
FACT SHEET REGARDING CONTRACT QUESTIONS

May 11th, 2020

1. BC Family Hearing Resource Society (BCFHRS) is the main Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) contractor providing services for deaf and hard of hearing children from birth to school aged entry. Under the contract deliverables BCFHRS is responsible for providing equitable services across the entire province of British Columbia.
2. We work with children and families who choose spoken language, American Sign Language, Sign Supported Speech and/or a variety of communication approaches to optimize communication outcomes for children. Of the total clientele served by BCFHRS, 40% of children also have a range of additional needs and for 10% of families second language interpreters are used for intervention sessions.
3. Since family involvement is crucial to optimize the child's communication and language development, we involve families in the decision-making process of all intervention services provided to their child/children right from birth. Family-centred care also ensures that these services children receive are based on the informed choices that families make.
4. Currently BCFHRS serve a total of 408 families; 140 families in outreach areas, including rural and remote communities of BC, 75 in the Vancouver Coastal region and 193 in the Fraser Valley.
5. The majority (90%) of these children and families served by BCFHRS identify as hard of hearing. Most families of these children do not choose to use American Sign Language (ASL) with their children and instead use some signs to facilitate their spoken language. All families are informed about American Sign Language early in the intervention process and it is always an option for families to choose and if they desire to learn it as a second language, they can continue to learn it at BCFHRS.
6. There are smaller number of families (10%) of deaf or hard of hearing children who choose American Sign Language (ASL) as their primary language for their children or would like their children to be bilingual (spoken language and ASL). This could be either the parent's choice as they identify as Deaf, want their children to be part of the Deaf community or children have limited physiological access to sound/hearing. For these families ASL is the primary mode of communication.

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7. The number of deaf and hard of hearing children requiring crucial early intervention services has increased over the past 5 years. In 2015, when BCFHRS was successful on the Request For Proposal (RFP) bid issued by MCFD, there were a total of 388 children served across three specialized early intervention agencies. As of April 2020, we serve 556 children across all three specialized agencies. Despite these steady increases in numbers, MCFD government funding has remained the same.
8. The contract that BCFHRS has held with MCFD for the past five years 2015 - until March 31st, 2020 and has been extended until 2021, has its focus on early intervention services for each child, ensuring that child's communication ability is optimized. This intervention may include individual intervention services, individual sign language services and some group intervention services. While the contract included group intervention services it was never intended to run full time specialized preschools/daycares. The contract mandates a range of early intervention services to be delivered equitably across the province.
9. Under previous contracts, the subcontractors - Deaf Children's Society of BC (DCS) and Children's Hearing and Speech Centre of BC (CHSCBC) chose to use some of contract funds to run such specialized preschools/daycares for the children enrolled in their programs. This created serious distortion in the funding available for the large majority of children wherein a larger portion of their funds were directed towards local clients participating in those specialized preschools, and smaller portions were available to support children living elsewhere in the province. For example, groups cannot be run in a remote community such as Bella Bella wherein there is one deaf/hard of hearing child/family. This child and family deserves the same level of access of services that a deaf/hard of hearing child deserves in Vancouver.
10. In the MCFD fiscal Year April 1st, 2019 - March 31st, 2020 there were 556 children served across 3 agencies. The total number of children served by agency, the amount of money received by each agency, and the percentage of funds each agency received for the total number of children served was disproportionate. It was evident from these numbers that showed that funding has not been used in an equitable manner.
 - DCS provided services to 47 children, i.e., 8% of the total children served and received funding of \$339,468 that is 21% of the total funds available for early intervention services.
 - CHSCBC provided services to 101 children, i.e., 18% of the total children served and received funding of \$337,346 that is 21% of the total funds available for early intervention services.
 - BCFHRS provides services to 408 children, i.e., 73% of the total children served and received funding of \$929,059 that is 57.85% of the total funds available for early intervention services.

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In summary, CHSCBC received approximately 1.5 times the funds per child and DCS received more than 3 times the funds per child than the BCFHRS.

11. To achieve equitable funding across the entire population of children served and taking into consideration the variations in children's communication needs, family's need for second language interpreters, and outreach travel costs across the three agencies involved, the funds are now distributed on a per child basis. This number is calculated by dividing the funds available for early intervention services by the total number of children served by the three agencies. The per child amount is then multiplied by the number of children each agency serves. Agencies are then free to use the funds to deliver the services according to their priorities and under the deliverables required under the contract.

If you have any questions or require further information, please contact:

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