



The General Child
and Family Services
Authority

Annual Report

FIFTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

April 1, 2007
to March 31, 2008

October 2, 2008

Norwood Hotel
112 Marion Street
Winnipeg, MB

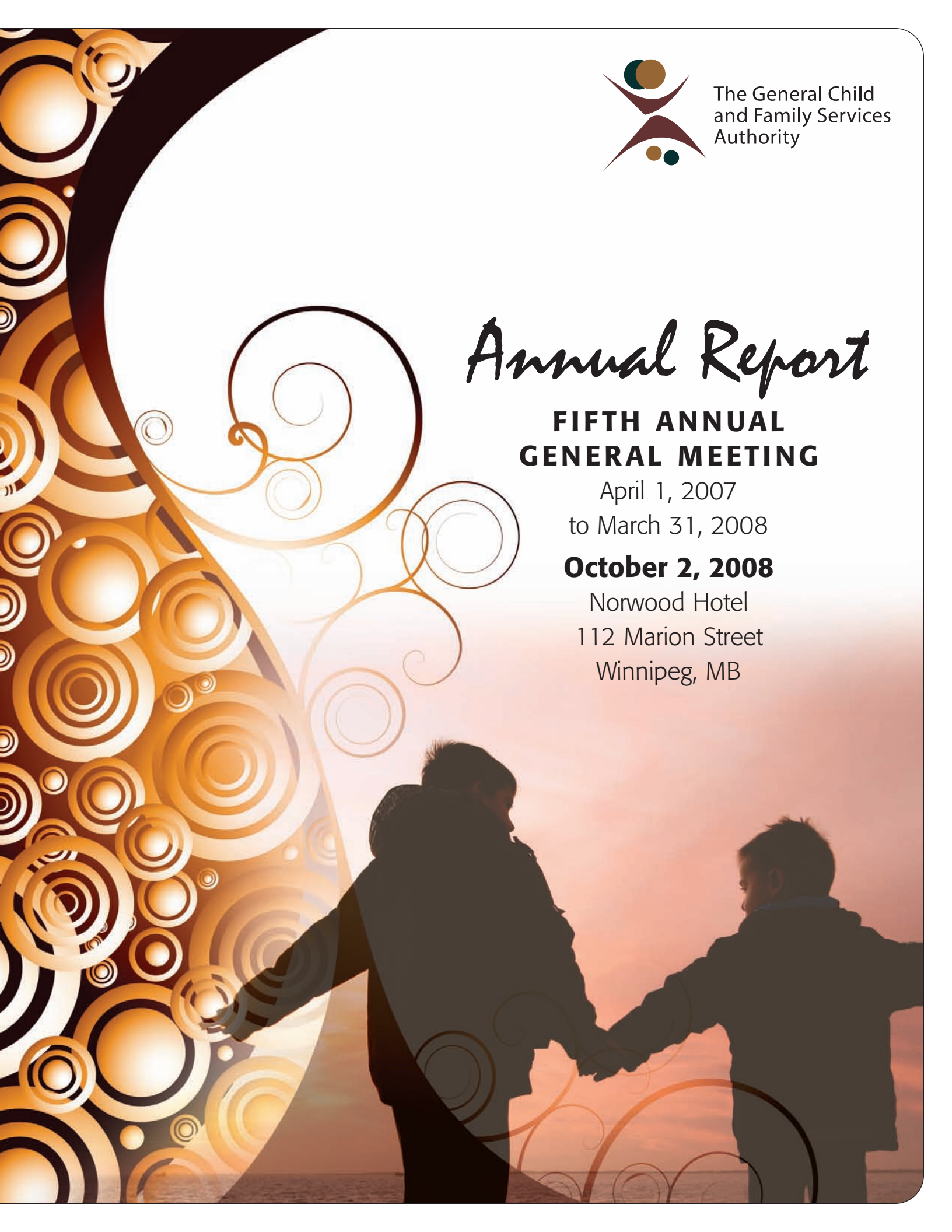


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i. Message from the Chair



In my message last year, I reported on the challenges that are somewhat unique to the General Child and Family Service Authority's Board of Directors given the mixed model of service delivery that includes private agencies and government offices. I am pleased to report that our Board has made significant progress this year in addressing some of these complex challenges.

During this year, through a series of collaborative and productive discussions with the Department of Family Services and Housing, the Authority has been successful in clarifying the scope of our responsibilities as defined under *The Child and Family Services Authorities Act*.

Most notably, we have successfully established a new relationship with the Department for meeting our Human Resource needs. We have also had encouraging conversations with the Department about expanding our funding role further for child and family services delivered through government offices. We appreciate their leadership and support.

At the Board level, this has been a very busy year as we continue to adjust and adapt to meet our changing needs and responsibilities. Our Executive and Finance Committees met regularly throughout the year.

I am reminded that this is my fifth year as Chair of the Board of Directors. I am very pleased to provide a report on our Board's activities and initiatives for the 2007/08 year. I can't remember a year when there has been so much activity, energy and excitement at our Authority.

We have a new CEO, Jay Rodgers. Jay has been with us since May of 2007 and I'm sure that he has made himself known to you. I don't have to tell you that he brings with him a new sense of commitment and energy and a

new enthusiasm for the ongoing development of family and children services. We welcome his expertise.

