

# Ministry of Children and Family Development

**2022/23**

## **Annual Service Plan Report**

**August 2023**



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## Minister's Accountability Statement



The Ministry of Children and Family Development 2022/23 Annual Service Plan Report compares the Ministry's actual results to the expected results identified in the 2022/23 – 2024/25 Service Plan published in 2022. I am accountable for those results as reported.

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

Honourable Mitzi Dean  
Minister of Children and Family Development  
August 11, 2023

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## Letter from the Minister

It is essential that every child and youth in B.C. has the services and supports they need to live a safe, happy, and productive life, to be connected to their culture and community, and to achieve their full potential. I am honoured to lead a ministry that is committed to supporting that vision and making meaningful change in the lives of those we serve, today and in the future. This year has seen a number of advancements.

In November 2022, we passed historic legislation to bring provincial child and family service law into alignment with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, respecting the inherent rights of Indigenous communities to provide their own child and family services. The first coordination agreement was signed with Splat'sin in March 2023, setting the stage for many more to come.

To support the transformation and improve contracted care in our province, we began to implement a network of Specialized Homes and Support Services. Progress includes a procurement process for prequalified service providers, and working in partnership with existing service providers in early implementation areas as they begin to transition their services to new accountabilities and policies.

To improve services for children and youth with support needs, we are moving to a new service approach in four pilot sites while undertaking deeper engagement on a long-term province-wide approach. At the same time, the Ministry has introduced a comprehensive suite of supports and relationship-based networks for youth transitioning from care. Rent supplements, an earnings exemption, and transition navigators are all in place to help youth from care thrive.

We continue our work to reduce the number of Indigenous and non-Indigenous children and youth in care and keep them connected with family, community, and culture. Our commitment to listen to the children, youth, and families we serve is unwavering. We know their voices and experiences are central to the creation of services that truly meet their needs.

I thank Ministry staff, Indigenous Child and Family Service Agencies, the Youth Advisory Council, the Minister's Advisory Council for Children and Youth with Support Needs, community partners, caregivers, and knowledge-keepers for their dedication and commitment to creating positive change for children, youth, and families. We could not move forward without their unwavering support.



Honourable Mitzi Dean  
Minister of Children and Family Development  
August 11, 2023

## Purpose of the Annual Service Plan Report

This annual service plan report has been developed to meet the requirements of the Budget Transparency and Accountability Act (BTAA), which sets out the legislative framework for planning, reporting, and accountability for Government organizations. Under the BTAA, the Minister is required to report on the actual results of the Ministry's performance related to the forecasted targets stated in the service plan for the reported year.

## Strategic Direction

The strategic direction set by Government in 2020, and Minister Dean's [2020 Mandate Letter](#) shaped the goals, objectives, performance measures, and financial plan outlined in the [Ministry of Children and Family Development 2022/23 – 2024/25 Service Plan](#) and the actual results reported on in this annual report.

## 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, 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, and cultural and community connections. The Ministry strives to keep families together wherever possible. Where it is not possible to keep children with their parents, we seek to place them with family or community members. If that is not possible, we seek to place them in a home-based environment with foster parents or a specialized staffed facility.

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 transition to adulthood and adult services. Together, these services 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 4,970 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 4,275<sup>1</sup> 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 has shifted to a system-wide approach 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.
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 approach is transforming how child and family services is 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](#), implementation of Integrated Child and Youth (ICY) teams in five communities, 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.

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 day-to-day obligations and responsibilities for child and family services, have also been directing efforts and working together to design, develop, and implement the many initiatives that were started or implemented last year.

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

### Delivering Child and Family Services

Together with its partners, the Ministry continues to address staffing challenges, particularly recruitment and retention difficulties for the social sector throughout 2022/23. To ensure critical services continue to be maintained for children, youth, and families, the Ministry is developing centralized support teams and evaluating its mobile response program.

The Ministry developed a workforce plan with a strong focus on recruitment, retention, health, and wellness. 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.

