Road to Integration: A Personal Account and Analysis of the Process Leading to the Establishment of the Ministry for Children and Families in British Columbia

by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study is to provide insight into the factors contributing to significant public policy change, through the personal account of one person as well as perspectives of other key informants during a change-filled time in British Columbia's child and youth service history.

The results suggest three key factors influence changes to significant public policy: the dynamic relationships and interdependence between elected officials, bureaucrats, communities of interest, the public, and the media; political will; and policy analysis and planning. The study seems to suggest that in the current climate the media has a great deal of influence on political will.

The study also suggests that executive leadership and ownership of the change process by those with direct interest in the health and well-being of children in their community are key to the successful implementation of a significant public policy change.

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis is written in the style of a personal account, or reflection, on 25 years of one person's work life: the struggles and learning that occurred along my road to integration of the services for children and youth in the province of British Columbia between 1973 and 1996. Throughout, the account is challenged and supported by others who were chosen to provide insight into the questions that have been posed. In addition, literature in the fields of policy, organizational change, and leadership provides further insight and guidance to the analysis. The questions come out of my search for understanding regarding the connection between policy-making and practice and between policy-making and the public as client or consumer and the actions that affect these relationships.

The purpose of the study is to present the perspective and experience of one person who has grappled with the process of moving from being a field practitioner to becoming a senior bureaucrat in a time of significant public policy change. The study also incorporates the views of other key informants who were involved in these changes in child and youth services in British Columbia, involved in comparable changes in other provinces, or both. The factors contributing to, or impeding, such policy change are explored with reference to the interviews with these key informants and relevant literature.

My work career, which has been exclusively focused on children and youth, started as an early childhood educator in a cooperative preschool in 1973 and subsequently spanned 14 years as the owner-operator of a child care center, a number of stints in community organizations, two student placements at the Office of the Ombudsman of British Columbia, and the last nearly 6 years working in the provincial government.

I started my graduate studies in 1991, fully intending to complete my program in 1 1/2 years. However, since taking my first job in government in 1992, I have been almost completely consumed with my work, particularly in the last 3 1/2 years. Through these years I have been working directly in the area of interministerial work towards a better child, youth, and family services system.

I am currently a senior manager in government, working in an external agency responsible for reviewing and monitoring the provincial child and youth services system to promote accessible and responsive service delivery to children and their families and to provide an avenue of public accountability for those services.

My work has been my classroom. I have been challenged in every way: examining my beliefs and values--my way of looking at the world--in the context of working in government. I have resisted labels like bureaucrat and

have lectured my colleagues from the community about being sure to confront me if I ever sound like one. My fear of losing connection with the practical world, the world of child and youth care workers and the children and families they serve, has provided motivation to continue to hold that lens up to my work in government. It has not been easy and, except for encouragement from some exceptional people with whom I have had the privilege of working, I would not have stayed.

It is my belief that others are struggling with similar questions and may find some insight by reading my account and that those in the field of child and youth care practice may be assisted to understand and affect the complex policy framework of which they are an integral part.

The study is an important contribution to the social science literature as a case study and a personal account, both of which are considered major traditions of qualitative research (Lancy, 1993). Schön (1983) discusses the action of practitioners reflecting on their practice as an important contribution to research, and Langness (1981) credits personal accounts as models for others in their lives and work.

The results of my learning, as I now see it, are not surprising or new. I am convinced that there is a dynamic relationship between the elected officials, the bureaucracy, the media, and the public, which includes the community of

interest and the general public, that has a profound effect on significant public policy decisions. My experience and research suggest that each domain is dependent on the others and each one can come to the forefront in terms of influence for periods of time.

It seems from my experience and from the experience of others, that public policy in the child, youth, and family area in British Columbia has undergone, and is still in the midst of, a shift from a primarily bureaucratic policy-driven paradigm to one that is driven predominantly by elected officials, who are highly influenced by the media. And the influence of communities of interest and the general public has diminished.

It is important to acknowledge here that, although there is an extensive body of literature on the topic of integrating services in the human services sector, this account is offered as a case study presenting what has been learned from one person's direct experience and related experiences of other bureaucrats involved in this change process. Only major reports relating to the British Columbia change process and several pertinent studies are referenced in this paper.

I have included a glossary of terms to assist the reader to understand the terminology that is particular to British Columbia government or child and youth care practice.

METHODOLOGY

Purpose of the Study

Many other jurisdictions have undertaken restructuring of their child, youth, and family services systems. However, British Columbia's decision to establish a Children's Commission and a Ministry for Children and Families is unique. Although one can find the published documents and get anecdotal comments from those involved in the change process of other jurisdictions, it is rare to find an account from the perspective of one person involved in the process and an analysis of the history leading to significant public policy decisions such as these. The central purpose of the study is to shed some light on the policy development process of government through a reflective exploration of frontline experience of a single, well-placed participant.

I have documented the recent history in British Columbia through the use of a personal account augmented by document analysis, insights from supporting literature, and the inclusion of significant statements from interviews with key informants (see Appendix A for a chronology of the 1990 events leading up to the establishment of the Ministry for Children and Families). The interviews were conducted with individuals who have experience in other jurisdictions and with other significant public policy decisions in the child and youth service field.

The study provides a window on the experience of one child and youth professional, during a time of great change, along with the perspectives of others through this same time. These experiences and perspectives provide invaluable insight into how practice in this field is connected to policy. It is hoped that this insight will promote a better understanding of how frontline practitioners can contribute to the shaping and implementing of public policy. In addition, the study suggests a number of the factors that influence significant public policy decisions and suggests some considerations regarding such large-scale organizational change.

Focus of the Study

The major elements examined in this study include the context of change, the process of change, and the factors influencing change that are evident from the researcher's direct experience or the experience of other key informants.

The aspects of context explored include the major recommendations regarding the integration of the child, youth, and family services system made to government in the 1990s, government's response to these recommendations, the structures that were created, the effectiveness of these responses, and the role of the elected officials.

The process dimensions considered include the major decision points, the pace of the policy development process and implementation, and the significant events impacting on these decision points.

The supportive and blocking factors are identified as well as the role of senior management and the impact of mandates and planning. Other factors assessed throughout the account are the relationship of elected to nonelected officials, the involvement of communities of interest, and the influence of the media.

Research Method

In their study "Demystifying the Policy Process," Callahan and Wharf (1982) undertook a case study involving a review of the major documents developed during the stages of the development of new child protection legislation and conducted 17 interviews with key informants. After the preparation of the case study, the authors reviewed relevant policy-making literature for assistance in the analysis of the study and to identify unique aspects of this particular case.

For this study, I have adopted a similar methodology by analyzing documents, interviewing key informants, and reviewing relevant literature.

This study differs from Callahan and Wharf's (1982) in that the findings are ultimately embedded in the personal experience of the researcher:

> Personal accounts, as the name suggests, are different from other kinds of reports in the social science literature because they focus on whole lives, or people in the round. The person is examined not just as a convenient exemplary of a category we are interested in, but to get at his/her personal life story, views, and accomplishments. (Lancy, 1993, p. 169)

Such accounts are most useful when the subject of the account has been part of an important historical event. These personal accounts can take the form of autobiography that may be in the form of a diary, memoir, or confessional. Autobiographies are distinguished from strictly historical accounts by the fact that the events described have a profound effect on the writer, and the act of writing about them is in some way transformational in terms of personal and professional development.

The autobiographical style allows the writer to share her world and experience with the reader. It engages the reader in a story and the writer's life "become[s] available by the autobiographer's own intent, or simply by the act of publication, as models for other human beings who share certain conditions with the writer" (Langness, 1981, p. 93). Lancy (1993) suggests two primary ways in which personal accounts can be analyzed and interpreted to add to the knowledge in the field of social science: One way is to conduct a content analysis searching for themes; the other is to include a personal

account in a case study where other data sources are used to explicate the phenomenon.

The value in this approach, which Schön (1983) has described as "reflective practice," is in the "process of reflection-in-action which is central to the 'art' by which practitioners sometimes deal well with situations of uncertainty, instability, uniqueness, and value conflict" (p. 51). Schön goes on to discuss how managers use this skill of reflecting to solve problems in their organizations. He concludes that "managers do reflect-in-action, but they seldom reflect on their reflection-in-action. Hence this critically important dimension of their art tends to remain private and inaccessible to others" (p. 243).

The process of documenting the practitioner's reflection provides the opportunity for critical analysis of her experience in relation to the experience of others. This then becomes a research activity that carries with it the opportunity for a rich experience of self-education and renewal.

When contemplating the relationship between the researcher and the reflective practitioner, Schön (1983) asserts

> The roles of practitioner and researcher will have permeable boundaries, and research and practice careers will intertwine as a matter of course. While the relative weight given to reflective research or to practice may vary considerably in the course of a career, one

> would expect practitioners to function on occasion as reflective researchers, and vice versa. (p. 325)

A personal account by its very nature is one person's perspective on the chosen events described. The phenomenological approach to describing experience and making meaning of it recognizes that

> the phenomenological researcher is, above all, opportunistic. By being on the scene, the researcher observes and collects incidents, artifacts, and quotations that illuminate the phenomena. For this reason, phenomenology is best employed in situations that have relatively confined temporal and physical boundaries. (Lancy, 1993, p. 9)

As Osbourne (1994) notes, "Phenomenology provides a way of exploring lived-experience--the actuality of experience--from the inside rather than from the natural science perspective of observation and measurement" (p. 170). Therefore, it is imperative for the researcher to question and reveal how her personal beliefs and values influence that exploration and the potential impact on the results of the study.

In this case, the researcher reveals her beliefs and values, and her personal struggles with these, as they are challenged and change over time. Insightful analyses from the literature and themes derived from the interviews sometimes support and explain the struggle and sometimes raise other ways of looking at the same experience.

The action and the understanding of that action are linked, or as Colaizzi (1973) describes it, "Phenomenological understanding is not insulated from action since the agent of phenomenological understanding is not supramundane mind, a man as bodily-engaged, participating being-in-the-world-with-others" (p. 132).

Research Plan

Personal Account

As principal researcher, I have been a participant in the policy development and change process and, therefore, can provide an insider's perspective on the activity of interest. I occupy a unique position from which to shed light on the factors influencing significant public policy decisions from a personal experience standpoint.

I have been and continue to be directly involved in the development and implementation of significant public policy decisions relating to the focus of this study. I was a practicum student at the Office of the Ombudsman of British Columbia in 1990, during the writing of Report No. 22, and during my graduate course work much of my academic writing focused on services to children and youth. In 1995, I was hired as Director of the revitalized Child and Youth Secretariat. I became Team Coordinator in the Transition

Commission for Child and Youth Services in 1996 and am now, in 1998, Deputy Children's Commissioner.

Given this ongoing involvement, I have used the personal account as a framework to weave in documents, literature, and perspectives of the key informants. The researcher's experience provides a backdrop and lends a sense of reality to the sometimes dry and theoretical discussion of public policy.

The use of personal account is consistent with the phenomenological approach to analysis for this study. The account focuses on the lived experience of one public servant through a time of significant struggle and of major public debate about the safety and well-being of children.

Document Analysis

There are three major public reports from the 1990s that have called for fundamental change in the organization and delivery of child and youth services: (a) *Public Services to Children, Youth and Their Families: The Need for Integration* (Office of the Ombudsman of British Columbia, 1990); (b) *Report of the Gove Inquiry into Child Protection in British Columbia* (Gove, 1995); and (c) *British Columbia's Child, Youth and Family Serving System: Recommendations for Change; Report to Premier Glen Clark* (Morton, 1996).

Documentary analyses of these will enable the researcher to chronicle the call for reform and government's response.

