

# MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT

ESTIMATES  
BINDER 2024



Ministry of  
Children and Family  
Development

April 2024

## MCFD 2024 ESTIMATES

### Table of Contents

<b>MANDATE AND SERVICE PLAN</b>	
Minister/MoS Mandate Letter/Strategic Framework/Service Plan	1.1
Service Plan Performance Measures	1.2
Performance Management	1.3
<b>BUDGET AND HUMAN RESOURCES</b>	
2024/25 Operating Budget and Summary Appendix A: MCFD Estimates and Supplementals Appendix B: MCFD Material Assumptions Appendix C: Budget Highlights Appendix D: Resource Summary	2.1
Ministry Frontline Recruitment	2.2
Ministry Workforce Summary	2.3
Ministry Workforce Pressures	2.4
MCFD Contracting	2.5
Ministry Corporate Workforce Summary	2.6
MCFD and CYSN Historical Budgets	2.7
<b>CHILD SAFETY, FAMILY SUPPORT (INCLUDING OUT OF CARE) &amp; ADOPTION</b>	
Overview of Network of Care (OOC, Foster Care, Staffed)	3.1
Overview of OOC (including EOOO)	3.2
Overview of Foster Homes	3.3
Overview of SHSS Implementation and Contracted Care	3.4
Overview of Safety	3.5
Enhanced Oversight and Support of Child Safety	3.6
Overview of Indigenous Child and Family Services Agencies	3.7
Overview of Quality Assurance Programs	3.8
Supporting Family Preservation and Cultural Connection	3.9

## MCFD 2024 ESTIMATES

### Table of Contents

Overview of Permanency for Children in Care	3.10
Adoptions (including KPMG review)	3.11
Social Worker Oversight	3.12
Monitoring Visits with CIC	3.13
SWO – What We Heard Report	3.14
<b>CYMH / CYSN</b>	
Overview of CYMH Services	4.1
Responding to Opioid Crisis	4.2
CYSN Commitments	4.3
CYSN FCC Pilots and IAF Decision	4.4
<b>YOUTH SERVICES (AYA)</b>	
Youth Transitions	6.1
<b>YOUTH JUSTICE</b>	
Overview of Youth Custody Services	7.1
Overview of Youth Justice Services	7.2
PGYCS Closure	7.3
Working with BCFNJC	7.4
Working with MNBC Justice Council	7.5
<b>INDIGENOUS JURISDICTION AND RECONCILIATION</b>	
Overview of First Nations Jurisdiction	8.1
Métis Nation BC, Métis Commission and MCFD	8.2
Tripartite Working Group	8.3
Federal Indigenous Child, Youth and Family Services Legislation	8.4
Improving Services for Indigenous Children and Families	8.5
Declaration Act Action Plan	8.6

## MCFD 2024 ESTIMATES

### Table of Contents

Indigenous Self-Government in <i>Child and Family Services Amendment Act</i> – Bill 38	8.7
Jurisdiction Funding Model	8.8
Modern Treaty Nations	8.9
Indigenous Child Welfare Director	8.10
MCFD Legislations Amendment Package – Spring 2024	8.11

**MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT  
STRATEGIC SERVICES BRANCH  
ESTIMATES CORPORATE BRIEFING NOTE 2024/25**

**ISSUE: Minister's Mandate Letter/Service Plan/Strategic Framework**

**KEY MESSAGES:**

- Since 2019, MCFD's Service Plan and Strategic Framework have signaled a shift in the ministry's approach – away from reactive and shorter-term “symptomatic” responses towards a systemic approach, focusing on meeting the individual needs of the children, youth, young adults and families we serve - both today and into the future.
- Our service plan reflects the items identified in my mandate letter and focuses on four key areas: Indigenous Reconciliation; Prevention and Family Supports; Youth and Young Adult Transitions; and the Network of Care.

**BACKGROUND:**

- I am honoured to have an opportunity in my role to continue the work outlined in our Service Plan, Strategic Framework, and my mandate letter, including:
  - Significant expansion to services for youth and young adults transitioning out of government care, and
  - Historic changes to provincial legislation, removing barriers and paving the way to coordination agreements that recognize the inherent right of Indigenous Peoples in exercising jurisdiction over their child and family services.
- I look forward to continuing this journey to support B.C.'s children, youth, young adults, families, and communities. In addition to the vital day-to-day work of ensuring the health, safety and well-being of children and youth throughout the province, this will involve:

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Date: January 8, 2024

- **Ongoing work and engagement with Indigenous Peoples** (alongside the federal government) to transform delivery of child and family services, including increased decision-making authority and the exercise of jurisdiction.
  - Working alongside Indigenous Governing Bodies preparing to exercise jurisdiction to develop and implement coordination agreements.
  - Working alongside Indigenous communities to plan for increased decision-making authority and/or the exercise of jurisdiction.
  - Working alongside Indigenous partners to develop policy and regulations that support service delivery in a multi-jurisdictional model.
  - Working with Indigenous Peoples and the federal government to co-develop and implement a funding model to support First Nations jurisdiction over their child and family services.
- **Supporting improved outcomes and keeping families safely together** by strengthening supports and prioritizing resources for families and children based on their needs, including:
  - Engaging in deeper consultation with parents and caregivers, First Nations, Indigenous Peoples, communities, experts and practitioners, and other people and partners with lived experience to build a better system of supports for children and youth with support needs.
  - Investing, in the interim, to better serve children with a range of support needs who are currently underserved.
  - Piloting a new “children with support needs service delivery model” through four family connections centres in the North Coast / Bulkley Nechako and Central Okanagan service delivery areas.
  - In line with B.C.’s A Pathway to Hope roadmap, continuing to

work with partners and service providers to implement child and youth mental health services and supports, including Integrated Child and Youth Teams, Early Intervention Enhancement services, and High Intensity Services.

- Building on the historic help announced under Budget 2022 – now known as the SAJE program (Strengthening Abilities and Journeys of Empowerment) – for youth from care to support their transition to adulthood.
  - Continuing to provide housing agreements, support agreements, and rent supplements.
  - Hiring transition workers to support youth and young adults in planning for the transition to adulthood.
  - Expanding supports and tools, including access to life-skills, culture, and training programs, and increased access to dental and mental health benefits (e.g., counselling).
  - In collaboration with our partners, implementing an integrated network of care that provides services and supports driven by a child or youth’s needs, nurtures a sense of belonging and prioritizes cultural and family connections.
  - Through implementation of a responsive network of Specialized Homes and Support Services, providing respite, stabilization, emergency care, and specialized care services for children and youth who need more than what community-based and outreach services can provide.
  - Continuing to implement the Enhanced Out-of-Care program across the province to enable children and youth living with moderate to significant support needs to reside with extended family or people known to them.
  - Expanding efforts to recruit and retain caregivers.

**CROSS REFERENCE: N/A**

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**MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT  
STRATEGIC SERVICES DIVISION  
ESTIMATES CORPORATE BRIEFING NOTE 2024/25**

**ISSUE: Service Plan Performance Measures**

**KEY MESSAGES:**

- Every child and youth in British Columbia—both Indigenous and non-Indigenous—has the right to live in a safe, healthy, and nurturing home, and to be strongly connected to their communities and culture.
- The ministry approaches its work through a Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) lens, delivering services that are inclusive, intersectional, responsive, accessible, trauma informed and culturally safe; respecting the diverse backgrounds and identities of children and youth, including those who identify as Indigenous, Inuit, Métis, Black, a Person of Colour, 2SLGBTQQIA+ or a person with a disability.
- The Ministry of Children and Family Development’s Service Plan outlines key performance measures to help ensure that all children and youth can access the services they need, at the right time and in the right way, to set them on the path to success.

**BACKGROUND:**

- There are seven performance measures in this Service Plan, all are the same as in the 2023/24 Service Plan. Below are the highlights for each measure:
- **“Children and Youth in care” 2023/24 targets are forecast to be met (PM 1a):** The number of children and youth in care continues to decrease and is the lowest it’s been in thirty years. The targets for the out-years for the Children and Youth in care performance measure have not changed.
- **“Children assessed with a protection concern that can safely live with family or extended family” targets have been lowered (PM 2a):** Although the forecast for 2023/24 is expected to be short of the target, the number of children and youth coming into care has remained within the range of the last few years. The out-year targets have been adjusted accordingly.
- **“Distinct People Served by CYMH services” (called “Access to Child and Youth Mental Health Services clients served” in Service Plan 2022/23) is forecast to slightly miss the target for 2023/24 (PM 2b):** The number of clients served is a

measure of the accessibility of Child and Youth Mental Health (CYMH) services. An increase in the use of these services will translate to improved outcomes for children and youth with mental health needs across the province.

- As the ministry continues to partner in the implementation of the BC Government’s A Pathway to Hope framework, MCFD is participating in initiatives to promote seamless, timely and culturally safe access to mental health and substance use services.
  - Service enhancements that have an impact on this measure include Integrated Child & Youth (ICY) Teams, Early Intervention Enhancements (EIE), Step Up/Step Down: High-Intensity Outreach Services and Satellited Bed-Based Services and Foundry Expansion.
  - Participation in these services is estimated for 2023/24, as no firm data exists yet. The Ministry will continue to work with MMHA and other partners on how to capture the most accurate data possible, going forward. For that reason, out-year targets remain unchanged.
- **“Youth in care who turn 19 with a high school credential” target is on track for 2023/24 (PM 3a):** This performance measure is meeting targets and no change required to the out-year targets.
  - **Targets for “Percentage of eligible youth transitioning into adulthood that received a Post Majority Service benefit payment within the next year” have been pushed out by one year (PM 3b):** The hiring of new youth transition workers was hindered by persistent recruitment challenges in fiscal 2023/24. The new youth transition workers will be in place at the start of the 2024/25 fiscal year contributing to the attainment of the original targets.
  - **“Young Adults who receive rent supplements” targets for 2023/24 have been exceeded. (PM 3c):** Recipients receive the supplement for two years or until the month of their twenty-seventh birthday, whichever comes first. The Ministry will continue to refine forecasts and targets, including identifying the 2026/27 targets for this measure based on funding.
  - **“Children and Youth in care with no moves in the first 12 months” targets for 2023/24 were exceeded (PM 4a):** As more Specialized Homes and Support Services are implemented and additional foster homes are made available through recruitment, the ministry expects to see a positive impact on this performance measure. No change to the out-year targets were made to account for small variability in results that can occur from year to year and is not considered a trend yet.

- All these measures are publicly available on the ministry's Public Reporting Portal.

**CROSS REFERENCE:**

**1.1** - Minister/MoS Mandate Letter/Strategic Framework/Service Plan

**MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT  
FINANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES  
ESTIMATES CORPORATE BRIEFING NOTE 2024/25**

**ISSUE:** Performance Management & Public Reporting

**KEY MESSAGES:**

- The ministry is committed to improving its supports and services to make life better for children, youth and families.
- Through a public online reporting portal, MCFD proactively reports select caseload data, performance indicators and information on how the Ministry is organized, including workforce information, and contracted and total expenditures.
- Performance is monitored using trends in 30 indicators across five of the six service lines.
  - The Early Years service line indicators, all Child Care specific, were removed following the transfer of Child Care from MCFD to ECC in 2022.
  - Starting in 2023/23, MECC's Foundational Skills Assessments (FSA) for reading and writing were combined into a single FSA for literacy, dropping the number of measures on the MCFD portal from 31 to 30.
- The last update to the portal included monthly caseload reporting as of December 2023, and annual caseload reporting, performance indicators, expenditure, and other administrative information for fiscal year 2022/23.
- Performance trends for 2022/23 (currently on the portal) are:
  - Improving in 10 indicators, including the number of days to first clinical CYMH service, the rate of CYIC per 1,000 population, the foster parent retention rate, the Youth under a Youth Agreement who finish school with a high school credential, the relative use of out of care vs in care admissions, young adults that transition into adulthood and receive financial assistance through AYA, and income assistance use for former youth in care or under a Youth Agreement.
  - Unchanged in 5 indicators, including CYIC school grade progression,

age-appropriate grade and Foundation Skills Assessments (FSA) for literacy and numeracy.

- Slightly lower in 15 indicators:
  - Family preservation rates
  - Placement Stability in the first year of care
  - CYIC Who Finish School with a high school credential
  - CYIC who exited to permanency
  - Recurrence of maltreatment of former CYIC
  - CYIC funded bed utilization rate
  - Per cent of children eligible for adoption placed in adoption homes
  - Time taken from permanent care status to adoption placement
  - All five Youth Justice indicators: Youth who did not commit a new offense (diversion, community and custody), youth court and custody cases per 10,000 population
  - Residential cost per CYIC excluding CYIC with Support Needs
  - Median residential cost per CYIC with Support Needs
- Reporting on the portal will be updated this Spring (monthly caseload reporting to March 2024, annual caseload reporting to fiscal year 2023/24), and Winter (performance measures, expenditure, and other administrative information to fiscal year 2023/24).
- Since 2012, MCFD has publicly reported on performance through the Performance Management Report. Now it is reporting through an online portal (released in February 2018, last updated in March 2024).
- Public reporting is an essential part of the ministry's commitment to transparency and accountability and helps foster public confidence in the ministry.
- B.C. compares favourably to other jurisdictions on public reporting on the Child Welfare System.
- B.C.'s reporting is broader and more exhaustive than any other Canadian jurisdiction. Most provinces publicly report on child protection, but far less extensively than B.C.

**CROSS REFERENCE:** N/A

**MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT  
FINANCE & CORPORATE SERVICES  
ESTIMATES CORPORATE BRIEFING NOTE 2024/25**

**ISSUE: 2024/25 OPERATING BUDGET**

**KEY MESSAGES:**

- The Ministry of Children and Family Development's (MCFD) 2024/25 budget increased by \$209.1 million to \$2,121.2 billion. Budget highlights include:
  - \$129.5 million year-over-year increase for child safety, family support and children in care services. This increase consists of:
    - \$41.2 million for direct services,
    - \$77.1 million for wage increases to support front-line recruitment and retention, and
    - \$11.2 million for Strengthening Abilities and Journeys of Empowerment program (SAJE).
  - SAJE funding supports for youth as they transition out of care through the Strengthening Abilities and Journeys of Empowerment program (formerly known as Youth Transitioning into Adulthood).
  - Funding to increase the number of ministry staff focused on child welfare practice improvements, oversight, and child protection audits.
  - \$61.3 million for services for children and youth with support needs, including increasing access to existing programs and investing in social sector wages.
- Over 90% of MCFD's budget is allocated to service delivery to support clients and communities with over \$1.9 billion directly invested in programs and services.

**BACKGROUND:****CORE BUSINESS CHANGES:**

<b>Core Business</b> (\$ millions)	<b>23/24</b> <b>Estimates</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>23/24</b> <b>Estimates</b> <b>Restated</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>24/25</b> <b>Estimates</b>
Early Childhood Development	41.9	0.0	41.9	3.8	45.7
Services for Children & Youth with Support Needs	528.9	0.0	528.9	61.3	590.2
Child & Youth Mental Health Services	122.2	0.0	122.2	6.0	128.2
Child Safety, Family Support & Children In Care Services	935.2	0.0	935.2	129.5	1,064.6
Adoption Services	38.0	0.0	38.0	2.3	40.2
Youth Justice Services	51.3	0.0	51.3	3.0	54.3
Service Delivery Support	173.2	0.0	173.2	0.9	174.1
Executive & Support Services	21.5	0.0	21.5	2.3	23.8
<b>TOTAL MINISTRY</b>	<b>1,912.1</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>1,912.1</b>	<b>209.1</b>	<b>2,121.2</b>

**2024/25 Estimates**

The MCFD operation budget for 2024/25 budget increased by \$209.1 million to \$2,121.2 billion. This is an 10.9% net increase over the 2023/24 budget, and provides for the following increases:

- \$49.8 million for **caseload** for *Budget 2024* which includes:
  - \$8.6 million – increase to address growth in Autism program of 11% per year.
  - \$37.9 million – increase for ongoing rates of maintenance payments and spending on in-care and out-of-care contracted resources.
  - \$ 2.3 million - increase for Director’s Legal Counsel due to rising legal costs.
  - \$ 1.0 million – increase to stabilize funding for staffing of ICFSA Secretariat.
- \$138.9 million for sector increased in salaries and benefits from the **Shared Recovery Mandate** in *Budget 2024* for:
  - \$131.6 million – Social sector, contracted staff.

- \$7.3 million – MCFD staff.
- \$1.4 million increase to **rent supplement** starting in 2024/25 for 190 additional supplements increasing the bi-annual supplements available from 810 to 1,000.
- \$0.8 million for **CYSN** in *Budget 2024* for continued rollout of the framework engagement and evaluation.
- \$0.1 million increase to for minor adjustments **Minister's Office** in *Budget 2024*
- \$8.7 million for the salaries and benefits increases for MCFD staff resulting from the **shared recovery mandate** from *Budget 2023*.
- \$2.2 million increase for **CYSN Framework** for the continued implementation of the family connections centres from *Budget 2022*.
- \$9.8 million increase to continue wrap around services for Youth Transitions under the **Strengthening Abilities and Journeys of Empowerment (SAJE) program** from *Budget 2022*.

### **Shared Recovery Mandate**

- During 2022/23 government embarked on negotiating the three - year wage mandates for 2023/24 – 2024/26, for both internal employee and social sector service providers.
- *Budget 2024* includes lifts which acknowledged the first two years of the three-year mandate investing in social sector wages.
- *Budget 2024* adds the 2023/24 cost of living adjustment for MCFD employees to the *Budget 2023* funds provided for the three-year wage mandate.

### **Beyond 2024/25**

Further budget changes for subsequent years are outlined as follows:

- **CYSN: Engagement, Evaluation and Serving the Underserved**, as

projects are transitioned into regular operations, there is a reduction of one-time, project funding received as part of *Budget 2023* (\$4.1 million) in 2025/26.

### STOB CHANGES:

Major STOBs (\$ millions)	23/24 Estimates	Change	23/24 Estimates Restated	Change	24/25 Estimates
Salaries & Benefits	463.7	0.0	463.7	17.2	480.8
Operating Costs	70.9	0.0	70.9	(1.0)	69.9
Government Transfers	1,478.6	0.0	1,478.6	196.1	1,674.7
Other Expenses	30.0	0.0	30.0	0.0	30.0
Internal Recoveries	(46.1)	0.0	(46.1)	0.0	(46.1)
External Recoveries	(84.9)	0.0	(84.9)	(3.2)	(88.1)
<b>TOTAL MINISTRY</b>	<b>1,912.1</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>1,912.1</b>	<b>209.1</b>	<b>2,121.2</b>

- Salaries and Benefits increase due to the Shared Recovery Mandate wage increases, CYSN New Investments, and SAJE.
- Operating and Other Expenses decrease reflecting the completion of some project work for CYSN: Engagement, Evaluation, and Serving the Underserved was completed. Operating funding was provided for Directors Legal Counsel which support increased legal caseload volumes.
- Government transfers increase because of SRM social sector wage increases to support recruitment and retention, funding for direct child protection and child welfare, CYSN Framework, and Youth Transitioning to Adulthood (SAJE).
- Recoveries from federal government associated with increased child protection services.

**2024/25 CAPITAL BUDGET CHANGES:**

<b>Asset Category (\$ millions)</b>	<b>23/24 Estimates</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>23/24 Estimates Restated</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>24/25 Estimates</b>
Specialized Equipment	0.202	0.0	0.202	0.0	0.202
Office Furniture and Equipment	0.028	0.0	0.028	0.0	0.028
Vehicles	2.165	0.0	2.165	(0.2)	2.000
<b>TOTAL MINISTRY</b>	<b>2.395</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>2.395</b>	<b>(0.2)</b>	<b>2.230</b>

- Vehicle capital is allocated to MCFD based on government's vehicle replacement strategy. The 2024/25 strategy has resulted in a \$0.165M decrease to the MCFD allocation.

**Attachments:**

- Appendix A - MCFD Estimates and Supplements to the Estimates
- Appendix B – MCFD Material Assumptions
- Appendix C – Resource Summary
- Appendix D - Resource summary comparison by Core business

## **Appendix A – MCFD Estimates and Supplements to the Estimates**

### **MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT**

The mission of the Ministry of Children and Family Development is to work together to deliver inclusive, culturally respectful, responsive, and accessible services to support the well-being of children, youth, and families.

#### **MINISTRY SUMMARY**

*(\$000)*

	Estimates 2023/24 <sup>1</sup>	Estimates 2024/25
<b>VOTED APPROPRIATION</b>		
Vote 18 — Ministry Operations.....	1,912,095	<b>2,121,197</b>
<b>OPERATING EXPENSES</b>	<u>1,912,095</u>	<u><b>2,121,197</b></u>
<b>CAPITAL EXPENDITURES <sup>2</sup></b>	2,395	<b>2,230</b>
<b>LOANS, INVESTMENTS AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS <sup>3</sup></b>	(31)	<b>(31)</b>
<b>REVENUE COLLECTED FOR, AND TRANSFERRED TO, OTHER ENTITIES <sup>4</sup></b>	—	<b>—</b>

#### **NOTES**

<sup>1</sup> For comparative purposes, figures shown for the 2023/24 operating expenses; capital expenditures; loans, investments and other requirements; and revenue collected for, and transferred to, other entities are restated to be consistent with the presentation of the 2024/25 Estimates. A reconciliation of restated operating expenses and capital expenditures is presented in Schedule A.

<sup>2</sup> A listing of estimated capital expenditures by ministry is presented in Schedule C.

<sup>3</sup> A summary of loans, investments and other requirements by ministry is presented in Schedule D.

<sup>4</sup> A summary of revenue collected for, and transferred to, other entities by ministry is presented in Schedule E.

MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT  
(\$000)

VOTE 18 Ministry Operations

Description	Total 2023/24 Operating Expenses	50	51	52	54	Total Salaries and Benefits	55	57	59	60	63	65	67	68	69
Early Childhood Development	41,856	2,217	11	563	—	2,791	—	70	—	112	—	—	—	—	—
Services for Children and Youth with Support Needs	528,889	23,541	132	5,979	—	29,652	—	265	—	400	1,670	294	—	—	83
Child and Youth Mental Health Services	122,197	56,479	1,015	14,417	—	71,911	—	778	—	437	222	641	—	—	357
Child Safety, Family Support and Children in Care Services	935,155	152,359	3,415	38,741	—	194,515	—	2,918	23,949	246	1,213	50	83	22	84
Adoption Services	37,951	8,726	23	2,224	—	10,973	—	49	—	—	—	7	—	—	—
Youth Justice Services	51,320	29,565	876	7,513	—	37,954	—	285	—	27	—	112	—	—	831
Service Delivery Support	173,225	87,771	864	22,673	—	111,308	—	3,757	4,600	6,523	5,920	6,028	—	—	—
Executive and Support Services	21,502	17,254	12	4,415	58	21,739	—	410	2	—	9	1,217	—	—	—
Minister's Office	722	516	—	155	58	729	—	80	—	—	7	19	—	—	—
Corporate Services	20,780	16,738	12	4,260	—	21,010	—	330	2	—	2	1,198	—	—	—
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,912,095</b>	<b>377,912</b>	<b>6,348</b>	<b>96,525</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>480,843</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>8,532</b>	<b>28,551</b>	<b>7,745</b>	<b>9,034</b>	<b>8,349</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>1,355</b>

70	72	73	75	Total Operating Costs	77	79	80	Total Govt Transfers	81	83	85	Total Other Expenses	86	88	Total Internal Recoveries	89	90	Total External Recoveries	Total 2024/25 Operating Expenses
—	—	—	—	182	—	10	43,289	43,299	—	—	1	1	—	(570)	(570)	(1)	(1)	(2)	45,701
20	—	—	—	2,732	4,125	48,606	544,156	596,887	—	—	22	22	—	(36,801)	(36,801)	(1)	(2,284)	(2,285)	590,207
152	—	—	1,032	3,619	500	130	61,596	62,226	—	—	—	—	—	(8,768)	(8,768)	(660)	(115)	(775)	128,213
8	—	—	100	28,673	1,000	98,620	807,352	906,972	—	—	633	633	—	(1)	(1)	(148)	(66,014)	(66,162)	1,064,630
—	—	—	—	56	—	144	29,054	29,198	—	—	—	—	—	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(2)	40,224
131	—	—	—	1,386	500	299	32,141	32,940	—	—	1	1	—	(1)	(1)	(1)	(17,984)	(17,985)	54,295
1,853	—	1,494	1,353	31,528	500	—	1,843	2,343	—	—	29,163	29,163	—	(1)	(1)	(1)	(198)	(199)	174,142
—	—	21	79	1,738	—	—	830	830	—	—	160	160	—	(1)	(1)	(1)	(680)	(681)	23,785
—	—	—	—	106	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	835
—	—	21	79	1,632	—	—	830	830	—	—	160	160	—	(1)	(1)	(1)	(680)	(681)	22,950
<b>2,164</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>1,515</b>	<b>2,564</b>	<b>69,914</b>	<b>6,625</b>	<b>147,809</b>	<b>1,520,261</b>	<b>1,674,695</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>29,980</b>	<b>29,980</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>(46,144)</b>	<b>(46,144)</b>	<b>(814)</b>	<b>(87,277)</b>	<b>(88,091)</b>	<b>2,121,197</b>

## Appendix B – MCFD Material Assumptions

### Material Assumptions from *Budget 2023*

Ministry Programs and Assumptions (\$ millions unless otherwise specified)	Updated Forecast 2022/23	Plan 2023/24	Plan 2024/25	Sensitivities
<b>Children and Family Development</b>				
Average children-in-care ..... caseload (#)	4,952	4,817	4,738	The average number of children-in-care is decreasing as a result of ministry efforts to keep children in family settings where safe and feasible. The average cost per child in care is projected to increase based on the higher cost of contracted residential services and an increasing acuity of need for children in care. A 1% increase in the cost per case or a 1% increase in the average caseload will affect expenditures by \$2.8 million (excluding Indigenous CFS Agencies).
Average annual residential ..... cost per child in care (\$)	109,248	127,771	141,129	

### Material Assumptions from *Budget 2024*

Ministry Programs and Assumptions	Updated Forecast 2023/24	Plan 2024/25	Plan 2025/26	Plan 2023/24 Sensitivities
Average children-in-care caseload (#)	4,860	4,822	4,767	The average number of children-in-care is decreasing as a result of ministry efforts to keep children in family settings where safe and feasible. The average cost per child in care is projected to increase based on the higher cost of contracted residential services and an increasing acuity of need for children in care. A 1% increase in the cost per case or a 1% increase in the average caseload will affect expenditures by \$3.3 million (excluding Indigenous CFS Agencies).
Average annual residential cost per child in care (\$)	\$ 137,657	\$ 154,040	\$ 171,671	

1. What are the drivers for the change in per-child costs?

- Evolving composition of the children-in-care cohort** – A great percentage of children and youth that are involved with the child welfare system are temporary or permanently housed with family and community, in out of care placements (not included in the material assumption calculation). And a greater proportion of the smaller number of children-in-care have more complex needs, requiring greater supports. Since 2019 we have seen the percentage of children-in-care within staffed housing increase from 19% to 26%. As staffed housing is much more expensive, it drives up the overall cost per child.
- Complexity of care** – Over time, the ministry has observed the need for greater supports for children coming from unstable to sometimes violent family situations. The complexity in addressing the needs of children-in-care has increased, increasing the per child cost.

- **Basic needs costs** – BC, as other regions across Canada and the world, is impacted by the economic situation of rising costs. The cost to feed, cloth, transport, educate, etc. our children is much greater than it was three years ago.
2. Why is this happening now?
- Increased cost trend not new** – For all the above reasons, MCFD has been reporting gradual increases in the material assumptions cost per child over the past five or more years. *Budget 2024* increases are pronounced for the following reasons:
- **Budget 2023 Affordability rate increases** – *Budget 2023's* Affordability initiative provided for rate increases of up to 47% for foster parents.
  - **Shared Recovery Wage Mandate** service providers in the social sector will receive contract wage lifts of approximately 16% between 22/23 – 24/25. These are the highest wage increments as part of a wage mandate in over 10 years. Wages within staffed housing become part of the contracts, used to determine average cost per child.
  - **Inflationary impact on Staffed Housing** – although wage and maintenance costs within staffed housing contracts are aligned with other costs drivers, all other costs are impacted by market rates. Market inflation, which has been the highest it has been since the early 1990s, is passed onto the ministry, increasing the average cost per child.

## Appendix C – Resource Summary Financial Summary

(\$000s)	2023/24 Restated Estimates <sup>1</sup>	2024/25 Estimates	2025/26 Plan	2026/27 Plan
<b>Operating Expenses</b>				
Early Childhood Development	41,856	45,701	45,701	45,701
Services for Children and Youth with Support Needs	528,889	590,207	585,489	585,489
Child and Youth Mental Health Services	122,197	128,213	128,213	128,213
Child Safety, Family Support and Children in Care Services	935,155	1,064,630	1,064,630	1,064,630
Adoption Services	37,951	40,224	40,224	40,224
Youth Justice Services	51,320	54,295	54,295	54,295
Service Delivery Support	173,225	174,142	174,731	174,731
Executive and Support Services	21,502	23,785	23,785	23,785
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,912,095</b>	<b>2,121,197</b>	<b>2,117,068</b>	<b>2,117,068</b>
<b>Capital Expenditures</b>				
Service Delivery Support	2,395	2,230	2,230	2,230
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,395</b>	<b>2,230</b>	<b>2,230</b>	<b>2,230</b>
<b>Other Financing Transactions</b>				
<b>Executive and Support Services</b>				
(Human Services Providers Financing Program)				
Disbursements	0	0	0	0
Receipts	(31)	(31)	(31)	(31)
Net Cash Requirements (Source)	(31)	(31)	(31)	(31)
<b>Total Disbursements</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>(31)</b>	<b>(31)</b>	<b>(31)</b>	<b>(31)</b>
<b>Total Net Cash Requirements (Source)</b>	<b>(31)</b>	<b>(31)</b>	<b>(31)</b>	<b>(31)</b>

<sup>1</sup> For comparative purposes, amounts shown for 2023/24 have been restated to be consistent with the presentation of the 2024/25 Estimates.

## Appendix D – Resource summary comparison by Core business

### Ministry of Children & Family Development

#### RESOURCE SUMMARY COMPARISON- DETAILED CHANGES BY CORE BUSINESS

2022/23 to 2025/26

(\$000s)

Core Business Areas	2021/22 Restated	2022/23 Estimates	2023/24 Plan	2024/25 Plan	2025/26 Plan
Early Childhood Development	40,256	40,256	40,256	40,256	40,256
Services for Children & Youth with Support Needs	441,091	480,381	486,404	488,582	488,582
Child & Youth Mental Health Services	116,408	119,471	122,197	122,197	122,197
Child Safety, Family Support & Children in Care Services	807,579	835,781	841,156	851,001	851,001
Adoption Services	35,829	36,451	36,451	36,451	36,451
Youth Justice Services	51,320	51,320	51,320	51,320	51,320
Service Delivery Support	152,195	161,426	161,386	161,386	161,386
Executive & Support Services	16,730	16,959	17,021	17,021	17,021
<b>MINISTRY TOTAL</b>	<b>1,661,408</b>	<b>1,742,045</b>	<b>1,756,191</b>	<b>1,768,214</b>	<b>1,768,214</b>

#### Change - including Decisions for *Budget 2023* by Core Business:

Early Childhood Development	0	1,600	1,950	1,950	
Services for Children & Youth with Support Needs	0	42,485	45,391	40,673	
Child & Youth Mental Health Services	0	0	0	0	
Child Safety, Family Support & Children in Care Services	-1,400	93,999	97,999	97,999	
Adoption Services	0	1,500	1,800	1,800	
Youth Justice Services	0	0	0	0	
Service Delivery Support	0	11,839	9,758	10,347	
Executive & Support Services	0	4,481	5,201	5,201	
<b>MINISTRY TOTAL</b>		<b>-1,400</b>	<b>155,904</b>	<b>162,099</b>	<b>157,970</b>

#### Resource Summary as of *Budget 2023* :

Core Business Areas	2022/23 Estimates	2023/24 Plan	2024/25 Plan	2025/26 Plan
Early Childhood Development	40,256	41,856	42,206	42,206
Services for Children & Youth with Support Needs	480,381	528,889	533,973	529,255
Child & Youth Mental Health Services	119,471	122,197	122,197	122,197
Child Safety, Family Support & Children in Care Services	834,381	935,155	949,000	949,000
Adoption Services	36,451	37,951	38,251	38,251
Youth Justice Services	51,320	51,320	51,320	51,320
Service Delivery Support	161,426	173,225	171,144	171,733
Executive & Support Services	16,959	21,502	22,222	22,222
<b>MINISTRY TOTAL</b>	<b>1,740,646</b>	<b>1,912,095</b>	<b>1,930,313</b>	<b>1,926,184</b>
		171,449	18,218	(4,129)

**MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT  
FINANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES  
ESTIMATES CORPORATE BRIEFING NOTE 2024/25**

**ISSUE: Ministry Frontline Recruitment**

**KEY MESSAGES:**

- Direct service ministry employees have some of the hardest jobs in BC — that’s why the ministry is making improvements to help them provide vulnerable families with the quality services and supports they need and deserve.
- The ministry is continuously recruiting direct service positions with the aim to ensure quality service to children, youth and families.
- The ministry continues to support Indigenous recruitment.
- The ministry established a Hiring Services team that focuses on recruiting priority positions for the ministry. This has reduced total time to hire. This prioritization has resulted in a substantial number of direct service hires.
- The ministry has operationalized a continuous annual cycle of hiring for direct service positions.

**BACKGROUND:**

- MCFD has seven divisions. The majority of MCFD’s employees work in the Service Delivery Division.
- In February 2019, the ministry broadened the acceptable education and experience requirements for direct service positions requiring delegation under child welfare legislation to recruit more staff into Social Program Officer (SPO) 24-30 positions.
- In the summer of 2023, the ministry further amended experience requirements to reduce the requirement from two years to one year, as well as expanded relevant experience to include attributes such as working with adults.
  - A Social Work or Child and Youth Care degree is preferred but an equivalent combination of education and experience may be considered for some positions.
- In 2017, a Recruitment and Retention Incentive Program was created to further support recruitment and retention in hard-to-recruit (HTR)

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Date: January 2, 2024

communities:

- Eligible SPO positions in hard-to-recruit areas of BC receive an annual incentive payment based on a Memorandum of Agreement between the BC Government and the BCGEU.
- The next round of incentive payments will occur in May 2024.
- A review of the Recruitment and Retention Incentive Program for positions in hard-to-recruit locations is underway.
- MCFD also hires travelling Child Protection Workers. They work a schedule of seven days on, seven days off and serve the communities of Ashcroft, Dease Lake, Lillooet, Fort Nelson, Bella Coola, Fort St. James, McBride, Smithers/Hazelton, Terrace/Kitimat, and Williams Lake as outlined in a Memorandum of Agreement.
- The Provincial Remote Support Team (PRST) was established to address recruitment and retention challenges in northern and remote areas. PRST members collaborate with rural and remote district offices to deliver child protection services, prioritizing in-person service. Local offices access PRST for remote work.
- The Provincial Mobile Response Team (PMRT) continues to provide staffing support for hard-to-recruit communities.
- A new SPO R21 Child, Youth and Family Support Worker position has been created to support the SPOs and to create a bridge between a SPO Assistant and SPO R24.
- The requirements for recruitment of non-delegated SPO positions has been expanded to include both lived experience and education as meeting requirements for hiring these positions.
- To reduce barriers in hiring, the ministry has revised job profiles and expanded relevant credentials to accept a variety of degree types for positions in the ministry.
- The SPO Growth Series is moving from two years to one year to align with training requirements. This will benefit the workforce, as the growth positions will be able to work at full capacity sooner than before.
- The ministry has implemented a lateral transfer application process for service delivery employees to move into hard-to-recruit locations for specific positions and locations.

- The BCGEU 19<sup>th</sup> Main Agreement includes Temporary Market Adjustments (TMAs) for ministry classifications as a tool for recruitment and retention. In addition to the TMAs implemented in 2022, the ministry, effective April 1, 2024, has reduced the growth series steps from four to two for frontline SPO24s.
- An agreement for recruitment and retention incentivization bonuses for Sheriff and Corrections classifications was reached in 2023.

**CROSS REFERENCE:**

- 2.4 – Workforce Planning and Initiatives

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**MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT**  
**FINANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES**  
**ESTIMATES CORPORATE BRIEFING NOTE 2024/25**

**ISSUE: Ministry Workforce Summary**

**KEY MESSAGES:**

- Direct service employees have some of the hardest jobs in BC — that’s why the ministry is making improvements to provide vulnerable families with quality services and supports.
- The ministry’s overall budget increase for 2024/25 will allow better support to vulnerable children, youth, and families. Increased funding will be used to support the continuation of services and programs for youth and young adults transitioning from government care.
- Increased work flexibility because of work from home policies have increased both geographic and overall diversity of the ministry’s workforce.
  - Work from home policies have also increased access to opportunities working with the ministry.
- Ministry-specific strategies are being developed to support equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism employees in the workplace.
- The ministry has developed several plans, strategies, and frameworks to support the development and review of its workforce on an ongoing basis.

**BACKGROUND:**

- MCFD has seven divisions. The majority of MCFD’s employees work in the Service Delivery Division.
- Most MCFD employees are regular status.
- Most MCFD employees are unionized employees.
- The ministry published the People and Culture Plan in August 2021 with an update in July 2022. A new ministry workforce plan is in development, with an anticipated publication date of July 2024.
- MCFD’s largest occupational group is comprised of professionals (i.e., Social Program Officers and Mental Health Clinicians) in Health, Education, and Social Work; the remaining staff complement is comprised of excluded management, administration, corrections, and other corporate positions.

- The region with the highest number of employees is the Lower Mainland (Vancouver and Fraser Valley) and next highest is the Capital Region (Greater Victoria).
- Correctional Services, Licensed Psychologists, Nurses, Office Assistants and Social Program Officers roles are subject to a number of employees who are currently eligible to retire with an unreduced pension.
- To foster diversity, equity, and inclusion the following Communities of Practice (CoP) and Employee Resource Groups are available to employees: Gender Based Analysis + (GBA+); Accessibility; Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour; Indigenous Employees Network; Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual, other diverse sexual orientations, and gender identities (2SLGBTQIA+) groups.
- The Public Service Agency developed a “Supporting Transgender and Gender Diverse Employees in the Workplace” guide for supervisors, managers, and employees.
- The number of Indigenous employees that self-disclosed in 2022 decreased from 2020. Employees will have the opportunity to self-disclose in the upcoming 2024 Work Environment Survey (WES).
- The ministry is working on “Truth and Reconciliation” discussion forums with the intent to de-colonize ministry practices and policies and increase the cultural safety for Indigenous employees.
- The most current diversity data, from the 2022 WES, shows the ethnicity most self-declared was “White” followed by “Another Ethnicity” (e.g., Arab, Black, Iranian, Latin American, West Asian).

**CROSS REFERENCE:** N/A

**MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT**  
**FINANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES**  
**ESTIMATES CORPORATE BRIEFING NOTE 2024/25**

**ISSUE: Ministry Workforce Pressures**

**KEY MESSAGES:**

- Direct service workers have some of the hardest jobs in BC — that’s why the ministry is making improvements to provide vulnerable families with quality services and supports.
- Supporting families to keep children and youth safe is always the top priority of our employees and administrative staff.
- Workforce pressures include labour market competition, inflation, caseload volumes, and other complexities associated with the child and family service sector.
- Recruiting and retaining staff, particularly in rural and remote communities has been an ongoing challenge for many years and it is a reality faced by many employers, both provincially and nationally.
- MCFD has implemented strategies across the employee lifecycle – attraction, recruitment, onboarding, retention, career development and separation in response to current workforce pressures.
- The ministry has developed several plans, strategies, and frameworks to address workforce pressures both internally and within the sector. The ministry updated its workforce plan in 2022 and has developed a Child and Family Service Sector Workforce Plan expected to be released in 2024.

**BACKGROUND:**

- MCFD experienced low exit rates during the COVID-19 pandemic (2020/21) compared to previous years.
- In 2022 the ministry experienced a high exit rate and in 2023 the exit rate decreased compared to previous years.
- The number of employees in the ministry that are eligible for a pension is lower than the BC Public Service.
- The direct service Correctional Services, Licensed Psychologists, Nurses, Office Assistants and Social Program Officers roles are subject to a number of employees who are currently eligible to retire with an unreduced pension.

- Following the release of the *BC Public Service Guidelines and Considerations for Expanding Flexible Work*, the ministry reviewed and updated the telework policies as of June 2023. The ministry expanded the use of telework where possible given client facing roles.
- Programs have been implemented to support the psychological health and safety of workers, such as:
  - Critical Incident and Cumulative Stress Management sessions through our Employee and Family Assistance Services provider.
  - A Peer-to-Peer project that was piloted in the South Island Service Delivery Area.
- A program for rural and remote communities involves highly qualified employees who temporarily leave their base positions and voluntarily deploy for short-term assignments at their current rate of pay to meet operational and child safety requirements. These assignments are in child protection guardianship.
- A new SPO R21 Child, Youth and Family Support Worker position has been created to support the SPOs and to create a bridge between a SPO Assistant and SPO R24. The SPO Growth Series is moving from two years to one year to align with training requirements. This will benefit the workforce, as the growth positions will be able to work at full capacity sooner than before.
- The ministry has developed several plans, strategies, and frameworks to support the engagement and development of employees on an ongoing basis.
- A centralized hiring team has been established within the ministry to provide recruitment services for priority positions and develop and implement new strategies for marketing and talent acquisition.
- An agreement for recruitment and retention incentivization bonuses for Sheriff and Corrections classifications was reached in 2023. A review of the Recruitment and Retention Incentive Program for positions in hard-to-recruit locations is underway.

#### **CROSS REFERENCE:**

- **2.2 – Ministry Frontline Recruitment**

**MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT  
FINANCE & CORPORATE SERVICES DIVISION  
ESTIMATES CORPORATE BRIEFING NOTE 2024/25**

**ISSUE: MCFD Contracting – Compensation & Funding**

**KEY MESSAGES:**

Shared Recovery Mandate (Compensation)

- On March 28, 2023, the Community Social Services Employers' Association (CSSEA) and the Community Social Services Bargaining Association (CSSBA) ratified 3-year collective agreements, retroactive April 1, 2022, to March 31, 2025, under the Province's Shared Recovery Mandate (SRM).
- The Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) is in the process of implementing the final year of the three-year mandate (SRM) providing wage increases to public sector employers with unionized employees.
- To avoid disruption in service due to the delay in ratification, MCFD renewed contracts that expired in 2022 and 2023 at existing rates until bargaining was finalized.
- SRM has nine funding components recommended by PSEC that are separated into 3 funding categories (1) Core wage and benefits funding lift, (2) Targeted funding approach, and (3) Indigenous Services (IS) collective agreement incremental funding lift.
- Under SRM, non-union, and hybrid (partially certified) agencies received unprecedented core wage and benefit funding lifts that were equivalent to their CSSEA counterparts.
- Agencies were also eligible to receive targeted funding and lifts for management costs upon completion the 2022 CSSEA Compensation and Employee Turnover Report and authorized data sharing with MCFD.
- Management positions also received an equivalent rate increases as not to exacerbate wage compression/inversion.
- Indigenous Services Incremental Lifts were also extended to equivalent IS non-union agencies.

## HEABC Agencies

- On March 31, 2023, the Health Employers Association of BC (HEABC) and Nurses' Bargaining Association (NBA) ratified SRM, retroactive April 1, 2022, to March 31, 2025.
- HEABC agencies are subject to collective agreements in Community Health, Facilities, Nurses, and Health Science Professionals sub-sectors which all receive slightly different increases.
- The majority of HEABC funding is distributed by the Ministry of Health, and MCFD absorbs the cost of wage increases for the small number of agencies that fall within these agreements.
- HEABC agencies received a single core wage and benefit lift that serviced the same components as CSSEA and its non-union counterparts, however they received no targeted funding.
- HEABC agencies also received management lifts for the general wage element, distributed as a blended weighted average of the various collective agreements.

## Implementation

- Government committed to SRM implementation within four months of ratification (July 28, 2023).
- Community Social Sector funders collaborated in the development of an implementation strategy to provide funding lifts and compensation increases that were consistent amongst funders and endorsed by PSEC.
- MCFD requested agency level data from the 2022 CSSEA Employee Compensation and Turnover Survey and required agencies to provide data authorization in order to access targeted funding.
- Distribution of contract modifications aligning with the new mandate began July 24, 2023.
- Retroactive lump sum payments were included for FY22/23 wage increases as well as a six-month lump sum payment for the period of April 1, 2023, to September 30, 2023. Regular increased monthly payments commenced October 2023 for many agencies.

- Agencies who have not authorized data sharing or completed the CSSEA survey have been granted a multitude of extensions to be able to receive a targeted funding lift included in the April 1, 2024, contract renewal cycle.

## **BACKGROUND:**

### Compensation for Non-Union Agencies:

- Historically non-union service providers and the sector have expressed concerns regarding the wage comparability between the union and non-unionized sector.
- Recruitment and Retention (RR) funding began as part of a *Budget 2020* commitment to support the non-union social service agencies and to support the overall and long-term strength of the sector.
- In 2023, recruitment and retention funding became permanent baseline funding for eligible non-union and partially- certified agencies.
- Under SRM, non-union and partially certified agencies received unprecedented equivalent core wage and benefit increases as their unionized counterparts.
- In 2023, SRM paired with permanent recruitment and retention funding has significantly narrowed the wage gap between union and non-union agencies that was amplified by previous mandates, specifically the Low Wage Redress component of the Sustainable Services Negotiated Mandate (SSNM).

### Current Work Underway – SRM

- Third year implementation is underway. Increases will include the full COLA increase for April 1, 2024, ahead of annual average BC CPI data to avoid additional contract modifications or service interruptions.
- MCFD reserves the right to claw back increases through future adjustments if deemed necessary.
- A 30-day SRM inquiry period has just closed January 31<sup>st</sup> allowing service providers to bring any specific contract related questions, concerns and feedback forward. Inquiries have been triaged to the appropriate area and are being responded to.

## **CROSS REFERENCE: N/A**

**MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT**  
**FINANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES**  
**ESTIMATES CORPORATE BRIEFING NOTE 2024/25**

**ISSUE:** Ministry Corporate Workforce Overview

**KEY MESSAGES:**

- Direct service employees have some of the hardest jobs in BC — that’s why the ministry is making improvements to help them provide vulnerable families with the quality services and supports they need and deserve.
- The Ministry’s overall budget increase for 2024/25 will allow the ministry to better support vulnerable children, youth and families and the direction of the ministry.
- Supporting families to keep children and youth safe is always the top priority of our direct service and administrative staff.
- The Ministry is continuously recruiting direct service positions with the aim to ensure quality service to children, youth, and families.
- MCFD has implemented strategies across the employee lifecycle – attraction, recruitment, onboarding, retention, career development and separation in response to current workforce pressures.
- Ministry-specific strategies are being developed to support equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism.
- The ministry is aligning our ways of working with the Aboriginal Policy and Practice Framework and made amendments to the *Child, Family and Community Service Act* and the *Adoption Act* upholding Indigenous jurisdiction over child and family services.

**BACKGROUND:**

- MCFD has developed several plans, strategies, and frameworks to support the development and review of its workforce on an ongoing basis.
  - The ministry published the People and Culture Plan in August 2021 with an update in July 2022.
- Programs to support the psychological health and safety of workers are being

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Date: February 7, 2023

expanded.

