



Adoption Services

DEFINITION

Adoption Services provide information, counselling, and support to birth parents, children, youth, and prospective adoptive parents to facilitate permanent caring relationships for children within families. Adoption services also provide support to birth parents, adopted individuals, and adoptive parents after an adoption has been finalized.

Note: The term "children" includes infants, toddlers, school-age children, and youth. The term "birth parents" includes expectant parents. The term "prospective adoptive parents" can include foster parents and kinship caregivers that are seeking to adopt the child in their care.

Note: Home Study Services will complete: CA-AS 3, 6, 13 and 14 only.

Post Placement Services will complete: CA-AS 6, 12, 13 and 14 only.

Foster Care to Adoption Services will complete: all of CA-FKC and CA-AS 2, 3, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13, and 14 only.

Note: Please see [CA-AS Reference List](#) for a list of resources that informed the development of these standards.

Table of Evidence

Self-Study Evidence

- Provide an overview of the different programs being accredited under this section. The overview should describe:
 - a. the program's service philosophy and approach to delivering services;
 - b. eligibility criteria;
 - c. any unique or special services provided to specific populations; and
 - d. major funding streams.
- If elements of the service (e.g., assessments) are provided by contract with outside programs or through participation in a formal, coordinated service delivery system, provide a list that identifies the providers and the service components for which they are responsible. Do not include services provided by referral.
- Provide any other information you would like the peer review team to know about these programs.
- A demographic profile of persons and families served by the programs being reviewed under this service section with percentages representing the following:
 - a. racial and ethnic characteristics;

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- b. gender/gender identity;
- c. age;
- d. major religious groups; and
- e. major language groups
- As applicable, a list of groups or classes including, for each group or class:
 - a. the type of activity/group;
 - b. whether the activity/group is short-term or ongoing;
 - c. how often the activity/group is offered;
 - d. the average number of participants per session of the activity/group, in the last month; and
 - e. the total number of participants in the activity/group, in the last month
- A list of any programs that were opened, merged with other programs or services, or closed
- A list or description of program outcomes and outputs being measured
- Adoption Service (CA-AS) Data Sheet

On-Site Evidence

No On-Site Evidence

On-Site Activities

No On-Site Activities

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CA-AS 1: Adoptive Parent Recruitment

The organization ensures a diverse group of prospective adoptive parents considers the benefits and responsibilities of adoption, and a sufficient number of available adoptive families for children awaiting adoption.

NA *The organization only provides Foster Care to Adoption Services.*

NA *The organization provides homestudy services only.*

NA *The organization provides post placement services only.*

Rating Indicators

1) All elements or requirements outlined in the standard are evident in practice, as indicated by full implementation of the practices outlined in the Practice standards.

2) Practices are basically sound but there is room for improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,

- Minor inconsistencies and not yet fully developed practices are noted, however, these do not significantly impact service quality; or
- Procedures need strengthening; or
- With few exceptions procedures are understood by staff and are being used; or
- For the most part, established timeframes are met; or
- Proper documentation is the norm and any issues with individual staff members are being addressed through performance evaluations (CA-HR 6.02) and training (CA-TS 2.03); or
- Active client participation occurs to a considerable extent.

3) Practice requires significant improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards. Service quality or program functioning may be compromised; e.g.,

- Procedures and/or case record documentation need significant strengthening; or
- Procedures are not well-understood or used appropriately; or
- Timeframes are often missed; or
- A number of client records are missing important information or
- Client participation is inconsistent; or
- One of the Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

4) Implementation of the standard is minimal or there is no evidence of implementation at all, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,

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- No written procedures, or procedures are clearly inadequate or not being used; or
- Documentation is routinely incomplete and/or missing; or
- Two or more Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

Table of Evidence

Self-Study Evidence

No Self-Study Evidence

On-Site Evidence

- Website or book with photo listings, if available

On-Site Activities

- Interview:
 - a. Program director
 - b. Relevant personnel

CA-AS 1.01

Family members, foster parents, former caregivers, and other adults with a connection to the child are considered as prospective adoptive parents or as a resource for the child, and are appropriately involved in the child's placement.

CA-AS 1.02

An organization that has responsibility for placing children with special needs makes a proactive, intensive effort to recruit adoptive parents.

Interpretation: *Children with special needs are children who may be difficult to place or may have a greater risk of disruption and dissolution, and can include: sibling groups, older children, children with health, emotional, behavioural and developmental problems, and children of a racial or ethnic minority.*

NA *The organization does not place children with special needs for adoption.*

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(FP) CA-AS 1.03

Recruitment is conducted in a responsive, respectful, and ethical manner.

Interpretation: *Organizations that use online photo listing services ensure that appropriate mechanisms are in place to protect confidential information.*

Interpretation: *Generally, when board members, employees, or consultants of the organization express interest in becoming adoptive parents, the organization refers them to another provider. If the organization allows board members, employees, or consultants to adopt children through the program, the organization must have a policy and procedures that address the circumstances under which this practice is allowed, conflicts of interest, confidentiality of client and adoptive parent information, evaluation of the adoptive home, and any other risks that have been identified by the organization.*

Research Note: *Literature suggests that a prompt response to initial inquiries from prospective adoptive parents can improve recruitment.*

CA-AS 1.04

When services are limited to specific types of adoptive families, the organization:

- a. considers its mission, resources, capacity, and contractual and legal obligations, and the needs of children awaiting adoption when developing a policy for such selectivity;
- b. provides information about eligibility criteria to prospective parents; and
- c. refers applicants who are outside the scope of the organization's services to another provider.

Research Note: *Research suggests that prospective adoptive parents can become discouraged when organizations are not able to provide services and are unable to refer them to a more appropriate provider. Researchers recommend local organizations collaborate to make comprehensive information regarding available services and eligibility criteria readily accessible.*

NA *The organization does not limit services to specific types of adoptive families.*

CA-AS 1.05

Applicants are treated equitably and are informed about what services will be available and when.

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CA-AS 2: Assessment

Individualized, strengths-based, family focused, culturally responsive assessments identify the needs of children and birth parents.

Interpretation: *Assessments include the child study and the birth parent assessment.*

NA *The organization provides homestudy services only.*

NA *The organization provides post placement services only.*

Rating Indicators

1) All elements or requirements outlined in the standard are evident in practice, as indicated by full implementation of the practices outlined in the Practice standards.

2) Practices are basically sound but there is room for improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,

- Minor inconsistencies and not yet fully developed practices are noted, however, these do not significantly impact service quality; or
- Procedures need strengthening; or
- With few exceptions procedures are understood by staff and are being used; or
- For the most part, established timeframes are met; or
- Culturally responsive assessments are the norm and any issues with individual staff members are being addressed through performance evaluations (CA-HR 6.02) and training (CA-TS 2.05); or
- Active client participation occurs to a considerable extent; or
- Diagnostic tests are consistently and appropriately used, but interviews with staff indicate a need for more training (CA-TS 2.08).

