

Ministry of Children and Family Development

2023/24 Annual Service Plan Report

August 2024



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Minister's Accountability Statement



The Ministry of Children and Family Development 2023/24 Annual Service Plan Report compares the Ministry's actual results to the expected results identified in the 2023/24 - 2025/26 Service Plan published in 2023. I am accountable for those results as reported.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Grace Lore".

Honourable Grace Lore
Minister of Children and Family Development
July 26, 2024

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Letter from the Minister

This fiscal year has been a period of progress and commitment to improving the lives of children, youth, and families across British Columbia. Our efforts are guided by our dedication to reconciliation with Indigenous communities, and ensuring that services are inclusive, accessible, and effective. As Minister of Children and Family Development, I am honoured to lead and be a part of this work.

Since I became Minister in January, I have been listening to and learning from community. I have met with the First Nations Leadership Council, Union of BC Indian Chiefs, BC Assembly of First Nations, Métis Nation BC, and many other Indigenous partners. It has been an honour to be welcomed into communities and participate in several agreement signings with First Nations to improve information sharing and consultation practices, and to uphold the inherent right of Indigenous Peoples to reclaim jurisdiction over their children, youth, and families.

The Ministry of Children and Family Development has strengthened support systems and prioritized resources based on individual needs for children and youth with support needs. Our public and community engagements have led to substantial improvements in service delivery.

The supports for youth and young adults transitioning out of government care were significantly enhanced. We introduced comprehensive benefits for young adults - including medical, dental and mental health benefits - increased the duration of supports and introduced funding for life skills, training, and cultural connections.

Our integrated network of care continues to evolve, emphasizing family, community, culture, and child safety. Over the last year policy and practice updates were made to support social workers as they prioritize child safety, including visits with children and youth in care.

I would like to extend my gratitude to ministry staff, Indigenous Child and Family Service Agencies, community partners, and caregivers for their unwavering dedication and hard work. I look forward to working together with our partners, Indigenous Peoples and my colleagues across government towards lasting change and a brighter future for the children, youth, and families of British Columbia.



Grace Lore
Minister
July 26, 2024

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 Mitzi Dean's 2022 [Mandate Letter](#) shaped the goals, objectives, performance measures and financial plan outlined in the Ministry of Children and Family Development [2023/24 – 2025/26 Service Plan](#) and the actual results reported on in this annual report.

Purpose of the Ministry

The primary focus of 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 First Nations, Inuit, Métis, Black, a Person of Colour, 2SLGBTQQIA+, and as a person with a disability. The ministry approaches its work through a Gender-Based Analysis Plus lens, delivering services that are inclusive, intersectional, responsive, accessible, trauma-informed, and culturally safe.

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

The ministry delivers on its mandate through approximately 4,955 employees working in partnership with [Indigenous Child and Family Service Agencies \(ICFSA\)](#), [Indigenous Governing Bodies](#) (IGBs), and other levels of government, partners and communities, cross-government and social-sector partners, and the federal government, as well as approximately 4,909¹

¹ The approximated figure does not include recipients of funding for post-adoption assistance.

contracted community social service agencies, such as specialized homes and support services and direct care providers (i.e., foster caregivers and extended family care providers). Services are coordinated through a provincial office in Victoria and delivered through service delivery areas and 24 ICFSAs.

Operating Environment

Throughout 2023/24, the ministry navigated the ongoing challenges posed by the devastating toxic drug crisis and adapted to the global inflationary challenges that have impacted the delivery of essential services to children, youth, and families across the province.

To adapt to these challenges, and as part of transforming Child and Family Services in B.C., the ministry has focused on four key areas:

1. Indigenous reconciliation: Addressing the over-representation of the child and family services system in the lives of Indigenous children, youth and families.
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.

The [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples \(UN Declaration\)](#) has guided the ministry's work towards greater transparency and consistency. This led to a formal engagement process, co-developing policies and legislation with the First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC), rights and title holders and Indigenous partners. These changes have facilitated the path to Indigenous jurisdiction over child and family services, expanded services for youth and young adults in and from care, and advanced initiatives such as Integrated Child and Youth (ICY) teams, improved services for children and youth with support needs, and specialized homes and support services. Additionally, new legislation has introduced post-majority benefits for young adults aged 19-27, including income support, housing assistance, life skills training, cultural connections, and health benefits through the [Strengthening Abilities and Journeys of Empowerment \(SAJE\)](#) program.

