

SECTION 4: YOUTH SERVICES OVERVIEW	
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OVERVIEW

The primary focus of this program is the safety, health and well-being of youth. In keeping with this focus, the importance of the youth's family is to be a major consideration. Before an agreement under Section 11 of the *Child, Youth and Family Services Act* is entered into with a youth, every effort must be made to facilitate family preservation/reunification, if it is in the best interests of the youth. This may include providing counselling for the family, mediation, and/or other services under Section 10, to strengthen the family and facilitate the youth remaining at or returning to his/her home.

The underlying goal of the *Youth Services Program* is to assist young people in a successful transition to adulthood. Youth services may be designed to enhance a young person's ability to make this transition and supports may be provided to facilitate this transition process. For example, educational expenses, including child care expenses, may be approved if a youth agrees to regularly attend an educational program. In circumstances where residential services are provided to youth, the intent of this service is to assist the youth in securing and maintaining suitable living arrangements, with a plan to return home or to move to independent living.

By entering into a *Youth Service Agreement-Form 14-627*, the youth does not enter into a care or custodial relationship with a director.

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STATUTORY PROVISION:*Section 11.*

- (1) *A director or social worker may make a written agreement for services with a youth who:*
- (a) *cannot in the opinion of the director or social worker remain with or be re-established in the youth's family, temporarily or permanently; or*
 - (b) *has no parent or other person willing or able to provide care to the youth.*
- (2) *The initial term of an agreement shall not exceed 6 months but the agreement may be renewed for additional terms of up to 6 months each.*
- (3) *An agreement under this section may be made, even if the youth is not or has not been in the custody of the director, but shall not continue beyond the youth's eighteenth birthday unless the young person has been in the care of a director prior to his or her sixteenth birthday in which case the agreement may be extended until his or her twenty-first birthday or school leaving, whichever event occurs first.*

STANDARD:

1. Youth, 16 and 17 years of age, may request or be referred for residential services. Referrals for youth services may be documented on the *Youth Risk Screening Tool* (Appendix A) and must be responded to within 7 days, unless the circumstances dictate an earlier response. Where a referral is received, an assessment for eligibility must be completed.
2. Residential services, may be provided, through a *Youth Service Agreement- Form 14-627*, to any youth 16 or 17 years of age who for reasons of safety or because his/her parent/guardian is unable or unwilling to provide support cannot remain in the parental/guardian home.
3. A youth who is in the care or custody of a director upon attaining his/her sixteenth birthday is entitled to services through a *Youth Service Agreement* until his/her twenty-first birthday or school leaving, whichever event occurs first.
4. Whenever a residential service is provided, a *Youth Service Agreement* must be completed and an *Individual Support Services Plan* attached. A copy must be provided to the youth.
5. All youth who are approved for residential and support services are entitled minimally to a basic living allowance equal to the basic caregiver rate. Those youth requesting only the basic living allowance must agree to monthly contact with his/her social worker and a meeting at a minimum of every six months to review the agreement. While a *Youth*

Service Agreement may be entered into for terms of up to six months, earlier review periods are at the discretion of the youth and social worker.

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COMMENTARY:

Upon receipt of a referral indicating that a youth is in need of residential services, an assessment to determine eligibility for residential services must be completed. For a youth to be eligible for residential services the assessment must conclude:

- 1) that the youth's circumstances fit within the definition of a "youth" as specified by the *Child, Youth and Family Services Act*;
- 2) that the youth cannot remain with or be re-established with his/her family because of reasons of maltreatment, as defined in *Section 14*, or that the youth has no parent or guardian who is willing or able to provide care to the youth; and
- 3) that the youth is voluntarily requesting a service.

A *Youth Risk Screening Tool*, found in Appendix A, is available to determine the service needs of any youth who may present for services. It is a useful tool in determining a youth's need for residential services in accordance with the above-noted criteria. When the youth is already in receipt of a service from the health authority, the current service provider may complete the assessment, and where it is determined that residential services are required, discuss the provision of such services with a director or a social worker designated by the health authority to enter into such agreements.

The assessment shall include an interview with the parent/guardian. If the parent or guardian cannot be located and the youth requires residential services on an emergency basis, they may be provided with the approval of the social worker supervisor, until the assessment can be completed. During the assessment process the voluntary nature of the program and the services available will be explained to the youth. The youth will be encouraged to make contact with the appropriate policing/legal agencies, if there are allegations of criminal offences committed against them. However, it is the youth's choice whether or not to take this action. If the youth chooses not to proceed in this manner, it does not impact on services provided. If the youth has younger siblings who are living with the parent/guardian and circumstances described are such that there is concern regarding risk to these children, the youth must be advised that a referral to a social worker will be necessary and the social worker will have to investigate the referral.

