

GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA

Annual Report

Children's Services

2019-2020

Alberta 

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Preface

The Public Accounts of Alberta are prepared in accordance with the *Financial Administration Act* and the *Fiscal Planning and Transparency Act*. The Public Accounts consist of the annual report of the Government of Alberta and the annual reports of each of the 20 ministries.

The annual report of the Government of Alberta contains the consolidated financial statements of the province and the *Measuring Up* report, which compares actual performance results to desired results set out in the government's strategic plan.

This annual report of the Ministry of Children's Services contains the financial information of the ministry and a comparison of actual performance results to desired results set out in the ministry business plan. This ministry annual report also includes:

- **other financial information as required by the *Financial Administration Act* and *Fiscal Planning and Transparency Act*, as separate reports, to the extent that the ministry has anything to report.**

Ministry and department audited financial statements previously included in the annual report of the Ministry of Children's Services have been replaced with the financial information of the ministry on pages 54-61.

Minister's Accountability Statement

The ministry's annual report for the year ended March 31, 2020, was prepared under my direction in accordance with the *Fiscal Planning and Transparency Act* and the government's accounting policies. All of the government's policy decisions as at July 6, 2020, with material economic or fiscal implications of which I am aware have been considered in the preparation of this report.

[Original signed by]

Honourable Rebecca Schulz
Minister of Children's Services

Message from the Minister



This year, we have faced some of the greatest challenges ever seen in Alberta. Yet, I have never been more proud to represent this government and the Ministry of Children's Services.

In spite of significant setbacks and roadblocks in the energy sector and the rapid escalation of the COVID-19 pandemic, our government has remained steadfast in our mandate to build our economy while protecting our most vulnerable citizens and ensuring the children, youth and families we serve are safe and supported.

This has been a year of tremendous positive change in service delivery for Children's Services. We recognized significant milestones in our work to transform the delivery of Child Care and consolidate prevention and early intervention services to align with the Well-being and Resiliency Framework through the creation of Family Resource Networks. Across the ministry, we focused our efforts on reducing duplication, streamlining processes and working more efficiently. We reinvested savings to help meet growing and increasingly complex caseloads and the corresponding demand for frontline services.

The achievements and accomplishments outlined in this annual report are a result of the tremendous dedication of Children's Services staff, managers and the executive team.

As Minister of Children's Services, I am honoured to lead this ministry and will continue working to ensure Alberta's children, youth and families safe and supported.

[Original signed by]

Honourable Rebecca Schulz
Minister of Children's Services

Management's Responsibility for Reporting

The executives within the ministry have the primary responsibility and accountability for the ministry. Collectively, the executives ensure the ministry complies with all relevant legislation, regulations and policies.

Ministry business plans, annual reports, performance results and the supporting management information are integral to the government's fiscal and strategic plan, annual report, quarterly reports and other financial and performance reporting.

Responsibility for the integrity and objectivity of the accompanying ministry financial information and performance results for the ministry rests with the Minister of Children's Services. Under the direction of the Minister, I oversee the preparation of the ministry's annual report, including the financial information and performance results. The financial information and the performance results, of necessity, include amounts that are based on estimates and judgments. The financial information is prepared using the government's stated accounting policies, which are based on Canadian public sector accounting standards. The performance measures are prepared in accordance with the following criteria:

- Reliability – Information used in applying performance measure methodologies agrees with the underlying source data for the current and prior years' results.
- Understandability – the performance measure methodologies and results are presented clearly.
- Comparability – the methodologies for performance measure preparation are applied consistently for the current and prior years' results.
- Completeness – outcomes, performance measures and related targets match those included in the ministry's Budget 2019.

As Deputy Minister, in addition to program responsibilities, I am responsible for the Ministry's financial administration and reporting functions. The Ministry maintains systems of financial management and internal control which give consideration to costs, benefits, and risks that are designed to:

- provide reasonable assurance that transactions are properly authorized, executed in accordance with prescribed legislation and regulations, and properly recorded so as to maintain accountability of public money;
- provide information to manage and report on performance;
- safeguard the assets and properties of the province under ministry administration;
- provide Executive Council, the President of Treasury Board and Minister of Finance and the Minister of Children's Services information needed to fulfill their responsibilities; and
- facilitate preparation of ministry business plans and annual reports required under the *Fiscal Planning and Transparency Act*.

In fulfilling my responsibilities for the ministry, I have relied, as necessary, on the executives within the ministry.

[Original signed by]

Darlene Bouwsema
Deputy Minister of Children's Services
July 6, 2020

Results Analysis

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Ministry Overview

The key accomplishments identified in this annual report are aligned with and support the strategic direction of the Government of Alberta, as well as the outcomes and key objectives outlined in the Children's Services 2019-23 Business Plan.

The ministry is responsible for providing a continuum of supports and services for children, youth and families from early childhood programs to prevention and early intervention supports to intervention services, including kinship and foster care, adoption and post-intervention services. Children's Services' mandate focuses on the safety and well-being of children and youth.

In 2019-20, Children's Services worked toward three outcomes:

- **Outcome One:** Children and youth are protected.
- **Outcome Two:** The growth and development of children is supported through accessible, affordable and quality child care.
- **Outcome Three:** The well-being, resiliency and cultural connections of children, youth and families is nurtured and enhanced.

Children's Services is comprised of the following.

Office of the Deputy Minister

The Deputy Minister oversees the ministry under the direction of the Minister and is the liaison between the elected official and ministry employees. The Deputy Minister provides strategic advice, and oversees the ministry's day-to-day operations, budget, and program development.

Child Intervention

The Child Intervention division works in partnership with stakeholders and community-based agencies to lead and support programs and services for vulnerable children, youth and families. Child Intervention delivers services mandated under the *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act*, the *Drug Endangered Children Act* and the *Protection of Sexually Exploited Children Act*.

The division provides supports to children and families across the province, so children have what they need to remain safely at home whenever possible. When children are unable to safely remain in their family home, Child Intervention works collaboratively with parents and extended family to identify a safe and stable temporary caregiver, maintain familial, cultural and community connections, and pursue reunification of children with their parents. When it is not possible to safely return a child to their guardian, Child Intervention works to find legally permanent homes for children, through private guardianship or adoptions.

In Alberta, children, youth and their families receive services through one of the 87 provincial offices or Alberta's 17 Delegated First Nations Agencies (DFNAs) in communities across the province. Child Intervention maintains a collaborative relationship with the DFNAs and Indigenous Services Canada to support on-reserve child intervention service delivery. Additionally, Child Intervention works with Métis stakeholders including the Metis Settlements General Council and the Métis Nation of Alberta to support the needs of Métis children and families involved with Child Intervention. Child Intervention also works in partnership with community agencies that deliver supportive services to children, youth and their families.

Family and Community Resiliency

The Family and Community Resiliency division works with other government ministries and community partners to support early childhood development, including child care, and prevention/early intervention programs and services. The division works to enhance resiliency, reduce risk factors and strengthen protective factors in children, youth, families and communities.

Family and Community Resiliency supports accessible, affordable and quality child care options for families, oversees licensing and monitoring of child care programs and child care staff certification, and provides funding to programs to support the recruitment and retention of a qualified workforce. Additionally, this division supports development of prevention-focused and post-child intervention policy and programs for children and youth, including mentoring, transitional and education supports, and addictions, mental health and suicide prevention supports.

Programs and services are delivered regionally and/or in partnership with community agencies.

Policy, Innovation and Indigenous Connections

The Policy, Innovation and Indigenous Connections division supports Children's Services and its partners in taking a holistic perspective toward the needs of Indigenous people and communities and in building and strengthening relationships across the province. A specific focus is on improving outcomes for Indigenous children and families in Alberta through cultural understanding, relationship building and strategic leadership.

The division focuses on integration across programs, particularly of lessons learned and best practices, strengthens ongoing activities, and promotes a culture of innovation. Quality assurance and continuous improvement are priorities for the ministry and the division supports the development and implementation of both strategies.

The division is responsible for promoting Indigenous cultural awareness throughout the ministry by enhancing the understanding of Indigenous people and communities and working collaboratively with partners on initiatives relevant to children, youth and families.

Corporate Services

Corporate Services provides financial planning, management and reporting, internal audits, accommodations, fraud investigations, emergency planning and management, procurement, records management, and corporate planning and reporting. Under a shared services model, Corporate Services supports both Children's Services and Community and Social Services.

Communications

Through a service agreement with Communications and Public Engagement, the Communications branch offers strategic communications advice, strategic writing and communications planning services. Responsibilities also include delivering clear and timely information to the public about the ministry's key initiatives, programs and services.

Human Resources

Under the "One HR" approach, Human Resources service delivery has been consolidated within the Public Service Commission. Each department is supported by a dedicated portfolio director and business partners who lead providing strategic advice, talent development engagement and internal communications. This dedicated team connects people leaders to common human resource services such as recruitment, classification, policy development and analytics through service centres within the broader human resource system.

Legal Services

Legal Services is a team of Justice and Solicitor General lawyers and staff that provides a full range of non-litigation services and related strategic advice to all areas of the ministry. Under a shared services model, Legal Services supports Children's Services by providing advice on contracts, grants, procurement and legislation. For litigation matters, Justice and Solicitor General provides support via their Litigation and Family and Surrogate Court Litigation teams, as well as external counsel.

Discussion and Analysis of Results

Red Tape Reduction

The Ministry of Children's Services is committed to the ongoing review of programs and services to ensure that the best possible outcomes are being achieved for Albertans. As part of this ongoing review, the ministry is committed to reducing red tape to make life easier for hard-working Albertans and businesses. This includes reducing regulatory burden and unnecessary processes to encourage economic growth and job creation; and make Alberta one of the freest and fastest moving economies in the world.

In 2019-20, Children's Services identified 10,079 regulatory requirements; 2,422 in statutes and regulations and 7,657 in policies, guidelines and forms. Red Tape Reduction initiatives implemented in Children's Services reduced regulatory requirements by 8.2 per cent and reduced regulatory burden, while continuing to maintain the safety and well-being of children and youth.

The Government of Alberta committed to consolidating the Alberta Child Benefit and the Alberta Family Employment Tax Credit into a single program, the new Alberta Child and Family Benefit. Administered by the Canadian Revenue Agency on behalf of the Government of Alberta, the Alberta Child and Family Benefit simplifies benefits, reduces duplication and lowers administrative costs while supporting families with lower incomes. The new benefit will launch in July 2020.

Children's Services announced new Family Resource Networks to deliver a continuum of Prevention and Early Intervention services for children, youth up to 18 years old and families. The Family Resource Networks are made up of interconnected service providers who will expand services in a more effective and efficient manner, while maintaining accountability and reducing administration grants.

Case Connect, a mobile application that enables child intervention workers to work remotely, continued to be implemented as part of a larger initiative toward paperless workflows. Case Connect reduces administrative burden and time by giving caseworkers the ability to enter case notes in the field, while providing up-to-date accessible electronic information critical for decision making.

Children's Services announced that the ministry will transition annual funding grants to a three-year funding model for Child Advocacy Centres. This streamlining will reduce wait times when applying for grants, stabilize funding and reduce the time spent on grant administration and reporting. This allows organizations to focus on delivering programs and services.

A new online Child Care Online Subsidy Application was launched to simplify and expedite the process for parents applying for child care subsidy. This innovation will result in fewer paper submissions, emails and phone calls for support, which reduces red tape and allows staff to focus more time on supporting children and families and less on helping them with paperwork.

The ministry committed to child care transformation through the *Child Care Licensing Act* review. The review focuses on improving delivery of child care services; improving existing policy and service delivery; reducing regulatory burdens; and, identifying innovative solutions.

Children's Services will continue to work toward the goal of reducing red tape by one-third. Albertans can submit their ideas for Red Tape Reduction on the Cut Red Tape website at alberta.ca/cut-red-tape.aspx.

Supporting Albertans Affected by COVID-19

Children's Services acted quickly to address the impacts of the spread of COVID-19.

In March, Alberta's Chief Medical Officer of Health ordered all licensed child care facilities, out-of-school care programs and preschool programs to close indefinitely to help slow the virus and protect the safety of children, parents/guardians and child care staff. Approved family day homes, private day homes and licensed group family child care programs were exempt from this closure due to the fewer number of children they care for. Additionally, a temporary exception was granted to increase the maximum number of children in approved family day homes to six, not including the provider's own children, recognizing that many approved family day home providers would now have their own school-age children to care for at home.

The order was amended to allow select child care centres throughout the province to reopen, facilitating access to child care services for essential employees. Additional guidelines and requirements were put in place to help increase safety. To help mitigate the financial risk and uncertainty for child care providers, the ministry committed to financially compensate reopened centres for spaces that were not filled. Reopened centres also received up to \$500 for the purchase of cleaning supplies to enable them to follow the new health and sanitization guidelines.

To lower the risk of the spread of COVID-19, Children's Services offices were temporarily closed to the public, while ministry and agency staff continued to work regular hours, with modifications to support the safety and well-being of all children, families, caregivers and staff. Caseworkers fulfilled their delegated responsibilities to assess and help create safety for children and youth, and supported parents to ensure connections and contact between children and their families continued while following guidelines set out by Alberta Health.

To protect the health and safety of all court users, the courts limited all regular operations. Child protection matters continued to be heard in the Provincial Court of Alberta and child intervention matters were addressed on a case by case basis.

Children's Services worked with Alberta Health Services, the Ministry of Health, and ALIGN Association of Community Services to develop modified practice guidelines for group homes for children and youth in care.

