

## ***Alone and Afraid: Lessons learned from the ordeal of a child with special needs and his family*** **Year 2 Recommendations Tracking**

The Representative's report *Alone and Afraid: Lessons learned from the ordeal of a child with special needs and his family* was released in 2018 and included eleven recommendations. Tracking of recommendation implementation is normally undertaken on an annual basis, however on occasion, circumstances can delay the assessment and/or posting. The public bodies provided the information for assessment in December of 2020. Assessment and posting were delayed as a result of workload circumstances affecting operational timelines. The table below shows the results for the second-year assessment.

### **RCY Assessment Definitions:**

- **Complete/Implemented** = All activities that directly support the implementation of the recommendation are complete
- **Substantial Progress** = Most of the activities that directly support the implementation of the recommendation are complete
- **Some Progress** = Some of the activities that directly support the implementation of the recommendation are complete
- **No Progress** = None of the activities that directly support the implementation of the recommendation are complete (pre-planning may be underway but there has been no progress in formal planning or implementation).

Recommendation		Ministry's Response	RCY Assessment
#1	That MCFD undertake a comprehensive assessment of the actual need for CYSN services across B.C. and the capacity of the current system to meet those needs. This assessment to examine funding, staffing levels and workloads,	<p><b>Year 1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MCFD contracted with two research firms to complete consultation sessions to help inform a new CYSN framework which included assessing the actual need for CYSN services and determining where gaps exist. The research firms analyzed eligibility, equity, cultural responsiveness, inclusion, and family supports (completed June 30, 2019).</li> <li>• A predictive workload analysis and simulation model was designed to examine workload, staffing and service level risk (completed Oct. 24, 2019).</li> <li>• MCFD developed a new CYSN Service Framework to provide overarching policy that guides the investment and provision of a suite of CYSN services. The framework aims to assist families, service providers and other ministry partners in understanding: who MCFD CYSN services are for; what they do;</li> </ul>	<p><b>April 2020</b></p> <p><b>Some progress</b></p> <p>MCFD completed a comprehensive assessment of the actual need for CYSN services and an assessment of the current system to meet those needs using a predictive workload analysis and simulation model and tracking of CYSN service requests.</p>

<p>program delivery and wait times.</p> <p>Findings to be used to inform comprehensive service improvements so all eligible children with special needs and their families receive culturally respectful, appropriate and timely services and supports.</p>	<p>what families can expect when receiving them; and how they complement and relate to one another.</p>	<p>MCFD will be implementing the new CYSN Service Framework in Spring 2020.</p>
<p><b>Year 2</b></p>		<p><b>December 2021</b></p>
<p>MCFD to complete the comprehensive assessment and plan by the fall of 2019, seek necessary funding enhancements and begin implementation of changes by April 2020.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MCFD is continuing policy analysis, confirming financial implications and seeking direction from senior levels of government on the implementation of the CYSN Service Framework.</li> <li>• MCFD is reviewing and assessing jurisdictional scans completed by other provinces and territories around individualized funding; integrated service delivery; promising practices for youth transitioning to employment; and assessment processes to determine eligibility or needs.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Some progress</b></p> <p>MCFD has undertaken significant assessment, research and planning activities.</p> <p>There is no evidence that findings from the CYSN Service Framework are being used to inform comprehensive service improvements so all eligible children and youth with special needs and their families receive culturally respectful, appropriate and timely services and supports.</p>

