

**Recommendations Tracking – Update** (see Appendix A for assessment definitions)

**RCY Report: *Alone and Afraid: Lessons learned from the ordeal of a child with special needs and his family***  
**(December 2018)**

**Action Plans: Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Children and Family Development**

April 16, 2020

	Recommendation	Ministry's Response	RCY Assessment
#1	<p>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, 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>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 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; what families can expect when receiving them; and how they complement and relate to one another.</li> </ul>	<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>MCFD will be implementing the new CYSN service framework in Spring 2020.</p>

Recommendation		Ministry's Response	RCY Assessment
#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>	<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 their respite policy, streamline respite services and establish a strategy for supporting families with autism spectrum disorder.</p>
Recommendation		Ministries' Response	RCY Assessment
#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 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</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>MCFD will consider navigation and case coordination within the context of the CYSN Service Framework (spring/summer 2020).</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 what substantive steps have been taken towards implementation of an integrated service delivery system and exploration of a case coordinator other than preliminary</p>

	<p>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>meetings with Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education.</p>
<b>Recommendation</b>		<b>Ministry's Response</b>	<b>RCY Assessment</b>
<b>#4</b>	<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>	<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 focussed 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>• More than 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. The recommended timeline of April 2020 will not be met; revised timeline for launch of training is September 30, 2020</p>
<b>Recommendation</b>		<b>Ministry's Response</b>	<b>RCY Assessment</b>
<b>#5</b>	<p>That MCFD take steps to support child protection social workers to adhere to policy on response times to child 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.</p>	<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> <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> </ul>	<p><b>Some progress</b></p> <p>MCFD has developed strategies to reduce front-line workload and increase family preservation work and continues to assess the feasibility of implementing these strategies.</p>

	MCFD to begin implementation of these changes by April 2019.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <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>	MCFD is streamlining policy to make information accessible to front-line staff but it is unclear what steps they are taking to proactively track adherence to child protection policies.
	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Ministries' Response</b>	<b>RCY Assessment</b>
#6	<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> <li>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).</li> </ul>	<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>Recommendation</b>	<b>Ministry's Response</b>	<b>RCY Assessment</b>
#7	<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>	<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</li> </ul>	<p><b>Some progress</b></p> <p>The Ministry of Education is in the early stages of implementing this recommendation.</p>

		Education to track school aged children who are not enrolled in an educational program or registered as a homeschooler (target is September 2020).	
Recommendation		Ministry's Response	RCY Assessment
#8	<p>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.</p> <p>Ministry of Education to complete this work by September 2020.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ministry of Education will: <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> <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</li> </ul> </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 has not started its review of whether school districts 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. 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>

		supports are required. Branch analysis to inform project plan (targeted for fall 2020).	
Recommendation		Ministry's Response	RCY Assessment
#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>	<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 orientated 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 proceeding if an Indigenous child's parents and community make an agreement that would keep the child safe (Oct. 1, 2018)</li> </ul> </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>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <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</i>, provincial and regional gatherings for DAA and MCFD supervisors, team leaders and leadership staff (in progress; target is March 31, 2020).</li> <li>● Develop and implement Core Child Welfare Policy 1.1: Working with Indigenous Children, Youth, Families and Communities to provide guidance respecting the identity of Indigenous children and collaboration with Indigenous communities.</li> <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 C92: <i>An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families</i> was implemented on Jan. 1, 2020.</li> </ul>	
	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Ministries' Response</b>	<b>RCY Assessment</b>
<b>#10</b>	That the Ministry of Health and MCFD develop a plan to ensure early identification, timely assessment and appropriate and accessible supports	<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</li> </ul>	<p><b>Some progress</b></p> <p>MCFD implemented the Early Years Service Framework. The ministries of</p>



	<p>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>	<p>for enhanced children and youth special needs and child and youth mental health services.</p> <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. 31, 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); and,</li> </ul>	<p>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>
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Recommendation		Ministry's Response	RCY Assessment
#11	<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>	<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>Some progress</b></p> <p>The Ministry of Health has taken steps in an effort to incrementally decrease wait times for assessments, including increased funding and staffing. An additional 444 assessments were completed in 2019/20. However, evidence provided by BCAAN shows that wait times for assessments have increased as a result of increasing demand that is outstripping the additional capacity.”</p>

## **Appendix A:**

### **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).