

Ministry of Children and Family Development

2023/24 – 2025/26 Service Plan

February 2023



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Minister's Accountability Statement



The Ministry of Children and Family Development 2023/24 – 2025/26 Service Plan was prepared under my direction in accordance with the *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act*. I am accountable for the basis on which the plan has been prepared.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M. Dean".

Honourable Mitzi Dean
Minister of Children and Family Development
February 9, 2023

Table of Contents

Minister's Accountability Statement	3
Strategic Direction.....	5
Purpose of the Ministry	5
Operating Environment.....	6
Performance Planning.....	7
Financial Summary.....	20
Appendix A: Public Sector Organizations	21

Strategic Direction

In 2023/24, the Government of British Columbia will continue our work to make life better for people in B.C., improve the services we all rely on, and ensure a sustainable province for future generations. Government will focus on building a secure, clean, and fair economy, and a province where everyone can find a good home – whether in a rural area, in a city, or in an Indigenous community. B.C. will continue working toward true and meaningful reconciliation by supporting opportunities for Indigenous Peoples to be full partners in an inclusive and sustainable province. The policies, programs and projects developed over the course of this service plan period will focus on results that people can see and feel in four key areas: attainable and affordable housing, strengthened health care, safer communities, and a secure, clean and fair economy that can withstand global economic headwinds.

This 2023/24 service plan outlines how the Ministry of Children and Family Development will support the government’s priorities and selected action items identified in the [December 2022 Minister’s Mandate Letter](#).

Purpose of the Ministry

The primary focus of the Ministry of Children and Family Development (the Ministry) is to support the well-being of all children and youth in British Columbia—Indigenous and non-Indigenous—to live in safe, healthy and nurturing families, and to be strongly connected to their communities and culture.

The Ministry respects the diverse backgrounds and identities of children and youth including those who identify as Indigenous, Inuit, Métis, Black, a Person of Colour, 2SLGBTQQIA+, and as a Person with a disability. The Ministry approaches its work through a Gender-Based Analysis Plus lens, delivering services that are inclusive, intersectional, responsive, accessible, trauma informed, and culturally safe.

The Ministry supports children, youth, young adults and their families, emphasizing the principles of early intervention, prevention, and cultural and community connections to keep families together where possible, and to connect children and youth with permanent and, or family living arrangements when needed. The Ministry’s services include early childhood development, supporting children and youth with support needs, child and youth mental health, adoption, family support, child protection, and youth justice, as well as helping youth transition to adulthood and adult services. Together these services are intended to provide a system of supports that keep families safely together and ensure children, youth and young adults experience belonging and reach their potential.

The Ministry delivers on its mandate through approximately 4,760 employees working in partnership with Indigenous Child and Family Service Agencies, Indigenous Governing Bodies and other levels of government, partners and communities, cross-government and social-

sector partners, and the federal government, as well as approximately 4,275¹ contracted community social service agencies, such as specialized homes and support services and direct care providers (i.e., foster caregivers and extended family care providers). Services are coordinated through a provincial office in Victoria and delivered through service delivery areas and 24 Indigenous Child and Family Service Agencies.

Operating Environment

[Transforming Child and Family Services](#)

In 2019, the Ministry shifted from a reactionary to a holistic approach in improving services for children, youth and young adults, focusing on four key areas:

1. **Indigenous Reconciliation:** Addressing the over-representation of the child and family services system in the lives of Indigenous children and youth.
2. **Prevention and Family Supports:** Shifting focus from downstream interventions to early and ongoing support—prioritizing keeping families safely together.
3. **Youth and Young Adult Transitions:** Ensuring that young people have the tools, resources and social supports to transition successfully to adulthood and adult services.
4. **Network of Care:** Ensuring that the services and supports provided in the Network of Care are driven by a child or youth's needs.

This change in approach is transforming how child and family services is delivered in B.C. Initial changes include the recent historic legislative changes paving the way for [Indigenous jurisdiction for child and family services](#) and the expansion of services for [youth and young adults transitioning to adulthood](#).