The global staffing shortage, particularly in the social sector, continued to present significant recruitment and retention challenges for the ministry and its partners. To ensure the continuity of critical services for children, youth and families, strategies such as the Provincial Mobile Response Team and staff volunteer program for short-term assignments were utilized to support northern and hard-to-recruit communities. Furthermore, the ministry established centralized support teams, including the Provincial Remote Support Team and the Provincial Centralized Services Team to support northern and rural areas, and a Hiring Services team to expedite recruitment for priority positions.

The ministry has two workforce plans in place: one for the child and family service sector focusing on attraction and retention of staff, and service optimization; and another for the ministry emphasizing recruitment, equity, health and safety, and modernization of supports and services. Measures are in place to increase diversity in hiring with the aim to attract a broader pool of qualified candidates and to better serve diversity in the population of B.C. For example, the hiring requirements for non-delegated Social Program Officer positions have been expanded to include both lived experience and a wider range of educational backgrounds. These changes are designed to reduce barriers in hiring by attracting a wider range of candidates.

Recognizing the high pressure on the ministry's workforce amid these changes, the ministry prioritized employee health and well-being as crucial components of its strategy. This focus encompassed violence prevention, building resilience, and stress management to help staff navigate change and exposure to traumatic situations. In 2023/24, the ministry launched pilot programs such as Peer-to-Peer support and Cumulative Stress Management to complement existing support options for staff. The ministry also observed an increase utilization of critical incident stress management debriefings. These initiatives, along with ongoing efforts to address gaps and improve access to employee supports, are vital for both staff retention and well-being, and maintaining high-quality services for children, youth, and families.

In 2023/24, the ministry has also focused on modernization to support service delivery, as well as developing a strategy regarding services delivered through social sector partners, contractors, and other service providers to ensure continuity of service. For example, the ministry developed and operationalized an online service provider portal. The portal allows service providers to submit child-specific service plans and other reporting, allowing for consistent monitoring of goals and plans for each child or youth placed in an SHSS setting.

This year the ministry enhanced its focus on child safety and well-being through policy and practice guideline updates, to support social workers to visit children and youth in care – in person and privately – at least once every 90 days.

Throughout this fiscal, the ministry collaborated with various partners to provide targeted support to families facing economic challenges due to global inflation. The ministry also worked closely with service providers to adapt to the changing landscape of child, youth, and family services, ensuring that the most vulnerable populations 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, continued to receive the assistance they need.

Report on Performance: Goals, Objectives, and Results

The following goals, objectives and performance measures have been restated from the 2023/24 – 2025/26 service plan. For forward-looking planning information, including current targets for 2024/25 – 2026/27, please see the latest service plan on the [BC Budget website](#).

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

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

This objective focuses on working with [Indigenous Governing Bodies \(IGB\)](#), Indigenous communities, Indigenous Peoples, rights and title holders and partners, as well as the federal government to advance implementation of increased Indigenous child and family services decision-making authority and/or jurisdiction.

The harmful impact of colonization, including the imposition of a foreign legal system upon the cultures and customs of Indigenous Peoples, undermining family and community systems, and the resultant inter-generational trauma, have all contributed to the overrepresentation of Indigenous children and youth in the child and family services system. Reducing this overrepresentation and working with rights and title holders and Indigenous partners to reform child and family services continues to be of critical importance. The ministry recognizes that the best support for Indigenous children and youth comes from Indigenous communities.

Key results

- In fiscal 2023/24, The ministry engaged with five IGBs at coordination agreement tables making substantial progress in reaching table-level consensus.
- [The second community agreement in B.C.'s history was signed between the ministry and Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Nations](#) in November 2023.
- [The ministry signed a two-year pilot project with Simpcw First Nation](#) resulting in the first ever model of a First Nation and the ministry delivering child and family services to a First Nation community from co-located offices. The project focuses on supporting "away-from-home" families through two satellite offices.
- The ministry and Indigenous partners and rightsholders co-developed and brought forward the [Child, Family and Community Service Amendment Act](#).
- The ministry and Indigenous partners and rightsholders co-developed and brought forward the [Children and Family Development Statutes Amendment Act](#).

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

- The ministry and Indigenous partners and rights and title holders co-developed two Orders in Council to enact provisions of the [Indigenous Self-Government in Child and Family Services Amendment Act](#).

Summary of progress made in 2023/24

In collaboration with rights and title holders and Indigenous partners, significant strides were made in support of the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples \(UN Declaration\)](#) and the [Declaration Act](#), to address barriers and support the exercise of Indigenous jurisdiction over child and family services.

The ministry had significant engagement with Indigenous partners and rights and title holders to collaborate on the development of policies and regulations to support the transition of services under the [Child, Family and Community Service Act \(CFCSA\)](#) to Indigenous law. In summer and fall 2023, engagements related to CFCSA Regulations and provincial court rules saw participation from 19 First Nations, [FNLC](#), [Métis Nation British Columbia](#), the [BC First Nations Justice Council](#), and the [Our Children Our Way Society](#).

