child to take along with her to her new place to make her feel loved. Each gift was numbered and had a little description. The family she went to live with would do a FaceTime call with the former foster parents, and were instructed to give her a gift whenever she was having a difficult day.

"It helped her to know how much she was loved and cared about," said one of the workers on the team. "These gifts helped give the child confidence and to grow more comfortable in her new placement. It made her feel fulfilled," said the worker.

~ From CFS of Western Manitoba





## COVID-19 VIGNETTES

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A CFS of Western Manitoba worker took her COVID-19 creativity to the post office. When a child she was working with left Brandon to live with a parent in Winnipeg, the worker wanted to ensure he felt connected. During the pandemic, she began sending him packages in the mail once a week to keep up the bond they had developed. The package was made up of different things each week but always contained a letter along with crafts or games to try. The worker enjoyed creating unique mailouts and included many things over the year including a drawing challenge, a paper airplane making kit and joke books. The worker's supervisor was very supportive of the idea, saying the packages "help make sure we do everything we can to connect."

~ From CFS of Western Manitoba

The in-home support team put packages together for families when they could not see them face-to-face in spring/summer 2020. In the north, packages included food items, ingredients for making meals and activities that parents could do with their children. In the south, the packages were based on themes: nutrition, self-care, mental health and family activities. Packages were also created for families at Christmas with small gifts and a family activity. Workers also sent families a COVID-19 storybook for kids that explained the pandemic in a way that children could understand.

~ From CFS of Central Manitoba



## SECTION 2: THE PANDEMIC AS A LAUNCHING POINT FOR NEW INITIATIVES

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After the initial months mainly dedicated to our pandemic efforts, DLT meetings in 2020/21 became more focused on our strategic direction moving forward. As part of that direction, small teams of General Authority staff began work on exciting new initiatives intended to strengthen our service delivery system. Examples of these key initiatives are discussed in this section of this report.

### **A NEW EMPHASIS ON VIRTUAL LEARNING**

As in-person training had been suspended due to public health restrictions during the pandemic, the GA looked for creative ways to ensure our workers continued to learn and develop their practice skills. We quickly learned that much of our existing training could be offered successfully online. Virtual training offers the unique ability to create courses that are accessible for many more attendees than is possible when training is done in-person and is more convenient for staff who work in our rural and northern offices.

In the spring of 2020, the GA created two teams to develop a strategy for enhancing our capacity to deliver training in a virtual format. This includes live webinars, training videos and online self-study training. One staff team, working with our web developers, began working on the development of an intranet site that would be accessible to staff in all GA agencies (both government offices and in our private agencies). The GA launched this new site in January 2021. Key components of the new site include:

- Information on GA agencies, GA-specific standards and policies, research, statistical information, CEO messages and fast facts on service trends.
- Information on scholarships and awards including application forms for children in care to apply.
- A training page divided into Online Training, Upcoming Training and Previous Webinars. Under Previous Webinars, staff can access links, videos and other resources provided by our trainers during their online webinars.
- The site includes a current list of Indigenous Governing Bodies (IGBs) that require notice of a significant measure under Section 12(1) of An Act Respecting Indigenous, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families. The list includes contact information for each IGB so staff can easily find where to send the notice.
- Another page features a constantly updated list of forms commonly used by staff. All forms are downloadable and many are fillable. In the winter of 2020, we began translating many of our intranet pages and forms into French.



## A NEW EMPHASIS ON VIRTUAL LEARNING CONT'D

Since the intranet's launch in January 2021, there have been between 300 and 400 page views per month, a high percentage of returning users and those who are on the site typically spend more than five minutes perusing it (quite high compared to most sites). We have had positive feedback from many staff since the site launched. It is an ever-growing resource that can be updated and expanded regularly. We see this site as owned by all of our agency staff and we welcome their ideas for ways to enhance the content.

The second GA staff team worked with a Manitoba-based company, Technologies for Learning Group (TLG) to create an e-learning portal to house all GA-specific training. TLG has extensive experience developing courses for the Organization and Staff Development branch within the provincial government.

As of March 2021, the DLT had agreed on developing an initial set of seven core courses that will become mandatory training for all new staff in a case management role. These foundational courses will be in a self-study format with many featuring interactive elements and knowledge tests. It is expected that the e-learning portal and the foundational courses will be available by the fall of 2021.