As part of the account, the study examines the environment for significant public policy decisions in the child and youth area in the 1990s in British Columbia. This includes examinations of the responses to the recommendations from three reports and of the economic, political, and bureaucratic factors that led to and continue to influence the public policy process.

Key Informant Interviews

Seven interviews were conducted with individuals who were involved in major change processes in British Columbia, both past and present, and in other jurisdictions. Each of the interviewees held or continues to hold an influential or decision-making position in government. As Marshall and Rossman (1989) note, "Elite interviewing has many advantages. Elites often contribute insight and meaning to the interview process because they are quick thinking people, at home in the realm of ideas, policies and generalizations" (pp. 94-95). These key informants provide both a historical and a current perspective on the economic, social, and political environment affecting significant public policy decisions.

The interviews were conducted by the researcher and were taped, except in one case when extensive notes were taken over the phone. A semistructured format was followed and questions were used to examine the informants' experience in the area of study and to keep the interview on track (see Appendix B for a list of questions). This allowed for interviewees to be free to explore their own experience and to theorize about its meaning. Interviews were transcribed and submitted to each interviewee for review and verification.

Each transcribed interview was then analyzed using a phenomenological approach to uncovering the meaning of the experience of the interviewees within a set of themes. According to Colaizzi (1973), "It involved a dialogue constituted on the one hand by each of the themes, and on the other, the reflective interpretation of them in terms of what they express as fundamental for learning" (p. 83).

All significant statements were extracted from the interview protocols and then categorized into themes. These thematic statements were then analyzed and paraphrased into general meaning statements to disguise the identity of the interviewee. These meaning statements were then used to explicate the phenomena of interest.

Reviewing the Literature

The fourth element of the research approach, a review of relevant literature, will be outlined in the following pages, due to its size and significance in situating the study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Since the early 1970s, there have been calls for significant changes to the way in which government is structured to provide services to children and youth in British Columbia. Major reports, often prompted by tragic stories of child abuse and death, have called for fundamental change to the structure, governance, and service delivery of child and youth services. Although there were programmatic changes and reorganizations that occurred during the 1970s and 1980s, it was not until the 1990s that the pressure for change prompted significant public policy change. These changes were preceded by three major reports, each recommending large-scale organizational change to address problems within the child and youth services systems: (a) *Public Services to Children, Youth and Their Families: The Need for Integration* (Office of the Ombudsman of British Columbia, 1990); (b) *Report of the Gove Inquiry into Child Protection in British Columbia* (Gove, 1995); and (c) *British Columbia's Child, Youth and Family Serving System: Recommendations for Change; Report to Premier Glen Clark* (Morton, 1996).

The interest in significant change in the way child and youth services are organized and delivered is not a new idea, nor is it restricted to British Columbia. The integration of services, particularly for children and youth at risk, is an international phenomenon. A 1996 report prepared for the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development by their Centre

for Educational Research and Innovation Governing Board profiles integration initiatives in Germany, Finland, Portugal, the United States, Canada, the Netherlands, and Australia. The need to improve service delivery to children and youth at risk is supported by the experience of educators in schools around the world:

> In Australia, it has been concluded that family conflict, family fragmentation and family dislocation are major causes of youth homelessness, which in turn is associated with educational underachievement and early school leaving. . . . In Germany, 25 per cent of children in the kindergarten are described as having "oddities." (p. 12)

Additionally, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (1996) notes that social systems are "too fragmented, overspecialised and overburdened, and they have limited outreach capacity and are working in isolation from one another" (p. 13).

John O'Looney (1993) from the University of Georgia, writing about the trend towards privatization and integration of human services, describes the need for

> one-stop, comprehensive 'outlets' or service 'department stores' staffed with cross-trained, flexible personnel, any one of whom would be able to adapt to the personal needs of individual clients while tapping into a larger resource network in order to find and deliver the set of services that best fits specific clients. (p. 504)

Similarly, the Chapin Hall Center for Children report (Wynn, Costello, Halpern, & Richman, 1994)) recommends a fundamental change in service

delivery for Chicago, where the "primary" community services and the "specialized" services of government work together in new ways to meet the needs of its families. This collaboration is based on the assertion that "the cumulative weight of the circumstances facing children and parents and the limitations of existing services suggest a compelling need for a new response from society. . . . This response requires a fundamental shift in our conception of services" (p. 4).

Recent initiatives in other parts of Canada also demonstrate a move towards fundamental change in the child and youth services system. Camil Bouchard, in a 1995 paper presented to the Second Child Health 2000 World Congress and Exposition, describes a program in Montreal that challenges the traditional child and youth services system. He says

> A new paradigm is welcomed when there are alternative explanations or solutions to a problem and when the community of thought or action has been informed and cultivated to the necessity of change. This is certainly the cultural frame which has been prevailing for the last few years. (pp. 1-2)

Since the early 1990s, Alberta has undertaken to shift responsibility for child welfare services from centralized ministry control to independent regional authorities:

> The decision to redesign services for children and families is not just a component of the broad government reform initiative. It is a response to growing dissatisfaction with the inability of service systems to adapt and respond to the needs of children and families. (Alberta Commissioner of Services for Children, n. d., p. 2)

During the late 1980s and the 1990s, British Columbia has been challenged with the same problems as other jurisdictions. In 1990, the British Columbia Ombudsman published a report based on a trend towards complaints about the child and youth services system and the tragic death of a youth in a contracted agency. The report points out serious gaps in coordination among the government ministries providing licensing and funding for contracted agencies. One of the major recommendations was the establishment of a "single authority" to oversee child, youth, and family services.

The Ombudsman was convinced of the need for a ministry or agency in government where policy, planning, and funding decisions concerning services to children and their families were integrated. Recommendation No. 1 of the report *Public Services to Children, Youth and Their Families: The Need for Integration* (Office of the Ombudsman of British Columbia, 1990) states

> that a single authority within government be established with a formal mandate, executive powers and an adequate resource base to ensure uniform, integrated and client-centred provincial approaches to policy setting, planning and administration of publicly funded services to children, youth and their families. (p. 12)

Government responded to this structural recommendation by establishing the Child and Youth Secretariat with a mandate to coordinate and integrate services to children and youth. The Child and Youth Secretariat had an initial

3-year mandate and, after an evaluation, was restructured and given an additional 3-year mandate.

In 1994, then Minister of Social Services Joy MacPhail commissioned an inquiry into the death of Matthew Vaudreuil. Matthew's mother Verna had pled guilty to the murder of her son. Both Matthew and his mother were well known to the Ministry of Social Services' child protection workers in three different communities where he had lived during his brief life. He and his mother had received many services from government ministries and were known to countless professionals.

Judge Thomas J. Gove spent 18 months inquiring into the circumstances of Matthew's life and death, and documented that at the time of his death, it was apparent that Matthew had been subjected to severe child abuse and neglect for some time.

Many of the 118 recommendations from Gove's (1995) report relate specifically to improving the child protection practice in the Ministry of Social Services; however, the final 12 recommendations address the restructuring of government services to children and their families, based on the principles of child-centeredness, quality assurance, accountability, and community decision-making.

As with the Ombudsman's recommendations in 1990, now Judge Gove's in 1995 and subsequently Morton's in 1996, government was seized with determining how to respond: which recommendations to implement and how. A review of the literature on policy development will assist in understanding the rationale and process by which government responded to each of the three reports. Pal (1987) defines public policy as "a course of action or inaction chosen by public authorities to address a given problem or interrelated set of problems." The course of action is determined by a policy development process. This process includes the "definition of public problems, the forging of means to deal with them, the implementation of a solution, and the monitoring of success or failure" (p. 107).

It was clear both from the author's personal experience and the key informant interviews that the process of responding to the Ombudsman's (1990) and the Gove (1995) inquiry reports demonstrates public authorities choosing a course of action or inaction to deal with an identified problem. It is also clear that the course of action chosen was more or less effective depending on the action or inaction of other players. The choice of a Child and Youth Secretariat was a far cry from the single authority vision of the Ombudsman. In addition, the Child and Youth Secretariat was given few resources to carry its mandate to coordinate and integrate child and youth services. And lastly, it appears as though there was little political will to undertake the changes that were necessary to reach the goal of integration.

During the 8 months of the Transition Commission for Child and Youth Services policy alternatives were prepared to address identified problems in the child and youth services system. Within each project team there were problems identified that required analysis and options development. The process by which these alternatives were prepared is consistent with Doern and Phidd's (1988) six-stage policy development process: (a) identification, (b) definition, (c) alternative search, (d) choice, (e) implementation, and (f) evaluation (feedback and learning).

This rational model perhaps made sense in the 1960s and 1970s when government favored the use of formalized policy units. However, since the early 1980s, staff dedicated to policy analysis and program planning has been dwindling. Key informant data for this study supports Hollander and Prince's (1993) assertion that restraint in government spending, the increased use of the media by lobby groups, and the contracting of research activity have led to this decline.

Another major feature of this study is organizational change. All three of the major reports in the 1990s recommended large-scale organizational change. Large-scale organizational change is characterized as having three major dimensions: depth of change, persuasiveness of change, and the size of the organization (Mohrman et al., 1989). Each dimension has a scale from

which to measure the type of change to expect. For example, a key aspect of the depth of change is the paradigm shift, "a dramatic rejection of old beliefs and acceptance of new ones"(p. 13).

Kurt Lewin's (1951) force field analysis approach suggests that change is dependent on the dynamic relationship between opposing forces. Driving forces help to support the change process, while restraining forces reinforce the status quo. By conducting systematic identification of these opposing forces, one can be in a better position to facilitate a change process.

The Gove (1995) report concluded that "British Columbia's system for ensuring the safety and well-being of children and youth needs to be fundamentally reformed" (p. 45). Government's response to Judge Gove's recommendation was the establishment of the Transition Commission for Child and Youth Services in February 1996. The commissioner's 3-year mandate was to redesign and implement an improved child and youth services system. As an agency external to the child and youth services system of government, the Commission's task was to examine the recommendations of the Gove inquiry, recommend to government what it should implement, and then oversee the implementation.

The elected officials and the general public's outcry over the summer of 1996 were to significantly alter the course of the Transition Commission for

Child and Youth Services. Other children in care or known to the Ministry of Social Services had died. The opposition Liberals, the media, and child advocates began calling the ministry to account for how and why these children died. The Opposition asked many questions of the government in the Legislature and the print media, television, and radio were full of questions and accusations.

Towards the end of the legislative session in 1996, the premier called for a full report from the Transition Commissioner, and he indicated to her and to the press that he was amenable to speeding up the reform of the child and youth services system. On September 17, 1996, the Transition Commissioner delivered her report entitled British Columbia's Child, Youth and Family Serving System: Recommendations for Change. The report recommended the establishment of a Children's Commission and a single ministry for children and their families. In addition, she recommended the implementation of most of Gove's 118 recommendations and the termination of the Transition Commission for Child and Youth Services.

The literature clearly indicates that the move towards major change in child and youth service delivery is an international phenomenon. Governments in many parts of the world are recognizing the need to provide services differently and some, especially here in Canada, are undertaking

large-scale organizational change in response to recommendations made in reports about tragedy in children's lives.

All these moves to large-scale organizational changes are an attempt to resolve problems associated with a lack of integration and coordination of services. Often what is missing is a comprehensive analysis and planning process that takes into account the complexity of such a change and the dynamics of the relationships between the principle actors in the process.

PERSONAL ACCOUNT

This account reflects 25 years of working with and on behalf of children and families in British Columbia. It includes personal reflections, analyses, and conclusions based on my own experience. I have included the experiences of others as they have shared them with me and my learning from the literature.