The ministry made significant progress in advancing community agreements between the provincial government and Nations which formalize the requirement to consult and cooperate with Indigenous communities when planning and making decisions that affect their children, youth, and families. In fiscal year 2023/24, the ministry met with nine First Nations to negotiate community agreements under s. 92.1 of the Child, Family and Community Service Act.

The [Child, Family and Community Service Amendment Act](#) was co-developed with Indigenous partners and rightsholders and brought forward to address barriers to Indigenous jurisdiction by broadening the definition of “Indigenous Child” to expand ways Indigenous Authorities can identify their children and remove procedural and administrative barriers around notices when Indigenous law applies and the child returns to the care of their community. This amendment also introduced procedural safeguards that balance the protection of personal privacy with the need for Indigenous Authorities and the ministry respectively to access information to carry out child protection duties.

The ministry and Indigenous partners and rightsholders co-developed and brought forward the [Children and Family Development Statutes Amendment Act](#) amending the Adoption Act and the CFCSA to address barriers to Indigenous jurisdiction by expanding the scope of section 6 agreements (joint and consent-based decision-making agreements) between IGBs and the ministry to more closely align with the intent of the Declaration Act. It also enables the use of provincial appellate courts for dispute resolution under Indigenous law.

Two Orders in Council were co-developed to enact provisions of [Indigenous Self-Government in Child and Family Services Amendment Act](#), including section 91.2 designating the Indigenous Child Welfare Director, and an OIC enabling the director’s withdrawal and cancellation of continuing custody orders when Indigenous law applies to a child, and they return to the care of their community.

In further support of Indigenous jurisdiction over child and family services, the ministry held 49 sessions with a variety of Indigenous partners, IGBs and Modern Treaty Nations to co-

develop a provincial funding model to support First Nations jurisdiction over their child and family services. A discussion paper "[Building a Funding Model to Support First Nations Jurisdiction over Child and Family Services in BC](#)" was released in September 2023, with feedback from [FNLC](#) and [Indigenous Services Canada](#).

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

The harmful impact of colonization, the undermining of family and community systems, and the resultant inter-generational trauma, have all contributed to the overrepresentation of Indigenous children and youth in the child and family services system. Working with Indigenous Peoples, this objective focuses on ensuring ministry services are delivered free of racism and discrimination.

Key results

- The ministry continued engagement with community service providers to learn more about the challenges they face and to identify opportunities to improve the delivery of services to youth involved with the justice system. A [What We Learned About Youth Justice Services in B.C.](#) report was produced.
- In March 2024, the Indigenous Child Welfare Director role was brought into force.
- The ministry participated in the [Our Children Our Way Society's](#) MMIWG2SLGBTQIA+ Steering Committee, which is dedicated to enhancing the well-being of Indigenous women, girls, 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals, and Indigenous communities.

Summary of progress made in 2023/24

The ministry made significant progress in 2023/24 and increased collaboration with rights and title holders and Indigenous partners on the design and implementation of restorative policies, practices, and services with a commitment to eliminate racism and discrimination.

Using the [Aboriginal Policy and Practice Framework \(APPF\)](#) as the methodology for engagement, the ministry engaged with community service providers to understand the challenges they face and identify opportunities to improve service delivery to justice-involved youth. The outcomes of these engagements are documented in a [What We Learned About Youth Justice Services in B.C.](#) report, which will inform the future Youth Justice Service Framework and guide the re-investment strategy from the closure of the Prince George Youth Custody Centre on March 31, 2024.

The ICWD position was advanced in March 2024; staff collaborated with IGBs, Treaty First Nations, Métis partners, FNLC, and ICFSAs to co-develop the roles and responsibilities of the position. The ICWD will provide guidance and oversight on Indigenous child and family

services. In addition, they will focus on services aimed to keep young Indigenous people at home, connected to their communities, cultures and languages, as well as harmonizing the rights and laws of Indigenous Peoples with provincial and federal child welfare laws, and upholding the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

Through collaborative efforts with policy and practice divisional leads across the ministry, the Aboriginal Policy and Practice Branch developed tools and resources focused on supporting practitioners working with children and youth with support needs, as well as for practitioners assessing child protection concerns. These actions contribute to the deeper integration of the APPF across ministry policy, practice, and operations.