In 2022/23, public health emergencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the illicit drug toxicity crisis, as well as global inflation, have continued 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 meant an increase in service demand. In others, it has meant a change in service delivery (e.g., providing online options). In response, the Ministry has adapted its processes and has partnered with service providers, as applicable. In many cases, these changes have been positive and have improved services for children, youth, and families.

As the Ministry continues to navigate pandemic-recovery, there is a commitment 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.



## Report on Performance: Goals, Objectives, and Results

### **Goal 1: Recognize the right of Indigenous families and communities to retain shared responsibility for the upbringing, training, education, and well-being of their children, consistent with the rights of the child [UN Declaration] and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action**

#### **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 child and family services jurisdiction**

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 has been of critical importance. The Ministry recognizes that the best support for Indigenous children and youth comes from Indigenous communities.

#### **Key results**

- Engaged with Indigenous rightsholders and partners to collaboratively develop amendments to the [Child, Family, and Community Service Act](#), in alignment with the *Declaration Act* and the federal government's [An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit, and Métis children, youth and families](#).
- In April 2022, the Ministry signed the [first co-created child welfare community agreement](#) in B.C. (Tcwesétmentem: Walking Together Agreement) under the *Child, Family, and Community Service Act* with Simpcw First Nation, ensuring the unique practices, customs, laws, language, and traditions of Simpcw First Nation are integrated into child welfare decision making, protection, and planning.
- In November 2022, B.C. passed historic legislation, [Indigenous Self-Government in Child and Family Services Amendment Act](#), bringing provincial child and family service law into alignment with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and removing barriers for Indigenous Peoples exercising jurisdiction over child and family services.

- On March 24, 2023, Splat-sin First Nation, B.C. and Canada signed [the first tripartite coordination agreement in](#) B.C., ensuring that Splat-sin can effectively exercise their inherent right of self-government, including jurisdiction of child and family services for their children and families.

### **Summary of progress made in 2022/23**

In the 2022/23 reporting year, 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. The [Indigenous Self-Government in Child and Family Services Amendment Act](#) (the Act) is a turning point that provides a path to end the over involvement of the Ministry of Children and Family Development in the lives of Indigenous families. The amendments bring the *Adoption Act* and the *Child, Family and Community Service Act* into alignment with the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#).

From the beginning of the legislative development process, the Ministry worked closely with Indigenous partners by establishing working groups with Indigenous Governing Bodies (IGB) and Modern Treaty Nations and worked together with a Tripartite Working Group with Canada and the First Nations Leadership Council. During legislative drafting in summer 2022, the Ministry provided three separate consultation drafts to the working groups. Each of these groups were separately invited to provide verbal and written feedback, which was considered and incorporated into future legislation drafts as appropriate. In addition to these working groups, the Simpcw First Nation, Snuneymuxw First Nation, and Métis Nation British Columbia were also engaged.

As well as setting out a pathway for Indigenous Governing Bodies to exercise legal jurisdiction over child and family services, the Act created a pathway to establish a new Indigenous Child Welfare Director position. It also provided for greater information sharing with Indigenous communities exercising or planning to exercise jurisdiction, provided for greater involvement of Indigenous communities in child and family services through different types of agreements with the Province, and strengthened collaboration with Indigenous communities and consent-based decision making with Indigenous Governing Bodies on adoption placements and adoption for Indigenous children who are in the care of the Ministry.

Over two-thirds of the new legislation came into force in 2022 and the Ministry, together with partners, will work to implement new policies and processes to operationalize these changes. The remaining regulations are being co-developed in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous partners.

While the Ministry committed to 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 partners.