For prospective foster parents, the GA began developing a basic virtual orientation. In spring 2021, an online version of the Adoption Education Series (AES) was launched, with Winnipeg CFS as the lead. This new series has shortened the wait times for potential adoptive families wanting to take the training. Additionally, a virtual AES will allow prospective families to take the training from anywhere in the province. This is another example of a way that the unprecedented nature of the pandemic has helped the GA and its agencies use the digital environment to push forward our training mandate.

Through the new e-learning portal, the GA will track information about course participants which will include the names of employees who took training, which courses they studied and when they completed the courses. Staff will have the ability to look up completed courses, and to download completion certificates for supervisors. TLG will provide quarterly statistical reports and we will be able to produce other data, as needed. We see both of these initiatives as an exciting evolution of our online resources for staff and our training capacity at the GA! More to come in next year's annual report.



## SUPPORTED GUARDIANSHIP

Last year's annual report included an update on how the General Authority intended to complete research that would inform the development of a "made in Manitoba" supported guardianship program. A supported guardianship program provides supports for family members who become legal guardians of a child currently in the care of CFS. These types of programs are already offered across North America, in four provinces and nearly 50 states.

Supported guardianship is an innovation that will further the GA's efforts to achieve the "lifelong connections through reunification and permanence" pillar of child welfare transformation. In 2020/21, a GA staff team concluded the research, which focused on a broad interjurisdictional scan of similar programs and a compilation of evaluation studies done to assess the impact of supported guardianship programs. The research clearly demonstrates the positive lifelong health and mental health outcomes for children who grow up with family.

The GA used this information to develop a supported guardianship policy statement. This was done in consultation with our DLT and the Child and Youth Services Division. Advice and guidance was sought from the CEOs of the other three authorities throughout this process.

In January 2021, the GA implemented the provincial Single Envelope Funding Manual. Section 6.7.1 of that manual enables CFS authorities to establish a supported guardianship program. Each authority is required to create its own policy to set out the eligibility criteria, financial and other supports that will be available for prospective guardians through this program.

In February 2021, the GA Board of Directors approved a supported guardianship policy statement for the GA. The policy statement enables agencies to use SEF to create a support program to encourage family members to obtain guardianship of children in care. The policy recognizes that a permanent connection to a significant person or persons provides children with the stability and continuity they need to develop into healthy, secure adults. The agency and guardian work in partnership to ensure that the child grows up in a loving, caring and stable family environment.

With the policy approved, the GA began to develop related documents such as an agreement form and information sheets on the new program. Extensive training for agency staff will also be delivered during 2021/22. The GA expects this new program to be fully implemented by the fall of 2021. When it is in place, this will be the first supported guardianship program in Manitoba.





## PILLARS OF OUR PRACTICE:

### FAMILY FINDING & THE EVOLUTION OF THE PRACTICE MODEL

In 2020/21, the Directors' Leadership Table (DLT) engaged in discussions about the future of the General Authority service system. After a successful presentation to the GA Board of Directors on the Family Finding model, the DLT made a collective decision to sponsor two virtual Family Finding training sessions in early 2021. The goal of Family Finding is to connect each child with a family, so every child may benefit from the lifelong connections that only a family can provide.

This virtual, four-day Family Finding training was another unprecedented change from the GA's previous tradition of in-person training that was made necessary because of the COVID-19 pandemic. In fact, many participants appreciated the virtual format as it allowed those in numerous northern and rural communities to easily attend training in their communities and not have to travel to Winnipeg during the winter months.

The GA has held in-person training with Family Finding experts Elizabeth Wendel and Kevin Campbell in the past. Campbell is an internationally known youth permanency expert, founder of the U.S.-based Center for Family Finding and Youth Connectedness and developer of the Family Finding model. Wendel is a subject matter consultant for special populations projects at Aetna, (a CVS health company) and a Family Finding expert.

The two Family Finding workshops, held in February and March of 2021, provided next steps in both the integration of the strategy and tools of the Family Finding model. The training was extremely well-attended, with a total of 263 participants across GA agencies and our co-sponsoring partner, Macdonald Youth Services. Worker feedback was positive for the training sessions. Many said the sessions were helpful as a reminder of the importance of building a strong support network with and for the families they worked with, and of the need to build meaningful relationships between workers and families.