During the pandemic, high priority was placed on ensuring young adults who had previous involvement in the child intervention system were safe and had the supports and resources they required. In situations where a child turned 18 during the pandemic, workers ensured there was no disruption to the services they were receiving and required. Children's Services continues to support youth receiving assistance through Support and Financial Assistance Agreements (SFAA) which includes allowing young adults up to the age of 24, whose files have previously been closed, to re-enter a SFAA arrangement. Children's Services also recognized that SFAA eligible young people with dependent children might require specialized and complex supports. Caseworkers were guided to increase contact with these young parents when appropriate.

Youth previously approved for the Advancing Futures post-secondary educational program, were able to continue receiving psychosocial supports and monthly living allowance funding, even with the closure of post-secondary institutions. As program offices were closed to walk-ins and in-person meetings, day-to-day operations continued and youth were still able to connect with their program coordinator by phone, text, e-mail, and web based applications.

Outcome One: Children and youth are protected

The safety and well-being of children and youth is sustained through preservation of lifelong connections to their families, culture, spirituality and communities. The ministry will strengthen the child intervention system to support the healthy development of children, youth and families. The ministry works with Indigenous leaders, communities, families and other partners to reduce the over-representation of Indigenous children and youth receiving services.

Key Objectives

- 1.1 Improve child intervention practices through the implementation of safety-oriented, evidence-based, culturally appropriate approaches and models.**
- 1.2 Support children in care to develop long-term, nurturing relationships by increasing the connections to family, significant persons and Indigenous communities.**
- 1.3 Work with ministries and communities to combat human trafficking.**
- 1.4 Work in partnership with community-based organizations and municipalities to combat child exploitation and domestic violence.**

1.1 Improve child intervention practices through the implementation of safety-oriented, evidence-based, culturally appropriate approaches and models.

Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act

The Minister of Children's Services is responsible for the *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act*, which grants authority to provide services to children who are or may be at risk of being abused or neglected. The act guides child intervention services by:

- defining abuse and neglect;
- providing principles to guide how we support children and families;
- outlining what caseworkers must consider when planning and making decisions;
- ensuring the focus is working with families to try and keep them together and healthy, and confirming how extended family and community will need to be part of plans;
- outlining what needs to be done if children or youth cannot remain with or return to their parents, and how extended family and community will need to be part of plans; and
- explaining adoption and private guardianship for children or youth who need an alternative legal guardian, including exploring who in the parent's extended family and network may be able to be a legal guardian.

Child Intervention Practice Framework

Through collaboration with service delivery providers and community partners, Children's Services continues to implement the Child Intervention Practice Framework. The framework is a foundation for collaborative service delivery and the Signs of Safety model. This framework supports child intervention practitioners to deliver services consistently and in alignment with the ministry's organizational values and principles.

The Child Intervention Practice Framework guides casework through six principles:

- **Indigenous Experience** – recognizing Indigenous expertise in matters concerning their children, youth and families;
- **Preserve Family** – focusing on preserving and reuniting families, and building the capacity of extended family and communities;
- **Strengths-based** – supporting the right and responsibility of parents to share in the decision-making process for them and their children;
- **Connection** – supporting children and youth to maintain relationships that are important to them, be connected to their culture, and practice their religious or spiritual beliefs;
- **Collaboration** – working with families, community agencies and other stakeholders to build positive, respectful partnerships and provide individualized, flexible and timely services; and,
- **Continuous Improvement** – using an outcome-oriented and evidence-based approach to support innovative practices and ongoing improvements.

The framework brings together the people, knowledge and ideas that lead to improved child intervention services. It enhances support of children and their families, breaks down barriers and helps create positive outcomes for children.

Signs of Safety

Signs of Safety (SOS) is an evidence-based practice approach that focuses on collaborative relationships between child intervention professionals and family members in situations where children are in danger of harm. Working collaboratively with families, caseworkers are able to identify safety concerns, weigh consequences, and assess safety and risk of harm or danger to the child. This allows the family and caseworker to form a shared understanding of current circumstances as they develop a plan for the safety and well-being of the child.

The strategy to integrate SOS into existing Alberta practice consists of three phases that align with case progression: intake, assessment and ongoing case management. In 2019-20, the Intake Workflow Pilot commenced, which aims to develop, test and evaluate the quality of Alberta-specific SOS tools, methods and practices during the intake phase. Initial findings from the pilot indicate that incorporating SOS at intake leads to more comprehensive information being collected, which supports improved case decisions.

The ministry is committed to SOS as a model for addressing safety throughout child intervention practices. SOS introductory training is integrated in the Child Intervention Practitioner Training which is mandatory for frontline practitioners to become delegated caseworkers. Approximately 96 per cent of staff that completed the training in 2019-20 reported they feel confident applying the learnings in their day to day practice. SOS logic continues to be embedded into forms, processes and practice to support sustainable safety planning, culturally sensitive practice, and lifelong connections for children, youth and families.

Policy and Practice Enhancements

In 2019-20, the *Child Intervention Enhancement Policy Manual*, which guides the work of child intervention practitioners, was revised to align with legislative shifts and practice enhancements. Language and terminology were updated to communicate complex content more clearly, increasing efficiency for child intervention practitioners and agency staff to access current direction and resources.

By integrating the Child Intervention Practice Framework and Signs of Safety principles throughout, the refreshed manual supports consistent messaging for service delivery staff and reinforces culturally responsive practice with child-centred outcomes.

Quality Assurance, Ongoing Monitoring and Evaluation of Child Intervention

Case Connect

Launched in February 2019, Case Connect is a mobile application that enables child intervention workers to enter case information on a laptop, tablet, or smart phone directly into the case management system which can be accessed by staff anywhere to facilitate informed decision-making. Case Connect eliminates the need to transcribe hand-written notes into the Child Intervention Case Information Online system, which improves the timeliness of record entry and increases accuracy by reducing transcription errors. This is part of a larger initiative to develop paperless workflows, with the aim of reducing red tape and minimizing administrative burden.

Case Connect Mobile App:

- Over 43,000 contact logs were created in Case Connect in 2019-20.
- Caseworkers utilizing Case Connect have reported that it is “a game changer” and that they “don’t want to be without it.”

By freeing up caseworkers' time, Case Connect allows frontline staff to spend more time building relationships and responding to needs, rather than duplicating time and effort spent on record-keeping. The "guest edit" feature of Case Connect allows clients to record information directly in their case files, giving them a voice and a sense of empowerment in relation to their child intervention involvement. Having real-time, electronically available updates to case files improves decision-making that impacts the safety of children and families.

Client Feedback

A Client Feedback Tool was piloted in February and March 2019 at eight Child Intervention offices across the province. Feedback was gathered from children, youth and caregivers through a variety of methods. The intent of this pilot was to empower and honour the voices of children, youth and families receiving child intervention services, and to gain insight into the client experience, to inform future system improvements.

In 2019-20, feedback from this pilot was summarized and analyzed, and the learnings will inform a second pilot with an expanded scope in 2020-21. The pilot is an important step toward creating a system-wide Client Feedback Tool that will allow clients to help shape Alberta's Child Intervention system.

Child Intervention Practice Standards

Child Intervention Standards measure the quality of services provided to children, youth, and families. Focusing on safety and positive outcomes, the standards identify key areas of child intervention intended to complement and align with operational policy and legislation.

In 2019-20, Children's Services established new accountability mechanisms that provide worksites with real-time information on service delivery measures and processes to follow-up on areas to improve. Statistical reports related to service delivery quality measures, such as the frequency of caseworker face-to-face contact with children in care, are generated monthly to identify and address areas to improve at the regional and Delegated First Nations Agency level. These reports are also provided to leadership to assist with planning, expectations and continuous quality assurance improvements.

Additionally, data analysis has been enhanced to provide statistically representative reports regarding Indigenous and non-Indigenous children receiving child intervention services. Leadership continues to engage in discussions to increase awareness of differences between services provided to Indigenous and non-Indigenous children, and this data informs the work being done to address disparities.

Incidents, Serious Injuries and Deaths of Children and Youth with Child Intervention Involvement

To support government transparency and accountability, the *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act* prescribes a duty to publicly report deaths, serious injuries, or incidents regarding a child receiving intervention services. The act defines a serious injury as a life-threatening injury to a child that may cause significant impairment of a child's health.

There were two reports of serious injuries involving young people receiving intervention services in 2019-20. Both reports involved children who were receiving services but were not in care.

In 2019-20, 33 Albertans receiving child intervention services died. Nine were in care, 14 were not in care and 10 were over 18 years of age and receiving support through a Support and Financial Assistance Agreement. The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner determined that 10 deaths were accidental, one was natural and six were suicides. The manner of death for eight young people is

pending a determination by the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner. Of the remaining eight deaths, seven did not require a review by the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, as the death occurred in hospital while the young person was under the care of medical professionals and an attending physician determined the manner of death as natural. One death occurred outside of the province of Alberta. As per the *Child and Youth Advocate Act* and the *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act*, all deaths were reported to the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate.

There were 548 allegations of incidents involving 513 children in 2019-20. An incident may include, but is not limited to:

- allegations that a child or youth in care has been:
 - subjected to neglect, emotional injury, physical, or sexual abuse by the caregiver.
 - abused by someone other than the caregiver, including, but not limited to, another young person or adult who is not the child's caregiver.
- any child or youth receiving intervention services who witnesses, is the victim, or is the perpetrator of a serious event such as, but not limited to, a criminal matter.

The Statutory Director has substantiated 53 of these incidents involving 79 children.

1.2 Support children in care to develop long-term, nurturing relationships by increasing the connections to family, significant persons and Indigenous communities.

Culturally Appropriate and Diverse Supports and Services for Children, Youth, and Families

Kinship Care

Kinship caregivers are extended family members or persons who have a significant relationship with the child and family, or are a member of the child's community. Kinship care is grounded in the belief that, whenever possible, children should have the opportunity to live with extended family or those they feel connected to, and these connections promote the overall well-being of children and youth. Kinship care is the preferred placement option when a child cannot remain at home, as it allows children to maintain important familial and cultural ties, and is less traumatic for the child than being placed with people they do not know in a foster home or group care.

In January 2019, the Assessment and Support for Kinship Caregiving (ASKC) Pilot was launched across the province to test and enhance the Kinship Care Assessment process and tool. This kinship-specific assessment is a new approach that simultaneously assesses and supports kinship caregivers. The ASKC Pilot incorporates Indigenous world views, is respectful of all cultures, builds on strengths, identifies areas of need, and allows for the timely identification and provisions of supports necessary for kinship families with the focus of increased child safety and well-being.

The ASKC tool streamlines processes by reducing repetitive information sharing asked of caregivers. The Assessment begins at first contact and continues with integrated supports throughout the kinship caregiver's involvement with Children's Services. This reduces the number of professionals involved with a family to minimize transitions and enhance approval processes. The tool is being used for the purposes of immediate placement all the way through to legal permanency, and provides children, youth and kinship caregivers the opportunity to express their views and opinions. Currently 16 sites are participating in the pilot, including Children's Services department sites, Delegated First Nations Agencies and Metis Settlements. Children's Services'

decision to extend the pilot until December 2020 will allow additional time to assess and enhance the process, increase the number of families engaged in the pilot, and support a more fulsome evaluation of the model.

Foundations of Caregiver Support

Foundations of Caregiver Support training provides important information on the developmental needs of children, an understanding of trauma, grief and loss, and an introduction to the effects of colonization on Indigenous children, families and communities. Possessing this knowledge and understanding increases a caregiver's capacity to improve outcomes for children and youth.

Since implementation in 2018, Foundations of Caregiver Support has been incorporated into the Child Intervention Practitioner Training to equip new frontline staff with knowledge and tools necessary to provide trauma-informed care. Foundations of Caregiver Support principles have also been embedded into ongoing training requirements for agency staff and caregivers.

In 2019-20, Children's Services provided grant funding to service delivery partners to facilitate Foundations of Caregiver Support in the contracted agency sector, for both agency staff and caregivers. This funding supported train-the-trainer opportunities, with over 150 agency staff being trained to facilitate training.

Caregiver Connections

Many parents and caregivers may be concerned about their own or a child's mental health and well-being. In 2019-20, Children's Services provided \$245,000 to the Canadian Mental Health Association of Alberta to support the Caregiver Connections program in six communities across the province. Caregiver Connections is a free peer support program for parents and caregivers caring for a loved one with a mental health concern, illness or addiction. With the support of trained peers, parents and caregivers learn how to best take care of themselves, ask for help when necessary and learn about the importance of boundaries. Caregiver Connections provides parents and caregivers with compassionate support, along with specific information and connection to other resources.

Practice Strategies for Lifelong Connections

Family Finding

Family Finding is a structured approach for connecting children and youth in care to family and other community supports to create an ongoing, lifelong support network, which can be sustained after caseworkers and service providers are no longer involved.

In 2019-20, the ministry continued to practice Family Finding to support practitioners working through complex cases and is currently incorporating Family Finding practice principles into Child Intervention Practitioner Training. Caseworkers are supported in implementing Family Finding in their practice through coaching calls that create a space to share ideas, discuss learnings on Family Finding tools, and explore different avenues of finding family and building connections for children.

Supports for Permanency

Children who are unable to safely return to parental care may, through court order, become subject to permanent guardianship. Some of these children are matched for adoption with families who are trained and approved by Children's Services. Others may live permanently with their kinship families through private guardianship orders.

Children's Services continues to invest in the Supports for Permanency program, which provides financial support to families who adopt or obtain private guardianship of children under the age of 18 years in permanent government care. The financial supports provided through the Supports for Permanency program aim to reduce financial barriers for families who might not otherwise be able to pursue adoption or private guardianship of a child in permanent government care.

Financial supports available through this program include:

- full coverage of basic foster care maintenance rates;
- up to \$70 per week to help with the child's emotional and behavioral needs;
- respite care of up to 576 hours per year;
- up to 10 counselling sessions per year;
- treatment of a child in a residential facility for up to 12 months; and
- reimbursement for the cost of transporting a First Nations child to the child's band to maintain cultural ties.

