

Ministry of Children and Family Development

2026/27 – 2028/29 Service Plan

February 2026



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Minister's Accountability Statement



The Ministry of Children and Family Development 2026/27 – 2028/29 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 "Jodie Wickens". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Honourable Jodie Wickens
Minister of Children and Family Development
February 2, 2026

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Strategic Direction

In 2026/27, the Government of British Columbia will prioritize support for people by taking action to make life better for everyone.

Despite a challenging fiscal environment due to global uncertainty, trade relationship reordering, and low resource prices, over the past year government made significant progress on efforts to reduce costs for British Columbians, hire more doctors and nurses, and build more homes, hospitals and schools, faster. Government will continue to advance these key priorities even as tariffs, trade policies, and instability outside of the province's borders continue to put pressure on the province's finances.

Ongoing fiscal pressure means all parts of government must continue to do their part to maximize efficiencies and make sure every dollar counts.

To respond to these extraordinary times, government will focus on expanding trade and investment both within Canada and abroad and delivering major projects that offer good jobs and opportunities for people and communities. This focus on economic growth and prosperity is critical to delivering the revenue needed to provide services and infrastructure.

Good relationships and mutually beneficial partnerships with First Nations are critical to building a better future for everyone in British Columbia. Government will continue working diligently to implement the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act Action Plan. Through collaboration and open dialogue, we aim to foster trust, stability and certainty for all.

This 2026/27 service plan outlines how the Ministry of Children and Family Development will support the government's priorities and selected action items identified in the [Minister's most recent Mandate Letter](#).

Purpose of the Ministry

Territory Acknowledgement: The [Ministry of Children and Family Development](#) (ministry) acknowledges the territories of First Nations around B.C. and is grateful to carry out our work on these lands. We acknowledge the rights, interests, priorities and concerns of all Indigenous Peoples (First Nations, Métis and Inuit), respecting and acknowledging their distinct cultures, histories, rights, laws and governments.

The purpose of the ministry is to provide critical services and supports to British Columbia's vulnerable children and youth, and to their families, that contribute to their safety, well-being and sense of belonging. In doing so, the ministry also upholds the inherent right to Indigenous Peoples self-determination.

The ministry provides a network of care across B.C. that encompasses early childhood development, children and youth with support needs, child and youth mental health, adoption, child safety, family support and children in care services, youth justice, and helping youth transition from government care to adulthood.

The ministry emphasizes the principles of early intervention, prevention and cultural and community connections to keep families together, where possible, and connecting children and youth with permanent living arrangements when needed.

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, while upholding the vision of ensuring British Columbia's children and youth are safe and supported to achieve their full potential. 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+¹, and as a person with a disability.

The ministry delivers on its mandate by 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, for example, Specialized Homes and Support Services providers, and other direct care providers, such as foster caregivers and extended family care providers.

The ministry has approximately 5,000 employees. Direct services are coordinated through a provincial office in Victoria and delivered through seven service delivery areas, a Provincial Centralized Services Centre and facilities, and through the 24 Indigenous Child and Family Service Agencies.

¹ An acronym for Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual and additional identities. There are many variations of this acronym.

Performance Planning

Goal 1: Ensure every opportunity is available for Indigenous Peoples to achieve self-determination while continuously reducing the overrepresentation of Indigenous children and youth in the system of care

Performance Measures

Performance Measure	2025/26 Forecast	2026/27 Target	2027/28 Target	2028/29 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	4.9	4.9	4.8	4.8
Indigenous children and youth	34.8	33.9	33.3	32.7
Non-Indigenous children and youth	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7

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

Performance Measure	2025/26 Forecast	2026/27 Target	2027/28 Target	2028/29 Target
1b. Per cent of children initially assessed with a protection concern that can safely live with family or extended family				
All children and youth	94.2%	94.4%	94.5%	94.6%
Indigenous children and youth	89.9%	90.1%	90.4%	90.6%
Non-Indigenous children and youth	96.6%	96.7%	96.7%	96.8%

