

WALK WITH ME

17prohariaa 2025

Walk With Me

*A hand to hold, a path unknown
Through fears not meant to walk
alone*

*In every step, a light is cast
A hope for dreams, a love that
lasts*

*Though quiet, brave and seldom
seen*

*This walk can shape what might
have been*

2024-2025

91st Annual Report

**Child
& Family
Services**
OF CENTRAL MANITOBA

Walk With Me

2025

Gord Zacharias

In 2004, New Zealand Social Workers Maggie Greening and Nicki Weld introduced the world to an intervention tool that they called "The Three Houses" (Weld and Greening, 2004). They noticed that, to help people, we need to really hear, understand and consider their perspectives. They created a tool that imagined a child's worries, the good things in their lives, and their hopes and dreams as three houses.

The House of Worries represents things that make children feel vulnerable or unsafe.

The House of Good Things represents things that were positive, or make children feel safe and secure.

The House of Dreams represents a child's aspirations. It makes space for children to dream and consider what could be different in their lives.

Over the years, Social Workers around the world have integrated this tool into their practice and opened a whole new window into the lives of the children they serve.

"Walk With Me" was commissioned to represent the unique contribution of foster parents into the lives of vulnerable children. Drawing on the imagery of "The Three Houses", "Walk With Me", depicts a caring adult taking a child by the hand and helping them to navigate the road before them.

This is a road fraught with uncertainties. There are threats, both real and imagined. There are good things that strengthen and protect the child. There are dreams that the child can dare to reach for. The child cannot do this alone. They need a guide to walk with them, a safe and trustworthy adult to help them find their way.

So often, it is a foster parent who finds themselves taking this role in the life of a vulnerable child. The role is seldom glamorous or easy or lucrative, but it is important to that child, and it has an impact for generations to come.

Weld, N. and Greening, M. The Three Houses. In Social Work Now, Dec. 2004, PP 34-37.

Message from the President, Board of Directors

On behalf of the board of directors of Child and Family Services Central Manitoba Inc. (CFS-CM), I would like to acknowledge and thank all the staff for their professionalism and commitment to the children, youth, and families of the Central Region. The staff at CFS-CM are a special group of people who provide essential services to individuals and families in complex and difficult situations.

The board of CFS-CM includes 7 members from across the Central Region: Anne Malyon (Vice and Past President) from Winkler; Peter Veldhuis from Elm Creek; Bruce Wood (Board Recruitment) from Morden; Virginia Beckwith from St. Eustache; Jill Stuart-Edwards from Morden; Giselle Limaya Brito from Winkler; and me, Carol Braun (outgoing President) from Altona. Special thank you to Anne and Peter who are completing the third and final of their 3-year terms. We are a governance board, so we are not currently active as fundraisers or event-planners, but we are active in the area of governance. As board members in the Policy Governance model, board members act as representatives for people who live in the Central Region and are invested in the well-being of children, youth, and families. Participating on the board requires commitment and participation beyond the monthly meetings.

As a Policy Governance board, we are always learning more about the delivery of this model of leadership. We strive to learn more about this model and how to implement its 12 principles with integrity and to best effect. A major role of a Policy Governance board is control. This control does not refer to control of the day-to-day operations of the Agency but rather control of the RESULTS of the work of the Agency, which are clearly identified in what are called Ends policies. They are referenced throughout this report. This past year our educational focus was on assessing the performance and outcomes achieved by the Agency against expected results. The monitoring reports, presented by the Executive Director, provide the board with information and hard evidence that demonstrates how the work of CFS-CM is meeting the needs and expectations of the people in the Central Region.

On behalf of the board, I would like to acknowledge and thank the Executive Director for her commitment and work with the Agency staff to strive towards the Board's identified results, as well as her work to provide the board with ongoing reports of progress towards those results. As well, the Executive Director provides specific information to the board confirming that the Agency's practices fall within the designated guidelines of the Executive Limitations policies. As the board assesses the Executive Director reports, we monitor that the work of the Agency is producing the expected results within the parameters of legal, financial, ethical, and professional expectations.

This past year our board met with and gathered information from families and individuals who experienced the support of CFS-CM in the past and with social organizations in several communities in our region. In our efforts to determine if the Agency was meeting the needs of children, youth, and families in our region, Board members asked the meeting participants specific questions about their experiences with CFS-CM.

These meetings were incredibly valuable. Families and community organizations shared with us that, just as we have identified, they also want children and youth in our region to be safe and well; children to be safe within a family; families to be able to meet the needs of children; and families to be supported by their communities. On behalf of the board, I would like to thank those individuals, families, and organization reps who took the time to meet with our board members and shared so openly about their experiences with CFS-CM. This was incredible learning and connection for our board and helped us better understand the work of the agency AND the people who engage with the agency to do this vital work. As well, participants identified employees of CFS-CM as dedicated, committed, and caring people who supported them through some incredibly difficult life experiences.

In the coming months, the board will continue to review the information collected from the interviews conducted this past year, using it to inform what results are expected from CFS-CM. We also need to continue our efforts to recruit new board members, which will inform the direction of next year's education plan. Finally, our work for next year will include support to the Agency in its work to secure sufficient operating funds. Planning for the next year happens now in the fall as the monthly meetings resume.

Personally, I would like to thank the board for the opportunity to serve as President for the past 2 years. The commitment and contributions of each board member is key to the board's progress, growth, and effectiveness as we strive to serve our Agency and our region. I look forward to working with the board in the coming year as we continue to journey towards enacting the principles of Policy Governance and as we continue to do our best to represent the ideals and values of the broader community. At every level, from the provincial government to the General Authority to the board of CFS-CM to the Agency, the work of keeping children, youth and families safe and well is crucial for the health and well-being of our communities.

Thank you, interested community members, for your continued support to children, youth, and families in the region. Thank you for your support for the work of the CFS-CM Agency. We are pleased to share the 2024-25 annual report with you.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Braun, President CFS-CM Board of Directors

Message from the Executive Director

As the Executive Director of Child and Family Services of Central Manitoba, I am honored to present this report for our 90th Annual General Meeting. Over the past year, our agency continued to make strides in providing exceptional care and support to the children and families in the communities we serve.

During the 2024-2025 fiscal year, we operated with a deficit budget. We were, however, able to draw on our accumulated surplus while cutting expenses in cost centers that did not impact services to children and caregivers. As a result, we were able to ensure that we continued to provide high-quality services to families without interruption. The deficit was primarily due to salary increases for staff that were required to align with the Manitoba Government Employees contract (GEMA), as well as the rising costs associated with providing services for children in care. We remain committed to supporting communities within our jurisdiction with the same level of dedication and excellence.

This year, with the support of the General Authority, we introduced a new position within our agency - the Domestic Violence Coordinator. This role is vital in providing domestic violence training within our jurisdiction and assisting intake and family service staff with cases in which families are experiencing domestic violence. Using the Safe and Together approach, our Domestic Violence Coordinator working along with family service and intake workers, aims to hold the perpetrators accountable while identifying the protective strengths of the survivors. This model allows us to create better safety plans to keep children safe in their homes.

Our staff have undergone training on the Safe and Together model, which has equipped them with the skills to support families more effectively. Their dedication to continuous learning and improvement is greatly appreciated.

I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to our dedicated social workers on the front line, who tirelessly labor to support and educate caregivers while ensuring the safety and well-being of the children they work with. Their commitment and compassion are truly commendable.

Our supervisors, in-home support workers, case aides, administrative assistants, network facilitators, and domestic violence coordinator have all played crucial roles in supporting the families we work with, developing and maintaining relationships with community collaterals and implementing creative approaches to address complex situations. Each has contributed to creating a supportive and nurturing environment for the families we serve.