## **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 results**

- Signed nine new information-sharing agreements (ISAs), for a total of 99 ISAs, under s.92.1 of the *Child, Family, and Community Service Act* to ensure transparency and accountability to Indigenous children, youth, families, and communities, and to improve collaboration with Indigenous communities.
- Worked with Indigenous Peoples, leadership, service providers, and partners, following the Aboriginal Policy and Practice Framework, to co-host the Advancing Practice circles to transform practices that reflect the priority of keeping Indigenous children and youth safely at home and connected to their community and culture.
- With Indigenous Peoples, leadership, service providers and partners, developed and implemented the Core Practice Accountabilities – Child Protection Response Reference Guide to provide clarity on the procedures required for each standard and policy within Child Protection Response Policies.
- Created an internal web page for ministry staff to house information, tools, and learning opportunities to address systemic racism and increase engagement and community building.

### **Summary of progress made in 2022/23**

There has been increased engagement and community building to address systemic racism with the Anti-Racism and Debiasing the Workplace Initiative, including the creation of an internal web page to house information, tools, and learning opportunities, as well as the formation of an Anti-Racism Advisory Committee. In addition, the Ministry has developed a draft Anti-Racism Policy and Practice Framework for ministry staff, and initiated a cross-government analysis on current approaches to anti-racism.

To help Ministry staff provide services in a culturally safe manner, the Ministry has initiated an audit of Cultural Safety Support to determine the opportunities and financial support required and completed a review on cultural protocols with Elder Circles and Knowledge Keepers.

The Core Practice Accountabilities – Child Protection Response Reference Guide reduces Ministry over-involvement with families when there isn't a need and reduces over-intrusive

practice to support relational collaborative work that has a greater impact on ensuring child/youth safety and wellbeing.

The Ministry tracks the policy and practice changes that are developed with Indigenous Peoples. 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: PSSG: [A Path Forward: Priorities and Early Strategies for B.C.](#)

### Performance measure(s) and related discussion

Performance Measure	2021/22 Actual	2022/23 Target	2022/23 Actual
1.1 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	5.4	5.3
Indigenous children and youth	35.8	35.3	34.2
Non-Indigenous children and youth	1.9	1.9	1.9

Data source: Integrated Case Management (ICM) System

<sup>1</sup>PM 1.1 targets for 2023/24 and 2024/25 were stated in the 2022/23 service plan as 5.1; 34.3; 1.8 and 5.0; 33.5; 1.7, respectively. For forward-looking planning information, including current targets for 2023/24 – 2025/26, please see the latest service plan on the [BC Budget website](#).

The Ministry met this performance target.

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

While the overrepresentation of Indigenous children and youth in care is unacceptable and there is still much work to be done, the number of Indigenous children and youth in care has decreased to the lowest number in over 20 years and the number of children and youth in care continues to decrease to the lowest it has been in thirty years. The targets for 2022/23 were adjusted based on forecasts to capture better-than-expected results for Indigenous children and youth and to maintain relevance moving forward.

To date, this performance measure has included forecasts and targets for Indigenous children and youth to draw attention to, and to support action in response to the harmful impacts of colonialization on Indigenous children and youth. 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**

### **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**

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.

#### **Key results**

- In 2022, the ministry implemented a \$10 million funding increase to medical equipment benefits under the At Home Program, to help significantly lower the cost of medical equipment for B.C. families of children and youth with physical disabilities and other complex care needs to help keep children, youth, and families together.
- In 2022, services to help children and youth with support needs and their families were also boosted through [\\$7 million in grant funding](#) to community-based service providers and advocacy organizations.
- In line with [B.C.'s A Pathway to Hope](#), children and youth facing mental-health and substance-use challenges began receiving new services and supports from Integrated Child and Youth (ICY) teams in five communities throughout the province.
- To better support children, youth, and families of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and expressions, the Ministry has taken steps to make our services more inclusive. For example, in October 2022 we updated our records system (the Integrated Case Management system) to include a non-binary gender option.
- The Ministry completed engagement on the social work oversight framework in B.C. This engagement explored the current state of social work oversight, including strengths, challenges, and opportunities for improvement.

