

# Early intervention in british columbia province

[Environment](#)



In his early works Taylor (2002), states that structural intervention is a mode of implementing changes beyond the individual in order to change health behaviors and health outcomes. Whenever structural intervention is thought of, it targets the environmental level factors which shape the environment in which people live and their behaviors in that environment. In this regard, structural intervention for children refers to the provision of services to children that are showing or have indications of an identifiable problem or are significantly at-risk of developing a problem that may prove difficult to future life.

Interventions that are offered to children are educational and therapeutic, which are conducted and coordinated through formal planned methodology of taking action based on the child's needs during the first pivotal years of life before the needs may adversely affect children's development.

Therefore, it can be conceptualized that structural interventions provide assistance and support to the family, enhance the child's development, and maximizes the outcomes for the child and family's opportunities in Canadian society (Cameron, 2007).

Since the first child welfare set up in Toronto in 189, the child welfare in Canada has gradually been evolving. The driving force behind this advancement lies in the traditions of Canada in relation to a child were; British doctrine of *parens patriae* (the state as parent of the nation) (York, 1998, p. 261) and long-held traditions of viewing children as parents property. The first doctrine gives a meaning and empowers the structural interventions, in the sense that it allows intervention into the private family affair at gain of children protection.

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History and trends British Columbia province is one of the outstanding provinces in relation to child welfare issues and policies that are aimed in meeting local needs and ethnicity represented in the province. This birth of child welfare ideology came with the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway in early 1880s, that made British Columbia host 49, 459 people with a population mix of 52% aboriginal, 35% European, and 9% Asians.

When the railway was completed in late 1886, British Columbia experienced a population explosion for settlers from Great Britain, Maritime and Ontario that rapidly increased the population to 178, 657 people constituting 72% European, 16% Aboriginal, and 11% Asians. The decline of aboriginal race that was maintained below 5% was as a result of the death due to social upheaval brought about by white settlers, diseases and the overall explosion of immigrants to British Columbia (Canadian Council on Social Development, 2006).

The effect of high population density in British Columbia was evident as Vancouver become centre of economic life with high population than Victoria. Due to poor living condition, congestion, diseases break out, poverty and frequent deaths recorded; there emerged a range of charitable organizations, as a result of prodigious community organizing that carried out by women. The initial activities by women like Mrs. Foxley, Mrs. Haskett and Mrs. J. J. Southcott to cater and provide a home for children they met and observed to be friendless and orphaned using their own money marked the road map to the child welfare.

On realizing that these trends are likely to reoccur again and again, these women donated the money and established a home around Homer and Dunsmuir Streets. This significantly led to the development of the Alexandra Orphanage in Vancouver funded by drive of these women in 1892. However, the charity organization by these women experienced and realized inadequacy in the voluntary efforts to meet this societal contingency, they successfully petitioned the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia on 20th March, 1901 to pass child welfare act.

Which was felt made great impact to police agencies, charitable organization and Philanthropic societies. The following turn of events saw the government past and enacted the Children's Protection Act, which provided for state guardianship of orphaned and/ or neglected children and involvement of the children's aid societies in care for children. From this important turn of event, the paper shall navigate through the policies and practices changes within British Columbia province in order to show the outcomes for these structural interventions for the children.

In other words, child welfare policies have undergone several vital development that have contributed and shaped today's policies. The key policies have undergone various distinct phases that include; early voluntary organization of churches, nurseries, social agencies and women's groups to provide care for children that evolved to the modern child welfare and government services that provide support for children in recognition of the care and safety of children as an essential and comprehensive service.

In this connection, this paper shall go through each of the shift to unveil efficiency in the policy formulation and implementation. Early stages The early stages were characterized with the absence of the legislation and the child welfare services. Until the passing of Orphan's Act of 1799 and the Ontario Municipal Act of 1849 that offered a helping hand for abandoned children by creating opportunities for apprenticeship. The legal acts incorporated societal norms of a work ethic that gave legal recognition only to those children who could be bound into apprenticeship.

The break through was during the late 181 after passing of the Apprentices and Minors Act, resulted to formation of the local government to provide care for the needy non-apprenticed children. These models continued to prevail until end of the 19th century, (Cameron, 2007) when the middle class saw the need to have establishment and creation of the nurturing environments for children. While the harsh practices for upbringing children received criticism, viable options to apprenticeship were introduced for dependent children; adoptions and institutional care that resulted to long-term child care.

The next turn of event was the formulation of the Charity Aid Act of 1874 that was geared towards regulation of charitable groups and organizations under supervision of the government and prevents the severe abuse of children in apprenticeship positions. While the local schools trustees were conferred power upon to create and establish educational and residential institutions for unwanted children by Industrial Schools Act of 1874 to the children's protection act of 1888 proved to be worthy. These sequential acts

in British Columbia province significantly increased reflected by the statistics.