3) Practice requires significant improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards. Service quality or program functioning may be compromised; e.g.,

- Procedures and/or case record documentation need significant strengthening; or
- Procedures are not well-understood or used appropriately; or
- Assessment and reassessment timeframes are often missed; or
- Assessment are sometimes not sufficiently individualized;
- Culturally responsive assessments are not the norm and this is not being addressed in supervision or training; or
- Staff are not competent to administer diagnostic tests , or tests are not being used when clinically indicated; or

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- Client participation is inconsistent; or
- Assessments are done by referral source and no documentation and/or summary of required information present in case record; or
- One of the Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

4) Implementation of the standard is minimal or there is no evidence of implementation at all, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,

- There are no written procedures, or procedures are clearly inadequate or not being used; or
- Documentation is routinely incomplete and/or missing; or
- Two or more Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

Table of Evidence

Self-Study Evidence

- Procedures for child assessments
- Procedures for identification and collaboration for Aboriginal children
- Procedures for birth parent assessments
- Assessment tools and/or criteria included in assessment

On-Site Evidence

No On-Site Evidence

On-Site Activities

- Interview:
 - a. Program director
 - b. Relevant personnel
 - c. Parents
 - d. Children
- Review case records

CA-AS 2.01

The information gathered for assessments is limited to material pertinent to meeting service requests and objectives.

CA-AS 2.02

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Adoption Services establish a permanent family for children and youth awaiting adoption, and increase the well-being and functioning of birth parents, adoptive families, and adopted individuals.



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Assessments are conducted in a strengths-based, culturally responsive manner to identify resources that can increase service participation and support the achievement of agreed upon goals.

Interpretation: *Culturally responsive assessments can include attention to geographic location, language, and religious, racial, ethnic and cultural background. Other important factors that contribute to a responsive assessment include attention to age, sexual orientation, and developmental level.*

CA-AS 2.03

An age-appropriate child study is conducted to assess the child's readiness for adoption, and includes:

- a. an evaluation of the child's ability to bond and develop relationships;
- b. history of maltreatment and prior placements;
- c. prenatal history and developmental screening of infants and young children;
- d. current medical and dental health examinations; and
- e. a psychological evaluation, if needed.

Interpretation: *The assessment reflects the child's point of view, and considers the special needs of children and youth. Youth should be encouraged to discuss their interest in being adopted, and their understanding of adoption.*

Research Note: *Research on attachment capabilities of adopted children suggests the need for service providers to be knowledgeable and sensitive when assessing the child's ability to bond and develop ongoing relationships.*

CA-AS 2.04

The organization identifies Aboriginal children and collaborates with the nation or Aboriginal child and family service organizations, where available, to determine the most appropriate plan for the child.

(FP) CA-AS 2.05

Information is gathered from birth parents and maintained for the child's future use, including:

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- a. the child's medical and social history;
- b. contact information for organizations, medical facilities, or others involved in services to the birth parents and the child;
- c. all available information about the medical and social history of the birth parents and the pregnancy; and
- d. photographs or a physical description of birth parents.

Interpretation: *A birth parent's social history can include information about: marital status, family history, employment, education, religion, interests, and talents. Provision of information by birth parents is voluntary, and necessary consent forms must be obtained. When the organization is unable to obtain this information, documentation of efforts to do so are included in the case record. The organization may consider how appropriate and necessary it is to keep identifying information in a separate record, and should seek legal consultation regarding the collection and maintenance of identifying information.*

In foster care adoptions, information from the foster care record should be obtained before the record is sealed, and appropriate information is shared with the prospective adoptive parents.

CA-AS 2.06

Assessments are completed within timeframes established by the organization.

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CA-AS 3: Homestudy Practice

A collaborative homestudy process determines the interests, qualities, and abilities of prospective adoptive parents.

NA *The organization provides post placement services only.*

Notes: *Foster Care to Adoption programs will implement CA-FKC 18 and CA-AS 3.*

Rating Indicators

1) All elements or requirements outlined in the standard are evident in practice, as indicated by full implementation of the practices outlined in the Practice standards.

2) Practices are basically sound but there is room for improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,

- Minor inconsistencies and not yet fully developed practices are noted, however, these do not significantly impact service quality; or
- Procedures need strengthening; or
- With few exceptions procedures are understood by staff and are being used; or
- For the most part, established timeframes are met; or
- Proper documentation is the norm and any issues with individual staff members are being addressed through performance evaluations (CA-HR 6.02) and training (CA-TS 2.03); or
- Active client participation occurs to a considerable extent.

3) Practice requires significant improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards. Service quality or program functioning may be compromised; e.g.,

- Procedures and/or case record documentation need significant strengthening; or
- Procedures are not well-understood or used appropriately; or
- Timeframes are often missed; or
- A number of client records are missing important information or
- Client participation is inconsistent; or
- One of the Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

4) Implementation of the standard is minimal or there is no evidence of implementation at all, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,

- No written procedures, or procedures are clearly inadequate or not being

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used; or

- Documentation is routinely incomplete and/or missing; or
- Two or more Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

Table of Evidence

Self-Study Evidence

- Description of homestudy process
- Homestudy tool and/or procedures
- Procedures for background checks

On-Site Evidence

No On-Site Evidence

On-Site Activities

- Interview:
 - a. Program director
 - b. Relevant personnel

CA-AS 3.01

The information gathered for homestudies is limited to material pertinent to adoption.

CA-AS 3.02

The homestudy includes an assessment of:

- a. family relationships and functioning;
- b. education, employment, and financial status;
- c. parenting abilities;
- d. the home environment;
- e. physical and mental health status; and
- f. interest in adoption.

Research Note: *Research suggests that housing issues and health problems can delay kinship adoptions. Early identification of these barriers and provision of support and resources is recommended to facilitate permanency and stability.*

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CA-AS 3.03

Assessments are conducted in a culturally responsive manner and identify potential barriers to service participation and success.

Interpretation: *Culturally responsive assessments can include attention to geographic location, language of choice, and religious, racial, ethnic and cultural background. Other important factors that contribute to a responsive assessment include attention to age and sexual orientation.*

(FP) CA-AS 3.04

The homestudy is a collaborative process that helps the family decide if adoption is an appropriate goal, and includes:

- a. one or more visits to the prospective adoptive family's home;
- b. reference checks;
- c. criminal background checks according to applicable legal requirements;
and
- d. preparation of a home study report with a recommendation regarding the family's ability to meet the needs of an adopted child.

Interpretation: *The adoption worker can consider additional information offered by prospective adoptive families after they review the homestudy. The organization should develop criteria for criminal background checks that specifies if, and when, checks are conducted on a multi-provincial or national basis, and how the organization evaluates and responds to reports indicating criminal offences. Prospective adoptive families should be informed at the beginning about the process of the organization's policy about criminal convictions.*

CA-AS 3.05

The information gathered during the homestudy process is carefully considered, in a timely manner, to determine if:

- a. adoption services will be provided;
- b. a referral will be made to another provider when the strengths and abilities of suitable prospective adoptive families do not match the needs of the children awaiting families; or
- c. services will be terminated with explanation for persons found to be unable to meet the needs of a child who is adopted.

Interpretation: *Homestudies are completed within timeframes established*

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by the organization.

Research Note: *Research suggests that completion of homestudies is a major factor that can delay adoptions and extend children's stay in foster care.*

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CA-AS 4: Service Planning and Monitoring

Birth parents, youth, and prospective adoptive parents participate in the development and ongoing review of service plans that are the basis for delivery of services and support.

Interpretation: *Service goals should be identified for birth parents, the child, and the prospective adoptive family. Generally, separate plans are developed for each involved party, but in some circumstances it may be appropriate to add the child's goals to one of the other service plans.*

NA *The organization only provides Foster Care to Adoption Services.*

NA *The organization provides homestudy services only.*

NA *The organization provides post placement services only.*

Notes: *The contract signed by prospective adoptive families can be considered a service plan.*

Rating Indicators

1) All elements or requirements outlined in the standard are evident in practice, as indicated by full implementation of the practices outlined in the Practice standards.

