



Commission to Promote  
Sustainable Child Welfare

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Commission de promotion de la viabilité  
des services de bien-être de l'enfance

**Foster Parent's Society of Ontario  
General Meeting**

**March 26, 2010**

**Presentation by  
Ene Underwood, Commission Chair**

# Why our Work Matters ....



## Principles Guiding the Commission's Work

- A focus on **children, youth and families**
- **Transparency**
- **Objectivity** based on evidence and the lived experience
- Iterative, **action-oriented** process
- **Boldness**
- A spirit of **partnership**
- Respect for **diversity** – including in particular, recognition of the unique considerations relating to **aboriginal** child welfare



## **Today's Discussion ...**

1. The Commission and our Mandate
2. 2010/11 Priorities
3. FPSO and Sustainable Child Welfare

# Commission Terms of Reference

## Commission Mandate

- The mandate of the Commission is to develop and implement solutions to promote the sustainability of child welfare in Ontario.
- The Commission has the authority to make recommendations and implement change, working with the ministry, children's aid societies, and other partners.
- The Commission's scope encompasses the entire sector: the 53 Children's Aid Societies (CASs) and the Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS)

## Term

- Three years (almost) → Nov 2009 through September 2012

## Reporting Relationship

- Direct reporting relationship to the **Minister** of Children & Youth Services
- Day-to-day working relationship with the MCYS

## Authority

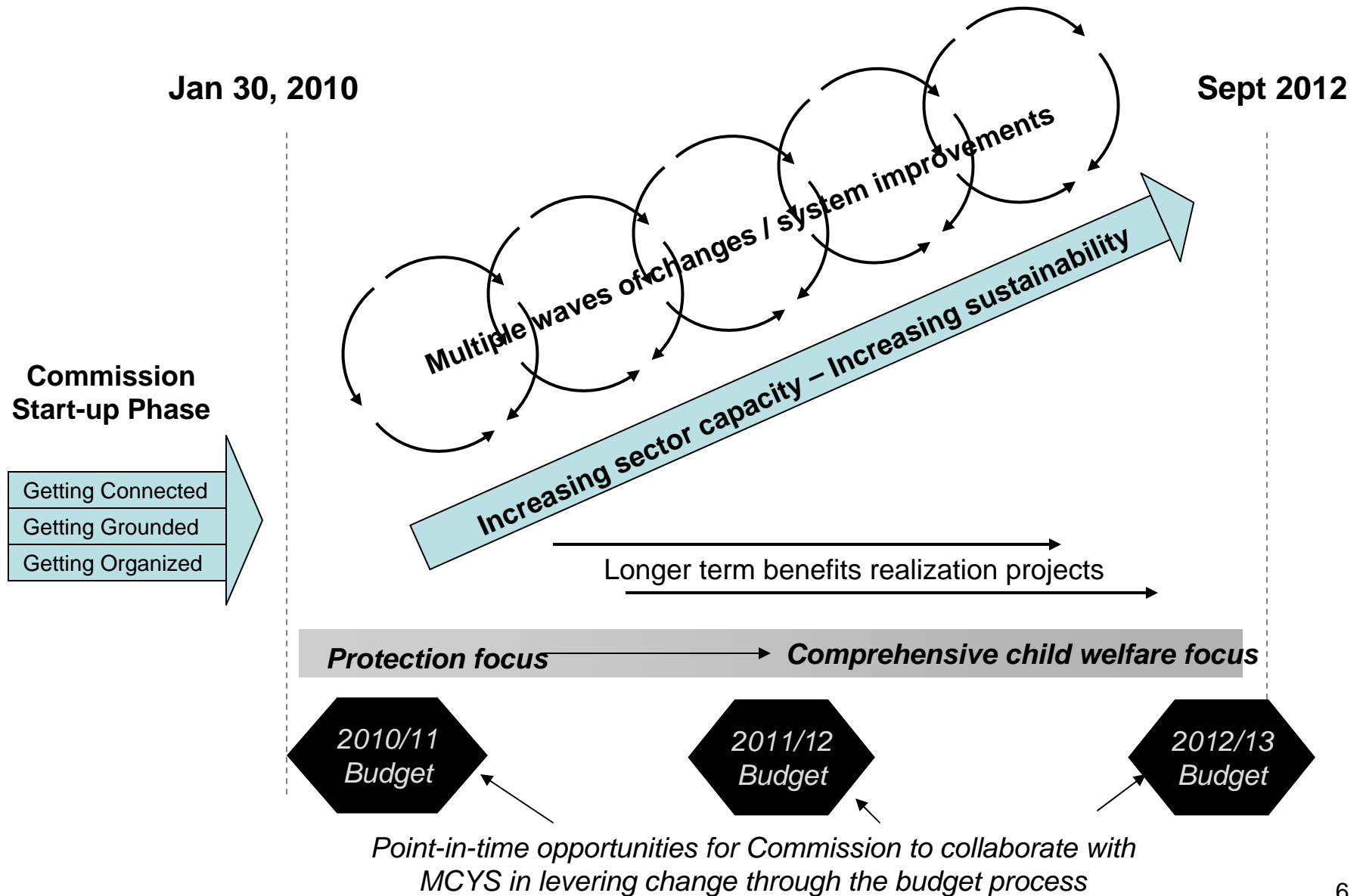
- **Regarding CASs:** Authority at the level of Director in Child & Family Services Act (CFSA) to issue directives to CASs
- **Regarding MCYS:** Mandate to make recommendations to the Minister on matters relating to policy, accountability, operations, etc.