I would also like to thank our board of directors for their unwavering support and guidance. Their dedicated leadership has contributed to our agency's growth and success.

Special thanks to our Program Director, Michelle Sveistrup, Finance Manager, Rhonda Verwey and our Human Resource Generalist, Christine Bergen for their hard work and assistance over the past year. Their contributions have been invaluable to our agency.

Together, we have continued to shape our practice according to the General Authority Practice Model and we make more strides each year in this area. I am confident that we will continue to have a positive impact on the lives of the children and families we serve in the coming years.

Thank you for your dedication and commitment to Child and Family Services of Central Manitoba.

Respectfully submitted,
Chris Chabbert, B.A., B.S.W., M.S.W.
Executive Director



2024-2025 Board of Directors



**CAROL BRAUN,
PRESIDENT**

**ANNE MALYON,
VICE-PRESIDENT**

**CHRIS CHABBERT,
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**JILL STUART-
EDWARDS**

GISELLE LIMAYA BRITO

BRUCE WOOD

PETER VELDHUIS

VIRGINIA BECKWITH

Our VISION

*...Healthy children,
healthy families,
healthy communities...*



Child & Family Services of Central Manitoba, Inc. was established in May, 1934 as the Children's Aid Society of Central Manitoba. The Agency is a charitable organization governed by a volunteer Board of Directors that provides services under the Child and Family Services Act, the CFS Authorities Act and the Adoption Act of Manitoba.

The Central Region is a rather large geographical area located West of the City of Winnipeg. It is bound by the City of Winnipeg and the Red River on its eastern limit, by the International Boundary on the southern limits, by a line approximately half way between the City of Portage la Prairie and the City of Brandon on its western limit and, just north of the Town of Alonsa on its northern limit. Primarily agricultural in its economic base, the total population of this catchment area is over 104,000. The head office of the organization is located in Portage la Prairie and a sub office is located in Winkler.





**Child and Family Services of Central Manitoba exists so that
Children and Young Adults in the Central Region are safe and well**

Agency target ends (outcomes)

Children are safe
within a family

Children in our
care are successful

Children live in a
stable environment
with a caring adult

Family connections
are maintained

Families are able to
meet needs of
children

Vulnerable families
have a support
plan created with
the family

Caregivers have the
necessary skills to
care for children

Families are
supported by
their community

Inter-agency
relationships
support children
and families

Each family has a
support network

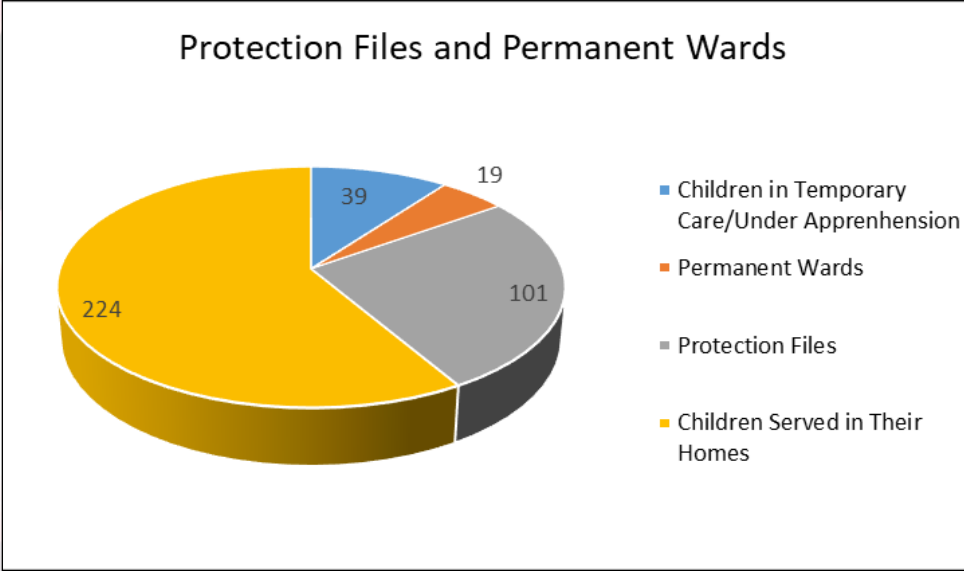
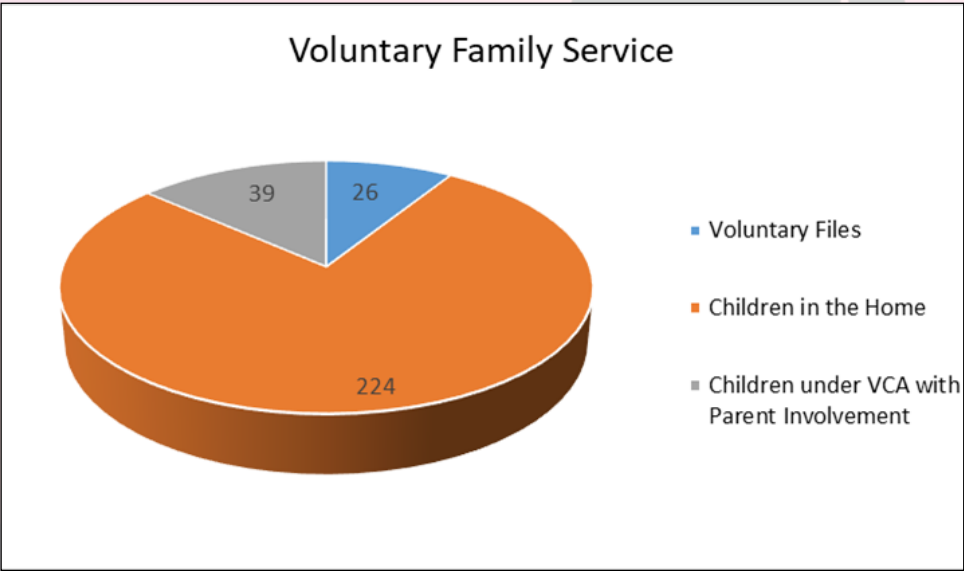
CHILDREN ARE SAFE WITHIN A FAMILY

On March 31, 2025 CFS of Central reported the following information:

Every effort is made to place children with extended family or those who care about them before an agency home is utilized and every effort is made to avoid apprehension by creating safety in the family home.

