

# Aboriginal Justice Inquiry - Child Welfare Initiative



## Options for Foster Care Providers

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### Interlake Region

October 2003





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## THE AJI-CWI: A New Approach to Child and Family Services in Manitoba

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The child and family services system works to protect children at risk of abuse or neglect. It supports and strengthens the well-being of families, especially those experiencing difficulties in caring for their children.

Child and family services in Manitoba is currently undergoing a major restructuring through an initiative called The Aboriginal Justice Inquiry – Child Welfare Initiative (AJI-CWI).

The AJI-CWI is a joint initiative of four parties:

- ◆ Manitoba Metis Federation,
- ◆ Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs,
- ◆ Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak, and
- ◆ the Province of Manitoba.

The parties have worked together to develop a new system that:

- ◆ recognizes and respects the cultural diversity of Manitoba, and
- ◆ returns to First Nations and Metis peoples the right to develop and control the delivery of their own child and family services.

In the new system, the delivery of child and family services will be a shared responsibility between the Province and Aboriginal peoples. The most fundamental change will be the delegation of responsibility for the delivery of child and family services from the Province to four new child and family services Authorities. Three of these are Aboriginal Authorities:



- ◆ Metis Child and Family Services Authority
- ◆ First Nations of Southern Manitoba Child and Family Services Authority
- ◆ First Nations of Northern Manitoba Child and Family Services Authority
- ◆ General Child and Family Services Authority

This change is legislated through *The Child and Family Services Authorities Act* of the Province of Manitoba.

All four Authorities and their agencies will provide services throughout the province. Aboriginal children and families will have access to culturally appropriate child and family services from Aboriginal agencies, no matter where they live in Manitoba.

Each Authority will be responsible for designing and managing the delivery of child and family services.

## Vision Statement

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*A child and family services system that recognizes and supports the rights of children to develop within safe and healthy families and communities, and recognizes that First Nations and Metis peoples have unique authority, rights and responsibilities to honour and care for their children.*

## Mission Statement

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*To have a jointly coordinated child and family services system that recognizes the distinct rights and authorities of First Nations and Metis peoples and the general population to control and deliver their own child and family services province-wide; that is community-based; and reflects and incorporates the cultures of First Nations, Metis and the general population respectively.*



## **New Arrangements for Foster Care Providers**

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As part of the restructuring of the child and family services system in Manitoba, there are new arrangements for providing foster care. However, foster families will continue to be considered an essential resource in the restructured system, as well as a valuable source of information regarding the children in their care.

### **General Licensing Arrangements**

Licensing of foster homes will be the responsibility of agencies, subject to province-wide regulations and standards, as well as Authority-specific standards. Each foster family will hold a licence from only one agency in the restructured system. A foster family can only have one application active at any given time.

### **Management and Support**

A registry will be developed to track applications and licences. All foster family licence renewals are to be done by the current licensing agency, unless otherwise agreed to by agencies. An agency will be responsible for managing and supporting the foster families it licenses.

### **Sharing Arrangements**

Sharing arrangements will be developed by each Authority to allow other agencies access to foster care spaces in homes licensed by their Authority/agencies. As such, foster families licensed by one agency will not be prevented from providing care for another agency. Subject to these protocols, however, the licensing agency will be responsible for approving all placement decisions.

### **Implementation**

The new foster care arrangements are scheduled to be implemented in the province, region-by-region, beginning in the Interlake



likely in late November 2003. Implementation will continue throughout 2004. Detailed information and supports will be made available to foster families in each region as implementation takes place.

A coordinated approach will be used to support existing foster families in making licensing decisions throughout implementation.

Starting the first day when cases are transferred in a region, foster families in the region will have up to three months to decide which agency to apply to for licensing when their current licence expires. Once this three month period is over, a process will be in place to facilitate licensing by either the existing or an alternate agency.

The existing licensing agency will be responsible for renewals for foster families whose current licence expires before the end of this three month period. A change in licensing agencies would be processed the next time their licence expires, unless otherwise agreed by the agencies.

