



Section 2 – Voluntary Support Services Agreements

Standard 2.2

Support Services Agreement and Case Plan

The Child Protection Worker /Designate (including Authorized Persons, Supervisor/Manager) may enter into a **Support Services Agreement and Case Plan (SSA)** with a youth aged 16-18 years old (until their 19th birthday) who is seeking support from Child and Family Services

REFERENCE

Child and Family Services Act, Section 6

Child and Family Services Standard 2.1 - Voluntary Services Agreements

Child and Family Services Standard - 6.12 Case Review

Child and Family Services Standard 6.6 - Child and Family Services Minimum Contacts

Child and Family Services Standard - 7.1 Placement Priorities for Children and Youth

Child and Family Services Standard - 7.2 Approval of Extended Family and Provisional Placement

Child and Family Services Standard - 10.16 Requirement to Provide Notice Before Taking a Significant Measure in Relation to an Indigenous Child of Youth

Federal Government's Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families, Section 9

PURPOSE


- To offer a youth support and services when they cannot live at home.
- To identify the youth's strengths and needs as well as to support them in accessing services that will increase their ability to live independently.

PROCEDURE

Responsibilities

Child Protection Worker/Designate:

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Determining the Cultural Identity of an Indigenous Youth:

- At the initial contact, ask the youth about their cultural identity, i.e., Indigenous, etc.
- Determine with the youth whether it is their best interest to include their parent(s)/ care provider(s)/caregiver(s) in the development of the **Support Services Agreement (SSA) and Case Plan**. If it is decided that it is in the youth's best interest to involve parent(s)/ care provider(s)/caregiver(s) in the process, develop a **Voluntary Services Agreement (VSA) and Case Plan as outlined in Standard 2.1 Voluntary Services Agreements**. That said, if it is not in the youth's best interest to involve their parent(s)/care provider(s)/caregiver(s) in the process, develop an **SSA and Case Plan** as per this Standard. If the youth is an expectant parent and requires support services, develop a **VSA and Case Plan** with them.
- Discuss with the youth if they would like their Indigenous Governing Body(s) (IGBs), applicable Aboriginal organization(s) (AAOs) or cultural organization(s) to support them and to participate in the case planning process for their **SSA. Form 10.15.1 Invitation to Participate in Case Planning Process for Child/Youth/Young Person (Non-Significant Measure)** can be used to invite a representative to participate in the development of a Case Plan if the youth consents to their participation.
- If appropriate, consult with the parent(s)/care provider(s)/caregiver(s) or extended family if there are questions about the youth's cultural identity. On consent, the Aboriginal Organization, Indigenous Governing Body, and other cultural organization for a non-Indigenous child/youth may have information to share.
- Considering the impact of racism and systemic discrimination, work with racialized youth to assess strengths and recognize resiliency when planning and delivering services specific to them.
- On consent, reach out to cultural groups or community members who can help foster the youth's connections to their cultural communities, and/or who could support the youth in an out-of-home placement if necessary.
- Document in MatrixNT the community or communities to which the youth is represented by or could belong to, including both maternal and parental cultural identities.

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Case Planning:

- Consult with the youth to determine what support services they require in order to meet their needs.
- Review the **Support Services Agreement Checklist tool 2.2.1** with the youth to determine if they are eligible for support services through an **SSA**. If the youth meets the criteria in the **Checklist**:
 - Ensure the youth cannot live with either parent/care provider/caregiver because of circumstances that would place the youth in need of protection;
 - Ensure the youth can make decisions and take responsibility for their own behaviour;
 - Ensure the youth can live independently, or with someone other than their parent(s)/care provider(s)/caregiver(s); and
 - Ensure the youth understands their responsibilities under the **SSA and Case Plan** and is prepared to assume them and sign the **SSA and Case Plan**.
- Refer to the **Philosophy of Voluntary Support Services Agreements tool 2.1.1** for a list of the types and extent of services that may be offered to the youth through an SSA.
- Advise the youth they may want to include their IGB(s), AAO(s) or other cultural organization representative(s) in the development of their **SSA and Case Plan** as the IGB(s) may be aware of people, services and programs that may be of benefit to them.
 - If the youth consents to the involvement of their IGB(s), AAO(s) or cultural organization, meet with the youth and their IGB or cultural organization to develop a clear understanding of the youth's needs and what support services they require. Consider the input of the IGB(s) or cultural organization as part of the development of the youth's **SSA** goals.
- Document a summary of the youth's needs and circumstances in MatrixNT as a **Case Note** including the following:
 - Information necessary to plan for the youth's care;
 - Information about what services are available from other formal and informal sources such as housing, income support, self-help groups, extended family members, friends, neighbours, the youth's Indigenous or cultural community and educational and recreational programs that could help meet the youth's needs;
 - Whether a suitable out of home placement is required (needs assessed in consultation with the youth and IGB(s), AAO(s) or cultural organization, if applicable), and

