Study into Foster Care and the Movement of Children

Cree Board of Health and Social Services

Project Manager:

Jill Torrie, Public Health

(514-953-8283) torrie.jill@ssss.gouv.qc.ca

PPRO:

Duncan Sanderson, Corporate Planning, Programming, Evaluation, and Development

(514-861-2352) duncan.sanderson@ssss.gouv.qc.ca

Study Background

- Various reports of high numbers of aboriginal children under Youth Protection throughout Canada
- the Annual Report by the Youth Protection department (Eeyou Istchee) indicate 4,379 placements of children into foster homes (2006/7), but it was not clear how many children were being placed
- What portion of children are placed in foster homes?
- There seems to be a large number of foster families; how many are there really?
- In the last few years, there seemed to be an increase in the number of children placed, but perhaps a decrease last year

Study Background

- The new YP law increases pressure to find permanent homes (adoption) for children in placements over a long period: how many children may be affected? Does the CBH have a plan to respond to this?

- Are there a lot of children being « bounced around » and is there an impact on them? (various researchers are concerned about this also)

- Foster parents receive money, this may be a source of income for some: how important is fostering as a source of income?

Study Objectives

- Develop a detailed description and understanding of the foster care system in Eeyou Istchee.

- Describe to what extent children are bounced around (placement instability). Begin to identify the reasons for this and whether it is important or not.

- Explore the needs of YP to see if long-term linkages to university specialists could help to prevent placements and/or improve services (support for YP).

Benefits of the Study

- A more detailed description of the use of foster homes than is currently available
- Better understanding of the foster home situation and system
- Better understanding of the extent to which children are bounced around
- A written report to describe the current situation
- A solid basis of information which can help orient other supportive activities, which could include, for example, policy, and prevention measures, measures for improving parental competency (prevention), or other issues of interest to Youth Protection.

Methods

- Identification of useful scientific literature & other documents

- Description of the School Board boarding program to have a comparison with YP (it is the other large fostering program in the region). George Oblin has been hired to prepare this description.

- Interviews with CBHSSJB personnel to understand words used in the annual reports & the nature of Foster Home placements (research assistant: Katrina Smeja)

- Verification of computer data and analysis of placements: for example number of children, number of placements, average length of stay

Initial Results:
Data Analysis of Placements

- Part of the data was obtained about placements, Jan. 2002 to Feb. 2008 (only client numbers, no names)
- The year 2005/6 was used (we wanted to check our results with previous reports)
- There were 877 clients (children and adults) who started or ended a placement in the year
- An additional 19 started before and ended after the year
- The following information represents initial results and will be checked. Part of this requires checking the accuracy of the data used.

Data Analysis of Placements: Number of Clients

- There were 877 clients (children and adults) who started or ended a placement in the year
- An additional 19 started before and ended after the year
- 517 children placed at least once during the year under the laws for Youth Protection, Young Offender or Adoption
- Placement rate: 517 / 5,227 (population of children) = 10%

Data Analysis of Placements: Placements

- Every placement in a foster home is supposed to be reported, and entered into the computer system

- Every placement results in a payment to a foster family (this seems to happen, but needs to be checked)

Data Analysis of Placements: Number of Placements

- 2431 placements in the year
- This is quite different from the 4,220 placements reported in the Social Services Statistics report, 2005/6
- Which number is the most accurate?

Data Analysis of Placements:
Types of Placements

- Placements occur with respect to a law, and each is of a certain type

Reference Law	Placement category					
	Regular	Special	Rehab	Emerg	Adoption	Total
Youth Prot.	874	16	36	718	0	1644
S-5	595	2	9	1	0	607
Adoption	0	0	0	0	5	5
Adult/Elderly	162	3	7	3	0	175
Total	1631	21	52	722	5	2431

4/5/2012

Data Analysis of Placements:
Placements by Community (Youth Only)

Community	Placements	# F Families	Youth Pop.	Ratio
Chisasibi	404	118	1638	24,7
Eastmain	89	36	251	35,5
Mistissini	338	132	1357	24,9
Nemaska	152	42	261	58,2
Ouje-Bougoumou	102	50	312	32,7
Waskaganish	472	137	875	53,9
Waswanipi	299	95	683	43,8
Wemindji	150	42	487	30,8
Whapmagoostui	425	108	401	106,0
Total	2431	760	6265	38,8

(Youth Population based on 2007 numbers, for 0-19 age group).

placements occur more frequently in Nemaska, Waskaganish, Waswanipi, and Whapmagoostui.

Data Analysis of Placements: Days in Foster Homes

- For every day in a home, there is a payment to a foster family.
- According to people we talked to in YP, if a child enters May 1st and exits May 1st, this is still one day.
- If a child enters May 1st and exits May 2nd, this is 2 days, and so on.
- This way of counting does not appear to be written down anywhere (but is used for payments).

- We found 55,261 days of placements.
- Social Services Statistics for the year reports 64,788 days.

Data Analysis of Placements: Length of stay

- 92 placements : 1 day
  (Entry and exit the same day)
- 441 placements: 2 days
- 332 placements: 3 days
- 274 placements: 4 days
- 186 placements: 5 days
- 1106 placements: 6 or more days

- Average length of a placement: 23 days

Data Analysis of Placements:

Days of Placement According to Reference
Law Used to Provide Foster Care

42111	Youth Protection
-	Young Offender
8566	S-5
1267	Adult/Elderly
3317	Adoption
55261	**Total**

Data Analysis of Placements: Evolution According to Year

- Only placements under YP were considered;
- For this analysis, the year of the start of the placement was used

2003/4	1251
2004/5	1408
2005/6	1554
2006/7	1618

- It appears that placements of youth are increasing

Data Analysis of Placements: Clients Bounced Around (Placement Instability)

- 35 clients had 10 placements or more in 2005/6. In between placements, a client may return home. Or they may go directly to another home. Or they may stay in the same home. Which are most disruptive?

- this analysis is not finished

- However, it is now possible for YP to know who the clients are who have a high number of placements and to try to understand why this is happening (we can provide client number); they could consider how this may be reduced

Data Analysis of Placements:
Questions About the Data

- Are all placements entered into YP database?
- How are the annual reports generated
- Did the annual reports take into account that a client can start a placement before, and end after, the year?
- How does the MSSS define a day of care?
- We do not yet have age of clients
- A few clients have a start date but no exit date, and not all seem to be ongoing placements
- There appear to be two different number systems to identify foster families
- Several foster families have an incomplete address (only a name and community as a mailing address)
- Apparently some of the clients are placed outside of the region, but this does not show up in the data we have
- The notion of "caseload" versus "placement" is not defined in the previous annual reports.

Work Remaining

- Organise a project working group
    - Suggested membership:
        - Mary Bearskin
        - Paula Rickard
        - Duncan
        - Jill
        - others to be determined
- Analysis of placement instability
- Try to explain differences between our numbers and those in annual reports
- Verify data entry and information in computer system

Work Remaining, continued

- Complete description of the boarding home system run by the School Board (started)

- Broaden our understanding of the Foster Home system in the Health Board (research assistant hired)

- Work with YP to better understand clients who are bounced around and to understand whether this is significant or not

- Explore with YP what directions the project should go