

# Child Intervention 101

Child Intervention 101 is intended to describe the Child Intervention system for individuals who may not be familiar with how this particular system serves young people in Alberta. Additional information can be obtained from the people who work within the Child Intervention system and on the Government of Alberta website. The information contained in this document is based on the Child Intervention system in 2011 and, as with all human services, may evolve as the needs of children, youth and families change over time.

## Child intervention service delivery in Alberta

Under the direction of the Minister of Children and Youth Services, child intervention programs and services are provided to children, youth and families from local offices in 10 Child and Family Services Authorities (CFSAs) and 18 Delegated First Nation Agencies (DFNAs).

Visit [www.child.alberta.ca](http://www.child.alberta.ca) for more information about or to find the CFSA or DFNA office nearest you.

## Child intervention programs and services offered by Children and Youth Services

Child intervention services address issues that affect the safety and well-being of children and youth such as abuse, neglect, family violence, and addictions. The programs and services focus on supporting families to be healthy so that children grow up in safe and nurturing homes. Parents and guardians are responsible for caring for their children; however, if they are not willing or able to provide a safe and secure home for their children, it is the mandate of Children and Youth Services (CYS) to intervene under the *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act* (CYFEA).

Reports of child abuse or neglect are screened by an intake caseworker. This is followed by consultation with a casework supervisor, and the report may be referred for further assessment or investigation. If the reporter is a professional involved with the family they will receive a courtesy call back, once the report has been assessed. The details of a specific case cannot be disclosed due to the confidentiality provisions of CYFEA.

CYS offers a range of voluntary and mandatory programs to support safe and healthy children, youth and families. See [www.child.alberta.ca](http://www.child.alberta.ca) for a complete listing.

Examples of situations where CYS may intervene include situations when:

- A child has been physically, sexually or emotionally abused, or is at risk of abuse by the parent, or the parent does not protect the child from abuse.
- A child has been neglected by the parent.
- A child has been subjected to cruel and unusual treatment or punishment by the parent, or the parent fails to protect the child from cruel and unusual treatment or punishment.
- A child's parent is deceased and arrangements have not been made for the care of the child.
- The parents' whereabouts are unknown.

# Frequently Asked Questions?

## If I think a child or youth is in need of intervention services, when and who do I call?

The law states that any person who has reasonable and probable grounds to believe that a child is in need of intervention must report the matter to CYS. All Albertans, including educators, are required by law to report concerns, or may ask for information about child abuse and neglect by contacting their local CFSA, DFNA, or by calling the **Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-387-5437 (KIDS)**. The responsibility to report cannot be delegated to, or absolved by another person, including your supervisor.

## What does it mean when a child or youth is in care?

“In care” or “in the custody of the Director” means that CYS has care and custody of the child or youth either through a custody agreement with the parents or guardians or through a court order. The caseworker may sub-delegate some of these responsibilities to a person or agency that provides day-to-day care of the child such as a foster parent or group home. CYS can remain involved with a young person up to the age of 22.

## If a student is living with a grandparent or aunt, are they in care?

A child or youth may be in care and placed with a grandparent, aunt or other relative who has been approved as a foster home or kinship care home. However, not every child living with an extended family member is in care. The Provincial Protocol Framework (PPF) point person in each school will either have information about or can call the CFSA to inquire about which students are in care with CYS.

## Can a student receive services from CYS and not be in care?

A child or youth can receive support services while remaining in the parental home under a Supervision Order or a Family Enhancement Agreement with Guardian. Emancipated youth may receive services under an Enhancement Agreement with Youth or a Support and Financial Assistance Agreement. In most “not in care” cases, the parents retain legal guardianship until the child is age 18, regardless if the child or youth is living with the parent or not.

## What is a Delegated First Nation Agency (DFNA) and what do I need to know about working with the staff?

CYS recognizes First Nation, Métis, and Inuit community roles in the delivery of child intervention services on-reserve. A DFNA is an agency of professionals that have the delegated authority and responsibility to provide intervention services on reserve. Through agreements, CYS provides delegations of authority authorizing DFNAs to provide culturally appropriate intervention services within the geographic boundaries of the reserve. Indian and Northern Affairs Canada funds the DFNAs for providing these services.

It is important for partners to respect the cultural needs of Aboriginal children, youth and families. Partners should ensure that the DFNA caseworker is consulted about appropriate cultural protocols and supports specific to each child, youth and family. It is important to participate in cultural awareness training and seek assistance from cultural workers who may be available within your organization.

## If a student in care is Aboriginal, or from another cultural background, how can CYS help with providing cultural supports?

CYS recognizes the importance of supporting Aboriginal children and youth in care. Case plans include special consideration and planning for students who are Aboriginal, or from other cultures, to ensure that the student's cultural heritage is respected and preserved. It will be important to draw upon the resources of all community, school, CFSA and DFNA partners to support the child's identified cultural needs.

## How do I know who the student's caseworker is?

The school point person in each school will be provided with, or will have access to, information regarding the child or youth's caseworker and caregiver. In circumstances where the caseworker is located in another region, he, she, or a courtesy caseworker, will be available for core team meetings.

Caseworkers may not be available when you call because they are out of the office at court, appointments or on home visits. Always leave a voice message or, if urgent, press "0" to ask for a backup caseworker or supervisor. For after-hours emergencies call the **Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-387-5437 (KIDS)**.

## What information can a caseworker share about a child or youth in care?

CYS' involvement with a child, youth and family is confidential and information must be maintained and handled in a professional manner. The CYFEA allows for the sharing of information that is in the best interests of the young person; for example, information that supports day-to-day care and educational programming. However, in cases of a recent apprehension or other crisis intervention, the caseworker may have limited information regarding the child and family.

## Is there money available to support more than the basic needs of students in care?

In addition to providing for the basic needs of a child or youth in care, other allowances are available for school and extracurricular fees, recreational activities, and other programs and services that may be needed by the student. Contact the caseworker for information regarding available funds.

## Why are students in care sometimes moved suddenly from school?

A student in care may be moved to a different residence and/or school, or returned home for a number of reasons including a placement breakdown, protection concerns, or a court order. At times, the need to move a child may be beyond the control of the caseworker, and the move may happen suddenly. However, whenever possible, the caseworker will advise and work with the school and caregiver to jointly plan a smooth transition for the student.