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- Determine the length of the **SSA**, 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,
- Develop the **SSA and Case Plan** based on the youth's identified needs, goals and responsibilities.
- Review the draft **SSA and Case Plan** with the Supervisor/Manager, to ensure the services offered within the SSA can be provided.
- Meet with the youth and IGB(s), AAO(s) or cultural organization representative(s) if applicable, to review and make any additions or changes to the draft **SSA and Case Plan**.
- Review the final draft of the **SSA and Case Plan** with the Supervisor/Manager and obtain their approval and signature on the **SSA and Case Plan**.
- Finalize the **SSA and Case Plan** as per the recommendations of the youth, IGB(s), AAO(s) or cultural organization, if applicable and Supervisor/Manager. The timeframe for the **SSA and Case Plan** cannot exceed **six (6) months** and cannot be extended beyond the youth's 19th birthday.
- Invite the youth, and IGB(s) or cultural organization representative, if applicable to sign the **SSA and Case Plan**; however, **the SSA and Case Plan** are still valid regardless if the IGB(s) signs it.
- Provide the youth with a signed copy of the **SSA and Case Plan** and place a copy of the **forms** as well as **Case Notes** on the hard file and upload copies of the documents to MatrixNT.

Case Management:

- Ensure ongoing communication and contact occurs with the youth and their Extended Caregiver, Provisional Caregiver or Regular Foster Caregiver (if applicable), as required by the **Standard 6.6 Child and Family Services Minimum Contacts** to support them in achieving their identified goals in their **SSA and Case Plan**. Document these contacts in MatrixNT as a **Case Note** and place on the hard file.
- Invite the IGB(s), AAO(s) or cultural organization, by consent only, to participate in service planning with the child/youth, parent(s)/care provider(s)/caregiver(s) or expectant parent(s). Document the meetings in MatrixNT as a **Case Note** and ensure any updates or reviews are documented during the **Case Review** process.

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Out of Home Placement Arrangement:

- Assess whether services can be provided within the home, and if these services would result in better outcomes for the youth because placement out of the home should be the last resort. That said, if the youth requires placement in a Extended Caregiver, Provisional Caregiver or Regular Foster Caregiver Home (because they are unable to identify a safe alternative living arrangement of their own), **Standard 7.1 Placement Priorities for Children and Youth** must be followed and notice must be provided to the parent(s)/care provider(s)/caregiver(s), IGB(s) of the Indigenous youth as outlined in **Standard 10.16 Requirement to Provide Notice Before Taking a Significant Measure in Relation to an Indigenous Child of Youth**. If there are no child protection concerns with the family, a **VSA** can be offered to help maintain the youth's placement within the family home as outlined in **Standard 2.1 Voluntary Services Agreement and Case Plan**.
- Complete **Genogram form 9.1.3** using the **Genogram Code Key tool 9.1.1** as per **Standard 9.1 Concurrent Planning for Children and Youth** and **Standard 9.5 Permanency Planning for Children or Youth** to map out the family relationships and other significant relationships that can assist with identification of a youth and family's cultural community. Considering the following information while completing the **Genogram**:
 - Aim to gather information about at least **three (3)** generations: the youth's generation, their parents and grandparents;
 - Include significant others who lived with or cared for the youth;
 - Start with drawing the family structure, who is in the family, in which generations, how they are connected, birth/marriage, deaths etc.;
 - You may ask them to tell you a bit about each person and how they offer support to the youth or family;
 - As the youth tells you about family members and relationships, make a note alongside the name;
 - Ask about relationships between family members;
 - Ask about family values, beliefs and traditions; and
 - Try to explore patterns and themes.

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- Upload a copy of the completed **Genogram** to MatrixNT and place a copy of it on the hard file.
- Consult with the youth and IGB(s), AAO(s) if applicable, to determine placement options. It is important to follow the placement priorities as outlined in the **Standard 7.1 Placement Priorities for Children and Youth** before finalizing the placement plan with the youth. Document the placement decision in MatrixNT as a Case Note and place a copy of the form on the hard file.
- If funding is required for a placement option identified by the youth and/or IGB(s), AAO(s) or cultural organization, then:
 - Complete the **form 7.3.2 a Foster Home Application** and **form 7.2.1 Extended Family and Provisional Placement Assessment** with the individuals identified as a placement option for the youth. Follow the procedures outlined in **Standard 7.2 Approval of Extended Family and Provisional Foster Homes**. If there are concerns with the identified placement, explore alternative placements as per **Standard 7.1 Placement Priorities for Children and Youth**
 - When a youth lives in an out of home placement through an **SSA**, the youth is not considered to be residing in the care of the Director; however they may be residing in a Room and Board situation.*
- Review the placement every **three (3) months** to determine if it is in the youth's best interest to continue the placement with anyone other than their parent(s)/care provider(s)/caregiver(s) or adult member of their family. Furthermore, the reasons for any change or lack of change with respect to placement must be clearly documented in MatrixNT as a **Case Note** as well as per **Standard 6.12 Case Review**.
- Document all actions that have been taken in the ongoing reassessment of a return to in-home placement of the youth with their parent(s)/care provider(s)/caregiver(s) or adult member of their family, and where applicable, the reason(s) why such placement is not in the youth's best

* Room and Board: The living situation for a youth with an SSA who requires a place to live. In these arrangements, the Caregiver is more a mentor and support person for the youth and this type of caregiver is paid the same amount as a Provisional/Extended Caregiver or Foster Caregiver.