Working with our Chief Executive Officer, the Executive Committee was instrumental in setting the General Authority's strategic priorities and related deliverables for this and the next fiscal year. In addition to their regular financial reporting, the Finance Committee developed a comprehensive and detailed response to the findings contained in the report on the Child and Family Services Division from the Office of the Auditor General. The Finance Committee continues to track our Authority's progress in responding to the recommendations in that report.

We also created a new Personnel Committee to oversee the development of policies and procedures for the General Authority's expanded role in human resources. This is work that will also continue into next year.

In collaboration with our partners, the General Authority continued to play a key role in implementing the Changes For Children Initiatives announced by the Department of Family Services and Housing in 2006. Distribution of workload relief funding, new resources for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) programming, the work of our resource development team to reduce reliance on hotels, enhancements to make the information system more user friendly for front line staff, new training and increased support for age of majority planning are only a few of the important service initiatives underway during 2007/08.

As a Board, we are particularly proud of our Youth Engagement Strategy which was launched in the fall of 2007. This strategy is very unique in that it is for youth led by youth. Our Authority and agencies have been truly inspired by the work of the two young

people leading this strategy.

The Board of Directors also endorsed a new framework for conducting Quality Assurance reviews with our agencies. Built on the principles of collaboration and continuous learning, this new approach will link standards compliance with outcomes and performance measures in child welfare. This is a critical part of being accountable to the children, youth and families that we serve. I look forward to providing a progress report on this important initiative in the 2008/09 Annual Report.

In closing, I would like to extend my personal gratitude to all of my fellow Board members for their hard work and dedication to the vision and mission of the General Child and Family Services Authority. I would also like to extend our sincere appreciation to the management and staff of the General Authority for their enthusiasm, commitment and tireless work to improve the lives of our children, youth and families. On behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to express our appreciation to our former CFO Dale Robinson for his contribution to the General Authority.

As a Board of Directors, we are extremely proud of the 2007/08 achievements of the General Authority and look forward to the future with renewed optimism.

Respectfully submitted,

Jean Ayre

Chair, Board of Directors



ii. Finance Committee Report

On behalf of our Treasurer, Doreen Draffin, I am pleased to provide the report from the Finance Committee for the 2007/08 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, 2008 present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Authority. The results of its operation and cash flow have been prepared in accordance with Canadian generally accepted accounting principles. The Authority has a positive cash flow; there is a cumulative surplus and current year operating 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. This fund also supports new initiatives and one time expenditures. In 2007/08 additional funds were received in support of the following activities or special initiatives:

- age of majority initiatives;
- differential response development and planning;
- standards consultation;
- funds to hire an FASD Specialist;

- time limited resources in support of communication and human resource activities.

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 funding to support the expansion 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 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.

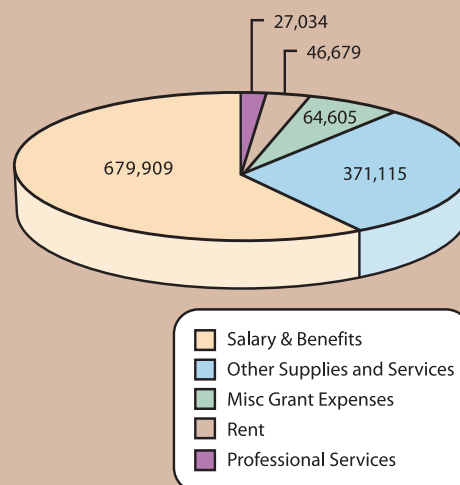
Guy Jourdain

Member of the Finance Committee

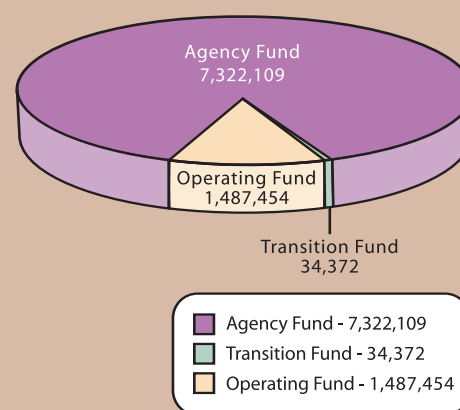
FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

For the year ended March 31, 2008

Summary of Expenses - Operating Fund



Fund Revenue 2007/2009



iii. 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

Helen Wang (Resigned)

Ellen Fleishman

Beth Beaupre

Kathy Levine

General Authority Staff

During 2007/08 the General Authority welcomed a new Chief Executive Officer, Senior Manager, Training Coordinator and an FASD Specialist. The following are the General Authority Staff during the 2007/08 year:

Jay Rodgers, A/Chief Executive Officer

Dale Robinson,
Chief Financial Officer (Retired)

John Borgfjord, A/Chief Financial Officer

Christy Holnbeck, Senior Manager

Anne Pratt, Senior Administrative Assistant

Pat Wawyn,
Program Specialist - Community Inquiry

Diva Faria,
Program Specialist - Protection
and Family Services

Jeanette Grennier,
Program Specialist - Alternative Care

Kerri Anderson,
Administrative Support to the Resource
Development Team

Collette Macpherson,
Resource Development Team

Laura Morton, Resource Development Team

Karen Smith, Resource Development Team

Pamela Zorn, Training Coordinator

iv. *The General Child and Family Services Authority* *2007/08 Activities and Highlights*

Under *The Child and Family Services Authorities Act*, there was a significant shift of powers from the Director of Child Welfare to each of the four new authorities. With the new Act in place, most powers directly related to the operation of child and family services agencies were transferred from the Director of Child Welfare to the four authorities. The authorities now have the exclusive legislative authority to mandate, fund and oversee the services provided by child and family services agencies throughout the province.

