CLOSING the GAPS

CHALLENGES & INEQUITIES regarding HUMAN SERVICE WORKER Series in the GOVERNMENT of ALBERTA
Executive Summary

Child Intervention is noted to be one of the most challenging fields of employment due to the difficult, intense and complex nature of the work; and best served by a highly skilled, well-trained and professional workforce. The recommended, and Alberta Children’s Services’ preferred minimum educational requirement is a Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) degree with some related human service experience or Master of Social Work degree.

Alberta Children’s Services is not able to attract workers with minimum educational and experience requirements, or retain new hires and longer-term employees; resulting in chronic workplace vacancies.

Workload and, negative characteristics of the workplace contribute to Children’s Services’ / Human Services Worker series’ employees to experience symptoms related to burnout, overall distress and secondary traumatic stress, along with intentions to leave their job and negative life satisfaction. The higher the worker’s level of education, the greater the worker’s intention is to leave.

Children’s Services’ / Human Services Worker series’ employees are underpaid in comparison with comparable roles within and outside the Government of Alberta.

To be competitive, Alberta Children’s Services’ / Human Services Worker series’ employees require a minimum of 4 grid increases to attract qualified applicants, and retain new hires and longer-term workers.

A stable, well-trained and experienced workforce is integral to maintaining role competencies, and gaining the efficiencies and capacities to ensure the safety, security and protection of children at risk; and meeting the needs of the vulnerable populations served by programs in Children’s Services and the Human Services Worker series.

Grid increases may be offset or rendered cost neutral by reductions in the monies and time set aside for recruiting and training new hires and ongoing knowledge and skill development, increases in worker productivity and the potential reallocation of trainers to frontline services. With a more seasoned workforce, the ratio of frontline workers to managers may be reduced. Supervisors could undertake the decision-making opportunities they assumed in the past, reducing system delays and layers of unnecessary bureaucracy and increasing efficiencies.

A healthy sustainable workforce is an investment in the future, and the desired outcome for Alberta’s most vulnerable populations.
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Introduction - Closing the Gaps: Challenges & Inequities in the HSW Series

Children and Youth Services – Child Intervention Position

In 2010 an independent Alberta Child Intervention Review Panel recognized Child Intervention, the supports and services provided to ensure a child’s safety and well-being, as an enormously difficult job. The panel indicated Regional staff are stretched in their ability to deliver services due to “change fatigue”, increased administrative and paperwork demands, and increased complexity of cases. In addition, a substantial number of caseworkers are inexperienced, yet carry tremendous responsibility and must make difficult decisions about complex family situations. The panel referred to Child Protection services as intake / screening, investigations, family enhancement, case management, foster care, and permanency, et cetera.¹

The 2012 Children and Youth Services Review reported Child Welfare has been identified as one of the most challenging fields of employment due to the difficult nature of the work, and high demands and expectations placed on workers (Annie E. Casey foundation, 2003).²

The 2012 report to the Alberta College of Social Workers (ACSW) indicated child protection work is one of the most demanding and challenging of careers. Social workers work with involuntary clients, in emotionally taxing situations, and within the confines of legislation and limited resources. The ACSW is concerned about the high turnover, burnout and workplace stress experienced by frontline government child protection social workers.³

The 2012 report by Doctor John Graham et al - Faculty of Social Work at the University of Calgary stated employees in [Human Services – Local 006] face many challenges including high case loads, limited flexibility in decision making or lack of autonomy, conflicting demands between client needs and government policy, poor social support and issues of safety and violence, and found that Human Services has been characterized as a highly demanding and stressful occupation.⁴

Child Intervention workers continuously make difficult decisions with life resonating impacts on children, youth and families; often under intense, stressful and urgent / emergent parameters. Responsibility and liability are enormous; professionalism, knowledge and skill base high, and personal risk an occupational reality. At times, Child Intervention is extremely sensitive and political, with decisions being tried in the media. Child Intervention workers may need to cope with internal and external investigations, with little perceived support from Management. No program is spared: investigations, ongoing case management, childcare licensing, foster care, or permanency/adoptions. Child Intervention workers experience vicarious traumatization, in addition to managing overwhelming workloads and the revolving door of exiting colleagues.

In addition to frontline line Intervention workers, Family Supports for Children with Disabilities (FSCD) and Supports for Permanence (SFP) are also programs in Children’s Services.