We see Family Finding as forming one of the pillars of the Practice Model. The Practice Model already includes a number of strategies for engaging with, and planning with, families. After the conclusion of the two training sessions in early 2021, and as a result of a brainstorming session hosted by CEO Jay Rodgers to determine next steps, we identified a desire for more coaching around the tools and creating opportunities to try out the new practice techniques. In consultation with the DLT in 2020/21, the GA formulated a plan on next steps to continue implementing this important approach for working with children, their families, and networks.

Family Finding continues our ongoing efforts to evolve our leading practice approaches. The model is a natural fit with our existing framework of family engagement and keeping children at the centre of our practice. Look for an update in next year's annual report.



## THE CREATION OF A DATA ANALYTICS & EVALUATION UNIT

Shortly after being appointed in January 2020, the new General Authority Board of Directors approved a number of strategic priorities for the GA, including becoming a more outcomes-driven organization. To accomplish this goal, the GA established a new data analytics and evaluation unit in September 2020. The unit is committed to continuously improving policy and practice and ensuring accountability by measuring outcomes and tracking service trends. This group is comprised of a manager specializing in data analysis, a program specialist and a policy analyst, with the intention of increasing the team's capacity over time.

The creation of this group is significant as the GA has never had this resource previously. In the last two quarters of the 2020/21 fiscal year, the group has greatly increased its capacity to analyze data from the Child and Family Services Information System (CFSIS), among other sources. The team has consulted with several individuals on data processing and indicator calculations, and has learned various new techniques to analyze data and present reports and results.

In 2020/21, in collaboration with our DLT, the GA created an internal set of measures to assess whether Single Envelope Funding (SEF) is working as intended. Over the past fiscal year, among its many accomplishments, the team developed a process for tracking and reporting on these success indicators. These measures will also help the Authority track outcomes related to the four pillars of child welfare transformation. Each of the GA outcomes will be analyzed in several ways. Team members also led and/or participated in quality assurance projects.

The unit conducted a detailed analysis of child in care trends across the GA. Using information from CFSIS, the unit also created an interactive child in care agency dashboard, which can be used to filter child in care information from one agency or several agencies depending on how the dashboard is manipulated by the user.

The GA has also created a section on our intranet site for statistics and research. This is where information from the data analytics and evaluation unit, along with "Fast Facts" on trends, were posted for all staff as soon as they were finalized.

Look for more innovative trends information from our new unit to be posted and shared in 2021/22!



## **FRENCH LANGUAGE SERVICES (FLS)**

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Over the past year, the General Authority has made great strides in its efforts regarding French Language Services (FLS).

The most significant development was the hiring of a part-time, fully bilingual person as FLS co-ordinator for the Authority in June 2020. This is the first time in the GA's history we have had a dedicated FLS co-ordinator. Our new co-ordinator, Claudette Dorge, ushered in a renewed direction for the FLS plan at the Authority and across our agencies, and a substantial increase in GA documents and forms that have been translated into French. Immediately after starting her role, our co-ordinator began work on an updated GA FLS strategic plan for 2021-2023.

As set out in the provincial policy regarding FLS, the GA continues to ensure the ability to offer services to the public in both official languages.

Our concerted efforts to achieve this goal included completion of the multi-year FLS plan (2021-2023) approved by the GA Board of Directors in February and by the Santé en français Managerial Social Services Round Table in April. The board has also identified an FLS champion, Lizanne Lachance.

We anticipate the approval of the strategic plan by the Santé en français Board of Directors, the Families Minister and the Minister Responsible for FLS later in 2021. Following the approval of the above-named levels of government, the FLS strategic plan will be available on the GA intranet in both French and English.

### **HIGHLIGHTS OF THE FLS PLAN:**

- Updating the GA's policy on FLS to clarify the expectations for all agencies regarding the orientation, training, delivery, monitoring and reporting regarding FLS.
- Continuing to translate sections of the Authority's staff intranet, and public-facing website, into French.
- Developing an online course regarding the Active Offer (the greeting in French) and a script for basic phrases in French to facilitate reception and other services in that language. This will be part of a broader training package that also includes information on the Francophone Community Enhancement and Support Act and the Province of Manitoba's FLS Statement of Policy.
- Creating a resource list of staff who are able to speak French to facilitate the follow-up required when services in French are requested.
- Developing terms of reference for the Authority's FLS committee.
- Identifying an agency level FLS co-ordinator.





