

Ministry of Children and Family Development

2024/25 – 2026/27 Service Plan

February 2024



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Minister's Accountability Statement



The Ministry of Children and Family Development 2024/25 – 2026/27 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 blue ink that reads "Grace Lore." The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Honourable Grace Lore
Minister of Children and Family Development
February 9, 2024

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Strategic Direction

In 2024/25, the Government of British Columbia will remain focused on providing the services and infrastructure that people depend on to build a good life. Government will continue delivering results that matter to British Columbians including helping people with costs, attainable and affordable housing, strengthened health care, safer communities, and a secure, clean and fair economy. Government will continue working collaboratively with Indigenous Peoples as it implements the Action Plan for the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act and delivers initiatives that advance reconciliation in ways that make a difference in communities throughout the province.

This 2024/25 service plan outlines how the Ministry of Children and Family Development will support the government's priorities including the foundational principles listed above and selected action items identified in the January 2024 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, 2SLGBTQIA+, and as a Person with a disability. The Ministry approaches its work through a gender-based analysis plus lens, with the goal of 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, belonging and cultural and community connections.

The Ministry's services include early childhood development, children and youth with support needs, child and youth mental health, adoption, family support, child protection, and youth justice, as well as helping youth and young adults transition from government care to adulthood and adult services. Together, these services provide a system of supports that work to keep families safely together and ensure children, youth, and young adults experience belonging and reach their potential.

For 2024/25 fiscal, the Ministry will deliver on its mandate through approximately 4,553 full-time 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 4,900 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 eight service delivery areas, a provincial centralized services centre and facilities, and through 24 Indigenous Child and Family Service Agencies.

Operating Environment

Transforming Child and Family Services

The Ministry is transforming to improve 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 and upholding Indigenous people's inherent rights to exercise jurisdiction over child and family services.
2. **Prevention and Family Supports:** Shifting focus to early and ongoing support—prioritizing keeping families safely together.
3. **Youth and Young Adult Transitions:** Ensuring that youth and young adults transitioning to adulthood from government care 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 approach is transforming how child and family services are delivered in B.C. Initial changes include [historic legislative](#) changes that pave the way for [Indigenous jurisdiction of child and family services](#), the expansion of services for [youth and young adults transitioning to adulthood](#) from government care, implementation of Integrated Child and Youth (ICY) teams, continued work to advance improved services for Children and Youth with Support Needs, and the beginning of the implementation of Specialized Homes and Support Services.

The Ministry advances this work in alignment with the [Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act \(Declaration Act\)](#) which 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.

Ministry staff and Ministry partners are working together and continuing to direct efforts to design, develop, and implement the Ministry's ambitious transformation initiatives, outlined in this service plan. As these transformative changes take place, staff and partners continue to deliver on Ministry obligations and responsibilities for child and family services in B.C.

Delivering Child and Family Services

Public health emergencies such as the illicit drug toxicity crisis, as well as global inflation, and the housing crisis 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 response to these challenges, the Ministry has adapted its processes and has partnered with service providers, as applicable.

Recruitment and retention within the social services sector continue to be an issue for the Ministry and its partners. Better understanding these labour market challenges has been a focus for the Ministry together with its partners, in order to ensure that children, youth, and families receive high-quality care and services, delivered by qualified staff. The Ministry is strengthening workforce planning with a strong focus on recruitment, retention, health, and wellness. To ensure services continue to be maintained for children, youth, and families, the Ministry is developing centralized support teams and assessing its mobile response program. The Ministry continuously looks for opportunities to improve policy and practice and to streamline administrative tasks so that frontline workers can spend more time interacting with the families they serve and focus on face-to-face work.

The [Nineteenth Main Public Service Agreement](#), signed in 2022, between the BC Public Service Agency and the B.C. General Employees' Union includes temporary market adjustments for several frontline positions with the intent of recruiting for and retaining these integral roles.

The Ministry remains committed to ongoing learning, assessing what works best, and implementing resources and support measures 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.

