

BUDGET 2021

GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA | 2021-24

Ministry Business Plan Children's Services

Children's Services

Business Plan 2021-24

Ministry Fact Sheet – Mandate and Structure

The Ministry of Children's Services supports the well-being of children, youth and families in Alberta. The ministry supports Alberta's economy by improving access to affordable, high-quality, safe and inclusive child care options that create employment opportunities and support parents' participation in the workforce.

Children's Services is committed to helping build strong, resilient families by focusing on safety and well-being from early learning and childhood development through to early intervention supports, intervention services and transitions to adulthood. Ministry programs and services that help build resilient, inclusive and economically-vibrant communities include:

- Early childhood development;
- Prevention, early intervention and post-intervention supports;
- Intervention for children at home and in care;
- Family Resource Network preventative programming;
- Adoption, post adoption registry and guardianship services;
- Licensing and monitoring child care programs;
- Youth in Care mentorship;
- Indigenous child and family development;
- Supports for children in child care settings with special needs; and
- Financial supports including child care grant funding, Advancing Futures Bursary and the Registered Educational Savings Plan program for children in care or children who have been in care within the past two years.

Access to a range of high-quality, affordable child care options allows parents to participate in training, education or the workforce knowing their children are safe and supported. The ministry is committed to supporting inclusive and culturally appropriate child care programs whether located in schools, communities, workplaces or home settings so parents, including those who work irregular hours, can choose the options that work best for their family.

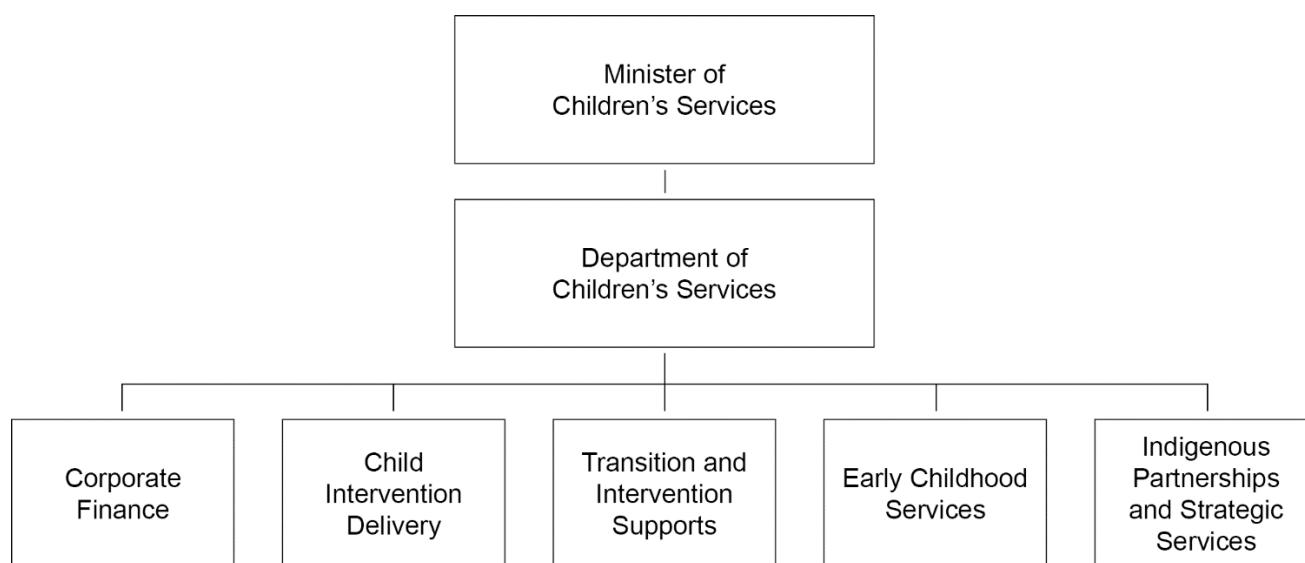
Collaboration with other ministries is essential to support effective and efficient early childhood services and promote inclusion in licensed child care services, including supports for children with additional needs. Safe and quality programs are delivered by educated, well supported staff and are built on positive, responsive relationships, engaging environments and meaningful experiences for children and families.