## Sustainable (sus-tain-able)

### A Sustainable Child Welfare System ...

- ***Constantly adapts*** to evolving challenges, needs and knowledge
- ***Leverages available resources*** to ***maximize positive outcomes*** for children and youth
- ***Balances current needs*** and demands while ***building a strong system*** for tomorrow

# Conceptual Approach to the Commission's Work



## Who We Are ...

### **Barry Lewis**

- Social Worker with over 35 years experience in the social services field – particularly child welfare
  - Residential youth worker, intake worker
  - CAS leader
  - MCYS Program Supervisor
  - Consultant
- Adoptive parent of four grown children

### **Wendy Thomson**

- PhD Social Work – Currently Director, Social Work at McGill
- Extensive system-level leadership in government in UK
  - Audit Commission
  - London local government
  - Chief Advisor on Public Service Reform to Prime Minister Tony Blair
- Adoptee ... and adoptive parent

### **Ene Underwood**

- MBA with career in healthcare; early career in private sector
  - Consultant
  - Health system restructuring
  - Hospital operations
- Roots in rural Ontario
- Adoptive parent

## Why a Commission?

*Funding for children's aid societies has nearly tripled over the last decade to \$1.4 billion, yet the societies say they still have trouble making ends meet. The challenge for the panel is not just to recommend ways to save money but also to take a hard look at what is driving up costs: government regulations, rising demands or inefficient operations. The panel also ought not to lose sight of something even more important - improved outcomes for children.*

*Whatever changes are ultimately made to children's aid funding, foremost should be ensuring that the money spent is focused on improving the lives of vulnerable children.*

