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Chapter 2: Family Support Services and Agreements	
Policy # 2.2: Support Services to Strengthen Capacity	
Effective Date of Policy: November 14, 2017	Amendment date of Policy:

Policy Statement

Wherever possible, children, youth and families are provided with voluntary support services that build on their strengths and promote resiliency, and support and assist families to care for their children and youth.

Outcomes

- A child or youth is safe living with their family.
- The parents are able to meet the child's or youth's needs.

Standard

2.1(1) A written support service agreement is signed before support services are provided unless there are emergency circumstances as outlined in the procedures section.

Procedures

Discussion of Support Services

- In discussion with a child, youth or family explore and determine what they consider to be their current strengths, goals and needs and what supports they require.
- Discuss with the family the importance of informal supports (e.g. friends, extended family, elders, spiritual leaders and community members) and actively seek out with the family available support services that can meet their needs.
- If the family does not have informal supports, discuss with the family the types of formal supports that will best meet their needs.

- If the information obtained from the family indicates a child protection concern, promptly report the concern and the reasons for it to a delegated child protection worker.

Entering into a Support Service Agreement

- Following an assessment of a child's, youth's or family's strengths and needs, develop a written family support service agreement when:
 - A support service has been identified that will help the family and/or will reduce the need for more intrusive CFCSA supports and interventions;
 - The provision of such services (sometimes together with other supports and interventions) can maintain the safety and well-being of children or youth in the family;
 - The services are available and address a child, youth's and family's needs;
 - The person who is requesting the services or agreeing to services has the legal authority and capacity to enter into and sign the agreement. (For more information refer to Appendix 'Authority to Sign an Agreement'); and
 - The provision of services through a written support service agreement has been reviewed and approved by a supervisor.



If a child, youth or parent is Aboriginal

- If a child, youth or parent is Aboriginal, explore with the parent the members of their circle and the services available through the Aboriginal community.
- Involve the Aboriginal community or identified Delegated Aboriginal Agency in planning, unless:
 - the parent, youth or child with capacity objects to the involvement; or
 - the community or agency is unable to become involved.

Completing a Support Services Agreement

- Collaborate with the family, extended family, and other involved community members and service providers in planning and completing the agreement by:
 - Obtaining the parents', youth's and, wherever possible, the child's consent to the disclosure of information that is needed for the provision of support services using Form CF0609 'Consent to Disclosure of Information';
 - Gathering relevant information about the family's strengths, goals, needs and vulnerabilities;
 - Involving the child or youth by discussing their views and preferences;

- Agreeing on the type and duration of the support services that will be included in the agreement;
 - Agreeing on the notice required to end the agreement; and
 - Signing the agreement before the provision of services, for a maximum initial term of six months.
- Complete Form CF2606 '*Support Service Agreement*'.
 - Give copies of the support service agreement to:
 - Everyone who signed the agreement, and
 - Those involved in the provision of services outlined in the agreement.

Providing services on an emergency basis

- When required, services may be provided on an emergency basis, with the parents' verbal consent for up to 30 days.
- A written agreement must be signed within 30 days.

Reviewing and renewing the agreement

- Reach agreement with the parents, youth and child if applicable on the process for reviewing the agreement, including the frequency of reviews. Review agreements at least every six months unless an individual involved with the agreement requests a review sooner.
- Review the agreement with the child, youth or family to determine whether:
 - The agreement continues to meet their needs; or
 - There is a significant change in the circumstances of the child, youth, family or extended family that may require a change to the agreement;
 - The services or resources continue to be available.
- After a review, renew a support services agreement for terms of up to six months each using Form CF2599 '*Support Services Renewal Agreement*'.

Ending the agreement

- When the child, youth and family no longer need the services outlined in the agreement and the intent is to end the agreement, provide notice as stated in the agreement.
- End the services mentioned in the agreement if:
 - The family terminates the agreement, or
 - More than 30 days "grace period" has elapsed since the expiry of the agreement.

- Contact the family during the 30 day's "grace period" to discuss their situation and ending the services.

Written Support Service Agreements and Information Sharing

- Information is shared based upon an assessment of the child's, youth's and/or family's strengths and needs for planning and decision-making purposes with the consent of the individual who signed the agreement.
 - Use Form CF0609 '*Consent to Disclosure of Information*' to obtain the individual's consent to disclose their personal information to a service provider or organization outside of the Ministry or a Delegated Aboriginal Agency;
 - Use Form CF0611 '*Consent to Collect Information*' to obtain the individual's consent to obtain their personal information from another service provider or organization outside of the Ministry or a Delegated Aboriginal Agency.



If there is concern about the safety of a child or another person, section 79(a) of the CFCSA gives authority to disclose the information without consent. For example, if concerns exist about a pregnant woman's safety as a result of information obtained about the woman's partner, the information about the partner can be disclosed to the woman without the partner's consent.

- For further information on information sharing, refer to the resource booklet ['Information Sharing and Confidentiality'](#).