The [Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act \(Declaration Act\)](#) aims to create a path forward that includes better transparency and predictability in the work we do together, ensuring the rights and well-being of Indigenous peoples, children, youth, and families are upheld. In line with the Declaration Act and to ensure that services designed are culturally safe and meet the needs of children, youth, young adults, and families, the Ministry has implemented a formal engagement approach. In summer 2021, Minister Dean, Minister of Children and Family Development, sent a [letter of commitment](#) to the First Nations Leadership Council outlining the Ministry's commitment to actively engage and codevelop policy, practice, and legislation changes with the First Nations Leadership Council and Indigenous governments throughout the development process. The Ministry and Indigenous partners are working to advance this approach.

This ambitious transformation agenda, which focuses on improving child and family services in B.C., means that Ministry staff and Ministry partners, while continuing to deliver our day-to-day obligations and responsibilities for child and family services, are also directing efforts and

¹ The approximated figure does not include recipients of funding for Post-Adoption Assistance or child care (which has been included in previous years).

working together to design, develop, and implement the initiatives outlined in this service plan.

Delivering Child and Family Services

The global staffing shortage, in particular recruitment and retention challenges for the social sector, are challenging for the Ministry and Ministry partners. Internally, to ensure critical services continue to be maintained for children, youth and families, the Ministry initiated strategies such as a mobile response and staff volunteer program for short-term assignments where needed. The Ministry has also developed a workforce plan with a strong focus on recruitment, retention, health, and wellness. The recently signed [agreement](#) with the B.C. General Employees Union includes temporary market adjustments for a number of social worker positions.

Moving forward, a focus for the Ministry is modernization to support service delivery, as well as developing a strategy regarding services delivered through social sector partners, contractors, and other service providers to ensure continuity of service.

Public health emergencies, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the opioid crisis, as well as global inflation continue to change the landscape for the delivery of child, youth, and family services, impacting some of the most vulnerable in B.C., such as families with children and youth with support needs, youth transitioning from government care, and children and youth receiving mental health supports. In some situations, this has meant an increase in service demand, in others it has meant a change in service delivery (e.g., online options). In response, the Ministry continues to adapt processes, supports and partner with service providers, as applicable.

As the Ministry continues to navigate a pandemic recovery approach, there is a commitment to ongoing learning from the pandemic, assessing what works best, and implementing resources and support measures, like temporary housing agreements for youth transitioning from care, that contribute to the health, well-being, and success of the children, youth, and families we serve—of which many are outlined in this plan.

Performance Planning

Goal 1: Recognize and uphold Indigenous jurisdiction over child and family services, consistent with the rights of the child [UN Declaration]² and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action

The harmful impact of colonization, including the imposition of a legal regime foreign to the cultures and customs of Indigenous Peoples, the undermining of family and community systems, and the resultant inter-generational trauma, have all contributed to the

² UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

overrepresentation of Indigenous children and youth in the child and family services system. Reducing this overrepresentation and working with Indigenous partners to reform child and family services is, and has been, of critical importance. The Ministry recognizes that the best support for Indigenous children and youth comes from Indigenous communities.

Objective 1.1: Continue to work with Indigenous Peoples and the federal government, where applicable, on systemic transformation, including implementing jurisdiction and/or increased decision-making authority over child and family services

This objective focuses on working with Indigenous Governing Bodies, Indigenous Communities, Indigenous Peoples and partners, as well as the federal government to advance implementation of increased Indigenous child and family services decision-making authority and/or jurisdiction.