**The Toronto Star, "Funding Children's Aid" (editorial), February 20, 2010**

# The Story Behind Sustainable Child Welfare

## The Simple Story

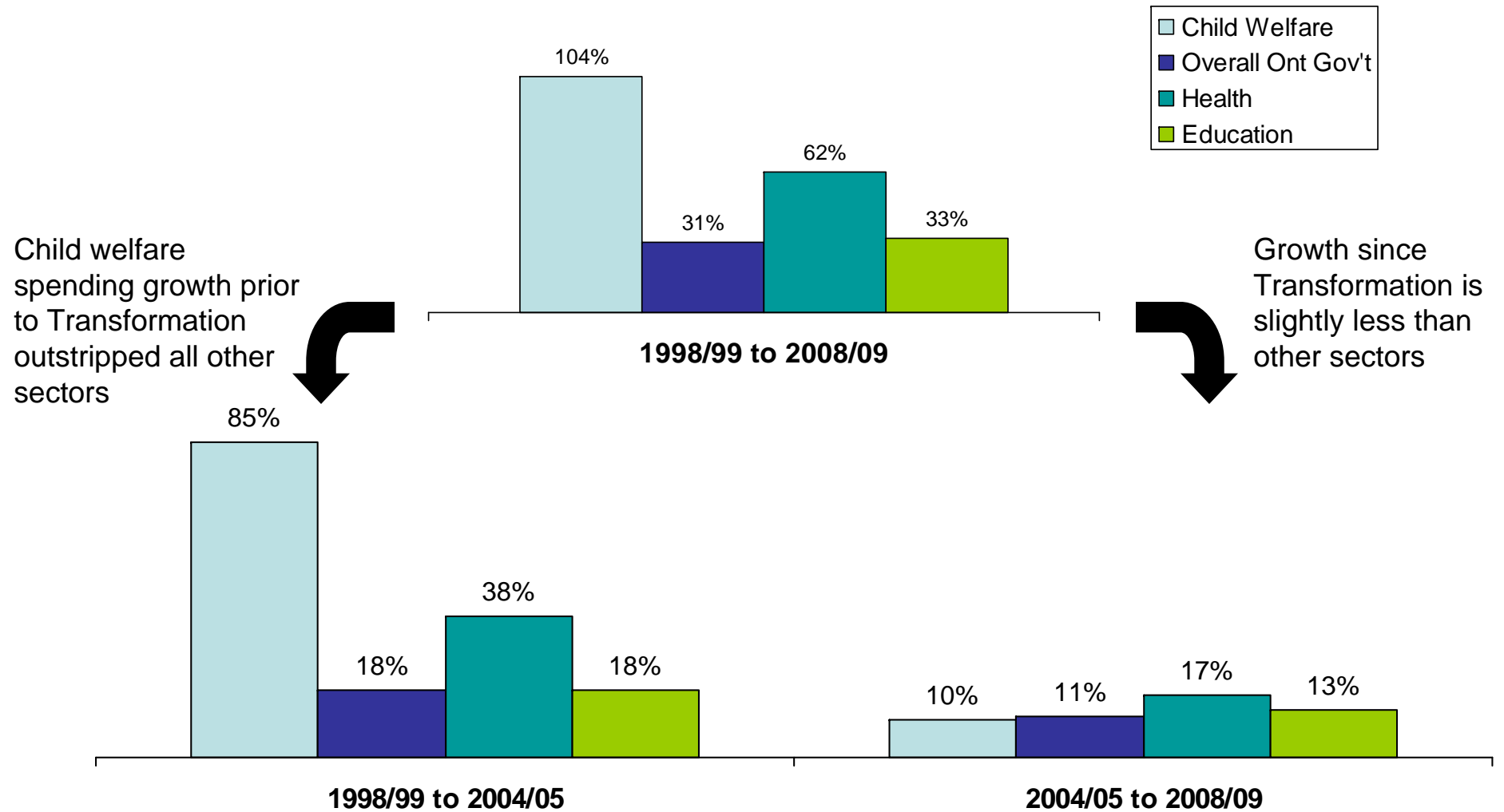
- “*Spending tripled* in the last decade”
- 2006 *Auditor General’s report*
- Are *outcomes* ok?

## The Fuller Story...

- There is a need for a *more rational, predictable* and *adaptive* child welfare sector
- Unprecedented *fiscal constraint* requires responses beyond what can be achieved within individual CASs
- Performance *variability* – and funding inequities – exist between CASs
- The historical pattern of *deficits and year-end mitigation* is *unsustainable* and unproductive for the sector
- A robust system of *performance and outcome measurement* is not in place – leaving questions about the system’s efficacy and leaving the sector vulnerable to continued criticism and scepticism

# Child Welfare Growth versus Other Sectors

1998/99 to 2008/09 (% increase based on constant 1998/99 dollars)