Economic Statement

B.C.'s economy posted modest growth last year as interest rate increases weighed on the economy, and employment continued to expand, supported by immigration. Inflation in the province continued to ease and the Bank of Canada has not raised its policy interest rate since July 2023. The impact of higher rates on borrowing costs and elevated household debt led to lower consumer spending and reduced home sales. Lumber, natural gas and coal prices declined in 2023, reducing the value of the province's goods exports. Meanwhile, there was a record number of housing starts in the province in 2023. There is uncertainty over the transmission of high interest rates to the residential construction sector and the duration of slower growth for the rest of the economy in B.C. and among our trading partners. The Economic Forecast Council (EFC) estimates that B.C. real GDP expanded by 0.9 per cent in 2023 and expects growth of 0.5 per cent in 2024 and 2.1 per cent in 2025. Meanwhile for Canada, the EFC estimates growth of 1.1 per cent in 2023 and projects national real GDP growth of 0.5 per cent in 2024 and 1.9 per cent in 2025. As such, B.C.'s economic growth is expected to be broadly in line with the national average in the coming years. The risks to B.C.'s economic outlook continue to center around interest rates and inflation, including the risk of price increases stemming from geopolitical conflicts, the potential for interest rates remaining higher for longer, and uncertainty around the depth and timing of the impact on housing markets. Further risks include ongoing uncertainty regarding global trade policies, lower commodity prices, climate change impacts and the volatility of immigration levels.

Performance Planning

Goal 1: Recognize and uphold Indigenous jurisdiction over child and family services, consistent with the rights of the child [UN Declaration]¹ 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, undermining family and community systems, and resultant inter-generational trauma, has all contributed to the 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 critical. 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, regarding systemic transformation, including implementing increased decision-making authority and upholding child and family services jurisdiction

This objective focuses on working with Indigenous Governing Bodies, First Nations, and Modern Treaty Nations, as well as the federal government to advance implementation of increased decision-making authority and upholding Indigenous child and family services 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 of tripartite coordination agreements.
- Continue to support and work with Modern Treaty Nations in implementing their child and family service jurisdiction off treaty lands.
- Support First Nations to enter into community agreements to strengthen involvement and collaboration with Indigenous communities in the delivery of child and family services, and to enter into *Declaration Act* agreements to support consensus-based planning and decision making under the *Child, Family and Community Service Act* and *Adoptions Act*.
- Seek to co-develop options for a BC-specific, distinctions-based funding model and approach in consultation with Indigenous Peoples to support First Nations resuming Indigenous jurisdiction over child and family services.

¹ [UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) and [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#).

- Engage and collaborate with Indigenous Peoples and partners on the regulations which are required to fully bring the *Indigenous Self-Government in Child and Family Services Amendment Act* into force, such as establishing an Indigenous Child Welfare Director and implementing new court-related processes.
- In response to advocacy from Indigenous partners, establish the office of the [Indigenous Child Welfare Director](#), including advancing the role's initial priorities as identified through [engagement and collaboration with Indigenous partners](#).

Discussion

In 2022, British Columbia changed provincial legislation to remove barriers for First Nations and Modern Treaty Nations seeking to exercise 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. This work includes advancing the pathways to jurisdiction agreements including tripartite coordination agreements, community agreements and *Declaration Act* consent and joint decision making agreements.

A number of these established pathways to exercising jurisdiction have already led to signed agreements. In 2024/25, the Ministry will continue to work with First Nations seeking to exercise their right to jurisdiction over their child and family services, through these pathways.

The Ministry, with Indigenous partners, continues to develop and implement the policies, training, information management systems and operational protocols necessary to implement the systemic transformation in Indigenous child and family services. The co-development of a B.C.-specific funding model to support child and family service jurisdiction is a key Ministry commitment in the [Declaration Act Action Plan](#) (Action 4.16).

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

This objective outlines the Ministry's delivery of services for Indigenous children and youth that focus on working with Indigenous Peoples in the development of policy, practices, and services. The intention of this objective is to ensure that Ministry services are delivered without racism or discrimination.