2) Practices are basically sound but there is room for improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,

- Minor inconsistencies and not yet fully developed practices are noted, however, these do not significantly impact service quality; or
- Procedures need strengthening; or
- With few exceptions procedures are understood by staff and are being used; or
- For the most part, established timeframes are met; or
- Proper documentation is the norm and any issues with individual staff members are being addressed through performance evaluations (CA-HR 6.02) and training (CA-TS 2.03); or
- In a few instances client or staff signatures are missing and/or not dated; or
- Active client participation occurs to a considerable extent.

3) Practice requires significant improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards. Service quality or program functioning may be compromised; e.g.,

- Procedures and/or case record documentation need significant strengthening; or
- Procedures are not well-understood or used appropriately; or

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- Timeframes are often missed; or
- In a number of instances client or staff signatures are missing and/or not dated (CA-RPM 7.04); or
- Quarterly reviews are not being done consistently; or
- Level of care for some clients is inappropriate; or
- Service planning is often done without full client participation; or
- Appropriate family involvement is not documented; or
- Documentation is routinely incomplete and/or missing; or
- Assessments are done by referral source and no documentation and/or summary of required information present in case record; or
- One of the Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

4) Implementation of the standard is minimal or there is no evidence of implementation at all, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,

- No written procedures, or procedures are clearly inadequate or not being used; or
- Documentation is routinely incomplete and/or missing; or
- Two or more Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

Table of Evidence

Self-Study Evidence

- Service planning and monitoring procedures

On-Site Evidence

- Documentation of case review

On-Site Activities

- Interview:
 - a. Program director
 - b. Relevant personnel
 - c. Parents
 - d. Children
- Review case records

CA-AS 4.01

The service plan is based on the assessment, and includes:

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- a. agreed upon goals, desired outcomes, and timeframes for achieving them;
- b. services, education, and supports to be provided, and by whom; and
- c. the service recipient's signature.

CA-AS 4.02

The worker and a supervisor, or a service or peer team, review each case to assess:

- a. service plan implementation;
- b. progress towards achieving service goals and desired outcomes; and
- c. the continuing appropriateness of agreed upon service goals.

Interpretation: *The review should occur:*

- a. *weekly for infants and monthly for all other children awaiting adoption;*
- b. *at least quarterly for prospective adoptive parents;*
- c. *according to milestones in the pregnancy of expectant parents; and*
- d. *at least quarterly for birth parents.*

Experienced workers may conduct reviews of their own cases. In such cases, the worker's supervisor reviews a sample of the worker's evaluations as per the requirements of the standard.

CA-AS 4.03

The worker regularly reviews progress towards achievement of goals with birth parents, prospective adoptive families, and youth, and revisions to the goals and plans are signed.

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CA-AS 5: Child and Youth Permanency

The organization participates in or facilitates a permanency planning process with families to promote stability and permanency.

NA *The organization only provides Foster Care to Adoption Services.*

NA *The organization provides homestudy services only.*

NA *The organization provides post placement services only.*

Rating Indicators

1) All elements or requirements outlined in the standard are evident in practice, as indicated by full implementation of the practices outlined in the Practice standards.

2) Practices are basically sound but there is room for improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,

- Minor inconsistencies and not yet fully developed practices are noted, however, these do not significantly impact service quality; or
- Procedures need strengthening; or
- With few exceptions procedures are understood by staff and are being used; or
- For the most part, established timeframes are met; or
- Proper documentation is the norm and any issues with individual staff members are being addressed through performance evaluations (CA-HR 6.02) and training (CA-TS 2.03); or
- Active client participation occurs to a considerable extent.

3) Practice requires significant improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards. Service quality or program functioning may be compromised; e.g.,

- Procedures and/or case record documentation need significant strengthening; or
- Procedures are not well-understood or used appropriately; or
- Timeframes are often missed; or
- A number of client records are missing important information or
- Client participation is inconsistent; or
- One of the Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

4) Implementation of the standard is minimal or there is no evidence of implementation at all, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,

- No written procedures, or procedures are clearly inadequate or not being

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used; or

- Documentation is routinely incomplete and/or missing; or
- Two or more Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

Table of Evidence

Self-Study Evidence

- A description of permanency planning process

On-Site Evidence

- Reports or other aggregate data regarding the length of stay in out-of-home care, if the organization facilitates foster care adoptions

On-Site Activities

- Interview:
 - a. Program director
 - b. Relevant personnel
 - c. Parents
 - d. Children
- Review case records

CA-AS 5.01

The permanency plan defines the permanency goal as adoption and specifies:

- a. activities that support the achievement of adoption; and
- b. a timeframe for completing the adoption.

CA-AS 5.02

The child, parents, caregivers, and relevant professionals participate in a court or administrative case review at least every 6 months to assess:

- a. facilitation of therapeutic parent/child/sibling visitation, unless contraindicated;
- b. progress towards permanency;
- c. possible planning resources and options; and
- d. appropriateness of services.

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Interpretation: *Provincial statutes or administrative rules may provide guidance about when and how administrative reviews are to be conducted. The case review may be conducted by or in collaboration with the public authority. The review is scheduled at times when appropriate parties can attend.*

CA-AS 5.03

The child receives age appropriate information about progress towards achieving permanency.

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CA-AS 6: Service Philosophy

The program is guided by a service philosophy that:

- a. establishes the child as the primary focus of the adoption service;
- b. provides a logical approach for how program activities will meet the needs of children, parents, and families who receive adoption services; and
- c. is based on program goals and the best available evidence of service effectiveness.

Interpretation: *A program model or logic model can be a useful tool to help staff think systematically about how the program can make a measurable difference by drawing a clear connection between the service population's needs, available resources, program activities and interventions, program outputs, and desired outcomes.*

NA *The organization only provides Foster Care to Adoption Services.*

Rating Indicators

1) All elements or requirements outlined in the standard are evident in practice, as indicated by full implementation of the practices outlined in the Practice standards.

2) Practices are basically sound but there is room for improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g., Å

- Minor inconsistencies and not yet fully developed practices are noted, however, these do not significantly impact service quality; or
- Written service philosophy needs improvement or clarification; or
- Procedures need strengthening; or
- With few exceptions procedures are understood by staff and are being used; or
- Proper documentation is the norm and any issues with individual staff members are being addressed through performance evaluations (CA-HR 6.02) and training (CA-TS 2.03); or
- In a few rare instances required consent was not obtained; or
- Monitoring procedures need minor clarification; or
- With few exceptions the policy on prohibited interventions is understood by staff, or the written policy needs minor clarification.

