

2013/2014

Alberta Association of Services for Children and Families – Annual Report



Rhonda Barraclough

Strategic Framework 2011-2016

AASCF's Strategic Framework was developed by the AASCF Board of Directors, the executive director, AASCF staff and our members.

Our Mission	Our Values
<p>The Alberta Association of Services for Children and Families works to strengthen member agencies and promotes attitudes, practices and conditions that contribute to quality services for vulnerable children and families. We achieve our mission by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating a network of agencies for information sharing, social policy development and advocating on behalf of service providers; • Working to resolve social policy issues with collaboration between various stakeholders; • Developing professional service excellence; • Representing the interests of member agencies on regional and provincial committees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect for children, families and communities • Working together; • Service excellence; • Diversity of individuals, cultures, communities and services; • The strength of the community of staff, professionals and volunteer helpers who support children and families.

Our Beliefs

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All people must be treated with dignity and respect. • Children and families must live in safe, secure, healthy, stable and nurturing environments. • Children and families need to be supported in developing a sense of pride in themselves and their cultural heritage. • Understanding and supporting people's spiritual beliefs contribute to their sense of empowerment, resiliency and capacity. • Children and families must be given the opportunity to access education that meets their needs. • Services need to be accessible and responsive to all in a timely and proactive way. • People must know what services are available to them. • People have the capacity to make their own decision. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All families and communities have the strengths and capacities to grow and change. • Service providers must foster and facilitate growth for children, families and communities. • People must be heard. • Quality Services must be sensitive to all cultures in supporting children in their familiar environments and in their home communities. • Children are gifts and we are all equally responsible for their well-being. • We believe in the integrity of Aboriginal culture specifically. • All cultures' values, language, beliefs, principles and ceremonial practices for the empowerment of children, families, individuals, communities and agencies are important. • Each child and family must be provided the opportunity to maximize their potential.
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Our Strategic Directions

<p>WORKFORCE CHALLENGES</p>	<p>TASKS>></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in the Human Services Network. • Participate as a member of the Alberta Workforce Council. • Liaise with other organizations on coordinated support for agencies (e.g. ECVO, CCVO, etc.). • Provide workshops as necessary that help participants address workforce issues and challenges. • Participate in research projects that identify the value of the non-profit sector and its impact and influence on the community/economy. • Advocate through government channels for increased resources and support to address workforce issues and challenges, including support of AASCF, ACYS, etc. • Continue working with AASCF members through strategic initiatives committee to develop approaches, advocacy and support. • Work for adequate funding of our programs, services, and administration. • Work to ameliorate the historical salary gap issues facing our membership.
<p>SELF SUFFICIENCY</p>	<p>TASKS>></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain an office space that is suitable and affordable. • Produce the Annual budget. • Provide training opportunities as a revenue source. • Determine other or alternative revenue sources that may be available to AASCF.
<p>QUALITY SERVICES</p>	<p>TASKS>></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to work on OBSD including hiring staff to support initiative. • Provide guidance and expertise to policy areas. • Respond to reviews and questions as necessary. • Support the FSCD council. • Contract Foster Care Council. • Provide training on practice and practice related issues. • Hold AASCF conference. • Undertake and/or participate in best practice, evidence based research about <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Aboriginal services, ✓ Child intervention, and ✓ Outcomes for children. • Provide ongoing opportunities for leadership development through the Bursary Program. • Convey stories that demonstrate effective practice models, successful services, and the role of AASCF.

