



ATIPP Request: 25-143

Source of Records: Family and Children's Services

Health and Social Services

ATIPP Request for Response Records 25-143

Annual data relating to the following across the territory:

Over the years, FCS improved its data reporting capabilities. Data collected and reported prior to 2017 are not as extensive as data currently captured. Additionally, from 2013/14 to 2016/17, unique client IDs were reported on for the fiscal year. However, in 2017, FCS no longer received support from HSS corporate services to collect and report data, therefore FCS switched to point-in-time counts reported monthly.

Below are figures from FCS annual reports to the HSS Minister that pertain to your questions. The full annual reports have been attached separately.

Attached separately are the monthly point-in-time data reports from August 2018 to April 2025.

Please note, FCS does not share information based on race in order to maintain client confidentiality. Due to the small caseload sizes in the Yukon, race can be used to identify individuals. The monthly data does report on whether the individual is Yukon First Nation or belongs to an Indigenous group from outside of the territory.

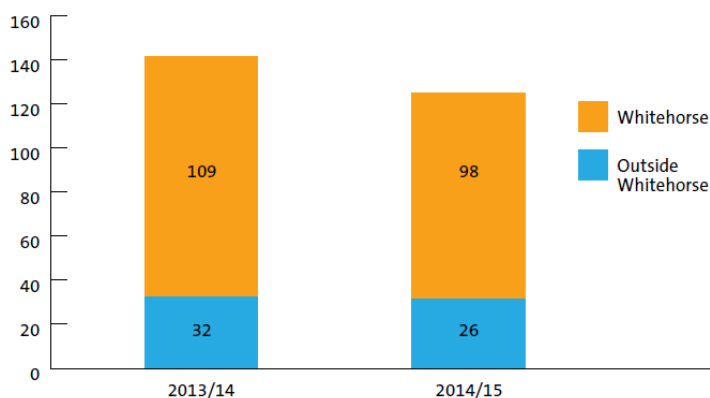
1. Rates of child protection unit investigations, broken down by race of the child;

- FCS does not collect or report on rates of child protection investigations.

2. Child involvement in the Family Support Program, broken down by race of the child;

2014/2015

Number of families receiving preventative support services



2015/16

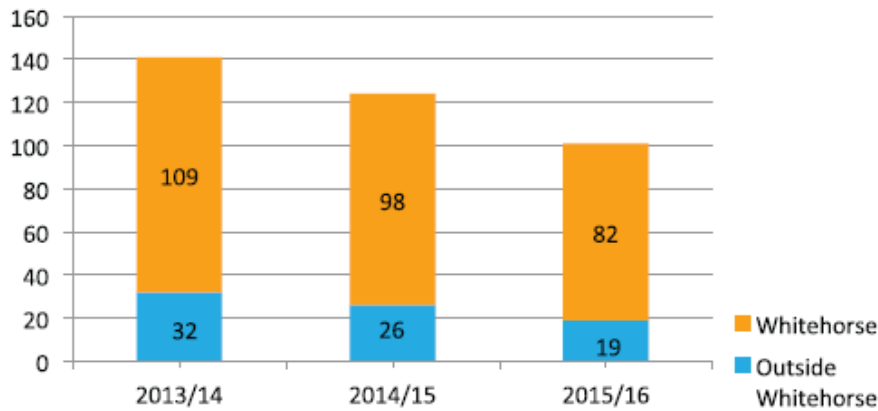
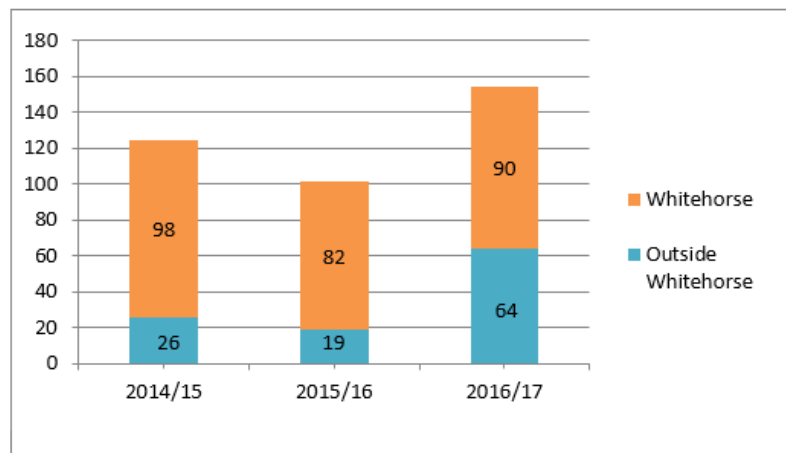
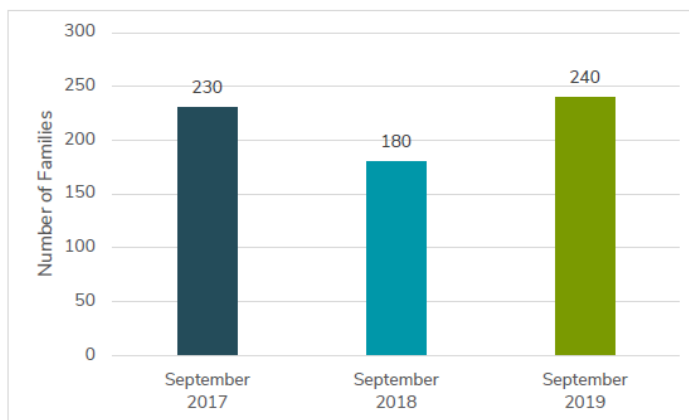
Chart 2: Number of families receiving preventative support services**2016/17****Chart 2: Number of families receiving preventative support services****2017-2019**

Figure 1. Number of families with Agreements for Support Services for Families (ASSFs). This figure shows the number of families with ASSFs in a point-in-time count approach from September 2017 to September 2019. To avoid double counting agreements that may have been renewed over several fiscal years, and to minimize other reporting errors, we chose September (middle of the fiscal year) to provide point-in-time counts during this reporting period.

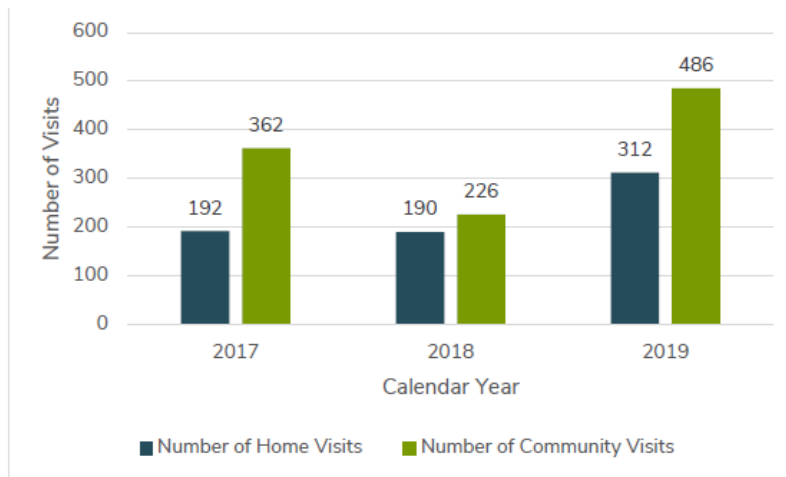


Figure 2. Home visits and community visits conducted by the Family Support program. This figure shows the number of home visits and community provided in the 2017, 2018 and 2019. Home visits are when Family Support Workers meet with families in their place of residence. Community visits are when Family Support Workers meet families in public places within the community.

2020-2022

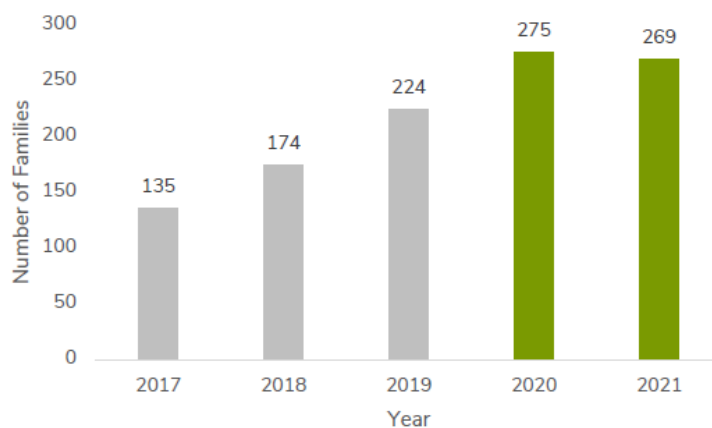


Figure 1 Number of families working with the Family Resource Unit from 2017 to 2021. The data for the reporting period (2020 and 2021 calendar years) are highlighted in green, whereas prior data are grey. Note: The FRU service use data is cumulative for each calendar year. As such, the 2022 statistics are not yet available for reporting.

The Family Resource Unit delivers the Family Support Program.

2023/24

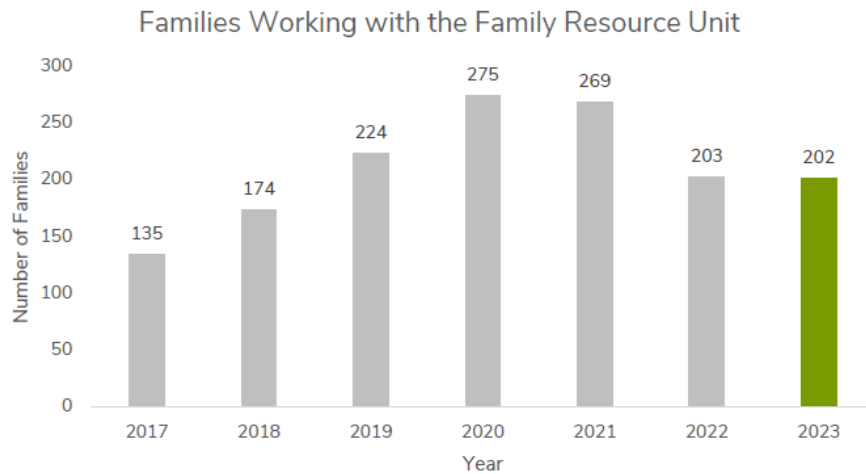


Figure 2 Number of families working with the Family Resource Unit from 2017 to 2023. The data for the reporting period is highlighted in green. Note: FRU service use data is cumulative for each calendar year.

- The Family Resource Unit delivers the Family Support Program.

3. Foster care placement rates, broken down by race;

2017-2019

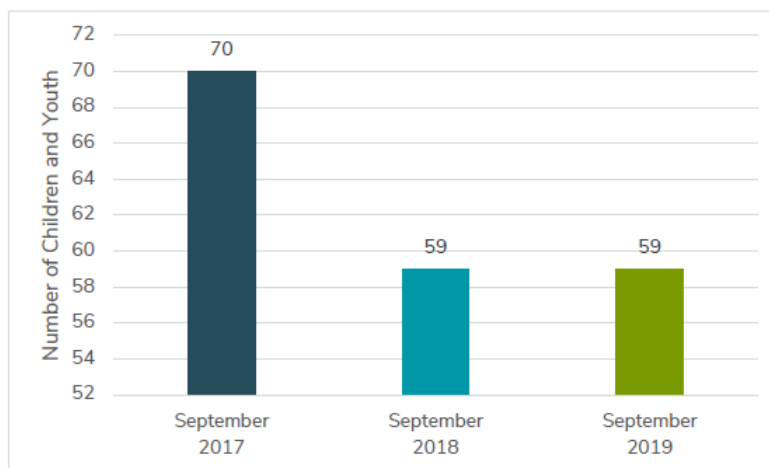


Figure 7. Number of children and youth in care and/or custody of the director placed in the Foster Care program. This figure shows the number of children and youth in the foster care program in a point-in-time count approach from September 2017 to September 2019. To avoid double counting children and youth that may have remained in foster care over several fiscal years and to minimize other reporting errors, we chose September (middle of the fiscal year) to provide point-in-time counts.

2020-2022

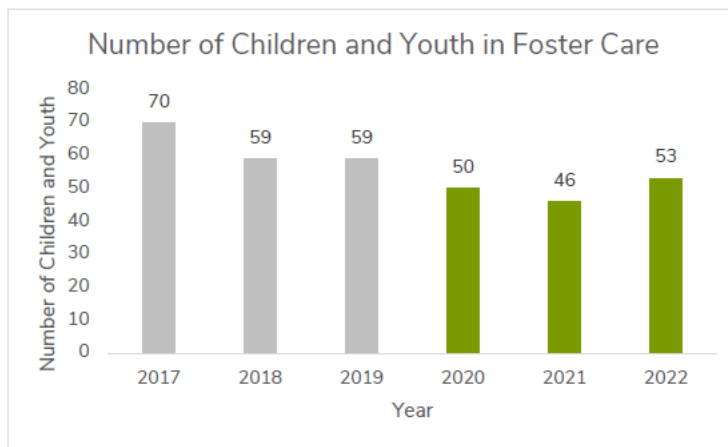


Figure 5 Number of children and youth in the care of the Director who are in foster care from 2017 to 2022. September caseloads were used for each year due to the reporting structure of the previous case management system and to remain consistent with previous annual reports. The data for the reporting period (2020, 2021 and 2022 calendar years) are highlighted in green, whereas prior data are grey.

2023/24

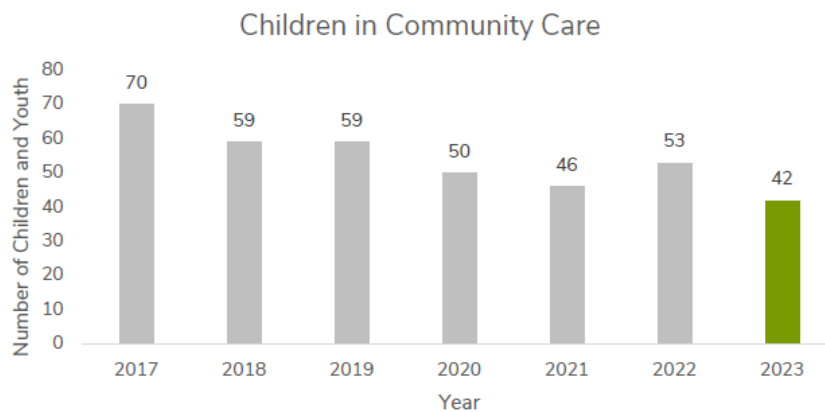


Figure 13 Number of children and youth in the care of the Director who were in community care from 2017 to 2023. September caseloads were used for each year due to the reporting structure of the previous case management system and to remain consistent with previous annual reports. The data for the reporting period is highlighted in green.

4. Group home placement rates, broken down by race;

2017-2019

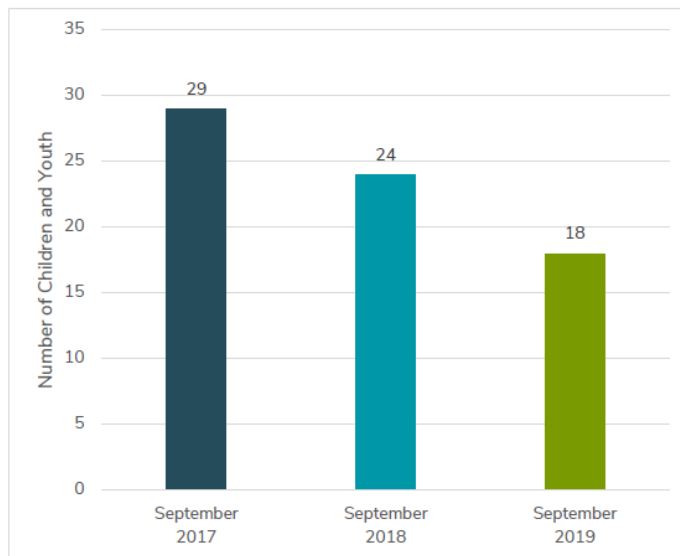


Figure 8. Number of children and youth in the TSS program. This figure shows the number of children and youth in the TSS program, or group care, in a point-in-time count approach from September 2017 to September 2019. To avoid double counting children and youth that may have resided in the TSS program over several fiscal years and to minimize other reporting errors, we chose September (middle of the fiscal year) to provide point-in-time counts.

2020-2022

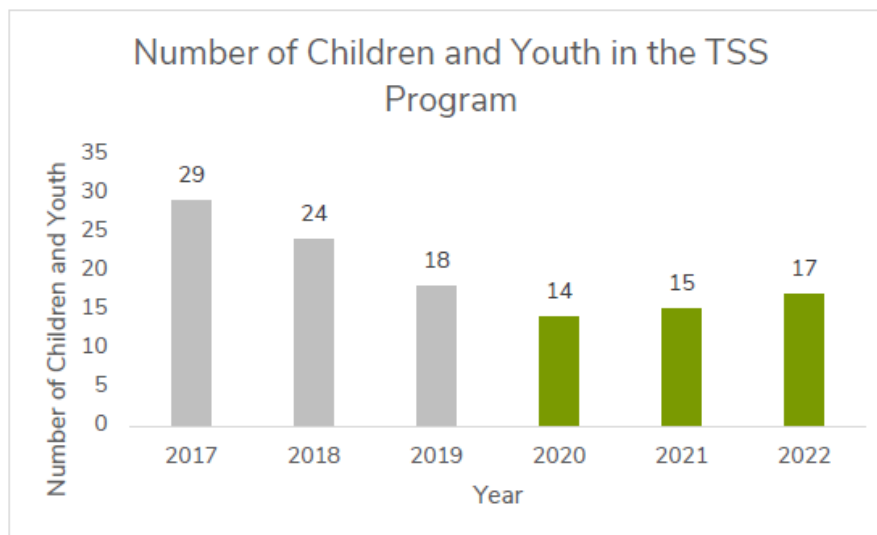


Figure 6 Number of children and youth in care living in group homes from 2017 to 2022. September caseloads were used for each year due to the reporting structure of the previous case management system and to remain consistent with previous annual reports. The data for the reporting period (2020, 2021 and 2022 calendar years) are highlighted in green, whereas prior data are grey.

2023/24

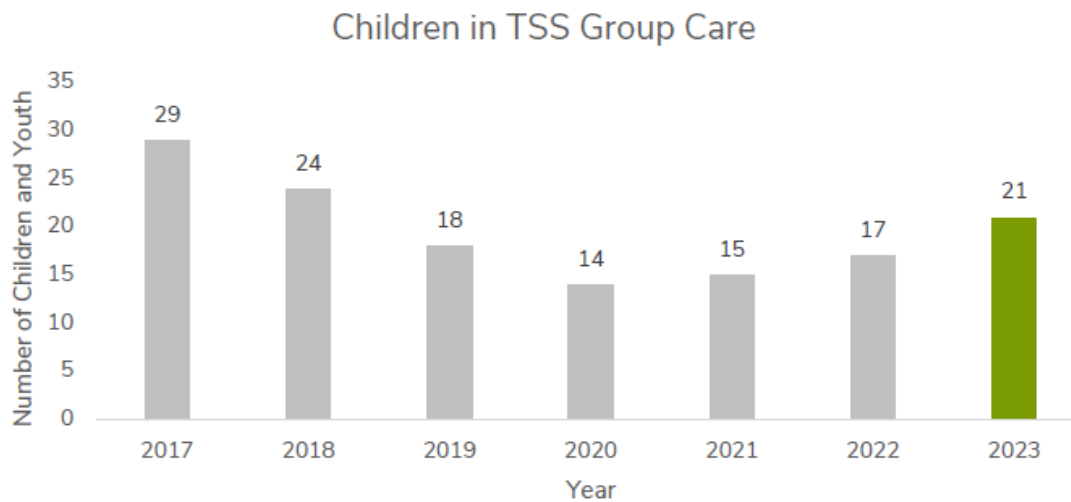
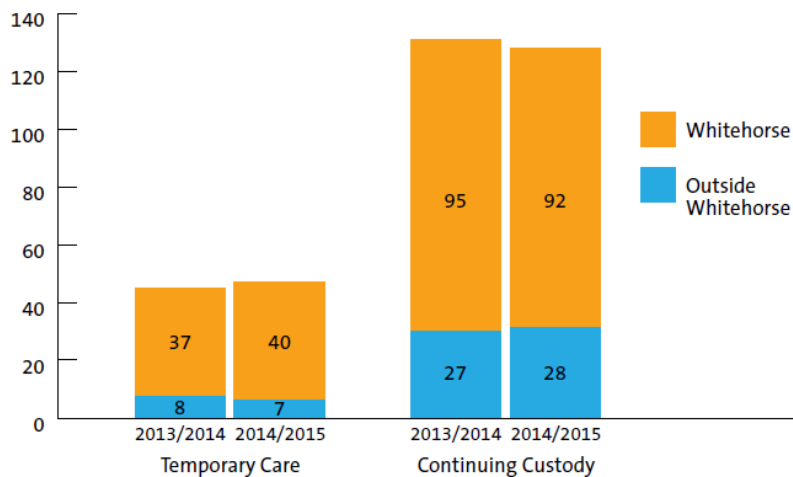


Figure 15 Number of children and youth in care living in group homes from 2017 to 2023. September caseloads were used for each year due to the reporting structure of the previous case management system and to remain consistent with previous annual reports. The data for the reporting period is highlighted in green.

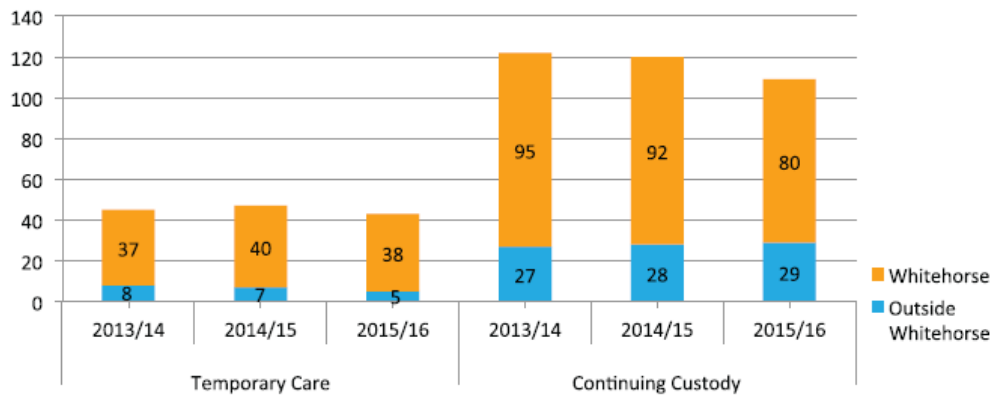
5. Overall rate of children in care/custody of the government, broken down by race;

2014/15

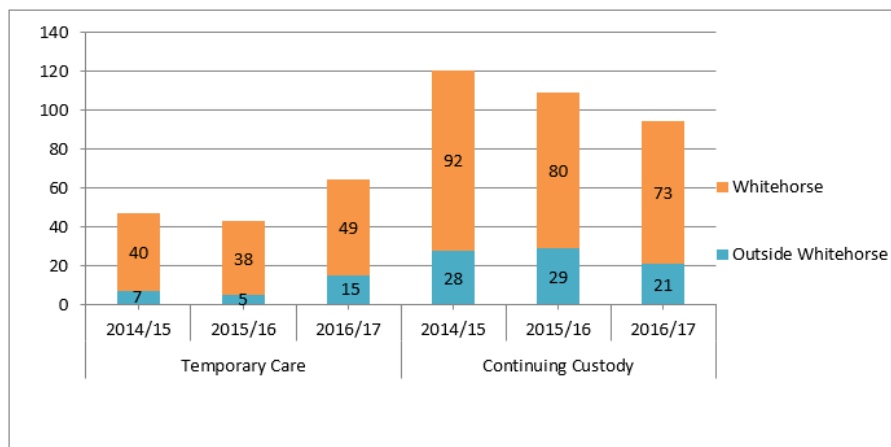
Number of Yukon children in the care or custody of the Director



2015/16

Chart 7: Number of Yukon children in the care or custody of the Director**2016/17**

▲ Chart 3: Number of Yukon children in the care or custody of the Director

**2017-2019**

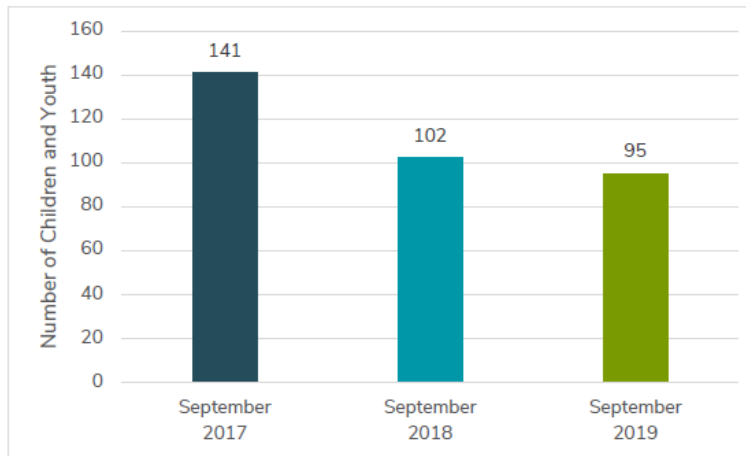


Figure 6. Number of children and youth in the care and/or custody of the director. This figure shows the decrease in the number of children and youth in the care in a point-in-time count approach from September 2017 to September 2019. To avoid double counting children and youth over several fiscal years and to minimize other reporting errors, we chose September (middle of the fiscal year) to provide point-in-time counts. Please note: adding the numbers of children in foster and group care will not directly result in the total number of children in care because the figures would be missing children in other types of placements (e.g. out-of-territory treatment, family visitation, etc.).

2020-2022

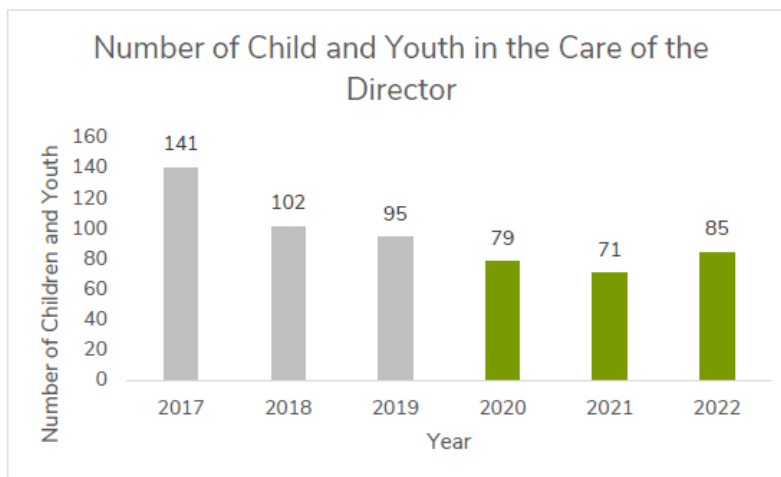
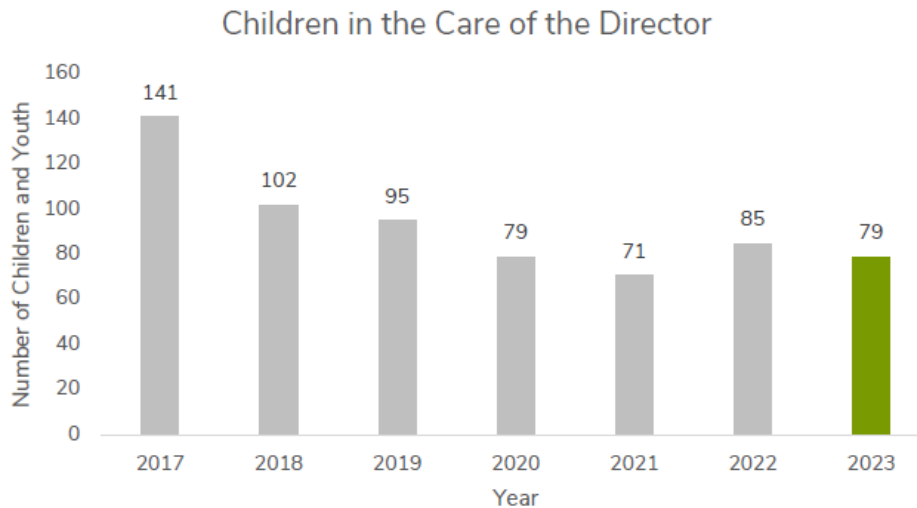


Figure 4 Number of children and youth in the care of the Director in all placement types from 2017 to 2022. September caseloads were used for each year due to the reporting structure of the previous case management system and to remain consistent with previous annual reports. The data for the reporting period (2020, 2021 and 2022 calendar years) are highlighted in green, whereas prior data are grey.

2023/24



6. Reason for FCS intervention (including physical/emotional abuse, physical/emotional neglect, incarceration of primary caregiver, substance abuse in home, mental illness in home, domestic violence in home, death of primary caregiver), broken down by race of the child for each reason.

- FCS does not report statistics based on the reason for intervention. FCS currently collects data on the general reason(s) for involvement (i.e., CFSA s. 21 authority) concerning child protection referrals received, but this information is linked to the parent/caregiver's file not the child's and is not currently reported (i.e., no formal records are available, only raw data).

Timeframe: January 1, 2015 - June 1, 2025.

Family and Children's Services
Monthly Data Profile for April 2024

<u>CHILDREN IN CARE</u>	All children	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Total Children in care	87	57	26	66%	95%
Continuing care order (CCO)	50	37	11	74%	96%
Other types of children in care (VCA/TCO/ITO)	37	20	15	54%	95%

<u>PLACEMENTS FOR CHILDREN IN CARE¹</u>	All children	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Children in care - Community care home	42	32	8	76%	95%
Children in care - YG group home care	25	13	11	52%	96%
Children in care - Private group home care	2	2	-	100%	100%
Children in care - Nts'aw Chua	3	2	-	67%	67%
Children in care - Out of territory	6	-	6	0%	100%
Out-of-territory group home	1	-	1	0%	100%
Out-of-territory community care home	-	-	-	-	-
Out-of-territory extended family home	5	-	5	0%	100%
Children in care - Extended family	7	6	1	86%	100%
Children in care - Parental care	2	2	-	100%	100%
Children in care - Independent living	-	-	-	-	-

<u>COMMUNITY CARE HOMES</u>	All homes	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Community care homes (general, respite, emergency, kinship)	47	14	3	30%	36%

<u>EXTENDED FAMILY CARE AGREEMENTS</u>	Total	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Children in Extended Family Care	98	83	14	85%	99%
Extended Family Placement homes	67	43	10	64%	79%

<u>AGREEMENTS WITH YOUTH</u>	All youth	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Youth Support Services (16-19)	13	5	4	38%	69%
Transitional Support Services (19-26)	56	37	14	66%	91%

<u>NTS'AW CHUA</u>	All youth	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Residents	6	4	1	67%	83%

¹Placements for children in continuing care (CCO) and other types of care (VCA/TCO/ITO).

Family and Children's Services

Monthly Data Profile for May 2024

CHILDREN IN CARE	All children	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Total Children in care	89	59	26	66%	96%
Continuing care order (CCO)	52	37	13	71%	96%
Other types of children in care (VCA/TCO/ITO)	37	22	13	59%	95%

PLACEMENTS FOR CHILDREN IN CARE¹	All children	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Children in care - Community care home	45	35	8	78%	96%
Children in care - YG group home care	25	12	12	48%	96%
Children in care - Private group home care	1	1	-	100%	100%
Children in care - Nts'aw Chua	3	2	-	67%	67%
Children in care - Out of territory	5	-	5	0%	100%
Out-of-territory group home	1	-	1	0%	100%
Out-of-territory community care home	-	-	-	-	-
Out-of-territory extended family home	4	-	4	0%	100%
Children in care - Extended family	8	7	1	88%	100%
Children in care - Parental care	2	2	-	100%	100%
Children in care - Independent living	-	-	-	-	-

COMMUNITY CARE HOMES	All homes	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Community care homes (general, respite, emergency, kinship)	43	12	3	28%	35%

EXTENDED FAMILY CARE AGREEMENTS	Total	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Children in Extended Family Care	96	80	15	83%	99%
Extended Family Placement homes	63	41	10	65%	81%

AGREEMENTS WITH YOUTH	All youth	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Youth Support Services (16-19)	14	7	3	50%	71%
Transitional Support Services (19-26)	55	37	13	67%	91%

NTS'AW CHUA	All youth	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Residents	7	5	1	71%	86%

¹Placements for children in continuing care (CCO) and other types of care (VCA/TCO/ITO).

Family and Children's Services

Monthly Data Profile for June 2024

CHILDREN IN CARE	All children	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Total Children in care	92	61	27	66%	96%
Continuing care order (CCO)	52	37	13	71%	96%
Other types of children in care (VCA/TCO/ITO)	40	24	14	60%	95%

PLACEMENTS FOR CHILDREN IN CARE¹	All children	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Children in care - Community care home	44	33	9	75%	95%
Children in care - YG group home care	25	13	11	52%	96%
Children in care - Private group home care	1	1	-	100%	100%
Children in care - Nts'aw Chua	3	2	-	67%	67%
Children in care - Out of territory	5	-	5	0%	100%
Out-of-territory group home	1	-	1	0%	100%
Out-of-territory community care home	-	-	-	-	-
Out-of-territory extended family home	4	-	4	0%	100%
Children in care - Extended family	11	10	1	91%	100%
Children in care - Parental care	3	2	1	67%	100%
Children in care - Independent living	-	-	-	-	-

COMMUNITY CARE HOMES	All homes	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Community care homes (general, respite, emergency, kinship)	41	12	3	29%	37%

EXTENDED FAMILY CARE AGREEMENTS	Total	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Children in Extended Family Care	93	78	14	84%	99%
Extended Family Placement homes	60	39	8	65%	78%

AGREEMENTS WITH YOUTH	All youth	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Youth Support Services (16-19)	15	7	3	47%	67%
Transitional Support (Post-Care) Services (19-26)	57	38	14	67%	91%

NTS'AW CHUA	All youth	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Residents	7	5	1	71%	86%

¹Placements for children in continuing care (CCO) and other types of care (VCA/TCO/ITO).

Family and Children's Services

Monthly Data Profile for July 2024

CHILDREN IN CARE	All children	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Total Children in care	92	62	26	67%	96%
Continuing care order (CCO)	54	39	13	72%	96%
Other types of children in care (VCA/TCO/ITO)	38	23	13	61%	95%

PLACEMENTS FOR CHILDREN IN CARE¹	All children	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Children in care - Community care home	41	31	8	76%	95%
Children in care - YG group home care	27	15	11	56%	96%
Children in care - Private group home care	2	1	1	50%	100%
Children in care - Nts'aw Chua	6	5	-	83%	83%
Children in care - Out of territory	5	-	5	0%	100%
Out-of-territory group home	1	-	1	0%	100%
Out-of-territory community care home	-	-	-	-	-
Out-of-territory extended family home	4	-	4	0%	100%
Children in care - Extended family	9	8	1	89%	100%
Children in care - Parental care	2	2	-	100%	100%
Children in care - Independent living	-	-	-	-	-

COMMUNITY CARE HOMES	All homes	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Community care homes (general, respite, emergency, kinship)	42	12	3	29%	36%

EXTENDED FAMILY CARE AGREEMENTS	Total	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Children in Extended Family Care	98	81	15	83%	98%
Extended Family Placement homes	61	40	8	66%	79%

AGREEMENTS WITH YOUTH	All youth	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Youth Support Services (16-19)	15	7	3	47%	67%
Transitional Support (Post-Care) Services (19-26)	57	38	14	67%	91%

NTS'AW CHUA	Total	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Residents	10	8	1	80%	90%

¹Placements for children in continuing care (CCO) and other types of care (VCA/TCO/ITO).

Family and Children's Services

Monthly Data Profile for August 2024

CHILDREN IN CARE	All children	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Total Children in care	96	63	28	66%	95%
Continuing care order (CCO)	55	40	13	73%	96%
Other types of children in care (VCA/TCO/ITO)	41	23	15	56%	93%

PLACEMENTS FOR CHILDREN IN CARE¹	All children	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Children in care - Community care home	41	31	8	76%	95%
Children in care - YG group home care	29	15	12	52%	93%
Children in care - Private group home care	2	1	1	50%	100%
Children in care - Nts'äw Chua	8	7	-	88%	88%
Children in care - Out of territory	1	-	1	0%	100%
Out-of-territory group home	1	-	1	0%	100%
Out-of-territory community care home	-	-	-	-	-
Out-of-territory extended family home	-	-	-	-	-
Children in care - Extended family	12	7	5	58%	100%
Children in care - Parental care	3	2	1	67%	100%
Children in care - Independent living	-	-	-	-	-

COMMUNITY CARE HOMES	All homes	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Community care homes (general, respite, emergency, kinship)	42	13	3	31%	38%

EXTENDED FAMILY CARE AGREEMENTS	Total	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Children in Extended Family Care	94	79	11	84%	96%
Extended Family Placement homes	59	38	8	64%	78%

AGREEMENTS WITH YOUTH	All youth	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Youth Support Services (16-19)	15	7	4	47%	73%
Transitional Support (Post-Care) Services (19-26)	58	38	14	66%	90%

NTS'ÄW CHUA	Total	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Residents	11	9	1	82%	91%

¹Placements for children in continuing care (CCO) and other types of care (VCA/TCO/ITO).

Family and Children's Services
Monthly Data Profile for September 2024

<u>CHILDREN IN CARE</u>	All children	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Total Children in care	93	62	27	67%	96%
Continuing care order (CCO)	53	38	13	72%	96%
Other types of children in care (VCA/TCO/ITO)	40	24	14	60%	95%

<u>PLACEMENTS FOR CHILDREN IN CARE¹</u>	All children	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Children in care - Community care home	37	28	7	76%	95%
Children in care - YG group home care	29	15	13	52%	97%
Children in care - Private group home care	2	1	1	50%	100%
Children in care - Nts'aw Chua	8	7	-	88%	88%
Children in care - Out of territory	1	-	1	0%	100%
Out-of-territory group home	1	-	1	0%	100%
Out-of-territory community care home	-	-	-	-	-
Out-of-territory extended family home	-	-	-	-	-
Children in care - Extended family	14	9	5	64%	100%
Children in care - Parental care	2	2	-	100%	100%
Children in care - Independent living	-	-	-	-	-

<u>COMMUNITY CARE HOMES</u>	All homes	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Community care homes (general, respite, emergency, kinship)	41	13	3	32%	39%

<u>EXTENDED FAMILY CARE AGREEMENTS</u>	Total	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Children in Extended Family Care	88	74	9	84%	94%
Extended Family Placement homes	61	39	8	64%	77%

<u>AGREEMENTS WITH YOUTH</u>	All youth	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Youth Support Services (16-19)	16	7	4	44%	69%
Transitional Support (Post-Care) Services (19-26)	56	37	13	66%	89%

<u>NTS'AW CHUA</u>	Total	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Residents	11	9	1	82%	91%

¹Placements for children in continuing care (CCO) and other types of care (VCA/TCO/ITO).

Family and Children's Services

Monthly Data Profile for October 2024

CHILDREN IN CARE	All children	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Total Children in care	99	67	27	68%	95%
Continuing care order (CCO)	54	38	14	70%	96%
Other types of children in care (VCA/TCO/ITO)	45	29	13	64%	93%

PLACEMENTS FOR CHILDREN IN CARE¹	All children	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Children in care - Community care home	38	29	7	76%	95%
Children in care - YG group home care	33	19	13	58%	97%
Children in care - Private group home care	2	1	1	50%	100%
Children in care - Nts'aw Chua	8	7	-	88%	88%
Children in care - Out of territory	5	-	5	0%	100%
Out-of-territory group home	1	-	1	0%	100%
Out-of-territory community care home	-	-	-	-	-
Out-of-territory extended family home	4	-	4	0%	100%
Children in care - Extended family	11	9	1	82%	91%
Children in care - Parental care	2	2	-	100%	100%
Children in care - Independent living	-	-	-	-	-

COMMUNITY CARE HOMES	All homes	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Community care homes (general, respite, emergency, kinship)	44	12	3	27%	34%

EXTENDED FAMILY CARE AGREEMENTS	Total	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Children in Extended Family Care	90	78	11	87%	99%
Extended Family Placement homes	63	42	8	67%	79%

AGREEMENTS WITH YOUTH	All youth	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Youth Support Services (16-19)	14	7	3	50%	71%
Transitional Support (Post-Care) Services (19-26)	58	39	14	67%	91%

NTS'AW CHUA	Total	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Residents	11	9	1	82%	91%

¹Placements for children in continuing care (CCO) and other types of care (VCA/TCO/ITO).