#2	<p>Pending completion of the comprehensive assessment, that MCFD take immediate steps to improve the current accessibility of CYSN services and supports by providing respite within a reasonable period of time, eliminating the need to choose between medical and respite benefits, and monitoring and ensuring follow-up with families not using autism funding.</p>	<b>Year 1</b>		<b>April 2020</b>	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In April 2019, a \$6.3-million increase to respite funding was announced.</li> <li>• MCFD is revising respite policy (on track; target is Nov. 30, 2020).</li> <li>• MCFD is streamlining respite services to align with CYSN Service Framework (in progress; target is fall 2020).</li> <li>• Establishing a strategy that works across MCFD program areas that supports families with autism spectrum disorder and makes the best use of our information system to monitor utilization of autism funding and respond where necessary with follow up and support (not yet started; target is fall 2020).</li> </ul>		<p><b>Some progress</b></p> <p>MCFD has increased its respite funding. The increase in funding has taken 1,300 of the 3,900 families (as of March 31, 2018) off the respite wait list.</p> <p>MCFD continues to revise its respite policy, streamline respite services and establish a strategy for supporting families with autism spectrum disorder.</p>	
		<b>Year 2</b>		<b>December 2021</b>	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In response to COVID-19, MCFD implemented interim policies offering flexibility for families who receive basic Direct Funded/At Home Program respite. Some flexible options may include, but are not limited to, meal preparation/grocery shopping assistance, homemaker supports, caregiver relief support for siblings, on-line programs for children who are CYSN eligible, counselling services, and any other options that support family functioning and alleviate stress. MCFD also enabled flexible service delivery options for families accessing contracted respite supports.</li> </ul>		<p><b>Some progress</b></p> <p>MCFD has continued to revise its Respite Policy including instituting interim policies that offer greater flexibility for families.</p>	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learnings from the interim policies offering flexibility in the use of respite funding in response to COVID-19 will inform options to improve respite service delivery.</li> <li>• Cross-jurisdictional research on respite is informing the respite policy revisions.</li> <li>• Autism Funding Utilization Working group established to develop short and long-term strategies to support and provide information to families.</li> <li>• Enhanced process for supporting families has been established: After MCFD sends an Autism Funding agreement to families, Specialized Provincial Services (SPS) conducts follow-up calls two weeks, 30 and 60 days after the agreement is mailed if the agreement has not been returned. Once agreement has been received, a welcome call to the family provides information and answers questions. CYSN Social Workers are attaching a priority flag to children who are within six months of their sixth birthday.</li> </ul>	<p>MCFD has enhanced its process for providing information to and connecting with families who qualify for Autism funding.</p>
#3	<p>That MCFD take the lead in working with the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education to develop an integrated service delivery model that enables appropriate information-sharing between service providers. This model would ensure that children and youth</p>	<p><b>Year 1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MCFD is exploring opportunities for electronic record integration. A short-term strategy for information sharing is expected to be developed by the fall of 2020.</li> <li>• MCFD will consider navigation and case coordination within the context of the CYSN Service Framework (spring/summer 2020).</li> </ul>	<p><b>April 2020</b></p> <p><b>Some progress – planning</b> <b>No progress – implementation</b></p> <p>MCFD, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education are in the early stages of developing a strategy for information sharing.</p> <p>From the evidence provided, it is unclear</p>

	<p>receiving special needs services through MCFD can be supported by a case coordinator who is responsible for navigating access to, and provision of, all necessary services. The case coordinator to remain assigned to the child to ensure appropriate services and facilitate successful transition to adulthood.</p> <p>MCFD to lead development of a comprehensive plan by fall 2019 and seek funding and begin implementation of plan by April 2020.</p>		<p>what substantive steps have been taken towards implementation of an integrated service delivery system and exploration of a case coordinator other than preliminary meetings with Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education.</p>
	<p><b>Year 2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ministries are working through the privacy concerns and cost considerations of an integrated service delivery model and note that solutions require consultation and coordination.</li> <li>• Within MCFD, the <i>Collaborative Practice between Children and Youth with Special Needs and Child Welfare Workers Policy</i> is being updated to enhance information sharing.</li> <li>• MCFD is exploring parent-driven models as a short-term solution to foster information sharing while mitigating privacy issues. Engagement is needed to determine whether a parent-driven model is a viable solution.</li> <li>• Enhancements to early intervention supports and infant mental health services are underway in five communities to promote social and emotional well-being in young children and provide enhanced access to family supports as part of the Pathway to Hope Strategy.</li> <li>• As part of the phased implementation of the CYSN Service Framework, MCFD will aim to support integrated service delivery approaches in developmental- and goal-focused services. The CYSN Service Framework is intended to clarify pathways and service expectations regarding what</li> </ul>	<p><b>December 2021</b></p> <p><b>Some progress</b></p> <p>MCFD, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education remain in the planning stages of an integrated service delivery model that enables appropriate information-sharing between service providers.</p>	