I have divided the account into significant time periods that represent shifts in my experience, thinking, or learning and I have given these periods subheadings. As I worked through the analysis, a number of phrases and metaphors came to mind--some of which are my own and some of which come from the interviews with key informants.

Relevant meaning statements from my interviews have been included and are indented and in italics. In some instances, I paraphrased the words of the key informants in an effort to ensure anonymity. Otherwise, actual quotes from the interviews are enclosed in quotation marks.

The Early Years

I began my journey with children and families as a young teenager, but my first "real" job was in 1973 as a cooperative preschool teacher at the age of 21.

By this time I had two children, one 14 months and the other 4 years old. I had just completed the requirements for my certificate in Early Childhood Education. I remember thinking that it was a miracle being paid for doing something I loved as much as one loves a chosen hobby.

At that time, I was barely aware of how government policy affected the day-to-day work of a frontline early childhood educator. The New Democratic Party government was creating more rules about how much play yard space was needed for a preschool and about the need for fencing. A new subsidy program was created that meant that a couple of the children in my preschool were subsidized by the government. Even though I was chair of the Supervisors' Committee for the Vancouver Island Cooperative Preschool Association for a couple of years, I would not involve myself in the bigger world of public policy until the mid-1980s.

One of the interviewees in the study, who had been a longtime practitioner in the field, suggested that to make significant public policy relevant, the decisions must affect children and families directly. There need to be connections between significant public policy decisions and the experience of a child or family.

In 1978, I left the preschool and purchased a daycare business. I wanted to work with a team of qualified staff and develop a program according to my

beliefs about children's need to be given support and opportunity to grow and develop through their own play. At this time in my professional career, I was most influenced by one of my early childhood education instructors. Her demonstrated respect for children and her profound belief in their individual and collective ability to think creatively and constructively was truly inspiring.

It was during those first years running a daycare center and raising a young and active family that I began to recognize the difficulties many families face when they are in need of services to support their role as parents. I found myself advocating to public agencies for everything from higher daycare subsidies to access to extra supports for children with emotional and behavioral challenges.

The Age of Idealism

During the early 1980s, I was often involved in bringing together others in the early childhood practice community who were concerned about how public policy was affecting children and their families. One example of this was my involvement with the members of the Vancouver Island Early Childhood Centre Operators Association. We would organize letter-writing campaigns so that parents could express their concern about the state of child care to the elected officials. Other times it took the form of writing briefs and

letters to government task forces or ministers responsible for children's services.

From the perspective of several key informants, reports or reviews have a better chance to gain a significant response if the author has a high public profile and is not seen as representing any special interest group. The report must address the interests across sectors in order to capture public interest.

Reports or reviews from the practice community often focus on the issues of one discipline. Reviews that take a broader view of child and youth services often have more impact.

I once had an ongoing letter-writing exchange with a former minister responsible for provincial child care subsidy. After several months and a number of exchanges, she decided to visit me at my daycare center. Aside from her showing interest in my financial statements and our sharing a pleasant conversation about the children, nothing else came of it.

A senior public official with 35 years of experience in child protection offered advice and noted that the child and youth services practice field does not have a long history of trying to influence significant public policy change: "We are neophytes at it." The field sees itself as representing the

morally correct agenda. This is not enough. The field has not learned how to influence public policy because it has excluded itself from other interests in the community and it hasn't considered one of the key factors influencing public policy, that being the fit with political agendas of the day. The practice community must learn to be more strategic.

Field practitioners who try to influence significant public policy change must learn about the political dynamic involved in that change. They must learn how to assess the political agenda and prepare strategies to influence it while determining their role in providing leadership in the change process.

Another longtime senior official with experience in Ontario and British Columbia suggested that stakeholders who want to influence public policy must organize and empower themselves. Human service professionals are not fighters by nature; however, they need to learn to make the arguments and to fight for what they believe in.

Through those years, I became interested in and committed to professional development and expanded training. In addition to supporting practicum students from the Early Childhood Education division at the local community college, I developed a relationship with the School of Child and Youth Care at the University of Victoria. At that time, one of the instructors

who taught and supervised practicum students began encouraging me to enroll and study for my degree.

By the late 1980s, I had worked for nearly 15 years in early childhood education and I had completed a specialty in Infant and Toddler Care, as well as a diploma in Human Services. I was becoming burned out, working 5 days a week with young children and providing support to staff and parents, as well as administering the business end of the center.

After my mother died in the spring of 1988, I decided to pursue a degree in Child and Youth Care. In order to be free to go to school, I worked part time in the daycare until the fall and then hired a full-time director to take my place. I continued to do the administrative work right through to the day I closed the daycare center in November 1992.

I knew when I started at university that I did not want to train for another frontline job in child and youth services. I was interested in how policy that affects children and youth was developed and implemented and how children and their families could impact that process. I also knew that this degree would be a part of my journey of understanding, but that I would need other experiences and training to reach my goal. I was very fortunate to have a supportive practicum coordinator. She and I had many long conversations about my interest in administration and policy. With her guidance and

support, I was able to do both my third and fourth year practica at the Office of Ombudsman of British Columbia. During my first practicum, I spent most of my practicum hours doing intake. This was a wonderful training ground for learning about government services and about what was not working for the consumers of those services.

I also became conversant with how the Ombudsman's work relates to the children and youth involved with government services. I learned about how children and youth could bring forward issues and complaints that could have the potential to impact existing and future policy and programs in government.

Reality Sets In: An "Unnatural Bureaucratic Event"

In my fourth year practicum, I was delegated an Ombudsman officer, under the British Columbia Ombudsman Act (1979), and took on a caseload of complaints. I dealt with parents who were distraught because they had difficulty gaining access to their children who had been removed from their care, foster parents who disagreed with child protection workers' decisions to move their children to new placements, and young people who were dependent on a system that at times confused and frightened them.

I dealt with some committed child care workers, social workers, mental health workers, and probation officers who worked very hard to serve the

children and youth who came to them. They were able to use the programs and services at their disposal to meet those needs. Unfortunately, many workers, who were usually the subject of the complaints at the Ombudsman's office, did not appear to care about the individual children who were so dependent on them. Some seemed to use the policy manual as an excuse for being rigid, whereas others ignored the discretion they had to offer help.

An outstanding feature for me was the lack of joint planning for and with the children and their families who were clients of the government.

A senior official commenting on integrating services across ministries pointed out that "public bureaucracies aren't any different than private bureaucracies, or big families, or universities. . . . They have an inertia to them. . . . Large vertical bureaucracies are full of well-meaning professionals, doing their job, doing an important one, an important function. They are not easily going to integrate horizontally with each other."

"I don't know of a situation where two large divisions, ministries or departments, which have independent statutory authority and independent budgets, independent workforces, and hierarchies, will voluntarily merge or subordinate themselves to a single . . . outside, sort

of superstructure or just blend themselves naturally. This is an unnatural bureaucratic event."

This comment by one of the key informants would help explain my later experience with the Child and Youth Secretariat. The attempt to integrate across ministries was perhaps less likely to succeed than the move to a single authority.

The story of one young woman has stayed with me. She was 14 and her mother was not able to provide a home for her, although she was concerned about her daughter's welfare. The young woman was in the permanent care of the state. During the previous few years she had lived in a number of foster homes and had spent time on the street where she had been sexually exploited and had filled her body with drugs. She had been charged with a number of shoplifting offenses and was on probation. Because of her acting out behavior she had been assessed by a mental health worker. At the time of the complaint, her mother called to say that her daughter had been told she was going to be sent to an adolescent treatment facility, but there would be a waiting period of several months. The mother wanted her to go right away and feared for her safety. She had been absent from her foster home and breached her probation order several times in the past few weeks and was currently on the run.

As an Ombudsman officer, my job was to see if the government services that were provided were done so in ways that were procedurally and administratively fair. To do this I needed to understand the legislation, regulation, and policy that governed the work of the social worker, probation officer, mental health worker, and the staff at the treatment facility. I spoke to each of the professionals involved in the young woman's life and I was struck by the fact that, other than the social worker and the foster parent, these people had never spoken to each other. They read each other's reports, but they did not talk about the well-being of this young woman or about what role they each played in her life.

At this time two other important events were taking place at the Ombudsman's office: Report No. 22, *Public Services to Children, Youth and Their Families: The Need for Integration* (1990) was being written and there was news of an international committee of the United Nations drafting the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. An instructor at the School of Child and Youth Care had brought the Ombudsman's office news of this convention and a draft to review and consider.

I remember the discussions at the Child and Youth Team meetings about advocacy. We were not to be advocates--officially anyway--but when it came to complaints affecting children and youth, most of us approached our work as if case managers and advocates for the child's or youth's needs. I loved this

work; it was inspiring to work with people so committed to putting children's needs first. Team members came from several different disciplines, law, youth corrections, social work, mental health, and child and youth care, but all shared common values.

Report No. 22 (Office of the Ombudsman of British Columbia, 1990) was a significant public document in that not since the reports of the Royal Commission on Family and Children's Law were published in the 1970s had government been faced with such sweeping recommendations for fundamental change to the child and youth services system. The report was based on the growing number of complaints coming into the Ombudsman's office regarding services to children and youth and the tragic death of one young person in a fire at a facility for young offenders.

Report No. 22 (Office of the Ombudsman of British Columbia, 1990) made recommendations regarding changes to the child and youth services system, including strengthening the licensing requirements and monitoring the residential facilities, such as the one where the young person had died. Its number one recommendation to government was the establishment of a "single authority" in government to administer child, youth, and family services (see Appendix C for the recommendations of this report related to service integration).

My first experience with multidisciplinary work had occurred in 1988, while I was a full-time student, still running my daycare center. I took a part-time job as a housemother at a local boarding school for girls. I needed to contribute to the family income and I wanted some experience with older children. The 2 years I spent at the school turned out to be very rich. I was privileged to work with girls from several different countries: Mexico, Japan, China, India, Taiwan, the United States, and Canada. The staff at the residence included women with a variety of backgrounds, including psychology, social work, nursing, child and youth care, and teaching. It was clear that we all saw these girls and their needs through slightly different lenses. It was a challenge to work together.

A senior official with 35 years experience in the field discusses the needs of practitioners when trying to learn to work together. We may forget that changing the way we do things involves changing the way we think about what we are doing. This means taking the time to work with field-level staff over an extended period and being patient as change takes time.

A Time of Renewed Hope

In the fall of 1990, graduating with a B. A. in Child and Youth Care, I was a year shy of 40 and had landed a job as coordinator of a new child care support program in a community nonprofit agency providing services to single

parents. The agency programs mostly focused on providing assistance to single parent women, many of whom had left abusive relationships. They could get free clothing, attend a life skills program, or just stop for coffee and connect with other women.

Once again, I was working in a multidisciplinary environment with counselors, social workers, child and youth care workers, and early childhood educators. As with my former experiences, I found a clash of values between the counselors and staff who had been focusing on the needs of the women and my program staff who were primarily concerned with the needs of children in child care environments.

The agency provided child care in the basement of the building, supervised by a volunteer, who sometimes had far too many children to deal with. My new program's focus challenged the child care practices of the agency.

I soon discovered that I was very fortunate to be involved in the development and implementation of an important program that would prove to be key in the growth of child care in British Columbia. The program was funded by the Ministry of Social Services and it was 1 of 25 being established in communities around the province. The primary goal of the program was to enhance the accessibility and quality of family daycare homes,

with a primary focus on unlicensed, unregulated facilities. We hired an experienced and well-respected licensed family daycare provider as the field-worker. The area manager who was responsible for the contract was supportive of us developing the program to meet the needs of both the licensed and unlicensed child care sector.