¹ Closing the Gap Between Vision and Reality: Strengthening Accountability, Adaptability and Continuous Improvement in Alberta’s Child Intervention System - Final report June 30, 2010: p-19 &1, 68 & 70, 20 & 105
² Children and Youth Services Review 34 (2012): p-1
⁴ Stress and Well-Being among AUPE Local 006 Members: 2012 Summary Report, pg-7&8
Qualifications / Education
The 2010 Alberta Child Intervention Review Panel reported the complex demanding nature of child intervention work is best served by a highly skilled, well-trained and professional workforce. The Review Panel recommended a Bachelor of Social Work degree as a minimum educational requirement for intervention workers working directly with children and families. The Panel emphasized it is important not to lose focus on what workers are being asked to do and how. Relationship-based service is the core of good child intervention, and the system must continually strive to improve the quantity and quality of face-to-face social work practice. The Panel recommended that Alberta Children and Youth Services (ACYS) take a more deliberate approach to human resource planning and management that will increase professionalism at all levels.

The Alberta government's education standard for Child Intervention workers is a Bachelor of Social Work degree (BSW) with some related human service experience, or a Master of Social Work (MSW). Successful BSW/MSW applicants are required to register and maintain registration with the Alberta College of Social Workers, have a valid Alberta Driver's license, and access to a reliable vehicle. The role involves strong assessment skills to determine the needs and risk of children and families, and to provide the supports and services to ensure a child's safety. [Caseworker - HSW 5 Calgary and Area open competition]

Mandatory four week Delegation training is required prior to a caseworker being eligible for "delegated" work. On-going mandatory training includes Suicide Intervention, Legislation/Acts (including, but not limited to - Child, Youth and Family Enhancement, Family Law, Protection of Children Involved in Prostitution, Drug Endangered Children, Protection Against Family Violence, and Freedom of Information and Privacy), Information Security Awareness, Case Management Practice Model, Child Youth: Information Technology, Child Youth: Adoptions, Child Youth: Supports for Permanency, Concurrent Planning, First Aid / CPR, ISIS, Car Seat Safety, et cetera. Re-certification is required every three years for a number of the aforementioned.

A study submitted to the Journal of Workplace Behavioral Health in 2010 indicated it takes upwards of 2 years for a child protection worker to fully develop the necessary knowledge, skills, abilities and dispositions to work independently.

In Alberta, to acquire and enhance core competencies, Regional in-service training is extensive and frequently consists of 30 plus hours per year, in addition to program specific in-service training of an equal or greater amount.

Learning and skill development in Child Intervention is continual and fluid with the evolution of research, philosophies, policies, procedures, regulations, legislation, and technologies, and system and bureaucracy realignments.

The probationary period for Children and Youth Services is one year, which, on occasion, is extended.

5 Closing the Gap report: p-12 & 76
6 Closing the Gap report: p-77
Demand
The 2010 Alberta Child Intervention Review Panel noted investigators and caseworkers in Alberta are not required to have a Bachelor’s Degree in social work. In fact, Child Intervention workers are not required to have any formal training in social work at all.\(^8\)

At a January 27, 2012 Children and Youth Services’ Provincial Advisory meeting, questions were raised regarding Children and Youth Services’ hiring of “equivalencies”. The Employer’s response was a BSW is the preferred qualification for Child Intervention workers; however, Alberta’s post-secondary institutions do not graduate enough BSW students to fill vacancies. The Employer indicated we have to “broaden our views” on hiring because of demand.\(^9\) The Employer acknowledged new recruits often lacked fundamental engagement, relationship building, interviewing, assessing, problem solving and critical thinking skills; and additional training is being considered / implemented to augment educational / skill deficits.

If basic professional acumen, which takes years to acquire, is not initially present to investigate and assess situations, one must ask; what is the quality of information gathered, how informed are decisions, and what impact does this have on child, youth and family risk management and outcomes? In the 1980’s, in response to an inquiry and reviews into the suicide of a youth in care, GOA Children’s Services’ workers were financially supported to upgrade their education to a BSW degree.

The 2010 Alberta Child Intervention Review Panel indicated improving the qualifications, competencies and job-readiness of Child Intervention workers is a priority, given the challenging nature of this work and its importance in the lives of vulnerable children.\(^10\)

**Standards** in human resources, as in industry, are to be met or exceeded to mitigate the potential for tragedy. Is history is destined to repeat itself?

Recruitment and Retention of Qualified Workers

History
In the early 1990s jobs in Children and Youth Services in Calgary had limited movement. The few vacancies were primarily filled with transfer-ins from out of Region; except for the “Native Unit”, which hired persons with Aboriginal ethnicity. The Klein hiring-freeze resulted in the redeployment of persons with Bachelor of Social Work degrees from programs such as Income Security.