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interests. Also, this reassessment must be clearly documented during the **Case Review** process.

- One (1) month before the youth is due to transition back home to the care of their parent(s)/care provider(s)/care giver(s), OR before the expiry of the SSA where no renewal is signed, complete the **Form 9.2.1 Transition Plan** to plan for a successful transition of the youth from their out-of-home placement or transition from receiving services through CFS.

Supervisor/Manager:

At the Initial Request for Service:

- Ensure the Child Protection Worker/Designate meets with the youth to determine if it is in their best interest to include their parent(s)/care provider(s)/caregiver(s) as well as the IGB(s), AAO(s) or cultural organization (s) in the development of the **SSA and Case Plan**.

Determining the Cultural Identity of an Indigenous Youth:

- Remind the Child Protection Worker/Designate to speak to the youth about their cultural identity, i.e., Indigenous, etc. and to document in MatrixNT as a **Case Note** the community or communities to which the youth is represented by or could belong to, including both maternal and paternal cultural identities.
- When applicable, ensure the Child Protection Worker/Designate completes the **Genogram form** to map out the family relationships and other significant relationships that can assist with identification of a youth and family's cultural community.

Case Planning:

- Ensure the Child Protection Worker/Designate coordinates and supports the youth in accessing appropriate community services to meet their needs.
- Assist the Child Protection Worker/Designate in their strategies to effectively support the youth and help them with transitional planning, if applicable.
- Ensure the Child Protection Worker/Designate appropriately documents their work and client support in MatrixNT as a **Case Note** and places a copy of the form on the hard file.
- Review the draft **SSA and Case Plan** with the Child Protection Worker/Designate to ensure the

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services offered within the **SSA** can be provided.

- Review and approve the final draft of the **SSA and Case Plan** with the Child Protection Worker/Designate.

Case Management:

- Ensure the Child Protection Worker/Designate meets with the youth as per **Standard 6.6 Child and Family Services Minimum Contacts** to support them in achieving their identified goals in their **SSA and Case Plan**.
- Ensure the Child Protection Worker/Designate has inquired and understood the youth's views and has engaged and collaborated with the IGB(s), AAO(s) or cultural organization(s) if appropriate.
- Ensure that if the IGB(s), AAO(s) or cultural organization(s) is involved in planning for the youth, the joint service planning meetings with the youth are clearly documented on MatrixNT as a **Case Note**.


Out of Home Placement Arrangement:

- Ensure the Child Protection Worker/Designate obtains the youth's views regarding alternative placement options and considers their opinions when making the placement decision. Moreover, ensure the placement decision is well documented in Matrix NT as a **Case Note**.
- Consult with and provide approval to the Child Protection Worker/Designate to place a youth in an out of home placement.
- Remind the Child Protection Worker/Designate that whenever a youth is placed out of the home or moved to a new placement, to follow the required priority of placement.

NTHSSA Deputy Director of Practice:

- Ensure that all Supervisors/Managers are aware of and inform Child Protection Worker/Designate of the importance of the **Federal Government's Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families** and its importance on practice.
- Ensure that all open files clearly identify the Indigenous heritage of the youth accessing services

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through Child and Family Services.

- Ensure that when a youth is placed in an out of home placement, there is a written rationale that outlines the efforts made to attend to priority placement considerations, engage and collaborate.
- Provide information and feedback pertaining to the use of the **SSA** with youth to the Statutory Director as requested.
- Promote practices to ensure adherence to **Standard 2.2 Support Services Agreement**.

DHSS Director of Child and Family Services or Deputy Director:

- If applicable, provide the Regional Health and Social Services Authorities and the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority with a copy of the Community Agreement as per **Section 20(1) and (2) of the Federal Government's Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families**.
- Where these do not already exist, the Statutory Director will work with the youth's Indigenous community to advance regional Community Planning Tables to formalize engagement opportunities and protocols.
- Maintain a list of applicable Aboriginal Organizations and Indigenous Governing Bodies.
- Receive information and/or the Quality Reviews on a quarterly basis from the Deputy Director of Practice of Designate.


FORMS

- Form 2.2.1 Support Services Agreement and Case Plan
- Form 7.3.2 Foster Home Application
- Form 7.2.1 Extended Family and Provisional Placement Assessment
- Form 9.1.3 Genogram
- Form 9.2.1 Transition Plan
- Form 10.15.1 Invitation to Participate in Case Planning Process for Child/Youth/Young Person (Non-Significant Measure)

TOOLS

- Tool 2.1.2 Philosophy of Voluntary Support Services Agreements

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- Tool 2.2.1 Support Services Agreement Checklist
- Tool 9.1.1 Genogram Code Key
- Tool 9.2.1 Elements of a Transition Plan

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