3) Practice requires significant improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards. Service quality or program functioning may be compromised; e.g.,

- The written service philosophy needs significant improvement; or

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- Procedures and/or case record documentation need significant strengthening; or
- Procedures are not well-understood or used appropriately; or
- Documentation is inconsistent or in some instances is missing and no corrective action has not been initiated; or
- Required consent is often not obtained; or
- A few personnel who are employing non-traditional or unconventional interventions have not completed training, as required; or
- There are gaps in monitoring of interventions, as required; or
- Policy on prohibited interventions does not include at least one of the required elements; or
- Service philosophy is not clearly related to expressed mission or programs of the organization; or
- One of the Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

4) Implementation of the standard is minimal or there is no evidence of implementation at all, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,

- There is no written service philosophy; or
- There are no written policy or procedures, or procedures are clearly inadequate or not being used; or
- Documentation is routinely incomplete and/or missing; or
- Two or more Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

Table of Evidence

Self-Study Evidence

- Include service philosophy in the Narrative

On-Site Evidence

No On-Site Evidence

On-Site Activities

- Interview:
 - a. Program director
 - b. Personnel

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CA-AS 7: Pre-Adoption Services

Pre-adoption services prepare children, birth families, and prospective adoptive parents for adoption.

NA *The organization provides homestudy services only.*

NA *The organization provides post placement services only.*

Rating Indicators

1) All elements or requirements outlined in the standard are evident in practice, as indicated by full implementation of the practices outlined in the Practice standards.

2) Practices are basically sound but there is room for improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,

- Minor inconsistencies and not yet fully developed practices are noted, however, these do not significantly impact service quality; or
- Procedures need strengthening; or
- With few exceptions procedures are understood by staff and are being used; or
- For the most part, established timeframes are met; or
- Proper documentation is the norm and any issues with individual staff members are being addressed through performance evaluations (CA-HR 6.02) and training (CA-TS 2.03); or
- Active client participation occurs to a considerable extent.

3) Practice requires significant improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards. Service quality or program functioning may be compromised; e.g.,

- Procedures and/or case record documentation need significant strengthening; or
- Procedures are not well-understood or used appropriately; or
- Timeframes are often missed; or
- A number of client records are missing important information or
- Client participation is inconsistent; or
- One of the Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

4) Implementation of the standard is minimal or there is no evidence of implementation at all, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,

- No written procedures, or procedures are clearly inadequate or not being used; or

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Adoption Services establish a permanent family for children and youth awaiting adoption, and increase the well-being and functioning of birth parents, adoptive families, and adopted individuals.



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- Documentation is routinely incomplete and/or missing; or A
- Two or more Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

Table of Evidence

Self-Study Evidence

- A description of Pre-Adoption Services
- Procedures for establishing continued contact and openness in adoption

On-Site Evidence

- Informational materials provided to birth parents
- Orientation and informational materials provided to prospective adoptive parents

On-Site Activities

- Interview:
 - a. Program director
 - b. Relevant personnel
 - c. Parents
 - d. Children
- Review case records

CA-AS 7.01

Custody status of the child is clearly established before the initiation of adoption services, and the organization acts in accordance with federal and provincial regulations for legal proceedings to terminate parental rights.

Interpretation: *The child's custody status may be as follows: the child is in the custody of a public agency and the birth parents' rights have been terminated; the child's birth parents have legal custody; or another organization or individual has legal custody.*

Research Note: *Research suggests that court delays can be one of the greatest challenges in completing special needs adoptions.*

CA-AS 7.02

Age-appropriate services that prepare the child for adoption include:

Purpose

Adoption Services establish a permanent family for children and youth awaiting adoption, and increase the well-being and functioning of birth parents, adoptive families, and adopted individuals.



Adoption Services

- a. opportunities to visit prospective adoptive parents, and preparation and support for such visits;
- b. counselling to help the child understand the adoption and cope with separation, loss, and birth family loyalty issues;
- c. consideration of continued contact with the birth parents, siblings, and extended family; and
- d. the development of a lifebook that describes the child's personal history.

Interpretation: *Generally, a lifebook is completed for young children, and older children are actively engaged in developing their lifebook.*

Research Note: *Consideration of continued contact with the birth family may be especially important for youth, who often have strong attachments. Research suggests that the amount of visitation between children and prospective adoptive parents can have an impact on adjustment. Researchers recommend the visitation schedule take into account the individual needs of the child and the prospective adoptive parents.*

CA-AS 7.03

Birth parents who are interested in the continuum of openness in adoption receive information and counselling.

Interpretation: *The continuum of openness can range from the provision of identifying information about the birth family at the time of placement, to agency-mediated ongoing written communication, to frequent, in person contact with birth family members. Counselling helps birth parents consider whether continued contact is in the best interest of the child, with whom the child might continue contact, and the type and frequency of contact. The organization should explain limitations on confidentiality and document in the case record the birth parents' preferences regarding the disclosure of personal information.*

Research Note: *While some early research on open adoption presented conflicting conclusions, recent studies have demonstrated that most birth parents involved in open adoptions are satisfied with the arrangement.*

(FP) CA-AS 7.04

Birth parents are prepared for adoption through services that include:

- a. education about their legal rights and confidentiality;
- b. planning for participation in the adoption process when it is appropriate and desired;

Purpose

Adoption Services establish a permanent family for children and youth awaiting adoption, and increase the well-being and functioning of birth parents, adoptive families, and adopted individuals.



Adoption Services

- c. counselling and support to cope with voluntary or involuntary termination of parental rights, grief, separation, loss, and the lifelong implications of placing a child for adoption;
- d. discussion of changing roles and relationships when the birth parents will have an ongoing relationship with the adoptive family;
- e. education on issues related to search and reunion; and
- f. planning for the immediate future and referral for needed services.

CA-AS 7.05

Prospective adoptive parents participate in an orientation that includes the following:

- a. an overview of the lifelong process of adoption and its meaning;
- b. the process for completing an adoption;
- c. the needs of children awaiting adoptive families;
- d. benefits and responsibilities of openness in adoption and the range of openness;
- e. the availability of adoption subsidies and post-adoption services; and
- f. criteria used to determine eligibility for adoptive parenthood.

Interpretation: *Prospective adoptive parents who have adopted a child through the program previously may only need a refresher orientation.*

Interpretation: *When the program facilitates adoptions by older caregivers, the orientation is tailored to include information about the capacity to provide permanency over time for the child. This material can cover the need for additional support, circumstances that may adversely impact the ability to care for the child, and plans for the child if the caregiver is unable to provide care.*

Research Note: *While some early research on open adoption presented conflicting conclusions, studies have demonstrated that most adoptive parents involved in open adoptions are satisfied with the arrangement, and some desire even greater openness in the relationship with birth family members.*

Literature suggests that prospective adoptive parents considering a special needs adoption may have concerns about the costs of providing services for the child, and these concerns can impact their decision to proceed with the adoption.

CA-AS 7.06

Purpose

Adoption Services establish a permanent family for children and youth awaiting adoption, and increase the well-being and functioning of birth parents, adoptive families, and adopted individuals.



Adoption Services

Prospective adoptive parents are prepared for adoption through education, training, information, and support that address the following:

- a. attachment and bonding;
- b. possible impacts of adoption on the family;
- c. changing roles and relationships when the child and prospective adoptive parents already know each other;
- d. child development and parenting techniques;
- e. raising a child of a different race, ethnicity, culture, or religion;
- f. caring for a child with special needs; and
- g. helping a child cope with separation and loss, history of maltreatment, and identity development.

Interpretation: *Pre-adoption services should be tailored to the age range and needs of the children awaiting adoption, and the types of adoptions facilitated, for example, private, foster care, or identified. Prospective adoptive parents that have already adopted another child through the program may only need refresher training.*

Research Note: *A preliminary study suggests that the organization consider the readiness of each prospective adoptive family, rather than relying only on the completion of training or other tasks.*

CA-AS 7.07

When an open adoption is being planned, birth parents, prospective adoptive parents, and the child, as appropriate, receive assistance and support to:

- a. develop positive relationships;
- b. develop and agree on plans for continued contact; and
- c. decide how to resolve conflicts that can arise, and agree on a method for renegotiating the plan when necessary.

