

B.C. Adoption & Permanency Options Update

August 2019



REPRESENTATIVE FOR
CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Aug. 30, 2019

The Honourable Darryl Plecas
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly
Suite 207, Parliament Buildings
Victoria, B.C., V8V 1X4

Dear Mr. Speaker,

I have the honour of submitting the report *B.C. Adoption and Permanency Options Update, August 2019*, a follow-up to *Finding Forever Families: A Review of the Provincial Adoption System*, to the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia.

This report is prepared in accordance with Section 6(b) of the *Representative for Children and Youth Act*.

Sincerely,



Dr. Jennifer Charlesworth
Representative for Children and Youth

pc: Ms. Jennifer Arril
Clerk of Committees
Legislative Assembly of British Columbia

Ms. Kate Ryan-Lloyd
Acting Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Introduction

In June 2014, the Representative for Children and Youth (RCY) issued a report entitled *Finding Forever Families: A Review of the Provincial Adoption System*. This review was prompted by the Representative's concern about the nearly 4,000 children and youth who were in the continuing custody of the ministry at that time – 1,000 of whom were eligible for adoption.

In addition, the Ministry of Children and Family Development's (MCFD) adoption program had not been reviewed since 2002, making it timely to build an understanding of the important metrics related to adoption. These metrics included the number of children eligible for adoption, the number of available and new adoptive homes approved and the time it took to move a child or youth from a Continuing Custody Order (CCO)¹ to an adoption placement. In order for the system to improve, it was important – and it remains important – to understand the barriers and challenges to finding permanency for children and youth involved in the provincial care system.

The 2014 RCY report made several recommendations to address key findings. These key findings included a high number of children eligible for adoption, a decrease in children adopted out of continuing care and a decrease in approved adoptive homes. RCY recommendations called for increased awareness of adoption, improved oversight of adoption practices and regular public reporting.

At the time the report was released, the Representative committed to issuing periodic updates on the status of B.C.'s adoption program. Four updates were released – in November 2014, April 2015, December 2015 and December 2017. This report is the fifth and final update on the initial 2014 report.

Although the initial report and subsequent *B.C. Adoption and Permanency Option Updates* fulfilled the intention of public and ongoing monitoring of key adoption metrics, they did not provide adequate information on the extent of permanency experienced by children and youth involved with the B.C. care system. Conceptualizations of permanency have been shifting and evolving during the five years since the first RCY adoption report. In 2014, legal permanency (primarily referring to adoption) was believed to be more desirable than other established aspects of permanency, which include relational, cultural and physical permanency. At that time, adoption was prioritized over other permanency options within MCFD *Adoption Practice Standards*, as evidenced by the fact workers were required to obtain an exception from their regional manager in order to pursue a permanency plan other than adoption for a child who was under 12 years of age.²

¹ A Continuing Custody Order can be sought if there is no significant likelihood that (a) the circumstances that led to the child's removal will improve within a reasonable time, or (b) the parent will be able to meet the child's needs. Once the CCO is granted, the child remains in the continuing custody of the Director until an alternative permanency option is pursued (i.e., transfer of custody under s. 54.1, adoption) or until the child is 19-years-old.

² MCFD *Adoption Practice Standards* (2001). Practice Standard 16: *Requesting an exception to registration for adoption*.

Dimensions of Permanency

Relational permanency involves creating strong, long-lasting connections with biological family members, school staff, foster parents, social workers, youth workers, community members and organizations.³

Cultural permanency means the child is connected to their culture, regardless of what else is changing in their life.⁴

Physical permanency involves creating a safe, stable, healthy and lasting living arrangement.⁵

Legal permanency refers to where the responsibility for guardianship of a young person rests (i.e., parents, social worker, adoptive parent, etc.)⁶

The ministry's practice of prioritizing legal permanency, combined with RCY's focus on adoption numbers, led to MCFD allocating resources and setting targets for adoption placements. However, since 2014, First Nations, Métis and Inuit leaders, communities and families have challenged this one-dimensional conceptualization of permanency, and many have suggested that legal adoption is a colonial construct that has caused harm.