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 (the General Authority) during the 2007/08 year.

Creating a "Best Practices Vision"

In May 2007, the General Authority hosted a "visioning" session with agency Directors. This produced an operational plan with specific goals and action steps that, when fully implemented, will further the operationalization of the twelve best practice principles endorsed by Standing Committee and adopted to guide the development of new initiatives under *Changes For Children*. This will ensure that the Authority's plans are directly consistent with the strategic direction set by the Department of Family Services and Housing.

Expanded Role for 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 ongoing 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. Also, it is this committee that is responsible for planning the remaining AJI-CWI priorities (new legislation, reviewing the residential care system, and building a new funding model).

Two developments occurred in 2007/08 that expanded the role of Standing Committee and created an enhanced capacity for Standing Committee to complete its work. In 2006, an implementation team was established to develop plans for implementing the *Changes for Children* initiatives. This team was led by two external co-chairs and had the chief executive officers from each child and family services authority as members. The co-chairs were to lead the implementation process until December 2007. In the fall of 2007, the co-chairs concluded their work and Standing Committee became responsible for the *Changes for Children* initiatives and monitoring the 289 recommendations from the external reviews. This greatly increased the work and expanded the role of Standing Committee consistent with the continued devolution of responsibilities recommended in the external reviews.

Also in 2007/08, a proposal was finalized to create a new office specifically devoted to supporting the work assigned to the Standing Committee. This was in response to the "Strengthening Our Commitment" external review report which noted that no staff resources were specifically dedicated to completing the substantial work that had become the responsibility of Standing Committee. The proposal approved by Standing Committee established the scope of responsibility for the new staff office, confirmed the staffing complement, set budget allocations and defined reporting relationships. At the end of the fiscal year Standing Committee was in the process of hiring staff for the new office.



Completed Differential Response Planning

The single largest financial commitment in the *Changes for Children* agenda is for creating a differential response capacity in the child and family services system. Differential response models create a new capacity that assists the child welfare system to provide support services where a child protection investigation is not warranted but families are struggling with challenges that, if left unaddressed, will likely result in children being at risk in the future.

These models are prevention focused in that the primary intent is to intervene early in a supportive manner so that the more intrusive and adversarial child protection response may not be required.

Last fiscal year, the General Authority completed the first phase of planning for differential response by providing informational and educational seminars to all of its agencies. In 2007/08, the Authority initiated the next phase which involved the development of specific plans to implement differential response pilot projects in each General Authority agency. The development of these plans was assisted by the Authority's Differential Response Resource Team led by Dr. Brad McKenzie from the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Manitoba. Each agency was asked to submit a proposal for a differential response pilot project. These proposals were received in November 2007 and reviewed by the General Authority Director's Common Table (DCT). At the conclusion of this process, the DCT agreed by consensus to support three types of differential response projects: These include:

- Family enhancement projects at five sites to offer families an alternative service path through comprehensive strengths based assessment and supports.
- The creation of a new resource centre at a designated intake agency (Child and Family Services of Central Manitoba).
- Three capacity building projects to explore the potential for a different and earlier service response for new Canadians and families exposed to domestic violence.

The funding required for these nine differential response projects is within the funding allocation for the General Authority determined at Standing Committee. Under the Authority's plan, each agency would host at least one differential response pilot project.

New Tools for Conducting Risk Assessments

With the assistance of Dr. Eric Sigurdson and Dr. McKenzie, the General Authority initiated and led a cross-authority team which researched the best practice approaches for assessing the potential risk of child maltreatment. From January to March 2008, the team completed a literature review and conducted a detailed examination of risk assessment tools used in international jurisdictions where differential response has been implemented. Using a standardized rating criteria, the team identified those tools which are most user friendly, most suitable for the Manitoba system and based on the evidence, have the highest predictive validity. The tool currently being used in Ontario was rated as the strongest risk assessment currently available. The team then revised elements of the tool to be more reflective of the Manitoba system. With this work completed, a similar approach will be used in 2008/09 to select a new tool for conducting strengths based assessments with families. Both the new risk assessment and strengths based assessment tools will be tested in the Authority's differential response pilot sites in 2008/09.

Workload Relief Results

In 2006/07, the authorities reached agreement to allocate the \$5.0 million that was available through Changes for

Children for workload relief. Hiring of new staff began in 2006/07 and continued into 2007/08. In total General Authority agencies have now hired 34 new front line staff (social workers, supervisors and case assistants) as part of the workload relief initiative.