Key Strategies

- Continue to work with Indigenous Governing Bodies that are preparing to exercise jurisdiction in relation to child and family services (alongside representatives from the federal government) on the development and implementation of tripartite coordination agreements.
- Continue ongoing dialogue with Indigenous communities that are planning for increased decision-making authority and/or jurisdiction.
- Engage and collaborate with Indigenous communities on the development of the associated policy and regulations related to the amendments to the *Adoption Act* and the *Child, Family and Community Service Act*, and support service delivery within a multi-jurisdictional model.
- Implement an interim fiscal framework to support the transition of services as Indigenous Governing Bodies begin to exercise their inherent right to jurisdiction over child and family services and continue to codevelop, with the federal government and Indigenous Peoples, a B.C.-specific fiscal framework (to replace the interim fiscal framework) in alignment with B.C.'s *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (Declaration Act).

Discussion

In 2022, British Columbia changed provincial legislation to remove barriers for Indigenous Peoples exercising jurisdiction over child and family services, becoming the first province in Canada to expressly recognize this inherent right within provincial legislation. This pivotal shift toward real and meaningful change is expected to improve services, supports, and outcomes for Indigenous children, youth, young adults, families, and their communities. The strategies above have been developed as next steps to operationalize these changes.

Although the Ministry will monitor, track and support the advancement of jurisdiction coordination agreements and increased decision-making authority, the pace of this work is led by Indigenous Governing Bodies and Indigenous communities, therefore there are no specific targets set for the implementation of these key strategies.

Over two thirds of the new legislation came into force in 2022 and the Ministry, with partners, will work together to implement new policies and processes to operationalize these changes. The remaining regulations related to the amendments to the *Adoption Act* and the *Child, Family and Community Service Act* and interim fiscal framework are in development this year and project plans will be used by the Ministry to track and monitor progress.

Given the magnitude of the provincial legislative changes that were made through co-operation and consultation with Indigenous rightsholders, Modern Treaty Nations, Indigenous governing bodies, Métis Nation B.C., and other Indigenous partners, such as the First Nations Leadership Council, as outlined above, this year the Ministry will focus on working with our Indigenous partners to advance these changes. Engagement on reforming the *Child, Family and Community Service Act*, as included in last year's service plan will begin once the jurisdiction changes outlined in this objective have been further implemented.

Objective 1.2: In collaboration with Indigenous Peoples, design and implement restorative policies, practices, and services with cultural humility and a commitment to eliminate racism and discrimination consistent with our responsibilities under the UN Declaration

The harmful impact of colonization, the undermining of family and community systems, and the resultant inter-generational trauma, have all contributed to the overrepresentation of Indigenous children and youth in the child and family services system. Working with Indigenous Peoples, this objective focuses on ensuring that Ministry services are delivered without racism or discrimination.

Key Strategies

- Work with Indigenous Peoples, following the [Aboriginal Policy and Practice Framework](#), to continue to transform policies, practices, services, and programs that reflect the priority of keeping their children and youth safely at home and connected to their community and culture.
- With Indigenous Peoples, leadership, service providers, and partners, develop and continue to implement tools and resources to support Ministry staff to address systemic racism and implement practice changes to provide services in a culturally safe manner.
- Collaborate with Indigenous Peoples to build on efforts to address the 40 Ministry-led responses to the Calls for Justice in the [Final Report of the Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls](#).
- Continue to engage with partners and service providers, including Indigenous Peoples, leadership, service providers, and partners, to design a Youth Justice Service Framework that transforms youth justice services to better support youth, victims, and community needs, and address gaps that lead to the overrepresentation of Indigenous youth in the youth justice system.
- Enhance trauma-informed service delivery and cultural safety within youth custody, youth forensic psychiatric services, and community youth justice to ensure earlier interventions and transitional supports.

Discussion

This objective outlines how the Ministry delivers services for Indigenous children and youth with key strategies that focus on working with Indigenous Peoples in the development of policy, practices, and services intended to ensure that Ministry services are delivered without racism or discrimination. The Ministry tracks the policy and practice changes that are developed with Indigenous Peoples.

The Ministry, together with the Indigenous Child, Family Services Agencies, is responsible for 40 responses to the Calls for Justice as identified in the Final Report on the Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. The Ministry will continue working with the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General to report on progress toward meeting the Calls for Justice.