The Supports for Permanency program facilitates adoption and private guardianship by current caregivers, as it assures the continuation of specific financial supports once legal permanency has been achieved. The updated provisions address barriers families might otherwise face in making a commitment to children with exceptional needs. Recognizing the range of unique needs children in permanent care can present with, the supports provided through Supports for Permanency allow adoptive or private guardianship families to care for and more reliably address complex needs. The financial assistance families may be eligible to receive under Supports for Permanency very often makes the difference in their ability to make a lifelong commitment of adoption to children in permanent government care.

1.3 Work with ministries and communities to combat human trafficking.

Bringing Awareness to Human Trafficking

Human trafficking involves the recruitment, transportation, or the exercising of control over the movements of another person. Human trafficking is a dehumanizing and predatory crime, which generally takes three forms: sexual exploitation, labour trafficking, or organ trafficking.

Traffickers target the most vulnerable people, particularly those who are socially or economically disadvantaged, alone or in a vulnerable situation. Targets are most often women, youth, sexual and gender diverse individuals, Indigenous and racialized persons, migrant workers and new immigrants. Since 2009, there have been 90 reported Albertan victims of human trafficking, the majority being girls and women under 25 years old. Traffickers are most often men between 18-34 years of age.

Justice and Solicitor General is leading efforts to implement the government's nine-point action plan to combat human trafficking, with the support of Children's Services, Community and Social Services, Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women, Indigenous Relations, and Labour and Immigration. In 2019-20, a recruitment process was initiated in order to create a provincial Human Trafficking Task Force. The task force will bring together representatives of relevant ministries, agencies, police services, and community groups to share information and coordinate action on an ongoing basis.

On February 21, 2020, the Government of Alberta recognized National Human Trafficking Awareness Day to bring awareness to a crime that often goes unreported or unintentionally ignored, and to take a stand to protect survivors of human trafficking.

1.4 Work in partnership with community-based organizations and municipalities to combat child exploitation and domestic violence.

Protecting Children from Internet Exploitation

Sexual exploitation of children may include making, selling or distributing child pornography, involving a child in sexual activity in exchange for items of value to the child or youth, or luring a young person through the internet or social media for sexual purposes. Child sexual exploitation can occur anywhere and to any young person under the age of 18 regardless of their gender, family situation or social, cultural and economic background.

In 2019-20, Children's Services supported other ministries and community organizations in combatting child exploitation through the development of material for youth and parents debunking myths around sexual exploitation and the dangers of sharing information online; and resources for professionals regarding the *Protection of Sexually Exploited Children Act* and statistics related to sexual exploitation.

Child Advocacy Centres

Children's Services provides a range of specialized services to support children and youth across Alberta who are survivors of abuse. Child Advocacy Centres have multidisciplinary teams of professionals who provide a coordinated and collaborative response to reports of sexual abuse, severe physical abuse and neglect. These teams provide timely access to law enforcement, child protection, justice, prosecution, mental health, health care and advocacy services.

Child Advocacy Centres provide a child-centred approach to abuse investigations and coordinated access to services. This aims to minimize trauma for the child, while supporting their long-term well-being.

In 2019-20, the ministry reviewed the partnerships and funding to Child Advocacy Centres across the province to develop a more sustainable long-term approach. The new funding model was announced in February 2020 and came into effect on April 1, 2020. The new model provides a three-year funding cycle to support a more equitable and sustainable approach, when compared with the previous annual grant system. This change also reduces red tape, as grants will no longer need to be reviewed each year. There are Child Advocacy Centres operating in Calgary, Edmonton, Grande Prairie and Red Deer. Two new sites in Lloydminster and Fort McMurray are under development.

Addressing Domestic Violence

Domestic violence, also referred to as family violence, includes physical, verbal, emotional, financial and sexual abuse, neglect, stalking, being kept from seeing other people or forced to stay in one place. Alberta has the third highest rate of self-reported spousal violence among Canadian provinces, yet domestic violence is preventable.

Children's Services is one of several ministries that supports Community and Social Services, as the lead ministry, working to prevent, reduce and end family violence in Alberta. The ministries coordinate a provincial response to family violence and in partnership with service providers and communities, build on effective practices already in place and implement priorities in family violence prevention, intervention and response.

Children's Services also participated as a member of the *Disclosure to Protect Against Domestic Violence (Clare's Law) Act* cross-ministry working group, collaborating on implementation of the act and development of associated regulations. The act will allow people at risk of domestic violence to find out if their partner has a violent or abusive past. The legislation also allows law enforcement to proactively inform an individual of their partner's domestic violence history.

Performance Measure 1.a:

Percentage of cases opening to child intervention without involvement in the last year

	Prior Years' Results				2019-20 Target	2019-20 Actual
	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19		
Indigenous	81%	84%	80%	85%	85%	81%
Non-Indigenous	88%	90%	88%	89%	90%	91%

Child intervention services respond to concerns about the safety and well-being of children and youth such as abuse, neglect, family violence, and addictions. Child intervention services are required when a parent cannot adequately protect a child from harm, or the danger of being harmed, as defined by the *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act*.

This performance measure describes the percentage of files that opened for children and youth without child intervention involvement in the last 12 months. It incorporates children and youth receiving services in care and not in care.

In 2019-20, 81 per cent of Indigenous children and youth who had a file opened with child intervention without involvement in the last 12 months. This is a decrease of four percentage points from the previous year's result and a difference of four percentage points from the 2019-20 target. This result has fluctuated between 80 and 85 per cent over the last four years (81 per cent, 84 per cent, 80 per cent and 85 per cent). As such, the 2019-20 result is consistent with the average year-over-year variability of four per cent observed from 2015-16 to 2018-19.

Non-Indigenous children who had a file opened with child intervention without involvement in the previous 12 months in 2019-20 is 91 per cent. This result represents an increase of two percentage points from the previous year and is one percentage point higher than the 2019-20 target. The result has continued on an upward and gradual trend over the last three years (88 per cent, 89 per cent, 91 per cent). An increase in the percentage of children and youth who open a new file without previous involvement with child intervention is one indication that services provided by Children's Services are successful in supporting parents and guardians to provide a safe and nurturing environment so children can remain at home or return home to their families, without involvement from child intervention.

Performance Measure 1.b:
Percentage of children in care placed in family-based care

	Prior Years' Results				2019-20 Target	2019-20 Actual
	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19		
Indigenous	85%	85%	85%	85%	86%	85%
Non-Indigenous	82%	83%	84%	84%	85%	86%

Child intervention services are designed to respond to concerns about the safety and well-being of children and youth such as abuse, neglect, family violence, and addictions. Intervention services are required when a parent cannot adequately protect a child from harm, or the danger of being harmed, as defined by the *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act*.

Children's Services is committed to supporting children in care to develop long-term, nurturing relationships by increasing the connections to family, significant persons and Indigenous communities. The ministry supports the preservation of families by offering targeted services and community-based supports so that children can safely remain at home. The ministry also intervenes to protect children and youth when necessary, working collaboratively with parents and extended family to maintain familial, cultural and community connections to pursue reunification of children with the parents.

This performance measure describes the percentage of Indigenous and non-Indigenous children and youth who are placed away from home in a family-based placement including kinship care, foster care and permanency placements. It reflects the ministry's commitment to provide a range of programs and services to help children grow up in a safe and nurturing family setting when out-of-home placements are necessary for short or longer periods.

In 2019-20, 85 per cent of Indigenous children and youth in care were placed in family-based placements. The result is unchanged from the previous year and represents a difference of one percentage point relative to the 2019-20 target. Further, 86 per cent of non-Indigenous children and youth were placed in family-based care in 2019-20. This result represents an increase of two percentage points relative to the previous year and a difference of one percentage point relative to the 2019-20 target. During the period from 2015-16 to 2019-20, the percentage of Indigenous children in care placed in family-based care has been stable at 85 per cent while the non-Indigenous children placed in family based care increased by four per cent from 82 per cent to 86 per cent. Higher percentages of children placed in family-based placements may indicate that services collaborate with parents and extended family to maintain familial, cultural and community connections to pursue reunifications of families and support child safety and well-being.

Performance Indicator 1.c:**Children receiving child intervention services as a percentage of the child population in Alberta**

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Number of children receiving child intervention services	14,834	15,564	15,624	16,123	16,210
Children in Alberta	919,922	938,410	948,261 ¹	958,367 ¹	970,452
Percentage	1.6%	1.7%	1.6%	1.7%	1.7%

¹ These values have been revised to incorporate the updated numbers in the Statistics Canada Table 17-10-0005-01.

Child intervention services are designed to respond to concerns about the safety and well-being of children and youth such as abuse, neglect, family violence, and addictions. Intervention services are required when a parent cannot adequately protect a child from harm, or the danger of being harmed, as defined by the *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act*.

This performance indicator describes the percentage of children, aged 0-17 years, receiving child intervention services as a percentage of the total child population in Alberta. Monitoring this indicator helps Children's Services assess whether any progress has been made to the overall safety, security and well-being of children in the province.

In 2019, 16,210 children of the total Alberta estimated 970,452 child population aged 0-17 years, received child intervention services. This means 1.7 per cent of the total Alberta child population received intervention services in 2019. From 2018 to 2019, Alberta's child population grew from 958,367 to 970,452; by 1.3 per cent. This is in line with the average year-over-year increase during the period from 2015 to 2018 (1.4 per cent).

The number of children who received intervention services increased from 16,123 to 16,210; by 0.5 per cent from 2018 to 2019. This is less than half of the growth rate for Alberta's child population growth rate of 1.3 per cent for the same period. The average year-over-year increase in the number of children who received intervention during the period from 2015 to 2018 is 2.8 per cent.

The relatively small increase in the number of children and youth receiving child intervention services may indicate Children's Services commitment to keeping families together by building on preventative approaches, implementing reforms in the child intervention system and promoting collaborative solutions.

The percentage of children receiving child intervention services for the estimated child population of Alberta has remained stable during the past five years (1.6 per cent to 1.7 per cent). This result may reflect the ministry's success in strengthening families and communities to keep children safe and living in stable environments.

**Performance Indicator 1.d:
Percentage of Indigenous children in kinship or foster care who are placed with Indigenous families**

2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
40%	43%	44%	45%	46%

Child intervention services are designed to respond to concerns about the safety and well-being of children and youth, such as abuse, neglect, family violence, and addictions. Intervention services are required when a parent or guardian cannot adequately protect a child from harm, or the danger of being harmed, as defined by the *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act*.

The ministry is committed to helping children, youth, and families maintain connections with their culture, traditions, ceremonies, and communities. As such, when Indigenous children are placed in foster or kinship care attempts are made to place them in their community, with extended family or individuals emotionally connected to the child, or with a family of a similar Indigenous culture.

This performance indicator shows the percentage of Indigenous children and youth receiving culturally appropriate services through foster care or kinship care.

In 2019-20, 46 per cent of Indigenous children and youth received culturally appropriate services through foster care or kinship care. This result is an increase of one percentage point from 2018-19 and is consistent with the average year-over-year increase of 1.6 per cent observed during the period from 2015-16 to 2018-19.

Indigenous children continue to be over-represented in the child intervention system. This over-representation highlights the need to partner with Indigenous leaders and communities to improve outcomes for Indigenous children and build on community strengths

Children's Services practices Family Finding, a structured approach in connecting children and youth to family and other community support. Continued and gradual increases in the percentage of Indigenous children in kinship and foster care placed with Indigenous caregivers is one indication that Children's Services is working to establish and strengthen collaborative relationships with Indigenous communities, leaders and organizations while providing safe and nurturing placements for children in need of services.

Outcome Two: The growth and development of children is supported through accessible, affordable and quality child care

Children, youth and families are supported to engage fully in their communities. The ministry is committed to improving access to affordable, quality child care programs; and promoting culturally appropriate community-based early childhood services, parenting resources and supports.

Key Objectives

- 2.1 Improve access to child care by supporting initiatives that encourage affordability and quality in the child care system.**
- 2.2 Enhance and promote diversity in community-based child care services, including supports that are culturally inclusive and that support children with unique needs.**
- 2.3 Review of the *Child Care Licensing Act* with the intent of reducing red tape, supporting choice for parents, and maintaining focus on the safety and well-being of children.**

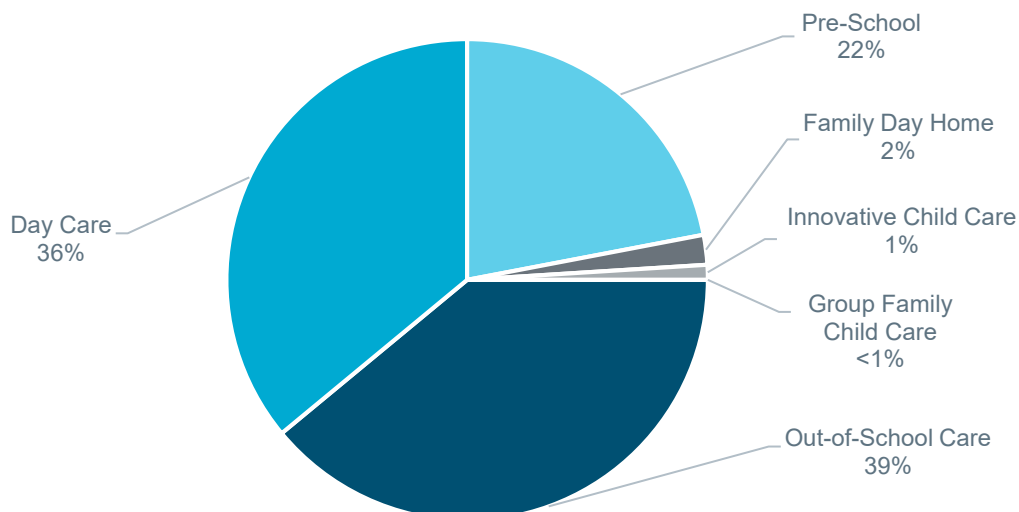
2.1 Improve access to child care by supporting initiatives that encourage affordability and quality in the child care system.