Key Strategies

- Continue to implement and refine tools and resources with Indigenous Peoples, leadership, service providers, and partners, to support Ministry staff in addressing systemic racism and implement practice changes to provide services in a culturally safe manner.

- Continue to 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](#).
- Collaborate with Indigenous Peoples, service providers, and youth with lived experience to design a responsive, trauma-informed, and culturally agile justice system that better supports youth, promotes public safety by responding to the needs of victims and the community, and addresses the gaps contributing to the overrepresentation of Indigenous youth in the justice system.

Discussion

The Ministry, together with the Indigenous Child and Family Services Agencies, is accountable 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 continues to respond to the Final Report on the Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and to contribute to the actions in the whole of government response led by Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General: [A Path Forward: Priorities and Early Strategies for B.C.](#)

Co-development of the enhanced Youth Justice services across B.C. for youth involved in the justice system continues. This work includes exploring an increased focus on alternatives to custody, supporting cultural connections and belonging for youth in custody outside of their community, and ensuring supported transition planning for youth returning home.

Performance Measures

Performance Measure	2023/24 Forecast	2024/25 Target	2025/26 Target	2026/27 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	5.2	5.2	5.1	5.0
Indigenous children and youth	34.5	34.3	33.9	33.6
Non-Indigenous children and youth	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.7

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 remains at the lowest it has been in thirty years, with the lowest number of Indigenous children in care in more than twenty years.

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.

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 other ministries (e.g., Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions, Ministry of Education and Child Care), 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

- Continue engaging with parents and caregivers, First Nations, Indigenous Peoples, communities, experts and practitioners, and others with lived experience to understand how the children and youth with support needs system can be transformed and to build a better system of supports together, co-developed with Indigenous communities.
- Continue [implementation of the pilot service model](#), including family connections centres in four areas of the province and begin an evaluation of the pilot, which will continue through to Spring 2025, to further inform the transformed system of Children and Youth with Support Needs (CYSN) supports being co-developed through engagement.
- While a new provincial CYSN model is being developed, continue to implement investments made in Budget 2023, to enhance supports for children and youth with support needs including enhancements to respite, expansion of the Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Key Worker program, and of early intervention therapies.
- In line with [B.C.'s A Pathway to Hope](#) and working in partnership with the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions, and other ministries, continue to support implementation and operationalization of Integrated Child and Youth (ICY) Teams in a number of communities around the province.

- Continue to develop and provide CYMH prevention resources focused on anxiety, depression, and suicide for parents, professionals working with children with support needs, educators, and care givers.
- Improve supports for children and youth with mental health needs by providing young people with severe and enduring mental health and behavioural challenges more treatment options by expanding provincial outreach services, and ensuring virtual services are offered across the province.
- To better support children, youth, and families of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and expressions, continue to take steps to make services gender affirming and more inclusive.
- Based on learnings from [social work oversight engagement](#) completed in 2023, in conversation with partners, develop an informed understanding of opportunities and options to strengthen the regulation related to the oversight of the social work profession.

Discussion

The Ministry is taking action to build a system of supports that better meets the needs of all children and youth with support needs (CYSN). The Ministry is advancing this work in three ways:

- Engaging in deeper consultation with parents and caregivers, First Nations and Indigenous Peoples
- Implementing pilot family connections centres
- In the interim taking steps to help support children who have been underserved and their families, including:
 - Funding an additional 90 foundational program therapists for programs such as infant development, early intervention, and school-aged therapies in every community in the province.
 - Doubling the budget for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Key Worker programs.
 - Increasing the base amount of CYSN Direct Funded Respite.
 - Doubling the billing rate cap for the At Home Program's School Aged Extended Therapy benefits and increasing the annual amount that can be accessed.

The new CYSN service approach and the family connections centres will be evaluated and the learnings will help inform the future system of supports for families with children and youth with support needs.