Today, vacancies in Calgary and Area, and across the province are a chronic issue. At the end of December 2011, the Calgary and Area vacancy rate for assessors was 8% and 7% for case managers\(^11\). Vacancy rates fluctuates; with hiring blitzes filling positions; however, the struggle to attract and retain qualified employees continues, especially in the Aboriginal offices. Although the aforementioned statistics demonstrate a 15% vacancy rate, this does not include persons away on General Illness, vacation or learning opportunities.

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\(^8\) Closing the Gap report: p-71
\(^9\) Provincial Advisory Committee meeting, Edmonton – Local 006 minutes – 2012.01.27
\(^10\) Closing the Gap report: p-78
\(^11\) Calgary HR - JK
Current Human Resource Statistics
The number of Alberta Children and Youth Services' full-time equivalencies and vacancies in each Region and program were requested in May 2012, with numerous follow up requests; the Employer was unable/unwilling to provide the aforementioned statistics. The Employer did provide the number of new hires and terminations for all Local 006 members per Region between January 01, 2011 and October 31, 2012; including Child & Youth Care, interns, case aides, Childcare Licensing Officers (HSW 3s / now 4s), and ACYS, AISH, and PDD workers.

Provincial Statistics for Alberta Children and Youth Services
New hires - April 2009 to March 2010: 470 were recruited; 450 employees left
New hires - April 2010 to March 2011: 319 were recruited; 201 were retained.  
(The number of already employed staff departing is unknown)

Provincial Statistics for Local 006 members, including Child & Youth Care and Human Services Worker (HSW) series – ACYS, PDD, AISH plus HSW 1 caseworkers, summer interns, support workers, trainees & case aides:
# New hires provincially - January 01, 2011 to December 31, 2011: 329, terminations: 226
# New hires provincially - C&YC 1 & 2s: 55, Licensing: 4, AISH – 41; OPG – 5; PDD – 10; HSW 5s, 6s & 7s: total # 185 (most likely ACYS) and Region 3 - Calgary & Area: ACYS – 56 plus 12 HSW 1s; PDD – 5;
# New hires provincially - January 1 to October 31, 2012: 358, terminations: 203
# New hires provincially - C&YC 1 & 2s: 36; Licensing: 10; AISH – 54, OPG – 7; PDD – 13; HSW 5s, 6s & 7s: 208 (most likely ACYS) Region 3 - Calgary & Area: ACYS – 70 plus 13 HSW 1s; PDD – 4;

Without the number of full time equivalencies (FTEs) and vacancies per Region and program, it is difficult to ascertain trends; however, based on the aforementioned, in Calgary and Area there were 126 front line Children Services’ workers (HSW 5s, 6s & 7s) hired in slightly less than 2 years, indicating a significant number of new inexperienced workers potentially lacking the preferred minimum education requirements.

In a December 2012 Children's Services Calgary and Area Regional Advisory meeting, management indicated the Region had 55 vacancies; indicating new hires are only maintaining the ongoing yearly revolving door of vacancies.

Of the 101 members in Calgary and Area who terminated employment between January 01, 2011 and October 31, 2012, 59% resigned or left for alternate employment, with an average of 5.66 years of service indicating members are likely leaving early in their employment, and others after 10 or more years of employment; 13.86% retired.

Provincially 55.24% of Local 006 C&YC and HSW workers resigned or left for alternate employment; 17.24% retired.

AISH, a small program compared to ACYS, provincially had 94 new hires between January 01, 2011 and October 31, 2012. 47.37% of their workers resigned or left for alternate employment after an average of 3.01 years; 29.83% retired.

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12 L. Powers & B. Black
13 Corporate Human resources – Lillian Helton
Child welfare workforce studies have identified low wages, high caseloads, inadequate training and poor supervision as key contributors to job burnout and high turnover within the Child Protection population (AECF, 2003; General Accounting Office, 2003). A 2010 study in the Journal of Workplace Health reported staff turnover typically occurs within the first 3 years of employment; critical factors for leaving were stress of the job, workload and high levels of exposure to traumatic events (Ellet, Ellis, Westbrook, & Dews, 2007, Griffith & Horn 2001 & Howe & McDonald 2001).

Kim (2011) found social workers in the public child welfare sector reported higher levels of depersonalization compared to social workers in the private child welfare sector. Boyas and Wind (2010), in their examination of social capital and burnout found that the public child welfare worker subsample reported high rates of burnout.

The 2012 report by John Graham et al indicated the higher the level of education of respondents, the greater the intention to leave their positions; and the older the respondents, the less intention they have of leaving.

Employee instability is a perpetual drain on resources, severely impacts the accumulated wisdom and experience in the workplace, increases workload, and indicates the program is not desirable as long-term or career employment. The number of retirees is especially disconcerting coupled with the inability to attract and retain adequately qualified staff.

