

ALTERNATIVE CARE (FOSTER) SERVICES

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

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Sandy Bay Child & Family Services has a responsibility to ensure that all children placed in foster care are provided with a safe and loving environment, which meets the child's emotional, mental, physical, educational, social, cultural and spiritual needs.

The Agency encourages placement with extended family but where that is not possible will make every effort to place within their home community or with a First Nation family.

Sandy Child & Family Services has the mandate for the development, utilization, maintenance and overall coordination of the foster care/alternative care program within its administrative structure. The *Child and Family Services Act* defines a foster home as:

"a home other than the home of a parent or guardian of a child, where not more than four children who are not siblings are placed by an agency for care and supervision but not for the purposes of adoption."

Foster homes are licensed under the Foster Homes Licensing Regulation (Regulation 18/99)

The purpose of the foster care program is to protect children and strengthen the family. A foster family provides the child with the stability of an alternative family that is seen as complementary to the child's biological parents, rather than as a substitute family. This view of the foster family is an extension to the biological family, rather than a replacement, will reduce conflict between the foster parents and biological parents. Their role is to assist the child and his/her family with reunification, if that is the plan. The length of time each child remains in care is determined by the needs of the child and his/her family situation.

The Agency has also developed a network of contacts with alternative care facilities in the area, the City of Winnipeg and within the Province of Manitoba. The licensed facilities are accessed through the Child Protection and Support Branch and provide a range of placements for children in need of a higher level of care. Their facilities include group homes and child care institutions (Knowles Center, Marymound Inc., Macdonald Youth Services and New Directions).

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PLACE OF SAFETY

The *Act* defines a place of safety as any place used for the emergency temporary care and protection of a child as may be required under the *Act*.

Under clause 4(2) of the *Act*, the Director may designate in writing a place or type of places as a place of safety. The *Act* does not list specific types of places of safety except in subsection 22(2) which states where a child who is apprehended is a patient in a hospital, the hospital is a place of safety.

Section 2 of the *Foster Home Licensing Regulations* (Regulation 18/99) applies if a home is used for four or more days a month on a regular monthly basis, or for 15 or more consecutive days in any year.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

Foster family care is appropriate for a child who is:

- In need of a family based program;
- Not at risk of acting out that could put the foster family at risk;
- In care for the first time, or who has had extensive group treatment;
- In a large family of children whose individual needs would be best served by remaining together;
- Preschool children;
- Emotionally disturbed or physically disable but is ready for discharge from residential care, can live with a family in the community with special help, and has experiences geared to his/her readiness;
- In need of specialized medical or physical care.

PROCEDURES

Foster family services provide a substitute family for a planned period of time for a child who has to be separated from his/her natural or legal parents. This service also includes social work and other intervention services needed by the child, his/her parents, and the foster parents.

Foster family services provide a combination of care for the child and family who need placement, plus services and resources to the child, family, and foster family. These services offer opportunities for the health development of the child in accordance with the *Act*.

It is important this resource is used for the child who can benefit most from a family environment. Other forms of placement may be preferable for the child who has extreme needs which a foster family could not meet.

Placing a child in a foster family affects not only the child but the entire foster family. Each person in that family is considered for each placement and discharge.

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RECRUITMENT

The Agency responds to enquiries from prospective foster parents **within five working days** provides information on the orientation and application processes.

FOSTER PARENT EDUCATION

A foster parent applicant receives an orientation or pre-service program as part of the approval process and any ongoing and specialized training to meet the needs of an individual child. An agency provides an opportunity for an applicant to receive an orientation **within three months** of contacting the agency unless the agency has advised the applicant it will not approve the application.

LICENSING REQUIREMENTS

The Agency has certain requirements they must meet in order to ensure the child is in a safe and secure environment.

1. Complete an Application Form
 - a. Criminal Record Check on adults living in the home
 - b. Child Abuse Registry Check on all adults living in the home
 - c. Prior Contact Check with all Child and Family Services Agencies for all adults residing in the home
 - d. Medical checks for all applicants
 - e. Physical Requirements Checklist
 - f. Four written references or approval from the Local CFS Committee
2. Completed and approved Foster Home Study

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Foster parents receive a daily allowance to assist in caring for the child. SBCFS follows the Provincial Chart of Accounts which details what is covered in the daily rate.