

# Ministry of Children and Family Development

## 2025/26 – 2027/28 Service Plan

March 2025



For more information on the Ministry of Children and Family Development, contact:

PO Box 9970  
STN PROV GOVT  
Victoria, B.C.  
V8W 9S5

1-877-387-7027

Or visit our website at

[www.gov.bc.ca/mcfd](http://www.gov.bc.ca/mcfd)

Published by the Ministry of Children and Family Development

## Minister's Accountability Statement



The Ministry of Children and Family Development 2025/26 – 2027/28 Service Plan was prepared under my direction in accordance with the *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act*. I am accountable for the basis on which the plan has been prepared.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jodie Wickens". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Honourable Jodie Wickens  
Minister of Children and Family Development  
March 4, 2025

## Table of Contents

Minister's Accountability Statement .....	3
Strategic Direction.....	5
Purpose of the Ministry .....	5
Performance Planning.....	6
Financial Summary.....	14
Appendix A: Public Sector Organizations.....	15
Appendix B: Minister Mandate Letter .....	16

## Strategic Direction

In 2025/26, the Government of British Columbia will continue to prioritize delivering the services and infrastructure needed for people to build good lives in strong communities.

To support this objective, Government will focus on growing the economy, responding to the threat of tariffs, creating good paying jobs, improving affordability, strengthening healthcare and education, and making communities safer.

Government will also continue deepening relationships with Indigenous Peoples while advancing implementation of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act Action Plan.

This 2025/26 Service Plan outlines how the Ministry of Children and Family Development will support the government's priorities and selected action items identified in the Minister's January 2025 [Mandate Letter](#).

## Purpose of the Ministry

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

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

This work is guided by the principles of attachment and belonging to family, community and culture, as well as individualized care and support, and timely intervention. The Ministry's work is in service of a vision where British Columbia's children and youth—both Indigenous and non-Indigenous—are safe and supported to achieve their full potential and best possible outcomes.

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

The Ministry provides a network of care across B.C., including twenty-four hours a day emergency response that encompasses children and youth with support needs, child and youth mental health, adoption, family support, child protection, youth justice and helping

youth transition from government care to adulthood. Together, these services provide a system of supports that work to keep families safely together.

For 2025/26, the Ministry will deliver on its mandate through approximately 4,900 full-time employees working in partnership with Indigenous Child and Family Service Agencies, Indigenous Governing Bodies and other levels of government, partners and communities, cross-government and social-sector partners, and the federal government, as well as approximately 4,900 contracted community social service agencies, such as [Specialized Homes and Support Services](#), and other direct care providers, such as foster caregivers and extended family care providers. Services are coordinated through a provincial office in Victoria and delivered through seven service delivery areas, a provincial centralized services centre and facilities, and through 25 Indigenous Child and Family Service Agencies.

## Performance Planning

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

Indigenous Peoples have inherent rights to hold jurisdiction over their own children, youth, and families and to provide their own child and family services. Recognizing that Indigenous children and youth are best cared for by Indigenous Peoples and communities, the Ministry will continue to work in consultation and collaboration with Indigenous communities to reduce the overrepresentation of Indigenous children and youth in government care and to realign and improve child and family services.

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

This objective focuses on working with Indigenous Governing Bodies, First Nations, and Modern Treaty Nations, as well as the federal government to advance implementation of increased decision-making authority and uphold Indigenous child and family services jurisdiction.

### Key Strategies

- Work in collaboration with First Nations on a range of agreements that exist to enable the exercise of decision-making authority and jurisdiction over child and family services. These agreements include bi-lateral section 92.1 community agreements under the [Child, Family and Community Service Act](#), tri-partite coordination agreements with Canada and B.C. in

accordance with [An Act Respecting First Nations, Inuit and Metis Children, Youth and Families](#) and [Declaration Act](#) shared decision-making agreements.