With the initial delegation and hundreds of hours of on-going in-service training necessary to provide the foundational knowledge and skills to gain and enhance the competencies to fulfill Children’s Services’ positions, staffing is an expensive investment that should be nurtured and protected.

**Workload / Working Conditions**

Since the early 1980s excessive workload has been an issue for Local 006 members, Children’s Services (Child Intervention, Childcare Licensing, Foster Care, Permanency/Adoptions, FSCD, SFP & C&YC) and OPG, AISH and PDD. Workload was a primary factor in the Local 006 province-wide strike in 1990. In 1991, Local 006 and the Employer agreed upon the Workload Standard of 101 hours per worker per month. Although there is an appeal process, caseload sizes have continued to increase. The toll workload takes on workers is extreme, increasing General Illness and Long Term Disability claims.

The 2011 Local 006 AUPE Caseload Issues report indicated members have been working short staffed for years. In fact, it is a rare occasion when worksites have a full complement of employees; yet Employer standards and expectations remain as if a human resource shortage is not an issue; resulting in employee burnout; leaves; transfers; harsh demanding, and at times, toxic work environments; and the inability to retain staff.

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14 Children and Youth Services Review 34: p-2
16 Children and Youth Services Review 34: p-2
17 Stress and Well-Being among AUPE Local 006 Members: 2012 Summary Report, pg-7&8
If an employee is away on annual vacation, general illness, training et cetera; then workload increases and the disparity between recommended to actual caseload is even more pronounced. On average there were 509 Local 006 members missing work for a period of 16 days over a 6 month period (L Powers & B Black) 18 [2011 Caseload report attached]

The 2012 report by Doctor John Graham et all indicated Local 006 has 2881 members with an average age of 48 years old, and at the time of the study 10.62% of all members were on leave from work. Participants, on average, had high levels of emotional exhaustion (a component of burnout). Individuals that worked in government offices experienced higher levels of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, and less personal accomplishment than members in non-government offices.

Over 50% of participants reported bullying and interference from colleagues in the workplace, slightly over 30% of respondents reported experiencing harassment, false allegations, and yelling; and slightly over 20% of respondents reported experiencing verbal threats and name calling.

Respondents with higher levels of education experienced fewer or less severe symptoms associated with disengagement and emotional intrusion.

Based on the review, it is apparent that characteristics of the workplace can significantly contribute to Human Service workers experiencing symptoms related to burnout, overall distress and secondary traumatic stress, along with intentions to leave their job and negative overall life satisfaction. 19

**Employee Engagement**

**2006, 2010 and 2012 Corporate and Region 3 2010 and 2012 surveys** indicate Children’s Services’ workers are generally enthusiastic and passionate regarding the work they do (C: 2006-85%, 2010-85%, 2013-81%, R3: 2010-86%, 2012-80%); however, there is an overall

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18 Report prepared by Local 006 for A.U.P.E. to provide to the Public commissioner on Caseload Issues – November 2011
19 Stress and Well-Being among AUPE Local 006 Members: 2012 Summary Report, pg 7&8
decline in: employee engagement, quality of work environment, organizational support and involvement, internal communication, leadership and management indexes with outcomes ranging in the 50th to 30th percentiles. [Refer to Appendix A for additional information on the Corporate and Region 3 surveys].

The Ministry of Human Services acknowledges a problem in employee engagement as the Government of Alberta is providing ¾ of a million dollars towards a Children and Youth Services Employee Engagement Fund for the years 2011/2012, 2012/2013, and 2013/2014 to support employee growth and development, attract new staff, and provide a quality work environment.

In response to the 2012 Corporate Survey results on March 04, 2013 Deputy Minister Steve McDonald emailed “I have heard your comments regarding workloads, improving processes and communication, and making timely decisions. The issues you have identified demonstrate a need to continue to focus on creating workplaces that support and empower you”.

Point Rating Evaluation Plan (PREP)

A brief history of wage comparisons will demonstrate the erosion of the Human Services Worker series (Children and Youth Services, OPG, PDD and AISH) remuneration; compared to Income and Employment (SFI) workers, who moved from Local 006 HSW series, to Local 002 Program Services series (Immigration and Employment).

Although information will focus on Children’s Services’ Human Services Worker 4s, 5s, 6s & 7s (caseworker / adoption worker and team leader roles) with Program Services Employment and Immigration 3s & 4s (employment counselor support services / client employment counselor and team leader roles) pay equality is of issue for the entire HSW series. A minimum of four pay grids is required, to attain pay equality with Program Services.

