



# Group Homes and Specialized Placements – Department of Social Development

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## Why Is This Important?

- Children taken into the care of the Province under the *Family Services Act* are among the most vulnerable in the Province
- Inadequate care of these children can have disastrous consequences, contributing to suicide attempts, addictions, long-term mental health challenges and homelessness

## Overall Conclusions

- The Department does not effectively manage placement and care of children in group homes and specialized placements
- Department standards exist but weaknesses need to be addressed to improve quality of care to children
- The Department does not plan effectively to ensure adequate group home capacity exists in the Province

## What We Found

### Poor Planning for Child in Care Placements Creates Risk for Children

- Placement options limited when children enter care – decreasing foster home availability and emergency placement options strained
- Increased use of group homes and increased number of young children in group homes
- Increasing complex behaviours of children coming into care
- 9 of 15 specialized placements without service contract stating conditions and performance expectations
- No standardized Department forecasting or resource planning for children coming into care

### Weaknesses in Quality of Care Increase Risk of Poor Outcomes

- Case planning requires improvement
- Limited development outcomes set for children
- Care plans for children do not meet standards
- High social worker and group home employee turnover
- Social worker and group home employee training improvements are required
- Weak Department information system limits social worker efficiency and effectiveness

### Ineffective Department Standards

- No standards for children in temporary care
- No standards governing specialized placements
- Standards have weak performance indicators

### Poor Monitoring and Reporting

- Department annual monitoring of contracted service providers requires improvement
- No standard monitoring procedures for specialized placements
- Ineffective use of social worker skillset