- Critical Incident and Cumulative Stress Management sessions are being offered to teams through our Employee and Family Assistance Services provider.
- A Peer-to-Peer project will be piloted in the South Island Service Delivery Area in 2023.
- The Ministry now has a Hiring Services team. Working closely with the BC Public Service Agency, the Ministry will prioritize top recruited positions to reduce delays in filling vacancies and the burden on direct service managers.
- The following strategies have been implemented to address recruitment and retention in hard-to-recruit communities:
  - The Recruitment and Retention Incentive Program was created in 2017. A review of the Recruitment and Retention Incentive Program for positions in hard-to-recruit locations is underway.
  - Travelling Child Protection Workers that work a schedule of seven days on, seven days off.
  - Staffing support from the Provincial Mobile Response Team.
- In February 2019, the Ministry broadened the acceptable education and experience requirements for front-line positions requiring delegation under child welfare legislation in an attempt to recruit more staff.
- The Ministry increased flexible work opportunities for employees in order to improve attraction and retention.
- A Social Program Officer (SPO) 21 role has been introduced to provide direct services to children, youth, families, and caregivers, easing the workload of SPO 24s.

#### **CROSS REFERENCE:**

- **2.2 – Ministry Frontline Recruitment**
- **2.4 – Workforce Pressures**

**MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT  
FINANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES  
ESTIMATES CORPORATE BRIEFING NOTE 2024/25**

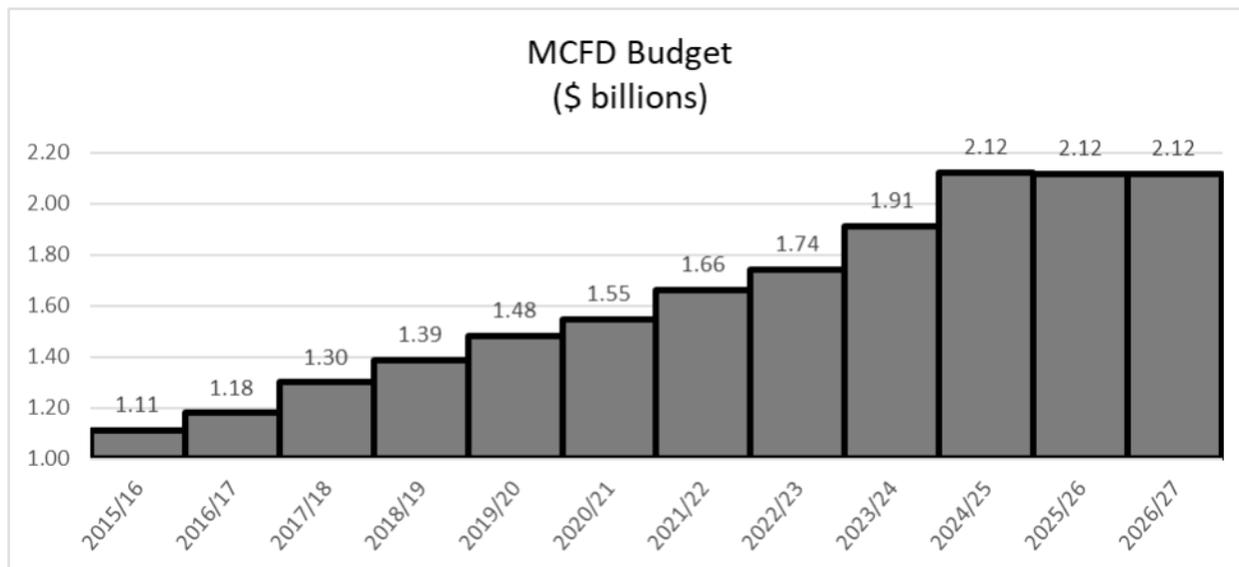
**ISSUE: MCFD and CYSN Historical Budgets**

**KEY MESSAGES:**

- The Ministry of Children and Family Development's (MCFD) 2024/25 budget is \$2,121.2 million.
- Since 2015/16, MCFD's budget<sup>1</sup> has increased by \$1,009.0 million, with *Budget 2024's* increase of \$209.1 million being the largest increase of the 10 years.
- Since 2015/16, the Children and Youth with Support Needs (CYSN) budget has increased by \$304.8 million.

**BACKGROUND:**

- MCFD's budget has steadily grown since 2015/16 with the largest increases to come in fiscals 2024/24 (10.9%), 2017/18 (10.2%), and 2023/24 (9.8%).

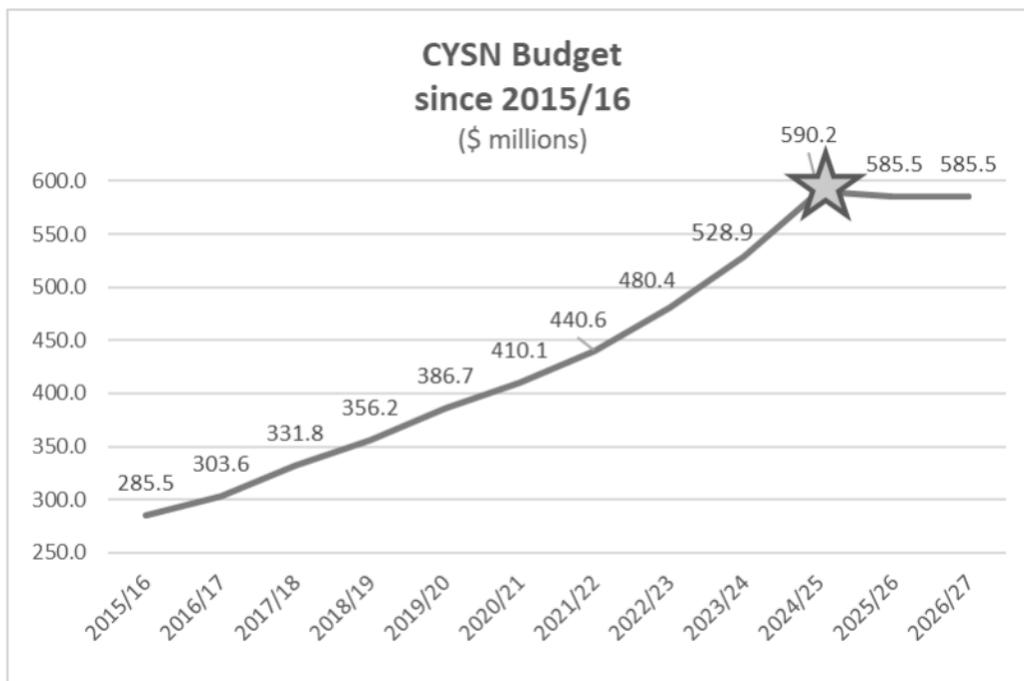


- Over the 10 years the ministry has received investments<sup>2</sup> for:
  - Child Welfare caseload- \$211.9 million
  - Caregiver Rates - \$99.4 million

<sup>1</sup> 2015/16 – 2022/23 budgets have been restated to reflect the ministry's current program delivery.

<sup>2</sup> Appendix A includes a detailed listing of categorized investments over the fiscal years

- CYSN Service Framework - \$73.9 million
- Caseload Staffing - \$68.3 million
- Child and Youth Mental Health - \$55.3 million
- Youth Adults - \$44.4 million
- CYSN Caseload (including Respite) - \$102.7 million
- The CYSN budget has received steady increases since 2015/16 landing between \$18.1 million and \$48.5 million; with the latest investment landing at \$61.3 million.
- Since 2015/16, the CYSN budget has received lifts as a result of the following initiatives/priorities:
  - CYSN caseload (Autism Individualized Funding and Medical Benefits) - \$89.0 million
  - Direct Funding Respite annual maximum increases - \$13.7 million
  - CYSN framework pilot and interim supports - \$73.9 million



**CROSS REFERENCE:** N/A

### Appendix A – Detailed Annual Investments - Cumulative

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
<b>Child Protection</b>											
Caseload - Children in Care/Alternates to Care	\$ 38.0	\$ 76.8	\$ 80.4	\$ 100.4	\$ 129.4	\$ 155.0	\$ 159.7	\$ 159.7	\$ 200.93	\$ 200.9	\$ 200.9
Caseload Staffing	\$ 18.8	\$ 62.1	\$ 62.1	\$ 62.1	\$ 62.1	\$ 62.1	\$ 68.3	\$ 68.3	\$ 68.3	\$ 68.3	\$ 68.3
Caregiver Rates	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 20.9	\$ 21.4	\$ 22.0	\$ 22.0	\$ 22.0	\$ 22.0	\$ 22.0	\$ 22.0
Cultural Connections	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 5.0	\$ 5.0	\$ 5.0	\$ 5.0	\$ 5.00	\$ 5.0	\$ 5.0
Director's Council	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 6.0	\$ 6.0	\$ 6.0	\$ 6.0	\$ 6.00	\$ 6.0	\$ 6.0
Affordability (not including respite)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 77.4	\$ 77.4	\$ 77.4	\$ 77.4
<b>Cumulative Total</b>	<b>\$ 56.8</b>	<b>\$ 138.9</b>	<b>\$ 142.5</b>	<b>\$ 183.4</b>	<b>\$ 223.9</b>	<b>\$ 250.0</b>	<b>\$ 261.0</b>	<b>\$ 338.5</b>	<b>\$ 379.7</b>	<b>\$ 379.7</b>	<b>\$ 379.7</b>
<b>Children with Support Needs</b>											
Caseload - Autism and Medical Benefits	\$ 8.7	\$ 23.9	\$ 23.9	\$ 35.2	\$ 43.8	\$ 52.4	\$ 80.4	\$ 80.4	\$ 89.0	\$ 89.0	\$ 89.0
Respite (including respite from affordability)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 6.3	\$ 6.3	\$ 6.3	\$ 6.3	\$ 13.7	\$ 13.7	\$ 13.7	\$ 13.7
CYSN Framework Early Implementation	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 33.2	\$ 39.2	\$ 42.8	\$ 42.8	\$ 42.8
CYSN: New Investments	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 32.9	\$ 31.2	\$ 27.1	\$ 27.1
<b>Cumulative Total</b>	<b>\$ 8.7</b>	<b>\$ 23.9</b>	<b>\$ 23.9</b>	<b>\$ 41.5</b>	<b>\$ 50.1</b>	<b>\$ 58.7</b>	<b>\$ 119.9</b>	<b>\$ 166.3</b>	<b>\$ 176.6</b>	<b>\$ 172.5</b>	<b>\$ 172.5</b>
<b>Youth and Young Adults</b>		\$ 15.2	\$ -	\$ 17.6	\$ 8.6	\$ 8.6	\$ 61.2	\$ 46.3	\$ 10.4	\$ 4.1	\$ -
Agreement with Young Adults	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 7.7	\$ 10.0	\$ 12.0	\$ 12.0	\$ 12.0	\$ 12.0	\$ 12.0	\$ 12.0	\$ 12.0
Poverty Reduction Strategy	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 6.3	\$ 12.6	\$ 12.6	\$ 12.6	\$ 12.6	\$ 12.6	\$ 12.6
Youth Transitioning	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 4.6	\$ 10.0	\$ 19.8	\$ 19.8	\$ 19.8
<b>Cumulative Total</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 7.7</b>	<b>\$ 10.0</b>	<b>\$ 18.3</b>	<b>\$ 24.6</b>	<b>\$ 29.2</b>	<b>\$ 34.6</b>	<b>\$ 44.4</b>	<b>\$ 44.4</b>	<b>\$ 44.4</b>
<b>Child and Youth Mental Health</b>											
Staffing	\$ -	\$ 15.0	\$ 15.0	\$ 15.0	\$ 15.0	\$ 15.0	\$ 15.0	\$ 15.0	\$ 15.0	\$ 15.0	\$ 16.0
Pathway to Hope	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 9.4	\$ 14.3	\$ 34.9	\$ 37.6	\$ 40.3	\$ 40.3	\$ 40.3	\$ 39.3
<b>Cumulative Total</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 15.0</b>	<b>\$ 15.0</b>	<b>\$ 24.4</b>	<b>\$ 29.3</b>	<b>\$ 49.9</b>	<b>\$ 52.6</b>	<b>\$ 55.3</b>	<b>\$ 55.3</b>	<b>\$ 55.3</b>	<b>\$ 55.3</b>
<b>Other</b>											
Wage Mandates	\$ 8.0	\$ 20.5	\$ 47.7	\$ 68.2	\$ 88.4	\$ 138.1	\$ 138.6	\$ 178.1	\$ 325.7	\$ 325.7	\$ 325.7
Benefits Adjustments	-\$ 1.3	-\$ 1.3	\$ -	\$ 1.9	\$ 1.9	\$ 2.0	\$ 2.0	\$ 2.0	\$ 2.0	\$ 2.0	\$ 3.0
Contract Management	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1.0	\$ 1.0	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Budget Adjustment (involving Child Care)	-\$ 4.3	-\$ 8.9	\$ 36.6	\$ 39.3	\$ 24.8	\$ 25.8	\$ 24.6	\$ 24.6	\$ 24.6	\$ 24.6	\$ 24.6
Legal Services	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 0.3	\$ 0.3	\$ 0.3	\$ 0.3	\$ 0.3
Other Minor	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 0.1	\$ 0.1	\$ 0.2	\$ 0.3	\$ 0.3	\$ 0.3
<b>Cumulative Total</b>	<b>\$ 2.5</b>	<b>\$ 10.3</b>	<b>\$ 85.3</b>	<b>\$ 110.5</b>	<b>\$ 115.2</b>	<b>\$ 166.0</b>	<b>\$ 165.7</b>	<b>\$ 205.2</b>	<b>\$ 352.9</b>	<b>\$ 352.9</b>	<b>\$ 353.9</b>
<b>Total Cumulative Increases</b>	<b>\$ 68.0</b>	<b>\$ 188.1</b>	<b>\$ 274.4</b>	<b>\$ 369.8</b>	<b>\$ 436.8</b>	<b>\$ 549.2</b>	<b>\$ 628.5</b>	<b>\$ 799.9</b>	<b>\$ 1,009.0</b>	<b>\$ 1,004.9</b>	<b>\$ 1,005.9</b>

## Appendix B – Annual Increases – Charts

Fiscal Year	Ministry		YoY Lift Amount (\$)	YoY Lift Amount (%)	Cumulative Lift since 2016
	Restated for Comparability				
2015/16	1,112.2				
2016/17	1,180.2		67.961	6.11%	67.961
2017/18	1,300.3		120.167	10.18%	188.128
2018/19	1,386.6		86.241	6.63%	274.369
2019/20	1,482.0		95.417	6.88%	369.786
2020/21	1,548.9		66.964	4.52%	436.750
2021/22	1,661.4		112.466	7.26%	549.216
2022/23	1,740.6		79.237	4.77%	628.453
2023/24	1,912.1		171.450	9.85%	799.903
2024/25	2,121.2		209.102	10.94%	1,009.005
2025/26	2,117.1		-4.129	-0.19%	1,004.876
2026/27	2,117.1		0.000	0.00%	1,004.876

Fiscal Year	CYSN	YoY Lift Amount (\$)	YoY Lift Amount (%)	Cumulative Lift since 2016
2016/17	303.568	18.108	6.34%	18.108
2017/18	331.824	28.256	9.31%	46.364
2018/19	356.249	24.425	7.36%	70.789
2019/20	386.669	30.420	8.54%	101.209
2020/21	410.091	23.422	6.06%	124.631
2021/22	440.635	30.544	7.45%	155.175
2022/23	480.381	39.746	9.02%	194.921
2023/24	528.889	48.508	11.01%	243.429
2024/25	590.207	61.318	11.59%	304.747
2025/26	585.489	-4.718	-0.80%	300.029
2026/27	585.489	-4.718	-0.80%	300.029

**MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT  
STRATEGIC INTEGRATION, POLICY AND LEGISLATION  
ESTIMATES CORPORATE BRIEFING NOTE 2024/25**

**ISSUE:           Overview of the Network of Care (OOC, Foster Care, Staffed)**

**KEY MESSAGES:**

- Every child and youth should be healthy, safe, and supported to reach their goals and maintain strong connections to their communities and culture; the Ministry of Children and Family Development is creating an integrated Network of Care that puts their individual needs at the centre.
- Evidence shows that, when appropriate and safe, keeping families together results in better outcomes compared to placing a child or youth into care.
- When a child can no longer live at home, our priority is to make every effort to support kinship care (often referred to as out-of-care placement) – ensuring children and youth remain in community connected to culture and language.
- If care cannot be provided by a person known to the child, the Ministry prioritizes placing children and youth in home-based environments, where the foster caregiver resides with the child.
- Where a child/youth’s needs cannot be accommodated in foster care, or where a family requires specialized supports to remain strong and together, the network includes Specialized Homes and Support Services (SHSS).

**BACKGROUND:**

- Work to develop an integrated Network of Care began in response to reports and recommendations dating back to 2012, including the Residential Review report, the Office of the Representative for Children and Youth reports and the Office of the Auditor General’s report on the Oversight of Contracted Residential Services for Children and Youth in Care, as well as consultation with children, youth, families, and service providers across B.C.
- The ministry has spent the last five years, actively engaged with partners across B.C. to design service improvements to the Network of Care. This collaborative work has included province-wide virtual engagement, targeted consultation with youth and service providers, Indigenous Child and Family Services

Directors (ICFSD), partnership working group, engagement with the First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC), and ongoing collaboration with external sector partners (including urban and rural ICFSD, Métis Nation, and the BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres (BCAAFC)).

- The integrated Network of Care’s services are designed to work together to meet families where they are and address their needs early to keep families strong and together. When needed, families or children/youth are connected to high-quality, specialized supports that focus on belonging and connection to community and culture.
- Implementation of the Network of Care is underway, beginning with SHSS and the Enhanced Out-of-Care program that provides wrap-around supports to children and youth with complex support needs to live with extended family and/or community members.
- While progress on improving the Network of Care has been made, we are committed to continuing that work by:
  - continuing to move away from “group homes”/staffed models of care and towards specialized therapeutic homes through the implementation of SHSS;
  - continued implementation the Enhanced Out-of-Care program to better support children/youth with support needs to live successfully with extended family and/or community members;
  - addressing gaps in the continuum of supports needed to keep families together and avoid children/youth coming into care through expanding access to specialized respite and stabilization services;
  - developing a Youth Emergency Shelter service that provides voluntary, self-referred short-term accommodation on a crisis-intervention basis, outreach services and drop-in day programming. A pilot of the service is currently in operation.
  - conducting a comprehensive review of care planning which intends to transform the policy and practice of care planning to ensure it is grounded in fostering belonging – to family, culture, and community – for children and youth.
  - establishing stronger linkages with other supports, such as Children & Youth with Support Needs (CYSN), Child & Youth Mental Health (CYMH) and Youth Justice (YJ) services to help ensure our various

systems work together to provide wrap around service to British Columbians.

**CROSS REFERENCE:**

3.2 – Overview of OOC (including EOOO)

6.1 – Youth Transitions

**MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT  
STRATEGIC INTEGRATION, POLICY AND LEGISLATION  
ESTIMATES CORPORATE BRIEFING NOTE 2024/25**

**ISSUE: Out-of-Care Overview (including Enhanced Out-of-Care)**

**KEY MESSAGES:**

- MCFD's top priority is to ensure the health and wellbeing of children and youth, and keeping families strong and together.
- All children and youth deserve to be supported to live healthy and happy lives, reach their goals, and stay connected to their families, communities and cultures.
- When a child can no longer live at home, our priority is to make every effort to support kinship care (often referred to as out-of-care placement) – ensuring children and youth remain in community connected to culture and language.
- The ministry uses out-of-care arrangements as a key response to support children and youth who cannot safely live at home with their parents.
- Evidence shows that, when appropriate and safe, keeping families together results in better outcomes compared to placing a child or youth into care.
- Out-of-care arrangements help preserve family unity, support cultural continuity, and minimize the trauma of removal and disconnection for children, youth, and their families.
- The use of out-of-care options is increasing, which is a sign of success for the ministry's early intervention, prevention and child protection systems.
- The ministry is committed to continuing to support out-of-care arrangements, which are consistent with *An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families* and the Ministry's prevention and early intervention mandate.

**BACKGROUND:**

- Children in out-of-care arrangements are cared for by extended family members, or others with a cultural or traditional responsibility to the child, without the child being in the care of the ministry or an Indigenous Child and Family Service Agency.

- Out-of-care arrangements are a family preservation strategy and can be used as part of a child protection response.
- Out-of-care arrangements provide families in crisis with viable options to keep their children out of foster care and safe in the homes of their extended families and communities.
- There are some continuing gaps that can present challenges for families and can result in situations where children come into care, particularly those children with significant and complex needs, even if the child has family members who are willing to care for them:
  - Out-of-care care providers are not eligible to receive the same supports that are available to foster caregivers, including service payments, education, or the same access to social workers who can help them to access and coordinate supports.
  - Supports and services that are available to out-of-care care providers are inconsistent and based on legal status, which creates inequities between out-of-care arrangements. These inequities present a barrier to entering into a permanency plan. For example, those in the Extended Family Program (typically a temporary arrangement) receive more supports and services than those in a permanent transfer of custody.
- The ministry continues to make improvements to out-of-care options. Recent efforts to better support out-of-care options include:
  - Boosting monthly caregiver rates for children in foster, kinship, and out-of-care arrangements by up to 47%, and increasing the per-day rate for caregivers providing respite and relief care. Budget 2023 provided the ministry \$84.9 M to boost monthly caregiver rates, benefiting approximately 7,800 children, youth, and their caregivers.
  - Fully implementing the enhanced out-of-care system in early 2023, which provides wrap-around and financial supports to a child or youth and their out-of-care care providers to meet the child or youth's significant and complex functional support needs. In the first two quarters of implementation, the ministry saw 13 enhanced out-of-care agreements completed, with a combined annual cost of \$135,221.00.

- Continuing evaluation of the enhanced out-of-care program, allowing for opportunities to identify and make program improvements. Evaluation of the enhanced out-of-care program is expected to be complete in early 2024.
- Policy changes which set new minimum requirements for workers to meet in-person and privately with children and youth to ensure that workers can assess whether the needs of the child/youth are being met and to identify concerns.
- Policy changes to clarify that a proposed care provider and child/youth over 12 is provided the opportunity to consult with independent legal advice (a direct response to the BC Ombudsperson's 2023 report, *Misinformed: How the Ministry of Children and Family Development failed in its permanency planning obligations to a youth in care*).
- Policy changes coming in 2024 that ensure social workers and care providers know how to access the Canada Learning Bond that is now available for permanent transfers of custody.
- Increasing support to out-of-care arrangements is also an element of the Specialized Homes and Support Services transformation and will benefit children and youth, families, communities, and the ministry by:
  - Expanding access to respite services to support successful out-of-care arrangements and improve short- and long-term outcomes for children and youth.
  - Supporting children and youth to stay with their families and avoid less appropriate care options will enable the ministry to reinvest those resources to better support families in the community and keep more families together through increased preventions and early intervention.
- Types of out-of-care arrangements include:
  - Extended Family Program agreements, which provide support when a parent voluntarily and temporarily gives care of their child to a care provider. Extended Family Program agreements may be used to support customary care arrangements in Indigenous communities.

- Temporary or interim custody orders to a person other than a parent, which occur when a child has been removed from their parent’s care and the court orders that the child is placed temporarily in the care of another person (e.g., an extended family member).
- A permanent transfer of custody, which permanently transfers custody of a child to a person other than their parent when it has been determined that reunification with the parent is not possible.
- The Child in the Home of a Relative program, which is an income assistance-based program administered by the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction. This program supports children to live with relatives when their parent cannot care for them. The program stopped receiving applications in 2010, although existing clients may continue to receive financial assistance if the eligibility criteria are met.
- Youth Agreements, which support youth ages 16 – 18 to live independently when all efforts to reconnect them with their parents or family have been exhausted.

**CROSS REFERENCE:**

**3.1** – Overview of Network of Care

**6.1** – Youth Transitions

**MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT  
OFFICE OF THE PROVINCIAL DIRECTOR AND ABORIGINAL SERVICES  
ESTIMATES CORPORATE BRIEFING NOTE 2024/25**

**ISSUE: Overview of Foster Care**

**KEY MESSAGES:**

- The Ministry of Children and Family Development's (MCFD) goal is to keep families together, resulting in fewer children and youth coming into care.
- However, there is still a need for foster caregivers to care for the children and youth who come into care.
- Foster caregivers care for children and youth who cannot safely live with their own families, whose families have asked for help with parenting during times of crisis, or whose families need specific or periodic help in caring for their children or youth.
- In foster homes, the child or youth resides in the caregiver's home.
- Foster homes operate under a contractual agreement with the director under the *Child, Family and Community Service Act* (CFCSA).