Family and Children's Services
Monthly Data Profile for November 2024

<u>CHILDREN IN CARE</u>	All children	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Total Children in care	97	66	26	68%	95%
Continuing care order (CCO)	55	39	14	71%	96%
Other types of children in care (VCA/TCO/ITO)	43	27	13	63%	93%

<u>PLACEMENTS FOR CHILDREN IN CARE¹</u>	All children	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Children in care - Community care home	37	28	7	76%	95%
Children in care - YG group home care	31	17	13	55%	97%
Children in care - Private group home care	1	1	-	100%	100%
Children in care - Nts'äw Chua	8	7	-	88%	88%
Children in care - Out of territory	5	-	5	0%	100%
Out-of-territory group home	1	-	1	0%	100%
Out-of-territory community care home	-	-	-	-	-
Out-of-territory extended family home	4	-	4	0%	100%
Children in care - Extended family	11	9	1	82%	91%
Children in care - Parental care	3	3	-	100%	100%
Children in care - Independent living	1	1	-	100%	100%

<u>COMMUNITY CARE HOMES</u>	All homes	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Community care homes (general, respite, emergency, kinship)	52	14	5	27%	37%

<u>EXTENDED FAMILY CARE AGREEMENTS</u>	Total	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Children in Extended Family Care	93	81	11	87%	99%
Extended Family Placement homes	66	44	8	67%	79%

<u>AGREEMENTS WITH YOUTH</u>	All youth	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Youth Support Services (16-19)	15	8	4	53%	80%
Transitional Support (Post-Care) Services (19-26)	60	40	15	67%	92%

<u>NTS'ÄW CHUA</u>	Total	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Residents	11	9	1	82%	91%

¹Placements for children in continuing care (CCO) and other types of care (VCA/TCO/ITO).

Family and Children's Services
Monthly Data Profile for December 2024

<u>CHILDREN IN CARE</u>	All children	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Total Children in care	99	66	27	67%	94%
Continuing care order (CCO)	55	39	14	71%	96%
Other types of children in care (VCA/TCO/ITO)	44	27	13	61%	91%

<u>PLACEMENTS FOR CHILDREN IN CARE¹</u>	All children	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Children in care - Community care home	37	28	7	76%	95%
Children in care - YG group home care	33	17	14	52%	94%
Children in care - Private group home care	1	1	-	100%	100%
Children in care - Nts'äw Chua	8	7	-	88%	88%
Children in care - Out of territory	5	-	5	0%	100%
Out-of-territory group home	1	-	1	0%	100%
Out-of-territory community care home	-	-	-	-	-
Out-of-territory extended family home	4	-	4	0%	100%
Children in care - Extended family	11	9	1	82%	91%
Children in care - Parental care	3	3	-	100%	100%
Children in care - Independent living	1	1	-	100%	100%

<u>COMMUNITY CARE HOMES</u>	All homes	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Community care homes (general, respite, emergency, kinship)	55	14	5	25%	35%

<u>EXTENDED FAMILY CARE AGREEMENTS</u>	Total	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Children in Extended Family Care	94	80	11	85%	97%
Extended Family Placement homes	66	44	8	67%	79%

<u>AGREEMENTS WITH YOUTH</u>	All youth	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Youth Support Services (16-19)	14	6	5	43%	79%
Transitional Support (Post-Care) Services (19-26)	60	40	15	67%	92%

<u>NTS'ÄW CHUA</u>	Total	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Residents	11	9	1	82%	91%

¹Placements for children in continuing care (CCO) and other types of care (VCA/TCO/ITO).

Family and Children's Services

Monthly Data Profile for January 2025

<u>CHILDREN IN CARE</u>	All children	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Total Children in care	99	65	29	66%	95%
Continuing care order (CCO)	54	38	14	70%	96%
Other types of children in care (VCA/TCO/ITO)	45	27	15	60%	93%

<u>PLACEMENTS FOR CHILDREN IN CARE¹</u>	All children	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Children in care - Community care home	41	31	8	76%	95%
Children in care - YG group home care	33	17	15	52%	97%
Children in care - Private group home care	2	1	-	50%	50%
Children in care - Nts'äw Chua	7	7	-	100%	100%
Children in care - Out of territory	5	-	5	0%	100%
Out-of-territory group home	1	-	1	0%	100%
Out-of-territory community care home	-	-	-	-	-
Out-of-territory extended family home	4	-	4	0%	100%
Children in care - Extended family	9	7	1	78%	89%
Children in care - Parental care	1	1	-	100%	100%
Children in care - Independent living	1	1	-	100%	100%

<u>COMMUNITY CARE HOMES</u>	All homes	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Community care homes (general, respite, emergency, kinship)	56	14	5	25%	34%

<u>EXTENDED FAMILY CARE AGREEMENTS</u>	Total	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Children in Extended Family Care	93	81	11	87%	99%
Extended Family Placement homes	68	46	8	68%	79%

<u>AGREEMENTS WITH YOUTH</u>	All youth	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Youth Support Services (16-19)	12	6	4	50%	83%
Transitional Support (Post-Care) Services (19-26)	61	40	15	66%	90%

<u>NTS'ÄW CHUA</u>	Total	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Residents	11	10	1	91%	100%

¹Placements for children in continuing care (CCO) and other types of care (VCA/TCO/ITO).

Family and Children's Services
Monthly Data Profile for February 2025

<u>CHILDREN IN CARE</u>	All children	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Total Children in care	94	64	26	68%	96%
Continuing care order (CCO)	51	37	12	73%	96%
Other types of children in care (VCA/TCO/ITO)	43	27	14	63%	95%

<u>PLACEMENTS FOR CHILDREN IN CARE¹</u>	All children	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Children in care - Community care home	37	30	5	81%	95%
Children in care - YG group home care	35	19	15	54%	97%
Children in care - Private group home care	1	-	-	0%	0%
Children in care - Nts'äw Chua	6	6	-	100%	100%
Children in care - Out of territory	5	-	5	0%	100%
Out-of-territory group home	1	-	1	0%	100%
Out-of-territory community care home	-	-	-	-	-
Out-of-territory extended family home	4	-	4	0%	100%
Children in care - Extended family	7	6	1	86%	100%
Children in care - Parental care	1	1	-	100%	100%
Children in care - Independent living	2	2	-	100%	100%

<u>COMMUNITY CARE HOMES</u>	All homes	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Community care homes (general, respite, emergency, kinship)	57	14	5	25%	33%

<u>EXTENDED FAMILY CARE AGREEMENTS</u>	Total	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Children in Extended Family Care	94	79	13	84%	98%
Extended Family Placement homes	66	45	8	68%	80%

<u>AGREEMENTS WITH YOUTH</u>	All youth	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Youth Support Services (16-19)	12	6	4	50%	83%
Transitional Support (Post-Care) Services (19-26)	63	42	15	67%	90%

<u>NTS'ÄW CHUA</u>	Total	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Residents	10	9	1	90%	100%

¹Placements for children in continuing care (CCO) and other types of care (VCA/TCO/ITO).

Family and Children's Services

Monthly Data Profile for March 2025

CHILDREN IN CARE	All children	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Total Children in care	97	64	29	66%	96%
Continuing care order (CCO)	54	38	14	70%	96%
Other types of children in care (VCA/TCO/ITO)	43	26	15	60%	95%

PLACEMENTS FOR CHILDREN IN CARE¹	All children	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Children in care - Community care home	39	30	7	77%	95%
Children in care - YG group home care	34	18	15	53%	97%
Children in care - Private group home care	1	-	-	0%	0%
Children in care - Nts'aw Chua	7	6	1	86%	100%
Children in care - Out of territory	5	-	5	0%	100%
Out-of-territory group home	1	-	1	0%	100%
Out-of-territory community care home	-	-	-	-	-
Out-of-territory extended family home	4	-	4	0%	100%
Children in care - Extended family	8	7	1	88%	100%
Children in care - Parental care	1	1	-	100%	100%
Children in care - Independent living	2	2	-	100%	100%

COMMUNITY CARE HOMES	All homes	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Community care homes (general, respite, emergency, kinship)	59	13	4	22%	29%

EXTENDED FAMILY CARE AGREEMENTS	Total	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Children in Extended Family Care	94	81	11	86%	98%
Extended Family Placement homes	67	47	7	70%	81%

AGREEMENTS WITH YOUTH	All youth	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Youth Support Services (16-19)	10	5	3	50%	80%
Transitional Support (Post-Care) Services (19-26)	63	42	16	67%	92%

NTS'AW CHUA	Total	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Residents	11	9	2	82%	100%

¹Placements for children in continuing care (CCO) and other types of care (VCA/TCO/ITO).

Family and Children's Services

Monthly Data Profile for April 2025

CHILDREN IN CARE	All children	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Total Children in care	98	65	29	66%	96%
Continuing care order (CCO)	53	37	14	70%	96%
Other types of children in care (VCA/TCO/ITO)	45	28	15	62%	96%

PLACEMENTS FOR CHILDREN IN CARE¹	All children	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Children in care - Community care home	41	32	7	78%	95%
Children in care - YG group home care	37	17	19	46%	97%
Children in care - Private group home care	1	-	-	0%	0%
Children in care - Nts'äw Chua	7	6	1	86%	100%
Children in care - Out of territory	1	-	1	0%	100%
Out-of-territory group home	1	-	1	0%	100%
Out-of-territory community care home	-	-	-	-	-
Out-of-territory extended family home	-	-	-	-	-
Children in care - Extended family	9	8	1	89%	100%
Children in care - Parental care	1	1	-	100%	100%
Children in care - Independent living	1	1	-	100%	100%

COMMUNITY CARE HOMES	All homes	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Community care homes (general, respite, emergency, kinship)	62	15	3	24%	29%

EXTENDED FAMILY CARE AGREEMENTS	Total	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Children in Extended Family Care	94	80	12	85%	98%
Extended Family Placement homes	66	48	7	73%	83%

AGREEMENTS WITH YOUTH	All youth	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Youth Support Services (16-19)	9	5	3	56%	89%
Transitional Support (Post-Care) Services (19-26)	65	43	15	66%	89%

NTS'ÄW CHUA	Total	Yukon FN	Indigenous - OOT	% Yukon FN	% Indigenous
Residents	11	9	2	82%	100%

¹Placements for children in continuing care (CCO) and other types of care (VCA/TCO/ITO).

Yukon Family and Children's Services

A photograph showing the silhouettes of a family of five walking up a grassy hill. The sun is low on the horizon to the left, creating a bright glow and casting long shadows. The family consists of two adults and three children. One child is in the foreground, bending over. The others are further up the hill, walking towards the right.

Child and Family Services Act 2014/15 **Annual Report**

Message from the Director

In 2014/15, under the mandate of the *Child and Family Services Act*, the Department of Health and Social Services continued to support families and extended families in caring for their children; continued to strengthen cooperative planning processes, including the Family Group Conferencing program; and continued to collaborate with families and First Nations to maintain important cultural connections for children in out-of-home care.

The department also moved forward on a number of initiatives to strengthen collaboration with First Nations. This included development of a Memorandum of Agreement with Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation, creation of a cultural committee in residential group homes with First Nation elder representation, and increasing family support worker funding for First Nations.

Commencing work with the Youth Transition to Adulthood Committee in May 2014 was a significant step forward in addressing one of our most pressing areas requiring improvement – supporting youth in care as they transition to adulthood. The work of this multi-stakeholder committee will continue in 2015/16 as we strengthen planning and supports for youth in care.

I would like to extend my thanks and gratitude to staff, First Nations and community partners for their professional and caring work in support of children and families across Yukon. I look forward to working with you all in the coming year.

Lydia Fawcett
A/Director, Family and Children's Services
Yukon Health and Social Services

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Yukon Child and Family Services Act 2014/15 Annual Report



Executive Summary

The 2014/15 *Child and Family Services Act (CFSA)* Annual Report is a departure from previous iterations. In keeping with the commitment to improve performance measurement and reporting, a greater focus has been placed on quantitative measures, including results from internal audits. The Department of Health and Social Services (the department) intends to include more performance measurements in subsequent annual reports as the capacity for data collection and analysis increases.

This report contains quantitative and qualitative data on program developments, strategic initiatives, and service provision under the *CFSA*. Information is presented according to some of the important themes within the *CFSA*, such as collaboration and inclusive decision-making with First Nations and families, recognition of the importance of cultural connections for children and families, and support for families to care for their children.

In 2014/15, the department:

- developed a Memorandum of Agreement with Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation, which is to be signed in 2015/16;
- increased funding agreements with First Nations to provide two additional family support workers;
- continued to work directly with families through cooperative planning processes, including the Family Group Conferencing program;
- initiated a cultural committee for youth in residential group homes to ensure that connections with cultural communities are maintained; and
- continued to develop internal cultural awareness through staff training.

Efforts to improve service delivery also continued in 2014/15, as the department:

- implemented tracking systems to monitor service standard compliance;
- launched a project to identify and plan development of a new child welfare case management system;
- worked with the multi-stakeholder Youth Transition to Adulthood Committee to address planning and supports for youth leaving government care and entering adulthood; and
- improved financial processes to ensure foster parents receive timely payments.



Strategic Context

Legislative

Child and family services in Yukon are provided under the mandate of the *Child and Family Services Act (CFSA)*. The *CFSA* was proclaimed in 2010, and replaced the *Children's Act*, which had been in force since 1984. The *CFSA* signalled a new approach to child welfare services, with guiding principles for the collaborative development and delivery of services to children and families.

Demographics and Geography

Yukon had an estimated population of 37,251 in 2014/15 (June 2014). First Nations comprised 21% of the Yukon population. For the entire Yukon population, approximately 21.5% were under the age of 20; in the First Nations population, 30.3% were under the age of 20.

For the entire Yukon population, 77% lived in the Whitehorse area, while 23% lived outside Whitehorse. By comparison, the First Nations population was much more evenly spread between urban and rural communities, with 54% living in the Whitehorse area and 46% living outside Whitehorse.

The Department of Health and Social Services (the department) employs an innovative model for delivering child and family services to a large and concentrated urban population and a smaller more sparsely-distributed rural population. In Whitehorse, child welfare services are delivered under a specialist model, with social workers specialising in child protection, family support, child-in-care services and foster home supports. Outside Whitehorse, child welfare services are delivered under a generalist model, with one regional social worker delivering all child welfare services to children, families, and extended families.

Collaboration with First Nations

The *CFSA* provides for early and continued involvement of First Nations at key points along the continuum of service. This involvement occurs in both the planning of child welfare services and decision-making for families of a First Nation.

In 2014/15, the department and Yukon First Nations continued to strengthen relationships and increase capacity for collaboration.

- A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) signed in October 2012 between the department and Kwanlin Dün First Nation outlines the procedures for collaborative service provision to Kwanlin Dün members under the *CFSA*. This MOA was also intended to serve as a model for developing similar agreements with other Yukon First Nations. In 2014/15, the department and Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation drafted an MOA, which is expected to be finalised in 2015/16.
- In 2014/15 the department completed a funding agreement with Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation to provide a family support worker position. This increased the number of First Nations with funding agreements for family support workers to seven. The department also increased the existing funding agreement with Kwanlin Dün First Nation to add an additional family support position.
- The department and First Nations have established a number of forums in which to foster ongoing collaboration. The department meets quarterly with First Nation health and social services directors to discuss policies and service provision under the *CFSA*. In Whitehorse, child welfare staff meet monthly with Kwanlin Dün First Nation, and as required with the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council. In most communities outside Whitehorse, interagency meetings are held regularly between First Nations representatives, social workers and other community and government partners.

First Nation family support workers partner with department of Health and Social Services staff to assist and support children and families involved in the child welfare system. Family support workers help ensure services are culturally appropriate, accompany social workers in responding to child protection concerns, and participate in planning and decision making.

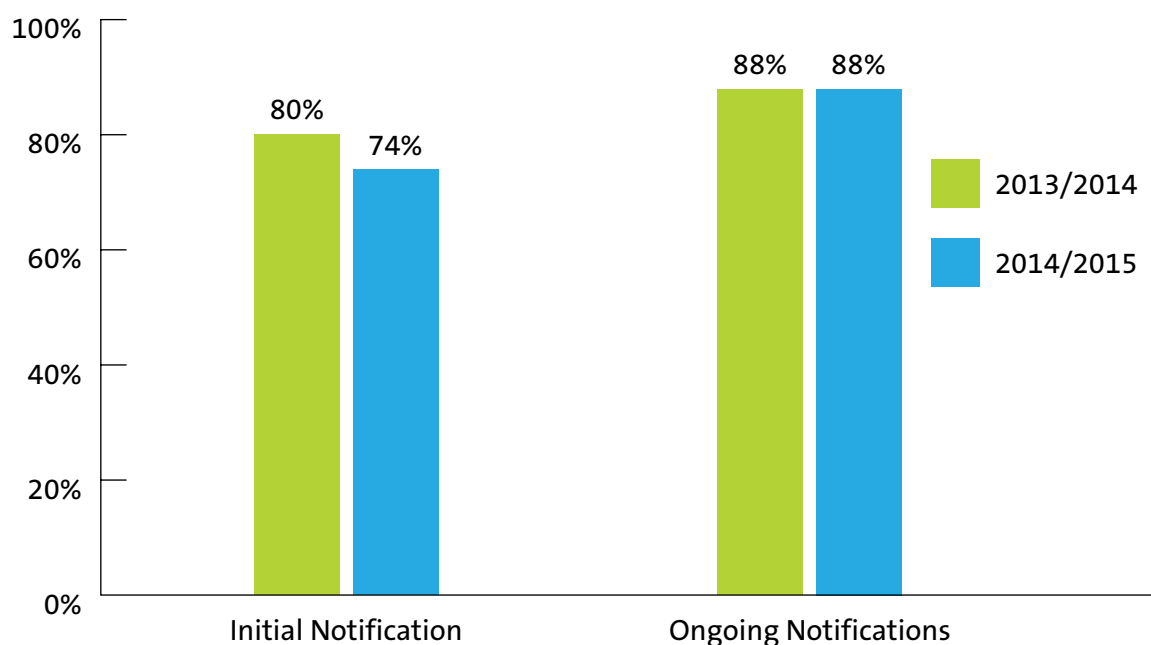
2014/15 Service Provision:

Early and ongoing involvement of First Nations

When a First Nations child is in need of protective intervention or when a First Nations child comes into the care or custody of the Director, social workers are required to notify the child's First Nation either immediately, or as soon as practicable. Internal compliance audits on a random sample of case files in 2014/15 found that in these situations, the child's First Nation was notified immediately or as soon practicable in 74% of cases, compared to 80% in 2013/14. A similar review by the Auditor General of Canada (see page 22 of this report) found 93% compliance for this service standard on case files between 2010/11 and 2011/12. The department is committed to increasing the consistency with which social workers notify First Nations when children in their community require protective intervention.

Internal compliance audits found high rates of ongoing notification of the child's First Nation by social workers in 2014/15 (Chart 1). Ongoing notification includes providing updates at key times during a social worker's involvement with a family.

Chart 1: Initial¹ and ongoing notification of a child's First Nation



First Nations involvement in cooperative case planning, including Family Group Conferencing (see page 8 of this report), is an important element of both inclusive decision-making and collaboration with First Nations. In 2013/14 and 2014/15, First Nations representatives participated in 100% of the Family Group Conferences held for their members.

¹ Audit results for this measure (initial notification of a child's First Nation) in 2013/14 were based on a significantly smaller sample size (five case files) than in 2014/15 (23 case files).

Collaborative and Inclusive Decision-Making

Collaborative and inclusive decision-making is a foundational principle within the *CFSA*. As part of case work, this is referred to as cooperative planning, where families, extended family members, First Nations representatives (where applicable), and community supports are invited to develop plans with the social worker to address protection concerns, placement options and transitions. Cooperative planning takes many forms, and is often incorporated directly into social workers' practice. This inclusive practice exemplifies the different approach to child welfare service delivery under the *CFSA*.

One type of cooperative planning process in Yukon is Family Group Conferencing. In a Family Group Conference (FGC), a neutral FGC specialist organizes and facilitates a half-day conference with the social worker, the family, extended family members, First Nations representatives (where applicable), and community supports. During an FGC, safety and other concerns are discussed between participants, and the family takes the lead in developing a plan that is presented to the social worker for agreement.

In 2014/15, the department:

- provided an update on Family Group Conferencing processes to the Council of Yukon First Nations health and social service directors in November 2014;
- provided training sessions to social workers in Whitehorse and rural communities on Family Group Conferencing processes in September and October 2014; and
- implemented a Family Group Conferencing database to better track work related to organizing conferences, as well as conference outcomes.

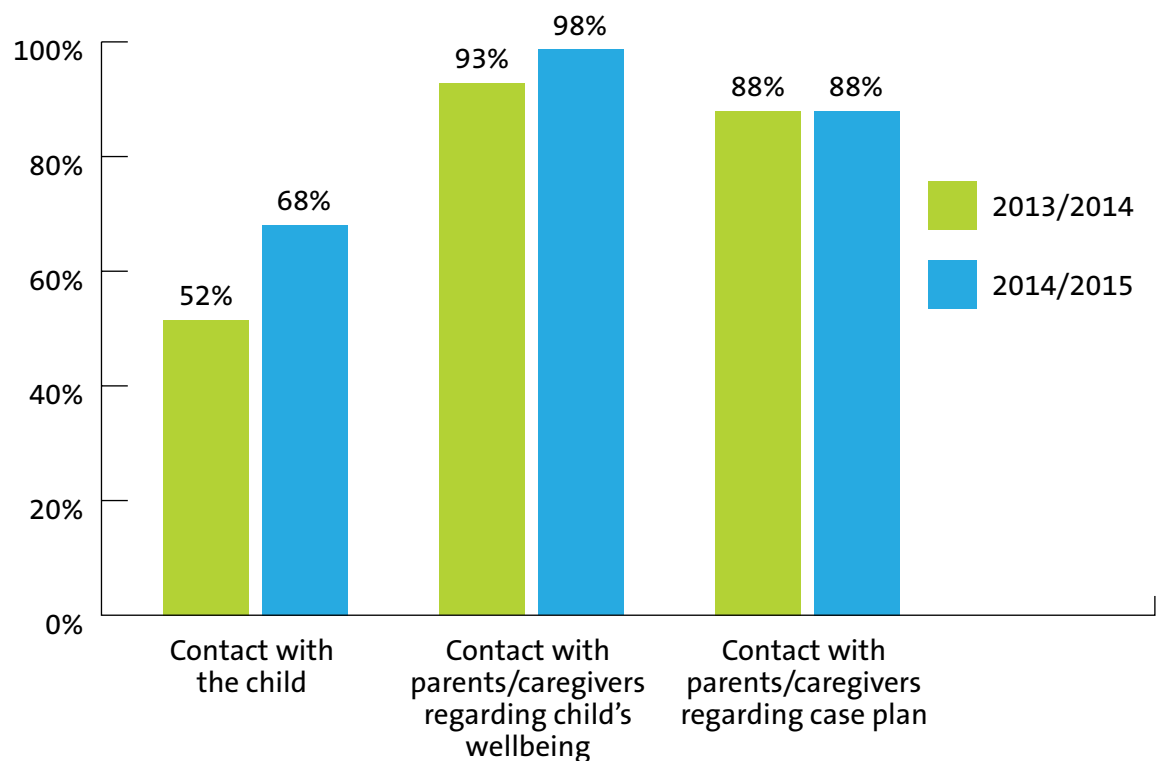
2014/15 Service Provision:

Ongoing contact with children and families

Ongoing contact with children and families is one way that social workers incorporate collaborative and inclusive decision making into their practice. Ongoing contact with children and families also helps the social worker build trust and relationships. Internal compliance audits on a random sample of case files in 2014/15 found that social workers met with the child at least once per month in 68% of cases (Chart 2). In some cases, youth refuse to meet with the social worker. In other cases, the social worker meets less frequently than once per month with the child. While compliance was higher on this standard than in 2013/14, there is room to improve when building and maintaining relationships with children.

Compliance audits found high rates of ongoing contact by social workers with the family to discuss and update them on their child's well-being and the case plan (Chart 2).

Chart 2: Social worker contact with children and parents/caregivers as part of ongoing collaboration.

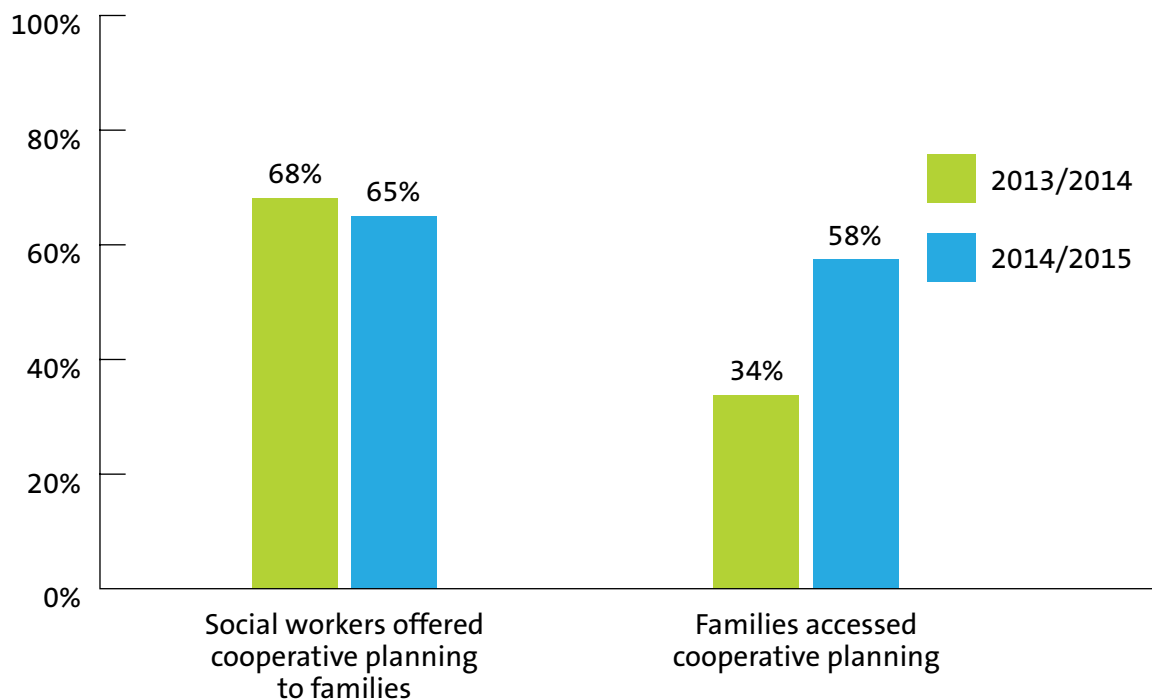


Cooperative Planning

Cooperative planning can take a number of forms, such as Family Group Conferencing and case conferences where the family and others are invited to develop plans. Cooperative planning provides a mechanism for collaboratively developing interim and long term plans when children are in need of protective intervention.

Internal compliance audits on a random sample of case files in 2014/15 showed that cooperative planning was offered to families in 65% of cases (Chart 3). However, the rates of families accessing cooperative planning increased by 24 percentage points between 2013/14 and 2014/15 (Chart 3). This suggests that while there is room for improving the rate of offering cooperative planning, the way in which cooperative planning is offered and communicated to families may have improved in 2014/15, as more families opted to access this approach when offered by the social worker.

Chart 3: Social worker offers of cooperative planning and families accessing cooperative planning



Family Group Conferencing

A total of 12 Family Group Conferences were held in 2014/15, serving 11 different families, all of whom were members of First Nations. There was a decrease from 2013/14 in the number of Family Group Conferences held, due to turnover of FGC specialists and training a new FGC specialist.

Outcomes of Family Group Conferencing remained exceptional, with 100% of plans developed by families being agreed to by the social worker. Having plans developed by the family recognizes that families have unique strengths and insights to plan for their child's care and safety.

In addition to the positive outcomes on case planning, Family Group Conferencing has an immeasurable positive impact on families themselves – recognizing and building on their strengths, connecting them with extended family and community supports, and healing relationships, as evidenced by feedback from participants. This is the result of both conferences themselves, and the process of organizing conferences, which provide opportunities for building family strength – for example, by bringing extended family members and First Nation and community supports into the preliminary work and discussions as partners.

“ *[Our] family was able to set aside differences and clean-up misunderstandings – clearly this family wants what's best for [our child].*

FGC participant (family member) ”

“ *Family private time always works miracles. It was great to hear things were resolved between all parties.*

FGC participant (First Nations representative) ”

Supporting Parents and Families to Care for their Children

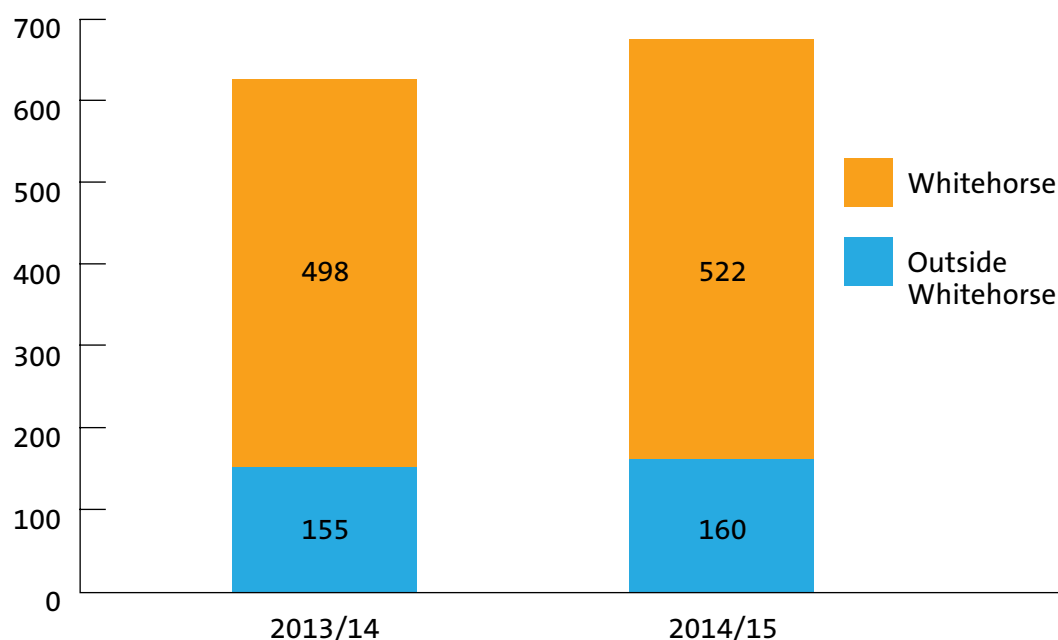
Research shows there are significantly higher positive outcomes for children when they remain with their immediate or extended family than when they are removed from their family home. Under the *CFSA*, the department provides services to reduce or prevent safety concerns, so that children can remain in their home where possible.

2014/15 Service Provision:

Families receiving support services

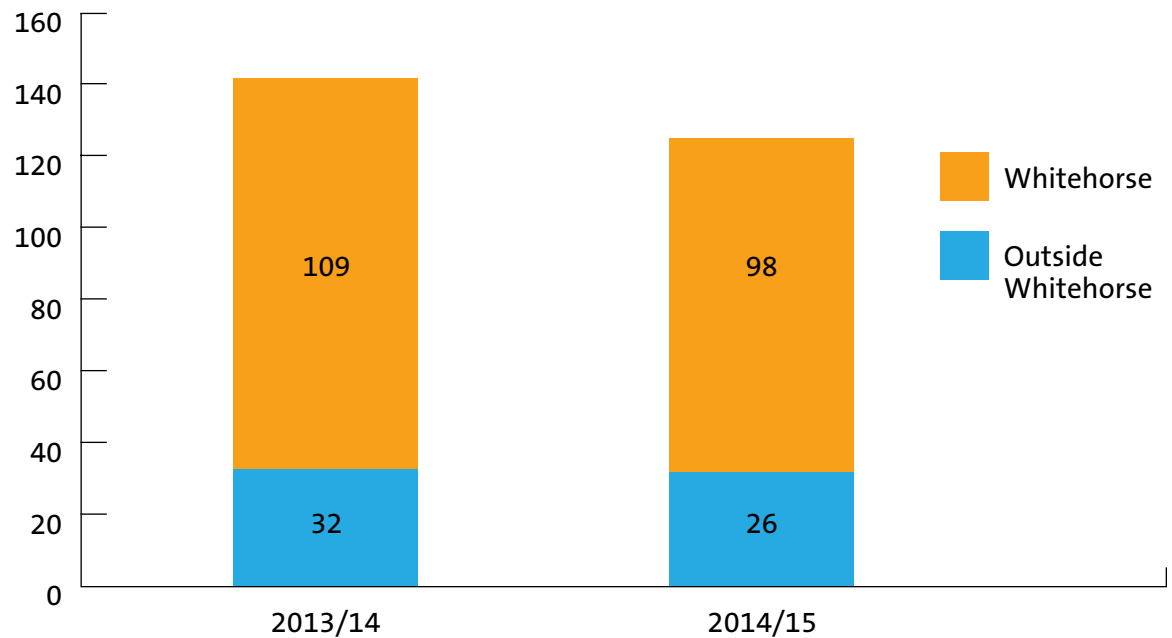
In 2014/15, there were 682 families in Yukon with identified child protection concerns (Chart 4). Whenever there are identified child protection concerns, social workers offer services to the child and/or family to reduce safety risks. A continuum of services are offered, including in-home supports and counselling, parenting programs, pro-social child and youth programs, respite, and out-of-home care. The small increase from 2013/14 may be due, in part, to the public's increasing familiarity with mandatory reporting requirements in the *CFSA* and trust in the approach to providing child protection and support services that is the result of the *Act*.

Chart 4: Number of families with identified child protection concerns



Support services are also provided to families when there are no immediate child protection concerns, but where the family is in need of assistance to manage difficult situations and to prevent child protection concerns from arising or returning. In 2014/15, 124 families in Yukon received preventative support services, such as counselling and parenting programs (Chart 5).

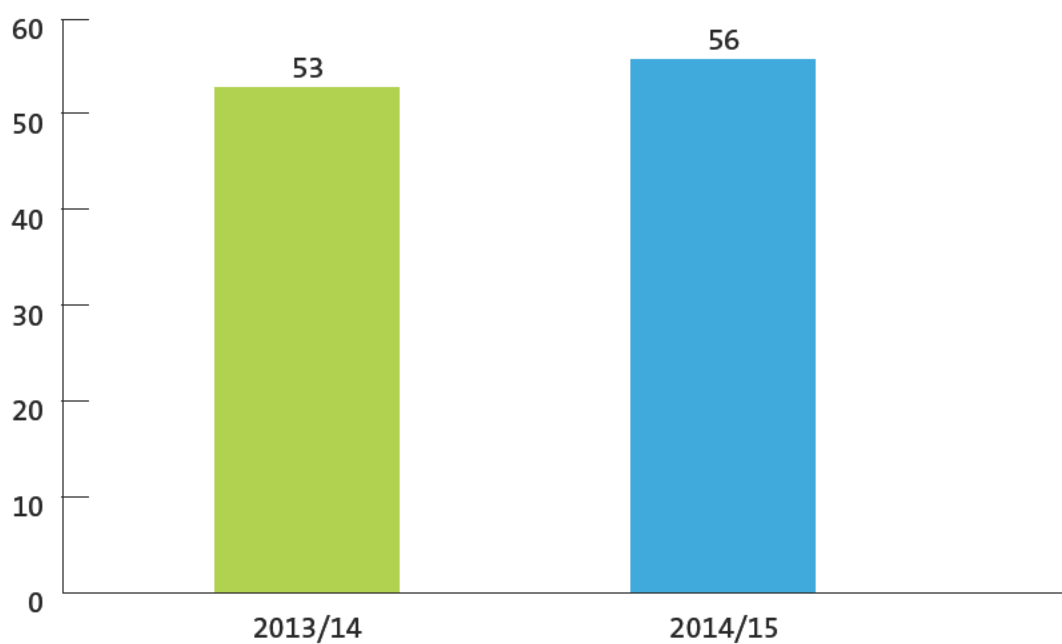
Chart 5: Number of families receiving preventative support services



Extended Family Care

Extended Family Care Agreements enable the department to financially support extended family members in caring for their children. In these cases, children do not come into the care of the Director, but remain with extended family through an agreement with the parents. In 2013/14, Extended Family Care Agreement provisions were broadened from a short-term support to a long-term support, available until a child reaches 19 years of age. Broadening the scope of these supports, along with increased communication of this option to First Nation health and social services directors, means that more children across Yukon are able to remain with their families (Chart 6).

Chart 6: Number of Extended Family Care Agreements



Recognizing the Importance of Culture for Children in Out-of-Home Care

Maintaining cultural identity and connections permeates the entire *CFSA*, from service delivery principles to early and ongoing involvement and collaboration with families and First Nations; from requirements for placing children in culturally appropriate out-of-home care to cultural planning for children in out-of-home care.

The department recognizes the importance of culture for children in the care or custody of the Director in a number of ways:

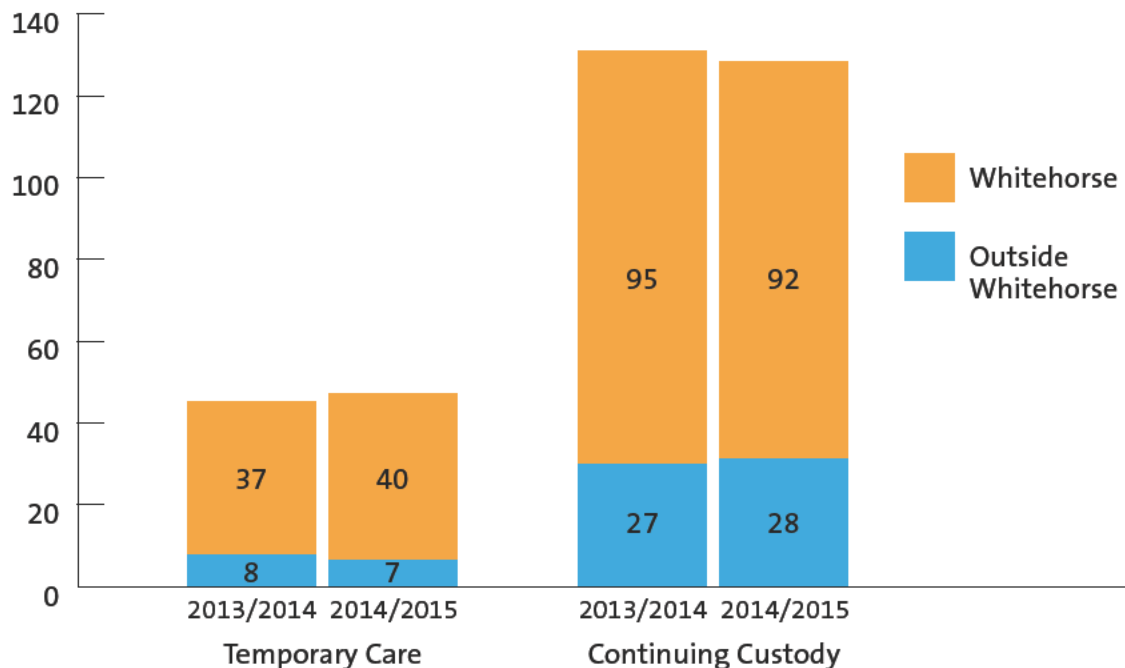
- Social workers undertake comprehensive case planning for each child, which helps ensure cultural connections are maintained. Social workers also facilitate connections with First Nations and community partners.
- Residential group homes for youth in the care or custody of the Director instituted a cultural committee in 2014/15. The committee, which includes youth as well as First Nations elders when available, meets monthly to identify and plan cultural activities for youth in the group homes.
- Residential group homes also operate annual Culture Camps in partnership with First Nations. In 2014/15, the Culture Camp took place at The Long Ago People's Place in partnership with Champagne and Aishihik First Nations.

