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## Update on Prior Years' Report Items

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### 2004 Update

In our 2004 annual report, we included an update on the Department's progress towards implementing the recommendations contained in our 2002 report item. At that time, the Department indicated that since 2002 Boards have made progress in addressing the deficiencies identified by our Office. Annually the Department has contacted Boards to obtain an update on progress to date. The Department indicated that it will continue to monitor Board progress in the future.

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### Update

In October 2005, we contacted the Department of Health and Community Services requesting an update as to the progress on the comments and recommendations included in our 2002 report. The Department indicated that the Boards continue to make progress in addressing the deficiencies identified by our Office, and that the Department will continue to monitor Board progress in the future.

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### 3.2.13 Child Care Services (2003 Annual Report, Part 2.18)

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#### Introduction

The *Child Care Services Act* and *Child Care Services Regulations* provide the legislative framework for control over the provision of child care services in the Province. In 2003 we performed a review of child care services.

The objectives of our review were to determine whether there were adequate systems and processes in place to:

- identify all providers of child care services in the Province required to be licensed under the *Child Care Services Act* and *Regulations*;
- ensure that applicants approved for child care licences meet the application requirements of the *Child Care Services Act* and *Regulations*;
- monitor child care facilities to determine whether they are operated in accordance with the *Child Care Services Act* and *Regulations*; and

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- ensure that annual fire, life and safety, and environmental health inspections are conducted for all child care facilities.

Our review included the Department of Health and Community Services as well as the St. John's Regional Health and Community Services Board and the Western Regional Health and Community Services Board.

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### Conclusions from our 2003 review

As a result of our review we concluded the following:

- Although the Department of Health and Community Services had overall responsibility for the child care services program, it had not adequately monitored and controlled the delivery of the program.
- Neither the St. John's Regional Health and Community Services Board nor the Western Regional Health and Community Services Board took the initiative to actively investigate whether there are any unlicensed child care service providers in their region.
- Although licences were being issued to child care facilities, there are many instances where there was no evidence on file to indicate whether all licensing requirements outlined in the *Child Care Services Act* and *Regulations* were met.
- The *Child Care Services Act* was not complied with in that the two family child care agencies associated with the St. John's and Western regional boards were not licensed as required when they commenced operations in 2000.
- Not all child care facilities were being monitored in accordance with the policies established by the Department of Health and Community Services.
- As a result of the monitoring that was performed, violation orders were issued for matters such as: children left unattended; a child was administered medication, not as prescribed, resulting in an overdose; food was not handled as required; and the ratio of children to staff was exceeded.
- Violation orders were not always issued when warranted. For example, there were 4 centres which had a combined total of 31 health and safety violations for which no violation orders were issued as of March 2003.

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- The required annual fire, life and safety, and environmental health inspections were not always being conducted by the Department of Government Services and Lands.

On 1 April 2005, the St. John's Regional Health and Community Services Board and the Western Regional Health and Community Services Board were integrated into the Eastern Regional Integrated Health Authority and the Western Regional Integrated Health Authority respectively.

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### Update

In October 2005, we contacted the Department of Health and Community Services requesting an update as to further progress on the comments and recommendations included in our 2003 report. The information provided by the Department in response to our request is outlined below.

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### 2003 Recommendation

*The Department of Health and Community Services should improve its processes for monitoring and controlling the delivery of the child care services program and ensure that the requirements of the Child Care Services Act and Regulations are being complied with in identifying, licensing, monitoring and inspecting child care facilities in the Province.*

### Action Taken

The Department indicated it is continuing to work collaboratively with the Regional Integrated Health Authorities (RIHAs) to support the delivery of quality child care services by holding monthly conference calls as well as quarterly meetings. The RIHAs have been requested to submit annual reports regarding their Child Care Service Program to the Department. The Department indicated that in collaboration with the Regional Directors of Child Care, it has developed a policy requiring the investigation of all complaints where there is sufficient information provided by the referral. Finally, the Department has circulated brochures to the RIHAs which have been placed in public areas regarding child care services. Further material is being prepared to provide information to the public on licensed and unlicensed child care.

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### 2003 Recommendation

*The St. John's Regional Health and Community Services Board and the Western Regional Health and Community Services Board should comply with the requirements of the Child Care Services Act and Regulations and the Department's policies. Specifically the Boards should ensure that all providers of child care services are identified, licensed and monitored.*

### Action Taken

As outlined above, the Department indicated that it and the RIHAs are continuing to work collaboratively to ensure compliance with the requirements of the *Act* and *Regulations*, as well as Departmental policies.

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### 2003 Recommendation

*The Department of Government Services and Lands should ensure that annual fire, life and safety, and environmental health inspections are conducted for all child care facilities as required under its agreement with the Department of Health and Community Services and the regional health and community services boards.*

### Action Taken

The Department indicated its staff and officials of Government Services have met and established a process which will ensure that the above-mentioned inspections are completed as required.

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### 3.2.14 Eastern Health and Community Services Board (2003 Annual Report, Part 2.19)

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#### Introduction

In 2003, we performed a review of the Eastern Health and Community Services Board (the Board). The objectives of our review were to assess the Board's financial position and determine whether the home support expenditures were adequately monitored, controlled and whether they complied with policies and procedures.

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