



**Ministry of Human Services' Response to the
JB Fatality Inquiry Report**

December 2013

Alberta 
Human Services

Background

The Ministry of Human Services has carefully reviewed the fatality inquiry report released on November 22, 2013 regarding the death of JB on September 27, 2009.

The inquiry found that this death was due to acute carbon monoxide intoxication and the manner of death was homicide, committed by the father. The child was in an out-of-home placement through an agreement with the Family Support for Children with Disabilities (FSCD) program, but was visiting his father and stepmother at the time of death.

The single recommendation of the Fatality Inquiry Review Board was to encourage the Joint Action Committee on Children (JACC) to implement the plan developed by the task force for the crisis team.

The inquiry did not recommend any other changes in the system however, noted that, where only one parent presents with the child, the FSCD program should deal with that parent only. Unless the circumstances raise serious concerns with the worker, whether or not to communicate with the other parent should be left to the presenting parent.

General Response

JACC Crisis Team

The members of JACC represent the partner organizations that provide health, education and protective and support services to children and their families in the greater Edmonton region. The Edmonton and Area Child and Family Services (CFS) is a member of JACC, with the FSCD program as a primary partner.

The purpose of JACC is to improve outcomes for children, youth and families through:

- increasing understanding between parties;
- increasing knowledge of the status and needs of children, youth and families;
- planning and co-ordinating the delivery of programs and services in order to maximize the use of resources; and
- maintaining collaborative links within the region to actualize the goals of the Alberta Children and Youth Initiative.

Guided by Alberta's Social Policy Framework, the Ministry of Human Services is committed to continuous improvement and working collaboratively with our ministry and community partners. The Edmonton and Area CFS will continue to work with JACC to help improve outcomes for the children and families they serve.

FSCD Communication with Parents/Guardians

Guardians of children with disabilities have the authority to enter into a FSCD agreement and receive information regarding the FSCD agreement. Most guardians involved with the FSCD program are parents. When the parents live separate and apart, they have all the same guardianship powers, responsibilities and rights, unless a court order directs otherwise.

In May 2013, Alberta passed the *Children First Act* to enhance legislation, tools, processes and policies that aim to improve the security, education, health, safety and well-being of children and youth. A key element of this legislation is to enhance information sharing about a child's personal and health information for the purposes of planning and providing services. The *Children First Act* enables information sharing among parents, guardians and services providers for the purpose of providing services or benefits to the child. Consistent with the suggestion from the Fatality Inquiry Review Board, the Act allows public bodies and service providers to share information with guardians when it is in the child's best interest to do so.

The FSCD program is developing policy that acknowledges a parent's right to information and reflects the direction from the inquiry as to how this communication should happen.