2014/15 Service Provision:

Children in the Care or Custody of the Director

In 2014/15, the number of Yukon children in the temporary care and continuing custody of the Director was 47 and 120, respectively, almost the same numbers as in 2013/14 (Chart 7). When a child cannot remain in their home because of safety concerns, and extended family are not available, the child enters the temporary care of the Director. Every effort is made to address the child protection concerns so that the child can return home. When this is not possible, children enter the continuing custody of the Director, and longer-term permanency planning takes place, including exploring adoption.

Chart 7: Number of Yukon children in the care or custody of the Director

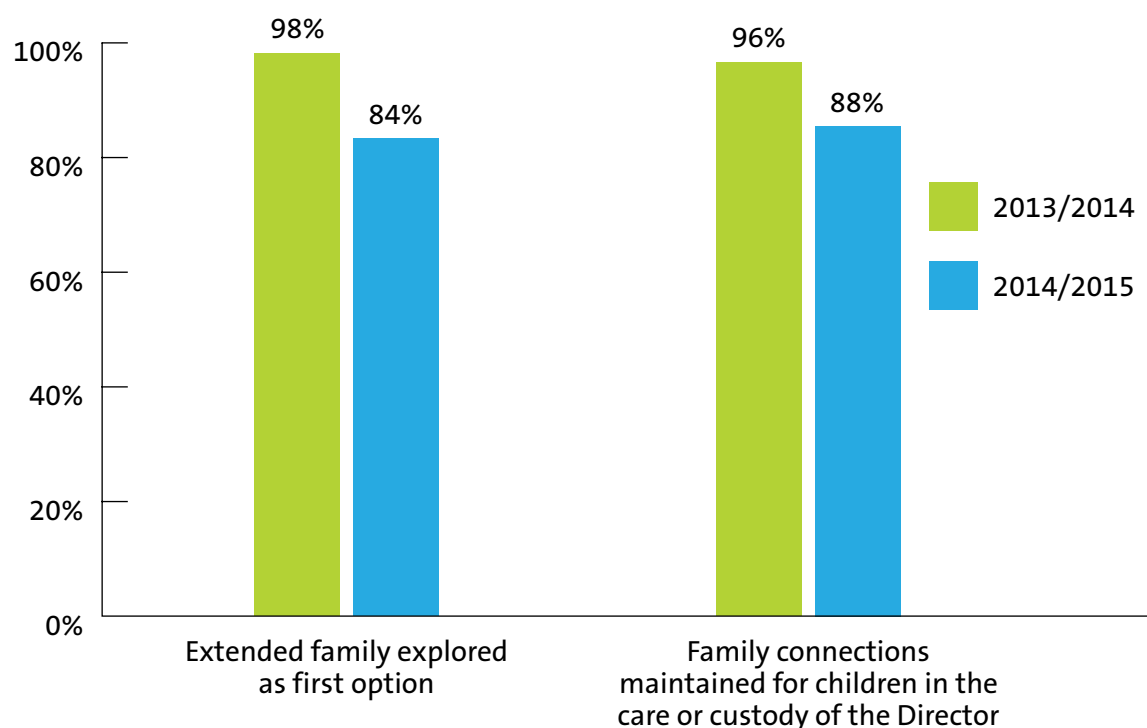


Maintaining Family and Cultural Connections

When out-of-home care is required, cultural connections are best maintained when the child remains within their extended family. Internal compliance audits on a random selection of case files showed that in 2014/15, when a child required out-of-home care, rates of extended family being explored as the first choice for placements remained high at 84% (Chart 8).

For children who cannot remain in their parental home or with extended family, and who are in the care or custody of the Director, maintaining connections with their family is important for their cultural identity. Internal compliance audits on a random sample of case files found a high rate of family connections being maintained as part of case plans (Chart 8). This includes ensuring that family visits take place while the child is in the care or custody of the Director.

Chart 8: Maintaining family connections

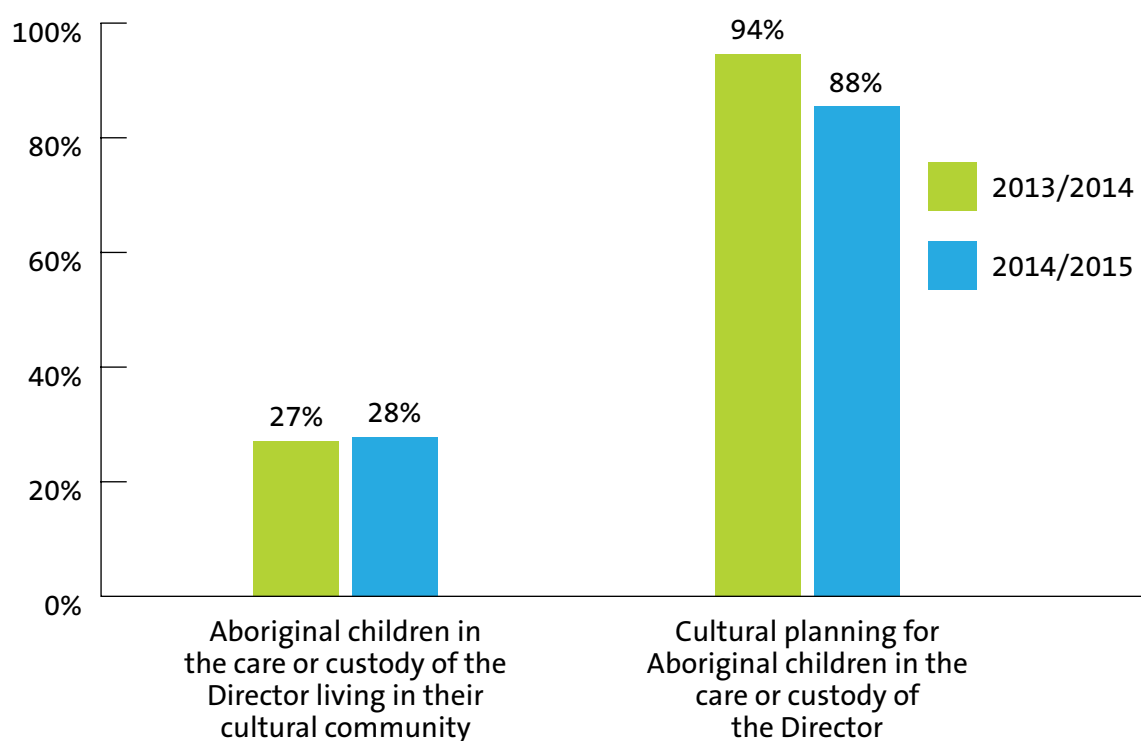


Internal compliance audits on a random sample of case files showed that in 2014/15, Aboriginal children in the care or custody of the Director were living with extended family or within their cultural community in 28% of cases (Chart 9).

The intent is for all children, and particularly Aboriginal children², to live within their cultural community. This is not always possible, however. While extended family, for example, is explored as the first option for placement in most cases, families sometimes live far away from their home communities; in many of these cases, it is deemed not in the child's best interests to be placed far away from their immediate family. In other cases, there are also no available foster homes within the child's cultural community, which means the social worker and family will have to look elsewhere for caregivers.

Internal compliance audits showed, however, that when children were in the care or custody of the Director, there were high rates of planning to ensure connections were maintained with the child's cultural community (Chart 9). Cultural planning may include involvement of elders in the child's life, participation in traditional activities, or facilitating other significant relationships with members of the child's cultural community.

Chart 9: Cultural placements and planning for Aboriginal children² in the care or custody of the Director



² For this measure, Aboriginal children refers to children of Yukon First Nations, other First Nations outside Yukon, and Inuit or Métis children.



Supporting Children and Youth at Key Transition Points

Transition points represent difficult times for children and youth – whether entering out-home-care, moving back to their parental home, or transitioning to adulthood in the case of youth who have been in the care or custody of the Director. For older youth in particular who are transitioning from government care into adulthood, there is an increased risk of ‘falling through the cracks’ and falling into vulnerable situations.

Most youth in Canada reach adulthood after years of preparation from their family, and continue to receive substantial family support after leaving home (such as financial assistance for post-secondary education, emotional support in challenging times, or advice about budgeting, cooking, and other life skills). Youth in government care often reach adulthood without these same supports, and research shows that without adequate transition support, youth leaving care are less likely to finish high school or post-secondary education, and more likely to be involved in the criminal justice system, receive social assistance, or experience homelessness or substance abuse.

In order to better support these youth, and as part of its response to recommendations made by the Auditor General of Canada in February 2014, the department struck a Youth Transition to Adulthood Committee in May 2014. Committee members include representatives from several First Nations, the Yukon Foster Parent Association, and social workers involved in supporting youth transitions.

The Committee met in November 2014, December 2014 and February 2015. At the February 2015 full-day meeting, the Committee identified strengths and weaknesses in the current approach to youth transitions, and set a plan for information gathering to inform policy and program updates to be made in 2015/16.

2014/15 Service Provision:

Youth Transitions

There were 27 youth aged 16 to 18 years in the care or custody of the Director on March 31, 2015. This represents a significant cohort that will require effective and early transition planning to ensure that all youth leaving the care or custody of the Director can achieve positive outcomes as they transition to adulthood.

Early planning is key to ensuring supports and connections are in place to help youth transition to adulthood. Internal compliance audits on a random sample of case files found that in 2014/15, there continued to be a high rate of transition planning for youth 16 years of age and older, with five of six case files showing transition planning. This was similar to audit results in 2013/14, when all seven case files were in compliance with this standard.

One way youth are supported in their transitions to adulthood under the *CFSA* is through formal Transitional Support Service Agreements, which can last until the youth reaches 24 years of age. Depending on the youth's goals and needs, the department may provide counselling supports, independent living skills training, and financial or other supports for educational programs. Throughout 2014/15, 19 Transitional Support Service Agreements were signed with young persons aged 19 to 23 years.

Ongoing Staff Development and Organizational Capacity-Building

An engaged, skilled and well-equipped workforce is a key factor in achieving service excellence. Supporting staff education and training, and maintaining effective information management technologies will help drive continual improvements in service delivery under the *CFSA*.

In 2014/15, the department:

- Provided Yukon First Nations History and Culture training to 11 child welfare workers. This is in addition to the 23 child welfare workers who received the same training in 2013/14. In this cultural competency training course, staff are guided through a timeline that reflects the history of Yukon First Nations from pre-contact through to present day, as well topics such as self-government, culture and values, residential school experiences, and some recent contemporary issues.

The course was developed in partnership between the Council of Yukon First Nations, the department of Health and Social Services, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the Northern Institute of Social Justice, and Yukon College's First Nations Initiatives. The department intends to have all child welfare staff take this training by the end of 2016/17.

- Provided trauma-informed care training to 23 staff members who provide treatment, care, or support services to children and families under the *CFSA*.

Trauma-informed care training helps staff understand and address underlying trauma that may be affecting children and families, including substance abuse, physical abuse, and residential school experiences.

- Implemented a Family Group Conferencing database to better track work related to organizing conferences, as well as conference outcomes.
- Conducted a comprehensive review of foster parent payment systems to ensure this community of caregivers receive timely payments. During the review, a tracking system was implemented to ensure accuracy and timeliness of payments. In 2015/16, the department will implement further changes to streamline financial payments to foster parents.
- Issued a Request for Expression of Interest following completion of Phase Three (Procurement Market Research and Initial Solution Planning) of the Continuing Improvement Case Management project. This project will identify and plan development of a new child welfare case management system, which will increase the capacity for data collection, performance measurement and reporting, and more comprehensive tracking of outcomes for clients.

Quality Assurance and Accountability — Auditor General's Report

The Auditor General of Canada conducted an audit of child welfare programs delivered in Yukon between April 2010 and December 2013. The Auditor General's report was tabled in the Yukon Legislative Assembly in February 2014. The department was found to be meeting the majority of the commitments under the *CFSA*, particularly with respect to collaboration with First Nations.

The report also identified several areas in which the department was not meeting its commitments, and made recommendations for improving programs and services. The department accepted all of the Auditor General's recommendations, and made significant progress in 2014/15 to address them.

- Recommendation: increase efforts to comply with service standards and policies related to case plans, transitional plans, foster homes and medical/dental examinations for children in the care or custody of the Director, as well as monitoring effectiveness of those efforts.
 - The department implemented an internal reporting system to track compliance with these service standards and policies. Early reports from this system in the first two quarters of 2014/15 indicated increased compliance. Reporting will continue in order to determine further efforts that may be required, such as social worker training or policy changes.
 - The department established a multi-partner committee to address transitional planning for youth in the care or custody of the Director (see page 19 of this report).
- Recommendation: acquire a case management system capable of effectively tracking compliance with legislative and policy requirements.
 - The department launched the Continuing Improvement Case Management (CICM) project in January 2014 to identify and plan development of a new child welfare case management system.
 - Phase Three (Procurement Market Research and Initial Solution Planning) was completed in 2014/15, and a Request for Expression of Interest was posted in February 2015.
- Recommendation: deliver annual reports as required under the *CFSA* in a timely manner that include more quantitative information and measures, explanations of how these measures differ from expectations, and plans for addressing any shortcomings.
 - The 2014/15 Annual Report includes performance measures not previously reported. Subsequent Annual Reports will include more performance measures as the department increases capacity for more reliable and comprehensive information tracking.



Looking Ahead

The year 2014/15 marks an important milestone for the *CFSA*, as the *Act* will have been in force for five years. As part of its commitment to accountability and transparency, and as required by the *Act* itself, in 2015/16 the department will begin preparation for a five-year review of the *CFSA*. This review will be conducted by a committee appointed by the Minister of Health and Social Services. Membership of the committee is prescribed the *CFSA*, and includes First Nations representation.

As part of its ongoing work, the department will continue to work with First Nations on planning and policy, as well as case work, to ensure services are delivered collaboratively and in culturally-sensitive ways. This will include already established forums, as well as new mechanisms for collaboration, such as the Memorandum of Agreement that is to be signed with Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation in 2015/16.

And as part of its commitment to service excellence, the department will continue to improve compliance with service standards and policy when working with and supporting families, communities and their children. This will include working with social workers and stakeholders to clarify and amend policies where appropriate, identifying targeted training to support social workers in meeting service standards, and moving forward with identifying case management solutions to support social work practice as well as measurement of child welfare outcomes. This will also include efforts to increase the number of out-of-home care options, such as foster homes within First Nations communities.

Yukon Child *and Family* *Services Act* 2014/15 Annual Report



December 2015

Yukon Family and Children's Services



2015/16
Annual Report



Message from the Director

25-143 - 0054

The 2015/16 fiscal year marks a number of important accomplishments in service delivery for child welfare services as mandated under the Child and Family Services Act (CFSA). We entered into more extended family care agreements than in the previous year and increased the monthly financial support provided to extended family members to support them. These agreements are an important mechanism that ensures children who require out-of-home care remain with their extended family, within communities, and connected to their culture instead of entering into the Director's care.

The Branch engaged in more cooperative planning processes, including family group conferences, with children/youth, parents, extended family members, and First Nation partners than in the past. The number of family group conferences held in 2015/16 increased almost two-fold from the previous year.

In 2014/2015, we made a commitment to support youth in care as they transition to adulthood and in 2015/16 we re-developed policies to better support youth through transition and support service agreements.

Our partnerships with First Nations are critical and we continue to build on these. Our close working relationships and collaborative efforts to provide supports to First Nation members have improved a number of outcomes, including a substantial increase in finding placements for First Nation children (who require out-of-home care) within their own community. In 2015/16, we entered into contribution agreements with seven First Nations to fund Family Support Worker positions that undertake child welfare liaison work with our branch.

Despite these highlights, there are some challenges we need to address. Across Canada, there is a foster caregiver crisis with fewer and fewer people available to provide temporary placements for children; Yukon is no exception

to this problem. But we are working collaboratively with foster caregivers and community partners to develop sustainable solutions. In addition to the fall 2015 marketing strategy to recruit foster caregivers, the Minister held a Foster Care Forum in May 2015 to engage in an open dialogue with foster caregivers.

Staffing challenges were another obstacle in our path. But our five-year Social Services Division Human Resources Strategic Plan is promising. It will undoubtedly have a positive impact on our staff and improve our service delivery.

Since 2010, the CFSA has provided us with both the legal authority for child protection in Yukon and the legislative framework for us to deliver services to children, youth, and families. Considering that we have operated under the CFSA for over half a decade, it is time to examine whether the purposes and principles of the legislation are being achieved. As mandated under the CFSA, the legislation must be reviewed every five years and we have initiated work to undertake this review.

Looking back to 2015/16, it is clear that without the dedication of our staff as well as our First Nations and community partners, we would not have been able to achieve all that was achieved. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their commitment to support children, youth, and families across Yukon. Every day they continue to make a significant difference in the lives of those we serve. I applaud them for all of their efforts and I look forward to working with them all in the coming year.

Brad Bell
Director, Family and Children's Services
Department of Health and Social Services





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Executive Summary

The 2015/16 CFSA Annual Report highlights the broad range of child welfare services provided by Health and Social Services over the last year to support children and families throughout the territory. This year's report reflects upon the department's previous commitment to improve performance measurement in an effort to continually improve service delivery. As such, the report includes quantitative analysis for a number of indicators which are reflective of the key mandates of the Child and Family Services Act (CFSA), such as collaboration with families and First Nations, providing culturally-appropriate services, and supporting youth as they transition to adulthood.

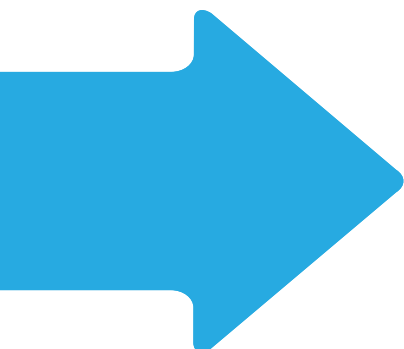
In 2015/16, the number of families with identified child protection concerns decreased to 568 families, compared to the previous two years (653 families in 2013/14 and 682 families in 2014/15). There were 101 families receiving preventative support services in 2015/16.

The results from the 2015/16 internal compliance audit highlight many areas of strength, as well as opportunities for improvement. For example, the number of extended family care agreements increased significantly in 2015/16 to 101 agreements, almost twice the number of agreements signed the previous year. Other positive trends observed in 2015/16 include the rate at which cooperative planning was offered and accessed by families, as well as the percentage of First Nation children in care or custody of the Director who are living in their cultural community (50%). The internal compliance audit also identified areas for improvement such as increasing the rate at which First Nations are notified once protective intervention is initiated, as well as increasing the frequency of social worker contact with children in care.

In 2015/16, the department:

- continued to work collaboratively with First Nations and families through cooperative planning, including the Family Conferencing Program;
- operated a cultural camp in partnership with Champagne and Aishihik First Nations for children in group home care at the Long Ago People's Place;
- expanded the Healthy Families Program to offer preventative support services in Watson Lake for families with young children;
- implemented foster care program improvement initiatives including development of the Foster Care Services Action Plan, launching of a marketing campaign designed to attract new foster parents, and facilitation of a Foster Care Forum;
- advanced the Continuing Improvement Case Management System project to plan development of a new child welfare case management system; and
- began preparation to undertake a five year review of the CFSA.

The department has a number of initiatives planned to enhance programs to improve service delivery to children, families and our community partners.



Strategic Context

Legislative

Child welfare services in Yukon are provided by the Department of Health and Social Services (the department) under the Child and Family Services Act (CFSA). Since proclamation in 2010, the CFSA has resulted in many positive outcomes including a reduction in numbers of children in care, additional up-front support services, and more involvement of First Nations and families in the planning and decision making process. The CFSA emphasises quality of service and demonstration of accountability through continued program evaluation.

Under the CFSA, the Director of Family and Children's Services reports annually to the Minister on the provision of services during the previous year. The annual report also provides an opportunity to report on compliance with key child welfare service standards. The 2015/16 reporting year marks the sixth year of compliance monitoring under the CFSA. In keeping with the intent of the CFSA to report on compliance with the service standards every three years, the 2015/16 annual report reflects back on compliance since 2013/14.

Demographics and Geography

According to the Yukon Bureau of Statistics, Yukon had an estimated population of 37,343 in June 2015, with First Nations comprising approximately 20% of the population. Youth under 20 years of age represented approximately 21% of the entire Yukon population, while youth under age 20 represented a larger portion of the First Nations population at 30%.

The majority of the Yukon population (77%) lived in the Whitehorse area in 2015/16, with the remainder of the population living in communities throughout the territory. The First Nations population is much more evenly dispersed in comparison, with 54% living in Whitehorse and 46% living in communities.

Service Delivery

The department employs two different types of service delivery models in Whitehorse and other communities throughout the territory. In Whitehorse, social workers deliver specialised child welfare services in the areas of child protection, family support, child-in-care services, and foster home supports. A more generalist approach is implemented in rural areas, with social workers providing a broad range of services including those governed by the CFSA.

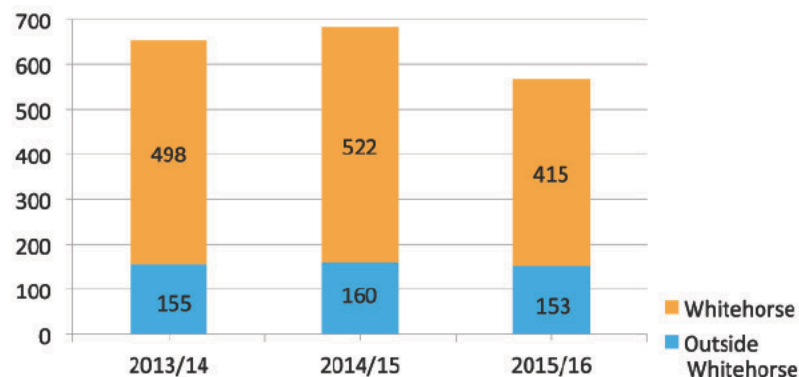
Supporting Parents and Families to Care for their Children

The CFSA allows for support services for children and their families to ensure the safety, health, and well-being of children throughout Yukon. These support services are designed to increase parenting capacity, build family resiliency, and allow a child to remain safely in the home or with extended family whenever possible. Support services are offered through various types of agreements under the CFSA and are tailored to meet the individual needs and goals of each family.

Families receiving support services

The department may become aware of children protection concerns in a number of ways, including mandatory reporting as required under the CFSA. Whenever child protection concerns are identified, social workers offer services to the child and/or family to reduce risk to child safety. Support services may include in-home support, counselling, parenting programs, child and youth programs, and respite. In 2015/16, there were 568 families with identified child protection concerns.

Chart 1: Number of families with identified child protection concerns



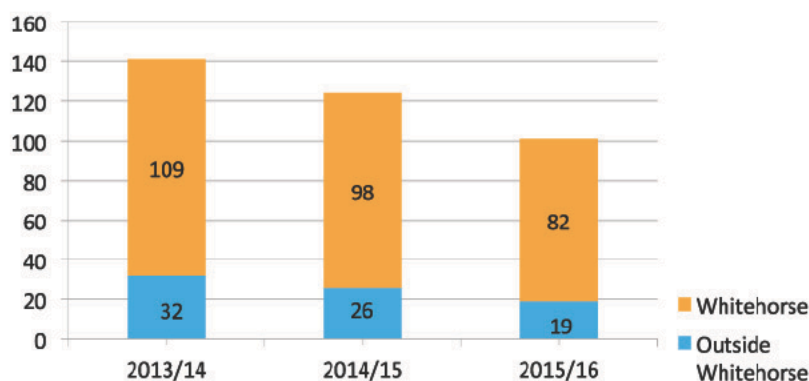
2015/16 Service Provision

In 2015/16, the number of families in Yukon with identified child protection concerns decreased from the previous two years to 568 families.

The number of extended family care agreements in 2015/16 increased almost two-fold compared to the previous two years, allowing more children to reside with extended family rather than coming into the care or custody of the Director.

Where there is no immediate danger to the child, the department offers support services to families to prevent child protection concerns from arising or reoccurring. Preventative support services include counselling, parenting programs, respite, independent living skills training, and coordination of other services offered by the department including addiction treatment service. In 2015/16, there were 101 families that accepted preventative support services (Chart 2).

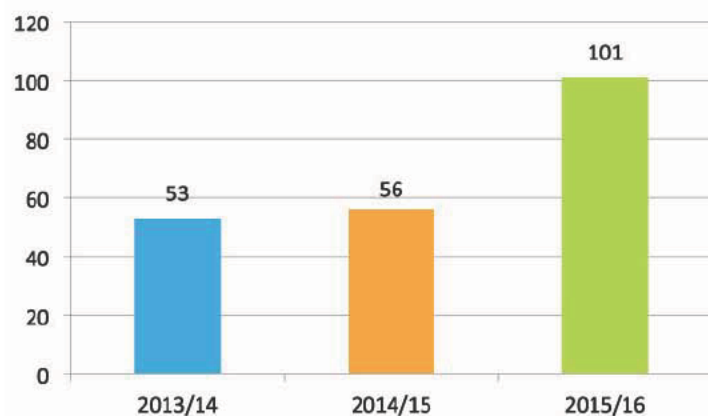
Chart 2: Number of families receiving preventative support services



Extended Family Care

The first choice for a child in need of out-of-home care is to have the child reside with extended family. Extended family care agreements allow children to remain with extended family members, rather than coming into the care or custody of the Director. Under an extended family care agreement, financial and other support services may be on a short-term basis or provided up until the child reaches 19 years of age. In 2015/16, the number of extended family care agreements increased significantly to 101, almost twice the number of agreements signed the previous two years.

Chart 3: Number of Extended Family Care Agreements



Collaborative and Inclusive Decision-Making

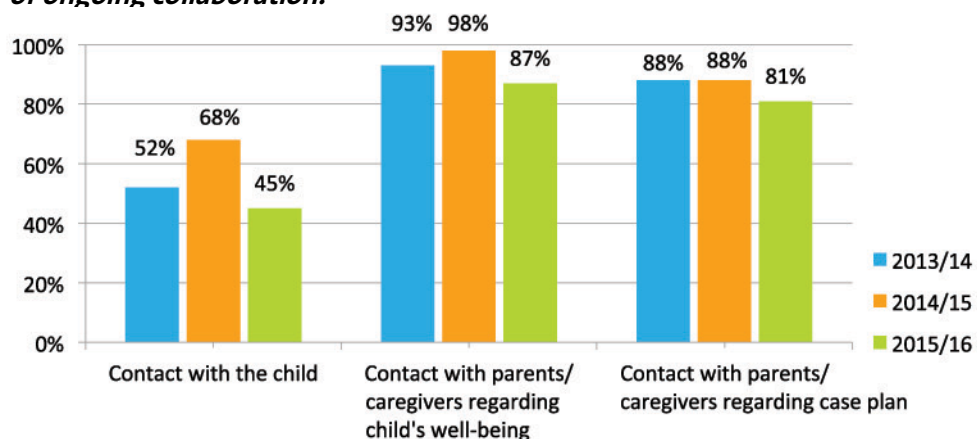
The CFSA recognizes the importance of inclusiveness and collaboration with families, First Nations, and communities throughout the planning and delivery of programs and services. One example of how these principles are ingrained in case planning is through the cooperative planning process. Cooperative planning brings together families, extended family members, First Nations representatives (where applicable), and community supports to develop a case plan that serves the best needs of the child, taking into account the wishes of the family and the child's culture and heritage. One form of cooperative planning is family conferencing; however, cooperative planning can take many forms. Traditionally, many cultures had collaborative practices that they used for decision making for their children and families.

Ongoing contact with children and families

Ongoing contact between social workers and caregivers provides an opportunity for families to continue to be involved in planning for the child throughout the continuum of care. Caregivers and parents are able to provide valuable insight in relation to the child's needs which helps inform case planning decisions. Ongoing contact also builds trust between the social worker, child and family and provides a forum for caregivers to ask questions and receive support.

An internal compliance audit conducted on a random sample of case files in 2015/16 found that social workers met with the child at least once per month in 45% of cases (Chart 4). A decrease in compliance from the previous year may have been influenced by youth refusing to meet with social workers, lack of staff resources, and/or insufficient documentation of contact in relevant case files (such as lack of documenting contact with a child during a home visit). Although contact by social workers with the child decreased in 2015/16, contact with parents/caregivers in regard to the child's wellbeing and case plan remained relatively high at 87% and 81%, respectively.

Chart 4: Social worker contact with children and parents/caregivers as part of ongoing collaboration.



2015/16 Service Provision

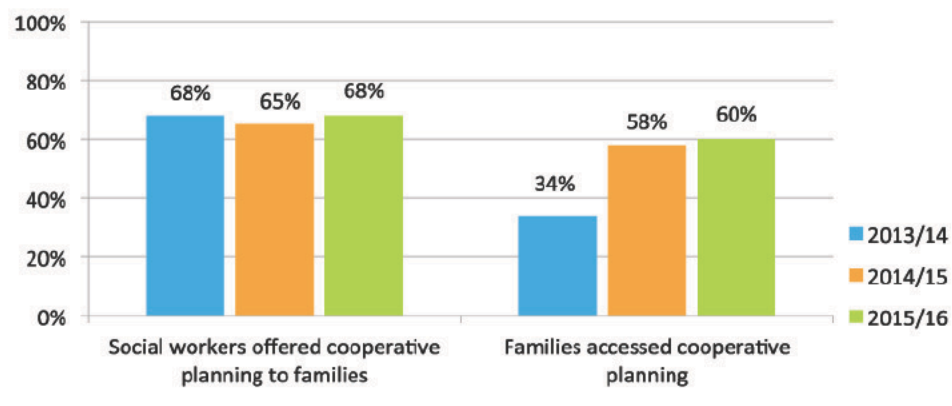
The department recognizes that there is work to be done to improve compliance in relation to social worker contact with children. In response, the department will expand communication and training for front-line staff to further assess obstacles that may prevent contact with children and to ensure all staff are properly trained on procedures related to this service provision, including proper documentation. In addition, the department's social services division has recently implemented a five-year Human Resource Strategic Plan to recruit and retain staff in an effort to alleviate staff shortages which may be preventing more frequent contact with children.

Cooperative Planning

When children are in need of protective intervention, cooperative planning allows families to become involved in the decision-making process related to the care and well-being of their children. Two forms of cooperative planning include family conferencing and case conferences.

An internal compliance audit conducted on a random sample of case files in 2015/16 demonstrated that social workers offered cooperative planning to families in 68% of cases, similar to the previous two years (Chart 5). The compliance results indicate that families accepted cooperative planning in 60% of the cases, suggesting that the majority of families that are offered cooperative planning accessed this service. The number of families accessing cooperative planning has progressively increased over the last three years, rising by 26 percent points since 2013/14.

Chart 5: Social worker offers of cooperative planning and families accessing cooperative planning



The family conferencing program was highly successful in 2015/16 with 100% approval of all plans developed through the program.

While the rate at which families accessed cooperative planning has increased over the last three years, there is room for improvement to increase the rate at which cooperative planning is offered to clients. In 2016/17, the department will assess potential barriers which may prevent social workers from offering this service. Based on the outcome of this assessment, improvement initiatives will be developed and implemented in an effort to increase the rate of cooperative planning. For example, if staff awareness is identified as a potential barrier, the department will look for opportunities to increase staff training in addition to the core training currently offered for this service provision.

Family Conferencing

Family Conferencing is one form of cooperative planning offered by the department. Facilitated by a neutral coordinator, a family conference brings together family members, First Nation representatives (if applicable), community supports and the social worker to discuss planning for the child, including out-of-home care options.

Having family members involved in the decision-making process recognizes that families have unique strengths and insights to plan for their child's care and safety. In addition to promoting family members to become involved in planning for their children, family conferencing also provides a supportive atmosphere for family members to build and heal relationships with one another and connect with community supports.

Although the results of the internal compliance audit suggest that the rate at which cooperative planning is offered and accessed could be improved (Chart 5), the number of family conferences held in 2015/16 increased almost two-fold in comparison to the previous year. A total of 21 family conferences were held in 2015/16, serving 16 different families, including 15 First Nation families.

One measure of the success of the family conference process is the family develops its own plan and social workers agree to the plan. In 2015/16, all plans (100%) developed through family conferencing were approved by the social worker.





Collaboration with First Nations

The CFSA includes provisions to ensure First Nations have the opportunity to participate in the planning and delivery of services to children and families throughout the territory. In 2015/16, the department and Yukon First Nations continued to collaborate on child protection issues to provide culturally appropriate services to children and families requiring assistance.

- A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) signed in October 2012 between the department and Kwanlin Dün First Nation provides a framework for working together on child welfare matters. Further work is planned in 2016/17 to move towards development of MOAs with other First Nations throughout the territory.
- The department staffs an on-site child welfare social worker position to support Kwanlin Dün First Nation children and their families.
- The department funds family support positions with seven First Nations including Kwanlin Dun First Nation, Ta'an Kwach'an Council, Ross River Dena Council, Liard First Nation, Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, Selkirk First Nation and Tr'ondek Hwech'in First Nation. Family support workers help ensure services are culturally appropriate, accompany social workers in responding to child protection concerns, and participate in planning and decision making.
- Regular meetings are held between the department and specific First Nations to address child welfare concerns as they arise and to continue to collaborate on key provisions of the CFSA that affect First Nations and their children.
- First Nation representatives are invited to participate in cooperative planning for their members, including family conferences (see page 9 of this report).

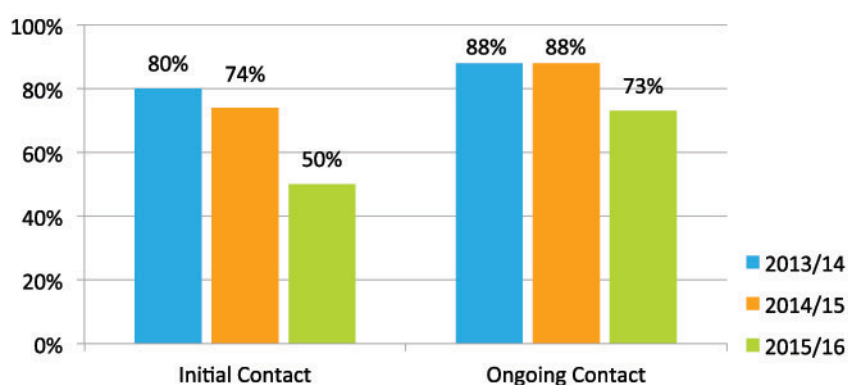
Early and ongoing involvement of First Nations

To ensure First Nations have early and ongoing involvement in the delivery of child welfare services, social workers are required to notify a child's First Nation when protective intervention is first initiated and throughout the various stages of provision of care. This inclusive approach ensures children and families involved in the child welfare system receive services which are culturally appropriate and promote connections to the child's community.

In 2015/16, internal compliance audits on a random sample of case files indicate that the child's First Nation was notified immediately or as soon as practicable in 50% of cases, a decrease of 24 percentage points from the previous year (Chart 6). The rate associated with ongoing notification of First Nations (73%) was higher in comparison to the rate of initial contact, but decreased in comparison to the compliance rate of 88% observed in 2013/14 and 2014/15.

The decline in First Nation notification rates may be due in part to social workers contacting First Nations through alternate processes, such as informal discussions. These informal processes may result in a lack of proper documentation in case files, leading to lower compliance rates. In addition, the relatively small sample size (12) does introduce some uncertainty regarding the representativeness of the audit results for this measure. Notwithstanding these issues, the decline in compliance results observed in 2015/16 for this service standard indicates that there is an opportunity to improve First Nation notification

Chart 6: Initial and ongoing notification of a child's First Nation



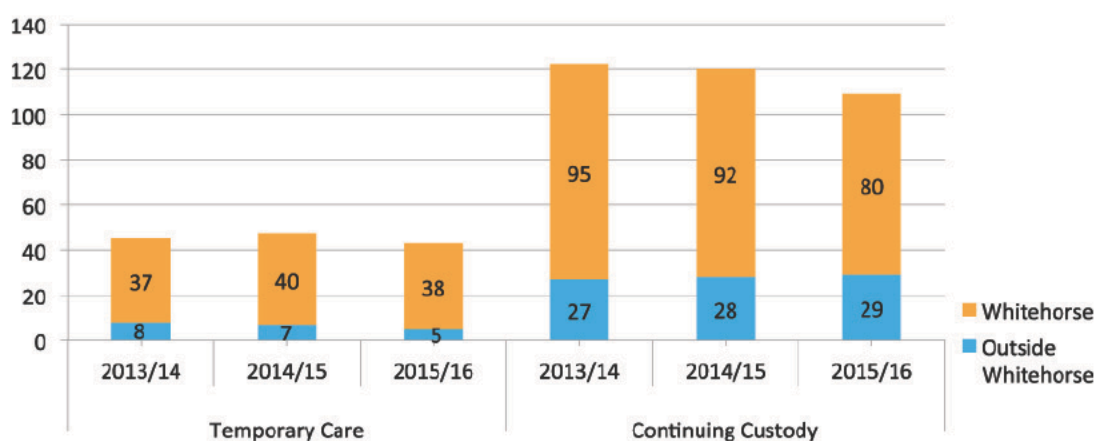
The department recognizes that there is a need to improve contact with First Nations through consistent, timely communication reflected through proper documentation. In response, the department will offer operational-level training to all social workers to improve compliance with this service provision, in addition to core training programs currently offered.

Children in Out-of-Home Care

Children in the Care or Custody of the Director

A child enters the temporary care of the Director when safety concerns prevent a child from remaining in their home, and extended family is not available. While the child is in temporary care, support services are provided to the family in an effort to address child protection concerns so that the child can return home as quickly as possible. If child protection concerns are not resolved, children may enter the continuing custody of the Director. The number of children in the temporary care and continuing custody of the Director decreased in 2015/16 to 43 and 109 children, respectively (Chart 7). This decrease may be attributed to the corresponding increase in the number of extended family care agreements (page 7 of this report), which allows more children to reside with extended family rather than coming into the care or custody of the director.

Chart 7: Number of Yukon children in the care or custody of the Director



Foster parents play a vital role in the child welfare system in Yukon, providing a caring, loving, stable home environment for children. In fall 2015, the department launched a "Fostering is inclusive" campaign to attract new foster parents throughout Yukon. The campaign raised awareness through various means, including social media, and was designed to attract potential foster parents with diverse backgrounds and family structures. The campaign will continue throughout the upcoming year.

Recognizing the Importance of Culture and Family Connections for Children in Out-of-Home Care

The department recognizes the importance of maintaining family and cultural connections for all children in the care or custody of the Director. In fact, these principles are embedded into the CFSA and are practiced throughout the continuum of service. Ensuring that children in care maintain a connection to their families, community and culture promotes a sense of self-identity and increases a child's overall wellbeing.

- Through comprehensive case planning, social workers facilitate and maintain cultural, family and community connections for children in care.
- In 2015/16, children and youth in group homes participated in a number of cultural activities planned by the Cultural Committee, including traditional dance, fishing, hunting, and ceremonial activities. The committee meets regularly throughout the year and includes First Nations representatives and elders.
- The department partnered with Champagne and Aishihik First Nations to organize this year's annual Cultural Camp in Long Ago People's Place for children and youth in group homes.