Early in the 1990’s Local 006 employees in the Department of Family and Social Services, which included programs such as Child Welfare, Supports For Independence (SFI) also known as Income Security (Welfare), and Services to Persons with Disabilities were remunerated based on education and years of service and not the position; thus an employee with a Master’s degree received a higher income than an employee with a Bachelor of Social Work degree, who received a higher income than an employee with a General Arts degree. [Refer to Appendix B]

In 2001/2002 the Employer moved to a Point Rating Evaluation Plan, commonly known as PREP. PREP is the ranking of jobs within the organization by points, with bandwidths [initially] correlated with pay grades; the higher the bandwidth, the greater the financial compensation; a systemic process of determining the value of jobs in relation to other jobs within the organization. Objectives of job classification and evaluation are to establish a hierarchy of jobs or group of jobs in the organization, and to provide a consistent approach to ensure the fair and equitable treatment of employees across Ministries.
PREP evaluation factors used to measure the job worth are:

- Knowledge (Professional/Content knowledge, Complexity and Diversity and Human Relations Skills)
- Creativity/Problem Solving
- Responsibility

Numeric values are assigned to the aforementioned factors. Ranking is based on comparing the total points to established benchmarks to determine the ranking of an individual position within the plan. More recently positions that are re-classed may not receive a specific Point Rating Evaluation, but simply moved to a higher Class title such as from an HSW 3 (bandwidth 269 – 313 to an HSW 4 (bandwidth 314 – 370).

Benchmarks are descriptions of jobs within a particular stream, and provide a constant set of reference points from which other jobs are measured to ensure cross-government consistency and equity in the application of PREP. A stream groups similar kinds of work together into occupational groupings such as Human Services Worker, Child and Youth Care, and Medical and Rehabilitative Services (formerly Local 010, now Local 006), Program Services and Finance (Local 002), and Correctional Services (Local 003). There are levels within each stream with point band determinants.\(^20\)

In today’s society the “worth” or “value” of a role is typically equated to the monetary compensation a worker receives, such as an Executive Manager is remunerated at a higher level than a Manager.

It is acknowledged that classification does not consider issues related to pay, as this is negotiated through the Collective Agreement; however, classification does measure “job worth” or the “value” the organization places on the ongoing responsibilities and outcomes of a role.\(^21\)

**Classification and Wage Comparisons**

**1998 Subsidiary Agreement 006:** Remuneration was based on Education; thus Child Welfare, Income Security (Supports for Independence) and PDD workers were paid on their academic credentials and years of service, irrespective of position. Teachers, under the Education series topped out at a few thousand dollars higher than Casework Supervisors. [Refer to Appendix B]

**2001 Subsidiary Agreement 006:** Introduced PREP and the ranking of jobs in relation to other jobs within the organization by points, with bandwidths correlated with pay grades; the higher the bandwidth, the greater the financial compensation. The exception was C&YC - Child Care Councilors who have consistently been paid less than counterparts in the same bandwidths. (Refer to chart)

\(^{20}\) PREP Information: AB Government websites CHR and PAO
\(^{21}\) PREP information: AB Government websites CHR and PAO
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Bandwidth 314-370</th>
<th>Bandwidth 371-438</th>
<th>Monthly Pay #1</th>
<th>Monthly Pay #7</th>
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<tr>
<td>CCC 1</td>
<td>C&amp;YC</td>
<td>342</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCC 1C</td>
<td>C&amp;YC</td>
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<td>$2,978</td>
<td>$3,805</td>
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<tr>
<td>HSW 4</td>
<td>SFI-ECSS / now E&amp;I CEC workers</td>
<td>353</td>
<td></td>
<td>$3,485</td>
<td>$4,511</td>
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<td>CCC 2</td>
<td>CCC/C&amp;YC</td>
<td></td>
<td>406</td>
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<td>HSW 5</td>
<td>ACYS Caseworker</td>
<td></td>
<td>393</td>
<td>$3,640</td>
<td>$4,707</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Red:** In 2001 HSW 4s ECSS/CEC workers (now Program Services 3s) were ranked and paid less than HSW 5s (Children’s Services’ caseworkers; including foster care, permanent guardianship & adoption)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Bandwidth 439-518</th>
<th>Bandwidth 519-613</th>
<th>Monthly Pay #1</th>
<th>Monthly Pay #7</th>
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<td>C&amp;YC</td>
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<td>HSW 6</td>
<td>ACYS Assessor</td>
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<td>$3,805</td>
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<td>HSW 6</td>
<td>SFI-Team Leader</td>
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<td>$3,805</td>
<td>$4,916</td>
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<td>HSW 7</td>
<td>ACYS-Team Leader</td>
<td>556</td>
<td></td>
<td>$4,138</td>
<td>$5,316</td>
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</table>

**Blue:** In 2001 Children’s Services Assessors and SFI Team Leaders (now Program Services 4s) were in the same bandwidth and remunerated the same.