Integrated Child and Youth (ICY) teams connect children, young people, and families to mental health and substance use services and peer and cultural supports in schools, homes, or community settings. As ICY teams are formed, clinical and non-clinical team members are providing services to children, youth, and families, including those on current waitlists, and strengthening relationships within the mental health and substance use systems of care.

To better support children, youth, and families of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and expressions, the Ministry is taking steps to make our services more inclusive. For example, the [Maples Adolescent Treatment Centre](#) is developing Gender Affirming Care Policies and Procedures.

Continue to support practitioners working with youth at risk of suicide through implementation of 2023 updates to core policies:

- Incorporation of “life promotion” approach, acknowledging suicide prevention may be supported by promising practices and wise practices, recognizing individualized care needs and enabling culturally safer, gender affirming and inclusive care.
- Recognition of how intersectionality, systemic barriers, and social factors influence and impact suicidality.
- Clear documentation processes outlined, including how suicide risk is documented and where to file suicide risk assessments and safety plans; and clear direction to use a standardized CYMH-approved risk assessment tool and safety plan.

Performance Measures

Performance Measure	2023/24 Forecast	2024/25 Target	2025/26 Target	2026/27 Target
2a. Per cent of children assessed with a protection concern that can safely live with family or extended family				
All children and youth	91.7%	92.1%	92.6%	93.0%
Indigenous children and youth	87.1%	88.1%	89.1%	90.1%
Non-Indigenous children and youth	94.5%	94.6%	94.7%	94.8%

Data source: MCFD’s Integrated Case Management (ICM) 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. There are many factors which may impact protection concerns, including poverty, housing accessibility, food security, violence and addiction and substance use. The Ministry is committed to working with its cross-government partners to provide a continuum of supports and services – from infancy through to young adulthood – that wrap around children, youth and their families and lead to improved outcomes such as better health and educational success.

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.

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 7.4 per cent in 2023/24, 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 (refer to Goal 1), this will have a positive impact on family preservation rates for Indigenous children and youth.

Performance Measure	2023/24 Forecast	2024/25 Target	2025/26 Target	2026/27 Target
2b. Distinct People Served by CYMH services All children and youth	31,000	31,250	31,500	32,000

Data source: MCFD's Community and Residential Information System (CRIS) plus an estimate of contracts for core CYMH services that do not use CRIS such as Vancouver Coastal SDA which is served by VCHA (Vancouver Coastal Health Authority).

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.

All public bodies and mental health organizations collaborate under the umbrella of the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions' mandate and the B.C. government's 10-year plan, A Pathway to Hope, to address mental health and substance use needs across the lifespan. MCFD/CYMH is a partner, with other ministries, in the implementation of the Pathway to Hope priorities for children, youth and families, including Integrated Child and Youth (ICY) Teams and the Foundry.

As the ministry continues to partner in the implementation of the B.C. 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 include Integrated Child and Youth (ICY) Teams, Early Intervention Enhancements (EIE), Step Up/Step Down: High-Intensity Outreach Services and Satellited Bed-Based Services and Foundry Expansion. MCFD is committed to increased efficiency in reporting shared data indicators on these initiatives and will continue working with MMHA and other partners to capture the most accurate data possible.

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 out of 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

This objective focuses on the expansion of Ministry services to enable youth and young adults to transition out of government care successfully.

Key Strategies

- To ensure more youth and young adults transitioning from care (including kinship care) have the supports they need, implement regulatory amendments co-developed with Indigenous partners to expand eligibility for youth and young adults transitioning from government care.
- To ensure youth and young adults are supported as they transition out of government care, continue to establish and implement a consistent approach to youth transition planning by the [Strengthening Abilities and Journeys of Empowerment \(SAJE\)](#) program navigators and guides.
- Continue to implement enhanced functionality in the youth portal which provides seamless IM/IT options for eligible youth and young adults to access transition services and benefits provided by the Strengthening Abilities and Journeys of Empowerment program.
- Continue to build knowledge and awareness of the Strengthening Abilities and Journeys of Empowerment program to ensure eligible youth and young adults are able to take advantage of the program.