- Continue to work with Indigenous Governing Bodies that are preparing to exercise jurisdiction in relation to child and family services (alongside representatives from the federal government) on the development of tripartite coordination agreements.
- Continue to support and work with Modern Treaty Nations in implementing their child and family service jurisdiction on and off treaty lands.
- Continue to co-develop options for a B.C.-specific funding model, in partnership with the 204 First Nations in B.C., Metis and Inuit, and in consultation with key Indigenous organizations to advance jurisdiction over child and family services.
- Continue to work in partnership with the 204 First Nations in B.C. to develop practice materials to support implementation of agreements that exist to enable the exercise of decision-making authority and jurisdiction over child and family services.
- Explore next steps to ensure that the Ministry is positioned to effectively operate in a multi-jurisdictional service delivery environment in conjunction with Indigenous Governing Bodies who are exercising jurisdiction.

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

We have heard from partners that 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. This objective outlines the Ministry's commitment to 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 and to further the commitment to reduce overrepresentation of Indigenous children and youth in care.

### **Key Strategies**

- Continue to operationalize the Office of the Indigenous Child Welfare Director to further the commitment to reduce overrepresentation of Indigenous children and youth in care, keep Indigenous children and youth connected to their families, culture and languages, and to provide advice and guidance within the Ministry on crucial Indigenous child and family service decisions.
- Continue to collaborate with Indigenous Peoples to build on efforts to address the Ministry led responses to the Calls for Justice in the [Final Report of the Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls](#).

- Engage with the Métis community on how Métis children, youth and families can be best served through designated representatives under the [Child, Family and Community Service Act](#) and the [Adoption Act](#).
- Collaborate with Indigenous Peoples, service providers, and youth with lived experience to design responsive, trauma-informed, and culturally agile youth justice services that better support youth, promote public safety by responding to the needs of offenders, victims and the community, and address the gaps contributing to the overrepresentation of Indigenous youth in the justice system.

## Performance Measures

Performance Measure	2024/25 Forecast	2025/26 Target	2026/27 Target	2027/28 Target
1a. Rate of children and youth (age 0-18) in care per 1,000 children and youth in the population				
All children and youth	4.8	4.9	4.9	4.8
Indigenous children and youth	33.5	33.0	32.3	31.3
Non-Indigenous children and youth	1.7	1.8	1.8	1.8

Data source: MCFD's Integrated Case Management (ICM) System, BC Stats Indigenous population estimates and annual projections for each given year, and BC Stats PEOPLE full population statistics.

Performance Measure	2024/25 Forecast	2025/26 Target	2026/27 Target	2027/28 Target
1b. Per cent of children assessed with a protection concern that can safely live with family or extended family				
All children and youth	91.2%	91.7%	92.3%	93.0%
Indigenous children and youth	85.6%	87.0%	88.4%	89.7%
Non-Indigenous children and youth	94.5%	94.6%	94.7%	94.8%

Data source: MCFD's Integrated Case Management System



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

Improving outcomes for children and youth requires a coordinated effort to explore what services are needed to support child well-being and how government and service providers can work differently to provide these services in a more responsive, proactive, and integrated way. This work will be comprehensive and collaborative.

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

### **Key Strategies**

- Lead the Deputy Minister Project Board on Child Well-being, a cross-ministry group of senior public officials that will guide the work—including prioritizing and sequencing of actions and activities across government—and map out new strategies focused on achieving better outcomes across government for children and families.
- Lead the research and engage with First Nations, Modern Treaty Nations, Métis, urban Indigenous people, Indigenous organizations, across-government and other key partners to obtain input for the development of the child well-being plan and outcomes framework.
- Continue to develop an outcomes-based framework to establish shared measures for child and youth outcomes. Over time, the framework will support reporting on outcomes, services, and factors that contribute to these outcomes to ensure that actions taken are working to improve the lives of the most vulnerable children and families.
- As part of the child and youth well-being action plan, explore options for a service model that prioritizes the most vulnerable children and their families for access to cross-government social services required to mitigate family risks (e.g., housing instability, childcare access).
- Contribute to solutions that will be collaboratively developed across government to address barriers to information sharing between ministries and service providers so when children and youth are struggling, they are connected with the supports they need.