Purpose

Adoption Services establish a permanent family for children and youth awaiting adoption, and increase the well-being and functioning of birth parents, adoptive families, and adopted individuals.



Adoption Services

CA-AS 8: Temporary Care for Infants

Foster parents provide temporary care that ensures the health and safety of infants awaiting adoption.

NA *The organization does not provide temporary care for infants or private, infant adoption services.*

NA *The organization provides homestudy or post placement services only.*

NA *The organization provides foster to adopt services only.*

Rating Indicators

1) All elements or requirements outlined in the standard are evident in practice, as indicated by full implementation of the practices outlined in the Practice standards.

2) Practices are basically sound but there is room for improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,

- Minor inconsistencies and not yet fully developed practices are noted, however, these do not significantly impact service quality; or
- Procedures need strengthening; or
- With few exceptions procedures are understood by staff and are being used; or
- For the most part, established timeframes are met; or
- Proper documentation is the norm and any issues with individual staff members are being addressed through performance evaluations (CA-HR 6.02) and training (CA-TS 2.03); or
- Active client participation occurs to a considerable extent.

3) Practice requires significant improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards. Service quality or program functioning may be compromised; e.g.,

- Procedures and/or case record documentation need significant strengthening; or
- Procedures are not well-understood or used appropriately; or
- Timeframes are often missed; or
- A number of client records are missing important information or
- Client participation is inconsistent; or
- One of the Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

4) Implementation of the standard is minimal or there is no evidence of implementation at all, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,

Purpose

Adoption Services establish a permanent family for children and youth awaiting adoption, and increase the well-being and functioning of birth parents, adoptive families, and adopted individuals.



Adoption Services

- No written procedures, or procedures are clearly inadequate or not being used; or
- Documentation is routinely incomplete and/or missing; or
- Two or more Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

Table of Evidence

Self-Study Evidence

- Policy and procedures for licensure, approval, or certification of homes
- Procedures for foster home assessments, including criminal background checks
- Procedures for visits to foster homes
- A description of healthcare services

On-Site Evidence

- Training curricula

On-Site Activities

- Interview:
 - a. Relevant personnel
 - b. Foster parents
- Review case records
- Review foster parent records

CA-AS 8.01

Foster homes are licensed, approved, or certified according to provincial or local regulation.

CA-AS 8.02

Criminal background checks are conducted for all adults in the home prior to placement, in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

CA-AS 8.03

Purpose

Adoption Services establish a permanent family for children and youth awaiting adoption, and increase the well-being and functioning of birth parents, adoptive families, and adopted individuals.



Adoption Services

The home is assessed prior to placement to identify and address any safety concerns.

CA-AS 8.04

The organization coordinates needed healthcare services for the infant, and foster parents are trained to respond to the medical needs of the infant.

CA-AS 8.05

The adoption worker visits the foster parents within the first two weeks of placement and at least once a month to evaluate safety and needs.

CA-AS 8.06

The organization determines the appropriate amount of pre-service and in-service education necessary to ensure that foster parents understand:

- a. the organization's mission, philosophy, goals, and services;
- b. rights and responsibilities;
- c. specific duties;
- d. reimbursement for services;
- e. complaint procedures; and
- f. circumstances that will result in closing a home.

Related: CA-FKC 5.05

Interpretation: *The organization may consider the current experience, knowledge, and skills of each foster parent when determining the appropriate amount of training required.*

CA-AS 8.07

Each foster family develops or uses the organization's protocols for responding to emergencies including accidents, serious illness, fire, and natural disasters.

(FP) CA-AS 8.08

Purpose

Adoption Services establish a permanent family for children and youth awaiting adoption, and increase the well-being and functioning of birth parents, adoptive families, and adopted individuals.



Adoption Services

Foster parents who transport infants in their own vehicles:

- a. use age-appropriate passenger restraint systems;
- b. properly maintain vehicles and obtain required registration;
- c. provide evidence of vehicle safety;
- d. provide the organization with validation of their driving records; and
- e. provide the organization with regular validation of their licences and appropriate insurance coverage.

Interpretation: *The organization should have procedures to ensure vehicles are in proper working condition. Procedures should address periodic visual inspections conducted by the organization or provision of other documentation indicating mechanical soundness from a certified mechanic. Procedures should also address the need for repair.*

Interpretation: *Regarding element (e), this information should be provided as frequently as necessary, based on the amount of time licences and insurance are valid. For example, if licences are valid for two years, licence validation can occur every two years.*

Notes: *In some cases this standard may not be applicable to all foster parents (e.g., if foster parents live in urban areas and utilize public transportation instead of private vehicles).*

Purpose

Adoption Services establish a permanent family for children and youth awaiting adoption, and increase the well-being and functioning of birth parents, adoptive families, and adopted individuals.



Adoption Services

CA-AS 9: Placement

The organization identifies adoptive families who can meet the needs of waiting children and facilitates timely placements.

NA *The organization provides homestudy services only.*

NA *The organization provides post placement services only.*

Notes: *Foster Care to Adoption programs will implement CA-FKC 6 and CA-AS 9.*

Rating Indicators

1) All elements or requirements outlined in the standard are evident in practice, as indicated by full implementation of the practices outlined in the Practice standards.

2) Practices are basically sound but there is room for improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,

- Minor inconsistencies and not yet fully developed practices are noted, however, these do not significantly impact service quality; or
- Procedures need strengthening; or
- With few exceptions procedures are understood by staff and are being used; or
- For the most part, established timeframes are met; or
- Proper documentation is the norm and any issues with individual staff members are being addressed through performance evaluations (CA-HR 6.02) and training (CA-TS 2.03); or
- Active client participation occurs to a considerable extent.

3) Practice requires significant improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards. Service quality or program functioning may be compromised; e.g.,

- Procedures and/or case record documentation need significant strengthening; or
- Procedures are not well-understood or used appropriately; or
- Timeframes are often missed; or
- A number of client records are missing important information or
- Client participation is inconsistent; or
- One of the Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

4) Implementation of the standard is minimal or there is no evidence of implementation at all, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,

Purpose

Adoption Services establish a permanent family for children and youth awaiting adoption, and increase the well-being and functioning of birth parents, adoptive families, and adopted individuals.



Adoption Services

- No written procedures, or procedures are clearly inadequate or not being used; or
- Documentation is routinely incomplete and/or missing; or
- Two or more Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

Table of Evidence

Self-Study Evidence

- Matching and placement procedures
- Procedures for involving expectant/birth parents, when applicable
- A description of assistance provided to adoptive parents during placement

On-Site Evidence

No On-Site Evidence

On-Site Activities

- Interview:
 - a. Program director
 - b. Relevant personnel
 - c. Parents
 - d. Children
- Review case records

CA-AS 9.01

A process that examines the child's needs and interests, and the prospective adoptive parents' interpersonal and parenting skills identifies an adoptive family that:

- a. is most suitable to meet the child's needs; and
- b. can advance the child's best interests.

Interpretation: *Children who are old enough are encouraged to participate in the decision-making process.*

CA-AS 9.02

The child's and prospective family's religious, cultural, racial, linguistic, and

Purpose

Adoption Services establish a permanent family for children and youth awaiting adoption, and increase the well-being and functioning of birth parents, adoptive families, and adopted individuals.