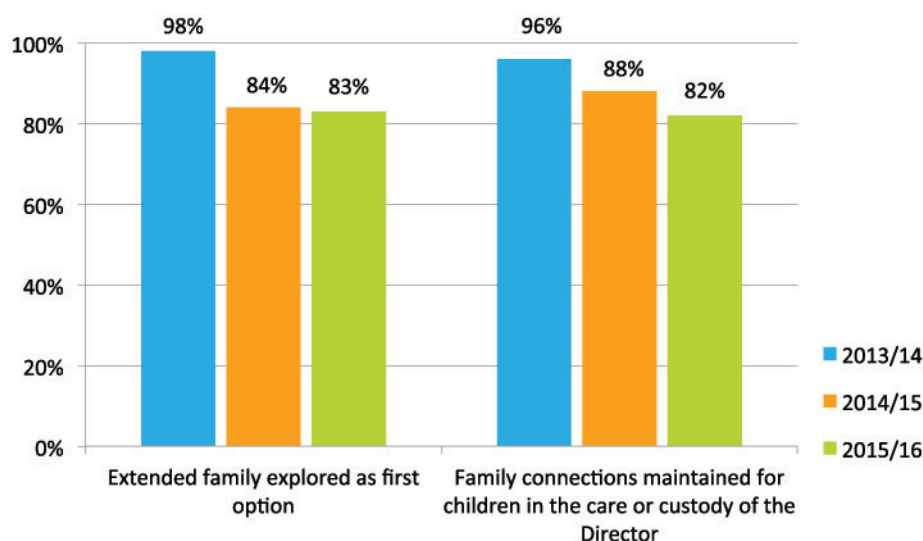
Photo: Government of Yukon

Maintaining Family and Cultural Connections

When a child requires out-of-home care, placement with extended family is the preferred option to ensure family and cultural connections are maintained and nurtured. Internal compliance audits on a random selection of case files showed that extended family was explored as the first choice for placement in 83% of cases (Chart 8) when out-of-home care was required. While compliance with this service standard was consistent with the previous year, the number of extended family care agreements increased significantly in 2015/16 (page 7 of this report).

When placement with extended family is not an option, maintaining ongoing connections with family is important for the child's wellbeing. One way to maintain family connections is to ensure family visits take place while the child is in the care or custody of the Director. Although internal compliance audits on a random sample of case files found a high rate of family connections being maintained (82%) in 2015/16, compliance results for this service standard have decreased over the last three years (Chart 8). The department recognizes that there is opportunity for improvement within this service area and will focus on improving compliance over the next year.

Chart 8: Maintaining family connections

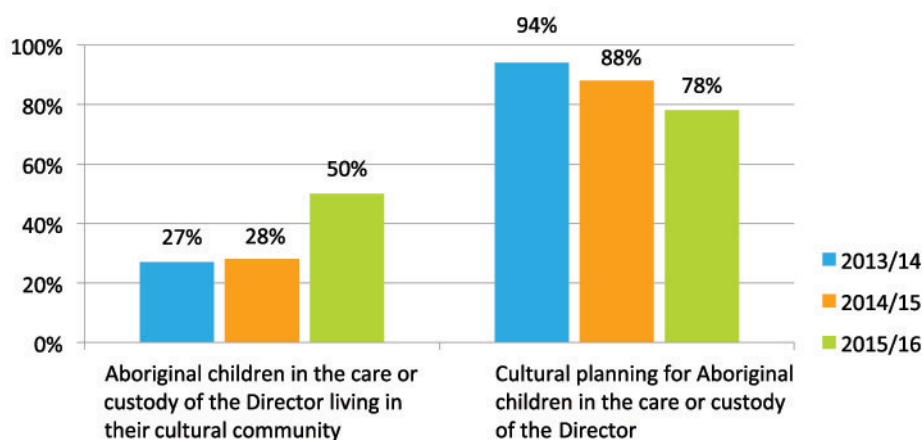


The department understands the importance of placing children, and particularly Aboriginal children², in their cultural communities whenever out-of-home care is required. Placement within cultural communities may not always be possible, however, due to extended family living far away or a lack of available foster homes within the child's cultural community. Despite these challenges, internal compliance audit results were positive, with audit results demonstrating a 22 percentage point

increase in the number of children in the care or custody of the Director living in their cultural community in 2015/16 compared to 2014/15 (Chart 9).

In addition to seeking out culturally appropriate placements, social workers promote and integrate cultural connections for children in care through comprehensive case planning. For example, Aboriginal children are encouraged to participate in cultural experiences and maintain connections to their communities during their time in care, such as attending ceremonial activities, learning their traditional language, and visiting their home community. Cultural planning rates for Aboriginal children in the care or custody of the Director remained high in 2015/16 at 78%, but rates did show some decline compared to the previous two years (Chart 9), indicating that there is opportunity for improvement within this area of service.

Chart 9: Cultural placements and planning for Aboriginal children² in the care or custody of the Director



To address the decline in cultural planning in 2015/16, the department will increase training to all staff to ensure cultural planning is integrated during case planning for a child in care/custody. Training will focus on identification of culturally appropriate activities for the child, as well as proper documentation to ensure cultural planning is reflected in case files. In addition, the department will continue to increase internal cultural awareness through ongoing delivery of training focused on culture, diversity and First Nations. The federal government has also committed new investments aimed at improving outcomes for indigenous children and youth. The department will use available funding to support prevention services and program enhancements to improve outcomes for First Nations children, youth and their families.

²For this measure, Aboriginal children refers to children of Yukon First Nations, other First Nations outside Yukon, and Inuit or Métis children.

Supporting Children and Youth at Key Transition Points

Transition and change can be challenging for children and youth, particularly for those who have been in care due to child protection concerns. Youth in care may find the transition to adulthood extremely challenging due to a lack of family support or insufficient basic life skills, potentially leading to high-risk behaviours.

Recognizing the need for increased support for transitioning youth, the department created a Youth Transition Committee in 2014, with representatives from several First Nations, the Yukon Foster Parent Association, and social workers. In 2015/16, the department focused efforts on the development of a service model to improve support service access for youth up to 24 years of age, including youth transitioning out of care. The model, which has since been successfully implemented, allows youth to access a range of support services in one location outside of traditional business hours.

Youth Transition Planning

To ensure youth receive the support they require to succeed once they leave the care or custody of the Director, early transition planning is key. On March 31, 2016, there were 26 youth aged 16 to 18 years in Yukon in the care or custody of the Director. Internal audit results demonstrate the compliance rate of transition planning for youth 16 years and older remained high in 2015/16, with five of six case files sampled showing transition planning. Previous years' audit results were also positive, with 5 out of 6 case files showing transition planning in 2014/15 and all seven case files demonstrating compliance with this standard in 2013/14.

One way youth are supported in their transitions to adulthood under the CFSA is through formal Transitional Support Service Agreements. These agreements can remain in place until the youth reaches 24 years of age. Support services established under this type of agreement may include counselling, financial supports to allow the youth to continue their education, or living skills training. Each agreement is unique and support services are tailored to the youth's individual needs. Transitional Support Service Agreements were signed with 7 young persons aged 19 to 23 years in 2015/16, compared to nineteen agreements signed in 2014/15.



Photo: Government of Yukon

Ongoing Staff Development and Organizational Capacity-Building

Department staff involved in child welfare and family support services show their commitment and dedication to protecting children's safety throughout Yukon in their daily work. To ensure staff have the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively fulfill their roles and continually improve service delivery under the CSFA, the department is committed to ongoing training and professional development for all staff members. Ongoing training allows staff to deliver child welfare services in a timely and consistent manner in accordance with policies, procedures and quality assurance standards, resulting in better outcomes for children, youth and their families. In addition to ongoing training, the department will continue to explore opportunities to grow organizational capacity to increase efficiency and service quality.

In 2015/16, the department:

- Provided training to more than 30 child welfare workers in the areas of First Nation culture, diversity, cooperative planning, legislation and policy pertaining to the CSFA, dispute resolution, case management, and client information database systems.
- Continued to enhance the foster parent payment system to improve reliability and ensure timely payments to caregivers. In 2015/16, additional quality assurance measures were implemented to track the success of these system improvements.





Quality Assurance and Accountability – Auditor General's Report

The Auditor General of Canada conducted an audit of child welfare programs delivered under the CSFA between 2010 and 2013. The audit results indicated that the department was meeting the majority of the commitments under the CFSA; however, the report did identify several areas for improvement and included recommendations for addressing deficiencies. Immediately following conclusion of the audit in 2014, the department undertook a number of initiatives, many of which were carried forward to 2015/16.

- Recommendation: increase efforts to comply with service standards and policies related to case plans, transitional plans, foster homes and medical/dental examinations for children in the care or custody of the Director, as well as monitoring effectiveness of those efforts.
- In 2015/16, the department continued to enhance data collection methodology and performance measurement tracking procedures.
- Following the Auditor General's report, a review of the methodology applied in the department's annual Internal Compliance Review was completed and performance measures were adjusted to better track compliance. In an effort to continually improve compliance monitoring, the audit methodology was further refined in 2015/16 to address issues raised during previous audits, such as limited sample size.
- The department developed a Foster Care Services Action Plan to improve service delivery within this program. Feedback received during the Foster Caregivers Forum held by the department in May 2015 was used to inform the plan. The plan is designed to enhance communication, increase collaboration and partnership, and improve support services for foster caregivers.
- The department re-developed policies on transitional planning, transition agreements and support agreements to better support youth during and after the transition from care.
- In 2015/16, the department developed a service model to improve youth access to health and social services programs. This initiative was implemented as a pilot project in August 2016 with the opening of the Integrated Supports for Yukon Youth (ISYY) in Whitehorse.

- Recommendation: acquire a case management system capable of effectively tracking compliance with legislative and policy requirements.
 - The department intends to continue work on the Continuing Improvement Case Management System (CICM) project in 2016/17 to further define detailed system requirements and move towards development of a business case for the project.
- Recommendation: deliver annual reports as required under the CFSA in a timely manner that includes more quantitative information and measures, explanations of how these measures differ from expectations, and plans for addressing any shortcomings.
 - The 2015/16 annual report presents quantitative data and measures pertaining to the services standards and policies under the CFSA. The data presented herein, in conjunction with the internal compliance audit, is being used to identify deficiencies in service delivery and develop action plans to address shortcomings.

Commitment to Continual Improvement

The 2015/16 internal compliance audit results highlighted many strengths of the department in providing child welfare services and meeting the mandate of the CFSA. The audit also identified opportunities for improvement in the areas of cooperative and cultural planning, notification of First Nations and maintaining ongoing contact with children in the care and custody of the Director.

The department is committed to improving and maintaining compliance with all service standards to ensure positive outcomes for children, families, First Nations and community partners. The department intends to achieve this objective through the implementation of both short and long term initiatives.

In 2016/17, the department will:

- Communicate the results of the internal compliance audit to all managers, supervisors, and social workers;
- Review and potentially refine audit methodology to address limitations identified in 2015/16, such as small sample size;
- Explore opportunities to streamline data collection methods to improve the robustness of the quality assurance tools currently in place;
- Review the standard (core) training program currently in place to identify opportunities for additional alignment with service standards;
- Develop and deliver targeted training to managers/supervisors and social workers on service standards, with particular focus on low compliant standards; and
- Complete an evaluation of the current service delivery and staffing model in Yukon communities.

In an effort to continually improve service delivery, the department will also undertake a number of longer term improvement initiatives, including:

- Evaluate options for implementation of a child welfare practice framework. Practice frameworks are designed to incorporate consistent, evidence-based decisions into service delivery principles, improve program performance through ongoing evaluation, and most importantly, achieve positive outcomes for child and families involved in the child welfare system;
- Update policy and program materials as required to implement program improvement initiatives on an operational level; and
- Implement a five-year Human Resources Strategic Plan to recruit and retain qualified staff (currently underway).

Looking Ahead

This year represents the sixth year the CSFA has been in force. During that time, the department has made significant progress on a number of initiatives to meet the mandate and key principles introduced when the CFSA came into effect in 2010. The upcoming year promises to build upon this foundation, with an introduction of new services, program improvement initiatives, and further opportunity for collaboration with First Nations.

In August 2016, the Integrated Supports for Yukon Youth (ISYY) centre opened its doors, providing youth and their families with a convenient location and supportive environment to access a full range of services. The centre is expected to be a valuable resource to youth in care transitioning to adulthood.

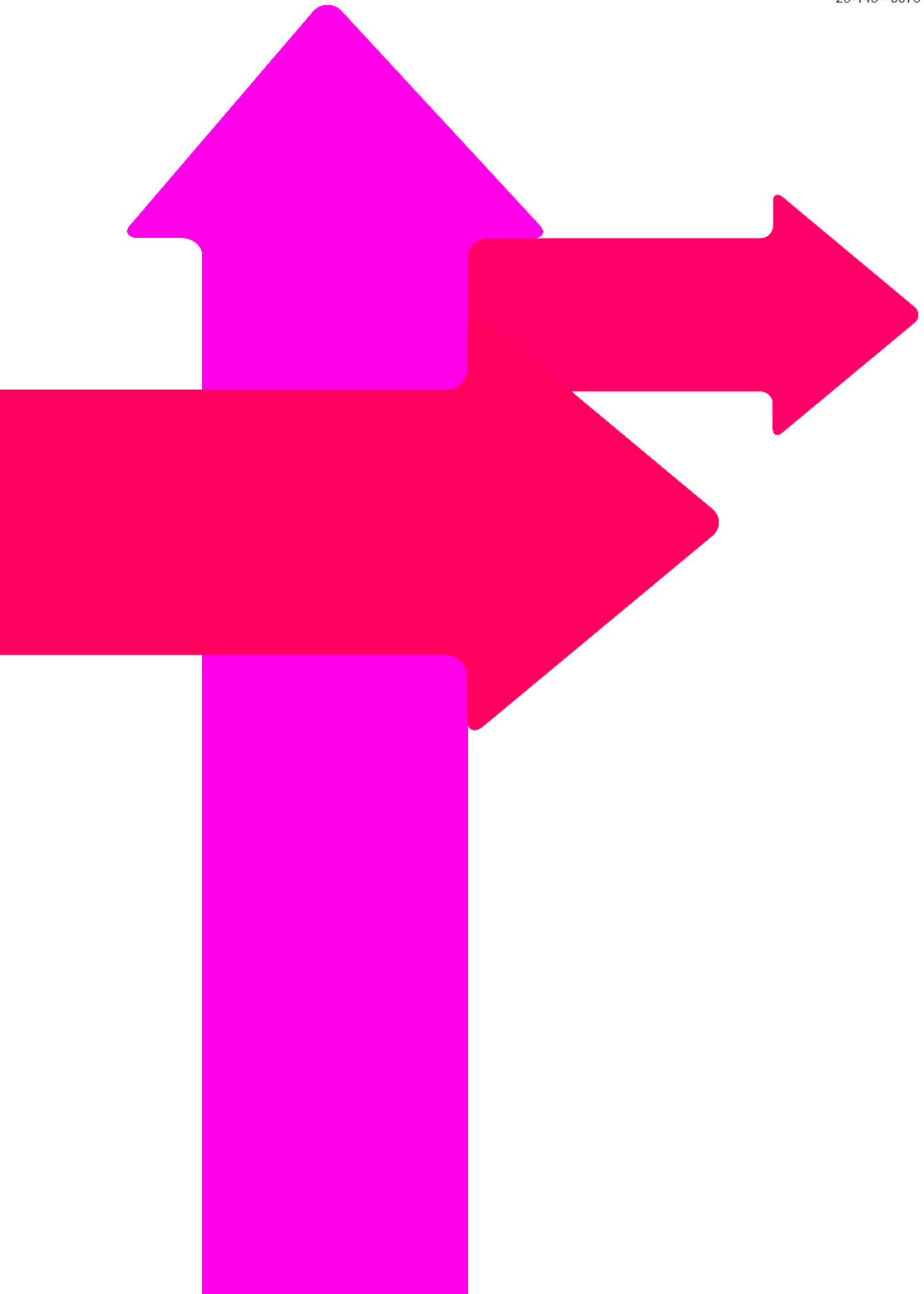
In 2016/17, the department will work towards developing Memorandums of Agreement with First Nation partners, in addition to the agreements already established with Kwanlin Dün First Nation and Kluane First Nation. Over the next five years, new federal funding is expected to be made available to the department and to First Nations to support prevention services and improve outcomes for indigenous children and youth. Department funding will be used to enhance program services to reduce the number of children coming into care and increase collaboration with First Nations and their members.

The department is currently preparing to conduct a five-year review of the CFSA. This review will be undertaken by a committee appointed by the Minister of Health and Social Services and will include First Nation representatives as prescribed by the Act. The review will provide an opportunity to evaluate whether the purposes and principles of the CFSA are being achieved and will help inform new initiatives as the department strives to continually improve compliance and quality of service.



Photo: Government of Yukon

Yukon Family and Children's Services Annual Report, 2015/16





March 2017



Child and Family Services Act **2017-19 Annual Report**

Yukon Family and Children's Services

April 2020



Message from the director

Minister of Health and Social Services Pauline Frost

Government of Yukon

Dear Minister Frost,

I am pleased to present to you the most recent report on the provision of child welfare services under the *Child and Family Services Act (CFSA)*, as required by s. 187 of the legislation.

In Yukon and across Canada, child welfare practices have shifted significantly over the past few years. National-level reports, such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's final report (*Honouring the Truth, Reconciling the Future*) and recommendations from the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (*Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls*), have called on governments to re-evaluate their approach to child welfare, and we have responded accordingly. The Government of Yukon and First Nation governments have identified child welfare as a priority, and we have made significant headway in improving the system that serves Yukon children, youth and families. In the coming year, Yukon's child welfare system is expected to continue evolving as we consider and implement the recommendations from the review of the CFSA (*Embracing the Children of Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*) and gain certainty in working alongside Canada's *An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families*, which came into force on January 1, 2020. Our continued work with our First Nations partners, including the Council of Yukon First Nations (CYFN), on shared priorities and goals will contribute significantly to these ongoing systemic changes.

In the past, reports on the provision of child welfare services to the Minister of Health and Social Services (HSS) were closely tied to the fiscal year, and as such our reports identified past achievements. For this report, we are embarking in a new direction and reporting on service provision from April 2017 to the end of 2019 to provide a more

comprehensive picture of our readiness to take on the challenges of 2020. It will highlight our major accomplishments over the last year and a half, and identify areas in which Yukon is innovating in child welfare.

Family and Children's Services (FCS) recognizes that effective change for all children and youth requires a broad, interconnected and coordinated approach with community involvement. Change must extend beyond any one person, policy, program, branch or government. Instead, it must include communities and First Nations in progressive roles to bring about true systemic change that will ultimately result in healthier outcomes for children, youth and families.

Over the last few years, we have undergone a philosophical shift in our child welfare practice. We are moving from a focus on intervention, which emphasized bringing children into the safety of the director's care, to a stronger focus on prevention that prioritizes safety within families and communities. One of our significant preventative initiatives is the Extended Family Care program, which ensures that children who require out-of-home care remain with their families. Yukon was the first jurisdiction in Canada to match the supports and services for extended family caregivers to those provided to foster caregivers. Most recently, we re-aligned staff positions to create the Placement Resource unit to provide dedicated support workers and supports for all caregivers, including foster caregivers, extended family caregivers, and adoptive parents.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's first Call to Action asks that all levels of government commit to reducing the number of Indigenous children in care. Yukon continues to make significant strides toward reconciliation through strong government-to-government relationships. The department recognizes that to create change, Yukon First Nations must be actively involved in making decisions that affect their children, youth, and communities. Yukon has taken steps to ensure that child welfare practice remains a priority at all levels of government by establishing the Trilateral Table on the Wellbeing of Yukon First Nations Children and Families (Trilateral Table) in 2018. The Trilateral Table sets strategic priorities for child welfare activities and guides the development of capacity within First Nation governments. It consists of representatives

from Government of Yukon, Government of Canada, First Nations and CYFN, with the shared goal of improving outcomes for First Nations children, youth and families.

A number of organizational changes were made over the last two years to support our shift in child welfare practice. These include: realigning Regional Services under the director; creating Family Enhancement teams; creating the Family Resource unit; co-locating a new team with the Kwanlin Dün First Nation; creating a team of analysts to review our policies and procedures in partnership with CYFN; and creating barrier-free universal access to family programming. We also implemented Nts' äw Chua, a new supportive housing and semi-independent living program for youth.

In addition, through our partnership with First Nations and CYFN, we embarked on a significant, innovative initiative called Honouring Connections. Through this initiative, we are reviewing all existing continuing custody orders with First Nations and CYFN (where applicable) to determine if the children and youth in the director's care can be reunified with family, extended family, community, and culture.

This report will further expand on the initiatives I have highlighted above, and will look at how we have situated ourselves to face the challenges of the future. None of this could be achieved without the tireless efforts of our staff, colleagues, and partners. I wish to thank all HSS and FCS staff, First Nation health directors, the CYFN, and government and community partners for working together to improve the lives of children, youth, and families. By strengthening partnerships and working together, we will achieve great things for Yukoners.

Sincerely,

Geraldine MacDonald
Director of Family and Children's Services

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Executive summary

This report provides a detailed overview of the child welfare services and supports provided by the Department of Health and Social Services from April 1, 2017 to December 31, 2019.

It identifies a number of significant accomplishments achieved over this period, and also looks at system changes that are affecting our philosophies, practices and service delivery. Quantitative and qualitative data is presented to demonstrate the direct impact on children, youth and families within a narrative that explains our services. Please note that, due to limitations in data collection, some quantitative data is represented both in calendar years and in point-in-time counts from fiscal years.

The report's first section, Strategic Context, provides brief overviews of the *Child and Family Services Act*, Yukon demographics, and changes to our service delivery model.

The second section, Our Continuum of Support and Services, gives a detailed description of the various programs available for children, youth and families involved in the child welfare system. The continuum starts with Preventative Supports to Keep Families Together, which includes Agreements for Support Services for Families which have been consistently accessed over the last years by an average of 216.6 families per year. Other preventative supports include our Family Support Program, which has significantly increased their service levels from 192 home visits and 362 community visits with families in 2017 to 312 home visits and 486 community visits in 2019. Following a description of new Family Enhancement Teams that provide cohesive and consistent services for families, we discuss the Family Group Conferencing program that has held an average of 19.3 conferences per year from 2017 to 2019.

Next, the Out-of-Home Care portion of the continuum discusses the significant changes made to our Extended Family Care Program to meet the needs of growing number of families accessing it. The number of children in extended family care increased from 54 in 2017 to 145 in 2019. This increase is correlated with a notable decrease in the number of children in the care and/or custody of the director from 141 in 2017 to 95 in 2019. However, the overall number of children and youth requiring out-of-home care due to safety concerns has not significantly decreased. Still, we strive

to place children with extended family in the hopes that it will increase the likelihood that they remain connected to their parents, community and culture.

Important initiatives were launched to improve our foster care program, such as cultural competency training and culturally-sensitive application processes, so that if a child must be placed in a different family setting, they are still connected to their community and culture. The decrease in the number of youth in the Transitional Support Services (TSS) program, or group care, from 29 youth in 2017 to 18 youth in 2019 resulted in two group care programs closing, reallocation of staff and other program changes to better support youth. We anticipate the number of youth in group care to further decrease in 2020 as other programs gain momentum and fewer children enter care.

The third part of the continuum, Programs for Youth and Young Adults, introduces Nts'aw Chua. This is a supportive and semi-independent living program that incorporates Indigenous and non-Indigenous elements in its practice model, and offers improved transitional supports for youth from 15 to 24 years of age. A special community partner spotlight on the Skookum Jim Friendship Centre highlights their important contributions to support youth in our community. Finally, a discussion on the Agreements for Support Services for Youth and Agreements for Transitional Support Services shows the rapid increase in the number of these agreements from 23 in 2017 to 42 in 2019.

The director of FCS is also the provincial/territorial director of the Youth Criminal Justice Act, therefore the section on Youth Supports and Services highlights the Youth Achievement Centre (YAC). YAC now provides low-barrier, preventative, community-based services to at-risk youth. They have created a complement of employment initiatives and wilderness therapeutic programming with community partners that invest more into at-risk youth, as demonstrated by the significant increase in the number of hours youth spend in programming.

The subsequent section, Promoting Child and Family Wellbeing beyond the CFSA, describes our broader systemic approach to promote protective factors within families, irrespective of child welfare concerns. Our Healthy Families program has expanded to more rural communities than ever before with culturally-responsive programming, which has resulted in a 72.3% increase in program enrollment by families from pre-2017 to 2019. After a discussion on the three-year, \$7M, Canada-Yukon Early Learning and Child Care Agreement and how we support licensed child care programs, we

introduce the Family Resource Unit (FRU), which will provide preventative programming to all Yukon families with a universal, barrier-free approach.

In the Relationships with First Nations section, we detail the significant steps taken towards reconciliation, such as forming the Trilateral Table on Wellbeing of Yukon First Nations Children and Families with the Government of Canada, First Nations governments and the Council of Yukon First Nations (CYFN) for strategic focus on child welfare. Other progressive actions include changing the flow of Indigenous Services Canada's prevention and enhancement funding directly to First Nations; increased collaboration between FCS and First Nation Family Support Workers/Community Liaisons to better serve First Nation communities; and our work to complete Memoranda of Agreements on child welfare with Carcross/Tagish First Nation and Ta'an Kwäch'än Council. Over the past few years, we strengthened our relationship with CYFN and the First Nations Health Social Development Commission in the area of child welfare. In January 2019, we launched the Honouring Connections project with First Nations and CYFN to re-connect all children in long-term care and/or custody of the director to their families, communities and cultures.

The following section reports on our relationship with internal HSS partners, namely Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services' (MWSU) Child, Youth and Family Treatment Team (CYFTT), as well as Social Supports' Child Disability Services. Both have improved the services they provide to children, youth and families involved in the child welfare system.

The Continuous Service Quality Improvement portion of the report describes training and professional development initiatives such as the 2017/18 and 2018/19 Child Welfare Core Training, the latter of which had significant participation from First Nation Family Support Workers/Community Liaisons. It also details the policy and program changes implemented as a result of the recommendations from the reviews of our group care program, such as the Costanzo Report (2018), the Public Interest Disclosure Commissioner's Report (2019) and the Yukon Child and Youth Advocate's Report (2019).

Finally, our Looking Ahead section will introduce you to the program enhancements and partnerships to expect from us in the near future: our new child welfare practice model – Signs of Safety, our integrated child welfare case management project, re-visioning of our group care program, increased focus on restorative justice for at-risk

youth, community-based safety resources managed by First Nations, and the rural licensed child care project.

Strategic context: legislation, demographics and service delivery

The Department of Health and Social Services' (HSS) Family and Children's Services (FCS) branch provides child welfare services to Yukoners under the *Child and Family Services Act* (CFSA). Given the complexity of delivering these services, it is important to consider the context in which they are provided.

The CFSA came into effect in 2010 and introduced progressive principles and mechanisms to strengthen families, prevent child apprehensions and to promote family reunification while preserving and addressing the cultural identity needs of service users. Guided by this progressive statute, practice shifted over the last decade to provide family-centred, strengths-based, relationship-focussed, and culturally competent services, all of which emphasize that the best way to protect children on a long-term basis is to strengthen and support their families, including their extended families.

On May 29, 2018, the Minister of HSS appointed a six member Advisory Committee to undertake a broad review of the CFSA and make recommendations to improve our child welfare system. The Advisory Committee travelled to all Yukon communities and engaged with many Yukoners to gather their perspectives on the CFSA. Their report (*Embracing the Children of Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*) for HSS was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on October 28, 2019. The Government of Yukon is currently reviewing the Advisory Committee's 'required actions' with view to amend our legislation and consider any related policy changes.

According to the Yukon Bureau of Statistics, the estimated population of the territory on September 30, 2019 was 41,408, of which 8,890 (21.5%) were between 0 to 19 years of age. The majority of the population (32,395 or 77.9%) resided in the Whitehorse area. Yukon's Indigenous population, including those with status under the *Indian Act* and those who self-identified as First Nations, Métis or Inuit, amounted to

8,524 or 20.6% of the total population. However, more than 70% of the children, youth and families involved in the child welfare system self-identify as First Nation, Métis or Inuit.

Approximately, 4,760 (55.8%) of the Indigenous population resided in Whitehorse and 3,764 (44.2%) resided in rural communities. To ensure that the CFSA was applied consistently across the territory and so that children, youth and families received support services according to the same standards regardless of whether they lived in a rural community or Whitehorse, in October 2018, HSS realigned Regional Services under the director of FCS (referred to as the “director”). This realignment has positioned us to use existing staffing resources more strategically.

We could not accurately represent the vital work being done by staff over the course of this reporting period without acknowledging the challenge of staff recruitment and retention. At times, high turnover rates in social work staff, especially in the communities, has disrupted services to clients. Isolated Northern communities and difficulties in securing housing creates challenges for us to recruit and retain experienced social workers. But, as a result of this realignment and a one-team approach to child welfare services, during staffing shortages we are able to more easily transfer staff from Whitehorse to the communities to help reduce any disruption to services. While difficulties in child welfare social worker recruitment and retention are expected to persist in Yukon, as they are across Canada, we will continue to look for ways to use collaboration, partnership and innovation to strengthen the overall system.

Our continuum of supports and services

Based on the CFSA, we have developed an extensive continuum of support and services for families. Preventing children and youth from entering into the care is the starting point for this continuum. When families need help to keep children safe at home, we make every effort to keep them together with wraparound supports tailored to their needs. When this is not possible, and all other options have been exhausted, the second part of our continuum responds with out-of-home care options for children and youth, such as extended family care, foster care and group care. The third part of our continuum provides programs and services to youth and young adults involved with FCS to achieve their life goals as they transition out of the child welfare system. This section of the report provides a detailed account of these three distinct parts of our continuum.

A. Preventative supports to keep families together

We recognize the importance of keeping families together whenever possible. To help do this, we redirect funding and provide preventative programs, as described below, to reduce the likelihood that children will need care outside of their family setting.

Family support services

According to s. 10 of the CFSA, we can provide a broad range of family support services to promote family integrity and overcome the obstacles that may have resulted in child protection concerns. Based on a comprehensive family assessment and case plan, we offer services such as child care, respite, counselling, financial supports, and parenting programs. If the family requires longer-term support, then, under s.11 of the CFSA, we explore the possibility of entering into Agreements for Support Services for Families (ASSF) with a parent who has custody of a child to provide the necessary support services for the child to either remain in, or return to, their family home.

Over the last three years, families with identified child protection concerns have consistently accessed ASSFs, as demonstrated in Figure 1. Although the numbers fluctuated from 230 families in September 2017 to 180 families in September 2018, the number for families rose to 240 in September 2019.

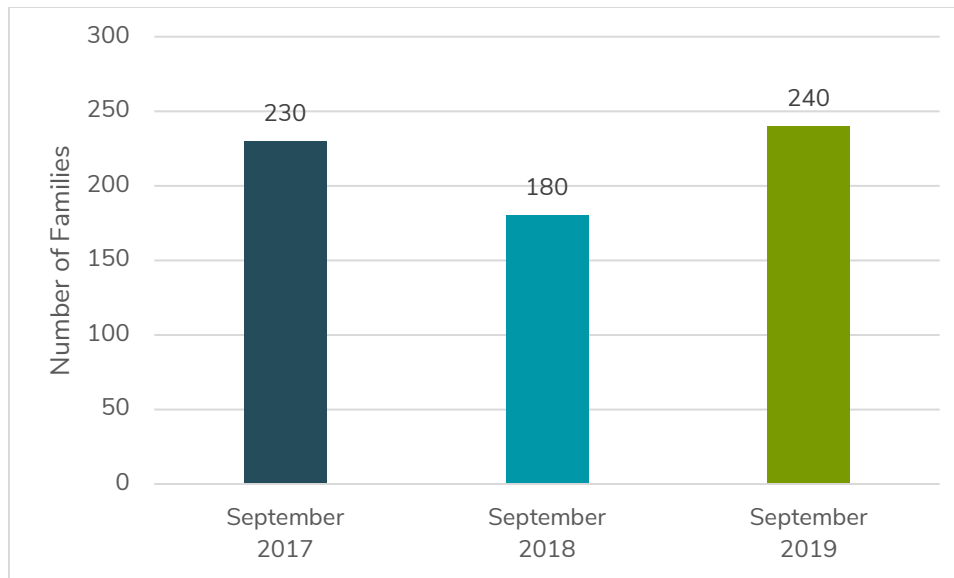


Figure 1. Number of families with Agreements for Support Services for Families (ASSFs). This figure shows the number of families with ASSFs in a point-in-time count approach from September 2017 to September 2019. To avoid double counting agreements that may have been renewed over several fiscal years, and to minimize other reporting errors, we chose September (middle of the fiscal year) to provide point-in-time counts during this reporting period.

Family support program and the child and youth support program

In order to assist families to address identified child protection concerns, our Family Support program provides intensive home-based supports to families as well as parenting and group sessions geared to build on parents' strengths and improve caregiving skills. The program collaborates with other government and community resources to develop specific strategies that address concerns affecting a child's safety and well-being within the family. Additionally, workers facilitate group events, including holiday dinners, summer barbecues, and other seasonal outdoor activities to encourage family participation, social interaction, peer support and self-care for families.

Although the Family Support program delivers services exclusively in Whitehorse, it does try to support the rural communities whenever possible. For example, in 2019, it collaborated extensively with the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyak Dun to provide training and program materials so that some of the Family Support program's curriculum (namely, the Take-a-Break program designed to help isolated parents form social bonds with their peers and engage with the community) can be delivered in Mayo, Yukon. Likewise, the program regularly shares program materials and resources with regional social workers so that some programming is available in the rural communities.

Figures 2 and 3 represent the home and community visits conducted by the Family Support program and the number of programming hours delivered to families, respectively. When comparing 2018 to 2019, we see a massive jump in the number of visits and programming hours delivered to families. This increase is due to the following program changes in 2019: filling vacancies to reach a full staffing complement; increased oversight from the supervisor; expanded eligibility criteria to provide programming even after a family's involvement with the child welfare system ended; and an expanded definition of client-related meetings that captured visits that were previously unaccounted for.

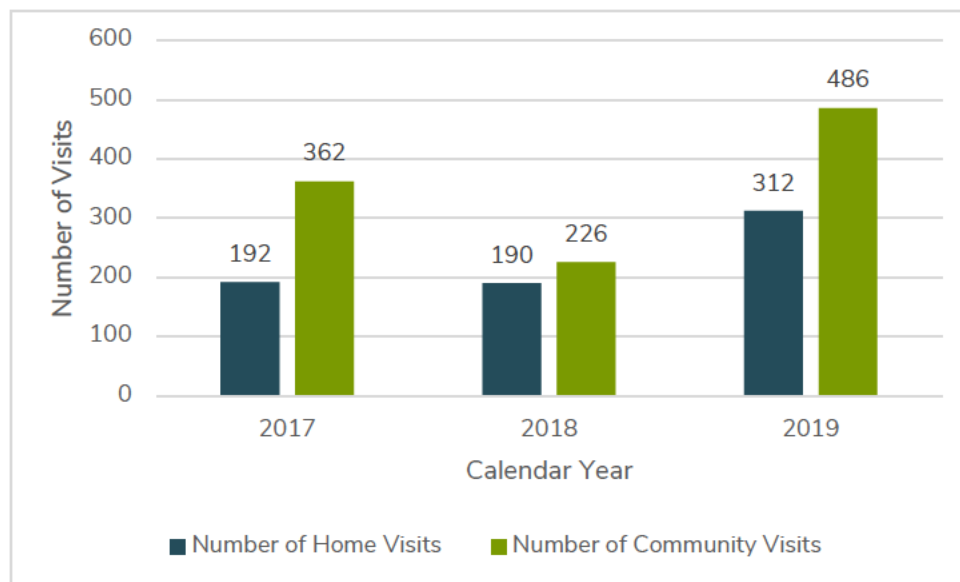


Figure 2. Home visits and community visits conducted by the Family Support program. This figure shows the number of home visits and community provided in the 2017, 2018 and 2019. Home visits are when Family Support Workers meet with families in their place of residence. Community visits are when Family Support Workers meet families in public places within the community.

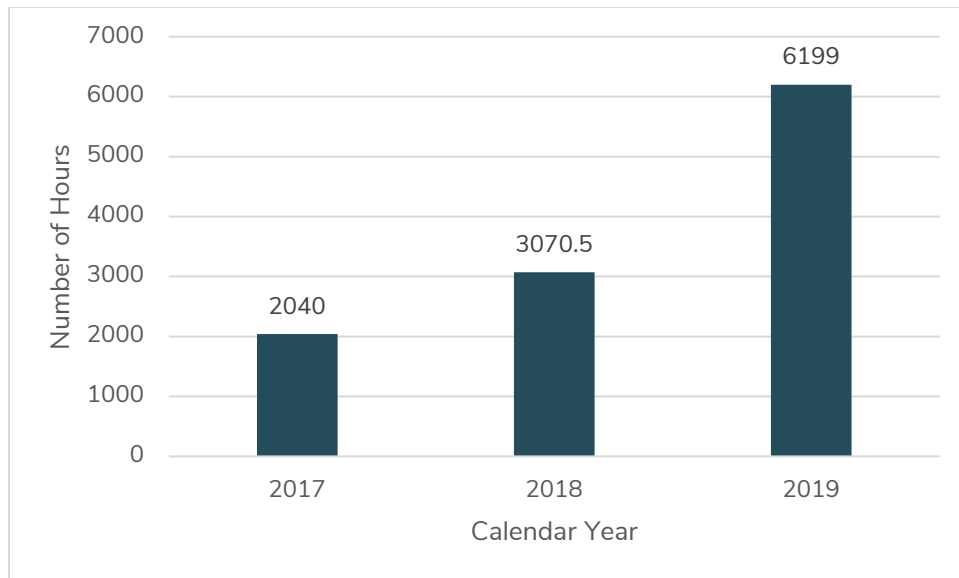


Figure 3. Family Support program hours delivered to families. This figure shows the number of hours of programming the Family Support Program delivered to families in 2017, 2018 and 2019.

While the Family Support program focuses on parents and caregivers, the Child and Youth Support program develops and facilitates programming for children aged 5 to 19 years of age who are either involved with FCS or are in the care and/or custody of the director. One-on-one recreational activities and group programming build essential life skills, including problem solving, communication and self-regulation. Figure 3 shows the number of children and youth who participated in one-on-one and group programming. Over the last three calendar years, the average number of participants per month has remained consistent.



Figure 3. The average number of participants in the Child and Youth Support program. This figure shows the average number of children and youth who participated in one-on-one recreational activities per month in each calendar year, as well as the average number of children and youth who participated in group programming per month in each calendar year.

Going forward, plans are underway to realign these two programs under FCS' Family Services unit to better meet the needs of children, youth and families with child protection concerns. However, a portion of the Family Support Team will be assigned to the Family Resources Unit to provide prevention-oriented, universal programming to all Yukoners (see pg. 29 for more information).

Family enhancement teams

In 2018, we realigned units within FCS to create Family Enhancement teams. These teams are designed to work closely with families, caregivers, children and youth in a more holistic manner to encourage prevention and family reunification. These teams provide longer-term, ongoing services to children and families. They are responsible for cases involving child protection, family services, children in care, youth support, and extended family care. The social workers assigned to Family Enhancement Teams hold specialized caseloads catered to their strengths to promote the best service delivery possible.

To improve our working relationship with First Nations providing social services to their members, in November 2018 we co-located one of our Family Enhancement Teams

with Kwanlin Dün First Nation (KDFN) Social Services within the McIntyre subdivision in Whitehorse. As a result of this collaborative relationship, KDFN families receive coordinated supports and more cohesive services. We are exploring the potential to create additional partnerships with other Yukon First Nations.

Family group conferencing

The Family Group Conferencing program offers one of the cooperative planning processes under the CFSA (s. 6) that can be used when a case plan is required for the safety or care of the child or support services for the family. It provides a neutral setting for families to work collaboratively with FCS, the respective First Nations, community partners and collaterals to create meaningful plans that are centered on the child and family.

Our statistics indicate that, while the number of referrals declined from 2017 to 2019, the number of Family Group Conferences held during this period, as well as the number of Family Group Conferences held with First Nation families remained fairly consistent (see Figure 4). Since February 2019, the Family Group Conferencing program has been operating with only one Family Group Conference coordinator which has resulted in a decline in conferences that are noted in the following table.