**BACKGROUND:**

- Foster caregivers receive a monthly payment called the Foster Family Care Rate that covers the costs of caring for a child/youth.
- As of December 31, 2023, Foster Family Care rates were \$1,502.53 for children aged 0 to 11 and \$1,686.92 for youth aged 12 to 18.
- The Maintenance rates for adoptive parents under the *Adoption Act* are \$849.36 for children aged 0 to 11 and \$1,135.81 for youth aged 12 to 18.
- The different types of foster homes are:
  - Restricted care: Foster care provided by a person who is related to or known to the child/youth;
  - Regular care: Foster care provided by a person who is not known to the child/youth;
  - Specialized foster care: Foster care provided to a child/youth with support needs (cognitive or physical support needs, or emotional or behavioural issues); and,

- Respite or relief care: Care provided to a child/youth for a short period so that parents or foster caregivers can have a few days without the child/youth.
- There are three levels of Specialized Care, depending on the support needs of the child/youth. In Specialized Care, a service payment is provided in addition to the Foster Family Care rate. This service payment recognizes the special parenting skills and extra time required to meet the support needs of the child/youth. Service payments are not taxable.
- Service payments are \$591.90 per child/youth for a level one home; \$1,473.74 for one child/youth in a level two home; and \$2,347.67 for one child/youth in a level three home. Service payments for level two and level three homes are dependent on the number of children/youth in the home.
- There are three levels of Specialized Care which are determined through an assessment of the caregiver:
  - Education and training;
  - Child-related experience;
  - Knowledge; and,
  - Demonstrated skills.
- Children/youth requiring more skilled and intensive care are at higher levels of Specialized Care. The maximum number of children/youth in care allowed in these homes is determined by level:
  - For level one: 6 children/youth in the home (including the caregiver's own children/youth and children/youth in respite/relief);
  - For level two: 3 children/youth in care; and,
  - For level three: 2 children/youth in care.
- The Ministry conducts a full assessment of each prospective foster caregiver before they can be approved to provide care.
- The Centralized Services Hub screens all prospective foster caregivers in seven of the eight Service Delivery Areas. For the remaining Service Delivery Area, responsibility for screening caregivers will be transferred to the Centralized Services Hub over the next few months.
- MCFD is responding to calls for action by undertaking the transformation of Specialized Homes and Support Services (SHSS). SHSS refers to the segment of

our network of care that provides services outside of the home – through what we often call ‘staffed resources’ or ‘contracted bed-based services’ for children/youth who cannot live safely at home with their parents.

- Implementation of an integrated network of care for children/youth, which will include improvements to foster homes and the system of services supporting them, contributes to the Ministry's approach to strengthening prevention, early intervention, and family preservation.
- The number of foster homes has been decreasing. Available information suggests that a reduction in the number of children/youth in care, the retirement of foster caregivers and foster caregivers who have adopted the children/youth in their care are all factors contributing to the decrease in foster homes.
- In an effort to improve the retention of current foster caregivers, the ministry is offering a number of virtual and in-person learning opportunities this year, with a focus on topics identified by foster caregivers. These offerings will enable caregivers to connect with other caregivers and learn about the support agencies they can access. Virtual learning opportunities will be offered to out-of-care (or kinship), foster and contracted agency caregivers.
- To facilitate the onboarding of new foster caregivers, the ministry has supported a priority home study initiative to address the queue of applicants requiring screening and home study. To continue this work, a Central Caregiver Retention and Recruitment Team (CRRT) has been developed to assist with the completion of foster home studies on an ongoing basis. This team assists the field with the recruitment of new foster caregivers. This team has a central phone number and email address that applicants can access. The team coordinates information sessions for new applicants, collects applications, facilitates screening at the Central Services Hub, and then completes home studies. Since April 1, 2023, this initiative has resulted in the completion of 147 home studies.
- The reduction in the number of children/youth in care is also an indicator of the success of the ministry's emphasis on prevention and early intervention. While the number of children/youth in care is decreasing, the use of out-of-care arrangements to keep families together and avoid children/youth coming into

care is increasing.

**CROSS REFERENCE:**

3.2 – Overview of Out of Care

MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT  
STRATEGIC INTEGRATION, POLICY AND LEGISLATION  
ESTIMATES CORPORATE BRIEFING NOTE 2023/24

**ISSUE: Overview of SHSS Implementation and Contracted Care**

**KEY MESSAGES:**

- We are working with partners to design a care network that ensures the safety and well-being of children and youth and supports the broader work to shift the focus of supports from protection to prevention and early intervention.
- Services within the Network of Care are intended to be accessible to all children and youth based on their needs, regardless of their legal status (in-care, out-of-care arrangement, or not in care).
- Specialized Homes and Support Services (SHSS) operate as part of the Network of Care and include specialized long-term care, emergency care, specialized respite, and low-barrier stabilization services. Some of these services are available to children and youth with no child welfare experience and are designed to address gaps in the continuum of care.
- The ministry is working closely with partners to implement the SHSS transformation in a way that does not negatively impact children and youth or destabilize existing contracts, while planning for a provincial rollout of SHSS.
- The ministry continues to work separately with Indigenous partners and Rights Holders, including Indigenous Child and Family Service Agencies, through a distinctions-based process to explore if and how SHSS services support their vision for child and family services.

**BACKGROUND:**

- Phased implementation of SHSS Transformation is underway in two ways:
  - **Transition of existing contracts:** In July 2023, the ministry began gradually transitioning 53 contracts of service providers in Okanagan and North Fraser to the new accountabilities over an 18-month period. Early transition focuses on the new approaches for referral and service planning for children/youth, use of Information

Management Systems, and enhanced oversight accountabilities.

Following early implementation, all contracts in the province (~433 as of August 2023) will be transitioned by the end of 2025.

- **Prequalification of new SHSS Services:** Beginning February 2023, new contracts are awarded across the province in response to community needs through a call for responses process that establishes a list of pre-qualified service providers. The solicitation is intended to be open indefinitely and is used by the ministry when standing up net new resources.
- As part of the implementation of SHSS, the ministry has made the following commitments to the Office of the Auditor General following their 2019 report on MCFD's contracted staffed resources:
  - **Standardize contracts** with consistent costs for service/staffing models. This will allow for predictable cost growth and improve forecasting and management of capacity.
  - **Better provision of individualized care** with a process to individualize care outside of a contract's set costs – where the supplemental funding directly relates to the unique needs of individual children. These processes are standardized and monitored directly against how funds support the child.
  - **Services designed around child outcomes** e.g. improve self-reported mental health (child specific), with reduction in placement moves or breakdowns. Service providers are held accountable for provision of quality care. Reporting is standardized and can be accessed at individual level at any time, at contract level as and when needed, and at set intervals for system level reporting.
  - **Monitoring and accountability** to ensure every child will have an individualized plan, informed and monitored by a circle of accountability which includes social worker, adults in the child/youth's life, professionals providing care to child/youth. The plan utilizes Integrated Case Management and provides inputs for monitoring day-to-day wellbeing and progress against set goals. It also allows for monitoring quality of care provided by the caregiver and system level data to monitor the network of SHSS services.

- **Quality procurement processes** to ensure service providers are prequalified against pre-established criteria and the list of pre-qualified providers can be accessed when needed.
- **Services interact as a network** to drive down overall use of care system and services are accessible to children in care (e.g. respite, stabilization do not require a child to come into care to access). For this reason, all communities need access to a minimum capacity of suite services for system to be responsive and function as designed.
- **Services are responsive** to the needs of the child and family and will no longer be funded as “bed-filled, bed-funded”. The SHSS model allows for a service to operate with predictable costs without fluctuating funding.
- **Improving and clarifying roles and responsibilities** to ensure social workers will fulfill social work obligations, while contract managers will centrally manage contract administration. The standardization of services establishes a process to access supplemental supports and removes contract negotiations from the system.
- **The provincial roll-out of SHSS will be completed by 2025.**

**CROSS REFERENCE: N/A**

**MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT  
STRATEGIC INTEGRATION, POLICY AND LEGISLATION  
ESTIMATES CORPORATE BRIEFING NOTE 2024/25**

**ISSUE: Child Safety in the Child Welfare System**

**KEY MESSAGES:**

- The safety and wellbeing of children involved in the child welfare system is the paramount consideration of the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) and partner Indigenous Child and Family Services Agencies (ICFSA).
- If there are concerns about the safety and wellbeing of a child or youth, MCFD/ICFSA staff treat these concerns very seriously. The least intrusive measures possible are used to keep the child safe, but all options are considered.
- If a child or youth can no longer remain safely at home, out-of-care options to place a child or youth with a family, friend, or community member are pursued rather than bringing the child or youth into care.
- If all other efforts have been exhausted, children and youth are brought into care and every effort is made to ensure the child or youth is safe and supported while in care.
- The ministry works in partnership with contracted service providers to deliver Specialized Homes and Support Services (SHSS) as part of the Network of Care continuum which will result in improved safety, belonging, wellness and quality of care through enhanced oversight, service expectations and accountabilities.
- Policies and practice guidance are regularly reviewed and updated to ensure continuous improvement in the child welfare system, to the benefit of all children, youth and families in BC.
- Quality Assurance policies that apply to practice oversight of child and family services delivered through the ministry are publicly posted.

**BACKGROUND:**

- The *Child, Family and Community Service Act* (CFCSA) specifies that all aspects of the legislation must be interpreted and administered so that the safety and wellbeing of children are paramount considerations.

- The federal legislation *An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families* requires that primary consideration must be given to an Indigenous child's physical, emotional and psychological safety, security and well-being.
- In 2023, the ministry took several steps to improve the child welfare system to ensure children and youth are safe, including:
  - Mandatory 90-day visits for children/youth in court-ordered out-of-care placements and the Extended Family Program
  - A professional supervision policy was launched to clarify expectations of Team Leaders and Directors of Operations who oversee Service Delivery Division staff. This policy includes day to day oversight and requires Team Leaders and Director of Operations to ensure in-person visits of children in care and those on out-of-care placements occur.
  - A simplified and single Consolidated Criminal Record Check is now required for caregivers who are responsible for the health and safety of children in care, which streamlines the procedures and clarifies MCFD's sole accountability for the adjudication of caregivers.
  - Policies on how to respond if a child or youth in care has gone missing have been updated to ensure timely and effective measures are taken.
  - File transfer and joint file management policies were strengthened so that when a child moves to a new region of the province, services are delivered in a seamless and timely manner. These policies contain new provision for working with families where there has been domestic violence.
- The ministry is responsible for the safety and well-being of children, youth and families throughout BC:
  - As part of the ministry's public accountability, Quality Assurance plays a critical role to oversee, support and report out publicly on the quality of practice to support child safety and wellbeing.
  - Quality Assurance policies, including reportable circumstances, child and family practice reviews, complaints, foster caregiver review, practice audits, and accreditation policies, are in place to provide clarity and guidance to staff on roles and procedures.
- The ministry is working closely with partners to implement the SHSS Transformation in a way that positions the safety and wellbeing of children in the centre of planning, while exploring opportunities for a provincial rollout of SHSS:

- The SHSS Care Circle, which includes the child or youth, is responsible for supporting key decisions around the child or youth's care.
- The ministry is introducing a new outcome-based oversight model designed to measure whether children, youth, and their families are benefiting from SHSS services.
- In cases where issues with service provision or adherence to contract deliverables arise, the issues will be escalated to appropriate levels of contract management and governance, including conflict resolution processes.
- An updated Information Management System will be developed and implemented to leverage information gathered through the day-to-day care delivered to children and youth to support SHSS monitoring and oversight functions.

**CROSS REFERENCE:** N/A

**MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT**  
**PROVINCIAL DIRECTOR OF CHILD WELFARE AND ABORIGINAL SERVICES DIVISION**  
**ESTIMATES CORPORATE BRIEFING NOTE 2024/25**

**ISSUE:       Enhanced oversight and support of child safety & guardianship practice**

**KEY MESSAGES:**

- Ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children and youth, both when living in their family homes and when placed outside of their family homes, is a priority across the ministry.
- Over the past year, the ministry has taken measures to improve services by strengthening support for practice, improving technology, and enhancing monitoring and oversight processes.
- In 2023, we have:
  - Appointed an Associate Provincial Director of Child Welfare (APDCW) to provide systemic practice oversight and guidance to Designated Directors (statutory decision makers) in the service delivery areas (SDAs) on child safety matters.
  - Created a new branch called Child Safety Oversight and Practice Development to support the work of the APDCW and provide increased practice support and systemic oversight of services focusing on child safety and wellbeing for children, youth, and families in BC.
  - Introduced a policy that requires children and youth in out-of-care placements (court-ordered out-of-care and the Extended Family Program) to be visited a minimum of once every 90 days.
  - Improved oversight measures to monitor the requirement to visit children and youth in care and in out-of-care arrangements are as follows:
    - Visits with children and youth can now be entered and monitored through the implementation of new technology.
    - Reports that outline the frequency, type, and number of visits are now available in real time, providing important

practice information and greater oversight.

- Improved communication regarding required 90-day visits and monthly monitoring of 90-day visit data will ensure visits are occurring and being documented as required, increasing safety and producing better outcomes for children and youth.
- Updated policies and developed practice guidelines to ensure appropriate and coordinated action is taken when children/youth go missing to safeguard them from harm and better understand their needs.
- Introduced a practice approach that incorporates belonging as an overarching need for all children and youth to be physically, relationally, legally, and culturally connected and cared for.
- Provided staff with new and updated training regarding Interviewing Skills, Domestic Violence, and Fetal Alcohol Syndrome.
- Developed a streamlined criminal record check process for foster caregivers, reducing administrative demands and improving application processing times.
- Introduced an adaptable approach to deliver child protection services in rural and remote areas by offering increased flexibility in how staffing resources are utilised through in-person, remote and hybrid methods.
- Strengthened policies that address practice expectations when children and families move to a new region of the province to ensure that services are coordinated and timely with the safety of children and youth as the priority.
- Developed processes to provide relevant data, practice themes, and analysis to Designated Directors responsible for the delivery of services to children, youth, and families, so they have the necessary information to make informed decisions and create responsive plans in their SDAs.
- Revised letters of designation for all Designated Directors, clarifying statutory accountabilities, roles, and responsibilities.

- Revised the Delegation and Assessment Readiness Tool (DART) enabling a clearer and more streamlined process for Designated Directors in SDAs to assess and determine the readiness of child protection workers for full child protection delegation.
- Launched a Professional Supervision policy, which clarifies expectations and provides guidance and direction to Team Leaders and Directors of Operations who oversee child safety services.
- Implemented the Enhanced Out of Care program that allows children with significant and complex support needs to be cared for in a loving home where a person known to them provides safe, stable care that meets their needs, reducing the need for children to come into care of the ministry.
- Increased monthly payments for children in foster care and out-of-care placements by as much as 47%.
- Improved oversight measures to monitor that children in care are in safe and approved homes.

**BACKGROUND:**

- The APDCW position was created to provide leadership, guidance, and systemic practice oversight to Designated Directors across the province.
- The APDCW:
  - Provides leadership, guidance, and promotes decision-making by or on behalf of all directors that is consistent with the requirements and principles of the CFCSA.
  - Provides systemic practice oversight and guidance to Designated Directors in Service Delivery Areas (SDAs).
  - Acts as the primary point of contact for Designated Directors in service delivery areas with complex practice consultation.
- The Child Safety Oversight and Practice Development branch will support the APDCW and provide practice oversight, practice support, and coordination of project-based work to improve processes, policies, and practices for practitioners providing services under the CFCSA.

- The new branch will provide necessary oversight and monitoring of child safety work, like ensuring children and youth in care and out of care are regularly visited and that the places they live are safe and nurturing environments.
- The Child Safety Oversight and Practice Development branch will also play an essential role in coordinating work across MCFD divisions to ensure that the safety and well-being of children and youth are at the forefront of all our work.

**CROSS REFERENCE:** N/A

**MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT  
OFFICE OF THE PROVINCIAL DIRECTOR AND ABORIGINAL SERVICES  
ESTIMATES CORPORATE BRIEFING NOTE 2024/25**

**ISSUE:** Overview of Indigenous Child and Family Service Agencies

**KEY MESSAGES:**

Indigenous Child and Family Service (ICFS) Agencies provide direct services under the *Child, Family and Community Service Act* (CFCSA) to Indigenous children, youth, families, and communities throughout BC. The ICFS Agencies have a Partnership Forum table that meets quarterly and is made up of:

- 24 ICFS Agency Executive Directors and Our Children Our Way ICFS Secretariat team
- Aboriginal Services Branch (ASB) Deputy Director and 2 ASB Directors
- Partnership and Indigenous Engagement Division ADM and 1 Director
- 2 Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) Managers

ICFS Agencies are guided by the Aboriginal Operational and Practice Standard Indicators (AOPSI) when providing child safety, resources, guardianship, and post-majority services to Indigenous children, youth, young adults, families, and communities throughout BC.

The 24 ICFS Agencies in BC represent approximately 117 First Nations communities of the 204 First Nation communities in British Columbia, as well as urban Indigenous and Métis children, youth, and families, and currently serve 51% of the Indigenous children in care. The remaining 86 First Nation communities are served by MCFD.

The Partnership Forum table was formed in 1996 to discuss matters related to Indigenous children and families concerning practice, training, funding, legislation, programs, and policies, plus one day for the Partnership Planning Committee to inform the Partnership agenda. The Partnership Forum has Terms of Reference, and the agenda is agreed upon by the three partners and meets quarterly for two days. There is also a monthly Partnership Forum table that started during the pandemic. Meeting regularly continues to strengthen the relationship between the three partners.

**BACKGROUND:**

In BC, through delegation agreements, the Provincial Director of Child Welfare provides authority to ICFS Agencies to undertake administration of all or parts of the CFCSA depending on the level of delegation within the ICFS Agencies. Staff in the ICFS Agencies are delegated under the CFCSA to provide direct services to Indigenous children and families in their communities.

There are 24 ICFS Agencies in British Columbia:

- 14 are delegated to provide full child protection services:  
Services include child protection services and the responsibility of guardianship services for children in interim, temporary, and continuing custody court-ordered care.
- 7 are delegated to provide guardianship services:  
service is specific to the guardianship of children in continuing custody.
- 3 are delegated to provide voluntary services:  
including family support services, voluntary care agreements, support needs agreements, establishing residential resources.

2 urban community agencies are currently working with the Aboriginal Services Branch (ASB) on their readiness assessments in order to become ICFS Agencies.

ASB is also working with several ICFS Agencies, as they have requested to expand their services to further meet the needs of Indigenous children, youth, families, and communities.

ICFS Agencies providing services on-reserve under the CFCSA receive funding from the federal government. MCFD provides funding to ICFS Agencies that deliver services off-reserve.

**CROSS-REFERENCE: N/A**

**MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT  
OFFICE OF THE PROVINCIAL DIRECTOR AND ABORIGINAL SERVICES  
ESTIMATES CORPORATE BRIEFING NOTE 2024/25**

**ISSUE: Overview of Quality Assurance Programs**

**KEY MESSAGES:**

- Quality Assurance programs support practice and service improvements for both the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) and Indigenous Child and Family Service (ICFS) Agencies in the following service areas: Children and Youth with Support Needs, Child and Youth Mental Health, Community Youth Justice, Youth Transitions, Adoption, Child Safety, Resources, Guardianship, and Family Service.
- The programs ensure MCFD and ICFS Agency practitioners are performing their legislative responsibilities in adherence with policy and practice guidance and support transparency and accountability through public reporting of key activities.
- Improvements to the Quality Assurance programs are underway to ensure the following:
  - Indigenous Peoples, leaders, lived experience experts, and knowledge keepers are included in the design and delivery of programs to support accessible and culturally informed, safe and relevant services that are free from stigma and racism.
  - Indigenous understandings of evidence, effectiveness, success, and impact are sought, understood, valued, and relied upon.
  - Programs and services are delivered in alignment with MCFD strategic planning and the Quality Assurance Programs and Services plan, which provides a common understanding of Quality Assurance programs, services, and delivery approaches.
  - Evaluation is outcomes-based and relies on quantitative and qualitative information to help us understand the impact of ministry services on those being served and improve programs and services by connecting data to practice (child and family-centred).

**BACKGROUND:**

- Quality Assurance Programs consist of eight key services:
  - *Child and Family Practice Reviews* are conducted when a child, youth, or young adult who has accessed MCFD or delegated ICFS Agency services dies or is critically injured to help address specific questions about what supports or services were provided before the death or injury. Actions may be developed to support practice or service improvement. A summary of each completed child and family practice review is posted publicly twice a year.
  - *MCFD Practice Evaluations* are conducted at a provincial level to measure compliance against legislation and policy and may result in actions to support practice and service improvement. Practice Evaluation reports are posted publicly twice a year.
  - *ICFS Agency Practice Audits* are conducted regularly to measure compliance against legislation and policy for all delegated services the ICFS agency provides. Actions may be developed to support practice or service improvement. ICFS Agency Practice Audit reports are posted publicly twice a year.
  - *Complaints* offers a formal mechanism that ensures that children, youth, young adults, and families who receive services from MCFD or who believe they should receive MCFD services have an opportunity to express their concerns. Complaints specialists promote collaboration between complainants and employees to help them work towards a resolution of the person's complaint concerns. Complainants may choose to engage in a complaints resolution process or request an Administrative Review.
  - *Administrative Reviews* provide an examination of the complaint issues by a review authority who has not been involved in matters related to the complaint. The review authority will draw conclusions based on the information gathered and may make recommendations to support practice and service improvement.

- *Foster Caregiver Reviews* are completed at the request of a foster caregiver after a foster home investigation or quality of care review has resulted in a serious sanction, like the cancellation of a contract.
- *Self-Report Audit Tool* is used by contracted agencies to submit a report to MCFD of the screening and assessment results (i.e., criminal record and reference checks, interviews, etc.) for all caregivers looking after children in their program for the purpose of verification.
- *Accreditation* policy requires contracted service providers that receive \$500,000 or more in annual funding from MCFD, or MCFD and Community Living BC combined, to be accredited by one of two accreditation organisations: the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities or the Council (CARF) on Accreditation (COA). Accreditation is one of the layers of oversight that supports quality service for children, youth, young adults, and families.

**CROSS REFERENCE:** N/A

**MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT  
OFFICE OF THE PROVINCIAL DIRECTOR AND ABORIGINAL SERVICES  
ESTIMATES CORPORATE BRIEFING NOTE 2024/25**

**ISSUE:** Supporting Family Preservation and Cultural Connection

**KEY MESSAGES:**

- The Ministry is committed to supporting children and youth in BC to live in safe, healthy, and nurturing families with connections to their communities and culture.
- The Ministry is working collaboratively to ensure Indigenous communities in B.C. have jurisdiction over their own children and family services.
- B.C. is seeing the lowest number of children in care in 30 years.

**BACKGROUND:**

- The Ministry, along with Indigenous Child & Family Services (ICFS) Agency partners, strives to emphasise the principles of early intervention and prevention to support children, youth, and families who may be struggling and keep families together whenever possible.
- When children or youth cannot live with their guardian, the preferred option is to provide financial and other supports so they can live with extended family or others known to the family through out-of-care options, rather than bringing them into care.
- The Ministry funds a range of services and programs to support family connections, including: the Affordable Childcare Benefit; respite; infant development programs; traditional decision-making processes; family finders; roots workers; family preservation workers; collaborative planning and decision-making options such as family group conferencing; and mediation.
- In partnership with Indigenous communities and Rights Holders, we have made historic changes to our legislation with the introduction of Bill 38, which includes both the *Child, Family and Community Service Act* (CFCSA) and the *Adoptions Act*. BC's laws governing the Ministry and how it operates now reflect and uphold the inherent and pre-existing rights of Indigenous people to exercise jurisdiction over child and family services.