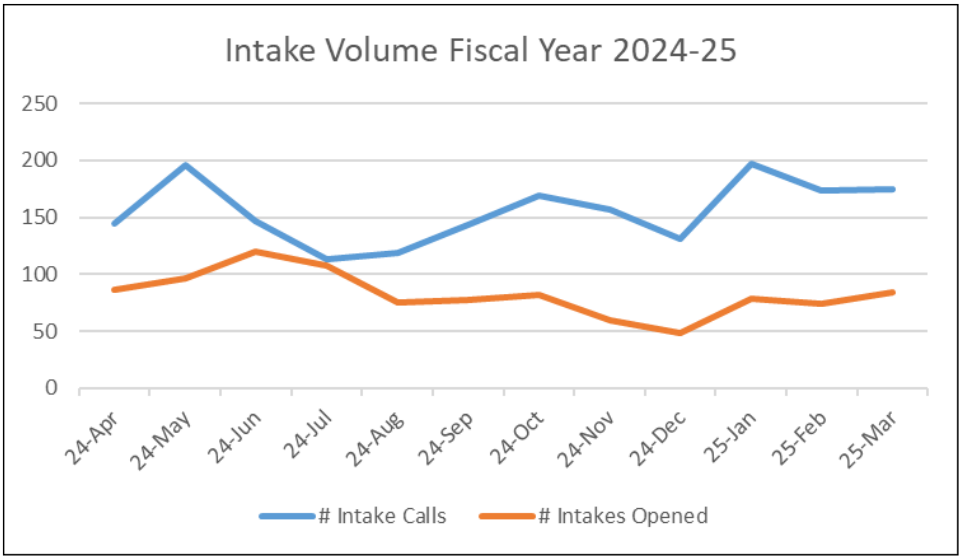
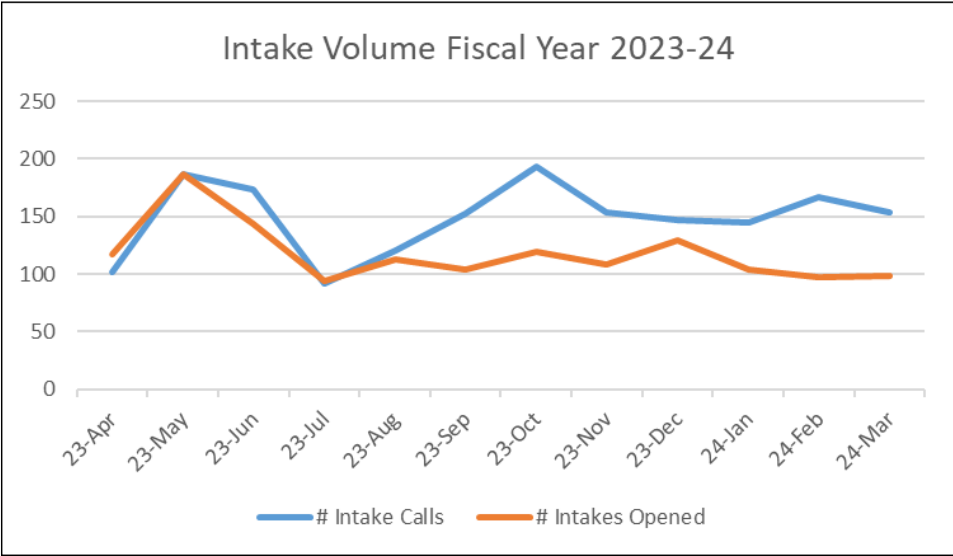
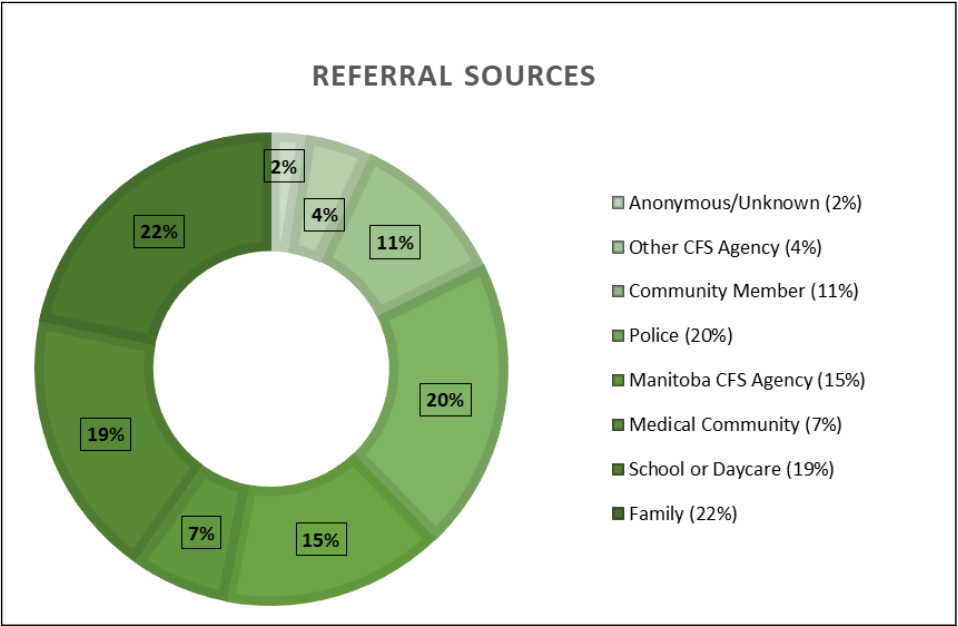
Of all the files closed, 100% of the children were deemed safe on the Safety Assessment and the Probability of Future Harm Assessment either indicated lower risk or, if the assessment indicated the same risk as a result of historical factors that could not change, a network of support was in place. Safety assessments are conducted promptly following any incident that has placed, or could have placed, a child at risk. Additionally, all open protection files undergo a reassessment of the likelihood of future harm approximately every 90 days. When children are assessed as unsafe or conditionally safe with a safety plan in place, immediate action is taken to enhance safety or, when necessary, remove the child from their caregivers. Throughout the duration of an open file, if the assessed risk of harm increases, the file remains active and further safety interventions are implemented to ensure the continued well-being of the children. These measures are designed to ensure that children remain in safe environments with appropriate caregivers.

In total, as of March 31, 2025, CFS of Central was providing service to 282 children. Of those 282 children, 224 of them were receiving services in their homes and 58 were in agency care.



Intake and After-Hours

Child & Family Services of Central Manitoba serves as the Designated Intake Agency (DIA) for an area of central Manitoba that encompasses twenty municipalities and one local government district, excluding First Nation communities. As the DIA we provide this service on behalf of the four Child & Family Service Authorities – Southern First Nations Network of Care, First Nations of Northern Manitoba Child & Family Services Authority, Métis Child & Family Services Authority and the General Child & Family Services Authority. We function as a single point of entry for referrals to the child welfare system.



Adoption

"Family isn't defined only by last names or by blood; it's defined by commitment and by love."

— Dave Willis



Adoption is a profound and life-changing act that weaves together the threads of love, hope, and belonging. It offers children the chance to grow up in a nurturing environment when their biological families are unable to care for them, and it gives adoptive parents the opportunity to build a family through compassion and commitment. Beyond just creating families, adoption plays a vital role in society by ensuring that every child has the chance to thrive in a safe, supportive home. It is a testament to the power of human connection and the belief that family is defined not only by blood, but by love and dedication.

Adoption work encompasses a range of responsibilities, including supporting foster parents adopting children in their care, guiding new applicants through the adoption process, managing financial subsidy files, preparing court reports, facilitating openness agreements, and responding to post-adoption inquiries. The adoption team also delivers its own educational series, which is a mandatory component for all new adoption applicants before they can proceed further in the adoption journey. We have 20 adoption applications under assessment or awaiting assessment. We have 4 families where their adoption assessment is finished, and they are currently on the adoption registry awaiting a placement. While our team provides service in all of Manitoba's Adoption Divisions, most of these applications are for Division 1, Permanent Ward Adoptions.