The development of the Youth Justice Service Framework was previously included as a strategy in Goal 3. It has been moved to Goal 1 given its focus on improving services for Indigenous youth. As the Youth Justice Service Framework is developed, so too will the performance measures associated with the services.

Performance Measures

Performance Measure	2022/23 Forecast	2023/24 Target	2024/25 Target	2025/26 Target
[1a] Rate of children and youth (age 0-18) in care per 1,000 children and youth in the population				
All children and youth	5.4	5.3	5.2	5.1
Indigenous children and youth	35.3	34.8	34.3	33.9
Non-Indigenous children and youth	2.0	1.9	1.8	1.8

Data source: MCFD's Integrated Case Management (ICM) System

Discussion

This performance measure tracks the rate of Indigenous and non-Indigenous children and youth in care, as well as the overrepresentation of Indigenous children and youth in care.

The number of children and youth in care continues to decrease to the lowest it has been in thirty years; however, as the province emerges from the pandemic, the past year has seen a slight slowing in this downward trend. Therefore, targets for 2023/24 and 2024/25 have been adjusted based on forecasted data.

Looking ahead, as Indigenous Governing Bodies begin to exercise jurisdiction over child and family services, the Ministry expects that more Indigenous children and youth will stay with

their families and in their communities, resulting in fewer Indigenous children and youth in government care.

To date, this performance measure has included forecasts and targets for Indigenous children and youth to draw attention to, and support action in response to the harmful impacts of colonialization on Indigenous children and youth. Over the coming year, the Ministry intends to explore with Indigenous partners whether this approach remains valid, and if so, review the forecasts and targets to ensure they are meaningful for Indigenous Peoples.

Goal 2: To support improved outcomes and keep families safely together, strengthen supports, and prioritize resources for families and children based on their needs, and in collaboration with communities, partners, and service providers

The importance of early and ongoing support for families who may be struggling remains clear; it not only helps keep families together when it is safe to do so, it also provides children and youth with the strong foundations they need to reach their full potential.

Objective 2.1: In collaboration with communities, partners and service providers, implement changes to the delivery of services to focus on prevention, early intervention, and family supports

Working in collaboration with communities, partners, and service providers, this objective focuses on improvements to services in the areas of early and ongoing family supports. The current focus of this work is on services for children and youth with support needs and children and youth with mental health needs.

Key Strategies

- Engage in deeper consultation with parents and caregivers, First Nations, Indigenous Peoples, communities, experts, practitioners, and other stakeholders with lived experience to build a better system of supports for children and youth with support needs.
- Invest, in the interim, to support children with support needs that are currently underserved, including fetal alcohol spectrum disorders, Down syndrome and other neuro-cognitive developmental disabilities.
- Pilot a new integrated service delivery model through four family connections centres in the Northwest and Central Okanagan service delivery areas to provide accessible and inclusive services based on individual needs.
- In line with B.C.'s [A Pathway to Hope](#) roadmap, and informed by the voices of those the Ministry serves, continue 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.

- Based on learnings from the engagement on social work oversight, develop an informed understanding of opportunities to strengthen the regulation and oversight system.
- Provide policy and practice guidance and training for Ministry employees, and work together with partners and service providers to support 2SLGBTQ+ people to be safe, recognized, respected, supported, and cared for in a manner that affirms their sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression.

Discussion

This objective focuses on the delivery of services that increase early and ongoing family supports to ensure children and youth reach their full potential.

While the Ministry, with partners, continues to focus on improving services for children and youth with support needs, the approach to this work has changed. While proceeding with implementation of the new Children and Youth with Support Needs service approach in four pilot sites, the Ministry has paused the provincial roll out to allow additional time to thoroughly evaluate the new service approach and to more deeply engage with all partners. The lessons learned from the pilots, evaluation, and the information from the engagement will be used to build a better system of supports that meets the needs of all children and youth with support needs and their families.