## **Implementation and Places of Safety**

At the time of the case transfer of a child in care of a Place of Safety, the home providing service as the Place of Safety will need to decide which agency they will apply to for licensing as a foster family. That agency will then begin processing the application.

## **Foster Care Rates**

Special rates currently being paid to foster families will be maintained for six months from the date of the case transfer of any particular child. During this time, there will be no decrease to the special rates paid to the existing foster home. Any increase will be based on sound case planning. If a placement change is made during this time, this provision will no longer apply.



## The New Child and Family Services Authorities and Foster Care Service Options

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The four Child and Family Services Authorities and their affiliated agencies serving the region are working together to coordinate the new foster care arrangements. All the agencies recognize the benefits of working together so that foster care services in the Interlake will be provided effectively and efficiently.

To this end, the agencies with primary responsibility in the Interlake region have formed a coordinating group. This group recognizes the need to maintain open lines of communication among service providers. The group will work together to implement strategies on foster care issues such as:

- ◆ Placements
- ◆ Emergency placements
- ◆ Special rate procedures
- ◆ Recruitment and orientation
- ◆ Training opportunities for foster parents and foster children



# Authorities and Agencies Serving the Interlake

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Five agencies from the four Authorities will be the primary service providers in the region:

## **Metis Authority**

- ◆ Metis Child, Family and Community Services

## **Southern First Nations Authority**

- ◆ Anishinaabe Child and Family Services
- ◆ Intertribal Child and Family Services
- ◆ Peguis Child and Family Services

## **Northern First Nations Authority**

- ◆ Service provided through service agreements with other Authorities

## **General Authority**

- ◆ Interlake Child and Family Services

On the following pages are summaries of the foster care arrangements for each Authority and a brief profile on each of the five agencies listed above.

Please note that child and family services may be provided by other agencies in the province, but the five profiled in this booklet have primary responsibility in the Interlake.





## Metis Child and Family Services Authority

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On behalf of the Metis Child and Family Services Authority (MCFS) and Metis Child, Family and Community Services (MCFCS) I wish to extend greetings to individuals in Manitoba's Interlake Region. As many are aware, the past year has been extremely busy for the Board and staff of MCFS and MCFCS as we draw closer to opening our first agency (MCFCS).

The establishment of MCFCS has been a longstanding dream within the Metis community and it was with great excitement and enthusiasm that we received the formal mandate from the province of Manitoba to deliver child and family services province-wide on September 13, 2003. While this event marked a major milestone for the Metis Authority and agency, it is recognized that our work is far from over. We look forward to working with individuals, families and organizations from across the province as we work to roll-out services throughout the province and implement our mandate.

MCFCS will have a single-agency structure with a head office located in Winnipeg. Although the bulk of administrative tasks will occur centrally through this head office, services will be developed and provided on a regional basis. Currently, we are planning to develop services in five stages. In each stage, services will be developed in an area or region of Manitoba. Our initial energy will be focused primarily upon the set-up of services in Winnipeg.



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Although there is still some work to be done with respect to the specifics of the restructuring in Interlake, MCFCS currently plans on having the equivalent of two to four staff present in the Interlake. As well, MCFCS currently has four interns working closely with staff at Interlake Region Child and Family Services. The plan is for these interns to eventually become part of the broader MCFCS structure.

Specifically for Interlake (the second stage), MCFCS plans to begin delivering services directly for those individuals and families in the southern portion of the region (generally defined as south of highway 513 including any communities located on the northern side of this divide adjacent to these highways) by the early portion of the new year. For all other areas, services are likely to be provided through service agreements, at least in the interim. You should be aware, however, that MCFCS will not be providing services prior to the proclamation of *The Child and Family Services Authorities Act*.

*Nelson Mayer*

*CEO, Metis Child and Family Services Authority*

*Telephone: (204) 949-0220*



## Metis Child, Family, and Community Services

Metis Child, Family and Community Services (MCFCS) takes a holistic approach in working with children. We recognize that children require a permanent, stable, safe and nurturing environment where they receive adequate nutrition, shelter and clothing. As well, a child's unique strengths and needs must be assessed and attended to in order to maximize the child's emotional, social, academic, spiritual and cultural growth.