## FRENCH LANGUAGE SERVICES (FLS) CONT'D

As noted above, we are pleased to report that we have made notable progress on translation of many of our internet and intranet pages into French over the past year. Until 2020/21, no text on our public website was available in French. We have made our Active Offer services more prominent on our public website (<https://generalauthority.ca>) and translated Active Offer information into French as well.

We have also translated several sections of our GA public website into French and much of our new GA intranet site has sections which are available in both English and French. Also in 2020/21, all forms posted on our intranet were translated so they were available in both French and English. As part of the multi-year plan, the GA has also committed to posting all future forms in both French and English.

Regarding requests from the public, we can report that in the last year, the GA has not received any complaints regarding the provision of French Language Services.

The GA would like to express its sincere appreciation for the support provided by Santé en français, the Department of Families FLS co-ordinator and the Francophone Affairs Secretariat in 2020/21.

## SERVICES EN LANGUE FRANÇAISE (SLF)

Au cours de la dernière année, la Régie générale a fait de grands progrès à l'égard des services en langue française (SLF).

La plus grande nouveauté a été le recrutement à temps partiel d'une personne entièrement bilingue comme coordonnatrice des SLF de la Régie, en juin 2020. C'est la première fois dans l'histoire de la Régie que nous disposons d'une coordonnatrice des SLF dédiée.

Notre nouvelle coordonnatrice, Claudette Dorge, a contribué à une réorientation du plan des SLF à l'échelle de la Régie et dans tous ses offices, et à l'augmentation considérable de la traduction en français des documents et formulaires de la Régie. Tout de suite après son entrée en fonctions, elle a travaillé à la mise à jour du plan stratégique des SLF de la Régie pour 2021-2023.

Comme le prévoit la politique provinciale en matière de SLF, la Régie continue de faire en sorte d'avoir la capacité d'offrir des services au public dans les deux langues officielles.



## SERVICES EN LANGUE FRANÇAISE (SLF) (SUITE)

Nos efforts concertés à l'égard de cet objectif ont notamment consisté à terminer le plan pluriannuel des SLF (2021-2023) qui a été approuvé en février par le conseil d'administration de la Régie et en avril par la Table des gestionnaires de Santé en français en matière de services sociaux. Le conseil a également trouvé une défenseure des SLF en la personne de Lizanne Lachance.

Nous nous attendons à ce que le conseil d'administration de Santé en français, la ministre des Familles et ministre responsable des Affaires francophones approuvent le plan stratégique plus tard cette année. Après son approbation par les paliers de gouvernement mentionnés précédemment, le plan stratégique des SLF sera affiché en français et en anglais sur le site intranet de la Régie générale.

### POINTS SAILLANTS DU PLAN DES SLF :

- Mettre à jour la politique des SLF de la Régie pour préciser ce qui est attendu de tous les offices en ce qui concerne l'orientation, la formation, la prestation, la surveillance et la production de rapports dans le domaine des SLF.
- Continuer la traduction en français de sections du site intranet et du site Web de la Régie.
- Élaborer un cours en ligne sur l'offre active (salutations en français) et rédiger un texte comportant des phrases toutes simples en français pour faciliter l'accueil et d'autres services dans cette langue. Cela fera partie d'une formation plus vaste consacrée notamment à la Loi sur l'appui à l'épanouissement de la francophonie manitobaine et à la politique de la province du Manitoba sur les services en français.
- Créer une liste des membres du personnel qui sont capables de parler français pour faciliter le suivi nécessaire en cas de demande de services en français.
- Établir le mandat du comité des SLF de la Régie.
- Trouver un coordonnateur ou une coordonnatrice des SLF à l'échelle des offices.

Comme il est mentionné précédemment, nous avons le plaisir d'annoncer qu'au cours de la dernière année, nous avons fait des progrès notables en ce qui concerne la traduction en français de nombreuses pages de nos sites Internet et intranet. Jusqu'en 2020-2021, aucun texte ne figurait en français sur notre site Web. Nous avons mis davantage en évidence nos services d'offre active sur notre site Web (<https://generalauthority.ca>) et avons également traduit en français l'information sur l'offre active.