		families can minimally expect from services based on their needs. MCFD will consider navigation and case coordination within the context of the CYSN Service Framework.	
#4	<p>That MCFD ensure its children and youth with special needs training is mandatory for child protection staff.</p> <p>MCFD to ensure that all child protection social workers complete training by April 2020.</p>	<b>Year 1</b>	
		<b>April 2020</b>	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MCFD is developing an online CYSN training course for MCFD and DAA Child Protection workers (on track; target date is Sept. 30, 2020).</li> <li>MCFD has created a project charter for the new CYSN course: “The new training being developed is focused on how child protection workers can access CYSN services for children/youth and how to work collaboratively with CYSN workers for the best possible outcome for clients.”</li> <li>Over 1,100 child protection workers will require the new CYSN training.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Some progress</b></p> <p>MCFD is developing a new CYSN course for MCFD and DAA child protection workers.</p>
		<b>Year 2</b>	
		<b>December 2021</b>	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Within MCFD, the Collaborative Practice between Children and Youth with Special Needs and Child Welfare Workers Policy is being updated to clarify roles, responsibilities and communication between the CYSN, Child Protection, Guardianship and Resource Workers, Child Protection Services and Provincial Centralized Screening processes.</li> <li>The COVID-19 pandemic impeded progress, but the Policy was approved. It has not been posted on the ministries’ intranet system.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Some progress</b></p> <p>MCFD has resumed development of the policy training module after a delay.</p>
#5	<p>That MCFD take steps to support child protection social workers to adhere to policy on response times to child</p>	<b>Year 1</b>	
		<b>April 2020</b>	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MCFD developed a cross-divisional strategy to reduce front-line staff workload and increase capacity for family preservation work (completed on Oct. 31, 2019).</li> </ul>	<p><b>Some progress</b></p> <p>MCFD has developed strategies to reduce front-line workload and increase family</p>

<p>protection reports and ensure children are seen during child protection investigations. This should include consideration of additional staffing, training and resources. MCFD to track adherence to these policies. MCFD to begin implementation of these changes by April 2019.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ministry’s feasibility, assessment and implementation of the cross-divisional strategy to reduce workload and create increased capacity for family preservation work is in progress (target is Nov. 30, 2020).</li> <li>• The ministry’s streamlining of policy to ensure information is easily accessible by front-line staff, with improved consistency and readability is in progress (target is March 31, 2020).</li> </ul>	<p>preservation work and continues to assess the feasibility of implementing these strategies.</p> <p>MCFD is streamlining policy to make information accessible to front-line staff but it is unclear what steps it is taking to proactively track adherence to child protection policies.</p>
	<p><b>Year 2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ministry’s feasibility, assessment and implementation of the cross-divisional strategy to reduce workload and create increased capacity for family preservation work was delayed due to COVID-19 but is back in progress.</li> <li>• All CYSN policies have been mapped and inventoried and the policy streamlining project has been operationalized.</li> </ul>	<p><b>December 2021</b></p> <p><b>Some progress</b></p> <p>MCFD has streamlined policy to make information accessible to front-line staff but it is unclear what steps it is taking to proactively track adherence to child protection policies.</p>
	<p><b>Year 1</b></p>	<p><b>April 2020</b></p>