## **Summary of progress made in 2022/23**

In 2022, the Ministry paused the province-wide rollout of B.C.'s plan to establish a network of family connections centres, except for the four pilot sites, and committed to maintaining individualized funding for children with an autism diagnosis. In addition, the Ministry committed to engage in deeper consultation with parents and caregivers, First Nations, Indigenous Peoples, communities, experts and practitioners, and others with lived experience to understand how the system can be transformed and to build a better system of supports together, co-developed with Indigenous communities. In the interim, as a system of supports is being developed, new investments were made to support underserved children with disabilities and support needs, including fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, Down syndrome, and other neuro-cognitive developmental disabilities.

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. Implementation of 12 ICY teams is underway in five communities throughout the province. 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. In February 2023, the Province announced an additional seven communities that will be served by ICY teams.

To better support children, youth, and families of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and expressions, the Ministry updated our records system (the Integrated Case Management system) to include a non-binary gender option. This means that gender diverse youth served by the Ministry have their gender identity represented when accessing services and are not required to select a binary option that doesn't reflect their identity.

In 2022/23, the Ministry engaged with the B.C. government-wide Employee Resource Group for 2SLGBTQIA+ staff and are part of the organizing committee. We also established a working relationship with QMUNITY, B.C.'s leading Two Spirited, Trans, and Queer Resource Centre.

**Performance measure(s) and related discussion**

Performance Measure	2021/22 Actual	2022/23 Target	2022/23 Actual
2.1 Percent of children assessed with a protection concern that can safely live with family or extended family <sup>1</sup>			
All children and youth	93.2%	93.7%	92.9%
Indigenous children and youth	90.1%	91.0%	88.8%
Non-Indigenous children and youth	95.1%	95.4%	95.2%
2.2 Access to Child and Youth Mental Health (CYMH) Services <sup>2</sup>			
CYMH clients served	29,965	30,750	27,675

Data source: ICM

Data source: Community and Residential Information System (CRIS)

<sup>1</sup>PM 2.1 targets for 2023/24 and 2024/25 were stated in the 2022/23 service plan as 94.0%; 91.5%; 95.5% and 94.3%; 92.0% 95.7%, respectively.

<sup>2</sup>PM 2.2 targets for 2023/24 and 2024/25 were stated in the 2022/23 service plan as 31,250 and 31,750, respectively. For forward-looking planning information, including current targets for 2023/24 – 2025/26, please see the latest service plan on the [BC Budget website](#).

2.1 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.

Although the results for 2022/23 are short of the target, the number of children and youth coming into care has remained constant since last year. The family preservation rate gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous families has improved from 9.2% in 2016/17 to 6.4% in 2022/23.

2.2 This performance measure was new to the Service Plan for 2022. It was added to highlight the prevention and early intervention services that the Ministry provides, 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 results: the global staffing 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 will continue 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, later year 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**

### **Objective 3.1: Support youth and young adults to successfully transition 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.

#### **Key results**

- In 2022, temporary housing and support arrangements were indefinitely extended for young adults transitioning out of care up until 21 years of age.
- In August 2022, the Ministry introduced the no-limit earnings exemption, which aims to increase stable employment outcomes for young adults and allows youth to gain crucial skills and experience without impacting their financial support.
- In October 2022, the Ministry introduced the [Rent Supplement Program](#), which provides \$600-a-month rent supplements for up to two years for eligible young adults from government care.
- The Ministry also began hiring youth transition workers to support youth and young adults transitioning to adulthood from government care.

#### **Summary of progress made in 2022/23**

To support youth and young adults as they transition out of government care, the Ministry, via 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—up to the age of 27. These include indefinitely extending temporary housing and support arrangements, introducing the no-limit earnings exemption, implementing the rent supplement program (which saw 798 rent supplements approved in 2022/23), 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 independence.

In addition to providing housing options and addressing some of the challenges that young adults face as they transition out of government care, young adults received priority access to BC Housing subsidized housing, where appropriate, preventing the experience of homelessness.