In the initial 2001 PREP, SFI-ECSS workers were assessed to be HSW4s and Children’s Services’ caseworkers were assessed to be HSW 5s with an increased pay differential based on their designated PREP ranking and bandwidths. SFI-Team Leaders were assessed as HSW 6s and Children’s Services’ Team Leaders were assessed as HSW7s with an increased pay differential based on their designated PREP ranking and bandwidths.

During 2001 negotiations, outside comparators for PREP Benchmarks with respect to ACYS HSW workers were teachers and nurses.

**2011 Collective Agreement:** A number of years prior, SFI (now Employment and Immigration-workers) moved to Local 002 and the Class Title of Program Services 3s. The SFI-ECSS / E&I CEC worker’s job descriptions did not change significantly. Their PREP bandwidth remained the same; however, their remuneration compared to ACYS workers increased close to $6,000 per year in their different Program stream. The disparity between E&I workers and ACYS workers will increase with every wage increase unless grid increases are implemented. [For PREP HSW 5 and PS 3 position comparisons, refer to the attached report].

**Note:** E&I Team Leaders’, formerly SFI Team Leaders’, point ranking and bandwidth decreased; however, their remuneration jumped substantially to near parity with ACYS’ Team Leaders.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Class</th>
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<th>Bandwidth 371-438</th>
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<th>Biweekly Pay #7</th>
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<td>E&amp;I</td>
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<td>$2,420.93</td>
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<td>(HSW4)</td>
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<td>$33.39/hr</td>
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<td>*AHS</td>
<td>Addictions III</td>
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<td></td>
<td>$34.57</td>
<td>$44.63</td>
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<td>PS 4</td>
<td>E&amp;I Team Leaders</td>
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<td>$3,403.56</td>
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<td>$35.81/hr</td>
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<td>Rehab 4</td>
<td>Medical &amp; Rehab</td>
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<td>$36.57/hr</td>
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<tr>
<td>*AHS</td>
<td>Social Worker II</td>
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<td></td>
<td>$35.43</td>
<td>$47.12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Blue: GOA comparators (same bandwidth) to HSW5; White: PS3 (lower bandwidth) to HSW 5
Pink: Outside GOA comparators to HSW 5 Children’s Services Workers

E&I CECs (PS3s), in the bandwidth of 314 - 370 receive $43.79 per hour where as ACYS Caseworkers (HSW5s), a bandwidth higher, top out at $42.23 per hour; which equates to approximately $3,000 a year less than E&I CECs; whereas when E&I CECs / SFI ECSS workers were in the HSW series, SFI ECSS workers received approximately $3,000 less per year than HSW5s; as per their assigned ranking and job descriptions. By moving to Local 002 and the Program Series stream, E&I workers received a $6,000 salary increase.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Bandwidth 439-518</th>
<th>Bandwidth 519-613</th>
<th>Biweekly Pay #1</th>
<th>Biweekly Pay #7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HSW 6</td>
<td>ACYS Assessor</td>
<td>451</td>
<td></td>
<td>$2,474.49</td>
<td>$3,198.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$34.13/hr</td>
<td>$44.11/hr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PS 4</td>
<td>E&amp;I Team Leader</td>
<td>421-1 bandwidth lower than HSW 6</td>
<td></td>
<td>$2,596.42</td>
<td>$3,403.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(formerly HSW6)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$35.81/hr</td>
<td>$46.94/hr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*AHS</td>
<td>Addictions IV</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$36.84</td>
<td>$48.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HSW 7</td>
<td>ACYS-Team Leader</td>
<td>556</td>
<td></td>
<td>$2,692.53</td>
<td>$3,486.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>37.13/hr</td>
<td>$48.09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Blue: GOA comparators: HSW 6s and PS4s (formerly HSW6)
Pink: Outside comparator to HSW 6

With re-evaluation of E&I Team Leaders’ benchmarks, their ranking decreased to 421 points and one bandwidth; however, they are now compensated at near parity with HSW7s, two bandwidths higher and at 556 points. E&I Team Leaders’ hourly wage ranges from $35.81 to $46.94 per hour, whereas ACYS Team Leaders receive between $37.13 and $48.09 per hour; approximately $1.00 per hour more, insignificant to the differential in job duties and responsibilities.