Adoption Services

ethnic identities are considered when identifying a family, provided such consideration:

- a. does not delay placement of the child for adoption;
- b. is in the best interest of the child; and
- c. is consistent with applicable legal requirements.

CA-AS 9.03

The organization takes into account, whenever feasible and appropriate, birth parents' expressed desires regarding the child's placement, and when this consideration can delay placement, the organization:

- a. acts in accordance with applicable law;
- b. tries to resolve the conflict in the best interest of an expeditious and permanent placement; and
- c. promptly seeks legal counsel regarding resolution of such differences, if necessary.

CA-AS 9.04

Prospective adoptive parents are provided with sufficient information and time to make an informed decision about the placement, and assurance that the child is legally available for adoption.

Related: CA-RPM 2

Interpretation: *Information includes all available non-identifying child and birth parent information, and information about the general circumstances leading to the decision to place the child for adoption. Prospective adoptive parents should be given sufficient time to comprehend large amounts of information about a child. If the organization develops a process to share information over time with parents, it should carefully consider what information must be shared prior to the decision to adopt. Intentional misrepresentation or concealment and negligent disclosure or withholding of information can put the organization at risk for wrongful adoption lawsuits. Practices that may limit exposure to liability include: informing prospective adoptive parents of limits on information gathering and disclosure, provision of information in writing, and training staff on procedures for collecting and disclosing information.*

Research Note: *Literature suggests that adoptions are more successful when adoptive parents have realistic expectations about the adopted child.*

Purpose

Adoption Services establish a permanent family for children and youth awaiting adoption, and increase the well-being and functioning of birth parents, adoptive families, and adopted individuals.



Adoption Services

This is of particular importance for children with special needs or children at greater risk for disruption.

CA-AS 9.05

When a child is placed prior to termination of parental rights, the organization:

- a. informs the prospective adoptive parents of the substantial risks involved and limitations on confidentiality;
- b. requires written agreements between the organization and the prospective adoptive parents, stating the mutual intention that the adoption take place, if legal matters are resolved; and
- c. makes diligent efforts to remove legal and other barriers to the adoption.

NA *The organization does not place children prior to the termination of parental rights.*

CA-AS 9.06

The child is placed as soon as the family and child are prepared, and adoptive parents receive assistance:

- a. with the child's transition to the home;
- b. obtaining available subsidies and medical insurance for the child;
- c. obtaining resources for the child's special needs; and
- d. completing the legal adoption.

Purpose

Adoption Services establish a permanent family for children and youth awaiting adoption, and increase the well-being and functioning of birth parents, adoptive families, and adopted individuals.



Adoption Services

CA-AS 10: Community Partnerships

The organization partners with people and providers with adoption experience to ensure sufficient availability of a full range of adoption services in the community, through activities such as:

- a. events to promote adoption awareness; and
- b. education of community providers about the needs of children and youth awaiting adoption, birth parents, adoptive families, and adopted individuals.

Interpretation: *Community providers that work with people touched by adoption can include mental health practitioners, counsellors, clergy, and educators.*

NA *The organization provides homestudy services only.*

NA *The organization provides post placement services only.*

NA *The organization provides foster to adopt services only.*

Rating Indicators

1) All elements or requirements outlined in the standard are evident in practice, as indicated by full implementation of the practices outlined in the Practice standards.

2) Practices are basically sound but there is room for improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,

- Minor inconsistencies and not yet fully developed practices are noted, however, these do not significantly impact service quality; or
- Procedures need strengthening; or
- With few exceptions procedures are understood by staff and are being used; or
- For the most part, established timeframes are met; or
- Proper documentation is the norm and any issues with individual staff members are being addressed through performance evaluations (CA-HR 6.02) and training (CA-TS 2.03); or
- Active client participation occurs to a considerable extent.

3) Practice requires significant improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards. Service quality or program functioning may be compromised; e.g.,

- Procedures and/or case record documentation need significant strengthening; or
- Procedures are not well-understood or used appropriately; or

Purpose

Adoption Services establish a permanent family for children and youth awaiting adoption, and increase the well-being and functioning of birth parents, adoptive families, and adopted individuals.



Adoption Services

- Timeframes are often missed; or
- A number of client records are missing important information or
- Client participation is inconsistent; or
- One of the Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

4) Implementation of the standard is minimal or there is no evidence of implementation at all, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,

- No written procedures, or procedures are clearly inadequate or not being used; or
- Documentation is routinely incomplete and/or missing; or
- Two or more Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

Table of Evidence

Self-Study Evidence

- A description of community partnerships

On-Site Evidence

No On-Site Evidence

On-Site Activities

- Interview:
 - a. Program director
 - b. Relevant personnel

Purpose

Adoption Services establish a permanent family for children and youth awaiting adoption, and increase the well-being and functioning of birth parents, adoptive families, and adopted individuals.



Adoption Services

CA-AS 11: Case Closing

Case closing is a planned, orderly process.

NA *The organization provides homestudy services only.*

NA *The organization provides post placement services only.*

Rating Indicators

1) All elements or requirements outlined in the standard are evident in practice, as indicated by full implementation of the practices outlined in the Practice standards.

2) Practices are basically sound but there is room for improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,

- Minor inconsistencies and not yet fully developed practices are noted, however, these do not significantly impact service quality; or
- Procedures need strengthening; or
- With few exceptions procedures are understood by staff and are being used; or
- Proper documentation is the norm and any issues with individual staff members are being addressed through performance evaluations (CA-HR 6.02) and training (CA-TS 2.03); or
- In a few instances the organization terminated services inappropriately; or
- Active client participation occurs to a considerable extent; or
- A formal case closing summary and assessment is not consistently provided to the public authority per the requirements of the standard.

3) Practice requires significant improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards. Service quality or program functioning may be compromised; e.g.,

- Procedures and/or case record documentation need significant strengthening; or
- Procedures are not well-understood or used appropriately; or
- Services are routinely terminated inappropriately; or
- A formal case closing summary and assessment is seldom provided to the public authority per the requirements of the standard.; or
- A number of client records are missing important information; or
- Client participation is inconsistent; or
- One of the Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

4) Implementation of the standard is minimal or there is no evidence of implementation at all, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards;

Purpose

Adoption Services establish a permanent family for children and youth awaiting adoption, and increase the well-being and functioning of birth parents, adoptive families, and adopted individuals.



Adoption Services

e.g.,

- No written procedures, or procedures are clearly inadequate or not being used; or
- Documentation is routinely incomplete and/or missing; or
- Two or more Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

Table of Evidence

Self-Study Evidence

- Case closing procedures

On-Site Evidence

No On-Site Evidence

On-Site Activities

- Interview:
 - a. Program director
 - b. Relevant personnel
 - c. Parents
- Review case records

CA-AS 11.01

Case closing is a clearly defined process that involves the worker, the individual or family receiving services, and others, as appropriate.

CA-AS 11.02

When the organization discontinues adoption services for prospective adoptive parents prior to placement, a written reason is provided within five working days of the date services ended, and efforts are made to link the family with appropriate services.

Purpose

Adoption Services establish a permanent family for children and youth awaiting adoption, and increase the well-being and functioning of birth parents, adoptive families, and adopted individuals.