MCFD describes legal permanency as being "achieved through legally binding custodial arrangements such as family reunification, guardianship transfers and/or adoption."⁷

These voices have called for more work to be done to prevent removals from family members, greater efforts to place children and youth with extended family members, more attention paid to cultural permanency and more effort given to supporting customary or custom adoption within Indigenous communities.

More recently, MCFD has demonstrated an increased awareness of the fact that adoption is not in the best interest of every child. Effective July 2018, an exception to adoption is no longer required to pursue an alternative permanency plan for children under 12. The ministry also indicated at the time that it was reviewing the permanency plan of each child and youth who had adoption identified as their aftercare plan to ensure that each of them had what MCFD described as a "best interest informed permanency plan."

RCY recognizes that adoption numbers do not tell the complete story when it comes to working toward permanency for the children who come in contact with the care system. The Representative is concerned about the bigger questions pertaining to all dimensions of permanency and how the ministry is addressing these.

Evidence tells us, and youth have reinforced the message, that relational permanency – those strong, enduring connections to family, community and helping professionals – is the most important

³ Federation of BC Child and Youth in Care Networks, "Belonging 4 Ever: Creating Permanency for Youth in and from Care" (August 2010): 6.

⁴ MCFD and Federation of Community Services of BC, *Residential Review Project* (Victoria, B.C.: Ministry of Children and Family Development), 2012.

⁵ Federation of BC Child and Youth in Care Networks, "Belonging 4 Ever: Creating Permanency for Youth in and from Care" (August 2010): 6.

⁶ Federation of BC Child and Youth in Care Networks, "Belonging 4 Ever: Creating Permanency for Youth in and from Care" (August 2010): 6.

⁷ MCFD, *B.C. Permanency Framework Summary: Achieving Out of Care Permanency for Children and Youth* (Victoria, B.C.: Ministry of Children and Family Development), 2015.

component of permanency. The Representative will be monitoring key shifts in the ministry's understanding and practice of supporting permanency through RCY's upcoming work in the areas of care planning and transitioning to adulthood and through our Office's advocacy work.

This final *B.C. Adoption and Permanency Options Update* examines the trends in adoption and other permanency placements over time and includes updated information for the 2017/18 and 2018/19 fiscal years.

Permanent Transfer of Custody

s. 54.01

Under s. 54.01 of the *CFCS Act*, an order can be made to permanently transfer custody of a child from the parent(s) to another person. Prior to the transfer, the child or youth would be placed in the temporary custody of a person other than a parent under a Temporary Custody Order or placed with extended family by agreement under s. 8 of the *CFCS Act* and would reside with the proposed guardian(s) for at least six consecutive months immediately before an application was made for an order to transfer custody.

s. 54.1

Under s. 54.1 of the *CFCS Act*, an order can be made to permanently transfer custody of a child from the care of the Director (under a CCO) to a person other than the child or youth's biological parent(s). Prior to the transfer, the child or youth would reside with the proposed guardian(s) for at least six consecutive months immediately before an application was made for an order to transfer custody.

Rescindment of a CCO

Under s. 54 of the *CFCS Act*, a Director or party to a proceeding in which a CCO was made may apply to the court for the cancellation of the order. After considering the importance of continuity in the child's care and the effect of maintaining a relationship the child has with any person, the court could cancel the CCO, but only if it was satisfied that (a) the circumstances that caused the court to make the order had changed significantly, and (b) cancelling the order was in the child's best interest.

Custom Adoption

There is no single, concise definition or approach to custom adoption, as practices vary across Indigenous communities. Custom adoption is a broad term used to describe *"the cultural practices of Aboriginal peoples to raise a child, by a person who is not the child's parent, according to the custom of the First Nation and/or the Aboriginal community of the child."*⁸ Contrary to Western notions of adoption, connections to the birth family and community are maintained in custom adoption.⁹

⁸ Marilyn Poitras & Norman Zlotkin, "An Overview of the Recognition of Customary Adoption in Canada," *Saskatchewan First Nations Family and Community Institute*, (February 2013): 6.