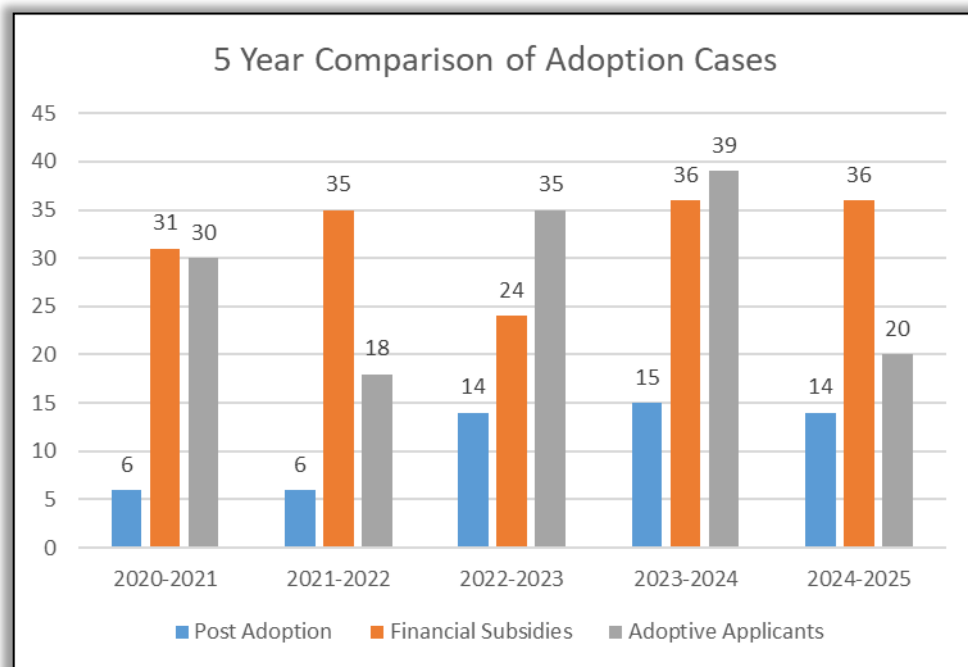
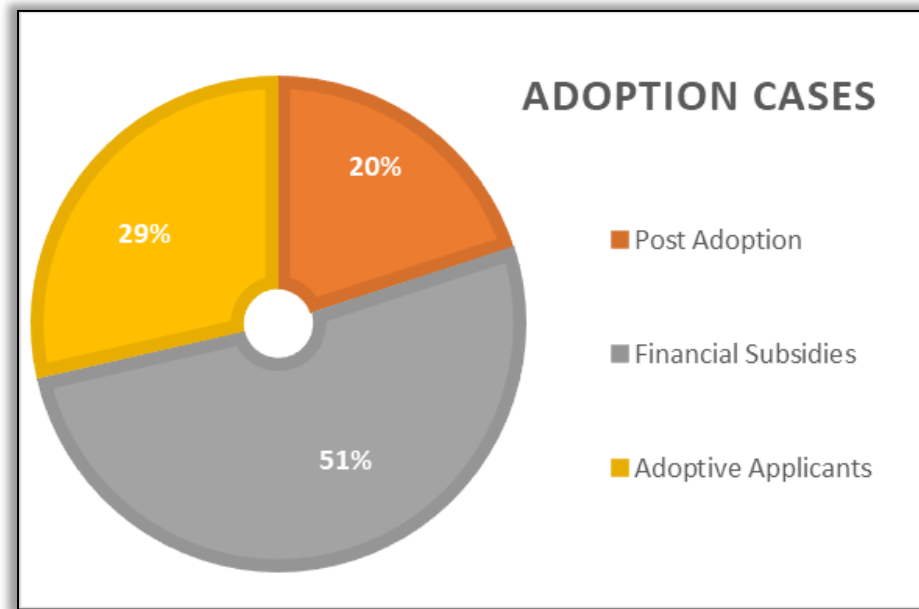
During the past year, our adoption team has finalized 2 adoptions as follows:

- 1 Permanent Ward Adoptions (Division 1) for CIC's from our agency
- 1 Permanent Ward Adoptions (Division 1) for CIC's from another GA agency

However, at the beginning of 2025 we are in the process of doing 6 adoptions.

As of March 31/25, we were carrying 36 Financial Subsidies for adoptive families which provides ongoing financial support to their adopted children. We provided post adoption support services to 14 adoptive and birth families. This usually involves assisting families with challenges related to openness agreements and children struggling to come to terms with their adoption story. We also continued to do a high volume of work in post adoption services to adult adoptees.

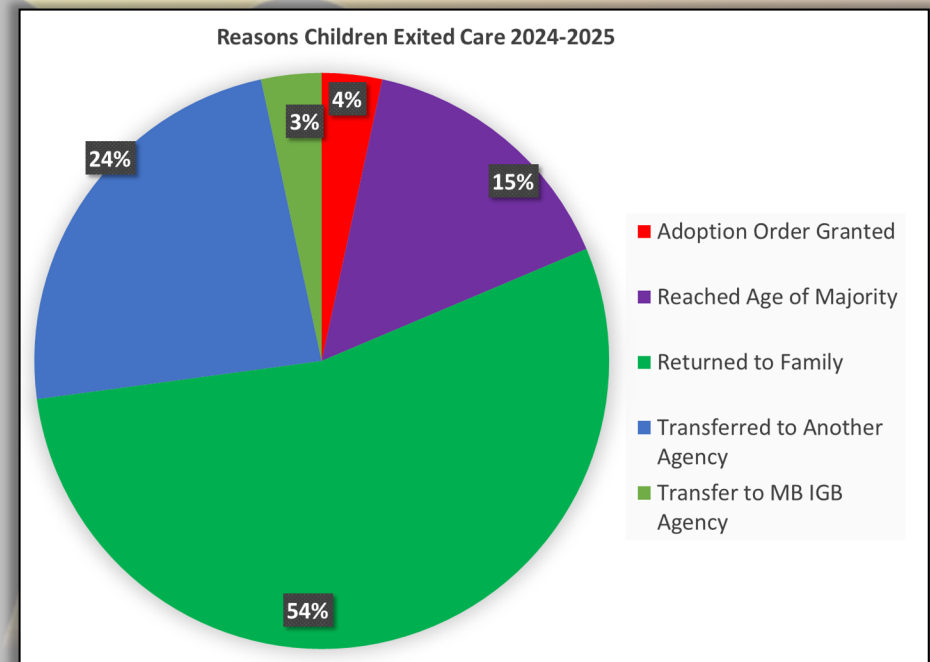
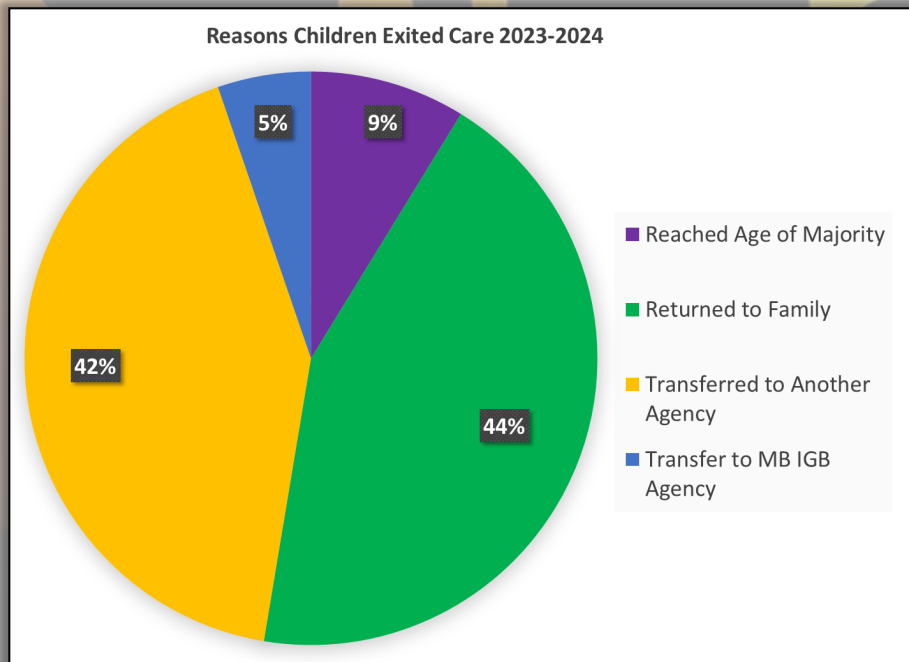
Our Resource Team (adoption and foster care) chairs and staff actively participate in the agency's Permanency Planning Committee. This committee meets regularly throughout the year to review all child-in-care files. Its primary purpose is to support timely, thoughtful, and effective long-term planning for children in care. The committee's work focuses on ensuring permanency planning is conducted promptly and thoroughly; exploring all viable options to determine the best possible plan for each child; prioritizing the development of meaningful, lifelong family relationships for children transitioning out of care; incorporating the child's voice in permanency decisions, when appropriate based on age and maturity. In addition, the committee provides guidance and support to frontline staff, helping them navigate complex permanency planning and identify solutions aligned with these goals.