- Bill 38 provides a much-needed path to end the over-involvement of the Ministry in the lives of Indigenous people. This work is foundational to reconciliation and instrumental in our collective priorities to keep families together and ensure all efforts are made to support children and youth to remain in and be cared for by their families and communities.
- We have done more than legislative change – we have also looked at how we provide a seamless system of support for families that spans from early intervention through to specialised care.
- In 2023, we are expanding our network of care to include services intended to support family preservation. Through the implementation of our Specialized Homes and Support Services (SHSS) network, we have included services such as specialized respite and stabilization services. These services will be available to children and youth living with their parents, kinship caregivers, and other caregivers. The intention of all services in the network is to support a child and family for a successful transition home.
- We have also expanded supports for kinship caregivers through the introduction of our Enhanced Out of Care program, which provides caregivers caring for children with complex trauma or support needs access to additional supports to ensure the child and caregiver remain together and well.
- The Ministry continues to strengthen cultural planning by increasing the use of out-of-care/kinship placement options and greater involvement of Indigenous partners when developing care plans and permanency options for children and youth to remain with their families and within their communities.
- Under the *Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families*, Indigenous children and youth in care who are living with someone other than their parent or an adult member of their family are required to have their placements reassessed at specific times or at a minimum every six months to determine if it is in their best interests to be placed with a parent or other adult member of their family or community member.

#### **CROSS REFERENCE:**

- **3.7** – Overview of Indigenous Child and Family Services Agencies

**MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT  
OFFICE OF THE PROVINCIAL DIRECTOR AND ABORIGINAL SERVICES  
ESTIMATES CORPORATE BRIEFING NOTE 2024/2025**

**ISSUE: Overview of Permanency**

**KEY MESSAGES:**

- All children deserve to have stable, lifelong relationships and a strong sense of belonging.
- Permanency refers to a child or youth having attachments and connections to parents, siblings, families, communities, and culture so children and youth develop into healthy, secure adults.
- Children and youth have better long-term outcomes when they remain with their families and communities.
- That's why keeping children and youth connected to their families, cultures, and communities is always the ministry's first choice for permanency for any child or youth in care.
- All permanency planning for children in care must be consistent with their best interests.
- If an Indigenous child and family service law applies to a child, permanency options under the *Child, Family, and Community Service Act* (CFCSA) or the *Adoption Act* are not pursued if the applicable Indigenous authority indicates that it is planning to assume custody of the child under the Indigenous law.

**BACKGROUND:**

**Children in Care in Continuing Custody**

- A child/youth is placed in the continuing custody of the director only when there is no significant likelihood that the circumstances that led to the child's removal will improve within a reasonable time or that the parent will be able to meet the child's needs.
- A Continuing Custody Order (CCO) means that the director is the child/youth's sole personal guardian and may consent to the child/youth's adoption.

- The permanency options once a CCO has been granted are:
  - permanent Transfer of Custody to a person other than the parent;
  - cancellation of the Continuing Custody Order with a return to the parent(s) (reunification);
  - adoption; and,
  - transfer of custody to the Indigenous authority providing services under an Indigenous law that applies to the child.
- The Permanent Transfer of Custody of a child/youth can occur to an extended family member or another person through Section 54.1 of the CFCSA after a CCO is granted.
- Reunification (through the rescindment of a CCO)
  - Reunification is when a child/youth in care leaves care by returning to their parents or family of origin; this happens after an assessment confirms that the circumstances that caused the child/youth to come into care have changed and no longer pose a direct risk to the child/youth's safety and well-being.
  - When a child is under a CCO, reunification through rescindment must always be considered if the birth parent or guardian's circumstances have changed so that the child or youth could be safely returned to their care.
- Adoption
  - Adoption is only pursued after all other permanency options have been thoroughly explored.
  - For Indigenous children and youth, *An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit & Métis children, youth & families* (the Federal Act) sets out national standards that must be applied in adoption and permanency planning for Indigenous children. These standards relate to:
    - placement priorities;
    - the ongoing reassessment of a placement;
    - the promotion of the child's attachment and emotional ties; and,
    - giving notice before taking a significant measure.
  - A child becomes legally available for adoption after the court has granted a CCO or when the parent(s) have placed the child for adoption or consented to the child coming into care under the *Adoption Act*.

- On October 26, 2022, amendments to the *Adoption Act* were introduced in the legislature. These amendments were passed on November 24, 2022, and came into force on November 25, 2022.
- The amendments ensure that there is greater alignment with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which recognises the right of Indigenous families and communities to retain shared responsibility for the upbringing, education, and well-being of their children consistent with the inherent rights of the child.
- Transfer of Custody to an Indigenous Authority
  - CFCSA amendments passed in November 2022, via Bill 38, affirm Indigenous peoples' inherent right to jurisdiction over child and family services.
  - Amendments to the Child, Family and Community Service Regulation (CFCSR), and Provincial Court (CFCSA) Rules that came into force on January 15, 2024, support the transition of Indigenous children and youth in care or custody under the CFCSA to the Indigenous authority serving their community under Indigenous law.
  - When an Indigenous authority confirms it is, or will be, providing Indigenous child and family services or intends to have custody of a child under Indigenous law, the director must withdraw from CFCSA court proceedings or end CFCSA court orders.

**CROSS REFERENCE:** N/A

**MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT  
STRATEGIC INTEGRATION, POLICY AND LEGISLATION DIVISION  
ESTIMATES CORPORATE BRIEFING NOTE 2023/24**

**ISSUE: Intercountry Adoptions (including KPMG)**

**KEY MESSAGES:**

- In BC, intercountry adoption (ICA) services are provided exclusively through adoption agencies licensed by the Ministry of Children and Family Development (the ministry).
- BC's licensed adoption agencies (e.g., Adoption Centre of BC and Sunrise Family Services Society) are independent, non-profit organizations responsible for their own funding, operating decisions, and the success of their organization.
- In September 2021, the ministry initiated an external review of how intercountry adoptions are provided in BC, as well as the processes and requirements for licensing and monitoring adoption agencies.
- This independent review notes that many aspects of the service delivery model and the intercountry adoptions process function effectively and that BC's system is positioned to meet its regulatory obligations.
- The report was provided to the Office of the Ombudsperson on December 20, 2022.
- The report was posted publicly on April 6, 2023; some portions of the report were redacted under Freedom of Information (FOI) guidelines to protect the confidentiality of adoption agencies and families.
- The ministry completed a full review of the report in Fall 2023. The response to the Office of the Ombudsperson has concluded and there is no urgent action required by the ministry.

**BACKGROUND:**

- Licensed adoption agencies provide adoption services under the *Adoption Act* (AA).
- This enables the ministry and Indigenous Child and Family Service Agencies to focus on achieving permanency for children who are in the continuing custody (CCOs) of the Director under the *Child, Family and Community Service Act*.

<b>Types of Adoption and Adoption Services</b>	
<b>Private Adoption Agencies</b>	
ICA	Adoption of children/youth from outside of Canada.
Domestic infant - agency placement	Birth parents work with an adoption agency to facilitate placement with an adoptive family.
Domestic infant - direct placement	Birth parents work with an agency to place the child with an adoptive parent that they know (who is not a relative).
<b>Ministry Adoptions</b>	
ICA oversight	Regulatory oversight of ICA in alignment with the Hague Convention.
Administration of Post Adoption Assistance (PAA)	Management of financial assistance for services related to specific needs of a child/youth adopted from care.
Foster-to-Adopt	Adoption of children/youth under Continuing Custody Orders (CCOs) by their foster parent(s).
Child Specific	Adoption of CCOs by an adoptive parent recruited for a specific child due to their relationship or ability to meet the child/youth's unique needs.
BC General	Adoption of CCOs by a member of the general community (no previous relationship to the child/youth).
Direct Placement	Birth parents work with the ministry to place the child with an adoptive parent they know (who is not a relative).
Wards under the AA or <i>Infant Act</i>	Adoption of a child who becomes a ward of the ministry due to voluntary relinquishment or death of their parent.
<b>Adoptions Under an Independent Legal Process</b>	
Custom	An Indigenous cultural practice where a child is raised by a person who is not the child's biological parent, according to the community's customary laws.
Relative/Stepparent	Adoption of a child/youth related to the adoptive parent by blood or marriage.
Adult	Adoption of an individual over the age of majority.

- The Provincial Director of Adoption licenses and regulates agencies under the Adoption Agency Regulation (AAR).
- Since the AAR came into force in 1996, declining ICA rates have resulted in significant financial implications for adoption agencies. As a result, the

number of agencies in BC has decreased from seven to two.

- The Ombudsperson office recommended a review of whether the AAR enables the Ministry to meet its regulatory oversight mandate. The ministry completed a full review of the report in Fall 2023, and several non-regulatory themes and considerations emerged that could inform ICA services in the future. These themes include:
  - Consistent application of the best interests of the child and their safety
  - The ministry's lack of a clear strategy, goals, and outcome measures for ICAs
  - The limitations of quality assurance for ICAs
  - The current state of the licensed adoptions agency fee-for service model facing risk to sustainability
- The agency-based service delivery model has changed substantially since it was implemented in 1996. The review set out to determine whether:
  - the current framework supports effective and efficient agency regulation in the public interest
  - the ICA service delivery model aligns with Government's strategic direction regarding permanency for children and youth and enables Government to meet its international obligations under the Hague Convention
  - there are other models of ICA services that might better meet the needs of children and families.
- KPMG LLP consulted with key partners to inform the development of the report and articulate challenges and opportunities within the current model.

**CROSS REFERENCE: N/A**

**MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT  
STRATEGIC INTEGRATION, POLICY AND LEGISLATION  
ESTIMATES CORPORATE BRIEFING NOTE 2024/25**

**ISSUE:**        **Social Worker Oversight** (Registration of MCFD Social Workers with the College of Social Workers)

**KEY MESSAGES:**

- As the ministry responsible for the B.C. Social Workers Act, the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) is committed to ensuring ethical, professional, and competent social work practice throughout B.C.
- Social workers in B.C. work in a variety of workplaces, including hospitals, private practice, corrections facilities, community agencies and social service agencies, and are just one group of professionals who work for the ministry.
- MCFD listened to those calling for a review of the social work oversight model which is why MCFD launched a broad engagement to understand individual perspectives and priorities on this issue.
- Between Spring 2022 and January 2023, we completed a broad engagement on the oversight of social workers in B.C. which included engagements with various Indigenous partners.
- Advice/Recommendations

- 

*Why might it be a challenge for all MCFD front line staff to register with the B.C. College of Social Workers?*

- We recognize the importance of ensuring high-quality social work practice and the need for strong oversight measures for all staff who interact directly with children, youth and families.

- Not all front-line workers employed by MCFD have a social work degree or background. We also employ CYMH mental health clinicians, nurses, psychiatrists, psychologists, and other professionals.
- In 2019, for the first time in 20 years, we broadened the education requirements for some positions to increase diversity in our workforce and to recruit a broader selection of applicants.
- This change addressed recommendations in the 2016 Indigenous Resilience, Connectedness and Reunification Report, and aligned with then-Minister Conroy's mandate letter.
- As before, preference continues to be given to individuals with a bachelor's degree or higher in Social Work or Child and Youth Care.

*What have you changed in the past few years to verify credentials?*

- Credential verification is undertaken for new hires and pre-existing MCFD employees wherever the position requires:
  - A bachelor's degree or higher; and
  - A criminal record check via the Criminal Records and Review Act OR enhanced security clearance.
- All government employees are required to take a mandatory Fraud Awareness and Prevention Course.
- All B.C. Public Service employees must review and pledge a yearly Standards of Conduct oath.
- Employees also complete a six-month probation and receive core training under a supervisor to pass all requirements under the Child, Family and Community Service Act.
- Delegation is a separate process and child protection workers must successfully complete the competency-based Delegation Assessment and Readiness Tool that promotes clinical supervision, critical thinking, and reflective practice.

*Should social workers be regulated under the Health Professions Act?*

- On November 24, 2022, the Health Professions and Occupations Act passed into law and the B.C. government is now working with partners to develop regulations and bring the Act into force through a phased approach.

- At this time, the Health Professions and Occupations Act does not regulate social workers.

*How does MCFD ensure its staff who are not registered with the BC College of Social Workers work in accordance with similar standards as set out for registered social workers?*

- The ministry recognizes the importance of ensuring high-quality social work practice and the need for strong oversight measures for all staff who interact with children, youth and families.
  - Registered social workers are regulated by the BC College of Social Workers (BCCSW) and governed by the *Social Worker Act*. MCFD child welfare workers are delegated under the *Child, Family and Community Service Act* (CFCSA).
  - The BCCSW has a code of ethics and MCFD has the Standards of Conduct and oath of employment.
  - Both the BCCSW and MCFD have practice standards and principles that guide the work of individuals. Both organizations have complaint and discipline processes.
  - MCFD has additional oversight mechanisms to support supervision and accountability, including practice audit and reviews.

In addition, the ministry has high standards for conduct across its workforce:

- Front line workers use Structured Decision Making (SDM) tools – a system of risk assessments, guidelines, prompts and checklists that help guide worker decision making to ensure consistent practice. Most child welfare authorities in Canada use the SDM model.
- Practice guidelines instruct workers on how to use the tools, in combination with their own clinical judgement and consultation with supervisors, to determine risk to children and respond appropriately.
- The Aboriginal Policy & Practice Framework has been integrated into ministry training and the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act is embedded in MCFD Child Welfare training.
- All MCFD staff must take required courses, including training on An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families, which provides opportunities for staff to reflect on

reconciliation, how cultural safety and agility influence practice, and how to shift practice to align with this legislation.

**BACKGROUND:**

- As the ministry responsible for the Social Worker Act (SWA), MCFD is responsible for social work oversight in B.C.
- Under the SWA, social workers must register with the BC College of Social Workers unless exempt under the Social Worker Regulation (SWR).
- The SWR exempts from registration social workers employed by: MCFD and Indigenous Child and Family Service Agencies; provincial and federal governments; municipalities, regional districts and boards of education; First Nations; and others.
- There have been longstanding calls from the community to remove the exemptions.
- Removal of exemptions could exacerbate challenges with recruitment and retention, especially for rural and remote areas. As well, that removal of exemptions may limit practice for First Nations and other Indigenous organizations and communities.
- MCFD does not require staff to register with the BCCSW nor does it track the number of staff who voluntarily register.
- Data indicates that most MCFD frontline staff (e.g., Social Program Officers that require delegation under the CFCSA and work in either a Service Delivery Area or in Provincial Centralized Screening) are hired under the preferred credentials, with the majority holding social work degrees. The next most common degree is Child and Youth Care.

**CROSS REFERENCE:**

3.15 – Social Worker Oversight Engagement *Advice/Recommendations*

**MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT  
PROVINCIAL DIRECTOR OF CHILD WELFARE AND ABORIGINAL SERVICES BRANCH  
ESTIMATES CORPORATE BRIEFING NOTE 2024/25**

**ISSUE:           Monitoring visits with children in care as per policy**

**KEY MESSAGES:**

- Regular contact with children and youth in care is imperative to ensuring their overall safety and well-being. Visits are fundamental to building relationships between practitioners and the children and youth they serve.
- As outlined in ministry policy, practitioners should visit with children and youth in care every 90 days at a minimum, with more frequent visits when vulnerabilities are present that could impact safety and wellbeing – such as mental health concerns, substance use concerns, complex support needs or children who are less visible in their community.
- For the time periods of June 1<sup>st</sup> to August 31<sup>st</sup> and September 1<sup>st</sup> to November 30<sup>th</sup> 2023, visit tracking was reviewed to ensure all children and youth were seen, with follow up taken where needed.
- From June through October 2023, work was undertaken to upgrade the electronic data base (ICM), through the development of an applet that allows workers to document visits with children and youth in one place. This system improvement has also enabled ‘real time’ electronic monitoring and reporting on visits with children and youth rather than manually tracking visits on a quarterly basis. The IT solution and associated Corporate Data Warehouse report was launched October 27<sup>th</sup> and December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023, respectively for staff to use.

**BACKGROUND:**

- Annual visit tracking to ensure children and youth in contracted agency placements were visited within a 90-day period began in 2018 and continued yearly until 2020.

- In 2020, due to the Covid pandemic, there were heightened concerns for the visibility of children and youth in care resulting in an expansion of the annual 90-day visit tracking to include children in care in all placement types.
- In June 2023, the frequency of visit tracking was increased from annually to quarterly, starting with June 1<sup>st</sup> to August 31<sup>st</sup> and continuing into the next quarter of September 1<sup>st</sup> to November 30<sup>th</sup>.
- New functionality in ICM was released October 27<sup>th</sup>, 2023 to enable more clear and consistent documentation of visits with children and youth in care. The new child visit applet enables visit details, frequency and type to be recorded and monitored for children and youth across legal statuses.
- Additionally, an associated report was created and launched on December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023, to support oversight and real time monitoring of the type of visits occurring and what visits are complete, due, or overdue. The report shows information for all children in care and notes whether the 90-day visit was completed, is due or overdue by individual child.
- Use of the applet will allow workers, team leaders and leadership to accurately monitor compliance to the 90-day visit policy, including the frequency and type of visits.
- Workers in Indigenous Child and Family Services Agencies (ICFSA) are also recording all child visit information in the new applet. Staff in IFCSAs also have access to the new reporting features in the Corporate Data Warehouse.
- Oversight and individual follow up with each Service Delivery Area and ICFSA will be completed on a regular basis with additional reporting when requested.
- Communication with staff on when and how to use the applet has started and will be continued through orientations and through leadership discussions. The use of the applet and associated report will be incorporated into training.

**CROSS REFERENCE:** N/A

**MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT  
STRATEGIC INTEGRATION, POLICY AND LEGISLATION  
ESTIMATES CORPORATE BRIEFING NOTE 2024/25**

**ISSUE:**        **Social Worker Oversight Engagement** –Advice/Recommendations

**KEY MESSAGES:**

- As the ministry responsible for the B.C. *Social Workers Act*, MCFD is committed to ensuring ethical, professional, and competent social work practice throughout B.C.
- Social workers in B.C. work in a variety of workplaces, including hospitals, private practice, corrections facilities, community agencies and social service agencies, and are just one group of professionals who work for the ministry.
- MCFD listened to those calling for a review of the social work oversight model by launching a broad engagement to understand individual perspectives and priorities on this issue.
- Between Spring 2022 and January 2023, we completed a broad engagement on the oversight of social workers in B.C. which included engagements with various Indigenous partners.
- Advice/Recommendations
- 

**BACKGROUND:**

*Engagement Process*

- MCFD engaged with a wide range of partners and others interested in social work oversight (e.g., Indigenous organizations, Indigenous Governing Bodies, and Modern Treaty Nations; social work representative groups; social work educators; partners from the health and social services sectors; the Representative for Children and Youth; the Provincial

Director of Child Welfare's Youth Advisory Council; registered and unregistered social workers; and the public).

- MCFD held 32 engagement sessions, with 76 partners and over 200 participants.
- Public engagement opportunities were open from December 2022 to January 2023, which included a public survey, a social work practitioner survey and written submissions.
  - 534 respondents to the Social Work Oversight public survey
  - 1,142 respondents to the social worker survey
  - 14 written submissions from partner organizations and private individuals
  - Additional input received:
    - 380 template emails from public letter writing campaign.
- The ministry hosted a series of validation sessions through summer and fall 2023 with engagement partners and social workers who completed the social worker survey to validate the analysis of the engagement data received.

Advice/Recommendations

## Advice/Recommendations

*Cross-jurisdictional learnings*

- Similar to B.C., the majority of jurisdictions across Canada follow a title protection model, while some jurisdictions have fully or partially protected practice.

- As well, some jurisdictions have exemptions to registration, with most of those exemptions being specific to child welfare and/or government.
  - Registration and employment requirements for child welfare and/or government staff vary across jurisdictions.
  - Canadian jurisdictions are evenly split between those who require frontline staff to register, those who have partial requirements (e.g., staff with a social work degree must register) and those who do not require staff to register.

How does MCFD ensure its staff who are not registered with the BC College of Social Workers work in accordance with similar standards as set out for registered social workers?

- The ministry recognizes the importance of ensuring high-quality social work practice and the need for strong oversight measures for all staff who interact with children, youth and families.
  - Registered Social workers are regulated by the BC College of Social Workers (BCCSW) and governed by the Social Worker Act. MCFD child welfare workers are delegated under the Child, Family and Community Service Act (CFCSA).
  - The BCCSW has a code of ethics and MCFD has the Standards of Conduct and oath of employment.
  - Both the BCCSW and MCFD have practice standards and principles that guide the work of individuals. Both organizations have complaint and discipline processes.
  - MCFD has additional oversight mechanisms to support supervision and accountability, including practice audit and reviews.

In addition, the ministry has high standards for conduct across its workforce:

- Front line workers use Structured Decision Making (SDM) tools – a system of risk assessments, guidelines, prompts and checklists that help guide worker decision making to ensure consistent practice. Most child welfare authorities in Canada use the SDM model.
- Practice guidelines instruct workers on how to use the tools, in combination with their own clinical judgement and consultation with supervisors, to determine risk to children and respond appropriately.

- The Aboriginal Policy & Practice Framework has been integrated into ministry training and the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act is embedded in MCFD Child Welfare training.
- All MCFD staff must take required courses, including training on An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families, which provides opportunities for staff to reflect on reconciliation, how cultural safety and agility influence practice, and how to shift practice to align with this legislation.

Advice/Recommendations

**CROSS REFERENCE:** N/A

**MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT  
STRATEGIC INTEGRATION, POLICY AND LEGISLATION  
ESTIMATES CORPORATE BRIEFING NOTE 2023/24**

**ISSUE: Overview of Child and Youth Mental Health**

**KEY MESSAGES:**

- MCFD is committed to building and supporting a responsive continuum of mental health services with children, youth, and families.
- Child and Youth Mental Health (CYMH) services range from prevention and community-based supports through to initial services provided during intake and specialized intervention and bed-based clinical treatment.
- CYMH provides free and voluntary evidence-informed mental health services to over 25,000<sup>1</sup> children and youth (aged 0-19) who are experiencing moderate to severe mental health challenges and disorders.
- CYMH services are offered in-person and virtually to meet the needs and preferences of families. The transition to include virtual services has improved access to service, especially for those families in rural and remote areas. Children and youth present to CYMH with increasingly complex needs, including an average of four mental health issues, such as anxiety, depression, suicidal thoughts, and neuro-developmental concerns.
- At 93 intake clinics<sup>1</sup> across the province, children and youth participate in an initial screening tool, the BC Child and Family Phone Interview (BCFPI) and intake interview, which informs the CYMH clinician's response in connecting children, youth, and families to the right supports including CYMH core services.
- CYMH clinicians work in collaboration with several partners including Health Authorities; health and substance-use services; community-based social service providers; Indigenous Child & Family Service Agencies (ICFSA); Schools; Foundry centres; and contracted agencies or services.
- MCFD is a full Ministry partner in *A Pathway to Hope* and continues to support the implementation of Integrated Child & Youth Teams (ICYT) in twelve communities; expansion of Foundry centres; Early Intervention Enhancements (EIE); and High Intensity Outreach (HIOT) Services in the first five communities.
- An additional 8 ICY communities are expected to be announced in Spring 2024

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<sup>1</sup> Data does not include the number of children, youth, and families who accessed CYMH services in Vancouver and Richmond, where services are contracted with Vancouver Coastal Health Authority.

- MCFD continues to lead two Step-Up Step-Down Services to address gaps in the CYMH continuum of services including: High Intensity Outreach Services and Live-In Satellite services.

#### **BACKGROUND:**

- CYMH services are guided by a provincial service framework and overarching policies and practice standards that ensure quality and consistency across all service delivery areas of the province.
- CYMH teams are comprised of a variety of professionals including Masters-level Clinicians, Nurse Clinicians, Psychologists, Support Workers, and contracted Psychiatrists, offering trauma-informed and evidence-informed care to children, youth, and their families. This includes culturally safe and relevant services to Indigenous children, youth, and their families.
- MCFD does not directly provide CYMH services in Vancouver/Richmond and Prince George where services are delivered through an MCFD-funded contract with Vancouver Coastal Health and Intersect Youth and Family Services.

