



Justice Innovation and Transformation Initiatives (JITI) FAQ for Parents Legal Centre

The Ministry of Justice has made a commitment to the Legal Services Society to provide \$2 million a year for three years, starting in 2014/2015, to fund five pilot projects at LSS. These FAQ will help answer questions about the Parents Legal Centre pilot project.

Parents Legal Centre — launched in February 2015

The Parents Legal Centre is a new service provided by the Legal Services Society that focuses on early, consensual resolution of child protection issues. It will engage with eligible parents at an early stage prior to and during their involvement with the Ministry of Children and Family Development/Delegated Aboriginal Agency, and will provide services to parents to support the issues being resolved collaboratively. The Parents Legal Centre is located at the Vancouver courthouse.

Questions	Answers
What services are provided by Parents Legal Centre?	<p>The Parents Legal Centre will provide the following services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information and advice on options for resolving child protection issues out of court • Legal advice and representation, where appropriate, at collaborative processes such as mediation and family case planning conferences • Information and advice on court processes • Legal advice and representation at uncontested hearings • Referrals to other services, including online resources and other public agencies <p>The Parents Legal Centre is available for all child protection issues under the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Family and Community Services Act

<p>What is new and innovative about this service?</p>	<p>The Parents Legal Centre pilot program is innovative and transformative in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The pilot program focuses on trying to resolve cases consensually out of court, and identifies alternative methods to address the child protection issues before they escalate to require court processes. <i>Previously, the Legal Services Society did not provide services focusing on consensual out of court settlement of child protection issues.</i> • The pilot program has a dedicated advocate role that will support parents in resolving the underlying issues that led to the protection concern. <i>Previously, Legal Services Society did not provide this kind of support.</i>
<p>How does a client access the service?</p>	<p>The Parents Legal Centre is located in the Vancouver courthouse. It is open Monday to Friday from 8:30 am - 4:00 pm.</p> <p>Clients can be referred directly to the Parents Legal Centre when they are at court. Clients can also be sent to the Parents Legal Centre for a scheduled appointment.</p> <p>Clients may be informed of the service before court involvement from social workers, the Legal Services Society, community agencies or on the LSS website.</p>
<p>How will the pilot improve the efficient use of justice system resources?</p>	<p>By focussing on collaborative planning and decision making, the Parents Legal Center will help to avoid lengthy hearings, thereby freeing up judicial resources.</p> <p>The Parents Legal Centre will also work to facilitate the improvement of the flow of cases through the courts.</p>
<p>How will the pilot improve the effectiveness of the child welfare system?</p>	<p>The Parents Legal Centre will focus on collaborative resolution of child protection issues with the goal of achieving earlier resolution outside of contested hearings.</p>
<p>How will the service benefit families?</p>	<p>Collaborative planning and decision making has been shown to strengthen family relationships by empowering families to work together to find long-term solutions to the problems giving rise to child protection concerns.</p> <p>By focusing on early and collaborative approaches to resolution, the Parents Legal Centre will support parents to achieve better outcomes for their families.</p>

<p>Why doesn't LSS increase the number of representation referrals instead of adding this service?</p>	<p>This pilot program is part of the Ministry of Justice initiative for Justice Transformation. LSS can use the funding only for new services that are innovative or transformative, and cannot use it to increase the capacity of existing tariff bar services.</p>
<p>How will the pilot be evaluated to determine if the new model improves access to the justice?</p>	<p>The pilot program will be evaluated by an independent evaluator who will use the best data available from the Legal Services Society, Court Services Branch and the Ministry of Children and Family Development, as well as data gathered through client and service provider surveys.</p> <p>The evaluation will determine whether the pilot:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • effectively supports clients to resolve their child protection matters collaboratively • helps clients resolve their legal issues as early as possible in the CFCSA process • contributes to the efficient use of available judicial, lawyer, and social worker resources for clients