

**Government of Saskatchewan**  
**Ministry of Social Services' Response to the**  
**Advocate for Children and Youth's Report**  
*Lost in the System: Jake's Story*  
**September 2014**

Recommendation	Ministry Response/Action Plan
<p>1. That the Ministry of Social Services complete a study that includes a review and analysis of the number of moves children and youth experience in out-of-home care and to provide a report to the Advocate. This study should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A random sample of children in emergency receiving homes, regular foster homes, group homes, and alternate care from the past two years;</li> <li>• the number of moves and rationale for each move a child in the sample experienced; and</li> <li>• the method of approval for the moves.</li> </ul>	<p><b>The Ministry accepts this recommendation and it is in progress.</b></p> <p>This review is in progress and the report will be provided to the Advocate for Children and Youth (ACY) by the Fall, 2014.</p>
<p>2. That the Ministry of Social Services fully implement the software for the “Linkin” Information Database to allow for data collection to monitor the number of placements of children and youth in out-of-home care provincially.</p>	<p><b>The Ministry accepts this recommendation and it has been implemented.</b></p> <p>The complementary software has been implemented.</p>
<p>3. That the Government of Saskatchewan amend <i>The Child and Family Services Act</i> (or any legislation replacing this <i>Act</i>) or its regulations for the licensing of foster homes.</p>	<p><b>The Ministry will take this recommendation under consideration.</b></p> <p>The Ministry of Social Services is currently undertaking a review of <i>The Child and Family Services Act</i>. The licensing of foster homes is being examined as part of this review.</p>
<p>4. That the Ministry of Social Services develop policy for new foster and group home resources that fall outside of the parameters of policy to ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assistant Deputy Minister approval is granted as recommended in the Joint Child Death Review; and</li> <li>• appropriate operating procedures are developed and implemented prior to the opening of the resource.</li> </ul>	<p><b>The Ministry accepts this recommendation and it has been implemented.</b></p> <p>Currently, Assistant Deputy Minister approval is required to open new child care resources which fall outside of the policy parameters. This was put in place as a response to the Ministry’s internal child death review recommendation in February 2012.</p> <p>As per the ACY recommendation, the Ministry has outlined this requirement in policy.</p>

Recommendation	Ministry Response/Action Plan
<p>5. That the Ministry of Social Services conduct a provincial review of its open foster and group homes to ensure that homes are operating as per policy. For those that are operating outside of policy ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assistant Deputy Minister approval is granted as recommended in the Joint Child Death Review; and</li> <li>• appropriate operating procedures are implemented.</li> </ul>	<p><b>The Ministry accepts this recommendation and it has been implemented.</b></p> <p>As the ACY acknowledged in this report, the Ministry’s “practice of opening high-capacity resources has been discontinued. All current resources are classified as either a foster home or a group home, thereby being covered by MSS policies currently in place.”</p> <p>Ministry foster homes are reviewed annually to ensure that operating policies are being followed.</p> <p>As outlined in the Ministry’s response to the preceding recommendation, homes operating outside of policy require the approval of the Assistant Deputy Minister as per the updated policy.</p>
<p>6. That the Ministry of Social Services amend policy to conduct mandatory investigations of foster home incidents involving highly vulnerable children, including documentation and gathering information from collateral sources such as staff and other children in the home.</p>	<p><b>The Ministry accepts this recommendation and it has been implemented.</b></p> <p>In May 2011, the Ministry amended policy to provide greater clarification in defining under what circumstances a Foster Home Investigation is required.</p> <p>This includes clear procedures related to the gathering of collateral information and the documentation of information from the investigation.</p>
<p>7. That the Ministry of Social Services require strict adherence to the “The Maximum Number of Children in a Foster Home” and “Foster Home Review” policies in the Children Services Manual.</p>	<p><b>The Ministry accepts this recommendation and it has been implemented.</b></p> <p>Ministry staff are required to follow Ministry policies and procedures.</p> <p>The Linkin case management system ensures the required approvals are in place.</p> <p>The Ministry ensures compliance to policies and procedures by conducting regular program reviews by the Quality Assurance Unit and through supervisory and managerial oversight.</p>