The Ministry's CYMH services include:

- Core Services provided through community-based CYMH and Indigenous CYMH teams and Integrated Child and Youth (ICY) teams in select locations – these are offered through Ministry offices, ICFSA's, Foundry Centres, contracted agencies, community outreach, and schools.
  - Children and youth who present with urgent mental health issues, such as suicidal thoughts, are immediately responded to by a mental health clinician for assessment and safety planning.
- Contracted telehealth services ensure Psychiatrists can meet with young people and their families in Northern, rural, and remote areas of the province.
- The Maples Adolescent Treatment Centre (Maples), is a provincially designated mental health facility. Services are delivered to youth ages 12-17 with severe and enduring mental health needs.
  - Referrals are made by CYMH, Indigenous CYMH, and Health Authority Clinicians.
  - The Maples provides a range of community and live-in services for young people admitted under the *Mental Health Act*.
  - Including care, assessment and treatment for youth with behavioural and complex care needs and for youth found Unfit to Stand Trial and Not

Criminally Responsible due to a Mental Disorder (NCRMD) under the Criminal Code of Canada.

- Youth Forensic Psychiatric Services provide court-mandated forensic assessments and interventions to youth involved in the justice system and support youth who are on community or custody supervision via:
  - in-Patient Assessment Unit in Burnaby
  - outpatient clinics in Vancouver, Burnaby, Langley, Victoria, Nanaimo, Prince George, Kamloops, and Kelowna.
- Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) Initiatives provide school-based mental health prevention programming (e.g., Everyday Anxiety Strategies for Educators (EASE) or Confident Parents Thriving Kids).
- Specialized Services provided by specialized CYMH teams (in some communities, contracted agencies, and/or health authorities include:
  - Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health
  - Early Psychosis Intervention (EPI)
  - Developmental Disabilities Mental Health
  - Concurrent Disorders
  - Eating Disorders
- As a full Ministry partner in *A Pathway to Hope*, CYMH clinicians work collaboratively with cross-ministry and community partners to offer seamless and integrated services through:
  - Integrated Child and Youth (ICY) teams: CYMH Clinicians are core members of these teams.
  - Foundry Centres: CYMH clinicians and team leaders work onsite and support Foundry staff and the youth who access Foundry centres with in-kind services, where capacity permits.
  - Step Up/Step Down: High Intensity Outreach Services: CYMH Clinicians work to help prevent and reduce mental health related hospital admissions and support the transition from hospital to community.
  - Early Intervention Enhancement services: Newly funded Infant Mental Health Clinicians work alongside contracted early childhood community service providers to provide early intervention services for children (ages 0-6) and their families.

- As demand for CYMH services exceed capacity, families waiting for a primary clinician can access the following CYMH initial services:
  - Regular monitoring of mental health status, brief treatment sessions, consultations, psychoeducational and therapeutic groups, resources, and referrals to local and provincial services.
- CYMH and social sector partners have been experiencing labour market challenges since the pandemic, resulting in historically higher challenges with recruitment and retention.

### **WORK UNDERWAY:**

- Further integration of mental health services, including Integration of Child and Youth Mental Health Teams currently in 12 communities (and planning for 8 new communities underway), as well as new Foundry centres.
- To address the labour pressures within CYMH, mitigation strategies have been implemented or are underway, including:
  - Ongoing recruitment within CYMH province wide
  - Development of recruitment strategies across the ministry
  - Implementation of a Provincial CYMH virtual team located in various areas of the province, providing increased flexible work options to attract new, and retain existing, CYMH Clinicians.
- To address the responsiveness and quality of services, the ministry has implemented or is undertaking the following:
  - Streamlined the intake process with an updated screening tool.
  - Policy guidance on waitlist monitoring that includes flexible options to connect with youth and families.
  - Implementation of a Provincial CYMH virtual team to deliver services to children, youth, and families currently on a CYMH waitlist through a virtual platform. Service is expected to commence March 2024, focussing on communities with the longest wait times.
  - As part of Step Up/Step Down services through Pathways to Hope, satellite services are being developed in Prince George and Vernon. Each location will offer live-in services for up to 5 youth for 30-90

days. A soft launch of outreach services will occur in March 2024 with live-in services expected to be offered in the Spring of 2024.

- Enhancement of CYMH service pathways for neurodiverse children and youth and children/youth in care of the ministry.
- Development of the publicly available *Mental Health and Wellness Resources and Supports* guide, with resources that clinicians can share with young people and families awaiting services.
- Development and implementation of a new provincial CYMH governance structure and SDD realignment of CYMH Service Delivery Directors to enable increased strategic and specialized oversight of the ministry's continuum of CYMH services.

**CROSS REFERENCE:** N/A

**MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT  
STRATEGIC INTEGRATION, POLICY AND LEGISLATION DIVISION  
ESTIMATES CORPORATE BRIEFING NOTE 2023/24**

**ISSUE:        Responding to Opioid Crisis**

**KEY MESSAGES:**

- The toxic drug crisis continues to have a devastating impact on children, youth, families and communities in B.C. and we know families need support to help their loved ones.
- Young people are struggling, and the illicit supply is so poisoned that the risks associated with drug use, whether through experimentation, occasional or regular use, are extraordinarily high.
- The death of any child or youth is tragic, and our hearts go out to the families, friends and communities who knew and loved these young people.
- In response, MCFD is working as a full partner with the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions (MMHA) in building an integrated system of care for mental health and substance use services.
- Together, we are working across ministries (including Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education and Child Care) and with community partners and service providers, to offer resources and outreach services through Integrated Child and Youth (ICY) teams and community organizations, including Foundry centres, throughout B.C.
- MCFD continues to invest in community-based services targeted to the needs of youth at risk of harm, including overdose and exploitation.
- MCFD's response to the opioid crisis is focused on keeping children, youth, and families safe and healthy through prevention, early intervention, and coordination of equitable and trauma informed services, including harm reduction resources.
- This includes monitoring data trends related to drug overdose to inform service needs and resource allocation, improving oversight and quality assurance.

**BACKGROUND:**

- The treatment of problematic substance use falls outside of MCFD's Child and Youth Mental Health (CYMH) mandate.
- CYMH clinicians are the treatment lead for youth when their mental health concern is the primary presenting issue, and their substance use is secondary.

- When a youth’s substance use is primary and significantly impacting their daily functioning, CYMH clinicians may provide specific intervention e.g., crisis stabilization, suicide risk assessment, as needed; and refer to a specialized substance youth counsellor to be the treatment lead.
- MCFD and Indigenous Child and Family Services Agencies (ICFSA), including ICFSA’s that are contracted to provide Indigenous CYMH services, work within a broader system of care to support health and development through an array of child and youth mental health and substance use services.
- According to Children’s Health Policy Centre, 2.3% or 8,200 youth (12–18 years) in B.C. are impacted by any substance use disorder (2020) — these young people are more likely to have a mental health disorder and be a youth in care.
- The province’s opioid public health emergency continues into its eighth year, and it is significantly impacting youth across British Columbia<sup>1</sup>:
  - Drug related deaths of youth (0-18) has tripled since 2016.
  - Unregulated drug toxicity was the leading cause of unnatural deaths among youth from 2017 to 2022, surpassing death by suicide and motor vehicle accidents.
  - Fentanyl or its analogues were detected in 79% of the youth who died.
  - 142 youth deaths related to unregulated drug toxicity over this six-year time period.
  - Of that number, 73% (103 of the youth) were in receipt of Ministry of Children and Family Development (the ministry) services (31 were in care). These services include child and family services, guardianship, and youth services, Youth Justice (YJ), Children and Youth with Support Needs (CYSN) and Child and Youth Mental Health (CYMH).
  - Ninety-five of the youth who died (67%) had a mental health diagnosis or anecdotal evidence of a mental health disorder.

## WORK UNDERWAY

- A series of practice guidelines and educational tools have been developed to support MCFD and ICFSA staff to work with youth and families impacted by problematic substance use, including harm reduction resources such as training for, and access to, Naloxone kits.

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<sup>1</sup> Coroners Service (2023). *Youth Unregulated Drug Toxicity Deaths: January 1, 2017 – December 31, 2022*. [https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/birth-adoption-death-marriage-and-divorce/deaths/coroners-service/statistical/youth\\_drug\\_toxicity\\_deaths\\_2017-2022.pdf](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/birth-adoption-death-marriage-and-divorce/deaths/coroners-service/statistical/youth_drug_toxicity_deaths_2017-2022.pdf)

- Through *A Pathway to Hope*, government’s 10-year vision for mental health and substance use care:
  - MMHA is leading the establishment of Integrated Child and Youth (ICY) Teams, recognizing that opioid use and mental health needs are deeply intertwined, and that mental health and substance use programs for children and youth need to be integrated. These teams include, or are working to include, MCFD CYMH clinicians in each of the 12 school district communities.
  - The Ministry has developed two Step Up/Step Down (SUSD) services to support children and youth with severe mental health and/or substance use issues who require intensive services. The term “step up” refers to treatment options at a higher intensity than regular community services as an alternative to hospitalization. The term “step down” also refers to intensive treatment but for children and youth transitioning out of hospital care before returning to community services.
    - 1High Intensity Outreach Services have been implemented in the first five ICY communities. This program model follows evidence-based recommendations to engage children and youth in services and increases access to specialized practitioners who can provide more frequent mental health and/or substance use support and treatment where a child or youth resides in context of their caregivers/family. Specialized clinicians are available to respond to youth within 24 – 48 hours of receiving a referral.
    - The Maples Adolescent Treatment Centre (MATC), has provided step-up from community services for decades and recently developed a step-down pathway to the Maples services from hospital/Health Authority. As well, through the MATC, live-in and outreach satellite services are being developed in Prince George and Vernon. Each location will offer live-in services for up to 5 youth for 30-90 days.
  - Foundry centres and virtual services are being expanded, increasing access to integrated mental health care, substance use services, primary care, peer support, and social services for youth ages 12-24 and their families — Currently there are 16 open centres, 9 in development, and 10 more planned.
- Forensic Rapid Access Transition Team (FRATT), through Youth Forensic Psychiatric Services (YFPS), is for youth involved in the justice system. FRATT

consists of a multidisciplinary team (Nurse and Psychiatrist) that provides a needs assessment of youth who use opioids non-medically, followed by Opioid Agonist Therapy (OAT) when appropriate and with consent. FRATT coordinates the transition, enabling access to prescriber or resource for OAT to enable long term substance use support for the youth.

- MCFD is leading the delivery of the following services to enable wraparound supports for young people in care, and/or transitioning out of care to adulthood who may be impacted by, or at risk for, problematic substance use:
  - Specialized Homes and Support Services (SHSS), including low-barrier short-term stabilization care
  - Youth Emergency Shelter (YES) program
  - Integrated Practice Program (IPP)
  - Strengthening Abilities and Journeys of Empowerment (SAJE)
- Launched in 2021, Phones 4 Youth (P4Y) provides data plans from TELUS to every youth in care aged 13 or older receiving services from MCFD, as part of multi-faceted safety planning.
  - Social workers ensure the phones have the Lifeguard App – an app to help save lives and ensure that people who use drugs alone have access to the supports they need.
- The Ministry works in tandem with the RCMP in various communities and local police agencies to conduct youth outreach including:
  - Yankee 20 (high risk youth/street youth Intervention team – Vancouver)
  - Yankee 30 (Surrey, and Richmond RCMP as of January 2023)
  - Car 86 (Vancouver Police Department) that responds to child welfare matters where violence is an issue, such as family violence.
- MCFD staff participate in the MMHA’s provincial Overdose Emergency Response Centre (OERC) meetings and distribute information from the OERC within MCFD and ICPSA, including the weekly OERC Overdose Dashboard.
- MCFD is supporting the development of the *Provincial Child and Youth Substance Use and Wellness Framework*<sup>2</sup>, to inform further actions towards enhancing the continuum of services for young people at risk for, or struggling with, problematic substance use, which may provide direction for information sharing pathways and services needs of the children and youth serving system.

## CROSS REFERENCE:

- **Note 4.1 – Overview of CYMH Services**

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<sup>2</sup> Co-lead by MMHA and PHSA-BCCH and contracted vendor, *Inside Out*.

**MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT**  
**STRATEGIC INTEGRATION, POLICY AND LEGISLATION DIVISION ESTIMATES CORPORATE**  
**BRIEFING NOTE 2024/25**

**ISSUE: Children and Youth with Support Needs Commitments**

**KEY MESSAGES:**

- All children and youth deserve access to the support they need to live a full, happy, and healthy life and to reach their goals.
- The government's intention is to build a system where services are provided in a way that meets the unique needs of all children and youth, regardless of diagnosis.
- November 2022, Premier Eby and Minister Dean articulated four key commitments related to the system of services for children and youth with support needs. The province committed to:
  - Maintaining individualized funding for those with an autism diagnosis even after 2025, including those who are diagnosed in the future.
  - Pausing the rollout of BC's plan to establish a network of family connections centres, with the exception of four pilot centres to be launched with a thorough evaluation process.
  - Engaging in deeper consultation with parents and caregivers, First Nations, Indigenous Peoples, communities, experts and practitioners, and other stakeholders with lived experience to understand how the system can be transformed and together build a better system of supports, co-developed with Indigenous communities.
  - Making new investments as the new system is being developed to support children with disabilities and support needs that are currently underserved.
- In Budget 2023, substantial new investments were announced by government to support the November 2022 commitments. The new investments also include funding for the co-development of an Indigenous-led integrated service

approach for Indigenous children and youth with support needs in partnership between the ministry and Indigenous community service partners.

- In 2023, the four pilot family connections centres (FCCs) opened and are fully operational. A robust evaluation process has commenced and is being led by external contractor, MNP.
- The pilot FCCs are:
  - ARC Programs Ltd. in Central Okanagan/Kelowna
  - Terrace Child Development Centre Society in Terrace/Kitimat
  - North Coast Community Services Society in Haida Gwaii/Prince Rupert
  - Northwest Child Development Centre Society in Bulkley Valley/Stikine
- The Ministry is well underway with deeper engagement and consultation.
- Throughout 2024, engagement will continue across the province in numerous ways with the support of Indigenous Rights and Title Holders, community partners, and subject-matter experts. Information about the different ways to engage and participate in informing the government on improving services for Children and Youth with Support Needs can be found on the Engage BC Website.

#### **BACKGROUND:**

- In October 2021, government announced the CYSN Service Framework, including a new approach to services to better serve a broad range of children and youth with support needs in BC. This included four early implementation sites where family connections centres and strengthened Ministry programs would be implemented.
- This CYSN service framework was built from thorough engagement going back to 2019 but was delayed due to the COVID-19 Pandemic as the Ministry pivoted to announce the Emergency Relief Support Fund and other flexible measures.
- Between April 2022 and early 2023, the procurement process for family connections centres was launched and successful operators were identified for the Northwest and Central Okanagan.
- On November 25, 2022, the planned provincial implementation of family connections centres was paused, and the four early

implementation sites became four pilot sites.

- The pilot FCCs opened in 2023, and are providing an integrated approach to services, based on the changing needs of the child, and are integrated with Disability Services and Provincial Services delivered through the Ministry.
- In November 2022, the government committed to a robust evaluation of the pilots and their outcomes for children, youth and families and to deeper engagement with parents and caregivers, Indigenous Peoples, communities, practitioners, and those with lived experience to understand how the system can be transformed and together build a system that better supports all children and youth with support needs.
- Throughout 2024, MNP, an external contractor, will work in partnership with each of the four pilot FCCs to ensure that evaluation is thorough and accurately represents the strengths and needs of the FCCs and the families they are serving.
- In the pilot areas, existing programs such as the individualized Autism Funding program, At Home Program Medical Benefits and School Age Extended therapy benefit, and Autism Information Services continue.
- If families are accessing Individualized Autism Funding, they can choose to continue receiving their current funding and services or opt in to receiving services through the family connections centres.

#### **CROSS REFERENCE:**

4.4 – CYSN FCC Pilots and AIF Decision

**MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT  
STRATEGIC INTEGRATION, POLICY AND LEGISLATION  
ESTIMATES CORPORATE BRIEFING NOTE 2023/24**

**ISSUE: Children and Youth with Support Needs: Pilot Family connections centres (FCC) and Autism Funding (AF)**

**KEY MESSAGES:**

- On November 25, 2022, the province-wide rollout of a new CYSN approach for children and youth with support needs was paused as well as a decision to continue Individualized Autism Funding (IAF).
- Evaluation of the FCCs began in late 2023 and is focusing on the outcomes that will further inform the development of a new model of care that is evidence-based.
- As of December 2023, four pilot FCCs operated by contracted community agencies have opened. They are:
  - ARC Programs Ltd. in Kelowna
  - North Coast Community Services Society in Prince Rupert
  - Terrace Child Development Centre Society in Terrace
  - Northwest Child Development Centre Society in Smithers
- These pilot FCCs provide a range of supports and services that are delivered by multidisciplinary teams, that can be accessed by children, youth and families, regardless of diagnosis while the family pursues a diagnosis.
- Families whose children have an autism diagnosis in the pilot areas can either choose to continue receiving IAF or transition to the services provided through the FCCs.

**BACKGROUND:**

- Today, a diagnosis of Autism is required for IAF. Families can obtain either a publicly funded assessment through the British Columbia Autism Assessment Network (BCAAN) or a private assessment from a qualified clinician by paying out-of-pocket.
- There is a waitlist for publicly funded assessments, which can delay access

to autism intervention supports and services.

- Advocates and families of children and youth with autism believe that ending IAF represents a loss of service and choice for families.
- Government has committed to maintaining IAF for children and youth who have an autism diagnosis, while increasing services for children, youth and families who are currently underserved.
- The families of children and youth with autism who live in pilot areas can choose to opt-in to FCC supports and services or keep receiving their current IAF. If a family decides that the FCC is not right for their family, they can resume accessing IAF at any time. IAF can be paused once.

**CROSS REFERENCE:**

4.3 – CYSN Commitments

**MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT  
STRATEGIC INTEGRATION, POLICY AND LEGISLATION  
ESTIMATES CORPORATE BRIEFING NOTE 2024/25**

**ISSUE: Youth Transitions**

**KEY MESSAGES:**

- It is essential that youth and young adults transitioning from government care to adulthood have the supports, tools and relationships that help them thrive.
- As part of the Ministry of Children and Family Development's (MCFD) mandate, the Ministry is committed to supporting youth and young adults in and from care to transition into adulthood by helping them obtain the skills, resources and connections that they need to thrive into their adult years.
- MCFD is making significant changes to programs and services to better meet the needs of young people through the introduction of Strengthening Abilities and Journeys of Empowerment – through this program we have:
  - expanded eligibility for supports;
  - introduced new housing and financial supports;
  - provided young and young adults access to navigators and guides who can help them plan for their futures;
  - and we have provided access to new benefits including to mental health services.
- The aim of these supports is to increase financial stability, reduce the experience of homelessness, promote skill development, connection to culture and community, improve mental health and wellbeing and better prepare young people for the transition to adulthood.
- MCFD will continue to work with cross-government partners to ensure accessible and enhanced supports and services for young adults are implemented through 2024/2025.

**BACKGROUND:**

- The following measures and program supports have been implemented to date:
  - In August 2022, a no-limit earnings exemption was introduced.

Contact: Emily Horton, ADM, SIPL  
Cell phone: 250-413-7608  
Date: December 18, 2023

Employment income is now exempt when determining the level of funding a young adult will receive.

- In November 2022, a new rent supplement program was introduced to help eligible young adults from care to live independently and afford their rent in the private market. 50% of the rent supplements are available to Indigenous young adults.
- Beginning in March 2023, SAJE workers have been hired to support youth in care starting at age 14 and guiding them until age 25. This new support will be available throughout the province and hiring will be completed by spring 2024.
- In April 2023, the annual dental limit was raised to \$1000 per year (an increase of \$300 per year), and optical benefits were expanded to cover eye exams.
- Eligible young adults on a Temporary Housing Agreement (THA) were also enabled to access a Temporary Support Agreement (TSA) on their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday regardless of their living arrangement and may also move from a THA to a TSA at any time between their 19<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> birthday.
- As of April 2023, young adults accessing supports and services through the Agreements with Young Adults (AYA) program were allowed do so for 84 months, or until their 27<sup>th</sup> birthday, which is a substantial increase over the previous 48 months. This was introduced nearly 1-year ahead of schedule to ensure young adults on AYA did not fall through the cracks when their support ended after 48 months.
- As of November 2023, MCFD introduced a new Mental Health and Counselling Benefit for young adults on THA, TSA or AYA. Additionally, eligible young adults focused on developing life skills are now able to access funding to support the pursuit of their goals through educational, training or cultural connections learning opportunities.
- The ministry passed legislation that will come into force in spring 2024, expanding the eligibility and services available to youth and young adults from government care to better support them as they transition to adulthood. The amendments will allow MCFD to:
  - Expand eligibility for new, comprehensive transition supports that are more accessible to young adults from care, something it didn't previously

- have the legal authority to do.
- Support young people with a minimum of 24 months of government care experience regardless of legal care status, up to the age of 27.
  - Youth with a permanent transfer of custody, or those who are adopted, anytime between the ages of 12 and 19 will automatically qualify for SAJE supports.
  - Enable young adults from care to maintain stable housing by making emergency pandemic housing supports and the rent supplement program permanent.
  - Provide unconditional monthly income support until age 20 to cover living expenses, support stability while transitioning out of care and prevent homelessness, and ongoing income support until age 27 if engaged in approved programming.

**CROSS REFERENCE:**

6.2 – Youth Transitions Service Framework

**MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT**  
**SERVICE DELIVERY DIVISION**  
**ESTIMATES CORPORATE BRIEFING NOTE 2024/25**

**ISSUE:        **Overview of Youth Custody Services****

**KEY MESSAGES:**

- Every youth deserves to have the support they need to live safe and healthy lives and reach their goals.
- In BC, the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) holds the mandate for the administration of youth justice services for youth between the ages of 12 to 17 at the time of their alleged criminal offence.
- Youth justice services administered by MCFD are comprised of three services: community youth justice services, Youth Forensic Psychiatric Services (YFPS), and Youth Custody Services (YCS).
- Youth justice services in BC continues to be recognized nationally as a leader in the delivery of youth justice programs and services.
- Most notably, BC has the lowest per capita custody rate (0.37 per 10,000 young people compared to the national rate of 2.37) in the country.<sup>1</sup>
- The key factor accounting for the recent years' declines in community caseload and youth custody population is the reduction in the youth crime rate.<sup>2</sup>
- While the decline in the use of custody reached its lowest point in recent years, there has in fact been a slight increase in the past year, from a daily average of 15 youth in 2023/24 to 22 youth fiscal year to date.<sup>3</sup>
- Notably, the average number of Indigenous youth in custody to date this

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<sup>1</sup> See, Statistics Canada, Average counts of young persons in provincial and territorial correctional services, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=3510000301>. Fiscal Year 2021/22 is the most recent available national data.

<sup>2</sup> Statistics Canada's Crime Severity Index (CSI) measures changes in the severity of police-reported crime by accounting for both amount of crime reported by police and the seriousness of these crimes. The overall youth CSI for BC in 2022 is nearly half (46 per cent) of what it was in 2012.

<sup>3</sup> Source: MCFD IBM Cognos. Retrieved December 29, 2023.

fiscal year is only 12, which is approximately one-third (33 per cent) of what it was in Fiscal Year 2013/14.

### **BACKGROUND:**

- There are currently, until March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024, two youth custody centres in BC, located in Burnaby and Prince George, which provide pretrial detention (remand) for youth awaiting trial or sentencing, sentenced secure custody, and sentenced open custody.
- The combined space for both centres is 108, with 24 rooms at Prince George and 84 rooms at Burnaby.
- In response to fewer young people receiving custodial sentences, the ministry announced the closure of Prince George Youth Custody Services effective March 31, 2024, and centralization of services to Burnaby.
- The ministry is retaining a small area of the PGYCS building as a place of temporary accommodation to assist with the transportation of in-custody youth from Northern areas to the BYCS and/or to facilitate multi-day court appearances.
- An interim holding unit, a satellite facility of Burnaby Youth Custody Services (BYCS), is located in Victoria. It functions as a short-term, temporary, overnight accommodation for youth on Vancouver Island who are awaiting transfer to or from court or to BYCS.
- A number of programs and services are available for youth receiving custody services, ranging from mental and health care support, educational programming, substance misuse counselling, and culturally responsive interventions, programs, and services.