Overriding all these needs is the firm belief that maintaining family and community connections and decision-making power is absolutely essential to healthy child development. Children must be provided with all these skills, resources and relationships to make a healthy transition into adulthood.

MCFCS strives to support and strengthen Metis, Non-status and Inuit families. Our efforts are intended to serve the best interests of children, families and communities. Our focus is to promote the health and well-being of our Metis children and families by building on the capacity of our Metis communities through the provision of culturally sensitive and appropriate programs and services.

We accomplish this by ensuring our programs are responsive and accountable to the communities we serve. We offer an alternative method of intervention and prevention that is holistic and family centered. We believe that involvement of family and community is essential when working with children who are at risk of entering the child welfare system.



MCFCFS can provide the following types of “Alternative Care” arrangements:

- ◆ Extended Family Placements by way of a licensing process
- ◆ Licensed Foster Homes (no relationship with a particular child) within a specific community to maintain the child’s connections with the birth family
- ◆ Treatment or Specialized Foster Care arrangements for children with special needs

MCFCFS has developed a number of programs and services specifically for care providers, including:

- ◆ Cultural Orientation Training to encourage cultural sensitivity to our children
- ◆ Training to address specific behavioral difficulties (ie. FAS, ADD, ADHD, Oppositional Defiance, Caring for medical needs children etc.
- ◆ Connecting and bridging relationships with birth family members

MCFCFS provides ongoing support and supervision to all placement resources.

### **Contact Information:**

DIRECTOR  
Dorothy McLoughlin

### **Office:**

Metis Child, Family, and Community Services Agency  
127-150 Henry Avenue  
Winnipeg, MB R3B 0J7  
Ph: (204) 949-0220      Fax: (204) 984-9487  
E-mail: [info@metiscfs.mb.ca](mailto:info@metiscfs.mb.ca)



## First Nations of Southern Manitoba Child and Family Services Authority

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In 2000, the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, on behalf of the southern First Nations, signed an historic agreement with the Province of Manitoba to begin the process of restoring responsibility to First Nations for child and family services to their children and families living off reserve. While this initiative does not restore jurisdiction over child welfare to First Nations, it is a significant step towards that goal.

First Nations of Southern Manitoba have been providing child and family services to their own people living on reserve for over twenty years. With the proclamation of *The Child and Family Services Authorities Act*, First Nations will be able to begin providing these same services to all of their citizens, wherever they live in Manitoba.

There are currently 7 mandated First Nations agencies providing a full range of child and family services to 36 southern First Nations. Each of these agencies provides a variety of programs and services designed to meet the needs of the families and children that they serve. These agencies have developed many innovative approaches, designed to support families and protect children, which are based on First Nations culture and customs.

Alternative care for children, including foster care, is one such program area. Over the last 20 years, the agencies have worked with communities and foster families to develop a base of licensed and trained foster parents and alternate care resources. As a result of this work, we are now able to keep First Nations children who



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are in need of alternate care within their extended families, home communities, and within the Aboriginal community.

Each agency has staff that recruit, license, and train foster parents, and also provide ongoing support to foster homes when children are placed. Foster parents who are interested in getting more information should call the agencies directly. The key contact for each agency with respect to foster care is:

- ◆ Anishinaabe Child and Family Services – Martha Marsden
- ◆ Dakota Ojibway Child and Family Services – Bev Flett
- ◆ Intertribal Child and Family Services – Liz Murdoch
- ◆ Peguis Child and Family Services – Rhonda Traverse (Peguis) & Tara Petti (Wpg)
- ◆ Sagkeeng Child and Family Services – Andrea Klyne Lavallee
- ◆ Southeast Child and Family Services – Lloyd Goodmanson
- ◆ West Region Child and Family Services – Angela Everett

You may also contact the Southern First Nations Authority for further information. Please call Louise McKay at (204) 783-9190.

The Southern First Nations Authority is looking forward to working in partnership with the southern First Nations agencies to continue to develop and deliver innovative and progressive alternative care programs, built on First Nations values, respecting First Nations customs and practices, and honoring First Nations children.