When Medical and Rehabilitative Services integrated with Local 006 the disparity in their Program series wages and the HSW series wages became evident. Although Rehabilitation 4
and Finance 4 workers are in the same bandwidth as HSW 5s their remuneration is $89,859 and $90,556.18 per year, compared to an HSW5’s $79,615.64.

AADAC (Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission) Addiction Counselors received an increase in salary when transitioned to Alberta Health Services. Prior to their relocation, Addictions Counselors were compensated significantly lower than HSW5s. Heath Services’ Social Worker II’s job description is comparable to an HSW5s; however, are remunerated approximately $5.00 more per hour.  

Local 002’s Finance 4’s remuneration is nearly equal to an HSW7’s, yet 2 bandwidths lower.

Local 006’s HSW series has not maintained financial parity with GOA colleagues and/or outside comparators such as AHS’ addiction counselors, social workers, and nurses and teachers. Unlike some Program streams, the HSW series has not had grid increases since the inception of PREP, or like Income Security workers inherited a 4-grid increase by moving from Local 006 to Local 002.

Children’s Services, which is noted for some of the most challenging, stressful, intense and complex positions requiring high levels of skill, expertise and responsibility are no longer financially competitive within and outside the GOA.

**Conclusion**

The Government of Alberta’s 2013 budget includes $67.7 million to “support contracted agencies in attracting and retaining qualified staff”; yet the GOA has similar challenges within Children’s Services, Office of the Public Guardian, Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped and Persons with Developmental Disabilities.

In a May 16, 2011 email, Deputy Minister Steve MacDonald indicated, “In any organization, and especially human service ones, our greatest asset is our people”. **YET Children’s Services’ workers and the Human Services Worker PREP Classification stream** have not kept financial pace with other positions and Program streams within the Government of Alberta. The HSW series, although ranked as equal (Finance and Enterprise), in the same bandwidth (Medical and Rehabilitative Services) or higher (Employment and Immigration), the series is paid less.

Literature reviews indicate Child Intervention is an enormously difficult, demanding, and stressful field of employment, requiring advanced education and extensive on-going in-service training to best serve the organization and ensure the safety of children.  

The complexity, intensity, responsibility and accountability of Children’s Services’ work, inability to hire and retain qualified staff, workload and, at times, negative work environment result in new hires and formerly committed, knowledgeable, skilled and experienced workers to seek positions in Health, Mental Health, other GOA departments, the private sector, non-profits and/or agencies for employment in healthier more welcoming predictable workplaces that

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22 Health Services Collective Agreement – April 1, 2013
support work/life balance, and personal well-being; and recognize “job worth” through remuneration that reflects the merits of the position. Once valued as career opportunities, Children’s Services and counterparts in the HSW series are being used as training experiences for more amenable long-term employment. Children’s Services is no longer competitive within and outside the GOA.

Due to acknowledged market demand, Children’s Services cannot maintain their education hiring standard of a BSW; a concern of the Alberta Independent Review Panel that recommended the Minister develop and implement a human resource strategy that addresses capacity, qualification and competencies at all levels of the system.24

Workload has been an ongoing 30-year issue, which is exacerbated by the inability of Children’s Services to recruit and retain knowledgeable skilled frontline workers, and the implementation of practice models that are paperwork and resource heavy.

Corporate Surveys demonstrate Children Services’ workers are typically “satisfied” with, and passionate about their work as GOA employees; and enjoy assisting children and families, keeping children safe, and working to make a positive difference, yet “rational” connection to the organization has remained notably low for years.25

Frontline Child Intervention is a challenging, crisis oriented and predominately reactive occupation. An experienced, well-trained and stable workforce would increase employee engagement, competencies, and productivity, subsequently providing more effective and efficient services to the children, youth and families served.

At the January 27, 2012 Children’s Services’ Provincial Advisory meeting, the inequality between the Human Services Worker series and the Program Services series was acknowledged as a known issue that needed to be addressed at the bargaining table.

The Government of Alberta and Ministry of Human Services has an opportunity to rectify the pay inequality within the HSW series, and ongoing loss of valuable human resources by providing frontline Intervention workers with a minimum of 4 pay grid increases. The fair and just grid increases would enable Children and Youth Services to be competitive, and attract and retain a qualified workforce.

As the number of employees in the HSW series is small, grid increases may be offset or rendered cost neutral by reductions in the monies and time set aside for hiring and training new recruits and ongoing knowledge and skill development, and the potential reallocation of trainers to frontline services. With a more seasoned workforce, the ratio of frontline employees to managers may be reduced. Supervisors could undertake the decision-making opportunities they assumed in the past, reducing system delays and layers of unnecessary bureaucracy and increasing efficiencies.