Where, upon completion of the assessment, it is determined the youth can remain safely with his/her parent/guardian, the social worker or other service provider may determine in consultation with the youth and his/her family whether support services are required in accordance with *Section 10* of the *Act*.

Where the assessment indicates that the youth requires residential services, the youth may enter into a *Youth Service Agreement* with the director or social worker.

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The purpose of a *Youth Service Agreement* is to document the conditions under which the agreement is made and the primary responsibilities of all parties to the agreement. The signing of this agreement does not constitute a care or custodial relationship; instead, it is a legally binding agreement for the provision and acceptance of residential and support services.

Where a youth enters into an agreement with a director or social worker and both parties consent, the agreement, may be extended past his/her eighteenth birthday should he/she be enrolled in an educational program. This extension may be approved only until the end of the academic year.

A youth who has been in the care of a director prior to his/her sixteenth birthday, and cancels this agreement after his/her eighteenth birthday, will be eligible to re-enter into an agreement for services for a period of six (6) months following cancellation.

The agreement is to be signed between the youth and a director/social worker upon the approval of residential services.

SECTION 4: YOUTH SERVICES 4.2 INDIVIDUAL SERVICE SUPPORT PLAN	
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STANDARD:

1. An *Individual Support Services Plan* shall be initiated where a youth is in need of (or already receiving) one or more services from government funded agencies.
2. Where an *Individual Support Services Plan* does not already exist, Social Workers shall initiate the *Individual Support Services Plan* process with the youth within 30 days of signing the *Youth Service Agreement* and complete the process within 60 days.
3. Where a youth enters into a *Youth Service Agreement* and, does not consent to an *Individual Support Services Plan*, the social worker will continue to provide the basic services and allowance including monthly contact and a semi annual meeting to review the *Youth Service Agreement*.

COMMENTARY:

Individual Support Services Planning (ISSP) is used to ensure a comprehensive, coordinated approach to meeting the needs of children and youth in this province. The *ISSP* is a working plan which should address areas including needs/risks; strengths and protective factors; goals; interventions; safety issues; education and employability. The overall purpose of the *ISSP* process is to ensure continuity of service at all developmental levels. In accordance with the government protocol which supports the *Model for Coordination of Services*, where a child/youth is receiving services from government funded agencies, an *ISSP* must be initiated. The composition of the *ISSP* team will depend on the needs of the youth and should include any service providers relevant to the transition plan for the youth. Once the *ISSP* is signed, it is the only written plan that should be used to document planning with the youth.

For more information on the *Model for Coordination of Services*, the *Individual Support Services Planning* process and the *Child/Youth Profile*, you can go to www.mcscy.nl.ca.

In keeping with the voluntary nature of youth services, all *ISSP* should be self-directed. A focal point of the *ISSP* for youth must be the needs of the youth and transition to adulthood. For example, the youth with the social worker, will explore ways the youth can meet their safety, residential and financial needs. Where appropriate, family members and significant others should participate in the planning process. Further, the youth's parents should be encouraged to sign the *ISSP* where they are supportive of the *Youth Service Agreement* and the youth is in agreement.

A youth who has dependant children may enter into a *Youth Service Agreement* on their own behalf. This agreement does not mean that their child is in the care or custody of a director. The needs of the youth and their dependant child will be addressed in the *ISSP*.

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Where the youth is a single parent and has a child with special needs, an *ISSP* should be initiated for the child. Case management of the *ISSP* will depend on a number of factors including: the child's needs and whether there are other service providers involved. These decisions should generally be made in consultation with the parent of the child.

Where a youth enters into an agreement with a director and is requesting financial assistance only and, has chosen not to engage in an *ISSP*, an *ISSP* is not required. This is a decision the youth may make, as participation in the *ISSP* process is voluntary. Basic services and allowances will continue to be provided to the youth in these cases. These services can be directly provided by the regional health authority or through community supports or agencies. They can range from referrals to addictions, mental health, or direct services including (but not limited to) the basic allowance, drug card, school books, vision care, dental services and transportation. It is important to continue to engage the youth where possible and to advise the youth of the options and community supports that may be available to them within their community.