## Anishinaabe Child and Family Services

Anishinaabe Child and Family Services provides child and family services to members of the following First Nations:

- ◆ Lake Manitoba First Nation
- ◆ Little Saskatchewan First Nation
- ◆ Lake St. Martin First Nation
- ◆ Dauphin River First Nation
- ◆ Pinaymootang First Nation



Our agency operates under the following mission statement:

*The Agency will deliver mandated child and family services and programs in a manner which will maintain and strengthen the individual, the family unit and the First Nations community within the context of Aboriginal values and customs.*

Our philosophy is based on the belief that the child is a precious gift from the Creator, who has entrusted the family of the child with the sacred duty to love, protect and nurture him/her in the ways of the First Nations people.

We offer training and ongoing support to all of our foster homes. We also have a Winnipeg outreach office that monitors children in care who are placed in foster homes in Winnipeg and surrounding areas. Outreach staff advocate and make referrals based on the needs of the child and his/her family.



## **Contact Information:**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dave Rundle

Main Office: Pinaymootang First Nation  
Fairford, Manitoba  
R0C 0X0  
Ph: (204) 659-4546 Fax: (204) 659-5877

## **Other Offices:**

Winnipeg Outreach  
501-286 Smith Street  
Winnipeg, MB R3C 1K4  
Ph: (204) 942-0788 Fax: (204) 957-1734

Lake Manitoba First Nation  
Vogar, Manitoba R0C 3C0  
Ph: (204) 768-2317 Fax: (204) 768-9007

Little Saskatchewan First Nation  
St. Martin, Manitoba R0C 2T0  
Ph: (204) 659-4403 Fax: (204) 659-5391

Lake St. Martin First Nation  
Gypsumville, Manitoba R0C 1J0  
Ph: (204) 659-5855 Fax: (204) 659-5724

Dauphin River First Nation  
Gypsumville, Manitoba R0C 1J0  
Ph: (204) 659-5810 Fax: (204) 659-5816

Pinaymootang First Nation  
Fairford, Manitoba R0C 0X0  
Ph: (204) 659-5707 Fax: (204) 659-4225





## Intertribal Child and Family Services

Intertribal Child and Family Services provides child and family services to the members of three First Nations communities:

- ◆ Fisher River Cree Nation
- ◆ Kinonjeoshtegon First Nation
- ◆ Dakota Tipi First Nation

Our motto is:

*Serving the Cree, Ojibway and Dakota First Nations.*



We operate under the following mission statement:

*To develop support systems that protect children, empower families and strengthen our communities.*

Common values of our agency include:

- |                      |                       |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| ◆ Acceptance         | ◆ Balanced lifestyle  |
| ◆ Bonds/Belonging    | ◆ Communication       |
| ◆ Community roots    | ◆ Family differences  |
| ◆ Friendship         | ◆ Have fun / laughter |
| ◆ Love/Respect/Trust | ◆ Support/Teaching    |
| ◆ Value our elders   | ◆ Value our history   |
| ◆ Working together   |                       |

We believe that fostering involves becoming part of a team of people planning for the best interests of the child. We understand that fostering means learning to cope with the daily stresses and trials of children who need to feel loved and special. To support foster families, we encourage communication between foster parents and our staff, and endeavor to respond quickly and with compassion to any questions and concerns that foster parents have. As well, we provide regular activities and training for foster parents and children to promote physical and emotional well-being.



## **Contact Information:**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
Shirley Cochrane

Main Office:           Box 358  
Koostatak, MB R0C 1S0  
Ph: (204) 645-2744 Fax: (204) 645-3065  
Toll Free: 1-866-573-4461

## **Other Offices:**

Winnipeg Outreach  
Unit 19-399 Berry Street  
Winnipeg, MB R3J 1N6  
Ph: (204) 927-2800 Fax: (204) 949-1180  
Toll Free: 1-866-573-4460

Kinonjeoshtegon Child and Family  
Kinonjeoshtegon First Nation  
Box 10  
Dallas, MB R0C 0S0  
Ph: (204) 394-2281 Fax: (204) 394-2285

Dakota Tipi Child & Family  
2020 Dakota Drive  
Dakota Tipi, MB R1N 3X6  
Ph: (204) 857-4381 Fax: (204) 857-9855



## Peguis Child and Family Services

Peguis Child and Family Services provides services under *The Child and Family Services Act* of Manitoba to Peguis Band members on and off reserve. These services include:

Service to families, child protection, children in care, foster homes and adoption.