⁹ Dawn Thomas-Wightman, "Moving forward: Identifying barriers and pathways to permanency for Indigenous children and youth in British Columbia through custom adoption," Master's thesis (University of Victoria, 2016).

Adoption and Permanency Options for Children and Youth in B.C.

Since the 2015/16 fiscal year, the number of B.C. children in care eligible for adoption and the number placed for adoption have decreased. The number of children in care with an adoption aftercare plan has also decreased.

Table 1 indicates that the overall numbers of adoption placements for both 2017/18 and 2018/19 were relatively stable but decreased when compared to the previous two fiscal years. MCFD notes that ministry staff have described an increase in the frequency and complexity of special needs among children and youth who have adoption as their permanency plan. For children with complex needs, adoption planning requires more time and support. The recent actions taken to allow for equal consideration of all legal permanency options in policy may have also contributed to the decrease in the overall number of adoption placements for 2018/19.

Placement

It is important to note that this report continues to utilize the term *placement* in the context of both transfers of custody and adoptions. The term *placement* refers to the initial placement of a child or youth in an adoptive home, or in the care of another guardian at the beginning of the six-month residency period, rather than when the final adoption or transfer of custody order is granted in the courts and complete. In some cases, these placements may not result in a completed order as, during the residency period, the placement may be deemed as not in the child's best interest. Within the information presented in this report, there are also some children who have experienced multiple permanency placement breakdowns and are counted more than once. In some cases, these children still lack legal permanency in their lives. In future work, the Representative recommends that shifting the focus to the number of completed orders for transfers of custody and adoptions would be a more accurate measure of legal permanency.

In 2016/17, the ministry expanded its previous adoptions targets to include other permanency options for children in care following a CCO or permanent care order,¹⁰ including transfer of custody placements under s. 54.1 of the *Child, Family and Community Service Act (CFCS Act)*. As shown in Table 1, there has been minimal variability over the past four years in the total number of transfer of custody placements under s.54.1. Table 1 also indicates that there has been a slight increase in the number of CCO rescindments¹¹ for the 2017/18 and 2018/19 fiscal years compared to 2016/17.

¹⁰ Continuing custody refers to children in care under a CCO. Permanent care refers to children in care with a legal status of *Infants Act* Ward or *Adoption Act* Ward.

¹¹ Under s. 54(1) of the *CFCS Act*, a Director or party to a proceeding in which a CCO was made may apply to the court for the cancellation of the order if the circumstances that caused the court to make the order have changed significantly.

Although MCFD has been encouraging staff to explore alternative permanency options, the overall number of permanency placements (including adoption, transfer of custody under s.54.1 and CCO rescindments) for children and youth following a CCO or permanent care order decreased between 2015/16 and 2017/18 and remained relatively stable in 2017/18 and 2018/19.

Table 1: Permanency placements for children and youth following a CCO, or permanent care order, 2015/16 to 2018/19

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Adoption	362	281	241	242
Transfer of Custody (s.54.1)	38	43	37	36
Continuing Custody Order Rescindment	24	23	32	29
Total	424	347	310	307

In recent years, MCFD has increasingly used transfers of custody under s. 54.01 of the *CFCS Act* as a method of family preservation and an alternative to keeping children in care. Table 2 notes the number of transfer of custody placements under s. 54.01 between 2015/16 and 2018/19. There has been considerable fluctuation over this time, with a peak of 498 transfer of custody placements in 2016/17, followed by a decline to 391 in 2017/18 and then an increase to 450 in 2018/19. MCFD has also indicated that a substantial number of children and youth found permanency through reunification with their parent(s) or extended family members.¹² Questions remain regarding why the number of children and youth reunified with their parent(s) or extended family members has consistently decreased, however, this could be a result of fewer admissions to care.