FAMILIES ARE ABLE TO MEET THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN

Of the children that exited care before the case was transferred to another agency, 32 out of 59 of them returned to their parents after Agency intervention and ongoing assessment for safety. The majority of the parents of the children that are apprehended are able to reach the goal of meeting the needs of their children after Agency support and intervention.

Before protection files are closed, families have typically received multiple interventions to ensure they can meet the needs of the children. Some of these interventions include: networking, parenting skills education, domestic violence education, sexual abuse education, nutrition/cooking education, budgeting education and wellness education. Caregivers are assessed on an ongoing basis to determine if they are able to transfer the learning. Though it is only necessary that caregivers meet the basic needs of the children, we strive to provide opportunities for them to achieve a higher degree of parenting competency which reduces further reports of neglect and abuse.



FAMILIES ARE SUPPORTED BY THEIR COMMUNITY

The agency provides support networks to all those who are willing to participate and strongly encourages these networks when families are reluctant. The networks circle the children and parents with a community of support which increases the safety of children. The networks typically continue to provide support to the family once the Agency has closed the file, further ensuring the safety of the children. The goal of CFS of Central MB is to be able to develop a support network for every family and child we work with.

Community members participating in the support networks were:

- ⇒ Central Station
- ⇒ Care Portal
- ⇒ Children's Disability Services
- ⇒ Clergy
- ⇒ Families First
- ⇒ Foster Parents
- ⇒ Genesis House
- ⇒ Guidance Counsellors
- ⇒ Pregnancy Care
- ⇒ Resource/Principal/Teacher
- ⇒ Therapists
- ⇒ Youth for Christ - Morden, Morris
- ⇒ Business Owners
- ⇒ Employment & Income Assistance
- ⇒ Workers from other CFS Agencies
- ⇒ Altona's "The Community Exchange"
- ⇒ The Link (counselling)

35 families participated in support networks from April 2024 to March 2025.





Support Networks: How They Help Families Thrive

Support networks are groups of people who come together to help children, youth, and families feel safe, connected, and supported. These networks can include extended family, friends, neighbors, community members, and professionals. They play a vital role in helping families navigate challenges and celebrate successes.

What is a Support Network?

A support network is a group of people who care about a child or family and are willing to be part of their journey. These individuals offer emotional support, practical help, and a sense of belonging. Support networks are built around the strengths, culture, and values of each family.

The Role of the Support Network Facilitator

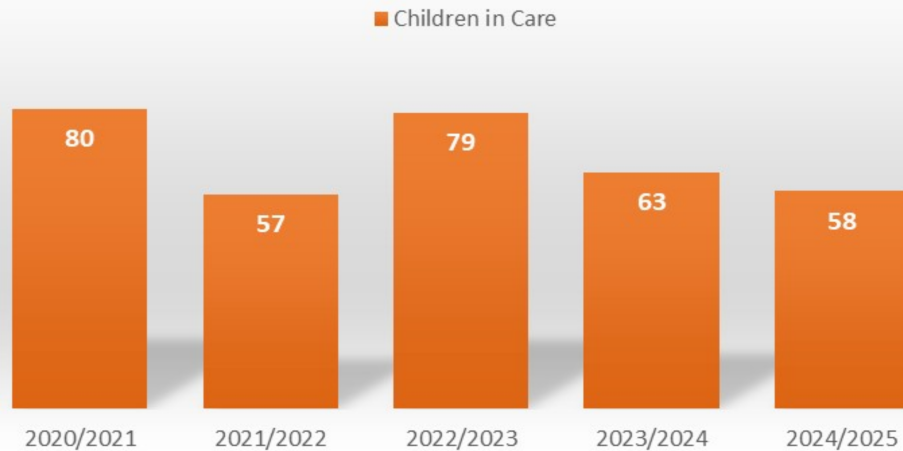
A Support Network Facilitator helps families build and strengthen their support networks. They work alongside families to identify people who can offer support, organize meetings, and ensure everyone is working together. Facilitators are respectful, compassionate, and focused on helping families lead their own planning and decision-making.

How Support Networks Help Families

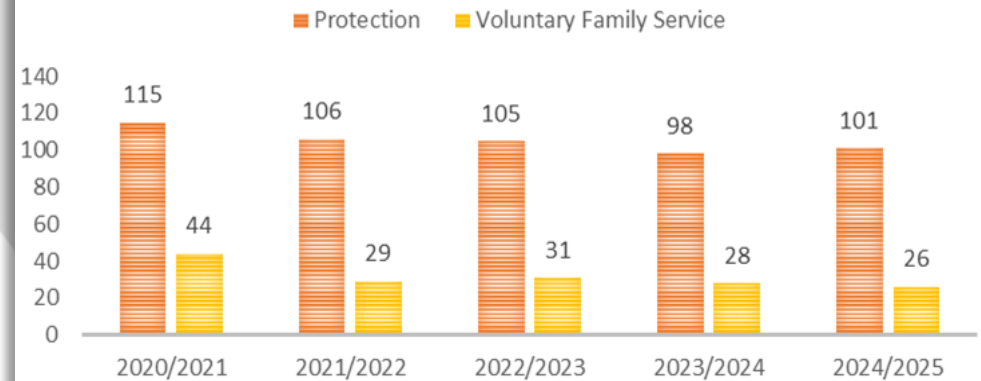
- Create a circle of care around children and caregivers
- Help families feel less alone and more empowered
- Support safety, healing, and long-term well-being
- Encourage collaboration and shared responsibility
- Reduce the need for formal services over time

Support networks are about walking alongside families—not leading them. Together, we can build stronger, more connected communities where every child and family feels seen, heard, and supported.

5 Year Child In Care Comparison



5 YEAR FAMILY SERVED COMPARISON



Recent changes made by Indigenous and Indigenous Governing Body (IGB) agencies in their criteria for accepting files transferred from intake or family services have led to a reduction in the number of files transferred outside of the General Authority. This shift has contributed to a slower rate of reduction in the overall number of children in care.

However, the implementation of agreements with families to place children with familiar and trusted caregivers has positively impacted the system. These arrangements have resulted in a decrease in the number of children entering formal care, supporting the goal of maintaining family and community connections while ensuring child safety.