Discussion

To support youth and young adults as they transition out of government care, the Ministry, through investments announced as part of Budget 2022, introduced new supports and benefits that youth and young adults need to thrive as they transition from government care – including those transitioning from out of care options often referred to as kinship care, up to the age of 27.

Improvements include indefinitely extending temporary housing and support arrangements, introducing the no-limit earnings exemption, implementing the rent supplement program, as well as hiring youth transition workers. Transition workers assist youth, starting at age 14 and up to 25 years, to plan for their transition from care, articulate and action their goals, and connect the youth and young adults to services and supports for a successful transition to adulthood and interdependence.

In 2023, youth and young adults who have been in government care in British Columbia helped develop a new name for the supports and services available – the Strengthening Abilities and Journeys of Empowerment (SAJE) program with the youth transition workers becoming SAJE Guides and SAJE Navigators.

The Ministry continues to advance implementation of the Budget 2022 investments. This includes introduction of new rent supplements, enhanced medical benefits, expansion of the eligibility window up to 84 months (and age 27), and funding to access life skills, training and cultural programming as well as counselling services.

New Ministry staff are now working with youth and young adults in a phased rollout, starting in the Northern and Vancouver Island Service Delivery Areas. This phased roll-out of SAJE Guides and Navigators is expected to be completed in the spring of 2024. The SAJE Guides work alongside staff with guardianship responsibilities to help youth to plan for the transition to adulthood starting at age 14, and SAJE Navigators begin working with young adults starting at the age of 18.

Eligibility for SAJE programs will be expanded in 2024 to include youth transitioning from care that have 24 months of cumulative time in care (inclusive of out-of-care arrangements) between the ages of 12 and 19 or, who were adopted or, had their custody permanently transferred to someone other than their parent between 12 and 19.

Performance Measures

Performance Measure	2023/24 Forecast	2024/25 Target	2025/26 Target	2026/27 Target
3a. Per cent of youth in care who turn 19 with a high school credential				
All children and youth	62.4%	63.0%	63.5%	64.0%
Indigenous children and youth	60.0%	60.5%	61.0%	61.5%
Non-Indigenous children and youth	65.7%	66.2%	66.7%	67.2%

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

Data for this measure comes once a year and 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 400 children and youth in care and includes a target increase of two children per year.

Performance Measure	2023/24 Forecast	2024/25 Target	2025/26 Target	2026/27 Target
3b. Percentage of eligible youth transitioning into adulthood that received a Post Majority Service benefit payment within the next year ¹	54.5%	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 implemented a number of new supports and benefits (refer to Objective 3.1).

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.

The targets for this measure were pushed out by one year as 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.

Performance Measure	2023/24 Forecast	2024/25 Target	2025/26 Target	2026/27 Target
3c. Total number of Young Adults who receive rent supplements during the fiscal year	1,630	1,700	1,364	TBD

Note: 2023/24 counts include 181 rent supplements provided by BC Housing

Discussion

Finding and maintaining safe housing can be a significant challenge for young people in care. The [Rent Supplement Program \(SAJE Housing Supports\)](#) 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 measure assumes a retention rate of 90 per cent into the second and third years. Of 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 2026/27 targets, for this measure based on data collected and funding.

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 experience better outcomes 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 principle of belonging and individual needs determine the care and support a child or youth receives. It includes a 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 homes and services 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.

Key Strategies

- Continue implementation of the Specialized Homes and Support Services by expanding services from the early implementation areas of North Fraser and the Okanagan. Continue the province-wide procurement to prequalify service providers ready to provide respite, stabilization, emergency care, and specialized care services across the province.
- Advance the design of a provincial [Youth Emergency Shelter \(YES\)](#) services model using the lessons learned from the pilot in Maple Ridge and based on input received through engagement with internal and external partners.
- Undertake with partners such as people with lived experience, Indigenous partners, social workers and others, a Comprehensive Review of Care Planning – to ensure care planning is

grounded in fostering belonging – to family, culture, and community – for children and youth.