A New Framework for Quality Assurance

One of the Authority's strategic priorities for 2007/08 was the development of a new framework for conducting quality assurance reviews with agencies. The development of this framework included an extensive literature review, consultation with other jurisdictions and advice from academics who are recognized experts in this field. In 2007/08, with the assistance of a graduate student from the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Manitoba, the Authority developed a draft framework that includes the following three core elements:

- measures of compliance with case management and program standards;
- an assessment of performance in relation to standardized outcome measures; and
- an annual assessment of outcomes achievement in comparison to generally accepted performance measures for child welfare.

This new approach, to be implemented in 2008/09 will complement the Authority's existing quality assurance activities. The new framework will be implemented in a phased approach from which the General Authority will develop a plan for cyclical quality assurance reviews and regular reporting on performance.

Developing a Staff Recruitment and Retention Strategy for Child Welfare

In the latter part of 2007/08, the Manitoba Government and Employees Union (MGEU) and Standing Committee agreed to work collaboratively to develop a formal recruitment and retention strategy for child welfare workers. To this end, in February 2008 the MGEU hosted a two day workshop attended by representatives from the union and all four authorities. Over the two days, participants shared ideas, heard about similar strategies with the nurses' workforce in Manitoba and explored various options and actions to promote child welfare as a career choice. The results of this workshop will be summarized in a written report and presentation that will be made available to each authority. The four authorities will then develop a formal recruitment and retention strategy based on the experiences and needs of their own unique workforce. Standing Committee will then consider each plan and identify priorities and partnership opportunities.

Involving Staff in the Development of New Standards

Acting on recommendations in the external reviews that emphasized the importance of consulting with front line staff, in November 2007 Standing Committee approved a new protocol for the development of foundational standards. This protocol stipulates that no new foundational standards will be approved unless consultation with front line staff has occurred. Further, the protocol sets out a collaborative cross-authority process

for prioritizing those service areas requiring new or revised standards.

In early 2008 the General Authority designed a consultation process for staff to review a package of new draft standards. This process included focus groups with front line staff and written submissions from agencies to ensure as broad a participatory approach as possible. All feedback was tabled and discussed with a cross-authority committee. Recommendations for revisions or additions were then forwarded to Standing Committee. The General Authority is preparing a summary report that will show the changes to standards that were made as a result of the consultation process. This report will be made available to all staff.

Overall, the feedback on the consultation process from staff of General Authority agencies has been quite positive. Staff expressed a genuine appreciation for being involved and emphasized that continued support from the front line is critical to the success of the new protocol.

A more user friendly Child and Family Services Information System

In 2007/08, Standing Committee agreed to a series of new enhancements to the Child and Family Services Information System (CFSIS) and the Intake Module. Suggestions for improvements came from front line workers and supervisors. Standing Committee prioritized these based on how each suggestion would improve child safety assessments, reduce administrative workload for front line staff, strengthen ease of use

and expand the availability of case information. These enhancements to the information system were introduced at various release dates throughout 2007/08.

Also during 2007/08, under the direction of Standing Committee, work continued on a major project to replace or upgrade CFIS so that Manitoba will have a state of the art information system for child welfare. An external firm (IBM) was selected to complete this project with a report due in August 2008.

New Opportunities for Youth in Care Reaching the Age of Majority

In 2007/08, each Authority was provided with resources through Changes for Children to support youth in care reaching the age of majority. Funding was intended to support the development of a youth engagement and mentoring strategy as well as 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.

Late in 2007/08, the General Authority finalized eligibility criteria for the Vision Catchers Fund. 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. Examples include specialized study in high school, accessing post-secondary education, technical and sports training and apprenticeship programs. This fund provides an opportunity to support activities not typically funded by the system.

The General Authority was pleased to provide an award to Ms. Giselle Fillion who was nominated by Child and Family Services of Central Manitoba.

Introducing a Staff Engagement Strategy

In 2007, the Chief Executive Officers of the four child and family services authorities signed a protocol committing each Authority to establish a process for youth and staff engagement. Within the General Authority, it was agreed at the Directors Common Table (DCT) that a staff engagement standard should be established to set out minimum expectations for each agency. The purpose of this standard is to ensure that front line child and family services workers, supervisors and administrative staff have the opportunity 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.

In anticipation of the standard coming into effect, a number of General Authority agencies established engagement committees. Also, throughout 2007/08 the Acting Chief Executive Officer of the General Authority met with front line staff in each agency. As part of the broader staff engagement strategy, in August 2007 a new Child Welfare Staff Representative Consultation Committee was created in partnership with the Manitoba Government and Employees Union (MGEU). This Committee was created to enhance communication and to create an opportunity for staff representatives to discuss service issues and initiatives underway or being planned.

Engaging With Our Youth

In November 2007, the General Authority established a youth engagement team

comprised of two former youth in care. Terms of reference for the first stage of the team's work were developed in consultation with V O I C E S , Manitoba's Youth in Care Network. To launch this initiative, the Y o u t h Engagement Strategy Team (or YES Team) developed a poster and pamphlet to be distributed to current youth in care, child welfare agencies, collateral service providers and advocacy groups. The poster and pamphlet were intended to provide basic information about the YES Team's work and to encourage current and former youth in care to participate. A toll free telephone line was put in place exclusively for current and former youth in care to confidentially contact the YES Team.