## SERVICES EN LANGUE FRANÇAISE (SLF) (SUITE)

Nous avons aussi traduit en français plusieurs sections de notre site Web et une grande partie de notre nouveau site intranet comporte des sections dans les deux langues officielles. De même, en 2020-2021, tous les formulaires affichés sur notre site intranet ont été traduits pour qu'ils soient disponibles à la fois en français et en anglais. Dans le cadre du plan pluriannuel, la Régie générale s'est également engagée à afficher tous les futurs formulaires en français et en anglais.

En ce qui concerne les demandes du public, nous pouvons signaler qu'au cours de la dernière année, la Régie générale n'a reçu aucune plainte au sujet de l'offre de SLF.

La Régie générale tient à souligner combien elle apprécie le soutien qu'elle a obtenu de Santé en français, du coordonnateur des SLF du ministère des Familles et du Secrétariat aux affaires francophones en 2020-2021.







## AGREEMENTS WITH YOUNG ADULTS

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The GA and its agencies continued to support youth and young adults during the pandemic through Agreements with Young Adults (AYAs). AYAs are offered to permanent wards prior to their 18th birthday to provide additional supports during their transition to adulthood and independence, up to the age of 21.

This past year has been particularly challenging for young adults transitioning to adulthood and independence in the midst of a global pandemic. COVID-19 has impacted every aspect of daily living, adding another layer to the challenges and complexities faced by young people.

Under the Emergency Measures Act, the Manitoba government was able to implement a policy change related to AYAs which ensured that young people would continue to be supported throughout the pandemic. This change allowed supports to be provided for 18-year-olds of any legal status and the ability to extend benefits for young adults beyond the age of 21.

This was a major policy shift which allowed agencies, while in this emergency situation, to support young adults who previously would have aged out of care. As of March 31, 2021, young adults were continuing to receive this support due to the continuation of the pandemic.

During 2020/21, GA agencies supported 261 young adults through these agreements. Of these, 34 young persons were able to enter into an AYA because of the policy change announced by the Manitoba government. This has ensured that youth and young adults have additional assistance through the pandemic and will provide them with adequate support networks, resources, and skills in the post-pandemic era.





## EXPECTANT PARENT SERVICES (EPS)

On July 1, 2020, all four CFS authorities in Manitoba officially ended the practice of issuing birth alerts.

Provincial standards were updated to focus on providing voluntary prevention services to expectant parents during pregnancy while addressing potential safety concerns prior to the birth of a baby. The new standards emphasize the need to establish relationships with expectant parents and partnerships with community service providers. Workers also provide a list of programs and services available to expectant parents in their community, such as a referral to Public Health.

The General Authority's major contribution, in consultation with DLT, was developing leading practice guidelines for Expectant Parent Services (EPS) along with a checklist as a companion document to the new standards. The guidelines include information on when to advise services, next steps if parents do not wish to receive services and what happens after the baby is born in terms of continued assessments. What is significant about these new standards and guidelines is that they feature a strength-based, family centred approach with expectant parents.

### EPS SUCCESS STORY

When CFS of Western Manitoba began working with Jenna\*, she was homeless and using methamphetamine and other drugs to cope with her situation. She was also four months pregnant. Throughout Jenna's pregnancy, she engaged with EPS, but was wary of working with CFS, due to her own experiences as a child. By working with EPS and making a commitment to parent her baby, Jenna was able to secure housing, attend prenatal classes and engage with her network. Jenna worked hard to complete probation requirements, ensure she had family to support both herself and her partner in parenting, and take part in Families First programs. She celebrated six months of sobriety before having a healthy baby. CFS of Western Manitoba worked alongside Jenna to have a plan, which allowed her to parent her baby upon discharge from the hospital. Jenna is doing so well, there are no safety concerns reported at this time. It is unknown what Jenna's experience would have been without this early supportive intervention. ~ From CFS of Western Manitoba. (\*Names have been changed)