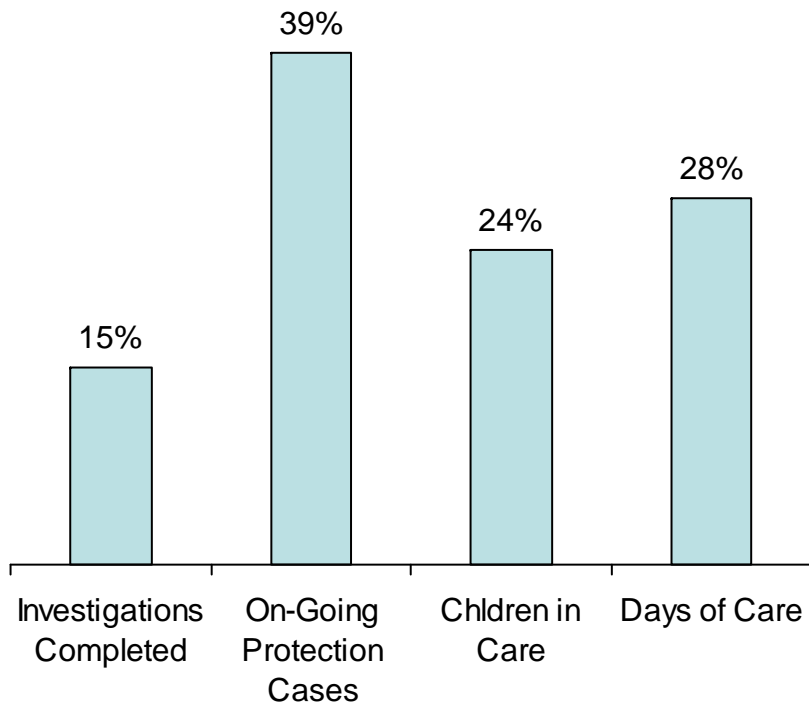


Note: Expenditures based on constant 1998/99 dollars

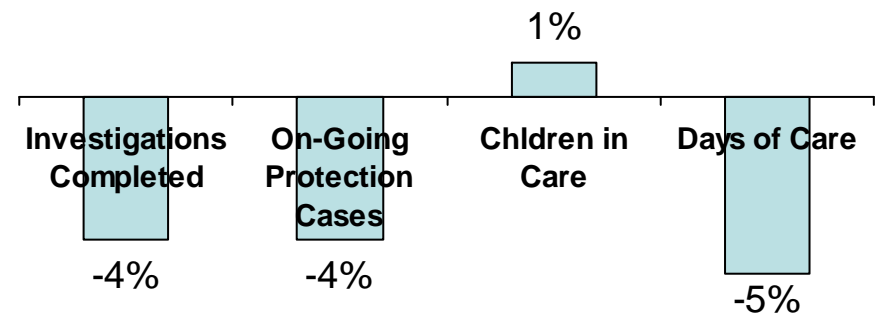
# Impacts of the Transformation Agenda

## Service Volumes

Four Years Leading Up to Transformation  
2000/01 to 2004/05



Four Years Following Transformation  
2004/05 to 2008/09

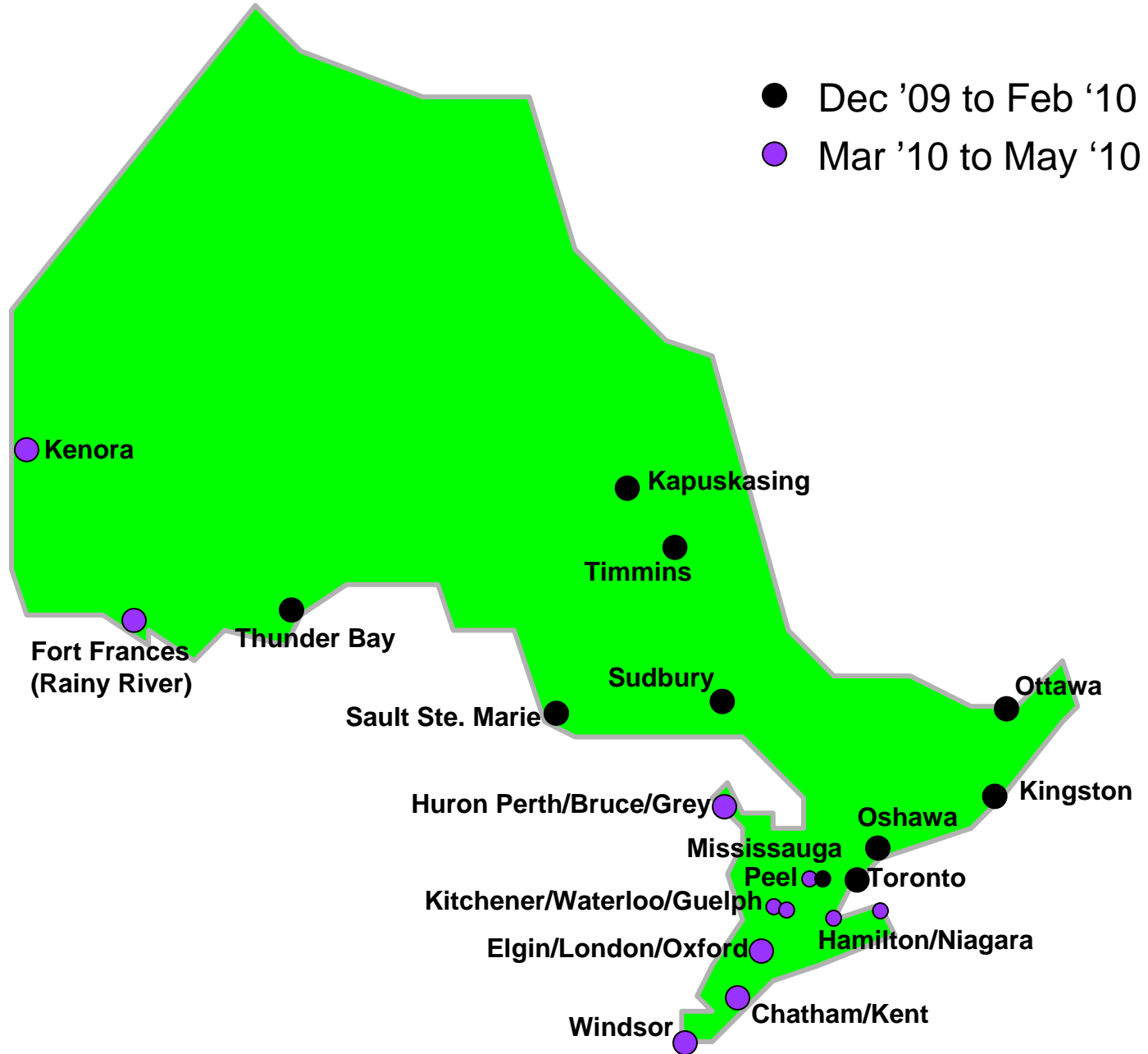


## The Auditor General's Caution in 2006 ...

While it is reasonable to add new policies and procedures to ensure greater value for money, it is important to understand that the child welfare sector is already both highly regulated and severely stretched for resources. Accordingly, **adding new requirements without appropriate flexibility and eventually streamlining of the regulatory burden can have a very real cost in terms of service** to the vulnerable populations that we serve. Although recent increases in ministry funding have enabled critical investments in the long term capacity of the sector, a direct correlation between new resources and the number of families served should not be expected

Auditor General's Report, 2006, p. 78.