Accessible Child Care

Accessible child care supports children and their families to engage fully in their communities, including parents' ability to pursue post-secondary education and take part in the workforce. Additionally, access to child care supports job creation, economic growth, poverty reduction and gender equality.

In March 2020, there were 2,916 licensed and approved child care programs, a three per cent increase to 82 programs since March 2019. Of the active child care programs operating across Alberta, the majority fall into three categories: day care (1,043), pre-school (648), and out-of-school care (1,127) programs. In 2019-20, the ministry reported a total of nearly 138,367 licensed and approved child care spaces, a five per cent increase of 6,743 spaces from 2018-19. Of these spaces, approximately 126,523 were in licensed programs and nearly 11,844 spaces were in approved family day homes. Geographically, 52,587 spaces were in Edmonton and 54,804 in Calgary, and 30,976 throughout the rest of Alberta. Greatest demand for spaces was in Calgary, with overall enrolment for day care programs, out-of-school programs, family day home and group family day home programs at 82.5 per cent, as compared with the provincial average enrolment of 80.6 per cent.

Licensed and Approved Child Care Programs



Supporting Effective Child Care Subsidy

The Alberta government is committed to supporting families most in need to access child care. Children's Services assists eligible families with children from birth to 12 years of age and not yet in grade seven to pay for child care costs for children enrolled in licensed and approved child care programs.

The Alberta Child Care Subsidy program maintains one of the highest eligibility thresholds in Canada; in 2019-20, families earning up to \$50,000 could qualify for full subsidy support. In the last year, the ministry provided a subsidy to 28,729 children, 80 per cent of whom received a full subsidy.

Children's Services also subsidizes infant care costs through the Infant Care Incentive Program, paying a universal grant of \$150 per month to licensed day cares and approved family day home agencies to offset the higher cost associated with caring for infants under 18 months of age. In 2019-20, the ministry supported nearly 5,400 infant spaces under this program.

In 2019-20, Children's Services ended the Kin Child Care and Stay-at-Home subsidies. The elimination of these subsidies allowed the ministry to focus child care subsidy funding on assisting low-income families who are working or attending school to access child care in licensed and approved settings, where there is more oversight and legislated standards related to care and safety. The cancellation of these two subsidies resulted in a cost savings of \$5.3 million in the last three months of 2019-20.

Red Tape Reduction in Child Care Subsidy

In 2019-20, Children's Services launched a new online application, making it easier for parents to apply for child care subsidy and providing more security during the application process.

The new online application system allows parents to easily check if they are eligible to receive this benefit and apply using their MyAlberta Digital ID (MADI) on any computer, tablet or smart phone, on multiple browsers. The use of MADI allows parents to start and stop the application process without losing any data already stored. This new system allows parents to file their application through a modern, secure and user-friendly system while ensuring their information and personal privacy are safe and secure. This innovation is expected to result in fewer paper submissions, emails and phone calls for support, subsequently reducing red tape, the time it takes for parents to access subsidy and the time staff spend helping Albertans with paperwork.

The online Child Care Subsidy Application for Children's Services was the first major project of the Alberta Digital Innovation Office and was developed in conjunction with Service Alberta. The Alberta Digital Innovation Office was created to drive digital transformation and innovation across government.

MyAlberta Digital ID (MADI):

- Is a free account that provides online verification without paper documents or face-to-face visits.
- Facilitates seamless access to a growing range of government sites and services, while protecting personal information and privacy.

Quality Child Care

Wage Top ups and Professional Development Funding

Quality child care increases the knowledge, skills and abilities of child care staff to provide enriched developmental environments that promote positive brain development, learning, and long term outcomes for children.

Wage top-ups and professional development are critical elements that help maintain a stable and qualified workforce that supports quality care environments for Alberta's children and families. In 2019-20, Children's Services invested \$126.7 million to support such things as professional development and wage top ups provided to 2,006 licensed child care programs. As of December 31, 2019, 98.7 per cent of employees working in day care programs, 94.4 per cent employed in out-of-school care programs and 100 per cent employed in approved family day homes received wage top ups. Additionally, approximately 4,000 child care professionals received professional development funding. Approximately \$1.1 million was provided to these professionals.

In 2019-20, wage top ups and professional development funding were available only to programs that participated in accreditation. Effective April 1, 2020, all licensed and approved programs can apply for these benefits through the Alberta Child Care Grant Funding Program. Learnings from the accreditation program will be considered as part of the legislative review.

Certification, Training and Educational Qualifications

Research demonstrates that early childhood educators are critically important to creating high-quality learning environments and influencing the experiences that shape child development. Child care professionals with educational backgrounds in early childhood development have specialized knowledge to support the healthy development and well-being of children.

In 2019-20, Children's Services invested \$1.3 million for the certification of child care staff. Under the provincial certification process, the ministry assesses post-secondary early childhood education training at one of the three levels of certification. The following represents the number of certified staff working in licensed and approved child care programs as of March 31, 2020:

Certification Level and Education of Child Care Professionals in Alberta

Certification Level	Number	Percentage
Child Development Assistant: • 45-hour post-secondary course	8,076	42.9%
Child Development Worker: • One-year post-secondary Early Learning Child Care Certificate or equivalent	2,998	15.9%
Child Development Supervisor: • Two-year post-secondary Early Learning Child Care Diploma or equivalent	7,744	41.2%
Total	18,818	100.0%

Curriculum Practices

Children's Services continues to engage and collaborate with external stakeholders to gather information on the expansion of evidence-based practice frameworks, such as Flight: Alberta's Early Learning and Care Curriculum Framework. Good curricula address the whole child and are often organized into broad categories (physical, social, emotional, communication/language and cognitive) with learning expectations for each. This supports educators in observing the children and adapting activities accordingly. The curricula serve additional purposes, such as promoting standards of quality across programs and facilitating communication between parents and staff.

Online Child Care Orientation Course:

- Children's Services provides funding for the delivery of the online Child Care Orientation Course available in English and French.
- Available at no cost to staff working in child care programs who have no formal post-secondary education in early learning and child care.
- Elective courses relating to Indigenous perspectives were expanded in 2019-20 to ensure early childhood educators have enhanced Indigenous cultural awareness.
- Approximately \$185,000 invested in collaboration with the Francophone Secretariat – includes translation services, narration and voice-over of child care training videos.
- 2,191 staff completed the course in 2019-20.

2.2 Enhance and promote diversity in community-based child care services, including supports that are culturally inclusive and that support children with unique needs.

Community Based Early Childhood Development Programs and Services

Inclusive Child Care Program

When children with unique needs are unable to attend inclusive child care programs, they miss out on opportunities for social, emotional, physical and cognitive development. Children's Services provides supports to facilitate access for these children to licensed child care centres and family day homes.

In 2019-20, the ministry invested \$12.1 million to support Inclusive Child Care and create flexibility in child care environments to meet the individual needs of children with unique needs or disabilities. Supports provided include training for child care staff, consultation on programming and inclusion, resource and referral information or funding for additional staff.

Children's Services also developed a new evidence-based model for Inclusive Child Care to promote equitable access to resources, supports and training across all regions of the province. The ministry is committed to supporting inclusive child care and will be implementing an updated Inclusive Child Care policy in 2020-21.

Getting Ready For Inclusion Today

The Getting Ready for Inclusion Today program provides family-centred and inclusive learning experiences to support meaningful participation of children with disabilities in their homes, communities and schools through the ASaP (Access, Support and Participation) program.

Child care programs participating in the ASaP program strengthen inclusion practices through professional development and on-site coaching supports. The ASaP program works with child care programs to create high quality, responsive environments, intentionally teach social and emotional development and respond effectively to challenging behaviors. Additionally, ASaP supports child care programs to tailor the curriculum to respond to the individual abilities and unique needs of each child.

The ASaP program is delivered with provincial and federal grants administered through Children's Services. In 2019-20, Children's Services provided \$2.3 million to support 162 active Getting Ready for Inclusion Today programs delivering the ASaP program.

2.3 Review of the *Child Care Licensing Act* with the intent of reducing red tape, supporting choice for parents, and maintaining focus on the safety and well-being of children.

Transforming Child Care in Alberta

As part of the Government of Alberta's Red Tape Reduction strategy, Children's Services is committed to reducing regulatory burden and adopting an outcome-based regulatory approach. In Budget 2019, a full review of the *Child Care Licensing Act* was announced. The focus of the review is to improve existing policy, enhance service delivery, reduce red tape and minimize regulatory burden, while remaining focused on safety and supporting greater choice for parents. This review will identify innovative solutions to simplify, streamline and target efforts to become more cost effective while working toward a modernized model for child care delivery in Alberta.

Over the next year, Children's Services will review the *Child Care Licensing Act* and the Child Care Licensing Regulation, to modernize the way child care is administered and delivered in Alberta. The review will focus on accessibility, accountability, safety and quality within child care, while also reducing red tape and regulatory burden on operators and educators. As part of this review, the ministry will initiate an engagement process, taking into account the diverse needs of parents, child care program operators and professionals, to support the development and define the parameters of new policy and revisions to the legislation.

Performance Measure 2.a:**Percentage increase in the number of licensed and approved child care spaces***(The number of spaces available reflects March data – a point-in-time count)*

Prior Years' Results				2019-20 Target	2019-20 Actual
2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19		
4%	7%	7%	5%	4%	5%

The ministry supports accessible, affordable and quality child care options for parents, oversees licensing and monitoring of child care programs and certifying child care staff, as well as provides funding to programs to support the recruitment and retention of a qualified workforce.

This measure shows the percentage increase in the number of licensed and approved child care spaces. Spaces refer to the maximum number of children that the child care centre can accommodate. The number of spaces within a child care program is the total net floor area divided by the number of required square meters per child. Day care programs require three square meters for each child, while out-of-school and pre-school programs require 2.5 square meters for each child.

In 2019-20, the number of licensed and approved child care spaces increased by five per cent relative to the spaces available in 2018-19 fiscal year. This result represents a difference of one percentage point from the 2019-20 target. The ministry exceeded the 2019-20 target by one percent.

The percentage change in licensed and approved child care spaces is related to the factors affecting demand for child care, such as population growth, and the factors affecting supply of child care, such as government commitments to expand the number of programs. The child care space growth percentage has shown a greater increase from 2016-17 to 2017-18, which was mainly due to the expansion of federal and provincial funding to Early Learning Child Care (ELCC) Centres starting early 2017. The number of child care centres has stabilized across the province and child care space growth has returned to normal year-over-year growth. The current investment through federal transfers, which provided incentives for space creation, will be renegotiated in 2020-21.

In addition, as the province faces significant macro-economic impacts stemming from a global pandemic, a high unemployment rate, flooding in Northern Alberta, and low oil prices, the demand for child care spaces may decrease, and in turn, the rate of increase of supply of child care spaces has slowed down from previous years. Further, according to Statistics Canada, the birth rate decreased between 2015 and 2018, which may also help to explain the slowed growth of available child care spaces since 2018-19.

Performance Indicator 2.b:

Licensed and approved child care spaces *(The number of spaces available reflects March data – a point-in-time count)*

2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
109,482	116,714	124,824	131,624	138,081 ¹

¹ The December 2019 count was reported for the 2019-20 fiscal year rather than the March 2020 count to reflect a policy change that came into effect on January 1, 2020.

Note: The “Per cent increase year over year” row in performance indicator 2.b, included in the 2019-23 Children’s Services Business Plan, was removed due to duplication with performance measure 2.a.

Children’s Services supports accessible, affordable and quality child care options for parents, oversees licensing and monitoring of child care programs and certification of child care staff. The ministry also provides funding to programs to support the recruitment and retention of a qualified child care workforce.

This performance indicator shows the number of licensed and approved child care spaces available at the end of March in a given year. Spaces refer to the maximum number of children that the child care centre can accommodate. The number of spaces within a child care program is the total net floor area divided by the number of required square meters per child. Day care programs require three square meters for each child, while out-of-school and pre-school programs require 2.5 square meters for each child.

The 2019-20 results are based on the December 2019 count, as this performance indicator relates to performance indicator 2.c, which only has the December count available. Performance indicator 2.c is typically the count available at the end of March in a given year based on the claim reports submitted by the child care programs. A policy change came into effect on January 1, 2020, which removed Stay-at-Home child care subsidies for parents whose children attend preschool. As the data on the number of children enrolled in child care programs is tied to subsidy claims, there is no data available on the number of children enrolled in preschools as of March 2020. Therefore the December 2020 count was used, which incorporates all the different types of child care enrollments, including preschools. As the month-over-month change in child care spaces is relatively small, the impact of the December count is minimal.

In 2019-20, the available number of spaces was 138,081 which is an increase of 6,457 spaces from 2018-19. During the period from 2015-16 to 2019-20, the number of spaces has increased by 28,599, at an average year-over-year rate of 5.9 per cent. The increase in licensed and approved child care spaces is associated with several external environmental factors, such as the population growth, interprovincial migration, labour market participation rates and internal environmental factors, as well as government commitments of child care expansion.

Performance Indicator 2.c:
Licensed and approved child care enrollment
(The enrollment reflects March data – a point-in-time count)

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Number of children enrolled	88,929	93,132	100,929	105,800	105,351 ¹
Per cent of total enrollment	81.2%	79.8%	80.9%	80.4%	76.3% ¹

¹ The December 2019 count was reported for the 2019-20 fiscal year rather than the March 2020 count to reflect a policy change that came into effect on January 1, 2020.