Our Strategic Directions

<p>STRUCTURE</p>	<p>TASKS>></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Board structure. • Continue to regularly upgrade the website and our communication tools. • Provide regular updates, and ED news. • Hold regular membership meetings. • Produce an Annual report. • Undertake surveys and data gathering to ensure advocacy is accurate. • Review Business practices and business purchasing.
<p>Ensure the effective and efficient operational structure of AASCF. This involves continued, effective communication with members as well as the potential to sell new services to government.</p>	
<p>A VOICE FOR MEMBERS</p>	<p>TASKS>></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to be a voice for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Funding issues, ✓ Increasing the strength of the sector and ✓ Advocacy. • Increase the strength of the social services sector especially with respect to the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Language and reframing our work, ✓ Business mentality, ✓ Social Return on Investment, • Review diversity in membership.
<p>AASCF will clarify what its voice will be used for, when it will be utilized, for whom it will be used to benefit, and the audiences which are most crucial for it voice to be heard.</p>	

The Highlights 2013/2014

Workforce challenges/ Issues and efforts to date

The Workforce Alliance remains a viable committee. At this time it is considering what a healthy workforce is and what it can do to work towards developing that. Currently a literature review of this area is underway and some data is being gathered to draw a picture of the sector including the agencies that sit within AASCF, ACDS, AWSA, AHVNA. This is collaborative work that is being conducted with government input as well.

Over the past year the focus has been on wage increases, contracting and looking at ways to make contracts more consistent and flexible, and training in various parts of the sector.

Wage increases:

Generally speaking in 2012/2013 there were \$1500.00 bonuses for front line delivery staff and a 5% increase in wages. There was some variation on this in certain sectors. At the time it included Women's Shelters, Child and Family services contracted agencies and agencies contracting to provide PDD services, and brain injury providers.

In 2013/2014 and 2014/2015 there were increases and this time the Ministry of Human Services had been formed so increases were also provided for homelessness agencies, and immigrant serving agencies, FSCD agencies and parent agreements, brain injury programs and the FASD networks. Along with the increases came significant flexibility in how those increases are applied. Executive directors have autonomy to distribute the wage increases in a matter they see fit within the programs that are receiving them and it is inclusive of all staff in the contracts, not just front line providers.

This work continues as we meet with the Ministry executive, and sit on the Workforce Alliance and its various working groups. Members should not let their guard down though, we need to continue to make sure politicians and government executives continue to see the contracted and non-profit sector as a viable option and need to encourage their support to develop a healthy and sustainable workforce. We still have a long way to go, but progress is being made.



Outcome Based Service Delivery and Practice shifts

While OBSD continues to “roll-out” across the province, it has continued to evolve and many other initiatives (i.e. Signs of Safety, the Child Intervention Practice Framework (CIPF), Front-end Strategies etc.) have evolved from the work being done in the OBSD sites. Many of the initiatives are being rolled-out at different rates and are in different phases of implementation within each region. While there is some confusion, ***it is important to understand that all of the different initiatives and shifts in practice are connected, congruent; complement each other; are moving in the same direction and are intended to support children and families to achieve better outcomes.*** As a result, the AASCF has representation on the implementation committees and I sit at the OBSD Leads, Signs of Safety, Practice Framework and Communication tables.

- The report entitled ***The Shape of Practice - the 2013 OBSD File Review Report*** has been made public and is a good overview of the evolution of OBSD and provides evidence of shift in practice within OBSD sites
- The OBSD newsletter is still being compiled collaboratively, has broadened its focus to include other practice shifts and been renamed ***Outcomes Focused Newsletter***. The latest newsletter was released in Summer 2014

Since writing the last report for the board in May 2014, there has been a much activity and what is being called “turbo implementation” of the Minister of Human Services, ***5 point plan***. (available to be viewed on the AASCF web-site: www.aascf.com under ***Sector News*** (at the bottom of the home page) ***Ab. Gov’t News and Initiatives*** . Some of the shifts include:

- **The Child Intervention Practice Framework (CIPF)** outlines six principles - Aboriginal Experience, Preserve Family, Strengths-Based, Connection, Collaboration and Continuous Improvement upon which all child intervention decisions should be based. The CIPF has been widely distributed and work is being done to embed the framework principles into practice: <http://humanservices.alberta.ca/CIPpractice>
- The **Signs of Safety (SoS)** model of child intervention has been adopted province wide and the Minister of Human Services has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (August 2014) with Western Australia which will allow both jurisdictions to share research, training and on-going learning
 - Massive amounts of training are in progress, in all regions. Agency staff are being invited to participate in the SoS trainings