From November 2007 to March 2008, the Youth Engagement Strategy Team interviewed former and current youth in care, conducted focus groups with former and current youth in care, met with management and staff of every General Authority child welfare agency in the province and interviewed the Manitoba Ombudsman and Children's Advocate. The YES Team has adopted an Appreciative Inquiry approach to gather their information. The YES Team will be submitting a report in the fall of 2008. It is expected that the report will include recommendations for:

- Creating ongoing opportunities for current and former youth in care



to share their experiences and perspectives about the services they received while in care.

- Establishing formalized structures for current and former youth in care to provide advice on new program and policy initiatives in child welfare.
- Improving communication with youth in care about their rights and advocacy programs available.
- Developing specific strategies to invite every youth transitioning from care due to age to comment on both their positive and negative experiences.
- Putting into place new approaches to mentor and support youth transitioning out of care due to age.

The General Authority will provide a progress report on this important initiative in the 2008/09 Annual Report.



The General Child and Family Services Authority

Building Expert Capacity for Assisting Families Affected by FASD

In April 2007 the province announced its commitment to invest in a Provincial Coordinated Strategy to enhance prevention, support and diagnostic services for individuals and families affected by Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). As part of this strategy, each Authority was provided with funding to hire a new FASD Specialist.

The General Authority hired our FASD Specialist in March 2007. Immediate priorities are to distribute information on FASD to staff of General Authority agencies, foster parents and other caregivers; meet with the Joint Training Unit to begin implementing a training plan specific to FASD for agencies; and, meet with Healthy Child Manitoba to begin implementing the remaining elements of the FASD Provincial Coordinated Strategy.

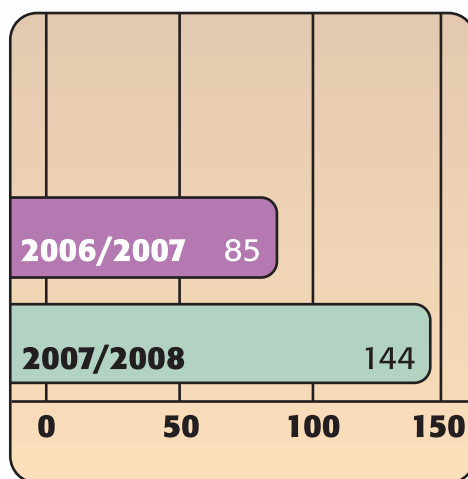
Resource Development

In November 2006, Standing Committee announced its plans to reduce and eventually eliminate the use of hotels for children requiring emergency placement. Each authority hired a team of resource development specialists to work specifically on the hotel reduction strategy. By July 31, 2007 the authorities were able to report that alternative placements had been located for all children and there were no children placed in hotels. A hotel placement standard approved by Standing Committee became effective August 2007 that outlined the conditions under which a hotel placement would be permitted. Since that time there has been limited

numbers of hotel placements all of which have been consistent with the exceptions in the standard. Throughout the remainder of 2007/08 the Specialists assisted agencies with placing high needs children and developing new placement resources for children.

The resource development team also facilitated foster care information sessions for potential foster families. Information packages were provided and callers to the Circle of Care line were referred to agencies for information about orientation sessions. The Specialists provided orientation sessions in Parkland Region, Brandon and Winnipeg to 162 potential foster parents.

59 % Increase Over Last Year Newly Licensed Foster Beds



A foster parent Training Curricula Design Team was established during this reporting period to develop a Competency Based Training Manual for foster parents. Membership consists of representatives from the four Authorities, The Manitoba Foster Family Network, and the Child and Family Services Joint Training Unit.

At the direction of the DCT, the Specialists participated on a team to develop and implement a coordinated Resource Development Strategy to address both immediate and long term placement needs of children in care of General Authority agencies. This is work that will be completed in 2008/09.

New Training Offered for General Authority Staff and Caregivers

In April 2007, the General Authority hired into a new Training Coordinator position. Each authority received funding to hire one coordinator to work collaboratively as part of the Child and Family Services Joint Training Unit (JTU) located at 831 Portage Avenue. In May 2007, the Training Coordinator undertook a needs assessment with each General Authority agency. Each agency identified their preferences for training based on the themes in the external review recommendations, their service environment and the experiences of their staff. The needs assessment was consolidated into a broader document that identified common training need areas across General Authority agencies. These General Authority priorities were then included into a comprehensive plan prepared by the JTU that included cross-authority and agency specific training scheduled for 2007/08. This plan was tabled with Standing Committee.



In 2007/08, almost 600 staff and caregivers from the General Authority and its agencies attended some form of training. This includes:

- almost 50 front line staff who received training in conducting child abuse investigations;
- over 120 individuals who received training in suicide intervention and prevention;
- 182 staff trained in Non Violent Crisis Intervention techniques;
- 30 staff trained in critical incident stress debriefing and another 20 who received upgrading in this area;
- 10 staff who attended workshops on writing policy and procedures;
- 30 staff who attended training in mediation, and
- 115 care givers who received training in relationship strengths based approach to discipline.