Data source: MCFD's Integrated Case Management System

Objective 1.1: Continue to offer multiple pathways to support decision-making authority and jurisdiction over child and family services, while working with the 204 First Nations in B.C. regarding timing and approach

Objective 1.2: Continue to address and reduce the overrepresentation of Indigenous children and youth in government care and the youth justice system

Discussion of Changes

Performance Measure 1b: The ministry has expanded the family preservation performance measure to include children and youth identified with a safety concern at initial contact with the ministry. This expansion ensures a more accurate representation of the ministry's efforts to support family preservation when it is safe to do so.

Goal 2: Design and implement a comprehensive child and youth well-being plan and an outcomes framework that aligns services across ministries and agencies

Objective 2.1: In collaboration with other ministries and partners, lead the development and implementation of a comprehensive child and youth well-being plan and outcomes framework that aligns services across ministries and agencies

Discussion of Changes

The previous performance measure 2a was removed because the child and youth outcomes framework is in development. This work is expected to describe what well-being looks like for children and youth in B.C., how it can be measured, and how it is systematically shaped, so investments and services focus on the levers that make the biggest difference. The child and youth outcomes framework is expected to establish several markers of well-being, from material well-being to physical health, social, emotional and cultural well-being and cognitive development.

Goal 3: Continuously evolve and improve policies and practices, so that children and youth in the system of care realize comparable outcomes to their peers

Performance Measures

Performance Measure	2025/26 Forecast	2026/27 Target	2027/28 Target	2028/29 Target
3a Percentage of children and youth in care residing in a Specialized Homes and Support Services (SHSS) home with a service plan ¹	57%	60%	65%	70%

Data source: ICM, children and youth in SHSS placements for a minimum of 7 days. Data as of March 31 of each year.

¹[Specialized Homes and Support Services](#) (SHSS) is the ministry's approach to the delivery of services and contracted staffed care to children, youth and families; emphasis is placed on key prevention and early intervention to support family preservation, address the individualized needs of, and provide homes for, children and youth who require specialized care.

Performance Measure	2025/26 Forecast	2026/27 Target	2027/28 Target	2028/29 Target
3b Per cent of 16- to 18-year-old youth in care through MCFD connected to a SAJE Navigator ^{1, 2, 3}	85%	90%	92%	94%

Data source: ICM and Collaborate. Data taken March 31 of each year.

¹Youth in care through MCFD with open collaborate cases, intakes in progress, or not started but assigned a Navigator.

²This measure does not include youth in care through ICFCAs as ICFSAs have various models of youth transition support, and MCFD does not have the data to report on these models.

³[Strengthening abilities and journeys of empowerment](#) (SAJE) is a ministry program providing supports available to youth from care transitioning into adulthood.

Objective 3.1: In collaboration with partners and service providers, continue to identify and implement improvements to policies, practices and services to ensure that the child welfare system meets a child or youth's needs, nurtures a sense of love and belonging, and prioritizes cultural and family connections

Objective 3.2: Youth and young adults have the tools, resources, and social supports to transition successfully to adulthood and adult services and are supported to achieve their full potential

Discussion of Changes

Performance Measure 3a, introduced this year, highlights the ministry's role within the child welfare system by focusing on children and youth in care.

This performance measure includes children and youth under 19 residing in a Specialized Homes and Support Services home with a service plan. The service plan provides the ability to monitor child and youth specific planning to achieve outcomes across key areas of wellness.

Performance measure 3b: While the [Strengthening Abilities and Journeys of Empowerment \(SAJE\) program](#) supports youth and young adults pre and post the age of majority, this year's measure has been updated to focus on youth in care of the ministry to showcase the ministry's actions and commitment to long-term success. Supporting youth planning for adulthood earlier increases the likelihood of better outcomes. The SAJE Navigator and SAJE Guide roles provide additional and dedicated transition supports, over and above transition supports provided by guardianship workers.