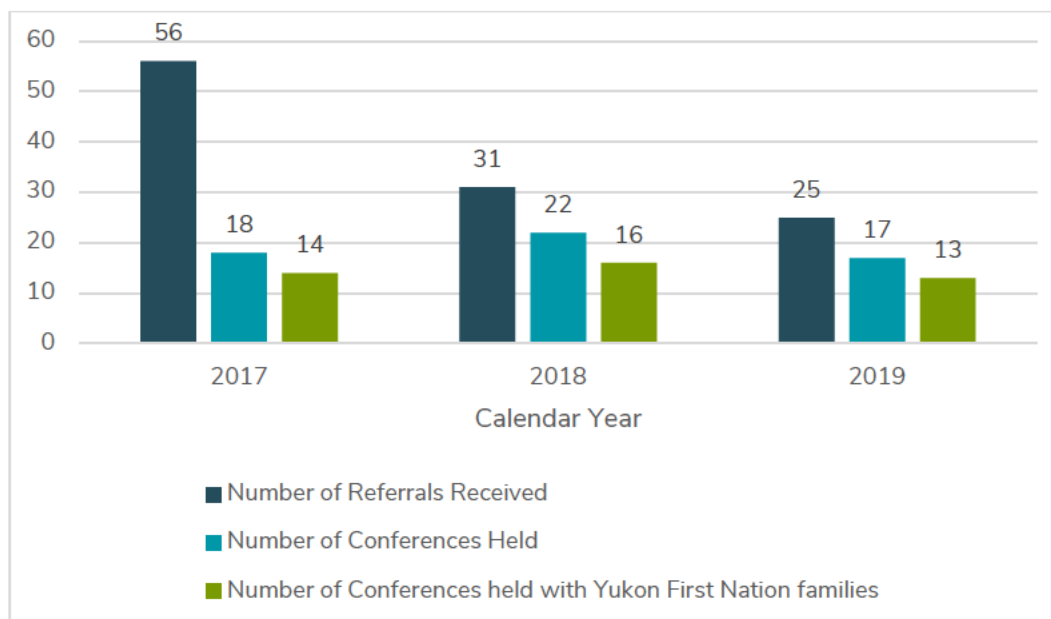


Figure 4. Number of referrals for Family Group Conferences and the number of Family Group Conferences held, including Family Group Conferences with First Nation families.

To address concerns raised about the capacity and limitations of this program and to look for opportunities to support the creation and/or utilization of existing Yukon First Nations processes, we expect to undertake a review of the current program model for Family Group Conferences in the near future.

B. Out-of-home care

When the identified child protection concerns in the family setting remain unresolved and the child's safety is at-risk, we work with the family to explore options for the child to receive care outside of their family home. This is referred to as out-of-home care. While our goal is always to address child protection concerns and work with parents and family on reunification, this is not always possible. Until safety is established, the child may be in one of the following out-of-home care options described below.

Extended family care

If a child is in need of out-of-home care, our first choice is for the child to reside with their extended family. Supported and mandated through the CFSA, specifically s. 14, Extended Family Care Agreements (EFCAs) allow children who require out-of-home care to remain with extended family rather than come into the care and/or custody of the director. Extended family caregivers include people who are related to the child by blood, through a spousal relationship, or any other persons who have, or had, a parent-like relationship with the child.

In November 2017, we were the first jurisdiction in Canada to increase financial supports provided to extended family caregivers to match the funding levels foster caregivers received. Then, in October 2018, we clarified policies and processes to ensure that all children in out-of-home care, regardless of whether they are in foster care or in extended family care, receive equivalent supports and services. Financial supports and services available to extended family caregivers include:

- a monthly base rate;
- clothing and special needs rate allowances;
- respite, homemaker, and alternate child care services;
- exceptional transportation reimbursements;
- annual holiday allowance and travel allowances;
- school supplies; and

- in-kind contributions such as training and parenting programs, and family counselling.

In September 2019, we re-aligned staffing positions to create the Placement Resource Unit and provide dedicated support workers for both foster caregivers and extended family caregivers.

These policy, procedural and program changes were implemented as a response to the growing number of families accessing the extended family care program, as displayed in Figure 5, as well as to reduce barriers and encourage more extended family members to provide out-of-home care.

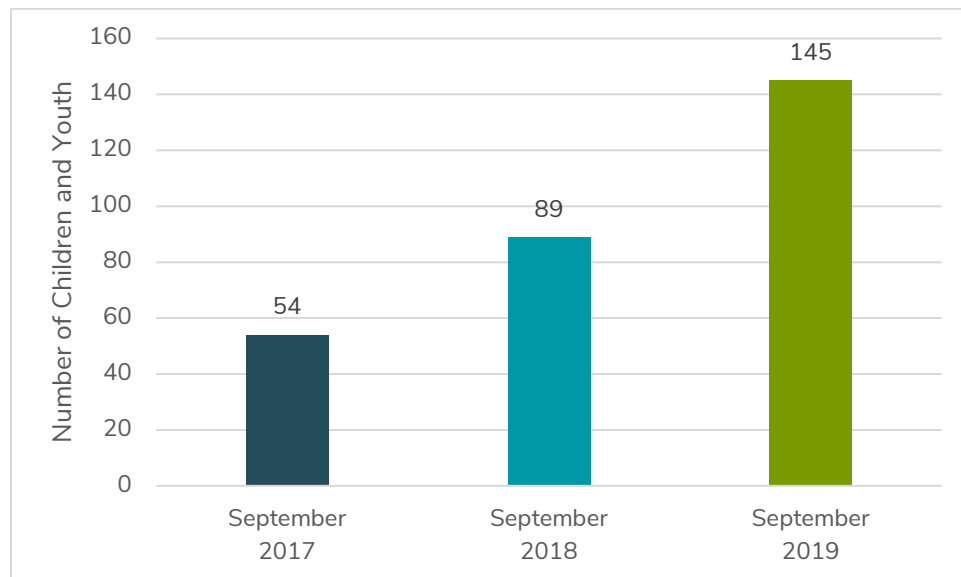


Figure 5. Number of children in the Extended Family Care program. This figure shows the number of children in extended family care in a point-in-time count approach from September 2017 to September 2019. To avoid double counting children in EFCAs that may have been renewed over several fiscal years and to minimize other reporting errors, we chose September (middle of the fiscal year) to provide point-in-time counts.

This increase in the number of children in the extended family care from 2017 to 2019 correlates with a significant decrease in the number of children in the care and/or custody of the director, as shown in Figure 6.

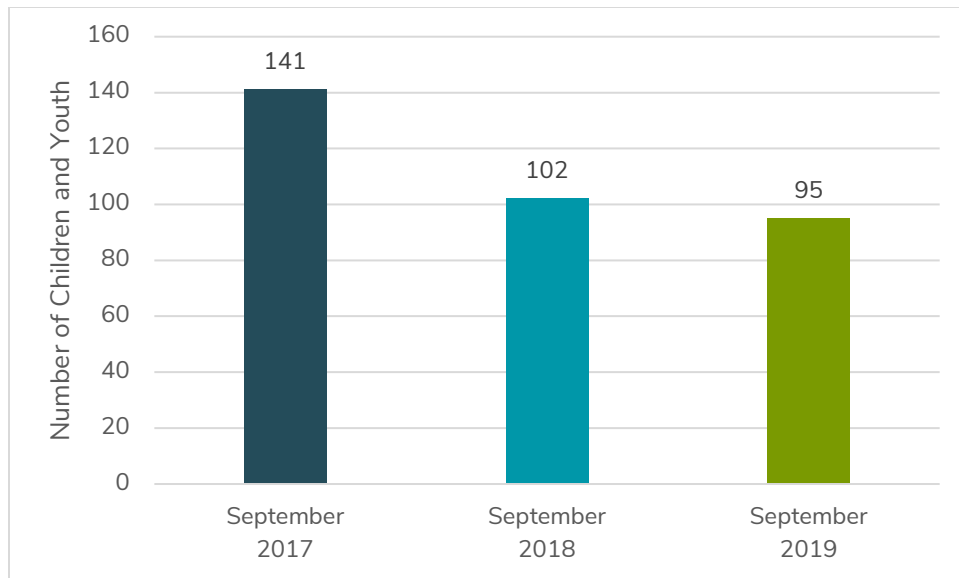


Figure 6. Number of children and youth in the care and/or custody of the director. This figure shows the decrease in the number of children and youth in the care in a point-in-time count approach from September 2017 to September 2019. To avoid double counting children and youth over several fiscal years and to minimize other reporting errors, we chose September (middle of the fiscal year) to provide point-in-time counts. Please note: adding the numbers of children in foster and group care will not directly result in the total number of children in care because the figures would be missing children in other types of placements (e.g. out-of-territory treatment, family visitation, etc.).

If Figure 6 is viewed in isolation, the decrease in the number of children in the care and/or custody of the director could be interpreted to mean that more children and youth are safe in their family homes. However, the rising figures in the Extended Family Care program indicate that the overall number of children and youth requiring out-of-home care due to safety concerns has not significantly decreased. Child welfare concerns rooted in complex social issues such as intergenerational trauma, poverty, parental substance use, mental wellness and/or family violence cannot be resolved by the CFSA alone. However, we are pleased that the system is responding in better ways through the Extended Family Care program, as described above, to keep children and youth closer to their families, communities and culture.

Foster care program

Once all options for extended family care are exhausted, we then, in collaboration with parents and other partners such as the child's respective First Nation, explore alternative options for out-of-home care. The preferred approach for out-of-home care

is a family environment where the child can continue to receive support to reach their developmental milestones and maintain connections to their family, culture and community. The foster care program strives to provide this with trained foster caregivers who work with the child, the child's parents and FCS.

A noteworthy trend in our data is the decrease in the number of children in the foster care program from 2017 to 2018, as shown in Figure 7, which coincides with the increase in the number of children in the extended family care program (see Figure 5). The stable number of children in the foster care program from 2018 to 2019 (see Figure 7) confirms the continued need for the foster care program as an option in our continuum of supports.

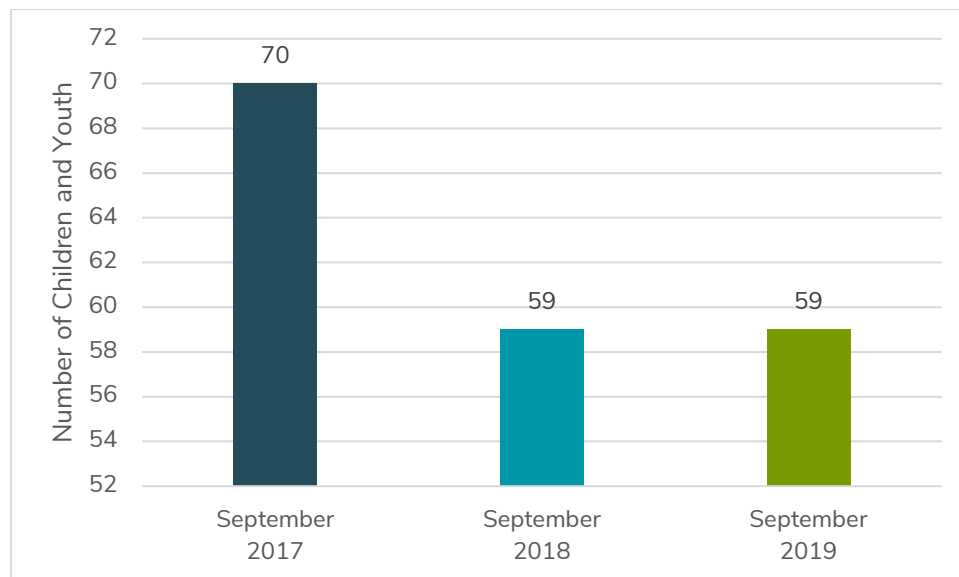


Figure 7. Number of children and youth in care and/or custody of the director placed in the Foster Care program. This figure shows the number of children and youth in the foster care program in a point-in-time count approach from September 2017 to September 2019. To avoid double counting children and youth that may have remained in foster care over several fiscal years and to minimize other reporting errors, we chose September (middle of the fiscal year) to provide point-in-time counts.

Increasing cultural competency among foster caregivers and ensuring children in foster care have opportunities to be involved in cultural activities was an area of focus in 2017-19. We organized and facilitated several events to cultivate an increased cultural awareness and knowledge for foster caregivers, as well as family-focused events with content tailored for children. For example, our 2018 caregiver appreciation event

included a special performance by the Dakhká Khwáan Dancers, where they invited all of the children to dance with them on stage. In June 2018, we held our annual caregiver barbeque and picnic in the Long Ago Peoples Place, a recreated First Nations village in Champagne, Yukon, designed to teach Southern Tutchone history and culture. In 2019, we invited Elders and Knowledge Keepers to our annual caregiver barbeque and picnic to teach traditional hand games and provide ceremonial drumming.

In partnership with First Nations, the Mutual Family Assessment process was redesigned during 2017-19 to be more user friendly, less intrusive, and more culturally sensitive with an increased focus on skills and strengths. Mutual Family Assessments work to ensure that foster homes meet the needs of children placed in their care. This new process will be piloted throughout Yukon in 2020.

To further enhance support to caregivers, in 2018-19, we hired a consultant group to assess the feasibility of a more inclusive caregiver association for both foster and extended family caregivers. We received the consultant's report, confirming interest for such an association, in October 2018 and it was subsequently presented to First Nations. Our Placement Resource Unit will continue to work on developing this initiative in the coming year.

Foster care recruitment was an ongoing priority over the reporting period of 2017 to 2019. In addition to all of the foster caregiver recruitment initiatives underway, we are in discussion with the Council of Yukon First Nations (CYFN) to co-develop a Yukon-wide caregiver recruitment strategy.

Transitional support services

Transitional Support Services (TSS) provides group care, intensive support services and supervision to youth in the custody of the director whose needs cannot be fully supported in extended family care or foster care. While a youth is in the TSS program, the youth, their social worker, TSS workers, the youth's family and their First Nation, all work collaboratively to develop and implement a comprehensive case plan that helps map the way forward for the youth to achieve their life goals.

Assisting youth to maintain connection to their culture while in group care is a key priority. To this end, TSS supports youth to participate in cultural programs with First Nations partners, such as the Moosehide Gathering in summer 2018 and the Jackson

Lake land-based healing camp. The staff and management at TSS incorporate First Nations cultural elements into daily living within the group care homes, in addition to helping children and youth in care to access their culture and community.

Starting in 2017, TSS made important changes to better support youth as they prepare to transition to life on their own or return to the family. Some of the changes include:

- hiring additional program support staff to work one-on-one with youth and assist with searching for and supporting youth on unplanned absences;
- staffing a personnel support position, which performs call-outs for shift coverages so that supervisory and front line staff can focus on providing care; and
- creating additional supervisory positions for after-hours, including evenings and weekends.

Despite these efforts, we acknowledge that the best place for youth is within family settings, preferably close to their community, until they can reunify with their parents. Social workers have increased their efforts to find alternatives to group care and to routinely re-explore the possibility of potential extended family care placements or reunifying youth with their families. These efforts have resulted in a prominent decrease in the number of children and youth in our TSS program, as shown in Figure 8.

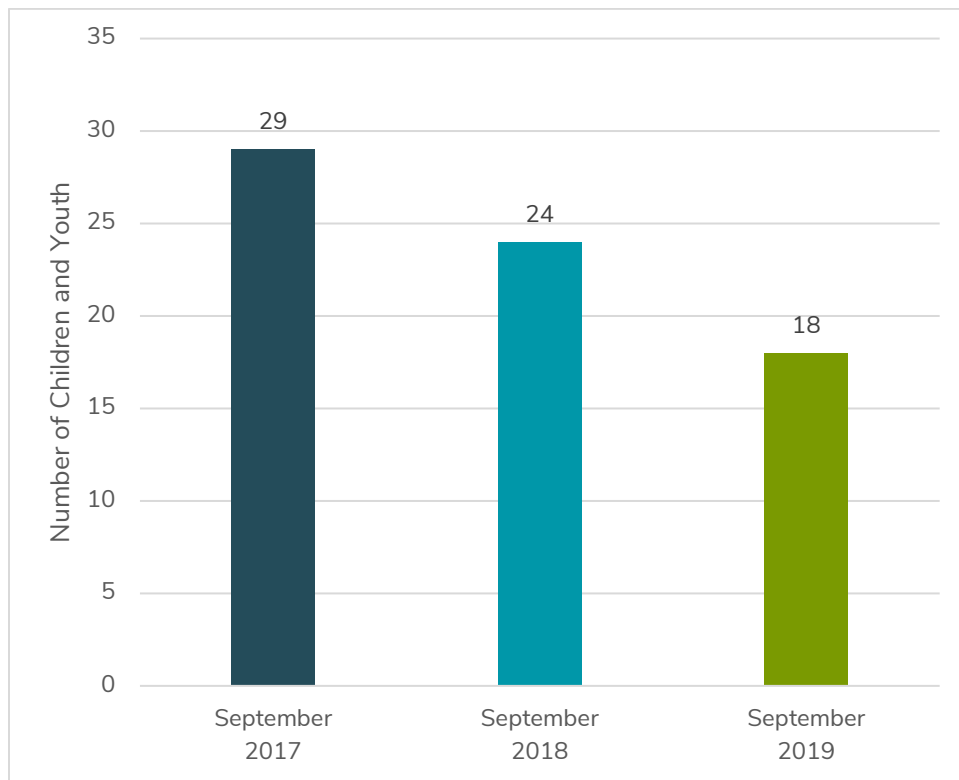


Figure 8. Number of children and youth in the TSS program. This figure shows the number of children and youth in the TSS program, or group care, in a point-in-time count approach from September 2017 to September 2019. To avoid double counting children and youth that may have resided in the TSS program over several fiscal years and to minimize other reporting errors, we chose September (middle of the fiscal year) to provide point-in-time counts.

Youth form important bonds with their peers and TSS program support workers while they are in group care. Accordingly, we have implemented policies to ensure that these bonds can continue after a youth leaves the program. The TSS aftercare policy allows youth who have left the program to return to their placements for up to six months for optional services, such as meals, emergency supplies, and support from staff. As these transitions can be challenging, TSS will continue to provide support through its current mandate and will look for opportunities to expand the services and care provided to youth.

C. Programs and services for youth and young adults

We understand that youth and young adults are more likely to succeed and live self-sufficiently when focussed programs and supports that emphasize building life skills and connecting with their natural support networks are available. In order to help facilitate their successful transition to self-sufficiency and lasting connections, we provide the following programs and services for youth from 16 years of age to young adults under 24 years of age, with some exceptions.

Agreements to assist youth and young adults

The CFSA introduced two distinct mechanisms, the Agreement for Support Services for Youth (s. 16) and the Agreement for Transitional Support Services (s. 17) to further assist youth and young adults. The Agreement for Support Services for Youth is for those from 16 to 19 years of age who are not able to safely reside in the family home and where there is no parent or other person that can assist them. The Agreement for Transitional Support Services is for young adults from 19 to 24 years who have been in the custody of the director and are making the transition to independent living.

Both of these agreements may provide financial assistance for housing and living expenses, and supports to help youth gain independence, self-confidence, life skills and deal with concerns such as mental health and substance use issues or returning to school. In order to be eligible for either of these agreements, youth must be actively engaged in working towards self-reliance, as well as participating in education, employment or training.

Supporting youth and young adults is a priority for the department. FCS continues to work internally and with other Government of Yukon departments, as well as First Nations and community partners to enhance the services available in Yukon. As indicated in Figure 9, we are using these agreements more to provide support to youth and young adults.

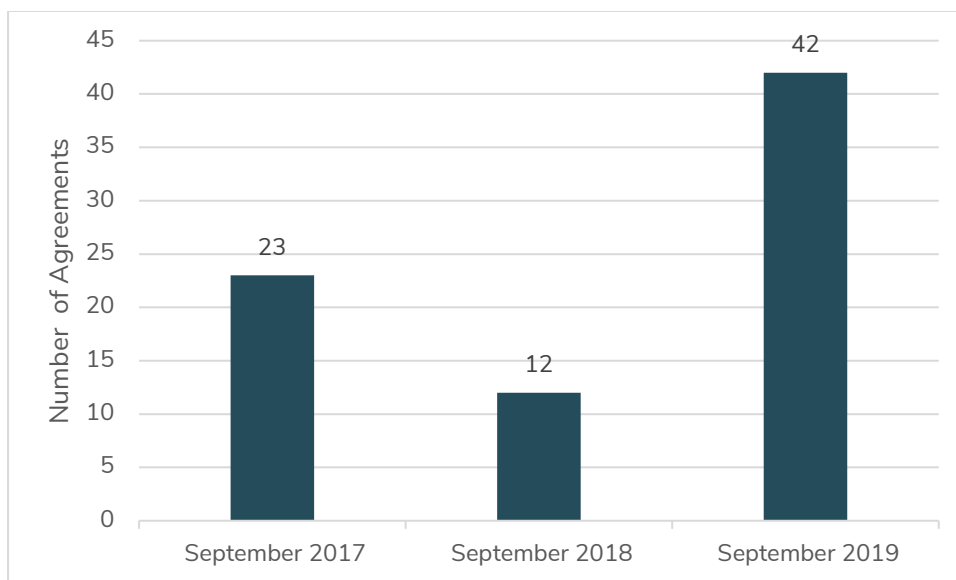


Figure 9. Number of agreements for support services for youth and number of agreements for transitional support services. This figure shows the number of families with ASSFs in a point-in-time count approach from September 2017 to September 2019. To avoid double counting agreements that may have been renewed over several fiscal years and minimize other reporting errors, we chose September (middle of the fiscal year) to provide point-in-time counts.

Nts' äw Chua: supportive housing and semi-independent living

Supporting youth transitioning to independence from the care and/or custody of the director was, and continues to be, an area of high priority. In April 2018, HSS purchased a residential property with semi-independent units to implement an innovative supportive housing and semi-independent living program. We engaged with youth currently in care, young adults who have aged out of care, First Nations, Elders, and service providers in the community to develop a program model to help youth successfully live on their own and maintain connections to their culture.

In December 2019, we officially launched Nts' äw Chua: Supportive Housing and Semi-Independent Living Program. Nts' äw Chua is a Southern Tutchone phrase, and roughly translates to 'wild rhubarb little creek', which is the traditional name for the Porter Creek neighbourhood where the program is located.

Based on information gathered during the engagement, the program provides:

- housing and primary care for youth from 15 to 19 years of age;
- life skills training to assist youth to live on their own;

- a combination of on-site and outreach services to children, youth and young adults from 12 to 24 years of age; and
- safe, supportive, and culturally relevant programming.

The Nts' äw Chua program is rooted in a “two-eyed seeing model” that brings together Indigenous and non- Indigenous worldviews. From an Indigenous perspective, the Seven Grandfather Teachings, the Medicine Wheel and Circle of Courage were integrated into the model. From a non-Indigenous perspective, the model includes trauma-informed and trauma-responsive approaches as well as elements from the Systems of Care and Natural Supports models. The principles from these models have been incorporated into our policy and procedures manual, training and hiring procedures.

Community partner spotlight: Skookum Jim Friendship Centre

Skookum Jim Friendship Centre (the Centre) is a well-established, non-profit, charitable organization that has provided holistic support to Indigenous people for over 50 years. The Government of Yukon has a long-standing partnership with the centre, providing funding to them to support programming for youth such as the Youth Emergency Shelter, Youth Support Services, the Tān Sakwāthān Youth Diversion program, and the Family Support Worker program. Funding provided to the centre has remained consistent in 2017/18 (\$900,373) and 2018/19 (\$840,000). However, given that the centre expanded to provide the Youth Support Services program (described below), FCS committed to providing additional support in 2019/20 with \$886,556 from April 1, 2019 to December 31, 2019.

The centre's Youth Emergency Shelter and emergency after-hours outreach services serve youth from ages 17 to 23 who require a safe environment, with supports including a safe bed, counselling, and referrals to additional services.

In February 2019, the centre launched its low-barrier Youth Support Services program for youth aged 12-24 with the goal of assisting youth to access services. More specifically, support workers will work one-on-one with youth in the community to secure housing, obtain identification, and participate in recreational activities (e.g. canoe trip, hikes, fishing and horseback riding) or to access emotional support during difficult circumstances. They will also help youth access food or any other government or emergency services when needed.

The department also provides funding to the centre to deliver the Tān Sakwāthān Diversion Program, an eight-week program for youth aged 12-17 years who are in conflict with the law. The program is intended to encourage participants to connect with or reconnect with their cultural identity, community, and history, and help reduce youth crime and “break the cycle”.

The centre’s Family Support Program works with youth and their families to provide referrals, workshops, community events (such as camps) and facilitate discussions with Elders. The goal is to work with youth and families to improve relationships, resolve conflict, connect with culture and build self-esteem.

Youth supports and services: Youth Achievement Centre

According to s. 174(3) of the CFSA, the director of FCS is also the provincial/territorial director under the *Youth Criminal Justice Act* (YCJA). In Yukon, FCS’ Youth Supports and Services unit has the legal mandate to deliver services under the YCJA.

Over the last few reporting years, the number of youth involved with youth criminal justice system has continued to decline. The few youth involved continue to be served by either Whitehorse-based probation staff or regional social workers in partnership with Yukon First Nations, as appropriate. As a result, our Youth Achievement Centre (YAC) has transformed to meet the needs of a changing population of youth in high-risk situations and provide low-barrier, preventative, community-based services.

By creatively using existing resources and building partnerships with community partners such as BYTE, Skookum Jim Friendship Centre, KDFN Recreation, City of Whitehorse, Contagious Mountain Bike Club and Whitehorse Cross Country Ski Club, YAC has created many employment initiatives and offered wilderness therapeutic programming. Some examples include building mountain bike trails, constructing furniture and cabin construction projects, and participating in remote canoe and hiking trips. Participants gain basic work-related life skills, social skills, and improve their self-esteem, while learning carpentry and construction skills, outdoor survival skills and connecting to the land and natural environment.

While the number of youth enrolled in YAC programming remained fairly consistent, with 67 total youth in 2017/18 to 69 total youth in 2018/19, the number of hours that youth spent in programming significantly increased, from 5,861 hours in 2017/18 to 7,669 in 2018/19. This increase indicates two things: that youth with more complex needs enrolled in YAC programming, and that youth found the programming to be more engaging. Although two fiscal years do not provide enough data to be confident of these trends, we continue to look for opportunities to address the needs of at-risk youth and work on youth crime prevention.

Promoting child and family well-being beyond the *Child and Family Services Act*

In 2017, the Government of Yukon adopted **‘our people-centred approach to wellness helps Yukoners thrive’** as one of its enduring priorities, which acknowledged that “improved coordination of early childhood programs maximizes benefits to children”. Consistent with this priority and best practices in child welfare, we expanded and realigned our early childhood programming to serve more families. While child welfare services provided under the *CFSA* can mitigate child protection concerns and keep families together, a broad systemic approach that promotes protective factors, such as healthy relationships and early childhood development, can help families thrive. This section of the report describes the programs and services that assist and complement the child welfare mandate, or the *CFSA*, and contribute to better outcomes for all children and families.

Healthy Families

The Healthy Families program provides universal, barrier-free home-based supports and services in Whitehorse and in rural communities to parents from prenatally and/or birth until the child reaches school age (usually 5 years of age). In addition to teaching parents about family functioning, child health and development, and parent-child

interactions, it connects families to resources and helps families set and reach their goals. Services are offered at no cost to parents.

In 2017, Family and Children Services decided to forego the accreditation through Healthy Families America due to privacy and confidentiality concerns, which allowed us to move away from the standardized curriculum and expand the program to rural communities (Watson Lake, Pelly Crossing, Carmacks, Mayo, Haines Junction, Old Crow, Burwash Landing and Dawson) with culturally responsive programming. Most recently, in 2019, we created a Healthy Families worker position based in Carcross to provide services to the community and surrounding area. These program expansions were in response to requests from the respective First Nations within those communities. As a result of these changes, we are able to reach more families than ever (see Figure 10). In fact, when comparing pre-2017 family enrollment of 130 families per year to 2019 family enrollment, we see a 72.3% increase in family enrollment.

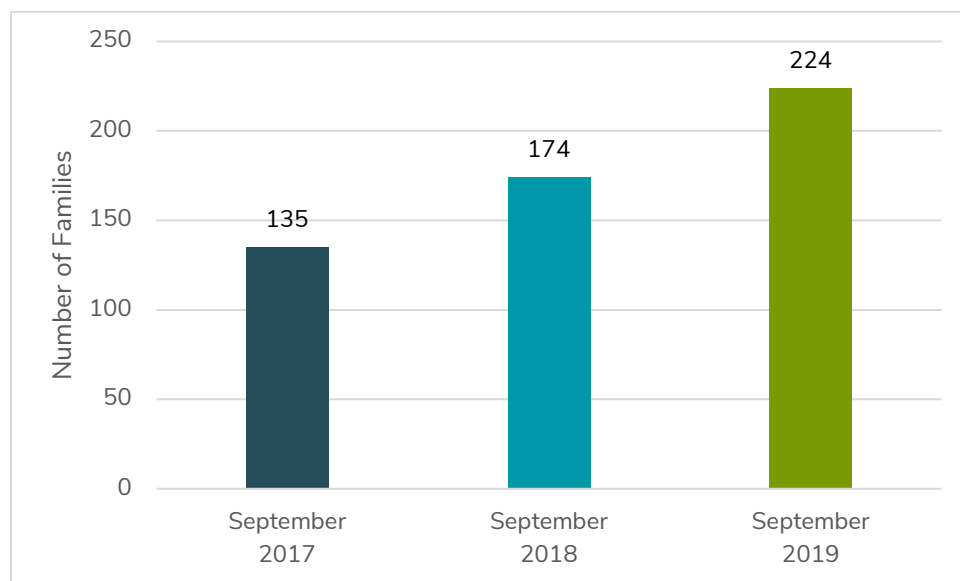


Figure 10. Number of families that accessed the Healthy Families program. This figure shows the number of families that voluntarily accessed the Healthy Families program across Yukon from each calendar year from 2017 to 2019.

Canada-Yukon early learning and child care agreement

In February 2018, the Minister of Health and Social Services signed the Canada-Yukon Early Learning and Child Care Agreement. This bilateral agreement provides Yukon with more than \$7 million over three years to fund investments that support four main areas of early learning and child care (ELCC):

- affordability and accessibility;
- inclusivity;
- innovation; and
- improving quality through training.

The current agreement expires on March 31, 2020, and the Government of Yukon is currently working with the Government of Canada to negotiate a new agreement that will take effect on April 1, 2020.

Some of the initiatives and program expansions launched using funding from the Canada-Yukon Early Learning and Child Care Agreement during this reporting period include:

- \$15,000 in funding to each of the 14 Yukon First Nations governments to assess early learning and child care needs in their respective communities.
- \$15,000 in funding was provided to *La garderie du petit cheval blanc* to assess early learning and child care services in the francophone community.
- Increased the Direct Operating Grant, which provides funding to licensed child care programs to manage their operating and maintenance costs, by 14.5%, with an additional 20% for rural programs.
- A grant for grandparents to cover the costs of licensed child care fees when they are the primary caregivers.
- A grant for young parents to cover the costs of licensed child care fees while completing secondary education.
- The development of a curriculum framework for all licensed child care programs for children 0 to 8 years of age.
- An early childhood education bursary program to provide funding for ELCC studies to enhance the quality of ELCC programs.
- Funding to Yukon College to offer early childhood education courses in communities outside of Whitehorse.

- Funding to the Yukon Child Care Association to host an annual early learning and child care conference.
- Funding to the Child Development Centre to offer Handle with Care and other supportive programming, as well as training to administer the Ages and Stages Questionnaire.
- Enhancement grants to assist with start-up costs for new licensed child care programs, to meet health and safety requirements and for radon testing and mitigation.
- Awareness campaigns regarding the importance of early childhood educators to support early childhood educator recruitment.
- Enrichment grants for licensed programs to purchase culturally and/or developmentally appropriate toys and equipment.

Family Resource Unit

In keeping with HSS' commitment to an ongoing continuum of supports throughout the lifespan, we realigned the Early Childhood, Prevention and Support Services Unit to form the Family Resource Unit (FRU). This newly-created unit includes the Child Care Services Unit, Healthy Families, a Family Support Program and Family Group Conferencing.

FRU's Family Support program offers similar prevention services to all Yukon families in a universal, barrier-free approach. Preventative services are now more accessible than ever before as child welfare involvement is no longer required to be eligible for the Family Support Program.

This new unit also supports preventative services provided by our community partners. It collaborates with Skookum Jim Friendship Centre and Ta'an Kwäch'än Council to assist in delivering their traditional parenting programs and culture camps that teach parenting skills through the traditional knowledge of Elders. In the coming months, FRU will explore additional opportunities to enhance its services and in-kind contributions to community partners.

Relationships with First Nation partners

A key priority for Yukon has been the work with Yukon First Nation partners to shift our focus from a protection to a prevention based model which is resulting in better outcomes for children and families, and keeping children with their family, extended family and community. We are committed to the ongoing journey towards reconciliation with First Nations and addressing the overrepresentation of First Nations children in care. This section of the report will detail the significant steps we have taken in this journey during 2017-2019.

Trilateral Table on Wellbeing of Yukon First Nations Children and Families

In January 2018, senior officials from the Government of Yukon, Government of Canada, First Nations governments and CYFN came together and established the Trilateral Table on Wellbeing of Yukon First Nations Children and Families to determine how to facilitate information sharing, promote collaborative decision-making on priorities, coordinate program implementation, and discuss allocation of financial resources. Federal, territorial, and First Nations government officials signed the terms of reference on February 18, 2019.

Indigenous Services Canada – prevention and enhancement supports

In March 2018, the Government of Yukon, First Nations governments, CYFN, and the Government of Canada, collectively agreed to changes to increase prevention and enhancement funding flowing directly to First Nations communities. This change in funding allocation further strengthens capacity in First Nations communities to improve outcomes for First Nations children and youth. This approach recognizes that by working together, we will improve outcomes for Indigenous children, youth and families.

First Nations Family Support Workers/Community Liaisons

In order to work closer with Yukon First Nations to identify solutions that ensure children remain in the community and connected to their families, we offer funding and

training for Family Support Workers/Community Liaisons. Hired and managed by Yukon First Nations, these Family Support Workers/Community Liaisons work hand-in-hand with FCS social workers. They even complete some of the same training; in 2018/19, approximately 50% of our core child welfare training participants were Family Support Workers/Community Liaisons from Yukon First Nations. Using their intimate knowledge of the community and family dynamics, they provide unique insight and creative solutions. They are an important prevention service and part of the resource network that can rapidly respond to the needs of the community.

Memoranda of agreement

To improve child welfare processes and operationalize the provisions of the CFSA that require First Nations involvement, we have entered into cooperation agreements with Yukon First Nations governments known as Memoranda of Agreement (MOA). These MOAs not only guide the delivery and administration of child welfare services to First Nations citizens, but also support First Nations child welfare service delivery. To date, we have completed MOAs with KDFN and Kluane First Nation, and are in the process of finalizing negotiations with Carcross/Tagish First Nation and Ta'an Kwäch'än Council. Additionally, we are in the early stages of preparing for negotiations with another First Nation. We are pleased to work with any Yukon First Nation interested in pursuing an MOA with FCS to enhance our working relationship and further crystallize their involvement in child welfare services.

Honouring Connections

We recognize that when children and youth remain in long-term government care under Continuing Custody Orders (CCO), they lose connections to family, community and culture. This loss of connection results in negative impacts on their emotional, physical, cognitive and spiritual well-being. Without a significant departure from past practices, future generations will inherit these negative impacts and First Nations children and youth will continue to be overrepresented in the child welfare system.

In response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's first Call to Action that asked all levels of government to commit to reducing the number of Aboriginal children in care, we launched the *Honouring Connections* project in January 2019 with First Nations and CYFN. This project will reassess all 50 First Nation children and youth under CCOs with a goal to, where possible, reunify them with their families, extended

families, communities and/or culture while focusing on their individual circumstances and needs. First Nations are currently determining their individual level of involvement in reassessing their respective children, youth and families; developing transition plans; and providing necessary supports and services for reunification. FCS will lead the reassessment and reunification processes for all non-Yukon First Nation children and youth.

Yukon will be a leader in Canadian child welfare by undertaking such an initiative, which to our knowledge has never been attempted by other provinces or territories, especially in coordination with the jurisdiction's respective First Nations, Inuit and/or Métis partners.

Council of Yukon First Nations and the First Nations Health and Social Development Commission

The Council of Yukon First Nations and the First Nations Health and Social Development Commission have provided invaluable support, guidance and direction for the delivery of child welfare services in Yukon. They were instrumental in some of the significant accomplishments detailed in this report, such as the changes to the Extended Family Care program, adopting Signs of Safety as our new child welfare practice model (see Looking Ahead pg. 38), and policy development for sending children and youth for specialized treatment outside of Yukon. We appreciate their commitment to child welfare and look forward to working together in partnership in the years to come.

Birth alerts

As stated in the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls report, “birth alerts” predominantly impacted marginalized women and disproportionately Indigenous mothers. The report recommended the removal of birth alerts from practice. In support of this commitment, in May 2019, Yukon officially discontinued the use of “birth alerts” or “hospital alerts” which often resulted in newborn children being taken away from their parent within days of birth. The last time a child was taken into care after a “birth alert” in Yukon was in 2017. Yukon was the first jurisdiction in Canada to move in this direction, with some other provinces and territories following shortly after.

Partners in the Department of Health and Social Services

Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services – Child, Youth and Family Treatment Team

We collaborate closely with HSS' Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services (MWSU) to provide wraparound services to children, youth and families with child protection concerns. Together, we are continuously exploring opportunities to enhance the respective service delivery models. More specifically, MWSU's Child, Youth and Family Treatment Team (CYFTT) offers mental health services to all children, youth and their families, including children in foster care, group care, extended family care, and the new Nts' äw Chua program. Children and youth may access these services through self-referrals, parent referrals or third-party referrals (e.g. child welfare social workers, teachers). This team uses trauma-responsive and culturally-informed practices to engage with children and youth at a ground-level and reduce barriers to accessing treatment.

As a result of this close relationship between MWSU and FCS, when youth in our care are undergoing crises, we can connect them to CYFTT for more positive outcomes instead of referring them to Whitehorse General Hospital or other supports that result in waitlists.

Social Supports – Child Disability Services

According to s. 12 of the CFSA, the director can provide in-home supports and out-of-home care services to a parent with a child that has complex needs, even if there are no child protection concerns. However, in Yukon, voluntary, family-centred supports and services to such parents are provided through Social Supports' Child Disability Services to deliver disability services across the lifespan from children to adults. Some of Child Disability Services' key supports include respite services, occupational therapy, speech-language pathology, and autism assessments. During the 2017-19 reporting period, Child Disability Services served 150 children from 137 families.

Continuous service quality improvement

As part of our commitment to provide quality programs to children, youth and families, we regularly enhance our staff skills and overall services through training and professional development initiatives, quality assurance audits, and policy and procedural revisions. In spring 2019, the FCS branch began the Organizational Culture Conversations Project, an initiative to look at how we can build strong teams and workplace culture. What follows is a more detailed look at each of these areas supporting quality improvement.

Training and professional development

In 2017/18, we delivered a Child Welfare Core Training course with a revised curriculum to all of our child welfare social workers with the aim of not only improving their understanding of foundational child welfare competencies, but also improving the working relationships between Whitehorse staff and staff in the communities. Based on lessons learned, we revised our curriculum and offered another Child Welfare Core Training course in 2018/19 for all incoming child welfare social workers as well as First Nation Family Support Workers/Community Liaisons, FCS policy analysts and CYFN child welfare analysts. The second offering of the Child Welfare Core Training course intended to improve working relationships between FCS and First Nations at the child welfare operational level.

In addition to all of the courses and training offered through Government of Yukon's Organizational Development branch, in 2018 and 2019, staff were provided training on client complaint processes, respecting client rights and other policy revisions related to TSS and group care.