Support Services for Youth

- For more information on youth-oriented support services and written agreements with youth refer to ['Standards for Youth Support Services and Youth Agreements'](#)

Respite Support Services

- If needed to maintain long-term family stability, consider offering families respite services.
- Access respite care providers by contacting:
 - An agency contracted by the ministry or DAA to recruit, assess and approve respite care providers; or
 - A resource worker who can identify an approved foster caregiver who has the necessary skill, availability and willingness to provide culturally appropriate respite care required for the specific children.
- When selecting a respite care provider, consider:
 - The number and ages of children requiring respite care;
 - The children's

- behaviours,
- development levels,
- cognitive abilities,
- special needs (if any),
- culture and cultural needs;
- The willingness and capacity of the respite care provider in meeting the children's needs;
- A respite care provider who is an extended family member, a person who has a significant relationship to the child, and/or is a member of the child's community.
- Determine with the child's or youth's family the number of days of respite care required and whether the respite services will occur in the approved respite care providers' home or in the child's or youth's home. Note that respite cannot exceed 14 days per month.
- Complete Form CF2606 '*Support Service Agreement*' for the provision of respite services to a family.
- Provide the respite care provider with an information sheet that includes relevant information about each child receiving respite care in either the respite care provider's home or in the child's or youth's own home. See practice directive: [Information Sharing with Relief or Respite Care Providers](#)
- Provide the respite care provider with or confirm that they have information relating to child safety including 'Purple Crying' at <http://www.purplecrying.info/> and [Safe Sleeping](#) written specifically for the care of babies.

If Child Protection Concerns Arise

- If support services have been initiated through voluntary services, promptly inform a delegated child protection worker by contacting Centralized Screening and provide information about the concerns.
- Document the child protection concern and the referral to Centralized Screening.
- Once a child protection worker becomes involved, determine with the child protection worker whether the support services should continue to be provided.
- Transfer the file to the child protection worker. For further information regarding transfer of files, refer to practice directive [Case Transfer and Joint Case Management Under the Child, Family and Community Service Act](#)

Appendix A: Developing, Reviewing and Signing Agreements

Before entering into an agreement with a person it is important to determine their identity, their capacity to understand the agreement and to determine if they have the authority to sign it.

Identification

- Confirm the individual's personal identity and obtain proof by making copies of or recording the numbers on two pieces of either primary or secondary personal ID (e.g., birth certificate, Social Insurance, Medical Services CareCard, Status Card, BC ID, driver's license, passport), one of which is picture ID, and place this documentation in the file holding the agreement;
- Confirm their family relationship to child or youth who is the subject of the agreement by asking to view and make copies of the child's or youth's birth certificate or other documentation that would lend proof to stated parental, custodial or guardian relationships;
- When formal identification is not available, do not proceed with the agreement until necessary identity and relationships are confirmed.

Authority to Sign an Agreement

Before entering into an Extended Family Program Agreement, a Voluntary Care Agreement, a Special Needs Agreement or a Support Service Agreement that authorizes the child to be placed outside the parental home, determine which parents should sign the agreement.

Determine if there is a court order or agreement:

- If the order or agreement was made under the former *Family Relations Act*, a parent who has custody or guardianship is a guardian under the *Family Law Act* and has parental responsibilities and parenting time. The guardian's parental responsibilities and parenting time are as described in the order or agreement;
- If a parent is a guardian and has the parental responsibility of day-to-day care, control and supervision, even for only part of the time, that parent should also sign the agreement along with the parent who exercises day-to-day care, control and supervision most of the time.

If there is no court order or agreement:

- If parent B is a guardian and exercises the parental responsibility of day-to-day care, control and supervision, even for only part of the time, s/he should also sign

the agreement along with parent A who exercises day-to-day care, control and supervision most of the time;

- If parent B is a guardian and is not exercising the parental responsibility of day-to-day care, control and supervision:
 - Discuss with parent A who has day-to-day care, control and supervision how s/he should consult with the parent B regarding the agreement; and
 - Explore with the parent A who has day-to-day care, control and supervision if s/he feels that parent B could jeopardize the voluntary agreement.

Developing the Agreement

Discuss and review the terms of the agreement with those who have authority to enter into the agreement to ensure as much as possible the person signing the agreement understands the terms and agrees to them.

- Draft the agreement according to the agreed upon services to be provided;
- Review the agreement with a supervisor for approval;
- If not approved by the supervisor:
 - Revise the agreement as required; or
 - Terminate the process in favour of a different course of action.

Demonstrated Capacity and Understanding

- When presenting the agreement to an individual for the first time, review and explain the important aspects and terms of the agreement that include:
 - The responsibilities and implications involved with entering into the agreement;
 - That by signing the agreement, they are consenting to the disclosure/sharing of any personal and file information associated with the agreement.
- Based on the explanation provided, ask the individual questions, the response to which will demonstrate understanding or not.
- Recommend that the individual seek advice from an independent third party before signing the agreement.
- If demonstrated capacity and understanding is in question:
 - Request that the individual involve a third party to provide advocacy on their behalf in regards to their capacity and understanding; and/or
 - Consult with a supervisor and consider other possible courses of action.

Signing the Agreement

- Address any questions that the individual has about their responsibilities and any implications of entering into the agreement.
- If the individual agrees with the terms:
 - Present the agreement and any pertinent schedules/appendices to the individual for his/her signature.
 - Ensure the agreement is signed by a delegated representative of a CFCSA director as required in individual policies for the specific type of agreement being signed.
 - Provide copies to each signatory to the agreement.
- If the individual is not in agreement with the terms:
 - Revise the terms of the agreement to address concerns; or
 - Consult with the supervisor and consider other possible courses of action.

Note: Revising an agreement could be very minor, in which case, a few words might be changed and initialled in the pertinent spots. Major changes will require re-printing, which may or may not require a re-scheduling for signatures.

Youth Agreements

For information on Youth Agreements, where “youth” are the individuals entering an agreement, refer to the [Standards for Youth Support Services and Agreements](#)