A middle manager in government, with many years of field experience, expressed a love of program development, because there is a potential to really impact the lives of children and families. In her mind, program development is an entirely different activity than that of policy development, which she saw as mostly experienced by bureaucrats.

The policy process often does not relate directly to the needs of clients; it is too slow and often gets mired in the politics of the day. Good policy changes that are felt by clients are the most useful. It only makes sense to clients if there is a visible change in how they experience services.

Later, I found out why government had funded such a provincial program. At that time, the federal government provided 50 percent of the funding for child care subsidy in the province. The federal government provided funding through the Canada Assistance Plan for child care subsidy as well as for other social assistance programs. The funding for child care subsidy was intended to subsidize parents who chose licensed child care only.

However, in British Columbia, a large percentage of the dollars went to parents who chose unlicensed, unregulated care.

In order to ensure that these federal dollars were not lost, the province proposed the establishment of a provincial program that would enhance the accountability of unlicensed family daycare. This proposal was looked on favorably by the federal government and the funding for the child care subsidy was maintained.

I thought the establishment of the Child Care Support Program was based on a public policy agenda that recognized the critical need to ensure children received quality care in family child care facilities. Instead, it was government's response to a potential financial crisis. I began to have respect for government officials who were creative and strategic enough to recommend a much needed program to solve a financial problem.

A former senior bureaucrat, who has worked with a number of different administrations both in Ontario and Alberta, made a comment related to this issue: "The timing was right, as there was a populist government and the message could be spun in a number of ways to be consistent with the overall agenda. I don't care what government thinks it is doing, as long as it can be convinced to do the right thing!"

I spent a year getting the Child Care Support Program underway with the able assistance of the field-worker. While she spent much of her time on the road visiting family child care providers, she was also instrumental in the design, writing, and distribution of a high quality monthly newsletter that provided licensing and safety information, programming tips, and referral information.

By early 1991, the Director of the School of Child and Youth Care was encouraging me to enroll in a new multidisciplinary master's program in Policy and Practice in Health and Human Services in the Faculty of Human and Social Development at the University of Victoria. The program was to begin its first year in the fall. Given my previous experiences working in multidisciplinary environments, and my growing interest in public policy and organizational structures, it seemed like a good fit.

For the next 12 months after entering the master's program, I read, debated, and wrote about children's rights and public policy affecting children and youth. I revisited Report No. 22 (Office of the Ombudsman of British Columbia, 1990) and followed up on government's response to the recommendation to establish a single authority in government for child and youth services. For example, in late 1990 the government had established the Child and Youth Secretariat. Its mandate was to coordinate and integrate government services to children and youth. A year later the staff had mostly

focused on reestablishing the Interministry Children's Committees around the province. These had evolved into the regional and local Child and Youth Committees and were responsible for the coordination and integration of services. Each committee had representatives from the four major child and youth services ministries: Health, Social Services, Attorney General, and Education.

The Child and Youth Secretariat reported to the Assistant Deputy Ministers' Committee whose responsibility it was to assist their own ministries' staffs to work together to solve problems. This committee was responsible for joint policy, planning, and funding for services to children and youth. For the most part, coordination and integration were occurring at the local level. Staff developed an excellent guide for integrated case management and began going out to provide training to local Child and Youth Committees.

There are a number of perspectives on the work of the Child and Youth Secretariat during this time:

A staff person, who worked with the Child and Youth Secretariat for most of its 4 1/2-year history, commented that there were no funds allocated to support the work of integration and coordination of services. This

probably indicates a lack of will on the part of the elected officials at the time.

There were a number of reasons cited for the failure of the Child and Youth Committees to really affect integration of services:

1. The establishment of the Child and Youth Secretariat was not intended to result in large-scale organizational change; rather it was intended to support incremental change aimed at enhancing integration of services.

2. Staff in middle management positions will often refrain from engaging in change initiatives without demonstrated sanction from their superiors. Sometimes this hesitancy is based on not knowing how to engage in the change. Sometimes they don't understand the point of the change, or they lack the time and resources to undertake the change.

3. Middle managers have been known to suffer repercussions for initiating change so they are conditioned to maintain the status quo.

Also, problems that staff encounter as a result of a change initiative, such as changes to computer and filing systems, office moves, and the requirement to establish new working relationships, are often not seen as significant and are, therefore, not adequately planned for. Nor do staff

always see how what they are doing is connected to the broader vision for change.

Based on the experience of a senior bureaucrat, who had been involved with the Child and Youth Secretariat, it can be said that integration of services, in the absence of a single ministry, requires strong messages from the elected officials to the senior bureaucrats that this is the agenda and they must undertake it. The job of bureaucrats then is to figure out how to address the funding, administrative, and programmatic challenges.

Successful senior bureaucrats have the ability to judge what public policy has a chance of success, based on their assessment of the political climate.

During the time of the Child and Youth Secretariat the message did not come from the elected officials that integration of the services of a number of child and youth services ministries was on the agenda.

Those with experience in the public service would agree that the interest of the elected officials and their will to see it through are critical to the success of a significant public policy decision.

It has also been asserted that bureaucrats at all levels need to take leadership in the change. When those who have the authority and

capacity to provide leadership don't or can't provide it, there is little hope of real change.

The Reinvigoration

Soon after I completed the course work in the master's program, I applied for a job in government. I started work in government on November 16, 1992. I was full of idealism about how I could contribute to the improvement of the lives of children, especially young children in child care and their caregivers. By now, I had nearly 20 years experience working with children, families, students, staff, and a variety of service providers. My training at university had given me a good grounding in public policy and I thought I was ready to "make a difference." Little did I know what stood in front of me. The following 4 years taught me a great deal about the reality of public policy, about the power of the bureaucracy, about gatekeepers, and about myself as a colleague and manager.

The first 2 years were both a blessing and a curse. The blessing was the opportunity to learn a great deal in a short time. Because it was a new ministry and a new program area, there was much development work to do. We had very few staff and the work processes were yet to be developed. In the beginning, I was responsible for developing, implementing, and managing several new grant programs, and some days I would do everything from

make labels, design brochures, consult with legal counsel, to brief the minister. I learned how to do all these things quickly and fairly well.

One key informant asserted that field practitioners rarely enter the ranks of senior bureaucracy and, therefore, there is a lack of understanding of the issues facing at-risk families at senior levels. They need to understand the connection between policy at their level and the effect on children and families who are the recipients of services. People providing services understand this connection.

In the fall of 1995, the ministry I was working in established a new position in their Research and Evaluation Branch. This position was designed to support the program staff with policy work and development of an evaluation framework for a large federal-provincial program. The federal government had a specific kind of evaluation in mind that was not initially compatible with the interests of the province. It was my job to coordinate the development of the evaluation framework by bringing together the interests of both the federal and provincial governments.

At that time, the Child and Youth Secretariat Assistant Deputy Ministers' Committee met semiweekly and the Assistant Deputy Minister in my ministry was a member. Because of my interest in children's rights and

broader public policy, she asked me to be her alternate on the committee and attend meetings on her behalf.

For the first few meetings I said little. I listened, took notes, and provided reports about issues relevant to the ministry. I understood the mandate of the Child and Youth Secretariat to be the integration and coordination of services to children and youth. However, it seemed as though most of the time was spent discussing which ministry would fund some initiative being proposed by the staff.

One of the former staff expressed frustration at the lack of resources put to supporting the work of coordination and integration. As in many cases, significant public policy change is often not accompanied with adequate resources to accomplish the change agenda.

A senior official, who was involved with the Child and Youth Secretariat at that time concurred that much of the problem with a lack of success was related to a lack of money. At the same time the Child and Youth Secretariat was trying to integrate services, the assistant deputy ministers were being asked to slash their budgets, and if they could avoid paying for something they would.

When the economy is growing and there are plentiful resources, it is a much better environment for creative projects.

After its initial 3 years, the work of the Child and Youth Secretariat was evaluated to see to what degree it had accomplished its mandate. The evaluation found that although the Child and Youth Secretariat had done little to address coordination or integration of funding or policy, it had had some success in reestablishing and supporting a network of regional and local Child and Youth Committees. Government decided to continue with a new mandate that placed a stronger emphasis on the Assistant Deputy Ministers' Committee as the principal body, with staff supporting them. The new Assistant Deputy Ministers' Committee reported to the nine-member Deputy Ministers' Committee. Also included in the mandate at this time was the responsibility to establish pilot projects to test models of integration.

I was hired as the director of the reinvigorated Child and Youth Secretariat in March 1995. Additional staff had been seconded from Health, Social Services, Attorney General, and Education ministries. At the same time, the management of the Kids at Risk Program, consisting of interministry integration pilot projects, was transferred from the Ministry of Education to the Child and Youth Secretariat.

The following 10 months I spent at the Child and Youth Secretariat were very rewarding. I was fortunate to work with an exceptionally committed staff team, and I had a great deal of autonomy to re-create the organization. We spent several months creating the vision and planning for the next 3 years. I believed that with the right mission, goals, objectives, projects, and evaluation, plus strong leadership from the senior bureaucrats, we could make coordination a reality and, perhaps, test some integration of services. In the beginning our staff and those in the Assistant Deputy Ministers' Committee were committed to this plan. I was impressed with the chair's passion for integration of services, even though his day-to-day responsibilities in the ministry were very onerous.

Our first newsletter referred to a "reinvigoration to make sure the Child and Youth Secretariat is in the best possible position to meet our goals of effective integration, coordination and harmonization" (Child and Youth Secretariat, 1995). The chair was quoted as saying, "Cabinet very clearly recognized and understood the need for integrated services for families and children" (p. 1).

A change process should be preceded by a rational policy process undertaken by professionals. This is good governance and it rarely happens.

Change requires high-level planning; however, it will not, in and of itself, change the attitudes of practitioners or the service delivery climate for consumers. Attitudinal change is the most important part of the change process.

The change process needs to include all systems of the organization. The underlying principles need to be reflected in (1) practice, (2) training, (3) human resource recruitment, (4) evaluation.

Government often uses time-limited pilot projects to test initiatives before undertaking a system-wide change. However, projects in service integration take several years of operation to show enhanced outcomes for children and youth. Often before the project can demonstrate good results, it is cut short because of changing fiscal priorities and political agendas.

Cynicism Sets In: Enter Marshmallow Man

During my term as director, I attended monthly Deputy Ministers' Committee meetings, when they were not canceled due to the conflicting schedules of the members. Although the Deputies seemed interested in my reports, my impression was that integration of child and youth services across ministry programs was not a major priority for any of them.

A former member of the Assistant Deputy Ministers' Committee suggested that there was good reason for the perceived inertia of the senior bureaucracy. Sometimes significant public policy decisions are not seen as a serious attempt to change the system. Many senior bureaucrats do not see or understand how it will or could make a difference. What is lacking is a shared mission that can break down the walls between the systems. This shared mission needs to be supported and led by clear messages from the elected officials. There needs to be clear authority to take up the shared vision and there needs to be respect for this process throughout the system. This shared vision needs to take into account all facets of the system. It cannot be focused on one level of the bureaucracy or vested in one area of service delivery.

A former member of the Deputy Ministers' Committee confirmed this need for leadership from the elected officials. Significant public policy change initiatives have more success if there is strong leadership that is transferred to the bureaucracy. Senior bureaucrats will commit to a change process and take leadership in it if they understand its value and can maintain their credibility throughout the process.

Some senior bureaucrats can see how a change is useful; others are blinded to the need for change by the traditions of their disciplines or systems.