- Develop the Ministry contract model via the Contract Management Modernization Project focusing on role clarity, defined processes and updated tools to improve experience for both service providers and the Ministry.
- Continue implementation of the Enhanced Out of Care model, providing additional supports to kinship caregivers caring for children and youth with complex mental health, trauma and/or support needs. Ensuring these youth can remain in community, connected to family and culture.

Discussion

The Network of Care provides a continuum of supports and services designed to keep families together and well, offer therapeutic and healing opportunities for children/youth and their families; and provide high quality and individualized care for children and youth who can no longer live at home or with extended family.

The Ministry's core focus is keeping families strong and together. When children and families need support, the Ministry works to connect them with preventative or early intervention services. However, some families need more intensive supports and when if child can no longer live safely at home, the first consideration is to ensure the child maintains connection to community and family by pursuing out-of-care arrangements (e.g. living with extended family or people known to them), and if that is not possible or appropriate and a child must come into care then they receive an appropriate, nurturing and loving home that meets their needs until they can return home or achieve appropriate permanency, either through a foster home or, if required, a specialized home. The Ministry is continually improving these supports and services, and ensuring they meet the needs of families.

Specialized Homes and Support Services (SHSS) is replacing the current model of contracted staffed homes with a network of services designed to be culturally safe, trauma informed and supportive of family preservation and the therapeutic needs of children and youth and families. SHSS's include: Respite Care, Low-Barrier Short-Term Stabilization Care, Emergency Care, and Specialized Long-Term Care. SHSS services are accessible to all children/youth based on their needs, regardless of whether they are in care, in an out-of-care arrangement, or living at home with their parents.

In 2023 the Ministry began implementing SHSS in two ways: gradually transitioning existing contracted care providers in two early implementation areas (the Okanagan and North Fraser Service Delivery Areas (SDA)) to the new SHSS contracts and oversight requirements via direct award negotiation; and through prequalifying new service providers across the province to deliver SHSS services via a Call for Responses (CFR). Implementation will continue through 2024 where learning from the early implementation will be incorporated as the Ministry begins implementing the transformation provincially.

In addition to implementing the SHSS Transformation, the Ministry continues to implement the Network of Care, examining gaps in services and the needs of families and developing new services. An area of focus in 2024 is the development of Youth Emergency Shelter (YES) services, which is being piloted in Maple Ridge. YES services are designed to support vulnerable youth who require the ability to self-refer to a low-barrier service that meets their immediate needs of shelter, crisis intervention, and safety while also creating an opportunity to connect youth with a broader range of ministry services and supports.

Performance Measure	2023/24 Forecast	2024/25 Target	2025/26 Target	2026/27 Target
4a. Per cent of children and youth in care with no moves in the first 12 months since their last admission to care	67.0%	67.0%	67.5%	68.0%

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.

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

(\$000s)	2023/24 Restated Estimates ¹	2024/25 Estimates	2025/26 Plan	2026/27 Plan
Operating Expenses				
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
Total	1,912,095	2,121,197	2,117,068	2,117,068
Capital Expenditures				
Service Delivery Support	2,395	2,230	2,230	2,230
Total	2,395	2,230	2,230	2,230
Other Financing Transactions				
Executive and Support Services (Human Services Providers Financing Program)				
Disbursements	0	0	0	0
Receipts	(31)	(31)	(31)	(31)
Net Cash Requirements (Source)	(31)	(31)	(31)	(31)
Total Disbursements	0	0	0	0
Total Receipts	(31)	(31)	(31)	(31)
Total Net Cash Requirements (Source)	(31)	(31)	(31)	(31)

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

* Further information on program funding and vote recoveries is available in the [Estimates and Supplement to the Estimates](#).

Appendix A: Public Sector Organizations

As of February 2024, the Minister of Children and Family Development is responsible and accountable for the following organizations:

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. It discusses important issues related to the planning and delivery of the full range of CYSN services, provides advice on the CYSN services model, and teaches how to implement new services in a coordinated and collaborative way.