There has been an increased demand for mental health and trauma supports as the pandemic and its effects are impacting not just those with pre-existing mental health conditions, but the mental health of all individuals and families. The Ministry will monitor and track the advancement of this work as additional services and sites are implemented. The Ministry continues to work with partners to expand children and youth mental health services. In 2023, child and youth mental health clinicians will have access to foundational and specialized training to better support children and youth with neurodiversity seeking mental health services. In addition, the Ministry will develop and implement new learning resources for caregivers regarding how to support the everyday mental health of children and youth in their care.

As the Prevention and Family Supports Service Framework included in last year's service plan will be developed in alignment with the reform of the *Child, Family and Community Service Act* (see discussion in Goal 1), advancement of this item has been postponed allowing time to implement the recent jurisdiction legislative amendments.

Performance Measures

Performance Measure	2022/23 Forecast	2023/24 Target	2024/25 Target	2025/26 Target
[2a] Per cent of children assessed with a protection concern that can safely live with family or extended family				
All children and youth	92.9%	93.2%	93.6%	93.8%
Indigenous children and youth	89.0%	89.8%	90.6%	91.3%
Non-Indigenous children and youth	95.1%	95.2%	95.3%	95.3%

Data source: MCFD's Integrated Case Management System

Discussion

The percentage of children and youth assessed with a protection concern who can safely live with family or extended family is an established measure of family preservation. These children have improved outcomes, such as better health and educational success.

Through the pandemic the Ministry saw better-than-expected results and increased the targets for "all children and youth" and "Indigenous children and youth". As the province emerges from the pandemic, the past year has seen a slowing of this upward trend. While the Ministry continues to strive for improvement, these larger gains from earlier years led to more modest room for improvement and the forecast for this measure has been softened.

Although the forecast for 2022/23 is expected to be short of the target, the number of children and youth coming into care has remained constant since last year.

While the family preservation rate gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous families in this performance measure has shifted from 9.2 per cent in 2016/17 to a forecasted 6.4 per cent in 2022/23, the forecast for Indigenous children and youth family preservation is lower than expected. The Ministry expects that as Indigenous Governing Bodies begin to exercise jurisdiction under their inherent right of self-government in relation to child and family services (see Goal 1), this will have a positive impact on family preservation rates for Indigenous children and youth.

Performance Measure	2022/23 Forecast	2023/24 Target	2024/25 Target	2025/26 Target
[2b] Access to Child and Youth Mental Health (CYMH) Services CYMH clients served	29,500	31,250	31,750	32,000

Data source: MCFD's Community and Residential Information System (CRIS) plus an estimate for Vancouver/Richmond SDA which is served by VCHA (Vancouver Coastal Health Authority) as VCHA does not use CRIS

Discussion

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.

The Ministry continues to find this performance measure important to assess the prevention and early intervention services provided, as well as to highlight the importance of mental health services and improved outcomes for children and youth.

Two factors negatively impacted the 2022/23 forecast: the global labour shortage and the likelihood that more services were provided than tracked by mental health services performed outside of Ministry offices. Going forward, the Ministry and sector continues to recruit employees to fill existing vacancies and is working to update and implement practice guidelines to ensure complete recording of services provided. For that reason, targets have been maintained.

Goal 3: Youth and young adults have the tools, resources, and social supports to transition successfully to adulthood and adult services

Youth and young adults transitioning from government care deserve to have the same supports, as well as the gradual and extended transition time to adulthood, that most young people in B.C. receive.

Objective 3.1: Support youth and young adults to successfully transition to adulthood and adult services

Building on [Budget 2022](#) that introduced comprehensive supports for young people transitioning from government care and extended the age of support up to their twenty-seventh birthday, this objective focuses on the expansion of Ministry transition services to enable youth and young adults to transition out of government care successfully.