The committee meetings were often much more focused on debating how to pay for the computers at the Child and Youth Secretariat or share the costs of the Kids at Risk pilot projects than focusing on the bigger issues of joint policy development, funding, and service delivery across ministries. I believed it was my responsibility to convince them to take the leadership to do this important work. One of the deputies stayed after the meeting one day and said to me, "We know that integration is important, and I think we all would like to see it happen, but we simply don't know how."

I remember talking with the chairs of the regional Child and Youth Committees at a 2-day forum the Child and Youth Secretariat held in Victoria. They were polite to me probably because I was new and full of enthusiasm, but their cynicism was also evident. From their perspective they had not seen strong leadership from the senior bureaucrats in Victoria. What they had seen was a lot of talk and some memos but nothing concrete to indicate commitment to any real change.

While I was director I received a letter from one of the regional chairs. He compared the Child and Youth Secretariat to the Marshmallow Man, a character from the movie *Ghostbusters* (Reitman, 1984). It is a giant man made out of marshmallows, who comes into the city and at first causes quite a stir. On closer inspection the Marshmallow Man turns out to be a sweet, nice,

and relatively harmless being that is pretty much useless for anything really important. This letter made me more determined to be a force for change.

Staff will only commit to a significant public policy change if they are assured by their senior managers that this is a good thing to do, that the effort of change is worthwhile.

In child protection, crisis is the usual focus and impetus for the work; therefore, it is not a system that is very conducive to "visioning" for change.

Implementation of a significant public policy decision often does not get the same attention from elected officials and the media as the passing of new legislation or the announcement of a new initiative.

Those in the system who are responsible for implementing a significant public policy decision need assurances that the change will be followed through. Too many times interest wanes or the senior leadership changes, resulting in the abandonment of a change initiative.

By the fall of 1995, the Kids at Risk pilot projects were up and running and an interministry project to develop standards for contracted services was in full swing. The Child and Youth Secretariat had begun to make headway on

providing guidelines for sharing information across disciplines, an evaluation of services to sexually exploited youth was about to start, and two newsletters had been issued. The staff who traveled to the regions were getting feedback that the assistance they were offering was helpful and there was a cautious sense of optimism among the staff.

By this time Assistant Deputy Ministers' Committee meetings were focused on what Judge Gove was going to say in his report to government on the state of the child protection system. There was much debate about how the report would affect the Ministry of Social Services and the other child and youth services ministries. Most believed that this was a child protection problem to manage and that other ministries would not be affected. This was in spite of strong messages from senior managers and bureaucrats in Social Services, who had been following the Gove inquiry very closely. The inquiry process was clearly indicating that Judge Gove was going to speak to the need for integration of services across ministries.

The Assistant Deputy Ministers' Committee was convinced the Child and Youth Secretariat should take some leadership in crafting a response to the report of the Gove (1995) inquiry. I was given responsibility for chairing an interministry committee made up of several directors from Health, Social Services, Education, Attorney General, and Women's Equality, as well as representatives from Treasury Board, Cabinet Planning, and Government

Communications. We were to propose a response to Judge Gove's recommendations, and we began our work with the broad categories of issues the judge would likely address in his report.

This was a slow and painstaking process. Each ministry provided a response to the issues that concerned them. I was to collect these responses, compile them, and analyze them from a cross-ministry perspective.

Just before Judge Gove released the report of his inquiry, the Ministry of Social Services established the Child and Family Review Board. The Board was established under the new child protection legislation, the British Columbia Child, Family and Community Service Act (1996), and its primary function was to provide an independent review of breaches of rights of children in care or any other review of practice related to that act.

In November 1995, the *Report of the Gove Inquiry into Child Protection in British Columbia* was released. It contained 118 recommendations, most of which were focused on improving child protection practice, but a number of key recommendations related to the governance and organization of services across five ministries (see Appendix D for a summary of the recommendations in this report).

The report was very critical of the existing service delivery system for children and of the Child and Youth Secretariat as an impotent agent of change. Judge Gove recommended instead a Ministry for Children and Youth that would have responsibility for child protection, special needs programs, mental health and public health, youth corrections, child care services, and specialized education programs, with a regional governance model of organization to manage the programs and services. He recommended that government appoint a Commissioner of Transition within 2 months to implement the change agenda.

From that day until the day of the appointment of the Transition Commissioner, I knew that the Child and Youth Secretariat would not last. What I hoped for was a reassignment of the staff to work on the transition. Although I had not been convinced that we needed a single ministry for children prior to my experience with the Child and Youth Secretariat, the lack of progress and the inertia of the bureaucracy I experienced was beginning to convince me that this may be the only way.

I continued to chair the interministry committee, but little was accomplished because it seemed as though everyone was waiting to see how the elected officials would respond. At the time I did not understand this phenomenon: bureaucrats waiting for a signal from the elected officials before they commit themselves to anything.

Bureaucrats are interested in whether the policy will be seen positively by the media and whether it is consistent with current ministry issue management strategies.

Pollyanna Lives: Power at Last

On January 30, 1996, the premier announced the appointment of the Transition Commissioner, with a 3-year mandate to examine the recommendations of the Gove (1995) report, propose a plan for service delivery, and implement the new plan. As soon as I learned of her appointment, I sent an electronic mail message to the new commissioner, congratulating her and offering the support of myself and my staff in her endeavor. Later that day I received a response to my message: "Thanks, you are now working for me. Please arrange a meeting in the next few days."

I was ecstatic; this was the best outcome for us all. I wanted to work on the change. I wanted to be part of the solution. I had had some experience with the commissioner in her former role and I liked her no-nonsense, let's-get-on-with-it style. I was looking forward to an exciting new challenge. I remember saying that the Child and Youth Secretariat was like a boat with a journey planned and a good crew but it lacked a motor to make it move towards its goal. The new commissioner was the motor; she had the power of

the premier's office behind her and a strong commitment to service integration. With all this power and authority, surely we could complete the journey.

At first, my role at the new Office of the Transition Commission for Child and Youth Services was mostly undetermined. Although after a few weeks, I sensed that the commissioner was beginning to trust me and rely on me for some things, she had not really defined a role for me. The staff remaining from the Child and Youth Secretariat no longer reported to me and were not sure what their roles were either. Eventually, all but two of the former staff returned to ministry work.

The commissioner decided that she would designate team leaders and organize the office into project teams, each focusing on various aspects of service delivery and governance. The teams were (a) Governance and Decision-Making; (b) Service Delivery, five teams, for covering 0-5, school age, youth, disabilities, and Aboriginal clients; (c) Quality Assurance, three teams for training, performance management and, audit and review; (d) Finance and Administration; and (e) Communications and Consultation.

By this time the commissioner had recruited additional management-level staff in government. She had also hired a contractor to provide communications and consultation advice. The commissioner decided to

assign myself and two other team leaders the job of coordinating the activities of the office. As well, I was assigned one of the project teams.

By this time there was already tension in the office and some staff were openly hostile to the idea of a coordinating team. It seemed to be an issue of power and control again, not of getting on with the work.

The commissioner gave directions that each project team leader was to create a work plan that included the recruitment of a project team from the five ministries Judge Gove (1995) referred to in his report. There were ongoing discussions about the need to include relevant representatives from outside of government. The commissioner decided that they could consult with people from outside, but the core team members were to be from government.

Although we each had the same direction, there were a number of the team leaders who struggled with creating a work plan and getting their project team together. For some it seemed to be philosophical disagreement with the process. Some team leaders believed they needed to involve the team members in making the plan, so that they would be committed to it and to contributing to its success. For some reason they did not connect with the vision of the work of the Commission as a whole and so struggled to articulate goals and objectives consistent with the vision.

The commissioner and I met with the Assistant Deputy Ministers' Committee that had been responsible for the Child and Youth Secretariat early in the Commission's mandate. The chair suggested that there were a number of ways they could support the work of the Commission, so the commissioner decided to continue the life of the committee and often assigned me the task of attending these meetings on her behalf. I did not think this was well received. After all, I had essentially worked for them at the Child and Youth Secretariat and now they were being asked to listen to me because I represented the commissioner.

Although I was cognizant of this dilemma and thought I was respectful and collaborative, I had little sympathy for the hierarchical protocol that sometimes got in the way. I also believed that we had some very important work to do to create a service delivery system that would serve children's needs in a holistic way. I saw this as a window of opportunity when government was paying attention to children and a time when real change could occur. It did not appear as though there was an acceptance or recognition of the profound change in the child and youth service system that was being contemplated.

Elected officials and senior bureaucrats need to be convinced that their system is part of the problem and that changes to it are part of the solution.

There is a need to seek and respond quickly to opportunities for action as they are often transitory.

When bureaucrats are faced with the possibility of significant public policy change they often respond initially by attempting to maintain stability by defending their current policies and practices. When it is clear that they must accept the change agenda, bureaucrats will accept there will be a period of instability and begin to plan and strategize on how best to absorb the changes in their organization. To ensure the desired change is appropriately integrated into the organization, one must take the opportunity to influence the planning and strategizing activity before the organization becomes stable again.

The key informants stress the need for any leader of change to be seen as having knowledge, experience, and authority.

By the early summer of 1996, all team leaders had begun to meet with their teams and to plan demonstration sites for testing new service delivery models. By this time, the Commission had contracted with someone to provide assistance with organizing *developmental sites*.

We were planning to implement a series of developmental sites designed to test innovative service delivery and governance. We had come to believe that the only way to convince the bureaucrats that child-centered, integrated, accountable, and participatory services could work was to show them. We planned to evaluate the effectiveness of these innovations, based on sound research and previous experience elsewhere. This seemed like a logical and reasonable approach given the growing skepticism of many in the system.

Several cliques had formed at the Commission and work was going slowly. There was a lack of a sense of teams working together to accomplish the bigger goals. I was unhappy and frustrated with the progress being made, both with my work and with the Commission in general.

The commissioner had committed to providing the premier with an update on the work of the Transition Commission for Child and Youth Services in the fall of 1996. The commissioner asked me to begin to draft this piece, which I did with the assistance of other team leaders, who were to provide status reports.

The Alberta Experience: Infiltrating the System

In June 1996, the commissioner and I traveled to Alberta and Saskatchewan to gather information on the process of service integration in

these two provinces. We spent a day and a half with Alberta's Commissioner of Services for Children, his staff, some of the regional representatives and a group of government assistant deputy ministers.

We knew that Alberta had appointed the first commissioner in 1993, after a rather scathing report from the Children's Advocate. The commissioner's mandate was expressed in terms of a vision for Alberta's child welfare system.

The paper "Planning and Implementing: A New Approach to Services for Children and Families" (Alberta Commissioner of Services for Children, n. d.) had been distributed to Albertans in the early 1990s, outlining the process for consulting with citizens on the best way to provide services to children and families. The paper articulated a vision, goals, and tasks for a new service delivery system that was to be managed and delivered in communities.

One of their first steps was to establish six working groups around the province, each cochaired by two individuals, one of whom was to be Aboriginal. The working group members were drawn from a broad range of interests: children and families, Aboriginal communities, service providers (provincial government and nongovernment), municipal government, service clubs and organizations, and the business sector.

These working groups were "tasked" with providing advice to the commissioner on the redesign of services for children and families and with proposing initial regional service plans, following consultation with the wider community. All this was to be accomplished by May 1994.

For community involvement to be effective in significant public policy change, there needs to be agreement on the broad goals of the process. The process needs to include mechanisms for bringing the community "voice" to government.

Community processes often have their own power struggles within them as members engage in a process of bureaucratization. In this way, the bureaucracy and the community can be seen to share parallel courses; they are both dealing with traditional behaviors related to power and influence.