In addition, our foster and extended family caregivers also received and were eligible to attend a variety of courses and workshops including trauma-informed and responsive care training (i.e. Risking Connections), First Aid, suicide intervention training and the Crisis Prevention Institute's Non-violent Crisis Intervention training. Given all the exciting and necessary changes that are in progress or planned for FCS in the coming year, training and professional development will continue to be a busy area for our branch.

Quality assurance

According to the CFSA, we must report our compliance with child welfare standards to the Minister every three years. Over the 2017-2019 reporting period, we shifted our internal compliance auditing process to occur every two years, away from the previous annual auditing cycle, to allow more time for our quality improvement initiatives to improve outcomes. In December 2019, we hired a quality assurance analyst to help develop a quality assurance framework tailored to Yukon and informed by the CFSA's guiding principles and Signs of Safety's Meaningful Measures, the new child welfare practice model we are implementing in 2020 (see pg. 38 for more information).

Internal and external reviews on group care

In 2018, a number of allegations pertaining to the services delivered by Transitional Support Services (TSS) came to light. As a result, several internal and external reviews were launched to fully investigate these allegations and provide recommendations to address any systemic issues.

In response, the Minister requested the Yukon Child and Youth Advocate to conduct an independent and impartial review of the TSS program from April 1, 2015, to April 1, 2018. The Deputy Minister of HSS retained an external investigator from a legal firm in British Columbia to review these allegations and determine whether FCS followed the proper policies and procedures [the Costanzo Report (2018)]. As well, the Public Interest Disclosure Commissioner conducted a special investigation under the *Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act (PIDWA)* into similar issues and allegations [the *PIDWA Report (2019)*].

We participated fully and forthrightly in all of these reviews to identify systemic issues that compromised care and support to children and youth. In light of these reviews, we took a number of significant steps described in this report and invested substantial human resources to address these issues and improve the quality of our services. For example, in 2018 we created a team of three policy analysts to conduct comprehensive policy reviews and jurisdictional scans on best practices with a view to align TSS policies with the CFSA and its respective policies. Based on the recommendations from the internal and external reviews, many policy and procedural revisions were undertaken in 2019 and respective training was delivered to staff. In the coming years,

we will continue to identify opportunities to improve the delivery of services to Yukon children, youth and families.

Organizational culture conversations project

When there is a strong organizational culture where all staff, from senior management to frontline, embody the values of the organization, employees are engaged, turnover is typically low and relationships with clients are strong. Simply put, the organization prospers as a collective. To better understand our own organizational culture, or “the way things are done around here”¹, in April 2019, we launched our Organizational Culture Conversations project in partnership with the Public Service Commission’s Organizational Development branch and the Respectful Workplace Office. We hosted a total of 20 crucial conversations (i.e. staff workshops and focus groups) with over 130 FCS staff to discuss topics such as what they are proud of and thankful for in our organizational culture, as well as what can be improved, how leadership can support a healthy culture and staffs’ role in culture-building.

In February 2020, ODB shared with management the themes, reflections and feedback from the conversations. In the coming months, the findings will be shared with staff and we still start the discussion on taking actions based on these results. Interwoven in this process is our all staff engagement days that incorporate and build upon the themes’ and topics from this work. This initiative emphasizes that, regardless of the position we are in, we all have a role in maintaining a healthy workplace that supports the healthy delivery of services to the people we serve.

¹ Deal T. E. and Kennedy, A. A. (1982, 2000) *Corporate Cultures: The Rites and Rituals of Corporate Life*, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1982; reissue Perseus Books, 2000

Looking ahead

As the child welfare landscape changes and we learn more about the complex issues affecting the children, youth and families in our communities, we will use our creativity and existing resources to offer the best services possible. Described below are some of the notable initiatives, program enhancements, and partnerships to expect from us in the near future.

Signs of Safety

In collaboration with CYFN and our First Nations partners, in summer of 2018 we worked to identify child welfare practice models more appropriate for Yukon that would be compatible with the CFSA. Following extensive research, consideration, and engagement with First Nations, the collective decision was reached to adopt the Signs of Safety (SoS) practice model.

The SoS model is a flexible, strengths-based, family-centered, safety-organized approach to child protection casework that is consistent with the recommendations to improve child welfare services from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada final report, the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls final report, as well as the guiding principles highlighted in the CFSA. Additionally, implementing the SoS practice model in collaboration with First Nations will provide an opportunity to respond to Item 5 within the First Nations Child & Family Caring Society's Spirit Bear Plan by introducing training, policies, and practice that helps further efforts towards reconciliation.

In fall 2019, a three-year contract was signed to allow the project to proceed with the help of SoS consultants. Pre-implementation activities in fall 2019 have focused on identifying barriers to implementing the new practice model and preparing staff, management, CYFN and First Nations partners on the model basics and what can be expected with the implementation. The official SoS implementation launch is scheduled for April 2020 with staff, leadership and partner training to take place in May 2020.

Family case management project

In 2018, following recommendations from the Auditor General of Canada Report of FCS (2014); the Costanzo Report (2018); the PIDWA Report (2019); the Yukon Child and Youth Advocate Office Report (2019); and FCS management and staff, we began

planning for an integrated Family Case Management (FCM) system, which was completed in fall 2019. Soon after, we started our phased approach to implementation. We are currently working towards launching the first phase of the new system in November 2020 and second phase in October 2021. Some of the benefits of a case management system include:

- enhanced services to families;
- reduced paperwork for social workers, resulting in more time spent with children, youth and families;
- streamlined financial processes and greater financial accountability; better statistical reporting; and
- increased compliance with privacy legislation.

Re-visioning of services offered by Transitional Support Services

As FCS continues to support families to keep children in their homes and communities, as well as reunify those in long-term care with their families, fewer children and youth will require group care. In order to utilize TSS resources to better meet our emerging client needs, we will review our current service delivery model with the goal of refocusing resources to address gaps in our continuum of supports. This work will be done in partnership with youth, staff, First Nations and community partners.

Increased focus on restorative justice

Our Youth Supports and Services program, in partnership with First Nations, CYFN, and other community partners, are set to review current practices to shift our focus to restorative practices and prevention.

We are working closely with KDFN to expand the restorative community conference program to include a KDFN-based position embedded within the community. By expanding this program to include a First Nation coordinator, we hope to provide youth with an alternative to the court system while incorporating traditional principles and values rooted in their culture.

Additionally, we will host the Vision 20/20 restorative justice forum in the fall of 2020 alongside First Nations, other Government of Yukon service providers, and community

partners to discuss best practices, avenues to modernize services, and enhance the focus on restorative and preventative approaches to youth justice.

Community-based safety resources

At the request of several Yukon First Nations and in collaboration with First Nations governments, we are exploring the development of community-based safety resources, such as community care homes (i.e., “Auntie’s Home”) operated in First Nations communities. These homes would provide short-term/emergency care to children under the age of 19 with the goal of keeping children in their communities, while resources are deployed to address safety concerns in the family home.

Rural sustainability of licensed child care – pilot project

Rural sustainability of licensed child care is a priority for this government. With input from First Nations governments, community partners and community members, we are embarking on a pilot project to develop a model for funded child care in the communities. In early 2020, we will launch the two-year project that will provide operational funding to two non-profit, licensed child care centres in the communities (Watson Lake Daycare in Watson Lake, and Little Blue Early Child Care and Learning Centre in Dawson). This funding will help increase the quality of services, stabilize parent fees and implement a stable wage grid for early childhood educators with the expectation that this will facilitate staff recruitment and long-term retention.

Progressive initiatives, program enhancements, and partnerships like the ones noted above create a feeling of optimism and hope for the future. We recognize that systemic issues require systemic responses and we cannot address the effects of residential schools, the 60s scoop, and violence against Indigenous women and children without concerted, collaborative, and coordinated efforts. Our approach to child welfare is ever evolving with our focus shifting from intervention to prevention. Our approach to service delivery is shifting towards increased partnership with First Nations and communities, and collaboration across government and community to address the challenges faced by Yukon families, children and youth. We look forward to reporting on our future initiatives, successes and learning in the next annual report.



Family and Children's Services

Annual Report 2020-2022



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Message from the Director

Tracy-Anne McPhee, Minister of Health and Social Services
Government of Yukon

Dear Minister McPhee,

I am pleased to present to you the most recent report on the provision of child welfare services under the *Child and Family Services Act* (CFSA), as required by section 187 of the legislation. This report will detail service provision from January 2020 to December 2022 including our major accomplishments, how we overcame the hurdles presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, and the pivotal next steps of child welfare reform in the Yukon.

The last two years have been unprecedented to say the least – a global pandemic fundamentally changed the way we interact with one another, *An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Metis children, youth and families* establishing the minimum standards for child protection services came into effect, and the country was forced to reconcile with the horrors of residential schools.

In March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic reached the Yukon and disrupted service delivery in all sectors, including child welfare. Research indicates that the resulting mandates and restrictions led to increases in substance use, mental health crises, and family violence, as well as decreases in child welfare reports and access to necessary services.

To reduce the service disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic while protecting the health and safety of staff, we implemented numerous practice guidelines and provided necessary supports to continue delivering our mandate under the *Child and Family Services Act*. I am proud of the dedication and commitment our staff have shown to the children, youth, and families that needed our support during this crucial period. Our staff worked to protect children from harm, provided children and youth with the technology to remain connected to their support networks, provided families with the supports needed to create safety, provided housing to youth in care who



turned 19 years of age, and provided caregivers with guidance and supplies to facilitate visits between children and their families, as well as respite.

While new issues emerged from the COVID-19 pandemic, we continued with our challenge of overrepresentation of Indigenous children and families in the Yukon's child welfare system. Currently, 95% of the children and youth in out-of-home care are Indigenous.

Guided by the Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Calls for Justice from the Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, we continue to work with Yukon First Nations and the Council of Yukon First Nations to address this overrepresentation.

Based on our shared values of respect, collaboration, representation, and transparency that we have established over the past five years, our collaborative efforts were stronger than ever before. We entered into negotiations for a Memorandum of Understanding with Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, we successfully completed our pilot of the Kwanlin Dün Family Enhancement Team, and made key policy and practice shifts guided by the insight from the Yukon First Nation Health and Social Development Commission. The enhanced working relationship between Family and Children's Services and Yukon First Nations culminated in an innovative approach to amend the *Child and Family Services Act*. We developed a government-to-government legislative amendment process that implemented the 'Required Actions' from the *Embracing Children of Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow* report and brought our territorial legislation into compliance with the Government of Canada's *An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Metis children, youth and families*.

I am indebted to the representatives from the Yukon First Nations and the Council of Yukon First Nations for their participation in the legislative process. Thank you for providing us with your truths and sharing your Indigenous worldviews. You were heard.

During the 2020-2022 reporting period, Family and Children's Services continued our philosophical shift in child welfare practice to move away from an intervention-based approach that bring children into the Director's care to a prevention-based approach



that creates safety within families and communities. The impact of this shift in philosophy has been reflected in changes to practice. Through it, more children have been able to remain in their communities with extended family, instead of being brought into foster care or group care. However, this is just the beginning. We will continue this trajectory through the legislative changes and caregiver support programs to make sure children are able to maintain their connection to family, culture, and community.

As the role that extended family caregivers play in the Yukon's child welfare system becomes more pivotal, we partnered with Yukon First Nations and the Council of Yukon First Nations to launch the Caregiver Strategy. With the shared vision of providing more culturally appropriate out-of-home placements for children in their own communities, this strategy will focus on caregiver recruitment, retention, training, and support initiatives. These initiatives will be co-developed with our Yukon First Nation partners and tailored to fit the needs of each community.

In response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's second Call to Action requiring all governments to publish comprehensive data related to child welfare and recommendations from a number of reports to the Government of Yukon, including the 2014 recommendations from the Office of Auditor General of Canada, Family and Children's Services fully implemented a new electronic case management system, called the Family Case Management (FCM) system, in November 2021. We are now better equipped to track the child welfare service provision, determine compliance with legislative and policy requirements, monitor outcomes of children and their families, and report data to Yukon First Nations. By creating a funding program and integrating it with FCM, we also significantly reduced the administrative processes for social workers, thereby decreasing the time it takes for clients to receive funding and increase the amount of time social workers can spend with their clients.

While the last few years presented new challenges, we took them as opportunities to evolve and adjust how we support vulnerable children, youth, and their families. This report will further expand on the above-mentioned initiatives and our successes. I sincerely thank all Family and Children's staff, First Nation Health Directors, Council of



Yukon First Nations, our colleagues from the Government of Canada, and community partners for their work in support our service delivery.

Sincerely,

Leeann Kayseas, on behalf of Geraldine MacDonald
Director of Family and Children's Services



Executive summary

This report summarizes the work of the Family and Children's Services (FCS) branch of the Government of Yukon between January 1, 2020 and December 31, 2022. Over the reporting period, there have been significant changes to the field of child welfare in the Yukon. This report will detail the work of the past two years, focusing on the provision of child welfare services to children and families, as well as important initiatives intended to improve services.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had wide-ranging impacts on the lives of Canadians, impacting financial security, mental health, and physical wellbeing. In order to safely provide services to children, youth, and families in the Yukon, FCS has had to adapt service delivery in all program areas. Some of these changes include providing personal protective equipment to children and families, supporting children in out-of-home care with virtual school, and, when possible, shifting programming to online platforms.

In addition to the challenges associated with maintaining standards of services within a pandemic, there have been philosophical shifts in practice at the national and local level that have influenced child welfare practice in the Yukon. At the federal level, An Act respecting *First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families* came into effect on January 1, 2020. This legislation acknowledged the rights of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples to deliver family and child services to their citizens, and established standards for the best interest of the child, cultural continuity, and substantive equality. Many of the standards outlined in the legislation were already part of practice in the Yukon; however, these were further solidified during the review and amendment process for the *Child and Family Services Act* (CFSA).

Under the CFSA, FCS provides a continuum of services that aim to address child protection concerns and assist children, youth, and families. The first part of this continuum are the family support programs offered through Agreements for Support Services for Families and the Family Resource Unit. These provide a range of mandated and voluntary preventive programming. The second part of the continuum of services are out-of-home placements for children and youth who are not able to remain in their family home. Over the past several years, there has been a shift in practice within FCS



that has prioritized placing children with extended family members in order to ensure their connection to family, community and culture is maintained. While the number of children in out-of-home care has remained consistent over the past six years, there has been a 137% increase in the number of extended family care placements, with decreases in foster care and group home placements. The third part of continuum of services focuses on supports for youth and young adults who are transitioning to independence. Youth and young adults involved with FCS are able to receive financial aid and services through agreements until they reach the age of 26. These services can include anything from connections to employment services, funding for education and training, or help finding housing.

Outside the provision of services to children, youth, and families, there have been several initiatives meant to improve programs and maintain relationships with community and Yukon First Nation partners. Memorandums of Understanding have been signed with three Yukon First Nations in order to guide how child welfare services are delivered to their citizens. This work is still ongoing, with an agreement currently under development with Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in. Other collaborations with Yukon First Nations include the Family Enhancement Team pilot project with Kwanlin Dün First Nation, the Honouring Connections Project and the Caregiver Strategy with the Council of Yukon First Nations (CYFN) and Yukon First Nations. Within FCS, recruitment and retention of social workers, continued professional development, and improving data capacity have been prioritized to ensure staff are supported and programs are running effectively.

Under the CFSA, a review of the legislation is required every 5 years. Between 2018 and 2019, an advisory committee reviewed the CFSA and completed the report *Embracing the Children of Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*, which included 149 required actions to incorporate into legislation and practice. A steering committee was established to explore the implementation of these required actions, with representatives from FCS, CYFN, and Yukon First Nations. The amendments to the legislation was completed through extensive government-to-government engagement between the Government of Yukon and Yukon First Nations, and included changes related to the definition of best interests of the child, preventive supports, imbedding



the importance of community and culture throughout, and clarification of definitions, such as emotional harm. The amended CFSA was tabled on the March 9, 2022 legislative sitting and passed into law on March 31, 2022. Critical changes to the *Child and Family Services Act* operational policies were updated as part of a collaborative process that included representatives from CYFN, Yukon First Nations, Yukon Information and Privacy Commissioner, and Yukon Child and Youth Advocate in time for the legislation to come into force on November 30, 2022.

With the landscape of child welfare rapidly changing across the country, FCS is working to incorporate these philosophical shifts into policy and practice. Over the next year, FCS will prioritize the remainder of the CFSA operational policy changes, the establishment of prenatal preventive supports, and the implementation of cultural plans for all children in care, with CYFN and Yukon First Nations, in addition to continuing to maintain the same standards of service provision to children, youth, and families in the Yukon.



Strategic context

This report provides an overview of the services and supports provided to children, youth and families by the Family and Children's Services (FCS) branch of Health and Social Services (HSS) from January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2022. Over the past two years, there have been significant shifts in philosophy and practice that have influenced the supports and services provided, in addition to the need to adapt services in order to respond to the pandemic.

Overview of the legislation

HSS delivers child welfare services through FCS, which acts under the authority of the *Child and Family Services Act (CFSA)*.

In 2018, the Minister of HSS appointed a six-member Advisory Committee to undertake a broad review of the CFSA and make recommendations to improve the Yukon's child welfare system. The Advisory Committee travelled to all Yukon communities and engaged with many Yukoners to gather their perspectives on the CFSA. The Advisory Committee's report, *Embracing the Children of Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*, resulted in the subsequent creation of the CFSA Steering Committee in July 2020.

The goal of the CFSA Steering Committee was to evaluate the many required actions brought forward by the report. The committee then established which of the actions required legislative changes and which required policy and training initiatives. Through significant discussions and meeting dates with Yukon First Nations, which were co-chaired by HSS and CYFN, new legislative changes intended on improving the CFSA have been drafted, voted on, and signed into law during the spring session of 2022. The updated Act came into force on November 30, 2022.

Demographics

The Yukon Bureau of Statistics estimates that the population of the territory, as of June 30, 2022, is approximately 43,964 of which 9,230 (21%) are between 0 to 19 years of age. The majority the population (34,698 or 78.9%) reside in the Whitehorse area. Yukon's Indigenous population, including those with status under the *Indian Act* and



those who self-identified as First Nations, Métis, or Inuit, make up approximately 9,548 or 21.7% of the total population, with 58.4% residing in Whitehorse. However, between 80% to 90% of the children, youth and families involved in the child welfare system self-identify as First Nation, Métis, or Inuit.

Adapting services due to the pandemic

The Director has continued to provide services to families and children in need of support throughout the pandemic. FCS connected with children, caregivers, and families to assess what resources were available to maintain contact, such as personal protective equipment (i.e., masks), computers, cellphones, and internet access. By assessing the differing needs at the individual and program levels, FCS was able to provide targeted supports such as phone minutes, recreation resources in the home, food, medications, and other essential items to ensure that families had access to the supports needed to reduce the negative impacts of the pandemic. Maintaining connections and support systems for children, youth and families was a priority for FCS.

Implementing *An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families*

In Yukon, we have made changes to the CFSA to bring services to the federal standard set out in *An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Metis children, youth and families*. These changes have provided opportunity to work with all governments to support First Nations in providing direct prevention services to their community members, create the cultural plans initiative, and enhance protection services to children, youth and families.

Continuum of supports and services

Preventive supports to keep families together

Keeping families together is a priority for FCS. In situations where there are child protection concerns, FCS staff work with the families to address the underlying issues.



There are several preventive programs offered by FCS in order to create a continuum of services that families can access based on their individual needs.

Family support services

Under section 10 of the CFSA, FCS provides a range of supports to families that have child protection concerns. The specific services provided are determined on an individual level, but can include services for children, counselling, in-home support, out-of-home care, homemaker services, respite care, parenting programs, and services to support children who witness family violence. Families are also able to enter into Agreements for Support Services for Families through section 11 of the CFSA. Through these agreements, FCS is able to provide financial supports and connect families with resources needed to address protection concerns and keep children in the family homes.

Family Resource Unit

The Family Resource Unit (FRU) is a universal, barrier-free preventive program where involvement is voluntary. In 2019, FCS realigned the Healthy Families and the Family Support Program into a single program in order to create a continuum of supports for families with children aged 0 to 19. The FRU team offers individual and group programming throughout the Yukon that focuses on assisting caregivers to build confidence and capacity. Some examples of group events offered include lessons on self-care, cooking, craft groups, story sharing, mindfulness for dads group, crafting circles, children's nutrition, and many more. Additionally, workers facilitate other outdoor activities to encourage family participation, social interaction, peer support and self-care for families, including holiday dinners, summer barbecues, and other seasonal activities. Throughout the pandemic, FRU adapted group and individual programming in order to incorporate public health guidelines. This included modifying group programs and individual supports so they could occur virtually, limiting group sizes, and exploring alternate ways of connecting with caregivers and youth.

Over the past five years, the number of families working with the Family Resource Unit has doubled, increasing from 135 in 2017 to 269 in 2021 (Figure 1). This increase is likely the result of the restructuring of the program to include parents and caregivers for



older children and youth, as well as the increase in the number of groups and workshops offered. Between 2020 and 2021, FRU held over 250 events across the territory, with 140 held in Whitehorse and 110 in the communities. These programs collaborate with other governments and community groups in order to develop specific strategies aimed at addressing family wellbeing. With the program modifications to adhere to public health guidelines, FRU has been able to help many families across the Yukon gain more confidence in their caregiving skills, increase their support network, and prioritize wellness.

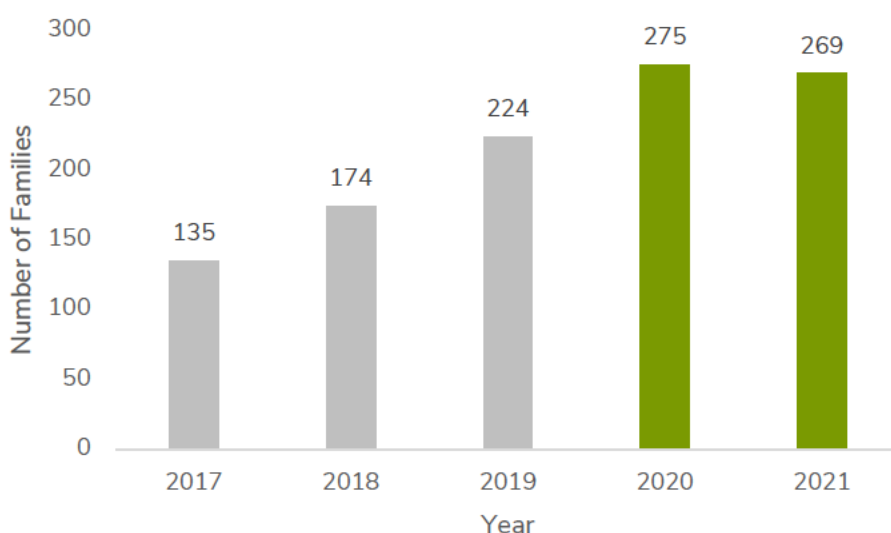


Figure 1 Number of families working with the Family Resource Unit from 2017 to 2021. The data for the reporting period (2020 and 2021 calendar years) are highlighted in green, whereas prior data are grey. Note: The FRU service use data is cumulative for each calendar year. As such, the 2022 statistics are not yet available for reporting.

Out-of-home care

Extended family care

When it is determined that a child or youth is in need of protective intervention, extended family care is the first choice for out-of-home care in order to preserve a child or youth's connection to family, community, and culture. Under section 14 of the CFSA, children and youth are able to reside with extended family instead of coming into the care of the Director. Within the legislation and policy, the definition of extended family caregiver goes beyond close family relations and includes any adult who has a parent-like relationship with the child. FCS works closely with the child, family, and Yukon First

Nations to identify potential caregivers for the child. Between 2017 and 2019, a series of policy changes occurred that created parity in supports offered to foster and extended family caregivers. These include expanding the financial aid, support services, and dedicated FCS resources offered to extended family caregivers.

From 2017 to 2022, there was an 8% increase to the number of children and youth in out-of-home care in the Yukon. However, over this same period, there was a 137% increase in the number of children and youth in extended family care (Figure 3). This means that while the rate of children and youth in out-of-home care has remained relatively stable over the past 6 years, there has been a significant shift in the types of placements. During this period, FCS has prioritized placing children and youth in extended family care instead of foster care or group homes. The effect of this philosophical shift can be seen in Figure 2, which compares the percent of children and youth in out-of-home care placement types over the past 6 years. In 2017, prior to the parity in supports for caregivers, the majority of children and youth in out-of-home care were in the custody of the Director, with only 28% having Extended Family Care Agreements. During this period, the main placement type was foster care. As the programming and support changed, so did the primary placement choice. In 2022, 61% of children and youth in out-of-home care were under Extended Family Care Agreements.



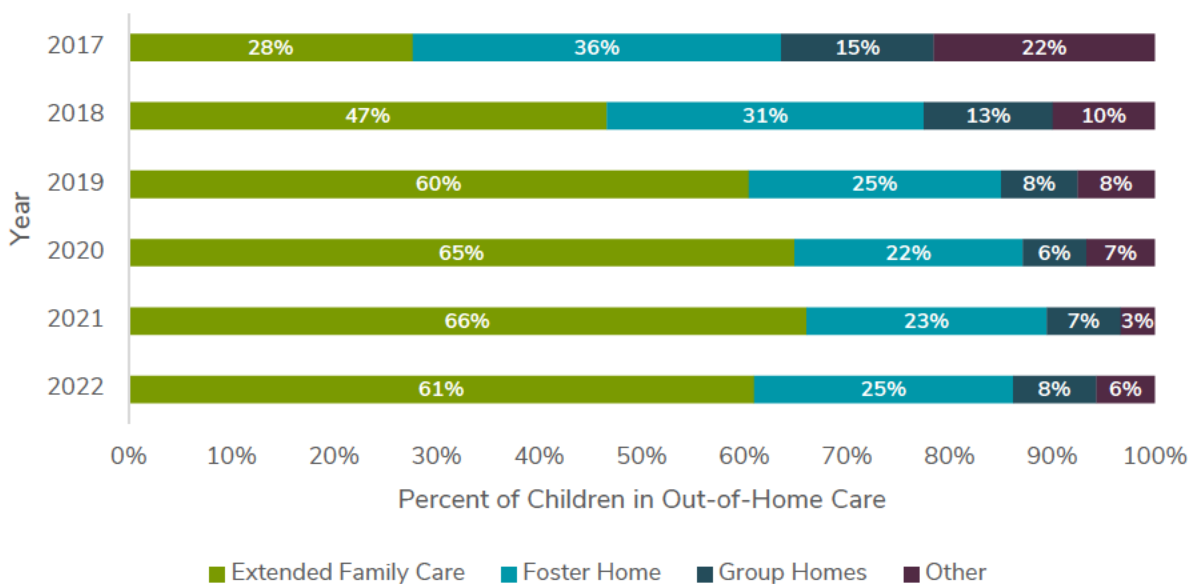


Figure 2 Percent of children in out-of-home care placement types (i.e., extended family care, foster homes, group homes, and other) from 2017 to 2022. Other placement types could include many placement types, including extended visits with family, out of territory placements, or medical placements.

The number of children and youth in extended family care has steadily risen since the CFSA came into effect in 2010. However, the most significant turning point occurred between 2018 and 2019, when the number of children and youth in extended family care increased from 89 to 145 (Figure 3), likely as a result of the parity initiatives implemented during that period. During the reporting period for this annual report, January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2022, there was a slight decrease in the total number of children in out-of-home care, from a total of 225 children and youth to 210. This decrease can be seen across all placement types, with the number of children and youth in extended family care dropping from 146 in 2020 to 128 in 2022 (Figure 3).

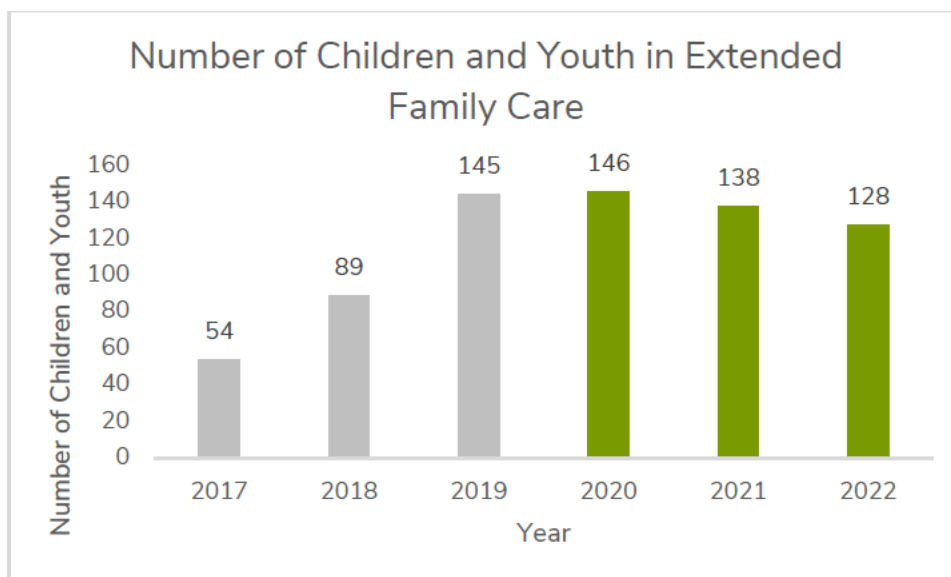


Figure 3 Number of children in extended family care from 2017 to 2022. September caseloads were used for each year due to the reporting structure of the previous case management system and to remain consistent with previous annual reports. The data for the reporting period (2020, 2021 and 2022 calendar years) are highlighted in green, whereas prior data are grey.

Foster care program

Maintaining a child or youth's connection to family, community, and culture is a priority when a protection intervention results in out-of-home care; however, extended family care is not always possible. In these cases, one out-of-home care option is the foster care program. Foster caregivers go through an extensive application process to determine their eligibility. Once approved, foster caregivers receive financial aid and support services from FCS to provide for children and youth in their care. These supports can include monthly financial support, clothing allowances, respite and childcare services, and homemaker services.

In contrast to extended family care, the number of children in the care of the Director has steadily decreased. Since 2017, there has been a 40% decrease in the number of children and youth in the care of the Director (Figure 4). Similarly, there has been a 24% decrease in the number of children and youth placed in foster homes, dropping from 70 children and youth in 2017 to 53 in 2022 (Figure 5). This change is part of the larger organization shift towards placing children and youth with extended family, as can be seen in Figure 2.



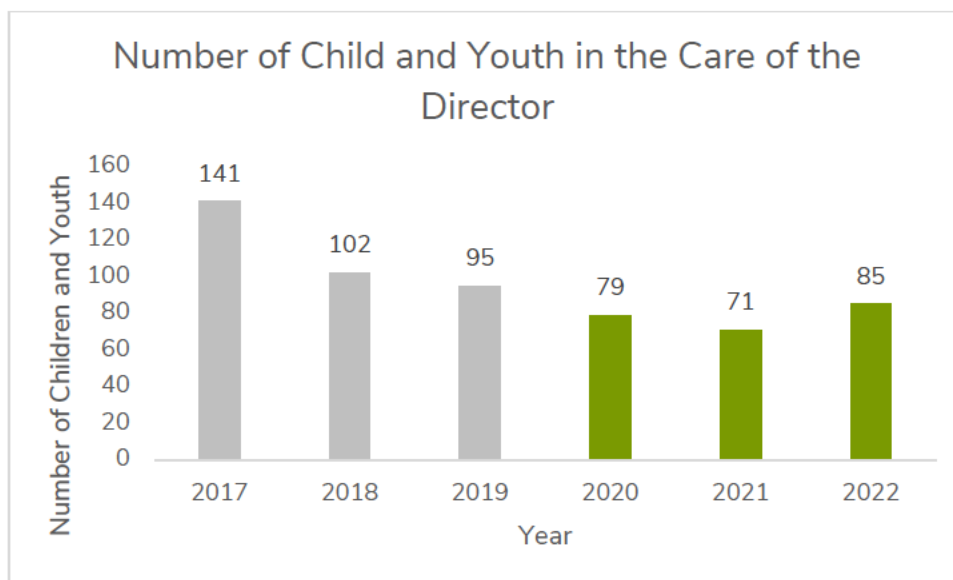


Figure 4 Number of children and youth in the care of the Director in all placement types from 2017 to 2022. September caseloads were used for each year due to the reporting structure of the previous case management system and to remain consistent with previous annual reports. The data for the reporting period (2020, 2021 and 2022 calendar years) are highlighted in green, whereas prior data are grey.

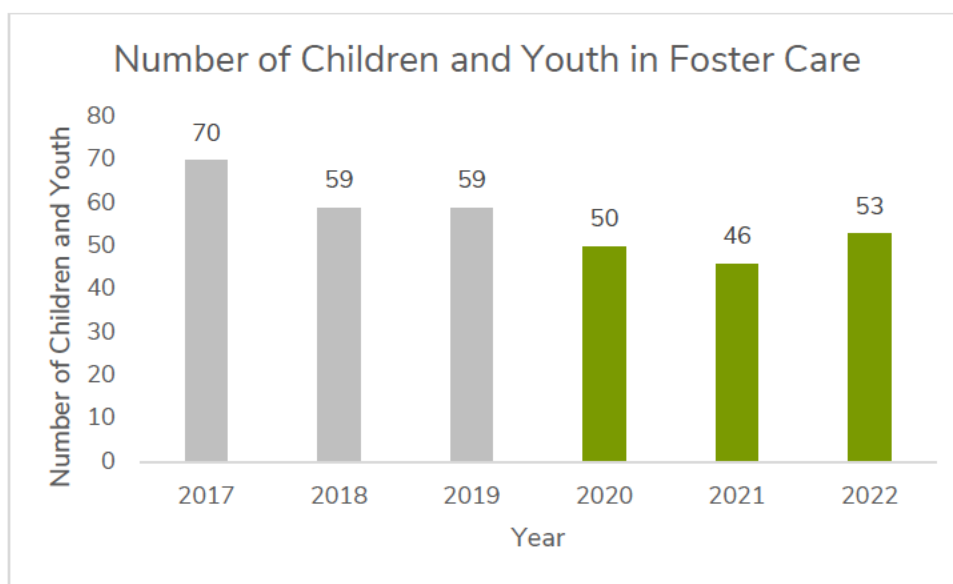


Figure 5 Number of children and youth in the care of the Director who are in foster care from 2017 to 2022. September caseloads were used for each year due to the reporting structure of the previous case management system and to remain consistent with previous annual reports. The data for the reporting period (2020, 2021 and 2022 calendar years) are highlighted in green, whereas prior data are grey.

Transitional support services

Managed through the Transitional Support Services (TSS) program at FCS, group care is a continuously staffed supported living environment that is an alternative housing



option for youth not able to reside with extended family. In addition to working with the youth, family, First Nation, and social worker to develop and implement a case plan, the TSS staff help youth navigate their daily routines and learn the skills required to transition to independent living.

In January of 2021, Nts'äw Chua was realigned under the TSS Manager, in order to support a continuum of care for youth looking to gain more independent living skills while in the care of the Director. Since opening its doors in April 2020, Nts'äw Chua has provided an alternative to traditional group care, offering semi-independent living or supportive housing options, as well as programming aimed to help youth develop the skills required to live independently. The number of youth living in Nts'äw Chua varies month to month, partially because the semi-independent living suites were used to meet the pandemic isolation requirements and accommodated youth who turned 19 during the state of emergency. However, there are generally between four to seven youth living at Nts'äw Chua at a time.

TSS continues to support youth as they prepare to transition to independent living or return to their families. Outreach support and additional supervisory positions have facilitated a shift in focus towards drop-in services and outreach. A pilot outreach program opened in one of the centrally located facilities to support youth and young adults throughout the pandemic and beyond. Based on the success of the pilot, TSS is looking at implementing a longer-term program. A range of services are provided, including transportation, laundry facilities, access to meals, personal protective equipment, and emotional and crisis support. Additionally, changes to legislation and policy now allow outreach supports to continue up to age 26, whereas previously it was limited to 6 months after leaving the TSS program. TSS is continuing to explore opportunities that will allow them to expand the services and care received by youth, keeping the program consistent with changing child welfare policy and best practices.

The best option is for youth to remain within their community and with their family. To this end, social workers continue to focus their efforts on finding alternatives to group care and prioritize extended family care placements. These ongoing efforts have had significant effects, as seen by the 41% decrease in the number of children and youth in



the TSS program from 2017 to 2022 (Figure 6). In 2017, group homes accounted for 15% of out-of-home care placements, whereas in 2022, only 8% of children and youth in out-of-home care lived in group homes (Figure 2). While the number of youth in group homes decreased over the reporting period, there is still a need for families, children and youth to have access to support services. To meet this need, TSS is shifting focus and reallocating resources to match current realities and trends.

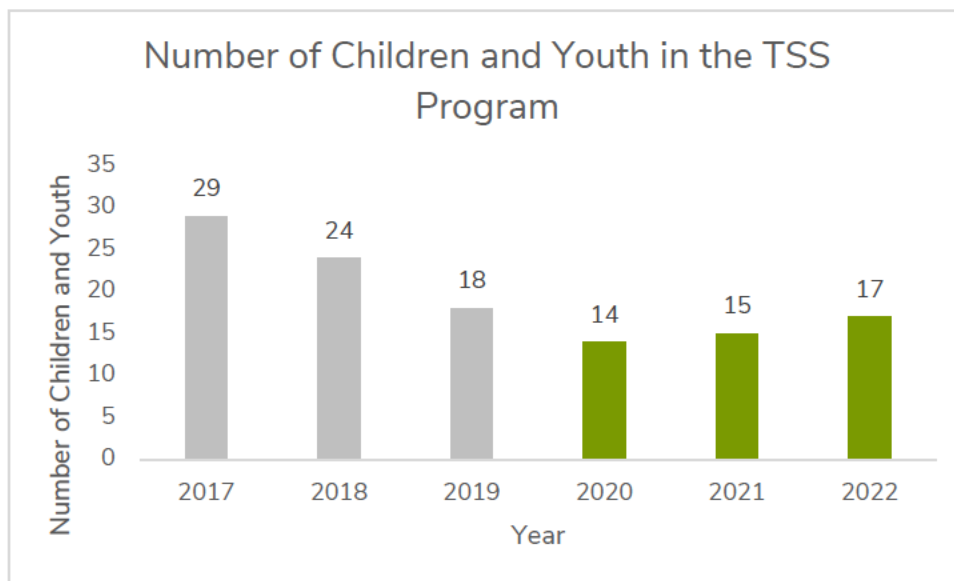


Figure 6 Number of children and youth in care living in group homes from 2017 to 2022. September caseloads were used for each year due to the reporting structure of the previous case management system and to remain consistent with previous annual reports. The data for the reporting period (2020, 2021 and 2022 calendar years) are highlighted in green, whereas prior data are grey.

The pandemic has presented unique challenges for the TSS program, namely maintaining the same level of care while complying with COVID-19 safety standards in a 24/7 home. This includes taking care of youth who caught the virus, providing isolation space, and supporting youth while they participated in remote learning during school closures. These challenges were intensified by the restrictions on gatherings, including activities, workshops, and visitors.

Programs and services for youth and young adults

When youth and young adults have access to focused programs and supports that emphasize building life skills and connecting with their natural support networks, they are more likely to succeed outside of care. To help facilitate the successful transition to



self-sufficiency and lasting connections, FCS provides the following programs and services for youth between 16 and 26 years of age.

Agreements to assist youth and young adults

Under section 16 of the CFSA, FCS provides supports to youth aged 16-19 through Agreements for Support Services for Youth. These agreements are intended to connect youth who cannot re-establish contact with their families with financial and social supports. This includes providing financial assistance for necessities such as housing, living expenses, and other supports aimed at helping those under the agreements gain greater independence by developing life skills and dealing with concerns such as mental health, substance use, or returning to school. Young adults aged 19 and 26 who were previously in the care of the Director or in extended family care, but have transitioned to independent living are able to receive similar supports through Agreements for Transitional Support Services (CFSA, section 17).

Supporting youth as they transition to independent living is a priority for FCS. Since 2017, the number of youth and young adults using these agreements has increased by 196%, going from 23 to 68 (Figure 7). This means that more youth are connected to services and financial supports that will help them work towards self-reliance.