As the HSW series involves different programs, the expense may be distributed between financial groupings, reducing costs to one department.

24 Closing the Gap - Final report June 30, 2010
25 Region 3 Survey
Make the choice to ensure the safety, security and protection of children at risk and the vulnerable populations served by FSCD, SFP, OPG, PDD and AISH; by working towards a healthy and sustainable workforce, and preserving Government Of Alberta human resources for the benefit of the GOA and Albertans; an investment in the future for all.

Demonstrate the Government of Alberta values the roles and responsibilities of their HSW series employees, and most importantly the desired outcomes for the most vulnerable of Alberta populations.

Respectfully submitted,

Local 006 Ad Hoc Committee:
Donna Smith, Local 006 Vice Chair, and
Gail Iler, Local 006 Chief Steward
Appendixes
Appendix A: Corporate and Regional Surveys

December 2006, 2010 and 2012 Corporate Employee Survey Results for Children and Youth Services; and 2010 and 2012 Corporate Employee Survey Results for Calgary and Area Child and Family Services Authority

The aforementioned surveys demonstrated an overall decline in employee engagement, quality of work environment, organizational support and involvement, internal communication, leadership and management indexes. C&YS’ percentages are in blue, black and purple and Calgary and Area’s 2010 survey in red.

Percentage of employees who somewhat or strongly agreed with:

- Support to balance work and personal life (58% / 65% / 65% / 59%)
- Proud to tell people you work for GOA (66% / 61% / 68% / 59%)
- Receiving meaningful recognition (47% / 57% / 53% / 49%)
- Support for learning and development (74% / 50% / 66% / 53%)
- Opportunities for input into decisions (48% / 51% / 39%)
- Have support to provide a high level of service (55% / 53% / 48% / 48%)
- Confidence in senior leadership (55% / 44% / 51% / 39%)
- Organization provides support to adapt to changes made to your job (47% / 44% / 49% / 35%)
- Senior leadership provides clear direction (44% / 46% / 38%)
- Essential information flows effectively from senior leadership (52% / 40% / 46% / 32%)
- Organization asks for employee input when planning business improvements (47% / 34% / 42% / 25%)
- Senior leadership makes timely decisions (33% / 38% / 29%)
- Senior leadership demonstrates interest in well-being of employees (38% / 48% / 30%)

86% / 85% / 83% / 86% of C&YS employees rated their job as a good fit with interests and skills. Supervisors indicated (89% / 91% / 89% / 96%) of the employees they managed had the skills and knowledge to meet current job requirements. (66% / 67% / 64% / 66%) of employees were satisfied with the quality of supervision, and (93% / 92% / 90% / 94%) of employees indicated positive working relationships with co-workers.

Verbatim comments from Calgary and Area’s Survey indicated employees liked helping children and families, keeping children safe, and working to make a positive difference, and working directly with the public. Recommendations to improve the quality of the work environment were: reduce workload / hire more staff; enhance leadership, management and supervision; provide better / more supports to enable the provision of the quality of service needed and increase communication.

Calgary and Areas 2012 ESAT Survey indicated an Employees’ willingness to engage at 80% / benchmark 81%; intent to remain with the GOA 73% / benchmark 71%; emotional engagement 79% / benchmark 81%; and rational commitment 54% / benchmark 54%.
# Appendix B: Education Based Pay Grades

## 1998 Subsidiary Agreement #006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Class Title</th>
<th>Working Title</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Yearly Wage-max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SOCIAL SERVICES</td>
<td>Social Worker I</td>
<td>CFS-Child Protection, Adoptions, Foster Care, Day Care, HCS, Mediation &amp; Court Services I &amp; E-AISH, Intake Worker, Client Support Worker SFI-Employment &amp; Client Support Services Worker, Intake Worker, Specialist</td>
<td>Diploma Equivalencies</td>
<td>35,364.00 to 36,816.00</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social Worker II</td>
<td>CFS program-as above I &amp; E programs-as above (Except for FBWs &amp; EROs) PDD program</td>
<td>Bachelor of: (BA, B Ed)</td>
<td>39,312.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social Worker III</td>
<td>CFS program-as above I &amp; E programs-as above PDD program-as above Bachelor of Social Work</td>
<td></td>
<td>42,780.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CCC I</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>36,816.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CCC II</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>40,212.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CCC III</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>43,716.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Welfare Program Supervisor I</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>44,652.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Casework Supervisor I</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>49,740.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Welfare Supervisor II</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>53,088.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Services</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>25,692 to 51,696</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PAY information from GS Collective Agreement November 5, 1998

* Teacher Class Series also included monthly modifiers / add-ons