The General Authority also funded board development training for Child and Family Services of Central Manitoba. Many Authority staff also attended the Core Competency training for case managers and supervisors throughout 2007/08.

v. Directors' Common Table Highlights

Since its inception, the General Authority has recognized the importance of having a structure in place for mandated agencies to shape Authority-specific policy, collaborate to achieve greater consistency in service delivery and to collectively influence key decisions that have cross-authority implications. In March 2005, the General Authority created the Directors' Common Table (DCT) for this purpose. Senior staff from all General Authority agencies and service delivery areas are represented on this committee. DCT has established a consensus model for making decisions.

Much of the preparatory work for the DCT is done through a sub-committee structure. The terms of reference, tasks and priorities of sub-committees are set by the DCT. The committees provide progress reports to the DCT on a regular basis. All General Authority agencies are represented on each sub-committee. As part of the ongoing work of the DCT, sub-committee work was reviewed regularly throughout 2007/08.

In 2007/08, the DCT met on eleven occasions to discuss common issues, engage in joint planning, be updated on new initiatives and resolve issues across agencies or service delivery areas. Following is a list of key decisions that were made through the DCT in 2007/08 to ensure consistency and representativeness across all General Authority agencies.

- **Response to Auditor General's Report** - The DCT developed and agreed upon the final General Authority and agency specific responses to the recommendations

identified in the report from the Office of the Auditor General.

- **Consultation Process for Standards Revisions** - The DCT asked that the existing sub-committee structure be used to coordinate the consultation process. A series of focus groups and written submissions was used to gather feedback on the draft standards. This increased consistency in the content and presentation of this feedback to Standing Committee.
- **Resource Development Strategy** - The DCT approved formal Terms of Reference to develop a coordinated resource development strategy across agencies. This is being done to address both the immediate and long term placement needs of children in care receiving services from a General Authority agency.
- **Differential Response** - The DCT approved a standard set of guidelines and criteria for preparing differential response proposals. By consensus, the DCT reviewed these proposals, set priorities for pilot projects in 2008/09 and agreed to allocations for each site.
- **Training Priorities** - DCT designed and coordinated a process to set annual training priorities that reflects the recommendations identified in the external reviews and is sensitive to individual agency training needs.
- **Vision Catchers** - The DCT agreed on a set of selection criteria, an application form, an agency selection process and agency reporting expectations on how the funding was used.

VI. Issues and Inquiries

2007/2008 Highlights

With the proclamation of The Child and Family Services Authorities Act 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 General Authority 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.

- **Mileage Rates** - Through the work of DCT, the approach for paying mileage rates was standardized across all agencies within the General Authority. A review indicated some minor differences in approach between the regional offices and private agencies. Subsequently the private agencies under the jurisdiction of the General Authority agreed to ensure their practices are consistent with the regional offices.

- **Adoption Staff Committee** - The DCT established a cross-agency committee to provide a venue for networking, information sharing, training and education with respect to adoption and post-adoption issues. The General Authority Agency Adoption Staff Committee is to meet semi-annually and report back to the DCT annually.



This past year there were 320 referrals, a decrease of 9% from the previous year's total of 354.

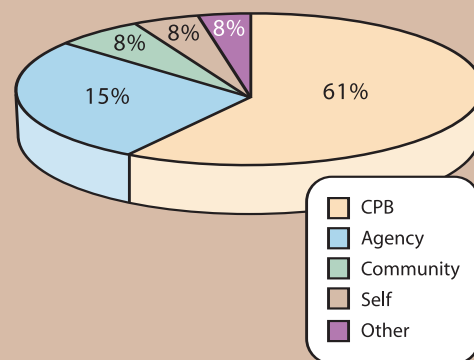
Source of Referral

Consistent with previous years, the largest percentage of referrals (61%) were received from the Child Protection Branch

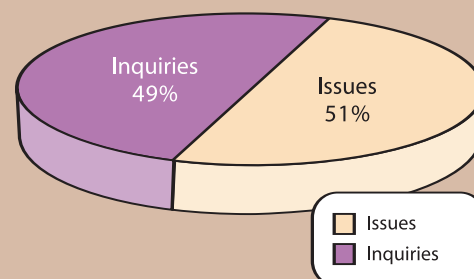
Inquiries/Issues

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 158 issues versus 162 inquiries.

**% of Referrals by Source
2007/08**



Issues/Inquiries



VII. Quality Assurance

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 undertakes quality assurance activities to ensure agencies are in compliance with service expectations. These regular activities are supplemented by detailed case and program reviews that are done periodically throughout the year. Following is an overview of these main quality assurance activities.

Case Reviews:

In 2007/08, the General Authority conducted a detailed review on 56 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.

Program Reviews:

As a follow-up to work completed in 2006/07 and in response to issues raised by the Office of the Children's Advocate, the General Authority and the Child Protection Branch (CPB) in consultation with the Churchill Regional Health Authority (CRHA) implemented an on-site assessment of the CRHA receiving home. The CPB, as the licensing body, assumed responsibility for the assessment and development plan based on its mandate to ensure compliance with provincial standards respecting residential child care facilities. The General Authority, whose responsibility is to ensure that its mandated agencies provide services and follow practices and procedures according to provincial licensing standards, participated in a consultative role.

The review was to be conducted in two phases. The onsite assessment phase conducted from March 9 - March 11, 2008 resulted in recommendations to address the identified issues.