<b>#6</b>	<p>That MCFD and the Ministry of Education develop practice guidelines and a joint protocol to address concerns of unexplained school absences and withdrawals with the view to supporting children, youth and families and addressing barriers to school participation. MCFD and the Ministry of Education to conduct this work in consultation with advocates/stakeholders from the Indigenous and special needs communities.</p> <p>MCFD and the Ministry of Education to complete this work by May 2019.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Ministry of Education, with support from MCFD, will develop practice guidelines identifying the roles and responsibilities of MCFD, school boards and independent schools (target is December 2020).</li> <li>The Ministry of Education, with support from MCFD, will develop a joint-ministry protocol outlining responsibilities to identify, monitor and/or respond to unexplained absences or withdrawals (target is December 2020).</li> </ul> <p>The Ministry of Education, with support from MCFD, will consult with rightsholders and stakeholders from Indigenous communities and advocates for the rights of persons with disabilities or diverse abilities (not started).</p>	<p><b>Some progress – planning</b> <b>No progress – implementation</b></p> <p>The Ministry of Education and MCFD are jointly working on practice guidelines and a joint-ministry protocol regarding unexplained school absences. They have been communicating with each other and schools; however, draft practice guidelines and protocols have not been provided to RCY to confirm progress towards implementation.</p>
		<b>Year 2</b>	<b>December 2021</b>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Ministry of Education is leading work with MCFD and the Ministry of Health on revising and updating the <i>InterMinisterial Protocols for the Provision of Support Services to Schools</i> and is targeting March 2021 for completion.</li> <li>The Ministry of Education is leading the development of the practice guidelines with a focus on roles and responsibilities of school boards to monitor and respond to unexplained absences and withdrawals. All school boards and independent schools have been informed that this work is underway.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Some Progress</b></p> <p>The Ministry of Education has drafted practice guidelines and is consulting about them with Indigenous stakeholders through a working group.</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A draft of the practice guidelines is currently undergoing final review by the Ministry of Education, MCFD, Delegated Aboriginal Agencies and the First Nations Education Steering Committee working group before beginning internal review processes.</li> </ul>	Implementation has not begun.
<b>#7</b>	<p>That the Ministry of Education establish mechanisms to enable local school districts to identify and do timely follow up when a school-age student is not registered in an educational program.</p> <p>Ministry of Education to complete this work by September 2020.</p>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>April 2020</b>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assign personal education number (PEN) at birth to all children to enable school districts to follow up when a child is not enrolled in an educational program or registered as a homeschooler (in progress; target is September 2020).</li> <li>• Ensure cross-ministry information-sharing agreements are in place to allow the Ministry of Education to track school aged children who are not enrolled in an educational program or registered as a homeschooler (target is September 2020).</li> </ul>	<p><b>Some progress</b></p> <p>The Ministry of Education is in the early stages of implementing this recommendation.</p>
		<b>Year 2</b>	<b>December 2021</b>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legislation enabling the Minister to issue PEN earlier was passed in March 2020. The PEN Registry rebuild is in progress with implementation planned for March 2021.</li> <li>• Target date for completion being extended to September 2021 to work through the complexities of developing cross-ministry record level information sharing agreements and address potential legal barriers to sharing information.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Some progress</b></p> <p>The Ministry of Education and partner ministries continue to work through implementation of this recommendation.</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progress on an Information Sharing Agreement with the Ministry of Health has been slowed by COVID-19 workload and the complexities of matching personal education numbers with personal health numbers.</li> <li>• Information-sharing protocol between the Ministry of Children and Family Development and the Ministry of Education was finalized: <a href="https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/inclusive/guide-sharing-information-about-cyic.pdf">https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/inclusive/guide-sharing-information-about-cyic.pdf</a>.</li> <li>• Regular reporting of daily attendance data was initiated in June 2020 and for the 2020/2021 school year across all School Districts using standard approaches and reporting methods.</li> </ul> <p>Current Withdrawal and Attendance Reason codes are being reviewed and will be streamlined to increase data quality and reporting capabilities across all Districts which is estimated to be complete March 2021.</p>	
#8	That the Ministry of Education determine how many students with special needs designations are being homeschooled and conduct a review to determine whether school districts should be offering additional support and guidance to these students.	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>April 2020</b>
		<p>Ministry of Education will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop clear guidelines about what conversations schools should be having with families so that families are aware of all the options and the support and services that come with those options (in progress).</li> <li>• Ensure cross-ministry information-sharing agreements are in place to review other agencies'/ministries'/programs' data collection activities to allow education stakeholders to identify homeschoolers who are receiving services from other ministries (target is September 2020).</li> <li>• Engage with stakeholders to confirm the feasibility of enhanced approaches to collecting and tracking information about homeschooled children and confirm current homeschooling resources provided by schools and districts (planning completed May 31, 2019).</li> </ul>	<p><b>Some progress</b></p> <p>The Ministry of Education is in the process of developing clear guidelines and has engaged with stakeholders to confirm supports available for students.</p> <p>The Ministry of Education has not started its review of whether school districts</p>