An *ISSP* must be initiated within 30 days of signing the *Youth Service Agreement* and completed within 60 days. This will allow time to explore, with the youth, what their service needs are, whether there are other service providers already involved with the youth and if the youth may wish to involve additional service providers in the planning process. The *ISSP* will serve as the planning document for services and interventions with the youth and is required as a transition plan if the youth is referred to Human Resources, Labour and Employment (HRLE) at age 18.

If education or career planning is a goal for the youth, contact should be made with the Employment and Career Program of HRLE by contacting the HRLE district office Career Development Specialist. Where a youth (16 to 18) is preparing to transition out of the youth services program and will receive income and/or employment support from HRLE, Career Development Specialists are available to participate in the *ISSP*. This process should begin at least 6 months in advance of the transition. The Career Development Specialists can provide consultation and counselling in the areas of employment, education and career planning. The Career Development Specialist may also have access to other initiatives for youth.

SECTION 4: YOUTH SERVICES 4.3 SERVICES TO SINGLE PARENTS	
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STANDARD:

1. Residential youth services shall be provided to single parent youth subject to assessment of eligibility.
2. All single parent youth who are approved for residential youth services are entitled minimally to financial support consistent with Human Resources Labour and Employment rates.
3. Where a single parent youth is assessed for residential youth services and is not deemed eligible, support services may be provided to the youth and their family in accordance with *Section 10 of the Child, Youth and Family Services Act*.

COMMENTARY:

Comprehensive assessment and planning with youth who have dependent children, is critical in the identification of their strengths, resources, community connections as well as the challenges they may be facing. A component of this assessment involves ongoing consultation with the youth to determine his/her needs and most importantly, their current support system. It is important to consider the youth within the context of their community, family and extended family connections and social connections. These connections are central to the youth's health and development and may assist them in making healthy lifestyle choices. These healthy lifestyle choices may contribute to successful outcomes for the youth and their child(ren).

Youth who are single parents may receive residential services through the youth services program following an eligibility assessment using the *Youth Risk Screening Tool*. Where a youth is a single parent and is unable to continue residing in their family home, residential services may be provided through the signing of a *Youth Service Agreement*. The signing of the *Youth Service Agreement* is between the youth and a director, not for any dependent children the youth might have. The needs of the youth and their dependant child will be addressed in the *Individual Support Services Plan (ISSP)* (See ISSP section for standards on initiating this process where youth is a single parent and has a child with special needs). Services may be financial, residential and supportive in nature depending on the needs of the youth. For example, youth may require financial support for housing, educational programming or basic living items. The youth may also be eligible for child care services if the parent is employed, in an educational program, or the child requires services for developmental or other reasons. Collaboration between various programs within the health authority is essential to ensuring that youth have access to services they require. Some examples include, but are not limited to, child care, intervention services, family resource centers, mental health and addictions, public health, mother/baby programs, parenting programs, community supports or other government departments that could assist the youth.

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The financial needs of a single parent youth may vary according to the needs of the youth, their child (ren) and the community in which they reside. However in the event a young person has not gained financial independence upon turning 18 and must transfer to the Department of Human Resources and Employment (HRLE), they are assured of consistency in their core financial resources. Community supports and programs are critical links that should be part of the *ISSP*.

Youth with Children in Need of Protective Intervention:

Where it is deemed that the child of the youth is, or may be in need of protective intervention, the *Risk Management System (2003)* must be applied to determine the need for this type of intervention.

Support Services for Single Parent Youth Residing in their Family Home:

Youth who are not deemed eligible for residential youth services may still require support services while residing in their family home. Where it is deemed that a youth is not at risk of abuse or maltreatment and where he/she can continue to reside in the family home, support services may be provided under *Section 10 of the Child, Youth and Family Services Act*. These services may be crucial to strengthening family capacity and should be identified by/with the youth and their family. Following identification of the needs of the youth and their family, services may be provided by programs run by the regional health authority, community supports/agencies (i.e. Single Parents Association) or other government departments. Collaboration between community partners and youth serving agencies is the most effective way to support families. For example, a single parent youth residing at home whose parents are in receipt of income support, may be eligible for a number of services through HRLE. These services can be found in the regulations of the *Income and Employment Assistance Act*. HRLE also has liaison social workers who may be able to provide information and assistance regarding programs and services the youth may be able to access.

Where the needs of the youth, any dependent children and their family are related to income, the family should be referred to HRLE. The youth services program does not provide income support to youth residing with their family. Poverty issues may be placing additional strain on the family and advocacy is a critical role for those involved with them.