Key Strategies

- To provide housing options and prevent homelessness, the Ministry will continue to provide housing agreements, support agreements, and, in line with government direction, continue to implement the rent supplement program and ensure young adults receive priority access to subsidized housing with support services through BC Housing.
- The Ministry will hire transition workers to support youth and young adults transitioning to adulthood, which will assist them to plan for their transition from care, articulate and action their goals, and connect them to services and supports for a successful transition to adulthood and independence.
- To continue to shift the adverse outcomes that young adults face as they transition out of government care to adulthood, the Ministry will expand the supports and tools they need

to thrive, including access to life-skills, culture, and skills training programs, and increased access to dental and mental health benefits (e.g., counselling).

- The Ministry will seek legislative changes to implement an income supplement program for young adults between the ages of 19 to 20 years without program requirements and a further income supplement program for young adults between the ages of 20 to 27 years who are enrolled in an approved program stream, such as life skills, educational, vocational, and rehabilitation.
- The Ministry, in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous partners, will codevelop legislative and regulatory amendments to the *Child, Family and Community Service Act* and its regulations to provide statutory authority for the expanded suite of supports and services for young adults.

Discussion

To support youth and young adults to transition out of government care successfully and have better outcomes, as part of [Budget 2022](#), the Ministry, with our partners, continues to advance efforts to ensure that they have the supports, tools and relationship-based networks they need to thrive as they transition from government care and up to the age of 27.

The focus this year, through ongoing engagement with youth and young adults, is on hiring transition workers to help youth and young adults to navigate the transition, continue to provide housing funding (in various forms), begin to implement expanded skills training, and provide enhanced dental and mental health benefits.

Implementation of these services will be tracked through an implementation plan. In addition to the performance metrics below to track and monitor youth and young adults accessing the new programs, the Ministry will track the number of transition workers hired and programs implemented.

Performance Measures

Performance Measure	2022/23 Forecast	2023/24 Target	2024/25 Target	2025/26 Target
[3a] Per cent of youth in care who turn 19 with a high school credential				
All children and youth	59.0%	59.5%	60.0%	60.5%
Indigenous children and youth	57.0%	57.5%	58.0%	58.5%
Non-Indigenous children and youth	64.0%	64.5%	65.0%	65.5%

Data source: MCFD's Integrated Case Management System and Ministry of Education and Child Care Data Warehouse, MyEdBC. Credential data excludes all on reserve schools and Dogwood equivalent diplomas obtained through university.

Discussion

There is strong evidence that completing high school is linked to future well-being. The Ministry is working to ensure that children and youth in care have completed high school by the time they turn 19, acquiring the education and life skills needed to successfully transition to adulthood and adult services.

This performance measure is trending up, primarily driven by an increase in adult graduation diplomas (these are equivalent to the Dogwood diplomas completed for adults). Over time, the Ministry is seeing a higher proportion of children and youth in care reconnecting with school and completing high school as adult learners prior to turning 19. Outyear targets assume a continued increase in the adult graduation diplomas.

Data for this measure comes once a year, with a significant time lag in reporting that makes it impossible to receive feedback during the year. The data for this measure is provided from the Ministry of Education and Child Care and combined with Ministry of Children and Family data. There are no concerns with the data quality, though some graduations may be missed if they occur on reserve or at a university. This measure is based on approximately 450 children and youth in care and includes a target increase of two children per year.

Performance Measure	2022/23 Forecast	2023/24 Target	2024/25 Target	2025/26 Target
[3b] Percentage of eligible youth transitioning into adulthood that received a Post Majority Service benefit payment within the next year ¹	53.2%	71.2%	76.0%	82.0%

Data source: MCFD’s Integrated Case Management System, CAS, and RAP Systems

¹ Post Majority Service benefit payment includes Agreements with Young Adults, Housing Agreements or Support Agreements benefits and/or rent supplement payments.