Adoption Services

CA-AS 12: Post-Adoption Services

Post-adoption services promote child and adult well-being and family functioning and stability.

NA *The organization provides homestudy services only.*

Rating Indicators

1) All elements or requirements outlined in the standard are evident in practice, as indicated by full implementation of the practices outlined in the Practice standards.

2) Practices are basically sound but there is room for improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g., \hat{A}

- Minor inconsistencies and not yet fully developed practices are noted, however, these do not significantly impact service quality; or
- Procedures need strengthening; or
- With few exceptions procedures are understood by staff and are being used; or
- Proper documentation is the norm and any issues with individual staff members are being addressed through performance evaluations (CA-HR 6.02) and training (CA-TS 2.03); or
- Active client participation occurs to a considerable extent.

3) Practice requires significant improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards. Service quality or program functioning may be compromised; e.g.,

- Procedures and/or case record documentation need significant strengthening; or
- Procedures are not well-understood or used appropriately; or
- Aftercare planning is not initiated early enough to ensure orderly transitions; or
- Client participation is inconsistent; or
- One of the Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

4) Implementation of the standard is minimal or there is no evidence of implementation at all, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,

- There are no written procedures, or procedures are clearly inadequate or not being used; or
- Documentation is routinely incomplete and/or missing; or \hat{A}
- Two or more Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or

Purpose

Adoption Services establish a permanent family for children and youth awaiting adoption, and increase the well-being and functioning of birth parents, adoptive families, and adopted individuals.



Adoption Services

4.

Table of Evidence

Self-Study Evidence

- A description of post-adoption services

On-Site Evidence

- Community resource and referral list

On-Site Activities

- Interview:
 - a. Program director
 - b. Relevant personnel
 - c. Parents
 - d. Children
- Review case records

CA-AS 12.01

When the need for post-adoption services is identified, the organization and the individual or family jointly develop a plan that specifies steps for obtaining these services.

Interpretation: *The decision to develop a post-adoption service plan is based on the wishes of the adopted person, adoptive family, or the birth parents unless it is mandated.*

CA-AS 12.02

Children, birth parents, adoptive parents, and adopted persons have access to needed post-adoption services that include, and are not limited to:

- a. assessments;
- b. information;
- c. case management;
- d. early intervention for children with developmental delays and educational services;
- e. counselling, mental health treatment, and crisis intervention services;
- f. family preservation and stabilization services;

Purpose

Adoption Services establish a permanent family for children and youth awaiting adoption, and increase the well-being and functioning of birth parents, adoptive families, and adopted individuals.



Adoption Services

- g. peer support; and
- h. respite services and out-of-home care.

Interpretation: *The organization refers families to adoption competent professionals.*

Research Note: *Research studies demonstrate that adoptive families seek a wide array of post adoption services, and needs may vary depending upon the type of adoption. Research and literature suggest that families often seek services in response to: issues of separation and loss, relationship problems, self-development and identity issues, and emotional and behavioural problems resulting from childhood abuse or neglect. Research has shown that financial support, medical services, and respite care were important to families that adopted children with disabilities.*

CA-AS 12.03

The organization takes the initiative to explore suitable resources and contact service providers when appropriate, and with the permission of the person, or family.

Purpose

Adoption Services establish a permanent family for children and youth awaiting adoption, and increase the well-being and functioning of birth parents, adoptive families, and adopted individuals.



Adoption Services

CA-AS 13: Administrative Practice

Administrative practices are ethical and professional, and respect the rights of all parties involved in the adoption.

Rating Indicators

1) All elements or requirements outlined in the standard are evident in practice, as indicated by full implementation of the practices outlined in the Practice standards.

2) Practices are basically sound but there is room for improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,

- Minor inconsistencies and not yet fully developed practices are noted, however, these do not significantly impact service quality; or
- Procedures need strengthening; or
- With few exceptions procedures are understood by staff and are being used; or
- For the most part, established timeframes are met; or
- Proper documentation is the norm and any issues with individual staff members are being addressed through performance evaluations (CA-HR 6.02) and training (CA-TS 2.03); or
- Active client participation occurs to a considerable extent.

3) Practice requires significant improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards. Service quality or program functioning may be compromised; e.g.,

- Procedures and/or case record documentation need significant strengthening; or
- Procedures are not well-understood or used appropriately; or
- Timeframes are often missed; or
- A number of client records are missing important information or
- Client participation is inconsistent; or
- One of the Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

4) Implementation of the standard is minimal or there is no evidence of implementation at all, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,

- No written procedures, or procedures are clearly inadequate or not being used; or
- Documentation is routinely incomplete and/or missing; or
- Two or more Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

Purpose

Adoption Services establish a permanent family for children and youth awaiting adoption, and increase the well-being and functioning of birth parents, adoptive families, and adopted individuals.



Adoption Services

Table of Evidence

Self-Study Evidence

- Fee policy and procedures
- Fee scale
- Record retention procedures
- Process for releasing information

On-Site Evidence

- Board minutes documenting the review and approval of the fee policy
- Documentation of licensure or credentials of collaborating organizations or individuals
- Service agreements and contracts

On-Site Activities

- Interview:
 - a. Program director
 - b. Adoptive parents
- Observe record storage area
- Review financial records of fees paid by adoptive parents

CA-AS 13.01

Fees are fair, reasonable, and based on costs associated with service delivery, and parents are only charged for services provided.

Interpretation: *Practices are developing to protect the interests of prospective adoptive parents if the organization closes the adoption program. One example of such a practice is to place funds collected prior to the delivery of a service in a separate account, and provide an accounting of disbursements to parents.*

NA *The organization does not charge fees for adoption services.*

CA-AS 13.02

When reviewing and approving the organization's adoption fee policy, the governing body considers ethical issues associated with charging adoption fees, including:

- a. the influence fees can have on decision-making about child relinquishment and matching; and
- b. the psychological effect fees can have on birth parents, adoptive

Purpose

Adoption Services establish a permanent family for children and youth awaiting adoption, and increase the well-being and functioning of birth parents, adoptive families, and adopted individuals.



Adoption Services

parents, and adopted individuals.

NA *The organization does not charge fees for adoption services.*

CA-AS 13.03

The organization, its personnel, and independent contractors do not accept or provide financial or other consideration beyond reimbursement for services.

Interpretation: *The organization must demonstrate thoughtfully developed, fully implemented policies that ensure that professional decision-making is separate from financial considerations, and that all actions have a sound ethical and professional basis. Prospective adoptive parents interested in making donations can be advised to do so after the adoption has been finalized.*

CA-AS 13.04

When the organization collaborates with other organizations or individuals to deliver services:

- a. providers are licensed or appropriately credentialed, according to applicable regulations;
- b. service agreements or contracts are written;
- c. prospective adoptive parents are made aware of the relationship between providers; and
- d. the quality of services is monitored.

NA *The organization does not collaborate with other providers.*

CA-AS 13.05

Records are retained for the period required by applicable law, or in the absence of such law for at least 99 years, and the organization has a plan for transfer of records if the adoption program is closed.

Related: CA-RPM 6.02

CA-AS 13.06

Purpose

Adoption Services establish a permanent family for children and youth awaiting adoption, and increase the well-being and functioning of birth parents, adoptive families, and adopted individuals.



Adoption Services

All releases of identifying information about adopted persons, birth parents, and adoptive families are in accordance with individual wishes and applicable regulation.