Performance measure(s) and related discussion

Performance Measures	2022/23 Actual	2023/24 Target	2023/24 Actual
[1a] Rate of children and youth (age 0-18) in care per 1,000 children and youth in the population			
All children and youth	5.3	5.3	5.1
Indigenous children and youth	34.2	34.8	34.5
Non-Indigenous children and youth	1.9	1.9	1.7

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

¹PM 1.1 targets for 2023/24 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 refer to 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 (age 0-18) in care per 1,000 children and youth in the population, 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 30 years, with the lowest number of Indigenous children in care in over 20 years.

As IGBs begin to exercise jurisdiction over child and family services, the ministry anticipates 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 safely, but it also provides children and youth with the strong foundations they need to reach their full potential.

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

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

Key results

- The ministry conducted engagement on [Children and Youth with Support Needs \(CYSN\)](#), involving various approaches, resulting in significant public participation.
- In fiscal 2023/24, the ministry hired 90 additional foundational program therapists, doubled the [Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder \(FASD\) Key Worker](#) program budget, provided a 60% increase in agency-coordinated respite budgets, and increased school-aged extended therapy investment.
- The [Maples Adolescent Treatment Centre](#) established satellite mental health treatment locations in Prince George and Vernon in fiscal 2023/24 and is currently offering community-based services for youth/families in those locations.
- Four pilot [Family Connections Centres \(FCCs\)](#) became fully operational, enhancing coordinated and accessible support in Central Okanagan, Smithers/Bulkley Valley, Terrace/Kitimat, and Prince Rupert/Haida Gwaii.
- [Integrated Child and Youth \(ICY\) teams](#) became operational in eight ICY communities and funding for high intensity outreach services was provided to five ICY communities. Early intervention services became operational in 11 ICY communities.
- The ministry has enhanced training courses for staff on 2SLGBTQQA+ inclusiveness.

Summary of progress made in 2023/24

In the last fiscal year, considerable progress has been made in strengthening supports and prioritizing resources for families and children based on their needs while promoting collaboration with communities, rights and title holders, partners and service providers. A comprehensive stakeholder engagement strategy ensured that their voices were heard in decision-making processes.

On CYSN, the ministry solicited public engagement, and received significant feedback. The public contributed 637 complete feedback forms online, and shared comments in the discussion forum. CYSN advocates submitted three formal proposals. [Reciprocal Consulting](#) engaged 281 people from diverse groups including Urban Indigenous, Métis, immigrants, refugees, BIPOC, and LGBTQ2S families. Community-level partners facilitated 29 sessions across five communities, reaching 462 individuals. The ministry led 12 sessions with First Nations rights and title holders, averaging 11 participants per session, and provided engagement grants of \$25,000 to each of 43 First Nations to enhance services delivery in their communities. A Symposium Speaker Series attracted 735 participants over six sessions.

In fiscal 23/24, the ministry hired 90 additional foundational program therapists, doubled FASD Key Worker program budget to support approximately 2,500 more families, and provided a 60% increase in agency-coordinated respite budgets. School Aged Extended Therapy investment saw a 175% increase, doubling reimbursement rates and annual maximums.

Significant progress was made in the roll-out of ICY teams with eight teams beginning operations in the first 12 communities. Funding for high intensity outreach services was provided to the first five ICY communities, with services operational in Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows, Comox Valley, Richmond, and Okanagan-Similkameen. Additionally, early intervention services became operational in 11 of 12 ICY communities, supported by a one-time investment for training, intervention materials, and cultural enhancements. A community mapping project was completed to increase public awareness and access to these services.

The CYSN Engagement Grant targeted families of children/youth with specific diagnoses like attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), autism, and Down Syndrome, with varied engagement activities set for implementation.

Service delivery changes prioritized prevention, early intervention, and family supports. This was evidenced by the opening of four pilot FCCs which became fully operational in December. These centres aim to improve services for families, and children and youth with support needs.

The [Maples Adolescent Treatment Centre](#) has increased provincial outreach positions, expanded the referral criteria, and enhanced the referral process to be more responsive to the complexity of young people presenting with severe and enduring mental health challenges.

Training courses on 2SLGBTQIA+ inclusiveness were enhanced. Permanency 1 and 2 courses now feature guidelines and a case example of an Indigenous youth identifying as two-spirited and gay. The [Strengthening Abilities and Journeys of Empowerment \(SAJE\)](#) program practice

training integrates pronoun use and addresses sexual orientation to avoid heteronormative assumptions. The PRIDE In-Service Caregiver training Module 3 has updated content to better support 2SLGBTQQIA+ children and youth. The Care Plans course guides workers in connecting young people with the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community. Resource worker training now ensures caregivers use preferred pronouns and understand gender identity and expression.

