

# Ombudsman Manitoba

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April 26, 2006

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Thank you for meeting with me on April 21, 2006 to discuss the review of the child welfare system that we are undertaking. As you know, the Minister of Family Services and Housing has commissioned an external review of certain issues regarding case management in the child welfare system in Manitoba.

The scope of the review will include:

- Standards, processes and protocols for the opening and closure of child and family services cases
- Standards, processes and protocols for the transfer of child and family services cases between child and family services authorities
- Workloads managed by front line social workers in the child and family services system
- Any other related issues as deemed necessary by the co-chairs

Upon completion of the review we, as co-chairs, are to make recommendations as needed for the improvement of the system in these specific areas, and in other related areas as may be required.

We have met to discuss the way in which the work of the review will be conducted. The basic principle that will guide the review will be the protection and safety of Manitoba children.

We will work with you recognizing that you have the responsibility and mandate to make decisions and take action. If a situation arises where in our opinion there needs to be immediate action taken, that will be brought to your attention when it is discovered.

The review will be conducted in three separate phases as follows:

1) Best Practices Review

A best practices review will be undertaken to determine what the optimum standards in child welfare are, against which the existing standards and practices can be measured. This review will commence at the end of April and will be completed late summer to allow time for comparison of the data gained through the other phases of the review. It will also review how to define a workload and provide a method of measurement of the volume of work required to be performed by front line social workers.

2) Administrative Accountability Review

An administrative accountability review will commence as soon as possible to determine the existing requirements of the child welfare system in Manitoba as set out in legislation, regulations, standards, protocols and procedures in the Department of Family Services and Housing, the Child Welfare Authorities and the Child Welfare Agencies. This will include the administrative requirements for opening and closing cases, transfers of cases, and workloads managed by front line workers. The review of transfers will include not only transfers between authorities, but also from the department to the authorities.