Interpretation: *In cases where an individual waives confidentiality, informed consent is obtained in the form of a notarized affidavit before any contact or exchange of identifying information occurs.*

Purpose

Adoption Services establish a permanent family for children and youth awaiting adoption, and increase the well-being and functioning of birth parents, adoptive families, and adopted individuals.



Adoption Services

CA-AS 14: Personnel

Personnel are qualified and receive support to facilitate the development of permanent caring relationships between children and adoptive families.

Notes: *When the organization is unable to fully implement one or more of the practice standards, intensive efforts should be made to fully implement the other standards. For example, if the organization is unable to recruit workers with specific qualifications, it can ensure that appropriate supervision and workload standards are implemented.*

Rating Indicators

- 1) All elements or requirements outlined in the standard are evident in practice, as indicated by full implementation of the practices outlined in the Practice standards.
- 2) Practices are basically sound but there is room for improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g., A
 - With some exceptions, staff (direct service providers, supervisors, and program managers) possess the required qualifications, including: education, experience, training, skills, temperament, etc., but the integrity of the service is not compromised.
 - Supervisors provide additional support and oversight, as needed, to staff without the listed qualifications.
 - Most staff who do not meet educational requirements are seeking to obtain them.
 - With some exceptions staff have received required training, including applicable specialized training.
 - Training curricula are not fully developed or lack depth.
 - A few personnel have not yet received required training.
 - Training documentation is consistently maintained and kept up-to-date with some exceptions.
 - A substantial number of supervisors meet the requirements of the standard, and the organization provides training and/or consultation to improve competencies.
 - Supervisors provide structure and support in relation to service outcomes, organizational culture and staff retention.
 - With a few exceptions caseload sizes are consistently maintained as required by the standards.
 - Workloads are such that staff can effectively accomplish their assigned tasks and provide quality services, and are adjusted as necessary in accord with established workload procedures.
 - Procedures need strengthening.

Purpose

Adoption Services establish a permanent family for children and youth awaiting adoption, and increase the well-being and functioning of birth parents, adoptive families, and adopted individuals.



Adoption Services

- With few exceptions procedures are understood by staff and are being used.
 - With a few exceptions specialized staff are retained as required and possess the required qualifications.
 - Specialized services are obtained as required by the standards.
- 3)** Practice requires significant improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards. Â Service quality or program functioning may be compromised; e.g.,
- One of the Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.
 - A significant number of staff, e.g., direct service providers, supervisors, and program managers, do not possess the required qualifications, including: education, experience, training, skills, temperament, etc.; and as a result the integrity of the service may be compromised.
 - Job descriptions typically do not reflect the requirements of the standards, and/or hiring practices do not document efforts to hire staff with required qualifications when vacancies occur.
 - Supervisors do not typically provide additional support and oversight to staff without the listed qualifications.
 - A significant number of staff have not received required training, including applicable specialized training.
 - Training documentation is poorly maintained.
 - A significant number of supervisors do not meet the requirements of the standard, and the organization makes little effort to provide training and/or consultation to improve competencies.
 - There are numerous instances where caseload sizes exceed the standards' requirements.
 - Workloads are excessive and the integrity of the service may be compromised.Â
 - Procedures need significant strengthening; or
 - Procedures are not well-understood or used appropriately; or
 - Specialized staff are typically not retained as required and/or many do not possess the required qualifications; or
 - Specialized services are infrequently obtained as required by the standards.
- 4)** Implementation of the standard is minimal or there is no evidence of implementation at all, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,

For example:

- Two or more Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

Purpose

Adoption Services establish a permanent family for children and youth awaiting adoption, and increase the well-being and functioning of birth parents, adoptive families, and adopted individuals.



Adoption Services

Table of Evidence

Self-Study Evidence

- Program staffing chart that includes lines of supervision
- List of program personnel that includes:
 - a. name
 - b. title
 - c. degree help and/or other credentials
 - d. FTE or volunteer
 - e. length of service at the organization
 - f. time in current position
- Chart that specifies caseload size, per worker, for the past six months
- Procedures or criteria used for assigning and evaluating workload

On-Site Evidence

- Job descriptions
- Documentation of training
- Training curricula
- Data describing staff turnover

On-Site Activities

- Interview:
 - a. Supervisors
 - b. Personnel
- Review personnel files

CA-AS 14.01

Adoption workers are qualified by:

- a. an advanced degree in social work or a comparable human service field;
or
- b. a bachelor's degree in social work or a bachelor's degree with two years of related experience.

CA-AS 14.02

Supervisors are qualified by an advanced degree in social work or a comparable human service field and two years of experience in working with children and families, preferably in adoption.

Purpose

Adoption Services establish a permanent family for children and youth awaiting adoption, and increase the well-being and functioning of birth parents, adoptive families, and adopted individuals.



Adoption Services

CA-AS 14.03

Adoption workers have the competencies to:

- a. facilitate adoptions that meet applicable legal requirements;
- b. conduct assessments and identify children with special needs;
- c. provide support to persons touched by adoption to cope with social and emotional issues;
- d. facilitate adoptions for children with special needs; and
- e. maintain and protect confidential information and assist persons served to access information, as outlined by applicable law.

Interpretation: *Competency can be demonstrated through education, training, or experience.*

CA-AS 14.04

Adoption workers and supervisors, depending on job responsibilities are knowledgeable about job relevant provisions of provincial child welfare legislation and/or policy regarding the placement of aboriginal children, including:

- a. appropriate notice and collaboration with the child's nation;
- b. placement preferences; and
- c. court procedures.

CA-AS 14.05

The organization determines the appropriate type of in-service training needed to ensure personnel remain current on adoption trends and practice issues.

CA-AS 14.06

Adoption workers maintain a manageable workload, and cases are assigned according to a system that takes into consideration:

- a. the qualifications and competencies of the worker and the supervisor;
- b. the complexity and status of the case;
- c. services provided by other professionals or team members; and
- d. other organizational responsibilities.

Purpose

Adoption Services establish a permanent family for children and youth awaiting adoption, and increase the well-being and functioning of birth parents, adoptive families, and adopted individuals.



Adoption Services

Interpretation: *Case complexity can take into account: intensity of child and family needs and size of the family. Generally, caseloads do not exceed 12-25 families. However, there are circumstances under which caseloads may exceed these limits. For example, caseload size may vary depending upon the volume of administrative case functions (e.g., entering notes, filing, etc.) assigned to the worker. Caseloads may also be higher when organizations are faced with temporary vacancies on staff.*

Research Note: *One study of special needs adoptions suggests that high caseloads can make it difficult to recruit prospective adoptive families, and can delay the processing of homestudies and background checks. Additionally, high caseloads may lead to infrequent contact by adoption workers, which can cause some prospective adoptive parents to seek services from other providers.*

Note: *The evaluation of this standard will focus on whether the assigned workload is manageable for staff, taking into account the factors cited in the standard and interpretation. The specific caseload sizes stated in the interpretation are only a suggestion of what might be appropriate. Each organization should determine what caseload size is appropriate, and reviewers will evaluate: (1) whether the organization's designated caseload size reflects a manageable workload, and (2) whether the organization maintains caseloads of the size it deemed appropriate.*

CA-AS 14.07

Supervisors or experienced workers provide additional support when personnel are new or are still developing competencies.

Purpose

Adoption Services establish a permanent family for children and youth awaiting adoption, and increase the well-being and functioning of birth parents, adoptive families, and adopted individuals.