Performance measure(s) and related discussion

Performance Measures	2022/23 Actual	2023/24 Target	2023/24 Actual
[2a] Per cent of children assessed with a protection concern that can safely live with family or extended family			
All children and youth	92.9%	93.2%	91.8%
Indigenous children and youth	88.8%	89.8%	87.1%
Non-Indigenous children and youth	95.2%	95.2%	94.6%

Data source: MCFD’s Integrated Case Management System

Although the actual number for 2023/24 fell slightly short of the target, the number of children and youth coming into care has remained constant since last year. 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. Various factors can impact protection concerns, including poverty, housing accessibility, food security, violence, mental health and addiction and substance use.

The ministry is committed to understanding the factors that impact protection concerns, and work with its cross-government partners to develop programs and policy that support keeping families together. This collaborative effort aims to close the slight gap between the targets and actuals going forward.

Performance Measure	2022/23 Actual	2023/24 Target	2023/24 Actual
[2b] Access to Child and Youth Mental Health (CYMH) Services CYMH clients served	30,500	31,250	31,000

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). Note: The figures for this measure have been adjusted to include the estimated non-CRIS caseload. This estimate is included in the out-years.

The number of clients served is a measure of the accessibility of 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.

Two factors impacted the 2023/24 actual: the global labour shortage and the likelihood that more services were provided than were tracked by mental health services performed outside of ministry offices. The target for CYMH clients served was 31,250, and the estimated number reached was 31,000, slightly below the target. Going forward, the ministry and the sector will continue to recruit employees to fill existing vacancies and work to update and implement practice guidelines to ensure a complete recording of services provided.

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

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

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

Building on Budget 2022 that introduced comprehensive supports for young people transitioning from government care and extended the age of support up to a youth's 27th birthday, this objective focuses on the expansion of transition services to enable youth and young adults to transition out of government care successfully.

Key results

- In fiscal 2023/24, the ministry expanded funding for life skills, training, and cultural connections for youth under Agreements with Young Adults (AYA) or Income Support agreements, available up to age 27 and for a duration of up to 84 months.
- New comprehensive benefits, including mental health, counselling, medical, dental (up to \$1,000/year), and optical services (\$600 every two years), were introduced for eligible youth aged 19-26 under AYA programming.
- Legislative changes were implemented in May 2023 to provide a 12-month Unconditional Income Support program for eligible youth aged 19-20, offering financial stability to those transitioning from care.
- The ministry provided three housing options for young people with care experience, including SAJE Housing Agreements, SAJE Support Agreements, and rent supplements for those in the private rental market.
- As of March 31, 2024, 89% of the hiring of SAJE program navigators and guides was complete, enhancing support for youth and young adults in their transition planning.

Summary of progress made in 2023/24

To support youth and young adults transitioning out of government care, the ministry has significantly enhanced its support framework. This includes the expansion of funding for life skills, training, and cultural connections available to youth up to their 27th birthday under various agreements. The ministry implemented a 12-month Unconditional Income Support program for youth aged 19-20 who meet specific eligibility criteria, providing crucial financial stability during their transition to adulthood.

Comprehensive benefits, including mental health, counselling, medical, dental, and optical services, were introduced for eligible youth aged 19-26 under AYA income support, housing support, and temporary support agreements. Mental health and wellness funding introduced in November 2023 includes clinical, evidence-based, and cultural supports for young people in addressing trauma and working towards healing and wellness.

The ministry provided housing options to meet the needs of young people with care experience, enhancing their access to stable housing through SAJE Housing Agreements, SAJE Support Agreements, and rent supplements for those in the private rental market.

As of March 31, 89% of the hiring of SAJE navigators and guides was completed. These roles are crucial in supporting youth and young adults in their transition planning, helping them articulate and achieve their goals, and connecting them to necessary services and supports.

Performance measure(s) and related discussion

Performance Measure	2022/23 Actual	2023/24 Target	2023/24 Actual
[3a] Per cent of youth in care who turn 19 with a high school credential			
All children and youth	59.9%	59.5%	n/a
Indigenous children and youth	56.4%	57.5%	n/a
Non-Indigenous children and youth	64.5%	64.5%	n/a

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

The data for this measure is provided by the Ministry of Education and Child Care and is combined with Ministry of Children and Family Development data. This data is collected once a year in December, creating a lag in reporting. The actuals will be reflected in the next annual service plan report. There are no concerns with data quality, though some graduations may be missed if they occur on reserve or at a university. This measure is based on approximately 450 children and youth in care and includes a target increase of two children per year.

This performance measure is trending up, primarily driven by an increase in adult graduation diplomas.³ Over time, the ministry is seeing a higher proportion of children and youth in care reconnecting with school and completing high school as adult learners prior to turning 19.