### **CROSS REFERENCE:**

7.2 – Overview of Youth Justice Services

7.3 – PGYCC Closure

**MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT**  
**SERVICE DELIVERY DIVISION**  
**ESTIMATES CORPORATE BRIEFING NOTE 2024/25**

**ISSUE:       Community Youth Justice Services**

Every child and youth deserves to have the support they need to live safe and healthy lives and reach their goals.

**KEY MESSAGES:**

- BC is widely recognized across Canada as having progressive and effective youth justice services.
- Community youth justice services are committed to public safety and the rehabilitation of youth in conflict with the law. Youth probation officers promote rehabilitation through supervision and support of youth involved in the criminal justice system.
- BC provides youth justice services for youth aged 12 to 17 at the time a criminal offence was committed and can retain youth up to age 20 on youth orders.
- There are 11 centrally managed Full-Time Attendance Programs (total 38 beds) located across BC providing community based rehabilitative services, focused programming, and enhanced supervision to youth involved at all stages of the justice system.
- Since FY21/22 the average number of youth on community supervision has increased by 23%.
- Community youth justice provided services to approximately 965 youth this fiscal year to date with 41% self-identifying as Indigenous youth.<sup>1</sup>

**BACKGROUND:**

- Youth probation officers work in integrated ministry offices across all service delivery areas and report to specialized youth justice team leaders.
- Community supervision by youth probation officers is enhanced and supported by a range of programs and services including:

- intensive support and supervision programs
  - substance abuse treatment
  - mental health assessment and services
  - restorative justice services
  - cultural connection mentorship and supports
  - a provincial toolbox to financially support individualized case specific planning
  - specialized federal funding options for youth specific to rehabilitation services, based on criteria and focused on individualized plans
  - a treatment and rehabilitative program developed in 2023 to support individualized treatment and rehabilitative plans for youth who do not qualify for specialized federal funding options
  - a range of Full-Time Attendance Programs aiming to provide intensive community based rehabilitative services through focused programming and enhanced supervision.
- Youth justice services provided by MCFD are cost-shared with the federal government through two contribution agreements. Funding for both agreements is recovered directly to the MCFD Vote.

## **CROSS REFERENCE:**

### 7.1 Overview of Youth Custody Services

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<sup>1</sup> Data Source Specialized Intervention and Youth Justice Branch, MCFD  
FYTD 2023/24 as of January 2, 2024

**MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT  
SPECIALIZED INTERVENTION AND YOUTH JUSTICE BRANCH  
ESTIMATES CORPORATE BRIEFING NOTE 2024/25**

**ISSUE:        Closure of Prince George Youth Custody Services (PGYCS)**

**KEY MESSAGES:**

- We are working on modernizing Youth Justice Services to ensure effective and efficient use of resources that best meet the needs of the youth in our province.
- In response to fewer young people receiving custodial sentences in BC, the ministry announced the closure of PGYCS effective March 31, 2024.
- The centralization of custody services offers an opportunity to re-allocate youth justice resources more effectively, particularly in addressing the overrepresentation of Indigenous and other racialized youth within the justice system.
- Commitments made in the BC First Nations Justice Strategy, signed in 2020, included commitments to address poor justice outcomes for First Nations people in B.C., and promote alternatives to incarceration.
- We are focused on providing enhanced community-based services that address mental health, addictions, and complex needs including addressing over representation of Indigenous and other racialized youth within the justice system.
- This strategic reinvestment will be guided by consultations with key partners and will focus on the transformative change needed to create the conditions where Indigenous youth and other racialized youth are no longer disproportionately interacting with the youth justice system.
- Burnaby Youth Custody Services (BYCS) will be the only youth custody facility in the province.
- With a staffed operating capacity of 84, and an average daily count of 17 youth, BYCS has sufficient capacity to meet provincial demand for youth custody services.

- The ministry is retaining a small area of the PGYCS building as a place of temporary accommodation to assist with the transportation of in-custody youth from Northern areas to the BYCS and/or to facilitate multi-day court appearances.
- The temporary use of a portion of the building is part of a broader permanent plan for the temporary accommodation of in-custody youth from Northern areas of the province.
- **Personal Information**

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#### **BACKGROUND:**

- Beginning in 2021, the ministry has been working in partnership with the BC First Nations Justice Council, the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General (ministry responsible for Indigenous justice programs and services and restorative justice), and the Indigenous Justice Secretariat to advance the BC First Nations Justice Strategy and the Métis Justice Strategy.
- The ministry in consultation with justice and ministry partners, the First Nations Justice Council, Métis Nation BC, and local First Nations, are working together to develop a plan for the redeployment of resources to services for Indigenous youth and other racialized youth and communities.
- To mitigate the use of local police cells and to ensure an expedited, secure, and trauma-informed escort for youth from Northern areas, the ministry and BC Sheriff Service have amended the Memorandum of Understanding for the in-custody transport of provincial in-custody youth.
- The ministry continues to provide a family visitation financial support program which subsidizes travel costs for families or other adults who wish to visit their child while they are receiving custody services.

#### **CROSS REFERENCE:**

##### 7.1 – Overview of Youth Custody Services

**MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT  
STRATEGIC INTEGRATION, POLICY AND LEGISLATION DIVISION  
ESTIMATES CORPORATE BRIEFING NOTE 2023/24**

**ISSUE:**        **Working with First Nations Justice Council**

**KEY MESSAGES:**

- There has been a Canada-wide trend of fewer youth involved in the justice system needing to be placed into custody, including here in BC.
- The Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) is working towards modernizing youth justice (YJ) services to ensure effective and efficient use of resources that best meet the needs of the youth in our province.
- A decision has been made to close the Prince George Youth Custody Centre (PGYCC) effective March 31, 2024, and centralize youth justice services to the Burnaby Custody Centre location. The Ministry will be maintaining an interim holding unit in the Prince George Youth Custody Centre to facilitate transportation needs and court appearances for youth.
- Centralizing services provides an opportunity to refocus resources to address the overrepresentation of Indigenous and other racialized youth within the YJ system and to work in a way that aligns with the *Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People*.
- The BC First Nations Justice Strategy (the Strategy) signed in 2020, included commitments to address poor justice outcomes for First Nations people in BC, and promote alternatives to custody.
- The Strategy was jointly developed by the BC First Nations Justice Council (BCFNJC), BC First Nations communities, and the Province of British Columbia.
- Indigenous partners, including BCFNJC and Métis Nation BC Justice Council, are currently working in partnership with the province to identify opportunities to improve BC's YJ services.

**BACKGROUND:**

***BC First Nations Justice Strategy***

- The work of the BCFNJC is rooted in the BC First Nations Justice Strategy (released in 2020), which provides a roadmap for transforming the justice

system.

- Three significant components of the Strategy relate to YJ:
  - Strategy 10 – Develop a First Nations Youth Justice Prevention and Action Plan to help address root-causes, youth-specific issues and the prevention of youth involvement in the justice system.
  - Strategy 14 – Expand culturally based programs throughout corrections, and support for use of alternatives within First Nations.
  - Strategy 15 – Support First Nations community-based justice programming.

### ***Engagement Partnership with BCFNJC***

- The Ministry is modernizing YJ services through the development of a Service Framework. As part of this work, the Ministry is undertaking a comprehensive current state assessment that involves research and engagements.
- Phase 1 engagements (2021-2022) included 340 sector partners and staff. Key themes from this are showing alignment with the BC First Nations Justice Strategy intent.
- Moving into Phase 2, engagements will be conducted with youth who have lived experience, community sector partners, and Indigenous communities, including First Nations.
- Throughout summer 2023, MCFD has been working with representatives from the Indigenous Justice Secretariat and the BCFNJC to deepen partnerships and explore funding opportunities to support FNJC's youth engagement initiatives in the spring of 2024.
- These engagements will inform a youth-specific action plan for the BCFNJC (Strategy 10), the Ministry's re-investment priorities as well as the forthcoming MCFD YJ Service Framework.
- After the closure of PGYCC, BCFNJC representatives expressed concerns regarding the Ministry's lack of communication about the Centre's closure.
- In response, the Ministry made commitments to enhance communication and collaboration, including engagement on the development of the Ministry's forthcoming YJ Service Framework and redirection of funding for YJ.

**CROSS REFERENCE:** N/A

**MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT  
STRATEGIC INTEGRATION, POLICY AND LEGISLATION DIVISION  
ESTIMATES CORPORATE BRIEFING NOTE 2024/25**

**ISSUE: Working with Métis Nation BC Justice Council**

**KEY MESSAGES:**

- The Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) is working towards improving youth justice (YJ) services to ensure effective and efficient use of resources that best meet the needs of the youth in our province.
- To uphold the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Minister's Letter of Commitment (August 2021), and the Province's Letter of Intent with Métis Nation BC (October 2021), MCFD is committed to working alongside Indigenous partners, including BC First Nations Justice Council (BCFNJC) and Métis Nation BC Justice Council (MNBC Justice Council), to identify opportunities to improve BC's YJ services.
- The Ministry has been working collaboratively with the MNBC over the last year to establish a positive working relationship.
- The Ministry and Métis Nation BC Justice Council have a shared priority of addressing the overrepresentation of Métis youth in the youth justice system and will be working together to identify solutions.

**BACKGROUND:**

- There has been a Canada-wide trend of fewer youth involved in the justice system needing to be placed into custody, including here in BC.
- A decision was made to close the Prince George Youth Custody Centre (PGYCC) effective March 31, 2024, and centralize youth justice services to the Burnaby Custody Centre location. The Ministry will be maintaining an Interim Holding Unit in the Prince George Youth Custody Centre to facilitate transportation and court appearances for youth.
- Centralizing services provides an opportunity to refocus resources to address the overrepresentation of Indigenous and other racialized youth within the YJ system and to work in a way that aligns with the *Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People*.

- Discussions are underway with MNBC Justice Council to determine how to better meet the needs of Métis youth involved with the youth justice system and custody services.

### ***Métis Justice Strategy***

- Developed by MNBC Justice Council, the forthcoming Métis Justice Strategy outlines a comprehensive approach to supporting Métis individuals involved in the justice systems, emphasizing a trauma-informed lens rooted in the Métis experience of colonization.
- Recommendation 12 of the strategy focuses on Métis Youth Justice to address the overrepresentation of Métis youth, particularly 2SLGBTQIA+ Métis youth, in the criminal justice system.
- This recommendation proposes transformative change through evidence-based preventative and early intervention programs and services, culturally responsive restorative justice programs, and engagement with key partners.

### ***Engagement Partnership with MNBC Justice Council***

- The Ministry is improving YJ services through the development of a Service Framework. As part of this work, the Ministry is undertaking a comprehensive current state assessment that involves research and engagements.
- Phase 1 engagements (2021-2022) included 340 sector partners and staff. Key themes from this are showing alignment with the intent of the MNBC Justice Strategy.
- Moving into Phase 2, engagements will be conducted with youth who have lived experience, community sector partners, and Indigenous communities, including the 40 Métis chartered communities.
- These engagements will be shared with MNBC and will inform the Ministry's re-investment priorities as well as the forthcoming MCFD YJ Service Framework.

### **CROSS REFERENCE: N/A**

**MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT  
PARTNERSHIP AND INDIGENOUS ENGAGEMENT DIVISION  
ESTIMATES CORPORATE BRIEFING NOTE 2024/25**

**ISSUE:           Overview of First Nations Jurisdiction**

**KEY MESSAGES:**

- MCFD’s goal is to support children and youth to remain safely with their families and connected to their culture and communities.
- On January 1, 2020, the federal legislation – *An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth, and families* (the “federal Act”) – came into force which affirmed the inherent right of self-government and jurisdiction of Indigenous peoples in relation to child and family services.
- On November 24, 2022, Bill 38, *Indigenous Self-Government in Child and Family Services Amendment Act*, which amends the *Adoption Act* and the *Child, Family and Community Service Act* (CFCSA), was passed into law.
- On November 25, 2022, most of the clauses of the *Indigenous Self-Government in Child and Family Service Act* came into force.
- On January 15, 2024, additional clauses came into force through regulations co-developed with First Nations.
- We expect the remaining provisions of the new Act will be brought into force through a series of regulations co-developed with BC First Nations.
- BC is the first province in Canada to enact legislation that expressly recognizes that Indigenous Peoples have an inherent right of self-government, including self-determination specific to child and family services.
- First Nations now have several pathways available to them under the federal Act, the CFCSA, and the *BC Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (Declaration Act) to support them in achieving their goals regarding children and families.
- The Ministry is actively engaged in discussions with First Nations and Indigenous governing bodies regarding increased involvement, decision-making authority, and jurisdiction in relation to child and family services.

**BACKGROUND:**

- Since 2017, the Partnership and Indigenous Engagement Division has been engaging with Indigenous communities wishing to exercise their jurisdiction.
- There are several pathways for Indigenous communities to increase involvement, authority, and jurisdiction over child welfare:
  - Community agreements under s. 92.1 (2) of the CFCSA which pertain to consultation and cooperation with an Indigenous community on child safety work with their families such as assessments, child welfare investigations, development of care plans and planning for the needs of Indigenous children as well as placement decisions when children come into care.
  - Delegation enabling agreements under the CFCSA wherein a director enters into an agreement with an employer of one or more persons to whom a director has delegated any or all the director's power, duties, or functions under section 92.
  - Joint and consent-based decision-making agreements which provide the opportunity for the province and Indigenous governing bodies to share decision-making for child and family services, through reference in the CFCSA to section 6 and 7 of the Declaration Act.
  - Through the federal Act, Indigenous communities can exercise their inherent right of jurisdiction by one of two processes:
    1. adopting a new law and providing notice to the Minister of Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) and the province or territory in which the community is located; or
    2. sending a request to the Minister of ISC and the government of each province and territory in which the Indigenous community wishes to exercise jurisdiction to enter into a tripartite coordination agreement in relation to child and family services.
  - Section 21 (1) of the federal Act outlines that an Indigenous law has the force of federal law after either entering into a coordination agreement or making reasonable efforts to conclude an agreement over a year.
  - Self-governing agreements negotiated by the Ministry of Indigenous



**CROSS REFERENCE:**

- **8.4 – Federal Legislation and Coordination Agreements**

**MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT  
PARTNERSHIP AND INDIGENOUS ENGAGEMENT  
ESTIMATES CORPORATE BRIEFING NOTE 2024/25**

**ISSUE: Métis Nation BC, Metis Commission and MCFD**

**KEY MESSAGES:**

- MCFD continues to meet with Métis Nation British Columbia (MNBC) to support and assist them in achieving their goals of increased involvement in and authority over child and family services for Métis children, youth and families.
- In June 2018, MNBC and the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) signed a Joint Commitment document that commits the parties to collaboratively work toward MNBC authority over child welfare for Métis children and families in BC.
- Since 2018, MCFD has worked in collaboration with MNBC and the Métis Commission for Children and Families of BC (the Métis Commission) to determine a path forward for Métis people in BC to achieve increased involvement in and authority over child and family services.
- Intergovernmental Communications  
Intergovernmental Communications MCFD is  
continuing discussions with MNBC on the appropriate mechanism to increase MNBC involvement in and authority over child and family services for Métis children, youth and families.

**BACKGROUND:**

- Since the signing the Joint Commitment document 2018, the federal *Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families* was brought into force in January 2020. Amendments were also made to the *Child, Family and Community Service Act (CFSCA)* in 2019 and 2022 which provide additional potential options and pathways for increased involvement in and authority over child and family services.

- MNBC is generally regarded as the political voice for Métis people in BC. Lissa Dawn Smith is the President, Colette Trudeau is the Chief Executive Officer and Colleen Hodgson is the Executive Director, Children and Families/Citizenship.
- The Métis Commission is the designated representative under the *Child, Family and Community Service Regulation* for receipt of notices of hearings. Suzanne Patterson is the Interim Executive Director of the Commission.
- In February 2020, MNBC submitted a notice of intent to exercise jurisdiction under section 20(2) of the federal Act and requested to enter into a tripartite coordination agreement discussion with BC and Canada.
- MNBC was advised by Canada that they did not qualify as an Indigenous Governing Body (IGB) under the federal Act and therefore, coordination agreement discussions would not occur.
- MNBC has filed an application for judicial review of Canada's decision on IGB status from Canada as MNBC's goal is to work towards authority over their children in BC. MCFD is not aware of any decision or settlement at this time. The court file remains open.
- Intergovernmental Communications
  
- Intergovernmental Communications
  
- In September 2023, MNBC passed a resolution at its Annual General Meeting stating that MNBC is authorized to exercise the Métis Nation within British Columbia's inherent jurisdiction over child and family services, including through the development of a Métis child welfare law related to child and family services, the negotiation of related interim agreements, and any actions required to advance or exercise that jurisdiction.
- Intergovernmental Communications

**CROSS REFERENCE:** N/A

Contact: Denise Devenny, ADM, Partnership and Indigenous Engagement  
 Cell phone: 250-361-8280  
 Date: January 12 2024

**MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT  
PARTNERSHIP AND INDIGENOUS ENGAGEMENT DIVISION  
ESTIMATES CORPORATE BRIEFING NOTE 2024/25**

**ISSUE: FIRST NATIONS TRIPARTITE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

**KEY MESSAGES:**

- The First Nations Tripartite Children and Families Working Group (TWG) was established to support systemic reform to improve First Nations child and family well-being in British Columbia.
- The TWG has made valuable contributions to:
  - Implementing the federal Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families;
  - Increasing engagement and communications with First Nations in BC; and,
  - Informing a funding model to increase accountability and transparency to First Nations regarding the funding that goes to services to support First Nations.
- This has informed the work of a new Fiscal Framework Development Team mandated to support the TWG's commitment to co-develop a new funding model, with representatives from Indigenous Services Canada (from both the BC region and Headquarters), Ministry of Children and Families (MCFD) and First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC).

**BACKGROUND:**

- In May 2016, BC made a number of commitments at the BC First Nations Children and Family Gathering, which was held with representatives from the Province of British Columbia, Canada and the First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC) to discuss the current state of child welfare, including:
  - Work with Canada and the FNLC to build new jurisdictional and funding frameworks that would support improved outcomes, as well as empower First Nations who are

interested to exercise their own jurisdiction over child welfare; and

- Establish a tripartite working group to guide the work of the Province, Canada and the FNLC.
- In fall 2016, the TWG was formed and consists of representation from the Province of BC [Ministries of Children and Family Development (MCFD), Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation (MIRR) and Attorney General (AG)], the Government of Canada, and FNLC.
- Since then, the TWG signed Terms of Reference, an internal communications protocol, a Reconciliation Charter, and an updated 2020/2021 Workplan. The TWG also established two sub- committees in the areas of child welfare practice and fiscal relations/funding.
- The two sub-committees paused their meetings in 2021/2022 to get a better understanding of the governance structure and to determine if the sub-committee meetings were achieving the intended outcomes.
- In 2021/2022, FNLC contracted Ference and Company to undertake a review of the fiscal sub-committee and support the revision of the Service Level Agreement, which is a bi-lateral funding agreement between Canada and the Province of BC.
- Work with Ference and Co. concluded in the Spring of 2022 and a new Fiscal Framework Development Team (FFDT) was formed with representatives from Indigenous Services Canada (from both the BC region and Headquarters), MCFD and FNLC.
- The FFDT is mandated to support the TWG's commitment to work together to explore and co-develop a funding model applicable to First Nations child and family well-being in BC that adopts the principles of long-term, sustainable, and needs-based funding to support jurisdiction and improved long-term outcomes for children, youth, and families.
- The FFDT developed a Discussion Paper, Developing a new Funding Model and Approach for BC First Nations Children and Families, that was shared with First Nations Chiefs in November 2022 as start of an engagement process with First Nations.
- In September 2023, MCFD developed and released a further discussion paper titled Building a Funding Model to Support First Nations Jurisdiction over Child

and Family Services in BC. The September 2023 discussion paper was developed with input from the FFDT but was not a fully co-developed product.

- The September 2023 discussion paper was intended as a first step in the process of co-developing a new funding model with rights holders, Indigenous partners, and Canada. It supported introductory co-development with First Nations and Indigenous partners in Fall 2023. Further co-development with rights holders and partners is continuing in 2024.
- The FFDT has continued to meet regularly since September 2023 to discuss MCFD's ongoing co-development of the funding model.
- At this time, the TWG sub-committee on practice has not been re-established.
- Representatives from FNLC are regularly briefed at the TWG on the transformation initiatives occurring for MCFD.
- TWG most recently met on February 1, 2024 to re-establish the working group. Prior to this, the last TWG meeting was held on January 27, 2023.

**CROSS-REFERENCE:** N/A

**MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT  
PARTNERSHIP AND INDIGENOUS ENGAGEMENT DIVISION  
ESTIMATES CORPORATE BRIEFING NOTE 2024/25**

**ISSUE: Federal Indigenous child, youth, and family services legislation**

**KEY MESSAGES:**

- On January 1, 2020, the federal *Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families* (the federal Act) came into force.
- The federal Act affirms the inherent right of Indigenous peoples to exercise jurisdiction over child and family services and provides a process through which Indigenous laws can have the force of federal law.
- The Supreme Court of Canada unanimously upheld the constitutionality of the Federal Act on February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024.
- It also establishes national child and family services principles that must be used in the administration and interpretation of the Act, as well as national standards for service delivery that every province and territory must meet.
- The federal Act enables Indigenous communities to exercise jurisdiction over child and family services by one of two processes:
  - (1) adopting a new law and providing notice to the Minister of Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) and the province or territory in which the community is located; or
  - (2) by sending a request to the Minister of ISC and the government of each province and territory in which the Indigenous community wishes to exercise jurisdiction to enter into a tripartite coordination agreement for child and family service delivery.
- The province has implemented legislation, policies and practices to ensure alignment with the federal Act and oriented all MCFD and Indigenous Child and Family Service Agency (ICFSA) staff to the national principles and standards.
- The province continues to work with the federal government and First Nations, Inuit and, Métis peoples to implement the federal Act, including tripartite coordination agreement discussions with Canada and Indigenous governing

bodies intending to exercise jurisdiction over their child and family services.

- In 2021, IGBs in BC began entering into coordination agreement discussions with the provincial and federal governments.
- In March 2023, the first BC coordination agreement was signed between Splatsin First Nation, Canada and BC.
- The province is currently participating in coordination agreement discussions with five Indigenous governing bodies (Cowichan Tribes, Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw, Huu-ay-aht First Nations, Sts'ailes, and T̓silhqot'in National Government).

### **BACKGROUND:**

- Under the federal Act, an Indigenous law has the force of federal law after either entering into a coordination agreement or making reasonable efforts to conclude an agreement over a twelve-month period.
- The federal Act established three principles of cultural continuity, substantive equality<sup>1</sup>, and best interests of the Indigenous child to guide the way in which the statute is to be interpreted and administered.
- The Province of Québec challenged the constitutionality of the federal Act. The Québec Court of Appeal held that provisions giving Indigenous child and family services laws the force of federal law and paramountcy over provincial child and family services laws are unconstitutional.
- The Québec Court of Appeal decision appealed the decision in the Supreme Court of Canada (SCC). The SCC issued its judgement on February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024, unanimously concluding that the Federal Act is, on the whole, constitutional.
- Specifically, the SCC concluded that establishing national standards for Indigenous child and family services a valid exercise of federal jurisdiction, as well as adopting Indigenous laws by reference a valid mechanism by which to incorporate the referenced Indigenous laws.
- For national standards, the SCC described that while the provinces are bound by the standards, these standards are not so prescriptive that they regulate all

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<sup>1</sup>According to the Government of Canada, substantive equality is a “legal principle that refers to the achievement of true equality in outcomes. It is achieved through equal access, equal opportunity and, most importantly, the provision of services and benefits in a manner and according to standards that meet any unique needs and circumstances, such as cultural, social, economic and historical disadvantage.”