A key player in the process in Alberta provided insight into why they took this approach. By genuinely involving the community in wrestling with the difficult questions associated with child welfare, the community will begin to take ownership and will be willing to put time and energy into solving the problems.

Community involvement is based on the belief that fundamental change happens at the bottom and is not necessarily facilitated by changes at the top.

The process must involve significant community leaders; and clients, especially Aboriginal people, need to be well represented. For the process to work, it must build the community's connection to its children. Specialized services provided by government have contributed to children being disconnected from their communities, sometimes physically, but more often from the standpoint of community responsibility and accountability for its children.

A significant part of the process of community involvement was the deconstruction of the myths surrounding the profession of child protection so that it was understandable to the common citizen. Other important components in the process are the meaningful involvement of community representatives on all major decision-making bodies and community access to all information that is relevant. At times this means taking some risks. An example of this came when the legislation was being drafted to create the regional children's authorities in Alberta. Staff of the Commission insisted that community representatives be consulted because the staff knew the community needed to have the same level of

access to all relevant information if they were to maintain the trust of their community partners.

Champions of community involvement in the bureaucracy sometimes put their careers on the line to ensure the integrity of the process.

When the commissioner and I visited, in June of 1996, a new Alberta Commissioner had been appointed and the activity of the Commission of Services for Children and the community groups they had set up had taken an interesting path. Although the Commission's offices were located in the Ministry of Family and Social Services, its work was quite separate from that of the ministry. The Commission had applied most of its resources to enabling and empowering the regional groups to take on the responsibility for managing child welfare.

The body charged with developing and implementing a major change agenda should be structurally separate from the bureaucracy and frontline workers, especially while it is in the planning stage. This allows for the community to learn and gain strength yet remain protected from the pressures of elected officials or bureaucrats.

Once strong enough, the community people have to "infiltrate the system" so that they understand and can affect it. The change agent is often the "lightening rod" of community criticism during this time.

At a meeting with the Alberta assistant deputy ministers representing Family and Social Services, Health, Justice, and Education, it became abundantly clear that the bureaucracy was not prepared for the ground swell of community involvement and interest that was being fostered by the Commission's process. We could not help but wonder if the two worlds were not on a "collision course" that would result in the community becoming frustrated with a status quo bureaucracy.

When I posed this question to a senior official involved in the community process, I was told that the community representatives were appointed by ministerial order so saw themselves as working in partnership with the elected officials, not the bureaucrats. The ownership for the change occurred in the community not in the bureaucracy. As they gained in power and influence, the community began to negotiate directly with the elected officials on issues of policy and funding.

Another former Alberta government official expressed skepticism about the community process, believing that the selection of community representatives was focused on persons with high public profile rather

than those with any knowledge of child welfare. Those involved need to demonstrate an understanding of the complex needs of child welfare clients and not be content with simplistic solutions.

There was fair consensus among the key informants that the process of change needs to be "pushed down" to the level of community. Rhetoric about community taking responsibility for child welfare will not work. For real change to occur, government needs to push the responsibility for change down to the community.

Community ownership of child welfare is not just about caring for each other, it is ownership of the resources and services and the accountability for them.

One example in British Columbia, where the involvement of parents, business, and labor had a profound effect on government direction is in the area of education in the early 1990s. The public's demand for involvement and voice in decision-making caught the attention of government.

In British Columbia the Transition Commission for Child and Youth Services had envisioned a significant public consultation process as a key part of the work of developing the options for service delivery models. There

were already established local and regional groups with membership that included government and nongovernment service providers. To these already established structures, the Commission intended to add consumers and Aboriginal representatives.

Much of the Commission's work relied on a close working relationship with the Ministry of Social Services as it was key to providing the Commission with information and access to the service community. The ministry, however, was reeling from the *Report of the Gove Inquiry into Child Protection in British Columbia* (1995). The report had named names and the ministry was dealing with possible disciplinary action and nervous staff. This internal turmoil gave rise to a perceived resistance to the work of the Commission.

Other forces were also affecting the Ministry of Social Services at that time. Judge Gove, in his review of ministry files, had discovered an additional 19 deaths of children who had been in the ministry's care; and the ministry, on closer inspection, found another 11 dating back to the death of Matthew. The ministry decided to make public the Audit and Review Division's review of these deaths.

During the late summer of 1996, the Legislature was sitting and questions were posed regarding these deaths. The Opposition Party was pummeling the

minister of Social Services daily in question period. They wanted to know why the minister had not asked the Child and Family Review Board to review the deaths of these children instead of relying on the internal Audit and Review Division in the ministry. The Opposition was suggesting that the internal process could not be relied upon for a fair and open review given the circumstances of Matthew's death and Judge Gove's (1995) report.

When the Board was established it was assumed that it would investigate the deaths of children in care in addition to reviewing alleged rights breaches and any other matters referred by the minister. The minister had changed since its establishment and the mandate of the Board had been limited to review of rights breaches.

Judge Gove's (1995) report included recommendations about the Board. He suggested that it be renamed Child Welfare Review Board and broaden its scope to include the review of complaints about other child and youth services. Gove also recommended the establishment of a Children's Commission that would review the deaths of all children, along with reviewing and monitoring other aspects of service delivery to children and youth.

It would have been sensible for the ministry to explain its reluctance to have the Board review these deaths in deference to the recommendations of

the Gove (1995) report. However, that is not the answer the minister gave in the House one August day in 1996. The answer he gave changed the course of the Transition Commission for Child and Youth Services and most government services to children and youth for the foreseeable future.

When the minister was confronted with a direct question about why he had not referred these deaths to the Board for review, his reply was that the Board was not independent enough. When the media asked the chair of the Board about this statement, he came back with a very firm and strident response that the minister was wrong, that his statements were an insult to the Board members who had sworn an oath of independence. He compared the Board to other organizations in government such as the Worker's Compensation Board or the Human Rights Council, all with similar structure, enabling legislation and independence.

The minister was eventually forced to apologize to the chair, who was right about the independence issue, and to the Board members in a ministerial statement to the members of the Legislative Assembly.

After this crisis, those deaths were referred to the Board for review. However, the criticism of government in the Legislature and in the media escalated, and serious doubts were expressed about whether government was going to respond in any real way to the Gove (1995) report.

Significant public policy change is usually driven by reports in the media that cast government in a bad light. These reports give rise to public indignation and elected officials often respond by making changes to policy and legislation.

Public opinion that government was stalling and had lost its commitment to protecting children was running very high. The press was full of stories of tragic lives and deaths of children in care, or those who were "known" to the Ministry of Social Services.

The relationship between the media and the elected officials is very powerful in terms of public policy change. Elected officials gauge public opinion by what they see in the media. Media has a powerful effect on the reputation of individual elected officials and on the future of governments.

Sometimes the Opposition and the media have the power to significantly influence public policy if they are successful in embarrassing a minister. Government will sometimes respond dramatically and the effect of that response is often unpredictable.

When elected officials are shamed by the media, they will blame the bureaucrats. In this case, bureaucrats are not likely to be consulted on answers to the problem.

The Inevitable

The premier directed the commissioner to provide a report in September on how to proceed more quickly. It was clear that he was not looking for advice on how to implement developmental sites. Rather he was looking for a more permanent solution the problem of how to provide services to children and youth.

In the introduction of her report (Morton, 1996), the commissioner confirmed the premier's request by writing, "Mr. Premier, you have requested I report to you on how to expedite this workplan, and have also set out to me your expectations for major system reform as soon as possible" (p. 3).

Over a period of several weeks, a number of us in the office undertook to draft the report. We decided early that we had not seen anything either in our research or our experience with the ministries over the 8 months of the Commission's existence, that suggested we should recommend an alternate approach to the one envisioned by Judge Gove. We discussed the pros and cons concerning whether the Coroner or a newly formed Children's

Commission should review deaths and whether the functions of the Child and Family Review should be included in the mandate of the Children's Commission.

In the end, the advice we gave government was essentially to implement the recommendations of the Gove inquiry, except for a few where we made some adjustments or suggested not going ahead with at the time. For example, the full regional and community governance model seemed to be out of the question given the problems being experienced while implementing the regional health board model in the province (see Appendix E for the recommendations from this report).

The commissioner stressed the need for a new ministry to make prevention and early intervention an integral part of services and programs for all ages. As an early childhood educator, it was particularly gratifying to see a section of this landmark report dedicated to an "Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy" (see Appendix 7, Morton, 1996). (To my mind, this is the way of the future as we can not afford from a social or economic perspective to carry on focusing most of our resources on children and families who are in crisis.)

By the time the report (Morton, 1996) was presented to the premier, I was convinced that we had done the right thing. What we recommended was not

simply the ruminations of a few people, it had grown out of 10 years of consultation with community members, consumers, and professionals.

> *One senior official reminded me of this by saying that the Gove report recommendations were the result of a number of significant consultations involving a wide range of community representatives and stakeholder groups.*

We also advised the premier to end the mandate of the Transition Commission for Child and Youth Services and to give the new Ministry for Children and Families the responsibility for implementing the change in collaboration with the other ministries.

On to the Next Challenge

On September 17, 1996, the commissioner presented her report to the premier. On September 23, 1996, Premier Clark announced the creation of a new Ministry for Children and Families and a Children's Commission. The ministry would gather together the services to children and families from the ministries of Social Services, Health, Attorney General, Education, and Women's Equality and work towards integrating these services in local and regional service centers staffed by multidisciplinary teams. The report recommended that the new ministry take a prevention and early

intervention approach to service delivery and ensure the involvement of children and their families in decision-making. The ministry was to develop a sophisticated quality assurance model for all its services including performance management and audit and review functions.

A single ministry provides the framework so that there is a single line of authority, funding, vision, and mission. This is what bureaucrats understand and are comfortable with. Service integration will not occur unless the organization is structured to do this.

The organizational structure helps deal with issues that are a natural part of any change process. It helps to define the new roles and rules to which the bureaucrats must adjust.

It was to become an organization that could learn from its mistakes and adapt to new and changing demands. The new ministry was expected to develop a fair and responsive complaints review process so that clients could be assured that they would have fair hearings, if they had complaints about the services they receive.

In 1996, Premier Clark reassigned the Transition Commissioner to be the first Children's Commissioner, with a mandate to review the deaths of all children in British Columbia and to investigate those warranting it. In

addition, the new Commission would also (a) investigate the critical injuries of children, (b) set standards for and monitor internal complaints processes in ministries related to services for children, (c) review complaints about breaches of rights (previously a Child and Family Review Board function) and about service, and (d) review the care planning for children in continuing custody of the Director of Child Protection.

As of September 23, 1996, I began work in the Children's Commission and I am still there today. I have also had the opportunity to observe, from the outside, the struggles the Ministry for Children and Families has had in establishing itself. And I hope others closer to this process have documented the struggle of creating the new ministry.

REFLECTIONS, IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS, INVITATIONS

Reflections

I use the metaphor of a road because it seems to me that there has been consensus for some time about the destination: integration of services to children and youth. The road on which we have traveled to get there has not been smooth and we have taken a number of detours and gotten lost in a few dead ends. This has been a collective experience and an individual one.

Upon completion of this study, it was important for me to reflect on the totality of my experience over the past 25 years, in order to understand how I, as a practitioner, have changed and grown. I believe that reflection will resonate with others who have had a similar journey or who are somewhere on their own roads to integration. This study is entitled "Road to Integration" and it is an account of both British Columbia's journey to the establishment of an integrated ministry for services to children and families and an account of my personal integration.

As an early childhood educator and child and youth care practitioner, I understood intimately the world of children and families in need of support and services. I held strong beliefs and values about the primacy of society's obligation to the health and well-being of its children. I also held strong beliefs about the ineffectiveness of government to respond to this obligation.

