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## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release  
2009CFD0013-000575  
November 4, 2009

Ministry of Children and Family Development

### **CROSS-MINISTRY PROTOCOL EASES TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD**

VICTORIA – A new Cross-Ministry Transition Planning Protocol for Youth with Special Needs became effective Nov. 1, 2009 and will begin to be implemented in the coming months, Children and Family Development Minister Mary Polak announced today.

“We know the transition to adulthood can be a challenge for youth with special needs and their families. This sentiment has been expressed often by them,” said Polak. “Starting the transition process early and co-ordinating it with other ministries is part of our commitment to these families and cross-ministry collaboration.”

With a focus on young people between the ages of 14 and 25 who require significant additional educational, medical/health and social/environmental support, beyond that required by youth in general, the protocol was developed to:

- Improve access to existing resources and supports.
- Ensure that a co-ordinated transition planning process occurs for youth with special needs and their families.

Approximately 8.3 per cent of B.C.’s youth population will require transition planning support, with 4,400 youth expected to begin the transition planning process every year at age 14. The purpose of transition planning for youth with special needs is to identify opportunities and experiences during their school years that will help them better prepare for life as an adult.

Nine government organizations are signatories to the protocol:

- Six ministries: Advanced Education and Labour Market Development, Children and Family Development, Education, Health Services, Housing and Social Development and Public Safety and Solicitor General.
- Plus: BC Housing, Community Living BC, and the Public Guardian and Trustee.

The following community agencies also participated in the development of the protocol: Family Support Institute, PLEA Community Services Society, Bridges to the Future and Caring for First Nations Children Society.

“With children’s services transferring from Community Living BC to the Ministry of Children and Family Development, it’s now even more important we ensure an easy transition from children’s to adult’s services,” said Housing and Social Development Minister Rich Coleman. “We’re helping to build better futures for youth with special needs by having the supports they need ready for them when they reach adulthood.”

This protocol is the first step toward a collaborative and co-ordinated transition process for youth with special needs across government. Further work will be done to jointly implement it and support staff working with youth and their families.

To view a copy of the Cross-Ministry Transition Planning Protocol for Youth with Special Needs Please on the Ministry of Children and Family Development's website, visit: [http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/spec\\_needs/pdf/transition\\_planning\\_protocol.pdf](http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/spec_needs/pdf/transition_planning_protocol.pdf).

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