	<p>Ministry of Education to complete this work by September 2020.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review supports provided by schools/districts to homeschoolers and assess schools' and districts' ability to provide special education supports for homeschooled children and youth (not yet started; target is fall 2020).</li> <li>• Review services provided by other ministries to help determine if additional educational supports are required. Branch analysis to inform project plan (targeted for fall 2020).</li> </ul>	<p>should be offering additional support and guidance to these students.</p> <p>RCY and the Ministry of Education have had several meetings about the intent of this recommendation. The RCY hopes that the Ministry of Education will consider offering additional support in the form of individual education plans and assessments to children with special needs designations, including those who are being homeschooled.</p>
<b>Year 2</b>		<b>December 2021</b>	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cross-ministry Information Sharing Agreements are in progress but not complete. These agreements are required in order for the Ministry of Education to review other ministries’ data collection practices.</li> </ul> <p>Determining the total of number of home-schooled children that are in a special needs category would require linkage to data held by MCFD for program data and the Ministries of Mental and Health and Addictions and Health for diagnostic data to cover all possible sources of information.</p> <p>MCFD is currently working to determine whether sharing individual level information on children and youth in care is permitted under current legislation and, if so, the allowable avenues to share this information with the Ministry of Education and with school districts/independent school authorities.</p> <p>Progress on Information Sharing Agreements has been slowed by COVID-19 workload and the complexities of matching personal education numbers with personal health numbers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Ministry of Education is in the process of developing home-schooling guidelines. It convened a Homeschooling Guidelines Working Group in 2020 which met twice and developed a first draft of the Guidelines document. The working group was then put on hold to enable work to progress on the ministry’s online learning policy, given the strong linkages between online learning and homeschooling.</li> <li>• The sector’s capacity to engage in this work and implement changes in practices has been significantly impacted by the pandemic. Further, due to the pandemic, homeschooling registrations and questions related to homeschooling by parents, school districts and independent schools have dramatically increased in 2020/21, suggesting the need for some potential legislative changes.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Some progress</b></p> <p>The Ministry of Education is in the process of ensuring cross-ministry Information Sharing Agreements are in place with MCFD and Health.</p> <p>The Ministry of Education is in the process of developing clear guidelines and has engaged with stakeholders to confirm supports available for students.</p> <p>The Ministry of Education has not started its review of whether school districts should be offering additional support and guidance to these students.</p>
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#9	<p>That MCFD ensure identification and involvement of an Indigenous child or youth's family, community and culture at the first point of contact with any MCFD service and continue this involvement on an ongoing basis. This should include, in consultation with Indigenous stakeholders and communities, the creation of guidelines for social workers working with Indigenous families, including resources to help them do this work.</p> <p>MCFD to complete this work by May 2019.</p>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>April 2020</b>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Aboriginal Policy and Practice Framework (APPF) has been implemented regionally. Program analysts in each region have built relationships, mentored and oriented staff across the service delivery division and developed further partnerships with Indigenous communities and service providers (completed March 31, 2019).</li> </ul> <p>Further, the ministry will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• develop divisional plans to implement APPF across all areas of the ministry. A divisional plan working group has been established. Several divisional plans have been developed. The implementation of all plans is underway (target is March 31, 2020).</li> <li>• embed early identification and involvement of an Indigenous child or youth's family, community and culture in MCFD Service Frameworks (in progress; target is Dec. 31, 2020).</li> <li>• amend and implement the <i>CFCS Act</i> to support greater collaboration between Indigenous communities and the Director in caring for, supporting and protecting Indigenous children and building stronger planning and support networks by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ withdrawing from court proceedings if an Indigenous child's parents and community make an agreement that would keep the child safe (Oct. 1, 2018)</li> <li>○ entering into Community Agreements with Indigenous communities (April 1, 2019)</li> <li>○ supporting implementation of Bill 26 <i>CFCS Act</i> amendments by hosting <i>Walking Together with Children, Youth and Families in Respect for their Inherent Right to Culture and Connection, provincial and regional</i> gatherings for DAA and MCFD supervisors, team leaders and leadership staff (in progress; target is March 31, 2020).</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Develop and implement Core Child Welfare Policy 1.1: Working with Indigenous Children, Youth, Families and Communities to provide guidance</li> </ul>	<p><b>Some progress</b></p> <p>MCFD has implemented the APPF (a framework that provides guidance to workers working with Indigenous families) regionally</p> <p>The early identification and involvement of an Indigenous child or youth's family, community and culture has not been embedded in MCFD service frameworks yet.</p>