**Performance Measures**

Performance Measure	2024/25 Forecast	2025/26 Target	2026/27 Target	2027/28 Target
2a. Where accountability rests solely with MCFD, the number of recommendations implemented responsive to the intent of the Representative for Children and Youth’s (RCY) calls to action outlined in “Don’t Look Away: How one boy’s story has the power to shift a system of care for children and youth”	n/a	1	3	5

Data source: The number of recommendations where accountability rests solely with MCFD are found in the RCY Don’t Look Away report

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

Children and youth who have had to leave their primary home voluntarily or through court order are at risk of adverse short- and long-term outcomes in the areas of material well-being, physical health, social, emotional and cultural well-being, cognitive and educational well-being, and more. Concentrated effort to mitigate the impacts that can come from interacting with the system of care are required.

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

This objective focuses on the work the Ministry, along with our partners, is advancing to improve the child welfare system so that children and youth, from birth to 18 years old, can achieve comparable outcomes to their peers.

**Key Strategies**

- Continue implementation of Specialized Homes and Support Services by implementing these services across B.C. Continue the province-wide procurement to prequalify service providers ready to provide respite, stabilization, emergency care, and specialized care services.

- Implement the Ministry contract operational model via the contract management modernization project to enhance monitoring, oversight and overall experience for both service providers and the Ministry.
- Explore opportunities to improve the effectiveness of less intrusive measures to ensure child safety.
- Complete a comprehensive review of kinship care services by examining its role within the continuum of child welfare options and making recommendations for changes to existing programs and services.
- Develop the plan and implement a system of enhanced oversight for places where children in care or out of care reside. Continue to exercise oversight related to visits with children and youth in care and out of care.
- Develop policy and associated practice guidelines to support caregivers, care providers and Ministry staff for children in care who are impacted by the toxic drug crisis.
- To better support children, youth, and families of all sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions, continue to take steps to make services gender affirming and more inclusive, such as developing actions to support staff to uphold the Ministry's Corporate Commitment to 2SLGBTQIA+ children, youth, and families.

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

Youth and young adults (from 19 to 27) 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 Strategies**

- To ensure youth and young adults are supported as they transition out of government care, continue to establish and implement a consistent approach to youth transition planning through connecting youth and young adults to the [Strengthening Abilities and Journeys of Empowerment](#) (SAJE) program navigators and guides.
- Continue to make improvements to the youth portal based on feedback from the youth we serve, to provide eligible youth and young adults with better online access to transition services and benefits provided by the SAJE program.
- Ongoing promotion of the SAJE program to ensure eligible youth and young adults can take advantage of the program.
- Continue to operate the two Youth Emergency Shelter pilot locations in Maple Ridge and Cowichan to better meet the needs of vulnerable youth, who require low barrier services for shelter and support focused on immediate needs, safety, and crisis intervention.

Performance Measure	2024/25 Forecast	2025/26 Target	2026/27 Target	2027/28 Target
3a. Proportion of eligible 19-year-olds that have a Strengthening Abilities and Journeys of Empowerment (SAJE) Guide <sup>1</sup>	79%	80%	82%	84%

Data source: Collaborate<sup>2</sup> and MCFD's Integrated Case Management System.

<sup>1</sup>SAJE Guides provide planning support to eligible young adults from age 19 to 24 (25th birthday).

<sup>2</sup>Collaborate is a management application used by MCFD for SAJE guides.

## Goal 4: Strengthen and align children and youth with support and mental health needs services with the health system

Research, consultation, and engagement has shown that the provision of children and youth with support and mental health needs via multiple ministries has resulted in barriers to service. It has, in some cases, meant gaps in service as well as missed opportunities for wraparound supports and integrated care. Aligning the mandate for children and youth with support and mental health with the health system provides the opportunity for better information sharing and more streamlined access to services.

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

The work to align services with the health system will be measured, thoughtful, and undertaken collaboratively. As that work unfolds over the coming months and years, action will be taken to continue to strengthen services and remove barriers for families and their children.

