



Section 2-Voluntary Support Services Agreements

Tool 2.1.2

Philosophy of Voluntary Support Services and Agreements

Voluntary Support Services Agreements are intended to promote the safety, health and well-being of families and/or individuals. Voluntary Support Services Agreements can be provided for many reasons such as:

- Ensuring the health and well-being of children, youth and families;
- Providing services to an expectant parent before the birth of their child
- Preventing or reducing the risk of child maltreatment;
- Improving parenting capacity;
- Providing support services to youth 16 to 18 years old who cannot live safely with their parent(s)/care provider(s)/caregiver(s) and are making efforts to care for themselves; and
- Extending voluntary services to youth with a Permanent Custody Order up until their 23rd birthday to assist with their independent adult living needs (ESSA).

Early intervention with families is critical to promoting positive outcomes for children and youth. The provision of support services that identify and build on strengths and resiliency of the family may assist them in allowing the child/youth to remain safely at home is of utmost importance. When it is impossible to keep children in the home, it is important to ensure that the child/youth has an ongoing connection to their siblings, family, community and culture. It is important to explore what type of supports may be helpful in mitigating any risk factors while considering the safety, health and well-being of the child/youth as the primary consideration.

When assessing what support services would best meet the child/youth, young adult, expectant parent(s) or families' needs, you will need to explore formal and informal supports such as housing, income support, self-help groups, extended family, friends, neighbours, the family's spiritual and cultural community and educational and recreational programs. When providing formal supports such as treatment, counselling, respite, etc., approval must be provided by the Supervisor/Manager.

Service delivery should be tied to specific outcomes and monitored by the Child Protection Worker/Designate to determine if the services are having the intended effect, and if they continue to be needed or adjusted.



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Support Services Agreement Checklist

Before entering an Agreement, the Child Protection Worker/Designate:

- Confirm that the youth is 16, 17 or 18 years old;
- Determine the cultural identity, i.e., Indigenous etc. of the youth;
- Determine the Indigenous Governing Body(s) (IGBs), Applicable Aboriginal Organization(s) (AAOs) or other cultural organization that the youth belongs to and make documented attempts to connect them to the youth. A list of IGBs and AAOs can be found [here](#).
- Determine that the youth cannot live with either parent/care provider/caregiver because of circumstances that would place the youth in need of protection under the *Child and Family Services Act* (this is not simply a situation where the youth cannot accept the rules of the home);
- Determine that it is not in the youth's best interests to return to the parent(s)/care provider(s)/caregiver(s)' care;
- Determine the youth's strengths and needs;
- Ensure the youth understands they have responsibilities under the **Support Services Agreement (SSA) and Case Plan** and is prepared to assume them and sign an **SSA and Case Plan** listing the responsibilities; and
- Ensure that the youth understands that they may need to sign releases, consents or documents that help determine their eligibility for or receipt of any benefits, payments, entitlements or other services.

Additional factors to consider before entering an Agreement:

- Obtain consent from the youth to consult with their IGBs, AAOs or cultural organization in the development of their **SSA and Case Plan** as they may be aware of people, services, and programs that may be of benefit to them.
- If required, determine a suitable out of home placement as outlined in **Standard 7.1 Placement Priorities for Children and Youth** in consultation with the youth and IGB(s), AAO(s) or cultural organization, if applicable.
- Ensure the youth's personal information is kept confidential which includes their right to privacy from parent(s)/care provider(s)/caregiver(s). The need for privacy can be particularly important in cases where the youth's health and safety may be at risk if their parent(s) /care provider(s)/caregiver(s) are privy to the information. Discusses the length of the **SSA and Case Plan**, which can be up to **six (6) months** in duration and renewed until it is no longer needed, is terminated, or the youth turns 19 years old.
- Ensure the youth is aware of how to cancel or have the **SSA and Case Plan** amended.

