



# FAMILY SERVICE OF EASTERN NOVA SCOTIA

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THE NOVA SCOTIA STANDING COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY SERVICES

DECEMBER 8, 2020

# FAMILY SERVICE:THE NATIONAL LANDSCAPE

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- We are an active member of Family Service Canada which is a National Organization committed to building healthy and resilient families across the country. There are over 27 member Organizations across Canada. We are all community-based social service Agencies that believe strongly in collaborative relationships with Government Partners in the development and delivery of services. Our Organization is an active Board member of the National Network in the role of Vice Chair and our Organization hosted the National Family Service Conference in the Fall of 2019.
- Family Service of Eastern Nova Scotia also plays an active role in Family Service Atlantic in the position of Chair. This coalition is made up of the five Family Service Agencies in New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia.

# OUR ORGANIZATION: HISTORY AND CURRENT WORK

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- Family Service of Eastern Nova Scotia has been providing community based services that support the healthy development and well being of individuals and families in Nova Scotia for over 51 years. Historically, services were provided primarily in the Eastern region, as well as Northern parts of Nova Scotia. Within the past two years, however, FSENS has extended to Central Region through expansion of the FP Program and has reached a provincial scope, within the past year, with the implementation of the Men's Help Line.
- Family Service of Eastern Nova Scotia is a leader in providing counselling supports and services that contribute to the healthy development and well-being of children, youth, families, and communities. Our workers are licensed and insured social workers and counsellors.
- We serve thousands of families annually through strong collaborative relationships with three Government Departments and numerous community-based organizations. We are currently a staff of 9 part time and 33 full time.



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- The Families Plus program, an Intensive Family Preservation program, has been developed as DCS's highest intensity of early intervention before placement. It is designed to work with children and their families to improve family functioning and to reduce entries of children into care.
  - A unique component of the FP program is the 24/7 On call telephone support which allows participating families to speak with one of the FP social workers workers at any time 365 days of the year.
  - To achieve the Department of Community Services objectives, the Province and the Family Service of Eastern Nova Scotia have agreed to the shared goal of delivering programs such as Families Plus.



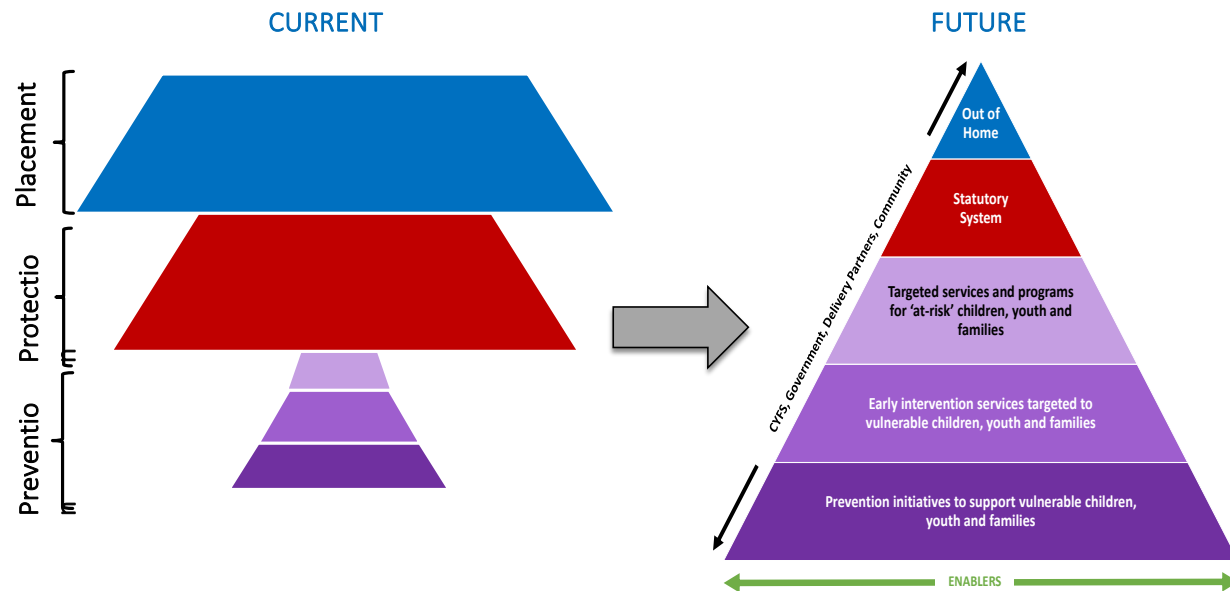
# Families Plus Program

PRESENTATION TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY SERVICES

December 8, 2020

# Child Welfare Transformation

The goal of Child Welfare Transformation is to move from a child welfare system that is crisis-driven to one that focuses on prevention and early intervention and mitigates the need for some of the more intrusive, less effective, and more costly government interventions.