Performance Measure	2022/23 Actual	2023/24 Target	2023/24 Actual
[3b] Percentage of eligible youth transitioning into adulthood that received a Post Majority Service benefit payment within the next year ¹	53.2%	71.2%	57.5%

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

Although this target was not met, the 2023/24 actual of 57.5%, is an improvement from the previous year's 53.2%. The target for this measure was delayed by one year because the hiring of new youth transition workers was hindered by recruitment challenges in fiscal 2023/24. New youth transition workers are in place at the start of the 2024/25 fiscal year and are expected to contribute to achieving the original targets.

Performance Measure	2022/23 Actual	2023/24 Target	2023/24 Actual
[3c] Total number of Young Adults who receive rent supplements during the fiscal year	798	1,325	1,445

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

Note: The 2023/24 number of young adults who received rent supplement does not include the 181 Rent Supplement from BC Housing

The ministry met this performance target.

This performance measure tracks the total number of young adults who received rent supplements during the fiscal year. Recipients receive the supplement for up to two years or until the month of their 27th birthday, whichever comes first. The 2023/24 actual is 1,445, surpassing both the previous year's actual of 798 and the target of 1,325.

This measure assumes a retention rate of 90 per cent into the second and third fiscal years. This assumption is because recipients of the maximum two years often receive their supplements within a 24-month period that overlaps three fiscal years. It is known that for the first 800 recipients, approximately 10 to 15 per cent will turn 27 before they receive two years of rent supplements.

³ An adult high school diploma is the British Columbia Adult Graduation Diploma (BCAGD), also known as the "Adult Dogwood." It is for adult learners (18 years of age and older) who want to take courses in order to complete high school and obtain their adult high school diploma.

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

Children and youth have more success when they remain connected to their community, culture, family, and the people known to them. The network of care includes services intended to support family preservation—such as stabilization services—and ensures that in cases where children and youth must come into care, this principal of belonging and their individual needs determines the care and support a child or youth receives. It includes continuum of care options, such as living with extended family or people known to a child or youth, foster care and, if needed, specialized homes that include additional therapeutic services.

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

This objective focuses on the work the ministry, along with partners, is advancing to improve the network of care. This fiscal the focus was on [Specialized Homes and Support Services \(SHSS\)](#), targeted advertisement to recruit foster parents, and additional support to enable children and youth with support needs to reside with extended family or people they know.

Key results

- The Enhanced Out-of-Care Program was implemented provincially, with at least 19 Indigenous Child and Family Services Agency agreements, and 33 Enhanced Out-of-Care agreements in place by the end of fiscal 2023/24.
- Continued transition of contracts to the new SHSS model in the two early implementation sites (North East Fraser and Okanagan West Kootenay Service Delivery Areas), including new approaches for service planning, new Information Management and Information Technology (IM/IT) systems, and oversight accountabilities.
- The SHSS Service Provider Portal became operational in July 2023. The portal allows service providers to submit child-specific service plans and other reporting, allowing for consistent monitoring of goals and plans for each child or youth placed in an SHSS setting.
- Child safety was a key focus, and oversight of children and youth in care was enhanced through updated policy and practice guidelines, and IM/IT solutions to ensure social workers have clarity on when visits must take place and that they are properly documented. Regular quarterly compliance reviews were introduced to ensure that children in care are visited at least once every 90 days

Summary of progress made in 2023/24

Phased implementation of SHSS progressed in two main ways: through an open call for new prequalified service providers, and through two early implementation sites that began shifting existing contracts to the SHSS model. These efforts included the introduction of new service planning methods, IM/IT systems, and oversight accountabilities.

The Enhanced Out-of-Care program continued to grow, with a steady increase in children enrolled, reflecting the program's success in supporting children in out-of-care arrangements and reducing the need for them to be brought into care.

The ministry conducted the "Open Your Heart, Open Your Home" campaign delivering millions of impressions and increasing interest in foster care. In addition, the ministry held four in-person, one-day learning opportunities for 170 foster caregivers on resilience, attachment, co-regulation, suicidality, and trauma, as well as co-hosted community information sessions in Fort St. John and Terrace to recruit caregivers in hard-to-recruit areas. The [Foster Caregiver Review Policy](#) was developed and implemented to provide clarity for Quality Assurance staff, ICFS Agency staff, and foster caregivers on the Foster Caregiver Review process.

Overall, the ministry's efforts have focused on creating a more integrated and responsive network of care, emphasizing family, community, and cultural connections to better support the needs of children and youth.

Performance measure(s) and related discussion

Performance Measure	2022/23 Actual	2023/24 Target	2023/24 Actual
[4a] Per cent of children and youth in care with no moves in the first 12 months since their last admission to care	67.6%	66.5%	68.2%

Data source: Integrated Case Management System

The ministry met this performance target.