# The Commission on the Road .....

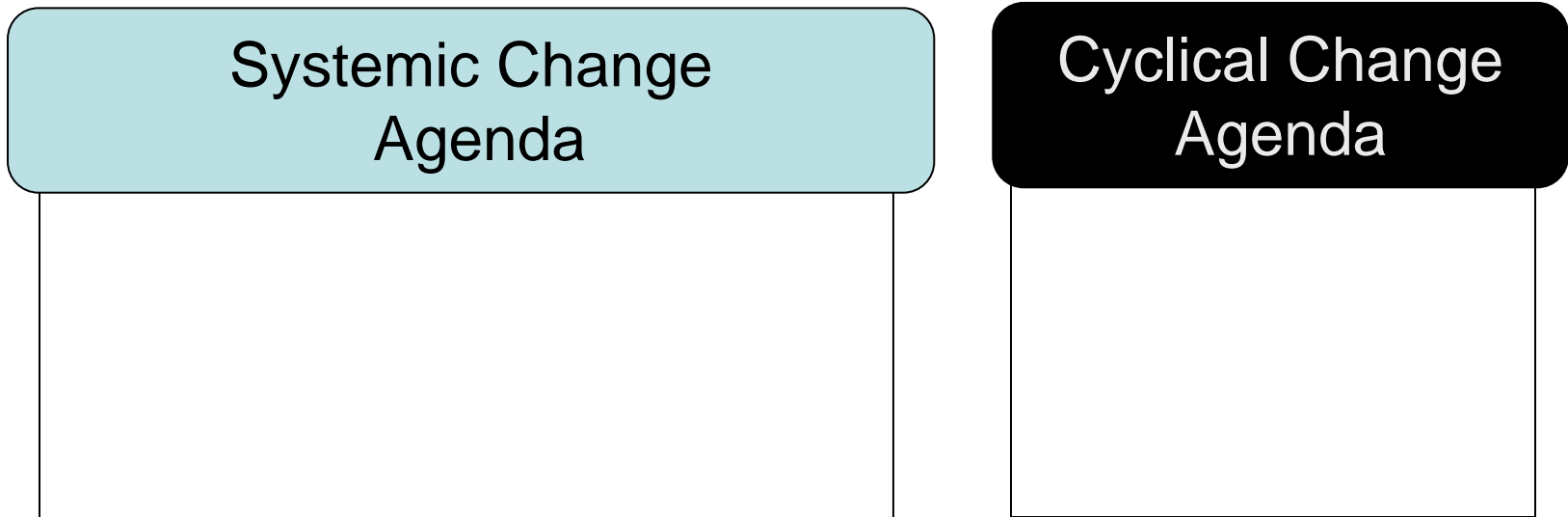


# Early Impressions ... Inherent Challenges

- Ontario is a big place. **One size does not fit all!**
- System configuration reflects **historical development of services** – counties, cities, religious / charitable organizations
- **Variable** capacity and service approaches across the 53 agencies;
- **Fragmentation of MCYS functions**
- **Too much expected of a funding formula**
- False economies and variations in **funding of in-care services**
- No part of the system assesses the **'needs'** of Ontario's children and ensures that services are available to meet these needs, within the funding available.
- Too much reliance on **compliance at 'case level'**, and not enough on focus on **performance and outcomes**.

How to 'modernise' the system without losing its priceless assets – community engagement and volunteerism, the passion of child welfare professionals, child-centered values.

# Two Parallel Agendas for Sustainable Child Welfare



*Sustainable Child Welfare System  
for Ontario*

# 2009-10 Commission Priorities

## Systemic Change Agenda

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Examine and Articulate System Design Options | 2. Profile the Current System Landscape |
|---|---|