The ministry succeeds in delivering on its mandate through advocacy and partnership with other levels of government, agencies and civil society organizations. Children's Services works closely with First Nations, Inuit, Métis and urban Indigenous communities to support the healthy development of Indigenous children and youth by providing culturally appropriate opportunities to maintain and enhance connections with family, community and culture. Children's Services works with children families and other partners to preserve a child's connection to their family, promoting preventative care and preserving the child's cultural, linguistic, religious and spiritual upbringing and heritage.

The ministry provides services, supports and resources to protect children and youth from harmful situations including abuse, neglect or those that would otherwise put them in need of intervention. The child’s best interests, safety and well-being are the highest priority when determining the best care options and supports if the child is placed in care – including kinship care (with a family member), foster care, guardianship and adoption. The ministry is committed to preserving connections with the child’s culture and cultural communities, considering the importance of lasting relationships with family and friends and collaborating with broader community services, school boards, primary care providers, parents and caregivers. Children’s Services also collaborates with ministries and communities to combat human trafficking, child exploitation and domestic violence.

Children’s Services helps prepare current and former youth in care for the transition to adulthood through a range of programs and services, including social and emotional support, financial agreements, and tuition and living expenses for youth pursuing post-secondary education. The ministry also provides funding for projects that support mentorship for at-risk youth and youth receiving government services, as well as for youth suicide prevention.

The ministry is working to ensure that digital services are designed with accessibility at their core, striving for all users to have equal access to information and functionality. Developing online forms that meet the highest standards of quality, usability and accessibility is one way the ministry is reducing red tape and improving services to Albertans.



A more detailed description of Children’s Services and its programs and initiatives can be found at: <https://www.alberta.ca/childrens-services>.

The Ministry of Children’s Services continues to review programs to ensure Albertans receive efficient and client-focused services from their government. As part of this ongoing review, the ministry is committed to making life easier for hard-working Albertans and job creators by reducing regulatory requirements by one-third by 2023, and eliminating administrative burden through more efficient processes. This work will improve service delivery for Albertans; foster economic growth, innovation and competitiveness; and create a strong and attractive investment climate.

Ministry business plans should be considered in conjunction with all budget documents – including the Fiscal Plan, Government Strategic Plan and Estimates – which work together to provide a complete overview of government’s commitment to responsible fiscal management.

Business Plan – Core

Outcome 1

Albertans have access to early childhood education and child care options to enable participation in the workforce

Key Objectives

1.1 Improve access to child care through initiatives that support affordability, high-quality, safety, inclusion and parent choice enabling parents to participate fully in the labour market and supporting Alberta’s economic recovery.

Initiatives Supporting Key Objectives

- In 2021-22, \$279.6 million is allocated for providing subsidies to low and middle-income families with children who access licensed child care services.
- In 2021-22, \$113.8 million is allocated to provide funding for the certification of child care staff through professional development and wage top ups; and for supporting and monitoring licensed child care programs.

Performance Metrics

1.a Performance Measure: percentage change in the number of licensed child care spaces

Recognizing the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and a downturn in the economy, current focus is to maintain the safe operation of child care programs, with anticipated future growth in child care spaces influenced by a combination of market forces and government supports.

In 2019-20, there was a 5 per cent increase in the number of licensed child care spaces (includes daycare, family day home, out of school care, preschool, innovative and group family child care programs).

Targets	2021-22	0%	2022-23	2%	2023-24	2%
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1.b Performance Indicator: children enrolled in Daycare, Family Day Home, Out of School Care, Innovative and Group Family Child Care programs (data for children attending preschool is no longer available therefore the scope of the indicator was modified and data has been updated).

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Total number of spaces	90,982	98,463	106,319	113,838	121,096
Number of children enrolled	74,005	78,787	86,530	92,254	97,553
Per cent of total enrollment	81.3%	80.0%	81.4%	80.0%	80.6%
Number of children receiving subsidy	23,886	24,491	26,368	27,632	28,320

Outcome 2

The well-being, resiliency, and cultural connections of children, youth and families are supported and children and youth are protected

Key Objectives

- 2.1 Improve processes to support the successful transition of youth from government care into adulthood, focusing on mentoring, educational attainment, employment readiness and connection to supportive services.
- 2.2 Work with Indigenous communities to strengthen relationships and develop agreements to support greater authority for Indigenous child and family services.