- If you are not familiar with this model there is a ***Signs of Safety Briefing Paper, 2012*** and newsletter on our web-site: www.aascf.com
- **Front end Strategies**, an initiative to slow down the Intake Process of Child Intervention, was piloted in various offices (over the last year) and is being implemented province wide. This shift in process has resulted in quite dramatic shifts in the rate of apprehension and front-end support to families.
- Minister Bhuller indicated a real interest in **kinship care**, resulting in focused work within this area:
 - A study has been completed that looked at the rate of children placed in kinship care (as a first/second placement), the barriers (including biases and beliefs) and recommending changes in policy/practice;
 - There has been a Memorandum of Understanding signed with the Edmonton and Calgary Police Services to address the need for quick Criminal Record Checks and an MOU is being worked on with the RCMP;
 - Training in Family Group Conferencing/Talking Circles and Relative Searches are being supported;
 - A KIN Line (a phone number answered by a real person) will soon be available to answer questions and provide support for kinship providers and
 - As there is more work happening within the multicultural communities, with new refugees/immigrants with limited English, access to translation services is being made available. A phone number will soon be made available to access translators of over 120 different languages (including some Aboriginal languages).

Edmonton and Area Region has completed a lengthy process of selecting **OBSD Lead Agencies** as they are going **"all in"**. The process included: a Request for Information (2013); a Request for Proposals (spring 2014); panel selection and decision making over the summer. Lead Agencies and their partner Edmonton CFS office were announced in August 2014 and the sites will become operational April 1 2015:

- **AltaCare Resources** – South West NCCYF
- **Bosco Homes** – West Central, St. Albert & Spruce Grove NCCYF
- **Ubuntu** (partnership with Boyle Street Community Services, Norwood Child & Family Resource Centre, Terra Centre for Teen Parents, Edmonton Mennonite Centre, and Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society) – North East NCCYF
- **Chimo Youth Retreat Centre** – Leduc, Sherwood Park, and Fort Saskatchewan NCCYFs

- **Catholic Social Services** – Energy Square NCCYF
- **The Family Centre** – East NCCYF
- **McMan Youth, Family and Community Services Association** – South East NCCY

Working Together/Caring Together Workshops:

The AASCF/Alberta Foster Parent Association and Regional Staff are developing and implementing a series of workshops for foster parents, kinship providers, community representatives and front-line staff. *Many caregivers have already experienced how practice is changing within the sites working to implement OBSD, Front-end Strategies, Signs of Safety, the Practice Framework and others. As the practice of child intervention changes, so does the role of foster parents, kinship providers and staff working with the children and their families.*

- The workshop in Calgary (June 2014) had over 335 adult participants and the presentations were taped. The videos, which present an excellent overview of what is happening in Calgary Region (including emerging trends and changes in the numbers as a result of the practice shifts) , power points and *Notes from the Table Conversations* are available to be viewed and/or used and may be found at: [www.aascf.com/AASCF Initiatives/AASCF News and Resources/ AASCF/AFPA Workshop materials June 16 Working Together](http://www.aascf.com/AASCF%20Initiatives/AASCF%20News%20and%20Resources/AASCF/AFPA%20Workshop%20materials%20June%2016%20Working%20Together).
- Workshops are scheduled for Central Region (2 in October) and the other Regions are looking at either later this fall (Nov), January in Edmonton or later into the spring
- The Red Deer Caring Together workshop will also be taped and made available

The last of 5 **Response Abilities Pathways (RAP) /Circle of Courage Workshops** will be offered in Edmonton Oct 23-24.

- Workshops have been completed in Edmonton, Calgary and High Prairie.