Foster Care

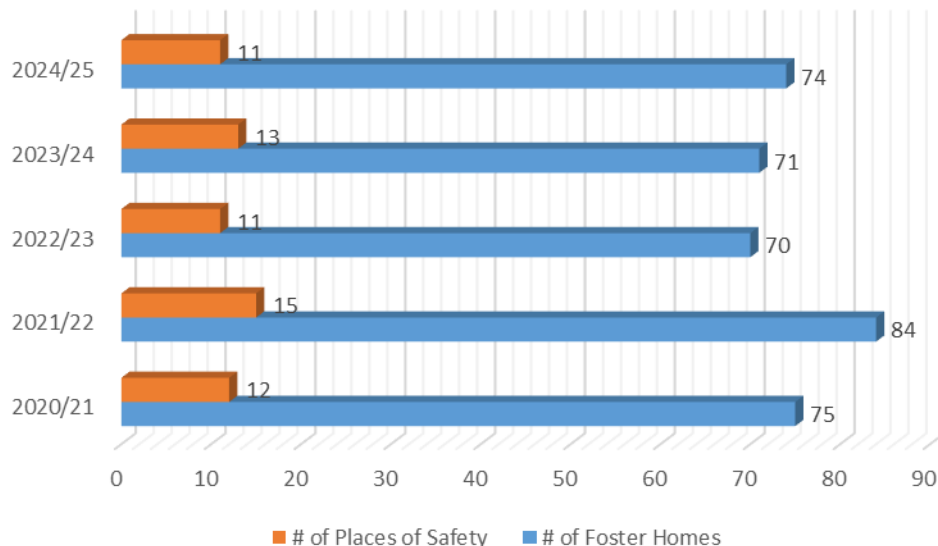
"Fostering is not about us. It never was and never will be. Foster care is about serving, loving on others, and being the one constant in a child's life when they are going through a really hard time." - Jeremy Garman

Foster parents are compassionate individuals or couples who open their homes and hearts to children in need of temporary care and stability. They provide a safe, nurturing environment for children who have been removed from their biological families due to various circumstances, such as neglect, abuse, or family crises. Beyond meeting basic needs like food, shelter, and education, foster parents offer emotional support, guidance, and a sense of belonging, often playing a crucial role in a child's healing and development during a challenging time in their life. Our foster parents regularly participate in support networks for families, taking on teaching roles, building relationships with, and supporting the children's families, participating in check-ins, and assisting in planning for youth transitioning out of care.

We currently have 74 licensed foster families in the Central Region, 11 Place of Safety (POS) homes and 2 Kinship Home (both are short-term family/relative placements). In our 74 licensed home, we have 7 family placements that have move from POS to Licensed status. In addition to foster homes, our agency supplements care for children both in and out of foster care by providing respite support. CFS-CM continues to accept new foster parent applications. There remains a need for foster care placements for ages 12 – 17 throughout the region and families willing to take those ages on an emergency basis (DEP). The resource team has been fantastic in finding solutions to our shortage, one being looking at adoptive applicants to take on the role of long-term fostering which has been successful.

The agency continues to honour those foster parents who have committed ten years plus in service to the agency. The agency continues to look at ways to support our foster home going into the future. The impact they make may not always be visible, but it is deeply felt and profoundly meaningful.

5 Year Foster Care Comparison



SAFE & TOGETHER

THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE RESPONSE STRATEGY

As part of our ongoing commitment to enhancing child safety and supporting families impacted by domestic violence, CFS Central has adopted the Safe & Together Model as a foundational framework for practice.

The Safe & Together Model is a globally recognized framework designed to strengthen child welfare responses to domestic violence. It emphasizes keeping children safe and together with the non-offending parent—most often the mother—while holding perpetrators accountable for their actions. The model shifts the focus from victim-blaming to a strengths-based, perpetrator-pattern approach that promotes family safety and stability.

At CFS Central, the Safe & Together Model is being actively integrated into frontline practice, supervision, and case planning. This past year, Sally Marsolais, our Leading Practice Specialist, successfully completed the Safe & Together Train the Trainer certification, making her our certified in-house trainer. All frontline workers have also completed the Safe & Together 4 day Core training to:

- Identify the perpetrator's pattern of behavior and its impact on child and family functioning.
- Partner with the non-offending parent as a protector and support system for the child.
- Hold the perpetrator accountable for creating harm and disrupting family functioning.

This approach has resulted in more nuanced assessments, improved engagement with survivors, and better-informed decisions that prioritize child safety without unnecessary family separation. Through ongoing training and reflective supervision, our team continues to build capacity in applying the model consistently and effectively.

Looking ahead - one of our strategic goals is to hire a Domestic Violence Response Coordinator. This role will:

- Support staff in deepening their integration of the model into daily practice.
- Lead prevention initiatives, including youth-focused presentations on healthy relationships.
- Promote and deliver training across sectors and community organizations to enhance inter-agency collaboration. This will ensure that law enforcement, mental health, and child protection professionals share a common language and coordinated strategy when responding to domestic violence.



Child & Family Services of Central MB 2024-2025 Annual Report



IN-HOME SUPPORT PROGRAMMING

One of the joint events that we facilitated in 2024/2025 was the Summer Fun Day. A group of 28 ladies including past moms, current moms and staff spent the day at Stephenfield. Here, the participants enjoyed each other's company, went on a nature scavenger hunt, played outdoor games and enjoyed a wiener roast. Despite the blustery weather, the participants remained warm through active engagement and shared laughter.

Another joint event facilitated by the In-Home Support staff was the annual ladies retreat at Camp Arenas in September. Here 23 moms had the opportunity to connect with old friends, make new friends and learn valuable skills. This is a fun and relaxing atmosphere where the ladies can rest and rejuvenate. They return home with a more positive outlook on parenting and have set new goals for themselves and their families. They learn from each other as well as from the staff presentations.

We also host an annual Christmas workshop. At this event ladies are able to make a craft, play games and enjoy a homemade Christmas dinner. It brings together long-term clients, new participants, and those whose cases have been closed. They encourage each other and learn from each other. There is a lot of laughter at each of these group events...the best medicine for healing and learning. There is always a education component during each of our group events. Moms will ask, "What will we learn today?" knowing there will be a lesson but that it will be presented in an entertaining way.

Winkler staff facilitated several educational sessions for the parents they support. These classes included:

Caring Parent – A class for moms to learn about what it looks like to be in an abusive relationship and the impact this may have on their children.

There were seven moms that completed this program.

Co Parenting – This is an eight-week program designed for parents to learn how to coparent successfully. We decided to run a mom's program in the morning and the dad's program in the afternoon. This worked well due to No Contact Orders and parents that cannot work together.

There were six dads and six moms that completed this program.

Mental Wellness – This was a six-week program where moms learned about mental wellness and how to take care of themselves. At the end of the session, they each created their own Wellness Plans.

Teen Program – We ran the first Teen Program and had eight females join. They participated in the Shift program which introduces concepts like healthy body image, safe relationships, mental health. The girls enjoyed it immensely and have requested to continue working together. We decided to connect with the girls monthly and will include a variety of topics they have chosen.

We are filled with optimism as we look ahead to the coming year. In my role as Resource Coordinator, I am committed to supporting our dedicated team in delivering impactful programming for families in Portage la Prairie. Recently, we successfully completed the Caring Parent classes for mothers in the region...a significant milestone that reflects the strength and resilience of these women. Their courage was further demonstrated through their enthusiastic participation in the Summer Fun Day in June, stepping out of their comfort zones to connect, learn and grow. We are inspired by their progress and excited to witness the continued expansion of our programs in the North part of our jurisdiction, while celebrating the ongoing success of our initiatives in Winkler.



CARING DADS



We continue to offer the Caring Dads program every fall. This 17-week program is designed to support fathers facing challenges in family relationships, particularly those involving domestic violence. This past year we successfully ran our 12th session since we began offering the program in 2018.