Other services are also offered which include, but are not limited to: family violence, anger management, parenting skills, advocacy and Interprovincial liason when Peguis band members need or request such services.



Peguis Child and Family Services mission statement is to produce services that protect children, and enhance the quality of life for Peguis First Nation families and community.

Peguis Child and Family Services recruits and provides training and support through workshops and home visits to foster families. The Foster Home application process involves an application, home visits, child abuse and criminal records checks, a homestudy and final approval by the Executive Director.

The qualities important in fostering are that families have room in their lives for children and the ability to provide a stable home life, guidance, love and security. Wherever possible, the goal of the agency is to reunite the foster child with his or her natural family.

Our organization is committed to a positive working relationship with the General, Metis and Northern Authorities in the restructuring of the child and family services system.



## **Contact Information:**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
Sylvia Wilson

Main Office:      Box 610  
                         Peguis, MB  
                         R0C 3J0  
                         Ph: (204) 645-2049    Fax: (204) 645-2558

## **Other Offices:**

Winnipeg Outreach  
Unit 6 - 350 Keewatin Street  
Winnipeg, MB R2X 2R9  
Ph: (204) 632-5404    Fax: (204) 632-7226



## **First Nations of Northern Manitoba Child and Family Services Authority**

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The opportunity has been created for First Nations of northern Manitoba child and family service agencies to move closer to attaining full jurisdiction over child and family matters. While the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry - Child Welfare Initiative is not a self-government initiative, it is a process that has extended our mandate to help our families living off-reserve.

One area of service is in foster care. In our northern communities, the existing First Nation child and family service agencies have developed models, such as custom care, community care and alternative programs. These models have been designed to meet the goals and objectives of northern First Nations and the needs of northern First Nation children, with an emphasis on program elements which recognize and support First Nations identity, traditional customs and culture.

With the development of the Northern First Nations Authority and the establishment of service delivery sites off-reserve, the Northern First Nations Authority will support the above principles, but will also be mindful of its relationship to the provincial system and its program and service delivery standards.



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While there will be differences between the Northern First Nations Authority and its service delivery system, in terms of roles and responsibilities, there will be commonalities in the areas of philosophy, recruitment, support systems, financial systems, placement protocols, reviews, data and record keeping, registration requirements, and appeal processes. Examples of common elements reflected in the philosophy of most service delivery systems include: “our children are our most precious resource”; “children are our future”; “children are entitled to a safe and healthy environment that is nurturing and protective”; and “keeping families together”.

The Northern First Nations Authority is committed to creating a better system for helping our people.

For more information, please call: (204) 927-7516



## General Child and Family Services Authority

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The General Child and Family Services Authority (General Authority) has been created as a part of the whole child welfare reform strategy contemplated by the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry – Child Welfare Initiative (AJI-CWI). In transitioning responsibility for Aboriginal children and families requiring child welfare services to the First Nations and Metis Authorities, it was recognized that the non-Aboriginal population needed to be served. The design of the new system will see responsibility for all non-Aboriginal permanent wards and those who choose the General Authority as their service provider rest with General Authority agencies.

The General Authority agencies are as follows:

- ◆ Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba
- ◆ Child and Family Services of Central Manitoba
- ◆ Jewish Child and Family Service
- ◆ Churchill Child and Family Services (a program of the Churchill Regional Health Authority)
- ◆ Winnipeg Child and Family Services Branch
- ◆ Interlake Child and Family Services
- ◆ Eastman Child and Family Services
- ◆ Parkland Child and Family Services
- ◆ Northern Child and Family Services

All of these agencies have been in existence for many years and continue to deliver child welfare services in their particular geographical regions. They will continue to be responsible for receiving referrals from their communities, investigating child abuse allegations, and providing all services under *The Child and Family Services Act* and *The Adoption Act*, including licensing foster homes.