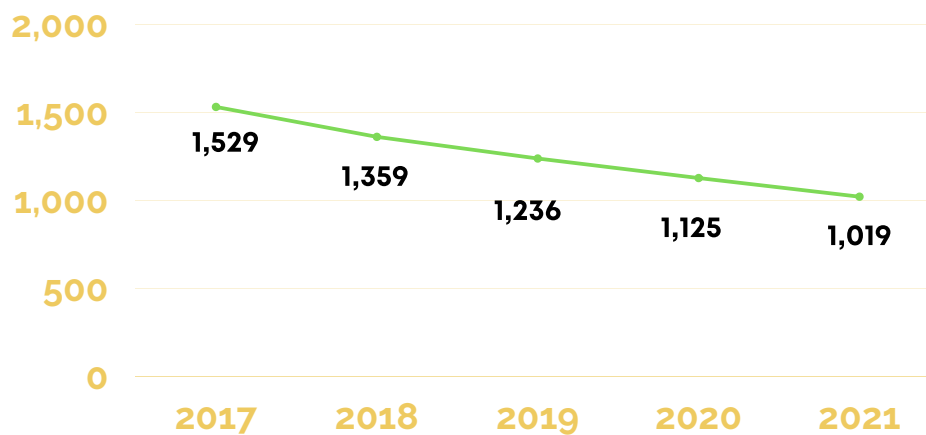
## SECTION 3

### SERVICE TRENDS 2020/21

The following charts show how the General Authority has continued its transformation goals through reducing the number of children in care and providing supports to families.

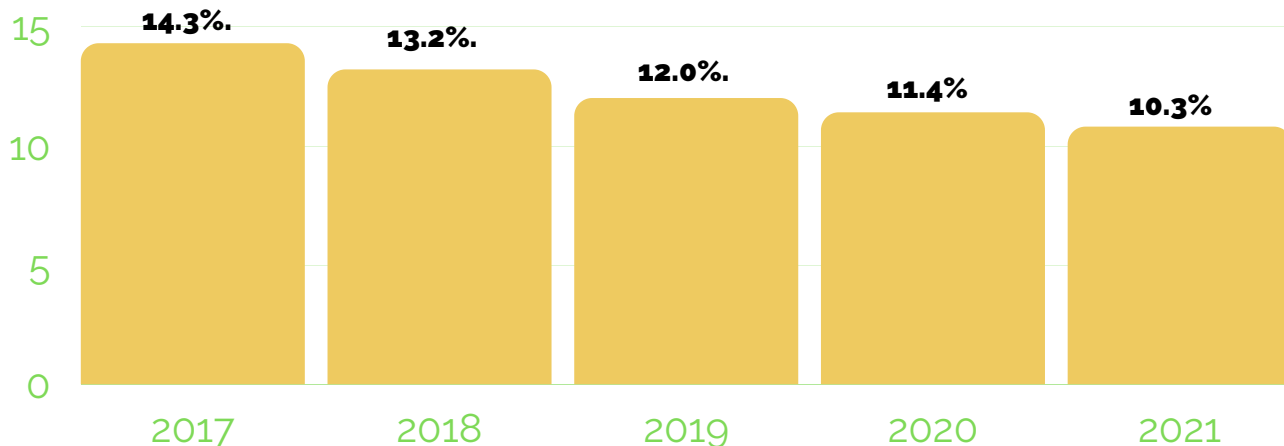
The first chart shows that the total number of children in care as of March 31, 2017 to March 31, 2021 decreased each year from 1,529 in 2017 to 1,019 in 2021. This represents a 33.3 per cent reduction in children in care over four years, representing an average annual decrease of 8.3 per cent. All of the GA agencies saw a decrease in the number of children in care from March 31, 2017, to March 31, 2021.

Number of children in care as of March 31, 2021



Another measure of tracking child in care trends is to look at the percentage of all children in care who are with a GA agency. The following table shows that this percentage also has been decreasing in each of the last four years. In 2017, over 14 per cent of all children in care in Manitoba were with a GA agency. As of March 31, 2021, fewer than 11 per cent of children (10.3%) in care were with a GA agency.