This performance measure tracks the percentage of children and youth in care with no moves in the first 12 months since their last admission to care. The 2023/24 actual percentage, i.e. 68.2% exceeds both the previous year's actual, 67.6% and the target 66.5%.

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 continued positive impact on this performance measure.

Financial Report

	Estimated	Other Authorizations ¹	Total Estimated	Actual	Variance
Operating Expenses (\$000)					
Early Childhood Development	41,856	2,562	44,418	41,626	(2,792)
Services for Children and Youth with Support Needs	528,889	52,516	581,405	583,962	2,557
Child and Youth Mental Health Services	122,197	4,904	127,101	121,415	(5,686)
Child Safety, Family Support and Children In Care Services	935,155	141,270	1,076,424	1,085,861	9,436
Adoption Services	37,951	1,729	39,680	35,971	(3,709)
Youth Justice Services	51,320	3,855	55,175	47,494	(7,681)
Service Delivery Support	173,225	33,060	206,285	207,550	1,265
Executive and Support Services	21,502	344	21,846	28,455	6,609
Sub-Total	1,912,095	240,239	2,152,334	2,152,334	(0)
Adjustment of Prior Year Accrual ²				(2,202)	(2,202)
Total	1,912,095	240,239	2,152,334	2,150,132	(2,202)
Ministry Capital Expenditures (\$000)					
Service Delivery Support	2,395	1	2,396	2,396	0
Total	2,395	1	2,396	2,396	0
Other Financing Transactions (\$000)³					
Executive and Support Services (Human Services Providers Financing Program)					
Receipts	(31)		(31)	(31)	0
Disbursements	0		0	0	0
Net Cash Requirements (Source)	(31)		(31)	(31)	0

Ministry of Children and Family Development

Total Receipts	(31)	(31)	(31)	0
Total Disbursements	0	0	0	0
Total Net Cash Requirement (Source)	(31)	(31)	(31)	0

¹ "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.

² The Adjustment of Prior Year Accrual of (2.202) million is a reversal of accruals in the previous year.

³ Human Services Providers financing program receipts represent the repayment of one outstanding loan by a community social services provider. The funding for capital purposes was provided for under the Human Resource Facility Act.

Appendix A: Public Sector Organizations

As of March 31, 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 B.C. 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 2022 Mandate Letter](#).

2022 Mandate Letter Priority	Status as of March 31, 2024
<p>Engage in deeper consultation with parents and caregivers, First Nations, Indigenous Peoples, communities, experts and practitioners, and other stakeholders with lived experience to build a better system of supports for children and youth with support needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On CYSN, the ministry solicited public engagement, and received significant feedback. The public contributed 637 complete feedback forms online, and shared comments in the discussion forum. CYSN advocates submitted three formal proposals. Reciprocal Consulting engaged 281 people from diverse groups including urban Indigenous, Métis, immigrant, refugee, BIPOC, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ families. Community-level partners facilitated 29 sessions across five communities, reaching 462 individuals. The ministry led 12 sessions with First Nations rights and title holders, averaging 11 participants per session, and provided engagement grants to 43 First Nations of \$25,000 to enhance service delivery in their communities. Additionally, a Symposium Speaker Series attracted 735 participants over six sessions. • The CYSN Engagement Grant targeted families of children/youth with specific diagnoses like ADHD, autism, and Down syndrome, with varied engagement activities set for implementation. • In fiscal 2023/24, the Maples Adolescent Treatment Centre increased provincial outreach positions, expanded the referral criteria, and enhanced the referral process to be more responsive to the complexity of young people presenting with severe and enduring mental health challenges • Satellite mental health treatment locations were established in Prince George and Vernon, with bed-based services and outreach. • The ministry established four pilot Family Connection Centres by December 2023 to

2022 Mandate Letter Priority	Status as of March 31, 2024
	<p>enhance support in Central Okanagan, Smithers/Bulkley Valley, Terrace/Kitimat, and Prince Rupert/Haida Gwaii with the aim to improve service delivery for families and children/youth with special needs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ministry operationalized Integrated Child and Youth (ICY) Teams in eight of the first 12 communities. Funding for High Intensity Outreach Services was provided to the first five ICY communities, with services operational in Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows, Comox Valley, Richmond, and Okanagan-Similkameen. • Early intervention services became operational in 11 of 12 ICY communities, supported by a one-time investment for training, intervention materials, and cultural enhancements. A community mapping project was completed to increase public awareness and access to these services. • In fiscal 2023/24, the ministry hired 90 additional foundational program therapists, doubled the Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Key Worker program budget to support approximately 2,500 more families, and provided a 60% increase in agency-coordinated respite budgets. School-aged extended therapy investment saw a 175% increase, doubling reimbursement rates and annual maximums.
<p>Continue work to expand supports for young adults transitioning from government care to support their transition to independence.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In fiscal 23/24, the ministry expanded funding for life skills, training, and cultural connections for youth under AYA or Income Support agreements, available up to age 27 and for a duration of up to 84 months. • The ministry introduced new comprehensive benefits, including mental health, counselling, medical, dental (up to \$1,000/year), and optical services (\$600 every two years), for eligible youth aged 19-26 under AYA programming. • As of March 31, 2024, the ministry completed 89% of the hiring of SAJE navigators and guides,