- aspects of the provision of child and family service in the Indigenous context
- Regarding the Federal Act establishing that Indigenous laws prevail in the event of conflict or inconsistency, the SCC described this approach as a simple restatement of the doctrine of federal paramountcy as a “for greater certainty” provision.
  - Notably, the SCC left the possibility open for future courts to conclude on matters regarding paramountcy, where for example there is an alleged conflict of laws and a declaration of paramountcy by the court is necessary.
  - The SCC declined to rule on whether First Nations’ inherent right of self-government over child and family services is a s.35 right. Instead, the SCC characterized the Federal Act’s affirmation on the right to self-determination of Indigenous peoples as a reiteration of intent expressed by Parliament and noted the practical merits of the Federal Act’s approach, since other ways to recognize Indigenous rights through constitutional amendment or self-government agreement can be costly, lengthy, and lead to inconsistent results.
  - The SCC decision represents the first time the court has considered UNDRIP, stating the Federal Act forms part of the implementation of UNDRIP by Parliament.

**CROSS REFERENCE:** N/A

MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT  
STRATEGIC INTEGRATION, POLICY & LEGISLATION DIVISION  
ESTIMATES CORPORATE BRIEFING NOTE 2024/25

**ISSUE: Improving Services for Indigenous Children and Families**

**KEY MESSAGES:**

- We are working in partnership with rights-holders and Indigenous partners to improve child and family services, address the overrepresentation of Indigenous children and youth in care, and to keep Indigenous children and youth connected to their families, communities, cultures, and languages.
- Over the past few years, there has been a significant change in the ministry's approach to working with Indigenous Peoples and communities.
- On Nov. 24, 2022, Bill 38, *Indigenous Self-Government in Child and Family Services Amendment Act* was passed into law, amending B.C.'s two key pieces of child welfare legislation: the *Adoption Act* and the *Child, Family and Community Service Act* (CFCSA).
- B.C. is the first province in Canada to enact legislation that expressly recognizes that Indigenous Peoples have an inherent right of self-government, including self-determination.
- These amendments are the beginning of a journey, and we continue to work with Indigenous Peoples and partners to co-develop policies, practices, and services to keep children and youth safely at home, connected to their communities and culture.

**BACKGROUND:**

- **Coordination Agreements between B.C., First Nations, and Canada:** We are working with First Nations and the federal government to negotiate coordination agreements that will ultimately see the Nations exercise their inherent jurisdiction over child and family services.
  - Splatlin completed the first coordination agreement in B.C. in March 2023.
  - Five Indigenous Governing Bodies (IGBs) in B.C. are actively engaged in coordination agreement negotiations with the Province and Canada. (Cowichan Tribes, Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Nations, Sts'ailes

First Nation, Huu-ay-aht First Nations, Tsilhqot'in National Government).

- Intergovernmental Communications

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- **Community (92.1) Agreements:** These agreements support Indigenous communities to be directly involved in child welfare decisions that impact their children, youth, and families. Community agreements are specific to s. 92.1(2) of the CFCSA and are focused on collaborative decision making on key areas such as assessments, child welfare investigations, and placement decisions when children come into care.
  - In April 2022, the Simpcw First Nation had its unique practices, customs, laws, language, and traditions integrated into a community agreement, Tcwesétmentem: Walking Together Agreement, the first of its kind in B.C.
  - In October 2023, Simpcw First Nation also entered into a two-year partnership with the province to provide cultural connections to families living away from home.
  - Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Nations signed their community agreement on Nov. 15, 2023, to become operational on Feb. 15, 2024 (3 months for orienting MCFD and ICFSA staff and community designates).
  - Intergovernmental Communications
  
- **Declaration Act Agreements:** Bill 38 introduced joint and consent-based decision-making agreements into both the CFCSA and *Adoption Act*. We are now working on legislative amendments to expand the scope of these agreements.
  - Intergovernmental Communications

- **Funding Model:** As part of the Declaration Act Action Plan, MCFD is co-developing a B.C.-specific funding model with rightsholders and Indigenous partners to support First Nations resuming their inherent jurisdiction over child and family services.
  - MCFD engaged with rightsholders, Indigenous partners, and Canada in fall 2023 as part of the funding model co-development process.
  - The funding model will support a range of agreements relating to both resuming jurisdiction over child and family services and consulting and cooperating with Indigenous communities more broadly in child and family services.
- **Practice changes:** calls to action from Indigenous organizations and oversight bodies have highlighted the need for transformative shifts to better support Indigenous children and youth. In 2023, we have:
  - Introduced regulatory amendments and policy changes to enable the Director to withdraw from proceedings so a child or youth can be served under Indigenous law.
  - Updated policy and procedures as well as standards for foster homes and staffed residential services to better respond to children and youth who are missing.
  - Introduced 90-day visits for children/youth in court-ordered out-of-care placements and the Extended Family Program to align with policy for children/youth in foster care.
  - Introduced a Professional Supervision policy to clarify expectations of Team Leader and Directors of Operations who oversee Service Delivery Division staff.
  - Launched Child and Family File Transfer and Joint Child and Family File Management policies to ensure that no child will fall through the cracks when they move to a new region of the province.
  - Introduced a new approach to contracted agency services, Specialized Homes and Support Services, to provide high-quality, accessible services that support the unique needs of all children and youth.
  - Increased monthly payments for children in foster, kinship, and out-of-care placements by as much as 47%.

- **Improvements to Out-of-Care Agreements:** the Ministry is committed to supporting children and youth to remain safely with their families and communities.
  - Enhanced Out-of-Care is a new policy that provides eligible children and youth, and their care providers, with enhanced supports in addition to the ones in our current Out-Of-Care Policy.
  - Additional supports are designed to ensure that eligible children and youth can be supported to live in out-of-care arrangements when they have significant and complex functional support needs.
  - Enhanced out-of-care enables us to provide the financial supports to family members as we continue to build upon our good practice of supporting children and youth to live with extended family whenever possible.
- **Information sharing:** We are working to ensure transparency and accountability to Indigenous children, youth, families, and communities.
  - As of December 15, 2023, we have signed 108 information sharing agreements with Nations.
  - Recent amendments to the CFCSA greatly expand the ability to share information in support of s.35 rights, for both the planning and administration of Indigenous jurisdiction over child and family services.
- **Indigenous Child Welfare Director:**
  - The new Indigenous Child Welfare Director (ICWD) position will further our commitment to reduce the overrepresentation of Indigenous children and youth in care, keep children and youth connected to their families, culture, and languages, and will provide advice and guidance on crucial Indigenous child and family service decisions.
  - This new position will also work to support Indigenous jurisdiction through upholding UNDRIP and harmonizing the rights and laws of Indigenous Peoples with provincial laws.
  - We are currently engaging with Indigenous partners on a proposed approach and job profile for the ICWD in preparation for hiring.
- **Collaboration with Indigenous Peoples:** we are committed to distinctions-based engagement with Indigenous Peoples in the development of policy, programming, regulation, and legislation. We are always seeking to improve our engagement pathways.

- Continued engagement with Indigenous partners on the development of regulation and legislation to fully uphold Indigenous jurisdiction.
- Engaging with Indigenous Peoples to improve services for children and youth with support needs, including Indigenous-led service development.

**CROSS REFERENCE:** N/A

**MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT  
PARTNERSHIP AND INDIGENOUS ENGAGEMENT DIVISION  
ESTIMATES CORPORATE BRIEFING NOTE 2024/25**

**ISSUE:**        **Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act Action Plan**

**KEY MESSAGES:**

- In November 2019, the Province passed the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* as a commitment for provincial legislative, regulatory, policy and operational changes over time to support implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- Section 4 of the Declaration Act commits the provincial government to develop an action plan in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples in BC.
- The Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation (MIRR) engaged with Indigenous Peoples on the development of the Consultation Draft Action Plan from fall 2020 to summer 2021.
- MCFD engaged with targeted Indigenous partners and selected sector partners during the engagement phases.
- In March 2022, the final *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* Action Plan (Action Plan) was released.
- The Action Plan includes three action items for MCFD. Two actions are specific to MCFD (4.16 & 4.17) and one action (4.18) is shared with the Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills (PSFS).
- MCFD continues to make progress on its action items by supporting Indigenous jurisdiction over child and family services, including developing a funding model and negotiating coordination and community agreements.

**BACKGROUND:**

- The *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* Action Plan has a total of 89 actions across four specific themes:
  1. Self-determination and the inherent rights of self-government
  2. Title and rights of Indigenous peoples
  3. Ending indigenous-specific racism and discrimination

#### 4. Social, cultural and economic well-being

- The three actions attached to MCFD are:
  - Action 4.16 – *Co-develop a BC-specific fiscal framework, in partnership with First Nations, Métis and Inuit, and in consultation with key Indigenous organizations, to support and move forward with jurisdiction over child and family services. (MCFD only)*
  - Action 4.17 – *In collaboration with BC First Nations and Métis Peoples, and Inuit, continue implementing changes to substantially reduce the number of Indigenous children and youth in care through increased prevention and family support services at all stages of contact with the child welfare system. (MCFD only)*
  - Action 4.18 – *As committed to in the First Nations Children and Youth in Care Protocol, co-develop and implement measures to support improved education outcomes of current and former First Nation children and youth in care, including meaningful data collection to inform policy planning and service delivery. (Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills and MCFD)*
- Cabinet Confidences

Cabinet Confidences

**CROSS REFERENCE:** N/A

MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT  
STRATEGIC INTEGRATION, POLICY AND LEGISLATION  
ESTIMATES CORPORATE BRIEFING NOTE 2023/24

**ISSUE:**        *Indigenous Self-Government in Child and Family Services  
Amendment Act – Bill 38*

**KEY MESSAGES:**

- The *Indigenous Self-Government in Child and Family Services Amendment Act* (Bill 38) received Royal Assent in November 2022. This historic legislation introduced provisions to uphold Indigenous jurisdiction over child and family services in BC.
- About 68% of the Bill 38 clauses came into force on November 25, 2022, while the remaining provisions are being brought into force through a series of regulations developed through the engagement with Indigenous partners.
- Currently, regulations are being developed to bring into force the Bill 38 sections related to:
  - Directors Withdrawal;
  - Indigenous Child Welfare Director; and
  - Use of Provincial Court for Indigenous Law.
- Amendments to the Child, Family and Community Service Regulation (Regulation) and to the Provincial Court (CFCSA) Rules were made in December 2023 and were brought into force on January 15, 2024. These amendments will enable the Ministry to withdraw from child protection court proceedings so that children in MCFD care can return home to their communities.
- In March 2024, MCFD will bring into force the role of the Indigenous Child Welfare Director (ICWD) and confer jurisdiction of Provincial Court for Indigenous Governing Bodies (IGBs) who wish to use this court for adjudication of disputes.
- Cabinet Confidences

**BACKGROUND:**Directors Withdrawal

- Transitioning children and youth under existing provincial care to the care of their Indigenous communities is an important step to fully uphold Indigenous jurisdiction over child and family services in British Columbia.
- Amendments to the Regulation to enable the director's withdrawal and cancellation of continuing custody orders when an Indigenous authority will be providing services were made in December 2023 and will come into force on January 15, 2024.
- MCFD worked with the Ministry of Attorney General to develop amendments to the Regulation and related amendments to the Provincial Court (CFCSA) Rules to support these Bill 38 provisions.
- Indigenous partners were consulted throughout the regulatory development process that unfolded in summer and fall 2023.

Indigenous Child Welfare Director

- The role of ICWD was introduced in Bill 38. This role will provide practice oversight and support for services delivered under provincial law to Indigenous children and youth and collaborate with Indigenous partners to ensure alignment with Indigenous jurisdiction.
- Throughout spring and summer 2023, MCFD further engaged with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples and organizations on their priorities related to the role of ICWD.
- Cabinet Confidences

Use of Provincial Court for Indigenous Law

- Enabling IGBs to use provincial courts for dispute resolution in case Indigenous laws provide for this path, enables Indigenous peoples to use the provincial courts in an equitable pathway as non-Indigenous people.

- This amendment will not limit IGBs to one dispute resolution process; it will expand dispute resolution pathways available to IGBs in carrying out their inherent jurisdiction over their communities.
- One IGB has already developed court rules to start using this dispute resolution provision in the April 2024.

- Cabinet Confidences

**CROSS REFERENCE:**

- **8.10 – Indigenous Child Welfare Director**

**MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT  
PARTNERSHIP AND INDIGENOUS ENGAGEMENT DIVISION  
ESTIMATES CORPORATE BRIEFING NOTE 2024/25**

**ISSUE:       Jurisdiction Funding Model**

**KEY MESSAGES:**

- The Declaration Act Action Plan commits MCFD to co-develop a B.C. specific fiscal framework in partnership with First Nations, Métis and Inuit, and in consultation with key Indigenous organizations, to support and move forward with jurisdiction over child and family services (Action 4.16).
- To meet this commitment, MCFD has begun co-developing a funding model with First Nations, Indigenous partners, and Canada that is transparent, equitable, and responsive to the needs of First Nations resuming jurisdiction.
- The co-development process is ongoing. In September 2023, MCFD released a discussion paper and conducted initial engagement sessions with partners throughout Fall 2023. More detailed co-development of the funding model is taking place during 2024.
- The co-development of this funding model is part of a broader commitment by the Province of B.C. and the federal government to support First Nations resuming jurisdiction over child and family services.

**BACKGROUND:**

- In 2019, amendments were made to the *Child, Family and Community Service Act* (CFCSA) that enabled agreements providing for greater involvement for First Nations, Indigenous Governing Bodies or legal entities representing an Indigenous community in child and family service delivery, care planning, and information sharing.
- In January 2020, the federal *Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families* was brought into force. The federal Act provides for tripartite coordination agreements as a mechanism for First Nations to exercise their inherent jurisdiction over child and family services.
- Section 20(2)(c) of the federal Act provides that coordination agreements address fiscal arrangements, relating to the provision of child and family

services by an Indigenous governing body, that are sustainable, needs-based and consistent with the principle of substantive equality.

- In 2021, BC began negotiating its first coordination agreement with an Indigenous governing body in BC under an interim funding approach. That interim funding approach is still being used today.
- In November 2022, the Tripartite Working Group consisting of MCFD, Canada, and the First Nations Leadership Council released an initial discussion paper “Developing a New Funding Model and Approach for BC First Nations Children & Families”. This initial discussion paper was preliminary work and outlined possible approaches and draft guiding principles for a funding model.
- In September 2023, MCFD released a subsequent discussion paper, “Building a Funding Model to Support First Nations Jurisdiction over Child and Family Services in BC.” This September 2023 discussion paper represented a first step in co-developing BC’s funding model.
- Throughout Fall 2023, MCFD held engagement sessions with First Nations and Indigenous partners on the funding model. These sessions were grounded in the September 2023 discussion paper. Representatives from Indigenous Services Canada and/or Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada attended the engagement sessions as observers.
- Following these engagement sessions, MCFD has now begun more intensive co-development sessions with First Nations and Indigenous partners on the details of a proposed funding model.
- Co-development is expected to continue through 2024 (with break for interregnum), with the funding model approval targeted for January 2025.
- The funding model is anticipated to fund both coordination agreements under the federal Act and various jurisdiction-related agreements under the CFCSA (e.g. 92.1 agreements, Declaration Act agreements).

**CROSS REFERENCE:** N/A

**MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT  
PARTNERSHIP AND INDIGENOUS ENGAGEMENT DIVISION  
ESTIMATES CORPORATE BRIEFING NOTE 2024/25**

**ISSUE: Indigenous Jurisdiction for Child and Family Services in Treaty Context**

**KEY MESSAGES:**

- In 2022, during Bill 38 consultations, Indigenous partners identified ways in which Modern Treaty Nations were inadvertently disadvantaged by the federal *An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Metis children, youth and families* (federal Act).
- BC has been working collaboratively with Modern Treaty Nations and First Nations in late-stage treaty negotiations to ensure treaties reflect the full scope of Indigenous jurisdiction for Child and Family Services.
- This includes removing geographic restrictions for Treaty Nation's children and families and other updates to Child and Family Service-related Treaty provisions, such as including references to other Indigenous peoples' laws.

**BACKGROUND:**

- In 2020, the federal Act came into force affirming that section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*, includes the inherent right of jurisdiction over child and family services without geographic limitation.
- In current Treaties, Modern Treaty Nations' law-making authority for Child and Family Services is geographically limited to Treaty lands.
- MCFD heard from Indigenous Governing Bodies, including Modern Treaty Nations, that it was important to remove that geographic restriction in the Treaty context, to ensure the same possible scope of jurisdiction for Treaty Nations as for non-Treaty nations.
- As such, BC's 2022 legislation *Indigenous Self-Government in Child and Family Services Amendment Act* included provisions for agreements with Modern Treaty Nations to exercise jurisdiction off Treaty lands.
- To date, no Modern Treaty Nations have drawn down their Treaty law-making authority for Child and Family Service laws. One Modern Treaty Nation has provided BC with a proposed Child and Family Service law.

- Intergovernmental Communications
- MCFD and MIRR have also been working to update BC's treaty mandate language to reflect new approaches to jurisdiction for Child and Family Services. New draft language has been shared with some First Nations in late-stage Treaty negotiations for discussion and is waiting to hear Canada's feedback about the proposed updates. Once that feedback is incorporated, MIRR will lead in obtaining their minister's approval on the new treaty mandate.

**CROSS REFERENCE:** N/A

**MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT**  
**STRATEGIC INTEGRATION, POLICY & LEGISLATION DIVISION**  
**ESTIMATES CORPORATE BRIEFING NOTE 2024/25**

**ISSUE: Indigenous Child Welfare Director**

**KEY MESSAGES:**

- The new Indigenous Child Welfare Director (ICWD) position will further our commitment to reduce the overrepresentation of Indigenous children and youth in care, keep children and youth connected to their families, culture and languages, and will provide advice and guidance on crucial Indigenous child and family service decisions.
- The ICWD will also work to support Indigenous jurisdiction through upholding the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and harmonizing the rights and laws of Indigenous Peoples with provincial laws.
- By changing the way we work, we are responding to the Child Welfare section of the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action and supporting improved outcomes for Indigenous children, youth and future generations.
- Moving forward with this position is a priority for the ministry and we are engaging with Indigenous partners to co-develop details of this new role to advance that commitment.

**BACKGROUND:**

- On Nov. 24, 2022, Bill 38 *Indigenous Self-Government in Child and Family Services Amendment Act* was passed into law making amendments to the Adoption Act and the Child, Family and Community Service Act (CFCSA).
- This included the provision to create an Indigenous Child Welfare Director within the ministry – long advocated for by Indigenous partners, including the First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC) and Métis Nation BC (MNBC).
- Co-development of the ICWD began with initial engagement in Spring and Summer of 2023. We worked with First Nations, Modern Treaty Nations, MNBC, FNLC, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, ICFSAs, and other Indigenous organizations to identify their goals and priorities for the role.

- A second round of engagements started in early 2024 to co-develop materials to support creation of the ICWD. A draft job profile and proposed approach to the role and responsibilities of the ICWD has been distributed for input.
- Based on what we heard through engagement, it is proposed that the ICWD's role include three main areas of responsibility:
  - Practice Oversight & Support: The ICWD will be responsible for enhancing and improving oversight of practice for Indigenous children, youth, and families. They will also be responsible for supporting and deepening culturally safe and trauma-informed practice grounded in Indigenous worldviews and cultures.
  - Partnerships & Advisory: The ICWD will be responsible for working in partnership with Indigenous Peoples to be guided by communities' priorities for child and family services.
  - Indigenous Jurisdiction: The ICWD will be responsible for working across MCFD to provide guidance on how policies, processes, practices, and operations can be aligned with and better support Indigenous jurisdiction.
- When the ICWD is hired, they will work with Indigenous Peoples throughout B.C. to continue to shape the role and its functions. This means building on the co-development work already underway to inform the ICWD regulations. Having this position in place will allow for immediate action to advance our commitments under Bill 38, while maintaining momentum to co-develop the position further with partners.

**CROSS REFERENCE:** N/A

MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT  
STRATEGIC INTEGRATION, POLICY AND LEGISLATION  
ESTIMATES CORPORATE BRIEFING NOTE 2023/24

**ISSUE: MCFD Spring 2024 Legislative Packages Overview**

**KEY MESSAGES:**

- MCFD is developing amendments to the *Child, Family and Community Services Act* (CFCSA) and the *Adoption Act* (AA). This package includes addressing barriers to Indigenous Jurisdiction and responding to a BC Court of Appeal (BCCA) decision striking down section 96(1) of the CFCSA.
- MCFD commenced engagement in summer 2023 and has moved into co-development aiming to introduce these packages jointly by April 2024.
- Key amendments from the two packages are aiming to:
  - Improve privacy protection surrounding the collection of personal health information.
  - Further define the scope and procedures related to the section 6 *Declaration Act* agreements.
  - Create an appeal pathway for IGBs who will use the court process to resolve appeals at the BC Supreme Court and Court of Appeal.

**BACKGROUND:**

***Package 1:***

*Procedural safeguards related to personal health information:*

- In *T.L. v. British Columbia (Attorney General)*, 2023 BCCA 167, the BCCA declared section 96(1) of the CFCSA invalid because it found that the provision did not include procedural safeguards around the director's power to compel personal health information.
- The BCCA suspended its declaration of invalidity for 12 months to allow MCFD to amend section 96(1) to introduce appropriate safeguards. This means that the proposed amendments to address the order must receive Royal Assent before April 23, 2024.

- MCFD will introduce procedural safeguards to section 96 of the CFCSA to increase the protection of privacy as it surrounds personal health information as this information has a greater expectation of privacy. Section 96 allows the Director to compel third-party information from public bodies, including personal health information. These safeguards will include: defining personal health information, stipulate that the request be made in writing, have a reasonableness component, have a post-request notice to the individual subject to the request, and an arms-length administrative review process.
- Section 79.2 provides the same authority to Indigenous Governing Bodies to compel information from third parties and the Director. The safeguards introduced will include: defining personal health information, stipulating that the request may be in writing, and affirming the Indigenous Governing Bodies determination of reasonableness, as information collection and privacy is often incorporated into Indigenous Law.

#### Definition of Indigenous Child

- To address barriers to jurisdiction, MCFD is amending the definition of Indigenous child to expand subsection (f) to include Indigenous Governing Bodies so that those who are not yet exercising full jurisdiction are still able to identify their children and be involved in the care and planning.
- The current subsection (f) relies on Indigenous Authority which could include an IGB, but requires that the Indigenous Authority is carrying out jurisdiction over child and family services through Indigenous Law. Partners have raised that this prevents their identification and involvement with a child in MCFD's care that in future they intend to assume jurisdiction over.

#### Dispensing with Notice

- The last component of this package includes enabling the Courts to dispense with notice when an Indigenous law applies.
- The current requirements under section 69 are predicated on the notice for proceedings. As introduced in Bill 38, the Indigenous Authority will issue a notice under 50.02 or 48 for the Director to withdraw or cancel a continuing care order as Indigenous Law applies to that child. As these are notices and no proceeding is required, the court cannot dispense with the Director's

requirement to give notice to parties involved such as the family, child, or other IGBs. Where a party is unable to be notified, the child could not be returned to their community until the court hears and is satisfied with the notice. This causes unnecessary administrative delays to Indigenous Jurisdiction.

***Package 2:***

**Section 6 and Appellate Courts:**

- MCFD was the first ministry to adopt section 6 (statutory powers) and section 7 (statutory powers of decision) *Declaration Act* agreements through the co-development of Bill 38.
- Partners have since expressed concerns with the procedures attached to section 6 as they mirror the procedures imposed on section 7 agreements and unintentionally limit care and planning decisions.
- The amendment will broaden the scope of section 6 agreements and reduce procedural barriers for agreements between MCFD and IGBs to specifically enable joint and consent-based decision-making.
- To immediately enable joint and consent-based decision-making, MCFD will expand existing community agreements under section 90 to include joint and consent-based decisions to mirror the intent of section 6 of the *Declaration Act* and reduce imposed procedures attached to section 6 to maintain the linkage to the *Declaration Act*.

**Use of the BC Courts of Appeal**

- Bill 38 enabled a pathway for IGBs, who wish to do so, to use the BC Provincial Court to adjudicate Indigenous Law and resolve disputes.
- IGBs have expressed interest in using the BC Supreme Court and BC Court of Appeal as appellate courts for decisions from the BC Provincial Court.
- This amendment will confer the jurisdiction of appeals to the BC Supreme Court and BC Court of Appeal which creates an equilibrium as the Director and non-Indigenous families have access to this pathway.

**CROSS REFERENCE:** N/A