Manitoba Key Worker Program
Evaluation Findings
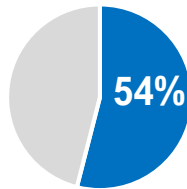
Established in 2014, the **Manitoba Key Worker (KW) Program,** provides individualized resources and support for children and youth with FASD or confirmed prenatal alcohol exposure in the Interlake-Eastern Regional Health Authority (IERHA).

Through home visits and one-on-one support, Key Workers assist families for up to two years and serve as advocates; connecting clients to resources and delivering educational seminars to teachers and other service providers within a one-hour radius of Selkirk, Manitoba.

KW Coverage Area

Between 2014-2019…

73 clients were enrolled

58% identified as foster families

54% were single-parent households

Implementation

Program Demand

As awareness for the KW program increases, there is high demand for support throughout the IERHA.

> "I do a lot of referrals myself to the program and their wait-list is quite long. Families are waiting 6+ months to get into the program. In many cases, families could benefit from services immediately because of the intense behaviour they are dealing with."
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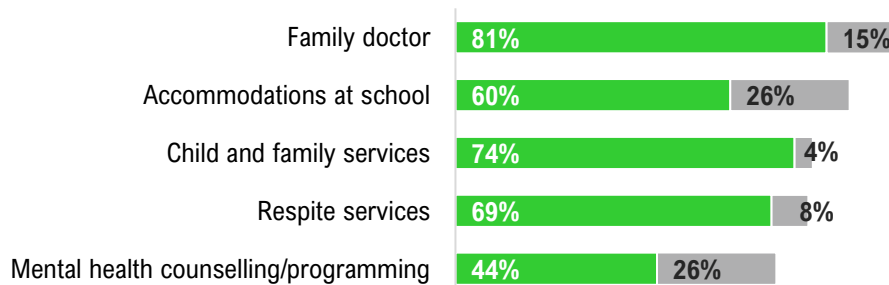> - **Key Stakeholder**

Tailored Support for Families

Each child and youth with FASD has unique strengths and challenges; KWs assess individually and apply a strengths-based lens in all interactions.

> "We work from a brain-based lens – FASD is a developmental disorder, based on exposure to alcohol and the child has a brain that is individual to them. We look at the ways they have scored on assessments and use this as a blueprint for how kids move through life…"
>
> - **Key Stakeholder**

Supports Required by Clients

Multiple community services are **currently accessed** or **required** by clients

Service	Currently accessed	Required
Family doctor	81%	15%
Accommodations at school	60%	26%
Child and family services	74%	4%
Respite services	69%	8%
Mental health counselling/programming	44%	26%

Most families have access to a family doctor, Child and Family Services and respite services.

Mental health programming and accommodations at school were the most common services required, but not currently accessed.

Short-Term Outcomes

Increased FASD Knowledge

Caregivers knowledge **increased** from **intake** to **program exit**

0	2	4	6	8	10

6.7   8.7

Examples of increased caregiver knowledge included *knowing more about their child's brain*, *better understanding their needs*, *responding more appropriately* and *better managing their child's frustration*.

> "*Our KW taught me about how my daughter's brain works and her processing time. It helped me get less frustrated. For example, she doesn't feel pain the same way we do. The KW helped with strategies to get my daughter to notice and name emotions, and to express them.*"
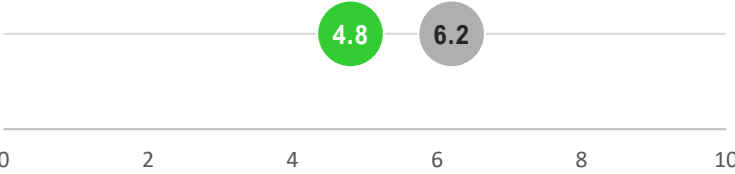>
> - **KW Caregiver**

Decreased Levels of Stress

Caregivers noted working with the KW led to reduced stress levels; helping manage feelings of frustration, desperation and isolation. Key Workers are available to "put feelings into perspective" and help caregivers remain calm when dealing with stressful situations, often outside of regular business hours.

Family stress levels **decreased (↓)** from **6-month check-in** to **program exit**

0	2	4	6	8	10

4.8   6.2

> "*I learned how to be less stressed and manage my frustration. Our Key Worker helped me a lot, I worked at a tax centre and it was stressful at home dealing with [child name redacted]. I could call our Key Worker and she would come meet me on my lunch breaks to give me support and help me plan what to do. She was flexible and supportive.*"
>
> - **KW Caregiver**

Intermediate-Term Outcomes

Improved Ability to Advocate

Key Workers support caregivers to advocate in a variety of settings, including at school, with medical professionals and community organizations. Key Workers shift caregivers' perspectives, helping them understand they are the experts on their child and giving them confidence to voice their opinion.

> "*Clients are the experts, I really emphasize that with families. One family in particular, when the caregiver would attend meetings she felt very intimidated. She didn't want to attend meetings and make recommendations. I would attend and ask them to talk in more inclusive language and the caregiver gained confidence to ask this on their own when they didn't understand something. Helping clients realize their experience is so valuable.*"
>
> - **Key Stakeholder**