For instance number of children doubled from 4, 400 to 8, 900 between 1891 and 1896, which further increased from 10, 419 to 15, 792; (see table1) during the period of 1996 to 2001 as per the cases admitted to the care of CAS. By the year 2003 this number increased to more than 18, 000 children (Adamoski, Richardson, 1985, p. 103). The modern era The modern era child welfare was at center stage for various radical reforms that resulted to recognition of the legitimacy of child protection. The most important and significant measure was the change in management and fiscal structure to be inclusive and efficient by the CWA (Child Welfare Act) of 1945.

This Act guaranteed governmental support, while the province assumed responsibility for the accountability of the Societies. At the same time BC fiscal responsibility for wards increased from 25 percent to 40 percent directed towards children's safety. In addition to that, the WCA promoted the prevention of child abuse, designated preventive family services as an authorized activity and increased the funding structure. That saw British Columbia catering for 70 percent while 30 percent was completed by the municipalities and counties.

Greater step was made when CFSA (Child and Family Services Act) enacted during year 1985, which consolidated all the past Acts into one Act that is inclusive. This Act reflected the need to protect vulnerable children while incorporating and acknowledging the importance of the family unit role in the contributing in quality child care. The basis for this CFSA Act being

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acceptable and efficient than the past enacted Acts was because of consultation from The Judicial Inquiry Report of 1976 and The Garber Report on Child Abuse of 1970.

Impacts of policy change of the structural intervention From family-focused to child-focused welfare These comprehensive reforms become more child friendly and involving the children from an earlier focus that was on the family. The key indicator for this shift was the element of language simplification of the legislation that constituted the Act. Additionally, the terms of the legal frame work changed to put the child at the center of success strategy of interventions.

For instance, such terms like least restrictive or disruptive course of action should be followed” was placed strengths and might on the family unit, leaving the child with the family rather than getting to the alternative for protecting a child by placement with Child Aids Society. To substantiate that, Act provided for temporary care agreements and term limits for the length of time a child can be in care. The revolving door strategy was replaced by 24 or 12 months duration depending on the child’s age.

In this way, the Act gave long term view on child protection and care (Blackstock, 2006, p. 271). Community involvement in welfare of children The Act provided for reporting the need for protection by all persons in the community as the confusion about the requirements for reporting of the child abuse was replaced with clarity and detail. Moreover, the all stakeholders have been involved in the collective role for child protection and development. This is inclusive of all professionals and the entire

community that are obliged to report cases of child abuse to a Children's Aid Society.

As a consequence, failure or breaching the obligation from any such official within the community and professional body to report faces a heavy penalty (Adamoski, 2003, p. 249). As a result reporting increased positively that facilitated better services to the children in British Columbia. For instance, the figures from data by an active federal provincial working report in the year 2004, reveals that British Columbia authorities received 2, 502 protection reports, which grew by 19 percent to 3, 094 numbers of reports.

In-care services increase The entire province of British Columbia has witnessed the rapid increase to the number of children admitted to the in care (Andrews, 1990, p. 63). Most scholars attribute this influx to the child oriented child welfare policies which ensure child safety through intermediate care provided by in-care child welfare services, as opposed to family oriented policies guided by least restrictive alternatives geared to providing intervention focused on maintaining families integrity.

The province Child's Aid Society are continually meeting the need of the community evident by the increment of the children admitted to the in care, which currently holds up to 400, 000 children. Empirically, in the year 2002 only, the number of children in care in British Columbia peaked at 10, 775 that is a reflection of 1. 1 percent of the total youth population. The statistics reveal a 29% increment in admission for in care, reflected by 8, 232 to 9, 956 children between the years 2003 to 2005.



That constituted of 30% of children in care being the Aboriginal (Canadian Council on Social Development, 2006). Annual Report acknowledges that the majority of children in care are Aboriginal. This was facilitated by the arrangement between the federal and British Columbia provincial government under the Canada Assistance Plan (CAP). Whereby federal government provided 50 percent of the costs to providing provincial based child administered services and 100 percent to the costs of Aboriginal child services.

**Conclusion** To sum up the paper, the structural intervention in British Columbia province in Canada shows significance positive impact to the society. This is evident through policy change that saw number of admission increase to in care. However, to the community there are various gains and lesson that makes it useful. The poverty reduction programs which are facilitated by increased income and other supports to address Family Poverty are such useful incentives that meet the local needs.

As a result, poverty rates have gone down slightly, while depth of poverty, the gap between the poverty line and the actual resources of families has remained steady. With a call for a universal child tax credit for all and an income tested child allowance for families earning less than \$40, 000 to provide a base amount of \$4000 per child annually. Community building has taken a lead through these structural interventions as precious members of the community being given a future while opening opportunities for the rest members of the society.

This can be said to be grate achievement to the community. Before the formalization of the structural intervention cases of children abuse or/ and neglect was 44% in 1896, but today this rate has reduced to 9. 14% as per the 2004 statistics that is bound to reduce. While number of children admitted to the in care and residential schools increasing. For example from1993 to 2001 the number increased from 4, 100 to 8, 759 children. However, more has to be done to ensure greater efficiency in the latest policies in balance with the societal welfare