2022 Mandate Letter Priority	Status as of March 31, 2024
	<p>enhancing support for youth and young adults in their transition planning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ministry provided three housing options for young people with care experience, including SAJE Housing Agreements, SAJE Support Agreements, and rent supplements for those in the private rental market. • The ministry implemented funding in November 2023 to support young people in developing life skills, pursuing learning opportunities, and accessing mental health and wellness support. • The ministry implemented legislative changes in May 2023 to provide a 12-month Unconditional Income Support program for eligible youth aged 19-20, offering financial stability to those transitioning from care.
<p>Implement B.C.'s historic legislation on Indigenous jurisdiction over child welfare and continue to address and reduce the overrepresentation of Indigenous children in government care.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Child, Family and Community Service Amendment Act was co-developed with Indigenous partners and rightsholders and brought forward to address barriers to Indigenous jurisdiction by broadening the definition of "Indigenous Child" to expand ways Indigenous Authorities can identify their children and remove procedural and administrative barriers around notices when Indigenous law applies and the child returns to the care of their community. This amendment also introduced procedural safeguards that balance the protection of personal privacy with the need for Indigenous Authorities and the ministry respectively to access information to carry out child protection duties. • The ministry and Indigenous partners and rightsholders co-developed and brought forward the Children and Family Development Statutes Amendment Act amending the Adoption Act and the CFCSA to address barriers to Indigenous jurisdiction by expanding the scope of section 6 agreements (joint and consent-based decision-making agreements) between IGBs and the ministry to more closely

2022 Mandate Letter Priority	Status as of March 31, 2024
	<p>align with the intent of the Declaration Act. It also enables the use of provincial appellate courts for dispute resolution under Indigenous law.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two Orders in Council were co-developed to enact provisions of Indigenous Self-Government in Child and Family Services Amendment Act, including section 91.2 designating the Indigenous Child Welfare Director, and an OIC enabling the director's withdrawal and cancellation of continuing custody orders when Indigenous law applies to a child, and they return to the care of their community. The ministry had significant engagement with Indigenous partners and rights and title holders and partners to collaborate on the development of policies and regulations to support the transition of services under the CFCSA to Indigenous law. In summer and fall 2023, engagements related to CFCSA Regulations and Provincial Court Rules saw participation from 19 First Nations, First Nations Leadership Council, Métis Nation British Columbia, the BC First Nations Justice Council, and the Our Children Our Way Society. From September 2023 to March 2024, 49 sessions were held to support a wide range of Nations and contribute to the co-development of a provincial funding model to support First Nations jurisdiction over their own child and family services. The ministry signed a two-year pilot project with Simpcw First Nation resulting in the first ever model of a First Nation and the ministry delivering child and family services to an Indigenous community from co-located offices.
Continue improving B.C.'s in-care system to ensure that it meets the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ministry undertook a phased implementation of SHSS, which progressed in two main ways: through an open call for new prequalified service providers, and through two

2022 Mandate Letter Priority	Status as of March 31, 2024
<p>unique needs of every child and youth.</p>	<p>early implementation sites that began shifting existing contracts to the SHSS model. This included the introduction of new service planning methods, IM/IT systems, and oversight accountabilities. Insights from these early transition sites will guide further expansion and ongoing discussions with Indigenous partners and rights and title holders.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ministry implemented the Enhanced Out-of-Care Program provincially. At least 19 Indigenous Child and Family Services Agency agreements, and 33 Enhanced Out-of-Care agreements were in place by the end of fiscal 2023/24. • The ministry conducted the "Open Your Heart, Open Your Home" campaign delivering millions of impressions on social media and increasing interest in foster care. In addition, the ministry held four in-person, one-day learning opportunities for 170 foster caregivers on resilience, attachment, co-regulation, suicidality, and trauma, as well as co-hosted community information sessions in Fort St. John and Terrace to recruit caregivers in hard-to-recruit areas.