Table 2: Permanency placements for children and youth prior to a CCO, or permanent care order, 2015/16 to 2018/19

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Transfer of Custody (s.54.01)	330	498	391	450
Reunification with parent(s) or extended family	2191	2006	1873	1836
Total	2521	2504	2264	2286

¹² This counts the number of children and youth who were reunified with their parent(s) or extended family members following a period of time spent in care of 60 days or more.

Adoption and Permanency Options for Indigenous Children and Youth

MCFD acknowledges that many Indigenous organizations and communities do not support adoption of their children and prefer other permanency options that are grounded in and supportive of Indigenous cultures. In response to this, the ministry has increasingly made use of other permanency options including reunification with parent(s) or extended family members and rescindments of CCOs.

As described in Table 2, compared to 2015/16, there has been an increased number of transfer of custody placements under s. 54.01 although the number in 2018/19 is still below the peak in 2016/17. As well, the number of Indigenous children and youth reunified with their parent(s) or extended family members following a period of care has been quite stable over the four-year period.

Table 3: Permanency placements for Indigenous children and youth *prior to a CCO, or permanent care order, 2015/16 to 2018/19*

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Transfer of custody (s.54.01)	185	310	237	261
Reunification with parent(s) or extended family	1070	1035	1044	1065
Total	1255	1345	1281	1326

The Representative recognizes the damaging historical and contemporary context of adoption and is especially concerned about the continued lack of culturally appropriate permanency options available for Indigenous children and youth in the continuing custody or permanent care of MCFD. The need for urgent attention to this is evident in that the overall number of adoption and transfer of custody placements under s. 54.1 has consistently decreased since the 2015/16 fiscal year. Of the children and youth placed for adoption, the proportion placed in Indigenous adoptive homes has consistently decreased from 51 per cent in 2015/16 to only 23 per cent in 2018/19 (see Appendix B for information on related data quality concerns). This lack of progress in relation to Indigenous children in care is further underlined by the fact that the number of non-Indigenous children and youth in the continuing custody or permanent care of the ministry decreased by 22 per cent between 2016 and 2019, yet the number of Indigenous children and youth in the continuing custody or permanent care of the ministry has only decreased by 5.4 per cent.

Table 4: Permanency placements for Indigenous children and youth *following a CCO, or permanent care order, 2015/16 to 2018/19*

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Adoption	175	134	120	89
Transfer of Custody (s.54.1)	31	33	29	16
Continuing Custody Order Rescindment	13	19	27	23
Total	219	186	176	128

Under s. 46 of the *Adoption Act*, there are provisions for custom adoptions, which state: “*On application, the court may recognize that an adoption of a person effected by the custom of an Indian band or Aboriginal community has the effect of an adoption under this Act.*” The ministry has informed RCY that it is unable to verify whether it has completed any custom adoptions in the more than 20 years since that legislation has been in place. The ministry further indicated that it made a request to the courts for this information but was informed that the courts were not able to provide this detail as applications to B.C. Supreme Court are not tracked to this specificity.

Several of the recommendations put forward in Grand Chief Ed John’s November 2016 report *Indigenous Resilience, Connectedness and Reunification – From Root Causes to Root Solutions* make specific reference to Indigenous custom adoption (see Appendix A).¹³ In response to RCY’s December 2017 update, the Minister of Children and Family Development stated that “*we’re committed to exploring traditional practices like custom adoption*”¹⁴ with the goal of finding permanency for Indigenous children. This statement is consistent with actions identified to address custom adoption within the ministry’s *Strategic Plan (2018-2021)*.

The ministry has informed the Representative that it has undertaken a Custom Adoption Project “*in collaboration with Indigenous peoples to deepen the current understanding of custom adoption, and guided by this, propose improvements to supports for custom adoption.*”¹⁵ As part of this work, MCFD has completed a cross-jurisdictional scan of custom adoption legislation that included research on such legislation in Nunavut and the Northwest Territories. It has also established an external advisory circle that includes representatives from First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities to “*guide the project and ensure that Indigenous people are meaningfully engaged throughout.*”¹⁶ MCFD reports that collaboration sessions took place across the province with more than 100 people participating, representing First Nations communities and organizations, Métis governments, child and family service societies and universities. In an April 2019 update provided to the Representative, MCFD indicated that:

“Collaborations supported a process that legally recognizes the effects of community-driven custom adoptions that occur outside of the court system, and enables support for custom adoptions.