		<p>respecting the identity of Indigenous children and collaboration with Indigenous communities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Core Policy to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.a: At initial contact, ask the child and family about whether they have an Indigenous identity</li> <li>1.b: If a child or youth is Indigenous, identify and document the Indigenous community or communities to which the child belongs, including both maternal and paternal Indigenous identities. (policy in effect on Jan. 1, 2020).</li> </ul> </li> <li>Bill C-92: <i>An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families</i> was implemented on Jan. 1, 2020.</li> </ul>	
<b>Year 2</b>		<b>December 2021</b>	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In-Care Framework has been developed, and implementation through modelling the system began in Jan/Feb 2020.</li> <li>The <b><i>“Walking Together with Children, Youth and Families In Respect for their Inherent Right to Culture and Connection”</i></b> Gatherings, which were planned collaboratively with First Nation, Métis and Inuit communities, were held in eight communities and focused on breathing life into the <i>CFCS Act</i> amendments that came into force on April 1. The amendments call for collaborative practices.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Some progress</b></p> <p>MCFD has implemented the APPF (a framework that provides guidance to workers working with Indigenous families) regionally.</p> <p>The early identification and involvement of an Indigenous child or youth’s family, community and culture has not been embedded</p>

			in MCFD service frameworks yet.
<b>#10</b>	<p>That the Ministry of Health and MCFD develop a plan to ensure early identification, timely assessment and appropriate and accessible supports for children under six-years-old with signs of developmental delay.</p> <p>Plan to be developed by April 1, 2020 with implementation to begin immediately thereafter.</p>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>April 2020</b>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MCFD implemented the Early Years Service Framework on April 1, 2019. This framework provides over 100 communities with early years services including family child drop-ins and options for enhanced children and youth with special needs and child and youth mental health services.</li> </ul> <p>The Ministry of Health will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>assess current state and identify gaps and opportunities to inform the plan (in progress; target is March 31, 2020)</li> <li>develop the plan to ensure early identification, timely assessment and appropriate and accessible supports for children under six-years-old with signs of developmental delay (in progress; target is March 31, 2020)</li> <li>provide guidance to healthcare system about core public health services to be delivered to women, children, families from preconception period up to Kindergarten entry, including guidance about developmental monitoring for children (in progress; target is March 31, 2021)</li> <li>lead the Provincial Perinatal Substance use project. This project provides culturally safe and harm-reduction-informed care to reduce stigma that prevents parents using substances from accessing health care. The system of care enables earlier identification of children with signs of developmental delay (in progress; target is Sept. 30, 2021)</li> <li>work with health system partners and appropriate care providers to ensure they are aware of services in the new Children and Youth with Special Needs (CYSN) Service Framework and how to access services within MCFD's programs (in progress; target is Dec. 31, 2021)</li> <li>explore opportunities to ensure seamless transitions of patient-centred care between health services and CYSN services to ensure services are</li> </ul>	<p><b>Some progress</b></p> <p>MCFD implemented the Early Years Service Framework. The Ministries of Health and MCFD are in the process of creating a plan to ensure early identification, timely assessment and appropriate and accessible supports for children under six with signs of developmental delay.</p>