The written documentation of phase one of the review is near completion. Phase two of the review involves the development of an action plan to be approved by a Steering Committee comprised of senior managers from the General Authority, the CPB and the CRHA.

The General Authority wishes to acknowledge the efforts and changes already undertaken by the recently appointed Senior Manager and the Chief Executive Officer of the CRHA. We would also like to acknowledge the support and training that Thompson Region Child and Family Services provided to the Churchill Child and Family Services Program.

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 47 requests were submitted, an increase of 47% from last year. The following chart illustrates the number of approvals granted by agency and reason for the request:

AGENCY	REASON FOR REQUEST			TOTAL
	Completion of High School	Waiting for Supported Living Services to Begin	Independent Living Skills Development	
Winnipeg	16	4	6	26
Interlake	0	0	0	0
Eastman	5	1	2	8
Central	2	0	0	2
Western	6	1	1	8
Northern	1	0	0	1
Parkland	1	0	0	1
Jewish	1	0	0	1
Churchill	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	32	6	9	47

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 25 approvals (32% decrease)

AGENCY	TOTALS
Winnipeg	9
Interlake	4
Eastman	0
Central	0
Western	2
Northern	1
Parkland	1
Jewish	0
Churchill	0
TOTAL	17



Transfer of Permanent Wards to their Culturally Appropriate Authority

In August 2006, the four Child and Family Services Authorities determined that to further the spirit and intent of AJI-CWI, a process should be established to support the transfer of permanent wards to their Culturally Appropriate Authority. To this end, a Permanent Ward Transfer Protocol

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:

Subsection 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".

Subsection 7(4)

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

Subsection 7(3)

"A licensing agency may license a foster home to provide residential care and supervision for more than four foster children where all the foster children in the foster home are siblings."

The General Authority approved 12 variances this year in comparison to seven last fiscal year for an overall increase of 71%. The following chart outlines these requests by agency and the type of variance requested.

AGENCY	SUBSECTION 7 (5)	SUBSECTION 7 (4)	SUBSECTION 7 (3)	TOTAL
Winnipeg	5	1	2	8
Interlake	0	0	0	0
Central	0	0	0	0
Eastman	1	1	2	4
Western	0	0	0	0
Northern	0	0	0	0
Parkland	0	0	0	0
Jewish	0	0	0	0
Churchill	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	6	2	4	12

was drafted to guide the transfer process including the need to assess each transfer on an individual basis. Assessment on a case by case basis would allow both the sending and receiving agencies and Authorities to arrive at a mutual understanding regarding whether transfer was in the child's best interest.

From January 2007 to March 31, 2008, General Authority agencies have transferred approximately 78

permanent wards to their Culturally Appropriate Authority. Of these, 64% were transferred to the First Nations of Southern Child and Family Services Authority, 12% to the First Nations of Northern Child and Family Services Authority and 24% to the Metis Child and Family Services Authority. Throughout this time period General Authority agencies received three permanent ward transfers from the Metis Child and Family Services Authority.

Services to Minor Parents

The General Authority receives copies of all Notices of Live Birth to a Mother under age 18.

The Program Specialist checks the Child and Family Services 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 14 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.

Notices of Live Birth to a Minor Parent 2006/2007

Agency	Number of Notices of Live Birth to a Mother Age 14 to 18	Number of Notices of Live Birth to a Mother Under Age 14	Total
Winnipeg	53	2	55
Western	15		15
Central	17		17
Parkland	0		0
Northern	4		4
Interlake	6	1	7
Eastman	11		11
JCFS	0		0
Churchill	0		0
Total	106	3	109

Voluntary Placement Agreements 2006/2007

Agency	Number of Agreements		
	New	Renewals	Terminations
Winnipeg	229	235	101
Western	14	15	13
Central	39	33	20
Parkland	4	2	1
Northern	11	4	2
Interlake	14	16	5
Eastman	53	50	14
JCFS	1	1	
Churchill	0	0	0
Total	351	356	156

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 Program Specialist reviews and approves all Voluntary Placement Agreements entered into by General Authority Agencies.

The Program Specialist provides all mandated agencies with a Voluntary Placement Agreement Quality Assurance Report on a regular basis.

Office of the Chief Medical Examiner Reviews:

Under subsection 10(1) of *The Fatality Inquiries Act*, the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (CME) is required to conduct a review of the services provided by a child and family services agency under the following circumstances:

"If the chief medical examiner receives an inquiry report about a deceased child who, at the time of death of the child or within the one year period before the death,

- (a) was in the care of an agency as defined in *The Child and Family Services Act*; or
- (b) had a parent or guardian who was in receipt of services from an agency under *The Child and Family Services Act*."

As further specified in *The Fatality Inquiries Act*, the purpose of the review is to "assess the quality or standard of care and services provided

by the agency". Under provincial standards, agencies are required to immediately report such occurrences to the Director of Child and Family Services.

In the findings section of the report, the CME may recommend that specific action be taken by:

- the Department of Family Services and Housing;
- the Child Protection Branch;
- one or more child and family services authorities; and/or
- one or more child and family services agencies.