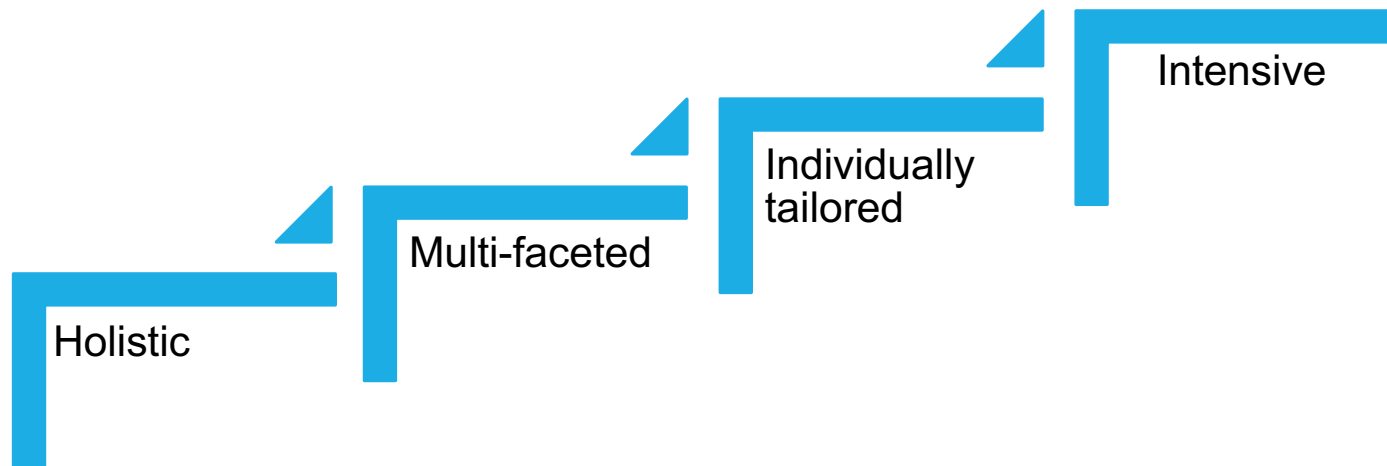


## Child Welfare: Prevention & Early Intervention

- Prevention and early intervention within Child Welfare is a proactive and early approach to strengthening children, youth and families and building their resilience, ultimately mitigating the need for more intrusive, statutory interventions.
- Research has shown that supporting children, youth and families early and proactively reduces the risk of child abuse and neglect and ultimately results in more positive outcomes.
- The Department of Community Services is committed to a transformed Child Welfare system that shifts from being crisis driven to one with a far greater emphasis on, and investment in, prevention & early intervention programs and services.
- Child Welfare's Prevention & Early Intervention programs in Nova Scotia are delivered by community organizations. They are voluntary and intended for families experiencing multiple risk factors such as poverty, ability, lone parenting, social isolation, unstable housing / homelessness, family violence, substance misuse, emotional / mental health issues and generational trauma.
- Programs and services are intended to support equitable access and be culturally responsive to the needs of Nova Scotians, in particular African Nova Scotian and Mi'kmaq children, youth, and families.

# Families Plus Program

- The Families Plus Program is part of the Prevention and Early Intervention Program within the Children Youth and Family Services division of the Department of Community Services.
- The Families Plus Program is designed to work with families in crisis, whose children are at imminent risk of removal and placement in out-of-home care. The primary intended outcome is for children to stay home with their family in a safe, stable and nurturing environment.





# Families Plus Program

## Approach

- A voluntary program.
- Families are referred by DCS Child Protection and Adoption social workers.
- Consists of a period of twelve weeks of intensive casework and 24-hour on call assistance, followed by a period of up to 24 weeks of continuous, multi-faceted and individually-tailored casework and assistance services.
- Since every family's situation is different, the Families Plus Program allows service providers the flexibility to determine the types of services offered to children and their families, consistent with the family's unique circumstances and needs.
- Other community-based agencies/programs such as Family Resource Centres, Parenting Journey, Youth Outreach, Boys & Girls Clubs, Men's Intervention Programs, etc. may be engaged to support the family during less intensive phases or when exiting from the Families Plus Program.

# Families Plus Program

The program is delivered by Family Service of Eastern Nova Scotia (FSENS).

- There are two full-time Families Plus Programs with two full-time social workers at each site in Sydney and New Glasgow, and one part-time program with one social worker in Sackville.
- The Department plans to expand the Families Plus Program:
  - New Central Regional Program for African Nova Scotian Families (referrals from Dartmouth, Sackville, Gottingen, and Bayers Road offices).
  - Upgrade the Sackville program to full-time.

# Families Plus Program

## How a family becomes involved

Only Child Protection/Adoption workers can refer to Families Plus.

Referral criteria:

- Family has an open Child Protection file;
- There is an identified level of risk that impacts the child(ren)'s continued safety and well-being;
- They have child(ren) who are at risk of entering care without intensive intervention;
- Their case is not before family court or the application to family court can be withdrawn;
- There is a risk of disruption in the adoption process without intensive intervention.

# Families Plus Program

## Families served

Since its launch in 2016, 36 families have participated in the Families Plus program, impacting 83 children.

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Site	Families served (both completed and currently participating)	Children in participating families	Children taken into care	Children remaining at home (for families who completed the program)	Children of families currently in the program and remaining at home
Sydney	19	49	8	32	9
New Glasgow	12	24	0	18	6
Sackville	4	10	0	4	6
<b>PROGRAM TOTALS</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>21</b>
%			10%	65%	25%

Of the 83 children whose families participated in the program, a total of 62 have exited the program. 8 (13%) of these children were taken into care and 54 (87%) were able to remain at home.

# Families Plus Program

## Costs

- In 2019/2020 DCS funded FSENS **\$455,400** for Families Plus delivery in Sydney, New Glasgow and Sackville.

Cost of Program All Sites Year 2019-20	Number of Children All Sites 2019-20	Average Cost per Child 2019-20
\$ 455,400	45	\$10,120

- Funding committed for 2020/21 is **\$635,000** for Families Plus delivery in Sydney, New Glasgow and Sackville, as well as the expansion of the program to African Nova Scotian families through referrals from Dartmouth, Sackville, Gottingen, and Bayers Road DCS offices.

Thank you.