The ministry supports accessible, affordable and quality child care options for parents, oversees licensing and monitoring of child care programs and certifying child care staff, and provides funding to programs to support the recruitment and retention of a qualified workforce.

This performance indicator is typically the count available at the end of March in a given year based on the claim reports submitted by the child care programs. A policy change came into effect on January 1, 2020, which removed Stay-at-Home child care subsidies for parents whose children attend preschool. As the data on the number of children enrolled in child care programs is tied to subsidy claims, there is no data available on the number of children enrolled in preschools as of March 2020. Therefore the December 2020 count was used, which incorporates all the different types of child care enrollments, including preschools.

In 2019-20, 105,351 children were enrolled in licensed and approved child care programs. The number of enrollments is 76.3 per cent of the total licensed and approved child care spaces available in 2019-20. From 2018-19 to 2019-20, the number of children enrolled and percentage of enrollment has decreased by 449 children and four per cent respectively. The under-utilization of available child care spaces may be due to shortages of certified staff impacting how many children can be enrolled. Additionally, available spaces may be in geographical areas or for age categories which do not meet the needs of families.

Performance Indicator 2.d:

Average annual Child Care Subsidy caseload *(The subsidy caseload is an average over 12 months of subsidies paid to families)*

2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
24,509	25,114	27,031	28,259	28,729

The ministry assists eligible families with children from birth to 12 years of age and not yet in grade seven to offset the child care costs for low and middle income families. The amount of subsidy varies depending on the age of the child and type of child care program (e.g. day care or family day home).

This performance indicator shows the 12-month average of the number of subsidies paid to families in a given year. The subsidy caseload numbers include full and partial subsidies. Subsidies can be paid at a partial rate for two reasons: the child uses less than the full-time hours of care based on age or because the family's income exceeds the full subsidy threshold.

In 2019-20, an average of 28,729 children were supported by child care subsidies each month. This is an increase of 470 subsidies (1.7 per cent) from the previous year. Starting January 1, 2020, families with children attending a preschool were no longer eligible to receive the Stay-at-Home child care subsidy. This policy change impacted approximately 500 subsidized children in preschools.

During the period from 2015-16 to 2019-20, the number of children receiving subsidies increased by 4,220, representing an average year-over-year of growth of 4.1 per cent. A possible contributing factor to the increased growth may include the Alberta recession that began in 2014. An increased number of Albertans applied for subsidy due to potential decreases in their annual income in 2015 and 2016 and were therefore eligible for subsidy in 2017, as eligibility is based on previous years' tax assessment.

Outcome Three: The well-being, resiliency and cultural connections of children, youth and families is nurtured and enhanced

Children, youth and families are supported through a continuum of government and community-based prevention and early intervention services that support the well-being of children and youth; develop and strengthen caregiver knowledge, capacity and skills; promote the development of social connections and family supports; and enhance connections with Indigenous communities.

Key Objectives

- 3.1 Develop strategies to support safe, healthy and resilient children and families, including mentoring opportunities for children and youth who have experienced trauma.**
- 3.2 Support the successful transition for youth out of care into adulthood, focusing on educational attainment, career exploration and employment readiness.**
- 3.3 Support child safety and enhance parenting skills and knowledge by supporting families and caregivers in their home environment.**
- 3.4 Collaborate with Indigenous communities, leaders and partners to strengthen relationships and develop strategies to support Indigenous children, youth and families while ensuring all staff and service delivery partners have enhanced Indigenous cultural awareness.**
- 3.5 Work with ministries to increase access to supports for Indigenous families who have children with disabilities.**

3.1 Develop strategies to support safe, healthy and resilient children and families, including mentoring opportunities for children and youth who have experienced trauma.

Streamlining Financial Supports for Low-Income Families

The Government of Alberta provides various financial support programs to help families provide a better quality of life for their children, support their well-being and give children opportunities to reach their potential. These programs improve lives for Albertans by helping address child poverty. The Alberta Child Benefit assists low-income families with children under 18 to help provide a better quality of life for their children.

To focus benefits on Albertans most in need and to streamline administration, beginning in July 2020 the Government of Alberta will consolidate the Alberta Child Benefit and the Alberta Family Employment Tax Credit into a single program, the new Alberta Child and Family Benefit. Children's Services will administer the Alberta Child and Family Benefit, which focuses dollars more effectively on families with lower incomes, with many families receiving higher benefits than they did under the old programs. The Alberta Child and Family Benefit will be non-taxable and will not affect eligibility for other benefit programs such as Alberta Child Care Subsidy, Income Support, Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped, Alberta Seniors Benefit, Alberta Adult Health Benefits or Alberta Child Health Benefits.

This modernization demonstrates the government's commitment to supporting low-income families with innovative solutions and streamlined programs while reducing red tape and administrative burden.

Well-Being and Resiliency Framework

Released in March 2019, the Well-being and Resiliency Framework guides the ministry in enhancing and increasing prevention and early intervention services and supports for infants, children, youth and families by defining the key elements of the prevention continuum of services, identifying desired outcomes, supporting decision making on funding and service delivery and promoting an understanding of how trauma impacts development. The framework captures emerging research and leading practices, incorporates Indigenous perspectives and reflects the cultural diversity of our province.

Improving Access to Mental Health Services

In 2019-20, Children's Services supported community-based organizations with approximately \$1 million in grants to improve access to mental health specialists and supports for children, youth and families involved with Children's Services who may experience additional barriers and have unique needs, including newcomer families, multicultural families, Indigenous families and high-risk youth.

Additionally, approximately \$545,000 was provided to increase access to prevention and early intervention resources focused on strengthening the capacity of Indigenous youth who are transitioning to adulthood, supporting Indigenous youth who are pregnant or parenting and building capacity and connection to culture for Indigenous fathers.

Mental Health in Alberta:

- 1 in 5 Albertans will experience a mental illness.
- As many as 10 per cent of Albertans over 15 years old will battle a drug or alcohol dependency.
- Youth between 15 - 24 years old are more likely to suffer from mental illness and/or substance use disorders than any other age group.

Supporting Sexual and Gender Diverse Children and Youth

Sexual and gender diverse youth face unique challenges which place them at heightened risk of self-harm, addiction, depression, anxiety, homelessness, and suicide. The transformation of sexual and gender diverse policies and practices to guide child intervention caseworkers helps protect and foster the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of sexual and gender diverse children and youth.

In 2019-20, the Gender Affirming Health Supports and Services policy was created in the Enhancement Policy Manual to provide young people with gender-affirming supports and services to help them feel safe to explore and indicate their gender identity, as well as to foster their healthy development. As a result, the Child Intervention Case Information Online system was updated to include a Sexual and Gender Diverse section under the identity section for children and youth. This modernization provides caseworkers an area to document information related to a young person's biological sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, their pronouns, as well as 'safe' contacts and methods of communication. This section also allows caseworkers to capture information related to a young person's transitioning status.

Children's Services facilitated caregiver training sessions in Edmonton, Calgary and Red Deer in 2019-20, providing in-depth guidance for the unique conversations and considerations in addressing the needs of sexual and gender diverse youth. Training on sexual and gender diversity was developed in collaboration with stakeholders and is available to all child intervention staff. This training, which introduces sexual and gender diversity, outlines risk factors, and identifies how child intervention can support sexual and gender diverse children and youth.

Building Strength, Inspiring Hope: A Provincial Action Plan for Youth Suicide Prevention 2019 – 2024

Suicide is a significant issue that affects everyone – individuals, families, friends, schools, teams, neighbourhoods, entire communities – and can be prevented. Suicide is the second highest leading cause of death for Canadian youth ages 10 to 24 years. Of specific concern is the high rate of suicide among Indigenous youth, which is approximately five to six times higher than the rate for non-Indigenous youth in Canada. Alberta in particular has one of the highest provincial rates of youth suicide in Canada.

The Government of Alberta released *Building Strength, Inspiring Hope: A Provincial Action Plan for Youth Suicide Prevention 2019 – 2024*, which focuses on targeted prevention, intervention and post-intervention activities for priority youth populations, rural and Indigenous communities and settlements. The plan takes a comprehensive, long-term strategic approach to youth suicide prevention by building on effective activities and programs already underway and supporting the development of new stakeholder-identified initiatives to meet the needs of youth and families.

In 2019-20, the ministry provided approximately \$1.5 million through 16 grants to provide youth suicide prevention supports and services, training, awareness and education. This funding supported the five outcome areas outlined in the plan:

Building Strength, Inspiring Hope: A Provincial Action Plan for Youth Suicide Prevention 2019 – 2024 Outcomes and Actions

Outcome Area	Achievements
Supports and Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approximately 300 Indigenous youth attended grant-funded culture summer camps. • Increased support for cultural services and outreach services within two integrated youth service hubs.
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed a new youth suicide prevention learning module for child intervention staff. • Provided support to pilot a project focused on supporting the mental health of Indigenous youth living in urban centres.
Awareness and Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided media awareness and guidelines on reporting suicides to 90 journalism students at Mount Royal University. • Launched the graphic and animated short films for Indigenous youth. • With grant funding provided by the Ministry of Health, released an Indigenous youth suicide prevention resource toolkit: <i>Community-led promotion plans for Indigenous youth and communities</i>.
Research, Data and Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided funding for four research grants that focus on youth suicide prevention.
Reduce Access to Means of Suicide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connected with community partners, such as pharmacists and home hardware retailers, to provide presentations around targeting common means of suicide.

Children’s Services and the Ministry of Health are co-leading the implementation of the plan with support from the Ministries of Education and Justice and Solicitor General, as well as Alberta Health Services and the Centre for Suicide Prevention. The ministry is also collaborating with the City of Edmonton to support Living Hope, Edmonton’s suicide prevention strategy.

Indigenous Youth Suicide Prevention Graphic Novels

Over 100 Indigenous youth from across Alberta, in addition to First Nations and Métis producers, writers and artists, engaged in the development of two graphic novels on youth suicide prevention. Children’s Services provided a contract for \$48,000 in 2019-20 to the Indigenous Story Studio, formerly Healthy Aboriginal Network, to develop animated short films based on the graphic novels. These graphic novels and animated short films were released on September 10, 2019, along with the Indigenous youth suicide prevention toolkit, *Community-led promotion plans for Indigenous youth and communities*, funded by the Ministry of Health.

The graphic novels and animated short films reflect Indigenous voices and respect the uniqueness of First Nations and Métis cultures and traditions in Alberta. They are intended to help youth, their friends, families and trusted adults discuss youth suicide prevention. *Tomorrow’s Hope*

reflects the experiences of First Nations youth, while *Strength of the Sash* reflects the experiences of Métis youth.

In the six months after publication, the graphic novels were downloaded over 600 times, the animated short films were viewed over 1,600 times and 6,000 print novels were distributed to stakeholders and organizations throughout the province. The graphic novels can be accessed at <https://open.alberta.ca/publications/9781460143872>.

Mentoring

Child and youth mentoring involves partnering a caring individual with a young person to provide support, advice, friendship, positive reinforcement and constructive role modelling over time. Mentoring helps young people develop confidence, self-esteem and social skills. Research has shown that consistent mentorship increases the likelihood that a child or youth will complete high school and experience success in life.

Mentorship for Youth in Care

The ministry’s Child & Youth in Care Mentoring Program coordinates partnerships between mentors and youth who are currently or have previously been involved with Children’s Services. In 2019-20, approximately \$440,000 in mentorship grants were provided to three Big Brothers and Big Sisters organizations in Alberta. Big Brothers and Big Sisters reports that for every \$1 invested in mentoring, there are \$23 in societal benefits returned. Of the 208 children and youth who were supported through the mentoring program in 2019-20, 57 were new to the program.

A survey conducted in 2019-20 shows that children and youth involved in Alberta’s mentoring programs are demonstrating positive outcomes.

Child and Youth in Care Mentoring Program

Survey Question	Percentage Agree
My mentor has helped me feel hopeful about the future	90%
The program has helped me solve problems	77%
The program has helped me create healthy relationships	82%
The program has increased my confidence to try new things	82%
The program has helped me prepare for their future	69%
The program has helped me set goals	78%

Alberta Mentoring Partnership

The Alberta Mentoring Partnership is a network of over 190 community mentoring organizations, government ministries, and youth all working together to strengthen Alberta’s capacity to support mentoring relationships for children and youth. In collaboration with the Ministry of Education, and in partnership with the Boys and Girls Clubs Big Brothers Big Sisters Society of Edmonton, Children’s Services co-chaired the Alberta Mentoring Partnership and provided \$125,000 in 2019-20.

In Alberta, there is a shortage of male mentors and a high number of boys who are referred for a mentor, leaving many boys on waitlists. Through the “More Males Mentoring Project”, the Alberta Mentoring Partnership supports initiatives to encourage more male-identified persons get involved in youth mentoring.

The Alberta Mentoring Partnership Learning Day 2019 brought together mentoring program practitioners, funders, researchers, thought leaders, and volunteers to discuss how to enhance mentoring resources, tools, and practices. Presentations from Alberta Mentoring Partnership Learning Day 2019 can be viewed at albertamentors.ca.

In 2019-20, the formation of the Canadian Mentoring Partnership was announced. The Canadian Mentoring Partnership is a coalition of organizations that provide youth mentoring services with the goal to build sector capacity to expand access to mentoring across the country. The Canadian Mentoring Partnership focuses on work in four areas: research, technology, public education and development of regional networks.