Family Group Conference/Talking Circle Facilitation Training, facilitated by Gayle Desmeules from Native Counseling

- We will be offering 2 sessions, one in Edmonton later this fall 2014 and the other in Calgary in the spring 2015. In total 24 people will participate in 5.5 days classroom instruction (2.5 days initially and 3 a month later) and 2 community of practice sessions between the classroom sessions, to support the learning

- 50 participants (25 in Edmonton and 25 in Calgary) completed FGC Facilitation training in the fall of 2013

Another session of ***Allying with Indigenous People, the Practice of omanitew*** was scheduled for Calgary at the beginning of September but had to be postponed; to be re-scheduled for late November

- An evaluation of the first 2 sessions has been completed. The full ***Evaluation, Executive Summary and the Notes of the follow-up session with CEO's/Managers*** and Ministry staff are on the web-site (with 966 hits). In addition, there are very good related recourses:
 - Surveys developed by Drs Leona Makokis and Ralph Boder with FCSS Calgary to assist agencies to assess their level of inclusion entitled: ***Aboriginal Identity Tool*** (Questions addresses Aboriginal Identity and Social Inclusion)
 - A paper entitled ***Innovations in program development - Indigenous concepts and framework vital for human service workers: The practice of omanitew***, R. Bodor, L. Makokis, S. Friesen (AASCF Research Journal vol 7, June 2014)



Casework Practice Model and OBSD; Report Writing and Documentation and Preparing for Court Workshops

These were developed to support the implementation of OBSD (videos, power-point and support manuals) continue to be accessed and used as part of organization's staff orientation and on-going training. The numbers of hits on our website, for these workshops are:

	<u>Sept 2013</u>	<u>Sept 2014</u>
Preparing for Court	121	1421
CWPM/OBSD and	149	1348
Report Writing	153	1668

Health and Safety in the Child and Family Service Sector (HSCFS) Project Update

This is a Board initiative of the AASCF. It has been requested that we endeavor to assist agencies in decreasing their WCB costs and support a healthier workforce through Occupational Health and Safety. As we work our way through the various systems involved and do some research in our specific area of work we will update the membership.

- A survey addressing psychosocial hazards was developed and piloted with the membership of the Youth and Child Care Association - 97 front line staff and supervisors completed the questionnaire. The data is being analyzed.
- The survey will be re-worked and distributed more widely
- A funding proposal is being developed for submission to the Ministry of Jobs, Skills, Training and Labour by Oct 15 (a new research funding process called OHS Futures)
- We have met with the Continuing Care Safety Association (about the possibility of expanding their mandate to include our sector) and I have had meetings with organizations about the processes they have developed, to either become certified (Certificate of Recognition-COR) or to further develop their internal OHS programming.

At this point it is clear there is a need for further research in our sector and in the area of violence, trauma, and support to workers.



Signs of Safety

The Ministry has sponsored training in **Signs of Safety** in Calgary, Red Deer and Edmonton and is in the process of setting up more training sessions, as there is a groundswell of interest in this training on the part of CFSA staff. It is the approach being used in many parts of the province, including some of the DFNAs. We encourage agencies to take opportunities as they arise to attend Signs of Safety Training as it has become a provincial wide initiative of the Ministry and it is important that you know what it is about even if you do not use it in your practice.

In August, the Province of Alberta signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Helen Morton, Minister of Child Protection for Western Australia, to formalize a partnership to exchange knowledge, research collaboration and a potential caseworker job exchange. Australia has been leading the implementation of the Signs of Safety model.

Signs of Safety focus on tools to help workers determine a family's strengths and resources to reduce the risk to the child and to create a safer healthier environment. The approach, used in over 200 jurisdictions in 13 countries, empowers families and holds them accountable for identifying approaches that will keep children safe. Alberta is currently implementing the Signs of Safety approach across the province.



Mental Health First Aid (MHFA)

This is a collaborative initiative between Alberta Health Services and the Ministry of Human services. It has been felt that this course is extremely helpful for front line workers. It also has met many of the criteria in accreditation for suicide and self harm areas. MHFA continues to be offered throughout the province by AASCF and the MH Commission. AASCF will continue for the rest of this fiscal year to support and pay for the course for members. Please just call and let us know in advance and we will make sure we help you out. If you want to run a session in your agency and have a

significant number of attendees we will/ can set up a session there for you as well.