To inform the co-development of the Youth Justice Service Framework and enhancement of services across B.C. for youth involved in the justice system, we continued to partner and engage with representatives from BC First Nations Justice Council and Métis Nation BC



throughout 2022/23. The goal is to co-design an accessible, culturally safe, and distinction-based engagement strategy with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples and communities.

In 2022, the Ministry also took action to address the recommendations from the Office of the Ombudsperson’s report, [Alone: The Prolonged and Repeated Isolation of Youth in Custody](#). Priority actions in 2022 included the launch of a publicly accessible report on the use of separate confinement in youth custody, decommissioning a unit used as a place of separate confinement, and, as a replacement, planning for the creation of specialized rooms within each custody living unit for youth who need immediate, temporary, emotional, and physical support.

### Performance measure(s) and related discussion

Performance Measure	2021/22 Actual	2022/23 Target	2022/23 Actual
3.1a Percent of youth in care who turn 19 with a high school credential <sup>1</sup>			
All children and youth	66.5%	59.0%	n/a
Indigenous children and youth	63.9%	57.0%	n/a
Non-Indigenous children and youth	69.7%	64.0%	n/a
3.1b Youth under Continuing Custody Orders and youth aging into adulthood and adult services who receive an Agreements with Young Adults benefit payment within the next year <sup>2</sup>	32.8%	33.3%	35.0%

Data source: ICM and Ministry of Education and Child Care enrolment data

Data source: Resource and Payment System

<sup>1</sup>PM 3.1a targets for 2023/24 and 2024/25 were stated in the 2022/23 service plan as 59.5%; 57.5%; 64.5% and 60.0%; 58.0% 65.0%, respectively.

<sup>2</sup>PM 3.1b targets for 2023/24 and 2024/25 were stated in the 2022/23 service plan as 35.3% and 37.3%, respectively. For forward-looking planning information, including current targets for 2023/24 – 2025/26, please see the latest service plan on the [BC Budget website](#).

3.1a There is strong evidence that completing high school is linked to future well-being. MCFD 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.

Targets for 2022/23 were adjusted to reflect better-than-expected results.

This performance measure is trending up, primarily driven by an increase in adult graduation diplomas (equivalent to Dogwood diplomas). Over time, the Ministry is seeing a higher proportion of children and youth in care completing high school 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.

3.1b This performance measure includes one of the youth transition programs—[Agreements with Young Adults](#). The program provides young adults with financial assistance for education, training, and life skills.

In 2023/24 this performance measure was changed to include the expanded suite of benefits available to eligible young adults. It now includes the number of young adults who receive either Agreements with Young Adults, Housing Agreements, or Support Agreement benefits and/or rent supplement payments in the 12 months following their nineteenth birthday.

Improving the uptake of these programs will help ensure better transitions and, therefore, better outcomes for young adults as they transition into adulthood and adult services.

## **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**

### **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**

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.

## Key results

- Began implementation of a network of Specialized Homes and Support Services for children and youth, starting with early implementation in North Fraser and the Okanagan, and a province-wide procurement to prequalify service providers ready to expand respite, stabilization, emergency care, and specialized care services in February 2023.
- Began province-wide implementation of the Enhanced Out-of-Care program that enables children and youth living with significant and complex support needs to reside with extended family or people known to them. This program is intended to ensure fewer children and youth being brought into care, residing in foster homes, or specialized homes.
- Through the Priority Home Study Initiative and the work of the Centralized Retention & Recruitment Team, 76 foster caregiver SAFE home studies were completed to expand our network of care between May 2022 and May 2023.
- Completed the regulatory review of the licensed adoption agency model.

## Summary of progress made in 2022/23

The Ministry's primary goal is to keep families strong and safely together. 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. When a child needs protection, 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 began to implement the network of Specialized Homes and Support Services via a gradual transition. This process includes addressing opportunities in the network of care through a procurement process for prequalified service providers (with a positive response across all service categories), and by working in close partnership with existing service providers to transition their services to new accountabilities and policies.