Community Partnerships Youth Grants

Community Partnerships Youth Grants support at risk and vulnerable youth, including Indigenous, immigrant and sexual and gender diverse populations. In 2019-20, Children’s Services provided approximately \$900,000 so that 1,500 individuals could receive mentoring services through Community Partnerships Youth Grants. Most programs are located within urban centres, with two operating in the communities of Ponoka and Peace River. Of the mentees, 22 per cent of participants indicated they identify as First Nations, Indigenous or Métis and eight per cent of participants indicated they had accessed child intervention supports within the previous two years.

3.2 Support the successful transition for youth out of care into adulthood, focusing on educational attainment, career exploration and employment readiness.

Supports for Youth to Succeed

Advancing Futures

Advancing Futures is a psychosocial educational bursary program that supports youth aged 18 to 24 who have been, or continue to be, in care or receiving services under the *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act*, to access post-secondary opportunities and obtain a career. The only program of its kind in Canada, Advancing Futures takes a strengths-based approach to supporting youth and recognizes the potential of students to reach their educational goals and to overcome challenges they may face.

Advancing Futures provides transitional supports, such as mentoring and coaching, and financial supports to assist youth to achieve their educational goals and obtain employment. Youth are encouraged to apply if they would like to obtain their high school General Equivalency Diploma, upgrade through adult education or enroll in a post-secondary school for a degree, diploma, certificate or trade.

In addition to addressing financial needs, students participating in Advancing Futures are linked to a program coordinator who assists the student achieve success by providing supports such as transitioning into adulthood, navigating through adult systems, learning everyday life skills and how to be successful in school. The program recognizes

Advancing Futures:

- 944 youth applied to Advancing Futures and 883 were accepted into the program.
- Children’s Services invested \$12.1 million into Advancing Futures to support the 883 youth participating in the program.

that investing in the successful transition of young people out of the child intervention system results in longer-term individual and societal benefits.

A Social Return on Investment and an Economic Impact Assessment completed to identify, assess and cost the social and economic benefits and outcomes of Advancing Futures found that the program generated \$4 of social and economic benefit for every \$1 spent. Additional benefits included improved labour market participation, increased employability, higher earnings, improved parenting and other life skills, and improved mental and physical health and well-being.

Recognition of Student Achievement

The Alberta government established the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge scholarship to commemorate their Royal Visit to Alberta in July 2011. The scholarship recognizes the exceptional educational achievements of students who have been in care.

These \$2,000 scholarships are awarded to 25 Advancing Futures students each year based on their academic performance the previous year. In 2019-20, the Advancing Futures students who received the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge Scholarship achieved an average grade point average of 3.8, with five students achieving a 4.0 average, the highest grade possible.

3.3 Support child safety and enhance parenting skills and knowledge by supporting families and caregivers in their home environment.

Supports for Children and Families

Triple P – Positive Parenting Program

Triple P – Positive Parenting Program (Triple P) was delivered across the province to increase positive parenting skills and knowledge and decrease the risk of child maltreatment. The program offers parents simple and practical strategies to help them confidently manage their child's behaviour, prevent problems from developing and build strong, healthy relationships. This evidence-based program is proven to work across cultures, socio-economic groups and in a variety of family structures.

Triple P International developed French resources for francophone practitioners and parents. Francophone parents were able to access the program online in French. Triple P resources, such as tip sheets, are available in 22 languages upon request.

Triple P – Positive Parenting Program

Triple P resources are available in the following 22 languages:

Arabic	French (Euro, Universal, Canadian)	Portuguese
Berber	Greek	Romanian
Chinese (Simplified, Traditional)	Indonesian	Spanish (US, Americas)
Dutch (Flemish Hybrid)	Japanese	Swedish
Flemish	Malay	Turkish
		Urdu

Triple P also offers a free online self-directed positive parenting course for parents and caregivers who may find it challenging to attend in-person parenting sessions, such as those living in rural or remote areas or who have a disability affecting their mobility.

In 2019-20, Children's Services invested approximately \$177,000 for Triple P training and resources to access practitioner training, program resources and online resources to ensure Albertans have access to the supports they need. This funding helped to provide 45 training and special accreditation spaces for practitioners to access Triple P.

Survey results from 2019-20 identify a number of statistically significant findings based on participation in Triple P programming:

- improved child prosocial skills;
- reduced child hyperactivity, conduct issues, peer problems and emotional symptoms; and
- improved parenting skills and confidence.

Parents who utilized Triple P reported high levels of satisfaction, noting that they received the help they wanted.

Home Visitation Program

Alberta's Home Visitation program serves families in their homes to support healthy child development and family wellness and to address challenges before they lead to critical child safety or well-being concerns. The goal is to support an understanding of child development, improve parenting skills and establish a connection to supports in the community to prevent the need for escalated services.

Home visitors help the family by providing information, supports and referrals and facilitating goal setting. Involvement in the Home Visitation program is voluntary; referrals are made by public health nurses, social workers, other community professionals, or the family may request services themselves.

In 2019-20, Children's Services supported 34 Home Visitation agencies with funding of \$11.2 million. This included \$1.6 million to support waitlist pressures and build the capacity of the pilot agencies to provide evidence-based Home Visitation interventions. In 2019-20, 121 home visitors and 21 supervisors were trained in evidence-based Great Kids Inc. Integrated Strategies for Home Visitation. This training focuses on evidence-based core practice information for parents of infants and young children. Parents are empowered with communication and motivational tools to form secure attachment relationships, be involved in their child's development, strengthen the foundations of their family, and successfully problem-solve. The Alberta Home Visitation Network Association provides training, resources and enhanced mentoring and coaching supports for Alberta's Home Visitation agencies. Training was also provided to Home Visitation agencies (49 Home Visitors and 16 supervisors) for consistent application of the Parent Survey, which assists agencies in assessing the eligibility of families for their program.

The data from 2019-20 shows the 34 agencies providing Home Visitation services across Alberta served over 9,183 clients; including parents, children, youth and other Albertans. Of the individuals served by Home Visitation programs, approximately 20 per cent self-identified as First Nations, Métis or Inuit and approximately 23 per cent reported being new to Canada. Of those new to Canada, 662 (32 per cent) of those individuals had been in Canada less than three years.

Through Family Resource Networks, Home Visitation continues to be a well-utilized program. Overall, funding for Home Visitation has increased under the Family Resource Networks model, and waitlist pressures will continue to be monitored.

3.4 Collaborate with Indigenous communities, leaders and partners to strengthen relationships and develop strategies to support Indigenous children, youth and families while ensuring all staff and service delivery partners have enhanced Indigenous cultural awareness.

Strengthening Relationships and Developing Collaborative Partnerships with Indigenous Communities

Children’s Services is committed to reconciliation and ensuring the issues and challenges commonly faced by Indigenous children, youth and families are being addressed through collaborative solutions.

The ministry continues to establish and strengthen essential relationships with Indigenous communities, leaders and organizations. In 2019-20, the Minister of Children’s Services participated in three tours across the province and met with various stakeholders and service providers including 12 Indigenous leadership groups and, attended four events including National Indigenous Day Events.

In 2019-20, Children’s Services worked with the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and the Blackfoot Confederacy to establish a Sub-table under the Blackfoot Confederacy Protocol Agreement to address Child and Family Services matters. The ministry also continued to work with the Métis Nation of Alberta as part of the Children’s Services Sub-table. This table was established under the Métis Nation of Alberta - Government of Alberta 10-Year Framework Agreement to collectively identify mutually agreeable priorities and necessary actions to address inequities between Alberta Métis and other Albertans. The ministry also collaborated with the Ministries of Health and Indigenous Relations to support the Sixties Scoop Indigenous Society of Alberta to engage with Sixties Scoop survivors to identify the types of supports and services that would benefit their healing journey.

Indigenous Cultural Understanding Framework

The Indigenous Cultural Understanding Framework and its Learning Development Pathway identifies experiential Indigenous cultural training required for all Children’s Services staff. The Learning Development Pathway is a holistic learning journey for staff as they participate in various learning opportunities delivered by Indigenous communities.

Relationship and Culture Pathway Comments:

“We participated in an opening and closing circle, daily smudging, as well as a sweat lodge. The experience was amazing and so difficult to put into words.”

“This training helped me to understand better how trauma and emotions need to be acknowledged before healing can happen personally and in work with youth and families. The importance of spirit and culture for all of us but especially Indigenous children when in Children’s Services.”

“I am learning more and more that ceremony is an essential part of the work. I am learning more about what that means and have a stronger understanding about what an oral story can mean.”

The Indigenous Cultural Understanding Framework increases knowledge, skills and a better understanding of Indigenous histories, cultures, worldviews, challenges, and resilience. Children's Services staff learn how best to foster respectful and collaborative relationships with Indigenous people. This knowledge will affect behaviour and practice, leading to more respectful and meaningful approaches in serving Indigenous children, youth, families, and communities.

As of March 31, 2020, over 2,000 Children's Services staff had completed the basic requirements for the Foundations Pathway and 455 Children's Services staff had completed the training under the Relationship and Culture Pathway. Approximately 92 per cent of Children's Services employees who have completed training under the Relationship and Culture Pathway training state they have a better understanding of Indigenous pre-contact life, colonization, and the contemporary obstacles that face Indigenous people today and how this influences their work.

These training opportunities provide a safe and engaging learning environment for staff to participate in experiential learning about Indigenous cultures. This training is intended for frontline staff and their supervisors, and as such, will assist in reducing the over-representation of Indigenous children in care.

To continue to support the Indigenous Cultural Understanding Framework, grants were provided in the previous fiscal year to Metis Settlements General Council, Métis Nation of Alberta, and Aseniwuche Winewak Nation of Canada to develop cultural understanding training. Throughout 2019-20, these partners continued to develop the training to be rolled out to Children's Services staff. Delivery of training by Indigenous experts and Elders from various communities acknowledges that Indigenous peoples can speak for themselves and are in the position to share their own community knowledge and cultural teachings.

The miyo Resource

The kâ-nâkatohkêhk miyo-ohpikinawâwasowin (miyo) Resource discusses foundational beliefs and approaches of Indigenous peoples to promote well-being and resiliency, and outlines an evaluative process that honours an Indigenous worldview. This resource supports provincial implementation of the Well-being and Resiliency Framework by outlining an evaluative framework that recognizes culturally-based practice and assesses program effectiveness and the achievement of outcomes in a meaningful way. The miyo Resource was developed recognizing that western-based evaluation practices are generally not effective when working with Indigenous communities. It includes a model for service delivery, and outcome and performance measurement that accurately and culturally assesses the impact and value of culturally designed services provided by and for Indigenous client populations.

The miyo Resource is currently being piloted by six of the 19 Early Intervention in First Nations Communities grant recipients in Treaty Six, Seven and Eight. The communities will have the option to continue to use the miyo Resource in the 2020-21 fiscal year. The miyo Resource has also been made available and is currently being piloted by at least one other Indigenous serving organization.

Early Intervention in First Nations Communities Grants Program

In 2019-20, Children's Services provided approximately \$1.6 million for the Early Intervention in First Nations Communities Grant Program. There are currently 19 grants supporting the delivery of prevention, early intervention and youth support services in 16 different First Nations communities across Alberta. Grants are funded in alignment with the kâ-nâkatohkêhk miyo-ohpikinawâwasowin (miyo Resource). These programs focus on improving child development and well-being among Indigenous infants, children, youth and families.

3.5 Work with ministries to increase access to supports for Indigenous families who have children with disabilities.

Ensuring Children with Disabilities Receive Support

Families who have a child who lives with a disability may need added support for their child to become fully included in the community. Children's Services works collaboratively with Community and Social Services, Health, Indigenous partners and other stakeholders to provide children with disabilities the supports they need. This includes the Family Support for Children with Disabilities program and the *Supporting Alberta's Children, Youth, Parents/Guardians with Disabilities, a Cross-Ministry Protocol*.

Family Support for Children with Disabilities

Operated by Community and Social Services, the Family Support for Children with Disabilities (FSCD) program is available to families of children with a wide range of disabilities, including developmental disabilities, mental health conditions, physical disabilities, sensory impairments and health conditions resulting in a disability. The FSCD program was developed to provide services and supports to help strengthen families' ability to promote their children's healthy development, and encourage their children's participation in activities at home and in the community. Children's Services works in partnership with FSCD with families who are involved with both programs, to provide services mandated under *Child Youth and Family Enhancement Act* when required.

Support Alberta's Children, Youth, Parents/Guardians with Disabilities

Supporting Alberta's Children, Youth, Parents/Guardians with Disabilities, a Cross-Ministry Protocol is a framework for collaboration to support the ongoing work across Children's Services and Community and Social Services. This protocol brings together relevant programs and services to best support children, youth and parents/guardians with disabilities.

The protocol supports the shared commitment to build and sustain effective, collaborative relationships across the two ministries, as well as with other relevant Government of Alberta programs and departments, such as the Office of the Public Guardian/Trustee, Health, Alberta Health Services, Education and school boards.

By working together, Children's Services, Community and Social Services and other Government of Alberta programs can more effectively promote the safety, security and development of children and youth, and help preserve the family unit. This provides children and youth opportunities to maximize their potential, while parents and guardians, including those with disabilities, are equipped and supported to meet their child's needs.

The protocol was updated in June 2019 to incorporate recommendations from the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate and now includes the Persons with Developmental Disabilities program. This makes it easier for staff to collaborate on files where clients are receiving services from both ministries, which aims to reduce the number of delays experienced by families.

The updated protocol guides staff to provide timely access to services regardless of which program has first contact with the child, youth or family. The goal is to make sure people in need receive services they need in the least disruptive way, from as many programs as it takes.

The protocol continues to be applicable to Child Intervention, Supports for Permanency, and Family Support for Children with Disabilities programs, and has been expanded to include the Persons with Developmental Disabilities program when either the parent has a developmental disability or a youth with a developmental disability is transitioning to adulthood.

