Supporting Child Development through Long Term Care Arrangements

British Columbia’s Migrant Services Program

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Government of British Columbia
Ministry of Children and Family Development

- The Ministry’s mandate and highest priority is the health, safety and well-being of those who depend on the ministry to provide quality, client-centred service delivery.
Legislated Authority

**Child, Family and Community Services Act**
- provides protection to children in cases of abuse or neglect

**Family Relations Act**
- ministry assumes guardianship of orphaned, abandoned minors under 19, those without a legal guardian.
Guiding Principles

• Safety and well-being of the child
  - Child, Family & Community Service Act

• Best Interest of the Child
  - Family Relations Act
  - Immigration and Refugee Protection Act
  - UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
Migrant Services Program

- Ministry of Children and Family Development
- Unaccompanied and separated children
- Refugee claimants and government-settled
- 80+ cases each year
History

• Established in 1999 following the arrival of boats off BC’s west coast

• 134 ‘unaccompanied minors’ traveling without parents or legal guardian

• Majority became legal wards of BC’s child protection system
Program Specifics

• Assumes legal and financial responsibility for all unaccompanied minor children entering

• Coordinates specialized services:
  legal guardianship
  foster care/housing
  trauma counselling and support
  education
  health care
  legal representation for refugee matters
Challenges

• Specialized foster care
• Trauma counseling
• Education system response
• Health care needs
• Language issues