Enhanced Out-of-Care is a new program that provides eligible children and youth, and their care providers, with enhanced supports in addition to the ones in the existing Out-Of-Care Policy. Additional supports are designed to ensure children with significant and complex support needs can be supported to live in out-of-care arrangements, reducing the need to be brought into care.

**Performance measure(s) and related discussion**

Performance Measure	2021/22 Actual	2022/23 Target	2022/23 Actual
4.1 Percentage of children and youth in care with no moves in the first 12 months since their last admission to care <sup>1</sup>	69.4%	67.0%	67.6%

Data source: ICM

<sup>1</sup>PM 4.1 targets for 2023/24 and 2024/25 were stated in the 2022/23 service plan as 67.3% and 67.5%, respectively. For forward-looking planning information, including current targets for 2023/24 – 2025/26, please see the latest service plan on the [BC Budget website](#).

The ministry has met this performance target.

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 staffing shortage and global inflation have impacted retention of caregivers, and the past year has seen a slight slowing of this increase.

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 Report

## Financial Summary

	Estimated	Other Authorizations <sup>1</sup>	Total Estimated	Actual	Variance
<b>Operating Expenses (\$000)</b>					
Early Childhood Development	40,256		40,256	39,223	(1,033)
Services for Children and Youth with Special Needs	480,381		480,381	498,087	17,706
Child and Youth Mental Health Services	119,471		119,471	103,781	(15,690)
Child Safety, Family Support, and Children in Care Services	835,781	1,555	837,336	845,273	7,937
Adoption Services	36,451		36,451	30,980	(5,471)
Youth Justice Services	51,320		51,320	36,415	(14,905)
Service Delivery Support	161,426		161,426	169,909	8,483
Executive and Support Services	16,959		16,959	19,932	2,973
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>1,742,045</b>	<b>1,555</b>	<b>1,743,600</b>	<b>1,743,600</b>	<b>0</b>
Adjustment of Prior Year Accrual <sup>2</sup>				(779)	(779)
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,742,045</b>	<b>1,555</b>	<b>1,743,600</b>	<b>1,742,821</b>	<b>(779)</b>
<b>Ministry Capital Expenditures (\$000)</b>					
Service Delivery Support	1,000		1,000	828	(172)
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,000</b>		<b>1,000</b>	<b>828</b>	<b>(172)</b>
<b>Other Financing Transactions (\$000)<sup>3</sup></b>					
Executive and Support Services (Human Services Providers Financing Program)	(31)		(31)	(29)	2
Receipts	(31)		(31)	(29)	2
Disbursements	0		0	0	0
Net Cash Requirements (Source)	(31)		(31)	(29)	2
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>(31)</b>		<b>(31)</b>	<b>(29)</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Total Disbursements</b>	<b>0</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

	Estimated	Other Authorizations <sup>1</sup>	Total Estimated	Actual	Variance
<b>Total Net Cash Requirements (Source)</b>	<b>(31)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(31)</b>	<b>(29)</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> "Other Authorizations" include Supplementary Estimates, Statutory Appropriations and Contingencies. Amounts in this column are not related to the "estimated amount" under sections 5(1) and 6(1) of the Balanced Budget and Ministerial Accountability Act for ministerial accountability for operating expenses under the Act.

<sup>2</sup> The Adjustment of Prior Year Accrual of (0.799) million is a reversal of accruals in the previous year.

<sup>3</sup> Human Services Providers financing program receipts represents the repayment of one outstanding loan by a community social services provider. The funding for capital purposes was provided for under the *Human Resources Facility Act*.

## Appendix A: Public Sector Organizations

As of August 2023, 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.

## Appendix B: Progress on Mandate Letter Priorities

The following is a summary of progress made on priorities as stated in [Minister Mitzi Dean's 2020 Mandate Letter](#).