Work is underway to develop a model that can meet these objectives with a focus on the following:

- *Indigenous communities having control over their unique custom adoption processes, including the languages and traditions used.*
- *Providing a non-intrusive interface with provincial systems (Vital Statistics) if the parent/community wishes to have full recognition of the adoption under provincial law.”*¹⁷

¹³ Grand Chief Ed John, *Indigenous Resilience, Connectedness and Reunification – From Root Causes to Root Solutions: A Report on Indigenous Child Welfare in British Columbia* (Victoria, B.C.: Ministry of Children and Family Development), 2016.

¹⁴ B.C. government news release, *Minister’s statement on the representative’s adoption update* (Victoria, B.C.: Ministry of Children and Family Development), 2017.

¹⁵ Information provided to RCY from MCFD on August 17, 2018.

¹⁶ Information provided to RCY from MCFD on August 17, 2018.

¹⁷ Information provided to RCY from MCFD on April 25, 2019.

MCFD further stated that policy options were to be developed over spring and summer 2019, and that *“timelines for legislative change will be contingent on other legislative priorities and MCFD will be working with Indigenous partners, including the Tripartite First Nations Child and Family Working Group, on both priority setting and potential further Indigenous engagement.”*

It is clearly evident that there is a substantial amount of work ahead in relation to custom adoption and other recommendations made by Grand Chief Ed John. The Representative will continue to monitor MCFD’s progress on this important work.

It is also important to highlight that *An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families* (Bill C-92) received royal assent in June 2019. The purpose of this Act is to *“(a) affirm the inherent right of self-government, which includes jurisdiction in relation to child and family services; (b) set out principles applicable, on a national level, to the provision of child and family services in relation to Indigenous children; and (c) contribute to the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.”*¹⁸ As First Nations reassume jurisdiction over child and family services, adoptions and permanency planning will be done in accordance with their own laws and not through MCFD’s provincial adoptions program.

Progress Made

In response to Grand Chief Ed John’s recommendations regarding the disparity between caregiver and extended family rates, MCFD has taken an important step to better support extended family who provide care for their family members. Budget 2019 provided approximately \$64 million over three years to MCFD to increase payments to foster caregivers and extended family care providers for the first time in a decade.¹⁹ As part of this increase, caregivers who are part of the Extended Family Program (s.8 of the *CFCS Act*) now receive financial support equal to foster care providers. At the time of the announcement, the minister stated: *“Bringing these rates in line will undoubtedly lead to both an increase of permanent placements as well as an increased quality of care for children placed with extended family members. This is especially important for Indigenous children in care as it will result in greater opportunities for placements with extended family and their communities, thereby maintaining access to their culture and language.”*

While increases to financial support represent a positive improvement for supporting extended family in providing care to their family members, further work is required to ensure that extended family members receive the other necessary supports required to provide for the needs of children and youth in their care. This includes, but is not limited to, ensuring that children and youth receive timely assessments, appropriate support and intervention service including mental health and substance use treatment services, additional supports for children with complex needs, and proactive and collaborative case management when required. A shift in practice to placing children with extended family also requires simultaneous attention to the need for more intensive efforts targeted at family preservation by surrounding families with adequate community supports to keep more children living with their parents wherever possible.

¹⁸ *An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families* (June 21, 2019).