		<p>streamlined and parents and caregivers of children needing services will know how to access appropriate services (in progress; target is Dec. 31, 2021).</p>	
		<p><b>Year 2</b></p>	<p><b>December 2021</b></p>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Ministry of Health has been working on issues of early identification and autism assessment, and regular meetings are occurring between Health and MCFD to assess the current state of service delivery to children and youth with special needs and their families. Due to COVID-19, the work had continued at a slower pace, but is now progressing.</li> <li>• An updated version of the Collaborative Practice Protocol was developed in partnership with MCFD and released in September 2019, to correspond to the ending of “birth alerts.” The protocol outlines the roles and responsibilities for health sector and MCFD/DAA workers when supporting families experiencing vulnerabilities, clarifies rules around information sharing and separates the concepts of vulnerabilities (e.g., poverty, substance use, etc.) from child welfare concerns.</li> <li>• Further work led by the Provincial Perinatal Substance Use Project is underway to build an online course for acute care social workers to better support perinatal women who use substances and experience vulnerabilities.</li> <li>• Provincial Perinatal Substance Use Project has developed and released (October 2020) a Provincial Rooming-In Guideline for Perinatal Women Using Substances. This guideline supports birth parents and infants to stay together while in hospital.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Substantial progress</b></p> <p>MCFD implemented the Early Years Service Framework. The Ministries of Health and MCFD are in the process of creating a plan to ensure early identification, timely assessment and appropriate and accessible supports for children under six with signs of developmental delay. Progress has been made towards planning for a universal and inclusive childcare system.</p> <p>COVID-19 has led to some delays, but implementation appears to be underway.</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Evidence reviews were completed to expand and refresh Perinatal, Child and Family Public Health Service Standards in partnership with Regional Health Authorities, First Nations Health Authority and partners.</li><li>• The Ministry of Health and MCFD are having regular meetings to discuss and learn about the services available through the CYSN Service Framework and find ways to integrate this knowledge into the health system. Regular meetings also serve to identify gaps and overlaps in services with a goal to ensure services are more accessible and streamlined for families.</li><li>• MCFD has been gathering information to inform planning for a universal childcare system that is inclusive of all children, including children with support needs. MCFD engaged key sector stakeholders and families regarding this conceptual model through a series of virtual sessions in June 2020.</li><li>• Affordability initiatives are supporting more lower income families in accessing childcare, and as a result, provide more opportunity for early identification of/intervention for children who have, or are at risk of, developmental delay as a result of the family's experience of vulnerability:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- As of September 2020, over 71,500 children (53,500 families) have been approved for the Affordable Child Care Benefit (ACCB) which helps all eligible families with the costs of childcare, saving them up to \$15,000 per year, per child. In 2019/20, more than 4,500 children received the special needs supplement through ACCB.</li></ul></li></ul>	
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative (CCFRI) enhances childcare affordability by offering funding to eligible, licensed childcare providers to reduce and stabilize parents' monthly childcare fees.</li> </ul>	
<b>#11</b>	<p>That the Ministry of Health take steps to incrementally decrease the wait times to three months for completed assessments of autism and complex behavioural developmental conditions across the province.</p> <p>Wait times to be reduced to nine months by Sept. 30, 2019; to six months by Sept. 30, 2020; and to three months by Sept. 30, 2021.</p>	<p><b>Year 1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased funding, quality improvement efforts and increased staffing is underway at the Ministry of Health; however, the ministry is unable to meet the timelines for the recommendation due to increasing demands for assessments.</li> <li>• Additional funding was provided to BC Autism Assessment Network (BCAAN) and additional funding will be provided to Provincial Health Services Authority to support BCAAN on an ongoing basis.</li> <li>• Eight new qualified specialists were trained in 2019/20.</li> <li>• BCAAN is on track to complete 444 additional assessments in 2019/2020.</li> <li>• BCAAN continues to monitor wait times for assessments.</li> </ul>	<p><b>April 2020</b></p> <p><b>No progress</b></p> <p>While the Ministry of Health has taken some steps in an effort to incrementally decrease wait times for assessments, evidence provided by BCAAN shows that wait times for assessments have increased.</p>
		<p><b>Year 2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 152 children were screened by the Shared Care Triage in 2019/20, up from 53 in 2018/19. This surpasses the target of 70 additional children screened.</li> <li>• The Shared Care Clinic program, which does the screening, continues into 2020/21.</li> <li>• The Ministry of Health funded PHSA to provide an additional 444 assessments. BCAAN completed the additional 444 assessments that was funded with an extra \$1.183 million added to base. Total completed assessments were 2154 (2019/20).</li> </ul>	<p><b>December 2021</b></p> <p><b>Some Progress</b></p> <p>The Ministry of Health has taken some steps in an effort to incrementally decrease wait times for assessments.</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Due to COVID -19 restrictions, BCAAN was only able to complete training for two new Qualified Specialists for a total of 10 since 2019.</li><li>• BCAAN has implemented virtual assessment options for specific age groups and hopes to expand the virtual assessment options to a larger number of children.</li><li>• BCAAN is also exploring a rapid assessment program for preschool-aged children identified as having high risk for ASD, as well as out of province children with previously diagnosed severe ASD without detailed diagnostic paperwork to fast track them to a BCAAN assessment using less resources.</li><li>• BCAAN is working with referring physicians to connect them with BCAAN qualified specialists who could see a school-aged child for an MSP-billed ASD assessment sooner through their community practice.</li></ul>	
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