Initiatives Supporting Key Objectives

- In 2021-22, \$14.4 million is allocated to support vulnerable youth transitioning to adulthood, who have previous or current child intervention involvement through mentoring supports and the Advancing Futures program.

Performance Metrics

2.a Performance Measure: percentage of youth receiving supports from the Advancing Futures program who successfully complete their planned studies

This performance measure demonstrates how well the ministry is addressing the needs of youth transitioning out of government care into post-secondary education.

In 2019-20, 88 per cent of youth receiving supports from the Advancing Futures program successfully completed their planned studies.

Targets	2021-22	88%	2022-23	88%	2023-24	89%
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2.b Performance Measure: percentage of children in care placed in family-based care

This performance measure demonstrates the ministry's commitment to prioritizing the best interests of children by placing them in culturally appropriate environments.

In 2019-20, 85 per cent of Indigenous children and 86 per cent of non-Indigenous children were placed in family-based care (includes kinship care, foster care and permanency placements).

Targets	2021-22	86%	2022-23	87%	2023-24	87%
Indigenous	2021-22	86%	2022-23	87%	2023-24	87%
Non-Indigenous	2021-22	86%	2022-23	87%	2023-24	87%

Outcome 3

Reduction in the regulatory and administrative requirements imposed by legislation, regulations and associated policies and forms improves services for children, youth and families

Key Objectives

- Implement the new *Early Learning and Child Care Act* and regulation to streamline licensing processes and empower child care operators to provide high-quality early childhood education and care to meet the needs of working parents.
- Improve online services and the management of digital information to simplify communication and interactions between government and Albertans and support greater efficiencies.

Initiatives Supporting Key Objectives

- In 2021-22, \$750,000 is allocated to develop an Electronic Content Management Solution for Child Intervention.

Performance Metrics

3.a Performance Measure: percent reduction of regulatory requirements to enhance services for children, youth and families

This performance measure demonstrates the ministry's commitment to reducing regulatory requirements for children, youth and families through innovations like moving the child care subsidy application online.

In 2019-20, the ministry's baseline count of 10,079 regulatory requirements has been reduced by 8.2 per cent.

Targets	2021-22	20%	2022-23	33%	2023-24	net zero
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STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

(thousands of dollars)

	Comparable			2021-22 Estimate	2022-23 Target	2023-24 Target
	2019-20 Actual	2020-21 Budget	2020-21 Forecast			
REVENUE						
Services to First Nations Reserves	41,736	45,678	45,678	45,678	45,678	45,678
Other Federal Transfers	75,385	72,593	76,542	76,051	76,970	77,917
Premiums Fees and Licenses	123	50	55	55	55	55
Other Revenue	8,941	5,730	19,099	7,699	7,699	7,699
Consolidated Total	126,185	124,051	141,374	129,483	130,402	131,349
EXPENSE						
Ministry Support Services	6,303	6,086	6,086	5,876	5,850	5,850
Child Intervention	866,044	867,069	870,669	881,396	864,408	862,967
Child Care	408,749	393,986	475,397	393,402	424,622	424,622
Early Intervention Services for Children and Youth	101,509	95,780	95,780	96,077	96,057	96,057
Policy, Innovation and Indigenous Connections	7,363	9,715	9,065	9,379	9,350	9,100
Alberta Child Benefit	171,813	45,500	49,000	-	-	-
Alberta Child and Family Benefit	-	230,000	240,000	345,000	335,000	325,000
Ministry Total	1,561,781	1,648,136	1,745,997	1,731,130	1,735,287	1,723,596
Inter-Ministry Consolidations	(13,730)	(12,000)	(12,000)	(13,700)	(13,700)	(13,700)
Consolidated Total	1,548,051	1,636,136	1,733,997	1,717,430	1,721,587	1,709,896
Net Operating Result	(1,421,866)	(1,512,085)	(1,592,623)	(1,587,947)	(1,591,185)	(1,578,547)
CAPITAL INVESTMENT						
Child Intervention	70	483	234	350	-	-
Consolidated Total	70	483	234	350	-	-