Discussion

Young people transitioning from government care deserve to have the same support, guidance, and time to grow that their peers rely on. Yet people who have been in government care are far more likely to experience homelessness or a mental-health crisis in their lives. The Ministry learned from the pandemic and from young people what services and supports they need to not just survive, but to thrive. As a result, the Ministry has made a number of pandemic emergency supports permanent (e.g., housing and support agreements) and has begun to implement additional supports such as the rent supplement.

Previously, this performance measure measured eligible youth who accessed the Agreements with Young Adults program. This performance measure has now been expanded to include the suite of benefits currently available to eligible young adults. The full suite of supports are expected to be available in spring 2024, once the Ministry has sought legislative changes.

The measure includes young adults who are eligible for Agreements with Young Adults, Housing Agreements, or Support Agreements who turn 19 in a given year, and how many receive either Agreements with Young Adults, Housing Agreements, or Support Agreements benefits and or rent supplement payments in the 12 months following their 19th birthday.

For this measure the first 12 months after a young adult’s 19th birthday are counted. The 2022/23 results are for young adults who turned 19 during the 2021/22 fiscal year.

Performance Measure	2022/23 Forecast	2023/24 Target	2024/25 Target	2025/26 Target
[3c] Total number of Young Adults who receive rent supplements during the fiscal year	800	1,325	1,798	TBD

Data source: MCFD’s Integrated Case Management System

Discussion

Finding and maintaining safe housing can be a significant challenge for young people in care. The Rent Supplement Program implemented in late 2022 is designed for the most vulnerable young adults from care to support them as they transition to independence and to help prevent homelessness.

This performance measure tracks the total number of young adults who received rent supplements during the fiscal year. Recipients receive the supplement for two years or until the month of their 27th birthday, whichever comes first.

This new measure assumes a retention rate of 90 per cent into the second and third years. It is known that for the first 800 recipients, approximately 10 to 15 per cent will age out before they finish their two years.

The Ministry will continue to refine forecasts and targets, including identifying the 2025/26 target, for this new measure based on data collected.

Goal 4: Services and supports provided in the network of care are driven by a child or youth’s needs and focused on developing and strengthening belonging to family, community, and culture

Children and youth have more success when they remain connected to their community, culture, family, and the people known to them. The network of care includes services intended to support family preservation—such as stabilization services—and ensures that in cases where children and youth must come into care, consideration of this principal of belonging and individual needs determine the care and support a child or youth receives. It includes

continuum of care options, such as living with extended family or people known to a child or youth, foster care and, if needed, specialized homes that include additional therapeutic services.

Objective 4.1: In collaboration with partners and service providers, implement an integrated network of care providing services and placements that meet a child or youth’s needs, nurture a sense of love and belonging, and prioritize cultural and family connections

This objective focuses on the work the Ministry, along with our partners, is advancing to improve the network of care. This year the focus is on Specialized Homes and Support Services, targeted advertisement to recruit foster parents, and additional support to enable children and youth with support needs to reside with extended family or people known to them.

Key Strategies

- Implement a provincial network of Specialized Homes and Support Services made up of respite, low-barrier short-term stabilization care, emergency care, and specialized long-term care supported by a new integrated information management system and a robust oversight process that monitors quality of care and well-being of children and youth.
- Continue 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 and support fewer children and youth being brought into care, residing in foster homes, or specialized homes.
- Continue targeted advertisement to retain and recruit caregivers to help keep families together in a culturally safe way, strengthen placement stability, and provide healing opportunities for children and youth.
- Continue to implement outcomes-based monitoring, ensuring that the quality of services across all types of care are responsive to feedback from children, youth, families and communities.

Discussion

The Ministry’s primary goal is to keep families strong and safely together. To maximize a child or youth’s chances of success, the Ministry supports families involved within the child welfare system by focusing on family preservation and keeping children and youth connected to their communities and culture. This is done by first considering the option for a child or youth to reside with extended family or people known to them, and then working to ensure that in cases where children and youth must come into care, consideration of their individual needs determines their placement.