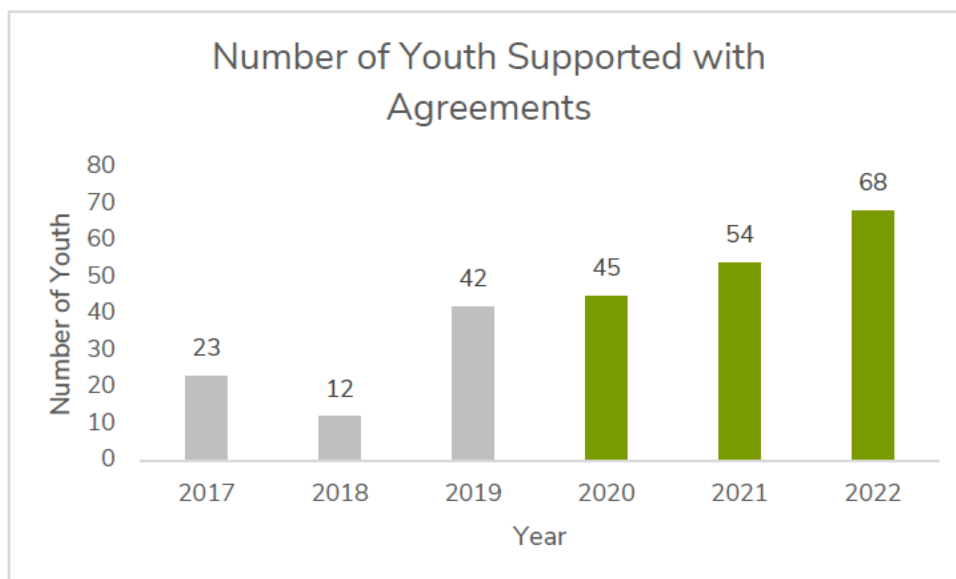


Figure 7 Number of youth and young adults supported through agreements from 2017 to 2022. September caseloads were used for each year due to the reporting structure of the previous case management system and to remain consistent with previous annual reports. The data for the reporting period (2020, 2021 and 2022 calendar years) are highlighted in green, whereas prior data is in grey.

Youth Supports and Services

In accordance with the Youth Criminal Justice Act (YCJA) and section 174(3) of the CFSA, the Director of FCS is also the territorial Director of youth justice within the Yukon. This provides Youth Supports and Services with the legal mandate to deliver services under the YJCA and serve youth who are in, or likely to be in, conflict with the law.

Youth involved in the criminal justice system in the Yukon continue to work with either Whitehorse-based probation staff or regional social workers in partnership with Yukon First Nations. This work continues to be supported through a pilot project that is comprised of two different departments (HSS and Justice) to support the possible goal of a one government approach to restorative justice. Youth Supports and Services staff of the Integrated Restorative Justice Unit work with First Nations, community partners, and the Department of Justice on the Restorative Community Conferencing program, which works to provide programs and services aimed at reducing the number of youth entering the justice system.

Over the last few years, the number of youth involved in the justice system has declined, with a significant change in the number of youth that have had the need for time in a secure facility to in-community probation services.

Youth Supports and Services also operates a community-based program through the Youth Achievement Centre (YAC) – which provides programs for youth aged 12-17 who are involved in the youth justice system, in high-risk situations or in need of extra supports. Based on the decrease in numbers in youth justice and through the support of restorative practice and case planning, YAC has continued expanding its services to meet the needs of a changing population of youth in high-risk environments and to provide low-barrier, preventative, community-based services.

YAC has continued to maintain its partnerships with community organizations, such as the Bringing Youth Towards Equality program (BYTE), the Skookum Jim Friendship Centre, KDFN Recreation, City of Whitehorse, Contagious Mountain Bike Club, and Whitehorse Cross Country Ski Club. Some examples include building mountain bike trails, constructing furniture and cabin construction projects, participation in remote



canoe and hiking trips, naloxone training and naloxone distribution to members of the community.

While there have been many successes, YAC experienced challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Primarily, the significant increase in the number of youths isolating and parents pulling youth from group programming due to health concerns. YAC programs experienced a decline in youth enrollment in its programs, decreasing from 69 enrolled youth down to 53 during the first year of the pandemic. This largely contributed to an increase in the demand for provision outreach services, which ensure young people have what they need to safely isolate. At times, this resulted in YAC staff delivering sleeping mats, sleeping bags, naloxone kits, hygiene supplies, and food. The number of youth involved in YAC programming has since returned to pre-pandemic levels.

While the number of youth dropped slightly during the early stages of the pandemic, the most significant change is the number of hours of youth participation in programming. Prior to the pandemic, youth spent 6,687 hours per year on programs run by YAC. In 2020, this dropped to 2,723 hours. However, the programming hours rose to 3,982 in 2021. This suggests that the decrease in attendance and hours spent in programming was largely due to pandemic-related measures taken by YAC, and that there is demand for their services as restrictions ease.

Continuous quality improvement initiatives

Realignment of the Child Care Services Unit

In April 2021, the Child Care Services Unit (CCSU) was moved from FCS to the Department of Education. This was done as part of YG's ongoing strategy to better incorporate responsibilities related to early learning, early learning programs, and childcare, to the Department of Education in order to make the transition to school easier, as recommended by the Putting People First report.



Recruitment and retention

The relational nature of child welfare practice means that strong partnerships between FCS and Yukon First Nations is essential to ensuring families, children, and youth receive the support they need to thrive. To this end, Yukon First Nations are actively involved in the recruitment process for new social workers, especially for regional positions. This involves co-writing job descriptions, co-creating interview questions, including a representative from Yukon First Nations on the interview panel, and considering their feedback and wishes when determining the successful candidate. Once the position is filled, a Yukon First Nations representative provides an orientation to the community.

The recruitment and retention of staff has been an ongoing issue for FCS throughout the pandemic. The general concerns about safety, as well as uncertainty with the shifting regulations and restrictions, have been a challenge for staff that work closely with the public. In addition to this, difficulty obtaining housing, isolation in remote communities, and burnout have influenced staff retention. Remote communities pose additional challenges, such as reduced access to services, higher cost of living, and potential feelings of isolation for staff who often lack an established support network in the community. These factors all contribute to the difficulty of attracting experienced staff. FCS and the HSS Human Resources branch continue to develop strategies to improve social worker recruitment and retention across the Yukon.

Implementing the Family Case Management system

The Family Case Management (FCM) system was fully implemented for FCS in November 2021, providing an electronic case management solution. All FCM users were trained prior to system launch using a combination of self-directed online learning modules and one-on-one mentorship from FCM project personnel. The new system has increased the data capacity at FCS and has ensured better compliance with the reporting requirements, as set out in the CFSA. The system also provides increased financial accountability by integrating financial service delivery with other aspects of the case management process within the system itself.



As the system is fully customizable, efforts are ongoing to improve functionality based on user feedback, and changes to child welfare legislation and policy. The reception of the new case management system has so far been positive, and early testing has revealed that front line staff are spending far less time on administrative processes than they were when reliant on a purely paper-based system.

With the successful completion of the FCM project, the branch now shifts its efforts towards support for and ongoing maintenance of the system itself. New training content for users and the identification of system support staff will be key elements in ensuring the FCM system remains a viable case management solution into the future.

File review

Under section 185 of the CFSA, every 3 years the Director is required to submit a report detailing the review of compliance with service standards. This requirement, along with the prioritization of continuous quality improvement efforts by FCS, has led to the review of files that were active in the 2019-2020 fiscal year. The review measures compliance with standards outlined in the CFSA and the *Child and Family Services Act* Policy Manual. These service standards were then refined based on recommendations from the Continuous Quality Improvement Committee, which is comprised of FCS managers and key personnel.

Currently, the reviews of child protection and child in care files open between April 1, 2019 and March 31, 2020 have been completed, with the reviews of other files types expected to conclude in the 2022-2023 fiscal year. The insights into service delivery gained through this review will be incorporated into policy development, training and professional development opportunities, and ongoing clinical supervision conversations between management and staff. The results from this review will be shared in future reports.

File management

The Records Unit of FCS consistently works to ensure client information is safe, secure, and in compliance of all procedures and mandated processes. A key aspect of this work has been the development of a comprehensive information asset file management



system, which functions as an electronic master tracker for internal file transfers from communities or to the records centre. The records registry has comprehensive knowledge of the location and whereabouts of all physical records throughout the territory, including the 11 regional offices, records center, and archives. This work will lead into the implementation of InfoLinx, YG's physical records management system for active and inactive records.

Additionally, the Records Unit worked collaboratively with Archives, Highways and Public Works, Department of Health and Social Services departmental records officers to begin developing YG's functional classification and scheduling system for FCS records. This work identified all records, both physical and electronic, that are created by staff, allowing a retention schedule to be developed. Once finalized, this retention schedule will allow for all records within FCS to be indexed and moved to appropriate storage and disposition.

Signs of Safety

Over the last few years, FCS has undergone a philosophical shift in how child welfare services are delivered. This shift is reflected in a number of organizational changes, including the collaboration between FCS and Yukon First Nations on deciding to adopt the Signs of Safety program, which is a flexible, strengths-based, family-centred, safety-organised approach to child welfare that is consistent with the following:

- the Calls to Action from the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada;
- the Calls to Justice from the Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls;
- the Required Actions from the CFSA Advisory Committee's Embracing the Children of Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow report; and
- item 5 of the First Nations Child & Family Caring Society's Spirit Bear Plan.

In September 2019, FCS supervisors, managers, and the Director met for a leadership engagement session. Between June and August 2020, FCS staff attended Signs of Safety engagement sessions, where 9 FCS teams and a total of 50 staff members



participated. Several trainings have been offered throughout the implementation of Signs of Safety, with 4 introductory training sessions and 5 advanced sessions. Yukon First Nations Family Support Workers and CYFN Family Preservation case workers also attended the introductory training sessions. These trainings provide in-depth information on the framework, the practical application of the Signs of Safety tools, and how they can support ongoing child welfare practice.

Although, the COVID-19 pandemic caused some delays in implementation, FCS will continue making strides in adopting Signs of Safety while ensuring the safety of everyone.

Professional development

The philosophical shift in practice at FCS has been grounded in the training and professional opportunities offered to employees. The trainings covered a range of topics related to child welfare best practice, including trauma-informed care, the importance of natural support networks, Signs of Safety, CORE training, and land-based cultural events.

CORE training

CORE training is considered an essential knowledge base for social workers who practice in the field of child protection in the Yukon. The training is based on information outlined in the *Child and Family Services Act* and operational policy, but also covers critical subject areas including documentation, ethics and boundaries, worker wellness, supervision, and reflection of practice. This training is a required component for social workers to be delegated under the *Child and Family Services Act* to act on behalf of the Director and requires ongoing assessment during the training itself. Yukon First Nations Family Support Workers and Health Directors as well as CYFN staff involved in child welfare are invited to attend CORE training.

Due to the high number of Indigenous children and families involved in the Yukon child welfare system, ongoing work toward reconciliation, and essential working partnerships to deliver increasingly culturally mindful service to First Nation families, it was critical to re-design this training in collaboration with CYFN. CYFN was able to



offer detailed review and feedback of suggested FCS content, as well as invite knowledge keepers and experts to speak to topics vital to cultural awareness, including: Truth and Reconciliation, Jordan's Principle, CYFN's Family Preservation Unit, a First Nation legal perspective, impacts of child welfare work and colonialism in the Yukon, as well as the curation of a half-day experiential learning opportunity on the land.

Land-based cultural workshops for staff

FCS has collaborated with CYFN to offer land-based cultural workshops open to all FCS frontline staff. This training is meant to increase the cultural competency of workers and improve their understanding of land-based programs. Developed by CYFN, each session includes key cultural learnings, activities, preparations, and knowledge sharing of what traditional life could look like for Indigenous people during the different seasons on the land.

Forensic interviewing

Forensic interviewing training is provided to FCS staff through the StepWise training program. This training focuses on developing and strengthening advanced strategies and skills required to conduct a person-centred, trauma-informed, strength-based forensic interview. While this training is geared toward advanced techniques for interviews for adults, these techniques can be successfully adapted for interviews with children and youth. The basic training, known as StepWise 360, was offered in April 2021 for both FCS and RCMP staff. This was followed with a refresher course in November 2021, Advanced Training in April 2022, and another offering of the base course in September 2022.

Looking forward

The changing landscape within child welfare at the national and territorial level means that practices and processes within FCS constantly need to adapt. In the upcoming year, FCS will focus on implementing the legislative changes, including adapting policy to align with the amendments, all while continuing to support children and families across the Yukon.



Implementing legislative changes

The critical operational policies were updated to reflect the intent of the updated CFSA in a collaborative process with the CFSA implementation working group. Going forward, the more minor policy changes will be made collaboratively with CFYN and reported back to the First Nations Health and Social Development Commission on a regular basis.

Cultural continuity project

As of November 31, 2022, each child in care is now required to have a plan that outlines how the child will maintain a connection to their language, culture, practices, customs, traditions, and ceremonies. This plan is to be developed collaboratively and have an associated budget that can be used to participate in events. For Yukon First Nations children and youth, the plans are developed by individual Yukon First Nations or CYFN, with support from FCS if requested. The specific cultural events that the child attends is dependent on their own interest and culture, but could include access to traditional language classes, materials to participate in traditional activities, or regalia.

As part of the larger cultural continuity project, CYFN and Yukon First Nations will host frequent events for children and youth in out-of-home care, in both Whitehorse and the communities. These events will help maintain connections to culture and community when out-of-home care is required, as well as presenting an opportunity for children and youth to increase their support network. The specific events will vary, but could include on the land activities, culture camps, or cultural workshops. In addition to group events for children and youth, CYFN is currently developing culturally appropriate caregiving classes and workshops, such as speech and language playgroups.

Prenatal services working group

Between 2019 and 2022, FCS and CYFN worked to conduct multiple scans of maternal and child health programs available in Yukon communities, with the goal of improving access, availability, and quality of programs. The scans examined several prenatal programs in the territory to better understand what services are available, what those services look like, the successes of the services, their limitations, whether those facilities



serve at-risk mothers, and to identify other potential gaps that providers may be experiencing.

The scans identified areas of success, such as programs being able to operate regularly with steady attendance from children and families, increased numbers of referrals from other health facilities, and strong community relationships. However, the scan also identified several communities with limited access to pre-natal and child health programs, as well as other gaps and challenges experienced by service providers, such as staff shortages and limited space. The information gained through the scans will be used as the foundational material for a pre-natal working group that will work to create programs designed to address any identified gaps in services available to at-risk expectant and new parents.

Youth Justice and community support services

FCS will be working with Yukon First Nations and CYFN to look at Yukon policy updates in youth justice, as well as support the continued work of the development of pre-charge and post-charge restorative programming. Through the coordinated efforts and the continued relationships that FCS has built with CYFN, Yukon First Nations, and community stakeholders, the redesign and update of our policies and programs for youth will support the national changes that have been prioritized by the Government of Canada, National Indigenous leaders, and provinces and territories to create systems that support preventative vs punitive outcomes.

Conclusion

The past few years have presented several challenges to the delivery of child welfare and youth support programming, namely the global pandemic and adapting services to meet these new situations and needs. However, there have also been many opportunities. The passing of the federal legislation, the amendments to the CFSA, and continued partnerships with Yukon First Nations and CYFN have been part of a larger philosophical shift to the field of child welfare within the Yukon. As the field evolves, FCS is committed to continuing to work closely with Yukon First Nations and other



community partners to ensure children, youth, and families receive the supports they need to thrive.





Family and Children's Services

Annual report 2023-2024



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Message from the Director

To: Tracey-Anne McPhee
Minister of Health and Social Services
Government of Yukon

Dear Minister McPhee,

Please accept the 2023-24 Family and Children's Services' annual report which details the work undertaken by the Family and Children's Services (FCS) branch to deliver services under the *Child and Family Services Act* (CFSA) and the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*.

This annual report departs from previous reports by increasing the focus on quantitative data, including monthly data over the reporting period. Based on annual point-in-time data we draw trends across the years. Similarly, based on the monthly data, we explore trends over the reporting period and infer trends that we expect to see in the future.

Additionally, the report highlights a new program we launched, as well as milestones in our relationships with Yukon First Nations, Council of Yukon First Nations (CYFN), and other partners.

The progress and achievements detailed in this report could not be possible without the tireless efforts of FCS staff. I extend my deepest gratitude to all the frontline workers, supervisors, managers, and administrative staff for their hard work. Our successes are a testament to their dedication to children, youth, young adults, and families in the Yukon.

Thank you,

Leeann Kayseas,

Director, Family and Children's Services



Executive summary

This report provides an overview of the services and supports provided to children, youth, and families by the Family and Children's Services (FCS) branch of Health and Social Services (HSS) from January 1, 2023, to March 31, 2024. The primary focus of this report is the *Child and Family Services Act* (CFSA), but it also provides information on the work done by FCS under the *Youth Criminal Justice Act* and the services delivered to all Yukoners through FCS' Family Resource Program.

The figures included in this report detail the service use trends of the various supports and services offered by FCS. Some of these noteworthy trends include:

- A decrease in the number of children in care or custody by 63.3 per cent from 2009 to 2023. In 2023, the total number of children in out-of-home care were the lowest they have been since the CFSA came into effect in 2010.
- The majority of children in out-of-home care (approximately 60 per cent) stayed with extended family members in 2023.
- Over the reporting period, the number of children placed with extended family members and community members decreased. This resulted in more children being placed in group care; in fact, the number of children in group care increased by 44.4 per cent from January 2023 to March 2024.



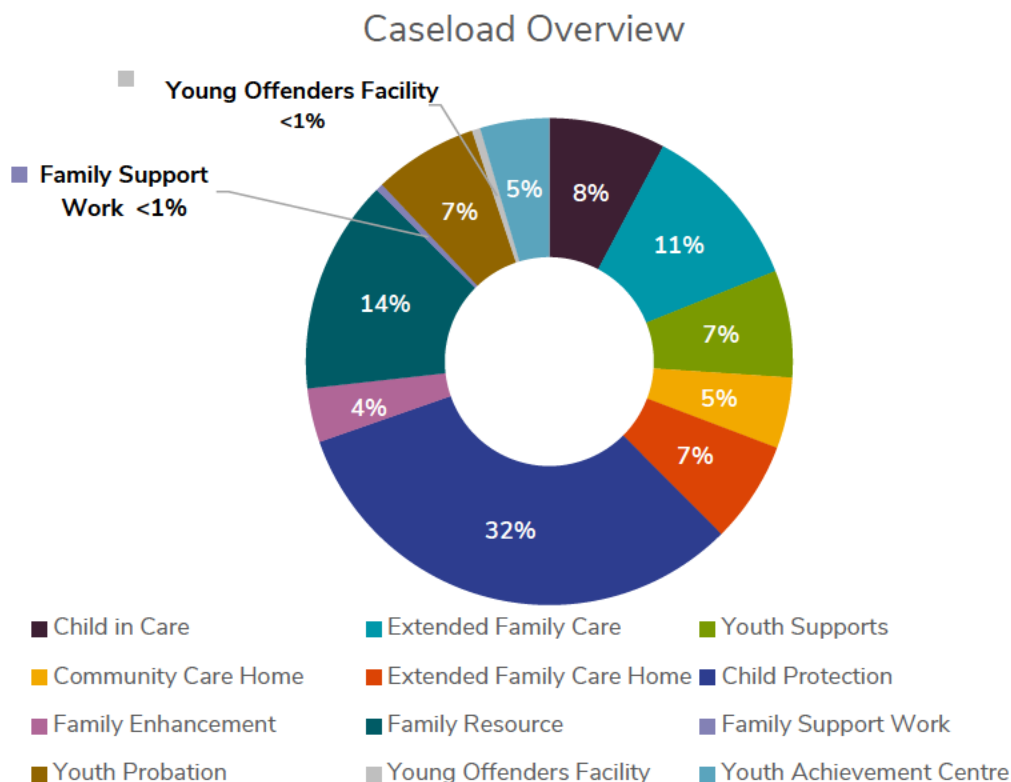


Figure 1 Percentage breakdown of total unique FCS cases over the reporting period by file type. Note: This data speaks to the number of unique cases, not unique individuals served. Due to the nature of the data and services provided, some individuals may be double-counted if they have accessed services/supports under more than one file type over the reporting period.

In addition to data on FCS programs and services, this report briefly highlights FCS' response to the 2023 Yukon Coroner's Inquest related to the death of a child, as well as milestones in FCS' relationships with Yukon First Nations, the RCMP, and the Department of Education.

Purpose of the report

According to s. 187 of the CFSA, the Director of FCS must submit to the Minister of HSS an annual report on the provision of services under the CFSA. The two previous reports to the Minister summarized service delivery from 2017 to 2019 and 2020 to 2022, respectively. This reporting period begins January 1, 2023, and goes to March 31, 2024, to align the FCS annual report with the end of the 2023-24 fiscal year. Subsequent FCS annual reports will follow the fiscal year.



Continuum of programs and services

FCS provides a continuum of programs and services to support Yukoners. It starts with preventative programming designed to support all families in the Yukon. When child protection concerns regarding the safety of children arise, FCS delivers Family Support Services under the CFSA to keep children with their families. If the child protection concerns cannot be mitigated to create safety for children, then children are placed in out-of-home care temporarily until they can be reunified with their parents. FCS also delivers specialized programming for youth from 16 to 19 years of age who cannot live with their parents and for those from 19 to 26 years of age who were previously in out-of-home care.

Preventative programming for all families

FCS prioritizes keeping families together and in their communities by building on their strengths. FCS' Family Resource Unit (FRU) provides resources for families outside of the confines of the legislated mandate of the CFSA. These programs are voluntary and are available to all families who have children aged 0 to 19. Programming offered through FRU ranges from one-on-one supports to group events and structured parenting programs. Examples of group events offered by FRU include crafting groups, lessons on self-care, and many more.

The number of families working with FRU has continued to increase since 2017 (Figure 2). However, numbers have shown no significant changes from 2022 (203 families) to 2023 (202 families). Seven (7) of these families accessed FRU's Family Support Work program.

These numbers are anticipated to increase in the coming year, as the average number of families served during the remainder of the reporting period (January 1, 2024, to March 31, 2024) was 204. The noticeable drop in the number of families working with FRU in 2022 and 2023 is largely due to improvements in how this data is now captured and reported. Additionally, FRU data for subsequent years will be captured following the fiscal year in order to align with future annual reports.



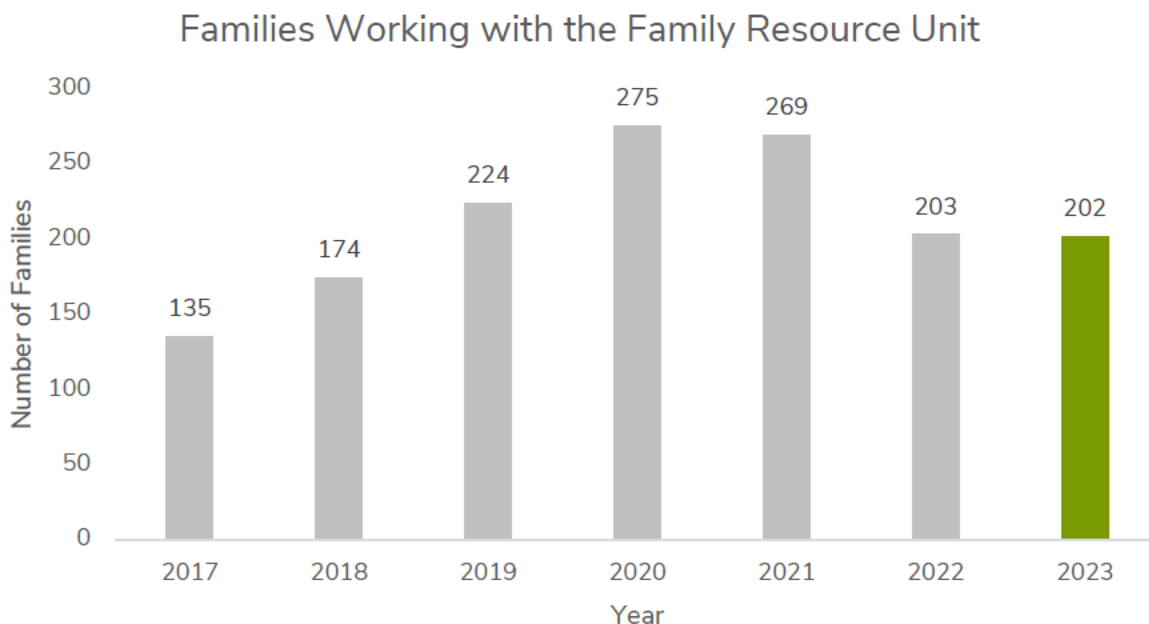


Figure 2 Number of families working with the Family Resource Unit from 2017 to 2023. The data for the reporting period is highlighted in green. Note: FRU service use data is cumulative for each calendar year.

Over the 2023 calendar year, FRU hosted 274 events with a total of 2,542 participants. This represents an increase of 33.7 per cent in the number of events held when compared to the 2022 calendar year.

Family Support Services

When child protection concerns are identified, FCS works with the families to address the underlying issues. There is a range of services and supports, listed in the CFSA, that can be provided to families based on their individual needs. These include services for children, counselling, in-home support, out-of-home care, homemaker services, respite care, parenting programs, and supports for children who witness family violence. FCS also provides financial supports and connects families with the necessary community resources to create safety for the child(ren) in the family home.

Over the reporting period, FCS served 456 families with identified child protection concerns. Additionally, FCS served 51 families with children that were likely to be exposed to child protection concerns.



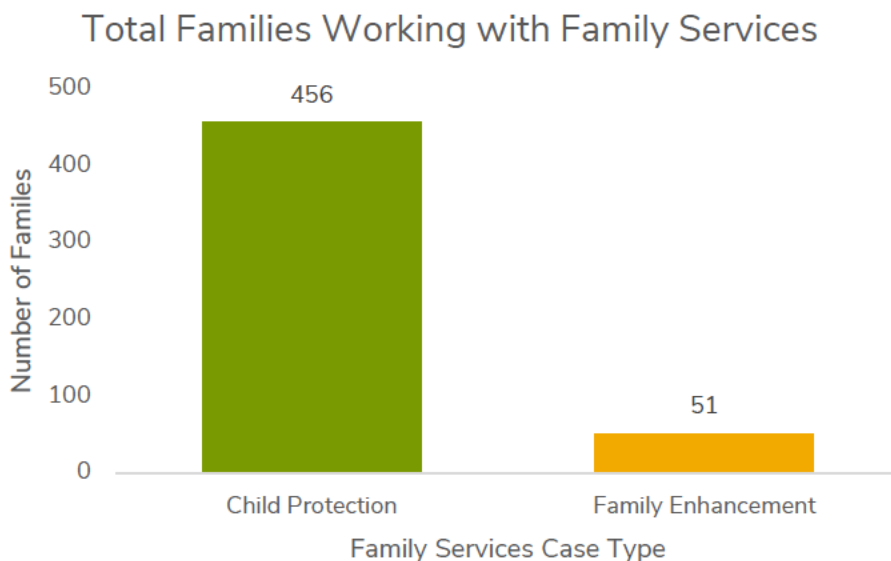


Figure 3 Total number of unique families with a Family Services case open at some point during the reporting period. Note: Open cases include both those receiving ongoing services and cases in the Investigation/Assessment stage.

Out-of-home care programs

When Family Support Services cannot mitigate the child protection concerns for the child in the family home, then the child requires out-of-home care. In such cases, placing the child with an extended family member is prioritized. If no extended family members are available, then the child may be brought into care and placed with a community caregiver or in group care.

Although there is variation over the years, the following overall trends in out-of-home care can be seen:

- A decrease in the total number of children in out-of-home care, from 215 in 2009 to 183 in 2023, which represents a 14.9 per cent decrease.
- With the introduction of extended family care, the number of children in the Director's care or custody has decreased from 215 in 2009 to 79 in 2023, which represents a 63.3 per cent decrease.



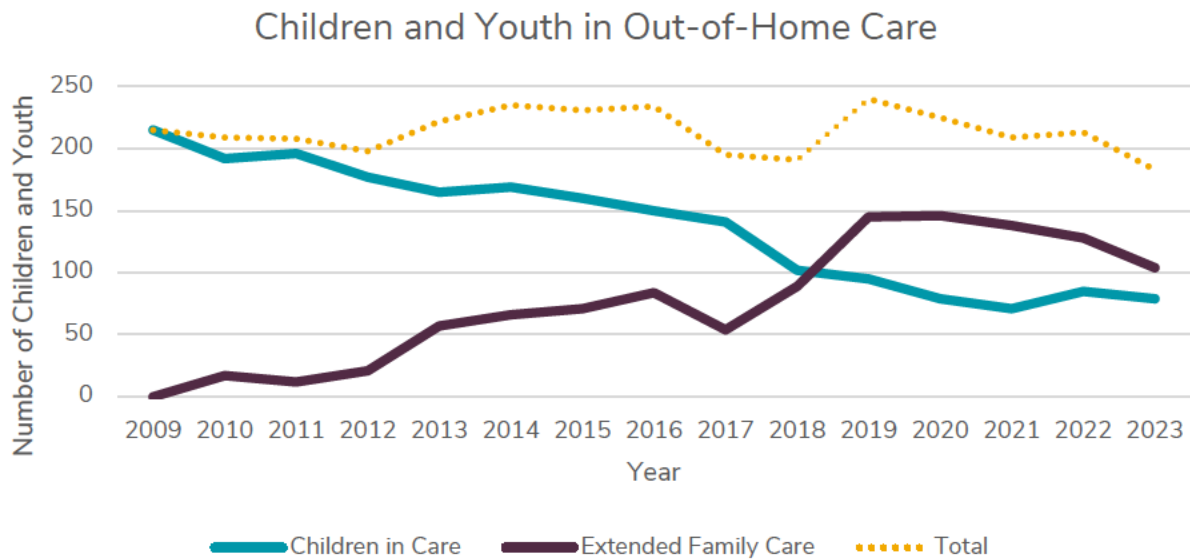


Figure 4 Number of children and youth in both types of out-of-home care from 2009 to 2023. September caseloads were used for each year due to the reporting structure of the previous case management system and to remain consistent with previous annual reports.

- Percentages of children in out-of-home care based on placement type (that is, with extended family members, community caregivers, and group care) have remained relatively stable since 2019.



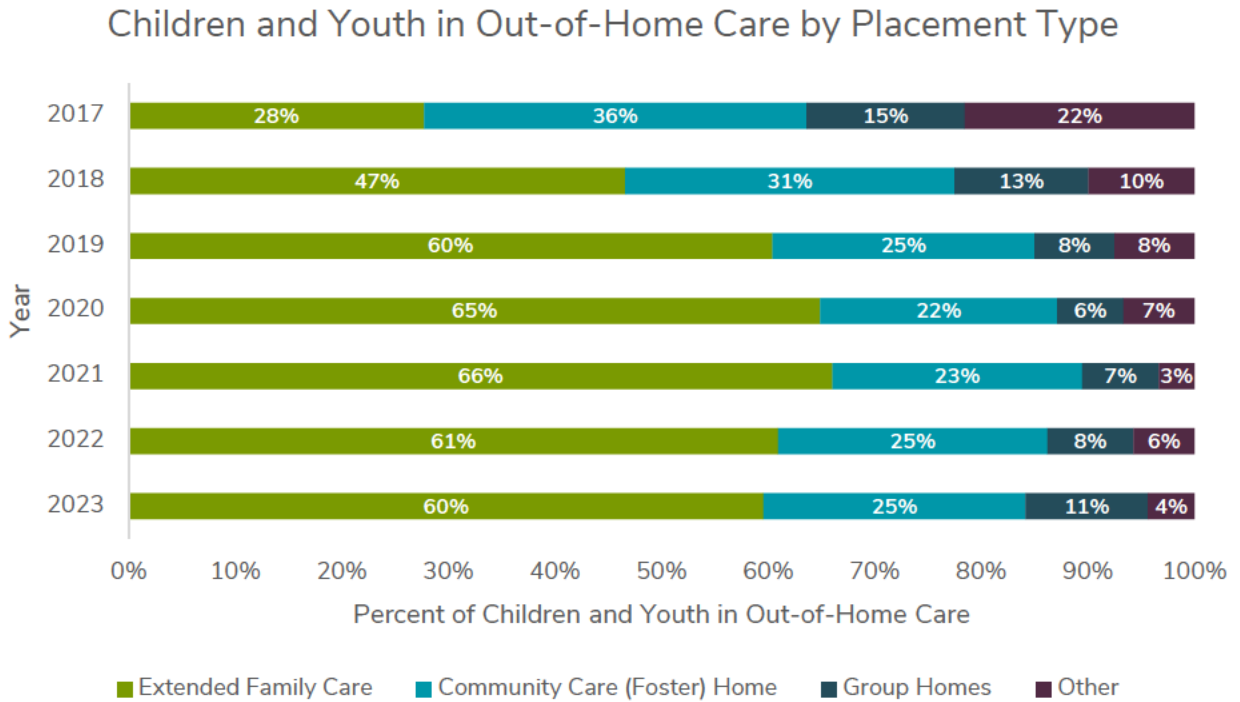


Figure 5 Percent of children and youth in out-of-home care placement types from 2017 to 2023. Other placement types could include many placement types, such as extended visits with family, out of territory placements, or medical placements. Note: September caseloads were used for each year due to the reporting structure of the previous case management system and to remain consistent with previous annual reports.

For the current reporting period, there were a total of 269 unique out-of-home care cases, with extended family care cases representing the majority (59.1%).

Approximately 55 per cent of children in out-of-home care were between 12 to 15 years of age and the average age of children in out-of-home care was just under 11 years old.



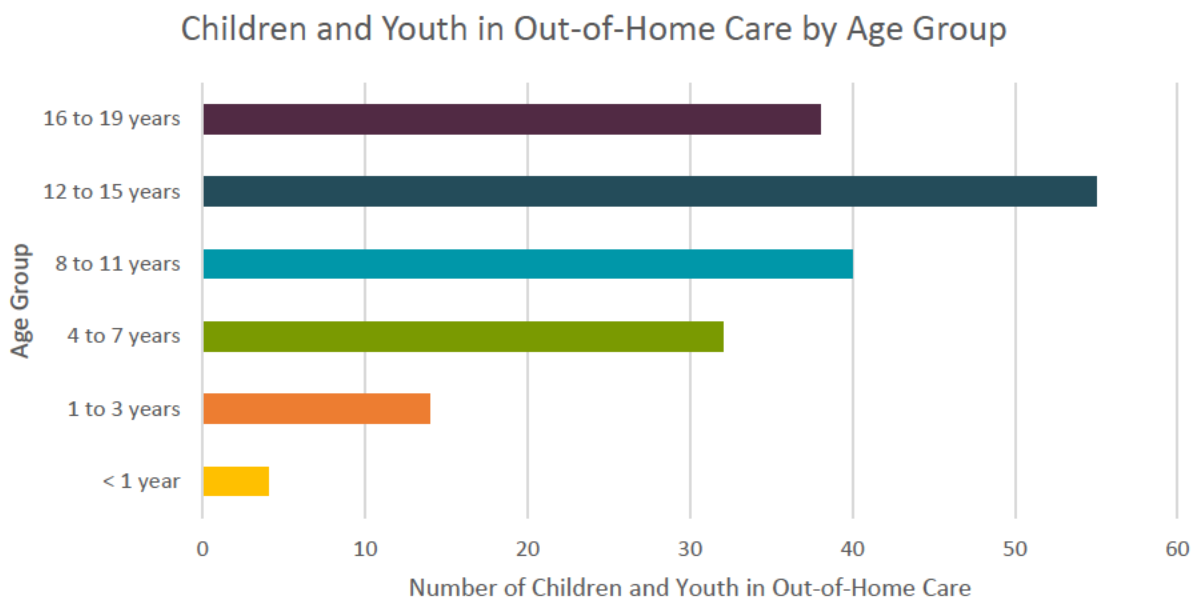


Figure 6 Number of children and youth in out-of-home care by age group. September caseloads were used due to the nature of this data and to remain consistent with the other point-in-time statistics included in this report.

Extended family care

The first choice for out-of-home care is placement with an extended family member, which allows the parents to keep the custody of the child and for the child to keep their connection to family, community, and culture.

The majority of children and youth in extended family care identified as Indigenous (96%), with most identifying as Yukon First Nation (82%).



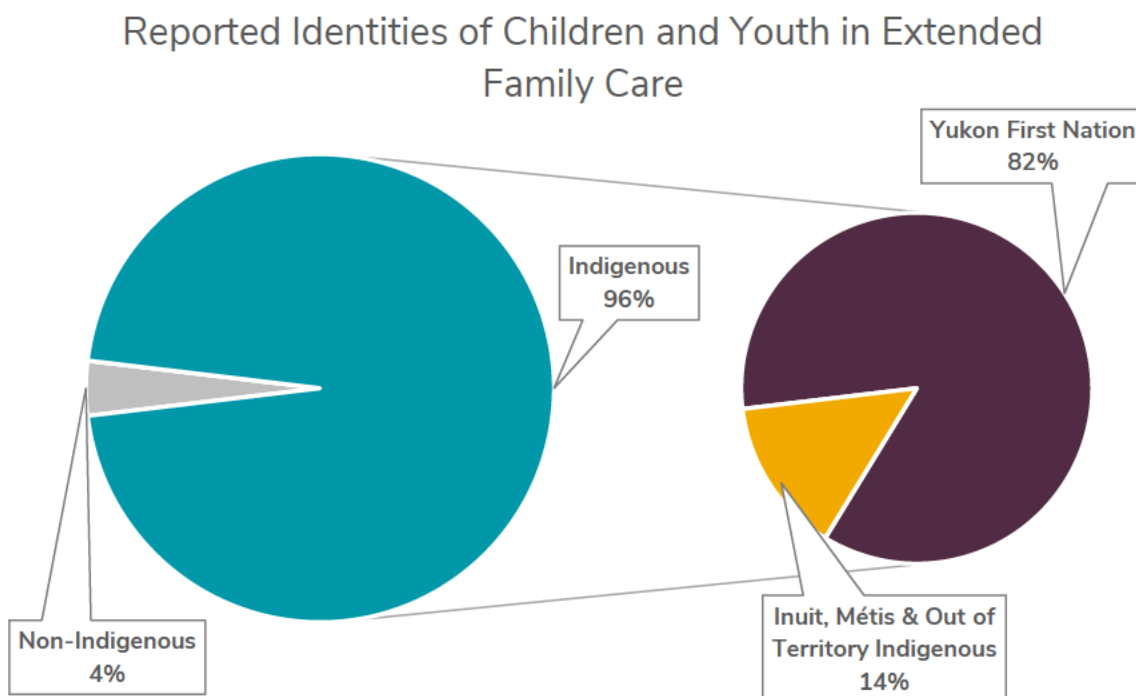


Figure 7 Self-reported identities of children and youth in extended family care during the reporting period. The chart on the left speaks to the general demographic identity, including overall Indigenous representation, of those in extended family care. The chart on the right provides a breakdown of Indigenous representation, including those who identified as Yukon First Nation.

The number of children in extended family care continues to decrease both annually and monthly over the reporting period. As demonstrated in Figures 8 and 9, the number of children in extended family care has decreased by 18.7 per cent from September 2022 to September 2023, and the number of children in extended family care decreased by 17.1 per cent from January 2023 to March 2024.