AASCF Annual Conference- *Strengthening Today, Building Tomorrow*

The Conference is set for January 29 &30, 2014. Again it is promising to have great speakers - Charlie Applestien, Paula Maclean and Joe Roberts and entertainer, Craig Cardiff. We encourage all members to review the information and encourage your staff to attend. This truly is a great networking and training and development event for front line and executive staff.

Leadership Bursary Project

Along with our distribution of Bursary funds for leadership training and development this year we have encouraged agencies to consider collective leadership development and added a \$5,000.00 bursary option to train larger groups of leaders in agencies.

Alberta Mentoring Partnership (AMP)

The Alberta Mentoring Partnerships vision is that every child or youth who needs a mentor has access to a mentor. The mission is to grow sustainable mentoring across Alberta through a shared services approach. Mentoring offers the power to transform lives and make a difference. AASCF has sat on the leadership team for many years. Some of the agencies that are partners of AMP are members of ours as well. This year one of the strategic priorities for AMP has been developing Mentoring for Children and Youth in Care. That priority became a turbo-boosted priority as Minister Bhuller became interested in this area of work and added more resources. As a result there are 3 pilot

sites – Edmonton, Calgary and Red Deer that are beginning work on developing mentoring for Children in Care.



Reconstructing group care

A committee of government and agency group care providers has been meeting to develop some new guidelines and recommendations regarding the use of group/residential care. It is our intention to develop some recommendations about best or promising practice in this area and to work with government policy makers and caregivers to implement them to improve outcomes for children and youth in these types of resources.

Foster Care

Over the last year a Provincial Foster Care table has been developed. This table brings together the Alberta Foster Parent Association, contracted foster care providers and the Ministry to discuss policy and procedures that involve foster care in Alberta.

An exciting project, that a collaborative of AASCF and AFPA, and other advisory folks, has been the development of resources for foster parents on how to transition children into adulthood. In doing this a manual was created that is online – *Transitioning Youth in Care*

Looking Forward

These are many, but not all, of the activities that AASCF have been involved this last year. It has been an exciting year of projects, policy change and politics. We have strived to stay on top of activities that matter to our members.

As we move forward with our rebranding and new logo activities we are asking members to become involved. We want to know what you see AASCF as, how we work for you, where can we improve. All part of the communication process that we are embarking on. You will also be asked in our annual survey should you not be able to be at our meetings in person.

With the new political realities in Alberta, we are looking forward to developing some key messages to talk with new politicians and encourage you to go out and meet your new MLA's and the new Minister.

We are tentatively planning on a political forum the evening before the conference as well. Our hope is to have all the political leaders attend and to ask them some questions that relate to our sector and hopefully will get them thinking about how they campaign for children and youth in the upcoming year.

Financial Report

See separate document for financial report

All documents referenced within this report may be found on the AASCF Web-site www.aascf.com.

Sandra Maygard continues to be available to chat with individuals (by e-mail, phone or in-person) or groups (staff and/or Board) about:

- OBSD,
- the shifts in practice initiatives and/or
- What we are learning through the HSCFS project (ideas to how to move some of the changes forward within the organization)

She can be reached at:

Sandra Maygard

OBSD/ HSCFS Project

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Of course, I am also always available to discuss matters of importance to you as members. Please do not hesitate to contact me:

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2013/2014 Board of Directors

President – Jim Pritchard

Past President – Danica Frazer

Vice President – Bruce Armson

Treasurer/ NW Representative – Jacquie Aiken Kish

NE Representative – vacant

Edmonton and Area Representatives– Margaret Martin and Bruce Armson

Central Representatives – Sherri McAllister and Karen Murphy

Calgary and Area Representatives – Karen Olivier and Jim Pritchard

Southern Representatives – Betty Weiss and Crystal Elliott

Aboriginal Representatives – Lois Thompson and Casey Eaglespeaker

Academic Representative – Catherine Hedlin