During 2007/08, the General Authority received a total of three (3) reports prepared by the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner's Office. Under the current legislation, the scope of these reviews is limited to those services provided by a mandated child and family services agency. 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 2007/08, the General Authority concluded four (4) reports from the Chief Medical Examiner's Office (including some reports issued in prior fiscal years). Reports are considered "concluded" when the Chief Medical Examiner 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 2007/08, the General Authority received notice of twenty-one (21) child deaths (compared to 25 in 2006/07. In most instances, the family had received service within the previous 12 months but the case was not open at the time of the child's death. In the majority of cases, the death was due to natural causes (66.7%). Accidents accounted for a further 14.3%. The General Authority also noted a reduction in the number of child deaths due to violence.

Children in Care

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 below, the General Authority agencies experienced a 2.4% increase in the number of children in care when compared with the previous fiscal year.

CHILD IN CARE STATISTICS

General Authority	2006/2007	2007/2008
Central	101	99
Western	130	129
Churchill	17	18
Eastman	158	149
Interlake	64	62
JCFS	18	18
Northern	93	85
Parkland	20	19
Winnipeg	1017	1077
Total	1618	1656

viii. Intersectoral Committee Work

Staff at the General Authority also work in collaboration with General Authority agencies, the Child Protection Branch (CPB), the Community Service Delivery Branch (CSD), colleague authorities, and other external stakeholders on a number of systemic program and policy issues. Following is an overview of this intersectoral work and a description of committees that involve representation from the General Authority.

The Provincial Advisory Committee on Child Abuse (PACCA)

The General Authority is a member of the PACCA and represents its agencies. The PACCA has a number of sub-committees and currently the General Authority has representation on the Abuse Interviewing Sub-Committee. The PACCA Abuse Interviewing Sub-Committee is focused on developing up to date child abuse interviewing tools and training material for social workers. The PACCA identified the need for a tool to be developed in Manitoba given the absence of an up to date Canadian abuse interview training video. The initiative was specifically developed to meet the needs of social service providers, specifically social workers in more isolated geographical locations where resources are less accessible. Culturally appropriate approaches and representation of First Nations are key in the project, which is supported by all four Authorities.

The Sub-Committee has now completed the majority of the filming and has advanced to the post-production phase. The video will also be accompanied by a

companion guide. The University of Manitoba has also expressed interest in utilizing the final product for training of social workers in their Social Work program.

PACCA has also produced various documents and initiatives with respect to child abuse prevention and best practice, which have been adopted by other professional fields including nursing, education, social work, youth correctional facility staff, and child day care. The General Authority representation on PACCA has ensured feedback from the General Authority and its agencies related to other PACCA initiatives including the Joint Statement on Physical Punishment of Children and Youth.

Child Advocacy Centre Partners Working Group and Sub-Committees

The General Authority is also represented on the Children's Advocacy Centre (CAC) working groups. The objective is to establish a CAC in Manitoba which will seek to make those who respond to child abuse more responsible to the needs of the children by providing a single operational site. The CAC is intended to provide a service base where the relevant professionals come to the child and therefore reduce the secondary trauma to the child when an abuse disclosure is made by providing a friendly environment for the child. The CAC will be a centre where an interdisciplinary team of professionals can investigate allegations of physical and/or sexual child abuse. These centres provide appropriate support services for child victims and their families in a comfortable home-like setting.

Alternative Care Sub-Committee

This sub-committee is a resource to Standing Committee whose purpose is to identify and report on issues related to alternative care which require the attention of the Standing Committee, to act on such issues where appropriate and to carry out tasks as assigned by the Standing Committee.

Communications Sub-committee

This sub-committee is a resource to Standing Committee with respect to issues pertaining to communication. The main tasks of the committee this year included:

- The compilation and distribution of the Staff Update in January 2008.
- Assisting in the planning for the Trends and Challenges in Child Welfare conference held in November 2007.

Partners in Parenting Committee

The purpose of this committee is to examine the services parents with cognitive disabilities have access to and to assist in the development of an interdepartmental government protocol to promote integrated services. A survey of caseworkers in the Supported Living Program and Children's Special Services was completed. The results are currently being analyzed, with recommendations being developed.

Keith Cooper Scholarship Committee

This spring, the committee awarded scholarships to 10 recipients including the following

Jainna Cabral	University of Manitoba
Jerri-Lynn Chester	University of Winnipeg
Amber-Dawn Daniels	University of Manitoba
Giselle Fillion	Brandon University
Samuel Hutsal	University College of the North
Alysia Lawson	University of Winnipeg
Chasity Levasseur	University of Winnipeg
Tom Provost	McGill University
Heather Ruser	University of Manitoba
Shimon Segal	University of Manitoba

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

To date, the General Authority has approved 15 applications. Of the children receiving funds, 11 were in care of a child and family services agency.

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.

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 education. The award itself is a combination of \$50 cash and a \$250 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.

The image features a large, faint, and somewhat blurry background photograph of a person's legs and feet, likely in a snowy or sandy environment. The person appears to be wearing light-colored pants and dark shoes. In the bottom right corner, there is a small, circular inset photograph. This inset shows a young child wearing a blue knit hat and a light-colored winter jacket, holding a small snowman. The snowman has a black hat, an orange carrot nose, and is made of snow. The child is standing in a snowy field.





The General Child
and Family Services
Authority