2020 Mandate Letter Priority	Status as of March 31, 2023
<p>Continue to support children, youth, and families through the COVID-19 response and recovery.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 2022, temporary housing and support arrangements were indefinitely extended for young adults transitioning out of care up until 21 years of age—this will be made permanent through legislation.</li> <li>• Ministry offices remained open, with measures in place to ensure the safety of staff, children, youth, families, and community partners, including home visits, the use of cloud tools and virtual collaboration platforms (e.g., Microsoft Teams and Zoom), where possible.</li> <li>• Partnered with Indigenous Child and Family Service Agencies and met on a regular basis to ensure critical practice support information was developed, implemented, and communicated.</li> </ul>



2020 Mandate Letter Priority	Status as of March 31, 2023
<p>Continue to work with Indigenous partners and the federal government to reform the child welfare system, including implementing the federal <i>An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families</i> and the principles of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act, and continuing to reduce the overrepresentation of Indigenous children in care.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engaged with Indigenous rightsholders and partners to collaboratively develop amendments to the <a href="#">Child, Family, and Community Service Act</a>, in alignment with the <i>Declaration Act</i> and the federal government's <a href="#">An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families</a>.</li> <li>In November 2022, B.C. passed historic legislation, <a href="#">Indigenous Self-Government in Child and Family Services Amendment Act</a>, bringing provincial child and family service law into alignment with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and removing barriers for Indigenous Peoples exercising jurisdiction over child and family services.</li> <li>In April 2022, the Ministry signed the first <a href="#">co-created child welfare community agreement</a> (<i>Tcwesétmentem: Walking Together Agreement</i>) under the <i>Child, Family and Community Service Act</i> in B.C. with Simpcw First Nation, ensuring the unique practices, customs, laws, language, and traditions of Simpcw First Nation are integrated into child welfare decision making, protection, and planning.</li> <li>On March 24, 2023, Splotsin First Nation, B.C. and Canada signed the first <a href="#">tripartite coordination agreement</a> in B.C., ensuring that Splotsin can effectively exercise their inherent right of self-government, including jurisdiction of child and family services for their children and families.</li> </ul>

2020 Mandate Letter Priority	Status as of March 31, 2023
<p>Support families involved with the child welfare system by focusing on family preservation and keeping children and youth connected to their communities and culture, while working to ensure that in cases where children and youth come into care, consideration of their individual needs determine their placement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Began implementation of a network of Specialized Homes and Support Services for children and youth, starting with early implementation in North Fraser and the Okanagan, and a province-wide procurement to prequalify service providers ready to expand respite, stabilization, emergency care, and specialized care services in February 2023.</li> <li>• Began province-wide implementation of the Enhanced Out-of-Care program that enables children and youth living with significant and complex support needs to reside with extended family or people known to them and supports fewer children and youth being brought into care, residing in foster homes, or specialized homes.</li> <li>• Completed the regulatory review of the licensed adoption agency model.</li> </ul>