The protocol also includes a new conflict resolution process. In the event of a dispute around services, each decision-making level is required to make a decision within two working days or escalate the issue to the next step in the process.

Performance Measure 3.a:

Percentage of youth receiving supports from the Advancing Futures program who successfully completed their planned studies

Prior Years' Results				2019-20 Target	2019-20 Actual
2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19		
84%	85%	81%	85%	85%	88%

Advancing Futures is a psychosocial transitional support and funding program that assists youth aged 18 to 24 who have been or continue to be in care or are receiving services under the *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act* to access post-secondary opportunities and obtain a career. Youth are invited to apply if they would like to obtain their high school General Equivalency Diploma, upgrade through adult education or enroll in a post-secondary school for a degree, diploma or trade certificate. Youth are eligible to apply to the program until the day before their 25th birthday.

The program provides educational support through:

- fiscal and budgeting support (funding for educational fees, monthly living allowances, child care and supplemental benefits), which enables youth to achieve their educational goals;
- funding for educational fees, monthly living allowances, child care and supplemental benefits, which enables youth to achieve their educational goals;
- regular face-to-face contact between the youth and caseworker, which provides opportunities to discuss transitional challenges, support navigating complex adult systems, life goals and the actions needed; and
- assisting youth to identify a specific career path and supporting them through the application process to begin a degree, diploma, or certificate program.

This performance measure describes the percentage of youth who received funding from Advancing Futures and successfully completed a program this fiscal year or continue to be in attendance as of March 2020. In 2019-20, 88 per cent of youth receiving supports from the Advancing Futures program successfully completed their planned studies or continue to be in attendance. This is a three per cent increase over 2018-19 and the 2019-20 target of 85 per cent. The average year-over-year viability in this measure is three per cent during the period from 2015-16 to 2018-19.

The positive 2019-20 result may stem from the decrease in the average caseload to 98 recipients per coordinator in 2019-20. Although the program is designed to have 70-75 recipients per coordinator, caseloads in recent years have increased up to 140 recipients per program

coordinator, which is approximately an 87 per cent increase in caseload volume over the ideal caseload benchmark. In response to the high caseloads, one additional program coordinator was added in April 2019. Advancing Futures succeeds because program coordinators provide a high level of skill development training and social and emotional support to students. Higher caseloads potentially impact accessibility to a program coordinator.

Performance Indicator 3.b:

Percentage of young adults who transition out of child intervention at age 18 and access additional supports through Support and Financial Assistance Agreements

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Indigenous	87%	92%	90%	90%	89%
Non-Indigenous	87%	90%	90%	91%	89%

Child intervention services are designed to respond to concerns about the safety and well-being of children and youth such as abuse, neglect, family violence, and addictions. Intervention services are required when a parent cannot adequately protect a child from harm, or the danger of being harmed, as defined by the *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act*.

Support and Financial Assistance Agreements are available to young adults who were involved with child intervention services to help them in fully reaching their independence. Services provided under a Support and Financial Assistance Agreement may include:

- living accommodations;
- financial assistance to meet the necessities of life;
- depending on the age of the youth, additional services may be accessed including;
- financial assistance related to training and education;
- health benefits; and
- any other services required to assist the young adult achieve independence.

This performance indicator shows the percentage of young adults who turn 18 years old while receiving child intervention services who entered a Support and Financial Assistance Agreement. The indicator helps to show an important part of the continuum of services and care provided in Alberta, with a focus on those who have received child intervention services planning for and working toward independence in keeping with their goals, development, and functional ability.

In 2019-20, 89 per cent of Indigenous and non-Indigenous young adults receiving child intervention services when turning 18 years of age transitioned successfully into young adulthood with a Support and Financial Assistance Agreement in place. The 2019-20 results reflect a decrease of one percentage point and two percentage points relative to the previous year's results for Indigenous and non-Indigenous categories respectively. However, 2019-20 results are consistent with the average year-over-year variability of 2.3 per cent for Indigenous young adults and 1.3 per cent for non-Indigenous young adults observed from 2015-16 to 2018-19.

**Performance Indicator 3.c:
Number of youth in care matched with a mentor in Edmonton, Calgary and Red Deer**

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Edmonton	103	96	146	131 ¹	123
Calgary	33	33	44	54	46
Red Deer	26	33	40	43 ¹	39

¹ This number has been corrected as the number in the 2019-23 Business Plan only included one-to-one matches and not the combined total of group and one-to-one mentoring.

The Youth in Care Mentoring Program aims to increase participation in, and further foster, meaningful relationships between mentors and youth in the child intervention system. One of the main objectives of the program is to have strong match compatibility at the start to support a lasting relationship. The agencies participating in the project are Big Brothers Big Sisters of Calgary and Area, Red Deer Youth HQ, and Boys & Girls Clubs Big Brothers Big Sisters Edmonton and Area Society. The agencies provide recruitment, training, match support and activities for one-to-one matches specifically focused on serving youth in care.

This performance indicator reflects the total number of youth in care who received or are receiving a specific type of tailored mentoring program over the course of the year. The indicator incorporates both one-to-one mentoring and group mentoring. It reflects the ministry's direct support to individuals with child intervention involvement. The youth served by this program are those who have had some type of involvement with the child intervention system in the past two years, including Family Enhancement.

In 2019-20, the number of youth in care supported by mentoring relationships through the Youth in Care Mentoring Program in Edmonton, Calgary and Red Deer were 123, 46 and 39 respectively.

The total number of youth supported decreased by 8.7 per cent from 2018-19 to 2019-20. In that time, 32 per cent of existing matches ended. This can happen for various reasons, the most common being: graduation, extenuating circumstances (e.g. moving, life and/or health changes), the relationship ran its course, not a good fit, or loss of contact. Graduation occurs when the relationship continues without agency support or the youth has reached the age of 24. The majority of spaces are filled with youth needing support when a match ends. However, it can be challenging to find enough mentors who are the right match for the youth.

Performance Measure and Indicator Methodology

Performance Measure 1.a:

Percentage of cases opening to child intervention without involvement in the last year

This performance measure describes the percentage of files that opened for children and youth without child intervention involvement in the last 12 months in a given fiscal year. It incorporates children and youth receiving services in care and not in care.

This is calculated separately for Indigenous and non-Indigenous children by using the following formula:

$$\text{Percentage} = \frac{\text{total number of children who opened a new file with child intervention during a fiscal year and no previous closure within the last 12 months}}{\text{total number of children who opened a file with child intervention during a fiscal year}} \times 100$$

Preliminary data is available from a live dataset at least one month after the end of the fiscal year. Since the dataset is a live source, the data and results generated are subject to change as more information is entered into the system. Data is considered preliminary for 26 months, after which the data is frozen for yearly reporting.

Source: Child Intervention Case Information Online

Performance Measure 1.b:

Percentage of children in care placed in family-based care

This performance measure describes the percentage of Indigenous and non-Indigenous children and youth who are placed away from home in a family-based placement including kinship care, foster care and permanency placements in a given fiscal year.

This is calculated separately for Indigenous and non-Indigenous children by using the following formula:

$$\text{Percentage} = \frac{\text{average monthly number of children placed in a family-based placement during a fiscal year}}{\text{average monthly number of children receiving services in care during a fiscal year}} \times 100$$

Source: Child Intervention Case Information Online

Performance Indicator 1.c:**Children receiving child intervention services as a percentage of the child population in Alberta**

- **Number of children receiving child intervention services**
- **Children in Alberta**
- **Percentage**

This performance indicator shows the percentage of children, aged 0-17 years receiving child intervention services, of the estimated total child population in Alberta, in a given calendar year.

The percentage is calculated by using the following formula:

$$\text{Percentage} = \frac{\text{number of children (0-17) who had an active child intervention legal authority during a calendar year}}{\text{estimated number of children between the ages 0-17 in Alberta during a calendar year}} \times 100$$

The reported number of children receiving child intervention services and the total child population in Alberta are subject to change as source information is entered into the system.

Source: Child Intervention Case Information Online and Statistics Canada Table: 17-10-0005-01 (formerly CANSIM 051-0001) – Population estimates on July 1, by age and sex

Performance Indicator 1.d:**Percentage of Indigenous children in kinship or foster care who are placed with Indigenous families**

This performance indicator shows the percentage of Indigenous children and youth receiving culturally appropriate services through foster care or kinship care of the total number of Indigenous children and youth in foster or kinship care in a given fiscal year. A foster or kinship care is determined to be Indigenous if the home is denoted as Indigenous or caregiver's racial origin is identified as Indigenous in the Child Youth Information Module or Intervention Services Information System.

The percentage is calculated by using the following formula:

$$\text{Percentage} = \frac{\text{total number of Indigenous children and youth in foster or kinship care who reside with an Indigenous foster or kinship care family in a fiscal year}}{\text{total number of Indigenous children and youth in foster or kinship care in a fiscal year}} \times 100$$

Source: Child Intervention Case Information Online

**Performance Measure 2.a:
Percentage increase in the number of licensed and approved child care spaces**

This performance measure shows the percentage increase in the number of licensed and approved child care spaces over time. The number of spaces within a child care program is the total net floor area divided by the number of required square meters per child. Day care programs require three square meters for each child, while out-of-school and pre-school programs require 2.5 square meters for each child.

The percentage increase in licensed and approved child care spaces is calculated by using the difference in the available spaces between March of the previous year and March in the current year. March data is used in these calculations as it represents the end of the fiscal year. This number is then divided by the number of spaces in March of the previous year and expressed in percentage terms as indicated by the following formula:

$$\text{Percentage} = \frac{\text{spaces in March current fiscal year} - \text{spaces in March previous fiscal year}}{\text{spaces in March previous fiscal year}} \times 100$$

Source: Child Care Information System

**Performance Indicator 2.b:
Licensed and approved child care spaces**

This performance indicator shows the total number of approved child care spaces available in a given fiscal year. Spaces indicates the maximum number of children that a child care centre can accommodate.

This performance indicator is typically the count available at the end of March in a given year based on the claim reports submitted by the child care programs. The December 2019 count was used for the 2019-20 fiscal year in order to make drawing comparisons between performance indicators 2.b and 2.c possible. The March 2020 count is unavailable due to a January 1, 2020 policy change, which removed Stay-at-Home child care subsidies for parents whose children attend preschool. As the data on the number of children enrolled in child care programs is tied to subsidy claims there is no data available on the number of children enrolled in preschools for March 2020. As the month-over-month change in space is relatively small, the effect of using the December count instead of the March count on the 2019-20 result is minimal.

Source: Child Care Information System

**Performance Indicator 2.c:
Licensed and approved child care enrollment**

This performance indicator shows the number of children enrolled in licensed and approved child care programs and the percentage of enrolment of the total child care spaces available (performance indicator 2.b) in a given fiscal year.

This performance indicator is typically available at the end of March in a given year, using the claim reports submitted by the child care programs. However, a policy change came into effect on January 1, 2020, which removed Stay-at-Home child care subsidies for parents whose children attend preschool. As the count on the number of children enrolled in child care programs is tied to subsidy claims, there is no count available on the number of children enrolled in preschools as of March 2020. Therefore, the December 2019 count was used instead of March 2020, which incorporates all the different types of child care enrollments, including preschools.

The percentage of total enrollment is calculated by using the following formula:

$$\text{Percentage} = \frac{\text{number of children that used child care services in a fiscal year}}{\text{total number of available child care spaces in a fiscal year}} \times 100$$

Source: Child Care Information System

**Performance Indicator 2.d:
Average annual Child Care Subsidy caseload**

This performance indicator shows the 12-month average of the number of subsidies paid to families in a given fiscal year. The subsidy caseload numbers include full and partial subsidies.

To receive subsidy funding for qualifying children, the child care operator must report the number of hours each eligible child was in attendance. The details of the number of children in attendance are submitted as part of a monthly claims report.

Source: Child Care Information System

Performance Measure 3.a:

Percentage of youth receiving supports from the Advancing Futures program who successfully completed their planned studies

This performance measure describes the percentage of youth who received funding from Advancing Futures and successfully completed a program this fiscal year or continue to be in attendance as of March in a given fiscal year.

The data for this performance measure is based on the fiscal year start and end dates (April 1 to March 31). The total recipients identifies students who have been approved for supports and a bursary, those who applied but never attended a program, those who withdrew during the year, and those whose award was terminated by the institution. The students who finished their planned studies within the fiscal year or were in studies this fiscal year and will be continuing the following year are considered as those who successfully completed their planned studies.

This performance measure is calculated by using the following formula:

$$\text{Percentage} = \frac{\text{total recipients in a fiscal year} - \text{never attended/withdrawn/terminated recipients in a fiscal year}}{\text{total recipients in a fiscal year}} \times 100$$

Source: Bursary Information Module

Performance Indicator 3.b:

Percentage of young adults who transition out of child intervention at age 18 and access additional supports through Support and Financial Assistance Agreements

This performance indicator shows the percentage of young adults who turn 18 years old while receiving child intervention services (aging out) who entered a Support and Financial Assistance Agreement in a given fiscal year. The indicator helps to show an important part of the continuum of services and care provided in Alberta, with a focus on those who have received child intervention services planning for and working toward independence in keeping with their goals, development, and functional ability.

The percentage is calculated dividing the total number of youth aging out and having a Support and Financial Assistance Agreement in place by the total number of youth aging out.

$$\text{Percentage} = \frac{\text{total number of youth aging out and having a Support and Financial Assistance Agreement}}{\text{total number of youth aging out}}$$

Source: Child Intervention Case Information Online

Performance Indicator 3.c:**Number of youth in care matched with a mentor in Edmonton, Calgary and Red Deer**

This performance indicator shows the total number of youth in care who received or are receiving mentoring services as part of the Youth in Care Mentoring Program in a given fiscal year. The indicator incorporates both one-to-one mentoring and group mentoring. This indicator does not include youth on the wait list, closed matches, those receiving intervention services who are served through other formal mentoring programs or through other agencies, or informal mentoring relationships not supported by the three participating agencies: Big Brother Big Sisters Agencies in Red Deer, Calgary and Edmonton.