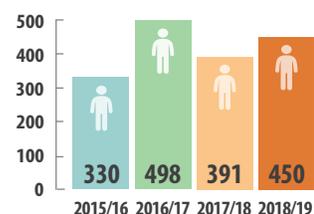
¹⁹ B.C. government news release, Caregivers for B.C.’s most vulnerable get first pay increase in a decade (Victoria, B.C.: Office of the Premier), 2019. <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2019PREM0023-000294>

B.C. Adoption & Permanency Options Update – August 2019

Transfer of custody under s.54.01^a

Number of transfer of custody placements under s.54.01 of the *CFCS Act*^{a,b}

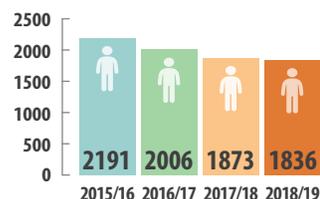
■ Indigenous
■ Non-Indigenous



Reunification with parent(s) or extended family

Number of children and youth reunified with their parent(s) or extended family^b

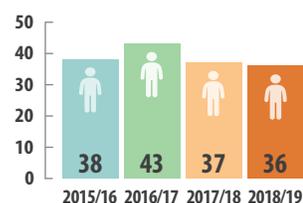
■ Indigenous
■ Non-Indigenous



Transfer of custody under s.54.1^a

Number of transfer of custody placements under s.54.1 of the *CFCS Act*^{a,b}

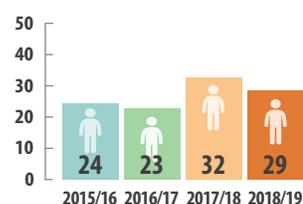
■ Indigenous
■ Non-Indigenous



Continuing Custody Order Rescindments

Number of Continuing Custody Order rescindments^b

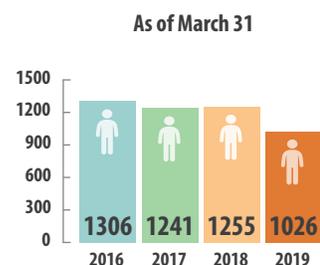
■ Indigenous
■ Non-Indigenous



Adoption

Number of children and youth in permanent care with adoption aftercare plans^c

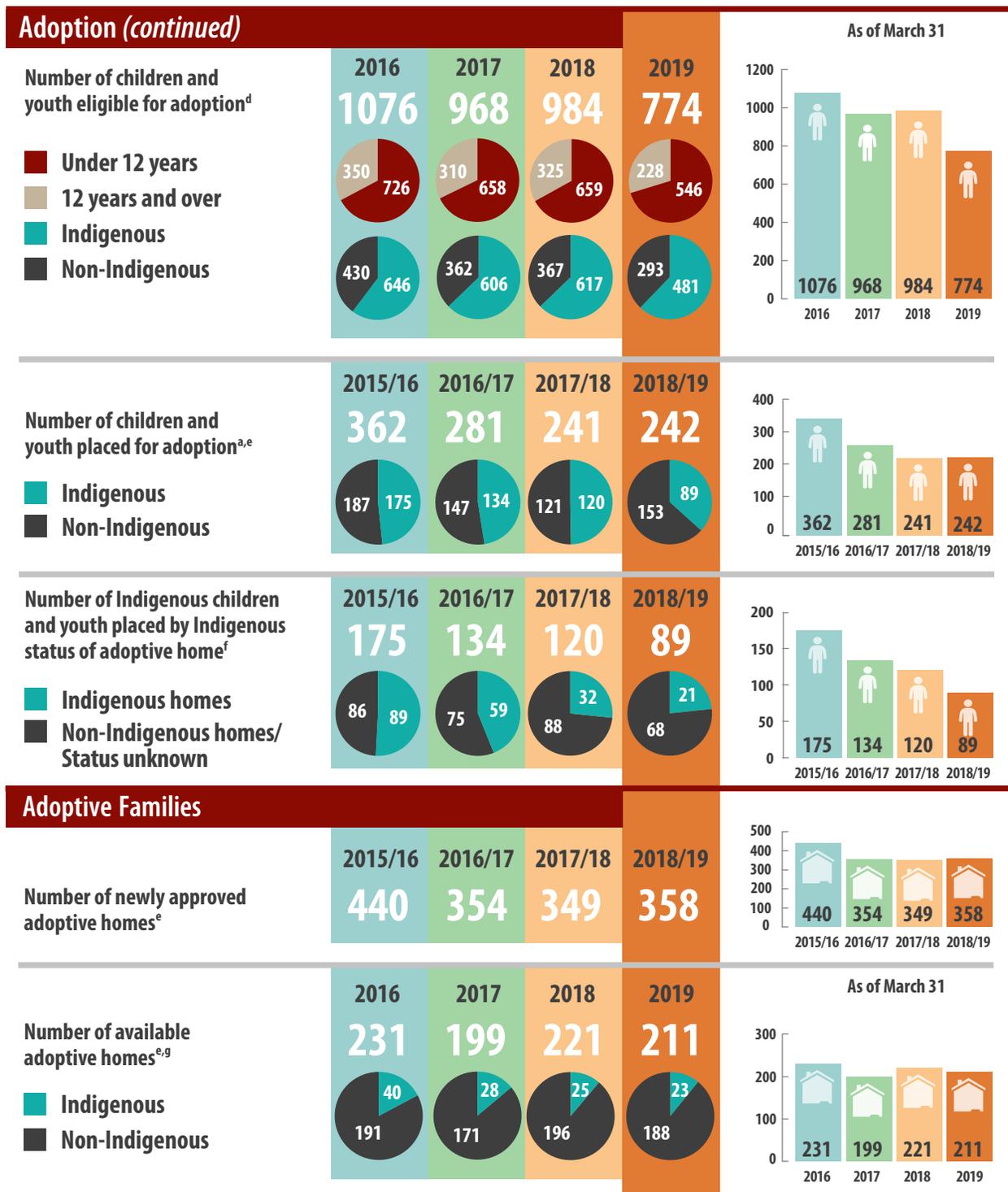
■ Indigenous
■ Non-Indigenous



^a Some youth may have been counted more than once.

^b Source: Data provided to the RCY from MCFD on May 2, 2019.

^c Source: MCFD Corporate Data Warehouse.



^d Source: ICM: March 31, 2019.

^e Source: Adoption Management System: April 15, 2019.

^f Source: Adoption Management System and ICM: April 15, 2019.

^g Available adoptive homes include those that have approved, proposed, or offered status.

Moving Beyond Legal Permanency

The numbers presented in RCY's *B.C. Adoption and Permanency Options Updates* capture some of the efforts made by MCFD to find legal permanency, but do not provide adequate information on the breadth and quality of permanency planning. Due to changes in the ways in which permanency and adoption are understood, and the views held about adoption by First Nations, Métis and Inuit leaders, communities and families, the Representative has decided that future monitoring reports will take a broader view on permanency.

Future work will be informed by youth in and from care who have added their voice to the reconceptualization of permanency suggesting that relational permanency is more important to them than legal permanency.²⁰ The Representatives' informal consultations with youth advisors have also led to the exploration of a fifth dimension of permanency – **identity permanency** – defined by youth as the opportunity to develop a more enduring, informed and positive sense of themselves as they move into adulthood. Youth have expressed a desire to have access to information about their family, the circumstances that led to them being in care, what happened to them while in care, access to assessments so that they better understand the challenges that they might face with respect to learning, mental health, health, employment, etc. and how they might be able to be more successful (such as through developing coping strategies or choosing certain learning or career paths).

In cases where children and youth may have legal permanency, RCY has not yet examined the extent of relational, cultural, physical and identity permanency in their lives. In moving forward, it is essential that we better understand how the voices of children and youth are centred in conversations around permanency, and which domains they value and aspire to have most in their lives.

Note on Changes in Adoption Data

The Representative is aware that adoption and permanency numbers are dynamic, and may show slight changes over time as new information is entered into the case management system by workers. However, in preparing this *B.C. Adoption and Permanency Options Update*, evidence of more substantive changes in numbers were found regarding information that was included in previous updates released by the RCY (see Appendix B).