Percentage of all children in care with GA agencies



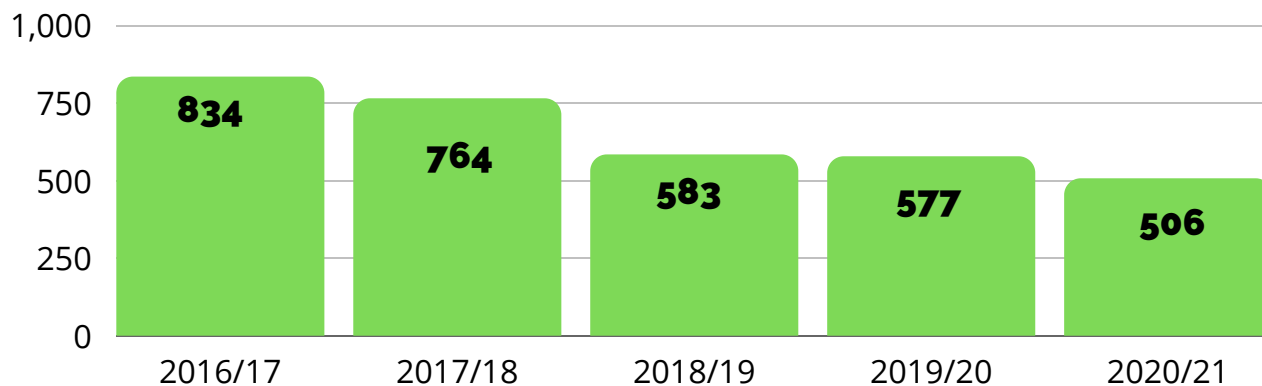


## SECTION 3

### SERVICE TRENDS 2020/21

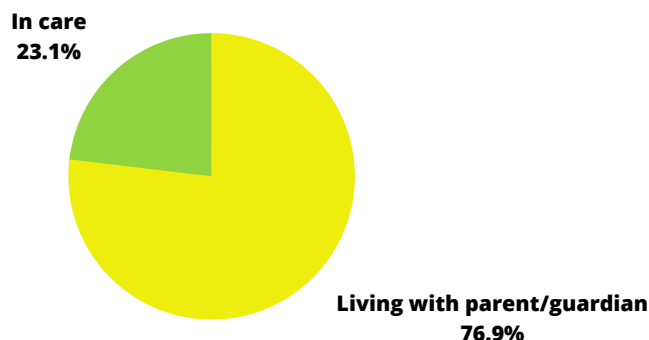
The number of children who entered care in the past five fiscal years has also been tracked. The table below shows that the number of children apprehended has decreased in the past four years. In 2020/21, GA agencies needed to apprehend 328 fewer children when compared to 2016/17. This represents a 39 per cent reduction in the number of apprehensions when comparing 2020/21 with 2016/17.

#### Apprehensions



The GA continues to show positive trends in terms of early interventions with families where an agency worker engages with a parent or guardian to prevent children from coming into care. The chart below shows that as of March 31, 2021, nearly 77 per cent of all children being served by a GA agency are living with their parent or guardian. Only 23 per cent of children receiving services are in care. Our interventions with parents and guardians are working.

#### Children Receiving Services - In care vs. living at home with parent/guardian



When we look at the families receiving intervention services in 2019/20 and where all children were living at home, 92 per cent of families did not have any of their children in care 12 months later. This demonstrates that engaging with families early and providing supports helps prevent children from coming into care.



## SECTION 4: SCHOLARSHIPS & AWARDS

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The General Authority is proud to support children and young people by managing numerous scholarships and grants to help enrich their lives through academic assistance, sports and cultural funding, as well as helping young people prior to their transition to young adulthood. Despite the challenges of the COVID-19 restrictions over the past year, we continued to assist children and youth throughout the pandemic by providing numerous grants and scholarships.

The GA partners with the Children's Aid Foundation of Canada (CAF), which provides funding for programming and awards for children and youth across Canada. In collaboration with the CAF, the GA assists children and youth receiving services from agencies with funds. More information is available on the CAF website at [www.cafdn.org](http://www.cafdn.org). The following are the scholarships and funds granted by the GA over 2020/21:

### **TED AND LORETTA ROGERS COMFORT CARE TRANSITION PROGRAM**

This program was created to provide children coming into care with backpacks. Additional funding is also available for agencies to personalize the backpacks for children as needed. This past year, due to COVID-19, there were some changes to the program. In late spring 2020, agencies were given a one-time emergency response grant to provide funding for urgent needs for children and families. A total of 2,500 comfort kits were also sent out to agencies in the fall of 2020, including to our GA agencies, containing teddy bears, blankets and other items.