#### Key Strategies

- Build upon previous engagement feedback to strengthen choice and flexibility for families of children with support needs (CYSN).
- Continue to implement previous approved investments to enhance supports for children and youth with support needs, including enhancements to respite, expansion of the Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Key Worker program, and early intervention therapies.
- Continue to support integrated models of child and youth mental health (CYMH) service provision, including through Integrated Child and Youth Teams, in several communities around the province.
- Continue to develop and provide CYMH prevention resources focused on anxiety, depression, and suicide for parents, professionals working with children with support needs, educators, and caregivers.

**Objective 4.2:** Align children and youth with support and mental health needs services with the health system

Alignment of children and youth with support and mental health services with the health system provides a crucial opportunity to work towards breaking down our current siloed service approaches—approaches we have consistently heard that can create miscommunication across professionals, missed opportunities to provide timely, wraparound, and integrated care, and, at times, can result in crises for children and families.

**Key Strategies**

- Working with the Ministry of Health, engage experts, Indigenous partners, and service providers to support and help guide the alignment of services for children and youth with support and mental health needs with the health system.
- Lead the work to analyze recommendations provided through earlier engagements, including options to strengthen early intervention, improve access to diagnostic services and overall care coordination.

**Performance Measure**

The Ministry will work in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, utilizing the new child well-being outcomes framework, to further develop and refine the most relevant outcomes for children and youth receiving CYSN and CYMH services as these strategies get implemented.

## Financial Summary

(\$000s)	2024/25 Restated Estimates <sup>1</sup>	2025/26 Estimates	2026/27 Plan	2027/28 Plan
<b>Operating Expenses</b>				
Early Childhood Development	45,701	46,523	46,523	46,523
Services for Children and Youth with Support Needs	590,207	642,882	648,226	648,226
Child and Youth Mental Health Services	128,213	130,288	130,288	130,288
Child Safety, Family Support and Children in Care Services	1,064,630	1,327,711	1,351,069	1,349,553
Adoption Services	40,224	36,138	36,695	38,211
Youth Justice Services	54,295	55,524	55,524	55,524
Service Delivery Support	174,142	179,634	179,634	179,634
Executive and Support Services	23,785	24,136	24,136	24,136
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,121,197</b>	<b>2,442,836</b>	<b>2,472,095</b>	<b>2,472,095</b>
<b>Capital Expenditures</b>				
Service Delivery Support	2,230	2,230	2,230	2,230
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,395</b>	<b>2,230</b>	<b>2,230</b>	<b>2,230</b>
<b>Other Financing Transactions</b>				
<b>Executive and Support Services</b> (Human Services Providers Financing Program)				
Disbursements	0	0	0	0
Receipts	(31)	(31)	(31)	(31)
Net Cash Requirements (Source)	(31)	(31)	(31)	(31)
<b>Total Disbursements</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>(31)</b>	<b>(31)</b>	<b>(31)</b>	<b>(31)</b>
<b>Total Net Cash Requirements (Source)</b>	<b>(31)</b>	<b>(31)</b>	<b>(31)</b>	<b>(31)</b>

<sup>1</sup>For comparative purposes, amounts shown for 2024/25 have been restated to be consistent with the presentation of the 2025/26 *Estimates*.

## Appendix A: Public Sector Organizations

As of February 2025, the Minister of Children and Family Development is responsible and accountable for the following organization:

### **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.

## Appendix B: Minister Mandate Letter





January 16, 2025

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

Dear Minister Wickens:

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

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

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

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

.../2

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

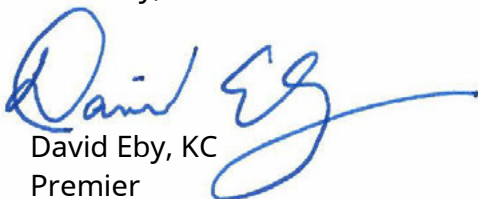
We have an obligation to protect and defend British Columbians, as well as seize opportunities, in these uncertain times.

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

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

Thank you for joining me in the work ahead.

Sincerely,



David Eby, KC  
Premier