²⁰ Amy M. Salazar, Kevin R. Jones, Jamie Amemiya, Adrian Cherry, Eric C. Brown, Richard F. Catalano, Kathryn C. Monahan, "Defining permanency among older youth in foster care," *Children and Youth Services Review* (2018): 9-16.

Appendix A – Recommendations Related to Custom Adoption from Grand Chief Ed John's Report²¹

Recommendation 48

The Province commit to the creation of an Indigenous custom adoption registry for Indigenous children and youth, such as those models existing in Nunavut and the Northwest Territories:

- B.C. amend the *Adoption Act* to provide a mechanism, such as a custom adoption registrar, to register Indigenous custom adoptions.

Recommendation 49

MCFD ensure all custom adoptions are eligible for post-adoption services and pay rates similar to the current post-adoption assistance, to those caregivers who utilize custom adoptions:

- The determination of necessary post-adoption services should be decided in consultation with Indigenous communities.

²¹ Grand Chief Ed John, *Indigenous Resilience, Connectedness and Reunification – From Root Causes to Root Solutions: A Report on Indigenous Child Welfare in British Columbia* (Victoria, B.C.: Ministry of Children and Family Development), 2016.

Appendix B – Changes to Adoption Numbers

In spring 2018, MCFD found an error within the information system used to record information on adoptions. As a result, some of the information included in this report for the 2015/16 and 2016/17 fiscal years differs from what was stated in previous *B.C. Adoption and Permanency Options Updates* released by the Representative. The following provides a summary of the differences by comparing numbers included in the previous report released in December 2017 to the current report, and the extent to which the numbers have changed between the two time points.

Children Eligible for Adoption

The numbers contained in this report reveal that the ministry previously under-reported the number of children and youth eligible for adoption for the 2015/16 and 2016/17 fiscal years. The ministry has indicated that there are currently no data quality concerns with the revised numbers provided to the RCY for waiting children.

Number of children and youth eligible for adoption by Indigenous status

	Fiscal Year-End					
	March 31, 2016			March 31, 2017		
	2017 Report	Current	Change	2017 Report	Current	Change
Indigenous	433	646	213	344	606	262
Non-Indigenous	445	430	-15	610	362	-248
Total	878	1076	198	954	968	14

Number of children and youth eligible for adoption by age

	Fiscal Year-End					
	March 31, 2016			March 31, 2017		
	2017 Report	Current	Change	2017 Report	Current	Change
Under 12 years	578	726	148	649	658	9
12 years and over	300	350	50	305	310	5
Total	878	1076	198	954	968	14

Adoption Placements

In spring 2018, MCFD identified data quality concerns with the reporting of Indigenous identity of children and youth in care placed for adoption. Information received from MCFD indicates that further investigation of this concern revealed that Indigenous identity had not been captured accurately within the adoption information system. Following a review of the information, the numbers on Indigenous identity were corrected. As a result, figures for previous years have been adjusted and show that a higher number of adoption placements involved Indigenous children and youth than was stated in previous *B.C. Adoption and Permanency Options Updates*.

Number of children and youth placed for adoption by Indigenous status

	2015/16			2016/17		
	2017 Report	Current	Change	2017 Report	Current	Change
Indigenous	152	175	23	124	134	10
Non-Indigenous	210	187	-23	160	147	-13
Total	362	362	0	284	281	-3

Status of Adoptive Home for Indigenous Children and Youth

MCFD indicated that when no information is entered into the information system, it cannot distinguish between whether an adoptive home is non-Indigenous, or if its Indigenous identity was not disclosed, or not entered into the information system. The ministry has informed the RCY in writing that it has not yet explored whether there are any current data quality concerns with this information because it does not report on it.

	2015/16			2016/17		
	2017 Report	Current	Change	2017 Report	Current	Change
Indigenous home	78	89	11	58	59	1
Non-Indigenous home	74	86	12	50	75	9
Status of home unknown	-			16		
Total	152	175	23	124	134	10

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