Goal 4: Strengthen and align children and youth with support needs; and children and youth with mental health needs services across health, education and social services systems

Performance Measures

Performance Measure	2025/26 Forecast	2026/27 Target	2027/28 Target	2028/29 Target
4a Number of children and youth with support needs served by MCFD ¹	58,000	65,000	71,000	79,000

Data source: ICM with an estimate of the number of children and youth supported by the ministry's Children and Youth with Support Needs (CYSN) programs and contracted CYSN services during March each fiscal year.

¹ Children and youth include those accessing CYSN Family Services through one or more of the following: ministry CYSN offices; CYSN pilot area Disability Services offices and Family Connections Centres; Autism Funding Program; At Home Medical Benefits program. The count also includes an estimate of additional children under age four supported by the community contracted CYSN foundational programs who may not be accessing the MCFD programs.

Objective 4.1: Strengthen services for children and youth with support needs, and children and youth with mental health needs

Objective 4.2: Align children and youth with support needs and children and youth with mental health needs services across health, education and social services systems

Discussion of Changes

Goal 4 and Objective 4.2 have been expanded to acknowledge that delivery of children and youth with support needs and children and youth with mental health needs services requires alignment of these services across health, education and social services systems.

Performance measure 4a has been added for this goal which did not include a performance measure last fiscal year. It measures the number of children and youth supported by the

ministry's [Children and Youth with Support Needs](#) programs and contracted Children and Youth with Support Needs services. This measure will be updated in the 2027/2028 service plan to reflect the changes that will be implemented in 2027.

Financial Summary

(000s)	2025/26 Restated Estimates ¹	2026/27 Estimates	2027/28 Plan	2028/29 Plan
Operating Expenses				
Early Childhood Development	46,523	45,928	45,009	44,139
Services for Children and Youth with Support Needs	642,212	814,833	678,533	691,281
Child and Youth Mental Health Services	130,066	127,608	126,306	125,079
Child Safety, Family Support and Children in Care Services	1,326,498	1,473,060	1,494,124	1,490,881
Adoption Services	36,138	29,119	29,380	29,340
Youth Justice Services	55,524	53,626	52,944	52,302
Service Delivery Support	145,118	149,512	149,473	147,436
Executive and Support Services	18,413	18,242	18,242	18,242
Total	2,400,492	2,711,928	2,594,011	2,598,700
Capital Expenditures				
Service Delivery Support	2,230	2,230	2,230	2,230
Total	2,230	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 2025/26 have been restated to be consistent with the presentation of the 2026/27 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 2026, the Minister of Children and Family Development is responsible and accountable for the following organizations:

British Columbia 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.

Appendix B: Minister Mandate Letter



January 16, 2025

Honourable Jodie Wickens
Minister of Children and Family Development
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

Dear Minister Wickens:

Congratulations on your appointment as Minister of Children and Family Development at a critical time for our province. Serving as a member of the executive council is a privilege and responsibility which I am confident you will fulfill with integrity and a commitment to the people of our province.

British Columbians have trusted us with a mandate to deliver for them in ways that make a tangible difference in their daily lives. They expect us to listen and learn from people of different perspectives – and work together to make things better for everyone.

Specifically, we will tackle the challenges people worry about at the kitchen table:

- **Grow the economy by creating good jobs across British Columbia.** We will collaborate with businesses, workers, and communities to attract investments in both new and traditional sectors as well as emerging sectors of the economy. This approach will bring certainty for business, security for workers, and generate the wealth needed to support the essential services British Columbians rely on.
- **Reduce costs for families** including by helping people access homes they can afford through support for first-time homebuyers, increasing the supply of rental housing stock, and stronger measures to crack down on housing speculation.