SECTION 4: YOUTH SERVICES 4.4 REMOVAL OF YOUTH IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES	
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STATUTORY PROVISION:**Section 24**

- (1) *Where a director or social worker believes on reasonable grounds that*
- (a) *a youth is in need of protective intervention as defined in section 14;*
 - (b) *a less intrusive course of action is not available or will not adequately protect the youth; and*
 - (c) *the director or social worker considers the circumstances to be of an exceptional nature,*
- the director or social worker may remove the youth.*
- (2) *In case of the removal of a youth, the provisions of this Act that apply to the removal of a child, except section 36, apply as if the youth were a child.*

STANDARD:

1. Where the use of *Section 24* is being considered, consultation with the director is required.
2. A *Warrant for Removal* must be obtained prior to the removal of the youth.
3. The social worker must apply for an order of temporary custody which is not to exceed 12 months or go beyond the youth's eighteenth birthday. Where an order is obtained for periods beyond six months, there must be an internal review not later than six months following the removal.

COMMENTARY:

Section 24 provides a statutory provision for use in exceptional circumstances where all three of the conditions outlined in *Section 24 (1)* are present. The procedures for declaring a child in need of protective intervention and applying for custody are to be followed when a youth is removed. However an order of continuous custody cannot be sought.

SECTION 4: YOUTH SERVICES 4.5 EFFECTS OF AGREEMENTS	
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STATUTORY PROVISION:

Section 11(5) Before the agreement is signed, the director or social worker shall explain the effect of the agreement to the youth.

Section 12. Where a director or social worker enters into an agreement with a youth under this Act, the agreement is binding on the youth and enforceable against him or her notwithstanding he or she is less than 19 years of age.

COMMENTARY:

Normally a person under the age of 19 years cannot enter into legal agreements. However, Section 12 gives youth the ability to enter into legal agreements in relation to this Act.

The youth should be advised that by signing the agreement he/she will be entering into a legally enforceable relationship with the social worker or director. The terms of the agreement need to be clearly explained to the youth who should understand that if he/she does not follow the terms and conditions of the agreement, the agreement may be cancelled.

It should be noted that such an agreement does not create a care/custody relationship with a Director; nor does it give a Director or social worker the ability to sign consent for medical, school, etc. on behalf of youth.

SECTION 4 : YOUTH SERVICES 4.6 CANCELLATION OF YOUTH SERVICES AGREEMENTS	
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STANDARD:

A *Youth Service Agreement* may be cancelled by either the youth or the social worker. Where an agreement is being cancelled a *Cancellation of Youth Services Agreement, Form 14-827*, must be completed and signed by one or both parties and placed in the youth's file.

COMMENTARY:

Upon cancellation, the social worker should discuss options with the youth and if necessary make referrals to any appropriate program(s) or services(s) that may be available to the youth for follow up and support. The youth should be provided the rationale for the cancellation in person and followed up in writing.

SECTION 4: YOUTH SERVICES 4.7 FINANCIAL MAINTENANCE	
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STATUTORY PROVISION:**Section 11**

(4) Where a youth is provided with services, the cost of those services may be recovered by the health authority that provided them and an action or other proceeding for the recovery of the cost may be instituted in the name of the board.

STANDARD:

An assessment of the parent's ability to contribute to the financial maintenance of a youth who has entered into a *Youth Service Agreement* must be completed within 30 days of the signing of the Agreement

COMMENTARY:

Intervention for youth should be in keeping with the principles under *Part II of the Child, Youth and Family Services Act*. In assessing immediate interventions viable family based options should be assessed. Family based alternatives are viable when the youth considers the living arrangements safe and supportive of their needs. These alternatives might include reconnection/reintegration with family of origin, living arrangements with extended family (aunts, uncles, older cousins/ siblings) or, living arrangements with friend of family or family of friends.

Even if a youth cannot live with various family members, it is important to be open to considering other forms of contribution /support that those family and extended family members might provide such as social/emotional, physical and financial supports. Supportive relationships are important for everyone to grow and develop into successful and contributing adults. Youth need adults who support and care about them unconditionally, throughout their journey to adulthood. Youth in care have better outcomes when they continue to have relationships with their birth parents and extended birth families. Ensuring this relationship exists when possible and is in the best interests of the child and can help youth both in the present and in the future.

Pursuant to *Part III of the Family Law Act*, parents are financially responsible for their children, at a minimum, until their 18th birthday; therefore, an assessment of a parent's ability to contribute to the financial support of youth is required in all cases.

An application can be made to court to recover the costs of support to youth. A determination of the amount can be made using the *Support Enforcement Guidelines*; the format of the application

for financial support under *Section 35 of the Act* can be adapted for use in these instances.