Support services may include:

- Counselling;
- In-home support;
- Recreation;



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- Referrals to services;
- Worker support;
- Services for improving the youth's financial situation;
- Services for improving the youth's housing situation;
- Homework, Tutoring;
- Transportation assistance;
- Room and board/Housing;
- Drug or alcohol treatment and rehabilitation;
- Mediation of disputes; and
- Any other services agreed to by the Director of Child and Family Services



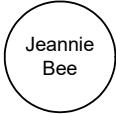
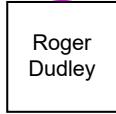
Genogram Code Key



Male Applicant – should be indicated by a double square and is placed on the left



Female Applicant – should be indicated by a double circle and is placed on the right



Other males and females should be indicated by a single square or circle – males are placed to the left and females to the right. Siblings are placed in order of birth.



Solid line connects individuals and also represents marriage – date of marriage is placed above the line



Dotted line connecting individuals horizontally is indicative of a common law relationship - date of the relationship started can be placed above the line



Solid line with two slashes through it represents a divorce – date of divorce is placed above the line



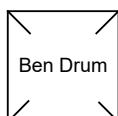
Solid line with one slash through it represents a separation – date of separation is placed above the line



Dotted line with solid line vertically indicates an adoption – date of adoption is placed beside the lines



Vertical single dotted line indicates a foster child



Either box is acceptable to indicate a death – the date of death should be placed above the box



A triangle is used to represent a miscarriage



Elements of a Transition Plan

The Child Protection Worker, the assembled team and resources, and the youth will work collaboratively to build an effective and reflective transition plan through steps as follows:

(1) Assist the youth to develop a vision statement: A vision statement is a description of a desired outcome that inspires and energizes and helps you create a mental picture of your target. It could be a vision of part of your life, or the outcome of a project or goal. Capturing the essence of your vision using a simple memorable phrase can greatly enhance the effectiveness of your vision statement.

The purpose of the vision statement is not to serve as a “real” target that you are going to measure against to determine if you have succeeded to your best expectations. You should use your plan goals to do that. Instead, the purpose of the vision statement is to open your eyes to what is possible.

(2) Describe/Define the youth's goals and ambitions through identifying concrete implementation steps (educational, work, and developmental) they will need to follow.

(3) Define education and employment needs including:

- Key education, specialized training or career options
- Training for entering the workforce with a focus on topics such as interview skills and workplace etiquette

(4) Life skills development including:

- Youth's needs in order to live independently such as budgeting, cooking, life skills, household management. Basic and practical skills must not be overlooked.
- Skills for coping with stress from sources such as social anxiety, emotional challenges or social isolation.
- Assistance and training on how to obtain a Social Insurance Number, Birth Certificate, NWT Health Care Card, Picture Identification.

(5) Placement Objectives including:

- Development of the specific goals and tasks to work towards the youth living independently.
- Determination of whether the current placement can offer permanency and stability on a long-term basis. If another placement is required to meet the long-term needs, identification of location and type of living situation will be required.

(6) Service/Program Supports Including:

- Financial support and what will be covered; youth's contribution or other financial resources (family, student assistance, other financial resources).



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- Development of youth's awareness of how to access available community services. A key factor in decision making should be the readiness and acceptance of the youth to access these services.
- Support groups, counselling for a youth overcoming addictions issues.
- Special considerations in planning where youth will require specialized supports as an adult. This will apply to a range of youth who live with challenges such as a developmental disability or a temporary state with special health considerations or other needs that require high levels of program supports.

(7) Connections (confirmation, encouragement, facilitation to be healthier where applicable) including:

- Specific goals and tasks to facilitate cultural, spiritual, familial, community and other identified connections. There must be an emphasis on connection with immediate and extended family who are willing to become re-involved with the youth in a positive way. Where appropriate, involve family members in transition planning.
- Develop strategies for resolving relationships with peers or others who don't support the youth's positive goals (learning how to say "no" and let go in a caring way, until stronger or both parties share the same vision).
- Other relationship considerations the youth may be experiencing (termination of relationships, strengthening, guidance/support regarding sexual orientation).

(8) Legal Considerations including a plan for resolution of any outstanding legal requirements (including creditor issues).

(9) Plan implementation summary including referrals needed, primary contacts and contact information (frequency/purpose of the meeting), secondary contacts, monitoring agreements between the Child Protection Worker and the youth, financial accountability expectations, timelines etc.