This year, the Ministry will continue implementation of the network of Specialized Homes and Support Services via a gradual transition. This process includes addressing gaps in the network of care through a procurement process for prequalified service providers, and by working in close partnership with existing service providers to transition their services to new accountabilities and policies. Implementation also includes an outcomes-based performance

management framework to support responsive oversight of the quality of care of children and youth. Monitoring wellbeing of children and youth in Specialized Homes and Support Services homes is enabled by a new integrated information management system that will allow for monitoring outcomes at the individual, service provider, and provincial level.

Children and youth with support needs have, in the past, come into government care to receive needed support services. To ensure that children and youth with moderate to significant support needs can reside with extended family or people known to them, the Ministry will continue to implement the Enhanced Out-of-Care program. Implementation of this program began in the North Fraser and the Okanagan service delivery areas in 2022 and will be expanded province-wide in 2023. The Ministry will closely monitor this program to ensure it is meeting its intended objective to keep children and youth with extended family.

Although a key strategy related to intercountry adoptions is not included in this year’s service plan, the regulatory review of the licensed adoption agency model was completed, and the Ministry is proceeding with conducting an analysis of the result which will inform the Ministry’s future approach to intercountry adoptions.

Performance Measures

Performance Measure	2022/23 Forecast	2023/24 Target	2024/25 Target	2025/26 Target
[4a] Per cent of children and youth in care with no moves in the first 12 months since their last admission to care	66.0%	66.5%	67.0%	67.5%

Data source: Integrated Case Management System

Discussion

Placement stability is essential for children and youth to develop a secure attachment to a caregiver, which is a fundamental determinant of their well-being and sense of belonging. Children and youth with stable placements that are driven by their needs achieve better outcomes in terms of safety, permanency, attachment, and well-being.

During the pandemic, more children and youth in care than expected remained in their existing placements, so targets at that time were revised. As we emerge from the pandemic, the global labour shortage and inflation have impacted retention of caregivers, and the past year has seen a slight slowing of this increase. Therefore, targets for 2023/24 and 2024/25 have been adjusted based on forecasted performance.

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.

Financial Summary

Core Business Area	2022/23 Restated Estimates ¹	2023/24 Estimates	2024/25 Plan	2025/26 Plan
Operating Expenses (\$000)				
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
Total	1,740,645	1,912,095	1,930,313	1,926,184
Ministry Capital Expenditures (Consolidated Revenue Fund) (\$000)				
Service Delivery Support	1,000	2,395	2,230	2,230
Total	1,000	2,395	2,230	2,230
Other Financing Transactions (\$000)				
Executive & Support Services (Human Services Providers Financing Program)				
Receipts	(31)	(31)	(31)	(31)
Disbursements	0	0	0	0
Net Cash Requirements (Source)	(31)	(31)	(31)	(31)
Total Receipts	(31)	(31)	(31)	(31)
Total Disbursements	0	0	0	0
Total Net Cash Requirements (Source)	(31)	(31)	(31)	(31)

¹ For comparative purposes, amounts shown for 2022/23 have been restated to be consistent with the presentation of the 2023/24 Estimates.

Appendix A: Public Sector Organizations

As of February 1, 2023, the Minister of Children and Family Development is responsible and accountable for the following:

BC College of Social Workers

[The British Columbia College of Social Workers](#) regulates the social work profession in British Columbia. Its mandate is to protect members of the public from preventable harm while they are interacting with Registered Social Workers. The College maintains an online registry of all social workers authorized to practice as Registered Social Workers.

Minister's Advisory Council for Children and Youth with Support Needs (CYSN)

[The Minister's Advisory Council for CYSN](#), which includes parents/caregivers, an Indigenous Elder, a youth representative, and others, provides a forum to build collaborative and respectful relationships through ongoing communications and engagement; discusses important issues related to the planning and delivery of the full range of CYSN services; and provides advice on the CYSN services model and how to implement new services in a coordinated and collaborative way.