However, I also believed that there was hope government bureaucracy could do a better job of serving children and their families and that I could influence this in a positive way.

I had tried on a number of different occasions to influence government to be more responsive to the needs of children. These efforts included letter-writing campaigns and presentations to task forces. At the time, I did not understand or appreciate the world of public policy and program development and delivery. As I strove to understand this world, both in my academic and practical experience, I encountered challenges to my beliefs and values. Others with whom I studied and worked offered perspectives on the role of government and its ability to be proactive in the lives of children. For example, some believed government's role with children and families should be strictly residual; only when all else failed would government step in with services. Services to children should be based on a deficit model so that only those with severe problems would get services. Others believed that the very nature of bureaucracy, its rigid hierarchical structure and highly systematized processes, was antithetical to being proactive in ensuring the health and well-being of children. Some of my direct experience in government bureaucracy supports the latter belief and it has been the one issue that I have struggled with the most. If it were true that there is little hope that government bureaucracy can be a leader in ensuring the health and well-being of children, I would have to question my continuing to work in this very bureaucracy.

There are several important examples from the key informant interviews that have assisted me to reflect on and understand my own experience. One of these relates to the notion that field practitioners in child and youth care are not experienced at influencing public policy. According to the key informants, some of this is due to the fact that practitioners often come from a position of believing they represent the morally correct agenda. Therefore, it is often difficult to see other perspectives that take into account the broader public policy context.

Another example, related to the struggle to integrate child and youth services across ministries, illuminated my frustration by the lack of progress towards service integration in the early 1990s. Key informants identified that what was expected and what was likely in a bureaucratic environment were not compatible: hence the notion of "unnatural bureaucratic event."

An additional example from my interviews relates to the influence senior bureaucrats can have on elected officials. Senior bureaucrats can develop the ability to convince the elected officials to undertake certain public policy change by skillfully linking it to the overall political agenda. I came to see this skill as powerful in the shaping of public policy in the child and youth service sector.

A key learning through my own journey to integration is that it is possible for myself as a bureaucrat to maintain the beliefs and values from my experience as a practitioner in the field, while working in a bureaucratic system. Several things have made this possible for me. One is the care and maintenance of a group of close friends from my days as a frontline practitioner, who keep me grounded in that experience. The other is seeking out and becoming associated with leaders in the bureaucracy who have similar values and who are able to operate skillfully in the system. I am privileged to work with one such leader, who is a daily inspiration to me. My experience working with this individual helps to maintain my belief that there is hope that government, in partnership with communities, can take a leadership role. This hope is based in the belief that these domains are connected and need to work together to meet our collective obligation to children.

Implications

Dynamic Relationships and Interdependence

The personal account and the perspectives of others indicate that there were four significant forces at play on the road to integration. These included elected officials, bureaucrats, the public, and the media. The study seems to suggest that the model that was operating during the 1990s was one where the

media took initial leadership in presenting the issue of children's deaths to the public and, along with the Opposition Party, put pressure on the elected officials to respond. Because of the depth and longevity of the media's coverage and the public outcry, elected officials decided to announce a significant public policy change: the integration of children's services into one ministry. The bureaucrats then had the job of creating the new organization.

Another way of thinking about this is that each of these forces operates in a dynamic relationship to the other three, and each is key in determining whether significant public policy is changed and the success of its implementation. Kooiman's (1993) article suggests that effective governance must take into account the qualities of dynamics, complexity, and diversity: "A dynamic approach to governance emphasizes the process and change aspects of interactions. It pays systematic attention to the forces which bring about movements and it tries to influence these patterns of change and their consequences" (p. 41). There are a number of examples in my study where an actor or a group of actors attempted to influence, positively or negatively, the change process. A good example came from one of the key informants, who clearly described a plan to use the media to advance particular policy changes.

Kooiman (1993) goes on to say that the key to effective "social-political governance" is the recognition of the interdependence of the domains:

> By "interdependence" we mean that no single actor has the possibilities of "doing the job" (solving the problem or grasping the opportunity) unilaterally. No actor is so dominant as to be able to enforce a certain line of behaviour, or to place the costs of social problem-solving on others and take the revenues for himself. And all actors can be severely hindered in reaching their own objectives by other actors. "Interdependence" in itself, however, is not enough. The realization of the opportunities within interdependence is the central assignment of social-political governance. (p. 251)

In addition to these notions of a dynamic relationship and interdependence of the political, bureaucratic, media, and community influences, there were also some key factors that arose as themes in my study. These factors influenced the response to the three reports of interest in terms of public policy change and the extent to which these responses were effective. The factors *are political will; policy analysis and planning; executive leadership;* and *joint ownership*. Other themes that emerged through the study were the availability of fiscal resources and the relative influence of reports depending upon the influence of the writers.

Political Will

The study demonstrates that significant public policy change is largely dependent on political will. It suggests that, in the current climate, the media has a great deal of influence on political will. Key informants indicated that this is a relatively new phenomenon.

For some successful change initiatives, political will takes the form of one high profile Cabinet minister championing a cause, such as the changes in educational policy in British Columbia in the early 1990s when the premier advocated for some major changes to the education system. In other instances, a group of Cabinet ministers may be committed to an agenda and are key in seeing it through, for example, the "greenways" initiative in Victoria to establish and enhance access to trail and bikepath systems to encourage alternative modes of transportation to the automobile. Here several of the local members of the Legislative Assembly, who also happened to be Cabinet ministers, pursued the saving of significant public land for parks and the development of a system of bicycle paths. These projects were successful in great part because of the active participation and ongoing commitment of high-profile elected officials.

Osbourne and Gaebler's (1992) *Reinventing Government* suggests the notion that *steering* is the most effective role of government: "Governments that focus on steering actively shape their communities, states, and nations. They make *more* policy decisions. They put *more* social and economic institutions into motion" (p. 32). Elected officials who take up this role of *steerers* of a particular agenda are often able to utilize significant powers of persuasion to influence public opinion and the activity of bureaucrats. Without this steering from the elected officials, bureaucrats hesitate to make changes that may not be necessary or that may not be viewed favorably.

One of the key informants for the study, who is a longtime public servant with experience in Ontario, Alberta, and British Columbia, recalled a time when being a public servant meant having an opportunity to work for society, when there was time to create public policy based on research, experience, and evaluation. In his opinion this is not the case now. Now things are speeded up and driven by the crisis of the day. Public service is more driven by how the elected officials will react to an issue and the need to create answers quickly and always be conscious of the fiscal environment. In the past there appeared to be more opportunity to create policy because it was good governance and it made sense from a fiscal perspective as well.

A former British Columbia public official remembered the 1970s and 1980s when governments established *policy shops* that had the time and resources to develop policy options. These shops were populated by professionals who took the lead and were respected by the bureaucrats and elected officials.

Hollander and Prince (1993) in their article examining the origins and functions of policy and planning divisions in government agree that there was a growth of policy analysis, planning, and evaluation departments in the 1970s. Then Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau's new technocratic and rational approach to government led to the establishment of Cabinet committees and the role of the Treasury Board became important in prioritizing government's spending. There was a period of growth in services in the

health and social service sectors. "New policy units were required at both the federal and provincial levels in order to assist in the planning, development and analysis of these new, or expanded, services" (p. 195).

These units have, however, been on the decline since the early 1980s. Prince and Chenier (1980) suggest this decline is due to a number of factors including

> the shortage of qualified staff, staff line differences, the comparatively weak power base of planning units, the dispersal of power and resources within complex organizations and the withdrawal of management support, environmental stability, the subjectivity of planning and an abdication of proactive roles by policy analysts in order to gain the support from line officials. (p. 538)

However, Mayntz (1993) asserts, "The growing interest in the topic of governing reflects the increased claim of political guidance, which first manifested itself in the 1960s in the growing orientation of political decision-makers towards planning and the use of planning techniques." He goes on to describe governing as a process of steering "social and economic processes according to a plan" (p. 12).

Although, in theory, there appears to be recognition in the British Columbia government of the need for adequate planning, evidenced by the renewed interest in ministries undertaking strategic planning activities, this does not seem to be an active process that has the capacity to deal with the issues of the day.

Executive Leadership

Two other key factors that evolved from the study are executive leadership and joint ownership. Although both of these relate more to the implementation of large-scale organizational change (which is outside the scope of this study), my own experience and those of the key informants are worth including in my study.

My education in public policy and organizational behavior led me to expect that those in management positions in government would be highly skilled change agents. Although I was privileged to work with some who had exceptional skills in this area, I was surprised to find this was not the rule. Critical characteristics, such as vision and the ability to communicate that vision and then lead others to realize it, were rare.

Leading by vision or mission is more than developing the mission statements, goals, and objectives of the organization. It is the ability "to imprint the mission of an organization on its members [and] build a culture around it. They articulate their values and model the behavior they want" (Osbourne & Gaebler, 1992, p. 132).

Nadler and Tushman (1989), upon reflection on the literature of large-scale organizational change, recognize the key role senior administrative leadership plays in successful change enterprises. They sum it up by saying, "It appears that significant and profound organizational change cannot happen without a certain type of executive leadership. The leader is a critical player in the drama of organizational change" (p. 100). They describe the characteristics of the "magic" leader who is able to influence by being liked and having charisma and the "instrumental" leader who leads by knowledge and technology. They also recognize that leadership roles are undertaken in various levels of the organizations and that this leadership can be supportive of the change agenda or resistant to it.

This notion is consistent with Lewin's (1951) early work on change. His *field theory* suggests that change in a work group, department, or organization is controlled by a field of countervailing forces. As long as these forces are in balance, stability is maintained. Change occurs when alterations in a force or set of forces begin to generate stress in the balanced system.

Bureaucrats struggle to maintain this balance so they can get on with the critical work of their organization: providing services and making the organization work effectively. This usually means that the first reaction to a suggested change is a defensive or negative one. In what is being called *learning organizations*, the leaders have "mastered the art of adapting quickly

on the one hand and preserving their direction and identity on the other" (Swieringa & Wierdsma, 1992, p. 71). This is a critical skill for those who are engaged in a large-scale organizational change process.

During the 8 months of the Transition Commission's mandate, there were those who understood and supported the change agenda proposed by the Gove (1995) report and those who actively opposed it. These two countervailing forces worked to balance each other and, for the most part, status quo was maintained.

Joint Ownership

Another key consideration coming out of the study is ownership for the change. It was clear from my experience that it was not possible to undertake fundamental change to an organization without considering ownership. In British Columbia, two different approaches to achieve integration were attempted during the 1990s. Both approaches involved the establishment of organizations outside of the direct delivery of services, with mandates to coordinate and integrate services. The first was the Child and Youth Secretariat and, even in its reinvigorated state, it was not successful in influencing the system to change. The second attempt was the Transition Commission and, this time, even with the power of the premier's office, it was not successful in being an agent of change. The results of the study

indicate that this was at least partially due to where the ownership for the change was perceived to lie. As long as it appeared as though the Transition Commission "owned" the process, there appeared to be less buy in by the ministries responsible for the services. The decision to create a Ministry for Children and Families was, in part, a recognition that the ownership of the change needed to be vested in the system itself.

Alberta took a different approach in creating a separate change agent body in the Commissioner of Services for Children that, instead of working with the government services system to establish change, had as its goal the transfer of ownership for children's services from the government to the community. Commission staff then spent 3 years organizing and empowering regional steering committees to take over the service delivery for their areas. The ministries responsible for delivering the services were not involved in this process until the community was ready to assume responsibility.

It seems as though there needs to be joint ownership of the change agenda as this kind of major change requires the ongoing commitment of government, the public, and the service providers.