**2020/21 amount disbursed: \$15,988.00**

### **IGNITE THE SPARK**

The Ignite the Spark fund, the newest fund offered by the CAF, is intended to provide enrichment opportunities for vulnerable children and youth. Specifically, the fund helps pay for at-risk children and youth to sign up for sports and athletics, recreation, arts and cultural programs they would not otherwise have the opportunity to explore. The philosophy of the fund supports the idea that being good at something can be the spark to build a child's self-confidence and help build a brighter future.

**2020/21 amount disbursed: \$10,308.50**

### **CIBC MIRACLE FUND**

This grant helps children and youth exploring enrichment activities to enhance their physical, mental, social and developmental well-being. Funds can be accessed for activities including cultural/music lessons, camps, school trips or sports and recreation activities.

**2020/21 amount disbursed: \$11,675.95**



## SCHOLARSHIPS & AWARDS CONT'D

### SCOTIA CAPITAL FUND

We would like to thank Scotia Capital fund for their generous support to GA children and youth. After a long-lasting relationship with Scotia Capital, they have ended their funding relationship with CAF, and we thank them for the many children and youth who received assistance through their programs created to help at-risk children and youth achieve academic success. Scotia Capital made awards available for students graduating from Grades 8, 9 and 12 along with Stay in School Awards for children who made significant strides over the academic year. Additionally, the Leap to Learning fund provided monies for tutors for children in care of or receiving services from CFS agencies to help them achieve academic goals.

**2020/21 amount disbursed: \$23,902.00**

### VISION CATCHER'S FUND

Provided by the Department of Families, this fund helps youth in care ages 16-21 develop their academic strengths and career goals. Monies are available to either youth in care or those on Agreements with Young Adults (AYAs) to access post-secondary education, assistance with job seeking, training or apprenticeship programs, along with enrichment and cultural activities.

**2020/21 amount disbursed: \$11,703.71**

The GA would like to thank the CAF for their tremendous generosity in helping children and youth in our agencies achieve their goals.

I have just received the CIBC Miracle Fund cheque for a new mountain bike. I want to thank all the donators and participating people who have made this fund possible. I will allocate this fund into my savings, and once I can afford a mountain bike I will provide the receipt. Thank you CFS general authority for giving me a push of support as always, I am forever grateful for your generosity and dedication for the upbringing of youth in Manitoba.







## KIM THOMAS AWARD



Each year, the Kim Thomas Award is presented to a community member or CFS staff member who works diligently within the newcomer and refugee community, in the area of community engagement and creating connections with CFS. The award is named after former General Authority practice specialist Kim Thomas, who worked on the New Canadian Awareness and Education Initiative. The initiative was created to build mutual relationships with newcomer communities, minimize unnecessary contacts between CFS and newcomer communities, as well as increasing mutual understanding and shared strategies.

Kedeen Cummings, who is currently a supervisor at Child and Family All Nations Coordinated Response Network (ANCR), is this year's winner. ANCR provides front-end intake services in the Winnipeg region, and has been a partner with Winnipeg CFS, seeking best practice services for newcomers and refugees.

Cummings began working at ANCR as a student on a placement with the GA in 2014/15 while completing her master of social work degree. She was assigned to the New Canadian Initiative as one of her first roles, and worked closely with Thomas at the time. Her nominator, Nanette McKay, ANCR's director of human resources, noted in her nomination that "Cummings was immediately a valuable asset to the work. Her capacity for intercultural communication was brilliant, and her positivity and energy were boundless."

In mid-2015, Cummings was hired at ANCR as an intake assessment worker. While the role wasn't specific to newcomer and refugee communities, Cummings excelled in every aspect of service, gaining the respect of colleagues and supervisors, as well as families and communities served. While in her front-line role, Cummings continued to work actively with the New Canadian Prevention Initiative, maintaining relationships with newcomer communities and the CFS system, developing resources, and creating a shared agenda for change. She did most of this work as a volunteer while maintaining her general responsibilities.

The structure of the organization changed during this time, becoming an independent organization called the Coalition of Manitoba Cultural Communities for Families, with a broadened agenda that includes health, education and a variety of interests, along with child welfare. Cummings continues to have active engagement with this organization, serving various roles including vice-chairperson.

In 2020, Cummings was promoted to supervisor at ANCR's All Nations Family Resource Centre. Her nominator called her "a shining example of the adage, 'When service is better for newcomer communities, service is better for all communities.'"



**Family can extend far beyond one household.**

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**General Child  
and Family Services  
Authority**