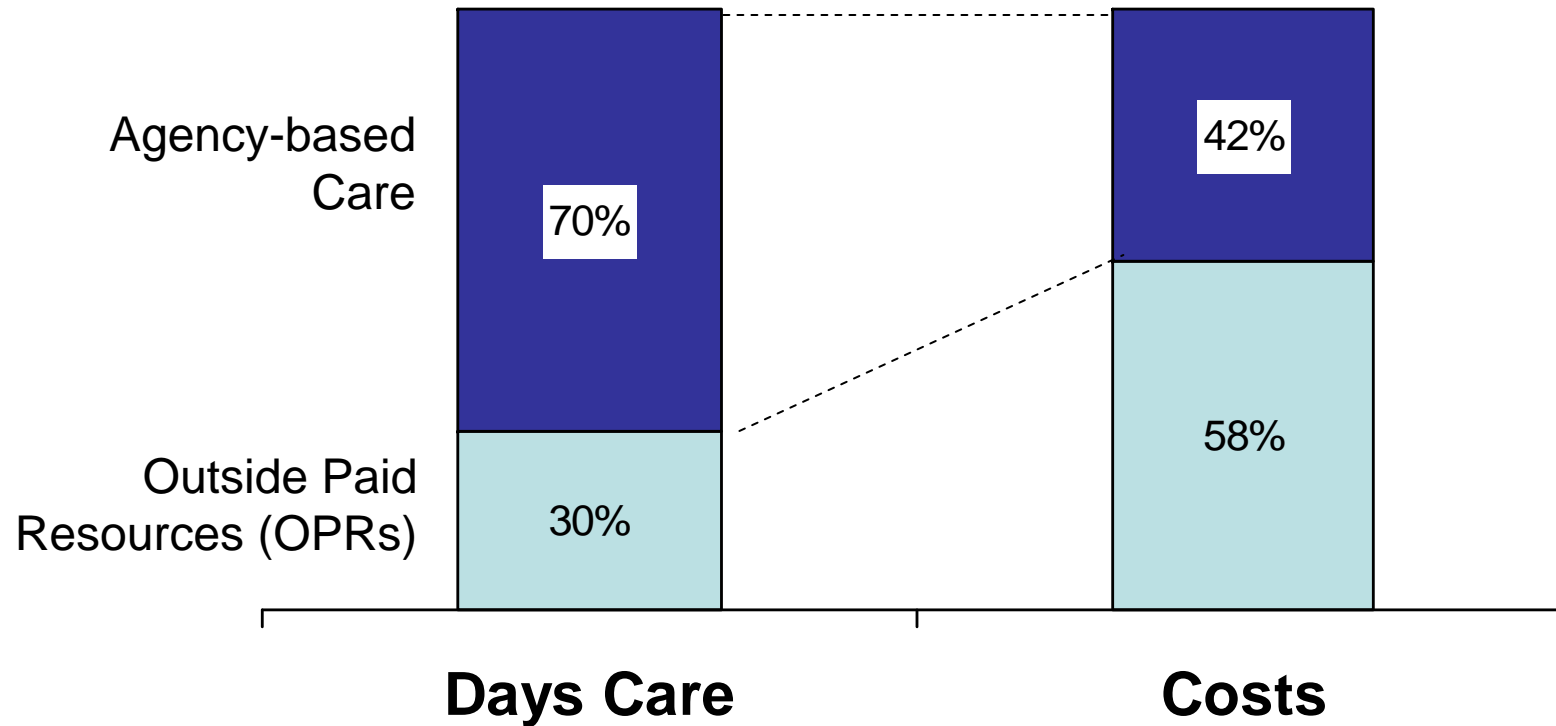
Projects Arising from Priorities 1 and 2

3. System Funding Approach
4. Accountability / Performance Framework
5. Service Configuration
6. Aboriginal Child Welfare

## Cyclical Change Agenda

7. In-Care Services
8. Administrative Processes
9. Permanency

# Distribution of Agency-Based vs Outside Care 2008/09



Source: MCYS Briefing on Out of Home Care, 2010

# Optimizing the Use of In-Care Services

## Phase 1 -- April to July 2010



<p>1. Profile of Existing In-Care Capacity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Map how decisions regarding in-care services are made</li> <li>• Profile capacity by: type of service, provider, region, etc.</li> <li>• Profile how each type of care is funded, licensed, managed</li> <li>• Profile children and youth in care by age, geography, needs, etc.</li> </ul>
<p>2. Practices to Leverage from Within Ontario and Other Jurisdictions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of all previous studies</li> <li>• High level review of other jurisdictions</li> <li>• Interviews / other methods to identify best practices in Ontario.</li> </ul>
<p>3. Framework for Prioritizing Opportunities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approach to evaluating costs, benefits of various opportunities</li> </ul>
<p>4. Inventory of Challenges and Prioritization of Opportunities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prioritize opportunities. Encompass such areas as:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– System management</li> <li>– Funding / rate setting processes</li> <li>– Organization and roles</li> <li>– Licensing, risk, quality management</li> <li>– Other?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Source: MCYS Briefing on Out of Home Care, 2010

## Areas for Discussion – Over to You!

- What are your perspectives on this sector? If the Commission could only address three issues, what should they be?
- What are the change priorities that you would urge specific to In-Care Services?
- How should FPSO members be engaged during Phase 1 of our In-Care Services work?