The role of the General Authority will be as articulated in *The Child and Family Services Authorities Act* but generally is as follows:



- ◆ To ensure that child and family services are delivered through a network of agencies to all children and families falling under the jurisdiction of the General Authority who require these services
- ◆ To advocate for the delivery of high quality services throughout the General Authority agencies
- ◆ To fund the agencies under its jurisdiction for regional and community based programs and services; and
- ◆ To ensure compliance with legislation, regulations and standards

The General Authority will be governed by a Board of Directors appointed by the Minister of Family Services and Housing for the Province of Manitoba. The Board will be a governance Board which will take the lead role with the General Authority in promoting and supporting innovative programs within the agencies.

The AJI-CWI has created a unique opportunity for all Authorities and service providers to examine critically all of the assumptions behind the traditional delivery of child welfare in this province. The General Authority too will take this opportunity. With the leadership of the General Authority and the continued work of the agencies, the future of services to children and families will be reformed and enhanced. The well being of all children living in the province continues to be the prime directive for all of child welfare practitioners. Innovative and creative alternatives to the more traditional delivery of the services is what is driving the whole system under this initiative....we need to preserve what is good for children and change what doesn't work anymore.

For more information contact:  
Dennis H. Schellenberg  
Chief Executive Officer  
(204) 984-9360 or  
Toll Free: 1-866-803-2814





## Interlake Child and Family Services

Interlake Child and Family Services serves the entire Interlake region. Our vision is safety, self-sufficiency and dignity for all citizens of Interlake Region. We also have a Mission Statement to guide our service delivery:



*Dedicated to providing protection and support services to children and their families through the promotion and development of partnerships in the community.*

Like other foster care providers, we recruit and develop foster homes for children in need of protection. We follow a detailed process of orientation, completing an application, background and reference checks, and an in-depth home study (up to three home visits).

We make every effort to reunite a foster child with his or her family, or find a permanent home for the child if reunification is not possible. Extended family and friends are approached to try to maintain the child in his/her own community and, if at all possible, cultural background.

Our Foster Care program is committed to working cooperatively with our Aboriginal and Metis partners in the restructured child and family services system.



## **Contact Information:**

**REGIONAL DIRECTOR**  
Gerry Liske

**Main Office:** 3rd Floor, Administration Building  
Box 9600  
825 Manitoba Avenue  
Selkirk MB R1A 2B5  
Ph: (204) 785-5100 Fax:(204) 785-4882

## **Other Offices:**

**Gimli District Office**  
Box 1290  
120-6th Avenue  
Gimli Mb R0C 1B0  
Ph: (204) 642-6051 Fax:(204) 642-4924

**Selkirk District Office**  
101-446 Main Street  
Selkirk MB R1A 1V7  
Ph: (204) 785-5106 Fax: (204) 785-5321

**Stonewall District Office**  
589-3rd Avenue  
Stonewall MB R0C 2Z0  
Ph:(204) 467-4421 Fax: (204) 467-4431

**Ashern District Office**  
Box 310  
43 Railway Avenue  
Ashern Mb R0C 0E0  
Ph:(204) 768-2585 Fax: (204) 768-2961



## DO YOU . . . .

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**Want more information?**

**Have any concerns?**

If you want more information before you make a decision regarding the new foster care arrangements, please speak to your worker. If you prefer, you can also call any of the Child and Family Services Authorities during regular office hours:

Metis Child and Family Services Authority  
(204) 949-0220

First Nations of Southern Manitoba  
Child and Family Services Authority  
(204) 783-9190  
Toll Free: 1-800-665-5762

First Nations Northern Manitoba  
Child and Family Services Authority  
(204) 927-7516

General Child and Family Services Authority  
(204) 984-9360  
Toll Free 1-866-803-2814

OR:

Visit the web site:  
[www.aji-cwi.mb.ca](http://www.aji-cwi.mb.ca)

Call the Central Information Line:  
In Winnipeg: **(204) 945-1183**  
Toll Free: **1-866-803-7503**