Limitations

Although the study is an important examination of the journey taken by one person on the road to integration of services in British Columbia, it is limited in a number of ways.

First, it is a single account of experiences over a period of time. It does not compare other accounts during a similar period to see where the similarities and differences might lie. This has been partially addressed in the study by including the perspectives of others and by examining the literature.

The scope of the study was intentionally limited to focus on significant events of the 1990s with respect to examining the change process. The study examines the policy process of the early and mid-1990s in order to understand events leading up to the establishment of the Ministry of Children and Families. The implementation phase of the "road to integration" would be a logical follow-up study.

Invitations

This study suggests that elected officials, the public, and bureaucrats need to recognize that they are in a dynamic relationship that has a powerful effect on how public policy is developed and implemented. Key to this dynamic

relationship is the media. Media can be used to assist in bringing policy issues to the public or it can create a sense of crisis that sometimes results in hurried or less than well-planned decisions. A more thorough examination of the impact of the recent role of the media on government decisions would be a good follow-up to this study.

Given that integration of services to children and youth is an international phenomenon, it will be important for others to compare the experience in British Columbia with that of other jurisdictions, such as Alberta. A comparison of these two approaches would significantly add to the understanding of how to approach large-scale organizational change in the public service.

The results of this study also suggest to me that there is significant value in practitioners reflecting on their work as a way of assisting them to improve their practice and to inform others. The experience has been valuable for me in my work and I believe that others would benefit as well.

Another area that deserves further study is the implementation of the integrated Ministry for Children and Families. Several topics arose in this study that would benefit from more in-depth examination and analysis. One is the influence of leadership on change. There is a fair body of research that

deals with this topic and it would be useful to examine the experience of implementing integration of services in light of that literature.

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GLOSSARY

Child and Youth Committees. During the early 1990s regional and local Child and Youth Committees were established by the Child and Youth Secretariat to assist in the coordination and integration of services to children and youth. The regional committees were made up of managers from Social Services, Health, Education, and Attorney General. These committees provided regional coordination and resource allocation. Local Child and Youth Committees were made up of representatives from the same ministries, usually those at the frontline management level. These committees were charged with local case management for children, youth, and their families, where their needs crossed ministerial service boundaries.

child and youth services. These are virtually all government services to children under the age of 19, other than mainstream education services.

child protection. These are the actions, as described in the British Columbia Child, Family and Community Service Act (1996), that constitute the practice of protecting children from abuse and neglect.

child welfare. *Child welfare* is often used synonymously with *child protection*. In this study, the term is used in the way that Judge Gove (1995) described in his inquiry report: the broad spectrum of government services to children and youth.

communities of interest. These are individuals and organizations in the province who depend on the child and youth service sector for employment income, who, therefore, have a vested interest in decisions concerning these services or individuals who have a significant interest

based on personal involvement with children and youth who receive or are in need of services.

continuing custody. A court in British Columbia may order a child to be placed in the continuing custody of the Director of Child Protection, which means the director becomes the sole guardian of the person of the child and the order stays in effect until the child reaches 19 years of age, is adopted, or marries; then the court cancels the order.

contracted services. Many government services to children and youth are provided by nongovernmental agencies that receive funds on an annual basis in the form of a contract with government. As an example, in 1997 approximately $800M of the Ministry for Children and Families' budget for child and youth services went to contracted agencies.

rights of children in care. Section 70 of the British Columbia Child, Family and Community Service Act (1996) enumerated the rights of children in the care of the state.

Director of Child Protection. This is an appointed official in British Columbia who has been vested by the minister with powers and duties under the British Columbia Child, Family and Community Service Act (1996). Section 93 outlines these powers and duties.

service integration. This refers to the bringing together of the planning, policy-making, funding, and delivery of government services to children and youth to ensure that services are provided in a way that recognizes the holistic nature of client needs.

APPENDIX A

Chronology of the Process of the Integration

DATE	MAJOR EVENT
November 1990	Ombudsman releases Report No. 22, *Public Services to Children, Youth and Their Families: The Need for Integration*
November 1990	Government establishes the Child and Youth Secretariat (CYS)
July 1992	Matthew Vaudreuil dies
May 1994	The Honourable Judge Thomas J. Gove is appointed Commissioner of Inquiry into the death of Matthew and the child protection services of the Ministry of Social Services
June 1994	Evaluation of the CYS completed
January 1995	"Reinvigorated" CYS established
November 1995	Judge Gove releases the report of the his inquiry into child protection
January 1996	Premier establishes the Transition Commission for Child and Youth Services and appoints Cynthia Morton as the Commissioner with a 3-year mandate
September 17, 1996	Transition Commissioner submits her final report to the premier
September 23, 1996	Premier announces the establishment of the Ministry for Children and Families and the Children's Commission

APPENDIX B

Questions to Orient Interview Discussions

1. What has been your experience with public policy development in the area of services to children and youth?

2. Can you give examples from your own experience when there was significant public policy change?

3. Can you give examples from your own experience when there was no change to public policy despite public, media, and bureaucratic demand?

4 What do you think contributes to decisions to make significant change in public policy?

APPENDIX C

Four of the Recommendations from the Ombudsman Report

Recommendation #1

That a single authority within government be established with a formal mandate, executive powers and an adequate resource base to ensure uniform, integrated and client-centred provincial approaches to policy setting, planning and administration of publicly funded services to children, youths and their families.

Recommendation #2

That government review current approaches to the collection and analysis of non-identifying child-centred information and data and establish more compatible and comprehensive cross-ministry information systems that are accessible and useful to communities, policy makers, funders, researchers and service providers. Immediate activities to be explored should include:

a) Establishing, perhaps as apart of a broadened mandate of IMCCs [Interministry Children's Committees], improved cross-ministry resource and client based tracking systems that are sensitive to community needs and confidentiality requirements;

b) Identifying the nature and extent of cross-ministry case overlap and analyzing the implications for policy and program planning and integrated service delivery.

Recommendation #3

The government, in consultation with relevant consumer groups, service providers, and professional schools and organizations, review current approaches intended to promote and support integrated multi-disciplinary service delivery in the child, youth and family service field with objectives of:

a) ensuring easy access to needed services for children and youths with special needs;

b) minimizing the need for unnecessary multiple assessments when more than one service may be required by a child or youth with special needs:

c) establishing multi-disciplinary, cross-ministry approaches to case management that reinforce the need for consumer participation and consensual approaches to service planning and decision making;

d) ensuring the appropriate regulation, monitoring and enforcement of practice standards for counsellors and therapists in private practice;

e) encouraging multi-disciplinary approaches to professional education, research and staff development with particular attention paid to the training needs of frontline service providers; and

f) effectively utilizing child psychiatrists and psychologists so that funding adequacy and flexibility enables their increased use as diagnosticians, consultants, researchers and trainers

Recommendation #4

That the proposed Child and Youth Secretariat undertake a comprehensive review of the cross-ministry service delivery system to children and youths with special needs and their families, and, in consultation with communities, consumers and service providers, formulate recommendations to government within two years intended to ensure:

a) integrated approaches to information-based planning, policy and program development and service delivery;

b) the existence of a culturally appropriate and regionally sensitive continuum of multi-disciplinary services that are easily accessible to special needs children, youths and their families;

c) a special focus on the need to develop responsive, locally accessible preventive services that support families and ensure the safety, health and well being of children and youths;

d) the existence of formal and effective links with communities in planning, organizing, delivering, monitoring and evaluating publicly funded services.

Adapted from *Public Services to Children, Youth and Their Families: The Need for Integration* (Report No. 22), by Office of the Ombudsman of British Columbia, 1990, p. 12.

APPENDIX D

Summary of the Recommendations from the Gove Inquiry into Child Protection in British Columbia

BROAD CATEGORY	SUBCATEGORY	SPECIFIC AREA
Delivery of child protection services	How the ministry [Ministry of Social Services] protects children	Philosophy and models (Nos. 1 & 2) The duty to report (Nos. 3-5) Intake (Nos. 6-8) The investigation (Nos. 9-14) Risk assessment (No. 15) Case planning (Nos. 16-18) File transfer (No. 19) Coordination (Nos. 20 & 21) Apprehension (No. 22) Sources of failure (Nos. 23-28)

BROAD CATEGORY	SUBCATEGORY	SPECIFIC AREA
Delivery of child protection services	Quality assurance	Practice audits (Nos. 29-32) Clinical supervision (No. 33) Annual performance assessments (No. 34) Provincial licensure of child welfare resources (No. 35) Provincial child advocate (No. 36) Reviewing of continuing care orders (Nos. 37 & 38) Complaints (Nos. 39-43) Professional regulation of social workers (Nos. 44-47) Professional regulation of other child welfare service providers (No. 48)
	Death and injury reviews	Children's Commissioner (Nos. 49 & 50) Review of child deaths and serious injuries (Nos. 52-54)

BROAD CATEGORY	SUBCATEGORY	SPECIFIC AREAS
Delivery of child protection services	Qualifications	Child protection social workers (Nos. 55-57) Child welfare contract service providers (No. 58)
	Training	Ministry social workers (No. 59) Contract child welfare workers (No. 60) Medical and other health care professions (No. 61) Police (Nos. 62 & 63) Continuing professional development (Nos. 64-67)

BROAD CATEGORY	SUBCATEGORY	SPECIFIC AREAS
	Reviewing the Acts	Paramountcy of child safety and well-being (Nos. 68-70) Fairness to children and families (Nos. 71-76) Aboriginal children (Nos. 77 & 78) Improving legislative powers to protect children (Nos. 79-89) Administrative accountability (Nos. 90 & 91) Child, Youth and Family Advocacy Act (Nos. 92-94)

BROAD CATEGORY	SUBCATEGORY	SPECIFIC AREAS
Designing a new child welfare system	Designing a new child welfare system	The need for a new system (Nos. 95 & 96) Community-based children's centers (Nos. 97- 101) Responsibility for managing the delivery of child welfare services (Nos. 102 & 103) Regional authorities (Nos. 104 & 105) Provincial responsibilities (Nos. 106-108) Guardianship (Nos. 109-111)
	Making the transition	Making the transition (Nos. 112-118)

Adapted from "Executive Summary," *Report of the Gove Inquiry into Child Protection in British Columbia,* by T. Gove, 1995, pp. 55-78.

APPENDIX E

Nine Major Recommendations from the Morton Report

1. Do not establish regional and community based governance and employment models at this time, as recommended in the Gove Report.

To move further ahead in this change agenda, I recommend several key actions be taken immediately:

2. Implement a Children's Commissioner to review all children's deaths, investigate all of those found to be suspicious or unusual, and perform other key quality assurance functions across the child, youth and family serving system.

3. Dismantle the Ministry of Social Services by separating its child, youth and family serving functions from its income assistance responsibilities.

4. Establish a new single Ministry of Children, Youth and Families.

5. Instruct the new ministry to put into place a fully operational, comprehensive and high quality set of programs for children, youth and families, including the integration of those programs now housed in ministries of Education, Health, Women's Equality and the Attorney General.

6. Direct the new ministry to implement a new province-wide early intervention and prevention strategy.

7. Direct the new ministry to create a separate, highly trained child protection workforce, dedicated to focus on high risk children, reporting to a new Director of Child Protection.

8. Direct the new ministry to immediately implement a system to include communities in decision making which affects them.

9. Terminate the work of the OTC [Office of the Transition Commission] and direct the new ministry to take full responsibility for implementing the change agenda required to respond to the Gove Report.

Adapted from *British Columbia's Child, Youth and Family Serving System: Recommendations for Change; Report to Premier Glen Clark,* by C. Morton, 1996, p. 8.

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