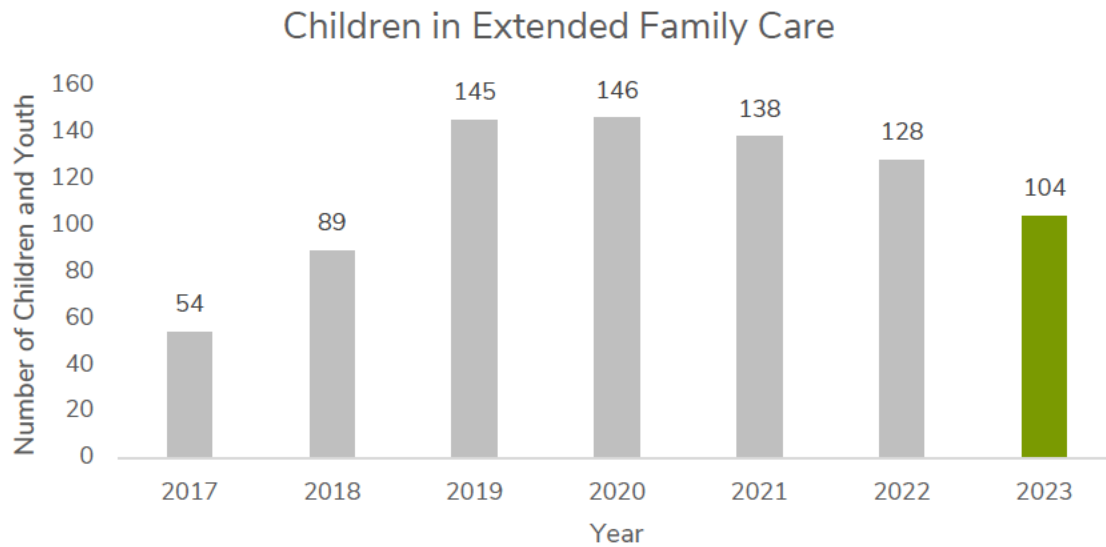


Figure 8 Number of children and youth in extended family care from 2017 to 2023. September caseloads were used for each year due to the reporting structure of the previous case management system and to remain consistent with previous annual reports. The data for the reporting period is highlighted in green.

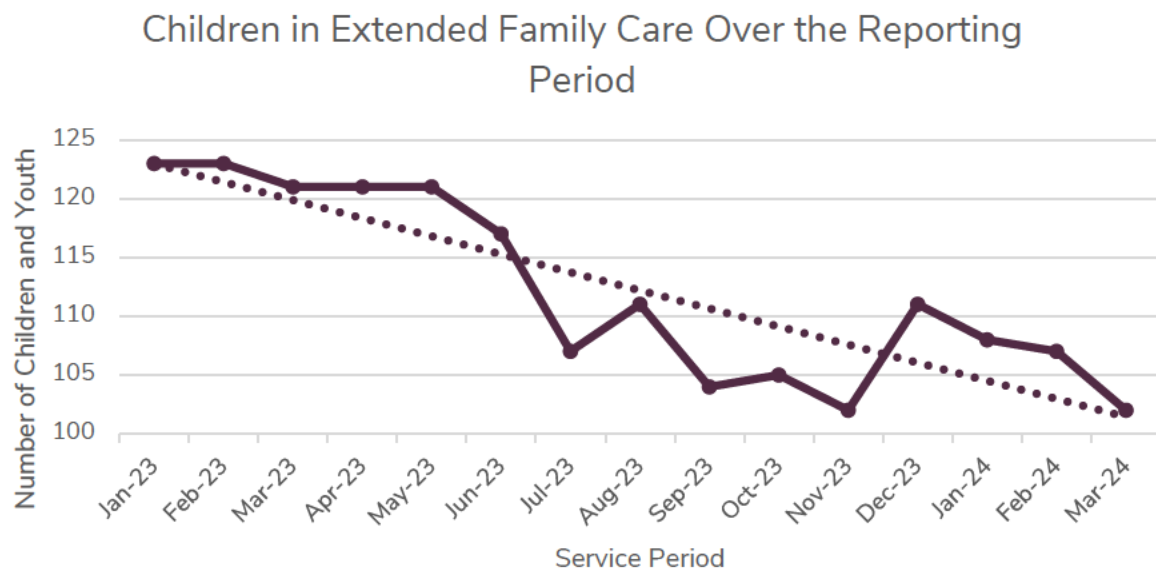


Figure 9 Number of children and youth in extended family care during each month of the reporting period. The dotted line showcases the overall trend over the reporting period.



Children in care

When extended family care is not possible, children come into the care or custody of the Director and are placed with community caregivers or in group care. The Director may also place children in care with extended family members, but unlike extended family care discussed above, the parents will not have custody of the children.

Similar to extended family care, most children in care identified as Indigenous (93%), with the majority identifying as Yukon First Nation (63%).

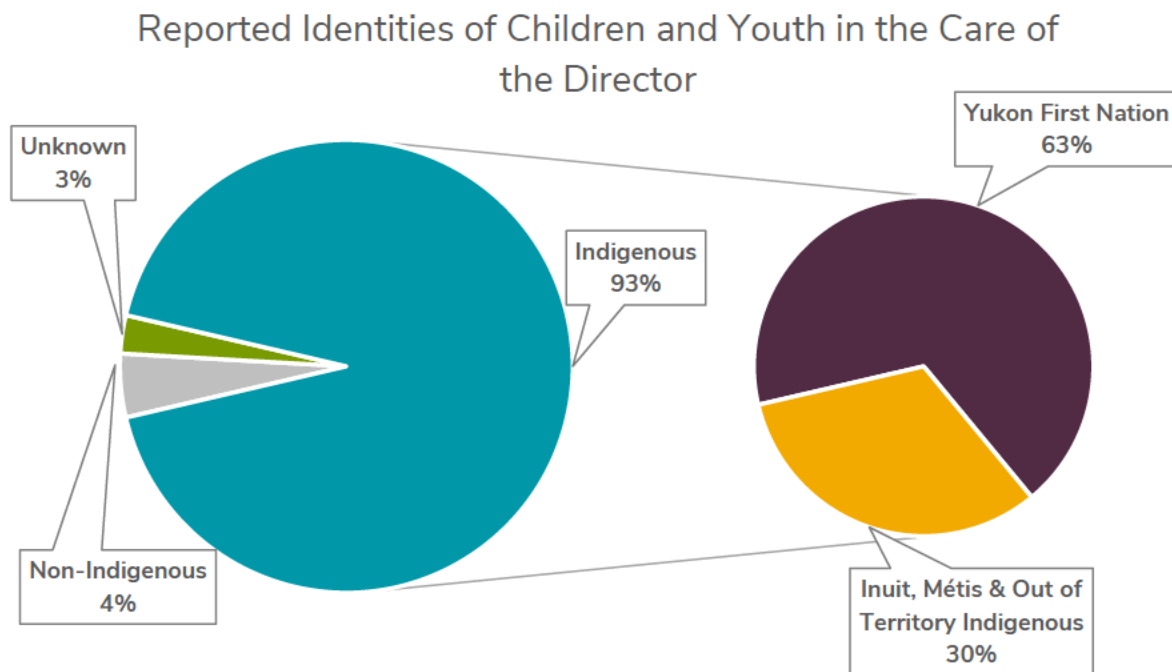


Figure 10 Self-reported identities of children and youth in the care of the Director during the reporting period. The chart on the left speaks to the general demographic identity, including overall Indigenous representation, of those in the care of the Director. The chart on the right provides a breakdown of Indigenous representation, including those who identified as Yukon First Nation.

While Figure 11 shows that the annual counts of children in care decreased, as point-in-time counts from September of each year, Figure 12 below shows that the monthly counts of children in care during the reporting period increased from 80 in January 2023 to 87 in March 2024.



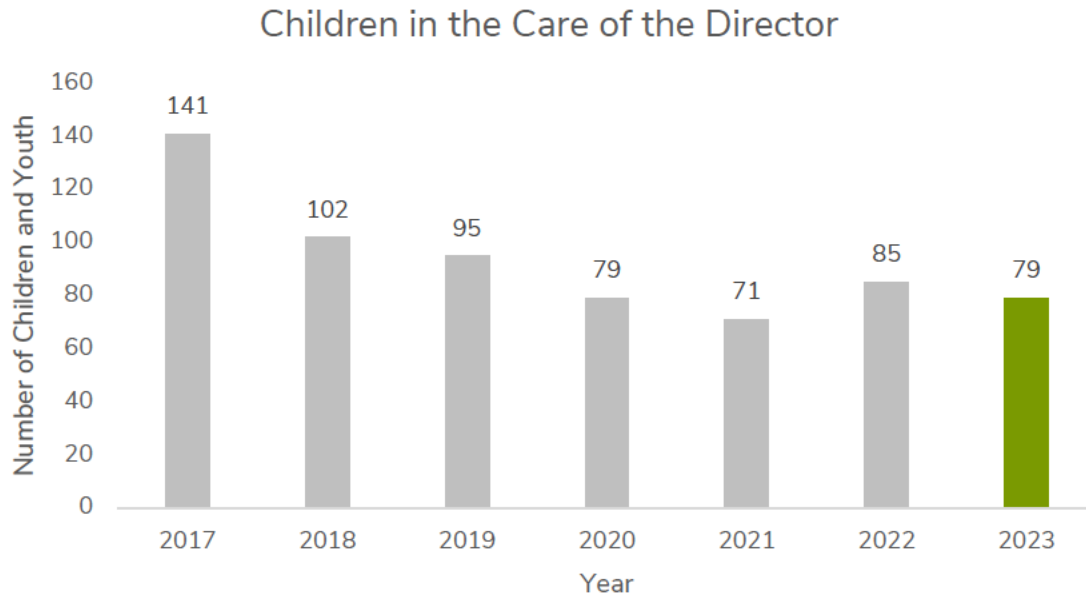


Figure 11 Number of children and youth in the care of the Director in all placement types from 2017 to 2023. September caseloads were used for each year due to the reporting structure of the previous case management system and to remain consistent with previous annual reports. The data for the reporting period is highlighted in green.

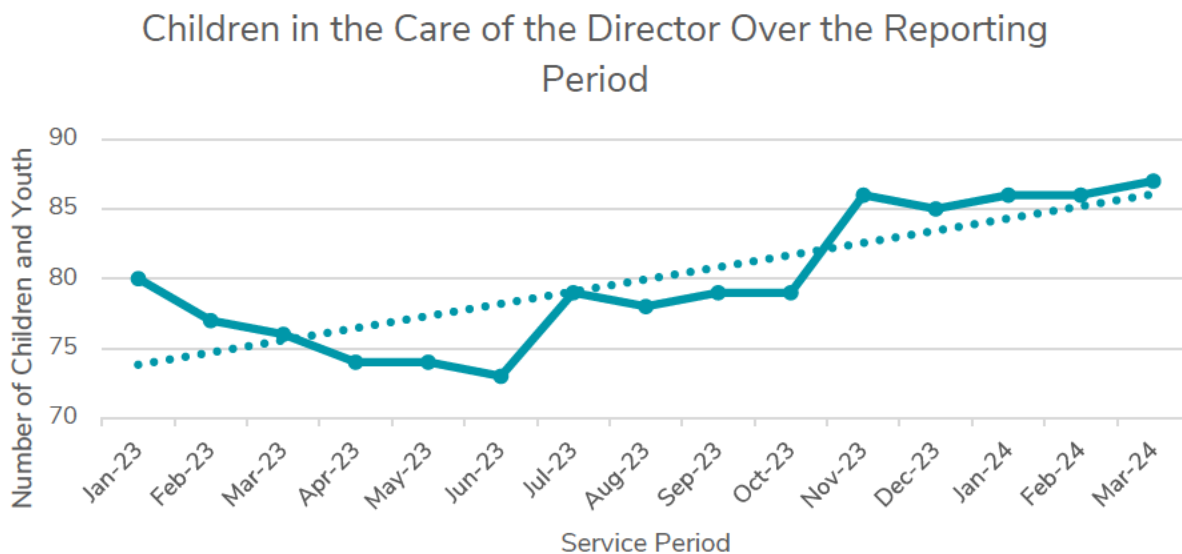


Figure 12 Number of children and youth in the care of the Director during each month of the reporting period. The dotted line showcases the overall trend over the reporting period.



Community caregiver program

Community caregivers, formerly referred to as foster parents, provide a home environment for children in the care or custody of the Director. Under the guidance of the Director, they are responsible for the day-to-day care of the children placed with them. These caregivers can provide emergency, short- or longer-term care, depending on their caregiving capacity.

When comparing point-in-time counts from September of each year (Figure 13) and comparing the monthly numbers over the reporting period (Figure 14), the number of children placed with community caregivers has decreased. From 2022 to 2023, there was a 20.8 per cent decrease and from January 2023 to March 2024, there was a 10.2 per cent decrease.

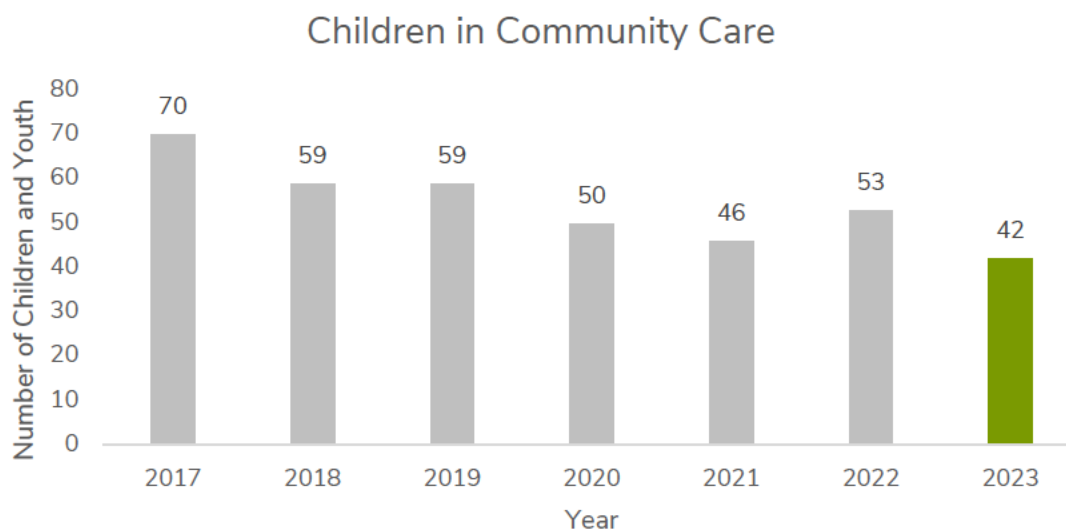


Figure 13 Number of children and youth in the care of the Director who were in community care from 2017 to 2023. September caseloads were used for each year due to the reporting structure of the previous case management system and to remain consistent with previous annual reports. The data for the reporting period is highlighted in green.



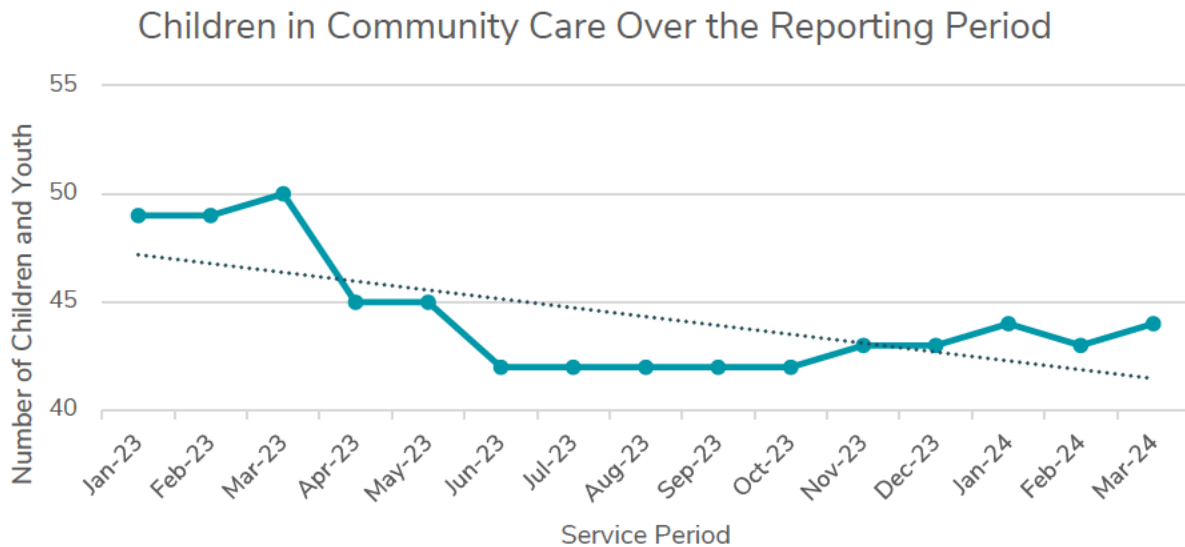


Figure 14 Number of children and youth in the care of the Director residing in community care homes during each month of the reporting period. The dotted line showcases the overall trend over the reporting period.

Decrease in the number of extended family caregivers and community caregivers

The decrease in the number of children placed with extended family caregivers and community caregivers is likely due to two reasons: an overall decrease in the number of children in out-of-home care and a caregiver shortage.

As exemplified in Figure 4, for the last 14 years, the number of children in out-of-home care have slowly decreased. This is likely due to the increased focus on prevention services by FCS, Yukon First Nations, CYFN, and other community resources to either prevent children from coming into contact with the Yukon's child protection system, as well as the increased focus by FCS to keep children with their families and reunify children in out-of-home care with their families.

We have also seen a steady decline in the amount of both community and extended family caregivers. The retirement of some longer-term community caregivers and lower interest seen during caregiver recruitment initiatives has contributed to the current caregiver shortage.



Individuals are finding it more difficult to serve as caregivers given the rise in cost of living, complex needs of children in out-of-home care, and other daily challenges that prevent caring for a child. To address this, FCS is working with Yukon First Nations to implement the Caregiver Strategy Action Plan that aims to recruit, retain, train, and support caregivers.

Transitional Support Services

In the absence of extended family caregivers and community caregivers, children in need of out-of-home care are placed in group care, managed by FCS' Transitional Support Services (TSS) program. Group care is a 24/7 staffed living environment where qualified workers are available to meet the day-to-day caregiving needs of children.

Although the number of children and youth residing in TSS group care generally decreased from 2017 to 2020, the number of children increased by 23.5 per cent from 2022 to 2023 (see Figure 15), continuing the trend that began in 2020.

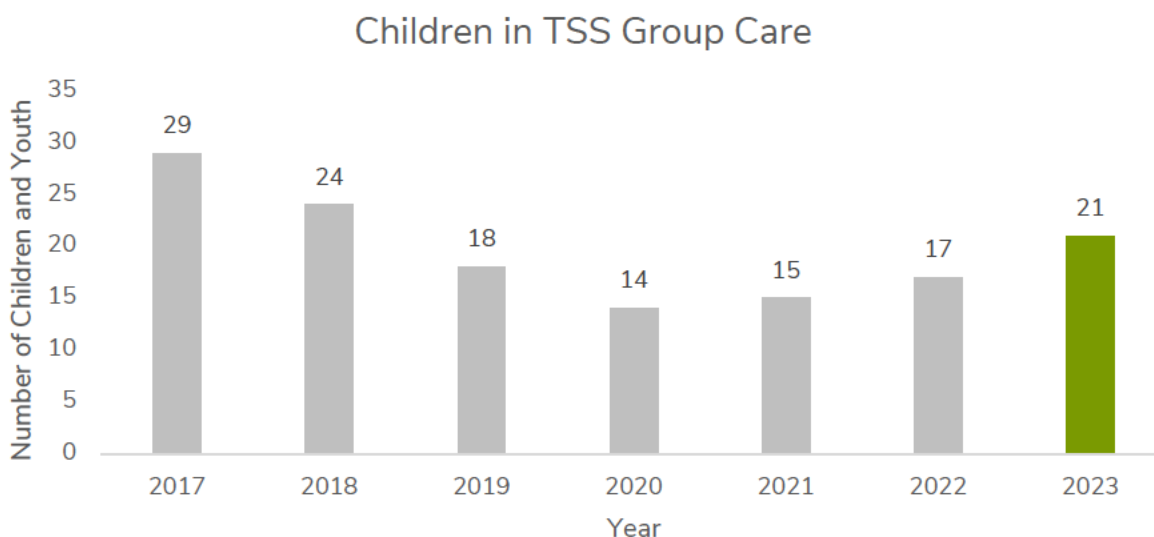


Figure 15 Number of children and youth in care living in group homes from 2017 to 2023. September caseloads were used for each year due to the reporting structure of the previous case management system and to remain consistent with previous annual reports. The data for the reporting period is highlighted in green.



When reviewing the monthly data over the reporting period, the number of children in group care increased by 44.4 per cent from January 2023 to March 2024 (Figure 16).

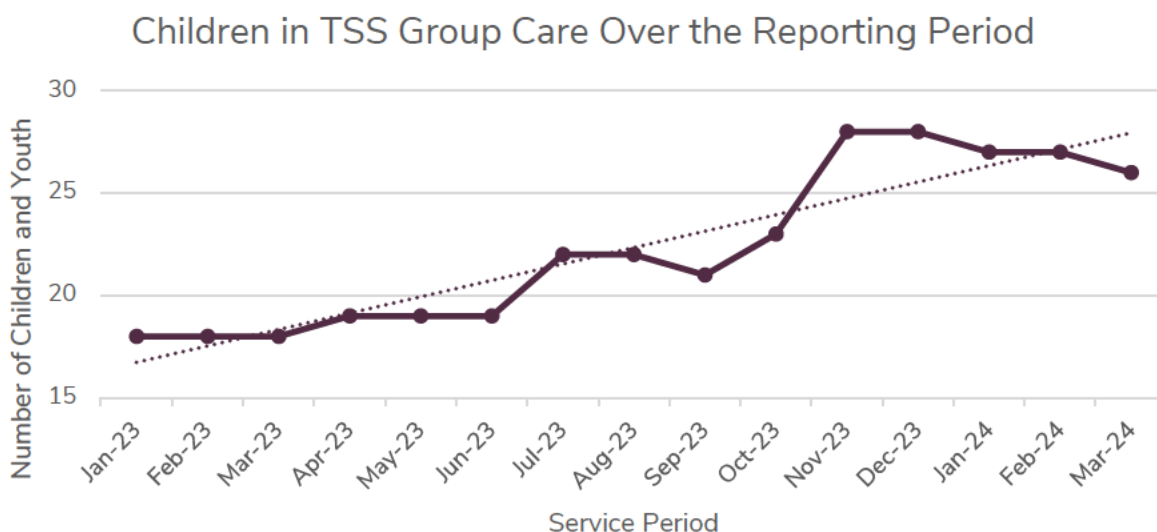


Figure 16 Number of children and youth in the care of the Director residing in TSS group homes during each month of the reporting period. The dotted line showcases the overall trend over the reporting period.

As the number of extended family caregivers and community caregivers decrease, more children requiring out-of-home care are placed in group care.

Programs and services for youth and young adults

When youth and young adults have access to programs and supports that help build necessary life skills and connection to natural support networks, they are more likely to succeed out of care. To help facilitate the successful transition to independence and lasting connections, FCS provides two programs for those from 16 to 26 years of age: Agreements for Support Services for Youth and Agreements for Transitional Support Services.

Through Agreements for Support Services for Youth, FCS provides supports to youth aged 16 to 19 who cannot live with their parents. These supports include financial



assistance for necessities such as housing, food, and clothing, alongside social supports aimed at developing life skills and addressing concerns such as mental health, substance use, or returning to school.

Young adults aged 19 to 26 who were previously in out-of-home care but have transitioned to independent living are able to receive similar supports through Agreements for Transitional Support Services.

Most youth and young adults supported through these two types of agreements identified as Indigenous (84%), with over half identifying as Yukon First Nation (63%).

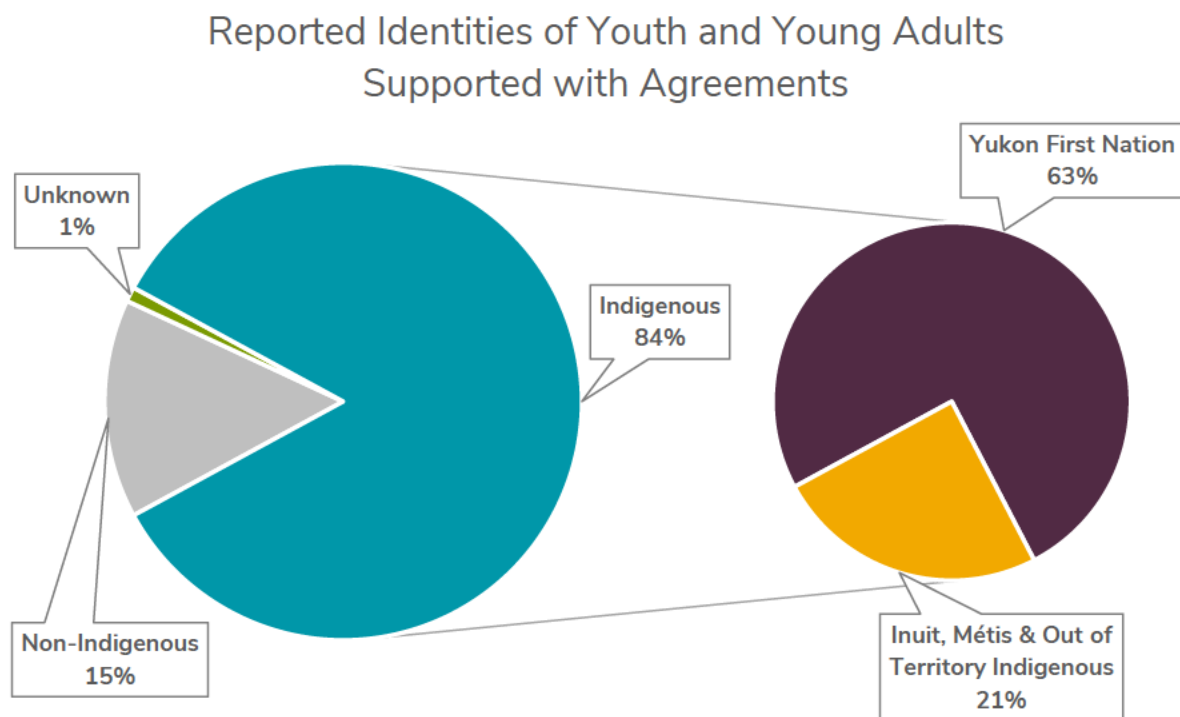


Figure 17 Self-reported identities of youth and young adults supported with agreements during the reporting period. The chart on the left speaks to the general demographic identity, including overall Indigenous representation, of those supported with agreements. The chart on the right provides a breakdown of Indigenous representation, including those who identified as Yukon First Nation.

The number of youth and young people supported with agreements has continued to increase from 2019 onwards. However, numbers have shown no significant changes from 2022 to 2023 (see Figure 18).



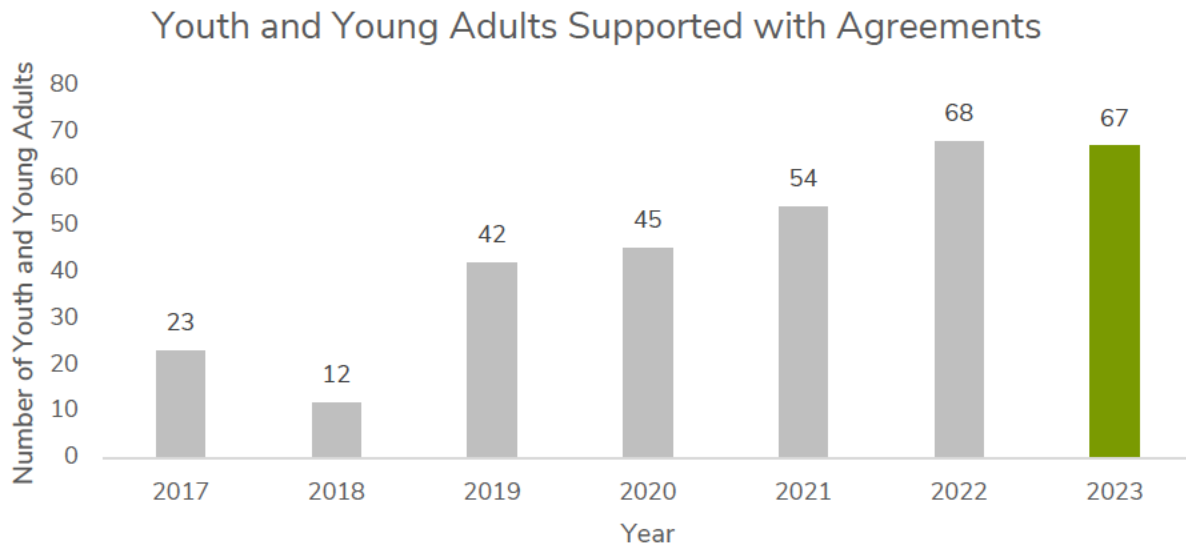


Figure 18 Number of youth and young adults supported through agreements from 2017 to 2023. September caseloads were used for each year due to the reporting structure of the previous case management system and to remain consistent with previous annual reports. The data for the reporting period is highlighted in green.

When comparing monthly data over the reporting period, there is a slight downward trend (see Figure 19).



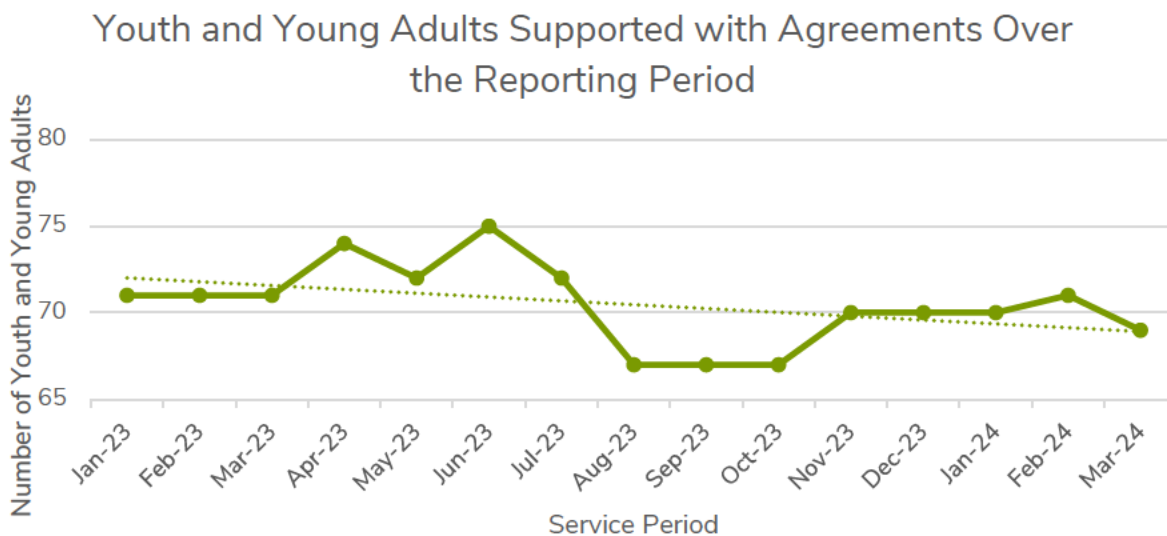


Figure 19 Number of youth and young adults supported with agreements during each month of the reporting period. The dotted line showcases the overall trend over the reporting period.

Youth Justice

The Youth Criminal Justice Act (YCJA) and s. 174(3) of the CFSA establish the Director of FCS as the territorial Director of Youth Justice within the Yukon. Youth Justice is responsible for delivering three programs under the YCJA to serve youth who are, or are likely to be, in conflict with the law, all under the guidance of the Director of FCS. The three programs are as follows: Youth Probation, the Young Offender Facility, and the Youth Achievement Centre.

Youth Probation

Youth involved with the criminal justice system in the Yukon continue to work with either Whitehorse-based probation staff or mobile probation officers, in partnership with Yukon First Nations. Over the last few years, the number of youth involved in the justice system has continued to decline. Most notably, there has been a significant decrease in the number of youth serving time in a secure facility, as opposed to in-community probation services.

During the reporting period, the Youth Probation office supervised 98 court orders, including extrajudicial sanctions (both pre-and post-charge), bail orders (undertakings



and release orders), and sentenced orders (probation, conditional discharge, intensive support and supervision, deferred custody and supervision orders, and the community portion of custody and supervision orders)¹. However, this does not mean 98 unique individuals were served, as some youth were subject to multiple orders during the reporting period.

Court Orders Supervised by Youth Probation Office

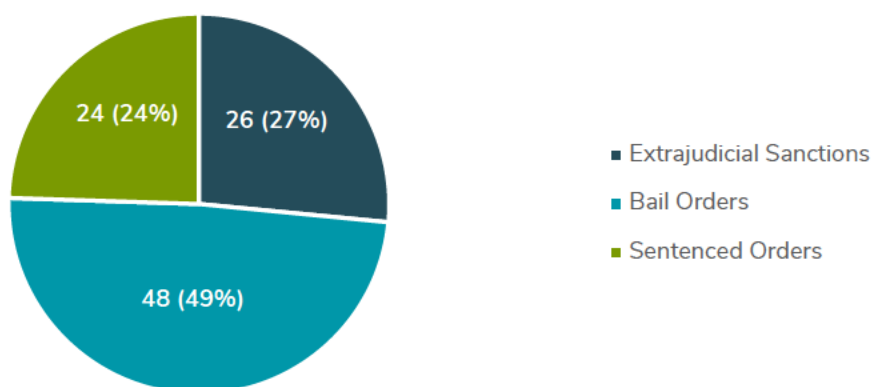


Figure 26 Number of orders supervised by the Youth Probation office during the reporting period, by order type.

Young Offenders Facility

The Young Offenders Facility (YOF) provides custodial supervision of youth aged 12 to 17 at the time of offence under the YCJA, ensuring the safety and security of youth and the community. During the reporting period, YOF saw a total of eight admissions from five unique youth.

Youth Achievement Centre

The Youth Achievement Centre (YAC) provides programs for youth aged 12 to 17 who are involved in the youth justice system, at risk of becoming involved in the youth justice system or require support that cannot be provided through Yukon's education system.

¹ Please see Appendix 1 for descriptions of the order types supervised by the Youth Probation office.



Over the reporting period, 65 unique youth attended a total of 3,905 hours of programming provided by YAC. Approximately 80 per cent of these youth attended YAC programming because they were at risk of becoming involved in the youth justice system or required additional educational support. Only 21.5 per cent of youth attending YAC programming were involved with the youth justice system.

New programs launched during the reporting period

In March 2023, FCS launched the Nts'äw Chua – Semi-Independent Living Suites program, which delivers independent living skills training and housing supports to youth aged 19 to 26 who are receiving support from the Director. Four suites are available for youth who require additional day-to-day support before they transition to independent living.

Coroner's Inquest

In June 2023, the Yukon Coroner's Service held an inquest into the accidental death of an infant who was receiving services from FCS. Based on the testimony heard, the Jury made 13 recommendations to prevent such a tragedy in the future, with eight of the recommendations directed to FCS. As of April 8, 2024, four of the eight recommendations have been fully implemented (recommendations 5, 6, 7, and 13) and work is underway to implement the remaining recommendations (recommendations 8, 9, 10, and 11).

Relationships with partners

In April 2024, the Director of FCS signed the *Memorandum of Understanding on the concurrent investigations of child abuse and other related matters between the RCMP and FCS*. This carves a clearer path forward for FCS and RCMP to coordinate efforts and ultimately reduce the impact of investigations of children and families.

As a part of the Government of Yukon's *Safer School Action Plan*, FCS supported the development of the Joint Agreement between the Department of Education and the Department of Health and Social Services regarding interdepartmental operations and



communication when a child's safety is, or is likely to be, at risk, which was also signed in April 2024.

Relationships with Yukon First Nations

FCS continues to work together with Yukon First Nations and CYFN to deliver services under the CFSA to Indigenous children and families in the Yukon. Over the reporting period, FCS met with Yukon First Nations bilaterally numerous times to discuss issues specific to their communities.

FCS also regularly provided updates on child protection service delivery at the Yukon First Nation Health and Social Development Commission meetings.

At the Trilateral Table on the Wellbeing of Yukon First Nations Children and Families, FCS worked side-by-side with the Government of Canada, Yukon First Nations, and CYFN to share information and make decisions related to service delivery under the CFSA.

Over the reporting period, FCS, the Department of Justice, and Executive Council Office worked with the Government of Canada and Inuvialuit Regional Corporation (IRC) to develop a coordination agreement that would support IRC to deliver Inuvialuit law governing child and family services for Inuvialuit children and families in the Yukon. Negotiations for this coordination agreement between the Government of Yukon, the Government of Canada, and IRC are ongoing.

In June 2023, the Government of Yukon and the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Government signed a Memorandum of Understanding that provides a framework to collaborate on the implementation and delivery of services under the CFSA to Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in children and families.

Looking forward

Child protection systems across Canada are evolving at a rapid pace as First Nations and Indigenous governing bodies exercise authority over child and family services. The Yukon is no different and Yukon First Nations have also expressed their interest in exercising similar authority.



As Yukon First Nations occupy jurisdiction in the area of child and family services, FCS is committed to continuing a collaborative approach and offering any support possible to help Yukon First Nations build capacity and work together to ensure that children, youth, young adults formerly in out-of-home care, and families all experience the best possible outcomes.



Appendix 1

This appendix details the various order types commonly supervised by the Youth Probation office.

Order Name & Type	Description
Undertaking (Bail)	When a youth is charged with a criminal offence they can be released on an Undertaking to an Officer in Charge (RCMP). The undertaking will identify a court date and may include conditions such as reporting to a bail supervisor, curfew, no contact with person(s) or address etc.
Release Order (Bail)	When a youth is charged with a criminal offence, they can be released from court on a Release Order issued by a Judge under the YCJA. The Release Order will identify the next court date and any conditions the Judge deems appropriate. These conditions may include: reporting to a Bail Supervisor, residency conditions, programming expectations, curfew and no contact orders. A Release Order may include a surety or cash deposit if deemed necessary by the court.
Extrajudicial Sanction (Diversion)	Referrals for Extrajudicial Sanctions are received from Crown Prosecutors or the RCMP and, after completing assessments, are referred to the Youth Justice Panel to craft an Extrajudicial Sanction (diversion) suitable for the young person's circumstances. For this form of diversion, the following must occur: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The young person accepts responsibility for the alleged offence and there is sufficient evidence to proceed with the prosecution of the offence. 2. The young person consents to participate. 3. The young person is advised of their right to be represented by counsel and has a reasonable opportunity to so. 4. The sanctions are deemed to be appropriate to meet the needs of the young person and the interests of society.
Probation Order (Sentence)	A court ordered sentence for a young person who has pled or been found guilty of a criminal offence. Youth Probation Orders cannot run longer



	than two years and typically contain conditions to guide the youth's rehabilitation and reintegration while addressing public safety.
Conditional Discharge (Sentence)	A court ordered sentence for a young person who has pled or been found guilty of a criminal offence. With this sentence the young person is not given a criminal conviction if they meet certain conditions set out by the court, such as counseling or community service hours, and comply with all conditions set out.
Deferred Custody and Supervision Order (Sentence)	A court ordered sentence for a young person who has pled or been found guilty of a serious criminal offence. Instead of serving time in a youth facility, the youth is placed under strict supervision in the community with conditions such as regular reporting to their probation officer and attending programming and counseling for a time not exceeding six (6) months. In the event of a breach of conditions the young person may be subjected to a period of detention in a youth facility for up to 48 hours, at the discretion of the Territorial Director.
Custody and Supervision Order (Sentence)	A court ordered custody sentence for a youth who has pled or been found guilty of a criminal offence. The youth serves the first two-thirds of their sentence in a youth custody centre, either in an open or secure setting, and is then supervised in the community for the remaining third of their sentence. The Territorial Director is responsible for determining which conditions the youth will be subject to while supervised in the community.
Intensive Supervision and Support Order (Sentence)	A court can order this type of sentence as an alternative to custody. This sentence provides more intensive support and supervision of the youth when compared to a Probation Order.



Intensive Rehabilitative Custody and Supervision Order (Sentence)	A court can order this sentence for serious charges such as murder and aggravated sexual assault for a youth who suffers from a mental, psychological, or emotional disorder. This type of sentence is meant to have a treatment component and requires willingness from the youth to engage in a treatment plan.
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