The number youth in care who received or are receiving mentoring is provided by each participating agency. These numbers are added together to obtain the total number of youth in care who received mentoring support.

Source: Big Brother Big Sisters Agencies in Red Deer, Calgary and Edmonton

Financial Information

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Ministry Financial Highlights

Statement of Revenues and Expenses (unaudited)

Year ended March 31, 2020

	2020		2019	Change from	
	Budget	Actual	Actual Restated	Budget	2019 Actual
<i>(in thousands)</i>					
Revenues					
Services to First Nations Reserves	\$ 45,678	\$ 41,736	\$ 37,107	\$ (3,942)	\$ 4,629
Other Federal Transfers	72,593	75,385	73,922	2,792	1,463
Premiums, Fees and Licences	50	123	138	73	(15)
Other Revenue	5,730	8,941	7,842	3,211	1,099
Ministry total	124,051	126,185	119,009	2,134	7,176
Programs					
Ministry Support Services	6,591	6,303	6,479	288	176
Child Intervention	871,376	866,044	803,387	5,332	(62,657)
Child Care	423,794	408,749	408,246	15,045	(503)
Early Intervention Services for Children and Youth	108,413	101,509	107,852	6,904	6,343
Policy, Innovation and Indigenous Connections	9,002	7,363	10,665	1,639	3,302
Alberta Child Benefit	179,000	171,813	169,064	7,187	(2,749)
Ministry total	1,598,176	1,561,781	1,505,693	36,395	(56,088)
Inter-ministry consolidation adjustments	(12,000)	(13,730)	(13,833)	1,730	(103)
Adjusted ministry total	1,586,176	1,548,051	1,491,860	38,125	(56,191)
Annual Deficit	\$(1,462,125)	\$(1,421,866)	\$(1,372,851)	\$40,259	\$ (49,015)

Revenue and Expense Highlights

Revenues

Ministry revenue was \$126.2 million, approximately \$7.2 million higher than 2018-19 and \$2.1 million higher than Budget 2019.

Compared to 2018-19 Actual

Higher revenues were primarily due to increases from Government of Canada under the Administrative Reform Agreement for services on First Nations Reserves for Child Intervention and for Children's Special Allowance.

Compared to Budget 2019

Higher revenues were mainly due to increase for Children's Special Allowance and adjustment of prior year expenditure accruals, offset by decrease in revenues from services on First Nations Reserves due to less than projected cost and caseload growth in Child Intervention program.

Expenses

The total Ministry's operating expense was \$1,561.8 million in 2019-20, \$56.1 million or 3.7 per cent higher than 2018-19 and \$36.4 million or 2.3 per cent lower than budget.

Compared to 2018-19 Actual

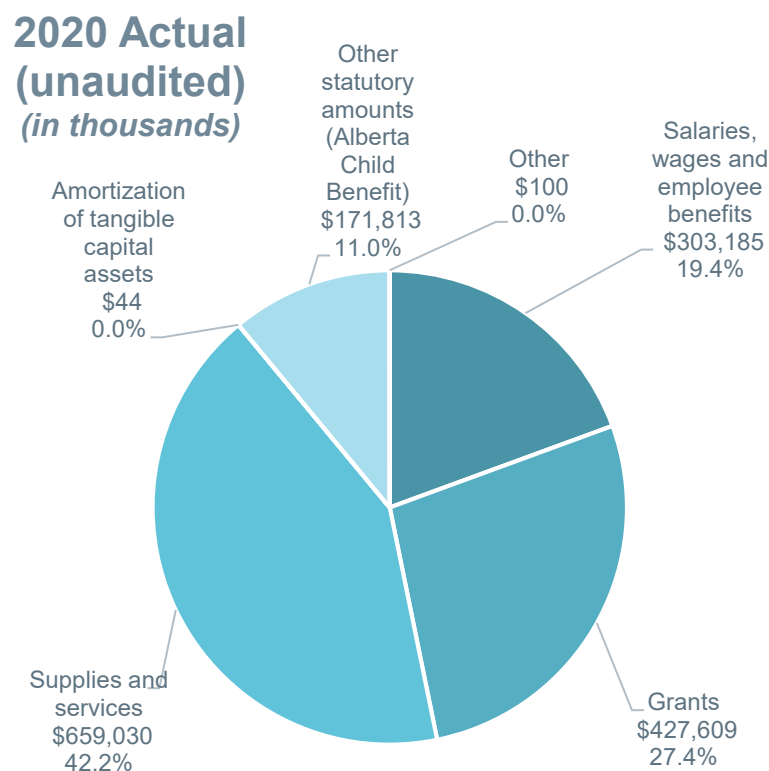
- Child Intervention expense was \$866.0 million, an increase of \$62.7 million or 7.8 per cent from 2018-19 due to higher caseload management growth for Child Protection and Foster Care Support programs.
- Early Intervention Services for Children and Youth expense was \$101.5 million, \$6.3 million lower than 2018-19 primarily due to reduction in discretionary grants.
- Policy, Innovation and Indigenous Connections expense was \$7.4 million, \$3.3 million lower than 2018-19 due to reduction in discretionary grants.
- Alberta Child Benefit expense was \$171.8 million, \$2.7 million increase from 2018-19 due to the increase in program uptakes.

Compared to Budget 2019

- Child Intervention expense of \$866.0 million was \$5.3 million lower than budget due to lower caseload management in Child Protection and Family Enhancement programs.
- Child Care expense of \$408.8 million was \$15.0 million lower than budget due to lower grants for provincially funded Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) Centres and Family Day Homes.
- Early Intervention Services for Children and Youth expense of \$101.5 million was \$6.9 million lower than budget was primarily due to reduction in discretionary grants.
- Policy, Innovation and Indigenous Connections expense of \$7.4 million was \$1.6 million lower than budget due to reduction in discretionary grants and contracts.
- Alberta Child Benefit expense of \$171.8 million was \$7.2 million lower than budget due to lower than anticipated uptake in the program.

Expenses – Directly Incurred Detailed by Object

The following information presents expenses of the ministry that were directly incurred by object. The objective of disclosure of expenses by object is to provide information that is useful in evaluating the economic impact of government acquiring or consuming various types of resources.



- The ministry's largest operating expense was supplies and services, which totaled \$659.0 million (42.2 per cent) and was primarily in the Child Intervention program (\$579.4 million). Included in supplies and services was approximately \$433.0 million in contract payments which were paid primarily to contracted service providers who provided services directly to Albertans on behalf of the ministry.
- The next largest operating expense was grants, which totaled \$427.6 million (27.4 per cent) primarily for Child Care program.
- Expenditures for salaries, wages and employee benefits totaled \$303.2 million (19.4 per cent) and were primarily on Child Intervention program.
- Alberta Child Benefit which helps lower-income families pay for child care totaled \$171.8 million (11.0 per cent).
- The remainder of ministry expenses were classified as amortization of capital assets (\$0.04 million) and other expenses (\$0.1 million).

Other Financial Information

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Trust Funds Under Administration

The ministry administers trust funds that are regulated and other funds consisting of public money over which the Legislature has no power of appropriation. As the ministry has no equity in the funds and administers them for the purpose of various trusts, they are not included in the ministry's financial statements.

At March 31, 2020, the trust fund under administration was as follows:

	2020	2019
	<i>(in thousands)</i>	
Child Resources Rebate Trust Fund	\$ 676	\$ 683

Statement of Remissions, Compromises, Write-offs

The following statement has been prepared pursuant to section 23 of the *Financial Administration Act*. The statement includes all remissions, compromises and write-offs of the Ministry of Children's Services made or approved during the fiscal year.

	<i>(in thousands)</i>
Remissions under section 21 of the <i>Financial Administration Act</i> :	\$ -
Compromises under section 22 of the <i>Financial Administration Act</i> :	-
Bankruptcies:	-
Write-Offs:	
Child Care Subsidy	278
Other	55
Sub total	<u>333</u>
TOTAL	<u><u>\$ 333</u></u>

Lapse/Encumbrances

	Voted Estimate ⁽¹⁾	Supplementary Estimate	Adjustments ⁽²⁾	Voted Estimate	Voted Actuals ⁽³⁾	Unexpended (Over Expended)
	<i>(in thousands)</i>					
Program - Operating Expense						
1 Ministry Support Services						
1.1 Minister's Office	\$ 789	\$ -	\$ 151	\$ 940	\$ 923	\$ 17
1.2 Deputy Minister's Office	785	-	-	785	770	15
1.3 Strategic Services	1,008	-	(500)	508	438	70
1.4 Corporate Services	4,009	-	-	4,009	4,286	(277)
	<u>6,591</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(349)</u>	<u>6,242</u>	<u>6,417</u>	<u>(175)</u>
2 Child Intervention						
2.1 Program Planning and Delivery	9,064	-	(82)	8,982	9,727	(745)
2.2 Child Intervention Services	573,244	-	(9,768)	563,476	566,147	(2,671)
2.3 Supports for Permanency	65,898	-	481	66,379	67,005	(626)
2.4 Kinship & Foster Care Support	221,592	-	(9,350)	212,242	222,283	(10,041)
	<u>869,798</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(18,719)</u>	<u>851,079</u>	<u>865,162</u>	<u>(14,083)</u>
3 Child Care						
3.1 Child Care Subsidy and Supports	296,434	-	(3,053)	293,381	282,058	11,323
3.2 Child Care Accreditation	127,360	-	1,963	129,323	126,718	2,605
	<u>423,794</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(1,090)</u>	<u>422,704</u>	<u>408,776</u>	<u>13,928</u>
4 Early Intervention Services for Children and Youth						
4.1 Early Intervention and Early Childhood Development	96,050	-	(8,521)	87,529	87,860	(331)
4.2 Youth in Transition	12,363	-	2,044	14,407	13,679	728
	<u>108,413</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(6,477)</u>	<u>101,936</u>	<u>101,539</u>	<u>397</u>
5 Policy Innovation & Indigenous Connections						
5.1 Policy and Innovation	6,350	-	243	6,593	5,011	1,582
5.2 Indigenous Connections	2,652	-	(115)	2,537	2,277	260
	<u>9,002</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>128</u>	<u>9,130</u>	<u>7,288</u>	<u>1,842</u>
Total	\$1,417,598	\$ -	\$ (26,507)	\$1,391,091	\$ 1,389,182	\$ 1,909
Lapse						\$ 1,909
Program - Capital Investment						
2 Child Intervention						
2.2 Child Intervention Services	84	-	-	84	70	14
Total	\$ 84	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 84	\$ 70	\$ 14
Lapse						\$ 14

⁽¹⁾ As per "Expense Vote by Program" and "Capital Investment Vote by Program" page 45 of the 2019-20 Government Estimates.

⁽²⁾ Adjustments include encumbrances, capital carry over amounts, transfers between votes and credit or recovery increases approved by Treasury Board and credit or recovery shortfalls. An encumbrance is incurred when, on a vote-by-vote basis, the total of actual disbursements in the prior year exceed the total adjusted estimate. All calculated encumbrances from the prior year are reflected as an adjustment to reduce the corresponding voted estimate in the current year.

⁽³⁾ Actuals exclude non-voted amounts such as amortization and valuation adjustments.

Annual Report Extracts and Other Statutory Reports

Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblower Protection) Act

Section 32 of the *Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblower Protection) Act* reads:

- 32 (1) Every chief officer must prepare a report annually on all disclosures that have been made to the designated officer of the department, public entity or office of the Legislature for which the chief officer is responsible.
- (2) The report under subsection (1) must include the following information:
- (a) the number of disclosures received by the designated officer, the number of disclosures acted on and the number of disclosures not acted on by the designated officer;
 - (b) the number of investigations commenced by the designated officer as a result of disclosures;
 - (c) in the case of an investigation that results in a finding of wrongdoing, a description of the wrongdoing and any recommendations made or corrective measures taken in relation to the wrongdoing or the reasons why no corrective measure was taken.
- (3) The report under subsection (1) must be included in the annual report of the department, public entity or office of the Legislature if the annual report is made publicly available.

The following is a summary of the activity filed with the public interest disclosure office for Children's Services from the period April 1, 2019, to March 31, 2020:

1 – Disclosure

- 1 disclosure acted on
- 0 disclosures not acted on

1 – Investigation

0 – Investigations resulting in a finding of wrongdoing in 2019/20

1 – Investigation resulting in a finding of wrongdoing from 2018/19

- PIDA 2018 101
 - The wrongdoing in this file related to Section 3(1)(c) of the Act, “gross mismanagement of public funds or a public asset”. The specific wrongdoing cited by the disclosure was that significant resources were being used by the department in providing Intervention Record Checks to non-GoA entities without the necessary legal authority.
 - The recommendation in the report was for the department to ensure that steps are in place to discontinue the practice by the fall of 2018.

- To respond to the recommendation, the department has the following comments:
 - Children’s Services takes the safety and well-being of children extremely seriously and Intervention Record Checks (IRCs) have historically been useful in identifying potential threats to children. However, we want to make sure they strike the right balance between being fair to those seeking new opportunities and protecting innocent and vulnerable children.
 - The discontinuation of IRCs to non-GoA entities requires ongoing discussion and collaboration with stakeholders who have historically relied upon these checks as an integral and component part of their screening processes to protect vulnerable children.
 - Consequently, IRCs are embedded in policies and contracts of many organizations and entities.
 - These organizations and entities require time to adjust their processes and establish/adopt alternate processes for fulsome screening of staff and volunteers who will be working with vulnerable (or child) populations.