<p>Build on our expanded supports for young adults in care, with particular attention to supporting the transition to independence and ensuring supports reach all youth.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduced new supports, tools, and relationship-based networks youth from care need to thrive—this includes extending the temporary housing and support arrangements introduced in 2020 indefinitely, introducing the no-limit earnings exemption, implementing the new Rent Supplement Program, and hiring youth transition workers to help young people successfully navigate their journey into adulthood.</li> <li>• In addition to the above supports, young adults receive priority access to BC Housing subsidized housing, where appropriate, preventing the experience of homelessness.</li> <li>• Throughout 2022/23, continued to partner and engage with representatives from BC First Nations Justice Council and Métis Nation BC to co-design an accessible, culturally safe, and distinction-based engagement strategy with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples and communities. The strategy will inform the co-development of the Youth Justice Service Framework and enhancement of services across B.C. for youth involved in the justice system.</li> <li>• In 2022, the Ministry took steps to address the recommendations from the Office of the Ombudsperson’s report, <i>Alone: The Prolonged and Repeated Isolation of Youth in Custody</i>. Priority actions included publicly launching an accessible report on the use of separate confinement in youth custody, decommissioning a unit used as a place of separate confinement, and, as a replacement, planning for the creation of specialized rooms within each custody living unit community for youth who need immediate, temporary, emotional, and physical support.</li> </ul>
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2020 Mandate Letter Priority	Status as of March 31, 2023
<p>Improve support for families of children with special needs, ensuring that the new Child and Youth with Special Needs framework is designed to serve the needs of a broad range of families.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engaged with service providers, advocates, provincial organizations, and families to develop a draft Child and Youth with Support Needs (CYSN) Service Framework.</li> <li>In 2022, the Ministry paused the rollout of B.C.'s plan to establish a network of family connections centres, except for the four pilot sites, and committed to maintaining individualized funding for children with an autism diagnosis.</li> <li>In 2022, the Ministry committed to engaging in deeper consultation with parents and caregivers, First Nations, Indigenous Peoples, communities, experts and practitioners, and other stakeholders with lived experience to understand how the system can be transformed and together build a better system of supports, co-developed with Indigenous communities.</li> <li>As the system is being developed new investments were made to support underserved children with disabilities and support needs, including fetal alcohol spectrum disorders, Down syndrome, and other neuro-cognitive developmental disabilities.</li> </ul>
<p>Work with the Minister of Education and the Minister of State for Child Care to integrate child care into the broader learning environment by developing a strategy to move delivery of child care into the Ministry of Education by 2023.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transitioned Child Care to the Ministry of Education and Child Care in April 2022, better integrating child care into the broader learning environment.</li> <li>Read the <a href="#">2021/2022 Annual Service Plan Report</a> for more details.</li> </ul>
<p>Support the Minister of State for Child Care and the Minister of Education to work toward providing universal access to before and after school care, prioritizing care on school grounds so parents know their children are safe at one place for the full workday.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In April 2022, Child Care moved to the Ministry of Education and Child Care, and this work is now the responsibility of the Minister of State for Child Care within that ministry.</li> </ul>

2020 Mandate Letter Priority	Status as of March 31, 2023
<p>Support the work of the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions to continue addressing mental health concerns early by rolling out new mental health and addictions care initiatives for children and youth, and ensure these programs are aligned with and support the work of the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In line with B.C.'s <a href="#">A Pathway to Hope</a>, children and youth facing mental-health and substance-use challenges began receiving new services and supports from the Integrated Child and Youth (ICY) teams in communities throughout the province (see Goal 2).</li> <li>• Expanded the <a href="#">Everyday Anxiety Strategies for Educators</a> prevention and early intervention online resources, aimed at building resiliency and increasing mental health literacy for educators of grades 8–12 (see the 2021 Annual Service Plan Report for more details).</li> </ul>
<p>Support the work of the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Training to expand tuition waivers to all former youth in care, regardless of age.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As of August 1, 2023, tuition and eligible fee waivers will be made available to all former youth in care who meet the time in care requirement, regardless of age. This means the age criteria for the Provincial Tuition Waiver Program will be removed and will include students under the age of 19 who are currently in the care of the B.C. government.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Learn more about the Provincial Tuition Waiver Program.</a></li> </ul>

2020 Mandate Letter Priority	Status as of March 31, 2023
<p>Support the work of the Attorney General and Minister responsible for Housing to address the needs of people experiencing homelessness, including those living in encampments.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduced new supports, tools and relationship-based networks youth from care need to thrive—this includes extending the temporary housing and support arrangements introduced in 2020 indefinitely, introducing the no-limit earnings exemption, implementing the new Rent Supplement Program, and hiring youth transition workers to help young people successfully navigate their journey into adulthood.</li> <li>• In August 2022, the ministry introduced the no-limit earnings exemption for young adults transitioning out of government care. This aims to increase stable employment outcomes for young adults and facilitate attachment to the labour market, increase their overall financial stability, and provide greater financial resilience.</li> <li>• In October 2022, the ministry introduced the <a href="#">Rent Supplement Program</a>, which provides \$600-a-month rent supplements for up to two years for eligible young adults from government care. Read this <a href="#">news release</a> for more details.</li> </ul>