Our objective is to enhance the safety and well-being of children and their mothers, while equipping fathers with the tools and knowledge to become the best parents they can be. Whether they live together as a family, share custody, or have visits, Caring Dads will help give dads the tools to improve their relationships with their children. Caring Dads requires a significant commitment from both instructors and participants, but the rewards are substantial. We are seeing dads learn new skills in communication, building loving relationships with their children and having fun as fathers.

In the fall of 2024 eight dads showed up for the class. They were unsure of what to expect. They questioned their participation, wondering, 'Is this class necessary for me? What concerns exist about my parenting? Why did CFS recommend this program?' These dads typically do feel that they are already good parents, so why should they take this program? Over the course of 17 weeks, they start to see that they have been abusive and can make changes to their communication, expectations, and relationships with their children's moms.

Last year's class had six dads receive their certificate of completion. They attended all 17 classes. One dad missed 3 classes and was unable to receive the certificate, but he decided he would still attend the remaining classes. One father dropped out after the third week. This was unfortunate, as he was a young father likely to have more children and he lacked a positive role model.

The remaining men in the class made some realizations in their parenting and the way they communicate with their children's mothers. They shared how they were seeing an improvement in their relationships with their children because they were treating their mothers better.

We are immensely proud of each father who participated in the program. Some of the dads continue to reach out to share the activities they are doing with their children. They are proud of the dads that they have become.

In the upcoming year, we are planning the 13th session in Winkler starting at the end of September. We also hope to be able to provide a group session for the men in Portage sometime as well.



CHILDREN LIVE IN A STABLE ENVIRONMENT WITH A CARING ADULT...

Earlier this year I had the privilege of celebrating my 35th year with CFS-CM. I also had the privilege of being asked to create some artwork for plaques to be received by long time foster parents. 'Walk with Me' is what I came up with.



Its meaning will become more apparent as I share some of my 35-year journey.

My career began in 1990 as a Child Abuse Investigator working out of Carman. About a year later I moved to the Portage Office. In the years that followed I mostly alternated between seasons as a Family Service Worker and seasons as an Intake Worker. In 2012 I was able to move away from child protection work all together and into the field of adoption.

I have been blessed in all of these positions to work with good people, to be part of a well organised, forward-thinking agency. It has also been my privilege to learn from skilled supervisors and colleagues who kept me learning and investigating the cutting edge of child welfare practice.

Child Welfare, like policing and a few other vocations, has unique qualities and challenges. We are witnessing situations that can be deeply troubling, and traumatic. We are dealing with clientele that, by and large, will not engage with us voluntarily. We are encountering people at some of their worst and most vulnerable moments, and we are often faced with an array of options that are all undesirable.

On top of that, we are dealing with people. Being people ourselves, we recognize our universal tendency to cling to what we know, what is familiar, what is predictable. If people change at all, they change slowly.

In this environment it is essential to be aware of and instructed in the very best practices. As I said earlier, CFS-CM has, in my 35 years, been a leader in giving us tools that we can use to be successful. I'd like to mention a few and highlight a couple in particular.

When I arrived in 1990, we were part of a research project that involved the U of M, the RCMP, physicians, mental health professionals, addiction professionals etc. So, my first experience here was one of breaking down barriers between professions and working together for the good of families.

In subsequent years, I and my colleagues were immersed in the Narrative Therapy approach of Michael White.

We were trained in the therapeutic approach of externalizing the problem, finding exceptions and building solutions.

We were trained in investigative techniques and strategies alongside police.

We were introduced to a novel concept called Family Group Conferences.

As I was exiting child protection work in 2012, we were sending teams to be trained in a highly innovative child welfare model known as the Signs of Safety.

In subsequent years we have been trained in:

- Solution Focussed Practice
- Strength Based Practice
- Family Finding for our long-term children in care
- The SAFE Home Study model for adoption and foster care
- Safe and Together training for domestic violence

And, most significantly in recent years, in Family Support Networks (essentially the same concept I had been introduced to as Family Group Conferences some 15-20 years earlier).

All of these tools have been added to my toolbox over the years. All of them have given me confidence, hopefulness and greater competence when entering highly conflicted and complicated situations.

However, there are two tools that hold the most prominent places in my social work toolbox.

The first, I studied carefully as an adoption worker. It is called Attachment Theory.

The second, I learned in the later years of my child protection work. It is called the Three Houses.

First, I'd like to talk to you about **Attachment Theory**.... Particularly the work of Gordon Neufeld and the practical application of Attachment to Adoption by Andrea Chatwin.

For me, attachment theory has become the foundation of my social work practice. It informs my understanding of what a given child will need most. It informs my evaluations of prospective adoptive families, and it informs my understanding of how to help children and families when things come off the rails from time to time. One of the most precious things about adoption is that, at its best, it presents a child with an opportunity to be fully known, fully accepted and fully protected by a family that will be there for a lifetime. Kids who have had insecure attachments early in life need this more than anything because these early childhood deficits can take a lifetime to overcome.

This is the attachment cycle, an illustration of how attachment forms. A child has a need. They cry or do something to make that need known. A reliable caregiver meets the need. Trust develops. When this cycle goes around thousands of times and the caregiver meets the need most of the time, a strong attachment develops. When the need is never met, or met inconsistently, attachment is insecure, incomplete. The child develops other strategies to meet those needs.

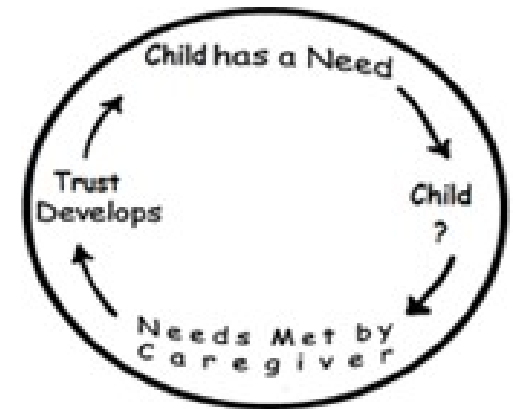
When a child's primary attachment is to someone stronger, wiser, loving, accepting, reliable and committed for a lifetime, they can safely rely on them and have a solid foundation to build a life on.

When a child has no strong attachments or a primary attachment to someone no stronger and no wiser than themselves or who is uncaring, unreliable or dangerous they have shifting foundation that is hard to build a life on.

When a child does not have a strong primary attachment to a safe trusted adult or adults, they will pursue attachments elsewhere. Adolescents most commonly connect to peer groups or any group that will accept them. Sometimes children will attach to things or people in the media. Obviously, these attachments are not ideal. They offer no safety. They expose kids to countless dangers and offer no reliable direction, support or security. Parents, on the other hand, have the opportunity to be a safe, trustworthy attachment figure.

In our system, when children are separated from parents for a season or permanently, social workers, foster and adoptive parents are invited to step into this role as a safe, trustworthy attachment figure. Seeing these relationships come together in adoptive and foster families is one of the great privileges of my profession.

In recent months I have guided three families through an adoption process. In all three, we started with a child or a sibling group who had few safe attachments in the world. In all three, a strong enduring attachment was developed over time. And in all three, we arrived at a place where these children could be formally invited into their new family for a lifetime. These were beautiful moments where friends, family, relatives and even members of the child's birth family gathered together to celebrate the occasion. These events all look different. Some are like a birthday party with cake, decorations, a little sand or candle ceremony and the official document signing. Others are more like wedding with many invited guests, catered food, cake and speeches on top of symbolic ceremonies and the document signing. All celebrate the child or children and place them in the very centre of a larger family who is pledging to guide, care for and protect them for a lifetime.



