

ALBERTA COUNCIL of WOMEN'S SHELTERS

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended changes to the legislation:

1. The Act be named **The Children and Family Services Act**.
2. Acknowledge that family violence and its subsequent impact on children is a social problem in the preamble to the act.
3. State that children who witness abuse in their homes are deemed to be in need of timely integrated prevention and intervention services.
4. Timely interventions should be mandated in the act.
5. The legislation needs to be integrated with both family law and the Divorce Act.
6. The legislation should recognize the accountability of the perpetrator.
7. Provide for the formation of **Regional Child Welfare Committees** comprised of well-regarded representatives of the four pillars.
8. Strengthen the role of the Children's Advocate by ensuring that s/he:
 - Reports to the Legislature,
 - Is able to investigate any complaint regarding children receiving services from any department or authority without a child welfare file being opened.
 - Implements the children's filter recommendation from the Children's Forum by reviewing all legislation, budgets, policies and procedures for their impact on children.

Further, we would build on experience in the United States, which requires that government act on the recommendations of the Children's Advocate and Task Forces.

9. Encourage the sharing of information for case conferencing.
10. Protect confidentiality for aboriginal children.

"We believe in a world free from violence and abuse."

Recommended policy changes and direction:

1. The province show moral leadership and a commitment to children by signing the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
2. That resources be put in place to address the needs of women and children who are impacted by family violence.
3. The province establish a Commission to Prevent Family Violence similar in structure to AADAC
4. The province intervene strongly against the present proposals and course of action in the proposed federal Divorce Act.

“We believe in a world free from violence and abuse.”