.../2

- **Strengthen health care** by expanding access to family doctors and recruiting and training more health professionals, ensuring that every British Columbian can access the care they need, no matter where they live. We will also increase access to addictions treatment and provide help for people whose struggles require intensive supports.
- **Make our neighbourhoods and communities safer** by working with law enforcement and social agencies to address street disorder, crack down on organized crime, and do all we can to ensure repeat offenders stay behind bars.

Our commitment to take action on climate change remains foundational and will be key to a healthy and prosperous BC for future generations.

Underlying all this work is our partnership with Indigenous peoples. Advancing reconciliation, implementing the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* and working in partnership with First Nations rights-holders to advance shared interests is the responsibility of every Minister.

Over this mandate I expect you to prioritize making progress on the following:

- In order to protect key services that British Columbians rely on, work with the Minister of Finance to review all existing Ministry of Children and Family Development programs and initiatives to ensure programs remain relevant, are efficient, and improve the lives of vulnerable British Columbians. This is important in the context of current Provincial budget constraints and overall efficiency in delivering the goals of safety and well-being for British Columbia's most vulnerable children and youth.
- Continue to implement BC's historic legislation honouring Indigenous jurisdiction over the care of children and families and continue to address and reduce the overrepresentation of Indigenous children in government care.
- Continue leading work to design and implement a comprehensive child well-being plan and outcomes framework that aligns services across ministries and agencies, prioritizing a new service model that brings the most vulnerable children and their families to the front of the line to prevent crisis. This plan should include an outcomes framework to measure the needs, successes and well-being of children and youth.
- Lead work with the Ministry of Health, and with Indigenous peoples, key stakeholders and people with lived experience, to realign and improve services for children and youth with support and mental health needs.

As you are aware, we have established an accord with the BC Green Caucus that supports our shared commitment to ensuring stable governance focused on delivering progress and tangible outcomes for British Columbians. The commitments in that accord complement the direction in these mandate letters.

As a Cabinet, we will uphold the highest standards of ethics, collaboration, and good conduct in service of the public, and as a Minister of the Crown, you are expected to review, understand, and act according to the *Members' Conflict of Interest Act*. You will establish a collaborative working relationship with your Deputy Minister and the public servants under their direction, who provide the professional, non-partisan advice that is fundamental to delivering on our government's priorities. Your Minister's Office must meet the highest standards for integrity and provide a respectful, rewarding environment for all staff.

The work we have ahead takes place in a profoundly challenging geopolitical environment. Close friends and neighbours to our south are contemplating imposing draconian tariffs on our products that would hurt both Americans and Canadians. Our allies internationally face governmental instability. Hate and racism are on the rise around the world. Artificial intelligence breakthroughs with unclear implications and astonishing potential are announced daily. Global inflation, snarled supply chains, and war are threatening global economic growth and prosperity as well as the transition to a low-carbon economy.

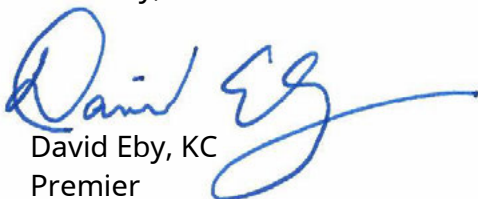
We have an obligation to protect and defend British Columbians, as well as seize opportunities, in these uncertain times.

The good news is that we have everything we need to succeed, and we will succeed. British Columbia's people – our workers, entrepreneurs, business leaders, artists, and innovators – are among the most talented in the world. We are home to world-class educational institutions and public services. Our natural beauty is unmatched, we have internationally envied resources, and we are one of the most diverse places on the planet. Your job is to help us leverage these advantages in perilous times.

Use this mandate letter to guide your work, and do not be afraid to challenge assumptions, or be innovative, bold and aggressive in achieving the goals set out for you and your Ministry by the people of this province.

Thank you for joining me in the work ahead.

Sincerely,



David Eby, KC
Premier