This brings me to the second noteworthy tool that I have in my toolbox, **The Three houses**

In 2004, New Zealand Social Workers Maggie Greening and Nicki Weld introduced the world to an intervention tool that they called “The Three Houses”. They noticed that, to help people, we need to really hear, understand and consider their perspective. They created a tool that imagined a child’s worries, the good things in their lives, and their hopes and dreams as three houses.

The House of Worries represented things that made children feel vulnerable or unsafe.

The House of Good Things represented things that were positive, or made children feel safe and secure.

The House of Dreams represented a child’s aspirations. It made space for children to dream and consider what could be different in their lives.

Over the years, Social Workers around the world have integrated this tool into their practice and opened a whole new window into the lives of the children they serve. As a child protection worker, when I would walk into an interview with a child, the Three Houses could be easily sketched out on a piece of paper like this...

Instantly, that child and I had an unthreatening, nonjudgmental way to talk about every part of their lives: the things that gave them security, the things they feared, the things that kept the awake at night, the things they loved and their biggest hopes and dreams for the future.

In these heightened moments with children, they will shut down in the face of direct questions and pushy inquiries. In these moments the Three Houses bring down the temperature in the room and make open communication more possible.

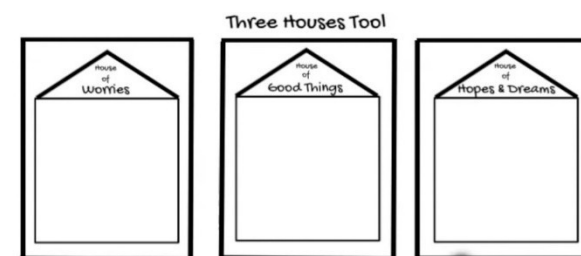
In recent years I’ve been dabbling as an artist in my free time. As I stated earlier, our Executive Director, Chris Chabbert, commissioned me to draw something that could go on a plaque for our foster parents, something that would represent the unique contribution of foster parents into the lives of vulnerable children. So, drawing on the imagery of “The Three Houses”, I created this drawing called “Walk With Me”. It depicts a caring adult taking a child by the hand and helping them to navigate the road before them.

This is a road fraught with uncertainties. There are threats, both real and imagined. There are good things that strengthen and protect the child. There are dreams that the child can dare to reach for. The child cannot do this alone. As Attachment Theory taught me, they need a guide to walk with them, a safe and trustworthy adult to help them find the way.

So often, it is a foster parent who finds themselves taking this role in the life of a vulnerable child. The role is seldom glamorous or easy or lucrative, but it is important to that child, and it has an impact for generations to come.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to share a bit of my journey with you and some of the inspiration behind this artwork.

/gz Sept 5/2025



WALK WITH ME

Agathias 2025

Statement of Operations for the Year End March 31, 2025

CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES OF CENTRAL MANITOBA INC.

Statement of Operations and Changes in Net Assets

For the year ended March 31, 2025

	CORE AGENCY SUPPORT FUND	WARD CARE FUND	PROTECTION AND PREVENTION SERVICES	DESIGNATED INTAKE	CAPITAL FUND	2025	2024
REVENUE							
Province of Manitoba	\$ -	\$ 46,167	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 46,167	\$ 43,925
Government of Canada	-	500,734	-	-	-	500,734	483,587
General Child and Family Services Authority	872,438	3,111,387	1,903,582	1,492,908	-	7,380,315	7,791,246
Amortization of deferred contributions	73,092	-	-	-	12,163	85,255	12,163
Other	450,464	100,320	46,824	-	13,213	610,821	515,360
	1,395,994	3,758,608	1,950,406	1,492,908	25,376	8,623,292	8,846,281
EXPENSES							
Allocation of operational expenses	(59,335)	(526,074)	368,665	216,744	-	-	-
Amortization of capital assets	-	-	-	-	215,244	215,244	186,260
Field service costs	87,872	-	33,716	-	-	121,588	151,589
Office maintenance	231,698	-	-	-	-	231,698	259,332
Office operations	123,733	-	-	48,418	-	172,151	253,639
Other support	-	-	46,824	-	-	46,824	63,177
Salaries and benefits	856,871	1,633,808	1,315,280	1,188,086	-	4,994,045	4,503,165
Service support	155,155	-	185,921	39,660	-	380,736	358,718
Ward care expenses	-	2,956,118	-	-	-	2,956,118	2,838,563
	1,395,994	4,063,852	1,950,406	1,492,908	215,244	9,118,404	8,612,441
EXCESS (DEFICIENCY) OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES	\$ -	\$ (305,244)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ (189,868)	\$ (495,112)	\$ 233,840
NET ASSETS, beginning of year	1,650,096	4,696,332	129,261	16,449	929,393	7,421,531	7,187,691
Interfund transfers (note 10)	(198,233)	-	-	-	198,233	-	-
NET ASSETS - Ending	\$ 1,451,863	\$ 4,391,088	\$ 129,261	\$ 16,449	\$ 937,758	\$ 6,926,419	\$ 7,421,531

CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES OF CENTRAL MANITOBA INC.

Statement of Financial Position

For the year ended March 31, 2025

	CORE AGENCY SUPPORT FUND	WARD CARE FUND	PROTECTION AND PREVENTION SERVICES	DESIGNATED INTAKE	CAPITAL FUND	2025	2024
ASSETS							
CURRENT ASSETS							
Cash	\$ 103,990	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 103,990	\$ 1,169,041
Accounts receivable (Note 3)	323,927	84,688	-	-	-	408,615	357,934
Prepaid expenses	49,980	-	-	-	-	49,980	55,520
	477,897	84,688	-	-	-	562,585	1,582,495
INVESTMENTS (Note 4)	6,965,239	-	-	-	-	6,965,239	6,656,809
CAPITAL ASSETS (Note 5)	-	-	-	-	1,071,551	1,071,551	1,075,349
	\$ 7,443,136	\$ 84,688	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,071,551	\$ 8,589,375	\$ 9,314,653
LIABILITIES							
CURRENT LIABILITIES							
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$ 314,025	\$ 90,717	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 404,742	\$ 648,176
Accrued vacation pay entitlement	385,276	-	-	-	-	385,276	347,456
Accrued sick pay entitlement	66,978	-	-	-	-	66,978	70,171
Interfund balances	4,542,827	(4,397,117)	(129,261)	(16,449)	-	-	-
	5,309,106	(4,306,400)	(129,261)	(16,449)	-	856,996	1,065,803
LONG-TERM LIABILITIES							
Accrued severance/ retirement entitlement payable (Note 7)	682,167	-	-	-	-	682,167	608,271
DEFERRED CONTRIBUTIONS (Note 8)	-	-	-	-	133,793	133,793	219,048
	5,991,273	(4,306,400)	(129,261)	(16,449)	133,793	1,672,956	1,893,122
NET ASSETS							
Invested in net capital assets	-	-	-	-	937,758	937,758	929,393
Externally restricted	-	4,391,088	129,261	16,449	-	4,536,798	4,842,042
Unrestricted	1,451,863	-	-	-	-	1,451,863	1,650,096
	1,451,863	4,391,088	129,261	16,449	937,758	6,926,419	7,421,531
	\$ 7,443,136	\$ 84,688	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,071,551	\$ 8,589,375	\$ 9,314,653



Child & Family Services

OF CENTRAL MANITOBA



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Portage la Prairie, MB R1N 1N1
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F : 204-239-1413

Winkler Office :
324 South Railway Avenue
Winkler, MB R6W 0M8
P : 204-331-5040
F : 204-331-5046

<https://cfsofcentralmb.mb.ca/>

Designated Intake Agency For All Four Authorities In Manitoba's Central Region (Off-Reserve)

