

APPENDIX 13

SAMPLE PLAN OF A CHILD AND YOUTH ACTION PLAN

The Child and Youth Action Plan should include the following:

Returning justice to the community

To return justice to the community there must be a reduction in the use of incarceration and thus a transferring of authority and resources to support programs in the community.

- 1.1 Youth and community must engage in a discussion of the present social policy that criminalizes youth rather than healing and nurturing their development.
- 1.2 Focusing on restorative justice responses to anti-social behaviour outside of the criminal justice system strengthens youth.
- 1.3 All governments provide assistance to communities to establish programs that promote rehabilitation, and reintegration of young offenders.

2. Developing youth leadership

Recognizing that youth are the best agents for delivering positive change to other youth.

- 2.1 First Nations and Metis children and youth must be consulted in the identification of issues, the development and delivery of services to youth.
- 2.2 Peer mentoring programs must be developed.

Ensuring youth voice in governance

Recognizing that youth want to be included and want to have a voice in matters that concern them and their communities, leaders must provide youth with opportunities for youth to be involved in governance.

- 3.1 Leadership must provide assistance to communities to establish programs that promote youth development and leadership.
- 3.2 Youth positions must be created on boards such as police boards, school boards and boards that provide services are provided to youth.
- 3.3 Youth networks must be developed to enhance the capacity of youth through exchanges of experiences and information between youth, especially those living on-reserve and those requiring protection from violence, in particular young women.
- 3.4 The proposed Institute on Traditional Law and Governance must be involved.



Strengthening families and parenting skills

Recognizing the impact the child welfare system has on many children, effort must be made to strengthen family and develop parenting skills. Any attempts at reducing the number of children coming into care must be accompanied with respite services and child care services for youthful parents and parents of disabled children.

- 4.1 Youthful parents must be consulted to determine what services they require and that the supports necessary for them to parent their children are provided.
- 4.2 Parenting skills that involve Elders must be developed.
- 4.3 “Safe” houses, on and off-reserve, must be established for children and youth where they are able to stay on short notice and for short stays, without the fear of being apprehended by the system.
- 4.4 Cooperative parenting centres must be established where children and their parents are able to learn parenting skills and contribute to the well-being of others.

Engaging youth in schools

Recognizing that zero tolerance policies in schools foster intolerance of diversity and that youth value education, creativity and flexibility is required to engage students disconnected with school.

- 5.1 Curriculum must be developed for legal literacy at an early age.
- 5.2 Pro-social behavior instruction including conflict resolution to avoid the criminalization of students must be introduced in schools.
- 5.3 School^{Plus} should consult youth to assist in finding ways of assisting attendance and providing relevant educational instruction, i.e. mandatory parenting 30 classes across Saskatchewan.
- 5.4 Schools must include physical education, sport and physical activities for all students.

Enhancing youth employment

Recognizing the change in demographics, that training and programs to cultivate and develop First Nations and Metis youth labour potential is developed and implemented.

- 6.1 Credited learning and training opportunities must be created for youth outside the mainstream school system.



6.2 Business should be engaged in developing work placement and training opportunities that address the growing unemployed and unskilled labour force.

Promoting arts, sport, culture and recreation

Recognizing that participation in arts, sport, culture and recreation provides opportunities for pro-social development to youth.

7.1 Arts, sport, culture and recreation must be a core component of all services to children and youth.

7.2 Direction and resources should be provided to develop, in schools, supervised physical activity, sport and recreation programming offered outside of school hours including weekends, especially in areas where there are identified 'at-risk' youth.

Developing cultural learning opportunities

Recognizing that an opportunity to learn cultural practices and traditions from Elders has a positive effect on children and youth.

8.1 Opportunities for Elder-youth cultural learning must be created.

Providing Integrated services

Recognizing that youth requiring services have difficulty accessing services.

9.1 Services to youth must be provided by one integrated service worker per youth to coordinate services in one location familiar to youth.

Providing accessible addictions services

Recognizing that services must be 'accessible' to children and youth.

10.1 In the short term, the waiting lists for addiction services must be eliminated and a 24-hour service for children and youth be created.

10.2 In the longer term youth should be involved in the design and implementation of a long term action plan to address youth addictions that includes prevention, early intervention and a continuum of care delivered in the community.

10.3 An awareness campaign to address youth sexual health, practices and the prevention of teen pregnancy as it relates to addictions must be created.



Providing mental health services for children and youth

Recognizing that there are many children and youth who may have mental health needs that are not being served and may be incarcerated as a result.

- 11.1 A community based mental health services plan for children and youth, outside of the youth justice system, must be developed and implemented.

Providing a targeted focused prevention strategy

Recognizing that prevention reduces victimization, a risk focused prevention strategy with active involvement of youth, family and community is required.

- 12.1 At-risk' youth, including youth affected by FASD, those witnessing violence, girls subjected to violence and youth affected with addictions and involved in gangs must receive targeted attention.

Providing 'meaningful' justice

Recognizing that youth must be provided with meaningful justice, and for justice to be meaningful to youth it must be timely.

- 13.1 All youth charges not dealt with in six months from the date the charge is laid should be dismissed.

Reducing reliance on incarceration

Recognizing the spirit and intent of the *Youth Criminal Justice Act* and the resulting reduction in youth incarceration, the long term target is to reduce incarceration levels to be representative of populations.

- 14.1 In the short term, incarceration levels should be reduced to 50 per cent of the pre-YCJA level by March 31, 2005. This can only be accomplished if present facilities resources are redistributed to community based programs that address addictions, education, and skill development.

Reintegrating youth to community

Recognizing that youth will be released and returning to their communities.

- 15.1 Corrections and Public Safety must establish a reintegration plan that promotes the youth's reintegration back into community.
- 15.2 This reintegration should begin the moment the youth is sentenced to custody.
- 15.3 Intake assessments must focus not only on 'risks' but also on the strengths and hopes of the youth.

- 15.4 Addiction assessments and programming to address youth addictions should be offered in young offender facilities. Most addictions programming requires more time to be effective than the length of the current youth sentences, therefore it is vital that a case manager create a treatment program that begins in the facility but involves community and that a continuum of service is provided.

Improving youth-police relations

Recognizing that youth value police and want to be treated with respect and dignity.

- 16.1 Police services establish an Aboriginal civilian liaison presence to provide youth with an advocate to assist with respectful treatment between police and youth.
- 16.2 Police must engage in a dialogue with First Nations and Metis youth to develop an understanding of youth and create youth specific programs that promote a positive relationship between youth and police services.

Creating positive images of youth

Recognizing that the images of youth provided in the media contribute to how society sees youth.

- 17.1 The Saskatchewan media should dialogue with youth and implement a positive imaging campaign that celebrates youth successes and achievements.

Improving quality of life

Recognizing that over half of First Nations and Metis children and youth live in urban environments.

- 18.1 'Quality of life' indicators of the urban First Nations and Metis child must be established, and that action is taken to improve them.
- 18.2 These indicators should become one measure of the success of the Saskatchewan First Nations and Metis Children and Youth Action Plan.
- 18.3 In recognition of the mobility of youth from the Reserve to the city and from the Far North to urban centres, youth transition/urban orientation programs in urban centres should be established to assist in successful transition.
- 18.4 The value of urban youth centres must be recognized and funded.

